

PROGRAMS REPORT

2025 QUARTER 2 APR - JUN



TE KARANGA
CREATIVE COMMUNITY

OVERALL SUMMARY



Prepared by TK White

This quarter was defined by deepening relationships, consistent creative practice, and significant personal growth among young people across our spaces. Participants didn't just show up – they committed. Many became more confident in themselves, supported each other's progress, and stepped into leadership in their own unique ways. A clear example of this transformation was seen in one of our young women who, through her involvement in our programs, found the confidence to step into youth political spaces and was invited to join The Hive (A youth voice in Parliament group) – a powerful indicator of the kind of real-world impact our programs are creating.

Across the board, young people reported feeling more seen, heard, and safe, which translated into more risk-taking, more honest expression, and more meaningful relationships with their peers. Whether they were performing at open mics, producing full-length projects, or just showing up consistently each week, the shift from passive participation to active ownership was undeniable. This sense of agency and identity-building is central to how we measure growth, and this quarter delivered.

From an organisational perspective, we gained a deeper understanding of what it means to create not just creative programs, but *wellbeing ecosystems*. Creativity may be the entry point, but the outcomes we're seeing – stronger mental health, increased self-worth, emotional intelligence, and social connection – are at the core of our impact. The growing demand for spaces like these, and the way rangatahi are bringing their peers into the fold, shows that what we're doing is both needed and working.

This quarter also saw us launch new offerings. Our weekly Dojo event created a youth-friendly Friday night space in the city, attracting a regular crowd who used it for performing, networking, and content creation. Bridge The Gap delivered its most ambitious project to date, guiding three participants through the full cycle of writing, producing, and launching their own EPs, culminating in a live show that drew a crowd of over 150 and nearly sold out their custom merchandise. We also continued growing our offsite activations, including an under 18s Krump battle and multiple open mic appearances during NZ Music Month and Youth Week, which gave participants public platforms to showcase their voice, identity, and artistry.

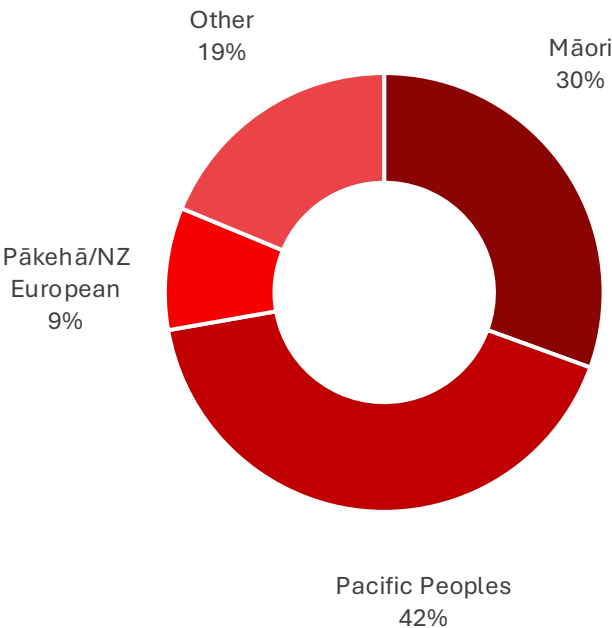
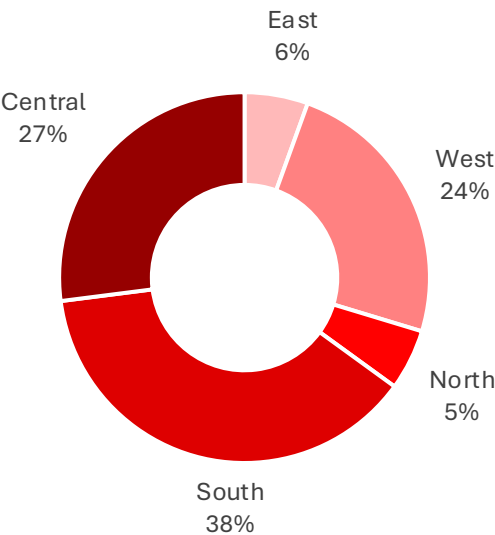
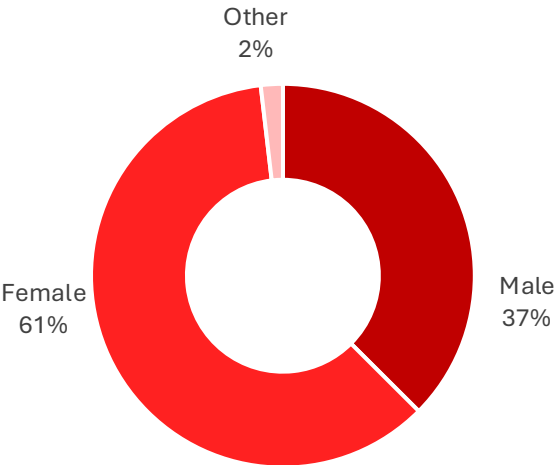
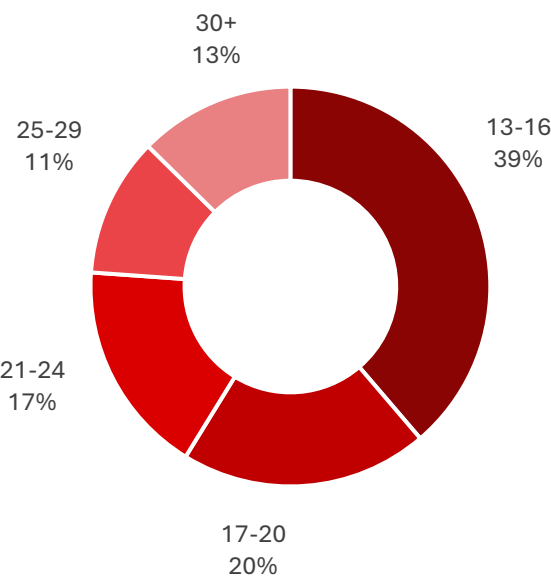
What we've learned this quarter is clear: youth thrive in environments that prioritise emotional safety, creative freedom, and meaningful relationships. We've seen the importance of being flexible, not just in how we design our sessions, but in how we respond to life as it happens. Participants bring their whole selves into our spaces, and we've continued learning how to meet them there – with care, encouragement, and high expectations. When we hold space for their stories, their setbacks, and their growth, they rise to the occasion, not just as artists, but as whole people.

As we look ahead, our challenge will be in scaling that depth. Whether through additional facilitators, stronger systems, or more studio time, our next step is to meet the growing demand while protecting the intimacy and mana that make our spaces transformative.

DATA TOTALS



Participant stats: **783**



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Offering personalised support through mentoring sessions, creative guidance, personal and professional development, whānau support, and community connections.



CREATIVE PATHWAYS



OVERVIEW

A weekly program for 13-17-year-olds not in education or employment, fostering positive learning experiences, creativity, and career exploration. Delivered to several providers across Tāmaki Makaurau.



CREATIVE PATHWAYS



Facilitated by Hariata Makiha, Albert Purcell, Lincoln Keepa & Thomas Steed
Report by Hariata Makiha

This quarter, we wrapped up our previous street art and music sessions and transitioned fully into logo design and branding. The goal was to help participants explore how logos reflect identity, values, and personality — while giving them space to reflect on their own influences. Each participant developed a personal brand concept by building mood boards, drawing inspiration from culture, family, community, and personal interests. Using iPads, they drafted and refined logo designs that represented their unique selves. It's been a powerful term for self-discovery and creative development. We welcomed a new provider to our weekly delivery schedule, bringing us to six different providers overall. Despite the large number of participants across our different programs, we've seen strong engagement, consistency, and impressive progress from participants who are learning new creative skills, gaining confidence in their ideas, and taking full ownership of their work.

HIGHLIGHTS

The engagement has been incredible — participants picked up software tools quickly, helped each other troubleshoot, and dove deep into their creative process. We saw participants referencing their culture, families, and real-world surroundings in their designs, reflecting a grounded sense of identity. It's been especially rewarding seeing how the program supports peer learning. Participants often finished early and helped others complete their logos. Feedback from one group showed a strong desire for more sessions, with many asking for longer hours and more frequent classes. A standout observation was the shift in female participants who were initially unsure or uninterested — many ended up excelling, grasping the tasks quickly and leading the way in design and concept execution. Across all programs, most participants created original logo designs they were proud of. Their confidence and ability to articulate their ideas clearly has grown significantly, showing just how impactful creative freedom can be.

CHALLENGES

This term saw higher absences across our programs, most likely due to winter sickness, which caused a split in program progress. While it didn't disrupt the learning too heavily, we often needed to give extra 1-on-1 support to those catching up, which made it harder to support the whole group equally. We also ran into some tech limitations — not always enough iPads to go around, and occasional issues with file transfers or uncharged pens. These moments caused small delays in productivity but were mostly manageable. Some participants who missed earlier sessions needed more help to build momentum, which meant more energy had to go into helping them reconnect with their creative process. However, the group's overall attitude remained strong, with participants showing patience and willingness to adapt.

LEARNINGS

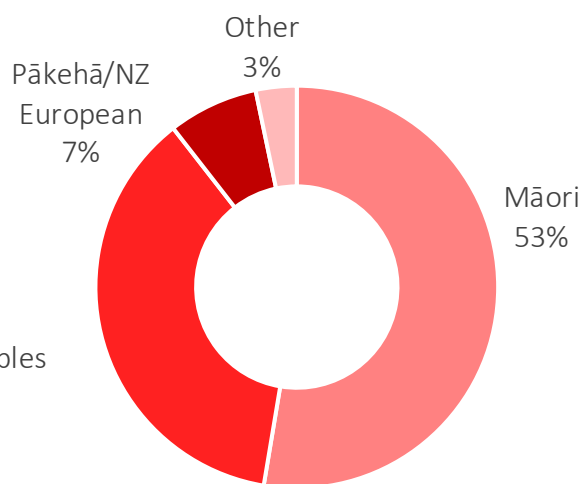
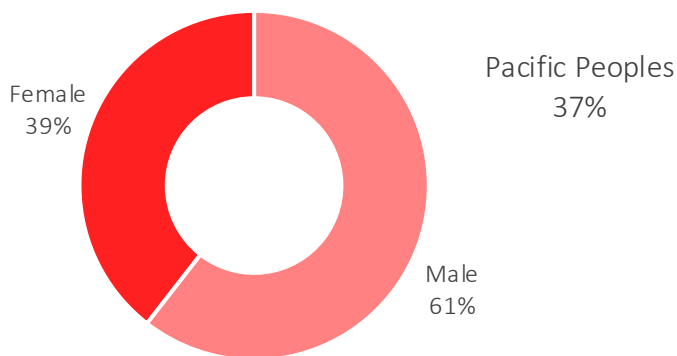
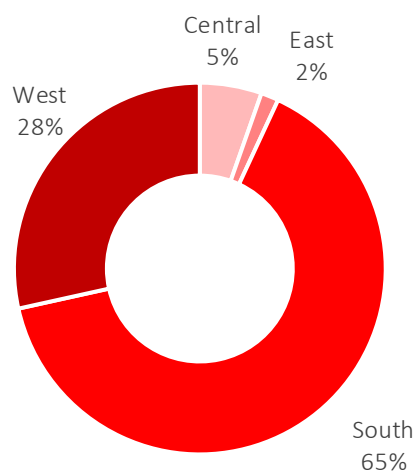
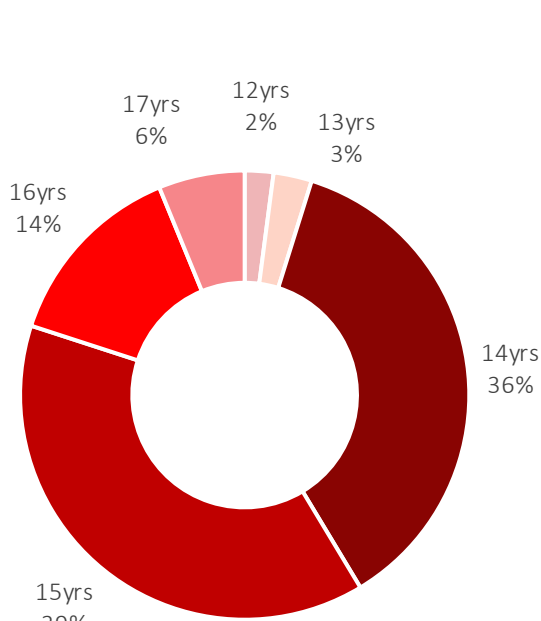
We've seen that giving participants full creative control boosts engagement more than anything else. When they feel ownership over the work, they're more motivated, focused, and excited to show up. The use of mood boards as a first step continues to be one of the most effective ways to help participants get clarity on their ideas — especially those who aren't sure where to start. Once they've found a visual spark, their concepts often come together quickly. It's also been clear that peer-to-peer learning is a big strength — participants helping each other, giving feedback, and bouncing ideas off one another lifts the overall vibe of each session. This term reinforced how important it is to keep the environment open and flexible, while still structured enough to support different learning paces. We're excited to carry this energy into next term as we head into printing and final product creation.

CREATIVE PATHWAYS

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 145



CREATIVE PATHWAYS

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS



OVERVIEW

Navigators (Navs) is a free weekly music workshop, delivered across several locations in Tāmaki Makaurau, connecting & engaging young people through shared experiences, stories, and creativity. Open to youth aged 16-24.



NAVIGATORS / NORTH



Facilitated by Rizvan Tu'itahi, Siose Solo & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Tamzin Naicker

Monday's, Shore Junction, Takapuna

This quarter at North Navigators we continued to build on the strength of our weekly sessions by creating a space that supports both creative expression and personal development. This quarter, Navigators North created a consistent and supportive space for young people to develop both creatively and personally. Our Talanoa discussions and Creative tasks explored real-life topics such as social anxiety, digital overload, artist identity and balancing passion with the real world. These conversations supported participants in reflecting on their lives and building self-confidence. Creative tasks were directly linked, encouraging growth through quirky challenges like writing from a cartoon character's perspective to responding to hecklers - experimenting with unfamiliar beats, and taking part in free-write nights. We saw strong engagement and clear development — with participants stepping further into their creative voices, supporting one another, and growing in confidence. Navigators North continues to nurture creative risk-taking, personal reflection, and a culture of encouragement.

HIGHS

There was a great vibe with strong participation and creativity. We had new participants join the space, some of whom have already become regulars that has brought in such fresh energy. We've seen noticeable performance growth across the group, and the culture has been supportive and encouraging. This has helped newer and shyer participants feel confident enough to step forward and share their voices. Discussions have been deep and meaningful, and the creative tasks have really supported the learning by encouraging participants to think differently and stretch their creative thinking. It's been a strong quarter for building confidence, developing new skills, and strengthening connections in the space.

CHALLENGES

We've had two new participants that bring a different energy to the room — one has ADHD and the other is on the autism spectrum. They both tend to get off track and easily excited, which has added a new dynamic for facilitators to navigate. While it's been more challenging than usual, it hasn't been an issue. We've been able to manage the interruptions well and guide the group back into focus when needed. The rest of the participants have also been incredibly patient and welcoming, which speaks to the strong sense of community that's been built. We're still adjusting to this shift and the space has remained inclusive and supportive for everyone involved.

LEARNINGS

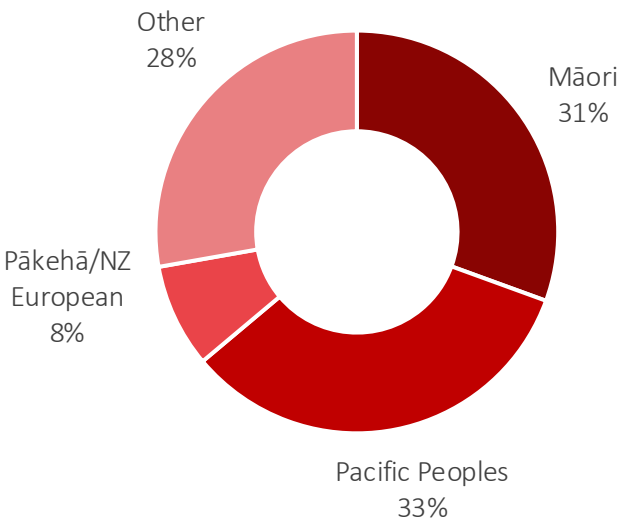
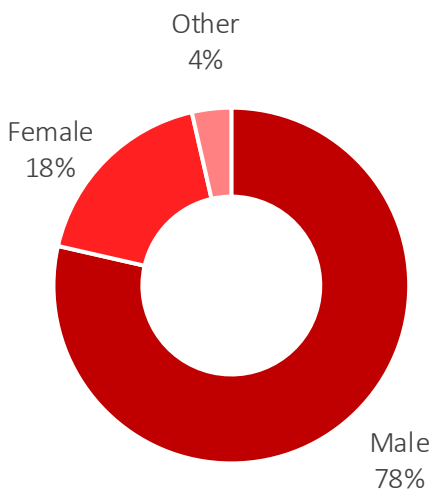
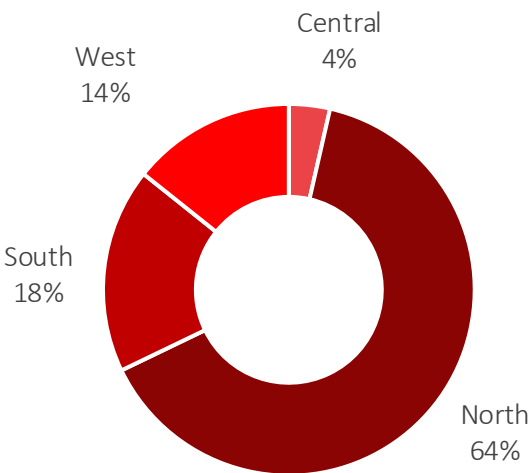
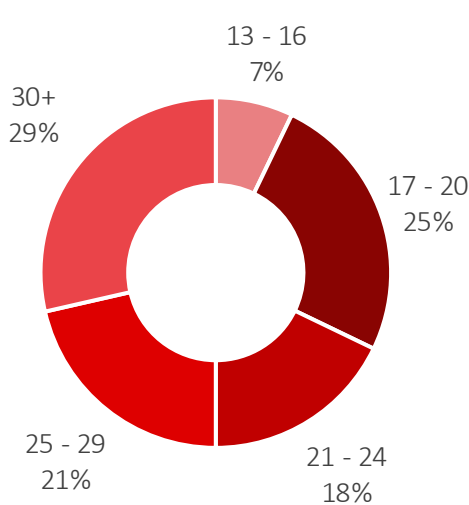
One of the key things we've learned is the importance of holding space for all kinds of learners. While structure is helpful, flexibility has been just as important — knowing when to guide the group back in, and when to allow creative freedom. We're also seeing that growth looks different for everyone. For some, it's performing in front of others for the first time. For others, it's speaking up in Talanoa or learning how to support someone else's journey. As facilitators, we're learning how to meet people where they're at while still holding high expectations for what they can achieve. This space continues to teach us how powerful creativity, connection, and conversation can be when held with care.

NAVIGATORS / NORTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 29



NAVIGATORS / NORTH

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WEST



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Aidan Fine & Bronson Price

Report by Aidan Fine

Tuesday's, Zeal West, Henderson

West Navigators maintained strong momentum, with a consistent and committed group turning up each week — even through the colder months. Sessions focused on songwriting, recording, and performance, offering both structure and flexibility. We introduced creative challenges linked to current music trends, like building a track using AI after exploring Timbaland's AI projects, or sampling iconic NZ tracks for NZ Music Month. These prompts sparked critical thinking and kept the creative process relevant. We also returned to cypher-style sessions in open spaces, creating space for spontaneous expression and deeper confidence-building.

HIGHS

One of the biggest wins has been the growing strength of West Navigators culture. Participants aren't just attending — they're identifying with the program and extending their engagement beyond the sessions. Many have begun promoting their creative work online, supporting each other at live events, and collaborating independently. The group's diversity has led to rich artistic exchange, and the supportive environment has helped participants grow in confidence, develop their sound, and step further into their identities as artists. There's been a noticeable shift in ownership and pride among the group.

CHALLENGES

High attendance has sometimes meant we've had to get creative with space. The main recording booth can only host so many at once, so we've split into smaller groups and rotated into other rooms. While not ideal in terms of equipment, these adaptations have still allowed us to keep everyone engaged and active. It's a minor but ongoing challenge to balance quality creative time with limited studio capacity.

LEARNINGS

This quarter reminded us how powerful consistency is for personal and group growth. A familiar routine has helped participants settle in, build relationships, and take more creative risks. We've seen how community fuels progress — many show up as much for each other as they do for the music. We also learned the value of adapting how we use our space. The second room, originally a fallback, became a valuable zone for freestyles and energy resets. Small shifts in setup can have a big impact on engagement.

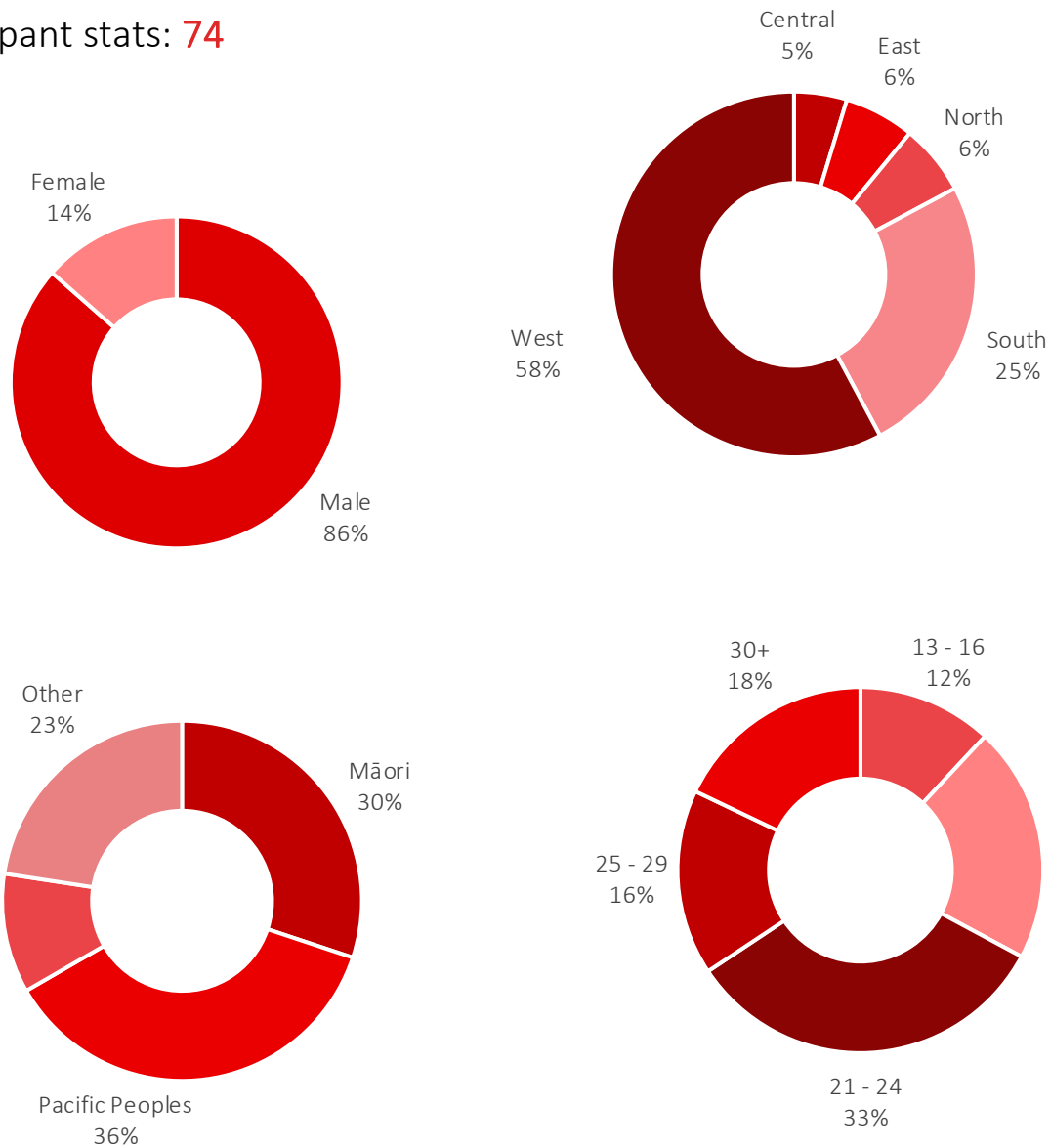


NAVIGATORS / WEST

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 74



NAVIGATORS / WEST

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE



Facilitated by TK White, Hariata Makiha & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Hariata Makiha

Tuesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

This quarter was all about deepening connections. We focused on building strong, supportive relationships with participants, which created a space where they felt free to be themselves. With trust in the room, creativity soared. Participants were writing and recording more than ever, with many returning regularly and new ones sliding in seamlessly. We hosted a quiz night to change things up, and it turned into another opportunity for bonding and laughter. The creative flow was high, and we've seen huge growth in participants — not just artistically, but personally. They're more confident in the booth and bolder in life, and they lift each other up while doing it.

HIGHLIGHTS

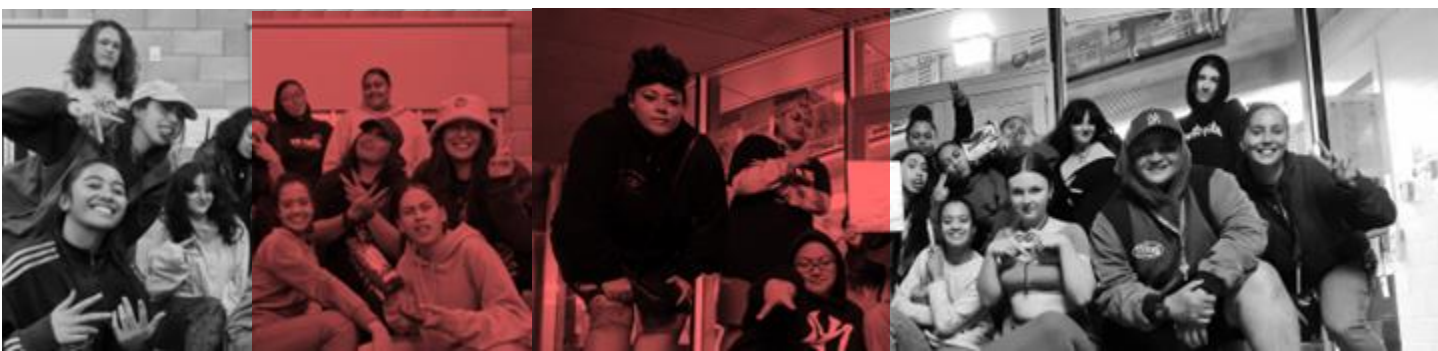
Talanoa continues to be our superpower — participants open up, reflect, and support one another deeply. Their self-awareness is growing, and it's clear they value a space where emotional honesty is celebrated. One standout was a young mother who, through Wāhine Navigators, found her voice and was invited to join The Hive — a youth collective engaging in politics. Her confidence has visibly bloomed. In another lens, we've had participants show their truest selves, exploring sides of themselves they don't show others. Participants express the challenges that revolve around making good quality relationships with other females, and the beauty of this space allows them to traverse the waters in a safe and supportive environment. The booth sessions have been especially productive this quarter; participants jump straight in, keen to share and sharpen their skills. The room is full of energy when we're creating, and it's beautiful to witness.

CHALLENGES

Some weeks, our talanoa dives into really heavy kōrero — from trauma, relationships, and deeply personal stories. While powerful, this can sometimes leave less time for the creative work. We're mindful of this, checking in during and after sessions where needed. When time is tight, we shift to speed-writing and live performances to keep the creative spark alive without pushing anyone too hard emotionally.

LEARNINGS

The relationships built here are the heart of Wāhine Navigators. Participants consistently speak on how healing it feels to find genuine friendship let alone a space where women uplift each other. The space has become a hub of love, wildness, support, and openness. Music has shown itself to be a true release — not just expression, but a way to come out of heavy moments with clarity and confidence. Talking and creating together is our way of caring for each other at Wāhine Navigators.

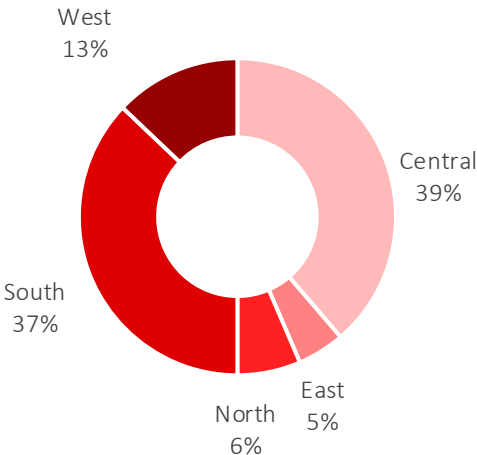
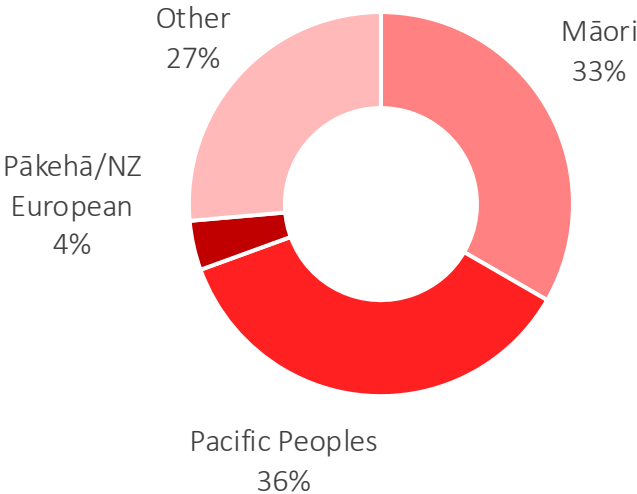
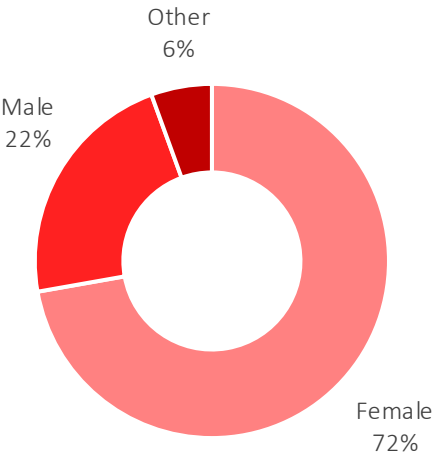
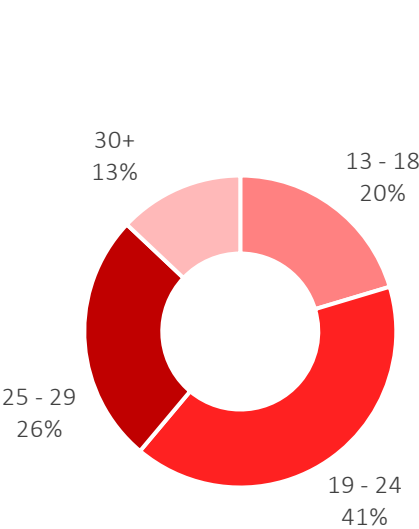


NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 58



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE
IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Aidan Fine, Bronson Price & Dera Meelan

Report by Aidan Fine

Wednesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

This quarter marked a new chapter for Central Navigators as we welcomed an entirely new group of participants into the space. The focus has been on building a supportive environment where creativity and personal growth can unfold naturally. The new cohort brings together a range of abilities — from first-time creatives to those with more experience — which has created a great balance of peer learning and mutual encouragement. Participants have been developing confidence in their artistic expression as well as their ability to collaborate and communicate with others. It's been encouraging to see how quickly they've adapted, forming relationships, asking questions, sharing ideas, and actively engaging in group tasks. The mix of skill levels has helped boost learning across the board, as more experienced participants offer guidance and newcomers bring fresh perspectives.

HIGHS

The group gelled quickly, forming friendships that extended beyond the space. That connection made it easier for participants to take creative risks and stay engaged. One participant, who came in without any songwriting experience, is now writing and performing full songs — a massive leap in just a few weeks. Others stepped up as quiet leaders, offering support and encouragement to their peers. The overall vibe has been positive, consistent, and growth-driven, making this one of the strongest quarters so far.

CHALLENGES

There were moments where energy dipped or engagement felt low — some weeks flowed better than others. Balancing different personalities and creative confidence levels can be tricky, especially with a new group. We found that going with the flow, rather than forcing energy, worked best. The challenge remains in holding structure while staying flexible enough to support participants wherever they're at in their journey.

LEARNINGS

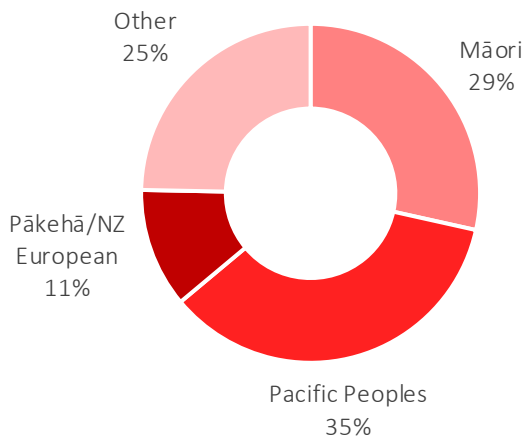
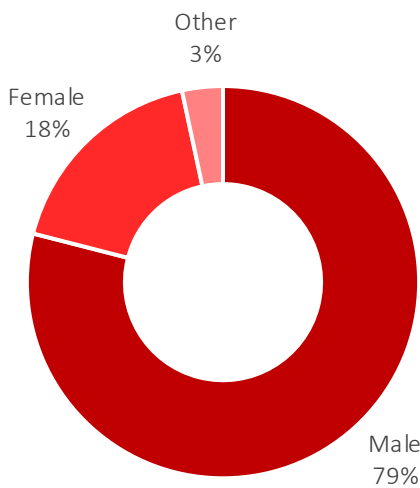
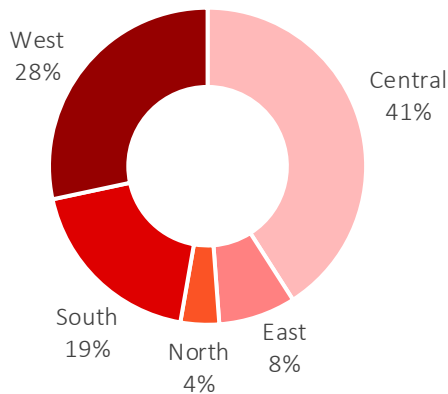
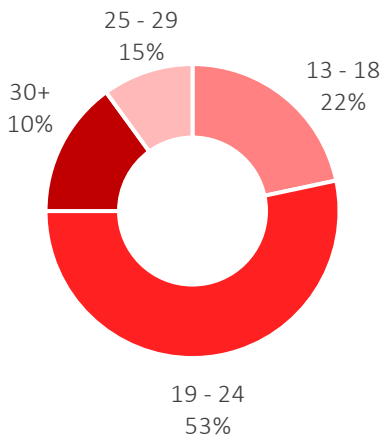
We've learned the power of adaptability. Shifting approaches depending on the group's energy made the space more effective and supportive. Peer-to-peer learning stood out as a key strength — participants learn best when they feel safe and connected. We're also reminded that small wins matter: showing up, sharing a verse, or even staying consistent are big achievements when building creative confidence. There's been visible growth not only in creative output but in mindset — with participants becoming more open to feedback, more willing to take creative risks, and more consistent in their practice. The space has become a container for both skill-building and self-discovery, with each week allowing for reflection, exploration, and a stronger sense of personal and artistic identity to emerge.

NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 108



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki, Ben Tuimaseve, Lincoln Keepa & Noah Tauti

Report by Noah Tauti

Monday's, OMAC, Ōtara

This quarter was a solid mix of offsites, creative sessions, and catching our rhythm again at OMAC. May was packed with NZ Music Month events, so we hit the open mics around South Auckland — giving our participants space to perform, connect, and be seen in the wider music scene. Even with a few missed sessions due to public holidays, energy stayed steady. We had a good mix of returning regulars and fresh faces, which brought new energy into the space. Talanoa was strong throughout — we talked about creative identity, being multi-faceted artists, and navigating life stuff like uni. One participant jumped on the mic for the first time with full support in the room — one of those moments you don't forget. When the studio's not always available, participants still pulled up — jamming, writing, and sharing. The connection and commitment to the space has been evident this quarter.

HIGHS

A real standout was seeing our younger participants sign themselves up for NZMM open mics at Māngere Arts Centre. Watching them step into that with confidence — and seeing others show up in the crowd — was huge. Some of it even got livestreamed on TikTok, which gave South Navigators some solid visibility. Back in the studio, the vibe stayed strong. We celebrated 3 participants that completed the Bridge The Gap program who hosted an event, recorded and released albums and merchandise — that inspired everyone. Talanoa was flowing, with people opening up, sharing advice, and reflecting on things like “what the end of something” means to them. We split sessions between recording in the studio to a selected digital beat, and live jamming in the big room where those who could play instruments worked on live music sessions together — this creative strategy kept it fresh and gave people different ways to express themselves. All of it added to the growth and creative energy at South Navigators.

CHALLENGES

Winter always brings its own vibe. The cold and dark hit hard, especially for our younger ones who juggle sports, school, and transport. Public holidays and offsites made the term feel a bit choppy, and studio availability on Mondays wasn't always a guarantee — other bookings clashed, which meant no recording time some weeks. During open mics, the number of signups meant our crew sometimes had to wait a while to perform, and the weather didn't help with motivation to attend. Still, the participants kept turning up, to the offsites and the normal program delivery, which says a lot about how much the space matters to them. We're always looking at how to keep it consistent without losing that spark.

LEARNINGS

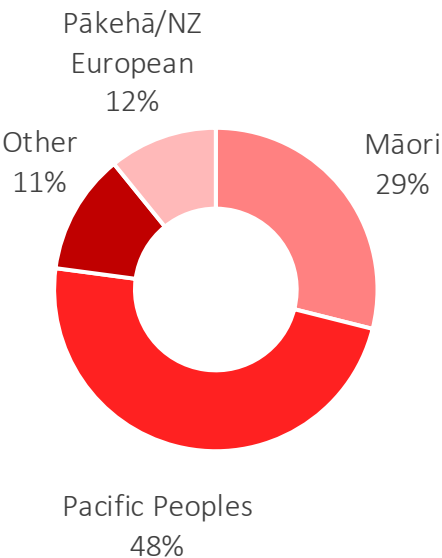
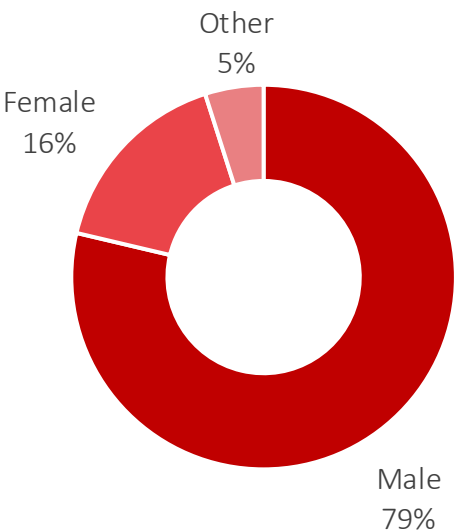
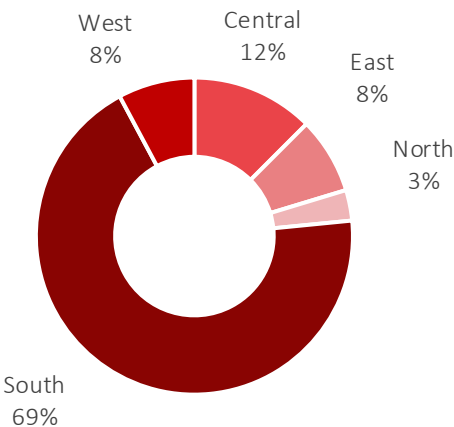
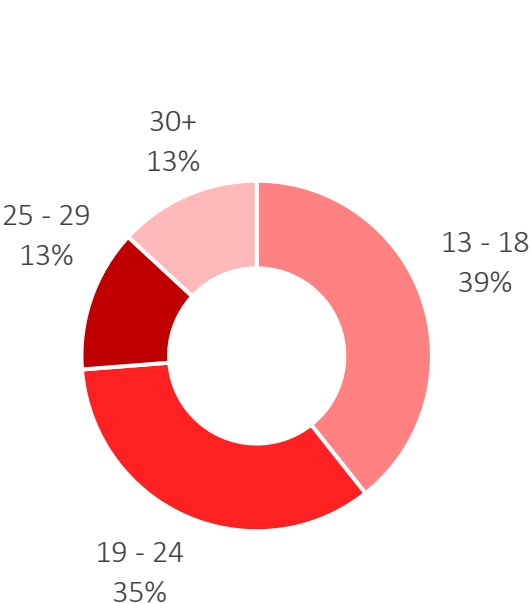
This quarter reminded us how important Talanoa is — not just to unpack life stuff, but to build creative confidence. When young people feel safe to speak up and be heard, they bring deeper energy into the space. That's what makes South Navigators feel like more than just a program. We had some real layered kōrero about being multi-faceted creatives, figuring out what matters most, and sharing that between older and younger participants. Everyone had space to reflect, give advice, or just be curious. We also saw that the creative flow doesn't depend on a studio — the energy is in the people, the questions, the laughs, and the challenges. Giving participants writing prompts, that they're not used to receiving, actually opened them up more. Next step for us as facilitators is to sit down and plan how we can bring more rangatahi into the space, while keeping that South Navigators wairua strong.

NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 63



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD



Facilitated by Noah Tauti & Luani Nansen

Report by Noah Tauti

Wednesday's, OMAC, Ōtara

Spoken Word Navigators branched outwards this quarter as there was strong focus on getting out into the community. In celebration of NZ Music Month and Youth Week, we attended a range of open mic events — both as audience and performers. These offsite sessions gave participants the chance to experience live Spoken Word spaces and support their peers, including one participant who hosted their own Kava Talanoa and another who featured with a full performance set. These experiences offered valuable practice and inspiration, while strengthening the group's bond outside the usual session space.

HIGHLIGHTS

There was a refreshing shift as we ventured into the community for open mic sessions. The casual and creative vibe of live performance spaces encouraged participants to jump up and share spontaneously. One standout moment was watching a participant headline their own set, surrounded by their peers cheering them on. These offsite events boosted confidence, created shared memories, and showed the impact of peer encouragement — both on and off the mic.

CHALLENGES

The multiple field trips brought high engagement allowing frequent energy shifts and excitement. But while the offsite events were energizing, the frequency may have disrupted our regular rhythm. It became clear that returning to a consistent session structure — even if in a new or warmer space — was necessary to keep engagement with frequent check ups, creative expression, and a sustained familiar tone through the winter months. There would be some issues with gaining access to the room we usually have our sessions in that could cause a disruption in session flow, but luckily the group have been able to find connectedness wherever we are, whether that be in the corridors of OMAC or out on a field trip.

LEARNINGS

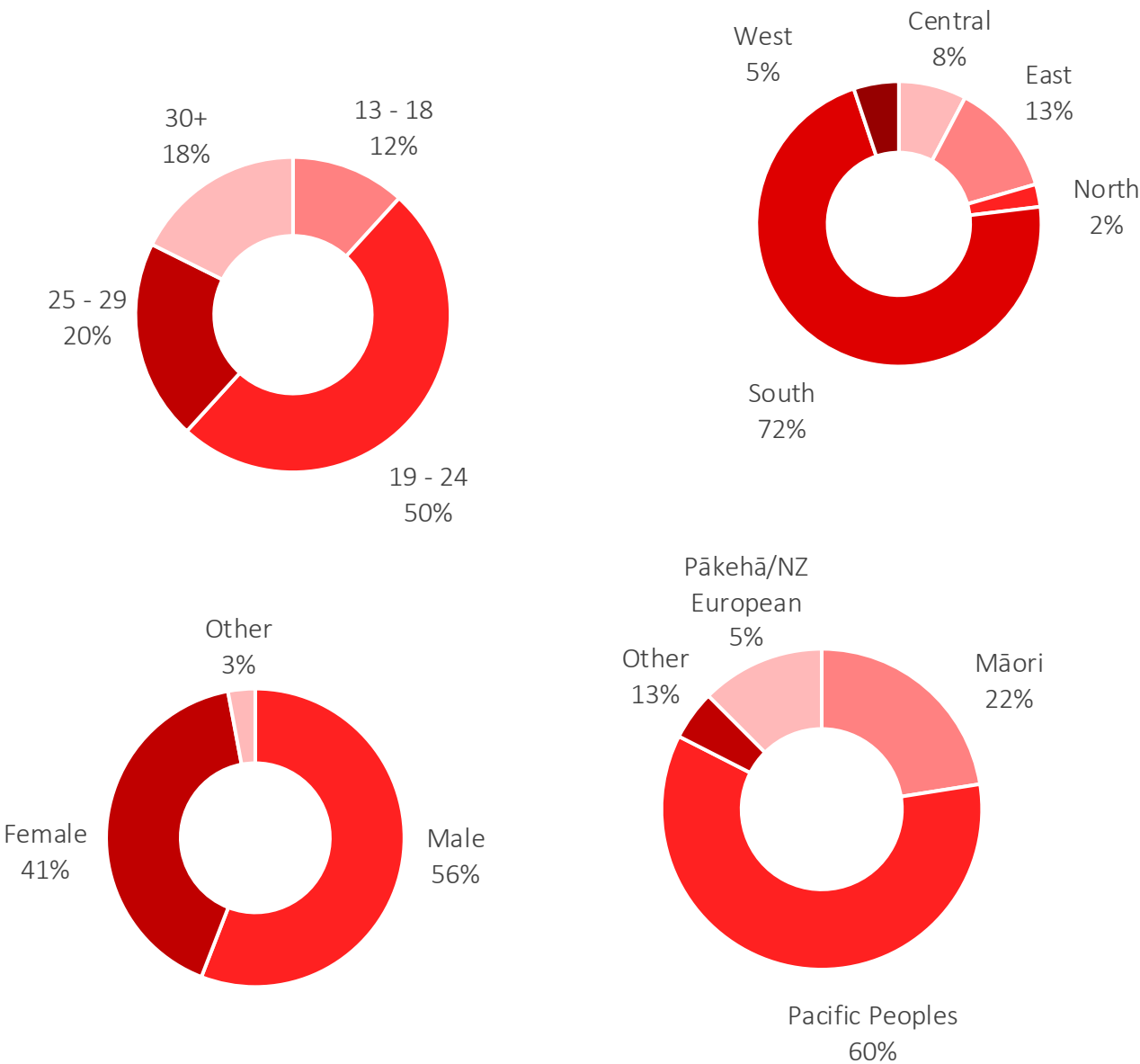
One thing we've learned this quarter is just how much impact Spoken Word Navigators has had on this community. We've seen participants out at spoken word events on their own, which shows how they're carrying what they've learned beyond our sessions. Some have even brought friends along to check out the program, which really speaks to the sense of community we've built. It's a solid reminder of how far we've come and the lasting effect this space has on them.

NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 27



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

IMAGES



CREATIVE LABS



OVERVIEW

Free weekly studio program that empowers youth with local resources, equipment, and guidance. Fostering creativity, connecting like-minded individuals, and nurturing the next generation of artists and musicians.



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Dera Meelan & Aidan Fine

Report by Dera Meelan

Weds, Thurs, Wesley Community Centre, Sandringham

Creative Labs is a bit different from our other programs, as it runs itself. The main goal has always been to give participants the freedom to use the space to develop their craft, and that is exactly what continues to happen this quarter. Most people who come through tend to stick around – it's rarely a one-off visit. The space has continued to give a consistent opportunity for participants to build on their music skills at their own pace, whether it's producing, songwriting, or recording. Over time, we've seen genuine progression, with participants taking more ownership of their growth and creative direction.

HIGHLIGHTS

Around 95% of participants are regulars who book in every week, often for months. That level of commitment has allowed us to witness real personal and creative development. We've seen people go from having little to no experience to releasing music, producing entire tracks independently, and even performing at shows — all off the back of work done in Creative Lab's. Beyond creative wins, the studio has also become a strong social space. Participants often bring friends, and even when they're not actively working on music, this space has become a place to hang out, share ideas, and connect. That mix of creativity and community has made the space more than just a studio — it's become a consistent support system. That consistency has helped participants grow in confidence, build peer relationships, and stay committed to their personal goals.

CHALLENGES

There haven't been any major challenges with Creative Labs this quarter — everything has run fairly smoothly. The only real issue has been the reduction in available days, from four days a week down to two. Because of that, bookings have filled up quickly, and some participants have struggled to secure time in the studio. This has created some frustration and made it harder for a few regulars to keep up their creative momentum.

LEARNINGS

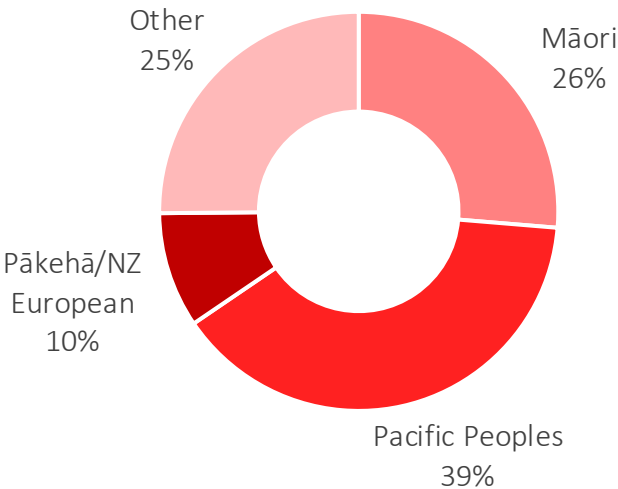
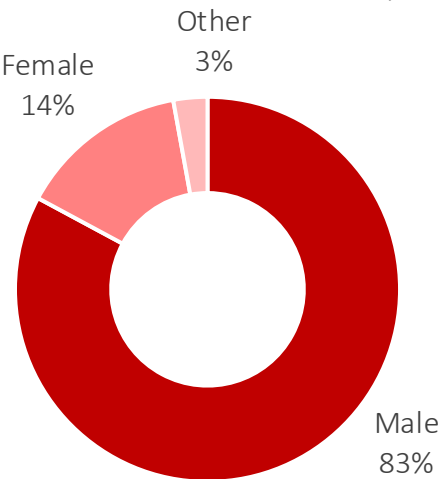
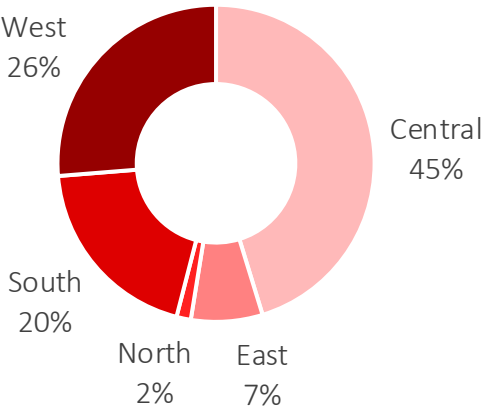
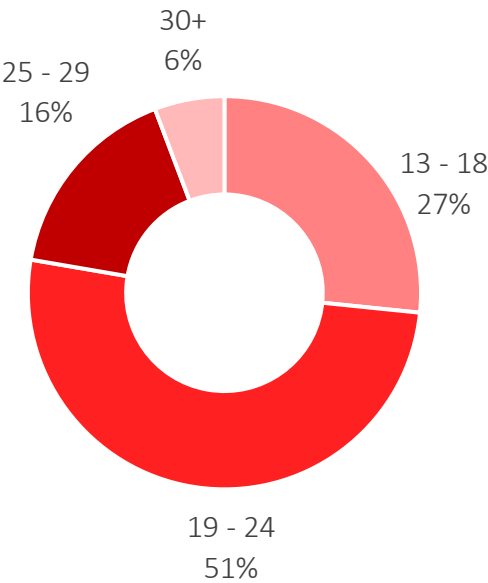
One of the biggest things we've learned is the value of simply being present. While many participants use the space to work independently and keep to themselves, moments of doubt or creative block can come up. Even when we're not directly involved, just being nearby, checking in, or offering quiet support can make a real difference. It's shown us that sometimes, the most meaningful support comes from just being available — giving participants the space to lead their own journey but knowing someone's got their back when they need it.

CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 127



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki

Mon, Tues & Weds, OMAC, Ōtara

South Creative Labs was packed with creativity and growth. Most sessions were fully booked, and participants consistently showed up and committed to their work. It's been especially cool to see newer participants come out of their shell — getting more comfortable in the space and making music that really reflects them. There were some solid releases too: two singles were recorded and released, and one full project made it to all streaming platforms. We also saw real bonds form through jam sessions, with a few participants collaborating out of those organic connections and becoming a music group. The consistent energy and return of participants shows a shift from just trying something out to actually sticking with it — and that's where real growth is happening.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the best parts of this quarter has been seeing participants buzz out on hearing their music — whether just recorded it, or it was freshly mixed. That joy is real. It's been dope watching young people push through self-doubt, trust the process, and follow their songs through to release. Those moments build real substantial confidence and show how important consistency is. With a stack of unheard songs still in the studio, there's more to come — and we can see that belief in themselves starting to grow with every track they work on.

CHALLENGES

One challenge that's come up this quarter has actually been raised by the participants themselves — some have expressed frustration when others don't show up to their booked studio sessions. Because spots are limited and in high demand, it can be a bit disheartening for those who are committed and waiting for their turn. As facilitators, it's a balancing act to keep things fair and consistent. We've introduced a one-week stand-down for missed bookings to help encourage accountability, and while it's not a perfect fix, it's a step toward building more respect for the shared space and time.

LEARNINGS

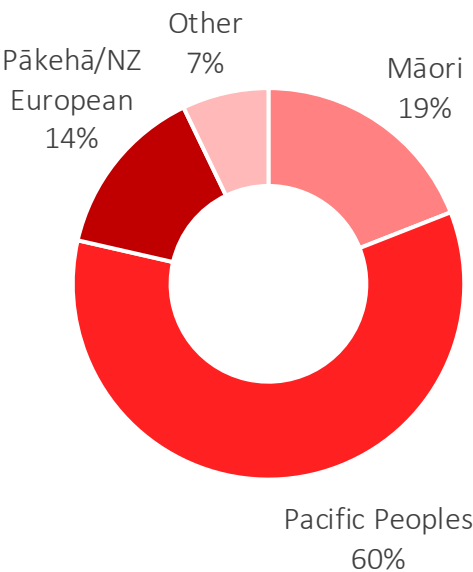
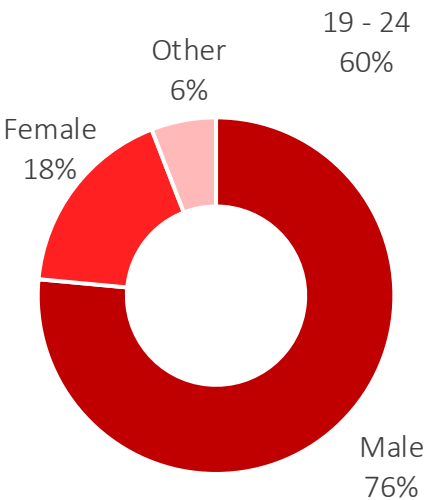
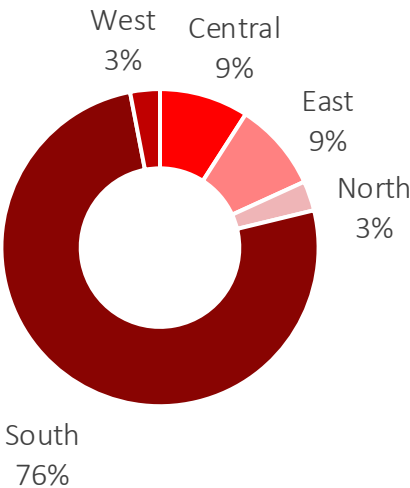
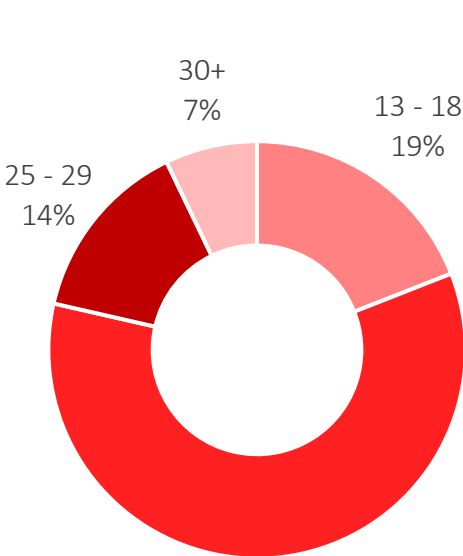
The big lesson this quarter is the power of encouragement. Participants often overthink their art, and it holds them back. Keeping it real and building honest, relaxed relationships with them helps break that barrier quicker. When they feel safe to be themselves, the creativity flows way more naturally — and the music becomes something they're genuinely proud of.

CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 37



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

IMAGES



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP



OVERVIEW

An internal program preparing aspiring creatives for future work environments. Supporting rangatahi with business ideas and focusing on artist professional, personal, and business development within the arts.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki

This quarter, we continued to work with young aspiring creatives to develop their enterprise and entrepreneurship skills. We would like to focus this report on a new pilot project we worked on with three participants this term. We set a challenge: in just under four months, each individually, from scratch, develop, write, record, complete, and release their own EP recordings and supporting shared launch event, together as a team. Starting in February, the process included specific challenges like working with collaborators on lyric writing, beat making, live instrumentation, vocal recording, arrangement, mixing, mastering and making financial agreements on disbursements of revenue created. We walked them through digital distribution and publishing options and developing promotional content. They worked together to plan and promote a shared live release show. They handled all their own project promo and marketing independently — with zero budget — which were promotional videos for social media, a poster and previews of their music online. They worked hard on the collaborative show called LOVE IN THE MIX, where all three artists launched their EPs for a live audience at The Button Factory in Auckland CBD. Each participant received a \$350 seed funding grant to develop original merchandise. Instead of working separately, they pooled their money to co-create 35 t-shirts with their poster art printed on them, and 10 CDs each. They were all guided through how to create the design, order the printing & t-shirts, heat-pressing the t-shirts, CD cover designs and creation (from scratch) to which they all hand made the CDs. They managed everything for their show from production of merchandise to sales themselves, selling the merch at their live show, making their money back, and learning how to monetise their music in the process. In just a few months, these artists gained hands-on experience in creating and releasing original music, building an online support system, planning and promoting a show, and designing and selling their own merchandise. The event was a roaring success with over 150 people in attendance, and 80% of the stock in their pop up shop was sold on the night.

HIGHLIGHTS

The biggest highlight was witnessing the shift in their confidence and mindset during the three months. Each participant faced real-life challenges along the way — studio cancellations, writer's block, family emergencies — and yet they stayed committed, overcame obstacles, and delivered the final product by the deadline that was set. They didn't just make and release their music, they grew as young adults, artists, and entrepreneurs. Their approach to music now includes an understanding of branding, self-management, marketing, and revenue generation. We saw their thinking shift: they started to see themselves as both the product and the driver of their own creative business. Seeing them set clear goals — then execute them in just four months — was powerful. They learned that small, consistent steps lead to big outcomes. They also picked up new skills like merch printing, DIY CD production, and how to keep music at the centre of the mahi, knowing that once the music exists, the opportunities are endless.

CHALLENGES

Our biggest challenge was time, especially when things out of our control happened. Studio availability and life events sometimes made it hard to stay on schedule. One participant, for example, had to travel to Niuē within the last three weeks of the project deadline and needed her project ready for distribution before leaving. That was tough, but we made it work by planning smart and staying adaptable. The key was helping participants maximise the time they did have and encouraging focus during sessions. Time management and decision-making became part of the learning.

LEARNINGS

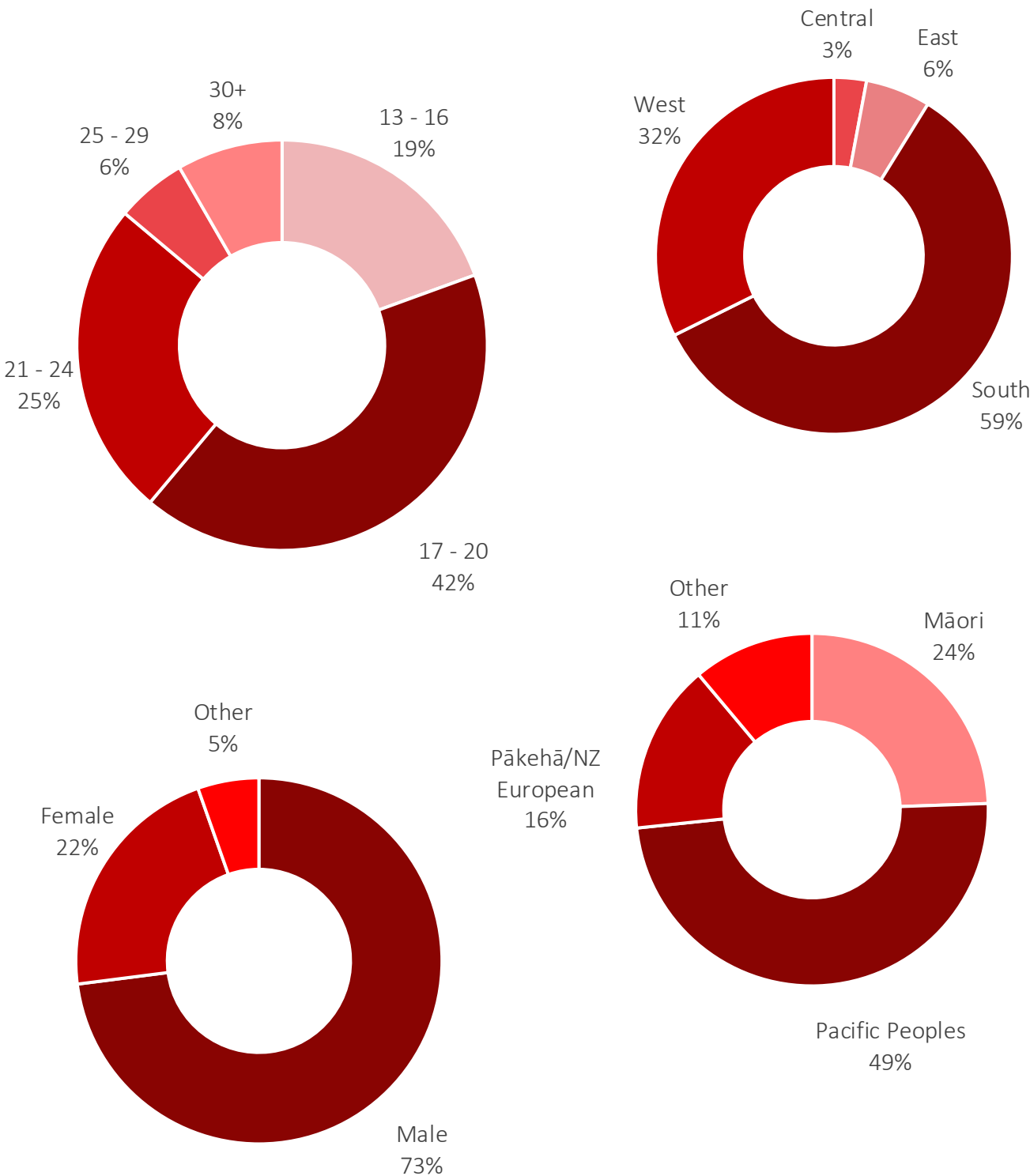
If we ran this again, we wouldn't change much — the model we've created works and is highly effective. What would improve it is bringing another facilitator on board. If one facilitator can support three artists to achieve this much in four months, a second facilitator would double the impact. This would also allow facilitators to take breaks and avoid burnout, making sure we're bringing our best to every session. This quarter proved that small-scale, high-support programs like Bridge The Gap can lead to real, measurable outcomes for young artists, and equip them with the necessary tools to keep creating and growing beyond the program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 37



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

IMAGES



EVENTS



OVERVIEW

Throughout the year we deliver events for our rangatahi to showcase their skills as artists in their chose creative industry.



MOST STREET 3



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by TK White

Saturday 03 May 2025, Silo Park

As part of the initiative to activate the city through youth-focused programming, we delivered an energetic, family-friendly Krump battle at Silo Park, led by renowned facilitator and OG Krump figure Oliva Luki. The event brought together young dancers (under 18s) from across Tāmaki Makaurau to compete for the title of Most Street Champ – Young Hitters. The event was designed to provide a safe, positive space for youth expression in a public setting, and it did just that, drawing a crowd of around 80 people, including families with toddlers and young children. For many of these rangatahi, it was their first opportunity to perform in a competition focused entirely on their age group and artform.

HIGHLIGHTS

The gathering drew around 80 community members and had a genuinely warm, family-friendly atmosphere. A standout feature of the event was that it centred entirely on young Krumpers, something that hasn't happened before in the Krump scene locally, and this visibly boosted the confidence and pride of the performers. Community members shared heartfelt feedback, saying it was the best they'd ever seen some of their young people battle, and there was a shared sense that this event was a long-overdue moment of recognition. We were also proud to host exhibition battles from long-time Krumpers, including world champions, which elevated the event's status and excitement, especially given that they were the featured performers for young Krumpers who have looked up to them in their time. Although this wasn't a formal collaboration, LH Combine, a respected group in the Krump community, brought several of their young people to participate, which added to the event's mana. It was also exciting to see some of our Te Karanga Navigators, experience a Krump event for the first time. They were visibly inspired, describing the energy as being validating for those in the battle.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge was being understaffed, which made managing the event a bit more demanding than expected. Additionally, because the event was held outdoors in a public space, we had to rely on battery-powered equipment, and although we managed this challenge, it is a risk for long events that need music. Despite these constraints, the event ran smoothly and maintained its energy throughout.

LEARNINGS

This event affirmed the value of spotlighting rangatahi in artforms that are often sidelined in mainstream programming. While dance isn't a core focus for Te Karanga, it's clear that holding smaller, youth-led events like this provides a powerful platform for growth, connection, and pride. We also saw the importance of cultural leadership, where Oliva's involvement played a key role in drawing in both participants and audience, showing that trusted figures can successfully rally community engagement. Finally, there's strong demand to build on this event, especially with interest in delivering something similar for adolescent youth next time. The momentum is there and the potential to grow it even further is real.

MOST STREET 3

IMAGES



MOST STREET 3

IMAGES





Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Albert Purcell and Lincoln Keepa

Report by TK White

Every Friday, The Button Factory, Auckland Central

As part of the initiative to activate the city through youth-focused programming, this quarter we launched Dojo — a weekly Friday night event designed as a safe and vibrant space for young people to gather, connect, and express themselves creatively. Led by young artists already active in the NZ music scene, Dojo offers a relaxed yet inspiring environment featuring a live DJ, open mic, and networking opportunities. Since launching on Friday May 02, the space has welcomed over 200 young people, averaging around 30 attendees each week. That consistent turnout reflects the need for spaces like this — places where rangatahi can be themselves, build confidence, and explore their creative identity. Over time, Dojo has grown into more than just a night out — it's become a creative home where young people return weekly, building friendships, momentum, and a genuine sense of belonging.

HIGHLIGHTS

A standout feature has been the popularity of our open mic segment, where young people share their writtens, unreleased tracks, or new music in a space free from pressure or perfectionism. Participants regularly use the space to workshop material, talk about their albums or projects, and gain feedback from their peers. The vibe is one of encouragement and curiosity, making it easy for first-timers to step up. Another major highlight this quarter was hosting our 'Love in the Mix' youth led event at Dojo — a live EP release event led by three of our emerging artists, which drew over 150 people into the space. We wanted to show participants what's possible in the same venue they regularly hang out in. The energy from the night had a big impact. We received strong feedback from rangatahi in the crowd who expressed a keen desire to perform themselves, asking how they could get involved and get on stage in future events. The event sparked inspiration and planted seeds of ambition among attendees, proving that showcasing peer-led success is one of the most powerful motivators we can offer. Dojo has also begun to attract other youth services and new faces from across the city, often through word-of-mouth. It's exciting to see the space growing its reach organically and being recognised as a key creative hub for rangatahi in central Auckland.

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges this quarter has been the technical learning curve. Our facilitation team had to quickly upskill in live sound and streaming software — areas that were new to most of us. Although this pushed us outside our comfort zone, the team adapted well and continued delivering high-quality experiences for our participants. Attendance numbers have been slightly lower than expected so a new strategy has been implemented for the second phase of the pilot, mainly centred around promoting specific weekly performers.

LEARNINGS

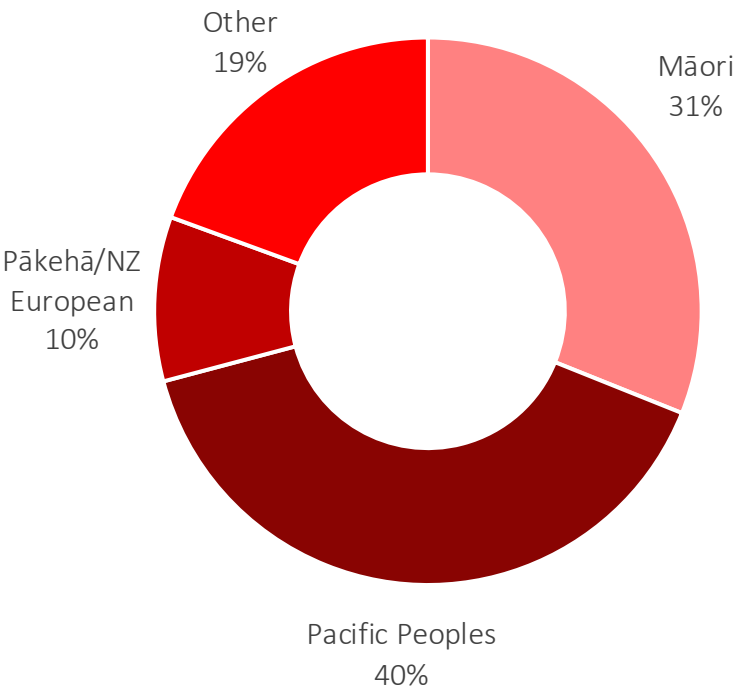
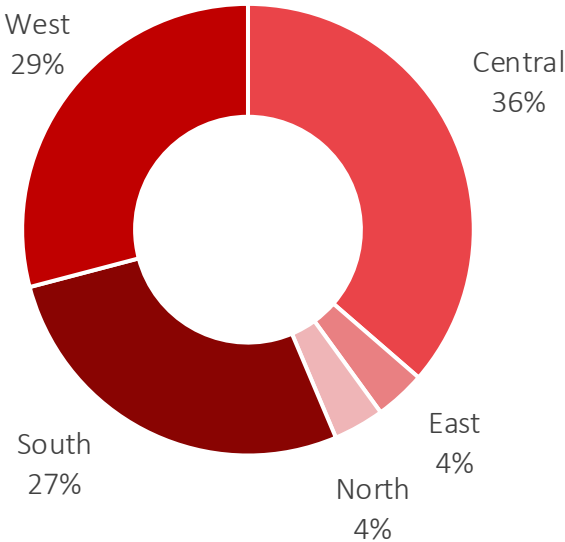
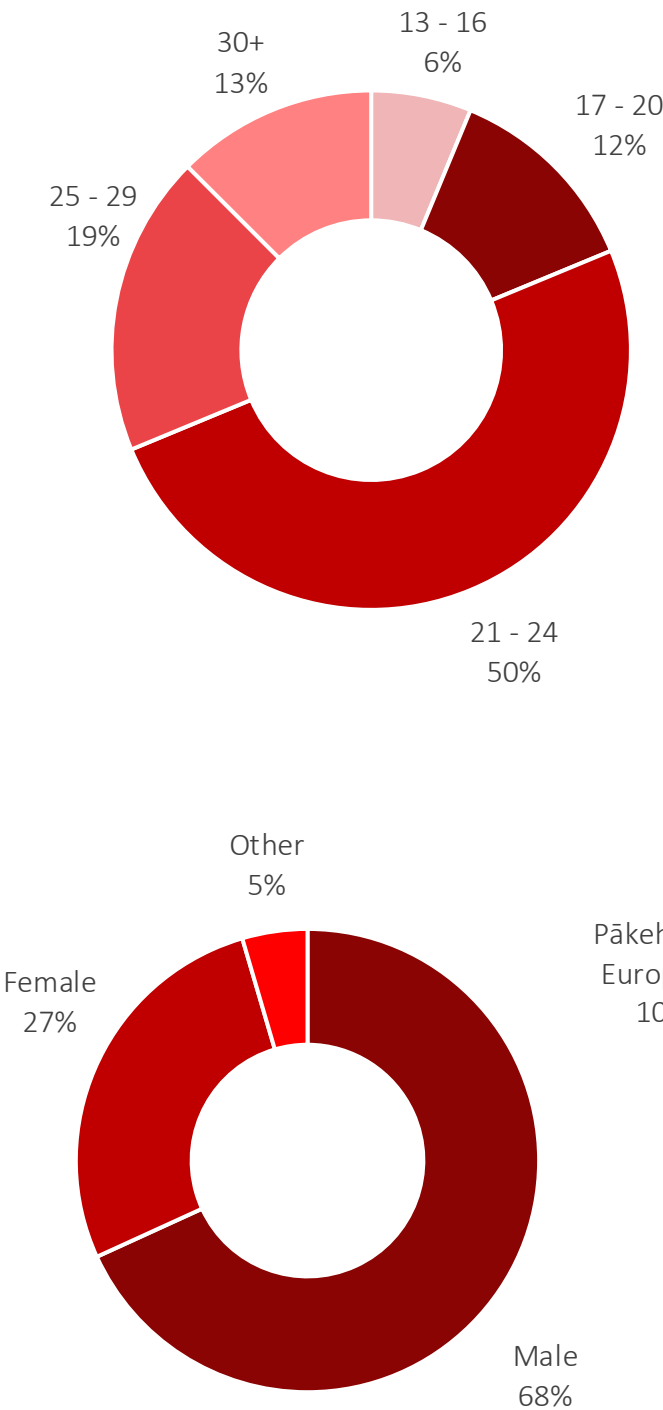
Dojo has reinforced that young people thrive in creative environments that are informal, youth-led, and centred on connection. The open mic format has been a powerful confidence-builder, and the presence of relatable facilitators has only deepened the sense of belonging. We've learned that consistent, low-pressure spaces can spark big shifts — creatively, socially, and emotionally. Many participants now see Dojo as more than just a drop-in event — they use it as a launchpad for content creation, music testing, and community building. Our team has grown alongside the kaupapa too, learning new skills and witnessing firsthand the value of showing up, adapting, and co-creating with rangatahi. Dojo is still young, but the wairua in the space is strong, and the potential is only growing.

DOJO

SUMMARY



Estimated participants: **200+**





RANGATAHI HIGHLIGHTS



I get to be a part of a community that gives me rare opportunities in a safe space with people who genuinely care about me and my goals.



Getting to meet new people and having new connections and learning and growing together as one, I feel empowered to do so much more with the mana and aroha from this program.



Being able to connect and open up as a male. It seems we don't have many spaces, or it feels like there isn't many spaces, for men to open up and be vulnerable and connect on certain topics.

The connection with the community. Being able to network with new people as well as maintain a strong connection with those already met is something special

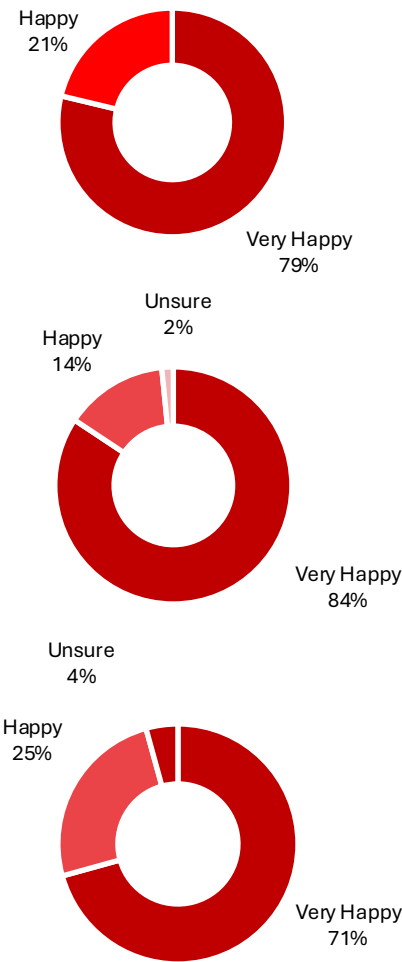
The experience I got to feel with this program is beautiful, my experience with all is better because the tribe sets the vibe and the vibe is on!

Being part of a group that's got your back, not just with music but life aswell!

Being able to work alongside and get tutored by established artists and take on creative challenges every week.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

HOW OUR RANGATAHI FEEL



HAPPY WITH THE PROGRAM

“Being able to korero about our talanoa topics, being able to share a space where we are all equals, sharing each others experiences and knowledge within the music industry etc. It brings out the BEST in us.”

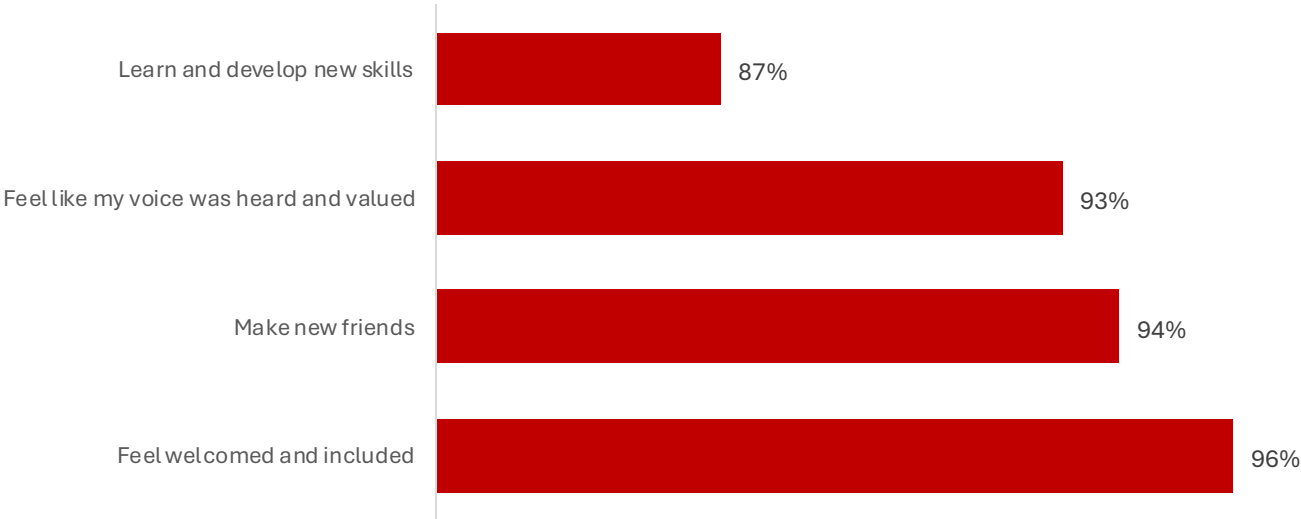
HAPPY WITH THE FACILITATORS

“Working with Church and Aidan and Melo and learning their process on writing and recording and learning to break it down and apply it to my recording understanding not just to rely on my written but to come off the top and record while the inspiration is there.”

HAPPY WITH THE FACILITIES/VENUE

“The best thing about this program is the access to free quality studio and equipment. Having a private space to create.”

PARTICIPATING ON THE PROGRAM HELPED ME TO...



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