

Tairāwhiti Environment Centre

InternetNZ Grant: End-of-Project Report

Grant period: 20 March – 1 December 2025

Project Purpose: Coordinate and engage across networks around e-waste, resource recovery, and device refurbishment; invest in training and hours to enable ongoing device refurbishment to address e-waste and digital inequities.



John, one of the happy recipients of a refurbished all-in-one desktop computer

1. Project Overview

The project ran in three phases:

Phase 1 (March–June): Set up systems, trialled new approaches, built regional connections, and collected data.

Phase 2 (July–September): Evaluated Phase 1, celebrated achievements and shared data via social media and in-person, implemented improvements.

Phase 3 (August–December): Consolidated learnings, completed evaluation, explored next steps, and prepared the final report.

2. Staff and Volunteer Contributions

- **Staff:** ~120 hours dedicated to coordination, community engagement (volunteers and the general public) and futureproofing by scoping out collaborative efforts with training institutions and community organisations.
- **Volunteers:** More than double staff hours (~250+ hours) contributed to device refurbishment, collection, and community engagement.



Phil, our amazing in-hub volunteer supporting Katarina and Hyrum, one of the device recipients

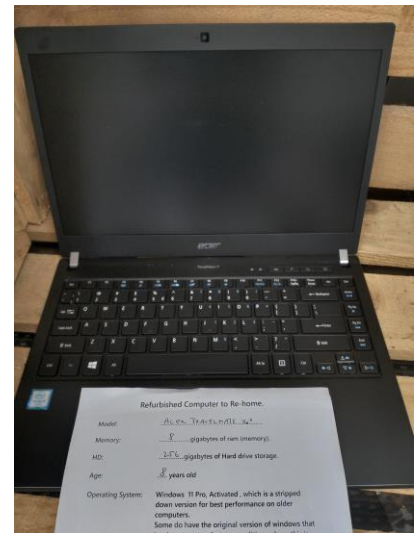
3. Devices Refurbished & E-Waste Diverted

Digital Equity Outcomes:

- 82 devices refurbished or rehomed, increasing access to technology.

Environmental Outcomes:

- Nearly 0.5 tonnes of e-waste was diverted through direct refurbishment.
- Total e-waste diverted (including peripherals, monitors, batteries, all-in-ones): ~1.2 tonnes.
- 900 additional devices housed at EIT for future refurbishment.





4. Social and Pastoral Impact

- Recipients included individuals, community groups, and kura.
- Age range: 7-year-old homeschool children to elderly community members.
- Safe spaces created by the programme allowed participants to share sensitive experiences, including domestic violence and terminal illness.
- Volunteers and staff facilitated pastoral care, fostering gratitude and social connection.

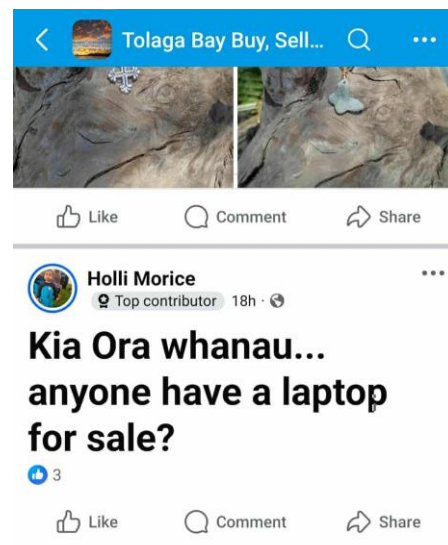


After hours text from one of the recipients, Krystal:

'Thanks so much for the laptops. They both work great. I really appreciate it.'

Follow-up text to our volunteer Phil:
'Krystal finally picked up her dvd drive laptop. The reason she hadn't picked up earlier is she's got a brain tumor and has been really sick. She also took the one for her brother. She is super happy! Beautiful outcomes right there, Phil! Thank you so much for all that you do!'

Reply from Phil: *'Thanks Steph. That's what all our efforts are about'*





5. Capacity-Building and Partnerships

New Staff Contribution:

- Leo joined our team part-time on 22 October 2025, bringing practical knowledge and design skills.
- Improved e-waste storage, labelling systems, set up a reuse space out in the shop and designed a social media tile that has been shared in reels to inform the public.



Example of the social media tile



Front-of-house E-waste REUSE station

Future Partnerships & Collaboration:

- Late November: meeting with **Javahn Apatu and Ian Allan from EIT (Eastern Institute of Technology)**, along with the TaiTech board.
- Explored the refurbishing/redistributing of 900 devices using open-source software **Zorion** (future potential social enterprise called 'SAVED')
- Follow-up collaborative meetings planned for early 2026 with the **Digital Equity Collective**.

6. Key Insights and Learnings

- Coordination multiplies impact by connecting networks and organisations.
- Volunteer and staff contributions demonstrate strong community engagement.
- Providing access to refurbished devices supports digital equity.
- Diverting over 1.2 tonnes of e-waste contributes to sustainability.
- Staff and system improvements enhance long-term capacity and scalability.

7. Conclusion

This project demonstrates that **modest funding**, combined with **dedicated staff, volunteers, and partnerships**, achieves significant **digital, social, and environmental outcomes**:

- Built a foundation for **scaling impact** in device refurbishment and e-waste reduction.
- Fostered **social connection and pastoral care** within the community.
- Strengthened **partnerships for future collaboration**.



*Willy Gray says
“thank yous all
very much for
his laptop”*

“Thank you for the support in enabling this project and the learning generated through it.”