Financial Capability of Māori in 2025

Navigating Challenges and Opportunities

Presented Dr Alexander Stevens II

Welcome back!

2025

CHALLENGE AHEAD FOR 2025 / 2026

Financial wellbeing shouldn’t be left to the luck of a coin flip, it requires careful planning, knowledge, and control.

WEALTH AND HEALTH / FLIP OF THE COIN

- Money stress affects our mind (hinengaro), spirit (wairua), and body (tinana).
- Financial strength supports overall hauora (wellbeing).
- Improving your finances = improving your life.

“Money is not just numbers. It’s about values, choices, and the future of our whānau.” Wahine participant

FINANCIAL STRESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING

- Financial stress significantly impacts mental wellbeing. In a recent survey, Te Ara Ahunga Ora Retirement Commission. (n.d.). Financial capability research.
    - 83% of Māori reported concerns about money.
    - 57% experienced stress due to financial worries.
    - 40% made unhealthy eating choices as a result of financial stress.
    - 38% avoided accessing health services because of financial concerns.

    - 16.3% per 100,000 of Māori compared to 9.0% per 100,000 Non-Māori (Mental Health Foundation, n.d). 147 Māori suicides/year

FINANCIAL STRESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING

- Studies show families experiencing financial difficulties report higher rates of domestic violence and relationship breakdowns.

- Māori households face disproportionate economic hardship due to systemic inequities (e.g., lower incomes, higher unemployment), which correlates with the overrepresentation of Māori in family violence statistics.

- Financial stress can also reduce the ability to access support services or counselling, prolonging cycles of abuse.

(Good Shepherd, n.d.; Ministry of Social Development, 2019)

YOUR WORK MATTERS

The work of those in the financial capability sector matters deeply, it empowers individuals to make informed financial decisions that not only build lasting wealth, but also reduce stress, improve mental well-being, and ultimately enhance overall health and quality of life

KO WAI AU / HOW MY WORK FITS IN

- Kaupapa Māori research
- Senior Māori Academic AUT
- CEO StandingTallNZ.org
- Financial capability $$$
- Sexual violence recovery
- Family violence
- Mental Health / Rongoa
- Suicide prevention
- Addictions recovery
- Mentoring
- Facilitations

RECENT RESEARCH

107 people in 2024 aged 16–72 were interviewed about financial capability to understand their financial knowledge, behaviours, confidence, and the challenges they face in managing money in today’s economic environment.

Here are some of the findings

PUT IN ORDER WHAT PEOPLE WANTED TO DEAL WITH FIRST

Below are the top seven themes that came up consistently. In pairs, place the topics in order of relevance or importance based on frequency and impact as identified by participant

- Learning financial speak
- Investments
- Insurance
- Debt
- Wills and Testaments
- Fraud Protection
- Budget and Planning

PRIORITY OF THEMES

1. Debt
2. Learning financial speak
3. Budget and Planning
4. Investments
5. Insurance
6. Wills and Testaments
7. Fraud Protection

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE MATTERS

Participants want to learn the language of finance. Name the four areas based on the language used below

- Premium
- Policy
- Cover / Coverage
- Claim
- Excess
- Underwriting
- Lapse
- Renewal
- Policyholder
- Beneficiary

- Loan
- Interest
- Principal
- Repayment
- Term
- Arrears
- Default
- Creditor
- Debtor
- Lender

- Beneficiary
- Executor
- Trustee
- Witness
- Lawyer
- Guardian
- Heir
- Next of kin

- Income
- Expenses
- Surplus
- Deficit
- Cash flow
- Fixed expenses
- Variable expenses
- Discretionary spending
- Needs vs wants
- Savings
- Emergency fund

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE MATTERS

INSURANCE

- Premium
- Policy
- Cover / Coverage
- Claim
- Excess
- Underwriting
- Lapse
- Renewal
- Policyholder
- Beneficiary

DEBT

- Loan
- Interest
- Principal
- Repayment
- Term
- Arrears
- Default
- Creditor
- Debtor
- Lender

WILLS & TESTAMENTS

- Beneficiary
- Executor
- Trustee
- Witness
- Lawyer
- Guardian
- Heir
- Next of kin

BUDGETS

- Income
- Expenses
- Surplus
- Deficit
- Cash flow
- Fixed expenses
- Variable expenses
- Discretionary spending
- Needs vs wants
- Savings
- Emergency fund

HOPE NOT FALSE HOPE

Our people, families, and communities want to thrive, not just survive, and your work is vital in breaking down barriers, shaping empowering messages, and building partnerships that create real opportunities for lasting change; your work with our people matter, “now more than ever.”

- Our people, families and communities want to get ahead.
- Messaging is everything (trouble and troubled are two different things).
- We need to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for partnerships.
- The challenges we face are many, yet your work is vital, important, and needed.

A SPECIAL MENTION - TONGAN LANGUAGE WEEK

Next week is Tongan Language Week, a time to celebrate ko e lea faka-Tonga, our language. Ko 'etau lea, ko e fe'unu mahu'inga ia ki he mo'ui 'ae Tonga.

Connecting to culture, identity, and ancestors. By speaking and sharing our language, we keep our heritage strong for future generations.

TONGAN AMBASSADORS

Queen Sālote Tupou III

Jona Lomu

Devolo

TONGAN AMBASSADORS

We honour Tongan ambassadors like Queen Salote Tupou III, Jonah Lomu, and rapper Devolo, who have proudly carried Tongan language and culture onto the world stage.

Their legacy reminds us of the strength in our voices and the power of staying true to who we are.

IN THE FINANCE SPACE

Chris Fifita
Debt Managers

Victoria Ongolea
Good Shepherd NZ

THE NEXT GENERATION

As we celebrate Tongan Language Week, we also acknowledge the rising generation of Tongan financial advisors and all those working in the financial capability sector.

Your presence and leadership are breaking new ground, supporting our communities to build wealth, confidence, and resilience. You are not only guiding families through financial decisions, you are reshaping futures and lifting up our people.

Malo 'aupito for the vital work you do. Your role is powerful, your voice matters, and your journey inspires the next wave of Tongan excellence.

SIONE FINAU UPDATE

Since the last presentation, Sione has made strong progress on his financial journey. He’s consistently contributing 10% of his salary to KiwiSaver, with an additional 3% from his employer, and has already built up a balance of $20,000. He now has a solid budget in place that helps him manage his income and expenses effectively. Sione has also taken steps to protect his future by securing full insurance coverage. Importantly, he’s on track to clear all his remaining debt by the end of 2025. His progress shows the power of planning, discipline, and access to the right financial tools.

NEXT GENERATION IN GOOD HANDS

Chris Fifita
Debt Managers

Victoria Ongolea
Good Shepherd NZ

Sione Finau
Financial Capability

FREE GIFT – STANDINGTALLNZ.ORG

financial capability information is now available on the standingtallnz.org website, including the innovative Money Talks program. This initiative offers practical tools and guidance to help people confidently manage their money, break down financial barriers, and build a more secure future.

StandingTallNZ.org

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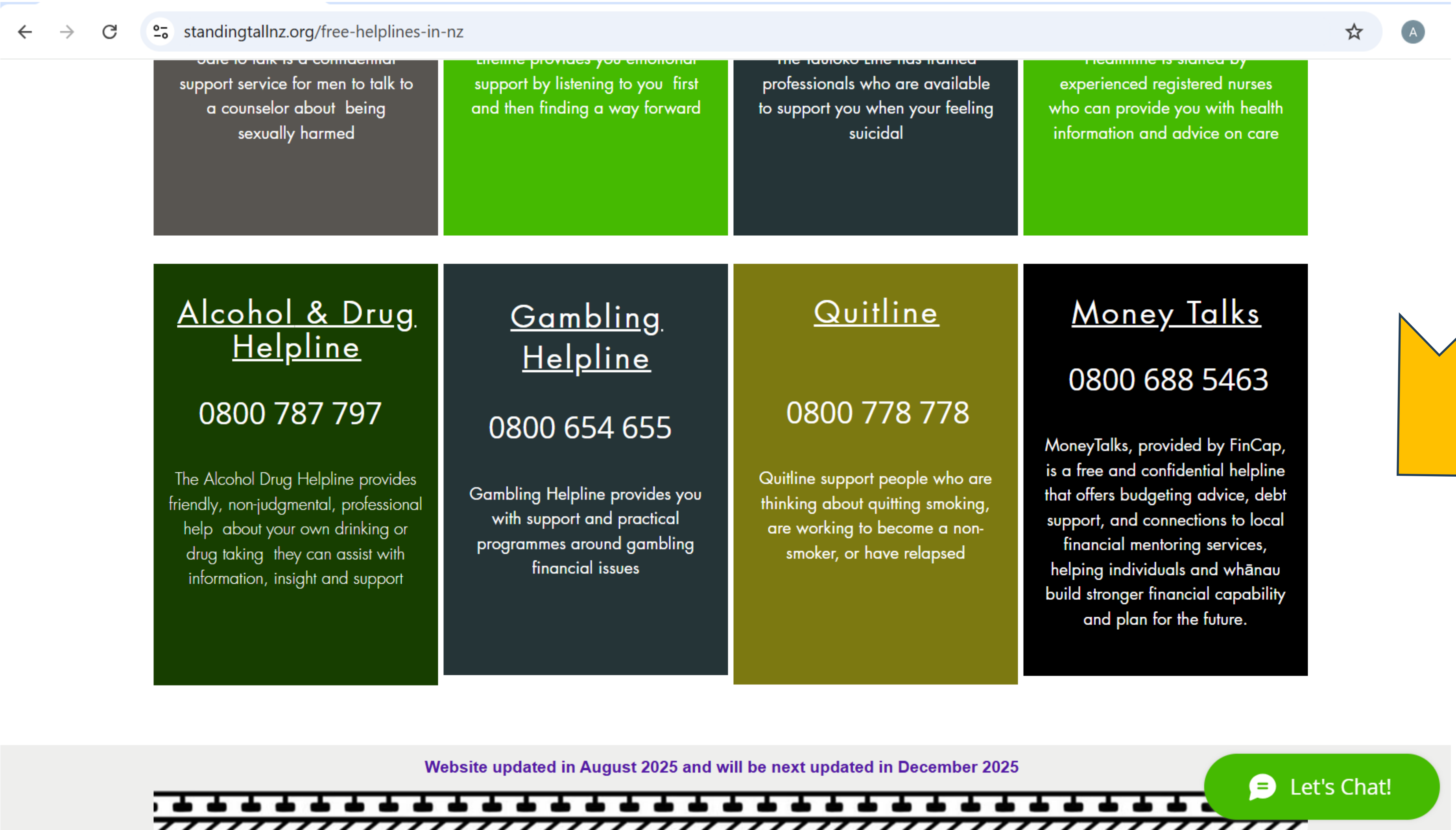
Financial Capability ✓

MONEY TALKS ON OUR 0800 PAGE



Financial capability, step by step

Click on the note to learn more

This information is for general learning only and is not personal financial advice, please seek

STRONGER TOGETHER

Financial capability for Māori is like nurturing a precious taonga coin handed down through generations, when cared for with knowledge and wisdom, it grows in value and strength, empowering whānau to thrive and maintain their mana in today’s world.

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A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS