

ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025



WHATUNGA TŪAO
VOLUNTEER
CENTRAL

CHAIR'S REPORT

BY JORDAN DEMPSTER

There's a question that faces us at each of these Annual Meetings. How do you truly portray the impact of Whatunga Tuao | Volunteer Central?

We have some impressive numbers to share, but what do they mean to our communities? Let's start with our active volunteers. We saw a 24% increase in the last 12 months, taking us to over 2200 volunteers actively contributing across the rohe. If they were employees, rather than volunteers, we would be one of the biggest employers in Manawatū. And yet they are doing all this work voluntarily. Contributing tens of thousands of hours of mahi for the good of their communities.

We've also seen a 21% increase in member organisations, up to 204. That's in addition to last year's 36% increase! The biggest increase has been in Horowhenua - a testament to the work the team has put in to the district.

A big part of these results is down to the team's focus on quality. They've put huge amounts of effort into creating quality connections that work for our volunteers and member organisations. From July 24 to June 25 we made 950 referrals, 775 of which converted into placements. That's an incredible 82% conversion rate.

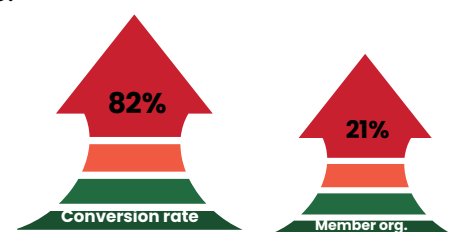
The credit for these results goes to both Kate Aplin, our Tumu Whakahaere Manager and Ankita Sharma, our Marketing and Events Co-ordinator, who have once again done an amazing job this year. They have continued building on the solid foundations we've built in previous years as Whatunga Tuao | Volunteer Central has grown into a lead in the community sector. Also invaluable has been the contributions of our office volunteers who keep our office ticking over.

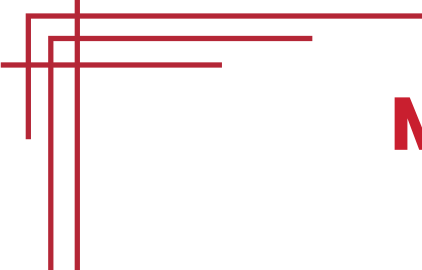
A special thank you to Grant Smith (not the Mayor) who left for a paid role at the age of 80 after many years as an office volunteer with Whatunga Tuao Volunteer Central. Grace Bartosh, Treasurer, resigned from the Board due to being involved in so much volunteering she ran out of time! Thanks to Chris Atherton for stepping back into the Treasurer shoes while recruitment occurs. Caroline Grant, Trustee, also resigned due to work commitments. We are very pleased to have Dilan Raj and Justyna Williams fill these vacancies.

Where to from here? We revised our strategic plan - A Connected Future - last year and it will continue serving us well for the years to come. A sign that the work put into originals has well and truly paid off. At a Board level we're also focusing on succession as both I, as Chair, and Chris Atherton, our long serving Chair and current Treasurer, reach our term limit in 2026. We've also said farewell to Grace Lukenoff and Caroline Grant from the Board, while welcoming Dilan Raj.

As with every year, we're extremely grateful to the funders and contributors who enable this work. A big thank you to Horowhenua District Council, Palmerston North City Council, Manawatu District Council, The Department of Internal Affairs and UCOL Te Pukenga as well as our member organisations.

It has been a great year at Whatunga Tuao | Volunteer Central and we look forward to seeing where the next year takes us.





MANAGER'S REPORT

BY KATE APLIN

Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central has again exceeded over 2025 with many of the achievements noted in the Chair, Treasurer, and Marketing and Event Coordinator reports. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central Board, in particular around their role modelling of leadership and succession planning that saw Chris, the previous Chair, step aside in Sept 2024 to give the opportunity for Jordan to wear the hat to add to his kete. Chris remained on the Board to provide leadership and mentoring. Ankita has grown our social media presence significantly and receives fantastic feedback about her posts/campaigns. Many thanks go to our office volunteers that make our mahi fun, valuable, and easy! The successes were stretching our paid staff capacity so the paid hours were increased from 60 per week to 80 per week in September. Grant (not the Mayor) left us for paid work at the age of 80 – what an inspiration he is!

We have developed/presented/organised and arranged 111 workshops, events, and community activities over the year – an increase of 38% from the previous year. We have over 200 member organisations from all parts of the community representing all parts of the social sector – we have guided them to revise their recruitment processes to improve their likelihood of attracting the right volunteers. We have registered 34 former refugees from Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela – many with very limited English so have had to master Google Translate! It has been awesome working with Te Whatu Ora Refugee resettlement team (Robyn, Carlos, and Maria), and English Language Partners (Catherine) in arranging opportunities to register the former refugees, arrange translators, and support the former refugees during interviews. We have also worked with member organisations to assess and increase their capacity for being able to have volunteers with very limited English. A memorable Muaupokotanga wananga day was enjoyed with over 100 former refugees – fantastic and moving experience for Ankita and I.

WHĀIA TE ITI KAHURANGI, KI TE TUOHU KOE, ME HE MAUNGA TEITEL.

SEEK THE TREASURE YOU VALUE MOST DEARLY; IF YOU BOW YOUR HEAD, LET IT BE TO A LOFTY MOUNTAIN.

We were privileged to have Jaimee join our team for 12 weeks for her Bachelor of Social Services internship. Watching the growth in her confidence, knowledge, and enthusiasm for community development over her internship was awesome to be part of.

Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central is one of 17 volunteer centre's nationally. We are all stand alone entities however work together on regional and national initiatives where these impact volunteering and community connection. As a result Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central took the lead for the Volunteer Centre Network Aotearoa (VCNA) in developing, submitting and speaking to submissions on the Social Security Amendment Bill, Emergency Management Bill, and Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway and Otaki to Levin Highway Road Tolls. We have also been working hard on collaboration across the region recognising the number of organisations being challenged by finite resources, whether that be people and/or dollars. As such we are proud to be leading a regional community led project named Stretching the Oily Rag: Best Community Impact through Collaboration. There is a fantastic steering group representative of different geographical areas and sectors guiding and monitoring the project – true collaboration in action!

We look forward to the coming year which will see a greater focus on supporting community collaboration for best community impact through the project, becoming Volunteer Coordinators for regional emergency events, and involved in national volunteer coordination in an emergency through our collaboration with National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

KAIKŌTUITUI WHAKATAIRANGA, TAIOPENGA EVENT & MARKETING REPORT

BY ANKITA SHARMA

As we reflect on the past year, we do so with both pride and gratitude. This has been a year of meaningful growth, innovative initiatives, and memorable events which have not only strengthened our organisation but also deepened our connection with the communities we serve.

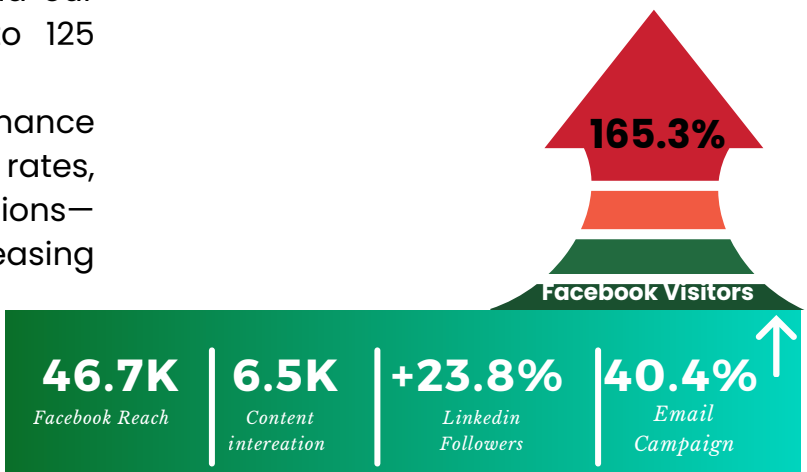
Our digital presence has grown significantly, with focused efforts on enhancing brand visibility, driving traffic to our website, and encouraging greater engagement across multiple platforms. The results demonstrate clear progress:

- Facebook: Reach increased to 46.7k (↑ 27.6%), visits rose to 12.2k (↑ 165.3%), and content interactions more than doubled to 6.5k (↑ 119.8%). Our followers grew from 2,404 to 2,588 (which is +7.7% year-on-year, precisely 7.65%).
- Instagram: With 420 posts shared, our audience expanded from 559 to 721 followers (that's a 28.9% increase in followers.)
- LinkedIn: Our professional network strengthened with 106 posts, and our follower base rose from 101 to 125 (followers increased by 23.8%).
- Email Campaigns: Performance indicators—including open rates, click-throughs, and conversions—grew by 40.4%, showing the increasing impact of our communications.

Major Events and Recognition

- The Volunteer Recognition Event, now in its 12th year, celebrated the achievements of 61 individuals and teams, along with 3 businesses. We reached out to 247 businesses, securing the generous support of 18 sponsors.
- We successfully hosted Volunteering Expos in both Manawatū and Horowhenua, each showcasing 25 organisations, providing valuable opportunities for collaboration and engagement.
- Our work with young people continues to flourish, with growing participation at expos and student-focused events, helping to inspire the next generation of volunteers.

These successes are the direct result of the dedication and passion of our remarkable team and volunteers. Their commitment, creativity, and hard work have been the driving force behind our achievements, enabling us to deliver lasting impact and stronger connections throughout the year.



FINANCIAL REPORT

BY CHRIS ATHERTON



Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central realised a small surplus in 2024/2025 which is the first, and welcome return to a positive result since 2022. This is largely due to an improvement in revenue which is up 14% to \$186,413 and due to increased grant income although membership fees are also up representing 4% of total revenue. The Department of Internal Affairs, Horowhenua District Council, Manawatu District Council and PNCC are funders that have contributed most to increase our grant income.



Expenses for the year increased to \$184,491 which is 7% more than in 2023/24. The biggest element of this is wages and salaries, which is up reflecting the value to which we place on our wonderful Manager and Events Co-ordinator and increasing their hours from 30 to 40 per week each in September. Travel costs are also up reflecting an increase in activity for the year. Lower costs have been achieved with savings in office costs and audit fees.



The improved financial performance of the organisation has also resulted in a much stronger financial position, with most of this being cash balances, which combined with no borrowing (other than a small balance on our credit card) makes Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central very stable financially. We are expecting our cash position to improve further going forward which we will use to rebuild our reserves which have been drained after three years of deficits. This suggests a bright future for us enabling us to continue the great support for our communities

We would like to acknowledge the financial support of the following:

