

PROGRAMS REPORT

2026 QUARTER 2 APR - JUNE



TE KARANGA
CREATIVE COMMUNITY



OVERALL SUMMARY

Prepared by TK White

This quarter we continued to demonstrate the impact of creative spaces built on trust, relationships and genuine opportunity. Across the organisation, we saw young people step into leadership, take greater ownership of their ideas and continue building confidence through creativity and connection. While the quarter celebrated many achievements, it also reminded us of the importance of being present for our communities through difficult moments. More than anything, this quarter reinforced our belief that creativity is not the outcome of our work - it is the vehicle through which young people discover confidence, belonging, resilience and leadership.

A key theme throughout the quarter was the continued growth of young people as leaders within Te Karanga. Across programmes, participants moved beyond simply taking part and began creating opportunities for themselves and others - organising events, mentoring peers, coordinating performances, launching merchandise, navigating professional opportunities, engaging with national media and representing themselves confidently in public settings. Bridge The Gap and Dojo highlighted the impact of trusting young people with genuine responsibility, while Tuakana, Navigators and Creative Pathways continued providing the foundations that support these opportunities. Alongside this participant growth, the organisation also strengthened its own capacity, with two former participants transitioning into employment within Te Karanga and an experienced producer/beatmaker joining the facilitation team to support increasing programme demand.

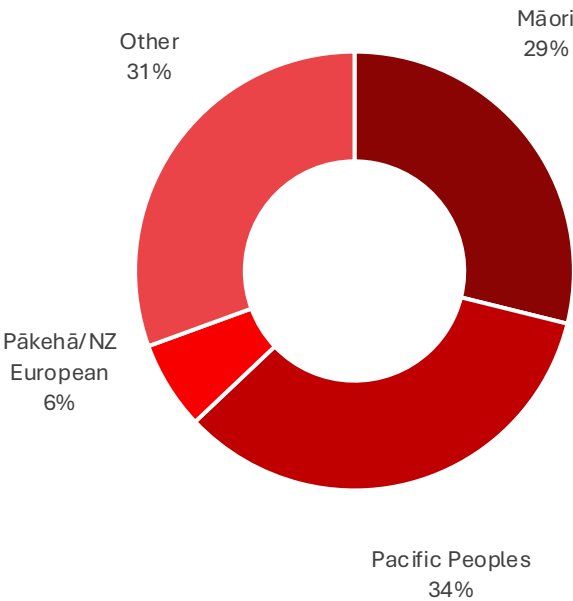
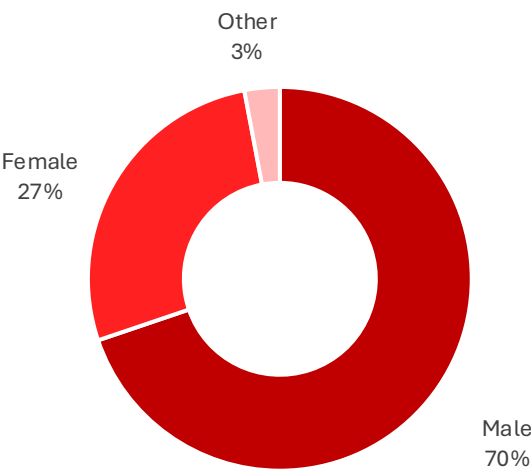
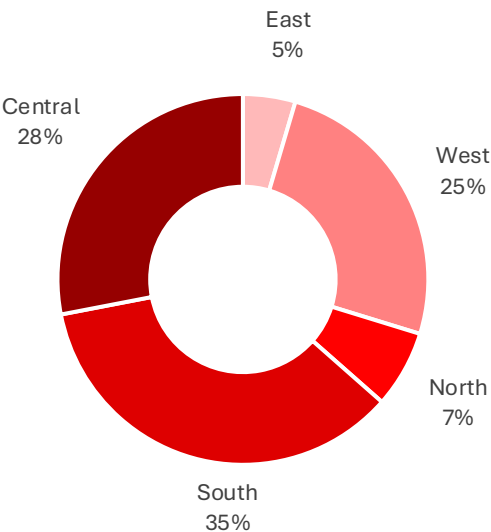
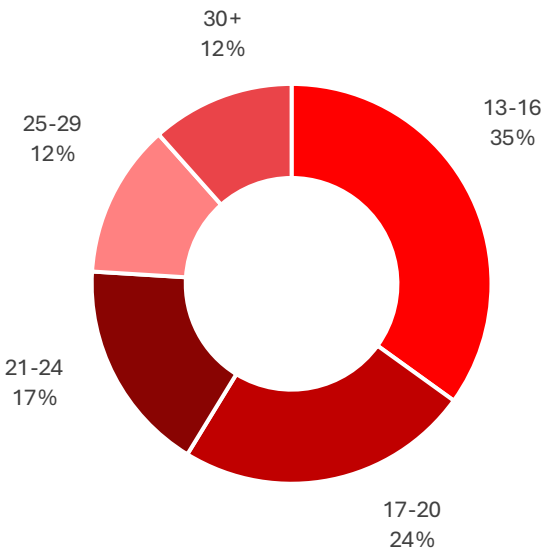
The most significant challenge of the quarter was the tragic loss of a participant who had left a lasting impact on many within our community. Although he had not participated in our programmes for several months, his passing deeply affected participants, facilitators and whānau across multiple programmes. Through this loss, we created space for young people to grieve in ways that felt right for them—whether through conversation, creative expression or simply being present without expectation. Our team remained available, checking in with participants individually, supporting attendance at tangihanga where needed, and walking alongside young people and whānau through a difficult time. More than anything, this experience reinforced that the strength of our programmes lies not only in the opportunities we create, but in the relationships we build long before moments of crisis arise.

Overall, this quarter reinforced that meaningful youth development is built through trust, consistency and genuine opportunity. This quarter celebrated young people stepping into leadership, taking ownership of their ideas and strengthening the communities around them, while also reminding us of the responsibility we carry to walk alongside them through life's most difficult moments. Together, these experiences reaffirm that creativity is not the outcome of our work, but the vehicle through which confidence, belonging, resilience and leadership are developed. As Te Karanga continues to grow, these learnings remain central to our commitment to supporting confident, connected and capable young people who positively influence the communities around them.

DATA TOTALS



Participant stats: 775



CONTENTS & PROGRAMS



CREATIVE PATHWAYS

Weekly program for 13-17-year-olds not in education or employment, fostering positive learning experiences, creativity, and career exploration.

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Free weekly music workshop connecting & engaging young people through shared experiences, stories, and creativity. Open to young people aged 16-24.

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CREATIVE LABS

Empowering young people with local resources, equipment, and guidance. Fostering creativity, connecting like-minded individuals, and nurturing the next generation of artists and musicians.

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BRIDGE THE GAP

Bridge The Gap is an intensive programme where young people create and release original work while building the skills and confidence to shape their own creative pathways.

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EVENTS

Throughout the year we deliver events for our rangatahi to showcase their skills as artists in their chose creative industry.

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TUAKANA TEINA

Offering personalised support through mentoring sessions, creative guidance, personal and professional development, whānau support, and community connections.

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CREATIVE PATHWAYS

OVERVIEW

Creative Pathways delivers 8–10 week creative programs within alternative education settings, designed to re-engage young people aged 13–17 who are not currently in school or employment. Through hands-on creative projects, cultural activities, and exposure to industry role models, participants are encouraged to explore their identities, discover new passions, and develop transferable skills. The program provides an inclusive, supportive environment that builds confidence, inspires personal growth, and opens pathways toward meaningful futures.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES



Increased confidence and self-expression through creative and cultural activities



Strengthened sense of identity and personal pride



Improved social skills and peer relationships within inclusive learning spaces



Greater self-awareness and openness through transformative moments of growth

CREATIVE OUTCOMES



Development of transferable creative and technical skills across multiple artforms



Exposure to industry professionals and creative career pathways



Experience designing, producing, and showcasing original work



Increased motivation and readiness to engage in future education or employment opportunities



CREATIVE PATHWAYS



Facilitated by Hariata Makiha, Albert Purcell, Lincoln Keepa & Thomas Steed
Report by Albert Purcell

Creative Pathways spent the quarter introducing participants to digital illustration through Procreate, with each group working towards designing their own custom t-shirts. After completing our spray can projects with several groups, we shifted our focus into digital design, using games, creative challenges and practical tutorials to help participants get familiar with the software before developing their own concepts. Across each site, participants explored different design techniques, refined their ideas over multiple weeks and had the freedom to create designs that reflected their own personalities and interests. As confidence grew, we saw participants becoming more willing to experiment, share ideas and help each other throughout the design process.

HIGHLIGHTS

It was awesome seeing how quickly participants got stuck into designing once they realised there were no limits to what they could create. Giving participants creative freedom brought out a huge range of ideas, and it was cool watching designs evolve week by week as participants became more confident using Procreate. Another highlight was seeing participants naturally bounce ideas off each other. Whether it was sharing design tips, helping someone figure out a technique or getting excited about another participant's work, there was a real sense of collaboration developing across many of the groups. We also loved seeing participants from previous years wanting to jump back into the programme, which shows the positive connections they've built with Creative Pathways.

CHALLENGES

One of the ongoing challenges this quarter was making sure every participant could continue progressing their work when life events or illness interrupted sessions. This meant we often needed to adapt sessions and support participants at different stages of the design process. Access to equipment also created challenges at some sites, particularly in larger classes where iPads needed to be shared. While this occasionally slowed the pace of the sessions, we adapted activities where needed to keep everyone engaged and moving forward with their designs.

LEARNINGS

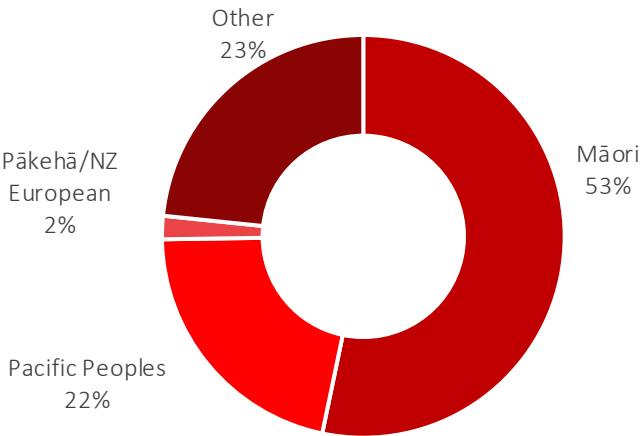
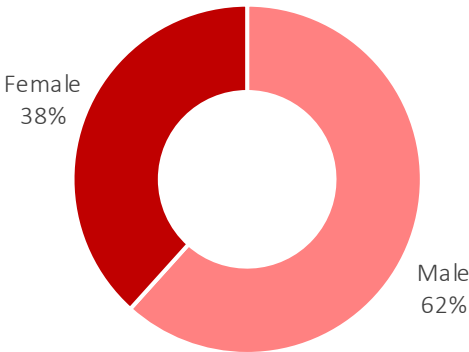
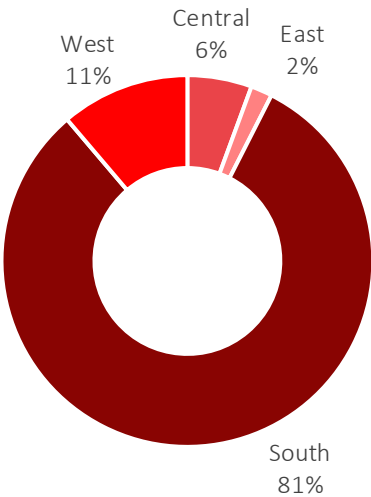
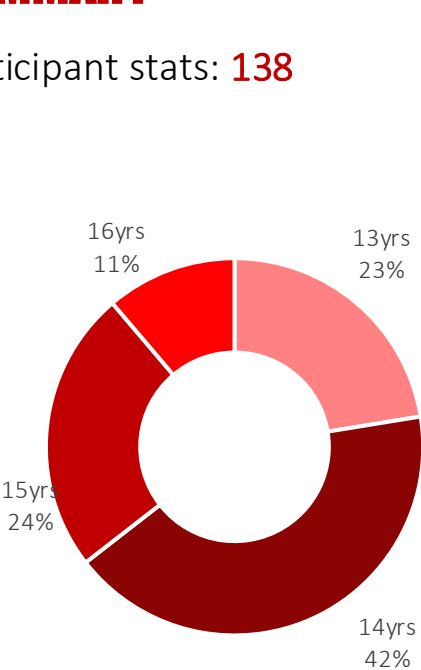
One of the biggest things we noticed this quarter was how engaged participants became when they were given genuine creative freedom. Rather than worrying about getting things "right", participants appeared more willing to experiment, take creative risks and develop ideas that reflected who they were. We also saw that creativity naturally encouraged collaboration. As participants became more confident with the design process, many began sharing knowledge, encouraging one another and celebrating each other's progress without needing to be prompted. That peer-to-peer support became just as valuable as the technical skills they were learning.

CREATIVE PATHWAYS



SUMMARY

Participant stats: 138



CREATIVE PATHWAYS

IMAGES





NAVIGATORS

OVERVIEW

Navigators is a free weekly social program that responds to the growing need for communal spaces where young people can connect, reflect, and express themselves authentically. Through open check-ins, talanoa (group discussions) and creative practice, participants build trust, foster connection, and achieve personal growth, whilst sharing experiences, building self-awareness, and supporting one another in a non-judgemental environment. Creative sessions offer a healthy outlet for expression, helping young people process life experiences while developing confidence, identity, and a sense of belonging.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Strengthened sense of belonging and connection



Increased confidence and self-awareness



Improved emotional literacy and communication skills



Safe space for reflection and mental wellbeing

CREATIVE OUTCOMES



Development of creative skills and artistic confidence



Increased confidence and self-awareness



Access to professional networks & industry opportunities



Increased ability to work independently as artists



NAVIGATORS / WEST



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Oliva Luki, Bronson Price & Harry Huavi

Report by Oliva Luki

Tuesday's, Zeal West, Henderson

West Navigators continued providing an open creative space where participants could choose how they wanted to engage. Across the quarter we ran collaborative recording sessions, producer challenges, live band jams, cyphers, songwriting sessions and demo-sharing spaces, giving artists the freedom to explore different creative disciplines throughout the night. Sessions explored topics relevant to emerging artists, including collaboration, touring, artist management, networking and the realities of pursuing music. These conversations naturally flowed into collaborative songwriting, recording, beat-making and live performance. We also welcomed new participants throughout the quarter, alongside producer and artist Haz Beats (Home Brew) joining the facilitation team. His addition brought further industry experience into the programme and created new opportunities for participants to learn from another established artist.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the biggest highlights this quarter was seeing West Navigators continue growing into a genuinely collaborative creative space. Whether participants were producing beats, playing live instruments, recording songs or simply connecting with others, there was always something happening and people naturally found the spaces that suited them best. We also loved seeing participants share their skills so freely with one another. Producers challenged each other through sample flips, musicians came together for live jams, artists collaborated on large group tracks, and demo-sharing sessions created opportunities for honest feedback and encouragement. It was great seeing experienced participants help newer creatives settle into the environment and become part of the community. The steady growth in attendance throughout the quarter also reflected the reputation West Navigators continues to build as a welcoming place for artists to connect, collaborate and create.

CHALLENGES

As the programme continued growing, managing multiple creative spaces at the same time became more demanding for staff. With recording sessions, producer rooms, live jams and discussion spaces often running simultaneously, facilitators needed to balance supporting participants across several environments while ensuring each space remained productive and welcoming. We also recognised that the continued growth of the programme is beginning to push the limits of the current venue, particularly on nights where attendance was at its highest and multiple creative activities were happening at once.

LEARNINGS

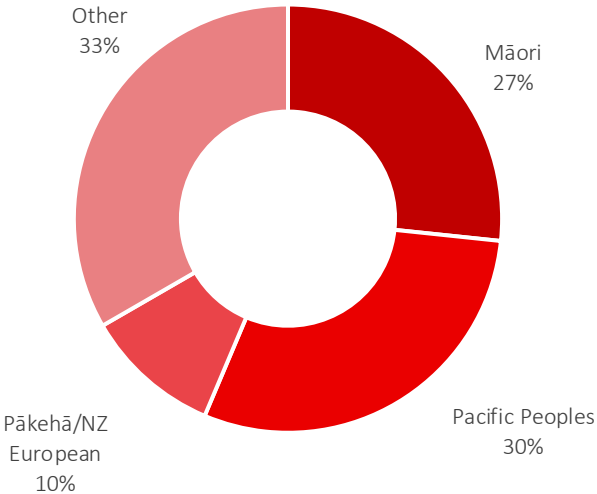
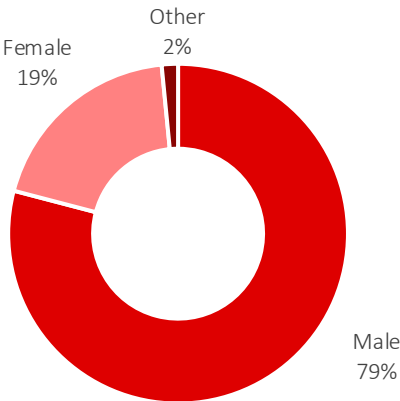
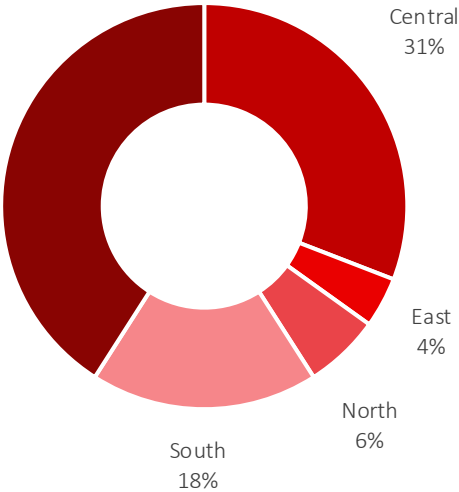
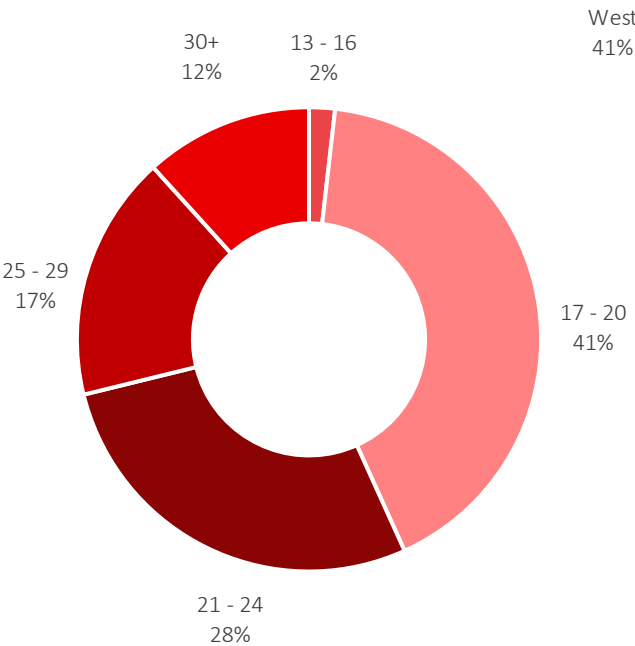
This quarter reinforced that participants engage best when they're given choice. Rather than everyone following the same creative pathway, we noticed people became more invested when they could move between different rooms, collaborate with different creatives and engage in ways that suited their own interests and goals. We also saw that West Navigators is becoming much more than a weekly programme. New participants quickly found themselves connecting with returning artists, collaborations were forming naturally across different creative disciplines, and the space continued strengthening as a creative community where people felt comfortable sharing ideas, supporting one another and building networks beyond the programme itself.

NAVIGATORS / WEST

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 129



NAVIGATORS / WEST

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE



Facilitated by TK White, Hariata Makiha & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Hariata Makiha

Tuesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

This quarter we explored prompts connected to confidence, personal transformation, relationships, self-talk and life experiences, which were then developed into songs, writing pieces and group creative projects. Creative sessions encouraged participants to experiment with different genres, vocal styles and recording approaches, including Afro-beats, dance tracks, country-inspired tracks and collaborative group songs. Participants also took part in first-time mic sessions, collaborative writing exercises and group booth work that encouraged creativity outside of their usual comfort zones. Alongside weekly sessions, we held a guest Q&A with local Alternative Hip-Hop artist Jujulipps and an offsite poetry event where the group attended to support one participant in achieving a performance goal.

HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight this quarter was the level of trust and support that continued growing within the group. Participants regularly showed up for one another with encouragement, advice and care, creating an environment where wāhine felt comfortable sharing openly and trying new things creatively. We also saw strong creative growth across the quarter, particularly through participants experimenting with new genres, building confidence in the booth and taking more ownership over their creative ideas. It was especially encouraging seeing participants support one another through nerves and uncertainty while still encouraging each other to give things a go. The Jujulipps Q&A was a particularly impactful experience for participants. Hearing directly from an artist with lived experience helped participants feel that creative pathways were more achievable and relatable, and several participants reflected afterwards that they felt more motivated to continue pursuing their own music and performance goals. The offsite poetry event was another highlight for the group. We attended to support a participant's performance, and the event also included an open mic poetry session. Several of our participants chose to share their own poetry, many for the first time, which became a particularly meaningful moment within the quarter. It opened up new layers of creativity and vulnerability within the group, and highlighted a depth of expression in our participants that we had not previously seen.

CHALLENGES

Balancing the emotional depth of conversations with the time needed for recording, mixing and creative development continued to be a challenge throughout the quarter. Discussions regularly opened into deeper kōrero, which created valuable connection within the group but sometimes caused sessions to run overtime. We also continued navigating challenges around group dynamics and ensuring all participants felt safe and supported within the environment, particularly when tensions or strong personalities arose within the space. Alongside this, some studio equipment issues made recording sessions more difficult at times, particularly with damaged mic stands and headphone cables needing replacement.

LEARNINGS

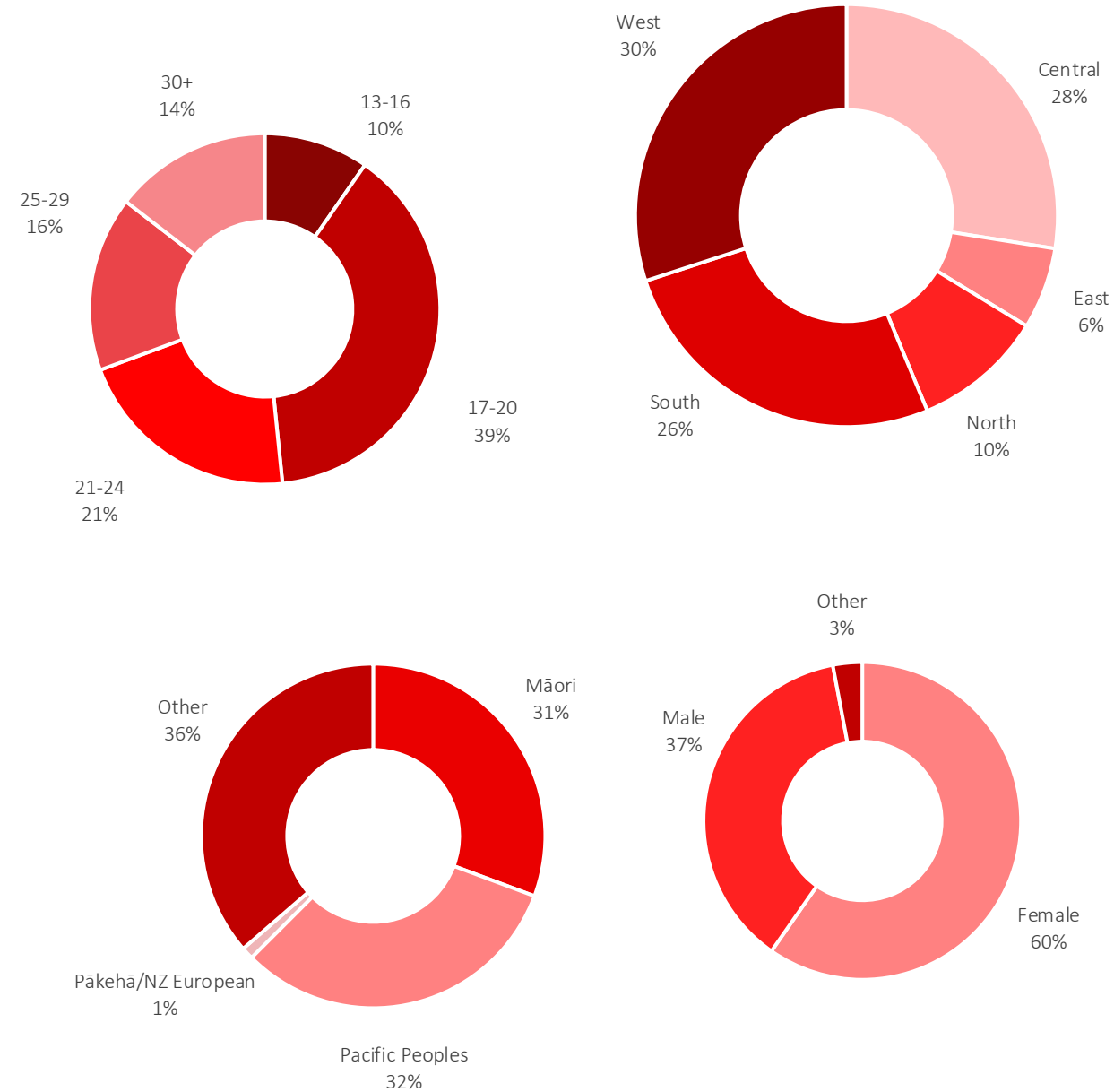
One of the strongest learnings this quarter was seeing how much emotional safety impacts creative confidence. We noticed participants were often more willing to take creative risks, try new things and share openly once trust had been built within the group environment. We also noticed the value of smaller and more intimate sessions, where participants often felt more comfortable opening up, supporting one another and building stronger relationships through shared experiences and creativity. The quarter further reinforced the importance of wāhine-focused creative spaces where participants feel heard, encouraged and understood by others navigating similar experiences, as this created a stronger sense of belonging, increased confidence to share openly, and encouraged participants to take creative and personal risks they may not have felt comfortable taking in other environments.

NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 67



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Oliva Luki, Bronson Price & Dera Meelan

Report by Dera Meelan

Wednesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

This quarter, sessions explored themes around family, identity, artistry and personal interests, with participants often drawing from their own experiences and influences to inspire their creative work. We saw participants using music as a way to reflect on personal memories, share different parts of themselves and connect with others through common interests. Creative sessions included collaborative beat-making, songwriting and recording, with participants regularly supporting one another's ideas and contributing within group creative spaces. Even during quieter sessions, participants remained highly engaged and often used the smaller group environment to spend more focused time developing tracks, collaborating with peers and building stronger connections within the space.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the highlights this quarter was seeing participants engage openly with one another through both conversation and creativity. Sessions created opportunities for young people to connect over shared music tastes, personal experiences and creative ideas, which often carried through into collaborative music-making. It was also encouraging to see participants taking pride in the music they created throughout the quarter, with several completing full tracks during sessions and building confidence within the studio environment. Another positive this quarter was seeing new participants come through and begin engaging with both the creative and social aspects of the programme.

CHALLENGES

This quarter, we experienced smaller group sizes across parts of the quarter, which is somewhat expected during winter. However this created an ongoing focus around strengthening participant engagement and programme visibility within the local community. Despite this, engagement within sessions remained consistently positive, with participants making strong use of the space through collaboration, discussion and creative development.

LEARNINGS

This quarter reinforced the value of creating spaces where young people feel comfortable sharing their experiences, interests and creative ideas with others. We also noticed that smaller group settings sometimes created opportunities for more in-depth collaboration, stronger peer interaction and more individual support within creative sessions.

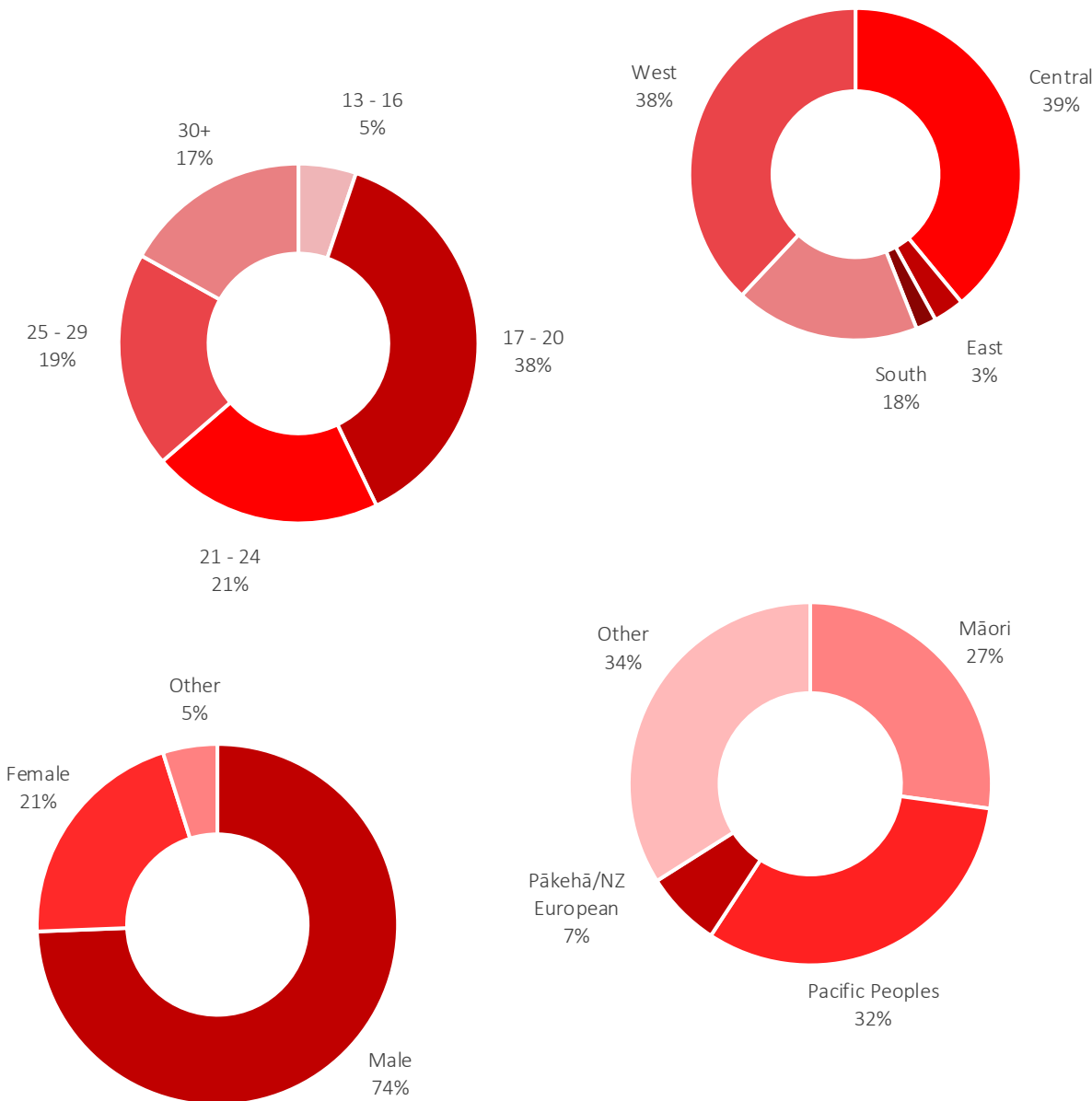




NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY

Participant stats: 82



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki, Ben Tuimaseve, Lincoln Keepa & Noah Tauti

Report by Oliva Luki

Monday's, OMAC, Ōtara

South Navigators continued providing a creative space where participants could connect through conversation, collaboration and music. Across the quarter, sessions explored topics including creative progression, social media, live performance, artist identity, confidence, mental wellbeing and the different barriers people face while pursuing creativity. Creative challenges encouraged participants to experiment with new writing styles, collaboration, performance techniques and even different creative disciplines. Alongside regular songwriting activities, the group spent several weeks rehearsing and refining a Showcase for New Zealand Music Month/Youth Week before later exploring visual art as a way of reflecting, resetting and processing together.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the strongest highlights this quarter was the sense of community that continued growing within the group. Participants regularly checked in on one another, followed up on conversations from previous weeks and created a space where people felt comfortable asking for help, sharing ideas and being honest about where they were at. We also saw participants becoming more willing to challenge themselves creatively. Preparing for the New Zealand Music Month showcase was another standout this quarter. It was great seeing participants commit to rehearsals, support one another with feedback and work together towards a shared performance, with everyone excited to represent South Navigators on stage.

CHALLENGES

We continued operating without access to a dedicated recording studio, requiring the team to adapt creative sessions and make the most of the spaces and resources available. While participants remained highly engaged, access to studio facilities would create greater opportunities to develop and capture the work being produced each week. The colder months also brought a noticeable shift in participants' energy, with many navigating personal challenges, grief and the natural slowdown that winter can bring. Even so, participants continued showing up, supporting one another and staying engaged with the programme.

LEARNINGS

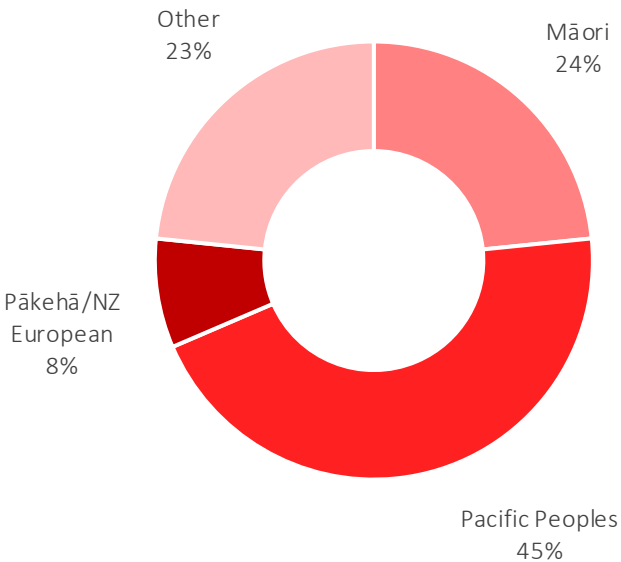
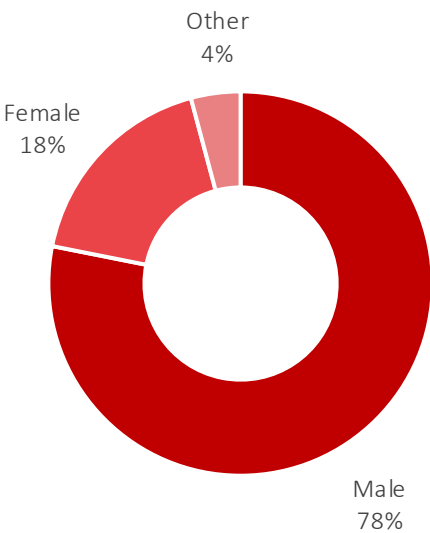
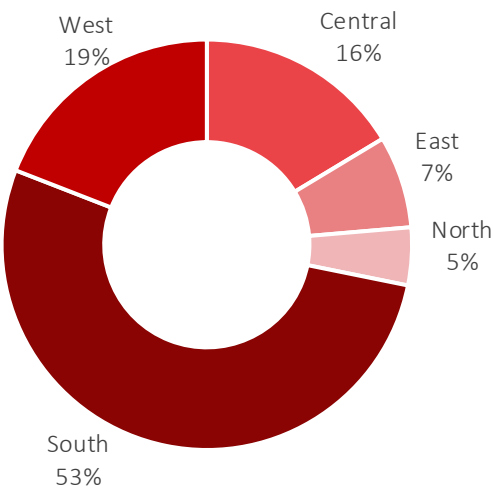
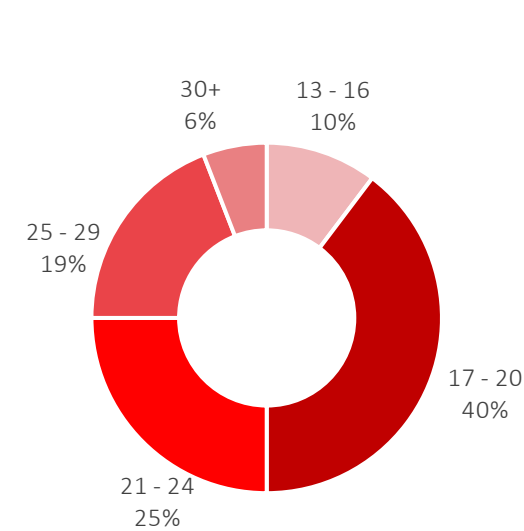
This quarter reinforced that meaningful creative growth often follows honest conversation. We noticed participants becoming more open about their mental wellbeing, personal challenges and creative insecurities, and those discussions regularly translated into stronger creative work and deeper collaboration. We also saw that South Navigators has developed its own identity within the wider Navigators programme. While it may operate on a smaller scale, the more intimate environment created opportunities for stronger relationships, deeper conversations and more personalised support. Participants themselves recognised this, often describing the space as one where they felt comfortable being themselves, speaking honestly and growing alongside others.

NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 96



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD



Facilitated by Noah Tauti, Luani Nansen & Jesse Gibson

Report by Luani Nansen

Tuesday's, Whare Koa Community House, Māngere

Spoken Word Navigators remained a space where rangatahi could come together to unpack ideas, share experiences and connect through conversation, poetry and creative expression. Across the quarter, discussions regularly explored identity, culture, relationships, community issues and the different ways young people navigate the world around them. We saw participants using the space to openly reflect on things happening in their everyday lives, including conversations around code switching, cultural identity, grief, addiction within communities, leadership, accountability and family experiences. These conversations often flowed naturally into poetry, reflective writing and freestyle pieces, while some sessions remained fully discussion-based because the engagement within the room was already so strong. Returning participants continued helping shape the environment each week, creating a space that felt warm, welcoming and comfortable for both familiar and new faces entering the room.

HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the strongest moments this quarter came from the openness participants brought into discussions with one another. Young people regularly found common ground through shared experiences and perspectives, creating conversations that were thoughtful, reflective and deeply engaging. It was also encouraging seeing participants build confidence in sharing their writing, ideas and personal reflections with the group. Freestyle poetry, collaborative discussion and exposure to live spoken word performances all created opportunities for participants to feel inspired and more connected to the wider creative community. Smaller group sessions also became a strength throughout the quarter, often allowing for deeper conversations, stronger connections and more intentional support within the space.

CHALLENGES

An ongoing focus this quarter was continuing to grow awareness of the programme and encourage wider participation, as Spoken Word Navigators generally operated with smaller group sizes this quarter. Several sessions also explored heavy personal and community topics, including grief, addiction, abuse and cultural identity. These conversations required care and intentional space-holding to ensure participants felt supported while navigating difficult discussions together. Even with these challenges, participants continued returning consistently and contributing positively to the environment throughout the quarter.

LEARNINGS

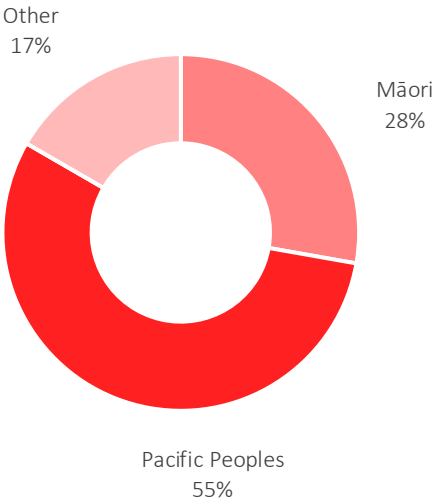
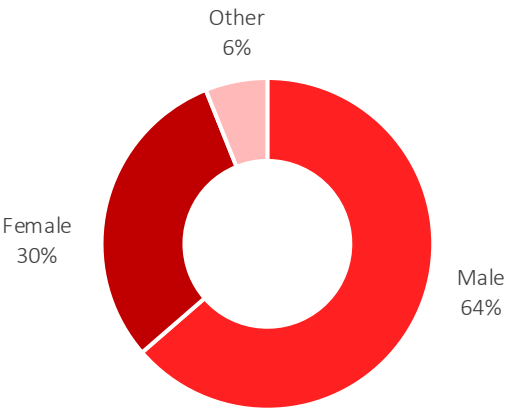
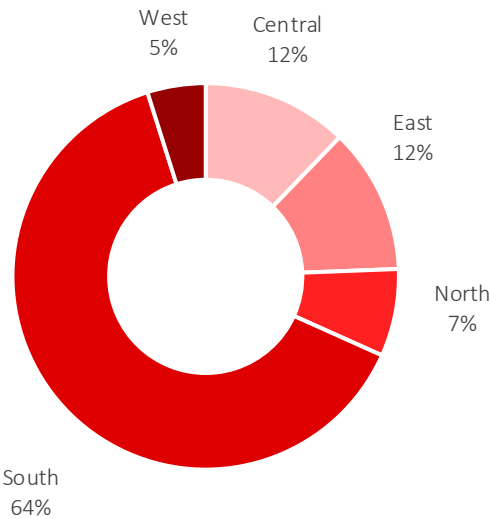
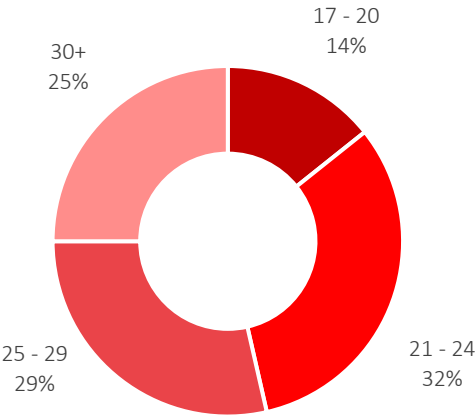
One of the clearest learnings this quarter was how valuable it is for young people to have spaces where they can speak openly without feeling judged or rushed toward solutions. We also noticed that creativity was often most impactful when it emerged naturally from conversation and lived experience, rather than feeling separated from it. In many sessions, poetry and reflective writing became an extension of the discussions already happening in the room, allowing participants to process thoughts, emotions and experiences through creative expression.

NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 33



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

IMAGES





CREATIVE LABS

OVERVIEW

Creative Labs provides free access to high-quality music spaces, creative resources, and mentoring for young people—particularly those facing adversity—so they can develop their skills in a safe, supportive environment. Participants receive hands-on guidance from experienced producers and musicians, as well as opportunities to learn the technical skills needed to work independently. The program has become a pivotal launchpad for many emerging artists, helping them create and release original music, build confidence, and take meaningful steps toward future opportunities in the creative industries.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES



Strengthened sense of identity and personal agency through music creation



Increased confidence and self-expression through supported creative practice

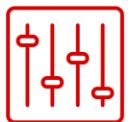


Development of resilience and perseverance through independent studio use



Access to a safe, inclusive space that fosters belonging and personal growth

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES



Growth in technical music production, recording, and creative industry skills



Creation and release of original works that build artistic portfolios



Experience using high-quality equipment and software independently



Increased readiness to pursue performance, recording, and industry opportunities



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Dera Meelan, Aidan Fine, Sean Andersen, Mataio Hanrahan

Report by Dera Meelan

Weds, Thurs, Wesley Community Centre, Sandringham

Throughout Quarter 2, Central Creative Labs continued to provide a consistent creative space for rangatahi to connect through music and creative expression. Sessions remained busy across the quarter, with a strong mix of returning and new participants engaging in recording sessions, songwriting and collaboration with peers. We've consistently seen high levels of engagement and positive wellbeing across sessions, with many young people regularly returning to the space week to week. Alongside creative development, participants were also spending time socialising, building relationships with peers and facilitators, and contributing to a positive and welcoming atmosphere within the studio environment.

HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight this quarter was the increase in participant engagement, particularly throughout May where attendance numbers grew significantly across several sessions. It was encouraging to see many new young people entering the programme while existing participants continued returning regularly and contributing positively to the space. The overall atmosphere across the quarter remained positive and highly engaged. Participants were not only focused on creative projects, but were also spending time connecting with one another, supporting peers and building a sense of familiarity within the environment.

CHALLENGES

As participation numbers increased throughout the quarter, sessions occasionally became very busy, particularly during periods where large numbers of new participants were entering the space at once. This sometimes made it challenging for staff to manage sign-ins, bookings and support everyone efficiently during peak sessions. The increase in young people using the studio space also highlighted the need for improved file storage and equipment management, as computers began reaching capacity from the amount of creative work being produced and saved over time. Despite these challenges, staff continued adapting to participant needs and maintaining a positive and welcoming environment throughout the quarter.

LEARNINGS

This quarter reinforced the importance of providing consistent creative spaces where young people feel comfortable returning regularly and engaging with both peers and facilitators over time. While music and studio development remained the main form of engagement, we also observed strong social benefits within the space, including regular peer collaboration, positive group interaction and ongoing participant engagement throughout the quarter. The programme also highlighted the importance of ensuring systems and resources continue growing alongside participant demand so that the quality of support and engagement can remain consistent as attendance increases.

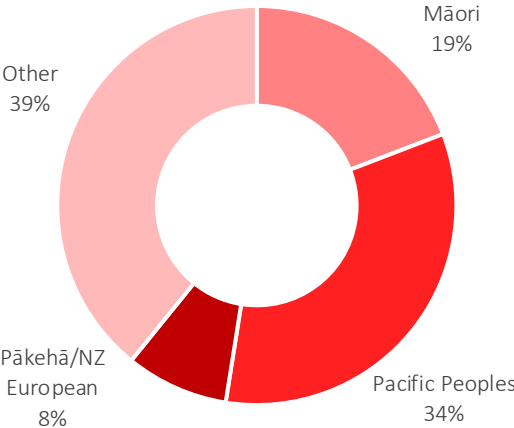
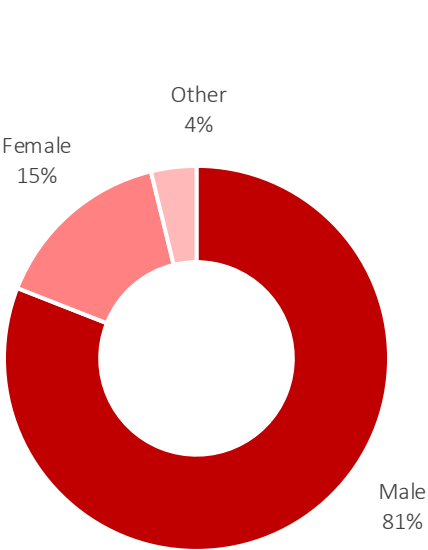
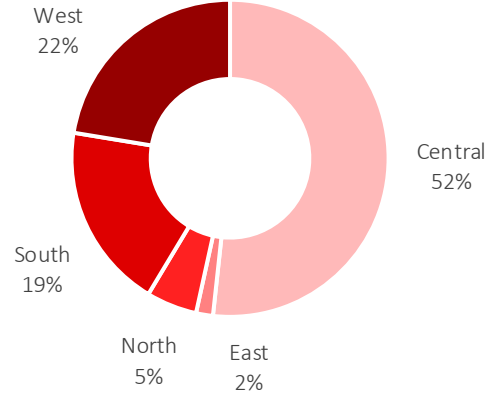
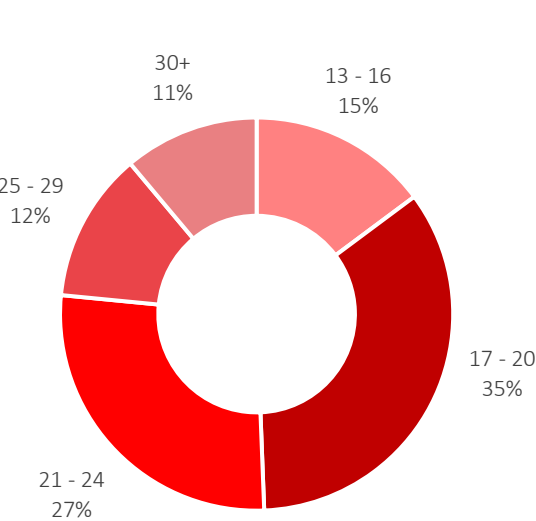


CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 105



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki

Mon & Weds, OMAC, Ōtara

South Creative Labs continued providing a creative space for young people to work on music production, songwriting and recording projects. Sessions were consistently fully booked during the reporting period, with participants using the space to record demos, develop songs, create beats and build their technical skills within music production software. We supported participants through hands-on studio sessions, including recording vocals, arranging tracks and teaching production techniques such as sampling and looping. We also noticed high engagement and positive wellbeing across sessions, with participants arriving motivated and making strong use of their studio time.

HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight this quarter was seeing participants continue developing their own individual projects over multiple sessions, including demos, EP work and visual content connected to their music releases. It was also encouraging to see participants building confidence within production spaces, particularly through beat-making and learning new technical skills such as sampling, looping and arranging tracks. We noticed participants becoming more comfortable contributing ideas during sessions and taking greater ownership over their creative process.

CHALLENGES

The main challenges this quarter related to staffing capacity and studio equipment issues, which at times impacted the number of sessions able to be delivered this quarter. There were also technical difficulties during some sessions as the studio computer was being repaired, requiring sessions to be adapted using alternative equipment and headphones instead of the usual studio setup. Despite these disruptions, sessions remained consistently booked and engaged throughout the quarter, with staff continuing to adapt delivery where needed to support participants.

LEARNINGS

This quarter reinforced the value of smaller, focused studio sessions where participants are able to spend dedicated time developing their creative skills and projects alongside facilitator support. We also noticed that participants often engaged more confidently when working on their own music and creative ideas, particularly when they are given space to lead sessions and contribute their own direction and goals within the studio environment.

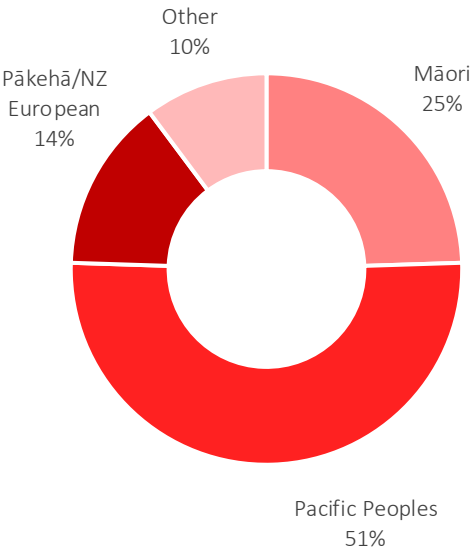
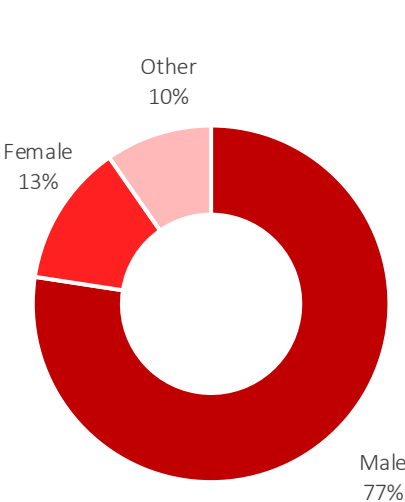
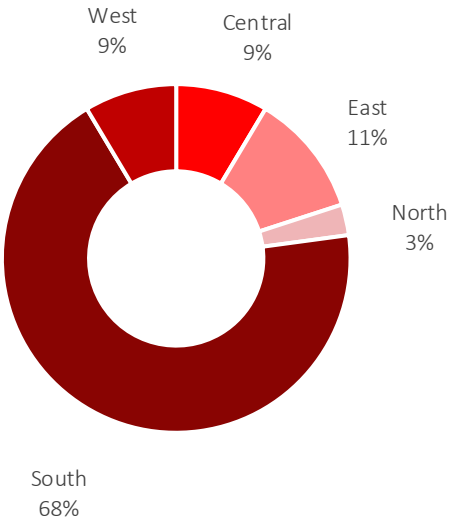
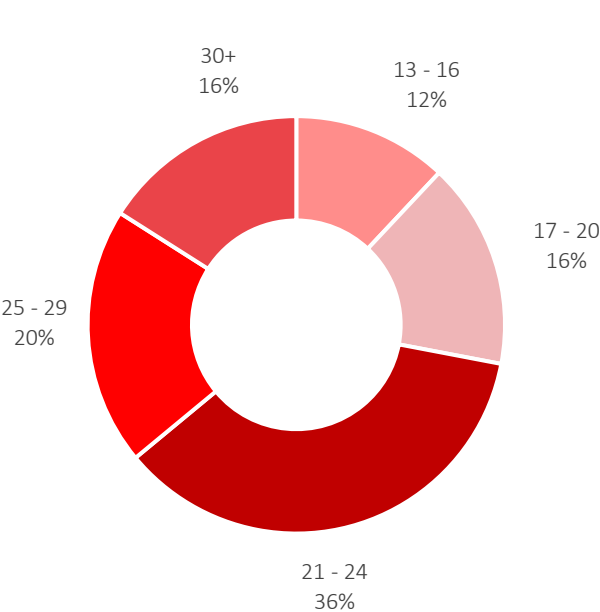


CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 31



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

IMAGES





BRIDGE THE GAP

OVERVIEW

Bridge The Gap is an intensive creative development program that guides young emerging creative entrepreneurs through a transformative, hands-on learning journey. Over three months, participants produce, and publicly release an original body of work, while learning every stage of the process – from production and digital distribution to content creation, identifying potential revenue streams, promotion, and merchandise development. The program empowers young people with creative passions to gain practical, transferable skills and real-world experience, supporting their growth as independent and confident creative leaders, capable of shaping their own pathways.

CREATIVE OUTCOMES



Full end-to-end experience in music production, release, and promotion



Growth in entrepreneurial and creative industry skills



Development of branding, content creation, and merchandise capabilities



Increased ability to lead and manage creative projects independently

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES



Access to professional networks and industry opportunities



Paid performance, work & experience within the industry



Development of skills for future creative or business ventures



Increased readiness to sustain creative careers beyond the program



BRIDGE THE GAP



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki & TK White

Bridge The Gap continued supporting emerging artists through intensive one-to-one mentoring, giving participants hands-on experience across every stage of developing and releasing original music. Throughout the quarter, artists worked alongside mentors to write, record, mix and master projects, prepare for live performances, manufacture CDs, produce merchandise, launch presale campaigns and promote their music through interviews and live performances. Alongside this, four participants were selected to create the official Youth Week anthem, which was commissioned by Ara Taiohi. Over the course of the project, participants were mentored by Tom Scott and Haz Beats (Home Brew), recorded at BigPop Studios with a young professional engineer, filmed a music video with a young aspiring director, planned a community launch event, completed a week of media interviews across Aotearoa and Australia, and travelled to Parliament to present their music video at the national launch of Youth Week.

HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter celebrated a number of significant milestones for participants. One participant, 16 years old, completed and released their first body of work while learning every step of preparing a professional release, including producing CDs, merchandise and preparing for a live show. The Youth Week project became another major highlight. The group wrote 'Revolution' as a response to the theme "Our voices matter, we deserve to be heard", choosing to create a song that encouraged young people to use their voices and advocate for meaningful change. Seeing participants experience professional songwriting sessions, studio recording, media commitments, Parliament and live performance gave them a genuine insight into what a career in music can look like. The community showcases were another standout moment, bringing together around 200 audience members, including whānau, teachers, friends, mentors and supporters. It was especially encouraging to see people wearing merchandise created through the programme and rallying behind the artists as they performed their original work. We also witnessed one participant's relationship with her father strengthen through the project, with him actively supporting her performances and celebrating her creative journey for the first time.

CHALLENGES

The scale of both projects meant balancing multiple deadlines across recording, rehearsals, merchandise production, media commitments and live events, often within tight timeframes. For the Youth Week project, several public holidays reduced ten planned sessions down to seven, requiring facilitators and participants to adapt quickly while still delivering a high-quality outcome. The team also needed to remain flexible when participants experienced personal challenges that delayed parts of the project. While this extended the overall timeline, adapting to participants' circumstances remained an important part of ensuring everyone could contribute meaningfully to the final outcome.

LEARNINGS

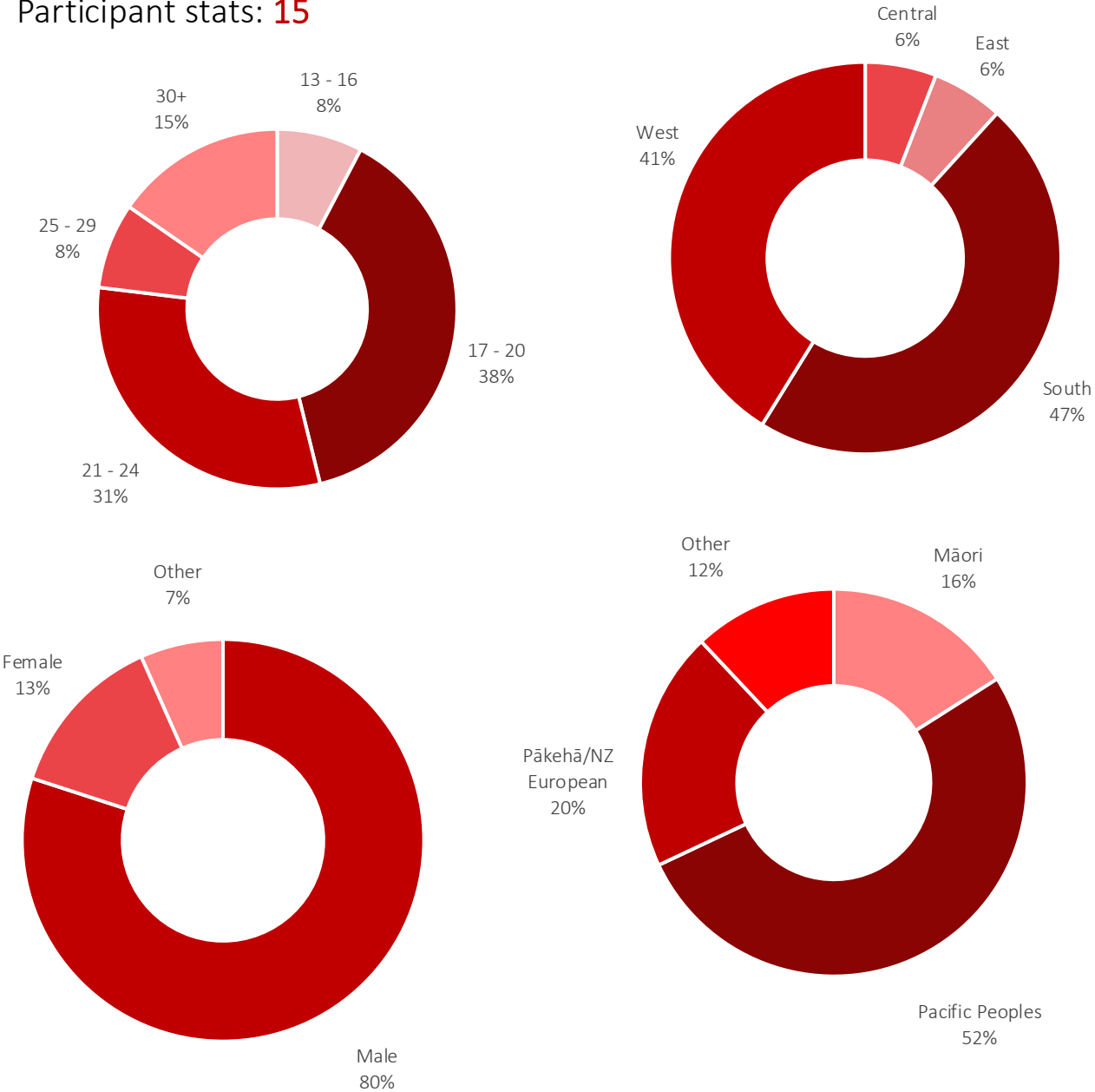
This quarter reinforced that authentic industry experiences create a different level of engagement than simulated learning environments. When participants were trusted with real responsibilities, real audiences and real deadlines, we saw them rise to the occasion with professionalism, commitment and pride in their work. We also came away with an even stronger belief that young people are far more insightful than they are often given credit for. Through the songwriting process for 'Revolution', participants challenged social issues they felt were affecting their generation and confidently expressed their hopes for change. Rather than telling young people what their voices should sound like, this project reminded us of the importance of creating spaces where their voices can simply be heard and given a platform to be heard. Finally, Bridge The Gap continued reinforcing that artist development extends far beyond music. Learning how to release a project, promote it, collaborate with others, navigate professional environments and build relationships across the industry equips young people with confidence, resilience and skills that reach well beyond a creative career.

BRIDGE THE GAP



SUMMARY

Participant stats: 15



BRIDGE THE GAP

IMAGES





EVENTS

OVERVIEW

Events provide powerful opportunities for young people to build confidence, showcase their talents, and gain real-world experience across all aspects of live performance and event delivery. Through performances, collaborations, and behind-the-scenes roles such as DJing, MCing, stage management, and content capture, participants are supported to step into new spaces, grow their skills, and discover their potential. These events are designed not just as creative platforms, but as spaces that uplift participants' mana, strengthen their sense of belonging, and open pathways toward future opportunities in the creative industries and beyond.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES



Increased confidence and stage presence through live performance



Strengthened sense of belonging and pride through public creative expression



Growth in leadership and teamwork through active involvement in event delivery



Opportunities to discover personal strengths and interests in a real-world setting

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES



Exposure to live industry environments and potential paid opportunities



Hands-on experience across performance, hosting, DJing, stage management, and event production



Increased readiness to plan, lead, or contribute to future creative events



Development of transferable skills in communication, organisation, and professionalism



SOUTH SHOWCASE



Report by Oliva Luki
Saturday 23 May 2026, OMAC

As part of New Zealand Music Month (NZMM) and Youth Week, Te Karanga delivered the Southside Showcase in partnership with Ōtara Music and Arts Centre (OMAC). The showcase also formed part of the wider Sounds of Tāmaki Makaurau initiative, celebrating NZMM across Auckland Council venues and partner organisations. Participants spent several weeks rehearsing individual performances, with each artist preparing one original or selected piece. The showcase featured 12 performers made up of both long-term and newer participants. Beyond performing, participants also contributed to the event itself, with one designing personalised looping visual backdrops for every performer and another selling merchandise developed through his Bridge The Gap journey. We also provided a free kai, helping create a welcoming environment that encouraged connection beyond the stage. Delivered with full sound and lighting production at OMAC, the showcase attracted approximately 120 audience members from across the community.

HIGHLIGHTS

For several participants, the Southside Showcase marked their first experience performing in front of a live audience, providing an important milestone in their creative development. The rehearsal process strengthened relationships across the wider South Navigators group, with participants encouraging one another throughout. One particularly significant highlight was seeing one of our participants with cerebral palsy perform alongside his peers. By adapting the stage setup to meet his needs, he was able to participate fully and showcase his strengths as an artist. Moments such as these reinforced the importance of creating environments where every young person has genuine opportunities to contribute and succeed. The showcase concluded with a collaborative performance involving participants and facilitators, celebrating the pride and connection built throughout the rehearsal process. It also highlighted several participants whose commitment and consistency identified them as strong candidates for the next Bridge The Gap cohort.

CHALLENGES

As participants continue growing in confidence and capability, so too does the ambition behind the opportunities we create alongside them. While showcases have a significant impact on young people, they also require much more planning, preparation and time than our regular weekly programmes. Facilitators dedicated many additional hours behind the scenes to rehearse, organise and deliver the event. As showcases become a more valuable part of the participant journey, we will continue exploring ways to deliver them sustainably while maintaining the quality of the experience.

LEARNINGS

The Southside Showcase reinforced the value of providing young people with meaningful goals to work towards. Preparing for a public performance encouraged participants to commit to rehearsals, refine their craft and experience the satisfaction of sharing their work with others. Performing in front of whānau, friends and the wider community also gave participants an opportunity to proudly showcase what they had been working towards throughout the term, strengthening the connection between the programme and their support networks. The event also demonstrated that showcases provide more than performance opportunities. They give young people an authentic insight into the realities of preparing for and participating in a professional creative environment while helping them discover whether they want to continue pursuing creative pathways. Most importantly, the showcase reinforced that when young people feel seen, valued and supported, they become more willing to challenge themselves, celebrate one another and continue pursuing their creative aspirations.

SOUTH SHOWCASE

IMAGES



Facilitated by TK White, Oliva Luki & Luani Nansen

Report by TK White

Last Friday of each month, The Button Factory

This quarter, Dojo continued providing a participant-led creative event space where young people could take ownership of live events from concept through to delivery. More than a performance platform, Dojo gives participants the opportunity to develop practical skills in event planning, promotion, collaboration and community engagement while showcasing their creative work to live audiences. As demand for the space evolved, Dojo transitioned to a monthly event model, delivering four participant-led events across the quarter. These included first time event coordination by aspiring young artists, the Bridge The Gap artist showcase, the Youth Week launch event featuring the premiere of the 'Revolution' (Youth week anthem song) documentary and music video, and a community showcase that celebrated original music while creating space for participants to come together following the loss of a fellow creative. Across the events, participants took ownership in a variety of ways beyond performing. Young people organised line-ups, coordinated performances, sold merchandise, prepared and sold hāngī, cookies and refreshments, and supported one another behind the scenes to help bring each event to life.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the biggest highlights this quarter was the consistent community support shown across every event. Families, teachers, friends and wider creative networks turned out in strong numbers, creating an atmosphere where participants genuinely felt celebrated for the work they had put in. Collectively, the four events welcomed around 400 attendees, reflecting the strong relationships participants have built both within and beyond the programme. It was also exciting to see participants becoming increasingly creative in how they approached their events. Rather than simply performing, many looked for ways to create a fuller experience by incorporating food stalls, merchandise, visual screenings and other participant-led activities. Watching young people support each other's ideas and contribute their own skills created events that felt unique and genuinely owned by the community. Perhaps the biggest highlight was the pride participants took in seeing an idea become a successful event. Many reflected afterwards on what they had learnt, what had worked well and what they would do differently next time, demonstrating a growing understanding of leadership, event management and creative entrepreneurship through a valuable, practical experience.

CHALLENGES

As participant-led events continue growing, reaching audiences beyond existing community networks remains an ongoing opportunity. Attendance throughout the quarter remained consistently strong, with participants drawing support from whānau, groups, peers and wider creative communities. Expanding Dojo's reach beyond these established networks, however, will require greater promotional capacity, allowing more young people and community members to experience what participants are building.

LEARNINGS

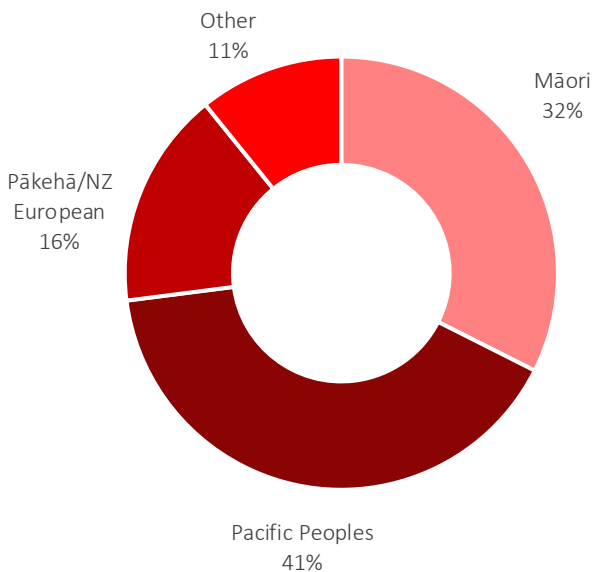
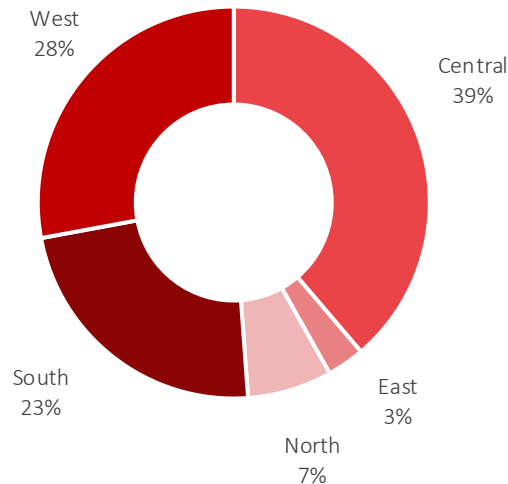
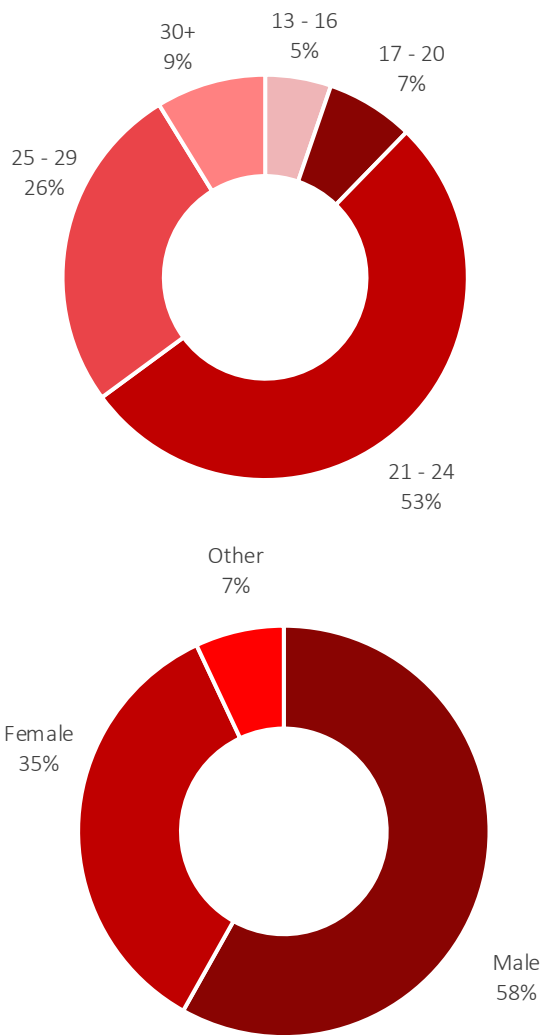
This quarter reinforced that community isn't something young people simply arrive with, it is something they build. We noticed that participants who consistently invested in relationships, supported others and contributed positively to the wider creative community were also the ones who attracted the strongest support when it came time to host their own events. We also saw that giving young people ownership produces outcomes that extend well beyond creative development. By trusting participants to lead, organise and shape their own events, they developed confidence, leadership, problem-solving skills and a stronger sense of responsibility for the communities they are helping create. More than anything, Dojo continued reminding us that when young people are trusted to lead, they don't just create successful events, they create communities that others genuinely want to be part of.

DOJO

SUMMARY



Estimated participants: **500+**





OVERVIEW

Tuakana is our mentoring program designed to nurture personal growth, confidence, and wellbeing through genuine connection. Built on trust and meaningful kōrero, Tuakana provides a safe space for young people to express themselves freely, reflect on their challenges, and explore solutions with the support of experienced mentors. Each mentoring journey is guided by the pace and capacity of the participant — empowering them to find direction, take action, and build belief in their own potential. Whether it's through one-on-one sessions, group chats, or spontaneous moments in daily life, Tuakana creates pathways for personal, creative, and social development that strengthen the whole person.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Strengthened confidence and self-belief



Increased personal responsibility and leadership



Stronger sense of connection and belonging



Positive identity and self-awareness

WELLBEING OUTCOMES



Improved emotional regulation and awareness



Greater resilience and coping skills



Empowered decision-making and independence



Stability through healthy routines and relationships

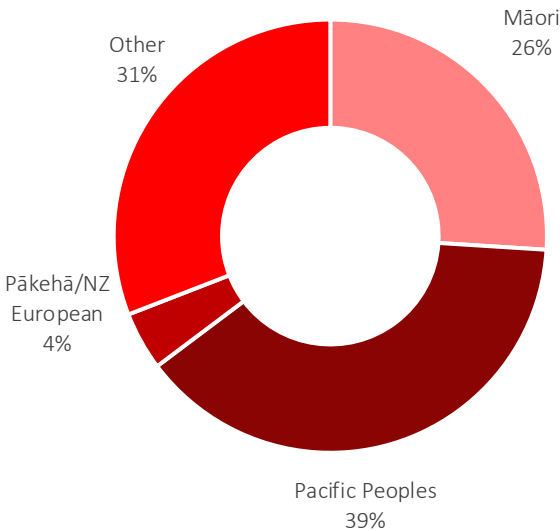
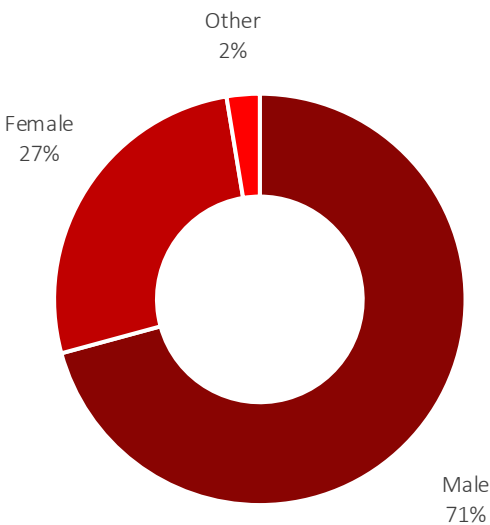
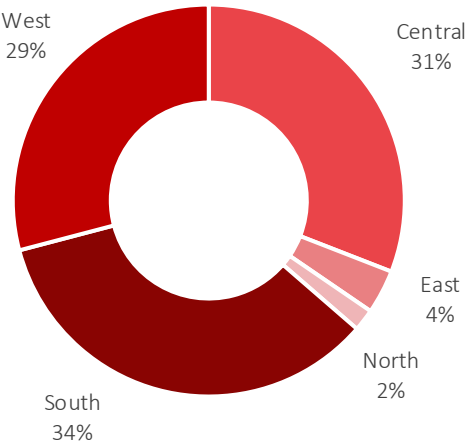
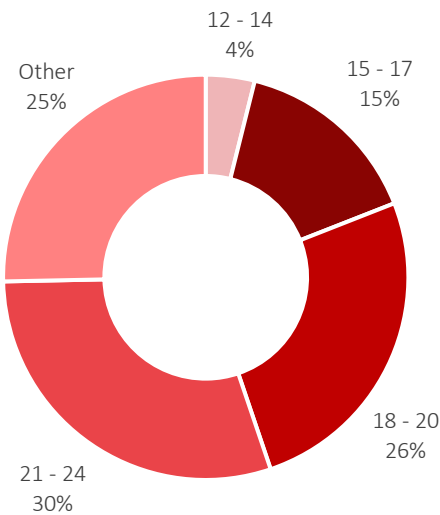


TUAKANA

SUMMARY



Estimated participants: **462**



RANGATAHI HIGHLIGHTS



The connections I've made with like-minded wāhine. Them as well as the mentors have helped me gain confidence and comfortability in my own skin and supported me at gigs, listened to my highs and lows and offered advice. etc... it's bigger than just music <3

In the past few months of attending it's taken the form of a real positive community with a diverse range of talents all in one, and that is something that makes me look forward to it every week. It's not a just small clique of rappers, but rather a group of young artists who are open minded to all genres and it creates a welcoming environment for all.

Open and welcoming space where I felt validated to be my true self however I am on that day, even when I was coming in feeling down/not wanting to talk.

Being able to be in a community, connect with people I would never have thought I would meet and being able to meet with industry veterans.

Talanoa is the best section of a night at navs. The amount of knowledge wisdom and insight to be shared is invaluable .

Making something new with friends and having fun or exploring the recording studio. I love hearing about people's highs and lows and getting to support them at artist events.



Growing and learning so many lessons - not only as an artists but as a person. So many blessings came from this program that fueled my fire for my future endeavors.

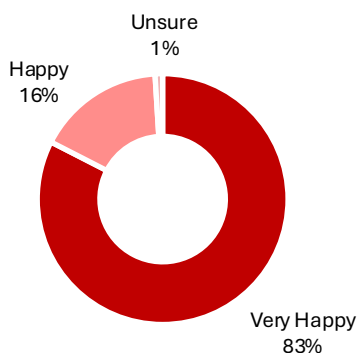




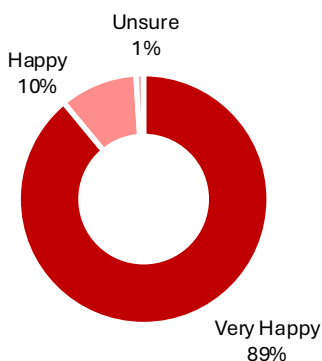
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

HOW OUR RANGATAHI FEEL

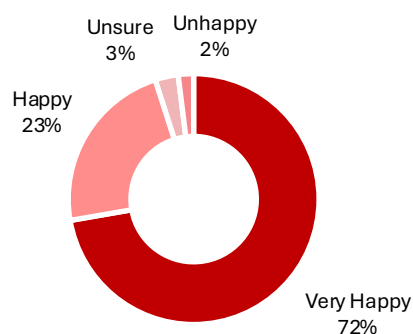
HAPPY WITH THE PROGRAM



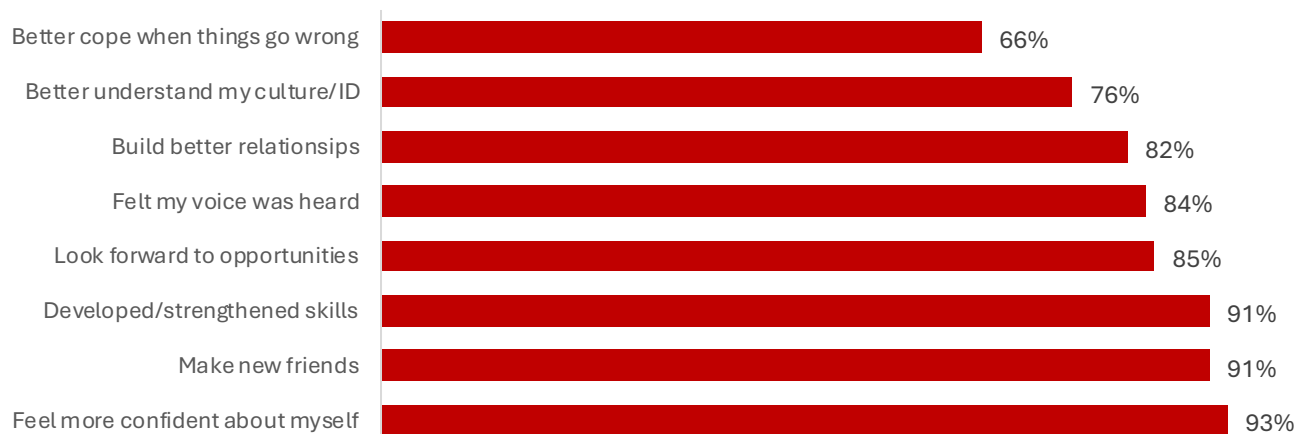
HAPPY WITH THE FACILITATORS



HAPPY WITH THE FACILITIES/VENUE



THE PROGRAMS HELPED ME TO...



WHAT COULD BE BETTER

25% Indicated that no improvements were needed.

18% Requested increased access (more time, days, or sessions)

10% Requested improved equipment and creative resources.

10% Requested more events, workshops and learning opportunities.

4% Requested greater facilitator interaction / engagement

2% Provided other individual suggestions specific to their programme.

MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES

