

Te Ikarere

He ika haehae kupenga

The fish that shreds the net

A youth perspective of Police pursuits

For youth, by youth, in partnership with Police

“...cause we’re actually sitting down and talking about it, where not much people really get that. So, you actually get to see the consequences or the few options you have or whatnot. This is the only chance I’ve had to actually sit down and talk about it, no-one’s really wanted to talk about it before, they just wanted to put me behind bars.” – *18-year-old-male*

Presented by Nicole Macquet
Founder and Director of WithBox

June 2021



Dedication

This engagement is dedicated to the life and memory of Bailey Patmore, a bright, funny and energetic young man full of potential who was taken from all who knew and loved him to soon.

E kore koe e ngaro, he kākano nō Rangiātea

You shall never be lost for you are a sacred seed sown in the heavens

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Findings: Rangatahi perspectives of the fleeing driver event.....	11
Police response to rangatahi perspectives.....	26
Recommendations.....	29
Positive Outcomes.....	36
References.....	42

Acknowledgements

This report was created with the courageous and open involvement of rangatahi (young people). Their willingness to share their experiences with such raw authenticity is to be admired. The lives of rangatahi, their voices and experiences are at the centre of this report.

New Zealand Police are to be commended for their determination and vision to seek change in a respectful and innovative way. We applaud NZ Police for their enthusiasm and dedication to Prevention First, along with a willingness to engage with vulnerable rangatahi in ways which support their wellbeing.

Thank you to the host organisations who opened their doors, facilitated the ability to connect with rangatahi and provided the space and resources that made this work possible.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the wider WithBox team; Kate Bower, Dr Kate Bryson, Viv Campbell, Aileen Cheshire, Seamus Curtin, Karina Janislowski, Claire John, Dr Venezia Kingi and Emily Paterson for their invaluable contributions to this project.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge and sincerely thank Luke Crawford, Māori Cultural Advisor at New Zealand Rugby, for gifting our project with its name and whakatauki (proverb).



Image: Aimee Jules Photography

Introduction

Background

Fleeing driver events are a problem in New Zealand. In 2017 there were 3,796 fleeing driver events, of which 626 ended in vehicle crashes. As a result of those crashes 12 people were killed and 170 injured. In May 2018, two rangatahi aged 15 and 12 years old died in Palmerston North after the car they were travelling in failed to stop for Police and crashed. Similarly, a 15-year-old died in the boot of a stolen car in Wellington in May 2018 following a similar incident.

The aim of this project is to increase understanding into the reasons why rangatahi get into cars and why they don't stop for Police. It also explores what happens after the event has ended. A prime motive behind this work is a strong desire from NZ Police to seek meaningful change, which positions whanaungatanga (relationship) and the wellbeing of rangatahi at the forefront.

This report narrates the stories of rangatahi and their passengers, and shares their experiences when involved in a fleeing driver event. To that end, this report places the reader in the midst of the event to help them understand the reasons why rangatahi get into cars, why they don't stop for Police and what happens during and after the event. In doing so, the language and descriptions used in this report directly reflect the perspectives and experiences of rangatahi.

Purpose

This project delivers to *NZ Police: Our Business* (NZ Police, 2020) with particular focus on prevention through partnership. It also aligns with the cross-agency *The Youth Crime Action Plan 2013-2023* (Ministry of Justice, 2013) and the specific target of a 5 percent reduction in road deaths each year, every year. Youth is one of the six drivers of demand as defined by Prevention First report (NZ Police, 2017) with an emphasis on understanding the drivers and design tactics and deployment activities to beat demand.

The project also satisfies Recommendation 8 outlined in the Independent Police Complaints Authority (IPCA) report called *Fleeing Drivers in New Zealand - a collaborative review of events, practices, and procedures* that advises Police to commission further research to increase the understanding of the motivations of young people involved in fleeing driver offences (IPCA, 2019). The increasing numbers of rangatahi involved in speeding vehicles and fleeing driver events means we need to better understand their perspectives and experiences to be able to design effective preventative strategies that reduce youth offending, injury and death.

This project specifically meets the three priorities of *NZ Police Our Business* (NZ Police, 2020): *Be First then Do, Deliver the Services New Zealanders Expect and Deserve, and Focused Prevention Through Partnerships*. WithBox shares the Police Commissioner's view that those working with rangatahi must be able to understand them in human terms. To do that we need to understand the journey of rangatahi and what led them there. Aligned with the Commissioner's focus on capturing voices of all those who receive Police services in a way that gains a deeper insight into their motivations and aspirations, Police saw a need to go beyond traditional research methods of data collection, analysis and making data-based only recommendations.

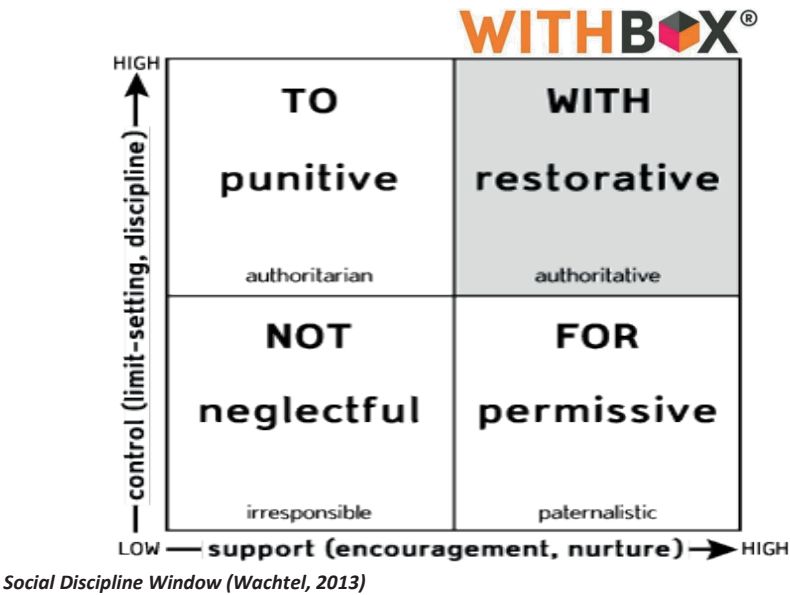
With the aim of focused prevention through partnerships, Police enlisted WithBox. WithBox has been able to carefully bring rangatahi involved in fleeing driver events to the table and facilitate working with Police in partnership, to co-design strategies which will protect rangatahi and communities from further harm.

This project was specifically designed by WithBox, to understand what leads to a fleeing driver event and what the post event consequences are for rangatahi. Acknowledging and upholding the mana, agency and worldview of our rangatahi is at the forefront of this project, where they are acknowledged as experts in their own lives. This project therefore hears directly from rangatahi and presents the unique and intimate experiences and views of young drivers and passengers involved in fleeing driver events. and places the reader in their shoes.

The WithBox engagement and research model

The WithBox approach works to move people from an us versus them mentality (see below diagram: the To box), where blame is assigned to those involved, to a position where people are in partnership with each other (the ‘With’ box), working against the problem together.

When in the ‘To’ box, the party with authority and power has their perspective and voice privileged; this can silence the other party. The WithBox concepts pay close attention to how we position ourselves in relationship to each other – where there is an awareness of power and space is made enabling both voices to be heard.



The WithBox engagement and research model works to reposition people from an us versus them mentality to a position where people are in partnership working against problems together. By immersing ourselves in the world of the people we seek to understand and their complex challenges, we are able to create partnership and build a bridge which connects both sides. This truly facilitates seeing and learning about each other’s worlds. Using curiosity in a genuine way gives us space for solutions to be codesigned and delivered together.

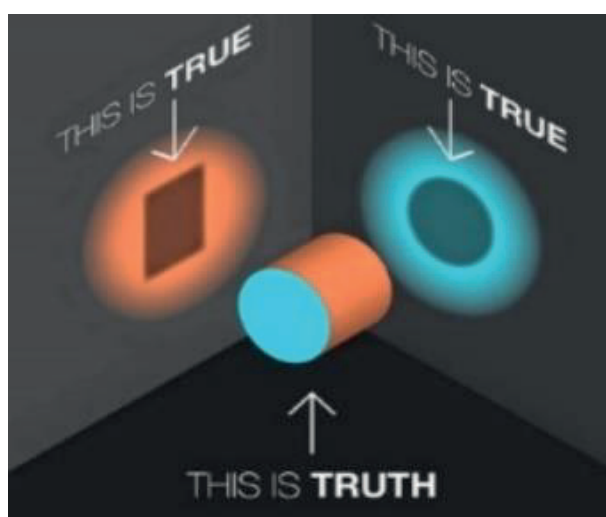
While this new and unique model incorporates some of the theoretical approaches of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 2009), WithBox methodology goes further. We go beyond collecting and working with data from participants to instead working with people and their data to design solutions together in partnership with key stakeholders.

The WithBox model seeks to ethically facilitate voice whilst upholding mana and agency of all parties. This is done by first developing a trusted relationship with the people in our projects whose needs are recognised and supported through engaging and immersing ourselves into their world, on their own terms. Data collection is only done once relationships have been formed and mutual trust has been built.

There is a distinct recognition that the participants' voices (the data) collected belong to the participants. This means that once data from semi-structured interviews is analysed, it is taken back to participants to ensure their voices are presented in a way that represents their world and views. This model seeks to involve them from the beginnings to the end of the project, where recommendations are designed in partnership. The findings and recommendations in this report are a result of the engagement, immersion, research and partnership used by the WithBox Engagement and Research model.

Language and positioning

Ultimately this is about perspective. The language used to describe a fleeing driver event will differ vastly depending on which car you are travelling in. When rangatahi are being chased by Police they see them in their rear-view mirror and therefore call this event a “*pig chase*”. By contrast, Police experience the driver fleeing from them, therefore referring to the situation as a “*fleeing driver event*”. Each view reflects the experience from the individual's perspective.



Two different perspectives of the same event

While factually correct, the term “fleeing driver” is one-sided. The issue with calling it a fleeing driver incident is that it labels the rangatahi as the problem and privileges the perspective of the Police as the only truth. The negative character description of a fleeing driver generates dominant assumptions about who they are and how we expect them to behave. Society and Police then follow these assumptions and make their own conclusions about the rangatahi. Once a problematic description or negative stereotype is constructed, it is almost impossible to change it.

| “The problem is the problem, the person is not the problem” – White, 1988

WithBox® uses a Narrative Therapy approach to working with problems. Narrative therapy works with the person's values, beliefs, skills and abilities in order for them to work towards their preferred way of being in the world. This considers the cultural and socio-economic context of people's lives.

Narrative Therapy separates the person from the problem, so the person can make a choice to take a stand against the problem. This is in contrast with many ways of thinking which identify people as the problem, creating a blame mentality which can result in guilt and shame. Ultimately, this prevents positive change.

To affect positive change, the event must be looked in the wider context. On one level, this is an event where one car pursues another, resulting in two cars travelling at high-speed. As such, this report describes these

events in a way which avoids labelling either party as the problem and attempts to shift, from a us versus them mentality to see the bigger picture.

Yet, there are also other factors at play which position rangatahi and Police in opposition to each other and create an us versus them mentality. Some rangatahi view Police as just another gang where members wear the same colour but have the advantage of the law on their side.

“They’re like one big gang. They’re their own gang, they all wear one colour, but it’s just they’re on the side of the law.” – *15-year-old male*.

The us versus them mentality can also be heard in reference to “hunting” when Police are looking to apprehend the fleeing driver.

“Bro this car is in your town, start hunting.” – *19-year-old male*

In response to this disconnect, this project was designed to reposition rangatahi and Police into a partnership to work alongside one another. To build relationships based on trust and to work towards a deeper understanding of each person’s worldview, engagements between rangatahi and Police were ongoing. This allowed us to connect, work together and codesign solutions with the common goal of preventing the injury and death of rangatahi on the roads.

“That’s what you boil it down to, it’s us versus them.” – *Police officer*

Our kaupapa

This project was driven by the WithBox kaupapa (purpose) of manaakitanga: showing kindness, generosity and support in order to show respect to rangatahi and uphold their mana (spiritual power). We recognise that rangatahi, particularly those in the justice system, are vulnerable people with complex needs and that they deserve to be heard and understood.

At WithBox we believe in genuinely engaging with rangatahi and developing an on-going relationship where care and support is provided on an individual and ongoing basis. This involves building a genuine relationship with our participants through sharing food, stories and experiences. It also means engaging with them on their own terms and then looking for meaningful ways to support them in the problems they are dealing with, before asking them to share their stories. This is about the deliberate care that is taken to truly connect with each participant and build the trust necessary to move into talking about very personal and emotional experiences, such as the fleeing driver event. Allowing rangatahi to do this in their own time and on their own terms recognises their right to agency and self-determination.

In this project, early engagement with rangatahi meant immersing ourselves in their world. This involved supporting them therapeutically, meeting their basic needs such as food and transport, linking them up with support and resources. As the project developed, further support was given in other areas of their lives such as family group conferences, attending youth court and assisting their whānau (family) to navigate the education and mental health system. During this journey of engagement and developing meaningful connections, rangatahi signalled to us when they felt that trust and mutual respect had slowly developed, as they began to open up about their lives, experiences and the daily challenges they face.

The project began with the roles of participant and practitioner, but as relationships developed and experiences were shared, this connection deepened with the rangatahi calling the people in the project the

“WithBox Whānau”. To us has greatly symbolised that our kaupapa has been achieved. This also tells us that to work with rangatahi and understand their worldview, using the principle of manaakitanga is necessary to authentically engage and truly understand them.

A therapeutic and culturally informed approach

The project, including engagements and interviews, were conducted by WithBox Director Nicole Macquet, an educator, mental health specialist and narrative therapist with 25 years’ experience of working with and supporting rangatahi and whānau. Throughout the entire process, rangatahi together with Nicole identified their various needs. In response to these needs, therapeutic support was provided to enable healing and protection of rangatahi guided by the principles of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) and Fonofale models of wellbeing (Polotu-Endemann, 2009).

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a Māori model of health which encompasses the four walls of the whare (house) where each wall represents the strong foundation of Māori wellbeing. The five dimensions are: Whenua (connection to land and roots), Taha tinana (physical health), Taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing), Taha whānau (family wellbeing) and Taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing). All five dimensions are essential to the whole of Māori wellbeing. Similarly, Fonofale is a Pacific model of health which encompasses values and beliefs about Pacifica people’s wellbeing. The fale signifies the house where the foundations, ceiling and walls represent the construct of health.

The Withbox approach and ethics are also heavily guided by the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, partnership, participation and protection. The approach acknowledges the rights of all indigenous people to self-determination, equality and non-discrimination, and participation underpinned by free, prior, informed consent, as signified by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and principles of Kaupapa Māori (NZ Human Rights Commission, 2021; Rangahau, 2021; Smith, 1992). WithBox ensured participating rangatahi had control over research processes by working with them in partnership with their data and maintained reciprocal research relationships, ensuring that equitable benefits were realised within our Māori and Pasifika groups. Culturally responsive protocols were adhered to when engaging with rangatahi and their whānau, as directed by the rangatahi. Additionally, a Māori wāhine with extensive experience working with Māori rangatahi was consulted throughout the project, to ensure continued cultural responsiveness and awareness.

Ethics, informed consent and peer review

A thorough and robust ethical assessment took place which was peer-reviewed before beginning engagements and interviews. Peers involved in the review and consulted throughout the project included psychologists, academics and researchers in the forensic psychology and criminology fields based in Aotearoa. All potential risks to the participants and other parties involved in the project were carefully assessed. As a member of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC), Nicole Macquet abides by the NZAC Code of Ethics.

The rangatahi

Sixteen rangatahi were invited to participate in the project from a variety of host organisations in the Wellington and Counties Manukau districts. There were thirteen male and three female rangatahi aged 13-19 at the time of initial engagements and interviews. Rangatahi self-identified as: seven Māori, two Pasifika, four Māori/Pasifika, two Māori/NZ European, one Māori/Pasifika/NZ European. Thirteen had been both driver and passenger, and three a passenger only in fleeing driver events. This sample is representative of the population of young fleeing drivers in Aotearoa who are predominantly male, with very few drivers being female.

As relationships with rangatahi were developed and trust was built, they invited Nicole into their worlds where she could immerse herself in their world view. Nicole visited the rangatahi regularly and provided them with support as the need arose, including in prison, youth residence, Police cells following arrest, youth court hearings, family group conferences, and in their school and whānau meetings, as well as supporting their whānau to navigate various agencies. It became evident that trust was built when one particular rangatahi reached out to Nicole for guidance when absconding on electronic bail, homeless on the streets, or on the run from Police. Nicole was able to ethically and culturally support rangatahi, connecting them with their whānau and appropriate support systems to ensure their safety and attend to their overall wellbeing.

Through this engagement and immersion an immense amount was learnt. One of the most common factors amongst all rangatahi is that they are predominantly living in poverty and have little or no access to resources such as money for transport and food. Many daily experience hunger, lack of sleep and no warm and safe place to live. A few rangatahi have been homeless, living on the street at different points of their young lives. For these rangatahi crime is viewed as a form of survival, a means of obtaining things others can access easily.

“Helping families and young teenagers that are struggling. They need someone that is going to always be there for them instead of relying on their mates or doing crime. I think the government should step up a bit more and help young teens and help the young people to get to where they want to be instead of them doing it themselves” – *16-year-old male*.

Police participation and partnership

Eleven of the sixteen rangatahi from the Wellington district went on to participate in engagements with Police officers in the project. Twelve Police officers were recruited from the Wellington and Central Districts. The various roles held included Superintendent, National Manager (Inspector), Area Commander (Inspector), Senior Sergeant, Detective Senior Sergeant, Sergeant and Constables, Youth Services, School Community Officers and Dog Section.

Engagement and immersion into the Police worldview included meeting with Police on a fortnightly basis to continue to co-design the project as it evolved. To understand the fleeing driver event from the Police perspective, Nicole joined Police frontline staff, including a dog section officer on ride-a-longs, where she experienced a number of fail to stop and fleeing driver events, one of which ended in the other vehicle crashing and a rangatahi being arrested. When Nicole interviewed Police staff using semi-structured interviews, she would also prepare them to use the WithBox approach and kaupapa to genuinely connect with rangatahi and uphold their mana during engagements. Meetings between rangatahi and Police were always facilitated and guided by Nicole who was present at all times, and held in neutral locations where rangatahi felt comfortable.



Image: WithBox Ltd



Image: Aimee Jules Photography

Findings: rangatahi perspectives of the fleeing driver event

The following findings are a result of an in-depth co-design process. By using semi-structured interviews with rangatahi, rangatahi shared with us much more than just stories about fleeing driver event; they gave us intimate insights into their lives, thoughts and emotions related to driving cars, fleeing from Police and the outcome of the event.

Once initial findings were identified, we took these back to rangatahi to check our understanding and gain further insights. This helped us complete our final findings and ensure their experiences and interpretations were accurately represented.

The following final findings and their sub-themes are presented in a narrative form from the rangatahi perspective. As the reader, you are placed alongside our rangatahi in the car to get a glimpse of their world and walk in their shoes.

Getting into a car

It is important to understand how rangatahi come to be involved in a fleeing driver event, the decisions that are made to get into a car and the motivation behind these decisions. Rangatahi spoke to us in detail about the types of cars they get into, where and how these cars are obtained and for what purpose.

Finding 1 – Stolen cars

All rangatahi were in a stolen car when in a fleeing driver event

All rangatahi told us they were in stolen cars when Police found them and consequently turned on their red and blue lights. They were either a driver or a passenger of a stolen car, knowing it was stolen.

| My mates drive around in a stolen car. It's always stolen. – *18-year-old male*

| I was chilling at home and some bros came over with a stolen car, I jumped in. I thought it was cool at the time. – *18-year-old male*

| The bros come with. Sometimes we have like three cars or four, it depends if the bros want their own car. The days before we snap the cars, we just go find cars and if we see one in the days that we want to snap we just go to it. We only get subies now, RV4's and hatchbacks. Demios are well known now. We go out of (our area) now, too many pigs (here). We go to Paraparaumu, Whitby, everywhere... But not the Bay cause that's one way in and one way out. Snap a car here then dump it in Paraparaumu and get another one there, sometimes we already have one there. See other bros up the line. We don't like reported cars, Car jamming – if it's reported we don't take it. – *15-year-old male*

Several rangatahi showed that they care about their own community by stealing cars in other areas so as not to negatively affect their own families.

| We thought of it like, not to steal our own people's cars, that's our people. So, we wanted to go somewhere else where we didn't know where family was or where family wasn't. Yeah. Community, family, people. We don't steal cars in our own area. – *15-year-old male*

Main reasons for stealing cars

It's about the drive, not the chase

All rangatahi said that while there were many reasons for stealing a car, it was never to intentionally seek out Police and flee from them. Although one rangatahi mentioned being excited about seeing the red and blue lights as the chase provided an adrenalin rush, this was never the reason for stealing a car in the first place.

For some there is lots to do and for others there is not much, so they do this type of stuff, snap cars for the drive, the fun of driving – not the chase. – *14-year-old male*

Yeah. Like ... if we had the money, I guess we would have just spent it on gas 'cause we wanted to drive – that was our main trip was the driving. But I told him, “Bro, I don’t wanna get in a cop chase, bro”. I told him straight up, straight up. “Bro, I don’t wanna get in a cop chase” and he was like “Yeah, gee, f**k definitely, definitely”. But once we heard it (sirens) we were like f**k. – *15-year-old male*

Public transport is too expensive

Rangatahi often don't have money to access public transport, so they steal cars as a means to get places such as going to see their mates, getting to and from an activity and also as a way to get to and from school. The cost of transport is high for rangatahi who often do not have money to buy food, let alone pay for a bus or train fare. Rangatahi see this as unfair as they witness other parents driving their children places or giving them money for transport. These rangatahi must find their own way of getting to and from places. Stealing a car is often a means of survival.

I would catch the bus if I had the money, I wouldn't even pop a car, we only use it to get around to places. If it was free, I would stop. I don't want to get a bad reputation. I have a f**king bad name already being in a gang, but popping cars is just going to make it worse. – *18-year-old male*

If transport was free for us, we wouldn't need to go to the carpark and search for cars. That's what most of us do. Every day after school we would go to the car park and search six cars, look inside for money, smokes, speakers, then catch the bus home. – *15-year-old male*

I think we steal cars to get to where we want to go because the only way you can get there is stealing a car because we have no money or transport. Some people just do it for fun, to act cool and do it for fame but some just need to get places and can't afford it. – *18-year-old male*

To put simply, rangatahi said that if they had money or a way to access transport, they would be less likely to steal cars and drive them to get to places.

I was walking down a street when three of our rangatahi ran up to me, high on adrenaline, shouting over one another. They had just abandoned a stolen vehicle they were driving after they got away from a chase with Police. In all the excitement of telling me how they managed to get away, they told me how they stole the car so they could get back to school. They had enough bus money to get to where they were going, but not back. They told me if they had enough money to get back to school, they would have caught the bus instead of stealing a car. – *Nicole Macquet, WithBox Founder and Director.*

Freedom and something to do

This subtheme encapsulated a sense of freedom felt by our rangatahi. A freedom from the seriousness of their often-troubled lives, from worry and stress, and a way to have fun with their friends. When rangatahi do not have the funds or resources to access activities and entertainment, they experience boredom and a sense of inequity when comparing themselves to peers who have the funds and easy access to activities they enjoy. Being in a car either as a driver or passengers is a way for rangatahi to feel that they too can enjoy being young and free

Ohh, it was so cool – honestly. Trust me, it was awesome. It was like ... it was like go karting. It was just like you could do anything ay. Like, you felt free, you felt free to just do anything, swerve on the road, like drive, but you know. – *15-year-old male*

It's just like, to do something. Because we have nothing to do. Most of why trouble happens a lot is because young people got nothing to do. – *14-year-old male*

Some people do it because of poverty or they have been around the situation that their family has been through and they just keep doing it. At the end of the day it is your choice that makes the decision. They want to leave home or their family is not supporting them so they make friends and their friends become family to them. They keep doing it because they are used to it. – *18-year-old male*

Rangatahi steal cars to socialise, go see their friends, pick them up, cruise together and listen to music.

We just wanted to have some fun to be honest, go for a ride. – *15-year-old female*

Fun, adrenaline and get to places faster. – *16-year-old male*

I felt cool, just steal a car and go for a ride, go get stoned or something. – *13-year-old male*

The skill of stealing and driving cars

Many rangatahi, particularly the drivers, showed an interest in the skill of driving and a general interest in cars. They spoke of learning a lot about cars from stealing them, fixing them up and driving. Being skilled in stealing and driving cars provides rangatahi status amongst their peers. Some spoke of being chosen by their friends to be the driver as their skills make the drive fun but also safer. Other rangatahi thrived on learning how to do manoeuvres such as a drifting.

Need for speed. Just for fun, just drift. That's why we snap cars because we like drifting. Just speed. We are always speeding to get to places faster. Gotta drive the car like it is stolen. – *15-year-old male*

There appears to be a hierarchy and progression from being a young passenger towards learning to steal and then learning to drive a car. Some rangatahi are happy to remain just passengers while others seek the challenge of learning to steal cars and drive them well. Often the older, skilled rangatahi teach the younger ones to help them progress. While this seems to be mainly amongst male rangatahi, some female rangatahi have also shown a similar interest.

Many rangatahi said that if there was a legal and free way for them to drive cars and practice their skills this would significantly lower their need to steal cars.

Like a place to do a handbrake, without having to pay like do it for free, like a youth kinda thing, that would keep them from popping cars, with a safe person fully licenced. Or like, even just mini cars with

hand brakes, honestly for free. If it was a youth thing every Friday and you could just go hang there, man that would be mean. Trust me, there'd be heaps of people that would go there instead of stealing cars.

– 15-year-old male

Positive memories of time with whānau

Several rangatahi mentioned a parent or a whānau member who taught them to drive, speaking of their experience positively. Driving a car now reminds them of those good times where they bonded with that person. Some steal a car to re-live these moments.

I can do heaps of things but this thing I do now (driving stolen cars) brings back my old memories of when I used to ride mum's car, motorbikes, go carts and trucks. I want to drive, and it just came a daily thing and weekly thing and just kept doing it like that. It is weird how we do it. – 13-year-old male

My mum first showed me how to first drive. She showed me in an automatic in a Nissan. She said take the hand break off and see what you can do. I first started on a motorbike because we used to ride around on farms. My mum's ex-boyfriend was on a farm. We went go-karting and then I got interested in driving. That is how it all started really through fun and then I got into stealing cars. – 13-year-old male

My dad teaches me mechanics stuff, takes me out for drives. – 14-year-old male

A few rangatahi were taught how to steal cars by a parent or another whānau member and have continued to steal and drive cars as a result.

To obtain other things

A ram raid is the crime of driving a car into a shop window to gain access and steal items. Two rangatahi spoke of stealing a car for ram raids as a way of getting money and cigarettes for themselves and their families.

We rammed it (the gas station) and brought heaps of ciggies and money. That is how the young teens think nowadays they want ciggies and money, that's what they want just cigarettes because they can't afford them or the whānau can't support their habits so they get it themselves, they only way they think is just by robbing. – 18-year-old male

One reason for fun, two for driving and three you can do a lot of things with that car. People use them as door breakers pretty much, ram raids. – 16-year-old male

Drive straight

All 16 rangatahi agreed that it is unusual for a young driver to be under the influence of drugs and alcohol when they go out with the intention to steal and drive a car. While passengers will often drink alcohol or smoke cannabis, the driver does not want to be under the influence of any substance as it affects their ability to drive. Cannabis and alcohol (substances most often used by rangatahi when not driving) make them. According to rangatahi who have experienced driving under the influence of these substances, it makes them "sketch out". Those who have experienced driving in a chase under the influence of cannabis or alcohol say they would never do it again because it made them feel unsafe and lowered their chances to successfully escape from Police.

Never drink. Not drugs (when we driving). Never smoke drugs, just cigarettes yeah. High only if a passenger. I can't drive when I'm on stuff. – 15-year-old male

Nah, I don't drink (when driving). I used to drink but even when I was drinking, I never would go that way. I was sober as hell. – *16-year-old male*

We are sober when we do it so we can think straight. We don't get buzzed because we just feel tired sometimes and just fall asleep on the wheel. – *15-year-old male*

The Chase

All 16 of our rangatahi have extensive experience of being regularly involved in a fleeing driver event, which they call a pig chase or high speed. When rangatahi recall these experiences, they use emotional language describing their excitement and feeling an adrenaline rush, as well as experiencing fear, sadness, anger and regret, depending on how the event unfolded and concluded. According to these rangatahi they successfully get away from Police majority of the time. These experiences and perceptions of what happens during and after the event influence how rangatahi respond next time they are signalled to stop by Police.

Finding 2 – Lights on, foot down

All rangatahi described putting their foot down as being an automatic reaction to seeing Police lights at the start of a fleeing driver event.

When rangatahi see Police red and blue lights, their reaction is to boost it. Rangatahi talk about this response being automatic, most described by them as a switch. There is often no recollection of any conscious thought process present at the time.

See the lights, my foot goes down. Boost it. – *13-year-old male*

I was just sorta listening to the music and when I saw the lights, I sorta just switched and then put my foot down. It's sorta just like switch for me, it's adrenaline, just wanted more of it, just wanna keep on going and try get away from them instead of getting caught. – *14-year-old male*

The race is on mate, get out of here. Never stop on a red and blue light. In a Police chase you don't wanna stop at all... doing 180kms on the motorway. – *19-year-old male*

We only get out of our car when we get away from the pigs. But stopping is not an option. No, once they take off that is it and it is over, no one can make you stop. I don't think it is going to happen. – *15-year-old male*

It was like, go bro, like you get mean adrenaline, like f**k let's go G, like who cares G you know. Once the adrenaline comes in you are fine but there's also a part inside of you like f**k if I get caught f**k I am a dumb c**t, f**k none of the boys will let me drive their cars. – *19-year-old male*

It's in the head really, never stop at red or blue lights. – *18-year-old male*

Experience and decision making

For a smaller group of older rangatahi the reaction becomes less automatic and more of a conscious decision to flee over time. This decision appears to be influenced by their perception of a much higher chance of successful escape in a fleeing driver event, versus a low risk of getting caught. The more times they successfully escaped from Police, the more confident they were in their own ability to escape next time. This confidence translated into the use of tactics such as a 'lazy stop' or waiting to see whether the Police would signal for them to stop before speeding up when first spotting them. According to our rangatahi, the more experience you have of escaping during a fleeing driver event, the smarter you are.

Oh, nah we used to just bang, gone. But we've been cheeky before, like pull up, wait for them to get out to come check on us and then bang, gone. Oh, it's 'cause you're used to it. – *15-year-old male*

But if you're on to it and they turn their lights on, they might not even be after you, you know? Even though they turn their lights on and you're in a stolen car, they wouldn't know unless you sketch out. It's mostly the young ones that put their foot plant down. – *19-year-old male*

Finding 3 – Get away at all costs

Rangatahi commonly identified their main focus in a fleeing driver event as getting away at all costs.

During the fleeing driver event there is a lot going on inside the car. Excitement and adrenaline is high, and there is a lot of yelling and arguing. The primary focus for the driver is to get away at all costs. Often this means using dangerous tactics and manoeuvres.

Once we see the red and blue lights everything changes. We have to get away. Whether we die or not ay, there is no way we are going to get caught, we have to get away. – *18-year-old male*

It's sketchy, cause you turn corners at high-speeds. You get fat adrenaline. Like three people in the car with me saying go this way, go that way. I just get in this zone and I zone out from other things. The only thing you're thinking is you're getting away. Ditch the cops. – *14-year-old male*

It's fun but it's scary. when you're going 180km/hr. It's just like smooth ay, but it's like hard when you wanna turn cos the whole car will just slide. And when I went around the roundabout, I tapped my brake a little bit and the whole car just slid. I'm trying not to crash or I'm gonna get hurt bad or die. I was driving like an idiot but they just kept going. – *15-year-old male*

I was like scared to go up streets and that, like to turn into streets cause I was going too fast and I already knew that the car would slide out – I didn't want to hit a lamppost or anything. Then I went over another one (spikes) and then I ripped that whole black thing off (tyres). – *15-year-old male*

Like 40km/hr. Cops just keep following you, yeah, and I just came down here, nearly spun into the roundabout. The car just ran out of gas and stopped. – *15-year-old male*

Seriously the Police keep chasing you and it is a death series because you just want to get away from the Police. If they just pull off and catch them another way it would be good. If they keep chasing and pursuing you will keep going until something eventually happens because there is no stopping for young people. No, never pull over. Flat foot no break. – *18-year-old male*

Can't think straight

In this highly emotionally-charged situation rangatahi say they can't think, they simply react. There is no time or ability to make rational decisions that consider all possibilities and consequences. The thought process is chaotic and changeable depending on each rangatahi, their experience and their circumstances.

We kept going, f**k I was scared. I dunno, I just didn't know what my mum was gonna think – I was more worried about my parents. We were in the car ay, the cops behind us, f**k, I was scared for my life. He was just like "Gee, just calm down", I was like "F**k, gee, just pull over", and he was like "Nah, gee, calm down. Ohhh, jeez, f**k...bro, I've never—I think I've never been that scared, ay. Ohh, I was like shit, I knew we were in big shit. I was like "no-one's gonna like me, no-one's gonna trust me again", it's almost like...f**k...I was scared, ay. – *15-year-old male*

Rangatahi do at times consider public safety and make this a priority over getting caught.

We were like boosting it, but it was getting real sketchy and we were driving without the lights. We could have hurt people that were on the footpath so we just wanted to dump it and run. We ditched it and ran, got caught anyhow but we knew it was the right thing to do. – *19-year-old male*

Passengers are a distraction

Passengers are most often described by rangatahi as a dangerous distraction during a chase. The driver does their best to stay calm and focussed. Some passengers try to help the driver stay calm, but most passengers encourage the driver to keep going and drive faster. Some yell directions while others scream in fear and plead the driver to stop.

Well I was just thinking shit, I don't wanna die in a car and it depends like, some people they'll keep influencing you like, keep going, keep going, but they don't know, like they don't know how much they're putting on the driver. Like influencing them. – *14-year-old female*

We argue in a high-speed. One person is yelling and another person is yelling. Another one of the bros is saying slow down but the driver carries on anyway. I have been in a couple of scary high-speeds. We got spiked going 170 kms on the wrong side of the road. – *18-year-old male*

Passengers were talking too much but I was too focused on the road. They just say "go go". Then I just stopped focusing on what he was saying. – *15-year-old male*

He (passenger) was threatening to pull the handbrake because I wouldn't stop and was going too fast. I was going way too fast around corners, and the car was screeching around the corners. I nearly spun out twice. I just wanted to get away. – *15-year-old male*

I was a passenger, so I was just keeping the driver calm so he didn't crash us into the bush or something. I was saying just go slow because we were on all four rims. It was sliding everywhere on the road, "just go slow" I said. I was keeping the driver calm. Just say we are alright, just relax, you have this one. I didn't wanna die, no way and there were four of us. – *16-year-old male*

The driver decides if the passengers are let out

Rangatahi say it is up to the driver whether or not they stop to let the passengers out. It also depends on the relationship between the driver and passengers, how old they are and the circumstances of the chase.

For example, if I had someone like two years younger than me, I might pull over but if they are the same age I wouldn't. If you have someone smaller than you, I guess you should just pull over and have a foot race. I reckon it is probably better to have a foot chase than a car chase. Because they have a long life to live. I wouldn't want to ruin someone else's life because of your actions. – *14-year-old male*

I always tell them (passengers) before they jump in the car that if the cops are chasing, I'm not going to stop. I will give you a chance to jump out now and they say nah I'm all good. I will jump in, I can handle speed. Then not only over 100kms and they're sketching out. I realise with a lot of people they're like yeah man I'm used to doing high-speeds and stuff. When they jump in, I say what's the fastest you have been? And they say over 220. Then at 140 they're sketching out, no slow down, slow down!
– *16-year-old male*

I reckon it is always the driver's decision because he is the one in control of the car. I think it depends how close they are because if you are just a random person and they said let's go, they wouldn't listen.

– 15-year-old female

I just yelled at him, I kept yelling and he finally stopped the car. I knew we were going to get snapped. He stopped the car and said "bitch, get out" then they kept going and I saw they got snapped. You have to say it aggressively like you mean it. If you say it aggressively surely they should listen to you. If they don't understand what you are feeling then I guess they will keep driving. – 13-year-old male

It just depends how close you are to the fulla who is driving. If you just tell him let's just stop, get caught and f**k it. You just stop and wait for the cop stomps. – 16-year-old male

Don't want to kill their bros

The driver thinks about their passengers' safety whenever they can. If the gap between the driver's vehicle and Police is large enough, the driver will consider letting passengers out and then keep going.

Yeah, it's a whole different story because when it's yourself, yeah f**k who cares, yeah you crash you crash. But when it's somebody else in the car, yeah, their whānau is also at risk for losing their kid. Like, for me so I've always been like in a Police chase with my boys, but I've always had this one, like one of my main n*gas ay, like got brought up with him in CYFS care, boys homes, you name it, on the street and all. He's always been the one that's in the car with me. – 19-year-old male

If the Police were far away, I would let them out and then just drive off. Don't want to put them in danger. I don't wanna be one of those ones that kills one of them. – 15-year-old male

Say I am the driver, you're the passenger, you're like bro stop, I'll be like bro not here ya know, you'll get me caught and if you ever dob my name in. I know who it's gonna be, you're the only one in the car. So, I'm gonna stop you somewhere where they won't catch you. – 19-year-old male

Don't care if they die

During the chase, many drivers do not think about the risk of dying; this is often only an afterthought. Others say they know this is a possibility but they don't care if they die. Sometimes this is because they feel their life doesn't mean much and often because they feel it is out of their control.

Nah, I don't really think about that too much (dying). I just thought of, I was thinking more about ah yes, I did get away, at least I got away. But I don't think about, ah yeah, I could have died because I didn't.

– 14-year-old male

When I'm just in bed and I just think about dying from crash in a high speed. It's like a relief that you didn't die. I don't want to die. When I'm driving I don't care. Like f**k I just got away, thoughts on getting away basically. No, thinking of dying doesn't stop me from driving because I don't know that the high speed is going to happen. – 14-year-old male

It's like you get that adrenaline and it's just ah yeah this is fun, like shit I'm actually doing it. But you will be shaky at the time and just don't really think about what happens if something goes down. Like say if I crashed and I killed someone, I wouldn't be thinking about it when I'm driving. Like, I'm pretty sure no-one does, but when it happens, you're just like shit, yeah. – 14-year-old female

Yeah, I realise that I could have died and we all could have died actually but I just didn't think about it really. I just felt like going, driving, boosting off, cause that's the main reason why we do it really. I have almost been killed in a car but it doesn't worry me, really. We all know we are going to die some day when we are old, so that's why I'm not worried about dying. I'm totally fine with it. It is how I choose to live my life. Whatever decision I make it's all on me. – *13-year-old male*

Yeah, like for me, yeah I didn't wanna die, but I had nothing to lose at that time, because my life was already f**ked ay, they know my old man, agh for me it was f**k who cares, either you do you or someone else will do you. But for me f**kin go, who cares. – *19-year-old male*

Having friends who have died is not always a wakeup call or a deterrent.

One of my friends got in a pig chase and died. It makes me want to go out and do it more. It doesn't make me want to stop. You just want to go out and f**k the world and go do everything and go be a criminal, f**k, go get f**ked up. – *16-year-old male*

While it is their conscious choice to get in the car, many rangatahi feel that what happens once the chase begins is out of their control, much like other parts of their life.

Pretend there are three of you, this is emotional. Pretend that there is a man, a lady and you. The man was beating her up and that is one of your loved ones, and you can't do anything about it because he is stronger and will take both of you out. So, you're like, just watching her fall to the ground. In a car chase it's like that. You're scared you're gonna die and you don't want it to happen. You feel sad because if you die you won't get to live the rest of your life, but then it's fun because you are fleeing from the Police. – *14-year-old male*

Taking videos

Rangatahi told us that passengers often take videos during the event to later share with their friends on social media. It is a way to obtain status, connect with their peers and re-live the moments together.

They are videoing on the inside then put it up (social media site). We make stuff with it like we put music in the background and chuck it in our stories. We have done, when we pulled a high-speed from Wellington where we got away. We post it to everyone. No, we just tell them (passengers) to shut up because the talking is the bros at the back saying slow down and that is annoying. It makes you angry and then you just boost. We hate hearing slow down, it is annoying as. They would chop the scene, get out of the car and gap. – *15-year-old male*

They were recording a video out the window. He was saying slow down before he started the recording. See [showing a video of the chase] you can hear the car too, going hundies. At first, he was yelling "go hundies!". Then as soon as I started doing it, he was yelling "slow down". – *16-year-old male*

Reasons for not stopping

While the reaction to put their foot down is automatic, on reflection rangatahi realised many of their past experiences influence their deep desire not to get caught.

Avoiding charges

The consequence of being arrested and charged with a criminal offence is one of the main reasons rangatahi do not stop for Police. Punishment, including possible charges, is not a deterrent. Many rangatahi, particularly those with previous fleeing driver convictions, are even more determined to flee.

If we don't get away, we are going to get locked up. That is why young people pull chases now to get away because they don't want to get locked up. That is why with reckless driving they don't care, they just want to get away. – *18-year-old male*

He boosted it because he knew he was going to prison because he had photos of when he stole 13 cars in one night. – *14-year-old male*

To rangatahi, being arrested and charged for either driving a stolen car and/or fleeing from Police means losing their freedom, having to go to court and having to face the disapproval of the adults around them.

Getting caught is what makes you not want to stop from the Police. The people say the more charges you are the more uppity you are. – *16-year-old male*

The chase is f**k that. I don't wanna get caught. One I don't wanna go to the cells, then the whānau and then the court things. That just puts stress on my whānau, on my caregiver cause my caregiver she's old. – *13-year-old male*

I don't want to get snapped. I didn't wanna go to YJ, like residence. I don't wanna go there because of my bail conditions were pretty bad back then. Was on 24/7 from other high speeds. – *14-year-old male*

Whānau shame, hidings and trust

Rangatahi do not want to disappoint, embarrass or anger their whānau. Many rangatahi speak of receiving physical punishment and abuse (hidings) from an adult after being released into their care.

Oh, I didn't really care if we crashed, I just ... I dunno. Oh, to be honest, if I died I didn't really care if we crashed, but like I kinda wanted to crash so I wouldn't have to deal with my family, like, being disappointed. I don't want them to be disappointed, ay. "If I die, it's okay". "I won't be in trouble with my family". Or the Police, you know? Like... It would be my way out. – *15-year-old male*

Yeah... well anyways, my mum came down and she was like pissed as. I just got in big trouble, ay. My dad gave me a mean hiding. But yeah. – *14-year-old male*

Nah stuff that. If I got pulled over, got arrested, a mass hiding when I got home. That's why I kept going. From my dad it's pow! Mother f**kin combos to your head. It's not a Samoan hiding it's a Māori plus Samoan plus f**kin whatever that shit is. Plus, I'm a girl so he wants me to do good, but I'm the shit of the family. – *15-year-old female*

Most rangatahi say they seek positive adult interaction such as approval, trust and care while avoiding negative interaction, even if it means risking their life.

I like people to trust me. I didn't even think we were gonna get in that Police chase, ay. I didn't know. I didn't want to. Like, my parents, the Police, people will think I steal cars. I thought I was gonna lose heaps of people. I thought I was gonna lose heaps of friends. But yeah, I was honest to everyone "Yeah, yeah, sorry man – f**k, I did steal a car". – *15-year-old male*

Cold cells

A number of rangatahi spoke of not wanting to go to the cells because they are cold and unpleasant.

I just feel angry for getting caught and then staying in the cells for the night. You are lucky if you get a blanket. It's cold. – *14-year-old male*

The cells are dumb, you just sit there and look at the walls. You go nuts, worse than prison. – *16-year-old male*

Win the chase

For several rangatahi once the chase begins it's a game of cops and robbers. To get away and to outsmart Police is a motivator to drive better and faster often using dangerous tactics which they think will either make the Police slow down or back off. The thrill of the chase, the adrenalin and the win at the end has been described by one person as "the gold at the end of the rainbow".

F**k the Police, because they're onto it. We're just showing them that we're onto it too. – *15-year-old male*

If you think about things that will happen then that is what will happen because it stresses you too much. If you just stay focussed and just relax then you will be all good. The more you sketch, the more problems that are going to happen because you are going to be overthinking and then you will lose control and then you fully panic. I'm like nah I'm just always relaxed as, just chilling out, all of the bros in the back scared and me I'm just driving. I don't pay attention. I just keep my eyes on the road, pretend that there are no cops around me and imagine that there is a pot of gold at the end of the high speed and I am all good. – *16-year-old male*

Rangatahi think that the Police also see it as a game which they don't want to lose, regardless of risk.

The cops still want to try chase after them but does the cop ever realise how fast he is going? If the cop thinks "I can't chase him," what does that cop do, give up? But no cops will give up unless they know they are going to lose or they will start calling for back-up. Bro this car is in your town, start hunting. – *19-year-old male*

Rangatahi say they don't understand why, despite knowing the dangers of the chase Police continue to chase them.

If a cop does that why doesn't a cop realise it could be their kid in the car? That kid was in a Police chase and that dad would save the kid because he is a cop. – *19-year-old male*

End of the chase

Broken cars won't go

In most cases the chase ends not because rangatahi stopped the car but because they could no longer drive it. Sometimes they slow down because they realise the car is so broken it would be too dangerous to keep driving, sometimes it is because there is too much damage to the car, or they have simply run out of petrol.

There were spikes and we weaved one spike then the next spike just hit our back wheel and we still boosted it. We pulled a handbrake on at 160. It went bang and then we hit the curb. – *15-year-old male*

Then we kept on getting spiked and we were on rims, so then she just pulled over because the car was already f**king up. – *13-year-old female*

Finding 4 – Use of force

Rangatahi reported the end of the fleeing driver event as physical, some describing the force used by Police as excessive.

Rangatahi described the use of force used by Police at the end of the fleeing driver event as physically painful. Some described feeling that the force used by Police was excessive, whereas others explained it as reasonable force required during an arrest after the event. Some rangatahi found the force of the arrest so painful that they did not want to experience it again, a reason the next time for not stopping for Police when signalled to do so.

It's just the way they handle you when they arrest you – pushing your face into the ground, putting their knees into your back and digging it into your back and then pulling your arms all the way up to your shoulder blades and putting the cuffs on you really tight. That's something you wouldn't want to experience again. Yeah, you're gonna take off. – *15-year-old male*

I didn't want to stop because I knew we were all going to get a mean hiding from the Police. That would be my third time getting some black eyes. Yes, all the fullas on Police chases get a hiding, get a bash and put in the cells. – *16-year-old male*

They treat us like we're a dog, just throw us. It was sore. Right here on my ribs. And when they threw me on to the ground I was on my stomach, and he was like big as and he like had his knee on me and he was forcing all his pressure on me. They always do it though, they just like throw you on the ground and then they grab the handcuffs and cuff you. – *13-year-old female*

Fear, chaos and misunderstanding

As the event ends, rangatahi describe the situation as chaotic and frightening. Both inside and outside of the car Police are shouting, dogs are barking. It is hard to hear and understand instructions being shouted at them by Police when there is so much fear and chaos.

Yeah, we got stopped and yeah f**k it was scary. The dogs came. Like, by the window. They were just telling us to get out. We like had to get out. F**k, it was like scary. They handcuffed us. We got into the Police car – f**k, I was like as scared for my life. Bro, like “GET DOWN, GET OUT! GET THE KEYS OUT!” Far, I was scared ay. Bro...heaps. But like the dogs, I just didn't want— “woof woof”, f**k. Oh, like, oh it was just scary. – *15-year-old male*

Rangatahi often freeze out of fear and are just focused on protecting their face or body from being hurt. According to rangatahi Police mistake this as failing to comply and resisting arrest. Rangatahi say they are not even given a chance to comply before being handled by Police for the purpose of being arrested.

After we stopped the car on our own, they pulled us through the windows. They could've just opened the door. He just punched the window, he kept punching it, punching it. I said "The door's unlocked, the door's unlocked" I was scared and just like, frozen. I was just trying to cover my head and my ribs.

– 16-year-old male

Well, I couldn't pull over, the car wouldn't move anymore, I was like shit! We're f**ked. They're gonna be at our door in like one second, trust me. And then boom, hello! Nah, I was trying to protect myself putting my hands on my head. They kept yelling "stop resisting arrest" but I was just doing this because they said "Put your hands behind your back" – 16-year-old male

Well, it's not their job to give us hidings but f**k...sometimes it might seem like a hiding, but really cause you don't know what you're doing when there's a lot of people and you might be punching and swinging – you just don't know cause you're just so rushed. Cause once you know you're in a car and next thing you know you're on the ground, f**king 10 cops on you, restraining you and it angers you and then you don't know what you're doing at that point cause you're just really angry and you're just trying to get them off and that's why they use force. They say "stop resisting", you're just gonna keep resisting cause you don't wanna get hurt. The thing is though you're trying to protect yourself, but they'll just keep saying "stop resisting" and you don't know you're resisting. – 17-year-old male

While rangatahi often have a negative view of the arrest based on their personal experiences and stories from others, many rangatahi still feel empathy towards Police and say that Police are just doing their job and risking their own lives.

And they say stop resisting but we're just trying to protect ourselves. But yeah, that's just what cops do – that's why I don't really like cops. But at the end of the day they're just doing their job, but they do too much. – 16-year-old male

When I get arrested and restrained, far I go to the cells cut, big bumps on the head, but f**k... cause like you're also putting cops' lives at risk too. I might be one of the most criminals out there, old criminals, but f**k gotta remember that the cops have a life too and a family – they're putting their lives out there so f**k, I dunno. – 17-year-old male

Oh, young people hate Police. Me personally, nah, I don't hate the Police – they're just doing their job, trying to put food on their table. That's all they're trying to do. – 17-year-old male

Perceptions of Police

Rangatahi say that the way they are treated by Police when they are interacting with them or being arrested is the main reason why they see Police as the enemy. The relationship between Police and these rangatahi is fraught with tension and negative perception due to their often negative interactions.

This one cop said "you have f**king ADHD". I was like "you have f**king ADHD", don't tell me what to do. Then I told my Dad and my Dad came down and was about to get tasered just because I told my Dad the truth (of how rough they treated me). If you look at my Dad's record it will say rarking up around Police because he hates being around them or most of them anyway. My Dad doesn't like Police. He reckons they are going to pull me up for nothing when I am older. That is why most of us say f**k the Police.

– 14-year-old male

The Police attitude is so unnecessary. They say put your hands behind your f**kin back and then they say watch my language. What the f**k. – *15-year-old female*

Finding 5 – Traumatic event

From the moment the fleeing driver event unfolds to the way in which it ends, the experience is traumatic for many rangatahi and has a negative effect on their wellbeing.

Evident in the way rangatahi recalled the event was the negative impact of the event on their wellbeing. Some would choke on their tears; others became frustrated and angry when re-telling their stories of the event.

I think about it sometimes. I don't wanna ever go through that scaredness again. Never again ay. This one we flipped a car upside down. I am lucky to be alive. – *15-year-old male*

We went straight through red lights and went around a round-a-bout the wrong way. That was the scariest part in my life that high speed. – *18-year-old male*

Many rangatahi presented with symptoms of trauma as a result of the event, describing the physical and psychological effects it had on them. They talked about trouble sleeping and stabilising their emotions.

After it happened and I was there I went home and thought about stealing the car and getting chased. I didn't sleep that night. – *15-year-old male*

Especially when you go to court for that shit and someone's passed away it's like you're hurt, but you gotta deal with it in the court too, like it all just keeps coming at you, but you can't really deal with it. – *14-year-old female*

Bloody insane man. It's crazy... it's live or die thing...it's anything goes...it's hard to explain, but it's really a big rush. Yeah, it's really intense. It's crazy. No-one wants to be in that place to be honest, no-one would want to be in it. – *17-year-old male*

You get heaps of anxiety and shit like "are we gonna die, are we gonna live or what?" yeah I go home and have a sesh. Like if I die from a high speed then it would be all the grief for my family and stuff. Yeah that's what I think about. After the chase – *13-year-old female*

Many rangatahi expressed regret when recalling the fleeing driver event.

I wish I didn't do it. I wish I got out the first time and went into the house. Like all of us didn't get in that car. – *15-year-old male*

Self-medicating to cope

To cope with the emotional effects of the event rangatahi often self-medicate with cannabis and alcohol. Often long after the event they are scared that Police will come into their house and take them away from their whānau.

I go home and have a sesh, have a blaze, calm down. Sketchiness because the pigs know where we are and know where we live now. They know our names now so sometimes they just rock up to our house and take us. They take us to the cells. – *15-year-old male*

I would probably just go have a smoke or have a drink or something. Not really calm down, but think about it. It wasn't stressing me out, but it played on my mind. It was like, I'm not really like this, but I done it so what am I gonna do about it? I'm just gonna sit here, smoke and keep on smoking.

– 15-year-old male

I can tell you later on they're gonna be smoking shitloads of dope, alcohol, drinking...cause we're so stressed after. They'll be relieved but stressed at the same time, cause far. It's just gonna keep going on and on in your head, round in circles till you get it out. – 17-year-old male

When recalling their experiences many rangatahi were visibly upset and required ongoing therapeutic support which was provided.

Negative experiences are not a deterrent

While the negative emotional effects of the event have a significant impact on their wellbeing, these experiences are still not a deterrent to rangatahi, even if after the event they genuinely say they will never do it again.

Like, as I was saying, we didn't go for the chase, we went for the drive. But honestly, if I was driving (again) and I saw the lights I would pull over straight away no matter what. The cops would have handled it better. Just so they know, I like people to trust me. I didn't even think we were gonna get in that Police chase, ay. I didn't know. I didn't want to, but it was his (driver's) decision. I couldn't say "Gee, just pull over", I couldn't say that cause obviously he wouldn't. Now I'm never thinking of going on one (stolen car drive) ever again. – 15-year-old male

Two weeks later the above rangatahi was a passenger in another fleeing driver event, excitedly explaining how they got away. The reward of being a part of his peer group was stronger than the fear of the consequences and emotional effects of being in a chase.

Police response to rangatahi perspectives

The above findings were taken to the 12 Police staff involved in the project. This was done to engage Police with the data and begin building a bridge for Police to work in partnership with rangatahi about fleeing driver events. Using semi-structured interviews, Police participants were asked to respond to the above findings, based on their own experience and understanding of the fleeing driver event. WithBox found that while four of the five rangatahi findings were generally understood and accepted by Police participants, there was variety and contrast in the response to finding four, use of force, highlighting its complexity.

Police response to Stolen cars finding

All rangatahi were in a stolen car when in a fleeing driver event.

The majority of Police participants readily accepted that most rangatahi were in stolen cars when apprehended after a fleeing driver event. They agreed that rangatahi motivations for stealing cars were likely multi-faceted and that rangatahi don't get into a car specifically for the purpose of finding Police and getting into a fleeing driver event.

Yeah and as one of them says, it's like they're coming from these deprived, lower socioeconomic places and they can't afford to be going out and doing things so they have to find their own entertainment and for them to do this is free essentially. — *Police officer*

It's not about stealing – stealing is just the outcome if you haven't got transport – no public transport, no activities, wanna pick up my mates and go and do some stuff. So, it then doesn't become a desire of an offence as such in their mind, it's just a means to an end. — *Police officer*

However, many Police participants were surprised that rangatahi said they were not under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they drove a car.

There was one thing that was surprising, that they drive straight. I would assume when they drive that they were under the influence of something. – *Police officer*

Police response to Lights on, foot down finding

All rangatahi described putting their foot down as being an automatic reaction to seeing Police lights at the start of a fleeing driver event.

All Police participants agreed with this finding based on their experiences of the event and understanding of rangatahi. Some Police participants said they understood that the challenges of a developing brain make it difficult for rangatahi to make conscious decisions and consider consequences before reacting.

But these kids don't have that cognitive frontal lobe ability to think about what could be the likely consequences. So it's not that they're doing it on purpose and it's not that they're thinking.
— *Police officer*

If you think when our red and blues go on those kids will have a massive spike, that will probably then come down a little bit as they settle into the pursuit, but it's how do you mitigate that spike, because that's where there's no decision making at all. — *Police officer*

Like if you're being chased by a tiger, you're going to run aren't you? You're not gonna stop and think.
— *Police officer*

Police response to Get away at all costs finding

Rangatahi commonly identified their main focus in a fleeing driver event was to getaway at all costs.

Many Police participants agreed that during a fleeing driver event, rangatahi drive dangerously to deter Police from continuing to pursue them. Many stated that this is frustrating as it places the public, Police and the rangatahi at risk of serious harm.

Yeah, nah – everyone does it cause that’s the way of getting it [the chase] pulled. And as soon as they do it, I’m just like “Yep” – it just disengages me, I’m like “Yep, cool – if they wanna drive like that... I’m done, I’m not risking my job.” — *Police officer*

Just dangerous, just wrong side of the road, up on the curb, speed...yeah. Just pretty much anything to make you stop, really. — *Police officer*

Police response to Use of force finding

Rangatahi reported the end of the fleeing driver event as physical, some describing the force used by Police as excessive.

There was no consistent response from Police to this finding. While some Police accepted that excessive use force may occur, even if they had not witnessed it themselves, others reported being involved in arrests that would have felt like excessive force for rangatahi.

That stood out to me because I’ve been in that situation yeah. Now nothing to the extent of some of the allegations that have been made. But yeah, I have been involved in pursuits where, like when I’ve arrested someone I’ve kicked them up the arse. In essence I’ve gone to that next level when I need to be more professional. It’s not that long ago that it was commonplace that you catch someone in pursuit and you beat them up. — *Police officer*

I didn’t know it happened. I believe it, I’ve just never seen it. I’ve certainly seen people get a doof from the Police, but not after a chase. — *Police officer*

You can’t negate the fact that this happens. For the young person they’ll say “I’ve been assaulted”, but the cops will say “We’re justified, it’s reasonable force because that vehicle was still running, that vehicle could’ve still driven off and killed somebody so we’re using everything we can”. — *Police officer*

Most Police said that arrests are naturally highly physical in nature because of the fight or flight response, therefore it may feel like excessive force even if the force being used is reasonable. Similarly, Police also suggested that when rangatahi freeze it can feel like resisting arrest to the Police officer and may contribute to the feeling of excessive force.

Yeah I saw it here where someone said they freeze and when they’re freezing they’re just getting real tight and tense and not like moving an arm when we’re trying to put handcuffs on – to us that’s them resisting and they’re not giving us their arm. — *Police officer*

So their perception is that we’re assaulting them. We’re actually using force to overcome them. So one of the forces is violence but we actually want them to stop resisting. — *Police officer*

If you think in terms of fight or flight, what they’re experiencing is probably more flight, because they’re fleeing, and we’re experiencing fight, because we’re chasing. So, they’re trying to get away from their

opponent, we're trying to catch our opponent. And I think that means when we catch them, we've got to quite quickly de-escalate ourselves down to that level that appropriately meets how much resistance, if any, they're giving us. — *Police officer*

One officer said that they have never witnessed excessive use of force used by Police during an arrest.

In 27 years, I've never seen anyone being beaten up before. I've seen people being arrested using reasonable force and being handcuffed behind their back, maybe on the floor. So, from a Police perspective that's not being assaulted that's being arrested. And you sort of have to justify it but obviously for a kid they think that's being assaulted. — *Police officer*

Police response to Traumatic event finding

From the moment the fleeing driver event unfolds to the way in which it ends, the experience is traumatic for many rangatahi and has a negative effect on their wellbeing.

All Police participants said they had not previously considered that the fleeing driver event may be traumatic for rangatahi. However, they all accepted this finding readily once presented with the data, stating that this is important to remember and understand when dealing with rangatahi.

Well, yeah, I thought they'd get more of a rush out of it, rather than it being traumatic for them.
— *Police officer*

I never ever considered the event being traumatic, which you could almost say as a result some of them probably suffer from PTSD or something similar... I never turned my mind to the fact that, because essentially they're breaking the law, they're risking my life, members of the public lives, as well as the people in the car, so you don't sort of... don't see them as a victim. — *Police officer*

You just see it as an event, an incident and there's a conclusion, a conclusion takes them through the court or wherever – not looked at from a wellbeing perspective. — *Police officer*

Many Police participants agreed that the fleeing driver event is approached as part of their job. It is seen as criminal behaviour that risks other people's lives, where the driver is never seen as a victim or thought of as being emotionally affected by the event.

Recommendations

After a thorough engagement and immersion process with rangatahi and Police participants, WithBox led a co-design phase where rangatahi together with Police formulated prevention strategies based on the findings of this project, to tackle fleeing driver events. Rarely, if ever, are rangatahi involved in the solution design process. Based on the WithBox approach and kaupapa described in the introduction, rangatahi are believed to be experts in their own lives and are therefore well equipped to know what would work best for them, in their world. It was therefore crucial in this project to ensure rangatahi were active participants in designing solutions to fleeing driver events which has a direct impact on their lives.

The focus for co-designing and choosing final recommendations was rangatahi safety, rangatahi wellbeing and realistic crime prevention strategies which rangatahi and Police felt would have the greatest impact on lowering rates of fleeing driver events, and subsequent victims and casualties.

The following recommendations are strategies put forward by youth, for youth, in partnership with Police with the aim of reducing youth offending, injury and death.

Summary of recommendations and their objectives:

1. Wellbeing Check-In

This is the primary recommendation. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all rangatahi following a high intensity event and improve rangatahi perceptions of Police, which greatly influences their reaction to flee.

2. Delay Lights = Time to Think

This is the secondary recommendation. To allow rangatahi and Police more time to self-regulate their emotions which can help them make better, more conscious decisions.

3. Stealing Cars — Learn More

This is an additional recommendation based on the overall findings. To understand why rangatahi steal cars and drive them, which often unintentionally leads to a fleeing driver event.

Recommendations are discussed in detail below.

1. The Wellbeing Check-In

Objective:

This is the primary recommendation. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all rangatahi following a high intensity event and improve rangatahi perceptions of Police, which greatly influences their reaction to flee.

Link to findings:

As presented earlier in this report under Finding 4 – Use of force and Finding 5 – Traumatic event, the fleeing driver event is emotionally charged, during which both rangatahi and Police experience adrenaline and fear. For many rangatahi this is a traumatic experience including an arrest which is physically painful, contributing to ongoing trauma that negatively impacts their immediate and long-term wellbeing. Additionally, experiences with Police after the event and how they treat the young person during this time leave a lasting impression on them, which shapes their future perceptions of Police. These perceptions also then extend to their peers and family.

Recommendation:

In the co-design process, rangatahi asked that Police first check in on their safety and wellbeing after a fleeing driver or a similar emotive event. They want Police to put the crime aside for a moment and check to see if they are okay. They speak of their need to be treated like a human being, rather than having the legal proceedings placed at the forefront.

Put the crime aside and check-in on us first. Go in and say “You alright? You all good? How are you?” Yeah. Who cares about the crime man, just see if they’re all right, if they’re feeling all good or anything. Yeah just chuck the crime away and talk about that later, while he’s comfortable to talk...yeah so f**k “why’d you do this, why’d you do that?” just ask “how are you?” Yeah – “you good? You alright?” Anything. F**k. Who to contact – your Mum, Dad. I dunno, anything – just talk to them normally like they’re a person you just met. – *17-year-old male*

There are two main reasons why a wellbeing check-in is crucial in the aftermath of the event:

1. To check on their safety and wellbeing, and
2. To improve their perceptions of Police.

To check on their safety and wellbeing

The Wellbeing Check-in is an opportunity for Police and rangatahi to genuinely connect as human to human, without ulterior motives. Both parties are inclined to sit on opposite sides of the event, where the other party is often dehumanised. The Wellbeing Check-in reminds both sides that they are both human and have a shared emotional experience. Often after the event, the adult and young person dynamic means rangatahi feel judged and lectured. This causes them to immediately shut down and respond in a non-cooperative manner, or say what the adult wants to hear rather than the truth.

Cause when you’re like ruffed up and stuff, you can’t think straight and you’re just gonna... I’m just gonna say anything, that could be absolutely wrong. – *18-year-old male*

On the other hand, being seen as a human worthy of empathy and care allows rangatahi to think about the event and reflect in a way they otherwise wouldn’t, and potentially consider the consequences of their actions.

I just wish that the Police would have the time and courage to understand the young’uns. That’s one thing I would always want the Police to do. Instead of just talking about the crime... Let the young ones talk. I reckon that, yep. For Police to understand and help them, help the young ones. – *20-year-old male*

The Wellbeing Check-in also helps rangatahi recover from the ordeal and focus on their physical and emotional needs first. Rangatahi see this as a human right which should be prioritised before any evidence gathering takes place. The Wellbeing Check-in includes giving them food and water, seeing if they are physically hurt and need medical attention, providing a warm blanket and checking on their emotional wellbeing.

You could have just a 5 to 10 minute yarn to them, like “Oh yeah...”. See if the wellbeing’s alright, seeing if you’re like still panicking. Need some, like...yeah, Panadol or something. Some water. Just to let them calm down. Something like that. – *16-year-old male*

If mental health risks are identified, a mental health risk assessment should take immediate precedence over any evidential and intelligence gathering. This ensures the young person's safety and protects them from being re-victimised. Rangatahi said often Police processing procedures such as the experience of spending time in the cells, being cold, hungry, and sometimes being placed with intimidating older adults who threaten or assault them. Despite common assumptions that the experience of being in Police cells is a "valuable lesson" which helps rangatahi reflect on their wrongdoing, rangatahi told us this has the opposite effect where they are instead harmed and further traumatised.

I reckon, yeah, the custody people should look after the young ones that go in because yeah they know they did wrong, they know they did the crime, but I just hope that one day they realise to make sure that the young one's okay and just put the crime to the side and just leave it for later. – *20-year-old male*

Both participating rangatahi and Police agree that the Wellbeing Check-in will also help each group regulate their own emotions and think more clearly before moving onto procedural matters.

I reckon it will give the young people more time. More time to think on their actions. Because some people, some people just...don't know how to express themselves and they don't know how to deal with it. So they deal with it in another way. In a crime way. So some people grieve in another way—I dunno, it could be grieving, the why they do crime, grieving. Or it could be like they're struggling at home. Or something's going wrong at home that they don't wanna tell anyone, it's just hard for them to let it out. – *20-year-old male*

To improve perceptions of Police

International and New Zealand literature (Evidence Based Policing Centre [EBP], 2020) as well as this project have shown that rangatahi perceptions of Police strongly inform future behaviour, including the reaction to flee or stop for Police. While these perceptions are shaped by a number of factors, including their whānau and friends' experiences of dealing with Police and mainstream media messaging, rangatahi personal experiences of interacting with Police during and immediately after a fleeing driver event impacts their perceptions of Police in a more prominent way.

Additionally, rangatahi told us they have minimal trust in Police. Rangatahi said that they believe that Police are only being nice to get rangatahi to "incriminate" themselves or their friends, and to help Police with their case. They say this usually happens when Police bring them some water or a warm drink and make small talk before beginning to ask questions about the event, rather than genuinely checking to see if they are okay.

By first engaging with rangatahi on a human level, with genuine empathy and understanding, Police can help create a more positive experience for the young person. By prioritising the rangatahi's safety and wellbeing by conducting a thorough Wellbeing Check-in immediately following an event and when it is safe to do so, Police have the power to re-shape the young person's perception of Police.

More positive experiences with Police can lead to better cooperation immediately after the event. This includes the young person being more responsive to evidence gathering questions and cooperating with processing requirements, once their safety and wellbeing has been assured. When we connect with rangatahi in a genuine, authentic way and without judgement, we open the door to better communication and understanding, which in turn influences thinking and positive behaviour.

Yeah and I think it's a great recommendation and, as I said, it's something that cops who've been around a while will do instinctively as welfare...I dunno, is there another way of telling people this is the best way to get, you know, A) for their wellbeing and B) for evidence gathering? – *Police officer*

In this study most rangatahi said the negative experience with Police after an event is a major reason for not stopping next time they see the Police lights. By improving interactions with and thus perceptions of Police, we can also influence the decisions rangatahi make in the future, such as whether to stop for Police in a vehicle when signalled to do so.

And look, you know when I think about it, you could apply that to all the kids we deal with. Because we're often taking them home – you know, a kid who's run away and come into town and committed some kind of offence and then we take them home and I think we're getting better, but we're still not at that stage of saying "Well, wait on – they ran away from that home and came to town to commit a crime and now our response is to take them back to that home" and it's like well, potentially they're going back to the same place that made them come and do this in the first place. – *Police officer*

The Wellbeing Check-in will help Police to see rangatahi for who they are, rather than what they have done.

Designing the Wellbeing Check-in is crucial to getting it "right".

To achieve the above objectives, the Wellbeing Check-in must be carefully co-designed in partnership with Police and rangatahi. The design needs to go beyond just the use of the youth-appropriate language. Police need to pay careful attention to reframing rangatahi from that of an offender to a vulnerable young person, and repositioning the parties into a partnership. The Wellbeing Check-in, if done correctly, is an opportunity for both sides to connect and assist with emotional regulation. Therefore, the Wellbeing Check-in design and possible training programme supported with resources and a framework could include:

- Key questions to prompt the conversation between the Police officer and the rangatahi
- An understanding of how and why the Wellbeing Check-in is designed to move the perception of the rangatahi as an offender to victim
- An understanding of the implications of this shift in positioning and the positive outcomes

Where possible, the Wellbeing Check-in needs to be conducted by a Police officer who is not in charge of evidence gathering and preparing the case for prosecution. It should also not be done in conjunction with any intelligence gathering or other tasks that could be perceived by the young person as Police having an ulterior motive and *trying to trick* them.

The Wellbeing Check-in should be viewed as an essential step by Police to genuinely connect with rangatahi in their custody and to use their time engaging with rangatahi in a different way, rather than viewing it as an extra task added to their workload. If designed and executed correctly, the Wellbeing Check-in ensures rangatahi are safe and protected while also improving their perception of Police.

2. Delay lights = time to think

Objective:

This is the secondary recommendation. To allow rangatahi and Police more time to self-regulate their emotions which can help them make better, more conscious decisions.

Link to findings:

As presented earlier in this report under Finding 2 - Lights on, foot down and Finding 3 - Get away at all costs, rangatahi told us that as soon as they see the Police red and blue lights, their automatic reaction is to put their foot down and escape at all costs. Previous studies (EBP, 2020) have referred to this reaction as a "decision" which rangatahi make, whether to flee or not to flee. However, this could be mistakenly understood that fleeing

from Police is a conscious decision which includes reasoning. As described in our findings and based on current literature related to decision making (Phillips et al., 2016), we believe rangatahi putting their foot down when seeing Police red and blue lights is a subconscious and conditioned response (foot down) to known stimuli (Police lights).

Furthermore, we believe this response is further influenced by the stress and other stimuli experienced by rangatahi in this situation (Loureiro, 2020). Therefore, to avoid this response, we must first eliminate, or at least delay, the stimuli (Police lights) for as long as possible to allow rangatahi to move into a more conscious decision-making process where they can consider other options than fleeing.

Recommendation:

Rangatahi recommend that when Police identify them on the road, they significantly delay turning their lights on. They have said this will allow them time to think and weigh up their options before seeing the lights and putting their foot down automatically to flee. Based on their experiences of times when Police delayed their lights and kept their distance, rangatahi said having this time to think allowed them to make better, more conscious decisions that kept everyone safe.

That would actually help ay, cause as soon as you see the lights go on ay, we don't even think ay – it's just like *boom*, foot to metal, but if we see... Like cause we spot a pig car straight away, c'mon, you know? But like yeah, we'll spot it out straight away, but if they give us that little bit of time just to let us think about what we're gonna do, then I reckon it would be less of a danger for us and them and the people around us, for like getting hurt. – *16-year-old male*

Rangatahi have told us that between the time they spot the patrol car and the time Police switch on their lights, they have more time to think and discuss their options with passengers. These discussions include: to stop or not, or to let out the passengers and if so where. This also gives the passengers time to convince the driver to stop without having to yell and cause panic. Rangatahi said this could also allow all in the vehicle to collectively consider the consequences of each decision. At the centre of these discussions is often their own safety, where risks and benefits are evaluated.

Rangatahi have also told us that as soon as Police lights go on, whatever decision has been reached in the car is what goes, if no decision has been reached it will most likely be back to the automatic reaction – lights on, foot down. These discussions only happen between seeing the Police car and Police lights being turned on.

To think about what's the next move. (When the lights go on) it just starts getting hectic ay? Like they're just like...everyone's just like "Bro, do this!" and then the other friend's like "Bro, nah, nah, nah – this the way you gotta go, back down" and then you're just like "F**k". Everyone's just screaming at the driver and the driver's like "Nah, nah, f**k you" *boom* straight away, *boom* gone – he'll just do his own plan. The driver won't stop. The driver won't stop until we know it's clear to get out. Like, as soon as we see the lights vanish we'll go to a safe spot, the driver will take us to a safe spot or someone will point out a safe spot. – *16-year-old male*

3. Stealing cars - learn more

Objective:

This is an additional recommendation based on the overall findings. To understand why rangatahi steal cars and drive them, which often unintentionally leads to a fleeing driver event.

Link to previous findings:

As previously mentioned in Finding 1 - Stolen cars, rangatahi said they regularly steal cars for a variety of reasons. When we took this finding to our rangatahi, they all agreed that if cars were not being stolen as often, there would be less fleeing driver incidents, less crashes and less rangatahi dying.

That (not stealing cars) will stop a lot of crashes. Yeah. And heaps of the danger and shit. Driving the speeds. There might be people out walking, kids out playing, animals. Innocent people could die. So it's good. – 17-year-old male

Rangatahi response to recent rephrasing of the Fleeing Driver Policy:

During this project Police made the decision to revise the Fleeing Driver Policy. The revision and shift in approach has meant that currently, Police will only pursue a fleeing driver if there is a threat before the start of a possible fleeing driver event occurring and if there is a need for the driver to be apprehended immediately.

We asked our rangatahi how this change has impacted them. Some rangatahi told us that when they first learned of the changes, there was general excitement that they no longer had to drive dangerously at high speed to flee from Police. This resonates with previous research findings that while most rangatahi do not steal and drive cars with the intention of getting into a chase, there is a willingness, where they are aware of the likelihood that driving a stolen car may lead to a fleeing driver event (EBP, 2020).

Cause it saves their life and you can't take their life back. Like why now, if they invented that a couple of years ago it could've saved that kid that died ay? Yeah Bailey.. and a couple more. – 16-year-old male

Some of our rangatahi tested the new approach by stealing a car and purposely driving past Police and failing to stop, confirming Police were no longer as willing to pursue them.

I popped a car just to see if it was true. Drove straight past a pig, nothing. Didn't get pulled up or anything, me and the bro. ...it's different. Yeah. Ah. I didn't get an adrenaline rush. Cause I didn't get chased. So, my mindset was clear, I knew what I was up to so I just went on to where I was going, home. – 16-year-old male

One rangatahi also said that the adrenalin rush he enjoyed when he found himself in a chase is now gone which has meant he lost interest in driving stolen cars.

Nah. It ain't fun anymore. They ain't chasing us. That's what I found fun about it, they would chase us, it was like cops and robbers. But we weren't robbing stores, we were just boosting off in other people's cars. Basically ay, they finished the game. Ended it. – 16-year-old male

Conversely, many of our rangatahi said that this change has meant they feel much more drawn to stealing cars now because they feel safer to do so, thus indicating that there may be an increase in cars being stolen.

Nah, don't tell no-one that, that'll make me go steal a car right now. – 16-year-old male

With rangatahi indicating that the recent change is possibly influencing now more cars being stolen, some rangatahi said this increases other dangers for communities.

Yeah, I reckon if more young'uns knew about it, I reckon they would steal more. But It makes the whole community unsafe and it doesn't help the parents around the area for their children, cause they would be like "Those streets ain't safe for my children. – 20-year-old male

Recommendation:

In the co-design phase, both rangatahi and Police recommended learning more about why rangatahi steal cars from rangatahi in a way which engages them in the conversation and goes beyond previous research findings, literature reviews and outside of the confines of traditional research methodology. Furthermore, it's also recommended that Police gather more data and insights to see whether there has been any significant increase in stolen cars since the revised Fleeing Driver Policy was released.

According to our rangatahi, because time was taken to authentically engage and build trust with them, allowing them to reflect on their experiences and decision making, they were able to share deeper and more genuine insights. To find long-term, effective prevention strategies to fleeing driver events, there is a need to have an in-depth understanding of the complex reasons behind why rangatahi steal cars and drive them. There is so much more we can learn from our rangatahi.



Image: WithBox Ltd

Positive Outcomes

Engaging with rangatahi

Engaging with rangatahi in a meaningful way, immersing ourselves in their world view and taking the time to build mutual trust over the three years of this project has allowed the time to gain unique insights into the fleeing driver event from the perspectives of rangatahi. We recently asked rangatahi what it was like for them to have been involved and engaged in this project. Below are their responses.

(Note: Attached to the citations is the rangatahi's current age – some are now adults. At the start of the project these rangatahi were three years younger ranging between 13-16 years of age).

Rangatahi told us that this is the first time they have been able to think about, talk about and truly reflect on the fleeing driver event:

It just gives you a better picture of...cause we're actually sitting down and talking about it, where not much people really get that. So you actually get to see the consequences or the few options you have or whatnot. This is the only chance I've had to actually sit down and talk about it – no-one's really wanted to talk about it before, they just wanted to put me behind bars. – 18-year-old-male

Yeah, that you were interested and that you were actually willing to listen and hear it from our side other than just getting it from the cops. My whole experience going through this is a whole highlight cause I've never been through something like this in my life until now. – 18-year-old-male

We're all whānau and we're all treated the same. There's no special, there's no hated, just all of the love shared round. – 18-year-old-male

Cause she went out of her way, she visited me when I was locked away. Yep. And then I knew from there, yep, nah, bang on – she's the one. It was good cause we can actually like speak our part, can actually say and give others a view of how it is on the receiving end. – 18-year-old-male

Rangatahi told us about the importance of taking time to build trust before being asked to share their stories, how this contributed to them opening up and the importance of staying true to their voice in research:

Nah, if I had no trust I wouldn't have said as much. Like you guys didn't disrespect me or anything or like...you always showed us respect as well when we showed you guys respect and you showed manners as well. She'd always give me a heads up like "You don't have to if you don't want to", but it was there for me, my choice as well. I'm not like forced to say anything I don't want to. Feeling like I had my own rights to say what I wanna say. Cause I couldn't really just tell my family. Then it was good ay, like gave us the option to check it as well, go over it, yeah. And most times you'd even shout like a feed and shit.
– 17-year-old-male

Oh yeah, she never forced us to open. She waited; she was patient. Patience is the key sometimes and the impatient ones don't get what they want. – 16-year-old-male

After about a year, we had mad trust. As mad as trust. Like I'd give it a zero back then and a ten now.
– 16-year-old-male

It's just good to be able to tell someone that I know I can trust. Cause I haven't spoken to anyone about those kinds of things, not even the individuals that I hang out with. – *19-year-old-male*

Like she's actually keen and willing to actually help out all these things and actually hear our voice, hear us out, is actually like...it's amazing. And she doesn't change it up, she won't change the story, she won't do this, she won't do—it's just bang on, it's just hearing us out really. – *18-year-old-male*

Rangatahi were also asked how being involved in this project was different to what it would be like if they were asked to participate in a single research interview or questionnaire:

Well, it would have been way different if it was over the phone, so it's not in person. No, I wouldn't even talk even talk to them, eh? What do you want to know for? (Laughs). – *16-year-old male*

Since she [Nicole] came in person she knew that we wanted to get a good bond first. So, on the first day, she just talked, had a yarn, told me what she wants to do... got ideas from us of what we wanted. Next one, did it again. She talked about Police chases but she didn't ever like ask us, we mainly just told her. She never like, made us give her an answer. Like, we gave it to her as the time went by and just gave her more and more and more. And we just got closer. – *16-year-old-male*

She was like, talking about trust and that and she said, If I ask you some questions you don't even have to give me some answers, I'll be all good with that. Just get the trust first and all that. I had heaps of trust in her then anyway. Enough to trust after about three sessions. Trust was mint. After just how the way she was talking to me, eh? Sounded like a normal Māori. – *16-year-old-male*

We asked rangatahi whether they felt their culture and background was understood and respected in the project:

All of this whole project, the mana, the wairua, the aroha. The tikanga throughout the whole thing, and also on top of everything else that everyone brought into the table, just to respect themselves, and to know that they've got it, they've got that mana, that aroha and everything. But mainly that wairua in themselves. Because trust is a hard thing, don't get me wrong, everybody knows that. We all gave, we all put out that leap of faith, or that leap of hope, and that wairua and that mana towards Nicole for her to do all these sorts of things for us. And I would say, that's where the respect came in. – *20-year-old-male*

Being part of the project, I felt like I was part of the whānau. Like part of a whānau, that we all come from different backgrounds, we all come from different lifestyle, but we all just put our pride away. – *16-year-old-male*

Rangatahi also shared with us what ongoing support has meant to them:

The experience from moving from an 8.5 to a 10 (trust) bro is that she stayd by my back the whole way. The whole way. Like, by saying the whole way, it's, I've been through about 10 houses in the last two years, and throughout the last two years for me, going into emergency housing and all of those transitional places and what not bro, she's been with me, she's been supportive, she even came up to me when I was on respite, and just been so f***ing supportive, eh? It's just. One thing that she changed a lot is that from a point in time I was putting my trust into her. You know? She made me believe that there's an easier way.

And it's only because of the support that... bro, it's the support, the aroha she gives out to the young person bro, it's f**king beautiful. Like I said to you on the phone today bro, not much people listen, and not much people pay attention. But with Nicole though, she's actually listening, she's actually paying attention, and she's actually making a difference with young people.

Bro, in all honesty, I want to cry. In all honesty, I wanted to cry when Nicole did all of this. Because, like I said the wairua inside of me, it just brought out more discipline towards myself and being able to do things I never thought I'd be able to do if I didn't find Nicole. I wouldn't be able to, you know, take another step forward now, as I say. – 20-year-old-male

Rangatahi engaging with Police

Rangatahi reflected on their engagements with Police during the project:

I'm actually talking to cops! Like actually making a full-on connection with them. Like, I'm listening to their background, they're listening to my background and they're not judging about it and I'm also not judging about their job. And that's why it took me out, because I have met a few cops and bro, some of them don't give a f**k. Well, with these ones here, like how I see it, like I said bro, equal, and now, since I've learnt their way, met them, I treat every cop the same now. I don't look at that cop and be like, Oh yeah, f**k, that pig shit, he's all shit. I look at him as another hero, just doing his duty, keeping people safe, going home to his family and doing the same thing.

The biggest highlight was actually introducing myself to them and them introducing themselves to us. Like, you don't see that everyday bro. Like a normal cop, walking up to a total stranger they don't know, without their uniform on and saying, Hey bro, and putting out their hand for a handshake as a sign of respect. And, just seeing that, it's like, ah man, I'm in there. He's got my back, I've got his back, type of thing.

In a different way, you don't see a cop praising you for what you've done in the past. But like, he looks at you now, and be like, oh, I'm proud. You don't see that every day, you don't hear that every day. Coming from a kid that had a bad upbringing, he did his wrongs and now he's making his wrongs right, changing his life around and seeing a whole new perspective, all because of this [project]. – 20-year-old-male

He put all of his pride and joy away, like. He put his cop, his negativity away. He was positive about Police work and what not. He just wiped it all out and been himself. – 16-year-old-male

I got a crack up bond with them. One of the Police officers, my phone was the cracked one and we pretended like it was a popped car. But then his one was like a mean flash as phone and his one was the Police car. And then, like, we would just, pretend what it was like in the cop chase. So then I gained a good bond there with that Police officer anyway. Then the go-karting and the paintball. Those were the best ones. And like, just to cruise around, eh? Cruise around and having conversations (with cops). That was cracking! – 16-year-old-male



Image: WithBox Ltd

A new perspective

Engaging rangatahi with Police and working in partnership against fleeing driver events has allowed rangatahi and Police to understand each other's perspective:

I dunno, I have a different look at it now that I've gotten older and grown out of it. Like, what about their side? They just wanna go home, they're just doing their job and we're just being c**ts that's giving them a job. – *18-year-old-male*

I always hated Police [laugh], especially back then, anyway. But now I think of it as, f**k, I'd be dead right now, if they weren't here, eh? If there was no Police, I could be dead. Shit. – *16-year-old-male*

Yeah, it makes a big difference, eh? I just talk to them all now, if I ever see them around town or anything. Be cracker to have a fat yarn with them. Like, even if I just see normal ones [cops] I just go, all good. Even if I don't know them or anything. Because I just think, I'm just a civilian, and you're just a civilian too.
– *16-year-old-male*

Yeah, like sometimes it's not the cop's fault. Yeah, they're just doing their job. It's our fault that we get in those situations and stuff. I learnt that it's not just them, it's us as well. How they were talking to us about what they do with their life and what they're doing is just their job of protecting communities and shit. And yeah, here we are going out there and giving them some jobs to do, so nah, if we weren't doing that maybe they wouldn't, I dunno, target us. Yeah, like they're just like us too, they have family, they're doing their job for money. – *17-year-old-male*

I never ever considered the event being traumatic [for rangatahi], which you could almost say as a result, some of them probably suffer from PTSD or something similar... you don't sort of... don't see them as a victim. — *Police officer*

Benefits for rangatahi

An initial 16 rangatahi were involved in the engagement and research part of the project, 11 then chose to participate in engaging with Police. Of those, eight rangatahi have made significant changes to their decision making and behaviour which has had a positive impact on their lives.

We asked rangatahi to reflect on the project and tell us whether anything has changed for them during this time, and how:

Just doing this and knowing that there's actually like potential and stuff to do...like, there's actually things to do that's being put forward. There's...I don't know how to explain it... I know there's a reason not to do crime. – *18-year-old-male*

Doing the whole programme thing was...it's all good ay, helped me out in a way, get out of crime and that, do something positive. – *17-year-old-male*

So like these are things I wouldn't do, but when Nicole entered my life, she's the reason... like yous are the reasons I actually get up and wanna do this shit [the project]. It makes us feel wanted and actually like... yeah. Wanting us around. Like cause I wouldn't expect to do this kinda thing in my life. – *18-year-old-male*

It's good. It's good that it changes and it will, it will change. This will change everything – it'll change the system and it'll change other people's view to these things that we've done. I wish for no-one to go through what we had to go through, I guess, so I really hope this changes everyone's view.

– 18-year-old-male

Doing the whole programme thing was...it's all good ay, helped me out in a way, get out of crime and that, do something positive. – 16-year-old-male

Yeah, I'm not like getting in trouble with the law or like losing family members' trust. Yeah, because I'd lie to them and like lie to the cops. And it wouldn't get me anywhere. Yeah, I haven't done many [chases] since ay. Just being able to tell someone how it feels in the situation and someone can understand it without making you feel bad for it ay. Cause sometimes people wanna talk about their problems but they can't ay, cause there's no-one to trust enough. Yeah and she was trusting, we could trust her enough to talk to her ay. It made me feel all good ay and she always asks for our opinion. Actually caring about what I was saying to her. It felt better that someone could understand and listen. – 17-year-old-male

A decision to stop for Police

Prior to becoming involved in the project, a few rangatahi said they had nothing to lose. Since engaging in the project and being supported, some made a conscious decision to stop when signalled by Police, because they did not want to lose their current relationships and support:

Back then when I used to flee the cops, I just didn't give a f**k, I just couldn't care. I dunno, I had nothing at the time, I just pretty much...I dunno. But the reason I pulled over now is cause I gotta lot on and I got a lot to lose – I had nothing to lose back then. Well, I got my missus, I got it going good, I've got good support, it's going real good. – 17-year-old male

Yeah, by us talking about it throughout the whole project. From there on, that's when I realised – it's time to stop. And then with every other time, yeah, just onwards. Yeah, nah – fleeing; yeah, nah, that would be the first thing that comes in the convo. But like now, I'd just be like "I'm pulling over". Yeah. So that'd be the first thing I'd say "I'm pulling over, I'm not pulling this no more". – 18-year-old-male

Instead of fleeing, I stopped cause I thought back on the project, I thought back on heaps of shit and it just made me stop. Yeah and then I just...yeah, stopped, gave up, instead of pulling a chase.

– 16-year-old-male

A decision to stop stealing cars

Some rangatahi stopped stealing cars since being involved in the project:

Did it influence me? Yes! To stop for Police lights? Yes! Did it stop me from stealing cars? Yes! For an example, I haven't stolen a car in f**k, three or four years. All this processing that (we have) done with the programme, it's influenced me to encourage other people not to do it. Because how I see it, it's not just your life on the line, it's other people on the line. – 20-year-old-male

People have worked hard to get the car and stuff. I know what it feels like to get stuff stolen off you so why do it to others. It has been mean actually (my year so far), I haven't popped a single car. Ever since we did our first interview. It made me understand what it feels like to be in a serious situation and having stuff stolen off you. – 13-year-old male

Just by saying it, eh? Saying what I've done, the things I've done. All the things I'd been caught for doing. They all added up. I'd know what I'd been done for. Like, when I reflected on them at the things, the interviews. I just, I don't know, I didn't really think about stealing eh. I wasn't around the people who were doing it anymore. – *16-year-old male*

All good eh. Because I still haven't done it. It's been like, I'm like 16 now and it's (almost) three years since I've stolen a single thing. I've stolen like a biscuit along the way from Countdown but that was like, two years ago. – *16-year-old male*

The above insights show that if you genuinely engage with rangatahi, take time to build trust, respect their voice and mana, you have the opportunity to support them in making better decisions for themselves.

Benefits for NZ Police

Through the sharing of the data from phase one and the introductory engagements, NZ Police staff involved in the project also mentioned several beneficial gains they observed for themselves:

It was actually really refreshing because the nature of my work is I dealt with youth a lot on the frontline as a cop going through, but then when you get into this sort of role the actual engagement with youth is minimised and I'm more looking at their output and their crimes through a paperwork-based system. So, it actually was refreshing and gave me a little bit of a perspective or a reality check on the youth perspective.

Just a reminder that at the core of what we do is what is best for our communities, victims and offenders and being more holistic in our thinking when it comes to dealing with our young people goes a long way to how they come out of that interaction and where they go in life.

I was able to actually take a whole heap of learnings from those interactions and put them into my interactions with pursuit ...and it really worked well. I engaged with (a young offender) and he admitted everything and helped us. He made a full confession, engaged, everything was by the book, there was no problems, we've gathered all the evidence and all the follow-up processes are able to be done properly because, you know, we've got a full account of things. It worked well because I think I had that mindset created or refreshed by having spoken to those young guys.

Changing that mind-set of "I'm a Policeman here to investigate a crime" and being a one up, one down type thing to actually trying to be alongside the youth, engage with them at a peer level, even though we're not, and then engage and develop trust and confidence to get into dealing with the criminal act.
– *Police officer*

The above insights have shown that this project has led to meaningful and positive change for both the rangatahi and NZ Police staff involved. Ultimately, by working alongside rangatahi in partnership, we have a much better opportunity to co-design solutions with rangatahi that work for rangatahi and affect transformative change.

References

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: a Practical Guide for Beginners*. SAGE.
- Durie, M. (1994). *Whaiaora-Māori health development*. Auckland, NZ: Oxford University Press.
- Evidence Based Policing Centre, New Zealand Police (2021). *Fleeing Driver Research Reports*.
<https://www.Police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/fleeing-driver-research-reports>
- Gluckman, P. D. (2018). It's Never Too Early, Never Too Late: a Discussion Paper on Preventing Youth Offending in New Zealand. Auckland, New Zealand: Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor.
<https://www.pmcsa.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Discussion-paper-on-preventing-youth-offending-in-NZ.pdf>
- Independent Police Conduct Authority (2019). Fleeing Drivers in New Zealand - a collaborative review of events, practices, and procedures. <https://www.ipca.govt.nz/Site/publications-and-media/2019-reports-on-investigations/2019-mar-15-fleeing-driver-joint-thematic-review.aspx>
- Ministry of Justice (2013). The Youth Crime Action Plan 2013-2023
<https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/cross-government/youth-crime-action-plan/>
- New Zealand Police (2017). Prevention First.
<https://www.Police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/prevention-first-national-operating-model-2017>
- New Zealand Police (2020). Our Business.
<https://www.Police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/our-business-2020.pdf>
- Pulotu-Endemann, F. K. (2009). Fonofale model of health.
<http://www.hauora.co.nz/resources/FonofalemodelExplanation.pdf>
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis : theory, method and research*. SAGE.
- Wachtel, T. (2013). *Dreaming of a new reality: How restorative practices reduce crime and violence, improve relationships and strengthen civil society*. Bethlehem, PA: The Piper's Press.
- White, M. (1988). The externalizing of the problem and the re-authoring of lives and relationships. Dulwich Centre Newsletter, Summer (special edition). Republished 1989 in M. White, Selected Papers (pp. 5-28). Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.

