

StrongVoices

EMPOWERED LIVES

Summer 2025



A celebration of kapa haka in the regions

Building a future

Ray's journey across the world for IHC



Kōrero

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua

'I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past'.

While it has been a busy couple of months at IHC, the end of October was an extraordinary period.

Two things happened that emphasised the importance of considering our rich history side by side with our future.

On 23 October, Chief Executive Andrew Crisp expressed IHC's profound regret for the abuse and neglect survivors experienced within the support services meant to protect them – including IHC's part in that.

The apology to survivors, members and whānau marked our formal acknowledgement of the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry and affirmed our commitment to the inquiry's recommendations and ensuring safe, quality services.

You can read more about the apology on page 3 and can visit our website to see Andrew deliver the apology on video.

It is with a commitment to our past and the knowledge that today the lives of people with intellectual disabilities are still more difficult than others that we look to the future.

IHC has set a high-level strategy that looks towards the next decade up to 2035. It is not an action plan – which is to come – but it affirms our values and priorities to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. The strategy was presented and discussed at the Annual General Meeting, held in Ōtautahi Christchurch on 31 October, and you can read more about it on pages 4-5.

There have already been changes in the way we work at IHC. There is continued greater involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in decision-making for the organisation and a better integration between our properties and disability services.

Finally, we can end the year with more celebration – with Capture the moment, kapa haka festivals and more.

I wish you a safe and happy end of the year and a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. All the best for 2026.

Gina Rogers
Editor

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Join the conversation:

Be the first to read the news and views across the IHC Group and disability sector.

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 ihc.org.nz/strong-voices

Cover image: West Coast kapa haka group Te Rōpū o Māwhera in front of a sculpture of Chief Tūhuru. Read about their incredible journey on page 14.



Acknowledging the past

IHC

On October 23, Chief Executive Andrew Crisp apologised on behalf of IHC to people who experienced abuse and neglect in disability services. The apology was in response to the findings of the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry: 1950-1999, which IHC called for and supported.

The Commission found that many people who should have been supported and protected by disability services were harmed. IHC's apology acknowledged that our organisation was a part of the system that allowed abuse to occur historically.

Despite a red-weather warning across the country, the apology went ahead as planned, with an audience of IHC members, Chief Executive's Advisory Group members, and staff. Other guests sent apologies as they were unable to travel due to the weather, but IHC later shared the apology directly with people in services and their families and whānau.

IHC staff also spoke directly with people in our services and their families and whānau to share the apology, answer questions, and help people find more support or information.

Andrew said the apology was an

important step in acknowledging the past, recognising the courage of survivors who shared their stories, and committing to a safer future. He also shared a significant step that IHC had taken to recognise its most vulnerable group of people.

"Following the Inquiry, we took time to think about what we could do that is tangible for people who are currently in our residential disability services and who were in those services during the Inquiry period," he said.

"Many people in that group cannot speak up for themselves or have not had someone to speak up with or for them. So, we decided to offer everyone in that residential service group, who was with IHC since the Inquiry period, a payment."

The payments of \$2500 per person, totalling approximately \$3 million, recognise the difficulties faced by this group of people in sharing their experiences. The payment does not prevent people from coming forward to share their experiences, engage with IHC, or enter a restorative process. IHC has encouraged people to come forward if they are considering it and has set up a dedicated engagement team to

support people through that process.

Soon after IHC's apology, the first anniversary of the Government's apology to survivors of abuse in state care was remembered with a Day of Reflection on 12 November.

IHC encouraged staff and the community to attend public events around the country led by survivor and community groups.

Andrew's apology on behalf of IHC finished with the words: "I want to reiterate our deepest apologies to all survivors. We remain profoundly sorry and committed to making better, safer disability services".

The apology can be watched, listened to or read in full or easy read versions on IHC's website at: www.ihc.org.nz/apology

IHC has made major improvements over the past 25 years to make sure people with intellectual disabilities are safe, respected and supported to live good lives. Some of those significant initiatives can also be found via the website link above.

Above: IHC Chief Executive, Andrew Crisp delivering IHC's apology.

Building a future where everyone can thrive

IHC

Since joining IHC in February, Chief Executive Andrew Crisp has spent time listening and learning. He has visited and talked to people with intellectual disabilities, their whānau, IHC staff, carers, funders, donors and many others.

Through these conversations he has built a picture of our sector – one that can be inspiring but, at times, sobering.

He has seen people with intellectual disabilities who live the lives they want to, surrounded by whānau, carers and communities that support them.

He has also seen services and homes that are simply not fit-for-purpose, and people whose lives and surroundings fall far short of what they want and deserve.

“I saw that we needed to reset,” says Andrew. “And to make sure IHC continues to honour the legacy of those parents who 76 years ago started a movement to improve the lives of their children.

“The research in our 2023 Data to Dignity report only reinforced this. Intellectually disabled New Zealanders die up to 20 years earlier than the rest of the population, which is just unacceptable. And many other life indicators are bleak.

“To understand the reality of life for people with intellectual disabilities and their whānau was the first step.

“And from there we could build a strategy that would bring real and lasting change for the 50,000 New Zealanders affected.

“To make sure we truly understood the situation, we engaged with people in multiple ways. We held face-to-face and online conversations across the country, did an online survey, shared information in Easy Read formats and had discussions with people with intellectual disabilities and their whānau.

“People told us what mattered most to them, what was working, what wasn’t and what they wanted to see change.”

For many, including long-time IHC member and parent Kay Pearce, being part of the strategy engagement was deeply personal.

“The initial contact to respond to the survey piqued my interest. I was constantly reminded by my grandmother and mother that my voice wouldn’t be heard until I made it happen. It leaves me with a legacy of asking questions – maybe too many sometimes.

“I have a vested interest in the organisation as my son is living in residential care with IDEA, so I felt I had a valuable opportunity to respond as a mother, as someone with a family member in care, as an active member of an Association I care about, and as a past Member Council member, all of which gave me insight into the governance of the organisation.”

From the feedback, IHC has developed a 10-year strategy, which Andrew Crisp presented to members at the October AGM.

“It sets out our mission, which is unchanged, what we want to achieve, how we’re going to work and what we are going to do. It is simple but not easy.”

Otago Association Chair Eric Robertson reinforces the need for change.

“IHC is well overdue for a renewed focus. I’m excited about the prospect these changes will bring while remaining guarded until we see exactly how it will deliver direct benefits for people with intellectual disabilities.”

“I’m heartened that we’ve got a sound foundation from which we can develop the next level of detail.”

Andrew Crisp acknowledges people want to know what IHC will do next.

“The next step is to develop clear action plans – turning aspirations into action, together. We will work in partnership with people with intellectual disabilities and their whānau, ensuring their voices and experiences continue to guide our work.

For Kay, that promise makes all the difference.

“My voice was heard, and my plea to not leave anyone behind – words I first heard at the 2018 Inclusion International Conference – was listened to. Those words resonated and have become part of the action plan going forward,” she says.

“We also have an assurance from our CE that there will be checks and balances along the way to ensure each step taken is in the right direction.

“I sincerely believe IHC members and cohorts can collaborate to achieve the goals set. Not one part of the organisation has the answer to how to move forward, but we should be able to work together to achieve as the IHC community, being respectful of each other’s boundaries.

“My passion is supporting an organisation that has survived and continually evolves to ensure my son, and others following us, will have the same rights as any other New Zealanders. There’s still some way to go yet.”

With people, whānau, and communities at the heart of the reset, Andrew says the strategy is a deliberate, purposeful and timely shift toward that future.



What we heard

- People appreciated the clear focus on outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities – and the importance of hearing their voices.

- Whānau play a vital role in communication and decision-making, and need to be supported in that role.

- People want IHC to focus more on those who can't speak for themselves.

- There is a strong call for more transparency about how IHC makes decisions.

- People want to see more choice, control and real opportunities for personal growth, friendships and relationships.

- Many told us the biggest challenges happen at key transition points – early childhood, leaving school and when parents are no longer able to be involved.

- Finding help can be difficult. People said there's a lack of clear information and too many barriers.

- Keep it simple – make sure the strategy is something everyone can understand and see themselves in.



Moment, captured

IHC

Capture the moment is IHC's photography competition for New Zealanders who have an intellectual disability.

Initially built on the success of the IHC Art Awards, Capture the moment has grown year on year since its inception in 2021. This year saw 160 entries from photographers responding to the theme Nature: the living world, celebrating everything from native birds to mountain vistas.

Judging the 2025 competition were seasoned photographers Shayne Jeffares (Hawke's Bay) and Bridgit Anderson (Christchurch), who were joined by last year's winner Beren Hughes. For Beren, stepping out from behind the lens as a judge was a new adventure. "It was really interesting," he shares. "I enjoyed seeing such a

wide range of photographs entered. Talking to the other judges was a new experience. It was hard to pick a winner because the standard was so good." Though he relished the challenge, Beren's already thinking about entering again next year.

Auckland-based Dani Zam's photograph of a lone native New Zealand duck *Whio* was the image that claimed first prize.

"It feels pretty epic to win," says Dani. "I have never won anything like this in my life. I love photography because I like taking the photo and looking at it after. And I like other people looking at my photos too. I'm so excited that

with the prize money I'm going to buy a really good camera."

Second place went to Connor Stokes from Auckland for his photograph *The Sacred End of the Water*, which he took on an iPad at Muriwai Beach on Auckland's west coast. Connor was having lunch at his art studio Two4Nine when he heard of his placing in Capture the moment. "I felt cool," he says. "Photography is amazing." Connor has lately been taking photos of Te Whatu Stardome observatory at Cornwall Park.

Dean Coleman from Pukekohe took third place with his image of sunlight through trees called A

Quiet Moment. Dean's whanau are very supportive of his passion for photography. He was on a walk with his mum and twin sister through their local reserve when Dean captured his award-winning photo. "It was quiet, and he truly enjoyed the experience," says Dean's mum Serena.

The Youth Award winner was Aurora McCulloch from Darfield with her work *Taniwha Splash* taken at the Rakaia Gorge River. Aurora was in class at school when she found out she'd won the Youth Award.

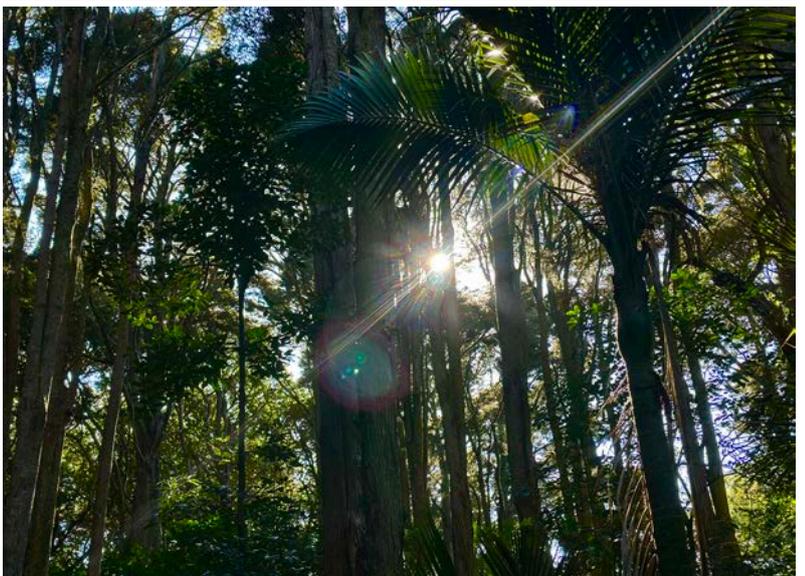
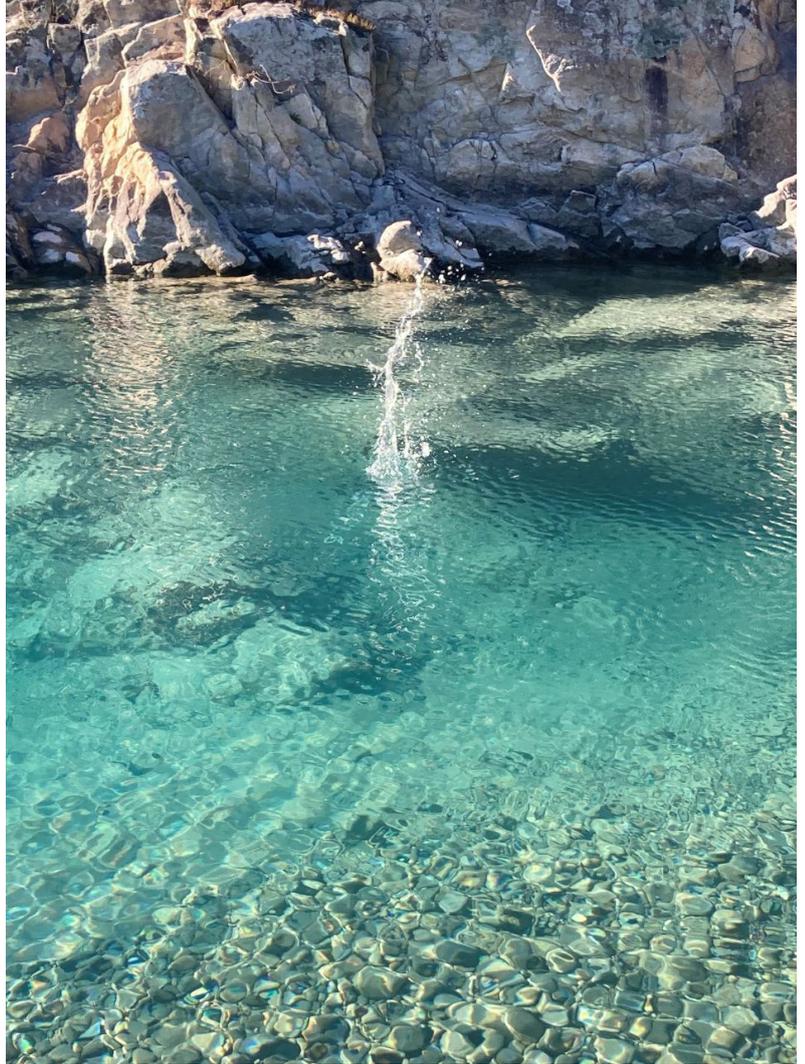
"I was sitting in class and my mum sent me an email. I looked and then screamed and told everyone I won," she says. "I'm proud of myself because I haven't done much photography, but I enjoy learning."

The People's Choice Award went to Wellington's Regan Humphries with his photograph *Muscles* shot upwards through a forest canopy. "Leaves, sun and trees make me feel happy," says Regan.

All of the top 30 finalists from 2025's Capture the moment exhibited at FOTOFEST '25 in Hastings City where some of the images sold.

View the 30 finalists here: [Capture the moment 2025 gallery](#)

Capture the moment returns in 2026 for its fifth year, promising more unique moments worth capturing.



Left: Dan Zam, First Place winner, *Whio*.

Top to bottom: Youth Award Winner, Aurora McCulloch, *Taniwha Splash*. Second Place Winner, Connor Stokes, *The Sacred End Of The Water*. Third Place Winner, Dean Coleman, *A Quiet Moment*.



Celebrating rural life through the lens

2025 IHC Calf & Rural Scheme photo competition

IHC

There's something special about life on the land. The early mornings, muddy boots, laughter and the bond between people and animals. That's what the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme photo competition is all about. It's a chance to capture those moments that make rural life so unique.

Every year this competition brings out the creativity of our rural supporters, and 2025 is no exception. This year we've had an incredible response, with 146 entries across three categories: Farm Animals, Working on the Farm and the much-loved IHC Calf category featuring our iconic Allflex pink ear tag.

The IHC Calf & Rural Scheme photo competition has been running since 2013. It's more than just a fun

contest. It's a celebration of community spirit and of the farmers, families and friends who have supported IHC for generations through the IHC Calf & Rural Scheme, one of New Zealand's most successful rural fundraising programmes.

Since its beginnings in 1982, the scheme has raised more than \$43 million for people with intellectual disabilities, thanks to the generosity and hard work of rural communities across the country.

We're featuring a few of this year's stunning photo entries in this issue, but the big decision will be announced in December.

Keep an eye on the IHC Calf and Rural Facebook page for winners' announcements.



And make sure you follow us at:
facebook.com/IHCNewZealand

If you'd like to pledge a calf or make a virtual donation to support people with intellectual disabilities in rural communities, visit www.ihc.org.nz/calf

When you donate to IHC's Calf & Rural Scheme, you help change lives like Gabrielle's. Thank you, rural NZ, for your incredible support.

Please donate today: www.ihc.org.nz/calf

Opposite page: Gabrielle loves life on her West Coast dairy farm spending her days with the calves enjoying the outdoors.

Top left: *Not going to get far with you in there Pinky, Buster and Bones!* Photo by Fiona Knight.

Top right: *Winter evenings. My daughter Autumn and Highland steer Midge.* Photo by Rachel Hawkings.

Bottom left: *Mr Moto Moto born at a whopping 47kg, enjoying the lush pastures and last of the winter snow!* (IHC Calf) photo by Anna Wilson, Pāmu Valetta Farm in Ashburton.

Bottom right: *Working with Poppa.* Photo by Keith and Tracey Crawford.

IHC Chief Executive Andrew Crisp: On tour around the motu

IHC

There aren't too many corners of New Zealand that IHC's Chief Executive Andrew Crisp hasn't found himself in over the past nine months.

Visiting IHC houses, hubs and offices has given Andrew the opportunity to really get to know many of the people we support, their whānau and our staff.

"I've loved seeing people really engaged and connecting with others and doing things they enjoy," he says.

"I've also been struck by the calibre of our frontline staff. They care deeply, they're committed and they often do very challenging work."

At the same time, Andrew says it's clear that some of our properties need attention. "We need to be proud of every one of our homes – and that means upgrading or redeveloping a number of them."

In the Hutt Valley, Andrew joined more than 200 people at the Glitz & Glam Dance. At Grey Street Studio in Hamilton, he met artists whose works tell powerful stories of identity, resilience and pride. In Christchurch, he helped celebrate the Student Volunteer Army Service Awards, recognising young people making a real difference in their communities.

Across the country, kapa haka groups have welcomed him with waiata and haka, grounding each visit in the warmth and strength of te ao Māori.

For Andrew, the most significant moments of his travels have been the times he's been welcomed into people's homes.

"That made the importance of what we do very real for me."

There have been a few travel misadventures along the way too, including one particularly rough flight.

"The flight attendant said it was the worst she'd had in 15 years. We did get to Wellington but barely touched the tarmac before heading straight back to Christchurch.

"On our second attempt, four hours later, lightning struck as we landed and we had to wait half an hour to get off the plane safely."

There've been other, less frightening, almost comedic moments including missing three turn offs on the way from Tauranga to Auckland and inadvertently picking up someone else's bag from a baggage carousel, but Andrew remains keen to keep traveling.

"It's given me a deeper understanding of the lives, hopes and challenges of the people at the heart of IHC and strengthened my commitment to making a real difference for them."



Above: Map showing the locations visited by Andrew Crisp in 2025.

Chief Executive's Advisory Group: What matters most?

IHC

The Chief Executive's Advisory Group came together early in 2025. It's chaired by National Self Advocacy Advisor David Corner. He has compiled this report for us.

The idea for a Chief Executive's Advisory Group came about after talking to IHC CEO Andrew Crisp. Andrew was keen on getting an advisory group together made up of people with an intellectual disability. IHC sent out an Easy Read nomination form and the terms of reference advertising for people with an intellectual disability to be part of the CEO Advisory Group.

Among those who applied were Neville Pugh, Dianne Pelvin, Hamish Tavener and Waata Houia and after going through the selection process they were appointed to the CEO Advisory Group. Alexandra Flutey Rowe, who is on the IHC member council, is also part of the Group.

The Group has had two meetings so far, one face-to-face and one

online, and have another face-to-face meeting scheduled in December.

Dianne Pelvin was the acting chairperson, and she chaired the first Group meeting as I was unable to attend.

The Group discussed the terms of reference as well as talking about the things that can help to make a meeting good. Then they came up with ideas and suggestions for meetings.

Independent Advisor Gordon Boxall spoke to the Group about the work he has done talking to people about what matters most in their lives. The information Gordon gathered was then included in the IHC survey.

The Group has talked about how people could be safe and happy in their residential homes by having regular meetings, having their say and choosing to live with people they want to live with.

We discussed what to expect at the IHC Annual General Meeting in



Christchurch and that most of the focus would be on the IHC draft strategy.

We also talked about the New Zealand Disability Strategy and had lots of discussion about how the strategy does not include enabling good lives or the minimum wage exemption. The Group felt that these must be included in the strategy. I am also on the New Zealand Disability Strategy Employment Working Group representing people with an intellectual disability.

Above: David Corner, National Self Advocacy Advisor.

Left: The Chief Executive's Advisory Group, Alexandra Flutey Rowe, Waata Houia, Dianne Pelvin, Hamish Tavener, Neville Pugh.



Below: Murihiku Roopu (Southland/
Core) performing at Ngā Tāngata
Manawa o te Tai-Tonga Kapa Haka
Festival.



Kapa haka brings aroha to the regions

IDEA SERVICES

Nothing could stop our mighty kapa haka performers, who took over stages around the country at IDEA Services regional festivals.

For Te Atakura Ryan, Kaitakawaenga from IHC's Māori advisory group Te Anga Pāua, these festivals were more than events—they were a movement. “Kapa haka is flourishing,” she says. “It’s a taonga that connects people to their whakapapa and to each other. Everyone worked so hard and seeing them shine on stage is just incredible.”

Despite a week of wild winds that hit Southland at the end of October, Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-Tonga the southern region kapa haka festival went ahead. The first in the series of four IDEA Services regional kapa haka festivals Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-Tonga brought together rōpū from all over Te Wai Pounamu. Spirits were high and performers from Blenheim, Nelson, Canterbury, North Otago and Southland itself lit up the stage – showcasing the results of months of hard work.

Next stop: Northland as Te Hoenga Waka the Northern region kapa haka festival transformed the Orewa Events Centre. The sun came out, food trucks rolled in, and the community turned up in force. One News popped by to capture the magic for a national audience. It was a day of laughter, waiata, and whānau cheering on every performer.

Then came the Mid Central region’s turn with Te Wakatini at the breathtaking setting of Lake Karapiro. Against a backdrop of sparkling water, rōpū from Gisborne, Rotorua, Hawke’s Bay and Waikato along with a big crowd of well-wishers packed out the big

venue. MC Krissy (who’d also held things together down south) kept the vibe electric — sparkling and singing and getting everyone on their feet to dance between sets.

The regional kapa haka festivals wrapped up in Wairarapa with Te Ngākoutaki o ngā Kahui-maunga at the Carterton Events Centre on 20 November. Rōpū from Whanganui, Taranaki, Manawatū, Horowhenua, and Wairarapa proudly took their turn on the stage, joined by special guests Te Iiti Kahurangi from Kuranui College. After their own stunning performance, the college kids stayed to tautoko every group—a true display of manaakitanga.

Four regions. Four unforgettable festivals. Countless moments of pride, connection, and aroha. Standby for Nationals in Waikato in 2026. Tīhei Mauriora!

To view photos and videos visit: www.idea.org.nz/festivals-25

Right: Ngā Taonga Atawhai (Northland) performing at Te Hoenga Waka.



When the weather said no, we said kia kaha!

IDEA SERVICES

West Coast kapa haka group Te Rōpū o Māwhera had worked extremely hard to be ready for Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-Tonga Kapa Haka Festival in Invercargill in October.

Despite only being formed in June of this year, Te Rōpū o Māwhera had five waiata polished and ready for their first-time kapa haka festival.

But then the weather said 'no'. October saw some unseasonably bad weather hit the deep south with record wind gusts and snow falls over the week leading up to the festival. To be on the safe side, Te Rōpū o Māwhera was advised against travelling to Invercargill.

However, the group had worked too hard to let that stop them from performing. Members had been practising every day at home and had been coming together every

Tuesday without fail for rehearsals.

So, the group turned to the local community for help. And the generous West Coast community responded in a big way! Cultural centre Pounamu Pathway in Greymouth kindly offered one of their exhibit rooms as a space for Te Rōpū o Māwhera to record their kapa haka performance. After finishing the recording, Pounamu Pathway also invited the rōpū to take group photos in front of the sculpture of Tūhuru, the Chief of Poutini Ngāi Tahu.

The recording meanwhile, was sent to festival organisers in Invercargill.

It was played on the screen at the festival in what was Te Rōpū o Māwhera's scheduled performance time. In this way the rōpū were still able to represent their region at

the festival – without actually being there.

And the efforts of Te Rōpū o Māwhera were not lost on the crowd attending the festival in Invercargill. Once the performance had taken place on the screen, the audience responded with an appreciative, rousing haka.

"Even from afar, you'd feel the beautiful energy this rōpū is radiating and sharing through their voices and actions," says Buller/Westland Service Manager Elyx Bailey Balks

On the day of the festival, members of the rōpū had a Halloween celebration and watched the live stream of Ngā Tāngata Manawa o te Tai-Tonga Kapa Haka Festival.

Te Rōpū o Māwhera – 1 Weather – 0



Captions:

West Coast kapa haka group Te Rōpū o Māwhera in front of a sculpture of Chief Tūhuru.



A new chapter for Trish: from insecurity to comfort

ACCESSIBLE PROPERTIES

After 19 years settled in a private rental in Whanganui, Trish's world was upended when the house was put on the market and her long-term tenancy came to a sudden end.

With no alternatives available, she found herself in insecure temporary housing and then in emergency accommodation.

Trish had lost her home and there was nothing on the horizon. But, because she is supported by IDEA Services, her situation was flagged as urgent and the hunt was on.

Accessible Properties identified a property that was available and, with the paperwork underway, she was able to move in.

She had keys to a new place, a comfortable, welcoming house that offered not just shelter, but a fresh start.

"It's good, very good," smiles Trish. "My home is very warm and cosy."

There is plenty of space, including a big kitchen and a separate lounge for relaxing, plus a garage for storage and shelving, and the luxury of gas hot water.

The house also boasts a garden and lawn area that Trish is very proud of. A friend comes regularly to help her maintain it. And across the road is a large sports park that bustles with activity.

"I get to watch everyone come and

go from my lounge window or outside when it's fine," says Trish.

Friends have rallied around, helping furnish the house and ensuring Trish's cherished items have places in her new home.

"It's taken a few weeks to settle in, but now I'm feeling more settled and comfortable in my lovely new surroundings."

And perhaps the most comfort comes from the knowledge that Trish won't have to move any time soon.

Caption: Trish on the front steps of her new home.

Getting extra help from your bank

SECTOR

It's always worth speaking up. Sometimes, small misunderstandings can be resolved simply.

Navigating banking can sometimes feel overwhelming. Whether you're managing money on behalf of a family member, dealing with bereavement or struggling to understand complex systems, help is available.

For more than five years, IHC has been part of the New Zealand Banking Association's Older and Disabled People Focus Group. This group allows people with intellectual disabilities and their families to communicate directly with the banks. It's led to some positive changes, including the creation of vulnerable customer teams in most banks.

Vulnerable customer teams can offer extra time, clearer communication and personalised support when things get difficult.

If you need help, start by calling your bank's main number or visiting their website. Clearly explain your situation and mention that you have a carer or support person, or that you are a carer or support person. You can also ask if there's an extra care or customer care team available.

Westpac

www.westpac.co.nz/personal/life-money/navigating-trying-times/extra-care-where-its-needed/

Westpac's Extra Care team manages more than 1,700 complex cases each year. The bank has also joined the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Initiative, training staff to recognise and support people with non-visible disabilities.

ANZ

www.anz.co.nz/contact-us

ANZ has a dedicated specialist team that provides support to frontline staff helping customers in vulnerable circumstances.

ASB

www.asb.co.nz/banking-with-asb/support-hub.html

ASB is now officially a Sunflower-friendly organisation, with 97% of its frontline teams trained to recognise the Hidden Sunflower and provide extra support. ASB also has a dedicated Estate Support Services team to help families when a loved one dies.

BNZ

www.bnz.co.nz/contact

BNZ's Fair Conduct Programme provides specialist expertise and support for customers experiencing economic harm.

Kiwibank

www.kiwibank.co.nz/banking-with-us/special-care-customers

Kiwibank's Special Care Programme offers dedicated assistance for customers who may need more time, patience or support with financial literacy.

The Co-operative Bank

www.co-operativebank.co.nz/contact-us

The Co-operative Bank has a Customer Vulnerability and Resolution Advisor overseeing its Extra Care Customer Programme.

TSB

www.tsb.co.nz/#help-support

TSB has introduced Extra Care Champions in every branch and created an 'extra care flag' in its system to help staff identify and support customers who need additional care.

SBS Bank

www.sbsbank.co.nz/contactus

SBS offers support for customers who may be experiencing vulnerability through its general enquiry channels.

If you feel you're not being heard, contact the Banking Ombudsman Scheme – a free independent service that helps resolve banking complaints.

Phone: 0800 805 950 | Email: help@bankomb.org.nz | Website: bankomb.org.nz.



Ray's journey across the world for IHC

IHC

- **Fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and five kilometres**
- **Five hundred and forty-four days**
- **More than thirty countries**
- **And over \$20,000 raised for IHC**

That's how far Ray Urlich has travelled on his incredible fundraising journey for IHC – riding his motorcycle from New Zealand all the way to Ireland.

Ray set out to 'follow the sun', hoping for a smooth scenic adventure... but the journey turned into something far more extraordinary.

He shares his story:

When I go through the photos and videos, the scale of the journey really hits me. In all honesty, I didn't think it would be particularly noteworthy. Compared to other travellers and round-the-world motorcyclists, I wasn't aiming to do anything extraordinary – just to follow the sun, avoid winters and keep the ride as simple and enjoyable as possible.

Of course, things didn't always go according to plan. What I thought would be a straightforward motorcycling adventure quickly became a journey full of challenges, surprises and unforgettable experiences.

From getting Dengue fever in Indonesia to realising that some cities had unexpected reputations for scams, every leg of the trip brought something new. In India, I learned quickly that traffic there operates by

its own rules. In Pakistan, my travel partner and I were redirected by police after accidentally riding into an area considered unsafe. I had to leave Iran earlier than expected due to rising regional tensions, and in Iraq I discovered how important it is to keep your passport with you at all times!

There were some tense moments, but they were balanced with countless acts of kindness and hospitality. Australia covered the most kilometres and offered some stunning desert roads. Southeast Asia delivered incredible rainforests, generous people, great food and some of the most rewarding travel experiences of the journey.

Pakistan stood out the most – the landscapes were breathtaking and the hospitality was unmatched. Despite its challenges, it left a lasting impression.

The Middle East was fascinating in every sense. From the modern marvels of Dubai to the vast desert of Saudi Arabia and the historic beauty of Jordan and Turkey, each country offered a unique window into culture and history.

Riding through Eastern Europe felt like travelling through living history – places still reshaping themselves after decades of change. And Western Europe, while pricier, was full of charm, culture and comfort. Reaching the Netherlands, then the UK, felt almost like coming home – though it was strange being able to understand everyone again after so long abroad!

Pulling up to my friend's houseboat

in London was an incredible feeling. The ride technically ended in Dublin, but that moment symbolised the finish line for me. Raising more than \$20,000 for IHC was a huge highlight and a deeply rewarding part of the journey.

It's been a long-time dream to ride around the world, and this adventure has given me both the experience and motivation for many more rides to come – maybe not quite as long, but definitely just as meaningful.

Stay tuned...

– Ray Urlich

We're so grateful to Ray for his generosity, passion and determination, and to everyone who has supported him along the way.

Ray's passion for this ride was shaped by three people who inspired him. His uncle Peter Hill, who lived his life with support from IHC after contracting cerebral meningitis as a child, showed Ray what strength and resilience look like. Ray also shared Peter's love of adventure stories – especially Jim Rogers' book *Investment Biker* and, later, the travels of Dutch bike rider Noraly Schoenmaker, captured on her *Itchy Boots* digital channel. Their stories planted the seed for Ray's own journey across the world.

You can see more about Ray's journey at 2wheels2everywhere.com

Above: Ray Urlich on his journey.



Thirty years of Sibling Camps: you're not alone

IHC

Family outings are few and far between for nine-year-old Tui Baigent. And if the family does make it to the park they'll often have to leave early. Tui's younger brother Kahu has non-verbal autism and global developmental delay (GDD). He gets easily overwhelmed and overstimulated by noise and crowds.

For many children who have brothers or sisters with intellectual disabilities and/or autism, family life can be challenging. Outings are often complicated by the unique needs of a sibling, and plans may need to change at a moment's notice.

"If anything involves queuing, like rides, we just can't do it," explains Tui's dad Jack Baigent.

In 2024 Tui joined around 20 other children at El Rancho in Waikanae for one of Parent to Parent's Sibling Camps which is part of the SibSupport NZ programme known as "Sib Camps".

For the past 30 years, Parent to Parent Sib Camps supported by IHC have offered unique camps all over New Zealand for children like Tui. Created as both respite and support, the camps bring together children from eight to sixteen who all share the experience of having a sibling with additional needs.

"Siblings don't often readily identify as carers, but they will likely have the longest relationship with a person who has a disability," says Parent to

Parent Chief Executive Karen Miles. "They may become the primary carer as a parent ages."

Karen says SibSupport has become a vital Parent to Parent service and its impact on youth, whānau and communities is growing.

While the camps are filled with all the usual fun – sports, games and the outdoor activities you'd usually find at other children's camps, Sib Camps also allow opportunities for conversations and for the kids to connect with others like themselves.

"SibSupport events help siblings discover they're not alone," says Karen. "They can talk through issues, and everyone gets a much-needed break."

"Sometimes, the older kids especially really get stuff of their chests," says Jack, who is also Parent to Parent's Wellington Regional Coordinator. "But for other kids it was almost like they didn't want to talk about the sibling at all. They just wanted to be completely normal for a bit. To not be known as that person's brother or sister. To just be themselves in their environment."

The camps are led by young facilitators or 'Sib Leaders' who are in their 20s and 30s and all of whom have a family member with special needs. Most of the Sib Leaders are Sib Camp veterans themselves and know the powerful experience of connecting with others in their situation.

"The burden on the sibling without the disability can be hard," says Jack. "They can sometimes take on a lot of responsibility. Often siblings of those with high needs will have a maturity level well above their peers."

The camps last over a weekend and the most recent ones have been in Manawatu and Bay of Plenty.

Parent to Parent also offers Sib Shops, which are one-day workshops that provide additional spaces for fun, connection and community.

Over the years, Sib Camps have helped foster friendships, build resilience and offer practical tools for coping.

Jack would love to see much more regular Sib Camps and Sib Shops around the country, but funding is the biggest obstacle to this.

The difference the camps make is clear though. For some, attending Sib Camp is the first time they've met others who share their experience. The sense of belonging and acceptance can have a lasting effect and make burdens feel lighter.

For Tui, the camp was a ten out of ten. As well as making lots of friends, she got to have unlimited fun.

"Mini golf was my favourite," she grins, "and there was no leaving early."

Above: Activities at Sibling Camps.

My Voice

– Dianne Pelvin

My Voice is a new feature in Strong Voices where we get to know some of the people in our community.

Dianne Pelvin, from Ōtautahi Christchurch, is a member of the Chief Executive's Advisory Group. She is also a member of IDEA Services Christchurch/North Canterbury Kapa Haka rōpū and is a National Student Volunteer Army (SVA) Ambassador.

What's your ideal Saturday?

My ideal Saturday, depends on the weather; if it is nice and sunny I like to get out and about, catching up with friends and family, and a wee bit of gardening or a nice walk. If the weather isn't so great, I stay home and watch a movie on Netflix with my flatmates. I like to bake and enjoy doing diamond art and jigsaw puzzles.

What is the most interesting thing that has happened to you lately?

Going to a place I had never been. I got to go to Nelson as part of my role as SVA Ambassador. I had never been there. Beautiful weather and lovely views, I really liked being in Nelson, and I would like to go back. The accommodation where we stayed had the comfiest bed, I loved it. Then we went to Blenheim. I haven't been there since I was little and it has changed heaps.

What does New Zealand need to do better for people with intellectual disabilities?

The funding cuts have been hard, especially with the cost of living at the moment, so this needs urgent attention.

More paid work opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

More partnerships with businesses and other community groups to support employment and volunteering.

Better accessibility in the community for wheelchair users, such as accommodation that has wet floor bathrooms, access ramps and wide doorways. Sometimes we can't perform kapa haka in venues due to accessibility.

You're on the Chief Executive's Advisory Group. Tell us why this is important.

It's really important for me to express my feelings and point of view to Andrew as a representative of people with disabilities. It is important that the right information is getting to Andrew about what life is like for us, some of the barriers we face and things that we think need fixing.

What do you want to achieve?

I want people to have the right support and to be able make their own decisions and choices. If I can help towards making that happen that would be achievement.

Who are some of your favourite people?

My family, especially people that I haven't had much of a relationship with and we are connecting now, which is really good. The staff that work with me in my home are some of my favourite people. The team at IDEA Services, Service Managers, Area Manager and Admin always make time for me and listen.

What are you most proud of?

I have come a long way in my health and wellbeing since coming back into Residential Services. I have had lots of great opportunities offered to me which I have taken, and my life is very busy now.



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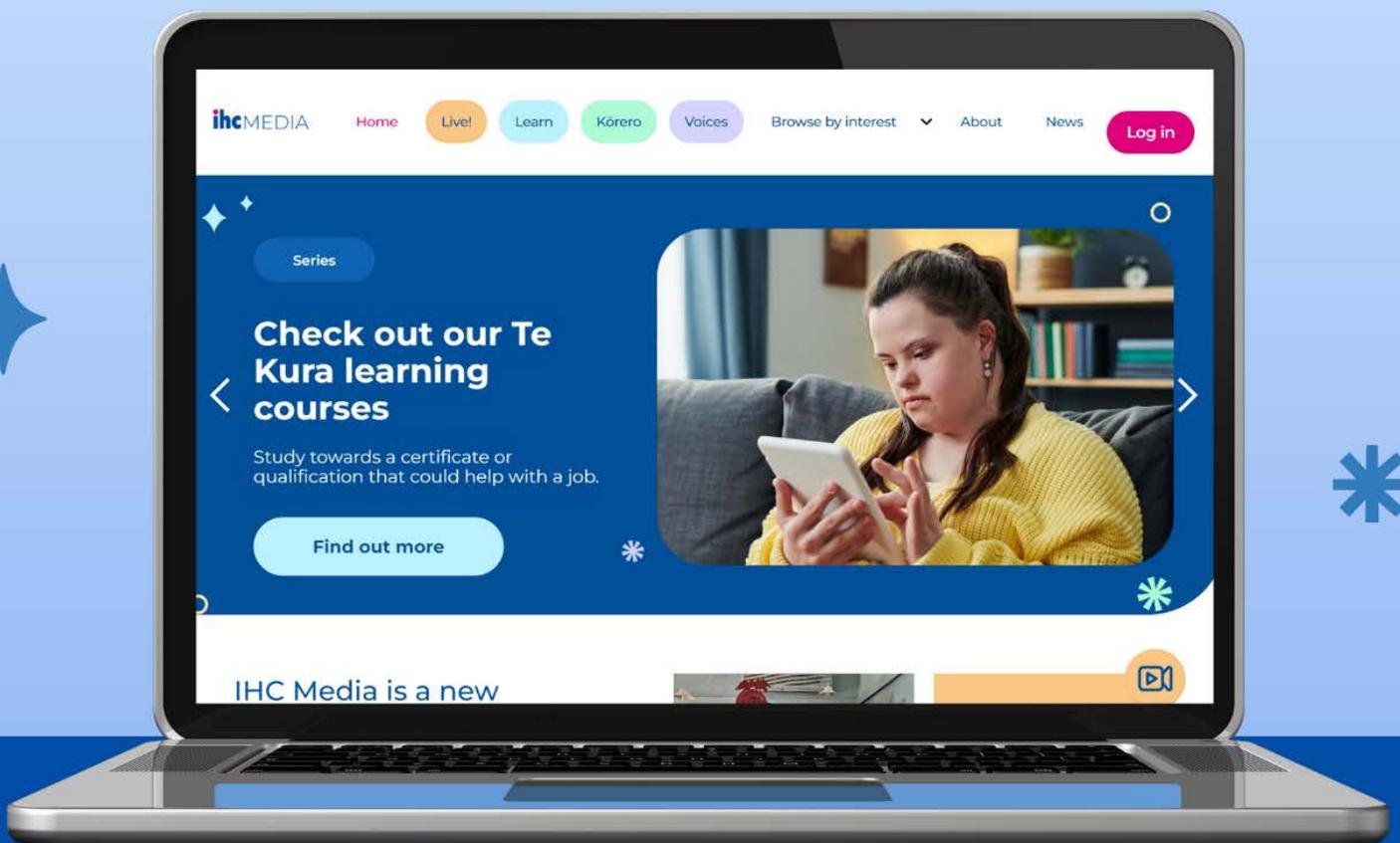
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