

STRAIGHT UP NZ · EVIDENCE DOSSIER 001

Kiwis For Good Foundation (CC57436)

Claim-by-claim fact check against published scientific evidence and official register data

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10 claims examined · 40+ primary sources

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Kiwis For Good Foundation: Evidence Dossier

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1. Executive summary

Kiwis For Good Foundation is a small, genuinely registered New Zealand charity (CC57436, Napier; ~NZ\$58,000 filed revenue in FY2025) whose stated mission is youth mental health and suicide prevention.^[1] This dossier examines ten claims published on its website and in its public statements, checking each against peer-reviewed research, regulator decisions and official register data.

Three findings stand out. First, the site's most emotionally prominent claim — that "useless" and "worthless" are the two most common words in suicide notes — is contradicted by every published content analysis of genuine suicide notes and appears to be rhetorical invention.^{[4][5]} Second, the charity's board now includes Mike Ferriss, the long-time public face of the Church of Scientology in New Zealand, certification officer of the Church's own registered charity, and director of CCHR New Zealand — a Scientology co-founded organisation whose official position is that psychiatry is "a pseudoscience" and that antidepressants should be banned for under-18s.^{[10][11][12]} Third, the charity formally endorses — and plans a documentary promoting — "Somatic Compassion," a proprietary trauma-touch therapy created and sold by its own chairman, Dr Robin Youngson, for which no clinical trials exist.^{[17][18]}

The verdict distribution across the ten claims: **1 false, 6 misleading or unsupported, 2 accurate, 1 unverifiable.** No evidence of fraud, deregistration or regulator action was found, and none is alleged.

2. The organisation and its board

The trust was incorporated on 14 November 2019 and registered with Charities Services on 10 December 2019, with a Hawke's Bay operating focus and a grant-making/service profile.^{[1][2]} Its flagship programme, The Hero's Journey, is a free year-long wellbeing programme for men aged 16–25 combining gym memberships, fortnightly video mentoring, group calls and "free counselling (if needed)."^[3]

TABLE 1 – KEY PEOPLE AND OUTSIDE AFFILIATIONS

Person	Role at KFG	Outside affiliation of note
Mike Ferriss	Trustee (appointed 2026)	Church of Scientology member since 1980 and long-time NZ spokesperson ^[10] ; Certification Officer, Church of Scientology of NZ Inc. (CC27252) ^[11] ; Director, CCHR NZ ^[12]
Dr Robin Youngson	Chairman (2025)	Retired anaesthetist; NZMA Chair's Award 2016; certified Havening practitioner/trainer; founder of "Somatic Compassion"; author of <i>The Science of Miracles</i> ^[17]
Tim Baker	Founder, National Director (trustee until 2023)	Announced documentary <i>One Last Story</i> on "the medications we are prescribing to children with depression," promising "it will really shock people" ^[16]
Tracy Livingston-Pooley; Karen Hart; Tukiri Awa	Treasurer; Secretary; Trustee	No public red flags identified

Why the Ferriss appointment matters — precisely. CCHR was co-founded by the Church of Scientology in 1969; its government submissions state that "psychiatry itself is a pseudoscience," seek a ban on antidepressants for under-18s and a freeze on mental-health funding.^[13] Suicide prevention is the one domain where anti-medication messaging can be lethal. For balance: CCHR NZ's Lake Alice advocacy — pressing for accountability over the abuse of children at the Lake Alice unit — was genuine, officially recognised work that contributed to a Royal Commission finding of torture and a Crown apology.^[14] The concern is structural conflict of ideology, not personal malice.

3. Financial position

Filed returns show a dormant organisation until 2023, income of NZ\$116K in FY2024, then NZ\$58K against NZ\$69K expenditure in FY2025, with total assets around NZ\$8K — roughly one month of reserves.^[15] Revenue is essentially 100% donation-dependent. The advertised "over \$10,000 in prizes" exceeds 17% of annual revenue, alongside free gym memberships, funded counselling sessions and staff costs — arithmetic donors are entitled to query.

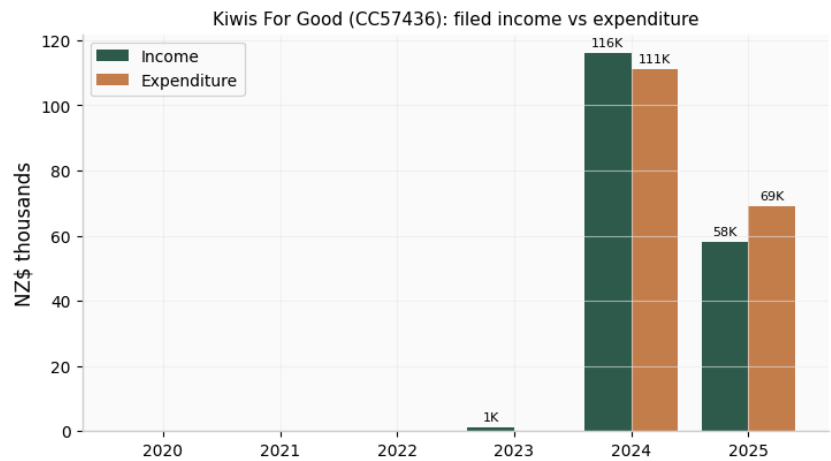


Figure 1 — Filed income vs expenditure by year ended 31 March. Source: Charities Register filings via CharitiesWatch NZ (CC57436).

CharitiesWatch also lists the charity among 244 NZ charities with an "officer register red flag" (an officer appearing on a banned/disqualified list). This is a factual register field, **not** a finding of wrongdoing; the officer is not publicly identified in the summary.^[19]

4. Claim-by-claim verdicts

CLAIM 1 · THE HERO'S JOURNEY PAGE

""Useless' and 'worthless.' Tragically, these are two of the most common words found in suicide notes."

FALSE

No published research supports this. Content analyses of genuine suicide notes — from Shneidman and Farberow's 721-note corpus onward — find the most frequent content words are references to family members and expressions of love and attachment.^[4] A 2025 KAIST/Korea Foundation for Suicide Prevention analysis found the most common nouns were "mom/mother" (3.5% of nouns) and "dad/father" (3%), with notes dominated by love, gratitude and sadness.^[5] An AI-aided 2025 study found the top terms were "dad" (155 occurrences), "mom" (118) and "hope" (89).^[6] The claim also ignores that only a minority of suicides leave any note. **Function:** the invented "fact" reframes suicide as deficient self-worth — the precise problem the programme markets itself as fixing.

CLAIM 2 · STORIES PAGE

"617 lives were lost to suicide" (2023–24); NZ has "one of the highest youth suicide rates in the OECD."

ACCURATE, WITH OMISSIONS

The 617 figure matches the Chief Coroner's provisional count for the year to 30 June 2024 (rate 11.2 per 100,000).^[7] NZ's teen suicide rate is currently second-highest in the OECD after a long run at first.^[8] Omitted context: the 2023/24 rate was 3.6% below the 15-year average, per the Chief Coroner, and 2024/25 came in at 630 deaths, 3.1% below the 16-year average.^[9] The statistics are real; the alarm framing is selected.

CLAIM 3 · THE HERO'S JOURNEY PAGE

"This programme is built on the science of fulfilment: physical strength, mental resilience, supportive community, and a sense of purpose. When those four pillars align, change becomes unstoppable."

PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC

No recognised research field called "the science of fulfilment" exists, and no published "four pillars" model. The phrasing borrows the silhouette of self-determination theory and PERMA without their definitions or evidence; "physical strength" appears in neither. "Change becomes unstoppable" names no outcome, mechanism, comparison or timeframe — it is unfalsifiable marketing presented as science.

CLAIM 4 · THE HERO'S JOURNEY PAGE

Free gym membership will "build a stronger body and mind."

PARTLY SUPPORTED

The BMJ 2024 network meta-analysis of 218 randomised trials (14,170 participants) found walking, jogging, yoga and strength training significantly reduce depressive symptoms, with moderate effect sizes comparable in some analyses to psychotherapy or medication.^[20] Caveats: the trials are overwhelmingly in adults with diagnosed depression; exercise complements rather than replaces treatment; a membership addresses access, not adherence; and no trial has demonstrated that gym access reduces suicidal behaviour.

CLAIM 5 · THE HERO'S JOURNEY PAGE

One-on-one mentoring will "build real confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose."

EVIDENCE MUCH WEAKER THAN IMPLIED

Mentoring works — modestly. DuBois et al. (73 evaluations) and Raposa et al. 2019 (70 studies; 25,286 youth) both found overall effects of $d \approx 0.21$, with smaller effects on emotional outcomes ($d \approx 0.15$).^{[21][22]} For youth with existing mental-health problems — this programme's explicit recruits — reviews find "minimal support" for effectiveness.^[23] Effects depend on ongoing mentor training, structured activities, monitoring and long match duration, none of which the site documents. No mentoring trial has demonstrated suicide-prevention effects.

CLAIM 6 · THE HERO'S JOURNEY PAGE

Every participant is supported by a "qualified Program Facilitator... trained in youth wellbeing," collaborating with "counsellors, nutritionists, and trauma-informed professionals."

UNVERIFIABLE

No qualifications, registration bodies, training curricula, supervision arrangements or safeguarding policy are published anywhere on the site. Facilitators are tasked with identifying when participants need "trauma management" — quasi-clinical triage of at-risk 16–25-year-olds by persons of unstated training, under a board including a CCHR director and a Havening trainer.

CLAIM 7 · FREE COUNSELLING PAGE (2023–24)

BetterHelp counsellors are "all licensed, trained, experienced, and accredited psychologists (PhD/PsyD), LMFTs, LCSWs or LPCs... at least 3 years and 1,000 hours of hands-on experience."

MISLEADING

The text is copied nearly verbatim from BetterHelp's own FAQ, presented as independent assurance.^[24] It overstates the modal credential — most BetterHelp therapists are master's-level counsellors and social workers. In March 2023 the platform entered a US\$7.8 million FTC settlement with a 20-year consent order for sharing users' mental-health intake data, emails and IP addresses with Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest and Criteo (2017–2020) while displaying deceptive "HIPAA certified" seals.^{[25][26]} Therapists are licensed in US states; a distressed NZ teenager has no NZ registration, complaint pathway or privacy-law relationship.^[27]

CLAIM 8 · CHARITY ENDORSEMENT OF CHAIRMAN'S METHOD

Somatic Compassion is "a powerful integration of neuroscience, affective touch, and compassionate presence that has transformative effects on trauma healing."

NO EVIDENCE

Somatic Compassion is chairman Robin Youngson's own branded method with no published clinical trials. Its parent technique, Havening, rests on an untested theoretical hypothesis (affective touch → delta waves → synaptic "depotentialization"), with a handful of small promoter-run studies and no independent replication or trauma-outcome RCTs; mainstream medical references state there is no scientific proof of effectiveness and warn it must not replace evidence-based care.^{[18][28]} A registered suicide-prevention charity endorsing — and funding a documentary to promote — its own chairman's untested proprietary therapy is a conflict-of-interest and evidence-integrity problem.^[29]

CLAIM 9 · THE HERO'S JOURNEY PAGE

"Over \$10,000 in prizes."

STRAINED BY THE FILINGS

The figure exceeds 17% of total filed FY2025 revenue (NZ\$58K), on top of gym memberships, counselling and staff, against ~NZ\$8K of assets.^[15] Donors should ask whether it is a single-year cash pool, multi-year commitment, or in-kind sponsorship.

Figure 2 — Left: published suicide-note content analyses vs Claim 1. Right: effect sizes from the mentoring and exercise meta-analyses behind Claims 4–5. Sources as cited.

5. The pattern, and what we did not find

The structure repeats across the site: accurate statistics establish a crisis; an invented fact (the suicide-note words) defines the problem as deficient self-worth; and a programme whose components have real but small evidence is dressed in scientific language ("science of fulfilment," "four pillars," "neuroscience") that no published research supports. Presented honestly as low-intensity wellbeing support, the elements would be credible; what pushes the site into pseudo-science is fabricated authority claims, a counselling partner marketed with the vendor's own regulator-discredited assurances, and board-level promotion of an evidence-free proprietary trauma therapy.

What we did not find: fraud; deregistration or regulator action; Christian right-wing ties; religious content in programme material; or any evidence that participants are currently recruited toward Scientology or advised to stop medication. Absence of evidence is stated as such.

6. Due-diligence questions and safer alternatives

Before donating or referring, ask the board in writing: (1) Are facilitators supervised by a registered NZ health practitioner, and what is the documented protocol when a mentee discloses suicidal intent? (2) Are participants ever advised about psychiatric medication, and by whom? (3) Does the charity have any formal or financial relationship with CCHR or the Church of Scientology? (4) What does the officer red flag on the Charities Register refer to?

If you or someone you know needs help now: free call or text 1737 (24/7) · Lifeline 0800 543 354 · Youthline 0800 376 633 · or GP referral to publicly funded care. Concerns about charitable status: Charities Services (Department of Internal Affairs). Misleading advertising claims: the Advertising Standards Authority.

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Method note: all claims were quoted verbatim from kiwisforgood.co.nz or the charity's published statements, captured 30 September 2026. Register data is reproduced as factual record and implies no finding of wrongdoing by any person or organisation named. This dossier is general information for public education and does not constitute medical, legal or financial advice. © Straight Up NZ 2026.