



MATIIHIKO AWARDS

NGĀ TOHU MATIIHIKO

2024

AGENDA

Doors open / Whakawhanaungatanga 5:00pm

Haka pōwhiri 5:30pm

Kai & Entertainment 6:00pm

Award Presentations commence 6:50pm

Corporate Change

Innovator

Pakihi

Kaiāwhina

Intermission 7:40pm

Award presentations continue

7:55pm

Public Sector

Kaitiaki o te Taiao

Whiua ki te Ao

Rangatiratanga

Daniel Karehana Memorial Scholarship for Technology

Graeme Everton Honorary Award

Intermission

9:00pm

Award presentations continue

9:15pm

Kaupapa

Changemaker

Emergent Icon

Living Icon

Maurice Watene & Tama Lundon from
Herbs & the band **10:00pm**

Event End **10:30pm**

KAI

Mains

Green-lipped mussels, coconut cream, coriander (df, gf, nf)

Ika mata, capsicum, cucumber, red onion, coconut cream (df, gf, nf)

Chicken, marinated in palm sugar (gf, nf)

Tofu and chickpea korma curry (ve, gf, df)

Sides + Salads

Baked taro, coconut (df, gf, nf, ve)

Steamed rice, lemongrass, chilli (df, gf, nf, ve)

Sautéed vermicelli, seasonal greens, garlic, chilli (df, gf, nf, ve)

Raw vegetable salad, ginger, garlic, chilli (df, gf, nf, ve)

Kumara, squash, sesame salad (df, gf, ve)

Dessert

Cassava cake (ve, df, gf)

Pineapple pie (gf)

df - dairy free | gf - gluten free | nf - nut free | v - vegetarian | ve – vegan

NAU MAI, HAERE MAI

Nau mai, haere mai e ngā hau e whā o te motu, I am pleased to celebrate the incredible achievements of our 66 finalists with you all tonight. These exceptional people and pakihi represent Māori excellence in digital, tech, and innovation. The manifestation of the dreams of their tīpuna.

We are determined to see even more Māori representation in these spaces. Your presence and support tonight is a testament to this.

We thank our sponsors and guests; your tautoko means we can continue delivering our kaupapa. Kāore e ārikarika aku mihi ki a koutou.

While we celebrate tonight, we acknowledge there is still work to be done. We are committed to forging a path towards a more inclusive and innovative future for Māori, and everyone in Aotearoa.

Ki te hoe!



Katie Brown

Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Whātua

Tumu Whakarae - Chief Executive Officer
Te Ao Matihiko | Te Hapori Matihiko

TE AO MATIHIKO

Our vision is to integrate Te Ao Māori into the digital realm, maximise Māori participation, achieve digital excellence, and ensure the benefits of the digital age are equitably shared across all communities.

Over the last year, we've made some changes to streamline our mahi and position ourselves well to serve Māori in digital and tech long-term. Te Ao Matihiko was born, bringing together two kaupapa, Te Hapori Matihiko and Te Matarau. We are guided by whānau, hapū and iwi.

Te Hapori Matihiko: focuses on community, events, connection & amplification.

Te Matarau: focuses on policy, pathways and research.

We are an uarā Māori and Tiriti-led organisation. We have 950 members with Te Hapori Matihiko. We offer mātauranga sessions with leaders in our hapori, wānanga, cultural support, and opportunities to contribute digital skills and expertise back to iwi and hapū. The Matihiko Awards is our annual event that celebrates all of the amazing contributions from Māori in digitech, big and small.

Under the korowai of Te Ao Matihiko, we have an ambitious vision in our strategy for Māori in digital, tech and innovation. We look forward to sharing more with you soon.

Celebrate with us!
Take photos and tag us!
Use the hashtag #MatihikoAwards2024



MC



A broadcaster of more than 30 years, **Stacey Morrison** has worked as a researcher, writer, reo consultant, director, producer, and presenter in shows across the spectrum of entertainment, documentary, comedy, Māori language programmes, and news. She is currently on Flava radio at NZME and is a MC and voice over artist. We mihi to Stacey and her incredible mahi in the revitalisation and growth of te reo Māori.

BAND

Maurice Watene & Tama Lundon from Herbs & the band

We are fortunate to have a 9 piece band covering Herbs tunes led by OG Herbs members Maurice and Tama.

CATEGORIES

Corporate Change recognises contribution to progressing and empowering kaupapa Māori within a corporate workplace.

Innovator & Emergent Innovator recognises innovative mahi or mahi in innovation.

Pakihi: recognising excellence of Māori business in digital and tech.

Kaiāwhina recognises the planners, organisers, project managers and people that kept the mahi moving.

Public Sector recognises contribution by Māori kaimahi within the public sector in digital and tech.

Kaitiaki o te Taiao recognises contribution to digital projects which have a positive impact on sustainability and te taiao.

Whiua ki te Ao for contribution to global projects in digital and tech.

Rangatiratanga recognises excellence in leadership . This may be in governance, business leadership or rōpū leadership.

Kaupapa for contribution to not-for-profit, community, iwi or social enterprise in the digital and tech sector.

Change-maker Recognises contributions to meaningful change in the digital and tech sector.

Emergent Icon recognises great achievement to a newcomer in the digital tech sector. Service and contribution to Māori digital and tech.

Living Icon recognises a lifetime achievement in service to Māori and the digital tech sector.

CORPORATE CHANGE

Tipu Finalists



Jeremy Hollis

Te Aitanga-a-Maahaki, Rongowhakaata, Whakatōhea, Ngati Porou

Wētā FX

Jeremy transitioned from stuntman to the VFX industry, starting as a PA and rising to Associate VFX Producer at Wētā FX. As a founding member of Te Komiti Māori, he advocates for Māori representation and excellence in VFX. Jeremy's efforts include Treaty awareness training, cultural learning videos, and mentorship programs. Currently working on Avatar 3, he integrates tikanga Māori into his work, inspiring a new paradigm of inclusivity and leadership. He's not just carving a space for himself at the top table; he's reaching back and pulling others up with him.



Te Moana Barlow Bartlett

Ngāti Kahungunu

Now

Te Moana left his law studies at Victoria University in 2020 to return to Hastings and care for his parents. He began working in the call center of Now NZ, where he championed te ao Māori by introducing te reo Māori sessions. In 2022, he spearheaded a proposal focused on Māori-run businesses, leading to his role as Kaiarahi Pakihi Māori. Te Moana has built strong relationships with - Māori-run and owned organisations, aligning Now's service approach with Māori cultural practices. This initiative boosted Now's business and internal cultural awareness, earning him the 'Crafter of Culture' award at the 2023 People of Now event. His leadership has fostered cultural pride and resilience within the team. Beyond work, Te Moana actively supports local politics and community health, showcasing his dedication to inclusivity and cultural respect.



Isaac Morunga

Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa

Microsoft

Isaac Morunga is a rising leader in tech and kaupapa Māori, embodying corporate change-making within these fields. His notable achievements include winning the prestigious Microsoft Gold Club Award in 2023 and working on innovative projects like the AI translation initiative with Stuff News. Isaac's education at Waipapa Taumata Rau (University of Auckland) and Henderson High School paved the way for a career that bridges technology and te reo Māori. His commitment to community is evident through his role as a UNESCO Aotearoa Youth Leader and an early leadership start with an MP internship during high school.

Supported by:



**TE TAURA WHIRI
I TE REO MĀORI**

MĀORI LANGUAGE COMMISSION

CORPORATE CHANGE

Tōtara Finalists



Ernestynne Walsh

Ngāti Porou, Te-Whānau-ā-Apanui

Nicholson Consulting

Ernestynne is an exceptional data analytics practitioner with deep expertise in Māori Data Governance. She has implemented effective principles in both public and private sectors, emphasising the importance of data governance in today's tech-driven world. Rooted in tikanga and mātauranga Māori, Ernestynne guides organisations in designing and implementing robust data practices. Her ability to clarify complex analytics and build beneficial frameworks makes her an invaluable advisor and guide in the field.



Riki Hollings

Ngāti Ranginui

Spark

Riki, a Tōtara at Spark NZ, has influenced the tech sector for decades. A fearless advocate for Māori participation and equity, he supports Māori in tech and entrepreneurship through advising, event access, sponsorship, and advocacy. Riki's work has enriched Spark NZ's strategy with a kaupapa Māori foundation, boosting Māori visibility, participation, and success in the industry.



Vincent Egan

Ngāruahine, Ngāti Ruanui

Māui Studios

Vincent Egan is the Co-Founder and CEO of Māui Studios Aotearoa Ltd and Director of Māui Virtual Production, blending Māori cultural heritage with cutting-edge digital innovation. Under his leadership, Māui Studios has grown into a multi-million dollar organisation pivotal to the Māori economy. Vincent pioneers immersive technologies like AR and VR, bringing Māori legends into the modern age. His groundbreaking projects include Āhuru Mōwai - Sanctuary™, Mythik Tane VR Game, Google Doodle for Waitangi Day, and collaborations with global platforms like Apex Legends. Vincent's work exemplifies integrating mātauranga Māori with innovative technology, ensuring cultural resonance and paving the way for future generations.

Supported by:



**TE TAURA WHIRI
I TE REO MĀORI**

MĀORI LANGUAGE COMMISSION

INNOVATOR

Tipu Finalists



Sara Smeath

Ngāpuhi

CiRCLR

In regional New Zealand, abundant food is grown and exported, yet much is wasted, leaving many families struggling with food insecurity. This inspired Sara to start CiRCLR, leveraging her expertise in global supply chains and sustainable innovation. Frustrated by missed opportunities in the circular economy, she developed a digital platform to address food waste and improve regional food security. The framework maps resources in a region using AI technology and offers a marketplace to trade waste as a resource between businesses. This creates opportunities for small businesses to access valuable resources more easily and affordably so their businesses can be more sustainable and more competitive, without greenwashing or exploiting our natural environment further.



Michael Puhara

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa; Ngāti Porou

kahu.code

An English teacher at Mount Albert Grammar School for the past 15 years, Michael has embarked on an extraordinary journey beyond the traditional classroom, diving deep into the world of digital technology and AI. His passion for technology, ignited while pursuing his Master in Contemporary Education with academyEX, where he conceptualised and built a chatbot aiming to explore AI's role in enhancing student engagement and critical thinking skills, laid the groundwork for innovations, including "Koro," a bilingual Māori and English AI voice assistant. It is from here that kahu.code was founded. Driven by a commitment to te reo Māori, its revitalisation, and wanting to leave a legacy, Michael has seamlessly blended his expertise in education with his self-taught technical skills.



Suede Sadler

Ngāti Kahungunu

Techtorium

Having completed two years of software development, Suede transitioned into teaching at Level 5, where he can impart his knowledge and expertise to aspiring tech professionals. His involvement in all Māori in Tech events reflects his commitment to promoting tech pathways for Māori individuals, ensuring they have access to opportunities in this rapidly evolving field. Suede is actively engaged in creating software and applications specifically designed to engage and empower rangatahi Māori, providing them with tools to explore their potential and contribute meaningfully to the tech industry. Through these initiatives, he aims to bridge the gap and create a more inclusive and diverse tech community that embraces the talents and perspectives of all individuals, particularly Māori.

Supported by:

paymentsnz

INNOVATOR

Tōtara Finalists



Kahu Tuwhare

Ngāpuhi

Kōrero Online

Kōrero Online blends expertise in teaching te reo Māori with the latest technology, offering a unique, intimate learning experience. Their approach warms students to te reo Māori, making lessons feel personal and safe, despite the digital format. Korero.online's innovative curriculum and dynamic, face-to-face teaching style create a sense of connection akin to sitting with whānau. This platform is empowering those far from home to strengthen their reo in a supportive, familial environment, setting a new standard for digital language learning.



Shanon O'Connor

Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tahu

Tōnui Collab

Shanon is the founder and director of Tōnui Collab, a kaupapa Māori-led charitable trust providing STEM opportunities through various educational programs. Passionate about equity for Te Tairāwhiti's taitamariki, Shanon transitioned from corporate IT to education, earning advanced degrees in digital and contemporary learning. She champions diversity in tech, especially for wāhine Māori, and holds key roles in Te Matarau, EdTech NZ, and Te Kāwanatanga o Te Ao Matihiko. Shanon is a prominent voice for indigenous tech at summits like SXSW Sydney 2023.



Vincent Egan

Ngāruahine, Ngāti Ruanui

Māui Studios

Vincent Egan is the Co-Founder and CEO of Māui Studios Aotearoa Ltd and Director of Māui Virtual Production, blending Māori cultural heritage with cutting-edge digital innovation. Under his leadership, Māui Studios has grown into a multi-million dollar organisation pivotal to the Māori economy. Vincent pioneers immersive technologies like AR and VR, bringing Māori legends into the modern age. His groundbreaking projects include Āhuru Mōwai - Sanctuary™, Mythik Tane VR Game, Google Doodle for Waitangi Day, and collaborations with global platforms like Apex Legends. Vincent's work exemplifies integrating mātauranga Māori with innovative technology, ensuring cultural resonance and paving the way for future generations.

Supported by:

paymentsnz

PAKIHI

Tipu Finalists



AU

AU, founded in 2020, addresses a significant corporate market gap with culturally authentic, scalable learning tools. Initially subcontracting to tier 1 businesses, AU now directly contracts with large international organisations. Their innovative digital e-Learning modules, featuring avatars inspired by the AU whānau, emphasize a human-centric approach. With a focus on mauri, AU fosters impactful learning, supporting businesses globally across various sectors, including digital technology, aviation, and more.



ATA

ATA is a mokopuna-focused pākihi excelling in social media and digital marketing. Driven by creativity, manawa māui, and passion, ATA leverages Māori approaches to effect behavior change. Notably, ATA's social media campaigns have propelled Te Rau Hihiri, a Charitable Trust, to over 6,000 members in 2023, a 57% increase from 2022. Known for pushing digital content boundaries, ATA's innovative and culturally resonant storytelling sets them apart in the industry.



KDM

Marina Kere founded KDM Digital while studying for a Bachelor of Commerce, using her first laptop bought with a student loan. She identified a gap in Nelson's market for effective digital marketing, transforming KDM Digital into a successful web design and digital marketing agency over four years. Marina champions Māori and women's representation in tech, advocates for digital skills, and inspires through her community involvement. As a board member of Nelson Young Professionals and a speaker at key events, she fosters inclusion and empowerment. Her dedication to education and entrepreneurship exemplifies leadership.

PAKIHI

Tōtara Finalists



Māui Studios

Recognising significant gaps in the creative representation of Māori culture, the founders of Māui Studios, Madison Henry, Patrick Hussey, and Vincent Egan, saw an opportunity to use advances in communication technology and digital creation to fill these gaps, driven by the ethos and ambition of the demi-god Māui. Since its establishment, Māui Studios has grown into a production studio that specialises in visual design, motion design, and immersive design services, transforming them into intellectual property blueprints, all grounded in ngā uara Māori. They've created animated pūrakau, AR experiences and graphic novels, and helped iwi Māori tell their stories. Their studio produced the 2024 Google Doodle for Waitangi Day, a tāonga for all.



Kiwa Digital

Founded in 2003, KIWA Digital is a media tech company dedicated to supporting indigenous cultures. Initially focused on localising children's TV into te reo Māori, it now produces digital media to uplift indigenous communities and promote cultural understanding globally. KIWA's Cultural Services combine design, technology, and cultural expertise to authentically amplify indigenous voices, ensuring narrative and data sovereignty through apps, websites, videos, and games. KIWA believes that supporting indigenous voices benefits the world.



iSparx

Joff Rae (Te Ati Awa) leads iSparx Group, a cutting-edge, Māori-owned AR-focused agency transforming art experiences with bold innovation and immersive media. With deep roots in the arts and Māori activism, Joff uses technology to foster unique connections. iSparx collaborates with artists like Johnson Witehira and Tama Iti, creating groundbreaking AR installations and exploring future technologies like 6G, redefining how we interact with the world.

Supported by:



KAIĀWHINA

Tipu Finalists



Ashley Riddell

Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāi Tahu

Kiwa Digital

Ashley Riddell is the Project Manager for KIWA, a media tech company uplifting indigenous cultures globally through digital media. A young wahine Māori, Ashley has excelled in her role over the past two years, demonstrating exceptional skills. She manages a team of five editors, overseeing projects from contract signing to completion, including apps, websites, videos, and AR/gaming activities. Her work empowers indigenous communities to reclaim and share their narratives, histories, cultures, and languages. Since taking on the role, she has driven a record number of projects to successful completion and is currently managing the forthcoming launch into the Australian indigenous market.



Engie Matene

Ngāpuhi, Kuki Airani

Āhau & Hokianga Housing Resilience Collective

If anyone had told Engie after College that she would one day become a Software Developer – she would have looked them in the face and told them “A what??” Initially working in customer service, Engie discovered a passion for helping people. In 2018, she transitioned into tech by attending Dev Academy Aotearoa, graduating as a full-stack junior developer. Over six years, she has honed her skills at companies like Arataki Systems, Trade Me, and Flick Electric. Engie’s impactful work includes leading digital literacy workshops for marae trustees and her current roles as Project Lead and Full Stack Developer at the Hokianga Housing Resilience Collective and Āhau.



Kirialana Wilson

Te Atihaunui a Pāpārangī

Tōnui Collab

Kiri is a STEMM Navigator for Tōnui Collab, a Māori-led, kaupapa-driven charitable trust in Te Tairāwhiti. Kiri facilitates STEMM wānanga in schools and marae and is the lead on the Kōhine Robotics, a kaupapa specifically designed to address the disparity of wāhine Māori in tech. This culminated with a Kōhine Robotics Expo supporting 50 Year 6 - 9 girls from kura across Te Tairāwhiti to experiment with VEX IQ Robotics, develop confidence with a range of technologies, learn about study and career pathways in tech, and hear from wāhine thriving in tech. In 2024, this kaupapa has grown to support 75 kōhine from 17 kura. Kiri's commitment to facilitating STEMM wānanga i te reo Māori and ensuring that STEMM wānanga is not only delivered i te reo Māori but also designed from perspectives that celebrate te ao Māori me tangata Māori is inspirational and important mahi.

KAIĀWHINA

Tōtara Finalists



James Davis-Sigley

Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Kahungunu

Hono and Ryze

Founder of Hono (previously DataHQ) and Ryze, James began tinkering with computers at 17. Now, with decades of experience, he has held technical roles for major New Zealand companies, from building e-commerce platforms to designing contact centres, he's done it all. A community servant skilled in data, ads, and technology, James volunteers for initiatives like Whāriki Te Tai Tokerau offering expertise to Māori business groups. Known for his innovation, he solves tech issues and shares his knowledge freely. James embodies genuine good intentions, often working behind the scenes to help others succeed.



Eva Riddell

Ngāti Porou

Digital Future Aotearoa

Eva grew up in the predominantly Māori community of Tokomaru ākau in Te Tairāwhiti. Throughout her career, she has worked with Māori whānau in advocacy, iwi development, and Māori enterprise. She is now the Community & Schools Liaison for Recycle A Device (RAD), a Digital Future Aotearoa programme that promotes kaitiakitanga of laptops through education on diagnosis and refurbishment, enhancing rangatahi access to education, the economy, and digital life. Based in Te Wai Pounamu (Ōtautahi), Eva oversees all RAD community operations south of Te Moana-a-Toi and Taranaki. She excels in whakawhānaungatanga, strategic thinking, co-design, manaakitanga, facilitation, project management, and servant leadership. Eva has been bringing the benefits of RAD to rangatahi since early 2022.



Tahui Pare Ihimaera Crawford

Ngāti Porou

Tairawhiti Technology Trust

Tahui Pare Ihimaera Crawford is the operations manager at Tairawhiti Technology Trust and oversees the organisation's mission to help educate and empower people in the Gisborne region to become capable, creative, and confident lifelong learners, creators, and innovators. Tairawhiti Technology Trust supports the establishment and operation of technology-based learning facilities within communities experiencing high levels of deprivation that have limited access to new technology. Tahui is a great organiser, dedicated, helpful, caring, and attentive to those seeking tech help in the community.

PUBLIC SECTOR

Finalists



Amber Taylor

*Ngāti Mutunga, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Whātua, Ngā Puhi,
Te Rarawa*

ARA Journeys

ARA Journey's mission, led by Amber and her team, integrates te ao Māori with immersive technologies to bring local histories to life. Their project at Tamaki College has been inspirational for whānau and rangatahi to pursue digital technology, increased tauira Māori enrolment in digitech, and demonstrated tech employment pathways. This partnership fosters creativity and innovation, transforming students from consumers to creators of digital content.



Henare Royal

Ngati Tamatera, Ngati Whanaunga

Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Henare, the ICT Security and Risk Manager at Fire and Emergency NZ, has a remarkable seven-year career with experience at prominent government agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Justice. He excels in information security and risk management, providing strategic guidance that strengthens critical information infrastructure. A visionary leader, Henare embeds robust security frameworks within ICT operations and actively contributes to national security through conference speaking and senior government forums. As a kaikōrero for the Govtech Graduate Programme, he supports young Māori in tech and government, serving as an inspiring role model. At just 30, Henare is a leading cybersecurity expert and one of the youngest senior leaders in New Zealand.



Bruce Jepsen

Tūwharetoa, Tainui, Ngāti Raukawa

Te Akau ki Pāpāmoa School

For over two decades, Bruce has been a leading Tumuaki (Rangatira), shaping a vision to foster belonging, identity, and self for communities. Internationally recognised for integrating digital technologies into education, he champions the effective use of technology among teachers, setting a best practice standard nationally and internationally. As President of Te Akatea - Aotearoa Māori Leadership Inc., formerly the New Zealand Māori Principals Association, Bruce advocates for Māori achievement parity, driving positive outcomes for all tamariki.



Rawiri Norman-Pakinga

Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Hako, Ngāpuhi

Trans Work NZ

Rawiri commenced his technical journey at UNITEC in 2010, immersing in Electricity, Magnetism, Electronics, and Construction Engineering while securing an apprenticeship with Chorus. Transitioning to Trans Work Ltd, he honed expertise as a Telecommunications Bearer and Switch, earning certifications. Fostering an early foundation in work ethics, Rawiri's commitment earned trust and respect. Despite nationwide travel, he stays connected to whānau and community, using photography to bridge personal and professional realms, inspiring others with resilience and dedication.

KAITIAKI

Tipu Finalists



Haukapuanui Vercoe

*Te Arawa, Tūwharetoa, Te Āti Haunui-ā-Pāpārangi,
Ngāti Pāhauwera, Ngāti Raukawa me Ngāi Tahu
Te Arawa Lakes Trust*

Hundreds of marae around the country face potential exposure to floods, landslides, and other natural hazards, but new research aims to bolster marae resilience in the face of climate change. University of Auckland Engineering PhD student Haukapuanui Vercoe conducted an analysis of 869 marae nationwide using geographic information system (GIS) mapping to identify the marae that were at risk from natural hazards. The intended outcome of the hangarau is to provide hau kāinga with the data and tools to aid in their decision-making. In this way, they can create visualisations of potential impacts to the marae directly, key infrastructure, and other places of significance such as wāhi tapu or historic pā sites.



Sara Smeath

Ngāpuhi

CEO & Co-Founder | CiRCLR

CiRclr is revolutionising the circular economy by transforming waste into valuable resources through innovative AI and blockchain technology. In just two years, CiRclr has garnered global recognition, presenting at the United Nations Climate Conference and winning the APEC Saint Gobain Build the Future Digital Award. Our platform links circular outcomes to carbon markets, fostering sustainable business opportunities and empowering Māori entrepreneurs, ultimately driving global decarbonisation and resource efficiency. CiRclr is a platform where sustainability isn't just about making better decisions for the environment. We create better outcomes for all communities and businesses.



Cecelia Kumeroa

Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi

IHI Design Studio

Cecelia is dedicated uri o Whanganui, fostering artistic leadership and representation of Whanganui design throughout the community. As a designer and educator at UCOL, she empowers artists to lead their own projects, amplifying Māori design across the region. In her role as Arts representative for Te Rūnanga o Tupoho, Cecelia coordinates initiatives towards greater funding and representation for Toi Māori design. Her work challenges conventional approaches to environmental management, urging us to reconsider our relationships within te taiao and the limitations of our current knowledge traditions in addressing global biodiversity and climate crises.

KAITIAKI

Tōtara Finalists



Dr Rory Clifford

Kāi Tahu ki Waitaha whānui

University of Canterbury Computer Science and Software Engineering

Dr. Rory Clifford's tenure at the University of Canterbury and HIT Lab New Zealand has been marked by innovative contributions at the intersection of technology and community empowerment. Notably, he developed a multi-sensory VR/XR simulation system for aviation firefighting, enhancing decision-making and stress resilience for Fire and Emergency New Zealand personnel. Passionate about Marae-based initiatives, Rory champions Mahinga kai and technology integration, earning him a Ngā Puanga Pūtaiao Fellowship for his research on technology pathways. His dedication to Māori representation in computer science and software engineering reflects his commitment to reciprocity and community-driven solutions.



Mere Takoko

Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau a Apanui, Rongowhakaata
Hinemoana Halo

Mere Takoko leads a kaupapa called Hinemoana Halo, a kaupapa Māori response to our climate challenges. At COP28, her mahi was taken to the world stage when Hinemoana Halo was funded \$50 Million USD to progress. This is creating a new "blue carbon" system, an offset scheme, which seeks to empower indigenous custodians of the land to protect and revitalise coastal and marine biodiversity in Aotearoa and the Pacific. The fund will use technology such as sensors and blockchain to ensure transparency. This means jobs in monitoring and technology and the protection of our taonga, Hinemoana.



Mapihi Martin-Paul and Brian McAuslan

Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki (Ngāi Tahu) & Ngāti Pikiao (Te Arawa)

Boffa Miskell

Boffa Miskell is a leading environmental planning and design consultancy associated with a significant number of projects that have led changes in shaping the environment of Aotearoa. Mapihi Martin-Paul, Kaiaarataki Te Hihiri / Strategic Advisor Māori, works with whanau, hapū, and iwi Māori across Aotearoa on a diverse, wide range of capacities – from landscape architecture to resource management, planning, and ecology. Mapihi has become increasingly involved in weaving together mātauranga Māori with western science and leads significant cultural health monitoring work across Te Waipounamu. Brian McAuslan, Kaimātai Pūnaha-a-tuwāhi / Senior GIS Specialist, applies his expertise in CAD, ArcGIS, FME, and Python to a wide range of landscape, ecology, and planning projects. His enthusiasm for using the latest technologies developed by ESRI for their ArcGIS Online Platform was catalytic in developing the set of forms that Boffa Miskell uses to undertake state of the environment monitoring that uses a methodology with equal balance for mātauranga Māori and western science.

WHIUA KI TE AO

Finalists



Tweedie Waititi

Te Whānau a Apanui, Rongowhakaata

Matewa Media

Tweedie Waititi, alongside the team at Matewa Media, has spearheaded a pioneering effort in Te Reo Māori revitalisation by reimagining classic Disney films in Te Reo Māori. This initiative not only amplifies the global visibility of our indigenous language but also underscores the significant demand and necessity for projects of this nature within our local communities and beyond. The Disney Reo Māori films are being used at home to increase Te Reo Māori for families, in Kohanga Reo, kura and tertiary providers in both Māori and non-Māori environments for learning and development.



Grant Straker

Ngāti Raukawa

Straker Group

Grant Straker, co-founder and CEO of Straker Translations, leads a cloud-based translation service using AI for faster, accurate translations in over 70 languages. Straker Translation has put out as part of growing from a family founded tech company into a global success with offices, partners and 40,000 plus translators working all over the world. "You name it, we translate it – computer games, smartphone apps, website localisation projects, historic manuscripts – anything that needs to be understood in one language to another," says Grant, who serves 10,000 customers annually. Straker, a Māori tech advocate, supports tech careers through internships and a Coding for Kids programme in Auckland schools.



Aaron Ward

Ngāti Maru

AskNicely

Aaron is an excellent example of Māori ki te Ao! He created his tech business, Ask Nicely, in a garage in Auckland and now has offices in the US and the Netherlands. Ask Nicely has successfully raised over \$48 million and is globally respected. Founded in 2014 in Aotearoa, AskNicely is the Frontline Success platform pioneer, connecting the dots between employee experience, customer experience, and revenue growth for service businesses. He has been able to hire hundreds of staff and, more importantly, position himself as a Māori leader and someone to look up to. Throughout his growth, he has ensured that Māori values are instilled in his global business and he has ensured that he is accessible to inspire the next generation of Māori tech creators.



Sara Smeath

Ngāpuhi

CiRCLR

In regional New Zealand, abundant food is grown and exported, yet much is wasted, leaving many families struggling with food insecurity. This inspired Sara to start CiRCLR, leveraging her expertise in global supply chains and sustainable innovation. Frustrated by missed opportunities in the circular economy, she developed a digital platform to address food waste and improve regional food security. The framework maps resources in a region using AI technology and offers a marketplace to trade waste as a resource between businesses. This creates opportunities for small businesses to access valuable resources more easily and affordably so their businesses can be more sustainable and more competitive, without greenwashing or exploiting our natural environment further.

RANGATIRATANGA

Tipu Finalists



Aleisha Amohia

Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Hāua
Catalyst IT

Aleisha Amohia is a software developer and Māori-Asian woman - identities not often seen in the same sentence. Aleisha mentors rangatahi, presents at events, and designs spaces to empower marginalised groups, so the STEM solutions of the world will be built by diverse communities. Aleisha is a Technical Lead at Catalyst IT, an open source software company, where she started as an intern in 2014. Aleisha also volunteers with National Council of Women New Zealand, Innovative Young Minds, and more. In the past, she has been the Co-Chair of the Māori Design Group at InternetNZ, and she began her advocacy journey by founding the Victoria University of Wellington Women in Tech while she studied. She graduated from VUW in 2020 with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Computer Science specialising in Artificial Intelligence, and a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in management minoring in Information Systems.



Damian Rangitutia

Ngāti Raukawa

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Damian, a humble and generous servant leader, has a background in financial and ERP software expertise and combined with his nature means he ends up helping many organisations navigate the financial world, including assisting with their use of digital tools. At Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, he leads ICT for Governance and Performance, champions Māori talent development, and fosters a balance of technical acumen, personnel management, and tikanga. Damian's leadership steered the team through challenging periods, demonstrating selflessness, generosity, and a commitment to excellence.



Miria Royal

Ngati Tamatera, Ngāti Whaunga,

Ngāti Ruakawa ki te tonga

Westpac

Miria is a pre-eminent leader in the digital space, impacting multiple large corporates. She has managed teams and designed digital customer journeys that scale effectively. As co-founder of FLINT (Future Leaders in Technology), she empowers future tech leaders. Miria is the Chair of Te Pu Whero at Vodafone and co-business owner of the Vodafone Māori Strategy, driving cultural integration. Her role as a Solution Architect at Vodafone saw her recognised as a top three revenue earner in the Enterprise Solution team for three consecutive years (2016, 2017, and 2018).

A digital transformation expert, Miria has led adoptions and transformations at Vodafone, Genesis Energy, and Westpac, enhancing customer experience and efficiency. As a member of the Vodafone Shadow Executive, she developed the consumer ethnic prioritisation strategy. Her innovative engineering honours project involved designing a system for harvesting radio signals to power remote sensors.

And, Miria is the treasurer of her Hapu's trust, managing land and assets for over 300 beneficiaries.

RANGATIRATANGA

Tōtara Finalists



Melissa Gollan

Te Rawara

RIPA Global

Inequitable access to healthcare for people living remotely or without means to travel is a major concern for RIPA, a majority Māori-owned tech company with shareholders from several Iwi. Globally scalable and leading in ESG disbursement payments, RIPA partners with National Australia Bank to serve disability payment recipients or NDIS, aiming to become New Zealand's leading tech exporter. The company is expanding, with a new data centre opening in Gisborne to manage global help desk operations and data processing. RIPA has developed a mobile digital tool called SAM, in collaboration with Te Whatu Ora, to provide equitable health access for those unable to travel for healthcare. By building digital connectivity for Māori, RIPA empowers and elevates communities. The patented, paperless process will also reduce the government's carbon footprint by 10-12%.



Bruce Jepsen

Tūwharetoa, Tainui, Ngāti Raukawa

Te Akau ki Pāpāmoa School

For over two decades, Bruce has been a leading Tumauaki (Rangatira), shaping a vision to foster belonging, identity, and self for communities. Internationally recognised for integrating digital technologies into education, he champions the effective use of technology among teachers, setting a best practice standard nationally and internationally. As President of Te Akatea - Aotearoa Māori Leadership Inc., formerly the New Zealand Māori Principals Association, Bruce advocates for Māori achievement parity, driving positive outcomes for all tamariki.

DANIEL KAREHANA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Daniel Karehana Memorial Scholarship for Technology is intended to support rangatahi of Māori descent on their tech journey.

Last years winners of the Matihiko Awards got \$1,000 towards a chosen kaupapa as Tōtara and Tipu. Melissa Gollan, Kale Panoho, Sara Smeath, Robyn Kamira and Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe chose to establish a scholarship in Daniel Karehana's name. Te Hapori Matihiko and an anonymous donor added to the pūtea

Daniel Karehana was an amazing Māori in tech and highly respected in the community. He was the CEO and co-founder of BlinkPay. He previously worked at Ngati Paoa Group Investments Limited as a Chief Executive officer.



GRAEME EVERTON HONORARY AWARD

This award honours a lifetime of contribution to Māori in technology. The Everton whānau will join us on stage to accept this special acknowledgement honouring Graeme Everton.

Moe mai rā e te rangatira.



KAUPAPA

Tipu Finalists



Pera Barrett

Ngāti Toa, Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai,

Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga

KohaTree

Pera has revolutionised the digital world by uplifting kaupapa Māori and supporting rangatahi. His projects, like Shoebox Christmas and Koha Tree, use digital innovation to spread kindness, develop leadership skills, and create learning opportunities. Through Shoebox Christmas, Pera has directed over \$4.88 million worth of gifts to nearly 100,000 whānau, expanding from a few local gifts to reaching kids in 192 schools across 23 regions. Pera's initiatives have provided part-time jobs for rangatahi, fostering their growth in tech and community projects. His kaupapa Māori-based learning programmes empower rangatahi with transferable skills and confidence to excel in Digitech. Koha Tree exemplifies Pera's innovative approach, offering a digital platform where rangatahi and community leaders blend Māori values with modern enterprise skills, crafting future leaders in digital project management and innovation.



Te Puna Oranga

Te Puna Oranga has designed the first-ever digital tool for whānau/hapū/iwi to address and navigate issues of sexual abuse. This groundbreaking tool is essential in healthcare, empowering families to break the silence around sexual abuse. It provides guidance, enabling conversations and offering resources. This innovative platform fills crucial gaps, supporting survivors in a safe environment, bringing down barriers and fostering open dialogue.



Billy Poi

Ngāti Porou

Ngāti Porou Oranga

Billy Poi has been a vital part of the Hauora team for over a decade, travelling over 200km daily to health clinics along SH35 from Te Araroa to Turanganui a Kiwa. He installs, trains, upgrades, and maintains systems for Ngāti Porou Oranga Hauora. Despite the challenges of remote locations, Billy's work ensures resilient health services, particularly after Cyclones Gabrielle and Hale, by setting up Starlink backups. His efforts provide advanced tech access to the community, such as video conferencing, digital medication management, and cloud-based patient systems. Billy's dedication and professionalism inspire rangatahi and kaimahi, making him a relatable and humble tech leader.

Supported by:



KAUPAPA

Tōtara Finalists



Moira McGarva-Ratapu,

Ngāti Kahungunu

PurSuit

PurSuit Limited is proudly 100% Māori owned, with almost all staff having whakapapa Māori. Their superpower is enabling others to see their full potential. They provide support to those who are looking for mahi, or rangatahi who want to learn more about technology and computer skills, and assist holistic wellness in the workplace. Founder, Moira McGarva-Ratapu, has over 15 years of experience working with whānau in the community and was once a single mother on a benefit and remembered how hard it was to return to work after having a baby. She received some help from MSD and other services and wanted to return this favour to others in the community. With a Social Work background, she approached the CEO of the local Iwi provider that employed her at the time and asked if she could implement an idea she had to support others looking for work. Pursuit has created an online tool called NOHI. NOHI is a well-being tool based on the fundamentals of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1984).



Henry Lawton

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngāti Kauwhata

Te Papatipu Matihiko

Te Papatipu Matihiko (TPM) is a living network of kaupapa-Māori innovators, educators, and entrepreneurs. TPM and Nare provide hope to support communities who have suffered colonisation, poverty, and natural disasters. When the doors are open, many rangatahi look for a safe, creative space where they can feel part of a community, meet friends (who are often their whanaunga), and learn together. TPM is the first decentralised Māori hub network, powered by Māori gamers who share a love and passion for te reo Māori and te Ao Matihiko over many hours with tireless energy and 1000% devotion to the kaupapa of supporting digital rangatahi and their whānau. Nare and the TPM whānau go above and beyond just to see our people thrive.



Tōnui Collab

Tōnui Collab, led by Founder/Director Shanon O'Connor, pioneers STEMM education for taitamariki, fostering creators and innovators. Since 2019, their initiatives have empowered over 54,000 youth in Te Tairāwhiti, bridging the digital divide through equitable access and collaboration with marae, schools, and industry partners. Initiatives like Pā Hangarau and Kōhine Robotics nurture Māori representation in tech, shaping a brighter future for Te Tairāwhiti's economic landscape.

Supported by:



CHANGEMAKER

Tipu Finalists



Amy Stevens

Ngāti Raukawa & Ngāti Kahungunu

Slice Technologies

Amy has always had a passion for home ownership and the financial security it represents. Amy is the founder of Slice, a platform that helps others achieve their dream of home ownership. She is dedicated to reducing barriers to ownership and creating a world where everyone has the opportunity to own their own home. Amy has helped Māori across New Zealand into homes who thought ownership was out of reach. She has collaborated with Kainga Ora (KO), Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK), and Iwi to streamline the legal processes involved in working with these providers. Amy's platform also streamlines the co-ownership process paving the way for alternative pathways into home ownership with as little as \$20k.



Kirialana Wilson

Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi

Tōnui Collab

Kiri is a STEMM Navigator for Tōnui Collab, a Māori-led, kaupapa-driven charitable trust in Te Tairāwhiti. Kiri facilitates STEMM wānanga in schools and marae and is the lead on the Kōhine Robotics, a kaupapa specifically designed to address the disparity of wāhine Māori in tech. This culminated with a Kōhine Robotics Expo supporting 50 Year 6 - 9 girls from kura across Te Tairāwhiti to experiment with VEX IQ Robotics, develop confidence with a range of technologies, learn about study and career pathways in tech, and hear from wāhine thriving in tech. In 2024, this kaupapa has grown to support 75 kōhine from 17 kura. Kiri's commitment to facilitating STEMM wānanga i te reo Māori and ensuring that STEMM wānanga is not only delivered i te reo Māori but also designed from perspectives that celebrate te ao Māori me tangata Māori is inspirational and important mahi.



Sara Smeath

Ngāpuhi

CiRCLR

In regional New Zealand, abundant food is grown and exported, yet much is wasted, leaving many families struggling with food insecurity. This inspired Sara to start CiRCLR, leveraging her expertise in global supply chains and sustainable innovation. Frustrated by missed opportunities in the circular economy, she developed a digital platform to address food waste and improve regional food security. The framework maps resources in a region using AI technology and offers a marketplace to trade waste as a resource between businesses. This creates opportunities for small businesses to access valuable resources more easily and affordably so their businesses can be more sustainable and more competitive, without greenwashing or exploiting our natural environment further.

Supported by:



TE HUARAHI TIKA
TRUST

CHANGEMAKER

Tōtara Finalists



Steven Renata

Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Pakahi, Ngāti Rehia

Kiwa Digital

Steven Renata is an accomplished commercial manager, formerly CEO of Les Mills USA, now Managing Director and the largest investor in Kiwa Digital Ltd (KIWA). Based in Tāmaki Makaurau and operating globally, KIWA was founded in 2003 by Rhonda Kite to localise children's TV programming to te reo Māori. For eight years, Steven has ensured KIWA stays true to its kaupapa, treating te reo as a taonga. Under his leadership, KIWA has significantly impacted the digital and tech sector, building a thriving export business. KIWA's VoiceQ software is now used by 170 clients, 270 studios, 25 cloud networks, and thousands of industry professionals worldwide.



Māui Studios

Recognising significant gaps in the creative representation of Māori culture, the founders of Māui Studios, Madison Henry, Patrick Hussey, and Vincent Egan, saw an opportunity to use advances in communication technology and digital creation to fill these gaps, driven by the ethos and ambition of the demi-god Māui. Since its establishment, Māui Studios has grown into a production studio that specialises in visual design, motion design, and immersive design services, and transforming them into intellectual property blueprints, all grounded in ngā uara Māori.



Adam Miratana

Ngāti Wehi Wehi

Aurecon

Adam is an exemplar of Māori digital leadership, demonstrating humility and dedication throughout his near two-decade tenure at Aurecon, an engineering, design, and advisory organisation. Adam first joined Aurecon as a school-leaver Drafter, creating technical engineering drawings and plans. Over the years, he has been instrumental in expanding Aurecon's digital capabilities and now leads significant and complex engineering and infrastructure projects across Aotearoa as an Associate Digital Modeller. Adam is a tuakana and respected figure among peers and clients alike. He is the national go-to expert for enhancing and supporting the digital facets of engineering and infrastructure projects and inspires Māori in the industry to pursue a career in this field. Adam consistently advocates for mana whenua aspirations and is highly regarded for his ability to effectively integrate these aspirations into the digital delivery of projects.

Supported by:



TE HUARAHİ TIKĀ
TRUST

EMERGENT ICON



Madison Henry-Ryan

Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Rarotonga

Māui Studios

Mads is a multidisciplinary creative and indigenous filmmaker who specialises in film, design, and digital Māori content. Born in Bluff and raised in the Chatham Islands, he has found success by co-founding Māui Studios in 2014 alongside his peers and building up a platform to empower Māori & Pasifika communities and creatives. Over the last 10 years, Mads has found his creative niche by fusing his profession as a designer, creative director, and cinematographer into directing and producing stories that reflect art, emotion, and culture to the world. He is effective in cultivating meaningful relationships and delivering premium quality projects working alongside iwi, government, and independent groups, in diverse sectors of education, health, technology, environment, and business.



Vincent Egan

Ngāruahinerangi, Ngāti Ruanui

Māui Studios

Vincent Egan is the Co-Founder and CEO of Māui Studios Aotearoa Ltd and Director of Māui Virtual Production, blending Māori cultural heritage with cutting-edge digital innovation. Under his leadership, Māui Studios has grown into a multi-million dollar organisation pivotal to the Māori economy. Vincent pioneers immersive technologies like AR and VR, bringing Māori legends into the modern age. His groundbreaking projects include Āhuru Mōwai - Sanctuary™, Mythik Tane VR Game, Google Doodle for Waitangi Day, and collaborations with global platforms like Apex Legends. Vincent's work exemplifies integrating mātauranga Māori with innovative technology, ensuring cultural resonance and paving the way for future generations.



Tiger Telford

Te Āti Awa

Aurecon

Tiger Telford is a Digital Visualisation cadet in Aurecon's Māori Cadetship programme, bringing one year of experience in the digital technology industry. His work integrates creativity and cultural perspective, reflecting te ao Māori values. Tiger impacts diverse projects, from infrastructure to internal initiatives, and fosters cultural exchange and inclusivity. His dedication to innovation and honouring te ao Māori exemplifies excellence in digitech. Tiger's initiatives, including facilitating STEM wānanga and representing Aurecon at key conferences, support Māori enterprise and strengthen Māori participation in engineering through collaboration with organisations like Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Pūhoro Māori STEMM Academy.

LIVING ICON



Sir Ian Taylor

Ngāti Kahungunu

Animation Research Limited

Sir Ian Taylor is a globally renowned and highly accomplished technology entrepreneur. In 1990, Ian established Animation Research Limited, which quickly became one of the top computer animation companies in New Zealand and known internationally for its television advertising and sports graphics. In 2014, ARL won a prestigious Sports Emmy for “Outstanding New Approaches to Sports Coverage,” and has been recognised by the New Zealand Hi-Tech Trust with a special “LifeTime Achievement Award.” One of Australasia’s leading computer graphics production facilities, turning digital data into pictures, ARL has won numerous national and international awards for its work in computer-generated television commercials, and applications used for education and entertainment. In 2021, Ian was made a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year’s honours, recognised for his services to broadcasting, business, and the community.



Dr Johnson Witehira

Tamahaki, Tamakana, Uenuku, Ngai Tūteauru

IDIA & PAKU

Dr. Johnson Witehira is an expert in traditional and contemporary Māori art and design. After earning the first doctorate in Māori Design, he has been dedicated to revitalising Māori visual culture. In 2017, he co-founded Indigenous Design and Innovation Aotearoa (IDIA), working with major New Zealand organisations to design futures through an indigenous lens. In 2018, he co-founded Āpōpō, Wellington’s only Indigenous Creative tech hub, supporting internships and international collaborations. Johnson’s leadership has significantly advanced indigenous design and employment opportunities.



Antony Royal

Ngāti Tamatera, Ngāti Whanaunga

Tū Ātea

Antony Royal, CEO of Tū Ātea, has dedicated over 30 years to advancing Māori in technology. Passionate about leveraging tech for economic and social benefits, he also holds key governance roles, including Chair of Ngāti Tamatera Treaty Settlement Trust and Board Member of Next Generation Critical Communications. Renowned for his contributions to 2degrees, UFB and RBI rollouts, rural broadband, and digital equity in education, Antony is a respected leader in the tech and telecommunications sectors.



Dan Te Whenua Walker

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa; Ngāti Porou

Microsoft

When you think of Māori and tech, you think of Dan Te Whenua Walker. Driven by a vision to bridge the digital divide for Māori, Dan believes technology can disrupt cycles of inequity. He aims for Māori to not only participate in but also lead and innovate within the tech industry. His roles at major corporations like Microsoft highlight his impact, promoting economic opportunities for Māori locally and globally. Dan's focus on using AI and digital technologies to address societal inequities directly fosters growth and opportunity within Māori communities.

Supported by:



**Callaghan Innovation
Te Pokapū Auaha**

KAITAUTOKO

Our amazing sponsors have allowed us to deliver this event and continue our mahi for Māori in digital and tech. As a not-for-profit, we rely on the tautoko of organisations like these who share our vision and values for Māori, and Aotearoa.

E rere ana ngā mihi ki ngā kaitautoko o Ngā Tohu Matihiko! E kore te puna mihi mimiti! We extend our deepest gratitude to you all.



TE HAPORI MATIHIKO

Follow us and continue to support
Māori in digital & tech



matihiko.nz



[@tehaporimatihiko](https://www.instagram.com/tehaporimatihiko)
