

Connections Week 2025

Hamilton City, New Zealand | July 22nd-24th

Key information

The key aim of our annual three-day outreach campaign is **to connect with people, to offer support and build relationships**.

Connections Week is an extension of the Outreach we complete every weekday. Kaimahi from The People's Project (TPP) and volunteers visited places in Hamilton where people are known to be sleeping rough or in vehicles. Nine teams spread out across the city at 5:30am for two hours. They gave people they met information about TPP, coffee, food and warm clothes.

These results do not provide a complete picture of homelessness in Kirikiriroa.

We keep track of details about people we meet each day, but this is not a scientific exercise. We are simply reporting about who we met over three days in parts of Hamilton with a view to getting them the urgent support needed. Based on our regular daily outreach, there were people we expected to see, but did not. They are not included in these data. Importantly, no children, families or young people (under 18 years of age) were found rough sleeping or living in cars during this Connections Week campaign.

Building trust takes time. We expect, as has happened every Connections Week, more people will come in for support over the next weeks and months. Therefore, our data is limited to those who connected with us in the first two weeks after Connections week.

OUR AIM



CONNECT



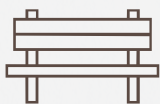
SUPPORT



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Who we discovered

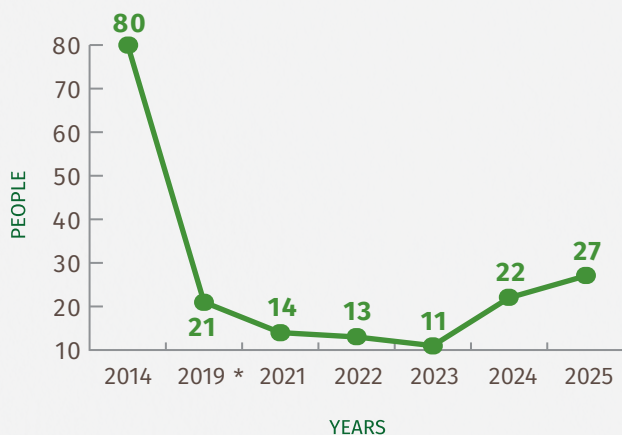
During Connections Week 2025, we met **92** people



27 people
were sleeping rough*



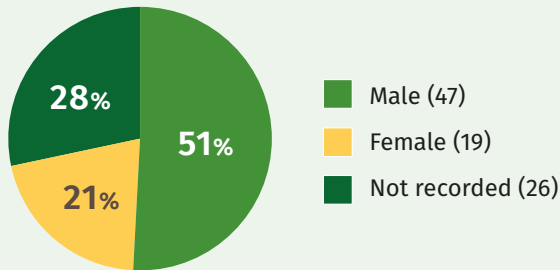
65 people
were sleeping in cars*



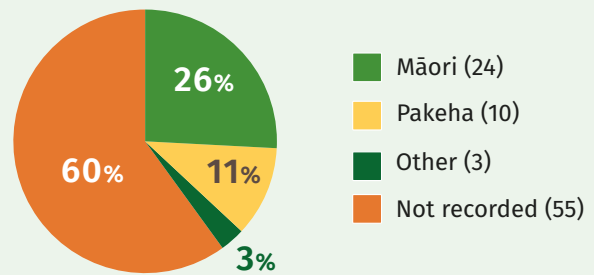
* There was no Connections Week in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. We did not collect car data in 2014.

Demographics

Gender



Ethnicity



Sometimes people prefer not to share their personal information, so we have made estimates for some of these data.

The methodology



3 consecutive days
- 3 sweeps of each area



nine teams of
4-5 people



5.15am briefing at Mānuka
House and on street by
5.30am



Regular radio
check-ins on
two-way radio



Support from City Safe CCTV
team and volunteers from
other areas within the Wise
Group



Data, such as housing and work
status, gathered via questionnaire
for context-specific data to plan
a local response.



Back in office by
7:20am for
debrief

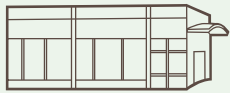


Hot drinks and
breakfast provided
to volunteers



In total, teams found 92 people in cars or sleeping rough over three days.

Immediate support we provided



11 people

came into TPP's
Kirikiriroa office



7 people

accepted ongoing
support



4 people

were supported by Ministry
of Social Development (MSD)



3 people

were placed in MSD
Emergency Housing



3 people

were provided
a little advice

workwise
employment agency

1 person

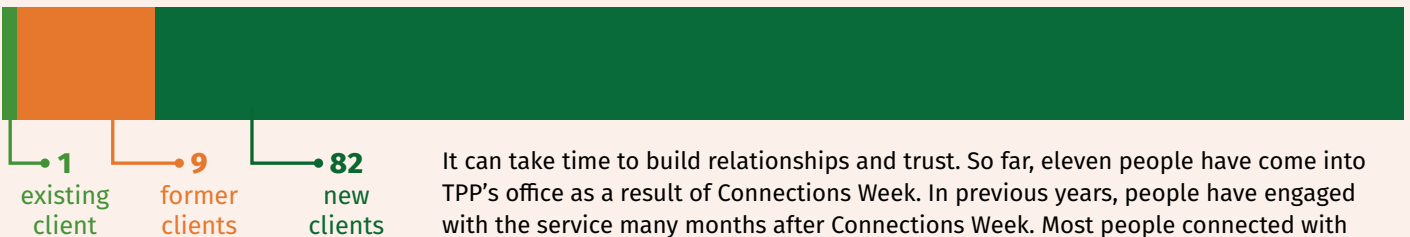
was referred to our sister
entity Workwise



3 people

were supported to other
specialist services

Client status



It can take time to build relationships and trust. So far, eleven people have come into TPP's office as a result of Connections Week. In previous years, people have engaged with the service many months after Connections Week. Most people connected with were new to the service, with fewer existing and former clients connecting than in previous years. These data reflect the transient nature of homelessness.



Teams spread out across the city, checking locations where people are known to sleep rough or in their cars.

Thank you for your contribution

Many thanks to HCC's City Safe team, volunteers from the Wise Group, and The People's Project Team. TPP would also like to thank the dedicated MSD support staff available during Connections Week, who provided immediate support to people found homeless. The combination of immediate access to MSD support with support and advocacy from TPP staff provided highly distressed tāngata whai ora with a sense of dignity, and timely access to much needed financial and emergency housing assistance.

Ben* was approached by the team on the second day of Connections week.

He was living in his ute. He was not sure if he wanted TPP's support, telling the team he was hoping to get his vehicle up and running and move to another part of Hamilton.

The vehicle needed a new battery and other repairs. This included replacing the back window of his vehicle which was missing, adding to the discomfort in the frozen chill of the morning. Ben said he'd been living in his vehicle for about five months, due to a break down in family relationships. He'd been working in his recent past but wasn't at this time.

He had never explored emergency housing before and was very cautious about engaging with the TPP team. He gratefully accepted a new blanket, socks, a woollen hat, some soup, and a food voucher.

The team knew they needed a cautious, measured approach to building his trust with Ben. After some convincing, Ben agreed that TPP could call back and see him around the same time next week. He cautioned the team that he may not be there and if he wasn't there, we would know that he got his vehicle going and had moved on. When TPP returned, Ben was there and accepted additional help. Work with Ben is ongoing.

He gratefully accepted a new blanket, socks, a woollen hat, some soup, and a food voucher

Martin* was found rough sleeping under a bridge.

He said he'd recently been couch surfing with friends, but the landlord had decided he wanted the property back, so he'd had to leave. Martin was streetwise and resourceful, managing rough sleeping by accessing free community resources around the city. This helped him get by on the street.

Martin said he'd first experienced homelessness when he was 15 years old. He revealed he'd never had a tenancy of his own. He'd lived with family in a home that was mostly overcrowded.

Martin could not read, or write, and said he had no understanding of numbers. This made interactions with government agencies very challenging. Martin was supported to access emergency housing through MSD. He is very keen to work and has already been referred to Workwise for support to get back to work.

Martin said he'd first been homeless when he was 15 years old

Sam* presented at the office after finding a pamphlet on his car window at Porritt Stadium.

Sam was managing several health and wellbeing issues while living in his car. There was no place to correctly store his temperature-sensitive medication. Sam had been working out of town but had lost his job. He was supported to explore his eligibility for emergency housing through MSD. This process was made smooth and easy thanks to MSD staff dedicated to supporting people TPP connected with during the campaign.

There was no place to correctly store his temperature-sensitive medication

Pete* had connected with TPP during the COVID-19 lockdowns, having been in emergency housing during that time.

Pete was found sleeping outside a church. He reported having been rough sleeping for eight months. Pete was supported to test eligibility for emergency housing through MSD. Unfortunately, Pete disengaged before being able to access the support he needed. TPP will keep searching for Pete during daily Outreach.

He reported having been rough sleeping for eight months