

November **20
25**

THE STATE OF THE STREET REPORT




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Purpose

This State of the Street report shares insights from Kick Back Make Change—a youth-led organisation responding to youth homelessness in central Auckland (Tāmaki Makaurau) —and amplifies the voices of rangatahi (young people) supported by Kick Back between June 2024 and July 2025. The report highlights the current realities of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau, emerging trends, and unmet needs, while also presenting a vision for a future where all tamariki (children) and rangatahi have access to a safe, loving, and supportive place to call home.

This is Kick Back's first State of the Street report that highlights the voices and experiences of rangatahi experiencing homelessness. This report is a SOS to the government, decision makers and the community at large that urgent crisis response is needed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people of Aotearoa. Our young people are firm in their belief that youth homelessness is a problem that we can solve, and they continue to call for urgent action and different political choices to ensure the right to housing for ALL is realised.



“It is crazy we have to show people evidence of our suffering for them to believe us, and even that isn't enough for decision makers to do something...”
– Wāhine Māori - 20 years old

Executive Summary

Youth homelessness is escalating across Aotearoa, especially in Tāmaki Makaurau. While it can be prevented and eliminated, doing so requires systemic change and different political choices.

Over the past year, more than 160 rangatahi and tamariki (majority Māori, many facing high and complex needs) have sought support at The Front Door, Aotearoa's first integrated crisis response and early intervention centre for young people and children experiencing homelessness.

Kick Back's, The Front Door opened in 2024 and was co-designed with rangatahi to provide a safe space for healing, growth, and access to essential services like housing, health care, mental health and addiction services, legal support, kai, clothing, general advocacy and long-term navigation support. Our data shows youth homelessness is growing and increasingly hidden, with many rangatahi and a growing number of tamariki couch surfing or living in unsafe conditions. The system is failing to respond quickly or appropriately, and young people are falling through service gaps. In response, Kick Back has stepped in to fill critical gaps—often at its own expense and in partnership with community organisations.

Innovative initiatives like The Safety Net (a Host Home model), created through a partnership between Kick Back and Massey Community Trust, along with support from MSD, landlords and other housing providers, have enabled us to respond quickly to rangatahi in need—preventing homelessness and supporting smooth transitions into long-term housing.

Together with our partners, funders, and community allies, we have made significant strides in reconnecting rangatahi with whānau and providing access to safe housing, health care, and essential services—while creating pathways to education, employment, and wellbeing. Although, without systemic change and intentional policy decisions, youth homelessness will continue to rise.

This report highlights the urgent need for system change. Kick Back is calling on the government to implement structural reforms to end youth homelessness. This includes rolling back Emergency Housing changes, investing in proven community-led immediate housing solutions, and introducing Duty to Assist legislation. These changes—alongside better resourcing for youth services, increased public housing, a national youth homelessness strategy are essential to ensure rangatahi and tamariki have access to safe, stable, and supportive homes.

Looking ahead, our vision is to establish Auckland's first 24/7 rangatahi hub and immediate housing project—ensuring no young person is left without a safe place to go.

This report draws on data from Record Base, our central client and service delivery system, and reflects our ongoing commitment to improving data quality and transparency.

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Background

INTRODUCING KICK BACK



Kick Back is a Youth Development and Social Justice organisation based in Tāmaki Makaurau, established in May 2024 to respond to the urgent and growing issue of youth homelessness.

Kick Back aims to innovate and drive system change by embodying the principle "Te Ara o Te Aroha", "Love is The Way", in their approach to ending youth homelessness in Aotearoa. Kick Back believes that we can build a world where no rangatahi or tamariki ever need to sleep on our streets or go without a safe, loving and supportive place to call home.

Kick Back fills critical service gaps and advocates for systemic change to better support vulnerable rangatahi. Our approach to driving change is grounded in three core pou (pillars):

- Education—supporting the community and sector to grow our collective mātauranga (knowledge) regarding youth homelessness to better serve and care for rangatahi experiencing homelessness.
- Advocacy—working to create greater public awareness of youth homelessness within the community, government, and wider society to support collective efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- Innovation and systems change—piloting innovative solutions like The Front Door, and The Safety Net that focus on addressing system gaps in systems to better meet the needs of rangatahi at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

The three pou of Kick Back's mahi



Innovation

Kick Back works with rangatahi to develop and deliver alternative models of care, often where there is a gap in current services, to better meet the needs of rangatahi at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

Education

Kick Back aims to educate the public about youth homelessness and support whānau and organisations to build the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively assist rangatahi in need.

Advocacy

Kick Back works to transform the system by advocating to the public and decision makers for alternative models of care and policies to prevent and ultimately end youth homelessness.

Kick Back works proactively to ensure that rangatahi can access health care, mental health and addiction support, legal advice and where possible employment, education and work readiness opportunities through The Front Door an early intervention and crisis response service (described in further detail below).

In the year ahead, we plan to continue evolving and expanding our services—moving toward the establishment of a 24/7 rangatahi hub, the implementation of The Mahi Club, and exploring the development of an immediate housing project.

Youth homelessness in Aotearoa

Youth homelessness is a significant and ongoing problem in Aotearoa. Overall, homelessness across all age groups is increasing. In 2023, 13,000 more people were estimated to be severely housing deprived (2.3 percent of the population), compared with the 2018 estimate of 99,462, or 2.1 percent of the census usually resident population (Stats NZ, 2024).

Analysis of the 2023 Census data found that the highest rates of severe housing deprivation (homelessness)^[1] were experienced by children (319.0 per 10,000 children aged under 15 years) and young people (287.3 per 10,000 people aged 15 to 29 years) (Stats NZ, 2024).

There were higher proportions of young people (aged 15 to 29 years) living in temporary accommodation (36.3 per 10,000 young people) or sharing someone else's private dwelling (97.1 per 10,000 young people) than other age groups (Stats NZ, 2024)

In the Growing Up in New Zealand study^[1] seven percent of young people had experienced homelessness by the time they were 12-year-olds (Lai et al, 2023). 22 percent of young people living in public housing and 24 percent of young people who had to move homes involuntarily had experienced homelessness by age 12 (Lai et al, 2023).

Despite the number of rangatahi who experience homelessness there are no clear pathways into safe and secure housing (Paul and Ratana, 2022). Māori, Pacific and LGBTIQ people have disproportionate experiences of homelessness in Aotearoa which both results from and reinforces inequities.

Since the coalition government introduced changes to the emergency housing system—adding new obligations and harsher consequences for those unable to meet them—more young people have been excluded from accessing emergency accommodation. These restrictions have led to an increase in youth homelessness and have had a significant, detrimental impact on their wellbeing.

What is Needed to End Youth Homelessness

The Youth Homelessness crisis is escalating across the country. Youth homelessness can be prevented and eliminated but this requires system change and different political choices. Political choices have led us to where we are, the good news is, political choices can end this.

"This government has had time to fix this issue, but they push this off to the side while they are busy introducing bills that make no sense" – Wāhine Māori - 22 years old

Youth homelessness is a product of a housing system that values housing as a commodity. No service, charity or amount of wrap around services alone can solve this problem. Until we address the structural issues that allow homelessness to persist, we will never bring this crisis to an end.

Kick Back is calling on the Government to implement these structural changes.

[1] Severe housing deprivation is defined as people living in severely inadequate housing due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing. This means not being able to access a private dwelling to rent or own that has all basic amenities (cooking facilities, safe drinking water, a kitchen sink, a bath or shower, a toilet, and electricity). The New Zealand definition of homelessness to organise the severely housing deprived population into four groups, without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing someone else's private dwelling, in uninhabitable housing (Stats NZ, 2024).

[1] Growing Up in New Zealand is Aotearoa's largest longitudinal study of child health and wellbeing, following the lives of more than 6000 rangatahi and their families.

→ Roll back Emergency Housing reforms and invest in Immediate Housing Solutions

This issue has been well canvassed, including in our report *Denied: The Growing Cost of Denying Young People Access to Shelter* ([Read the full report \(PDF4.4MB\)](#)). When people are in crisis and sleeping outside, they need shelter. We all agree that the motel-based Emergency Housing model is not fit for purpose.

A government serious about solving this issue would roll back the reforms, utilise the current motel model to keep people in shelter, while at the same time engaging with the community to scale up and then roll out nationally, existing immediate housing models (an alternative to emergency housing) in order to build an alternative crisis system.

The government should support proven community-led housing solutions for rangatahi in urgent need—such as Kāhui Te Kākā's immediate housing service in South Auckland, and The Safety Net project a partnership between Massey Community Trust and Kick Back in West Auckland. These models offer effective alternatives to emergency housing, meeting the complex and immediate needs of rangatahi.

→ Implement Duty To Assist Legislation

Duty to Assist is legislation which would clarify the states responsibility to provide people with support when they are at-risk of homelessness.

Under the Duty to Assist, MSD would be required to provide emergency housing to those in need and ensure they have access to shelter. From there, MSD must offer all available support to help people move from emergency and transitional housing into stable, safe, and permanent homes.

This legislation could also include a duty to refer clause, ensuring that state agencies and health professionals understand their duty to screen for housing insecurity and refer to appropriate services in order to close gaps in the system and ensure people receive the support they need.

Currently individuals seeking help are being turned away or not referred to the appropriate services despite agencies being aware that they are experiencing homelessness. These gaps highlight the need for stronger legal protections and clearer accountability within service responses.

A Duty to Collaborate could also be included, requiring Public Services to collaborate with one another, and preventing critical support or services being pulled or denied from rangatahi and whānau as a result of system, process and funding gaps and inconsistencies.

This type of legislation has proven successful internationally. For example, in Wales, homelessness services shifted toward prevention, leading to fewer people needing temporary accommodation and a reduction in persistent homelessness.[3]

→ Implement legislation to prevent young people being transitioned from state care into homelessness

The community has been calling for this legislation for over six years. If passed, it would require state agencies to include housing needs in their budgets and ensure there is enough public and supported housing to prevent government systems from driving young people into homelessness from state care.

An Oranga Tamariki [2022 review](#) found that one in ten young people leaving care or the justice system are currently experiencing homelessness, yet there are not enough funded supported housing services to guarantee them a place to live. However, this is likely to be a significant under-estimate because this survey was based on feedback from young people who were contactable and who chose to respond.

Under this legislation, Oranga Tamariki would need to plan ahead and allocate sufficient resources to ensure supported or public housing is available for young people transitioning from care, helping to prevent homelessness.

→ Review the Youth Services contract and ensure providers are equipped to provide intensive support to rangatahi on the Youth Payment

Youth Services contract youth development providers nationally to support young people on the youth payment. To be eligible for the youth payment a young person will have had a whānau breakdown and will not be able to live at home. This means that a high volume of young people accessing this service are experiencing homelessness, have experienced homelessness, or are at-risk of doing so.

Youth service providers are under-resourced, with youth workers often supporting over 20 young people each—far above the best practice of five to ten for this cohort. Despite this, they are expected to deliver comprehensive wraparound support while also managing paperwork and benefits.

The Youth Service contract has the potential to significantly reduce long-term youth homelessness. By lowering caseloads, embedding youth-focused housing navigators, and strengthening links with physical and mental health services, we can build on the strengths of this service to close system gaps and make it a key part of preventing and ending youth homelessness.

→ Build more Public Housing and give Kāinga Ora a mandate to House The People

We cannot end homelessness without homes. **Public Housing is essential to building towards a future Aotearoa that can truly End Youth Homelessness.**

Private landlords – and even some community housing providers – routinely discriminate against young people due to their age, ethnicity, health needs and class.

Youth housing plays an important role in providing supportive housing for some young people, however housing services often don't feel equipped to support young people who are significantly unwell due to their experiences of homelessness.

Only Public Housing can guarantee that young people will be able to access safe, stable and long-term housing.

→ Resource a strategy to end and prevent youth homelessness, supported by robust data collection systems.

A future youth homelessness strategy must recognise that rangatahi interact with multiple systems—such as housing, health, education, and justice—and requires a coordinated, cross-sector response.

Ending youth homelessness will require a system-wide approach, with clear actions, deadlines, and stronger integration between housing and broader social and health services.

Improved data collection is essential if we are going to respond effectively to this growing crisis our tamariki and rangatahi are facing. Introducing Duty to Assist legislation, which includes the Duty to Refer, and Duty to Collaborate, would require professionals across various systems (housing, education, health etc) to actively screen for housing insecurity. Increasing the data available to us will improve our understanding of the size and scope of the crisis. This is especially important in light of the recent decision to stop the census and rely on government departments to collect the required data.

→ Prioritise Integrated Service Centres like The Front Door to improve access to welfare and housing support

There is an urgent need for structural change in how welfare and housing support are delivered. Currently, people with high levels of vulnerability struggle to access help due to complex, bureaucratic systems that require significant manpower to function—an indicator that the system is not designed for its purpose.

MSD is not the “front door” for most people, and sanctions and a lack of trauma informed practice and understanding of youth development, often harm rather than help, highlighting the need for a review of welfare design. To address these gaps, MSD can pivot funding, partner with high-trust organisations (like they are already doing), and streamline processes to move away from ad hoc solutions and scale up coordinated approaches across the country. A key part of this shift is developing Integrated Service Centres like The Front Door that bring agencies together to close system gaps and end homelessness.

In response to the government's changes to the emergency housing system, Kick Back has worked proactively with MSD and friendly landlords who own hostels, lodges and boarding houses, to develop an alternative emergency system, working with MSD who have provided us a key contact within Work and Income who can streamline paperwork and support, and building on our relationships with landlords, we have been able to ensure that young people walking through our doors can access shelter swiftly, sometimes within a couple of hours of entering The Front Door.

The opportunity with The Front Door is for the government to take the model and concept behind the service and then engage with local communities across Aotearoa to support the design and develop of similar projects, for specific cohorts, in each major city and town in the country.

[3] Homelessness Prevention: Reflecting on a Year of Pioneering Welsh Legislation in Practice [article-4592410342917616893.pdf](#)

THE FRONT DOOR

OVERVIEW OF THE FRONT DOOR



A Rangatahi Led Hub Connecting Rangatahi to Essential Services

The Front Door, Kick Back's early intervention and crisis response hub, was officially opened in May 2024 at 307 Karangahape Road in Tāmaki Makaurau. The Front Door was born from the aspirations of rangatahi with lived experience of homelessness, shaped by what they said they needed most—a safe haven where they could access housing, community care and other essential services. This kaupapa is grounded in their voice, their stories and their dreams for a future free from homelessness.

Kick Back's, The Front Door is a crisis response and early intervention centre specifically focused on responding to the needs of tamariki and rangatahi facing homelessness. Though, internationally these sorts of services exist and are critical first response services for young people facing homelessness, it is the first of its kind here in Aotearoa.

The Front Door is essentially an integrated services centre, a rangatahi hub where we work to close gaps between services in order to bring the support rangatahi need to them at The Front Door. Through The Front Door and in collaboration with our partners, rangatahi can access advocacy and support, connecting them to essential services, such as housing, healthcare, financial assistance through (work and income), mental health and addiction support, kai, clothing, legal assistance, skill development, recreational activities, employment, and work readiness programmes.

The Front Door also provides after-hours support and is expanding to offer 24/7 services in response to the urgent and crisis-level needs facing rangatahi, particularly in mental health and housing. This service bridges a critical gap in the community, delivering essential care at times when existing services often lack the capacity to respond.



Not Just a Door – A Space for Healing and Growth

The Front Door was built by rangatahi, for rangatahi. From the beginning, rangatahi have shaped the space and its purpose. It's not just about accessing services; it's about building whānau, community, and a sense of belonging.

Unlike lodges or emergency housing, which often lack communal areas, are unsafe and can feel isolating, The Front Door offers a place where rangatahi come daily to connect, feel safe, and build relationships. Many of the rangatahi and tamariki we support have been turned away elsewhere. Yet, they often become the first line of support for their peers—bringing them to The Front Door and standing on the front lines of the escalating housing crisis affecting rangatahi.

Kick Back has not just created a community – it has made a space for an existing one to heal, grow and access the resources needed to chart their own path forward.

Rangatahi have told us what Kick Back and The Front Door means to them:

"KB is a safe spot when you need somewhere to go and talk to someone you can just come here.... When you walk out of your house you take a big breath, and this is a place where you can release your breath like you are heard..." – Pakeha male – 19 years old

"It feels safe, it is warm. It is a space where I can come when I need help... a safe space where I can just chill... I am grateful for the support I get. It feels nice to be heard by people" – Wāhine Māori – 22 years old

"I felt appreciated, loved and respected when I worked through the doors. I am at a lodge at the moment but pushing for an apartment. Just being loved by the community has helped me... sometimes I feel up and down but I talk to someone where I can. Much love to the community and respect." – Tane Māori – 20 years old

"KB is somewhere you can ask for help, feel comfortable with surroundings. Lots of people don't have this. This place can help with housing, benefit or wider social support" – Wāhine Māori – 19 years old

"My connection to Kick Back would be the foundation of love and support that I get through KB... being able to fall back and gain a helping hand, all emotionally, physically and mentally and to be able to offer the same experience to others that need it" – Wāhine Māori – 23 years old

As the needs of rangatahi have evolved over the past year, so too has The Front Door. Its mahi, services, and partnerships continue to be shaped by the voices and lived experiences of rangatahi themselves. The Front Door is a vibrant, youth-led space where programmes are created and delivered by rangatahi, grounded in their ideas, aspirations and needs.

Through The Front Door and in collaboration with our partners a range of initiatives have been delivered or are under development:

- **Winter Wellness Programme** – A youth-led initiative that supported rangatahi in preparing for winter, offering access to immunisations, health services, dental care, health education and more.
- **Pink Hoodz** – A grassroots outreach and community response initiative focused on improving perceptions of safety. It empowers local individuals to support rangatahi and whānau experiencing homelessness e.g. showing them where and how to access support, fostering collective care and creating safer, more connected communities.
- **The Mahi Club** – An individualised work readiness programme tailored to the specific needs of rangatahi was launched in August with funding provided by the Auckland Council.
- **Matariki events** – Kick Back collaborated with organisations like Pride, Hapori Rori, and local businesses on Karangahape Road to deliver a vibrant Matariki programme, supported by funding from Te Puni Kōkiri. The events—ranging from scavenger hunts and skateboarding to creative workshops and reflective sessions—enabled rangatahi to engage in cultural learning, healing and grief workshops and community connection.
- **Mauwai** – We also partnered with Mauwai to deliver a programme at The Front Door that supported approximately six rangatahi in developing key skills such as competency, agency, self-determination, and a deeper understanding of hauora. Through this programme, rangatahi were empowered to take the lead in supporting their peers and whānau to prepare for winter, fostering leadership and community care.
- **Manawa Ora** – Is a wellbeing and resilience programme delivered by Te Hā, designed to strengthen cultural identity and connection, support emotional wellbeing, and promote resilience. It draws on Māori healing practices and cultural concepts of health and wellbeing, viewed through a te ao Māori lens.
- **Recreational and advocacy activities** – including arts and crafts, gaming, fitness circuits, breach trips and advocacy activities such as youth-led hikoi and protests.

Rangatahi involved in Kick Back are not only leading change—they are also learning essential life skills through everyday experiences in a space designed to feel like whānau. Alongside formal programmes, the rhythm of The Front Door naturally builds skills like cooking, conflict resolution, and shared responsibility. What began as a trial of cooking classes has evolved into regular communal meals, where rangatahi learn to clean, cook, and care for one another.

Leadership groups are invited into strategic planning and vision-setting sessions, giving rangatahi real opportunities to shape the direction of the work. This sense of ownership and empowerment is evident in moments like when three children, who had never been to Kick Back but had heard about our mahi from a stranger in Drury, were welcomed with warmth and safety by other rangatahi after making the trek into the city to locate The Front Door. These experiences show how rangatahi are not just recipients of support—they are active agents, leaders, creators, and connectors, building a community of care and learning as they go.

The Growth of The Front Door

With the support of our funders, community, and partners, The Front Door has experienced significant growth over the past year responding to the urgency and complexity of youth homelessness.

- We now have a dedicated team of six paid staff, supported by over 15 passionate volunteers, including our dedicated Board members.
- Our work is strengthened by more than 10 active partnerships, including Auckland PHO, Massey Community Trust, Youthline, Sunday Blessings, Pride, Mauwai, Ease Up, CADS, Youthlaw, Auckland City Mission, Merge, Rainbow Youth, and QES. More detail on our partners and how we collaborate is provided in the Partnerships section.
- Largely due to referrals from rangatahi themselves, our reach has expanded—we are now actively monitoring and supporting around 160 rangatahi and tamariki across Auckland and beyond.
- We are fortunate to have incredible funders who believe in our mahi and make it possible for The Front Door to deliver its services and support rangatahi.

Our Impact – What We've Achieved Together

Together with our partners, funders, and the broader community, we have made a meaningful impact—connecting rangatahi with whānau, essential services, wellbeing and healing opportunities, and helping to prevent homelessness. These outcomes are supported by case studies, and we're currently working to integrate quantitative impact data into our case management tool to support future reporting.

Thanks to our amazing community partners and funders, through the Front Door, rangatahi have:



Reconnected with whānau – Rangatahi have rebuilt and strengthened relationships with their whānau, marae, and iwi. In some cases, these renewed connections have played a vital role in preventing the need for emergency housing and have supported efforts to keep tamariki out of care.

Over the last month, the team at Kick Back have supported a 13-year-old who had been couch surfing and living in lodges with older rangatahi since December last year to reconnect back with his whānau. The team also connected him with an education provider, where he has just begun his studies after being out of year for almost a year.



Secured housing quickly – preventing and responding to homelessness – Rangatahi have been supported into a range of housing options, including immediate housing services (emergency housing, youth housing services), private accommodation, and public housing. Kick Back's advocacy and partnerships with a range of housing providers have played an important role in both preventing and responding to youth homelessness.

"Kick Back is a safe, youth-only space where I could hang out and meet others my age. It fills a gap—lots of other cities have places like this to support young people, and we needed one too. Kick Back helps us stay out of trouble and supported me in getting housing. They really understand my needs in a way that others don't." - Rangatahi with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)

To prevent rangatahi from sleeping rough—and in some cases, to support their transition into long-term, sustainable housing—Kick Back has developed innovative, community-based alternatives:

- **Supportive Landlords** – We have built relationships with hostel and lodge owners, community housing providers and private landlords who are willing to work with us and MSD to provide rangatahi with access to shelter swiftly, or longer-term accommodation. As a result over the last month, we have been able to get a number of rangatahi into safe and stable housing.

"Kick Back helped me get my own apartment, I feel like a weight has lifted off my shoulders. I now feel like I have freedom to make my own choices... and I am able to sleep better without being afraid of getting attacked in the middle of the night. Kick Back listened to me and my needs." – Pakeha Tane – 20 years old.

- **MSD Key Contact and Streamlined Processes** – We have established a strategic partnership with MSD, which has provided a dedicated key contact. This allows Kick Back to work directly with MSD to streamline the process of young people accessing what they need, making it easier for rangatahi to access their entitlements without visiting Work and Income. The result is a more equitable and accessible process.
- **The Safety Net (described in further detail below)** – Through our partnership with Massey Community Trust we collaborate to provide the Safety Net project, a Host Home model. This model provides safe, stable, and immediate housing for rangatahi in urgent need by connecting them with a host whānau who have a spare room and are willing to offer short-term accommodation. This approach has enabled us to support rangatahi with safer, community-based housing alternatives when they need it most.

The example below demonstrates the effectiveness of these relationships in responding to rangatahi in crisis within a couple of hours.

Recently, a 16-year-old who had been sleeping outside a local library for several days reached out to us late in the afternoon. Within 20 minutes of arriving at our hub, we connected him with immediate shelter options through our strong partnerships with MSD, landlords, and community networks. By that evening, he had a safe place to sleep, and within 24 hours, we secured a semi-permanent transitional lodge. Homelessness is incredibly dangerous for our children and young people. This rapid response not only provided safety but also prevented the ongoing risks associated with homelessness, such as harm to mental and physical wellbeing.



Improved wellbeing through access to health and social support services – through The Front Door, rangatahi who might otherwise be disconnected from support systems have been connected to essential services in one place, including health care (GP, nurse, psychologists), mental health and addiction services (e.g. Ease Up and the Grace Foundation), youth specific legal support (Youth Law), Work and Income, food and clothing and family and sexual violence support services.

A snapshot of health impacts from the last two months:

- **Seven Young People Activity Engaged in Mental Health/Addiction Services.** Through partnerships with CADS and Ease Up, **Seven rangatahi** are actively engaged in ongoing mental health and addiction services, with additional young people receiving brief interventions and support through drop-in clinics.
- **Dental Support Provided to five Young People, 20+ Engaged in conversations around dental hygiene.** Over the last period, **five rangatahi** were supported to access dental care through a partnership with Alpers Dental, and **over 20 regular rangatahi** received information and were offered opportunities for dental hygiene support.
- **GP Registrations Facilitated for seven Young People.** The program supported **two rangatahi** to register with TEND as their GP and an additional **five rangatahi** with the Calder Centre, improving access to primary health care.

In the past week alone, we supported 15 rangatahi to access basic health check-ups with a nurse. Young people experiencing homelessness often struggle to access mental health and addiction services, and we are encouraged by the growth in engagement with health services from our young people and mihi to our partners for their tireless work providing flexible and tailored health to our rangatahi through The Front Door.



Built skills and engaged with education, training and employment opportunities – Through programmes and initiatives delivered at The Front Door, in collaboration with our partners, rangatahi have developed confidence and self-esteem, strengthened cultural identity and knowledge, and gained a wide range of practical skills—including Māori tikanga, cooking, health and wellness, capability, literacy, communication and teamwork, problem-solving, leadership and advocacy. These experiences have also supported re-engagement with education, participation in work readiness programmes and access to work experience.

For example, we have collaborated with small businesses such as Karearea construction who have provided opportunities for young people to gain valuable experience and potentially secure paid employment.



Strengthened community connection and reduce engagement in anti-social behaviour (e.g. crime) – Rangatahi have told us that access to The Front Door, and the holistic, trauma-informed support provided, has helped them disengage from criminal activity and build stronger connections within their communities—particularly through participation in events and programmes provided through The Front Door e.g. like the Matariki Festival.

"I got connected to KB after being released from prison... Kick Back is a place of growth and change, I've been slowly changing and seeing improvements...stepping away from crime. The support means a lot and I am grateful for it. KB is a place of love to me." – Tane Māori - 24 years old.

"Kick Back has kept me out of a lot of crime, helped me stop hanging around the people I was hanging around. It slowly makes change in my life. It just keeps me away from the people I shouldn't be around. I can choose to come here. It's just having that place to go, when you're hungry, it's knowing you have a place to go to get a meal." – Tane Māori - 17 years old.



Gained confidence and independence – Rangatahi have told us that being involved in decision-making at Kick Back and receiving tailored support has helped them build confidence and independence. They have felt empowered by opportunities to elevate their voices — including attending homelessness panel discussions, seminars and leading programmes at The Front Door — and say these experiences have made them feel heard and valued.

"It gave me the family I never had, helped me understand my emotions, and grow my confidence around others and public speaking. I'm not as anti-social now, and the space is always chill with heaps to do. They've even helped me reconnect with my whānau and get support with housing, food, and mental health." - Rangatahi with ADHD.

THE SAFETY NET

A COLLABORATION WITH MCT

Another innovation Kick Back has been developing is The Safety Net project – a partnership between Kick Back and Massey Community Trust. The Safety Net is a grass roots response to youth homelessness and yet another alternative to motel-based emergency housing.

The power of The Safety Net project is that it is about developing the capacity of the community to hold and heal its own. Kick Back and Massey Community Trust have been working together over the last two years to organise and empower whānau within Massey Community in West Auckland to support and care for rangatahi in need of immediate housing. And we have seen promising results, with young people accessing the Safety Net often reporting improvement in their mental health, reductions in their reliance on drugs and alcohol, the support they needed to stay in school, retain employment and move into more stable long-term housing.

Kick Back has also developed a range of materials to support other grass roots agencies to become Safety Net providers and is developing a longer-term strategy to explore how we can grow The Safety Net across the country and eventually wider across Aotearoa.

The opportunity with this project is that, compared to other bricks-and-mortar housing services, it is relatively inexpensive, embedded within local communities, and enables young people to access support quickly in their own environment. From there, they can stabilise and receive the assistance they need to develop a longer-term housing plan.

The Safety Net Project has had promising results:

Key outcomes in the last 12 months

14

Rangatahi hosted



10

Other rangatahi supported to access alternative housing/shelter options or stabilise their current housing situation.

85%

supported to access safe, stable housing upon leaving the Safety Net.



186

total safe nights provided



x9

Community Kōrero training events provided



x47

Referrals received

RANGATAHI REPORTED THAT WHILE BEING SUPPORTED WITHIN THE SAFETY NET THEY EXPERIENCED THE FOLLOWING:

30%

were able to reconnect with whānau.

80%

of rangatahi shared that their mental health either improved or stabilised while accessing the Safety Net.

100%

of those engaged in education or employment were able to maintain engagement during their stay.

100%

shared that they received the support they needed in order to plan their next steps.



What's next for Kick Back

Our vision is to establish the first fully operational 24/7 holistic rangatahi hub and immediate housing project in Auckland city centre, specifically designed to respond to youth homelessness. The Front Door is the first phase of the project.

Progress towards The Front Door becoming 24/7

Our next step is to expand into a digital after-hours service as we move toward full 24/7 operation. There is currently an element of 24/7 crisis response support we are providing a core group of our regular rangatahi however, we are currently undertaking a piece of mahi to develop this service further to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

Rangatahi are often the first to respond when their peers are in crisis, but they should not have to do it alone. We need resources to establish an after-hours duty line with the capacity for physical response—someone who can show up when needed. Long-term, we aim to be physically open 24/7, especially as we see the most harm occurring in the evenings and on weekends when other services are closed.

Expand The Front Door to include immediate housing options

We are also exploring immediate housing options closely connected to The Front Door, with the ability to support complex needs and provide wraparound care onsite. Too often, rangatahi are left in unsafe situations simply because there is no capacity in the system. If we had been able to place them in safe, immediate housing, we believe many crises and lives could have been prevented. There are different options as to how this can occur, and we are actively exploring those.

We are also committed to supporting partners across the system, like Massey Community Trust, to grow initiatives like The Safety Net—a grassroots, community-based alternative to institutional care. Together, we can build the infrastructure needed across the city to ensure a world where no rangatahi or tamariki ever need to sleep on our streets or go without a safe, loving and supportive place to call home.

The Mahi Club

When we designed The Front Door one of the themes that came from that design was a feeling from our young people of permanent impermanence. One of our young leaders spoke about how despite experiencing homelessness, they also had worked hard to develop and progress their goals to access education, employment and training. However, they spoke about the litany of barriers and closed doors that were presented once they disclosed they were experiencing homelessness. Education providers would often tell them “sort your housing” and then reapply. The impact of this, on a young person who had no power over their housing situation, within a context where housing opportunities for young people are slim and difficult to attain, created a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness.

Through The Front Door, Kick Back has been able to demonstrate the power of a consistent, safe, supportive and loving community to mitigate harm for young people experiencing homelessness and provide stability and grounding in the midst of instability and impermanence. We are seeing young people engage in opportunities, seek employment, express desire to reengage in education. And through kōrero with our young people we have also recognized that if we are going to break generational cycles of poverty and support our rangatahi to be resilient to future experiences of homelessness, that we must do so much more to support them to develop the skills, tools and social infrastructure around them that will support them to stabilize, grow and thrive.

Over the next 12 months we have a vision of developing The Mahi Club, which is a flexible, tailored program designed to meet the needs of tamariki and rangatahi experiencing homelessness, from the street to stability. We have already completed the initial design phase for this project with a cohort of rangatahi rangatira, and in the new year we will be looking to resource, grow and develop this project. The opportunity here is to support young people into meaningful opportunities that build hope, support the development of a sense of self, and provide meaningful pathways into employment, education and training for young people with experiences of homelessness, through a project designed by them, for them, and delivered in a manner which meets their needs.

Understanding the tamariki and rangatahi engaging with Kick Back



KICK BACK HAS HAD 160 INDIVIDUAL RANGATAHI AND TAMARIKI ACCESS SOME FORM OF SUPPORT THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR BETWEEN 1 JULY 2024 TO 1 JUNE 2025. AS NOTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS REPORT, THE DATA AND INFORMATION PRESENTED BELOW REFLECT WHAT HAS BEEN COLLECTED TO DATE.

Rangatahi told us what this data means to them:

"It's crazy we have to show people evidence of our suffering for them to believe us, and even that isn't enough for decision makers to do something..." – Wāhine Māori - 18 years old

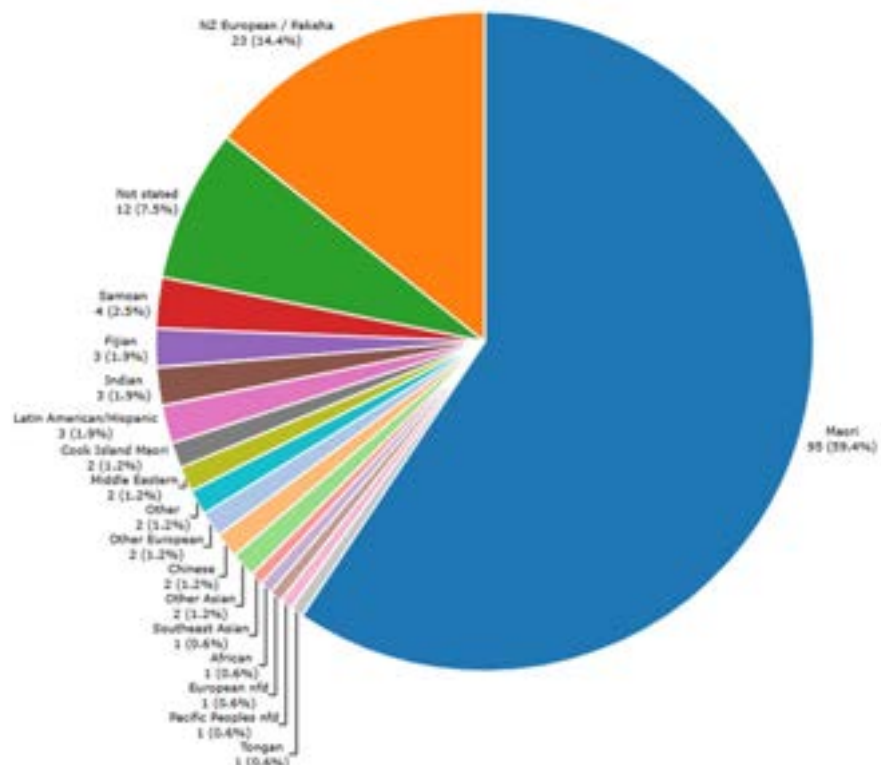
Data disclaimer:

This year has provided valuable insights into how we collect, interpret, and use data to inform our work. It has helped us identify critical gaps in our systems and prompted important conversations about how to improve our data practices. While we are committed to capturing accurate and meaningful information, we acknowledge that there are times when the data does not fully reflect the realities we are seeing on the ground.

Where discrepancies exist between data and lived experience, we are actively working to strengthen our systems—ensuring they are more responsive, inclusive, and reflective of the communities we serve. This includes ongoing efforts to refine our data collection methods, improve accuracy, and better capture the complexity of rangatahi experiences.

Ethnicity

As evident from the diagram below, of those seeking support through The Front Door almost 60% identified as rangatahi Māori, about 14% identified as pākehā, and almost 7% identified as tangata moana. Notably, we've identified that nearly 9% of those seeking support through The Front Door come from migrant communities. We believe this figure may be underreported and are currently exploring ways to improve the accuracy of our data collection.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Youth Homelessness in Migrant Communities

The experiences of rangatahi from migrant backgrounds facing homelessness have not been a prominent focus in the broader movement to end youth homelessness. At Kick Back, we have heard from rangatahi that their experiences often stem from a clash between cultural expectations and the realities of growing up in a Western, New Zealand context. This cultural tension can lead to conflict at home and, in some cases, a breakdown in relationships with whānau who themselves are navigating complex cultural landscapes.

Despite these challenges, rangatahi consistently express deep respect and love for their parents and caregivers. They acknowledge the difficulties—and at times, the harm—they face within their home environments, while also recognising the pressures their families are under.

Although more work is needed to fully understand and accurately capture data on this issue, Kick Back sees a valuable opportunity for both Central and Local Government to engage meaningfully with migrant communities. By listening to the voices of rangatahi and their whānau, we can better identify the kinds of support needed to prevent youth homelessness and help families thrive together.

Ongoing impact of colonisation and land loss, and the importance of Te Tiriti of Waitangi

As noted almost 60% of all those seeking support from Kick Back through The Front Door were rangatahi Māori. This stands in stark contrast to recent census data, which estimates that Māori make up 28.8% of the overall population experiencing homelessness. This discrepancy raises an important question: are we undercounting the true number of Māori experiencing homelessness at a national level – this is likely given how the census data is collected and the nature of homelessness? Further analysis is needed to better understand and address this potential gap.

“this data pisses me off...that 60% are Māori... its youth, it's our rangatahi... because us tangata whenua are being treated like this” – Wāhine Māori - 22 years old

Although we are not yet formally recording this data, we've observed that several of the rangatahi and tamariki supported by Kick Back come from whānau who are themselves experiencing homelessness and lack access to safe, stable housing. This reality speaks to the deep, intergenerational impacts of colonisation and land loss in Aotearoa. It serves as a powerful reminder that the consequences of historical injustices continue to shape the lives of whānau today.

Rangatahi have expressed that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is essential in responding to homelessness, not only as a framework for restoring rights and protections—particularly over whenua—but also as a safeguard against deeper systemic harm. They have told us that without Te Tiriti, the impacts of poverty and racism would worsen, and the consequences for future generations could be devastating.

“Why does the government want to get rid of it... it is one of our last remaining protections of our whenua. That is when poverty started... all of this comes down to racism.” - Tane Māori - 19 years old

*“If we lose te tiriti it will be worse, our kids won't be homeless they will be dead.”
Wāhine Māori - 22 years old*

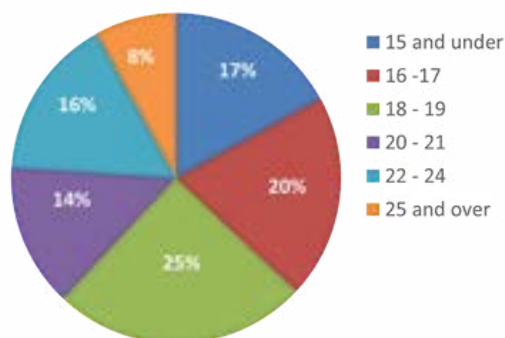
Iwi Affiliation

While not all rangatahi and tamariki were able to identify their iwi, a small number did share this information. Among those who were aware of their iwi affiliation, 22% identified as Ngāpuhi, 19% as Tūhoe, and 17% as Ngāti Whātua. These insights, though limited, offer a glimpse into the whakapapa of the rangatahi we support and highlight the importance of culturally grounded approaches in our mahi. They also point to opportunities to strengthen relationships with iwi.

AGE GROUPS

The age profile of rangatahi support by Kick Back through The Front Door as outlined below shows that the majority of rangatahi accessing support are in their late teens, with a significant number also in their early twenties.

When seeing this data, rangatahi told us more support is needed for parents, and we need to act quick to end youth homelessness.



Of those supported:

"The government should be doing more to help parents... some parents do not have the skills or know how to parent... it comes down to intergenerational trauma... there is not enough support to help parents..." - Wāhine Māori - 22 years old

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Tamariki Homelessness

Kick Back has been concerned by the increasing number of tamariki accessing support through The Front Door. The youngest tamariki Kick Back is currently monitoring is nine years old, with an increasing number of 11 year olds and 14 year olds coming to our attention.

The current systems in place—particularly within Oranga Tamariki —are under resourced and do not have the capacity to meet the needs of children experiencing homelessness.

There is currently no strong or consistent process for supporting tamariki at risk of, or experiencing homelessness. Often, the default government response when a child is found sleeping rough is to involve police, who then take children into care. This approach is deeply problematic, as many tamariki do not trust the police or institutional settings and frequently refuse to stay in care residences.

Kick Back's experience over this period has been that on average, it is taking between four to six weeks to be connected with a social worker after making a Report of Concern. Our observation is that Oranga Tamariki is under significant pressure and lacks the capacity to respond in a timely manner. Even when contact is made, social workers are stretched thin and are often unable to act quickly on the concerns raised.

There is a clear gap in services for tamariki experiencing homelessness without caregivers. This issue is compounded by a limited understanding of what homelessness looks like for children—many are couch surfing with other rangatahi or living in unstable arrangements, yet are not recognised within formal definitions of homelessness.

Youth housing services typically cater to rangatahi aged 16 and over, leaving younger tamariki without appropriate shelter options. Many of these children are reluctant to engage with Oranga Tamariki or the police, and often do not meet the criteria for community residences—or there is simply no availability. Compounding this, tamariki engaging with Kick Back often lack strong social networks or whānau support.

As a result, community organisations like Kick Back are stepping in to fill these gaps, often working creatively to find solutions that enable tamariki to access shelter—frequently at their own expense.

In one case, we paid for a hostel stay for a child who had been sleeping rough and in order to access shelter had managed to convince a landlord to allow them to stay. In another, we collaborated with a youth housing service to make an exception to their usual policy allowing them to stay while we developed a tailored plan. We also had to pay roughly \$300 to transport a child who had been sleeping rough from Auckland to a safe location to support a whānau led plan because Oranga Tamariki could not provide support.

Kick Back works alongside Oranga Tamariki to reconnect tamariki with whānau and appropriate supports, while actively monitoring risk and providing essentials like kai, clothing, and a safe community. These situations demand urgent, flexible responses—something the current system is not set up to deliver.

Systemic inflexibility is harming tamariki. Kick Back has identified that at times the very system that is designed to keep tamariki safe prevents Oranga Tamariki from doing what it can do to mitigate harm for tamariki. For example, in the above-mentioned situation where a tamariki sleeping rough had convinced a landlord to allow them to take shelter in their hostel, Oranga Tamariki communicated that they could not pay the child's rent as a hostel rightly falls outside the existing care standards, but despite failing to do so, would put the child at-risk of sleeping rough. And yet, Oranga Tamariki could also acknowledge the hostel was a safer environment than allowing the child to sleep rough, and that existing options within the current system would not serve this child and would put them at greater risk of harm. This reflects a broader systemic issue: a lack of flexibility within the system to support tamariki and community-led responses, despite these being more responsive and effective at mitigating harm than options available to tamariki from within the system.

Further compounding the issue, Kick Back has been informed that site managers within Oranga Tamariki do not have the authority to grant access to motel accommodation and now must seek approval from the Chief Executive to access emergency housing, creating significant delays. As a result, Kick Back is aware of tamariki and rangatahi who have continued to experience homelessness and remained without shelter, not because Oranga Tamariki cannot provide tailored solutions and responses, but because of the inflexibility and lack of responsiveness of the system. **These barriers highlight the urgent need for greater devolution of decision-making and resources to community organisations who are already doing the work, often without adequate support.**

Filling critical gaps in adults and whānau support

Approximately 8% of those Kick Back has served through The Front Door have been adults (25+). In these cases, Kick Back has been able to provide immediate assistance—including access to kai and essential items—and has connected whānau to appropriate services such as MSD, Lifewise, and the Auckland City Mission.

Within this group are also whānau Kick Back has supported as part of housing and support plans for tamariki and rangatahi. Kick Back takes a holistic approach, recognising the importance of supporting tamariki and rangatahi to reconnect with their whānau. We work to support the whānau as a whole in accessing housing and wraparound services. This highlights the vital role Kick Back plays as a bridge to wider support systems, filling critical gaps in adult and whānau support, and serving as a key touchpoint for holistic community care.

GENDER IDENTITY

Of those seeking support through The Front Door, there is a broadly equal representation of male and female participants, with a small percentage identifying as trans or non-binary. However, we believe this data likely underrepresents the true number of trans and non-binary individuals, due to barriers in disclosure or limitations in data collection.

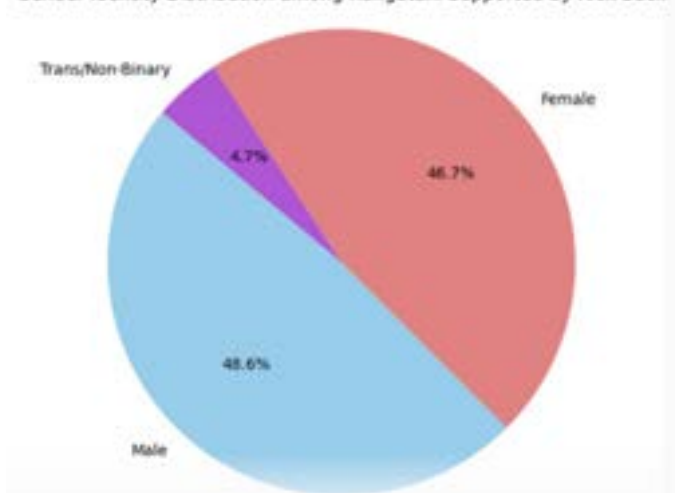
Lack of Support for Māori Takatāpui Communities

As highlighted in our engagement, many Māori takatāpui face significant barriers when exploring their sexual identity and accessing the healthcare they need. These challenges are often compounded by experiences of poverty and trauma, which limit their ability to navigate complex systems without adequate support.

We have heard directly from individuals about the lack of validation and support they feel within the healthcare system, particularly in accessing gender-affirming care. There is a clear need for services to be more inclusive and culturally competent, with a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of takatāpui.

We also see a critical intersection between rangatahi who are both disabled and queer. These overlapping identities can create compounded challenges, but also present opportunities—such as greater collaboration with Primary Health Organisations—to reconnect with whānau and begin healing and reconciliation.

Gender Identity Distribution among Rangatahi Supported by Kick Back

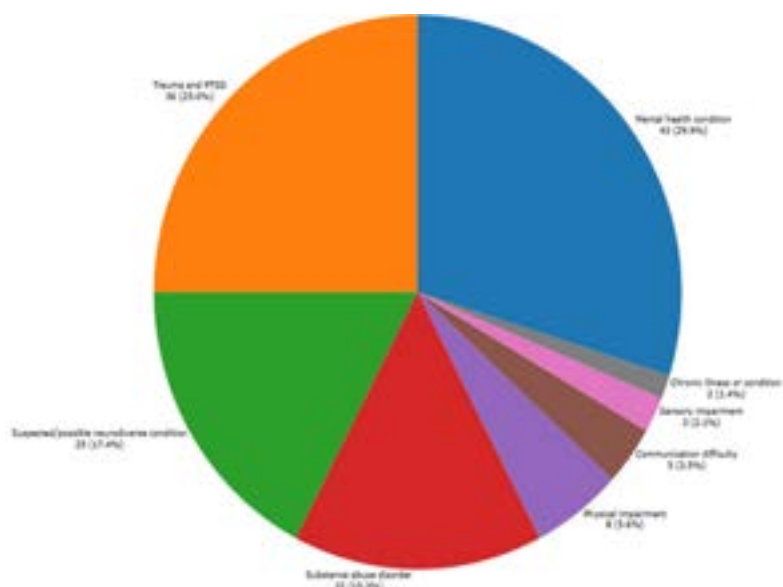


HEALTH

Kick Back estimates that between 80–90% of rangatahi receiving regular support through The Front Door experience some form of mental health condition, addiction, disability, and/or significant trauma. The graph featured provides a snapshot of the data we've been able to capture; however, it does not fully reflect what we observe daily in the lives of our rangatahi.

Through our partnership with Auckland PHO, we are currently working to develop a more robust assessment and screening process for trauma, mental illness, and disabilities. This will help us build a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the needs and experiences of the rangatahi we support.

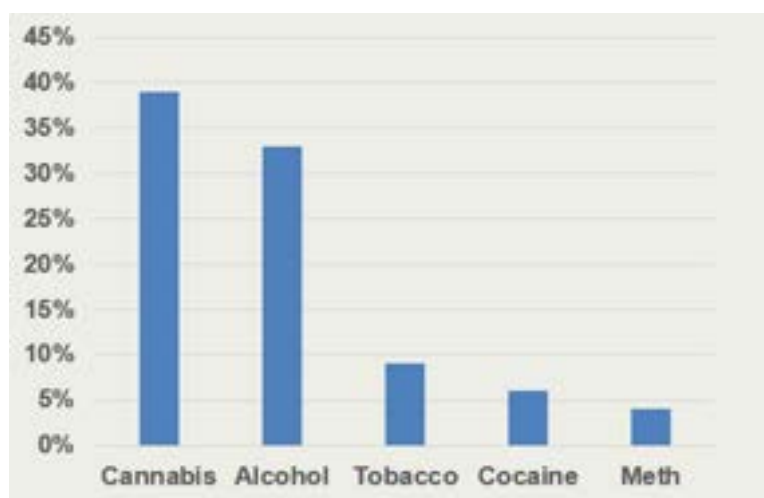
The number of rangatahi with mental health consideration reflect the complex nature of homelessness.



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

From a small sample of 38 rangatahi, 39% reported using cannabis, 33% alcohol, 9% tobacco, 6% cocaine, and 4% methamphetamine. Kick Back has observed a concerning increase in methamphetamine and cocaine use within our rangatahi community and believes the current data likely understates the true extent of this issue.

We have noted a sense of whakama (shame or reluctance) around disclosing methamphetamine or cocaine use, with rangatahi appearing more comfortable reporting cannabis or alcohol use. This suggests that stigma and fear may be impacting the accuracy of our data.



Over the coming year, Kick Back will be working to strengthen our data collection processes, with the goal of providing quarterly snapshots that better reflect substance use trends and inform more targeted support.

Rangatahi told us the importance of understanding the drivers of substance use and the importance of trauma informed support.

"It is something you see every day. It is normalised... we need to create more safe spaces for rangatahi to hang out... it is about understanding why people do it... it's about dealing with trauma"
 - Tane Māori - 17 years old

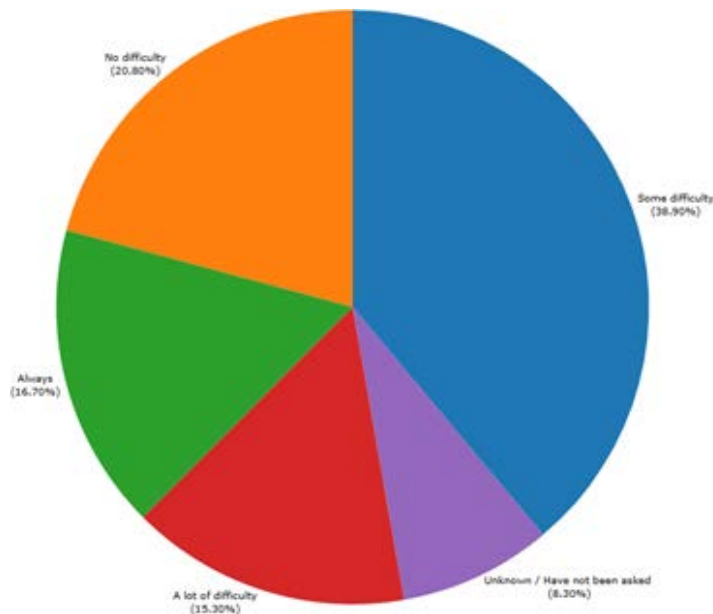
KEY CONSIDERATIONS

High and complex needs is a barrier to accessing housing services

Many of the rangatahi accessing support through The Front Door have struggled to be accepted into youth housing services due to the complexity of their health and wellbeing needs. These services are typically designed and funded to support rangatahi with low to medium needs, and often lack the wraparound support required for those experiencing significant mental health challenges, addiction, trauma, or disability.

A [2022 review](#) by Oranga Tamariki into transitional and supported housing for rangatahi highlighted this mismatch—finding that while the majority of rangatahi in need had high and complex needs, the funding model at the time was not designed to meet them. In our experience, when rangatahi are in the midst of crisis, their needs are at their highest. Yet, youth housing services often feel unequipped to provide the level of care required, and as a result, rangatahi are frequently declined support at the very moment they need it most. This gap underscores the urgent need for a more responsive, well-resourced housing system that can meet the realities faced by our most vulnerable youth.

Due to the drop-in, crisis response, nature of our service, we were not able to record a full assessment for each young person that sought Kick Back's support through The Front Door.



However the pie graph above demonstrates that of about 72 rangatahi and tamariki Kick Back was able to complete and record an assessment for, about 70% had some form of long term ailment, health condition or disability (mental and/or physical health) which made it difficult to carry out day to day tasks.

Gaps exist within the current Youth Housing System

Kick Back has identified a significant gap in housing services available for rangatahi experiencing homelessness. Many of these rangatahi have high and complex support needs, which make it difficult for them to access traditional youth housing services. These services often require rangatahi to live in mixed housing environments or commit to participation in a kaupapa (such as recovery, education, or employment) as a condition of access—requirements that can be unrealistic or unsafe for those with complex health and trauma histories.

Rangatahi have shared with Kick Back that private housing is often inaccessible, and that their experiences in mixed environments—such as residential services, state care, or whānau settings—have left them with a need for autonomy and safety in their living arrangements. Many require housing that is unconditional, allowing them to stabilise without the pressure of immediate engagement in structured programmes.

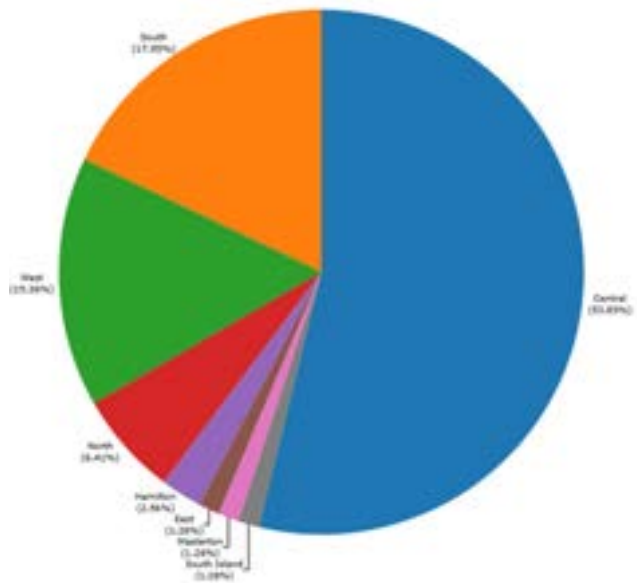
These barriers highlight the urgent need for the implementation of alternative housing models—one that is trauma-informed, flexible, and responsive to the realities faced by rangatahi experiencing homelessness.

THE NATURE AND COMPLEXITY OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Auckland Central is a critical touch point for rangatahi experiencing homelessness

The majority (approximately 53%) of rangatahi accessing support through The Front Door were seeking shelter in Auckland Central when they first connected with Kick Back. This was followed by South Auckland (18%), West Auckland (15%), and North Auckland (6%). Kick Back also provided digital support to rangatahi located in Masterton, Hamilton, and parts of the South Island.

The fact that most rangatahi were experiencing homelessness in the Auckland city centre prior to seeking support highlights the role of the CBD as a central touchpoint for rangatahi and tamariki in crisis. The central location of The Front Door has been key to Kick Back's success—allowing us to be accessible, visible, and responsive to rangatahi where they are.



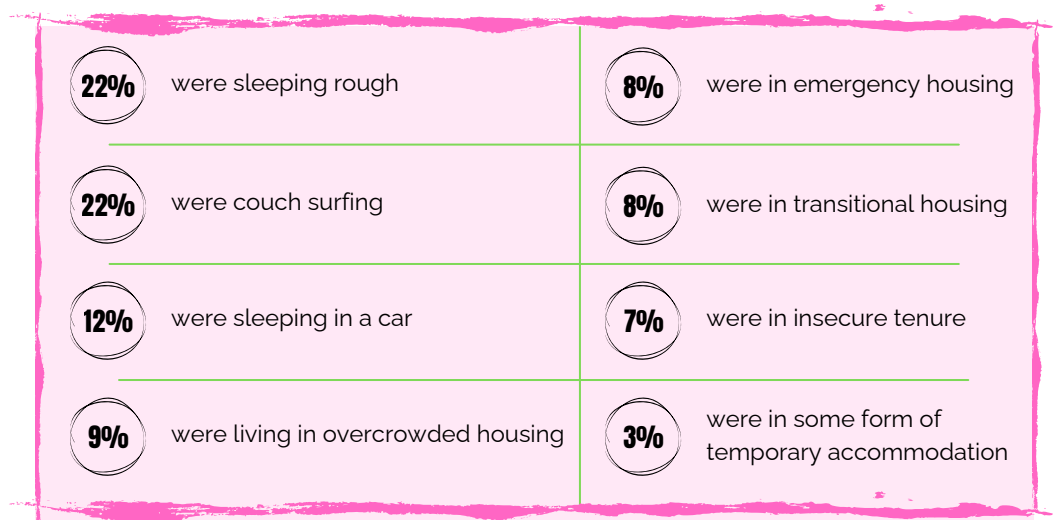
Migration Within the Youth Homelessness Community

While the majority of rangatahi (over 92%) supported by Kick Back have come from communities within the Auckland Council region, we have also connected with a smaller group (around 8%) who have travelled from outside of Auckland—including Wellington, Tauranga, Masterton, and Hamilton—to seek shelter in Tāmaki Makaurau.

This highlights the transient nature of youth homelessness and the resilience of rangatahi, who are often forced to move across the country in search of safety and support. It also reinforces the role of Auckland—particularly the City Centre—as a key landing place for rangatahi experiencing homelessness nationally. There is a clear opportunity for future research to explore patterns of youth migration across Aotearoa and the systemic factors that drive rangatahi to relocate in search of shelter and services.

Snapshot of housing insecurity among rangatahi when first connected with Kick Back

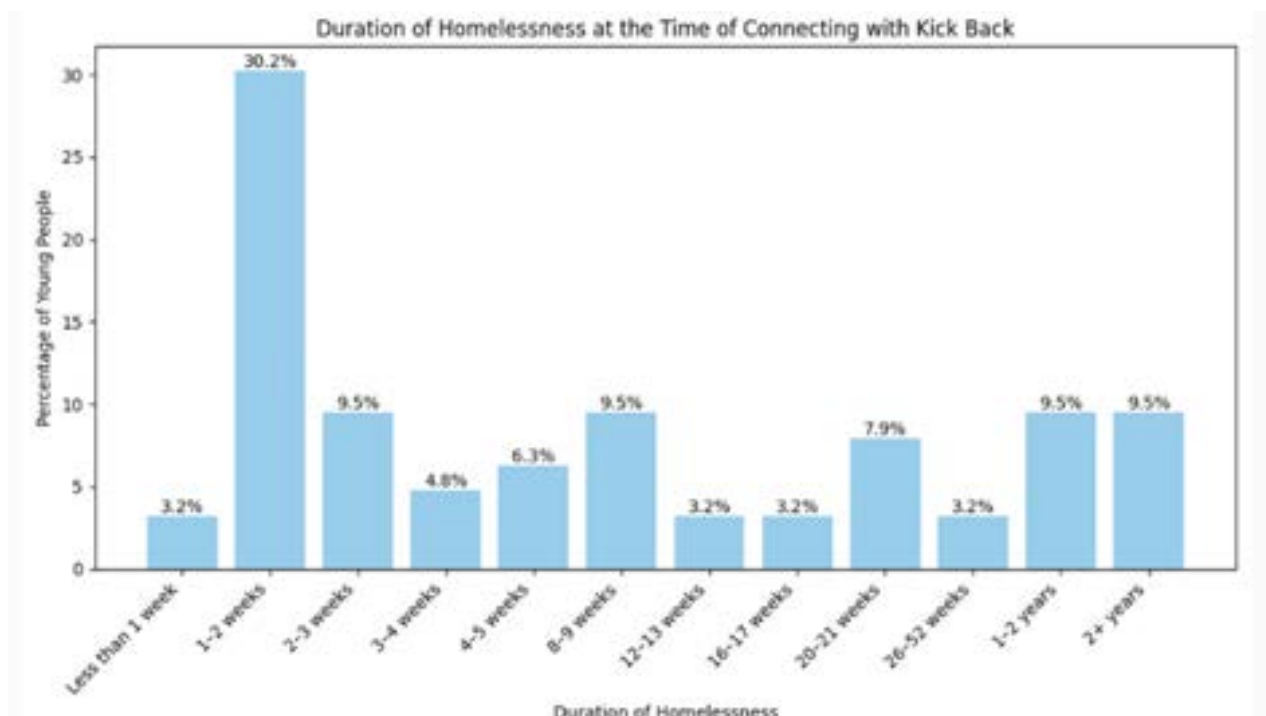
Out of a sample of 76 rangatahi supported by Kick Back, their initial housing situations when first connecting with The Front Door were as follows:



These figures reflect the diverse and precarious living conditions faced by rangatahi experiencing homelessness. They also highlight the urgent need for flexible, trauma-informed housing solutions that meet rangatahi where they are.

Kick Back is providing early intervention support

This table presents data from a sample of 107 rangatahi, showing the number of weeks, they had been experiencing homelessness before accessing support through The Front Door. Notably, 30% of rangatahi connected with Kick Back within the first couple of weeks of experiencing homelessness.



One of The Front Door's core goals is to provide a safe, accessible space for early intervention—helping to reduce the risks and long-term impacts of homelessness for rangatahi. By engaging rangatahi early, Kick Back aims to prevent entrenched homelessness and support pathways to stability and wellbeing. As shown in the graph, early engagement has been a key success of our service this year—often driven by rangatahi themselves, who act as the first line of response by referring their friends to us.

Factors identified as contributing to homelessness

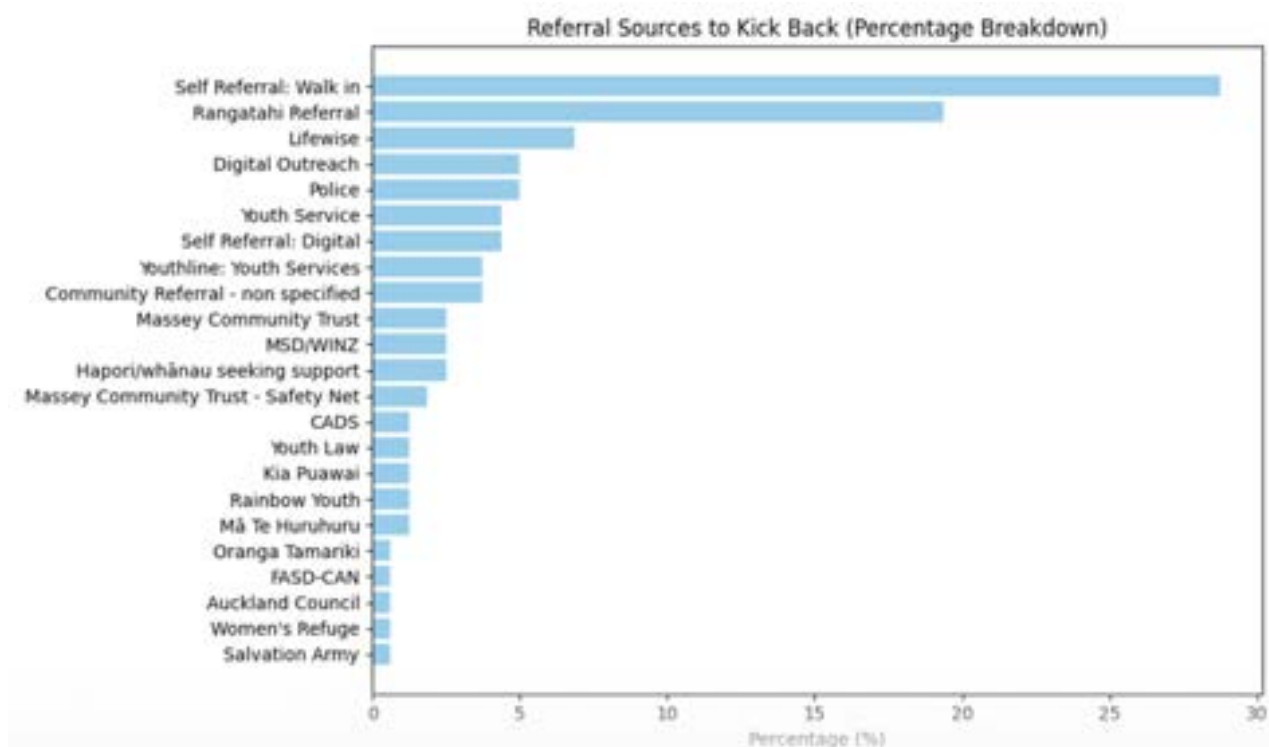
The key factors contributing to youth homelessness among those seeking Kick Back support included:

- Family or relationship breakdown was the most reported cause (19%)
- A lack of social support (17%)
- Mental health challenges (12%)
- Other contributing factors included domestic violence, transition from care, housing affordability and substance use or addiction.

"Homelessness is happening because there is stuff going on at home, maybe abuse or other things....we need to build more culturally appropriate whare like an apartment complex for Kick Back... a space for us to be together – living by tikanga" – Wāhine Māori - 22 years old

Referral type – Youth-led referrals are the most powerful drivers of engagement

Almost 58% of all rangatahi and tamariki supported by Kick Back have either referred themselves or been referred by their peers. This speaks to the deep trust rangatahi place in their own networks and highlights the importance of being visible and accessible within youth spaces. Note that the 58% figure includes a range of categories such as self-referral walk in, rangatahi referral, digital outreach, self-referral digital.



Our core referral pathways are driven by social media, peer networks, and youth-led outreach—underscoring the need for youth-friendly, community-based engagement.

“Rangatahi support each other...when someone is struggling...when the system doesn’t support us... we support us” – Tane Māori - 22 years old

Building trust is central to our approach. Many rangatahi are hesitant to engage with formal services, but they are willing to connect with real people in safe, supportive environments. This is why our model prioritises whanaungatanga and manaakitanga—creating spaces where relationships come first, and support follows. While formal referrals from services like Lifewise, Police, and MSD play an important role, the data shows that community and youth-led channels are the most powerful drivers of engagement. This reinforces our commitment to working alongside rangatahi, not just for them.



Our Partners

THE FRONT DOOR IS GROUNDED IN A KOTAHITANGA MODEL, AND WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR HAS ONLY BEEN POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION OF OUR PARTNERS.



Mana Services played a critical role in helping us get off the ground, and since becoming operational, we've built strong, collaborative relationships with a range of services—opening up access to vital support for our rangatahi.

During the design phase, rangatahi told us clearly: they do not trust services, but they do trust real people. That's why we approach referrals through the lens of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga. Our goal is to create opportunities for rangatahi to connect with professionals in a safe, supportive environment—building genuine relationships before engaging in formal support.

To ensure equitable access to healthcare, we have developed a range of strategic partnerships. We work closely with CADS and Ease Up to provide mental health and addiction support—CADS runs a weekly clinic onsite, and Ease Up regularly meets with rangatahi at The Front Door. Auckland PHO is another key partner, providing a Health Improvement Specialist and a Clinical Psychologist who is onsite three days a week. In partnership with Health West, we've also launched a weekly health clinic at The Front Door.

YouthLaw is an important partner and provides critical support enabling equitable access to legal support for our rangatahi.

We collaborate with MSD to streamline access to support, reducing the need for rangatahi to engage directly with Work and Income. We also work alongside Youth Service providers to support access to the Youth Payment.

Our partnerships extend to Merge Café, Pride, Auckland City Mission, Auckland Council, and the K' Road Business Association to ensure rangatahi and tamariki at risk of homelessness are identified early and connected swiftly to the support they need.

Sunday Blessings is a key partner, enabling us to access surplus kai from Woolworths to cook and feed rangatahi at The Front Door.

We also collaborate with Mauwai who delivered at The Front Door, a programme which supported approximately six rangatahi in building competency, agency, self-determination and understanding of hauora. The programme empowered rangatahi to lead in helping their peers and whānau prepare for winter.

We work closely with organisations such as Kāhui Tū Kaha and Massey Community Trust on The Safety Net project (as described above). Back is a proud supporter of these organisations. Without these vital alternatives, many of our rangatahi would have faced the harsh reality of sleeping rough or staying in unsafe living conditions.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

THIS SECTION SUMMARISES THE KEY LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNT OVER THE LAST YEAR AT KICK BACK.

Youth-Led solutions drive real change, the power of youth leadership

At the heart of Kick Back's approach is a deep commitment to being rangatahi-led—not by doing the work for rangatahi, but by creating the space and support for them to lead, thrive, and shape the solutions they need. Initiatives like the Winter Wellness programme and youth-led Hikoi to House our Youth are grounded in the voices and aspirations of rangatahi themselves. This approach ensures that decision-making stays close to those most impacted, allowing services to be shaped by lived experience. It's not just about leadership—it is about whai wāhitanga, supporting rangatahi to step into their power and pace, and to build the confidence and skills to lead change in their communities.

The Front Door, a space co-designed and led by rangatahi, has evolved into more than just a service access point—it's become a third space, a living room, kitchen, and lounge where community is built. In the absence of safe housing, it offers a place of connection, healing, and belonging. Rangatahi who have been denied formal support are now advocating for themselves and others, forming a community of care that wraps around those in crisis. Even those experiencing homelessness have a place to check in, feel safe, and access essentials.

Kick Back has not just created this community—it has provided a space for this community to grow. What is emerging is a visible, powerful group of young leaders who are finding their voices and stepping into roles as future leaders in housing justice.

The photos below illustrate our rangatahi in action, whether that be leading a hikoi, attending panel discussions sharing their lived experience, running games/ activity events at Kick Back and many more.





Councils also have a vital role in addressing youth homelessness.

Councils have a vital role to play in addressing youth homelessness. They can regulate hotels and lodges where many rangatahi currently stay, and lead local strategies to coordinate crisis responses. Auckland Council has shown leadership by supporting innovative services, but these efforts need sustained funding and advocacy to be embedded in central government policy. Councils can also help create city-wide touchpoints—safe places where rangatahi can access emergency support and information from frontline workers within the community. By identifying where they have influence, councils can begin to lead youth homelessness strategies, with youth voice and leadership at the centre.

Councils can do more to support Central Government in its efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness. One opportunity for Central Government to collaborate with Local Government is to allocate Homelessness Prevention and Response funding directly to local Councils to administer directly. Councils know their communities and are well positioned to know what and where the need is in order to coordinate resource allocation and ensure that the right services are invested in and supported in the right places within any given city or town.

Removing free public transport for under-25s has had a massive impact on our rangatahi.

This policy change has cut rangatahi off from connecting with their communities, engaging in opportunities, and accessing vital resources across the city. The cost of travel is a constant barrier. At Kick Back, there is not a day that goes by where we are not stepping in to help—whether it's buying a HOP card or Ubering a young person in danger or crisis to where they need to be. Some rangatahi feel forced to jump on buses without paying. These moments leave them feeling whakama—ashamed and embarrassed. The emotional and social toll is real. This is not just about transport—it is about dignity, connection, and equity. The impact on our community has been deep and ongoing.

Many Youth housing services aren't equipped or designed to support rangatahi with high and complex needs.

This is a system issue as many services are funded to support low to medium needs, but that does not reflect the reality. There is often not enough wraparound support to meet the complex needs of rangatahi experiencing the significant trauma and harm that comes with homelessness. What we see at Kick Back is that when rangatahi are in the midst of the crisis of housing instability—when their needs are highest—services often feel unequipped to care for them. Instead of being supported, they are often declined. This leaves them feeling rejected, isolated, and whakama. Government and councils should identify and resource existing youth hubs and services—many of which are already in place—and invest in youth-specific housing projects.

Crisis response is increasingly a core role of what we do at Kick Back—filling a critical gap in current services.

Though The Front Door is not yet fully resourced to provide a 24/7 service, in reality, we often find ourselves providing after-hours support, especially in mental health-related situations that can be dangerous or high-risk.

Current government crisis services often do not work for our rangatahi. The experience of our rangatahi is that the Mental Health Crisis Line does not provide the level of support they require when they are in the midst of a mental health crisis. The police are also not a safe or appropriate alternative, and there's a real gap in services that can respond with care and understanding. In many cases, it is our team who ends up responding, developing safety plans, supporting rangatahi to de-escalate, and physically responding to rangatahi in distress—sometimes in the early hours of the morning.

Many of the rangatahi we support have serious physical and mental health needs and accessing care is often a major challenge.

Rangatahi tell us that they feel the health system is not designed to meet them where they are at, which creates barriers to timely and effective support.

Our collaboration with the Auckland PHO has led to some powerful outcomes. Initiatives like CADS and Ease Up and having a nurse practitioner or GP on site (through our partnership with Auckland PHO and Health – Te Puna Manawa) has made a real difference – connecting rangatahi to essential health care that otherwise they would not have access to. These efforts show the value and effectiveness of services being responsive and embedded in spaces where rangatahi already feel safe.

Rangatahi have shared that they do not always trust institutions—but they do trust people. When partners are willing to come in, sit down, and genuinely connect, that is where we see real change. We have not seen this level of engagement from this cohort of young people with health services before, and it is breaking down barriers in ways traditional service models haven't been able to.

Increasingly, Oranga Tamariki do not have the capacity and capability to meet the needs of children experiencing homelessness.

As mentioned in the body of the report, Kick Back is increasingly concerned about the growing number of young tamariki, some as young as nine, experiencing homelessness and seeking help through The Front Door. Current systems, particularly Oranga Tamariki, are ill-equipped to respond effectively, often requiring police involvement in order to gain immediate access to shelter, which many tamariki distrust. There are significant delays in connecting with social workers, and youth housing services are not able to support younger children, leaving them without safe shelter options. Kick Back frequently steps in to fill these gaps, often at its own expense, but faces systemic barriers due to inflexible government processes and a lack of trust in community-led solutions. To address these challenges, there is an urgent need to devolve decision-making and resources to community organisations, who are already providing responsive and effective support.

Rangatahi are the first line of response to homelessness, but lack the resources

The shift in emergency housing access has driven youth homelessness underground, with many rangatahi now couch surfing and relying on each other for shelter. The changes to the Emergency Housing system have changed the shape of youth homelessness in Aotearoa, with less young people in motels and an increasing number of young people forced to couch surf, sleep rough, or remain in dangerous situations. In response, rangatahi have stepped up, supporting one another to find shelter. For example, Kick Back is aware of rangatahi, who after gaining access to Public Housing, have become the "emergency housing" option for their peers, leading to situations where at times up to 18 children and rangatahi have had to share space, creating a cycle of informal support without adequate resources. Rangatahi have effectively become the first line of response to homelessness, despite lacking the means to provide safe and sustainable housing.



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS



WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO ALL OUR FUNDERS, DONORS, AND SUPPORTERS.

Your generosity and belief in our mission have been instrumental in helping us launch Kick Back and operate throughout 2024–2025. Because of your support, we have been able to take our first steps as an organisation and begin to make a meaningful impact in the communities we serve.

Thank you for your commitment and partnership. Together, we can build a world where no rangatahi or tamariki ever need to sleep on our streets or go without a safe, loving and supportive place to call home.

A special shoutout to:

- Mana Services
- The Auckland Council
- Waitemata Local Board
- Ministry of Social Development
- Auckland PHO
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Te Puni Kōkiri
- Sky City
- Ease Up
- CAYAD
- Clare Foundation
- Huge Green Foundation
- Kindness Collective
- Sunday Blessings
- Auckland Foundation
- Christine Foundation
- Foundation North



APPENDIX A:

WHAT OUR RANGATAHI ARE TELLING US

WAHINE, QUEER, 21YRS, MĀORI

HOW HAS KICK BACK AND THE FRONT DOOR HELPED YOU?

THEY HAVE HELPED ME WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, TO GET ACCESS TO SUPPORT.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE FRONT DOOR FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS?

IT HAS HELPED ME TO CONNECT WITH EVERYONE. IT HAS BEEN GOOD TO HAVE THAT EXTRA HELP.

HOW EASY IS IT TO GET SUPPORT FROM KICK BACK AND OTHER AGENCIES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

IT'S EASY, YOU JUST HAVE TO STICK WITH THEM, NO MATTER WHAT, NO MATTER IF IT'S A LONG TIME, YOU JUST GOT TO STICK WITH THEM.

HOW DOES THIS CONTRAST WITH OTHER SUPPORTS?

KICK BACK IS QUITE EASY BECAUSE IT'S ANOTHER HELP TO SUPPORT YOU FOR WINZ. WINZ CAN'T HELP YOU IF YOU'RE BY YOURSELF, SO YOU NEED THAT EXTRA SUPPORT.

HAS THE FRONT DOOR MADE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO ACCESS SERVICES, KAI, HOUSING AND SUPPORT? WHAT SUPPORT OF SUPPORT HAVE YOU RECEIVED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

YES, I HAVE GOTTEN HOUSING SUPPORT, MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, CONNECTED TO A DOCTOR.

TRANS/QUEER, TANE, 22, MŌARI/COOK ISLAND

HOW HAS KICK BACK AND THE FRONT DOOR HELPED YOU?

IT'S HELPED ME A LOT, ACTUALS. THEY GOT US INTO A HOUSE THAT IS AWAY FROM ALL THE PEOPLE THAT ARE DOING DRUGS AND SHIT. THEY HELPED MOTIVATE ME AND OTHERS.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE FRONT DOOR FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IN YOUR LIVES?

IT MAKES A SAFE PLACE AND SOMEWHERE WE CAN CALL OUR SECOND HOME. IT HAS HELPED ME TO REDUCE MY DRUG USE, I'VE BEEN CUTTING DOWN AND NOT SMOKING AS MUCH AS I DID BEFORE.

HOW EASY IS IT TO GET SUPPORT FROM KICK BACK AND OTHER AGENCIES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

PRETTY EASY. IT'S JUST FOR RANGATAHI NOT ADULTS, IT MAKES IT ACCESSIBLE BECAUSE SOME ORGANIZATIONS THINK THE ADULTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUTH. THESE DAYS, EVERYONE THINKS THE KIDS ARE NOT ON TO IT, KICK BACK WILL JUST HELP OUT THE RANGATAHI, SUPPORT THEM TO GET INTO A PLACE AND IF THEY CAN'T, THEY WILL TRY AND FIND ANOTHER WAY TO HELP.

HOW DOES THIS CONTRAST WITH OTHER SUPPORTS?

SOME ORGANIZATIONS WILL TELL YOU TO COME BACK AND THEN PHONE THEM ON THE PHONE. KICK BACK ALWAYS HAS THE HEART FOR RANGATAHI. WE KNOW THIS BECAUSE OF ALL THE RANGATAHI'S KICK BACK'S BEEN HELPING. THEY GOT MY FRIENDS INTO A PLACE, KICK BACK HELPS WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE STRUGGLES TO TALK TO WINZ. BECAUSE SOME RANGATAHI DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, SO IF THEY GO TO WINZ AND THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, WINZ DECLINES THEM. BUT IF THEY ARE WITH KICK BACK, KICK BACK FIGHTS FOR US.

HAS THE FRONT DOOR MADE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO ACCESS SERVICES, KAI, HOUSING AND SUPPORT? WHAT SUPPORT OF SUPPORT HAVE YOU RECEIVED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

YEAH, IT DOES HELP, THE SERVICES HERE, IT'S EASY. THE HEALTH SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS, AND THEN THE LEGAL SERVICES, EASY AS TO ACCESS.

WAHINE, 20, MĀORI

HOW HAS KICK BACK AND THE FRONT DOOR HELPED YOU?

THEY ARE CURRENTLY HELPING ME WITH HOUSING. THEY HAVE HELPED ME WITH HOURUA, THEY BRING POSITIVE VIBES TO THE AREA, IT FEELS LIKE A MORE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. TALKING TO THE STAFF, THEY ALWAYS GIVE YOU SOLUTIONS WHEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, WHEN YOU ARE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING, THEY HAVE SOLUTIONS.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE FRONT DOOR FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IN YOUR LIVES?

HOURUA, HOUSING, MAKING FRIENDS. MAKING GOOD CONNECTIONS. IT HAS SUPPORTED MYSELF AND SOME OF MY FRIENDS TO GET OFF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. JUST BY COMING IN AND SEEING THAT EVERYONE IS DOING WELL. THEY HAVE A GOOD SIDE, AND THEIR OWN STRUGGLES, IT MAKES ME WANT TO PUSH THROUGH WITH MY GOOD SIDE.

HOW EASY IS IT TO GET SUPPORT FROM KICK BACK AND OTHER AGENCIES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

IT'S A LOT EASIER, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE WHEN I BECOME FRIENDS WITH (OTHERS) THEY SHOWED EVERYONE WHERE THIS PLACE IS. IT'S NOT EASY TO GET GOOD COUNSELLING, I'VE TRIED OTHER SERVICES, BUT IT'S JUST A JOB FOR THEM. HERE, IT FEELS LIKE YOUR JUST CONNECTED.

HOW DOES THIS CONTRAST WITH OTHER SUPPORTS?

IT'S EASY TO JUST WALK INTO THE FRONT DOOR AND ASK FOR HELP. WE HAVE ROOMS WHERE WE CAN HAVE PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, SO NOT EVERYONE CAN HEAR. I'VE KNOWN THIS PLACE FOR QUITE A WHILE, IT HAS BECOME A FAMILY THING, IT FEELS LIKE FAMILY, IT FEELS LIKE HOME, IT'S JUST SOMEWHERE TO COME BACK TO.

HAS THE FRONT DOOR MADE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO ACCESS SERVICES, KAI, HOUSING AND SUPPORT? WHAT SUPPORT OF SUPPORT HAVE YOU RECEIVED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

FOOD, HOUSING, SOCIAL SUPPORT, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, EVERYTHING TO DO WITH HAUORA, WITH YOUR MENTAL HEALTH, BEING ABLE TO BE THERE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION WHEN YOU NEED HELP. I'VE TOLD MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT THIS PLACE, IF THEY NEED HELP. I HAVE SOME FRIENDS AND FAMILY STILL OUT ON THE STREET. IT'S NOT THE BEST TO BE OUT ON THE STREET.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

THE WALL (REFERRING TO OUR PAINTED WALL WITH QOUTES, KŌRERO AND ART FROM OUR RANGATAHI), IT'S UPLIFTING, READING ALL THE QUOTES, BECAUSE IT CAME FROM OUR FAMILY (OTHER RANGATAHI EXP HOMELESSNESS).

TANE, 17, INDIAN

HOW HAS KICK BACK AND THE FRONT DOOR HELPED YOU?

KICK BACK HAS HELPED ME WITH LAW STUFF, LIKE SUPPORT WITH CHARGES, AND GETTING ACCESS TO LEGAL ADVICE. IT'S HELPED ME WITH HOUSING, MSD, PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING. IF I DON'T HAVE TOOTH PASTE, BRUSHES OR SOAP AND STUFF, THEY HELP ME WITH THAT SORT OF STUFF TOO. KICK BACK IS HELPING ME TO GET INTO SCHOOL, PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE FRONT DOOR FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IN YOUR LIVES

HELPED ME QUITE A LOT, I'D STILL PROBABLY BE ON THE STREETS, IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU GUYS. I WOULD PROBABLY BE SOMEWHERE DUMB, PROBABLY WOULDN'T EAT, I'D PROBABLY BE HOMELESS, STARVING AND USING DRUGS.

HOW EASY IS IT TO GET SUPPORT FROM KICK BACK AND OTHER AGENCIES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

YOU JUST COME HERE AND THEY JUST SORT IT OUT, YOU CAN JUST CHILL OUT, THEY ASK YOU A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SITUATIONS, AND THEY JUST SORT IT OUT. I'VE SEEN YOU GUYS HELP SOME OF MY FRIENDS GO ON THE BENEFIT, OR GET HOUSING, COS THEY GOT KICKED OUT, YOU GUYS TRY TO HELP THEM, LIKE FAMILY. YOU GUYS HELP WITH LIKE DRUGS AND STUFF, LIKE HOW TO QUIT. YOU GUYS BRING IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, YOU REACH OUT TO THEM FIRST, AND THEY SUPPORT US.

HOW DOES THIS CONTRAST WITH OTHER SUPPORTS

IT'S EASIER TO GO THROUGH KICK BACK TO GET ACCESS TO SERVICES, BECAUSE YOU GUYS CAN SORT A LOT OF IT OUT. IT'S REALLY HARD TO NAVIGATE A LOT OF SERVICES UNLESS YOU KNOW HOW TO. YOU GUYS CAN NAVIGATE THEM, GET THE MESSAGES THROUGH, YOU GUYS ADVOCATE FOR US, HELP US KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE.

**HAS THE FRONT DOOR MADE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO ACCESS SERVICES, KAI, HOUSING AND SUPPORT?
WHAT SUPPORT OF SUPPORT HAVE YOU RECEIVED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?**

YES, HOUSING, EMERGENCY HOUSING THROUGH WINZ, ALSO FOOD, TOILETRIES, TRAVEL SUPPORT AND HAIRCUTS, USING THE KITCHEN AND COOKING, YOU HELP US REACH OUT TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, ADVOCATE AND STUFF.

TANE, 23, PĀKEHĀ

HOW HAS KICK BACK AND THE FRONT DOOR HELPED YOU?

IT'S KEPT ME OUT OF A LOT OF CRIME, HELPED ME STOP HANGING AROUND THE PEOPLE I WAS HANGING AROUND. IT SLOWLY MAKES CHANGE IN MY LIFE. IT JUST KEEPS ME AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE I SHOULDN'T BE AROUND. I CAN CHOOSE TO COME HERE. IT'S JUST HAVING THAT PLACE TO GO, WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY, IT'S KNOWING YOU HAVE A PLACE TO GO TO GET A MEAL.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE FRONT DOOR FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IN YOUR LIVES

IT'S MADE OUR LIVES A LOT EASIER. JUST KNOWING WE HAVE A PLACE, AND THAT WE ARE SAFE, OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T COME UP HERE. MOST OF ALL OF US PEOPLE ARE VULNERABLE PEOPLE ON THE STREETS. MOST OF THOSE GUYS OUT THERE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US.

HOW EASY IS IT TO GET SUPPORT FROM KICK BACK AND OTHER AGENCIES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

EASY, YOU JUST HAVE TO COME HERE AND REACH OUT TO THEM. PEOPLE LIKE US, IF WE DON'T HAVE WAYS TO CONTACT PEOPLE, THERE'S ALWAYS A PHONE YOU CAN USE AT THE FRONT DOOR, YOU CAN CALL SOMEONE IF YOU NEED TO.

HOW DOES THIS CONTRAST WITH OTHER SUPPORTS

THERE'S NOT A LOT OF PROGRAMS FOR RANGATAHI, IT'S MOSTLY FOR OLDER PEOPLE. IT'S GOOD THAT IT FOCUSES ON RANGATAHI, SO WE CAN GET HELP. RANGATAHI ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE ON THE STREETS, A LOT OF THOSE ON THE STREETS, THEY (YP) GET TARGETED. A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHAT RANGATAHI HAVE BEEN THROUGH, SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THROUGH SOME REALLY HARD UP BRINGING'S.

**HAS THE FRONT DOOR MADE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO ACCESS SERVICES, KAI, HOUSING AND SUPPORT?
WHAT SUPPORT OF SUPPORT HAVE YOU RECEIVED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?**

YES, I THINK THEY (KICK BACK), THEY JUST HAVE A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING RANGATAHI. WHEN I WENT TO OTHER SERVICES I WAS FINDING I WAS GETTING MORE FRUSTRATED, THEY WERE BEING MORE FORCEFUL WITH ME.

THEY DO THINGS IN A NICE WAY, THEY TREAT OTHERS THE WAY THEY WANT TO BE TREATED.

HOUSING SUPPORT, FOOD, A SAFE PLACE, SOMEWHERE TO COME WHEN IT'S RAINING INSTEAD OF BEING STUCK ON THE STREETS WHERE IT'S COLD.

APPENDIX B:

WHAT OUR PARTNERS ARE SAYING ABOUT US



Youth law

It is often difficult to connect with rangatahi who experience homelessness because of the difficulties they may face in reaching out for help. The Front Door has given us the opportunity to instead bring our service to these rangatahi by meeting them where they are at and offering our services in an environment that is safe and comfortable for them. – Youth Law

Has helped us connect with rangatahi face-to-face and ensure our services are accessible by youth who belong to vulnerable communities. – Youth Law



There was a rangatahi who was needing emergency housing assistance, but also had a number of legal issues that they were needing assistance with. Working together, YouthLaw was able to address the rangatahi's legal needs whilst Kick Back helped them find emergency accommodation. By the end of the day, through these shared efforts this rangatahi had their legal questions answered and had sourced accommodation for that night. This is exemplary of the way our shared mahi is able to have a massive impact by addressing the intersectionality between homelessness and legal need for rangatahi. We are able to answer legal questions and give advice to rangatahi, but working with Kick Back gives the rangatahi the additional support and advocacy they need to actually action their legal rights. – Youth Law

The Front Door is an incredible service and it has been amazing to see the space grow and develop. You offer such a vital service for our rangatahi, and the entire team at Kick Back have done such a phenomenal job at curating a safe and welcoming space for all. – Youth Law

Research into legal need shows higher need communities do not come to legal assistance services. Best practice research into service design recommends partnering with organisations who are trusted by rangatahi and where rangatahi are already attending. This is why we wanted to partner with TFD. Our experience working with TFD is that they are trusted by rangatahi and rangatahi do attend their service. We can't reach these rangatahi without partners like TFD. – Youth Law

Yes. We meet and work with young homeless people every week through our partnership. The trust rangatahi have in TFD also means we are able to engage in conversations with rangatahi experiencing homelessness, and we are learning more and more about the legal and social needs of these people. This is helping us build capability to do more in this space. – Youth Law

YouthLaw is a specialist service. We do not have wrap around services or community workers. Our value is in providing specialist knowledge to rangatahi TFD workers. For example, we were able to provide a legal analysis to a TFD worker on a social housing matter. We also provided the worker with legal arguments they could use to pressurise the social housing provider to act in the interests of the young person. This argument was instrumental in making the social housing provider back down and compromise. – Youth Law



Ease Up

An amazing service, that is well established and well-regarded in the community. – Ease Up, Youth Worker

The Front Door supported our EaseUp service by offering a safe, welcoming environment, connecting us with the rangatahi, and making us feel part of the meaningful mahi they do. This partnership deepened our understanding of the challenges rangatahi encounter and enhanced our capacity to empathize with and support them. – Ease Up, Youth Worker

EaseUp is currently supporting a young man who is a regular at Kick Back. There is a strong partnership with the Kick Back team focused on how we can best meet the needs of these rangatahi. We've received positive feedback on ways to provide support that aligns with their needs and promotes the best possible outcomes. The team are meeting with this young man on a weekly basis. He shared that he has stopped drinking alcohol and continues to enjoy his current living situation. He's been working on managing his finances and discussed the challenges of stretching his money throughout the week. He also mentioned that he has used up his Emerge café card and expressed how helpful it was in supporting him over several weeks. – Ease Up, Youth Worker.



Youth Services – Youth Worker

TFD has provided our rangatahi a safe space to hang out and connect with likeminded others. We have worked in collaboration to provide housing for those in need and appreciate TFD fierce advocacy in this space. – Youth Services Youth worker



We receive our referrals through MSD but TFD has resulted in a better support network for rangatahi in need. – Youth Services Youth worker

Yes, we have a large amount of rangatahi that we see so TFD has been great in terms of offering more support to those who are higher needs and require more ongoing engagement.
– Youth Services Youth Worker

We have worked alongside TFD with many of our clients, alot of whom are not eligible for EH under MSD but working alongside TFD we have been able to work collectively to find alternatives.
– Youth Services Youth Worker



Additional feedback from Partners

The Front Door are very supportive. They allow us as a service to use their space and are very open to working collaboratively with us rather than any type of "gatekeeping". Aaron and team are very friendly and welcoming. It's great we can utilise the other services which work alongside The Front Door, making it easier and faster to get the best care possible for our rangatahi. Aaron has also been great for consulting with when I have had a couple of clients outside of Kickback who have needed access to housing.

This centralised location where rangatahi clearly feel comfortable means that we can connect with a population group that historically we have been unable to connect with consistently. Furthermore, by running a clinic there rangatahi can build a connection and level of trust with health services. Even if they are not ready to engage overtime as connection and trust grows, they are more likely to in the future.

Yes, we have been able to access and support this hard-to-reach population group that we likely otherwise wouldn't have been able to.





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