

The Dilemma

83,000

New Zealanders living with dementia
in 2025

170,000

projected to be living with dementia
by 2050

45–80%

higher risk for Māori and Pacific
peoples



The case is clear

- Meeting future demand requires a locally recruited and qualified workforce.
- People who are known, relatable and trusted.
- These qualities are not simply desirable; they are essential to effective service delivery.



Introducing a community-based solution

By Frank and Judy Solomon



Where this model comes from

Decades of education, community connection and workforce development.



Educators

Worked across primary and secondary education.



Solomon Group

Established in Manurewa in 2000 for second-chance learners—growing to support 7,000 learners each year before being sold in 2016.



Community Teacher Aides

Employed local people through Task Force Green funding to provide learners with one-to-one support.



Earn as You Learn

Teacher Aides were paid to learn alongside experienced tutors while completing an Adult Teaching qualification.



Proven over 20 years

Staff related to, understood and engaged learners with aroha—while giving back to their own communities.



The Key Idea

Grow trusted educators from within the community—combining paid work, practical learning and formal qualifications.



*People.
Learning.
Stronger Communities.*

Realisation of Mate Wareware



Moving beyond stigma

We chose to educate ourselves and other whānau—empowering our communities to understand mate wareware, create wellbeing and support one another.



Understanding the journey

Within Te Ao Māori, mate wareware can be understood as a natural part of the journey from this world to the next. For others, fear can delay understanding and action.



A solutions-focused response

We realised that change must come from within our communities. We are not victims—we can act together, build confidence and create our own solutions.



Community Model, a Source of Supply



Community is a Workforce Resource

The model starts by recognising strengths that already exist locally.



I. Intelligent

quick to learn, and have “lived experience” skills. But for various reasons they have no/few academic qualifications.



II. Reliable

put others first, don't want to let them down.



III. Concern for others– (aroha ki te tangata).



IV. Relatable

(ngā hononga/connections) known in the community and trusted by the community.



V. Respectful of the knowledge and customs of the individual person – “Te mana o te tangata.”



VI. They live in the community which enables a “prompt response” when and if required. (manakitanga)



*Stronger Communities
Brighter Futures*



Dementia Is All About the Well-Being and Care of People



Whānau Deserve Regular, Accessible Support and Sharing



The dementia response: community-led, health-supported

People helping people — with clear roles and shared knowledge.



Community knowledge + lived experience

People who know the whānau, understand local realities, and may have already travelled the dementia journey.

Ngā Hononga Connection

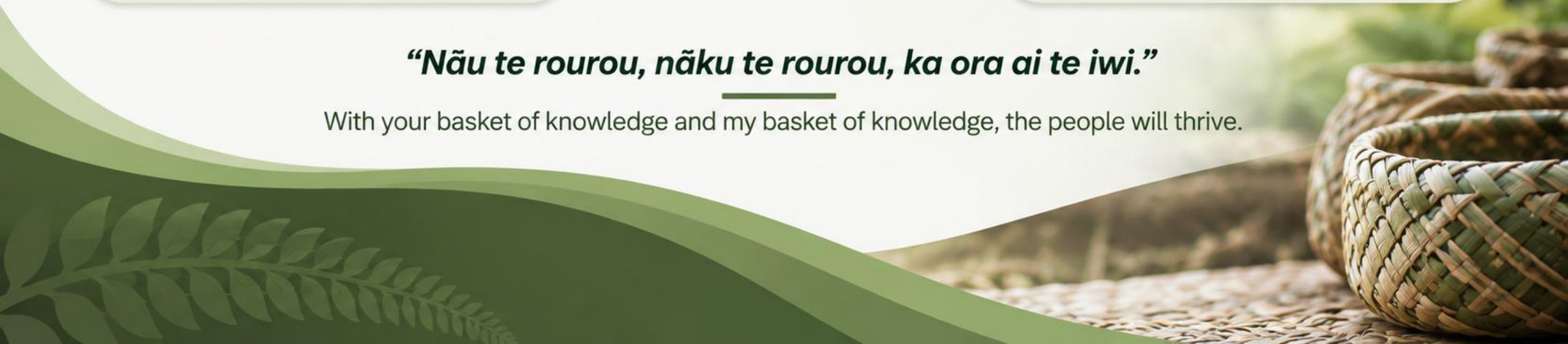


Trained health workforce + medical knowledge

Clinical expertise, professional practice, supervision and health-system knowledge.

“Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.”

With your basket of knowledge and my basket of knowledge, the people will thrive.



Creating a Community Workforce

Whānau need regular, accessible support from people who understand the journey.



Community workers complement trained staff

We see community workers as complementary to trained staff, rather than substitutes.



Upskill, qualify and be paid

There must be an opportunity for these people to upskill, complete the qualifications, be recognised, be respected, and be paid. (The Support Workers Settlements Act 2017 deliberately ties pay bands to qualification levels.) Complete the qualification and be paid more!



It's an emotional journey for everyone

We know that having dementia in the whānau is an emotional roller coaster, not just for the person with the disease, but for everyone associated with that person.



Recruit from the community and support them

Recruiting whānau from the community gets them through the door in the first place, with access to further qualifications, and keeps them there once they are through it. This is a genuine, unfilled gap in the current system and we need to address the question, “How do we find and support the right people to begin with?”



Kauawhitia a Mate Wareware

“Embrace Dementia” — community-led, health organisations supported.

Key Aspects of the Community Model

Whānau supporting whānau to create better outcomes.

*People
Whānau
Community*



*Stronger
Communities
Brighter
Futures*

Whānau at the heart
of better care.

1

Kai Awhina/Helpers



Job description could include:

- Assisting trained staff with basic tasks and activities.
- Learning from trained staff and in return, enabling trained staff to navigate community relationships, languages, needs and suggestions in order to produce successful outcomes for everyone.

2

Recognition of prior learning through “lived experience” is essential and equitable.



- Working in the sector is a requirement that should go hand in hand with the academic qualifications.
- For people who have “lived experience”, pre-requisites should be in place to acknowledge and accept prior knowledge as part of the qualification.

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Reciprocity is a strong Māori value, this is our drive.

Stronger communities build a stronger
dementia support workforce.



They give us
access to their
community and
we reciprocate.



It is our legacy
back to **our**
communities.



We offer this
model as an
opportunity
to help others.



***“Me mahi tatou
ki a tatou”***
Let's work together.

*People
Whānau
Community*



—— For more information ——



<https://teahunganui.co.nz/matewareware/>

Together we can build stronger communities
and a stronger dementia support workforce.



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