

Whāia Te Pae Tawhiti: Empowering Rangatahi Māori
to Forge the Future with Confidence and Increased
Economic Acuity.

Pūhoro Charitable Trust

December 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This investment was used to develop new micro credentials for CV completion, new resources for leadership and career decision-making and pilot a new initiative that builds self-awareness and fosters a proactive approach to mental health and wellness. Contract outputs are summarised in Figure 1.


Figure 1: Summary of project outputs.	Total of 800+ Participants 	Year Group 	Regions 	Schools 
Essential Documents 	CV sessions delivered to 80 schools. 213 CV completions.	Year 11 Year 12 Year 13	9 Regions – Ōtautahi, Kapiti/Horowhenua, Hawkes Bay, Manawatū, Whanganui/Ruapehu, Tauranga, Waikato, Tāmaki – South, Tāmaki – Central, Te Tai Tokerau One online session to tertiary students.	CV completions from 53 schools & 4 universities
Leadership  Tokī	35 rangatahi at Defence Camp. 334 rangatahi attending school sessions delivered by Kaihautū.	Year 11 Year 12 Year 13	4 regions – Hawkes Bay, Kapiti/Horowhenua, Whanganui/Ruapehu & Te Tai Tokerau.	5 in Te Tai Tokerau 6 in Kapiti/Horowhenua 10 in Hawkes Bay 6 in Wānganui/Ruapehu
Health & Resilience  Whare Tapa Whā	220 rangatahi using Think Ladder App.	Year 11	2 regions – Christchurch, Auckland – Central, Auckland – South.	7 in Ōtautahi 8 in Tāmaki Central 8 in Tāmaki South
Career Pathways 	68 rangatahi attending school sessions delivered by Kaihautū.	Year 12 Year 13	Manawatū Hamilton	5 in Manawatū 6 in Hamilton

Pūhoro was contracted to support a total of 400 rangatahi from Year 11-13 across the country.

Pūhoro has completed all deliverables above and beyond initial targets, on time and within budget.

The successful completion of this project can be attributed to our enthusiastic and talented kaihautū and Pūhoro’s extensive reach. Pūhoro has relationships and the infrastructure to engage with schools, rangatahi, whānau and industry in 11 regions to over 80 schools.

The TPK investment has supported Pūhoro to diversify and extend our successful Year 11-13 rangatahi programme in secondary schools to include a specific focus on building rangatahi capabilities and capacities to navigate post-school possibilities. The focus on career pathway support was designed to increase the relevancy and impact of the Pūhoro programme for rangatahi and their whānau.



The investment was used to engage in research and resource development to accelerate our ability to deliver a programme to schools to a high standard and in a much-reduced timeframe. It enabled an evidence-based approach allowing time for testing and evaluation of resources, training and delivery.

INTRODUCTION

This is the final report for the Work Programme MDF/HO.34594.52826. This Work Programme centres around two key deliverables as per our contract: (1) support 200 rangatahi to complete essential documents with a predominant focus on CVs, and (2) support 200 rangatahi to explore career pathways through sessions focused on leadership, well-being, resilience and career decision making.

CV completion activities were completed on 30 June and evaluated in July. Reporting on this activity can be found in Part I of this document. Part II of our contract involved the development and delivery of leadership, wellbeing, resilience and career decision-making sessions. Resource development began in Term 2 and sessions were delivered in Term 3. Reporting on these activities can be found in Part II of this document.

Each section begins with a list of contract deliverables and a summary of progress. Details are then provided of activities that were carried out and each section ends with an evaluation of activities.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Opportunity. 25% of school leavers are Māori (TEC, 2022, p. 16). Strategies that support navigation of post-school possibilities (i.e. career exposure and planning) and reduce systemic barriers (i.e. financial difficulties, discrimination, unwelcoming tertiary environments and inappropriate support systems) have the potential to produce significant impacts for Māori. At Pūhoro our focus is leveraging Māori identity, culture and mātauranga to amplify engagement of rangatahi in STEM subjects increasing opportunities to secure high value STEM careers and consequently address STEM workforce inequities (i.e. Māori make up 2% of the STEM workforce). Research indicates that “*Māori are overrepresented in industries that pay less and have fewer promotion pathways*”(Tokona te Raki, 2022, p.5). Therefore, engaging in high value careers offers rangatahi and their whānau economic security, builds Māori resilience to economic downturns and accelerates the shift towards a more “*unified and equitable Aotearoa*”(Tokona te Raki, 2022, p.3).

Outcomes. This project works directly with rangatahi and their whānau to strengthen Māori cultural identity and build the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully transition from secondary school into higher education and high value STEM careers. The programme focused on serving two cohorts of rangatahi with a total target of 400 rangatahi engaged in the initiative overall. The project outcomes were delivered through the Pūhoro STEMM Academy to ensure an evidence-based, whānau-centred, culturally grounded and locally led approach. The programme focused on:

- building study/work-ready preparedness through rangatahi sessions, tutorials, wānanga and badge activities. This includes providing support to complete scholarship applications, enrol in tertiary programmes and CV writing.
- developing a new collection of micro credentials to be delivered to rangatahi around career pathway support with an emphasis on career exposure and career planning to better inform complex career decision-making,
- whānau engagement to support rangatahi career decision-making,
- expanding the reach of Pūhoro through an exploration of asynchronous online modes for delivery of outcomes.

Pūhoro is a centre of excellence for Māori in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering Mathematics and Mātauranga) achievement and development in Aotearoa. We provide a by Māori, for Māori, with Māori approach for rangatahi and their whānau to access tools they need to carve their own mātauranga-inspired STEM futures. We are building a national network of the next generation of mātauranga-inspired STEM practitioners. Rangatahi are being mentored to not just participate but demonstrate leadership within the sector, so it better reflects and advances Māori priorities. Key to realising these goals is a pool of culturally anchored and locally connected STEMM practitioners capable of harnessing the potential of their own mātauranga. To advance this agenda, we build on Pūhoro activities that leverage whakapapa, pūrākau, mahi toi and wānanga to nurture identity and spark an interest in STEM. We will expand these activities to build capability for mātauranga-inspired practice within the STEM sector.

Figure 2: Pūhoro interns, 2022. Source: Pūhoro Charitable Trust.



PART I: ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Contract success indicators: 200 rangatahi from across Pūhoro regions supported to complete essential documentation from April to June; progress report.

Progress: progress report submitted on 27th June and is available at s9(2)(a) CV writing sessions were delivered to over 80 schools in 9 regions and one online session delivered on 12th June to students in tertiary education; 213 CVs completed by 30th June.

WHĀINGA: Support taura to complete essential documents.

NGĀ MAHI: The following activities were completed.

1. Resource development:

A resource review and stocktake was completed on 17 April 2025. This review identified the need to develop the following resources: Pūhoro-specific bilingual and te reo CV templates, a lesson plan for CV preparation sessions and resources to support CV writing including basic information introducing the purpose of a CV, activities for identifying strengths and writing a personal statement and tips for writing a good CV. Screen shots of resources can be found in the image gallery (Appendix 1). These resources were onboarded with Kaihautū on Friday 2 May.

2. Organising delivery:

CV completion targets were set for each region on 4 April 2025 (Table 1) and CV sessions were scheduled for Term 2 (Table 2). CV completions were tracked to ensure targets were met.

Table 1: CV targets by region

Region	Target
National wide - Pūhoro cohorts at universities and polytechnics	10
Te Tai Tokerau	20
Tāmaki Makaurau Central	20
Tāmaki Makaurau South	20
Waikato	20
Rotorua	20
Tauranga	New region N/A
Whanganui	10
Manawatū	20
Hawke's Bay	20
Kapiti/Horowhenua	20
Ōtautahi	20
Total	200

Table 2: CV sessions delivered in Term 2

Date	Region	Details
Week 1, 28 Apl	Horowhenua	Year 11 - writing a personal CV statement
Week 2, 5 May	Horowhenua	Year 12 - writing a personal CV statement
Week 2, 5 May	Horowhenua	Year 13 - writing a personal CV statement
Week 3, 12 May	Manawatū	Year 13 - Build your CV
Week 3, 12 May	Horowhenua	Year 11 - Build your CV
Week 3, 12 May	Rotorua	Year 11 - My perfect resume session
Week 4, 19 May	Rotorua	Year 11-13 - CV sessions
Week 4, 19 May	Horowhenua	Year 12 & 13 - Build your CV
Week 4, 19 May	Tauranga	Year 11 - My perfect resume
Week 5, 26 May	Tāmaki Makaurau Central	Year 12 - CV building session
Week 5, 26 May	Waikato	Year 13 - CV writing
Week 6, 2 June	Manawatū	Year 13 - CV writing
12 June	Aotearoa	Tertiary students – preparing an internship application

3. Delivery:

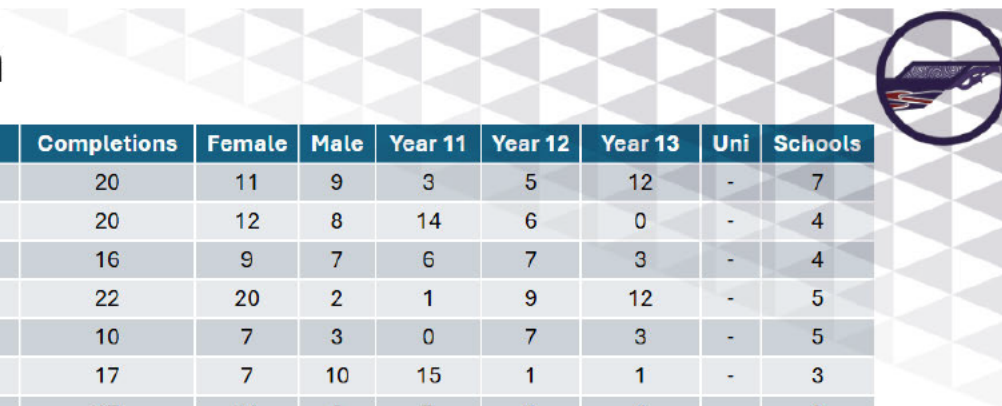
Kaihautū have developed lesson plans and activities for CV writing sessions. At these sessions rangatahi identify information to insert into a CV. Post session kaihautū continue to work with rangatahi to review information and support rangatahi to complete the CV. A Zoho Form has been developed to track completion and to gather permission to use some CVs as exemplars for reporting purposes to Te Puni Kōkiri.

NGĀ HUA:

As part of the contractual agreement Pūhoro is required to provide to Te Puni Kōkiri ‘*details of each participant’s acquisition of documentation and other key information.*’ **213** CVs were completed as part of this project. A list of completions including the name of each taura, school attended and year group is available at **s9(2)(a)** Exemplars are also provided in Appendix 2. Demographic data was collated. Table 3 is the raw data outlining completions by gender, year groups and number of schools. This information is visually displayed as a “quick glance” dashboard in Figure 3.

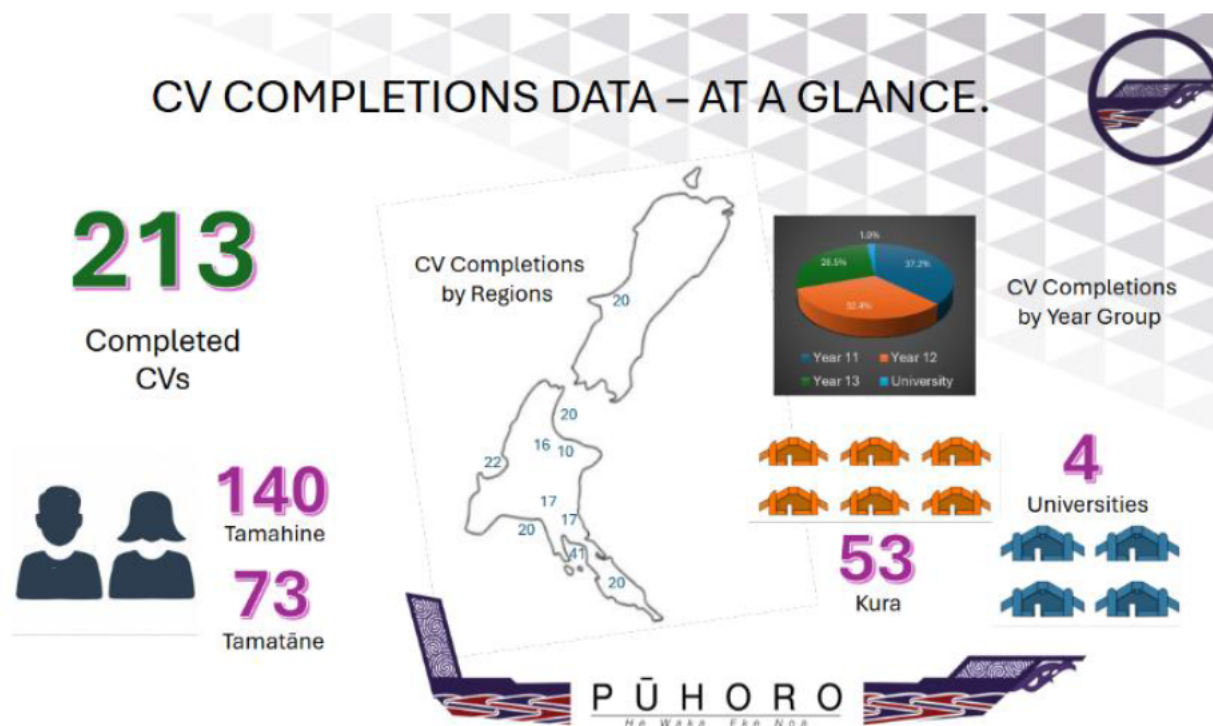
Table 3: Demographics associated with completed CVs

Raw Data



	Completions	Female	Male	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Uni	Schools
Otautahi	20	11	9	3	5	12	-	7
Kāpiti/Horowhenua	20	12	8	14	6	0	-	4
Manawatū	16	9	7	6	7	3	-	4
Te Matau-a-Māui	22	20	2	1	9	12	-	5
Whanganui	10	7	3	0	7	3	-	5
Rotorua	17	7	10	15	1	1	-	3
Kirikiroa	17	11	6	7	6	4	-	8
Tauranga	20	14	6	20	0	0	-	6
Tāmaki – Central	21	21	0	0	13	8	-	1
Tāmaki – South	20	9	11	11	4	5	-	7
Te Tai Tokerau	20	12	8	0	9	11	-	3
Te Urunga Pae	10	7	3	0	0	0	4	0
Totals	213	140	73	77	67	59	4	53

Figure 3: Visual representation of CV completion demographics. Source: Pūhoro



EVALUATION SCHEMA: The final activity associated with the CV deliverable was an internal evaluation. The tables that follow provide a brief description of the type of evaluation that was undertaken, lists key observations associated with the evaluation and ends with the assessment. The assessment criteria were based around ability to contribute to kaupapa Māori goals and achieve contract milestones. This evaluation data gives us confidence that the resources that were developed and delivered were fit for purpose, adaptable and achieved the intended outcomes of the TPK contract and contributed to the Pūhoro agenda.

Table 4: Evaluation assessments – CV deliverable

<p>A formative assessment during development and initial delivery to identify opportunities to improve programme implementation.</p> <p>Observations: Resource development was evidence-based as integrated expert research and experiences around what works best for rangatahi. Māori cultural elements and sense of belonging were incorporated into resource design and delivery. An initial review of resources and delivery plans occurred at onboarding sessions. Kaihautū were able to consider and discuss various delivery strategies and evaluate usefulness of resources for the various cohorts within their regions. This enabled some initial fine tuning. Kaihautū delivered sessions to multiple schools across the week. This meant that resources could be adapted as needed to increase relevancy to and impact for rangatahi.</p> <p>Assessment: The development and delivery approach was evidence-based and flexible enabling improvements as required. This ensured a greater responsiveness within the programme to meet the needs, changing</p>
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circumstances and challenges faced by rangatahi. One size does not fit all so flexibility is a valuable quality.

A summative assessment at the end of programme delivery to capture information of effectiveness.

Observations:

Effectiveness of programme can be measured by the high level of rangatahi involvement in the activities and completions of tasks, particularly completion of CVs.

Other measures of effectiveness included the creation of safe cultural spaces as evident by rangatahi feeling comfortable enough to pose questions and share their awangawanga | concerns, anxieties around being judged by others and low number of CV entries through to career planning in general.

One kaihautū shared that a group of rangatahi developed their CV's to apply for and secure holiday jobs. Another group worked on developing their CV to support scholarship and/or internship applications. Both of these cases are examples of fantastic real-world outcomes.

Assessment:

While a completed CV was the product of this activity the programme's effectiveness is more closely linked to rangatahi engaging in conversations about and planning career pathways.

A process evaluation to determine whether strategies and activities were implemented as intended and identify sites for improvement.

Observations:

Kaihautū reported that the following resources were useful and widely used with rangatahi: CV format, tips and templates, identifying skills and experiences, understanding job requirements, support for constructing personal statements and kaihautū sharing their experiences of their first jobs and career pathways.

Some issues were experienced with template format (quickly fixed by our digital gurus), use of AI and rangatahi feeling judged, deflated or whakamā with inability to identify skills and experiences (again quickly fixed through engagement with activities particularly drawing on tasks they perform every day). There were also some workforce capacity issues.

Ensuring sessions were fun, interactive and relevant is key to rangatahi engagement.

Assessment:

In the development phase of this project kaihautū quickly identified rangatahi challenges in this space. Difficulty generating information around skills and experiences was a frequent issue. Activities were designed specifically to address these challenges.

One strategy that should not be underestimated is the power of wānanga. Rangatahi were able to talk and support with each other by identify people's strengths and qualities and in this way providing the material to integrate into CV's.

An outcome and impact evaluation to determine what the interventions achieved.

Observations:

Over 200 completed CV's were generated by the contract deadline.

Two key strategies were used by Kaihautū. Two regions started early in the term and reached their targets quickly. The other regions started later in the term and found that completion was slow due to other commitments of rangatahi. Most of these CV's were submitted in the last week or two which created a bottleneck in terms of kaihautū providing feedback and polishing the CV's. Contract milestones and deadlines were achieved but in a high pressure environment which was not ideal. Rangatahi appreciated feedback – from their peers and Kaihautū

Assessment:

The programme achieved TPK contract deliverables. The CV programme provided a foundation for career pathway development. Rangatahi were able to perform a stocktake of current opportunities and visualise opportunities that would emerge with further training and experience.

4. Conclusion:

Part I of the contract was completed to a high standard within the allocated timeframe.

**PART II: LEADERSHIP, HAUORA, RESILIENCE & CAREER DECISION-
MAKING SESSIONS**

Contract success indicators: 200 registrations by 30 June; 200 rangatahi supported till near end of 2025; new content produced for trialling with a focus on leadership, well-being, resilience and career decision-making; staff onboarding; delivery of sessions, workshops and activities.

Progress: 200 registrations secured by 30 June; new content produced from 9th June - 18th August; staff onboarding, 7-11th July for leadership activities, Term 2 for hauora and resilience activities, and 28th July - 18th August for career decision-making activities; sessions, workshops and activities delivered in schools during Term 3 (13 July – 19 September 2025).

1. Leadership deliverable

WHĀINGA: To build awareness of leadership qualities valued in te ao Māori. There are two main activities associated with the leadership deliverable. The first is a Kahoot’s quiz to generate discussion of leadership that was delivered at the Pūhoro Defence Camp, 2-4 July 2025 Tāmaki Makaurau. The second activity used whakataukī to spark a wānanga around leadership. These were delivered at school Kaihautū sessions during Term 3 (13 July – 19 September 2025).

REGISTRATIONS: There were 35 rangatahi registered for the Defence Camp. Names and some general demographic data is available in Appendix 1 (generated on 24 June 2025). A leadership activity was trialled at the camp with this cohort. A new badge was designed around atua leadership qualities to be delivered at kaihautū sessions at schools. This new resource was trialled in four regions in the Pūhoro programme - Horowhenua/Kāpiti Coast, Hawke’s Bay, Whanganui/Ruapehu and Te Tai Tokerau, with Year 11, 12 & 13 tauira (Table 1). Pūhoro has school agreements in place to deliver weekly Kaihautū sessions in these regions to 26 schools (Table 1).

Table 5: Schools and numbers of taura participating in leadership activity by region and year group.

Source: Pūhoro Salesforce data, 27 June 2025

	Kāpiti/ Horowhenua	Whanganui/ Ruapehu	Te Matau-a-Māui	Te Tai Tokerau	Total
Schools	Tū Toa and the following colleges – Kāpiti, Ōtaki, Horowhenua, Waiopohū & Tararua	Te Kura o Kokohuia, Ruapehū, Whanganui Girls College, Whanganui High, Kura Kaupapa o Tupoho	Napier Boys High, Taradale High, Te Ara Hou, Hastings Boys, Sacred Heart College, Hastings Girls, Karamū High, Wairoa College, Napier Girls, Kura Kaupapa o Wairoa	The following high schools – Whangārei Boys & Girls, Kamo, Dargaville & Tikipunga	26
Year 11	85	16	130	85	316
Year 12	66	21	110	88	285
Year 13	33	5	96	38	172
Total	184	42	336	211	773

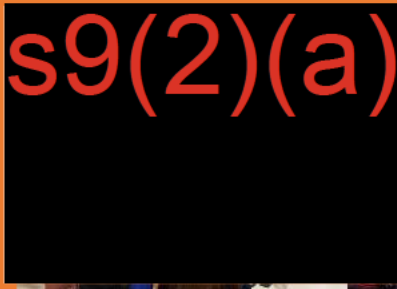
NGĀ MAHI: As part of this deliverable a database was generated of atua pūkenga, qualities and strengths reflected in pūrākau and whakataukī. This data was used to develop a range of resources including atua profiles for use in CV completion activities, a master list of leadership questions for use in Kahoot’s quizzes, Tallest Tower and Colour Kingdom games, and a series of whakataukī activities to be used as mātauranga challenges in schools.

NGĀ HUA: This section provides more details on the various activities and any associated outcomes.

Leadership Activity 1: A leadership quiz was piloted at a the Pūhoro Defence Camp for Year 13 students, 2-4 July 2025, Tāmaki Makaurau. Figure 4 provides feedback on the activity indicating it exceeded expectations. As a result, the activity was expanded to include whakataukī and a new quiz designed to be delivered at the end of the leadership session delivered in schools to consolidate learning.

Figure 4: Feedback from Kahoot's Challenge at the Pūhoro Defence Camp.

Kahoot's Colour Kingdom Challenge, 2 July 2025



Source: Pūhoro STEMM Academy

Many taurira didn't realise there were so many atua. They really enjoyed learning new names and stories.

While most taurira had a general understanding of atua Māori, for some it was the first time they encountered such detailed descriptions, so this added a whole new layer to their knowledge.

A few taurira discovered they knew less about Matariki than they thought, especially when faced with questions about the stars.

For those who aren't yet fully comfortable with their tūākiritanga, the questions were both challenging and refreshing. This did end up sparking some meaningful reflection.

Leadership Activity 2: A new micro credential badge was developed around 10 whakataukī (Figure 5) that explored leadership and atua in leadership roles. A database with 147 whakataukī was generated (Appendix 3). 10 whakataukī were selected for use that reflected a range of leadership qualities and a balance of female and male atua or tupuna (Appendix 4).

This micro credential can be delivered in a variety of formats to suit a range of learning styles and classroom contexts. In the *whakataukī o te wiki* format rangatahi are introduced to one whakataukī a week in a 10-minute session for 10 weeks. They wānanga in small groups to identify leadership pūkenga and qualities encapsulated in each whakataukī. This same session can be delivered as a 1-hour workshop. Other formats look to visualise the meanings behind the whakataukī as images (generated by ChatGPT) or as mystery box objects or in relation to rangatahi lived experiences. Again, these formats can be run each week or as a single workshop. An example of an activity is provided in Figure 6. A leadership Kahoot's quiz was also developed and designed to be delivered at the end of the session to consolidate learning.

Figure 5: Whakataukī used in leadership activity

<p>He waka eke noa We're all in this together</p>	<p>Ko te whaea to takere o te waka Mothers are the hull of the canoe</p>
<p>E kore Parawhenuamea e haere, ki te kore a Rakahore Parawhenuamea will not flow if it were not for Rakahore</p>	<p>Whāia te iti kahurangi, ki te tūohu koe, me he maunga teitei Pursue excellence – should you stumble, let it be to a lofty mountain</p>
<p>Me aro koe i te hā o Hineahuone Respect the dignity and power of Hineahuone</p>	<p>Ko Rangi e tū iho nei, ko Papa e takato nei Rangi is above, Papa is below</p>
<p>Te ngaungau o Hine-moana The repeated chewing of Hinemoana</p>	<p>Ko Tū a waho, ko Rongo a roto Tū is outside, Rongo is within</p>
<p>Ko Tangaroa ara rau Tangaroa of many paths</p>	<p>Ko Māui tinihanga koe Be resourceful like Māui</p>

Figure 6: Examples of resources used in the leadership activity based around whakataukī.



EVALUATION: Leadership Activity 2 was evaluated through a series of face-to-face wānanga and online surveys with kaihautū. The information was used to provide insights into the effectiveness of the development process, assess and improve delivery and identify impacts. The data below indicates that the activity was fun and effective in building an understanding of leadership from a Māori perspective.

Table 6: Evaluation assessment – Leadership Activity based around whakataukī

<p>A formative assessment during development and initial delivery to identify opportunities to improve programme implementation.</p> <p>Observations: The resources were useful. Kaihautū trialled a range of delivery modes – rangatahi working as individuals, pairs and groups. All worked to a certain degree. This flexibility enabled kaihautū to design sessions based on rangatahi strengths. One kaihautū supported rangatahi to develop “cheat sheets” associated with each whakataukī which was used in the Kahoot quiz. This tool was also good practice for exam preparation.</p> <p>Assessment: A series of whakataukī resources were created for use in school sessions. The intention was to create flexibility so the sessions could be integrated into the existing programme and be tailored to rangatahi interests. The formative assessment indicated that this approach worked well although did require initial planning and tweaking after delivery of the first session.</p>
<p>A summative assessment at the end of programme delivery to capture information of effectiveness.</p> <p>Observations: Whakataukī were used to learn how to do research, use AI tools, understand Māori culture and leadership, underpin wānanga and in CVs and scholarship applications. While not intentional the activity also facilitated learning of additional cultural concepts (beside leadership) and historical figures leading to some deep and arguably off-track conversations in class. The Kahoot’s activity reinforced rangatahi learnings and made the session “super fun.” The activity enabled rangatahi to engage with a range of pukenga/skillsets including creative and innovative methods to articulate their views and understanding of whakataukī – <i>“using Canva rangatahi created and presented posters to the</i></p>

class and were able to express their ideas and reflections with pride and confidence.”This approach “*sparked enthusiasm and engagement*”and provided a platform for self-expression, honesty and leadership.

Assessment:

Time management was the most frequently mentioned challenge. In part this is due to an already packed school programme but also as the AI elements to the new activity could be time consuming and the whakataukī activity could be connected to other important learning outcomes such as build cultural identify and knowledge of te ao Māori. It was important that kaihautū had a clear understanding of the session aims to manage time constraints. Whakataukī are an incredibly flexible learning tool as can be used for multiple purposes. It was an effective tool for exploring leadership in creative ways.

A process evaluation to determine whether strategies and activities were implemented as intended and identify sites for improvement.

Observation:

The leadership activities provided an opportunity for rangatahi to engage with AI tools. Unfortunately, the graphic generating capacity of ChatGPT was slow and clunky. This created time pressures and many rangatahi were frustrated with the outputs. On the plus side rangatahi learnt to be more precise with their AI instructions. This activity did stimulate conversations about the quality of Māori designs and problematic representation of Māori culture by AI including intellectual property issues.

The whakataukī were deliberately chosen to showcase the mahi of atua. Many rangatahi indicated the activity extended their knowledge of atua and they did not realise there were so many female atua.

This pilot provided kaihautū with the time to experiment and work out their own approach and style for delivering this activity.

Assessment:

Good internet connection is critical for generating images and managing time constraints and rangatahi expectations.

An outcome and impact evaluation to determine what the interventions achieved.

Observations:

Cohorts that were used to learning with whakataukī dived deeply into the activity. One group in the Ōtaki Horowhenua area used the activity as an opportunity to engage with te reo and learn additional whakataukī. This was driven and led by the tauira themselves. Tauira explored whakataukī that resonated with their experiences of hauora. The activity was useful for making connections with modern artists and Māori leaders. It was clear that these sessions were “*deeply tied to their identify and their ongoing journey of strengthening their sense of being Māori.*”

Assessment:

Kaihautū have noted that rangatahi thrive on activities are based on mātauranga. Learning with whakataukī was no exception. This activity provided further evidence of the utility and efficiency of an approach grounded in te ao Māori.

2. Wellbeing and resilience deliverable

WHAINGA: Design and deliver activities focused on building rangatahi wellbeing and resilience.

The wellbeing and resilience sessions were delivered through an app called Think Ladder. Think Ladder is a mental health application developed by a group of New Zealand mental health professionals and reviewed by clinical psychologists. It is a resource that promotes proactive mental health and resilience. The techniques behind the activities are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

Users answer a series of questions designed to explore their thoughts and emotions and are provided with tools and insights to understand the impact on everyday life and overall well-being. Think Ladder offers alternative insights and affirmations to replace any limiting beliefs.

In Term 3 rangatahi were preparing for exams. Think Ladder was used to understand how well rangatahi were coping and to identify pressures they were experiencing. Think Ladder provided rangatahi with tools to develop self-managing mindsets, self-worth expectations and time management.

Think Ladder was trialled in three Pūhoro regions on a weekly basis – Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland South and Ōtautahi. Kaihautū provided time in school sessions (5 minutes after karakia) and supported engagement with the app. Use of the app was voluntary.

THINK LADDER REGISTRATIONS: 667 taura in the Ōtautahi, Tāmaki Makaurau Central and Tāmaki Makaurau South regions were invited to participate in this initiative (Table 9). Participation in Think Ladder was voluntary and anonymous. At the beginning of Term 3 there were 449 taura registered. 220 were Year 11 students. As part of the TPK funded project the focus was supporting Year 11 students for the remainder of this year.

Table 7: Total numbers invited to participate in Think Ladder sessions. Source: Pūhoro Salesforce data, 9 June 2025

	Ōtautahi	Tāmaki Makaurau Central	Tāmaki Makaurau South	Totals
Year 11	109	96	104	309
Year 12	91	84	64	239
Year 13	37	39	43	119
Total	237	219	211	667

Table 8: Active users of Think Ladder app. Source: Think Ladder data, beginning of Term 3.

	Ōtautahi	Tāmaki Makaurau Central	Tāmaki Makaurau South	Totals
Year 11	116	47	57	220
Year 12&13	117	56	56	229
Total	233	103	113	449

NGĀ MAHI: Think Ladder generates a large volume of data (Table 9) to provide insights into rangatahi wellbeing and resilience.

Table 9: A summary of Think Ladder usage.

Region	Total Members Year 11(registered)	Active Members	Check-ins ¹	Reframes ²
Tāmaki Makaurau Central	78	47	130	148
Tāmaki Makaurau South	98	57	96	98
Ōtautahi	124	116	327	344
Total	300	220	553	590

1 A check-in is a reference to a search on the Think Ladder App associated with an unwanted thought, feeling or behaviour;

2 A reframe is when the user explores an underlying limiting belief to challenge and reframe that limiting belief with a fresh perspective.

NGĀ HUA: The Think Ladder data revealed that “*relationship with myself*” (Table 10), particularly self-worth linked to external expectations and academic achievements was the most significant challenge that rangatahi were dealing with.

Table 10: Top 6 common challenges by region identified by rangatahi.

Tāmaki Makaurau Central	Tāmaki Makaurau South	Ōtautahi
Relationship with myself (74)	Relationship with myself (53)	Relationship with myself (176)
Mental/emotional/physical health (31)	Work/school (27)	Mental/emotional/physical health (71)
Work/school (21)	Mental/emotional/physical health (20)	Work/school (46)
Other (14)	Other (10)	Other (29)
Relationships with others (12)	Relationships with others (10)	Relationships with others (27)

Academic pressure and performance-related stress were the greatest sources of distress leading to high volumes of stress, performance anxiety and self-doubt. The data also showed that rangatahi were successfully engaging in Think Ladder reflective strategies that helped to decouple their inherent value from performance revealing encouraging insights related to critical growth in self-compassion, accepting mistakes as part of the learning process and developing personal agency to prioritise wellbeing and help-seeking behaviour. These results indicate that through Think Ladder rangatahi are

learning how to be resilient by intentionally managing their mental health to actively look after themselves (self-care), seek good life balance, and understand that negative feelings and vulnerability are normal rather than signs of weakness or failure.

The data also provides a foundation for conversations in the classroom and the intentional teaching of coping strategies. For example, kaihautū can offer positive feedback in the following ways - acknowledge how brave it is to try something new, remind them if they stumble that learning takes time or curiosity and willingness to learn are wonderful strengths or asking for help shows strength and courage. Or kaihautū can lead short activities such as asking rangatahi to identify small daily actions that indicate growth or identify strategies that work for them and celebrating moments of self-advocacy. Appendix 5 provides more details on *“the relationship with myself”* trend as revealed by Think Ladder data including psychological hazards. The information provides a glimpse into how Think Ladder works.

There was an opportunity to evaluate Pūhoro participation in Think Ladder. Members from the Senior Leadership Team and kaihautū involved in the pilot meet early in October with Think Ladder to explore trends in the data. Table 11 summarises some experiences and insights of the pilot.

Table 11: Wellbeing and Resilience Evaluation.

<p>A summative assessment at the end of programme delivery to capture information of effectiveness.</p> <p>Observations: Kaihautū have indicated that information generated by Think Ladder helps them understand rangatahi anxieties, <i>“it’s eye opening”</i> and <i>“it enables us to make data-driven decisions.”</i> When the idea of using Think Ladder was first introduced some kaihautū were uncertain. <i>“I now have a better appreciation of what it can do”, “we can be more impactful with this tool”</i> and <i>“it’s positive to see how rangatahi are decoupling their thinking and taking control of things.”</i> Think Ladder data has been used to develop classroom specific strategies. For example, there has been a session on helplessness and study noho was added to a school programme to help deal with stress associated with exams. Kaihautū are currently using Think Ladder data to refine 2026 sessions delivered at schools.</p>
<p>Assessment: This data indicates that kaihautū valued the opportunity to use this tool to support rangatahi wellbeing and resilience.</p>
<p>An outcome and impact evaluation to determine what the interventions achieved.</p> <p>Think Ladder helps rangatahi to identify concerns early and find personalised self-management strategies including connecting with support teams and systems. The high use rates indicate that rangatahi find this tool easy to use and helpful. They can work through a process to deal with mental health rather than getting stuck.</p>
<p>Assessment: This data talks to the usefulness of the activity as a check in tool and as an opportunity to drive conversations and change behaviours to enhance wellbeing and resilience.</p>

3. Career pathway deliverable

WHAINGA: To help prepare rangatahi for life beyond school particularly entry into tertiary education. Career pathway sessions were delivered to 68 Te Urunga Pae, Year 13 students at five schools in the Manawatū and six schools in the Hamilton region. A list of schools and dates sessions were delivered is provided in Table 12.

Table 12: Participants in the career pathway sessions.

Year 13 Taura	
MANAWATŪ, 18-21 August 2025	
Feilding Agricultural High School	3
Manukura School	11
Awatapu College	12
Palmerston North Boys High School	14
Te Kura a Iwi o Kauwhata	1
HAMILTON, 11-15 August 2025	
Cambridge High	5
Te Kōpuku High	5
Ngā Taiātea Wharekura	4
Fraser High School	4
Tai Wānanga Ki Raukura	8
Te Kauwhata College	1
Total	68

NGĀ MAHI: Rangatahi participated in a structured planning activity where they mapped out their career aspirations and identified the key steps required to achieve their chosen pathways. A copy of the session PowerPoint is provided in Appendix 6.

A new career map resource was developed and trialled as part of this contract (see last page in Appendix 6). Rangatahi used the resource to identify their dream job, the training required to enter the profession and build a 5-year plan including funding options and identifying support systems that could assist them along the way.

This session also introduced processes for applying to tertiary study and scholarships and setting up RealMe and StudyLink accounts. To complement the career session Year 13 taura also participated in sessions that prepare them for life beyond school. Kaihautū have gamified an activity around budgeting and navigating challenges associated with finances and flatting.

NGĀ HUA: While the focus of this deliverable was mapping a pathway into tertiary education the activity also enabled rangatahi to register for a RealMe identity, apply for study and apply for scholarships. Table 13 provides an evaluation of the activity.

Table 13: Career decision-making evaluation.

<p>A summative assessment at the end of programme delivery to capture information of effectiveness.</p> <p>Observations: At the end of the session kaihautū were confident that rangatahi realised <i>“how much effort and planning goes into life after school”</i> and the resources provided a useful blueprint for planning their future. The sessions <i>“sparked meaningful kōrero and reflection, allowing us [kaihautū] to tailor our support to the areas students identified as important to them, rather than relying on our own assumptions about what they need.”</i> This session would be more effective if delivered earlier in the year to help prepare students for scholarship applications and planning a head.</p> <p>Assessment: The activity enabled rangatahi to map a deliberate and intentional pathway to achieve career training goals and reduce some of the anxiety associated this next step in their life.</p>
<p>An outcome and impact evaluation to determine what the interventions achieved.</p> <p>Observations: Rangatahi indicated the session helped them to better understand the full process of achieving their career goals - <i>“Thank you for this workshop. It has helped me and I learnt more.”</i> The activity raises awareness of the importance of planning - <i>“I am not ready”</i>. Kaihautū observed that most rangatahi were not prepared for life beyond school. Rangatahi were able to identify gaps in their individual planning. For example, the need to factor in the upfront costs of on-campus accommodation or hidden expenses such as textbooks and lab equipment or the need to plan for transport—whether that meant the cost of taking a vehicle or understanding how public transport works in their chosen city. This session built awareness of the range of services available at tertiary institutions and the distinction between academic staff and support staff, so rangatahi know who to approach for different types of help.</p> <p>Assessment: Rangatahi were not well prepared for life beyond school. These sessions were a reality check and provided an opportunity for rangatahi to actively plan for their future.</p>

CONCLUSION

All project milestones were completed on time and within budget. Through this initiative Pūhoro was able to further strengthen and support rangatahi across the country to have greater access to the tools they need and support both practically for employment, but also in terms of their own leadership development and well-being. We are grateful to Te Puni Kōkiri for funding these pilot activities that enabled staff to extend the reach and mahi of Pūhoro.

Pūhoro ki te hoe!



REFERENCES

- Tertiary Education Commission. (2022). Transitions from secondary school. Research report.
- Tokona te Raki. (2022). Puta-i-Tua. A Māori future skills for an equitable Aotearoa.

9(2)(b)(ii)

9(2)(b)(ii)

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APPENDIX 2: DEFENCE CAMP REGISTRATIONS

Last name	Kura
s9(2)(a)	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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APPENDIX 3: WHAKATAUKĪ DATABASE

Available at s9(2)(a)

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF WHAKATAUKĪ USED IN SESSIONS

Available s9(2)(a)

APPENDIX 5: EXAMPLES OF THINK LADDER DATA

An example of trends associated with a specific challenge

RELATIONSHIP WITH MYSELF		
<p>DESCRIPTION: Relationship with myself refers to a people's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours relating to themselves and their lives. It includes beliefs about the past, present, and future, including memories and predictions about how life is going to go.</p> <p>SUMMARY: Members of the organization have consistently expressed concerns related to self-esteem, academic pressure, and the fear of judgment, with a recurring pattern of associating self-worth with external validation (such as grades, approval from authority figures, and peers' opinions). Recent reframing efforts emphasize intrinsic worth, the importance of personal growth at one's own pace, and the recognition that seeking help and expressing vulnerability are strengths, not weaknesses. The process of reevaluating limiting beliefs underlines a collective movement towards accepting imperfection and valuing individual capabilities and self-compassion over external achievements and comparisons.</p>		
SUBDOMAINS		
<p>SELF-WORTH Self-worth refers to beliefs about the self and a person's worth and value, how people think, behave, and feel about themselves.</p>	<p>MEANING AND GOALS Meaning and goals refers to how someone finds, creates, and understands their sense of meaning, purpose, and future direction in their life.</p>	<p>CAPABILITIES Capabilities refers to thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours related to a person's capabilities and abilities.</p>
<p>SELF-MANAGEMENT Self-management refers to the beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, emotions, behaviours, and practices that relate to people managing themselves and their lives for health, holistic well-being, and success in all areas of life.</p>	<p>IDENTITY AND SELF-IMAGE Identity and self-image refersto how a person thinks, feels, and behaves in relation to their identity and self-image. It includes limiting beliefs about gender, race, ethnicity, culture, intelligence, education, job and career, or social status.</p>	
RELATED THEMES (top 5)	LIMITING BELIEFS	INSIGHTS (USER SELECTED REFRAMES)
Self-worth (39)	I should be able to understand and complete assignments without any difficulty	My worth or value is not determined by my energy levels or productivity
Perfectionism (22)	I should not feel tired as a young and healthy person	The goal is not to simply keep up with the lessons, but to truly understand and internalize the

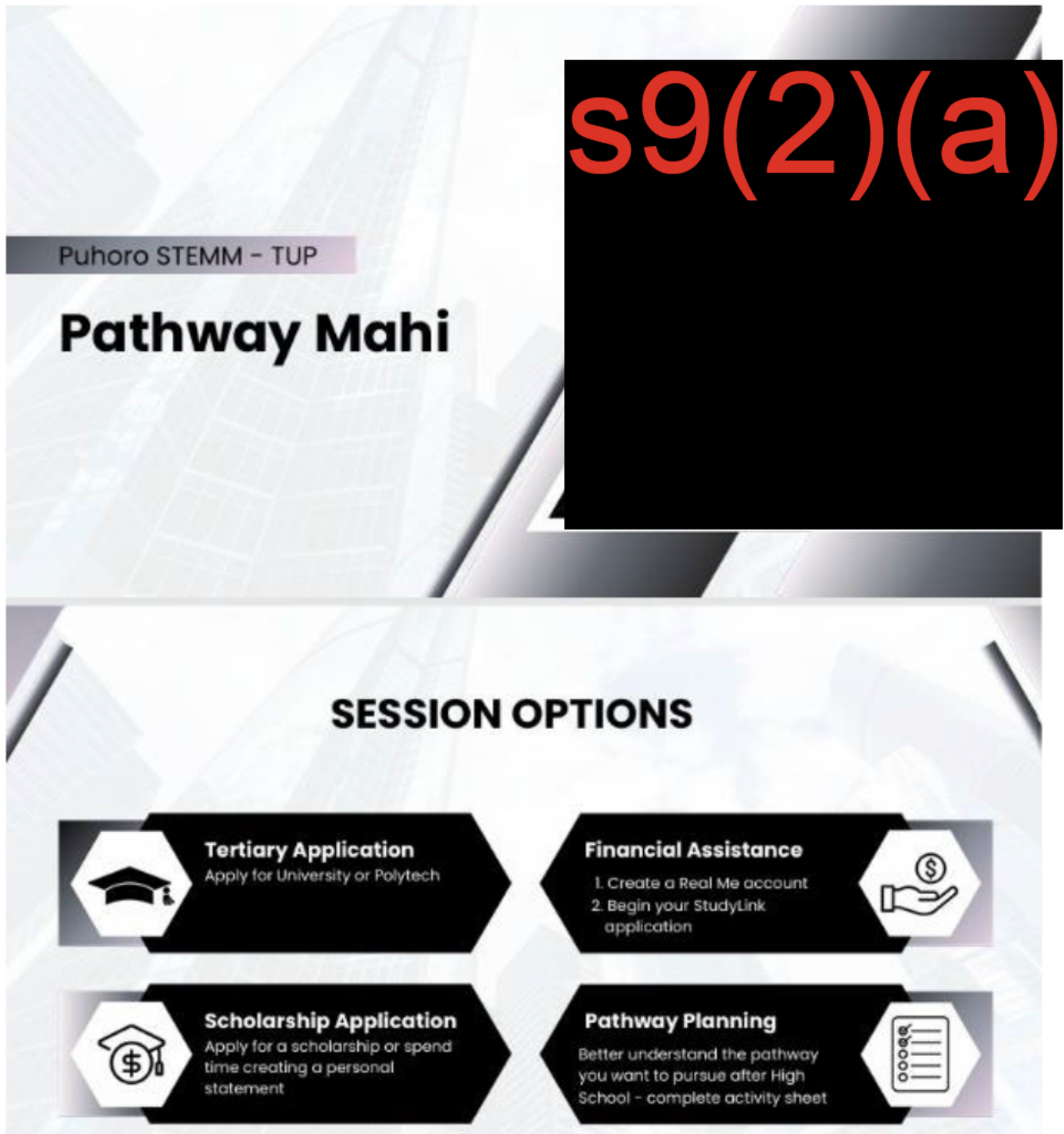
		material, and I will do so at a pace that is comfortable for me.
Failure (14)	I should be able to learn and retain information quickly and easily	I am not a disappointment if I struggle or fall short of expectations - I am human and it is natural to have ups and downs in life.
Comparing myself to others (10)	I am only valuable if I meet expectations of my parents/teachers	I am capable of learning and growing at my own pace, and that is more than enough.
I must always be strong (10)	My feelings are not valid or important	I give myself permission to make mistakes and learn from them.

Psychosocial hazards associated with the relationship with myself theme.

HIGH DEMANDS		
<p>DESCRIPTION: High demands refer to situations where taura are expected to handle excessive workloads, intense effort, tight deadlines, or complex tasks without adequate resources or time.</p> <p>SUMMARY: Recent self-reported issues highlight a pervasive anxiety related to academic performance and the pressure of high job demands, particularly concerning grades, presentations, and time management. Limiting beliefs frequently center on the misconception that self-worth is tied to academic success, while reframed beliefs emphasize the importance of self-acceptance, personal growth, and prioritizing well-being. Key themes include the struggle against perfectionism, the need for support, and the acceptance of one's limitations as part of the learning process.</p>		
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Stress Management Resources - Offer free and easily accessible resources for stress management, such as gym memberships and counselling services. These resources support employee well-being and signal an organizational commitment to their mental health. 2. Time Tracking for Realistic Scheduling - Encourage tracking the time spent on different tasks to gain insights into actual time requirements. This data can be used to plan more realistic schedules, reducing stress from underestimation of time and workload. 3. Balance Task Intensity - Encourage alternating between high-intensity and lower-intensity tasks throughout the day. This approach helps prevent fatigue and maintains productivity by not overloading employees with consistently demanding tasks. 		
SUBDOMAINS	LIMITING BELIEFS	INSIGHTS (USER SELECTED REFRAMES)
Emotional toll (31)	Others will judge me if I'm not happy and perfect all the time	I give myself permission to make mistakes and learn from them.
Time pressure (23)	I am not capable of balancing school and job search	I am not defined by this limiting belief, and I refuse to let it hold me back from pursuing my goals.
Cognitive demands (20)	I should be able to handle the pressure and stress of exams without getting distracted.	It is normal for my mind to wander during exams, and I am developing techniques to bring my attention back to the questions.
Excessive workload (15)	If I don't excel in school, I won't be successful in life.	My grades do not define my intelligence or potential; I am more than a number on a test.
Task complexity (1)	My worth as a person is determined by my grades and academic success.	It is okay to ask for help and seek support when I am struggling with something difficult.

APPENDIX 6: CAREER DECISION MAKING POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Available at [s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)







Puhoro STEM - TUP

Pathway Mahi

s9(2)(a)

SESSION OPTIONS

 <p>Tertiary Application Apply for University or Polytech</p>	 <p>Financial Assistance 1. Create a Real Me account 2. Begin your StudyLink application</p>
 <p>Scholarship Application Apply for a scholarship or spend time creating a personal statement</p>	 <p>Pathway Planning Better understand the pathway you want to pursue after High School - complete activity sheet</p>

Tertiary application guide

Step 1 - Research and Choose a University

- Explore universities based on your preferences such as location, programmes offered, reputation, and campus culture
- Consider factors like tuition fees, available scholarship, and student support services

Step 2 - Select a Programme or Course

- Decide on the area of study you're interested in (e.g. arts, sciences, engineering, business)
- Look into specific programmes or majors within that field

Step 3 - Check Admission Requirements

- Each university has its own admission criteria, common requirements include NCEA University Entrance
- Some programmes may have additional requirements (e.g. the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) programme at AUT requires UE and at least 14 level 3 credits in both Calculus and Physics)

Step 4 - Apply

- Follow the enrolment instructions provided by the university
- Typically, you'll need to create an account on the university's student portal, complete the university's application form online, submit all required documents by the application deadline

Step 5 - Monitor application progress

- Keep an eye on your application
- Ensure you are working towards fulfilling programme requirements (e.g. getting UE)

Required Contact Info

- Phone number
- Email

Ensure you have a personal email, avoid using your work email

What to bring

- Birth certificate (sometimes needs to be signed by JP)
- REN number (most cases)
- Photo (sometimes)

Course fees

- After submitting your application, you have a period of time to withdraw your application and you will not be charged for course fees
- There will be a section in your application (often after you select your papers) that asks for your preferred payment method. If you want to pay via StudyLink/Student Loan, select that option in the application

Tips

- Apply for as many Waiver Waiver as you like
- This doesn't stop you from applying for more scholarships
- Look in to accommodation options early (1st/2nd/3rd)

Study Link guide

Step 1 - Go to the Study Link website

Step 2 - Click on 'log in to apply online'

- Follow prompts to apply online for first-time students
- Here you will be asked for your Real Me login or to create a Real Me login

Step 3 - Go to 'Apply for Financial Assistance'

- You should be taken to your dashboard
- Find the 'apply for financial assistance' section

Step 4 - Complete the eligibility test

- StudyLink will need information about your intended tertiary institution, personal details and where you will be staying while you study

Step 5 - Apply for eligible financial assistance

- Once you know what yours eligibility, follow the prompts to apply (options could include compulsory fees, course related costs and living costs)

Step 6 - Collect and submit relevant supporting documents

- Parents annual income (payslip or contract)
- Verified bank statement
- Proof of enrolment
- Verified ID (birth cert or passport)
- <https://judicioalthepace.org.nz/Registration>

What is Study Link

- StudyLink is the government department which manages student loans and allowances for tertiary students in New Zealand

Can help with

- Compulsory course fees
- Course-related costs (e.g. text books, laptop etc)
- Day-to-day living costs
- Other costs (e.g. disability or childcare)

Types of payments

Student allowance

- Weekly payment for personal use
- You don't have to pay back
- How much you get will depend on your Parents Income
- If their joint earnings are more than \$60,415.00 a year before tax, the rate you get for Student Allowance goes down
- You can't get a Student Allowance if their earnings while you study are more than \$24,474.45 if you live with them or \$33,756.20 if you don't live with them

Student loan (3 forms)

- Yearly payment: for fees and goes directly to your institution
- Weekly payment (living costs): for personal use and comes in at the same time as your student allowance
- One off payment per year (course related costs): for course material e.g. text books, laptop, stationery

Tips

- If you don't get your documents in on time, you can call StudyLink to try and track your allowance and/or living costs by informing them you are going in to hardship
- Make sure you have a good understanding around paper selections which is important for your proof of enrolment
- Take ALL of the necessary steps when collecting your documents, e.g. verifying your documents properly
- Apply early - don't wait until the end of the year as that will be peak season

Real Me set up guide

Step 1

- Visit the Real Me page to find out if you are eligible to apply

Step 2

- Create an account
- Create username
- Create password

Step 3

- After you create your login, you will be sent an application number
- Proceed to your application number

Step 4

- If you go to a participating store to get your photo taken (Photo/Video/Smart phone to have a photo taken (participating photographers))
- Don't forget to take your application number
- Ensure you get your photo taken within 14 days of starting your application

Step 5

- When you see the photo gallery your photo from the store will email your account into Real Me
- Please Email your account to Real Me to let us know if you are not working at all

What is Real Me?

- Real Me is a government authorization and identity verification service
- It is a secure way to prove who you are online

Benefits of Real Me

- Apply for Study Link
- Renew passport
- Open a bank account
- Drive to work
- Receive a drivers license
- Transfer app links (some)

Tips setting up your Real Me

- Apply online does not cost the cost of the service that will be paid online
- Don't forget to take your application number with you when you get your photo taken
- Use a personal email address (avoid using your work email)

Scholarship guide

Step 1 - Research

- Investigate and/or identify and looking
- Work for
- Study fee

Step 2 - Check eligibility criteria

- Read and understand your scholarship
- Create a list
- Make note of the dead line

Step 3 - Apply

- Prepare the application form
- Fill in your personal statement
- Provide references (not always required)

Step 4 - Scholarship follow up tasks

- Create a personal statement when scholarship comes when you might hear back
- Inform your referees that you've applied for scholarships so they can prepare for a phone call etc
- Stay positive

Step 5 - Apply for more scholarships

- It's good to keep your application open to apply for scholarships you're eligible for
- Now it's not mandatory (as far as greedy) to apply for many scholarships. It's a good thing as it increases your chances of being awarded a scholarship and proves your scholarship application skills

What is a Scholarship?

- Awarded to people with exceptional academic records

Who are Scholarships For?

- Highly academic
- Talented
- High achievers
- Those who are in other fields
- Those who are in sports

What can scholarships help with?

- Cover living and travel costs
- Allow students to volunteer
- Moving costs (moving out of home and your own place)
- Education costs (tuition, books)
- Transport (buses, uber, petrol)
- Unexpected funds you could put money away in case of an emergency

Tips when developing your Personal Statement

1. Understand the University tasks
 - Write a letter to the school
 - Write a letter to the school
 - Write a letter to the school
 - Write a letter to the school
 - Write a letter to the school
 - Write a letter to the school
2. Tailoring your personal statement
 - Different schools will have different requirements that you should look for you to make specific things about your personal statement
3. Of the topics you're interested, choose the ones that fit the criteria criteria and/or personal statement guidelines
4. Develop a personal statement building on your experience. This is the best way to show that you are able to write, take notes and explain concepts until you're happy
5. Have a friend or someone you trust to read your personal statement and give you feedback

Pathway planning activity sheet

TE URUNGA PĀE CAREER BACKTRACK MAP
 Pae 1/2018/19

1. Dream Career Destination
 What do you want to do?

2. Qualifications or Training Needed

- University Degree
- Certificate or Diploma
- Apprenticeship or Trade Training
- Military Training or Learning
- Other: _____

When do you need to start? _____

How long will it take? _____

3. Entry Requirements

What do you need to get into the study or training you want to do next?

- NZQA Level 2 or 3
- Academic Results
- IELTS for English and numeracy
- CR Check/Case Load
- Minimum IQ of 100/110/120
- Other: _____

4. Are you on the right track now?

Subject	How well you are getting on with	Comments

5. Your 5-Year Career Plan (2020-2025)

Year	What you will do	Cost of this career
2020		
2021		
2022		
2023		
2024		
2025		

6. Plan B - Backup Options

Alternative employment: _____

Why would this work for you? _____

7. Support Crew

Who will support you? _____

Who will help you? _____

Who will encourage you? _____

Who will challenge you? _____

8. Financial Support

- Tuition
- Materials

Cost of this support: _____

Final Reflection

What do you think you will do next? _____