



Western Bay of Plenty  
Primary Health Organisation

TŪNGIA TE URURUA KIA TUPU  
WHAKARITORITO TE TUPU  
O TE HARAKEKE

# Te Rerenga

NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2025

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## Empowering primary care heroes



### WBOP HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUND

- PG Study
- Additional Training
- Mentoring
- Support

Apply Now!



SCAN ME



Applications for Round Two of the WBOP Workforce Development Fund are open till the 10th of March 2025. This funding supports kaimahi in the primary and community healthcare sectors who are seeking further education, skills development, or additional support to advance their careers.

#### How the fund can help

Support from the WBOP Health Workforce Development Fund is available for a wide range of opportunities:

**Postgraduate Study:** Financial assistance for health-related postgraduate courses to enhance expertise and skill sets.

**Additional Training:** Funding for vocational training courses in health, enabling professionals to develop their qualifications.

**Mentoring:** Support for mentoring relationships that contribute to leadership development and career progression.

**Awahi and Support:** Assistance with leadership development, sustainability, and ongoing career growth within healthcare roles.

#### Eligibility criteria

To apply, applicants must:

- ▲ Be employed within the primary or community healthcare sectors.
- ▲ Be a New Zealand citizen or resident.
- ▲ Meet the entry criteria set by the training provider for their chosen course or programme.
- ▲ Preference will be given to those working in allied health roles integrated into primary and community care.

#### How to apply

You can apply online through the Workforce Development Fund page (scan the QR code above). Not a fan of filling out online forms? No problem! You can apply with a quick video instead. Just record yourself following the guidelines you will find in the same page.

#### Supporting primary care

The WBOP Health Workforce Development Fund is part of Te Whatu Ora's initiative to empower local healthcare providers through workforce development. This funding aligns with the interim New Zealand Health Plan (Te Pae Tata), which aims to strengthen the primary and community health workforce.

In the Western Bay of Plenty, the WBOP PHO manages the funding for primary and community care settings. A similar initiative for Hauora Māori providers is led by the Poutiri Wellness Centre. If you work for a hauora, contact [hauoraworkforce@poutiri.org](mailto:hauoraworkforce@poutiri.org) for details.

## Looking ahead

A third round of the WBOP Health Workforce Development Fund is planned for later this year.

## Supporting you, supporting equity

Our Workforce Development Fund is here to help create a more diverse and capable health workforce, supporting Te Whatu Ora's goals to increase representation of kaimahi

Māori and other priority populations. By strengthening equity and access to primary health care, we can better meet the needs of our communities.

If you're considering applying, we're here to support you every step of the way. Whether you need guidance,

encouragement, reassurance or just a bit more information, our team is ready to help. Reach out to us through [workforce@wboppho.org.nz](mailto:workforce@wboppho.org.nz) – we'd love to hear from you!

**Sēnae Mitchell**

– WBOP PHO Equity Programme Lead.

# WBOP PHO strengthens leadership representation within GPNZ rōpū

We are proud to share that WBOP PHO kaimahi have been appointed to key leadership roles within General Practice New Zealand (GPNZ) member rōpū.



— Kiri Peita and Michaela Kamo.

Kiri Peita, WBOP PHO General Manager Māori, Population Health & Equity, and Michaela Kamo, Pegasus Health Director Māori Health and former Equity Programme Lead at the WBOP PHO, have been appointed as the new Co-chairs of Ngā Matapihi o te Wairua rōpū. Meanwhile, Dr Claire Isham, WBOP PHO Clinical Director, has been appointed the Chair of the recently established PHO Clinical Leaders rōpū.

## Ngā Matapihi o te Wairua rōpū

Ngā Matapihi o te Wairua rōpū is a Māori Leadership group comprised of primary care leaders who work within their communities to address equity challenges, particularly for Māori, where significant and systemic inequities persist.

The rōpū membership includes Māori health leads from Primary Health Organisations (PHOs), Māori health leads, including those who work specifically in Māori health directorates, as well as Māori staff in senior positions across PHOs. The team is dedicated to ensuring that GPNZ upholds the mana and intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the principles of partnership, options, tino rangatiratanga (self-determination, sovereignty and autonomy), equity (mana taurite), and active protection.

“I am honoured to co-chair Ngā Matapihi o te Wairua alongside Michaela. Having worked together before, I’m excited to combine our strengths in this role. Together, we will focus on embedding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, creating strong pathways for tino rangatiratanga and equity, and ensuring our whānau and communities are supported with mana and respect,” said Kiri.

Michaela added, “Co-chairing this incredible rōpū with Kiri is both a privilege and an honour. Having worked with her previously, I deeply admire her passion and leadership, making this opportunity even more special. Ngā Matapihi o te Wairua unites knowledge and commitment to equity, and I am excited to work alongside Kiri again to build on the rōpū’s mahi and amplify the voice of our people to drive meaningful change.”

Both Kiri and Michaela bring extensive experience, strong connections, and a deep commitment to improving hauora for Māori. Their leadership is guided by the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi – ensuring Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti thrive in partnership.

*He waka eke noa –  
we’re all in this together.*

## PHO Clinical Leaders rōpū

The PHO Clinical Leaders rōpū was established in late 2024 with the specific aim of bringing together PHO Clinical Leads. All PHOs – not limited to GPNZ members – have been invited to participate. This rōpū will provide a platform for clinical leadership within PHOs to share knowledge, collectively solve problems, drive innovation and offer a clinical voice for GPNZ advocacy.

Following a nomination and election process, Dr Claire Isham was appointed chair of the rōpū.



In response to her successful nomination, Claire commented, “The new PHO Clinical Leaders rōpū has a vital role to play in guiding GPNZ to achieve its goals of supporting primary care networks in improving healthcare outcomes for the communities they serve. Our collective experience and voice as clinicians can significantly impact all levels of our healthcare system.”

In addition to being the new chair of the PHO Clinical Leads rōpū, Claire Isham is a GP at Ngāti Kahu Hauora and has also been part of the broader Primary Care Clinical Leaders Forum for over five years.

*Nāku te rourou nāu te rourou ka  
ora ai te iwi – With your basket and my  
basket the people will thrive.*

## Scan QR Code to Learn More

GPNZ is a membership organisation with 25 of the 30 PHOs across Aotearoa. They provide a national voice on behalf of primary care, advocating for the well-being of New Zealanders.





# A step towards cultural connection

## Bethlehem Medical Centre launches bilingual website in English and Te Reo Māori.

Bethlehem Medical Centre has taken an exciting step forward by launching a bilingual website in English and Te Reo Māori, accessible at [www.bethdocs.co.nz](http://www.bethdocs.co.nz). This initiative reflects the practice's commitment to better connecting with its community and supporting the normalisation of Te Reo Māori in everyday healthcare settings.

The use of Te Reo Māori in healthcare is more than just words on a screen – it's about fostering a sense of connection. Language and culture are deeply linked, and this connection is closely tied to overall well-being. By integrating Te Reo Māori into their website, Bethlehem Medical Centre aims to honour and embrace Aotearoa's cultural identity.

The suggestion to make the website bilingual came from Dr Andy Torbet, inspired by a multilingual website he had encountered elsewhere. His idea came at

just the right time, as the medical centre was already working with a web developer to redesign its website – creating the perfect opportunity to incorporate Te Reo Māori.

Trevor Deane, the practice manager, explained, "With over a thousand of our enrolled population identifying as Māori, it just seemed like an obvious choice to include this feature." He added, "Like all other practices, we work hard to be culturally inclusive, and this was seen as a meaningful opportunity to strengthen that connection with our Māori patients."

*"We hope the result is a practical, user-friendly platform that aligns with our goal of providing accessible healthcare for everyone,"*

– Trevor Deane.



### A simple yet meaningful change

From a technological perspective, the practice was able to implement a parallel version of the website entirely in Te Reo Māori, easily accessible via the language selector icon on the homepage. "We hope the result is a practical, user-friendly platform that aligns with our goal of providing accessible healthcare for everyone," said Deane.

The practice manager also emphasised that there wasn't a lot of big mahi behind this project "Once the idea was identified and the technological solution found, we simply included it as part of the project and moved forward. In many ways it was quite easy and inexpensive – which, of course, made it a 'no-brainer' in terms of doing it".

# Celebrating a year of growth and innovation

The WBOP PHO has released its Annual Report for 2023-2024, reflecting a year characterised by significant achievements, resilience, and collaboration within the community. This report highlights the organisation's milestones and the impactful initiatives that have been implemented. Alongside this report is the Annual Financial Report, set to be released by the end of February.

This year marked a momentous occasion as WBOP PHO celebrated 20 years of a joint venture partnership between local iwi Ngāti Ranginui and Ngāi Te Rangi, and Providers Inc. The report also highlights the successful implementation of Practice Plus, which enhances after-hours care, and the

introduction of innovative tools such as the Diabetes Dashboard, reaffirming the organisation's commitment to improving primary healthcare services.

The report showcases the equity-focused initiatives driving real change in the WBOP. One example, Tāpiri Mai Distance Healthcare, is making strides in providing equitable access to healthcare in rural and remote areas, including Matakana and Mōtītī Islands. Another, the Hāpainga Stop Smoking Service, celebrates their 'Freedom from Smoking: Voices of Change' video series, which provides a powerful tool to engage new quitters who get to hear from those who have been successful in their journey.

Lindsey Webber, CEO of WBOP PHO, expressed her enthusiasm about the organisation's achievements, stating, "This report is a testament to our unwavering dedication to creating a healthier community. Our collaborative efforts with iwi and partners have been instrumental in driving positive change and fostering equity in healthcare."

## Read Now

Scan the QR code below to access the WBOP PHO Annual Report 2023-2024.



# The gift of volunteering

## Volunteering Leave boosts WBOP PHO connection with community.

On the 1st of October 2024, Volunteer Leave was added to the benefits package for all staff at the WBOP PHO, allowing for one volunteer day per year, within an employment start date cycle.

For those who already volunteer, this meant they kept the annual leave day they would otherwise use for volunteering, while for others, it offered the chance to sign up for a volunteering role opportunity they had been considering.

As noted by the University of Auckland, volunteering not only helps those on the receiving end but also offers significant advantages to those giving their time. Giving is a basic human need and behaviour, and it is known to counteract the effects of stress and anxiety, as well as increase self-confidence.

So how have some of our kaimahi been using their volunteer days?



For Matthew, the Whakarewarewa Forest holds a special place in his heart. "I've been riding there for as long as I can remember, even before I moved to Rotorua. It's like a second home to me. Volunteering gave me a chance to give something back to a place that's brought me so much joy over the years."

Matthew spent his day learning the ropes of trail maintenance. "Any time in the forest feels like a break from the world, but this was something special. I'm already looking forward to working on my adopted trail with a few others soon."

## From Rider to Trail Keeper

Matthew, Davis, Population Health Data Specialist, an avid cyclist both on and off the road, chose to spend his volunteer day with the Rotorua Trails Trust, a charity dedicated to maintaining and building recreation trails in the Whakarewarewa Forest. With over 330 kilometres of trails for walking, mountain biking, and equestrian use, the trust's work ensures this iconic space remains accessible and enjoyable.

"I've been a regular donor to the trust for years, but I'd never taken the step to volunteer," Matthew shared. "One of my riding friends recently became a trail adopter and encouraged me to do the same. When volunteer leave was announced, it felt like the perfect time to get involved."

## Annual Volunteer Tradition

Every year, in the lead-up to Christmas, Elena Affleck, Health Coach at Dee Street Medical Centre, volunteers for two days at the Gift of Groceries event, organised through Curate Church in Mount Maunganui.

Due to the size of the event, it relies heavily on sponsors and volunteers to make it happen. Elena, who has volunteered since the event's inception 10 years ago, said, "I usually take two days annual leave to volunteer for the event, but this year, I was able to use my volunteer day and save an annual leave day."

"After I mentioned the event at a Staff Hui, kaimahi asked to join me, and so I had a great group of people come along. Karine, Waimaria, Emma, Dee and

Christina joined from the PHO alongside four of my whaiora from Dee Street Medical Centre – two of which are on their second year of volunteering."

"This year, we were able to gift 1,200 bags through 31 charities, with the help of sponsors and volunteers." The grocery gift bags are a result of various efforts. Individuals and organisations donate food directly – Mount Maunganui New World being the biggest sponsor – while others sponsor the bags. Money is also gifted throughout the year, which is then set aside to make purchases at Mount New World in the lead-up to the event, which offers discounts for items purchased for this cause.

"I find it a huge privilege to be part of the event and the community working toward a common good that benefits our extended whānau at Christmas time. I feel like it's an extension of my mahi as a Health Coach. It also reminds me to take a pause, be thankful for all the things I have, my family, food, a home. It makes me focus on the best thing about Christmas – giving to others and sharing time with loved ones."

Volunteers sort the items into bags with an approximate value of \$40. In 2024, these were gifted through local groups, such as, the Mount RSA, Employ NZ, Plunket, Kai Aroha, Ngāi Te Rangi iwi, Arataki School, Merivale Community Centre and Tauranga Hospital.

*"This year, we were able to gift 1,200 bags through 31 charities, with the help of sponsors and volunteers."*

– Elena Affleck.





# Mauao-a-thon: moving for a cause

A Mauao-a-thon was organised by Hemi Rolleston for his nephew, Mikaere Sydney, to support the Tauranga councillor's long road to recovery after he fell seriously ill from a rare form of encephalitis.

Sydney, a Kaiako of the WBOP PHO's He Pounamu Te Reo Māori classes and Tauranga's first Māori ward councillor, spent many months in Waikato Hospital, before being transferred to Tauranga Hospital in November 2024, to begin an intensive rehabilitation process.

Mikaere is well known in the community through kapa haka and Netball. He is a board member for Tauranga Netball Centre, a Netball coach, and has been a judge for kapa haka competitions.

The 12-hour Mauao-a-thon, which took place on the 14th of December alongside a beautifully sunny day, started with an opening karakia at 5:30am at the summit of Mauao, and ended with a 5:30pm karakia to close the day. The aim was for climbers to

raise money through sponsorship for their climbs, with additional donations being made directly to the Givealittle page. Organiser Hemi believed that at least 100 people participated in the event.

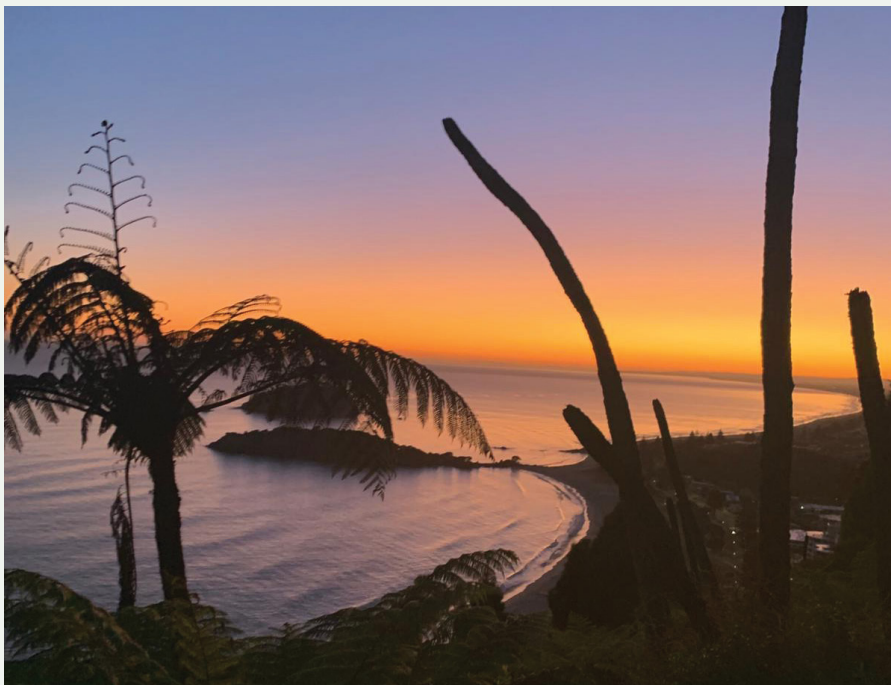
Mauao is a 232m climb, with many participants achieving personal bests during the walk. WBOP PHO GM Māori, Population Health and Equity, Kiri Peita said, "I walk up Mauao regularly, and today, I achieved a personal best of two climbs consecutively, with three in total for the day." Some participants managed up to 12 climbs over the 12 hours.

Tiana Bennett, WBOP PHO Health Promotions Coordinator, who was at the basecamp to support climbers with food and water alongside waiata, said "There was such a great vibe throughout the

day. Climbers talked about the high-fives they received from other participants while walking up and down Mauao".

On the eve of the Mauao-a-thon, vandals had attacked the pounamu touchstone on the top of the Atea-ā-Rangi star compass at the summit. Rolleston, when speaking to SunLive, noted that "The maunga has been uplifted, our spirits have been uplifted, our well-being has been uplifted and Mikaere and his whānau have been uplifted."

Upon closing, the Givealittle page for Mikaere Sydney had reached a total of \$39,000, donated by 394 generous donors over seven weeks, with numerous messages of support for strength and recovery. Funds raised would go to support Mikaere and his whānau through his rehabilitation.



*"There was such a great vibe throughout the day. Climbers talked about the high-fives they received from other participants while walking up and down Mauao".*

— Tiana Bennett, WBOP PHO Health Promotions Coordinator.



# WBOP PHO joins the Tauranga Sikh Parade



The streets of Tauranga came alive on Sunday, the 12th of January 2025, for the annual Nagar Kirtan – the Sikh Parade – celebrating the birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th Master. This year marked a special milestone as WBOP PHO joined the festivities alongside Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, Hato Hone St John and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Ranginui iwi, making health organisations part of the celebration for the first time.

Blessed with a sunny day, the event was filled with colourful floats, traditional costumes, and the lively energy of tamariki playing, laughing, and engaging with the community. Hundreds of participants from across the region joined the celebration, which reflected the rich cultural heritage of the Sikh community and the spirit of inclusivity.



For WBOP PHO, the parade was more than just a celebration – it was an opportunity to connect with the community and listen to their voices. Health Coach Taran Kaur, who attended the event, shared:

“The parade was a fantastic opportunity to engage with families. We set up a station with card games, toys, and bubbles, which naturally drew children to us. This gave us the chance to talk with parents about their experiences with the New Zealand healthcare system, the services we offer, and ways we can better support ethnic communities. It was a beautiful day filled with valuable insights and genuine conversations.”

WBOP PHO’s involvement in the parade also aligns with its ongoing work through the **Ethnic Health Project**, a collaborative initiative aimed at understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by ethnic communities in accessing primary healthcare. Laura Penny, Project Manager and one of WBOP PHO’s leads in the project, highlighted the significance of these efforts:

“Participating in events like the Sikh Parade allows us to deepen our connection with ethnic communities and listen to their needs firsthand. Through the Ethnic Health Project, we are committed to amplifying these voices and working collaboratively to improve health outcomes for our diverse communities across Tauranga.”

## Community Connections in Katikati

WBOP PHO kaimahi attended the Katikati Community Centre and Katikati Lions whānau picnic at Uretara Domain in Katikati on the 16th of December 2024. This event was part of a series of picnics held throughout November and December, aimed at bringing the community together for connection.

WBOP PHO Health Promotion Coordinator, Tiana Bennett, was present to share educational insights on healthy eating. She set up a display that highlighted the amount of sugar and fat in everyday foods.

Tiana awarded a prize of healthy goodies to young Jade, who actively participated in her discussion about the sugar content in fizzy drinks. “It was really great to see such high engagement from everyone regarding the sugar in store-bought drinks. So many people were shocked to learn just how much is actually in there!” said Tiana.

### Upcoming Events

#### February

22

Te Matatini - Kapa Haka Aotearoa Festival

28

Rare Diseases Day

#### March

1 - 31

SunSmart Month  
Hearing Awareness Month  
Kidney Health Month  
Endometriosis Awareness Month

4

HPV Awareness Day

10 - 16

Brain Awareness Week

14

World Sleep Day

15

International Long Covid Awareness Day

21 - 25

World Immunisation Week

24

World Tuberculosis Day

#### April

2

World Autism Awareness Day

6 - 13

Dietitians Week

7

World Health Day

There are too many events to list, so this list is not comprehensive.



## Kiri's Kōrero

*This week, we had the privilege of welcoming new members into our whare (office/home).*

Through a whakatau (traditional Māori welcome), we invited them to become part of our whānau (team/family). While our bond isn't through shared whakapapa (ancestry), a shared purpose and values connect us.

Reflecting on my Christmas break, I was reminded of how special whānau truly are. I spent some wonderful time in Adelaide with our eldest son, Whanauhou. His name, which means "newborn" or "firstborn," carries deep meaning. It honours his grandfather, who passed just three weeks before his birth, weaving our connection to whakapapa even more tightly.

On Christmas night, we joined his Greek in-laws, whose aroha and manaaki (kindness, hospitality) were heartwarming. The abundance of yummy kai (food), kōrero (conversations), and laughter made us feel truly at home. It reminded me that whānau extends beyond blood—it's about mutual care for loved ones, feeling a sense of belonging and creating cherished memories.

Our moko (grandchild), Saoirse Anahera Peita, was able to spend time with her

Irish grandad, Seamus who visited Aotearoa for the first time. Walking together around Mauao, watching Matapihi Community Whānau Touch Rugby, enjoying Mitai Māori Village in Rotorua, visiting Hobbiton are some of the special moments shared that reaffirmed that whānau is about nurturing connections, and embracing the love that transcends borders.

As we look ahead to 2025, I want to share an Irish blessing:

"May love and laughter light your days, and warm your heart and home.

May good and faithful friends be yours, wherever you may roam.

May peace and plenty bless your world, with joy that long endures.

May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours!"

*Ngā mihi o te tau hou!*

**Kiri Peita** – GM: Māori, Population Health & Equity.

## New faces in the whare



– **Harriet Ferguson**  
Physiotherapist

"When I was born my mum wanted to call me Lily and my dad wanted to call me Alice, it was later decided that I would be Harriet."



– **Janie de Malmanche**  
Health Improvement Practitioner

"I don't want to jinx it - but no matter how hard I try I can't lose my phone or my keys. They always come back to me!"



– **Victoria Diano**  
Executive Assistant

"I once won a trip to New York. And guess what? My grandma won an apartment! So, who knows... maybe the lotto is next! Fingers crossed!"



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Free mental  
health support



Urgent care  
and after hours



Free services to  
quit smoking



Free health  
coaching



Free lifestyle  
changes support



Free diabetes  
support



Health resources  
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