



Te Whatu  
Kairangi

Aotearoa Tertiary  
Educator Awards

# Te Whatu Kairangi Awardee Profiles 2025



**Image, front cover**

Te Whatu Kairangi Awardees 2025

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Te Whatu  
Kairangi

## The Significance of Te Whatu Kairangi

From a Māori perspective, after the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku the world was originally void of superior forms of knowledge. It instead resided in the realms of the atua who dwelt in the heavens. This knowledge was obtained by the ascension of Tāne (or in some cases Tāwhaki) to the twelfth heaven and brought back to earth to be used by mankind.

From the heavens Tāne retrieved three baskets of knowledge: te kete aronui (knowledge pertaining to good, all things humane and peaceful), te kete tuatea (knowledge pertaining to all evil arts, warfare, and black magic) and te kete tuauri (knowledge of ritual and of all ceremonies designed to remove the restrictions (tapu) that are placed on the relationships that connect all things on earth and in the heavens). This knowledge formed the content of formal study in the whare wānanga (learning institutions of esoteric knowledge).

The curriculum of the whare wānanga was split in two: te kauwae runga (teachings concerning the Supreme Being, cosmogonic and anthropogenic myths, etc) and te kauwae raro (historical traditions, matters of this world). Students went through an intense learning programme, where the information was transmitted orally in a rote learning fashion, and they were then subjected to a series of tests to ensure that they had memorised the content of the whare wānanga to a satisfactory level.

Whatu or stones were used throughout the learning to embed the information within the students. Upon the conclusion of their time as a student of the whare wānanga, students were presented a particular stone called a whatu kairangi to symbolise that they had successfully completed the programme of learning. In essence, they were now tohunga, learned experts. In the Hawke's Bay district, some whare wānanga used small, flat, smooth stones that were red, black and, in some cases, white.

The term Whatu Kairangi is adopted as the name of the teaching awards. The awardees have spent a considerable amount of time becoming notable experts in their field, they have refined their teaching, and been assessed by a panel of experts to have fulfilled the criteria of the awards that leaves no doubt of the impact they have had on their students. The recipients have transitioned from one space to another. In essence, they have been recognised as the learned experts of teaching in their field.

**Definitions:**

whatu (noun) initiation stone – a small stone swallowed by the student (tauirā) during the initiation to become a tohunga. It was said to help in the embedding of the new knowledge within the student. The whatu is a physical symbol that acknowledges the student has reached a certain level in their learning. It is their ‘tohu’ or their ‘award’. Where we might usually expect to see the word “Tohu” in a Māori name for the teaching awards (Ngā Tohu Whatu Kairangi), the use of “Whatu” serves the same purpose.

kairangi (noun) anything held in high esteem, darling, exalted chief, finest variety of greenstone, patron. This word is used in the Māori name for a PhD – He Tohu Kairangi. It also features on the Māori versions of the certificates presented to Kaupapa Māori Award winners. It, therefore, indicates something of the highest level.



Prime Minister's  
Educator  
of the Year  
Award winner

Richard Hope

Senior Academic Staff Member  
Automotive Trades  
Ara Institute of Canterbury

**“When I identify a learning barrier, I create and implement a strategy to overcome it.”**

After working as an automotive mechanic for 25 years, Richard started teaching automotive trades at Ara Institute of Canterbury in 2019. He holds the tertiary teaching qualifications of the New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (NZCATT) and the New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (NZALNE) and is now a Senior Academic Staff Member. Richard teaches the New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3), a 9-month programme where ākongā (learners) prepare for employment and apprenticeships in the automotive industry, focusing on foundational knowledge and practical skills. Ara runs up to seven classes annually, each with its own tutor who delivers all the courses of the programme to up to 18 ākongā. The programme has open entry and is in heavy demand.

Enrolled ākongā are predominantly school leavers who are interested in working in the automotive industry, encompassing heavy diesel, light automotive, electrical/electronic, motorcycle, parts and accessories. Richard's teaching experience involves automotive dual enrolment introductory courses, level 3 pre-trade, and Level 4 managed apprenticeship courses. Many of these ākongā have left formal education due to negative experiences and unsuccessful outcomes at school. The programme offers them a valuable opportunity to return to formal education and attain a qualification. A high proportion of his ākongā gain the New Zealand Certificate of Automotive Engineering. Results have risen to 100% over the last three years and, of those, 64% have gained apprenticeships or are working in industry.

As Richard builds rapport with ākongā, he often discovers unacknowledged and unidentified learning disabilities and challenges. Many learners also come from difficult home environments, which can impact on learning or manifest in challenging behaviours such as class disruption and non-attendance. As Kaiako, Richard acknowledges pastoral care as a critical element in this environment. He believes education is a right, not a privilege, and it is his role to uphold that right and provide, as best he can, equitable education for all his ākongā. Through collaboration with colleagues, disability services, learning services, counselling services and WINZ, he identifies barriers to successful learning journeys and removes these by empowering and assisting ākongā with resources that target their individual learning needs. This approach has resulted in the development of an online resource for kaiako to support deaf ākongā, translation of the

Level 3 Certificate into te reo Māori, and development and introduction of a Professional Conversation method of assessment. These resources are available for colleagues and the institute to draw on in other teaching environments, enabling an inclusive educational context for all ākonga that is updatable and future focused.

In 2020, Richard saw an opportunity to increase his class diversity and a challenge to maintain an inclusive learning environment by welcoming an ākonga turi (deaf learner) into his cohort. To enhance the learning of his new ākonga, he needed to understand deaf culture, and learn teaching strategies required for deaf learning. He did this by gathering information from support sections at Ara, the Deaf community, workshops he had facilitated, and participating in New Zealand Sign Language night classes. From this, he created a centralised online resource Teaching Deaf Learners for other tutors at Ara.

Although Richard regularly incorporates te reo Māori and principles into his lessons, when an ākonga whose first language was te reo Māori came into his class in 2023, he realised that to bring the ākonga into the whanaungatanga of the class, he needed to learn and understand more te reo Māori himself. He enrolled in a te reo Māori Level 1 night class and reached out to Ara colleagues for inclusive learning strategies. One of the requirements of this particular ākonga was to have assessments translated into te reo Māori. This involved 46 assessments and many technical terms, and proved to be no small task. Once completed, this became the only Level 3 automotive programme in the country able to be assessed in te reo Māori and was recognised by the multimedia news station TahuFM, which filmed the ākonga and Richard interacting in the learning environment.

It became evident that this ākonga also had severe literacy and other challenges. They were gaining the knowledge required to complete the programme but were unable to articulate that knowledge in a formal written assessment situation, even with reader-writer assistance. This difficulty was exacerbated by a lack of reader-writers fluent in te reo Māori. Richard made enquiries about different assessment methods which might utilise verbal interactions and settled on a system of Professional Conversations (as described by Cole 2023)<sup>1</sup> and translated the programme's assessments into a suitable format. This proved a much more effective means of assessing ākonga progress than the usual system and gave the ākonga a much better chance at achieving programme completion.

Richard's classroom management approach involves developing whanaungatanga amongst the ākonga from day one. This is inherently inclusive and generates a culture of empathy and respect amongst ākonga, nurturing the development of a cohesive class. He finds this approach is self-supportive, and learning outcomes progress rapidly, as distracting behaviours tend to be moderated amongst the ākonga themselves. He helps his ākonga establish a want or need to learn by linking content to real world situations. Employing humour and allowing banter opens communication pathways for informal formative assessment and the opportunity to normalise revision.

He encourages questioning by modelling open, closed and reflective questioning. Rather than solely imparting knowledge, he elicits it from the ākonga themselves, encouraging conversation and presenting consensus to the class, thus supporting all ākonga to be contributors and collaborators in building the class kaupapa (culture).

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<sup>1</sup> Cole, D. (2023). Authentic assessment through Professional Conversations: An AI-friendly assessment method? *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 11(3), 10–16. <https://doi-org.libproxy.ara.ac.nz/10.56433/jpaap.v11i3.586>

Ongoing and consistent observation of the ākongā in the classroom setting is crucial to Richard's monitoring of the development of relationships and establishing levels of knowledge and skills attainment. He methodically checks in with each ākongā and elicits their levels of understanding and this influences the structure of his lessons. Richard feels invested in the future of his ākongā and makes a point of staying connected with them upon completion of the programme. Ākongā regularly make contact, seeking advice on difficult projects and finding contacts in industry. He steers them towards career opportunities as they arise and gives guidance in the technical arena.

Richard believes that developing ākongā who are empowered and engaged in the process of learning is critical to building resilient people who will flourish in society today, and in the future.

“Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini. – No one gets there alone.”



## General Award

### Category:

Innovation in learning,  
teaching,  
and curriculum

## Antonie Alm

Associate Professor,  
Languages and Cultures,  
School of Arts,  
University of Otago

**“The impact of my teaching continues to be felt long after students leave the classroom, influencing their confidence, engagement, and ongoing relationship with languages.”**

Through three decades of tertiary teaching, Antonie has worked to connect pedagogy, research, and learner experience in ways that expand the methods students learn languages and, in the process, imagine who they can become. She holds a PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and completed her studies in German Language and Literature at the Université de Bordeaux III. She also holds a French teaching qualification from the École Normale Supérieure St. Cloud and has an extensive background in computer-assisted language learning. She began her teaching career in French at James Cook University in Australia before focusing on German when she came to Aotearoa in 1995. At this time, the country didn't seem like an obvious hub for foreign language learning and the emergence of the internet was only just beginning to enter everyday use. Recognising both the challenge and opportunity this presented, Antonie introduced her students to email and online collaboration even before they became users of these tools in their native languages.

At the University of Otago, Antonie has taught German and Intercultural Communication, coordinated the German and the Languages and Cultures programmes, and led curriculum innovation. She also taught a postgraduate course in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), preparing future language educators to use digital technologies critically and creatively. Following the closure of the German programme, she transitioned to teaching French, where she continues her sustained career of pedagogical innovation. Her commitment to innovation dates back to her arrival in Aotearoa: she led her students in creating a German-language tourist webpage for Dunedin in the mid-1990s, before most university departments had an online presence. From internet-based course pages (in pre-blackboard days), she progressed to podcasting, blogs, social networking sites and streaming platforms – and now integrates generative AI tools. At each stage, she has used technology to invite expression, creativity, and critical reflection.

Antonie's students are diverse in background and motivation; some are heritage learners reconnecting with their roots, others are complete beginners combining language study with humanities, science or commerce degrees. Antonie finds that, whether learners seek fluency for travel, identity

or intellectual growth, they share a need for learning environments that support emotional connection. She ensures her courses meet those needs through relevant content and tasks that enable learners to bring their whole selves to the learning process. Her pedagogical approach builds on self-determination theory and motivational frameworks, understanding how learners develop visions of themselves as future users of the target language. A central concept in her work is intraformal learning – a term she coined herself – which she defines as the dynamic interaction between formal and informal classroom learning, often involving digitally-mediated, self-initiated engagement with a second language. Rather than treating formal and informal learning as separate spheres, she designs experiences that allow them to inform and strengthen each other. She believes the flow between formal and informal, planned and spontaneous, academic and personal, is where meaningful learning occurs. This concept has gained international recognition and is now referenced in current research on language learning ecologies.

Experiences, such as teaching herself Spanish through mobile apps and learning Italian using voice-based conversational AI, keep Antonie grounded in the learner perspective. She knows firsthand that language learning is both a cognitive process and a deeply personal and affective journey. She encourages her students to bring their full selves to the learning process – their interests, frustrations, humour, and hopes. As one student described it, her classes provide “a safe space in which we could try, fail, and learn creatively.” In 2013, she surveyed the use of social media (then Facebook) and found that students actively used the resource in their second language, yet this learning remained disconnected from their coursework. To close this gap, she integrated informal tools – such as podcasts, social networks, and video platforms – into classroom practice as catalysts for reflection and metacognitive engagement. This approach supports access and participation by validating the diverse ways students engage with language beyond the classroom. By exploring digital tools to increase access and flexibility, Antonie also creates opportunities that connect learners across different levels and backgrounds. These include events such as plays, musical concerts, weekly conversation groups, and end-of-year festivities, where students engage informally with peers and native speakers.

Antonie uses Netflix as a powerful vehicle for intraformal learning drawing on its multilingual content, subtitling features, and students’ binge-watching habits. Supported by a university teaching grant, a Netflix project allowed students to select a series and use a browser extension with dual-language subtitles, clickable translations, and adjustable playback speed. They documented their experiences in reflective blogs, creating a shared viewing culture that integrated entertainment and academic engagement. During the pandemic this activity became a lifeline, with students using their blogs not only to reflect on the series, but also to share emotions and create collective space for connection – building an emotionally resonant community of practice even when physically apart. When in-person teaching resumed, Antonie took her students off-screen and outdoors with weekly *Spaziergänge* – language walks around campus and through the botanical garden. The walks were an integrated language task. Students selected and read a German article on a current issue and prepared questions for the walk. Afterwards, they wrote blog posts, reinforcing vocabulary and expressions in a personally meaningful context. The walks supported not just language development but student wellbeing – *hauora*. Another opportunity for students has been virtual exchanges, such as in 2022, when her class worked with third-year students from Auckland and Leipzig Universities (Germany), funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), with some student partnerships continuing beyond the course.

While at the University of Otago, Antonie has secured multiple teaching grants and led projects involving colleagues from the Spanish and Japanese sections, fostering cross-linguistic collaboration. Her machine translation literacy project resulted in workshops for all Languages and Cultures staff. She regularly presents at university-wide events, such as the Lessons Learned Symposium in 2022, where she conducted a workshop on AI in higher education - two weeks before the emergence of ChatGPT3.5. Her leadership extends into national and international professional communities. In 2020, she brought together researchers from across New Zealand to host the Applied Linguistics Conference during a narrow window between lockdowns.

Antonie has long-standing collaborations with national organisations, such as the New Zealand Association of Language Teachers (NZALT) and the Goethe Institute. She has given talks to high school teachers, language academics, and educational leaders, including a SEAMEO-STEM-ED webinar with over 7,000 live viewers. She has presented seminars, lectures and workshops at universities in Tokyo (2023) and Paris (2024), collaborating widely, including co-editing *Insights into AI and Language Teaching and Learning (2025)*, and *Transitions in CALL*.

Looking forward, Antonie is developing approaches that combine open educational resources with advising-informed support structures, empowering learners to chart their own paths and building resilience into language education.

“My teaching integrates formal and informal learning, where classroom, community, and digital practices blend.”



## General Award

### Category:

Innovation in learning,  
teaching,  
and curriculum

## Dr Nasser Giacaman

Senior Lecturer,  
Department of Electrical,  
Computer, and Software  
Engineering  
University of Auckland

**“Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”**

Nasser Giacaman says software engineering is the discipline behind the apps, websites, and digital systems we use daily, from banking platforms to social media and streaming services. Unlike basic programming, software engineering requires engineers to think systematically about building robust, large-scale systems with meaningful impact and critical considerations. This means balancing technical skills with professional judgment, considering not just whether something works, but whether it’s secure, accessible, and ethical. The senior lecturer in Electrical, Computer, and Software Engineering at the University of Auckland says this complexity makes software engineering particularly challenging to teach effectively, as traditional lecture-based approaches – particularly in large classes of more than 300 students – don’t scale to provide the individual guidance and real-world context that professional engineering education demands. Nasser’s approach is simple. He demonstrates infectious love for both the technical craft and professional practice, inspiring students through visible enthusiasm.

While enthusiasm engages, Nasser believes genuine care, which isn’t just about academic success but also about holistic wellbeing, sustains learning. He aims to understand students before expecting them to understand him. His mission is to push students to achieve results they are proud of while reminding them to take care of themselves, creating a lasting impact on their personal journey. Students’ inevitable struggles, such as feeling overwhelmed or comparing themselves unfavourably to experienced peers, become opportunities for genuine human connection and support. He greets his students with “Hi developers” rather than “Hi students” as he regards them as emerging software developers and engineers with professional careers ahead, rather than just academic learners. This establishes expectations and builds confidence from the start.

Although enthusiasm and care are foundational for learning, Nasser says these values alone are insufficient for large-scale challenges, and he needed to build solutions that embody these principles at scale. These multiple educational innovations have made abstract programming concepts tangible, while developing authentic professional engineering mindsets. For example, he led the design of Co-Thinker, an educational tool developed collaboratively with his students, featuring two assessment types: a “Reflection Mentor” where students are encouraged to articulate their learning experience, and an “AI Student” that the human student teaches, thus leveraging

research that shows teaching others reinforces one's own understanding. Co-Thinker's verbal communication function supports diverse learners, including auditory learners and those with dyslexia or English as a second language. During its initial development phase alone, the Co-Thinker platform was used across six courses with over 1000 students, demonstrating immediate scalability and effectiveness. It also won a Faculty of Engineering Teaching Development Award.

Nasser believes that traditional programming education can create a disconnect between concept introduction and practice, where students passively observe programming concepts in lectures, then wait days for separate laboratory sessions to gain hands-on experience. This delay prevents the immediate experimentation and practice essential for programming comprehension. This led him to develop Active Classroom Programmer (ACP), which eliminates this disconnect by turning large-scale lectures into interactive coding environments. Students have the ability to code alongside Nasser on their devices, generating authentic learning moments where questions arise naturally from hands-on experience rather than from theoretical confusion. Since 2013, over 5000 users have engaged with ACP across more than 50 course offerings, including international implementations, delivering over 700 programming exercises to tertiary students. The tool's consistent use across multiple years and institutions demonstrates its effectiveness in addressing fundamental challenges in large-scale programming education at the tertiary level.

Nasser's contribution to the redevelopment of a large core course included the development of a custom interactive website with embedded "Get your hands dirty!" programming exercises. In collaboration with colleagues, he created a platform where students could edit, execute, and save code directly alongside learning material, maximising engagement and active learning. This website is a one-stop shop featuring Topics (interactive content replacing traditional slides), comprehensive Resources (instructional guides), Assessment handouts, plus engaging features like lecture countdowns and calendars. Following its success, it has been extended to other courses.

Another of Nasser's innovations was helping to develop the GradeStyle tool to shift assessment from delayed summative feedback to continuous formative learning. Rather than waiting weeks for one-off grading, students receive immediate, detailed feedback throughout their development process. The impact is substantial—what previously took more than 50 hours now completes in minutes and provides more consistent and comprehensive feedback than manual assessment. GradeStyle's innovation extends beyond the University of Auckland, making both research findings and practical tools freely available to the international computing education community.

As software engineering demands professional skills beyond coding, such as client communication, ethical decision-making and collaborative problem-solving, Nasser worked closely with colleagues in developing an approach that transforms instructors into fictional clients while positioning students as professional developers. Elaborate client personas with backstories and professional needs are created. This embeds professional development directly within technical courses. Students complete semester-long projects with evolving requirements and realistic constraints, practising requirements gathering and client communication.

As one of 13 international authors on the 2020 Working Group report *High Performance Computing Education: Current Challenges and Future Directions*, Nasser contributed to

addressing challenges in teaching such difficult concepts. Most recently, his collaborative project for teaching AI development has been published by ACM EngageCSEdu. This comprehensive resource provides educators with starter code, handouts and teaching guidance. Such innovations have created impact beyond the University of Auckland's courses, through systematic dissemination of research-validated tools that address fundamental challenges in computing education worldwide.

“Software engineering demands professional skills beyond coding: client communication, ethical decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving.”



## General Group Award

**Category:**  
Achieving diversity  
and inclusion  
for improving  
outcomes for:  
Māori learners;  
Pacific learners;  
neurodiverse learners,  
and/or learners with  
disabilities

## Te Atakura Team

**Jon Bailey,  
Erin Lincoln,  
Mere Robb,  
Sherylee Spencer-Most,  
Lynette van Hutten,  
Janell Kiriona,  
and Tim Seaholme**

Universal College of Learning (UCOL)

**“Te Atakura is an exemplary educational framework due to its culturally grounded, relational approach that transcends conventional pedagogy.”**

Te Atakura is a culturally responsive relationships-based approach, guided by kaupapa Māori values, working towards achieving *ōritetanga* (equity) within tertiary education in Aotearoa. It focuses on enabling the organisation to better support experiences and outcomes for *ākonga* Māori, Indigenous and marginalised, so all can thrive within tertiary education. Te Atakura was developed in 2013 when the Universal College of Learning (UCOL) decided to prioritise a focus on *ākonga* Māori learning experiences and outcomes, placing *ākonga* at the centre. Although it started as a six-months’ pilot study, Te Atakura has prospered through four leadership changes, uncertainty and restructures. Now, in 2025, the approach has become embedded and sustained, transforming attitudes and practices among *ākonga* Māori, stakeholders, the wider community, leadership and *kaimahi*.

The current Te Atakura team, which consists of six coaches who work within UCOL, have diverse backgrounds in education and many years of experience between them. Culturally, the team includes one Māori *kaikōkiri*, three Māori coaches (one neurodivergent) and three *tangata tiriti*. Coaches were chosen because UCOL saw them as high-performing *kaiako* that had already excelled within their teaching capacity and had achieved significant success with *ākonga* Māori. The team supports UCOL in its work towards achieving *ōritetanga* within the organisation; their practice is grounded in culturally responsive pedagogy, which they role model for *ākonga*, creating a *whānau*-like context for all.

The team’s positive impacts have seen shifts in teacher and leader attitudes, changes in teaching and leadership practices, and increased course completions for *ākonga* Māori and marginalised *ākonga*. The team operates in classrooms, the online space, and off-site. Its interactions include collating *ākonga* voice as part of an observation process and *ākonga* Māori focus groups. It is actively involved in *pōwhiri*, *mihi whakatau* and graduation, building authentic relationships with *ākonga*, and also with their *whānau*. Working across the four campuses, the coaches provide pedagogical coaching for *kaiako*, undertake teaching observations, and deliver Professional Learning for all *kaimahi*.

Te Atakura recognizes that *ākonga* do not arrive alone. They are accompanied by their *whakapapa*, their *tūpuna*, and the aspirations of their *whānau*. In acknowledging this, the role of the educator becomes that of a relational *kaitiaki*, someone

who not only facilitates learning but who upholds mana and the potential of every learner. This shift is supported through deliberate acts of culturally responsive teaching which is guided by ongoing observation, feedback, and coaching.

Teachers are not left to interpret cultural responsiveness in isolation; instead, they are enveloped in a learning journey that models and embeds authentic relationship-based practice. The wellbeing and success of ākonga is seen as being inextricably linked to whānau participation and aspirations.

In alignment with Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and kaupapa Māori frameworks, such as Te Atakura and He Kākano Rua, Te Atakura practice positions ākonga Māori as capable, culturally grounded, and aspirational. The voices of ākonga are sought at the outset of programme development and throughout the learning journey. Regular hui, wānanga, and feedback loops align with the concept of ako/wānanga, where teaching and learning are reciprocal and relational. The team's mahi is grounded in a deep commitment to ākonga, ensuring their voices and realities remain at the centre.

Te Atakura coaches observe kaiako while they are teaching and give feedback which allows kaiako to explore patterns of engagement. Through open, respectful, and mana-enhancing dialogue, they uncover what uplifts ākonga — and where unconscious barriers may exist. They co-construct new possibilities for teaching - approaches that affirm identity, connection, and genuine pathways to success. Coaches specifically collate ākonga Māori voice after each classroom observation, to determine the cognitive engagement of the learning for the ākonga. They do this by asking three questions based on John Hattie's research on formative assessment: "What are you learning about today?", "How are you going and how do you know?", and "What do you need to learn next?". The Te Atakura process has affected a positive shift in teaching practice from 2014-2024 in terms of becoming more culturally responsive and increasing parity for ākonga Māori.

Te Atakura works in collaboration with every level of the institution to ensure the voices of ākonga are heard and systemic change is affected. The team disrupts respectfully through connections and relationships, evidence-informed pedagogical knowledge, role modelling and upholding their values, finding what it takes to truly build and create a whānau-like context. To stay relevant and valued, the Te Atakura team engaged in supervision alongside Professor Veronica Tawhai to create a Model of Practice which guides their continuing effectiveness. This model includes; positionality, whanaungatanga-relationships, whakarongo ki te rongō-active listening, whakamana tangata-acknowledgement, Te whakapuaki-Language and Te haerenga ki te āpōpō. Te Atakura is sustained through visible leadership support, strategic inclusion in planning documents, job descriptions and alignment with organisational equity goals. Within UCOL, 300 teachers have been engaged in over 1300 observations and, in 2024, the Professional Learning Series had over 500 attendees.

Te Atakura also collaborates with other providers within the Te Pūkenga network, enabling it to share the model and achieve wider impact. In 2025, the team presented at the Ako Aotearoa Central Regional Forum and has been accepted to present at the World Indigenous' Peoples Conference on Education, as well as the International Council for Open and Distance Education World Conference. Te Atakura has been adopted by two Industry Training Organisations (ITO), including BCITO (Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation) and PITO (Primary ITO). BCITO has a trained Te Atakura team, which completed a pilot and is preparing to roll out a full programme. Te Atakura has delivered

workshops at Te Hui Matariki 2024 Teaching and Learning Best Practice, Whitireia New Zealand, and WelTec Te Whare Wananga o te Awakairangi.

“The Te Atakura framework’s emphasis on relational pedagogy and community engagement ensures that learning is holistic, culturally sustaining, and aligned with whānau and iwi aspirations.”



## General Group Award

Category:  
Initiatives for  
progressing hauora  
and wellbeing in  
education

## Bachelor of Culinary Arts Distance Delivery Team

Food Design Institute,  
Otago Polytechnic

**“Using our experience as chefs and vocational educators, our purpose is to equip aspiring and existing culinary leaders with the capabilities and tools to foster hauora within their workplaces.”**

Responding to wellbeing issues within the hospitality industry, Chloe Humphreys and Juliane Tautz aim to equip both emerging and established culinary leaders with the skills to foster hauora within their workplaces. Abusive behaviours associated with toxic kitchen culture have been glamourised by celebrity chefs such as Gordon Ramsay, however, beneath the surface lies a dark reality, where such behaviours contribute to poor staff wellbeing and high attrition rates within the industry. The team are aware that, on top of staff shortages and high stress environments, chefs face an additional challenge – a lack of access to leadership education due to their work commitments. While many industry leaders are desperate for change, they simply don’t have the time, capacity, or access to educational development opportunities to make it happen. The Distance Delivery Team’s mahi is a direct response to this. Chloe and Jules, who make up this team, work within a wider group of eight who deliver the Bachelor of Culinary Arts (BCA) at the Food Design Institute, Otago Polytechnic. The course currently has approximately 85 ākonga across New Zealand and abroad, 25% of whom are in the Distance Delivery pathways. These pathways include a flexible Work Based Learning (WBL) pathway and an Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) pathway that formally recognises experienced professionals’ expertise, alongside on-campus offerings. Ākonga are predominantly working chefs, hospitality leaders and culinary educators from across Aotearoa and abroad.

Chloe’s background in secondary education, design and hauora, informs a learner-centred holistic approach to education, while Juliane is a chef-turned-online-learning-coordinator with expertise in positive culinary leadership. Together they design, deliver and review the BCA Work Based Learning (WBL) and Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) pathways. They collaborate with the wider BCA team and maintain regular dialogue with industry mentors to keep ākonga projects authentic and impactful.

The programme’s bicultural framework, co-designed with Māori chefs, learners, and industry, fosters a kaupapa where ākonga, community, and environment can thrive. To support this, the team equips aspiring and current culinary leaders with tools to cultivate workplace hauora, enhancing the wellbeing of themselves, their teams, and their workplaces.

This means equipping chefs with the skills to design menus that are sustainable for staff workloads and providing them with a leadership toolkit to manage high-pressure situations. As many chefs are time-poor and new to higher education, the learning environment is made intentionally safe, supportive, and mana-enhancing. This is done by embedding manaakitaka (care and respect for others' wellbeing), whanaukataka (positive relationships and belonging), and kotahitaka (unity, collaboration, and shared purpose) within the team's teaching practice.

Within the Work Based Learning pathway, students who are already in the industry can study the BCA while remaining in full-time work. The programme is delivered entirely via distance, with ākonga working through a series of co-designed projects tailored to their specific work context. The team works with ākonga and workplace mentors to guide them through projects and provide support. Regular three-way reviews with the learner, mentor and employer keep the scope flexible yet focused, allowing projects to remain viable even when business conditions change. A tripartite agreement between the facilitators at Otago Polytechnic, the workplace, and the learner outlines key responsibilities for all parties, ensures that students have sufficient support within the workplace, and safeguards their ability to continue studying in the case of a workplace relationship breaking down. In the first year of the WBL pathway a further safeguard was added to the agreement, requiring students to complete their 90-day trial period before starting study.

The Assessment of Prior Learning pathway enables experienced culinary professionals to validate their industry skills and knowledge through the development of a reflective portfolio, which is assessed against the BCA graduate profile. Within the portfolio, ākonga use storytelling to reflect on their experiences under other people's leadership, critically evaluate their past and current leadership practices, and develop an evolving understanding of effective leadership in the context of hauora. Many of the team's ākonga are culinary tertiary educators; others are experienced chefs who engage with the APL pathway to allow them to transition to secondary school cookery teaching. Through the APL pathway, the team has upskilled over 25 culinary lecturers across Aotearoa in culinary leadership education, working with lecturers from EIT, Toi Ohomai, Wintec, Weltec, Ara, and NorthTec. They have also partnered with the William Angliss Institute in Australia to support the upskilling of their culinary educators. By working with existing leaders and educators on prioritising hauora in leadership, the team contributes to real positive change for the next generation of young chefs.

The team further promotes hauora through its industry networks. Since 2015, the BCA programme has hosted the *Break the Cycle* Facebook group, connecting over 130 national and international industry professionals to share stories of positive well-being practices. In 2024 they expanded this initiative with the launching of the *She'll Be Right* podcast series, offering chefs a platform on which to share stories and engage in critical conversations about workplace culture and hauora. The team's research connects with like-minded educators to drive industry change at an international level. Both APL and WBL pathways have had a 100% success rate since their inception, including all of their Māori, Pasifika, and neurodiverse students.

“As our mahi filters outwards, from individual ākonga to employers and the wider industry, it cultivates a generation of chefs who can sustain both their craft and the wellbeing of their communities.”



## General Group Award

Category:  
Progressing educational partnerships and collaboration

### New Zealand Sign Language Team

**Dr George Major,  
Susie Ovens,  
Rachel Coppage,  
Pascal Marceau,  
Rebekah Guy,  
Dr Agnes Terraschke,  
and Melissa Simchowitz**

Faculty of Culture and Society  
Auckland University of Technology

**“Our teaching methods model positive Deaf-hearing partnerships to build learners’ competence and confidence as interpreters and allies to the Deaf community.”**

The New Zealand Sign Language Team of Auckland University of Technology is a specialised team of three Deaf and four non-deaf academics teaching New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and NZSL-English interpreting in the Bachelor of Arts, located within the Faculty of Culture and Society at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). AUT is the only university in Aotearoa that offers majors in NZSL. NZSL and Deaf Studies prepares ākonga (students) to sustain positive, linguistically and interculturally competent relationships with Deaf colleagues, clients, customers and learners. The NZSL-English Interpreting major is an intensive programme which is accountable to the Deaf community and stakeholders and produces qualified entry-level interpreters who are safe to practise upon graduation.

The NZSL team draws on diverse experiences for the benefit of their learners. With a professional background in interpreting, George Major leads most of the practical interpreting courses, co-teaching with Susie Ovens for expert Deaf eyes on students’ NZSL output. Rachel Coppage focuses on Deaf culture and agency in her teaching, while Pascal Marceau introduces beginner signers to NZSL through immersion. Susie leads more advanced NZSL courses and supports students to develop NZSL proficiency through community engagement. Rebekah Guy and Melissa Simchowitz are experienced professional interpreters, specialising in practical NZSL-English interpreting courses, and Agnes Terraschke coordinates real-world work experience for final year interpreting students.

Across the two majors, ākonga are both Deaf and non-deaf and come from multi-lingual backgrounds. EFTS enrolments across 2018–2024 totalled 265, of which 43 (16.2%) were for ākonga Māori and 37 (14.0%) were for Pacific learners. AUT’s Graduate Destination Survey data 2018–24 shows that 100% of respondents from the NZSL Interpreting and Deaf Studies majors are in full or part-time employment.

The NZSL team’s practice is based on allyship between Deaf and hearing communities. The team reinforces this approach by fostering active partnerships with diverse stakeholders, ensuring authentic learning opportunities in the community for their ākonga. Their innovative curriculum sustains social wellbeing for the Deaf community in Aotearoa and influences interpreter training practices internationally. The team helps students identify deficit-oriented attitudes and encourages

Deaf gain to support Deaf self-determination. All their language classes are immersive so, from day one, hearing students are immersed in a NZSL world with a Deaf teacher. Students are taken into the Deaf community where they observe, interact, reflect, and share their experiences. They are asked to critically analyse audism as a form of discrimination against Deaf people, and to explore their own positionality. In this way, the team shapes its ākonga into respectful professionals who also understand the need for self-care and avoidance of vicarious trauma when working alongside potentially vulnerable clients.

The team also works across the university to support hauora for all Deaf students at AUT as they navigate the complexities of studying at a mainstream English and hearing-dominant institution. This includes; student advising additional to their regular workload, assessment equity, supporting refugees, and safety, such as campaigning successfully in 2023 for a fit-for-purpose alert system. The team find Deaf and hearing co-teaching in the interpreting classroom contributes to the authenticity of teaching practice and assessment. For example, within the live ethical decision-making role-play examination for final year interpreting students, students are exposed to the realities of interpreting in the safety of the classroom using Deaf and non-deaf actors. The team presented learnings from this Deaf/non-deaf partnership approach at the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters Oceania conference in August 2025.

The team believes inclusivity means not only making the classroom an accessible and safe place for all people but also actively making space for learners from marginalised backgrounds, such as disabled, gender diverse, neurodiverse, deaf and hard-of-hearing, to be confident in their own identity. Deaf academics in the team, who have experienced the “illusion of inclusion” in their own education, model teaching with confidence in an institution where English is the dominant language and academic expectations are deeply entrenched in English. In early theory classes, video materials and live class discussions are interpreted by a team of professional NZSL-English interpreters. In a reversal of the more usual experience, Deaf and signing ākonga are advantaged and can have direct communication with the lecturer, while non-signing students experience having to access lecture content through interpretation.

The team is also committed to building its capacity to serve the Turi Māori (Māori Deaf) community in a culturally appropriate manner, guided by the principles of Te Aronui, AUT’s Te Tiriti framework. In 2023, responding to a need for fuller representation of Māori perspectives in its courses, the team secured funding to partner with two Māori students to advise on and embed mātauranga Māori resources, including NZSL waiata and Te Ao Māori contexts, with Turi Māori signers. These students also analysed the NZSL health corpus and identified suitable narratives from Turi Māori signers, now used across all practical interpreting courses. The team has also developed strong relationships with Rūaumoko marae – Aotearoa’s only Deaf marae – and with Tū Kōkiri, a post-secondary transition programme run by Ko Taku Reo Deaf Education for young Deaf people, many of whom are Māori.

Service learning with Deaf groups is a required element for students who enrol in NZSL courses, such as visits to the Deaf Wellbeing Society and Deaf Seniors at Auckland Deaf Society, as well as the Ko Taku Reo Deaf Education Preschool and Tū Kōkiri. Service learning responds to community-identified needs while helping students develop their NZSL skills and cultural understanding. Due to their sensitive nature, opportunities for practicums in health contexts are rarely available, yet community interpreters are commonly called upon to work in these settings. To address this gap, the team decided to bring the health setting

into the classroom through naturalistic recorded role-plays. In 2021, Susie and George (in collaboration with academics at Te Herenga Waka VUW and pharmacists) secured \$19,000 external funding from the Ministry of Social Development to support the “Deaf Health Stories in NZSL” project. In an earlier project, the team asked Deaf people from around Aotearoa to describe the barriers they had faced in the health system. They created the NZSL health corpus for use in future linguistics research on NZSL.

“Everything the NZSL team does is underpinned by collaboration with the Deaf community. Our goal is to create a resilient community, support a healthy and vibrant language, and to graduate students who embody and actively practise allyship.”



## Le Moana Mua Award

### Dion Enari

Lefaoali'i Associate Professor  
Ngā Wai a Te Tūī (Māori and  
Indigenous Research Centre)  
and School of Healthcare  
and Social Practice  
Unitec

**“Another Pacific person graduating is another victory for our people.”**

Once classifying himself as a high school failure, Dr Dion Enari is now the first Pasifika Associate Professor at Unitec. His teaching, research and media commentary has helped lead impressive educational change for his people. As a Pacific educator, he knows his role is crucial in nurturing and pushing his students toward academic success. He considers it a privilege to have taught hundreds of students, helping to build the next generation of “articulate and fearless contributors to society”. His educational philosophy is holistically learner-centric, with a special interest in the needs of Pacific learners, privileging their cultural capital as a carrier, not a barrier, to academic success. He reminds all of his students that their cultural knowledge is their competitive advantage in mainstream society.

Dion is a New Zealand-born Samoan who was raised in Australia, and has lived in Samoa. He was a lecturer/tutor at University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology between 2017–2019 and a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sport and Recreation at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) from 2021–2025. He is currently an Associate Professor at Unitec teaching in their Master of Applied Practice and this year became the first and only Associate Professor of Pacific heritage at Unitec. His teaching and learning approach aligns with the Unitec Pacific strategy goals: increase Pacific student success, completion and participation rates; grow Unitec staff capability and capacity to empower and support Pacific students; grow Pacific knowledge and awareness in learning, teaching and research, and develop and maintain partnerships with Pacific communities and stakeholders.

Dion has redesigned all his courses to include Indigenous models and perspectives. For example, within his Sport Development paper he adjusted content delivery to ensure that indigenous theory (particularly Māori models and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Pasifika models) was embedded throughout the course to create a whakawhanaungatanga learning environment for the students. This positioning invites Māori and Pacific students to bring their cultural knowledge to class, whilst also providing a safe environment for other students to learn Indigenous ways and share their lived experiences. Similarly, in his postgraduate course Pacific Health Research and Design, content was redesigned to include Decolonising and Indigenising Health for Pacific people and the importance of Pacific research methodologies.

As the only Pacific academic teaching staff in the School of Sport and Recreation AUT, and with Pacific students being the second biggest cohort, Dion's workload was exacerbated. He became the Pacific member on the school's board of studies, where he was able to advocate for Pacific student needs. In his leadership roles, he supported staff through professional development and was responsible for curriculum development to satisfy industry, community, professional, and student needs. Dion also addressed deficit-framing of Pacific learners by advocating for the inclusion of their cultural capital and the power of their bilingualism and multilingualism. He was also Co-Chair of the Moanaroa AUT Pacific Research Network, which is one of the highest priority research networks at AUT and sits across the whole University. In this role he was able to advocate for Pacific teaching pedagogy to be implemented in a way that uplifts Pacific students and is not over-burdensome on Pacific staff. He was also able to assist Pacific educators in getting their theories and frameworks published in academic journals and implemented nationally and internationally.

Throughout his teaching Dion has adapted his practice to meet the needs of his students. He constantly takes on student feedback and makes his lectures responsive to the diversity of his student cohort. When he found some Pacific students preferred group discussions to individual problem-solving in class, he adjusted lessons to allow for more collective discussions. This peer learning gave his Pacific students autonomy on how they learned, fostering a culture which enabled them to do well on the course and, more importantly, to become lifelong learners. When students appreciated his using Samoan phrases throughout class, he added more, including their English translations. This resulted in several students, who hadn't previously attended lectures, attaining 100% attendance in his classes.

As a Samoan man who knows his genealogical links through the islands of Samoa and throughout the Pacific, Dion gets to know his Pacific students from this positionality of familial, ancestral, and Pacific linkage. On his students' first day, he asks them to speak of their ancestral linkages and what they wish to draw from their cultural backgrounds in his class. He draws out and nurtures their prior knowledge and invites them to bring their rich lived experiences into the classroom. When Dion acknowledges that he speaks Samoan, conversational Māori, and has a basic understanding of other Pacific languages, he is given a deeper access and understanding of Pacific students that cannot be gained by a non-Pacific educator. This enables him to encourage and reward the knowledge students have in their languages; empowering their identity and reinforcing the concept that their cultural knowledge is academic knowledge.

Dion has been a keynote speaker at many events and is regularly invited to provide workshops to educators around the world on how to better know their Pacific and Indigenous students. As well as ensuring that Pacific methods of learning and the genealogical knowledge systems of Pacific students are upheld and further strengthened, it also gives non-Pacific students access to Pacific knowledge. As a Pacific researcher, Dion has created his own education methods via academic publications, speeches and professional development workshops. These have been implemented in curricula around the world for both Pacific and non-Pacific education networks. In class, Dion ensures Pacific students are confident in who they are, and that non-Pacific students feel safe and understand the importance of Pacific methods.

As a community role model, Dion has high expectations of his Pacific learners and he reminds them of their position in making their communities a better place. By having

the students reflect on their position within society along with community groups and industry, students realise that they are the authors of the future. Dion ensures he bridges connections between Pacific learners and their community, church, motherland, families, other Pacific educators, ally non-Pacific educators and Pacific pioneers across sectors.

“ I don’t just want my students to do well. I want them to do better than me and set the bar higher than I ever could ”



## Le Moana Mua Award

### Dr Moeata Keil

Senior Lecturer,  
Faculty of Arts and Education,  
University of Auckland

**“I centre Pacific identities and cultures in my teaching, building authentic relationships and creating inclusive spaces where students feel valued, respected, and supported.”**

Moeata’s journey from being a student to a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Auckland shapes her passion for teaching. She was raised in Samoa and moved to Aotearoa for tertiary education, becoming the first in her family to graduate from university. Moeata strives to create environments that foster community, belonging and student excellence. Her teaching is relational, holistic and grounded in Pacific knowledge and she uses inclusive, innovative and student-centred practices to support Pacific and diverse learners to succeed. Her teaching excellence was recognised in 2024 through two awards, the Faculty of Arts and University of Auckland Teaching Excellence awards.

Moeata’s early teaching experiences in 2011 as a Tuakana mentor and tutor in Sociology were formative as she was able to integrate Pacific ways of seeing, knowing and doing in teaching and learning spaces. She found that bringing her cultural identity with her into the classroom resonated with Pacific students – and students in general – because her focus was on cultivating relationships. She held part-time lecturing roles from 2015 to 2018, where she redesigned Sociology papers to embed Indigenous and Pacific worldviews into the curriculum and, since 2020, has been a full-time lecturer in Sociology. During her initial two-year contract she developed a Sociology pathway for the Tertiary Foundation Certificate (TFC), a transition programme with a high number of Pacific students, which resulted in two new courses. In 2022, she was appointed as a full-time permanent lecturer.

Grounded in Pacific knowledge and a commitment to Pacific student success, Moeata has redesigned key courses to create a pathway from undergraduate to postgraduate study. These now critically examine social policy and justice issues through Pacific and intersectional lenses. Students explore policy challenges using Indigenous, Pacific, feminist, and queer theories. They challenge colonial constructs of gender and family and analyse how state policies shape gendered and family lives. The Sociology learning community is richly diverse, with strong Pacific student representation but a key challenge across the Faculty of Arts and Education is the declining retention and progression of Pacific students. As a Samoan/Pacific educator, Moeata is committed to driving change by creating learning environments that foster belonging, affirm cultural identity, and empower Pacific students to thrive.

To demonstrate her commitment to professional development and leadership, Moeata co-led the University of Auckland's first cross-university Pacific Early Career Academic Network (PECAN). This network connects 85 Pacific educators, academics, and postgraduate students, creating a supportive space within which to share knowledge, build teaching and research capacity, and grow leadership in academia. For example, PECAN empowers Pacific doctoral students and early career academics to develop their teaching philosophies, innovate in their practice, and strengthen their leadership skills. As a co-leader of PECAN, Moeata facilitated, led and participated in workshops that enhance Pacific pedagogical practices. She also led a 'reflexive teaching praxis' workshop that encouraged the sharing of teaching pedagogies and innovative teaching practices for engaging diverse learners. To enhance pedagogical research, she has collaborated on five transdisciplinary peer-reviewed publications on Indigenous and Pacific pedagogies. One of these establishes Pacific pedagogy as decolonial practice and a second examines how Pacific pedagogies enabled connections with students when COVID-19 required online modes of teaching. The other empirically-based studies explore Māori and Pacific students' experiences in higher education.

Moeata says reflexive praxis is at the heart of her teaching. Through ongoing self-reflection, she critically examines how her cultural background, experiences, and assumptions shape her practice. She recognises the privilege of her role and never assumes a one-size-fits-all approach. To stay responsive, she invites anonymous formative feedback from her students each semester and adapts her teaching based on their insights. At the end of each course, she invites students to reflect by offering two gifts: one they received from the course and one they wish to give to her and future students, such as potential lecture topics. This practice honours their contributions, builds community, and affirms the value of their voices.

Moeata regularly invites Māori and Pacific scholars and community leaders to share their work, such as addressing family poverty or exploring social policy through Mātauranga Māori, connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts and Indigenous knowledge systems. She is also actively involved in the Tuakana programme, a pastoral care programme for Māori and Pacific students that centres around Indigenous and Pacific ways of being and knowing. For her undergraduate courses, she works alongside Tuakana mentors to deliver workshops that provide academic support with course content and assessments. Her teaching involves a strengths-based approach rooted in Pacific perspectives. She draws on Pacific norms as solutions to contemporary social issues, such as framing multigenerational households/living as a solution to the housing crisis, highlighting the value of collectivist family models.

Moeata invests much of her personal identity into building connections with students. She enters all teaching spaces by sharing her positionality – who she is personally and professionally. She finds there is a real power in knowing and using students' names as it fosters connection and creates community. She relates theory and abstract ideas to her own life and encourages students to reflect and draw on their personal experiences. She also uses diverse teaching strategies to create dynamic learning experiences, such as incorporating news media, social media, video clips, posters and class debates into teaching. Moeata takes a 'no one gets left behind' approach, cultivating mana-enhancing spaces through strong relationships and pastoral care. After assessments, she personally follows up with students who haven't submitted, offering support and reassurance that they are valued and their success matters. For assignments, she offers encouraging,

collaborative and constructive feedback that prioritises learning and growth over grades.

“By supporting their educational journey, I promote Pacific excellence — enhancing retention, progression, and completion, and helping to support the next generation of bold Pacific leaders.”



## Te Tohu Reo Māori Award

### Haani Huata-Allen

Waikato-Maniapoto,  
Ngāti Kahungunu,  
Ngāti Porou,  
Ngāti Whakaue me Ngāti Pikiao)

Head - Leadership Development  
and Reo and Cultural Capability  
Kiriwhanake  
Te Wānanga o Aoteaora

Haani's foray in to supporting the te reo Māori language learning journey of students began in 1986 where she started out as a tutor in various Māori language papers at the University of Waikato, under the expert guidance of Haupai Puke, Dr Te Rita Papesch, Sir Tīmoti Kāretu, Dr Ngāhuia Dixon, Professor John Moorfield and Professor Te Wharehuia Milroy. I name these people to show the calibre of expert Māori language speakers and teachers who were key influencers in the development of Haani's own teaching practice that she has sustained at a high level for the last 39 years.

Her nominators describe how "Her students have had access to her considerable skills and to the body of knowledge she developed through growing up immersed in te ao Māori, she recognises the privilege and duty of preserving and sharing this knowledge in ways that maintain its integrity and vitality for future generations."

Haani started as a lecturer at the University of Waikato in 1990, which at the time also saw her teaching their papers to local high school students and in the Early Childhood teaching programme. In 1999 she moved to Christchurch to teach in the Māori Language programme at the University of Canterbury where she, alongside Dr Te Rita Papesch, revamped the undergraduate programme and introduced the full immersion Masters of Te Reo Māori. Haani left there in 2003 and started working at CPIT (now Ara) as the Head of the department, where she taught from Level 3-7 and introduced an immersion Bachelor's degree alongside Dr Eruera Tārena. In 2011 she moved back to Hamilton and has been employed by TWoA ever since in curriculum design of professional development for kaiako across the whole country, supporting the delivery of wānanga reo, and at different times, as a kaiako in the immersion programmes. She is currently the Head of Leadership Development and Reo and Cultural Capability.

What drives her teaching is her belief that every student she teaches will eventually lead to the reestablishment of te reo Māori as the primary language of their home. For example, one of her nominators, Hemi Hoskins, entered into her classroom at CPIT with limited reo. He completed his Bachelor of Language (Māori) with Haani, which provided him with the language base to be invited to attend Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo (The Institute of Excellence in the Māori Language,

which is an invitation-only course). He started teaching te reo at CPIT and when Haani left, he took over her job as Head. His children are first-language speakers of te reo Māori and he is now her upline manager at TWoA. This is one of her greatest highlights of being a kaiako – seeing her former students raising their children in te reo Māori, which we saw as a significant impact of her teaching – when the student walks in the same shoes as the kaiako.

Alongside her academic leadership in teaching te reo in the tertiary sector, Haani has also taught at Kutatahi, Te Kura Reo o Maniapoto and is a key member of He Reo Pūrekireki, developing and implementing a te reo Māori revitalisation strategy for Purekireki Marae situated in Pirongia. For this kaupapa Haani is involved in setting up and supporting 5 wānanga a year for whānau that will increase the capabilities of whānau members to perform pivotal roles as kaikaranga and kaikōrero for Pūrekireki Marae. She is also a kapa haka expert, and has used her reo skills to create compositions for kapa haka that she has been involved in around the country.

Her teaching practice does not just sit within the classroom but throughout all aspects of her life. She regularly takes students to marae, various kaupapa, and invites community members, in particular elders, into the classroom. She works across departments, often bringing te reo into spaces where it is seldom heard. One year her students formed their own class kapa haka group and performed at the Waitaha Senior Kapa Haka Regional Competitions. She exemplifies te reo as not just a language of the classroom or a subject of study but as part of a way of life.

Haani's practice is reflective, engaging and current. Her students range from highly proficient speakers to those with little reo; from young to old, many of whom are dealing with intergenerational language trauma. Therefore, she is compassionate in her approach and strives to provide a safe environment for all her taura (students). Haani pivots and is able to align activities, often unplanned, with the language level and interest of the student, in real time. She is pivotal in creating strong reo Māori domains within the communities that she has lived in, knowing that they are domains that her students then interact with and in.

She is not afraid to have difficult conversations with taura and they soon realise that it comes from a place of passion and aroha for te reo so that they too strive for excellence as embodied in the phrase that underpins Haani's teaching, 'ko te reo kia tika, ko te reo kia rere, ko te reo kia Māori' – accuracy of te reo, fluency of te reo, and naturalisation of te reo.

Her nominators said: "As we think about the achievements of this remarkable woman we are filled with joy, our wairua are uplifted. There are many people who have benefitted from her mentorship, many reo students who have been gifted with her teachings. It is true that the mind is perhaps the home of the skills that make a learned person successful. But it is in her heart you find aroha for the revitalisation of te reo that has been implanted into those who have learnt from her."



## Te Tohu Reo Māori Award

### Haani Huata

Waikato-Maniapoto,  
Ngāti Kahungunu,  
Ngāti Porou,  
Ngāti Whakaue me Ngāti Pikiao)

Head - Leadership Development  
and Reo and Cultural Capability  
Kiriwhanake  
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

I tīmata te hīkoi a Haani ki te tautoko i te ara akoranga reo Māori i te tau 1986 i tōna tīmatanga mai hei kaiako i Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, i raro i te ārahitanga o Haupai Puke, o Tākuta Te Rita Papesch, a Tā Tīmoti Kāretu, a Tākuta Ngāhuia Dixon, Ahorangi John Moorfield me Ahorangi Te Wharehuia Milroy. E whakahuatia ana ēnei ingoa o ēnei tāngata hei whakaahua i te momo kaikōrero, kaiako reo Māori i noho hei kaikōkiri matua mō te whakawhanaketanga o ngā tikanga whakaako a Haani kua kawea e ia ki ngā taumata tiketike mō ngā tau 39 ka hipa ake nei.

E ai ki te hunga nāna i whakarewa tana ingoa “Kua whai wāhi āna ākongā ki ōna pūkenga nui me te mātauranga hōhonu nāna i whakatupu i a ia e tupu ake ana i roto i te ao Māori tūturu, ā, e whakaae ana ia ki tōna waimarie, me te whakaaro tuku iho kia whakapūmautia, kia tohaina hoki tēnei mātauranga, me te whai kia puritia te mana me te mauri o aua mātauranga mō ngā reanga kāore anō kia whānau mai.”

I tīmata a Haani hei pūkenga i Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato i te tau 1990, ā, i taua wā i te whakaako ia i ā rātou akoranga ki ngā ākongā kura tuarua, ā, i te hōtaka whakaakoranga Kōhungahunga anō hoki. I te tau 1999 ka nuku ia ki Ōtautahi ki te whakaako i roto i te hōtaka Reo Māori i Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, ā, ka noho tahi ia me Tākuta Te Rita Papesch, ā, i whakahoutia e ia te hōtaka paetahi, me tana whakauru i te Tohu Paerua mō Te Reo Māori reo rumaki. I wehe atu a Haani i reira i te tau 2003, ā, ka tīmata tana mahi i CPIT (e mōhiotia ana ināianei ko Ara) hei tumuaki mō te tari, ā, i whakaako ia i ngā Taumata 3-7, me tana whakauru i te tohu Paetahi i te taha o Tākuta Eruera Tārena. I te tau 2011 ka hoki ia ki Kirikiriroa, ā, ka whakawhiwhia ki te mahi e Te Wānanga o Aotearoa i roto i te hoahoa marautanga o te whanaketanga ngaiotanga mō te motu katoa, me te tautoko i te horanga o ngā wānanga reo, ā, i ētahi wā, hei kaiako i te hōtaka rumaki. I tēnei wā koia te Tumaki o Te Whanaketanga Ārahi Hautūtanga, me ngā Pūmanawa Ahurea.

Ko te mea e ārahi ana i āna whakaakoranga ko tana whakapono mā ia ākongā ka aratakina nei e ia e āwhina te whakapūmautanga anō i te reo Māori hei reo mātāmua mō tō rātou kāinga. Hei taura, i uru mai tētahi o te hunga whakarewa i tōna ingoa, a Hēmi Hoskins ki tōna akomanga ki Ara (CPIT) me tōna reo iti. I oti i a ia tōna Tohu Paetahi Māori i te taha o Haani, i whiwhi ai ia ki ngā pūkenga reo taketake, me te aha, ka pōwhiritia ia kia haere ki Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo (The

Institute of Excellence in the Māori Language, mā te pōwhiri rawa ka uru te tangata ki tēnei akoranga). Ka tīmata tana whakaako i Ara (CPIT), ā, i te wehenga atu o Haani, ka uru ia ki tana tūranga, hei Tumuaki. Ko ana tamariki he kaikōrero reo tuatahi i te reo Māori, kāti, koia tōna kaihautū i Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Koia tēnei tētahi o ngā mea tino hira ki a ia o tana mahi hei kaiako – te kitenga i ana ākongā e whakatupu ana i ā rātou tamariki ki te reo Māori, ki a mātou, he pānga nui tēnei o āna whakaakoranga – i ngā ākongā e hīkoi nei i ngā ara ka hīkoia e te kaiako.

I te taha o āna hautūtanga mātauranga mō te whakaako i te reo i te rāngai mātauranga matua, kua whakaako a Haani i Kutatahi, arā, Te Kura Reo o Maniapoto, ā, he tangata taketake ia nō He Reo Pūrekireki, e whakawhanake nei, e whakatinana nei i tētahi rautaki whakaora reo mō Pūrekireki Marae ki Pirongia. E whakarite ana a Haani, me te tautoko anō, i ētahi wānanga e 5 ia tau, e piki ake ai ngā pūmanawa o ngā tāngata o te whānau kia kawea e rātou ētahi tūranga taketake hei kaikaranga, hei kaikōrero hoki mō Pūrekireki Marae. He mātanga kapa haka hoki ia, ā, kua whakamahia e ia ōna pūkenga reo hei tito waiata mā ōna kapa haka huri noa i te motu.

Ehara i te mea e noho ana āna mahi whakaako i roto i te akomanga anake engari i ngā āhuatanga katoa o tōna oranga. Ka kawea auautia e ia ngā ākongā ki te marae, ki ngā kaupapa huhua, me tana pōwhiri i ngā mema hapori, otirā ngā pakeke, ki te akomanga. E mahi ana ia i ngā tari maha, me te kawē i te reo tē rangona i te nuinga o te wā. I tētahi tau, i tahuri āna akonga ki te whakatū i tō rātou kapa haka ake, ā, i tū ki te whakakite i ā rātou waiata i ngā Whakataetae ā-rohe mō ngā pakeke o Waitaha. E whakatinana ia i te reo, ehara i te mea hei reo anake o te akomanga, hei kaupapa mātauranga anake, engari hei tikanga noho i te ao.

I takea mai ngā tikanga whakaako a Haani i te huritao, i te tuituitanga, i ngā tikanga hou hoki o te wā. He matahuhua āna ākongā, tīmata mai i ngā mea matatau ki ērā he iti noa te reo, kāre kau rānei; mai i ngā pakeke ki ngā mea ririki, he tini o rātou kei te rongō i ngā mamaetanga o te hātepetanga reo, mai i ngā whakatupuranga o mua, heke iho. Nā reira, he ngākau aroha tōna i roto i āna mahi, me tana whai kia horaina he wāhi haumarū mō ana tauira. He kakama a Haani ki te whakanoho mai i ngā kaupapa, ki te whakarite hoki i ngā ngohe, i ētahi wā kāore i āta whakamaheretia, kia hāngai ki te taumata reo me te hiahia o te ākongā, i te wā e rere ana. Koia te pūtake mō te hanga rohe reo Māori pakari i roto i ngā hapori e noho nei ia, me tana mōhio koia ēnā ngā rohe e hīkoi haere nei, e noho nei āna ākongā.

Kāore ia e matakū ki te kōrero i ngā mea uaua ki ngā tauira, ā, ākuanei ka mōhio rātou i tīmata mai i tōna kaingākau me tana aroha ki te reo, nā reira, ākuanei ka tahuri ki te whai i te kairangitanga, arā tōna whakataukī e noho nei hei pou herenga mō te mahi whakaako a Haani, 'ko te reo kia tika, ko te reo kia rere, ko te reo kia Māori' (accuracy of te reo, fluency of te reo, and naturalisation of te reo).

E ai ki ngā kaiwhakarewa i tōna ingoa: "I a mātou e whakaaro nei mō ngā ekenga taumata o tēnei wahine whakamīharo ka hari te ngākau, ka hīkina ō mātou wairua. He tini anō ngā tāngata kua whiwhi painga i āna mahi hei kaiakopono, he tini anō ngā ākongā reo kua hāpainga e ana akoranga. He pono ko te hinengaro pea te kāinga o ngā pūkenga e piki ai tētahi tangata mātau ki ngā taumata. Engari kei roto i tōna ngākau te aroha mō te whakaoranga o te reo, me te aha, kua whakatōkia taua aroha ki ngā ngākau o ana ākongā."



## Kaupapa Māori Award

**Dr Melissa Anne McLeod**  
Ngāi Tahu

Associate Professor,  
Public Health Physician and  
Kaupapa Māori Epidemiologist  
University of Otago, Wellington

**“My teaching is grounded in love for my whānau and iwi, and a drive to address social injustice.”**

Melissa’s passion for public health and epidemiology began in her childhood, when she became curious about the differences and patterns she was seeing between the Māori and European sides of her own whānau. She remembers attending the tangi of her great aunts and uncles aged in their early sixties, who died of what should have been preventable causes like asthma and heart disease, whilst watching her European family aging into their 80s and 90s. Her training in public health medicine and Kaupapa Māori epidemiology have given her the language and frameworks to articulate the patterns and connections she observes in her own whānau: a gift she feels honoured to share with her students.

Melissa is an Associate Professor, public health physician and Kaupapa Māori epidemiologist based in Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka (University of Otago), Wellington. She has been teaching for ten years across diverse contexts, including general undergraduate courses for medical students, postgraduate courses as course convenor and lecturer, and specialised Kaupapa Māori epidemiology sessions for health professionals and organisations. She has recently delivered Kaupapa Māori epidemiology guest lectures for Auckland University, workshops for the New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM) and Te Whatu Ora staff and facilitates regular journal clubs for the Māori Public Health Medicine Registrars. She provides formal and informal mentoring of Public Health Medicine Registrars and actively supports Māori students on the Wellington campus. She also regularly advises and supervises Master of Public Health and PhD projects focused on equity and Māori health.

Melissa is a leader in Māori public health teaching who integrates Kaupapa Māori principles and pedagogy across all aspects of her work. She actively contributes to the Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka: Māori Strategic Framework 2030 by embedding tikanga Māori, te reo Māori, and mātauranga Māori into her teaching practices. As a senior Māori staff member, she supports Māori staff and learners to achieve their potential while aligning curriculum design and teaching approaches with Māori aspirations for equity and health advancement. Being a Māori lecturer in general courses allows her to connect core public health and epidemiological concepts with applied examples of impactful and high-quality Kaupapa Māori public health and epidemiology, drawing from her own work in cancer screening, ethnicity data quality, and modelling of health interventions from an equity perspective.

Melissa's students range from undergraduate learners to experienced health professionals, and classes vary in both size (10–300) and mode of delivery. Her teaching emphasises critical engagement with public health and epidemiological concepts through an equity lens, drawing from her own positioning and experiences. She encourages learners to reflect on their power and positioning, better enabling them to identify and address systemic health inequities. She faces the dual responsibility of challenging biases, stereotypes and victim-blaming language of students whilst also creating culturally safe learning spaces to demonstrate the relevance and application of mātauranga Māori in evidence-based practices. Central to her teaching is the recognition and affirmation of Māori rights to health, as guaranteed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Melissa developed a postgraduate Kaupapa Māori Epidemiology workshop to integrate Māori-led research on ethnicity data quality and racism as a health determinant into a previously “traditional” epidemiology course. She is thought to be the only epidemiologist in this country who delivers general epidemiology courses through a Kaupapa Māori lens. She uses technology to enhance collective learning and engagement, reflecting mātauranga Māori principles. This includes using interactive tools like Slido to encourage knowledge-sharing, and podcasts that align with kaitiakitanga (stewardship) by ensuring knowledge remains accessible and supports diverse learning styles.

Supporting Māori learners is a cornerstone of Melissa's teaching. She provides mentoring and personalised support through initiatives like public health revision sessions for Māori 5th year medical students, workplace mentoring of Māori Public Health Medicine Registrars, and pastoral support for the wide-ranging challenges faced by Māori students within the tertiary education system. In 2019/20, as part of a teaching team, Melissa contributed to the development of a new undergraduate public health module for 4th year medical students. She provided content for sessions on bowel cancer management, prioritisation and bias workshops and developed teaching approaches to acknowledge and support those with lived experiences and to create culturally safe learning environments. In 2020, the teaching team received an international award from the Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australasia (CAPHIA) ‘Award for Excellence and Innovation in Public Health Teaching’ for the MICN401 Public Health module.

Between 2022 and 2024 Melissa was the overall convenor of Principles of Epidemiology, leading the three teaching centres (Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin). Historically, this core paper delivered poor outcomes for Māori students, with a disproportionate rate of course failure for these students. She led the development of a strategy to address this issue, which included introducing close monitoring of the progress of the Māori students during the course and providing additional sessions and pastoral support where required. As a result, the pass rate for Māori completing that paper has been higher than the pass rate for non-Māori over the last three years (100% vs around 95% respectively) and in Wellington has achieved a 100% pass rate for Māori students over the past three years.

Melissa's influence in Māori public health and epidemiology extends beyond the classroom and directly informs her teaching. Her service on numerous committees and advocacy for equity-driven approaches reflect her commitment to systemic change. Current committees include Pae Whakatere (oversight of the BreastScreen Improvement Action Plan) and Te Tauraki IMPB Data Subcommittee. Previous roles include Directorship on ESR Board, advisor to PHARMAC, Bowel Screening Advisory Group, and the Māori Monitoring and Equity Advisory Groups. These roles enable her to champion Māori health priorities, ensuring that public health policies and practices align with Māori aspirations.

“Central to my teaching is the recognition and affirmation of Māori rights to health, as guaranteed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”



## Kaupapa Māori Award

**Tākuta Melissa Anne  
McLeod**  
Ngāi Tahu

Associate Professor, tākuta  
hauora tūmatanui, ā, kaimātai  
tahumaero Kaupapa Māori hoki  
Ōtākou Whakaihūwaka,  
Te Whanganui-a-Tara

**“Ko te pūtake o āku mahi whakaako ko taku aroha tino nui ki taku whānau me taku iwi, me taku whai kia whakatikaina ngā hē ā-hapori.”**

I tīmata te kaingākau o Melissa mō te hauora tūmatanui me te mātai tahumaero i tōna tamarikitanga, i tōna titiro ki ngā rerekētanga me ngā piki, ngā heke o ngā āhuatanga hauora, i te taha Māori me te taha Pākehā o tōna whānau. E maumahara ana ia ki tōna taenga ki ngā tangihanga o ōna tīpuna kuia, koroua i tōna whānau, i mate i ngā tau tuatahi i muri mai i te ono tekau tau. Te tikanga, kia aukatingia atu ēnā pūtake o te mate i mate ai rātou, ko te huangō tērā, ko te mate manawa tērā, me tana titiro ki tana whānau Pākehā, i piki haere tonu te pakeke ki te tau 80, 90 ahu whakarunga. Nā tōna whakangungutanga i te mahi tākuta hauora tūmatanui me te mātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori i mōhio ai ia ki te reo me ngā anga hei whakaahua i ngā tini putanga kētanga o te ao, tae atu ki ngā hononga ka kitea e ia i roto i tōna whānau: hei takoha tēnei i roto i ōna whakaaro, ka tohaina ki āna ākonga.

He Ahorangi Tūhono, tākuta hauora tūmatanui, ā, he kaimātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori hoki a Melissa, i roto i Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare ki Ōtākou Whakaihū Waka (University of Otago), i Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Ka tekau nei ngā tau e whakaako ana ia i ngā horopaki matahuhua, tae atu ki ngā akoranga paetahi ahuwhānui mō ngā ākonga tākuta, ki ngā akoranga paerua, hei kaiwhakarite akoranga, hei pūkenga hoki, me ngā wātū mātanga mātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori mō ngā kaimahi hauora ngaio, me ngā whakahaere. Kātahi anō ka tāpaetia e ia ētahi kauwhau manuhiri mātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori mō te Whare Wānanga o o Tāmakimakaurau, ētahi awheawhe hoki mā te New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM) me ngā kaimahi o Te Whatu Ora, ā, ka whakaritea e ia ētahi karapu tuhi kōrero auau mō ngā Kairēhita Tākuta Hauora Tūmatanui Māori. Ka tāpaetia hoki e ia te whakaruruhau mō ngā Kairēhita Tākuta Hauora Tūmatanui, ā, he kaha tana tautoko i ngā ākonga Māori i te whare wānanga i Pōneke. Tohutohu ai ia, whakahaere ai ia i te Master of Public Health me ngā kaupapa Tohu Kairangi e aro ana ki te tautika me te hauora Māori.

He kaihautū a Melissa i te ao whakaako hauora tūmatanui, e tuitui nei i ngā mātāpono Kaupapa Māori, me ōna tikanga whakaako ki roto i ngā āhuatanga katoa o tana mahi. E āta āwhina ana ia i te Anga Rautaki Māori o Ōtākou Whakaihū Waka: 2030 nā tana tāmāu i ngā tikanga Māori, i te reo Māori, me te mātauranga Māori ki āna tikanga whakaako. E tautoko ana ia i ngā kaimahi me ngā ākonga Māori kia tipu ki tō rātou tino teitei, inā hoki, he kaimahi Māori mātāmua ia i te tari,

waihoki, e whakahāngai ana ia i ngā hoahoatanga marautanga me ngā tikanga whakaako ki ngā wawata Māori mō te tautika me te kawenga whakamua o te hauora. Nā tana noho hei pūkenga Māori ki roto i ngā akoranga ahuwhānui i watea ai ia ki te tūhono i ngā ariā hauora tūmatanui, mātai tahumaero hoki, mā ngā tauira ka tāpaetia o ngā mahi hauora tūmatanui me ngā mahi mātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori kounga tiketike, i takea mai i āna ake mahi ki te tātari mate pukupuku, te kounga raraunga momo iwi, me te whakatauiria i ngā kōkiritanga rongoā hauora ina tirohia te taha tautika.

Ko ētahi o ngā ākonga a Melissa he ākonga paetahi, kāti, ko ētahi atu he kaimahi hauora ngaio, ā, ko ngā rahinga akomanga he rerekē, (10-300), he rerekē hoki ngā ara whakaako. E whakaū ana ana akoranga i te piringa arohaehae ki ngā ariā hauora tūmatanui, mātai tahumaero hoki, mā tētahi aronga titiro ki te tautika, i takea mai i tōna tū i te ao, me ōna wheako. He kaha ia ki te whakamanawa i āna ākonga anō ki te huritao mō tō rātou noho me tō rātou tū, e pai ake ai tā rātou tautohu, whakatika hoki i ngā korenga e ōrite o te pūnaha hauora. Ka riro māna ngā haepapa e rua hei kawē, te wero ki ngā haukume, i ngā whakaaro horapa me ngā kupu taunu a ngā ākonga ki te hunga kua whara i te pūnaha, me te whakawātea wāhi ako haumarū ā-ahurea hei whakaahua i te hāngai me te tika o te hoatu i te mātauranga Māori i roto i ngā tikanga mahi i takea mai i te taunakitanga. Kei waenga pū o āna mahi whakaako ko tana whakaae me tāna whakaū i ngā tika o te iwi Māori ki te hauora, e kīa taurangitia nei e Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I whakakaupapatia e Melissa tētahi awheawhe mātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori hei tuitui i ngā rangahau nā te Māori i ārahi mō te kounga raraunga momo iwi, me te kaikiri, hei pūtake putanga hauora, ki roto i tētahi akoranga mātai tahumaero “tuku iho i roto i te ao whare wānanga”. E ai ki ngā kōrero koia anake te kaimātai tahumaero Kaupapa Māori hoki i te motu katoa e hora nei i ngā akoranga mātai tahumaero ahuwhānui i runga i te tirohanga Kaupapa Māori. Ka whakamahia e ia ngā hangarau hei whakapiki i te akoranga me te tuituinga mai o te katoa, e whakaahua nei i ngā mātāpono mātauranga Māori. Ka uru ki tēnei mahi te whakamahi taputapu pāhekoheko pēnei me Slido hei whakatenatena i te whakawhiti mātauranga, me ngā pāhorangi e hāngai ana ki te kaitiakitanga mā tana whakaū tikanga e noho wātea ai te mātauranga, e tautoko ana hoki i ngā tikanga ako matahuhua.

Ko te tautoko i ngā ākonga Māori tētahi kahupapa nui o ngā akoranga a Melissa. Ka hora ia i ngā mahi whakaruruhau me te tautoko whaiaro mā ngā kōkiri pēnei i ngā wātū whakahou akoranga hauora tūmatanui mō ngā ākonga tākuta Māori tau tuarima, te whakaruruhau i te wāhi mahi mō ngā Kairēhita Tākuta Hauora Tūmatanui Māori, me te tautoko i ngā ākonga Māori i roto i ngā pīkauranga torowhānui i roto i te pūnaha akoranga mātauranga matua. I te tau 2019/20, hei wāhanga o tētahi tira whakaako hou, i āwhina a Melissa i te whakawhanaketanga o tētahi kōwae hauora tūmatanui mō ngā ākonga tau tuawhā. I horaina hoki e ia ngā akoranga mō ngā wātū mō te whakahaere i te mate pukupuku kōpiro, ngā awheawhe mō te whakaarotau me te haukume, ā, ka whakawhanaketia e ia ētahi tikanga whakaako hei whakatairanga, hei tautoko hoki i ērā kua whai wheako, hei hanga hoki i ngā horopaki ako haumarū. I te tau 2020 i whiwhi te tira whakaako i tētahi tohu ā-ao mai i te Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australasia, arā, ‘Award for Excellence and Innovation in Public Health Teaching’ mō te kōwae mō te Hauora Tūmatanui MICN401.

I waenga i 2022 me 2024 ko Melissa te kaiwhakarite ahuwhānui o Principles of Epidemiology, nāna i hautū ngā pūtahi whakaako e toru (Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Ōtautahi me Ōtepoti). I ngā tau o mua, kāore i tino pai ngā putanga mō ngā ākonga Māori i tēnei o ngā pepa taketake, me te taka ki tahaki o ēnei ākonga, arā, he maha atu kāore i puta te ihu, i tō rātou ōrau o te hunga whai i te tohu. Ka arahina e ia te tāreitanga o tētahi rautaki hei whakatika i tēnei

raru, ko ētahi o ngā rongoa ko te whakaurunga o te aroturukitanga pūputu i te kokenga whakamua o ngā ākongā Māori i roto i te akoranga, me te hora i ētahi wātū tāpiri, me ngā tautoko whānui, ina hiahiatia. Nā konei kua piki ake te pāpātanga putanga ihu o ngāi Māori e whakaoti nei i taua pepa i tērā mō te hunga ehara i te Māori mō ngā tau e toru ka hipa ake nei (100% ki te tōna 95% o tētahi atu rōpū), ā, i puta te ihu o te 100% o ngā ākongā Māori o Pōneke mō ngā tau e toru ka hipa ake nei.

Kei waho anō te awe o Melissa ki te hauora Māori tūmatanui mō te mātai tahumaero i te akomanga, ā, ka noho hei wāhanga o tana mahi whakaako. Hei whakaahua āna mahi i ngā komiti maha, me tana kauwhau tikanga mō ngā ara i takea mai i te tautika i tōna piripono ki te panoni tikanga i te pūnaha nui. He mema ia o te Komiti mō Pae Whakatere (e tirotiro nei ki te BreastScreen Improvement Action Plan) i tēnei wā, me te Komiti Whāiti o Te Tauraki IMPB Data. I mua he Kaiarataki ia i te Poari o ESR, he kaitohutohu ki a PHARMAC, he mema nō Bowel Screening Advisory Group, me ngā Rōpū Tohutohu mō Māori Monitoring and Equity. Nā ēnei tūranga ia i āwhina kia kawea whakamua ngā whakaarotau hauora Māori, i taea ai e ia te whakahāngai i ngā kaupapa here hauora tūmatanui me ōna tikanga mahi ki ngā wawata o ngāi Māori.

“Kei waenga pū o āku mahi whakaako ko te whakaae me te whakaū i ngā tika o te iwi Māori ki te hauora, e kīa taurangitia nei e Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”



## Kaupapa Māori Award – Group

### Master of Māori and Indigenous Leadership programme

Led by Associate Professor Garrick Cooper, Associate Professor Sacha McMeeking, Liam Grant, and Jamie Hape  
University of Canterbury

**“Our goal was to keep ākongā connected and on their whenua to ensure they could continue to work, support their communities, and have an impact whilst learning.”**

The University of Canterbury’s Master of Māori and Indigenous Leadership (MMIL) programme was sparked by a conversation between Sacha McMeeking (then Head of Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies) and Ta Tipene O’Regan, who reflected that the networks he developed at university were instrumental to his ability to lead and advocate for kaupapa Māori. The programme’s mission is not to teach business leadership or people-coaching, but rather to develop innovative and strategic leaders in diverse fields across Aotearoa, who can implement programmes to advance mana motuhake and tino rangatiratanga in their own communities.

The programme is based at the University of Canterbury (UC) but reaches across the motu, with ākongā coming from a wide range of backgrounds and occupations. They may be teachers, social workers, police, corrections officers, midwives, nurses, kaitiaki, IT technicians, theatre and creative artists, local and national government kaimahi, iwi and hapū leaders and trustees. All have the same goal, to be leaders in their space. Developing a programme that could be accessible to such a diverse range of students and support their unique needs was ambitious. The major challenges were isolation, location, the practical component, time and commitments, academic background and indigenous perspectives. Although it was initially envisioned MMIL would have a five-year lifespan, it has now been running for nine years, with over 400 students participating in 17 cohorts based across the motu, and a completion rate of 85% (compared to 68% for Māori master’s students overall at UC).

The kaupapa Māori-driven solution adopted by the programme team is to take the course to the students, to meet them where they are – in their rohe, at their marae – through wānanga delivery. The first two courses are delivered via six weekend wānanga held on marae. Wānanga is a culturally appropriate learning model and Māori pedagogical tool based on the concept of whanaungatanga and devoting extended periods of time to engage – kanohi ki te kanohi – in the process of sharing, reflecting, learning and understanding. The programme’s goal is to keep ākongā connected and on their whenua to ensure they can continue to work, support their communities, and have an impact whilst learning. This also enables students to build relationships and collaborate with their peers on their collective goals.

To ensure that students have practical experience in their communities and are well-placed to lead, the programme is structured around a practical project that the student designs and implements. The kaupapa is typically a passion project or aligned with work they are already doing for their organisation or community, but all projects revolve around developing mana motuhake in a cultural context.

They span diverse disciplines and industries in both public and private sectors. To enter the qualification each student submits a portfolio of experience which includes an outline of their proposed project. These projects are developed during the first two wānanga-based courses and delivered over the summer after students participate in a national or international tour designed to expose them to other relevant indigenous initiatives. After delivering their project, students theorise and research an aspect of it.

Early in the programme, it was found that students' study options could be limited by their academic background, with some lacking an undergraduate degree. To solve this, such students were allowed to enter the first two courses under a 60-point Postgraduate Certificate in Māori and Indigenous Leadership. Completing the certificate with a B-average allowed students to enter the full master's degree programme. Similarly, many students didn't enter the programme with the academic skills required to complete their research essay effectively. To scaffold their learning, the elective Kaupapa Māori Research Methods paper was made compulsory, and now provides additional support to aid the transition from group work to the more individualised work of writing the research essay. The programme's subject librarian attends wānanga to build relationships with students and help develop research skills and, since 2022, small groups of UC staff have travelled to local marae for three weekend writing retreats each year. To ensure that students can benefit from other indigenous perspectives, a compulsory international tour paper exposes them to these frames of reference through haerenga. Since 2017, students have visited locations in New Mexico, Alaska, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Washington State, Hawaii, and Australia.

The MMIL has always taken a team approach to learning. This involves contracting pou external to the university - eminent Māori leaders who act as mentors for each cohort. These pou have extensive leadership credentials in Māori society and not only bring their mana to the programme, but are also real-life exemplars of leadership who provide both grounded experience and an inspirational mandate for the students to emulate. Some examples are; Dr Bentham Ohia, CEO of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa 1999-2005, Che Wilson, a member of the Tekau-mā-rua who advise and represent the Māori Queen, and Professor Rangi Mataamua (Massey University) who was New Zealander of the Year in 2024. The programme also provides opportunities for its own teaching staff. It has recruited a number of esteemed tohunga from across the motu which has led to the upskilling of staff, giving them the opportunity to facilitate alongside some of the most respected minds in te ao Māori. The successful delivery of this comprehensive programme is an achievement that reflects the contributions of all UC staff, guest speakers, and contracted pou involved.

Key benefits of the MMIL are networking, new horizons, dissemination of research, and doctoral study. In 2021, it ran a symposium at UC showcasing the exciting initiatives alumni were implementing and sought funding to hold a further symposium this year. In order to make student research accessible to a wider Māori and indigenous audience, an open access online journal Te Tira, was started in 2023. Each year five of the best tuhinga are selected, edited and published. Many alumni progress on to doctoral study, either at UC or other institutions.

More than 10 alumni have enrolled in a PhD in Māori and Indigenous Studies or other disciplines at UC, from Social Work to Engineering to Education. At least 15 more have enrolled with other tertiary institutions around the motu.

“Our role as educators is not to make this change ourselves, but to empower others to advance mana motuhake and tino rangatiratanga in their own communities – to give our ākonga the mātauranga, academic skills, confidence, and networks to lead without compromising who they are.”



## Kaupapa Māori Award – Group

### Tohu Paerua mō Te Hautūtanga Māori, Iwi Taketake hoki

Led by Associate Professor Garrick Cooper, Associate Professor Sacha McMeeking, Liam Grant, and Jamie Hape

Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha

**“Ko tō mātou whāinga kia tūhonohono tonu ngā ākonga, kia noho tonu ki ō rātou whenua e pai ai te haere tonu o ā rātou mahi, me te puta haere tonu o ngā painga i te wā o te akoranga.”**

I tīmata te Akoranga Tohu Paerua mō Te Hautūtanga Akoranga Māori, Iwi Taketake hoki (MMIL) i tētahi kōrerorero i waenga i a Sacha McMeeking (I taua wā koia te tumuaki o Aotahi: Te Kura mō ngā Akoranga Māori, Iwi Taketake hoki), rāua ko Tā Tīpene O’Regan, nāna te kī, ko ngā kupenga i whakawhanaketia e ia i te whare wānanga i noho hei pūtake mō tana āhei ki te ārahi me te kawē tikanga mō ngā kaupapa Māori. E hāra te whāinga o te hōtaka i te whakaako i te hautūtanga pakihi, te whakangungu tangata rānei, engari kia tupu ai he kaihautū auaha, whakaaro rautaki hoki i ngā wāhanga mātauranga huhua puta noa i Aotearoa ka taea e rātou te whakatinana kaupapa hei kawē whakamua i te mana motuhake me te tino rangatiratanga i ō rātou hapori ake.

E haere ana te hōtaka i te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha – University of Canterbury (UC) engari e toro ana ki te motu katoa, me te piri tonu mai o ngā ākonga i te huhua o ngā ao, me ngā ara mahi. He kaiako ētahi, he kaimahi toko i te ora, he pirihihana, he āpiha whare herehere, he kaiwhakawhānau, he tapuhi, he kaitiaki, he kaimahi hangarau whakawhiti pārongo, he ringa toi whakaari, auaha hoki, he kaimahi kāwanatanga, ā-motu hoki, he kaihautū ētahi, ā, he kaitiaki ā-iwi, ā-hapū anō hoki. Kei ngā tāngata katoa te whāinga taurite, kia noho rātou hei kaihautū i tō rātou ao. He whāinga pae tawhiti te whakawhanake i tētahi hōtaka i wātea ki te matahuhua o ngā ākonga, ki te tautoko hoki i ō rātou hiahia ahurei. Ko ngā wero tino hira ko te noho taratahi, ko ngā takiwā noho, ko ngā mahi kikokiko tūturu, ko te wā me ngā whakaūnga k ite whakaoti mahi, ko te horopaki o muri o te tangata, me ngā whakaaro iwi taketake. Ahakoa i whakaarotia i te tuatahi ka haere te Tohu Paerua MMIL mō te rima tau, ka tae tēnei ki te iwa tau ōna e haere ana, ā, neke atu i te 400 ngā ākonga i roto i ōna tira 17 puta noa i te motu i whai wāhi mai, ā, ko te pāpātanga whakaoti kei te 85% (kia whakaritea ki te 68% o ngā tohu paerua Māori katoa i UC).

Ko te ara i hāpainga e te kaupapa nei i takea mai i ngā kaupapa Māori, arā, he hari i te tira whakaako ki ngā ākonga, ki te tūtaki ki a rātou i tō rātou wāhi mahi – i roto i ō rātou rohe, i ō rātou marae tonu – mā te hora wānanga i reira. E haere ana ngā kauapa tuatahi e rua mā ētahi wānanga i ngā mutunga wiki ka tū ki ngā marae. He huarahi tika ā-ahurea

tēnei mea te wānanga, ā, he ara whakaako Māori i takea mai i te ariā o te whanaungatanga, e noho ai te tangata i ōna hui anō, kanohi-ki-te-kanohi, mō tētahi wā āhua roa – i roto i te hātepe whakawhiti kōrero, huritao, me te hātepe ako, whai hoki i te māramatanga. “Ko tō mātou whāinga kia tūhonohono tonu ngā ākonga, kia noho tonu ki ō rātou whenua e pai ai te haere tonu o ā rātou mahi, me te puta haere tonu o ngā painga i te wā o te akoranga.” Mā konei ka āhei ngā ākonga ki te hanga hononga, ki te mahi pāhekoheko hoki ki ō rātou hoa mō ngā whāinga o te katoa.

Kia whai wheako ā-ringa ai ngā ākonga i ō rātou hāpori, kia pai ai tō rātou takatū mō ngā tūranga hautū, e whakatūria ana te hōtaka i roto i tētahi kaupapa mahi tūturu ka hoahoatia, ka whakatinanatia hoki e te ākonga. Ko taua kaupapa tētahi kaupapa kaingākau, he kaupapa rānei i whakahāngaitia ki ā rātou mahi kua tīmata kē i roto i tō rātou whakahaere, i tō rātou hāpori rānei, engari e noho ana te whakawhanake mana motuhake hei wāhi nui o ngā kaupapa katoa.

Ka kapi i a rātou ngā momo mahi me ngā ahumahi maha i roto i ngā rāngai tūmatanui, tūmataiti hoki. E uru ai te ākonga ki te tohu, ka tukua e ia tētahi pōtawhōrio o ana mahi, kei roto nei tētahi huatau o tana kaupapa e marohitia ana. E whakawhanaketia ēnei kaupapa i waenga i ngā akoranga wānanga tuatahi e rua, ā, ka horaina i roto i te raumati i muri i te whāinga wāhi o ngā ākonga ki tētahi haere ā-motu, ā-ao rānei hei whakakite i ngā kōkiri iwi taketake hāngai ki a rātou. I muri i te horanga o tana kaupapa, ka hanga ariā, ka rangahau hoki te ākonga i tētahi āhuatanga o roto.

I ngā marama me ngā tau tuatahi o te kaupapa, ka kitea nā ngā ekenga taumata akoranga i haukotia ētahi o ngā whiringa ako i wātea ki ngā ākonga, nā te mea kāore he tohu paetahi o ētahi. Hei whakatikatika i tēnei, i tukua ngā ākonga kia urutomo ki ētahi kaupapa mātauranga e rua i raro i tētahi Tohu Paetahi 60 tohu mō te Hautūtanga Māori, Iwi Taketake hoki. Nā te whakaoti i te tohu paetahi ki tētahi tohu B toharite i āhei ai ngā ākonga ki te uru ki te akoranga tohu paerua whānui. Waihoki, he maha ngā ākonga kāore i whakauru ki te akoranga me ngā pūkenga mātauranga tika hei whakaoti tika i tā rātou tuhinga rangahau. Kia piki ai tō rātou akoranga, i meatia te pepa mō Ngā Tikanga Rangahau Māori kōwhiri kia noho hei pepa whakahau, ā, e tukua ana he tautoko tāpiri ināianei hei āwhina i te whakawhitinga mai i tētahi momo mahi ā-rōpū ki tētahi tikanga mahi takitahi, ā, te tuhituhi i te tuhingaroa, te rangahau hoki. Haere ai te kaitiaki pukapuka ā-kaupapa o te akoranga ki ngā wānanga ki te whakapakari hononga ki ngā ākonga, kia tupu hoki ngā pūkenga rangahau, ā, mai i 2022, kua haere ētahi rōpū iti o ngā kaimahi o Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha ki ngā marae i ngā rohe mō ētahi wānanga tuhituhi e toru ia tau. Kia whai hua ai ngā ākonga i ngā whakaaro o ētahi atu iwi taketake, mā tētahi pepa haere ā-ao whakahau rātou e akoako ki ēnei whakaaro mā ngā haerenga. Mai i 2017, kua torotoro ngā ākonga ki ngā wāhi i New Mexico, i Alaska, i British Columbia, i Saskatchewan, i Washington State, i Hawaii, me Āhitereiria.

Mai rā anō, kua whai Te Tohu Paerua Hautūtanga MMIL i ngā tikanga āko ā-tira. Ka uru ki tēnei te kirimana i ngā pou i waho i te whare wānanga – he kaihautū Māori whai mana, ka noho hei kaiakopono mō ia tira. He tāngata whai mana ēnei pou i te ao Māori, ā, kāore e mutu mai i te whāinga mana mō te hōtaka, engari ka noho hei tauira o te hautūtanga i takea mai i ngā wheako taketake, mā ā rātou mahi whakamīharo ka oho ngā ākonga, me te whai i aua ara i tō rātou ao. Ko ētahi o ngā tauira ko Tākuta Bentham Ohia, Tumuaiki o Te Wānanga o Aotearoa 1999–2005, rātou ko Che Wilson, he rangatira noho i te Tekau-mā-rua, te kāhui tohutohu, tautoko hoki i te Ariki-Nui, ko Ahorangi Rangī Mataamua (Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa), te tangata o Aotearoa mō te tau 2024. He whāinga wāhi anō ō te akoranga mō āna kaimahi whakaako ake. Nā te kaupapa nei i karanga atu ki ētahi tohunga mai o te

motu katoa, i piki ai te whāinga pūkenga o ngā kaimahi, i taea ai hoki te whakaako i te taha o ētahi o ngā tino hinengaro o te ao Māori. He ekenga taumata te horanga whai hua o tēnei kaupapa whānui e whakaata nei i ngā mahi nui o ngā kaimahi o Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha katoa, āna kaikōrero manuhiri me ngā pou kua whai wāhi mai.

Ko ētahi o ngā hua matua o Te Tohu Paerua ko te whakawhanaunga, ko te mātai pae tawhiti, te hora rangahau ki te ao, me te whai tohu kairanga. I te tau 2021, ka whakahaeretia tētahi wānanga i Te Whāre Wānanga o Waitaha i whakakitea ai ngā kōkiri whakamere a ngā ākonga kua tohia, e whakatinanatia ana ināianei, me tana whaiwhai pūtea ināianei ki te whakatū hui taumata anō i tēnei tau. Kia wātea kē atu ai ngā rangahau ākonga ki tētahi minenga Māori, iwi taketake whānui kē atu, i tīmataria tētahi hautaka tuihono wātea ki te katoa, a Te Tira, i te tau 2023. Ia tau, ka kōwhiria ngā tuhinga tino pai e rima, ka etitatia, ā, ka whakaputaina ki te ao. He maha ngā tauira kua puta ka piki ki ngā akonga kairangi, ahakoa i Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, ahakoa i whare mātauranga kē atu.

Neke atu i te 10 ngā ākonga o mua kua whakauru ki tētahi Tohu Kairangi mō Te Mātauranga Māori, Iwi Taketake hoki, ki ētahi atu kaupapa ako rānei i Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, mai i Te Mahi Toko i Te Ora, ki te Mātai Pūhanga, ki te Mātauranga. 15 neke atu kua whakauru ki ētahi atu whare mātauranga matua huri noa i te motu.

“Ko te wāhi ki a mātou hei kaiako ehara i te mea kia kawea ēnei panonitanga, engari kia whakamanaia ētahi atu kia kawea whakamua i te mana motuhake me te tino rangatiratanga i ō rātou hapori ake – he tuku tonu i te mātauranga, i ngā pūkenga rangahau, i te māia me ngā whatunga tangata ki a rātou, kia kua hoki rātou e wareware ko wai rātou.”

## The story behind the korowai – Rauaroha

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The korowai – Rauaroha – is a chiefly garment that recognises the mana of the Educator of the Year, as part of the annual Te Whatu Kairangi awards ceremony. New recipients have the honour of being photographed wearing it at the ceremony, but it remains in the care of its guardian, Ako Aotearoa after the awards. However, recipients may request its use for formal occasions during the year. Meanwhile a taonga pounamu is bestowed on the new recipients of the Educator of the Year which they get to keep.

The karakia (ancient invocation) Te Hokai tells the story of how Tāne-nui-ā-rangi climbed to the uppermost of the twelve heavens to obtain the three baskets of knowledge – te Kete Tuauri (sacred knowledge), te Kete Tuatea (ancestral knowledge), te Kete Aronui (life's knowledge).

Before he received the three baskets of knowledge on arrival at the entrance of the uppermost heaven, Tikitiki-o-Rangi, Tāne was met by the spiritual beings who guard the doorway to Tikitiki-o-Rangi. After undergoing a ceremony, Tāne was guided to Io (the Supreme Being) where he was asked about the reason for his visit. Tāne was then taken to a place called Rauaroha where the male and female beings of Tikitiki-o-Rangi were, and he underwent ritual ceremonies to prepare him to receive the knowledge.

Rauaroha has been made entirely of muka (flax fibre) and bird feathers by Te Atiawa weaving expert, Veranoa Hetet. Rauaroha was six months in the creation and is the result of painstaking and fastidious work. During that time Veranoa allowed her hands the luxury of just three weeks rest.

It has been created using traditional methods handed down through six generations of Veranoa's whānau. Veranoa says that korowai are made to last and based on the longevity of similarly created Māori chiefly garments, Rauaroha will last for more than three hundred years. Ako Aotearoa acknowledges Veranoa's contribution to the Te Whatu Kairangi Awards.









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