

TE TŌPŪ MANGŌPARE

Restoring mana
Guiding rangatahi futures in Manurewa

Impact Report 2022 - 2026





As the hammerhead shark relentlessly pursues the stingray so our youth relentlessly pursue their dreams.

Sharks symbolise strength and the unrelenting pursuit of ambition. The pūrākau of the Mangōpare and its pursuit of the Whai is the manifestation of this determination.

“I now look to the future not to the past”

Mangōpare Rangatahi

Te aumihi

Nei rā te aumihi ki a koutou, ngā pūkōrero i whakakanapa mai te hinatore o tēnei hōtaka whakamana rangatahi. Huge thanks to all contributors for your openness and generosity: the rangatahi who shared their journey and experiences, The Pride Project staff and Mangōpare team, and all of the Mangōpare partners who continue to support rangatahi journeys. Special thanks to Foundation North.

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Introduction

Te Tōpū Mangōpare (Mangōpare) offers hope and practical pathways for rangatahi in Manurewa who are navigating complex challenges and limited opportunities.

Mangōpare works intensively with rangatahi aged 15–24 who are not in education, training or employment, and at significant risk of long-term social and economic exclusion. Rangatahi entering Mangōpare have typically experienced trauma, family breakdown, housing instability, gang influence and disengagement from education.

Mangōpare provides a safe, relationship-based environment grounded in Māori values, where rangatahi can heal and build pathways toward independence and purpose.

This report shares the approach and impact of Mangōpare across six cohorts between 2021 and 2026, highlighting the voices of rangatahi, their whānau, the Mangōpare Team and partners. It identifies what it takes to support rangatahi into transformational pathways of mauri ora.

There are five parts:



1. Context



2. Mangōpare approach



3. Mangōpare impact



4. Insights



4. Looking ahead



The Pride Project

Mangōpare is part of The Pride Project, a community-led initiative that began in 2017. Based since 2019 at Manurewa's Clendon Community House, it was founded by Melissa Moore - a mum, former teacher and sixth-generation Manurewa local.

The Pride Project is now led by Luella Linaker, a mum raised in Manurewa, and former public sector Māori policy and strategy advisor (see photo page 11).

The Pride Project is led by and for locals who know and care about their community. Their work responds to the challenging realities many whānau face. The Pride Project walks alongside whānau who are navigating these realities (see current programmes below).

The Pride Project takes a whānau-centred approach grounded in te ao Māori. It is relationship-based, holistic, grounded in values of manaaki, manawanui, māia and pono. To learn more about The Pride Project, its story and programmes, see theprideproject.co.nz or [here](#) on Facebook.



Melissa Moore, founder of The Pride Project

Hāpai Ō Hope Navigation

- Helping you with what you need
 - Housing and tenancy support
 - MSD advocacy
 - Accessing support providers of health services, financial literacy, alcohol and drugs, etc.
 - Kai parcels late Wednesday to Friday

The Pride Project Aotearoa HQ

Tool Library

- Manurewa residents only
 - Lawn mower \$10 for 2 hours
 - Weedeater \$10 for 2 hours
- Delivery available for those in need
- Proof of address and photo ID required
- Mon-Fri 9.30am, last hire 2pm

PH: RHONDA 021-226-5851

Kura Manaaki

Supporting tamariki back to school at Waimahia intermediate, Weymouth, Leabank, Homai, and Wiri Central Primary schools, years 1-8. By school referral only.

Kura Manaaki

Whare Tautoko

- Free donated clothes and household items
- All donations of clean pre-loved items welcome
- Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

60 Maplesden Drive, Clendon

Mangōpare

Programme for 15 to 24 years. 6 months in-person + 6 months pastoral care. Only 2 intakes per year. Up to 18 rangatahi.

Mangōpare

Te Ohu Kaumātua

- support network
- activities & kai
- Thursdays 10am-12pm
- Matariki Clendon Community Centre
- Everyone welcome

PH: POLLY 020 4133 8010

Barber Academy

Partnership with Groove Kuttz to teach rangatahi barbering. Includes free barber cuts for the community:

- Tuesday and Thursday
- 10am to 2pm

PARTNERSHIPS

Manurewa Soup Kitchen

- Wednesday's 12-1pm
- Matariki Clendon Community Centre
- Free lunch - just turn up

Men's Group

Led by David Ringrose

- Support group
- Learnings & Kai
- Monday's 6 - 8.30pm

www.theprideproject.co.nz

Hours Mon-Fri 9am-4pm

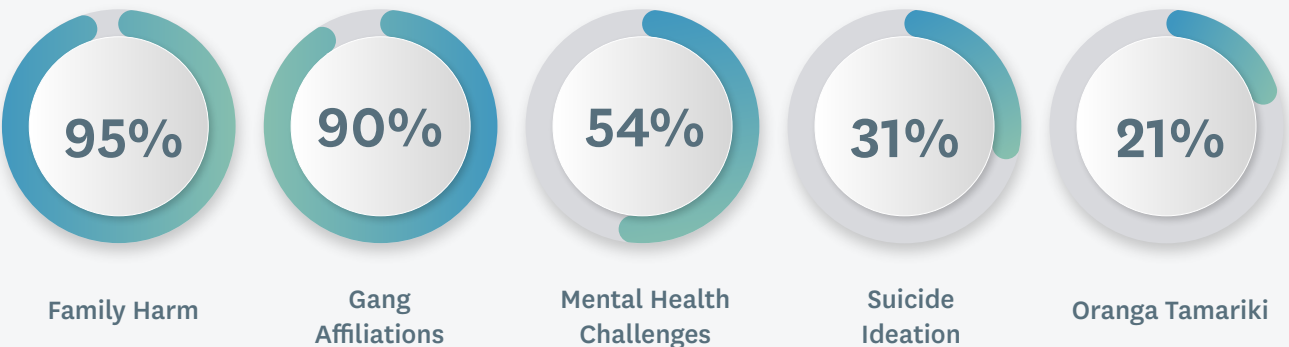
Rangatahi complexities

Behind the data in this report are lived experiences that are often deeply challenging. Of the 103 rangatahi who have come through Mangōpare to date, most have experienced family harm and gang connections in their home. Around half have experienced significant mental health challenges, around a third suicide ideation, and one in five had experience with Oranga Tamariki.

“In one cohort, seven of the girls had been sexually assaulted. And here we are trying to talk to them about employment and CVs when our babies are broken”.

Mangōpare Team

As trust grows, so does understanding of each rangatahi’s challenges. Through this, we have kept every rangatahi safe and given them options for a better future.



These realities shape how rangatahi show up – and what is needed to support them. Trust, consistency and stability lay the foundation for healing.

Part two: Mangōpare approach

Emergence

As a former teacher, Melissa Moore saw the stark reality of tamariki and rangatahi being let down by current systems. Melissa saw whānau continually being underserved by multiple agencies, each working within their own boundaries, without truly understanding whānau needs or aspirations, or working together to support meaningful change. One young kōtiro and her whānau particularly affected her.

Melissa saw the immense potential in these rangatahi and a need for people who would take the time to know, believe in, and walk alongside them. She envisioned a space grounded in mātauranga and tikanga Māori, creating the conditions where rangatahi could feel safe, be themselves, heal from trauma, and restore their mauri and mana.

From this belief, Mangōpare was born. Grounded in the whakatauki *kaua e mate wheke, mate ururoa* – don't give up like the octopus, fight on like the shark – Mangōpare reflects strength, resilience, and the belief that our rangatahi can overcome even the hardest challenges.

In 2021, Mangōpare received Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment funding (later transferred to the Ministry of Social Development) to support rangatahi into pathways of education, training and employment. The Mangōpare Youth Hub - Te Kōpū Mangōpare - was established in the Clendon Shopping Centre as a dedicated space for rangatahi.

This Youth Hub has been pivotal as a safe space for rangatahi, a space where they belong. Local businesses who once felt wary of youth and youth crime have reported a significant drop in local youth crime, of feeling safer and knowing rangatahi by name.

Rangatahi, in turn, see those around them – including local retailers – as part of their wider circle of relationships. They feel they belong, call out bad behaviour in the Town Centre, and help those in need. They support the retailers - on windy days when the clothing mannequins blow over, the rangatahi pick them up again. What was once a place of tension has become a place of connection.

Mangōpare began as a pilot to work with three cohorts of Manurewa rangatahi, with a contractual focus on supporting pathways into education, training or employment. In practice, the work quickly revealed itself to be much deeper. Rangatahi came through word of mouth, social media, self-referral, and referrals from Oranga Tamariki, Police, and the wider community. As the programme developed, the cohort size increased from 15 to 18 rangatahi. While this may seem small, each additional young person brought their own complexity - requiring time, trust, and intensive support from the team.

Mangōpare walks with rangatahi to break cycles of disadvantage and create new pathways for themselves and their whānau. Kai Arataki (navigators) walk alongside rangatahi as they discover who they are and explore what they aspire to be, in a safe space where they can be themselves.

Through mentoring, cultural connection and practical support, Mangōpare creates a space where rangatahi can:

- reconnect with identity and belonging
- build confidence and resilience
- develop positive peer relationships and sense of belonging
- connect with education, training and employment pathways.



Kaupapa Māori foundations

The majority of rangatahi participating in Mangōpare identify as Māori, reinforcing the importance of kaupapa Māori approaches within the programme. Many arrive disconnected from culture, identity, and whenua.

With the addition of Pou Tikanga, Chris Wiremu, to The Pride Project whānau in 2024, the depth of tikanga Māori, connection to whenua and te taiao, rongoā, and noho experiences, has enabled rangatahi to begin to reconnect with who they are and where they come from.

This cultural reconnection strengthens identity, confidence, and belonging, and is often a critical turning point in their journey.

Mangōpare draws on kaupapa Māori principles that centre:

- manawanui (relationships and belonging)
- manaaki (care and respect)
- māia (confidence and courage)
- pono (integrity and honesty).

For many rangatahi, Mangōpare is the first environment where they feel safe, valued, and believed in.



Supporting rangatahi whānau

Over time, it has become clear that lasting change for rangatahi cannot happen in isolation. Supporting whānau is a critical part of the Mangōpare model. Through The Pride Project's Hāpai Ō Hope Navigators, whānau are supported alongside rangatahi - helping to create the conditions for long-term, intergenerational change.

Some whānau, seeing the changes in their rangatahi, choose to connect with The Pride Project themselves. As part of a wider organisation, Mangōpare can support the whole whānau - recognising that lasting change often means addressing wider conditions for rangatahi. This can include housing, access to kai, and support to navigate other challenges.

Not all whānau engage straight away. For some, connection comes later – sometimes after the cohort has finished. This reflects the importance of trust: trusting The Pride Project with their story and trusting that support will be consistent over time.



The mahi

Each cohort is supported through six months of intensive engagement, followed by ongoing pastoral care. This is not a typical programme – it is daily, relational, and consistent.

In their first six months with Mangōpare, rangatahi are immersed in intensive, daily support. Based at the Mangōpare Hub four days a week, the focus is on reconnecting rangatahi to themselves and to a holistic understanding of wellbeing, grounded in Te Whare Tapa Whā – embracing tinana, hinengaro, wairua, whenua, whānau and community.

Rangatahi build connections – to Manurewa, to their mentors, and to each other – through shared experiences, time in nature, and engagement in te ao Māori. Alongside this, they are supported to navigate real-life challenges such as housing, addiction, and disconnection, while gradually reengaging with the wider community.

Each day begins and ends with care - Kai Arataki picking rangatahi up, supporting them throughout the day, and returning them home. Over time, this consistency builds trust, routine, and a sense of safety. As relationships strengthen, rangatahi begin to build skills for the future. They explore their strengths, engage in Māori healing practices, and work toward practical milestones - including First Aid certification, driver licences, CV development, employment training, and work experience. These are not just achievements - they are steps toward confidence, independence, and possibility.

Mangōpare kaimahi go far beyond what is typically expected of mainstream services - supporting rangatahi through difficult moments, including late nights in hospital, and being present across all hours when needed.

“Oranga Tamariki brought a girl into us at 5pm. MSD and OT needed us to house her until the next day - saving a life, none of the other services are doing it”.

Mangōpare Team



Programme



1. Whanaungatanga

Who I am.
Identifying barriers and strengths.

2. Cultural Identity

Noho marae Rongoā
Connection to whenua, Manurewa, whānau, hapū

3. Mindset Shift

Health and wellbeing, first aid, triggers and addictions

4. Goal setting

Pathway planning, passions, drivers licences, CV, IRD, bank accounts, money matters



5. Adulting and pathway engagement

Work placement and experience, building, growing, maintaining healthy relationships



6. Transitional placement

Into work, education or training.
Intervention and pastoral care plans in place

7. Training and employment

Weekly pastoral care check-ins, and with whānau once a month. Revisit 5 year goals and ongoing communication plan.

Celebrating progress

At the end of the intensive phase, rangatahi achievements are celebrated. A noho provides space for reflection and recognition alongside their peers and mentors. It is often the first time many have been out of Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland and their first time participating in these types of activities.

This is followed by a graduation with whānau – honouring their journey and the progress they have made. The next six months of pastoral care supports rangatahi to take their next steps into education, training or employment, with continued guidance and connection.



Learning and evolving

*“We do what it takes
and work in the grey”.*

Mangōpare Team

Mangōpare continues to evolve as the team learns from each cohort and adapts the programme to better meet the realities facing rangatahi.

In 2023, Te Puni Kōkiri funded a Clinical Lead role to support rangatahi with mental health, physical health, court processes, and engagement with services. While this role was not continued due to funding constraints, the experience reinforced the importance of accessible, culturally grounded wellbeing support - which remains a key need.

Learning from delivery has also shaped how the programme is structured. For example, introducing a noho earlier in the programme strengthened whanaungatanga from the outset, creating a stronger foundation for connection, trust, and engagement.

In 2024, The Pride Project successfully renewed the Mangōpare contract, supporting a further three cohorts. This next phase has built on learning from the first three cohorts - strengthening the model, deepening its cultural foundations, and adapting to the dynamic needs of rangatahi and their whānau.



The people

Driving Mangōpare's impact are the kaimahi who walk alongside rangatahi every day. Mangōpare has been built on the commitment, passion, and lived experience of its kaimahi, the Kai Arataki - Mangōpare Hope Navigators. Kai Arataki hold space for trauma, walk alongside rangatahi through complex life situations, and provide continuity in times of instability.

The strength of Mangōpare sits in these relationships – but sustaining this work requires care for those who deliver it. As the programme continues to grow and deepen, ensuring that this workforce is supported – both in terms of wellbeing and remuneration – is important to sustaining the quality and integrity of the mahi over time.

The support Kai Arataki need includes professional supervision, ongoing development, and an active focus on wellbeing and self-care. Kai Arataki draw on their own practices to stay well and grounded in the mahi. At times, the nature of the work can impact them personally, and additional support is needed, such as Rongoā Māori healers, team building and activities outside of work.

Ongoing care for the team is essential to ensure they can continue to show up for rangatahi in a safe and consistent way. Mangōpare's intensive, 'what it takes' kind of support is demanding for kaimahi - mentally, emotionally and practically.

“Supporting rangatahi well means supporting the people who walk alongside them.”



Valentine Hala
Cohorts 4,5



Davinia Waite
Cohorts 1, 2



Pearl Hickland
Cohorts 3-6.
Team Lead Cohorts 4-6



Luella Linnaker
Cohorts 4-6



Ngaparaihe Tūmai-Totorema
Cohort 6



Tutemauri Pouwhare
Cohort 1-3



Roger Tupu-Tuia
Cohorts 1-6.
Team Lead Cohorts 1-3



Chris Wiremu,
Pou Tikanga

Investment picture

Mangōpare has been delivered to date through a combination of government and philanthropic investment. Ministry of Social Development funding equates to \$16,000 per rangatahi, per year, whereas actual delivery costs are between \$18,000 to \$18,500.

The difference reflects the reality of delivering intensive, relationship-based support - including meeting basic needs such as food and transport, responding to crises, and walking alongside rangatahi and their whānau. Remuneration is relatively low compared to other similar roles.

Mangōpare has continued through a braided funding model, with philanthropic and community funding bridging this gap (see more on funding in Insights).

“Mangōpare need more staff. It's big mahi. I see the fatigue. When there is support, these kids can go far.”

Caroline Wilson - A-OK

Part three: Mangōpare impact

Evidence Sources



Mangōpare data

- Funding applications
- Quarterly reporting
- Excess notes

Rangatahi interviews

- Seven 1:1
- One group of 10



Case studies

- Review of 15 rangatahi case studies
- 3 whānau and rangatahi video interviews

Kai Arataki interviews

- Interviews with the 3 Mangōpare Kai Arataki



TPP staff interviews

- Pride Project Hope Navigator and management interviews (7)

Partner interviews

- Partner organisation interviews (4)



Partners

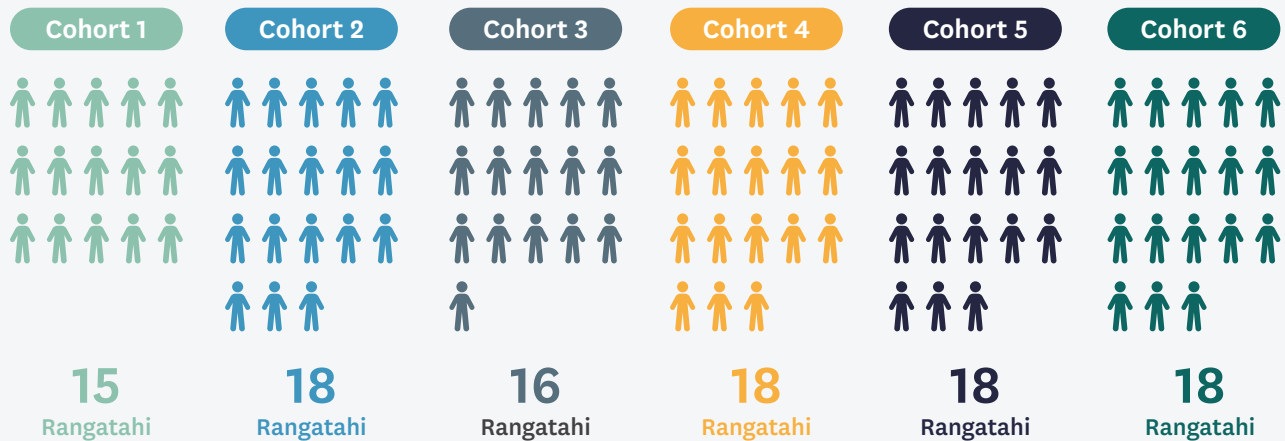
- Beccy Fenn - He iti Pounamu Mobile Health Service
- Paul Delamere - Odyssey
- Caroline Wilson - A-OK Suicide Prevention
- Maree Beaven - Bloom.kiwi

*Maree Beaven conducted these interviews in April 2024.
Maree runs the Clifton Strengths Finder programme with the rangatahi.
Pearl Hickland conducted the rangatahi interviews in February 2026.
Pearl is Kai Arataki Matua for Mangōpare.
Luella Linaker conducted the Kai Arataki interviews in February 2026.

The Rangatahi

103 Rangatahi across 6 Cohorts

Cohorts 1 and 2 were 15 rangatahi each. From Cohort 3 onwards this grew to 18 rangatahi per cohort. Each rangatahi brings a set of complexities including unresolved trauma and significant mental health challenges – but all share a desire for change.

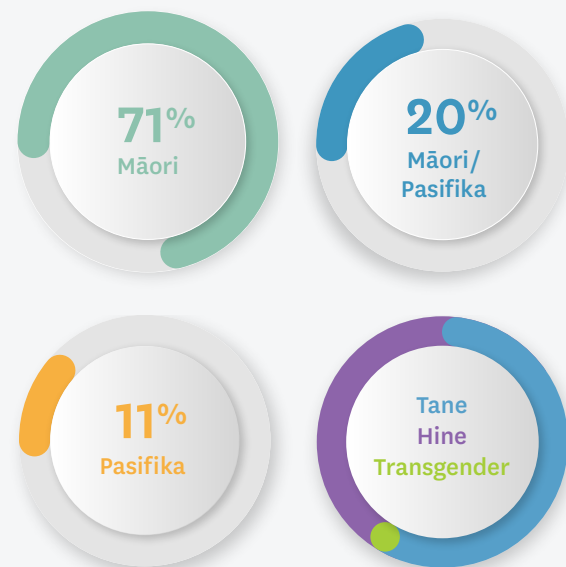


TOTAL: 103 Rangatahi

Rangatahi ethnicity and gender

While the majority of rangatahi identified as Māori or as having Māori whakapapa, 20% were mixed Māori and Pacific.

In terms of gender, 44% of rangatahi identify as female, one as transgender and the rest as male.



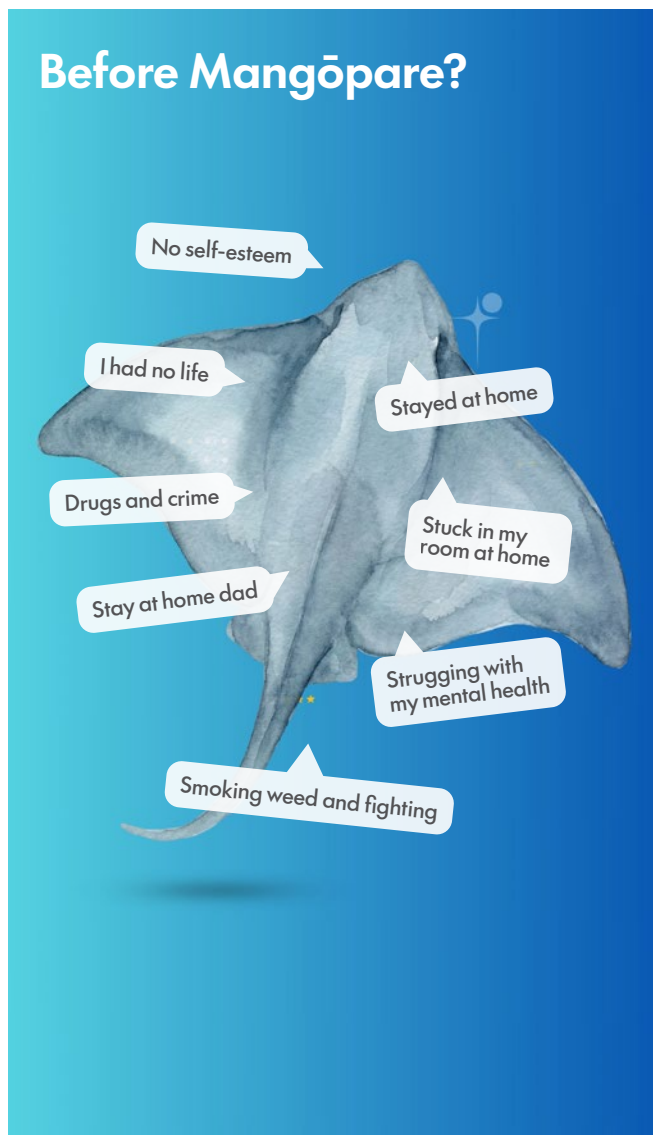
Tane (Male) Hine (Female) Transgender

Understanding Impact for Mangōpare

“You can’t chuck people ram raiding into a job”.

Mangōpare Partner

While government funding for Mangōpare prioritises placement into employment, training or education, in reality many other outcomes lead to these things and many other outcomes matter to rangatahi and their whānau. This stems from what is happening for rangatahi when they start with Mangōpare, which can include a combination of social isolation, gang involvement, unemployment, drugs, crime, mental health issues and lack of hope.



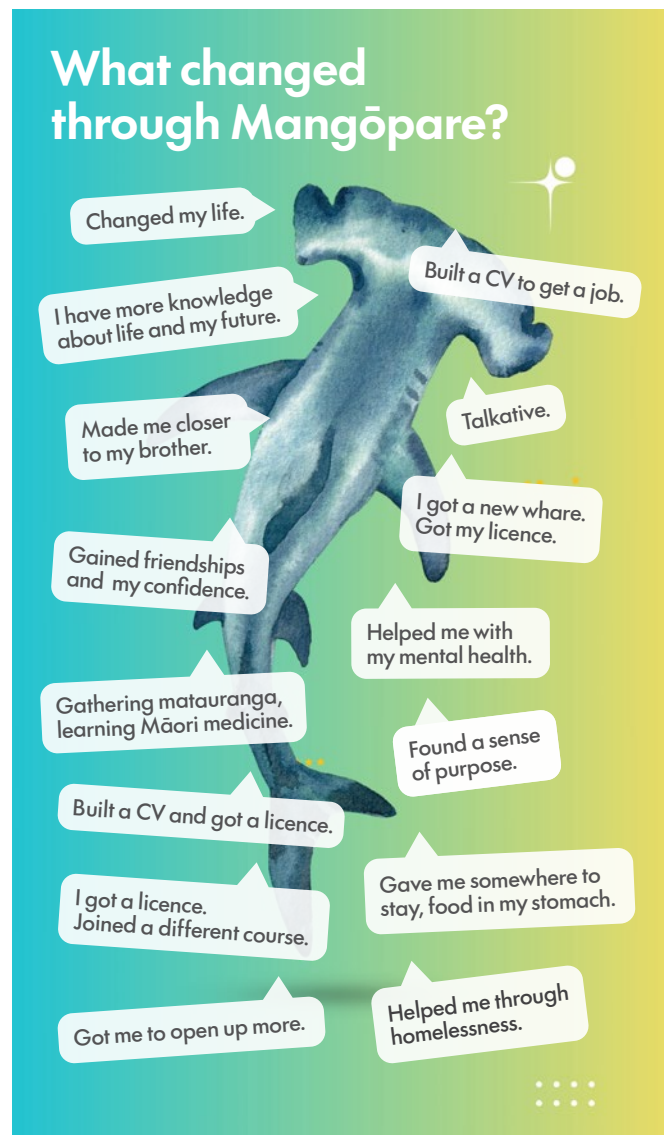
“We are measured on numbers into jobs, training and education”.

Mangōpare Team

“The biggest change? Definitely my outlook on life!”

Rangatahi

Rangatahi journeys are not linear, and progress can be disrupted by many factors. Significant support and healing is often required before rangatahi are ready to engage in education, training or employment, and expecting rapid transitions into employment is unrealistic. This work is intensive and long-term, and ongoing support and trusted relationships are essential to sustaining progress.

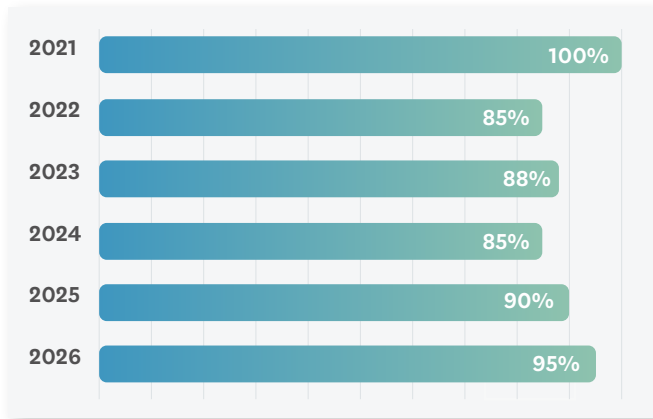


“There can be an expectation of employment within six months, while a young person is still navigating significant challenges”.

Mangōpare Team

High completion rate

Graduation levels from Mangōpare are exceptionally high - 90.5% across the six cohorts:



Reasons for not completing the programme include relocating, mental health, moving into state care or finding another pathway.

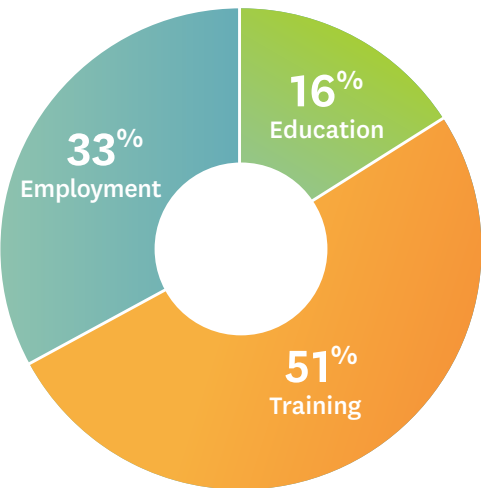
Programme achievements across cohorts

Completion of structured learning and skill development through the programme is high.

Cohorts	1 (15)	2 (18)	3 (16)	4 (18)	5 (18)	6 (18)
Cultural learning to Pepeha	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Karakia/Waiata/Haka	15%	18%	18%	17%	17%	17%
Pepeha	15%	18%	18%	17%	17%	17%
Driver licensing	60%	81%	81%	78%	67%	50%
First Aid	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%
Budgeting	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
CV & Cover Letter	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Suicide Prevention Training	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Goal Setting	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
IRD/Bank Acc/ Birth Cert	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	77%
Alcohol and drug counselling	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gallup Strengths ¹	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Physical Wellbeing	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Community Volunteering	100%	100%	94%	0% (wasn't included in this cohort)	100%	94%
Fostering Positive Relationships	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹ Gallup Strengths refers to the Clifton Strengths Finder tool, which supports people to identify their strengths, gifts and talents. See www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home.aspx

Placement into employment, education or training



86% of graduates progressed into education (secondary or tertiary), employment or training.

“Mangopare prepared me for my job, it made it less hard to start working.”

Rangatahi

“Now I can get out there and actually talk to people. I’m definitely a lot more confident. They taught me a lot of skills that I needed, like job searching. I got my learner’s license, that was really big. And I even got my first job from there as well, in retail. They managed to connect me to a lot of courses like Vision College. And I managed to achieve my level two [NCEA]. That was really great”.

Rangatahi

“Mangōpare is a huge protective factor for these kids. It becomes a huge part of their life. Kids wouldn’t turn up if it was framed as education.”

Mangōpare Partner



Key changes for rangatahi

Mangōpare impact occurs through large and small changes, often building over time and creating ripple effects across rangatahi, their whānau, and the wider community.

Through working alongside rangatahi, the following areas of change are consistently observed.

- **Confidence and self-belief grow**
Rangatahi begin to speak up, engage, and back themselves. Some shift from extreme shyness to leadership roles.
- **Wellbeing improves**
Rangatahi experience greater emotional stability, safety, and hope.
- **Identity and belonging strengthen**
Connection to culture, community, and self creates a stronger sense of who they are.
- **Basic needs are stabilised, with movement from survival to stability**
Access to food, clothing, hygiene, and safe spaces enables engagement.
- **Life skills develop**
Communication, responsibility, and decision-making improve over time.
- **Relationships improve**
Stronger connections with whānau, peers, and trusted adults.
- **Future aspirations grow**
Rangatahi begin to see and plan for a different future.
- **Re-engagement with pathways**
Rangatahi move into education, training, or employment when ready.

For many rangatahi, simply showing up – and continuing to show up – represents a significant and meaningful shift.

“Now I’ve got so many things that I wanna do. I’m getting a guitar today. I’m planning on taking up streaming. Now I have actual thought processes of ‘I can do this to get that job or I can do this to do that’.”

Rangatahi



Rangatahi voice and advocacy

In March 2024, two Mangōpare rangatahi and one Kura Manaaki tama made a submission to the Ram Raid Offending and Related Measures Amendment Bill. They spoke against the criminalisation of young people, sharing their own experiences and the realities behind youth offending - and advocating for approaches grounded in support, not punishment.

Eryka Kiri (19) spoke about the role Mangōpare played in her life - providing care, support, and a safe place to be. For her, this is what creates change.

Aaron Tyree (18) shared his journey of growing up in challenging environments, surrounded by violence and negative influences, which led him into offending. "I was looking at some pretty serious jail time, then I found Mangōpare."

Through Mangōpare, Aaron experienced a turning point. He spoke about the importance of programmes that support rangatahi to heal, grow, and find a different path - rather than being pushed further into the justice system.



Their voices reflect a broader message:

Rangatahi need support, connection, and opportunity – not just consequences.

Their submission was a powerful example of rangatahi using their lived experience to inform change, and to advocate for approaches that better support young people across Aotearoa. Their voices carried what statistics cannot.

Media coverage and Select Committee footage of the submission are available [here](#) and [here](#) (Note that coverage starts around 47 minutes in).



Tuakana-teina pathways emerging

Some former Mangōpare participants are stepping into informal mentoring roles for new rangatahi, as volunteers or future kaimahi. There is a strong focus on growing local people with lived experience who can support others. This tuakana-teina dynamic strengthens the programme and creates ripple effects within the wider community.

“They [Mangōpare] should be a staple of the community. The Police must be realising something is going on, they’ve got less kids sitting around”.

Partner



Stories of impact and change



Ed

Ed came to Mangōpare extremely shy, rarely speaking and avoiding attention. He found it difficult to engage, often staying on the edges of the group and keeping his thoughts to himself.

Trust took time.

Through consistent support and encouragement, Ed began to find his place. Small shifts became noticeable - joining conversations, connecting with others, and slowly building confidence in himself.

Over time, those changes grew.

Today, Ed is working and thriving. He has become a role model for other rangatahi, supporting those who are where he once was. The young person who once struggled to speak now stands with confidence, contributing to the space and those within it.



Gene

Gene came to Mangōpare at 14, navigating instability, offending, and a lack of direction. Home life was volatile, shaped by the loss of a beloved Nan, leading to housing instability, hidings, starvation, disconnection and substance use. As the eldest, returned to his biological parents who were affected by their addictions, he carried responsibility beyond his years to feed and clothe his siblings.

He arrived at Mangōpare withdrawn and guarded - often with his hoodie up, speaking little, and struggling to engage. He had over 150 convictions and Police checked on him regularly at Mangōpare. Despite this, he kept showing up.

Over time, Gene began to build trust with the team and form connections with others. With support, he moved into a more stable home environment. His confidence grew, and he started to engage - discovering interests in art, cooking, and muay thai martial arts, reconnecting with a sense of possibility.

His offending stopped. His involvement with youth justice and care and protection ended and remains closed.

Today, Gene is working, has saved his wages, and bought his first car at 17. He continues to navigate challenges that are relatively normal for his age. He does so with support, confidence, and a clearer sense of direction.

Lara

Lara came to Mangōpare at 16, carrying the weight of a life of instability, sexual abuse, and other trauma. For a period of time, she had been abandoned, living with her sister in a house without power, food, or basic necessities. She was exhausted but couldn't sleep, hungry but couldn't eat, withdrawn, and tired of being let down.

Like Gene she had been raised by a loving Nan, but had moved far away from her Nan to live in Tāmaki with her mother. When she came to Mangōpare her mental health had declined to the point where she no longer wanted to live.

The Kai Arataki team wrapped around her - finding safe accommodation, advocating for support, and providing consistent care. Trust did not come quickly; she was used to being let down. But over time, trust began to build.

Change showed up in small but significant ways. From not eating, to eating alone, to eating with others. From isolation to connection. From silence to engagement.

Today, Lara is working and volunteering and is exploring pathways into social work. She speaks about having hope for her future - something that once felt out of reach.

Buster and Shelley

Before Mangōpare, Buster and Shelley didn't really get involved with strangers. That could end in trouble.

Both were very young and street smart when they joined Mangōpare. Their homes weren't stable and they had learned to fend for themselves.

In 2022, after the St John first aid course through Mangōpare, Buster was at a café when a person nearby began choking. He stepped in immediately, using his training to help. That day he saved a stranger's life.

Four years later, Shelley found herself in a similar situation. When a woman began choking, she also stepped forward. Neither knew the person they were helping. But they both acted immediately to help someone in need.

These moments reflect a shift – from looking after themselves to looking after strangers. A change in mindset, confidence, and care that extends beyond the programme and into the wider community.



A whānau story

Rangatahi

Before Mangōpare I was at home, going downhill, not going to school, I didn't like the way I was.

Through Mangōpare my confidence is going uphill. I realise I have potential, my anxiety is all good. I completed the half marathon, passed my driver's licence. The kaimahi listen to me.

Mum

I saw massive changes in the first week for him, his eyes lit up, it was a good space for him, he was around people, encouraging him, boosted his confidence, good role models who saw his potential, new friends. As a whānau we didn't provide the most healing of spaces. We weren't in a space to give him the awhi he needed.

It's hard for me to say but Mangōpare took him out of our care, he felt unsafe, which is sobering and embarrassing but was a blessing in disguise. It helped me see the error of my ways. I love this kid and he needs to be shown that. I've gone into recovery myself, accepted I needed to be in recovery and I have to work to get this kid in my life.

Even now he pushes all those buttons, challenges me to show up as his parent. I take him on driving lessons, to Timezone, the beach. We spend time together. Really all they want us to do is listen. Without Mangōpare he wouldn't have opened up to me.

Having a positive male leader in his life through Tu, he still messages Tu and Tu instantly responds. That's massive as he has those abandonment issues. Having someone older who is positive is massive for him and for me as his mum. When he asked to move home I was in tears. We can give him that love now. We had made him feel unloved and unsafe in our home.

So I just have to show up and do what I say. All I want to do is be honest with him. He stands up for his own voice now - I would be a fool to take that away from him. Pearl gave me a chance to show her who I was, and to be the mum and person I can become.

*Pearl and Tu are Mangōpare mentors

Mangōpare Team Member Story

Manurewa is a key recruitment zone for gangs. They offer young ones a sense of family. Start by giving them stuff and offering community and whānau, then it's the hidings and you can't get out.

In one cohort we had a 15-year-old prospect for a gang. Within a few weeks at Mangōpare he was saying "I don't want to be in a gang." His younger siblings were under the watch of OT [Oranga Tamariki]. He has seen no way out.

Through Mangōpare support and The Pride Project's connections within the community, relationships with gang members were opened to find middle ground, and with the Grace Foundation we were able to broker a conversation.

We took a risk no-one else would take. Stepping in was scary. Did we have enough connections and social capital to navigate this path? We weighed the risks versus the opportunity for this young man to have a different life. He got out. We were lucky.



What rebuilding trust looks like

Trust is not immediate. It is built over time, often in small, observable shifts. Over six cohorts the Mangōpare team has observed the behaviour changes that show where trust levels are at.

Everyone starts somewhere on this journey (read from top down on right). Not everyone will end up bantering with kaimahi. But each step taken is noticed.

Some may take a step back every now and then. But there is a noticeable shift from where rangatahi start to where they end.

“I’d have a problem and they’d help me fix it”.

Rangatahi

“All these strangers turned into basically family”.

Rangatahi

“...it took a whole year before he would engage with me. I worked with him for three years. It takes so much longer than six months!”

Mangōpare Team

“Mangōpare’s point of difference is that we wear our heart on our sleeve and do whatever it takes, to whatever time in the morning, in whatever ways we can”.

Mangōpare Team



What partners see

A small number of Mangōpare partners were invited to share their reflections. These were a Mobile Medical Clinic Nurse, [a woman who does Clifton Strengths Finder](#) with the rangatahi, and representatives from [A-OK Suicide Prevention](#) and [Odyssey](#) (a drug and alcohol addiction and wellness organisation).

Across these conversations, a consistent picture emerged. Partners who work alongside Mangōpare consistently describe it as a unique and trusted space for rangatahi. They speak to the way Mangōpare creates an environment where young people feel safe, supported, and able to be themselves. This sense of trust and connection allows partners to engage meaningfully with rangatahi, often in ways that are not possible in other settings.

A key strength identified by partners is the consistency and authenticity of the Mangōpare team. Kaimahi bring lived experience, build strong relationships, and remain present alongside rangatahi, even when external providers are delivering sessions. This creates a calm, grounded environment where rangatahi feel secure.

Mangōpare is seen as going above and beyond mainstream approaches. Partners consistently highlight the sense of whānau connection and aroha within the programme. For many rangatahi who have felt rejected by traditional systems, this environment provides a different experience - one that supports belonging, learning, and growth.

Partners have observed a wide range of positive changes in rangatahi. For many rangatahi, simply showing up and staying engaged is seen as a significant success.

“The fact they even turn up, that they even start is proof that it’s working.”



Insights

“To truly support rangatahi into education, training or employment, the underlying challenges impacting their wellbeing must also be addressed”.

Mangōpare Team

What partners see

“Working in the grey - doing what it takes - is what changes lives.”

Mangōpare’s combination of relational depth, responsiveness, and practical support is what enables meaningful and sustained change, reflecting the elements below.

- **Lived experience leadership**
Kaimahi who have walked similar paths and are safe, skilled, positive role models bring credibility, relatability, and hope.
- **Trusting relationships**
Consistent, genuine relationships with kaimahi who show up, follow through, and build trust over time.
- **Meeting basic needs first**
Access to kai, clothing, hygiene, transport, and safe spaces creates the foundation for engagement and wellbeing.
- **Cultural connection**
Reconnecting rangatahi to te ao Māori strengthens identity, belonging, and confidence.
- **Manaaki**
Awhi, aroha, consistency and constancy.
Being a reliable and safe haven over time.
- **Safe and consistent environments**
Spaces where rangatahi feel accepted, valued, and able to be themselves without judgement.
- **Working with the whole whānau**
Supporting whānau alongside rangatahi strengthens long-term outcomes and stability.
- **Responsiveness and flexibility**
The ability to work in the grey, make judgement calls and respond in real time to crises, changing needs, and opportunities.
- **Manawanui – intensive and long-term**
Long term commitment and investment.
Providing intensive support over six months, plus ongoing pastoral care. Progress takes time, patience, consistency, and ongoing support.

- **Holistic ecosystem approach**
Ability and capacity to build relationships across the system to support rangatahi, including health providers, welfare agencies, employers, education and training providers.
- **Access**
Welcoming, friendly, adaptable employers and education providers like Vision College.
- **Ringa atawhai**
Doing whatever it takes to keep rangatahi safe, managing risks in the process.

At its core, this mahi is grounded in trust. Building trust takes time, presence, and a willingness to show up – not just during programme hours, but whenever rangatahi need support. Kai Arataki walk alongside rangatahi through a wide range of situations, including engagement with education, employment pathways, health services, court processes, and moments of crisis. This often extends beyond standard working hours and requires flexibility, judgement, and care.



Mangōpare highlights two ongoing system challenges significantly impacting rangatahi and shaping their journeys:



1. Rangatahi urgently need safe and secure housing

A consistent theme across cohorts has been the need for safe, appropriate housing for rangatahi. Mangōpare has seen firsthand the difference that stable housing makes. When rangatahi have a safe place to sleep, shower, and eat, they are better able to engage, build trust, and focus on their future.

Access to safe and appropriate housing for rangatahi remains limited. Referral pathways are typically through MSD, where rangatahi may be placed in emergency accommodation that is not always suitable for their age or needs. In some cases, these environments place rangatahi in unsafe situations alongside adults with complex needs, creating further risk.

Mangōpare's vision is to develop safe, local housing options for rangatahi - spaces that provide not only shelter, but connection, guidance, and care. These environments would support rangatahi to remain engaged in Mangōpare, while building independence and transitioning into long-term, sustainable housing.

A key part of this vision is creating spaces that encourage connection rather than isolation, with trusted adults present who provide support in a way that feels more like whānau than a service. Safe housing is not separate from the work – it is foundational to it.



2. Navigating the welfare system

Rangatahi often face challenges navigating the social welfare system, which can be complex, difficult to access, and at times discouraging. A significant part of Mangōpare and Pride Project mahi involves advocating alongside rangatahi to access their entitlements.

“Rangatahi find going to MSD hard and are scared to speak. They put red tape up even though they are well intentioned”.

Mangōpare Team

Over time, the focus shifts to building rangatahi confidence and capability - supporting them to navigate systems independently, and ultimately move toward pathways where they no longer need to rely on social support.

Since the first cohorts, these systemic challenges have remained consistent. In some cases they have intensified, for example with housing. Mangōpare kaimahi frequently fill gaps left by existing systems, providing advocacy, crisis response and practical support well beyond the scope of traditional youth programmes.

These challenges highlight the need for solutions that are safe, local, and designed specifically for rangatahi - where connection, stability, and support can be built alongside one another.



Mangōpare is preventative and cost saving over time

Research and government data show that the cost of responding to youth offending, incarceration, unemployment and emergency housing far exceeds the investment required to support preventative programmes like Mangōpare.

For example:



Youth justice facilities
\$150,000 per young person per year



Prison
\$150,000+ per adult per year



Emergency housing costs



Long-term benefit dependency costs

Mangōpare works with rangatahi who are often heading toward these outcomes. Early intervention significantly reduces long-term social and economic costs. Mangōpare represents a significantly lower cost, early intervention approach. It also offers something the systems above cannot - connection, trust, and the opportunity for long-term change.

Delivering Mangōpare has been made significantly harder in the current funding environment, requiring the team to seek additional philanthropic funding and keep kaimahi remuneration comparatively low.

“There’s a lot of people and organisations waiting to sign up to Mangōpare, an endless demand.”

“There are over 4,000 disengaged young people in this community who are not in mahi or education. We only take in 18”.

Mangōpare Team



The current funding model adds stress and complexity

Iti noa, he pito mata

Although small, a seed kumara produces hundreds more

“Mangōpare need more staff. It’s big mahi. I see the fatigue. When there is support, these kids can go far”.

Mangōpare Team

The way government funding is structured does not always align neatly with the rhythms of delivery. There are natural pauses within the programme - including end-of-year periods and short breaks between cohorts - which allow time for rest, reflection, and planning. These are important to sustain both the quality of the mahi and the wellbeing of the team.

At times, this has meant that delivery extends beyond strict contract timeframes, while the needs of rangatahi and the operational costs of the programme continue. Funding for Mangōpare is typically received on a quarterly basis and aligned to contract timeframes. In practice, this has created periods where delivery continued without confirmed funding.

The team continues to maintain programme delivery during these times, covering ongoing costs such as staffing, facilities, and transport. This includes supporting rangatahi from Cohorts 1-5 who return for help, support, and advice. Funding approaches that better align with the realities of mahi like Mangōpare and of community-based delivery are needed. These involve:

- Funding relationships are grounded in trust, understanding, and partnership.
- Taking the time to understand the realities of the work on the ground and recognising the depth and complexity of support required.
- Longer-term funding, giving the stability needed to plan, respond effectively, and sustain both the programme and the workforce. This enables the team to focus on rangatahi and the mahi, rather than on navigating uncertainty between funding periods.
- Impact reporting that reflects what matters to rangatahi and whānau. While education, training, and employment outcomes are important, these sit at the end of a longer journey. Rangatahi need time to stabilise, build trust, and address underlying challenges before these outcomes can be attained and sustained.
- Streamlined reporting across funders would reduce administrative pressure and allow more focus on delivery.

Partners expressed a desire to see Mangōpare supported through longer-term, stable funding and greater recognition of its impact. They emphasised the importance of:

- Investing in the workforce, including fair pay and professional development.
- Maintaining low ratios to preserve relationship quality.
- Exploring options such as residential or supported housing to strengthen outcomes.

Mangōpare is seen as a model that works - one that can be strengthened and sustained with the right support.

“Come here and see the work, trust the work, and allow Mangōpare to do their work. The proof is in the pudding. Rangatahi keep coming back and now want to help”.

Mangōpare Team

“Mangōpare opens different doors of opportunity and rangatahi feel loved, heard, seen. If the rangatahi say yes [to Mangōpare] that should be it”.

Mangōpare Team



Looking ahead

The thing that has the single greatest impact for rangatahi is skilled awhi from people they trust.

Through these trusting relationships, rangatahi begin to shift how they feel, how they see themselves, and how they navigate their lives. Strengthening wairua, mindset, and identity - while removing barriers - creates the foundation for improved wellbeing, education, and employment outcomes.

Investing in this kind of mahi not only supports rangatahi in the present, but reduces future demand on social services, justice, and health systems. It also helps to break intergenerational cycles of trauma.

What is clear is that the approach is working - and that there is an opportunity to strengthen and extend this impact. Priorities for Mangōpare going forward are as follows.



Growing local leadership

Expanding the Mangōpare model by supporting more local people with lived experience to work alongside rangatahi. This strengthens connection, trust, and sustainability within the community.



Safe, local housing solutions

Developing youth-specific housing in Manurewa that provides stability, connection, and support, enabling rangatahi to engage fully in their journey.



Earlier intervention

Working with younger rangatahi, before challenges escalate, to support stronger pathways and reduce the likelihood of long-term harm.



Stronger funding partnerships

A trust-based, collaborative approach to funding that reflects the realities of the work, provides longer-term certainty, and supports meaningful, streamlined reporting.

While there is a desire to grow Mangōpare, maintaining the integrity of the model is critical. Small group sizes and strong relationships remain central. Over time, impact grows not just through scale, but through influence - as rangatahi go on to support others. Mangōpare is already seeing this, with rangatahi returning as volunteers and mentors, strengthening the model from within.

The future of Mangōpare is grounded in what already works - and in growing that impact in ways that remain connected to community.

Ngā mihi
Thank you

