NGĀ TOHU MATIHIKO

2025 MATIHIKO AWARDS

Doors open 5:00

Haka Pōwhiri 5:30

Kai + Entertainment 6:00

Award presentations commence 6:50

Corporate Change

Innovator

Pakihi

Kajāwhina

Intermission + Dessert 7:45

Award presentations continue 8:00

Public Sector

Kaitiaki ite Taiao

Whiuaki te Ao

Rangatiratanga

Daniel Karehana Memorial Scholarship

Intermission 9:00

Award Presentaions Continue 9:15

Kaupapa

Changemaker

Emergent Icon

Living Icon

Awards conclude 10:30

HŌTAKA

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 tipuna.

We thank our sponsors and guests; your tautoko means we can continue delivering our kaupapa and seeing more Māori blazing their trails in tech. Kāore e ārikarika aku mihi ki a koutou.

Ngā Tohu Matihiko 2025 is a tribute – to the legacy of Wai 776, and to the whetū who continue to shine. Tonight, we celebrate Māori excellence in the digital realm. Each award, a constellation. Each nominee, a beacon of innovation and identity in motion.

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.

We are no longer just navigating, we are leading.

Mauri ora.



Katie Brown

Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Whātua Tumu Whakarae - Chief Executive Officer Te Ao Matihiko | Te Hapori Matihiko

TE HAPORI MATIHIKO

A community for Māori in digitech.

Te Hapori Matihiko is a kaupapa Māori organisation representing over 1,200 Māori and allies working across the digital and technology sectors in Aotearoa. We are an uara-led organisation grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which serves as our papa pounamu and guides all that we do. Our work exists to protect, uplift, and advance Māori in te ao matihiko.

We are committed to ensuring Māori leadership, values, and voices are at the centre of digital transformation. Through advocacy, education, policy engagement, and building collective power, we work to address digital inequities, remove systemic barriers, and support Māori to thrive in digital spaces.

Our hapori includes developers, creatives, innovators, leaders, and learners. Together, we hold space for kaupapa-based collaboration and push for sector change that protects the rights of tangata whenua and taonga in digital environments. We have a strong focus on digital equity, Māori data sovereignty, and creating safer online spaces for Māori.

Ngā Tohu Matihiko is our platform to honour the excellence, innovation, and leadership of Māori in digital and tech. Every finalist represents a powerful expression of what is possible when Māori are resourced, recognised, and supported in digital futures. This is our vision in action. Māori not just participating, but leading and redefining te ao matihiko on our own terms.

If you're not already a member of our hapori, we invite you to join us.

Celebrate with us! Take photos and tag us! Use the hashtag #MatihikoAwards2025



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.

ENTERTAINMENT



Hone Hurunui

Hone Pirini, a 21-year-old Māori artist from Ōtautahi, making waves in the New Zealand music scene. With deep roots in Kāi Tahu, Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngā Rauru, and Ngāti Ruanui, Hone effortlessly blends R&B, pop, soul, and reggae into his distinct sound. Influenced by his bassist father, Hone started his musical journey with TikTok covers, quickly amassing a cult following. His collaboration with Marley Sola resulted in hit tracks, amassing over 3.6 million streams and 80k monthly listeners on Spotify.

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 I con 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



Kat Falepau Ngai Tai ki Tāmaki, Waikato Tainui Arup

Kat Falepau is the Global Business Engagement Partner & Digital Technology Recruitment Manager at Arup, a global collective of designers, engineers, consultants, and digital experts working across 34+ countries. Managing the day-to-day business operations for a team of over 700 staff globally, Kat leads recruitment efforts for Digital Technology positions while ensuring diversity, inclusion, and innovation. Her professional focus lies at the intersection of technology and people, with a deep commitment to weaving kaupapa Māori into everything she does at Arup. Kat joined an international company and asked: How do I create more Māori opportunities through this?



Ta'ase Vaoga

Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngāpuhi, Hāmoa Tahuriora Consulting, Previously InternetNZ

Ta'ase Vaoga is a rising leader in Aotearoa's digital equity, data, and tech landscape. With a unique blend of kaupapa Māori strategy, policy influence, digital insight and community-rooted leadership, Ta'ase is making bold and meaningful contributions to how we design digital futures. Whilst at Internet NZ, Ta'ase led a landmark constitutional transformation programme, embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori aspirations into the governance of Aotearoa's internet infrastructure. She is responsible for designing and implementing a bespoke, Tiriti-led approach to this change, a first for the organisation in its 30-year history.





Kātene Durie-Doherty

Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kauwhata, Kāi Tahu, Rongowhakaata, Rangitāne, Ngāti Raukawa Motion Sickness

A catalyst for change, Kåtene's work bringing kaupapa Måori into the corporate boardrooms and advertising agencies ensuring that Måori voices are not only heard but are leading the charge in the creation of innovative campaigns that benefit the community. He has been pivotal in developing a series of world-first initiatives, including the "Real Time Reo" project which turns billboards into live Måori language translators. This work, alongside his campaigns like "Fight for Your Whakapapa" and "Proud to Be Måori," has redefined how Måori culture is portrayed in the corporate space.

CORPORATE CHANGE

Totara Finalists



Ernestynne Walsh

Ngāti Porou, Te-Whānau-ā-Apanui Nicholson Consulting

Ernestynne leads Nicholson Consulting's Māori Data Service Area, an area she built from the ground up. This mahi involves forecasting the number of te reo Māori speakers in the future, as well as survey analysis for organisations working in te reo Māori. Alongside being a mentor to the next generation of Māori data experts, Ernestynne approaches mahi applying tikanga Māori values such as whakawhanaungatanga first, and focuses on work with intergenerational impact, paving way for initiatives such as the "Challenging the Existing Norms" kaupapa which was used to weave te ao Māori into all aspects of the organisation.



Rob Selwyn

Whakatohea, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui One NZ

Rob Selwyn is a values-led leader whose contribution to corporate transformation is grounded in manaskitanga, whanaungatanga and the active expression of Maori identity. With deep commitment to embedding kaupapa Māori into business systems, language, and relationships; his influence led to the development of internal behaviour statements and wellbeing touchpoints that reflect Māori principles. With nearly two decades in technology and service delivery, Rob blends technical experience with kaupapa leadership, now playing a central role in One NZ's Māori strategy, staff capability development, and external partnerships across iwi, Māori business, and the digital inclusion space.





Evan Wilson *Ngāti Kahungunu, Tūhoe*Pinnacle Health

Evan Wilson is a highly respected digital leader whose career spans over two decades of executive leadership in tech, analytics, data innovation and public service transformation. His impact can be seen across Actearoa, from rebuilding government systems to championing diversity in the tech workforce, and now driving digital innovation in health through his role as Chief Digital Officer at Pinnacle Midlands Health Network. Evan is driving digital transformation across primary care with a focus on data equity, Māori service design, Al enablement, and system integration, ensuring the health system works better for Māori whānau and clinicians allike.

INNOVATOR

Tipu Finalists



Nicole Retter Muaūpoko

PAM

Drawing from her personal experiences as a working māmā, Nicole founded PAM (Personal Admin Manager), an app designed to lighten the mental load for parents when it comes to whānau administration. With an extensive marketing background and innovative approach to addressing real-world challenges, PAM integrates professional expertise with personal insight to create impactful tech solutions. Nicole's vision for PAM extends beyond convenience, she hopes that by reducing the mental load, PAM will help parents have more time for what truly matters. With innovation, privacy, and user needs at its core, PAM is poised to become an essential tool for families worldwide.



kahu.code

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Ngāti Porou

kahu.code is a Māori-owned, father daughter AI-led software company specialising in translation and captioning services, known for fast turnaround on large scale translation projects. With a deep love for both te ao hangarau and te ao Māori, kahu.code places reo, kaupapa and culture at the centre of everything they do. By combining AI technology with human review, they uphold the mana and integrity of te reo rangatira. Their appreciation for reo hangarau (the language of tech) comes naturally, and it is a space they proudly specialise in.

paymentsnz



Xaviere Murray-Puhara Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa & Ngāti Porou kahu.code, Tech Taniwha

Xaviere's background in product management combined with her curiosity to learn and her commitment to seeing our people thrive makes her one of the most innovative up and coming leaders in our tech ecosystem. Co-founder of Tech Taniwha and kahu.code, Xav's bias to action has already seen her make huge impact, creating a support system for young Māori professionals and enabling people around the world to lift their reo capability.

INNOVATOR

Totara Finalists



Amber Craig

Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne, Muaūpoko, Ngāi Tara Te Whare Hangahanga

Amber Craig is a pioneering Māori technologist, strategist and kaupapa Māori innovator, founding Te Whare Hangahanga, a kaupapa built to design te ao Māori-led solutions for social change. She has served on the Council of InternetNZ for 8 years, contributed to the Digital Economy & Digital Inclusion Ministerial Advisory Group, and has led digital literacy and education initiatives for Māori communities across Aotearoa. Through Te Whare Hangahanga and Te Rua o Mahara Trust, Amber builds scalable, culturally grounded systems that serve whānau, uplift te reo and tikanga, and enable rangatahi to thrive.



Jacob Scott Kahungunu Te Ara Hihiko

Over the past 40 years tohunga toi and master carver, Jacob Scott, has been a pioneer of kaupapa Māori design and whakairo. Te Ara Hihiko is a kaupapa Māori design, innovation, and fabrication studio, grounded in whakapapa and cultural responsibility. A living expression of Jacob's life work, it bridges traditional Māori art forms with contemporary technology to shape the future of Māori innovation. The adaptation of digital fabrication tools such as CNC routers, 3D modelling software, and sustainable materials like Cleanstone allows Te Ara Hihiko to scale kaupapa Māori design without compromising tikanga.

paymentsnz



Taane Flanagan *Ngai Tahu, Ngāti Maniapoto*Tai Creative

Tai Creative is a Māori-led graphic design studio founded by Taane Flanagan, a passionate designer dedicated to elevating Māori narratives through culturally grounded visual storytelling. The studio's mission is to empower Māori voices, strengthen identity, and inspire the next generation of creatives through design that is both visually powerful and deeply rooted in whakapapa, tikanga, and te reo Māori. He established Tai Creative in 2024, driven by a vision to empower whānau, rangatahi, and kaupapa Māori initiatives through design.



Kyle Forde *Kai Tahu* Karo

Kyle has had a life long career in digital and tech, starting in infrastructure through Telecom before moving into the primary healthcare industry. Creating Kotahi to support Hauora Māori, pasifika and social sector providers to help with their mahi, Kyle draws from his own personal and whānau experiences with the health system. Kotahi encourages primary care to think beyond "GPs are the provider" to refer services and provide funded activities to these social sector providers. The Kotahi system gives a modern, fit-for-purpose solution for providers, treats personal data as taonga and emphasises the hauora framework as the key to cutromes.

PAKIHI

Tipu Finalists



Cloverbase

Cloverbase is a digital enable ment consultancy dedicated to empowering leaders with the mindset needed to navigate an increasingly digital world. As technological change accelerates, digital literacy has become an essential leadership skill, whether leading a boardroom or starting a professional journey. Cloverbase equips leaders to think critically about technology and use it ethically and effectively through tailored training, personalised mentoring and in-person workshops.



zuuka

zuuka is a healthtech company reimagining drug delivery through user-centred design, advanced technology and environmental responsibility. Its flagship product, the zuuka patch pump, is a next-generation infusion device that simplifies insulin delivery by integrating Al-powered personalisation, intuitive design and sustainable materials. Founded by Dr Jake Campbell (Te Rarawa) and Jamie Cairns, zuuka partners with healthcare providers and patients to deliver scalable, patient-led solutions that improve access and outcomes.



Pursuit

Pursuit Limited is a purpose-driven business working across employment, digital services and education. For over seven years, it has supported job seekers, with a strong focus on rangatahi through Te Ara Matihiko, a pathway that upskills young Māori in tech and connects them to employment. Pursuit also delivers digital solutions, including website development and Digi Marae, which helps marae build an online presence. Its latest product, Pūnaha Reo, is a gamified platform for learning te reo Māori, now being introduced in schools across Actearoa.

Totara Finalists



Matatini Enterprises

Te Matatini Enterprises is the social enterprise arm of Te Matatini Society Incorporated, supporting the growth and delivery of Aotearoa's premier kapa haka festival. Guided by the mission to protect, promote and practice Māori cultural and creative excellence, the organisation blends strategic partnerships and kaupapa Māori values to elevate kapa haka on the global stage. Te Matatini ensures the festival remains widely accessible while staying true to its cultural roots, authenticity and integrity.



Arataua Media

Arataua Media is a Māori-owned digital media and communications agency founded by Chey and Kahurangi Milne in Rotorus. Since 2013, Arataua has uplifted Māori voices through bilingual storytelling, kaupapa-driven design, and creative strategy. From iwi-led COVID-19 responses to national reo Māori campaigns and rangatahi content, Arataua delivers powerful, culturally grounded media that serves iwi, government and Māori organisations across Aotearoa.



Ruruku

Ruruku is a boutique Māori-owned creative design pakihi based in Ōtautahi. With over two decades of experience in the print and design industry, Ruruku is dedicated to uplifting Māori voices through authentic and impactful creative expression. Guided by the principles of whanaungatanga, collective success, and kaitiakitanga, Ruruku ensures that kaupapa Māori are genuinely represented while maintaining a strong commitment to environmentally responsible practices. From concept to delivery, Ruruku blends cultural integrity with design excellence to bring kaupapa to life.

KAIĀWHINA

Tipu Finalists



Ta'ase Vaoga

Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngāpuhi, Hāmoa Tahuriora Consulting, Previously InternetNZ

Ta'ase Vaoga is a rising leader in Actearoa's digital equity, data, and tech landscape. With a unique blend of kaupapa Māori strategy, policy influence, digital insight and community-rooted leadership, Ta'ase is making bold and meaningful contributions to how we design digital futures. Whilst at Internet NZ, Ta'ase led a landmark constitutional transformation programme, embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori aspirations into the governance of Actearoa's internet infrastructure. She is responsible for designing and implementing a bespoke, Tiriti-led approach to this change, a first for the organisation in its 30-year history.



Nat Johnston

Ngāti Awa Spark NZ

As an exceptional wahine Māori and self-proclaimed data storyteller, Nat is making significant contributions to both the technology sector and Māori representation within it. Having been raised across multiple countries throughout Asia, Nat brings a uniquely rich and perspective to her mahi at Spark NZ, able to bridge diverse worldviews and communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. Despite her global experiences, she has maintained a profound connection to her iwi, Ngāti Awa, and often describes herself as the "technical interpreter for her grandmother", a role that beautifully captures how she translates complex technical concepts into relatable narratives that honour tikanga practices.



Leah Kahukura

Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Te Āti Awa

Pursuit

A proud māmā of two, born and raised in Wairoa by her solo mum, Leah brings lived experience, deep empathy, and authentic connection to everything she does. Over the past four years at Pursuit, Leah has continuously stepped up and evolved her role. As a CV writer supporting job seekers, she embraced the challenge of becoming a Kaiārahi for Te Ara Matihiko, a digital pathway programme supporting rangatahi into employment and further education. Leah works closely with 60 rangatahi, offering hands-on pastoral care that includes securing driver's licences to preemployment support, and most importantly, being a constant source of manaaki and encouragement.

KAIĀWHINA

Totara Finalists



Moko Templeton

Waikato, Ngāranui

Te Matatini Enterprises

Moko Templeton is the Media and Communications Lead for Matatini Enterprises, where she has demonstrated exceptional leadership in using digital technology to increase the reach and accessibility of Te Matatini, Aotearoa's kapa haka festival. Her innovative approach to digital communications has revolutionised how audiences engage with this special event. Alongside Te Matatini, she manages the Klingitanga socials, providing more access and connection to the Klinigtanga.



Shona Te Huki Ngāti Porou Katoa Connect

Shona has been with Katoa Connect for 11 years. In that time she has created, developed, and continues to manage the delivery of digital inclusion programmes across Actearoa. These programmes have served individuals and groups from multiple ethnicities, in over 10 languages, to various demographics such as rangatahi, wahine, kaumātua.senior citizens and people with disabilities. Her success is shown in the years of successful programme reporting to funders such as the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Social Development - Office for Seniors, Foundation North, Lottery Grants, Chorus NZ, and more.



Patrick Waenga Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngati Porou Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Paddy has worked within Te Wänanga o Aotearoa since 2006, and is driven by a deep sense of care and responsibility for others. He's taken on a range of roles that have all centred around helping people, from the service desk to business analyst roles, he is now as our Senior Digital Adoption SME. His role is instrumental in helping others understand, adopt, and feel confident with the technology that supports how we work and deliver across the motu. Paddy has been committed to creating safe and inclusive spaces for others, helping to establish our Taupārongo Online Karakia, giving remote kaimahi a way to stay grounded in tikanga.

PUBLIC SECTOR

Tipu Finalists



Jahminique Grace

Ngāti Porou

Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand

Jahminique is the Māori Data Governance Lead at Te Tāhū Hauora. She previously served at Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand as kaitohutohu Intelligence - Hauora Māori Tūmatanui and at Te Whatu Ora Tairāwhiti in multiple roles including Business Analyst, IT Support Officer, and Data Analyst. She holds a Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science and is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences, Digital Health, and Te Pōkairua Tikanga (Mātauranga Māori) Kaupae S in Indigenous Strudies.



Ava Williams Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Paoa, Waikato-Tainui N7TF

Ava Williams is a Customer Manager for Māori Business at NZTE, specialising in the Tech and Beauty sectors. Her role involves supporting Māori enterprises to expand and excel in global markets. Ava's professional journey includes significant experience in both public and private sectors, notably with Microsoft. She is passionate about advocating for, empowering and improving Māori outcomes and is also a Kaituhi, writing for screen and theatre through a Te Ao Māori lens and registered celebrant and storyteller, helping clients share and honour their stories.

PUBLIC SECTOR

Totara Finalists



Sonny Tatahau Taite Naāi Te Ranai Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand

Sonny is a nationally recognised cybersecurity leader and currently serves as the National Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at Te Whatu Ora. With over 20 years of experience in digital infrastructure and cybersecurity across public and private sectors, Sonny is known for leading complex national-scale transformations that enhance the resilience and security of Aotearoa's health system. Sonny is an advocate for Māori inclusion in tech. He co-designed and leads the Cyber Academy, an initiative that trains Māori and Pacific rangatahi for roles in cybersecurity. Sonny leads with strategy, values and vision, driving systemic change and paying the way for future generations.



Moira Apiti-Civcic

Waikato Tainui - Tūrangawaewae, Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Hikairo, Naāti Wairere, Naāti Porou, Naāti Paoa

Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau

Equipped with the understanding that whosoever holds the pens to the maps controls the narrative. Moira has long been a passionate and brilliant advocate of indigenous mapping. Her technical, analytical, and creative mind has been an incredible asset in building her kete o tiriki; empowering her to not only innovate and envision what a future in te ao matihiko can look like in her creative practise, but also collaboratively build and work to protect all components of a digital experience. Her capacity to manaaki and awhi ngā iwi taketake o te ao is also not to be overlooked not diminished



Jon Herries Ngāti Ruanui Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand

Jon Herries is a leading force in transforming Actearoa's public health sector through innovation, digital transformation, and a steadfast commitment to equitable outcomes. As General Manager for New Technology & Innovation at Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand, Jon has been at the forefront of emerging technologies in national health systems, with a focus on enabling data-driven services and scalable innovation. His legacy is shaping the infrastructure that enables future generations to thrive in a health system that is more responsive, inclusive, and digitally empowered.

KAITIAKI O TE TAIAO

Tipu Finalists



Ratu Mataira Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu OpenStar Technologies

Dr. Ratu Mataira is a visionary physicist and the founder and CEO of OpenStar Technologies, a Wellington-based startup at the forefront of nuclear fusion research. His leadership in developing a levitated dipole fusion reactor positions Aotearoa as a global contender in the quest for clean, sustainable energy. Ratu's work is not only a scientific breakthrough but also a profound expression of kaitiakitanga, aiming to protect Papatūānuku through innovative technology grounded in Māori values.



Courtney Karalus

Ngāti Hauā, Waikato Tainui Deep Dive Division

Courtney Karalus is a wähine Mäori tech entrepreneur and the Commercial Development Director of Deep Dive Division, a Mäori and Pacific-owned marine innovation company based in Waikato. One of the most significant projects under her leadership is the Deep Tech Project, a cutting-edge initiative that integrates IoT sensors, autonomous underwater rovers (ROVs), and data platforms to monitor freshwater and marine health, supporting better environmental outcomes while advancing Mäori data sovereignty and digital capability. This mahi has created stronger digital infrastructure for Mäori communities and laid the foundation for smart, iwi-led environmental response systems.





Sarah Copeland Ngāti Awa

Te Kura ō Te Pāroa

The Wai Science Project at Te Kura o Te Pāroa, led by Whaea Sarah Copeland, is a student-driven kaupapa grounded in whakapapa, community connection, and tech-enabled environmental restoration. This kaupapa exemplifies how a kura can activate tamariki, whānau, iwi and technology to restore the mauri of their awa and reconnect to the mātauranga of their tūpuna. Guided by local pūrākau, iwi knowledge and science mentors, tamariki began monitoring water quality, studying native plantings, and conducting eDNA analysis of Kopeopeo Awa and Awatapu Lagoon.

KAITIAKI O TE TAIAO

Totara Finalists



Mike Taitoko *Ngāti Manaiapoto*Toha, Takiwā

Mike Taitoko is a pioneering Māori tech entrepreneur, environmental strategist, and systems-change leader whose mahi sits at the intersection of data, finance, whenua and kaupapa Māori. He is the co-founder of Takiwā, a geo-analytics platform designed to democratise access to data for iwi, hapū, and communities; and co-founder of Toha, an impact-driven network that enables scalable investment into climate and environmental action. Mike 's vision is grounded in kaltiakitanga, empowering whānau to take collective, coordinated action to protect and regenerate te taiao. His work is collaborative, future-focused, and a living example of Indigenous innovation that centres both whenua and whakapapa.





Pou Rāhui Research Project

Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Hei and Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea University of Waikato

Pou Răhui is an iwi lead, kaupapa Māori research project that addresses the revitalisation of the mauri of Tikapa Moana and Te Moananui-ā-Toi with an intergenerational, action orientated approach, through a Māori world view.

WHIUA KI TE AO

Tipu Finalists



Gloria Ewe

Mātāwaka

Au Consulting

AU Consulting is a kaupapa Māori-led consultancy that fuses cultural integrity with digital innovation. Founded by Gloria Ewe and Jahmaine Cummings-Hodge, AU works at the intersection of Te Ao Māori, learning strategy, and enterprise transformation. Our name, "AU," reflects the currents of Tangaroa-guiding our clients through powerful and purposeful learning journeys. We specialise in building ecosystems of Māori suppliers to co-deliver at scale. In 2024, AU led Project Joey, the complete redesign of Qantas' cabin crew training programme. With over 5,500 staff impacted globally, it became a standout kaupapa, embedding Māori intelligence into international aviation, compliance, and digitech transformation.





Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe

Kāi Tahu

Centre of Digital Excellence

Over 70 indigenous game developers travelled from across the globe for a "life changing" visit to Dunedin. Wānaka Whare Karioi ā-Whenua, the International Indigenous Digital Games Summit, run by the Centre of Digital Excellence in conjunction with Tühuru Otago Museum's Whare Karioi and supported by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu opened an interactive digital games exhibition in 2024. Representation from Indigenous Australians, Taino descent (the indigenous people of the Caribbean), and iwi Māori came together and stayed at Ōtākou Marae prior to the opening, sharing stories of their journeys with gaming, culture and identity.

WHIUA KI TE AO

Totara Finalists



Miriana Lowrie *Ngā Rauru Kītahi*1Centre

Miriana Lowrie is the founder and CEO of 1Centre, a pioneering fintech company transforming the B2B trade credit application process. With over 20 years of experience in the banking sector, Miriana identified a critical need for a streamlined, paperless solution to manage trade credit applications, leading her to establish 1Centre in 2016, aiming to simplify and digitise the traditionally cumbersome process of opening trade accounts between suppliers and business customers. Miriana's commitment extends beyond technological innovation; she is dedicated to fostering diversity within the tech industry and serves as an inspiration for Māori women aspiring to enter the sector.



Aaron Ward

Ngāti Maru AskNicely, Stealth Al

Aaron Ward is the co-founder of AskNicely, the world's first Frontline Success platform, and a new Al startup based in Aotearoa called Stealth Al. Aaron has spent over two decades scaling disruptive ventures across Aotearoa, Australia, the U.S., and Europe, launching digital products that blend customer experience, behavioural science and next-gen technology. The platform is now used by companies worldwide to empower frontline workers, improve service culture, and uplift business performance all from a mobile device. Through every venture, he has demonstrated that Māori can lead, create, and export digital innovation to the world – without compromising who we are.





Huia Hamon

Ngāti Porou, Te Aitangaā-Mahaki, Hauiti Integrity Creative, HūHā Music, Kog Mastering, Kog Studio

Huia Hamon is an award-winning singer, songwriter, producer, engineer, composer, and visual artist. As founder of HUHA Music and co-director of KOB Studio and Kog Chief Label, she is deeply engaged in digital music production, virtual collaboration, and global Indigenous networking. With over 18 years in the industry, Huia leverages digital technology to create, connect, and distribute te reo Māori music on the world stage. She has a solid presence in international showcases, with invitations to various global music events including: WOMEX, SXSW, BigSound, and the Indigenous Music Summit to name a few.

RANGATIRATANGA

Finalists



Arahi

Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Toarangatira, Ngāti Kuia, Kai Tahu Pūhoro STEMM Academy

Arahi Hippolite's mahi is transforming how rangatahi Māori see themselves in the worlds of technology, esports, and STEMM. As the Digital Kaihautū at Pūhoro STEMM Academy, Arahi plays a key role in designing culturally grounded tech programmes that connect rangatahi to their pūrākau, their tupuna, and their future pathways in digital innovation. Arahi is also the founder of JainTech Gaming, an esports kaupapa focused on building inclusive, Māoricentred spaces where rangatahi can thrive as gamers, creators, and digital leaders. Through pūrākau-inspirad digital projects, collaborative STEMM initiatives Arahi is leading by example, and helping others believe in their own greatness.



Dan Te Whenua Walker

Ngāti Ruanui, Ngā Ruahinerangi, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Tūhourangi, Maniapoto, Manuhiakai, Tangahoe Microsoft

Dan Te Whenua Walker exemplifies rangatiratanga through his exceptional leadership across multiple domains, corporate technology, Māori development, governance, and cultural revitalisation. After overcoming early identity struggles and dropping out of high school, Dan transformed his life through cultural reconnection and professional development. Now holding two master's degrees with distinction, pursuing doctoral studies, and serving in senior leadership roles at Microsoft alongside numerous board positions, Dan embodies rangatiratanga that honors traditional values while embracing innovation and global engagement.



Potaua Biasiny-Tule

Te Arawa, Ngãi Tūhoe, Te Whakatōhea, Niue Digital Natives Academy

Potaua is a visionary leader who has consistently championed kaupap that uplift Māori language, identity, and self-determination through technology. From establishing TangataWhenua.com, one of Aotearoa's first Māori news portals, to co-founding Digital Natives Academy with his wife Nikolasa, his work has centred on closing the digital divide and opening new futures for rangatahi Māori. Over the years, Potaua has led in spaces where few Māori had walked - creating safe, culturally grounded digital spaces, challenging government and corporate systems to do better, and ensuring our reo and tikanga are embedded in digital storytelling, education, and innovation.



Nathan Bryant-Taukiri

Kāi Tahu, Rangitāne o Wairau, Waikato-Tainui Rea Coach

Nathan Bryant-Taukiri is a values-led Māori tech leader, impact investor, and digital workforce pioneer who is reshaping the future of employment, enterprise, and identity in Aotearoa. Nathan has spent over 20 years building businesses and careers always with a focus on unlocking potential through people, technology, and purpose. His journey is one of reconnection and resurgence. At Rea, a digital-first, impact-driven startup, Nate is creating a path-to-work platform that equips people with the job-ready skills and connections they need to secure high-paid, meaningful employment in the tech sector. Through this kaupapa, he is not just filling jobs, he's building futures.

DANIEL KAREHANA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Daniel Karehana Memorial Scholarship for Technology supports rangatahi of Māori descent on their journey into the tech sector.

Established in memory of Daniel Karehana, the scholarship has been made possible through the aroha and support of his wife, Kristine Karehana, and their two sons, to honour his legacy and continue his impact.

Daniel was a respected Māori leader in tech, known for his vision, integrity and deep commitment to community. He was the CEO and co-founder of BlinkPay, and previously served as Chief Executive of Ngāti Paoa Group Investments Limited. His contributions, particularly in the field of Fintech, have paved the way for others.

This scholarship has been established by Daniel's whānau to acknowledge his enduring influence and uplift the next generation of Māori tech leaders. Te Hapori Matihiko is honoured to support their wishes by administering this scholarship and backing rangatahi into a thriving future in tech.



KAUPAPA

Tipu Finalists



M.A.T.C.H. Tech Creative Hub

The MATCH Creative Intensifier is a 12-week training program aimed at Māori seeking to work in the film and creative industries. Located at the Māoriland Hub in Ōtaki, MATCH is more than just a training program. It's a creative space designed to empower rangatahi Māori with the skills to excel in the film and tech industries. From animation and graphic design to game development and VR, MATCH is your gateway to working in the creative sectors.



Morehu Ransfield

Taranaki, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kahungunu Oranga Matihiko

Bringing 18+ years of teaching experience in Mātauranga Māori, Morehu is dedicated to providing next generation leaders with the skills that they need to fulfil their aspirations. Founding Oranga Matihiko in 2023, this kaupapa is pioneering a future-focused learning model in a Māori digital space that supports ākonga to explore digital pathways grounded in kaupapa Māori. It was initially a learning programme created in response to a growing need for our rangatahi to succeed. Since then, the kaupapa has developed into a community initiative, working with Taranaki schools and local businesses to provide them with equitable access to digital services.





Koha

Koha Kiwi was founded by Te Awanui Reeder and Ngahu Potaka to bring kaupapa and tikanga Māori into the digital age. It grew from the realisation that kaumātua were struggling with envelopes of donations at tangihanga during COVID restrictions. Awa and Ngahu wanted to uphold this important practice in a way that fits today's realities. The platform embeds tikanga throughout the digital experience, offering a full te reo Māori user journey (with English translations), personalised mihi with each koha, and the sense of connection that gives koha its meaning.

KAUPAPA

Totara Finalists



Digital Natives Academy

Digital Natives Academy (DNA) is a kaupapa Māori charitable trust founded in 2014 by Nikolasa and Potaua Biasiny-Tule, with the mission to inspire the next generation of Māori digital leaders. The kaupapa includes key initiatives like Te Iwi Matihiko, which supports digital wellbeing through a Māori values framework, and Get Into Games Aotearoa, the country's largest online outreach event connecting thousands of students with careers in gaming and tech. DNA is a movement that empowers rangatahi to be creators of digital tools. It is a proven, values-led, and nationally significant kaupapa Māori tech incubator transforming the future of Māori in digital.



Te Matatini Enterprises

Te Matatini Enterprises is the social enterprise arm of Te Matatini Society Incorporated, supporting the growth and delivery of Aotearoa's premier kapa haka festival. Guided by the mission to protect, promote and practice Māori cultural and creative excellence, the organisation blends strategic partnerships and kaupapa Māori values to elevate kapa haka on the global stage. Te Matatini ensures the festival remains widely accessible while staying true to its cultural roots, authenticity and integrity.





Te Mana Raraunga

Te Mana Raraunga is the Māori Data Sovereignty Network established in 2015 to advocate for Mãori rights and interests concerning data. Recognising data as a living taonga (treasure) of strategic value, the network asserts that Mãori data should be subject to Mãori governance, thereby supporting tribal sovereignty and the realisation of Mãori and iwi aspirations. Through their unwavering commitment, Te Mana Raraunga plays a crucial role in ensuring that data practices in Actearoa honor and uphold Mãori rights, fostering a future where data empowers Mãori communities and supports their collective well-being.

CHANGEMAKER

Tipu Finalists



Kātene Durie-Doherty

Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kauwhata, Kāi Tahu, Rongowhakaata, Rangitāne, Ngāti Raukawa Motion Sickness

A catalyst for change, Kåtene's work bringing kaupapa Måori into the corporate boardrooms and advertising agencies ensuring that Måori voices are not only heard but are leading the charge in the creation of innovative campaigns that benefit the community. He has been pivotal in developing a series of world-first initiatives, including the "Real Time Reo" project which turns billboards into live Måori language translators. This work, alongside his campaigns like "Fight for Your Whakapapa" and "Proud to Be Måori," has redefined how Måori culture is portraved in the corporate space.



Meg Smith

Ngāpuhi, Tainui, Ngāti Mahuta Cloverbase

Meg S mith is a rising Māori tech leader, entrepreneur, and Al strategist whose mahi is driving meaningful change in the way people across Actearoa engage with digital tools, build confidence in emerging technologies, and access career development in tech. Meg founded Cloverbase, a kaupapa-focused venture that supports people and organisations to become digitally literate, Alenabled, and future ready. Meg's kaupapa is grounded in making sure Māori and underserved communities don't just keep up with digital change, they lead it. She is an early and influential voice on the responsible use of Al in Actearoa.





Léon Bristow Naāpuhi

BFINGS + Colenso BBDO

A global trailblazer, recognised leader in the advertising industry and a proud voice for tangata whenua, Léon is deeply passionate about championing diversity and inclusion on the world stage. Léon has achieved international acclaim, including the Grand Prix Lion at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, ranking him the 4th best Art Director in the world. Léon uses his platform to empower indigenous voices globally, strengthening the indigenous lense, Léon is a force for collective progress, carving out space for the next generation of Máori storytellers.



Ana Kahika

Te Whakatōhea, Te Whānau ā Apanui, Te Arawa Digital Future Aotearoa

Driven by a deep belief that hangarau matihiko can be a vessel for empowerment and cultural reconnection, Ana has always looked for ways to inspire, excite and ensure her colleagues and students could shift from being users and consumers of technology to creators and innovators. As part of the Digital Future Actearoa team, Ana continues to inspire åkonga and kaiako alike through the Ötautahi Outreach kaupapa. Ana has been dedicated to making digital learning joyful, purposeful and culturally sustaining. Her steady leadership, humble presence and creative energy continue to ripple across our organisation and the kura we serve.

CHANGEMAKER

Totara Finalists



Jordan Koziol-Repia

Ngāti Kahungunu, Te iwi o Rakaipaaka Kiwa Digital

With nearly 15 years at Indigenous-owned Media Tech company Kiwa Digital (KIWA), Jordan started as an audio engineer, quickly advancing into data management and application development. He has led the way in global dubbing projects for major names like Netflix, Disney, and Amazon. Guided by whanaungatanga and Tikanga Māori principles, Jordan's mission is to nurture, uplift, and make a lasting impact on all who cross his path. Recently he's been involved in the development of a new platform for cloud-based media localisation, new models for language learning, and a novel SaaS CultureQ® that enables Indigenous Peoples to "reclaim the narrative".



Morris Pita

Ngāti Wai Emergency Q

Morris Pita is a transformational Māori tech entrepreneur and change-maker, best known as the creator of Emergency Q, a real-time digital solution that helps reduce emergency department overcrowding by empowering patients with live wait-time data and alternative care options. His work has directly improved clinical outcomes, reduced hospital pressure, and enhanced patient experience across Aotearoa. Morris combines technical strategy, health system insight, and cultural integrity to deliver solutions that serve both whānau Māori and the wider public. Morris has shown that Māori-led digital innovation can address complex national issues, redefining what system change can look like in Aotearoa's health sector.





Kat Lintott Ngāi Tahu

Wrestler

Kat Lintott is a pioneering leader in immersive tech, storytelling, and kaupapa-driven innovation whose career has consistently centred on positive impact, equity, and future-focused thinking. As the co-founder of Wrestler, Kat has been at the forefront of New Zealand's creative tech movement for over a decade. Kat has co-founded and led multiple social-impact ventures including Rewiring Actearca, a community-focused initiative dedicated to decarbonising homes and reducing power bills across Actearca through systems-level innovation and collaboration. Kat's kaupapa is grounded in people, sustainability, and imagination, pushing the boundaries of what's possible in Actearca's digital sector.



Belinda Allen Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi Healthpoint

Belinda Allen is an established Māori leader in Aotearoa's digital health sector whose work sits at the intersection of kaupapa Māori, digital equity, and systemic transformation. At Healthpoint, Belinda plays a strategic leadership role is shaping how health information and digital services are delivered fairly and equitably across Aotearoa. Her influence has helped Healthpoint evolve into a more culturally aware and people-first digital health provider. Whether she's leading digital change, championing Māori data equity, or building powerful industry collaborations, Belinda continues to challenge systems, uplift Māori, and advance digital innovation with heart and purpose.

EMERGENT ICON



Léon Bristow *Ngāpuhi*BEINGS + Colenso BBDO

A global trailblazer, recognised leader in the advertising industry and a proud voice for tangata whenua, Léon is deeply passionate about championing diversity and inclusion on the world stage. Léon has achieved international acclaim, including the Grand Prix Lion at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, ranking him the 4th best Art Director in the world. Léon uses his platform to empower indigenous voices globally, strengthening the indigenous lense, Léon is a force for collective progress, carving out space for the next generation of Máori storytellers.



Morehu Ransfield

Taranaki, Ngai Tahu, Ngati Mamoe, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Raukawa, Waikato, Tuhoe

Orange Matihiko

Morehu has always been a kaupapa driven individual with a thirst for matauranga maori and education. He has dedicated his life to providing next generation leaders with the skills that they need to fulfil their aspirations. He brings 18+ years of teaching experience in Māori Education (Mātauranga Māori) to the organization. Morehu founded Oranga Mathikko in 2023. It was initially a learning programme that he had created in response to a growing need for our rangatahi to succeed. Since then, the kaupapa has developed into a community initiative, working with Taranaki schools and local businesses to provide them with equitable access to digital services.



Manakore Rickus-King

Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Rapuwai, Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Tama ki Te Waipounamu, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Āti Awa Nicholson Consulting

Manakore Rickus-King is an emerging force in Aotearoa's Digitech and data sovereignty landscape, a creative thinker, strategist, and cultural innovator whose mahi is grounded in whakapapa, kaupapa Māori, and a commitment to transformative futures for Māori communities. She is currently Kaiatawhai Raraunga Māori at Nicholson Consulting, where she brings indigenous insight and tikanga-led strategy to data governance and digital system design. With a deep grounding in te reo Māori and formal training in statistics, Indigenous studies, and leadership, Manakore represents a new generation of Māori tech thinkers fluent in culture, code, and kaupapa.

LIVING ICON



Te Taka Keegan

Waikato-Maniapoto, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whakaue University of Waikato

Te Taka Keegan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Software Engineering at the University of Waikato, where he also serves as the Associate Dean Māori for Te Wānanga Pūtaiao (Division of Health, Engineering, Computing, and Sciences). His pioneering work lies at the intersection of computer science and te reo Māori. His focus on integrating te reo Māori into digital platforms ensures its vitality in the modern world, making technology more accessible to Māori speakers and setting a precedent for indigenous language integration in digital platforms globally.



Peter-Lucas Jones

Ngāi Takoto, Ngāti Kahu, Te Rārawa, Te Aupōuri Te Hiku Media

Peter-Lucas Jones is the Chief Executive Officer of Te Reo Irirangi o Te Hiku o Te Ika (Te Hiku Media), where he has pioneered groundbreaking work in Indigenous language technology. He is deeply committed to the intergenerational transmission of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. He has extensive governance experience as Chairman of Te Rūnanga o Te Aupōuri, Executive Chairman of Te Whakaruruhau o Ngā Reo Irirangi Māori (The Iwi Radio Network), and Deputy Chair of Whakaata Māori (Māori Television).





Bob Shaw *Ngāpuhi* Serko

Bob Shaw is a pioneering Māori technology entrepreneur and cofounder of Serko, a global leader in corporate travel and expense management solutions. With a career spanning more than 30 years, Bob has built a reputation for transforming the way businesses across the world manage travel through innovation, automation, and scalable technology. As a Māori founder in the high-growth tech sector, Bob continues to pave the way for indigenous excellence in global software development. Bob's legacy is one of visionary leadership, commercial impact, and deep commitment to Aotearoa's place in the world of technology.

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