



# Organising a science expo

NZASE  
resource

*Many tertiary organisations run science expos to connect graduates with job opportunities, and AGGS, for example, runs a science expo to encourage students into science careers. Wellington teachers ran a very successful expo in 2023 to connect teachers with science education providers (ELC, Enriched Learning Curriculum, formerly LEOTC). Mike Stone talks to some of those responsible about how to organise one.*

## History

Jessie McKenzie at the Royal Society Te Apārangi organised a Wellington evening for science education providers to meet teachers, around 2015. It provided an opportunity for teachers to find out what was available locally, and for providers to publicise their services. This was one of the first such gathering in the city run by and for teachers, and was warmly received by teachers and providers alike.

## Preparation

Wellington's science teacher association, Capital City Science Educators (CCSE), runs events to support science teachers. The committee is made up of primary and secondary teachers, facilitators, and scientists. Its once-a-term, secondary HoD meetings often include a presentation from an organisation or a scientist.

CCSE's science expo in May was designed along the same lines as that of the Royal Society, connecting ELC providers with teachers.

The group started by building a list of provider organisations and their contacts. Anne Ryan, PLD facilitator with House of Science, was responsible for the providers. She began emailing and phoning them to encourage their participation. Once on board she contacted

them about their needs and made sure the venue had what was needed and could provide it on time.

Natalie Robinson, Antarctic oceanographer with NIWA, was responsible for promotion. Natalie was able to shoulder-tap people in her scientist networks: "It was pretty straightforward – we posted on social media and sent flyers to CCSE's list of local schools, asking attendees to register as either providers or teachers." Natalie was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm of providers for exhibiting their material.

Anne says their initial day coincided, at fairly short notice, with a strike day. To keep in with the spirit of the strike day and ensure that all teachers could attend, they decided to change the date. Doug Walker, HoD Science at the venue, said the team appreciated the willingness of providers to be flexible and most were able to re-schedule.

## Providers

The providers who exhibited on the day included: BEANZ; Discovery at Blake; Education Perfect and Science Alive Mātauranga; EPro8; Garden to Table; House of Science; Innovative Young Minds (IYM); Learn well; New Zealand Antarctic Society; National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA); Science Learning Hub; Science Roadshow; SciPAD; VUW Design School and Science Outreach; Wellington Astronomical Society; Wellington Open Science Lab; Wellington Botanical Gardens; Wellington Zoo; and Zealandia.

Others who had to pull out when the date changed included JackBord, Mountains to Sea, Out there Learning and Island Bay Marine Reserve.

*Capital City Science Educators' mini-expo, May 2023.  
Photo: Doug Walker.*



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## On the day

The mini-expo was held at St Patrick's in Kilbirnie (where the HoD was on the committee) from 3.45-5.30pm. Sixty-two teachers had registered, and more turned up on the day. CCSE provided wine, beer and nibbles; Doug said that using food platters from Countdown was convenient.

All providers had wifi access, a table and display space; a few also needed power. All brought promotional material, and some provided hands-on activities.

Neither providers nor teachers paid for the event; with a free venue the only cost was catering, paid for by CCSE.

Teachers came from as far afield as Wairarapa, and reported enjoying the event. They connected with new organisations, found which providers would come to their school, and said the event was great PLD.

Doug Walker made contact with the local astronomical society and plans a telescope evening for Yr 9 students and their whānau.

Some said that there was lots more on offer than they anticipated, and they were grateful for the opportunity to meet people, discover what resources were available and have their horizons widened.

Providers made contact with new teachers, and the expo provided a rare opportunity for them to talk with and learn from each other.

## Suggestions

Anne and Natalie both said that it worked to keep it pretty informal. "There were no speeches, nothing to mark the beginning or the end. We were hands off and allowed it to organically happen."

Natalie says "For a long time we only had five to seven providers signed up and wondered if it was enough. We decided to go ahead, it snowballed and we ended up with over 20!"

Doug suggests allowing a long lead-in time as it can take a while to get a critical mass of providers. Also, in large cities the venue needs to be fairly central. And he stressed the importance of having a team to delegate tasks to and

share the load. Anyone wanting to organise such an event is welcome to [contact Doug Walker at St Pat's](#).

In summary, the expo was fairly easy to organise and connected teachers usefully with local resource organisations.

*The CCSE's second expo flyer.*



*The Garden to Table stall at the CCSE expo. Photo: Anne Ryan.*

## Ngā Kupu

**Ahokore** – Wifi, wireless

**Hāramuramu** – To be informal, casual

**Kaiwhakawhiwhi ratonga** – Service provider

**Whakaaturanga** – Expo, exhibition, display, demonstration

**Whakakitenga** – Exhibit, display

**Whakatairanga** – To promote; promotion

**Whareako ā-hapori** – Community education provider.

*Te Aka Maori Dictionary and Paekupu*



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