



OUR COVID STORY

26 March – 8 June 2020

TĀ MĀTOU MATE KARAUNA KŌRERO

COVID-19 Lockdown at VisionWest



*Ki te kotahi te kākaho, ka whati;
ki te kāpua, e kore e whati
If a reed stands alone, it can be
broken; if it is in a group, it cannot.*

INTRODUCTION

VisionWest's COVID Journey

When difficult times arise, the vulnerable in our society often face the greatest challenges. While many local businesses were temporarily closing over COVID-time, the draw on VisionWest's services increased significantly, which called for some creative thinking and focused teamwork.

Of the services provided by VisionWest, most were deemed to be essential according to government criteria;

- Home HealthCare
- Community Housing
- Pātaka Kai (Foodbank)
- Money Management (Budgeting)
- Counselling
- Youth Services

Others, provided services that, while not deemed essential, were vital in terms of providing much-needed support. Yet other services provided contact support to clients and whānau using various online interfaces.

The purpose of this COVID Report is to document the work of VisionWest during the time of the 2020 COVID crisis, from the time of lockdown through to our move to Alert Level 1, March 26th – June 8th. It contains the stories of our services and whānau during this time. Policy and in-depth procedures are contained in our Pandemic Plan and associated staff policies.

In the background

For all services, the restrictions of COVID, especially during the lockdown period, necessitated changes in the way support was delivered. This included support staff, most of who worked from home, keeping in touch through emails and meetings using video conferencing.

A COVID-19 Pandemic Management Team and a Communications Team were created and met daily during lockdown to ensure the quick and efficient delivery of support. The frequency of these meetings decreased as the nation moved through the COVID Alert Levels.

To facilitate the changing means of service delivery, many staff volunteered for secondment to newly created roles which became vital to ensure ongoing efficiency amidst the new, and constantly modified, way of doing things.

Communication became vital. With the campus off-limits to the public, COVID information was added to the website pages of each service to ensure other agencies and whānau in need of support knew how to contact VisionWest. Staff seconded from other roles created a call centre to which whānau, no longer able to come onto the VisionWest campus, could phone or text in with their needs.

Communication links with staff were also essential. MS Teams was used for regular communication and, in the case of our Home HealthCare Support Workers, a dedicated Facebook group was established. The constantly evolving messages from Ministry of Health and other government departments made this challenging because official messages were often contradicted by media reports. VisionWest's policy was to follow Ministry of Health regulations and guidelines in all policies developed and actions undertaken.

The move to staff working from home presented various challenges, and the IT team was kept busy as people ensured their computer hardware and home internet were up the task of providing adequate communication links.

The willingness of staff to adapt to these changing conditions – some even taking on new or unfamiliar roles – needs to be acknowledged and applauded. We could not have continued to provide our services at the level we maintained throughout COVID without the enthusiasm and commitment of our staff, many of who were involved in roles that were

vital but often unseen by others, or staff members who willingly worked with others or face-to-face with whānau, despite the potential health risks.

This COVID Report contains more detailed accounts of the COVID journey of each service and some VisionWest whānau.



PHOTO: ALEX WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY
TĀ MĀTOU MATE KARAUNA KŌRERO 5





LISA WOOLLEY

VisionWest CEO

I want to begin my COVID Report by acknowledging the entire VisionWest staff, from Auckland and throughout New Zealand, for their work flexibility and willingness to step up and do what was required in order to ensure VisionWest continued to deliver services to vulnerable whānau throughout lockdown.

Three words that have come to be closely associated with the pandemic are “*unprecedented*,” “*pivoted*,” and “*collaboration*.” These are words all of us at VisionWest became familiar with.

Unprecedented

The pandemic was truly unprecedented. It threw at us many situations we had never faced nor ever expected to face. And, it brought with it the threat of a tsunami of need that could easily have swamped us were it not for the commitment of our team.

Though unprecedented, we were quick to respond to the unique challenges presented by the pandemic. On March 23rd, when the Prime Minister announced that New Zealand would be moving to Alert Level 3, and then Alert Level 4 just a few days later, we had already established a Pandemic Management Team—ably led by our HR Manager, Anna Fraser—and a Communications Team. Throughout lockdown, these teams met daily to coordinate our pandemic response and ensure everyone was kept up to date with that response.

Pivoting

From the moment lockdown was announced, we began pivoting, adjusting and realigning our service delivery to ensure, during this time of uncertainty, the most vulnerable in our communities continued to receive the support they need; vulnerability that we expected to intensify as the effects of lockdown were felt.

We are all in awe of the commitment and expertise of Daniel and our IT Team who managed to organise the necessary equipment and software to enable so many of us to work from home over lockdown. The IT story is told elsewhere in this report, but it’s true to say, if not for them, we would have fallen at this first pivot-point.

Six of our services—Community Housing, Pātaka Kai (Food Security), Home HealthCare, Counselling, Budgeting and Youth Services—were

deemed by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to be essential services. Each of these services needed to pivot to new ways to service delivery within the bounds of urgency, social distancing, PPE, and other regulatory requirements.

- For Community Housing, the pivot required housing as many whānau in a couple of weeks as we would usually house over a period of several months.
- For Pātaka Kai, the pivot challenge was huge as we shifted from a self-service food store model to a food storage, packing and delivery service that saw, by the end of lockdown, upwards of 1,100 food boxes being delivered each week.
- The pivot for Home HealthCare involved hours spent realigning rosters to cope with a smaller workforce and the personal contact made to each of our thousands of clients to ensure they understood the support we were able to provide under MoH regulations. Much of this personal contact was made possible by the Outbound Call Team established by Kimberly Chalmers.
- The Counselling, Budgeting and Youth Services teams quickly and adeptly pivoted to an online and telephone delivery of sessions which, while not perfect for all clients, worked well.

Those services deemed to be non-essential by the government— Education and Training Centre and Early Childhood Education (Eden Cottage)—pivoted also. Each adapting in their own way to enable a continuation of some form of service delivery.

Collaboration

It's amazing what can be achieved when we all pull together for a common cause. Collaboration became a key feature of VisionWest's response to COVID-19.

There were daily meetings with a variety of groups including government agencies, government ministers, Civil Defence, and our local West Auckland Together groups and other networks. Through working together, we were all able to work flexibly and adapt quickly to the changing needs in the community.

VisionWest's mission statement is Building Hope Together and COVID lockdown certainly was a time of working together to ensure whānau in our community received the support and care they desperately needed through this time.

Volunteers were brought together from Glen Eden Baptist, our own VisionWest teams and our networked community groups to support the volunteer drivers team, ensuring food boxes could be delivered to those in need. The homeless were housed, whānau were fed, and those who were older or with disabilities were supported to stay safely in their homes through the lockdown. Together we learnt from each other, we adapted, we worked flexibly, and we achieved what would normally be thought impossible.

Thank you to all who were part of this collaborative effort.

Appreciation

As I mentioned at the beginning of this report, I am hugely appreciative of the commitment of each staff person to making sure VisionWest continued to offer a high level of community support over lockdown. Some people may feel they contributed little but each person, from those who were client-facing, to those offering support through a backroom role, contributed to VisionWest's ability to support our community's most vulnerable at a time of increased need.

The statistics on the infographic page are testament to what we achieved. While they are reported as numbers, each figure represents an individual whose life was made a little better as pivoted, collaborated and journeyed together during these unprecedented times.

Thank you all for being part of the team.

I need to also acknowledge and thank the many volunteers, funders, and benefactors who were so generous in supporting VisionWest and the community we seek to support. Just another reminder that we cannot do this alone; we are all part of this journey of Building Hope Together.

Blessings

Lisa



A portrait of Arvind Dayal, a man with short dark hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored sweater and a white collared shirt. The background is an outdoor setting with trees and a building.

© ARVIND DAYAL
VisionWest Board Chair

COVID-19 impacted New Zealand businesses and organisations, including VisionWest, in an unprecedented way. Given the unknown effects of this virus, VisionWest Executives and Board needed to rapidly assess the impact and exposure on our operation and react accordingly if we were to continue with service delivery.

Our response team swung into action immediately to promptly prepare and enact a robust action plan, ensuring we not only survived the event but continued to provide uninterrupted services to our whānau and communities.

I want to focus on two words to express the way the VisionWest staff, volunteers and Board rose to the COVID challenge: *response* and *resilience*.

Response

The way in which our team responded to the initial impact of the COVID-19 Crisis needs to be commended. Their swift and focused response minimised the catastrophic effects COVID could have had on the operations of our services, employee well-being and safety, food supply chain, housing, PPE and the ongoing financial viability of the Trust. All this while ensuring support for our whānau continued with minimum disruption.

Resilience

The ability of VisionWest staff to maintain business operations during COVID showed huge resilience. This involved adjusting our processes and information systems to allow people to adapt to the constantly changing way of doing business.

This ability to realign operations in the face of changing business conditions, preserved the continuity of critical functions required to serve our community. We can only thank our great team of staff and management in achieving such a satisfying result. We can now also look ahead with confidence, knowing that, whatever the future holds, even if this pandemic takes another turn, we are, as an organisation, well prepared to handle it.

As Chairman of the Board, I want to express my sincere thanks to all staff and management for the long hours and tireless effort each one invested as we worked through the lockdown. This focus on the task at hand ensured we continued to provide support and show love and care to our whānau and community. I also thank our Board for all their support and contribution during this time. Together, we made it through!

Arvind Dayal

VisionWest Board Chair



GARY GRUT

Pastor, Glen Eden Baptist Church

COVID-19 was a unique experience for the church. Not only did we have to adapt to new ways of doing church and connecting with people, we also had to make fast decisions about how the church buildings were to be used throughout lockdown.

The most significant of those changes involved allowing VisionWest Community Trust to use the church facilities as a distribution centre for food. The auditorium became the central hub for storing pallet loads of food, and Zones One and Two became the packing centre for food parcels.

Over the four weeks of lockdown, staff from Pātaka Kai and other areas of the trust formed a food service bubble comprised of themselves and their whānau. We are so thankful for the work that this team put into feeding and looking after the most vulnerable in our community.

This is just one example of how Church and Trust work together to serve the community.

The church leadership would like to thank all those involved in the Trust services, most of which were deemed by the government to be essential services, for the time, sacrifice, passion and love shown through this time.

Gary Grut

Pastor – Glen Eden Baptist Church





© **ANNA FRASER**
Pandemic Manager

Anna Fraser is the VisionWest Pandemic Manager. When news of COVID broke, it was Anna's task to establish and lead VisionWest's Pandemic Management Team. This, and the Communication's Team, met daily to ensure everyone knew the latest Ministry of Health COVID protocols and that all services were fully informed and resourced.

Everyone at VisionWest acknowledges the mammoth task undertaken by Anna and the superb leadership she provided during this time—she truly was the glue that held us all together. As part of this COVID Report, Anna shared some of the things she learned in her role.

Five things I learned as Pandemic Manager:

- We already had the most awesome group of talented and skilled people who had felt the call to join the VisionWest team. These incredible people had the ability and courage to work together and lead us through the crisis.
- We had the expertise to get through. This amazing group of people were quick to step into their areas of expertise and provide the guidance required by VisionWest to safely navigate through lockdown. We are fortunate to have wonderful leaders of our client services as well as specialists in areas such as clinical, IT, well-being, and others.
- Our staff have the courage and grit to step up in a crisis. Staff were quick to put their hands up to help wherever needed. Frontline staff kept working with the vulnerable in the community face to face or via video and phone, while many support staff, working from their kitchen tables at home and juggling the care and

education of their children, provided much needed administration and communications support. For many of these staff, this meant putting aside their usual role and learning new systems and skills.

- Communication is key to keep everyone connected. Communicating to everyone was key to help people feel like things were under control, that we had a plan in place, and that we would get through this crisis together. During lockdown, we pioneered our first ever video chats, initiated our online communication platforms, and first online staff meetings.
- Having fun is an important way to keep well-being uplifted. Fun and laughter were important to keeping well-being cared for and everyone feeling connected. We had some crazy theme days and saw some creative thinking which was a great distraction from the crisis around us.

VisionWest has the most amazing staff. If there is a crisis, these are the people you want to be working with.

Our community response during COVID-19







WHĀNAU CENTRE

Matapuna Whānau Centre

The Matapuna Whānau Centre is the entry point onto the VisionWest campus. It is here that those looking for support are welcomed, have the opportunity to tell their stories, and are given a pathway to begin their journey with VisionWest.

From the commencement of lockdown, whānau were no longer able to come onto the VisionWest campus. This meant, a new way of greeting whānau needed to be devised which resulted in the Matapuna Whānau Centre being integrated into Pātaka Kai to provide support with:

- Assessment of phone enquiries – a call centre was established (See Maxine and Rayanna's COVID story on page 20 of this report).
- Pre-packing of food boxes and food box deliveries – Whānau Centre staff were redeployed to help with this work.
- Tikanga support for deliveries to kaumatua and kuia and connections with Māori NGO's.
- Preventing domestic violence with the vulnerable in Community Housing. This was overseen by Faye, our Kaupapa Māori Trauma Specialist, who was our only member of staff to work from home.

Throughout COVID, our Whānau Centre staff continued to work diligently in roles they were unaccustomed to. By the end of lockdown, they were all tired but content in knowing that they had each helped make considerable differences in the lives of our whānau.

Mātanga Oranga Whānau (Trauma-Informed Care)

During lockdown, we saw an increase in family harm behaviours (family violence), tendency to self-harm, and family disputes. Alongside this, some of our whānau struggled with the lack of face to face Māori therapy. For Māori, talking about such personal matters by phone is culturally foreign and took some getting used to for some of our whānau.

Many of our whānau were accepting of phone consultations, however, and throughout Alert Levels 3 and 4 we were able to offer:

- Weekly online counselling and phone counselling.
- 24-hr phone access (whānau knew this was for emergencies only).
- Up to three check-in's per week.
- Home visits for emergencies only and under COVID social distancing conditions etc.



MY COVID

*tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero*

Rayanna and Maxine

Rayanna and Maxine usually work in the Whānau Centre—Rayanna as the Centre Coordinator and Maxine as a Social Worker. During the COVID-19 event, with the Whānau Centre being closed to visitors, they were redeployed to become the voice of Pātaka Kai, answering phones and assessing the needs of those who phoned in for food or other support. This is their COVID story.

Maxine: “The need out there was incredible with many different stories of people who were struggling. Sometimes they’d been struggling already, sometimes they were facing hardship due to COVID; people with mortgages, rent to pay, debt to cover, so many people finding things difficult.”

Rayanna: “We had a number of agencies contact us also, which is a nice way to network. And many new whānau, people who had never contacted us before. It was also amazing the number of people who rang, not with a need, but because they wanted to help in some way.”

Maxine: “Things were pretty intense at times. There was a little panic. Certainly, a sense of concern from whānau about how long lockdown and COVID would go on for? But then there was also a great sense of, ‘We’re all in this together,’ which resulted in a patience from most of those contacting us.

“It makes you understand that there is a very, very real need out there with families struggling in ways we can’t imagine. One day, I received a call from a woman who, after paying her rent and bills, was left with three dollars a week to survive on. She was distraught because she believed she would have to go out to Countdown and shoplift in order to provide for her family. That’s the level of struggle some people face.”

Rayanna: “One thing that is really good and extremely motivating for me is that we provide a wraparound service for those who come to us. Even during COVID, when someone contacted us for food, we’d try to go beyond just supplying a box of groceries. We’d look for other ways we could help each person so they’d know they were being cared for and that there was somewhere they could go, whatever their needs might be.

“That’s something that’s great about what we do. We’re not on our own. We have the passion, care and support of all the others who are serving throughout VisionWest.”



That's something that's great about what we do. We're not on our own. We have the passion, care and support of all the others who are serving throughout VisionWest.



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Deemed an essential service, the move to Alert Level 4 saw the Pātaka Kai quickly transition from a self-service food store model, where those needing food came to us to select the food they required, to a food delivery service where we stored and packed food on-site.

It sounds simple when you describe Pātaka Kai's COVID transition in a few words. In reality, it took a lot of organisation, volunteers and hard work. Two major changes were immediately recognised. First, the demand for food was going to rise quickly and to unprecedented numbers, which would require an efficient means of sourcing, receiving and packaging. Second, we were going to have to establish a delivery team with vehicles to distribute food boxes to the homes of whānau.

Food demand and assessments

Whereas before, whānau would come to our Whānau Centre to be assessed for an emergency food parcel, COVID meant we had to devise a contactless means of receiving and assessing requests. The answer was Maxine and Rayanna, who usually work in the Whānau Centre. They were deployed to work with the Pātaka Kai where they established a two-person call-centre, answering phones and assessing the needs of those requesting a food parcel and other supports.

It was a huge task requiring sensitivity and diplomacy; a task the pair handled superbly.

Food collection and donations

Once it was announced that New Zealand was going into Alert Level 4 lockdown, VisionWest commenced with urgent fundraising in order to secure funds to purchase food. In a single day, \$90,000 was committed. This was then followed by incredible financial support from Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM).

The Trusts then made a monetary donation of \$200,000 to be evenly split between VisionWest and Fair Food—funds much needed and greatly appreciated.

It was also important that we maintained our usual contacts with regards to food donations. We were grateful that so many usual food donation contacts, and businesses that are new to Pātaka Kai, responded to this unique situation. This included our food rescue partners, Fair Food and Kiwi Harvest, and household brand support from My Food Bag, Tegel and Foodstuffs. Some businesses were astoundingly generous, donating significant amounts of food.

While some donated food was brought to us, there were times when it needed to be collected and brought back to the VisionWest campus for storage. This invariably involved manually loading and unloading the truck.

Marie and Bianca were our principal truckdrivers. Four or five times a week they would take the truck out to pick up food and bring it back to the food store at VisionWest, or to complete bulk food drop-offs to places such as Western Park Village and Te Whānau Waipareira.

Food storage and packaging

Food storage took up a significant space. Glen Eden Baptist Church graciously allowed us to use their auditorium—COVID meant that they weren't meeting together, but utilising Facebook Live for Sunday services. This gave us the ability to store around 60 pallets inside with five containers (three 20ft and two 10ft) in the campus carpark for frozen and chilled food, and dry goods.

The auditorium, with its dozens of pallets, was arranged in aisles like a supermarket. This enabled our volunteers to walk down each aisle with a trolley and pack a few boxes at a time. These would, immediately prior to delivery, be supplemented with frozen goods.

The ease and efficiency of this process was vital because, at our busiest, Ivoga and her team were packing up to 500 food boxes per day.

Food delivery

While VisionWest staff were redeployed to support with phone contacts, food pickups and deliveries, and packing of the food boxes, we seconded a workforce from partnering agencies to serve as delivery drivers. These agencies included Sport Waitakere, Massey Matters, MPHS Community Trust, and Family Action. One thing is for certain, we could not have completed this work without our army of volunteers and seconded VisionWest staff.

One delivery challenge was organising food boxes into a logical delivery order. We overcame this with the expertise of Mark Cooke, from our IT Department, who GEO-mapped the delivery routes to ensure drivers worked efficiently.

Food and wraparound support

COVID for Pātaka Kai was a time of pivoting and relaunching itself as a supplier of emergency food relief. In this time, we went from serving

approximately 350 whānau per week, to, at our peak, delivering 1,100 food parcels per week.

Amidst this organised chaos, we worked hard to maintain the value of giving wraparound support to whānau. We did this by working with partnering agencies in West Auckland to triage and refer whānau for deliveries. Every whānau was then assigned a keyworker for ongoing support.

Food and the future

COVID has taught us much. Looking beyond our response to the pandemic, we see the potential for there to be a five day a week emergency food service from our VisionWest campus—prior to COVID, our food support service ran for three days a week.

We do recognise, however, if we are to supply food to this degree, we will need greater resourcing, staff, food and infrastructure. We look forward to seeing where this leads us and what good can come from COVID-19.



PHOTO: ALEX WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

TĀ MĀTOU MĀTE KARAUNA KŌRERO 25

MY COVID

*tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero*

Ivoga

Ivoga is the Pātaka Kai Manager. During the COVID event, she and her team were required to realign their method for packing and distributing food. Ivoga spent her time in the Glen Eden Baptist Church auditorium, overseeing the packing of food parcels ready for delivery to Pātaka Kai whānau. She tells her COVID story and what inspires her to do this work.

“The government regulations surrounding COVID and the increase in demand for food over that time meant we had to rearrange the way it was packaged and distributed. At the beginning, we came together to think about what would be the easiest and most efficient way of packaging. The increased demand we were experiencing meant it needed to be simple but fast.

“The most effective way was to use the church to store the food and arrange it into aisles. That meant the team of volunteers could walk up and down the aisles using trolleys to pack the food boxes, just like shopping in a supermarket.

“The need within our community whānau for food during COVID and other times is something that’s close to my heart. One story I can relate to is that of a solo mum with a couple of kids, living in a state house. She’s relied on the Pātaka Kai for a couple of years. Her family reminds me of when I was growing up, living with my mother, walking to the Salvation Army to get food so that we could survive. I see that solo mother and think, ‘I’ve been that person.’ That inspires me to give back in this way.

“Pātaka Kai and my work there is more than just giving away food. Food is a great connector. Families often gather together around food. But, it’s also an essential need, one that can empower a person. As a parent, it feels good to know you have the kai you need to feed your family; it’s empowering to know you can provide for them.

“And, that’s why I do this. It’s wonderful to see the food baskets being filled and know that people’s lives are changed because of what we’re doing.”



“ *And, that’s why I do this. It’s wonderful to see the food baskets being filled and know that people’s lives are changed because of what we’re doing.* ”





COMMUNITY HOUSING Auckland

The immediate challenges at the beginning of lockdown were similar for all services and involved transitioning to working from home and planning for what was to come.

For the Community Housing Service, we knew how vulnerable those without housing would be. For those living on the streets, the usual dangers were now added to by the very real threat of COVID. Many rough-sleepers would be particularly susceptible because of their living conditions. Many other whānau had been living in situations, e.g. with family members or friends, that were unsustainable once lockdown began. This resulted in an urgent need for housing.

As a positive, the government recognised this need and provided funding and guidelines to help our work.

One of our first tasks was to locate those who were rough-sleeping to let them know that housing was available, though, at this point, we were scrambling to find housing to place whānau. Prior to lockdown, we had talked of establishing an Outreach Team to help locate homeless people and to at least give them the option of being placed in housing.

COVID meant that team was required immediately. Jonas and Markly became that team.

During lockdown Jonas and Markly would go out into the community to seek out people who were sleeping rough. Each day, they would look under bridges and behind buildings in search of people in need of housing. The work of the Outreach Team was coordinated with other agencies and with the Council. It was also challenging because sometimes, after receiving a call about a person living on the street, Jonas and Markly would arrive at the location to find the person had moved on. Most people approached, however, were eager to be housed which presented another challenge.

While we had some housing available, there was no way we could find homes for the large number of people who were coming to us requiring housing or who were being referred by other agencies. The answer to the housing challenge was the provision of an apartment hotel complex in Avondale.

Jon and Christina are an entrepreneurial couple who own a brand new 62-apartment hotel in Avondale. At the announcement of lockdown, the hotel was about a week from completion but there would be no tourists or locals to stay there. Jon and Christina contacted the government to see if it could be used to help house the vulnerable and homeless. The result was that they were put in touch with VisionWest Community Housing and the answer to our housing challenge had materialised. The full story of the hotel is told in The Layard Street Story, on page 63 of this report.

We want to gratefully acknowledge the collaboration with John Maeava from the Salvation Army. Through John's work with the long-term homeless, he was able to put VisionWest in contact those who were needing housing and introduced many vulnerable whānau to the hotel.



LOVE
MARIA
&
AROHAN
#31 xxx

VISION WEST.

FRANK
+
SHEILY
WAT 112

THANK YOU!
WESTERN PARK VILLAGE

Thank you
very much
GLENIS HAYSON
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WYNE
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COVID 19
Helping us Thru...

Peter #13
Thanks.

FOOD

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support

Thank you





COMMUNITY HOUSING Canterbury

When the news media reported that it was likely New Zealand would go into lockdown, we immediately met as a team to spend time prioritising and planning for what we believed would be a tsunami of need. This included plans for the team to work from home and the adaption of our various processes to ensure our work could continue.

By the time lockdown began, we were all working from home. We continued to engage with whānau in creative ways, including meeting on doorsteps and interviewing in the carpark of the Christchurch office—always adhering to social distancing regulations.

One huge help was that we were able to provide cell-phones—thanks to donations from 2degrees—to some of the whānau who had no means of communicating. This helped reduce the isolation of these whānau and enabled us to maintain our support for them. For some of the most isolated people, this involved daily conversations, sometimes the only conversation they had during the day.

An outcome of COVID was a decision to move premises. During lockdown, the team discussed how much office space we require, having managed

in relatively small spaces while working from home. Coupled with this, VisionWest had entered into a long-term relationship with Oxford Terrace Baptist Church that included the construction of an office building and 10-12 apartments. Some of the apartments will eventually be managed by VisionWest while the Housing Service will have office space in the new building. With this in the back of our minds, we asked the question, “Why wait until the completion of the offices before moving on site; Why not move now?”

The result was a move into a temporary space in a portacom in the church carpark and two offices off their older lounge. This will be our home until our new office is completed.

This collaboration between VisionWest and Oxford Terrace Baptist Church has been a surprise bonus. It came about very quickly, and we have already found mutual ways of supporting whānau in need. In the first six weeks, VisionWest worked to house and support a lady who had slept outside the church over the autumn months and into the frosty winter mornings. We have also supported people who have come to the church for practical needs like housing and food support.

MY COVID

*tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero*

Jonas and Markly

Jonas and Markly are both Support Navigators with VisionWest's Housing First Team. During the COVID lockdown, they joined forces to become the Community Housing Outreach Team, spending time on the streets looking for, and offering to house, people who were rough-sleeping and homeless. They tell their COVID stories.

Jonas: "Before lockdown, VisionWest had discussed the establishment of an Outreach Team that would go out into the community to locate people who were sleeping rough and offer them the opportunity of being housed. COVID-19 created some urgency and Markly and I became that team."

Markly: "Every day, we would head out onto the streets, looking under bridges and behind buildings, to find people in need of housing. We coordinated our work with other agencies and with the Council. It was quite challenging because sometimes, after receiving a call about a person living on the street, we would arrive there and not be able to find them. Other times, people would claim they were homeless, but they weren't. Patience was important."

Jonas: "When we met someone, we would introduce ourselves and talk about the VisionWest Housing Service. We'd ask them if they needed accommodation and, if they answered, "yes," then we would take them back to the hotel which was being used to accommodate people. At the hotel, we'd take their details and sign them up for a place to live."

Markly: "It wasn't easy. We were out on the street meeting and mixing with people we knew nothing about, but we had to do it if we were to house these people and ensure their safety."

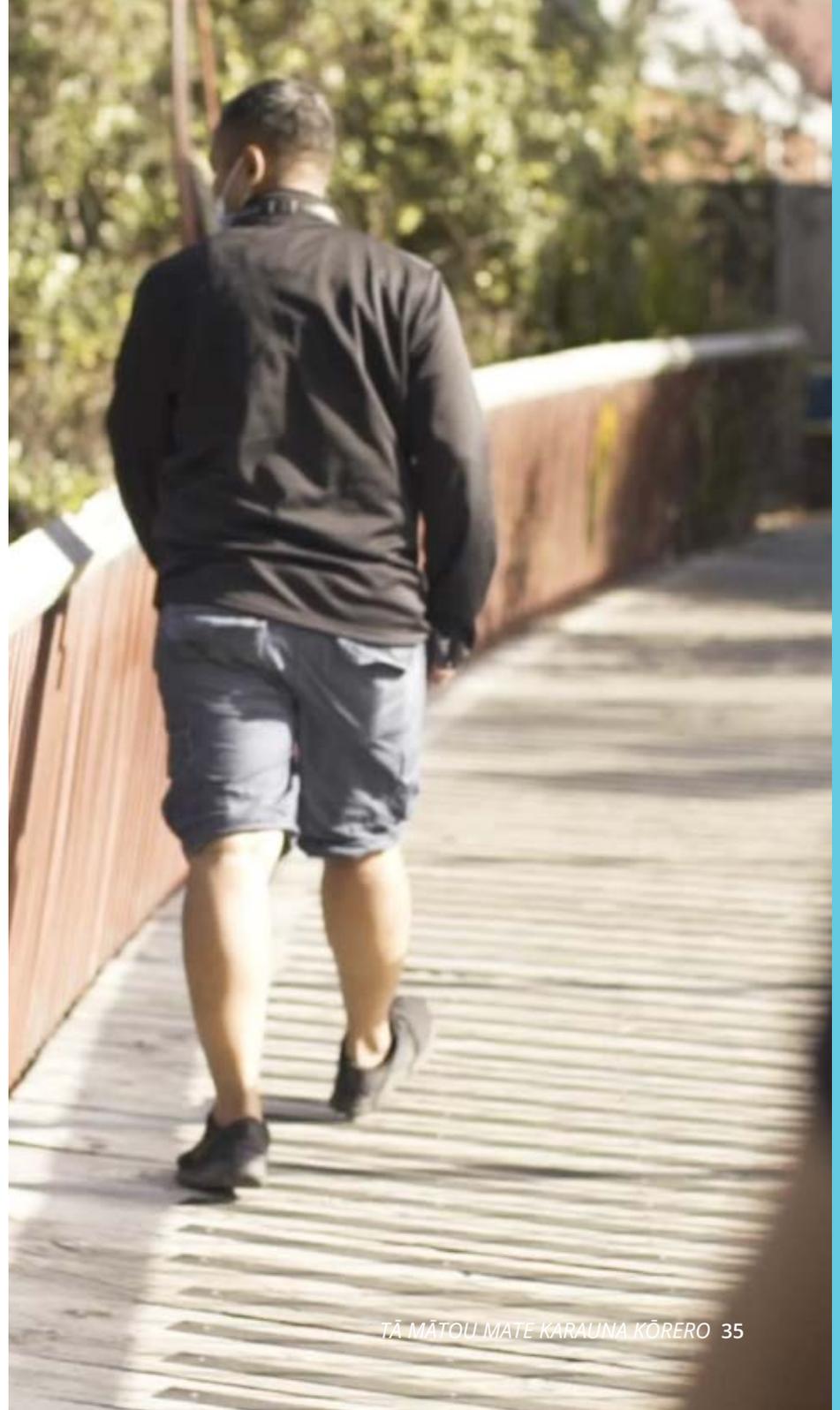
"The provision by the government of a hotel so rough-sleepers could get off the streets was a good thing. Housing is a basic need for people, and we need to remember, all people have a right to safe, healthy and affordable housing."

Jonas: “We were also able to put other supports in place for these people. Some needed counselling or help with drug or alcohol addictions, or budgeting help or something like that. We put those wraparound programmes in place for them. So, it was more than just putting them in a house. It was about supporting them on an ongoing basis so, in the future, they can maintain a house and sustain their tenancy.”

Markly: “Sometimes people who are living on the streets lose their value as a human being. We wanted to do something to restore their mana and reinstate their values. Housing is just a step to recovering that self-respect. So, it’s more than just putting someone in a house, it’s about transforming their life.”

Jonas: “The thing that motivated me to be involved in this work is that I come from a country where we also have homelessness. To be able to do something about this problem is a satisfying thing. It’s not about money or anything like that. It’s about feeling happy and content when I go home knowing that I was able to help someone find a home.”

“ *Sometimes people who are living on the streets lose their value as a human being. We wanted to do something to restore their mana and reinstate their values.* ”







HOME HEALTHCARE Auckland

Pandemic preparation for Home HealthCare started in late January with work intensity increasing as we moved into lockdown and were officially listed as an essential service. As a team, in Auckland and in the regions, we faced challenges including:

Changing government regulations

This was a first-time event, not only for us but for all agencies and government departments. That meant many of the regulations and guidelines surrounding COVID were constantly being adjusted. This was particularly noticeable with regards to issues such as, the changing Alert Levels, the requirements surrounding the supply and correct use of PPE, the payment of our workers, and what client tasks were deemed essential.

These changes meant we were obliged to constantly realign our service delivery, training and communications to ensure we complied with the latest regulations and guidelines.

Working offsite and face-to-face

Like other VisionWest services and most businesses around New Zealand, from the first day of lockdown, many of our administration staff

faced the immediate challenge of working remotely (a small number of personnel were still required to staff offices for some functions). This took a wonderful effort from BI to ensure everyone had the necessary equipment and that they quickly came up to speed with the use of MS Teams and other online platforms.

Unlike other services, however, the nature of our work demanded that our Support Workers continued to visit clients, often unable to avoid close physical contact.

Looking after our whānau

From the time it became evident that we would face social restrictions, a huge challenge was the welfare of both Support Workers and clients.

Our Pandemic Plan details that, in a pandemic, service delivery should be reduced to essential supports only. This enables us to reduce the bubble

of each individual while ensuring our workforce remains large enough to deliver essential needs. An essential support is a task that is required to ensure the person remains safe and well.

Once the pandemic was declared, the Home HealthCare team mobilised to reduce service delivery. However, to ensure that people remained safe, all clients whose supports were put on hold were contacted regularly to ensure their well-being.

With this need in mind, Kimberly Chalmers was seconded from the Quality and Evaluation Team to set up and led a group that established the Home HealthCare Outbound Call Team to complete welfare checks of approximately 260 Support Workers and around 3,000 clients whose supports had been put on hold. Where we found that people required support, their names were passed onto the clinical and coordination team to make further contact and, where necessary, roster supports back on.

Where Support Workers were over 70 years of age, or were immunocompromised or had caring responsibilities, they were given paid special leave. This decision made by the VisionWest Trust Board ensured, as best we could, the financial security of our workers. In addition, where support workers had reduced rosters (due to us reducing the level of service delivery), we paid support workers what they would normally get paid.

Communications

Communications were a key to our functioning during COVID. Alongside our call-centre, we used our website, texts, emails, phone calls, and mailed communications to ensure regulation updates, announcements and important information made its way into the right hands.

As part of our focus on communication, we established a closed Support Worker Facebook group which had over 600 members and enabled us to distribute information that was specifically for Support Workers and not appropriate for public broadcast, e.g. communications relating to pay or work conditions or PPE training. We were grateful to Michelle Warner, Jodie Houltram and Florence Agbayani who performed the bulk of the checks required to ensure all those requesting access to this Facebook group were current VisionWest Support Workers.

One communication challenge that needs mentioning was that of dealing with negative comments and enquiries, these often took valuable time and distracted us from the crucial task of looking after the vulnerable. Such communications, often from outside our organisation, were usually from people who did not understand the current regulations relating to matters such as PPE use or social distancing. We were pleased to be able to inform these people that, throughout the entire crisis, we were committed to following all government instructions on such matters.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

One issue that has absorbed significant time and effort was the obtaining of appropriate PPE in the required volumes, distributing that PPE through the regions and to individual Support Workers, and training of our Support Workers in its correct use.

Throughout all levels of the COVID event, we ensured the latest Ministry of Health guidelines relating to the provision and use of PPE were followed. That was, however, not always easy.

PPE stock was managed by the Ministry of Health and local DHB's. It's release to homecare agencies was sometimes slow, in limited quantities, and with conflicting information about the correct circumstances in which to wear it. These combined to make the distribution and training in how to use PPE correctly major issues.

Regular Sector and Government Meetings

During COVID, the entire HHC Management Team were extremely active meeting with provider groups, funders and government and union officials. These meetings covered clinical and operational guidance, PPE, and reporting to ensure we were planning and reacting to the crisis in the best possible way, and that funding decisions were made with best evidence.

Returning to “normal”

Pivoting to a new way of doing things was not easy, nor was returning to Alert Level 1. At this point, clients whose tasks were declared non-essential were once again eligible for support and some of those Support Workers, who had been on leave, were again available for work. The subsequent realignment of rosters meant the exit process took longer and was more complex than going into COVID had been.

As a service, we are grateful for the those seconded to help in the background during COVID, and to the BI team who ensured we were able to use our systems and had the necessary equipment enabling us to work from home. Also, to our own administration team and Support Workers who worked so diligently to get things done.

© HOME HEALTHCARE Waikato



As an essential service we had to scramble to organise ourselves in preparation for working from home. We'd never done that en masse before, so it was all new to us and was our biggest business risk because, if systems didn't work, we'd have been unable to function.

Our first issue to overcome was equipment. Because both the Weekday and Weekend Teams use the same workstations in the Hamilton Office, we didn't have enough equipment to enable everyone to work from home. Staff from the Glen Eden campus sent us their laptops, phones, and screens. Allocating and setting these up was a huge task. Those team members who understood IT were able to phone those who weren't so tech-savvy and help them set up their home system.

Once we were set up to work from home, people adapted quickly, and things ran smoothly. Our end-to-end workflow process didn't change at all, it just became paperless overnight and the allocation of work across our teams was done electronically. Like most VisionWest teams, we continued our full team meetings via Microsoft Teams.

Because we still needed staff in the office to perform tasks such as collecting timesheets and distributing PPE, the Weekday Team functioned with five staff working in the office and the remaining 20 working remotely for the entire lockdown period.

PPE distribution was a challenge. We cover a huge area—our furthest driving point is two and a half hours away. Because courier and mail networks were unreliable during lockdown, office staff would deliver to

PPE to volunteer Support Workers who acted as pick-up points for other Support Workers. All this was completed without physical contact.

It was interesting to see how different staff reacted to the new work environment. In general, the introverts loved working from home, whereas the extroverts struggled a bit. That meant, it was important to check in with staff frequently. In particular, we wanted to ensure that everyone was taking adequate breaks, finishing on time, and looking after their well-being.

As the team looks back over the time of COVID, we have learned a few things. These include the need to:

- Ensure business contingency plans are kept up to date, especially with staff turnover. This includes ensuring personal and emergency contact details of all staff are current.
- Ensure a constant supply of PPE. During COVID, the supply was slow and erratic.
- Keep an eye on each other's well-being.

We want to acknowledge all VisionWest staff who pitched in to ensure service delivery continued throughout COVID. It could have all gone incredibly wrong but, because of the dedication of staff, we managed our way through this period extremely well.



HOME HEALTHCARE

Bay of Plenty/Lakes District

COVID came upon us quickly. On March 23rd, when Alert Level 3 was announced with the promise that Alert Level 4 was looming, phone calls doubled immediately with 600 received on that first day; at one point the phonedlines became clogged. To cope with the volume of calls, we increased the size of our call team. This was helped, as lockdown began, by the establishment of a New Zealand-wide Outbound Call Team. Their help was invaluable.

Calls came from both Support Workers and clients. Anxious about being exposed to COVID, 627 clients called, asking to be put on hold. 161 Support Workers put themselves into self-isolation also. Some of these Support Workers were immunocompromised while others were over 70 years old.

Our first task, amongst answering phones, was to organise computer equipment that could be used from home. Because we are office-based, most staff use desktop computers. Suitable laptops and phone equipment were gratefully received from the Glen Eden campus. With phones in

place, our next priority was to contact clients. Emergency Priority 1 clients were identified and contacted by Registered Nursing staff who provided an assurance that no changes would be made to their support needs. Staff worked long hours completing many different tasks.

Because we aimed to immediately minimise traffic into the branch, our Learning and Development Trainer delivered PPE equipment to Support Workers within the Community. On-the-spot training was also provided by our Trainer to ensure PPE was being used correctly and in accordance with Ministry of Health guidelines.

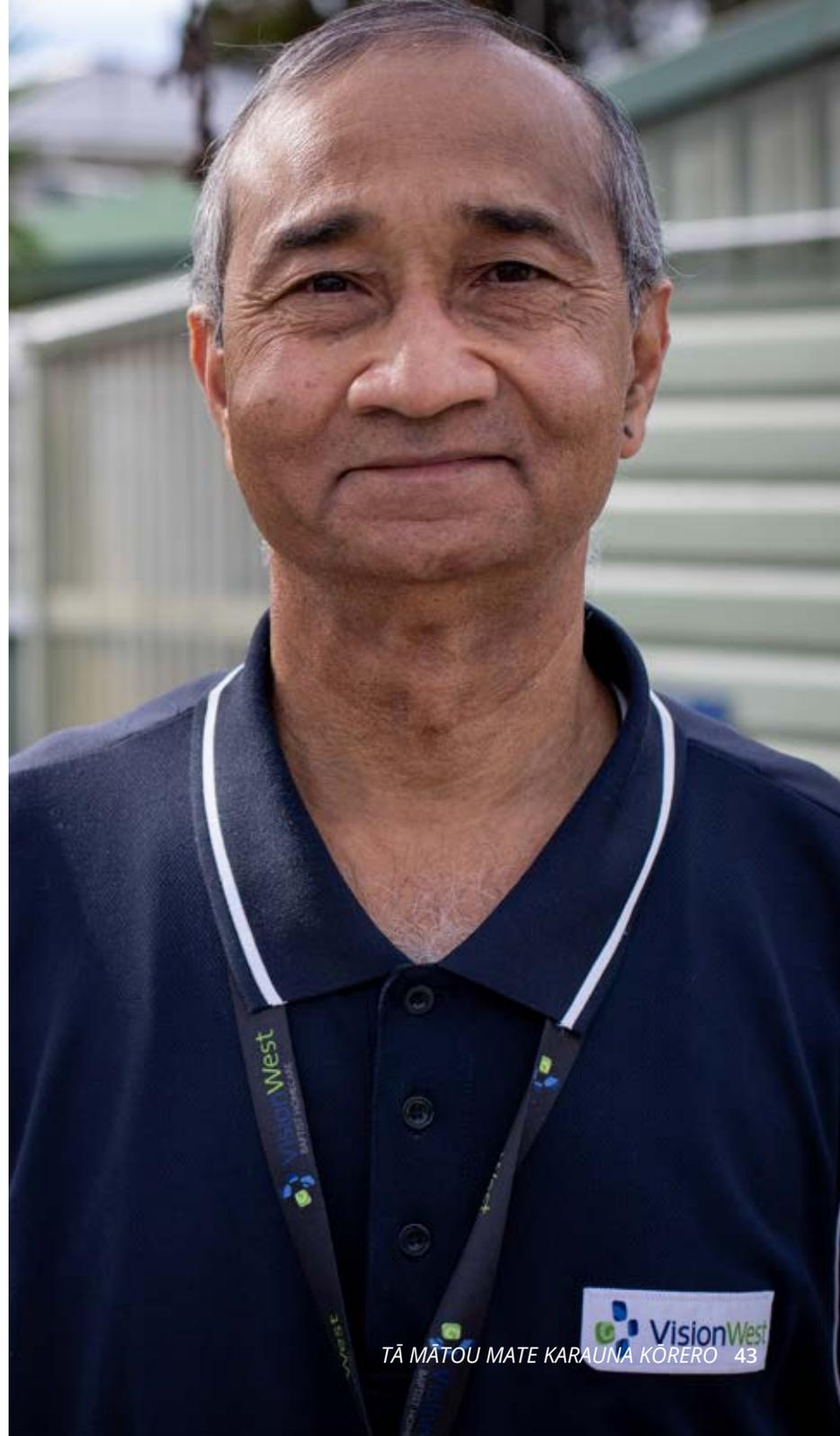
We quickly discovered the importance of communication. We had daily meetings with Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHB and daily reports were given within Tauranga and Rotorua Home HealthCare branches. Using MS Teams, the seven coordinators who worked from home were in daily contact with the Lead Coordinator or myself. This contact, along with reminders to one another that we were fulfilling a vital role in the lives of the vulnerable, meant we remained a happy team.

Rita Blade was approached by the Bay of Plenty DHB to prepare a flying squad of Support Workers which would be on standby for deployment into a rest home to support residents. This squad was developed and, while not needed in this instance, both the Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHB now have the action plan in place should it be required in the future.

An additional and rather unique COVID challenge for us was the presence of mice in our office and in the restaurant next door. These were quickly taken care of!

Some staff missed working together more than others and, as soon as we were able, we began to gradually bring staff back into the office. At the first meeting together, we each shared words that we felt were important to us as individuals. Some of the words shared were, "I learnt to make and bring my lunch to work," "depression," "loneliness," "relaxation," "tiredness," "stress and frustration." We made it through, but it was great to be together again.

All supports have now been reinstated. Many of our Support Workers who worked through COVID picked up shifts of others who were in self Isolation—the tiredness is now showing, but we're content to carry on.





MY COVID

tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero

Jessica and Simone

Jessica and Simone are two of VisionWest Home HealthCare's Support Workers. During COVID lockdown, they continued to call on clients to provide essential care. Here are their COVID stories.

Jessica: “What I love about this job is that we’re helping people who want to stay in their homes but who are among our community’s most vulnerable. The hours can be long but just seeing the impact we can have on our clients makes it worthwhile.

“Over COVID time, quite a few people asked me about stepping outside my bubble and going into homes. Some were afraid for me and some of our clients were afraid for themselves, but it was a risk I was willing to take for the sake of caring for people. Of course, we did have all the necessary PPE, and we did reassure our clients, but the job needed to be done and I felt privileged to be one of the essential workers doing it.

“I think of one client who I’ve been working with for some time. It was good that, when lockdown came, I was able to reassure him by letting him know I’d still be calling on him and helping him out each day. It made a huge difference for him. For some of our clients, their Support Worker was their only visitor during lockdown.”

Simone: “I love my job because it means I’m more than just a part of the community, I’m a part of someone’s life and can be a real help and encouragement to them. During COVID, the simplest things became important. Like taking a few extra minutes to chat with a client knowing that you might be the only person they would see all day.

“There were some sad moments, like the client I visited who was ill and in their last hours before passing. I felt especially sad for the wider family because, here was their loved one dying, and they were unable to be with her. That was heart-breaking. And then, afterwards, we couldn’t go

in person to offer our condolences to the family. That was something which, culturally, was very difficult for me. I’d still like to go and see them when COVID is all over and give a mihi and have a chat about their family member who has passed.

“To work over COVID time was an intentional decision I made. I discussed the potential risks with my family, including my teenage daughter. We decided that, once we went into lockdown, for safety’s sake, my daughter would go to stay with her Nana. That was hard for both of us but I’m not alone in making such a sacrifice. Many others made huge sacrifices over this time.

“Other Support Workers would have willingly made the same sacrifice but couldn’t, for example those who were in their 70s and so had to stand down from work. The great thing was the way those people supported those who were working. They’d give us a call occasionally and wish us well and encourage us. That was a good reminder of the family that VisionWest is.”

 *I love my job because it means I’m more than just a part of the community, I’m a part of someone’s life and can be a real help and encouragement to them.*

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Because six of the seven programmes we provide require face-to-face teaching and learning engagement, the COVID lockdown had a dramatic impact on VisionWest Education and Training Centre (ETC).

Our first challenge was to find solutions that would enable the continued learning and development of student whānau. Then came the challenge of ensuring all were able to access the training. Fortunately, most had access to technology and connectivity and those who didn't were provided with a pack of learning resources containing two weeks' worth of work. These were dropped off to them along with food parcel deliveries.

Online learning was developed and found to be effective for most learners. The Alternative Education team had immediate success with Zoom meetings with student whānau. Staying in touch with others, whether with the Mentoring Vocational Programme (MVP) for youth employment, or our new NEET and Youth Beneficiaries, was challenging but exciting with youth appreciating the new way of working.

MVP felt the biggest impact of the lockdown. Sid Tuaoi and his team worked tirelessly to maintain contact with those of their mentees who, having gained employment, were at risk of losing their jobs. Fortunately, MSD, having been kept informed of the programme, were understanding of the challenges faced by our mentees and supported us accordingly.

The one-on-one Youth Justice mentoring programme was also affected because those whānau engagements are almost entirely based on the trust built by strength of personal relationship. In these cases, mentors used food deliveries as a means of enabling ongoing connections.

The Pātaka Kai provided an outstanding service, and food parcel deliveries were an effective tool of engagement for ETC. Students, clients, and their respective whānau, were incredibly grateful for VisionWest's ability to stay connected in this way, despite overwhelming challenges.

Unlike most services and businesses, we were able to expand during COVID with the introduction to VisionWest of our new Youth Services team. Youth Services was deemed to be an essential service and the team was recruited and fully functioning from 1 April. This involved onboarding seven new Youth Development Coaches (YDCs) at the beginning of the period, with two of them starting in April whilst we were still at Alert Level 4. It was a monumental task and team leader, Peniel Fa'amausili, was able to train each mentor and introduce them to their respective mentees even prior to the transition to Alert Level 2.

ETC staff have been grateful to VisionWest for providing the opportunities and resources required to look after their students and clients.



VISIONARY YOUTH SERVICE

TRAINING CENTER



youth service
ratonā taiohi

BUDGETING

Deemed an essential service, the Budgeting Team continued to work throughout COVID. For the first month, while most other VisionWest services saw an immediate rise in demand, the call on our Budgeting Service remained relatively stable. This was because most of our existing clients were already on benefits meaning their income remained relatively stable over this time. We did, however, make the effort to keep in contact with all existing clients, either through continuing sessions remotely or by delivering much needed food parcels.

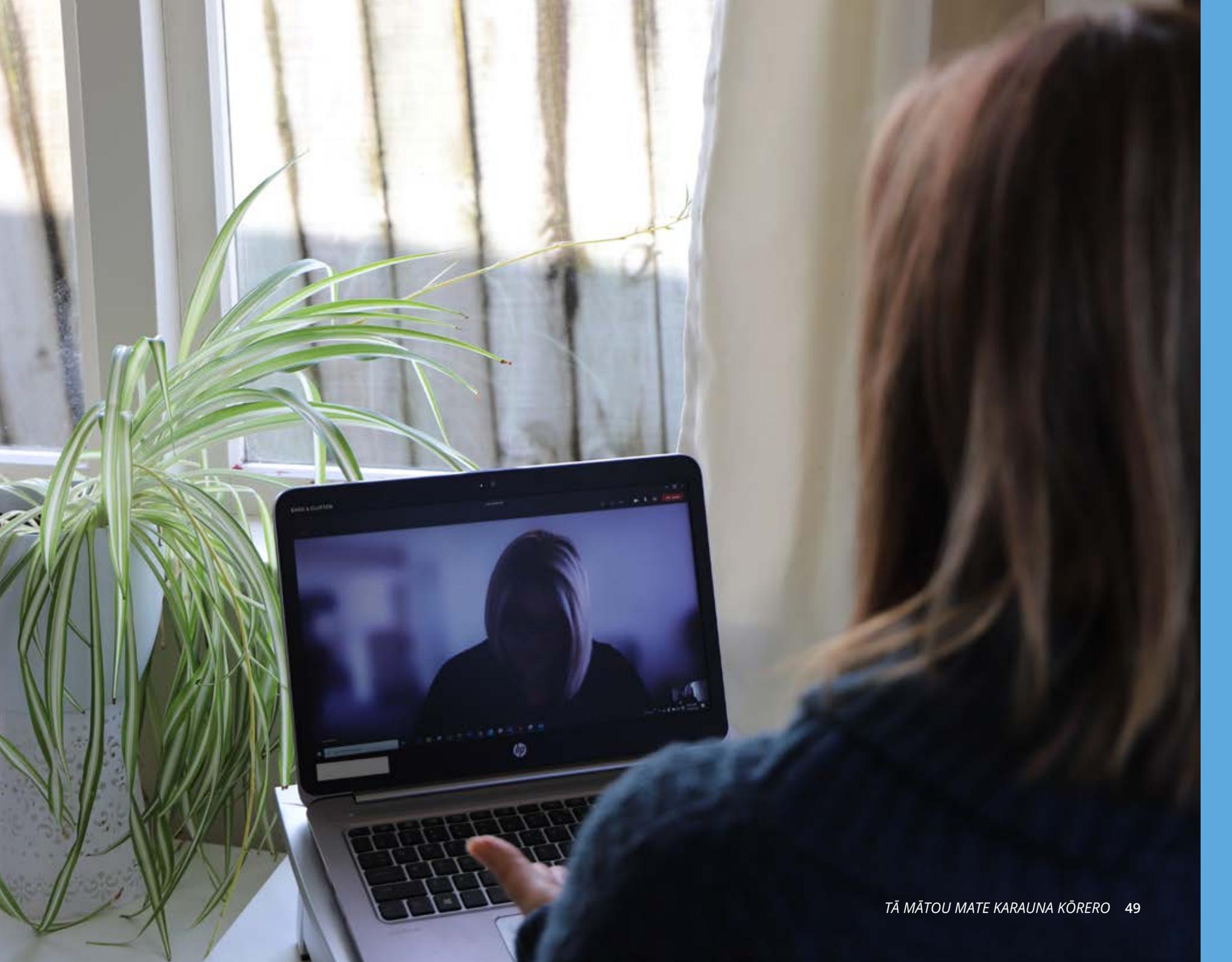
Towards the end of lockdown and beyond, an increasing number of whānau began to feel the effects of a decrease in income and numbers accessing our service jumped markedly. So much so that, by the beginning of July 2020, whānau who were new to our service were having to wait up to three weeks to be seen. Those requiring immediate support were referred onto alternative budgeting services.

Many of these new clients had never accessed a budgeting service before and, alongside their financial struggles, were working through challenging issues such as redundancy or having reduced work hours. Most had little or no experience of visiting Work and Income (WINZ) and some lacked

computer skills to access video sessions while others had no internet or computer access. These factors combined to place huge time pressure on our team which they handled brilliantly.

Like many other workers throughout New Zealand, COVID meant we became experts at meeting over the phone or by Zoom and other internet portals. This has led to an entirely new platform of engagement as, since moving to Alert Level 1, we have continued to hold some budgeting sessions by phone or internet. This is especially handy for whānau with family who find it difficult to make time to visit the VisionWest campus and meet face to face.

We expect the current busy level of demand to continue, and perhaps increase, over the foreseeable future as changes in the economy see a growing number of people facing financial hardship.



COUNSELLING

Mental health support (Counselling) was deemed by the government to be an essential service during COVID. A crisis such as COVID, with all the publicity and other factors that go with it—such as lockdown and the risk of illness—can be a major challenge for many of those we support. For those who are already living with mental health challenges it can lead to disorganisation, fear and anxiety for the future.

Knowing this, at the onset of the COVID crisis, we undertook the task of contacting our entire client-base to ensure they were coping and were aware that we were still operating, despite not being named as an essential service.

Our next step was to transfer our future sessions from the traditional face to face format to a video-meeting format. This was a major challenge for staff and clients. First it required training in the use of video programmes such as MS Teams and Zoom. The staff took this in their stride and were quickly up to speed.

Not all clients found it so easy, however. For those who were unfamiliar with the technology, it brought added stress. Likewise, finding privacy while engaged in a video counselling session was a challenge for some

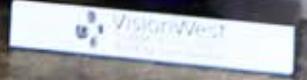
clients. We even had some who would have to go out and sit in their car just to get away from the others in their isolation bubble.

These factors added up to an initial drop-off in session numbers as clients grappled to adjust. As we worked through these matters, however, the new format was more widely accepted, and our sessions continued with no real hitches.

While stable for a while, the number of booked sessions slowly increased over the period of COVID, with anxiety or stress caused by relational, financial and career issues being a common theme.

As we moved out of lockdown and back through the Alert Levels, we were once again able to offer face to face sessions while adhering strictly to government regulations relating to hygiene, social distancing and tracing of movement.

A positive outcome of COVID is that it has shown us that holding sessions via internet is a viable option for many of our clients. We now give those we support the choice between a face to face meeting or a video session. While many favour meeting face to face, others find the convenience of being able to video from their home makes it their preferred option.



EDEN COTTAGE

“Loved the stories, suggestions, resources and photos from the teachers. It’s also been nice having the teachers comment on photos that we are sharing”.

“They’ve given me ideas for arts and crafts with the kids to keep them learning and interacting with them”.

“Thanks for the recipes! We are starting to run low on paint, so this is perfect”.

These are a few of the comments received by Eden Cottage in response to their use of online platforms to support whānau and their tamariki with fun educational activities over the time of lockdown.

At the start of lockdown, Eden Cottage, like all childcare centres and schools, was forced to discontinue face to face teaching. That presented an immediate challenge—how to keep in contact with children and their whānau.

The answer was to use online platforms such as Storypark, Facebook and Zoom. Teaching staff quickly embraced these formats, using them to post activities online which enabled families to connect with the community of Eden Cottage and share photos and stories.

Head Teacher Katrina explained, “Everyday our teachers posted ideas for families to do with their child. These included: songs, dances, stories,

crafts, scavenger hunts, games, recipes and exercises. The teachers came up with a theme for the week which provided the focus for learning. We celebrated Easter, Anzac Day, Mothers’ Day, and our own Eden Cottage community online. There were also online mat times and opportunities to talk with the teachers.”

Staff also made time to catch up on learning documentation and planning, and to review policies and procedures. Good resources and information were accessed through the Ministry of Education who updated centres daily with information relating to COVID procedures and regulations.

Under Ministry of Education guidelines, plans were made to reopen under Alert Level 3. Whānau were, however, still encouraged to keep children at home unless their guardians were having to go to work, e.g. essential workers. Online learning and engagement continued during this time.

Eden Cottage reopened in Alert Level 2 on Monday 18 May with strict plans in place for hygiene and the management of visitors to the centre. Entry was tightly controlled with hand sanitiser available at the gate.

COVID presented real challenges for Eden Cottage but with those challenges came opportunities. The children loved the online programme, the use of which was a steep learning curve for us all.

Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre
March 25 · 🌐

Kia ora families 🌟

As we are all starting to come to grips with the new reality we are facing please remember the most important thing at this time is to stay safe, take care of yourself, your family and your children. As Government has announced we will be entering into Alert level 4 at 11.59pm Wednesday 25th March (Tonight). Please adhere to Ministry of Health guidelines around self-isolation and let's stop the spread of Covid-19, together apart!

Please also check your emails as well as Story Park for communications from us 😊

Unite against COVID-19

Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre
March 31 · 🌐

Kia ora families 😊

The team at Eden Cottage just wanted to let you know that we are all thinking of you and your families during this time. It is a time of uncertainty but we wanted you to know that we are still here! Our contact lines are open 📞📧📧

We are regularly posting to Story Park to communicate some fun activities and ideas that you can achieve at home with your child/ren, so remember to check it out 🌟

Stay safe, stay positive and WASH YOUR HANDS doo doo doo doo doo.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L89nN03pBzI>



Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre
April 15 · 🌐

Kia ora families! 🌟

Thanks so much for sharing your moments and photos of you at home on Story Park! We love seeing what you all have been up to during the lock down, and it gives inspiration and ideas to us and others also 😊 Working together will get us through this time!

Today, we are inspired by some of the fun, crazy and spontaneous things by Teacher Michelle 🥰 Who along with her two girls have been very busy during this lock down. Take a look at their creativity and imagination! 🌟



Fun things We do together

Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre
April 9 · 🌐

🐰 Unfortunately with the current lock down we are not able to have our grand Easter egg hunt... but have you tried to find hidden Easter eggs online 🥰

Check out this fun online Easter egg hunt game, which requires a keen eye on finding all the Easter bunny's little eggs! 🐰

https://www.abcy.com/games/easter_egg_hunt



Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre
April 21 · 🌐

Good morning families 😊

Reminder: Please remember to check your emails for updates and announcements from Eden Cottage 📧

Reminder: TODAY at 10am we are holding our first 'MEET THE TEACHER' on zoom. We have teachers Crystal and Rochie meeting with you and checking in to see how you are 🌟 Head over to Story Park community to get the URL link to the meeting. We would love to see your faces and you can tell us all about how you are, and what you have been up too!!!

Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre created a poll.
April 8 · 🌐

Kia ora whanau! 😊

As some schools have used zoom to video chat their students we thought we would send it to the polls, and see if that is something our families would be interested in also!!?

We thought we could provide a half hour time slot for anyone and everyone to jump online and have a catch up with the teachers! Do you like this idea? 🌟🌟

Please respond on the poll below with your answer and we will follow it up. Thanks for the participation 😊

86% YES video chat teachers

Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre
April 16 · 🌐

🌟 Kia ora koutou!

We hope you are well today and getting into the swing of lock down life, and for those with older children, online learning!

Today, we get to see what our awesome Teacher Crystal has been up to in her 'bubble'. 🥰 Teacher Crystal has older children who enjoy their own activities, but they still make time as a family to have loads of laughs and FUN! Check out what they have been up to to inspire your day ahead 🌟

Eden Cottage Early Learning Centre is 🥰 feeling
excited.
May 5 · 🌐

MAT TIME ONLINE! 🌟

This week Eden Cottage Kaiako are bring mat times into your home, with fun and exciting 🎶 dances, songs and crafts. As well as calming bible stories and creative games 🌟

Have you checked out the mat times yet? What do you think of them??

Jump on over to Story Park every day at 10.30am to join in!





WHETŪ PAERANGI *(Stars in the Distant Horizon)*

COVID Māori Responsiveness Framework

Ehara tāku toa i te toa takitahi My strength is not as an individual
He toa takitini But as a collective

This whakataukī or Māori proverb speaks to the benefits and greater strength in working together as a collective during COVID-19 lockdown versus working as individual people or organisations.

As early as the beginning of March, as the presence of COVID and its potential impact on New Zealand communities became more apparent, we began to plan for the move to Alert Levels 2 and 3; by April we were planning for Alert Level 4. Our awareness of the over-representation of Māori in housing and food insecurity statistics, and our recognition that these would be two hard-hit areas should the virus be as disruptive as suggested, meant we wanted to be ready.

By the end of lockdown 34% of those housed, and 44% of those receiving food boxes from Pātaka Kai were whānau Māori.

In response to this need, Fred Astle played a pivotal role in the establishment of Whetū Paerangi and its development within VisionWest. Whetū Paerangi involved a collaboration of Māori leaders who recognised the impact COVID would have on whānau Māori, particularly in all areas, e.g. housing, health, food security, and general well-being.

Within VisionWest, Whetū Paerangi represents our wayfinding narrative of how we empower our VisionWest people and community to assist us in navigating our way through this pandemic for our whānau whakaraerae (vulnerable), such as kaumatua/kuia, whānau hauā (special needs), tamariki and rangatahi, whānau kainga kore (homeless), whānau rawakore (poverty), mātua takitahi (single parents), and our wider whānau.

Whetū Paerangi is not a separate operational arm to managing our organisation's response to the pandemic. It is a unique kaupapa Māori mechanism to complement and support our current pandemic management strategy and operational priorities. It is made up of comprehensive kaupapa Māori leadership and support that focusses on four key areas:

1. Te Whetū Kaupapa Whakahaere - Pandemic crisis management and coordination.
2. Te Whetū Whakahaere Tikanga - Pandemic tikanga oversight and supports.
3. Te Whetū Pāpāho Māori - Pandemic Māori communications.
4. Te Whetū Rangapū Māori - Pandemic Māori stakeholder partnerships.

The focus of Whetū Paerangi over lockdown saw:

- Ensuring no barriers exist in providing services to whānau Māori who also represent a greater proportion of our most vulnerable whānau.
- The use of tikanga Māori practices in working with whānau within local and central government guidelines. This included new tangihanga (funeral protocol) for housing and Mātāpuna Whānau Centre and Kaiārahi Team Leader overseeing tikanga for Pātaka Kai and food delivery into local marae areas.
- The Pandemic Management Team having constant access to expert Māori advisory support and regular updates from Whetū Paerangi through the Head of Māori Service Development.
- An increase in the number of Māori referred for housing, particularly at the Layard Street hotel.
- Management of trauma-informed care for our most vulnerable whānau.
- VisionWest weekly participation through the Head of Māori Service Development in the Waitakere Māori leadership collective formed at the beginning of Alert Level 4 and continuing as significant new Māori leadership base for Waitakere services and community.
- Many notes of appreciation from various networks in Waitakere regarding our work through Pātaka Kai, and from Māori housing groups for our consistent work in social housing.
- Constant phone contact with all 140 Māori Home HealthCare clients.
- VisionWest commitment to the post-Alert Level 2 whānau recovery phase up to December 31st.
- Renewed commitment from government to assist with the whānau recovery phase through the development of the Te Puni Kokiri Pae Aronui Māori youth employment contract, new Kaupapa Māori Trauma-Informed Care Centre and Pātaka Kai.
- Being available to host and share our learnings of our Pātaka Kai's response to COVID with other local marae and Māori service provider leadership.
- Regular online hui with our own VisionWest Kāhui Whakaruruhau (Kaupapa Māori champions). The Head of Māori Service Development working with individual members of the Whakaruruhau weekly and fortnightly for Kaupapa Māori pastoral care, shared learnings and ensuring no barriers exist for whānau in accessing support during COVID.

As we exit lockdown, we will continue to develop this work because it enables us to identify and prioritise work amongst Māori who, as mentioned above, make up a significant proportion of VisionWest's whānau.



MY COVID

*tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero*

Billie Jean

Billie Jean, Team Leader of the Whānau Centre, tells her COVID story which involved secondment to the Pātaka Kai team where she spent lockdown packing food boxes and delivering food to some of our elderly whānau Māori.

“Over the time of COVID, Pātaka Kai faced the initial challenge of transitioning from a self-service store to a delivery service, that meant there was a lot of physical work to be done. I really enjoyed that physical side of the work as teams of people were organised to pack food and deliver it to community whānau.

“Outside of this work on campus, our team made a huge effort to make sure that elders, our kaumātua/kuia, were supported in the community. So, I spent time delivering to those down at the local marae and to some in the immediate community. 90% of them are Māori, many in their late 80s or even 90s. I’ve known many of them for most of my life and have visited them before.

“COVID changed everything. Before COVID, if you took kai over, you’d give them a big hug and sit down with them to have a cup of tea and a chat. But suddenly, we couldn’t do that, which was rather sad. During Alert Level 4 and Alert Level 3, I’d go down to the kaumatua flats on the marae, drop their parcels off on the deck, then back away down the stairs and talk to them from a distance.

“Culturally, isolation was a difficult time for older Māori in our local community. Connection with people is very important, particularly for older folk, and food is the great carrier to enable this connection. So, the older whānau found it difficult. First to gain an understanding of what was going on, and then to come to terms with the isolation. I spent quite a lot of time explaining why it was all necessary. They understood in the end, but it wasn’t easy for them.





“My motivation to help at Pātaka Kai during COVID was the same as what motivates me to work here every other day. I believe I’ve been gifted by God and, you know what you need to do with a gift? You need to give it away. Not just tangible things but every good thing we have. So, I try to engage with whānau because, that way, they know someone cares.

“That’s the thing with the whole team here, and it’s what makes VisionWest such a wonderful place to work. We’re all in the same waka, we have the same purpose and that is, we want to show love to people. Working in the Pātaka Kai over COVID was my way of doing that.”

“*We’re all in the same waka, we have the same purpose and that is, we want to show love to people.*”



CHAPLAINCY

The role of Chaplain is all about relationship, particularly when whānau are going through difficult times. The irony of COVID and the associated lockdown is that, at the very time people were facing difficulties, opportunities for face-to-face relationship were limited. That required being creative and relating in different ways.

During COVID, I continued to maintain contact with those who I'd been journeying with. That equated to well over 300 phone and text chats during lockdown. The importance, and the time these chats took, cannot be understated. Many of our whānau struggled in all sorts of ways during COVID. Alongside the expected practical issues such as food and finances, were issues relating to relationships and trauma. It was good to be able to make time to listen to people and offer encouragement and practical help.

I also spent much time working with other VisionWest Services. In the case of Community Housing, this focused primarily on Layard Street where around 30 individual apartments were blessed as each tenant took possession. This was an awesome experience, one greatly appreciated by our whānau.

After the first day, as the hotel owner was leaving, the moon lit up the hotel's front door and the cross (put there during the blessing) stood out

brightly in silver. The owner was amazed. It was as if God was saying, "This is good. I'm being honoured here and protecting this place as you care for those I love."

I also spent time creating welcome packs with Bibles and activities for children. The stress brought many to their limits and a number asked for copies of the Bible which I was able to supply, one in te reo Māori.

The Pātaka Kai did an awesome job during lockdown. It was great to be able to place an Easter message and activities in food boxes on the days leading up to Easter. These included countless Easter goodies, 550 Easter poems and 250 Easter story books.

A sad casualty of the lockdown was that it was necessary to cancel our fortnightly Community Dinners. We will reassess what form these dinners should take in the future. People are still needing connection and love, so we are now looking at different ways of meaningful engagement with our community.



LAYARD STREET & THE HOUSING CHALLENGE

The Challenge

During COVID, the government made it known that they wished to protect those who were rough sleeping or homeless from the virus. To do this they needed housing providers to house as many whānau as possible, as quickly as possible. The challenge for providers, such as VisionWest Community Housing, was finding suitable accommodation for these many families.

The answer for VisionWest was in Avondale, just a few kilometres across town.

The Decision

Jon and Christina are an entrepreneurial couple who own a hotel in Layard St, Avondale. Comprised of 62 1, 2, and 3-bedroom apartments, the hotel can take up to 196 guests, or 85 people when used for community housing. The hotel was due to open in the middle of lockdown but, with New Zealand's borders unexpectedly closed, Jon and Christina had to face

the reality that they had a brand-new, A-grade hotel facility, with no clients to fill it.

After reading about COVID and what was happening in local communities, Jon and Christina considered those who may not survive because of the vulnerability of being homeless. Having made the decision to see what they could do to help, they approached government representatives who suggested they contact VisionWest Community Housing. What followed is an amazing relationship between the hotel owners, VisionWest and 60 whānau who now call the hotel home.

The Challenges

The housing of so many, in one location, in such a short period of time, resulted in some interesting challenges for Community Housing staff. First, there were no established processes or systems for placing so many people in such a short time—at one stage, between six and eight people were being processed and housed each day. The systems to enable this rapid influx of people had to be developed and tested within days of the start of lockdown. Overseen by Tulsi Watts, our Community Housing

Service Coordinator, this was a massive undertaking resulting in fast-tracked processes that have proven their effectiveness in placing large numbers of whānau into a housing facility of this kind.

Another aspect to the challenge was that, when processing and placing whānau in specific apartments, it was necessary to consider the backgrounds and specific needs of each person. Many had come from situations of abuse or domestic violence making it important to consider who could be housed at Layard Street and on what floor they should be placed. Through careful whānau placement, the team was able to ensure that each individual was not only kept safe but felt safe.

A further challenge was to help whānau adjust to their new accommodation. Some had not lived in close proximity with others before. Others had not lived inside for some time, and certainly not in surroundings like they now found themselves. These issues were worked through with the help of the team of Support Navigators whose role it is to journey with VisionWest whānau as they adapt to their new homes.

The Whānau

Of those successfully housed during COVID, while some were referred by other agencies and organisations, many came from the VisionWest Outreach Team. Community Housing team members, Jonas and Markly spent several hours each day driving around the local area, looking under bridges, in car parks, and in bush hideaways, talking to people who were without housing and encouraging them, for their own safety, to accept VisionWest's offer of accommodation.

The Support

A focus of VisionWest and the Community Housing Services' Support Navigators is enabling whānau to receive the other supports they require. Since moving in, some whānau had asked for help in specific areas; in particular, budgeting, counselling and skills training. An Open Day was held where VisionWest staff involved in various services came to the hotel to introduce themselves and the talk about the support they could provide. This enabled whānau to meet the faces behind the support services and feel their sincerity and warmth. Once this personal connection was made, it became a lot easier for whānau to trust and share their needs with a support person.

"An added benefit of the Open Day," explained Sherree, Lead Support Navigator, "was that it brought people from the hotel community together. It has resulted in a real sense of community where some people have been bringing food to the foyer to share with others. Future group meetings are planned, such as separate get-togethers for men and women where relevant issues can be discussed. There is also a large apartment available for one-on-one consultations for budgeting or counselling. It means the wraparound support provided by VisionWest can happen right here on site."

The Community

Housing whānau at the Avondale hotel has been a resounding success. The intentional relationships formed have created a positive culture of harmony and shared living.

The result is a community where people, many of whom once lived with a sense of distrust towards others, now look out for one another. As mentioned already, the residents have set up a food table in the foyer where food that is not required can be placed for those who don't have enough. People are also providing practical help for each other when needs arise. An example is the story of Steve* and Rona* (not their real names). It was late at night and Rona was outside chatting with others when she went into labour. She had previously thought carefully about how she would get to hospital when this moment came but the late hour meant her plan wasn't going to work. The community jumped into action and came up with an alternative idea. Steve, who hadn't known Rona prior to moving into Layard Street, brought his car around to the front of the building. The others helped Rona and they headed off. In the end, Rona made it to hospital just in time. Her intended plan would never have got her there before the baby was born but, through the community working together, she made it and now has a healthy, safely delivered baby. It's a wonderful example of community, everyone looking after each other.

The Reward

The decision to open their hotel to homeless whānau was not an easy one for Jon and Christina to make but has been a rewarding one. Christina described the moment when whānau see their accommodation for the first time, "People are overwhelmed as they walk into their apartment. They are expecting a roof over their head, but nothing like what they encounter when they walk through the door.

"When we were planning the hotel and its commercial brand, we had a dream that a person who spent a night here would write an online review that said, 'That was the best sleep I ever had in my life.' Well, it happened. Not quite the way we expected, but after the first night of housing whānau from the community, we had a person come downstairs with tears in their eyes and say, "That was the best night's sleep I've ever had in my whole life. I told our team. Everyone had tears in their eyes. We got the review we wanted, but in a completely different way than we ever expected."

Looking Back

The final words go to Jon and Christina, "I call the entire process, 'a beautiful oops.' It felt like things were going crazily wrong with COVID and border closures and businesses shutting down, but good things came out of it. We have a building with great facilities and furnishings; would we have created a building like this if we were building something to be used as social housing? No. But what happened was the creation of a place where now, people walk in here in a very low state and are pampered. It's like all these needs and visions came together at the same time," says Christina.

Jon agrees, "I call it a 'sudden alignment of trajectories.' If we had pre-planned this and applied for funding for it and discussed it, it would have been a long and drawn out process. But what happened was that it just sprung up, and because it solved a lot of things for a lot of people (solved a need for housing for people on street, solved our need for tenants, fitted in with VisionWest's vision to house the homeless), it just happened. And, for these whānau, it works."

MY COVID

*tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero*

Kimberly Chalmers Home HealthCare Outbound Call Team

Over lockdown the Quality and Evaluation Team had the privilege of supporting the pandemic responses of several VisionWest Teams including Payroll and Pātaka Kai, but our biggest piece of work was setting up and coordinating an Outbound Call Team for Home HealthCare.

As New Zealand transitioned into COVID lockdown, the Ministry of Health (MoH) released criteria for home healthcare providers detailing what client tasks were deemed to be essential, and what tasks were non-essential. Essential tasks would continue to be provided, while non-essential tasks were to be put on hold until after lockdown. The immediate challenge was to communicate this, and other COVID information, to over 1,000 Support Workers and 3,000 clients. Kimberly Chalmers tells her COVID story and the story of the Home HealthCare Outbound Call Team.

“In the early stages of the COVID event, as a result of MoH reprioritising home healthcare tasks, the VisionWest Home HealthCare Coordination Team were swamped with calls from clients and Support Workers. The volume of enquiries was such that there were hundreds of missed calls each day, piling up across the sites.

“Home HealthCare General Manager, Murray Penman, had the idea of creating a call centre as a means of distributing necessary information. Sam Bogusz (then VisionWest GM Business Support) was tasked with the job of finding the people resource from across the trust to oversee this aspect of our pandemic response. She asked me to head it up.

“The team was made up of a diverse group of between 20 and 25 people including, Social Workers from the Christchurch Housing Team, Tenancy Managers, and members of both the Health and Safety Team, and Quality and Evaluation Team in Auckland, and some of the Weekend Coordinators from Home HealthCare. That added up to between 20 and 25 people.

“The focus of our calls changed as we moved through lockdown. Initially, it was to support the Coordination Team in clearing the backlog of messages. Through doing that, we recognised the need to take a more proactive response to ensuring those involved in healthcare were kept informed of relevant information. Support Workers were wanting to know what PPE they should wear, which clients they should be calling on, and matters relating to remuneration. Clients were concerned to know the status of their service and whether they would be taken care of.

“First each Support Worker on COVID leave was contacted in order to answer their questions and to let them know of our website and Facebook page where information relating to Support Workers would be regularly updated.

“The next step was to contact clients whose care had been deemed non-essential to inform them that their service would be on hold for the duration of Alert Level 4 and to ensure they had support around them. Those who didn't have family or neighbours looking out for them were earmarked for regular follow-up calls.

“Our final piece of work was the biggest chunk; making welfare checks. Any person who had support put on hold was called at least twice over the

remainder of Alert Level 4 and into Alert Level 3. Once again, our concern was to check in and this was to see how they were coping, and if they needed any further support. If they did, we would refer them onto the Coordination Team who arrange appropriate support, e.g. reinstatement of some care or food from Pātaka Kai.

“It's interesting to note that, as we went through this time, people began by saying, “I'm coping well, no issues.” As time went on, people's ability to cope decreased. In these times, our call of support became more important to them.

“I think everybody who was involved in the call team came out of this experience with a story about how they felt they had been able to make a positive contribution to VisionWest's COVID response. Many felt it gave them a real purpose during lockdown because they were connecting with some of our most vulnerable whānau. Personally, it was encouraging to see how people from across the wider trust came together to complete this task. Their care and willingness to serve our whānau were encouraging to see.”

“*As time went on, people's ability to cope decreased. In these times, our call of support became more important to them.*”



donwast encompassing
aring transformational
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haukaitanga whānau
aparare tūāwhiri
rohe family belonging
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tūāwhiri inclusive unity
whānau community care



MY COVID

*tōku ake mate
karauna kōrero*

Daniel Mangalaraj *IT set up*

When the country went into lockdown, many VisionWest staff moved to working from home for the first time. This was possible only because of the herculean effort of our IT Team, Daniel Mangalaraj, Mark Cooke and Joel Fraser. Usually commissioning a maximum of 25 computers a year, the team did almost four times that number in just three 13-hour days. Daniel describes the urgency of their pre-lockdown days.

“Moving to an environment where people are working from home was tricky because our technology environment was not set up for that. 98% of the coordinators based in the regions had a desktop computer and wired landline phones. To work from home required a laptop.

“The first task was to determine what hardware was required, resulting in an order for 70 laptops. Because of the huge demand by other businesses, the supplier was only able to provide laptops with the Home Edition operating system, not the required Business Edition. These laptops needed to be upgraded.

“The next step was to set up each the laptop so that it was fit for purpose. This required each laptop needed to be connected to the internet using a docking port. By using a 24-port unit we were able to work on 20 laptops at the same time.

“Having connected to the internet, we needed to buy Microsoft Product Keys—\$250 each—for each laptop in order to upgrade to Business Edition. These keys are long and complex. And, each laptop required a unique key to be entered into it. So, we created a production line.

“We laid the computers out in the boardroom. First, we walked around and turned them all on. Next, we entered the password to start each one up, followed by the unique product key. Then, we uploaded the necessary software, including a firewall. We then had to add each one to the VisionWest domain because only computers on our domain can access the software on it.

“One other thing we made certain of, particularly because of our history with ransomware attacks, was cybersecurity. We wanted to make sure that, even if a person was working from home, none of the systems could be infected. Because of this, security levels were increased on all machines.

“We were also aware that some people required printers. We managed to get these by grabbing used and unused portable ones from other parts of the VisionWest Campus before launching into our next challenge, transporting this hardware to the regions. One day before lockdown, we loaded three cars and headed off to Hamilton, Tauranga and Rotorua.

“Alongside all this, we needed to ensure people had phone access from their homes. We spent some time working on a protocol that would enable people to take their phones home, connect to the local landline and make phone calls using the phone through the internet. It took some complex work, but we eventually enabled this.

“So, late on the day before lockdown, everyone took home their phone and a laptop. It would be wonderful to be able to say that everything went without a hitch. In reality, there were many teething issues which took many hours on the phone to rectify. The positive thing was everyone’s willingness to learn and to do whatever was required in order to enable them to fulfil their job.

“In all, we did close to 100 computers in three days. This involved, cleaning them of previous files and software, loading new software, adding them to

the VisionWest domain, refurbishing them and sending them out. We are now encouraging teams in the regions to work at least one or two days a week from home meaning, if something happens in the future and we are forced to work from home again, we have all the systems in place and know they are still working.

“It was a busy time but I’m passionate about the work of VisionWest and I know the impact each person in this organisation has. That inspired me and the team to go the extra mile. Everyone had a job to do during the pandemic, and this was mine; to make sure people had the technology to do their job effectively and efficiently.”

“*It was a busy time but I’m passionate about the work of VisionWest and I know the impact each person in this organisation has. That inspired me and the team to go the extra mile.*”



LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED DURING COVID

On June 17, Lisa Woolley, VisionWest CEO was interviewed on Rhema about the challenges of leading a faith-based organisation through a crisis. This article was prepared from the information shared in that interview.

Lisa has led West Auckland's VisionWest Community Trust through several crises including the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), the housing crisis following the Christchurch earthquakes, and now the lockdown stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through it all, she has learned some valuable lessons about leading a faith-based organisation during a crisis. Here are her top six lessons.

Crises are inevitable; leaders are there for times such as these

As an organisation, we've faced a number of crises in the past. There was the GFC which hit many in our community and resulted in a marked increase in budgeting, food and housing needs throughout our

community. COVID has been different, however, and we've been told that the needs will be greater and more far-reaching.

Those who are leading organisations need to remember, we have been placed in leadership for a time such as this. Rather than dwelling on the crisis, it pays to grapple with the question of what response is needed from leaders at this time, particularly from those who lead our churches and faith-based services.

It's vital that we are flexible

On the 23rd of March, we were informed that we were going into lockdown. While virtually all VisionWest's services were deemed essential, we knew that the key services would be food, housing and home healthcare. So, with a staff of 1,600 people we needed to be flexible in how we provided those services.

"Pivot" became a key word. Many team members pivoted from their normal roles to completely different work, e.g. our Quality Team pivoted

to become our Pastoral Care Team, making phone calls to every one of our homecare clients to ensure they were okay.

It wasn't just individuals who needed to pivot, however. Each of our services needed to consider new ways of operating during lockdown. For instance, pre-COVID our Pātaka Kai was providing about 350 food parcels a week for people who came onto our campus to collect them. Once we were in lockdown, and isolation measures were in place, we needed to pivot to a delivery service.

The church (Glen Eden Baptist) was turned into a food distribution centre. Volunteers were seconded from other parts of our organisations to help with packing, while other organisations referred whānau to us and provided people to help with delivery. Many of these weeks we were delivering over 1,000 parcels.

In terms of housing, the number of whānau who were homeless and needing a safe place to live required a pivoting in the way we assessed and placed people. This meant we were required to change our means of assessing and accommodating people. Motels and hotels were provided for community housing providers such as VisionWest to manage and, by fast-tracking our assessment processes, we were able to house about 60 whānau in this time and in the time since.

Now, coming out of lockdown, we need to consider how we transition these people from emergency accommodation and into permanent housing with the right supports.

I need to mention our Home HealthCare Support Workers also. They made an incredible effort as we were forced to adapt rosters to fit with a decrease in Support Worker numbers (some were forced to stand down from work due to age or immunocompromised health conditions).

Those who worked made incredible compromises. I heard of one Support Worker who sent her child to stay with another family member so she could continue to support vulnerable clients over lockdown. That's the sort of sacrifice made by many people.

It's time to ask the bigger question

Alongside "pivot" another word that has been used a lot is "unprecedented." In an unprecedented time, leadership can make all the difference, provided we ask and answer the right questions.

The short, sharp time of emergency response is over. Those frenetic, adrenaline-filled days are behind us and we're into the marathon phase now, the recovery-phase. For leaders of churches and faith-based organisations, now is the time to be asking, "If I'm a leader for a time such as this, what does that mean for my church and community organisation as we seek to work within our wider community."

Perhaps it's not just leaders that are here for a time such as this, maybe this is the time for the organisations themselves—all churches and all faith-based organisations—to consider how they might best offer proactive support at this time and in the days ahead.

Collaboration is the key

It's important to remember, we are not alone as leaders. To be effective, we must engage with other leaders and learn from one another as we discover what works well and what doesn't. This is key—we are not on our own! Times of crisis are times for churches and faith-based organisations to work strongly together.

One of the things I found valuable, was engaging in leadership learning circles. None of the participants had ever been through anything like this before and we found we were learning and adapting constantly. That learning and adapting occurs so much faster when we are open to collaborating with others.

One thing we had to do was to learn how to manage and lead our organisations during the crisis. Not just how to continue providing the services we give to our community but considering how to best support our people through this when we were all working remotely.

For VisionWest, this meant adapting quickly. We established a Pandemic Management Team and a Crisis Team. In those first weeks, because new information relating to service delivery was coming out by the hour, these teams met every day.

The key was collaboration, taking a team approach where you appreciate the different skills of each person. That makes it important to listen to one another as each person works within their areas of strength.

It's when we attempt to work in isolation that things get difficult. If, in a time of crisis, you find yourself working in isolation, you need to ask, "Who can I work in collaboration with to get some expertise around me?"

Of course, collaboration goes beyond the members of your organisation. We could not have maintained the intense level of service without close collaboration with other organisations who provided volunteers, the government and funders who provided funding for our services, benefactors who gave generously, especially to our Pātaka Kai (food service), and other individuals and groups who worked with us during the crisis. Help from others was vital and welcomed.

Be faith-led, not just faith-based

Faith-based leadership is different though. Faith-based means your organisation's beliefs and values are at the very core of decision-making and vision-setting.

At VisionWest, we refer to ourselves as a "faith-led" organisation rather than faith-based organisation because, these beliefs and values are more than a background philosophy. These are the principles that shape, not just what we do, but also the way we do it.



Thank you to all these businesses and organisations who gave generously to enable VisionWest to respond positively to the COVID-19 crisis.

- Air New Zealand
- Amino Restaurant
- Auckland City Council
- Auckland City Mission
- Bakers Delight
- Bidfood
- Fair Food
- Foodstuffs Distribution Centre
- Foundation North
- Glen Eden Baptist Church
- James Blond Rentals
- KiwiHarvest
- Laingholm Baptist Church
- My Food Bag
- Norwest Food Bank
- PAK'nSAVE Lincoln Road
- Perpetual Guardian
- Revive Café
- Rotary Club of Henderson
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- Storage King, New Lynn
- Tegel
- The Trusts
- Toby's Seafood
- Turners and Growers
- Vodafone
- Waipareira Trust
- Wilberforce Foundation

Also to the many individuals who gave generously to our COVID response.

Join us on the journey

Following the COVID-19 lockdown, the hardships surrounding many whānau are greater than ever. You can be a part of the VisionWest journey as we work together to build hope and transform lives within our community.

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Direct credit to the VisionWest Fundraising Account: 12-3252-0048346-52
In reference fields, please include your name and preferred area of funding.

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Online at our website, www.visionwest.org.nz

Let's Build Hope Together

We invite you to join us in the life-transformation of the vulnerable in our communities by becoming a Hope Builder.

As a Hope Builder, you have the power to help whānau live transformed lives. Through regular news updates, you will hear stories, and receive statistics and videos showing the life-transformation that you have made possible by joining us as we Build Hope Together.

To find out more about being a Hope Builder, use the QR code or visit <https://www.visionwest.org.nz/buildhope>



Donor Information

- For more information about donorship, please email partnerships@visionwest.org.nz or phone 09 818 0700.
- All monetary donations to VisionWest are eligible for the charitable donation tax rebate.
- VisionWest Community Trust financials for 2019/2020 are available on the Charities Service website from December 2020.

Building Hope Together – 30 Years of VisionWest

Be inspired and encouraged by the story of VisionWest Community Trust's journey from being a drop-in centre at the Glen Eden Railway Station, to a multi-service trust with branches throughout New Zealand.

For details of how you can purchase your copy of Building Hope Together – 30 Years of VisionWest Community Trust, email partnerships@visionwest.org.nz or purchase online at 30years.visionwest.org.nz





*Ko te hoa tino pono rawa, ko tērā e toro
atu ai tōna ringa ki tōu, engari ka titi
kaha ki tōu manawa te kōhengihengi.
A true friend is someone who reaches for
your hand but touches your heart.*

