

24
25

Living
Wage
Aotearoa

ANNUAL REPORT



Message from the Chair

Rev Stephen King

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It is my privilege to present this annual report, reflecting on a year of both transition and progress for the Living Wage Movement in Aotearoa. The past year has seen significant structural changes, leadership shifts, and continued commitment from our member organisations, staff, and volunteers. Despite economic headwinds, we have remained steadfast in our mission to eliminate in-work poverty and strengthen people power across our communities.

This is my final report as Chair, as my term has come to an end. The current Governance Board is an exceptional group of people, and the Movement is extremely fortunate to have their expertise and experience guiding its national direction.

Acknowledgement of Gina Lockyer's Contribution as Executive Director

This year we farewell Gina Lockyer, whose commitment to the Living Wage Movement has been exceptional across multiple leadership roles over the past five years. Beginning as Board Chair in 2020, Gina led significant organisational expansion, initiated our first national online Election Forum, and secured funding for a permanent Executive Director role.

When faced with leadership gaps, she stepped in to manage complex staffing and governance challenges, including performance management, staff transitions, and crisis leadership—all while maintaining her full-time employment and later, during parental leave.

In 2023, Gina formally took up the role of Executive Director, bringing structure and sustainability to our operations. She streamlined systems, introduced strategic planning resources, managed MECA bargaining, oversaw complaints processes, and developed our accreditation framework. Her leadership professionalised the organisation, safeguarded institutional knowledge, and laid a foundation for future growth—particularly within our Employer Programme.

Gina's tenure was marked by courage, transparency, and deep care for both the mission and people of the Living Wage Movement. We are grateful for her service and the legacy of systems, clarity, and resilience she leaves behind.

Rev Stephen King
Chair



Message from the Chair

Rev Stephen King

Interim Leadership Arrangements and Staff Capacity

Following the departure of the Executive Director, the Board has confirmed that the position will remain on the organisational chart for the time being. Over the coming eight months, Board members will actively canvass networks for potential Executive Director candidates. At the end of this interim period, the Board will assess whether to fill or retain the role at all, with consideration given to financial viability, candidate availability, staff capacity, and strategic need.

In the meantime, all core responsibilities previously held by the Executive Director will be distributed across the existing staff team. This redistribution will be managed in a way that fairly acknowledges the current capacity of each team member.

The Board recognises that this temporary structure will result in some staff taking on responsibilities that extend beyond their current roles—particularly in the case of those stepping into leadership functions, such as the shift from Community Organiser to Community Organiser – Lead. In recognition of these expanded duties, the Board has agreed to the provision of a Higher Duties Allowance for the interim period where applicable. These measures aim to ensure continuity and fairness while the organisation transitions into its next phase of leadership.

Financial and Employer Programme: Challenges and Planned Actions

The financial position remains stable but continues to require careful monitoring. The current MECA agreement expires on 31 May 2025, and a 3% wage increase has been budgeted in anticipation of upcoming negotiations. Our financial position continues to be affected by the current economic conditions, and our Living Wage Employer numbers have declined to 342 as of April 2025.

Since July 2024, cancellations have outpaced new sign-ups each month, with smaller, more economically vulnerable businesses most likely to withdraw. This trend presents a serious challenge to our financial sustainability.

It was agreed at the May 2025 Governance Board Meeting that in the eight months following Gina's departure, there will be a financial review of the organisation to ensure long-term sustainability. The Finance Subcommittee will meet monthly to maintain oversight, with Frank Accounting contracted to provide additional operational financial support.

d

Rev Stephen King
Chair



Message from the Chair

Rev Stephen King

Partnership with Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga

We are continuing to strengthen our relationship with Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga, a partnership that has enabled us to engage them to deliver the Living Wage organising programme in Auckland. This collaboration supports the revitalisation of our local networks and deepens engagement with member organisations and community leaders. Through this work, we are maintaining momentum in holding the Mayor and Auckland Council to account for their ongoing commitment to the Living Wage, ensuring that progress remains both visible and sustained.

Introducing the Member Organisations Council (MOC)

The Member Organisations Council (MOC) is a new structure for the Living Wage Movement in Wellington, bringing together member groups from across the Wellington, Hutt Valley, and Porirua networks. It replaces the former local networks with a single, unified decision-making body to strengthen democracy and collective strategy.

Delegates from each union, faith, and community organisation now meet quarterly to shape campaigns, build relationships, and lead organising efforts. This new model ensures greater accountability, clearer direction, and more concentrated people power to drive impactful, coordinated action for low-paid workers across the region.

Ōtautahi Christchurch Strategy 2025–26

The Ōtautahi network has developed a local strategy aligned with the national movement's direction. Key focus areas include strengthening broad-based organising through partnerships such as Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga, and securing a half-time organiser. Campaign priorities include supporting diversity in membership, launching a campaign at Nurse Maude, and expanding outreach to those most affected by in-work poverty. The strategy also emphasises income diversification, honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and promoting best practice in leadership and governance. This comprehensive approach positions Ōtautahi to deepen its local impact and grow its role within the national movement.

Closing Reflections

This has been a year of change, growth, and commitment to renewal. We have laid foundations to strengthen our democratic processes, improve our financial systems, and prepare for future leadership. As we navigate the year ahead, I am heartened by the energy and vision present across our movement.

Thank you to all who have contributed time, expertise, and heart to the Living Wage Movement this year. Together, we continue to organise for dignity, justice, and fair pay for all.

Ngā mihi nui,

Rev Stephen King
Chair



Our Mission

The Living Wage Movement Aotearoa NZ wants to see all workers in Aotearoa be paid a Living Wage. We bring together community, union and faith-based groups to campaign for a Living Wage and seek to influence those who have the power to change the lives of workers and their families.

Through community organisation, we:

- encourage and promote the development of better policies for working people
- raise public awareness and understanding of the issues associated with low income workers
- develop the capacity and skills of our members to support and advocate for low waged workers.

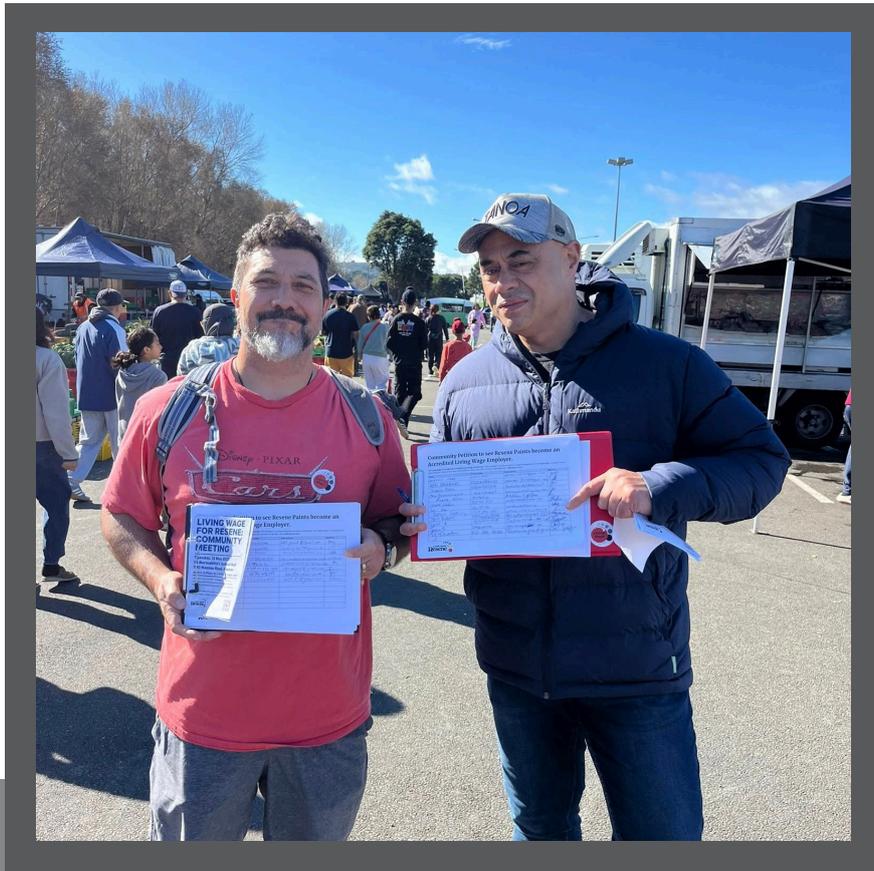
We focus on workforces where incomes are funded through public money, and on large employers who can afford to pay a Living Wage.

The Living Wage Movement is:

- non-party political
- built locally through local relationships and local issues
- independent of government in terms of funding and association, and
- comprised of three streams of the membership: secular/community, union, faith-based groups.



2024-2025 Highlights



10+

Submissions and advocacy actions made to local and national government

4

Employer Events for Accredited Living Wage Employer Businesses

6

Active local Living Wage Networks in Aotearoa

340

Accredited Living Wage Employers

60+

Participants in Aotearoa Living Wage education and training courses



Living Wage Employer Programme

Living Wage Employers are critical to achieving our vision of a more equitable Aotearoa.

To be granted Living Wage Employer accreditation, employers undergo a robust assessment process, during which our Accreditation Advisory Committee must be satisfied that all the employer's contractors and employees — including any engaged by franchises controlled by the employer — are being paid the Living Wage.

Accredited Living Wage Employers feature on our website, can use the Living Wage Employer trademark, and receive ongoing support from the Living Wage Employer programme team.

Living Wage Employers also contribute to our community advocacy and campaign work, helping to lift even more working people out of poverty.

The Living Wage Employer Programme celebrated its 10th Anniversary this year. A celebration that was marked by the accreditation of Tāmaki Makaurau's largest employer, Auckland Council. An achievement which had been many years in the making and had involved the advocacy of community, politicians and businesses alike.

We have continued to see a smaller but steady flow of businesses becoming accredited. In 2024-2025, we also welcomed Northpower Ltd, a leading contributor to NZ's electricity supply industry; Dunedin Airport; The Cathedral Grammar School in Christchurch and also SKU Ltd, producer of several wine brands.

“The leadership we can give to the community through this (Living Wage Employer accreditation) is important but of course it's about looking after our staff. We've got 8,000 odd staff in the Council organisation and being a good employer is really critical to me, and to us” - Phil Wilson, CEO Auckland Council



Living Wage Principal Partners Council

The Principal Partners Council comprises seven accredited Living Wage Employers: Annie Newman (E tū); Paul Goulter (NZNO); Benedict Ferguson (PSA); Jeff Ruscoe (AMP Wealth Management); Charlotte Ward (Kiwibank); Justin Brochocki (Westpac); Fiona Michel (Braemar Hospital)

Principal Partners champion the Living Wage across the private sector, extending the reach and impact of the concept of the Living Wage in Aotearoa NZ. The council operates as an advisory body of representatives from a cross-section of businesses to build the knowledge, innovation and voice that is essential in taking the Living Wage to a new level of acceptance in our society.

In the last year, the Council has initiated research through Auckland University into the experience of being a Living Wage accredited business. Still

- explore employer experiences and processes of adopting the LW
 - o to include becoming a LW employer, what motivates management to renew their accreditation, and positive and negative aspects.
 - o Why some stayed accredited, and others left or are only partially there (business sales, changes in HR, perceived costs etc).
 - o How much does this depend on a passionate advocate?
- Document participants understandings of how organisations and the public are talking about LW now.
 - o Is it still the right thing to do?



Living Wage Accreditation Advisory Council

The Accreditation Advisory Committee plays a vital role in maintaining the integrity and strength of the Living Wage Accreditation Programme. This committee is responsible for overseeing the accreditation process, ensuring that all applications for Living Wage Employer status are carefully reviewed and approved in line with the Movement's policies. Working closely with the Living Wage Employer Programme Lead, who advises the committee and reports to the Governance Board at each national meeting, the committee ensures that standards are consistently applied and upheld.

The Accreditation Advisory Committee comprises the three streams of the Movement: faith, community and unions. In addition to these representatives, there is also a representative from the Governance Board, the Principal Partners Council and a Living Wage Employer.

In February 2025, we farewelled longtime committee member Kevin Church from Living Wage Employer, Opticmix. Stepping into the Living Wage Employer vacancy, we welcomed Tania Pointon from Seed Waikato (Living Wage Employer since 2024).

The combined efforts of the Accreditation Advisory Committee members help protect the credibility of the accreditation programme and support the continued growth of the Living Wage Movement across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Members

Annie Newman Principal Partners Council/ E tū Union, David Hall Faith -Anglican Social Justice Group, Kevin Church - Living Wage Employer (retired from Feb 2025) Opticmix, Jeff Rowe Union -New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pukenga Here Tikanga Mahi Incorporated, John Kennedy-Good Governance Board Faith, Tania Pointon Living Wage Employer (current from February 2025) Seed Waikato, Tanja Bristow Community Working Women's Resource Centre



Regional activity – Auckland

balh



Regional activity – Waikato

In 2024, the Living Wage Movement Aotearoa NZ focused on growing our local organising work in Hamilton, supported by a \$20,000 grant from the Len Reynolds Trust. This partnership reflected our shared commitment to investing in local leadership, strengthening community power, and challenging the systems that keep working people in low pay.

Previous work in Hamilton included submissions to the Council’s Annual Plan, public meetings, and bringing new leaders into the network. The Trust’s support gave us a much-needed boost to keep that momentum alive and ensure the local community could continue to build strength together.

What We Set Out to Do

This project aimed to:

- Organise a strong public action to maintain pressure on Hamilton City Council to become an accredited Living Wage Employer.
- Grow and connect local leaders — especially young people — and support them into core leadership roles.
- Continue recruiting new communities and member groups to stand alongside our movement.
- Identify new funding to secure a permanent Hamilton-based organiser role in the future.
- Enable local leaders to access national training and wider development opportunities.

Key Highlights

Community Action

In November, the Hamilton network came together for a lively public action in front of Hamilton City Council. This event celebrated employers already paying a Living Wage and called on Council to follow suit. The community energy, music, performances and a giant postcard signed by dozens of people made it clear that Hamiltonians want their city to lead by example.

Council Engagement

In May 2024, Council worker, Robert, made a compelling submission to the Council’s long term plan, well supported by local Living Wage Movement leaders. A formal request to speak at the Council’s final meeting for the 2024 calendar year was declined under Standing Orders. While this was a setback, it gave local leaders valuable insight into Council processes for future advocacy.



Regional Activity – Waikato

A formal request to speak at the Council’s final meeting for the 2024 calendar year was declined under Standing Orders. While this was a setback, it gave local leaders valuable insight into Council processes for future advocacy.

Leadership Development

Throughout the project, the local organiser and leaders ran meetings, connected with new groups, and built stronger ties with schools and tertiary communities. This helped lay the foundations for a more diverse leadership group ready to carry the work forward.

Transitions

In November, the Hamilton organiser moved on to a new role in the union movement. While this was a big transition, it highlighted the need for stable funding and support for local leadership to ensure the momentum continues.

Impact

- Stronger local relationships and visible community support for a Living Wage Hamilton.
- A more connected network with emerging leaders ready to continue the work.
- A clearer understanding of local Council processes and how best to align our advocacy.
- Foundation work for leaders to participate in national training and grow their organising skills.

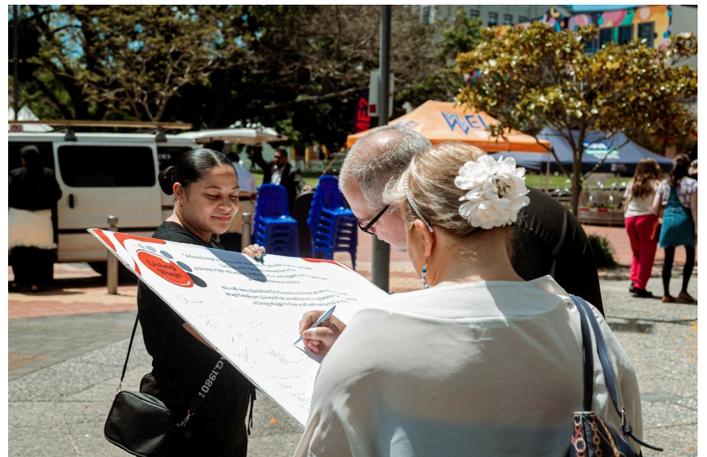
Next Steps

Looking ahead, the Living Wage Movement will:

- Tag remaining project funds for future Hamilton-based organising to keep the groundwork growing.
- Continue supporting and investing in emerging local leaders from faith, community, and union groups.
- Prioritise building our financial sustainability so we can offer community organisers long-term employment and the security needed to build people power over time.
- Grow our partnership with Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga, to strengthen broad-based organising connections in the Waikato region.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to the Len Reynolds Trust for backing this local organising and everyone in our network who turned out, signed the postcard, shared their stories, or brought their skills to this kaupapa.



Regional activity – Wellington

Local Government Wellington

We submitted to Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, and Greater Wellington Regional Council to keep the Living Wage on the agenda, ensuring that the new rate of \$27.80 continued to be paid and that the councils campaigned for the Living Wage.

Living Wage Schools

Our Wellington leaders have been systematically approaching their local schools, and we've seen schools of all shapes and sizes commit to supporting our campaign by signing the Living Wage pledge. The photo depicts a highlight in Wellington, where the Year 13 Social Studies class at St Catherine's took it upon themselves to ensure their school committed to the campaign and to paying the Living Wage.



VUW for Living Wage

An alliance of staff from the TEU, students from VUWSA, community members, and faith groups formed on campus to launch a campaign urging the University Council to take a leadership stance and commit to paying all its directly employed staff.

At the time, over 600 directly employed staff, mainly tutors, were receiving less than the Living Wage, in addition to the contracted cleaners and catering workers at the University.

Regional activity – Wellington



To make this a strategic priority, students, staff, faith groups, community members, and unions filled the University Council meetings twice—once with over 150 people on the 17th of June, and again on the 9th of September.

As a result, the Council passed a motion to implement a plan for the University to become a Living Wage Employer, with all directly employed staff transitioning to the Living Wage that year.

Formation of Member Organisation Council

In order to grow the people power of Wellington Living Wage, we formed the Member Organisations Council, inviting all our member organisations to send two representatives to help set the strategic direction for the Wellington region. Decisions were made via consensus, which allowed our movement in Wellington to flourish. We held three Member Organisations Council meetings, one of which led to the commissioning of our Resene for Living Wage campaign, which kicked off in April 2025.



Regional activity – Christchurch

Overview

The Living Wage Movement has adopted a strategy and Living Wage Ōtautahi Christchurch strategy is done in conjunction with that document.

SHIFT 1 | Rirā/Strength: Explore partnerships that strengthen broad-based organising in Ōtautahi

Action in 2025-2026

- Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga set up in Christchurch. August 1st for a meeting Marlon 1 pm to 3.30 pm – kai provided – book the room at Aldersgate.

- Get support for a half-time organiser to promote the Living Wage.

- Residential 5-day training in Auckland – get 2-3 people to attend – funding from Living Wage Aotearoa?? Possible candidates: Sue Molloy, Tria, Bobbi, and possibly Matt (Anglican)

SHIFT 2 | Arotahi/Focus: Focus on reflecting the diversity of workers to make concrete change

Action in 2025-2026

- Develop a plan with NZNO around a Living Wage campaign at Nurse Maude.

- Track the diversity of our membership organisations and our Living Wage Employers in Ōtautahi. We will need to get a full list from Living Wage head office as to who these are and work with them to grow the Living Wage movement in Ōtautahi. Have a gathering around Christmas as a thank you to them.

- Prioritise outreach to organisations and communities that represent those most affected by in-work poverty.

SHIFT 3 | Whanake/growth: Diversify and grow our income by working together

Action in 2025-2026

- Promote the importance of becoming a member organisation with groups that we are either aware of or part of.

- Explore possible fundraiser with outside groups, ie Unions Canterbury, to share the load and raise for local Living Wage.

- Work with some of our Living Wage Employers to get donations for local Living Wage.

- Promote direct debits of 1 hr of Living Wage rate per month – create a little flyer to hand out at events.

SHIFT 4 | Poutoko manawa/ the central pole: Begin the journey to honour te Tiriti O Waitangi and te Ao Māori

Action in 2025-2026

- Improve our working relations with Ngai Tāhu through Jo.

- Set up safe conversations to generate options for our future.

- Be prepared for it to change the way we think about and do things.

SHIFT 5 | Pou Tangata/ Guardians: Ensure governance and leadership is best practice and clear

Action in 2025-2026

- Support each other on the Steering Group and on the Campaign for Schools to ensure good practices and safe environments for all.

- Regularly feedback with updates of progress and also any concerns that we might have to the Living Wage Governance Board.



“Building a global network is essential if we are to bring to life the idea of each and every employer paying a fair wage wherever they may be. New Zealand’s success is another important step in achieving that benchmark of responsible employment.”

Mark Sparkes,
Sustainability
Director of
Linklaters, and
Review Panelist for
the GLW Affiliate
Network..

The global story

?

The Living Wage Movement is part of a global conversation about Living Wage standards across the supply chain and around the world. As an affiliate of the London-based Global Living Wage, our movement has been involved in an initiative called the WageMap. The first consultation took place in November 2024 and we are represented by Annie Newman, Assistant National Secretary E tū; Charles Waldegrave, the Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit; and Craig Renney, Economist and Director of Policy, NZCTU WageMap is a consortium of living wage data and service providers that have come together to align living wage methodologies and frameworks. The aim is a credible and representative living wage reference standard which assesses existing benchmarking methodologies to produce globally comparable, locally specific living wage benchmark data. In this way, the WageMap aims to accelerate the transition towards closing the gap between prevailing wages and living wages – globally.

Affiliation to Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga Trust

Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga is an umbrella charitable Trust that acts as a guardian of broad-based alliance-building in Aotearoa. In the last financial year, the Living Wage Movement and another Auckland-based alliance, Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga Tāmaki Makaurau, have affiliated to the Trust. Cementing the relationship, board member Alec Toleafoa has now been appointed a new trustee from the Auckland Living Wage network.



Financial Report

Blah



Acknowledgements

Living Wage Movement local networks, for your advocacy and leadership all over Aotearoa.

The Industrial Areas Foundation Pacific for organiser supervision and training, and **Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga** for partnership and peer support.

Our regular and one-off donors. Your donations give us the resources to spread the Living Wage message, projects and initiatives.

The Accreditation Advisory Committee, who uphold the standards of the Living Wage Accreditation Programme.

Our volunteers who support our operations, research, social media, mentoring, communications, and much more. Thanks to you, the business of the Movement ticks on.

The national Governance Board, for your commitment, guidance, and strategic leadership.

Our staff, for your dedication to growing and supporting the Movement.

Member organisations from our faith, union, and community streams. Your participation and generosity are the foundations of our Movement.

Governance Board

Rev. Stephen King — Faith (Chair)

Chas Muir — Faith

John Kennedy-Good — Faith

Kerry Davies — Union

Xavier Walsh — Union

Mat Danaher - Union (Treasurer)

Tess Upperton — Union

Alec Toleafoa — Community

Lillian Pak — Community

Muriel Tunoho — Community

Hiueni Nuku — Community

Accreditation Advisory Committee

Annie Newman - Principal Partners Council/ E tū Union

David Hall - Faith -Anglican Social Justice Group

Kevin Church - Living Wage Employer (retired from Feb 2025) - Opticmix

Jeff Rowe - Union -New Zealand Public Service

Association Te Pukenga Here Tikanga Mahi Incorporated (Retired from June 2025)

John Kennedy-Good - Governance Board - Faith

Tania Pointon - Living Wage Employer (current from February 2025) Seed Waikato

Tanja Bristow - Community - Working Women's Resource Centre

Staff and administrative support

Felicia Scherrer — LW Employer Programme Lead

Finn Cordwell — Lead Community Organiser

Sami Smart — Seniro Administrator

Frank Accounting & Thankyou Payroll



Acknowledgements

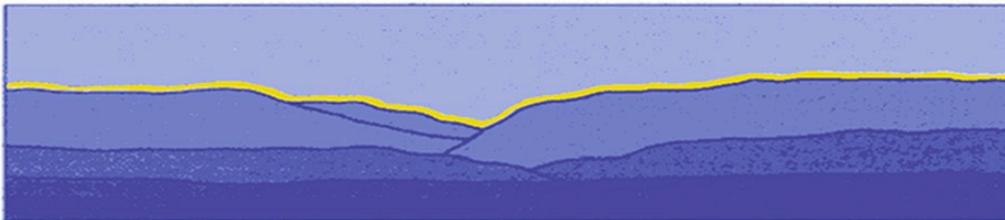
Our thanks also to our Principal Partners for their support of our Movement and for championing the Living Wage in their respective industries:



New Zealand Public Service Association
Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi



Braemar
Hospital
Your choice for excellence



PORIRUA UNION AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE INC.

