

WAIARIKI WHĀNAU MENTORING

KO TE WHĀNAU TE RITO | FAMILY IS CENTRAL



FOREWORD

THIS IS A STORY OF HOPE AND CONNECTEDNESS.

Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) is an organisation built upon partnerships, trust and a deep respect for the indigenous people of Aotearoa. In telling this story, and in sharing the experiences of the tāne and whānau impacted, the privilege is ours.

On the pages that follow lay a partnership developed upon faith and potential. From the outset of our relationship, PSN witnessed such passion and determination among the team of Waiariki Whānau Mentoring (WWM). A determination to envision a new life for whānau and tamariki connected to gang culture.

This is a new world kaupapa. A kaupapa dedicated to working differently within the hard spaces and places on the fringe of society.

This is work that required all of us to take risks, to open our hearts and minds to experiences and ways of being that we might not have experienced before.

Our journey together required a true leap of faith, learning together as we grew in our commitment to this unfolding impact.



The stories and outcomes that echo on each page are shared with aroha and respect. They are shared in the hope that each individual and organisation it reaches feel a sense of support for this new way of working, seeing each contributor as a person full of potential.

This report was captured, written and designed by Claire Mance (Talk) and Denise Bijoux (Catalyse), who brought vulnerability, compassion and evidence to its development. It is a report captured in support of WWM's sustainability, growth and success.

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Chief Executive.

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INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to WWM. We are a Māori owned and operated organisation with a Charitable Purpose. We provide mentoring programmes and advocacy services designed to make positive changes in the lives of whānau connected to gang culture. These people live in marginalised communities within vulnerable populations where anti-social behaviours, harm and abuse have been normalised.

Our vision to see a stronger and more positive Māori presence and participation in all aspects of New Zealand society starts with supporting one whānau at a time, transitioning every person we engage with from dependency to independence. Independence means something different for everyone, and our service tailors itself to what matters to the people we work with.

In helping our people to become independent and strong using whānau first therapies, concepts and ideas, we are also reducing Māori participation in areas such as criminal offending and incarceration. In turn, our work helps to reduce re-offending, re-incarceration, drug harm and whānau harm.

Our programmes and services use approaches that are grounded in te ao Māori and principles of faith, hope and love. A comprehensive network of partners and community-based providers and organisations include iwi and our Treaty Partner, the New Zealand government.

In addition to the authentic grassroots relationships we have with the leadership groups of gangs who are willing to work with WWM, we have equally strong relationships with wahine, rangatahi and tamariki. We can walk into their spaces in an atmosphere of trust and respect. We are the trusted provider in this space in the Bay of Plenty and we are seeing successes for whole whānau.

“What WWM do is that they have a foot in the door, because they have the relationships and mana with gangs. They are the only group I know who has this – their sole focus is about fringe whānau; they are the only ones dedicated to that. These are the ones that are often neglected and marginalised – too hard. No one else is working in that space across our region.”

~ TREATY PARTNER EMPLOYEE

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FRINGE WHĀNAU

From a gang perspective, geography is delineated by gang colours. The reach of WWM is, however, not. While we are located in Whakatāne, where Black Power is the established gang, we work with the willing from any gang. And, as of October 2020, we have worked with over 120 whānau from many different iwi and hapū from different parts of the eastern Bay of Plenty. These whānau all have gang affiliations and may be in rival gangs.

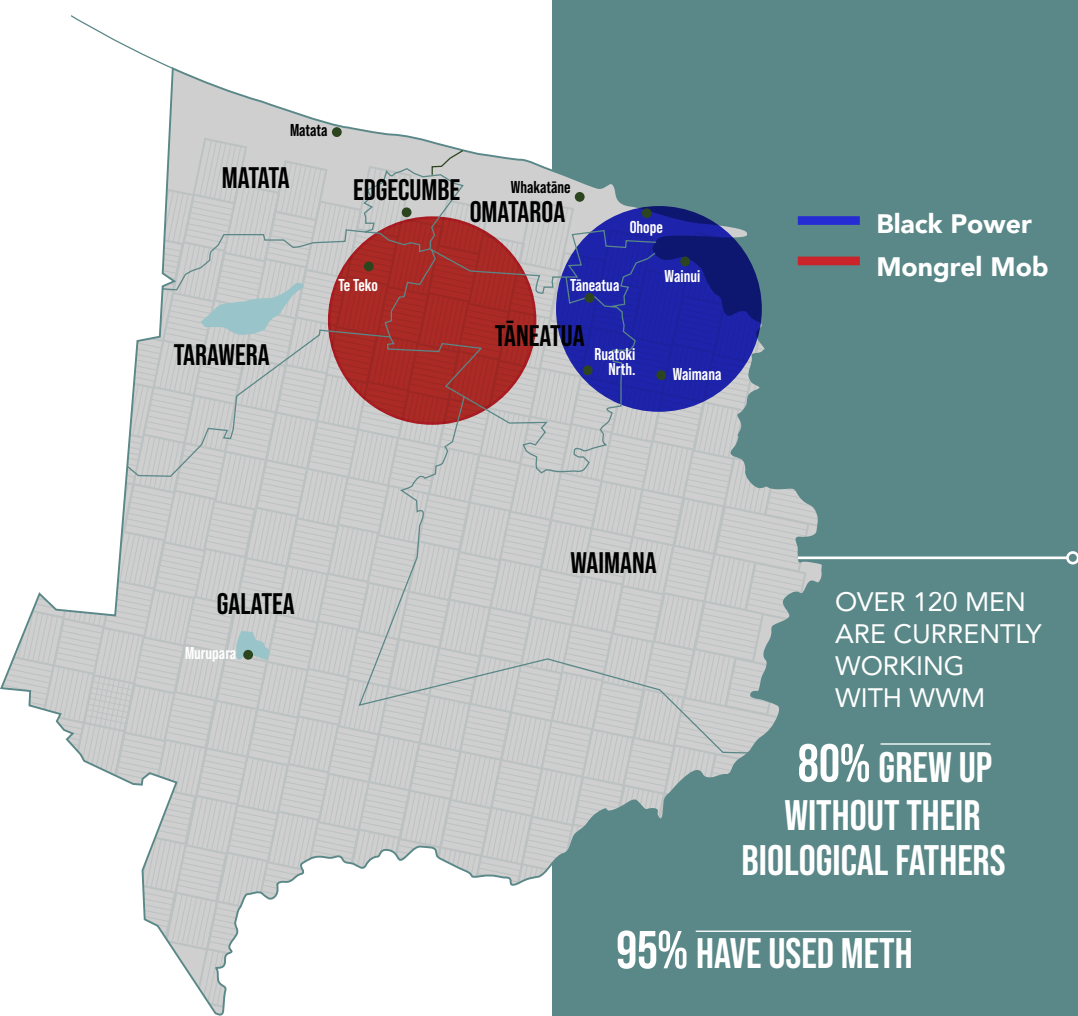
For over 40 years, fringe whānau have not featured on the radar of the social services sector in a way that is meaningful to their positive change and independence. Change, in recent times, has come from within the gang.

Gang whānau have, for example, been a catalyst of change in all aspects of what it is to be a Māori gang member in New Zealand today. Leadership now comes with a mindset that is immersed in tikanga Māori, Whānaungatanga, rangatiratanga, wairuatanga and manaakitanga. While these changes are relatively recent, the embrace

of these values by gang rangatira is having an inspirational effect on the gang and gang members. Indirectly, wives, girlfriends and children are also benefiting from these changes and perceptions by the wider community are beginning to change.

Through their work with the leadership group of the Black Power in Whakatāne, WWM have been able to connect to similar minded rangatira from other gangs such as the Mongrel Mob. Having a shared desire to address the issues around meth is one such example where WWM has been able to act as a conduit to allow dialogue and discussion to take place between these two gangs.

Understanding the bigger picture in the first instance is important when looking at the changes that are happening within the movement in small but significant ways. For gang tāne and their whānau wanting to change, WWM are the only provider they trust. They hear about our work from other whānau like them and these testimonies not only give them the motivation to change but also the conviction to act on that change. Our unconditional love for them, our hope and our deep faith



Black Power
Mongrel Mob

OVER 120 MEN ARE CURRENTLY WORKING WITH WWM

80% GREW UP WITHOUT THEIR BIOLOGICAL FATHERS

95% HAVE USED METH

60% HAVE BEEN TO PRISON

in their abilities to create good lives for themselves and their whānau enables us to work authentically alongside them, building trust and relationships as we go. Because we have trust and relationships with them, and because we come through for them and get the work done, WWM can bring them together for the betterment of whānau.

Gang leadership now comes with a mindset that is immersed in tikanga Māori, whānaungatanga, rangatiratanga, wairuatanga and manaakitanga.

TERRITORIES, BRAVERY AND A NEW WORLD KAUPAPA

The territories of gangs are typically undetected within our communities. But if you're part of a gang, you'll be acutely aware of where your boundary lies, and where you can be without making trouble. There is a code of conduct that is well known by the gangs, and that must be abided.

When the Mongrel Mob President died in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, his gang whānau wished to bring him back to the place that would maintain the continuity of his whakapapa lines - in the heart of Whakatāne. This resting place lies right at the heart of Black Power territory.

Just two years earlier, under similar circumstances, gang rivalry broke out, with whānau hurt over territorial lines.

This recent 'gang war' still lies heavy in hearts and minds of those involved, and the younger generation knew there was risk in what the Mob wanted to do.

An exchange of phone calls was made across the regions' respective chapters to see if the Mob could arrange a smooth ride in honour of their deceased leader. Both gangs knew they had to try and do things differently this time, without violence, and with mana.

It comes down to respect. It's tikanga Māori principles actually coming to play here, and this kind of allowance and acceptance to pave the way for 300 Mongrel Mob members to ride through their town untouched had never been done before.

To show respect was going to be a huge shift and the only way to honour that tikanga. But with such pressure laid upon the acknowledgment of this safe passage, WWM were called upon to broker this kōrero - something only made possible by the connections woven and respected through their mahi.

"We gave them a gift. We brought them into the heart of our Whānau."

It's about gangs collaborating, and the role of WWM has been fundamental in paving the way forward for gangs to leave their patch or their attitudes behind and honour themselves and their whānau. This is Te Ao Māori principles working, and it shows a new way forward. This is an incredible demonstration of this kaupapa and model of care, and how much it means to the tāne and whānau embracing it.

"We're trying to stop our men from being in hospital, in jail or in the ground - we are all family - we have to work together as a family."

"It's tikanga Māori principles actually coming to play here, this kind of allowance and acceptance to pave the way for 300 Mongrel Mob members to ride through their town untouched had never been down before."

50%+ HAVE NUMERACY AND LITERACY ISSUES

LOCKDOWN LED TO A 120% INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR WWM'S SERVICES

HAKI'S JOURNEY

"I never thought I would see my daughter again, I never thought I would drive, they don't give jobs to people like me. But now, I have a Whānau again. I have changed."

READ HAKI'S STORY ON PAGE 7

Removed from whānau in Whakatāne and relocated to Auckland.

Admitted to Juvenile Detention.

Ongoing reoffending and incarceration.

Left Auckland gang life.

Relocated to Whakatāne.

Accepted into Waiariki Whānau Mentoring Programme & attended noho marae.

Enrolled to study.

Reconnected with his daughter.

Successfully obtained his licence.

TRENT'S JOURNEY

"When I was in jail, I was just dreaming of being a better dad, and when I got out, I wanted to be able to take my daughter to school."

READ TRENT'S STORY ON PAGE 8

Recruited to the gang at 14 years of age.

Became a father at the age of 18.

Began using meth at the age of 19.

Coping with domestic violence and drug use.

Imprisoned for a 12 month period.

Released from prison and attended 3 x noho marae visits with WWM.

Began collecting his children from school everyday.

Offered a role as a Teacher Aide.

HARLEM'S JOURNEY

"My whole thing now is that if I can help others, 'cos of the things I have seen in my lifetime, I want to be the person that picks up people at that crossroad."

READ HARLEM'S STORY ON PAGE 9

Lost his mother as a young child.

Recruited into gang life at the age of 13.

Sentenced to 3-5 years jail time.

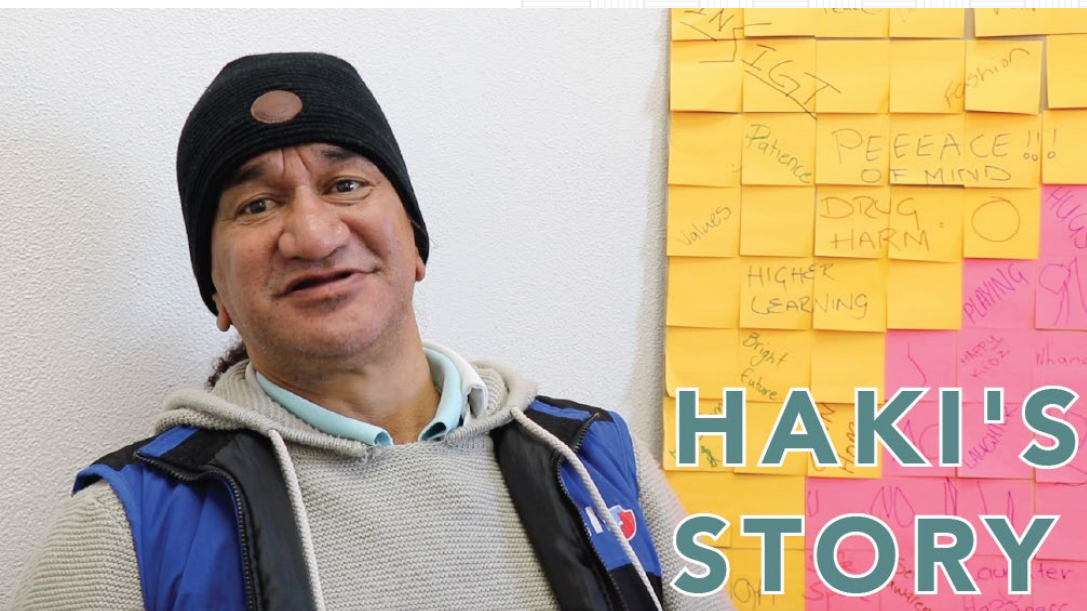
Supported by his partner - and mother of his child - throughout.

First daughter was born.

Attended his first noho marae as part of his probation.

Reduced his probationary period.

Now working to support other young men.



Haki was still on probation when he joined the WWM family. He was reassured by Waata, WWM's Founder, that there weren't any expectations for him to speak or do anything to prepare for his first session.

In Haki's mind, WWM was something to help him finish his probation faster. He knew it was Māori based and it sounded different to the other programmes he usually got sent on.

It hasn't been easy for Haki, spending most of his life connected with the justice and social system, from just three years of age.

"I was never one to listen to the system. The system wasn't born for me."

Placed in foster care homes, he never experienced a stable and consistent home. Often mentally abused and deprived, showing weakness and emotion was far too risky.

"We were put in a cupboard with a hole so we could smell the kai."

The abuse and misplacement of Haki as a child is unfortunately a common story for many of the tāne in the care of the corrections system of Aotearoa. His journey now inspirational to those willing to listen.

Haki began to open up during his first noho marae with WWM, amongst a quiet room full of current and ex gang members. But this is not a place where a patch actually matters. This is a place where whānau, and the tāne themselves, matter.

"We all had bracelets on, we were all in the same boat. And in the end, none of us wanted to leave. We were in this together"

This is a place with no judgement. A place to feel accepted no matter your background or what mistakes you've made. There's something that is given freely here, and that is aroha. It's just the way WWM do things, a programme unlike any other, run by Māori for Māori. And whānau is central to its success!

Supporting the tāne to change their relationships with their partners and their tamariki has helped many of the

"To have my kids say I love you dad, that's everything"

men reconnect with their whānau, and their support system.

Haki now helps with the programme and makes time to share his story and encourage others on their journey. He's considered whānau at WWM and wants to help open the doors for others who have taken a pathway just like him.

Having previously been suspended indefinitely from driving on the roads of Aoteroa, Haki has since been able to study and regain his full driver's licence, something he says he felt would never be possible.

"If you ever think you are alone on this journey, you are not. That is what WWM taught me."



Trent was born in Whakatāne, and raised by his father while his mother was working. His father joined the gang and was patched up at 19 years of age. Trent was recruited to the gang when he was 14 years of age.

At the age of 12, Trent began smoking marijuana, and got into harder drugs like methamphetamine from about the age of 19.

Trent became a father at 18 years old.

"I was learning how to be a father, and I wasn't doing too good."

During that time, he saw himself become more violent with his partner, and was imprisoned soon after.

"When I was in jail, I was just dreaming of being a better dad, and when I got out, I wanted to be able to take my daughter to school."

Trent was released from prison just 12 months ago now, and his growth and ability to talk and connect with the Waiariki Whānau has been inspirational.

Trent's Probation Officer didn't think that WWM was really a Māori course, and because Trent hadn't had much to do with Te Reo, he believe she didn't feel he would benefit from attending.

"I came to the first Noho - I didn't say anything, but I seen and heard a few other gang members talking and opening up."

When Trent left that day, he still had his walls up, no one had cracked him, and he didn't want to let anyone get

through. He wanted to feel like he had beaten them. But what he'd been part of that day really affected him.

"It sort of did something on the inside, aye, because when I left, I really wanted to say something."

Trent was relieved when he was invited back and recalls trying to speak that time around, but found it too hard to show his feelings and let out what he needed to say.

"I couldn't speak - the words just wouldn't come out, it was just like too traumatic, aye."

On Trent's third visit to the Noho Marae, he shared his story, his hardships and good times with the others in the room. He let everyone know where he'd come from and what he'd experienced.

"I've learnt that you don't always need to be tough, it's like alright to be vulnerable sometimes."

Trent was really ready for change, and this kaupapa is for people that want to embrace change.

"I've built a wall up around myself, for 26 years, and if I let it down or take the wall apart, it might take bricks out of my armour. There's gonna be no one to help me fix it up, once it's all gets let out."

"I've been off the drugs for about 3 years now, and um, life's sort of getting good"

Trent continues to improve, and he is now learning to enjoy life on the outside with his whānau.

"I go to pick up my kids every day. The school, they must have been watching because they noticed."

When Trent went to pick up his kids from school one day he noticed a lady chasing his car! It was the Deputy Principal of the school. She asked if he wanted some mahi. Trent showed up the next day and was handed a job description for a Teacher Aide position.

Trent accepted the role and is now working to support and help the younger Tāne who are sometimes experiencing behavioural problems.

Trent has learnt so much from this kaupapa, being cared for by Waata, Teresa and Watson has clearly become an important part of his journey.

"It's like whānau, they really care about you."



HARLEM'S STORY

Harlem has come such a long way from when he drove around in his car with guns, drugs and money stashed. Harlem was invited to take part in the WWM programme at the noho marae, he missed the first session, so instead of giving up on him, they kept calling him to come.

It's a massive leap for a man who once was the main debt collector for his gang. Previously charged with attempted murder, he frequently confronted people who owed money for dope, meth, cocaine, and firearms.

"Coming here was a big step. I don't have strong family ties, so my gang brothers were my only family I thought I had."

Just 9 months ago, Harlem welcomed his daughter into the world while on home detention. Invited to join the whānau of WWM, it was arranged through his Probation Officer, through

Corrections NZ, who now have a greater understanding and respect for the work and outcomes being achieved.

Living predominantly on the streets, Harlem was just 13 when he was first recruited. Doing a lot of the dirty work, it really took its toll not just on the people he hurt, but on his own mental trauma of living in this kind of world.

"I got out of jail about a year and a half ago. I woke up in jail one day and thought I am sick of this life."

Harlem had the love of his partner, who stood by him throughout his jail sentence - for 3 out of 5 years of their relationship. She was also the mother to his daughter, so Harlem had a lot on the line. The first time Harlem heard his father tell him he loved him, he was 22 years old.

"I didn't want that. My daughter and WWM gave me a reason to do this. They gave me a reason to want to change."

Waata and the others at WWM have been in constant contact with Harlem, perhaps just a phone call asking what he was up to and inviting him back to the group.

"Since I've been here, there's been a big change in me. I've been drug free for over a year now."

Having lived a traumatic childhood that lacked any form of aroha, he lost his mother to murder at a very young age.

WWM encourage participants to share their story, when they are ready to, no matter how raw and terrifying it might sound to some people. No one is ever judged.

"You listen to the stories and you take us at face value. They pretty much draw out everything from

the deepest darkest holes in a person - break it down and help you to rebuild yourself. Drawing out the pain and rebuilding it with love."

Harlem is now helping others that have experienced the hard life that he has, sharing his story so that others can share theirs too. The one thing Harlem wants to do to continue his journey is to help others.

"My whole thing now is that if I can help others, 'cos of the things I have seen in my lifetime, I want to be the person that picks up people at that crossroad."

I want to show them that they have a good man on this side of the crossroad that can help them."

Love is 24/7 - I just didn't understand that. Respect is what I've seen here - for me this is true aroha.

OUR APPROACH

“They approach their work from a Māori perspective and I think the model of care from mana-based, whānau-based work preserves the mana of the individuals they are working with which in turn gives them a much stronger chance of success.” — ANONYMOUS

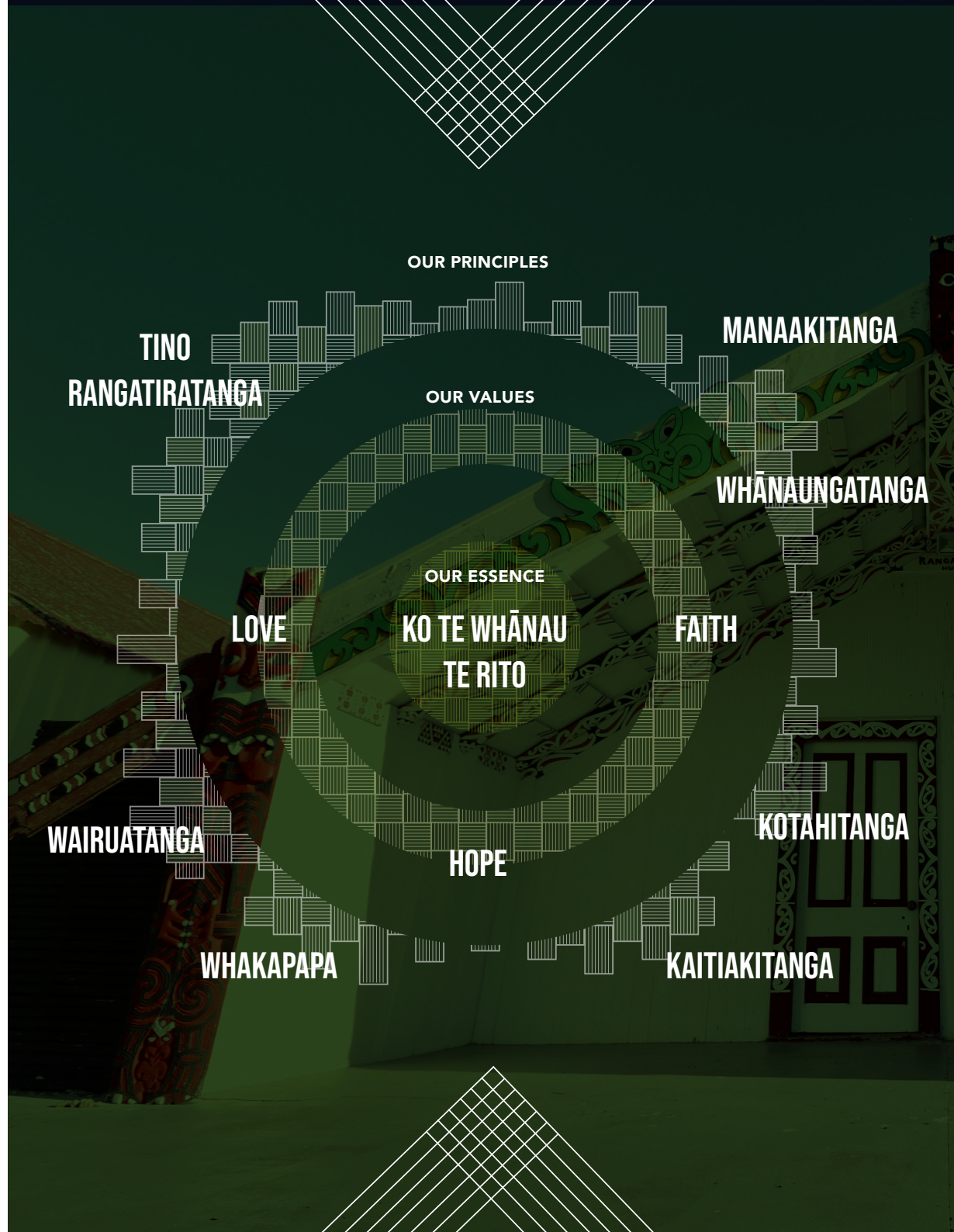
WWM's intent is to support fringe whānau by reducing reoffending, drug harm, incarceration, and whānau harm in order to live good lives that matter to them.

Whānau is central to all of our work. We operate in a tikanga Māori way, working with values-based approaches to advance goals that assist tāne and their whānau to move from crisis and/or trauma into recovery, resettlement and independence. Our values and principles underpin all we do.

We believe that fringe whānau want to make positive changes in their lives and are most likely to engage with support when they are experiencing trauma and/or crisis.

We also believe that successful support includes advocacy, mentoring, brokering, coaching and 24/7 pastoral care leading to reintegration into the community.

Whānau benefit from support at home and in places such as the marae. Group work is as important as individual and whānau work.



MODEL OF CARE

Our practice model is a 48 week model that involves four stages of up to 12 weeks each.

1 WAI PARE: a referral, assessment and planning stage. We follow up referrals within 24 hours by meeting whānau in their home, something no other provider does. Immediately after a referral is a hugely vulnerable and volatile time so this helps us build trust and relationship as we work out between us what both the needs and the strengths of the client are. As a result, fear and judgement diminish and whānau grow in confidence to face their trauma and crisis and work through it to create better lives.

2 WAI ORA: a recovery, management, training and service provision stage that includes noho marae and connection to whakapapa. Rather than starting with a noho marae in Stage 1, taking time to talk and listen with whānau helps us set them up for success at a noho in Stage 2. This stage also includes Te Tepu mentoring services, Learning for 'Life', our Working to 'Live' programme and meeting with whānau regularly in their home and in groups as well as phone and online conversations.

3 WAI MAHURU: a resettlement, ownership and working towards reduced dependencies on services stage that includes support into further training and paid work. This stage focuses on connecting the person back into community by way of further training or full time work. The person and their whānau continue to address the hurt they carry whilst functioning as close to normal as is possible.

4 WAI WĀTEA: a follow up, embedding and release stage where WWM withdraws from active participation in the person's life but continues to be there for them as needed. Whānau take ownership of themselves, their lifestyles and how they can remain on track with their predetermined goals, aims and objectives.

Each stage includes advocating, mentoring, brokering, coaching and an intensive pastoral care programme which is available to whānau 24/7. Whānau are also helped with financial and budgeting support as well as with finding accommodation and other needs that are regarded as critical and essential.

* Wai flows through all four of our pou because we are all mostly wai, we are born of wai and we travel through our lives as wai travels through the land and sea scapes. Moving through these four wais allows us to recentre and restart.

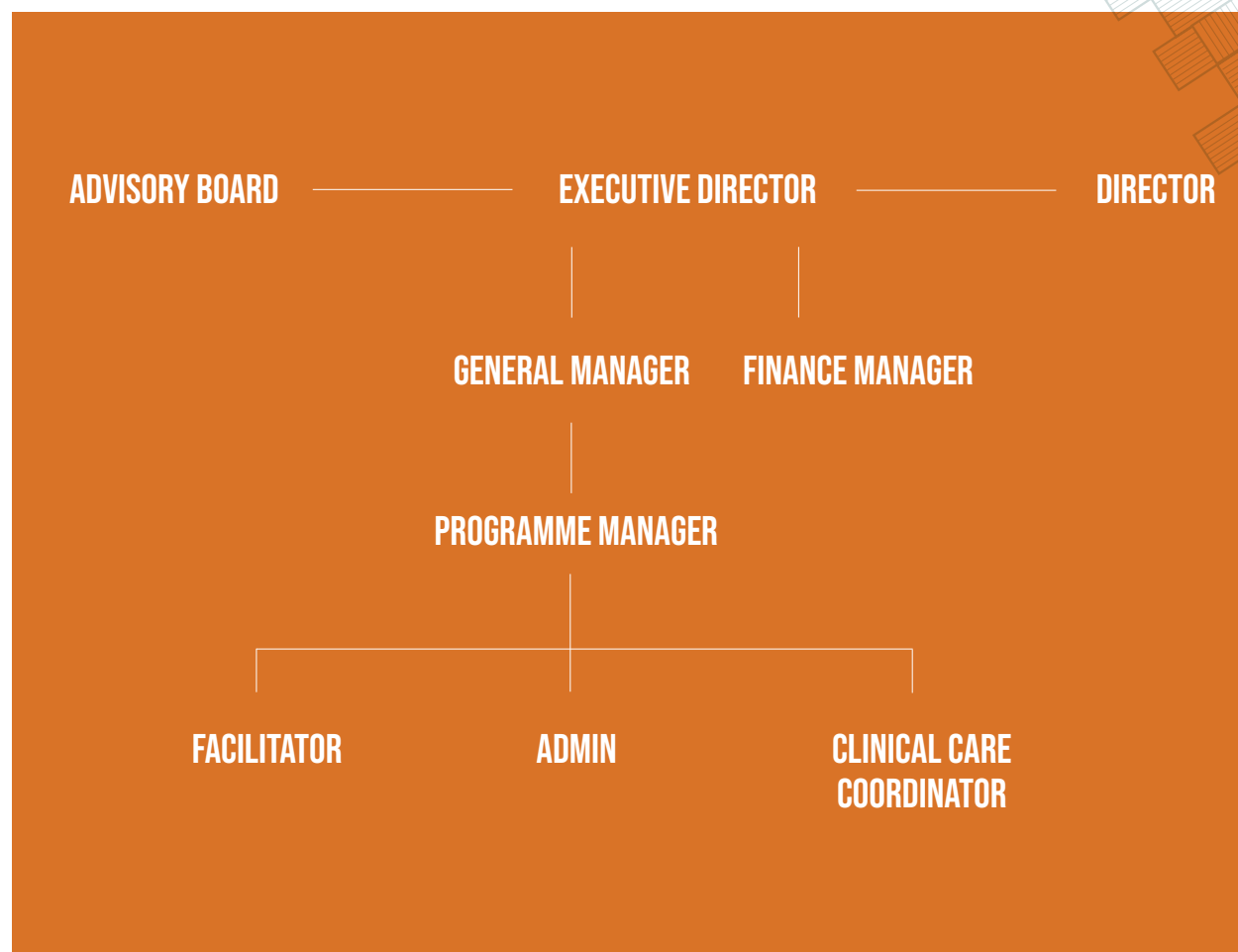


OUR ORGANISATION

“Anything is possible when respect is in play, when aroha is in place. When those two things are present building bridges between worlds - I’m not saying it’s easy but it’s doable and it can be done. WWM are doing it.” — VOLUNTEER

We are a young organisation. Established in 2018, and drawing on our previous experiences in the Police, Armed Forces and government departments as well lived experience, we now work with 120 whānau in crisis from across the eastern Bay of Plenty (up from 50 in 2019). To deliver our mahi we have a growing team, ably supported by an Advisory Board.

“The experience that Waata and WWM have working specifically with whānau connected to the gang space, with men who have been incarcerated, with men who have what look to be quite intimidating backgrounds, is absolutely indispensable and it is a real point of difference. I think they fill a real gap in the community. They are reaching people who are falling through the cracks and giving them a new lease on life.”



OUR JOURNEY & WHAT'S NEXT

2018

Waata (who held the vision) and Watson (who then implemented that vision) talked about working with fringe whānau connected to gang space by putting families at the centre.

Secured office and got the kaupapa off the ground.

Commissioner for Central Region of Corrections heard about WWM and met with them which led to further talks and an invitation to tender for a contract.

2019

Connected with Presbyterian Support Northern.

First funding received in May - with Corrections NZ - for specific services, (not core funding) - and other small amounts of funding from Bay Trust.

First significant funding - "Without PSN we wouldn't even be here now. "They helped us forge our future."

Started working with 30 men, first noho marae, recruited volunteers and first whānau champions onboard. Working with 50 men by the end of 2019.

2020

Very high trust with gangs by the beginning of 2020 - some refusing to work with other providers.

March - May 2020: Covid-19 Lockdown saw a 120% increase in demand from gang whānau - 116 further requests for services during lockdown 4 and 3.

Secured additional funding via Bay Trust, PSN, and Ministry of Social Development. Secured new premises and recruited 2 more employees.

8 men graduated, 11 in employment, 1 self employed, 6 in further training, working with 120 families with a further 70+ on the waitlist. WWM now has 7 employees in total.

2021

Working to build collaborative partnerships with local iwi. A continued focus on building strong supporting networks and relationships.

Developing cross-regional outcomes and opportunities.

Developing leadership capacity and the ability to generate sustainable funding streams.

Recruiting a Finance Manager and a General Manager.

CONCLUSION

We have supported over 120 tāne and their whānau affiliated to a range of local iwi and gangs since 2018.

As a result of our programme, tāne are increasingly using their values to guide their lifestyles, reconnecting with whānau and developing medium and longer term plans because they can see a positive future for themselves. This is because they trust WWM, have opened up about their trauma and now know how to reach out for support as well as because they are discovering te ao Māori and their rangatiratanga.

The men themselves say they are growing in confidence see themselves as “having a contribution to make” to their communities as a direct result of working with WWM.

Working with the things that are important to them means the men and their whānau know they are important to WWM. These changes mean that 36% of the 50 Tāne WWM worked with in 2019 are now in paid work; none of them are current users of meth and only one has re-entered prison.

Anchoring these successes is our values-based kaupapa of faith, hope and love centred around whānau. We notice that positive change happens for those that are willing and that releasing trauma brings great joy as it enhances the men’s mana. Men’s mana is enhanced through the WWM programmes and they are increasingly comfortable telling their stories to strangers.

The telling of stories is “equalising”, with Treaty Partner employees not only listening to stories but sharing their own as well. This is directly strengthening their partnerships with government agencies. Supporters and partners see “a level of mana” in these gang men that they didn’t see before and find their own preconceptions of gangs and gang whānau “challenged in a good way”. WWM are also increasingly connected with local iwi and we are seeing small positive changes with regard to perceptions of gangs and gang whānau among iwi.

These successes, connections and partnerships mean WWM are highly

respected in fringe whānau communities and increasingly well known. We now have a committed volunteer workforce and a waiting list that we are working to reduce by growing our team to meet demand and sustain the quality of our service.

PSN CONTINUE TO SUPPORT WWM WITH GENERATING MORE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING STREAMS.

LOCKDOWN LED TO A 120% INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR WWM’S SERVICES

THIS IS WHĀNAU DRIVEN INNOVATION

“This is whānau innovation, driven by the heart to better support needs of marginalised whānau – especially gang Whānau. The strengths are that it is whānau driven innovation - no one else is doing that. We need better fit funding pathways that are better fit for whānau movements like WWM.”

— TREATY PARTNER

There are two worlds (Māori and Pākeha), two different ways of thinking. I’m not saying that one world is right and other is wrong but that they are different and in order for us [Māori] to move forward we need to be able to communicate like we are here, on the marae. WWM can bridge those worlds, absolutely.

— VOLUNTEER.

“I just like that it’s a place it’s a safe place to talk about things that are troubling you and that its no judgment. I was scared at first. For me, it’s like I built a wall up around myself, my 26 years, but for me, it’s like if I take that wall apart take bricks out of my armour there’s going to be no one to help me fix it up once it’s all out, who’s gonna help me put that shit back in line once it’s all out? That’s what I was scared of but I learnt that it’s alright, there’s people here and they will help you.”

— TĀNE PARTICIPANT.





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