



# Across the Spectrum



**Meri Kirihimete me te Tau Hou ki a koutou!**

Best wishes to you and your whānau from all at Spectrum Group.

'Mā te kotahi te wairua e mōhio; mā te kotahi te whakaaro e kitea.' - 'Through unity, the spirit understands; through unified thought, clarity is achieved.'

**Sean Stowers**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
SPECTRUM FOUNDATION GROUP



## From the CE

ISSUE 114

Nau mai! It seems the Christmas season has well and truly arrived! Fortunately, it's also brought with it the first of the proper summer weather, with sunny days and warm nights becoming a regular fixture recently.

I hope you're looking forward to some time with friends and whānau over the festive season, as well as some well-earned rest and relaxation.

It's certainly been a bumpy year, with ambiguity as we navigate changes in the commissioning of services within the disability sector, which we acknowledge has created increased anxiety for disabled people and whānau.

Despite this, it's pleasing to see the outcomes delivered across Spectrum Group over the past year. A key highlight for me was Spectrum Foundation approving nearly \$900,000 of funding into the community to support disabled people and their whānau, with all grants aligned to our philanthropic priorities of empowering self-determination in employment, housing and education.

Another standout was significantly reinforcing our commitment to integrating disabled perspectives into all aspects of our organisation and activities, with the addition of the role of Whānau Engagement Lead and the convening of a Whānau Advisory Group this year.

We've also continued to focus on supporting more independent service types, such as Supported Independent Living, with a close to 50 per cent increase in the number of people supported in these services (now 125) over the past year. It's exciting to now be able to deliver these support options in the Wellington region, while growing independent options across our other key regions.

Over the past year, Homes of Choice has significantly increased the number of people it serves, doubled its planned property upgrades, and nearly doubled the number of two- and four-bedroom units under development and management. We currently have 14 Affordable Housing units under

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# Luau Night 2024

The Spectrum Care Luau Night marks the start of our Pasifika calendar of events. It's always a fantastic event and this year was no exception! A big thanks to the Pacific Cultural Group for a wonderful and joyful event, and to the people we support, staff and volunteers who helped to make it such a great success.

  
**Spectrum  
care**

Te Wai Kahukura Atawhai



**Every person with a disability deserves  
a life of choice, freedom and independence**

## From the CE continued...

development in Auckland for families with disabled children. Our portfolio now exceeds 200 properties, with more than 110 owned outright.

None of this could be achieved without our staff ensuring our Values are upheld and our promises kept. To this end, we refreshed our Vision and Values this year with involvement of staff from across the Group. They now provide a framework that empowers all our staff to make good decisions, while bringing their own personalities to their work.

### Our Group Vision is:

'An Aotearoa in which all disabled people have equal opportunity to live good lives.'

### Our Group Values are:

- › **Equity – Mana taurite:** 'We treat everyone fairly'.
- › **Dignity – Whakaute:** 'We honour and respect each other'.
- › **Ambition – Pae tawhiti:** 'We dream big'.
- › **Sustainability – Ka ora:** 'We do what's best'.

Each of our three entities fulfil this Vision in different ways across our sectors of operation – philanthropy/ shared services, disability support and community housing. Each entity therefore has its own supporting purpose – which remains unchanged.

**Spectrum Foundation's purpose is:** 'To break the barriers those most in need face in achieving equitable outcomes in health, housing, education, employment and self-determination.'

**Spectrum Care's purpose is:** 'To help maximise the potential of the people we support.'

**Homes of Choice's purpose is:** 'To empower new possibilities by providing welcoming homes, tailored to people's needs.'

Reflecting back on 2024, I'm continually inspired by the commitment shown every day to being a trusted partner, to walking alongside and working together, and to dreaming big.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to our staff, stakeholders and, most importantly, the people and whānau we support for your support and partnership over the past year.

# Shared services key highlights

## Recruitment

Over the past year, staff vacancies have decreased by more than 70 per cent. This not only relieves pressure on our existing teams, fostering a healthier and more sustainable work environment and creating a more attractive and supportive workplace, but – most importantly – enhances our ability to meet people's needs by ensuring more consistent support delivery.

## Learning and development

More staff appointments has meant higher demands for training and, over the past 12 months, well over 200 staff were inducted into the Group, with another 600 completing core trainings like Emergency First Aid. A key focus for the training team has also been a substantial revamp of our induction programme, which is due to be launched in February.

## Safety and wellbeing

2024 began with the first Wellbeing Survey of our workforce. Since then, the Safety and Wellbeing Team has developed a wellbeing strategy and convened a new wellbeing committee. People managers also completed mental health first aid training to better support their teams. An early outcome of this work was a 10 per cent improvement in staff satisfaction with the Group's actions on employee wellbeing in our September staff survey.

## Information technology

A key focus this year was the commencement of work to replace the old laptops and PCs in our homes, centres and worksites. Fifty new laptops have been rolled out over the past six months and the replacement project will continue in 2025. Our goal is to provide all staff with access to devices that are responsive and will work well with the new software systems that are rolled out over the next couple of years. These infrastructure upgrades include the replacement of our Customer Relationship Management system, plus new rostering and property management systems – all of which will increase the quality and timeliness of service delivery to the people and whānau we support.

## Quality

We made a significant change this year to the way we survey customer satisfaction, sending out a series of short surveys over the year, rather than a single, longform survey. Five surveys were conducted over 2024, with hundreds of whānau and people we support taking the opportunities to provide feedback and opportunities for improvement. Every response is valuable and we make changes to the way we provide support based on what you tell us. Thank you for taking the time to let us know about the support you and/or your whānau member receive.

# Key highlights for Spectrum Care

## Increasing the voice of Māori

Mid-2023 saw the appointment of our new Pou Tikanga, Aufata Muaulu, to the Spectrum Group Executive Team. While the role is Group-wide, it is particularly significant for Spectrum Care as it's a key driver in delivering a te ao Māori view in our support practices.

The role aims to have a significant impact in increasing the voice of tāngata whaikaha Māori and delivering greater equity by empowering mana and self-determination.

A key focus for the role has been to assist Spectrum Care's Service Delivery Management to build cultural capability for working with Māori, including in tikanga and te reo Māori, to enable staff to work in mana-enhancing ways.

The Pou Tikanga has also facilitated cultural competency training with Te Kaa for senior managers, as well as regional hui with whānau and equity assessments to enhance future service planning.



## Supporting financial independence

This year, Westpac collaborated with Spectrum Care to deliver a practical and empowering 'Manage Your Money' workshop for people we support. Over six weeks, attendees learned key financial skills in an easy-to-understand format, tailored to the people we support from our Supported Living and Aspirations services.

This initiative marks a meaningful step to include the disability sector and provided participants with valuable tools to better manage their finances, through topics like budgeting, saving and understanding expenses. Westpac's commitment to inclusion and accessibility continues to open doors, empowering individuals with knowledge that will support them in their financial journeys.



## Increasing choice and independence

In March of this year, Spectrum Care opened a home for three disabled young people in Warkworth.

The home and support options were developed through a partnership approach with the home owner, whānau members and Spectrum Care, and is part of our strategic commitment to having a maximum of three people living together to ensure greater choice and control for people living in residential services.

At the site blessing, parents delivered emotional speeches saying how happy they were that their family members could live close by, while also increasing their independence.



One of the three residents, Ashton Wright (front, second from right) with his family at the opening.

## Safeguarding and the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care

Following the release of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care report, Spectrum Care undertook a detailed review to identify any potential process gaps and what might be done to address them, and further improve how people are supported and protected from abuse, harm or neglect. Key to this response was a safeguarding partnership we formed with VisAble in 2023 to enhance and improve our prevention strategies and response to allegations of abuse, harm and neglect. As we roll into 2025, Spectrum Care and VisAble remain committed to continuous improvement initiatives that strengthen our safeguarding and practice approaches.

# Key highlights for Homes of Choice

How we've delivered on our strategic objectives of 'Housing more people', 'Housing people better' and 'Growing through funding and partnerships' over the past 12 months.

Over the past year, Homes of Choice has increased the number of people and whānau supported in accessible, affordable housing to more than 720 – an increase of over 100 on 2023.

We've also completed more than 20 planned property upgrades, which is a near doubling of those completed in 2023. As a result of this work, all 113 Homes of Choice-owned homes are now Healthy Homes compliant.

Six new developments were delivered, including two fully accessible two-bedroom units developed and delivered through a partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and impact investor Soul Capital. A further 14 units of two and four bedrooms are now under development.

Homes of Choice is also an experienced tenancy manager, recently adding 27 new apartments in central Wellington to its portfolio.



We're very excited to have a significant array of developments coming onstream over the next 12 months, which will see an investment of more than \$23m into safe, affordable homes that are tailored to people's needs.



## Welcoming homes, tailored to people's needs

Favona – One x one-bedroom and one x two-bedroom fully accessible units.

Our ambition is to provide accessible and affordable housing solutions through new builds, renovations, rentals and partnerships, and being open to people's choices.

Key highlights of the past year have been the opening of four new developments, providing much-needed accommodation options for disabled people in the Auckland region. One of these was new development in Favona.

The development was delivered through collaboration and partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development through its Affordable Housing Fund and Income-related Rental Subsidy, and provides two affordable, fully accessible homes with security of tenure to a population whose needs are both underserved and under recognised.

Pictured below are representatives from tāngata whenua Waikato Tainui, who led the blessing and 'whare tomo' (house opening) proceedings. We were honoured with a version of a Tainui waiata that's only bestowed on particularly special occasions.



# Directly impacting lives of disabled people in Aotearoa

Many of the projects we've funded in the past two years are directly impacting the lives of disabled people in Aotearoa. Last year, we provided funding to Independent Living, which offers a free mobility equipment repair service for the elderly and disabled in South Auckland. For many of their clients this equipment can be life changing, helping them live a more independent and engaged life in their own community. One such example is Mr Tokelau, who is now able to go to the shops, attend church, doctor's appointments and community activities using his mobility scooter.

In March of this year, Spectrum Foundation provided funding to Taimahi Trust, which provides employment training and support for disabled people in Whangārei. Their unique environment, which includes a greenhouse, commercial kitchen, and a fully operational retail store and café, allows trainees to gain real-life work experience and learn practical, transferable skills. The funding has been used to cover some of Taimahi Trust's core operating costs and key positions, enabling them to continue their training programme and provide more training and employment opportunities for disabled people.

We also provided funding to Project Employ, which runs an employability skills programme for disabled and neurodiverse adults. With this funding, Project Employ was able to hire a Job Coach to work alongside trainees and support their transition into paid employment. The photo below shows the 2024 graduates of Project Employ's employability skills training programme at Flourish Café in Takapuna.

Visit [www.spectrumfoundation.org.nz](http://www.spectrumfoundation.org.nz) to find out more about our work and impact.



## Project Employ

*"A huge shout out of thanks to Spectrum Foundation! Thanks to their generosity, we are able to continue providing essential Job Coach support to the many neurodiverse young adults that enrol on our employability skills programme each year."*

*"Our experienced Job Coaches work alongside the trainees to help them identify and develop transferable life and work skills, so that they can go on to gain and maintain meaningful, paid employment in their preferred careers."*

## Spectrum Group Annual Reports



**Spectrum Group Annual Report**  
[spectrumfoundation.org.nz/resources](http://spectrumfoundation.org.nz/resources)



**Spectrum Care Annual Report**  
[spectrumcare.org.nz/about/annual-report/](http://spectrumcare.org.nz/about/annual-report/)



**Homes of Choice Annual Report**  
[homesofchoice.org.nz/publications/](http://homesofchoice.org.nz/publications/)