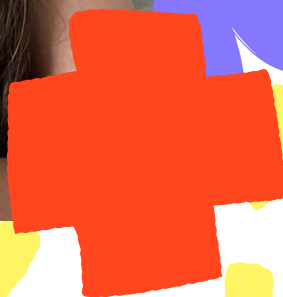


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# Starship Foundation Impact Report



1 July 2024 — 30 June 2025

  
**Starship**  
Foundation

**Tukuna te wairua hei  
whakarei ake i ā mātou tamariki  
Hei arataki i ngā mahi me tō mātou  
whāinga matua, he toiora hei ngā rā ki tua.**

**Tōia mai te hiringa me te ngākau māia hei  
whai oranga; kia kitea te kaha o ngā whānau,  
ngā kaimahi me ngā hapori e aroha nei ki ā  
mātou tamariki.**

**Whītikiria, tiakina.**

**Kia kore ai e ngaro noa  
Tāmaua. Kia ita.**

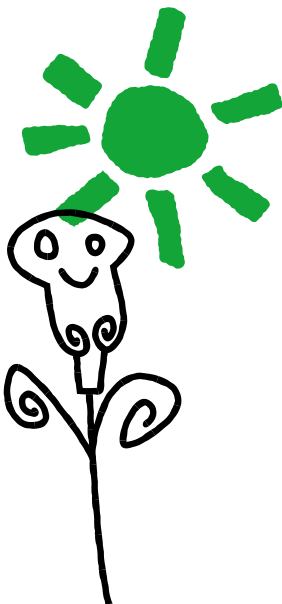
**Hui e, tāiki e!**

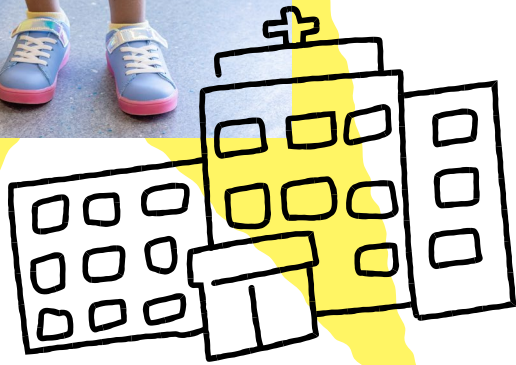
Release the spirit, to uplift our children.  
To guide our work and our purpose to ensure  
they have brighter futures.

Let us draw inspiration and courage for  
better health; to reveal strength in the families,  
the staff, and the communities, who care for our  
children.

Take hold and preserve it.

Ensure it is never lost. Hold fast. Secure it.  
Draw together! Affirm!





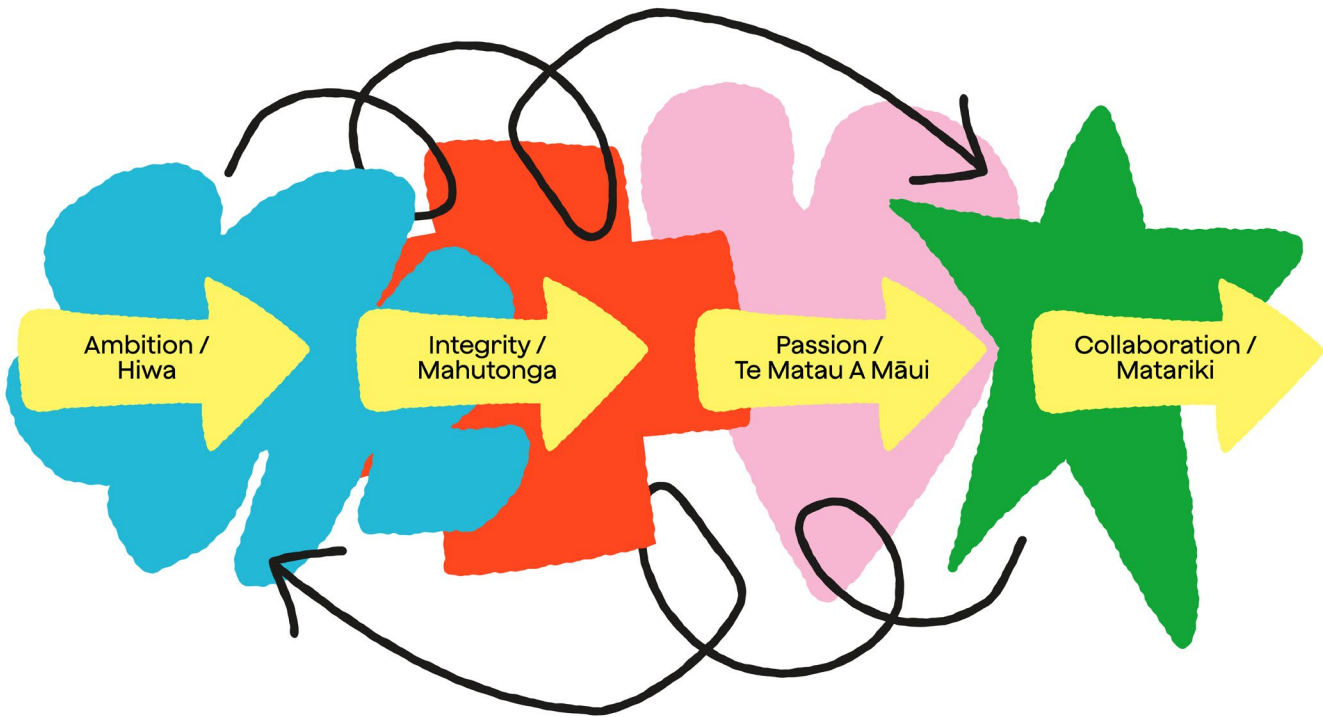
# Contents

04.	Our values, mission and purpose
05.	From our CEO and Chair
06.	Board of trustees
07.	From the hospital leadership
08.	FY25 Numbers at a glance
10.	Powered by generosity
12.	Our strategy and goals
13.	Clinical Care
24.	Patient Experience
32.	Research & Innovation
38.	A lasting legacy: Athlae Lyon
40.	Kilometres for kids
42.	A warrior's gift: Special thank you
43.	Thank you to our Five Star Partners
48.	Special thanks to our corporate family and our key supporters
51.	Gifts in Wills, leaving a legacy



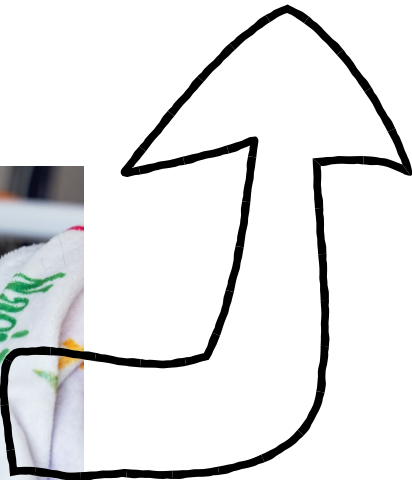
# Our values, mission & purpose

STARSHIP FOUNDATION



To nurture a nation of  
healthy children.

We fundraise to support Starship  
Child Health for projects and  
initiatives that transform and  
enhance paediatric healthcare.



IMPACT REPORT

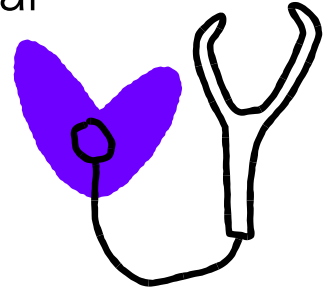
# From our CEO and Chair

This year has been defined by building momentum. We've invested in relationships, sharpened our strategy and positioned ourselves to accelerate the work that matters most for our children, families and communities. While our work evolves, our core values, Passion, Ambition, Collaboration and Integrity, have not changed. We continue to focus on supporting Starship Child Health to deliver the best care possible to children across Aotearoa New Zealand. Together, we have achieved more than we ever thought possible and we are only just beginning.

We are nearing the completion of the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit expansion, one of the most ambitious philanthropic projects in New Zealand healthcare history, made possible by thousands of generous supporters. A major milestone in this \$48 million project was the celebration of the opening of the Athlæ Lyon Starship Day Stay Unit. In addition, this year we funded 226 grants for Clinical Care, Research and Patient Experience projects. Together, we've shown how philanthropy can quite literally transform a hospital. Over the past four years, \$4.4 million has been invested in a kaupapa Māori programme grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, driving transformational change in Māori health equity at Starship through new leadership, cultural shifts, and innovative models of care that have improved outcomes for hundreds of whānau. The impact has already been remarkable with an 85% reduction in code orange incidents (behavioural emergencies).

We know healthcare is changing and it's happening rapidly. To support Starship in this changing world we are investing in

# Momentum: Building on a year of impact



the future and reimagining delivery of child health services. From advancing oncology innovation to launching the Starship Child Health Vision 2040 project, supported by philanthropy, we are laying the foundations for a stronger Starship. Our investment in growing fundraising programmes and digital transformation is ensuring sustainable growth so we can continue to rise to the challenges ahead in a changing healthcare landscape.

This has been a year of momentum – shaped by those who have served and those now joining us. Thank you to our retiring Trustees, Amy Knightley and Simon Tipene-Adlam, and a warm welcome to our new Trustees, Vince Hawksworth and Skye Daniels.

Thanks to you, our extraordinary supporters, Starship Foundation raised a record \$25.1 million, our largest total ever and a 26.6% increase on last year. This remarkable achievement is proof of the power of collective generosity. Every kilometre walked through Kilometres for Kids, every regular gift, every donation, every act of giving, it all matters. It all builds towards something bigger.

We are proud of how far we have come. But more than that, we are energised by where we are going. With your belief, Starship can continue to push boundaries, embrace innovation, and ensure every child has the best chance of a healthy future.

To every partner and supporter: thank you. None of this happens without you. You are not just giving to a hospital, you are changing the future of child health in

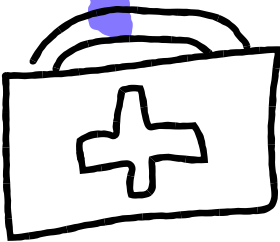
New Zealand. Together, we are building momentum and together, we will keep going further.

**“Every achievement, every story of hope, every life changed, it is all made possible by your generosity. Your support doesn’t just fund equipment, research or services, it gives children and families strength in their hardest moments.”** — Jo Simon, Chief Executive.

**“The role of the Board is to lead an ambitious vision, instilling a belief that the sky is the limit for what our supporters can do for Starship and the future of child health in Aotearoa.”** — Martin Wiseman, Chair of the Board.



# FY25 Board of trustees



Martin Wiseman (Chair)

Adrian Evans

Amy Knightley

Bryan Mogridge

Robin Skeggs

Sarah Lynds

Sharon Hunter (Vice Chair)

Simon Tipene-Adlam

Vince Hawksworth

Skye Daniels

Dr Cameron Grant

Dr Mike Shepherd

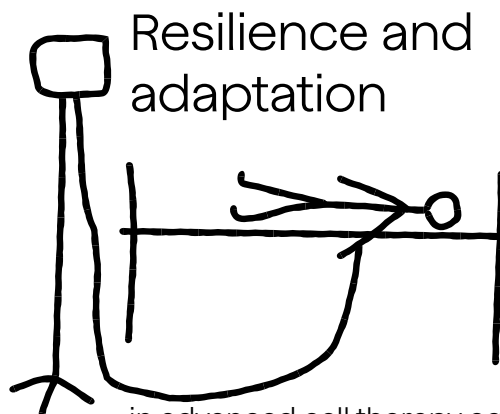
Dr John Beca

Jess Patten

Dr Greg Williams

Damian Tuck (PWC Consultant/Advisor to the Board)

# From the hospital leadership



This past year at Starship has been one of remarkable progress, innovation, and adaptation. Our biggest undertaking continues to be the extensive hospital build, the largest Starship has ever seen. While this brings unavoidable challenges, such as temporary corridor closures, café disruptions, and construction noise, it has also enabled exciting milestones: the opening of the Athlae Lyon Day Stay Unit, new whānau rooms and public spaces, all designed to better serve our children and their families. We look forward with excitement to the build's completion soon. In parallel with these physical developments, we've strengthened our leadership and clinical teams, appointing a new Tumu Whakarae and a Nurse Director – Tangata Whenua, ensuring Starship continues to lead with vision, cultural responsiveness, and excellence in care. Our staff have also adapted creatively to the ongoing changes and financial pressures within Health New Zealand, demonstrating extraordinary resilience and commitment.

Innovation remains at the heart of Starship. Ringa Atawhai, a team who provides wrap-around culturally sensitive multi-disciplinary care to children and families needing intensive care, has already had a tangible impact on PICU, reducing code orange calls (behavioural emergencies) and improving whānau satisfaction. We've also initiated a project to enhance the hospital experience for children and their families, guiding them safely and confidently through Starship, a project set to continue next year. Special initiatives, including International Nurses Day celebrations, further recognise and energise our teams. In parallel, investment

in advanced cell therapy equipment brings us closer to pioneering treatments, while the Toi Ora programme strengthens wellbeing for our kaimahi, ensuring a thriving workforce to care for our children.

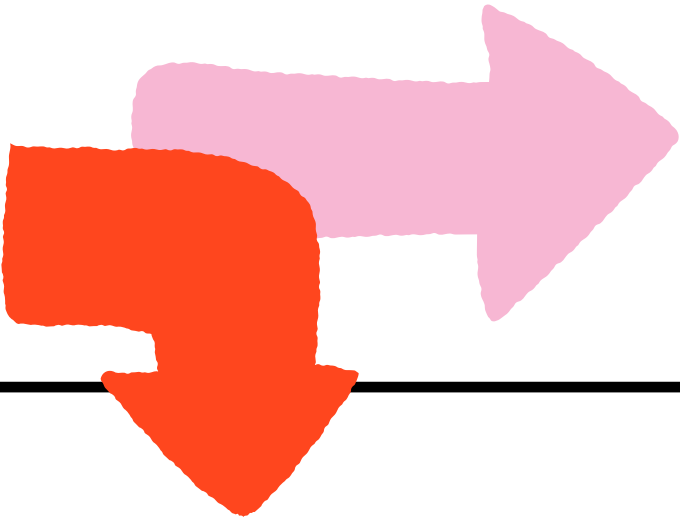
The ongoing partnership with Starship Foundation has been invaluable. The support of generous New Zealanders enables us to go beyond what government funding alone provides, delivering the very best care and facilities that truly make a difference in the lives of children and families. Whether improving comfort and navigation within the hospital, enhancing clinical capability, or supporting staff wellbeing, this support directly transforms experiences and outcomes. Every contribution helps ensure that our tamariki and whānau receive the care, support, and environment they deserve.

Looking ahead, we are energised by the opportunities ahead for the hospital. With your continued support, we can tackle these challenges and deliver even greater impact, ensuring every child receives the best possible start in life.



Hera Tolley, Dr John Beca, Jess Patten & Dr Greg Williams.

FY25  
Numbers  
at a glance



Your impact:

226	Grants funded	→ 26	Refurbishments
→ 10	Research projects	→ 96	Staff upskilled
→ 4	Fellowships	30+	FTE roles
→ 50	Pieces of equipment	82%	Increase in Māori staff

Income:

\$25.1 M

Total funds raised in FY25

26.6%

Increase in funds raised since FY24

---

# 152,128 Children treated at Starship



## Inside the hospital:

**39,933**

Visits to Children's  
Emergency  
Department

**2,881**

Children received  
surgeries

**53%**

Children treated  
under 6 years old

**936**

Children cared for  
in Neurology

**1268**

Children cared for  
in PICU (Paediatric  
Intensive Care Unit)

**1,353**

Children cared for  
in Cardiology

**913**

Children cared for  
in NICU (Neonatal  
Intensive Care Unit)

**151**

Plastic surgery

**12,562**

Appointments by  
phone or video

**2,681**

Children cared for  
in Haematology  
& Oncology

**12%**

Patients from  
outside Auckland  
region

---

## Starship's Air Ambulance:

→ **172**  
flights

**300,000km**  
travelled

# Powered by generosity, united for Starship children

Together with our community of individuals, businesses, and philanthropists across New Zealand, we've raised vital funds to support meaningful child health projects that create lasting, positive impact every single day.

In a year marked by economic challenges, New Zealanders continued to show extraordinary kindness. Despite the pressures many families and organisations faced, generosity shone through. We are incredibly proud and deeply grateful to have seen a remarkable 26.6% increase in funds raised.

This growth reflects something powerful: that even in tough times, the commitment to care for our children remains strong. Every dollar given, every kilometre walked, every act of support fuels Starship's mission to provide the very best care for New Zealand's children.

## Turning generosity into action

Every donation to Starship Foundation fuels impact across three key areas - clinical care, patient experience, and research and innovation.

We also invest in fundraising, operations and governance to ensure we can grow sustainable support, use funds wisely, and maximise the difference every dollar makes for Starship's children.

These investments strengthen our ability to stand beside Starship for the long term, helping us plan ahead, deliver efficiently, and continue transforming children's health across New Zealand.

**For every \$1 spent on fundraising, operating costs and governance, we generated \$2.99 this year.**

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# Together we raised \$25,149,104

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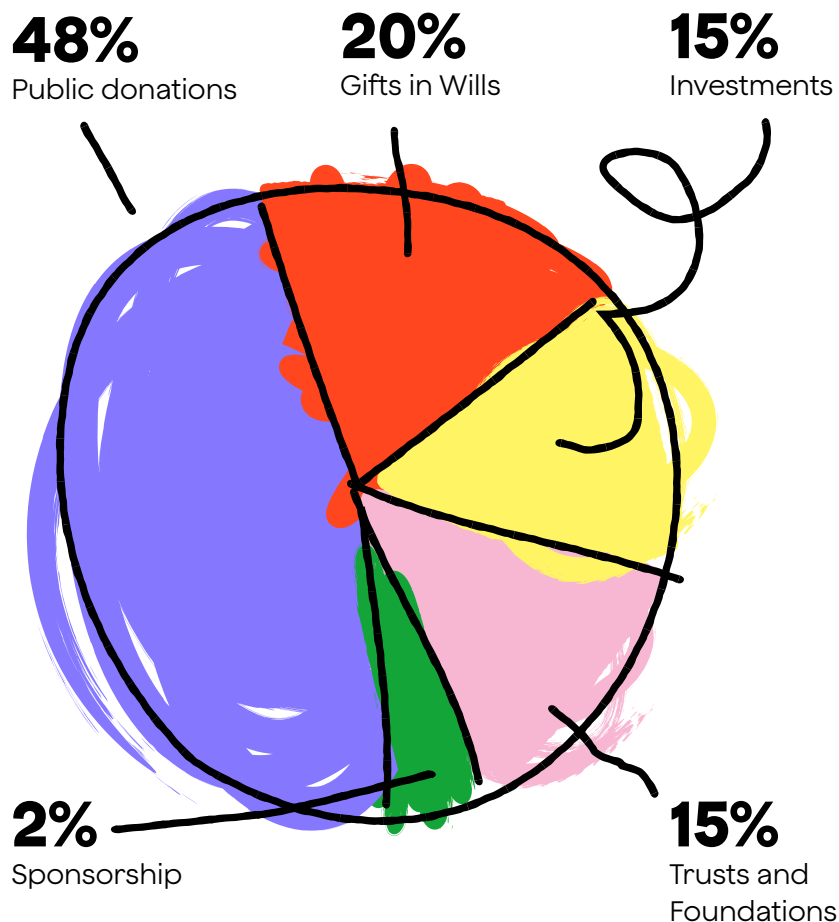


# + Gifts in kind \$1,019,957

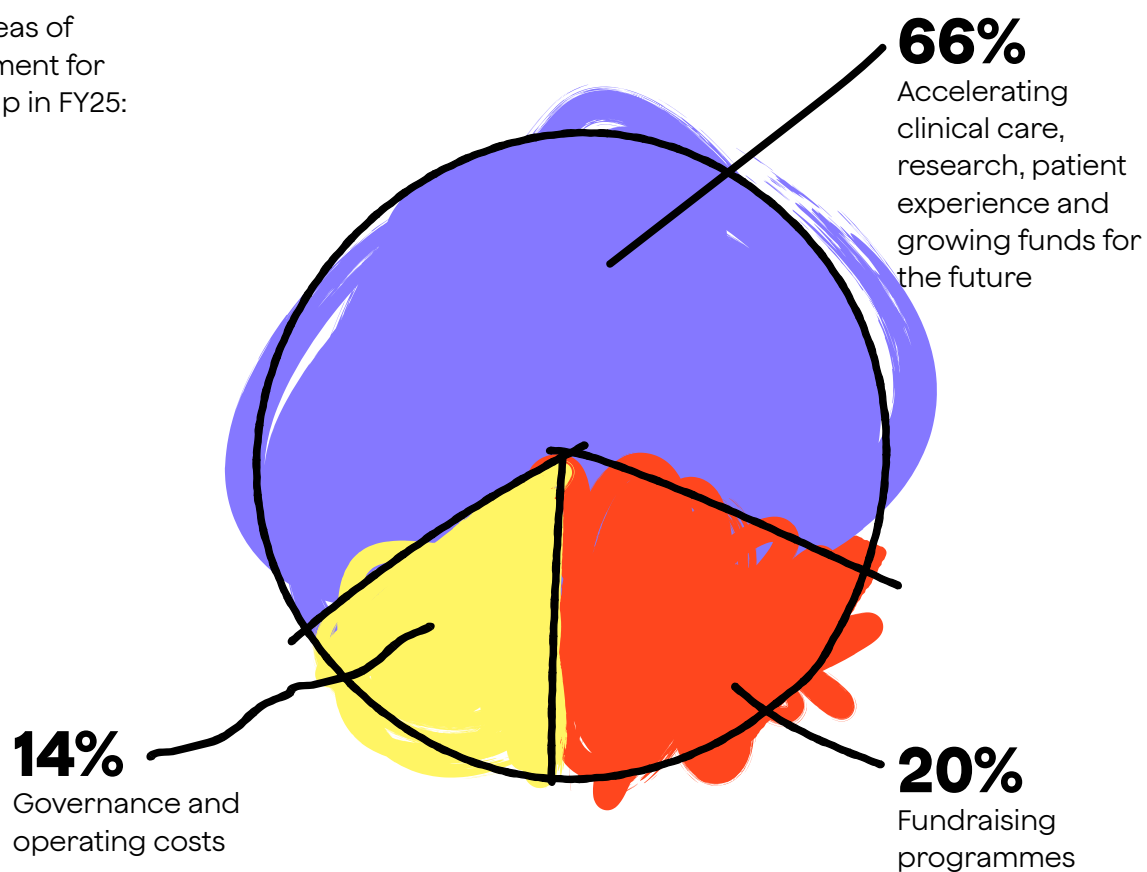
Gifts of goods and services have assisted in the areas of fundraising programmes and hospital gifts.



Here is a breakdown of funds raised for Starship in FY25:



Key areas of investment for Starship in FY25:



# Our strategy and goals



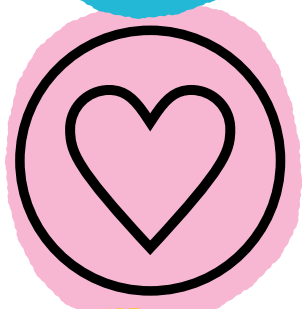
Starship Foundation exists to ensure that every child receives the care, comfort and innovation that goes beyond what government funding alone can provide. Every year, this equates to a funding gap that represents millions of dollars and every dollar donated helps close it.

## Our strategic priorities focus on three pillars of impact:



### Clinical Care

Equipping Starship with world-class facilities and equipment.



### Patient Experience

Ensuring every child and family feels supported and cared for.



### Research & Innovation

Driving breakthroughs that shape the future of child health.

Looking ahead, we are focused on sustainable growth and long-term investment, ensuring we can continue to meet increasing demand, plan for future capital developments, and respond rapidly to new healthcare challenges.

## Our grants programme

Through our structured grants programme, Starship Foundation works hand-in-hand with Starship clinicians and hospital leadership to identify areas of greatest need and opportunity. Each funding proposal is carefully assessed against our Impact Framework, which ensures every dollar delivers measurable, meaningful outcomes for children and families.

This framework guides our decisions, tracks progress, and demonstrates how philanthropy drives tangible change across Starship Child Health, from lifesaving equipment and staff wellbeing initiatives to research breakthroughs and patient comfort.

## Planning for the future

Our commitment is long-term. Starship's needs are evolving, and so too is our approach to partnership and investment. We're planning ahead, ensuring Starship remains equipped, future-ready, and able to deliver the very best care for generations of children to come.

## A new look, same heart

You'll start to see our look and feel evolving, a refreshed Starship Foundation brand that reflects who we are today and where we're headed. This new visual identity captures our values, our optimism, and our deep belief in the power of generosity to transform lives. We hope you enjoy the many authentic illustrations from children inside Starship featured in our new look.

We may look a little different but our heart remains the same: standing up for New Zealand's children, together.

# Clinical Care





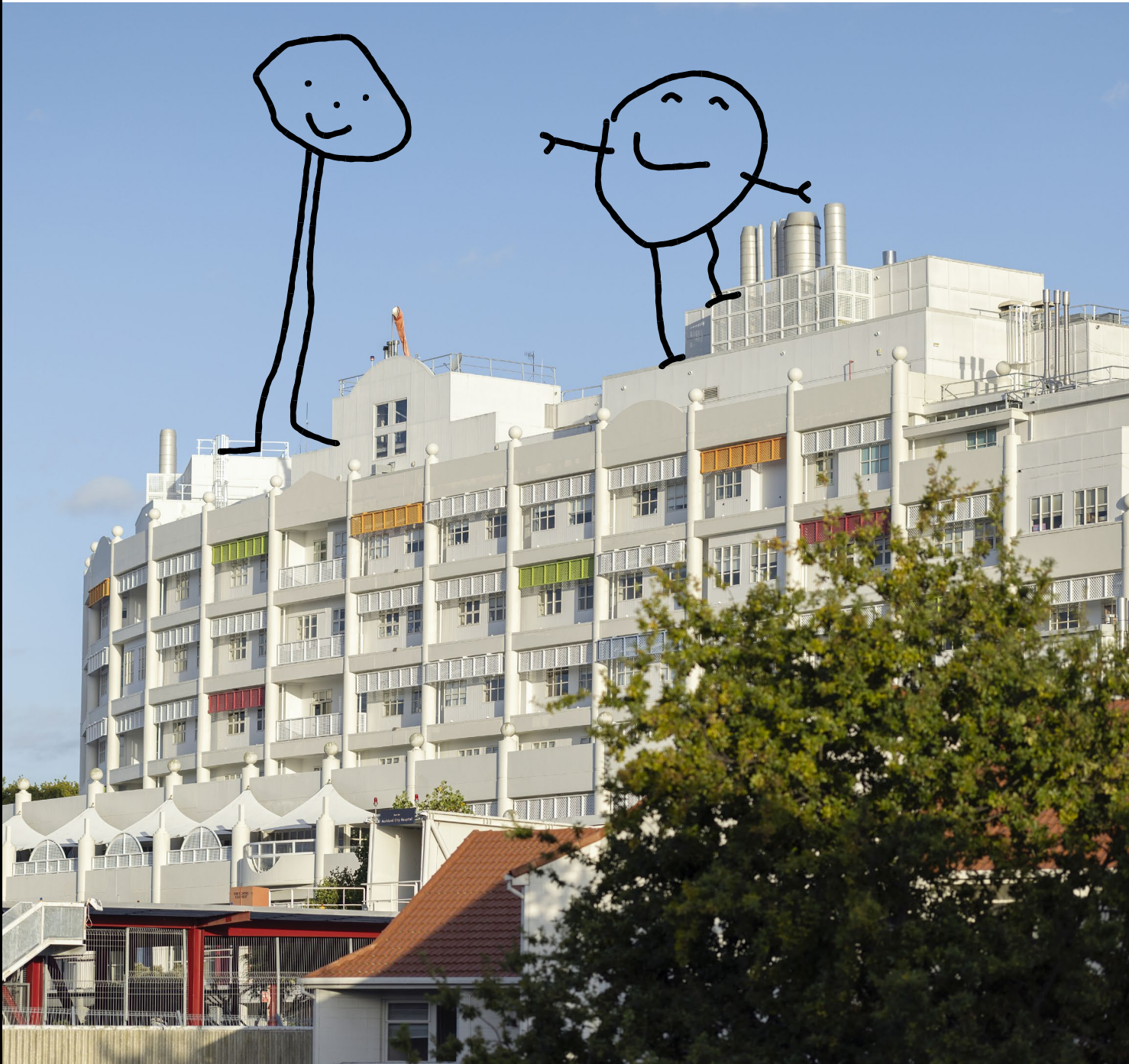
# Enhancing clinical care at Starship

50 pieces of new equipment

Together, **Starship supporters contributed \$6.5 million** towards enhancing clinical care, empowering staff, advancing knowledge, and equipping our hospital with the latest tools to deliver the very best care for New Zealand's children.

## Investing in tools – equipment that transforms care

50 pieces of new equipment have been purchased thanks to your support, improving accuracy, efficiency, and patient experience across Starship's wards and services.







### Sonosite LX ultrasound machine

This new ultrasound machine is making a lifesaving difference in Starship's Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). It enables simultaneous IV access by two clinicians, ensuring rapid intervention for critically ill infants.

**"Thank you very much for enabling PICU to get this additional Sonosite LX Ultrasound device so promptly. Since it arrived, it's been in use every day."** — PICU Nurse.

### Tumbleforms and totstanders

New therapy equipment, including tumbleforms, totstanders, treadmills, and parallel bars, is helping children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and developmental delays build strength, confidence, and independence.

These resources are shared equitably across Starship Community, enabling families who couldn't otherwise access such equipment to participate fully in therapy.

### Newborn life support manikins

These advanced training manikins have revolutionised neonatal resuscitation training, providing realistic feedback and enabling clinicians to practise airway and breathing management in lifelike scenarios.

Faculty and participants report that the new manikins have "enhanced the fidelity of training" and removed frustrations caused by outdated, non-functioning equipment, ultimately improving preparedness for real emergencies.



Newborn life support manikin.

### Vein finder stands

New mobile stands have greatly improved the usability and accessibility of Starship's existing vein finders. The stands make it easier to position devices for comfort and precision, especially for anxious or very young patients.

#### Success indicators:

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Improved patient comfort during venepuncture

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Increased staff satisfaction with usability

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Reduced time spent preparing equipment.

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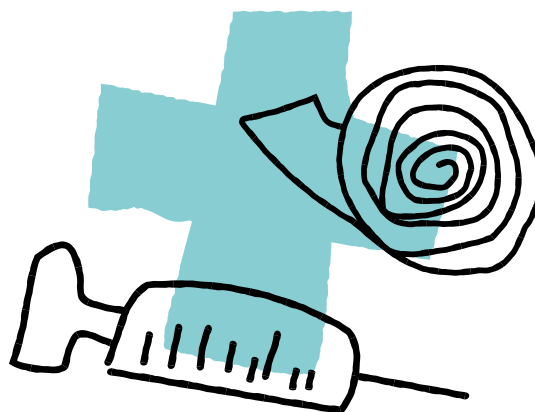
#### A success story

A paediatric nurse shared that with the new stand, she was able to position the vein finder perfectly for a nervous toddler, achieving a successful, stress-free cannulation on the first attempt.

**"Early intervention is crucial for improving outcomes. The new equipment has transformed the quality of service we can provide, helping children improve function, alleviate pain, and enjoy life with their families and friends."**

#### Every investment makes a difference

From international learning opportunities to cutting-edge clinical tools, your support ensures that Starship's dedicated teams have what they need to deliver the best possible care today, and for the future of all New Zealand children.





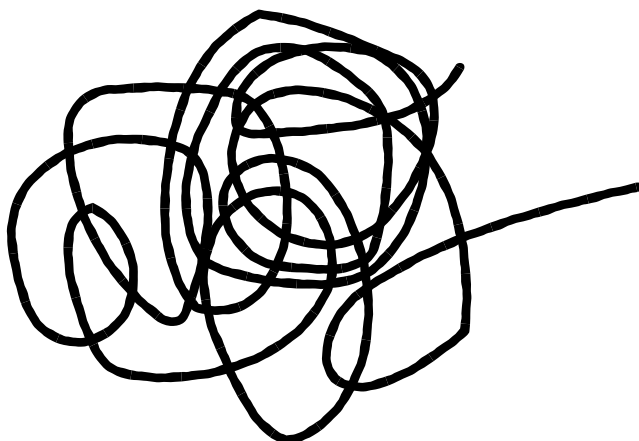
# Medical mediation

Patients and their families are often under immense stress in an emotionally charged setting such as a children's emergency department. This can trigger anxiety, particularly when families feel overwhelmed by complex medical information or left out of the loop so it is essential that hospital staff are skilled communicators who can deescalate any conflict that may arise.

Starship's conflict resolution training for staff has been a game changer for many clinicians. The training, delivered by UK-based Medical Mediation Foundation (MMF) in early-2025, is proving transformational with staff reporting that they have greatly improved confidence in managing difficult conversations – both with patient families and other staff.

The MMF team travelled to Auckland to train around 250 nurses, psychologists, and senior medical officers, thanks to funding by generous supporters.

There were three workshops on offer: Managing Conflict, levels 1 & 2, and Managing Conflict with Colleagues, level 4, all designed to empower staff to manage conversations around paediatric care with empathy and professionalism.



## Advanced training for Starship staff to manage conflict between healthcare professionals and families

The training was based on research from the Evelina Children's Hospital in London and designed to train health professionals at all levels to recognise flashpoints and warning signs of conflict, and to learn skills and techniques to help de-escalate and resolve. Staff described challenging situations in which patient care had become compromised by a breakdown in trust and/or communication between health professionals and family, and between health professionals themselves. Parents said the stress of complex choices often triggered conflict. This could significantly "disrupt care, erode trust, and leave lasting emotional impacts on everyone involved".

Whether conflict was short or long term, the cost to staff of managing was often considerable and could involve many hours of time which might otherwise have been spent on clinical care.

**"Conflict is extremely damaging to our patients and families, and to us as staff. It leads to poorer health outcomes in children, highly distressed families, and burnt-out staff who no longer want to work with children."** — Dr Louise Webster, Service Clinical Director.

Upon completing the training at Starship, participants said they felt more confident in recognising and defusing conflict before it escalated, and had techniques and strategies they could pass on to their teams. All who responded to a post-training survey said they would "definitely" or "very likely" recommend the Level 2 training to a friend or colleague.



In addition, five Starship staff have become accredited as trainers for the Level 2 training. This will allow the hospital to provide more workshops without the cost of bringing in trainers from overseas.

Project leader Dr Louise Webster, Service Clinical Director, says this is particularly valuable in that it allows for training to be New Zealand-specific. **“When we deliver the training ourselves, we are able to tailor it to the New Zealand environment, healthcare system, bicultural and multicultural system. Having our own trainers also means that we can deliver training throughout the year, which is a better fit for the teams and staff in Starship, and throughout the child health services in NZ.”**

One newly qualified Starship trainer said they were motivated to pass their knowledge onto colleagues because they'd found their own MMF training “enormously helpful”.

**“The training teaches us stop and listen, and to acknowledge what concerns families have. That takes training and practise. Our natural instincts are to avoid conflict until it gets really bad, or to launch in with boundaries and rules.”**

— Dr Webster.



Medical mediation training with Starship staff





# The Douglas Charitable Trust

Expanding the use of simulation to improve outcomes for children



During the past year, more than 1600 clinicians, students and whānau have upskilled their life-saving techniques through participation in the Douglas Starship Simulation Programme (DSSP). During this training, participants practise for medical emergencies using lifelike, computer-driven manikins.

It's a significant increase in participation on the previous year with a total of 203 simulation sessions delivered, up 42% on the previous year, and involving teams from 12 departments compared with just two in 2023 (an increase of 500%).

The focus has been on improving multidisciplinary team performance, clinical decision-making, patient safety and improving systems.

### Improving safety in real time

During the simulations, 26 hidden safety threats were uncovered, the most ever identified.

One simulation in the Emergency Department revealed a faulty airway device caused by a supply chain issue affecting multiple departments. The issue was escalated and resolved quickly, a real-world example of how simulation can directly improve patient safety.

↘ The simulation programme is funded by **an extraordinary gift of \$9 million** from The Douglas Charitable Trust in 2018, allowing staff across the country to access state-of-the-art lifesaving care for children.

### Strengthening global connections

DSSP has also expanded its presence internationally and in digital spaces. Their Sim Nurse NZ podcast was downloaded over 1,600 times in more than 30 countries. The podcast featured global leaders in simulation, covering topics such as psychological safety, human factors in clinical care, and new tools like virtual reality (VR) simulation.

Guests included respected voices such as Dr Todd Chang from LA Children's Hospital and Dr David Gaba from Stanford University, a pioneer in healthcare simulation and Crew Resource Management (CRM).

### Research reflecting real experience

DSSP's research efforts also grew this year, thanks to Simulation Fellow Dr Laura Newhouse (2023–2025). Her recent study explored how adults experience simulation-based learning in paediatrics.

### After interviewing 12 clinical staff members, she found three key themes:

- Anxiety before or during simulations
- Protective behaviours, for example, staying quiet or avoiding mistakes
- How the facilitator's style shaped the learning process.

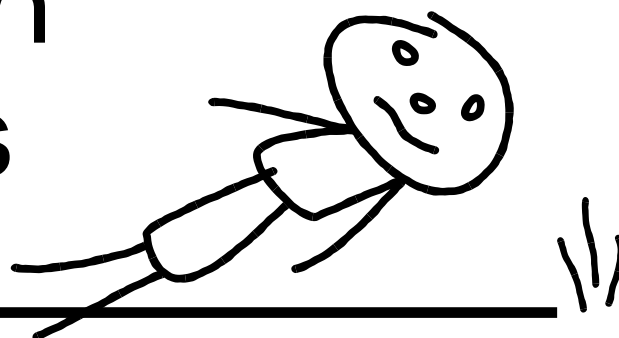
### What's next?

DSSP say simulation will remain a core part of how teams grow, learn, and keep our patients safe. They are immensely grateful to everyone who has supported and participated in the programme.



# Sim Nurse NZ podcast downloaded 1,600+ times in 30+ countries

Sim Nurse NZ is an inclusive podcast for all healthcare workers, especially nursing, featuring discussions, interviews and special guests.



Manikins used in training.

## Goals for FY26 include:

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Expanding simulation outreach across Aotearoa

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Strengthening mentorship for new staff

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Integrating simulation more deeply into clinical safety and quality systems.

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This work will help DSSP stay at the forefront of simulation, education, and innovation, both here and around the world.

The Douglas Charitable Trust is a big supporter of Starship and set up the simulator programme to improve care and outcomes for children.

The trust was established in 2007 by the late Sir Graeme Douglas to support local communities and causes, particularly in health, education, and community development.



1,600+  
clinicians,  
students  
and whānau  
were trained  
in life-saving  
simulation  
sessions



Simulation sessions  
delivered — up **42%**  
from the previous year



Increase in  
participation, with  
teams from 12  
departments involved



Manikins used in training.



**“I would like to thank the Douglas family for supporting this research. The process has been deeply informative for the team, and new projects are already underway.”**  
— Dr Laura Newhouse.





# Starship's Air Ambulance

When three-year-old Emily became desperately unwell with pneumonia, she needed specialist care urgently.

Emily was born with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) type 1, a rare genetic disorder that causes severe muscle weakness and leaves her susceptible to respiratory infections. When she caught a cold, it rapidly turned into pneumonia – and a life-threatening situation. Emily needed critical care, but she was in Gisborne, six hours' drive from the nearest paediatric intensive care unit (PICU) at Starship Hospital.

The Starship National Air Ambulance was dispatched immediately, flying Emily to Auckland for specialist care. It was a terrifying time for Emily's whānau, but mum Marion says she clung to hope, knowing that her little girl was in exceptionally good hands. "The team on the flight were amazing, they were awesome."

However, a year later, Emily became dangerously unwell with another respiratory infection, RSV (Respiratory syncytial virus).

**"On that second flight, I had this terror that I was going to lose her. She was gasping for air, and I really didn't think she was going to make it,"** recalls Marion.

But Starship's Air Ambulance and the PICU flight team saved Emily's life again and today, Emily and her whānau live in Auckland for easy access to the expert care at Starship.

Emily is one of hundreds of children in New Zealand whose lives have been

Always ready to dash a critically unwell child to Auckland for specialist care

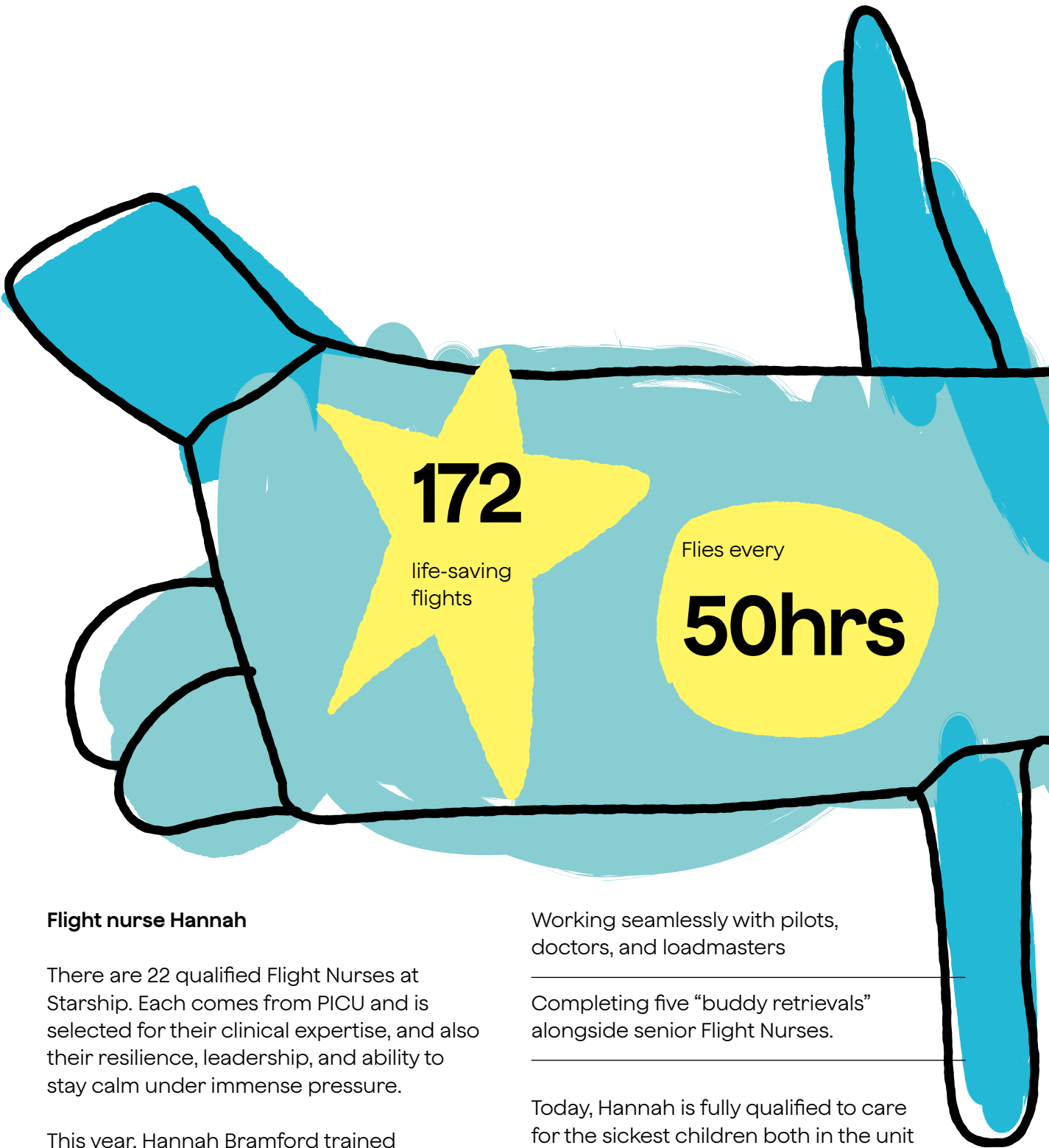
saved by Starship's Air Ambulance. It's the country's only flying PICU service, and it's on call 24/7, 365 days a year to airlift children who are critically ill or injured to Starship. And it can be in the air within just 60 minutes of receiving a call from a regional hospital.

The air ambulance is a Starship-decorated Beechcraft King Air turboprop plane. It flies at 550km per hour, and is equipped with modifications which enhance performance, passenger comfort, and fuel efficiency.



Onboarding the Starship Air Ambulance.





**Flight nurse Hannah**

There are 22 qualified Flight Nurses at Starship. Each comes from PICU and is selected for their clinical expertise, and also their resilience, leadership, and ability to stay calm under immense pressure.

This year, Hannah Bramford trained and qualified to become one of these incredible, life-saving nurses.

**With 14 years’ nursing experience, including eight years in Starship’s PICU, Hannah undertook rigorous training to become a Flight Nurse including:**

The impact of altitude on critically ill children

Mastering specialised equipment in confined aircraft cabins

Working seamlessly with pilots, doctors, and loadmasters

Completing five “buddy retrievals” alongside senior Flight Nurses.

Today, Hannah is fully qualified to care for the sickest children both in the unit and in the sky.

**“Being a Flight Nurse is completely different to working on the unit. You’re in a highly compact space, working side-by-side with just one other clinician. Clear communication and trust are everything.”**

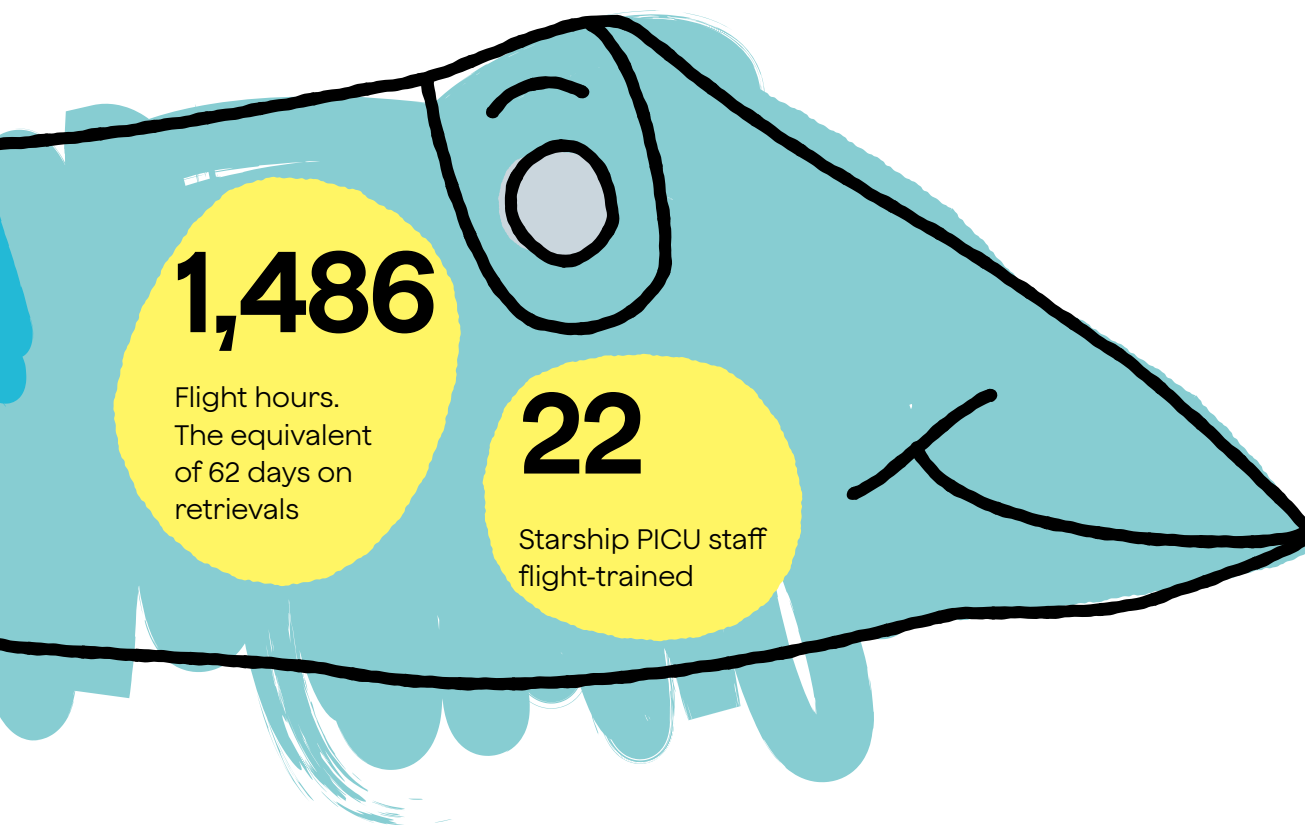
— Hannah Bramford, PICU Flight Nurse.



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# 300,000km

Distance flown, equal to flying around  
the world 7 times

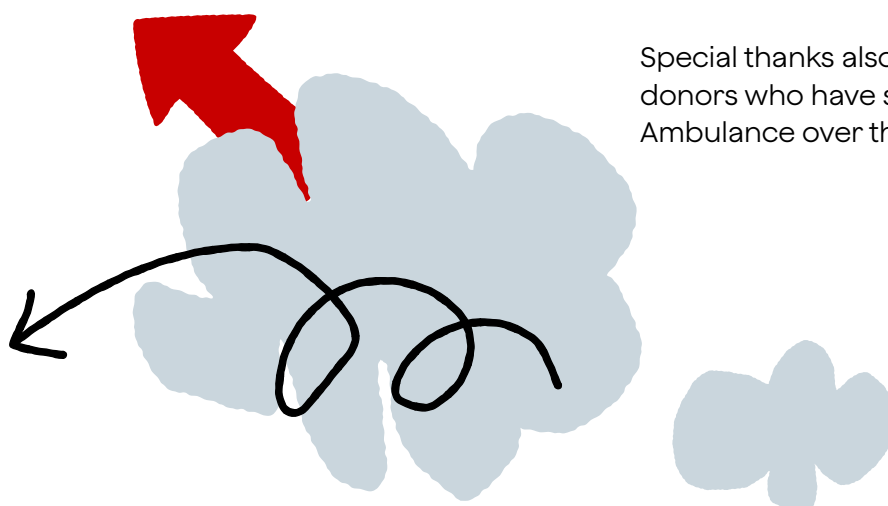


## Thank you to the Lindsay Foundation

Thanks to generous support, the Starship Foundation contributes **\$1.5 million annually** to help keep Starship's Air Ambulance flying around the clock, all year long. The Lindsay Foundation is a key supporter and has **generously donated \$500,000** annually since 2019.

And it is with immense gratitude, we can share that the Lindsay Foundation has pledged to support the Starship National Air Ambulance service for a further three years. Thanks to their generosity, the Starship PICU flight team can fly across New Zealand to pick up some of our country's sickest children and bring them back to Starship for urgent medical care.

Special thanks also to all our wonderful donors who have supported Starship's Air Ambulance over the last year.





## IMPACT REPORT



# Patient Experience





# How your support is transforming care for children and their families

At Starship, patient experience is central to delivering outstanding paediatric care. With generous support, we've been able to introduce innovative tools, resources, and equipment that make a real difference, helping children feel safe, supported, and empowered throughout their healthcare journey.

## Child-friendly paediatric wheelchairs

Brightly coloured and purpose-built for children, Starship's new paediatric wheelchairs have become a vital part of everyday life on the ward. Their easy-to-spot design means nurses spend far less time searching for equipment, and children can move comfortably and confidently to key areas like school, the playroom, or off-ward appointments. Not only are these wheelchairs functional, they give staff and children something to be proud of.

**"The coloured wheelchairs and spoke covers make them child-friendly while also making them easily identifiable. They've created ease in getting children down to school, to the playroom and off the ward."**

— Sam Halton, Charge Nurse.

## Toys and therapy equipment for Starship Community

The Starship Community team supports children with disabilities and developmental delays across New Zealand. With the help of funding, they now have access to high-quality therapy equipment and toys, essential tools for early intervention and equitable access to care.

Children with conditions like cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and global developmental delay now have access to



updated resources such as tumbleforms, totstanders, treadmills, and parallel bars. These tools are being used in both individual and group therapy sessions, helping prevent further deterioration and improving overall quality of life.

**"The ability to lend this equipment to families who otherwise wouldn't have access has meant we can provide a more equitable and effective service."** — Soo Zen Chew, Paediatric Physiotherapist.

## The Starship website – a lifeline for families and clinicians

With over 4.3 million page views in the past year, the Starship website is a trusted resource for paediatric professionals and families across the country. The site provides 24/7 access to over 1,000 clinical guidelines, patient information, and educational resources. There has been a much-needed investment in essential upgrades, operational support, and digital innovation, ensuring this vital tool continues to serve clinicians and families when they need it most.



# Transforming Māori health at Starship

In 2021, Starship Child Health embarked on a mission to transform Māori health equity, launching seven key projects underpinned by a kaupapa Māori approach upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

**Four years on, and a total of \$4.4 million invested, this work has led to remarkable change including:**

The creation of TamaAriki Ora, the Starship Māori Leadership Office

A system-wide cultural shift in how Starship supports mokopuna and their whānau

New models of care delivering shorter wait times, improved whānau engagement and the capacity to do more surgeries

Almost half of the funding, \$2.02million, has been invested in initiatives led by TamaAriki Ora. These include large-scale workforce wellbeing programmes, staff training in building cultural capacity, and policy review through a Te Ao Māori lens.

**Other significant investment includes:**

\$572,000 towards data gathering and analysis to identify inequities

Creation of Ringa Atawhai, a new team in PICU to provide clinical and cultural expertise to mokopuna and whānau Māori. Also, more support for mokopuna and whānau having surgery through the Kaiārahi Nāhi Service.

## TamaAriki Ora

In 2021, Starship had no dedicated Māori

## Equity in action: From seed funding to systemic shift

health leaders. Today, there are seven key leads across various teams, and kaimahi Māori in Starship has grown from 3.4% to 6.2%.

This shift has directly contributed to increased trust and engagement among Māori whānau, and has helped shape models of care, staff development and leadership structures.

## Strategic relationships

Strategic leadership roles funded through TamaAriki Ora helped Starship build and sustain key relationships with iwi and Māori leadership. These include Ngāti Whātua, Kiingitanga, the National Iwi Chairs Forum and international partner the United Nations.

## Ringa Atawhai: Culturally grounded care in PICU

Māori mokopuna account for 40% of PICU deaths, and whānau have previously reported feelings of cultural and emotional isolation. Ringa Atawhai, an interdisciplinary team of five, offers clinical and cultural support to whānau navigating trauma, grief and uncertainty. The teams consists of a Kaimanaaki, Nurse Specialist, Social Worker, Mental Health Clinician and Allied Health Specialist.

“We had nurses who did not want to be in that bed space and we have seen a big turnaround in that. Having Ringa Atawhai has been the biggest catalyst for this challenge. Whānau find heaps of value in the support and relationship with Ringa Atawhai. We know that because they are asking for the team to be part of every meeting. That is a key indicator.”





**TamaAriki Ora team.**

Since its inception, the team has supported more than 300 Māori whānau and many non-Māori. Their impact includes an extraordinary 85% reduction in Code Orange incidents (behavioural emergencies), provision of culturally responsive care and strengthened bereavement and emotional support for whānau.

### **Kaiārahi Nāhi**

Kaiārahi Nāhi are Māori Nurse Specialists who guide and support mokopuna and whānau through surgical care. Their presence ensures timely, accessible and culturally appropriate experiences from initial GP referral right through the planned care pathway.

Over the past 10 months (2024–2025 reporting period), Kaiārahi Nāhi engaged with more than 650 mokopuna and whānau. The impact is noticeable in terms of the reduced number of missed appointments, strengthened trust in the system, and improved health literacy. System-wide improvements in bookings

and direct whānau outreach have also been recorded.

“The way they engage with patients, almost by osmosis, influences our service, we pick up and hear different ways of interacting and operating.”

“They have been fundamental in how we talk about whānau and the judgement that is often placed upon them. They have been instrumental in changing the narrative with less blame being put on whānau.”

### **Te Puaruruhau: Leadership in child protection**

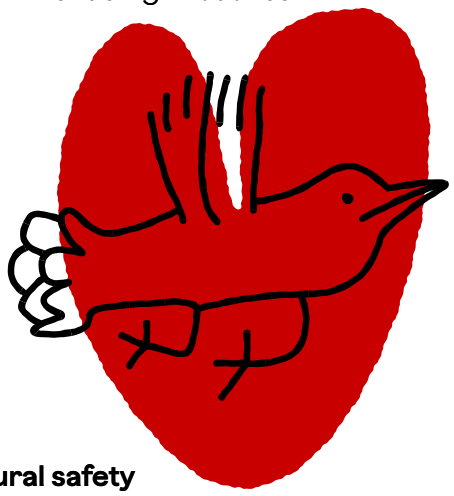
A crucial new role of clinical lead and research has been established within Te Puaruruhau, Starship’s Child Protection team. This allowed the creation of a key initiative, **Power to Protect, designed to prevent abusive head trauma in infants.** Every year, 20 to 25 babies in Aotearoa are hospitalised with deliberately inflicted head trauma and up to 20% do not survive.



Power to Protect has a strong national presence, including a website, with a central focus on helping whānau to manage infant crying.

**Toi Ora: Workforce wellbeing**

Toi Ora is Starship’s workforce wellbeing and development strategy. The vision for Toi Ora is to cultivate an environment where our workforce is happy, competent and dedicated to the privilege of serving mokopuna and their whānau. More than 1500 kaimahi across Starship have taken part in wellbeing initiatives.



**Cultural safety**

Between 2021 and 2024, 600 kaimahi attended Critical Tiriti Analysis (CTA) workshops, a five-step process designed to strengthen and review policy in relation to the articles and provisions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

More than 120 kaimahi took part in the Mana Series workshops to build cultural and clinical understandings of our environment, cultural excellence and Te Tiriti, and more than 300 staff participated in rongoā (Māori healing) workshops.

**“Never did I expect it to restore my wairua in such an amazing way. To provide a workshop that both teaches and cares for a group of people who often do not prioritise themselves, or their wellbeing as important to their job, was incredibly profound.”** — Starship nurse.

A Community of Practice with Tangata Tiriti was developed with more than 30 kaimahi to strengthen understanding, share

practice and embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi in care delivery and practice.

**System Change: easier access to surgery**

The Ear Nose Throat (ENT) project addressed inequities in surgery access for Māori mokopuna affected by glue ear and other conditions. Regional agreements, nurse-led assessments and improved waitlist visibility are already making a difference.

For example, during the five months to July 2025, **the Northern Region waitlist reduced by 32% – from 2364 to 1604.**

Oncology and theatre access also improved, with better coordination of ward-based procedures and operating theatre scheduling. From early-2026, an additional 700 children will get surgery every year.

**Injury prevention**

Digital roles funded through the equity programme supported campaigns in prevention of common childhood injuries including falls, choking, drowning, and accidents involving scooters, bikes and cars.

The impact has been immediate, with exceptional engagement – of more than 88,000 on the falls campaign, and over 77,000 with the choking campaign.

**A new standard in equity**

This equity programme has laid the foundations for a new standard of Māori child health – led by Māori, for Māori, grounded in whakapapa, and open to all. Starship is transforming the system so that all mokopuna have the best chance to thrive.

**Te Reo — “By gaining a better understanding of te reo and the cultural values embedded within the language, I can communicate more effectively and respectfully. This strengthens trust and connection with whānau.”** — Starship nurse.



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**700  
more  
children  
will get  
surgery**

every year from 2026

---

**→ 82%**

Increase in Kaimahi  
Māori, from **3.4 %**  
to **6.2 %**.

**→ 85%**

Reduction in Code  
Orange incidents  
(behavioural  
emergencies)

**1500+**

Staff taken  
part in wellbeing  
initiatives

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**\$4.4M  
Total  
invested**

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With **\$660,000**  
going to Te  
Puaruruhau,  
Starship's Child  
Protection mahi,  
and **\$572,000**  
towards data  
gathering to  
identify inequities

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**\$2.02M  
for TamaAriki Ora  
initiatives**

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# Supporting families through loss

At Starship, every effort is made to help children heal and return home to their families. But heartbreakingly, not every story has the ending we all hope for. When a family faces the unimaginable loss of their precious child, a charity called Baby Loss NZ, alongside Starship's Palliative Care team, is there to provide immediate comfort, care, and guidance.

Baby Loss NZ – with funding from Starship supporters – can be at the side of a family quickly, helping them to navigate those first impossible hours, and ensure there is unhurried time to make precious memories with their child.

Families are encouraged to bond with their baby by washing, dressing and holding them, and there is time for photographs, hand and footprints, and castings of the baby's hands and feet for framing.

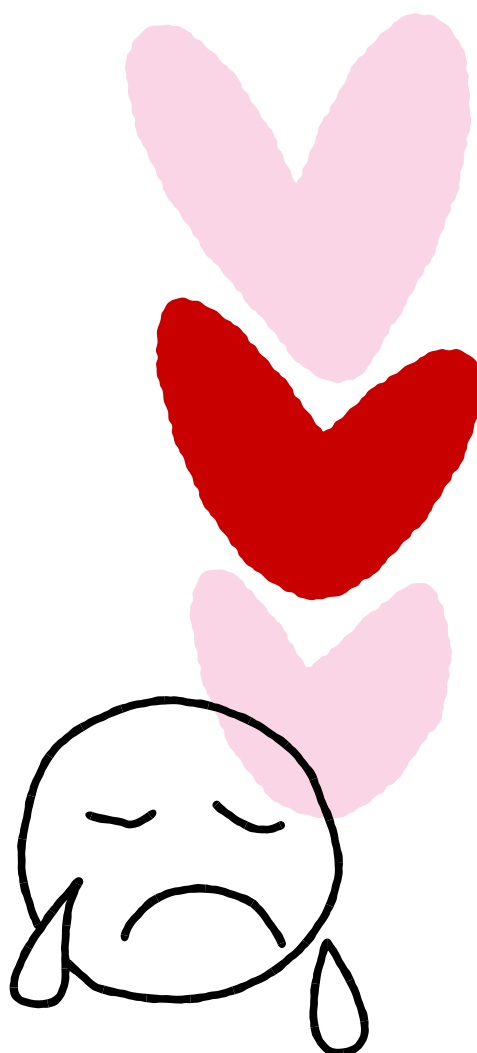
They also receive care boxes containing candles, a basket, blankets and locket, along with a memory box for items such as baby's clothing or lock of hair, locket and a name plaque. Written information about navigating grief is also included.

Baby Loss NZ general manager Sarah Numan says families are profoundly appreciative for the support at such an emotional time.

The need to provide tangible memories and to bond with their baby is critical to the healing and grieving process.

**“The grant has allowed us to support 20 Starship families this year. Parents, grandparents, extended whānau and friends are all touched by these gifts – making the true number of people supported immeasurable.”** — Baby Loss general manager Sarah Numan.

It is a privilege to support Baby Loss NZ to deliver this incredibly meaningful service to bereaved families at Starship.





**Angela & Adam – baby Azariah, 65 days old**

“Having Sarah and her lovely team visit us in hospital when our beloved baby passed away after 65 days of life in PICU, was a blessing to us. They created special ways for us to have tangible reminders of the baby who was no longer with us in person. We particularly appreciated their beautiful presentation of the hands and feet castings, as well as the hands and feet prints. These give us visual ways to remember our baby and to share with others, many who weren’t able to meet him. We are so thankful for how Sarah and her team brought us comfort at such a sensitive time.”

**Melody – mother of Camaro-Lee, six years old**

“To have these castings of Camaro-Lee is like being able to hold her hand just one more time. For weeks, all I was able to do was hold her hands, so these castings helped heal a part of me that I didn’t know needed healing. Camaro-Lee is baby number 6 of 7. She has a little sister. They were – and still are – best friends, and some days, all my youngest wants to do is hold her sissy’s castings and talk about her. They help us remember lots of happy memories, too.”

“I have an eternal amount of gratitude for Baby Loss NZ; they made my whānau feel validated. During the most heart-breaking moment of my life, Sarah captured a timeless memory that we can hold onto forever.

**“Without Baby Loss NZ, I wouldn’t be able to start my healing journey. Thank you for helping us piece our broken hearts back together.”**

# Research & Innovation





# Starship FY25 research projects

The future of child health depends on discovery. Research is where tomorrow's treatments begin, and where today's challenges are solved. With your support, Starship is driving research that moves swiftly from lab to bedside, delivering real-world benefits for children.

We're proud to share with you the 10 research projects funded at Starship for the 2025 financial year. These studies represent critical advances across a range of child health issues and reflect our ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for children across New Zealand. We look forward to keeping you up-to-date with the progress and results of this important work.



## Funded research projects:

**The PIKI Trial** – A randomised controlled trial comparing paracetamol vs. ibuprofen for fever and pain in children under 2 years old (Paracetamol and Ibuprofen Kids Intervention).

**PINZ Study – 10 Years On** – A follow-up investigation into paediatric inflammatory bowel disease in New Zealand, exploring long-term outcomes and changes over the past decade.

**Parenting Interventions Uptake Study** – Enhancing the uptake of evidence-based parenting interventions following health provider recommendations.

**Brain Injury Screening Tool (BIST) Validation** – Assessing the predictive validity of BIST for 8–16-year-olds with mild traumatic brain injury in inpatient settings.

**Biliary Atresia Immune Study** – Characterising immune and fibrosis markers in liver biopsies and explants from New Zealand children with biliary atresia.

**Childhood Dementia Burden Study** – A nationwide prevalence study examining the burden of childhood dementia in Aotearoa.

**Medulloblastoma Genomics Study** – Investigating the genomic profiles of medulloblastoma in New Zealand children to inform precision medicine approaches.

**Cerebral Palsy Musculoskeletal Monitoring** – Early detection of musculoskeletal complications in young children with moderate to severe cerebral palsy.

**Biliary Atresia Screening Development** – Developing a newborn screening test for biliary atresia using residual screening samples.

**Early Automated Insulin Delivery Trial** – Evaluating early use of automated insulin delivery systems to improve equity in outcomes for children with type 1 diabetes.



# Whiti Ora

## A vision realised through legacy



The vibrant heartbeat of innovation at Starship is alive and thriving at Whiti Ora – a space dedicated to transforming the future of child health through research, collaboration, and compassion. Now concluding its second year of full operation, Whiti Ora is the tangible realisation of an extraordinary gift from pioneering dairy farmer, innovator and philanthropist, **Trevor Ellett.**

Trevor Ellett, who passed away in 2016 at the age of 95, was a visionary long before his time. A Mangere farmer, Massey College graduate and lecturer, Ellett made his mark in the agricultural world through groundbreaking advances in ryegrass breeding, including the development of the Mangere ryegrass – later commercialised as Ellett and Grassland Nui ryegrasses. His legacy reshaped pasture-based dairying in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Yet Ellett's vision extended far beyond the fields of agriculture. A firm believer in the power of innovation to change lives, his remarkable bequest to the Starship Foundation was dedicated to research and innovation – an enduring gift that now powers the future of paediatric healthcare in New Zealand.

Whiti Ora, meaning “to shine brightly in health”, stands as a tribute to Ellett's values – a purpose-built space where ideas flourish, people connect, and solutions for our children are forged. Used by hospital staff, families and community groups alike, Whiti Ora has quickly become a central hub of activity, learning, and healing.

### Highlights of impactful use:

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**Medical Mediation Training:** 7 days of intensive workshops led by UK-based experts helped staff navigate and resolve complex conflicts between clinical teams, families, and patients.

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**The Kickstart Programme:** Led by the Complex Pain Service, this workshop teaches children experiencing chronic pain physical and mental techniques to manage it in their everyday lives.

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**Bereavement Follow-Up Meetings:** Families who have lost a child in NICU are welcomed into Whiti Ora – a warm, non-clinical environment to meet with doctors and access compassionate care.

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**Air Ambulance Transport Team Training:** A full-day session led by Di Fuller, advancing the skills of Starship's dedicated flight team.

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**TamaAriki Ora Māori Health Team:** Weekly strategic meetings focused on advancing equitable outcomes for mokopuna Māori.

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**Reo Māori Classes:** Weekly sessions provide Starship Child Health staff with a supportive environment to grow their reo Māori capabilities.

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**Family Violence Intervention Training:** Delivered by Te Puaruruhau, these workshops equip staff with the skills and strategies to address family violence in clinical settings.

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**Power to Protect Workshops:** Led by nurse Sheila Fowley, this national programme trains staff to have vital conversations with



families to prevent abusive head trauma in babies.

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**Douglas Starship Simulation Programme:**

Collaborative planning and simulation-based education to enhance clinical preparedness.

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**Hospital Play Specialists Training:**

Including the HPS Preceptorship Package, supporting holistic care for tamariki through therapeutic play.

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**A living legacy**

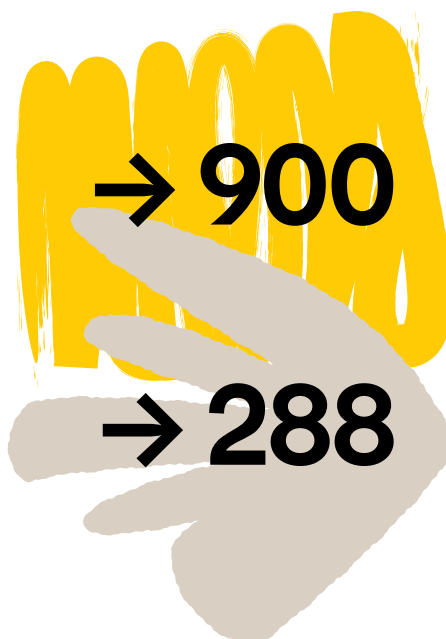
From strategy to simulation, healing to hope – Whiti Ora is more than just a building. It is a living legacy of Trevor Ellett's belief in innovation, learning, and progress. His extraordinary bequest has created a space that enables forward-thinking, culturally grounded, and collaborative approaches to paediatric care – now and for generations to come.

As Whiti Ora continues to grow and evolve, it reflects the very spirit that Trevor Ellett embodied: bold vision, practical action, and unwavering dedication to a better future.

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Snapshot: Whiti Ora – Year Two

**2,900+**  
attendees  
across  
all events



→ **900**

Hours of use by  
Starship Child  
Health teams

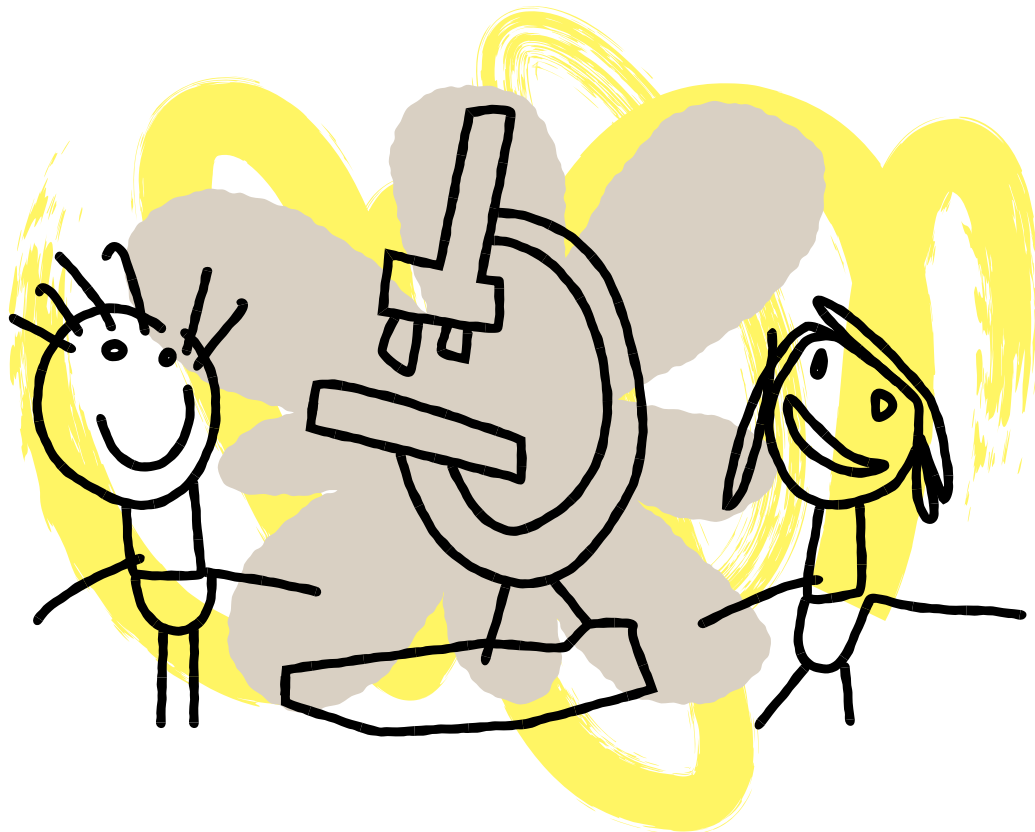
→ **288**

Clinical and  
community events,  
workshops and  
planning days

# Research fellow

## Looking at stroke in children as a complication of bacterial meningitis

by Dr Margot Price, Paediatric Registrar



In New Zealand, children face a disproportionately high risk of stroke as a complication of bacterial meningitis compared with other high-income nations, and Māori and Pacific children are particularly affected. This devastating complication significantly increases the risk of death, but until now there has been little research in this area.

Research fellow Margot Price secured funding to investigate paediatric stroke as a complication of acute bacterial meningitis, looking at risk factors and identifying opportunities for interventions.

She says that previously, little data has been available to inform treatment interventions,

although research in Canada reveals that stroke raises the death rate in children with bacterial meningitis from 4 percent to 25 percent. “Therefore, the early recognition of meningitis and effective prevention of stroke is an important clinical goal for children in New Zealand.”

Bacterial meningitis is a serious infection of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. It can lead to life-threatening complications, including stroke.

The study revealed that 11 percent of bacterial meningitis cases progress to stroke. “A key goal is to reduce this rate and the associated death rate.”





**Dr Price says the results have been compelling with key insights revealed, including:**

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Males and lower socioeconomic background are associated with higher stroke risk

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Māori and Pacific children are particularly vulnerable

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Children with bacterial meningitis who experience stroke often deteriorate during admission and present with partial seizure.

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These findings help clinicians identify opportunities for intervention and stress the use of brain scan as an important screening tool.

Excitingly, the study revealed that anti-thrombotic therapy shows promise in preventing stroke or stroke recurrence in paediatric bacterial meningitis.

With Māori and Pacific children disproportionately impacted, Dr Price's project will advance Māori healthcare and reduce disparity.

“The data obtained will contribute to updating the Starship Clinical Guideline for Meningitis and Acute Stroke used nationally and may form the basis for further studies including clinical trials to examine prophylactic use of anticoagulative therapy in bacterial meningitis.”

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**A medical fellowship is an advanced training programme that follows the completion of residency, providing doctors with the opportunity to specialise in a particular area of medicine. In Australia and New Zealand, fellowships represent an important step for medical professionals aiming to become consultant doctors.**



**“I am very grateful for the opportunities provided during this year as a Starship Foundation fellow. This experience has allowed me to contribute meaningfully to research in a critical area of paediatric morbidity and mortality while enhancing my clinical skills in paediatric neurology ahead of completing my subspecialty training overseas.”** — Research fellow, Dr Margot Price.

# A lasting legacy



Bringing years of planning and generosity to life, the Athlae Lyon Day Stay Unit opened its doors at Starship, a place that will transform care for thousands of children and their families.

The unit was officially opened by Health Minister Simeon Brown, with Athlae's husband Cliff Lyon, their family, and the Starship community gathered to celebrate a remarkable woman and the enduring generosity of supporters who make a difference every day.

## Who Athlae was

For many years, **Athlae Lyon** gave her heart and voice to Starship. She was more than a supporter, she was an advocate for children, a believer in research and innovation, and a woman who lived by the principle of giving back. **The Athlae Lyon Starship Research Trust**, created in her name, continues to invest in advances that transform child health, ensuring her impact lives on.

Cliff Lyon, now 92, says seeing Athlae's name on the new day stay unit is profoundly meaningful for their family:

## The Athlae Lyon Day Stay Unit opens at Starship

"Athlae gave so much of herself to Starship, her time, her voice, her heart. Knowing her legacy now lives on in a place that helps children every day is something we're immensely proud of."

### What does the Athlae Lyon Day Stay Unit mean for Starship?

Until now, Starship's day stay care was delivered in a single, small room, a space never designed for the growing number of children needing treatment that doesn't require an overnight stay.

The new Athlae Lyon Day Stay Unit changes that. With **six treatment bays and two purpose-built rooms for sleep studies**, the unit will triple Starship's capacity, giving children and families a calmer, more appropriate space for day procedures such as infusions, allergy testing, or monitoring.

Charge Nurse at the Athlae Lyon Day Stay Unit, Hamish Esslemont-Clow says patients receiving medical procedures not requiring a general anaesthetic now have a calm and inviting environment to receive treatment.

"There is increased privacy and more comfortable bedspaces with chairs and beds. This has allowed the assessment, delivery of diagnosis and education to occur in a more patient and whānau-friendly space. The build and prior smaller space displaced these patients into various areas within the hospital.

"Families have a more consistent location to arrive for regular treatment leading to less confusion. These patients who are

often electively well were exposed to the fast-paced surgical environment or acute inpatient wards where challenging and distressing procedures were being carried out. The new space has equally allowed medical patients with more sensory issues to be cared for.

“The unit is well sound-proofed providing a calm and supportive environment where children with anxieties around vaccines, minor procedural work etc. can be supported by nursing and play specialists. Families have a larger space, newer patient chairs and equipment making their time in the new unit a more comfortable stay.”

### Making a difference

The opening of the Athlæ Lyon Day Stay Unit marks an important milestone in Starship’s \$48 million rebuild project which

also includes the significant expansion of the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit. Of this total, \$23 million has been made possible through the generosity of Starship supporters, a powerful demonstration of how philanthropy can truly transform a hospital.

**“On behalf of the nursing and medical teams of Day Stay I would like to express our gratitude towards all those that made the development of the new medical unit possible. The modern facility has made the task of providing care a more enjoyable and efficient process. We would particularly like to express how grateful we are to have a tea room and a working space that makes their day a more pleasant experience.”** — Hamish Esslemont-Clow, Charge Nurse at the Athlæ Lyon Day Stay Unit.





# Kilometres for Kids

This last year, something extraordinary happened. In March, thousands of New Zealanders laced up their shoes, hopped on their bikes, and hit the streets, trails, and parks across the country. Together, more than 6,500 people joined the inaugural Kilometres for Kids challenge – and in just one month, they raised an astounding **\$1.1 million to help keep the Starship National Air Ambulance flying.**

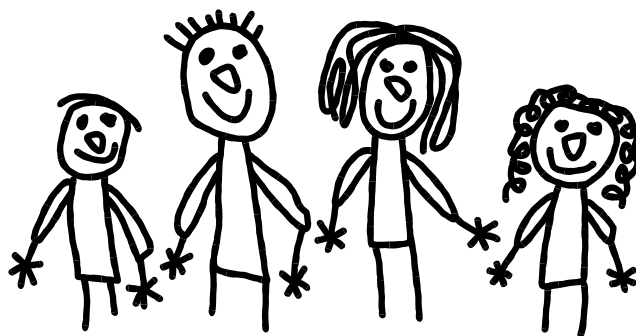
The idea was simple but powerful: walk, run, or cycle as many kilometres as you could, while raising funds to support Starship's most critically ill and injured children. But what happened went far beyond fundraising. Families, friends,

# A record-breaking beginning

colleagues, schools, and communities came together – moving their bodies, sharing their stories, and uniting around one clear goal: helping Starship give children the very best chance at life.

Among the many faces of this campaign was little Ezekiel Eadie from Southland, who needed the Starship Air Ambulance to reach life-saving heart surgery as a newborn. Ezekiel's story inspired thousands, and his family walked 85 kilometres together to give back to the hospital that saved their son's life. His smile became the symbol of what this campaign is all about – hope, resilience, and community.





Starship Foundation CEO, Jo Simon, who personally walked over 12 kilometres every day during the challenge, described the movement best: **“Knowing when I was out walking that there were literally more than 6,000 people in New Zealand doing the same thing, for the same reason, was an incredible feeling. It was a true sense of community.”**

Every step, every pedal, and every kilometre helped ensure that every 48 hours, the little rocket plane that is the Starship Air Ambulance can keep flying to rescue children like Ezekiel.

And this is only the beginning. Kilometres for Kids is coming back bigger and better in 2026. We can't wait to see more Kiwis out in force – moving together, making a difference, and enjoying the great outdoors while raising vital funds for Starship.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to everyone who walked, ran, cycled, donated, and cheered us on. Your generosity and energy are keeping Starship soaring.

**Join us next year – one kilometre at a time, you're helping save lives.**

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**\$1.1M**  
**raised**  
**for**  
**Starship**

**→ 6,500**

Participants walking, running and cycling across Aotearoa New Zealand

**→ 31**

Days of movement in March 2025

**→ 1**

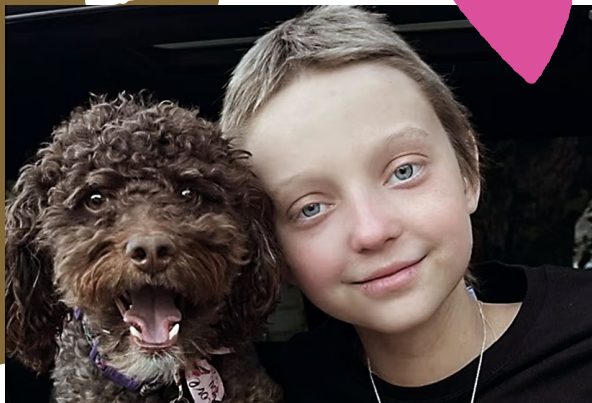
Shared goal: giving New Zealand's sickest children the best chance at life

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# A warrior's gift: Special thank you

STARSHIP FOUNDATION



Avie Skye Bensch was diagnosed with a rare form of leukaemia while her family was temporarily living in New Zealand from the United States. They found themselves at Starship Hospital, beginning a journey that would test their strength and resilience, but also inspire them to create hope for countless other children in New Zealand.

Avie Skye underwent intensive chemotherapy at Starship's Blood and Cancer Centre. After five weeks, her parents, Jenn and Freddy, faced the reality that Avie Skye needed further treatment to give her the best chance of cure that was not immediately available in New Zealand, thus they returned with her to the United States to continue her treatment with the latest advancements in medical care.

→ **"The fight of our lives began," says Jenn Bensch. "I'm beyond proud of her grace, strength, fortitude, and resilience. She's a warrior in the truest sense of the word."**

Back home, Avie Skye faced many more rounds of chemotherapy, lumbar punctures, tests, medications, radiation therapy, medical trials, and a stem cell transplant. The Bensch family were struck by the reality that some advanced treatments available in the US were not

## The Bensch family and the future of Advanced Cell and Gene Therapies in New Zealand

immediately accessible to children in New Zealand. Having been fortunate enough to have the resources to get the most advanced care, they were saddened that kids in New Zealand did not have local access to some of these treatments.

Determined to make a difference, the Bensch family made a transformative foundation gift to Starship to help launch New Zealand's first Advanced Cell Therapies programme for children. Their aim: to give Kiwi children access to the most advanced treatments and ensure no family has to question whether their child is receiving the best possible care.

"No family should have to question if their child is getting the world's best care, especially in a country like New Zealand," says Jenn. "We saw the incredible dedication of the Starship team to Avie Skye, but also how limited they were by funding. We had to help them get the tools they deserved. We invite you to join us in building a future where every child has every possible chance to live past their cancer."

Today, Avie Skye is celebrating life in full, cancer-free and thriving. She recently marked her two-year milestone and spent a month at camp, enjoying the freedoms and joys of childhood that cancer once threatened to steal. Avie Skye and her parents' vision is clear: to ensure that other families in New Zealand can access the treatments that gave their daughter a second chance at life.

Through the Bensch family's generosity, Starship is not just advancing medicine, it is creating hope, resilience, and possibility for children and families across the country.

IMPACT REPORT

**Thank you  
to our  
Five Star  
Partners**

# Bringing care closer to home



## The Panama Road School Whare Hauora

The new Panama Road School Whare Hauora will be a vital community resource, serving children and families across the wider Panmure and Mt Wellington areas in Auckland.

Until now, Starship's Community School Nurse, who supports Panama Road School 2.5 days a week, has worked wherever space could be found, often in shared areas like the school reception. The new Whare Hauora will transform this, providing **two dedicated clinical rooms** where children can receive care safely, privately, and with dignity.

This purpose-built space will enable a wide range of health and social services to come together under one roof, improving access and coordination for families who need it most. In 2024 alone, there were **247 direct nursing referrals and over 1,000 appointments** across the local area, demonstrating the scale of need. While Panama Road School has 347 enrolled students, the Whare Hauora will benefit a much larger community of **377 children under 15 and 717 families living nearby**.

Panama Road School serves a community with high health needs and a large Pacific and Māori population, around 200 Pacific and 75 Māori students. By offering accessible, wraparound care in a familiar environment, the Whare Hauora will help break down barriers to health and wellbeing, supporting not just children, but entire whānau.

The Panama Road School Whare Hauora represents a powerful step toward health

equity, bringing essential services closer to the people who need them most, and helping ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.



**This project was made possible by the combined generosity of our Five Star Partners, Mercury and Barfoot & Thompson, proving that collaboration is the key to giving every child the care they deserve.**

# Thank you Mercury



## Investing in people: Further education

Mercury has been an incredible Five Star partner of Starship Foundation for nearly 25 years, helping to transform care for children across New Zealand.



This year, Mercury and their customers helped enable 96 Starship staff to upskill, deepening their expertise and ensuring children receive the very best care possible.

## Certificate in Paediatric Nutrition & Dietetics

Paediatric Dietitian Lesley Savage attended the Royal Children's Hospital Certificate in Paediatric Nutrition Unit 2, gaining new

insights into managing complex conditions such as liver and renal disease.

Her new knowledge has already improved care for several young patients, including an ex-premature toddler with short bowel disease.

**"During the course I learnt that this toddler should be able to transition to standard cow's milk from her specialised formula. Her bowel is likely to adapt, allowing her to tolerate a standard diet long-term. Thank you for enabling me to attend this course."**  
— Lesley Savage, Paediatric Dietitian.

## Eating Disorders Service

Three members of Starship's Eating Disorders Service visited Sydney to meet with the Child Eating Disorder Network at Westmead and Randwick Children's Hospitals.

The visit offered valuable insights into structured day programmes and multi-family therapy models, approaches that balance inpatient and outpatient care for young people with severe eating disorders.

"We learnt how they've created a continuum of care, built longevity into their services, and managed common challenges. We came away with new resources, relationships, and an invitation to return to develop our skills further."

The team is now working to adapt these learnings to Starship, enhancing the continuum of care for our young patients and their families.





### Expanding metabolic care nationwide

Another project funded this year by Mercury and its customers was the growth of the National Metabolic Dietitian team to reduce wait times and increase access to care, benefiting many patients and their families, over half of whom live outside Auckland.

The National Metabolic Service cares for patients and their families with Inherited Metabolic Disease (IMDs). These are lifelong, genetic conditions.

Metabolism is the way the body breaks down food into products it uses for energy, growth and repair. If a person has an IMD, their body has problems with breaking down food normally or with using broken down food. IMDs are usually treated with specialised diets, vitamins or medication.

Metabolic Dietitians play a crucial role in educating families and supporting them to achieve strict dietary and medication plans to support long-term health.

### James's metabolic story

James was born prematurely by emergency C-section due to serious pregnancy complications. At just five days old, he was diagnosed with LCHADD, a rare metabolic disorder affecting fat processing — adding to an already stressful time.

**We sincerely thank Mercury and all its wonderful customers for their generosity and support, which makes a real difference to the lives of Starship kids.**



# Thank you Barfoot & Thompson



## Supporting recovery and comfort in Intensive Care

Since their arrival, the P Pods have become a vital part of care in Starship's Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). For critically ill or complex patients, they offer safe, supportive seating that was previously unavailable, helping children move out of bed and begin recovery sooner.

Available in two sizes, the P Pods allow clinicians to accommodate a wider range of patients, providing secure positioning and enabling early mobilisation. This approach is proven to reduce ICU-acquired weakness, shorten hospital stays, improve respiratory function, and enhance long-term outcomes.

## Already, the P Pods are improving care through:

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Greater access to supportive seating  
in PICU

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Integration into early mobilisation protocols

---

Better patient comfort and engagement  
in therapy.

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## A moment that mattered

One young patient with cerebral palsy was admitted to PICU with respiratory failure and unable to use his usual wheelchair. The P Pod provided a safe alternative, allowing him to sit upright early in recovery. Within days, his breathing improved, and his mother was so impressed she began exploring one for home use.



## Supporting literacy and wellbeing at Starship

The Magic of Reading Programme ensures every child who spends a night in Starship is gifted a book of their very own to take home.

Made possible by our amazing Five Star Partner Barfoot & Thompson, over 270,000 books have been gifted since 2003.

**Thanks to Barfoot & Thompson's generous funding, P Pods are helping children recover faster, stay more comfortable, and regain a sense of normalcy, even in intensive care.**

# Special thanks to our corporate family and our key supporters

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## Partners

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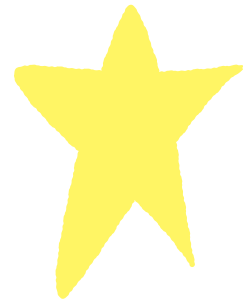
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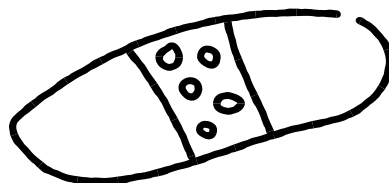
**And thank you to all the key supporters  
 who we were unable to reach or chose not  
 to be named.**





### Gifts in Wills

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# Gifts in Wills, leaving a legacy

Every act of generosity shapes Starship's future but some gifts go even further, carrying a legacy of hope that will live on for generations.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Starship Foundation, you are helping ensure that New Zealand's children continue to have access to world-class care, pioneering treatments, and the very best chance at life. It's a powerful way to extend your values, to reflect your belief in brighter futures, and to make a difference long beyond your lifetime.

Even a gift of 1% after you've provided for your loved ones, will have a lasting impact on the countless young lives we touch every day.

Legacy gifts have already transformed Starship in remarkable ways from funding cutting-edge research and equipment, to supporting the rebuilding of critical facilities that change the way children and families experience care.

When you choose to leave a gift in your will, you are joining a community of visionaries whose generosity secures tomorrow's Starship, today.

**If you would like to learn more about leaving a legacy of love and care, please contact the Starship Foundation team in confidence.**





# Let's keep the momentum going

Follow us, stay connected, and if you can, consider donating. Your support truly means the world.

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—

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[starshipfoundation.org.nz](http://starshipfoundation.org.nz)





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mission and brings us one  
step closer to a brighter  
future. With your help we  
can nurture a nation of  
healthy children, together.  
**Donate today.**

