



ON A MISSION

Your Generosity Changing Lives

WHAKAMARU – OPENING THIS YEAR

Building a Community Where There Is 'No Us and Them'.

Whakamaru, a name gifted by mana whenua meaning 'to shelter, to safeguard, and to protect' is a game-changing building for Wellington. It will reshape the way we support our community, and ensure The Mission can be here for even more people in our region.

Whakamaru will be a home for all Wellingtonians. It will be a place where everyone can feel a sense of belonging, where we can all take part in a more compassionate and caring society and better respond to the challenges we face together!

Located on Oxford Terrace, near the Basin Reserve, Whakamaru is an ambitious project. Open to anyone 24/7, it will be a place where The Mission, alongside our supporters and volunteers, will serve our community in new ways. Crucially, it will diminish social barriers, and be a place where people can change their lives for the better.

"Whakamaru will be a life-changing intervention: for the people who need the services, but more so for the people who come to help."

– Murray Edridge, Wellington City Missioner

Some Key Services at Whakamaru Will Include:



A 120-seat Public Café,
where you can get great coffee, affordable kai, and a chance to connect with people you wouldn't normally meet. It will operate a pay-what-you-choose model, and also have some kitchen training capabilities.



A Social Supermarket,
where shoppers have the dignity to choose their own groceries for free.



35 supported long-term transitional housing units,
where residents will belong to a community and be supported by Mission staff.



A Medical Centre, providing affordable healthcare.

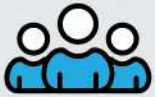
Continued...



A Sacred Space, open to all people 24/7.



Public Laundry and Shower Facilities, with some available 24/7.



It will also house the **Wellington City Mission offices**, and community spaces accessible for people and groups to use.

To find out more, please contact:

whakamaru@wcm.org.nz or visit, wellingtoncitymission.org.nz/whakamaru

A few of our manuhiri and volunteers shared their thoughts about Whakamaru!



I can't wait for it to open. I've seen the videos and it looks so welcoming, so spacious – absolutely brilliant. Being open 24/7 is a good idea because sometimes the middle of the night is the loneliest time for people, and they will have someone to talk to.

Paul



Whakamaru is going to be a community base, where people can come together. That's important because I think the last few years have shown us that we need each other and we can't do it on our own!

Sheryn



There are so many amazing people who've just been dealt a bad hand, and it's a very thin line. That's why Whakamaru's like a dream. There are going to be so many opportunities for people to volunteer, and if each of us can just make a small change in someone's life that's going to be massive!

Janet



We have to pay attention to what we're doing as a community, and do the right thing as often as we can. The Mission has created a really good vibe, it's 'no us and them', and Whakamaru will stand for the whole Wellington region.

Don





Quarterly Newsletter – February 2024

Murray's Message

I was born and grew up in the community of Wainuiomata. As you will be aware, Wainuiomata is a valley, surrounded by many hills.

change for them and new hope created for their lives and futures. It is our privilege to be able to share this journey with them.

One of my favourite hobbies as a young person was biking around those hills. Cycling on hills is a combination of different experiences – the slow painful climb up a steep incline, to be rewarded by an exhilarating free-wheeling adventure down the other side!

I have found those experiences to be a metaphor for life. Sometimes we are confronted by the enormity of the steepest hill in front of us and the challenge of the seemingly insurmountable, and sometimes we are going at speed downhill and enjoying the thrill, the delight, and the journey!

For my own whānau, this is an appropriate description of the early days of 2024; we have experienced the challenges and sadness of illness and the heartache of a much-loved parent passing away; whilst at the same time, looking forward to the imminent arrival of a new grandchild, and the pending marriage of one of our daughters.

So, we grieve, and we celebrate, all of which are part of life.

And we see these themes echoing throughout this publication; insurmountable difficulties, problems, and life challenges for some of the people who are part of our City Mission whānau, together with the hope and celebration of new opportunities and successes.

At The City Mission, we celebrate with Les, Charlene, Bruce, and many others that as we journey together we see things

The Wellington City Mission has many things to look forward to in 2024, including Te Pā Maru living into its full potential from March, Te Ō operating from early April, and the completion of the Whakamaru construction in August. There will no doubt be other highlights and celebrations throughout the year, and as for all of our lives, these will sit alongside the challenges, sadness and disappointments that are inevitable along the way.

The work of the Wellington City Mission and the things we can achieve, are only possible because of the encouragement and support of so many in our community. Together, we can ensure that the people we have the privilege to walk alongside have the best chance of living life in all of its fullness!

Ngā manaakitanga – blessings

Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12



YOU GAVE ME A SAFE PLACE TO START AGAIN

A few years ago, my relationship went sour, and I decided it was best for me to leave our home and start over. I was working full-time, but I couldn't find a house, so I started living in my car. Being the classic stubborn man I didn't want to ask for help, and I wound up doing that for about a year. You just end up adapting to it, and telling people you're all OK.

Then one day at work, I was having a bit of chest pain. I went to Wellington Hospital, where they said I was having a heart attack. Next thing I knew, I was getting ready for a quadruple heart bypass. I stayed there for a month, but then had nowhere else to recover safely. Thankfully a friend of mine really helped me out. We found emergency housing at a hotel in town, and he made sure I was getting by during the toughest part of my recovery.

Those first couple of weeks I had no money and no sickness benefit, so thankfully I was able to do a shop at The Mission's Social Supermarket. It was awesome being able to shop like in a normal supermarket, especially because you can choose food that you're actually going to eat. I only needed the Social Supermarket once, but I did end up going to the community lounge, Tā te Manawa, a few times.

It's a good vibe down there, and lots of people come up and ask you how you're doing.

Knowing you can get food if you really need it, and that you have a place to talk with people is important at times like that, because it takes a bit of stress off – especially for men who are afraid to ask for help.

After a while in my emergency housing, I found out it was closing. I still wasn't healthy enough to work, and my benefit didn't cover living costs, so I came in to meet with Kris from Te Pā Pori. At first, I didn't think living in a group was right for me. But after talking with him, and finding out more, I decided to give it a go. And I'm glad I did, because it's been the best thing that's happened for me.



Les in his room at Te Pā Pori



Les at work delivering food

The first thing you notice is the rooms are grouse, and the staff are so helpful it's not even funny! It was comforting knowing that people were around 24/7 and doing regular welfare checks. I started counselling with Peter to improve my health and well-being too. I was a bit closed off to begin with, but as it went along I got into a flow and made progress. Health-wise I've changed heaps, and that's thanks to being around caring people.

Next, I wanted to get myself to a better position in life. So as soon as I was feeling OK to work, I asked my brother who was a delivery driver for Countdown if he knew of any jobs, and there was! Now I work full-time, and it's a perfect fit because I can push myself but then take rests in between runs. I still haven't fully recovered, because as soon as I walk up stairs or a hill I need a rest.

Christmas at Te Pā was awesome too, we had a massive lunch, it brought everyone together in the spirit of Christmas. I was also invited to the Mission Toy Store to pick up a couple of presents for my young granddaughters. I bought some toys as well, and they loved all their gifts. Funny enough, on one of my runs just before Christmas I delivered a big donation to The Mission from Thankyou Payroll. It was really cool being able to tell the supermarket staff that I was actually staying with them at Te Pā Pori! It was like my life had done a 180-degree turn from a couple of years ago.

Te Pā has been a Godsend really. I hate to think of where I'd be if The Mission hadn't been here.

I'm thankful for every day that I'm alive, and I have peace of mind knowing that I'm safe. I'm looking forward to spending more time with my granddaughters, and even taking a bit of a holiday.

A big thanks to everyone who supports The Mission. What you're doing to help our community is selfless really, and I hope I can do something like that one day too.



MISSION WHĀNAU FOREVER

I've been with The Mission whānau for four years, and it's been like a positive charm for my life.

When I first came here I was a mess. I was begging on the street for over ten years, and any money I got would go straight to a pretty bad drug and alcohol habit. I've struggled with long-term mental health problems, and I just couldn't manage the normal things people do. I felt like a lost cause.

One day I saw a Mission car, and a voice inside my head said "Why not just give it a go?" I met with a Social Worker, Hayley, and for the first time I felt comfortable to share the truth about my life.

I'd never opened up to anyone like that, and all these words started coming out. Just having her talk with me made me feel special, because she listened and encouraged me. This beautiful lady gave me the lift I needed, and I could see a new door opening for myself.

Even though I had this new opportunity, for the first year or so, asking for help and making changes was tough, so sometimes I'd avoid coming in. But Hayley was always there for me, or checking in to see if I was doing OK, and that gave me a new sense of stability. I got into counselling and art therapy, and had food support if I really needed it too. I also started Financial Mentoring, so all my money would go to The Mission where my bills would get taken out directly. Then I'd pick up a \$100 New World voucher, and \$20 or so to spend or put into my savings account. I even got a KiwiSaver up and running! Soon I stopped begging on the street, and I was thankful because I really didn't want to be there.

I started coming to the community lounge, Tā te Manawa, as much as I could. I used to think it was beneath me, and I actually used to drink outside there. But once I took off that jacket, and got to know people, I went from thinking I was too



Charlene helping us with the Red Key campaign



Charlene all smiles with 'her rock' Izzy

good for the place to thinking the place was too good for me! There are some incredible people there, who have had some really bad experiences, and that's given me a new perspective on the positives I have in my life.

Now I still do have ups and downs, and there are dark times when I just want to give up on helping myself, but I have the right people around me – especially my current social worker Izzy. She's my rock.

She has this ability to bring me back to the ground so I can snap out of that bad way of thinking, and get on the go again. I'm trying my best to overcome my drug and alcohol problems, and having budgeting control has been one of the best mechanisms to stop it.

I feel like I've dug myself out of the hole I was in, now I'm on the outside filling it up!

I see it as my job to give back however I can. I can't give money, but I can give aroha (love), so I'm proud to be volunteering as a Māori Warden and as the gardener around Tā te Manawa. I've also helped collect donations for Whakamaru. That's going to be awesome, it'll be like what The Mission is doing here except ten times bigger and better!

Quite recently I've started seeing a vision of a future me. I've been doing a literacy and numeracy course, and I want to eventually be a mental health support worker because I have a lot of love for people with mental health issues. It's sad to see so many people who don't think they're worth anything, and I hope that my story inspires someone to get help for themselves. No one has to feel alone.

The Mission showed me how one person can change your life just by caring about you. That's why I love this place, and why I'm going to be a part of The Mission whānau forever!



I FINALLY FEEL WHOLE

Some years ago, my life spiralled downwards. I was studying, but the stress of it all got to me, and I went into the mental health ward. Then, just as I was recovering, Mum passed away. That hit me hard. I ended up leaving our family home, and becoming homeless.

I never felt settled, so I moved from place to place, staying with friends or in emergency housing. I even lived in various backpackers for years. I met some awesome people, but after a while, I realised that the lifestyle just wasn't for me. Shifting around like that was taking its toll. I was missing a home – somewhere I could finally feel comfortable. I looked for a better place, and that's when I was referred to The Mission.

When I first moved to Te Pā Pori, I was a little nervous, but that was quickly replaced with gratitude.

The rooms here are five star – you get your own kitchenette, a TV and internet. And when it came to meals I pulled out my money ready to pay for everything, until the other manuhiri told me we didn't have to. I didn't even have to put coins in the washing machine! I just couldn't see how it all worked, and I was waiting for the catch. But there was none, and that made me feel pretty good – I felt like I had found my home.

I'll admit it, I was a bit wary of the staff at first, because I'm not used to trusting people. But over time that changed. They have always led me on a good path. There's a lot of wisdom and experience in this place, I like listening to the other manuhiri and staff, and I can pick and choose the little nuggets that will help me in life.

Not long into being here I got a job as a kitchen hand, and after three or four months, the staff helped me find a suitable

council flat. I bought all my own furniture and moved in. Life was good, but as I continued working on myself I was ready to push further and take on a new challenge. So this year, I've been accepted to study for my certificate in Commercial Barbering. My theme for this year is to realign, refocus, and reset.

A year after leaving, I still come back to Te Pā Pori a few times a week.

I join in with group activities like quiz night, and especially karaoke on Saturday nights. I love to sing (my go-to songs are 'Wagon Wheel' and 'Mustang Sally'). It's important that I make sure I'm always respectful to this place, so I treat it like it's my home. When I'm here, I want to be here with purpose, and I'll look to help out around the place by tidying up or doing the dishes.

Looking back now, I can see that the moment I walked in here, my whole life changed. And it continues to change.

There are many obstacles in front of me, but I'm an optimistic person (sometimes annoyingly so!), and I take my experience here with me wherever I go. Being at Te Pā Pori makes you feel whole, and I wish that all the other manuhiri who come through here can succeed in life too.

To donors and everyone who makes this place run, I would say please continue. I heard someone say once, "If you can't help everyone, at least help someone". Well, you are changing men's lives because you've definitely changed mine.



LATEST UPDATE

Te Ō - a New Partnership



We're excited to announce that we've entered into a new partnership with Kāinga Ora. Together we will provide 24-hour wraparound on-site care for residents in an 80-unit apartment complex on Rolleston Street, Mount Cook. The brand-new homes will be spacious, warm, and safe for the permanent residents, who will live there.

We're currently recruiting a team to provide the services and programmes. The first residents are expected to move in during April. We look forward to keeping you updated about this new community!

Progress at Te Pā Maru



Since the official opening of Te Pā Maru, our alcohol-harm reduction facility, we've been busy developing our programme. We are co-designing it with prospective whānau (our residents), to identify their needs, wishes, and aspirations.

Whānau are now regularly visiting the Pā to establish relationships and prepare for opening, and Kaitiaki (Support Workers) and other roles are being filled. Te Pā Maru will be open for whānau to move into their new home in March.

Your Whakamaru Update



Progress is continuing on The Mission's new home, Whakamaru, which is on track to open in August.

In mid-February, the giant crane that sits in the middle of the building is being removed, allowing for the roof to be closed in. The external scaffolding will also be gone by the end of March, so we encourage you to have a drive-by of 4 Oxford Terrace to see it then!

Due to the escalating cost of materials and a strained construction industry, our target to finish the build has increased now to nearly \$50m. We've raised a whopping \$41m to date, however, we still have a way to go, so we're interested in talking with anyone who can help us close the gap.

If you'd like to discuss a donation, or would like to take a tour of the site, please contact Sharon Cavill, General Manager, Fundraising, & Communications sharon@wcm.org.nz or 022 0594 808.

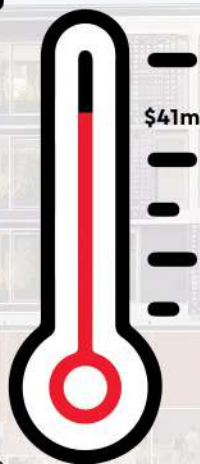
Your opportunity to be part of building a community where there is 'no us and them'!

Thanks to the awesome communities of Wellington, we've raised \$41m of the nearly \$50m needed to reach our shared vision for Whakamaru!

Of that, \$20m has come from the New Zealand Government, \$0.5m from Wellington City Council, and more than \$20m from grants, and amazing people and businesses.

We are grateful for donations of any amount you can give to help finish Whakamaru. If you'd like to help, then please head over to our website and donate online or via bank transfer, and reference 'Whakamaru'.

Thank you!



Red Key Campaign



Thanks to the continued support of Special Group, Lowe&Co and participating Wellington businesses, our Red Key campaign remains vibrant out in the community.

Every donation brings us closer to unlocking Wellington's new home Whakamaru.

THE CHANGE YOU ENABLE

During the months of October – December 2023, together we...



provided

6,723

meals for manuhiri living in our Supported Transitional Housing accommodation



supported

154

whānau and individuals with Financial Mentoring



supported

157

whānau and individuals with one-on-one Social Work



supported

1,731

people through our Social Supermarket



welcomed

2,000

manuhiri into Tā te Manawa, our community lounge, where we served home cooked meals and great barista coffee

Thank you! Your support enables us to be better than we would otherwise be.

FIND US

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