

For immediate release
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LIFEWISE is thrilled that AUT University has received recognition for its work with the charity over the last two years after the organisations were jointly selected as a finalist in the Robin Hood Foundation's Social Hero Awards.

John McCarthy, General Manager for LIFEWISE's Community Services, says "we were all delighted to be selected. Robin Hood Foundation has done so much to promote businesses getting involved in community. They continue to show the business world that 'doing good is good for business' and that is something New Zealanders should be proud of".

The partnership between LIFEWISE and AUT University is vastly different from the classic charity/business relationship as it draws on each organisation's strengths and resources, rather than money, to successfully deliver an outcome that addresses a major social need.

AUT initially chose to work with LIFEWISE to address the issue of homelessness both in Auckland and nationwide. Over time the relationship between the two organisations broadened to include the establishment of the Community Impact Group (CIG).

Everyone involved in this group, which consists of both for-profit and nor-for-profit organisations, as well as educationalists, is committed to promoting ways in which different sectors can work together more effectively to raise social and economic performance.

In addition to the establishment of CIG, McCarthy, says the partnership between the charity and AUT has resulted in a number of positive outcomes for both the homeless community and those who have contact with homeless people. For example, the development of a training programme for AUT security staff and frontline Auckland City Council staff on understanding and managing homeless people has already improved interactions with those living on the streets.

"We congratulate AUT University for its positive and constructive approach to the issue of homelessness, particularly given that it is a social issue many choose to ignore," says McCarthy.

"Social issues impact on all of us – not just people in the immediate surrounds. LIFEWISE knows from experience that complex social issues have to be addressed

from many angles, and that different sectors view issues from different perspectives.”

McCarthy adds: “It is not realistic for one organisation to endeavour to tackle social issues as significant as homelessness alone. We believe the sharing of knowledge, ideas, skills and contacts is vital to generate effective solutions to big social issues. Being selected as a finalist for a Robin Hood Foundation Social Hero Award is testament to the fact that LIFEWISE’s partnership with AUT, and the development of CIG, is an exciting step in the right direction.”

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