



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD
Te Poari Hauora o Whanganui

COVID 19

COMMUNITY LIVED EXPERIENCE REPORT

Reflections from members of the communities of Rangitikei, Ruapehu,
Whanganui and South Taranaki



ABSTRACT

There wasn't just one lockdown – we all had our own experience.

This report presents the lived experiences of the COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown for members of the Whanganui, Ruapehu, Rangitikei and South Taranaki regions. It serves to provide insights to members of the Impact Collective and our communities to our sense of wellbeing during our collective experience of lockdown.

Disclaimer:

As a result of the narratives being presented verbatim, some people may find the language and images contained within this report offensive or objectionable. Reader discretion is advised.

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60s Up Club	MediaWorks Whanganui
AccessAbility	MedLab Whanganui
Age Concern	Mental Health and Wellbeing Support
Alzheimer's Whanganui	Ministry of Social Development
Aramoho Health Centre	Mokai Patea
Balance Whanganui	National Council of Women
Birthright Whanganui	National Hauora Coalition
Brain Injury Association	Ngā Rauru-kitahi
Born and Raised Pasifika	Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa
Bulls Community Group	Ngāti Rangī
Bulls Medical Centre	New Zealand Police
Bulls RSA	Pathways
Bulls Rural Women's Network	Positive Aging Forum
Cancer Society	Prisoners Aid
Community Corrections	Project Marton
Community Education	Rangitīkei District Council
Community House	Rangitīkei Response Group
Community Law Centre	Rangitīkei Youth Council
Community Resilience Whanganui	Restorative Cities
Department of Internal Affairs	Restorative Practices Advisory Group
Family Harm Prevention Team	Ruapehu REAP
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	Ruapehu Whānau Transformation Team
Fordell/Mangamahu Rural Women's Network	Ruapehu District Council
Geneva	Safe and Free Whanganui
Gonville Health Pharmacy	Safer Whanganui
Hakeke St Library	Southern Rangitikei Networking Group
Hakeke St Community Hub	Sport Whanganui
Healthcare NZ	Step Up Durie Hill
Healthy Families Whanganui, Rangitīkei and Ruapehu	St John Ambulance
Huntermville Community Group	Stone Soup Kitchen
Jigsaw Whanganui	Sustainable Whanganui
Kaumatua Kaunihera	Taihape Community Development Trust
Kotuku Assistance Animals Aotearoa	Taihape Community Response Group
Living Waters Medical	Taihape Health
Love and Learn	Taihape Neighbourhood Support
Marton and District Budget Services	Taihape older and bolder
Marton Combined Churches	TCLT
Marton Food Pantry	Te Kotuku Hauora
Marton Lions	Te Ora Hau
	Te Oranganui

Te Oranganui Rangatahi
Te Ranga Tupua Hub
Te Pae Tata Team
Te Taihāhā disability support services
Te Puke Karanga
Thrive Whanganui
Tupoho
Upokongaro School
Violence Intervention Network
Volunteer Whanganui
Whanganui Accident and Medical
Whanganui and Partners
Whanganui Budget Services
Whanganui Civil Defence
Whanganui Community Learning Centre
Whanganui Community Living Trust

Whanganui District Council Youth Committee
Whanganui District Council
Whanganui District Health Board
Whanganui NZDF
Whanganui Peoples Centre
Whanganui Prison
Whanganui Red Cross
Whanganui Regional Health Network
Whanganui Sleep Clinic
WIN1000
Women's Network
Workbridge
Woven Whānau
Youth Services Trust

A special acknowledgement must be made to the members of the public who provided their pieces of art, stories, videos and statements to the Bubble Korero - Whanganui Community Learning Centre and enabling these to be presented in this document – they are a powerful representation of the personal experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown on the members of Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu, and South Taranaki.

The Integrated Recovery Team who supported the gathering of the experiences presented in this report were comprised of members from the following organisations:



BACKGROUND

We are facing a global health crisis unlike any in recent history. One that is killing people, spreading human suffering, and upending people's lives and livelihoods. But this is much more than a health crisis. It is a human, economic and social crisis. COVID-19, which has been characterised as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), is attacking societies at their core. As of the 19th of January 2021, there have been 2,262 coronavirus cases in New Zealand, out of which 85 are active. The total number of people who have died due to the virus nationally is 25. Worldwide, there have been 96,006,646 cases and 2,049,253 deaths.

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in New Zealand (NZ) was reported on 28 February 2020. From this date, NZ joined the global effort to fight the rapidly spreading pandemic. In order to prepare for this unprecedented public health crisis, the NZ government announced a four-level COVID-19 alert system on 21 March 2020. The alert system provides escalating restrictions on human contact, travel, and business operations. This signposts in advance the changes our population of 5 million will be required to comply with at each level. In the early stages of the NZ pandemic response, the aim was to flatten the epidemic curve to avoid overburdening the NZ healthcare system and its available resources. It quickly became apparent, with evidence of community transmission and over 200 confirmed COVID-19 cases, that the NZ epidemic curve was following the same initial exponential acceleration seen in Asia and Europe. In response, NZ acted quickly moving to the highest alert level 4 at 11.59 pm on 25 March 2020 (lockdown). It restricted contact between people to the bare minimum. Interactions were limited to members of the same household and to use of essential services, decreasing the transmission of the virus among the population (McGuinness & Hsee, 2020).

The Integrated Recovery Team formed in the immediate aftermath of the nationwide New Zealand COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown. With representation from the Whanganui District Health Board, Whanganui, Ruapehu and Rangitikei District Councils, Whanganui Civil Defence, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Social Development and Whanganui & Partners, the team sought to understand the lived experience of members of our communities of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic by undertaking more than 150 focus groups and 1 on 1 interviews. These stories and experiences tell a story of organisational boundaries being removed, of time for family, of instances of decreased access to necessary services, of joy and hope and of loneliness. This final report is the culmination of the last six months of rohe wide engagement with our communities and will form the beginning narratives of the next-normal.

METHODOLOGY

Following the final day of the nationwide level 4 lockdown, the Integrated Recovery Team set about engaging with as many iwi, community, government and non-government organisations as possible to get an understanding of their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

A minimum of two members from the team attended each community focus group and all sessions were recorded and then verbatim transcribed following the sessions. Alongside the focus groups, several 1-1 sessions with members of the community were also undertaken. These sessions were recorded and then verbatim transcribed following the sessions.

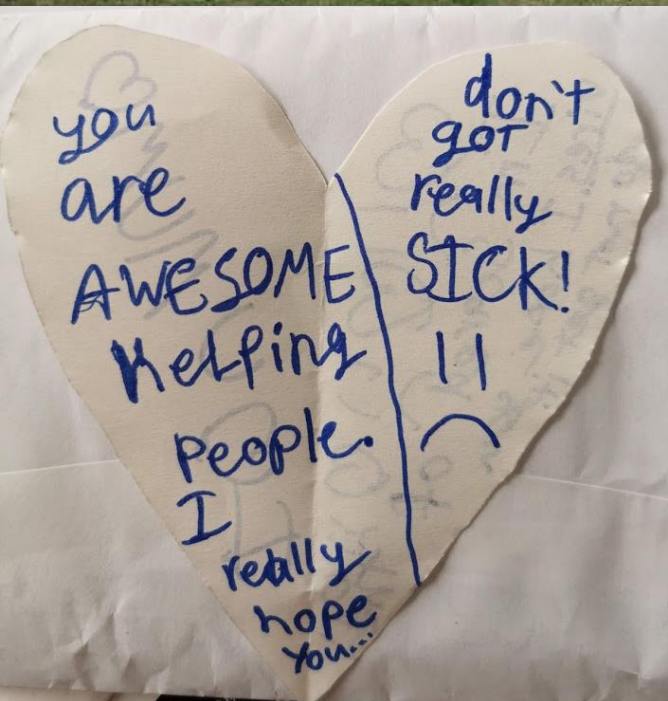
During the larger groups, the team utilised a dual moderator focus group methodology. This involved two moderators working together, each performing a different role within the same focus group. The division of roles ensured a smooth progression of the session and that all topics were covered.

Participants

All participants were contacted by either email or telephone to set up an appropriate time to hold the focus group. At the end of each focus group, participants were asked if there was anyone else that they believed we should reach out and contact – these leads were followed up and sessions set up where appropriate and agreed to.

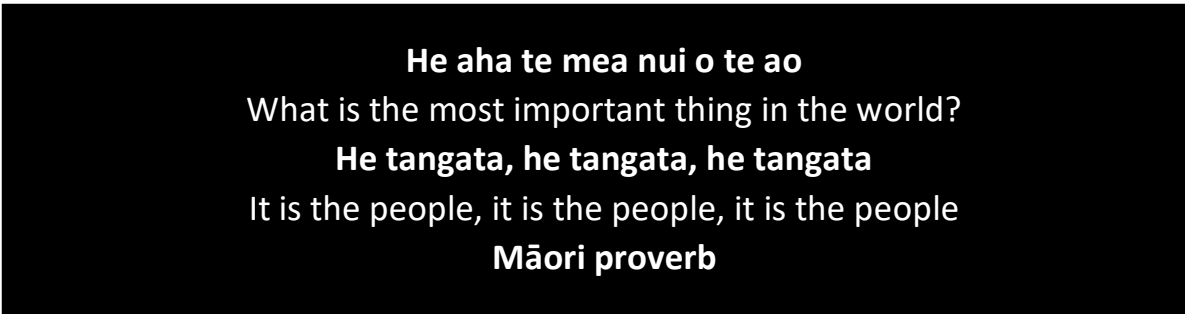
At the beginning of every session, participants were advised that the sessions were being recorded for the purposes of transcription to inform this report on the communities lived experience of COVID-19. If anyone identified that they were uncomfortable with this, notes were instead taken, and the recorder turned off. However, throughout the extensive engagement, no members of the community requested the session not be recorded. As a result, the quotes contained within this document are unedited, however, we have ensured these have remained anonymous. Some of the images provided by the Whanganui Community Learning Centre were unable to be anonymised.

Throughout this engagement, we captured over 66 hours of focus group recordings which were transcribed into 612 pages of transcribed data. This transcribed data was then synthesized by way of thematic analysis to understand the detail amongst the diverse korero.



LIVED EXPERIENCE REPORTS

SUMMARY



The biggest insight of the experience of COVID-19 Lockdown was that it is all about the people, the people, the people. When asked about the positive experiences– it was the connection with people. When asked about what we could do better – it was about the connections with the people that we need to improve. When asked about things that we cannot lose – it was about the newfound sense of connection and working together, as individuals, as whānau, as communities – as people.

The aspects that members of the community enjoyed the most were:

- *The slowing down of life – a time to reconnect*
- *Nature and the environment returning to equilibrium*
- *Support for one another – a sense of ‘being kind’.*

The aspects of most concern during lockdown for members of our communities were:

- *Mental Health and Addiction Services – availability and access*
- *Housing – Social Housing and Homelessness*
- *Organisations returning to how they operated in a pre-Covid environment.*

The aspects that were the most challenging for members of our communities were:

- *Loss of physical connection with friends and whānau*
- *Becoming workers, zoomsters, childminders and teachers all at once*
- *New ways of working – the same but different.*

The aspects that members of our communities want to keep the most in the future were:

- *Interconnection between agencies and the breaking down of barriers*
- *The sense of community kindness and connection*
- *Rapid support for the vulnerable and those in need in our community.*

... Bubbling Thoughts...

Lockdown has silenced some foes
But given speaking time to others
Who is the speaker of the house
In my head?
A house divided against itself will fall
So I better get myself together

Who am I listening to?
Find the truth and speak it out.
Match by match I will conquer
I will befriend my mind.

- Angela Paulin

LIVED EXPERIENCE REPORTS

Experience of COVID-19 Lockdown

Approximately nine months ago, the country was placed into full lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that was sweeping across the world. At 11.59pm on March 25, the country moved into alert level 4, introducing some of the strictest public health measures seen anywhere in the world.

Looking back at that one month when the country was at level 4, the curbs to personal freedom were unprecedented. Through this period:

- Everyone was staying in bubbles
- There was no inter-regional travel, no public gatherings and all public venues were closed
- Only essential services and businesses stayed open
- All educational facilities were closed for in person education.

However, it became clear that there wasn't just one lockdown – we all had our own experience. Throughout our engagement, each individual reflection on the lockdown varied and although there were a number of themes that began to emerge with no two stories of the experience being the same – even from members within the same bubble. Some people were forced into a month of unbroken solitude, others trapped for weeks on end with estranged partners. However, some saw it as a positive experience – a welcome opportunity to slow down, go for walks and relax with the family, or enjoy quality time with their children.

Whichever way the lockdown played out, there has been one near universal aspect to the past months – it abruptly disrupted our daily routines and living arrangements in ways that would not normally occur.

It was important for the Integrated Recovery Team to get an understanding of the personal impacts of lockdown on the individuals and whānau within our rohe. At each focus group and 1 on 1 session, the team asked the following questions:

- What was your experience of the COVID-19 level 4 lockdown?
- Have there been any unexpected positives as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Have there been any negatives/challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Are there any changes that were made during COVID-19 that we should keep?
- Are there any changes that were made during COVID-19 that we should not keep?

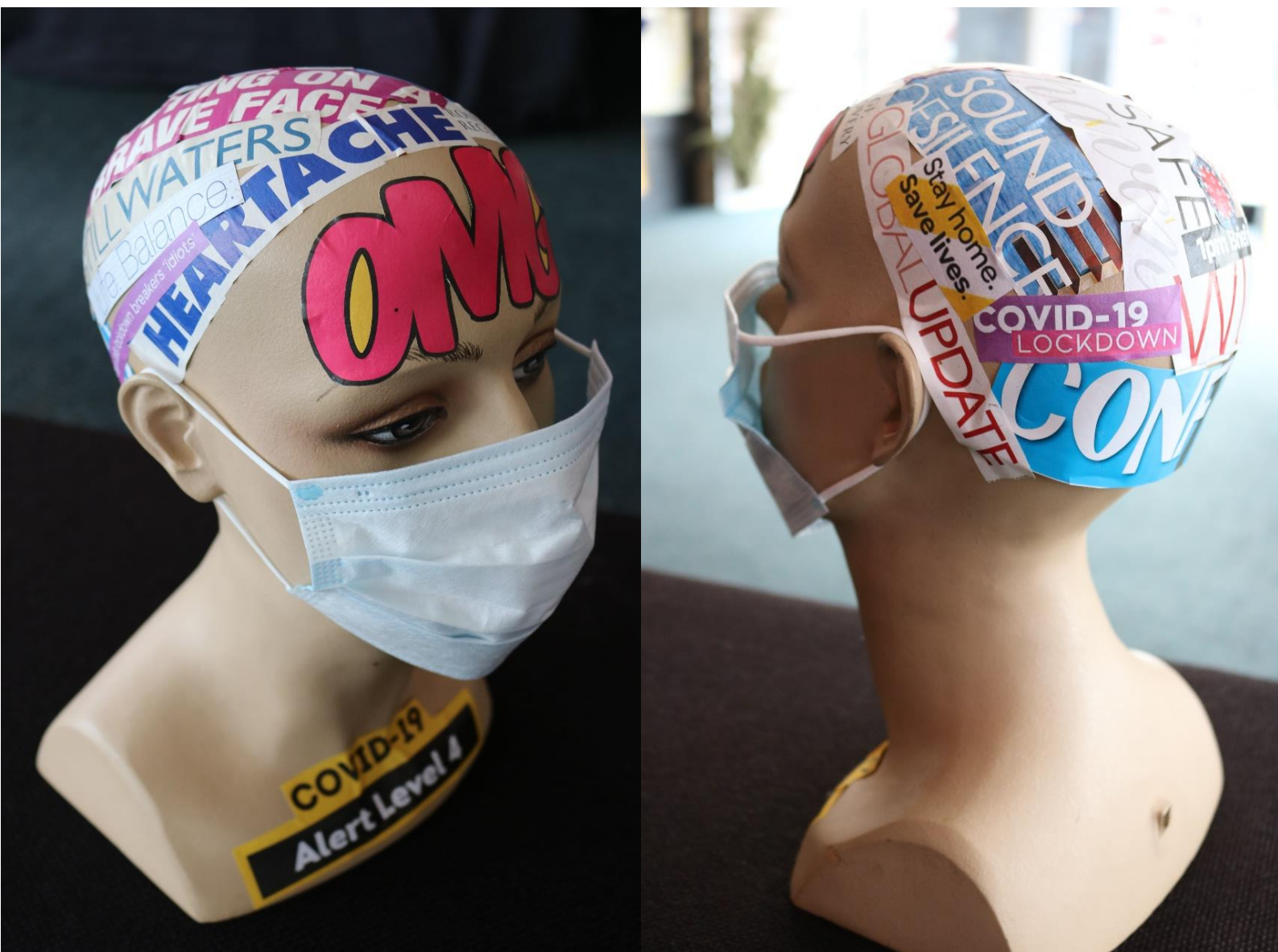
Additional questions were asked around what contributes to the health and wellbeing of the community, which will form part of the narratives in the Community Equity and Wellbeing reports. These are being developed as part of the mahi by the Manu Taki – Impact Collective.

We heard stories of people saying it was fantastic and I had a holiday, to I didn't have enough money or I was really isolated or none of our street obeyed the rules and they were all just drinking and partying all the way through it and we were really frightened. We thought, 'Wow, there's such a diverse experience, the experiences that are happening out there.'

Through thematic analysis of the transcription data, 12 key themes emerged across the positive and negative experiences of COVID-19 and the Level 4 Lockdown in the wider Whanganui rohe. The following sections provide verbatim narratives from our communities which reflect upon their experiences and provide key insights into which we can draw critical learnings from to inform future community co-design opportunities.

The Slowing down of life – a time to reconnect

Prior to lockdown, our lives were characterised by speed. Hurrying around, carrying on with life at pace was the standard. Staying aware of work duties and our expanding social commitments was an endless accomplishment. Just an advantaged minority could stand to back off. Yet, in lockdown, the speed of life eased back significantly for the time being for everybody. Individuals in a real



sense quit hurrying to work and in life in general. The workplace, recreation centres, bars, clubs and eateries were shut. Worldwide travel shut down. Remaining at home turned into the new normal. Individuals started playing games, planting, zooming, taking walks and other simple pursuits with their recently discovered time (Eckhardt & Husemann, 2020).

Living in lockdown has given us an opportunity to reflect on ourselves, our connections and what's critical to us. For a few of us, that meant contacting old friends or whānau, or mending old relationships with individuals we once thought we'd never address again. Between more opportunity to think, dread around what's happening on the planet and the longing for significant association, the pandemic has moved a few people's points of view.

It was my sister's sixtieth birthday during that time. She lives in England. My nephew who stayed with us for a few months, so he's very close, he organised a Zoom meeting for her birthday and then we continued on that call by doing quizzes from England, Rotterdam and here. It was really fabulous. It was great being able to reconnect with them and have fun.

I think too our pace of life got too busy. COVID slowed it down. COVID slowed it all down. That was a good thing. That was a good thing for everybody. I for one don't want to go back to that fast pace of life again.

Our general feeling from touching base with a few was actually they really enjoyed just that whole being safe, being locked down, being okay to do what they needed to do; but, actually, just doing stuff together as a family, it was a joy.

What else happened out of lockdown? More time talking with family; not just the family that are here, but all connecting.

I was going to come to, because we do get quite a few calls from people, sometimes family/whānau and sometimes from others where the relationships were deteriorating and people actually had to get out of that bubble because it was becoming dangerous.

On What's App we set up a family thing. We've got three kids and grandkids and every Sunday afternoon we all got on it and all the kids said what they'd been doing. We had never done that before and everyone was really looking forward to it. Everyone brought a cup of tea or cup of coffee and everyone sat down for an hour. That was a really positive and we'd do that again. Real connection instead of just the odd phone call to each other.

I mean, with the COVID lockdown, like especially in level four, maybe one of the contributing factors to less criminal activity and the reduction in family violence, it could well be that, and in some sense, we were so secure in our lockdown. There was a lot of relief given for financial issues whether it was loans, mortgage, rent, and that security around the rent freeze as well. Possibly people actually had an opportunity to just dial

back and appreciate time with family, rather than have all those money issues, and all the other bits and pieces...

Well, I led an ANZAC parade, straight opposite Kowhai Park, on that area, and what I was happy to see was the walks that people were allowed, was father and children. I mean, we see people walking up and down, and we know the kids go and play in Kowhai Park; but it was the walking and the family connection, in my opinion, in that; well, you know, if you're on your own and with husband, you might not want that! But families, and we see a lot of people taking the dog, but it was really, really interesting; and fathers and mothers on bikes, and the little kids on the pavements on bikes. You could feel that interconnection with families which normally back at work you don't see it, even at the weekend, because obviously families are busy at home at the weekend. So to me I just thought, 'well then it's good'. That was one thing I saw.

Yes, it is, generally speaking, it seems as though societies that reset, and they've gone back to discover family things, and they're actually the most important things, and the day to day grind of life generally has blinded them too.

On a personal level, I just noticed friends and family taking more time to prepare unprocessed meals, to actually eat better.

We live right by the cemetery, as you know like, when there was a tangi family couldn't attend it; but because the cemetery was in my neighbourhood, and through that Facebook thing; there was a lady that was posting about how stressed her friend was, she lost her mum and she couldn't attend the tangi or anything like that. I says, "Oh, I live right next door; its in my walking area. I can go in and video it for her," and tag you into it so that she can see it. So I'm sitting there like this weirdo at the cemetery, and me and Dempsey & Forrest; they were looking at me and I went, "I'm just here to video it for somebody on Facebook. I don't know who she is but that's her mum, and she can't be here." They said, "[whispers] let her be here." She goes, "Yeah." So that was nice for the rest of the family, I just carried on videoing and I thought, okay, take some flowers from the garden and do that. And then somebody else says, "Oh, can you go in and say hello to another family?" "Sure, no problem." I was running over and just put it on the headstone and I said, "Look, if you want to talk to her, talk to her; I'm just gonna put my phone down here and have a bit of a wander."

It was different and there were some positives, you know, the family connects and the connects with your neighbours seem to be more intensified because I suppose everybody's home.

I think you got a lot more quality family time, and a lot more of... People realised what was the most important thing I think, which was actually family or if not family, just having someone close, being able to talk to someone on the phone. Thank God we had the technology that we had.

So a lot of people around here really liked the work/life balance that happened in lockdown; the ability to spend more time with family; exercise was a huge one. You know you go to work, you rush around in the morning, and you get your kids to school and you go to work and then you come home and it's just about dark already, particularly at this time of year. It's like there's no opportunity to go for a walk or go for a bike ride or have quality time, so a lot of people moving forward are quite interested in making their hours a bit more flexible; maybe do a few hours in the weekend so they can finish a day early and go to their kids sport, or whatever, and I think that's huge. It's something that in this sort of sector, people are hardworking, and people put a lot of pressure on themselves to be perfect and work hard and whatever, and it sort of seems like you're letting the side down or it's a no, no if you try to do those things, whereas I think that it's changing, the attitude's changing and it's a bit more acceptable.

I was concerned it would start that and it would be hard for my husband and I to be there in the same... I wasn't worried about the kids but him and I, it actually brought us closer together as a family and as a couple personally.

It's been more family orientated as opposed to work orientated and it's not money orientated either. People have had to make do with limited means, but it's made them... even in the community, when we were going for walks the amount of food that people were putting out, fruit stalls and everything and just help yourself.

I like the fact that the world actually stopped for a while. After that fear of the unknown and that scary, scary oh my God, once it settled down a bit, it was really good to reprioritise and think what is the most important thing? It's like your family, your friends, people; looking after each other and just having that contact.

There was no one in my bubble, I talked with the neighbour once over the fence. I felt alone.

Shit.

I got to come back to Whanganui and spend time with my family. I was away from a very stressful job and it gave me a chance to reconnect, reflect and put some well needed plans in place. I also took the time to research some of our family recipes and learned how to bake a bread recipe from my great Grandmother.

I was so lonely.

My Mum died, I don't want to talk about it.

Great family time, we enjoyed it, love to happen every year.

I loved it, no visitors, time to rest, read books.

I feel guilty saying it was lovely.

It was special, I was able to pause and take time out.

I was a bit lonely.

We had bake offs with the neighbours.

It was amazing. Gave me time to actually take a break and reset. Realised I had been filling my life with so much "stuff". Was good to stop, spend time with my family and reflect on what was important.

and to see the Himalayas
Everyone is waiting for science to solve climate change.
Its in our hands We just need to stop.

Had my B-day in it was fun/brill

Dally dogg

Went to the beach.
Did some skids.
Abit of this n that
Worked on the cars.

My mother got sick just before lockdown. She had to go into a home. Couldn't see my mother for seven weeks. it was horrible. My mother got very sick at the end of the lockdown and was admitted to hospital. The hospital was great they let me and my family spend time with Mum before she died. Wish we could have had her for those seven weeks.

Jyting
COVID v
done so
Business
That people
only set
and a
out of
worked up
RD x5

My husband is a first responder & this was difficult to PCP & mixed messaging. He was worried about our family & possibly spreading it. I was @ first trying to work in civil defence & managing our kids home was a struggle. Eventually it was decided that I wouldn't continue in civil response. I became good at zoom meetings. A big struggle & my husband was shaving his beard - weird its thing that you worry about which and important to you...



it was an odd feeling having just moved here, not knowing anyone.

it made me get on my hum-dinger of a bike pretty darn quick.

it gave me a chance to get to know this town in real time.... albeit a ghostly fe

at home I painted & did lots of gardening & listening of the birds who came to visit.

I picked lots of pinecones & made fire. Took me back to basics & question what really matters.

(ave)

WERE NO TIME LIMITS OR DEADLINES
ENTOYING THE FACT THERE
SAYING REFLING
FROM WATERS & OUR
DAY, HUBBY, HOME
WE MY BUBBLE

Loved my Bubble by myself
but I got bigger & bigger

Rowi
Im still Bubbling
Jacqui

My Bubble had the
Best mother
Livi + mam/sark

The first few days
were great - fun - relaxing
but after that - not so much.
I was in a bubble alone. I
couldn't visit my friends but we drank
beer over skype

Baking Bread
Growing a veg garden
Hardly ever going to town
Saving money

Maybe Longtime Sunshine Upon You
While Love Surrounds You
The Fire Light Within You
Guide Your Way On

I loved the
friendliness of strangers
out walking. It was
nice seeing lots of
bubble-groups out walking
together. It was strange
walking on the road to
dodge other people's bubble.

Bubble was
great!

The ^{Global} Great Reset

Love this expression of
creativity - wonderful!
B. Parlone

Nobody knows

the bubble I've seen...

Justin Pappadom

Geez loise, I was scared but
having fun. how does that work?!

The
off!!
VIN
NEWS

lost confused endless news COVID
bullet
scared
Dads in the police
and worked most of
the time and MUM
works at the hospital.
It's Scary. I thought
MUM might get COVID-19
scared frightened nervous Helpless

no to
s in
time out!!

Nature and the environment returning to equilibrium

The worldwide spread of COVID-19 in a quite short time has brought a dramatic decrease in industrial activities, road traffic and tourism. Limited human association with nature during this pandemic has showed up as a gift for nature and the climate. Reports from around the world are showing that during the outbreak of COVID-19, natural conditions including air quality (figure 1), water quality in waterways are improving and untamed life is developing once again (Lokhandwala & Gautam, 2020). However, there are likewise negative consequences occurring, for example, the decrease in recycling and the large increase in waste, further exposing the pollution of actual spaces (water and land), and air (Zambrano-Monserrate, Ruano & Sanchez-Alcalde, 2020).

Figure 1: Comparison of air quality in worldwide major cities before the COVID-19 pandemic and during lockdowns



The sound of the bird life was amazing. Finally quiet enough to hear it in it's full chorus.

It was so calm and quiet. When I went for a walk I realized I could actually hear the sound of the sea from the end of my road in Whanganui East – I had never heard that before.

But we found that we were more sustainable in terms of whānau; empowering whānau to be able to move onto gardening and look at fishing and things like that; looking at recycling. It is just basic things like that and where does the waste go? It was around education. It was around sustainability. It was around environmental and all of that.

Most of them were environmental; like less rubbish and less cars on the road, and that made a healthy impact on the environment. And then all of a sudden COVID disappeared and everyone was just constantly on the road, going places, and then it just went down

again. I feel like something should happen with that, like just try and get more cars off the road.

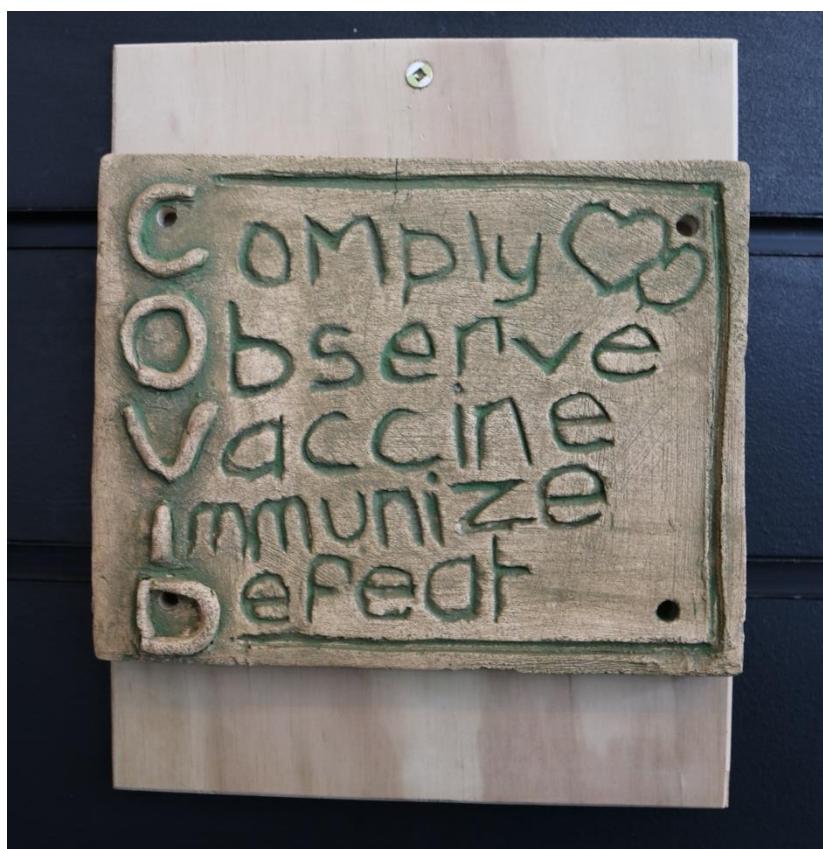
Community gardens I think. We're running a few gardening courses and we've had a lot of interest in that. I think many people realised how important it was. People are talking a lot about sustainability and self-reliance and I think anything around that would be a really positive thing. There's a lot of fear about the environment. I think people had a lot of time to think.

That's a big one. I was really questioning our spot, what humans have done in the environment, and I think anything like that, all that sustainability stuff, gardening, cooking, things that don't cost money is really important, and things that you can do with your family, that you can do with your children. All those mums that are moving here with their children and their partners, but because that's an incredibly vulnerable spot to be in and if we can reach those families through their children, through their schools, it's really good.

Yeah, there's less rubbish. It was quite pleasant for a while there; the beach wasn't being torn up by four wheel drives and it was nice and didn't have loads of rubbish all over it and it was all pretty kind of quiet. If you're a local person it's quite pleasant to walk along the beach and things like that. Footsteps and paw prints. Nothing but footsteps and paw prints. That's right. It was quite pleasant. It was quite noticeable when the change came; it was quite a noticeable difference.

Being a society that now has technological capability; how can we work with nature and learn the lessons with nature rather than against it.

All going out on their bikes, all walking around, all being outside, less cars. It was beautiful weather as well, which helped.



The sense of community kindness and connection; support for one another – a sense of ‘being kind’

**He aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai.
If kindness is sown, then kindness you shall receive.**

Wilson (2020) outlines that recognising a pandemic creates multiple stressors for people, a further feature of the government’s response has been a focus on *enabling kindness*. Jacinda Ardern specifically asked that all New Zealanders ‘be kind’ and offer support to one another when announcing the move to Level 4 (Arden, 2020). The government’s key COVID website has resources reflecting an interest in kindness and in the lead up to Easter the Prime Minister confirmed that both the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny were essential workers, thus demonstrating kindness to children and parents (Easter Bunny ‘essential worker, says PM’, 2020). When advised that some commercial landlords were increasing rents while under Alert Level 4, something the government was unable to prohibit, she condemned such actions as ‘utterly unfathomable’ and asked that landlords ‘just be a good human being’ (Molyneux & Lynch, 2020). The fantastic thing about kindness is that it benefits the *receiver*, and the *giver*. Being kind to others increases our own feelings of wellbeing – it makes us feel good about ourselves and improves our outlook on life. Kind and compassionate people tend to have more positive connections with their peers, higher academic achievement and a greater sense of happiness (Skinner, 2020).

I think it did make people stop and be kind and be considerate. I thought that was a real positive. I thought a lot more people actually stepped up and connected with their neighbours.

Connected with... I mean, we ended up volunteering at the Foodbank and oh my God, the generosity of the community was amazing. It was huge. So yeah, that was really, really good. I think people did stop and take time to smell the roses, which was good.

It was great just to see people’s faces and just have that chat, talk about stuff and... One thing that I kept on pushing the whole time is that we’ve got to be kind.

And one thing I reiterated was, “We actually need to be kind, because we don’t understand the bubble that they are in.”

They’ll have their own views on how they got through COVID and if there was kindness given to them.

So it’s that message, I think, for the community that, “Continue to be kind, because what you did was a beautiful thing. You don’t have to stop just because the country’s not in crisis anymore.” That is the angle that I’m trying to give to people now and they go, “Oh I bet you it will all go away.” “Well that’s your responsibility.”

How amazing were we? But if we can keep it moving, keep putting it out there, I don’t know, have a kindness day, I don’t know. You see on people’s windows, “Be kind,” now.

Like I never see that in Castlecliff, but to drive past and they've spray-painted it... That stuff. Wow.

Some of the locals that were down there were a bit more courteous than they had been in the past. I think everybody was just a little bit... That 'Be Kind' message did get across to a lot of people; even the more bolshy types that do live around here did button back a little bit

It was a mixture of concern for others and a relief to have some of the family home with me. We had two essential workers in the family so I was aware of the polar opposites of some sitting at home with not much to do while others were working long hours under the constant threat of the unknown.

I was acutely aware of the members of my extended family that were unwell or elderly and more vulnerable. It was a small sacrifice to make for them and the wider community.

Caring for your people, and that was one of our key messages, you know, check on your family and friends. Check on your neighbours. That's the best thing that you can do in this time. See those are the kind of message I think they should be all the time

That was the interesting thing; coming from the Prime Minister, who was having those 1pm briefings, with old Ashleigh stand aside, and she always ended hers with "be kind". And that was something, and especially in our community in Taihape; we took that really to heart, because that connection with the community; that connection we have with each other, and with our neighbours, was very very important.

And that's another thing that's come out of it, that I hope to see continue, the kindness and the acceptability for a range of people and abilities and all that kind of stuff. It was noticeable during lockdown, how kind people were, and I'd really like to see that keep... and be supportive and looking after neighbours and all that kind of stuff.

I think that all comes into the kindness thing, like people have to be kind, people haven't had to consider other people, and like suddenly they are, and I think that's huge as well.

There was a kindness during COVID which has stayed to some extent, but not to the full extent.

But people stop walking in the street. Even that man today. We were standing in the street like a bunch of wallies and he came out and he could see that we were there, and he just said, "Hey, you guys lost? What you after?" Would he have done that before COVID? Maybe. I'd like to think he would. He was a nice man. But everyone was saying hi to everyone even if they were crossing the street to be apart from everyone.

I think, from a community perspective some of the stuff that comes through the lockdown and things around being kind. I was gonna say, more understanding and people more kind I think; 'cause it was such a tough time, all over New Zealand. I mean, I just think people came out of it just more kind and understanding for each other.

The campaign's been there but it hasn't really continued, even if it was a Whanganui-centric kind of version of it, about being kind. And also, a couple of things on Facebook when they pop up every now and then; like, around being kind and you don't know what people are going through or what's behind closed doors. They were really strong things and its there, but its possibly could be ramped up a little bit more, or something like that perhaps.

Just amazing, you know. And that was way more than what we would normally see. Along with that was just the camaraderie, I guess. You know like people saying hello. Everyone said good morning. People were conscious of the social distancing but at the same time looked like a community that I don't think that I'd ever felt before. So, I think that was the biggest thing for me, if we could keep that. And already there's been a reduction in the likes of this. It's not helping that we're going into winter. But you know like as we transitioned down through the Levels it got less kind of thing.

It's real kindness. Yeah. People were nice to each other, much nicer to each other.



IT CAME IN WAVES
NOT THE VIRUS ITSELF
BUT THE FEELING
THE ANXIOUS FEELING THAT I
MAY NOT GET HOME.
THAT LOCKDOWN MIGHT LEAVE ME
STRANDED IN WELLINGTON
FAR FROM MY FAMILY AND THE WIDE
OPEN SPACES OF RURAL LIFE.



I RESTED
I LAUGHED
I LAUGHED
MY DAYS SPENT
DRAWING, SINGING,
TALKING, PLAYING
THE PIANO
WALKING AND
THEN EXPLORING
OLD FAMILY RECIPES
I WAS DEEPLY
NOURISHED
IT WAS LONG
OVERDUE AND
GAVE ME THE
SPACE AND TIME
TO APPRECIATE
AND FEEL GRATEFUL

THE THOUGHT WAS
NEVER FAR FROM MY
MIND. IN THE DAYS LEADING
UP TO LOCKDOWN I WAS
ON EDGE, TEARFUL.
UNCERTAINTY WEIGHED
HEAVILY ON MY HEART



THE EARTH
CARESSED THE SOLES
OF MY FEET.
THE FAMILIAR SOUNDS, SMELLS
AND ROUTINES OF HOME - OF FAMILY
THE WARM EMBRACE OF MY PARENTS,
MY BROTHER, OF HOME.
SINKING INTO ITS COMFORT, SHEDDING
THE DARK CLOAK THAT WAS UNCERTAINTY

THEN SUDDENLY - WITH MY CAR PACKED TO OVERFLOWING - I WAS HOME

The aspects that were the most challenging for members of our communities were:

Loss of physical connection with friends and whānau

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, public health officials were asking us to do something that does not come naturally to our very social species: Stay away from each other. Such social distancing—avoiding large gatherings and close contact with others—is crucial for slowing the spread of the virus and preventing our health care system from getting overwhelmed.

But touch is "really fundamental" for humans, says Prof Robin Dunbar, evolutionary psychologist at the University of Oxford - and going without it weakens our close relationships. "The sort of more intimate touching - arm round the shoulder, a pat on the arm and these kind of things reserved for closer friendships and family members - are really important," he says. They make us feel happier, satisfied and trusting of others. Touch is our first sense to develop in the womb, and research has shown physical contact with others can reduce the effect of stress" (Gillett, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has reshaped our personal relationships in unprecedented ways, forcing us to live closer together with some people and further apart from others. Life in lockdown has necessitated close, constant contact with our families and partners, but social distancing measures have isolated us from our friends and wider communities.

My Mum was travelling to Palmerston daily to have radiotherapy treatment. We were being vigilant not to do anything that could compromise her health. We connected through video chats and once or twice my daughter and I arrived at her property to do a "flash mob" ABBA routine in her driveway as she watched through the window.

I help quite a lot of elderly people, and I think the lockdown and families not being able to visit was hard for some people, and even people in the community too, and loss of all those fun things, like I go along and play table tennis, because there's quite some elderly people I discovered enjoy table tennis; and so, I've been losing all these activities that are really significant in those people's lives, and suddenly they couldn't do them was really upsetting.

And physical contact is quite important. That's what people missed. That's what they all missed during lockdown was that physical contact - just a touch on the arm or just that simple thing. This is why I think drop-in centres would be really, really handy to have.

I think that's really interesting isn't it, because during lockdown when we're thinking about the connects; like, I'm just thinking in my personal circles about people that I'm connecting with and then thinking about the parents that we had established some relationship.

Becoming workers, zoomsters, childminders and teachers all at once; New ways of working – the same but different.

There is certainly one trait that became apparent during lockdown, the ability to multi-task and multi-skill. Non-essential workers went from working in office environments to working at home, we became proficient in the utilisation of video web-based technology (such as zoom), and for many, we became teachers and or childminders fulltime. However, despite NZEI president Liam Rutherford stating that ‘parents shouldn't beat themselves up about it. Nobody is expecting them to be teachers ... instead, they should see it has an opportunity to make the most of the time and is important not to expect that learning from home would look the same as a standard school day’ (Williams & Franks, 2020), and Jacinda Arden urging parents to not feel teaching pressures (Devlin, 2020), some parents felt the full weight of having their children at home full time learning – no more so than parents with children with special needs (Edwards, 2020 & Franks, 2020). These pressures were not only felt by parents, but also teachers and pupils who both reported working/studying for longer hours in order to undertake distance learning than normal school based sessions.

Schoolwork and working, you got like six hours of homework every day from five classes and then you'd be called into work and just don't have time to do that plus when you weren't sure when you're going back to school so you'd have to try and come up with the working with given what you couldn't do, and um, I think it really negatively affected my schoolwork because I'm so used to a set routine that I do every day and taking away that retain was really tough for me. And I felt as if I was actually given more schoolwork to do. It was a lot on all of us mentally being in the lockdown. So suddenly, then being piled up with lots of internals and things to do when you're not actually even given the chance to really go through it with teachers and get that help that you need. Yeah, that was definitely a struggle for me.

My 5 year old grandson thought he was in a big time out.

I hated it, the kids wanted out and I had to keep them in.

I found it fucken scary, I got everyone in my office set up to work from home and it was full on. Once they had left and gone home, I realised that no one even thought about me, I went back to the office alone and bawled my eyes out. I hadn't even had time to get groceries for my family.

Help us be creative aye? We were doing things that we never thought we could do. I don't even know how to be a teacher, but I tried during the lockdown and the kids were like, “I want to go back to the real teacher. This teacher is too crummy.” So all those things that you learned as you stuck out with the kids.

Most of them were relatively okay. It's like, we just hit our groove and we decided let's just flag the home schooling and just kind of go with the flow. And, yep, you have your chaotic days but that's okay.

I guess the positive that came out of the COVID if you can call it anything positive about it was that the families that I knew and even my extended family; they had to work together. The kids benefitted from it because in most cases both parents were home. Both parents had to do things to occupy the kids that are normally out running all over the place and have a number of things to do at school; had to bring it home and do it there. They were quite innovative about things to the extent that when the COVID eased off and the return to school came about; a lot of the kids didn't want to go back to school because they had so much; well school entertainment during the day and taught them but doing it at home with the families; with their parents and the uncles and the aunts and stuff was hugely beneficial for them.

Pandemic stress, the pressures of working from home, school closures, social isolation...have caused a rise in abusive behaviours in families.

The road was empty it was like out of the movie apocalypse.

Because we work in the tertiary sector we weren't classed as essential workers – yet we often work with vulnerable people. The expectation from Govt was that we would work from home, but once we were locked out of our building we had no way to connect to our database and very few of our learners had the technology or capability to connect with us on-line. As a team we were concerned with how our families would cope. We knew that many were feeling stressed and would be completely isolated during lockdown. Sadly we did not have the means to alleviate that stress for them, stay connected or refer them to other organisations that may have been able to help.

And like people don't want to totally go online and they still like face-to-face and that, but it's nice to have options, and now we're set up so we do have options. For example, in the school holidays just been, normally I wouldn't be able to take time off because I can't not work. My job is such that I've got things that I have to do, and I was able to work from home. So I got a holiday, I got to be home with my son, I didn't have to shunt him off to school, I did the things that I had to do from home, so I'm now set up to work from home, and it was amazing. It was so much better, life was good, you know.

I actually struggle to get back into the zone, whereas that didn't happen at home and I absolutely agree. And I did, because my son was at home and working doing school from home, and so not motivated, I did basically hand-feed him through it. I did a lot of my work in the evenings and that suits me because I'm a night owl, and I'm super productive at night-times when I'm not interrupted and I loved the flexibility to be able to do that as well.

I guess with school and stuff back it would be a bit different now if we were to work. But I guess working from home was the dream. The reality isn't so.

Some employers are looking at things differently, they're allowing staff to work from home; they've got staff with mobility issues, that can be a really good thing.

I think I could concentrate a bit better at home, like I didn't have to work for two hours straight; I could work for an hour, have a 30 minute break, have some lunch, walk around the house, and then go back to work for another half an hour. I could do maths for an hour, or I could go out and cook something, as a hospitality assessment.

All the families were baking and everyone said to me, "Why are they running out?" And I said, "Think about it. They've all got their children home. What does a parent normally do if they've nothing to do, is they bake."

I like being at home because I can write my questions down, and my questions were down there, and I felt less of a barrier. You go into the doctor's surgery and you get all nervous and all up tight. You really want this, and you don't know if he's going to give it to you. But I had my cup of tea in my hand and my bits of paper down there, I'm going to be relaxed with it because I work on computers all the time. That's probably why. Got nice big screen. He came up nice and big. I do think it depends on the technology and the experience of the person.

Our parenting groups – four of them wanted to continue as a Zoom group and they really appreciated... I think one of the things they appreciated was, when you're stuck at home with your kids, and actually to have sort of adult to adult conversations.

Personally, yes, I enjoyed working from home in the sense that you could work and we were so lucky with the weather, so we could get out and get some sunshine and exercise at the same time which now that you're back at work full-time, that's a negative. It's the lack of the exercise now.

The other thing about working from home I noticed... Well, I spent a lot more time with my partner. She actually said that she appreciated having me, even though she put me in the garage so I didn't distract her life. Because we went for a walk every lunchtime; we went for a for a good hour and a half's walk each day. It was pretty quiet around town and all that. Actually, the weather was quite good during it

Some said they were working far more efficiently from home.

Yeah. I think because we're all set up in the cloud and all got laptops and that too, I think working from home works. It's worked for a lot of people. It worked for me. I think working from home if you can do it is... yeah. Because I think you get a much better work/life balance when you're working from home and I think you structure your day better when you're working from home. I do. That's a big positive.

And my man-child husband. I was concerned it would start that and it would be hard for my husband and I to be there in the same... I wasn't worried about the kids but him and I, it actually brought us closer together as a family and as a couple personally. Even though it's difficult at times working from home, I think it's made a lot of people look at work situations differently.

I know a lot of people enjoyed working from home and they wanted it to carry on, whereas then there were other ones that didn't enjoy working from home and couldn't wait to get back.

I was surprised at the amount of work I did from home, even not having access to our computers because I thought that it was going to be cosy and it wasn't as cosy as I thought it was going to be. From a normal day, what was my productivity? I'd have to say it was probably only 50%. But personally I found that really difficult.

Yes, it was really nice working from home and to have good productivity when I was doing things.

You imagine being overseas in a country that there's no leadership, the virus is rampant, you're locked up in home with nobody to help you, nobody cares, no services, no resources, it must be petrifying. As hard as it was on some people, like we didn't have that.

I didn't enjoy working from home. Not because... in the beginning I thought perhaps I wasn't going to be disciplined enough and I've just gotta look for work. But I didn't do that. I think I worked harder. I think I worked harder over lockdown than I have in my whole entire life. Because I just, you know, like you would sit at your computer and then I'd just forget. I'd start at, I don't know, eight o'clock and I had to physically move myself from my kitchen table and move, and actually set myself up an office

Whilst it was great, one of the girls here, she's got a little baby who's two, one is two and another one who's turned four. She found it really, really difficult. Then she got the guilt because she wasn't spending time with her kids and things like that

Even the schooling was as big an issue I don't think as some had felt that it might be; but that would be the tip over was that they had to home school.

Working from home in my whanau space, taking all of the sad, painful and troubling stories from my caseload into my home ♥

- Knowing the extreme need & feeling unable to meet it.

Thankful we didn't have deaths in the thousands like some countries

Loved my bubble with my wife. Decide, comparing safe I had no idea the struggles others were having.

Didn't know what to do with myself for first two weeks then it was all good. Relaxing. Time with whanau and getting back to nature - garden, cooking, knitting, drawing.

B99 You Are My Fire...

LOVED IT

I WAS GRATEFUL we all did it.

Thank you NZers.

Billie/addy Watched you tube stay missess

I just get to feel real love in the home that I live in, 'Cos I got too much life 'Pannin' through my veins going to waste
Please don't hold my hand I wanna keep on twin...
Nor sure I understand This role I've been given
I sit & talk to God And he just laughs at my plans
Two metres distance away is what he demands...
L. Neeson + R. Williams rehash!

We are lucky to be in NZ. In my home country 'lockdown' means you get shot if you step foot outside your door.

The world stopped and could finally see the Himalayas everyone is waiting for science to solve climate change. Its in our hands We just need to stop.

Dally-dogg

Went to the beach. Did some stunts. A bit of this n that worked on the cars.

My husband is a first responder of this was difficult to PCR & mixed Messaging. He was worried about our family & possibly spreading it. I was @ first trying to work in civil defence & managing our kids home was a struggle eventually it was decided that I wouldn't continue to civil response. I became good at zoom meetings. A big struggle & my husband was shaking his head - weird its thing that you worry about which and important to you...

My mother got sick just before lockdown. She had to go into a home. Couldn't see my mother for seven weeks. it was horrible. My mother got very sick at the end of the lockdown and was admitted to hospital. The hospital was great they let me and my family spend time with Mum before she died. Wish we could have had her for those seven weeks.

Billie/addy

Saying could we do some Barbas and that pulled in Emily sets. But a call and that was the end. Wished we had her for those seven weeks.

it was an odd feeling having just moved here, not knowing anyone.

it made me get on my hum-dinger of a bike pretty darn quick.

it gave me a chance to get to know this town in real time... albeit a ghostly feeling

at home I painted & did lots of gardening & listening of the birds who came to visit.

I picked lots of pinecones & made fire. Took me back to basics & question what really matters.

gwb

Amby Cindy
miss. So lucky to be in Whanganui NZ
I had not had an opportunity to see you
My phone died
I grew a beard
PJ's all day
DVDs all night
IN Lockdown I Slept (STAY INSIDE)

THIS IS AMAZING BY THE TIME I HAD GONE AROUND THE ROOM I HAD A LUMP IN MY THROAT. IT BURSTED SO MANY MEMORIES AND ANTIHISTAMINE

Listen to OTT THOMAS WILLIAMS TRUTH Honor & Integrity Youtube.

You have made the 'thing' beautiful thanks

In my bubble was my husband & our at the first two weeks were like a holiday but then I started to feel uneasy & worried. I missed my job kicking it didn't make sense. What hanging was the worst

Nga Manu e Kai ana i te Matawanga Nōnā Te Ao

I have noticed that when you are elderly that Spring is a time to be happy, stand up, move!

Shake a hand doubt then regain joyous confidence

Once we turned off the tv things got better. For a daily death was obscure

I checked myself as essential worker & carried on working. I didn't say when the police came to me!

Just the same as having the same job. I just didn't want to go to work.

United Divided

The aspects that members of our communities want to keep the most in the future were:

Interconnection between agencies and the breaking down of barriers

COVID-19 created a burning platform for change that required local organisations to think and act like a system, in ways we could have never before imagined. Things that were previously thought impossible were achieved in a matter of days or weeks, as people and organisations pulled together united in a new collective purpose, adopting radical new practice, and organising in new ways. One of the largest pieces of feedback that we received was that crown agencies, iwi and local government organisations cannot go back to operating in the manner that they were pre-COVID - because it was “never good enough for majority of our people” (Houpapa, 2020). The key theme that came out of the organisational and community engagement surveys was ‘Together is Better’ (Carey, 2020; and Carey, 2020b). As we collectively move forward it is important that we challenge traditional silos and work for the community. ‘Community’ in this sense is understood as a verb, not a noun; in other words, it is the state that is the consequence of our efforts, not a static thing at which we point or towards which we design services without our communities. If we do not directly invest in our community—its economy, ecology, and cultures— we may one day find there is no longer a community at all (Russell, 2020).

I’ve got four boxes of kai on my doorstep, you know? So, we actually had to talk about how we were distributing. You know? Who’s on your database? Having those hard discussions and I think to be honest once we kind of let the egos go and that protection of I work for this, I work for that, actually I am you, you are me. We’ve got to help each other.

And I think like you say, because of the COVID business, organisations here have talked to each other more. You saw a different side of people on Zoom meetings, because you see them at home, so it makes people more approachable.

I was talking to my friends at Manchester House this morning and they were saying during the lockdown they gave 300 families food parcels at a value of about \$100 each and that was a total of 30,000 and the Government gave them money like that. End of story. You need it you’ve got it. The Mayor organised for all of the swimming pool staff and the library staff to get in Council vehicles and deliver all the food parcels and there was a lot of collaboration here.

It’s got a whole lot better, but there still is very much the silo approach. There has been more collaboration that’s happened over the years which is not rocket science. If you all work together, we will find that the sharing of resources, you’re going to get more outcomes. But because we are still not doing that well enough, pre-COVID I was wondering how this was all sort of going to pan out. There’s political stuff as well, there’s iwi stuff, there’s all the things, the things, the things that go on in this community. However, from my experience, I felt that actually when that happened

there was... And I guess it does happen when there's a crisis – and only when there's a crisis – collaboration starts to happen. Why they can't keep that consistent, I don't know. So from what I saw between iwi, health and social service agencies, that collaboration was happening and it was happening really well.

The collaboration and the community, I think, was really, really good and really, really positive and it wasn't competitive because everybody united as one because everyone had a common cause, but we still had a common cause way before COVID came along, and post-COVID, so why can't we keep doing that stuff? During COVID Everybody did it together. It was amazing.

Absolutely but I mean that's just me just saying if we are going to move forward; collaboration and/or the most appropriate person doing the mahi; not the ones that are the ones left standing.

There was no such thing as a weekend, and the level of collaboration and cooperation to get a collective goal was just incredible. We don't do that on any other issue, and we've got some major, major entrenched social issues that we should be dealing with, but because they're not in our face, and they're not going to kill us tomorrow; we carry on and do like we used to do it, and it's the politics' step in. And the thing about this has to be about tino rangatiratanga in everybody... including my own iwi.

Two things for me have really stuck; the power of collaboration and the power of communication.

There's all these things which we already know about but I mean the power of the collaboration was that although numbers didn't increase in terms of family harm and that; it brought about change in terms of creating new relationships.

And there's a lot of collaborations that have come out of it like Volunteer and Age Concern is setting up together with the banks to help people that want to, especially elderly people get set upon online banking. And like that's amazing, like how cool's that, stuff like that to come out of it.

Communication, collaboration. It's really good working with other organisations; it's good when you have got that... You know other organisations, you know, other people you have that chat, you network.

I've seen amazing things happen when agencies work collaboratively. It's that really, because everybody's giving. No one agency is expected to go and fund the whole thing. If everybody sees that someone is putting in this and someone's putting in that then they don't feel like they're having to take responsibility. It's all come out that it's not fair that we have to do it and you don't have to do it. I've seen some amazing stuff like that. It's collaboration, and it works. Even in its most simple form.

Yeah, and if we do have a social governance model, and we do seriously have iwi at the table, and that's a big if we get them, and if they're willing to come and start, then that's an opportunity I think towards creating inclusiveness in terms of the whole city, but often iwi are focused on iwi, and that's okay, so long as they are taking care of everyone; and so, so long as everyone is connected somehow, but I don't think they are. That was the other thing I kept thinking after COVID; I was thinking we want to maintain this level of connectivity if you like, or collaboration.

So from what I saw between iwi, health and social service agencies, that collaboration was happening and it was happening really well.

Maybe a potential positive; the glass is half full. Is, from a major funder, a government agency; that they are starting to talk a little bit more, more flexible. I use the word flexible instead of being so structured. Yet to play out, but certainly, the right noises are coming our way.

That's one thing that's come out of that. Working together within the community was absolutely brilliant. It was amazing, and you just rung someone and something happened. That was really cool. We got stronger alliances and networks within other community agencies, and how we all just banded together was just amazing. Well, I reckon anyway. The positives were that people were reassured.

I'm a big advocate for all the agencies working together so we're all on the same page, we're all on the same page. Doesn't matter what agency we are, we are all to be working for the same reason, is the health of our people, the health and mental.

When they set goals, and I think that's a different elective of that community approach; is all they wanted was a job, a house, and to be healthy, to look presentable so that they could get a job and have a family and a house. I guess, going forward, one of the things that came out of the work with them is; there was always something done to them, or a service or an agency working with them; but generally just doing things to them. They had an issue, they got moved to another service, another service; and often they just got moved on because it didn't meet the criteria - very strict criteria. I think if there were more places with more open criteria; I understand there needs to be criteria but it seems to be there's pockets of the community missing out all the time, and we're not taking a strengths-based approach; we're taking a needs-based approach.

How can we work together better? And there's a whole lot of stuff you guys do way better than we do because that's not our core business but it's your core business; and we're used to delivering food because actually when it comes to a flood we do that; we've been doing that for a while. So that's the stuff that we've got some systems that are quite good at that so, actually collectively can we do that better together? So we need to think about that.

"I'm sick of things being done to me." We ask them quite frequently, "What is it that brings you through our door? What is it that you get from coming into this space?" Time and time again we hear, "You guys actually listen, you actually give us a voice, we actually feel valued here and you don't try to fit us into a box." We had one woman that drew this fantastic picture of her family squashed into this box and trying to get out and she said, "This is what other agencies do to us." She said, "We go into WINZ and they say, "Yes we can help if you meet this criteria, this criteria, this criteria." She said, "Nine times out of ten I don't." She said, "Whereas you guys just said, "How can we make that work?"



LONGING - FOR HOME : TO BE SAFE : FOR WIDE OPEN SPACES : FOR PEOPLE TO TRULY THIS SHIT SERIOUSLY

Sarah McDonald

Rapid support for the vulnerable and those in need in our community.

“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.” - Bishop Desmond Tutu

The New Zealand Government has announced a range of measures to support people and the economy with a \$12.1 billion support package in response to the Coronavirus health crisis. From wage subsidies, to welfare packages, to kai packs and the homing of the homeless (Bay of Plenty Times, 2020; Graham-Mclay, 2020; and Small & Lynch, 2020). Engagement around how, as a community, we were able to break down ‘bureaucratic barriers’ and get people fed and homed were common – “It’s those bureaucratic agencies; healthcare and education are not dissimilar, and council”.

So it’s very organic, I know it’s not an answer, but if they were supported by the things they needed - an 0800 line or a reiteration of the COVID line, Kai Access, I don’t know. Then if that kicked in you might have got neighbourhoods who were able to... and that we knew then that they were okay, rather than one house at a time.

They care for the community. There are lots of little groups doing their work and yes most of us came together but there are still lots of groups doing their own work supporting their own individual communities and that’s a really positive thing. We’d love them to be part of the wider network. I think that’s what we’re saying.

So they had to access the supermarket; they still have to have their stuff. I’m part of neighbourhood support and we found people who had just had fireplaces installed but hadn’t had them signed off, so they weren’t allowed to use them, and there was a solo mum with two preschool kids living in this fridge, but the saving grace for that was when I rang all the plumbers and found all the houses that we had these fires; I was able to get hold of the Rangitikei District Council CE, and bang, he had it organised and had a building inspector come up in the first week of lockdown of level four and sign these off.

Me personally, Taihape as a community really rose to the occasion. They were good – brilliant. We’ve got a great community here, great support system. Everyone was on board, there was no negativity at all, it was all positive.

I think on a whole everyone worked well together, and everyone; well, as many people that needed support got in and find other people that asked us, were able to suggest a way that they can be assisted the same as the welfare centre would have done as well. I don’t believe there was anyone that asked for food didn’t get any food, or the help that they needed at that particular time, but there was also a big number of

people who didn't ask for help either, that we actually didn't know about, because there's an assumption that we know all the older people.

And most of our member organisations were really impressed with how their clients managed the situation and were offering support on the phone and Zoom meetings and that sort of thing. I know Balance did a lot of Zoom support kind of meetings.

But they had a right to need support. So, we able to key them into support and that's having that wider network of us all working together. We were trying to only have a limited, you know, we were getting money given to us, how do we make that work?

She was referring a lot of our Samoan people, specifically from Marton and some around here in Whanganui. So, I was able to connect and ring the 0800 number so that they can get that support. It was great to actually see them utilise what we were trying to achieve here, to support our communities.

Because I think what we've highlighted through this process is that families are really vulnerable and the need to have easy access services, or ways that they can connect and feel supported in a way that's not threatening, is really, really important.

I think the way that Winz has restructured some of the ways that they do things; we need to keep that there. Because there are some parts of that that it's much easier now to access. That would be one thing I'd noticed. There seemed to be a dropping of the silos, which she's mentioned, and answers seem to be available quite quickly, which in the ordinary pre-Covid would have taken a very long time. You know, seem to be available almost instantly.

But that will only continue if we continue to have these conversations and continue to believe in a better tomorrow basically; and include the right people; have the right people. It's been done. It's been proven over the last you know. As some of the conversations we've had like just talking to your team. You've got a whānau here so sharing that. It didn't have to go by way of a big; there wasn't a lot of processes to go through; a lot of hoops to jump through in order to support this whānau. It was a conversation between two people or three people. We want those resources. At the end of the day the whānau were in a better space than they were that morning when they woke up basically. I think if we can use that as a starting point in terms of sustaining what's already happened and what's already taken place; then I think we're going to go a long way in terms of rebuilding or continuing to build on what we've started.

So obviously the current government's focus had a lot on mental health and resources for mental health, and I think that's huge in keeping people's wellbeing moving forward. There's a lot of resources around at the moment to help people with wellbeing, and to support people that need help there.

I think that's what I noticed was that people were able to access the help they actually need all the time. So, that extra pastoral support, that extra access to food. That extra access to money, that actually kind of helped them get across that threshold that is actually probably what they need all the time to be well. Was suddenly available. And it was like, oh, so we can do this.

So we transitioned our food delivery service through to them and I know Te Ranga Tupua have transitioned to them for food as well and so they'll get some extra support to provide additional support into the community from a food parcel perspective.

Also WINZ; I think WINZ impacted on the hub a lot, because the people that were ringing the beneficiaries, they talked about how the entitlements went out but it was very hard to make contact with WINZ. I know that one of our frontline said that one of her whānau had tried calling for hours to try and get a food entitlement. We did support that area, but she knew that because she was able to get those entitlements, tried ringing her on the phone and it was just chaos.

The bit that we saw that took really big hits were families where one income was lost, but they've got those fixed outgoings. That's where we've seen really big, big stress. It's been an interesting kind of, it's not been your average recipient of support. And they've found it quite hard to be recipients of support.

So failsafe support. I know you said outside COVID, but like was offered in COVID, like you're never going to get to rock bottom, we've got these systems in place.

They've got the help and support they need and medications

I mean, I suppose it's the same old issues isn't it; housing, mental health support is a big things that I notice.

I guess too, making sure that people are aware of the supports that are around; whether that be counselling, and again, the campaigns around that and what that looks like. So for the people who are struggling, they know its out there; and how to access it and make it easy, accessible.

That's huge because when I look around and see how much services there are in this area; I've said this before. There should be no one sick. There should be no one uneducated. There should be no one homeless when you look at the amount of money and resources that are poured in. If we could show over the COVID period how collaborative approach works best and go back to what was working and then look at that going forward; I'm sure we're going to get a whole lot of better outcomes. That may mean challenging some of these services that are funded to provide a service to engage with our family. A lot of people may feel uncomfortable about that conversation but I think it's a conversation that needs to be had.

Whanau
sad,
stones from
me

Thank you NZers.
Great to see people
giving their services
to others their work.

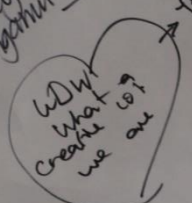
We are lucky to be
in NZ. In my
home country 'lockdown'
means you get shot
if you step foot
outside your door.

Ahly
Had my 2-day in
it was fun/bring

got sick just before
had to go into a home.
My mother for seven
horrible. My mother
at the end of the
what admitted to
hospital was great
of my family spend
before she died.
I have had hor-
rrible necks.

an odd
having
oved here,
sowing anyone.
de we get
my hum- singer
like pretty
we me a chance to
to know this town
real time... about a
ome I painted a
lots
sening of gardening
e came to the birds
picked lots of pinecones
made fire.
ook me back to basics
a question what really
matters. (ab)

Auntie Cindy
Takes S. L. L. to
be in Whangamata NZ



I had just had an operation
It was restful.
It was time to
reflection on the
vulnerability of the
world -> it
feels like we are
Mx Phone died
I grow a Beard
PJ's all day
DVDs all Night

WEIRD, ODD

COVID
RULE
(Creepy)

to au te awa
to te awa ko au

Look at
the facts

It was fine
I had a talking
time I have
views I have
maintain the
doubt about it

IN LockDOWN,
I SLEPT.
(ST Was Fun)

THIS IS AMAZING
BY THE TIME I HAD
GONE AROUND THE ROOM
READING THE KORERO
I HAD A LUMP IN MY
THROAT- IT EVOLVED SO
MANY MEMORIES AND EMOTIONS

INSANE

Listen too
THOMAS WILLIAMS
TRUTH Honor & Integrity
Youtube.

United We Stand
Divided We Fall
Caring & Sharing
Co-operative
Not competitive
LOVE WILL ALWAYS
SHINE LIGHT
ON THE SHADOWS
H- higher
U- universal

You have made
& uncomfortable
'thing' beautiful
thanks

ENTHUSIASM & BORING

I classified myself
as essential worker
& carried on working
I didn't stop, even
when the police stopped
me!

I talked to my friends
online & played heaps
of unicef on
learning was
strong

BECHAMP
or
PASTEUR?
TRUTH
SEEKER
or
LIES?

In my bubble was me
my girlfriend & our cat
the first two weeks were
like a holiday but then
I started to feel uneasy
& worried. I missed my job taking
it didn't make sense...
Not taking was the worst

Nga Manu e Kai ana i te Matauranga
Nōnā Te Ao

Just the same for
me I've been in
thinking for years
I missed shopping is
I just started doing
my way (15/10)

I have noticed that
in the elderly that I
strongly seem to be
angry, I seem to be
more...

Once we turned off
the t.v things
got better for us
Every day was the
daily death count. It
was obscure.

Shake a hand doubt and
then regain joyous confident welcome.

INSIGHTS

Throughout the community engagement, common experiences, stories and korero came to the fore that were of concern to many members of our communities. Through the thematic analysis, these were grouped into three core themes:

- *Mental Health and Addiction Services – availability and access*
- *Housing – Rentals and Home Ownership, Social Housing and Homelessness*
- *Organisations returning to how they operated in a pre-Covid environment.*

Other areas of concern were mentioned around education and the environment, however the narratives around these were specific and therefore have not been included to maintain the anonymity of the individuals and communities.

Whilst the narratives presented in this report are standalone to the narratives produced in the Integrated Recovery Team's previous reports, the themes are consistent with those found previously (Alexander, Almond & Carey, 2020; Carey, 2020a; and Carey, 2020b) in the immediate aftermath of the Level 4 lockdown.

In the following pages, narratives are presented to provide context to the concerns for our communities. These themes will be collated and presented with the 'stats' of each particular area in the Community Equity and Wellbeing reports.

Mental Health and Addiction Services – availability and access

Mental Health and Addiction Services were described throughout the engagement as dysfunctional. Unfortunately, to members of our community, their experience is one of not being able to get the help and support they need in a timely manner, of not having community connectors to support people through the system, of there being problems with access to services, and one of the system increasing health inequities.

A lot of mental health goes hand in hand with like social security. With energy poverty and healthy homes and social security; all these need resilient structures directly related to mental health. Then on top of it if you are in a cold damp home; you're probably miserable. You'll struggle about your power bill; you're miserable. If your children; if you're taking your children to hospital you're stressed out as well.

Lake Alice which was the mental health institution. You've got, I guess, the historic hurts that have come from up the river and the Treaty claims mixed with all the social issues which impacts on the health of people which then impacts on the education of children and it all gets ugly. Like that, in a great big mucky ball, and it's the intergenerational stuff. It's just a constant flow on and trying to break those cycles. Can't break the cycles if you haven't got the resources; so it's very much... My

colleagues work really hard – health, education, but we’re just band-aiding what’s happening and I just don’t know... You know you can only put a plaster on it for so long and so there’s a plaster that’s been put on here sort of, with COVID. But you rip that off in a year’s time and I just hate to see...

I don’t even know where to start. I’ve been here 18 years, and for the most part I’m pretty good at de-escalation, but from time to time I will get someone who’s really unwell, and it’s not P, because I know what that looks like, but they are really, really unwell; and trying to get someone to help is forget it. I just don’t even bother anymore. And how many times have we tried? Years and years and years... It is at all levels of mental health - All levels of mental health, it doesn’t matter. I’ve even had people that I’ve kept in my office for two or three hours at a time, to try and calm them down enough just to feel okay about sending them out on the street, and then picking up the phone and ringing the Police and saying, “Hey look, I’m a little bit concerned about this individual.”

It’s what’s not really working in a mental health team and all that kind of stuff and seeing some of the holes and going, “Oh.” All that happens is that Police are called; it goes south and then if crisis isn’t working but actually there’s a whole heap of things that haven’t worked way back here; that has enabled that to occur. The whole shift and focus around this is what is needed to empower our communities to put the barricades at the top of the cliff rather than seeking out the ambulances at the bottom which is Police pushing through doors or ambulances pushing through doors.

Yeah, so often in the NGO sector, I find people say, “Our contract doesn’t allow us to do that.” I’ll say, “Bugger your contract. Your contract is you have to meet a certain thing or we’ll deliver so many widgets or whatever it is. But that’s all we do. The institution you have the contract with – it’s not their job to tell you how to do it. That’s your job, or how you best apply it.” I get CAMHS. I get CAMHS saying, “Our contract with MOH, we can only work with the top three and a half percent of mental illness in children.” I say, “How do you bloody work out if a kid fits the top three and a half percent.” That’s just ludicrous. Sometimes it is the way that money works. I’ve always made it our business here that we have a wide range of sources and the reason we do direct fundraising ourselves is because I always say to bureaucrats, “It’s not your job to tell us how to do it and you’re only partially funding this and people in our community are putting hands in their pockets.”

They have felt left out through a lot of it. Even though they had contact with me, they still felt left out. Some of them felt very isolated. A lot of them, I thought that their mental health suffered. I was doing a lot more talking with them and just reassurance was desperately needed that they were going to be okay, that we’re all going through this and just telling them it is okay to feel angry, it’s okay to feel upset, it’s okay to cry.

Mental health, old trust, and broken issues. It was a constant thing but he's just one of many, you know, we've got an old community of mental health people that went through Lake Alice, have gone through the systems when it wasn't right. So, their trust and anything medical or doctors is not okay.

I think that mental health is a really significant issues in our community, and mainly among young people. I think we definitely need to work on educating; and like educating our youth on different issues surrounding that and making them aware that they do have those options, and providing them with people you can go to so that you have that support system, because yeah, the amount of teenagers struggling is just crazy. The standards that many of us like are made to try and live up to, especially at our school. We've got mental health is really bad at our school.

But in terms of that, I think like community-wise, if we get more opportunities for mental health to be like communicated and stuff, and it helps, that'd be great.

So, those rural communities need to be a real focus, and I'd be interested to hear what that comes back. But also our young people, because we kind of think oh yeah they get on with it, but they worry about everything. You only need to look at the mental health statistics, and suicide, in our region is horrendous. We don't want that to increase.

I firmly believe that physical health goes into mental health, goes into this health and goes into this one. It's not just one small parcel; it affects every part of everybody's health.

Stemming from that as well, emergency accommodation for people with mental health. There are quite a few that come in here, and they're like simply just walking the streets because there's nowhere for them go, and there's no facility. I mean, there's a facility but there's no service to pick them up and guide them into a place. I mean, there's obviously a shortage of housing, and mental health workers as well.

There's enough money into the community that the services should be there, and that's the point that people who get the funding to help these people, do not have the skills, because you know people with mental health issues will scream and shout, and if you retaliate the same way you're just going to get one big hell of a fight, and then these poor people get banned and trespassed from an office, and it's how you deal with them, and of course they're not trained.

I mean, I suppose it's the same old issues isn't it; housing, mental health support is a big things that I notice.

Or maybe just break the ice, get them into community mental health, you know, where they build up a relationship with someone and they can keep it going. But when you've got a pandemic going, and you're locked down for two months, where do people go for that kind of support? Because they need support and can't get it.

What happened in my bubble was not a lot at all, well so I thought until I started to speak about it. I entered COVID unaware and a little relaxed not realising the extent of Fear out there. After all I just spent over a week organising and coordinating Race Unity week at UCOL, and rushing through our Women's Wellbeing workshops before lockdown, and making sure my tenants had heaters to stay warm.

Our household was well prepared with everything from new vege plants growing in the garden, to fully stocked cupboards, and sufficient toilet paper lol.
One of our whanau wouldn't lockdown so we had to ask him to leave. He felt shafted... didn't understand the safety factor.

Moving on, now there were two.
Imagine a big big house 180sqm, and just 2 people with a room each at the front of the whare, and the kitchen all the way down the back.
Communication is easy, just yell across the hallway.

I had a mission that I was going to do heaps of craft. Not even.
I became bored.. unmotivated.

I watched a lot of NETFLIX, 4 season marathons.
I joined a lot of new Facebook pages. My Favourite was Millar's Kitchen.
The first three weeks I cooked my little heart out. But then I started to gain weight.

I focussed on my sons' stomach happiness instead.
Before he finished his first meal, he was asking what's for the next meal.
He was surprised by all the flavours that came together in his mouth.
We ate simply, fresh vegetables and small amount of chicken and wraps and other child friendly food.
I was happy when I could finally cook us a roast. We also had homemade curry. And first-time making custard squares as I craved bakery food and home made KFC went down a treat in many households.
Supermarkets sold out of Celery salt and many other herbs and spices.

We burst our bubbles and celebrated mother's day at level 3
We celebrated 70 years for mums birthday at level 2
We celebrated my moko's 1st birthday by hanging out with him for the day. He didn't recognise us at first as it had been 6 weeks.

We lost loved ones too.

My 11yr old decided his hair was too long, so shaved the lot off. First home haircut.
Then he asked me to supervise him while he cooked us breakfast – hash browns, fish fingers, followed by steak, and conversation

I was looking a little grey, so gave myself a hair dye. Someone else usually did this for me.

Online shopping – lots of it, all essential, May birthday gifts sorted. Supplements sorted.

Learnt new skills – seed saving, garden tutorials, and crafting. Made Feijoa cake for first time and Feijoa Fizz. That was scientific. Even started learning a new LANGUAGE.

Group messaging with the whanau, with my mokos, with my children. There are many fun effects on messenger, I now have lots of funny pics.

Facebook challenges were plentiful, as were quiz games. I enjoyed the 10-day Nana challenge, posting photos of my beautiful mokos.

Support local – as we moved through the levels I enjoyed buying local organic and fresh hydroponic food, at the best prices, delivered to the door.

I enjoyed lockdown. The main thing I realised was my son ate three square meals, went to sleep on time, and woke early daily. Before he had difficulty sleeping, and gamed all night. COVID showed how erratic or unstructured our daily life was before.

My highlights – going to the supermarket as often as I could. Delivering kai to the vulnerable. Someone stealing lettuce from my garden twice, they must have been hungry.

Housing – Rentals and Home Ownership, Social Housing and Homelessness

The conversations that were had around housing were extensive and not limited to social housing or homelessness. The primary concerns around housing were:

- Availability of housing stock
- Availability of land to build on
- Affordability of existing housing
- Affordability of building materials
- The poor quality of the current housing stock

The primary concerns for rentals were:

- Availability of rentals
- Affordability of existing rentals
- The poor quality of the current rental stock
- The inability to address poor landlords due to the above concerns for fear of becoming homeless.

The accommodation situation is terrible and where do you put people? Particularly with sex offenders, child sex offenders in particular – they're the hardest to house and the Department have a policy of not putting sex offenders into hotels and motels which I think is ridiculous because one person stuffed up; you know, I don't know how many, hundreds. Homeless and sex offenders, they did put in hotels and motels, but in those situations it's about risk management, not about risk-adverseness. It's about managing the risk. When you've got a pandemic, part of that is being risk-adverse of course, it depends on how high the risk is, but someone actually has to determine whether it should be elimination or control and how that goes, because the Department were in the situation that if someone had a release date, they had to be released.

I think there is got a contract to put people into motels and hotels for a week and I think there might have been some extra provisions made during the lockdown. But that's something that must be taken into consideration moving forward; even whānau relationships break down, but particularly when... The housing crisis, we've got manufactured flats, not natural flats, where you're putting strangers in with each other and expecting them to get on

I think New Zealand has a major issue with inequality. It's growing. And I really think we've got an opportunity here to grow it further making sure that people have lovely large houses or we have an opportunity to ensure that our private people and the other people that they don't do the feeding of people

Yeah it is cold aye. It's freezing. Oh man, I hope you've got a warm house to go to." "Oh nah, not really." "Oh where do you live?" "Oh over Cliff. Having a few problems with the landlord."

It's hard to get food without food and housing to people.

The council with the hotline and everything made it quite clear for people where to go in the first instance, so most of our public inquiries came at the end of it, the fallout of it; so the housing issues, people that had issues during lockdown with housing, looking for housing and people wanting food.

When we talked about the P epidemic there was other things that were uncovered as well like financial issues; housing issues; domestic violence and all this other stuff.

One of the things that also stuck out was that there was an absence of some of the services. There was an absence. I mean to me it's not rocket science really. If we all have a passion for the people; then everything else will automatically guide you in terms of that. But if you are driven by a different kaupapa then you're going to be led by that kaupapa which doesn't trickle down to the whānau that we're here to serve in terms of power for the education, employment, housing, social.

Germany got well over a million people within a very short period of time and I actually wanted, just out of pure interest... I've got a housing interest anyway, but how did they cope with it? Because I knew that they were in church halls, gymnasiums, anywhere where they could put a sleeping bag and a bed and how did they do that? They prefabricated houses – three storey, four storey – and they prefabricated them for cheap but adequate, you know? No leaky homes. They made communities. They looked at the social structure of the people that were coming and they built it around communities, and they had social workers and language specialists and health professionals going into the community so that they weren't isolated. They did a marvellous job.

Also we had like emergency housing available during COVID which disappears once the crisis is over. Our people continue to suffer.

I mean we still don't have enough housing by a long shot, and we still do not have decent housing either.

So some of the problems were there before COVID and the housing issue is our biggest. In fact, I did a submission to the Department about the housing issue with some solutions to it because I had the time to do that.

As a landlord with the new government regulations coming in, I am going to leave my properties vacant. Why would I enable people in them to have more rights than myself as the owner? Do I feel sorry for those that cannot get into a house and I have houses empty? Sometimes, but then I realise that this has only occurred due to the government

imposing this on landlords. Stop picking on those that have got ahead in life and can provide a roof over people's head – how about the government builds the houses they promised to build? How about that?

Housing.

Housing is huge.

We had a few people ringing, but they'd never had a fixed abode for food packages and stuff. So yeah, housing.

A big part is housing for our men folk. Not-so-great places like Bignell and they're getting charged \$320 for a one bedroom including power. And they've got no money left over each week. They're not safe and they've got virtually nothing left over for food. And it's not great. But there's nowhere else for them to go. It's like what's the option.

We need to increase our housing rapidly. I think youth housing is an easy one and I know Oranga Tamariki are talking about the possibility of youth transition housing here.

As a community, Waimarino have already identified housing as a really big issue; that some of the houses aren't actually liveable but people are still living in them because that's all they have.

And I'm finding it more and more frustrating when all this monies coming out for the emergency housing, and I know there's an issue, totally know there's an issue, but they're not looking where the money is going to, and they're not contracting for that money, they're just giving it out, because somebody's got the biggest mouth.

There's a lot of money going into emergency housing, a heap of money, but it's not been given to the right people, because we know who the people are now

Focus on housing.

Housing's a huge one obviously.

Yeah, but you know, does the council want to get into housing? That's a whole other big, big, big thing.

You know the people that are hard to house and that are the people who have all the issues and have burnt their bridge and blah, blah, blah, if they got help sooner, they might not get there.

And a lot of that is outside of our localized control in central government policy, or there's not enough housing, there's not enough builders, there's not enough resource.

The clear link between housing and respiratory health. We're looking at somewhere around 800 preventable emergency room visits of children in Whanganui every year which is costing a lot of money. It's really stressful to parents and families and the issue isn't being addressed significantly but it can be. It can be; that's one really good example where the DHB can be out working proactively in the community to promote and guide people towards healthy housing.

The amount of under-utilised housing in Whanganui is incredible in terms of just old people who can't afford to move but have these houses that aren't being lived in. I think that's another opportunity in terms of planning.

Can I just throw it out there. You know it's great that we've got all this development and housing and stuff going in. But none of that is going to be suitable for first homeowners or for people that are struggling.

Financially I mean the house prices. House prices are ridiculous. They are. And at the moment we've got families that are being shunted out of their houses because the house is sold and they cannot afford to get into anywhere and there's no rentals and the prices of these new places is not going to be achievable. It's the same everywhere. Also we've got an awful lot that the town isn't growing or anything because all the buildings here have got to be made earthquake proof. And I mean it's like our church. It's going to cost us about 300,000 to do a church that's 130 years old. It's never had a shake. Made of wood. Happy as a lark. But it's going to cost us that to put it back in. So we're in the church hall at the back.

I know a lot of families that, even though they don't have insulation, they're too scared to talk about it because then the house will be condemned and then they'll be homeless. I also know there's millions of homeless families right now.

They need more Housing New Zealand homes. At one point, sorry T, they did sell a lot of their houses because there was no need for them and now all of a sudden there's been a change. Because they've sold all their houses they've got a huge waiting list for whānau, so it's real hard. A lot of whānau can't get private rentals because of their backgrounds. People don't want them in their houses which is sad. The prices are ridiculous. Especially for Whanganui. I've got clients in those units where there's four two-storey units. You know how crappy they are? Mouldy everything. \$320-\$350 a week out of a benefit. How does that even work? I don't understand how they can put people in motels and that though for like \$700 a week. They can't put them in a house but you can put them in a motel for double the price – triple for some. Temporarily, so still got to live out of bags and unsettled. It's a lot of money.

We also don't truly know the urgency aye? I know families where they've got mum, dad and two children in one room because they're in with another family. So even

though they're in a home, it doesn't mean it's... Can you imagine the dynamics and the raru that comes out of having no space? Children and adults.

There's definitely need there but this is a particular gap that does have... it's a bit of a rabbit hole and people just can't get on to the ladder of rentals and so to try and avoid that kind of couch sort of thing.



Organisations returning to how they operated in a pre-Covid environment.

Outlined previously in this report is a section on the positive aspects of the inter-agency connections (see: *Interconnection between agencies and the breaking down of barriers*). It articulates that the communities and organisations represented in the narratives in this report seek a future whereby organisational silos and a lack of communication and collaboration is a relic of the pre-Covid era. They have challenged the way that iwi, crown organisations, local government and non-government organisations have traditionally operated. When development of new, or redesigning of old services are tabled, that collectively across the sectors the question is asked as to 'who should be at the table' and then ensuring that the design work is operationalised in a true codesign methodology. The long term success of intersectoral collaboration and cooperation is dependent on each sector committing to not reverting to a pre-Covid model of operating – the proof will be mutual trust and formation of authentic partnerships, a sharing in power, and in a joint understanding of the importance of lived experiences shaping our future.

It did. I think that's the way forward actually is you come to the table for the community and you check your ego at the door. You check your organisation at the door and you come in with that collective sense of responsibility.

But also at that table were community members; not community representatives. We had people; we had people on employment benefit. We had solo parents. We had scrub cutters; we had shearers; we had part-time workers. Then on the other side we had business owners; it gave a bigger and broader perspective around the functions of the community but more importantly; communities come up with solutions to some of the 23 points that they had. The whole conversation changed completely. It wasn't the same old conversation. It was empowering.

It's got a whole lot better, but there still is very much the silo approach. There has been more collaboration that's happened over the years which is not rocket science. If you all work together, we will find that the sharing of resources, you're going to get more outcomes. But because we are still not doing that well enough, pre-COVID I was wondering how this was all sort of going to pan out. There's political stuff as well, there's iwi stuff, there's all the things, the things, the things that go on in this community. However, from my experience, I felt that actually when that happened there was... And I guess it does happen when there's a crisis – and only when there's a crisis – collaboration starts to happen. Why they can't keep that consistent, I don't know.

So from what I saw between iwi, health and social service agencies, that collaboration was happening and it was happening really well.

That would be one thing I'd noticed. There seemed to be a dropping of the silos, which she's mentioned, and answers seem to be available quite quickly, which in the ordinary pre-Covid would have taken a very long time. You know, seem to be available almost instantly.

But they do. They work in silos. They're separate. But then when this happened they've come back together. I don't want to see them splitting again. This will happen if we don't get in there and say start pulling back and do it.

It was like, yeah, no, we need to do that a lot more. And there were different services up at the hospital that we didn't normally have and say, oh, my gosh they're really cool. I have to say and this is nothing to do with COVID, but pre-COVID we were already starting to find some really good relationships up, you know, like apparently up until recently we've not had very good relationships with the social workers. But just before COVID, during COVID, and even now, awesome. Awesome. Yeah, I think there is some good relationships that have been built and it will be a shame to let everything go back to the way that it used to be, if we let it.

UNITED IN RECOVERY

He waka eke noa



A new way forward

The transition has now occurred to shift us from working together under the collective banner of 'United in Recovery' to operating under the Impact Collective. This collective marks our new way forward, working in collaboration between iwi, local and regional organisations and private and social enterprise, whose leaders are collectively providing leadership to enable community led commissioning for services and supplies. Extending on from the work of the COVID-19 Integrated Recovery Team, through community and sector engagement, the community will identify their aspirations in order to live a more meaningful and healthy life in our thriving communities. The Impact Collective's aim is:

To enable regenerative systems within a thriving community that creates wellbeing for all people, our places and the planet. This will ensure that our resources, our services and our collective wellbeing is equitably shared across our rohe, founded in the principles of Mātauranga Māori.

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