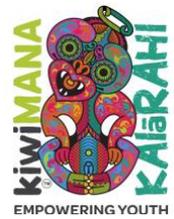




Ngā Anahera Pakira

Bald Angels Charitable Trust



4 February 2026

To: Minister Matt Doocey -by email: Matt.Doocey@parliament.govt.nz

Kia ora Minister,

In my role as a Children's Charity leader, I face the desperation, destruction and despair caused by poor mental health daily.

It's hard to watch whānau breaking under the strain of anxiety, depression, and inequity and lack of accessibility.

In the last year, I have personally talked two young people back from suicidal action. Others in our rangatahi network have mentored three other youth through very low points. These young people do not have the wherewithal to reach out for help. And when you're that deep in the 'pit' you generally don't reach out. It takes a special friend to notice and take action. These kiwi kids may be alive today because they have mentors keeping a close eye on them, and connecting with their whānau to guide and support wellbeing choices.

Whānau often are struggling themselves, and simply don't have the energy, knowledge or resources to fight for care.

I have personally hit walls calling emergency lines to get help on behalf of these rangatahi. If I, with my resources, knowledge and mental capacity can hit walls and be refused service, for all sorts of reasons (usually no capacity) how can these people possibly get the support they need.

It is only through my contacts and experience that I have been able get the help needed at the time.

We need to do better. You need to do better for our children.

The stats that say more than one in four kids are struggling seem low to me. In our rohe; in our mahi, without stats to prove it-I'd reckon higher than two in four tamariki are missing school, sports, socialising, and positive outcomes due to poor mental health.

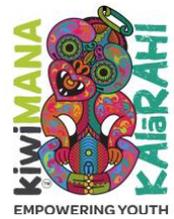
Furthermore, we are seeing good kids, from challenging backgrounds, heading straight into the school to prison pipeline. Is that because they are not accessing services and safe spaces and people needed that can support their neuro diversities, differences, diversities and traumas? From where I sit-yes is the answer.

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Your choice: build more prisons and invest in crime fighting. Or invest in our tamariki and preventative care models that grow healthy adults to serve our communities.

Come and spend time with me.

Sit with me and marvel at young mums who are unbelievably resilient. Their survival capacity is beyond comprehension. Listen to them beg for help to support their tamariki who are carrying the trauma and fear. Sense their own mental fragility, as well as inner strength to stay alive for their kids. They're teetering on the edge. Their kids are falling out of the system- stood down from schools and rejected by sports clubs. They're in effect, booted onto the streets, where they look for connection- and find it in gangs.

Observe kids toughing up, pretending to be ok, and looking for connection... or 'end it all' ideas on the internet.

See my own frustration when I get a reply to a referral to mental health services for a young person who really needs professional support(yes, again today)
"They don't qualify / we can't help/ we're sorry-it's at least a three week wait.

Well, Minister Doocey. I feel fear for the future of this country and our communities.

Your choice: build more prisons and invest in crime fighting. Or invest in our tamariki and preventative care models that grow healthy adults to serve our communities.

Ngā mihi nui

Thérèse Wickbom (she/her/ia)

Co-Founder CVO

Bald Angels Charitable Trust -Ngā Anahera Pakira

'All tamariki (children)deserve to thrive'
NZ Charities Services Register #CC50983
www.baldangels.org.nz

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