



## Letter of Recommendation for Kyra Barker

Dear Programme Manager,

I am pleased to provide this reference in support of Kyra Barker's application to become a BLAKE Inspire Delegate. I have had the privilege of knowing Kyra across several marine and youth programmes, and through these experiences, I have come to know her as a thoughtful, knowledgeable, dedicated, and genuinely passionate young person who cares deeply about the ocean and the people around her.

I first met Kyra through her volunteering with Experiencing Marine Reserve (EMR), where she assisted as a volunteer guide during a snorkelling session. In this role, she demonstrated both strong knowledge of the marine environment and impressive confidence in the water. Guiding students during snorkelling experiences requires both awareness and responsibility, and she approached the role with maturity and enthusiasm. Her calm and capable presence in the water helped build confidence among the students and contributed to a positive and engaging learning environment. It was clear that she cared not only about sharing knowledge of the marine environment, but also about ensuring that others felt comfortable and encouraged to explore it.

I later encountered Kyra again through her involvement with Young Ocean Explorers, where she continued to demonstrate the same enthusiasm for marine education and conservation. What stood out to me was her continued commitment to volunteering and learning across multiple organisations. This level of engagement reflects a genuine and sustained interest in environmental stewardship, and that she actively seeks opportunities to learn more and contribute to environmental initiatives.

More recently, Kyra joined the Ocean Youth programme at SEA LIFE Kelly Tartlton's Aquarium where I primarily work as the Education team's shift leader. During this time, I had the opportunity to observe her more closely in a collaborative learning environment. She would consistently participate with curiosity and care, and she approaches activities with a thoughtful and considerate attitude toward others in the group.

One moment that particularly stood out to me occurred during a session in the water where another participant was feeling less confident. I observed Kyra patiently supporting the student and helping them feel more comfortable. Rather than drawing attention to herself, she quietly encouraged them and remained alongside them until they felt more at ease. This interaction reflected her empathy, patience, and her ability to positively support others in a calm and encouraging way. It is a small example, but one that illustrates the kind of person she is: someone who is attentive to those around her and is willing to help others succeed.

As part of the Ocean Youth programme, participants have the option to complete a final project that reflects an environmental issue that they are passionate about. For her project, Kyra showed impressive creativity by developing an educational board game designed to teach both children and adults about environmental challenges and potential solutions. Through this project, she showed a strong ability to translate complex environmental concepts into an engaging and accessible format, and a thoughtful understanding of how education and engagement can inspire people to care about and protect the environment.





Across all these settings, Kyra has demonstrated a genuine commitment to environmental stewardship and learning. Her involvement across multiple organisations shows initiative and a willingness to actively engage with opportunities that promote conservation and environmental education. She brings thoughtfulness, reliability, and a collaborative mindset to the groups she is a part of, and she consistently contributes in ways that support both the learning environment and the people around her.

Programmes such as BLAKE Inspire bring together young people who are passionate about the environment and eager to grow as leaders. I believe Kyra would benefit greatly from the opportunities the programme offers, and equally importantly, she would contribute positively to the cohort. Her passion for the ocean, her maturity, and her ability to support and encourage others make her well-suited to an experience that values collaboration, curiosity, and environmental leadership. Based on my experiences working with her, I believe she has the potential to grow into a thoughtful and impactful environmental leader, and I have no doubt that she will make the most of the opportunities provided through this programme.

Kind regards,

**Victoria Lai**

**Education & Guest Experience Shift Leader**

SEA LIFE Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium

**Programme Coordinator**

Ocean Youth Aotearoa

E : [Victoria.lai@kellytarltons.co.nz](mailto:Victoria.lai@kellytarltons.co.nz)