# Science Learning Hub – Pokapū Akoranga Pūtaiao: Glossary terms

**carbon dioxide**

CO2 is a colourless, odourless, incombustible gas. It is a product of cellular respiration and combustion and is an essential component in photosynthesis.

**footprint**

1. The area of land a building or facility occupies.  
2. An impact that humans have on the environment.  
3. In aerospace, an area in which a spacecraft or space debris may land.

**leachate**

The liquid product of leaching.

**classification**

To arrange or organise by a set of chosen characteristics. In biology, the process of ordering living things into a system that allows scientists to identify them. Modern science uses the Linnaean system of classification where organisms are grouped based on what species they are most closely related to. In soil science, the grouping of soils with a similar range of chemical, physical and biological properties into units that can be geo-referenced and mapped.

**detritus**

In biology, particulate matter from dead organisms.

**gases**

The state of matter distinguished from the solid and liquid states. Gases have the ability to diffuse readily and to become distributed uniformly throughout any container.

**matter**

The basic structural component of all things that have mass and volume.

**holistic**

Emphasising the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts, looking at the entire system. In healthcare, this means looking at all aspects of a patient's well-being and not just treating a particular pain or disease.

**nutrient**

A substance that provides nourishment for growth or metabolism.

**plastic**

A synthetic material made from a wide range of organic polymers (such as polyethylene, PVC and nylon) that can be moulded into shape while soft and then set into a rigid or slightly elastic form.

**organic**

1. Molecules that contain carbon and that have a biological origin.

2. Grown using natural processes with nutrients from natural sources.

**kaitiakitanga**

A Māori term that encompasses ideas about care and guardianship of the sea, sky and land – the environment. Kaitiaki refers to those who carry out kaitiakitanga such as tangata whenua (people of the land).

**Aotearoa**

The Māori name for New Zealand, meaning Land of the Long White Cloud.

**citizen science**

Citizen volunteers participate in scientific projects and work in partnership with scientists to answer scientific questions.

**organic matter**

The decomposed remains of living organisms and their waste products.

**audit**

Inspection.

**Papatūānuku**

The land. In Māori tradition, the Mother Earth figure who gives birth to and nourishes all living things.

**byproduct**

A secondary product produced during manufacturing, mining or refining.

Something unexpected or unintended caused as a result of something else.

**Ranginui**

In Māori tradition, the God of the Sky, Sky Father.

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