Annual Impact Report | 2024–2025 Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand







MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

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Foreword

Message from our Chief Executive and Chair

The year to 30 June 2025 was both tough and rewarding for the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) as we worked to lift the mental health and wellbeing of all people in Aotearoa New Zealand. The people of our country faced many challenges; some divisive legislation and policies, on-going economic hardship, continued severe weather impacts and a world environment marked by conflict and turmoil. These pressures, along with navigating the everyday realities of life, can place considerable strain on mental health. We see this in the high and rising rates of mental distress amongst young people, persistently high suicide numbers and, as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission described it "a mental health and addiction system under immense pressure".

The MHF contributes to solutions to these challenges in three ways.

- 1. We promote everyday actions that lift mental wellbeing.
- 2. We provide tools that support people through tough times.
- 3. We advocate for a better mental health system and society.

In each area we achieved a great deal for the good of the community in 2024/25.

Through the combination of wellbeing campaigns, programmes, and distribution of wellbeing information and tips we reached nearly half the population.

Evaluation shows that over 1,000,000 people have put some form of regular wellbeing action into their lives as a result². Evidence shows that these actions will strengthen their wellbeing and resilience, including contributing to managing mental distress.

Our tools, tips, and programmes that support people through tough times reached over 600,000 people. Evaluation shows that 88% know more about how to help themselves or others because of our work and 89% say they feel more hopeful and can see a way forward.

The MHF kept up a persistent presence, providing advice and advocacy to politicians and government decision makers in the long-term process of changing social conditions and improving mental health services. We have increased the amount of

¹ Monitoring mental health and addiction system performance in Aotearoa/NZ June 2025 page 6

² Mental Health Awareness Week evaluation, Ipsos (2024)

public engagement in our advocacy by supporting grass roots action on stigma and discrimination, running campaigns and a public petition. We have been a key voice in the media and an advocate for safe reporting on suicide and mental health.

Some of our advocacy results include:

- A more measured transition of police reducing responses to mental health crises
- Positive changes in the draft of the new Mental Health Act
- Work has begun on a government action plan for mental health
- Close to 1.5 million people taking more upstander action to address bullying.

The MHF has been innovative; we initiated a pilot high school programme *Rangatahi Rise* to complement our involvement in primary and intermediate schools through *Pause Breathe Smile* and *Sparklers*.

We also began work on the national wellbeing promotion campaign "Top Up".

We have moved forward with our Tangata te Tiriti journey, participating in key Māori forums and networks, listening to what is important to Māori and attempting to be an ally to Māori aspirations for mental health.

In all our work MHF are informed by lived experience through our staff and board, our advisory groups, sector relationships and consultation processes. Our Nōku te Ao projects supported grass roots action by the lived experience community.

This is another year to be proud of. Especially when we consider that the MHF has also been affected by the economic conditions. To be sustainable in our work, we undertook a difficult restructure in

which we regrettably said goodbye to some dedicated and talented people. That we achieved so much for the community through a time of internal change is testament to the passion and commitment of our team; the board is extremely grateful to our remarkable staff.

Our board also deserves thanks for maintaining clear governance through this turbulent year.

With over half of our income coming from fundraising, we could not have kept up the progress for our mission without the generosity of our many donors, corporate partners and sponsors. We are deeply grateful, not only for your financial support, but for the enthusiasm you show for the cause of improved mental health and wellbeing.

The challenge to lift all people's mental health and wellbeing is ongoing. The coming year will be one where we hope to build momentum for positive change in individuals' lives, whānau, communities, and our systems and society. We will continue to be inspired by our whakataukī:

Mauri tū, Mauri ora – Creating space for and unleashing the positive life force found in all things.

Kevin Allan

Very Allan

Board Chair

Shaun RobinsonChief Executive

Who we are

The Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand (the MHF) has been the nation's trusted, independent voice for better mental health for almost 50 years. Our charity empowers individuals, whānau and communities to lift their mental wellbeing and support one another through tough times. We also advocate for a better mental health system and society – and hold governments to account for progress.

Why we do this work

We all have mental health and, just like our physical health, we all need to look after it.

Good mental health and wellbeing doesn't happen by accident – it's affected by our relationships, the conditions we live in, our ability to live healthy lifestyles, and what support and services are available to us when times are tough.

Long-lasting improvements to Aotearoa New Zealand's mental health and wellbeing require better services and systems, people who feel equipped to support one another, support for healthy lifestyles and improved social conditions. The Mental Health Foundation is working hard to have an impact on all these things.





Our approach

The MHF takes a population health approach to mental health and wellbeing. This means we develop programmes, campaigns and resources that help whole communities, whānau, schools and workplaces — not just individuals. We take this approach because wellbeing is holistic, and better mental health services are just one part of creating a mentally well Aotearoa.

Much of what the MHF achieves is through collaborations and partnerships. The Mental Health Foundation can't and shouldn't do this mahi alone. Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi – with your basket and my basket, the people will thrive.

Broadly, the work we do falls under three focus areas:

The Mental Health Foundation is dedicated to being a tangata Tiriti organisation — an organisation that upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We recognise that decolonisation and embedding Te Tiriti-based practices in society are vital for driving positive mental health and wellbeing for Māori, and other equitable outcomes.

We value the voices of people with mental health challenges (or tangata whaiora) and people affected by suicide, as well as their whānau and loved ones. We aim to reflect their needs and aspirations in all of the work we do.

Promoting everyday actions that lift wellbeing

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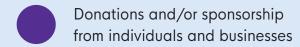
Providing tools that support people through tough times

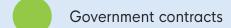
3.

Advocating for a better mental health system and society

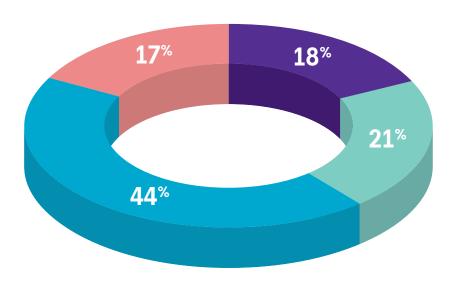
How we raise our money



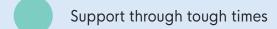




How we spend our money











Our impact at a glance

94%

of people surveyed said our resources helped them better understand what themselves or someone else is going through. Over

1,000,000

took small actions to improve their wellbeing thanks to our wellbeing campaigns, tips and tools.

600,000

people reached
with tools, tips, and
programmes that
support people through
tough times.

Our Suicide Media Response Service reviewed

4,874

media articles and engaged with

149

journalists and media organisations to support accurate, safe and responsible reporting.

Over

16,000
signatures to our
Health, not Haste
petition calling for the
Police to stop their fastpaced withdrawal from
mental health callouts.



83%

of people surveyed said they felt a sense of hope after receiving our suicide prevention and bereavement resources. 1,224,453
free MHF resources
ordered or downloaded
online.

886,698 unique visits to our website.

meetings attended with politicians and decision-makers to advocate for change.

497
mentions of the MHF in the media.



Promoting everyday actions that lift wellbeing

To support Aotearoa New Zealand's long-term mental wellbeing, we promote everyday actions that people can practise to look after it – like those in the Five Ways to Wellbeing, or Te Whare Tapa Whā. Our national mental wellbeing campaigns, resources, and partnerships help us to promote ways people can care for their wellbeing across the motu.

He iti hoki te mokoroa, nāna i kakati te kahikatea.

While the mokoroa grub is small, it cuts through the white pine. In other words, there is power in small things.



In the past year, we distributed 966,694 free print and digital resources to individuals, workplaces, schools and communities to help them take actionable steps to better mental health and wellbeing.

81% said our wellbeing resources helped them take active steps to improve their wellbeing.

94% said they helped them understand better what themselves or someone else is going through. (Resource user survey, November 2024.)

"We are a counselling agency working with a very large range of people in the Waikato. We have your resources in our reception for clients as well as in our caravan which travels around the Waikato so people can drop in to talk to someone. They are incredibly helpful for our clients."

- Resource user

"The MHF's resources and support have helped build greater awareness around how our people can improve their mental wellbeing on a daily basis."

- Peter Leathley, Head of People Experience Sime Motors NZ

"I'm on my own mental health journey and the resources the Mental Health Foundation provides are amazing and much appreciated."

- Jodie, donor





Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week 2024 (23 – 29 September) was delivered in collaboration with the Mental Health Foundation's psychosocial wellbeing campaign All Sorts. The theme 'Community is... what we create together' was informed by research exploring the impacts of recent severe weather events in Aotearoa. Findings from the research showed that community is key to getting through tough times.

81%
of New Zealanders
were aware of Mental
Health Awareness



Week in 2024.*

79%

of people said Mental Health Awareness Week was valuable for them personally,

88% said it was valuable for their workmates, whānau and friends, and

92% believed it was valuable for their community.*



70%

of people who saw the campaign said it helped them to think more about their wellbeing,

67%

said they would take small actions to improve their wellbeing, and

69%

said it helped them discover how building connections can enhance their own wellbeing and that of others.*

"I really appreciated this year's theme, 'Community is what we create together'. It resonates deeply, reminding us that the strength of any community comes from the collective effort and care we put into building and nurturing it. It highlights the importance of collaboration, shared values, and the positive impact we can have when we come together with purpose."

"I really liked the focus on community and togetherness and that we can support each other rather than going through things alone."

- MHAW 2024 participants

Mindfulness Month 2024

In July 2024 we hosted our third annual **Mindfulness Month** campaign, inviting people to commit to cultivating a practice of mindfulness with weekly challenges – journalling, a digital detox, meditation, and mindful eating.

Many of the participants also used the month to raise vital funds to support our work focused on the mental wellbeing of rangatahi/youth.

754
Mindfulness Month participants

\$16,544
raised for youth mental health

88%

 the number of respondents who said Mindfulness Month had either prompted or recommitted them to wellbeing practices.





Jocelyn Watkin has many passions which support her wellbeing including journalling, cycling, tai chi and surfing.





"Mindfulness can be an oasis of peace in our busy lives, things like deep breathing can help in times of urgent need, and longer-term it can help us to unwind, feel calmer and more settled."

Jocelyn Watkin,MindfulnessMonth participant

Pause Breathe Smile

Pause Breathe Smile is a mind health programme developed at the Mental Health Foundation, and operated by the Pause Breathe Smile Trust. Since 2020, the programme has been funded in schools by Southern Cross Healthcare. Locally designed and internationally recognised, the programme equips tamariki aged five to 12 with practical, evidence-based tools to help them manage life's ups and downs.

This year, Pause Breathe Smile is celebrating:

A milestone of reaching 10,000 educators trained

6,249 downloads of the app for educators

702,040 minutes of mindfulness played on the website and app

Reaching 170k+ tamariki, and being in 550 schools since Southern Cross started sponsoring the programme in 2020.

What teachers say:

"One duty teacher found three of our newest new entrants out on the field lying down looking up at the sky and overheard one say, 'let's do some Pause Breathe and Smile'."

"This young boy said to his social worker, 'sometimes when I stress out, I meditate'. The social worker said, 'what do you mean?' And he said, 'I do Pause Breathe Smile'."

"Hugely beneficial to fold back onto the resources and help our students to regulate and discuss their worries after the cyclone."

"The benefit we find is that children are able to verbalise what they are feeling. 'Drop the Anchor' is heard in the playground and around the village. It is also displayed in our rooms. Also you will hear children tell others or talking aloud to themselves 'pause, breathe and smile'."



Farmstrong

Farmstrong helps farmers, growers and their families adapt and thrive in a constantly changing world. By building on practical tips shared by farmers and growers, the programme encourages all people working in agriculture and horticulture to adopt small, regular habits that increase their mental wellbeing.

Over the last year, Farmstrong has continued to engage with farmers and growers through multiple media, event and organisational channels. A particular highlight was celebrating Farmstrong's 10 year anniversary at Mystery Creek Field Days in June. This also was an occasion to launch a new "Farmstrong Toolkit" resource, made up of print resources, podcasts, AV's and simple tools.

This year, Farmstrong:

Had a presence at 116 events.

Delivered 40 talks, workshops or webinars attended by **3,180** people.

Was profiled in 358 media articles reaching an audience of 3,561,524 people.

48,696 sessions on the **Farmstrong** website from 38,747 visitors.





The impact of this activity resulted in our annual monitor survey finding that **83**% of those who engaged in Farmstrong attributed an improvement to their wellbeing – that's equivalent to **20,000** farmers and growers.

Waihanga Ora: Live Well, Build Well

Building on the success of *Farmstrong*, in 2023 ACC funded the residential construction pilot <u>Waihanga Ora: Live Well, Build Well</u>. (LWBW). This MHF programme shares practical tools and ideas that construction workers can use to build wellbeing and resilience, and reduce stress levels contributing to common workplace injuries.

This year, LWBW built significant partnerships, expanded its nationwide champion network, and deepened its impact through digital learning and storytelling.

A major highlight was the success of LWBW's Champion Programme. It now has a network of builder and tradie champions across New Zealand, who are leading by example; running toolbox talks,

sharing personal stories on social media, and helping normalise conversations about mental wellbeing on-site. Their involvement has created a ripple effect of awareness and practical support that continues to grow organically across the industry.

This year, LWBW also launched educational partnerships with SiteSafe New Zealand and BCITO, meaning tens of thousands of trade apprentices access free learning content about mental wellbeing as part of their training. These partnerships are powerful, as they position mental fitness as an essential skill for the next generation of tradies. Together, we're embedding principles of resilience, wellbeing, and mental strength into trade education from the very start.



6.5k builders engaged with onsite through toolbox talks and presentations.

1 million
social impressions on
LWBW social media
platforms.

22%
of Kiwi builders have heard of LWBW.

38% listening to tradies' mental health stories.

Mind Set Engage

Rugby holds a unique power to drive positive wellbeing change within some of Aotearoa's most vulnerable communities through the reach of its brand, the voices of its players, and the use of familiar, relatable language. New Zealand Rugby's response to these insights is Mind Set Engage, a mental health and wellbeing programme developed with expert support from the Mental Health Foundation.

This year, the Mind Set Engage team delivered **62 workshops** across the motu, reaching **1,853 participants** through community rugby clubs, secondary school teams, referees and volunteers, almost double the reach of 2024. Additionally, **16 workshops** were delivered to professional spaces and out of contract regions with a further **563 participants** reached. These face to face workshops equip rugby whānau with the knowledge and confidence to look after their own wellbeing and support others.

An independent evaluation of pre and post workshop surveys showed after attending the workshop:

- The understanding of Te Whare Tapa Whā and Fonofale wellbeing models rose from 36% (pre) to 85% (post)
- Confidence knowing where and how to access mental health support increased from 58% to 91%
- Confidence to identify signs of depression lifted from 53% to 87%
- Confidence to identify signs of anxiety rose from 54% to 86%
- Confidence in using strategies to strengthen wellbeing rose from 73% to 94%
- Awareness of support services and pathways increased from 58% to 91%
- Confidence to start a conversation about mental health lifted from 56% to 88%.





"Good reminders to talk with each other to make sure everything is okay and check in with your mates."

"Being able to see stars like Anton and Ardie is great. It shows that even the people we look up to struggle too."

Workshop participants

Sparklers

<u>Sparklers</u> is a social and emotional learning toolkit that nurtures the wellbeing of tamariki. It is designed to support primary schools, whānau and anyone who works with tamariki in hands-on, real-life environments. The programme's fun wellbeing activities are evidence-based, and created by behaviour and mental health promotion experts.

The Sparklers activity suite is a go-to for many teachers across the motu – this year, the website had a total of **237,573** visits.

Most-downloaded activities included Fill My Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Whare Tapa Whā Wall Display, My Pepeha, Compliment Posters, Mandala Mindful Colouring and Explore My Manu and Rākau.

The programme continues to develop new material, such as tools to grow cultural safety for Māori and Pasifika tamariki, and psychological resilience in the face of climate change.





"I think it's really important, with so many stressors that our children have to face, that if they have these little skills now, that we just build on every day, that they do have these skills that they can take with them throughout their lives."

- Kelly Sheppard, teacher at Shirley Primary

"There is no one child who doesn't benefit from Sparklers."

- Tamara Bell, principal at Southbridge School



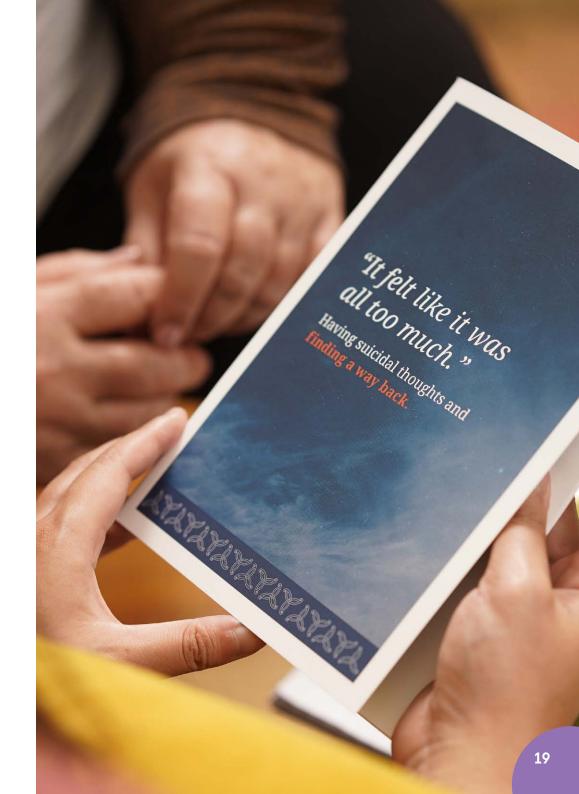
Providing tools that support people through tough times

Almost half of us (47%) will experience mental health challenges in our lifetimes. We provide resources and tools to help individuals, whānau and communities better understand and respond to mental health challenges, together. This includes information for those who have lost someone they care about to suicide, to help them through tough times and prevent further suicide.

We also provide information to workplaces, health providers, social agencies and community organisations; influence suicide prevention policy; and help shape national conversations around suicide prevention and postvention.

Rūia te pō, ka ao, ka awatea.

Move from the darkness, into the light.



In the last year, we've distributed

252,759

free digital and print resources to help support people through tough times.

In our latest resource user survey,

81%

said our suicide prevention and bereavement print resources helped them learn something about how to help themselves or someone else.

"Simply holding a pamphlet in your hands can offer a vital connection – someone might read it and then have the courage to reach out for help or reach out and help someone in mental distress."

Tricia Hendry,
 suicide prevention
 advocate



A gentle way to start a conversation about mental health

Nurse Leader, Kate Giblin, keeps a stack of MHF resources on hand to distribute to patients at the busy Tasman Medical Centre in Richmond where she works. Kate often gives the MHF's free information pamphlets to patients as they leave the clinic, finding it to be a subtle and safe way of "planting the seed" around mental health support.

"As a patient, it can be difficult when you're not well to take on all the verbal information given to you in a health space.

"Handing them an MHF pamphlet is a gentle way of introducing a level of communication around what they, and their family, needs to be aware of and where to seek help."

Kate says having a resource to take home means patients have something tangible that they can digest when they're in a more comfortable space.

"It can be overwhelming to bare yourself to someone you don't know well. While a resource may be a small thing, it can help. Patients can write on them, refer to them and share them with family. Then, when they're ready, they can speak to us."

Supporting those bereaved by suicide

For every person that dies by suicide, up to 135 people are affected.³

The Mental Health Foundation provides free resources and information to service providers and individuals, whānau and communities who have lost someone they care about to suicide, to help them through tough times and prevent further suicide. We also support communities and individuals to develop and run peer support groups for suicide loss by providing free information, tools and networking opportunities.

Some key initiatives from our suicide bereavement mahi this year included:

- Updates to existing MHF resources including the <u>After a Suicide</u> website, Support Groups for Suicide Loss, and After a Suicide funeral resource for providers.
- Strengthening relationships with others working in the suicide prevention/postvention sector across New Zealand, as well as attending the Roses in the Ocean Lived Experience Summit 2025 in Brisbane, with the aim of bringing back information on best practice approaches to suicide prevention and postvention.
- Coordinating and facilitating the MHF's Suicide Bereavement Service Advisory Group. As well as providing input and feedback on MHF's suite of resources, key initiatives for the group this year included providing feedback on the Draft Suicide Prevention Action Plan for 2025 – 2029 and the new national suicide bereavement service Huarahi Ora.
- Responding to approximately 360 information queries from the sector and public combined.



³ Cerel J., Brown M.M., Maple M., Singleton M., van de Venne J., Moore M., Flaherty C. (2018). How Many People Are Exposed to Suicide? Not Six. Suicide Life Threat Behav. 2019 Apr;49(2):529-534. doi: 10.1111/sltb.12450

New suicide prevention resources for workplaces

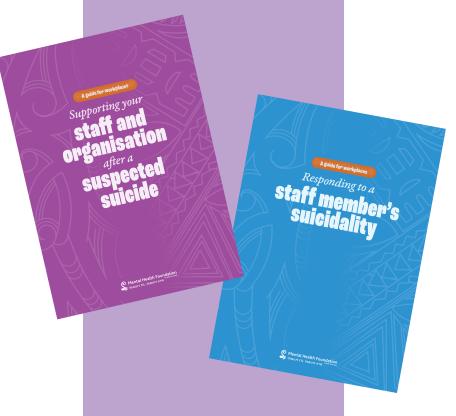
This year, we released two new suicide prevention and postvention resources specifically designed to support workplaces; A guide for workplaces: Supporting your staff and organisation after a suspected suicide and A guide for workplaces: Responding to a staff member's suicidality.

Developed in collaboration with people with lived experience of suicide and suicidality in the workplace and clinical experts, the resources offer evidence-based, practical guidance on:

- The steps needed to deliver an effective suicide postvention response, after a suspected suicide has impacted a workplace
- Ways to support people in a workplace bereaved by suicide
- Guidance and advice to help care for a staff member experiencing suicidality, including after a suicide attempt.

These resources are designed for use by business owners, people leaders and individuals and teams who support staff within a workplace (e.g. human resources professionals, counsellors and workplace wellbeing and health and safety teams). Divided into critical time periods, the resources also include checklists and templates to offer clear guidance on the actions that need to be taken, and when.





Influencing change; Media reporting and storytelling around suicide

How suicide is reported on can be critical to preventing it. Over the past year, the Suicide Media Response Service has continued to strengthen safe-reporting practices across New Zealand's media environment. The service reviewed 4,874 media articles and engaged with 149 journalists and media organisations to support accurate, safe and responsible reporting. This represents a notable increase in activity, largely driven by the high-profile Dr Philip Polkinghorne murder trial in July 2024.

The service delivered 12 training presentations, primarily to journalism education providers, as well as to mental health and wellbeing organisations. A guest appearance on a Whāraurau podcast further extended reach, helping to strengthen workforce understanding of safe storytelling and suicide prevention messaging. Engagement with Otago University Law School also supported future legal professionals to understand the intersection of mental health law and communicating about suicide.





This year also saw the publication of a new guidance resource, **Safely Reporting on Suicide**, designed for journalists, content creators and online community group moderators. The resource builds on national guidelines and incorporates global best practice to ensure safe communication across diverse media formats.

The service continued to foster international collaboration and sector leadership, attending the IASP International Congress in Vienna in June this year. There, it contributed to a suicide-media Special Interest Group discussion sharing lessons from the Polkinghorne trial about media coverage and engagement with the judiciary. A meeting with Samaritans UK further strengthened international relationships, reflecting shared challenges and a collective commitment to improving public-facing communication about suicide.

The Mullet Matters 2025

Since 2023, thousands of New Zealanders and their mullets have joined us to start powerful conversations about the tough stuff, whilst raising essential funds for our mahi.

Inspired by the memory of his mate Adriaan, Mateo Rose signed up for <u>The Mullet Matters</u>, determined to do his part, so that anyone having a hard time could get the help and support they deserve.

"Adriaan was a firecracker of energy and positivity.

He built up everyone he met and brought out
the best in them. Unfortunately, even the most
positive people can feel the effects of mental
distress. My mission now is to do my part of make
sure people can get the help they need
before it's too late."

Mateo Rose, fundraiser/mate/legend

Mateo's mullet also proved to be a powerful korerostarter, helping him to break barriers and spark conversations about about mental health with others.

The funds raised by these mighty mulleteers will enable us to reach **38,300** more New Zealanders with tools to take care of their mental health and wellbeing.

851 mullet-wearing legends

The Mullet Matters raised \$156,097



Mateo Rose sporting The Mullet Matters tee he earned as one of the campaign's top fundraisers.







Advocating for a better mental health system and society

Long-lasting improvements to our collective mental health and wellbeing require service and system change. We advocate on a range of issues, including mental health system reform, mental wellbeing promotion, the social determinants of mental health, and equitable outcomes for all.

Whāia te hauora hinengaro kia puāwai ai te hauora tangata.

There is no health without mental health.



Influencing systems and decision-makers

For decades, the Mental Health Foundation has provided constructive criticism to government on how they should transform our mental health system, and the laws and policies that govern it. We do this by using our trusted, independent voice to influence politicians and policymakers to deliver positive change, and help the public understand and challenge barriers to our collective mental health and wellbeing.

Highlights from this year include:

- **18 submissions** and consultations, and attending **56 meetings** with decision-makers including the Minister for Mental Health.
- Receiving over 16,000 signatures to the Health, not Haste petition calling for the Police to stop their fast-paced withdrawal from mental health callouts until an alternative health response was funded and operational, which preceded almost \$28m allocated to a multi-agency response to mental health crisis in Budget 2025, and an additional \$61.6 million of funding in November 2025.
- Contributing strong thought leadership on how the Mental Health
 Act needs to change that resonated with allied organisations, with
 at least seven organisations citing the MHF's policy positions and
 resources in their own Mental Health Bill submissions, including
 extensive quotes used by the Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human
 Rights Commission.
- Influencing some changes to the Mental Health Bill as recommended by the select committee. Fundamental MHF positions on compulsory treatment and seclusion are quoted and supported by Te Pāti Māori and the Green Party in the 'differing views' section of the final select committee report on the Mental Health Bill.

- Responding to all major law changes identified by advocates as challenges to the fundamental rights of Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga, including the Treaty Principles Bill, Regulatory Standards Bill and the Oranga Tamariki (Removing section 7AA) Amendment Bill.
- Mental Health Foundation calls for halt to police withdrawal

 For the State Advance

 For th
- Being an active ally for rainbow inclusion and rights, including opposing changes to puberty blocker prescribing and relationships and sexuality education.
- Securing publication of the Mental Health and Addiction
 Workforce Plan 2024–2027, alongside other advocates. This
 plan was identified by the MHF as one of nine priorities for the
 incoming Minister for Mental Health.
- Being one of two organisations outside of government invited to provide a second round of feedback on the draft Suicide
 Prevention Action Plan 2025–2029. The MHF's policy advice and recommendations were reflected in the final plan, including in leadership, accountability and evaluation commitments.
- Welcoming a Lived Experience Advisor to the team.

"[Your Mental Health Act campaign] has opened my eyes to the fact people do want to change how we perceive and treat mental health for our communities. Examples from other countries' successes... have given me some hope we could achieve change."

- Anonymous supporter

Spotlight on youth mental health

Sean Kearns is a skateboarder, entrepreneur, design student, and passionate advocate for mental health. He lost a close friend to suicide and is committed to doing everything he can to make sure he doesn't lose any other mate this way.

"Losing him was such a shock. I realise how important it is to let people know they can reach out."

- Sean Kearns

Sean isn't alone. Rangatahi/youth want Aotearoa to be a place where people with mental distress or illness aren't judged or discriminated against, and where it's okay to ask for tautoko/support. They want a country where mental wellbeing is valued and promoted.⁴

That's a vision we share, and in early 2025 we launched a fundraising appeal to share Sean's story and raise awareness around the state of youth mental health in Aotearoa, including that the majority of mental health conditions start before the age of 25.⁵

The funds raised help us advocate for better mental health services, policies that support young people's wellbeing, and a future where rangatahi have the tools they need to live fulfilling lives.



Over time Sean has learnt what helps him stay mentally well – healthy food, skateboarding, building his clothing brand, and staying connected to friends. He says, "We Facetime every week, and that connection with my mates, even if they're far away, lets me know I'm not alone, and I have people who care about me."

 4 Insights drawn from Whāraurau's 2019 and 2021 DMC ('deep and meaningful conversation') reports.

⁵ Solmi, M., Radua, J., Olivola, M., Croce, E., Soardo, L., Salazar de Pablo, G., Il Shin, J., Kirkbride, J. B., Jones, P., Kim, J. H., Kim, J. Y., Carvalho, A. F., Seeman, M. V., Correll, C. U., & Fusar-Poli, P. (2022). Age at onset of mental disorders worldwide: Large-scale meta-analysis of 192 epidemiological studies. Molecular Psychiatry, 27(1), 281–295. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-021-01161-7.

Pink Shirt Day

<u>Pink Shirt Day</u> is a bullying prevention campaign that is celebrated annually around the globe. The Mental Health Foundation has run Pink Shirt Day in Aotearoa since 2012, inspiring tāngata to Kōrero Mai, Kōrero Atu, Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora – Speak Up, Stand Together, Stop Bullying!



In 2025, Pink Shirt Day took place on Friday 16 May. **83%** of New Zealanders were aware of Pink Shirt Day, with **62%** being aware of the campaign from previous years. Thanks to the funds raised on Pink Shirt Day, we are able to deliver **Rangatahi Rise**, a youth-led wellbeing initiative for high schools. The funds also help us to supply schools and workplaces with free tools and information to create positive environments, support rainbow rangatahi across Aotearoa, and continue to grow the Upstander movement.

- 82% said Pink Shirt Day was valuable for their workmates, whānau, friends and school, 84% believed it was valuable for their community, and 67% said it was valuable for them personally.*
- 70% of people who saw the campaign said Pink Shirt Day has helped them do something to increase kindness and inclusion, and 69% said they were more aware of how to prevent bullying.*

"At our school, the whole place turned pink – it was amazing to see the tamariki and staff fully embracing the kaupapa. We linked Pink Shirt Day to our school values, using it as an opportunity to teach important lessons about kindness, respect, and standing up for others. It wasn't just a one-day event – we integrated it into our everyday learning to help build a culture where everyone feels safe and valued. Ka mau te wehi!"



^{*}Results from Pink Shirt Day Ipsos evaluation 2025

Rangatahi Rise

Formed in 2024, Rangatahi Rise is a youth-led social action project empowering rangatahi to lead the conversation about adolescent mental health and improve wellbeing within secondary schools. This year, steered by a youth advisory group and the Mental Health Foundation, Rangatahi Rise was piloted in secondary schools across Aotearoa. Below are some examples of schools taking part so far, and the areas their students have chosen to focus their wellbeing projects on.

St Cuthbert's School

Increasing connection with the community, particularly elders, and learning for young women nationwide through a STEM programme.

St Kentigern College

Focused on reducing academic pressure between students and building a culture of kindness and care, instead of comparison and competition.

Waitakere College

Aiming to increase safe spaces throughout the school to increase safety and connection and reduce isolation.

Kristin School

Raising awareness of mental health and young people and have open forums that educate and support students.

Ashburton College

Focused on reducing bullying and harassment.







Rangatahi Rise looks forward to expanding its reach next year – watch this space.

Nōku te Ao: Ending mental distress discrimination

Over the past year, Nōku te Ao has continued to drive collective action to end mental distress discrimination and create a more inclusive Aotearoa. Grounded in lived experience and guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the programme continues to amplify voices, strengthen communities, and build practical pathways toward a more equitable mental health system and society.







Nōku te Ao 2025 Symposium

On 13 May 2025, around a hundred people gathered in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland for the Nōku te Ao Symposium: *He reo tini, he wawata kotahi – Many voices, one goal to end mental distress discrimination*. From Egan Bidois' powerful message about listening to our inner voices with compassion, to Jehan Casinader's reflections on supporting people beyond labels, and Dr Karlo Mila's reminder of

"The kōrero around reducing stigma was very empowering – I'll be thinking about how I can bring this into my daily mahi and relationships."

ancestral healing and shared responsibility, the day was filled with vulnerability, strength, and hope.

A lived experience panel shared deeply personal insights about the power of community-led solutions, and a Te Kete Pounamu workshop encouraged participants to explore what sits beneath the surface of mental distress.

"I'm leaving this space with renewed motivation and clarity about how to support inclusion and advocate better in my community."

Pacific Community Engagement

Through their E Taua Tagata Uma programme, Amelia and Imoa Setefano have continued to lead meaningful engagement across Pacific communities in South Auckland, fostering open conversations about mental wellbeing, stigma, and discrimination. Their work has brought together teachers, parents, youth, and faith-based leaders to strengthen understanding and promote compassion within homes, schools, and churches. The growing momentum and positive feedback reflect the strength of Pacific-led approaches in creating safe, connected spaces for wellbeing.

Social Action Grants

The Nōku te Ao Social Action Grants received 93 applications from passionate changemakers across Aotearoa, reflecting strong community commitment to ending mental distress stigma and discrimination. Four initiatives: Hi Didi by Jannine Nock, Rerouting rivers/Liliu le vai o Sina by SINA voices, Lived experience actions to make social change by Thriving Madly, and Tūmata Kōkiritia by Take Notice were awarded \$150,000 to bring bold, community-led visions to life, showcasing the power of lived experience, creativity, and collective action.





Champions for change

Every year, passionate individuals step forward to support the Mental Health Foundation in creative and courageous ways. Here are just three of the many whose boldness, heart and commitment to mental wellbeing remind us that anyone – no matter their age or background – can make a powerful impact.

Skating for a happier Aotearoa

At just six years old, Isla Poa became a fundraising sensation. With a skateboard nearly as big as she is and a heart full of determination, Isla set out to skate 100 skatebowls in 100 days. Her goal? To raise funds for the Mental Health Foundation and promote "happy minds" for tamariki and rangatahi.

Inspired by her parents' own experiences with mental health and the loss of a loved one to suicide, Isla's challenge was more than just a physical feat – it was a family mission. Supported by her mum, dad, and coach Tiara, Isla travelled across the country, from Gisborne to Christchurch, dropping into bowls and spreading joy.

By day 10, she had already surpassed her \$1,000 goal, eventually raising over **\$2,000**. Her story was featured on national television, and her message was simple but profound: "If I fall, I just get up and try again."

Isla Poa, a pintsized powerhouse, about to drop in on the skatebowl in Te Awamutu.



Justin on one of his many blindfolded training runs, with good mate Pita Tupou, his running guide.

Running through darkness

Justin Weston's journey from depression to hope is nothing short of remarkable. After years of personal

struggle – including bullying, grief, and substance use – Justin found healing

through fitness and purpose. He became a personal trainer and set himself a bold challenge: to run the Auckland Marathon blindfolded.

The blindfold symbolised the experience of mental distress – navigating darkness with trust and support. His guide and close friend, Pita Tupou, trained alongside him, ensuring Justin stayed safe throughout the 42km journey. Though he stumbled just before the finish line, Justin's message was clear: recovery is possible, and no one should walk alone.

His fundraiser highlighted the importance of speaking up, leaning on loved ones, and believing in the light at the end of the tunnel.

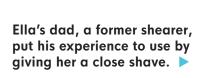
A bold cut for a better system

After 10 years of study, Ella Dickison graduated as a clinical psychologist – and marked the occasion by shaving off her decade-old dreadlocks. But this wasn't just a symbolic transformation. Ella used the moment to raise awareness about the burnout crisis facing psychologists in Aotearoa and to raise funds for the Mental Health Foundation.

During her internship, Ella witnessed firsthand the strain on mental health services: long waitlists, overwhelmed staff, and clients turned away due to capacity limits. Her bold makeover raised over **\$4,000** and sparked important conversations about systemic change.

Now based in Melbourne, Ella continues to advocate for better mental health support, proving that even a haircut can be a powerful act of activism.







Funders and sponsors

As we reflect on the last year, we extend our deepest gratitude to our funders and sponsors whose support is instrumental in helping us move our country towards greater mental wellbeing. To our funders, sponsors and donors, ngā mihi mutunga kore. Your commitment and generosity have empowered us to grow, innovate, and make a meaningful difference for the communities we serve.



We've been fortunate to be the recipient of the NZ Post Delivering for Good programme this year, which has allowed us to send over 552,789 mental health and wellbeing resources across Aotearoa for free. Our Publications Specialist Zooey Neumann says, "Being the recipient of this generous programme by an iconic New Zealand company means we're lifting the wellbeing of Aotearoa, one parcel at a time."

FUNDERS

Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora

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PROUD CHAMPIONS











PROUD MATES













Others: AJ Hackett Bungy – Beca – Buddle Findlay – Bunnings Warehouse – Dawny Adventure Club – Dual – Events Hospitality – Hitachi – Holistic Hair – My Food Bag – Online Distribution – Ruby – Shakti Mats – Synlait – The Collective – The Good Registry – TikTok – Woosah – Woolworths – Xero

Bequests: We acknowledge the estates of Jacqueline Moss, Declan Curran, and Janet Harland, who each left a bequest to the Mental Health Foundation during the past year.

Our board

The Mental Health Foundation is guided by a committed and diverse board of trustees, which includes people with clinical mental health expertise as well as people with lived experience and people who whakapapa Māori. Our board brings a wealth of legal, financial and governance expertise, ensuring the organisation is well-positioned to continue serving the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Kevin Allan, Chair

A long-standing supporter of the MHF's work, Kevin has a strong commitment to promoting mental wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand and doing so in a way that upholds the Treaty of Waitangi. He has a broad range of leadership experience in the health, disability and Justice sectors, and was Mental Health Commissioner before joining the MHF's board in 2021.



Jaqui Taituha-Ngawaka

Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāpuhi
Jaqui is a strategic advisor
and iwi leader with 20+
years experience shaping
governance and executive
decision-making across
iwi, community and
regulatory sectors. Her
relational style is grounded
in tikanga Māori. She is
a capable speaker of te
reo, and committed to
effective governance and
organisational practice.



Chris Black

Chris brings more than 25 years' governance and senior executive experience to the Mental Health Foundation board. He works predominantly with values-based and purpose driven organisations who have the betterment of New Zealand at their core.



Polly Schaverien

Polly is a clinical psychologist who specialises in working with people experiencing disordered eating and broader mental health concerns. She also supports people to live well with neurodiversity. Polly has over 20 years of governance experience on state sector and NGO boards.



Dame Ranjna Patel

Dame Ranjna is the cofounder of Tamaki Health, NZ's largest primary care and urgent care network, and Gandhi Nivas. She was appointed a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours for her exceptional contributions to ethnic communities, health, and family violence prevention



Ngila Bevan

Ngila is a professional director and advisor to government and the notfor-profit sector. She brings skills in strategy, policy, and risk and assurance.



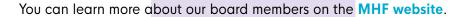
Vipul Dev

Vipul is a Chartered Accountant and a member of CAANZ. He chairs the. Mental Health Foundation's finance committee and assists The Board with the review of financial reports, budgets and audit processes.



Adrian Te Patu

Aotea, Kurahaupo
For nearly four decades
Adrian has worked for
government departments,
crown agencies, community
organisation, iwi, and health
providers including District
Health Boards. He also
represents New Zealand
and the Asia-Pacific region
on the governing council
of the World Federation of
Public Health Associations.



Statement of service performance for the year ended 30 June 2025

Intent: To reach everyone in Aotearoa/NZ and have a measurable positive impact on their mental wellbeing.

How: Utilise a range of mental wellbeing promotion strategies to support whānau, communities, schools, workplaces and Aotearoa to be mentally and emotionally safe, strong and supportive.

To achieve this the MHF will:	We will do this by:	Performance Indicator:	Result: July 23 – June 24	Result: July 24 – June 25	Outcome:
Give people the tools, skills, information and motivation to look after their mental wellbeing and support others.	Utilise a range of activities such as distribution of information resources, community engagement, social media, and other promotion activities to disseminate evidence based information about mental health and wellbeing.	Number of physical information resources distributed per year	766,034	789,639	Mental health and wellbeing messages are extended into the population.
		Number of information resources downloaded from the MHF website per year.	495,890	429,814	Mental health and wellbeing messages are extended into the population.
		Number of unique users of the MHF website per year.	847,317	886,698	The public seeks information and resources from the MHF website.

To achieve this the MHF will:	We will do this by:	Performance Indicator:	Result: July 23 – June 24	Result: July 24 – June 25	Outcome:
		Percentage of perceived usefulness of resources.	84%1	84%²	Information resources are useful and relevant.
		Percentage who feel more informed, and know better what to do or say, as a result of receiving an information pamphlet.	86% ³	93%4	Information pamphlets are useful and relevant
		Percentage who feel reassured and have a sense of hope as a result of receiving suicide prevention and bereavement resources.	89% ⁵	83% ⁶	Suicide prevention and bereavement information and resources are useful and relevant.
		Percentage who feel the wellbeing resources helped them start a conversation about wellbeing and mental health.	90% ⁷	90%8	Wellbeing resources are useful and relevant.
Deliver social marketing campaigns that aim to improve mental health and wellbeing		Percentage of respondents who strongly agree or agree that they're more likely to think about their wellbeing as a result of Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW).	71%	70%	Awareness about mental wellbeing across individuals, schools and workplaces grows.

¹ MHF Annual Resource Survey (December 2023). Number of respondents = 671. All respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of all items on a scale of all) to 100 (very useful) of three groups of resources; wellbeing resources, information pamphlets and the suicide prevention and bereavement resources.

² MHF Annual Resource Survey (December 2024). Number of respondents = 1038. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'.

³ MHF Annual Resource survey (December 2023). Number of respondents = 244. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'.

⁴ MHF Annual Resource Survey (December 2024). Number of respondents = 434. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'.

⁵ MHF Annual Resource survey (December 2023). Number of respondents = 383. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'.

⁶ MHF Annual Resource Survey (December 2024). Number of respondents = 676. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'.

⁷ MHF Annual Resource survey (December 2023). Number of respondents = 585. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'

⁸ MHF Annual Resource Survey (December 2024). Number of respondents = 1038. % of respondents 'yes a little' + 'yes very much'.

To achieve this the MHF will:	We will do this by:	Performance Indicator:	Result: July 23 – June 24	Result: July 24 – June 25	Outcome:
		Percentage of respondents who had seen or heard about the MHAW campaign by ethnicity.	Māori 53% Pasifika 43% Asian 38% °	Māori 38% Pasifika 32% Asian 36% ¹⁰	Māori and other specific audiences engage with MHAW messaging.
		Percentage of respondents aware of Pink Shirt Day, a bullying elimination campaign.	85% ¹¹	83% ¹²	Awareness about Pink Shirt Day and the importance of taking action against bullying grows.
		Percentage of respondents aware of Pink Shirt Day, those who strongly agree or agree that they're more likely to do something to stop bullying when they witness it.	73% ¹³	67% ¹⁴	People consider changing their behaviour to become upstanders ¹⁵ .
Advocate for a fair society and better mental health system.	Influence government at all levels of decision making in order to contribute to policies, legislation and resourcing that supports mental wellbeing and mauri ora for all New Zealanders.	Number of meetings with politicians and officials.	36	56	Influence decision making to reflect MHF advice

⁹ MHAW Evaluation, IPSOS (2023). Number of respondents = Māori; n=133, Pasifika; n=60, Asian; n=109.

¹⁰ MHAW Evaluation, IPSOS (2024). Number of respondents = Māori; n=137, Pasifika; n=65, Asian; n=154.

 $^{^{\}rm 11}$ PSD Evaluation IPSOS (2024), pg5. Number of respondents = 1,021

 $^{^{12}}$ PSD Evaluation IPSOS (2025), pg5. Number of respondents = 1,002

 $^{^{13}}$ PSD Evaluation IPSOS (2024), pg11. Number of respondents = 514

 $^{^{14}}$ PSD Evaluation IPSOS (2025), pg11. Number of respondents = 456

¹⁵ An upstander is someone who sees bullying and uses their works or actions to help the person being bullied.

To achieve this the MHF will:	We will do this by:	Performance Indicator:	Result: July 23 – June 24	Result: July 24 – June 25	Outcome:
		Number of submissions, letters and consultations responded to over the year.	45	61	Influence policies and legislation to reflect MHF advice.
	Influence public discussion on mental health and wellbeing	Number of times MHF was mentioned in the media.	599	497	Influence public attitudes and decision makers to reduce stigma and discrimination, and improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing.



Financial Statements

Consolidated statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses for year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Revenue from non-exchange transactions			
Contract income		3,177,719	3,696,773
Donations, legacies and sponsorship income	17	3,121,221	4,319,070
Grants and other contract income	17	1,162,020	1,379,978
Revenue from exchange transactions			
Service and training income		5,803	15,311
Resource & Fundraising Product sales		-	95
Total revenue (excluding gains)		7,466,763	9,411,227
Expenses			
Audit Fee		(56,832)	(36,680)
Depreciation	13	(67,543)	(119,138)
Leasing Costs		(425,801)	(318,285)
Employee Costs		(4,065,792)	(4,929,561)
Project Related Costs	5	(3,213,739)	(4,372,648)
Infrastructure Costs	5	(546,040)	(617,172)
Total expenses		(8,375,747)	(10,393,485)
Realised Gain/Loss on Investment		-	11,004
Finance income	6	74,296	133,853
Finance costs	6	(278)	(293)
Net finance income		74,018	144,563
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year		(834,966)	(837,696)
Other comprehensive revenue and expense			
Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year		(834,966)	(837,696)

Statement of changes in net assets/equity for the year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	Accumulated comprehensive revenue and expense
		\$
At 1 July 2023		4,043,697
Deficit for the year		(837,693)
Other comprehensive revenue and expense		-
Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year		(837,693)
At 30 June 2024		3,206,004
At 1 July 2024		3,206,004
Deficit for the year		(834,966)
Other comprehensive revenue and expense		-
Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year		(834,966)
At 30 June 2025		2,371,038

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	1,108,276	2,546,632
Short term investments		925,387	304,613
Receivables from non-exchange transactions	8	991,976	1,017,148
Receivables from exchange transactions	8	57,525	39,169
Inventory		33	33
Goods and services tax receivable		49,191	85,426
		3,132,388	3,993,022
Current liabilities			
Payables under exchange transactions	9	402,427	362,265
Payables under non-exchange transactions	9	290,147	385,435
Employee benefits liability	10	265,943	289,947
Finance lease liability	13	1,293	3,753
		959,810	1,041,400
Working capital surplus		2,172,578	2,951,622
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	11	91,604	148,820
Rental bond	13	108,983	108,983
		200,587	257,803
Non-current liabilities			
Finance lease liability	13	2,127	3,420
NET ASSETS		2,371,038	3,206,004
EQUITY			
Accumulated comprehensive revenue and expense		2,371,038	3,206,004
TOTAL EQUITY		2,371,038	3,206,004

Statement of cashflows for year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash receipts from contract income, grants and donations		7,397,399	9,842,749
Cash paid to suppliers and employees		(8,310,403)	(11,179,029)
GST Net receipt		36,235	70,061
Net cash flows from operating activities		(876,769)	(1,406,340)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest received		73,544	110,935
Short term investment (investment)/withdraw		620,774	216,965
Proceeds from sale of financial instruments		-	984,855
Purchase of PP&E		(10,326)	(25,381)
Net cash flows from investing activities		(557,556)	(1,287,374)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest expense		(278)	(293)
Repayments of finance lease		(3,754)	(2,209)
Net cash flows from financing activities		(4,031)	(2,502)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(1,438,356)	(121,468)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 July		2,546,632	2,668,100
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June	7	1,108,276	2,546,632



These financial statements are extracts from our full set of statutory financial statements for the year, which contain other notes such as accounting policies and detailed notes to the financial statements. Our full audited financial statements are available for viewing on the DIA Charities Service website www.charities.govt.nz.



