

Getting to grips with



Kim: "Oh! These poor trees! I want to get them saved!"

Richard: "When I was little, I never thought about it, but now it's so bad, I think we might have to kill everything and start again."

Abie: "At first I felt overwhelmed, but when I saw what others can do, I thought, why can't we?"

Chris: "I think it's a good idea for us to get in there; we should continually plant more trees."

Bridget: "It made me feel good getting in there. I am prepared to go up and clear in my own time."

Aaron: "It's good for us to get out and work. I think it is good fun."

THESE COMMENTS are from primary and intermediate children I talked to during their involvement in the Marsden Valley Project.

Marsden Valley is in the hills behind Stoke, a suburb of Nelson City, and within a few kilometres of five primary schools: Stoke, Enner Glynn, Nayland Primary, Birchwood, Tahunanui; and two intermediate schools: Broadgreen and Waimea Intermediate.

The idea of an educational, environmental project in this area came from a class visit to the upper valley to explore a coastal forest remnant. The children were shocked at the tangled mess of old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*) and of banana passionfruit spread over dead trees. Many were keen to do

something about the problem. All seven schools – supplying 650 children – agreed to become involved.

Because of the size of the task it was decided the project should be a community one, including parents, children, Forest and Bird members, the Department of Conservation, and local authorities. A representative committee has been set up to oversee the project, which is to run for four years. The main objectives are to control problem plants in the area, and to begin restoring the reserve land to its original condition.

The project, now in its second year, has generated lots of enthusiasm and local support. Everyone involved has been delighted with the practical conservation results