

Tena Koutou

Kei te mihi ki te mana whenua o tēnei rohe

Ko Ngai Tahu te iwi

Nō Waikouati ōku tūpuna

I tipu ake ahau ki Brisbane

Kei te noho ahau ki Tawa

Ko Ashby tōku whanau

Ko Amanda tōku ingoa

He kaimahi ahau ki Volunteer Wellington

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

Hi everyone, I'm Amanda Ashby. I acknowledged the mana whenua of the area.

My ancestors are Ngai tahu and come from Waikouati. I however grew up in

Brisbane but now live in Tawa and work at Volunteer Wellington.

I would like to thank Your Excellency for hosting us at Government House and recognising the members of Community Networks Wellington and the people we serve.

I would also like to thank the Mayor Tory Whanau for joining us and supporting the community sector.

And thank you Diana and Debbie for er...requesting...suggesting...I say a few words.

My role at Volunteer Wellington isn't just to help our members to get amazing volunteers but it's also to support the Volunteer Managers, who often didn't even know that was a job title until they accidentally found themselves managing 30 people in order to do their mahi and deliver their services. Surprise!

And while it's wonderful what our community achieves and that gaps that it fills, this often happens with limited resources, even more limited time, and perhaps a computer system from last century.

So I'd like to acknowledge how challenging it can be to keep going. Which makes today's event so important, along with the Community Networks Wellington's monthly meetings and the numerous hui you all host and attend. Because these things join us all together and kept us connected, letting us share ideas, resources and support.

They also let us share stories. And here's the thing about stories. We are always told to use them in our messaging, our funding and reporting. But often we can't fully tell those stories because we don't get to see the impact of them.

What might have started as a mentoring session for a disengaged tamaiti could improve school attendance and learning. They might become a role model for peers or sibling. It might classroom management easier for that teacher. It meant mean whanau takes less time off work, which might lead to more stable income and better housing and food security. That ripple can continue in so many ways into the community and the future.

The truth is that we might never fully know the amazing reach you all create with the programmes you run...and all the organisations that you volunteer for. But I like to think that it's vast and wide and the fact we can't measure it might be a good thing since we can't measure aroha either, which is the place where the mahi always begins.

So, thank you all for doing what you do, and for continuing to create ripples in our community.