



Annual Report

2020 - 2021

LIFEWISE



Welcome

to this Annual Report by Lifewise. Many of you reading this probably already know about Lifewise and our place in the Methodist family. We are one of the Three Trusts, part of the broader Methodist Alliance, together with Airedale Property Trust and Methodist Mission Northern.

Annual Reports like these are an excellent opportunity to share with you some amazing, life-changing stories. I have had the privilege of witnessing many of these stories first-hand; all in my first year as the Chief Executive of Lifewise. Starting a new role as a leader of such an organisation is challenging at the best of times.

But I joined in April 2020, amid the global pandemic.

There was uncertainty, fear, and unprecedented stress that many of us, particularly the young ones, had never faced before. Yet, it is only now, looking back, that I can see – and I want to show you all – how much love and care and aroha this pandemic brought to the surface.

In many ways, it reminded me of how we all need to go back to the basics. Let's remind ourselves and each other that no matter what the forces of nature bring our way, we will always look after one another. It's what we do best, isn't it?

Merge Cafe

Merge Café stayed open during all COVID lockdowns last year providing tea, coffee and food parcels to everyone in need. “It was very challenging for staff as it was completely unexpected,” says Manu - Café Manager. “We were working during this period where most of the country were in their homes. We did not know what was going to happen. COVID tests were a first-time experience for everyone.”

Today, Merge Café continues to be a hub for Aucklanders, serving healthy cheap meals along with a generous helping of belonging and community.



Merge Community

During the first COVID lockdown, Merge Community found emergency housing for 50 people from the rough sleeping community within three days. Today, many of these people have subsequently been supported by Housing First and Rapid Rehousing.

This family feared living in a tent or their car while the country was locked down. They contacted Lifewise, who found them a motel room within an hour.

“We landed on our feet,” said the father. “We would literally be freezing in a tent somewhere.”



Merge Community

The 'Street Reach' team launched last year, providing outreach and support to the rough sleeping community. The team were key supporters during the lockdowns, connecting with people and getting life-saving information out to the community.

Emergency Housing Navigation was also launched in 2020. Their focus is to get people into sustainable housing and provide wraparound support.



Housing First

Te Pou Tuatahi o Tamaki

Motel Initiative: In partnership with Airedale Property Trust (APT), two motels in the Greenlane / Epsom area were secured during Level 4. This acted as transitional housing before securing permanent housing.

Whānau Graduation: Housing First celebrated the graduation of 13 successful whānau from the programme. This meant they are now independently managing their home.

Hāpaitia: An advisory group formed to stay accountable for safely practising tikanga Māori.





Property Expansion

Airedale Property Trust is ever expanding!

There is a new build underway at our West Coast Road property in Glen Eden. This project will provide nine housing units for Lifewise youth tenants. Set to be complete next year!

Resource consent planning work for Matanikolo stage 3 social housing began. The Matanikolo Housing Development has been designed and built especially for Pasifika families who are currently living in crowded, unstable or unsuitable accommodation. Another great piece of social housing development from APT.

The new Wesley Rātā Village in Naenae was developed in partnership between Wesley Community Action, Airedale Property Trust, and the Methodist Trust Association, the principal funder.

“Nga whānau moemoea

With sadness, we acknowledge the loss of three of our whānau who passed away this year, having been housed and on their way to achieving great things, we are reminded of the fragility of the life span of our rough sleepers as it is shortened by the tenuous conditions in which they have come from.

Moe mai ra e te whanau.”-

Te Pou Tuatahi O Tamaki, Housing First



Youth Housing

Lifewise as a part of the **Manaaki Rangatahi Collective** has created a platform to remove silos between organisations in the sector and give the collective a voice at the table.

A youth employment specialist has been onboarded to assist in wrap-around services.

Responding to the growing need for mental health and AOD* support, a new youth development worker was also brought on board with the intention of offering peer support to rangatahi who are navigating their way out of alcohol and drug addiction.

The team held a voting information night for youth last year in collaboration with the **Electoral Commission**, so that young people understood the importance of their vote and the voice of rangatahi.



Family Services

Family Services adapted hugely during COVID-19.

During Level 4 Lockdown, our Family Services Team made sure all children and families had access to an electronic device. So, although visits were reduced, regular contact with whānau and Lifewise staff continued via video calls and phone calls.

The team also used Facebook groups so children could contact their whānau easily.

Parenting Education courses also adapted and have now moved online, making accessibility even easier.



Early Childhood Education



Lifewise ECEs had to close over Alert Level 4, but our resourceful and enterprising teachers managed to adapt and stay connected to tamariki as well as their whānau.

Through Facebook groups and Zoom, storytimes and learning opportunities continued regularly. Resources for learning and playtime were also distributed to children while in lockdown.

Among other milestones, our Glen Eden centre celebrated its 4th birthday! Our Mustard Seed centre in Otara achieved a positive report from the Education Review Office. And Royal Road had a major upgrade to the outdoor play area.



Health & Disability

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, the Health & Disability teams coordinated the cancellation of non-essential services for older people and supported them to receive alternative support.

Homecare Workers graduated Levels 2, 3 & 4 of the 'Certificate of Health and Wellbeing!'

We welcomed a new Health and Disability Service Manager, Ainsley Darvell.

Increased Individualised Funding clients by 70.

Collaborated with Taikura Trust on an Auckland Disability Providers Pandemic Response Working Group.



Lifewise Rotorua

Over COVID-19, Lifewise Rotorua provided 24/7 – Essential Workers, Supported Accommodation, Mental Health & AoD teams and Housing First team.

The Housing First partnership is the first Iwi led programme on an international platform. Now, 75 people in Rotorua have been housed!

Rangatahi have been recruited in the mental health space which has developed a strong workforce.





Pou Manukura

Cultural Lead

This year we welcomed our first ever Pou Manukura, Ken Kerehoma. Ken was appointed to the Three Trusts, marking a huge organisational milestone for the Three Trusts.

- Since the introduction of the new role, Te Reo Maori and tikanga courses for senior management and governance have begun
- Iwi relationships have strengthened
- Visits to all services have been carried out to discuss Te ao Maori approaches with staff and whanau
- The staff of all Three Trusts paid a visit to Orakei marae and attended a powhiri for Lifewise Chief Executive, Jo Denvir

We are moving

As 2020 drew to a close, more and more organisations explored flexible working options. There was a growing need to redesign and centralise working spaces that reflect and adapt to changing needs.

The Three Trusts* were no exception. Towards the end of 2020, we also identified the need to centralise our service offerings. This way each of the Three Trusts could support a full, wrap-around service delivery for our client base. The move would also bring our staff together to further enhance service collaboration and connection.

After all, sustainability, social connection, and wellbeing of all staff is an important consideration for the Three Trusts.



* The Three Trusts are Airedale Property, Lifewise, and Methodist Mission Northern

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