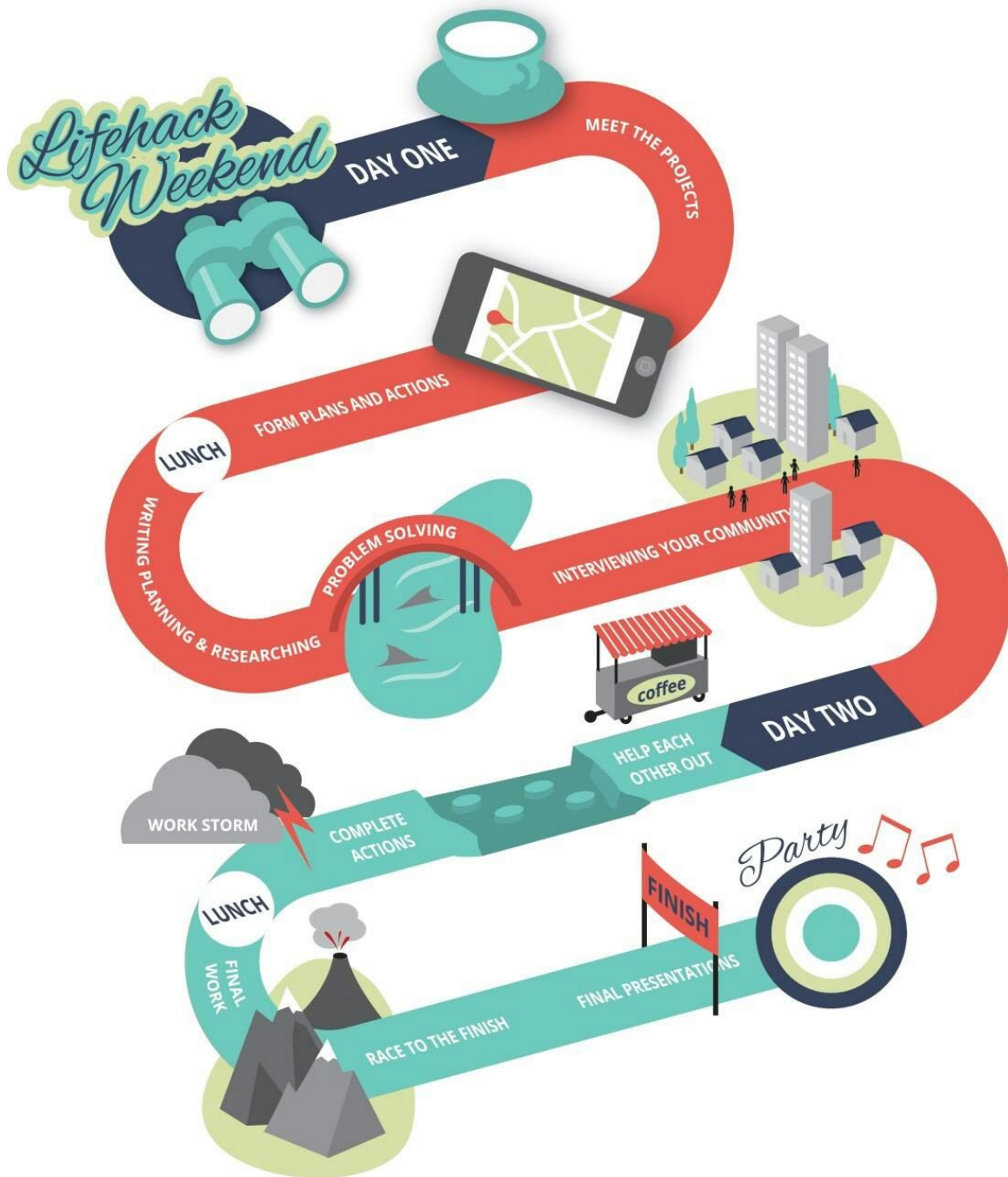


# THE LIFEHACK WEEKEND REPORT 2014



# Lifehack Weekends - Overview

## Table of Content

[Background: Why Lifehack Weekends?](#)

[Hypothesis: How & When to use a Lifehack Weekend?](#)

[Approach: What is a Lifehack weekend?](#)

[Results: What resulted from these Lifehack weekends?](#)

[Projects and Themes across the Country](#)

[Results across the 5 Capitals:](#)

[Longer-term Impact of Lifehack Weekends](#)

[Participants - Where Are They Now?](#)

[Projects - Where Are They Now ?](#)

[Learnings: What did we learn from running these Lifehack weekends?](#)

[Top Line Insights](#)

[What Makes a Project Suitable for a Weekend?](#)

[What Makes an Event Successful](#)

[Future Considerations](#)

[Next Experiment: Questions for the Future](#)

[Appendix](#)

## Background: Why Lifehack Weekends?

During 2014, we planned a series of experiments, testing hypotheses around impact, longevity and effectiveness of various tactics. One of those sets of experiments was around running Lifehack weekend events in far-flung corners of the country. We directed our focus on to the harder-to-reach communities around Aotearoa.

The thinking behind the new weekend tactic was around testing and comparing it to the events held in 2013. 2014 marked a shift in Lifehack's strategic direction towards wellbeing, collaboration and sharing – which was something that was baked into all tactics from the beginning of the year.

Lifehack weekends were also planned as a recruitment tool for Lifehack Labs – if we could identify community leaders for the regions we could then invite them to apply for the five-week programme later in the year. It was also a way of increasing brand awareness of Lifehack around the country.

## Hypothesis: How & When to use a Lifehack Weekend?

Lifehack Weekends are a specific tactic which were designed for a specific problem and participant group.

They set out to test the hypothesis:

"By bringing together a diverse group of people from a community and working with a strengths-based approach, we can harness their energy and enthusiasm to rapidly advance a youth wellbeing project over the course of a weekend.

We will build the **social capital** (new connections, trust and ability to collaborate) of the participants who attend, create some **physical & digital capital** (websites, posters, social media campaigns etc), and leverage significant **economic capital** (skilled volunteering contributions) for the youth wellbeing projects."

## Approach: What is a Lifehack weekend?

In 2014, we experimented with changing the structure of the Weekend Events to amplify a collaborative, strengths based, wellbeing-focussed approach.

We ran four weekends over the course of four months, and changed the format of each slightly – taking forward what's working, and improving what didn't work as well.

In February we used a structure which was largely based on a format from one of our UK partners: [Good For Nothing](#). 54 hours of self-organised working where people volunteer their skills to a local youth project. Whether contributors worked as nurses, teachers, illustrators, marketers, entrepreneurs or filmmakers (and everything in between), the idea was that every individual can apply their skills, whether that's from their day job or a passion, to give these social-good projects a helping hand.

The Projects which are worked on during the weekend is initially laid out through a brief from the organisation or team, but then changes and emerges based on the people who show up to help.

## Results: What resulted from these Lifehack weekends?

### Projects and Themes across the Country

Without fail, two themes emerged in every place: Belonging & Music.

#### Belonging

With regards to the belonging theme, this appeared to be regionally focused, rather than questioning the NZ identity overall. The long-term importance of this appears to be around the motivation to move back to a place once someone had left – or reasons someone should stay.

Belonging was a recurrent theme across the country - a celebration of diverse cultural backgrounds in Christchurch, young people driving a social media campaign called "You know

you're a Coaster when...", a community united behind urban renewal in Southland, and young people yearning to alleviate boredom and connect more deeply with their community in the Far North. Belonging and Identity is something pivotal to young people's development; their sense of self, normalising their behaviour and connection with people around them in the world - it's wonderful to see the depth that they care, but many are disconnected from their communities and culture. How might we better enable young people to belong in the modern world?

## **Music**

Whether it was the idea of music as a means of regulating emotions, building a local recording studio on the West Coast, or using music to raise awareness of domestic violence – music played a role for people everywhere.

Given the prominence of these two themes, it would be interesting to consider more narrowly focussed events or programmes in the future, which actively seek to build on these. It also raises further questions of what campaigns or initiatives overall could be useful for young people in this country (outside of the wellbeing remit, though they are likely to feed into one another), that would build on these. Could projects like [Orientation Aotearoa](#), which seeks to give young Kiwis the overseas experience within this country, help build people's understanding of their yearning for belonging?

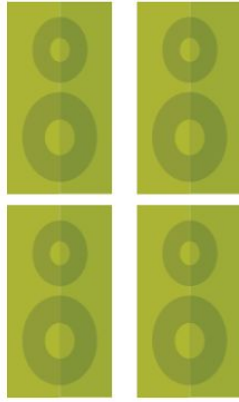
## **Results across the 5 Capitals:**

The following visual reports show data from the four weekend events, and feedback from surveys which we conducted immediately after the events.

# Lifehack Weekends 2014 Impact Report



**PEOPLE : 135**



**EVENTS : 4**



**PROJECTS : 12**

*We surveyed everyone that attended our Lifehack Weekends and asked them what had changed in their lives because of the event.*

0 = No Change  
5 = Significant Change



**OVERALL EXPERIENCE : 8/10**



**New Networks**

**3.6 out of 5**



**New Skills**

**3.2 out of 5**



**New Knowledge**

**3.2 out of 5**



**Understanding Wellbeing**

**3.5 out of 5**



**SKILLED VOLUNTEERING**



**ADDITIONAL FUNDING**



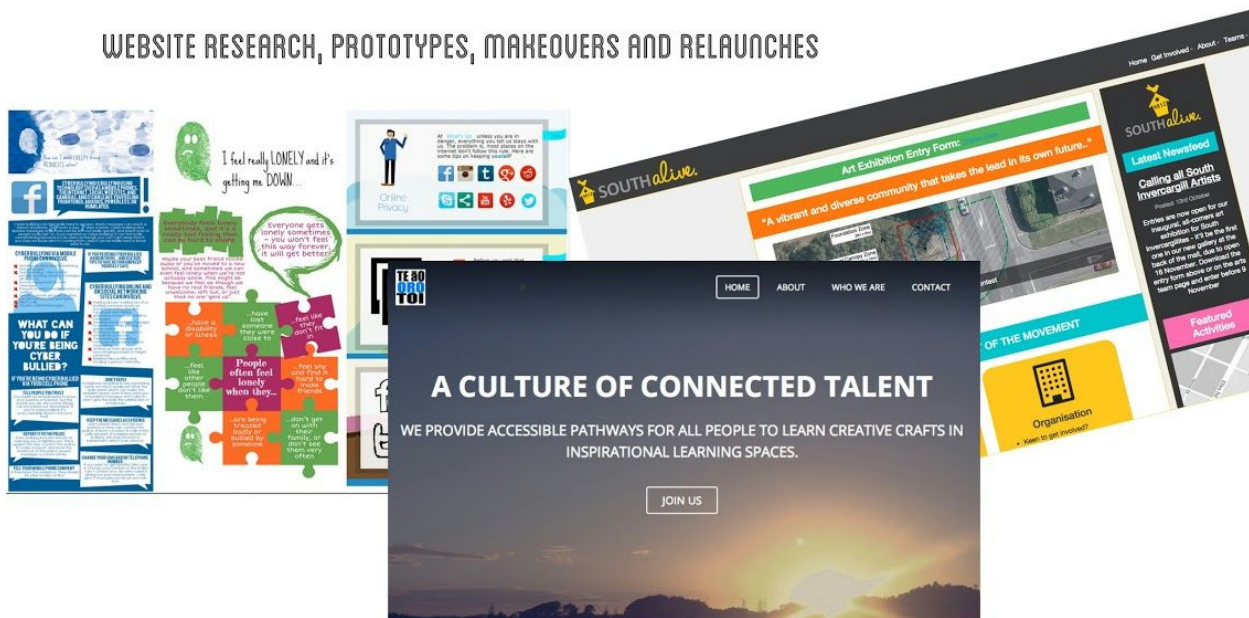
**LIFEHACK**



## POSTERS, SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT & ONLINE MARKETING MATERIALS SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES & PLANS



## WEBSITE RESEARCH, PROTOTYPES, MAKEOVERS AND RELAUNCHES



## INCREASING AVAILABILITY OF CONTENT & USABILITY THROUGH EXISTING TECHNOLOGY



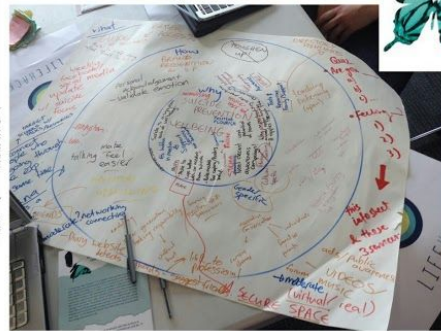
## LOGOS & BRAND GUIDELINES



## BUSINESS PLANS, FUNDING APPLICATIONS & OTHER RESEARCH



## PROJECT VISION



## APP DESIGNS & USER FLOWS

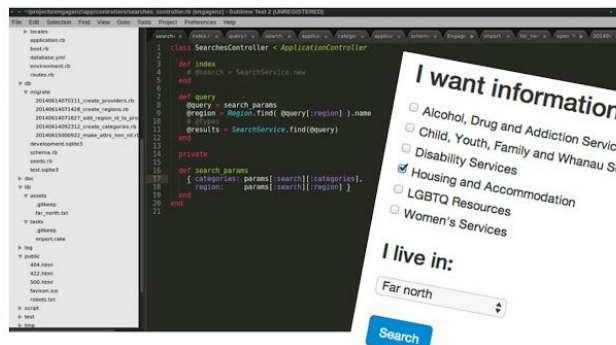
### MYRAP APP

Recording user audio and mixing with Today for Tomorrow song  
In the middle of the song Today for Tomorrow a 45 second gap was left for people to record their own audio and mix it into the song so it had a more personal meaning to them. Using HTML5 and JavaScript it would be possible to capture the audio straight from the web app and mix everything together without any special software or knowledge on the part of the user.

Our vision:  
A simple web applet that consists of three buttons is all that will be needed, something like this



The record button will record the users audio, the play button will play what they already have recorded and the mix button will mix the users audio with the original track. Once you hit record, a timer will start counting down from 45, to allow the user to see how long they have left.





The reports indicate significant outputs across Social, Human, and Physical/Digital Capitals, going toward existing and new organisations.

Through involving over 135 people in skilled volunteering, we leveraged \$89,775 worth of in-kind contribution (at a modest \$35/hour) which we can cite as the primary Economic Capital generated from these events, in addition to some significant funding (circa \$40k in total that we're aware of) received from various projects.

For a full list of projects please refer the the [Appendix](#).

For a full insight into individual outcomes please refer to the [raw data in this folder](#).

We made two videos to capture what a Lifehack Weekend is like, watch them here:



[Lifehack Southland - Youth Week](#)



[Lifehack Canterbury](#)



## Longer-term Impact of Lifehack Weekends

### Four months later

Our team is interested in finding out the longer lasting impact of Lifehack initiatives. To find out in how far – or if at all – Lifehack has influenced participants in the longer term, we conducted another survey four months after each event. Generally, only a small number of people responded to the survey, as was expected, and due to the small sample size we couldn't quantify the results properly. Instead, here are some of the excerpts from participants and project holders:

*From Manda, Greymouth*

"If I want to do something nothing can stand in my way except myself. I have no limitations fullstop. I am empowered and have really reached out to my community in very positive ways to make a difference amongst my peers and the students I work with. I found it especially valuable to young people who may have loads of ideas but just need a push in the right direction. It made me realise how isolated we can become even amongst a community and all you need to do is reach out and someone will be there to support and encourage. I have since volunteered my time to support non-English language learners in my community and applied for a new job. I have put my ideas forward to 2 projects so far and one has already come to fruition and the other is set to fly."

According to the questionnaire, she also mentioned that she's likely to start her own project as a result of having attended the Lifehack weekend.

*From Jaycee, Kaitia*

"Communities really can do anything when they all get together and support one another"

### General observations

Out of the people who chose to fill in the questionnaire, most felt inclined to start their own projects as a result of having participated in the weekend. Some also mentioned they felt empowered by having been connected with like-minded individuals.

### Participants - Where Are They Now?

Many of the participants join the Lifehack Facebook Group, and are reasonably engaged. A fair amount of participants explicitly state that they would like us to run more events in their region, and that they are keen to hear how projects are doing now, as well as wanting a regular meet-up with their fellow participants. Note: this shows a desire for *in person connection*, rather than online community building.

Out of all the weekend participants, at least seven applied to become Lifehack Labs participants. Six previous Lifehack weekend participants, from 2013 and 2014, ended up becoming part of the first Lifehack Labs cohort. Using weekend events as a recruitment tactic

was particularly effective to get people from New Zealand's more rural regions to apply: People from Greymouth (Westport) and Kaitaia (Taipa) joined us in Wellington.

Judging by the responses submitted to the four-months-after questionnaire, Lifehack can have a positive impact on people's confidence when it comes to starting projects, people addressing mental health issues with their peers, and individuals paying more attention to their wellbeing in the long term. However, given the small sample size and likelihood that people with positive experiences during the event are more likely to follow up post event, this needs to be understood appropriately.

### Projects - Where Are They Now ?

- Some of the projects reported back their success on their own account; **SummerZEnd** from Christchurch sent us their report outlining the success of the event, partly based on participating in a Lifehack weekend as a project holder.
- One project from the West Coast received funding. The Westport participant, who also went through Labs, is applying for the project manager role for that initiative. Sarah Harvey from CDHB says: "The news with the **Sound Carving** project is that we received \$26,000 from MYD as part of the Youth Development Partnership Fund to help set this project in motion & to run 6 events for young people as part of that. We have already run one very successful Buskers Festival, & we are developing the radio station part of the project more than the recording studio owing to the limited finances. So far it's still very early days & we are getting a group of interested people together to develop & get it together, mostly through the polytech & the GDYT. Aaron [Greymouth & Lifehack Labs participant] is keen to get involved & come & do a lean canvas exercise about it all J so good that he went to Wellington for your month long Lifehack!"
- Funding and on-going support for at least one Kaitaia-based project. **Project Opportunity** is receiving on-going support from Far North REAP. The Kaitaia-based event is also closely collaborating with HYPE, the Kaikohe-based project which also took part in the weekend as a project holder. They continue to work together (as can be seen in [this](#) recently release video), and are planning a Far North youth leadership programme that will travel across the Far and Mid North in October. They are hoping to engage the Lifehack Kaitaia weekend and Labs participant in this project, to link up with Facilitation Nation in the Far North. Kaylene from Far North REAP says: "the main thing that come out of the life hack weekend for us is connecting to project opportunity (nina) which then led to them joining with our existing 'be the change' group. So now they are "Project Opportunity – Be the Change" and we have utilised this core combined group to implement the funding we won from MYD (just before the life hack weekend) and the DIA funding (which we found out about just after the life hack weekend). We are now developing individual and team leadership skills with that core group who will drive the establishment of a Positive Youth Development Framework across the Te Hiku region... Yay :-)"
- **o800 What's Up** have since implemented an online chat function, as per our recommendations at the Invercargill event (checking for more info).

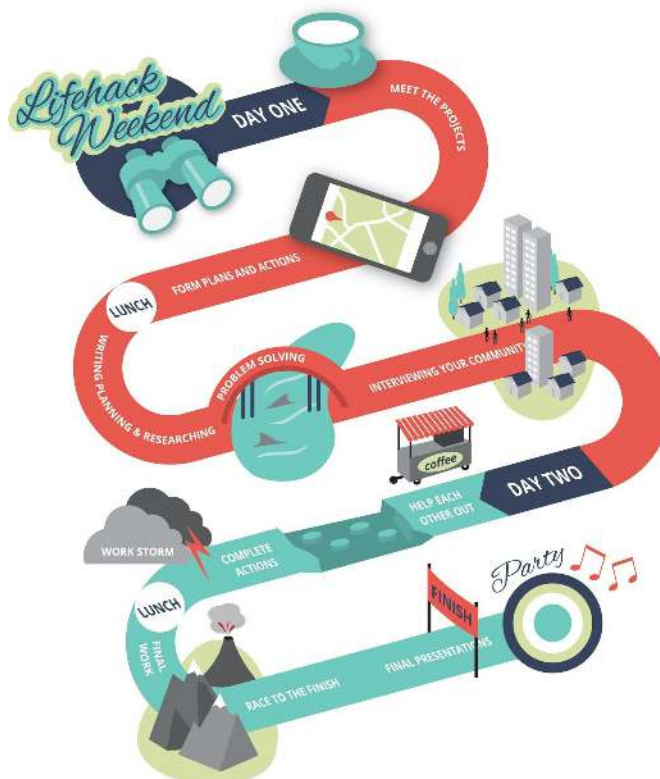
- Ongoing interest from the social sector trials in Kaikohe and Gisborne to explore the potential of collaborating around their causes

## Learnings: What did we learn from running these Lifehack weekends?

### Top Line Insights

By running events outside of our entrepreneurial Wellington networks, we quickly learnt that the weekend structure had to evolve to cater to the diverse communities who had largely been less exposed to this self-organising, collaborative way of working.

It's valuable to have at least some developers and designers in the room, who can help build digital assets on the day or can help an organisation to begin their journey into better tech outreach and usability.



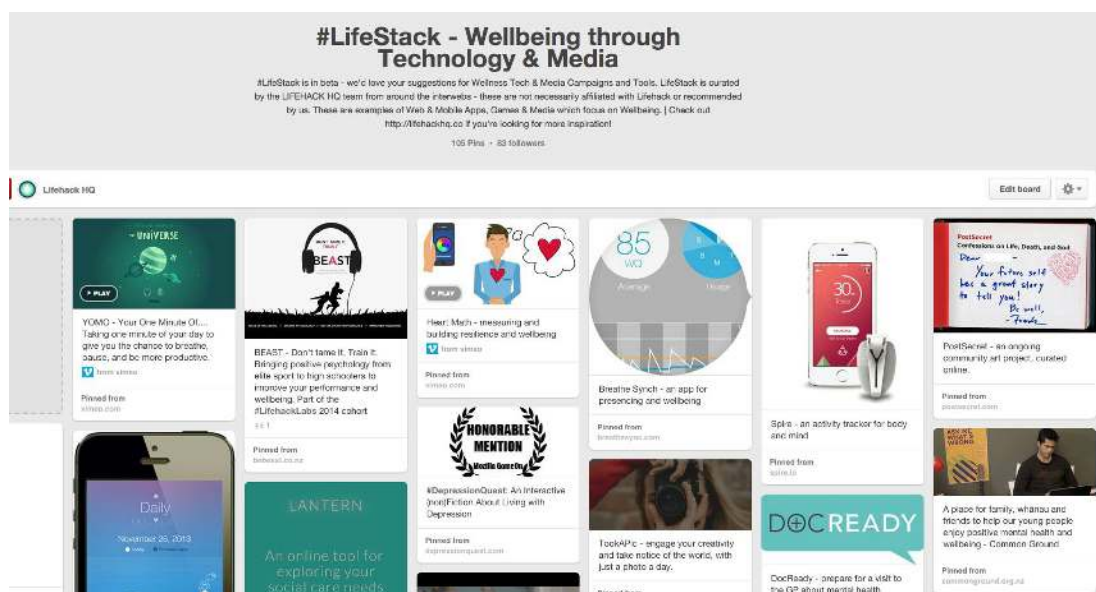
*Lifehack Weekend Event Format*

The general format of the weekend largely stayed the same (introduce projects, work on them in self-selected teams, present back outputs at the end), we had to introduce various tactics to allow this structure to be successful.

Through iterating on each of the events, we managed to turn a non-specific format that wasn't tailored to work in a New Zealand cultural context into something that did. Each event was then planned to be slightly different to maximise our learnings (as can be seen in the summary in the appendix). Successful elements that were introduced along the way included:

## Wellbeing Tech?

The idea for these weekends was to augment the work done in the youth wellbeing space. However, it proved helpful to define what we actually meant by wellbeing tech – both for the team internally, and for participants of our initiatives. Given our mission, it was useful to outline what sort of projects we would include under this youth wellbeing umbrella - to this end, we [developed LifeStack to show a sample from around the world](#).



Generally speaking, we were looking at projects that used (or could use) technology to increase the impact and reach of their projects, or lived on a modern tech platform. At the same time, we used the Mental Health Foundation's [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) as pointers in terms of the projects that would fit under this work.

For example, South Invercargill's Operation Zero Rubbish was about cleaning up neighbourhoods from rubbish – and invited people to take notice and connect with their local community as well as donating time and being active (four of the five ways). By using technology to help administer the programme, it then increased the effectiveness and reach of the programme.

## Techspiration

Realising people's varying understanding of technology as a subject and medium, we started introducing a section called Techspiration (technology & inspiration). A forty-minute presentation, this was a collection of case studies paired with conversations to ascertain people's knowledge and understanding of technology. The aim was to create a common basis



for discussions and work. We first held a techspiration session in Greymouth, and continued to do so for the remaining events.

### **Whakawhanaungatanga & Storytelling.**

During the Saturday night of Greymouth event, we had an inspiring conversation with Tiho, a Maori man in his twenties, who talked to us about his view on the importance of whakapapa and how we come together as groups of strangers. He made the point that unless we knew one another more deeply (where do we come from, what do we stand for, what are our values, interests and skills), it is 'impossible' to work together meaningfully. His view was to not only integrate the past, but also the future – that the work created during an event had to have enough gravitas to influence the next seven generations.

As a result, we integrated a whakawhanaungatanga process into the Invercargill & Kaitia event, and it heavily informed the design of [Lifehack Labs](#) in August 2014.

### **What Makes a Project Suitable for a Weekend?**

#### **Organisations vs Individuals as Project Holders**

Throughout the weekends we worked with different make-ups of teams. Single project holders, people coming in teams, as part of organisations with different levels of seniority.

The below briefly outlines what we have found most helpful in terms of the project holders that will contribute to a successful weekend:

- Working with organisations: Necessary to stress the importance of senior people representing projects. Rather than needing to seek permission after the event to implement any work that's been done, project holders need to demonstrate to participants that their work is indeed useful and is likely to be applied. Any project holder representing an organisation also needs to be well informed on the organisation's background, design guidelines etc to be able to answer ad-hoc questions
- Working with individuals comes down to their involvement in the project - and the lifecycle of where it's at. Too early on, and too many unanswered questions need to be addressed. Which can happen as part of the weekend process, but doesn't result in 'tangible' outcomes. The support network around the project is also important. For individuals, it helps if they bring young people with whom they work, or have got some way of representing them - via Skype calls, user personas or little videos

### **What Makes an Event Successful**

- An appropriate amount of attendees. Our experience indicates this means no less than seven people per brief.
- Pre-determined briefs. Not necessarily written out in the finest detail, but the need to have an agreement with the project holder prior to the event with regards to what's actually possible and realistic to achieve in just a weekend.

- Whakawhanaungatanga - getting to know people's backgrounds, and their reasons for coming creates better outcomes, faster. After all, taking a weekend out of people's busy lives is quite an ask, so normally people have a great motivation to come and stick around.
- Presentations: Getting each participant the chance to tell their story.
- Check-out circle - getting people to share their experience in front of the group (in a safe and positive space, brought about through demonstrating emotional maturity from the sides of the organisers) brings together the individuals' highlights

## Future Considerations

**Expectation setting:** It's important to make clear to project holders what the scope and likely impact could be of the work producing during a weekend. Whilst it is suitable for smaller, self-contained tasks, the format doesn't lend itself to work that needs ongoing commitment and/or maintenance.

**Health / ethics approach:** Project holders and participants need to be made fully aware that the Lifehack team of facilitators and process designers aren't fully trained mental/health professionals. In particular best-practice around mental health work and research needs to be more clearly communicated and put into place as part of the Saturday morning group-work time, if there are mental health-focussed projects present.

**Connecting like-minded individuals and projects:** One of the most powerful factors seem to arise out of connecting like-minded people in rural communities – eg seeing how Project Opportunity and HYPE continue to collaborate in the Far/Mid North. Noticing people's impressions in the check-out circle which concludes the events, it is worth noting how many people state that it is of utmost importance to them to get to know people who think alike and are interested in similar topics. Aside from the Facebook group, how might we foster connections between people from across different regions to enable them to support one another as well as the projects that have taken place in the events to date?

### Long-Term Engagement

How can we foster long-term engagement with the rural communities whilst bringing across wellbeing as a key message? How might we be able to engage with them, without being there physically?

## Next Experiment: Questions for the Future

Run a Wellington event to compare the outcomes of the regional events, versus an urban event where our networks are stronger.

Other areas to explore:

- What might an event/programme look like which actively features the themes of wellbeing and/or belonging?
- How might we better enable young people to belong in the modern world?
- How can Lifehack continue to connect like-minded people in a meaningful and long-term way?
- How do we build human & social capital in regional areas to kickstart more projects and seed a 'can-do' attitude backed up by skilled-up individuals?

# Appendix

## 1. The Events, and How They Differed

1. **Christchurch** - As this was the first event in the weekend series of 2014, it largely followed the Good For Nothing approach. Based in the UK, GFN weekends are hack weekends seeking to help social enterprises. Attendants volunteer their weekend time to help these ventures and largely work in a self-organised manner with little guidance.
2. **Greymouth** - as one of the least densely populated areas with a low concentration of IT professionals we expected a lower turnout than the one in Christchurch. With about 15 people we worked on two briefs, however struggled to work with the lack of digital expertise that we managed to attract to the event. We spent a fair amount of time trying to educate people around business modeling and free internet-based services like Google Documents and Canva.com. We also worked with small, local organisations and relatively young and inexperienced project holders.
3. **Invercargill** - Part of our approach was to weave as much learning opportunity and building shared understanding and trust into the fabric of the weekend. Whakawhanaungatanga, tech inspiration sessions and sharing our approach to wellbeing became part of the structure of the weekend, with regular check-ins as to how people felt throughout the weekend. This resulted in increased trust and understanding amongst attendees and the Lifehack team, allowing us to share insightful and emotional stories that connected individuals and built strong teams. Through our close relationship with the web development team at Digital Stock and Southern Institute of Technology we had close to fifty people sign up to the event. Due to the number of attendees, we decided to add a fourth brief to the weekend format, including one from 0800 What's Up / Barnardos Group. As part of this experiment, we added a five-day dev sprint to the end of the weekend. During the course of the weekend we decided which of the four briefs would be selected for this based on these criteria.
4. **Kaitia** - Continuing the diverse strategy we applied to previous events, we again altered the framework for the Northland event. Kaitia was run as a residential, hui-style weekend, with participants of all ages staying in the whare nui with the Lifehack team. In addition to a full weekend format, we also opened the floor to an open brief in addition to three pre-determined briefs. Having discussed the criteria for a suitable project ahead of time, we ended up adding in one more local brief to the mix.

## 2. Weekend Projects

### Christchurch

[Brozac](#)

[Summerzend Youthfest](#)

### West Coast



[Soundcarving - Recording Studio / Online Music Platform](#)  
[Buller REAP](#)

## **Invercargill**

[0800 Whats Up - Barnadoes](#)  
[South Alive - Zero Rubbish](#)  
[Bike Loan Scheme](#)  
[MyRAP](#)

## **Kaitia**

[Engage Aotearoa](#)  
[Te Ao Oro Toi - Music & Industry Training](#)  
[Project Opportunity](#)  
[HYPE NZ](#)

### **3. Typical Participant Personas**

Persona	Type/Characteristics	Proportional Representation	Motivations / Drivers
Wiremu	late 20s, life experience, big vision, big vision, decent education, Maori entrepreneurs. High passion, high time, medium skill.	Great to have many in the room	Wants to see how his work can fit into a greater vision for the country
Paul	Good intentions, non-savvy digitally. Medium passion, medium skill, medium time.	Only want a couple in the room	Wants to help, but can't commit beyond weekend
Jane	Public sector background, 30+ years experience, know-it-all. High skill, low time, low passion	1-2 per event	Likes to see good things happen in the community, without wanting to take projects on personally
Henry	Ripe, penny drops then YES!, need guidance, BEST investment. High passion, high time, medium skill.	Ideal Labs target	Looking for some guidance, meeting like-minded people

Chris	Skilled, Tech+design, savvy, UNICORN, generalist, 5-day, Enspiral type of person. High skills, low time, high passion.	Good to have at least 1 per project holder.	Wants to put her/his skills to good use
Christine	Backbone action, quiet sponges, not organisations, there for the personal experience. Low skill, Medium time, medium passion.	1-2	Seeking personal inspiration and sources of motivations to start their own projects
Alex	Student, was told to come by tutor, gateway to community of validation, not in the workforce. Medium skill, high passion, high time.	Having 4 or so is really helpful	Wants to see how much they know, and what else could be useful skills to gain / areas to learn more about