

This is the story of 48 hours of volunteering, fun and friendships of 19 Leos in Kaikōura, made a success by six Lions Clubs, four Leo Clubs and local organisations. A Lions family, young and old enjoying time together.

Leos from Rai Valley, Marlborough Girls College, Marlborough Boys College and Rangiora High School, their three Leo advisors and three helpers made themselves at home at Dusky Lodge Backpackers on Friday 29 Aug. around 6pm.



We picked up our groceries from Kaikōura New World's 'click and collect' and the 25 orders from Cods & Crabs. There's nothing like a dinner (made complete with salads and ice cream) after hours of travel to get everyone talking. A game of 'travel around the world' got us mingling a bit more. The layout of the Dusky was perfect for our group and the spa and sauna were definitely a big hit.

Kaikōura LC's Barry Dunnett was asked to organise something the 25 of us could serve the community with. He found the perfect project: remove

the lupins from the Pōhowera area's shingle (South Bay). I was a bit worried when he mentioned chainsaws. But indeed, these lupins are not the pretty pink and purple varieties, but the yellow ones, and they had grown into sizable shrubs.

Ailsa Howard from Forest & Birds explained to a crowd of Lions (with their tools), our Leo group and some members of the Youth Council, that it would indeed be great if we could deprive the predators of the protected Banded Dotterels, of their hiding places – the lupins. A photo was passed around of these birds blending into shingle surroundings.

After the group photo we set to work. Pulling some, lopping others, wrenching with the auger a good amount and cutting down the rest



with the chain saws. Paste and spray was applied to the stumps to prevent regrowth. Whilst small teams attended to the eradication, most of us dragged the cuttings to a big hollow, to be destroyed at a later stage.

After a wonderful morning tea at 10.30 – thank you Kaikōura LC – there was only a small patch left to do. Wow, we all admired the barren area (apart from a tree that had to be saved). A job well done. I saw young and old working together in perfect harmony.



Having completed our working project, we ate our packed lunch surrounded by the beautiful scenery of the South Bay Reserve and enjoyed spending time scrambling on the rocks. A small group of us walked to the Sharks Tooth to see the seals. A larger group took up Ted Howard's, (Kaikōura Lion and chair of the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust) offer to meet him at these birds' enclosure, up on the hill, off the Peninsula Walkway. I had seen this predator free area's fence and the nesting boxes up the hill, so it

was a huge privilege to be taken inside the enclosure as Ted's volunteers.

Ted told us about the start of the project, why it was necessary, about the struggles at the start and the perseverance which is resulting in a much higher success rate at present. While talking, two whales were spotted near a fishing boat. After a colony's noises, simulated over the loudspeakers to attract the birds back to their nest, Ted opened some of the boxes. Disturbed skewers (in front of the nesting box with the burrow inside), indicated if birds had returned. We all had a look when a Shearwater was found. The birds are chipped and banded. All the 110 boxes have to be inspected, and findings recorded. Jack and Kayden were so enthusiastically helping Ted with the checking and recording of the data, that we left them to it (with Debby). They told us later that five more birds were found.



The rest of us headed down the 'staircase' to the shore and very slowly made our way around East Head. Some hills had to be climbed, seals photographed, selfies taken, shells and other collectables found and generally a good time was had by all.

It was hard to give the seals their due space passing the Sharks Tooth. Through the tunnel was the only option.

All groups made it eventually back to the lodge in the afternoon to relax and soak up the last of the sun.

Irene Anderson and her team from the Seaward Kaikōura LC came in at 6pm with trays full of scrumptious home-cooked dishes: shepherd's pie, lasagna, mac 'n' cheese, broccoli salad etc. There wasn't much left over afterwards. The Rangiora Leos are accustomed to my chocolate cake at Leo meetings, so I wasn't getting away with not supplying some for dessert.

More card and board games, more spa and sauna, more chatting and some movie watching for the evening.

Just for some extra excitement the fire alarm went off next morning at 7.20! "Leave the rooms immediately." I had the 'privilege' to go through the attendance list in my HS folder, which I had with me wherever I went. All present, bar helper Kelly, who'd gone for an early morning run. So, there we stood in the clothes we were in, mostly PJs, on the footpath, watching the fire brigade come and check the rooms and the fire hydrant on the footpath. Finally, the all-clear was given and we could start our morning procedure, a bit earlier than planned.



Our departure time from the Lodge was 10am and we packed our luggage in the vans. Donned with raincoats and warm clothing for the imminent weather change and backpacks we went our separate ways. Most popular was the mini golf next door. They managed to finish their round before it started raining in earnest at 11am. The group going 'up the street' made their way to the Museum, where another group had gone earlier.

It is remarkable how Lions went out of their way to make our experience in Kaikōura just out of this world. Where could 25 people eat their packed lunch while sheltering from the rain? Seaward Lion Linda de Vine 'arranged' the room above the Mayfair Picture Theatre from 12 to 1 (before the next movie would start) to eat our lunch. The room had paintings and pictures on the walls and Linda gave some commentary, notably some work from the winner of the Seaward Lions 'Trash Fashion' event. Seaward Lion Nicky McArthur, from the Kaikōura Dark Sky Trust told us why this project had



inspired her to action. As we heard from Ted the day before, the conservation of the Shearwaters had a rough start. Nicky added that as the fledglings leave the burrows to start their lives on the oceans, some mistake the wet, shiny, well-lit streets in Kaikōura for water, hence crashlanding on the tarmac, from which they couldn't rise. She finished by telling us how we all can protect our incredible dark skies for future generations.

Stocked up with some purchases from the Mayfair's lolly counter we got into our vans, two North bound and two South

bound.

Thank you so much to the 19 Leos, who were open to everything this adventure entailed. To Leo advisors Christine and Debby. To helpers Sadie, Kelly and Tim. To our sponsoring Lions clubs, Havelock, Blenheim, Beavertown and Rangiora. To the amazing Kaikōura and Seaward Kaikōura clubs and your awesome connections. To Cods & Crabs, New World and Dusky Lodge backpackers. To Daniel Smith Industries and NC Mini Bus Trust, for supplying the two Rangiora vans.

Proud Leo advisor, Tini Lawry.

