

Wellbeing Recovery Tāmaki Makaurau Progress Report

June 2024

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government



Background

The Wellbeing Recovery Plan for Tāmaki Makaurau was approved by the Auckland Regional Leadership Group on 6 June 2024.

The purpose of the plan is to coordinate work across central and local government agencies, NGOs and service providers, to create a shared understanding of wellbeing recovery and coordinate the delivery of relevant wellbeing initiatives, support and services across seven key focus areas.

The Wellbeing Recovery Plan Progress Report (June 2024) provides an update on each focus area and any gaps and opportunities as identified by the Wellbeing Recovery Working Group for Tāmaki Makaurau.



Summary

| Success indicator | Focus area (s) | Progress | Gaps and opportunities |
|--|----------------|--|---|
| Individuals, families and whānau have access to support relating to basic needs and feel empowered to move forward with their lives | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storm Recovery Navigation Service: 1,750 impacted whānau supported to date Navigation Service outreach in priority areas Financial assistance provided, including \$1.6m in hardship grants and 156 home bundles Existing publicly available financial capability resources utilised 129 TAA applications granted (as at 2 July 2024) and 40 receiving TAS (as at 3 June 2024) Food support provided by NGOs NZCRS supported 895 cases in Tāmaki Makaurau (as at June 2024) Recovery Office communication on processes and support, including webinars, FAQs, newsletters and guidance documents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking extension of Navigation Service past December 2024 Exploring options to increase discretionary financial hardship funding which will be exhausted by July 2024 Seeking funding for a programme of repairs and weather tightness and further support for impacted tenants, where people continue to live in flood-damaged, unsafe and unhealthy homes Explore opportunities to align with Government Targets on reducing people in emergency housing and shorter stays in emergency departments where it relates to healthy housing. Advocacy for extending TAA to homes held in Trusts. Explore opportunities to align with the Good Food Road map and existing food resilience workstreams Seeking funding for a 'Know Your Rights' campaign to minimise secondary stressors |
| Māori have access to high quality programmes and initiatives, and culturally appropriate resources and practices to enable their wellbeing | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Partner Navigators are Iwi and Māori health organisations 7 Iwi organisations and Māori health providers funded through mental wellbeing grants to support therapeutic interventions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking evaluative exercise with recipients of the mental wellbeing grants to ensure Māori have access to culturally relevant resources and wellbeing practices |
| Communities are well connected to support recovery and adaptation and feel more prepared to respond to future events | 2, 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MHF Wellbeing research found community connection as key to wellbeing literacy and coping 16 organisations funded through mental wellbeing grants to support community cohesion Social connection through NGOs and Auckland Council BAU including events and community hubs Local Board grants available for social cohesion \$30,000 allocated to 49 community organisations across 36 locations to acknowledge first anniversary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking evaluative exercise with recipients of the mental wellbeing grants to identify ongoing needs for social connection in recovery Local Recovery Planning may identify opportunities for community connection Optimise partnership approach with schools, churches, libraries Proposed Iwi and community sector Wellbeing Recovery hui September 2024 |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding for community-led second anniversary commemorations • Explore opportunities within Making Space for Water programme for adaptation milestone celebrations • Explore opportunities to support displaced whānau to establish and resettle |
| Spaces to promote healing are made available and supported on a local and neighbourhood level to aid physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded wellbeing initiatives to reconnect with whenua include Te Kaiārahi Reconnection and Adventure Specialities Trust • 900 of the 1,459 impacted parks and facilities now repaired. 284 of the 361 impacted walking tracks now reopened. • Multiple examples of community-led beautification and creative healing, e.g. Clover Drive, Henderson and Adopt an Awa in Māngere • \$39.4 million over 10 years allocated in the Long-term Plan for the ongoing maintenance of storm-impacted land beyond deconstruction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to reconnect with whenua remain important as changes to environments continue • Develop communication strategy for promoting access to spaces for wellbeing • Identify ongoing funding for community-led beautification and creative healing • Explore opportunities for partnership approach to 'meanwhile use' of land • Local Recovery Planning may identify opportunities for spaces to promote wellbeing |
| Mana Whenua have a voice and are provided with meaningful opportunities to partner, participate, and express rangatiratanga in the rebuilding of their communities through reciprocal partnerships, collaboration and decision-making opportunities. | 3, 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mana Whenua Recovery Planning underway. Funding provided to Te Kawerau ā Maki, Ngāti Tamaterā and Ngāti Tamaoho FY23/24 for mana whenua to take a lead on recovery planning for their rohe. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Iwi to be funded FY24/25 to support mana whenua recovery planning |
| Communities have access to a range of opportunities to participate in planning for the future of their community and feel heard and included in the decisions that are made. | 3, 4, 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Recovery Planning programme underway. FY23/24 funding provided for 10 impacted communities and one priority community. • AEM website provides tools and resources to support households and communities to feel more prepared, including templates for communities to build their own resilience plans. • AEM Local Board readiness planning underway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further funding available in FY24/25 to support recovery planning in priority communities and impacted communities • Identify opportunities within Making Space for Water programme for community participation • Maximise opportunities to measure any changes in how prepared impacted communities feel |
| Community leaders and volunteers are acknowledged and provided with relevant development | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First anniversary commemorations acknowledged volunteers and local heroes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise national and local opportunities to acknowledge volunteers and community leaders • AEM volunteer framework in development |

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| opportunities to enable communities to lead their own solutions. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded courses such as Weathering the Storm, Tools for Managing Anxiety, MH101 and Addiction101 publicised through Recovery Office channels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Recovery Planning may identify leadership development, and capacity building opportunities |
| Tamariki and rangatahi have access to relevant wellbeing services and support | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 organisations funded through mental wellbeing grants to support youth friendly tools and programmes Support provided by NGOs, including Stormbirds programme with 22 trained companions in South Auckland MoE and MSD funding provided for transport and uniforms Implementation of Kia Ora Ake school wellbeing programme in Counties Manukau in 2024 Existing resources made available through Recovery Office communication channels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking evaluative exercise with recipients of the mental wellbeing grants to identify ongoing needs for tamariki and rangatahi Explore opportunities for online hub for resources Explore opportunities to increase specialist wellbeing supports for under 12's Explore opportunities to align with Government targets on attendance and achievement to support those whose education has been disrupted Disaster Research Centre Massey University scoping long term research on how recovery impacts rangatahi |
| Individuals, families and whānau are supported to achieve wellbeing through accessible, equitable mental health resources and services in their local communities. | 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and resources available online through All Sorts and services listed through Recovery Office channels Additional Awhi Ora services funded by TWO in FY23/24 13 organisations funded through mental wellbeing grants to support therapeutic interventions, including 7 Iwi organisations and Māori health providers, 2 Pacific Peoples providers, 2 migrant community providers, 1 rural community provider. Weathering the Storm workshops funded by TWO: 54 participants, 96% felt they were more able to provide relevant support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking evaluative exercise with recipients of the mental wellbeing grants to identify ongoing needs for therapeutic interventions Ongoing partnership approach to ensure relevant wellbeing support available at trigger points Explore opportunities to align with Te Aorerekura National Strategy to Eliminate Family and Sexual Violence Explore opportunities to fund further Weathering the Storm workshops accessible for impacted community members. Explore partnership opportunities to build guidance and support for recovery workers |

Focus area 1: Access to services and support to address basic needs

Success indicator: Individuals, families and whānau have access to support relating to basic needs and feel empowered to move forward with their lives

Success indicator: Māori have access to high quality programmes and initiatives, and culturally appropriate resources and practices to enable their wellbeing

Storm Recovery Navigation Service

The Storm Recovery Navigation Service (Navigation Service) was established to provide a free and confidential one-to-one wrap-around support for impacted households, individuals and whānau, to access a range of supports including financial assistance, housing and accommodation, and mental health and wellbeing services.

In October 2023, the Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Office (Recovery Office) received a Social Sector Recovery Grant to support the Navigation Service. The grant included two lots of funding – Future of Severely Affected Land (FOSAL) Support funding (\$500,000.00) towards 4x FTE to support households impacted by property categorisation across Tāmaki Makaurau, and Iwi and Community funding (\$2,398,140.00) to support 20x FTE to be employed through

Iwi and community organisations to support impacted households across Tāmaki Makaurau.

The Navigation Service has partner navigators based in [14 existing non-government organisations \(NGOs\) or Iwi partner groups](#) with strong ties to their local communities. Partner navigators provide communities with trusted culturally and linguistically relevant points of contact to support them through the recovery journey.

Navigators connect people to other support agencies such as Work and Income, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), and [New Zealand Claims Resolution Service](#) (NZCRS), as well as support people to gain access to specialist services such as legal and financial advice. Navigators also ensure impacted whānau have relevant information on insurance and categorisation processes.

As at 26 June 2024, 918 families are being supported by a Navigator, with 206 in the south, 183 in the north, 258 in central, and 271 in the west. To date, 1,750 impacted whānau have been supported by the Navigation Service.

The service currently receives an average of 33 new referrals a week. In addition to supporting those whānau already engaged with the service, there are a number of outreach activities underway including targeted door knocking in areas known to have had significant impacts where families have not yet contacted the Navigation Service. The aim is to connect to Aucklanders in priority areas and to provide them with information and support about the Navigation Service, so they know help is there if needed. This is particularly important in light of the 30 September 2024 deadline for registering for categorisation.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Navigators are here to help](#)
- [Partner Navigators connecting communities with support](#)
- [Storm Recovery Navigators reach out to Muslim community](#)
- [Social and wellbeing support](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Navigators provide the Recovery Office with insights into the direct experience of those impacted and the service has seen an increase in the complexity of needs as we navigate the long tail of recovery. The complexity of caseloads can mean that navigators are concurrently working with families that are new to the service and have high support needs, whilst also working with existing families that have received categorisation and need support in the next stages of their recovery journey.

While some people have managed to move on with their lives, we believe there are still many whānau with unmet recovery needs, as well as many already being supported by the service who will continue to require support well into the future.

The Recovery Office are still undergoing categorisation processes across the region and the end date for opting into the categorisation scheme has been confirmed as 30 September 2024. We anticipate that most buyout settlements should be completed by July 2025. It is anticipated that all property level interventions (for those who receive a Category 2P) should be complete within 2 years of confirmation of the category.

The Recovery Office is currently exploring opportunities for the Navigation Service to be funded past December 2024 to continue to support impacted whānau.

Financial assistance

Through the Navigation Service, impacted individuals, families and whānau are able to access a range of financial assistance. The Recovery Office has so far distributed over \$1.6m in Moments that Matter hardship grants and vouchers from the New Zealand Red Cross and Auckland Mayoral Funds to support those experiencing financial hardship. Moments that Matter funding has supported whānau with various needs ranging from essential items like hearing aids, therapy, and medication to practical assistance such as moving costs, flood damage repairs, and securing bonds for new tenancies. 156 home bundles have been provided through Red Cross funding to support impacted households to replace damaged furniture and homeware.

There is positive feedback from families who have received funding, highlighting a sense of gratitude and relief as the support has alleviated financial pressures and helped meet essential needs.

Civil Defence payments were also allocated to impacted families through MSD. The table below uses payment data to demonstrate the disproportionate impacts for Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Civil Defence Spend by Ethnicity*

| Ethnicity | \$ Spend |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Māori | \$8,584,332.46 |
| European | \$5,948,611.22 |
| Pacific Peoples | \$9,576,342.57 |
| Asian | \$1,470,621.15 |

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| MELAA | \$288,392.66 |
| Other** | \$478,466.04 |
| Unspecified** | \$2,851,000.36 |
| Total Amount | \$25,839,618.20 |

***Note:** As ethnicity is self-identified, an individual with multiple ethnicities may be counted in more than one applicable ethnic group. This means the total spend per ethnic group is greater than the 'Total Amount'. The 'Total Amount' spend is the sum of per individual.

****Note:** 'Unspecified' is where ethnicity is not recorded. 'Other' is where ethnicities fall outside the reported ethnicities.

Existing resources can also be utilised by the Navigation Service to support those who are struggling financially. The [Check what you might get \(msd.govt.nz\)](#) MSD tool enables whānau to identify financial support they are eligible for. Where it is relevant for whānau, financial capability resources can be accessed on the [Building Financial Capability](#) website and through [Family Services Directory](#). The Navigation Service can also support households to access budgeting services and some partner navigators also provide financial literacy as part of their business as usual.

[All Sorts website](#) established by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) to provide wellbeing support and information for those who are managing the impacts of a disaster on their lives, includes resources for [managing financial stress](#).

Gaps and opportunities

Eighteen months after the events, we recognise that ongoing financial hardships continue to have a severe impact on people's mental health. The \$2m grant from Red Cross will be exhausted before the

end of July 2024 meaning that there will be no discretionary funds available for financial hardship support.

The positive feedback received from those who benefitted from the funding suggests that access to ongoing hardship support would have a positive impact on the wellbeing of families who continue to deal with the financial pressures caused by the weather events. Where households that were under or uninsured have lost equipment in the flooding that provided income, such as gardening tools, a relatively small amount of discretionary funding can reinstate a household income stream and further minimise financial hardship.

Housing and accommodation

It is estimated that up to 1,000 households are still displaced. 129 applications for Temporary Accommodation Assistance (TAA) were granted for those with an affected property in Auckland (as at 2 July 2024), and 40 were receiving Temporary Accommodation Services (TAS), but we know many more are living with friends, family or elsewhere.

The Recovery Office worked alongside the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to advocate to Ministers to extend temporary accommodation services and products for impacted communities in Tāmaki Makaurau beyond June 2024.

The government announced in June 2024 that [TAS and TAA will be extended through to 30 June 2025](#) to support those displaced by storms in 2022 and 2023 (excluding houses held in trusts).

We know that many impacted whānau continue to live in flood-damaged, unsafe and unhealthy homes. Frontline recovery staff observe that many have become accustomed to not being able to use some rooms in a home because they are damp and have black mould,

or to living in garages due to the home being categorised as not liveable, and overcrowding due to whānau needing to stay.

The [healthy homes initiative](#) may address some, but not all of these issues. It is currently available for low-income citizens/permanent residents with an existing health condition or receiving benefits. Providers support whānau to make changes to live in a healthier home and can support conversations with landlords.

Gaps and opportunities

The extension to TAS and TAA excludes houses held in trusts, increasing financial hardship for a number of impacted households. This continues to be a point of advocacy for Auckland Council and the Recovery Office.

The Recovery Office is currently seeking funding to introduce a programme of repairs and weather tightness so that storm-damaged houses can be healthy for winter. This would have a massive benefit to the overall wellbeing, both mental and physical, of many of our most vulnerable community members.

We know some storm impacted tenants living in unhealthy and unsafe homes are not confident to raise issues with landlords. There may be an opportunity to provide further information and support to advocate for tenants in this position.

Current Government Targets include reducing the number of people in emergency housing and shorter stays in emergency departments. There may be opportunities to explore partnerships with relevant government agencies as these targets relate to displaced households and impacted whānau living in flood-damaged unhealthy and unsafe houses.

Food resilience

We know that since the pandemic, the demand for food support has increased dramatically and stays at a high level due to increase in cost of living and the impact of weather events.

Gaps and opportunities

A proposed Iwi and community sector hui on Wellbeing Recovery in September 2024 will help the Recovery Office to understand the levels of support currently provided by food hubs to impacted communities, as well as predicted demand going forward.

The [Good Food Road Map](#) is a collective strategy towards food security and food sovereignty in Aotearoa New Zealand in order to help strengthen the overall health, wellbeing, and resilience of our communities. Aligning with the Good Food Road Map and a partnership approach with existing food resilience workstreams will ensure a joined-up approach.

Minimising secondary stressors

The Recovery Office works closely with the [NZCRS](#) which was set up to support homeowners to find solutions to their residential insurance claims resulting from disasters. NZCRS has supported Tāmaki Makaurau whānau to provide insurance advice and guidance on 895 cases (as at June 2024). NZCRS is currently managing 226 of these cases, with the remaining 669 being resolved.

The [Disputes Resolution framework](#) also provides a transparent process for individuals to follow when challenging council decisions around categorisation and valuation.

Timely and clear communication is key to minimising secondary stressors and reducing the additional trauma that recovery process can cause. The Recovery Office has run multiple [webinars](#) on various topics to increase information flow and understanding, and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the [Our Auckland Recovery webpage](#) are regularly updated. The [Recovery Newsletter](#) and the Community and Social Recovery Pānui also keep impacted communities up to date on what is happening and what supports are available.

The [Storm Recovery documents library](#) on the Auckland Council website includes categorisation handbooks, guides on how to interpret geotechnical assessment reports, and information on decisions are made. For those impacted communities experiencing language barriers, fact sheets and navigation support information is available in te reo Māori, Tongan, simplified Chinese, Samoan, Korean and Hindi.

Recovery Office webinars:

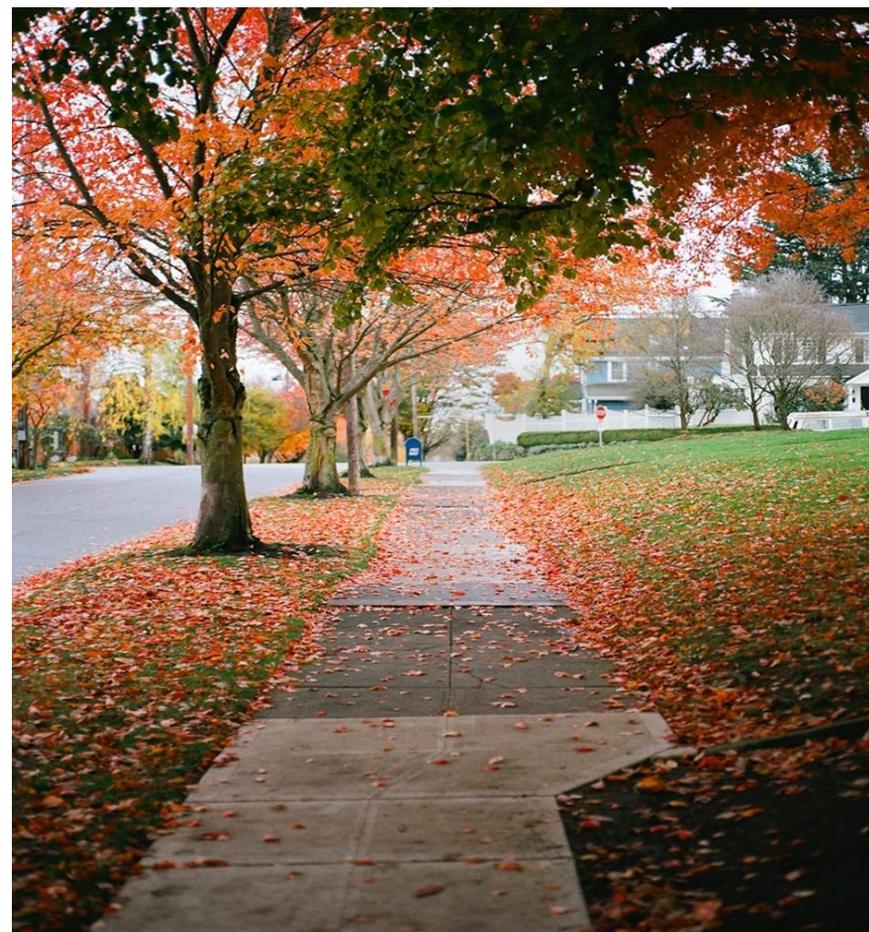
- [Question time with insurance experts](#)
- [How we measure risk and decide property categories](#)
- [Support for storm affected homes](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Most people are not skilled in understanding legal, insurance, banking and how these then relate to any works that may be necessary to their home. The language and information provided can be confusing and, if misinterpreted, result in repairs and maintenance costing more than expected or ongoing disputes that may take months to resolve.

Existing resources, such as [Know your rights | Building Performance](#) developed by MBIE can be a helpful starting point, however there is an opportunity to develop a specific resource for impacted

communities. A ‘Know Your Rights’ campaign would aim to increase understanding of how to project manage repairs and builds, how to establish what is covered by insurance and what isn’t, how to ask the right questions of your bank and access financial advisory services, how to access free legal advice, and what are the rights of tenants.



Focus area 2:

Opportunities for social connection

Success indicator: Communities are well connected to support recovery and adaptation and feel more prepared to respond to future events

Community initiatives to enhance social cohesion

MHF wellbeing research within weather impacted regions published in 2024 cited community connections and social networks as key coping mechanisms for impacted communities. The findings also indicate a strong link between community connectedness and wellbeing literacy, as respondents were most likely to talk to a friend or a family member for wellbeing support, information or advice.

In March 2023, Te Whatu Ora (TWO) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), through the Recovery Office allocated \$1.6m in Mental Wellbeing grants to Iwi and community organisations to support impacted communities. 16 of the 19 recipient organisations received grants to support community cohesion, often alongside youth focussed and other wellbeing supports.

Gaps and opportunities:

The Recovery Office is undertaking a comprehensive lessons learned evaluative exercise with the recipients of the mental wellbeing grants

to identify what worked well, what could be improved, and what are the future/ ongoing needs for social connection in the recovery space.

The Local Recovery Planning programme can also be an opportunity for communities to identify ways in which social support and community cohesion can benefit recovery.

Existing events and opportunities for social connection

Auckland Council offers a wide range of opportunities for local social connection as part of its business as usual, including Local Board events and activities within libraries, leisure centres, parks and community hubs. There is also funding available through [local board grants](#) to support local community connection. Community organisations and NGOs also provide events and opportunities for impacted communities to connect. Local events and funding opportunities are shared by Recovery Office staff working directly with impacted communities.

Gaps and opportunities

There are opportunities to optimise a partnership approach with existing local community anchor organisations, including schools and churches, as well as community connection spaces such as libraries and hubs.

A proposed Wellbeing Recovery community hui in September 2024 will further identify existing opportunities for impacted communities to connect on a local level via NGOs and community organisations.

Communication strategies could be enhanced to ensure impacted communities know of the local opportunities to connect.

Anniversary and adaptation milestone commemorations

First anniversary commemorations were led by communities, with the Recovery Office providing funding to groups to recognise the anniversary in the ways they saw as most appropriate for their community. Over \$30,000 was allocated to 49 community groups and organisations across 36 locations for impacted communities to acknowledge the anniversary and to recognise volunteers and local heroes. Local boards have also supported communities with funding for art projects or commemoration activities, such as the Sunnynook mural.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Rānui event remembers flood victims and volunteers](#)
- [Recognising emergency flood volunteers \(Henderson South\)](#)
- [Funding for storm-impacted communities to mark anniversary](#)
- [Mural celebrates Sunnynook community a year after floods](#)

Gaps and opportunities

As the second anniversary approaches, it is an opportunity to ensure that communities have access to funding and time to plan to commemorate in appropriate ways. As many communities are still in the depths of recovery processes it may be that local community-led commemorations, as well as relevant political recognition, are appropriate again for the second year. Larger scale commemorations might be planned for 5 or even 10 years.

The development of Making Space for Water engagement strategies would be one mechanism to include opportunities for impacted communities to recognise or celebrate milestones in adaptation on a local level.

Displaced whānau

We know impacted communities are dealing with changes in their neighbourhoods as individuals and whānau have left either on a temporary or permanent basis, creating a sense of loss of connection and grief on both sides.

It is estimated that up to 1,000 households are still displaced. 129 applications for Temporary Accommodation Assistance (TAA) were granted for those with an affected property in Auckland (as at 3 July 2024), and 40 were receiving Temporary Accommodation Services (TAS), but we know many more are living with friends, family or elsewhere.

Conversations with the Recovery Office, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and MSD continue to highlight needs of displaced communities.

Gaps and opportunities

Identifying displaced whānau who have been forced to leave their community on a permanent basis is challenging, particularly if they have not registered with the Navigation Service. It is important therefore that anchor organisations, such as schools who may experience an increase in their school roll, are equipped to support displaced students and their whānau as they build new relationships and connections. Further opportunities to support whānau to resettle and establish themselves in their new community should be explored.

Focus area 3: Spaces to promote wellbeing

Success indicator: Spaces to promote healing are made available and supported on a local and neighbourhood level to aid physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing

Mana whenua kaitiakitanga obligations

Māori Partnership and Participation is a key outcome of the Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Plan, committing to opportunities for mana whenua and communities to shape and lead their own recoveries.

The Local and Community Planning programme of work has a strong focus on mana whenua taking a lead on recovery planning for their rohe.

Access to spaces to promote physical, social, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing

Initiatives funded through the mental wellbeing grants provided impacted communities opportunities to reconnect with whenua to support wellbeing recovery. Te Kaiārahi Reconnection programme based in Piha provides opportunities for whānau to reset spiritually, physically and mentally and to reconnect with Te Taiao. The Adventure Specialities Trust has also been funded to provide impacted whānau with opportunities to learn and connect to nature through outdoor activities.

1,459 parks and community facilities were impacted by the weather events, with over 900 repairs now completed. 361 walking tracks were impacted by the weather events and 284 have now been reopened. Communication such as this article regarding the [Waitakere Ranges](#) provides information for communities on what walking tracks will reopen and when.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Waitākere Regional Park and tracks update](#)

Gaps and opportunities

As landscapes continue to change, reconnection with whenua will be an important part of healing and adaptation. Ongoing funding for wellbeing initiatives to reconnect with whenua would be recommended.

A communication strategy to ensure regular updates on repaired walking tracks, parks and community spaces would support people in maintaining their physical and spiritual health. The [Recovery Newsletter](#), Community and Social Recovery Pānui, and direct local communication channels can be utilised. This might also be an opportunity to communicate any alternatives for facilities that will be permanently closed.

Community-led initiatives

There are many examples of community-led initiatives across Auckland to improve neighbourhoods and remove the physical reminders of impacts of the storms.

Multiple organisations in Māngere supported their communities through mowing lawns and removing rubbish and debris, increasing a

sense of community and collaboration. ‘Adopt an Awa’ project in collaboration with ME Family Services, Te Ararata Stream team and residents, looks to build connection and pride of place after learning that rubbish blocking streams escalates the flooding risk.

Te Kawerau Iwi Tiaki Trust and community organisations in West Auckland are supporting ongoing work in Clover Drive, Henderson to clear rubbish and maintain grass areas and gardens. The Clover Drive community are also working with local artists to beautify abandoned and boarded up houses, to support neighbourhood wellbeing and recovery.

A commemorative mural in Sunnynook was supported by Devonport-Takapuna Local Board and funded by a local charity and a business as a tribute to residents who supported each other through the floods.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Mowing life back into flood-affected communities](#)
- [Mural celebrates Sunnynook community a year after floods](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Identifying ongoing funding for community-led beautification, creative healing and safety initiatives on a local level would increase opportunities for wellbeing, to give impacted residents a renewed sense of pride and ownership in their changing communities. This funding needs to recognise that decisions around adaptation planning may leave communities in ‘limbo’ for a considerable amount of time, impacting wellbeing over a long period.

Communicating stories of hope through existing Council channels, as well as through community channels, will increase participation, but also the witnessing of inspiring community-led recovery.

As the Recovery Office transitions into business as usual, it is important that relevant teams, such as Community Wellbeing, Healthy Waters and Local Board Services prioritise spaces for healing within planning and community development activities, recognising that the recovery journey is 5 to 10 years.

Future land use policy and spaces for healing

In May 2024, [Auckland Council’s Governing Body approved interim guidance for decisions on the future use of storm-impacted land](#)

acquired by council under the categorisation process, to ensure land is managed responsibly, efficiently and effectively. This includes maintaining land so it is not attracting pests, illegal dumping or anti-social behaviour, as well as exploring opportunities for Iwi and communities to determine future use of land. A budget of \$39.4 million over 10 years is allocated in the draft Long-term Plan for the ongoing maintenance of storm-impacted land beyond the deconstruction phase. This includes fencing, mowing, tree trimming and any other work to ensure the land is kept in safe and in a tidy condition for neighbouring residents.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Auckland Council sets direction for future use of purchased land](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Clover Drive is an active example of the importance of collaboration and partnership in supporting a community to recover. Current removal of a number of Kainga Ora houses has left open spaces within the community that might be utilised whilst decisions are made regarding future land use. Learnings here might enable us to have a strategic and joined up approach to meanwhile use and creative healing for communities that will also be in a similar position as deconstruction continues over the next few years. Learnings might be taken from initiatives in Christchurch such as [Life in Vacant Spaces](#) (LIVS) which utilised site brokers to support creative spaces.

Local and Community Plans and related funding may also be an opportunity to explore community-led temporary use and creative projects, where this is prioritised by impacted communities.

Future land use approaches might also provide opportunities to connect many different aspects of wellbeing recovery, for example temporary community gardens could link in food resilience and community capacity building with spaces for healing and community connection.



Figure 1: Mormon clean up team outside I Am Mangere's community hub



Figure 2: Some of the mowing crew

Focus area 4: Opportunities for communities to actively participate in local planning

Success indicator: Mana whenua have a voice and are provided with meaningful opportunities to partner, participate, and express rangatiratanga in the rebuilding of their communities through reciprocal partnerships, collaboration and decision-making opportunities.

Success indicator: Communities have access to a range of opportunities to participate in planning for the future of their community and feel heard and included in the decisions that are made.

Success indicator: Communities are well connected to support recovery and adaptation and feel more prepared to respond to future events.

Local Recovery Planning

The Local Recovery Planning programme, funded through the Storm Response Fund, is underway and will be delivered over the next three years, in recognition of the complex and dynamic nature of the recovery process. The purpose of this programme is to support

communities impacted by the 2023 extreme weather events to identify and respond to their own recovery priorities and needs. The programme will have partnership and community-led engagement at its core.

There are three strands of work that make up the programme:

- The Priority Communities Project (designed to innovate and test methodologies)
- Mana whenua-led Recovery Planning
- Impacted Areas Community-led Recovery Planning

Local Recovery Planning recognises the interconnected nature of readiness, recovery, resilience and adaptation planning, action and participation.

Funding agreements for financial year 23/24 include Te Kawerau Iwi Tiaki Trust, Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust and Ngāti Tamaoho Trust to ensure genuine opportunities for mana whenua to lead the recovery process in their rohe, ensuring that they are able to fully exercise their kaitiakitanga responsibilities. The priority area of Henderson/Rānui and 10 further impacted areas also received local recovery planning funding in financial year 23/24.

Gaps and opportunities

As local and community planning progresses, it may provide opportunities to support impacted communities to consider wellbeing within in their recovery priorities. As an example, Tairāwhiti's road to recovery community-led planning template utilises Te Whare Tapa Whā for communities who want to consider the different dimensions of wellbeing within recovery.

The current development of Making Space for Water work programmes and related community engagement strategies will also provide opportunities for impacted communities to be involved in the changes in their areas. The important link between Making Space for Water and Local Recovery Planning has already been identified and teams will work together over the coming months to ensure these workstreams are aligned.

Tools and information to support preparedness

MHF Wellbeing Research published in 2024 found that respondents who experienced primary and secondary impacts are more likely to make changes to ensure they are more prepared for the next weather event. In addition to what we have already found from community needs assessments, feeling more prepared will also reduce anxiety.

To support recovery and ensure impacted communities feel more prepared, there are a number of different tools and resources available on the [Auckland Emergency Management website](#) to support households, communities, businesses and landowners to take action before another weather event. The Healthy Waters Winter Flood Resilience campaign includes promotion of [Auckland Flood Viewer](#), [Get prepared](#) videos and resources and [Guide to preparing for flooding](#) for households to take action to feel more prepared. Resources are available in English, Te Reo, Tongan, Samoan, Hindi, Korean and traditional and simplified Chinese.

Community preparedness advice emphasises community connectedness, getting to know your neighbours and provides templates for communities to build their own [resilience plans](#). These tools allow households and communities to take back some of the

control that was lost in the weather events and take action to prepare.

Preparedness resources:

- [Auckland Emergency Management website](#)
- [Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Flood Viewer](#)
- [Preparing your property for flooding](#)
- [Community-ready](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Opportunities to measure any changes in how prepared individuals, whānau and communities feel could be identified to ascertain the effectiveness of self-driven preparedness tools and resources.

AEM are currently working on Local Board readiness planning which will provide opportunities to communicate messages of preparedness with communities and may also address anxieties relating to appropriate local authority response to weather events.



Focus area 5: Local capacity building and leadership development

Success indicator: Community leaders and volunteers are acknowledged and provided with relevant development opportunities to enable communities to lead their own solutions.

Success indicator: Communities have access to a range of opportunities to participate in planning for the future of their community and feel heard and included in the decisions that are made.

Community leader and volunteer recognition

Recognising the contributions of volunteers and community leaders is important for the ongoing wellbeing of the individuals themselves, as well as the wellbeing of the communities they continue to support as the recovery journey continues. As part of the first anniversary commemorations, over \$30,000 was allocated to 49 community groups and organisations across 36 locations for impacted communities to acknowledge the anniversary and to recognise volunteers and local heroes.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Leading the way for volunteer emergency response](#)
- [Funding for storm-impacted communities to mark anniversary](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Opportunities such as Local Board Community Volunteer Awards, [National Volunteer Week](#), [Volunteering Auckland Awards](#) and even [New Zealander of the year awards](#) can be widely communicated to encourage nominations for our local heroes and continue to recognise volunteers and community leaders.

The [Auckland Emergency Management Group Plan 2024 to 2029](#) includes the development of a volunteer framework addressing recruitment and retention, training, health and safety and use of volunteers in response. Although volunteers in recovery will have different roles to play, there may be opportunities here to learn from existing mechanisms to formally recognise volunteers, as well as to consider their welfare.

Community capacity building and leadership development

As we move through recovery, opportunities for communities to build capacity within the wellbeing space will become apparent. So far, courses such as the [Weathering the Storm](#) workshops funded by TWO have been successful in giving participants the tools they need to feel more able to effectively support people in their communities experiencing weather related anxiety. Alongside Weathering the Storm, funded courses such as [Mental Health 101](#), [Addiction 101](#) and

[Tools for Managing Anxiety](#) have been communicated to impacted communities through Recovery Office channels.

Gaps and opportunities

Local Recovery Plans are also an opportunity for communities to identify opportunities for leadership development and community capacity building, as well as recognise their local volunteers, where it aligns with their priorities for recovery. To support this programme of work, the Community-led Recovery team within the Recovery Office have recently discontinued Community Liaison roles and recruited Community Specialists with community development experience.

Focus area 6: Access to services and support for tamariki and rangatahi

Success indicator: Tamariki and rangatahi have access to relevant wellbeing services and support.

Success indicator: Individuals, families and whānau are supported to achieve wellbeing through accessible, equitable mental health resources and services in their local communities.

Success indicator: Māori have access to high quality programmes and initiatives, and culturally appropriate resources and practices to enable their wellbeing

Accessible, relevant and age-appropriate mental health services and wellbeing resources available for tamariki and rangatahi, schools and whānau

In March 2023, TWO and MSD, through the Recovery Office allocated \$1.6m in Mental Wellbeing grants to Iwi and community organisations to support impacted communities. 16 of the 19 recipient organisations received grants to support youth friendly tools and programmes, often alongside social cohesion and other wellbeing supports.

NGOs and community organisations already work in many different ways to support the wellbeing of young people who have been impacted by the weather events. For example, Aotearoa New Zealand has a national network of trainers, including the Catholic Diocese, who are able to facilitate the [Stormbirds programme](#). The programme provides 5 to 14 year olds who have lived through a disaster with the opportunity to examine the impact this experience has had on their lives. There are 8 Auckland based and 3 national trainers who are equipped to train Companions to run the programme within schools and other community organisations. There are currently 22 trained Companions in South Auckland and three Māngere schools are running the Stormbirds programme.

Working alongside the Health and Education Collaborative, it is clear that schools are key to providing wellbeing support for tamariki and rangatahi through access to relevant services and maintaining familiar community connections. Ministry of Education (MoE) funded transport to support displaced tamariki to continue to attend their usual school and MSD community connectors were able to provide up to \$1000 per whānau to replace uniform that was lost in the flood.

Going forward, the implementation of Kia Ora Ake school wellbeing programme in Counties Manukau in 2024 will provide wellbeing support to students within a number of impacted primary and intermediate schools in South Auckland.

Information has been shared through Recovery Office channels to ensure impacted whānau are aware of accessible wellbeing resources, support and services for tamariki and rangatahi. Resources include those that can be accessed directly by young people, such as helplines and web chat, as well as tools for schools and for whānau supporting young people.

Our Auckland stories:

- [Wellbeing support for tamariki and rangatahi](#)

Gaps and opportunities

A recent Ministry of Health survey showed that over half of all New Zealanders aged 15-24 experience anxiety or depression – and numbers of young people with moderate to high distress have nearly doubled since 2016/17. Alignment with any future youth-specific national mental health priorities will also support impacted tamariki and rangatahi to access relevant supports and services.

The Recovery Office is undertaking a comprehensive lessons learned evaluative exercise with the recipients of the mental wellbeing grants to identify what worked well, what could be improved and what are the future/ ongoing needs for youth friendly tools and programmes in the recovery space.

There are many existing wellbeing resources and supports for tamariki and rangatahi that are relevant for anchor organisations within the community, such as schools. A comprehensive online hub

of wellbeing resources would be an opportunity to share information and access to what is already available.

Kia Ora Ake school wellbeing programme will not be available in Auckland/Waitemata leading to reduced wellbeing supports across the region, including in priority communities such as Mt Roskill and Henderson/Rānui. Wellbeing supports and services for under 12's is also an area of specialism that could be increased.

We know from our communities that the weather events disrupted a number of young people's education. Current Government targets on attendance and achievement are an opportunity to explore how we can support those students impacted by weather events to continue to engage in school and maintain supports and connections even when they are displaced from their usual networks.

Initial discussions with the Disaster Research Centre at Massey University may provide opportunities for long term research on how recovery impacts rangatahi, focussing on disruption to education due to household trauma.



Focus area 7: Access to relevant mental health services and support

Success indicator: Whānau are supported to achieve wellbeing through accessible, equitable mental health resources and services in their local communities

Success indicator: Māori have access to high quality programmes and initiatives, and culturally appropriate resources and practices to enable their wellbeing

Accessible mental health and addiction services and support

The Wellbeing Recovery Working Group for Tāmaki Makaurau includes representation from TWO and the MHF to enable a collaborative approach to ensuring impacted communities have access to generalist and specialist mental health support and wellbeing resources.

Mental wellbeing services and supports are made available through the Navigation Service referral pathways and communicated through Council channels including [Our Auckland](#) Recovery pages, [Recovery Newsletters](#) and Community and Social Recovery Pānui. The [All Sorts website](#) also provides wellbeing support and information for those who are managing the impacts of a disaster.

Additional Awhi Ora services to support impacted communities were also funded by TWO for the 2023/24 financial year, supporting 20 people and providing \$2,210 in additional financial support for household items such as bedding, clothing, as well as rubbish removal and roof repairs (reported period up to the end of April 2024).

In March 2023, TWO and MSD, through the Recovery Office allocated \$1.6m in Mental Wellbeing grants to Iwi and community organisations to support impacted communities. 13 of the 19 recipient organisations received grants to support therapeutic interventions (including counselling), often alongside social cohesion and youth friendly tools and programmes. 7 of those 13 recipients are Iwi organisations and Māori health providers, 2 are providers for Pacific Peoples, and 2 recipients support diverse migrant communities. Rural Support Trust also received funding through the mental wellbeing grants to continue their work to provide mental health support within rural and farming communities in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Our Auckland stories:

- [\\$1.6m boost for mental wellbeing support](#)
- [Community and wellbeing support](#)

Gaps and opportunities

The Recovery Office is undertaking a comprehensive lessons learned evaluative exercise with the recipients of the mental wellbeing grants to identify what worked well, what could be improved and what are the future/ ongoing needs for therapeutic interventions in the recovery space.

As the long journey of recovery continues for some, financial strains and fear for the future have increasing impacts on mental health, and

navigators are also seeing increasing levels of anxiety around weather events in the winter months. Ongoing work with partners such as TWO and MHF, as well as local mental health providers, will enable us to ensure impacted communities have access to counselling services to support these needs as the recovery journey continues. Partnership and collaboration is also key to ensuring wellbeing support available at trigger points throughout recovery, such as anniversaries and adaptation milestones.

We know from other disaster recoveries that men's mental health can be increasingly affected as time passes, particularly when financial pressures and feelings of hopelessness become overwhelming. Initiatives such as men's sheds and other opportunities for men to access peer support and other wellbeing services can improve mental health outcomes.

Research tells us that dealing with the impacts of a disaster can also increase relational distress and family violence. Te Aorerekura National Strategy to Eliminate Family and Sexual Violence is a starting point in identifying workstreams that are relevant to wellbeing and recovery, including investment in upskilling community primary prevention and building tools for communities and informal helpers.

Weather related worries and anxiety

Weathering the Storm workshops funded by TWO have been run in Titirangi, Māngere and Mt Roskill so far, with a total of 54 participants including service providers and some impacted community members. The workshops were well received with an average of 85% of participants who completed the post-survey workshop giving an overall rating of 'very good' or 'excellent'. An average of 96% said that the workshop will enable them to more effectively support people

experiencing weather related anxiety. Future workshops will be held in Henderson and online.

The Mental Health Education and Resource Centre ran free online sessions on [Tools for Managing Anxiety](#) between 18 March and 22 April 2024. These sessions were run in the evening and publicised through Recovery Office channels for those who could not attend Weathering the Storm.

Weathering the Storm workshops

- [Weathering the Storm Workshops](#)

Gaps and opportunities

The Weathering the Storm workshops have been run in impacted communities across Auckland and were proven to be successful in increasing community capacity to manage weather related worries and anxiety. The funding for these workshops was provided by TWO and is completed in FY23/24. As weather warnings and severe weather events continue, funding might be sought to run future courses outside working hours to encourage attendance from impacted community members.

Wellbeing support for recovery workers and volunteers

Working in recovery can impact an individual's wellbeing in a number of different ways. The work can be fast paced and relentless, with frontline staff experiencing prolonged exposure to other people's trauma which can be draining and triggering. Recovery workers tend to take on a level of responsibility often in areas where they have little control, feeling guilt in not being able to provide immediate answers and solutions. Recovery can often feel 'invisible', where the spotlight

has moved away from the initial disaster, yet impacted communities are still suffering. It can be an uncertain space, cutting a new path through unknowns, often with the need to pivot and adapt to changing circumstances.

The Recovery Office is working across different teams on how to support staff to consider their own wellbeing, to decompress and take time to consider self-care.

Wellbeing resources:

- [Looking after your mental wellbeing after a natural disaster](#)
- [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)

Gaps and opportunities

Understanding the wellbeing needs of those who are working in recovery is a first step in identifying supports and resources that can be made available to staff to prevent poor mental health outcomes. Working with partners such as MHF may be an opportunity to build wellbeing guidance and support specific to those who work in recovery.



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