

Connect



Caption

A message from our EC

Kia ora koutou,

As Executive Chair of Methodist Mission Northern (MMN), I'm excited to share some updates as we head into the festive season. Your support means the world to us as we move forward together.

Late 2023, the Methodist Church launched a major review of our Three Trusts—MMN, Lifewise, and Airedale Property Trust (APT)—to explore better ways of working together. Over 18 months, two independent Commissioners examined our operations and have helped to shape a new direction.

The big news: The Three Trusts are now united under a single board of seven members (which I'm honoured to lead). We're also recruiting a single

connectional CEO to bring strong, connected leadership across the Three Trusts. As part of this transition, we've farewelled APT's CEO Dean Shields, Lifewise's CEO Haehaetu Barrett, and Head of Mission Shirley Rivers. Their contributions have been invaluable.

During this transition, my focus has been implementing the Commissioners' recommendations, addressing challenges, and building a strong foundation for the future. We're developing a strategic plan and new governance model with clear priorities:

- Unified Leadership and Governance
- Cultural Competency
- Sustainability and Innovation
- Asset Utilisation and Strategic Investment
- Impact Measurement and Advocacy

Once our new CEO joins, they'll lead Lifewise, MMN and APT into an exciting new chapter:

Most importantly, I want you to feel confident about these changes. With your ongoing support, Lifewise will grow stronger, financially resilient, and ensure your contributions make the greatest impact—now and into the future.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas!

Ngā mihi o te Kirihihmete ki a koe,

Pam Elgar, ONZM
Executive Chair, Lifewise



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“Pitch Perfect” Creating a sustainable future for Merge Café

Recently, Lifewise Merge Café partnered with AUT Business School’s department of Marketing and International Business (MIB) for a truly transformative collaboration. Thanks to a \$4,500 teaching grant secured by AUT academics Dr Cordelia Stewart and Andi Zorn, we welcomed MIB students into our café on Karangahape Road to help us tackle real-world challenges and identify fresh avenues for growth and impact.

Throughout the term, the students immersed themselves in our world, working in teams to analyse Merge Café and develop compelling solutions to some of our key pain points, notably financial sustainability. The digital marketing teams focused on attracting a more diverse customer base, nurturing and enhancing supplier relationships, and boosting our online presence. Meanwhile, social entrepreneurship students carried out independent research to better understand our social aims, business model, ecosystem, and key stakeholders.

We were thrilled to see the students’ creativity and innovation shine. With \$1,500 in grants available for the top three teams, the competition was fierce. Of the 46 teams that participated, twelve were selected for our final ‘Pitch Day’. It was an inspiring event, with each team presenting their ideas and strategies to a panel made up of our senior leaders and a key funder, SkyCity Community Trust.

The variety and quality of ideas were impressive. Some teams proposed new revenue streams, such as coffee carts, catering service expansion, and barista workshops. Others embraced our mission of ‘merging communities’ by suggesting ways to strengthen relationships with different groups—creating mural collaborations along Karangahape Road, cultural crossovers with migrant communities, and hosting live music nights to bring even more vibrancy into the space.

Judges evaluated the teams based on feasibility, alignment with Merge Café and Lifewise kaupapa, creativity, innovation, and impact. After much deliberation, the winning solutions came from ‘The Drip



The winning Digital Marketing team - “The Drip Squad” with Dr Cordelia Stewart on the left



The winning Social Entrepreneurship team - “Group One” with Andi Zorn on the left

Squad’ (digital marketing) and ‘Group One’ (social entrepreneurship), with two runners-up—‘The Legends’ and ‘Group Four’. In addition to funding, the top teams will receive mentoring to help implement their ideas directly into Merge Café’s operations.

We left the event with a renewed sense of energy and purpose, deeply inspired by the students’ passion and commitment. Their fresh perspectives and dedication

went beyond academic exercise; their ideas have the potential to create tangible, positive change for our café and the wider community.

Implementation of these ideas has commenced. We are delighted to be involved with this collaboration and look forward to the impact these projects will have at Merge Café and looking to potentially extend the collaboration in years to come.

Fundraising Updates

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of our community—it truly makes all the difference. Thanks to your kindness and commitment, we have kicked off the first half of the year on a high note, raising an incredible \$203,000+ for the Big Sleepout and an additional \$5,300 from the Christmas Auction. We are super grateful to the 31 organisations who donated 62 gifts for our Auction.

- Air New Zealand
- ANZ Bank
- ASB Bank
- Auckland Street Choir
- Bunnings Grey Lynn
- Butterfly Creek
- Coco Republic
- Corporate Traveller
- Federation
- Good Yarns
- Hilton Lake Taupo
- Maxwell Williams
- Melanie Roger Gallery
- MOTAT
- New World Long Bay
- New World Newmarket
- OfficeMax
- One NZ
- Pak'n Save Mt Albert
- Parnell Gallery
- PB Tech
- Redwoods Treewalk
- Ruckus Networks
- SEA LIFE Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium
- Silver Ferns
- Snow Planet
- Te Rourou, One Aotearoa Foundation
- Tourism Holdings Limited
- ToyWorld Henderson
- Wētā Workshop
- Woolworths

Your contributions are fuelling real change, and we are thrilled by the progress we're making together.

As we look ahead, we remain excited about what's next. We're continuing to seek donations through our Christmas Campaign to support the employment of a dedicated community social worker—

an essential role in expanding our impact and reaching even more people in need. Every gift, no matter the size, is greatly appreciated and brings us closer to our shared vision. Visit christmas.lifewise.org.nz to make a donation. Thank you once again for standing with us and believing in the work we do.

Devlin's ongoing Journey to Permanent Housing

Devlin's story isn't about a stumble but about a long, hard climb toward the stability he once believed was out of reach. His life has been a test of endurance, chronic wrestling with the choices that once chained him to a wheel he couldn't stop turning.



Devlin reaping the rewards of his hard work and commitment

The programme didn't pretend his history would vanish, instead it offered tools, rituals of daily routine, coping strategies for cravings, and community that understood the pull of old habits while choosing not to be bound by them.

housing search stayed on track. The Social Worker supported Devlin on the ground with his tenancy readiness and linking him with other agencies such as Visions, Linkpeople, and Te Pōkapu all known for supporting people on the path to permanent housing. Alongside these connections, Devlin also began exploring Kainga Ora, and Te Whare Koromatua Ki Te Arawa O Ngāti Whakaue submitting applications and learning what it would take to secure a long-term home.

What keeps Devlin moving forward is not a dramatic breakthrough but a string of small unwavering commitments, staying sober, showing up on time for appointments with the support of the Lifewise team, honouring agreements, and seeking help when the weight grows heavy. He knows permanent housing is not just about bricks and mortar; it's about stability that can cradle a life rebuilt from the inside out. With the Lifewise Team at his side he believes the housing he works toward will be more than shelter; it will be a foundation for the next chapter of his life, one where sobriety remains the anchor and hope, the compass.

Addiction, imprisonment, and the ripple effects of years spent in a cycle of confinement and relapses had painted a lid over his future. Yet in prison he learned something stubborn and hopeful, the possibility of a different life begins with one honest choice in the here and now.

When Devlin entered Te Whare Oranga Ngako Rehabilitation, the air inside his lungs felt lighter than the weight of the past. The days moved with careful discipline, group sessions, one-on-one counselling, and the stubborn work of learning to be still with himself. The programme didn't pretend his history would vanish, instead it offered tools, rituals of daily routine, coping strategies for cravings, and community that understood the pull of old habits while choosing not to be bound by them. Three months passed,

and with every sunrise he planted a quieter refrain in his mind, sobriety is a practice, not a destination.

Emerging from rehabilitation, Lifewise welcomed Devlin into Supported Accommodation for Post Treatment. The transition was not a magic doorway but one of rules and expectations, a space designed to sustain the fragile beginning he'd earned. Here, Devlin was held to account, but met with compassion by a team of Lifewise Support Workers, led by a dedicated Team Leader, and guided by a Social Worker who specialised in housing and stability.

The Support Workers helped him navigate daily routines, and healthy living skills. The Team Leader kept the big picture in view, coordinating appointments, mentoring personal development, and ensuring the

Jahvante's Journey with Te Tūhonohono

When Jahvante first joined the Te Tūhonohono programme, she was quiet and reserved, keeping mostly to herself and her partner. The space was new, the people unfamiliar, and it was clear she was still finding her footing.

By the second session, Jahvante and her partner returned this time with their pēpi. Though a little nervous about bringing their toddler along, they were warmly welcomed by the facilitators and Youth Housing staff. That sense of acceptance made a big difference. It was a turning point.

As the weeks went by, Jahvante began to open up. She started engaging more with the other rangatahi, chatting with facilitators, and connecting with the Youth Housing team. Her confidence grew, and her presence became a valued part of the group. She brought a calm, grounded energy, and her willingness to share and connect inspired others.

During Te Tūhonohono programme she learnt waiata and explored the history behind the songs, this made her feel a strong sense of belonging and pride. These moments helped strengthen her cultural identity and added richness to her journey. A highlight of the programme for Jahvante was visiting Ōrākei Marae. The tour around Ōrākei was a powerful experience, allowing her to connect deeply with her Māoritanga.

By the end of the six-week programme, Jahvante had become a familiar and cherished face in the Te Tūhonohono whānau. At the graduation celebration, she stood proudly with her partner and pēpi, receiving a gift pack and a Te Tūhonohono jumper, a special design created by fellow rangatahi in the service. It was more than just a hoodie; it was a symbol of her journey, her growth, and her place in the community.

After the final session, the group lingered no one in a rush to leave. They shared kai, stories, and laughter, with pēpi playing happily at the nearby playground. This Te Tūhonohono programme cohort had become more than just a group of participants; they had become a whānau.

Jahvante took a moment to chat with a Youth Housing Staff member. She and her partner shared how much they



Her confidence grew, and her presence became a valued part of the group. She brought a calm, grounded energy, and her willingness to share and connect inspired others.

Jahvante and partner celebrate their graduation with Maraea Mokaraka, Lifewise Community Housing Manager
From Left: Partner, Jahvante and Maraea.

had enjoyed being part of the Lifewise Service and the Te Tūhonohono movement. With smiles and hope for the future, they expressed their excitement for the next Te Tūhonohono kaupapa.

Lifewise Amplifies Lived Experience at Mayoral Forum

On 16 September 2025, Lifewise took centre stage at Auckland's Mayoral Forum as our senior leader and qualified clinician, Jolie Leach, presented a moving and insightful address on behalf of Lifewise and our whānau. Jolie's participation brought the voices and realities of people with lived experience of homelessness and addiction directly to those in positions of power, urging action and empathy for Auckland's most vulnerable.



Lifewise Service Manager, Merge Community bravely shares her story of lived experience

Her own experience after leaving prison, with no home or support, made clear that these struggles are rooted in systemic shortcomings—not personal failings.

Jolie's journey is one marked by personal challenges, resilience, and ultimately, transformation. Once dismissed by many in society, she now stands as a respected leader—yet she candidly acknowledges that the echoes of her past remain. Her story is not unique; it echoes the daily experiences of countless people in our community who are told, often subtly, that they do not belong or are undeserving of a second chance.

At Merge Café, the lived-experience peer support team works tirelessly to counter those damaging narratives. Meeting people on the street with aroha—offering a hot meal, a safe space, and genuine recognition—they restore mana and provide hope. For many, Merge is the first step back to housing, recovery, and connection.

However, as Jolie highlighted, compassion alone cannot fix a broken system. The ongoing housing crisis continues to drive more individuals and families onto the

streets. Every night, people are forced to shelter in cars, on benches, or in public spaces. This crisis is about more than just shelter—it is about dignity, belonging, and self-worth.

Jolie called attention to the systemic barriers that undermine the humanity of those experiencing homelessness. From the suspicion faced at social service agencies to the unsafe and unsuitable housing options often provided, the system frequently fails to recognise safe housing as a fundamental human right. Her own experience after leaving prison, with no home or support, made clear that these struggles are rooted in systemic shortcomings—not personal failings.

But amidst these challenges, Jolie's story also reveals what can change lives: being seen for one's potential, not one's past. She credits those who believed in her and looked beyond her mistakes for helping her reclaim her voice. It is this belief in people's potential

that she urges Auckland's leaders and community to adopt.

Jolie's message to the Forum was clear: leadership is crucial. Auckland's leaders must prioritise the right to decent, affordable housing and invest properly in homelessness services. Compassion, not suspicion, should guide every decision.

As Jolie powerfully stated, "Safe housing is not a privilege—it is a fundamental human right." For those accustomed to privilege, true equality may feel uncomfortable, but for those on the margins, it is the only path to dignity, belonging, and hope.

Lifewise stands with Jolie in calling for real change. The cost of inaction will always be paid by New Zealand's most vulnerable, and we believe our whānau deserve a future defined by hope and opportunity.

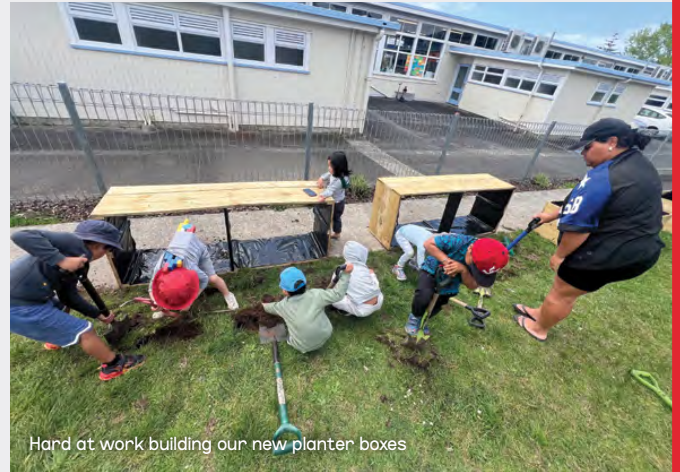
Let's continue to advocate for leadership that listens, learns, and leads with compassion—ensuring that everyone, regardless of their past or circumstances, is given the chance to belong.

Royal Road Pre-School

He Kaiako o ngā Tamariki have been working hard together to prepare our treasured outdoor areas for spring and summer.

Together in learning and teaching, we have planned, built, and constructed our new planter boxes. These are the foundations for the 'Garden to Table' project ahead. Our learning opportunity for Tamariki to be Kaitiaki of the Kai. Nurturing and caring for young plants to grow vegies and fruit to share with whānau.

Our playgrounds have been topped up with Safety Playfall to ensure all our adventures and development of ngā tinana is safe and well managed.



Hard at work building our new planter boxes



Finishing touches



A wonderful playground for learning and adventure

Let your generosity be a light for a family in their darkest hour

A gift to our Lifewise Family Services this Christmas will give a vulnerable family the support and care they desperately need.

\$55
One-time Provides a family with one hour of in-house support from a social worker

\$125
One-time Enables one parent to participate in a 6-week parenting course

\$140
One-time Enables a couple to participate in a 6-week parenting course

\$150
One-time Provides a family or parent with one hour of counselling

\$10.55
Weekly Enables four couples to participate in a 6-week parenting course

\$37.50
Weekly Enables one family to receive fortnightly counselling for six months

\$64.10
Weekly Funds the support of one family for an entire year through a dedicated social worker

\$75
Weekly Supports fortnightly counselling for one family for a year



Lessons and Inspiration from World Homeless Day Auckland

A staff member from Rotorua reflects on the Auckland event.

Attending World Homeless Day 2025 in Auckland was an incredibly meaningful and eye-opening experience for all of us. The event, held at Federal Square, brought together people from all walks of life — service providers, community organisations, volunteers, and most importantly, those with lived experience of homelessness, our “streeties.” The energy of the day was full of connection, compassion, and purpose.

“From the moment we arrived, we felt the Wairua of the place...”

People greeting one another warmly, sharing kai, stories, and laughter. It was powerful to see so many organisations standing side-by-side with the community, each offering their own support and aroha. Being there reminded us that homelessness is not just an issue to be talked about, but a lived reality for many — one that demands empathy, understanding, and collective action.

Some of the highlights from the day included engaging with the Auckland City Mission, Rapid Response Team, Whānau Ora, Orange Sky, and many others who work tirelessly to make a difference.

The City Mission team shared insights about the importance of wraparound care and permanent housing solutions, while Whānau Ora reinforced the value of supporting the whole person — their health, culture, and sense of belonging. The Rapid Response Team stood out for their passion and quick action in connecting people to the right services at the right time.

Of course, the most powerful voices came from the “streeties” themselves — those with lived experience who spoke with honesty, courage, and mana. Listening to their stories deepened our understanding of what homelessness really means — not

just the absence of housing, but the loss of connection, security, and identity. Their resilience and humour despite hardship left a lasting impression on all of us.

The communication and engagement throughout the day were genuine and uplifting.

We had meaningful kōrero with colleagues and providers, building stronger relationships and exploring how we can continue working together. It was a space where everyone — no matter their role — was valued and heard.

It was such a privilege to attend. My other colleagues from Rotorua and I each took away something personal and profound from the day. It strengthened our understanding of the cause and reminded us why our work matters. We would love to bring more of our staff next time so they too can experience what we did — the connection, the learning, and the shared sense of purpose that comes from standing alongside our community.

It was a day of learning, reflection, and hope — one that reminded us of all that homelessness is not a destiny, but a situation that can be changed when we work together with compassion and commitment.



“From the moment we arrived, we felt the Wairua of the place...”

Lifting Spirits at World Homeless Day

Our deepest gratitude goes to Hools and Che Fu for their outstanding performances at World Homeless Day. Their presence and music truly elevated the spirit of the event, filling Federal Square with joy and hope, and creating unforgettable moments for our whānau.

In lives often marked by struggle and scarcity, the happiness they brought was immeasurable. We are sincerely thankful for their generosity and commitment to supporting our community, and it is hard to imagine how we could ever surpass the magic they created on this special day.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini – my strength is not that of a single warrior, but that of many. Their contribution reminds us that it is through unity and collective action that we find true strength and resilience. Thank you, Hools and Che, for standing alongside us and making a genuine difference.



Building Stability and Community in the Supported Housing Pathway Programme

Since joining the Supported Housing Pathway Programme in August 2025, Harley has shown outstanding commitment to building a stable and positive future for himself and his whānau. Entering the programme with the goal of breaking free from housing hardship, Harley has fully engaged with every opportunity provided and demonstrated consistent personal growth across all areas of his life.

Harley has successfully completed his community service requirements and graduated from the Kai Hautu Men's Mentoring Programme, where he displayed strong leadership skills and a genuine dedication to personal development. He is also currently enrolled in a driver licensing programme with Corrections, taking proactive steps toward greater independence and employability.

Beyond his formal commitments, Harley continues to make meaningful contributions in his personal life. He actively supports his children, tends to a thriving home garden, and combines his professional skills as a qualified chef with his passion for growing and preparing fresh produce.

Harley's journey reflects resilience, responsibility, and an evolving sense of purpose. He consistently turns challenges

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Building Stability and Community in the Supported Housing Pathway Programme continued...

into opportunities and continues to move forward with motivation, optimism, and a clear vision for long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

Together with staff, Harley is now preparing to establish a larger Māra Kai (community garden) at the Supported Housing Pathway site. This initiative will enable other residents to learn about sustainable gardening, contribute to maintaining the garden, and use the produce to support their own wellbeing and independence.

It warms our hearts to see that the work we do each and every day, makes a difference.



Harley gives back by establishing Māra Kai in Rotorua



Nothing like fresh vegetables

Myers Park Cottage available for hire for Community Activities

From neighborhood gatherings and creative workshops to historic exhibitions and family programmes, Myers Park Cottage has proven to be a space where meaningful connections are fostered and local heritage celebrated.

Lifewise was honoured to help bring history to life at Myers Park Cottage as part of Auckland Council's recent Auckland Heritage Festival, which illuminated the city with stories from our collective past.

Over four special days, we welcomed Aucklanders from all walks of life to experience a slice of local history. Our event featured nostalgic screenings of the 1950 Empire Games and a captivating exhibition of Edward Bennett's book *A Centennial History of Myers Park, 1915–2015*. On Sunday, September 28, Edward himself joined us

to share deeper insights into the Cottage's rich legacy and the evolution of Myers Park.

The turnout was intimate but powerful—attendees brought with them a wealth of personal stories and connections. Some had parents

who were in the crowd during the 1950 Games; others remembered the Cottage as a rental home in decades past. A few of our own whānau joined in, offering thoughtful reflections on the current Commonwealth Games and how far we've come.

The atmosphere was warm, reflective, and full of meaningful exchanges. It was a beautiful reminder that heritage isn't just about buildings and dates—it's about people, memories, and the threads that tie us together.

We encourage all community organisations to consider Myers Park Cottage for your



Author Edward Bennett sharing the history of Myers Park with Aucklanders

next one-off our regular meetings, events, or programmes. Whether you're planning a board meeting, an art show, a class, or a social gathering, the Cottage offers an inviting and memorable setting. With its rich legacy and central location, it's an ideal venue to bring people together and make lasting memories.

Don't miss the opportunity to be part of the ongoing story of Myers Park Cottage. To enquire about availability or book the space at a nominal cost, reach out today MyersParkCottage@lifewise.org.nz—and let's keep the Cottage humming with life and community spirit!

Karangahape Rd neighbours unite to support those in need this Christmas

This Christmas, Melanie Roger Gallery is doing things a little differently—and with a lot of heart. As part of their Summer group exhibition, the gallery is teaming up with Lifewise and Merge Café to support those experiencing hardship in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Located just across the road from Merge Café on Karangahape Rd, Melanie Roger Gallery has witnessed firsthand the invaluable work we are doing for the community. The need for support is greater than ever: throughout 2025, Auckland has seen a significant increase in the number of people facing homelessness. In September 2024, 426 people were recorded sleeping rough. By January 2025, that number rose to 653, and by September 2025, outreach providers are supporting over 900 unsheltered individuals—a staggering 111% increase in one year.

To help address this growing need, Melanie Roger Gallery is transforming its window gallery space into a collection point for donations this December. Tāmaki Makaurau based artist Matt Ellwood's artwork "Madonna and Child" (2013) will preside over what the gallery hopes will become a generous pile of food and essential items for Lifewise to distribute—whether to people currently living rough or to those who have recently found housing and are rebuilding their lives. The collection point will remain open until the gallery closes for the year on Saturday 20 December, when all donations will be delivered directly to Lifewise.

This initiative coincides with Melanie Roger Gallery's ever-changing group exhibition, giving visitors extra incentive to stop by, enjoy the art, and support a worthy cause. The exhibition features new and earlier works by artists such as Roberta Thornley, James R. Ford, Kirstin Carlin, Stanley Palmer, Darryn George, Matt Ellwood, Gavin Hurley, Martin Poppelwell and many more.

Thank you Melanie for your amazing support, and please do check out Melanie's Gallery, the exhibition and support the food drive.

www.melanierogergallery.com



Gallery owner, Melanie Roger welcomes all



Yes! I want to help Lifewise support New Zealand's most vulnerable people

Scan the QR Code to donate now or complete the form, scan and email thankyou@lifewise.org.nz or return by freepost no.: 251632



I wish to donate \$

- I would like to make this a monthly gift
 Please contact me about leaving a Gift in my Will

Payment methods

- Credit card

Card number CVC

Expiry Date / Name on Card

Signature:

- Directly into Lifewise bank account

Lifewise bank account - BNZ: **02 0800 0700 902 00**

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