

## Submission on Dunedin City Council Annual Plan 2024

*To:* Dunedin City Council

*Name of submitter:* **Tomahawk-Smaills BeachCare Trust**

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*Summary of request:* We ask that the Dunedin City Council continue to provide the current level of funding that we receive of \$13,000 per annum.

### Overview of Tomahawk-Smaills BeachCare Trust

Tomahawk Smaills Beachcare Trust (the Trust) is a charitable trust with a focus on the restoration of the habitat and biodiversity of the sand dune ecosystem in the Ocean Grove Reserve. Our goals include the provision of long-term protection to the Ocean Grove community against the threat of erosion. The Trust was formalised in 2008 but has been active for over two decades, having been established in 2000.

Ocean Grove Reserve is a 28ha site of active sand dunes located approximately 6 kms from the Dunedin city centre. The reserve is bordered by Tomahawk and Smaills Beaches. The Trust has a service agreement in place with the Dunedin City Council regarding access to and replanting of the reserve with native trees and shrubs.

The Trust owns and operates a community nursery to ensure that plants being planted enhance and support local biodiversity. The Trust employs a nursery manager (Dr Nicole Bezemer) to oversee nursery operations and the planting programme. As a key part of our operation, the nursery enables us to grow plants from eco-sourced seeds and provides volunteering opportunities throughout the year. We are proud of the contribution that we make to our community.

### Summary of community involvement

Our casual volunteering sessions that run twice weekly have remained well-attended. In 2023, volunteers contributed a total of 1,857 hours (220 hours more than for 2022).

- We continue to host individuals joining from local disability service providers on a weekly basis.
- We regularly host groups of young adults from Otago Polytechnic and Southern Youth Development. In the year gone by, we have also hosted students from Queens High School, Balmacewan Intermediate, and Nature School Dunedin.

- We work together with parents, Oranga Tamariki, Te Whanua Ora and Police Youth Aid to host children and young adults whom are required to complete community service hours.
- We maintain strong relationships and sharing of resources, knowledge and ideas with Otokia Marsh and Habitat Trust, Quarantine Island Community, Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Save The Otago Peninsula and New Zealand Sea Lion Trust. We actively support the work of the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group, EcoOtago, and the newly formed Tomahawk Lagoon Catchment Group.
- This summer we worked hard to support DOC coastal rangers through the very busy sea lion birthing season at Smaills Beach. We were thrilled to observe 9 pups seeking sanctuary in our forested back dunes.

### **Current Funding**

- We won \$30,000 in competitive funding from NZ Lotteries Community towards the salary of our nursery manager. This funding allows for an increase from 12 hours to 21 hours per week for 2023 and 2024.
- We were awarded \$5,000 from the Lion Foundation towards our goal of replacing our shade house and constructing an undercover work area for our volunteers. The total cost of the project is \$20,000 and we are working on additional grant applications and selling plants from our nursery to help raise the deficit.
- We have been awarded funding from Trees that Count to plant a total of 1,500 native trees in Ocean Grove Reserve in the 2024 planting season.
- We have been awarded a DCC Biodiversity Grant to extend our planting site 'Sea Lion Gully'.
- We have been awarded two years of funding from COGS: \$5,000 in 2023 and \$5,000 in 2024.
- We work very hard to grow extra plants to sell from our nursery.

### **What we need from the Dunedin City Council**

We ask that the DCC continue (at a minimum) to provide the current level of funding that we receive.



Our annual DCC funding of \$13,000 is our only continuous source of funding. We work hard to secure the remaining funds required to meet the operational costs of our organisation and to undertake projects to improve our facilities for the benefit of our volunteers and for the wider community (improvements will allow an increase of our annual plant production and restoration work in Ocean Grove Reserve). We are proactive in seeking out and applying for competitive funds.

We are, however, concerned about providing job security for our nursery manager, who is fundamental to the ongoing success of our organisation. Searching, applying for and reporting on funding creates a significant workload for our small volunteer base of committee members and our nursery manager.

Our agreement with the DCC is to plant native trees – which we achieve – but in fact we provide a broader service to the City and our community. We care for and enhance our local reserve, which is increasingly enjoyed by people from all over Dunedin. We are proud of our unique approach that celebrates diversity and inclusion, has a demonstrable positive social impact and strong environmental outcomes.

The multi-year basis of the Service Level Agreements that we have with the DCC is incredibly valuable, because it provides a stable starting point for our annual operational costs. The certainty that this stable funding base provides for operational costs contributes to our sustainability and longevity as a community conservation group. We are hugely appreciative of the consistent support we have received from the DCC.