

## Empowering Māori career and employment aspirations so that our whānau can flourish

*Kia ora* from our Pou Whakahaere / Chief Executive



Tēna koutou katoa

Koanga – Spring is here. A time of growth and change. Around the garden or ngāhere, new growth is emerging. E titiro atu! - Life is blossoming! All life is woven together, through vital connections.

Working together with our whānau and partners, we aim to provide the best support we can, so whānau can more confidently reach towards their aspirations for rewarding careers; so they too can flourish, now and into the future. We are learning that culturally grounded support (Manaakitanga), Connections (Tūhononga) and career opportunities (Umanga) can help whānau make this happen.

This is our core approach and the basis of our mahi - for the past 15 years now! In a changing world, with many social and economic pressures on whānau, amidst old and new challenges, opportunities and a youthful and growing Māori population, there is always more work to do! We know our mahi is just part of the picture. That by working together with others we can better support the aspirations of our whānau to emerge and take shape. We are fortunate to have such great partners! In this issue we share several recent collective efforts, one colab made it onto Te Karere! [Click here](#) to watch. We also share an amazing whānau story and introduce new kaimahi. Enjoy reading!

Ngā mihi,  
Tanya Anaha, Pou Whakahaere, Why Ora

### Pūhoro Launches in Taranaki: Empowering Māori in STEMM

Pūhoro STEMM Academy has officially launched in Taranaki! Opening new doors for our taiohi Māori to thrive in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and mātauranga Māori.

The Pūhoro Taranaki launch was held at Ōwae Marae in Whaitara on 25 July. Speaking were Kemp Reweti (Pūhoro Chief Executive), Liahna Smith, Kaihautū, Te Urunga Tū (Pūhoro secondary schools programme in Taranaki) and Tanya Anaha, our Why Ora Pou Whakahaere. All spoke of the collective effort and their shared vision to see taiohi Māori succeed in STEMM in Taranaki.

Around 60 taiohi, and kaiako from five kura, took part in hands-on STEMM activities including coding using microbits to map Taranaki Maunga, Pūrākau, and learning the Pūhoro waiata!

The launch marks a powerful new chapter for STEMM education in Taranaki, grounded in Te Ao Māori and driven by collaboration, made possible through a strong partnership with Why Ora, sharing our connections to help bring this kaupapa to life in the region. To view a video of the launch [click here](#).



# TŪHONONGA

Tūhononga means strengthening and bringing together (Tū is to strengthen, hononga is to bring or join together). We all need connections that can help us to grow, to know who we are, where we've come from and help us get where we are going!



## Why Ora Hui Whānau - A Night of Connection and Opportunity

Our annual Why Ora Hui Whānau was held in August at the Pukekura Raceway Centre, bringing together 46 whānau for an evening focused on future pathways, inspiration, and meaningful kōrero. The event began with a haerenga to the Taranaki Careers Expo (held next door at the TSB Stadium), where whānau explored a wide range of study and career options.

Back at the Hui venue, we heard from Allie Hemara-Wahanui (WITT), speaking about the importance of asking questions and staying open to different pathways, and Mattie O'Carroll who shared her inspirational journey to becoming a Kaiako. Then everyone engaged with iwi and tertiary providers from around the Motu. We love Hui Whānau! Gaining inspiration from being together as one roopu!

## Waikato University Trip 2025

In August we took a group of 37 Year 12 & 13 taiohi from across Taranaki on a full day trip to the University of Waikato in Kirikiriroa and what an engaging day it was!

From the moment we jumped on the bus in the early morning, the wairua was high. Laughter, music, snacks, and good vibes set the tone for the day to come.

Our taiohi were welcomed by the University Kaimahi and student ambassadors who took them on a guided tour into the heart of uni life!

Sharing lunch at the Halls of Residence and opportunities to kōrero with tauira Māori all gave our taiohi a real taste of what living on campus could look and feel like.

For many of our taiohi, this was their first time stepping foot on a university campus, it was epic to see their curiosity and confidence grow!

A huge mihi to our kaimahi and Waikato University for the manaaki and... of course, our inspiring taiohi who showed up, leaned in, and made the most of the experience.





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## Pūtaiao Expo Sparks Curiosity and Connection

In August, 280 Year 9 and 10 taiohi from 11 secondary schools and kura around the Maunga took part in our annual Pūtaiao Expo, a hands-on event designed to ignite a passion for science and Mātauranga Māori, and to support greater Māori engagement in science pathways.

Our Pūtaiao Expo is a collaborative effort involving kura, iwi, tertiary providers, organisations, community groups, and whānau, working together to create opportunities that inspire and empower our taiohi. Our 2025 event programme included:

- Tane Manukonga and Cherry Smith – Te Ara Taiao
- Naomi Puketapu-Waite – Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, Discovering Fossils
- Thom Adams – Curious Minds: Microbiology
- Kaiah Bloor & David Warren – University of Otago: Hydrogen Fuel Cells
- Gwenda Pease & Richard Carr from Taranaki Regional Council alongside Taiawhiao Bryers from SCION Research – Wind Wanderers

A huge mihi to all our presenters! Also to our attending taiohi and their schools that enabled student participation, to our caterers at the venue and everyone else who supported Pūtaiao 2025!

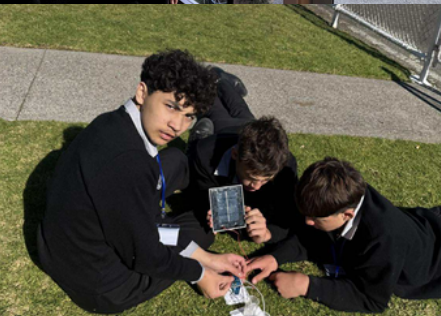


*"I really enjoyed today and would love to come again. It made me more interested in science" – Y9, Inglewood taiohi*

*"It was interesting to see science in a Māori perspective" – Y9, SHGC taiohi*

*"It was really fun learning all about our environment" – Y10, Taranaki Diocesan taiohi*

*"Lots of info from different fields was very fun and would do it again" – Y10, FDMC taiohi*





# UMANGA

A meaningful and rewarding career can change lives and change the future. There are so many possibilities and paths to take. Our career stories can help to show what is possible!



## Health careers can transform lives - an intergenerational health career story

*We love seeing what can happen over time working together with our whānau and partners! Sometimes the outcomes can be truly transformational. For the Graham Whānau of Taranaki health career opportunities have sparked a shared journey of discovery and purpose.*

*Today Joe Graham and his daughters Char (Charlise) and Jahnae all work in hauora careers for Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora in Taranaki. Joe is a Pouhāpai, providing cultural and advocacy support to Māori whānau in hospital and beyond. Char is a physiotherapy assistant, helping to rehabilitate patients to be able to return home from hospital and is Jahnae now working at Taranaki Base Hospital as an occupational therapy assistant cadet.*

The family's journey began with Char, whose interest in health was ignited while in Y11 at secondary school, through participating in our Rapuara Hauora (health career exposure) workshops. Char went on to secure a Why Ora Cadetship at Taranaki Base Hospital as a Physiotherapy Assistant.

A while after starting work, Char spotted a Pouhāpai job vacancy, a role she thought her Dad Joe might be good at. Joe had been a Butcher for 30 years! He was also a sports coach, with lots of skills and experience supporting people. With Char's encouragement Joe applied, thinking he may not have a chance – but it was a big surprise for him when he got the job, over a year ago now.

During this time, while still at school, Char's younger sister Jahnae also attended Rapuara Hauora workshops, then recently gained a cadetship working at Taranaki Base Hospital as an Occupational Therapy Assistant Cadet. Now the three whānau all work in health careers and are able to support each other along their chosen pathways. To read more visit [www.whyora.co.nz](http://www.whyora.co.nz)



2023 - WITT Pōwhiri, Jahnae and Kaiārahi Liahna



2021 - Charlise attending our Why Ora Rapuara Hauora workshops



# MANAAKITANGA

Our Manaakitanga means we genuinely nurture, encourage, respect and care for one another throughout our mahi, in whatever work we are doing.



## Creative Reflections at Toitū House

Our recent Hoki Mai Ki Why Ora wānanga held in Ngāmotu at Toitū House, Toi Foundation, was a relaxed and creative day with our taiohi.

Our focus was on whakawhanaungatanga, hands-on painting, and Matariki reflections, honouring those who've passed, celebrating achievements, and setting goals for the year ahead.

Ngā mihi nui to everyone who took part, and to the Toi Foundation for sharing your fabulous venue with our community.

Hoki mai ki Why Ora is made possible through the support from the Ministry of Social Development - He Poutama Rangatahi, helping create wānanga where taiohi can connect, express, and thrive.

## Welcoming New Faces to our Why Ora Whānau

We're excited to welcome three new kaimahi to Why Ora!

Jennifer Williams and Tane Whitehead (a former Why Ora taiohi) recently joined us as Kaiārahi, to support taiohi in kura across Taranaki and guide taiohi toward their career aspirations. Jennifer will also work with taiohi not in education, employment, or training to reconnect them with opportunities.

Shakaliah Bishell is our new Communications & Admin Assistant, helping us stay connected with our community. Shakaliah also engaged with Why Ora while at school.

It's inspiring to see past taiohi return to our kaupapa. We're thrilled to have them on board!

**Tane Whitehead**

Kaiārahi, Why Ora  
Taranaki, Te Atiawa ngā Iwi



**Shakaliah Bishell**

Comms and Admin Assistant  
Te Atiawa, Ngāti Mutunga ngā Iwi



**Jennifer Williams**

Kaiārahi, Why Ora  
Te Aupōuri,  
Ngāpuhi nui tonu ngā Iwi





## Meet Our Team

### Shakaliah Bishell – Administration & Communication Assistant, Why Ora

**Ko Taranaki Te Maunga**

**Ko Waitara rāua ko Waitoetoe ōku awa**

**Ko Tokomaru te waka**

**Ko Te Atiawa rāua ko Ngāti Mutunga ōku iwi**

**Ko Ngāti Rahiri rāua ko Te Kekerewai ōku hapū**

**Ko Owae rāua ko Urenui pā ōku Marae**

**Ko Shakaliah Bishell tōku Ingoa**

Ko wai au? I'm Shakaliah and I was born and raised in Waitara. I attended Waitara Central School, Manukorihi Intermediate and Waitara High School.

Throughout my years of high school I was supported by Why Ora, attending mātaki shadowing programmes as well as Rapuara Hauora workshops. This was such an inspiring time in my life as it ignited an interest in potentially taking up a career in health. Why Ora supported me ensuring that I was taking the right subjects, as well introducing me to other like minded Taiohi Māori.

At the end of high school I decided not to take up a career in health instead to continue my studies in Taranaki to be close to whānau, later taking up studies at Learner Me within the tech industry. I gained a Diploma in Web Design and Development.

In my later years of high school I started to connect with my Māoritanga, being able to take Te Ao Māori as a club elective ignited my desire to learn about my whakapapa and start learning Te Reo Māori. I am still continuing on my haerenga through studies at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

To strengthen my learning I try to immerse myself in kaupapa Māori, by attending wānanga and being part of the Taranaki Iwi kapa haka rōpu for Taranaki Tu Mai.

Along with Te Ao Māori, Whānau is a big part of my life especially being the mātāmua to two younger siblings. Me and my brother attended school together and although it suited me and the way I learn, I started to realise how school was not suited to everyone, especially my brother who was more of a practical learner. This is when I realised that everybody has potential, it's just a matter of finding the right support to enable us to utilise it.

This is where I am super grateful to have a role at Why Ora as it is a kaupapa Māori that aligns with my values. It also provides the opportunity for me to make meaningful connections with my community.

## 2025 Funding partners and Supporters

*The Toi Foundation, The Ministry of Social Development, Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora  
Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou! Thank you to all of our community and supporters - without your help we would not be here to support our whānau!*

**Health New Zealand**  
**Te Whatu Ora**



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*Don't forget your Kaiārahi is here if you require tautoko*