



NorthAble
MATAPUNA HAUORA

From Fragmentation to Coherence

Building Cross-Sector Ecosystems for Child Wellbeing.



Who is in the room?

A quick read of the perspectives shaping this conversation

From where you sit, what part of the system
do you most influence?



Choose one lens — then notice what lenses are missing.



The teenager was found guilty of Kumar's manslaughter and was jailed for six years, later reduced on appeal.



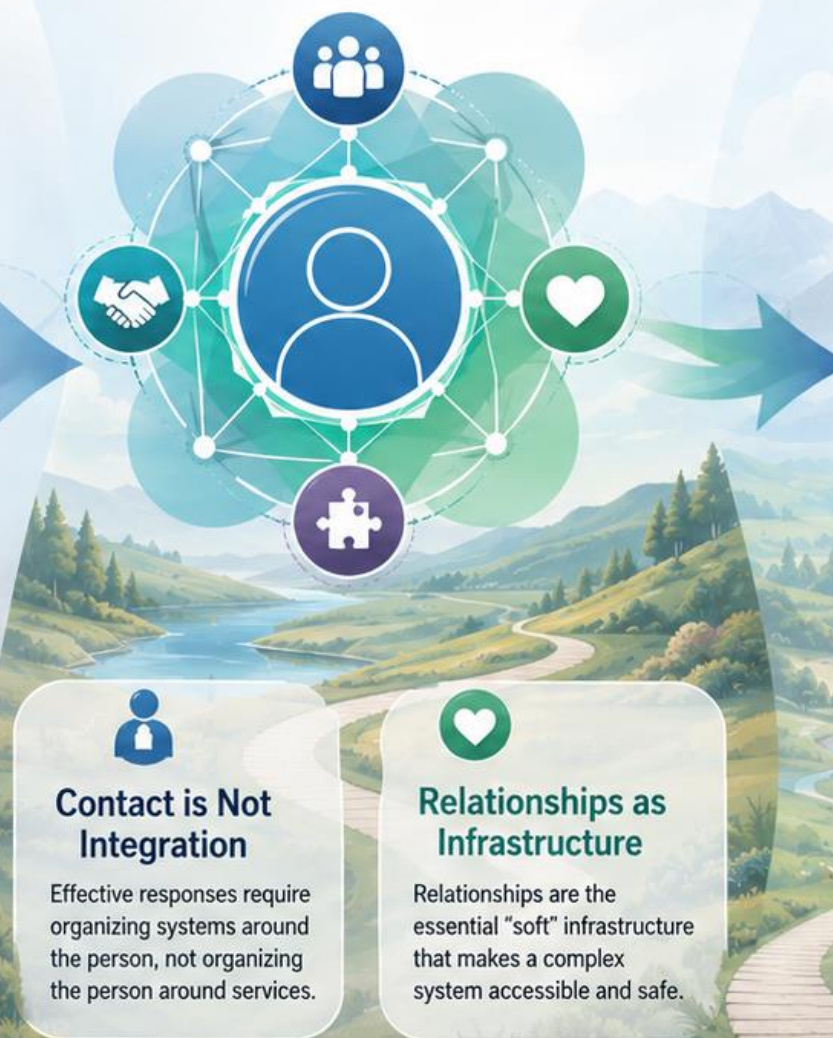
The Railside Dairy where Arun Kumar was stabbed to death in June 2014. Photo: CHRIS SKELTON / FAIRFAX NZ

JOHN SMITH'S STORY: FROM FRAGMENTATION TO COHERENCE

THE COMPLEXITY & THE FRAGMENTED WEB

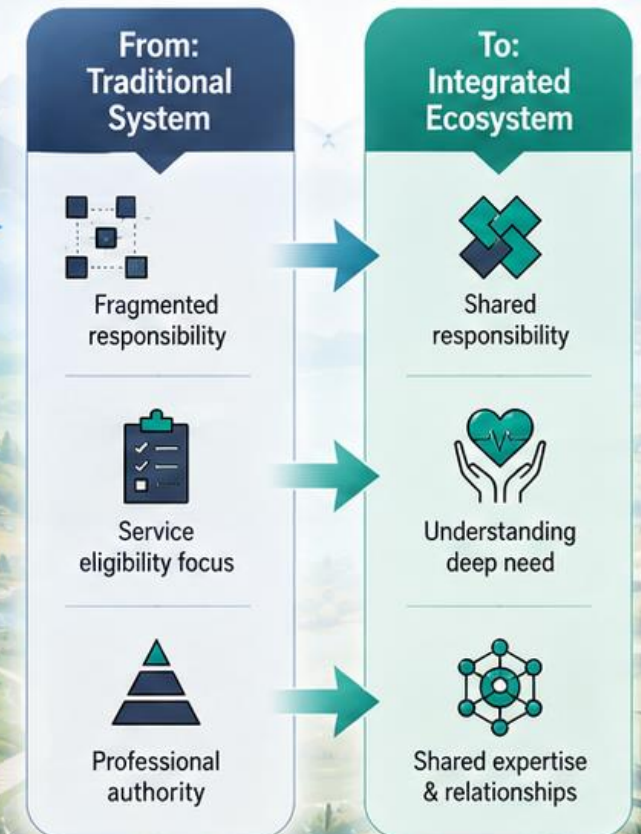


THE TURNING POINT & POLICY LESSONS



System & Relationship Synergy

A collective alignment of agencies shifted the focus from managing behavior to building trusted relational connections.



From Fragmentation to Coherence

FRAGMENTATION

Disconnected. Duplicated. Gaps.
People fall through the cracks.



From siloed systems and gaps in support
to connected people, whānau and communities

COHERENCE

Connected. Coordinated. Collective impact.
People and whānau thrive.



Working together across systems • Putting whānau at the centre • Creating a better future for all

THE INTEGRATED RESPONSE FRAMEWORK: TE AKO MANAAKI

Two Lanes of Action working together to build the right response around the person and whānau.



SYSTEMS LANE (STRUCTURAL COHERENCE)

Aligns governance, shared data infrastructure, and cross-sector mandates to reduce system fragmentation.



RELATIONAL LANE (ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT)

Mentors and support roles build trust and ensure whānau access the right help at the right time.

INTERCONNECTED PATHWAYS

Systems-level actions support relational work, while relational insights inform system improvements.

THE 9 DOMAINS PRIORITY HIERARCHY

LAYER 3: SUSTAINABILITY (LONG-TERM INDEPENDENCE)



Social, Cultural and Spiritual Connectedness



Community Engagement



Environmental Conditions

LAYER 2: FUNCTIONING (ENABLING PROGRESS)



Emotional and Mental Wellbeing



Family and Social Connections



Education or Productive Activities

LAYER 1: FOUNDATIONAL (STABILISATION)



Personal and Family Safety



Stability (Housing/financial)



Health and Wellness



Non-Negotiable Rule: Foundational Stabilisation First

Whānau in survival states cannot effectively engage in higher-level change.

Guiding Principles



Person and Whānau-Centred

What is best for the person at the centre?



Solutions-Focused

Results oriented, context responsive, shared accountability



Valuing of Relationships

High trust, respect filled relationships are a vehicle for change



Strengths-Based

Building on what works, avoiding duplication or competition



Inclusive and Collaborative

Unified, non-siloed approach involving all relevant voices and sectors



Two lanes of action, one integrated framework – systems and relationships working together across the 9 domains to achieve enduring whānau wellbeing.

STREAM ONE: SYSTEMS

Build the right response around the person



“ The question is not simply: Who can we refer this family to?
It is: Do we actually **have the right response available?** ”

What integration requires



1. Know your mandate – and your flexibility

Understand scope, boundaries and what resources can contribute to the solution.



2. Collective ownership of the response

Move from ‘that’s not our client’ to ‘what can each of us contribute?’



3. Decision-making authority at the table

Include people who can commit resources and make decisions.



4. Information that enables action

Share the information needed to understand context, risk, strengths and need.



5. Clear pathways when the system can’t respond

Escalate gaps, unlock resources, and feed learning back into commissioning and policy.

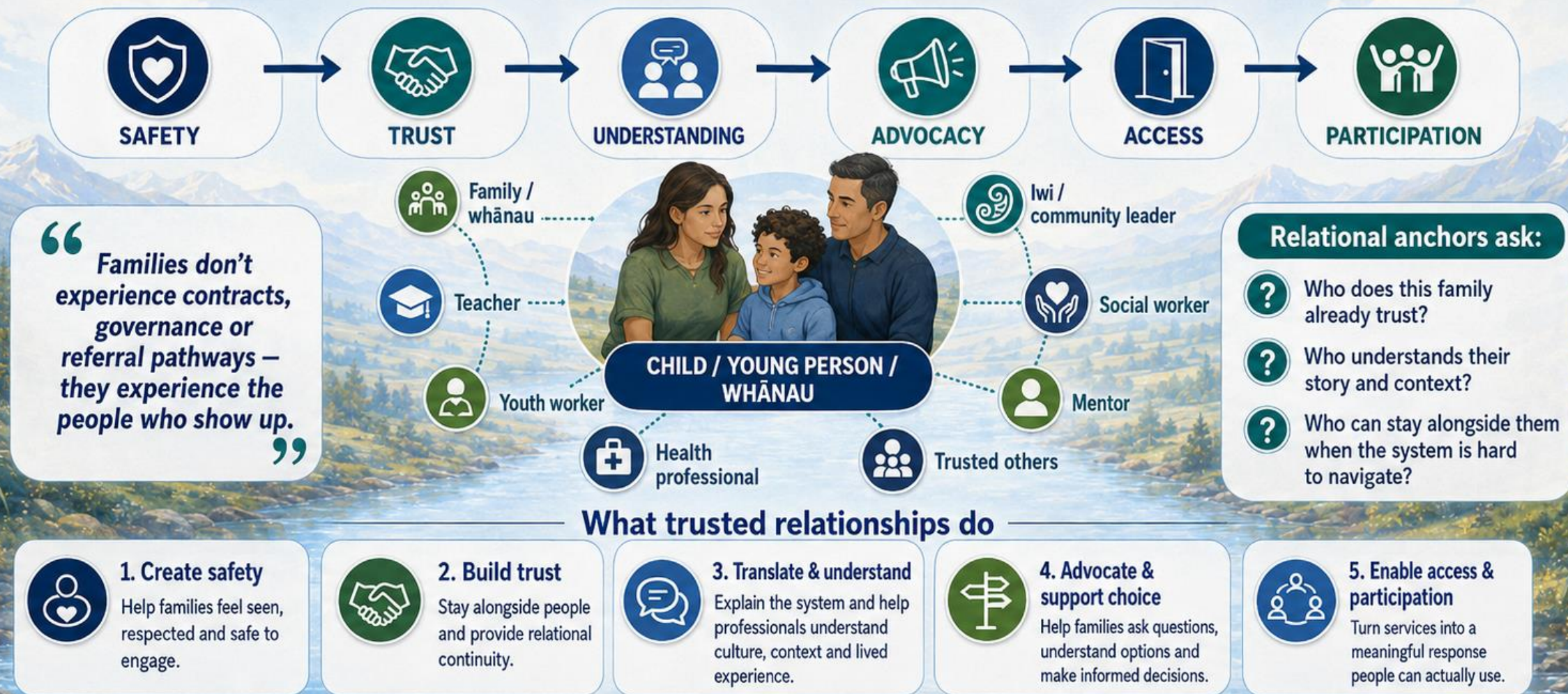


Integration is not just coordination – it is the capacity of a local ecosystem to collectively build the right response around what a child and family actually need.



STREAM TWO: RELATIONSHIPS

Make the system accessible through trusted relationships



Relational practice is not an optional soft extra — it is part of the infrastructure that makes the system accessible.

Without trust, safety, advocacy and continuity, the right services may never become a meaningful response.



WHAT CHANGES?

FROM → TO

FROM	TO	ATTENDANCE REFORM IN PRACTICE
1 Attendance as an education / compliance issue	Attendance as an early signal of wider need	Earlier identification + stepped response
2 Central prescription of the response	National direction + locally organised action	National targets + local Attendance Service Providers
3 Separate agency responsibility	Government working with the wider ecosystem	Schools + ASPs + whānau + community + other agencies
4 Late intervention	Earlier, proportionate response	Attendance plans + STAR + clear escalation
5 Activity + contract accountability	Outcome + system accountability	Case management + data + tracking + learning
6 Community as a delivery arm	Community / iwi as partners with capability + authority	Local responses shaped around relationships + local need

Government creates the enabling conditions — but remains part of the ecosystem.

POLICY QUESTIONS THIS RAISES

- 1 What must be consistent nationally — and where is local flexibility essential?
- 2 Do policy + commissioning enable collaboration — or reinforce boundaries?
- 3 Are we accountable for agency activity — or outcomes for children + whānau?
- 4 How does local evidence feed back into policy, commissioning + investment?

INVESTMENT

Use what we have better — then invest where it matters



1. Make existing investment work harder

Align existing funding, capability and relationships around shared outcomes.



2. Reduce waste through integration

Better referrals •
less duplication •
fewer failed hand-offs •
faster access



3. Identify genuine gaps precisely

Use evidence to distinguish poor coordination from real capacity or service gaps.



EXISTING INVESTMENT

What we already fund and what exists



BETTER COORDINATION

Connect capability and relationships



CLEARER EVIDENCE

Understand what works and where gaps remain



TARGETED NEW INVESTMENT

Invest where it will make the biggest difference

ATTENDANCE REFORM — WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE



\$140 million over 4 years

\$123m frontline delivery & contracting models
\$17m enhanced support



83

specialist Attendance Service Providers
plus targeted funding for 170 high-need schools



New approach

Mandatory school attendance plans
+ Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)



Up to 3% flexible funding

to address immediate barriers (e.g. transport, uniforms, stationery, devices)



Centralised data & case management

Real-time tracking, accountability and longer engagement enabled

EARLY OUTCOMES (TERM 1, 2026)

68.8%

↑ 2.9pp
regular attendance (>90% of term)

3.5%

↓ from 4.0%
unjustified absence rate

11,579

non-enrolled student case closures
Highest recorded since 2016



Changed targets and measures • Multi-agency forums and shared planning • Longer engagement with whānau • Better data to inform future action

FLEXIBILITY + ACCOUNTABILITY

Stronger systems. Smarter investment. Better outcomes for children and whānau.

STRONG SYSTEMS + INFRASTRUCTURE



Clearer expectations

Mandatory school attendance plans + consistent standards



Stepped response

Early intervention, proportionate support, clear escalation



Specialist provision

83 Attendance Service Providers with targeted funding



Case management + data

Centralised systems, real-time tracking and longer engagement

“ Flexibility works when it sits alongside strong accountability. ”

FLEXIBILITY WITHIN CLEAR BOUNDARIES



Contracts allow up to **3%** flexible funding to address immediate barriers (e.g. transport, uniforms, stationery, devices) and enable locally-driven solutions within scope.

NATIONAL DIRECTION + ENABLING CONDITIONS
Policy • Investment • Standards • Data • Safeguards • Accountability



EARLY OUTCOMES (ATTENDANCE REFORM)



68.8%

regular attendance
(>90% of term)

↑ **2.9pp**
from previous
year



3.5%

unjustified absence
rate

↓ **from 4.0%**
previous year



11,579

non-enrolled student
cace closures

Highest recorded
since 2016

• Ministry of Education data – Term 1, 2026

THE QUESTIONS WE MUST KEEP ASKING



Did activity increase?



Did life actually change for children?



Did the local ecosystem become more capable?



Where are the recurring barriers?



What does the evidence tell us government
needs to change next?



Government creates enabling conditions. The Integrated Response Framework provides the practice 'how'. Together we achieve better outcomes for children and whānau.



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Attendance Service Reform: A Whole-System Approach to Attendance, Engagement and Educational Participation

Presenter: Scott Samson



**New Zealand
Government**
Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa

Attendance Service Reform

- New Zealand's Attendance Service Reform, backed by a \$140 million investment over four years from [Budget 2025](#), overhauls how chronic absence and non-enrolment are managed.
- Operational in 2026, the reform replaces old contracts with 83 specialized Attendance Service Providers, mandates school attendance plans, and aims to reach twice as many chronically absent students.

Core Funding and Targets

- **Budget Breakdown:** \$123 million dedicated to frontline delivery and new contract models, plus \$17 million for enhanced support.
- **National Government Goal:** Ensure 80% of students attend school more than 90% of the time by 2030.
- **Attendance Service Capacity Reach:** Designed to support up to 45,000 chronically absent and 20,000 non-enrolled students annually.

Key Changes in the New Model

- **New Contracts:** All legacy providers were replaced by 83 Attendance Service Providers (ASPs) alongside targeted in-school funding for 170 high-need schools.
- **Mandatory School Plans:** Since Term 1 2026, all schools and kura must maintain formal attendance management plans aligned with the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework.
- **Basic Needs Support:** Providers can use up to 3% of contract funding to resolve direct material barriers to attendance, such as uniforms, transport, stationery, and devices.
- **Data and Case Management:** Implementation of a centralized case-management system allows real-time evidence to support student tracking, accountability, trend analysis to inform decision-making.

Attendance Reform Outcomes

- Attendance Service Reform - has driven regular school attendance to a decade high. By Term 1 2026, regular attendance reached 68.8% (up 2.9% points from 2025), with frontline providers closing a record 11,579 non-enrolled student cases and unjustified absences dropping to 3.5%.

Improved Attendance Rates & Metrics

- **Higher Regular Attendance:** Term 1 2026 regular attendance (>90% of term) hit 68.8%, marking a steady upward trajectory from previous post-pandemic years.
- **Lower Unjustified Absences:** Unjustified absence rates dropped to 3.5% in Term 1 2026, down from 4.0% the previous year.
- **Regional Highs:** Parts of Auckland and Otago/Southland led the country with regular attendance rates exceeding 72% to 75%.

Frontline Service Delivery & Case Management Outcomes

- **Record Case Closures:** The Ministry of Education reported closing 11,579 non-enrolled student (NEN) cases in early 2026 - the highest number recorded since tracking began in 2016.

- **Accountability Frameworks:** The rollout of mandatory school-level Attendance Management Plans and the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework ensured clearer data tracking and earlier interventions at 5, 10, and 15 days of absence.



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga
kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

We shape an education system that delivers
equitable and excellent outcomes.



**New Zealand
Government**
Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa



If integration depends on the conditions surrounding frontline practice, what does government need to do differently?



TE RAU ALLEN

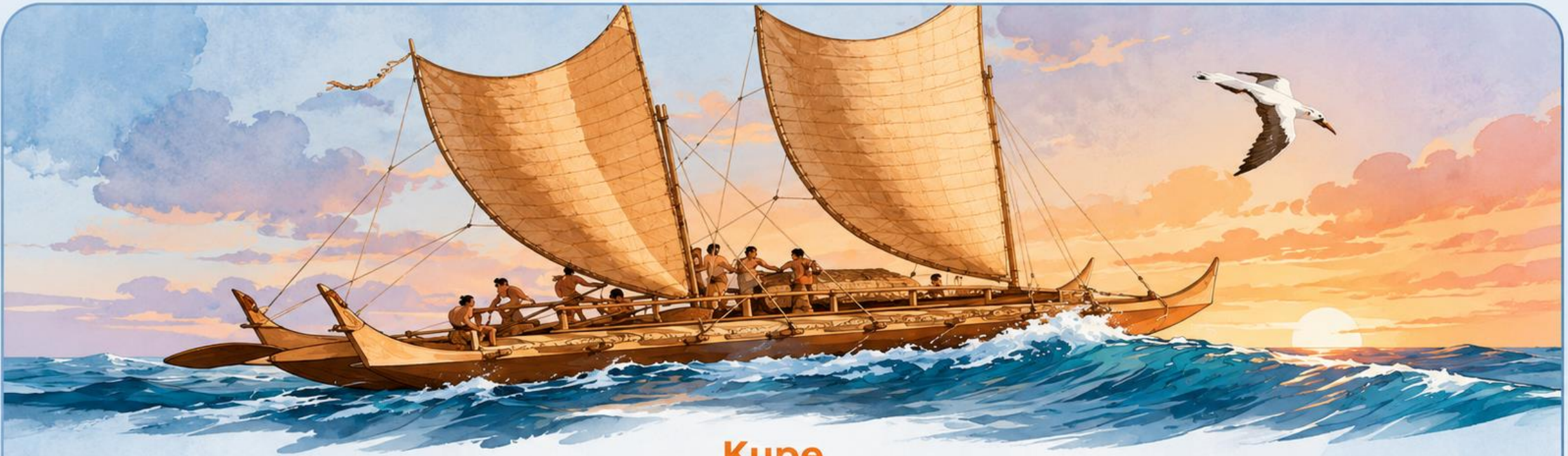
An integrated local ecosystem response

FASD Challenge
Te Ako Manaaki / IRF in practice



**From designing services for
communities
to building responses with communities.**

**The intervention is the capability of the
local ecosystem to work coherently around
rangatahi and whānau.**



**Kupe
Rāpaikura
Nukutāwhiti
Kareāriki
Tauraihrea
Tū
Tauramoko
Ahuaitei = Rahiri = Whakaruru**

People are not isolated service users – they come with histories, relationships, strengths and responsibilities.

The outcome gap is a system gap — and a relationship gap

FASD-affected whānau need the existing system to work coherently around them.



“When no one holds the thread, whānau carry the navigation burden.”

1



Fragmented landscape

Different criteria, waitlists and boundaries.

2



No thread holder

Complexity sits with whānau.

3



Uneven capability

FASD knowledge and confidence vary across the ecosystem.



Not another layer



A coordinating function

We did not start with a contract question

The design shift was from organisational ownership to community need, community assets and collective responsibility.

Old starting question



Who has the FASD contract?

Instead,
we asked...

Locality design questions

1



What is actually happening for these rangatahi and whānau?

2



What already exists locally?

3



What is missing?

4



How can we collectively build the response?



Build from what is already strong — and bring in what is missing.



Community need

Start with what matters most to rangatahi and whānau.



Community assets

Build on what already exists in our communities.



Collective responsibility

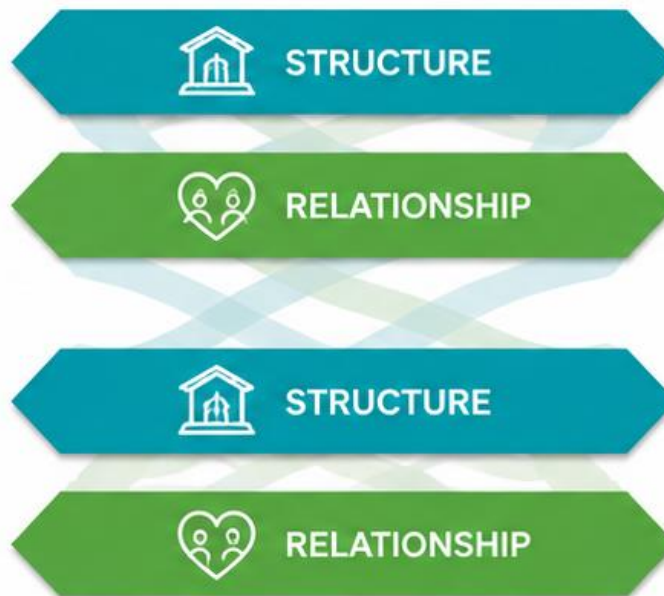
Share ownership across sectors and communities.



A subtle shift in the starting question changes the whole design approach.

Two streams, one operating model

Architecture creates the conditions for relational practice; relationships make the architecture usable



Neither works without the other.
Kaupapa is not decoration — it is operational.



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SYSTEMS LANE (STRUCTURAL COHERENCE)

Aligns governance, shared data infrastructure, and cross-sector mandates to reduce system fragmentation.



What is best for the person at the centre?

Results oriented, context responsive, shared accountability.



High trust, respect filled relationships are a vehicle for change.

Relationships create access, translate the system and advocate for whānau.



Building on what works, avoiding duplication or competition.

Positively focused, efficient use of resources.



Unified, non-siloed approach involving all relevant voices and sectors.

Collective alignment for coordinated impact.



RELATIONAL LANE (ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT)

Mentors and support roles build trust and ensure whānau access the right help at the right time.



THE 9 DOMAINS PRIORITY HIERARCHY



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What is best for the person at the centre?



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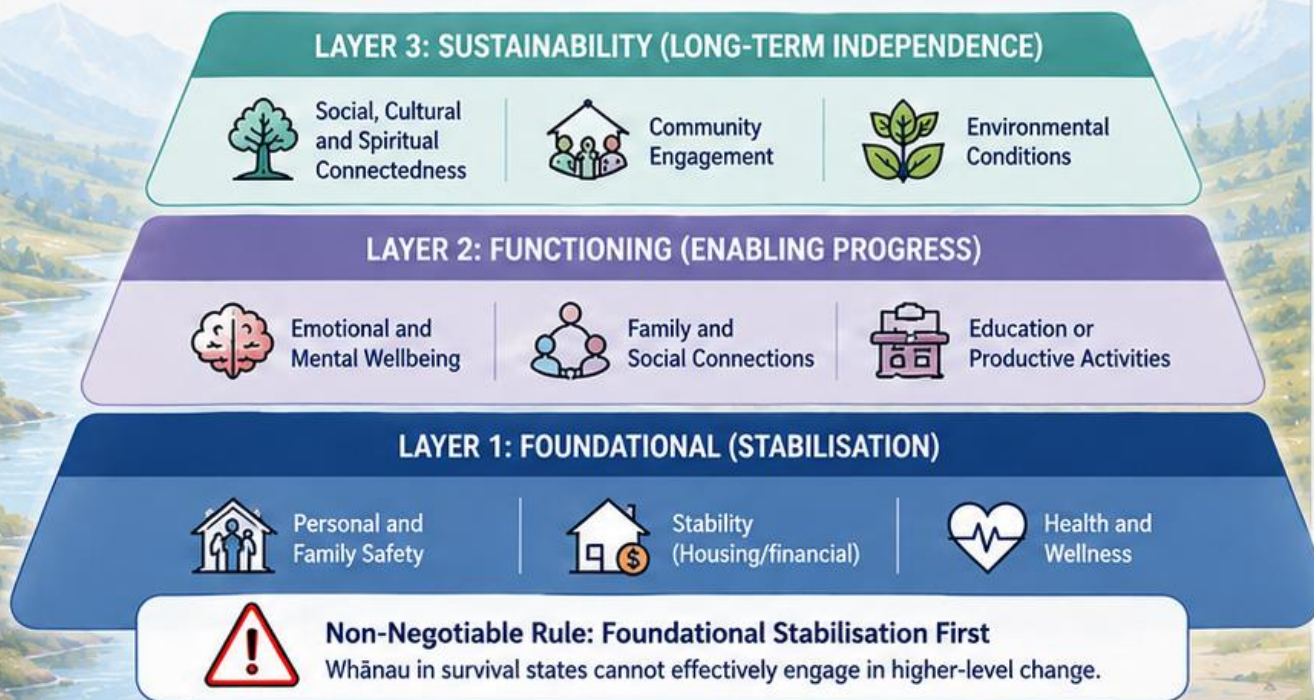
Strengths-Based

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Inclusive and Collaborative

Unified, non-siloed approach involving all relevant voices and sectors



Two lanes of action, one integrated framework – systems and relationships working together across the 9 domains to achieve enduring whānau wellbeing.

Kaiārahi and the Hub hold the thread

Making existing services accessible, coherent and accountable to whānau



Not another clinician, caseworker or standalone programme

The role helps the ecosystem do what it already has
the capability and responsibility to do.



Build an operating rhythm — then measure whether it works

A practical cycle: foundations, testing, learning and refinement

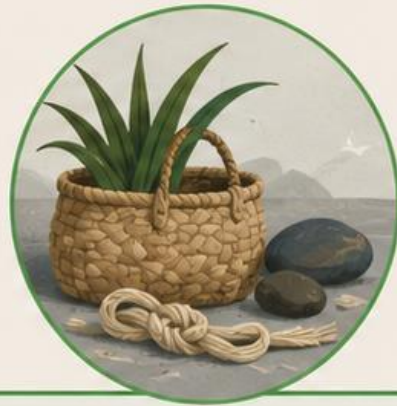


**The test: Did the ecosystem become easier to navigate?
Did whānau experience and outcomes improve?
What is the system learning?**

From services for communities to responses with communities



Use what is
already present



Bring in what
is missing



Create conditions for
the whole ecosystem
to respond



Integrated ecosystem capability is the intervention.

Kia ora.



What would it take to work as one ecosystem?

Government • Community • Indigenous communities



WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

- Siloed contracts
- Uneven power
- Short funding cycles
- Information barriers
- Lack of trust

WHAT SUPPORTS IT?

- + Shared purpose
- + Local authority
- + Cultural authority
- + Flexible resources
- + Shared accountability



At your table: identify one barrier and one enabling condition.

From Architecture to Implementation

Building the conditions around frontline practice

1

1. Understand the ecosystem

Map strengths, relationships, services, gaps and early indicators.



Readiness Assessment

2

2. Establish shared governance

Agree outcomes, stewardship, accountability and escalation.

3

3. Build coordination capacity

Connect strategy, partners, information and implementation.

4

4. Organise the response around people

Bring the right people together and clarify actions and responsibility.



Integrated Response Framework Manual

5

5. Measure and learn

Track child, whānau and system outcomes — not just activity.



Evaluation Architecture

6

6. Adapt and reinvest

Use evidence to improve, scale, redirect or invest where genuine gaps remain.



Integration requires more than good frontline practice — it requires the right ecosystem conditions around it.



What would it take to make this possible in your place?

Implementation • ecosystem conditions • local capability



WHAT WOULD SUPPORT IT?

-  Shared purpose + mandate
-  Trusted relationships
-  Flexible resources
-  Local + cultural authority



WHAT COULD GET IN THE WAY?

-  Siloed funding or contracts
-  Information barriers
-  Capacity gaps
-  Unclear accountability



WHAT WOULD YOU NEED?

-  Evidence + data
-  Implementation support
-  Capability-building tools
-  Governance or commissioning advice



At your table: identify one enabling condition, one barrier, and one form of support your place would need.

For more information



Visit



teakomanaaki.com



northable.org.nz

Kia ora.

