

Success Story:

Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research (MWLR)

Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research (MWLR) is New Zealand's Crown Research Institute (CRI) for its land environment. The organisation's scientists undertake world-class science focused on four research impact areas: enhancing soils, water and land; restoring biodiversity and beating invasive species; action on climate change; researching people's environmental decision-making. Its research supports local, regional, and national government decisions and policies. The organisation has seven sites, where it curates almost a third of New Zealand's nationally significant databases and reference collections – resources used by scientists and others across New Zealand and around the world.



Challenge

Like many organisations, COVID forced MWLR to pivot its communications methods quickly. MWLR scientists regularly attend in-person conferences to share information, collaborate, and spend time with like-minded peers. But then the pandemic hit. Renee Johansen, project manager and communications leader for the MWLR-hosted 'Beyond Myrtle Rust' (BMR) research programme, realised different methods were needed.

"In our field, conferences are really valuable because many of our researchers are one of only a few experts in the world on the subject area — and it can be hard to find other people to talk with. Working in science is stimulating, but it can also be a lonely existence. So when COVID hit, and people couldn't go to conferences, it was tough. The programme wanted to find a way to keep the conversation and collaboration going," Johansen said.

“We’ve done 18 webinars with speakers from across the globe, and every time GoTo has been fantastically reliable. And you could say reliability is boring. It’s not flashy, right? But when it comes to technology, it’s everything — it’s the foundation, it’s the base, you have to have it. So the fact that GoTo provides us that I think is great.”

Renee Johansen
Project Manager and
Communications Leader for
Manaaki Whenua Landcare
Research’s Beyond Myrtle Rust
Research Programme



Solution

MWLR considered several webinar solutions and ultimately selected GoTo due to its fine-tuned control options, analytics, and overall quality. “Basically, it came down to how much control we could have — we didn’t want the audience to interrupt presentations or control the Q&A,” said Tiffany Day, MWLR’s events and marketing advisor, who evaluated potential solutions. “We also needed reporting with stats that were easy to access and interpret and a high-quality live stream. The video and sound quality with the other platforms we considered were pretty bad, and we found that GoTo was far superior.”

MWLR relies on GoTo’s webinar solution – GoTo Webinar - not just as a marketing tool for its programs, but also as a platform for valuable collaboration. “The Beyond Myrtle Rust management team sees the webinar series I run as a service, a collaboration platform,” Johansen shared. “We’re certainly proud of it, and it’s great for us to be able to report on its success to our funders. But I try not to use it as a platform just to sell our program and what we’re doing. It’s about something much more than that — connecting disparate audiences with cutting-edge research.”



Results

MWLR credits GoTo’s reliability with contributing to the success of its many webinars – hosting both stand-alone and multi-webinar series. “The Beyond Myrtle Rust series has now featured 18 webinars with speakers from across the globe, and every time GoTo has been fantastically reliable. And you could say reliability is boring. It’s not flashy, right? But when it comes to technology, it’s everything — it’s the foundation, it’s the base, you have to have it. So the fact that GoTo provides us that I think is great,” Johansen said.

Pleasingly, since adopting GoTo Webinar, usage has shown that not only is MWLR attracting over 200% more webinar attendees year-on-year to their BMR webinar series, they were able to engage attendees with longer webinar sessions, by as much as 24% compared to last year.

GoTo’s analytics makes it easy for MWLR to track and share key metrics. “It’s easy for me to download and share reports about who registered, who showed up, and who asked what questions,” Johansen explained.



“Our presenters use this information for their own reporting — and it’s great to have such meaningful analytics because we need to provide feedback to the government. We are a government-funded research programme. We’re accountable —we invest taxpayer money and need to show how we’re effectively using that money.”

Johansen appreciates that GoTo has allowed MWLR to expand the reach and accessibility of the organisation’s research. “The webinars give people a chance to hear directly from the researchers. They can ask questions directly of the researcher who did the work. They might be able to offer some suggestions or guidance to the researchers undertaking the work. They might be able to jump in and collaborate. And people who would not normally access academic conferences — because they’re too expensive or too specialised — are tuning into the webinar series, too, so it’s a great leveller.”

Johansen concluded, “Our webinar numbers keep growing, so even though people are starting to return to in-person conferences, we plan on keeping them running for the foreseeable future.”



Want a reliable, easy-to-use solution for communicating with disparate audiences across the globe? Visit www.goto.com/webinar or call us at 1800 242 370 to learn more.

[Learn More](#)