

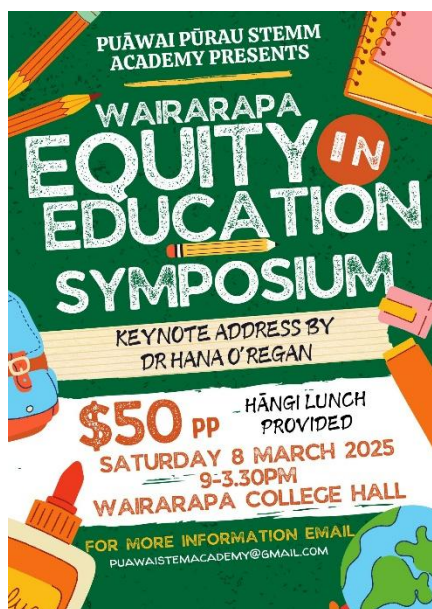
Puāwai Pūrau Academy

Report on Activity 2025

The 2025 year for the Puāwai Pūrau Academy was a busy one with a few new initiatives including the Equity in Education Symposium and Free Open Tutorials with REAP Wairarapa to help prepare ākonga for the new Literacy and Numeracy Exams. We also had a chance to travel further afield to Rotorua for our haerenga and visited with Potaua and the Digital Natives Academy. We are always extremely grateful for the ongoing support of Internet NZ and the Masterton Trust Lands Trust.

We are excited to begin our 5th year of operation in 2026. We will begin a little earlier to ensure that we can get ahead of our students subject selection and to help again with the preparation of ākonga for the literacy and numeracy co-requisites.

The Equity in Education Symposium

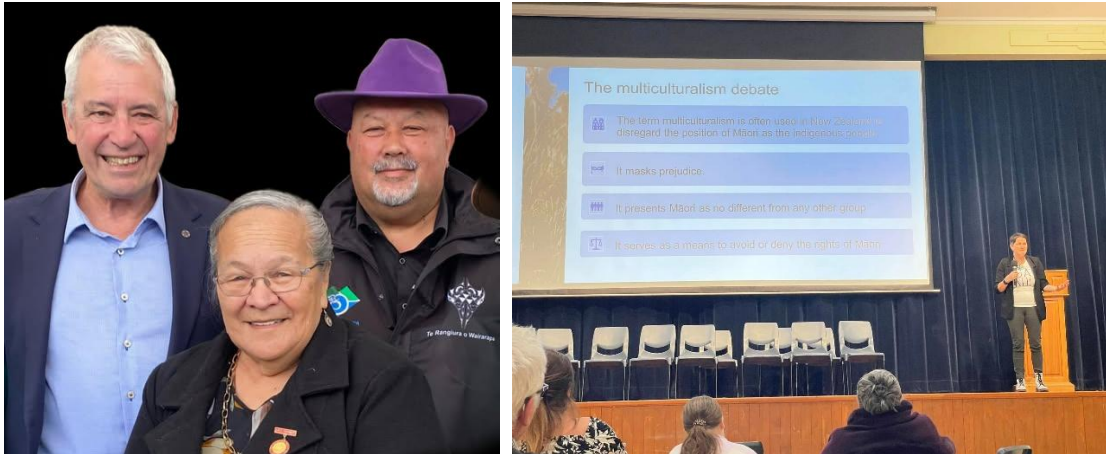


Leading out our 2025 year was the inaugural Equity in Education Symposium presented and hosted by our Puāwai Pūrau STEM Academy. The event was held on Saturday 8 March at Wairarapa College and we were very grateful to receive additional funding from Internet NZ, our two local iwi; Ngāti Kahungunu and Rangitāne, REAP Wairarapa and a personal business Cruse Education to help cover our costs. As a result, we were very happy to be able to offer out the tickets for the event at a very affordable \$50pp which also included a Hāngi lunch and morning and afternoon tea.

The purpose of the Symposium was two-fold, we wanted to help grow awareness of inequities in education while also promoting our academy and seeking new teachers to help support our kaupapa. We had hoped to have 150 attendees however there were about 80 people in attendance on the day including teachers and practitioners representing 19 organisations including the Pūhoro STEM Academy. Other attendees included individuals, our own academy ākonga and ākonga, kaumātua and special guests.

The main drawcard however was our special keynote speaker; Dr Hana O'Regan.

Dr. Hana of Kāi Tahu and Pākehā (Irish and Scottish) descent, is a renowned scholar with over 30 years of experience in language revitalisation, education, and Māori cultural development. A graduate of Te Panekiretanga, the Institute of Excellence in Te Reo Māori, she is also internationally recognised for her contributions to indigenous language acquisition. Hana is an author of books, composer of music, and is a passionate advocate for te reo Māori. In addition to her work in education, Hana was appointed to the Waitangi Tribunal in 2021. She was formally employed as the Tumu Whakarae of Tātai Aho Rau Core Education. Her career is marked by a strong commitment to equity, community, and in enhancing positive outcomes for learners and whānau.



The Symposium, which was particularly targeted at educationalists across Wairarapa, was partially MC'd by ākonga from our academy who took a leadership role in introducing each of our presenters. The programme was delivered in three parts as follows:

- Part 1: The Equity challenge in Aotearoa
- Part 2: Intergenerational inequities and insights
- Part 3: Culturally responsive interactions

The first part included a presentation from Hana who by sharing her personal stories and highlighting relatable systemic issues in education, took us on a journey through historical impacts which set the scene for our day by helping attendees understand how inequities might present themselves and how we might be able to change them.

Following Hana and morning tea, we were treated by a discussion panel titled: Intergenerational inequities and insights. The panel included local kaumātua; Paremo Matthews, Koro Mike Kawana and Mike Hollings (picture above), and rangatahi; nurse Cherry Matthews and Iraia Matthews (aspiring doctor). This session was an opportunity to have a comparative kōrero about intergenerational equity/inequity experiences at school including challenges and successes.

Following our hāngi lunch provided by local whānau, we began the afternoon session with a presentation from Riwai Pomana, Principal Kaihautū at the Pūhoro STEM Academy. During his presentation he also had a surprise announcement that the Pūhoro STEM Academy would be piloting their online programme in Masterton. This is a major achievement and aligns with our original intent to be a placeholder for this larger academy to come and do their mahi over the years however, we have learnt that nothing can compensate for local leaders contributing to local solutions.

The final part of the day focussed on culturally responsive interactions, this was delivered by local Te Ataahia Hurihanganui who shared her lived experiences of mātauranga Māori and highlighting the importance of whakapapa and mātauranga Māori.

Finally, we turned the time back to Hana who was able to gather all of the kōrero of the day and give her final thoughts. Thank you for supporting this additional kaupapa.

Open Tutorials for co-requisites



Puāwai & REAP WAIRARAPA
PRESENTS...
NAU MAI, HAERE MAI
FREE OPEN TUTORIALS
FOR YEAR 10 & 11 COLLEGE KIDS
FOCUS AND PREPARE FOR THE LITERACY &
NUMERACY CO-REQUISITE EXAMS
TWO NIGHTS ONLY- THIS WEEK
WEDNESDAY 21 MAY & FRIDAY 23 MAY
3.30-5.00PM
AT REAP HOUSE
WAIRARAPA, BEHIND UCOL
WHAT TO EXPECT
REGISTERED & CURRENT TEACHERS
KAI & RESOURCES
KAUPAPA MAORI ATMOSPHERE
PAST EXAM PRACTICE AND TEST RUNS

In 2024 schools were asked to introduce literacy and numeracy co-requisites for ākonga in Year 10. We heard through our ākonga experience that there were many who had not met the requirements for these exams. This was a massive concern for us because this was their first exam experience and we didn't want this experience to erode their confidence. By the time some of them sat this exam in 2025, they had already failed them 2 times.

It was important that we provided opportunity to help them grow their confidence in sitting these exams. We held 2 sessions prior to the exams in late May. The students who attended these sessions went on to pass them.

These sessions are important to continue as we prepare our ākonga for success in NCEA and beyond school.

Academy sessions begin

We did not have a chance to promote the academy to schools prior to our sessions beginning this year which is something we will be changing in 2026. However, this did not have too much impact on our numbers with 29 ākonga engaging in the kaupapa which was great given the drop off of year 13s the previous year.



PUĀWAI PŪRAU
STEM ACADEMY
WE ARE BACK!!! TERM 3 2025
NAU MAI, HAERE MAI
COME AND GET AMONGST IT
EVERY THURSDAY
4-6 PM
HAU KAINGA
15 QUEEN ST, MASTERTON
● Math & Science tutoring from Masterton based teachers
● Meet Māori working in STEM related mahi
● Participate in Trips for STEM
● Be part of a Māori learning environment
● Kai & resources provided
*For Māori learners taking
Math and Science at
Secondary school (college)*

We were also very happy to be contacted by one of our original academy students; Memphis Millward who was seeking a reference for his course of studies. In 2025 he is in his 3rd year of medical school at Otago University and we remain in touch to ensure that he feels supported throughout his journey. We were joined this year on our administrative team by past ākonga Rose Haira-Harmon who brought her sister along with her and is supporting the academy kaupapa. Rose is studying Design Engineering at Victoria University and also led a session. She regularly provides feedback and recommendations on how we can improve our kaupapa from a rangatahi perspective. We are very fortunate to have her.

Another great highlight was the return of our committed group of Kaiako; Kathryn Houliston, Mike Brown, Fleur Hardman, Bhavik Patel and Wendy Jacobsen they are essential to the success of our academy.

In 2025 we opened our first session on Thursday 17 July, it was a great opening night and we seized the opportunity to have a few rangatahi lead the session which included past student Jayden Collings, my son and inspiration for the academy. He was joined by Iraia Matthews who was one our Equity in Education Symposium panellists and Manaia Riwai-Couch. We asked them to lead a session on Whanaungatanga and help the ākonga with some brainstorming to obtain ākonga voice for our kaupoapa. We ended the evening by learning our academy waiata.



Student led session by Rose Haira-Harmon

Rose has brought much needed youthfulness to the academy this year. She is a very strong student, has always had a clear vision of where she wants to go and is a proactive self-starter. She volunteered to lead out our next session discussing with students what they wanted to be and plot some ways for them to get there.



In 2026, Rose has also been successfully selected as a Tuia student for the Masterton Māori Mayoral mentoring programme and has become a Māori representative for the Massey Wellington campus. Congratulations Rose.

NCEA me te Whānau

As part of my role working at NZQA, I deliver NCEA me te Whānau workshops which help students and their whānau understand NCEA and the importance of subject selection. For our 3rd session I delivered a workshop which was followed by more kōrero about subject selection with one of our Kaiako Wendy. We are so fortunate to have such passionate Kaiako who are tangata Tiriti and support the kaupapa of the academy each week and also come up with new ideas to help our ākonga be motivated in their learning.



Amber Craig – Te Whare Hangahanga



One of our ongoing supporters and local heroes in the STEMM space is Amber Craig. Amber has been an advocate for technology learning among rangatahi for many years. Following up on her presentation to our ākonga in 2024, she came back to academy in 2025 to give an update on her mahi in the innovative technology space and her business venture Te Whare Hangahanga. Learning about Te Whare Hangahanga is important for our ākonga to understand that you can be the solution for many of the issues that our whānau face in the world. Her venture seeks to solve the issue of housing poverty and reintroduces the idea of Papakāinga living for affordability and accessibility for whānau.

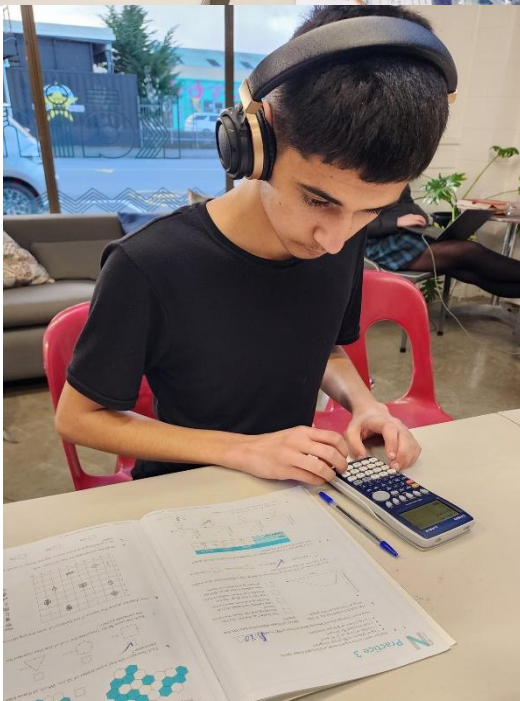
Getting into the learning our ākonga aspirations



Ava pictured left wants to be an Engineer, like her Dad. Here she is working on some math mahi with our teacher Fleur Hardman.

Hone picture below left, isn't sure what he wants to be when he leaves school. He is pictured working on some math learning.

Jose (below) also doesn't know what he wants to be when he leaves school. He is Year 13 and Whaea Trudy is helping him to find some options that could work for him beyond school.





Rory Carswell, wants to be a Midwife when she leave school. She learnt this year that she needed to add more Sciences to her learning.



Photo below: Hana and Elva brought their friends along with them to work on their homework together at academy.

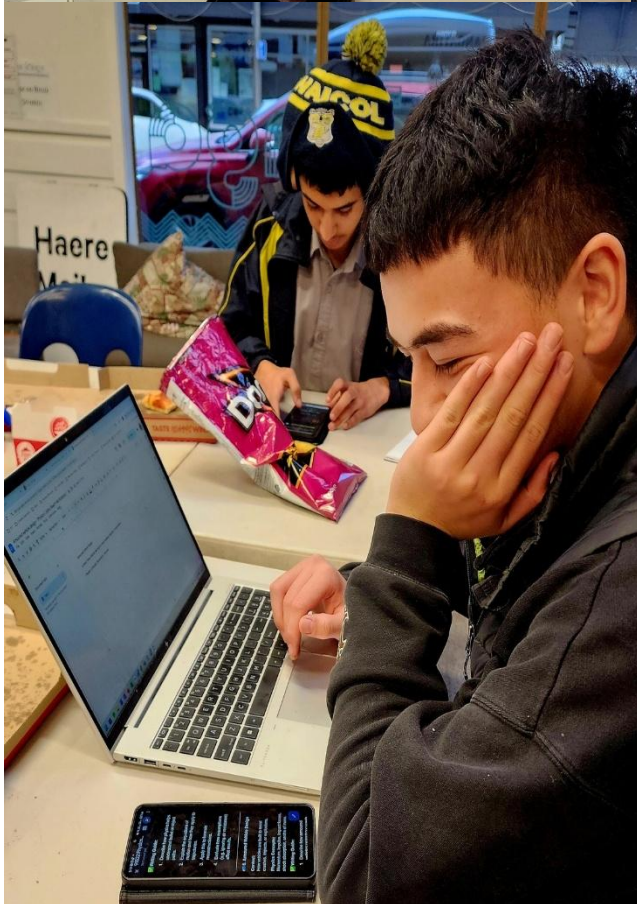


Left: Jared Collings wants to be an All Black but knows he also needs a back up plans. He has decided to take the Electrician course for USKILLS at UCOL this year. While Ivy Te Tau wants to be a nurse like her Mum.



Te Aira far left wants to be a surgeon when she leaves school. She left Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Wairarapa at the end of 2025 to transition to Wairarapa College so she can take all the Science subject she needs for her ambitious goal.

Luana pictured with her is her bestie from Te Kura and comes along with her. Luana isn't sure what she wants to be when she leaves school. We are proud that both of these girls and Elva have been named as members of the Masterton District Youth Council for 2026.



Jhyro Beach-McRoberts wants to be an Engineer. He has chosen to do this through Services Academy and wants to join the army in 2026.

Due to our relationship with REAP we were able to help Jhyro to get his full drivers license which was the last thing he needed to apply for the army.

Added opportunities like this come because we know our ākongā and have relationships with organisations in town that enable us to create for our ākongā other elements to help them succeed.

Kirialana Wilson – STEMM Navigator, Tōnui Collab, Code Club Aotearoa



Kirialana moved to Masterton from Te Tairāwhiri and was one of our guest speakers at academy this year. She is an inspiring wahine toa and works in innovating digital education and creating gender equity in digital spaces. She shared the opportunities available in the digital space with not just playing games, but creating code and designing so that our ākonga can be the architect of those games.

Her partner Wairarapa local Jimbo Ratapu is the kapa haka tutor for many kura around Masterton, so they then treated us to some waiata. Conicidentally, they both were also flatting with one of our Kaiako Bhavik Patel.



Pania Matthews – The Flying Kiwi

My sister Pania Matthews who has been a teacher and holds a Master of Education was our next guest speaker. Having been recently employed by the Ministry of Education before she took voluntary redundancy in one of the largest restructures in the organisation talked about being the master of your own destiny. Following her redundancy she applied for a voluntary position to Papua New Guinea with Volunteer Services Abroad. She talked about some of her life experiences like how she knew nothing when she project managed the build of her own tiny house, before they were very popular. She talked about how the small bits of learning in math enabled her to do that. She talked about Māori ingenuity and how it has helped



her in her varied career as a Senior manager at MoE and of course her travels around the world including teaching English in Korea and managing her own world travels. The purpose of her voluntary service in PNG was to help the Government build their early childhood curriculum. She spoke to our ākonga about the disparity and poverty over there. It was a great reminder to the tamariki that anything is possible if they put their minds to something.

Our Haerenga ki Rotorua



We had a blast on our haerenga for 2025 with the highlight of our trip being a visit with Potaua at the Digital Natives Academy (DNA) in the heart of Rotorua and what a beautiful city Rotorua is with its celebration of Māori art and culture. This was the first time that we had travelled more than a couple of hours away from home and the first time we spent 2 nights away. We were so excited to meet Potaua and take a look around the academy there. He gave us the rundown on their school that offers an alternative schooling option for ākonga who are natural "tutus" OR who like to take things apart or play and create video games. We were quickly at home with Uncle Potaua and mouths fell open as we had a tour of their kāinga with their modern computer labs and spaces.

It was easy to dream about what might be possible with a little ingenuity and Māori intuition (watch this space). One of our students said that a school like this "was a dream." There was something for everyone here and the ākonga were quickly drawn in to activities of all sorts of ranges including building and problem solving and of course a little bit of gaming too!

We were also fortunate enough to visit the Rotorua Skyline Luge with about 7 of our students never experiencing that before. When you come from a small community like ours, the disparities can be obvious, exposing our ākonga to these types of activities means they are able to more clearly dream beyond the confines of what they know and are used to. Our final activity was at the Redwoods Treetop walk where we had some light rain and a bit of thunder which added extra excitement to the trip.

So many firsts for our roopu this year, including trying something different, travelling somewhere different, having different experiences but still having the opportunity to be

empowered, lifting the gaze of what's possible and harnessing the power of tangata whenuatanga.

A big massive mihi to Internet NZ for our pūtea tautoko for our haerenga, Pōtaua from Digital Natives Academy and Makoura College for the use of their cvan.





Ākonga were put into groups and given challenges to complete, following instructions and working it out on their own, basically given free reign to tutu.





Next year we will celebrate our 5th year of operation as the Puāwai Pūrau Academy. This project continues to be a kaupapa that is dear to our hearts. There is no greater feeling than helping the emerging generation to realise their goals and their potential. A big mihi to our principal funders Internet NZ and the Masterton Trust Lands Trust. To REAP Wairarapa for sponsoring hours for Whaea Trudy and her expertise to boost our kaupapa and for also managing our funding for this kaupapa.

In 2026, we have been invited to present at the REAP National conference to be held in Wellington and we are very proud to be able to share the successes of our partnership with REAP.

Thank you for all your generous support, contributions and belief in this kaupapa.

Ngā mihi nui,

Waireka Collings & Trudy Sears



Once again, we would like to thank all of our sponsors the **Masterton Trust Lands Trust** who has sponsored all our learning and in class time and **Internet NZ** for sponsoring our holiday Wānanga and haerenga adventures, **Rumahanga Restoration Trust** for our final haerenga to Pūkaha, **Makoura College** for the van loan for our haerenga and **REAP Wairarapa** for the ongoing management of our financial affairs and allowing us to have the support of the amazing **Trudy Sears**.

In the words of the great late Whitney Houston...I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way!!!

Ngā mihi for another successful year
Waireka Collings
Puāwai Pūrau STEMM Academy Director