

PROGRAMS REPORT

2026 QUARTER 1 JAN - MAR



TE KARANGA
CREATIVE COMMUNITY



OVERALL SUMMARY

Prepared by TK White

This quarter saw a strong and intentional start to the year, with programmes creating consistent, youth-driven spaces across Tāmaki Makaurau. There has been a clear focus on fostering environments where young people feel safe to connect, express themselves, and explore creativity in ways that are meaningful to them. Alongside this, new approaches were introduced, including participant-led opportunities, guest speakers, and practical skill-building experiences that link creative expression to real-world pathways. Across all spaces, there has been a continued emphasis on balancing independence with support — allowing young people to lead their own creative processes while ensuring guidance is available when needed. This has supported deeper engagement, with participants not only creating, but also reflecting, collaborating, and building relationships within their communities.

A key highlight this quarter has been the noticeable growth in participant confidence and connection, especially so early in the year. Young people are increasingly showing up as themselves, contributing to discussions, sharing their ideas, and supporting one another in both creative and personal development. Many participants have moved from observation into active participation, demonstrating a stronger sense of belonging and ownership within the space. The introduction of new initiatives, including guest speakers and participant-led opportunities, has been met with strong engagement. These experiences have expanded participants' understanding of what is possible for them, while also encouraging them to step into leadership, take creative risks, and apply their skills in practical ways. The social impact of this has been significant, with participants building meaningful relationships, strengthening their sense of identity, and feeling heard and valued within their communities.

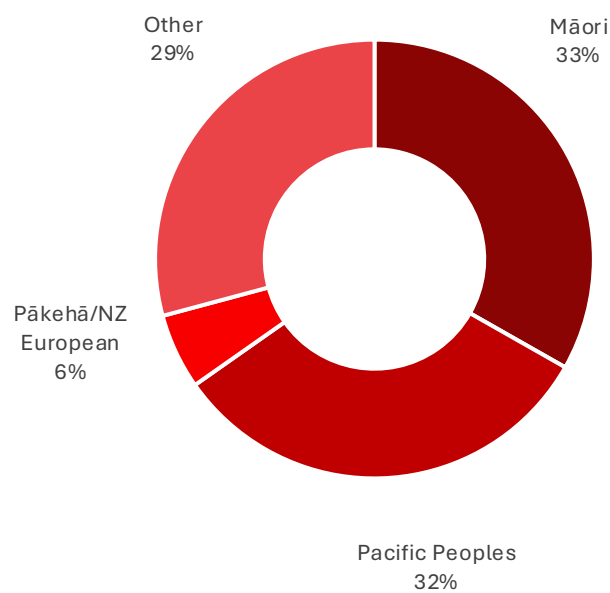
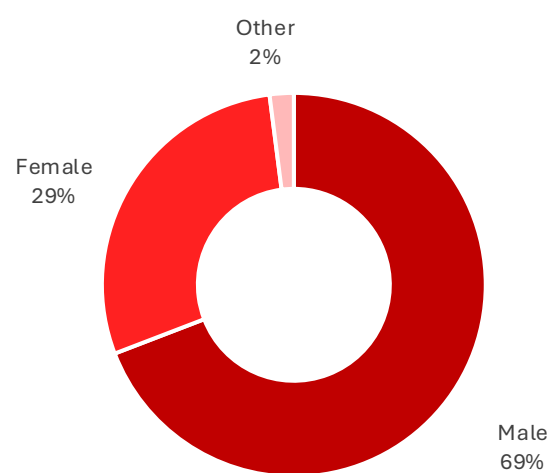
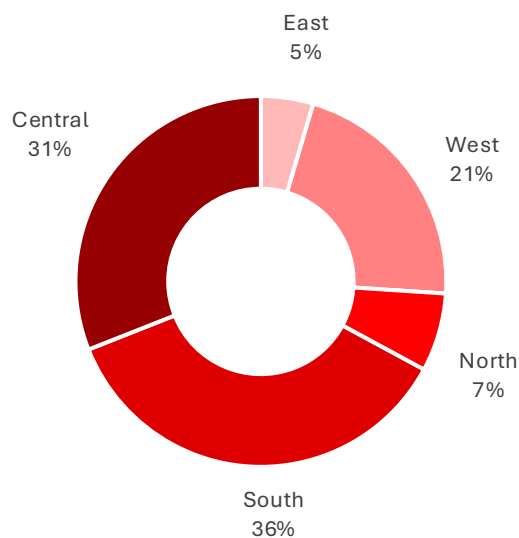
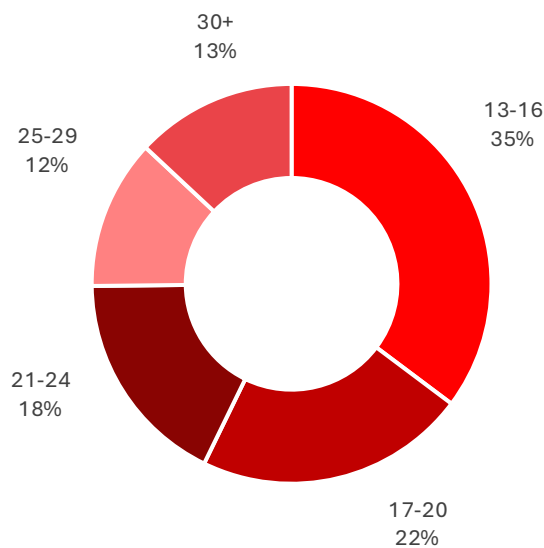
This quarter also highlighted areas for organisational growth, particularly in responding to increasing demand and evolving participant needs. High engagement across programmes has reinforced the need for greater access to time, space, and resources, as well as continued flexibility in how programmes are delivered. Working within shared and dynamic environments has required adaptability, both in terms of physical space and facilitation approaches. These experiences have strengthened the organisation's ability to respond in real time, maintain positive environments, and uphold safe and inclusive spaces even when navigating complex group dynamics. Additionally, shifts in how young people engage — particularly between online and in-person experiences — have prompted reflection on how opportunities can continue to meet participants where they are.

A key organisational learning this quarter has been the value of participant-led development. When young people are given the space to lead, explore, and make decisions within a supportive environment, growth happens more quickly and with greater impact. This has reinforced the importance of stepping back at the right moments, allowing participants to build confidence, resilience, and ownership over their journeys. We have also seen that connection remains at the core of all impact. The strength of relationships — between participants and facilitators, and among peers — continues to be the foundation for both creative and personal development. Creating environments that are safe, consistent, and responsive allows young people to not only develop skills, but also shift how they see themselves and their place in the world.

DATA TOTALS



Participant stats: 743



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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NAVIGATORS

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.





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

This quarter, sessions focused on exploring creativity through digital design and street art, with participants using iPads and Procreate to develop logos, lettering, and graffiti-style concepts. These ideas were then translated into physical artwork, with participants beginning their pieces by spray painting backgrounds on wooden boards. Participants are currently in the early stages of their projects, with most having completed their background layers, and are progressing toward creating their own finished graffiti-style artworks.

HIGHLIGHTS

A key highlight this quarter has been how quickly participants engage with the programme. Many young people who can be disengaged in traditional learning environments are eager to participate when given the opportunity to work on iPads and explore graffiti-style art. Some providers have noted that participants make a point of attending on days the programme runs, showing the value and appeal of the space. Creatively, participants have been experimenting with colour, gradients, and spray techniques, with many taking initiative and beginning to develop their own style. Another highlight has been the ability to adapt sessions while still maintaining strong engagement and participation. Despite limited resources at times (due to increased numbers), facilitators have created opportunities for all participants to be involved. We've also seen positive social outcomes, with participants collaborating, sharing ideas, and encouraging each other. In some cases, participants have grown in confidence quickly, moving from uncertainty to actively supporting their peers, demonstrating how creative environments can build confidence, patience, and connection.

CHALLENGES

This quarter has highlighted the importance of strong facilitation in dynamic classroom environments. At times, sessions have required additional support to guide group energy and ensure the space remains respectful and focused. These moments have provided opportunities to reinforce positive behaviour, strengthen relationships, and model how to navigate challenges in a constructive way. We have also worked within varying class sizes, at times with more participants than available devices. This has required flexibility in how sessions are delivered, with facilitators adapting activities to ensure all participants can participate. While this can impact pacing, it has also encouraged more collaboration, shared learning, and creative problem-solving within the group.

LEARNINGS

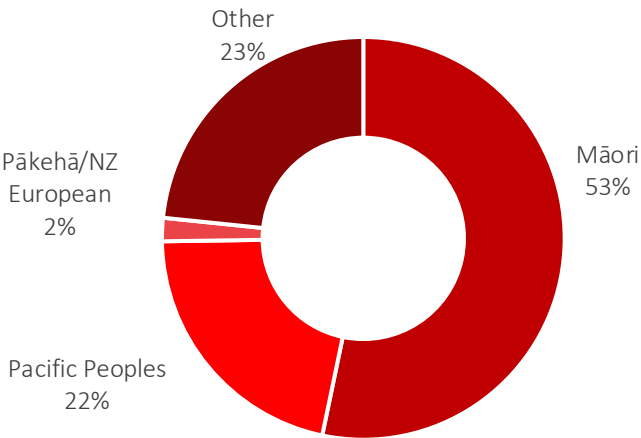
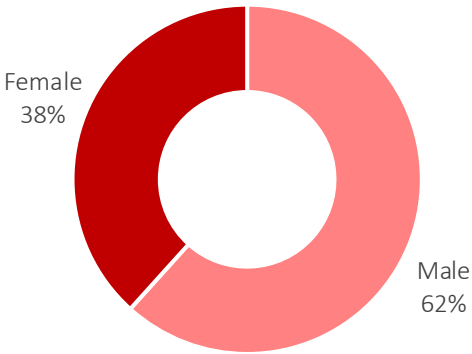
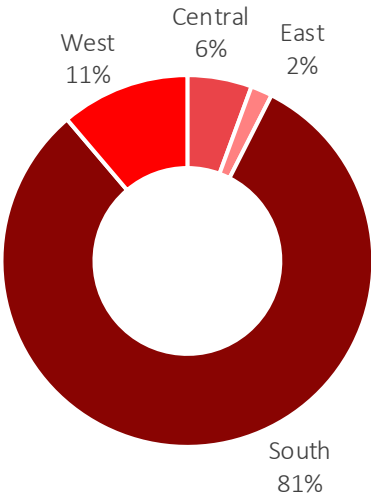
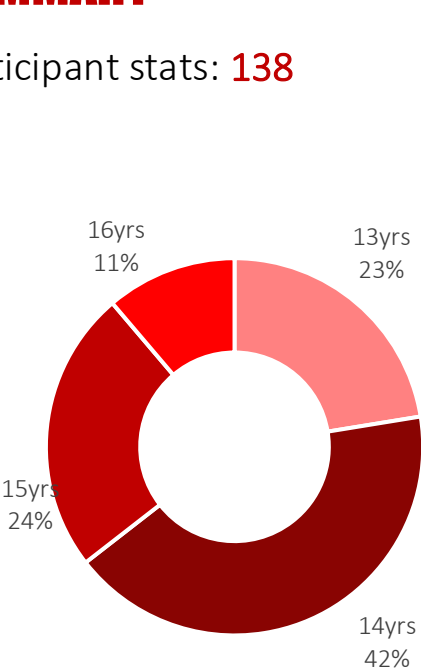
This quarter reinforced the importance of being flexible and responsive to the needs of each group. Working within alternative education settings means energy and dynamics can shift quickly, and we've found that balancing structure with creative freedom helps keep participants engaged and involved. Adapting delivery in real time has been key to maintaining a positive and productive environment. We also saw that participants respond strongly when they can see a clear pathway from digital ideas to real-world outcomes. Translating designs from Procreate into physical artwork has helped make creativity feel tangible and purposeful. Participants have shown a willingness to share, collaborate, and support one another, reinforcing that a positive and inclusive environment is just as important as the skills being developed.

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 / NORTH



Facilitated by Rizvan Tu'itahi, Siose Solo & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Tamzin Naicker

Monday's, Shore Junction, Takapuna

We began the year by resetting our kawa and setting shared goals for what we wanted to achieve together. Each session opened with connection, grounding ourselves through highs and lows and creating space to check in with one another. We held discussions around identity, self-worth, and reflecting on what we wanted to leave behind in 2025 versus what we hoped to carry forward into 2026. We also spent time talking about the state of the world and how to look after our mental and emotional wellbeing, especially when navigating social media and information overload. Creatively, we challenged ourselves with freestyle and writing exercises that incorporated random prompts such as colours or clothing items, keeping the sessions playful while strengthening confidence and quick thinking in performance.

HIGHLIGHTS

We started the year off strong with a lot of excitement and enthusiasm in the room. Many returning participants were eager to pick up where they left off with projects from last year, while also beginning new ideas as a collective. We also welcomed several new participants who quickly settled into the space, sharing both personally and creatively with confidence even on their first visit. The creative challenges throughout the quarter were well received, with participants embracing the prompts and engaging with them in fun and inventive ways.

CHALLENGES

One of the ongoing focuses this quarter has been supporting younger participants to understand and uphold the kawa of the space. As new and younger rangatahi join, facilitators have continued guiding conversations around respectful language, listening to others, and maintaining a supportive environment for everyone. These moments have required patience and consistency, but they have also created opportunities to reinforce the shared values that help keep the space safe and welcoming. We have also been mindful of the diverse needs within the group, particularly with several neurodivergent participants bringing different communication and energy styles into the room. Facilitators have continued adapting how discussions are held so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute while keeping the flow of the session balanced. While this requires ongoing attention, it reflects the inclusive nature of the space and the commitment to ensuring every young person feels supported and able to participate.

LEARNINGS

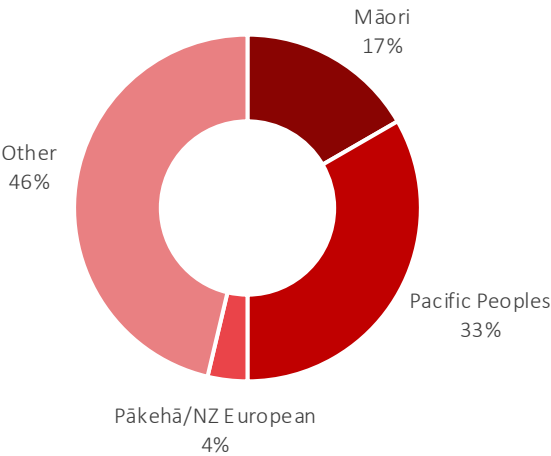
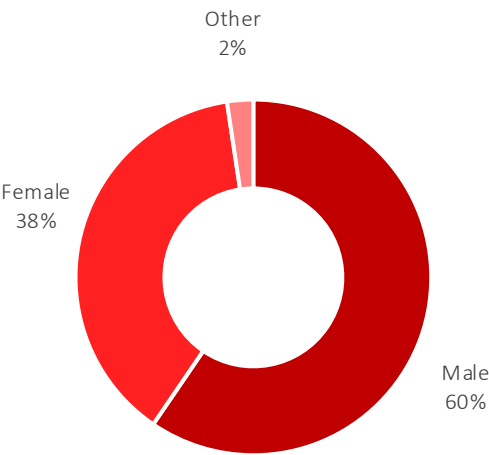
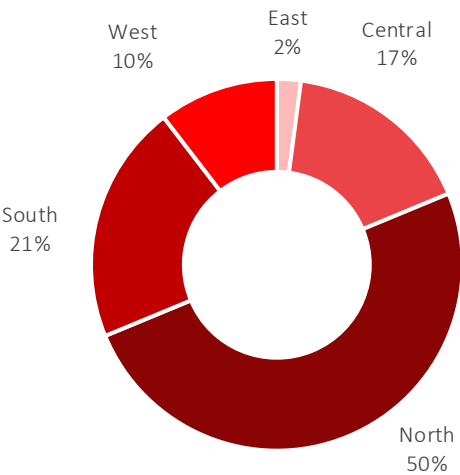
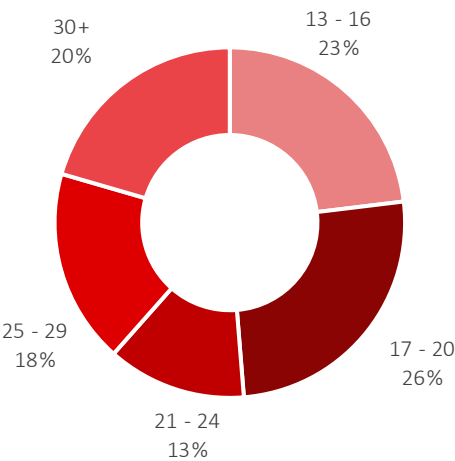
This quarter highlighted the importance of reaching out for support early when navigating complex group dynamics. While we focused on leading by example and reinforcing the kawa through gentle reminders, we learned that bringing in additional guidance and support sooner can strengthen how we hold the space for everyone involved. We also gained valuable insight into the diverse needs within the group, particularly with several neurodivergent participants bringing different communication and engagement styles into the room. This reinforced the importance of continuing to grow our facilitation skills and seeking further training and support where needed, so we can better balance the space and ensure every participant feels included, supported, and able to contribute.

NAVIGATORS / NORTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 42



NAVIGATORS / NORTH

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WEST



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Oliva Luki & Bronson Price

Report by Oliva Luki

Tuesday's, Zeal West, Henderson

This quarter we've had over 20 participants coming through weekly and a steady stream of new sign-ups throughout the quarter. Sessions make full use of the different spaces at Zeal, with participants recording in the studio, writing and producing beats, jamming with instruments, and gathering for talanoa and connection. Participants move between the studio, live jam room, and shared spaces throughout the evening, allowing different creative processes to happen at the same time. Facilitators help set the tone and provide prompts where needed, while participants take the lead in shaping the direction of the sessions through collaboration, experimentation, and shared creativity.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the biggest highlights this quarter has been the strong sense of community within the space. Participants regularly connect beyond the sessions themselves, collaborating on music, attending each other's gigs, and celebrating personal milestones together. What begins in the room often carries into their everyday lives, showing how meaningful the relationships formed here have become. Another highlight is how naturally collaborative the environment has become. The space isn't cliquey, participants move around, share ideas, and spend time creating with a range of different people throughout the night. This openness helps newer participants settle in quickly and encourages everyone to support each other's growth. It's also been powerful to see participants take ownership of the space creatively. Once the environment is set, many young creatives step up to engineer sessions, produce beats, and guide collaborative work. The level of encouragement between participants has created a supportive environment where confidence continues to grow and emerging talent feels comfortable developing at its own pace.

CHALLENGES

With such a diverse mix of experience levels in the room, from first-time creatives to artists already active in the scene, the space can sometimes feel a little intimidating for newer participants when it comes to sharing their work. Facilitators have been mindful of creating opportunities that encourage everyone to step forward at their own pace, making sure newer voices feel just as welcome to contribute. We've also noticed that, being a largely male-dominated space at times, some female participants can feel a bit shy about jumping straight into the studio. This has been an ongoing focus for facilitators, who continue to encourage balance in the room and create moments where everyone feels comfortable participating. With a lot of passionate creatives in one place, participants naturally bring strong ideas and energy into the space. While this can sometimes create a competitive atmosphere, it also reflects the level of ambition within the group. Facilitators have been working to keep that energy positive and collaborative, especially when welcoming new faces into the circle.

LEARNINGS

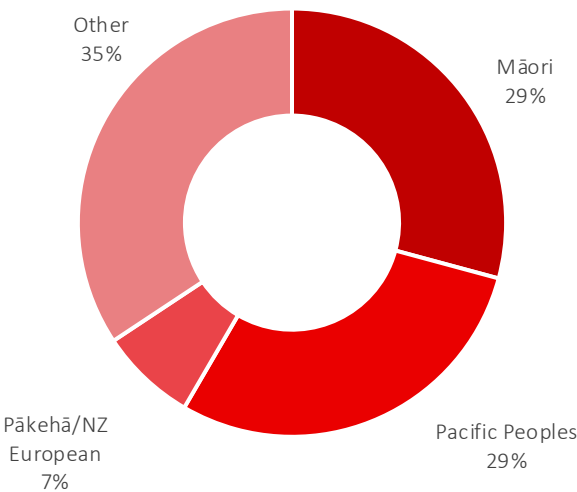
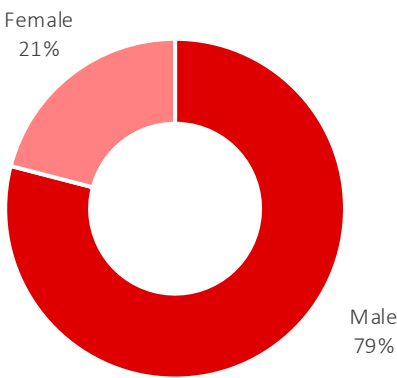
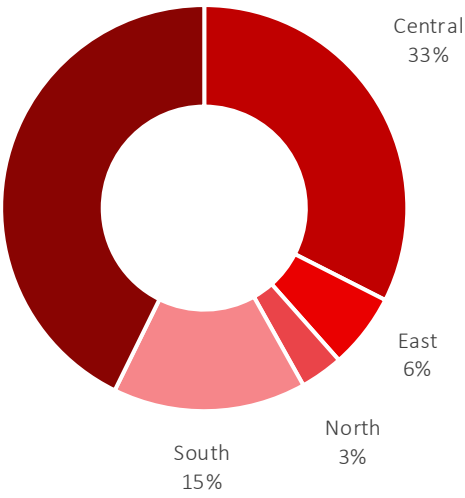
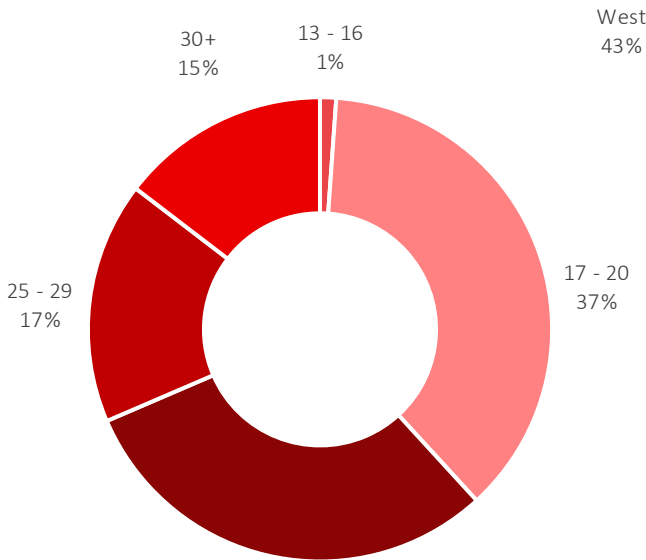
One clear learning this quarter is how much participants value the consistency of the space. Many return week after week knowing what they can gain from being there — whether that's creative progress, connection, or simply a place to recharge. The shared meals have also played an important role, giving participants time to slow down, eat together, and build genuine connections outside of the creative process. It's also become clear that spaces like this are rare within the wider creative community. The balance we currently have — where the space is busy and energetic but still personal enough for facilitators to connect with participants — has proven valuable. Maintaining that steady, sustainable growth allows relationships and collaborations to develop naturally while ensuring everyone who walks through the door still feels seen and supported.

NAVIGATORS / WEST

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 107



NAVIGATORS / WEST

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE



Facilitated by TK White, Hariata Makiha & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Hariata Makiha

Tuesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

We started the year by welcoming many new participants who discovered the programme through our social media platforms. The group now includes a diverse age range from 16 – 30 years old, creating a vibrant mix of perspectives and experiences within the space. With many new faces joining, we revisited the kawa and values established in previous years and worked together to co-design a refreshed kawa that everyone felt connected to. This process helped establish a sense of openness, warmth, and shared responsibility for the space. Facilitators have also been more mindful of time management this quarter, introducing clearer sections throughout the evening to ensure there is ample time for creative exploration. Creative sessions have continued to push participants in new directions, including songwriting challenges such as writing a piece inspired by a scene from a television show. At the same time, facilitators have been growing their own confidence with recording and mixing during creative sessions, strengthening the overall experience for participants.

HIGHLIGHTS

The group has developed a strong sense of synergy and respect for the kawa that everyone helped shape at the start of the year. Connections are forming naturally through extended highs and lows, creating space for participants — especially newcomers — to open up and share freely. It has been especially rewarding to watch our youngest participant find their feet, showing up consistently, growing more confident in the booth, and gradually building friendships within the group. Seeing them become comfortable enough to fully be themselves has been a real highlight for facilitators. The group has also shown a high level of care and inclusiveness. One new participant who has Tourette's has been warmly welcomed, with the group naturally normalising their tics and ensuring they feel comfortable and accepted. Moments like these highlight the culture of understanding and respect that participants continue to build together. Extended highs and lows have often taken more time than expected, but this has allowed participants to connect more deeply with one another, strengthening trust and reinforcing the supportive environment that defines Wāhine Navigators.

CHALLENGES

With a diverse group of participants bringing different experiences and needs into the space, facilitators have been mindful of how to hold discussions in a way that supports everyone. At times, some participants require additional space to express themselves, which can shift the energy of the group. This has highlighted the importance of creating moments for one-on-one check-ins where needed, allowing participants to feel heard while maintaining balance within the wider circle. Time management has been another area of focus, as sessions often extend beyond planned finishing times due to the depth of connection and conversation within the group. While this reflects the strength of engagement, facilitators are continuing to refine how the evening is paced to ensure sessions remain sustainable while still allowing space for meaningful connection.

LEARNINGS

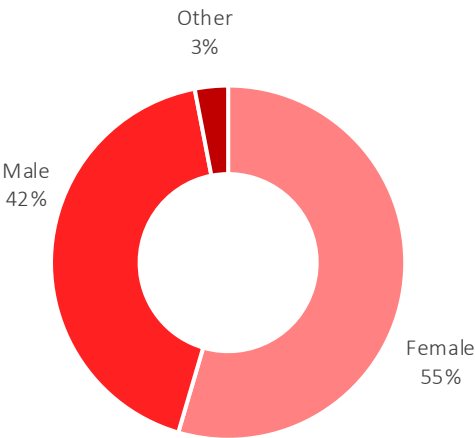
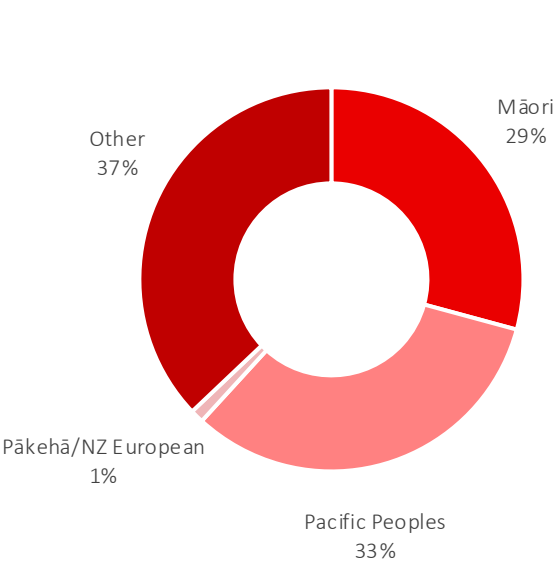
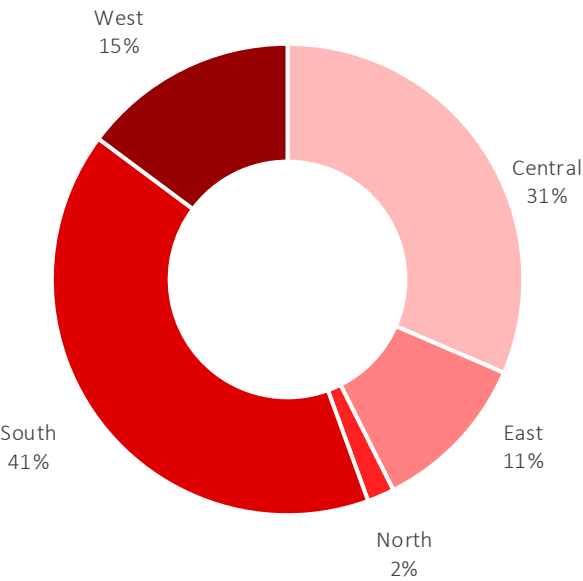
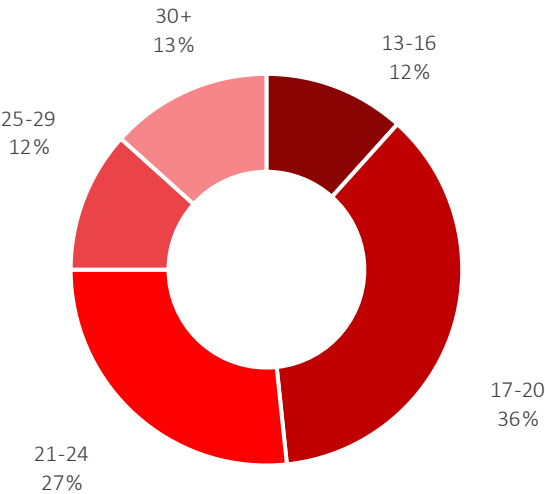
Extended highs and lows have been the best way for us to connect at ground level. It makes the next time we all see each other that much easier. Some participants were completely new and by the end of the night it'd feel like we've known each other forever. Old participants help embed the kawa amongst the group and it shows when everyone is able to hold space for each other and encourage each other. Girl tings. Having someone with multiple mental diagnosis has made the group much more understanding towards them.

NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 66



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Aidan Fine, Bronson Price & Dera Meelan

Report by Elijah Manū

Wednesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

We've had a strong start to the year at Central Navigators, welcoming an influx of new participants who have brought fresh energy into the space. A key focus this quarter has been creating an environment where relationships can grow naturally, allowing participants to feel comfortable, connected, and supported. We began by sharing highs and lows from the holidays and setting personal and creative goals, helping everyone settle in and build trust early on. Across the quarter, sessions explored conversations that connected both to life and creativity — from the environments we create in, to navigating uncomfortable situations, and understanding our place within the local music scene. Creative sessions were shaped around these ideas, with challenges that encouraged experimentation such as exploring duality, creating stadium-style tracks, blending genres, and developing album interludes. We also introduced music-based games and welcomed a guest speaker into the space, bringing new perspective and inspiration while continuing to support participants to create, share, and grow in ways that felt natural to them.

HIGHLIGHTS

The biggest highlight this quarter has been the strong sense of connection forming within the space. New participants have been settling in quickly — building friendships, opening up in conversations, and contributing creatively from their first sessions. It's been especially rewarding to see participants build confidence in real time, from recording for the first time and being excited hearing themselves back, to stepping into collaboration and sharing ideas more openly. The introduction of new activities, alongside the guest speaker session, brought a fresh dynamic to the space. Participants showed strong engagement, particularly during the Q&A, taking the opportunity to learn directly from someone active in the industry. This added depth to their understanding and gave them a clearer sense of what is possible beyond the room.

CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges this quarter has been managing time toward the end of sessions. With such a strong focus on collaboration and creative flow, sessions can sometimes run longer than expected. While this reflects the level of engagement in the room, it has highlighted the need to be more intentional with how we structure the evening so we can wrap up on time while still maintaining that energy. We've also experienced some practical challenges with the venue. At times, access into the space has not been as smooth as it could be, particularly for new participants arriving for the first time. There have also been moments where the physical environment required extra care to ensure equipment is protected and the space remains safe and comfortable. These factors have highlighted the importance of a venue that supports both accessibility and functionality as the programme continues to grow.

LEARNINGS

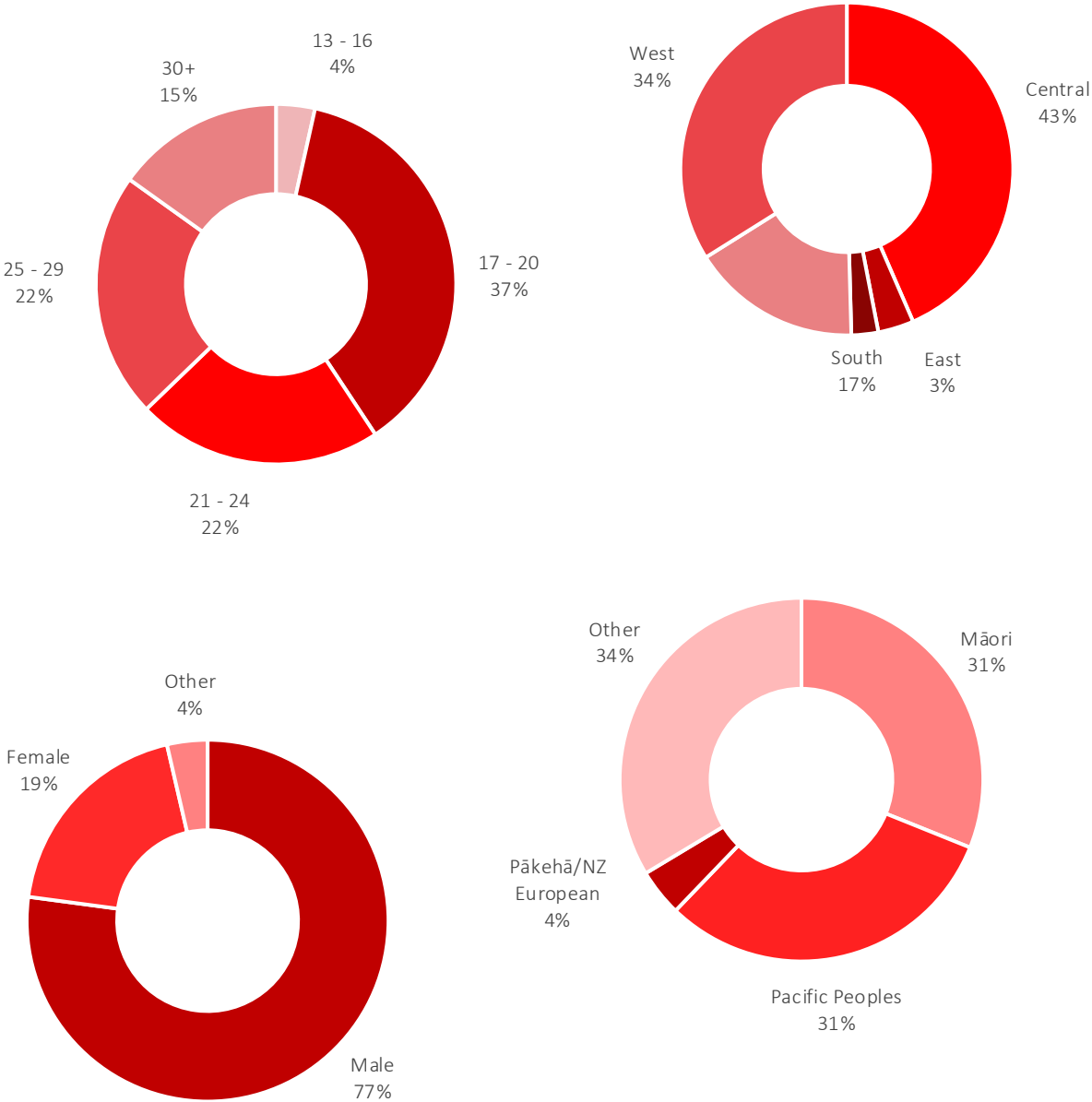
This quarter showed us that participants are open to trying new things. Introducing different activities and approaches was met with strong enthusiasm, reinforcing the value of keeping sessions dynamic and responsive. We also saw how quickly connection and confidence can develop when the space is held consistently, with new participants integrating with ease. Another key learning has been around pacing and accessibility. As sessions become more collaborative and creative output grows, being more intentional with time management will help maintain flow while still holding that energy. Ensuring the space is easy to access and functions well will also continue to play an important role in supporting participation and overall experience.

NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 95



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH



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

Report by Oliva Luki

Monday's, OMAC, Ōtara

This quarter marked a strong start to the year for South Navigators as we returned to our original space at OMAC, bringing a sense of familiarity and energy back into the programme. While we did not have access to the studio, the space continued to attract solid numbers, with a steady flow of new sign-ups and a strong return rate of participants becoming regulars. A key highlight this quarter was hosting HAZ BEATS as a guest speaker, where participants were highly engaged, asking thoughtful industry questions and gaining valuable insight. Across sessions, participation has remained high, with both returning and new participants feeling comfortable to engage in talanoa and creative activities. The space has continued to support young people to be more vocal, confident, and themselves, contributing to a strong sense of connection and growth within the group.

HIGHLIGHTS

A strong highlight this quarter has been how much participants look forward to starting their week at Navigators, with many sharing that it sets the tone for their motivation and inspiration moving forward. We've seen participants become more open in talanoa, engaging in deeper conversations and feeling comfortable sharing their thoughts and perspectives in the space. There's also a strong sense of pride and belonging within the group. Weekly group photos are often shared by participants on their own social media, reflecting how connected they feel to the space and to each other. New participants are welcomed naturally, with the group showing genuine interest in who they are and what they create, helping them settle in quickly without needing much direction from facilitators. The sense of community continues to stand out, with participants building connections through shared creativity, humour, and conversation. This reflects the strong collective culture within the space, where support, openness, and a village mindset are naturally upheld by the group.

CHALLENGES

This quarter has highlighted the importance of working flexibly within a shared space. As OMAC continues to support multiple programmes, sessions have occasionally moved between rooms, which has required adaptability from both facilitators and participants. While we've continued to make the most of the hall and maintain strong engagement, it has reinforced how valuable access to different creative spaces can be for supporting a range of creative outputs. We've also noticed that many participants arrive straight from work or the end of a long day. While not essential, having food or snacks available could further support energy levels and help participants stay engaged and comfortable throughout the sessions.

LEARNINGS

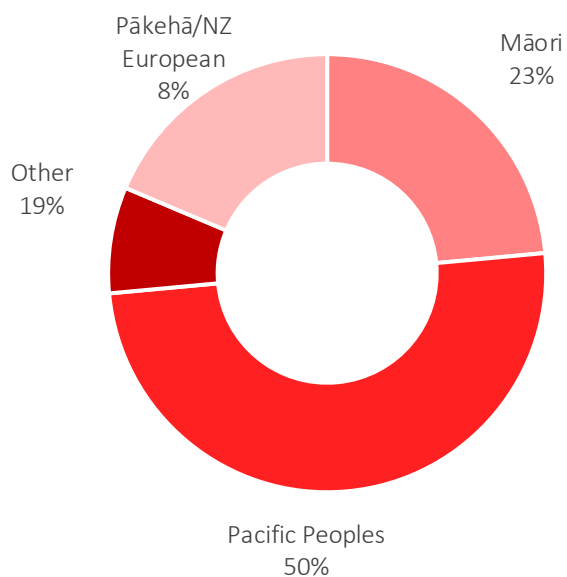
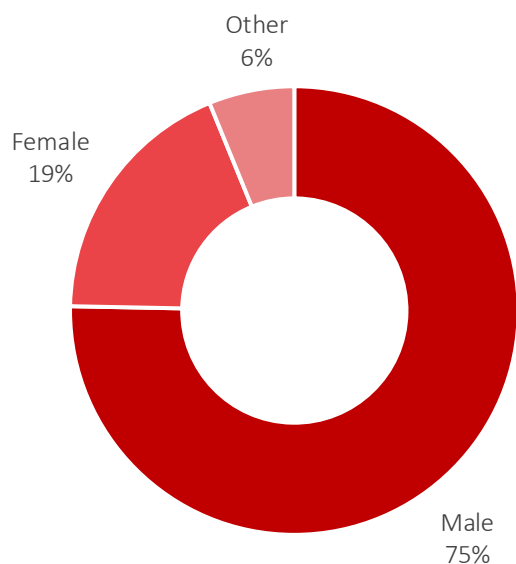
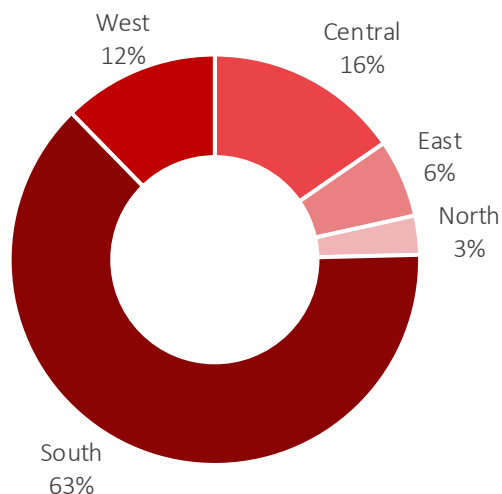
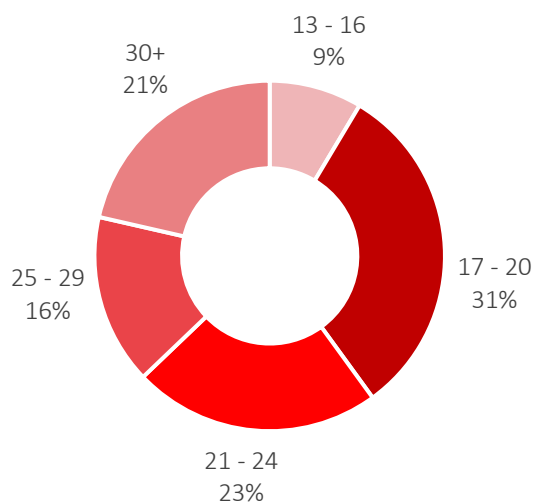
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NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

SUMMARY

Participant stats: **81**



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 entered its third year this quarter, beginning a new chapter in a new environment at Whare Koa Community House in Māngere. The shift brought a fresh and rejuvenating energy into the space, with both returning and new participants settling in and shaping the vibe of the group. Over the past few months, the space has grown into a consistent Tuesday check-in, where participants come together to connect, share, and explore spoken word. We've welcomed many new participants who have been eager to develop their skills in poetry and expression. Alongside this, small additions like shared snacks have helped create a relaxed and inviting atmosphere, strengthening the sense of connection within the group. Participants have naturally taken to spoken word, embracing it as a way to express themselves, with many showing confidence and ease in stepping into this form of storytelling.

HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight this quarter has been the shift into a new space, bringing fresh energy and new opportunities for connection. Whare Koa Community House has provided a welcoming environment that has allowed both new and returning participants to settle in with ease and embrace the space fully. We've seen a strong wave of new, ambitious participants eager to explore spoken word, and it's been powerful to watch their confidence grow over a short period of time. Participants have shown increasing willingness to contribute to talanoa, share their perspectives, and step into their voices as poets. While this growth has always been present, it feels especially strong this year, with the new space amplifying the openness, expression, and confidence within the group.

CHALLENGES

This quarter highlighted the importance of holding space with clarity and balance, particularly as more participants become confident in sharing and contributing during talanoa. At times, strong voices and enthusiasm meant that conversations required more guidance to ensure everyone had the opportunity to be heard, including facilitators. There were also moments that called for deeper reflection around how we maintain a safe and respectful environment while still uplifting each participant's mana. These situations prompted valuable internal discussions among facilitators about how to navigate challenging dynamics with care, ensuring the space continues to support openness while maintaining mutual respect for everyone involved.

LEARNINGS

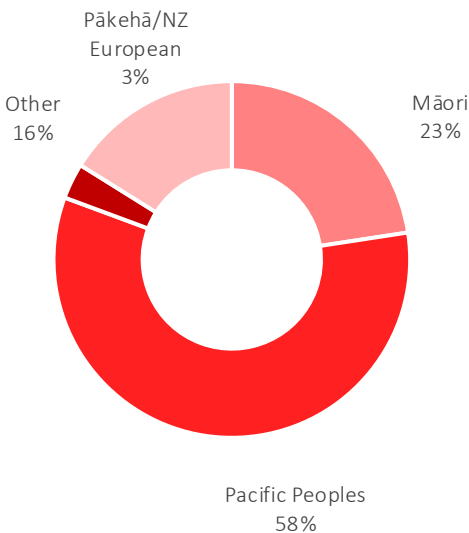
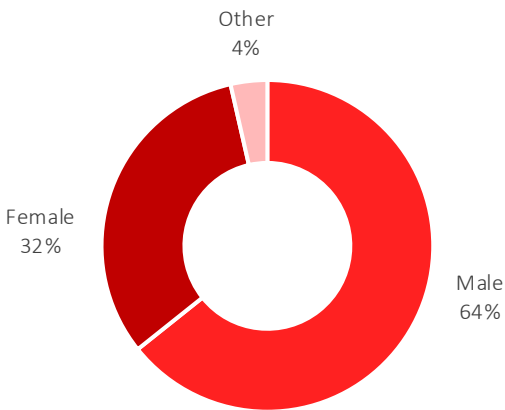
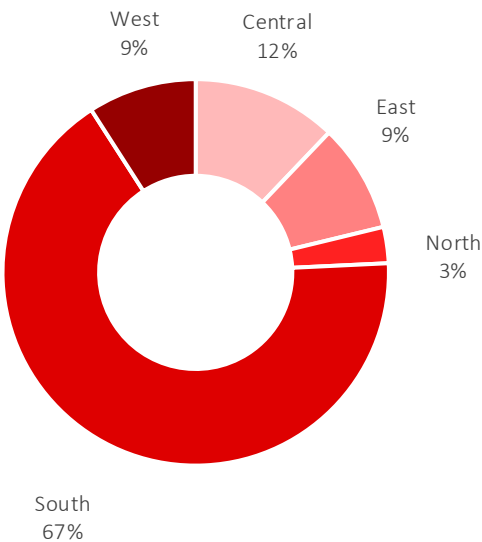
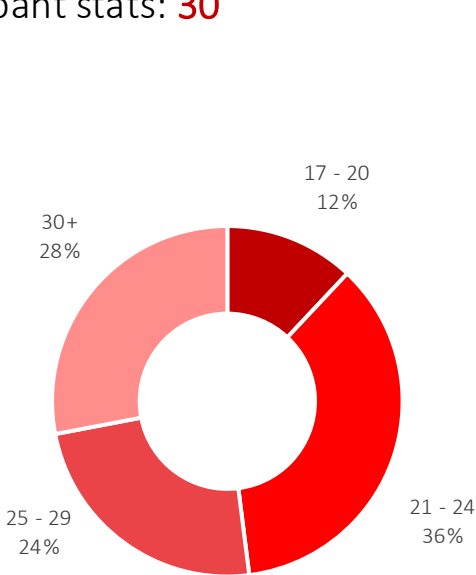
This quarter reinforced the importance of intentionally defining and maintaining what a safe space looks like for everyone in the room. Early in the quarter, we opened conversations with participants about what safety means to them, which helped shape a shared understanding of how we show up for one another. As facilitators, this also meant continuing to check in with ourselves and each other, recognising that holding a safe space starts with feeling grounded and supported as a team. A meaningful reflection of this was when a participant expressed their appreciation by giving flowers, acknowledging the warmth and safety they felt in the space. Moments like this affirmed that the kaupapa is being felt and received. It reinforced that creating a safe, welcoming environment is not just something we aim for, but something participants are actively experiencing, and that we are on the right path in how we hold the space together.

NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 30



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

IMAGES





TALANOA TUESDAYS

OVERVIEW

Talanoa Tuesdays is a weekly, communal dialogue initiative that provides a culturally grounded space for honest conversation, reflection, and collective growth. Rooted in the Pasifika practice of Talanoa, it offers a rare environment where people can explore personal experiences and worldviews that are often difficult to express in other settings. By creating a safe and dignified forum for open dialogue, Talanoa Tuesdays strengthens emotional wellbeing, mental health, builds social connection, and fosters a sense of belonging across diverse communities and generations.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Increased emotional self-awareness through guided communal dialogue



Strengthened sense of connection and belonging across diverse communities



Greater capacity to reflect on life challenges and navigate them with dignity



Access to a consistent, culturally grounded space that fosters trust and connection

WELLBEING OUTCOMES



Improved ability to process personal experiences in a safe and supportive environment



Increased sense of safety and dignity when exploring personal or sensitive issues



Strengthened emotional resilience through shared reflection and collective care



Enhanced overall mental and emotional wellbeing through regular, meaningful dialogue





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

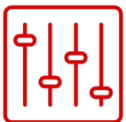


Development of resilience and perseverance through independent studio use



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

Report by Dera Meelan

Weds, Thurs, Wesley Community Centre, Sandringham

This quarter, Creative Labs Central continued to provide a free, open studio space where participants could come in and work on their music independently, with support available when needed. The focus has been on creating a safe and accessible environment where young people can develop their skills, progress their creative projects, and build confidence in their music practice at their own pace.

HIGHLIGHTS

A key highlight of Creative Labs Central is being able to witness participant growth firsthand. It's rewarding to see people move from one level of understanding and skill to the next, often quite quickly as their confidence in the creative process builds. Over time, participants become more comfortable experimenting, collaborating, and sharing their work with others in the space. Another highlight this quarter has been the balance of support within the studio. By offering guidance and constructive feedback without being overly involved, participants were able to lead their own creative journeys while knowing support was there when needed. This approach has helped foster independence, confidence, and consistent creative progress.

CHALLENGES

This quarter ran smoothly overall, with only minor moments requiring guidance to maintain the positive and respectful environment within the space. These instances were addressed as they arose and helped reinforce shared expectations around how participants engage with one another. Outside of this, the programme maintained a steady flow, with the structure and environment continuing to support participants in achieving their creative and personal goals.

LEARNINGS

This quarter reinforced the importance of knowing when to offer guidance and when to step back. While there can be a natural urge to solve problems for participants, we found it was more effective to point out challenges, offer direction, and allow them to work through solutions themselves. This approach supported participants to build confidence, strengthen their problem-solving skills, and develop a greater sense of independence in their creative work, while still feeling supported within the space.

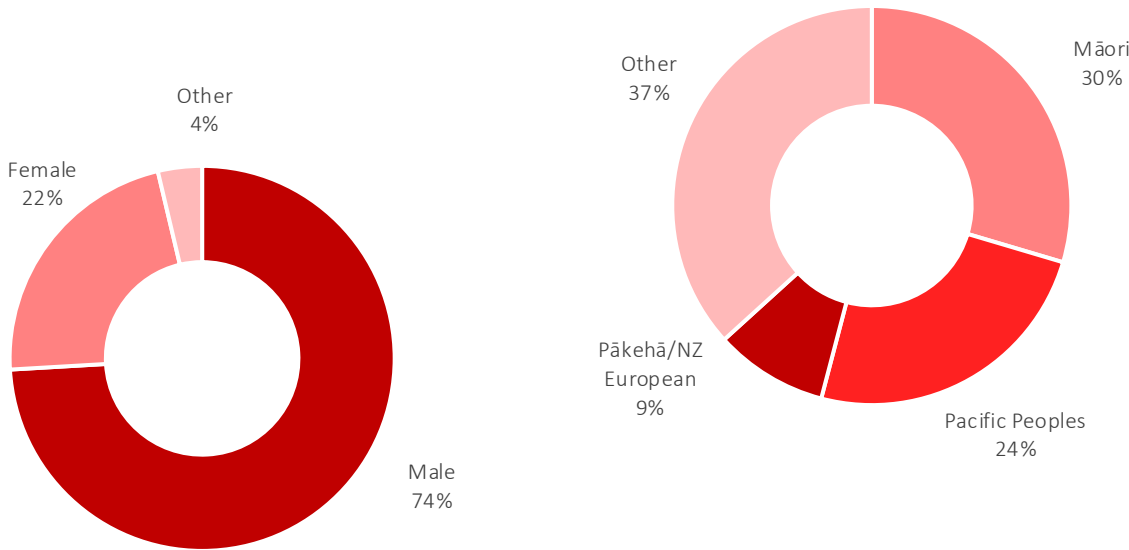
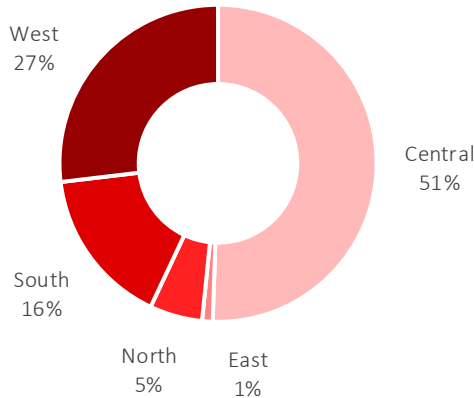
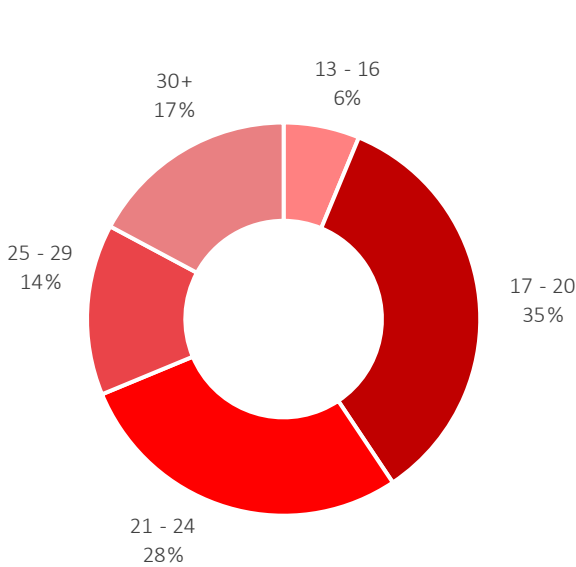


CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 81



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki

Mon & Weds, OMAC, Ōtara

This quarter saw a shift in approach within Creative Labs South, with a stronger focus on building participant capability in the studio. Alongside supporting recording sessions, we began introducing participants to the basics of studio use, including signal flow and how to record themselves, helping them develop practical knowledge that can be applied both within and beyond the space. The space has also naturally extended into a place for mentoring and connection, where participants feel comfortable seeking advice, asking questions, or simply taking time to talk about their personal life. This reflects the trust that has been built, with Creative Labs South continuing to operate as both a creative and supportive environment.

HIGHLIGHTS

A key highlight this quarter has been the continued growth in participants, with new creatives coming through and quickly engaging with the space. It's been especially encouraging to see younger participants showing strong interest, often looking forward to their studio sessions and using the time to focus on recording and developing their sound. We've also seen more participants begin releasing their music, shifting from keeping work in the vault to sharing it publicly. Another highlight has been the increase in participant independence within the studio. With more participants learning how to use the equipment, some are now confidently running their own sessions, creating space for experimentation and self-directed learning while still having support available when needed. Alongside this, there has been growing interest in beat-making, with participants beginning to create their own sounds and engage more deeply with the full creative process.

CHALLENGES

One of the ongoing challenges has been managing studio bookings, particularly when participants are unable to attend their scheduled sessions. To support fairness and maximise access, clearer expectations have been put in place around booking commitment, which has already led to a noticeable improvement. Demand for studio time also remains high, often filling quickly, which reflects how valued and well-utilised the space is by participants. There have also been some technical limitations within the studio environment, including limited internet access, which has required adapting how files are shared after sessions. Facilitators and participants have worked around this by preparing alternative solutions, such as using USBs to transfer files directly. These adjustments have helped maintain the flow of sessions while ensuring participants still leave with their work ready to go.

LEARNINGS

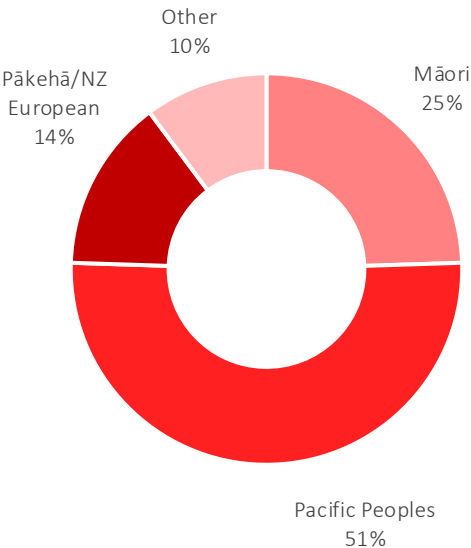
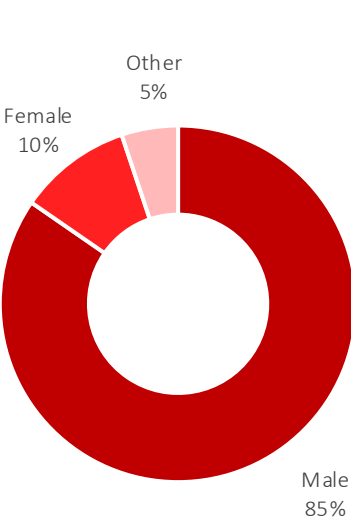
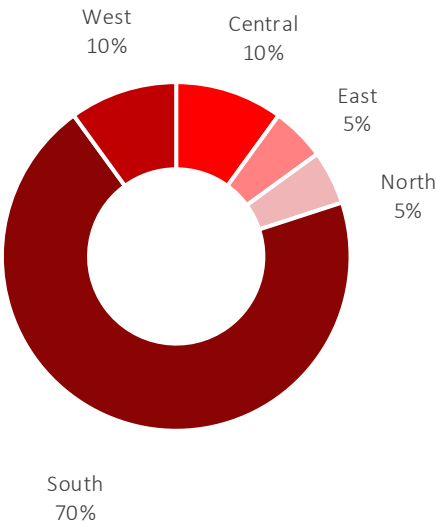
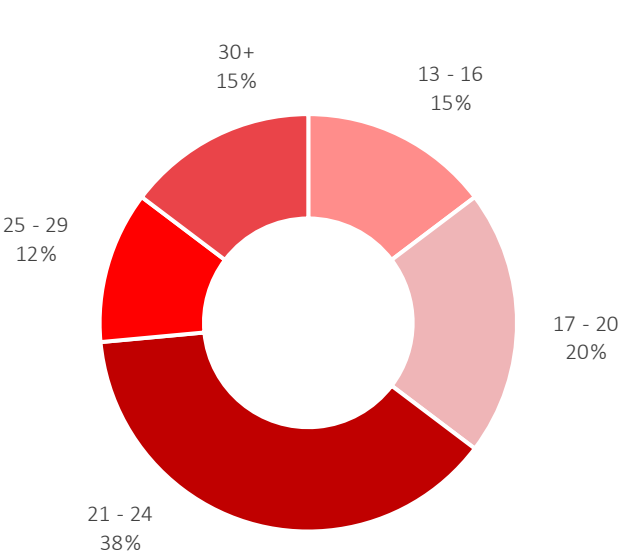
This quarter highlighted the importance of balancing support with independence. As participants become more comfortable in the space, building their capability to use studio equipment has helped encourage ownership over their sessions while maintaining a supportive environment. We also saw that participants engage with the space in different ways — some come to record, others to talk through ideas, and some simply to hold space and be present. Recognising these different needs has allowed sessions to remain flexible and participant-led, while still supporting progress and growth. The strong demand for studio time also reinforced how valuable and well-utilised the space is, with participants making the most of the opportunity to develop their craft.

CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 38



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

Bridge The Gap has had a strong start to the year, building on the success of the previous intake with a more intentional and structured approach. This intake includes participants from both West and South Navigators, bringing together a mix of emerging artists at different stages of their journeys. Sessions have been tailored to suit each participant's needs, with a combination of studio-based work and smaller focused sessions supporting steady progress across their projects. Participants have been actively developing their music from the ground up — from production and songwriting through to recording. Strong momentum has been built across the intake, with multiple tracks already completed and projects nearing their final stages. The programme continues to support participants to take ownership of their work, while adapting to individual schedules and creative processes to ensure consistent progress.

HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight this quarter has been the growth of participants across the programme. For some, this has meant stepping into recording for the first time with confidence, showing how prior experience in shared spaces has helped prepare them to engage comfortably in the studio. Participants have shown strong attitudes toward their work, consistently turning up with focus, openness to feedback, and a willingness to see their projects through. We've also seen growth in how participants are communicating and leading their creative direction. Some are becoming more confident in expressing how they want their sound to develop, allowing for more collaborative and intentional sessions. With multiple tracks already completed and strong momentum across the group, the intake is progressing well, with participants on track and building toward a strong final outcome.

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges this quarter has been supporting participants with different levels of readiness and commitment. While all participants brought strong talent into the programme, some required more support in maintaining momentum outside of sessions. This highlighted the importance of aligning expectations early and ensuring participants are prepared to fully engage with the opportunity. Working with a mix of emerging and more experienced artists has also required a tailored approach. While experienced participants bring strong skillsets and direction, facilitators have been mindful of maintaining a balance that still allows space for growth, development, and meaningful progression for each individual within the programme.

LEARNINGS

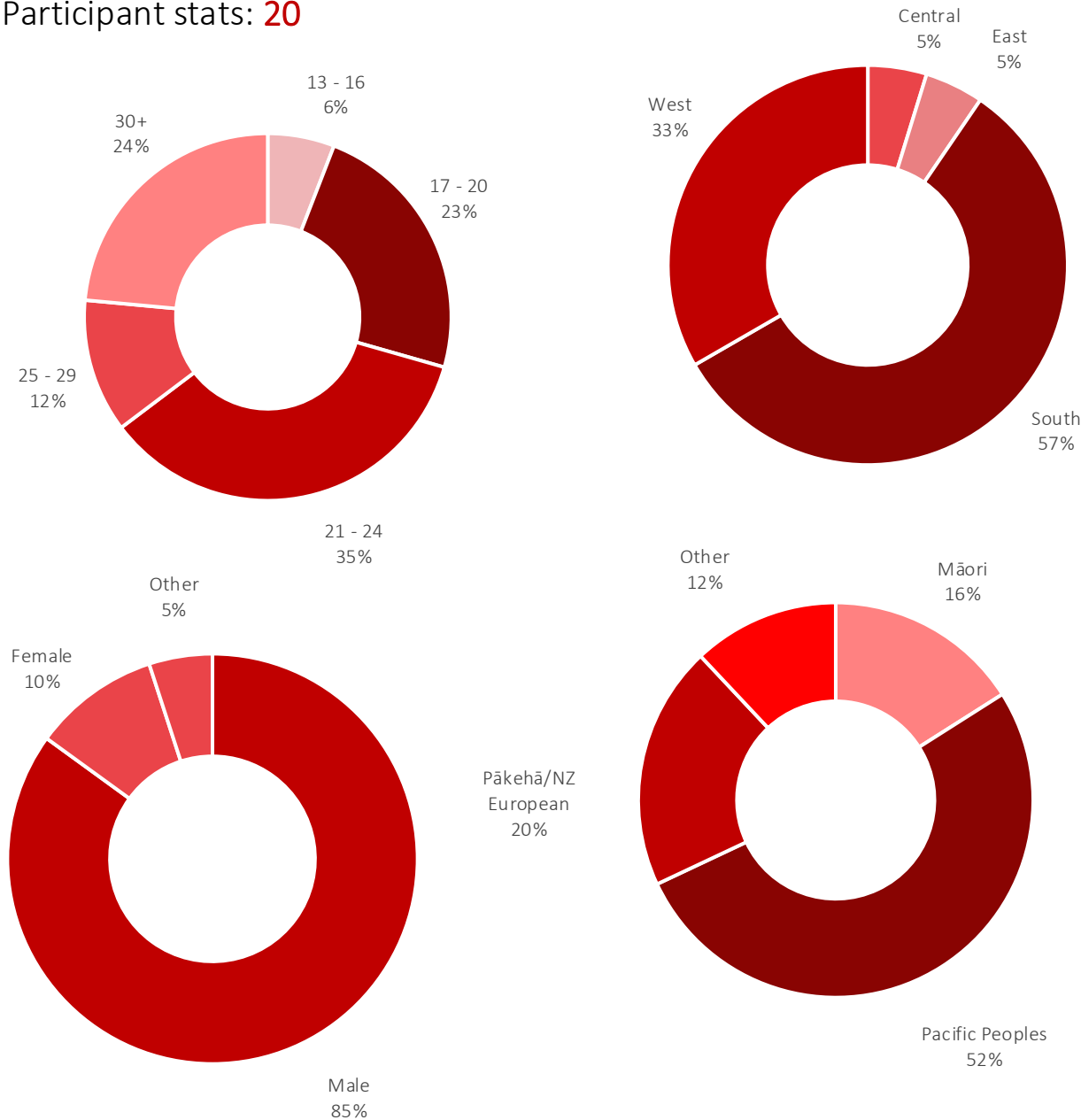
This quarter highlighted the importance of aligning participants to the purpose of the programme. We saw that the programme is especially effective for younger or less experienced participants who are still developing their skills and confidence, allowing them to fully benefit from the guidance and structure provided. Another key learning has been that talent alone isn't enough — confidence and self-belief play a crucial role in how far participants can take their work. Supporting participants to recognise their own potential, alongside developing their skills, remains an important part of the process as they move through the programme.

BRIDGE THE GAP



SUMMARY

Participant stats: 20



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



Facilitated by Oliva Luki, Luani Nansen & TK White

Report by TK White

Friday's fortnightly, The Button Factory, Auckland Central

This quarter saw Dojo move from Thursday's to Friday's to allow more opportunity for audience participation, while opening the space up for young people to lead and host their own events. Each session centred around participant-led events, including an album release and a solo show. These opportunities allowed young people to take ownership of their ideas while gaining hands-on experience in areas such as promotion, event management, and building support systems around their work.

HIGHLIGHTS

A major highlight this quarter has been delivering back-to-back events that were fully organised and led by young people under 24. It was powerful to see the level of ownership participants took, particularly in how creatively they approached promotion and brought their ideas to life. These experiences are continuing to push young people to step outside their comfort zones and build practical, real-world skills. Another highlight has been the growth of our young staff member in live sound engineering. After training last year, their increased confidence and capability has strengthened the overall quality of the performance space, allowing us to better manage the sound system and create a more professional and supportive environment for participants.

CHALLENGES

One of the key challenges this quarter has been engaging participants in leading their own live events. While there has been interest, it has been more selective, reflecting a shift in how young people are choosing to express themselves, with many placing greater focus on building their online presence alongside or instead of live performance. We've also seen that audience turnout for live events requires ongoing support and momentum to build. This has highlighted the importance of continuing to explore how live experiences can evolve to better align with what excites young people, while still creating meaningful opportunities for them to step into leadership and performance.

LEARNINGS

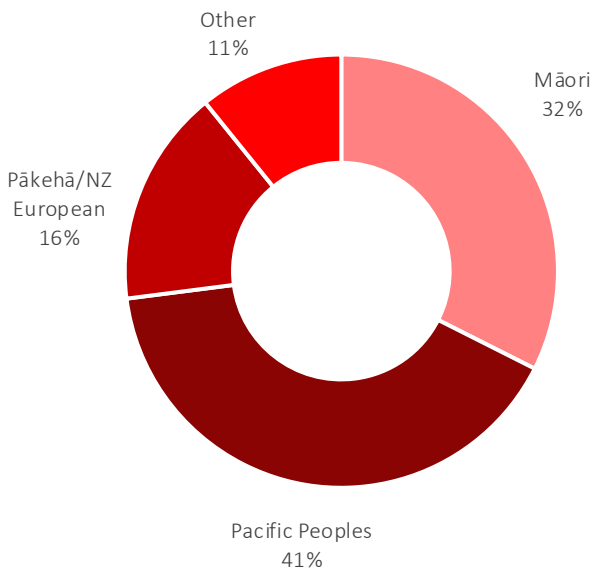
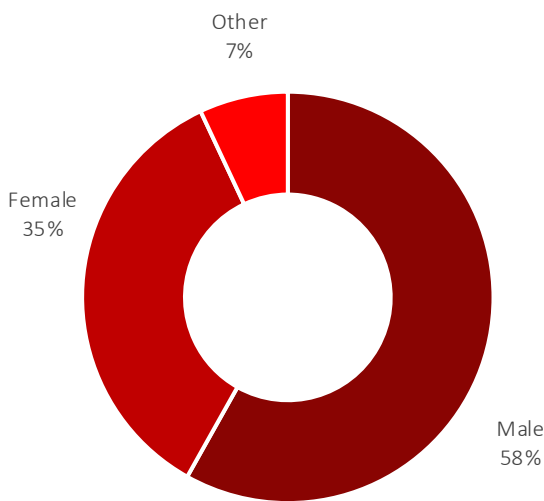
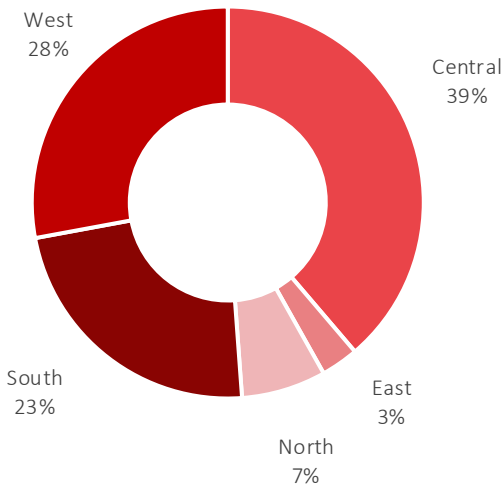
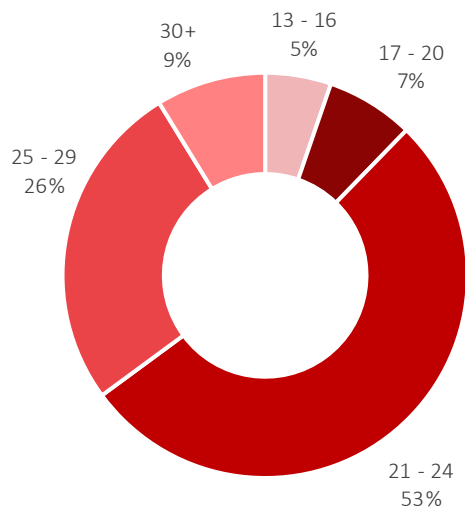
This quarter highlighted the importance of aligning opportunities with where young people are currently at. While live events remain a valuable pathway, we've seen that many participants are more focused on building their presence online, which has shifted how they engage with opportunities. This has reinforced the need for Dojo to remain flexible and responsive, meeting participants in their current interests while still creating pathways for growth. We also learned that participant-led opportunities require the right level of support and momentum to build confidence. When young people are ready, they are able to take ownership and deliver meaningful events, but creating that readiness takes time, encouragement, and consistent exposure. Moving forward, this will help shape how we scaffold opportunities so participants can step into leadership in ways that feel achievable and relevant to them.

DOJO

SUMMARY



Estimated participants: **500+**



DOJO

IMAGES





TUAKANA

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



RANGATAHI HIGHLIGHTS



The best thing for me participating in the programme was connecting and being surrounded by music minded people, getting good advice from well experienced artists and improving my music skills gradually just by attending regularly 🙌💯



Having the leaders there to spark music discussions and to force me to expand my knowledge e.g. coming in just wanting to rap, but engaging in group games like playing songs from different eras and really getting a better grasp on music as a whole.



The community, kindness and love that's in South Auckland is unmatched... and the talent. It was also dope to have guest speaker Haz Beats and having the opportunity to ask him questions.

Access to High quality studio's and equipment that would take me years to get myself. Also access to the biggest artists (e.g. Church & Melodownz) in New Zealand who are far along into the pathways that myself and others would like to down.

Navigators as a whole is so awesome! Ive been able to attend a few for a while now and its something i really look forward to through out the week. From the people, the talanoa, the creative the community, to the performances all together its such a blessing and im so grateful to be able to be a part of it!!!

The energy between the girls - it very much feels like a bunch of sisters and cousins . How the space feels so safe to be vulnerable and creative .

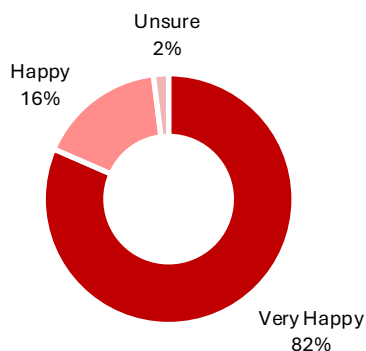
The best part about participating in navigators is that it is a safe space to not only express our creative work but also any things that we are experiencing in life that we might just want to offload . I really enjoy listening to others share their words of affirmation / pieces as it helps me not only improve my craft but also my way of storytelling.



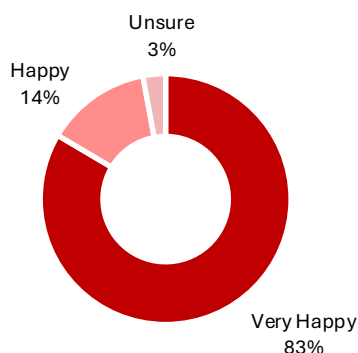
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

HOW OUR RANGATAHI FEEL

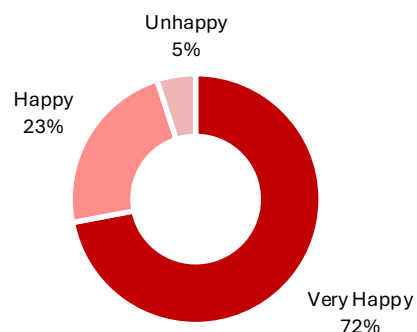
HAPPY WITH THE PROGRAM



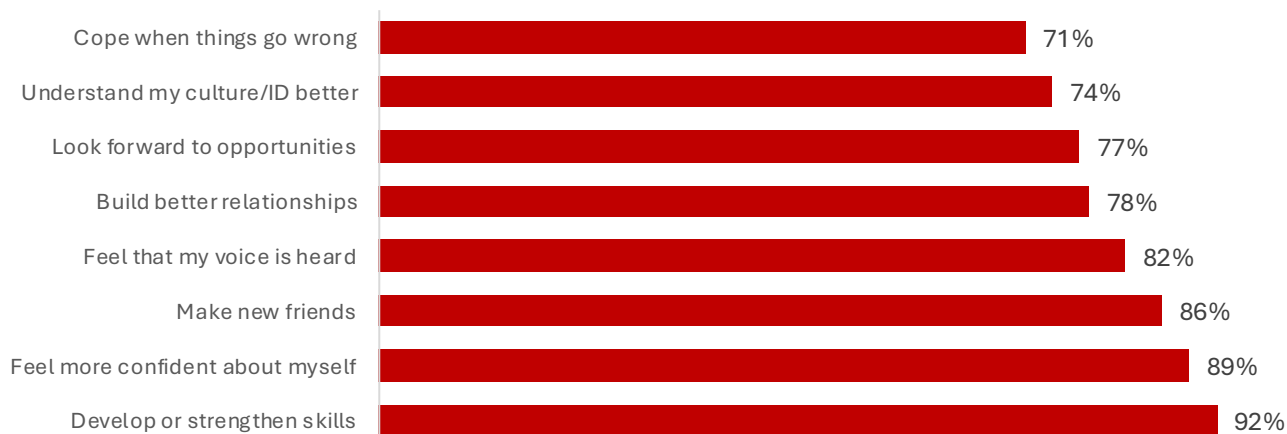
HAPPY WITH THE FACILITATORS



HAPPY WITH THE FACILITIES/VENUE



THE PROGRAMS HELPED ME TO...



WHAT COULD BE BETTER

38% indicated that no improvements were needed.

34% Requested increased access (more time, days, or sessions)

22% Highlighted the need for improved studio capacity and equipment.

18% Wanted expanded opportunities (guest speakers, projects, support)

11% Mentioned food and comfort enhancements.

8% Identified accessibility and communication improvements.

MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES

