

Tūhononga : Manaakitanga : Umanga

Connections | Support | Careers

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

Greetings

from our Pou Whakahaere / Chief Executive

Tēna koutou katoa

Raumati/ Summer and the end of 2025 is here! What a productive year it has been for Why Ora, with so much achieved by our whānau and all involved in our shared mahi.

We want to recognise the amazing efforts our whānau have put in throughout 2025! A huge congratulations to everyone who has made it to the end of the school and tertiary year. With exams completed, and results pending, many whānau will also now be working hard to earn over summer!



Tanya Anaha - Pou Whakahaere

With 2026 just around the corner – whatever happens we wish everyone well with their future next steps. For those unsure and still working out a clear pathway ahead, Why Ora will be here to offer support and opportunities to help our whānau decide a direction.

We will be sharing our calendar of activities in early 2026. We have a lot of exciting plans underway including a new taiohi event in South Taranaki, and support activities all designed to help our whānau grow rewarding future careers, with a focus on those in health and education.

If you or your whānau need support and advice now or in 2026, remember you can get in touch with Why Ora. Our tari will be open until 22 December and reopening again on 7 January 2026. Our kaimahi will be back into mahi, refreshed after a well-earned break!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff and Board for all of their hard work this year. We have a wonderful team, and it is inspiring to see them work together for the good of community. A huge thank you to our amazing partners too! We look forward to working with you in 2026. For now, we wish everyone the very best for the season and new year!

Ngā mihi, Tanya Anaha,
Pou Whakahaere, Why Ora



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!

Amarlia and Marley – Exploring Future Careers Through Opportunities

This year Amarlia Morehu and Marley Sutherland, both Y12 at New Plymouth Girls High School, have made the most of opportunities to explore health careers and progress their Why Ora Manaaki Oranga (career) plans, supported by our Kaiārahi.

Recently they both attended Why Ora Mātaki Shadowing (work experience), with Roka Osborne, a professional social worker at Tui Ora who works in the area of youth wellbeing.

Photo: (L-R) Roka, Marley and Amarlia



Earlier this year both taiohi attended our Why Ora Rapuara Hauora, health career exposure workshops, and along with 35 others, attended our University Trip to Waikato, to find out more about what life is like attending university.

All these experiences will contribute to their Manaaki Oranga (career plan) goals. Marley had a strong interest in Social Work and gaining more knowledge about this important field. Meanwhile both taiohi were keen to build more confidence and motivation this year.

Since spending time with Roka, Marley now understands more about social work as a career and has started exploring university options for 2027, including scholarships. Amarlia is now also thinking more seriously about university studies after high school.

Roka is also part of the Why Ora whānau having enrolled with Why Ora while at school. You can read her inspiring story in this newsletter too! Looking ahead Marley is keen to learn more about her whakapapa. Meanwhile Amarlia is also interested to learn more about the fields of Criminology & Psychology. We will look forward to continuing to support both Amarlia and Marley on their journeys!

Savarna-Rose Pumpi: Exploring Hauora Pathways



Photo: (L-R) Savarna and Nichol

Savarna-Rose Pumpi, Y13 at Te Paepae o Aotea, has been part of the Why Ora whānau since 2023.

While still deciding on her future career, Savarna is embracing every chance to learn.

This year, her standout experience was a Mātaki Shadowing opportunity at Te Whatu Ora Taranaki – Hāwera Hospital, where she shadowed Oral Health Therapist Nichol Chamberlin. This gave her a real insight into oral health and the impact of this mahi on the community.

Savarna also attended our 2025 Rapuara Hauora workshops, visited Waikato University, and joined the Hoki Mai Ki Why Ora wānanga, continuing to explore her options. We look forward to supporting her journey toward a meaningful career in health.

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!

Our Whānau Career Story

Roka-Reni Osborne: From Beauty Therapist to Social Worker

Roka Osborne (Ngāruahine, Taranaki iwi) has always had a strong sense of fairness and justice. Growing up in Kaponga and attending St Mary's Diocesan School in Stratford, Roka first connected with Why Ora through our Rapuara Hauora workshops in Year 11 and 12.

“Those workshops planted the seed. I learnt about health careers and kept it in mind for the future,” says Roka. After school, Roka wasn't quite ready to dive into health. Instead, she chose to study Beauty Therapy at WITT. *“I always knew I wanted to work in health – I just didn't feel ready at 18. Beauty Therapy was an interest, and I'm glad I did it. It taught me so much about people and communication.”*

Then COVID-19 changed everything. *“During lockdown, I had time to think. I wanted to do more to help people. So, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Work through the Open Polytechnic.”*

Balancing work and study was tough, but Roka persevered. Work placements at Ngāti Ruanui Whānau Ora and Health NZ Te Whatu Ora gave her hands-on experience in community and mental health. *“I graduated at the end of 2024, travelled overseas, then came home and applied for my role at Tui Ora working with taiohi aged 10–18. I felt so lucky to get it as a new graduate. Six to seven months in, it's going well.”*

For Roka, social work is about equity and advocacy. *“You need to understand the whole picture of someone's life. Building meaningful connections is key.”*

She also values boundaries and support: *“You hear hard things. But I don't take work home. Regular debriefs and open kōrero with my team to help keep me grounded.”*

Working at Tui Ora, a kaupapa Māori organisation, allows Roka to bring her culture into her practice. *“Reconnecting with my heritage is a priority, as is bringing my authentic self to whānau meetings.”*

Social Work is a meaningful career where you can truly make a difference. Roka's journey also shows us that career paths do not always stay fixed, they can grow and change along with you – and following your values and professional interests can lead to deeply rewarding mahi.

You can read more about Roka's story here:

Open Polytechnic – Roka Osborne [Roka-Reni Osborne | Learner Story | Open Polytechnic NZ](#)



MANAAKITANGA

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



One Year of Growth and Connection

This month we held our final Hoki Mai ki Why Ora wānanga, wrapping up with a beautiful hākari alongside our taiohi and their whānau. We celebrated their achievements, shared gifts, and listened to inspiring kōrero that made it unforgettable. In 2025, we delivered 8 wānanga with 14 taiohi in attendance – a great milestone for this kaupapa. A huge ngā mihi to the Ministry of Social Development for making this possible, and to everyone who supported our taiohi on their journey.

Celebrating our taiohi success in Kura

Photo: (L-R) Madison Hunt, Kaiārahi Jasmine and Rhiana Jane



Our team looks forward every year to celebrating the incredible effort our taiohi and their whānau put into achieving their education goals.

Recently, we were honoured to see our senior high school taiohi graduating and acknowledge the hard work, resilience, and accomplishments they've shown throughout the year.

Graduation isn't the end of the story, it's the closing of one chapter and the beginning of an exciting new adventure. As our taura step into the next stage of their hikoi, we hope to continue walking alongside them, supporting their aspirations and celebrating every milestone along the way.

“I’m glad to be heading to university next year going from a small place where everyone knows everyone to a bigger place where I get to meet new people is going to be exciting”

MADISON POWELL, YEAR 13, PATEA AREA SCHOOL,
BACHELOR OF NURSING – WAIKATO UNIVERSITY

“I’ve really enjoyed being part of Why Ora during my time at Secondary School. It’s been such an awesome experience. As I get ready to start my University studies in Physiotherapy, I’m looking forward to keeping that connection strong and working together in the future.”

HUNTER TEMATA, YEAR 13, NEW PLYMOUTH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL,
BACHELOR OF PHYSIOTHERAPY – UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

MANAAKITANGA

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



Koen Wensor: On a Pathway to Medicine

Next year, Koen Wensor heads to Waipapa Taumata Rau – University of Auckland, to begin studying bio-medicine, for a career in medicine.

Koen first connected with Why Ora in Year 11, setting goals, gaining relevant experiences, and building confidence through workshops, mentoring, and hands-on opportunities. Inspired by health professionals at our Rapuara Hauora workshops, Koen explored interests in medicine, surgery, and psychology.

With guidance from our Kaiārahi Rory, Koen mapped out the right school subjects, built a strong CV, and gained a driver's licence to open up part-time work options.

Koen's hard work paid off with selection for two university scholarship programmes: COACH (Creating Opportunities for Career in Health) at the University of Auckland, and On-Campus Experience (OCE) at the University of Otago. These gave Koen a taste of university life, connecting with future lecturers, and confirming a commitment to a health career.

Throughout Year 13, this year, Koen continued to set new goals, strengthen his iwi connections, and he also shared his journey with other Why Ora whānau at our Hui Whānau earlier in 2025.

Koen also participated in other Why Ora activities, including our 2025 University Visit to Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato: The University of Waikato, to broaden his perspective on tertiary study.

After applying to several health-related courses, including to study Medicine at the University of Auckland, and Engineering (Medical Technology) at the University of Canterbury, Koen was accepted to both and was also offered two scholarships.

Koen has chosen to pursue Medicine in Auckland, starting with Biomedicine, and we are incredibly proud to support this next step.

As a future Māori health professional, Koen will help to provide more inclusive and equitable healthcare system for Aotearoa New Zealand. His journey shows what's possible with perseverance, guidance, and whānau support.

“Being with Why Ora has made it easy to find a pathway to achieve my passions. I love the support and knowing I can reach out when I need it.”

– Koen

MANAAKITANGA

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



Photo: (L-R) Prajesh Chhanabhai and Tane Whitehead

Kia ora, my name is Tane Whitehead, and I'm proud to be one of the new Kaiārahi for Why Ora. Born and raised in Taranaki as one of eight siblings, I grew up surrounded by whānau and community.

My schooling years were spent at Spotswood College, where I had the privilege of serving as Deputy Head Boy and First XV captain. Alongside sport, I worked hard academically, earning Proxime Accessit (2nd academically) and achieved top Māori student for Te Kura Tuarua o Ngāmotu. This led to me receiving the Māori Entrance Scholarship to attend Ōtākau Whakaihu Waka (University of Otago).

In 2020, I moved to Dunedin to begin my tertiary journey. Over four years, I completed a Bachelor of Science majoring in Sport and Exercise Science with a minor in Economics. I then stayed on for an honours year, graduating with First Class Honours in Sport, Exercise, and Health. My research focused on the long-term benefits of Healthy Active Learning (a government initiative) and how it impacts primary school students' physical activity outside of school hours.

University life was full of opportunities. One of my proudest achievements was starting the Taranaki Hands-On at Otago Scholarship, which helps Taranaki secondary school students attend the Hands-On at Otago programme. The scholarship removes financial barriers by covering costs like registration, accommodation, and travel, ensuring more Taranaki rangatahi can explore their potential.

Meet Our Team

Tane Whitehead - Kaiārahi, Why Ora

Ko Taranaki te maunga

Ko Matanehunehu te awa

Ko Kurahaupo te waka

Ko Taranaki me Te Atiawa ōku iwi

Ko Ngā Mahanga me Ngāti Tairi ōku hapū

Ko Tane Whitehead tōku ingoa

Other highlights include earning the Canon and Social Impact Studio Leadership Award, contributing to the Kā Rikarika o Tāne Tuakana-Teina programme through the Māori Centre, serving as Sub-Warden at Studholme College, and leading as President of the Sport and Exercise Science Executive.

Sport has always been a passion of mine, not just playing but coaching. I've coached age-grade girls' rugby and rugby league, and last year I was Assistant Coach for the Niue U17 girls' rugby league team at the Pasifika Youth Cup. We made history as the first Niue girls' team to win a final – a moment I'll never forget.

Outside of mahi, I co-host the Baskets of Knowledge podcast, where we share stories and wisdom from diverse voices. We've recorded 177 episodes so far!

I also run the NRLW Shop, a passion project to provide women's-specific supporter merchandise for rugby league fans. Staying active is part of who I am – whether it's rugby league, the gym, or a good run.

Coming home to Taranaki and joining Why Ora feels like a full-circle moment. As someone who benefited from Why Ora's support during high school and university, I know firsthand the impact this kaupapa has. Now, as a Kaiārahi, I'm excited to help taiohi achieve their aspirations and embrace their culture. I'll be working closely with Spotswood College, Inglewood High School, and Coastal Taranaki School – and I can't wait to get started.



2025 TERTIARY COMPLETION

Congratulations to our whānau completing studies this year!

Linaya Wereta
Bree Mehaney-Johnson
Ria Hamilton-Davis
Tielah-jade Wipiti
Stevie Broughton

Diploma in Teaching
Foundation Skills
Certificate in Early Childhood
Certificate in Early Childhood
Diploma in Teaching

Massey University
WITT Taranaki
Taranaki Educare Training
Taranaki Educare Training
Otago University

Kalani O'Carroll-Haami
Nicola Stanton
Karalee Robinson
Lilly'Jo Robinson
Zahara Robinson
Caitlin O'Connell
Jacinda Shaw
Nina Goble
Taylor Kupe

Bachelor of Nursing
Bachelor of Health
Certificate Youth Development
Career and Study Prep - Level 4
Career and Study Prep - Level 4
Bachelor of Physiotherapy
Bachelor of Physiotherapy
Bachelor of Nursing
Bachelor of Nursing

WITT Taranaki
Waikato University
Praxis
WITT Taranaki
WITT Taranaki
Otago University
Wintec
WITT Taranaki
WITT Taranaki

Caylem Cook
Daniel Blackman
Ethan Matuku
Jackson Corlett
Jacob Brightwell
Logan Hook
Oliver Woodward
Sirino Rova
Trinity Kumeroa
Rhys Donovan
Dillique Brown
Hazel Simes
Macey Austin

Bachelor of Law
Bachelor of Business
Bachelor of Māori Development
Bachelor of Engineering
Bachelor of Law
Certificate - Level 3
Bachelor of Law
Bachelor of Communications
Bachelor of Media Studies
Bachelor of Business
Bachelor of Commerce
Bachelor of Performing Arts
Te Tohu Paetahi

Victoria University
Waikato University
Auckland University of Technology
Canterbury University
Victoria University
WITT Taranaki
Victoria University
Canterbury University
Canterbury University
Otago University
Otago University
Otago University
Otago University
Waikato University

Holiday Season Office Hours

Meri Kirihimete ki a koutou ko te whānau!
Ngā mihi o te wā me te tau hou

Our office closes 22 December so that our team can enjoy the festive season.
We look forward to re-opening on 7 January 2026



Meri Kirihimete
FROM THE WHY ORA TEAM

2025 Funding partners and Supporters

*Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou! Thank you to all our community and supporters -
without your help we would not be here to support our whānau!*

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



Tanya Anaha
Pou Whakahaere
tanya@whyora.co.nz

Mizziah Martin-Kemp
Kaiārahi & Event Lead
mizziah@whyora.co.nz

Tane Whitehead
Kaiārahi
tane@whyora.co.nz

Codelia Parkes
Administration Support
cordelia@whyora.co.nz

Danae Etches
Contractor/Adviser
danae@whyora.co.nz

Rory Maxwell
Kaiārahi
rory@whyora.co.nz

Jennifer Williams
Kaiārahi
jennifer@whyora.co.nz

Shakaliah Bishell
Admin & Comms
shakaliah@whyora.co.nz

Olivia Ratana
Office Manager
olivia@whyora.co.nz

Jasmine Jones
Kaiārahi
jasmine@whyora.co.nz

Graham Jones
Kaiārahi
graham@whyora.co.nz

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