

## Empowering Māori career and employment aspirations so that our whānau can flourish

# Kia ora

**from our Pou Whakahaere / Chief Executive**

Kia ora koutou  
Greetings everyone!

Following the colder, more insular winter months - Kōanga - Spring is here!

Nature is bursting forth. Taking time to observe the unfolding growth all around us is exciting! In challenging times, spring brings a sense of possibility, potential and opportunity, just when you need it!

Recently, I felt a similar feeling, listening to our taiohi and taurira at our Hui Whānau, when around 70 of our whānau, colleagues and supporters gathered to connect and share information.

Hearing the ideas, experiences and efforts our amazing young people shared reminded me of why after 14 years I am still here with Why Ora – each of their journeys to grow a flourishing future are so inspirational!

In this issue we share some powerful whānau stories including Jorja O'neill and our own kaimahi Jasmine Jones.

We also share highlights from our Rapuara Ako, Hoki Mai ki Why Ora and Pūtaiao events.

We are also very pleased to announce our new Trustee, education leader Scott Walden. Scott joins Why Ora to help us develop our strategy to grow the Māori education workforce and leadership. We are looking forward to having Scott on board!

This year has flown by for Why Ora. Our focus in the coming months will be on our promotions in schools and supporting our whānau on their study and career journeys. At this time of the year many will be completing course work, preparing for exams and planning for 2025. We look forward to offering our support as they progress!

Noho ora mai

Tanya Anaha, Pou Whakahaere



Tanya Anaha - Pou Whakahaere

# TŪHONONGA

Tūhononga means strengthening and bringing together (Tū is to strengthen, hononga is to bring or join together). We all need connections that can help us to grow, to know who we are, where we've come from and help us get where we are going!

## Hui Whānau 2024

Recently 67 whānau members joined us for our Hui Whānau event, which we hold annually, to engage with our whānau and hear about their inspiring journeys.

We also help them make connections with organisations we work alongside, such as Iwi and Education providers, to gain valuable information and ask questions about study and career paths, funding and scholarships.

This year we were very fortunate to have four wonderful whānau speakers;

- Tamara Te Waaka and Macey Austin, both taiohi of New Plymouth Girls High School, shared personal reflections on taking part in health career tertiary learning experiences and their aspirations for the future.
- Tilya Fenton, a participant in our Hoki Mai ki Why Ora programme, shared her story about pursuing career interests in engineering and fabrication.
- Gracyn Meredith, reminded us career pathways are not always straightforward. During studies Gracyn juggled a lot of responsibilities, including two tamariki, but kept going to complete a degree and is now a registered nurse working at Tui Ora.

Next up our Pou Whakahaere/ Chief Executive Tanya Anaha, talked about how it is possible to start a career outside of formal study, giving examples such as cadetships and sharing her own career story, along with why she co-founded Why Ora 14 years ago.



*Photo: Stacey Glassie and James Tautuku - Te Wānanga o Aotearoa*

Then two panels made up of Iwi and Education providers talked about support and potential funding opportunities; including Iwi organisations Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Mutunga, Taranaki Iwi, Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa, and Paraninihi ki Waitotara Incorporation, and Education providers; Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato/ University of Waikato, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka/University of Otago, Te Pūkenga – WITT Taranaki and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.



*Photo: Why Ora hui whānau*

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## Hui Whānau continued...

To those that took part we wish to say a huge: Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa!

To our taiohi speakers who bravely shared your stories, your words were truly inspiring and we hope you all enjoyed the evening as much as we did!

To our Iwi and Education presenters for sharing info with our whānau about how you may be able to manaaki our whānau – thank you all! To the staff from KDJ Catering who provided us all with such delicious kai!

A special mihi to Prajesh Chhanabhai, the past Liaison Officer from the University of Otago. Prajesh shared that he is moving on from his current role – thank you Prajesh for everything you have done to support our Why Ora taiohi over the years!

We are very grateful to all our whānau who ventured out to join us and hope that you found this Hui Whānau valuable. We look forward to our next Hui Whānau in the new year!



Photo: Prajesh Chhanabhai (Otago University) and Gracyn Meredith (Registered Nurse)



## Rapuara Ako

*Hapaitia te ara tika pumau ai te rangatiratanga mo nga uri whakatipu  
Foster the pathway of knowledge to strength, independence and growth for future*

In August we held our 2024 Rapuara Ako workshop. Rapuara Ako (education careers exposure) looks to inspire our taiohi into pursuing meaningful and rewarding careers in Education.

Our workshop this year was held at the stunningly beautiful Te Whare Hononga in Ngāmotu. It gave our taiohi the opportunity to learn more about this special place and to hear kōrero from whānau working in a variety of different Ako careers. We had eight kura in attendance, alongside our Hoki Mai Ki Why Ora taiohi. This was such a great turnout for our Rapuara Ako workshop.

A huge mihi to our presenters including Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, Educare Training, Kindergarten Taranaki, WITT Te Pūkenga and Te Heru Māpara for sharing your haerenga with our taiohi. We hugely appreciated your support for this kaupapa.

We look forward to hosting another Rapuara Ako event in 2025!



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## Pūtaiao Expo

Our Pūtaiao event was held in late August, attended by 383 Year 9 and Year 10 Taranaki secondary school taiohi.

Organised by Why Ora since 2016, Pūtaiao aims to inspire a passion for science and Mātauranga amongst Māori secondary aged taiohi.

Many important, rewarding and meaningful careers require science subjects as a pre-requisite (meaning you need these subjects to get into tertiary education for science careers).

By offering secondary taiohi hands on, exciting and fun science related activities our hope is that Pūtaiao will lead to an increase in the uptake of science in senior secondary years, when it is no longer a compulsory subject.

This year our engaging presenters included Thom Adams (Venture Taranaki), and kaimahi of Wildlife AI, Paraninihi ki Waitotara and Why Ora. A huge thank you to everyone involved!

*We are grateful to Tash Coulson from Wildlife AI for sending us this story to share (on the right).*

## Taranaki's Future Scientists: Learning AI for Conservation

***Taranaki's future scientists were in the spotlight at the Pūtaiao 2024 Expo; ākongā (students) in Year 9 & 10 discovered the power of AI for conservation. From drawing animals to spotting fake photos, students were amazed by AI's potential!***

In August, when Wildlife AI joined Pūtaiao 2024 we set out to inspire, engage and encourage ākongā to continue with science throughout their secondary school education, enabling a wider range of career options beyond school.

During 30-minute sessions featuring interactive activities, we played with the AI-powered game Quickdraw, where ākongā had 20 seconds to draw a given prompt while the computer attempted to guess their drawing. Quickdraw was an opportunity to interact with an AI system and our ākongā were surprised at the computer's ability to identify various objects from drawings that may not have been easily identifiable to the human eye!

We also challenged ākongā to distinguish between real and AI-generated images. Some found some images difficult to distinguish and were amazed at how advanced and realistic the AI images were.

After this, ākongā provided prompts to generate their own images; which also proved difficult, with ākongā quickly discovering that prompts required specific details to generate accurate images. These activities illustrated various AI functions, and the presentation concluded with a demonstration of the Wildlife Watcher, highlighting the role of AI in supporting conservation projects.

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## **Wildlife AI story continued...**

Overall, we had a fantastic day engaging with these budding scientists and received positive responses from all participating schools.

The event filled us with energy to continue working on a suite of online and in-person lessons for intermediate ākongā about AI and conservation. We will have these lessons freely available for schools in a few months.

Overall, our kōrero (discussion) was enthusiastically received by the ākongā, with over 70% expressing interest in how AI supports environmental action.

We would like to thank Why Ora for the fabulous opportunity to present alongside other agencies committed to enhancing the future of Taranaki. We look forward to next year.



Tash creating an image using prompts provided by ākongā



Ākongā comparing AI generated photos with real photos

## **Our Volunteers**

**This year we had 15 taiohi volunteer at Pūtaiao over the three days it ran. Here's what some of them had to say...**

*"Volunteering at the expo was a cool opportunity to try and build on my skills for my future career, like public speaking. Overall, the day was awesome, the whole team was very welcoming and allowed me to make the most of this opportunity for myself, but also a cool experience for the taiohi in the science space"* - Kadin Webster



*"I really enjoyed helping out at Pūtaiao. It is a great experience for all those involved. Being able to see this program grow from being a taiohi to now a volunteer is connect with as many people as I can is something that is very important to me. As Mizsiah said every taiohi has a different story and that is one thing that makes us different, but one thing that connects us all is being Māori. "Alone we can only do so little, but together we can do so much." - Helen Keller. Remember that moving forward as it shows us that yes we can do some stuff by ourselves but if we want to do more we will need the help of others"* - Alex Whitham

*"I think working as a volunteer went quite well and I enjoyed doing it because it reminded me of being back in scouts/venturers, I also think a lot of the students enjoyed it and some would have even grown a interest in the topics or expanded on them"* - Alexander Johnston



*"I enjoyed helping out where I could at the different stations and joining in on some activities that kaimahi lead, I also enjoyed meeting other volunteers that were like minded."* - Liam Ratana



Volunteer: Siarra Marsh facilitating Physics station



*"I had an amazing experience with the Why Ora crew! I learnt a lot and truly enjoyed engaging with different taiohi of Taranaki. It was a privilege to be a part of it and witness the mahi Why Ora is doing with rangatahi of Taranaki."* - Kitt O'Carroll-Leota

# MANAAKITANGA

Our Manaakitanga means we genuinely nurture, encourage, respect and care for one another throughout our mahi, in whatever work we are doing.

## *Hoki Mai Ki Why Ora: Whanaungatanga Event*

We held our second whanaungatanga event in August for taiohi enrolled in our Hoki Mai ki Why Ora initiative which aims to support taiohi into meaningful career outcomes in the future.

The purpose of these wānanga is to tautoko our taiohi to build self-confidence to go forth and pursue their aspirations, to help them to find their passions, make decisions for their future, towards moving into future employment, education or training. During our wānanga we continued the whakawhanaungatanga built from our first group wānanga held in July. We got to know one another more through kēmu and kōrero about how Why Ora can support our taiohi in this space. It was great to end our time together with activities including journalling and creating vision boards. We plan to hold our next Hoki Mai ki Why Ora wānanga in Pātea. Hoki Mai Ki Why Ora is supported through He Poutama Rangatahi, a kaupapa of the Ministry of Social Development.

## Our Whānau Stories

### TJ Wipiti

*Ko Taranaki te Maunga  
Ko Waiongona te Awa  
Ko Tokomaru te Waka  
Ko Mururaupatu te Marae  
Ko Te Atiawa te Iwi  
Ko Puketapu te Hāpu  
Ko TJ Wipiti tōku Ingoa*



I was born in Waitara and moved to New Plymouth when I was six.

Growing up I always wanted to work with rangatahi Māori, so our future tamariki would not have the same or similar experience that I did in kura. I struggled with learning, and if I didn't understand or pick it up straight away, I always felt pressured that my teachers would give up on me. What that led to was me wanting to give our rangatahi the support I believe they deserve.

I signed out of high school in the start of 2024, hoping to begin study or something that could guide me in the right direction to working with children.

After leaving school I stayed home for a few months. I registered with Why Ora and went into the tari in February for a hui with Kaiārahi Katie, who was working there at that time. I then met with Chelsea my current Kaiārahi. During our hui we discussed what I wanted to do and how I could do it. I voiced to my Kaiārahi that I want to work with children and that I was aware of Educare but couldn't build up the courage to reach out to them myself...

**To read TJ's full story [click here](#).**

# UMANGA

A meaningful and rewarding career can change lives and change the future. There are so many possibilities and paths to take. Our career stories can help to show what is possible!

## Our Whānau Stories

### Jorja O'neill: aspiring to a career in Physiotherapy!

Jorja grew up in Hāwera, attending St Joseph's School and Hāwera High School, graduating in 2022. Jorja originally registered with Why Ora five years ago, attended some of our Rapuara Hauora career expo days, and took part in Mātaki Shadowing /work experience.

Jorja says high school wasn't always easy for her. "Half-way through Year 11, the dreaded Covid hit, so 'Lockdown' meant online school. As well as that I had to have major back surgery which came with a lengthy and painful recovery, which equalled more time off school.

So, I literally just scraped through NCEA Level 1. Then when NCEA Level 2 came along I worked hard and got all merit and excellences, but by my final year I felt really 'burnt out' and decided school wasn't for me. My parents persuaded me stay, so I did and graduated. But at the time I left, I had no plan for future study or job opportunities, I was working part time and had no way out. I felt really stuck, because I knew I didn't want to be working a minimum wage job forever. Fortunately for me this is when Why Ora stepped in."

Through the support of Why Ora Jorja took on a cadetship and landed a great job as a therapy assistant with Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora at Taranaki Base Hospital.

***To read Jorja's full story [click here](#).***



*(L-R) Jorja O'neill, Michelle Martin and Treal Niwa*



## MEET OUR TEAM

### Jasmine Jones - Kaiārahi

Ko Jasmine Angeau  
Nō Tainui, Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāruahinerangi,  
Ngā Rauruu Kiihahi, Tongareva me Inarangi au  
I whānau mai au ki Te Whanganui-a-Tara  
I tipu ake au ki Motukairangi  
Kei Pātea nui a Turi e noho ana  
Kei Tangaroa tōku tūrangawaewae

It was quite the culture shock when, four years ago in 2020, my whānau and I decided to completely uproot our lives to move from Wellington to Patea. Wellington was all that I had known; it felt like it was my stomping ground. Moving between Lower Hutt and the Eastern Suburbs I was well versed in all that the city could offer.

I was raised by my mum and my grandparents; the only family I knew of and had a strong connection to growing up. I felt like we were a very close knit whānau, however I also recall feeling a sense of disconnection from wider whānau, not getting to see them often.

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## ***Jasmine's story continued...***

My fondest memories were centred around people; spending time with neighbourhood kids, riding our bikes, skimming rocks at the creek, playing at each other's houses.

Those were the good days; memories of a carefree and simple life remind me to keep being playful and having fun as an adult.

Tangaroa has always been a significant part of my life, my connection to water has continued to help me navigate my journey and provide a sense of grounding like nothing else does. I have always been a driven, highly motivated person. From as young as I can remember I took a lot of responsibility for myself and for my own needs, making for quite an independent person now.

I loved learning (and still do!). I would assert myself to everything I did and often, through a lot of hard mahi, get good grades and be recognised for this. I also loved performing and being creative and throughout schooling was often seen participating in musical theatre, drama, and art. In year 13, I became the Arts' Prefect for my college. I thought I would go forth and pursue a career in Performing Arts. All that changed when my mental health took a turn.

Home life was not great, so after my last year of school I moved in with my mentors through my church community, a husband and wife who had two tamariki. I found myself a job, working as an Education Support Worker to support this change.

I tried out university but left after one year as I seldom felt supported and more like a number than an individual. I started to notice myself slowly isolating and retreating from the outside world, with no sense of direction or purpose, unmotivated to participate in daily life.

Luckily a mentor and friend who knew my potential, challenged me not to let it go to waste! She worked in early childhood education and offered me a relief teaching role. I knew I did not want to do it forever, but I also knew I had to do something with my life! So, I took on some work, which turned into permanent work, and led me to do a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

I started to thrive because I felt connected and supported by the communities I was involved in. The most valuable learning at that time was discovering my Taha Māori for the first time. This gave me a newfound sense of identity and pride, but it also left me with lots of questions that I had to unpack from my own upbringing.

I have now spent over 14 years working in people-facing mahi; from early childhood education to vocational education and training with adults. One of the most profound experiences for me was my mahi as an education tutor at Arohata Women's Prison; a recurring theme highlighted was how the education system was not set up to empower Māori to be Māori and be successful.

I began to reflect on my own life and how education for me became an escape from some of the realities I was working through as an adult. I didn't associate being Māori with being successful in a mainstream world - so I take this moment to mihi everyone I have worked alongside since who have helped me to realise this!

In 2020 I felt a calling to go deeper, a feeling that change was coming. When we decided to uproot our lives and move to Patea, I didn't understand the wairua connection I had to the land there (I had never been there prior to the move) but knew there was a feeling of home...

***To read Jasmine's full story [click here](#).***





## 2024 Funding partners and Supporters

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou!



**Te Aka Whai Ora**  
Māori Health Authority

**Health New Zealand**  
Te Whatu Ora

Tanya Anaha  
Pou Whakahaere  
tanya@whyora.co.nz

Danae Etches  
Contractor/Adviser  
danae@whyora.co.nz

Olivia Ratana  
Office Manager  
olivia@whyora.co.nz

Mizsiah Martin-Kemp  
Kaiārahi & Event Lead  
mizsiah@whyora.co.nz

Rory Maxwell  
Kaiārahi  
rory@whyora.co.nz

Jasmine Jones  
Kaiārahi  
jasmine@whyora.co.nz

Liahna Smith  
Kaiārahi  
liahna@whyora.co.nz

Chelsea Crewe  
Kaiārahi  
chelsea@whyora.co.nz

Graham Jones  
Kaiārahi  
graham@whyora.co.nz

Codelia Parkes  
Administration Support  
cordelia@whyora.co.nz

Nina Lawrence  
Admin & Comms Cadet  
nina@whyora.co.nz

*Don't forget your Kaiārahi is here if you require tautoko*