

Annual Report

YWCA Hamilton

2024 / 2025



YW
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President Report 2024/25

Jenni Murphy-Scalon

Kia ora,

Over the past 12 months, the Board have focused on two major governance issues. The first has been our response to the changes required by new legislation. Our journey to determine how we should change in response to this has been influenced by our membership of the National YWCA and their membership of the World YWCA, requiring alignment in certain areas.

The other key influence has been our own strategic direction and how we might look going forward. To meet the April 2026 deadline for complying with the new legislation, the Board decided to re-register as an Incorporated Society with changes to our rules, ensuring compliance.

We ask you to please vote to approve the new rules and also a name change to reflect our work across the Waikato region, rather than only in Kirikiriroa, Hamilton. After the new rules are lodged with Charities Services, there will be new processes we will need to follow for our Board members and meetings.

The second major governance issue has been working on implementation of our strategic plan, with the results of our Huber Social Wellbeing Survey ensuring the voices of young women and sex/gender diverse people guide this work. Sub-committees have been formed to look at the key areas, and this process is still underway. There is a stage in each plan where the implementation becomes operational, and we hand over to our operations team under the capable leadership of Riikka. It's an exciting and impacting space as the team develop new relationships and outcomes in the community.



Our organisation relies on support from many people and sources. I want to acknowledge our dedicated staff who keep our services running, provide safe hostel accommodation, and uphold the spiritual, physical, mental, and cultural wellbeing of the young women we serve.

Thank you also to our Board members for their volunteer governance, with special appreciation to those who stepped down this year: Lisa Curtin, Nellie-Ann Abraham, and Ehlana Blissett. We are also grateful for the wider community, including funders and donors, whose support makes our work possible.

In the year ahead, we will continue advancing our strategic direction and strengthening our impact, ensuring a strong future for the YWCA and the young women and sex/gender diverse people of our region.

Manager Report 2024/25

Riikka Anderson

Kia ora,

This year, we have focused on refreshing our strategic direction to ensure it remains tightly aligned with our core purpose. We are committed to championing the wellbeing of young Waikato women, grounded in the belief that every young woman deserves a life she values.

In February 2025, we advanced this commitment with the launch of the Young Waikato Women's Wellbeing Baseline Report, developed with Huber Social and funded by Trust Waikato, WEL Energy Trust and the Waikato Wellbeing Project. The report offers a clear snapshot of the factors young women consider most important to their wellbeing. Key insights follow on the next page.

We also mapped the initiatives and organisations currently supporting young women across the region. With strong data and a clearer picture of the landscape, we are well placed to codesign new, community-led wellbeing initiatives. This includes expanding our reach beyond Hamilton and building partnerships in rural Waikato.

Another focus this year has been strengthening our storytelling and advocacy. We launched our podcast, Equal Agenda, with Season 3 already in production and introduced a standalone website with regular blog updates. Our growing social media presence continues to amplify the voices and experiences of young women.

Our commitment to young women across the wider Waikato region underpins our proposed name change to Waikato Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Incorporated.



This better reflects our regional focus and aligns with constitutional updates required under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. We will complete re-registration in accordance with the Act following our AGM.

This commitment is also reflected in our staffing. This year we welcomed Zeta Mohn (Community Activator), Bryanna Lingley (Communications Coordinator), and Ishani Jayamaha (Communications Support). We thank Liv Mehrtens, Mollie Hedgman and Bronwyn Pene for their valuable contributions. After Bronwyn's departure, Housekeeper Josie Frankhouser expanded her role to support the Duty Manager team. We also welcomed Tony Price, a long-term hostel resident, as a casual handyman.

Finally, thank you to our staff, Board, volunteers, funders, and all who support our work. Together, we are making a meaningful difference for young women across Hamilton and the Waikato.

Wellbeing Report

2025

Young Waikato Women's Wellbeing Baseline Report

Over the past year, the YWCA of Hamilton has taken an important step toward strengthening its impact by undertaking the first gender-specific wellbeing research of its kind in the Waikato. For more than 80 years, we have supported young women across the region, yet recent efforts to deepen this work have been constrained by a lack of relevant local data.

Recognising this gap, we partnered with the Waikato Wellbeing Project and Melde/Huber Social to design a research project grounded in the voices and lived experiences of young women and sex/gender diverse people. This work was made possible through the generous support of Trust Waikato, WEL Energy Trust and the Waikato Wellbeing Project, whose backing enabled us to launch a robust and inclusive measurement initiative.

From initial consultations to the final survey, the project has been a highly collaborative effort. Community advisers helped ensure our questions reflected what matters most to young women, while supporters across the region helped us reach a wide and diverse group of respondents.

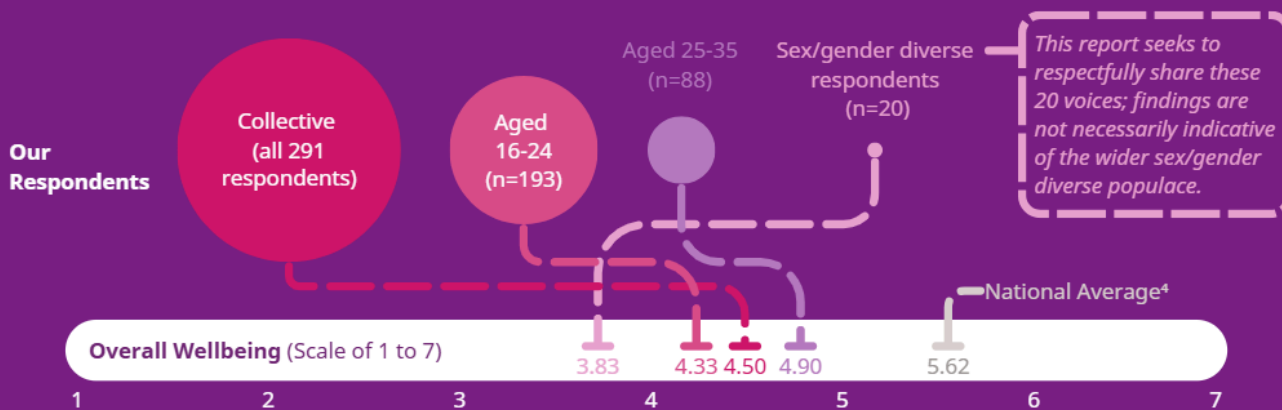
With the survey now complete, the focus shifts to action. The findings will guide the YWCA's priorities in the coming years, shaping activities that directly respond to what young women say they need to thrive. Importantly, we will share these insights widely and work alongside partners to drive collective change. This is only the beginning—we invite the wider community to join us as we strive to improve the wellbeing of young women and sex/gender diverse people throughout the Waikato.



Key Findings

- Young Women and Sex/Gender Diverse People of the Waikato reported **lower wellbeing compared to national average.**
- **Sleep, safe and stable environments and holistic wellness** identified as **top priority needs.**
- Respondents scored highest in feelings of **self-acceptance of sex/gender identity.**
- Those **aged 16-24 generally scored lower than those aged 25-35**, with unique areas of focus around health services and access to transport.
- **Sex/Gender Diverse** responses were generally **lowest out of subgroups**, indicating that focussed support is required.

Wellbeing Baseline Report Summary



What Matters Most

Enjoying Life

Hope for the Future

Self-Identity

Employment Networks

Sense of Purpose

Areas requiring the Most Support

Enough Sleep

Connection to Place

Time for Oneself

Autonomy

Financial Literacy


Through the sex/gender lens

 **85%**
Felt proud of how they identified



Only 1 in 2 respondents

- Felt they had the same opportunities
- Felt comfortable talking to men
- Felt safe alone in public at daytime



Only 1 in 3 respondents

- Felt safe alone in public at night
- Felt they were accurately represented in traditional or social media

Areas of Focus Specific to Those Aged 16-24

Physical Health

Access to Transport

Health Services

Areas of Focus Specific to Those Aged 25-35

Job Pathways

Stable Income

Financial Literacy

Areas of Focus Specific to Sex/Gender Diverse Respondents

Financial Literacy

Self-Acceptance

Job Pathways



Recommendations to drive change

Immediate Actions

- ☐ **Create safe and stable environments**, including explicit acceptance of gender diverse people
- ☐ **Skills training** on financial literacy, and vocational skills, + fostering employment networks
- ☐ **Support to access and navigate services** - mental health, women's health, financial services

Sowing seeds for wider change

- ☐ **Education** to challenge inequities and raise awareness
- ☐ **Advocacy** on safety in public and representation to shift the dial at policy level
- ☐ **Partnering** with organisations supporting men to be better allies for women

Young Women Activities & Social Enterprises Report 2024/25

Activities and Events

Over the past year, we shifted to fewer but larger collaborative activities for young women. So far, we've delivered various activities engaging over 300 participants. Highlights include the Wellbeing Baseline Report launch, Girls' Nights, a Matariki Wellbeing Day with Yasmina Trust, a Welcoming Week youth event at Zeal, and a Local Body Election event for female candidates. We also held two retreats at Pirongia Forest Park Lodge with First Step Outdoors and continued offering free self-defence workshops with Mindset Defence. In June 2025, we launched the Equal Agenda podcast on Free FM, exploring gender equality and everyday discrimination. Our advocacy work expanded as well including contributions to the Hamilton City Council's Rangatahi Action Plan, formal submissions, participation in Pay Equity protests, and presenting at the Involve Conference in Christchurch.



YWCA Hamilton Hostel

The YWCA Hamilton Hostel had a strong year, maintaining high occupancy of around 90%, primarily serving students, young working women, and those seeking safe, affordable housing. This sustained demand highlights its reputation as a supportive and well-managed environment. Operational processes were strengthened and maintenance addressed promptly through improved coordination. The Hostel continued to make a significant social impact, providing stable accommodation for nearly 70 residents and fostering a respectful, values-aligned community. Strong results this year position the Hostel for continued improvement and resident engagement.

Venue Hire

Venue Hire delivered a successful year, supporting YWCA Hamilton's financial sustainability and community presence. The Hall, Chapel, and meeting rooms were well-utilised by diverse community groups through regular and casual bookings, including classes, meetings, cultural events, and ceremonies. Revenue remained stable due to consistent weekly hirers and ongoing casual use. Operational improvements—clearer access instructions, streamlined key collection, and proactive maintenance—reduced after-hours issues and enhanced user experience. With many hirers already rebooking for next year, the enterprise is positioned for continued growth and deeper community engagement.

Our People & Funding

As of 30 June 2025

Our Staff

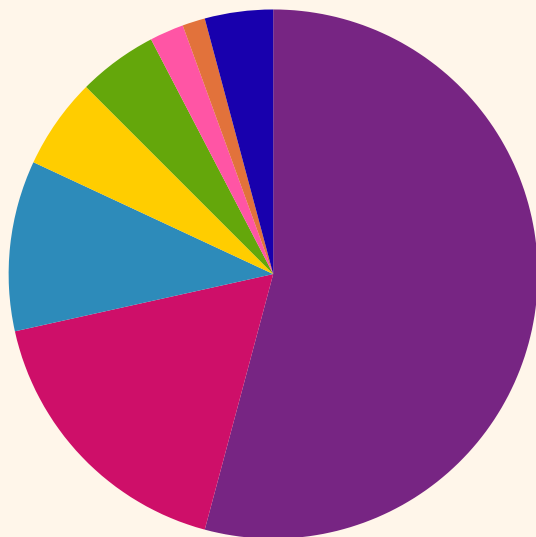
- Riikka Anderson – General Manager
- Hema Palapallil – Social Enterprise Manager & Financial Coordinator
- Zeta Mohn – Community Activator
- Mollie Hedgman – Social Media Coordinator
- Allie Gray-Ure – Duty Manager
- Dreshya Nidhin – Duty Manager
- Bronwyn Pene – Duty Manager
- Josie Frankhouser – Housekeeper
- Ruth Davis – Housekeeper
- Peta Thompson – Casual Duty Manager
- Benjie Ebrada – Casual Cleaner
- Marina Gerasimova – Casual Cleaner
- Tony Price – Casual Handyman

Our Board

- Jenni Scanlon-Murphy – President
- Tarran Frost – Treasurer
- Lisa Curtin
- Shinae Teao
- Jaime Lomas
- Charlotte Mitchell
- Ehlana Blissett
- Shree Kumar
- Diana Barber
- Nellie-Ann Abraham

Funders

- Lottery Community
- Trust Waikato
- WEL Energy Trust
- Hamilton City Council
- Sky City Hamilton Community Trust
- Tindall Foundation
- COGS
- Waikato Wellbeing Project





YWCA Hamilton



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