



WBOP PHO launches Bridging the Gap outreach pilot in Tauranga	4
Gender-affirming care programme to roll out	5
Future doctors to train in the Western Bay of Plenty	5

Te Rerenga

NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2026

Minister visits BeingWell as service grows reach and impact



– Mental Health Minister Hon Matt Doocey meets with WBOP PHO frontline kaimahi, service leaders and GPs during his visit to Tauranga.

Hon Matt Doocey met with WBOP PHO on 3 June to hear how a locally coordinated approach is transforming access to primary mental health support in the Bay of Plenty.

During a visit to Tauranga on 3 June, Mental Health Minister and Associate Minister of Health Hon Matt Doocey met with frontline teams and service leaders to learn more about BeingWell, the Bay of Plenty's primary mental health and addictions support. Coordinated by WBOP PHO, the programme has seen strong growth in recent years, following a focused improvement plan to increase awareness, access and engagement.

In a packed one-hour session, the Minister heard directly from service leaders, GPs, Health Improvement Practitioners (HIP) and Health Coaches

about the reach and impact of BeingWell across the rohe. "Since 2023, unique service users have increased by almost 40%, while visits have grown by 80%. That tells us people are not only accessing the service. They continue to engage for ongoing support. They value what we do," said Sarah Stevenson, Chief Executive of WBOP PHO.

The growth was the result of deliberate changes made across the service. "Three years ago, we looked at the service and knew we could do better. We listened to people who had used the service, strengthened our connections with general practice, community providers and secondary care, invested in our workforce and worked hard to raise awareness of the support available across the community," explained Stevenson.

The impact of the mahi was brought to life through stories shared by frontline teams.

One example involved a man at risk of losing his home due to anxiety, alcohol misuse and complex health needs. A HIP and Health Coach worked alongside the general practice team to coordinate practical and clinical support, helping him stay in his home, improve his health and return to work.

Reflecting on what he had heard throughout the visit, Doocey said: "This is probably one of the most impressive visits I've done as a Mental Health Minister in the last three years. What you've got here is a culture. A culture of being accountable, holding yourselves to a high standard and doing what's right, not only for the people you serve and for your organisation, but also for the taxpayer who is funding it. Making sure you're truly delivering."

Continued on pages - 2 & 3

One in 25 people accessed support

During his visit, Mental Health Minister Hon Matt Doocey saw the scale of BeingWell's impact across the Bay of Plenty. The figures tell a story of growing reach, while personal experiences show what that means for the community.

In 2025, more than 8,800 people accessed BeingWell support through their general practice, resulting in nearly 29,000 interactions with HIPs and Health Coaches. By mid-May 2026, 3,400 people had already used the service, with almost 11,500 interactions.

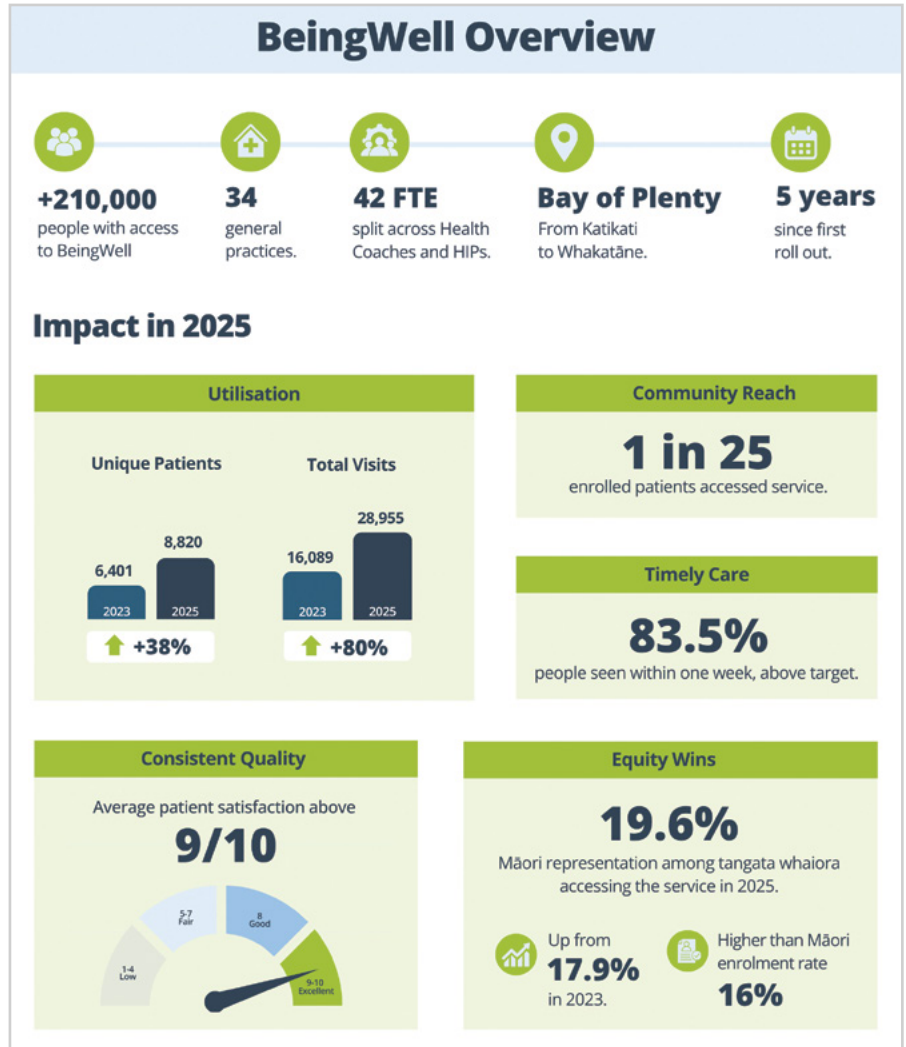
Sarah Stevenson, Chief Executive of WBOP PHO, said the service's reach becomes easier to understand when viewed against the enrolled population of around 210,000 people. "If there were 25 people in this room from our enrolled population, one of them would have used BeingWell in the past year. That's a pretty significant impact."

Behind the figures

For the people behind these numbers, the impact can be life changing. HIP Charmaine McGillan shared the story of a man living with the impacts of childhood trauma, PTSD symptoms, chronic pain and heavy alcohol use. Working alongside his GP and wider health care team, she helped him address the factors contributing to his distress through tailored, trauma-informed support.

Over time, he significantly reduced his alcohol use, improved his sleep and emotional wellbeing, rebuilt family relationships and returned to activities he once enjoyed. His whānau reported he was calmer and less reactive. Reflecting on his journey, he said: "The support has been massive in my recovery."

McGillan said stories like this are a reminder of why the role exists. "With this role, I feel I've made more of a difference than my whole 25 years in mental health."



FROM OUR COMMUNITY

From burnout to new heights

A woman in her 40s was referred to BeingWell while experiencing anxiety, depression, stress and burnout. Following support from the Health Improvement Practitioner (HIP), a Health Coach worked alongside her to explore small, sustainable changes around nutrition, exercise and healthy routines. She led the journey, setting goals that worked for her.

Today, she is thriving, having lost more than 20kg within a year and attending

the gym five times a week. Once believing that reaching the halfway point would be enough, she successfully climbed to the summit of Mauao. Reflecting on her journey, she said:

"I honestly do not know where I would be today without this support."



Minister visits BeingWell as service grows reach and impact – continued

A transformative model for patients and practices

One of the strengths of BeingWell is that support is available as part of everyday general practice care. More than 80% of patients are seen within one week, with many receiving support on the same day. Rather than referring patients elsewhere and hoping they engage, doctors can connect people directly with a HIP or Health Coach.

For patients, that can mean getting help sooner and staying connected to

the care team they already know and trust. Reflecting on the changes she has seen since BeingWell was introduced, Dr Matilda Lawrence said the service had transformed the options available to general practice.

"Now we can say, 'We have this amazing person next door. You can speak to them today or I can get them to give you a call tomorrow.' They help people navigate what's going on in their lives and connect them with the right support. The warm handover is an absolute treasure, and the follow-up means people don't have to manage everything on their own."



– Mental Health Minister Hon Matt Doocey listens during a discussion with frontline teams and service leaders about the growth and impact of BeingWell. Also pictured are GP Dr Matilda Lawrence, WBOP PHO Co-Chair and local GP Dr Dan McIntosh, and WBOP PHO Chief Executive Sarah Stevenson.

How we made it work

-  **Co-designing**
Designing services alongside communities and whānau.
-  **System integration**
Based in GP practices, and well linked to community and secondary care.
-  **Building Awareness**
A clearer service identity, improved digital access and active promotion.
-  **Connected team**
Health Coaches and HIPs work together alongside counselling and social work support.
-  **Workforce Development**
Investing in workforce training, supervision and ongoing support.
-  **Continuous Improvement**
Using real-time data, feedback and quality improvement to strengthen service delivery.

BeingWell launches newsletter for providers

WBOP PHO has launched Te Kererū, a new quarterly newsletter from the BeingWell team designed to keep providers informed and connected with

updates, insights and stories from across the network. The first edition, sent on 19 May, outlined the future direction of the service and highlights from the quarter.

The meaning behind the ingoa

The ingoa Te Kererū, a native wood pigeon, reflects hauora, regeneration, connection and collective wellbeing. Inspired by the whakataukī, “E koekoe te tūi, e ketekete te kākā, e kūkū te kererū” (the tūi chatters, the kākā cackles, the kererū coos), it recognises that different voices contribute to a stronger whole.

The gifting and use of an ingoa Māori is a thoughtful process guided by cultural integrity, reflection and engagement. At WBOP PHO, this includes collective kōrero, careful consideration of the kaupapa and values behind the mahi, and a dedicated formal process to ensure the name is meaningful and upheld with care.



Want to subscribe?

Message communications @wboppho.org.nz. This newsletter is for BeingWell providers and wider sector partners only. ▲

WBOP PHO launches Bridging the Gap outreach pilot in Tauranga

The new service delivers free health care to whānau facing homelessness or housing stress, and rangatahi who may otherwise miss out on support.

WBOP PHO launched Bridging the Gap in April 2026, a pilot outreach service bringing free health care to people facing barriers to access in our community. The service focuses on whānau experiencing homelessness or housing stress, as well as rangatahi who may miss out on school-based health support. Clinics run weekly at Under the Stars and BOP Youth Development Trust in Tauranga.

The kaupapa is straightforward: meet people where they are, in places they already trust. Delivered by a multi-disciplinary team of GPs, registered nurses and a Kaiārahi (navigator), the service operates as free walk-in clinics inside established community spaces, removing the need for enrolment, appointments or upfront costs.

Laura Penny, WBOP PHO Community and Clinical Programme Manager, says the pilot reflects a clear need. "We know that for some whānau and rangatahi, accessing health care can be challenging. Whether it's cost, past experiences or just not knowing where to start, people fall through the gaps. This service is about being present in spaces where trust already exists and making it easy to say yes to care."

The project grew from WBOP PHO's involvement in the Kāinga Tupu Growing

Homes Taskforce, which leads the Western Bay of Plenty's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. That connection shaped both the thinking behind Bridging the Gap and the relationships that helped bring it to life. "With the kaupapa established, we developed the model and sought funding to make it happen," says Penny.

TECT, BayTrust and the Kāinga Tupu Taskforce all stepped in as funders, united by a shared commitment to improving access and reducing inequities in health care across the region. At its heart, Bridging the Gap is about walking alongside whānau and rangatahi, building trust and confidence over time. The pilot will be tested and refined across its two sites, aiming to expand over time to meet growing community need.

Meet the team

Bridging the Gap is delivered by a rostered team of GPs from across the

provider network who have put their hand up to be part of the mahi, working alongside WBOP PHO Registered Nurses. Kaiārahi (Navigator) will join the team in July, strengthening wrap-around support and helping tangata whaiora reconnect with ongoing care over time. ▲

▲ **Dr James Peckett**
Mount Medical Centre

▲ **Dr Cameron Hughes**
Fifth Avenue Family Practice

▲ **Dr Stephanie Kramer**
HealthCare on Fifteenth





▲ **Dr Kate McIntosh**
Bethlehem Family Practice

▲ **Registered Nurse Ardell Unsworth**
WBOP PHO

▲ **Registered Nurse Diane Greenaway**
WBOP PHO

▲ **Kaiārahi Navigator Emma Walker**
WBOP PHO (Starting 1 July)

Bridging the Gap Free Clinics

UNDER THE STARS 45 Cliff Road, Tauranga	BOP YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TRUST 135 Thirteenth Avenue, Tauranga South
 Thursday	Tuesday
 From 9.30am	From 9.30am
 GP, registered nurse, health navigation support	Nurse-led clinic, youth-friendly and culturally responsive care
 Acute health needs, long-term condition management, connection to wider services	Early intervention, preventative care, health navigation

A message of thanks to nurses and doctors

In May, WBOP PHO marked International Nurses Day and World Family Doctor Day with a campaign celebrating the nurses and GPs who care for our communities every day. The campaign recognised the compassion, skill and commitment these health professionals bring to their work. ▲

Scan for a message from Chief Executive Sarah Stevenson



You may never know the full weight of what you give to people. But the people you care for do.

HONOURING NURSES & FAMILY DOCTORS
MAY 2026



Future doctors to train in the Western Bay of Plenty

The first students from the new Graduate School of Medicine are expected in the rohe from 2029, following the success of a proposal from WBOP PHO, local iwi and regional partners.

The Western Bay of Plenty has secured a place in The University of Waikato's new Graduate School of Medicine programme, with medical students expected to complete part of their clinical training in the rohe from 2029. This follows the success of Te Moana a Toi Partnership Proposal coordinated by WBOP PHO in collaboration with iwi and primary care partners. The announcement was made on 11 June 2026, when the wider Bay of Plenty was confirmed as one of the five regions selected nationally for the initiative.

Details released by Minister of Health Hon Simeon Brown outlined how clinical training will be delivered across each region. In the Bay of Plenty, students will undertake primary care training across Western Bay of Plenty and Rotorua communities, alongside secondary care experience at Tauranga Hospital. The programme also includes the establishment of Community Clinical Learning Centres (CCLCs), which will serve as The University of Waikato's teaching facilities. Their final locations will be confirmed in the coming months.

Sarah Stevenson, Chief Executive of WBOP PHO, says the result is a milestone for the region. "This is a proud moment



– An artist's impression of a University of Waikato Community Clinical Learning Centre.

for the Bay of Plenty and for all the partners who came together to make this proposal possible. We have long known what our communities need. Doctors who call this place home, who understand the diversity and complexity of our region and who will stay. Today's announcement is a significant step toward making that a reality."

A collective achievement

The proposal was the result of months of preparation, including hui with general practices to hear their perspectives, and drew on partnerships built across the rohe over many years. It was developed in collaboration with five partners:

- Ngāi Te Rangī
- Ngāti Ranginui
- Ngāti Awa, through Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa
- WBOP PHO
- Ngā Mataapuna Oranga
- Toi Manawa Alliance (previously Eastern Bay Primary Health Alliance)

Stevenson says the collective nature of the proposal is its greatest strength. "The relationships between PHOs, iwi and community providers across Te Moana a Toi are what makes this region special, and it is those same relationships that will make this medical training model work."

About the NZGSM

The New Zealand Graduate School of Medicine (NZGSM) is a new graduate-entry medical school established by The University of Waikato, the Ministry of Health and Te Whatu Ora Health NZ to help address doctor shortages in primary care and regional communities.

Its first cohort of 120 students will begin in 2028, spending their first year in Hamilton before completing clinical training across five regions, including the Bay of Plenty. ▲

Gender-affirming care programme to roll out

WBOP PHO has been successful in Te Whatu Ora Health NZ request for proposals to improve access to gender-affirming primary care across the region.

The proposed programme takes a community-led, primary care-based approach, building on WBOP PHO's general practice network and local

partnerships including Gender Dynamix and the BeingWell multidisciplinary team. It responds to barriers identified by local clinicians and communities: workforce confidence, time, funding and consistent access to care.

The model includes five key areas:

- Community input and guidance
- Funded care packages for longer GP and nurse practitioner consultations
- A workforce champion network

- Training aligned with national providers (Patha and Qtopia)
- Wrap-around support to help people stay connected to care

The programme will roll out over the coming months, with an initial contract of three years. It aims to support 100 to 150 people each year with timely, culturally safe primary care, while building workforce capability and improving equity in access to gender-affirming care. ▲

Volunteer Awards honours Mōtītī community leader



— Edward Matehaere with Health Minister Simeon Brown after receiving the Māori Health Service Award. Credit: Ministry of Health.

Edward Matehaere has been recognised with the Māori Health Service Award at the 2026 Minister of Health Volunteer Awards in April for the impact he has made on Mōtītī Island. The award honours individuals and groups who make an outstanding contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand's health system.

For over 15 years, Eddie, as he is known, has been a driving force behind health care and emergency response on the remote Bay of Plenty island. He helped establish Mōtītī's hauora clinic in 2010 and has since volunteered as its main coordinator, working closely with health providers to ensure residents can access regular care.

His contribution extends well beyond health care coordination. In a community

"It's not really all about me. It's about the general health of our people, really."

— Edward Matehaere.

without formal emergency services, Eddie has become the person people turn to in a crisis. Over the past 15 years, he has responded to major fires, marine emergencies, medical evacuations and rescue operations, often in challenging conditions and long before help can arrive from the mainland.

His efforts have helped improve access to health care, strengthen emergency response capability and support the wellbeing of one of the country's most isolated communities.

Speaking to Te Ao Māori News after receiving the award, Eddie remained focused on the people he serves. "It's not really all about me. It's about the general health of our people, really." ▲

Kiri's Kōrero

Connection creates wellbeing

I am shaped by whānau, whenua and community.

If there is one thing I have learned throughout my career, it is that connection creates wellbeing.

Recently, I have had the privilege of welcoming the BeingWell team under the korowai of the Hauora Māori, Equity and Community Wellbeing portfolio. What excites me most about this mahi is the opportunity to

strengthen connections: to people, to place and to purpose.

While we work across different practices, organisations and communities, we are all part of the same woven story. Health Coaches, Health Improvement Practitioners, general practice teams and community partners each bring unique strengths, experiences and perspectives. Together, we create something far greater than any one service or role could achieve alone.

In June, we had the opportunity to host Minister for Mental Health Hon Matt Doocey. The message he left with us was not simply about programmes or performance measures. It was about culture. A culture of accountability, collaboration and commitment to delivering meaningful outcomes for our communities.

Much of your impact happens quietly through trusted relationships,

compassionate conversations and the support we provide to tangata whaiora and whānau every day. Whether in general practice, community settings or alongside partner organisations, our mahi helps people navigate challenges and build wellbeing.

My hope is that we continue to cultivate connection and belonging, so that wherever we are based, we feel part of one whānau. By strengthening our connections with each other, with general practice and with our community partners, we strengthen the wellbeing of the people and whānau we serve.

Ngā mihi for the care, commitment and aroha you bring to this mahi every day.

Kiri Peita – General Manager: Māori, Population Health & Equity.

NETWORK EDUCATION

What's on

It has been a busy first half of the year for workforce development across the WBOP PHO network, with regular meetings, special interest groups and a range of other educational opportunities across the region.

Recent highlights included the Clinical Education Symposium in May, where 57 health professionals gathered for a cardiology evening led by Dr Rob McIntosh from Tauranga Hospital, and the Workplace Law 101 webinar supporting people leaders. The Diabetes Education Series is also underway, with face-to-face and online sessions running through to November.

Coming up

- ▲ **Diabetes Education: Fundamentals of Diabetes**
6 August
- ▲ **CME/CNE Symposium**
9 September
- ▲ **WBOP PHO x Grace Hospital Expo Collab**
Late September
- ▲ **Diabetes Education: Insulin Start for Type 2**
15 October
- ▲ **Heart Foundation Education Workshop**
Date to be confirmed
- ▲ **Diabetes Education: Fundamentals of Diabetes**
3 November, face-to-face
- ▲ **CME/CNE Symposium**
28 October
- ▲ **WBOP PHO Expo Service Forum**
18 November

Stay in the loop

Keep an eye on Practice News and the events calendar on the Provider Portal. ▲

Recognition for a lifetime of service to Māori health



The Managing Director of Ngā Mataapuna Oranga (NMO), Janice Kuka, has been appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours. The recognition acknowledges more than four decades of service and leadership in Māori health.

A respected advocate for Māori-led health care, Kuka has spent much of her career working to improve access, equity and outcomes for whānau. Her contributions span frontline health services, governance, system advocacy and the development of community-led models of care across the Bay of Plenty and beyond.

Beginning her career as a social worker at Tauranga Hospital, Kuka helped establish Māori nursing wards and mental health services in the late 1980s. In 2010, she stepped into the leadership of NMO and strengthened its role as a provider

of primary care, Whānau Ora, mental health, oral health and community health services across the rohe.

Her influence has also extended nationally through governance roles and advocacy for Māori health providers, including contributions to the Waitangi Tribunal over two decades.

Speaking to the New Zealand Herald following the announcement, Kuka described the recognition as "very humbling" and said the honour belonged to "the people, the hauora, the kaumātua from Tauranga". Reflecting on the achievements she is most proud of, she said: "It's those small incremental wins that are permanent and sustainable."

The recognition acknowledges a career dedicated to strengthening Māori health and supporting whānau and communities to thrive. ▲

"The honour belonged to the people, the hauora, the kaumātua from Tauranga."

– Janice Kuka.



– Janice Kuka (left) with Jackie Davis from Ngā Mataapuna Oranga. Credit: NMO.

Matakana and Mōtītī islands featured at Rural WONCA

Projects improving access to care and health equity on Matakana and Mōtītī Islands were showcased at Rural WONCA 2026, held in Wellington in April.

WBOP PHO Clinical Director Dr Claire Isham and Te Awanui Hauora Community Nurse Lead Hera Murray presented Tāpiri Mai, a community-led initiative co-designed with whānau on Matakana and Mōtītī Islands. Both also work with Ngāti Kahu Hauora ki Tauranga, one of the three organisations partnering to deliver the project.

Their presentation, Tāpiri Mai: Mana motuhake in action: Equitable health for

remote communities, highlighted how combining telehealth with locally led, in-person care can improve access to health care for remote communities.

A second presentation featured Te Haupapa Kōhatu Mōtītī, a kaumātua programme supporting hauora on Mōtītī Island. The programme was presented by Krystal Masoe, Clinical Lead and Practice Nurse at Ngāti Kahu Hauora ki Tauranga.

WONCA is the World Organization of Family Doctors, a global network representing around 500,000 family doctors across 111 countries and territories. This year's conference,



– Hera Murray (left), Krystal Masoe (centre) and Dr Claire Isham.

hosted by Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network, focused on Whānau Ora: Integrating mātauranga Māori and indigenous knowledge with rural health for a thriving future. ▲

Highlights

▲ Two aged residential care practices join the network

WBOP PHO has welcomed two aged residential care-focused practices to the network over the past year, helping strengthen access to health care for older people across the rohe.

Oceania Healthcare – The Bayview joined in April. Based in Judea, the practice provides care for residents at The Bayview, including those requiring hospital-level care and those living independently. The nurse practitioner-led service will also be open to the surrounding community.

Namat Health joined the network in October 2025. Owned and led by Dr Lorens Klopper, the practice provides medical care to aged residential care facilities in Katikati.



▲ WBOP PHO takes local insights to a national stage

WBOP PHO was well represented at the Collaborative Aotearoa Conference 2026 in the end of March. CEO Sarah Stevenson presented BeingWell: A Stepped Care Approach to Mental Health and Addictions, sharing our local experience of building responsive, integrated primary mental health support.

Equity Programme Lead Sēnae Mitchell and Community & Clinical Programme Manager Laura Penny presented Let's Talk Screening: Co-designing Confident Kōrero for Equity. They were joined by Network Services & Workforce Development Coordinator Becca Shooter.

▲ Long-serving Hairini GPs retire

Dr Jenny Jones and Dr Stuart Lydiard retired after 34 years serving the local community. They began practice in Tauranga in 1992 at Welcome Bay Doctors, before establishing Hairini Family Health Centre in 1998.

Jenny and Stuart acknowledge the privilege of caring for patients and being part of whānau lives for so many. They now step away from practice to focus on “family, friends, crafts, exercise and fishing”.

▲ Hairini practice new ownership

Hairini Family Health Centre has moved to new ownership and is now called Hairini Medical Centre. Dr Mathanki Vivekananda is the new GP owner. The current team remains in place, supporting continuity of care for patients.



Western Bay of Plenty
Primary Health Organisation

TŌNGIA TE URURUA KIA TUPU
WHAKARITORITO TE TUPU
O TE HARAKEKE



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