

SOPHIE HANDFORD



Councillor of Kapiti Coast, New Zealand YOUTHTOPIA Circle of Youth

Sophie Handford is a Kapiti Coast activist and councillor, working tirelessly to preserve our collective home.

Sophie made waves in New Zealand politics at the age of 18, when she was elected as a councillor for the Kapiti Coast District Council. She resides in the small village of Paekakariki, just an hour north of Wellington. This coastal village is immediately susceptible to climate change and Sophie Handford has passionately campaigned to raise awareness for this crisis.

In 2019, Sophie co-ordinated the nationwide School Strike 4 Climate NZ movement, uniting more than 170,000 people across the country in the fight for climate justice. As councillor, she has also increased investment in expanding youth services, adopted the Climate Emergency Action Framework, established a Raumati Community Board, and signed off on Te Tupu Pai – a district growth strategy which puts people and planet at its core. Currently in her second term, she holds the Climate and Youth portfolios on the Kapiti Coast District Council and chairs the Strategy, Operations & Finance Committee. Sophie continues to share her innovative and inspiring ideas around the world through APEC Voices of the Future, Ship for World Youth, and the 19th Annual Environmental Compliance Conference in Wellington this year.

Sophie Handford's leadership has not only contributed to a more environmentally conscious and socially inclusive Kapiti Coast but has also inspired young individuals across New Zealand to become actively engaged in local politics. With a bright future ahead, Sophie remains committed to her vision of a thriving and sustainable Kapiti Coast and continues to be a shining example of effective and compassionate political thought leadership.

Topics (Selection):

- Rekindling Hope: The Urgency of Climate Justice
- Hope for Humanity: Charting the Course to Climate Justice
- Climate Justice at The Local Level
- The future of governance - Intergenerational Equity
- Governance vs. Impact