

City students help in bid to restore stream

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Hamilton students have planted trees along the banks of a city stream to help improve water quality in the degraded waterway.

Environment Waikato schools programme co-ordinator Dean King organised the planting together with Mangakotukutuku Stream Care Group and Hamilton City Council, which donated the trees.

The stream care group hopes to increase the abundance and diversity of aquatic life in the stream through restoring the habitat. It has already cleared away rubbish and weeds, planted trees and improved fish access and habitat.

Earlier this year Mr King took students from St Pius X School in Melville to compare the Mangakawa Stream in Pirongia with Mangakotukutuku Stream, which flows through Rukuhia, Sunnyhills, Deanwell, Melville, Fitzroy and the Peacocke area before entering the Waikato River upstream of Cobham Bridge.

"Even though there was more aquatic life and better water quality in the Pirongia stream, we were able to show the kids there is life in city streams too, despite the impacts of contributing urban and agricultural environments," he said.

Threatened native fish, including the long-fin eel and the giant kokopu, have been found in the city stream.

The planted trees will improve water quality by stabilising the stream banks, preventing erosion and filtering nutrients. They will also help to keep the water cool and provide shade and food sources for fish.