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North Island Report

Prepared By :



Executive Summary



White Ribbon Ride 2025 – North Island

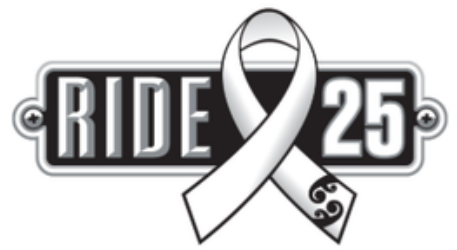
The White Ribbon Ride 2025 was a seven-day, multi-region primary prevention initiative that engaged tamariki, rangatahi, whānau, community organisations, iwi, schools, and local leadership across the lower and central North Island. Through visible presence, relational engagement, and kaupapa-based kōrero, the Ride promoted respect, accountability, and non-violence towards women and girls.

Across kura kaupapa Māori, primary, intermediate, and secondary schools, the Ride reached thousands of students directly, with additional reach through whānau, teachers, service providers, police, and community members attending public and community events. Engagement occurred in urban, provincial, and rural communities, many of which continue to experience disproportionate rates of family violence, underscoring the importance of early, values-based prevention.

The Ride's approach was intentionally relational rather than performative. Riders engaged in small-group classroom rotations, assemblies, pōwhiri, whakawhanaungatanga, and informal kōrero, creating safe spaces for curiosity, vulnerability, and disclosure. In several instances, students and community members raised personal concerns or experiences, enabling timely connection to local support services.

A strong kaupapa Māori foundation underpinned the Ride, particularly within marae and kura kaupapa Māori settings. Tikanga, waiata, haka, pūrākau, and memorial practices supported collective healing and reinforced cultural protective factors. These moments affirmed that prevention is not only about behaviour change, but about restoring connection, identity, and mana.

Community and leadership endorsement was evident throughout the journey. Local mayors, councillors, Members of Parliament, school leaders, Heartlands services, and community advocates publicly acknowledged both the urgency of the issue and the value of the Ride. Rider reflections further reinforced the intergenerational intent of the kaupapa — men speaking directly to boys as future men, modelling responsibility and care.



The White Ribbon Ride 2025 demonstrated that effective violence prevention is visible, relational, locally grounded, and culturally anchored. It did not seek to replace existing services, but to strengthen awareness, connection, and collective responsibility within communities. The Ride functioned as a catalyst — planting seeds, amplifying local leadership, and reinforcing the shared work required to prevent violence against women and girls.

About Us



The Te Ahi Kikoha monkier, "The Sharpened Flame," brings Māori knowledge and experience to our love of biking and violence prevention. We offer powerful White Ribbon kaupapa messaging because we understand whanau harm challenges.

Our Values

Te Ahi Kikoha are a group of Maori health professionals who formed to co-lead the 2011 White Ribbon Ride.

Hailing from communities across Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island), this group brings a wealth of experience in working to promote a violence-free Aotearoa New Zealand.

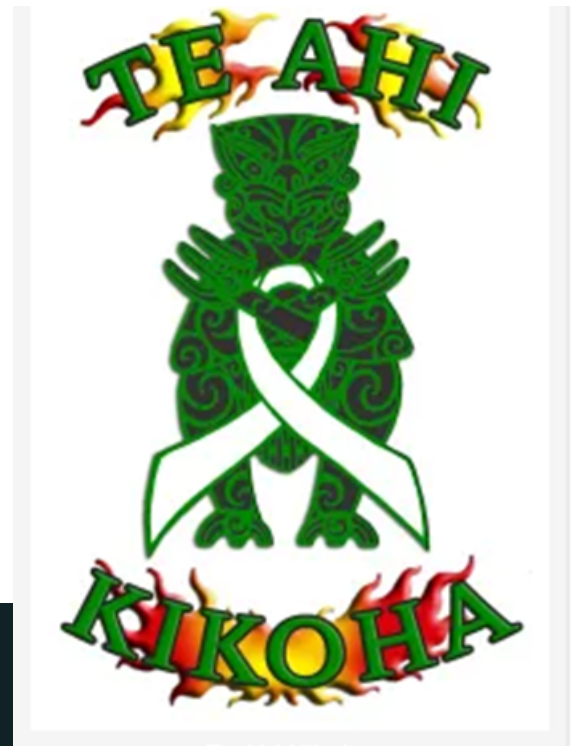
Te Ahi Kikoha means 'The Sharpened Flame'. The whakatauki that supports this is: Taku ahi tūtata, taku mata Kikoha. The literal translation is: When my fire is close the point of my weapon is sharp.

This is a metaphor for when a cause (fire) is close to one's heart and interest then the commitment, passion (point) is always greater.

The message is in the fire and Te Ahi Kikoha are the carriers and messengers, taking the fire and igniting communities for the cause across the motu (country),

Riding under the Te Ahi Kikoha moniker "The Sharpened Flame", this roopu brings a wealth of Maori knowledge and expertise and combines their passion to end violence with their love of bikes. With a deep understanding of the issues facing Maori communities, these men and women will deliver awesome messages to support the White Ribbon kaupapa.

Riding is with the elements, the cause moves the soul, and unity inspires a nation



#boyswillbeboys
#flipthescript
#whiteribbonwhanau
#whiteribbonriders
#takethepledge

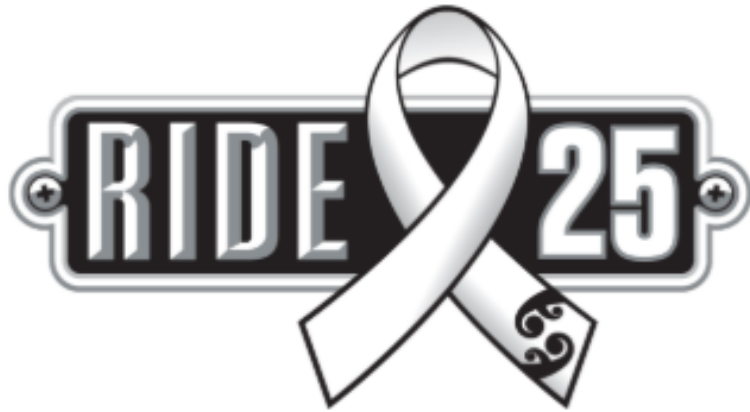
Our Riders

Our riders come from many walks of life, all have lived experience with whanau harm and understand the ongoing challenges and effects it has on whanau when things don't change, and also the positive impacts when they do. Our Tane who have 'Flipped the Script' for themselves, are ready and willing to talk to other Tane, tamariki and communities about eliminating violence towards Wahine and their commitment to change.

Our Wahine riders and supporters are there to enable the practical demonstration of what healthy respectful relationships look like, and role model that. Our Wahine are our connectors, organisers, and coordinators to sustain us all on the ride including administration and report writing.

We ride with nature, the cause drives the soul and our togetherness inspires our nation.





Event Summaries



Event 1: Sun 23 Nov 2025

**Ross Intermediate School
(Community Event)**

Location: Palmerston North

Approx. audience: 200+ community members

Facilitated by the Manawatū Abuse Intervention Network, this community event brought together a wide range of local service providers, whānau, and riders. A police escort accompanied the riders from the marae, reinforcing visibility and safety.

The event intentionally avoided formal speeches, instead prioritising connection, kōrero, and relationship-building. The informal structure created a welcoming environment where community members could engage freely with services and riders.





Event 2: Sun 23 Nov 2025

Kauwhata Marae

Location: Feilding

Approx. audience: ≈20–25

(Rangatahi, service providers, riders)

Riders shared kai with Te Manawa services and community members. Kōrero focused on rangatahi pathways, including a 12-week agricultural, land-based programme supporting recovery from methamphetamine use.

One young taurira shared his motivation to get clean in order to follow his brother's example, highlighting the power of peer influence and whānau-led change.





Event 3: Mon 24 Nov 2025

Eketāhuna Inn

Community Event

Location: Eketāhuna (Taranaki District)

Approx. audience: 130+ community members, leadership, riders



Hosted by Te Whare Ora o Eketāhuna, this community event included the Taranaki District Mayor, councillors, the local MP, community board members, and service providers. Media were present, amplifying the kaupapa. Leadership acknowledged the seriousness of family violence locally and nationally, and the importance of men taking responsibility for change. Riders engaged in kōrero with community members, reinforcing systems-based and collective approaches to prevention.



“White Ribbon riders came through Eketāhuna today and I was there to meet them with Cr Chris Corlett, Cr Keshaan Te Waaka and our local MP Mike Butterick. The riders spend a full week travelling, carrying an important message about respect, safety and standing up against violence. Our family violence statistics, both nationwide and here in the Taranaki District, are alarming. The trees covered in white ribbons each tell a story and serve as a powerful reminder of the people and families affected. The White Ribbon movement encourages men to take the lead in changing attitudes and behaviour. I’m grateful to the riders for their commitment and to all those in our district working to share the message”.

Scott Gilmore - Taranaki District Mayor





Event 4: Mon 24 Nov 2025

Wairarapa College

Location: Masterton

Approx. audience: ≈400 students, staff, riders



Engaging Year 9 and 10 students, this session centred on father-son relationships, accountability, and systemic change. Lived experience kōrero resonated strongly, prompting meaningful questions from students.

One young person sought guidance about supporting a parent subject to a protection order and was supported to connect with local services, demonstrating early intervention in practice.





Event 6: Mon 24 Nov 2025

Mākoura College

Location: Masterton

Approx. audience: ≈200 students, staff, riders



The visit was marked by strong tikanga, including pōwhiri, haka, and waiata. A very young student spoke confidently on the pae.

Kōrero focused on relationships, accountability, and the possibility of change, with students demonstrating pride, passion, and engagement.





Event 7: Mon 24 Nov 2025

Featherston School

Location: Featherston

Approx. audience: ≈100 students, staff, riders



The visit was marked by strong tikanga, including pōwhiri, haka, and waiata. A very young student spoke confidently on the pae.

Kōrero focused on relationships, accountability, and the possibility of change, with students demonstrating pride, passion, and engagement.





Event 8: Tues 25 Nov 2025

Te Ara Whānui Kura Kaupapa Māori

Location: Lower Hutt

Approx. audience: 600+ students, staff, riders

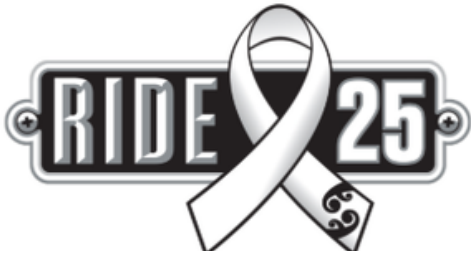


This deeply significant visit included a He Kaupapa Maumaharatanga for White Ribbon Rider Gideon Te Ahuru who sadly passed in February 2025.

A memorial pōkākā tree was gifted to the kura, creating space for collective grief and healing. Strong wairua, haka, and waiata reflected the kura's strength.

Lived experience kōrero reinforced that tikanga and kaupapa Māori continue to provide stability and protection for tamariki and whānau.





Event 9: Tues 25 Nov 2025

Naenae Primary School

Location: Lower Hutt

Approx. audience: ≈150 students, staff, riders

This inclusive school environment demonstrated strong Māori and Pasifika identity. Tamariki engaged confidently, asked questions, and took on leadership roles.

Feedback later confirmed that students took the kaupapa home, discussing White Ribbon messages with their whānau.





Event 10: Tues 25 Nov 2025

Taitā College

Location: Lower Hutt

Approx. audience: ≈150 students, staff, riders



Lived experience kōrero resonated strongly with Year 9 and 10 students, with high engagement and visible emotional response.

Students requested further engagement, highlighting demand for continued prevention work and the importance of local service connections.





Event 11: Tues 25 Nov 2025

Manakau School

Location: Horowhenua

Approx. audience: ≈120 (students, staff, parents, police, riders)



Messages challenged harmful norms and encouraged help-seeking. Tamariki engagement was strong, with the principal describing the kōrero as “a seed that can grow.”

Community members and police presence reinforced collective responsibility.





Event 12: Weds 26 Nov 2025

Foxton Heartland Service Centre

Location: Foxton (Horowhenua)

Approx. audience: 45+ community members, police, providers, riders



Survivor and victim kōrero were shared in a safe, supported environment. Testimonies highlighted both personal resilience and systemic gaps.

A white rose and hydrangea were planted with karakia, symbolising remembrance and commitment to change.





Event 13: Thurs 27 Nov 2025

Keith Street School

Location: Whanganui

Approx. audience: ≈150 students, staff, riders



Small-group classroom rotations enabled one-on-one kōrero and deeper engagement.



Tamariki asked thoughtful questions, shared values around whānau, and demonstrated strong emotional intelligence.

The school environment reflected care, curiosity, and connection.





Event 14: Thurs 27 Nov 2025

Rutherford Intermediate

Location: Whanganui

Approx. audience: ≈ 120 students, staff, riders



With a roll approximately 60% Māori, this diverse kura demonstrated strong respect and unity.

Messages aligned with the school's core values, and students engaged deeply, showing vulnerability, empathy, and maturity.

Teachers noted unusually high levels of focus and participation.





Event 15: Fri 28 Nov 2025

Te Kura o Kokohuia

Location: Whanganui

Approx. audience: ≈260 students, staff, riders

Led by tikanga and lived experience kōrero, this final school engagement emphasised choice, accountability, and the importance of education.

A short Q&A reflected student confidence and trust, providing a strong closing school visit for the Ride.





Event 16: Fri 28 Nov 2025

Hīkoi of Hope

Location: Whanganui

**Approx. audience: Variable public attendance
(community, whānau, riders)**

The Ride concluded by supporting the local Hīkoi of Hope, walking alongside the Whanganui community.

Riders intentionally took a supportive role, standing in solidarity and reinforcing that prevention is carried forward by the community itself.





Conclusion

The White Ribbon Ride 2025 reaffirmed that preventing violence against women and girls is not achieved through isolated events, but through consistent, relational, and collective action.

Across seven days, the Ride created spaces where tamariki and rangatahi engaged openly with conversations about respect, relationships, accountability, and help-seeking. Their questions, reflections, and willingness to connect demonstrated both readiness and need for early prevention approaches that are values-based and grounded in trust. Moments of disclosure and referral reinforced the importance of visible, trusted adults engaging directly with young people.

Community and marae-based engagements further highlighted that prevention is strongest when it is culturally grounded and locally led. Tikanga, whakawhanaungatanga, and lived experience allowed difficult kōrero to be shared with dignity and care. Survivor voices, community leadership, and collective remembrance underscored both the depth of harm experienced and the strength already present within communities.

Intergenerational responsibility emerged as a consistent theme throughout the Ride. Men speaking directly to boys — modelling accountability, vulnerability, and respect — was repeatedly identified as a powerful and necessary prevention approach. Rider reflections reinforced that prevention is not only about delivering messages, but about embodying them through presence, integrity, and long-term commitment.

Importantly, the White Ribbon Ride 2025 strengthened, rather than duplicated, existing community and service networks. The strong demand for future engagement reflects both the relevance of the kaupapa and the need for sustained investment in prevention initiatives that are visible, culturally anchored, and community-centred.

In closing, the White Ribbon Ride 2025 stands as a reminder that meaningful change is possible when communities are met with authenticity, respect, and care. Prevention is not a single moment, but an ongoing commitment — one that must continue to be carried collectively, across generations, and into the future.

2025 White Ribbon Ride

Summary:



590+ kilometres travelled

7 days on the road

11 schools and kura visited

8 community and public events

3 marae stays supporting tikanga-led engagement

An estimated 2,200–2,500 tamariki and rangatahi engaged directly

Several hundred community members reached

Multiple informal disclosures and referrals to local services

Strong demand for future engagement, including pre-bookings for upcoming rides





White Ribbon Message 2025

**Takurua Tawera,
White Ribbon Ride Leader**



The White Ribbon movement began in Canada in 1991, when a group of men made a commitment to never perpetrate, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. This movement emerged following the 1989 École Polytechnique tragedy, where 14 young women were murdered simply because they were women. The white ribbon has since become a global symbol of men taking responsibility to end violence against women — a visible commitment to laying down harm and choosing respect.

The campaign was introduced to Aotearoa New Zealand in 2004 by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and over time it has evolved to reflect our own communities and experiences. We have come to understand that violence is not just an individual issue — it is a societal one. All men have a role to play, whether as fathers, uncles, grandfathers, brothers, or community leaders. The way we model behaviour and values directly influences the next generation.

A key focus of our kaupapa is strengthening the relationships between men and boys. For too long, boys have been taught to suppress emotion and to “harden up.” We are working to flip that script — to show our boys that it is okay to feel, to talk, and to seek support. Emotional openness is not weakness; it is strength. When we give boys permission to express themselves, we help prevent harm before it begins.

Violence does not discriminate. It exists across all parts of society and affects people of all genders, ages, and backgrounds. Because of this, the White Ribbon movement stands alongside other initiatives and communities working toward a safer and more respectful society for everyone.

We must also recognise that male violence is often shaped by a complex interplay of societal expectations, trauma, and learned behaviours. Many boys grow up in environments where emotional expression is discouraged, and some carry unprocessed trauma into adulthood. Cultural norms that equate masculinity with dominance and control can reinforce harmful behaviours. If we are serious about prevention, we must address these root causes and support men and boys to develop emotional awareness, resilience, and healthy ways of relating to others.

Throughout the White Ribbon Ride, I am reminded that our boys are our future. When men step forward to engage with boys in honest, respectful kōrero, we help shape a generation that understands accountability, empathy, and respect. Our 2025 theme reflects this commitment:

“Bridging generations — men engaging with today’s boys.”

This work belongs to all of us, and together we can create safer futures for our whānau and communities.

White Ribbon Ride Acknowledgments

It is with huge thanks that we have support from the following organisations and community agencies providing road safety, a location for breaks, food, drink and accommodation.

Without you, our 2025 Ride and bringing the White Ribbon messaging to the people like we do would not be possible. We are forever grateful for your manaaki.

- Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga National Network of Family Violence Support Services
- Kauwhata Marae
- New Zealand Police
- Waiwhetu Marae
- Te Ao Hou Marae
- Jocelyn Smith (Ride Coordination)
- New Zealand Defence Force
- To all our supporters
- Ripene Ma Riders

In Loving Memory of
Gideon Te Ahuru





Te Ahi Kikoha will be seeking funding and resourcing to continue the White Ribbon kaupapa for 2026.

There will be a resource review and refresh particularly for use in tamariki engagement.

For any queries or to offer your support please contact:

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