



# **Community Service Delivery White Paper | Pepa Mā mō te Ratonga ā-Hapori**

**November 2022 | Noema 2022**



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Ngā mihi to [Frank Advice](#) for their mahi sculpting this pepa mā. We so appreciate the partnership we have together. Ehara koe i a ia!

Ngā mihi anō to the more than 600 community groups who [shared their lived experiences](#) with us in 2020 and 2021. We see you and acknowledge the incredible kaha you have provided, and continue to provide, to keep Aotearoa safe and well.

Photo: Shelter Masterton

# Executive Summary

The tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector of Aotearoa New Zealand (the sector) has faced the COVID-19 pandemic with resilience, manaakitanga and commitment to the communities of Aotearoa New Zealand. While the pandemic has highlighted challenges with service delivery, it also led to new, innovative methods of serving our people and communities. The sector now has an opportunity to build on these innovations and embed collaboration and trust within the sector.

Drawing on the findings of the research report, *COVID-19 Hauora Wellbeing Survey of the tangata whenua, community & voluntary sector 2021* (the report), this paper explores the challenges and opportunities for service delivery to ensure our communities continue to receive the best service possible.

We make the following recommendations to streamline, strengthen and enhance service delivery across the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector of Aotearoa.

## **Recommendation 1**

Resource community organisations to embed te Tiriti o Waitangi principles into regular practice.

## **Recommendation 2**

Provide funding to help organisations better adopt and embed service delivery models that are more responsive to Māori, Pacific and Ethnic cultural ways of working.

## **Recommendation 3**

Remove competitive funding models and encourage partnership, co-delivery and collaboration to embed the practices of whakawhanaungatanga.

## **Recommendation 4**

Invest in up-to-date technology for sector organisations, to enable seamless service delivery despite the changing external influences.

## **Recommendation 5**

Provide training to sector staff and volunteers to lift technological literacy and competency in service delivery.

## **Recommendation 6**

Promote strong succession planning to ensure business continuity and to support the longevity of sector organisations.

## **Recommendation 7**

Resource information and knowledge sharing for complex service delivery challenges by establishing chief executive and manager networks across the sector.

### **Recommendation 8**

Invest in research on emerging needs, so the sector can be best placed to respond to the needs of the community and strategically balance engagement to enable the sector to help the most people.

## **Introduction**

The tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector of Aotearoa New Zealand (the sector) is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our communities in meaningful ways and our people go above and beyond to provide this help and support.

Through the challenges of COVID-19, many community groups have adapted and thrived and become more responsive to the needs of those they serve. The core values of these organisations have helped them to mobilise and whakawhanaungatanga has enabled them to work together and help each other.

Despite this commitment, the sector has ongoing challenges with funding shortfalls, out-of-date technology, lack of digital tools, technological literacy challenges, and business continuity pressures. These challenges have been exacerbated and further highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but they also offer a clear direction for how to strengthen service delivery in the coming years.

As the sector continues to deliver its vital services in the face of increasing demand, it is more important than ever that service delivery is responsive to our communities, supportive of our kaimahi and tūao (volunteers), and works collaboratively to deliver services to our most vulnerable.

**Mā mua ka kite a muri, Mā muri ka ora a mua**  
*Those who lead give sight to those who follow,  
Those who follow give life to those who lead.*

## **Why good service delivery matters**

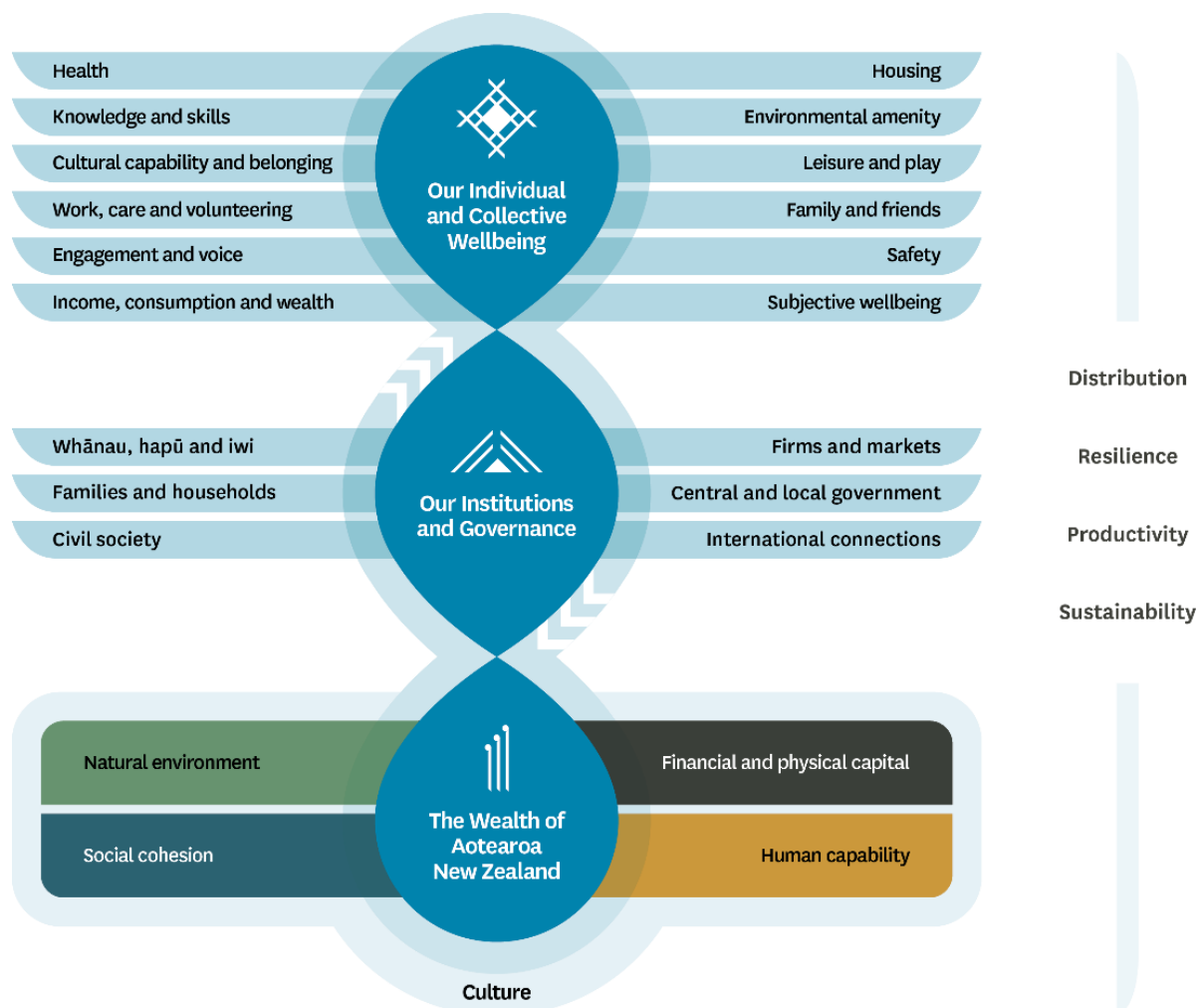
The services delivered by the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector are vital to New Zealanders. Good service delivery supports our kaimahi and tūao (volunteers) to do their best work while ensuring our communities receive the best services possible.

The sector is a core contributor to the Treasury's Living Standards Framework (LSF).<sup>1</sup> The LSF identifies 'work, care and volunteering' as one of the 12 domains of individual and collective wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are also a core contributor across the four wealth areas – natural environment, social cohesion, financial and physical capital, and human capability – as outlined in the following graphic.

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<sup>1</sup> The Treasury (October 2021), The 2021 Living Standards Framework. Accessed at <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-livingstandards-framework>





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Across the framework, the sector is a core contributor to many factors including ‘health’, ‘housing’, ‘cultural capability and belonging’, ‘engagement and voice’, ‘leisure and play’, ‘work, care and volunteering’ and ‘subjective wellbeing’. The sector works across our society, from families and households, whānau, hapū and iwi, to civil society. We enrich social cohesion and human capability.

With such an extensive contribution to the LSF, enhancing service delivery will have widespread and long-term benefits.

This paper draws on the findings of the research report, *COVID-19 Hauora Wellbeing Survey of the tangata whenua, community & voluntary sector 2021* (the report)<sup>3</sup> and presents recommendations for improving service delivery to achieve a more streamlined, supported and resilient sector.

<sup>2</sup> Te Ara The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. Source: Mason Durie, *Whaiora: Maori health development*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 68–74

<sup>3</sup> [COVID-19-Hauora-Wellbeing-Report-2021.pdf \(huie.org.nz\)](https://www.huie.org.nz/COVID-19-Hauora-Wellbeing-Report-2021.pdf)

# Key findings of the Report

## **Throughout COVID-19, the sector rallied, innovated, and adapted to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities**

With many organisations in the sector facing sudden increases in demand for services as a result of COVID-19, we witnessed some fantastic examples of strengthened and expanded connections and collaboration within the sector. For those working together as part of the COVID response, trust was developed and silos broken down, resulting in better sharing of resources and partnership building, especially when common issues arose. With greater collaboration has come more coordinated service delivery, improved information sharing, and the development of more sustainable business models.

The report identified whakawhanaungatanga, and establishing collaborative and collective relationships, as key to the sector's ability to continue providing community services throughout the pandemic and countering both external and internal pressures.

The continued development of local community hubs, in particular, has provided support for multiple organisations. Community hubs are small spaces that encourage and support community engagement and a range of services, often based out of marae or libraries and run by trusted community kaitiaki. Community hubs showcase collaboration in action and the sector has seen a growing demand from community organisations to become part of these hubs.

In a similar vein, an example raised in the report is the [Here to help u](#) website, an online portal established by a group of community organisations across Waikato and Western Bay of Plenty, for people to seek help and community services. Over 105,000 people have been supported through this website since 2020, with accommodation, food, and clothing assistance and a range of other needs.

Demand for food soared during the initial phases of the COVID-19 response, and many providers of meals and food parcels developed more collaborative ways of providing their services. By utilising whakawhanaungatanga, working together and improving communication, these providers were able to ensure that fewer people were missing out on food parcels and minimised service duplication.

## **However, the sector is increasingly having to do more with less to meet the complex needs of communities**

For the most part, the sector saw a significant increase in demand for services across the sector in response to ongoing lockdowns. With increased demand has come more stress for kaimahi and tūao (volunteers) alongside a drop in volunteer numbers.

At the same time, COVID-19 impacted the amount of funding available to organisations across the sector. While some organisations, particularly larger ones, benefited from extra government funding made available to respond to the impacts of COVID-19, the benefits of this funding were unevenly spread. The increased demand for services meant the additional funding did not keep pace with rising costs. Funding shortfalls were also a result of reduced public donations during COVID-19 and many organisations lost their fundraising abilities with face-to-face events repeatedly cancelled during lockdowns and other restrictions.

Alongside the increased demand, there has been increased complexity of demand – placing greater strain on an already constrained sector. The move to providing more services and support online has been particularly challenging, especially for those organisations working primarily with older people, those experiencing digital exclusion, or whose volunteers may not be digitally literate. Moving online also creates a lot of extra work coordinating appointments, increases the need to upgrade websites, and many kaimahi and tūao (volunteers) report experiencing fatigue after too much time participating in online meetings. This change in service delivery raised significant equity issues at both organisational and community level, with many low-income clients and some from migrant and refugee background communities unable to afford digital technology or WiFi.

Many organisations also saw young people increasingly referred to community organisations rather than receiving government support, which often required working closely with their wider whānau.

One of the overwhelming lessons of the past two years has been how important whakawhanaungatanga is to prevent the sector becoming overwhelmed by the size and complexity of problems that communities are facing. Being kind to each other and connecting with key supporters in the community has been invaluable and is a real strength of the sector.

## **Organisations delivering their mahi aroha have changed since 2020**

COVID-19 forced the sector to change how they delivered their services. Every sector, including the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, was forced to rethink how they operated at the onset of the pandemic. Many, if not most, organisations were unprepared and were forced to accelerate their digital capabilities to ensure that their vital services could be delivered through isolations and lockdowns. Many smaller organisations found it difficult to obtain the right skills and resources to transition to digital service provision.

Shifting to digital service delivery created opportunities for organisations to expand their reach and serve a wider clientele. However, while digital technology is an amazing tool, it should not be viewed as a permanent alternative to kanohi ki te kanohi interaction. Many people such as older people and ESOL speakers can find online service provision difficult and exclusionary for multiple reasons.

The sector has also moved to incorporate Māori, Pacific and Ethnic worldviews into their service delivery models. Critical to this move is changing the way funding and grants are distributed, with significantly more intentional focus on equity and support of kaupapa Māori initiatives required.

Further, many tangata whenua organisations have reported that service delivery was maintained as a result of whakawhanaungatanga bringing collaboration and networking between whānau, hapū and businesses. It was also due to respected and trusted community leaders utilising their long-established whanaungatanga networks. Tangata whenua communities were very quick to build on whānau and hapū connections, with community champions able to organise and advocate, using principles of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga to help their community.

Māori and Pasifika kaimahi and tūao (volunteers) within the sector have repeatedly emphasised the vital role of communal responses, cultural awareness, and being able to pass information and knowledge on to others. Rangatahi played an important role in helping their elders gain comfort in using online technology.

## **Additional resources, and incentives for collaboration and trust, will make the biggest difference for those working in the sector and the people they care for**

In response to the 2021 survey, the sector identified three goals that would make the biggest difference to the sector:

1. Resourcing for wellbeing and salaries, not only projects.
2. A better future in closer connectedness and collaboration. This means harnessing kin and non-kin-based relationships, incentives for collaboration, and enabling places, spaces, and resourcing to support this.
3. Competitive funding models removed in favour of trust-based models that respond to local need. This means respecting the ability of hapū, iwi, and communities to lead and support locally led planning and resourcing.

To give effect to these goals, we make the following recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Resource community organisations to embed te Tiriti o Waitangi principles into regular practice**

The tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector is committed to partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Because the sector is diverse, different parts are at different stages on their journey to Treaty partnership. Like most other organisational costs, the sector does not receive specific funding support to build its capacity for Treaty partnership. This makes it more challenging to fulfil its commitment to te Tiriti.

As highlighted earlier, many tangata whenua organisations reported that service delivery was maintained as a result of collaboration and networking between whānau, hapū and businesses, and due to respected and trusted community leaders who have long-established whanaungatanga networks of their own. Having trusted community leaders acting as vital conduits for the outreach of tangata whenua organisations will play an increasing role in meeting the needs of whānau who may be struggling, particularly in rural and harder-to-reach communities.

We recommend resourcing community organisations to embed te Tiriti o Waitangi principles into regular practice by:

- supporting tangata whenua organisations to build capacity to deliver services within their rohe and using their own whanaungatanga networks – this should include funding more by Māori, for Māori kaupapa services
- supporting tangata Tiriti organisations to strengthen their te Ao Māori cultural competency
- building on the approach of using respected and trusted community leaders to build and maintain connections between whānau, hapū and businesses, using principles of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga to help their community.



## **2. Provide funding to help organisations better adopt and embed service delivery models that are more responsive to Māori, Pacific and other ethnic minorities' cultural ways of working**

The tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector is committed to supporting Māori, Pacific and Ethnic communities, raising the voice of under-represented communities, and ensuring services are delivered in a culturally appropriate and responsive manner. Part of this commitment is ensuring critical information is available in multiple languages, but also taking steps to understand the lived experience of all service users.

The report clearly recognises that the concept of whakawhanaungatanga can increase service uptake. To solidify service uptake and ensure the sector's services are reaching New Zealand's Māori, Pacific and Ethnic communities, we must focus on strengthening collaboration between sector organisations and groups and key volunteers in these communities.

It would be beneficial if funding is made available to help organisations better understand the needs of all communities and embed more responsive service delivery models.



### **SPOTLIGHT: Hoa Pūtea | Grant Writing Support**

Since the start of the COVID pandemic in March 2020, Hui E! Community Aotearoa has supported community groups to access funding as part of its Hoa Pūtea | Grant Writing Support kaupapa. These community groups are small grassroots groups with a revenue of under \$2 million dollars or are fully voluntary run. They are designed to meet the immediate needs of their communities. The Hoa Pūtea kaupapa offers support with a community group's first grant funding application of between \$5,000-\$50,000.

The number of community groups accessing support through the Hoa Pūtea programme is indicative of the increased demand from whānau across the community sector for support with essential services. The Hoa Pūtea data indicates that the services provided are targeting communities that are considered high needs, including Māori and Māori/Pacific communities, vulnerable community/whānau members, and migrant/refugee background/ethnic communities.

The data indicates that the majority of services were focused on providing support for essentials including food, fuel, heat, and access to health and social services. This is in line with other research that indicates the COVID pandemic increased food insecurity and exacerbated social issues in Aotearoa New Zealand, and more recently the cost of living has increased significantly. Grassroots community groups, particularly those who are disadvantaged from access funding sources, are at the forefront of serving those communities experiencing these challenges.

Despite expectations from government that they are servicing grassroots communities, the number of applications from small community groups through the Hoa Pūtea kaupapa demonstrates that there are still significant gaps for community groups to access funding to service their community needs.

### **3. Remove competitive funding models and encourage co-delivery and collaboration to embed the practices of whakawhanaungatanga.**

One of the great takeaways from COVID-19 has been the way it galvanised the sector's commitment to collaboration. With greater collaboration has come more coordinated service delivery, improved information sharing, and the development of more sustainable business models. Whakawhanaungatanga, and establishing collaborative and collective relationships, have been identified as central to the sector's ability to meet increasing demand and complexity in service delivery.

Competitive funding models hinder the kinds of collaboration that the sector values. In fact, the sector has found it refreshing and enriching to step away from competitive models of funding for a time. Given the collaboration and trust that has grown in the sector during COVID-19, it is an opportune time to remove competitive funding models and embed co-delivery practices.

### **4. Invest in up-to-date technology for sector organisations, to enable seamless service delivery despite the changing external influences**

Online technology is increasingly becoming central to the delivery of services across the sector. COVID-19 forced organisations to quickly adapt to the use of digital tools to provide core services during lockdowns. With little warning, organisations across the sector found it difficult to acquire the right skills and resources to quickly transition to digital service delivery.<sup>4</sup>

To increase the resilience of organisations and effectiveness of service delivery, organisations need to invest in up-to-date technology that will enable seamless service delivery – but this will require multi-year funding to allow organisations to plan for the longer term. Organisations cannot easily invest in technology to help their service delivery options when much of their funding is short term and focussed on day-to-day necessities. We recommend prioritising investment to future-proof the sector's digital requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.information-age.com/how-covid-19-drove-charities-embrace-tech-123496985/>

## **5. Provide training to kaimahi and tūao (volunteers) to lift technological literacy and competency in service delivery**

The past two years saw many organisations revisit their entire operating model and organisational structure to bring about more collaborative, flexible ways of working, and greater empowerment for the team of staff and volunteers.

However, with the sudden shift from in-person to digital delivery of services in the sector, varying confidence levels around the use of online technology has been highlighted. As a result, the new volunteering environment was stressful for some volunteers and necessitated increased levels of support and training.

As part of business continuity, we recommend a sustained focus on providing training to sector staff and volunteers to lift technological literacy and competency to ensure the sector can continue to offer a wide range of service delivery models.



### **SPOTLIGHT: Maori & Pacific views on the digital divide**

The ‘Navigating Our Futures’ Research completed by PeopleforPeople focussed on creating better understanding about how a ‘digital mindset’ for Maori and Pacific people plays a role in the digital divide, and which other financial, educational and behavioural barriers may have added to this.

The research brought valuable insights into the digital divide for Māori and Pacific people, many of which are working and volunteering within the community sector. It highlighted the magnitude of knowledge gaps that currently exist. The definitions of digital and technology and the value add of digital tools and technology as a part of everyday life were not universally understood.

More focus and tailored investments towards addressing the knowledge gap barrier is a practical starting point to reduce the digital divide for Māori and Pacific people in Aotearoa. Bringing on this expertise at the community organisational level is vital to enable kaimahi and tuao (volunteers) to have the digital competency required to meet the needs of their communities.

Currently, many Pacific and Māori individuals feel that they are receivers of the digital world rather than its creators. To shift this, confident digital mindsets need to be developed.

Developing digital mindsets for Māori and Pacific people to become digital creators will not just be necessary for these communities; it will be beneficial for Aotearoa as a whole. Addressing the digital divide will provide an opportunity to reduce inequity, strengthen our local workforce and prepare Aotearoa for the future.

## **6. Promote strong succession planning to ensure business continuity and to support the longevity of sector organisations**

Establishing strong succession planning will lift the resilience and longevity of core service providers across the sector. COVID-19 highlighted the previous reliance on older people for volunteering and delivery of services. As noted in the report, many community and voluntary organisations, especially smaller ones, “are heavily reliant on volunteers for their functional continuity. Around two thirds of these organisations have no paid staff or up to a maximum of only five paid staff, so reliance on the kaupapa, goodwill, labour, and expertise of volunteers is fundamental both to organisational survival and to the continuation of service delivery to clients.”

While the strength of the commitment of existing tūao (volunteers) is to be celebrated, prioritising how to attract and retain younger volunteers is also critical to the longevity of the sector. The report noted that younger volunteers did step up to fill the need after a fall in volunteer numbers at the start of the pandemic, but that “some organisations found it challenging to engage well with younger volunteers”. Key for the sector is engaging with young people about how organisations can create an environment that is supportive and welcoming to a wider range of volunteers.

Business continuity, of course, is wider than staffing and volunteering. As outlined in the *Hui E! Community Funding White Paper 2022*, multi-year funding would enable organisations to plan more for the longer term.

## **7. Encourage information and knowledge sharing for complex service delivery challenges by establishing chief executive and manager networks across the sector**

It is now even clearer to the sector that solutions to complex service delivery challenges are best achieved through collaborative relationships and networks. As better connections were built between organisations, resiliency of staff and volunteers grew despite the increase in workload and transition to remote working. With strengthened community connections, we have seen collaboration in funding applications and organisational networks set up across multiple regions.

Having access to more shared information and knowledge gained through these networks has resulted in some organisations developing more sustainable business models.

While there is a recognition that collaboration takes commitment and time to develop, now is the time to prioritise forming and maintaining collaborative networks, which will help to shape the future in more positive ways. The sector now has an opportunity to build on and embed collaboration and knowledge sharing, and to put more formal structures in place to support this new direction. One clear step to maintain momentum is to establish chief executive and manager networks across the sector.

## **8. Invest in research on emerging needs, so the sector can be best placed to respond to the needs of the community and strategically balance engagement to enable the sector to help the most people**

Our collective experience of COVID-19 has taught us all the importance of resiliency and strong communities. When we strengthen the hauora of the sector, we strengthen the wellbeing of communities.

We recommend that a next step for peak bodies in the sector is to invest in research on emerging trends and developments, particularly where these may contribute to organisational resilience and longevity or improve the way the sector can meet the needs of our communities.



### **SPOTLIGHT: Building confidence and insights with data**

Data is vital to enabling community organisations to design services that meet the needs of those they serve. It clearly defines the issues faced within communities and enables evidence-based service design.

In 2019, Socialink, an umbrella organisation supporting social and community sectors across the Western Bay of Plenty, undertook a feasibility study to see what data was needed by communities. Out of this, grew Community Insights, designed to meet the needs of local community groups.

Community Insights' long-term vision is to build better data infrastructure, practices, and processes within social and community organisations across the Bay of Plenty. This mahi will build stronger community organisations, help resources be better targeted, inform better decision making, and improve how social impact and outcomes are demonstrated. It will enable the local sector to work better together. Over time, this will provide more effective, efficient solutions to the social challenges the sector addresses.

Community Insights will achieve the change needed through working one-to-one with community groups on data projects, strengthening their data foundations, visualising their data, and building data capabilities. The team also supports and encourages community data collaborations around social issues and needs.

Community Insights has begun to publish its interactive Social Data Dashboards which curate (and localise) data from government datasets including Stats NZ, MOG, MOE, MSD, and Charity Services. The dashboards are designed to collate relevant themed datasets for the Bay of Plenty, such as child and youth wellbeing dashboards, and the size and nature of the BOP's community sector.



One area of focus could be micro-volunteering, which is an emerging trend of having volunteers complete small tasks, often offsite and online. This approach can empower people who may not have otherwise volunteered in a face-to-face capacity, particularly people with restricted mobility, in caring roles, or who find it difficult to volunteer in person for whatever reason, or who only have short-term availability. Micro-volunteering means organisations can benefit from a wider range of volunteers and can make use of specific skillsets such as legal work, website or graphic design, writing and editing, and researching.

## **Conclusion**

The tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector has shown great resiliency and innovation throughout COVID-19 and demonstrated manaakitanga and commitment to the communities of Aotearoa New Zealand.

We witnessed many examples of improved service delivery and responsiveness to our communities because of collaboration within the sector. Working together has helped develop trust and break down silos, leading to more coordinated service delivery and sustainable business models.

The sector now has an opportunity to build on these innovations, by strengthening these partnerships and networks and continuing to expand collaboration and trust within the sector.