

The South Waikato Achievement Trust

The South Waikato Achievement Trust, based in Tokoroa, was established in 1972 to provide support for accident victims and people with disabilities in the South Waikato region. The Trust has expanded during 44 years of operation and now supports any people from the region who have a disability, are disadvantaged or marginalised.

The ultimate objective of the Trust is to provide a means by which any person with a disability or disadvantaged or marginalised people can be fully involved as active members of their community through employment, through community involvement and by having access to a good living environment with support when needed.

People who feel that they belong and are positively contributing to their community have a higher level of self-esteem. As well as the personal gains for each person, this leads to a more vibrant and diverse community with less crime and a better environment for everyone.

The Trust provides a range of support services which include three key life elements for the disadvantaged and people with disabilities: A place to live, employment and socialisation within the community.

The Trust is a not for profit organisation but operates in a professional and business-like manner to provide sustainable long term benefits to the community. The supported living section of the Trust provides a home for over 20 people who need various levels of support and supports a further larger number of people to participate in and contribute to the community.

Support is provided through a range of services including supported residential dwellings, supported community integration and employment opportunities:

Supported living is provided in a range of residential dwellings. Those who need a high level of support are provided for in a 16 bedroom facility with 24 hour support. If support needs decline, the Trust provides other residential options from group housing to individual dwelling units.

All people at the Trust are encouraged and supported to be part of the community through a number of programmes which encourage involvement in community events and development workshops which improve social and vocational skills to enable increased independence and more active involvement in the community.

Employment is a key factor in enabling people to feel and be a part of their community so the Trust operates four not for profit social enterprises which employ over 50 people with disabilities who might otherwise be unemployed. One social enterprise operates the Tokoroa transfer station and a further enterprise collects and recycles electronic waste from a region that stretches from Ruapehu to the Bay of Plenty and Hawkes Bay. The Trust is also a major packer of firewood and kindling which is stocked by a number of major retail outlets in the central North Island. A further enterprise provides general packaging and light assembly services to industry.

The enterprises must comply with all health and safety and other laws and they must be self-sustaining. These enterprises have generated 54 jobs in Tokoroa that would probably otherwise not exist. The flow on effect of these 54 jobs is immense as the income is spent locally and used to support local families. The employees are proud of their work and the workplace buzzes with enthusiasm and a willingness to do the job and do it well.

Being employed provides an income and a sense of community belonging. It is also an opportunity to improve work skills for advancement to other employment in the region.

You can support the Trust's work by:

- Recycling electronic waste responsibly through the Trust or at Waikato collection points.

- Purchasing firewood and kindling from the Trust's office at 12 Thompson St, Tokoroa or from selected New World and Pak n Save outlets.
- Using the recycling services available at the Croad Place transfer station.
- Contacting the Trust regarding any packaging, labelling or light assembly work that you require done.

The Trust has a staff of 60 dedicated and skilled people and supports over 90 people at 6 locations throughout Tokoroa. To find out more visit www.swac.co.nz

