



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

He Mahi Rangatira

CONTENTS



YOUTH VOYCE



STATEMENT FROM BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



WHAKAMANA



TŪHONO



WHAKATAIRANGA



WHAI PŪKENGA



RANGATIRATANGA



STATEMENT FROM THE CEO



FINANCIALS

WHĀRANGI

3

4

5

6

10

13

17

19

22

23

HEI MIHI

Nau mai rā ngā reo, Tau iho mai ngā tikanga.

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga o te wāhi ngaro ki runga ki a tātou katoa

Tangihia ngā mate, moe mai ki te Rangimarie, okioki e!

Tihei Mauri ora!

Nei ā mātou tumanako kua tutuki pai i te tau kua hipa, hei ārahi i te rangatiratanga

o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi atawhai kia eke panuku, Kia eke Tangaroa!

Haumi e! Hui e!

Taiki e!



AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We embrace all languages and cultural identities of the care experienced community

Acknowledging care and respect for all

We lament those who have gone to the eternal resting place

And to the living we say behold the breath of life.

Here we celebrate all that we have done in the past year that has contributed

to the ongoing achievements of the care experienced community.

In unity we are one

Let it be done.



YOUTH VOYCE

My highlight as an RYC Chair this year was the opportunity to attend the CREATE Foundation conference in Adelaide. It was an indescribable experience that I will never forget.

The trip to Adelaide was confronting but rewarding. I shared my story to Australian care experienced young people and listened to their stories; I was amazed by the similarities within them. It was upsetting to hear that the same issues are happening to children in care in another country and we, as young people, are continually let down by our governments.

One particular moment that will forever be in my heart is when all the Australian care experienced young people, who I had courageously made friends with, watched our presentation. It was so empowering having their support when we discussed the 6 Promises and hikoi to Parliament.

It is hard to explain the feeling we experienced when, after we presented, they approached us in tears to share hugs. They told us they are now going to try to set up a march to Parliament because of what we did in New Zealand. It warmed my heart that we had influenced them to try for such a huge and important thing!

The biggest thing that will stay with me from this trip is the connections we made. We have a group chat and we continue to talk to this day.

Thank you, VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai, for this opportunity and experience.

Sarah Gibbs

Deputy Chairperson, Te Waipounamu Regional Youth Council



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR VOYCE RANGATIRA:

I feel more inspired to share my experience yet listen to others even more.

To help someone else feel less alone.

We can make each other's journey lighter to bring a brighter future for mokopuna.

To help inspire others to speak up.

Feeling part of a movement was new and was a great feeling!

I learnt that I can really inspire people to use their voice.

I'm not alone. There are other people who have gone through care and come out the other side and who are now advocating for change.

I cannot stress enough how much awahi and aroha this group of rangatira have for each other, and it has been truly a blessing to witness the camaraderie and blossoming friendships within our group.



STATEMENT FROM BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRS

On behalf of the VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai Board, we pay our respects and acknowledge the passing of Kiingi Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII on 30 August 2024. His work to strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand through kotahitanga at a time of difficulty and dissonance will be greatly missed. Nō reira haere, haere, haere atu rā Kiingi Tūheitia.

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Tamariki atawhai and those with lived experience in the care system are still having to fight for their rights to receive the services they need, to have their experiences acknowledged and respected, and to be able to design the lives they aspire to for themselves and their whānau. This is unacceptable. And so, firstly we would like to especially acknowledge the tamariki atawhai and young people for whom VOYCE exists. As governors, we are grateful to have dedicated staff and partners who are committed to putting in the mahi that will help shape a better future for our young people.

'Hope is not optimism, which expects things to turn out well, but something rooted in the conviction that there is good worth working for.' (Seamus Heaney)

OUR TEAM AND SUPPORTERS

On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank all of the kaimahi across the country who, despite the continued challenges, remain focused on providing a platform for tamariki atawhai and young people across the motu to have their voices heard, and their perspectives included in decision making. In the past year, this has included the exceptionally difficult experiences of making submissions to select committees, and presenting deeply personal stories in front of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care. You can all be proud of everything you have achieved and contributed to improving the lives of the care experienced in Aotearoa.

We want to shout out to our inimitable Chief Executive Officer Tracie Shipton and her Executive Leadership Team for continuing to build on the organisation's strategic plan, setting a clear and strong pathway for the organisation, and always pursuing the vision for every tamaiti and rangatahi atawhai to live with love and mana. The accounts

within this report are an excellent demonstration of the prudence and hard work the team put into assuring VOYCE a long lasting and sustainable future.

Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua - those who lead give sight to those who follow, those who follow give life to those who lead.

We would also like to give thanks to all of our philanthropic partners who continue to trust and believe in the purpose and role of VOYCE. We would not be able to be such a strong advocate without your support. We also thank all of our partners across government who work hard within existing systems to ensure VOYCE is a respected partner.

THE BOARD

In the past year, the Board farewelled trustees Alice Sciascia and Josh Wharehinga, and welcomed Elizabeth Goodwin, Reihana Dougherty, Xixi Xian and Natasha Emery. We are grateful to you all for your contribution to the governance of VOYCE.

This is the end of our term as Co-Chairs of the VOYCE Board, and as we reflect on the past four years, we want to acknowledge all of our fellow trustees, past and present. Your open-hearted commitment to this vital kaupapa has been a source of knowledge, support and inspiration.

Ka kite anō,

Shayne Walker & Mana Williams Eade
Co-Chairs, VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai is only able to provide the amazing opportunities and experiences for Aotearoa's care experienced tamariki and rangatahi thanks to the generosity of our community partners. Ngā mihi nui.

PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

- One NZ Foundation
- Tindall Foundation
- Foundation North
- Todd Foundation
- Jr McKenzie Trust
- SkyCity Auckland Community Trust
- SkyCity Hamilton Community Trust
- SkyCity Queenstown Community Trust

GRANTS/CONTRACTS

- Oranga Tamariki
- Department of Internal Affairs (Royal Commission of inquiry - Abuse in Care, Rangatahi reference group)
- University of Auckland (Research Advisory Group)
- Aroturuki Tamariki - Independent Children's Monitor
- Sport Hawkes Bay
- Sport Canterbury

DONATIONS AND GIFTS IN KIND

- Buddle Findlay - Pro bono legal support
- L'Oréal
- AWWA



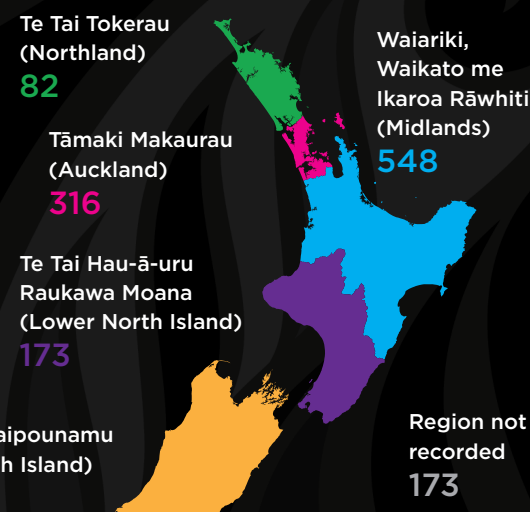
4 WHAKAMANA

Advocate with children and young people in care.

RANGATAHI TOLD US:

"Advocate with us as individual children and young people in care. Make information about rights and support services available in ways we understand. Support us to advocate for ourselves and others. Support our voice to be heard in decision making and resolution of our concerns. Support our trusted adults to undertake advocacy with us or become that trusted person for us."

NEW ADVOCACY CASES:



Total: 1,611

CASE THEMES:

TOTAL: 1,611



TOP 5 THEMES:

#1

FORMAL PROCEEDINGS

Having voice heard and taken into account in formal decision making processes; includes participation in FGCs, hui, assessments, court proceedings and police matters.

15.1%
(243 cases)

#2

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Variation to current living arrangements; includes temporary or unstable placements, returning to live with whānau or previous caregivers or transition to independent living.

13.3%
(214 cases)

#3

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Healthcare, dentistry, optometry, mental health services, personal hygiene supplies, smoking cessation, counselling, therapy and other therapeutic interventions and supports.

11.9%
(191 cases)

#4

BEING KEPT INFORMED

Access to information on rights, options, and outcomes; being kept informed regarding care plan or legal proceedings; includes information being provided in an accessible format.

10.4%
(168 cases)

#5

FINANCIAL AND BELONGINGS

Pocket money, benefits, entitlements, banking, budgeting and financial management, emergency assistance; access to or purchase of personal belongings including personal records.

10.2%
(164 cases)

ADVOCACY IMPACT:

Whakamana surveys indicated...

How much have we helped you **feel connected** to people you can trust?



9 / 10

How much have we helped you **understand your rights and options?**



9 / 10

How much have we helped you **feel seen and heard** by the adults in your life?



8 / 10

How much have we helped you **have a say in decisions** being made about you?



8 / 10

How much have we helped you **understand decisions** people have made about you and the **reasons** for them?



8 / 10

Overall, how do you feel about the **support you've received** from us?



7 / 10

ADVOCACY IN RESIDENCES:

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai Kaiwhakamana are a consistent presence in all secure residences and have worked hard this year to increase their visibility and availability in the many group homes that operate throughout the country. Our involvement in secure residences this year resulted in increased involvement in aspects of residence operations such as staff induction and training, rangatahi activities and programmes, case planning as well as complaints. Oranga Tamariki national office instructed all residences to establish youth councils, a positive move toward increasing youth participation. Kaiwhakamana are working with rangatahi to ensure they can participate fully and effectively in these opportunities.

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai also collaborated with Oranga Tamariki on Manaaki Kōrero, a long-term project to improve the Oranga Tamariki feedback and complaints system. After undertaking the initial consultation with tamariki and rangatahi and facilitating the consultation with whānau, the final Manaaki Kōrero report, with recommendations, was published in November 2023. The report resulted in a three-year plan to implement the recommendations. The Year One focus was on increasing tamariki and rangatahi understanding of their rights and access to independent advocacy while in an Oranga Tamariki residence.

This year, VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai also collaborated on a proposed redesign of the grievance process used in residences. Throughout the year, our regional teams have been working with the three pilot residences of Eponi (Wellington), Te Au Rere a Te Tonga (Palmerston North) and Te Maioha o Parekarangi (Rotorua) to test the development of new resources and information for tamariki and rangatahi, increase involvement in kaimahi induction and training and build a more collaborative relationship with residence management.

However, due to the disestablishment of the Manaaki Kōrero project team (following structural changes to Oranga Tamariki) the future of the project and the development of further initiatives remains uncertain. VOYCE - Whakarongo mai will continue to advocate strongly for these and other improvements to be implemented in all residences to honour the voices of those tamariki, rangatahi and whānau who participated in the consultation, and improve the experience for young people in residences where many reports have highlighted significant and ongoing concerns.



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Section 128 Plans

A Kaiwhakamana worked with two siblings who, when shown their s.128 plans filed by the Oranga Tamariki Social Worker for their Family Court reviews, noted both errors and confusion around content. Both siblings had not seen or understood the purpose of their plans, nor had they been given the opportunity to discuss them with their social worker.



A Kaiwhakamana worked with two siblings who, when shown their s.128 plans filed by the Oranga Tamariki Social Worker for their Family Court reviews, noted both errors and confusion around content. Both siblings had not seen or understood the purpose of their plans, nor had they been given the opportunity to discuss them with their social worker.

The Kaiwhakamana helped them to understand the purpose of the plans (using Te Reo Māori, given they were both Te Reo Māori speakers), going through the plans line by line with each young person so they were able to place themselves at the centre of their plans. They each corrected the errors and confusions (dates of birth, names spelt wrong, pronoun mistakes, using Te Reo Māori where that was more appropriate, using words that were more familiar – e.g. changed mother to mum, father to dad, reside to live, dwelling to whare, responsibilities to kaitiakitanga etc). There were 55 errors or changes in total that the siblings wanted to correct.

At the Court appearance, alongside the siblings, the VOYCE Kaiwhakamana was invited to speak (in Te Reo Māori) about the issues raised by the young people in respect to having the plan reflect their views and their truth by being written in language they can understand – not legal language. The Judge agreed, recorded their changes, and commended them for their courage and foresight. The Judge recommended to the lawyer that “these plans be a template for other tamariki Māori moving forward”. The plans were later updated, following a hui with the caregiver, OT site manager, lawyer, Social Worker, VOYCE and the young people.

“My Voice” Document

In Tauranga Moana, VOYCE Kaiwhakamana have been working with rangatahi on the development of a “My Voice” document. This document is being created and developed alongside the rangatahi to ensure that their voice and perspective is captured and can be clearly represented and heard in spaces such as Family Court, Family Group Conferences or to share with other professionals. This document empowers rangatahi to feel strong within their own care journey.



Establishing Age for Refugee Siblings

Kaiwhakamana advocated for a young person through the process of formally establishing their age. This young person was a refugee, and it was believed that her age, and the ages of her siblings, were altered prior to entry into New Zealand. The young person believed that she was older than her documentation stated. The young person was given different information from various professionals regarding the potential process for establishing her age. Kaiwhakamana supported them by following up with all stakeholders involved, including the manager from the International Child Protection Unit in Wellington. The Kaiwhakamana then created a youth friendly document that outlined the process to establish the young person’s age and shared it with them. The rangatahi was grateful that she could continue with this process herself and was confident to reach out to VOYCE again if she required further support.

Remand Home Advocacy

Kaiwhakamana worked extensively with rangatahi in a community remand home in the Hawkes Bay. Community-based remand homes are intended to support the needs of rangatahi remanded into youth justice custodial care for up to six weeks, by providing a safe, nurturing environment close to whānau and the community. The young people in the home shared that they sometimes write and draw on the walls to express themselves and stated that this would stop if they had other ways to express themselves. Some of the ideas put to the management of the home were to have access to music in the home and in the car, and to have access to more creative materials and spaces to express themselves freely. As a result, the home agreed to provide some creative materials. Rangatahi were also supported in their request for access to a boxing bag. Kaiwhakamana supported them to create a mind map to explore their reasons for why they would like to have access to a boxing bag. The mind map was shared with the Manager of the home as an effective way of communicating their views.

From Whakamana to Rangatiratanga

In Hawkes Bay we had our first ever Family Group Conference (FGC) that was solely facilitated by a young person. The rangatahi had been in care for over 14 years and wanted to take the lead in their care journey. They were supported by their VOYCE Kaiwhakamana, the FGC Coordinator and Lawyer for Child to make a plan, lead the space and in the process, they embodied all things rangatiratanga. The plan was accepted in court and a special note was made by the judge highlighting the leadership, bravery and mana of this young person.



Advocacy for Māmā and Pēpi

A teen māmā had been told her pēpi would be removed from her care. Pēpi was only 13 days old and this māmā was also under Oranga Tamariki care. The māmā shared that she wanted the opportunity to learn to be the māmā her baby needed. She had not been given the opportunity or the tools to be set up for success. Her Kaiwhakamana was able to work with her to ensure her whakāro were captured and submitted in Court. As a result, māmā and pēpi were able to move into a teen parent whare where, six months later, her and her baby are still thriving. VOYCE amplified her words - ‘I want to break the cycle (of care)’ - and she was not only listened to, but was heard.

Whakamana (Tāngata Whaikaha)

A rangatahi who identifies as tāngata whaikaha wanted support to obtain their learner driver’s licence. Their trusted adults had discounted this, ruling out the possibility of driving due to their disability. This young person met all the legal requirements needed to sit the learner’s test. The Kaiwhakamana amplified the young person’s voice continuously until this young person was given the opportunity to sit the test. They passed their test and now hold their learner’s license. The rangatahi shared with us that they simply wanted “my name and my photo on a card.”

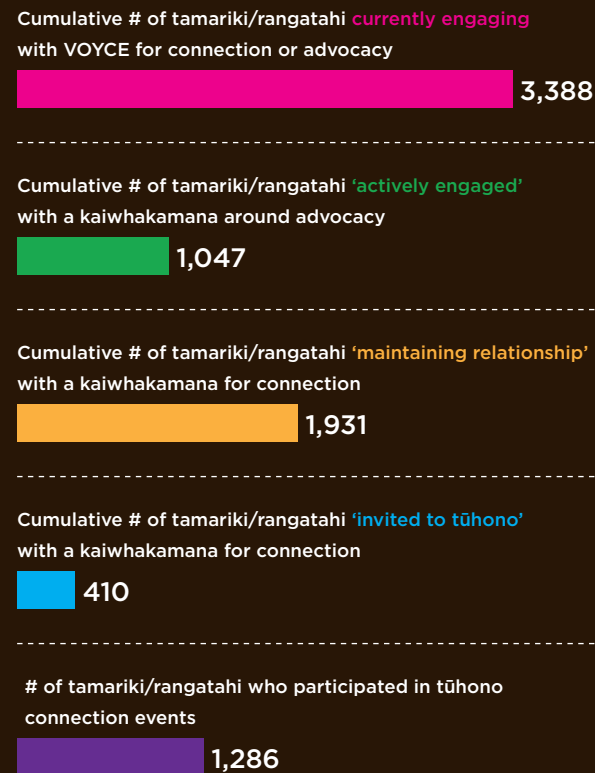
From Rangatahi to Rangatira

Over the past five years, VOYCE has been working with a young person who identifies as tāngata whaikaha and has supported them with a variety of matters. Over the past 12 months, they have really found strength in their voice (self-advocacy). With support from their Kaiwhakamana they have been able to clear thousands of dollars of debt and secured a number of necessary supports coming through their transition from care to live a “good life” and enrolled in a course at Ara / Te Pūkenga. This rangatira has now shifted from working with VOYCE in a whakamana capacity to embracing their rangatiratanga and actively helping with VOYCE tūhono, including designing future events.

5 TŪHONO

Connect children and young people in care with each other and with their significant others.

NUMBER OF CONNECTIONS:



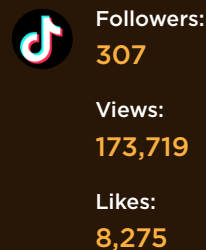
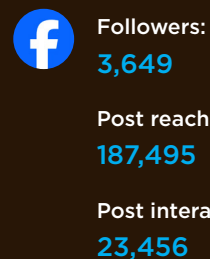
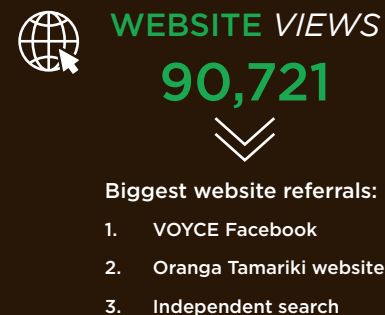
RANGATAHI TOLD US:

"Connect us as children and young people in care together. Reduce the isolation that we can experience in the care system. Help us to establish an identity through fostering a sense of belonging to a wider community of children and young people in care. Demonstrate that we are valued by providing opportunities and experiences that are fun and challenging."

NUMBER OF EVENTS BY REGION:



ONLINE GROWTH:



Launched TikTok this year!

Whānau Fun Day (Tāmaki Makaurau)

In collaboration with Caring Families Aotearoa and CLM Community Sports, this event was an awesome opportunity to provide a day of carefree fun for tamariki atawhai and their care whānau. Activities included multiple bouncy castles, Hunger Ball and lots of fun giant games (like giant Connect 4) to keep everyone of all ages entertained. There was also space for our pēpi and tamariki atawhai to be creative with playdough and colouring books. We also had kaimahi on the BBQ, providing everyone with yummy kai all day long. The venue was filled with laughter and fun, shrieks of joy and lots of bright colours.



Camp Raukawa (Te Tai Hau-ā-uru Raukawa Moana)

In a collaboration with the YMCA, young people were invited to spend a day out at Camp Raukawa, where VOYCE and the YMCA ran two interactive sessions with care experienced young people. Tamariki were able to join in for games like balloon tossing, hula-hoop races, a giant joint art project and a chance to make their own sleep spray. The young people were also given VOYCE care packs, and were told about who VOYCE is, what we do, and how they can get in contact with us if they want advocacy support.



Pride in the Park Picnic (Tauranga)

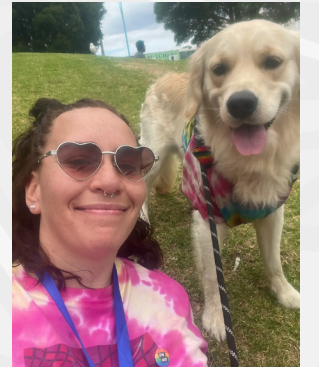
VOYCE Kaiwhakamana supported rangatahi atawhai to attend the Tauranga Moana Pride Picnic. It was an awesome chance for the young people to connect and experience diversity, inclusivity, and creativity with the LGBTQIA+ community.

The rangatahi really enjoyed the experience.

"I FELT SAFE WITH MY KAIWHAKAMANA."

"I REALLY ENJOYED HANGING OUT WITH MY FRIENDS AND BOYFRIEND IN A PLACE WHERE IT WAS OKAY AND SAFE."

"I FELT INCLUDED."



Children's Day (Whangārei)

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai collaborated with a range of local organisations in Whangārei - including Te Ora Hou - to put on an exciting Children's Day event. Kaimahi were kitted out in tutus, glitter and hair accessories and were armed with a few simple resources: wire, beads and soapy bubble mixture. All of this came together to make BUBBLE WANDS! The VOYCE stall proved a popular place to stop, and the team made over 300 wands!



He Tūhono Whakapakari Tinana (Ōtautahi)

With funding from Sport Canterbury, we were able to celebrate Youth Week with a series of tūhono events designed to move the body, strengthen hauora and connect with others. Young people were able to try new activities like waka ama, weaving, hiking and explore new tracks in Ōtautahi. The highlight for us was seeing young people taking leadership roles in the events from karakia and cooking kai, to evaluation and promotion.



Hāngi & Hot Pools (Ōtautahi)

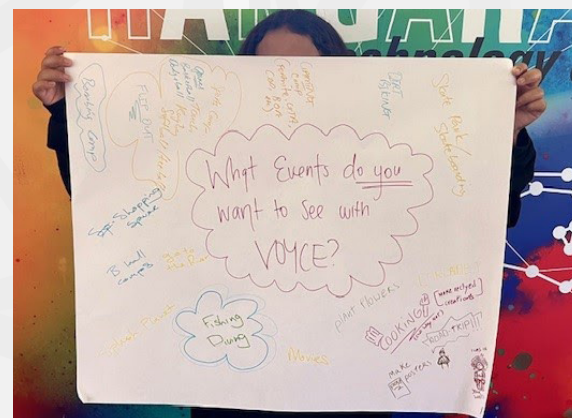
In collaboration with Caring Families Aotearoa, we hosted a large tūhono event with our care community, tamariki/rangatahi and foster whānau to celebrate Matariki. Approximately 100 people shared hāngi and took part in Matariki activities, with 60 people joining us at He Puna Taimoana Hot Pools for star gazing and Waiata.



"MY KAIWHAKAMANA SUPPORTED ME THROUGH MY TRANSITION IN INDEPENDENCE AND ACCESSING MY ENTITLEMENTS. SHE ALSO HELPED ADVOCATE FOR ME TO ACCESS THE RIGHT SERVICES WHEN I NEEDED THEM."

Think Tank (Heretaunga)

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai hosted a 'Think Tank' tūhono to give tamariki and rangatahi the chance to share what they want to see from VOYCE tūhono in their rohe. Thanks to a koha from the Hastings District Council, VOYCE was able to provide an awesome day out for young people in the care community. After some awesome kōrero, and ideas shared, everyone enjoyed a few games of bowling. One of the highlights of the tūhono was seeing young people reconnect with one another again after not seeing each other for a number of years. Two young people were able to swap phone numbers and promised to give each other a text when they got home. For young people in care, connection to their community is super important, so this was awesome to see!



WHAKATAIRANGA

Promote the collective voice of children and young people in care.

66 RANGATAHI TOLD US:

"Promote our collective voice as children and young people in the care system. Help us understand and tell our collective story. Help us to share this story in ways that are safe for us and can influence others. Use the themes and issues we raise to drive system change, by linking to other monitoring and oversight mechanisms in the system."

KEY WHAKATAIRANGA ACTIVITIES:



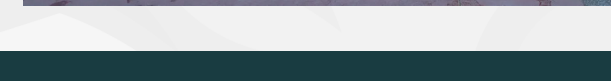
Election 23 Campaign Launch

"You Promised...Now Deliver!". The updated 6 Promises VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai election campaign was launched on 1st August 2023, with a live-streamed press conference from the Tamaki Makaurau office. The launch was attended by kaimahi, care experienced young people, professional supporters and members of the media. Isaac Heron, Alchimae Prasad, and Tupua Ulrich - all from the original 6 Promises group - spoke, to emphasise the ongoing need and importance of this kaupapa going into the next election.



Care Summit "Young Voices Rising: From Care to Influence"

On 30th August 2023, VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai hosted our first Youth Summit "Young Voices Rising: From Care to Influence". The Summit focussed on the 6 Promises campaign - examining what the Promises mean to rangatahi in care, and what "good" would look like against these promises. The Summit was attended by care experienced young people, allies and influencers from across the care sector. The Minister for Children, Hon. Kelvin Davis, presented to the Summit and the National Party's Spokesperson for Children, Harete Hipango, also attended.



6 Promises Petition - Hīkoi and Handover

The Summit culminated in a hīkoi to Parliament to hand over a 4000+ strong petition demanding our political representatives deliver on the 6 Promises. The handover was a poignant and moving event on Parliament's steps and was attended by a contingent of MPs from across the political spectrum. All of the major parties have now indicated their support for the 6 Promises.

In partnership with Family for Every Child, the event was captured in a Virtual Gallery which can be viewed at: <https://familyforeverychild.org/news/virtual-hikoi-gallery-amplifies-youth-voices-on-care-reform/>



Youth Led Virtual Political Hotseat

On 18th September 2023, VOYCE hosted a political hotseat event. A care experienced youth panel put an esteemed panel of politicians in the "hotseat" to answer the big questions from tamariki and rangatahi atawhai and to share how their party, if elected, would deliver on the 6 Promises and ensure a future Aotearoa in which all young people live with love and mana.

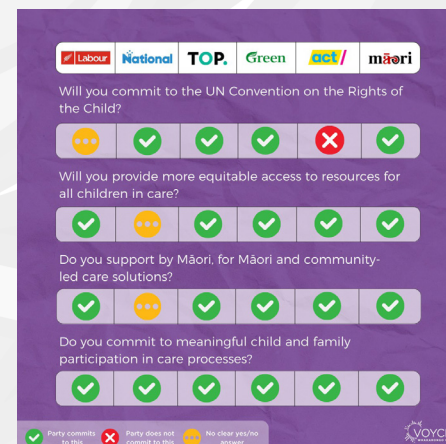
The Hotseat Panel: MC Aaron Hendry (VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai); Care Experienced Rangatira Panel - Sara, Katie, Oliver and Lisa; Politician Panel - Karen Chhour (ACT), Jan Logie (Greens), Arena Williams (Labour), Harete Hipango (National), Arabela Boatwright (Te Pāti Māori), Dr Nina Su (TOP).



Care and Protection Scorecard

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai, Family for Every Child and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren came together as part of the Tick 4 Kids movement to put key asks to political parties on what needs to happen to improve the care and protection system in Aotearoa, and to create a scorecard detailing political parties' responses.

On 3rd October 2023 the group hosted a virtual discussion on the urgent need to address challenges in the system and work towards better outcomes for all tamariki and rangatahi. This event focussed on crucial commitments, policies, and practices required to improve outcomes for children who are not able to live in their home of origin, and the actions supporters and allies could take to support these.



6 Promises Petition - Written and Oral Submissions

Submissions were made to the Petitions Office to support Select Committee's consideration of the 6 Promises petition, handed over to Parliament during the Hīkoi and Summit event in August 2023. The written submission provided supporting evidence to highlight the importance of the 6 Promises, as well as a call for the Government to commit to delivering on these through tangible recommendations.



We urged the Government to uphold these six promises by:

- Ensuring any proposed law or policy is consistent with the intent of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by making the Child Impact Assessment tool a mandatory requirement for the public sector.
- Strengthening the oversight, monitoring and accountability of the care system to meet its own minimum standards and legislated requirements.
- Providing greater investment in independent advocacy to ensure that young people in care have access to the supports they need to express their views as required by legislation.
- Committing to meaningful and ongoing engagement with the care experienced community to authentically co-design sustainable and fit-for-purpose solutions.

Oral Submissions were made in support of the written submission on 9th May 2024. Care experienced rangatira Amanda Faauga, Lisa McLaren and Jake Gibbons represented the care experienced community and shared lived experiences in relation to the promises via quotes that had been shared from across the community.

Ram Raid Offending and Related Measures Amendment Bill

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai worked with rangatahi residing in Youth Justice residences and Regional Youth Council Members to complete a submission in opposition to the Ram Raids Bill, which is seeking to criminalise children as young as 12 if they are caught up in this type of offending.

The position of VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai is that the answers to youth offending don't lie in harsh responses. The brains of children and young people have not yet developed to allow them to manage their impulsive behaviours, and the threat of more punitive outcomes won't change this.

The drivers of youth offending are societal and the answers to keeping our community safe lies in prevention, wrapping around families to support them and addressing issues of poverty, homelessness, mental health and addiction. When circumstances have escalated to the point where young people are driven to commit serious offences, it may almost be too late.



VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai also facilitated the collaboration of a collective of ally organisations on a joint submission and an open letter to educate and generate public interest and support in opposing this Bill.

Oral submissions on the Bill were called on 12th March 2024. Kaimahi supported two rangatahi with lived experience of the youth justice system to speak to the Justice Select Committee. Both these rangatahi reported that this was a "life-altering" experience for them.

"MY KAIWHAKAMANA SUPPORTED ME THROUGH COURT AND MADE SURE MY VOICE WAS HEARD BY THE DECISION MAKERS AROUND ME."

Oranga Tamariki (7AA repeal) Amendment Bill

The Government has proposed to repeal section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act (1989). 7AA sets out the requirements of Oranga Tamariki to improve outcomes for tamariki Māori. The Bill was subject to an urgent review by the Waitangi Tribunal prior to being introduced, received widespread criticism and had extensive media coverage. VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai made a written submission opposing the repeal, as did the Te Waipounamu Regional Youth Council and a rōpū of care experienced Māori rangatahi from Te Tai Tokerau. A number of care experienced rangatahi also made their own individual submissions on the issue.



VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai opposes the repeal on the basis that:

- 7AA is a part of the Oranga Tamariki Act that was added in 2019 to make sure that Oranga Tamariki do a better job for Tamariki Māori who have long experienced systemic racism, being over represented in the care statistics, and experiencing more harm and poorer outcomes.
- Since 7AA came into effect in 2019, the number of Tamariki Māori entering care has reduced.
- The argument for repealing 7AA on the basis that kaimahi were prioritising cultural connection over safety is flawed. Firstly, the legislation already states that safety is paramount over any other sections of the act. Secondly, safety, wellbeing and culture are intrinsically connected – it is not an “either/or” situation. We should and must consider culture as part of safety – it is an “and”.
- Oranga Tamariki’s own advice to the Minister said that repealing this section was a bad idea and the Waitangi Tribunal said that this decision will cause real harm to children in state care.

Oranga Tamariki Oversight System

In May 2024, Social Development Minister, Louise Upston, announced changes to the Oranga Tamariki oversight system. The changes included:

- Making the Independent Children’s Monitor an independent crown entity rather than a government department
- Reinstating the role of Children’s Commissioner
- Fast-tracking a review of the oversight system for completion in 2024
- Ensuring the changes allow for input from the final report of the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry

These changes were consistent with calls from our care experienced rangatira in 2022, when the original legislation brought the oversight system into effect. Opposition members of the Select Committee, unsatisfied with the outcome, had indicated they would make changes if and when they came into Government. The announcement of these changes is a huge win for our community, showing them that their voices do make a difference.

“I’M SO PLEASED TO FINALLY SEE A GOVERNMENT DECISION ABOUT THE CARE SECTOR BEING INFORMED BY THOSE WHO ARE CARE EXPERIENCED.”

Aroturuki Tamariki (Independent Children’s Monitor)

VOYCE partnered with Aroturuki Tamariki to support a series of youth engagements around the motu. These engagements gave Aroturuki Tamariki the opportunity to hear from young people directly regarding their experiences in care.



7 WHAI PŪKENGA

Help equip children and young people in care for their future.

“ RANGATAHI TOLD US:

“Equip us for our future. Teach us skills that can promote our wellbeing; our health, our relationships, our recreation, our education and employments. Partner with others so that we can benefit from opportunities and experiences that are fun and challenging.”

RANGATIRA ATAWHAI

L’Oréal – Face Your Future

With our partners, L’Oréal New Zealand and Caring Families Aotearoa, VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai was thrilled to again support the two-day Face Your Future event for rangatahi in care. This free event is packed with interactive workshops, inspiring speakers, pampering and fun – all aimed at inspiring participants to dream big about what they want to do with the next phase of their lives beyond school.



Multi Events Recruitment Collaboration

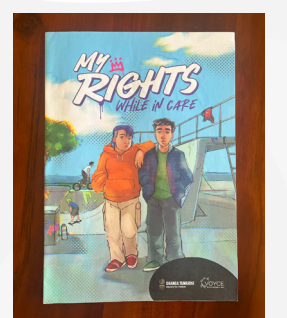
VOYCE established a relationship with Multi Events Recruitment Ltd, in Ōtautahi (Christchurch), to create a pathway for care-experienced rangatahi to gain paid work experience. Ten young people were supported to work a shift with Multi Events where they gained customer service experience, confidence, and soft skills. The opportunity was a great success and Multi Events Ltd hope to continue the collaborate in the future.

Identify Survey

A reference group of care experienced rangatahi was supported to work with Auckland University to review the Identify Survey findings specific to care experienced rangatahi. A series of workshops were held to review each of the reports and the specific findings for care experienced rangatahi. These rangatahi co-authored a series of four reports outlining the experiences of rainbow young people with Oranga Tamariki involvement, which can be found here: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research/rainbow-young-people-with-oranga-tamariki-involvement/>

Rights Resources for Oranga Tamariki Residences

VOYCE worked with Oranga Tamariki to create two comic books for rangatahi in residences to help them better understand their rights while in care. The comics are designed for different age cohorts and have been printed and sent out to the residences. VOYCE also supported Oranga Tamariki to create more accessible versions of the “My Rights, My Voice” resource. This included designing a fold out pamphlet of the original resource, as well as creating a “My Rights, My Voice” video starring care experienced young people from around the motu as well as kaimahi from VOYCE and Oranga Tamariki.



KAIMAHI

Te Tiriti o Waitangi Wānanga

As part of the journey to becoming a more Te Tiriti informed organisation, VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai held two Te Tiriti o Waitangi wānanga in June 2024 for all staff. One was held at Hoani Waititi Marae in West Auckland, the other was held at Maraeroa Marae in Porirua. Both wānanga were facilitated by Whaea Lynda Coley.

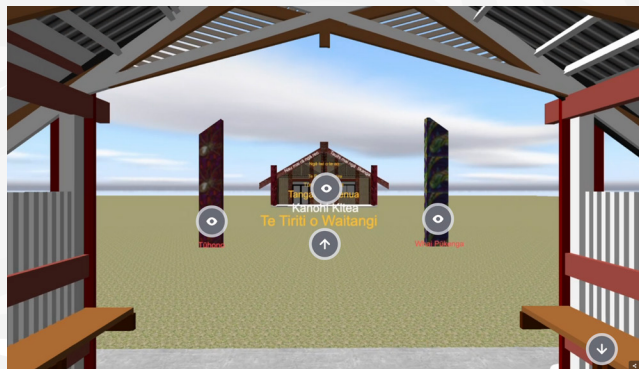
From these wānanga, a guidance document was created for the organisation, along with a set of key actions which included:

- The establishment of an online Te tiriti o Waitangi hub where staff can access resources and information.
- Ongoing support and training for staff and an annual review to see how staff are progressing
- The establishment of a Te Tiriti o Waitangi monitoring group.

VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai is committed to continuing to grow capability and capacity to become a more Te Tiriti o Waitangi informed organisation.



Poutama (Our Practice Framework)



This year, we finalised and rolled out Te Poutama, our practice framework. It has developed over time as VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai matured as an organisation and built up the understanding of how we can best support rangatira atawhai. Various kaimahi and rangatira atawhai helped shape Te Poutama.

- A practice framework is a non-prescriptive and metaphorical visual map to guide practice, decision making and development by linking evidence, acquired learning, values and other essential elements within a cultural context.
- Te Poutama is the name of our framework. It applies to all kaimahi including volunteers and contractors within VOYCE- Whakarongo Mai. It is a living document, open to new learning, review, and adaptation.

- Te Poutama establishes baseline expectations for our front facing mahi with tamariki and rangatahi atawhai, whānau, other stakeholders and each other internally. It also informs the development of the organisational structures and processes that support and enable the framework to be effective.
- Te Poutama is represented as the wharenui on a metaphorical marae Te Pūtaka-Kōkiri ki tua - our community centre. Each part of this marae is integral to ensuring that all aspects of the VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai Kaupapa are deliberately positioned. Te Pūtaka Kōkiri ki tua is the ground on which Te Poutama rests and is the foundation of all practice at VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai.
- Within the wharenui is Te Whāriki: The mat that weaves Ngā Pou Ārahi (our five pou or workstreams) and the four core values that underpin our approach to practice as individuals and as a collective.
- Within Te Whāriki, the weaving of Ngā Pou Ārahi and our values creates 20 intersections, or domains, where the key competencies defining our individual and collective practices within the framework are defined.
- Poutama is the starting point for ongoing reflection and development as advocates, both as individuals and as an organisation.



8

RANGATIRATANGA

Build leadership among children and young people in care.

66 RANGATAHI TOLD US:

“Build our leadership as children and young people in the care system. Invest in our training and development to grow our ability to be leaders in our own lives. Support our role in shaping, evaluating and holding to account services provided to children and young people in care and the wider care system. Involve us increasingly in the leadership, governance and delivery of this service and others.”

New Zealander of the Year Awards

VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai kaimahi were proud and honoured to be able to join Ihorangi Reweti-Peters, care experienced advocate and Young New Zealander of the Year finalist, at the New Zealander of the Year Gala Dinner. Ihorangi was nominated for “Channelling his own experience in state care into positive change for vulnerable rangatahi”.



“MY KAIWHAKAMANA SUPPORTED ME TO PREPARE FOR MY FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE AND WORK OUT WHAT I WANTED TO SAY.”

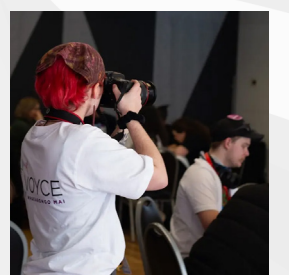
VOYCE Summit – Care Experienced Rangatira

18 care experienced rangatira were supported to help facilitate the running of the Youth Summit “Young Voices Rising: From Care to Influence” in August 2023.

They were invited to a series of weekly drop-in sessions to help upskill and prepare them for their contribution to the Summit and 6 Promises Petition handover to Parliament. The rangatira then joined us for a two-night noho marae for final preparations and to debrief after the Summit.



New rangatira were involved in several activities, including facilitating Summit round-table discussions, giving feedback, photography, interviewing, public speaking and speaking to the media—depending on their interest and comfort levels.



CREATE Conference: Voices in Action

Four Regional Youth Council Members – Sarah Gibbs, Sydney Hape, Elise Ramage and Jake Gibbons – were selected to attend and present at the CREATE Foundation conference in Adelaide in March 2024. They were accompanied by VOYCE kaimahi Tracie Shipton, Simon Burgess, Mary-Lynn Huxford and Sydney-Anne Martin.

The presentation focused on the 6 Promises campaign, highlighting the recent petition, Summit and hikoi to Parliament. The presentation was incredibly impactful for the Australian CREATE Young Consultants and has inspired young people there to start talking about taking their own advocacy into activism and perhaps an Australian “hikoi” to Parliament, inspired by VOYCE.



Involve Conference

Tupua Ulrich, Zak Quor, Isaac Heron and Carmel West presented a workshop on Kia Tika, Kia Pono – a guide to ethical engagement with care experienced rangatahi on 15 August 2024.



Whāraurau Webinars

Mary-Lynn Huxford and Tupua Ulrich presented two webinar presentations, the first introducing VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai to sector colleagues, whilst the second presented Kia Tika, Kia Pono and how to ethically engage with care experienced rangatahi.



REGIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

This year, our focus was on ensuring forums for youth participation and Regional Youth Councils (RYC) were firmly established across the motu. RYCs are intended to create a forum that acknowledges and respects the experiences of our care experienced rangatahi and equips them to participate in collective advocacy. They are also a space to feel connected to others with similar shared experiences. All our regions now have mechanisms which allow our young care experienced community to participate in VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai kaupapa.



Te Tai Tokerau

RYC Wānanga - Whanaungatanga and Maramataka Planning

The initial Te Tai Tokerau RYC Wānanga was a powerful gathering that truly embodied the spirit of Rangatiratanga. It was an opportunity to strengthen whanaungatanga, as we brought our RYC members together in unity and connection. The highlight of the day was planning our yearly calendar using the maramataka, aligning our activities with the cycles of the moon and seasons to honour our cultural heritage. We shared kai, enjoying a delicious buffet breakfast together, which fostered deeper relationships and opened up meaningful conversations. It was heartwarming to see everyone engaged, working collaboratively, and building strong bonds—an essential aspect of Rangatiratanga.

Tāmaki Makaurau

The Tāmaki RYC has been actively building their knowledge of the VOYCE kaupapa and tikanga Māori. They spent time during their weekend wānanga with Te Pou Whirinaki from VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai learning about VOYCE. The wānanga covered a range of kaupapa, including learning about Kia Tika, Kia Pono, the VOYCE Waiata, spending time connecting with their whakapapa and enjoying a “boil up”.

The Tāmaki RYC were able to join with the Youth Law Thinktank “Whakahoahoa”. This included surveying the environment, building connections and interactive brainstorming to align visions and get connected.

Te Tai Hau-a-uru

The RYC was able to participate in the first ever connection event for Youth Advisory Group members across Crown Entities and Government Departments that took place on the first day of Youth Week in May. Young people and kaimahi from Mana Mokopuna (including the Children’s Commissioner), Ministry of Youth Development, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education, Te Whatu Ora, Oranga Tamariki, The Classifications Office, Te Puna Aonui and VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai participated in this event in Wellington. A highlight was an eco-map activity which demonstrated the connections with other groups, especially in education and the environment. The rōpū also attended the Youth Week launch in Parliament the same day.

Waiariki, Waikato me Ikaroa Rāwhiti

The year started on a positive note when a group of rangatahi came together to help plan our year of tūhono events. We called this our “Eggcellent planning Day”. The rangatahi connected over some cool activities and identified celebrations and events during the year that they would like to acknowledge with VOYCE.

This group of rangatahi has developed into our youth participation group for VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai in the Central Region (RYPG).

Our regular games night events became a highlight, allowing our RYPG rangatahi to come together again, and inform us around some of the cool ideas they have about us coming together moving forward. This has been really helpful for us in thinking about how we are going to progress into the new year.

By the end of the year, we landed on a core group of 10 rangatahi jumping in and out of kaupapa depending on their age, availability and interests.

Te Waipounamu

Our Te Waipounamu RYC have celebrated their most active year yet. They’ve achieved consistent attendance at monthly meetings alternating between face to face and online. The council members represent regions across Te Waipounamu (Upper South, Canterbury and Lower South). The rōpū had a strong focus on whānaungatanga and team building, with all RYC members undergoing strengths coaching throughout the year.

Council members have volunteered at about half a dozen tūhono, supporting kaimahi to build connections with our care community whilst also being active in our collective advocacy mahi. RYC members participated in national initiatives like the 6 Promises Hikoi and Summit and contributing to the Ram Raids Bill submission. They’ve also co-authored a series of reports from the results of the Identify Survey about rainbow young people with experience of Oranga Tamariki. The RYC also wrote and presented their own submission on the repeal of Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act.

9 STATEMENT FROM THE CEO

It is heartening to reflect on the past year at VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai and the remarkable strides we have made in connecting and supporting young people in care across New Zealand. However, the context for our work has not been without its challenges.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State and Faith Based Care profoundly impacted many of our young people. The revelations surrounding historical abuses and systemic deficiencies that allowed these to occur highlighted the urgent need for change. As an organisation, we are grateful to have been involved with the Royal Commission and the Crown Response Unit.

We also felt the weight of the media focus on care and the injustices that persist within the system. We recognise that if we do not confront these difficult issues, we cannot learn from them, nor can we fully celebrate the milestones and progress achieved. Bringing stories of lived experiences from those in state care into the public arena underscores the necessity for advocacy, connection, social acceptance, the promotion of a sense of agency and well-being, and for the voices of tamariki and rangatahi within the care system to be represented, amplified, and respected.

So, what are we celebrating?

This year there was the addition of new care experienced young people to our Board. Their presence and participation in the governance space ensures that the perspectives and insights of those with lived experience are embedded in our governance and decision-making processes, reinforcing our commitment to youth empowerment at every level of the organisation and sending a powerful message to other young people.

Our 6 Promises Campaign progressed with a successful Youth Summit and hīkoi to Parliament during the election campaign period. This was a pivotal moment for us, providing an invaluable platform for many young people to articulate their experiences and needs directly to political representatives to hold these leaders accountable for the promises made. The responses we received from political candidates were encouraging, and we acknowledge the care and respect shown by them to our young people.

We also witnessed an inspiring increase in young people engaging with our individual advocacy programme. Their willingness to speak out is a testament to their empowerment and resilience. More young people from across the motu are also volunteering to speak up in our collective advocacy spaces. It is essential that we continue to create spaces where they can practise democracy, such as our involvement in select committee processes to foster a sense of agency and equip them with the tools to influence the systems that affect their lives.

The presentation at the CREATE Foundation conference in Adelaide, Australia, and the collaboration between young people in care from Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia demonstrates the breadth of our advocacy reach. Our youth speakers were inspiring and courageous, and it served as a reminder that the experiences and shared identity of young people in care crosses borders, and our commitment to amplifying their voices knows no boundaries.

Finally, thank you to the amazing Voices team at Oranga Tamariki for your partnership in bringing about change. And thank you to all who support our work.

I want to acknowledge our amazing kaimahi, whose dedication and passion are changing the face of advocacy in New Zealand. Their tireless work ensures that young people are heard and empowered to act for themselves and their communities. This work is not for the faint hearted.

To my incredible Executive Leadership Team—your grit, intelligence, and drive for better outcomes for young people exemplify the best leadership to cascade through the organisation. Thank you.

As we move forward, our mission remains clear: to advocate for the rights and needs of young people in care, ensuring they feel supported and empowered to shape their futures. Together, we can continue to build a culture where their voices are not only heard and celebrated, but where this becomes the norm!



Tracie Shipton

[Signature]

Tumu Whakarae
Chief Executive
VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai

10 FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSES

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
INCOME FROM NON EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS		
Donations and Grants Received	642,855	809,558
INCOME FROM EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS		
Contract Income	6,857,474	6,701,219
Gain on Disposal	18,649	-
Interest Received	254,664	85,087
Other Income	503	5,460
Dividends Received	604	543
Total Income	7,774,749	7,601,867
LESS EXPENSES		
Audit Fees	10,855	5,450
Donations and Koha	2,623	21,596
Employee Expenses	5,007,131	3,795,054
Rents	385,630	320,950
Service Delivery Expenses	1,518,046	1,422,084
Trustees Fees and Expenses	112,776	86,857
Total Expenses	7,037,061	5,651,991
Net Surplus Before Depreciation Adjustments	737,689	1,949,877
LESS DEPRECIATION ADJUSTMENTS		
Depreciation	230,834	199,415
Loss on Disposal	7,473	5
Total Less Depreciation Adjustments	238,307	199,420
NET SURPLUS	499,381	1,750,457

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2024

CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,435,112	4,693,216
Accrued Income	22,371	17,647
Trade and Other Receivables	23,000	101,988
GST Receivable	31,869	46,972
Prepayments	49,276	42,883
Total Current Assets	5,561,629	4,902,706
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and Equipment	510,033	593,866
TOTAL ASSETS	6,071,662	5,496,572
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	409,753	253,031
Accrued Expenses	33,323	35,573
Accrued Expenses - Employee Entitlements	268,302	333,900
Income in Advance - Current	265,624	278,791
Total Current Liabilities	977,003	901,295
TOTAL LIABILITIES	977,003	901,295
NET ASSETS	5,094,659	4,595,277
EQUITY		
Retained Earnings	5,094,659	4,595,277
TOTAL EQUITY	5,094,659	4,595,277

The following whakatauhākī was written
by Te Pou Whirinaki.

KO TE WHARE O POUTAMA, TĒNA HIKITIA, TĒNA HAPAINGA.

The house of Poutama,
uplift and **raise up**.

Te Whare o Poutama refers to the name of the VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai whare (House) that is part of Te Pūtake: Kōkiri ki tua. This is the home for all of our strategies and practice framework.

Tēna hikitia, tena hapainga is a testament to the way in which we honour the whare by uplifting and raising up all aspects of VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai, including its people to accomplish our vision.



0800 486 923 | [voyce.org.nz](https://www.voyce.org.nz)



VOYCEWhakarongoMai



VOYCENZ



voyce_whakarongomai



VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai

LOCATION MAP

MAP LEGEND:



Operating offices

