

ANNUAL REVIEW

For the year ended
31 March 2025

30 YEARS
OF SERVICE
start
STUTTERING TREATMENT
AND RESEARCH TRUST

CHANGING
THE LIVES OF
PEOPLE WHO
STUTTER



Mā te huruhuru, ka rere te manu
Adorn the bird with feathers, so it may soar



For 30 years, START has worked to change the lives of people who stutter - and we're delighted to report on another year in which our dedicated team of speech-language therapists and social worker, led by Executive Director, Janelle Irvine, has continued that mission.

While individual therapy sessions remain central to our work, our groups and courses are also a vital part of our mahi - helping reduce isolation and build a sense of community among people who stutter, and those who support them. These groups create spaces where people at different stages of their stuttering journey can connect and support each other - often in diverse and creative ways.

Everyone at START remains committed to our mission. We're especially grateful to our team, who showed dedication through a difficult year - one that required a restructure to stay sustainable. Despite the challenges, their commitment to our mahi hasn't wavered. We thank our Board for their strong belief in our work, and we acknowledge all those who come to START for support - and often return to support others. That cycle of care and contribution is something we truly value.

With our online services continuing to expand, START is now truly a national organisation - something we celebrate. However, demand continues to exceed capacity, and our waitlist is longer than we'd like. Providing high-quality professional social services is costly, and as a small community organisation, we rely on the generous support of donors, businesses, trusts and foundations - all of whom recognise the value of people being able to communicate with confidence.

Looking ahead, we aim to grow our team to meet demand in a timely way. To do that, we need your continued support. Thank you for being part of START's first 30 years. With your help, we look forward to the next 30 - and to continuing to change lives.

Ngā mihi nui

Eric Allan
Board Chair

Janelle Irvine
Executive Director and Clinical Leader

OUR TEAM

We're grateful to our dedicated team of speech-language therapists - **Brittney Mackie**, **John Doleman**, and **Chris Lawson** - for the expertise and care you bring to those you work with. Thank you also to **Paolo Querubin**, who left during the year; your contribution was valued and appreciated. Thanks also to **Felix Unger**, our social worker, whose commitment to our mission is inspirational.

We also acknowledge **Morgan McGregor**, **Nikki Draper** and **Jacqui Higgins** (volunteer) who each moved on from START during the year. Thank you for being such vital and generous members of our team.

We're fortunate to have the ongoing support of **Karen Cook**, **Dianne Armstrong** and **Helena Ashcroft**. Dianne and Helena joined us this year, and we are already seeing the positive impact of their contributions.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to our Executive Director, **Janelle Irvine**, for your steady and compassionate leadership through challenging times. Your care, commitment and generosity of spirit shape everything we do.



Back: Matt, Rachael, Karen, Felix, Eric, Chris, John, Zheen & Tony. Front: Jacqui, Morgan, Brittney, Nikki, Janelle, Anita & Dean. Not present: Geoff, Paolo, Helena & Dianne.

OUR BOARD

The impact of the mahi of START is what inspires and encourages the Board and supports their deep commitment to START. We thank Tony, Anita, Geoff, Rachael, Matt, Dean, Zheen (Shadow Board Member) and Eric, our Board Chair for their generous support of START and those who stutter.

This year, we were excited to launch a much-needed upgrade of our website, making it much easier for everyone to navigate and better equipped to host our growing range of online courses. As part of the refresh, we had beautiful professional photos taken of our team and clients, some of which feature in this review - we feel they truly capture the warmth, connection, and joy at the heart of START's work.

He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka
A choppy sea can be navigated by a waka

OUR MAHI

1206

Sessions with
244 people

SOCIAL SUPPORT EVENTS

1 Come. Be. Do
session for 15 children
(aged 7 to 14 years)

**1 Confident
Communicators Group**
for 5 children (aged 7
to 10 years)

2 Play & Connect

sessions for
9 preschool
aged children
and their parents
and whānau

2 workshops
for 45 SLTs
(our online
workshops
are under
development)

67% VIA ZOOM
& 33% in person

9 MEET & EAT sessions
for 25 SLTs – advice and
guidance sessions

IN THEIR WORDS

It was nice to know I'm not alone — I've never met anyone else who stutters before. When Daniel

struggled to get his words out, I knew exactly how he felt. I didn't realise kids get teased — I haven't, and I'm lucky to have good friends. But I don't get why teasing happens... it's just a stutter. » Nayan, age 9 (May 2024)

The Play and Connect session was an excellent opportunity to meet other parents who are experiencing stuttering with similarly aged tamariki in their household. I appreciated hearing their journey, stories, and experiences. It was amazing having the kids play together and interact with the speech language therapists in an informal and relaxed setting. » Mum of 3½ year old – (April 2024)

Thank you so much for the Come. Be. Do. event, Daniel loved it, he said he had a really great time. I've found that his confidence has increased enormously since meeting other kids who stutter, it is such a great initiative. Thank you to you and all of the team for putting the effort into organising this, it really is appreciated! » Carolyn (mum of Daniel, aged 10 years, April 2024)

Being able to talk to someone at START as soon as our young son started stuttering was amazing - we were able to get great advice quickly, for something we knew nothing about and weren't sure how to handle as parents. The advice made a huge difference to how we navigated stuttering with our son and our whānau, with successful results - thanks so much! » Jennie (mum of Logan, aged 5 years)

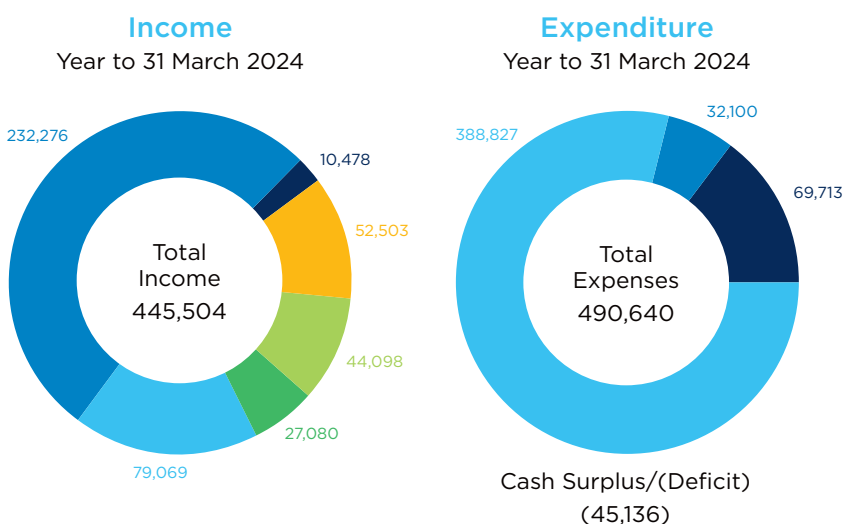
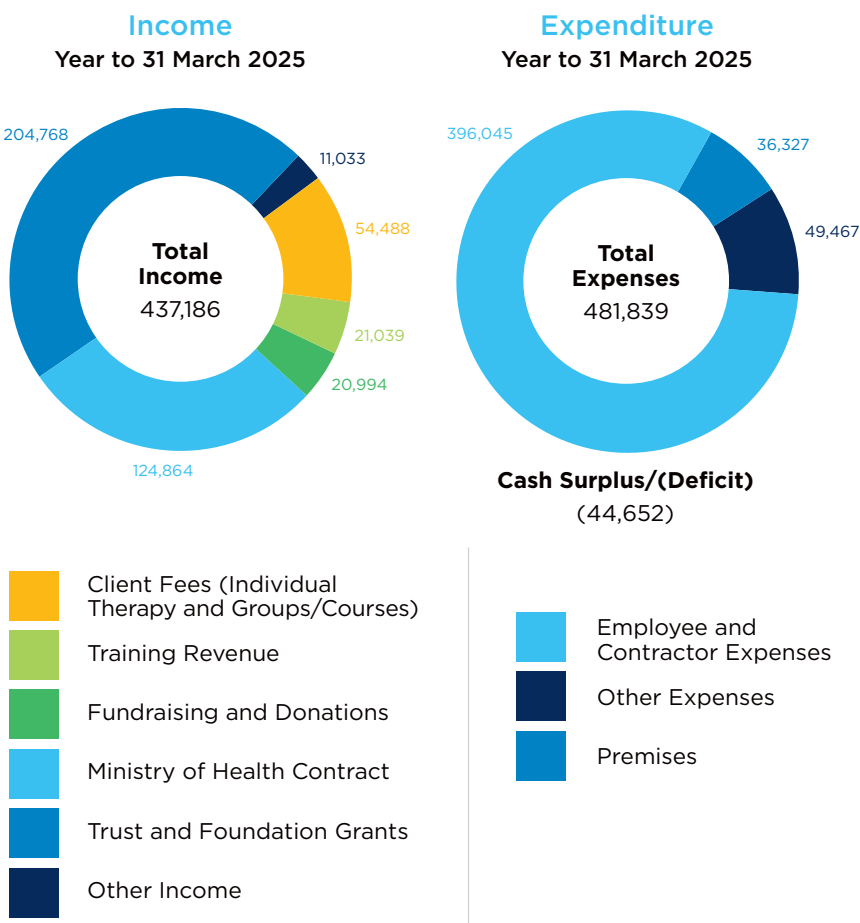
I would highly recommend attending a Meet and Eat session. It's a great way to access a really supportive session which left me feeling confident in my therapy plan going forward. I had the opportunity to present a case, ask questions and be guided into next steps. Great to know I am able to access this again in future if needed.

*» Kirsten
Mulvay, SLT -
Kapiti Coast*



Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi
With your basket, and my basket, the people will live

OUR FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS



YOUR SUPPORT IS VITAL

If you're not already supporting START, please consider the various ways you can help us to continue our life-changing mahi.

We don't want people who stutter to miss out on support – or be left waiting months for help. But with our small team stretched to capacity, at present, we simply can't respond in a timely way to everyone who needs our help.

Every donation makes a real difference, and regular monthly giving provides the stability we need to plan ahead and respond more quickly to those who need our support.

You can also make a lasting impact by leaving a gift to START in your will. It's a powerful way to change lives for generations to come - what a legacy!

OUR THANKS

Lives are changed because so many of you care about people who stutter.

We also thank all the trusts and foundations whose support makes so much of our work possible.

We thank the Lindsay Foundation, Foundation North, NZ Lottery Grants Board, Raye Blumenthal Freedman Trust, Four Winds Foundation, COGS (Auckland, Manukau, Waitakere, Rodney/North Shore, Papakura/Franklin, Kirikirioa/Hamilton, Manawatū/Horowhenua, Southland), Milestone Foundation, Pub Charity, Lion Foundation, Mt Wellington Foundation, Ara Lodge No 348 IC Charitable Trust, Dragon Community Trust, Blue Sky Community Trust, Trust Waikato, Invercargill Licencing Trust, Aotearoa Gaming Trust, Community Trust South, Rata Foundation, ANZ Staff Foundation, TECT Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty, Kiwi Gaming Foundation, Hutt Mana Charitable Trust, Remuera Lions Club, Quota – Auckland and Remuera Rotary Club (previous financial year but not acknowledged).