

## The choices you make shape our taiao

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**Lindisfarne College**

*Max 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 kotou katoa  
Ko Max tōku ingoa  
Nō Ahuriri ahau  
He ākongā ahau nō Motutapu Kareti

My name is Max. I'm from Napier and my school is Lindisfarne College.

Our taiao – our environment – is something that is not only important to the people in this room but to almost everyone on Earth. It provides us with kai, water, resources and many other taonga. It is our culture – a place where we can thrive. With climate change heavily affecting it, things need to change. We need to take a step forward and help this environment of ours recover to what it once was.

The environment is important to me because it has been my world since I was a child. When I was little, my father used to take me to the beach almost every day. Even then, I could admire how important our environment is – it supplies us with everything we need and the peace and beauty of just being out there.

Once I was a bit older, Dad started taking me on tramps up to various huts in the Kawekas – places like Te Puia and Makino. I have done these trips so many times that they now feel like home. The incredible wildlife and nature that might one day be out of reach have been part of my identity as a person since I was a kid.

My dream of the future is seeing Hawke's Bay as a place that actually did – and is still doing – something about our world's slow destruction of our biodiversity. I want to see places like the Ahuriri estuary begin to thrive again, with clean water and species that were once endangered flourishing in those areas. I want places like the Botanical Gardens to have many types of native bushes and animals that will still be there for my children and grandchildren.

One of my biggest hopes that you all continue to and expand education for young people in our community. I've seen firsthand the huge effect it can have on our schools' environments and awareness. The HBRC Climate Change Challenge is a direct example of this. Without it, we might not have the food-waste bins set up at our school, and many other schools might not have the same awareness that we now do.

Not only will the education of young people strengthen the fight against climate change today, it will carry forward through this generation for the rest of our lives. With enough people educated about the impacts of climate change – and what they can do about it – we can grow into a healthier future for everyone.

For your future decisions, please consider the choices you are making from now on are good choices for our taiao. Lead with a sense of connection and care for the environment – because we will be the ones who face the impact of the decisions made.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.