

# Huakina te tatau o te whare – Opening up the doors to the house

When every other learning experience has failed them, **Kiwi Can Do**. The success of a wrap-around training programme transitioning Māori youth into employment. Ten interwoven strategies contribute to the success of this “wrap-around training package” for Māori youth.

## Living our values

We are about respect, optimism, belief, and ‘No shit’ We don’t take it, and we don’t give it. We say to trainees - We’re good at solving problems. Tell us what’s troubling you. I bet we can fix it

## A public-private partnership

The programme is fees-free for the trainees, supported by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Government support has been crucial to the success of the programme, and over the years the relationship has strengthened, with MSD staff visiting several times a year, and working closely with Kiwi Can Do leaders to problem-solve and strategise for the future.

## Life skills – as well as work skills

In addition to upgrading driving licences, and learning a little about workplace regulations and legislation such as health and safety, there is a strong emphasis on self-management and interpersonal skills, workplace etiquette, courtesy and communication.

## Relationships – friends, whānau, family

The shared living and training environment builds camaraderie, and trainees support one another dealing with the challenges of being away from home, many for the first time, and a culture of personal responsibility and accountability.

## The ‘Dad’s Army’ tutor model

The Kiwi Can Do tutors are all retired tradespeople, they have spent their working life on the worksite, many have run their own businesses, and they know the job, the people, and the industry. They are employed for their experience and skill sets, and their readiness to provide patient guidance and support.

## Removing barriers

These can be both internal (such as a negative schooling experience with poor attendance and outcomes, low levels of literacy and numeracy, and low self-esteem), and external (such as issues with accommodation and transport). The residential programme means a lot of these barriers are immediately removed – there is also support for literacy and numeracy, completion of a Site Safe Construction Certificate, an upgrade of their driving licences – from learner, to restricted, to a full licence, and funding for protective gear and equipment, and the cost of relocating to wherever their new job is.

## The lodge

Otimai Lodge, for many decades the home of the NZ Girl Guides Association is a unique place, with an historical significance as a haven and a place of community to generations of Aucklanders. The lodge with its large, communal meeting and dining rooms, catering kitchen and accommodation wings – both bunkrooms and bedrooms – has been an ideal training site for the programme - all trainees interviewed loved their time here.

## Mentoring

Mentoring supports the development of personal and vocational skills, as well as growing confidence, purpose, and self-belief. Every member of the staff contributes – 24/7.

## Cultural identity

The whole concept is based around marae-style living: helping in the kitchen, having ‘boilups’ on the menu; karakia before meals, eating together in a large whare kai, communal living, rules about what comes into the lodge and what is left behind, and formal welcoming of visitors with a powhiri – korero, karakia, waiata.

## A focus on outcomes

Kiwi Can Do is a successful programme, recognised at ministerial level as achieving strong and consistent outcomes in transitioning youth from unemployment to work, via vocational training. Over the past five years, strong employment outcomes for graduates of around 67% have been consistently achieved.

You have changed our lives and I’m forever grateful to meet you’s all”

“We’re more building confidence than training people”

“Arrive as a group of strangers, leave with friends for life”

“We call them ‘Dad’s Army’, older men are role models”

“It’s a nurturing role. It’s an age-old model, like a dad showing his son”

“A values-based social enterprise, demonstrated every day by everyone”

