



Life changing 😊 experiences
for young people ✨ with
disabilities 🤝

2025



www.recreate.org.nz

Welcome!

Recreate NZ is a down to earth, youth focused, family orientated charitable trust that is offering positive development and out of home experiences for children, youth and young adults with disabilities.

For the 2024/25 financial year, Recreate NZ delivered over 6,275 opportunities across a range of 680 unique adventure, recreation, social, education and work-skills programmes in the Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Bay of Plenty and Christchurch regions.

Programmes range from ½ day to 6-days and cater to over 600 young people between the age of 10 and 35.

Recreate NZ strives to facilitate relationships and engage with community, creating greater inclusion and changing community perceptions towards disability and neurodiversity.

Governance

Recreate NZ was established as a registered Charitable Trust (CC41375) in 2002 by a group of parents of disabled children. Recreate NZ is overseen by a Board of Trustees, currently comprised of the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and five independent Trustees.

In 2020, the Recreate Youth Board was established, consisting of a group of young leaders who attend Recreate programmes. This Youth Board provides valuable input and feedback into the running of our organisation.



Auckland Head Office
630c Great South Road, Ellerslie, Auckland 1051

Where we are

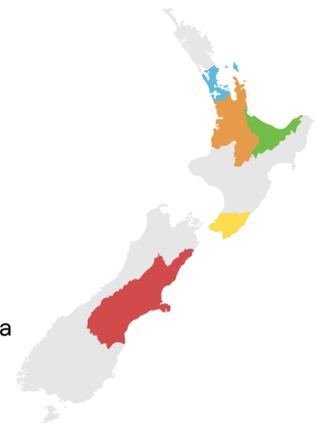
Auckland / Tāmaki Makaurau
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021 225 3992
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Wellington / Te Whanganui-a-Tara
021 229 9685
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Christchurch / Ōtautahi
021 871 787
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Operations

The national operational team consists of 38 permanent employees, including General Manager, Programme Coordinators, Facilitators and Administration Support, including 7 disabled young people. Additionally, Recreate NZ relies on the contribution of over 400 volunteers to help run our programmes, which helps to build upon an all-inclusive society.

Our Programmes

Recreate NZ offers a development pathway through the ages and stages in life, continuing to build on skills learned in a variety of areas.

We want to champion the achievements of young people succeeding through our programmes.

Recreate NZ facilitated 680 quality and unique Adventure, Recreational, Social, Educational and Work-Skills development programmes and events during the 2024/25 year.



Recreate's staple four-day camps providing personal growth opportunities through outdoor activities.



Premier adventures for thrill-seeking youth to the furthest reaches of Aotearoa.



Multi-day adventures where youth learn, develop and master specific outdoor skills from the snow to the sea.



Good times out socialising with friends in and around the city for either half or full days.



Weekends out of the city in a safe and relaxing environment with small groups of friends.



Multi-day recreational programmes where participants venture around the country to experience new places and new activities.



Fun-filled day activities every school holidays. Participants enjoy a mix of active and passive activities in and around the city.



Life-skills is a full term educational programme offering a variety of personal development opportunities.



Recreate NZ facilitates mid-week Moxie Work Experience programmes in a range of practical environments.



Moxie Employment aims to offer practical work experience in workplaces, leading to paid employment.

Our Values

Recreate NZ core values, presented below, drive our kaupapa, 'life-changing experiences for young people with disabilities'. These values have been formed and refined through 23 years of Youth Camps, Getaways, Urban events, Life Skills and employment courses, Holidays Programmes and more.



Self-determination

We are strengths-based and person-centred to encourage autonomy, where young people are empowered to make positive decisions for themselves.



Community led

Young people are supported by age-appropriate facilitators and volunteers. We encourage volunteerism, foster leadership skills, and inspire young people to engage in community-based initiatives.



Challenge and Advocacy

We follow social and rights-based models to challenge the status quo. We work to identify and remove barriers to enable full participation in society and equip our young people with the tools to advocate for themselves.



Hauora

We focus on the health of the whole person, encouraging healthy food choices, active lifestyles and positive social relationships. We foster meaningful personal growth through experiential learning.



Kotahitanga

We recognise the diversity of people and champion unity and solidarity. We support collective action to achieve a sense of togetherness for our young people and the wider community.



Whanaungatanga

We focus on connecting with our young people and their support network, creating meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging for all. Additionally, our programmes tangibly support parents, caregivers, and whānau by offering valuable respite.

Recreate NZ Youth Board

In July 2020, Recreate NZ set up a National Youth Board to make sure our young people's voices are heard.

This group of young leaders provide insight and ideas to foster best practice, better outreach and more understanding of young people and family needs.

The Youth Board is made up of 15 long term Recreate NZ members with lived experience of disability, representing each of the regions where we operate. Members meet monthly via Zoom and bring unique skills and influence to help the operations team make day-to-day decisions.

The Youth Board was refreshed at the start of 2025, bringing on a new cohort of passionate leaders who want to see Recreate NZ thrive.



Meg Young, Chair of the Youth Board, speaking at Illuminate Market in 2024

"I have loved being involved in the Youth Board. It has been so much fun being a part of it, and I have also loved being the chairperson. It is the best job ever and it has given me a sense of achievement. I love the responsibility that it brings. The programmes I have done have been a lot of fun. My favourite ones have been the cooking module, and I really enjoyed the getaway to Papamoa; that was really fun."

The Recreate NZ Youth Board was created to:

- Drive the direction of Recreate NZ to better meet young people's needs.
- Provide leadership opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities resulting in shared goal successes.
- Provide feedback and insights on programmes
- Encourage long-term peer-to-peer mentorship.
- Uncover ways to break boundaries and remove stigma for people with disabilities.
- Learn to gather and communicate information that creates more connections.

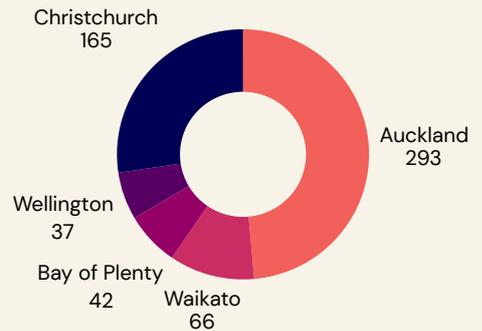
To sufficiently support and enable our Youth Board to perform its governance duties, Recreate NZ provides yearly leadership training and team building. Bringing the board together from all around NZ is valuable to building collaborative, innovative and successful shared objectives. This group of neurodiverse young people have different ideas, skills, experiences and opinions that can lead change in our community.

People and Programmes

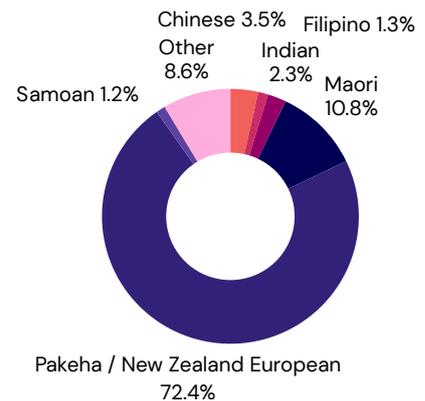
Our Recreate NZ communities have grown to include over 603 active participants across five regions in Aotearoa, totalling well over 1,000 since Recreate NZ's inception in 2002. Our programme output is relative to the size of each region, as displayed below. A goal of ours remains to reach more and more families in more parts of our country.



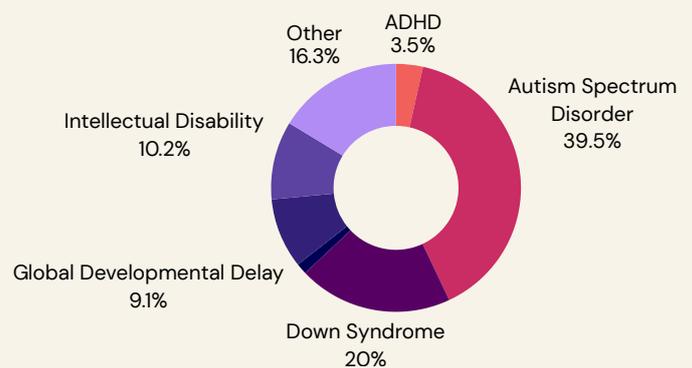
603 active participants in our communities



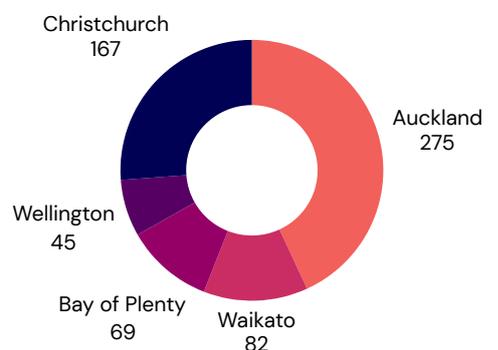
Ethnicity of participants



Primary disabilities for participants



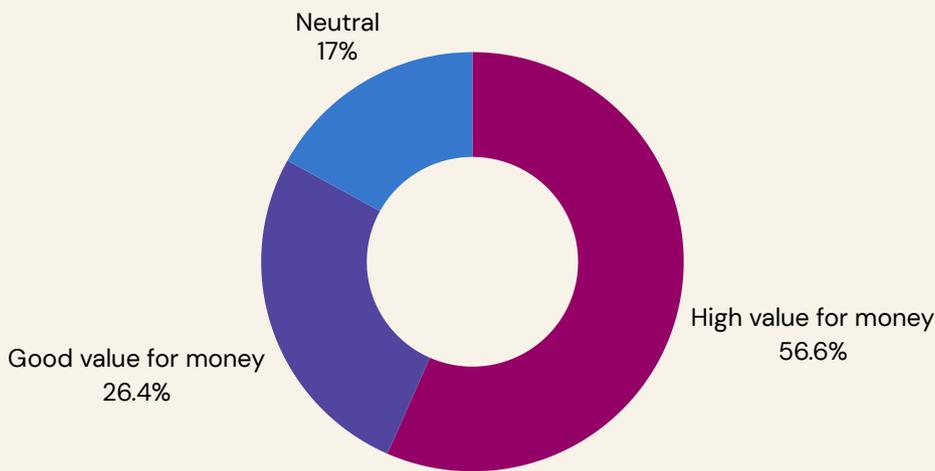
680 programmes in 2024-25



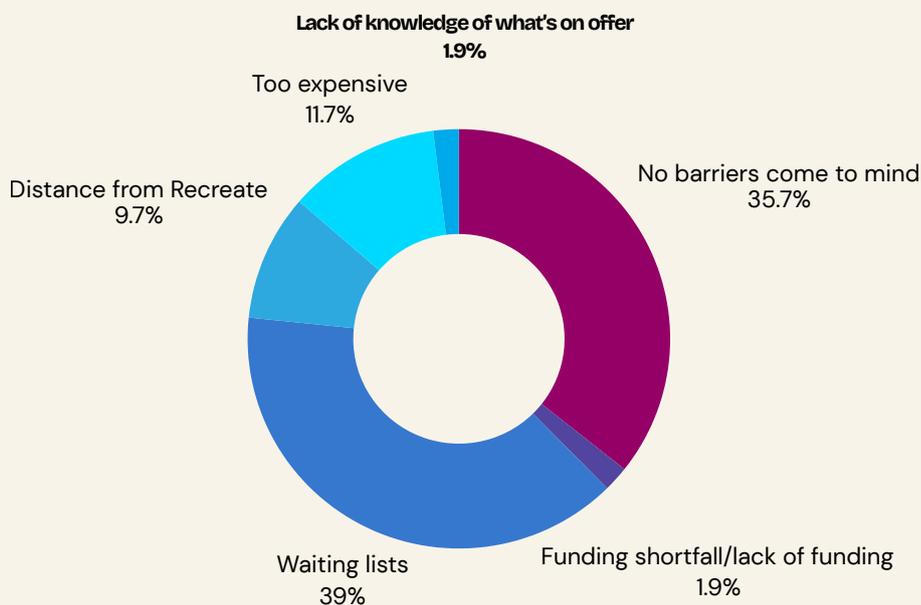
2024 Survey Feedback

Each year we survey members of our communities to gain valuable feedback on our programmes and to gauge our impact for families. The two charts below display how families perceive the value for money of our programmes, and also some of the barriers to attending programmes.

Value for money of Recreate NZ programmes



Barriers to attending Recreate programmes



Feedback from our community



"As a parent that found Recreate for our daughter 5 years ago, it has been life changing. I cannot overstate how much it has meant to us that we can take a break without worrying about her wellbeing and just how much our daughter has grown in confidence since being involved in Recreate. I see Recreate as the exemplar of how to provide youth services for the intellectually disabled and neurodiverse."

-Auckland parent



"Recreate provides an extremely valuable service of providing our daughter a place where she feels safe and 'at home' but is also great fun and targeted towards young adults. As a parent, it not only provides respite, it is also great to see our daughter develop socially and gain self confidence out in the world.."

-Bay of Plenty parent



"These activities keep her connected to her community which is vital for her well-being and sense of belonging. She has become part of something where she's valued for just being her - none of her community see a kid with a disability - they just see a friend."

-Christchurch parent

What we see on our programmes

Our Adventure, Recreation, Social, Educational and Work-Skills programmes develop the cognitive, physical and emotional skills of our participants while introducing them to a variety of essential life skills.



- Cognitive skills may include decision making, focus and concentration, task application and behavioural modification.
- Physical applications may include coordination, strength and endurance conditioning, balance and promotion of healthy exercise.
- Emotional growth may include communication and relationships, self-determination, confidence, risk assessment and personal safety, and health and wellbeing.
- Life skills development may include cooking and healthy eating, public transport training, budgeting, hospitality, and computer training.
- Moxie work skills opportunities include horticulture-based learning, community based learning, career development, product making and more.
- Networks developed by participants include friendships, support circles, connections in community and jobs.

Respite

Recreate NZ provided 9,972 days of respite in 2024-25. Family, whānau and caregivers have the opportunity for much needed respite while their young people are enjoying the personal benefits of our meaningful programmes.

Research frequently highlights the importance of a break from caring duties, which is far more rewarding when the young person is also having a positive and enriching experience. Ministry of Health Respite Strategy (2017-2022) states: When we support respite for carers, we invest in protecting the health and wellbeing of the whole family/whānau.

Volunteers

To facilitate 680 programmes and events, Recreate recruits and trains hundreds of 15–40 year old volunteers, filling over 1,700 positions per annum. Contributing 280 hours every week, volunteers are a critical to ensuring young people are supported to learn and thrive on programmes.

Volunteers are sourced through Volunteering Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Universities and Technical Institutes, community, corporate and church groups plus high schools and international internships.

Through these connections we strengthen and integrate communities while encouraging volunteerism amongst youth.

Many of our volunteers go on to help others for the rest of their lives, or move into employment positions within Recreate NZ.

“My favourite part about interning at Recreate was the environment that everyone created. I truly felt embraced within this organization. The staff are all supportive, open, and fantastic at what they do. Being at Recreate taught me so much about other people, myself, and what I hope to get out of my future career as a social worker. I feel lucky and proud to have had the opportunity to work with Recreate.”

Recreate Intern



Community

When disability is not viewed positively, it puts disabled people at high risk of social exclusion. Recreate NZ programmes and events are inclusive, utilising mainstream venues and activity providers, teaching the community to be more thoughtful about individual capabilities, and increases acceptance of functional diversity in society.

Participants develop skills and connections on our programmes that enable greater community contribution, and at the same time barriers are broken down, creating more accessibility.

Positive experiences promote achievement and elicit responses in other areas of life such as, further education, independent living, employment opportunities, increased socialisation and an active role in community life.



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