

# Kawepūrongo

## WALSH News

A Quarterly Newsletter by WALSH Trust

12 July 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa

Ko wai au? It's a joy to introduce myself as the new Chair of the WALSH Trust Board having been on the Board for several years now. Suzanne Sinclair resigned in May after 20 years of incredible service here at WALSH, and we had a lovely farewell for Suzanne joined by members of the Senior Leadership Team. As always Suzanne left us with some words of wisdom and inspiration as we enter a new chapter for WALSH with a relatively new CEO and now a new Chair.

I grew up on a dairy farm (now 4th generation) near Putaruru in the South Waikato and am the oldest of 3. Living in a small rural community I learnt from my parents the ethic of community service with them both being very active in the life of the community – my dad serving as chair of the local rugby club, school boards and the working man's club and my mum serving the local netball club, theatre players, woodturners association and scrabble club. With such incredible modelling it is no wonder that I find myself in a place of wanting to serve the community in which I now live.

My career has been wide and varied ranging from retail, sales, commercial fishing, family court registrar to being an adult educator for twenty plus years with a focus on workplace literacy, communication skills and leadership development. I first became involved with WALSH around fifteen years ago when I was employed as a tutor for Training Works, a training and education service we had at that time.

Having family members who identify as tangata whaiora working in the mental health sector has been a natural fit for me. Initially I found myself a little surprised that this was through governance but as I have developed my skills and understanding in governance, I am now passionate and deeply committed to 'adding value' to an organisation I fully support and believe in.

Will, our CEO and I had the opportunity to attend the Institute of Directors' one-week residential Director's course in February – it was a great time to get to know each other better, to learn all things governance and to dream of the next part of the haerenga/journey for WALSH and the people we serve.

*Nā Gail Tonga*  
(WALSH Trust Chair)



## Messages from our CEO

BY WILL WARD

It's been six months since I started in this role. The time has gone quickly. I now feel I have a real sense of our people, how the organisation works, and its services. It's been fantastic to look over everything we do and see wonderful work being done across the organisation. There is also so much potential, so many possibilities for us as a long established, evidence-based organisation as we look to our history of innovation to respond within a mental health landscape where this is required and expected!

We recently completed an external review of our Peer Support services. WALSH was one of the first NGOs in the region to deliver peer support. Over this time our peer services have established a reputation as dynamic and creative. It was wonderful to have the expertise of Whakatira to complete the review as we acknowledged what we do well now, what worked well in the past and how we get to be further creative into the future. It is now widely accepted that peer service options need to be more available across our community. WALSH is well placed for this exciting development.

There is one section of our mental health community who are often forgotten about; who are left out of the conversations relating to current and future need. I am referring to the older people mental health community. My work at Te Pou where I led the older person portfolio of work, highlighted the need for greater investment in service options and workforce development.

Many years ago WALSH established a unique sub-acute respite service for older people. The service has continued to thrive as well as the wonderful relationships we have with our service stakeholders. Recently I've been involved in internal discussions as we review an older person service pilot we've been delivering over the past year. It's very exciting to see its success and to plan for how this will now become a permanent service option.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the fantastic Not-for-Profit CEO development programme Tū Kahikatea with Outward Bound. Spending a week in the Marlborough Sounds, going outside of my comfort zone and increasing my awareness of what is truly possible was such an enriching experience. Doing this alongside equally passionate Not-for-Profit CEOs made the experience so much more rewarding. I am very appreciative to the Outward Bound facilitators and to the Joyce Fisher Fund for enabling this programme to happen.







## Getting to know our team

### Interview with Cara Shepherd

#### **What is your current role at WALSH Trust?**

I'm a registered health professional practicing social work. I work in a team with community and peer support workers to support tangata whaiora. I think my role specifically is about staying attuned to the complexity of tangata whaiora needs. I try to keep my kete full of modalities to support tangata whaiora. In particular I pull from te whare tapa whā, motivational interviewing and narrative theory.

#### **What do you love about working at WALSH Trust?**

It's the people. Coming in to work just feels good. I feel like the people I work with share a perspective with me. We're all fluid, empathetic and we work together. There's so much communication and I feel like that contributes to the quality of support we deliver.

#### **What do you find challenging in your role at WALSH?**

It's the complex needs of our tangata whaiora. Sometimes tangata whaiora require a range of services and it can be really challenging to manifest change when those services don't communicate well. The flip side is that this motivates me to learn more so that I can overcome those barriers with tangata whaiora.

#### **What do you feel is most rewarding about your work at WALSH?**

Being together on that journey with people. Watching a tangata whaiora go from being in a really challenging place, then watching them identify their strengths and use that to transform their lives is truly rewarding.

#### **Is there any advice you'd give to someone new to this role?**

Learn to be flexible with your approach and prepare to learn new things. Supporting people can take a lot and you really need to learn from the people around you, your team, supervisors and the tangata whaiora you meet.



## Getting to know our team

### Interview with Mark Lee

#### **What is your current role at WALSH Trust?**

I am a peer support worker, which means I provide support to tangata whaiora on their journey towards wellness. Sometimes that means providing emotional support and sometimes it means providing practical support like taking tangata whaiora to doctor or WINZ appointments. I also try to focus on connecting tangata whaiora with the community by facilitating workshops and social activities.

#### **What do you love about working at WALSH Trust?**

I love how supportive WALSH is. Everyone always gives each other support when it's needed, covering for each other, checking in with one another. Whether it's personal or work-related I feel like people here at WALSH care about each other. It feels like a family in that way.

#### **What do you find challenging in your role at WALSH?**

Sometimes working with the complex needs of the tangata whaiora can be challenging. A lot of tangata whaiora are facing challenges in so many parts of their life. Pulling that all together can be difficult, so I try to break it down into different goals that me and tangata whaiora can work towards together.

#### **What do you feel is most rewarding about your work at WALSH?**

Supporting tangata whaiora on their journey is consistently rewarding. Particular things that give me satisfaction are helping people deal with their anxiety by getting out of the house, going into the community and gradually experiencing different environments.

#### **Is there any advice you'd give to someone new to this role?**

Keep professional boundaries, keep good values: kindness, empathy, compassion, good listening. Also, you have to maintain a good work life balance. I make sure to do things I like after work, I play pool and I spend time with my friends and family.



# WHAT WE 'VE BEEN UP TO AT WALSH



Our Māori Hui group co-ordinated this year's Matariki celebration, full of reflections for our teams



Celebration of Samoan Language Week

# WHAT WE 'VE BEEN UP TO AT WALSH



Proudly representing WALSH Trust in WestConnect event  
organised by UNITEC



Pink Shirt Day 2024