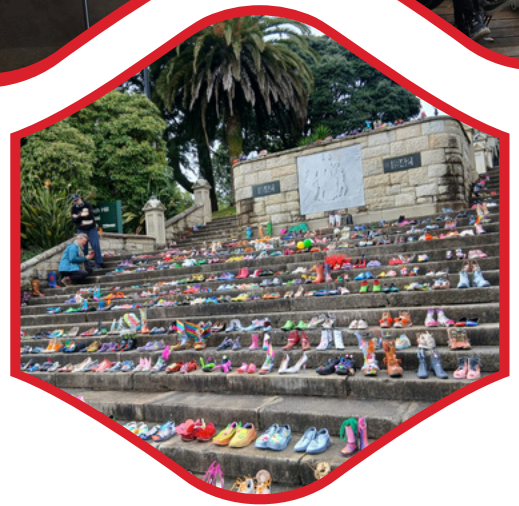


VOLUNTEER NELSON



**VOLUNTEER  
NELSON**  
connecting people  
with their community

# ANNUAL REPORT



# 2025

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# WHAT VOLUNTEER NELSON DOES

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Volunteer Nelson's purpose is to "Grow our Community connections."

Our vision is to support and strengthen the wellbeing of the community sector through active participation and partnerships.

We achieve this by working independently as well as collaborating with fellow community organisations, and leveraging the support of our funders to deliver impactful services and programs aligned with this vision.

Volunteer Nelson offers a core volunteer referral service, which has recently transitioned from the BeCollective platform to SEEK Volunteer, which will benefit community organisations and volunteers.

In addition to this, we manage the Found Directory and host monthly Community and Whānau Networking events and newsletters.

The annual Volunteer Expo continues to be an invaluable addition, enhancing the region's volunteer base and highlighting local volunteering opportunities.

In partnership with Age Concern, we have developed the Wellby programme, which focuses on recruiting and training Signposters and organising Talking Cafés throughout the region. These initiatives help people connect more deeply with their communities and improve overall wellbeing.

Over the years, we have significantly expanded our services and reach. This includes targeted youth initiatives like Young Leaders and Youth into Governance programs, as well as delivering training workshops on shared interests such as governance within the community sector.

Volunteer Nelson operates efficiently with just 2.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, all while achieving remarkable results. This small but dedicated team works tirelessly to make a meaningful impact.

More details about their incredible efforts can be found in the Activities and Service Performance section of this report.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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While the past year has been one of consolidation, momentum, and steady progress for Volunteer Nelson, our focus has been on strengthening what we do well, while responding to a ever changing and challenging environment, a key goal has been positioning the organisation to remain resilient and relevant well into the future.

The past year has been heavily characterised by delivery rather than design. The Regional Volunteering Strategy continues to guide our work and is now firmly embedded across the organisation, shaping how we support volunteers, partner with community organisations, and prioritise our services.

Our volunteer referral programme remains the cornerstone of our impact, and the transition to SEEK Volunteer has significantly improved our reach, efficiency, and visibility across the region.

Alongside this, we have seen renewed energy and growth in our youth-focused programmes and we look forward to welcoming a new youth focused programme late in the year.

The year has also brought change within our staff team. I would like to acknowledge Megan's contribution to Volunteer Nelson and thank her for the work she undertook during her time with us. We have since welcomed Nell to the organisation, and we are already seeing the positive impact of her skills, insight, and enthusiasm as she settles into her role.

Ongoing funding pressures have continued to challenge the community and not-for-profit sector. In response, the Board and staff have taken a disciplined and considered approach to resource management, programme evaluation, and governance, ensuring we deliver strong outcomes and the greatest possible return on investment for the community.

Looking ahead, the coming year will require continued adaptability and collaboration. While funding pressures are expected to remain, there are clear opportunities ahead. With established Youth programmes, trusted community services like Wellby, and a mature Volunteer Referral service aligned to our Regional Strategy, Volunteer Nelson is well positioned to deepen its impact and strengthen partnerships across the region.

I would like to sincerely thank our staff, led by Manager Gordon Oldfield, for their commitment and professionalism throughout the year. I also thank the Board for their thoughtful governance and leadership. Most importantly, I extend my gratitude to our volunteers, whose contribution underpins both our organisation and the many community groups we support.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our values and to the role Volunteer Nelson plays in building strong, connected communities.

*Glen Robinson - Board Chair*

# MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

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Volunteer Nelson continues to strengthen volunteering across the Nelson–Tasman region, supporting community organisations, volunteers, and young people to build an inclusive, connected, and resilient community.

## **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers**

Recruiting and retaining volunteers remains a challenge, with much volunteering occurring informally outside organisations. Volunteer Nelson addresses this through several initiatives:

### **Regional Volunteering Strategy:**

Volunteer Nelson led a collaboration of organisations, funders, and stakeholders to develop a strategy guiding collective efforts to improve recruitment, retention, and inclusion. The strategy was launched at a Community and Whānau meeting in February. A working group action plan is now being implemented.

### **Volunteer Referral Platform:**

In November, Volunteer Nelson transitioned to *SEEK Volunteer*, a user-friendly platform enabling volunteer managers to list opportunities and volunteers to find roles matching their interests. One-on-one support is provided to volunteers and organisations.

### **Promotion and Community Engagement:**

Volunteer Nelson participated in four community sector expos and utilised social media (Meta platforms) to increase awareness of volunteering and the organisation's services.

### **National Volunteer Week:**

In partnership with Nelson City Council, Volunteer Nelson hosted the Mayor's Morning Tea for Volunteers. Over 100 volunteers from 28 organisations were celebrated, providing a warm and inclusive recognition of community contributions.

### **Youth-Focused Volunteering**

Engaging young people remains a priority through volunteering and leadership development.

### **Young Leaders Programme:**

Ten participants completed the Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work, leading community projects involving approximately 90 young volunteers.

### **Youth in Governance Programme:**

Ten young people were placed on boards of local organisations, receiving mentoring and governance guidance. Many participants remain in leadership roles post-programme.

### **Rangatahi in the Community (Pilot Programme):**

Launched in response to funders' priorities to reduce youth disengagement from education, training, or employment. Students, referred by school staff, participated in short "volunteering taster sessions" with local organisations. Accreditation is provided via the Student Volunteer Army, fostering ongoing engagement in community life.

# MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER (Cont'd)

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## **Strengthening Community Connection**

Volunteer Nelson continues to support broader community engagement and governance:

### **Wellby:**

Partnered with Age Concern Nelson Tasman to reduce social isolation through seven Talking Cafés, held each month, linking participants to community organisations and services.

### **Found Directory:**

Maintains over 1,400 listings of community organisations and services. Listings are curated for accuracy.

### **Community and Whanau Network Meetings:**

Organised and presented 11 monthly meetings for all community stakeholders and circulated a fortnightly e-newsletter.

### **Governance Training:**

Delivered a full-day workshop for 30 directors from 21 organisations, enhancing local boards' capacity for effective volunteer governance. Governance remains the most popular volunteering activity nationally, with around half a million volunteers participating.

Through these initiatives, Volunteer Nelson continues to create pathways into volunteering across all age groups, strengthen volunteer management, and foster strong, connected communities. The organisation remains committed to supporting inclusive, resilient, and engaged communities through the power of volunteering.

Special thanks to our staff Ellie Young, Nell Woodward, Danielle Robson, and Karen Nancarrow for their dedication, and to a former staff member, Megan Callahan for her significant contribution.

*Gordon Oldfield - Manager*

# VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

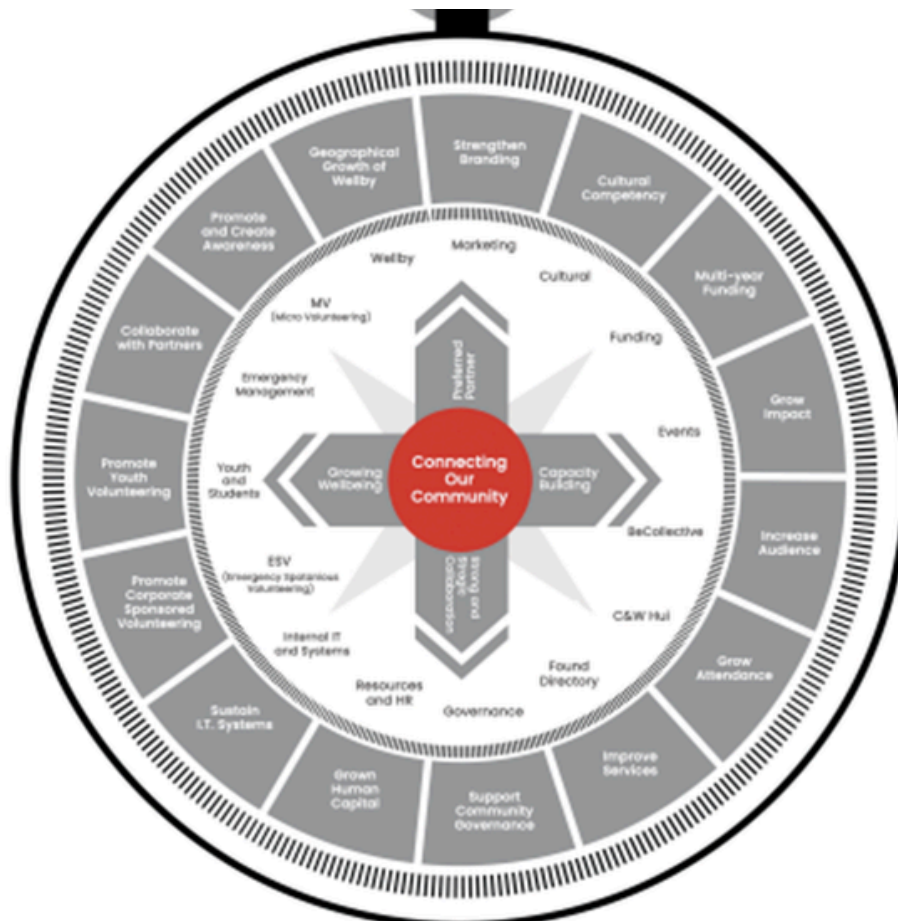
In 2023 the Board, together with Gordon and with significant input from staff and the board, developed Volunteer Nelson's Strategic Vision and Plan.

The challenge at that time was to create a plan that was aligned to our values and vision and that accurately reflected the organisation as it was evolving.

This work resulted in our current Vision statement, "Growing our Community Connections," and established the four strategic pillars that guide our work: Growing Wellbeing, Preferred Partner, Building Capacity, and Strong and Strategic Collaboration.

In 2025 we have continued to build on this foundation and now actively and regularly review and update our Strategic Plan to ensure it remains responsive, relevant, and future-focused.

Through this ongoing work, we have refined a forward-looking plan that balances ambition with realism, but still aligns Board and staff aspirations as well as community needs, it demonstrates our commitment to strengthening and growing our established services in youth development, governance, and volunteer engagement, while also recognising and responding to emerging opportunities in the region.



# ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE

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## Found Directory & SEEK Volunteer

Engagement with the Found Directory remains strong, with new users steady compared to the previous year. While returning user numbers dipped slightly, the directory's reach and relevance continue to grow.

On 1 November 2024, Volunteer Nelson retired the Be Collective platform and moved to SEEK Volunteer.

The transition from Be Collective to SEEK Volunteer has been positive, maintaining a steady flow of volunteer engagement and partnership activity. Volunteer Nelson continues to play a key role in connecting people with meaningful volunteer opportunities across the region.

### Statistics:

#### Found Directory

- New website users: 32,820
- Returning users: 6,638
- Active listings: 17,140 (*a substantial increase*)
- Listings updated: 1,415

#### Be Collective (1 July – 31 October 2024)

- Partner organisations: 222
- Active opportunities (*monthly average*): 288
- Completed opportunities: 409
- Registered volunteers: approx. 2,000

#### SEEK Volunteer (1 November 2024 – 30 June 2025)

- Partner organisations: 63
- Active opportunities (*monthly average*): 40–50
- Volunteer applications received: 405

## Wellby Talking Cafes and Signposters

Over the past year, Wellby Cafés and community gatherings have continued to bring people together across generations, creating spaces for connection, support, and belonging. Each session offered opportunities for meaningful conversation, local signposting, and community building.

Overall, the Wellby Talking Cafe initiative continues to strengthen community wellbeing through conversation, connection, and collaboration — fostering a culture where everyone can find their place and purpose.

Three online Wellby Signposter Training sessions were held, training 64 participants across the PHO, including the physio network, Health Improvement Practitioners (HIPs), and health coaches. Volunteer Nelson also delivered Wellby Signposter presentations at the Nelson Tasman Settlement Forum (20 attendees) and the Community & Whānau Hui (30 attendees). These sessions continue to strengthen community connections and awareness of local support options.

Wellby cafe's are held 7 times a month, these are held in Nelson, Stoke, Richmond, Motueka and Takaka and we hold on average 77 talking cafers per year over 11 months.

*"The Wellby cafes have been wonderful to meet new people, find out about things happening in the region and feel connected."*

*"Wellby has been the most inclusive group I have attended, have found it hard going to other groups where people do not talk to me"*



## Young Leaders - Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work

Volunteer Nelson successfully delivered a five-day Young Leaders Level 3 Youth Work Certificate training week in January at Founders Park.

The week was highly successful, with ten young leaders completing the training. Following completion, participants undertook mentoring roles, each supporting a young person over a six-week period.

In addition, they planned, organised, and implemented youth-led projects. Some of the projects the young leaders organised included:

- A school wellbeing day
- House dancing competition
- Multicultural Week
- Pink Shirt Day initiatives
- Poi workshops
- School camp activities at Whenua Iti Outdoors
- Halberg Games coaching sessions

Collectively, these projects and mentoring engaged and positively impacted more than 1,400 young people across the region.

Volunteer Nelson also provided ongoing support over six months, holding monthly hui and individual catch-ups.

## Youth into Governance 2023/2024

Volunteer Nelson successfully ran its popular Youth into Governance programme in 2025, with ten young people participating and being matched with ten community boards.

The programme aims to increase diversity on boards and introduce a fresh, youthful perspective to community decision-making processes.

This year, new boards joined alongside valued returning partners, with several young people remaining on boards after the programme concluded.

### Programme Highlights

Four engaging forums were held, including:

- A fun icebreaker session at the Richmond Bowling Alley featuring guest speaker Gael Gordon from Business Assist
- Three governance forums facilitated by Michelle Nunes-Vaz from Accounting for Good, who shared her extensive governance expertise and incorporated up-to-date content to broaden participants' understanding and confidence

Feedback from both participants and boards was overwhelmingly positive.

Participants reported increased confidence, understanding of governance, and leadership growth, while boards appreciated the energy, insight, and commitment young people brought to their governance teams.

## Rangatahi in the Community

As part of our commitment to empowering young people, Volunteer Nelson launched a new initiative in 2025 — Rangatahi in the Community. This programme is being developed to collaborate with schools, youth-involving organisations and volunteer involving organisations to run a series of volunteer taster sessions for young people considering leaving school early. The programme provides a structured and practical introduction to volunteering across local community organisations, aiming to build confidence, transferable skills and a sense of purpose and belonging.

These sessions aim to:

- Strengthen connections between rangatahi and community organisations
- Inspire pathways into future careers, further education, or work experience
- Encourage ongoing participation in volunteering

Several host organisations have already confirmed participation, representing a diverse cross-section of the community.

The first successful pilot session will held this November at The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, in collaboration with Nayland College more will be rolling out in 2026.



# TREASURER'S REPORT

## Statement of Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2025

### Revenue

Donations, koha, bequests and other general fundraising activities	-	1,000
Government service delivery grants/contracts	100,953	60,254
Non-government service delivery grants/contracts	191,827	193,094
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	8,642	11,120
Other revenue	2,737	7,409
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>304,159</b>	<b>272,878</b>

### Expenses

Employee remuneration and other related expenses	230,224	206,311
Costs related to service delivery	83,387	96,075
Other expenses	5,485	7,861
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>319,095</b>	<b>310,247</b>

<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year</b>	<b>(14,936)</b>	<b>(37,369)</b>
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The year ended 30 June 2025 demonstrated the organisation's ability to adapt to changes in funding while continuing to deliver valuable programmes for the community. During the year, Nelson City Council withdrew support for the Governance and Finance training programme. However, support was secured through the Council's Youth Strategy Fund to deliver leadership-focused initiatives. Our team, particularly Danielle, responded proactively by pivoting the programme to deliver similar leadership development outcomes through a revised format.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Rātā Foundation, which increased its funding during the year by \$15,000 compared with the 2024 financial year.

The Statement of Financial Performance reports total revenue of \$304,159 and total expenses of \$319,095, resulting in a deficit of \$14,936 for the year, an improvement on the prior year deficit of \$37,369. This smaller deficit reflects careful financial management during a period of funding transition while maintaining service delivery. Contractor expenditure increased slightly during the year. The Board is reviewing this area for the forthcoming year, particularly within the Wellby programme, where opportunities may exist for volunteers to undertake some of this work.

Full details of grant income from both government and non-government providers are available on the Charities Register.

The Board, and management team remain committed to prudent financial stewardship while ensuring the organisation continues to deliver meaningful services to the community.

Michelle Nunes-Vaz  
CA PTB

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We couldn't do it without the amazing mahi and support of our team, volunteers, funders and sponsors.

We thank our wonderful staff team of Gordon, Ellie, Karen, Danielle, Nell and Melissa, and all of the contractors and volunteers who help them throughout the year.

We would also like to recognise the hard work and dedication of the Board; Glen, David, Jacqui, Michelle, Shan, Marie, Bence, Hugo and Liz.

THANK YOU to each and every one of you,  
our successes are your successes.



## CONTACT

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