

## **ABOUT US**



**OUR MISSION:** To make a positive difference in the lives of young people facing adversity, through social and creative initiatives, safe spaces, access to resources and tuition.

#### **OUR VALUES:**

AROHA - Giving our time, space & empathy inclusively for all rangatahi

TIKA - Doing what's right, doing what's good and doing what's best for rangatahi.

PONO - Being open, honest, transparent and working with integrity.

WHAT WE ARE: We're a Kaupapa Tiriti, multicultural, non-profit charitable trust founded in 2004, working across Tāmaki Makaurau with a social and creative focus. Our board of trustees and staff are culturally diverse with strong representation from youth, Tangata Whenua and Pacifica members. We are a registered charity with donee status.

WHAT WE DO: We deliver strength-based creative group projects, discussion groups, professional development, access to resources, safe spaces and mentoring. We teach creative, technical, digital, music and arts skills with a view to further education and vocation. Our team is made up of dedicated registered youth workers, many of whom are creative professionals and notable and award-winning artists in the NZ creative industries, all sharing the same passion: bridging the gap for our rangatahi. We have a 'youth for youth' focus, promoting young leaders and youth-led initiatives. 80% of our current staff started as participants.

**OUR SOCIAL FOCUS:** We work to create a more inclusive, resilient and connected community, promoting cultural identity and understanding, engaging young people with their local communities and opening doors for youth in underserved communities. We promote connectedness, belonging and the overall wellbeing of young people, with a focus on the most under resourced youth. We honour He Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embrace Tangata Whenua and Te Ao Māori.

#### **OUR CHARITABLE PURPOSES**

(As stated in our trust deed)

- a. To facilitate the promotion of a multicultural and diverse artistic and educational community. This includes mentoring and support for members of the community by our volunteers from diverse cultures and backgrounds
- b. To promote inclusivity, connectedness, participation, and to create an environment where youth of diverse ethnic backgrounds can come together and share ideas in a safe and understanding place;
- c. To focus on nurturing career pathways, education and the arts;
- d. To administer the premises as a venue for youth development programs, discussion groups, visual arts and audio arts and to facilitate its function as a meeting place, and in particular administer, and facilitate the use of the premises as a working art gallery, community radio station, practicing work space, community theatre and venue for films and documentaries;
- e. To assist individuals and Charitable Bodies and Community Organisations to further any Charitable Purpose;
- f. To liaise and work with other charitable organisations and groups with a similar mission.
- g. To acknowledge and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to embrace Hapu, Iwi and Whanau of the land in which we live.

### YEAR TO DATE...

We have continued to work with youth and young adults facing adversity, facilitating programs in a range of mediums such as discussion groups, vocational education, one on one and group mentoring, physical education, public speaking, broadcasting, multimedia, music, arts, and film. We have always considered these mediums to be a means to facilitate our youth in working together as a group, to gain understanding of different cultures, and as a means towards a vocation; to further career pathways and education. Through our strength-based programs, we have inspired youth to enrol in foundation courses, tertiary education and/or relevant internships or apprenticeships.

We welcome youth of all ethnicities. Extra attention is placed on the following groups who are less likely to be able to access services:

- Rangatahi Māori
- Pacific Youth
- Youth from refugee and migrant communities
- Youth excluded from mainstream education
- Youth facing or being released from incarceration
- Youth in protective custody
- Youth struggling with isolation/anxiety/depression
- Youth who identify with the rainbow community

## **DATA TOTALS**

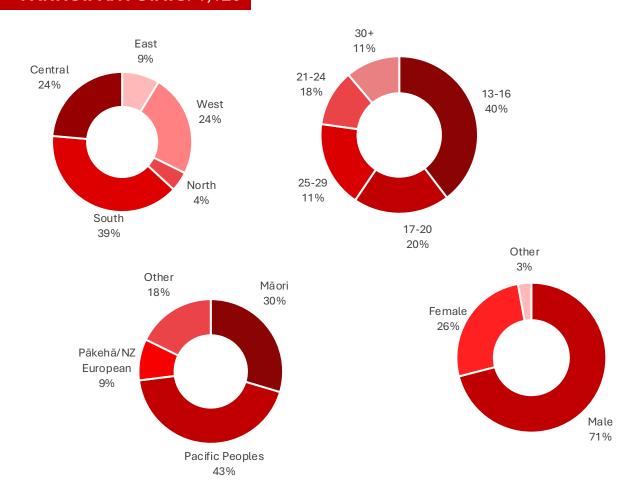


#### **KEY ACTIVITIES AND NUMBERS**

PROGRAM	CONTENTS	PARTICI PANT NUMBERS	2025	2024
Creative Pathways	Page 6		146	131
Navigators	Page 10		366	463
Tuakana & BTG	Page 14		369	589
Creative Labs	Page 19		179	233
Talanoa Tuesdays	Page 23		34	45
Rap 'n'Rec youth justice	Page 27		18	15
Internship: Music in Parks			8	9
Total Participants per program*			1,120	1,485
OtherActivities				
Events (approx.)	Page 29		450	320
Professional Development	t Page 33		31	26
WeeklyAverages				
Youth Participants			224	229
Youth development progra	ims		38	36
Key staff			24	21

<sup>\*</sup>Note - participants often engage in more than one program

#### **PARTICIPANT STATS: 1,120**



### RANGATAHI HIGHLIGHTS



The programs have helped me so much in pursuing my music and meeting people. I'm so grateful for the opportunities provided.



...the programme has strengthened my mental health in ways nothing else has been able to, especially since making beats and writing lyrics is such a healthy way to self express.



The opportunities to connect with industry professionals and utilise their guidance, knowledge, and feedback to build a career in music has been invaluable, I can't even put in to words how grateful I am.

This exposure has made it much easier for me to find myself executing on more ideas, building valued relationships and gaining a ton of knowledge about necessary skills that would otherwise be blindsided if I wasn't a part of this space.

This space is as close as you could get to a creative dojo for artists. So much access to valuable resources like the facilities, the space, and one-on-one's with experienced facilitators checks almost every box of what makes it difficult to pursue a creative passion.

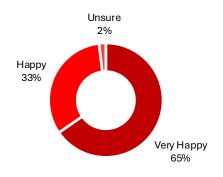
The feeling of accomplishment every time I walked out the door.

Thanks to this program, a year later I'm releasing music as an independent artist and have performed at 2 sold out shows.

## **FEEDBACK ANALYSIS**

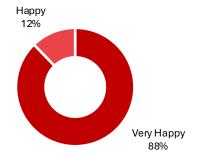
#### **HOW OUR RANGATAHI FEEL**





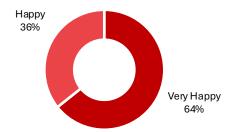
#### HAPPY WITH THE PROGRAM

"The best part for me is building strong community in a supportive environment and encouraging each other in life and our creativity."



#### HAPPY WITH THE FACILITATORS

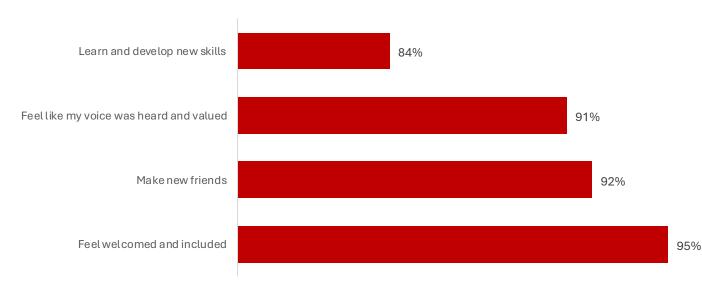
"The facilitators made me feel welcomed and part of the family. I was nervous going in for the first time but soon as I got inside they gave me an experience I never imagined I would have. It was a great opportunity."



#### HAPPY WITH THE FACILITIES/VENUE

"This space is as close as you could get to a creative dojo for artists. So much access to valuable resources like the facilities, the space, and one-on-one's with experienced facilitators checks almost every box of what makes it difficult to pursue a creative passion."

#### PARTICIPATING ON THE PROGRAM HELPED ME TO ...





#### **OVERVIEW**

A strengths-based youth development program that engages marginalised youth who have been excluded from mainstream school aged 13-17. We deliver project-based modules incorporating discussion groups with creative expression through creative writing, music and the arts. We teach transferrable skills such as digital literacy, confidence development and creative thinking. The underlying focus of this program is to guide disengaged youth into a positive learning experience. We place a strong focus on leveraging youth participants interests to identify and develop career pathways, entrepreneurship, future employment and hands on skills.



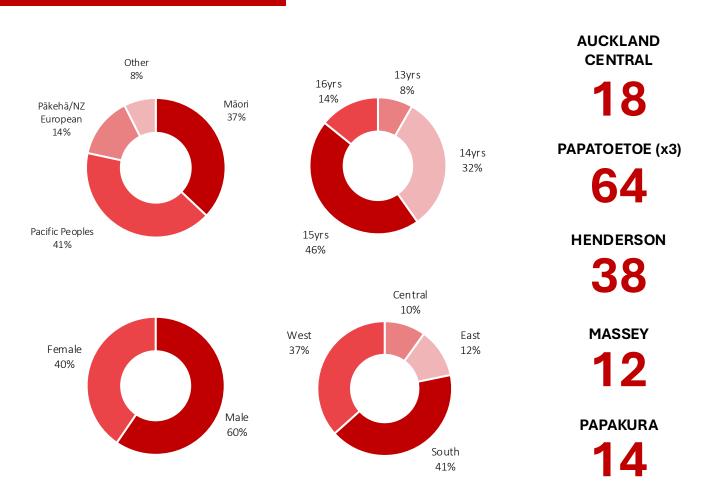


#### **SUMMARY**

Facilitated by Hariata Makiha, Albert Purcell, Lincoln Keepa, Shekinah Peneha, Noah Tauti & Ben Tuimaseve.

Creative Pathways provided a dynamic, hands-on learning environment where youth explored self-expression through street art, taonga pūoro, logo design, and merchandise creation across seven groups in Tāmaki Makaurau. The program fostered personal growth and confidence as participants created tangible projects, such as custom-designed t-shirts, while engaging with industry professionals and learning about viable career pathways. Highlights included witnessing the transformation in student engagement, creativity, and social skills, as well as the positive impact of building strong facilitator-student relationships over the year. However, challenges such as irregular attendance, time constraints, and diverse student needs required ongoing adaptation. Key learnings involved refining communication, managing group dynamics, and recognising the value of creative expression in boosting student confidence and reconnecting them with learning.

#### **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 146**













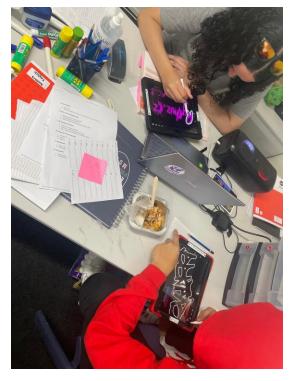




















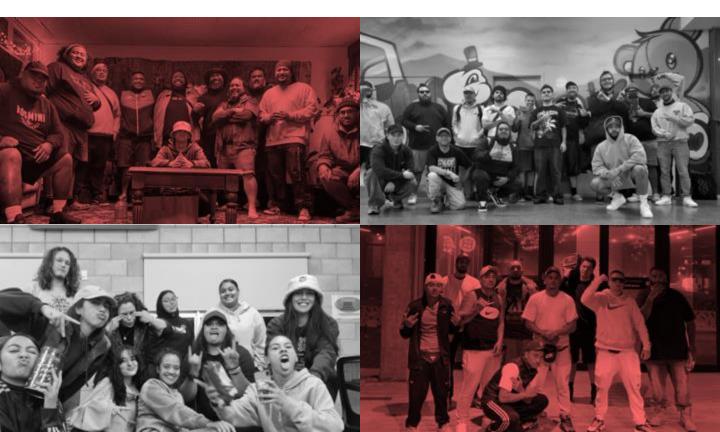




#### **OVERVIEW**

Navigators provides a free weekly drop-in creative program designed for young people who are looking for opportunities to connect, engage in conversations, and explore their creativity through music creation and related art forms. Through our weekly check-ins and creative workshops, we aim to facilitate meaningful connections and collaborative projects.

Our program is designed for both beginners and advanced creatives to enjoy, and includes a range of activities such as Talanoa (group discussions), guest speaker sessions, creating collaboratively, writing and recording projects, professional development, video shoots and live showcase events, offering a diverse platform for building networks, skill enhancement and performance practice. With a focus on engaging with youth, we prioritise the establishment of connections through shared experiences, stories, and creative expression. (Ages 16-30)



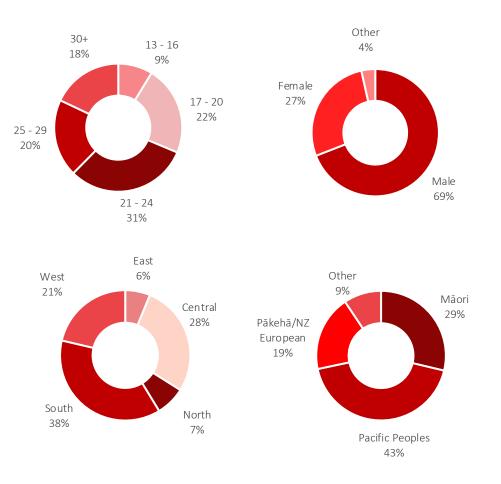
#### **SUMMARY**



**LOCATIONS:** Northcote Community House, Zeal West, Wesley Community Centre, OMAC, Taro Patch Creative, Onehunga Community Centre.

This year, Navigators focused on artistic growth, personal development, and community connection. The Showcase at Neck of the Woods in December highlighted the impressive talent and commitment of participants, with over 160 attendees celebrating our participants growth and achievements. Many participants took on new roles, stepping into leadership positions and joining Te Karanga Trust staff. We provided opportunities outside of regular programming, such as offsite workshops, team projects and guest speakers, and introduced a new program, Spoken Word Navigators. A highlight is the power of inclusivity and collaboration, with participants stepping out of their comfort zones and thriving together. Challenges included addressing personal and social support needs for our participants, particularly around access to external resources and support services. A key learning has been the importance of creating a flexible, inclusive space where creativity and emotional expression can flourish side by side, fostering resilience and growth in participants.

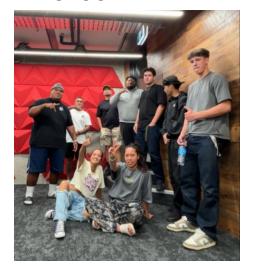
#### **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 366**



108
south
61
wāhine
54
west
62
spoken word
30
north
27
producer
24

**CENTRAL** 



































### **TUAKANA**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Weekly ongoing mentoring and social support for individuals and small groups. We work to inspire our young people to follow their dreams and aspirations, to increase their confidence and networking abilities, to become resilient and develop into youth leaders. We teach them how to become mentors themselves to their peers and their younger generation, by normalising regular discussions and check ins around mental health support and development, often using creativity as a tool. We have found this to be one of the biggest shortfalls and challenges with the youth we serve, that they need regular on-going support and informal counselling by a positive role model who is closer in age and culture to the young person in need. (Ages 13-30)

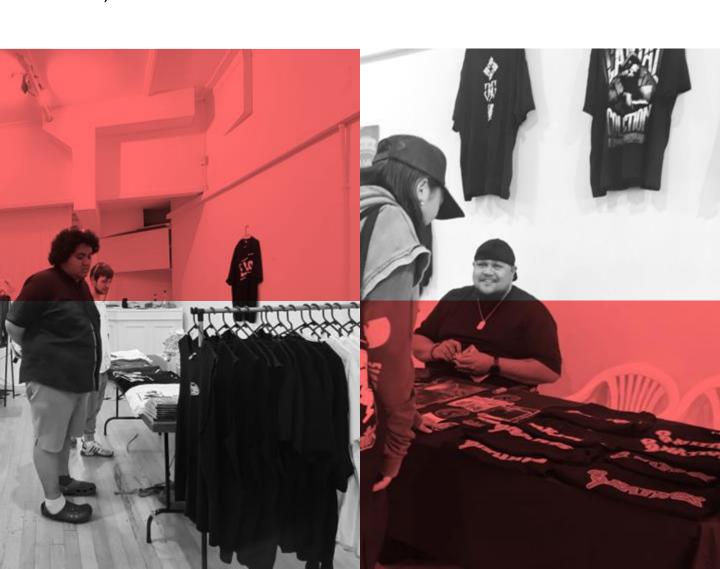


### **BRIDGE THE GAP**



#### **OVERVIEW**

This enterprise program is an extension of the Tuakana program and is created for young people wanting to start a business or enterprise, but also designed to guide youth earlier on in development towards an entrepreneurial mindset. Participants will meet and be mentored by some of Auckland's most innovative young creative entrepreneurs. Participants create viable business plans and further develop their ideas or vocation direction, access seed capital for launching, and they will learn skills critical to their future success, including communication, teamwork, perseverance, creativity, critical thinking and goal setting. (Ages 15-30)



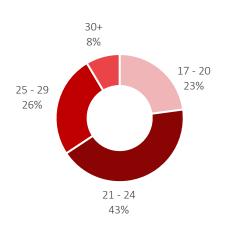
## **TUAKANA & BRIDGE THE GAP**

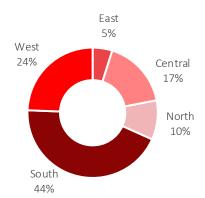


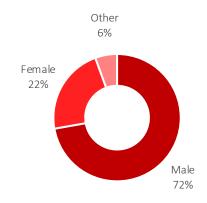
#### **SUMMARY**

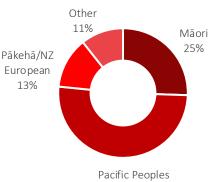
This year, we focused on rebranding and strengthening the structure of our entrepreneurial music program to better serve emerging artists and creatives. We delivered hands-on mentoring and professional development in key areas such as music production, branding, content creation, event planning, and merchandise development. Participants were supported through all stages of releasing music and products—from ideation to execution—with a strong emphasis on monetisation, sustainability, and industry readiness. Key highlights include our Pop-Up shop initiatives, multiple first-time paid performances, album releases, and merchandise launches. Participants hosted independent events, signed industry recording deals, and successfully navigated contracts, invoicing, and financial literacy—experiencing the realities of being selfmanaged creatives. Many achieved significant milestones, such as being booked for major gigs, receiving chart recognition, and building their own business models around their creative work. While we've seen consistent growth, **challenges** included managing excessive communication outside of session times and participant expectations, participants not completing projects, and confidence barriers that impacted follow-through. What we've learned is that confidence, consistency, and real-time experience are key to success. Participants respond well to high standards and practical learning, especially when they feel safe and seen in the process. Communicating clearly, meeting them where they're at, while still offering stretch opportunities, has helped build their trust and belief in their ability to thrive as independent artists and entrepreneurs.

#### **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 369**





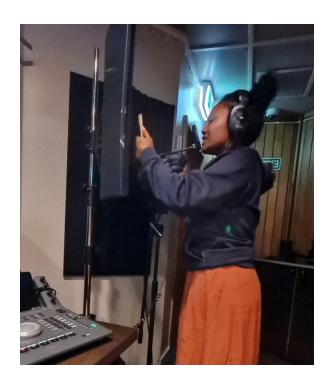




acific Peoples 51%

# TUAKANA & BRIDGE THE GAP











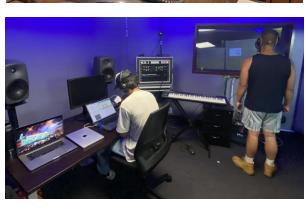
# TUAKANA & BRIDGE THE GAP









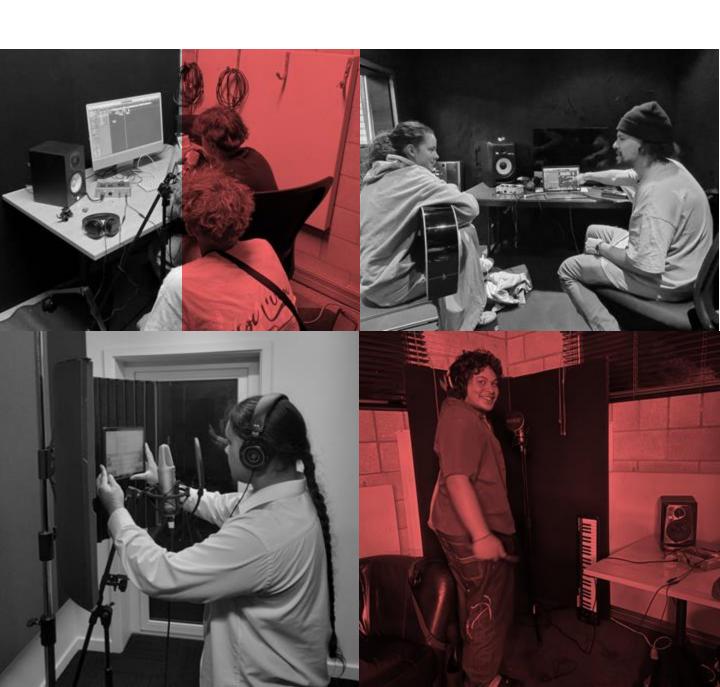






#### **OVERVIEW**

Weekly after school and evening workshops, open for all youth to learn how to use creative equipment and resources, create art, music and record songs. We also offer film, photography, design and computer skills. This is an empathetic inclusive platform for youth of all ages to connect and collaborate creatively. (Ages 15-30)



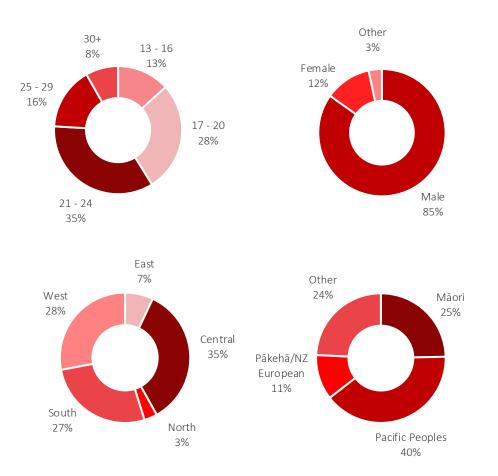
#### **SUMMARY**

**LOCATIONS:** South, Central, West



Creative Labs has continued to be a vital outlet for young people, offering access to studio spaces, equipment, and mentorship. Across different locations, participants engaged in regular sessions to develop, produce, and refine their creative projects. Many have grown in confidence, moving from first-time users to fully self-sufficient skilled creatives, with several completing and releasing full projects publicly. Highlights include a surge in new participants, four official music releases, and standout journeys — from beginners to young artists producing over 100 demos or releasing debut EPs. Several have also started mentoring their peers during sessions, showing the ripple effect of confidence and skill-building. Challenges included last-minute cancellations, no-shows, and occasional misuse of gear, prompting changes like one-session stand-downs and clearer expectations around bookings. We've learned that while some participants aim to release music, many simply need a space to create and be heard. Creative Labs continues to foster growth, self-expression, and empowerment, meeting young people where they're at.

#### **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 179**



103 south 22 west 23























## TALANOA TUESDAYS



#### **OVERVIEW**

This program focuses on community dialogue. The theme for Talanoa Tuesdays is identity, to which we invite guest speakers to share their experiences and perspectives about their identity in music and in life. In it's second year, the focus has been on participant world views, exploring topics such as:

- Your relationship with change
- Exploring faith
- Unlearning and re-learning
- Emotional intelligence and growth
- Generational inheritance
- Bridging generational gaps
- · Your relationship with your culture

Some people have no-one, or no-where to converse, and some people just need somewhere to have deep conversations. Talanoa Tuesdays provides a safe, non-judgmental space for anyone to join and share their experiences to affect growth within themselves..





### TALANOA TUESDAY'S

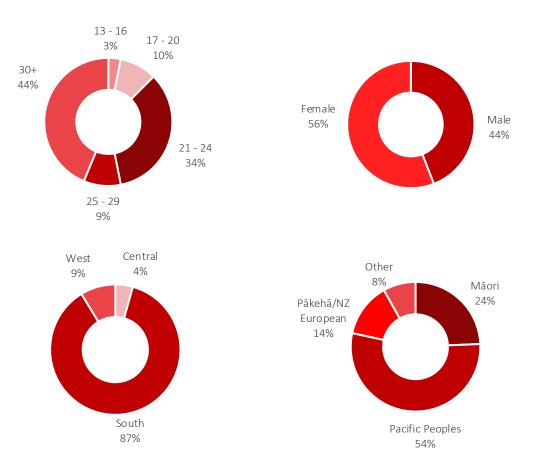
#### **SUMMARY**

**LOCATIONS:** Taro Patch Creative, Papatoetoe



This year, Talanoa Tuesdays offered consistent space for open dialogue, where participants explored identity, values, relationships, and emotional wellbeing. Sessions used prompts, guest speakers, and reflection tools to build trust, spark insight, and encourage self-awareness. A key **highlight** was the visible growth in confidence, with participants becoming more articulate, emotionally honest, and supportive of one another. Vulnerability became a norm, and many expressed feeling genuinely seen in the space. One ongoing **challenge** was emotional fatigue — especially for participants carrying personal heaviness outside the space. This sometimes showed up as low energy or resistance to deeper topics. Facilitators also had to hold the balance between care and emotional sustainability. **We learned** that participants thrive when they feel both safe and stretched — eager to reflect, lead, and hold each other with care when the conditions are right.

#### **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 34**



# TALANOA TUESDAY'S











# TALANOA TUESDAY'S









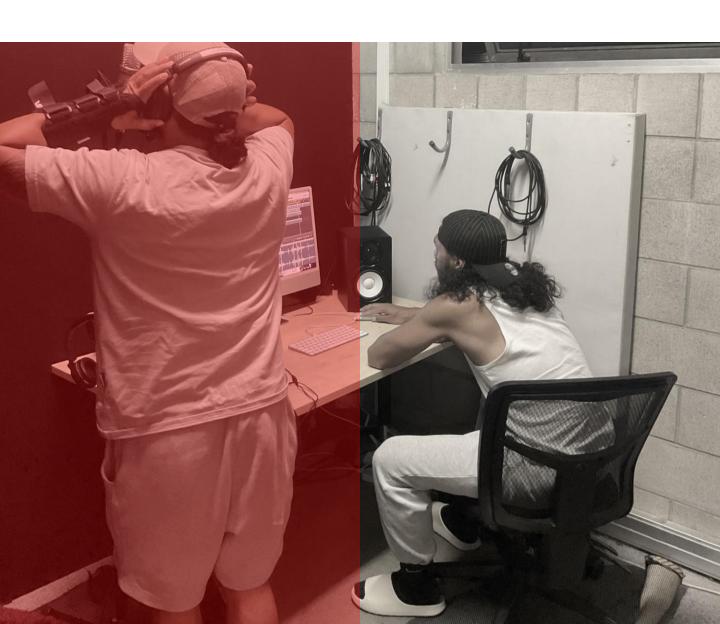




### **RAP N REC**

#### **OVERVIEW**

One on one creative mentoring in youth justice spaces. This program is designed to help incarcerated young people express themselves through art, songwriting and recording. This is achieved by connecting one on one and in small groups with rangatahi to develop confidence in their abilities and passion for art and music. Ultimately, the programme aims to empower them to share their story and normalise using their voice to communicate emotions, thoughts and opinions through artforms. We come onsite to Whakatakapokai with a mobile art and or music recording setup. (Ages 13-18)



### **RAP N REC / YJ**

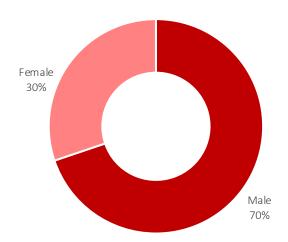


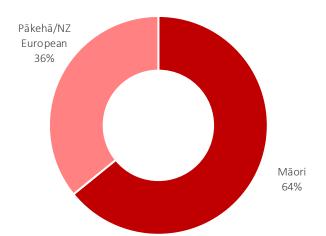


This year, we continued delivering Rap n Rec within Whakatakapōkai, a Youth Justice residence, creating a safe, creative space for young people to write, record, and reflect through music. Weekly sessions included one-on-one recording time and group listening, with participants choosing beats, crafting verses, and building full songs. A major highlight was adding a new arts program in early 2025 with local artist SMOVE that has been going well. Other highlights include the increased engagement and pride participants showed in their work over time. Many recorded multiple tracks and shared them with others upon release. For the first time, we delivered in the girls' unit, where we also filmed a music video. The transient nature of the space remained a challenge, with sudden departures, emotional disengagement, and literacy barriers making it difficult to complete work. Still, we adapted sessions to meet young people where they were, even if that meant shifting to music listening and korero instead of recording. This year reinforced that young people deeply value being heard and encouraged. Music and art continues to be a powerful tool for connection, growth, and pride, especially in environments where these young people are rarely affirmed.

#### **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 18**

All participants aged between 13 – 18 yrs old





### **EVENTS**

#### **OVERVIEW**



We host regular 'Navigators Showcase' events and engage participants in various other, often paid performance opportunities at a different locations each quarter, giving participants a chance to perform to peers and whanau, often performing for the first time in a safe and supportive environment. (Ages 0-100)



### EVENTS SUMMARY



This year, participants were active in five key events across Tāmaki Makaurau, which provided intentional and high-impact platforms for them to perform, share their creative work, and build connections with wider communities. Each event was either led by our team or facilitated through strategic partnerships, ensuring that participants were offered safe, well-supported spaces to grow their confidence and presence on stage. Our end of year Showcase at Neck of The Woods was a standout, drawing in over 160 attendees and offering a professional-level experience to participants across our Navigators and Creative Labs programs. The lineup featured artists who had either released original music or demonstrated exceptional development over the year, and the audience included whānau, community leaders, industry professionals, and alumni. Another milestone moment came when a participant, fresh out of an events management course, stepped into the role of stage manager for the first time, handling the pressure and pace of a live venue environment with composure and skill. We also booked participants to perform at several events in community-building spaces focused on identity, cultural expression, and mental wellbeing. These events included live music, spoken word, open discussions, and interactive installations, creating layered experiences that reflected the depth and honesty of our participants, who were supported to lead aspects of performance and contribute meaningfully to the kaupapa of each gathering.

A consistent **highlight** across all events was the strength of the collective spirit. Whether it was cross-collaborations across Navigators programs, or a first-time performer commanding the room with unexpected confidence, there was a clear sense of pride and unity. Many young people shared that these moments were transformative, not just because of the stage time, but because of the validation they received from peers, mentors, and their wider circles.

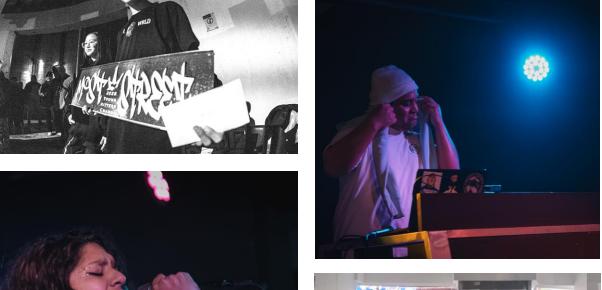
Navigating age-related venue restrictions, last-minute performance opportunities, and varying levels of technical readiness did pose **challenges**, particularly when balancing professional standards with an inclusive, youth-first approach. However, our team remained agile—adjusting logistics, providing supervision, and offering hands-on guidance to ensure each participant felt safe and seen.

What we learned this year is that when environments are intentionally designed with care and cultural integrity, young people thrive, not only as artists but as leaders and collaborators. Our events served as more than just performances; they became powerful mirrors, reflecting the courage, creativity, and resilience that lives within our communities.

## **EVENTS**













## **EVENTS**











## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



#### **OVERVIEW**

We deliver regular training in strengths-based youth development to all staff and volunteers. We use 'Mana Taiohi', 'Te Whare Tapa Wha' and the 'Circle of Courage/Mana' youth development models, as well as the 'Ara Taiohi Code of Ethics'. The focus is on safe and sustainable best practice as youthworkers, developing our future youth leaders and positive role models for younger youth. 85% of our current staff started as participants and are now registered youthworkers. Each participant works towards a Korowai Tupu Application for registration with Ara Taiohi – to ensure best practice is held to an industry standard.

#### **TOTAL STAFF: 31**

