

## So future generations can walk our rivers and beaches

**Aiden Walters**

**St Johns College, Hastings**

*Aiden was one of five young speakers invited to address the new HBRC councillors on Wednesday 12 November 2025. Their brief: to talk about what the environment means to them, their hopes for Hawke's Bay a generation from now – and the message they want councillors to take with them.*

Kia ora koutou katoa,  
Ko Aiden Walters tōku ingoa,  
Nō Heretaunga ahau.

Kia ora, my name is Aiden Walters and I go to St John's College.

This year, I've been part of the Regional Council's Youth Environmental Ambassador Programme. I'd like to thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to learn about and advocate for the environment. I believe it's so important for young people – and all people – to care about the environment, both on a global scale and here in Hawke's Bay. Our environment is part of who we are, and we need to take action, no matter how big or small, to protect it.

In the future, I'd like to see a Hawke's Bay where all our communities work together to ensure the environment is protected. My hope is that 25 or more years from now, young people like me can walk along our rivers and beaches and see them in the same state that they're in today.

To our councillors, I ask that you continue to listen to the voices of young people. The decisions you make today shape our tomorrow, and the responsibility of solving our region's issues will one day fall to us. With this in mind, remember that our voices should be respected as much as any other, because Hawke's Bay is our region as much as anyone else's. And I ask that you not just consider us but give us a say in the decisions that will affect us.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.