



Repair Café Aotearoa New Zealand 2024 Survey

Report by Repair Network Aotearoa

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Repair Café Aotearoa New Zealand 2024 Survey Report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from a comprehensive survey conducted by the Repair Network Aotearoa (RNA) in July 2024. It examines the operational characteristics and development patterns of community Repair Cafés across New Zealand that are part of Repair Café Aotearoa NZ (RCANZ), a fundamental pillar of RNA. The study employed a structured questionnaire distributed to 50 Repair Café coordinators, receiving a 63% response rate (n=31).

The survey data reveals a dynamic network characterised by recent establishment and geographic diversity. More than one-third of responding organisations (35%) commenced operations within the preceding twelve months, suggesting accelerated adoption of the Repair Café model. Auckland accounted for 22% of respondents, while Wellington and Canterbury each represented 13% of the sample. 55% of initiatives were located in larger city centres and 45% in smaller regional communities, indicating broad community appeal across diverse demographic contexts. Operational patterns show standardised approaches to service delivery, with the majority of Repair Cafés (52%) conducting monthly events and 58% using community buildings as primary venues. Organisational structure analysis reveals that 71% operate under umbrella organisations, suggesting established institutional frameworks supporting community repair initiatives.

The volunteer participation data suggests strong community engagement and retention. During 2024, 55% of groups reported increased volunteer numbers, with 35% successfully attracting volunteers with specialised technical skills and only 16% experienced volunteer reduction. Typical volunteer participation ranges from 7-20 individuals per event, indicating consistent community involvement across diverse locations. Collaboration patterns evidence extensive external partnerships, with 67% of groups maintaining formal or informal relationships with external organisations. Primary collaboration partners include community groups, recycling centres, and commercial repair businesses, indicating integration within broader sustainability and circular economy networks.

Financial arrangements exhibit considerable variation across participating organisations. 61% have allocated operational funds and 52% receive grant funding (with 45% receiving local council support). Groups also reported significant reliance on community donations. Donations support refreshments and tools and materials, indicating hybrid funding models combining formal grants with community contributions.

The RCANZ network uses systematic support mechanisms and data collection protocols. Registration with Restarters (94%), an international platform for community repair activity tracking, shows commitment to evidence-based practice and global knowledge sharing. 81% of survey respondents reported receiving direct support from RCANZ, with 71% also using the Repair Café Aotearoa Handbook for operational guidance. Regular bi-monthly online coordinator hui attract 65% participation rates, indicating active skill development and network coordination.

Family-oriented programming represents a significant focus, with 61% of groups providing designated areas and activities for children and young people. Common initiatives include 'take-apart tables' (implemented by 12 groups) and dedicated play areas, demonstrating commitment to intergenerational skill transfer and community engagement.



Long-term strategic objectives centre on sustainability, enhanced community engagement, and operational expansion. Groups prioritise increased event frequency, strengthened collaboration with local organisations, improved funding security, and expanded youth programming. Common goals include establishing regular event schedules (bi-annually, monthly, or weekly) and developing dedicated repair facilities.

The overall findings suggest successful community adoption of the Repair Café model across diverse New Zealand communities, with potential for continued expansion and development.

INTRODUCTION

Repair Network Aotearoa (RNA) is a nationwide charitable trust dedicated to fostering a culture of repair and reuse across New Zealand. Its main pou (pillars in te reo Māori, Māori language) include working with communities, businesses, and local authorities, engaging in repair education, and campaigning for the Right to Repair in Aotearoa New Zealand. The trust was established in 2024, evolving out of the Repair Café Aotearoa NZ (RCANZ), which now operates under its umbrella.

RCANZ's network development commenced during New Zealand's COVID-19 lockdown periods in late 2020 and early 2021, with formal establishment occurring on International Repair Day (16 October 2021). The initial network of approximately 15 Repair Cafés was concentrated primarily in Auckland, building on foundations established through a previous Auckland Council Waste Minimisation Fund grant. Subsequent growth has been substantial, with the network expanding to over 50 Repair Cafés by late 2023 continuing its upward trajectory. This expansion indicates significant growth in community-based repair initiatives, led by Repair Café Aotearoa NZ (RCANZ).

This report presents findings from the July 2024 survey examining the experience of Repair Café coordinators. Repair Cafés represent a key focus of RNA's initial activity and have been supported by Repair Café Aotearoa New Zealand (RCANZ) since late 2020. These pop-up community events, led by volunteer repair experts and organised by dedicated coordinators, provide spaces for community members to collaboratively mend their broken items.

Modelled after the International Repair Café Starter Kit,¹ the Repair Café Aotearoa Handbook and accompanying documents² aims to offer a safe and comprehensive framework for establishing a Repair Café in New Zealand, specifically around volunteer management and health and safety issues. The movement in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrates remarkable diversity, with Repair Cafés organised by varied local groups and supported by volunteers who contribute their expertise and the community members who seek assistance with repairs.

Understanding the operational dynamics within these Repair Cafés, including volunteer recruitment and retention (a focus of the 2024 survey), is particularly important, given the unique RCANZ beginnings during the COVID-19, a period that significantly shaped the Repair Café movement's development in Aotearoa New Zealand. This survey report highlights both the diversity and broader patterns observed within New Zealand's growing Repair Movement.

The 2024 survey builds upon previous surveys conducted by RCANZ. RCANZ's first coordinator-focused survey in 2022 (unpublished) was particularly significant, as it captured insights from a pivotal year when many Repair Cafés reopened and new ones emerged following pandemic restrictions. RCANZ used these findings to inform support strategies, leading to a follow-up survey in 2023 (unpublished). The current 2024 survey incorporates lessons from both previous studies while drawing additional questions from two relevant international Repair Café surveys.³ This ensures the research connects to the international movement while remaining specifically tailored to Repair Café operations and the New Zealand context.

1 See Repair Café Foundation International <https://www.repaircafe.org/en/join/start-your-own/> (last accessed 14 July 2025).

2 Repair Café Aotearoa NZ (2023) The Repair Café Aotearoa Handbook. Available via <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/want-to-set-up-a-repair-cafe-in-your-neighbourhood> (last accessed 14 July 2025).

3 Charter, M., & Keiller, S. (2016b). The Second Global Survey of Repair Cafés: A Summary of Findings. Available from <https://research.uca.ac.uk/3140/> See also Spekkink W, Rödl M, Charter M. (2020). The third global survey of repair cafés: a summary of findings. The Centre for Sustainable Design, UCA. https://research.uca.ac.uk/5588/5/The%20Third%20Global%20Survey_2020.pdf (last accessed 14 July 2025).

Furthermore, RCANZ initiated the first nationwide “Repair Survey”⁴ in New Zealand, accessing their networks, specifically exploring the link between people’s environmental attitudes, their repair behaviours, and the factors that either facilitate or hinder repair. Subsequently, the Repair Network Aotearoa (RNA) Trust commissioned the second national repair survey via a marketing firm.⁵ That survey investigated consumer opinions on Right to Repair legislation and their attitudes and motivations toward repair. Its goal was to identify what helps or hinders repair efforts across Aotearoa New Zealand, including those supported by Repair Cafés. This survey also created a crucial baseline for RNA, allowing it to track the impact of their work through subsequent annual surveys.

4 Repair Café Aotearoa NZ, Alef-Defoe, S. (2023). Repair Survey Report.

Available from <https://www.repaircafeaotearoa.co.nz/publications> (last accessed 14 July 2025).

5 Ozanne, L. K., Prayag, G., & Sistig, B. (2025). Understanding repair in Aotearoa New Zealand: Attitudes, experiences, and the right to repair. University of Canterbury & Repair Network Aotearoa. Available from <https://www.repaircafeaotearoa.co.nz/publications> (last accessed 14 July 2025).



METHODS

The survey was sent out to local Repair Café coordinators associated with RCANZ in early July of 2024. Responses from 31 local Repair Cafés were received by the middle of November 2024, out of 50 contacted, a response rate of 63.27%, with the majority responding in July and August (77.5%). To mitigate bias from duplicate responses, the two cafés that responded twice were represented by a single combined entry in the quantitative analysis. The full text of all comments was retained for the qualitative analysis to ensure potentially relevant information was not lost. The survey data were cleaned to remove duplicate answers (which can be introduced as extra detail provided by respondents), reduce similar categories where needed and other similar artefacts in the data set. The cleaned data were then tabulated, graphed and described in text. Although questions where the utility of a graphed result is diminished due to a small number of categories, or a very high prevalence in one category have been described in text only. Some similar categories have been combined for analysis purposes; this has been noted where needed.

To investigate interrelationships between variables, cross-tabulation was employed. This analysis considered the potential influence of factors such as location type, the duration of group operation, and related variables, notably the two support variables. Chi-squared⁶ tests were conducted where appropriate. Cross-tabulations that did not generate meaningful insights were excluded from further analysis and are not presented in this report.

Displayed graphs use the counts of responses received in a particular category. In the text, however, a total response approach has been taken to provide percentages for questions where respondents could give more than one answer. This essentially treats each response category as a binary (yes/no) variable for calculating percentages. For example, several groups indicated that they use more than one type of building. Therefore, the sum of the answers given to this question (35) is greater than the total number of people who answered the survey (31). Unless the number of excess responses is small, this will result in a total percentage given that is greater than 100%. This usually produces an intuitive answer (58% of groups use a community building – at least some of the time), and prevents the percentages provided from being artificially lowered by the extra responses (using 51% – $18/35 \times 100$ – suggests much lower community building utilisation) and allows us to infer the inverse: 42% of groups are not using a community building in this case.

When respondents gave conflicting answers (such as responding both “yes” and “no” to a binary question), the results are less intuitive as the respondent is essentially double counted in a question where the reader expects everyone to be in only one category.

WHAT TYPE OF VENUE DO YOU USE?	N	%
Response 1: Community Building	18	58
Response 2: Public Library	4	13
Response 3: Workshop or Makerspace	4	13
Response 4: Other	9	29
Total Responses	35	113

Table 1: Illustration of the total response approach using a modified version of question 6. Note that the sum of the responses in the N column is 35 (more than the total number of respondents) and the sum of the percentages given is 113%.

6 Chi-squared is a simple statistical test that compares the observed relationship between two categorical variables and what would be expected if there was no relationship. The relationship is considered ‘significant’ (there is likely to be some kind of relationship) if the p value reported is less than 0.05.

Qualitative responses were mainly short comments entered in free text boxes in the survey, although not all respondents entered free text when prompted to. The responses were analysed and summarised into short, anonymised paragraphs to give a sense of what respondents had entered. Recorded responses represent the range of views that some respondents chose to comment on. It is important in representing qualitative data that the range of responses is represented, rather than just the majority view.



RESULTS

This section reports on the results of the survey on a question by question basis for future comparison with the international Repair Café surveys cited in the introduction.

Location

Repair Cafés that responded to the survey were widely spread around the country, with the largest proportion in Auckland (n=7, 22%). Some groups were geographically close, for example Māngere East and Māngere Bridge (a distance of approximately 5 km), but serving different communities. Of the 31 responses received, 17 (55%) were from a group based in a city, whereas 14 (45%) were from a group based in a smaller regional centre (for example, a small town like Tākaka). In Table 2 below, groups have been summarised by region and as a city or regional based group. Some regions contain more than one city, so city names have been specified, and the Auckland groups have been divided into north, central or South Auckland.

Table 2: Summary of Repair Café responses by region and type of location (city or regional centre).

REGION	REGIONAL REPAIR CAFÉ GROUPS	CITY REPAIR CAFÉ GROUPS	TOTAL # GROUPS IN REGION	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES
Northland	2	Whangarei 1	3	9%
Auckland	-	North 2 Central 2 South 3	7	22%
Waikato	1	Hamilton 1	2	6%
Bay Of Plenty	1	Tauranga 1 Rotorua 1	3	9%
Hawke's Bay	-	Napier 1	1	3%
Taranaki	1	-	1	3%
Whanganui/Manawatū	2	-	2	6%
Wellington	2	Wellington City 2	4	13%
Nelson/Tasman	2	Nelson 1	3	9%
Canterbury	2	Christchurch 2	4	13%
Otago	1	Dunedin	1	6%
Total	14	17	31	

Length of operation

Among the 31 Repair Cafés respondents, over one-third (n=11, 35%) had been operating for less than one year, while fewer than one quarter, seven groups (n=7, 23%), had been operating for three years or more. The remaining Repair Cafés (n= 13, 42%) had been operational for one to two years. This distribution reflects the organic expansion of volunteer-led community initiatives within the context of RCANZ's development trajectory.

Operational frequency and venue arrangements

Over half of the 31 responding groups (n=16, 52%) operated their Repair Café monthly. Five groups (16%) met three times per year or fewer, with one group specifying 'infrequent' operations.

The majority of groups (n=18, 58%) used community buildings to run their Repair Café. For analytical purposes, workshops, makerspaces, and tool libraries were aggregated into a single category due to substantial overlap in responses. Two responses referenced Menzshed, which were subsequently included within this category. (Figure 1)

Umbrella organisation

Nine respondents (29%) indicated that they operated independently without affiliation to another organisation. One group specified that they are part of another organisation yet did not identify the type of parent organisation. While several organisations listed collaborators under "other", who potentially align with established organisational types, the available information provided was insufficient for definitive categorisation. (Figure 2)

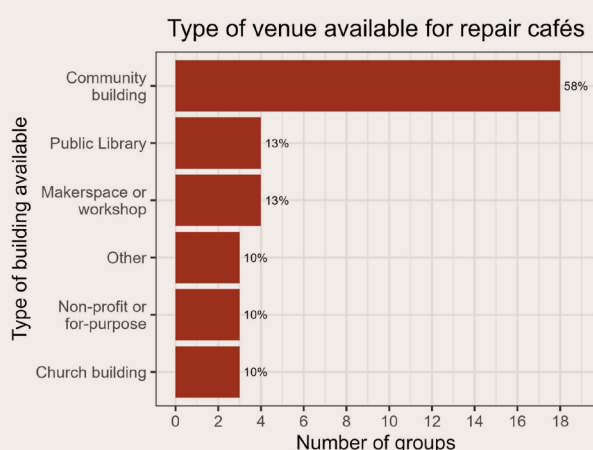


Figure 1: Venues used for Repair Café events across all 31 Repair Café groups surveyed.

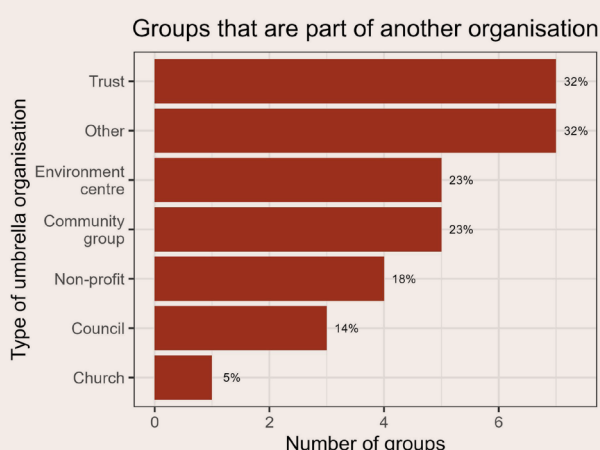


Figure 2: Type of umbrella organisation for the 23 Repair Café groups surveyed that are part of another organisation.

Collaboration with other groups

Among groups that engaged in collaboration, community groups represented the most common type of partner, with collaborating organisations working with a diverse range of partners comprising recycling centre (38%), repair business (33%), local business or café/bakery (19%) and other environment groups. However, approximately one-third of surveyed groups (n=10, 32%) reported no current collaborative relationships with other organisations or businesses. (Figure 3)

Young people

A clear majority of cafés (n=19, 61%) accommodated tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young people) through various avenues of involvement strategies. The most common approach was providing a designated children's area, often featuring a 'take-apart table' (n=12). Additional family-friendly amenities reported by respondents included play areas and craft activities. One respondent noted that adults were frequently accompanied by children. (Figure 4)

Several groups reported specific strategies for engaging with older rangatahi (young people). Three separate groups mentioned involving them in repairs or related activities. One respondent reported targeting volunteer recruitment efforts at the nearby university, noting that adult students appreciated both the opportunity to develop skills within their area of study and to engage with the wider community.

Volunteers

Groups reported varying volunteer numbers across repair events, with some indicating consistent participation while others noted fluctuations based on event type (e.g., sewing-focused versus multi-skill activities). The majority of responses fell into the 7-10 or 11-20 volunteer



Figure 3: Types of external organisations collaborated with for the 21 Repair Café groups surveyed that had collaboration arrangements.

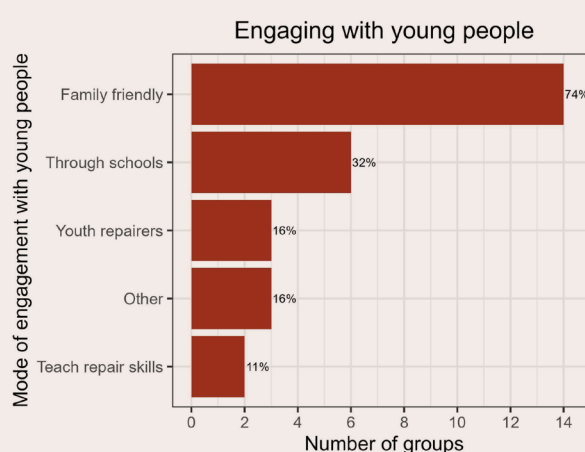


Figure 4: Types of engagement with young people for the 19 Repair Café groups surveyed that reported youth engagement.

categories (n=10 each), with fewer groups reporting either more or fewer numbers outside these ranges. Two groups selected multiple volunteer number categories. (Figure 5)

Changes in volunteers

Most groups reported changes in volunteer participation during 2024. Seventeen groups (55%) reported an increase in volunteer numbers, while eleven groups (35%) reported a steady volunteer base, whereas 3 (10%) did not comment on changes since they were too new. Eleven groups (35%) reported attracting volunteers with new and different skills. Five groups (16%) reported experiencing a reduction in volunteer numbers. Three groups (10%) indicated recent formation and insufficient data to assess trends. Additional qualitative responses included requests for recruitment assistance and reports of poor response to volunteer advertising (not shown on graph). (Figure 6)

Visitors

Visitor attendance at Repair Café events varied considerably both between groups and within individual groups across different events. Some respondents noted that attendance numbers fluctuated depending on event type, with three groups selecting multiple event attendance categories. Newer groups reported insufficient operational history to provide reliable estimates of typical attendance figures. (Figure 7)

Changes in visitors

Twenty-five groups (n=18, 58%) reported changes in visitor attendance patterns. Similarly to volunteer numbers, most of these groups observed either an increase in visitor numbers (n=9,

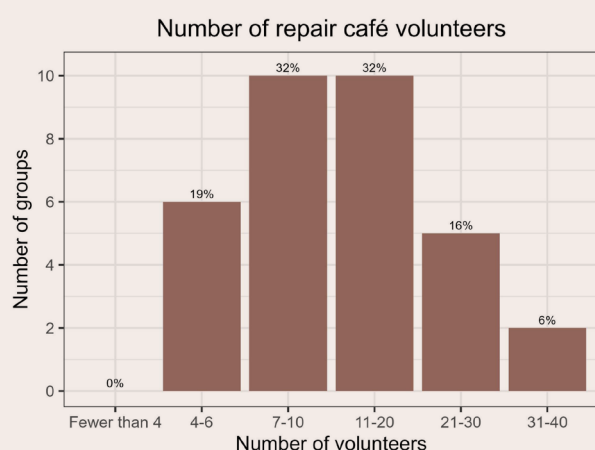


Figure 5: Number of volunteers by category across all 31 Repair Café groups surveyed.

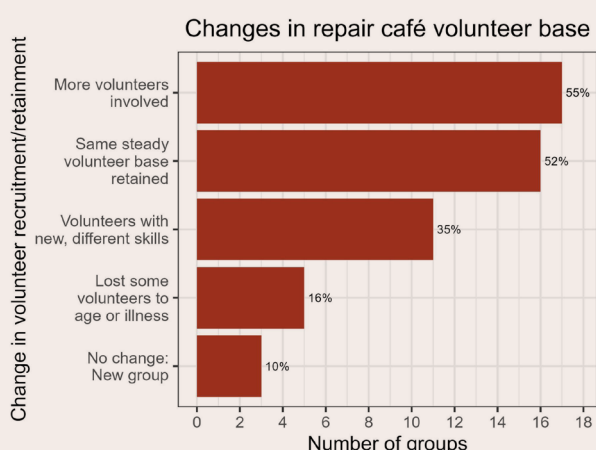


Figure 6: Changes in volunteer base across all 31 Repair Café groups surveyed.

36%), or about the same number of visitors (n=8, 32%). Two of these groups (8%) noted that visitor numbers vary depending on the location the Repair Café is held and four (16%) that the group was too new to comment on changes in visitor numbers.

Eighteen groups (58%) provided information about visitor categories of repair requests. Of these, fourteen groups (78%) reported having regular visitors. Some groups identified both positive changes (—) including increased interest in local repair options (n=3, 17%), safe recycling options (n=3, 17%), and learning repair skills (n=1, 6%). Others reported challenges such as more complex repairs (n=6, 33%), reduced capacity to offer donations (n=2, 11%), and decreased visitor participation in repairs (n=3, 17%). One additional comment made was that there were more insistent/demanding attendees at a recent event, though this group also noticed an increase in koha (gift or donation in Māori). (Figure 8)

Data collection

Restarters

Restarters, a member of the Open Repair Alliance, provides an international digital platform for recording repair data at Repair Cafés.⁷ Leveraging this platform, RCANZ hosts a dedicated page and developed a repair form that aligns with Restarters’ data categories. Specifically, the Repair Café visitor is invited to identify the product name, brand, age, approximate weight, and experienced fault. The volunteer repairer then adds comments regarding product repair accessibility, repairability, spare parts requirements, or end-of-life status. This data is useful for tracking which items are predominantly repaired, their repairability and the types of spare parts required. It also helps identify items that are unrepairable due to planned obsolescence or other

⁷ See www.restarters.net for further information. Last accessed 16 July 2025.

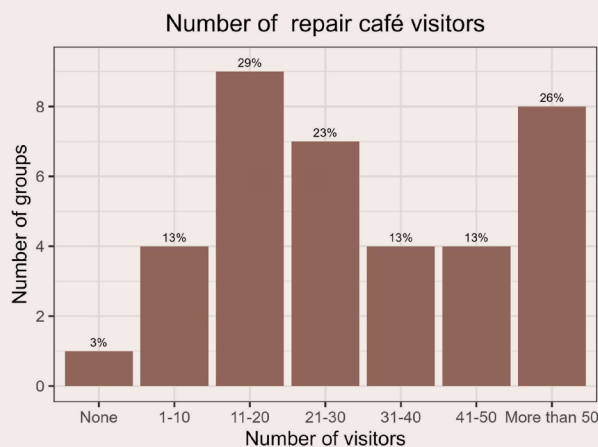


Figure 7: Number of visitors by category across all 31 Repair Café groups surveyed.

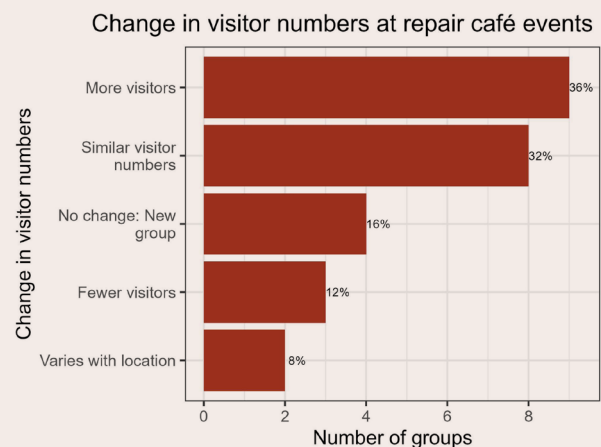


Figure 8: Changes in visitor numbers across all 31 Repair Café groups surveyed.

factors. Furthermore, it estimates the waste diverted from landfill (in kilograms) and the CO2 emissions prevented. Almost all groups (n=29, 94%) were registered with Restarters.

Repair Café data collection

All respondents (n=31) answered at least one component of the question regarding data collection using the Restarters system (as described above) and the RCANZ support offered, though not all responded to both components. Two (n=2/31) of the Repair Cafés were not registered with Restarters as they were very recently established. Fourteen respondents addressed whether the support provided by RCANZ for data collection was useful. Of these, twelve (86%) found it useful, while two indicated it was not particularly useful. No respondents provided additional comments elaborating on specific aspects they found useful or not useful. Twenty-six respondents indicated whether they had entered their 2024 data into the Restarters system. Seventeen groups (65%) had entered their data, while nine groups (35%) had not yet done so at the time of the survey.

Financial sustainability

Funding

Approximately two-thirds of the groups (n=19, 61%) reported having allocated funds for Repair Café-related work, while twelve groups (n=12, 39%) did not.

Just over half the groups (52%, n=16) received grant funding toward their events. This included fourteen groups (45%) with Council grants, two groups (6%) obtaining other community grants, with one of these groups having secured both. Fifteen groups (48%) did not receive grant funding, but as stated above, some of these had other forms of allocated funds, for example, funds obtained from the local residents' association.

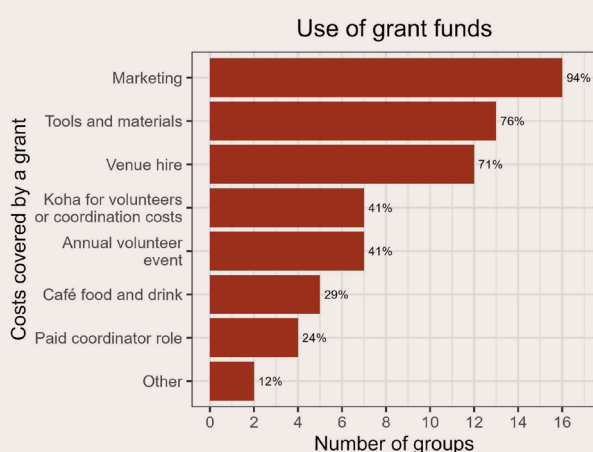
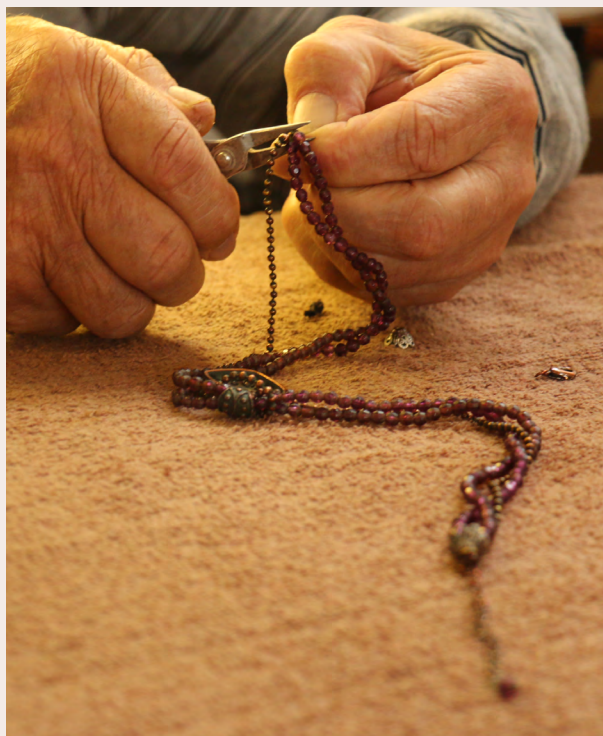


Figure 9: Use of grant funds by the 15 Repair Café groups surveyed that had grant funds available.





Groups with other funding detailed specific funding sources, including broader sustainability or waste reduction initiatives, specific funding streams, residents' associations, and local businesses. Non-monetary support was also reported, including free venues, food provision, and assistance with marketing and venue hire. A small number of groups indicated they were planning to apply for grants, currently applying, or had previously received grant funding. One group coordinator reported using personal funds to support operations due to limited koha and lack of external support.

Costs covered by grant

The groups with available grant funding used it for a wide variety of tasks. Responses were condensed into fewer categories as some specific comments closely resembled existing classifications. For example, the category 'marketing' covers both promotional material and social media boosting, plus any similar written comments. (Figure 9)

Costs covered by koha

Of the 29 out of 31 responding groups that received koha (a Māori term for a donation), the funds were most frequently used for refreshments at the café by 20 groups (69%). Other significant uses included purchasing tools and materials for repairs by 14 groups (48%) and funding an annual volunteer event by 10 groups (34%).⁸ Additional specific uses encompassed contributing to a fundraiser for a new building for the local Menzshed, a donation to RCANZ, and pooling koha with Council grant funds. Conversely, three groups (10%) indicated they received either a very small monetary koha or none at all.

⁸ Please note, the percentage refers to the percentage of groups that used the funds for this purpose, not the percentage of funds used for this purpose. We did not collect that data.

Sources of support

Support from RCANZ or from another Repair Café

Twenty-five groups (81%) reported receiving support from RCANZ, while six groups (19%) reportedly did not. Most groups (n=24, 77%) had not engaged in support from other Repair Café groups, while seven groups (23%) had received such assistance].

Among groups reportedly not receiving RCANZ support, five of six also had not sought inter-group support. Among groups receiving RCANZ support, 19 of 25 received no additional inter-group support. However, a Pearson's Chi-squared test indicated no significant relationship between these two types of support ($p=1.00000.71559999$).

The seven groups receiving inter-group support were connected with well-established Repair Café groups in their geographic area. Most well-established and relatively new groups received support from either RCANZ or another group at the time of the survey.

Repair Café Aotearoa Handbook

RCANZ published a handbook (May 2023) outlining Repair Café setup and operation procedures. Twenty-two groups (71%) used the RCANZ handbook, while nine groups (29%) did not. One respondent reported language barriers prevented their group from using the handbook.

Respondents identified multiple useful elements from the Repair Café Aotearoa Handbook, Volunteer Kit, and Forms Pack, including organisational guidance and insurance criteria, various forms (consent agreements, volunteer manuals, volunteer agreement forms, talent release forms, reception log sheets, repair forms, FIXED signs, electrical safety guidance, step-by-step guides, table labels, and registration ideas). Respondents also mentioned the Volunteer Kit's coverage of NZ legal matters and volunteer roles as valuable resources.

Several groups developed variations of the material and forms offered by RCANZ to better suit their specific needs. Some made adjustments to cover local requirements, while others modified the repair form or developed their own forms to gather specific information. Adaptations include the registration forms and volunteer expression of interest form. Additionally, one group is using a sign-in sheet template from RCANZ. Although some respondents made no changes yet, they considered adjusting the forms for local use in the future.





Repair Café coordinator community

RCANZ provides an online Repair Café coordinator Hui through Zoom videoconferencing every second month. Most groups participating in the survey were able to attend one of these Zoom Hui, with 20 groups (65%) stating that they attended and 11 (35%) responding that they did not.

Value of the Zoom hui

Many survey respondents found the Zoom meetings for Repair Community Hui to be highly positive and beneficial. They appreciated the opportunity to see what others are doing, gain new ideas, and consider interesting concepts. The educational atmosphere was valued, with speakers from other cafés sharing marketing tips and insights from Restarters about data being particularly useful. Respondents enjoyed sharing information and hearing about the operations of other repair cafes, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Learning new IT skills and communication tips were also highlighted. Additionally, networking and the encouragement from talking to others doing similar work were important aspects. Overall, the diverse presentations, sharing of experiences, and the sense of being part of a larger community were significant takeaways for attendees.

Barriers to attending the Zoom hui

Respondents cited some barriers to attending the Zoom hui. Time conflicts were a common issue, with many volunteers having other commitments or only being available on weekends. Some felt overscheduled or too tired to attend. For just a few respondents, the hui wasn't a priority, or there was a lack of interest from their fellow volunteers. Specific reasons included work schedules, childcare responsibilities, and illness. One group mentioned that their event operations differed, and another mentioned that they were a new group still getting organised. Overall, timing and conflicting priorities were the main obstacles to participation.

Long term plans

Respondents shared a variety of long-term visions for their Repair Cafés. Common themes included sustainability (both in terms of finances and people's capacities), community engagement or collaboration, expansion and education.

In terms of sustainability, respondents recognised that at times, capacity was limited. Some stated that it was just enough to keep going, for example, one group aimed to:

Keep it going as is for as long as it continues to work. Key strategy is to have an engaged and effective Organising Group (5-6 people) who share the workload so that it [does] not become overwhelming to any one individual.

Another respondent noted that:

I feel I need to streamline my coordinator work and gain more I T skills so my work is more time efficient and therefore sustainable long term as a volunteer role.

Others mentioned the need for more sustainable funding to help with upskilling.

In terms of community engagement and collaboration, many stated aiming to hold regular Repair Cafés, whether bi-annually, monthly, or weekly, with goals to increase participation and collaboration with local groups and councils. For example, one group stated they would like to organise:

More collaborative events with other organisations more along the lines of what RCANZ does/supports.

Another group wanted to 'set up a network, so that Repair Cafés are 'offered on a weekly basis across the city'. One respondent told a story about their vision for an inclusive space, where people without homes or resources could come and feel comfortable.

Further ways of planning for collaboration and community engagement included creating dedicated areas for children's repair activities, running workshops, and fostering partnerships with recycling organisations. For example, one group was:

Working on expanding to include a Repair Workshop which will focus on bigger items which take longer to fix and [need] the big tools

In terms of expansion, survey respondents also hope to secure more funding, expand volunteer roles, and enhance marketing and education. One responded with the goal to:

make a change in the 'MEND IT not END IT' mindset of the people.

Some spoke of setting up education internships and workshops. Specific ideas include establishing a repair workshop for larger items, developing a sustainability internship for local youth, and creating a network of Repair Café s across the city. Overall, the visions focus is on increasing capacity, sustainability, and community impact.

Discussion

The 2024 survey findings indicate a dynamic Repair Café network characterised by recent establishment and operational diversity. More than one-third of the 31 responding groups commenced operations within the preceding twelve months, suggesting accelerated adoption of the Repair Café model across New Zealand communities. The geographic distribution across urban centres (55%) and regional communities (45%) evidences the model's applicability to diverse demographic contexts.

Operational patterns reveal standardised approaches to service delivery, with 52% conducting monthly events and 71% operating under umbrella organisations. This arrangement appears to provide necessary support while maintaining grassroots autonomy. Volunteer participation data indicates positive recruitment trends, with 55% of groups reporting increased volunteer numbers and only 16% experiencing a decline. The typical volunteer participation range of 7-20 individuals per event suggests consistent community engagement.

External partnerships reported by 67% of groups confirm integration within broader sustainability networks. High engagement with international platforms (94% registration with Restarters) and substantial RCANZ support (81% participation) indicate multi-level governance structures facilitating knowledge sharing and coordination.

Financial arrangements exhibit considerable variation across groups. Although 61% secure operational funds, of which 52% receive grants including council grants, significant reliance on community donations indicates potential sustainability challenges. Coordinators expressed capacity limitations, with some aiming to “keep it going as is for as long as it continues to work”, highlighting operational constraints within volunteer-driven models.

Long-term strategic objectives centre on sustainability, enhanced community engagement, and operational expansion. Goals to establish networked repair services and create inclusive spaces demonstrate recognition of the potential for Repair Cafés to address social and environmental challenges. The objective to “make a change in the ‘MEND IT not END IT’ mindset” reflects broader cultural aspirations beyond immediate repair activities.

Overall, the widespread reporting of increases in both visitors and volunteers indicates growing public interest in repair activities and broader sustainability practices across Aotearoa New Zealand. This trend underscores the community's strong adoption of the Repair Café model. However, sustaining this positive momentum will necessitate continued strategic support, particularly in addressing ongoing challenges such as volunteer retention and ensuring long-term financial viability for the network.



Limitations to the survey

Considering that RCANZ commenced operations in early 2021, the majority of survey respondents represented groups operating for less than three years, with several being new cafés established in 2024. Several factors may influence the interpretation of these findings. The predominance of newer groups in the survey sample (established since 2021) could reflect either higher engagement levels among recently formed organisations or different response patterns between established and newer groups. Additionally, the higher representation of newer groups in the survey responses may not reflect the experiences of all Repair Café groups operating in Aotearoa, potentially limiting the generalisability of findings to more established organisations.

As the scope of the survey was limited to coordinators, it does not include direct qualitative data from visitors or volunteers (e.g., surveys on their motivations or satisfaction), which could offer deeper insights into the broader public's engagement with repair activities and sustainability.

Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data presents limitations, including two groups submitting surveys twice with occasional conflicting data. While self-reported data provides valuable insights into operational experiences and offers an indicative snapshot of Repair Café activities, inconsistencies were observed. These findings should therefore be interpreted with appropriate caution.



CONCLUSION

Drawing upon the insights from the 2024 survey, the Repair Café movement in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrates significant vitality and continuous growth. Findings from this national survey of Repair Café coordinators highlight a clear trend of increasing public interest and active participation in community-led repair efforts.

These local Repair Cafés reflect a diverse range of locations, operational variations, and volunteer skill sets, demonstrating the adaptability of the operational model to suit their places and communities. Despite challenges such as volunteer recruitment and retention, the overall trend indicates increasing participation and support for sustainability practices. The survey results underscore the critical need for continued support from RCANZ and other organisations to foster collaboration, provide resources, and effectively address barriers to participation.

Moving forward, the Repair Café movement in New Zealand is poised for further growth and impact. The insights from this survey can be used to guide RCANZ's work in supporting local Repair Cafés in volunteer engagement, expanding community outreach, and securing sustainable funding. By strategically building on the strengths of existing networks and proactively addressing the challenges identified, RCANZ is well positioned to continue its vital advocacy for Right to Repair legislation and contribute to more sustainable and connected, resilient communities. The ongoing success of Repair Cafés will undoubtedly play a crucial role in diverting waste from landfills, reducing carbon emissions, and championing the principles of a circular economy, as well as practical climate action.

A comparative study of the surveys conducted between 2022 and 2024 would allow for a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of Repair Cafés in Aotearoa New Zealand. By analysing trends in respondents' engagement, operational models, and identified barriers across successive survey iterations, RCANZ and the Repair Network Aotearoa Trust could delineate key areas of progress and persistent challenges. Such an analysis would also facilitate the refinement of strategic interventions, providing empirical evidence of their impact on fostering a more robust and sustainable repair ecosystem.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to all Repair Café coordinators who participated in the 2024 survey. Their contributions are invaluable to the advancement of the Repair Café movement in Aotearoa New Zealand. We thank Dr Alison Watkins for her quantitative data analysis of the survey data and preparation of figures and tables. We also thank Professor Kelly Dombroski of Massey University for assistance with data analysis, writing, and editing. We thank Massey University's graphic design team for their assistance enhancing the clarity and impact of this report.

Finally, we recognise the ongoing support from the Repair Network Aotearoa for Repair Cafés and other organisations that support the Repair Movement and promote sustainability and community engagement across Aotearoa New Zealand.





APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey questions for the Repair Cafe Survey – 2024 are below. Note: question 28 on RCANZ's 'In the Media' and a question 29 about possible donations to RCANZ were not analysed in this report.

Repair Cafe Survey - 2024

Kia ora awesome Repair Cafe coordinators. The past year has been an exciting time, seeing the repair cafe movement grow across Aotearoa NZ, resources developed and shared among the Repair Community Aotearoa. We'd love to hear about your experiences to help us keep moving forward together as a community.

Please share your journey, and we'll put it all together to share with the wider Repair Cafe community.

Note: Repair Cafe Aotearoa NZ (RCANZ) complies with the Privacy Act (2020).

* Indicates required question

NUMBER	QUESTION	RESPONSE TYPE/ AVAILABLE RESPONSE OPTIONS
1	Email*	Email address
2	What is the NAME of your Repair Cafe*	Short answer
3	What is the LOCATION of your Repair Cafe e.g., town/suburb/street?*	Short answer
4	When did you LAUNCH your Repair Cafe?*	Date
5	How FREQUENT do you run your Repair Cafe? - Please click all relevant to you -*	Weekly Monthly Bi-monthly Every 3 months 3 x times a year 2 x times a year Once a year Infrequent On International Repair Day (3rd Saturday in October) Other
6	What type of VENUE do you use? *	Community Building Church Building Public Library University Building Not for profit OR for purpose Building Makerspace Tool Library Workshop space Cafe Other:
7	Is your Repair Cafe PART OF a larger organisation? If, please give the name under "Other"*	Yes Environment Centre Community Centre Council Non-For-Profit Church/Parish Community Group Trust Write the Name of the organisation under 'Other' No Other:

NUMBER	QUESTION	RESPONSE TYPE/ AVAILABLE RESPONSE OPTIONS
8	Do you COLLABORATE/ invite other organisations/ businesses to join you at your Repair Cafe?*	Local cafe/ bakery Repair Business Local business Recycling Centre Composting initiative Community Group Environment Group No Other:
9	Does your Repair Cafe reach out to/ involve/ cater for YOUNG PEOPLE?*	Take apart table for children and young people at the repair cafe Teach young people repair skills. If YES, please detail under "Other" below. Connect with schools Enviroschools Sustainable Schools No Other:
10	How many VOLUNTEERS usually attend your Repair Cafe?*	Less than 4 4-6 7-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41 or more Other:
11	In your experience, did your repair cafe volunteer base change this year?- Under 'Other', please tell us your thinking around the reasons for any changes.*	More volunteers got involved Same steady volunteer base retained this year We lost some repair volunteers due to old age or illness It was difficult to keep the volunteers engaged over the year Gradual decrease in volunteer numbers Little response to advertising for new volunteers We got volunteers with new and different skills I would like some help with volunteer recruiting I would like to learn more about volunteer retainment Other:

NUMBER	QUESTION	RESPONSE TYPE/ AVAILABLE RESPONSE OPTIONS
12	How many does your Repair Cafe welcome on average?*	1-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 More than 50 Other:
13	In your experience, did your repair cafe visitors cohort change this year?- Under 'Other', please tell us your thinking around the reasons for any changes.*	Yes No More visitors Less visitors Similar number of visitors Repeat visitors that come regularly More complex requests for repair Less interest in repair participation Less capacity to offer koha/donation Increased interest in learning repair skills Interest in local repair options Interest in local safe recycling options Other:
14	Is your Repair Cafe registered with the RESTARTERS?*	Yes No I would like to register on the restarters Other:
15	Did you find the help offered with the repair data collection useful? Please note your comments under 'Other'. *	Yes No I have entered our 2024 Repair Cafe Data I have NOT entered our 2024 Repair Cafe Data I need more help with repair data entry Other:
16	Do you have allocated FUNDS available for your repair cafe?*	Yes No Other:
17	Did you receive a grant from your local Council to run your repair cafes this year? Write under 'Other' any other/additional funding you were able to access.*	Yes No Other:

NUMBER	QUESTION	RESPONSE TYPE/ AVAILABLE RESPONSE OPTIONS
18	If YES, what general costs does the GRANT received cover?	Venue hire cost Promotional material Small tools and utensils for basic repairs Social media boosting Cafe food and drinks Travel expenses of volunteers Volunteer celebratory event once a year Video equipment Video production Paid Repair Cafe coordinator role Does not apply Other:
19	What general costs is the KOHA received at your repair cafes used for?*	Promotional material Social media boosting Small tools and utensils for basic repairs Cafe food and drinks Travel expenses of volunteers Volunteer celebratory event once a year Pay the Repair Cafe coordinator a contribution Other:
20	Did/ Do you receive SUPPORT from another Repair Cafe? If YES, please identify the repair cafe by name under 'Other', and the type of support received.*	Yes No Other:
21	Did/ Do you receive SUPPORT from Repair Cafe Aotearoa NZ? If YES, please identify the type of support received under 'Other'.*	Yes No Other:
22	Did/ Do you consult the Repair Cafe Aotearoa Handbook, the Volunteer Kit and the Forms Pack (released May 2023)? *	Yes No
23	If YES, What did you find most helpful in the Repair Cafe Aotearoa Handbook, the Volunteer Kit and the Forms Pack?	Long answer
24	Did you develop a variation of the material/form(s) offered by RCANZ? If YES, email nzrepaircafeinfo@gmail.com	Short answer
25	Did you attend any of the RCANZ online ZHUI for Repair Cafe coordinators this year?*	Yes No Other:

NUMBER	QUESTION	RESPONSE TYPE/ AVAILABLE RESPONSE OPTIONS
26	If YES, what did you find most valuable about these Repair Community Zhui?	Long answer
27	If NO, tell us what were the barriers to attending.	Long answer
28	The 'In the Media' webpage needs updating on the RCANZ website. It is wonderful to share YOUR STORIES! Please email us the link(s) to your ARTICLE(S), so we can add them to the webpage – nzrepaircafeinfo@gmail.com	Long answer
29	Considering the support role of RCANZ for Repair Cafes and the Right to Repair campaigning, would you be interested in becoming a regular supporter of RCANZ? If so, can you indicate the amount of a monthly DONATION your cafe would be prepared to contribute?*	\$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 \$30 Annual donation of a larger dollar amount No Other:
30	Do you have a LONG-TERM VISION for your Repair Cafe, and what this involves? Share your ideas below.	Long answer
31	Any additional information or files you would like to share, please email nzrepaircafeinfo@gmail.com	Short answer



