



ON A MISSION

GROWING TOGETHER

ISSUE 3 2025

wellingtoncitymission
HEI WHAKAMARU O TE KOROWAI
O TE PANEPANE O TE IKA A MAUI



Quarterly Newsletter - Spring 2025 Murray's Message

Over time, there have been lots of songs, prose, and poetry written about the seasons – not just the time of the year and the weather, but the seasons of our lives.

So often, the season we are in and the weather we experience, determines how we feel. My wife and I recently ventured out on a cold, miserable and very wet Wellington weekend. In the course of braving the weather conditions, I was delighted to see some daffodils had flowered in the garden and some new-born lambs appeared in some neighbouring paddocks. These signs, together with the longer days we are enjoying, cause us to have confidence that Spring is arriving.

I have always been very excited and energised about the arrival of Spring, because it contains the promise of more sun, more warmth, and more joy! This feels of even greater significance given how cold and damp this winter has felt. As is often said; after the rain comes the sunshine!

We all have different seasons in our lives, some exciting, some challenging, some full of joy. Sometimes these seasons can change suddenly, when we least expect it, and sometimes we just need some additional support from those around us.

One of the great privileges of doing the work we do here at the Wellington City Mission, is we get to walk alongside people, whatever season they might be going through. Sometimes we come together to celebrate a life going really well, and other times it is to help pick up the pieces – to create a new way forward.

This On a Mission Newsletter contains three wonderful

stories of our Mission whānau who have been experiencing different seasons in their lives, and we have been privileged and honoured to share those journeys with them.

You will meet Yohanes who is at the early stages of his journey and on a wonderful path towards his future. You will meet Myles who is recovering from a major crisis in his life and finding a way forward in a different set of circumstances. And you will meet John, who having taken some positive steps forward, is reflecting on his journey to date, and what enabled him to get to where he now is. You will also meet some of the wonderful and highly skilled members of the team here at the Mission; Billy, Imogen, Te Arahi and Katrina, and get a glimpse into the things they do to help people on their journeys.

Thank you for all the amazing support that enables us to do this work. We couldn't do this without you!

And as you think about the seasons in your own life, I hope you will reflect with gratitude on those that have walked alongside you when you've needed it most. In doing so, please consider the part you can play in ensuring that for everyone, there is someone to turn to.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Ngā manaakitanga – blessings

Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner, He Manu Taupua





• Community Support Worker Billy (left), with Whakamaru resident Yohanes

Now I've Got a Bright Future

Once living in his car, Whakamaru resident Yohanes is now thriving in his studies, and is fast becoming a role model to others around him.

I was born and raised in Auckland. My family lived in a pretty rough spot, so there was a lot of violence around us, and I even had friends pass away. I wanted to get away from that life, work on myself, and start studying to become a youth worker. I'm very close with my family there, but they understood the position I was in and the future I wanted for myself.

I came down to Wellington in November last year. My plan was to stay with some family until I could find a flat, but that didn't really work out, so I lived in my car while I looked for my own place. It was really hard to find somewhere to live. I was constantly looking at places and going to viewings and interviews, but because of my age, and the way I look, I kept getting turned down. It really was depressing. I even got referred to a youth hostel by Work and Income but got rejected from

there too. Living in the car was kind of rough, and it's actually really boring. I had a few friends here who would come and visit me, and seeing them helped me forget I was staying in my car.

I didn't know what I was going to do, but I just kept on praying. Then in February, I got spotted by someone from the Mission, and they told me about the Supported Transitional Housing at Whakamaru. I really liked the place, because it felt completely different to what I had experienced for the last few months. It felt warm and comfortable, and people were happy I was here – it was perfect. I also got introduced to Billy, who became my support worker.

I started doing my two-year diploma in Youth Work at WelTec and I'm really enjoying it. I want to follow my older brother's footsteps a bit too, so I'm doing an online football coaching course. I've also started working part time doing food deliveries. I really like all the programmes we have here, like the regular study group, and I'm keen to start with financial mentoring soon as well. The other residents here have become like family to me. My family in Auckland is proud of me for leaving the situation I was in, and having good people around helps me keep focused on my goals.

I've always had a positive vision for my future, and everything is coming together perfectly now. I'm looking



forward to being able to help others who are in a similar situation to what I grew up in, and I'm excited about the idea of lifting up young people who are in trouble. Seeing what Billy and the other staff do here has only encouraged me more.

My plan is to stay at Whakamaru until my 12-month contract ends around February next year, and try again to find a flat. I feel reassured having people like Billy behind me, because whatever happens I'll know that when I do leave, **the Mission is here to help if I ever need it.**

One thing I will take away from being here, is to never be ungrateful for what I do have. Everyone here, from the residents to the people in the Community Café, are in different situations that are hard. You can really see how the Mission is making a difference for people in the community.



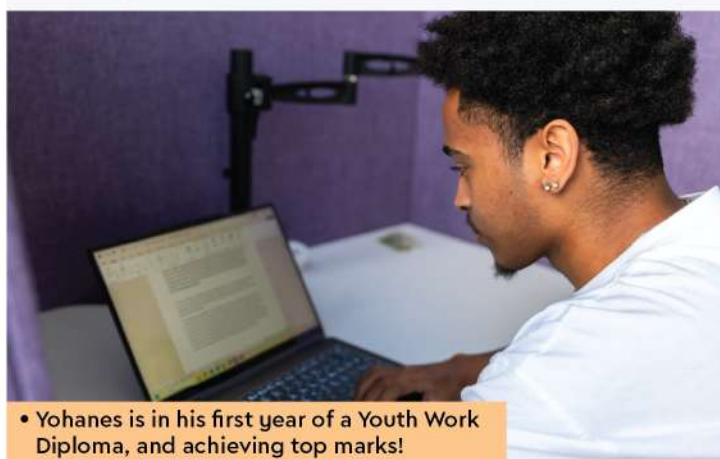
Billy, Community Support Worker



“With Whakamaru now in Wellington, it's great to have a space for young people who are struggling with housing or other needs. The youth workers have built up a programme designed specifically for young people to try new things and learn practical life skills, to eventually become independent. The social activities also bring a lot of enrichment to our group, and it's really nice to see young people from different backgrounds engage positively with one another and create community together.

Mission donors are providing a lot of new opportunities for our young people to live their best lives here. And because our residents always have the basic necessities, they don't have to worry about where they'll sleep or where their food's coming from. The 24/7 staff support and programmes we have in place just keep our young people on track. It all allows our rangatahi to thrive.

Lots of us staff see Yohanes as a bit of a role model for other people who live here, not just because he's achieving top marks in his studies and working, but he's also volunteering, doing school holiday programmes. He's done all of that hard work himself. We've just been the safety net!”



• Yohanes is in his first year of a Youth Work Diploma, and achieving top marks!



27

Residents
currently living at Whakamaru

9 residents
Aged 17-20

13 residents
Aged 20-25

5 residents
Aged 25+





• Te Ō resident, Myles (left), with his Community Support Worker, Imogen

I've Found My Home

After a life-changing injury in an unfamiliar place, Myles has shown remarkable strength to rebuild his life.

I first came from Ireland to Christchurch in 2005. Last year, the company I was working for as a kitchen manager transferred me to Wellington. My move here was a really enjoyable time, and I thought the city was super cool.

A few months in, I did something to my foot, and because I have diabetes and can have a pretty bad immune system, it quickly got worse. I went into hospital, thinking I'd be back to work in a couple of weeks and everything would be grand. But four days later, my leg was amputated.

I stayed in hospital for three months, but I didn't have anywhere to go afterwards. I'd been living in a flat on the third storey, and I didn't have any friends or family in Wellington, so I was thankful to be placed in emergency housing accommodation in Upper Hutt.

Initially it was just good to be out of hospital, but it was also very isolating because it took me far away from anybody I had met.

Living in emergency housing and being in a wheelchair got pretty depressing for me, and there was a lot going on in my mind. I didn't know what my future would look like. I wasn't sure if I would ever be strong enough to get back to work, and if I should go back to Christchurch or even Ireland. I did have family and friends messaging me which was nice, but it was also pretty overwhelming because they were so far away.

I was in emergency housing for a few months when my nurse brought me in for a meeting with the Mission. I was shown around Te Ō, and I was excited to move in. The whole place felt like a big move forward, and the staff have been the biggest thing. Imogen has been a real support. She's helped me deal with everything that's turned out to be tricky, like setting up a new doctor and getting onto the right benefit so I could get back on track. She even got a microwave for my apartment. One big thing was also getting to shop at the Social Supermarket. I had very little money, so I'd do a shop there once a month when I couldn't afford food.

My goal has always been to get back to work, and my company has been really good. They told me they would keep my job open if I was able to come back.



I initially thought that when I got my leg, I'd just click it on and be good to go, but it didn't quite work like that. It took a while to rebuild the muscles, and I slowly worked up to standing still on it. Then one day I was cooking dinner, and I thought I'd just try to take a step. I took two steps and I couldn't believe it. I actually got pretty emotional because I hadn't walked for a really long time.

It's been a year now since the operation. I'm walking without a cane, and I've started working two days a week. I've also got two cats, Luna and Murphy, and honestly they've been a huge help for my mood. I have purpose again, and I'm aiming to go full-time at work and get back to a normal life.

It's still hard to get by at the moment, so I really appreciate the support I have at Te Ō. I know that whatever happens, I'll have this place. And if something does go wrong I can always talk to Imogen, or do a shop at the Social Supermarket. I've just got myself to depend on, so having that sense of security is huge.

I actually don't know where I'd be now without all the help I've had from the Mission. Everyone here knows me by name, and it's such a nice environment to be in when you're going through something difficult. **It feels like I have a home and community for the first time in a while**, and after the year I've had I definitely now have a much more positive outlook for the future.

Imogen, Community Support Worker



"Having Myles at Te Ō has been such a success. Looking back at when we first met, Myles is a completely different person. It sounds a bit cheesy, but he's really got his spark back!

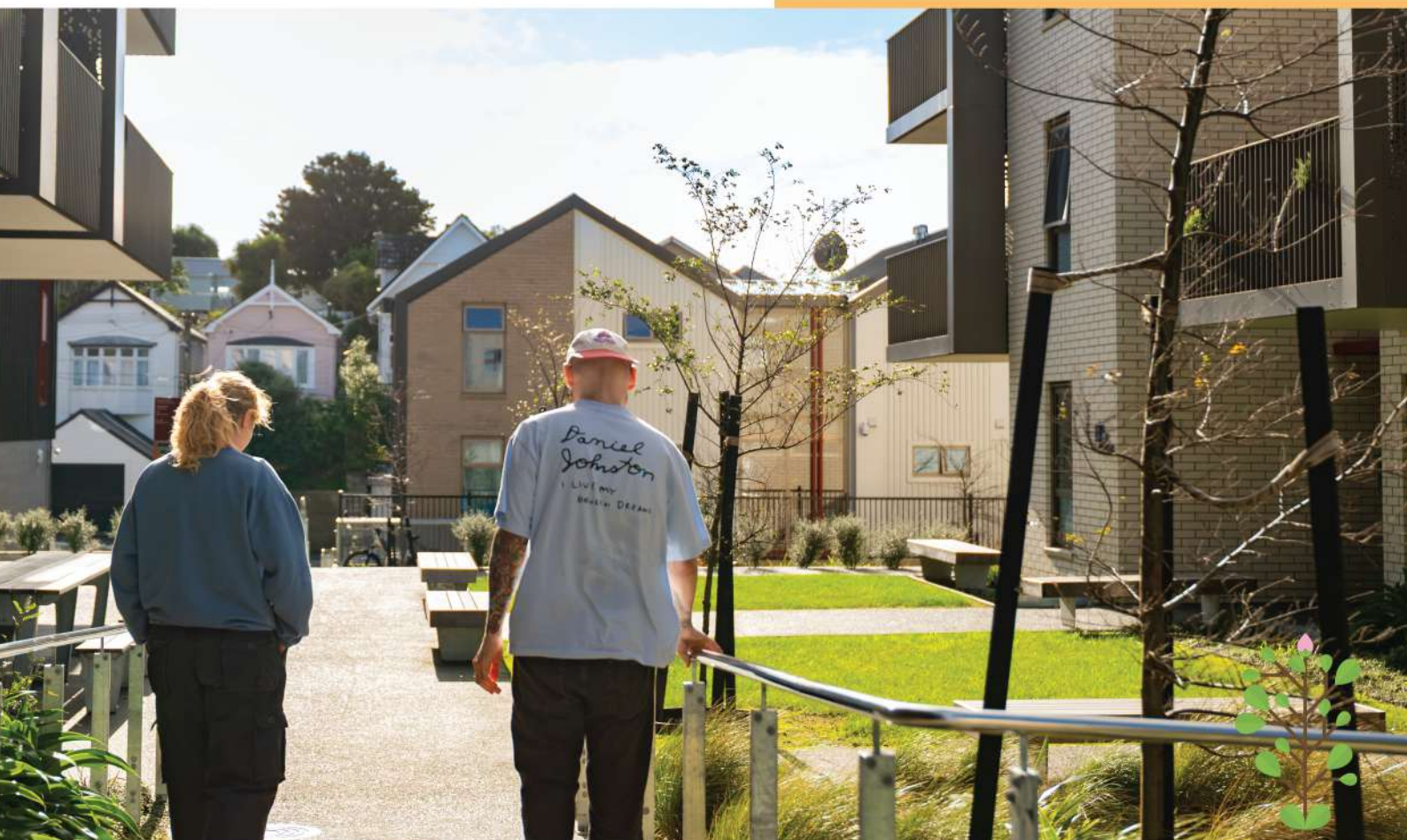
The progress he's made physically is amazing too, I feel like every time I see him, his mobility goes up another level, from crutches to a cane, now being back at work.

It's been such a privilege for us to see his hard work and the progress he's made, and to know that we can be here to help through any challenges that come up in the future too."



63% of residents report spiritual wellbeing has improved since living at Te Ō

61% of residents report physical wellbeing has improved since living at Te Ō



Empowerment. Transformation. Fullness of Life.



• John (right), with his Community Support Worker Te Arahī, outside Te Pā Pori

Grateful for My New Life

An ex-resident at Te Pā Pori, John has now found a home of his own – and a new lease of life here in Wellington.

I lived in Gisborne all my life, working on the farm as a general hand and groundsman. One day a few years ago, I had a heart attack. I was gone for a few minutes, so they had to shock me back to life. I got a pacemaker, so I needed to take work a bit easier after that. I did a course to become a heavy machinery driver, and found a job driving tractors and rollers. But pretty much as soon as I started, I jumped down from a machine in too much of a hurry and broke my back in two places. I had a broken heart, broken back, broken everything!

Gisborne is a small place. It only takes you about half an hour to walk from one side of town to the other. While I wasn't working, I had a lot of people trying to influence me to do things I didn't want to do, and there are a lot of gangs everywhere. I felt like I was going nowhere. So at the start of this year, I wanted to make a fresh start and I

came down to Wellington. I'd planned to stay with my brother, but when I got here I found out that I couldn't because of his rental contract. I started living on the street, while I tried to get into a better situation.

Being homeless in a new city was a bit scary at the start. A bunch of my stuff got stolen too, like my phone, IDs and clothes. I remember thinking, 'What am I gonna do now?'. I started going to DCM and the Mission to help me with everything I needed. It was good to know I wasn't going to starve, and Whakamaru was flash as. I could have showers and laundry done, and they'd give you all the soaps and whatnot. You could even get a hot coffee and a pie all for free if you wanted it.

There were a couple of staff members at Whakamaru who were helping me find somewhere to live as well. I was only homeless for 15 days before they introduced me to Te Pā Pori for an interview. When I first came I thought, 'Far out, this is the one'. And when they said I could come in straight away I was rapt as!

The rooms are really nice, then you go downstairs and there's food for breakfast. There are also group activities like 'Whakaaro mo te Rā', or 'Thought of the Day', every morning. That helped me heaps. I learnt about looking after myself better through budgeting and managing housing. It gave everyone a chance to talk



about what's happened to them and how they're getting on too. Some guys have to learn how to respect themselves before they can respect anything or anyone else. Respecting this place was easy for me though, because I really appreciated being here. I liked being around the positive kaimahi (staff), and getting to know all the different people who live here. It was a good community to be part of.

It turned out it's quite hard to find a flat, so my key worker, Katrina, was doing the hard yards helping me find a permanent place to stay. She also helped me get everything I needed like an ID, phone, and a new GP so they could keep an eye on my heart. It was good knowing I was getting everything sorted to start my new life in Wellington.

Then a new Kāinga Ora place came up and I was buzzing! I've been here for three months now and I'm really happy. I go for walks, see my brother, and catch up with people I've met from the Mission. My big goal is to get everything right with my body, then get back into work. I really want to be able to take care of myself well and get everything I need, like good clothes and a bit more food. I don't mind what I do, as long as it's a bit easier on my body and is not too much heavy lifting, because I just turned 60.

When I first came to the Mission I couldn't believe the help that I got. It's excellent knowing I still have the right people around me. Another kaiarahi, Te Arahi, comes and sees me every now and then, just to see how I'm getting on and if I need anything for my goals. I reckon if I hadn't linked in with them I'd probably still be on the street.

Wellington is a good city with good people, and when I wake up every day I'm just so grateful to be here.

Katrina, Kaiarahi at Te Pā Pori



"It's a real privilege to be able to walk with people like John, as they achieve and overcome things that can be very stressful. Our work is about empowering people, and walking beside them through their challenges. So instead of people feeling like doors are always closing on them, we like to open those doors up and ask, 'How can we work together, and what can we help with?'."

John took up all of the opportunities on offer here, and being able to provide wraparound support helped him achieve his goal of getting settled and healthy. We're really happy to see where he is today – in beautiful and safe housing. I also think he was able to grow personally here, and develop great relationships and friendships that will continue as he makes his new start in Wellington."



• John, surrounded by his Community Support Workers from Te Pā Pori, Te Arahi (left) and Katrina (right)



173

Te Pā Pori residents have been placed in permanent housing (July 2021 - August 2025)

63 manuhiri to Private Rental	20 manuhiri returned to family	38 manuhiri to Community Housing Provider	52 manuhiri to Kainga Ora
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OCT 11

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Lowe & Co's **Open Wellington** event will open some of Wellington's most beautiful homes and gardens to the public. **All proceeds from the ticketed event will support the work of the Wellington City Mission!**

The Change You Enabled – April - June 2025



7,552

Meals

provided for manuhiri living in our Supported Transitional Housing



1,137

People

supported through our Community Services and Financial Mentoring



1,531

Shoppers

supported through our Social Supermarket



Over 20,000

whānau and individuals

provided with shops at our Social Supermarket since 2021!

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