

# Ako Aotearoa Annual Report

1 January to 31 December 2024



Front cover image:  
2024 Te Whatu Kairangi Awards  
at the Parliamentary ceremony,  
4 November 2024.

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This report has been written to maximise the British Dyslexia Association guidelines for  
neurodiverse/dyslexic readers



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# Governance

## Our Vision

We are a recognised thought-leader that works to transform, advocate for, and reward excellent teaching and learning practices to accelerate successful learner outcomes in tertiary education.

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## Our Mission

To work in partnership with all tertiary education organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand, through a Te Tiriti led approach and to drive equitable outcomes for ākonga and Kaiako through exceptional teaching practices.





## Co-Chair's Report

Tāraia te mahara, ka tāraia ai te rākau

It is a pleasure to present this report, which carves out the range of work and development that has been done to enhance and advance the experience and outcomes for students and stakeholders across the tertiary sector of Aotearoa New Zealand.

For the Board, 2024 has been one of operationalising the new consortium in which Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Te Pūkenga joined Massey University as the contract holder and host of the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, Ako Aotearoa. The establishment board formed in late 2023 comprising senior members of each of the consortium partners was tasked with giving shape to the consortium. In January 2024 it also took over the governance responsibilities for Ako Aotearoa. In March 2024 Associate Professor Meegan Hall (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Apakura) Assistant Vice-Chancellor at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington was welcomed to the Board as Hoa Manukura (Co-Chair) with Derek McCormack.

Much of the Board work for the year was in two inter-dependent areas:

1. Delivery to a series of milestone reports that the Tertiary Education Commission required for the continuation of funding under the new consortium. Over the year this exercise was useful in bringing to clarity a shared understanding with the Commission over the shape of progress needed in the work.
2. The development of a new Strategic Plan that responds to the shifting environment and issues that will drive the direction of effective and excellent teaching for tertiary student outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand. We look forward to the finalisation and activation of the Strategic Plan during 2025.

A real highlight for 2024 was a new addition to Te Whatu Kairangi awards for outstanding tertiary educators. Minister of Tertiary Education Hon Penny Simmonds conferred the inaugural Te Tohu Reo Māori award, for a nominee who teaches in and presents a portfolio in Te Reo Māori, on Hiria Tumoana of Te Ūranga Waka (School of Māori Studies) at the Eastern Institute of Technology.

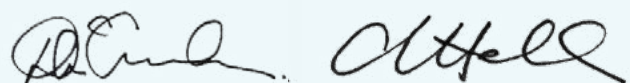
The work of the management and staff teams of Ako Aotearoa continued to be appreciated in numerous areas across the sector. As an example, the 2024 Ako Aotearoa regional forums, bringing together the diversity of tertiary educators and operators to share progress, issues and ideas, were a welcome return for the hundreds of participants who attended after the pandemic years' restrictions of such in-person engagements.

It is important to take this opportunity to acknowledge the substantial contribution as Board members of Paora Ammunsen (Ngāti Kahungunu and Rangitāne o Wairarapa, Te Arawa and Tainui) and Diane Lithgow. Both were nominees of Te Pūkenga but with the changes there they moved to other opportunities and notified their resignations to make way for replacement Board members from the ITP sector.

Also acknowledged is the ongoing support given by Professor Giselle Byrnes, Provost of Massey University, who as representative of the host consortium has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the mission and success of Ako Aotearoa. Our gratitude is also extended to Massey University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jan Thomas, for the use of Massey's systems and properties.

In conclusion, we hope that you will find in this report some insight and inspiration from the examples and statistics presented of the work and impact of Ako Aotearoa.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is on the left and the second is on the right.

Derek rāua ko Meegan





## Director's Report

In 2024 Ako Aotearoa undertook a review of its strategic direction, refining our Vision and Mission to be a recognised thought-leader that works to transform, advocate for, and reward excellent teaching and learning to accelerate learner outcomes in tertiary education.

In undertaking this we are working in partnership with all tertiary education organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand, through a Te Tiriti-led approach, to drive equitable outcomes for ākonga and Kaiako.

Underpinning this are three key objectives:

- Facilitation of tertiary education and sector collaboration aimed at strengthening cross-sector collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practice, including research and innovation
- Leadership, promotion and celebration of tertiary teaching excellence, including recognising and celebrating tertiary teaching excellence
- Thought leadership which focuses on identifying global and future changes in tertiary and vocational teaching and learning to ensure ongoing relevance and adaption.

These core priorities will form the key focus of Ako Aotearoa's work in 2025 and beyond, including sector-wide consultation on how we can best adapt our priorities and service provision in a responsive and meaningful way.

In Q4, we commenced a review of the Professional Learning and Development (PLD) Programme Model to critique its efficacy and ensure its alignment with sector preferences and needs. This work is well underway with key findings already providing valuable insights into how we can pivot what we are doing to better align with what our stakeholders want. This review is due to conclude by August 2025.



The national tertiary education awards Te Whatu Kairangi continue to evolve with the introduction of a new award for te reo educators. It was a profound honour to host the inaugural Te Tohu Reo Māori award winner at the Te Whatu Kairangi ceremony held in Parliament in November. Hiria Tumoana has made an exceptional and lifelong contribution to te reo Māori education. The mana of this award was further elevated when Hiria was also jointly awarded the Prime Minister's Educator of the Year award. Kerry Davis from Otago Polytechnic was the other joint award recipient.

The Ako Aotearoa Research and Innovation Agenda (AARIA) Contestable Funding Round 2024 garnered unprecedented interest, with 155 EOIs and 64 full proposals submitted, resulting in the awarding of \$259,320 to six high-quality research projects, alongside \$297,281 in co-funding from a broad range of tertiary organisations, underscoring the success of AARIA's co-investment model.





In addition, ongoing AARIA projects have delivered an exceptional 574 dissemination activities, ranging from conference presentations to academic publications and citations, marking one of the highest research impacts ever achieved by Ako Aotearoa and highlighting the significant contributions to the tertiary sector.

Our Manako – Adult Literacy, Numeracy, and Cultural Capability (ALNACC) – programme of work continues to uphold its commitment to supporting the tertiary education sector through innovation, collaboration, and culturally-grounded practices, ensuring positive outcomes for educators and learners in the tertiary education sector across Aotearoa New Zealand.

In a year marked by challenges and opportunities, the Manako programme has demonstrated adaptability and resilience in addressing the evolving needs of the sector. From the development of new resources and updated professional learning and development (PLD) models, to the celebration of

achievement through the Tapatoru Ako Professional Practice Award (Tapatoru) and the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM), the programme remains at the forefront of capability building and sector leadership. More about these programmes are in section 5 this report.

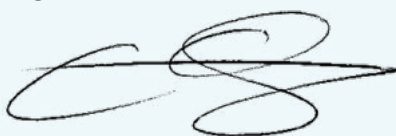
Central to this mahi is the commitment to fostering inclusivity and cultural responsiveness. The refreshed Māori Cultural Capability and Pacific Cultural Centredness PLD initiatives will continue to equip educators with the skills and knowledge to meet the diverse needs of their learners. Likewise, the integration of kaupapa Māori and Pacific perspectives into frameworks like the DFQM reflects our holistic approach to achieving meaningful and sustainable change.

Sector engagement and collaboration have also been a cornerstone of our approach this year. Through strong partnerships with stakeholders, contributions to key events and advisory work, Manako has been able to share its knowledge and resources while also listening to the voices of the sector to guide our ongoing development.

Looking ahead to 2025, our stakeholder consultation on Ako Aotearoa's draft Strategic Plan will be a key part of the strategic planning process, engaging the sector in discussion on the draft plan, testing its relevance and timeliness, and refining it further based on feedback. This will be a nation-wide process, drawing in all key dimensions of the sector and its people.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge and thank our staff for their loyalty, commitment, and steadfast efforts in what has been a challenging year for both Ako Aotearoa and the sector as we continue to navigate the current volatilities and unknowns ahead.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Corrina Gestro-Best  
Director

# Ako Aotearoa Board Members 2024

## Co-Chairs

**Dr Meegan Hall** (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Apakura)

**Derek McCormack**

## Members

**Professor Giselle Byrnes**

Massey University Vice Chancellor's representative and consortium lead

**Mel Barnes**

Massey University

**Shireen Mageed**

Te Wananga o Aotearoa

**Rebecca Kiddle**

Te Wananga o Aotearoa

**Paora Ammunsen**

Te Pukenga representative

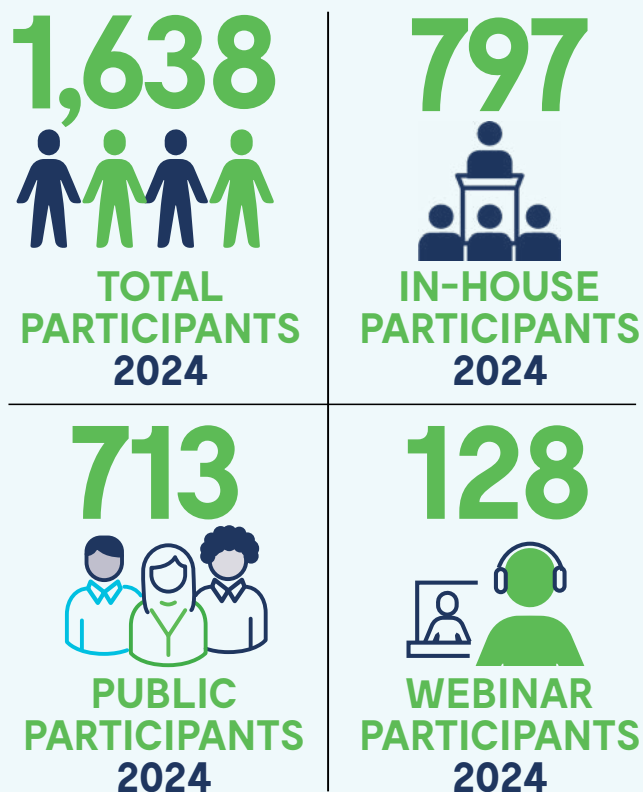
**Diane Lithgow**

Te Pukenga representative

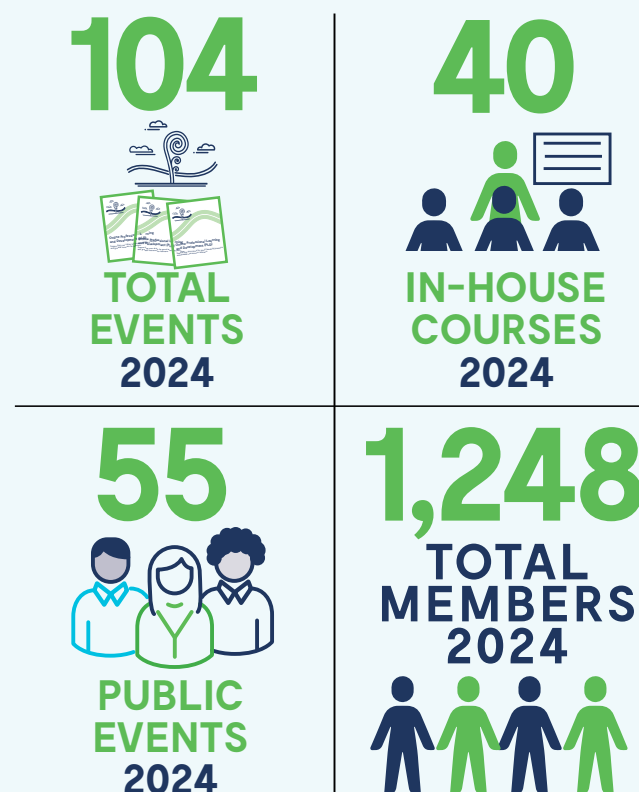
## Summary of activities



## PLD PARTICIPATION



## PLD EVENTS





# Research & Innovation

## AARIA PROJECTS '24



**6** completed  
**\$259,320**  
 (Ako Aotearoa contributions)



**TOTAL**  
 organisational contribution  
**\$297,281**



### Tapatoru

Ako Professional Practice Award

**total ORGANISATIONS  
 awarded 2024**

**6**

**38 staff**  
 6 ACROSS  
 organisations

**Ako Aotearoa**  
**3** Regional  
 Forums

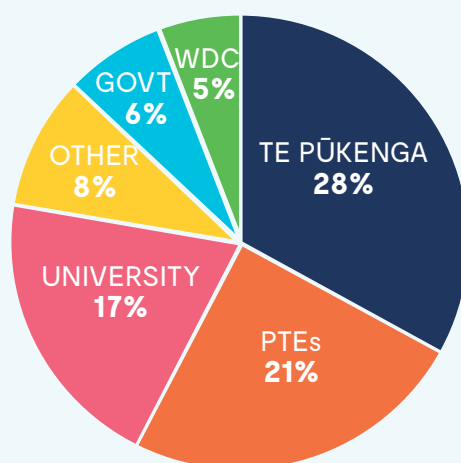


**288**  
 ATTENDEES



**96%**  
 EXCELLENT  
 AVERAGE QUALITY  
 RATING



**82%**  
 VERY HIGH  
 RATING FOR VALUE



## ako.ac.nz - website activity for 2024

  <b>Top pages visited</b>		<b>TOP 10</b>	<b>Downloads</b>	
[homepage]	<b>39,791</b>	<b>01</b>	Knowledge-centre/Ki-Te-Hoe-Indigenising-Practice/Set-of-Te-reo-Maori-resources	<b>7,851</b>
/Search/	<b>9,336</b>	<b>02</b>	Knowledge-centre/ALNACC-Resources/Learning-progressions/Resources	<b>2,201</b>
/professional-learning/	<b>7,627</b>	<b>03</b>	Knowledge-centre/Ki-te-hoe-Indigenising-Spaces/Ki-te-Hoe-indigenising-spaces-Book-set	<b>2,045</b>
/knowledge-centre/	<b>6,610</b>	<b>04</b>	Professional-Learning/Flyers/PLD-Flyer-2024	<b>1,312</b>
/professional-learning/in-house-workshop/	<b>5,550</b>	<b>05</b>	Knowledge-centre/Simplifying-Embedded-Literacy-and-Numeracy-for-Tertiary-Tutors-Practical-ideas for teaching	<b>846</b>
/KnowledgeCentreSearch/	<b>4,437</b>	<b>06</b>	Knowledge-centre/NPF-09-009-Bicultural-competence-in-ECE/Tool-Resource-kit-for-student-teachers	<b>714</b>
/knowledge-centre/indigenising-practice/resource-set-te-reo-maori-rerenga-korero-and-waiata/	<b>3,718</b>	<b>07</b>	Knowledge-centre/NPF-10-001A-Pasifika-Learners-and-Success-in-Tertiary-Education/Educational practices that benefit Pacific learners in tertiary education-Report	<b>473</b>
/programmes-and-services/research-and-innovation/how-to-apply/	<b>3,166</b>	<b>08</b>	Knowledge-centre/RHPF-N52-Goalposts/RESOURCE - Goalposts	<b>422</b>
te-pataka-matauranga-maori/kete-maori-resources/	<b>3,018</b>	<b>09</b>	Te-Whatu-Kairangi/2024/Te-Whatu-Kairangi-2024-Guidelines document	<b>410</b>
/knowledge-centre/ki-te-hoe-indigenising-practice/	<b>2,333</b>	<b>10</b>	Knowledge-centre/NPF-08-002-Tatou-Tatou-Success-for-all-Improving-Maori-student-success/RESEearch report	<b>405</b>

## Website engagement trends

This year, the website showed another strong performance of activity overall. While there was a slight decrease across the core volume metrics, such as website visits, pageviews and downloads, the following metrics have all seen increases – engaged sessions, engagement rate, average engagement time, and pages per visit.

Mobile device usage has increased from the previous year, and the site has also seen a slight increase in the number of Google search impressions and clicks for the months where direct comparison was available (September–December).

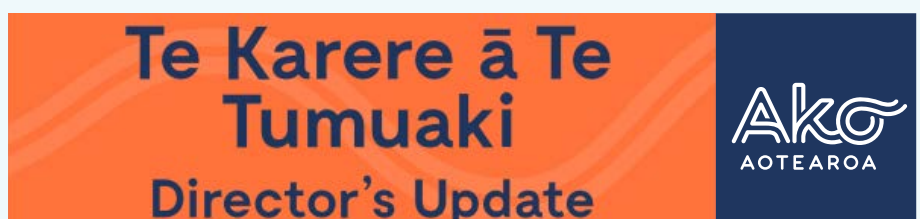


\*\*The percentage of total sessions that are engaged sessions. An engaged session is one that lasts for longer than 10 seconds, involves a key event, or had two or more screen or page views.

### Other communication channels

The Ako Aotearoa distributes three newsletters with specific purposes and audiences in mind:

- Te Karere | Director's Update – strategic information about our work with and for others across the sector and Government agencies.
- Kia Hiwa Ra! – the online Ako Aotearoa enews for a wide sector audience – of interest to all staff
- Professional Learning and Development enews – sent out six-weekly with updates on courses, workshops and other free events to benefit teaching and learning practice





# 2

## Strengthening teaching and learning capability through sector collaboration



# 2

## Strengthening teaching and learning capability through sector collaboration

As part of Ako Aotearoa's broader strategy, our aim is to strengthen sector collaboration by linking communities of practice, professional learning and development opportunities, and other events in ways that support shared learning, deeper engagement, and the exchange of thought leadership across organisations and roles. By aligning these activities, we aim to foster stronger networks, build collective capability, and support sustained impact across the tertiary education sector.

### Sector support through our Communities of Practice

The Ako Aotearoa-led Communities of Practice (CoP) is a great platform on which to build networks, showcase the mahi undertaken by the Manako team, and promote the products and services we offer.

## COMMUNITIES of PRACTICE members

NEURODIVERSITY

↑ 593



MANAKO COP

↑ 603



PHENOMENAL EDUCATORS PACIFIC

52



1,248



Image, left: A selection of presenter and attendees images from our three Regional Forums – read more on page 46.



## Manako Community of Practice

There were nine free Manako webinars conducted in 2024 and a yearly evaluation survey received 20 responses from 131 webinar participants (15% response rate). However, since the evaluation was conducted for the entire year's webinars and some participants may have attended multiple webinars but only responded to the survey once, this response rate could have been an underrepresentation of engagement. This has been mitigated in 2025 through periodic check-in surveys so participants can recall and reflect on webinars as they attend them.

Around 57% of the respondents were members of a Manako Community of Practice, while 13% expressed the willingness to join one. However, 31% of respondents were not members of a Manako CoP. This indicates a strong engagement level alongside further opportunities to expand membership and involvement.

Based on the webinar evaluation feedback:

- 85% of respondents were based in Aotearoa while 10% were based in Australia.

This distribution shows the international outreach of the Manako webinars and their potential to engage audiences beyond New Zealand.

## MANAKO Communities of Practice ENGAGEMENT





The diversity of the Communities of Practice model expands professional networks, exposes members to global practices, and strengthens collaboration and professional development.

Sector Types of Respondents:

- 30% from Te Pūkenga
- 20% from Adult and Community Education
- Other sector types included:
  - Tas TAFE
  - Department of Corrections NZ
  - Other vocational and tertiary organisations

The respondents' professional roles were a mix of:

- educators and tertiary lecturers (25%)
- learning support (20%)
- advisors (15%)
- managers (10%) and trainers (5%)
- a variety of career advisory, quality assurance, disability student support and other roles in the tertiary educational domain (25%).

The majority of the webinar participants showed a strong appetite and interest in neurodiversity and topics focused on priority learners. Key areas of interest also included trauma-informed practices in education, disabled students' experiences in navigating tertiary education, Skills Framework for the food and fiber sector, and challenges of dyscalculia in financial literacy. These topics underscore the focus of the sector on addressing diverse educational challenges and enhancing inclusive practices.

The webinar evaluation insights were mainly qualitative, highlighting participants' positive views on the content relevance, learnings from the webinar, practical applicability, and the level of engagement. Below are a few direct quotes from respondent feedback:

“[My key takeaway from the Manako webinars was] Informative and relevant to informing my teaching practice in a range of learning environments. Thank you for the webinars, during the year, I looks forward to more in the future!”

“I gained a greater understanding of the purpose of the Tapatoru framework and programme.”

“I presented information from the webinar back to our team, and referred others on to find out more, because it was more relevant to their roles.”

“Insights [from the Manako webinars] have helped me to work with students more effectively.”

In response to future webinar ideas and improvement areas, the Manako CoP members have suggested focusing on addressing challenges in implementing inclusivity and accessibility for priority learners, bridging knowledge gaps between Kaiako and ākonga, and overcoming their personal time constraints that limited their participation in the 2024 CoP webinars.

### **Pacific Phenomenal Educators CoP**

A Pacific Phenomenal Educators CoPP was launched at the start of this year. It focused on fostering collaboration and shared learning among educators committed to Pacific learner success. This community has created a platform for educators to share resources, experiences, and best practices such as presentations at various conferences and research forums in partnership with APTSE and MIT. Initial feedback from Phenomenal Educators CoP indicates high engagement and value in the peer support and learning opportunities provided. **For more details and background context on this CoP, see section 5 on supporting Pacific learner success initiatives.**

# Professional Learning and Development

## Programme activity

The figures displayed throughout this section are a combination of the wider Professional Learning and Development (PLD) and that which is delivered through our Manako programme (Adult Language, Literacy, Numeracy, and Cultural Capability).

In 2024, a total of 1,638 participants took part in 104 courses, workshops, and webinars throughout the year. Forty three of these were hosted by the Ako Aotearoa PLD programme, while the Manako team delivered 61 courses, public online events, and free webinars. Of the total 2024 participation, the broader Ako Aotearoa PLD suite attracted 551 participants, while the Manako Programme attracted 1,087 participants.



Figure 1: Professional learning and development stats from General and Manako contracts. Note: These participation numbers reflect total attendance rather than discrete individuals, as some participants may have taken part in multiple PLD throughout the year.

Throughout the year, we delivered a total of 40 PLD courses to whole organisations as on-site or in-house trainings. These catered to staff groups comprising 797 individuals from 19 different organisations and offered tailored professional development experiences.

A total of 55 public online events and 9 webinars were delivered to 713 public and 128 webinar participants, contributing to an overall public engagement of 841 participants.

## Quality and Value ratings



The above figures indicate the average professional learning and development programme rating for all Ako Aotearoa PLD offerings, including that provided under our Manako programme.

General PLD quality rating increased from 88% in 2023 to 93% this year, while value rating remained the same as in 2023 (73%). Manako PLD quality rating saw a slight decline from 91% in 2023 to 86.4% this year, while the value rating dropped from 84% in 2023 to 78% this year. This slight decline in Manako PLD ratings could reflect changing participant needs, shifting expectations or new content that may not have evolved at the same speed as demand. This is also the reason for Manako introducing a new themed-months based PLD model for 2025, which provides more flexible and comprehensive offerings for the sector. The increase in General PLD quality is positive but, with unchanged value ratings, there may be a need for better alignment with sector needs.



## Public professional learning and development – Participant feedback

The feedback received from our public or individual-level PLD offerings indicated an increased cultural understanding, especially in relation to Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori history, and Pasifika values. In response to what the participants would like to improve or change in their professional practice as a result of taking part, one of them mentioned:

“Look at each Pasifika learner as an individual and learn some of their important values such as Alofa, Fa’aloalo and Tautua [love, respect, service].”

Many educators are also thinking more critically on how to support diverse learners, particularly priority learners and those showing learning differences.

“I will be a lot more empathic and adaptable for those with different needs, patience, adapt fonts and ways of delivery.”

“It was great to learn about the free resource that is available for some of my high functioning neurodiverse learners to access. Extremely excited to see and explore the modules.”

“I’m going to be more aware of using asynchronous and synchronous teaching methods as linked and part of one whole.”

“I wouldn’t change anything, simply add/learn more and improve. Encourage others to do the course and learn more.”

There has been greater impetus towards incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) this year, to enhance teaching, assessment and learner engagement. Exploration and implementation of AI (e.g. ChatGPT, Co-pilot), use of Pathways Awarua (PA) and shifting from static presentations to interactive, multimedia formats have been visible themes in the feedback.

“I will be updating how I record my lectures and using the interactive tools demonstrated in this course.”

“Using a different format for presenting lessons. Moving away from PowerPoint and considering different background colours...”

Throughout the public individual and organisational PLD programmes, the intention to harbour stronger relationships with learners and develop empathy has been quite evident. The themes of building reciprocal relationships, learner voice and engagement, and emphasising pastoral care and holistic support appeared consistently through the evaluation feedback.

“[I want] To continue open non-judgmental communication. To not force people into thinking in ways they are not ready for.”

## **In-house professional learning and development- Participant feedback**

This year, we received 255 responses to our Ako Aotearoa Professional Learning and Development evaluations, with 44% of respondents representing in-house organisations i.e. only staff from a particular organisation attended these bespoke training courses. This participation indicates a growing interest in aligning organisational practices with professional development opportunities. Among the most popular courses with our organisational participants were:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi – visual history
- Six steps to success – Exploring ako
- Clarifying boundaries in teacher-student relationships for safe practice
- Introduction to dyslexia | Supporting learners to achieve their potential
- Effective assessment that supports learning
- Applying equity in tertiary education.

These preferences suggest a strong demand for courses that support cultural inclusivity, inclusive education and practical strategies for effective learning environments. Such feedback helps us shape future PLD offerings to better meet sector-wide needs.

In-house organisations rated the quality of our Professional Learning and Development (PLD) offerings highly, with 90% satisfaction. Additionally, 74% highlighted the value these PLD opportunities brought to their teams, underscoring the positive impact of our programmes in meeting organisational needs.

## IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



19

ORGANISATIONS



40

EVENTS



797

PEOPLE

Overall, the feedback points to a desire for organisations' professional learning to be engaging, practical, culturally responsive, and conducive to continuous improvement.



engaging practical  
culturally responsive  
and CONDUCTIVE  
to continuous  
IMPROVEMENT

“[This course has] Triggered deeper reflection and thinking for me and amongst the team.”

“I have been trying to create a holistic approach to my teaching and care of the students. The course has reinforced my beliefs in this approach and re-inspired my focus. This also follows through into my personal life with taking a holistic approach to my parenting and outlook on life.”

“If I think a student may be dyslexic, I will be able to talk to colleagues and managers about it, whereas before I felt I didn’t have anyone who would see it as something that needed extra attention.

“I really found the course to be so informative, and I know our organization did try to cram a lot in for one day but, I was keen to continue learning and felt there was still so much to know and understand, but boy it was a HUGE day!”

## Digital badging valued by participants

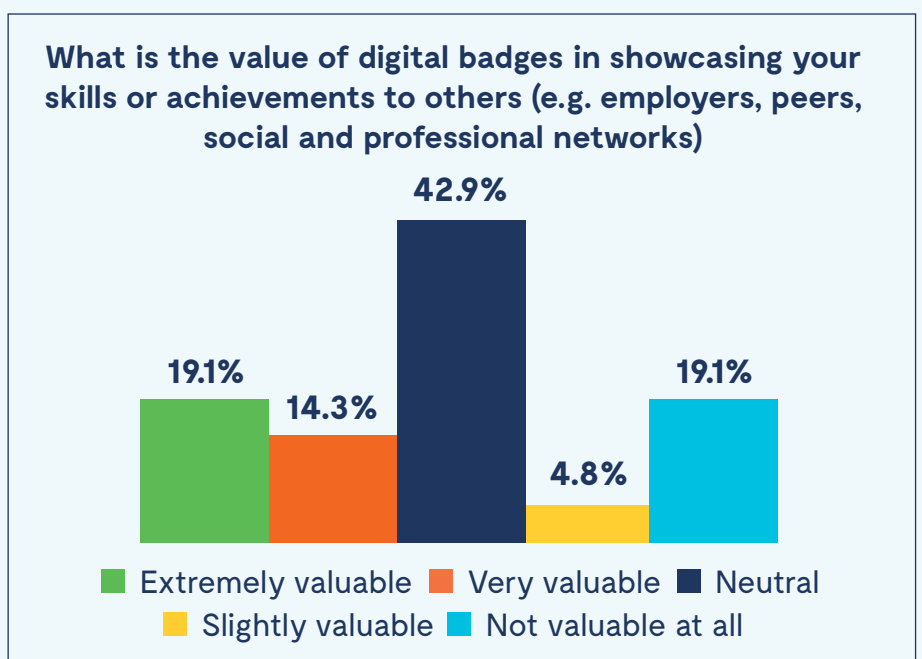
A total of 1,307 badges were awarded this year to educators who engaged in Ako Aotearoa in-house PLD programmes, public workshops, and those who participated in our Manako PLD programme to develop their Pacific and/or Māori cultural capabilities and language, literacy and numeracy skills. Three hundred and twenty three (323) of the total badges were related to the Ako Aotearoa in-house and public PLD, while 984 were for Manako courses. This is a 35% decrease, compared to the previous year (2023) when 1,999 badges were awarded. This decrease can be attributed to lower overall PLD activity this year. Forty eight badges were awarded to the Tapatoru Ako Professional Practice participants, which is a 71% increase from baseline 2023.





Figure 2: Number of 2024 badges awarded against achievement areas. Note: 'other' included badges awarded for 'Exploring Ako' workshop, 'Clarifying boundaries', and 'Engaging learners online'.

This year, we conducted a badge survey to better understand how participants value Ako Aotearoa's digital badging. The survey received a 15% response rate, with 30% of respondents identifying as promoters of the badges, though the overall Net Promoter Score was -25, highlighting areas for improvement. While many participants found badges to be a motivating and valuable addition to their professional development, others expressed uncertainty about their usefulness, accessibility, and visibility. Some also noted challenges in receiving their badges, suggesting opportunities to refine our delivery process.



## PLD Review and changes

While we regularly review our PLD programme to ensure topics and courses align well with sector needs, the significant downturn in 2024, along with the new Ako Aotearoa Strategic Intent and Organisational Plan, called for a more comprehensive review of the programme. A proposal for this was approved by the Board in its September meeting.

The review was undertaken by the independent team of Dr Linda Keesing-Styles and Jane Terrell. It was well underway by early December 2024, with an interim report identifying some critical insights from cross-sector feedback that will inform future changes and innovations. The PLD model review project is due to be completed by August 2025.

To address sector needs in the Manako space, a new public PLD programme has been developed for rollout in March 2025. This will respond to sector needs by offering themed monthly workshops with flexible formats and free online resources to support ongoing professional learning.

## PLD success story 1

### Ako Explored: Six principles for enhancing learner outcomes in tertiary education

Project leader – Dr Linda Keesing-Styles

Course facilitator – Jane Terrell



In February, we piloted two in-house workshops developed from the [project](#) by Dr Linda Keesing-Styles launched online in October 2023. The evaluative feedback from participants of these February sessions provided rich information which enabled us to hone the workshop topic before its public introduction to our PLD Programme.

Six educators shared their challenges in managing large student numbers and engaging learners. They wanted practical strategies for lesson preparation, student support, and discussions to improve teaching. Although digital tools were already a strong ally, they said that concepts from seminal research, school-based insights, and neuroscience felt like mysteries they wished to explore further. Half of the respondents were keen to explore *Experience: doing, experience, and reflective practice*, while the rest felt it already worked well in their practice.

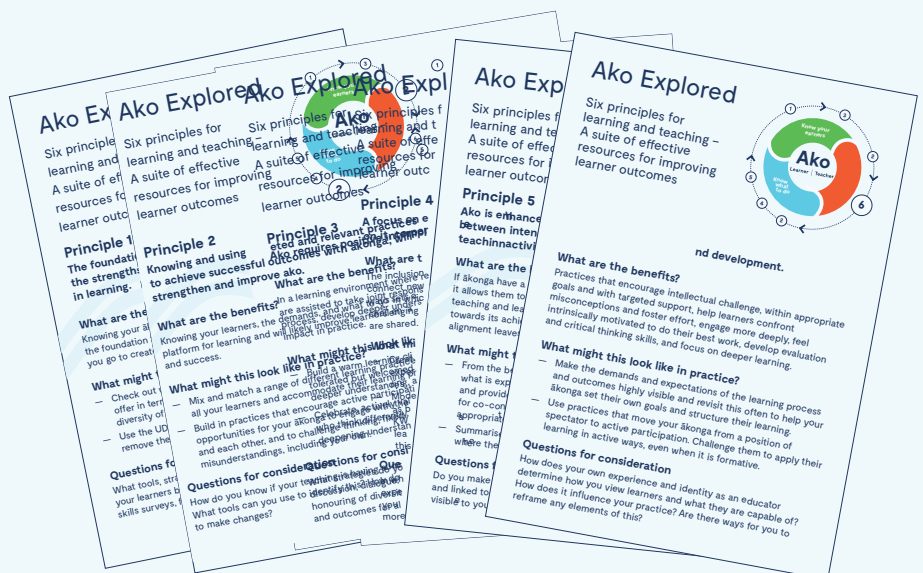
## Workshop series

The workshop series aims to explore the six foundational principles through short (one-hour), low-cost, high-value sessions. Workshop developer and facilitator Jane Terrell sees the series as a great chance to dive into this new resource which, she explains, “...covers everything close to my heart about learning-centered teaching.”

The series commences with a two-hour overview workshop, followed by six one-hour elective sessions, each focusing on a different principle. Organisations can purchase workshops separately or as a package.

The evaluation feedback for the *Ako Explored* workshop series showed that participants valued the focus on constructive alignment and the six Ako principles, particularly on how it applies to improve their professional practice. They appreciated revising key concepts, deep-diving into principles, and having access to relevant resources.

They found the workshop series provided various opportunities for collaboration and discussion, gaining from diverse perspectives and groupwork. The availability of resources such as coffee cards and videos provided examples of good practice in action. For some participants, learning about Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools as teaching aids broadened their perspective on technology adoption in education.





Below are a few quotes highlighting the beneficial elements of the Ako Explored series:

“The entire overview was absolutely fantastic, all elements were well covered, and I can’t wait to check the subsequent workshops.”

“Jane has such a great way of easing us into each component. It was a great taster with lots to think about in applying each principle day to day.”

“Today’s workshop prompted me to reflect on how I can provide more opportunities for students to stop and reflect while learning, as well as encourage them to share more in synchronous and asynchronous teaching.”

The top three aspects where participants expected to make changes to their professional practice included constructive alignment with learning outcomes, student engagement and support practices, and increased professional development and collaborative opportunities. The evaluation feedback on session pacing was mixed, with some finding it effective, while others preferred fewer sessions with more discussion time. Suggestions for improvement included better management of breakout rooms and clearer instructions in online sessions.

Go to the Ako Aotearoa website to access information about the [workshop](#), [project report](#) and [resources](#).

**Read PLD success 2 on Skills4Work in Section 5.**







## Sponsoring Tertiary sector events

An important part of how Ako Aotearoa collaborates with different peak bodies, associations and institutions across the sector is event sponsorship, especially through our support and involvement in programme content. The mutual benefits are many and provide us with wonderful opportunities to support great work around important topics and to connect with wider groups of specialists and delegates alike.

The 2024 portfolio allocated approximately \$43,000 across eight sponsorships that attracted over 1,000 people. The organisations showing our related involvement are listed on the next two pages.

## Sector **Event** SPONSORSHIPS

ATTENDEES  
**1,000**  
SECTOR WIDE



**\$43,000**



**8** SPONSORED  
EVENTS



**10**

AKO AOTEAROA  
**presentations**

Image, left: Attendees and presenters at the Southern Regional forum 2024.

## Ako Aotearoa's 2024 tertiary event sponsorships

Amount	Event	Target Audience	No. attending	Ako Aotearoa involvement
\$3,000	<b>Work-Integrated Learning New Zealand (WILNZ)</b> (VuW, Wellington)	University / ITPs	50	Gold sponsor
\$5,000	<b>ACE Aotearoa Annual Conference and Awards</b> (Te Papa, Wellington)	Adult and Community Education	120	Sponsor – Conference and Awards. Programme – Workshop – Michael Grawe and Graeme Read; Sector Update from Helen Lomax and presentation of top Award.
\$7,500	<b>Association of Pacific Staff in Tertiary Education (APSTE)</b> (University of Otago and Otago Polytechnic)	University, Te Pūkenga/ITPs/ Polytechs	70–90	Sponsor Pacific staff leadership on committee and across programme
\$5,000	<b>Te Huinga Tauira hui - Te Mana Akonga</b> (Waipapa Taumata Rau/University of Auckland)	Maori Student Representatives nationwide	300	Sponsor Presentation from Deputy Director Maori, Dr Joseph Te Rito
\$5,000	<b>Flexible Learning Aotearoa New Zealand (FLANZ)</b> (Waipapa Taumata Rau/University of Auckland)	Compulsory (primary and secondary), tertiary, and adult/community education	150–200	Sponsor Northern Regional Hub attendance



Amount	Event	Target Audience	No. attending	Ako Aotearoa involvement
\$12,500	<b>Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand (ITENZ)</b> (Victory Centre, Auckland)	Private Training Establishments (those who are members of the ITENZ association)	120	Principal Sponsor Programme involvement
\$2,275	<b>Tūwhitia - Learner Success conference</b> (TEC event, hosted by Unitec)	Wide range of tertiary sector types - management and SLT representation only	120	Programme - Project presentation of “Beyond Tuakana Teina”. Sponsorship and management of Cross-sector Student Panel session
\$3,000	<b>Tertiary Education Research New Zealand (TERNZ)</b> (VUW, Wellington)	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) members plus university. Provides capability building for research	60	Sponsor Presentation on Ako Aotearoa Research Programme (AARIA), Marvin Wu

## Contributing to the Tūwhitia Symposium

In November, we were delighted to be a supporter of the Tūwhitia Symposium 2024 – Ākonga success – Designing for the future beautifully hosted by Unitec (see below image: symposium attendees greeted onto the Te Noho Kotahitanga marae). In its third year, Tūwhitia is for senior decision-makers within tertiary education and training organisations, who have responsibility for learner success.



In 2024, the symposium strands covered the following sub-themes:

- (a) Data, technology and artificial intelligence
- (b) Holistic ākonga support and ancestral intelligence
- (c) Curriculum, learning and teaching, and academic integrity.

Ako Aotearoa was delighted to contribute two valuable sessions to the programme:

1. Beyond Tuakana Teina – a 2024 completed Ako Aotearoa Research and Innovation Agenda (AARIA) project – presented by Dr Joshua Kalan (pictured presenting below) from Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī and Jayden Thompson from Tawharau Housing Trust. The project investigated how a tuākana-tēina model of trade training can provide better learning outcomes and greater success for Māori learners in the construction industry.



2. An insightful session with our Student Representative Panel around key issues, challenges and successes in the learner journey, featuring (pictured below from left to right):
- Pauliasi Buleka – Secretary, NZ International Students’ Association
  - Sade Seumalo – Learner Voice Coordinator, Manukau Institute of Technology
  - Harris Devon – Tumuaki, Te Mana Ākonga
  - Mata Raea – President, Students Council, Manukau Institute of Technology
  - Christine Fusio – President, Student Council, Unitec, Jasper Poole – National Disabled Students’ Association



Image: Student Representative panel at the Tūwhitia Symposium.

## Supporting Te Mana Ākonga with Te Huinga Tauira hui

Māori learner success team through the support of Te Mana Akonga – Māori Tertiary Students' Association – again takes a 'whole of organisation' or 'whole of Māori sector' approach, as a national association of Māori tertiary learners.



Ako Aotearoa is pleased to have maintained a strong, ongoing relationship with this important learner group. Dr Te Rito gave a presentation to the 2024 gathering held at Waipapa Marae at the University of Auckland with around 300 student representatives and learners in attendance. There are plans to attract more attendees from the vocational and polytechnic sectors to this forum in 2025, to complement existing university representation.



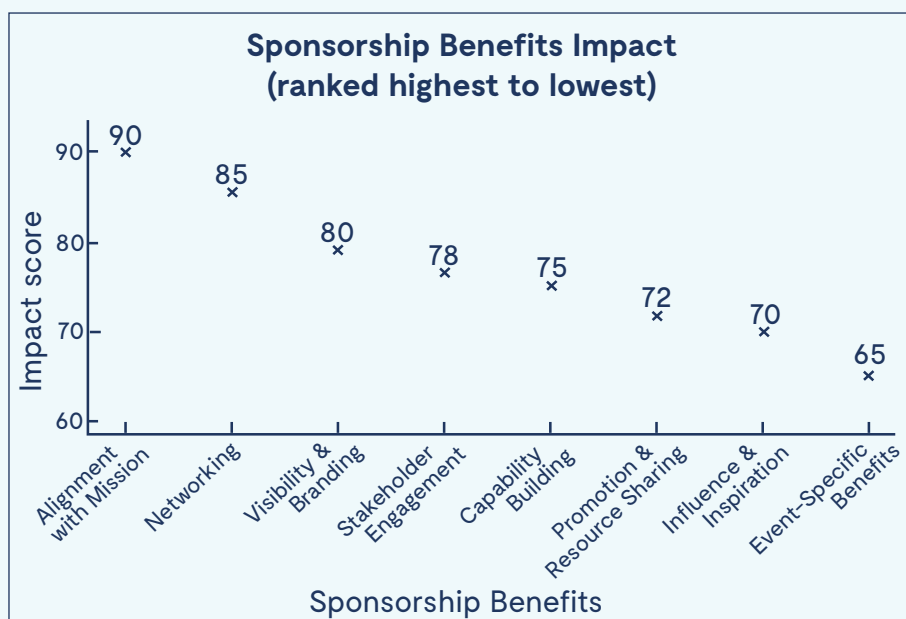
## Understanding the value and reach of sponsorships

Targeted event sponsorships have allowed Ako Aotearoa to make a difference in a sector-focused, high-impact manner. These events have served as platforms for inspiration for the event participants, including learners, giving them an opportunity to amplify their voice, ideate, and collaborate for meaningful change. As an event organiser put it:

“The focus of many of the sessions was learning success in a range of tertiary settings and has enabled substantial engagement and sharing of ideas and approaches. Many participants commented on the intensity of the sessions and the high level of complex engagement occurring in the host group discussions.”

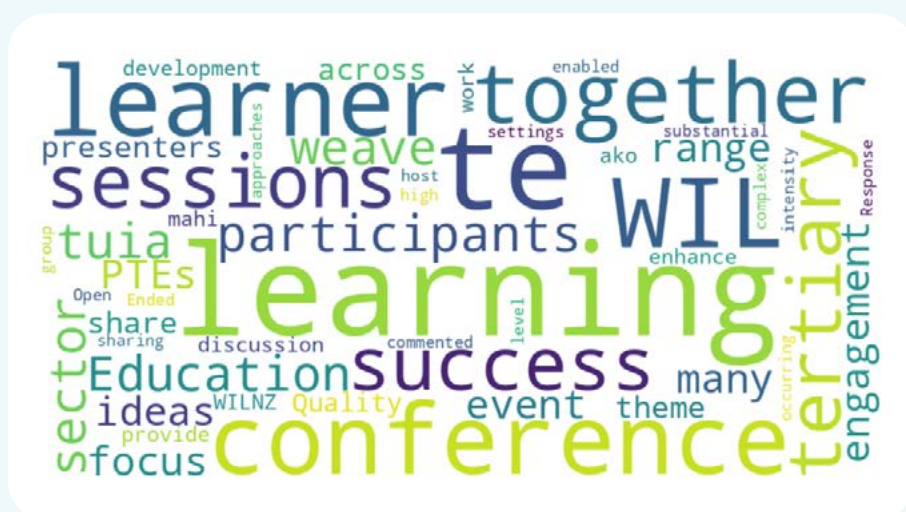
This year, we received seven sponsorship impact reports from the event organisers of TERNZ, ITENZ conference, APSTE annual fono, ACE conference, WILNZ conference and FABENZ conferences. Throughout the feedback, there was strong recognition of the learning and development benefits these sponsorships provide, specifically the networking opportunities for cross-sector collaboration. An analysis of the sponsorship effectiveness for the sponsored organisations indicated:

- ✓ **Highly positive sponsorship impact**
  - the sponsorship was rated highly effective (avg 9.14/10). The majority of the participants cited the events as “super energising and interesting”.
- ✓ **Strong engagement and participation**
  - events were well-attended, with high interaction from both participants and key stakeholders.
- ✓ **Opportunities for improvement**
  - suggestions include increased funding for flagship events, flexible sponsorship models (such as funding awards for outstanding achievements), and stronger cross-sector engagement.
- ✓ **Future partnerships look promising**
  - the respondents are open to continued collaboration with Ako Aotearoa. Net promoter score is 100%.



The above chart shows the largest-impact indicators (*Alignment with Mission and Values*), high-impact indicators (*Networking and Relationship Strengthening and Enhanced Visibility and Branding*), medium-impact indicators (*Professional Development, Capability Building and Stakeholder Engagement*), and lower-impact indicators. These outline the essence of Ako Aotearoa external events sponsorships.

For Ako Aotearoa, external event sponsorships reflect alignment with our core mission which is to drive impactful educational initiatives for Kaiako and ākonga/learner capability development. The high-impact indicators – networking



and relationship strengthening and enhanced visibility and branding – demonstrate how these sponsorships position Ako Aotearoa as a leading voice in the sector while fostering valuable stakeholder connections.

While we continue to focus on collaborating with key sector groups and peak bodies such as ITENZ, ACE Aotearoa and the various student-led organisations, forging new collaborations with international organisations, such as the International Council for Open and Distance Education on their distance education conference, and strengthening relationships with key Māori educator and Pacific staff associations, are also priorities.

Work to streamline the sponsorship application process and impact evaluations ensured the improved quality and consistency of data collected for our sponsorship programme this year. This enabled quicker analysis of sponsorship outcomes through standardised templates, which has led to enhanced transparency and accountability in the process. These improvements have also benefited applicants with their proposals and evaluation reviews.

### **Māori learner success team's collaboration in tertiary education**

The Kaihautū Mātauranga Māori and the Kaiwhakahaere Mātauranga Māori continue to maintain and develop relationships at various vocational fora and iwi Māori events. This ensures a 'finger on the pulse' in these two critical worlds/ areas of influence. In 2024, significant progress was made in strengthening relationships and advancing Māori education and cultural capability.

For our three regional Hub Forums, we invited local tribal academics to open the proceedings with whakatau, karakia, history and waiata to acknowledge their status as the 'people of the land' for the Ako Aotearoa regions of influence. They were Dr Janine Kapa (Kai Tahu), Professor Meihana Durie (Ngāti Rangitāne), and Professor Tom Roa (Tainui).

The Kaihautū Mātauranga Māori and the Kaiwhakahaere Mātauranga Māori both attended these events during the reporting period:

- ACE Fono in Rotorua – an opportunity to network with Māori and Pacific Island tertiary educators.
- ACE Annual Conference in Wellington – networking with educators in the Adult Community Education sector.

- ITENZ conference featured Jayden Thompson (Director Tāwharau Homes) and Dr Joshua Kalan, (Researcher, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi) showcasing the project ‘Beyond tuakana teina | Exploring Māori vocational pathways’, co-funded with Ako Aotearoa.

A major highlight was the launch of the Tohu app by Naomi Manu and Associates in collaboration with HERA, designed to guide learners in identifying vocational pathways. The *Beyond Tuakana Teina: Exploring vocational pathways* research project was widely disseminated, with presentations at the ITENZ Conference and Tūwhitia 2024 Symposium, reaching over 120 attendees.

Additionally, self-directed Māori cultural capability courses on the Pathways Awarua platform continued to see strong engagement, with 39 registered learners and 21 successful assessments.

Key conferences and sector engagements played a crucial role in promoting Māori education and outcomes. The Māori learner success team at Ako Aotearoa attended several conferences including ConCOVE Tūhura, ACE, APSTE, and ITENZ, strengthening ties with Workforce Development Council leaders and education stakeholders. A keynote address was delivered at the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Research Conference, reinforcing connections in Indigenous research. Additionally, the Kaihautū consulted with Eastern Institute of Technology regarding the NZQA Bachelor of Arts (Māori) qualification and held discussions on sponsoring the 2025 Toi Taura o Te Matariki conference.

Collaboration with iwi, government agencies, and private sector partners was also a priority. Notable iwi engagements included work with Te Atiawa o Te Waka a Maui Trust on the Seafood Qualifications review and partnerships with Ngāti Rangitāne and Ngāti Hineuru Trust on education initiatives. The Kaihautū facilitated Tikanga Māori services for the Te Whatu Kairangi Awards at Parliament and various national education events, reinforcing cultural integration.

These strategic engagements continue to enhance Māori learner success through collaboration, research, and the strengthening of tikanga Māori in education and workforce development.

Image, right: Attendees and presenters at the Central Regional Forum 2024.



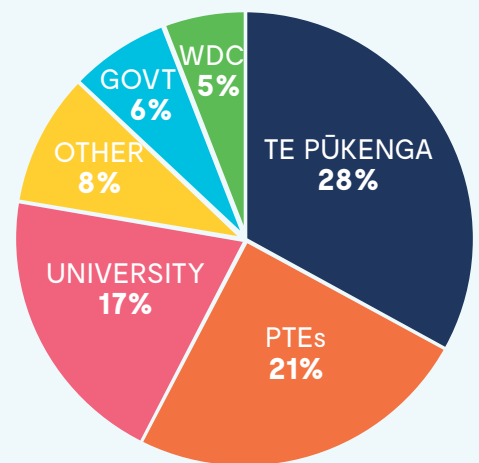




## Ako Aotearoa Regional Forums

This year, the Ako Aotearoa Regional Forums brought together 288 tertiary educators and providers across the Northern, Central and Southern regions to explore the theme Tohono: Connecting Traditions and Futures in Tertiary Learning.

The Forums attracted participation from diverse sector groups including, but not limited to, Te Pūkenga (30%), universities (25%), government agencies, REAPs, WDCs, ACE, and others.



### Sector diversity at 2024 Regional Forums

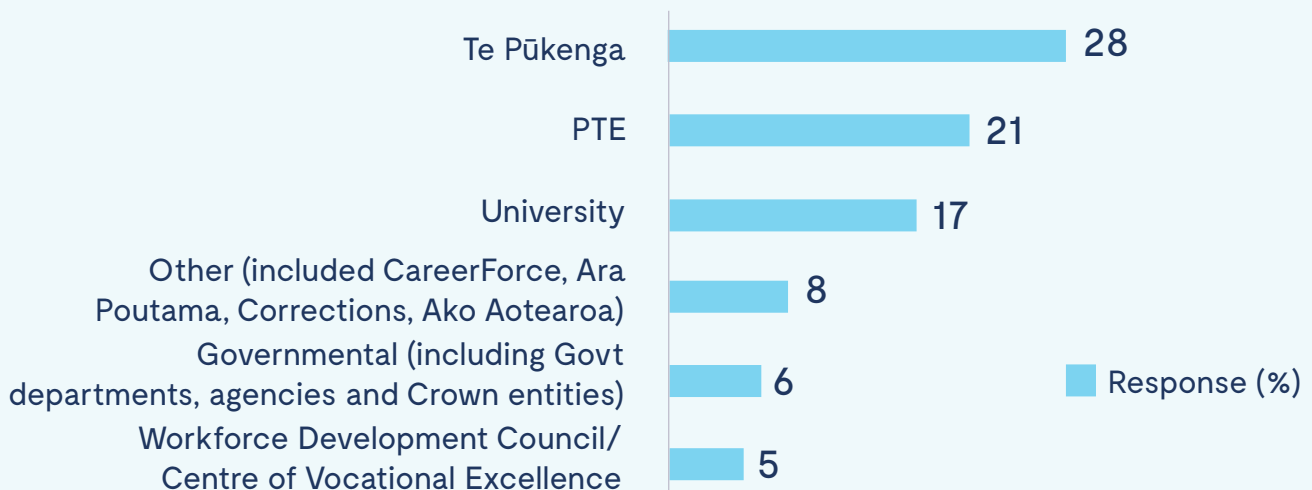


Figure 6: Sector diversity as reported in evaluations. Note: This data reflects responses from evaluation participants and may not represent all attendees across the three forums. Sectors with less than 5% attendance are omitted for clarity.

## Participant feedback

This reflected strong engagement this year, with 96% of respondents rating the forums as excellent in quality and 82.5% rating the forums as very high in value. Attendees highlighted key outcomes, including the integration of cultural approaches such as Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika perspectives, the thoughtful use of AI and technology in tertiary education, and the creation of inclusive and supportive learning environments.

A summary debrief one-pager was also shared with the sector to close the loop and keep all stakeholders informed of the key insights and outcomes from the 2024 Forums. This was a valuable step in ensuring continued collaboration and transparency as we move forward in our collective efforts to enhance tertiary education practices.

A few standout quotes from forum participants are shared below:

“It was a fabulous forum and what a learning experience! Heaps to take back to the team and great connections.”

“Although I enjoyed the presentations, I learnt more about the sector rather than applying to my practice. I.e., what the focus of Ako Aotearoa is, the experiences of teachers who have won awards; and learning about research.”

“The calibre of the chosen speakers was exceptional. The way they engaged the audience, were able to think on their feet, embedded humor and passion, and shared relevant, helpful insights, was something special.”

Analysis of our Regional Forums (2023/24) highlighted the following trends:

- Participation numbers remained similar over the two years, but simplified attendance-recording methods have improved accuracy. Also, engagement on the day has increased overall.
- Feedback shows preference for single, rather than multiple, themes highlighting a shift in the content delivery focus.
- There has been a greater emphasis in participant responses on the impacts of professional development this year, as opposed to 2023; we have received more feedback on the ‘applicability’ of the knowledge gained through the Forums.
- There has been a stronger recognition of Ako Aotearoa resources and offerings, which have received much greater appreciation.
- Suggestions for improvements consistently focused on more networking, improved engagement, and a deeper dive into understanding the sector challenges and co-designing solutions.

This was reflected in the following feedback:

“This is the first one I have been to, really enjoyed the day. To improve – get people to connect more, networking opportunities, see what different organisations are around, hear about what they do.”

“[Biggest takeaway message was to] look for ways to make sure people feel that they belong, and look at the person as a whole, not just the person they are when they are in class. Find out what’s going on in their life and what their challenges and pressures are, to fully understand them and to have a student-centered approach.”

All participant feedback is being considered in the planning of our 2025 Forums and other strategic events to ensure the sector is fully engaged and receiving maximum value. This ongoing commitment to continuous improvement ensures that Ako Aotearoa regional Forums remain a trusted source of promoting professional learning and development and thought leadership to tertiary educators and organisations.

## Key Themes from the Regional Forums 2024

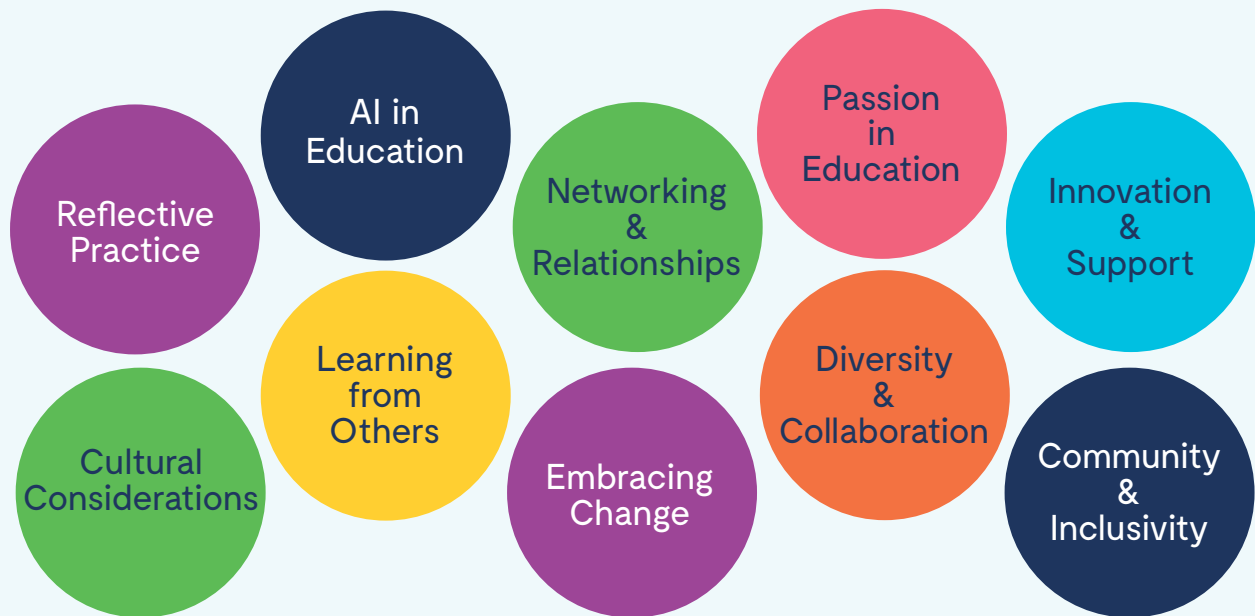
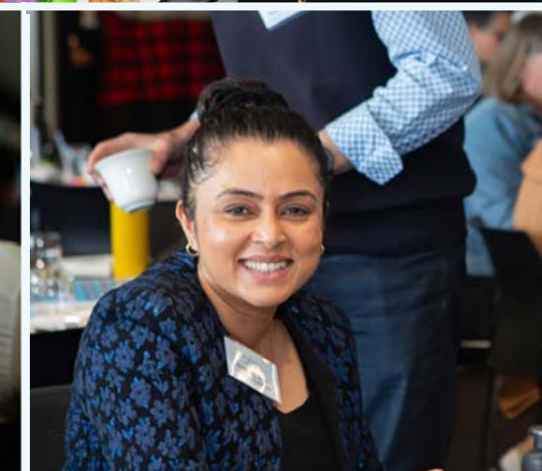
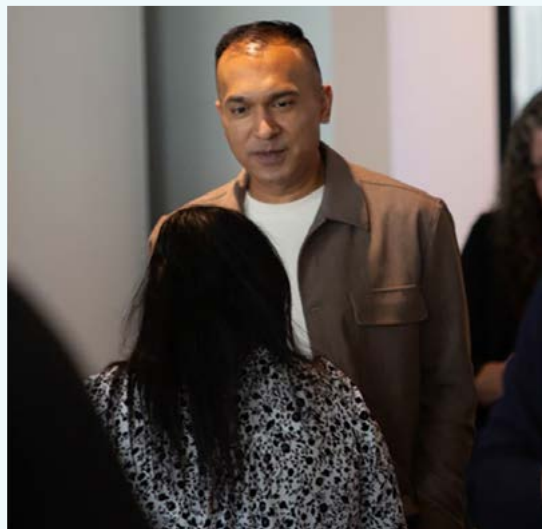


Figure 7: Key themes from 2024 Forum discussions and experiences, derived from evaluations.

Image next page:  
Presenters and  
attendees at the  
Northern Regional  
Forum.



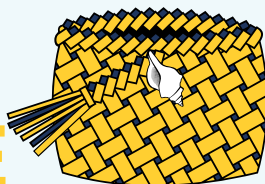




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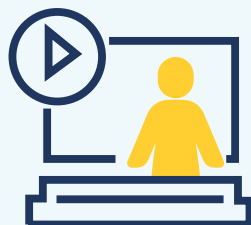
Strengthening key relationships  
to support with Māori, Pasifika,  
and priority learner success

# MANAKO PROGRAMME



total PLD  
**2024**

**61**



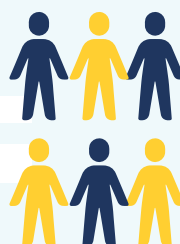
PUBLIC ONLINE  
EVENTS & FREE  
WEBINARS

**1,087**  
PARTICIPANTS



**23**   
in-house PLD  
COURSES 

**6** 



**519**

ORGANISATIONS ATTENDANCES

MANAKO  
DIGITAL  
BADGES

**984**  
AWARDED



PLD  
ratings  
**2024**

**86.4%**  **78%**  
QUALITY VALUE



## Strengthening key relationships to support with Māori, Pasifika, and priority learner success

### Manako Programme – Adult language, literacy, numeracy and cultural capability

The professional learning and development data is provided in section 2. However, we provide a quick snapshot here:

- In 2024, the Manako Programme delivered 61 PLD opportunities including organisational courses, public PLD workshops, and free webinars. A total of 1,087 participants attended different professional learning and development opportunities offered by the Manako Programme. This is a 28% increase from 2023's total participation.
- 23 PLD courses were delivered to whole organisations, catering to 519 individuals from six different organisations. Note that this number represents the total count of attendances and does not indicate 519 unique individuals, as some may have engaged in multiple PLD sessions.
- 29 public online events and nine webinars were delivered, engaging 568 participants in total.
- A total of 984 badges were awarded for participation in our Manako PLD programme, which supports the development of Pacific and/or Māori cultural capabilities and language, literacy, and numeracy skills.
- Manako PLD quality rating declined slightly from 91% in 2023 to 86.4% in 2024, and the value rating dropped from 84% in 2023 to 78% in 2024.
- The evolving participant needs and expectations led to the introduction of a new themed-months based PLD model for 2025, offering more flexible and comprehensive learning opportunities.

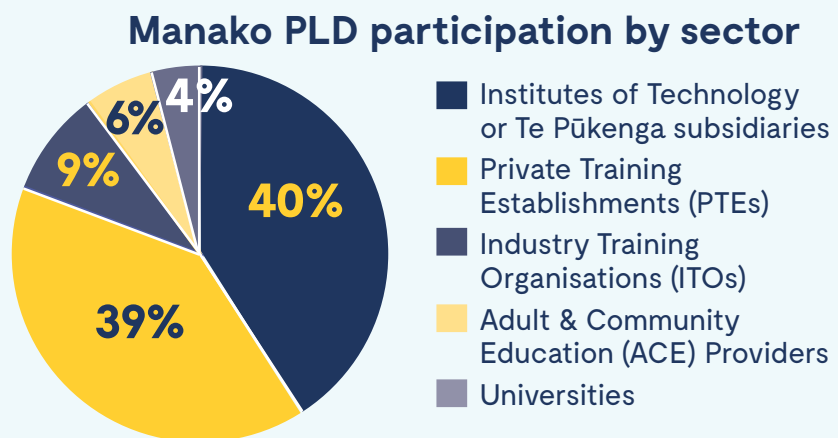
## Manako professional learning for organisations

Evaluating whole organisations in our professional learning and development programme helps us holistically uncover structural or systemic barriers to implementing change and enhancing professional practices.

This section highlights the key insights into the participation and engagement of in-house organisations in the Manako professional learning and development programme, offering an overview of trends, feedback and future improvements.

This year, we received a total of 107 responses from Manako in-house organisations (response rate 27%).

The participants represented a diverse range of sectors, with 40% from Institutes of Technology or Te Pūkenga subsidiaries and 39% from Private Training Establishments (PTEs). Other sectors included Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) (9%), Adult and Community Education (ACE) providers (6%), and universities (4%). One respondent represented the Open Polytechnic.



Note: 107 responses from Manako in-house organisations (response rate 27%)

Most respondents were educators or Kaiako (51%), followed by managers (16%), administrators (10%), advisors (10%), student advisors (7%), and learning support professionals (5%).

The most popular topics were Learner Agency (24%), Māori cultural capability (20%), and neurodiversity (18%), reflecting their relevance to professional development.



Regarding quality and value ratings, 44% found the workshop to be very high quality, while another 44% said the workshops were high quality. Two percent of the respondents rated the workshops as low quality. Forty one percent of the respondents found the workshops to be of extremely high value in enhancing their practice, while 32% noted them as very valuable and 22% as somewhat valuable. Four percent did not find them valuable.

While 51% of respondents understood the workshop purpose well, 14% were unsure, which suggests room for improvement in communications. The Manako team, in its 2025 PLD planning, has paid special attention to additional touchpoints for support, including online resources, as well as refining the workshop learning outcomes, messaging and pre-materials in order to support learners more successfully.

Following are a few direct responses from our organisations regarding how and what they envisaged changing as a result of taking part in PLD:

“I would like to have a discussion with our Learning Support team and programme manager regarding different ways students can be assessed.”

“I will incorporate this into the mentoring that I give the learners. I will change some of our procedures to include this in our training. For example, a discussion at the start of a class as to what the learners already know, can be added to practically all classes.”

“Positive support when first engaging with new apprentices and using the scenario about no one is dumb; using a notebook to capture lag and lead goals as well as identifying how we would celebrate our milestones.”

The qualitative feedback we received from our in-house organisation evaluations across the NCTTE and Manako programmes, offer the following insights:

- Practicality and relevance: Feedback suggests organisations value professional development with actionable takeaways across roles, such as Universal Design of Learning (UDL) courses, brainstorming activities, breakout sessions/discussions, and one-page summaries.
- Cultural awareness: Organisations want to address staff diversity and embrace cultural differences, including neurodivergence, Pasifika training, and understanding challenges faced by Māori learners.
- Engagement and delivery: There is a clear preference for interactive sessions and group discussions which highlight the importance of participant-centered workshop design.
- Follow-up and continuous learning: Organisations want to sustain learning impacts through follow-up workshops and other resources.
- Organisational alignment: Aligning PLD with organisational goals and integrating it into broader strategies is seen by a number of organisational participants as critical for learner success.
- Accessibility and flexibility: Preferences for face-to-face sessions, shorter sessions, morning scheduling and written resources show the need for PLD offerings to be accessible and adaptable to different learning styles and scenarios.

### **Manako public participants feedback**

Feedback indicated that the workshops were a valuable source of new ideas for our organisational participants. A total of 29% reported gaining a significant number of new ideas, while 48% found the workshops provided several new ideas. Nineteen percent of respondents noted they left with one or two new ideas, highlighting the Manako workshops' ability to inform and inspire across different levels.



Figure 8: Manako PLD ratings. Note that only the most frequent or significant responses are reported; less common responses are not shown.

The key themes emerging from feedback around new ideas are as follows:

- Neurodiversity awareness and support strategies
- Understanding the Treaty of Waitangi
- Cultural competence and inclusivity
- Student engagement and support strategies
- Available resources and their usefulness in classroom practices, and
- Goal setting and motivation for continuous learning.

When asked about the likelihood of changing their practice as a result of participating in the workshops, 47% of respondents indicated they would make moderate changes, with 24% planning a little or significant change. A small percentage (3%) said they would change their practice to a great extent, while 2% indicated they would not make any changes at all.

When asked what the workshop could have included for the participants to consider changing practice, we mostly received positive feedback, with an overwhelming majority (80%) noting the workshops were well-structured, well-facilitated, engaging, and requiring no further improvements.

A few respondents provided thoughtful suggestions, such as incorporating videos of neurodiverse learners' lived experiences, enhancing interactivity and greater emphasis on practical strategies and their application in real-world scenarios.

"The workshop did meet my needs and gave me good takeaways to put into practice."

"I got what I was hoping for. I think more on how to help a learner target and approach a task in their assessment would be great. What type of questions to consider and ask themselves around what they are being asked to do. To help them organize their thought processes. But I thought this course was fantastic."

"Need more Pacifica training opportunities. To dig deeper into how we can work alongside our brothers and sisters in the vocational space."

"[I would want] a refresher workshop for a few months for those that attended and to see how we are getting on and what is working and ideas for those that have come across barriers."



## Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM)

Since its inception in 2021, 32 organisations worked towards the DFQM, showcasing a growing commitment to inclusive and accessible education. In 2024, seven organisations successfully completed the DFQM, celebrated at an online ceremony in October.

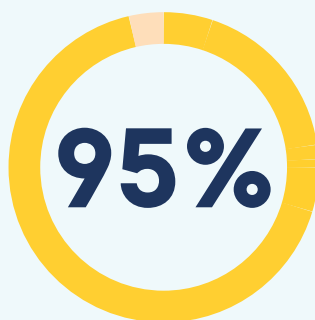


### Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark

**7**  **ORGANISATIONS  
awarded  
in 2024**

**13** **ORGANISATIONS  
currently  
active** 

**32** **TOTAL organisations  
2021-2024**



**ORGANISATIONS  
reporting  
improved  
LEARNER  
OUTCOMES**



The following organisations achieved the Quality Mark:

- Skills4Work
- Premier, Part of the Skills Group
- ETCO, Part of Skills Group
- Number 10 | Southland Youth One Stop Shop
- Hato Hone | St John | (PTE) Public Training and Clinical Services
- NZMA – Learner Success Team
- Solomon Group.



Additionally, 13 organisations are currently in progress, with two in the final stage of the process. This reflects an ongoing dedication to fostering supportive environments for individuals with dyslexia. The DFQM is valid for three years and a reverification process was developed to reassess the organisations that participated in the pilot programme and achieved the Mark in 2021. All three of the organisations involved in the pilot programme in 2021 renewed the DFQM, which demonstrates their commitment to identify as dyslexia-friendly organisations.

The DFQM evaluation targets four areas: leadership, teaching quality, learning environment, and stakeholder relationships. It assesses the impact on organisations, educators, learners, and their whānau using a mixed-method approach, including portfolio of evidence feedback, verification visit interviews with organisations, and annual check-ins. While individual feedback is also gathered through the DFQM evaluation survey, response rates tend to be lower, likely because the interviews already provide a thorough and comprehensive level of insight, reducing the need for additional input.

Our interviews and interactions with these stakeholders were invaluable, as were the impact insights from their staff and learners. These showed a strong sense of collaboration across these organisations, with everyone focused on creating safe, judgement-free spaces where learners feel welcomed, supported and valued.

“I have learned how much we as an organisation value all learners and how much the staff want to help. The DFQM has facilitated increased discussions between staff and learners. This is creating a greater understanding of how to help learners.”

## Key Findings:

The themes and impacts identified through interviews and annual check-ins underscore the significance of the DFQM in fostering meaningful educational practices and learner success:

- **Ongoing growth and reflections** – the DFQM journey is a continuous reflective practice. Organisations like Solomon Group, Hato Hone, and ETCO (part of the Skills Group) show how self-review and introspection help create more inclusive environments for neurodiverse learners.
- **Stronger teaching and inclusive practices** – tutors showed a stronger commitment to teaching, for example, the use of a visual DFQM charter by NZMA sets a remarkable standard for how a dyslexia-friendly organisation can visually and practically represent its values. Number 10's adjusting fonts on internal documents is a small change that has helped staff to engage more effectively with written materials.
- **Learner empowerment and success** – learner feedback and life-changing support has enabled achievements for learners. ETCO's use of a dyslexic apprentice's insights (like the hourglass analogy for voltage resistance) has helped create practical learning tools based on real learner feedback.
- **Collaboration for all** – Dyslexia-friendly approaches promote collaborative learning, placing learners' needs at the centre and benefitting everyone.
- **Advocacy and emotional support** – staff and learners have highlighted the importance of a respectful environment in building effective learning environments. This focus on empathy, openness, and a positive environment is seen as fundamental in supporting neurodiverse learners.

### **Whole-of-organisation changes:**

- Through their DFQM journeys, organisations like NZMA, Solomon Group, Hato Hone, and ETCO and Premier (parts of the Skills Group) demonstrated a commitment to transforming their culture and operations by revising and integrating dyslexia-friendly practices into policies, procedures, and daily interactions. This shows their commitment to implementing the DFQM approach more cohesively, beyond surface-level changes.
- ETCO, one of the first organisations to register for DFQM in 2021, has shown a long-term dedication to embedding the framework into its operations. All three pilot organisations renewed their DFQM, reaffirming their commitment to being dyslexia-friendly.
- Staff in DFQM-accredited organisations engaged in professional development opportunities to better understand dyslexia and neurodiversity, refining teaching strategies and adapting materials to ensure a consistent, organisation-wide approach to inclusion and learner success.

### **Challenges and improvements:**

- Participating organisations recognised the need to embrace the full spectrum of neurodiversity and broaden their scope accordingly.
- Ensuring the DFQM framework is integrated across all the different levels of operation could be a challenge.
- Building awareness, confidence, and acceptance likely involved addressing pre-existing biases or misunderstandings about neurodiversity within the organisation.
- While the process has been transformative, sustaining dyslexia-friendly practices demands constant reinforcement and integration.
- Maintaining the momentum and staff spirit for the framework as a continuous priority in busy operational environments remains a key challenge.



## Ākonga Voice

“I used to feel lost with my learning, but now with increased awareness of dyslexia, it feels good. I am learning and working on strategies that will help me. I now know I have the means to make my life better. It has helped knowing I have dyslexia, and it has changed my life.”

“I feel safe to be myself.”

“I feel more confident, and I’m able to be more open with my tutor when I’m struggling.”

## Kaimahi Voice

“Staff are now fully equipped to support learners, and this has had an amazing flow-on effect on the learners.”

“We’ve really appreciated the DFQM journey and how it has strengthened processes within our organisation and improved our teaching practice.”

“We now have better trained staff, and learners understand their dyslexia.”

## Reflections – DFQM Annual Check-ins

“We now use a dyslexia-friendly lens when updating resources.”

“An unexpected benefit of achieving the DFQM is how it validates our work and gives us acknowledgment and recognition.”

“The DFQM has normalised talking and thinking about dyslexia.”

## A holistic approach

The critical factors in the success of the DFQM stream lies in its holistic approach, which is centred on uplifting both learners (ākonga) and organisational employees (kaimahi) by enriching their understanding and acceptance of dyslexia and implementing practices that benefit everyone. This approach is deeply rooted in values, with cultural safety and inclusivity at its core. The DFQM journey is about creating neurodiverse-friendly environments, drawing on sought-after expertise and knowledge of our DFQM facilitators and advisors. Above all, the DFQM facilitation and support mechanisms champion tikanga, with good role-modelling as its most fundamental element.

## Tapatoru – Ako Professional Practice Awards



**total ORGANISATIONS  
awarded 2024** **6** | **38 staff** **6** ACROSS  
organisations



Participants reporting  
**IMPROVED**  
professional KNOWLEDGE  
and practice

### Impacts on Capability Development

During the reporting period, six organisations – Blueprint for Learning, Skills Update, Te Mahi Ako, Whitecliffe College, Hair to Train, and Pacific Coast Technical Institute – successfully completed the Tapatoru Professional Practice Award programme. Ten evaluation responses were received from these organisations, providing insights into the programme's impacts and experiences, giving a 28% response rate.

Various evaluation mechanisms, facilitator observations and assessments highlight a strong professional appetite for the Tapatoru programme. This enthusiasm and passion shows Tapatoru's potential in creating sustainable organisational shifts, ultimately strengthening the sector as a whole. These participants learnt about the Tapatoru programme through their organisations, where it was introduced as a professional development requirement. In this section, we discuss the key insights from the Tapatoru journey snapshot and ākonga completion surveys, as well as through assessments.

- 71% reported positive changes in learning support practices
- 29% reported positive changes in their organisational interactions, while 14% observed shifts in teaching and facilitation practices
- Minimal change was reported in stakeholder interactions (28%) and learning support (28%), indicating areas for further development.

Impacts on teaching practices:

- 90% of the participants have improved their professional knowledge and practice.
- 80% said it enhanced their capability as a kaiako (educator), kaiāwhina (learning support person) and/or other roles.
- 70% felt that Tapatoru has given them a platform for being recognised and has reinforced their professional contributions.
- 50% noted the impacts of Tapatoru in identifying additional PLD opportunities.

Whole-of-organisation changes:

- Increased cultural responsiveness due to enhanced collaboration and stronger organisational relationships were a few examples cited in the evaluation feedback as significant whole-of-organisational gains.

Challenges and Suggestions for Improvements:

- Time constraints were identified as a challenge to implementing learnings.
- Future improvements included aligning topics according to the needs of various audience types, and more in-person on-site engagement alongside online facilitation.

The Tapatoru programme significantly improved the understanding of different components, with participants reporting stronger knowledge across all areas. A before and after analysis (see the charts on page 67) shows that the participants developed a stronger or more advanced-level knowledge of Embedding Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN), Māori Cultural Capability, Kupu Māori, Teaching Better and Technology-enhanced Learning, following the completion of the Tapatoru programme. ESOL and Kupu Pasifika shifted towards moderate and stronger understanding, while Neurodiversity also had a positive shift forward in the continuum.



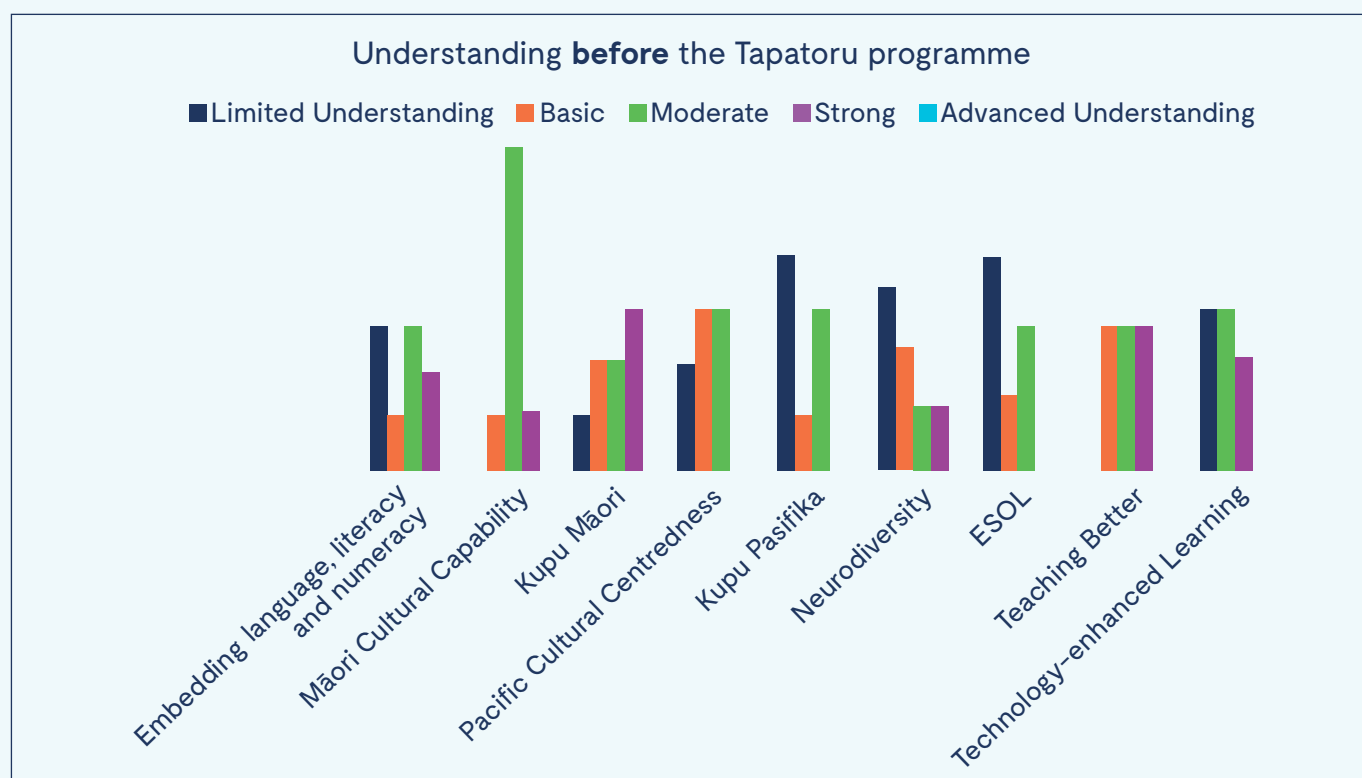


Figure 9: Understanding **before** the Tapatoru Programme based on 9 survey responses. Note: This data reflects the response rate and does not represent the performance of the entire Tapatoru cohort. Colors correspond to different levels of understanding as indicated in the chart legend.

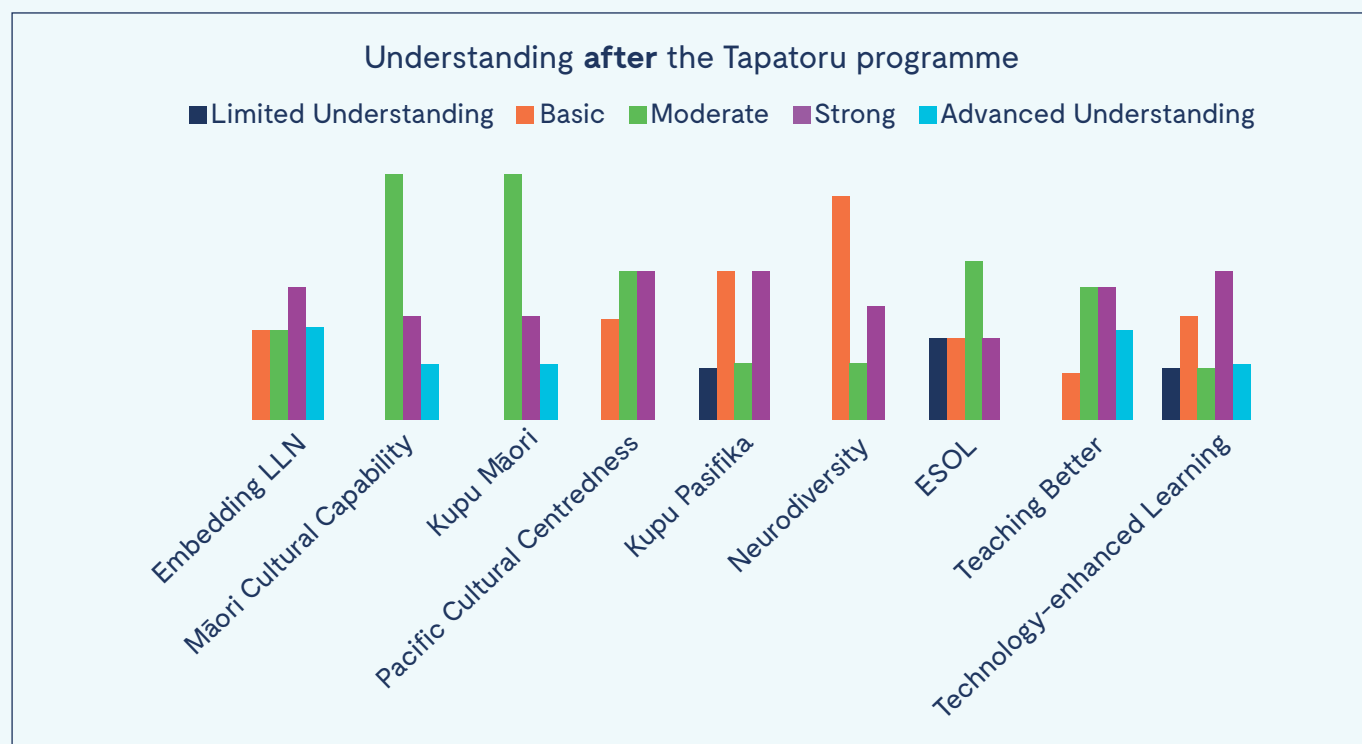


Figure 10: Understanding **after** the Tapatoru Programme based on 9 survey responses. Note: This data reflects the response rate and does not represent the performance of the entire Tapatoru cohort. Colours correspond to different levels of understanding as indicated in the chart legend.

Since the beginning of the Tapatoru journey, respondents reported varying degrees of change in their professional practice. Twenty percent indicated significant changes in their interactions with colleagues, and 10% significantly changed their facilitation or teaching practices as a result of taking part. Additionally, 60% reported enhancements in learning support, and 50% highlighted improvements in both facilitation/teaching and stakeholder interactions. However, 10% of respondents reported no changes in areas such as facilitation, teaching, or learning support. This could reflect the need for more tailored approaches to address specific challenges for the participating organisations or for additional support to help participants fully implement their learning.

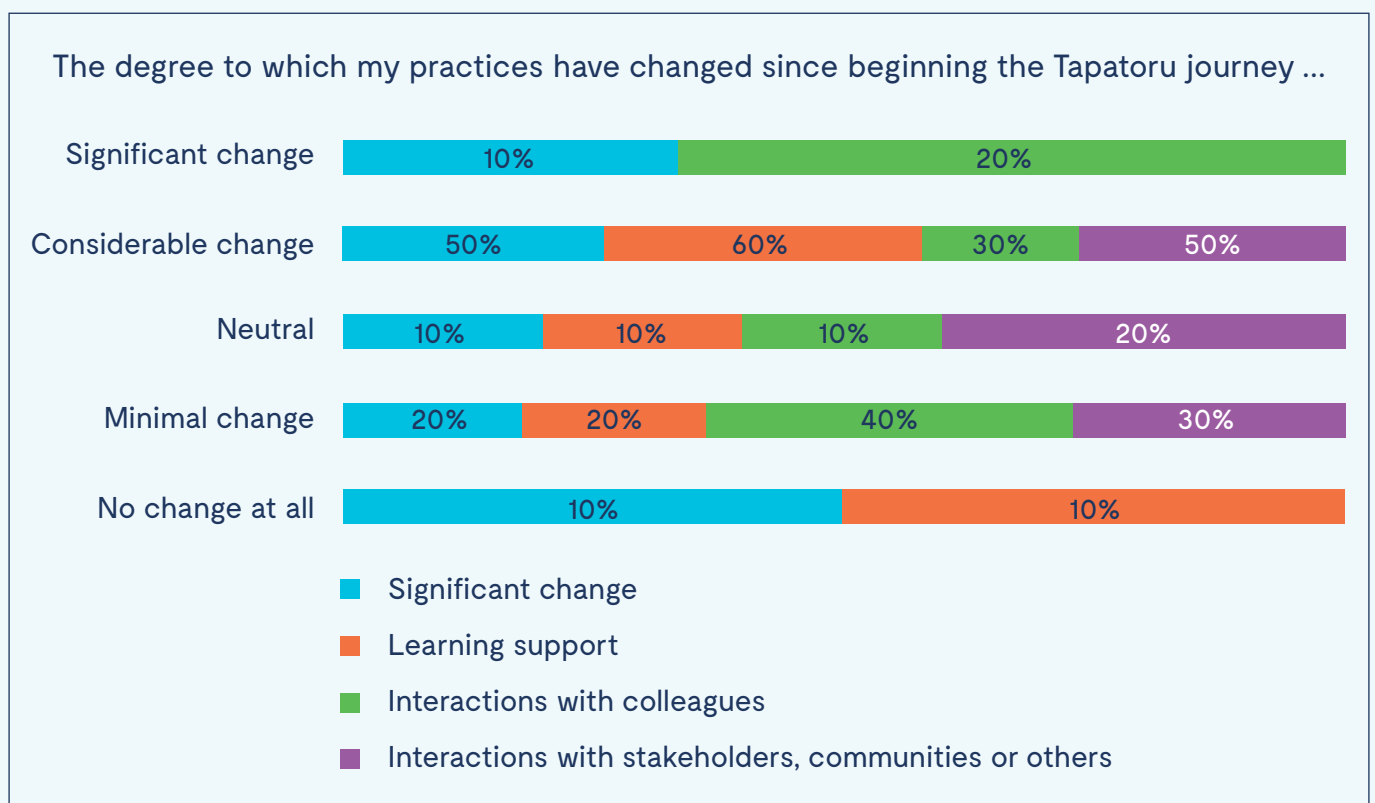


Figure 11: Stacked bar showing the degree of practice change across different areas since the Tapatoru journey.

An impressive 86% of participants said they had been able to integrate new approaches or practices into their teaching as a result of taking part in the Tapatoru programme. For these participants, Tapatoru involvement has led to an improved professional knowledge and practice (86%), and has enhanced their capability as a Kaiako (educator), kaiāwhina (learning support person) or in other roles (also 86%). For 71.4% of respondents, Tapatoru also provided recognition for the work they do and reaffirmed their contributions within their organisations. Following are a few examples of whole-of-organisational changes as a result of the Tapatoru achievement.

“The aroha within my organisation has been enhanced, I feel like I show more awareness of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga with my colleagues and also my workplaces.”

“The Tapatoru values are an integral part of how we facilitate at Blueprint, it was more of an acknowledgement of what we do rather than new learning. e.g connect with people when they come into the room, know who are going to be our participants and understand their mahi, start and finish with karakia.”

“It’s not just those ākonga impacted, it’s the whole organisation... it ensures equity for both staff and the ākonga.”

“This course taught me a lot; my tutors were very kind and had time to talk to me. Though I went through few of my personal problems which they knew but still they kept me in the loop instead of dumping me. A big salute to Mr Graeme Smith.”

The Tapatoru assessment feedback emphasises the true essence of the journeys of organisations towards Tapatoru and the fact that it presents an opportunity for participants to reflect on their practice. The following themes and effects of Tapatoru, as highlighted through evaluations and assessments, underscore its crucial role in nurturing culturally responsive and thoughtful teaching practices, such as:

- Reflection and professional development – Tapatoru prompted reflective practice and professional growth, beneficial across different areas of teaching expertise.
- Enhanced cultural sensitivity – participants gained confidence and skills in creating inclusive, culturally-sensitive learning spaces, emphasising spiritual and relational well-being.
- Neurodiversity awareness – the programme enhanced understanding of neurodiversity, proving beneficial for educators with neurodiverse learners and whānau.
- Authentic facilitation and inclusivity – the facilitation style was praised for its authenticity and inclusivity, promoting a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.
- Heightened awareness of values – participants gained more awareness and understanding of their own and other people’s values, along with a focus on meeting diverse literacy and numeracy needs.
- Mindful and purposeful teaching – the programme fostered more mindful, intentional teaching, embedding reciprocal learning (Ako) and cultural values in practice.
- Appreciation of cultural diversity in Aotearoa – participants developed a greater appreciation for diversity, keeping diverse values and cultural content central in their teaching.
- Concerns about tokenism in cultural content – the need for more authentic, meaningful integration of Pacific content in education, and the avoidance of tokenism was highlighted.

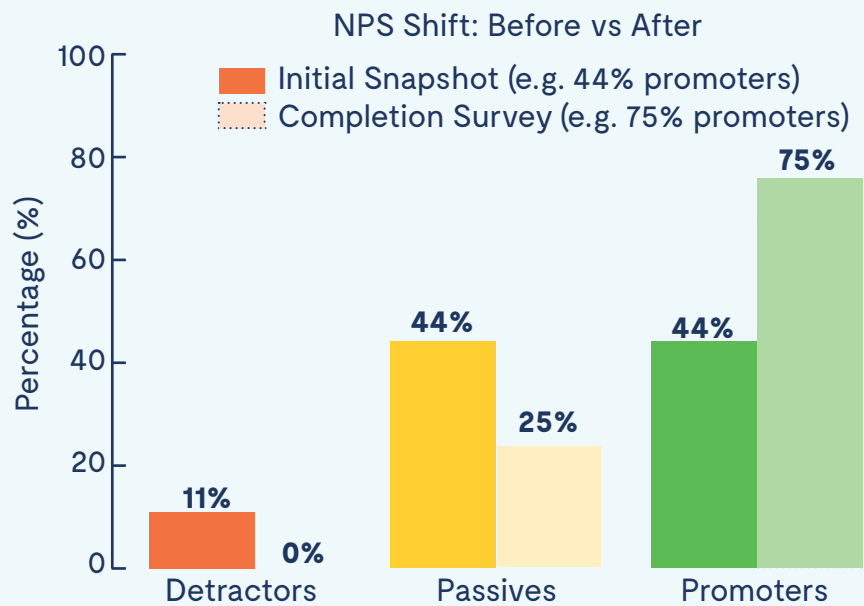


Figure 12: Bar chart comparing the before-and-after Net Promoter Score shifts in the Tapatoru programme. Improvements in Promoters and the elimination of Detractors clearly show the positive impact of the programme.

### Challenges and improvements

In terms of implementation challenges, a few participants identified time constraints due to existing responsibilities. This caused delay in completing the programme and taking time to explore different Ako Aotearoa resources that were referenced during the programme for a couple of respondents.

For future improvements, a few participants suggested aligning topics and delivery to better suit audiences that may not be directly ākonga-facing and incorporating more on-site, in-person engagement in addition to online facilitation.



## AARIA project success 1

### In the starting blocks: Scoping the experiences, vulnerabilities, and potentials of dyscalculic adult learners in Aotearoa New Zealand

Dr Damon Whitten

Completed in November 2024, this project initiated an important exploration into the life experiences of dyscalculic adults in New Zealand to shed some light on their often-unseen challenges and vulnerabilities. Project leader, Dr Damon Whitten, explored the challenges that dyscalculic adults experience and what strategies they use to meet, mitigate, or avoid numeracy demands.

The [full report](#) and outputs from the research reveal that life with dyscalculia in Aotearoa New Zealand is a challenge. It creates vulnerabilities, has serious implications for learner identity and limits employment opportunities. Moreover, it takes a heavy toll on self-esteem and emotions.



The author stresses that the New Zealand tertiary sector, workplaces, courses, educators, and adults with dyscalculia would benefit from context specific, targeted, research, followed by clear practice-based strategies that educators can implement.

His recommendations to the tertiary sector centre on the development of the New Zealand Dyscalculia Knowledge Hub that can act as a central point for coordinating the efforts of various experts, providing a central point for information, and coordinating and disseminating research (see page 59 of [the report](#) for more detail on this recommendation).

The following are examples of the areas for future research Dr Whitten identified would be valuable to explore;

- How do we encourage adults with dyscalculia into further education that is appropriate and able to meet their needs?
- What types of instruction work and what don't? What types of training, approaches, and instructional strategies are most effective for adults with dyscalculia?
- Further research into the strategies that adults with dyscalculia use and how these might be improved or adapted.
- What factors might encourage adults with dyscalculia to engage in personal numeracy study in their own time to meet the demands of workplace numeracy tasks?

(see page 60 of [the report](#) for the full range of information).

At policy level, Dr Whitten recommends a public awareness campaign to reduce stigma, increase understanding, and provide public support; thereby leading to supportive workplace and training environments.

He also recommends that policy be developed to support the professional development of educators and employers in the domain of dyscalculia, and calls for support from the Tertiary Education Commission.

**Please see Section 5 for AARIA project success 2 – “Beyond Tuakana Teina.”**

## PLD success 2

### Skills4Work – prioritising inclusive learning environments



In late 2023, Skills4Work became the first tertiary education organisation to achieve the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) and have its first cohort of staff achieve the Tapatoru Ako Professional Practice Award.

In doing so, it set a powerful example for other tertiary organisations as a champion of inclusivity by connecting the learnings from two of our flagship professional development initiatives:

**The DFQM** recognises organisations that take a strategic approach to creating an inclusive environment for dyslexic learners, trainees, or clients. It is designed to promote appropriate support measures and practical guidance within a tertiary education organisation.

**Tapatoru Ako Professional Practice Award** is a values-based, whole-organisation professional development initiative focused on fostering inclusive and effective learning environments for all learners. It elevates the practice of tertiary educators and trainers through regular online facilitated sessions on topics such as Māori values, Pacific cultural centredness, neurodiversity, literacy, numeracy, and more.

#### **A TEO operating in a niche space**

**Skills4Work**, a training provider focused on skill development across two specific industries, butchery and bakery, is the only NZQA-accredited provider of a butchery qualification in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is also one of a select few providers who deliver the New Zealand Certificate in Trade Baking (Craft).

The Skills4Work team is passionate about providing innovative, customised, and specialised training to produce highly employable graduates. They offer a wide range of industry courses, workplace programmes, apprenticeships, and resources for learners.

Skills4Work enrolled in the DFQM and Tapatoru programmes in 2022 when the senior management team saw how these initiatives could benefit their culturally diverse learners and apprentices, particularly those with neurodiverse learning requirements.

“You have to change the way you train, and it benefits everyone... it enriches our programmes... and [learners] just need that safe space to open up and speak.”  
Desiree Gelbart, Skills4Work.

In its original goal of upskilling its learner/apprentice-facing team, Skills4Work found that each programme helped to improve different areas of its operations. While the Tapatoru provided interactive professional learning sessions for kaimahi to elevate their own knowledge and capability in a range of areas, the DFQM supported Skills4Work's behind-the-scenes operations, such as policy, induction, resource development and the ongoing upskilling of its team.

### **The CEO perspective**

“We made the conscious decision to engage our team in both [DFQM and Tapatoru] to ensure that our learner/apprentice-facing team is well-versed and skilled in cultural competency and has robust strategies to respond to the neurodiversity of our learners and apprentices,” says Monique Le Marque, Chief Operating Officer of Skills4Work.

Tapatoru had supported trainers and elevated their capability toward delivering their professional knowledge and practice in a more holistic and culturally competent way. As for the DFQM, Monique believes it has supported Skills4Work to ensure development of resources and its general practice, so the team is better equipped and responsive to their learners who present with neurodiverse learning needs.

### **Quality Manager perspective**

As sessions got underway, quality manager Desiree Gelbart found the Tapatoru facilitators began to incorporate sessions about dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and other neurodiverse differences. One of the greatest impacts of Tapatoru for Desiree was that participants could build on their existing knowledge and “get another view” of each topic.

She also found that these sessions reaffirmed her work towards the DFQM and would often “trigger something” that would need to be incorporated into her portfolio, such as an amended policy or process.

“It definitely added value having that stuff covered in the Tapatoru... That was the stuff I’d been imparting to staff. This is affirming it.”

Skills4Work believes that its DFQM and Tapatoru achievements will enhance its visibility as an organisation that welcomes people with learning differences. It hopes that potential learners will feel more comfortable talking about any challenges and asking for the support they need to succeed.

We look forward to more organisations following Skills4Work’s example.



## Supporting Māori Learner success

### Te Whatu Kairangi triumph for Māori kaiako

Four awards were shared by three Māori kaiako at this year's Te Whatu Kairangi ceremony, including the top 'Te Kaiako Ngātahi o te Tau a Te Pirimia | Prime Minister's Educators of the Year' award.

Hiria Tumoana, received the inaugural Te Tohu Reo Māori award for her sustained commitment to teaching te reo Māori and was also the joint recipient of the PM's Educator of the Year award. Hiria is a Senior Lecturer/Kaiwhakaako for Te Ūranga Waka (School of Māori Studies), Faculty of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences at Eastern institute of Technology.



Individual Kaupapa Māori Awards were presented to Dr Phil Borell, Senior Lecturer, School of Māori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Canterbury, and Associate Professor Kelli Te Maihāroa, Kaihautū, Te Kahui Whetu | Capable Māori at Otago Polytechnic (see images next page).



Phil's teaching practice is driven by te ao Māori, whakaaro Māori and tikanga Māori. He uses pūrākau (oral traditions/storytelling) and, in his Sport and Culture in Aotearoa paper, encourages students to draw upon their own experiences to shape their understanding of sport and sport coaching practice.

From kaiako to learning adviser, initial teacher educator to strategic adviser for the Ministry of Education, Kelli creates opportunities for ākonga Māori to flourish. Her educational practice is underpinned and guided by Mana Māori, the unlimited potential of Māori. This framework serves ākonga and the aspirations of Ngāi Māori through the protection of indigeneity and promotion of decolonial practices.

We also acknowledge the Mental Health and Addiction team from the School of Health Sciences at Massey University, receiving a Group award under the 'Innovation in learning, teaching, and curriculum' category. Their programme is delivered collaboratively by staff from the School of Health



Sciences, School of Social Work, and Te Pūtahi a Toi School of Māori Knowledge, reflecting a commitment to Te Tiriti and honouring mātauranga Māori and social work practice. The team's teaching and learning practice is guided by Durie's (2008) Whakapiri, Whakamārama, Whakamana Framework.

# TE PĀTAKA MĀTAURANGA MĀORI

# 8,438

January-  
December  
2024



TOTAL  
PAGE  
VIEWS

Te Kete  
Rauemi  
Mātauranga  
Kete of Māori  
Resources



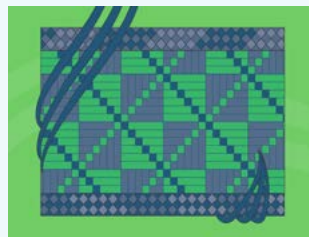
👁️ 4,282

Te Kete Āheitanga  
Ahurea Māori  
Kete of Cultural  
Capability  
Pathways



👁️ 1,484

Te Kete Hāpai  
Akoako  
Kete of Professional  
Learning  
& Development



👁️ 799

Te Kete  
Huihuinga  
Tāngata  
Kete of  
Events



👁️ 178

The Mātauranga Māori Programme is depicted visually within Te Pātaka Mātauranga Māori (Storehouse of Māori Knowledge) on the Ako Aotearoa website. The above infographic shows visitor activity across the Pātaka in 2024.

## Te Tiriti o Waitangi programme of work

### Te Tiriti suite of professional learning workshops

While 2024 was fraught with several factors that affected the tertiary sector – redundancies, reduced (or negative) budgets for professional learning, closures – the Te Tiriti suite of professional learning workshops continued to be delivered, with registration numbers being lower than previously. In this suite, there are four key offerings:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi – a visual history (for Tangata Tiriti)
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi – a visual history (for Tangata Whenua)
- Addressing racism in the tertiary sector
- Applying equity in Tertiary education.

In 2024, this suite of workshops was delivered monthly to the general tertiary public – for a total of 21 sessions. An additional five sessions were requested by whole organisations taking a strategic approach to staff development. Cancellations across the whole of our professional learning programmes were a marked feature of 2024, some in-house requests being postponed until early 2025. Registrations were lower than previously, with a number of tertiary providers, who had previously taken up Ako Aotearoa's workshops, being invisible throughout the year. As has been the case in previous years, the private education sector continues to provide at least 50% of registrations. The Te Tiriti o Waitangi introductory workshops will continue to be offered, however a new series of self-paced, online, Te Tiriti sessions will be launched in early 2025 to complement the existing programme.

### Community of Practice for Tangata Tiriti

In 2023, 583 Tangata Tiriti attended our inaugural online Visual Introduction to Te Tiriti o Waitangi workshops, with hundreds more having attended in previous years. Tangata Tiriti make up a critical mass that we will target in 2025 and onwards.

Furthermore, we offer a suite of Tiriti courses, including options specifically designed to support whole-of-organisation change, such as Tiriti for Organisational Management. The Te Tiriti o Waitangi – A Visual History workshops, tailored for both Tangata Tiriti and Tangata whenua audiences, have consistently been among our most popular offerings. Many of these

Tiriti workshops are already being delivered at scale, with organisations registering their entire staff as part of a broader strategy to build understanding and embed meaningful change. This pattern of organisational engagement has been well established over time.

While Addressing Racism in the Tertiary Sector (ARTE) and other equity-focused workshops also attract strong interest regularly, the Te Tiriti for non-Māori remains the most widely attended this year, according to data.

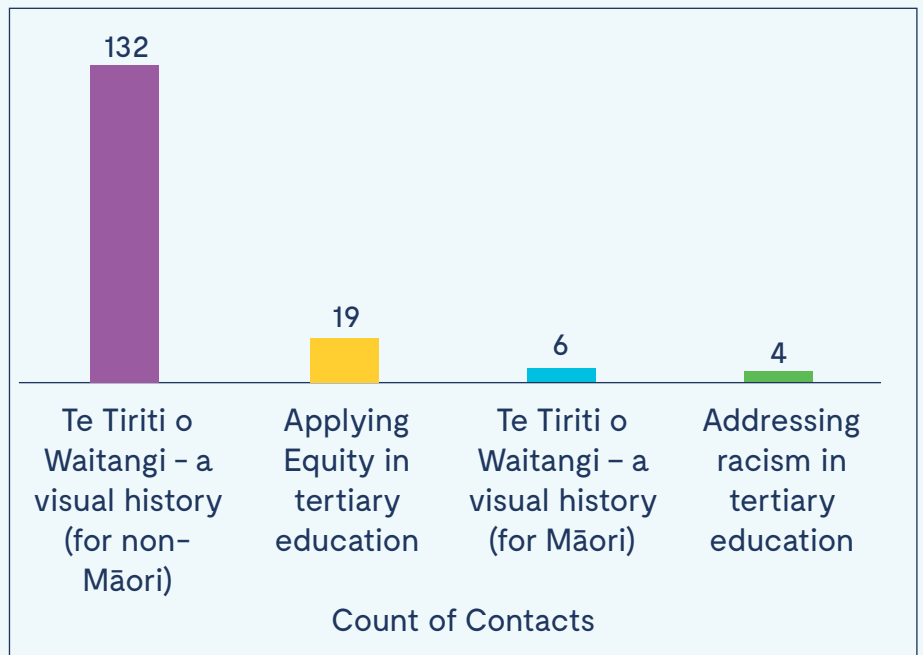


Figure 11: Number of participants per course within the Te Tiriti workshop suite. Note that ‘count of contacts’ means number of participants who took part in the PLD offering.

**Embedding the concept of ‘cultural coach’** into the Self-directed Māori Cultural Capability online courses. There were twenty-seven registered learners in this reporting period, with 12 successful assessments with reflective narratives and digital badges awarded. Fifteen active learners are continuing.



## Te Tiriti for organisational management

Almost 60% of the 2024 Tiriti workshops to date were delivered to whole-of-organisation groups 'in-house', including AQA NZ, Restaurant Association of NZ, Employ NZ, English Teaching College, BHB Academy, Dive Otago, Future Skills Academy, Upskills, PassRite Driving Academy, TR Group, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, and Yoobee Colleges.

One of most popular courses amongst the whole-of-organisation groups was Te Tiriti o Waitangi – a Visual History for Non-Māori (34.4% participation). REINZ and TR Group booked courses for 18 November 2024 and 7 January 2025.

Resources produced and located in 'Te Pātaka Mātauranga Māori/ Repository of Māori resources were published on the Ako Aotearoa website in advance of Waitangi Day 2024 and Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori 2024. (TToW for Tangata Tiriti / Treaty Partners, TToW in Tertiary Education, TToW – Issues in 2023 & 2024, Te Reo Māori for Tangata Tiriti/ Treaty Partners.



## **New strategic PLD opportunities**

### **Review and revive ‘Hei Toko i te Tukunga’ (Enabling Māori learner success)**

Hei Toko is an evidence-based course focused on evaluating the claims organisations make about being Tiriti-led, with a view to bringing positive change for senior and middle management of organisations using a kaupapa Māori framework. A process is currently underway to enable the journey of evaluation to be led by such an organisation, with support from us.

### **New Tiriti resources – scaffolding existing and developing new**

Online Tiriti modules will be completed for delivery in 2025, based on an Ako Aotearoa research project by a Tiriti advocates collective. It is a shift in focus from staff delivering content to individuals in workshops, to the opening out of the resource for mass market digital uptake online.

Te Tiriti for Research is a guide for educational researchers in Aotearoa to encourage them to respect Māori cultural viewpoints and ensure their research reflects the society in which it occurs.

## Supporting Pacific learner success

### Te Whatu Kairangi – Le Moana Mua award for Jone Tawaketini, Unitec

#### A champion for the Pacific voice, to empower and support Pacific learners

Jone Tawaketini is a Senior Lecturer, School of Computing, Electrical and Applied Technology at Unitec. His contribution to this discipline shows a genuine love for Pacific learner excellence. His students in the Bachelor of Applied Technology are a mixed ethnic group including New Zealand-born/raised, Pacific islanders (NZPI) and international students from the Pacific Islands of Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, and Tokelau, Fiji-i-taukei, PNG, and Vanuatu. He gets to know them all individually and appreciates their cultural capital as unique people.



One Pacific student says, “Jone’s unwavering support and dedication helped me navigate difficult times and complete my degree.”

He is truly a phenomenal educator who champions the Pacific voice and continues to grow staff capability and capacity to empower and support Pacific learners. Fostering authentic relationships with them has allowed his learners to see themselves as experts in their chosen field.

[Read his full profile and watch the video clip about his teaching practice here.](#)

## **Pacific stakeholder engagement summary**

Pacific stakeholder engagement and initiatives have fostered collaborations that support Pacific leadership, education, and wellbeing. These partnerships ensure that programmes are inclusive, culturally responsive, and aligned with the needs of Pacific learners and their communities. Following are a few concrete ways in which Ako Aotearoa's Pacific learner success team is showing commitment to co-designing impactful, culturally responsive and community-led projects that are aimed at uplifting Pacific learners, leaders and communities.

### **Inclusive leadership development with Taikura Trust**

The co-design of Pacific leadership development has been successfully undertaken in collaboration with Taikura Trust, with a strong focus on inclusive leadership practices. This partnership has helped ensure that leadership programmes are both accessible and tailored to meet the needs of Pacific people with disabilities.

Looking ahead, planning sessions are already underway for 2025 with a particular emphasis on developing governance literacy initiatives for the sight-impaired.

### **Le Va – Le Tautua leadership forum**

Successful engagement with this important stakeholder group around leadership development in the mental health sector ensures education programmes and courses are not siloed, but link access to services.

Planning has already begun for GPS Le Va conference in 2025.

### **Mahi moana and tangata whenua collaboration**

The collaboration between mahi moana and tangata whenua supports the holistic development of Pacific learners in alignment with Māori values and guardianship of shared resources. It strengthens partnership with Mahi Moana, focusing on the relationship with Tangata Whenua.

Various engagements are centred around integrating Pacific and Māori perspectives on environmental stewardship, cultural knowledge sharing, and educational advancement.

## Health and wellbeing partnership with Ka'ute Pasifika

Joint initiatives with Ka'ute Pacific are helping to improve learner outcomes by addressing both educational and health challenges faced by the Pacific community. Through co-design efforts in partnership with Tainui iwi, support for health and wellbeing is being shaped in ways that are culturally aligned with the needs of Pacific students and their families. Our collaboration with the Hamilton-based provider Ka'ute Pasifika Trust has so far focused on health, wellbeing, and Pacific leadership, with the aim of integrating these elements into educational development programmes to better support Pacific learner success. Engagement throughout 2024 has sparked a range of valuable discussions, many of which are set to continue into the next year.

## Phenomenal Educators and the Pacific Community of Practice

The Phenomenal Educators initiative is an 18-month project, a collaboration between Victoria University of Wellington and Weltec, focused on identifying effective teaching practices that significantly benefit Pacific learners in tertiary education. The project builds upon the From Good to Great: 10 Habits of Phenomenal Educators for Pacific Learners framework and employs an action research methodology to explore and refine these practices.

As part of this project, approximately 15–20 educators participated in professional learning and development (PLD) sessions focused on the 10 habits. The impact of these practices was then assessed through their implementation and feedback gathered from talanoa discussions with Pacific learners in focus groups. **For more details on this project and its outputs, check this [Ako Aotearoa Knowledge Centre webpage](#).**

As a result, the Pacific working group got together to continue working with phenomenal educators through a Facebook-based [Phenomenal Educators Community of Practice](#). As at the time of writing this report, it has 51 active members committed to supporting the success of Pacific learners in tertiary education.



# 4

## Promoting and celebrating teaching excellence



## Te Whatu Kairangi | Aotearoa Tertiary Educator Awards

This year was an extremely successful one for the Te Whatu Kairangi Awards programme. Thirty-one nominations came from a wide range of organisations across the sector, as identified in Figure 13 below.

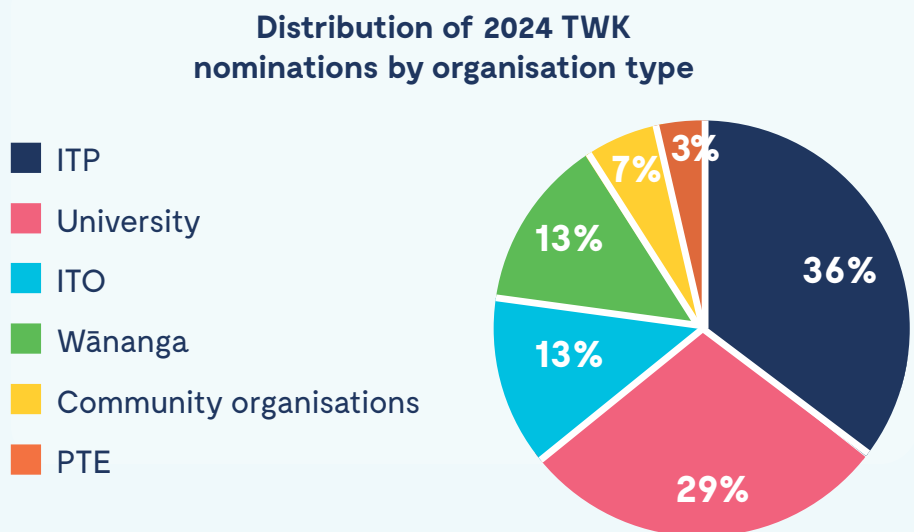


Figure 13: Distribution of 2024 Te Whatu Kairangi nominations by organisation type.

There was an interesting shift, with the ITP sector nominations surpassing the number of university nominations for the first time. It was also heartening to see the increase in nominations from Wānanga and Industry Training Organisations. Eleven recipients were selected from the 31 nominations. Those nominations included: two Kaupapa Māori, two Le Moana Mua, six General Groups, and thirteen General Individual.

## 2024 awardees

### General Awardees – Individual

- Dr Joseph Aziz, Senior Lecturer, Healthcare, Unitec
- Poppy Clapperton, Chief Executive Officer | Tumuaki, Industry Training Solutions Ltd
- Kerry Davis, Principal Lecturer, Nursing, Otago Polytechnic
- Dr Claire Goode, Principal Lecturer, Learning and Teaching Development, Otago Polytechnic
- Dr Kim Hébert-Losier, Associate Professor, Health, Sport and Human Performance, University of Waikato
- John Murrie, Lecturer, School of Aviation, Massey University

### General Awardees – Group

- Dr Chrissy Severinsen, Associate Professor, Public Health, Massey University
- Dr Andy Towers, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, Massey University
- Hoani Moriarty, Tutor, School of Health Sciences, Massey University
- Philip Brookes, Senior Tutor, Mental Health and Addictions, Massey University
- Andrea Meni, Data Manager | Statistician (Research Officer), Massey University
- Luke Rowe, Senior Research Officer, Massey University.

### Le Moana Mua

- Jone Tawaketini, Senior Lecturer, Electrical and Applied Technology, Unitec.

### Kaupapa Māori – individual

- Dr Phil Borell, Senior Lecturer Above the Bar, University of Canterbury.
- Kelli Te Maihāroa, Associate Professor, Kaihautū: Te Kāhui Whetū | Capable Māori, Otago Polytechnic.

### Te Tohu Reo Māori

Hiria Tumoana, Senior Lecturer, Te Ūranga Waka at EIT, Eastern Institute of Technology, was the inaugural recipient of the new Te Tohu Reo Māori award. The award attracted 17 nominations for eight kaiako (as some people were nominated in several categories) to recognise their commitment and impact teaching te reo Māori.

## **Te Tohu Reo Māori Award – background**

The Matāuranga Māori team were very pleased to work with the Māori Media Network to develop radio and social media advertising to attract nominations for the new Te Tohu Reo Māori award. The network covers all iwi radio stations across the motu. The decision was to target key regional stations at high traffic times of the day over a one-week period in early April. The result was an encouraging 17 letters of nomination received for three kaiako. The process involved two stages, with the inaugural recipient being selected by an external panel. Hiria Tumoana from Eastern Institute of Technology was the successful awardee.

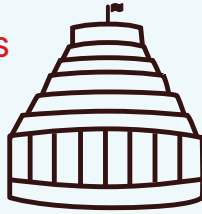




# TE WHATU KAIRANGI AWARDS 2024

2  11

joint Prime Minister's  
EDUCATOR  
of the YEAR  
recipients



**AWARDEES**

individuals + groups

1 **GROUP**  

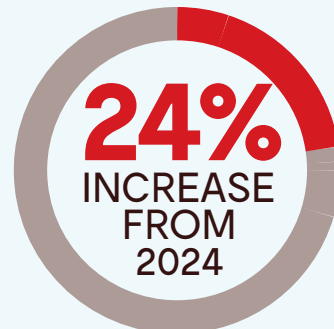

6 **GENERAL  
AWARDEES**

1 **TE TOHU REO  
MĀORI  
AWARDEE**

1 **LE MOANA  
MUA**  
AWARDEE

2 **KAUPAPA  
MĀORI  
AWARDEES**

31   
**NOMINATIONS**



## Te Whatu Kairangi Ceremony

The Honourable Penny Simmonds, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills, hosted a wonderfully uplifting and inspiring ceremony at Parliament on Monday 4 November. A total of around 120 people – guests from across all parts of the tertiary sector, awardees and their whānau – gathered together with Ako Aotearoa Board and staff.



Image: Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister of Tertiary Education, with Hiria Tumoana and Kerry Davis (centre left and right) and the 2023 educator of the Year awardee Dr Enoka Murphy.

### Te Kaiako Ngātahi o te Tau a Te Pirimia | Prime Minister's Educators of the Year

For the first time since the awards were introduced in 2001, the prestigious Prime Minister's award was jointly presented to Kerry Davis, a Principal Lecturer in Nursing at Otago Polytechnic, and Hiria Tumoana, a Senior Lecturer for Te Ūranga Waka at Eastern Institute of Technology.

Kerry was also a Te Whatu Kairangi General Award recipient under the category of 'Innovation in learning, teaching, and curriculum'. Hiria received the inaugural Te Tohu Reo Māori Award, which was introduced in 2024.

Chair of the Selection Panel, Derek McCormack described Kerry and Hiria as exemplars of the highest standards in tertiary education.

Read their profiles and watch video clips about their practice – [Kerry](#) | [Hiria](#)

## Panel insights

This year, we evaluated the panel experiences following the Awards selection process, with a 43% response rate (3/7 panel members). The average rating of the overall Te Whatu Kairangi selection process was 4.67/5, which indicates high satisfaction. The evaluation insights indicated several strengths of Te Whatu Kairangi selection process, such as a well-balanced panel, effective leadership, and a robust selection process. Suggested future improvements focused on clarifying documentation, enhancing panel communications, and continuing the orientation session to ensure consistent criteria application.

Selection Panel Chair, Derek McCormack

*“A special congratulations to all the 2024 Te Whatu Kairangi awardees for their commitment to outstanding educational practice. It’s been pleasing to see the calibre of educators Aotearoa has and the mana they possess. ... I am particularly thrilled to acknowledge Hiria Tumoana as the first recipient of the Te Tohu Reo Māori award, and to thank the reviewers and the panel members for their dedication during the selection process.”*

One of the panelists have summed up their experience by saying:

“I loved this. I felt quite honoured to be suggested as a reviewer/panellist. I loved the pair meetings as I learnt so much from the two people I was paired with. I think the process of putting the group nominations together was a good decision as that meant 1 document to use rather than flipping between the 2. It was sad to see that not all the categories had nominations, and maybe there is something in there to review. I loved the communication flow, it was timely, thought and appropriate for each stage of the process. Access to the files was easy (technological success!) Totally awesome experience and such a privilege to be part of it all. Thank you.”



## Award Ceremony Evaluation Insights and Participant Feedback

The post-ceremony evaluation of Te Whatu Kairangi Awards received 25 responses (a response rate of 34%), capturing a diverse group of attendees. Out of these, eight respondents self-identified as Award recipients – 10 as guests, three as colleagues of Award recipients, three as event organisers, and one as a panelist.

The evaluation showed high satisfaction with the Award ceremony. A rating-based review of the programme, overall event organisation, presentation quality, and venue and networking reported mostly positive experiences across the awardees and the guests, with only minor tweaks suggested to enhance next year's event.

It was heartening to see that all the award recipients would like to be involved in shaping the learning journey of aspiring future awardees. The figure above shows different ways the awardees would like to engage in this respect.

“What an inspiring day, with inspiring people, am so honoured to have attended. Ka heke te rae ki te whānau o Ako Aotearoa. He kaha nō te manaakitanga me te aroha nui.”

“Great to have the Minister there, would've liked to have had a little more from her on future vision for the sector.”

Regarding future improvements of the ceremony itself, the respondents suggested enhancing the quality of presentations and monitoring their length to keep the programme balanced and offering more networking opportunities throughout the ceremony.

These insights show the awards ceremony was well-received overall, with attendees appreciating its inspiring nature in recognising and celebrating tertiary teaching excellence. Minor adjustments could further elevate people's experiences of future award ceremonies.

Te Whatu Kairangi Awards highlight the importance of excellence in teaching, inspiring educators, and fostering a culture of recognition in the sector. As we reflect on the outcomes of this year's Te Whatu Kairangi Awards, one of the most inspiring aspects is the enthusiasm and willingness shown by the current attendees to contribute to the ongoing development of future educators.

As shown in the chart below, awardees can serve as role models and guides for others in the tertiary education community. This sets the stage for a revitalised approach for new educators who can follow in the footsteps of the current Awardees.

Looking ahead to the 2025 round, we will focus on attracting more nominations from Pacific educators, Te Reo Māori kaiako and the Community and PTE sectors. Also, we will continue to provide workshops and advice around developing quality nominations and portfolios.



**How would the 2024 Awardees like to be involved in shaping the learning journey of future (aspiring) awardees?**



Figure 14: 2024 Te Whatu Kairangi evaluation survey.

The above chart (Figure 14) shows the percentage responses of how the current awardees would like to be involved and engaged. Those who selected the 'Other' answer choice stated they were unsure about future involvement but were willing to help in any capacity. Time constraints were acknowledged as a challenge by one respondent.

**Sharing excellent awardee practice**

Each year we create and share the teaching and learning practices of Te Whatu Kairangi awardees through written profiles and video clips – both of which have a dedicated space on the Ako Aotearoa website where they can be accessed and shared freely. These are useful resources for other educators who may be:

- a) planning or supporting a nomination for the Awards, or
- b) seeking tips from nationally recognised teachers about their successful teaching and learning strategies/practices.

The Awardee profile booklet is also available for free PDF download.

## Supporting tertiary sector awards

Ako Aotearoa has valued its close relationships to sector Peak Bodies ACE Aotearoa and Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand (ITENZ) over many years. Our support and involvement in the strategic events these organisations run annually are mutually beneficial and rewarding. They provide important opportunities for our staff to whanaungatanga with their communities and members and ascertain current challenges and issues across their sectors that may provide opportunities for collaboration.

Each year we are thrilled to support ACE Aotearoa and ITENZ with the acknowledgement of top educators/Kaiako and organisations through their awards ceremonies. For 2024, we sponsored and celebrated the following:

### ACE Aotearoa



**Educator of the year - Tangata Tiriti – Kailash Devan**  
(Apprenticeship Advisor, assessing the Mental Health, Peer Support, Diversional Therapy and Youth Work level 4 qualifications in South Auckland for Careerforce).



**Educator of the year – Tangata Whenua – Mako Jones**, a community-based weaving tutor who works within her natural environment, her home on the marae, community hubs, halls, churches and institutions. She works with learners from a range of ages, from high school through to the elderly in the community and she focuses on welcoming diverse groups and ethnicities to her classes. Mako especially engages with Taranaki Pasifika ACE communities.

### ITENZ Excellence Awards



**Supreme Award**, sponsored by Ako Aotearoa – **Mission Ready HQ**.

This award celebrates the category winner that has demonstrated exceptional contribution to the outcomes of learners.

The judges commented that, by offering real-world learning experiences, Mission Ready ensures that students are well-prepared for the challenges of a constantly evolving industry.

Our Northern region sector services manager Ruth Peterson works alongside ITENZ chief executive Wayne Dyer on the organisation's annual conference and chairs the judging panel for its awards programme.

Ruth states, "Working with organisations in the private education sector has been a privilege over many years. This sector includes a mix of theoretical and applied learning, with a strong focus on learner wellbeing, as well as having good connections to industry. The ITENZ awards are designed to recognise the uniqueness of the sector."

Ako Aotearoa is extremely proud to sponsor ITENZ's Supreme Award, which it has done for a number of years. Ruth has been working hard with Wayne to strengthen the connection between the ITENZ Awards and our Te Whatu Kairangi Awards programme. This work has culminated in PTE owner Poppy Clapperton (from ITS – based in Palmerston North and working nationally) receiving a Te Whatu Kairangi award this year under the category Achieving diversity and inclusion for improving outcomes for: Māori learners; Pacific learners; neurodiverse learners; and/or learners with disabilities.

We continue to work closely with these important peak bodies to encourage members to celebrate the excellent teaching happening within their organisations and the benefits they can gain through achieving national recognition.

### **Phenomenal Educators Framework Research**

This Phenomenal Educators Framework research has provided critical insights into key competencies and practices that enhance educational outcomes for Pacific learners. Findings from the research are now informing the development of targeted PLD programmes for educators. Connecting with groups around the country, to share the outcomes of this project and take the opportunity to inform APSTE membership, will commence in 2025.

### **Partnership and sponsorship of Association of Pacific Staff in Tertiary Education (APSTE)**

Ongoing collaboration focuses on supporting and sharing best practices that enhance the educational experience for Pacific learners across the tertiary education sector. Support was provided to the establishment of the new Chair and committee members of APSTE through the Annual General Meeting.



### **AdvanceHE and Ako Aotearoa**

Ako Aotearoa and Advance HE enjoys a strong working relationship. In 2024 we actively participated in the Australasian Strategic Advisory Board meetings and the Accredited Program Leader Network meetings. It was a pleasure to meet Kathryn Harrison-Graves, the Director for Membership and Accreditation at Advanced HE, during her visit to New Zealand earlier in the year. These networking opportunities allow Ako Aotearoa to provide a New Zealand perspective on the Advance HE Fellowship programme and gain valuable insights into professional standards, particularly the 2023 revised professional standards framework. Being part of this transformative work in higher education is a privilege.





# 5

Excellence in action:  
Driving impact through  
research and innovation





# Beyond Tuakana Teina

Exploring Māori vocational pathways

Researcher: Dr Joshua Kalan

September 2024





Excellence in action:  
Driving impact through  
research and innovation

## Ako Aotearoa Research and Innovation Agenda (AARIA) – Projects 2024



Disclaimer: The reported projects are completed for milestone reporting; dissemination is in progress. Ongoing AARIA projects have delivered an exceptional 574 dissemination activities, ranging from conference presentations to academic publications and citations.

### 2024 Completed projects

The following projects concluded in 2024, and are in their dissemination phase:

**1. In the starting blocks: Scoping the experiences, vulnerabilities, and potentials of dyscalculic adult learners in Aotearoa New Zealand**

This study initiated an important exploration into the life experiences of dyscalculic adults in New Zealand to shed some light on their often-unseen challenges and vulnerabilities. More about the project is given [here](#). The project is currently under dissemination stage.

Lead Researcher – Dr Damon Whitten  
Ako Aotearoa funding – \$12,750.00  
Organisational funding – \$3,000  
[More about the project.](#)

## **2. Beyond Tuākana-Teina | Exploring Māori vocational pathways**

A collaborative, action research project that investigated how a tuākana-teina model of trade training can provide better learning outcomes and greater success for Māori learners in the construction industry.

Lead Researchers – Dr Joshua Kalan, Jayden Thompson

Organisation – Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiārangi

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$ 49,780

Organisational funding – \$14,620

[More about the project.](#)

## **3. Scoping the Integration of AI in Adult Tertiary Education: An Equitable and Outcome-Focused Approach in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The project provides educators with insights into the effective and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence, thereby informing curriculum design and teaching methodologies.

Lead Researchers – Graeme Smith and Michael Grawe

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$32,500

Organisational funding – \$10,000

[More about the project.](#)

## **4. Guidelines for supporting foundation ākonga to use Generative Artificial Intelligence tools to improve writing and reading**

This research project investigates how generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) can be effectively integrated into foundation and bridging programmes to support ākonga in developing their writing and reading literacies. Using a series of participatory action research (PAR) studies, the project collects, collates, and analyses data to better understand the specific literacy challenges faced by learners in these programmes. Insights from this research inform the design and development of tailored Gen AI tools or applications that provide contextualised and authentic support. These tools aim to enhance ākonga learning by offering relevant and culturally appropriate assistance in writing, reading, and, where applicable, te reo Māori literacy development.

Lead researcher – Dr Selena Chan

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$50,000

Organisational funding – \$36,000

[More about the project.](#)



## **5. Developing Te Tiriti E-learning modules**

The project seeks to develop Te Tiriti e-learning modules, comprising five segments (introduction, why was the Treaty written, what does it say, what went wrong and the Treaty today) covering distinct aspects. The initiative addresses perennial issues in Treaty education by providing a comprehensive online resource. It aligns with the broader goal of enhancing foundational skills and reducing barriers to education.

Lead researcher – Christine Herzog

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$50,000

Organisational funding – \$20,000

[More about the project.](#)

## **6. Building Phenomenal Educators Framework Projects** **Actions Building Phenomenal Educators Framework**

The project investigates the impact of the Kato Toolkit on Professional Learning and Development (PLD), focusing on its influence on educators' practices with Pacific learners. It also sought to assess the applicability of the phenomenal educators' framework within organisational settings, with the goal of fostering a supportive learning community dedicated to engaging Pacific learners.

Leading researcher – Aiono Manu Fa'aea

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$23,000

Organisational funding – \$2,000

[More about the project.](#)

## 2024 New projects

These projects, initiated in 2024, are currently in development – each with the potential to positively impact learner outcomes in the tertiary education sector.

### 1. Empowering Aotearoa: An inclusive approach to AI literacy in tertiary education

This research addresses AI literacy gaps among diverse New Zealand learners by co-creating practical resources for assessment. The project will create equitable resources that enable all students to build AI literacy through assessment activities.

Lead researcher – Tim Gander

Organisation – academyEX

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$49,800

Organisational funding – \$33,500

[More information](#)

### 2. A Tiriti-led Hinengaro: The effectiveness of Te Kete o Hinengaro in supporting whānau, community and learning environments

This project aims to explore how Te Kete o Hinengaro (Psychological Kits), which incorporate mātauranga Māori, work-based learning, and cognitive psychology, influence the academic performance and career readiness of ākonga in comparison to traditional educational resources. The study will build on existing research in psychology while providing contextual insights to inform the applied approach of the study.

Lead researcher – Dr Tia Neha

Organisation – Victoria University of Wellington

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$49,079

Organisational funding – \$55,470

[More information](#)

### **3. Matapaki Atamai Hangahanga: Promoting reflective and interactive learning with AI conversations**

Traditional written methods often fail to engage students. This project involves designing two types of AI-powered verbal conversational assessments:

- Reflection – where the AI engages students in real-time dialogue
- AI Student – where, through role reversal, the student will play the role of the tutor who will ‘teach the AI’

This role-reversal approach (AI as student) introduces a novel assessment type, helping students articulate and reinforce their learning by teaching. By incorporating conversational AI, the project creates an engaging environment that deepens reflection, fosters critical thinking, and maintains student interest

Lead researcher – Dr Nasser Giacaman

Organisation – University of Auckland

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$50,000

Organisational funding – \$69,186

[More information](#)

### **4. Circle of Knowledge: Engaging strategies for teaching and learning**

This research project addresses the question: “How does the implementation of teaching and learning circles (TLCs) in adult and community education sites influence teaching and learning practices?” The project aims to enhance educational experiences through collaborative and reflective strategies, fostering knowledge sharing and growth.

Lead researchers – Dr Cherie Chu-Fuluifaga and Hannah Pia Baral

Organisation – Victoria University of Wellington and Adult and Community Education (ACE) (co-led)

Ako Aotearoa funding: \$21,500

Organisational funding: \$21,500

[More information](#)

**5. Can a focus on ākonga Māori learning experiences and outcomes positively impact on the learning experiences and outcomes for all ākonga Māori and all ākonga?**

This action research will explore the impact of an approach that prioritises listening to the learning experiences and outcomes of ākonga Māori, with educators responding through iterative knowledge-building and inquiry cycles to embed culturally responsive, relationships-based practices. The impact of this approach will be evaluated for ākonga Māori as well as all ākonga.

Lead researcher – Tim Seaholme

Organisation – Universal College of Learning (UCOL)

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$43,845

Organisational funding – \$44,850

[More information](#)

**6. Panitīnaku: Kaupapa Māori approaches to doctoral examination**

This research project investigates how the examination and evaluation process of doctoral studies can effectively support and enhance the kaupapa Māori experience of doctoral study.

Lead Researchers – Dr Mera Penehira and Dr Miriama Postlethwaite

Organisation – Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi (TWWoA)

Ako Aotearoa funding – \$45,096

Organisational funding – \$72,775

[More information](#)

## Māori learner success team contributions to AARIA

Dr Joe Te Rito and Dr Mei Winitana collaborated with the AARIA Research Manager, Marvin Wu, in the design of the process, as well as in its implementation as subject experts. They also both gave feedback for 2025 based upon the maxim of seeking continuous quality improvement.

The Beyond Tuakana Teina project provides realistic vocational strategies for improving Māori apprentice success by extending the tuakana teina (experienced- inexperienced) methodology.

Successfully launched and presented at the ITENZ conference in September, the report was well received by the 60 or so who attended the breakout session, with 50 copies of the published report distributed.

### AARIA - future plans

The 2025 AARIA Contestable Funding Round is in the preparation stage and we plan to open the next round in March.

Ako Aotearoa will seek proposals that align with our AARIA Priorities.

**Value:** \$25,000 – \$80,000 over the term of the contract

**Duration:** 5 months – 12 months

**Total funding pool:** \$400,000

The 2025 request for proposals aims to catalyse systems-level change within the tertiary education sector, with the goal of advancing more equitable learner outcomes. We will invite proposals for innovative, Ako-centred research projects that explore potential solutions and enhance support mechanisms for ākonga and Kaiako, as well as teaching and learning strategies. More information on the [Ako Aotearoa website](#).



## AARIA project success 2

### Beyond Tuakana Teina

This research project used a case study of Tāwharau Housing Trust and their approach toward Māori trade training and apprenticeships in construction to explore and identify what works for Māori learners.

Tāwharau Housing Trust is a small whānau-based construction company operating out of Rotorua, focusing on applying Māori approaches and values to develop the next generation of Māori builders and tradespeople for the construction industry.

This study used data collected from focus group interviews with Tāwharau Housing Trust personnel and employees. Due to the high-pressure timeframes and workload within the construction industry, conducting focus group interviews was the most efficient method of data collection across the greatest number of participants in the time that was available.

The project is informed by kaupapa Māori research methodology.

During 2024, the project team presented at two national-level events – the Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand (ITENZ) conference in September and the Tūwhitia symposium for sector leads hosted at Unitec in November.

Within that timeframe, the project page on the Ako Aotearoa website received 491 views and 48 downloads of the full report.

Go to: <https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/a-tuakana-teina-model-of-trade-training>

**See also, AARIA Project Success 1 ‘In the starting blocks: Scoping the experiences, vulnerabilities, and potentials of dyscalculic adult learners in Aotearoa New Zealand’ in Section 3.**

## Successful research collaboration

### Ki te Hoe: Indigenising Spaces



Image taken at the launch: (left to right) Dr Tracy Dayman, Dr Ngaroma Williams, Rāhera Cowie, Dr Kay-Lee Jones.

Launched at the University of Canterbury on 10 June, the Ki Te Hoe: Indigenising Spaces set of resources attracted over 800 page views on the Ako Aotearoa website in the first week.

The project and its outputs aim to help Early Childhood Education (ECE) staff improve their confidence in te reo and tikanga Māori, shifting the ECE sector from monolingual and monocultural to bilingual and bicultural.

Ngaroma's doctoral thesis highlighted that kaiako were not confident in using te reo Māori, articulating tikanga Māori and understanding the relevance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in practice. She has a good understanding of how to develop tailored resources that could support the teaching professionals in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

"They [the resources] are starting points so that practice can be moved along to a more confident teaching profession in using te reo Māori as an everyday language."

The package includes:

- [A brochure set of everyday te reo phrases used in 27 curriculum areas and activities](#)
- [Karakia and waiata booklet](#)
- [Māori Lunar Calendar](#)
- [An information folio supporting educators to navigate Te Tiriti o Waitangi within ECE contexts](#)
- [A set of information booklets with pepeha for 12 iwi](#)

Speaking at the event, deputy chief executive Māori of the Teaching Council Tamahau Rowe spoke of how popular the resources were on the first day of availability, as educators all over the country were eager to use these useful tools.

### **Building on previous research and Ngā Taonga Whakaako**

This work complements the 2022 project developed by Ngaroma – [Kei te Hoe: Indigenising Practice](#) – an even larger set of resources uploaded to our website in late March 2023 and officially launched at University of Canterbury in June the same year.

The work also builds on Ngaroma's original project funded by Ako Aotearoa in 2012 – [Ngā Taonga Whakaako](#), undertaken with Mary-Liz Broadley and Keri Lawson-Te Aho and supported by Open Polytechnic.



# Statement of Service Provision (SPP)









# Statement of Service Provision (SPP)

Why does Ako Aotearoa (National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) exist?	
<b>VISION:</b> We are a recognised thought-leader that works to transform, advocate for, and reward excellent teaching and learning practices to accelerate successful learner outcomes in tertiary education.	<b>MISSION:</b> To work in partnership with all tertiary education organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand, through a Te Tiriti led approach and to drive equitable outcomes for ākonga and Kaiako through exceptional teaching practices.

NCTTE FUNCTION 1: Building the teaching capability of tertiary education organisations and educators.		
<b>Metric:</b> Educator Satisfaction and Feedback	<b>Metric:</b> Professional learning and development programmes and services	<b>Metric:</b> Alignment and Support for Tertiary Qualifications
Continuous evidence of PLD through participant feedback ensures relevance, effectiveness and sustained improvement.  Combined value and quality ratings across both contracts reflect consistently strong feedback. This reflects the effectiveness of our programmes in enhancing educator confidence and capability.	Recent shifts in participation patterns and evolving sector needs have prompted us to review our PLD approach and refine our model to ensure greater responsiveness.	Our PLD programmes align with the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Capability Framework, ensuring educators are supported in achieving formal qualifications and applying best teaching practices.

**FUNCTION 2: Commissioning and, where appropriate, conducting research monitoring and evaluation about effective teaching and learning in tertiary education.**

<b>Metric:</b> Addressing tertiary priorities and supporting sector change	<b>Metric:</b> Evaluation of Research Effectiveness	<b>Metric:</b> Integration of research into teaching and learning contexts
AARIA-funded research is aligned with national tertiary education priorities and aims to bring about systemic change and enable continuous improvements in the sector.	<p>We generate/fund high-quality research that informs sector-wide improvements, supports evidence-based decision-making, and enhances teaching and learning practices.</p> <p>Research results demonstrate clear impact, with findings cited in sector reports and policy documents.</p>	Research outcomes are integrated into curriculum design, teaching strategies, and professional development initiatives. Ako Explored series is one such successful research project that led to a professional development opportunity and useful resources such as coffee cards.

**FUNCTION 3: Commissioning and, where appropriate, conducting research monitoring and evaluation about effective teaching and learning in tertiary education**

<b>Metric:</b> Stakeholder Engagement and Communities of Practice	<b>Metric:</b> Responsive Advisory Services to Diverse Sector Needs, Including Policy Submissions	<b>Metric:</b> Feedback and Continuous Improvements
Communities of Practice continued to grow this year. Increased involvement in sector events and webinars reflect the strength of our network and partnerships in driving teaching and learning excellence.	Through Briefing Papers – Minister updates, the Manako team informs policy decisions, The University Advisory Group submission ensured diverse sector voices are represented, and ongoing evidence-based insights continue to drive improvements in tertiary education.	<p>Ongoing evaluation and refinement of PLD offerings based on participant feedback.</p> <p>AARIA project outputs and dissemination elevate voices across the sector.</p> <p>Regional forums provide valuable insights into sector priorities and emerging challenges, shaping future initiatives.</p> <p>Ongoing Stakeholder needs analyses inform Ako Aotearoa practice, and help bring targeted sector challenges into perspective as we refine our products and services/ offerings/programmes.</p>



# Financial Report and Confirmation of Audit







# Financial report and confirmation of audit

## Ako Aotearoa Statement of Financial Performance As at 31 December 2024

		Full Year Actual	Full Year Budget	Full Year Revised Forecast
<b>Income</b>				
TEC Payments – National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence (NCTTE)		3,556,000	3,556,000	3,556,000
TEC Payments – Adult Literacy Numeracy & Cultural Capability (ALNACC)		1,150,000	1,150,000	1,150,000
TEC Payment – Te Whatu Kairangi Scholarships		200,000	200,000	200,000
Interest Income		289,527	259,000	259,000
Other Income		141,307	217,200	135,730
Sponsorship		14,950	35,000	15,200
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>5,351,784</b>	<b>5,417,200</b>	<b>5,315,930</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Staff Related Costs	1	2,788,837	2,911,941	2,734,169
Asset Related Costs		4,692	5,000	4,270
Overheads/Administration		557,521	560,989	576,309
<b>Other Direct Costs</b>				
Contracted Services	2	497,384	613,114	588,047
Research, Innovation and Strategic Projects	3	392,048	500,000	423,006
Scholarships		211,500	220,000	211,500
Sponsorships		29,196	63,500	41,000
Other Direct Costs		498,275	542,656	561,377
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>		<b>1,628,403</b>	<b>1,939,270</b>	<b>1,804,930</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>4,999,453</b>	<b>5,417,200</b>	<b>5,119,678</b>
<b>Surplus</b>		<b>352,331</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>196,252</b>

### Notes:

1. Includes salaries, accrued leave, superannuation, ACC, contract labour
2. Includes Governance, website & development, Te Whatu Kairangi Review Panel, PLD, Contracts for Services
3. Ako Aotearoa's Research and Innovation (AARIA) Projects including Board Strategic Projects



Ako Aotearoa Statement of Movements in Equity

	Actual FY 2024	Actual FY 2023	Budget FY 2025
Opening Equity Balance 31 December 2023	4,737,217	4,202,485	5,089,548
Surplus as at 31 December 2024	352,331	534,732	0
<b>Closing Equity as at 31 December 2024</b>	<b>5,089,548</b>	<b>4,737,217</b>	<b>5,089,548</b>

Prepared 5 February 2025

29 April 2025

Helen Lomax  
Ako Aotearoa  
National Centre for Teaching excellence  
National Office  
PO Box 756  
Wellington  
6140

Dear Ms. Lomax

**2024 Annual Accounts**

I can confirm that Te Kunenga Ki Pūrehuroa Massey University's financial statements for have been audited by Audit New Zealand and that the scope of the audit covers the National Centre for Teaching Excellence to the extent that they form part of Massey University's financial transactions for the ended 31 December 2024. During the audit no issues were brought to our attention in respect of the accounts for the National Centre of teaching Excellence.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Dimond  
Chief Financial Officer



National Centre for  
Tertiary Teaching Excellence