



ANNUAL REPORT

Guiding tamariki and
rangatahi hauora through
responsive, informed, and
effective practice



2024–2025

Empowering tamariki and
rangatahi to thrive

Te Ata o Te Rangi

Whakatūwherangia te matapihi ki te ōruna
Whakatūwherangia kia wātea,
Whakatūwherangia kia whitikina e te rā,
Whakatūwherangia kia pūrea e te hau, kia horoia e te ua.
Kia tū ko te mauri ora,
Toitū, tūroa
Tū Te Ata o Te Rangi
Tihei Mauriora!

ABOUT US

VISION

In Aotearoa tamariki and rangatahi are empowered to thrive.

MISSION

Guiding tamariki and rangatahi hauora, through responsive, informed and effective practice.

VALUES



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Thank YOU to funders and donors

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR - Dr Nicole Coupe

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I present this year's Chair Report for Skylight Trust. Over the past 12 months, Skylight has continued to demonstrate unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau across Aotearoa. Guided by our vision—to empower young people to thrive—and grounded in our values of integrity, equity, and uplifting relationships, we have made significant strides in both service delivery and strategic development.

This year has been marked by transformation and growth. We welcomed our new Chief Executive, Kathryn Ross, whose leadership has brought fresh energy and clarity to our kaupapa. Under her guidance, Skylight has strengthened its core services, expanded its reach, and deepened its commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the launch of Te Kupenga Māori Strategy and Action Plan. This milestone reflects our dedication to being a Te Tiriti-based organisation and to honouring the voices and needs of Māori communities.

Our strategic priorities for 2025–2028 set a clear and ambitious path forward. From growing our regional presence and brand visibility to becoming a thought leader in mental health, we are focused on building a resilient, responsive, and sustainable organisation. The emphasis on evidence-based practice ensures we remain accountable and impactful, while our financial stewardship has enabled us to end the year with a modest surplus—an achievement in today's challenging funding environment.

I want to acknowledge the incredible mahi of our Skylight kaimahi. Your compassion, professionalism, and dedication are the heartbeat of this organisation. You have supported thousands of young people through creative therapies, school-based programmes, counselling, and resources—each interaction a step towards healing and hope.

To our Board members, thank you for your wisdom, governance, and unwavering support. Your strategic insight has been instrumental in navigating change and ensuring Skylight remains future-focused and values-led.

Finally, to our funders, donors, and partners—thank you. Your generosity and belief in our mission make our work possible. Together, we are creating a more compassionate and resilient Aotearoa.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism and determination. Skylight's work is more vital than ever, and I am confident that with our shared commitment, we will continue to uplift and empower those who need us most.

Ngā mihi nui,



Dr Nicole Coupe
Chair, Skylight Trust

REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE – Kathryn Ross

It has been a privilege to step into the role of Chief Executive at Skylight this past year. As I reflect on my first 9 months, I am filled with gratitude – for the trust placed in me, the dedication of our team, and the unwavering support of our Board and partners. Together, we have continued to walk alongside tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau through some of life's most challenging moments.

This year has been one of both consolidation and growth. We have strengthened our core counselling services, expanded our reach through school-based programmes like Awhi Mai Awhi Atu, and deepened our commitment to Te Tiriti and culturally responsive practice through the launch of Te Kupenga Māori Strategy and Action Plan. These milestones reflect our shared vision: that in Aotearoa, tamariki and rangatahi are empowered to thrive.

We have also seen the continued success of our creative therapies – music and arts-based approaches that offer powerful pathways to healing. Our group programmes, including Travellers, Pathfinders, Matika, and Tai-oranga, have reached hundreds of young people, building resilience and connection in ways that are both meaningful and measurable. Our resources and publications have continued to provide much needed support.

Financially, we have remained stable, ending the year with a modest surplus. This is a testament to careful stewardship, the generosity of our funders and donors, and the adaptability of our team. However, we remain mindful of the risks ahead – particularly the need to sustain and diversify income streams in a changing funding environment.

To the Skylight kaimahi – ngā mihi nui, thank you. Your compassion, professionalism, and commitment to our kaupapa are the heart of Skylight and this report highlights your immense achievements, talent and dedication. You should be proud. It is a privilege to lead such a skilled and passionate team.

To our Trustees – thank you for your guidance, wisdom, and belief in our mission. Your support has been invaluable as I have found my feet in this role. I have deeply appreciated your strategic insight, your commitment to good governance, and your encouragement as we have navigated both opportunities and challenges. Your stewardship ensures Skylight remains strong, future-focused, and grounded in our values.

And to our funders, partners, and community – thank you for being alongside us. Your support enables us to be there for others – when it matters most.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism, purpose, and a deep sense of responsibility. Skylight's work is more vital than ever.



Kathryn Ross

Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

SKYLIGHT TRUST – KEY MEASURES 2024/25

Community Education Partnerships



171

ACTIVE EDUCATION PARTNERS

Delivering well-being,
resilience, and mental
agility programmes.

Clinical Interactions with Children & Young People



7,610

INTERACTIONS

Counselling, bereavement
support, and resilience
workshops

Whānau Workshops



225

PARTICIPANTS

Helping parents support
children through separation
and other challenges

Resource Material Distribution



714

FREE RESOURCE PACKS

Supporting individuals
through grief, loss, and
relationship breakdown

Te Kupenga Māori Strategy and Action Plan

This year, our Trust Board approved Skylight's first Māori strategy – *Te Kupenga Māori Strategy and Action Plan*. This document marks a significant milestone in our commitment to upholding Te Tiriti as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand.

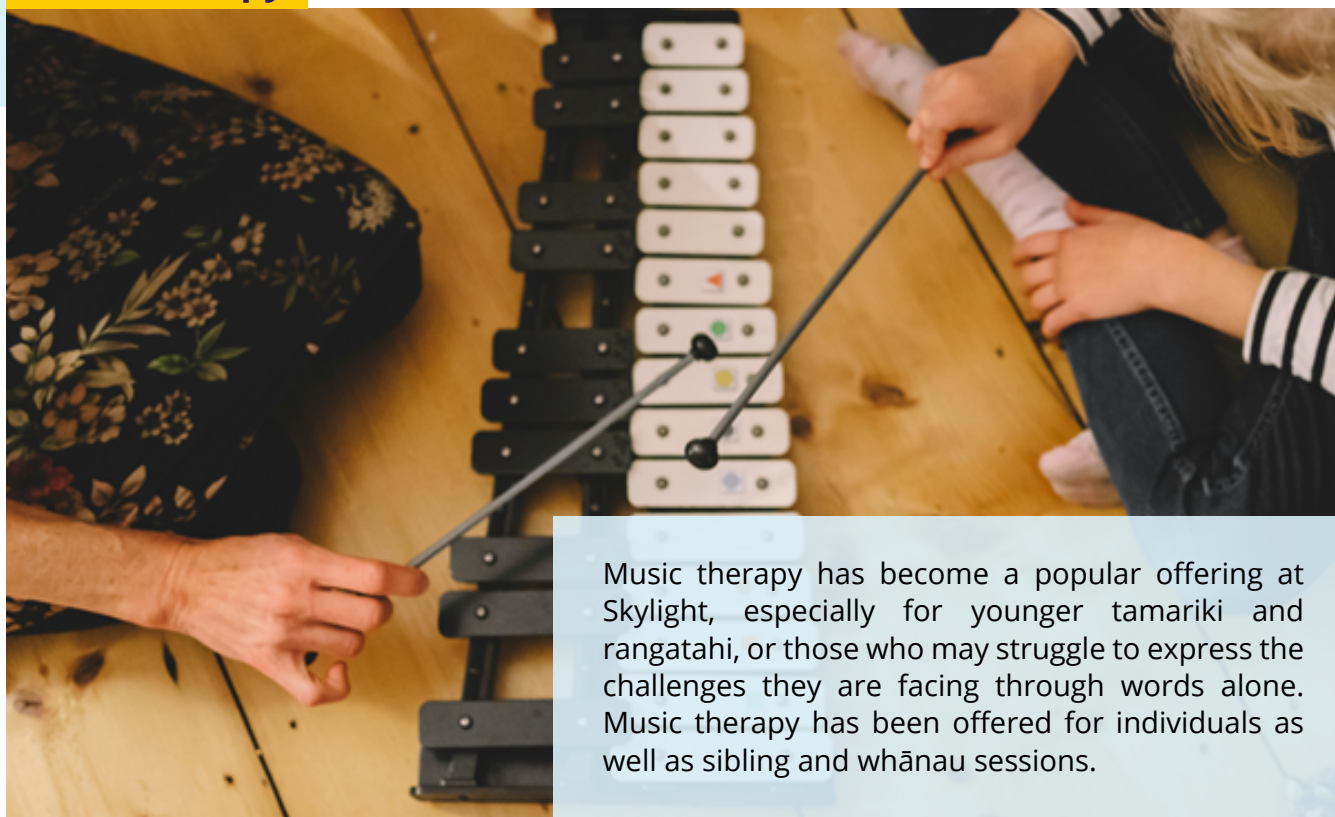
Counselling

Skylight specialises in counselling support for tamariki and rangatahi aged 5–24, and their whānau. Over the past year, we have strategically focused on increasing our service to include 18–24-year-olds and partnerships to increase access, as well as growing the number of referrals from fee-paying clients. Strengthening relationships with other services has also been a key focus, ensuring we are actively involved in our communities.

Skylight Counselling also provides accessible support through online sessions for older tamariki, rangatahi, and whānau members where this is a safe and appropriate option.

Online counselling has been particularly valued by parents seeking support but who face challenges with travel times. The flexibility of later sessions has made this option even more appealing, with counsellors available to hold sessions in the evenings.

Music Therapy



Music therapy has become a popular offering at Skylight, especially for younger tamariki and rangatahi, or those who may struggle to express the challenges they are facing through words alone. Music therapy has been offered for individuals as well as sibling and whānau sessions.



Creative Arts Therapy (CAT)

"The perfect setting to be supported and be given licence to run free! Priceless"



'All of it! A wee taste of heaven'

Creative Arts Therapists are now available across all our counselling regions, with many whānau gravitating toward this form of support. Creative Arts Therapists have also facilitated group sessions for external services, helping participants to express feelings of grief and loss. The workshops were a resounding success, offering both therapeutic and social benefits to participants.

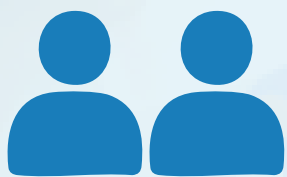
The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

AWHI MAI AWHI ATU - Counselling In Schools

Students' mental health is strongly linked to their engagement, achievement and school attendance. Awhi Mai Awhi Atu Counselling in Schools is an initiative which began in 2021 with the aim of providing evidence-based counselling support in primary and intermediate schools, to help young people thrive at school.

Skylight is the largest provider of Awhi Mai Awhi Atu school-based counselling in Aotearoa, delivering services in partnership with the Ministry of Education across 32 schools located in the South Canterbury, Waikato, and Wellington regions.

TOP FOUR REFERRAL REASONS 1 JUL 2024 – 30 JUN 2025



490
REFERRALS



5,539
THERAPUTIC
SESSIONS



158 BEHAVIOUR



74 EMOTIONAL
REGULATION



63 ANXIETY



51 FAMILY ISSUES

During the period three new schools were added to the programme. An additional creative arts therapist has also been contracted in the mid-Waikato and there has been a 159% increase in the number of group programmes delivered in Skylight's Awhi Mai Awhi Atu (CIS) schools.



Findings from the Education Review Office (ERO) evaluation highlight a range of strongly positive outcomes from the Counselling in Schools programme.

Students who receive support demonstrate significant improvements in psychological wellbeing, with lasting positive effects. Notably, the greatest gains are observed among students experiencing the highest levels of distress, indicating the programme's effectiveness in reaching and supporting those with the most critical needs.

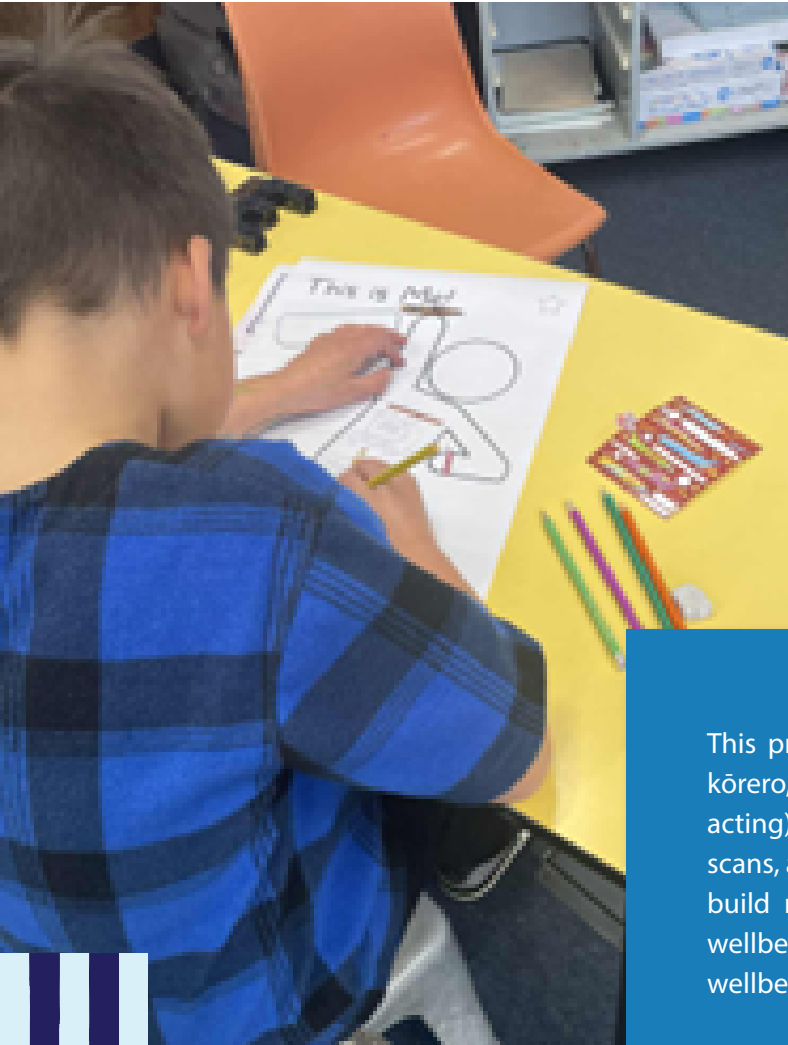
“ The learning support team have been bringing in students who are socially anxious to meet with me as drop-ins to see if they will feel comfortable in the therapy room - all have been keen to move forward with a referral. I attribute this to the calming powers of plasticine! ”

School counsellor

Kaiako (teachers) have commented that they have seen an increase in attendance from ākonga that have accessed counselling.

PROGRAMMES

Tai-oranga (Healing Tide) is a 4-hour school-based wellbeing programme for tamariki aged 7-9 years old. In the past 12 months, the programme has been delivered to 350 tamariki, bringing the total to 579 participants across nine schools, since its launch in 2022.



This programme includes a combination of psychoeducation, kōrero, movement-based activities (such as dance, yoga, and acting), mindfulness practices (including deep breathing, body scans, and positive self-talk), and artwork. These activities aim to build resilience and enhance emotional, social, and physical wellbeing, increasing an understanding in maintaining wellbeing and emotional regulation.

"Thanks for telling us how to deal with our emotions"

Matika (Stand Strong) is an 8-week programme that supports tamariki aged 6–12 who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Matika offers tamariki a safe space to connect with peers who have faced similar losses. Through shared activities and guided support, participants explore ways to understand and express their grief, build coping strategies, and maintain a sense of connection to the person who has died.



"It seems to be bang on in speaking to the kids at the right level, doing fun and interesting activities at the right level too. The fact that it is grief specific. Plus, the staff! Amazing."



Pathfinders is a one-day (6-hour) programme for young women and non-binary rangatahi aged 12 to 16 years, promoting wellbeing through the exploration of identity.

In partnership with the Ministry of Youth Development, this year, Skylight has delivered Pathfinders to 836 young people, across fifteen schools. Since 2023, the programme has been delivered to 1459 young people across twenty-one schools in the Wellington region and one school in the Waikato.

Pathfinders explores the theme of identity through whakapapa, whānau and me. Participants engage with these themes through kōrero, creative arts (drawing, weaving, collage), games, curated music, and video. Outcomes include improvements in wellbeing, confidence, resilience, and a sense of connectedness.

"I have learnt more about coping with challenges that I might face in the future"

"A real benefit that I know the wahine got from this, was connection with the others in the group....it was great to see them all working together."

Travellers

For over two decades, the Travellers programme has supported rangatahi as they navigate the challenges of adolescence. Designed for Year 9 students transitioning into secondary school, the programme helps young people explore change, build resilience, and develop tools for navigating life's difficulties.

This year marked another step forward in our mission to support the wellbeing of young people across Aotearoa.



Reach

75 schools from across the country joined the programme, creating safe spaces for their students to reflect, connect, and grow.



Student Voices

More than 14,200 rangatahi took part in the Travellers wellbeing survey, offering invaluable insights into their experiences and needs.



Building Local Expertise

We delivered sixteen facilitator trainings in communities spanning Tokoroa, Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Whangārei, Hamilton, Dunedin, and Napier, ensuring schools and youth workers are well-equipped to guide the next generation.

"I can communicate easier with people, it has increased my confidence and knowing there are people in my life that help and support me, we do activities that require thinking about the people who are there for you."

Travellers 2.0 – Modernising for the Next Generation

In 2025, we began the most significant refresh of Travellers since its launch in 2001. Travellers 2.0 is designed to reflect the diverse voices and realities of today's rangatahi, with updated language, visuals, and enhanced Māori and Pasifika representation. New topics—such as self-image, stress, identity, and relationships—ensure the programme remains relevant and impactful. Set to pilot in 2026, Travellers 2.0 represents a collective effort to create a refreshed, relatable programme

WAVES

After many years of delivering this programme and training facilitators, Waves now moves to a Charitable Trust deeply connected to its roots. With 143 facilitators trained to deliver Waves to whānau bereaved by suicide across Aotearoa, we leave a solid legacy. Skylight is confident it is in safe, and caring hands for the future.



Parenting through Separation

Skylight facilitators deliver the Parenting through Separation programme across Wellington, Porirua, Kāpiti, and Lower Hutt, supporting parents to navigate separation with their children's wellbeing at the heart. In small, supportive groups, parents connect with others in similar situations and work on practical parenting plans—clear, flexible, and Family Court-free. Two hundred and twenty five people attended this course over the year

Te Korowai

Te Korowai is a resilience-based well-being programme for aged 7-12 years designed to help tamariki cope positively with change and loss. It aims to improve wellbeing, capacity to cope and resilience. It was developed with Te Āti Awa and kaumatua input, reviewed by the Pou Ārahi and has been socialised with iwi in the Waikato.

This programme has been piloted across the Waikato during 2025. There have been both single and mixed gender participants, from school years 5 - 8 (ages 10 – 13).

Based on its success this year, we will be extending the pilot next year.

MEDIA

In April during **Music Therapy Week 2025**, Rick Berry who provides music therapy at Skylight, was interviewed by Radio Active. Rick highlighted that;



'Music therapy is a great way to connect with people. It is something we all have as part of our identity. We use it as a way to express ourselves - it is really powerful. Connecting with tamariki through the music that they love creates meaningful moments. It tells a story of who they are and what matters to them. It can be a safe way to support their wellbeing.'

RNZ National - morning programme in June featured senior counselling co-ordinator, Benjamin Jensen – Talking to kids about death

Ben stressed the need to use 'concrete' words rather than euphemisms like 'passed away,' to ensure you are not misunderstood when talking to tamariki about death. Up to the age of nine kids can have 'magical thinking,' which means their imaginations can run wild with mis information and self-blame. We want them to make sure that we are being really clear with (children) about what death is, so they don't think that – A. it is reversible or B. start to blame themselves.

"We don't want them trying to figure it out for themselves."

RESOURCES

We provided 714 resource emails and printed packs to individuals, education providers, and support services during the year. Each one offered practical guidance and reassurance on difficult challenges such as grief, trauma, suicide, family change, illness, and neurodiversity—helping people find the support they need when it matters most.

"Thank you SO much for your speedy reply and all the information/links etc. Fabulous, and will certainly be helpful as I wrap around this family."

PUBLICATIONS

Our publications continue to be well-received and widely distributed. In March 2025, we launched a new booklet titled *Change and Loss* (aimed at young people), which we have had great feedback on. This new release replaces the older publication, *Understanding the Losses Children and Teenagers Face*, as part of an ongoing revamp of our materials that began with the successful release of *Grief is Like a Huge Wave* last year.

Over the past year, we have seen an increase in publication orders from a diverse range of locations. We received orders from hospitals in Adelaide and Perth, counsellors in the UK, and Tasmania. Schools continue to represent the majority of our customer base. The peak time for orders still seems to be at the start of the school year.

The most popular publications in 24/25 were;

- ✧ *Colours of Grief* series of books
- ✧ *Grief is Like a Huge Wave*
- ✧ Our range of information leaflets for Children and Adults
- ✧ *Change and Loss*

STATEMENT OF PERFORMANCE

WHAT DID WE DO? WHEN DID WE DO IT?

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Working with Community Education Providers (Number of active education partners in the year)	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
<i>Based on the need in the community Skylight works with education providers to deliver information and education on well-being, resilience mental agility and programmes</i>	171	169	125
Providing clinical interactions with children and young people (no of interactions in the year)	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
<i>Skylight team interacts with children, young people whānau, and communities. These individual and group interactions can be for counselling, bereavement support, resilience workshops, etc.</i>	7,610	6,100	5,349
Working with whānau (Number of workshop participants in the year)	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
<i>Skylight provides information and training workshops offering practical advice to help parents understand and manage the needs of their children during challenging times like separation.</i>	225	241	204
Resource Material (Number of free resource pack recipients in the year)	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
<i>Skylight provides information and resources to help people during challenging times like grief, loss or relationship breakdown.</i>	714	676	567

SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

The Financial Statements have been prepared following an independent audit conducted by Moore Markhams Wellington. This summary of Financial Performance has been extracted from the full Performance Report. Please note that this summary does not include all disclosures required under the Public Benefit Entity Standards applicable to not-for-profit entities in New Zealand. As such, it should not be relied upon to provide a complete understanding of the organisation's financial position.

The summary financial statements have been prepared in accordance with PBE FRS-43:

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For the year ended 30 June 2025, Skylight Trust recorded:



Total Revenue

\$2,547,556 (2024: \$2,468,590)



Total Expenses

\$2,502,312 (2024: \$2,112,102)



Total Surplus

\$45,244 (2024: \$356,488)

Revenue was primarily from government contracts **(\$2,120,190)**, with additional income from donations, grants, publications, and rental revenue. Expenses mainly related to service delivery **(\$1,605,573)** and administration (\$815,881).

FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2025



Total Assets:
\$1,320,132 (2024: \$1,228,380)



Total Liabilities:
\$367,399 (2024: \$320,891)



Net Assets / Accumulated Funds:
\$952,733 (2024: \$907,489)

Accumulated funds comprise



General Reserve:
\$137,998



Flashlight Fund:
\$22,262



Accumulated Surpluses:
\$792,473

CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 30 June 2025, Skylight Trust had



Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities: **\$43,096 (2024: \$258,833)**



Closing Cash Balance: **\$654,093 (2024: \$584,699)**

A copy of the full Performance Report is available on request by contacting us at info@skylight.org.nz

Note: This Summary Financial Report has been extracted from the audited Performance Report of Skylight Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025. It does not include all disclosures required under Public Benefit Entity Standards. For a full understanding of the financial position and performance, readers should refer to the complete Performance Report, available on request at info@skylight.org.nz or via our website.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS

Thank you to our contract partners and funders, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Youth Development, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Tū Ora Compass Health, and valued partners Dentons, Child Cancer Foundation, New Zealand Defence Force and New World Wellington City.

Also, a huge thank you to the generous donors who supported us with grants and one off donations – Lotteries, ANZ Staff Foundation, Bupa Foundation, Brooklyn Central Health, Haven Falls Community Trust, Sam Turner, GreenCycle, Vonnie and Dave Marshall, Eugene Gibney, Juno Legal, Shivneel Singh, Tregaskis Brown, The Good Registry and many others. To our regular donors and supporters, TF Hughes, L Patterson, Willis Bond (M McGuiness), PM Hesketh, your continued kindness is so very much appreciated.

Donations contribute to the cost of valuable counselling sessions for those tamariki and rangatahi who would otherwise be unable to afford it.