

# Ōtākaro Orchard

## Case Study

**Project start**  
2015

**Amount crowdfunded**  
\$65,369

**Area**  
Community/  
Environment

**Total project budget**  
\$360,000

**Target:**  
NZD \$60,000

**Number of Pledgers**  
547

WELCOME TO  
Ōtākaro Orchard

## Who are Ōtākaro Orchard?

Following the earthquakes that destroyed much of central Christchurch in 2010 and 2011, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority called for proposals to build a community garden along the Avon River. In 2015, nearly 200 people from more than thirty organisations came together to draft the first proposal to create an urban edible orchard in the heart of Christchurch. Their ambitious vision went beyond a garden to turn the Ōtākaro Orchard into New Zealand's first urban food hub, including an edible park, planting beds showcasing different growing techniques, space for workshops, an amphitheatre for events, and a cafe.

The team worked for more than a year to build relationships with architects, gardeners, permaculturists, engineers, construction companies, and community activists to design and plan the Ōtākaro Orchard. In 2016, they signed a five year lease with the Crown for the site.

Over the course of a year, the project raised more than \$300,000 in grants and public donations alongside in-kind sponsorship of materials, construction labour, and design work. To get them over the line and break ground on the site, project coordinator Chloe Waretini turned to PledgeMe to activate and grow their crowd. This case study explores what they did, what worked, and what they learned for next time.



## Rewards

Rewards can make or break a campaign, and they don't always have to be directly related to your project. Exciting, quirky rewards can inspire your pledgers to give a bit more, or help attract a whole new crowd to your project. They also offer another way for your crowd to support your work. The Orchard started with rewards like an opening night dinner, vegetable bouquets and seeds, and naming rights for bricks, trees, and planters in the garden.

With one week to go in the campaign, the smaller rewards were running out and the project still had almost \$30,000 left to raise. We suggested Chloe reach out to her crowd to see if they could support the project by donating some new rewards to power them through the homestretch.

And did they ever! In the last week, the project received more than \$15,000 worth of in-kind rewards from individuals and businesses. Rewards ranged from vouchers to cakes to books to babysitting to consulting services. People who pledged early in the project came back for second and even third rewards. 'It turned into a great way to showcase Christchurch businesses,' Chloe said.

For cash-strapped small businesses and individuals, vouchers or services are often easier to donate on short notice. And for potential pledgers on the fence, a voucher to a favourite cafe or a service they already needed can sweeten the deal. That new momentum got the Ōtākaro Orchard to their target with a day to spare, and they were able to raise another \$5,000 in the last 24 hours.

## What worked well

- **Planning** – The Ōtākaro Orchard team spent nearly two years planning and raising funds before launching their PledgeMe campaign. They had a clear budget and plan, and had already demonstrated that they were willing to put in the hard work to make the project happen. People fund people, and most pledgers like to see that campaign owners are going to be able to deliver.
- **Building relationships** – Crowdfunding is about crowds as much as it is about money. The work the team put into starting the project meant they had a wide network of supporters before they ever launched. Engaging that crowd to help promote the project was a big part of getting over the line. After the emotional rollercoaster of the last week of the campaign, Chloe said 'I think I'm going to miss doing it - so much direct contact with our community!'
- **Cast a wide net** – Your supporters aren't always who you think they are, and their support doesn't have to be money. Students from a local school organised a fundraiser event and sold tickets as campaign rewards. That was just the beginning of their connection to the Orchard - 'The relationship with the kids from Ao Tawhiti is going to continue. They're turning into community organisers!'
- **Crowdsource rewards** – Donated rewards give your crowd another way to support you, and can open up new crowds who might not know about your project. Rewards that offer value to your supporters but don't cost you anything to produce leave more money for your project. For the Orchard, vouchers and services helped attract new pledgers, many of whom didn't even live in Christchurch.
- **Media coverage** – The project had picked up media coverage from local and national outlets before the campaign and built relationships with journalists who were already familiar with the project. Spending this time before you launch can make getting coverage during the campaign easier - don't forget to mention that you're crowdfunding though!



## What they'd do differently next time

- **Plan even more** – Most of our successful campaigners say that they are surprised by just how much time they end up putting into the campaign. Updates, social media, personal calls, interviews - all that time adds up quickly, especially if you're running your campaign on top of a day job. The more planning you and your team do, the easier it will be to keep things running smoothly and deal with unexpected developments. Chloe said, 'It's the \$60,000 I've worked hardest for on this project, but the community-building benefits definitely made it worthwhile.'
- **Personal outreach** – A personal connection to you or the project is often the key to securing bigger pledges from individuals and businesses. Reaching out directly to people can be hard, so making sure you have your pitch ready and set aside enough time to make it happen is important.
- **Social media** – Chloe isn't a big social media user and most of the planning before their campaign came about from face-to-face, old-school grassroots organising. The project generated some organic social media coverage from keen pledgers, but having a clearer plan and a dedicated person from the start can help get the campaign in front of more people, sooner.
- **Sustaining momentum** – The majority of pledges usually come in the first and last days of the campaign, and it can be hard to keep the momentum rolling in the middle. Planning some new rewards, an exciting announcement, or some media coverage for the middle of the campaign can help keep things moving and prevent some stress in the final days.

