PŪTAHI MANAWA

HEALTHY HEARTS FOR
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

HE PŪRONGO Ā-TAU
CoRE Annual Report

1 January - 31 December 2025

Mihi

Hikohiko te uira
Papā te whatitiri
Rū ana te whenua e
Kapakapa ana te manawa O Pūtahi Manawa
I te ngaromanga
O nunui mā o roroa mā
Haere koutou ki te pō
E ngā mahuetanga iho o rātou mā
Tēnā rā koutou katoa
Ngāti Whātua tē taea te kore e mihi
Ki a koutou e whakaruruhau nei i a mātou
E ngā iwi o te motu
E ngā pūkenga e ngā wānanga
E ngā kaitaunaki pūtea
Anei te reo o mihi e rere atu nei
Ki a koutou katoa
Ā tēnā, nei te puka-ā-tau e hora nei
Hei tirohanga mā koutou
Kia kitea mai ai te nui whakahekenga werawera
O ngā huruhuru o Pūtahi Manawa
Tīhei mauri ora!

Greetings

Lightning flashes
Thunder roars
The earth shakes
The heart of Pūtahi Manawa trembles
From the passing
Of our loved ones
Who have gone to the night
To us their descendants
Greetings
Acknowledgments to Ngāti Whātua
For their ongoing support
Also, to the many tribal peoples and communities
To the many research communities
To our funders
Please accept our grateful thanks
To all of you
We are pleased to present our Annual Report
For your perusal
To give detailed insight into the past year's activities
And respective financial reporting
May we move forward with vigor and energy

Composed by Matua Joe Pihema (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei), Pou Tikanga o Pūtahi Manawa

Contents

Mā pango, mā whero, ka oti te mahi

Through black and red, the work will be completed.

Whakatauki (Māori proverb)

O le tele o sulu e maua ai figota

Through collaboration, the most difficult challenges can be overcome.

Muāgagana (Samoan proverb)

These proverbs speak to the cornerstone of Pūtahi Manawa's modus operandi, the collaborative efforts of different groups working together to achieve a common desired outcome.

Ko Wai Mātou? |
Who Are We?

Vision

To achieve heart health equity for Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Kia tutuki ai te mana o te hauora ngākau mō ngā iwi Māori me ngā iwi o Te Moananui-a-Kiwa.

Ia ausia le tulaga tutusa o le soifua maloloina o le fatu mo Māori ma Tagata Pasefika.

Mission

Through research excellence, we will progress equity in heart health outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples and improve cardiovascular health and well-being for all in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Together, we will reach beyond a 'business as usual' approach and create a connected and collaborative environment for cardiovascular health research grounded within the Indigenous paradigm of Aotearoa. Our aim is to take a life course approach, guided by Māori and Pacific values and principles, to address the nation's crisis of equity for cardiovascular health in Aotearoa by earlier, more precise and personalised prevention, prediction, detection / diagnosis, and treatment of cardiovascular disease.

Ngā Wāriu o Pūtahi Manawa |
Pūtahi Manawa Values

Toitoi Manawa
Encourage and Inspire
We encourage and inspire behaviours and actions that align and reinforce our vision and mission.

Manawa Whānau
Team and Stakeholders
Our team and stakeholders are the foundation of our work.

Tānga Manawa
Place of Refuge
Our approach is unified and collective, we create safe spaces to engage and work.

Manawa Popore
Considerate
We are committed to an approach that enhances the mana and general well-being of others through considered behaviours, language, and actions.

Manawa Tina
Decisiveness
Our vision and mission encourages and inspires a decision-making process which is underpinned by our shared values, due diligence, and transparency.

Manawa Rahi
Resilience
When faced with challenges, we remain firm and optimistic in seeking positive outcomes.

Manawa Ora
Breath of Life
We acknowledge the connection between us all through the breath of life. Identifying and acknowledging our connections gives us strength.

Puna Manawa
Spring of Water
The source (or spring) of our vision and mission is the source of our mana. Through knowing the source, we can extend our care within our team and to our communities.

Mr Kent Gardner, Co-Chair

Dr Mataroria Lyndon, Co-Chair, (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Whātua, Waikato)

Professor Sue Crengle (Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha to Kāi Tahu)

Ms Sharon Shea, MNZM (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Hako).

Professor Palatasa (Tasa) Havea, ONZM (Vava'u, Tonga)

Mr Tamati Shepherd-Wipiiti (Te Whānau-a-Apanui, Ngāti Kahu)

Professor Simon Holdaway, Ex officio, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Reputation and Performance, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Nā Te Pōari | From The Board Co-Chairs

Tēnā koutou, talofa lava, mālō e lelei, and warm greetings.

This 2025 Annual Report marks a defining point in the journey of Pūtahi Manawa. As we reach the midpoint of our current Centre of Research Excellence term, it is a moment to reflect on what has been achieved, and on how that progress has been made - through research excellence, through partnership, through kaupapa Māori and Pacific leadership, and through a shared commitment to achieving heart health equity for our communities.

Pūtahi Manawa was established with a clear and urgent purpose: to address longstanding inequities in cardiovascular health for Māori and Pacific peoples. In 2025, we have seen this intent translate into tangible system shifts. Through the establishment of Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa and Le Alamea, we are moving beyond traditional, institution-led models of research toward approaches where communities lead - shaping priorities, driving delivery, and defining success.

This progress is reflected in the scale and quality of our research funding. Over the past year, Pūtahi Manawa has awarded $14.3 million in research funding across a portfolio of Integrated Research Modules and community-led projects. These investments are advancing research excellence, grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and responsive to the lived realities of whānau and communities.

A prime example of the research excellence delivered is the discovery of a new genetic variant associated with sudden cardiac death (SCD) that has mass utility for use in screening and preventing SCD in families around the world. Another world first with significant impact is the identification of an association between type 2 diabetes (T2DM) and hypertension which means earlier treatment of pre-diabetes at a lower level of blood glucose, increasing quality of life and halting the progression to T2DM.

We are equally encouraged by the strength of our emerging workforce. In 2025, we supported more than 50 tauira (students) through initiatives such as the hugely successful Maori (Kura Raumati) and Pacific (Fatu Malosi) summer research programmes again this year. This reflects a deliberate shift toward a research system that is more representative, more inclusive, and better equipped to deliver equitable outcomes. We see these tauira stepping into research careers, bringing their lived experiences, aspirations, and leadership into the future of cardiovascular health in Aotearoa.

At a governance level, Pūtahi Manawa continues to evolve to better reflect our kaupapa. The establishment of a Te Tiriti-led governance model, including Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti co-leadership, signals a deliberate commitment to partnership and equity by design. This shift supports our decisions - from strategic priorities to funding principles – are better grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

None of this progress happens in isolation. It reflects the collective efforts of our Board, leadership team, researchers, clinicians, Māori and Pacific community partners, and stakeholders across the motu and beyond. We acknowledge the strength of these relationships and the trust that underpins them. It is through this collaboration that Pūtahi Manawa continues to grow its reach, deepen its impact, and contribute to both national and global research in cardiovascular equity.

We also acknowledge and thank Professor Julian Paton, a founding Co-Director of Pūtahi Manawa, who completes his term with us in 2026. His leadership, commitment, and significant contribution over many years have helped shape the foundations of the Centre and advance its kaupapa. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe.

We also acknowledge the contribution of Professor Frank Bloomfield, who has completed his tenure as ex officio Board member, and welcome Professor Simon Holdaway, who joins the Board in this role. We thank them both for their leadership and ongoing contribution to the kaupapa of Pūtahi Manawa.

As we look ahead, the next phase of this journey will be critical. Planning for Centre of Research Excellence renewal is now underway, and with it comes the opportunity to build on the foundations laid over the past five years. Securing this future will be essential to sustaining momentum and realising the long-term vision of equitable heart health outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples.

We extend our sincere thanks to all those who contribute to this kaupapa - our Board, leadership team, researchers, partners, funders, and communities. This work is a collective endeavour, and its strength lies in the people who carry it forward.

Ngā manaakitanga, mālō ‘aupito, fa’afetai tele lava, and warm regards,

Kent Gardner, Board Co-Chair I Dr Mataroria Lyndon, Board Co-Chair, (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Whātua, Waikato)

Our Partners & Collaborators

We are proud to work alongside a network of leading academic institutions, health organizations, and community groups to drive innovation in heart research and health equity.

Host Institution

The foundation of our operations and research excellence.

Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland

Partner Organisations

Our core partners providing research infrastructure, and long-term support.

cure kids

Manawaora Integrated Health & Research

THE CENTRE FOR HEALTH

AUT

University of Otago

UC University of Canterbury Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha Christchurch New Zealand

Research & Advocacy Collaborators

Working at the intersection of clinical science, indigenous knowledge, advocacy & community health.

Heart Foundation

Christchurch Heart Institute Rongohau Manawa o Ōtautahi

Amanaki STEM Academy

PŪHORO He Waka Eke Noa

MANAAKI MANAWA CENTRE FOR HEART RESEARCH MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

HeartOtago Manawa Ōtākou

Cardiac Inherited Disease Group Cardiac Inherited Disease Registry N.Z.

Health Coalition Aotearoa

Pūtahi Manawa is solely funded by: Tertiary Education Commission Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Professor Julian Paton - Co-Director Heart Specialist.

Associate Professor Karen Brewer, (Whakatōhea, Ngai Te Rangi) - Co-Director Māori.

Soteria Ieremia, (Vaie'e, Saoluafata, Lepea and Faleasiu, Samoa) - Co-Director Pacific.

He mihi nā Ngā Manutaki Tautoru | Welcome from the Co-Directors

This year has been a defining year of growth and investment for Pūtahi Manawa. It has been an exceptionally exciting and demanding period, with $14.5 million in funding awarded through multiple highly competitive processes. These investments will significantly advance our vision of achieving heart health equity across Aotearoa New Zealand.

We have reached an important milestone with the completion of the first funding cycle for several flagship Integrated Research Modules (IRMs), including *Sweet pressure* and *Restoring the balance: Heart health of wāhine, fafine, va'ine, fifine and women in Aotearoa.* Notably, our IRM *Our hearts, our genes, our story* has identified a novel gene variant linked to sudden cardiac death in a Māori whānau - an advancement with the potential to inform life-saving screening. Importantly, this work has implications not only for Aotearoa but also for global populations, underscoring the international relevance of Indigenous-informed and co-designed research.

In 2025, three IRMs and three $1 million projects have been awarded. New initiatives include Using te Hā (the breath) for improved heart and mental health outcomes. Most significantly, two major Pacific-led projects have been funded—*Moana Nui-a-Kiwa Vuvale Bulabula: Pacific RHD pathways* and *Enhancing primary prevention of rheumatic fever in the Hutt Valley: strengthening coordination and surveillance under Pacific leadership*. This marks a first for Pūtahi Manawa and represents a major step forward in strengthening Pacific research leadership within our programme.

Workforce development continues to be a cornerstone of our strategy. Our summer research programmes remain highly successful, with 14 Māori and 25 Pacific students gaining experience in heart research. Encouragingly, we are now seeing participants progress into Honours, Master's, and PhD programmes. This reinforces that our approach is not only effective but also culturally appropriate, helping to build a sustainable and representative research workforce for the future.

Our commitment to engagement has extended beyond research into communities and national platforms, including outreach through schools, major events such as Polyfest and Waitangi, and contributions to sector forums such as the Fourth Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference on Gadigal Country (Sydney). Pūtahi Manawa members delivered 39 presentations on Māori and Pacific-led heart-health solutions, and the conference served as a powerful catalyst for developing and strengthening global research partnerships. These engagements are vital to bridging research, community knowledge, and public understanding.

We are pleased to formalise new partnerships with Manawaora Integrated Health and Research and Cure Kids, strengthening our collaborative ecosystem and extending our reach and impact.

We extend our sincere thanks to our Board for their continued guidance and support. We also acknowledge the exceptional contributions of our Māori Leadership Team, Pacific Leadership Team, Research Funding Panels including our International Panel (see page 33) and our operations team, whose professionalism underpins all that we achieve.

Looking ahead, Pūtahi Manawa is well-positioned to begin planning for a CoRE renewal bid. Improving heart health (the biggest killer in New Zealand) for Māori and Pacific Peoples will be good for everyone living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The major risk we face is that, if the CoRE re-bid is not successful, the 7.5 years of research in the present CoRE will not be fully leveraged, translated and implemented and our workforce pipeline of Māori and Pacific researchers and doctors ends abruptly. To mitigate against this, the multi-disciplinarity of our membership allows us to develop a compelling bid to further deliver on current government priorities, continuing our collective work towards positive heart health outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples and improved cardiovascular health and well-being for all in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Dr Karen Brewer
Ms Soteria Ieremia
Professor Julian FR Paton

From left: Dr Karen Brewer, Soteria Ieremia, Fatu Malosi Emerging Research Leader Award winner Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein, Dr Mataroria Lyndon and Prof Julian Paton

KEY OUTPUTS DASHBOARD

2025

$14.3 million
Research Funding

$4.37 million
To communities

$9.2 million
Workforce development

MĀORI AND PACIFIC RESEARCHERS FUNDED

84%

STUDENTS SUPPORTED

53

TE TIRITI-LED

Tangata Whenua on the Board	Tangata Whenua Board Co-Chair	Tangata Whenua Researchers funded	Tangata Whenua community projects
57%	New	41.5%	16

He Whakatau Pānga Rautaki | Strategic Impact Statement

This report is aligned to the Pūtahi Manawa Plan & Impact Statement (2024 - 2028). In 2025, Pūtahi Manawa advanced its strategic intent to achieve heart health equity for Māori and for Pacific peoples by embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, strengthening Indigenous research leadership, and implementing community-led research models. This work reflects a deliberate shift from traditional research approaches to a system grounded in equity, partnership, and Indigenous knowledge systems, with measurable progress demonstrated across governance, research delivery, workforce development, and global engagement.

Overall impact (2025)

Pūtahi Manawa has delivered on its Plan and Impact Statement by:

- Embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi across governance and research systems
- Shifting research from institution-led to community-led models
- Building a diverse, equity-focused workforce
- Demonstrating that Māori and Pacific knowledge systems drive innovation and impact
- Through the establishment of Le Alamea as a Pacific-led research model, and Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa as a kaupapa Māori research model, Pūtahi Manawa has initiated a system shift that will shape future impact, redefining who leads research, how it is conducted, and how outcomes are achieved. This is a reorientation of the research system: Where equity is designed, not assumed; where communities lead, rather than merely participating; and where the future of heart health in Aotearoa is shaped by those most affected.

Te Tiriti-Led governance and research practice

Outcome: System accountability and equity by design

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is embedded into CoRE governance and research practice for all our funded research. Our Advisory Board now operates under a Tiriti-based model, led by Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti co-chairs, with 50% Māori representation on the Board.

Our funding principles, against which all funding applications are assessed, incorporate Te Tiriti o Waitangi, requiring evidence of authentic partnerships, Māori leadership (where appropriate), and culturally grounded data governance. By maintaining these criteria as a requirement for all applications, and working with emerging researchers to develop their Tiriti response as needed, we ensure that heart research in Aotearoa is responsive to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

2025 Outcome:
Equity is structurally embedded across the CoRE, ensuring research is accountable to Te Tiriti and responsive to Māori priorities.

Partnerships with Māori and Pacific communities

Outcomes: Lay the foundation for meaningful and reciprocal research partnerships with Māori and Pacific communities around heart health; System transformation and future impact

We have established a transformative foundation for partnership through two funding streams, Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa and Le Alamea. These initiatives move beyond traditional top-down funding; both were created and are governed by our Māori and Pacific Leadership Teams, respectively. Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa provides bespoke support for community-embedded kaupapa Māori research grounded in whānau and community priorities, while Le Alamea, a Pacific-led, community-governed research and innovation platform, honours the Samoan proverb *"E fofo le alamea le alamea"*—empowering Pacific communities to lead their own healing through interdisciplinary innovation. This funding model establishes reciprocal research partnerships by shifting power and resources to community-based Māori and Pacific researchers and providing support as they further develop their research skills.

While projects funded under these streams are in early stages, Le Alamea and Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa represent a fundamental shift in how research is defined, funded, and led. It has:

- Repositioned Māori and Pacific communities as decision-makers and leaders of research
- Established new funding and governance processes centred on cultural knowledge, lived experience, and community authority
- Validated interdisciplinary approaches, including arts, storytelling, and digital innovation, as legitimate pathways to health impact

As projects progress, Le Alamea and Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa are expected to deliver culturally grounded, community-defined interventions, increased engagement and trust, and scalable Māori and Pacific-led models for health innovation.

2025 outcomes:

- New, separate, Pacific and Māori-led research models have been successfully established and implemented
- Demonstrated feasibility and strength of community-governed funding approaches, integrating clinical science with Indigenous-led design and lived experience
- Created a pipeline of community-driven research projects positioned to deliver future impact

Key indicators:

- Five Le Alamea and six Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa projects funded
- Eleven projects led or co-led by Māori or Pacific community organisations and one led by a Pacific doctoral student at a university.
- Sixteen new community partners engaged to conduct research

See Outcomes Framework page 100.

Workforce development and leadership

Outcomes: A diverse and future-focused research pipeline; Behavioural and system change

Pūtahi Manawa is strengthening the cardiovascular research workforce by increasing Māori, Pacific, and wāhine participation and leadership. Programmes such as Kura Raumati and Fatu Malosi are building pathways for emerging researchers, while Le Alamea and Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa expand workforce participation to include community leaders, practitioners, and knowledge holders.

In addition, through IRMs, fellowships, and community-led initiatives, all Pūtahi Manawa researchers are developing deeper understanding of bias, equity, and culturally responsive methodologies. At the start of the CoRE, we ran an Ako (reciprocal teaching and learning) webinar series on founding rules around equity and bias in research. Since then, we have not run additional formal sessions as the understanding of equity/research bias has, in most part, been achieved from the real-world experience of many of our researchers', performing studies with communities and community health organisations around Aotearoa New Zealand. Such examples include our IRMs and the experiences of Pūtahi Manawa research fellows (e.g. Drs Anna Ponnapalam and Debbie Zhao). Pūtahi Manawa's approach, which requires collaboration with relevant communities, has substantially expanded the experience of many heart health researchers in equity and bias.

2025 outcomes:

A broader, more representative workforce with strengthened capability to deliver equity-focused

research and innovation; Demonstrated shifts in research design, behaviour, and capability, with equity increasingly embedded in how research is conducted.

Key indicators:

- 53 students supported
- 84% of researchers funded in 2025 identify as Māori and/or Pacific - a big shift from where we first started
- Two IRMs and three projects delivered

See Outcomes Framework page 100 and graph below.

Global Indigenous partnerships

Outcome: International Indigenous leadership, innovation, and knowledge exchange

Pūtahi Manawa continues to strengthen global partnerships with Indigenous researchers, communities, and industry to advance equitable cardiovascular outcomes and bring the best science and innovation back to Aotearoa.

A significant milestone in 2025 was our contribution to the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference, where Pūtahi Manawa demonstrated leadership in Indigenous cardiovascular research through a strong programme presence, sponsorship, and delivery of Māori and Pacific-led research. This engagement strengthened relationships with Indigenous leaders across Australia and the Pacific, resulting in new collaborations and the inclusion of international expertise within Pūtahi Manawa's Scientific Review Committee and funding panels. Following a positive encounter at the CSANZ Indigenous Conference, we now have a partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim. This global entity supported the Kura Raumati and Fatu Malosi summer scholarship scheme this year and will continue to do so every year until the end of this CoRE.

Building on this global platform, Le Alamea has enabled new forms of international collaboration. This includes the development of a Le Alamea-funded AI Nutrition platform, delivered in partnership with the Equitech Collective and global collaborators in Singapore. This initiative integrates advanced digital health technology with Pacific cultural knowledge, supporting culturally relevant nutrition and behaviour change. In parallel, collaboration with internationally acclaimed arts organisation Black Grace has strengthened the role of arts, storytelling, and cultural expression as mechanisms for health engagement and knowledge translation. Together, these partnerships demonstrate a distinctive model that brings Indigenous leadership, global expertise, technology, and culture into alignment.

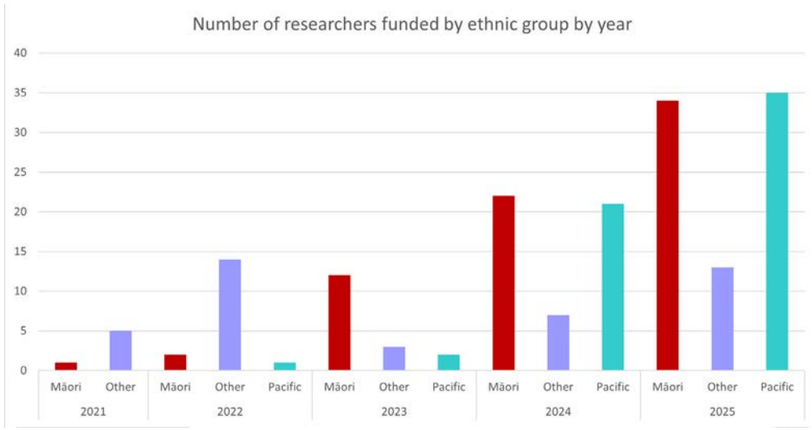
2025 outcomes:

- Strengthened global Indigenous partnerships across research, industry, and creative sectors
- Increased international collaboration and influence through CSANZ and Pacific networks
- Established new models integrating technology, culture, and community leadership

Key indicators:

- Three new international partnerships established
- Five strategic international contributors engaged in advisory and research roles.

Dr Karen Brewer, Ms Soteria Ieremia, Prof Julian Paton



Delivering on our Outcomes Framework - Equity *(page 100) Graph giving the number of primary investigators and students funded by Pūtahi Manawa by ethnic group for the years 2021 to 2025 - showing the increase in Maori and Pacific researchers and the number of researchers funded from the inception of Pūtahi Manawa.*

Kia Kounga Te Rangahau | Research Excellence

Pūtahi Manawa has brought together, for the first time in a Centre of Research Excellence, Māori, Pacific and non-Māori-non-Pacific researchers working in unison. Our unique approach combines Māori and Pacific Peoples' science and methodologies alongside conventional science and methods. Our funding model undertakes health research not only with our communities but also by our communities, adopting their definitions of research excellence, including key directions as outlined in Linda Tuhiwai Smith's 2021 book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, such as:

- Decolonisation: Stripping away colonial assumptions.
- Healing: Addressing historical trauma.
- Transformation: Creating tangible positive change.
- Mobilisation: Empowering communities to take collective action

Extra to this, in reference to the highest standards in academic research, research excellence encompasses several key aspects: rigorous methodology, innovation & originality, significance & impact, integrity & ethics, collaboration & engagement, sustainability & reproducibility. Pūtahi Manawa achieves all of this and adds a uniqueness that captures the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

Research conducted by communities and centring Indigenous methodologies has been amplified in 2025 through our two new funds: Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa and Le Alamea Pūtahi Manawa. This approach goes further than the "with" communities model, as access, participation, and workforce capacity increase within our Māori and Pacific communities, and is the best way to close the heart health gap in Aotearoa. This section outlines our research funds, research funding awarded, research updates and completed projects in 2025.

Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa: Community-led kaupapa Māori research driving innovation in heart health

Takiwai Russell-Camp, from the Maori Leadership Team played an important role in the development of Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa

Established by Pūtahi Manawa Māori Leadership Team, Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa is a fund supporting kaupapa Māori research projects that place whānau, iwi and community leadership at the centre of heart health innovation.

Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa supports projects designed and led by communities themselves. The result is Māori research excellence - methodologically sound, culturally grounded, immediately relevant, and focused on achieving equitable outcomes for Māori.

According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith[1], research excellence for Māori is defined by a strategic agenda centred on tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and social justice. It is not a neutral academic exercise, but a transformative process categorized by four "tides" or movements: survival, recovery, development, and self-determination.

Unlike Western science, which often prioritises objectivity and distance, Māori research excellence demands relational accountability. Joint control and guardianship are essential.

The projects selected for the Te Korowai fund are exemplary of Maori research excellence. Te Korowai also demonstrates how Māori-led research can advance multiple priorities of the Tertiary Education Strategy 2025–2030.

Integration and collaboration sit at the heart of the fund. Projects are grounded in partnerships between iwi, community organisations, researchers, clinicians and emerging Māori scholars. These collaborations ensure that research is quickly translated into practice.

Access and participation are strengthened by supporting Māori researchers and communities to lead their own work. By resourcing kaupapa Māori approaches, the fund opens pathways for Māori knowledge holders, practitioners and emerging researchers to participate in the tertiary research ecosystem.

Achievement is accelerated by bringing students together with senior researchers in project teams, supporting students into research careers and building community connections while they are still studying. This collaboration positions students well to move into the clinical, community, or research mahi that they are passionate about after their studies.

The programme also contributes to economic impact and innovation by developing new models of health research that integrate mātauranga Māori with contemporary science, generating solutions with the potential to improve health outcomes and reduce long-term healthcare costs.

Spearheaded by the Māori Leadership Team, Associate Professor Karen Brewer, Co-Director Māori of Pūtahi Manawa, wanted the fund to overcome the difficulties she had experienced in conducting community-based kaupapa Māori research and fitting whānau aspirations into standardised requirements.

"A huge part of Pūtahi Manawa's aim is to have people on the ground, from the community, conducting the research that they need to help support their community to thrive. Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa is doing exactly that." – Associate Professor Karen Brewer.

Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa reflects the direction of Aotearoa New Zealand's evolving science and innovation system, which places greater emphasis on mission-led research, collaboration and demonstrable impact. The programme also contributes to economic impact and innovation by developing new models of health research that integrate mātauranga Māori with contemporary science. By supporting kaupapa Māori research within the health and society domain, the fund strengthens Māori research capability, builds partnerships among communities, clinicians, and researchers, and generates solutions to real-world health challenges.

All projects are hosted by community organisations, with the fund engaging seven community organisations and two universities across six projects. Toi Tangata, Manawaora Integrative Health and Research Centre, Te Piringa Kōtuku, Tuhauora Medical Associates Ltd., Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia Ltd., Heart Foundation NZ, Waka Ama Aotearoa NZ, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago, and Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland.

Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa wānanga

Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa-funded researchers and their teams came together on the 11 December 2025 at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland to connect, share their aspirations and support each other as they embark on their respective projects.

Dr Mataroria Lyndon, Tangata Whenua Co-Chair of the Board and Māori Leadership Team member, has been involved in Pūtahi Manawa since the first conversations about setting up a heart health equity CoRE in 2019 and addressed the researchers at the wānanga.

"From a kōrero in 2019 with Dame Naida Glavish to being here today with you all, this is te whakatinanatanga—the embodiment of our aspirations for this kaupapa." – Dr Mataroria Lyndon.

Researchers valued the opportunity for whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building) and formed a contact group among themselves to foster collaboration and mutual support.

A whare of innovation for heart health equity

Together, these initiatives highlight the breadth of innovation that emerges when research is grounded in culture, whakapapa and lived experience and offer a powerful example of research that generates practical outcomes rather than purely academic outputs.

As Aotearoa looks to the future of how we do research, programmes like Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa demonstrate the potential of Māori-led innovation to strengthen collaboration, widen participation and deliver meaningful outcomes for Aotearoa.

Te Korowai cohort and Pūtahi Manawa staff, December 2025. Photo: Tracey Kellett

1. Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2021). Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. London: Zed Books.

Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa projects

Ngākau Ora: The connection of storytelling and heart health

Host Organisation: Toi Tangata

Chelsea Cunningham. Photo: supplied

Research Team

Chelsea Cunningham-McLean (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāi Tahu, Ngā Rauru), Toi Tangata - Lead Investigator
Dr Gianna Leoni (Ngāi Takoto, Ngāti Kurī, Te Aupōuri), Te Hiku Media - Co-Investigator
Dr Ngahuia Mita (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Hako), University of Otago - Co-Investigator
Dr Terina Raureti (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Rangitihi), University of Otago - Co-Investigator
Professor Anne-Marie Jackson (Ngāti Whātua, Te Roroa, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Kahu o Whangaroa), Rehutai Consultancy -Mentor

Amount Awarded: $250,000
Project Duration: November 2025 to October 2028

Description

Ngākau Ora aims to support Māori innovators to write, publish, and share their own stories from their own voices, in their own words. Too often, whānau are asked to share their mātauranga for someone else's research or report. This project flips that narrative: Instead of being written about, we want to support our whānau, kaimahi, and community leaders to become the authors of their own narratives.

Through a series of online workshops, writing retreats, and one-on-one mentoring, this project will create a safe, supportive, and empowering environment for both experienced Māori researchers and emerging writers to strengthen their writing skills and confidence. Central to this is a tuakana-teina approach, fostering intergenerational relationships to uplift Māori storytellers and researchers at all levels.

Central to this project is ngākau ora; healing and strengthening the heart through storytelling. Writing can be a deeply reflective and healing act, allowing people to process, honour, and celebrate their kaupapa in ways that nourish wairua and hauora.

To bring this vision to life, Toi Tangata is developing an Indigenous wellbeing journal, a digital platform where kaupapa Māori research and community-led initiatives can be published side by side. Whether focused on kai sovereignty, hauora, korikori, or mātauranga Māori, the journal will reflect the depth of Māori-led innovation across the motu.

The project strongly reflects the Pou Tāhu of Manawa Ora, which focuses on building Māori research capability. By supporting emerging Māori writers and researchers through a tuakana-teina approach, the initiative strengthens confidence, skills and leadership within the Māori research community.

Strengthening how people reconnect to the environment for the health of the planet

Host Organisation: Manawaora Integrated Health Research

Research Team

Kaewa Savage (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Rangitihi, Tūwharetoa ki Tai, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāi Tahu), Manawaora Integrated Health Research - Lead Researcher
Dr Anna Rolleston (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangi, Ngāti Pukenga), Manawaora Integrated Health Research - Co-Investigator

Amount Awarded: $182,268
Project Duration: March 2026 to October 2028

Description

This project explores how strengthening people's connection to te taiao can enhance both environmental and human wellbeing. Through wānanga and hands-on activities grounded in mātauranga Māori, whānau develop their own approaches to caring for the whenua and incorporating traditional practices such as Rongoā Māori into everyday life. The research builds on pilot work showing clear links between time spent in nature and improvements in heart health and overall well-being.

The project is creating practical, community-driven strategies that support environmental stewardship, reduce stress, and uplift cultural identity. Its impacts will benefit Māori whānau, Rongoā practitioners, health researchers, and community organisations by strengthening knowledge systems, revitalising traditional practices, and offering an Indigenous, environment-centred model of wellbeing. The findings will also contribute to future research, including the lead researcher's PhD pathway, and provide a foundation for wider community initiatives focused on reconnecting people with the environment.

E Hika, Kia Manawa Nui, Kia Manawa Ora!

Host Organisation: Te Piringa Kōtuku, Tuhauora Medical Associates Ltd

Dr Rahiri and Tuhoe's daughter and her team at Waka Ama nationals, 2026. Photo: supplied.

Research Team

Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara, Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi), Te Piringa Kōtuku, Tuhauora Medical Associates Ltd - Lead Investigator
Dr Jason Tuhoe (Hauraki, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Pikiao), Te Piringa Kōtuku, Tuhauora Medical Associates Ltd - Co-Investigator
Sugar Te Paa (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara, Te Atihāunui-a-Pāpārangi), Taniwha Outrigger Canoe Club - Co-Investigator and Project Manager
Ben Finau (Samoa), Taniwha Outrigger Canoe Club - Co-Investigator and Waka Ama Coach
Amiria Mita (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou), Waka Ama New Zealand - Co-Investigator and Waka Ama Coordinator
Noah Appleby (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki), Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland - Research Assistant
Professor Matire Harwood (Ngāpuhi), Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland - Co-Investigator and Research Supervisor

Amount Awarded: $250,000
Project Duration: December 2025 to February 2028

Description

This project works directly with the Waka Ama community to explore how participation in this rapidly growing intergenerational sport supports and improves heart health. Through a kaupapa Māori research approach, the project brings free cardiovascular disease risk assessments, GP consults, and health education directly into Waka Ama spaces, making preventative care accessible and culturally grounded for kaihoe and their whānau. By gathering both clinical data and lived experiences, the research team aims to build a clearer understanding of heart health among Māori and Pacific paddlers and the role Waka Ama plays in strengthening wellbeing.

The project is co-designed with Waka Ama leaders, clinicians, and researchers who whakapapa to the community, ensuring that all activities—workshops, interviews, surveys, and rangatahi career pathways—are shaped by the aspirations of those involved.

Its long-term impact includes the creation of a Waka Ama Hauora Framework: a sustainable, community-led model that embeds regular heart health checks, health promotion, and workforce development into the Waka Ama environment.

Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri reflects that after years immersed in medical training and surgical care, there was a strong pull to return her skills, time, and energy back to the community that shaped her.

"I wouldn't be a doctor if it wasn't for Waka Ama. It was through our 2004 World Championships campaign that Lara Collins, CE of Waka Ama NZ, introduced me to Professor Matire Harwood, who went on to support my journey into medicine and beyond.

This project brings together everything that has shaped me — Waka Ama, hauora, and a deep commitment to looking after those coming through."

Noah Appleby, the research assistant on this project, is one example of how the next generation of Māori researchers is being supported in practice. Guided by Rahiri through ongoing mentorship and supervision across his research journey to date, Noah has been supported not only academically but also through strong whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building).

This mentorship reflects Rahiri's broader commitment to growing Māori research capacity and supporting pathways for emerging researchers within kaupapa Māori spaces. The Pūtahi Manawa funding has

supported aspects of this project and enabled opportunities for tauira, demonstrating the importance of investing in both people and relationships alongside research outputs.

Manawa mai, Tatau mai: Heart to heart with Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei

Host Organisation: Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia Ltd

Members of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei with Rowena Dunn front-right. Photo: Tracey Kellett

Research Team

Rowena Dunn (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi), Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia Ltd - Research Coordinator
Erina Korohina (Ngāti Porou), Korohina Rangahau - Co-Investigator
Dr Ripeti Haretuku (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hau - Tūpuna Papahurihia, Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue, Maketu - Perepe Tapsell, Taranaki, Ngāti Ruanui - Kotiro Hinerangi, Whakatōhea, Opape - Mokomoko), Mauri Ora Associates
Joe Pihema (Ngāti Whātua), Te Kawau - Cultural Advisor

Amount Awarded: $316,425
Project Duration: December 2025 to February 2028

Description

This project gathers the heart health experiences of Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei whānau through pūrākau—stories shared kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) — to capture the realities, challenges, and strengths that shape manawa ora (heart wellbeing) for the hapū. By centring whānau voices, the project builds a culturally grounded picture of heart health that reflects lived experiences with the health system, lifestyle and wellbeing practices, and the impacts of colonisation and inequitable access to care. The insights will guide iwi-led decision-making, helping Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei create strategies, resources, and services grounded in tikanga, mātauranga, and the aspirations of whānau.

This kaupapa strengthens iwi capability by growing a local research workforce, supporting intergenerational knowledge exchange, and embedding whānau leadership throughout the process. The findings will contribute to a hapū-specific heart health profile and provide an evidence base for future initiatives—whether developing preventative tools, designing culturally aligned health programmes, or exploring opportunities such as māra kai, hīkoi-based activities, and whenua-connected wellbeing initiatives. Ultimately, the project ensures Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei can shape their own heart-health solutions, uphold data sovereignty, and build long-term, sustainable approaches to improving health outcomes for their people.

In 2024/25, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia hosted a student through the Kura Raumati programme to work on a project that laid the groundwork for this larger piece of work with Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa. Again in 2025/26, that work was built upon by another Kura Raumati student, Arihia Waitai-Morehu from Ngāti Whātua. See page 61 for more details about Arihia's work.

From Whenua to Whānau: The health and environmental potential of tūpuna-inspired eating

Host Organisation: Manawaora Integrated Health & Research

Research Team

Erina Korohina (Ngāti Porou), Manawaora Integrated Health & Research - Lead Investigator
Assoc Prof Andrew Reynolds, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago - Lead Investigator
Jamie Iro (Ngai Te Rangi, Cook Islands), Manawaora Integrated Health & Research, Co-Investigator
Dr Marama McDonald (Ngāti Kauwhata, Rangitāne), Manawaora Integrated Health & Research - Co-Investigator

Amount Awarded: $250,000
Project Duration: March 2026 to October 2028

This project explores how the kai practices of our tūpuna can support healthier eating for Māori today. Beginning with whānau already engaged in the *Te Ara Poutama: Living Well with Heart Disease* and *Wāhine* IRM heart health kaupapa, we will draw on trusted relationships to gather pūrākau about how ancestors grew, prepared, and shared kai, and how these practices might guide modern eating.

Description

A review of Māori literature will help identify key tūpuna-inspired ways of eating. These practices will then be examined through evidence reviews and Aotearoa-specific modelling to understand their potential impacts on health, grocery costs, healthcare savings, and the environment. Using these insights, we will work with Māori artists and communities to co-design educational resources that share practical guidance—such as foods to prioritise, traditional ways of growing and harvesting kai, and support for wāhine during ikura (menstruation) and hapūtanga (pregnancy). These resources will be tested with whānau and health professionals before being refined and shared widely, ensuring they are culturally grounded, useful, and accessible.

The project emerged from community kōrero during the collaborative co-design phase of *Te Ara Poutama*, a Pūtahi Manawa and Heart Foundation co-funded Integrated Research Module and *Restoring the balance: Heart health of wāhine, Fafine, Va'ine, Fifine and Women in Aotearoa*, another Pūtahi Manawa-funded IRM.

He Aronga Hou: Re-imagining early detection of heart risk for Māori

Host Organisation: Manawaora Integrated Health & Research

Research Team

Dr Anna Rolleston (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangi, Ngāti Pukenga), Manawaora Integrated Health & Research - Co-Investigator
Whetu Marama Manihera (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangi, Ngāti Pukenga, Ngāti Rehua), Manawaora Integrated Health & Research - Co-Investigator
Tasha Burton, Manawaora Integrated Health & Research - Co-Investigator (PhD candidate)
Prof Rob Doughty, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland- Co-investigator
Assoc Prof Katrina Poppe, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland - Co-investigator
Kataraina Davis (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Hine), Heart Foundation - Co-investigator
Assoc Prof Gerry Devlin, Heart Foundation - Co-investigator
Dr Patrick McHugh, Turanga Health - Co-investigator

Amount Awarded: $250,000
Project Duration: November 2025 - October 2027

Description

This project aims to support earlier detection of heart disease for Māori, recognising that many whānau experience heart problems younger and often without warning. Heart disease can develop quietly over time, and standard health checks do not always identify risk soon enough. This research brings together strong community guidance, improved primary care approaches, and advanced heart scans and blood tests to detect early signs that might otherwise be missed.

Working with Māori adults assessed as having "intermediate risk" of heart disease, the project offers enhanced testing to look for early signs of heart damage. Where early disease is identified, participants will be supported with more targeted care to reduce future risk. The kaupapa builds on Te Ara Poutama: Living Well with Heart Disease and has been developed alongside whānau and communities to ensure the approach reflects Māori values, experiences, and aspirations. Ultimately, this work aims to create more equitable pathways to early diagnosis and prevention, improving long-term heart health outcomes for Māori.

Manawaora Integrative Health and Research is a Kaupapa Māori community research centre that works as a collective. When one person is named on a research application, they come with the backing and support, connections and access to the knowledge of everyone at the centre.

Pilot Bay, Tauranga Moana. Photo: Tracey Kellett

Le Alamea Pūtahi Manawa : supporting Pacific-led solutions for heart health

The Le Alamea Pūtahi Manawa Fund is supporting a new generation of Pacific-led research that is grounded in community knowledge and focused on delivering meaningful improvements in heart health outcomes for Aotearoa.

Designed and delivered by the Pūtahi Manawa Pacific Leadership Team, the fund invests in interdisciplinary projects that bring together researchers, health providers and Pacific communities to address the persistent inequities in cardiovascular disease. In doing so, it advances new knowledge while strengthening the systems, relationships and capabilities required to translate that knowledge into impact.

At its core, the fund reflects a commitment to research that is both excellent and relevant—work that is shaped by, and accountable to, the communities it serves. Guided by the Sāmoan proverb “E fofo le alamea le alamea” - the alamea heals itself - the fund centres an approach where Pacific communities are not participants in research but leaders in defining priorities, designing solutions, and driving change.

Strategic Alignment

A key contribution of the fund is its role in growing Pacific participation and achievement in research. Funded projects create opportunities for Pacific communities, academics, and early-career researchers to engage in research pathways through mentorship, hands-on experience, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In doing so, they are helping to build a more diverse and sustainable research workforce for Aotearoa.

Equally important is the fund’s emphasis on connection—between research, education, and communities. Projects are inherently collaborative, spanning universities, health services, and community organisations. This strengthens the integration of teaching, research and practice, ensuring that learning is grounded in real-world contexts and that findings are translated into tangible outcomes.

The research supported by Le Alamea responds to the growing expectation that publicly funded research delivers clear public value. By focusing on cardiovascular health inequities—an area of significant national need—the fund ensures that investment is directed toward outcomes that matter for Pacific People, families, and communities. In this way, it demonstrates the ability to deliver both academic excellence and measurable impact.

Aligned with the evolving direction of Aotearoa’s science system, the fund reflects a shift toward mission-led research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and stronger system connectivity. By investing in Pacific-led approaches and embedding community partnership within research design, Le Alamea contributes to a more inclusive, responsive and effective national research system.

Ultimately, the Le Alamea Pūtahi Manawa Fund demonstrates how targeted investment can deliver across multiple priorities: growing participation, strengthening capability, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that research leads to real-world change. It is an example of a tertiary and research system working as intended—supporting diverse talent, responding to national challenges, and delivering outcomes that benefit all of Aotearoa.

Le Alamea Pūtahi Manawa projects

Heartstrings heritage: Learning from Pasifika family stories

Host Organisation: Mana Pacific Consultants

Professor Tracie Mafile'o. Photo: supplied

Research Team:

Prof Tracie Mafile'o (Tonga: Te'ekiu), Mana Pacific Consultants - Lead Investigator
Ms Fa'aeafale'upolu Samuelu (Samoa: Vaigaga, Foālalo, Sale'aula), Mana Pacific Consultants - Investigator
Ms Aburi Kusilifu (Solomon Islands: Kwai Island, East Malaita), Mana Pacific Consultants - Investigator
Mr Daniel Taylor, Mana Pacific Consultants - Investigator
Ms Vea Mafile'o (Tonga: Ha'apai), Taro Patch Creative - Collaborator

Amount Awarded: $239,789
Project Duration: January 2026 - July 2027

Description

Our research project shifts the focus from negative experiences of Pasifika families dealing with cardiovascular disease and focuses instead on family stories of overcoming difficulties, heart health, advocacy, and wellbeing. Cardiovascular disease is a major health issue for Pasifika. Given the likeliness of it being passed down between generations, it has been described as an 'inherited heart disease'. Heart health is therefore a collective experience for Pasifika families and their communities. Meaningful connections and coping strategies to navigate wellbeing journeys are contained in Pasifika family stories shared across generations. Pasifika peoples have holistic strengths with family contributing workable solutions.

This research will examine how Pasifika families have been navigating the health system by capturing their lived experiences of advocacy across the generations through their family stories. Through an exploration of how familial connections create and maintain resilience and healing for Pasifika families, we aim to identify and highlight effective strategies for improving healthy heart outcomes. Reciprocity in intergenerational knowledge transfer within Pasifika families is also important as it enables a co-creational exchange between younger and older generations.

Our project will talanoa with Pasifika families who have a family member with cardiovascular disease and will produce inspirational video resources and workshops for Pasifika communities and health providers to promote Pasifika heart health equity. This can be used to inform and educate others experiencing similar circumstances in addition to being a resource for cardiovascular focused health providers.

As Pasifika researchers, we have close family members with cardiovascular disease and lived experience navigating health systems, compelling our passion for actionable research to address Pasifika heart health equity.

Impacting Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease Awareness Through Art Health Model

Host Organisation: The Black Grace Trust

Neil Ieremia and Black Grace dancers. Photo: supplied.

Investigators:

Neil Ieremia, ONZM (Father's Villages: Vaie'e, Matautu Falealili, Saluafata, Safotulafai; Mother's Villages: Lepea, Faleata, Puipa'a, Faleasiu, Lefaga - Samoa), The Black Grace Trust
James Wasmer (Tonga), The Black Grace Trust
Dr Sarah Fairley - Medical Advisor
Dr Siobhan Tu'akoi - Research Advisor
Fuimaono Dr Karl Pulotu-Endemann - Research Advisor
Dr Julie Dao, Sonorus - Collaborator
Leki Jackson-Bourke - Playwright and Performance Artist
Maiava Nathaniel Lees - Actor and Director
Faiumu Matthew Saiapu aka Anonymouz - Composer and Producer
Ant Sang - Artist and Designer
Delainy Kennedy - Artificial Intelligence
Alt Group - Collaborator

Amount Awarded: $500,000
Project Duration: February 2026 - September 2028

Description

Can targeted arts-led initiatives effectively increase awareness of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease, contributing to improved health outcomes for Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand?

For Pacific peoples, artistic expression - through storytelling, performance, music, and dance - is deeply embedded in daily life and cultural identity. Yet, this potential has not been harnessed to address Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease.

The approach draws on these rich traditions to design experiences that resonate with Pacific communities, delivering vital health messages in ways that feel familiar, relevant, and empowering.

Objectives:

- To design and develop an innovative, culturally grounded art health model to communicate key messages on Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease.
- To pilot this art health model in South Auckland schools (primary to secondary schools) and community settings (i.e. Pacific churches), ensuring accessibility, relatability, and cultural resonance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of an arts-based health strategy in improving knowledge, shifting attitudes, and influencing behavioural intentions.
- To offer families and community members the opportunity to undergo a heart health check, using the latest offering from Sonorus (an Australian-based medical device company focussed on preventing RHD through an accessible, AI-powered screening tool that can be used by anyone, anywhere to screen for RHD).

This project is phase one of a three-phase scalable art-health model, in this case for rheumatic fever. Phase one includes the development of the content - performance, short film, and print assets and the pilot of the live performance and educational resources combined with Sonorous heart testing for South Auckland school children and their wider family and church communities.

Long-term impact

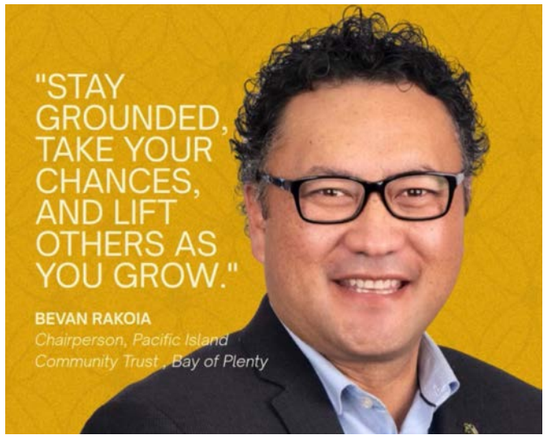
The long-term goal is to scale this approach nationally, tailoring the model to meet the needs of different Pacific communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tiritiria to nga vaevae ki mua: Tauranga Cook Island Community Sports Access Program

Host Organisation: Kūki Airani Tauranga - Te Moananui Society Incorporated

Research Team

Bevan Rakoia (Cook Islands), Pacific Island Community Trust (PICT), Te Moananui Society Inc. - Project Lead



Dr Cory Malbon (Aitutaki), Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi - Research Assistant
Dr Levi Simiona (Atiu), Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi - Research Assistant
Kristen Matthews (Mangaia, Aitutaki, Ngāti Numangatini, Cook Islands), Momenta Charitable Trust - Research Supervisor
Dr Joshua Agnew (Rarotonga, Mangaia, Aitutaki, Cook Islands), Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi - Research Supervisor
Banaba Haurua (Mauke, Cook Islands), Tauranga Moana Culture Group- Community Advisor
Dr Simone Watkins (Mo'ototua, Sāmoa), Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland - Qualitative Research Advisor

Amount Awarded: $200,000
Project Duration: February 2026 - August 2028

Description

When we look at disaggregated data breaking down Pacific groups by island nation Cook Island Peoples in Aotearoa show higher rates of CVD than other Pacific groups. This indicates the need for targeted, culturally specific approaches rather than treating all Pacific communities as one group.

Our proposed initiative Tiritiria tō ngā vaevae ki mua: Tauranga Cook Island Community Sports Access Program aims to improve physical activity, heart health, and wellbeing for our community by reducing cost barriers and creating culturally meaningful pathways into sport.

Long-term impact

This evidence will be compiled into a comprehensive report for Te Moananui Society to support advocacy and funding for ongoing delivery. It will also be shared with Pacific Island Community Trust Bay of Plenty, local councils, Pacific Providers, and seasonal worker networks to explore opportunities to scale the model across wider Pacific communities.

Fatu na totō: Co-Designing Heart Health Knowledge with Samoan women

Host Organisation: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Lead Researcher

Amy Maslen (Samoa, Manono and Sapapali`i), Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Supervisory and Advisory Team at the University of Auckland

Professor Satupaitea Viali - Research supervisor
Professor Peter Shepherd – Research supervisor
Professor Clare Wall - Dietitian
Professor Vili Nosa – Research supervisor
Dr Chris Puliuvea - Immunologist
Esmeralda Lo Tam – Research Assistant
Dr Natalie Netzler – Virologist and Governance

Amount Awarded: $250,000
Project Duration: TBC

Description

Fatu na totō "a heart that is planted", inspires this project. Drawn from Samoan lyrics, it speaks of determination, hope, and life even in difficult times. This imagery reflects our vision: may we, as Samoan women, plant seeds of hope together to build stronger, healthier families and communities, grounded in heart health.

At its heart, this project is about tautua (service) and fesuiaʻi (reciprocity): returning knowledge to Pacific communities in ways that respect their stories and strengthen their wisdom. It builds on PhD research with over 100 Samoan women, which bridged culture and biology to better support Pacific heart health. The research highlighted the cultural significance of Samoan foods carrying respect, ancestry, and identity beyond nutrition, alongside gene–diet interactions that examined how genetic variants may influence cardiovascular risk.

The project will co-create resources focusing on diet, genetics, and heart health. Planned outputs include a book weaving nutritional knowledge, women's stories, and health insights, and a documentary shared through trusted platforms such as Moana Connect and Pacific Heartbeat (Heart Foundation NZ).

Long-term impact

This project will generate evidence on which dissemination approaches are most effective for Pacific communities, including reach, engagement, and accessibility. By evaluating formats such as documentary storytelling, community screenings, and digital platforms, the project will establish a clear evidence base to guide future heart health initiatives. Findings will inform scalable approaches that can be embedded into future programmes led by Pacific health organisations, researchers, and community groups. In parallel, insights from engagement with Pacific students and academics will support longer-term capacity building, advocacy, and representation within health research.

Improving Heart Health through Culturally – Centered AI Nutrition Coaching

Dr Amio Matenga Ikihele. Photo: supplied

Research Team:

Dr Amio Matenga Ikihele (Niue - Avatele & Hakupu; Te Whānau-ā-Apanui), Moana Connect – Lead Investigator
Candice Apelu Mariner (Samoa - Fa'atoialemanu, Aleisa & Matautu Lefaga), Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley – Lead Investigator
Faletoese Asafo (Samoa), Moana Connect – Co-Investigator
Catherine Tu'akalau (Tonga – Ma'ufanga & Kolofalahola; Samoa – Luatuanu'u & Falealupo), Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley - Co-Investigator
Chan Chi Ling, Equitech – Collaborator
Lim Yin Hwee, Equitech - Collaborator

Amount Awarded: $499,868
Project Duration: February 2026 - August 2028

Description

This project is the first of its kind to co-design and adapt an AI-powered Nutrition Coach specifically for Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.
This project will develop and validate an innovative care model using a chat-based, generative artificial intelligence AI-powered Nutrition Coach designed specifically for Pacific adults with long-term conditions. Accessible through WhatsApp, the Nutrition Coach will support food logging and provide instant advice in Gagana Samoa and Lea Faka-Tonga.
Currently available only in English, the Nutrition Coach will be co-developed, adapted, validated, and piloted in real-world settings through partnerships with Pacific Health Services Hutt Valley (PHSHV) in Wellington and Moana Connect in Auckland.
Pacific adults (Samoa & Tonga) with long-term conditions will test the tool across both sites, with outcomes measured in nutrition knowledge, health literacy, dietary behaviours, usability, and acceptability.
The Nutrition Coach also addresses the shortage of Pacific dietitians by providing timely, culturally tailored support at scale.

While there are existing nutrition resources and digital health tools, none have combined large language model (LLM)-enabled AI, image-based food recognition, and culturally tailored localisation in Pacific languages to support nutrition and long-term condition management.

Long-term impact

While the first phase focuses on Samoan and Tongan communities, the same process of co-design, translation, and validation will extend to other Pacific languages, ensuring broad reach across Aotearoa's diverse Pacific communities.

Integrated Research Modules

Integrated Research Modules (IRMs) are the core delivery mechanism of the Centre and represent its flagship research programmes. Each IRM is designed as a multidisciplinary, mission-focused initiative that brings together mātauranga Māori, Pacific methodologies, and leading scientific approaches—including epidemiology, genomics, physiology, bioengineering, and clinical science—to address specific and well-defined heart health challenges.

Research is led in collaboration with community-based researchers, whānau, and aiga, ensuring that priorities, design, and outcomes are grounded in lived experience. This approach strengthens the relevance, uptake, and sustainability of research findings while contributing to more equitable health systems.

IRMs have a strong translational intent. Each module is expected to deliver actionable outcomes, including improved diagnostic pathways, prevention strategies, and models of care that are responsive to the needs of Māori, Pacific Peoples, and women (for women, refer to previous story). This ensures that research impact is realised through measurable improvements in health outcomes and system performance alongside academic outputs.

IRMs also serve as embedded training environments, supporting the development of emerging researchers and health professionals. Each IRM supports students studying towards postgraduate degrees and provides summer research projects aimed at undergraduate students.

Collectively, the IRM model enables the Centre to deliver high-impact, collaborative research that advances scientific excellence, strengthens workforce capability, and contributes to improved and more equitable heart health outcomes for Aotearoa.

This section includes three newly awarded IRMs in 2025, as well as updates on two, and the completion of two projects.

IRMs awarded in 2025

Our IRMs are awarded after a rigorous evaluation process. Applicants must submit an expression of interest. The best are invited to submit a full applications which is peer reviewed and then assessed by a panel of international experts.

IRM International Panel

Panel member	Organisation
Prof David Paterson	Oxford University, UK
Prof Jacquie Kidd (Ngāpuhi)	AUT, NZ
Dr Katherine Brown	Kids Research Institute, Australia
Assoc Prof Sereana Naepi (Nakida, Natasiri - Fiji)	University of Auckland, NZ
Prof Alex Brown (Yuin Nation)	Australian National University, Australia
Dr Karen Brewer (Whakatōhea, Ngai Te Rangi)	University of Auckland, NZ
Soteria Ieremia (Vaie'e, Saoluafata, Lepea and Faleasiu - Samoa)	Pacific-i Ltd, NZ

Moana Nui-a-Kiwa Vuvale Bulabula: Pacific Rheumatic Heart Disease Pathways

Host organisation: CureKids

Research Team:

Dr Adam Dennison (Matautu, Lefaga - Samoa), Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau
Dr Jimaima Tawanidama Kailawadoko-Matanaicake (Ono-I-Lau, Yasana Lau, Viti - Fiji) CureKids
Ms Jyotishna Mani, CureKids
Mrs Monleigh Tolimokahele Lauinah Ikiua Muliaumasealii (Avatele, Hakupu, Tuapa, Alofi - Niue), National Hauora Coalition

Amount Awarded: $1,500,000
Project Duration: November 2025 - September 2028

Description

Acute rheumatic fever is an abnormal response to a Streptococcus throat infection that, if untreated, can lead to heart valve damage, called rheumatic heart disease (RHD), and death, particularly among young people. While rare in high-income countries, Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, and other Pacific Islands have some of the highest rates of acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease globally. Pacific children in Aotearoa New Zealand are much more likely to be hospitalised for acute rheumatic fever than their New Zealand European peers. These disparities are linked to health system issues like racism and unequal access to resources. This project is designed to address and benefit these communities directly.

A collective of Pacific health professionals, researchers and advocates, supported by the Pū Manawa Pacific Governance Group and Cure Kids Pacific, is working to address this.

Their research focuses on a Pan-Pacific approach underpinned by shared values such as respect, reciprocity , and knowledge sharing. The project aims to develop a standardised non-expert RHD echo screening training program, determine adherence rates to secondary antibiotic prophylaxis and develop culturally appropriate models of care in Aotearoa New Zealand and Fiji with learnings applicable across Pacific nations. Through these initiatives, the researchers hope to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for patients and whānau living with RHD in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te āhua o te Manawa - State of the heart - Maroroya vinaka na yalomu

Host Organisation: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Lead Investigators

Dr Polona Le Quesne Stabej, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Dr Nikki Earle, Waipapa Taumata Rau
Terisa Tagicakibau (Fiji, Tonga), Waipapa Taumata Rau
Dr Karaitiana Taiuru (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Kahungunu), Taiuru and Associates

Amount Awarded: $1,400,000
Project Duration: April 2026 to October 2028

Dr Polona Le Quesne Stabej *Dr Nikki Earle*

Description

Inherited cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) such as cardiomyopathies, channelopathies, and aortic diseases can cause sudden death and immense distress for families. Identifying the underlying genetic cause is vital for accurate diagnosis and clinical care. For Māori and Pacific peoples, current genetic testing provides fewer answers compared to other ethnic groups, leading to ongoing uncertainty, intergenerational loss, and entrenched health inequities. This project will shift the landscape of cardio-genomic research in Aotearoa New Zealand by delivering three key outcomes:

1. Build a secure NZ-based genetic variant database by uniting siloed genetic test data from ~3000 patients with inherited CVDs. This central resource will enable accurate interpretation of genetic results, especially for Māori/Pacific peoples who are underrepresented in global databases. We will also study detailed, long-term health information on affected patients/families to uncover patterns and identify ways to improve care for patients and whānau.
2. Strengthen understanding and communication about genetics and inherited cardiovascular conditions, we will co-design culturally relevant resources with Pacific patients/families.
3. Apply advanced genome sequencing to uncover new genetic causes for patients who have exhausted standard clinical testing. This is critical for Māori/Pacific families, who are most affected by the limitations of standard genetic testing.

This project embodies the “not about us without us” principle with governance by our Kaitiaki Rōpū ensuring tikanga and Māori data sovereignty, and a Pacific team leading community engagement and managing Pacific genomic data. This partnership ensures research is meaningful, culturally grounded, and benefits Pacific and Māori patients.

Addressing heart health gender disparities in Aotearoa

Host Organisation: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Lead Investigators:

Prof Johanna Montgomery, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Dr Allamanda Fa’atoese (Samoa, Tuvalu), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Assoc Prof Justine Camp (Kai Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Takiwai Russell-Camp (Ngāi Tahu), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Amount Awarded: $1,400,000
Project Duration: February 2026 to October 2028

Description

Our purpose is to rebalance the contribution of research conducted with and about women, spanning communities, clinics, and biomedical science, ensuring women are equitable beneficiaries of advances in heart health. With a focus on menopause, Māori and Pacific women, and transgender individuals, we will raise awareness, improve diagnostic pathways, learn from our kaumātua, and understand the mechanisms underpinning wāhine heart health and disease through research excellence.

In our first IRM (see story on page 36), we built and strengthened partnerships with communities and organisations across urban and rural Aotearoa, including Tāmaki Makaurau, Tauranga, Te Puke, Tairāwhiti, and Ōtepoti. We developed a kaupapa Māori co-design approach that fosters trust, cultural safety, and genuine partnership. Our key learning is that strong, trust-based relationships take time and are foundational to a business-not-as-usual approach that prioritises equity. We have an obligation to continue to deliver and develop research through co-design with wāhine from these communities.

We will:

1. Identify what is known about the menopausal risk of heart disease with our communities and clinicians, develop resources, and learn from our kaumātua.

2. Identify what changes occur in our cells and systems to underpin women’s increased risk of heart disease.

3. Assess support for Pasifika women and build resources for change.

4. Conduct a pilot study examining the feasibility of a transgender heart disease risk database for Aotearoa. Together, this research will shift the balance of knowledge for equitable outcomes for women and other minoritised gender experiences.

Restoring the Balance – Re-imagining Heart Health for All Women in Aotearoa

“Heart disease remains the leading killer of women in Aotearoa — yet women’s heart health has long sat at the margins of research and care”

- Professor Johanna Montgomery

Over the past three years, Restoring the Balance has challenged long-standing inequities in cardiovascular research by placing wāhine Māori, Pacific women, and transgender communities at the centre of heart health research. Through community partnership, new evidence, and innovative solutions, the programme is helping reshape how heart health is understood and addressed in Aotearoa.

What the Data Had Hidden, Until Now

The research has revealed inequities that were previously obscured by surface-level investigations to demonstrate why it’s imperative to take a gender lens on heart health.

Key Findings

- Women with pregnancy-related cardiovascular risk experience their first major heart event at an average age of 46 years, before routine cardiovascular screening typically begins.
- Women under 75 who experience a first acute coronary syndrome have worse two-year outcomes than men.
- In STEMI cases, women experience higher mortality and readmission rates and are twice as likely not to receive revascularisation, a lifesaving procedure.
- A history of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy increases cardiovascular risk by 72%, yet 91.5% of these cases are missing from primary care records, leaving GPs unaware and unable to act.
- Three times more men than women receive atrial fibrillation (AF) ablations, and women who undergo the procedure experience higher complication rates and earlier recurrence.

And these are only the inequities that can currently be seen.

The Gender Research Data Gap: Why These Inequities Have Been Overlooked

Restoring the Balance carried out a systematic review to find out what is known about women’s heart health in Aotearoa. They screened the current published evidence for studies that included women, and had data separated by gender which narrowed down the number of studies to very few. Of those that made the cut, 26% examined sex differences as a primary focus. A figure that may not appear so bad at first glance, but Dr Shanks said that if you take into account all the heart research, not just the ones that made it into their review, this would be a much smaller figure.

Many studies reported disparities without analysing them. Others excluded women entirely or failed to highlight critical findings. These are the precise characteristics that these researchers are hoping to change.

The Gender Research Data Gap in Aotearoa

- Only a quarter of studies focus on sex differences.
- Many studies report gendered disparities but offer no analysis.
- Several studies treat women as a demographic footnote rather than a research priority.
- Significant findings, such as the reasons why women are not receiving appropriate arrhythmia device therapy, often go unmentioned in study conclusions.

A viewpoint article, currently in development, emerged from the review’s findings and paints a picture that cannot be ignored: When research neglects gender, health systems learn to do the same.

When gender neglect intersects with colonisation, racism, and socioeconomic inequity, Māori and Pacific women carry the greatest burden, facing fewer diagnoses, fewer treatments, and poorer outcomes.

For Transgender People, the Picture Is Almost Invisible

The Counting Ourselves 2022 survey marked the first time heart health data were collected for transgender and non-binary people in Aotearoa. In 2023, the New Zealand Census included self-identification of transgender and non-binary people for the first time.

This limited information forms the foundation of the work being undertaken by the team to understand transgender and non-binary heart health in Aotearoa.

Globally, evidence indicates that transgender people have a 40% higher risk of heart disease than their cisgender counterparts.

A rapid literature review highlighted substantial cardiovascular health disparities among transgender populations, particularly trans women. The findings underscored the urgent need for greater awareness, targeted interventions, and improved access to tailored healthcare.

The researchers are dedicated to shining a light on transgender and non-binary heart health in Aotearoa.

Communities Leading Research: Wānanga, Talanoa, and Trust

Community engagement grounded in kaupapa Māori and Pacific approaches has become the programme’s guiding star. Wāhine, Pacific women, and transgender participants have informed research questions, priorities, and solutions that genuinely reflect lived experience.

Co-Lead Investigator Professor Johanna Montgomery said that combining the Māori community co-design sessions with another Integrated Research Module, Te Ara Poutama, helped mitigate research fatigue for participants and strengthened the partnership between the two IRMs.

Alongside time and existing relationships, language was central to Pacific engagement, led by Dr Allamanda Fa’atoese and Selau Ifopo. Within Pacific values of family and service, self-care is understood through affirming language as “choosing me”, in contrast to European discourses that often frame self-care as “saying no.”

“Choosing me means prioritising myself and having me time and choosing my battles. Being a strong, confident Pasifika woman, it is a challenge for me to choose me. But I do understand that to look after my whānau, I have to look after myself first.”

- Pacific participant

This Pacific framing affirms wellbeing as a collective responsibility, one that sustains families, communities, and future generations.

These co-design approaches enriched and sharpened the research design, grounding it firmly in community

knowledge and values to achieve meaningful outcomes.

The conversations also revealed important differences among women themselves: between those living with heart disease and those supporting a loved one; between Māori, Pacific, and transgender participants; between generations; and between cultures. Each voice adds depth and texture to an evolving kete of understanding.

Community partnerships develop the Kete of Knowledge

The Kete of Knowledge is a digital heart health resource developed through Restoring the Balance in partnership with Te Ara Poutama. Drawing directly on insights from community engagement, the app provides practical tools to support people and whānau to better manage heart health.

Key features include:

- Personal health profiles and goal setting
- Educational resources available in written, audio, and video formats
- Symptom and medication tracking
- A dedicated space for whānau contributions and support
- Offline functionality to improve accessibility

Development of the app has now been completed and is entering initial community testing. Feedback from participating communities will inform refinements before broader implementation, supporting the programme's goal of improving equitable access to culturally responsive heart health information and self-management tools.

Building Research Talent

Restoring the Balance is creating impact beyond research findings. The programme is also investing in the next generation of cardiovascular researchers. Through undergraduate and postgraduate sponsorships, partnerships with Fatu Malosi and Kura Raumati, and community-embedded placements, the IRM is helping to grow a new generation of heart health researchers.

The IRM supported three Māori students, one Pacific student, two additional summer students and a Master's student

Student spotlight: Te Paea Ma'u

Te Paea receives her Community Contribution award.

Te Paea Ma'u completed two summer research projects with Restoring the Balance before joining the programme as a research assistant in 2025.

She was awarded the Community Contribution Award at the inaugural Fatu Malosi Awards in recognition of research that meaningfully supported whānau, aiga, famili, communities, and collective wellbeing.

During her placement, Te Paea established partnerships with more than 20 general practice clinics across Aotearoa, enabling women living with atrial fibrillation (AF) to share their experiences through a national survey.

Reflecting on her experience, Te Paea said the opportunity to contribute to Pacific health research was particularly meaningful.

"I felt like I was contributing to a bigger picture by helping strengthen Pacific presence in research spaces, building capacity, and showing that we belong in these conversations."

Toward a Future Where Balance Is Restored

Over the past three years, Restoring the Balance has generated new evidence, strengthened partnerships with communities, developed practical resources, and helped build the next generation of researchers. Together, these achievements are laying the foundation for more equitable cardiovascular care in Aotearoa.

The next phase of the programme will focus on three key objectives:

1. Conduct Aotearoa's first dedicated transgender and non-binary heart health research programme.

2. Recognise, understand, and investigate wāhine heart health through menopause.

3. Continue talanoa to ensure Pacific women receive timely screening and support when living with heart disease.

Restoring the Balance is changing the way heart health research is conducted in Aotearoa, creating not just a research programme, but a movement.

Oamaru Pacific Island Community Heart Health Talanoa, led by Dr Allamanda Fa'atoese and Selau Ifopo. Photo: Allamanda Fa'atoese

IRMs completed in 2025

Restoring the Balance: Heart health of Wāhine, Fafine, Va'ine, Fifine & Women of Aotearoa

Host Organisation: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

At a glance	
Project period	2023-2025
Project leads	12
Partner organisations	5
Communities involved	4
Students supported	4

Research leads

The multi-disciplinary team brings together some of the brightest minds from Kaupapa Māori community research organisation Manawaroa Integrated Health and Research, , Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury, and Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland.

- Professor Johanna Montgomery, Principal Investigator, Co-Lead, Stream 5
- Associate Professor Kim Mellor, Co-Lead, Stream 5
- Associate Professor Katrina Poppe, Co-Lead, Stream 3
- Dr Nikki Earle, Co-lead, Stream 3
- Dr Anna Rolleston, Co-lead, Stream 1
- A/Prof Justine Camp, Co-lead, Stream 1
- Takiwai Russell Camp, Co-lead, Stream 1
- Dr Julia Shanks, Lead, Stream 2
- Dr Allamanda Faatoese, Lead, Stream 4
- Dr Susannah Stevens
- Dr Marama McDonald Co-Lead, Stream 1
- Lisa Wong

Funding

Amount awarded: $1,515,106

Description & Findings

See story: "Restoring the Balance – Re-imagining Heart Health for All Women in Aotearoa" on page 36

Partners/Collaborators

Partners and collaborators for this work included the Te Ara Poutama Integrated Research Module, Her Heart Australia, Karitane, InsituGen, and Aboriginal women's heart health researchers. These partnerships brought together expertise across research, clinical practice, community engagement, and innovation to support the project's objectives.

Women's Heart Health Symposium

The Restoring the Balance Women's Heart Health Symposium brought together researchers, clinicians, and the public to share emerging evidence and strengthen collaboration in women's cardiovascular health. Hosted by Lisa Wong and Professor Johanna Montgomery on 1 December 2025, the event was delivered as a public hybrid symposium featuring local and international experts.

Researchers from the Integrated Research Module, including Professor Johanna Montgomery, Selau Ifopo, and Nikke Earle, shared the latest findings from across the programme's research workstreams.

International perspectives were provided by Professor Linda Worrall-Carter, Founder and CEO of Her Heart Charity, and Dr Jamie Kitt from the University of Oxford's Radcliffe Department of Medicine, an expert in pregnancy and postpartum hypertension.

The symposium strengthened national and international research partnerships while creating new opportunities for collaboration. It also established a relationship with the Auckland Medical Research Fund, whose support enabled Dr Jamie Kitt to attend in person.

Professor Larry Chamley, Takiwai Russell-Camp, Lisa Wong, Dr Nikki Earle, Dr Jamie Kitt, and Professor Johanna Montgomery.

Media

NZ Listener, Jan 2025, *Why diagnosing heart disease in women is dangerously off the pace.*
NZ Listener, February 2025, "*Heart of the Matter*"

Sweet Pressure: Improving outcomes for people with diabetes and high blood pressure in Aotearoa New Zealand

Host Organisation: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

At a glance	
Project period	2023-2025
Project leads	2
Partner organisations	6
Communities involved	3
Students supported	5

Principal Investigators

Dr Fiona McBryde, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Prof Andrew Lowe, Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makaurau | AUT

Funding

Amount awarded: $1,499,737

Description

Main aim of project: To improve the prevention and management, and medical/scientific engagement between people living with diabetes and high blood pressure (Sweet Pressure) and those researching these co-morbidities in Aotearoa NZ, through high-quality, community-led research. The team believes there is a common cause driving Sweet Pressure and that a novel combined treatment strategy for high blood sugar and high blood pressure together will better improve patient outcomes than continuing to treat these diseases separately.

Partners/collaborators

Turanga Health
Amanaki STEM Academy (ASA)
University of Otago - Discovery Studies
University of Waikato
Te Tītoki Mataora - MedTech Research Translator (co-funder)
Kia Aroha College

Students supported

Gerald Naepi, Niue (Tamakautoga & Avatele), Masters, PhD, University of Auckland
Jingyuan Liang, PhD, University of Auckland
Dr Tim Salmond, PhD, University of Otago
Courtney Brighouse, PhD, University of Auckland
Poyer Reihana, Fatu Malosi summer student, University of Auckland

Key findings and impact

See feature story on page 50. Other findings are listed below:

- Blood pressure measurement inaccuracies disproportionately affect cardiovascular risk scoring for higher-risk groups (including Māori and Pacific peoples, and those with diabetes or on BP-lowering medication), resulting in a larger proportion of misclassifications into cardiovascular risk categories for these groups.
- Pulse wave velocity (PWV) is a relatively accessible measurement that may be able to assist in managing Sweet Pressure, and other heart-health risk factors. Preliminary data indicate that regression equations that characterise PWV in the NZ population differ from equations that apply in other regions (e.g. with African or European populations), with some of this variation likely due to NZ's unique ethnic composition.
- ASA students Simione Nau and Malama Palelei became the first high school students to present at the 2025 Medical Science Conference in Christchurch - an event typically reserved for postgraduate researchers. Their presentation highlighted the co-design partnership between ASA and Sweet Pressure, focused on working alongside Pasifika communities to develop sustainable heart health solutions. This achievement reflects the strength of genuine community–research collaboration and ASA's commitment to building a pipeline of future Pasifika health leaders, while normalising pathways into higher education.

Amanaki STEM Academy student giving a presentation

Media

Research fellowship to support diabetes screening study at Mātai Medical Research Institute, Gisborne Herald, 21/1/2026. www.nzherald.co.nz/gisborne-herald/news/research-fellowship-to-support-diabetes-prevention-study-at-matai-medical-research-institute/GNQAXJMS3BD5VHFTVFE5YQTWTM.

Ongoing IRM updates

Te Ara Poutama: Living Well With Heart Disease

Host Organisation: The Centre for Health / Manawaora Integrated Health and Research

At a glance	
Project period	2023-2026
Project leads	5
Partner organisations	13
Communities involved	4
Students supported	6

Research leads

Erina Korohina (Ngāti Porou), Principal Investigator, Manawaora Integrated Health and Research
Prof Rob Doughty, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Assoc Prof Katrina Poppe, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Kataraina Davis (Ngāti Whātua), Heart Foundation
Assoc Prof Gerry Devlin, Heart Foundation

Funding

Amount awarded by Pūtahi Manawa: $1,504,251
Heart Foundation co-funding: $1,023,041

Description

Te Ara Poutama is a hapori-Māori-led heart health research programme, which is foundational for developing culturally-grounded approaches to equitable Māori heart health.

Partners/collaborators

This project brings together 13 partner organisations spanning Māori health providers, marae, research institutions, national charities and STEMM education organisations. Working across these sectors strengthens the relevance of the research, supports knowledge sharing, and helps ensure findings can be translated into real-world impact.

2025 Highlights

A heart health survey was undertaken at Te Matatini 2025, building on the major survey conducted in 2023 that collected more than 1,000 responses.

Analysis of these surveys, together with co-design hui held in 2023 across Tauranga Moana, Te Tai Rāwhiti, Tāmaki Makaurau, and Ōtepoti, informed the programme's current workstreams.

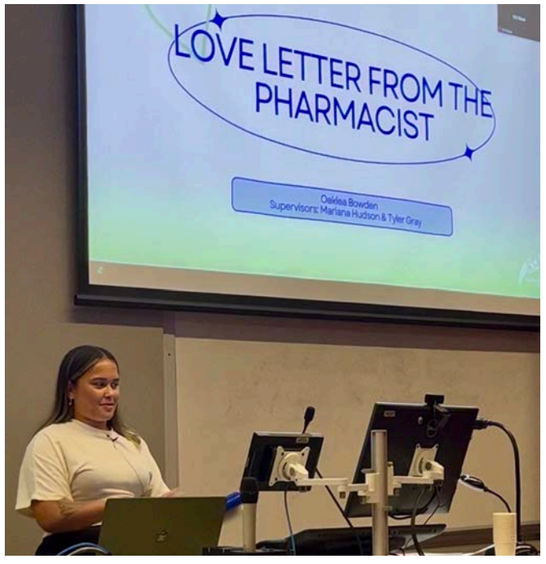
Five key areas of research emerged from community priorities and lived experiences shared through pūrākau and wānanga. The co-design process directly shaped the research programme, including the decision to discontinue one proposed project after communities advised that marae-based heart health checks were not appropriate. This ensured the integrity of the co-design process was maintained.

These research streams reflect community-driven solutions to longstanding challenges and opportunities in heart health.

1. A Love Letter From Your Pharmacist

Working with whānau to create clinically and culturally relevant medication information for rural Māori communities.

Accessing medication information can be challenging, particularly when resources are not designed with rural Māori communities in mind. A Love Letter From Your Pharmacist explored new ways to make medication information more meaningful, accessible, and culturally relevant for whānau living in rural communities.



Oaklea Bowden-Morris (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki) *presents her summer project at the end-of-programme presentations, February 2026.*

Led by Mariana Hudson, a Māori health researcher, previous Heart Foundation Fellow and current Tumuaki of the Māori Pharmacists Association, the project was developed in partnership with Ngāti Porou Oranga and whānau from the Tai Rāwhiti region. Through wānanga, researchers and community members worked together to understand the current landscape to access medicine information and how to support whānau to use medicines with confidence.

The project also provided research opportunities for Kura Raumati summer students, who worked alongside the research team and community throughout the programme.

A key outcome of the project was the establishment of a Kaitiaki Rōpū to help safeguard whānau knowledge, uphold Māori Data Sovereignty, and maintain an ongoing connection between researchers and the community.

While the resources developed were created specifically for the whānau involved, the collaborative approach—grounded in wānanga, reciprocal learning, and community leadership—has the potential to be adapted by other communities seeking culturally grounded approaches to medication support.

2. Taku Ahi Whitawhita - Flourishing Mindsets

Supporting whānau to engage confidently with heart health through a kaupapa Māori approach.

Some whānau face barriers to participating in health initiatives because they lack confidence or have had negative experiences with the health system. Through conversations with whānau, the research team discovered that some people chose not to participate in health initiatives because they worried they would not be able to complete the programme or feared they would "let the research down."

Delivered through a kaupapa Māori approach on marae, Flourishing Mindsets supports whānau to build confidence, strengthen wellbeing, and engage confidently with the health system.

Workshops were delivered across three communities, creating space for participants to reflect on existing heart health narratives, challenge long-held assumptions that poor heart health is inevitable. and explore culturally grounded pathways to prevention.

By addressing barriers to engagement identified by communities themselves, the programme is helping create more inclusive and culturally safe approaches to heart health.

3. Screening for Cardiovascular Health

Improving equitable access to early cardiovascular screening and diagnosis.

This project is working to improve equitable access to cardiovascular screening by strengthening community education, enhancing connections with primary care, and increasing access to CT coronary angiography (CTCA) and coronary calcium score screening.

The project aims to support earlier identification of cardiovascular disease and improve pathways to timely diagnosis and care for Māori communities.

The project received partial funding through the Pūtahi Manawa Te Korowai Fund and commenced in November 2025. - See page 25.

4. Nutrition in Communities

Exploring community-led approaches to nutrition that support lifelong heart health.

Healthy food environments play an important role in preventing cardiovascular disease and supporting long-term wellbeing.

This project will explore community-led, culturally grounded approaches to nutrition, recognising the important role that whānau, local food systems, and cultural practices play in supporting heart health.

The project received funding through the Pūtahi Manawa Te Korowai Fund and will begin in March 2026. - see page 25

Growing future indigenous leaders

Te Ara Poutama is helping build the next generation of Māori and Pacific health researchers through hands-on research opportunities, mentoring, and community-based learning.

The project supports students through the Kura Raumati Summer Research Programme, where participants work alongside experienced researchers on projects that address priorities identified by communities. These experiences develop practical research skills while strengthening pathways into cardiovascular and health equity research.

All students supported through the Kura Raumati summer research programme (developed by Te Ara Poutama) and working on project supervised by Te Ara Poutama team members at Manawaora Integrated Health and Research are listed on "Āpitihanga 5: Ngā Pia Raumati | Appendix 5: Summer students" on page 109

In 2025, Te Ara Poutama also partnered with the Pūhoro STEMM Academy to support emerging Māori students interested in health and science careers.

The programme also supported students to present their research at the 2025 Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) Indigenous Conference, providing valuable opportunities to share their work, gain professional experience, and connect with Indigenous researchers from across Australasia. See page 82.

Our Heart, Our Genes, Our Story

Host institution: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

At a glance	
Project period	2023-2026
Project leads	1
Partner organisations	10
Communities involved	2
Students supported	4

Oxford Nanopore sequencing technology at the Liggins Institute, University of Auckland; Hui Hui Phua (senior technologist) and Dr Le Quesne Stabej. Photo: FMHS, University of Auckland

Primary Investigator

Dr Polona Le Quesne Stabej, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Funding

Amount awarded: $1,500,000

Description

The purpose of this project is to find answers for families in Aotearoa where European-based genetic tests have failed to find a cause.

Partners/collaborators

University of Otago – Functional
Liggins Institute, University of Auckland - Professor J. O'Sullivan's team
The University of Auckland – Genomics
Rakeiora Genomics Platform
Genetic Health Service NZ
Cardiac Inherited Diseases Group
Māori Data Sovereignty – Dr Karaitiana Taiuru (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Toa)
Centenary Institute, Australia - Associate Professor Richard Bagnall
He Kakano (NZ Variome) project – Professor Robertson
Dr Adrian Tarca, Cardiologist - Toronto

Findings in 2025

The study has recruited 71 participants in total from 23 families. Around 40% of participants were Māori. Of the 23 families, two families had Long QT Syndrome (LQTS), three had Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), seven had Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM), six had aortopathy/thoracic aortic disease, one had Left ventricular non-compaction (LVNC) and four had Sudden Cardiac arrest or death (SCD). Genomic sequencing has been completed for 19 out of the 23 families.

Genome data analysis has been completed for 13 of the 19 families sequenced to date. A likely causative variant has been identified in one family, while in a further 10 families we have identified genetic variants of uncertain significance (VUS) that are potentially relevant to the observed phenotype. These findings are considered promising and will be prioritised for follow-up, including planned functional studies to better characterise their biological impact.

Pacific workforce development

It was identified early on in the project that there is a scarcity of Pacific professionals within this specialised field. There are missed opportunities to provide cultural advice around care and representation in research and community consultations.

Work was completed on developing a high-throughput screening pipeline for variants linked to arrhythmias, in preparation for future discoveries. This formed the basis of Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein's project, which he completed as part of his honours degree, supported by a Pūtahi Manawa Pacific scholarship. Jaxson modified an existing low-throughput assay, which took 4-5 hours to study a single variant (~30 minutes per experiment and eight experiments per variant), to allow up to six variants to be studied within the same four-hour window. He also developed a new analysis process which reduced it by a similar amount. Combined his work resulted in a method that is ready to very rapidly screen new variants once they are discovered. Moreover, he also showed that the same assay can be used for rapid drug screening, offering a new avenue of hope for treatments directed specifically at the newly identified variants.

Terisa Vula joined the team in 2025 in the role of Pacific Lead. Since joining, Terisa has led important foundational work to strengthen Pacific engagement and inform future recruitment and research approaches. Without a formal science background, Terisa's recruitment into this role marked a meaningful transition into the field of genetics. At the start of the project, she completed an online genetics course, which provided essential grounding in DNA, genetics, and genomics and received informal teaching and guidance from members of the IRM team.

In addition, the IRM and Pūtahi Manawa have co-funded scholarship for a Pacific student, Auroiana Glenda Etelei, to undertake a Masters in Genetic Counselling at the University of Technology in Sydney. Glenda will be the Indigenous Pacific person to complete this qualification in Aotearoa NZ.

Students supported

Te Whetu Aarahi Te Maringi Kerekere (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Te Whānau a Kai, Ngāti Oneone), PhD, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein (Fasito'otai, Eva, Upolu, Samoa; Te Āti Awa, B(Hons), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Auroiana Glenda Etelei, Master of Genetic Counselling Student, University of Technology (UTS) Sydney
Jolene (Jia Xi) Mok: BBioMedSci (Hons), Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Media

Saraya Hogan, with 95 bFM Ready, Steady, Learn hosts Tuesday, 1 July.

Research completed in 2025

Equity Grants - Closing the gap

Three of our Equity projects were completed in 2025. Equity grants were designed as supplemental funding to existing studies to ensure the inclusion of Māori, Pacific Peoples or women in the research to ensure the findings are relevant to them.

Non-invasive and non-contact diagnosis of cardiovascular disease – addressing equity in a cardiovascular imaging device pilot study

Principal investigator: Dr Prashanna Khwaounjoo, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Award amount: $128,899
Project duration: November 2022 - March 2025

Dr Khwaounjoo's team at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, Waipapa Taumata Rau, have developed a non-invasive imaging system to accurately measure neck skin movement caused by blood pressure pulses in major vessels, providing information about the heart's function. This system was being tested at Auckland City Hospital, with promising results - however, the patients recruited were mainly male and NZ European. This Pūtahi Manawa Equity grant supported the team to recruit additional female, Māori, and Pasifika patients to demonstrate that the system could cater to all New Zealanders, regardless of gender, ethnicity, and skin colour. In addition, the grant supported engagement with Māori and Pasifika communities to improve the device and acquisition protocols.

The project successfully:

- Developed and trialled a refined, compact imaging

system for use in clinical and outreach settings.
- Recruited a cohort of participants including European females and Māori and Pacific males
- Demonstrated the system's ability to acquire reliable displacement waveforms across diverse patient groups, regardless of skin colour or sex. Preliminary findings show no significant differences in waveforms across demographics, reinforcing the tool's potential for equitable diagnostics.
- Engaged in community partnerships through hui, school visits, and collaborations with Iwi United Engaged and tauira to ensure culturally appropriate, co-designed tools and approaches.
- Created outreach materials such as a patient-facing pamphlet to improve understanding and comfort with the device.
- Presented findings at cardiac and clinical conferences
- Contributed to securing Te Tīkoki Mataora funding, and the team are currently in discussions regarding the potential commercial translation of the device.

The funding from Pūtahi Manawa also enabled the team to extend the research to study the device's potential to diagnose the severity of aortic stenosis - a serious heart condition where the aortic valve narrows and stiffens, restricting blood flow from the heart to the body. The team found that their non-invasive imaging of the carotid artery is a promising technique for telehealth screening for clinically significant valve disease. With further investigation, this tool has the potential to screen for valve disease in non-specialist settings and improve prioritisation for echocardiography.

Next steps for the team include publishing their results, expanding recruitment sites, and continuing their collaboration with Māori health practitioners and communities.

Application of a kaupapa Māori research design into the computed tomography to reduce invasive coronary angiography in acute coronary syndrome study

Principal Investigator: Prof Suzanne Pitama (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Whare), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Award amount: $64,737
Project duration: July 2022 to August 2025

This project aimed to provide evidence on recruitment strategies that may better increase the recruitment of Māori into cardiovascular research projects. The researchers tested whether a standardised approach—including training sessions, an engagement protocol, and the use of animated recruitment videos—could strengthen equitable participation in research and enable more appropriate modelling and understanding of how to address inequities in cardiovascular disease outcomes for Māori.

This work addressed barriers to Māori engagement in cardiovascular research by providing a culturally safe, standardised recruitment tool. By embedding te reo Māori and Te Ao Māori motifs into the video and normalising Māori participation, the project supported more equitable recruitment processes. The leadership of a Professor of Māori Health, guidance from a Māori advisory group, and a Māori research fellow provided strong Māori oversight. In parallel, all research nurses were non-Māori, and the co-design process also involved non- Māori cardiologists and research nurses to ensure that the protocol was both culturally safe and operationally feasible. This dual involvement enhanced both equity and acceptability across sites.

The project demonstrated that culturally tailored recruitment tools and standardised protocols are acceptable, effective, and reduce recruiter workload. This work provides a model for future research projects in Aotearoa seeking to strengthen Māori engagement. This project demonstrates that given the complexity of the recruitment workforce in clinical trials, that this tool supports inclusion of Māori within research with a cost effective, and culturally appropriate method. This has made us more confident about having Māori research teams leading the way in which recruitment videos are designed and developed.

Future work will refine training delivery and expand implementation across a wider range of studies. The project has created a foundation for scaling standardised, culturally safe recruitment approaches across health research.

Hauora manawa mō ngā kaumātua me whānau / Heart health of kaumātua and family

Principal Investigator: Dr Andree Pearson, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Award Amount: $129,209.00
Project duration: September 2022 - December 2025

This grant has enabled Dr Pearson's team, who are investigating how cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk, heart structure and circulating biomarkers change as Māori age, to expand the study to whānau members over 18. The initial study, funded by the Heart Foundation, was focused on those over 55 but feedback from communities requested the inclusion of younger whānau members, given the higher rates of CVD in Māori at a younger age. The Pūtahi Manawa funding has supported the team to recruit a larger number of participants for the study.

Left to right, top row: Laura Perston (Cardiac Sonographer), Juanita Kane (Kaumātua Study Coordinator), Liz Ridder (CHI Administrator), Ellen Woodcock (Ngāi Tahu, Cardiac Sonographer), Andree Pearson (Principal Investigator, Scientist), Richard Troughton (Cardiologist), Sara Raudsepp (Laboratory Manager, Translational Biodiscovery Laboratory).

Bottom row: Cindy Kim (Study Coordinator), Nicky Inwood (Research Nurse), Judy Heslop (Phlebotomist, Clinical Lab Manager), Shannon Chen (Research Data Specialist), Rakesh Mathai (Clinical Data Analyst).

Current clinical reference intervals for common biomarkers for CVD are based on data primarily from European cohorts, and their appropriateness for Māori is unknown. Identifying differences in biomarker levels or other CV indices from current reference ranges could drive implementation of specific reference ranges for Māori and their future use may improve heart health equity.

The team held 33 clinics at five marae. The study recruited 195 participants, comprising 171 New Zealand Māori, 22 New Zealand European, one Samoan, and one Tongan. The inclusion of non-Māori participants was discussed with the study's Māori Governance Rōpū. In accordance with marae principles of inclusivity, the research team will continue to include closely connected non-Māori, such as spouses and marae employees; however, their data will be analysed separately.

Participants were interviewed, demographic and clinical information was collected, followed by an echocardiogram and ECG and blood tests. The also completed the Te Tatauranga Manawa a Māori Heart Health Survey investigating the burden of heart disease on whānau conducted in collaboration with Te Ara Poutama IRM. Following clinics, the participants results were made available to their GP, any abnormal findings were followed up by the project's consultant cardiologist. There were four participants that had findings that required immediate follow-up, and this was arranged on the day. Around half of all participants were encouraged to see their GP for a blood pressure check because it was elevated.

"This was a very important and necessary checkup. We are losing too many whānau of all ages of undetected heart problems until it is too late! The experience of being on the Marae attracted many whānau because it avoided a clinical atmosphere, the daunting idea of making it to city, parking and all the negatives around hospital and doctors surgeries visits." - Study participant

In August 2025, the project was further extended due to additional funding from the Heart Foundation which has enabled recruitment of a further 135 participants. Final results will be available at the conclusion of the study in December 2027.

The project also supported two Pūtahi Manawa Kura Raumati students.

Funding awarded in 2025

Pūtahi Manawa Projects

After our Integrated Research Modules, Pūtahi Manawa projects are the second highest value awards, at around $1 million per project. They incorporate many of the same principles as the Integrated Research Modules.

Sweet Pressure: Improving outcomes for people with diabetes and high blood pressure in Aotearoa

Host organisation: Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of

Auckland

Lead Investigators:
Dr Fiona McBryde, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Prof Andrew Lowe, Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makaurau Rau | AUT

Amount Awarded: $1,000,000
Project Duration: February 2026 to October 2028

Description

Our ultimate goal is to achieve improved and more equitable outcomes for people living with Sweet Pressure in Aotearoa NZ.

The team's previous IRM work (page 40) has shown that Sweet Pressure incidence in Māori and Pacific people is two to three times higher than in NZ Europeans. Our work to date has shown that from both a physiological and community perspective, a holistic strategy is needed to improve the lifelong management of blood pressure and blood sugar for people and whānau living with Sweet Pressure.

We propose a series of studies to address Sweet Pressure in a distinctly Aotearoa NZ context, in collaboration with our community partners. We will:

- Investigate how different types of cholesterol can improve the clinical prediction of cardiometabolic risk in different ethnic groups within the NZ Sweet Pressure population
- Evaluate inflammatory biomarkers and genetic associations specifically in Māori and Pacific populations
- Test whether empowering people with the ability to continuously monitor their own blood sugar can facilitate healthier lifestyle changes
- Harness STEM education to improve the health of the whole whānau.

Using te Hā (the breath) for improved heart and mental health outcomes

Host organisation: Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Lead investigators:

Dr Olivia Harrison, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Mr Fraser Beck (Ngāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe), Optimal Health Model Inc.

Amount Awarded: $1,000,000
Project Duration: January 2026 to October 2028

Description

This project will provide the first in-depth assessment of cardiovascular health markers in an at-risk population prior to any diagnosis of CVD, and – critically – their sensitivity to preventative therapy.

Anxiety is associated with a 26% increased risk of developing heart disease and a 50% increased risk of sudden cardiac death. This project will identify indicators of compromised heart health in those with anxiety, as well as assess how these respond to non-invasive treatment options such as mood-enhancing breathing techniques intertwined with Kaupapa Māori exercises such as porotiti (spinning disks). These techniques will draw on both traditional science and Māori knowledge, demonstrating the utility of breathing to manage both heart and mental health simultaneously via accessible and low-cost strategies that can help all New Zealanders.

The intervention will be co-designed with Puketeraki Marae and our research team. Two members of the co-design team whakapapa (have family ties) to the community, which is essential for meaningful co-design.

Projected translation and impact

Alongside the significant health impacts for those with anxiety and CVD, this project has enormous potential economic impact via reduced healthcare costs, improved patient contributions to society and the workforce, as well as potential commercial avenues.

- A spin-out company could emerge from this project, developing a widely accessible app-based platform with patentable breathing protocols to efficiently distribute these breathwork methods and help combat sub-clinical and clinical anxiety.
- An international network on breath training for physical and mental health, working towards organising an international meeting to collaborate on projects and ideas will be formed through connections with other related Indigenous groups around the world.
- Scalable resources based on the study results will be developed and presented to clinical groups such as Psychiatrists, General Practitioners, Physiotherapists and Nurses, as well as in community settings such as Marae, healthcare centres and schools, to ensure translation from research to practice.

Importantly, by weaving these interventions across both conventional science and Mātauranga Māori they will be to the benefit of everyone and accessible to Māori, who disproportionately suffer from both CVD and mental health conditions.

Enhancing primary prevention of rheumatic fever in the Hutt Valley: strengthening coordination and surveillance under Pacific leadership.

Host Organisation: Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley

Lead investigators:

Candice Apelu Mariner (Fa'atoialemanu & Matautu Lefaga - Samoa), Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley
Dr Tua Taueetia-Su'a (Samoa), Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley
Dr Gerard Sonder, Pacific Perspectives Ltd

Amount Awarded: $1,000,000
Project Duration: March 2026 to October 2028

Description

This project aims to strengthen local coordination of public-health interventions and active surveillance systems so that real-time data directly guide prevention efforts, enabling more targeted and equitable interventions for Pacific communities. By co-designing culturally grounded approaches to sore - throat management, access, referral, and follow-up with Pacific providers and communities-including the Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley (PHSHV) - the project connects national public-health guidelines with their local implementation to make the system function as a coordinated whole. It will evaluate how the 2024 Communicable Disease Manual and 2024 Heart Foundation ARF/RHD guidelines are being implemented in the Hutt Valley and how embedding these national standards within coordinated local systems, supported by linked public health, primary and community care, and hospital data, evaluation, can improve effectiveness and consistency compared with top-down national delivery models. Strengthened local–national feedback loops will enhance programme accountability and inform equitable resource allocation.

Pacific leadership is central throughout implementation, ensuring that interventions are culturally appropriate, community-driven, and sustainable. The project will also build Pacific workforce capacity in health-system coordination, data literacy, and evaluation. It will help PHSHV transition from an ad-hoc safety-net role to a more established leadership role in both providing and coordinating ARF prevention across the Hutt Valley. The resulting model will provide a tested, scalable framework for implementing

Projected Translation and Impact

- Technical outputs: A Regional Implementation and Evaluation Report summarising system improvements and effectiveness evidence will be shared with the Ministry of Health and Te Whatu Ora for national alignment.

- Practice tools: Standardised surveillance templates and training resources will be shared with other regions through webinars and provider networks.

- Community communication: Findings will be presented through Pacific media, radio, and community forums using accessible formats (visual summaries, videos, short reports).

- Evidence informs the design of consistent, scalable ARF surveillance and prevention frameworks for other high-risk districts.

Sweet Pressure: research excellence delivering equitable impact for Aotearoa

Sweet Pressure — the intersection of high blood pressure and rising blood sugar — is emerging as a critical challenge for heart health in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through this IRM, our team has demonstrated how publicly funded, tertiary-led research can deepen understanding of complex health conditions while delivering tangible benefits for communities, the health system, and the future workforce.

By integrating population-level data science, community-engaged research, and translational biomedical science, this programme exemplifies Pūtahi Manawa's investment priorities: research excellence, Māori and Pacific advancement, knowledge transfer, and long-term system impact**.**

Revealing the true burden of Sweet Pressure

At the population level, epidemiological work has delivered stark and previously unseen insights. By analysing large-scale health data, we found that Sweet Pressure is approximately twice as common in Māori and nearly three times as common in Pacific peoples compared with other groups. These findings reinforce the urgency of addressing cardiovascular and metabolic risk through approaches that reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's unique population, rather than relying on imported models.

Perhaps most importantly, this Integrated Research Module uncovered a strong predictive link between blood pressure and diabetes risk. People with hypertension had a 33–40% higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes within five years, even after accounting for other risk factors. This association highlights blood pressure not only as a cardiovascular risk factor, but also as a meaningful early warning sign for future diabetes.

The work also challenges long-standing clinical assumptions about "prediabetes". The team found that diabetes risk begins to rise exponentially at HbA1c levels well below current prediabetes thresholds, suggesting that existing definitions may miss people at genuine risk. This insight has profound implications: modern cardiovascular risk management may need to move away from rigid thresholds and towards multivariable, population-specific risk prediction that better supports early and equitable prevention.

Together, these findings point to a new way of thinking about heart health — one that sees blood pressure and blood sugar not as separate conditions, but as a connected pathway of Sweet Pressure, where early intervention could reduce healthcare costs and hospitalisations, and change lives.

The heart: The boss of our body

Numbers alone do not capture the experience of living with Sweet Pressure. Alongside the epidemiological work, recognising that equitable health outcomes depend on understanding lived experience as well as biological risk, the IRM partnered with Māori and Pacific communities to understand how heart health is experienced, perceived, and prioritised in everyday life.

"I know that the heart is the boss of our body...I look for three things: my body, my mind, and my spirit"

– Pacific elder

In Te Tairāwhiti — a remote, predominantly Māori region with a high cardiovascular disease burden and limited access to specialist care — Turanga Health partnered with Professor Holly Thorpe — an investigator on the project

"*Listening carefully to Māori Kaumātua and Pacific elders, we heard of the powerful effects of intergenerational experiences of heart disease, and how family members' experiences of cardiovascular disease and poor medical treatment and support cause feelings of fear and avoidance. Past and current experiences of discrimination and marginalisation within the health system prevent many from seeking early medical treatment.*" – Professor Holly Thorpe

This kaupapa Māori-informed research was led by local health staff, ensuring both cultural integrity and capability-building within the community.

"*We learned that layers of fear and silencing within whānau (the idea that heart problems are "in the family") and negative past experiences with the health system are contributing significantly to late presentations, and thus health outcomes.*" – Professor Holly Thorpe

Findings highlighted that enquiries often considered routine in clinical care — such as family history — can unintentionally retraumatise patients if not approached with cultural safety, compassion, and respect.

At the same time, the research revealed strong sources of resilience. Many Māori and Pacific elders are actively empowering themselves through knowledge, drawing on both medical and community sources, and passing this understanding on to their whānau. In doing so, elders are playing a crucial role in interrupting intergenerational cycles of heart disease, loss, and fear.

Hadyn Pomana (Turanga Health), and Dr Oka Sanerivi (Turanga Health, Mātai Medical Imaging Institute, Otago University), Professor Holly Thorpe (University of Waikato). Photo: Holly Thorpe

From insight to system change

The qualitative findings underscore the importance of trauma-informed, relationship-based care and highlight the opportunity for health providers to work more closely with Māori and Pacific elders as partners in system redesign. By amplifying these lived experiences, the IRM provides actionable insights that complement epidemiological data and support more culturally responsive models of care.

These lessons are already informing further work. In Te Tairāwhiti, the combination of community insights and positive experiences with group-based wellbeing programmes has led to a planned randomised controlled trial evaluating continuous glucose monitoring for people newly diagnosed with diabetes — a tangible example of research translating into locally relevant innovation.

A holistic look at the inside

Understanding Sweet Pressure also requires insight into what is happening holistically inside the body and how that knowledge can be used to improve care.

Mechanistic studies identified disruptions to brain blood flow regulation in people living with hypertension and diabetes, offering a potential explanation for the higher rates of cognitive decline seen in this group. This work has opened the door to exploring whether existing medications can be repurposed to help protect brain health in people with Sweet Pressure.

The team also investigated more accurate and equitable tools for assessing cardiovascular risk. They found that inaccuracies in blood pressure measurement disproportionately affect Māori, Pacific peoples, and those already at higher risk, leading to misclassification and missed opportunities for intervention. Encouragingly, early evidence suggests that pulse wave velocity, an accessible measure of vascular health, could help improve risk assessment — particularly when calibrated for Aotearoa New Zealand's diverse population.

In parallel, the research has helped explain why newer diabetes medications, now prioritised for Māori and Pacific patients in national guidelines, deliver broader cardiovascular benefits.

The team has shown that these drugs act to regulate both blood sugar and blood pressure via overlapping receptors in an organ called the carotid body; this may help explain the reported cardiovascular benefits of GLP1RA treatment.

"This finding also reinforces why these (GLP1) drugs may hold particular benefit for Māori and Pacific patients."

– Dr Fiona McBryde

Professor Julian Paton says that this is huge. "*The bigger picture here is that this foundational work and the planned trial mean this community in Tairāwhiti is leading the way in reducing hospitalisations, healthcare costs, and taking control of the burden of Sweet Pressure in a system that has traditionally sidelined their needs.*" – Professor Julian Paton

Advocating for an updated national cardiovascular risk framework

The most significant output of this IRM is the epidemiological work, which will be submitted to a top-tier international journal. Beyond publication, this research is already positioned to influence clinical practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through established connections with national health advisory boards, our team is advocating for updated cardiovascular risk frameworks, including reconsideration of prediabetes thresholds and improved integration of blood pressure, glucose, and lipid risk.

Crucially, the project has also sparked new, community-driven initiatives. In Tairāwhiti, insights from surveys and the success of group-based wellbeing programmes have led to a planned randomised controlled trial testing the use of continuous glucose monitoring for people newly diagnosed with diabetes. This trial represents a direct translation of research into action, shaped by community priorities.

A strong return on public investment

"This IRM shows how tertiary research can deliver longterm value for people, communities, and the health system." – Professor Julian Paton

By integrating rigorous science with community-led qualitative research, this programme has:

- Advanced internationally relevant knowledge
- Supported Māori and Pacific leadership and lived experience
- Enabled translation into policy, practice, and local trials
- Built research and workforce capability
- Contributed to fairer, earlier, and more effective cardiovascular prevention

In doing so, the Sweet Pressure IRM exemplifies the outcomes public investment is designed to achieve: excellence, equity, and enduring impact for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Read about next steps on page 47.


IT'S GIVING, INTIMIDATED....

Whakatupu Pitomata | Investing in the Future

At Pūtahi Manawa, we believe that lasting heart health equity begins long before people enter the health system. Our investments in education, research pathways, and community-centred innovation are designed to nurture the next generation of Māori and Pacific scientists, clinicians, and knowledge-holders — and to strengthen the environments that support them.

In 2025, this commitment took shape across Aotearoa in practical, values-led, and deeply collaborative ways. From bilingual classroom science kits to hands-on exposure to world-class research facilities, from innovative MedTech experiences to culturally grounded summer research programmes, we continued to build pathways that allow children, rangatahi/talavou, and emerging researchers to see themselves in the future of heart health.

Through our partnerships — including with the House of Science, Pacific-i, Malamaatu STEAM Academy, MedTech-iQ, Pūhoro STEMM, universities, community organisations, and national health agencies — we created opportunities that reach thousands of learners each year. Students engaged in kaupapa Māori and Pacific-designed research, explored cutting-edge imaging technologies, and contributed to projects addressing real-world heart health challenges in their own communities.

Our postgraduate scholarships, doctoral awards, and Pacific Fellowships further expanded the research workforce, enabling emerging Māori and Pacific researchers to undertake high-impact studies with meaningful financial and cultural support. These initiatives are not just about training individuals — they are about transforming the future of heart health by embedding Indigenous strengths, lived experiences, and community priorities into every stage of the research pipeline.

Together, these investments are cultivating a skilled, confident, and culturally grounded heart health workforce. By supporting early inspiration, sustained development, and long-term career pathways, we are helping shape a future where Māori and Pacific communities lead the solutions that uplift their own wellbeing and that of Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.

Serah ‘Otukolo: From outreach volunteer to doctoral researcher

When Serah ‘Otukolo (Tonga) missed out on medical school, she never imagined the setback would open the door to cutting-edge heart research. Today, she’s a Pūtahi Manawa Pacific doctoral scholarship recipient, preparing to work on a world-first pacemaker project.

A lesson in faith

Serah began her studies at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland with dreams of becoming a doctor. Supported by her family, she threw herself into her first year of biomedicine, only to face a tough reality.

“That was a big challenge for me. I was completely not ready for university, and didn’t make it into medicine. That really stayed with me for my whole undergrad degree—the rejection, and feeling like I wasn’t good enough.”

But the connections she made in biomedicine would open new doors and a new passion.

Finding her spark

A pivotal moment came when Professional Teaching Fellow Dr Anuj Bhargava invited Serah to participate in outreach programmes, encouraging more Māori and Pacific high school students to pursue science. There, she met Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Professor Julian Paton.

“I read about the pacemaker he’d developed and thought it was so cool—I even made my family sit down and watch the video with me,” she recalls.

Another outreach event introduced her to Dr David Crossman, Director of the Biomedical Research Imaging Unit at The University of Auckland, who became her supervisor. A summer studentship under his guidance gave Serah her first real taste of research—on the very pacemaker she had been inspired by.

“Here I am buzzing about it, and now I can actually do some work on it. That was a crazy feeling.”

Research with impact

The new "natural" pacemaker, developed by Professor Paton and colleagues, changes pace with breathing and is already in clinical trials. Serah's research dives into the microscopic effects of this device, using advanced imaging to understand how it could improve outcomes for heart failure patients—particularly Māori and Pacific communities who face higher rates of hospitalisation at younger ages.

"Māori and Pacific People bear the biggest burden of heart failure; we need more effective treatments. If we're seeing it more, we do need to be doing something about it", she says.

Serah's motivation is deeply personal, too. Since making it into medicine after her biomedical degree, she is already a go-to person for health advice among her family and wider community, and has seen firsthand how cultural barriers can lead to dangerous misunderstandings. *"Misunderstanding a diagnosis is huge—even fatal. Bridging those gaps is really important to me."*

Looking ahead

After presenting her first summer research project, both Professor Paton and her father told Serah she would go on to a PhD. *"I thought they were crazy. There's no way I thought I could do that,"* she laughed.

David Crossman, Serah's current supervisor, is passionate about supporting Pacific talent to flourish in biomedical science. *"Julian and I encouraged her toward a PhD because she has the talent, drive, and creativity to thrive."*

Serah has recently completed her Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours) in Medical Science, and was excited to receive her first University A+ grade for her thesis.

Now, with the backing of her mentors, she is preparing for the first year of her doctorate in 2026, with plans for international collaborations at the University of Oxford and the University of Bern before returning to complete her medical degree.

"When I look back, I realise everything happens for a reason. If I hadn't missed out on medicine the first time, I wouldn't have met Anuj, found Pūtahi Manawa, or discovered this path. I've been really blessed."

Serah 'Otukolo at the Heart2Heart community engagment event at Amanaki STEMM Academy in Palmerston North in April 2023

Engaging with schools

Bringing heart science to classrooms across Aotearoa

Through early engagement and meaningful learning experiences, we are inspiring tamariki and rangatahi to explore futures in science, health and research.

Building on early engagement initiated in 2023, the collaboration between Pūtahi Manawa and the House of Science has developed into a strong, impact-focused partnership aimed at inspiring the next generation of scientists and supporting equitable access to high-quality science education across Aotearoa.

Following the sponsorship agreement to develop cardiovascular system resource kits, 2024 marked a year of co-design and pilot testing. Pūtahi Manawa researchers and educators worked closely with the House of Science development team to create a bilingual, curriculum-aligned "Te Kete Manawa | Heart Kit" featuring hands-on, inquiry-based learning activities tailored for primary and intermediate students. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to making science engaging, accessible, and culturally relevant, particularly for Māori and New Zealand school-learners.

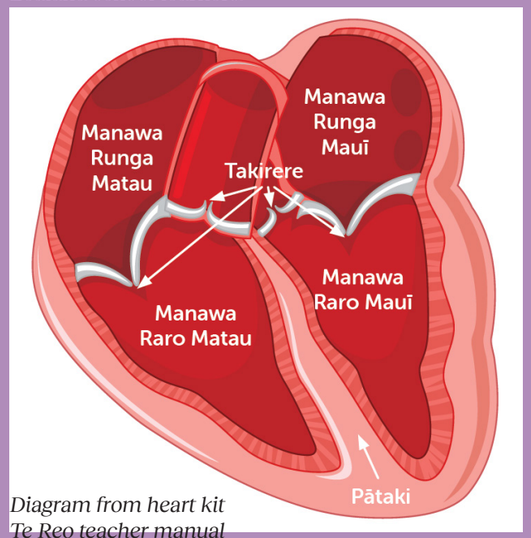


Diagram from heart kit Te Reo teacher manual

Pilot testing in selected schools demonstrated the strong educational value of the kits, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from both teachers and students. The hands-on approach not only deepened understanding of heart function and health but also sparked curiosity, critical thinking, and whānau engagement beyond the classroom.

National rollout in 2025

In 2025, the partnership between Pūtahi Manawa and the House of Science reached a significant milestone, with the national rollout and widespread uptake of the co-developed Heart Kit. Building on the design and pilot work undertaken in 2024, the ten Pūtahi Manawa-sponsored kits became available to schools across the House of Science's eleven branches from May 2025 and were rapidly integrated into classrooms across Aotearoa.

Pūtahi Manawa-sponsored copies of the kit were placed in selected schools with high Māori and Pacific student populations, supporting Pūtahi Manawa's commitment to equitable access to high-quality heart science education. House of Science secured additional funding to provide a total of 38 kits to 21 branches around the country. Demand for the resource was strong, with hundreds of bookings across the House of Science network and use by approximately 19,000 students and more than 700 teachers within the first seven months of delivery.

Feedback from schools highlights the value of the hands-on, inquiry-based approach, with teachers noting high levels of student engagement, increased confidence in understanding heart function, and the ability to connect learning to real-world health contexts.

"We love the kits. This time, we spent a whole week unpacking an activity each day. The hands-on activities are very engaging for the kids, the activities spark lots of conversations. We are a bilingual class and the te reo Māori resources are amazing! We are learning many new kupu (words) and are able to consider science through a te ao Māori lens."

- Shannon School, Horowhenua

The Heart Kit has also proven to be a versatile engagement tool beyond the classroom, with House of Science branches using it at community events, science festivals and outreach activities to extend its reach into whānau and wider communities.

Importantly, the kit aligns well with the emerging national science curriculum, positioning it as a sustainable, future-focused resource. With the recent expansion of the House of Science programme to reach all primary and intermediate schools across the country, this partnership provides a strong platform to scale impact even further.

Together, Pūtahi Manawa and the House of Science are demonstrating how collaborative, research-informed education initiatives can build early health literacy, spark curiosity in science, and inspire tamariki to see themselves in future health and science pathways.

Supporting Pacific Pathways into Science and Innovation

Pūtahi Manawa was proud to support Pacific-i and Malamaatu STEAM Academy Charitable Trust during their visit to the Biomedical Research Imaging Unit (BRIU) at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland.

Twenty Pacific students were given rare access to the Biomedical Imaging Research Unit at the University of Auckland. Immersed in a world-class research environment, they experienced first-hand how advanced imaging technologies are transforming medical science — turning abstract classroom concepts into tangible, high-impact applications.

Pūtahi Manawa supported the Pacific-I and Malamaatu STEAM Academy initiative to help create an inspiring, real-world learning experience for Waikato Pacific youth. This initiative reflects our mission and our Pacific Strategy to build meaningful pathways for Pacific learners by connecting education, research, and industry.

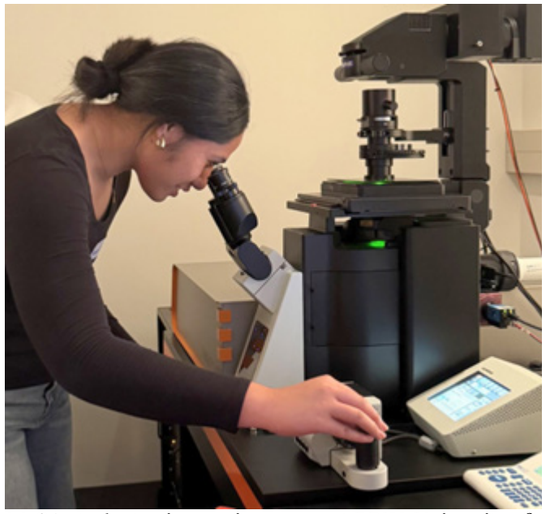
Soteria Ieremia (Vaie'e, Saoluafata, Lepea, Faleasiu - Samoa), Pacific-I founder and Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Pacific shared, "*When Pacific students experience world-class research environments, they begin to see their future in them — not as visitors, but as future innovators.*"

Embodying this vision, Serah 'Otukolo, Pūtahi Manawa multi-scholarship recipient and BRIU team member, was there to share her expertise and academic journey with the young Pacific STEM-enthusiasts.

Malamaatu STEAMM Academy Charitable Trust (MaSA) shared their thoughts:

"MaSA is incredibly fortunate to have been granted the unique opportunity in collaboration with Pacific-i, Pūtahi Manawa, and the STEM experts at The Biomedical Research Imaging Unit (BRIU), Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at the University of Auckland, Grafton Campus. This partnership has opened the door for Malamaatu to explore groundbreaking techniques, including light microscopy, confocal/STED microscopy, electron microscopy, and flow cytometry. A career pathways that could befitted some of our students and to become very few Pacific in the field in the coming future.

I would like to express heartfelt gratitude on behalf of MaSA to Soteria Ieremia, founder of Pacific-i, and to Dr. David Crossman along with his exceptional BRIU team—Dr. Sandy Chen, Dr. Victoria Hewitt, Ratish Kurian, Jacqueline Ross, and Serah Otukolo. They have not only provided our young learners with an unforgettable interactive experience but have also illuminated the fascinating applications of powerful microscopy in health and research. Your efforts have ignited curiosity and opened new pathways and opportunities for our students to explore, for which we are genuinely thankful.



MaSA student using a microscope at BRIU, University of Auckland. Photo: Soteria Ieremia

As the first community group to explore the BRIU space, typically reserved for postgraduate medical and health science researchers, we feel incredibly privileged. We eagerly anticipate future opportunities to engage our learners further and inspire the next generation of Pacific STEAM expertise."

Collaborating for the Inaugural MedTech Explorer Showcase

Clinicians inspiring youth with medical technology at the event. Photo: Soteria Ieremia

Pūtahi Manawa supported the inaugural MedTech Explorer Showcase hosted by Medtech-iQ alongside Moana Connect and Pacific-i at the Fale Samoa, Māngere on Thursday, 28th August 2025. The showcase brought together health innovators, experts, and technology to introduce local school learners to health careers beyond clinical roles.

Soteria Ieremia, co-lead Pacific for Te Tītoki Mataora | MedTech iQ Aotearoa, and a sponsor and collaborator through her roles in Pacific-i and Pūtahi Manawa, was central to the partnership between Pūtahi Manawa and Medtech iQ.

"It was great to see the number of schools that participated, and the clinicians and experts who came together here in Māngere. We wanted to create a lasting impression - and judging by the many conversations we had with Pacific youth, they're now seeing what's possible and can hopefully see themselves in this industry.

"We talked about our Pacific people being natural innovators - the ability to navigate the Moana with technology over millennia is proof of that. It was inspiring to see so many young people genuinely excited about their own potential and the possibilities that medical technology holds for them."

Read more about the event:
www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2025/08/28/medtech-showcase-hit-with-maori-and-pacific.html
www.hinz.org.nz/news/709025/Health-innovators-bring-future-of-MedTech-to-South-Auckland.htm

Summer research programmes

Kura Raumati and **Fatu Malosi** are two distinct summer research programmes run by Pūtahi Manawa. The programmes provide the opportunity for tauira (students) studying at a tertiary level to get a taste of research by participating in a kaupapa Māori or Pacific-designed and led heart health research programme over summer.

"The best thing Pūtahi Manawa does" – a sentiment echoed by all three Co-Directors at the Welcome events of both Kura Raumati, our by Māori, for Māori summer research programme and Fatu Malosi, our by Pacific, for Pacific summer research programme.

Both programmes centre on shared identity and values to advance heart health outcomes for iwi, whānau, and Pacific communities. During Heart Health Month in February 2026, the two programmes wrapped up with 40 students from all over Aotearoa presenting their research over two days at the Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland and celebrating with whānau/aiga and research colleagues. 37 unique projects were undertaken across four universities and 10 community organisations.

Māori and Pacific communities have long carried an unfair burden of heart disease in Aotearoa. Through the two programmes, students from these communities are leading research grounded in values, whakapapa, and a responsibility to future generations.

How it works

Associate Professor Karen Brewer (Whakatōhea, Ngai Te Rangi), Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Māori, has worked on research that shows when health providers and patients share a similar cultural background, this can overcome communication and relational barriers, leading to high-quality care and better health outcomes. A similar concept applies to health research.

"*When our communities see themselves in research, engagement is stronger, trust is deeper, and the solutions are more likely to work*", said Brewer.

Soteria Ieremia, Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Pacific, says the Fatu Malosi and Kura Raumati programmes inspire and support students to continue into the health workforce or the health research workforce, truly advancing heart health equity for our communities.

"*Pacific and Māori students bring powerful voices to their research. The positioning and ownership of their own identity is very important for creating solutions that are meaningful to our people*", said Ieremia.

Kura Raumati and Fatu Malosi cohorts are welcomed onto Ngā Tauira Marae at Waipapa Taumata Rau for their end-of-programme presentation and celebration event

Identity and value-led research design

Over the summer, each student undertook a research project focused on heart health, bringing the total number of students supported by Kura Raumati over three summers and Fatu Malosi over two summers to 100. Students were based in various parts of the country; some at universities, some in the community, and some at home with their own iwi. Each project strengthens communities' ability to shape their own health futures.

Te Ropere Tipene (Navunievu Village, Bua, Fiji; Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Koroki Kahukura), a Fatu Malosi student, examined the roles of Indigenous beliefs, Christian faith, and biomedical science in the recovery of Pacific children after heart surgery. This is especially important for Pacific children, Tipene says, as they have a higher heart disease burden and have limited clinical and surgical access in the Pacific.

"*There is an urgent need to understand and strengthen all the dimensions of recovery for Pacific children undergoing heart surgery*". - Te Ropere Tipene

The project centred on real-life holistic recovery practices of Pacific families, providing health professionals with a uniquely Pacific lens to inform future post-surgery recovery plans that include how families already provide their own recovery solutions.

Te Ropere Tipene receiving his certificate at the celebration with Pūtahi Manawa Board Co-Chair Dr Mataroria Lyndon and Co-Director Pacific, Soteria Ieremia

Dezaia Huia Walker (Ngāti Kahu, Waikato, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngai Tai), a Kura Raumati and Pūhoro STEMM student, developed a framework that integrates Te Ao Māori into the physiology and research spaces as part of a broader research project developing novel therapies for diabetic heart disease. During her presentation, Walker said that this matters to Māori because Maori have higher hospitalisation rates from cardiovascular disease associated with Diabetes.

"*Advancing Māori heart health equity requires more than scientific discovery. Research environments must recognise tapu (sacredness) and responsibility when working with life and the heart. They must restore noa (balance) through intentional ethical practice and honour Māori worldviews, tikanga, and relational accountability.*" – Dezaia Huia Walker

Dezaiah Huia Walker's whānau came to support her during her presentation at the end of the programme

A safe space for achievement

The two programmes aim to provide Māori and Pacific students with a safe, value-led space for heart health research, thereby increasing representation in the heart health and research workforce in Aotearoa.

Fatu Malosi 2026 Emerging Researcher, **Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein** (Fasito'otai, Eva, Upolu, Samoa; Te Āti Awa), has now completed two Fatu Malosi studentships as well as honours research that was inspired by his first summer research project.

During his honours research at the University of Otago, supported by Pūtahi Manawa, Murphy-Winterstein developed a faster way to assess heart cells' reactions to drugs intended to treat arrhythmia.

"*We developed this faster method because there's a massive disparity in cardiogenetic research for Māori and Pasifika compared to our European population, and we needed a way to speed up closing this research gap*", Murphy-Winterstein said.

The method then enabled Murphy-Winterstein to test heart cells' responses to potential new treatments for arrhythmia, yielding some exciting results over the summer for his second Fatu Malosi project.

"Aside from the discoveries of some new potential anti-arrhythmic drugs that we made during my summer research, I have also discovered through Fatu Malosi that research is genuinely something I want to continue to pursue in the future", - Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein.

Kura Raumati student, **Arihia Waitai-Morehu** (Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei, Ngāti Whātua ki Kaipara), conducted research with her own iwi, exploring the unique language and meanings around heart health for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. After her first

Kura Raumati and Fatu Malosi students at Ngā Tauira Marae at Waipapa Taumata Rau for their end-of-programme presentation and celebration event

Kura Raumati rōpu after sauna and sea bathing lead by Tash Burton (far right) with The Sauna Project. Photo: Tracey Kellett

taste of research, she says it's not as scary as she had thought.

"*I have discovered and developed an entirely new perspective on research and how useful it is, but also how much mahi goes into it. I have discovered a new part of my iwi, formed new friendships and relationships, and found out just how many amazing kaimahi are backing our people for the betterment of their health, their hauora, and their lives. I have discovered passion in a place where I only knew fear*". - Arihia Waitai-Morehu

Three students had the opportunity to gain experience working with media during the summer:

Waitai-Morehu and Oaklea Bowden-Morris shared their research with Te Ao Māori News

Murphy-Winterstein was interviewed live on Pacific Mornings.

Kura Raumati: Building the future Māori heart health workforce

Systemic barriers persist that affect entry, retention, and progression in health research and health careers for Māori, resulting in significant underrepresentation in the New Zealand research and health workforce. Māori also bear the burden of worse heart health outcomes in a health system where only 5.5% of all doctors are Māori.

Kura Raumati, a Māori-led summer research programme, is a pathway that contributes to increased Māori representation in research with a focus on heart health equity. On Monday, 17 November 2025, fifteen students were welcomed as the third cohort at Poutūterangi Marae in Tauranga.

The national programme funded by Pūtahi Manawa provides Māori students with paid, hands-on research experience. Students worked with supervisors on diverse projects across Te Whatu Ora Waikato, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia, Ngāti Porou Oranga, Pūhoro STEMM, Te Puna Hauora o Te Raki Paewhenua, Manawaora Integrative Health and Research Centre, and Squad Nation.

Erina Korohina, Kura Raumati Lead and researcher, who played a key role in designing the programme, says the studentship champions Indigenous ways of thinking, relating, and working.

"*What we've seen over decades is that models and systems built without us often fail to meet our needs. We wanted to do things differently,*" – Erina Korohina.

Sustained support

Kura Raumati has its whakapapa in Te Ara Poutama, a wider Kaupapa Māori research project hosted by The Centre for Health. The programme was developed and trialled by researchers with support from Pūtahi Manawa and Heart Foundation New Zealand. Now in its third year, the programme has been entrusted to Pūtahi Manawa to carry forward beyond the life of the original research project.

"*Too often, research produces incredible initiatives for communities, only for them to end when the project wraps up. Being able to carry this kaupapa forward for Māori students is a privilege, and an important step in strengthening the Māori heart health workforce.*" – Associate Professor Karen Brewer, Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Māori.

Assoc Prof Karen Brewer, Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Māori speaking at the pōwhiri at Ngā Tauira Marae, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Kura Raumati will be sustained for three more summers, the duration of Pūtahi Manawa's current funded contract with the Tertiary Education Commission.

However, Professor Paton, Co-Director of Pūtahi Manawa, says that longer-term investment is essential for the fruits of successful programmes like Kura Raumati to be realised and for heart health equity through workforce development to be addressed.

"*We are planting the seed for a career in heart health research and providing support at each step of the journey. It takes six to seven years from the beginning of an undergraduate degree to completing a PhD, studying full-time. We collaborate with Māori and Pacific STEM programmes, which support high school students, which means the potential lifespan of our relationship with a researcher could be even longer.*"

A Kaupapa Māori approach

Kura Raumati began with a week-long noho-marae (marae stay) in Tauranga Moana, providing students with direct access to diverse Kaupapa Māori research in action.

Dr Anna Rolleston, Director of The Centre for Health, says that in Te Ao Māori, Kaupapa Māori is simply doing things the Māori way. But within a Western academic context, it becomes a defined methodology with tikanga, rules, and the power to challenge established systems.

"*When we choose to do Kaupapa Māori research, it is inherently political. It is a challenge to the system.*"

Kaupapa Māori research tends to examine an issue holistically in a real-world context, where the environment influences outcomes, rather than in a controlled setting.

Tash Burton exemplifies this approach in her doctoral research, which investigates the cardiovascular effects of heat and cold exposure, specifically through sauna bathing and ocean immersion, as a holistic option for blood pressure management. As part of this work, Tash guided the students through a practical experience in Tauranga Moana with The Sauna Project.

Partnering for success

Kura Raumati leverages the collective's strengths to diversify the students' networks and experience. A long-standing partnership with Pūhoro STEMM Academy resulted in five of the academy's students being placed in the 2025/26 cohort.

"*This exciting collaboration strengthens our commitment to growing a diverse, culturally grounded health research workforce*", says Korohina.

Pūhoro STEMM run their summer research programme at the same time, and the crossover means the students get to experience two Kaupapa Māori programmes concurrently.

International attention

Kura Raumati was profiled nationally and internationally in 2025 at the CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference in Sydney and the CSANZ NZ Annual Scientific Meeting in Rotorua, by Korohina and Whetumarama Manihera, from the Centre for Health.

Korohina said that highlighting Kura Raumati locally and overseas goes beyond sharing the model and its successes.

"*It's also been a chance to connect with other Indigenous teams, swap ideas, and build relationships that can lift all our communities. Most of all, it's about putting our tauira and their mahi in the spotlight, and showing that when Māori values lead the way, real change is possible.*"

Manihera at CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference, Gadigal Country (Sydney), June 2025. Photo: Tracey Kellett

Kura Raumati awardees

See list of awardees on page 109 in the Appendices.

Fatu Malosi: A Pacific navigation of academia for improved heart health equity

The second cohort of Fatu Malosi welcomed 25 Pacific students and their families in November 2025

Co-led by Dr Julie Winter-Smith (ʻAlaki Fonua Pelehake & Fatai - Tongatapu - Tonga) and Nuseta Hope (Funafuti, Nukulaelae - Tuvalu; Atafu, Fakaofo - Tokelau; Saleimoa - Samoa), the programme creates a dedicated pathway for Pacific students into research and postgraduate study, an area where Pacific students face barriers and representation has historically been low. Winter-Smith understands these challenges firsthand, having once been one of the few Pacific students in academia herself.

"Not enough Pacific students continue into research or postgraduate study. Fatu Malosi is a programme that helps students to get a taste of research and hopefully contribute to filling that space", says Winter-Smith.

Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Pacific, Soteria Ieremia, told students they were selected with intention and purpose.

"Māori and Pacific Peoples continue to experience the highest rates of heart disease in this country... Your identity and your experiences are essential to creating the solutions that work for our families and our communities."

Why it matters

Pacific Peoples remain significantly underrepresented in academia. In 2019, only 1.7% of academics in New Zealand were Pacific, and Pacific Professors made up less than 5% of all Professors. Since these figures were published, subsequent funding changes have led to a 140% increase in Pacific academics, but gaps remain.

Editor of Oceans Between Us: Pacific Peoples and Racism in Aotearoa, Associate Professor Sereana Naepi (Nakida, Natasiri - Fiji), shared her expertise with the cohort at their fonotaga last week.

"*Research is a form of service. It has the ability to change not just one person's life, but our entire community's,*" says Naepi.

She also recently co-authored a paper that examines in detail what holding a higher education qualification, such as a PhD, means for Pacific People.

"*I want more Pacific academics, more Pacific graduates, because when that happens, we get a higher socio-economic status, which addresses our health outcomes, improves our chances of home-ownership, increases our net-worth, and other positive outcomes*".

The study found that Pacific People with doctoral degrees earn even more than their non-Māori, non-Pacific peers, breaking the trend of inequity.

Summer research

Over the summer, Pacific students investigated 23 cutting-edge and equity-focused topics across the Ministry of Health, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | The University of Waikato, Auckland University of Technology, National Hauora Coalition, and Turuki Healthcare.

Dr Sandra Hanchard (Kolomotu'a, Neiafu - Tonga), an expert in equity-focused research in Aotearoa, worked with a Fatu Malosi student to understand the potential benefits and risks of digital health and AI in the self-management of heart failure for Pacific patients and their families.

"*It's important that we ground our research in Pacific and Indigenous worldviews and uphold the mana of our participants.*

It makes absolute sense that we bring along a Pacific student in our research, who brings their own strengths and unique perspectives from their communities to help us co-design, interpret and disseminate our findings in a culturally responsive way."

Dr Julie Winter-Smith at WIPCE . Photo: Kim Meredith, University of Auckland Pacific Media Adviser

Global Indigenous connection

Winter-Smith shared Fatu Malosi with the world at two international Indigenous conferences this year: the Cardiac Society of Australia and NZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference in Sydney in June and the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) hosted by Auckland University of Technology in November.

"*Showcasing Fatu Malosi ensures that our Pacific stories, knowledge systems, and solutions are visible and heard. Conferences such as WIPCE provide opportunities for Indigenous peoples internationally to learn from one another and for collective advocacy*", says Julie Winter-Smith.

Fatu Malosi Awardees

See list of awardees on page 110 in the Appendices.

Fatu Malosi cohort at K'aute Pasifika Fale, Kirikiriroa | Hamilton. Photo: Soteria Iermeia

Inaugural Summer Research Awards

This summer, Pūtahi Manawa proudly presented its inaugural Kura Raumati and Fatu Malosi Summer Research Awards. A new initiative, created to recognise and celebrate the outstanding work of students who completed summer research projects.

The awards recognise those who truly embodied the values of Pūtahi Manawa — through integrity, compassion, innovation, and leadership, and were presented by Dr Allamanda Fa'atoese, Deputy-Chair of the Pūtahi Manawa Pacific Leadership Team and Professor Julian Paton, Pūtahi Manawa founding Co-Director.

Awardees

Values in Practice Award Fatu Malosi - Jayda Matara
Drawing from her South Auckland roots, Jayda connected with the project on a deeply personal level, bringing authenticity, humility, and heart to her work. With a growing interest in cardiology, her supervisors are hopeful she will choose to specialise in either cardiology or obstetrics medicine in the future - pathways where her compassion and commitment will no doubt make a lasting difference.

Values in Practice Award Kura Raumati - Angel Hillman
During her project with Te Puna Hauora, Angel's contribution has meaningfully supported a project focused on strengthening support for whānau Māori in the community living with cardiovascular disease and reflects the importance of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga-led practice in research and community engagement.

Community Contribution Award Fatu Malosi - Te Paea Ma'u
(See details on page 38)

Community Contribution Award Kura Raumati - Oaklea Bowden-Morris
During her summer studentship, this tauira demonstrated strong commitment to community engagement through kaupapa Māori grounded research. Oaklea worked closely with whānau in Ruatoria, listening to lived experiences and ensuring their voices guided the development of the A Love Letter from my Pharmacist resource. Her contribution reflects the importance of working alongside whānau in ways that build trust, relevance, and shared ownership.

Equity and Fairness in Practice Award Fatu Malosi - Pooja Rattu
During her project, Pooja brought an intentional and equity-centred lens to her analytical work. She consistently questioned how the data was structured, who it represented, whose experiences might be missing, and how interpretation could either support or undermine fairness. Her supervisor highlighted her thoughtful approach, noting the care she took to avoid pathologising communities. Instead, she focused on the system-level factors influencing differing GoodSAM response patterns, ensuring her analysis remained grounded in respect, inclusion, and a deep awareness of structural inequities.

Equity and Fairness in Practice Award Kura Raumati - Arihia Waitai-Morehu
During her project, Arihia reviewed archival materials, including karakia and mōteatea, analysing the use of kupu connected to heart health and exploring how these relate to iwi specific mātāpono guiding the project. Through this work, she demonstrated growing understanding of equity in heart health by helping centre iwi knowledge, language, and values within the research process.

Carmel Ah Chong receiving her award from Soteria Ieremia and Dr Mataroria Lyndon

Communication and Knowledge Sharing Award - Carmel Ah Chong (Fatu Malosi)
At the end of her project Carmel delivered a phenomenal presentation. Over the past two summers, she has taken a concept - a resource for Pacific mothers developed within a Pacific framework - and developed it from scratch, adapting it with professionalism and grace in response to feedback from multiple disciplines. Also, Carmel was selected to present her 2024/25 Fatu Malosi summer research project at the CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference and successfully published her work.

Chong, C. A., Oyston, C., & Okesene-Gafa, K. (2025). Managing long-term cardiovascular health following pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes in Pacific mothers—Setting the foundation for culturally safe health resources. *Heart, Lung and Circulation*, 34, S57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hlc.2025.05.002.

Innovation in Practice Award Fatu Malosi - Lisi-Malia Pereira

Through her thoughtful contributions, she has generated outputs that will provide valuable insights for health policy and systems addressing hypertension treatment — a key area affecting Māori and Pacific communities — and will meaningfully support the health and wellbeing of whānau and communities.

Emerging Research Leader Award Fatu Malosi - Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein
Having already completed an honours project in the lab, Jaxson returned with a strong foundation but quickly became the expert in the methodology he had designed previously. Particularly impressive was Jaxson's work with drugs provided by an Australian collaborator. He took the initiative to communicate directly with the collaborator, determine the best drugs to test, provide results, and adjust the approach as needed. His efforts allowed the team to collect data that would have taken months for the collaborators to gather. Beyond drug screening, Jaxson showed remarkable dedication to examining a new genetic variant associated with arrhythmia, identified postmortem in a New Zealand family. He even flew back to Dunedin from Auckland to screen the variant himself, ensuring data could be returned to the clinical team — potentially life-changing information for the family.

Emerging Research Leader Award Kura Raumati - Waimania Papuni
This tauira joined the programme two weeks after it began and, as a first-time researcher at just 17 years old, demonstrated impressive agility in stepping into the research environment. An emerging community-based researcher demonstrates strong relational skills, cultural integrity, and a commitment to community priorities, alongside growing research capability and ethical awareness.

Other summer student achievements

Jade-Tau Manuel (Ngāti Porou, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tahu Ngāti Whaoa, Kai Tahu)
Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Jade-Tau Manuel at the University of Minnesota

After completing a Kura Raumati studentship in 2024/25, Jade presented the work from her summer project at the 2025 Indian Health Service Northern Tier Pharmacy Conference at the University of Duluth in Minnesota. For her summer project Jade was partnered with Dr Andree Pearson, Pūtahi Manawa researcher at the Christchurch Heart Institute Centre and helped to conduct a literature search around the ethnic differences of cardiac biomarker NTproBNP particularly for Māori and pacific populations. Jade's work will increase understanding of differences in NT-proBNP levels in other Indigenous populations from around the world.

"I cherished the opportunity to have conversations with many individuals from different backgrounds about identifying and addressing health inequities within our communities. I tried to immerse myself in the culture and enjoyed listening to the stories and linking together many similarities that we share as Indigenous peoples."

- Jade Tau Manuel

Scholarships

Furthering our commitment to access and achievement, our funding application process is supportive. Students whose applications are evaluated as not fundable but are close to the required standard are given constructive feedback and the opportunity to improve their applications and resubmit them. This has led to a high success rate for our applicants.

Postgraduate scholarships awarded in 2025

In 2025, Pūtahi Manawa awarded seven postgraduate scholarships: five Māori and two Pacific. Four students were from Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago, two from Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. The success rate of applicants was 70%.

The purpose of the Pūtahi Manawa postgraduate scholarships is to provide direct support for Māori and Pacific students studying for either a Master's, a Bachelor's with Honours degree, or a Postgraduate Diploma, which includes heart health research and who are intending to continue their studies in heart health research at a tertiary institution in Aotearoa New Zealand. We offer up to two years of support to address a potential financial barrier for students entering postgraduate study.

Pūtahi Manawa scholarships offer a generous $23,500 per annum tax-free stipend, payment of tuition fees and $7,000 for research expenses/travel. This is a higher stipend than most postgraduate scholarships offered in Aotearoa NZ and is unusual in including an allowance for research costs. The 2025 funding round was open to applicants of Māori or Indigenous Pacific descent who were NZ citizens or Residents or had the right to study/hold a current visa to study in New Zealand.

Pacific postgraduate scholarships

Auroiana Etelei
Master of Genetic Counselling, University of Technology Sydney
Fees and travel grant

Supervised by Lucinda Freeman, UTS, and by Dr Polona Le Quesne Stabej, University of Auckland. This qualification is not available in NZ.

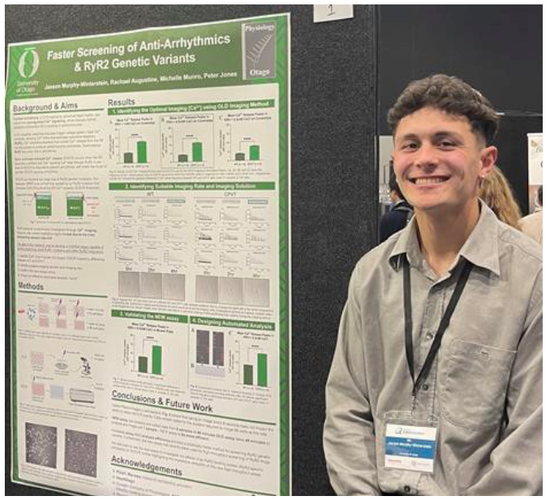
The qualification is being undertaken as part of the Integrated Research Module *Ō tātou ngākau, ō tātou ira, ō tātou kōrero / Our heart, our genes, our story*.

Auroiana Etelei has been awarded a grant to contribute to her tuition fees and travel costs to study (mostly remotely) at University of Technology Sydney for a Master of Genetic Counselling. Auroiana will be the first person of Indigenous Pacific descent to complete this qualification in Aotearoa NZ.

Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein (Fasito'otai, Eva - Upolu - Samoa; Te Āti Awa)
Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences (Honours), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Project title: *Investigating the role of genetic variants in cardiac arrhythmias*
Supervised by Prof Peter Jones

Jaxson was awarded and completed his honours research in 2025. He built on his Fatu Malosi summer research project from 2024/25 and advanced his honours research further through his Fatu Malosi 2025/26 project.



Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein with his poster at Queenstown Research Week, September 2025

Jaxson won the student research poster prize at Queenstown Research Week for his honour research which has developed a new assay to rapidly screen potential arrhythmogenic genetic variants identified in NZ patients.

His desire was to accelerate understanding of genetic variants in Māori and Pacific people. Currently, there is a good database for European patients, allowing genetic variants to be determined as pathological or not; this is not the case in other populations.

Jaxson reflected on the event, "It was great to be able to not only share my research that I have conducted for Honours, but more importantly, talk about the future uses of my research to more quickly mitigate the disparity in Māori and Pasifika cardiovascular research."

Māori postgraduate scholarships

Jatarla Absolum (Ngāpuhi, Te Mahurehure)
Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Project title: *Body composition, fitness, and cardiac function in young Māori: exploring a new perspective*
Supervised by Dr Hamish Osborne & Dr Gillian Whalley

Andrew Davis (Ngā Rauru)
Master of Clinical Pharmacy, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Prescribing patterns of guideline-directed medical therapy (GDMT) for Māori in Aotearoa with heart failure*
Supervised by Dr Joanna Hikaka & Prof Jeff Harrison

Aurora Ansin (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Maniapoto; Samoa)
Master of Health Science (Nutrition and Dietetics), Waipapa Taumata Rau
Project title: *Ready, steady, cook!*
Supervised by Assoc Prof Andrea Braakhuis

Fraser Beck (Ngāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe)
Master of Science in Neuroscience, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka
Project title: *Breathing protocols to enhance heart health and mental well-being for improved hauora*
Supervised by Assoc Prof Olivia Harrison

Eilish Dalley (Kāti Māmoe, Kai Tāhu, Waitaha)

Bachelor of Science with Honours in Physiology, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka
Project title: *Investigating the gene regulatory mechanisms of TMEM176B in the heart*
Supervised by Dr Megan Leask

Postgraduate completions in 2025

Our congratulations to the following Pūtahi Manawa scholarship students who completed their postgraduate qualification in 2025.

Ella Keaney

Bachelor of Biomedical Science Honours, Functional Human Biology - First Class Honours, University of Otago
Thesis title: *Sex Differences in Myocardial Function*

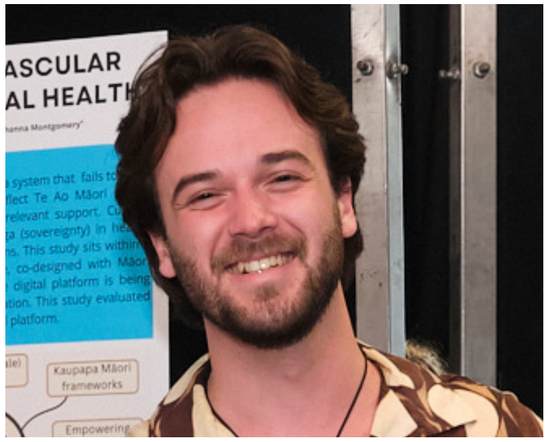
Ella also presented her findings at the annual Medical Science Meeting at Queenstown Research Week and received Co-Directors Support funding to continue her research for a further two months.

Serah 'Otukolo (Tonga)

Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours), Medical Science, University of Auckland
Thesis title: *Transmission electron microscopy to analyse how the novel respiratory heart rate variability pacemaker improves mitochondrial ultrastructure*

Congratulations to Serah who received an A+ grade for her thesis. Serah has now received a Pūtahi Manawa doctoral scholarship and starts her doctoral studies in early 2026.
Read more on page 55.

Noah Appleby (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki)



Noah Appleby at the CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference, Sydney 2025.
Photo: Orlandosydney.com

Bachelor of Medical Science (Hons)
University of Auckland

Thesis title: *Haumanu Hauora: a Kaupapa Māori aligned examination of bariatric surgery access and provision by ethnicity in Aotearoa, New Zealand*

Noah completed the Pūtahi Manawa Kura Raumati programme in 2023/24 and 2024/25. His summer research work in 2024/25 with Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri lead to his interest in bariatric surgery outcomes and he decided to study for a B(Hons) with Dr Rahiri, continuing his research in this topic.

Elaijah Tuivaiti (Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Whakaue, Taranaki; Upolu: Savaia - Lefaga, Levi - Falelātai - Samoa)

Bachelor of Medical Science (Hons)
University of Auckland
Thesis title: *Haumanu Hauora; whakaiti te puku: bariatric surgery outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand*

Elaijah completed the Pūtahi Manawa Kura Raumati programme in 2024/25. His summer research work with Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri lead to his interest in bariatric surgery outcomes and he decided to study for a B(Hons) with Dr Rahiri, continuing his research in this topic.

Tausi Tausi (Tuvalu, Kiribati)

Bachelor of Science Honours, Physiology - First Class Honours, University of Otago
Thesis title: *The Effects of CK2 Phosphorylation on RyR2 Cluster Organisation*

Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein

See full details on page 68.

Doctoral scholarships awarded in 2025

Six doctoral scholarships have been awarded to students at University of Otago and University of Auckland - two Māori doctoral scholarships and four Pacific doctoral scholarships. The scholarships provide a stipend of $36,000 per year, research expenses of $5,000 per year and payment of tuition fees.

Applicants must be Māori or of Indigenous Pacific descent but do not have to be a NZ Citizen or Resident to be eligible, as long as they have a right to study/hold a current visa to study in New Zealand.

Our doctoral scholarships were open for applications from 1 March through to 30 November 2025. Applications were reviewed monthly by the funding panel, allowing students to apply when they were ready.

We received eight doctoral scholarship applications in 2025, two applicants withdrew their applications and six were awarded scholarships - a 100% success rate.

Pacific doctoral scholarships

Tausi Tausi (Tuvalu, Kiribati)

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Project title**:** *Developing novel fluorescent probes for improved RyR2 cluster identification in mice and human tissue*
Primary supervisor: Professor Pete Jones

Tausi has completed three Pūtahi Manawa funded summer research projects in 2023/4, 2024/5 and 2025/6; two of them with Fatu Malosi. He has also recently completed his Bachelor of Science with Honours in Physiology, supported by a Pūtahi Manawa postgraduate scholarship in which he received a 92% grade for his thesis. This was the highest thesis grade for a Physiology BSc(Hons) student in 2024 at the University of Otago. Tausi continues to be an inspiring role model for our Pacific students.

Vaea Ulima Tofi (Tufulele, Vaipuna - Samoa; Rongowhakaata, Ngaati Maniapoto)

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Tāngata o le Moana - Exploring the experiences of Māori & Pacific heart health workers in Aotearoa*
Primary supervisor: Dr Sandra Hanchard
See more on page 76.

Serah ‘Otukolo (Tonga)

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *The role of mitochondrial organisation in mediating the effects of respiratory heart rate variability*
Primary supervisor: Dr David Crossman
See more on page 55.

Gerald (Jay) Naepi (Tamakautoga, Avatele - Niue)

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Integrating Pacific People’s needs into a biomedical investigation of pharmacological treatments for heart failure*
Primary supervisor: Assoc Prof Kim Mellor

Jay’s research work is being undertaken as part of the project *Sweet Pressure: Improving outcomes for people with diabetes and high blood pressure in Aotearoa* funded by Pūtahi Manawa.

Māori doctoral scholarships

Erina Korohina (Ngāti Porou)

Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Project title: *From whenua to whānau: The Health & environmental potential of tūpuna inspired eating*
Primary supervisor: Assoc Prof Andrew Reynolds

Jamie Iro (Ngāi Te Rangi; Rarotonga - Cook Islands)

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Kai ā nuku: nourishing whānau through an Aotearoa-centred nutrition approach*
Primary supervisor: Dr Nicola Gillies

Fellowships

Fellowships awarded in 2025

In 2025 we ran a funding round for Pacific fellowships. These fellowships provided a new model for supporting Pacific researchers. It’s common practice to require researchers applying for fellowships to already have a doctoral degree. Pūtahi Manawa’s “business not as usual” approach breaks longstanding norms to operate in a way that best suits our community.

Researchers with a doctoral degree OR at least three years equivalent research experience could apply for a fellowship.

For the first time, we offered Pacific researchers without a doctoral degree the opportunity to gain a qualification while completing their fellowship. Successful applicants can use the research project they will do for the fellowship as their doctoral project.

Key criteria for applicants intending to study towards a PhD:

- Successful applicants are admitted to a NZ university
- Research is supervised

A common student stipend when studying for a doctorate is around $35,000. Pūtahi Manawa Pacific Fellows will be paid at a full fellowship salary rate typically ranging between $90,000 and $120,000 p/a plus $100,000 working expenses over the three years.

This provided a great opportunity for community researchers to gain an academic qualification while still being able to support themselves and their aiga/fāmili. Pacific fellowship awardee, Penina Hitti is the first of our Pacific fellows to benefit from this new model of fellowship funding.

Penina Hitti (Gautavai - Savai’i - Samoa)

Pacific fellowship

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa | Massey University
Project title: *Pacific childhood experiences and their influence on metabolic and mental health: a holistic study of risks and protective factors*
Award amount: $740,749
Fellowship duration: June 2025 - September 2028

This fellowship will enable Penina to gain a doctoral degree, as the research undertaken as part of this fellowship forms the basis for Penina’s doctoral studies.

Description
This study aims to explore how childhood experiences—both negative and positive can impact long-term health for Pacific young adults. Research has shown that negative childhood experiences, like abuse or neglect, can increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and mental health challenges in later life. However, positive experiences, such as strong family support, cultural connections, and resilience, may help to protect against these risks.
Pacific cultures, with their emphasis on community, family, and spirituality, offer unique strengths that could buffer the negative impacts of childhood adversity and long-term health conditions. By using the Fonofale model, a holistic framework for Pacific health, this research will explore what cultural factors can promote resilience and reduce metabolic and mental health risks.

The study will involve 100 Pacific adults aged 20-34 years old, examining both measurable health outcomes (e.g., blood pressure, glucose levels and mental health) and personal stories that can provide insights of resilience factors. Findings from this study will help shape culturally relevant health strategies that contribute to reducing the risk of metabolic syndrome and mental health struggles. This research has the potential to guide public health approaches that are both effective and culturally appropriate for Pacific communities, addressing significant health inequities.

Dr Fa'asisila Savila (Ngāpuhi; Samoa)

Pacific fellowship
Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project Title: Improving cardiovascular health for Māori and Pacific people engaging with Buttabean Motivation's 'From The Couch' programme
Award amount: $966,826
Fellowship duration: July 2025 - June 2028

Description
Obesity poses the greatest cardiovascular risk for Māori and Pacific populations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Despite efforts to promote weight loss and lifestyle changes, these communities continue to experience higher levels of obesity and related comorbidities compared to non-Māori, non-Pacific populations. This Fellowship will evaluate the "From the Couch" (FTC) health programme run by the Maori-Pacific driven community organisation, Buttabean Motivation (BBM). The programme provides intensive wraparound support to community members living with extreme obesity who want to improve their health and wellbeing. The Fellowship will follow a cohort of FTC participants for two years, investigating clinical markers such as blood sugar and cholesterol, and evaluating the benefits of engaging in the programme.

Other health measures, such as mental wellbeing, spiritual health, and social relationships, will be examined to determine the effects of participating in BBM's much sought-after programme. Although open to all ethnic groups, BBM uses Māori and Pacific approaches to hauora (wellbeing) to create a safe space for these communities to engage socially while participating in exercise and nutrition classes, and other social supports like work-ready programmes.

The findings from this research will add to the body of evidence demonstrating the value and impact of using Kaupapa Māori and Pacific concepts for delivering health services and culturally appropriate research for these communities.

Ongoing fellowships

Dr Sandra Hanchard (Kolomotu'a, Neiafu - Tonga)

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Equity-focused discharge planning for heart failure*
Award amount Pūtahi Manawa: $429,965
Co-funding from National Heart Foundation: $192,930
Fellowship duration July 2024 - June 2026

Inaugural Pūtahi Manawa and Heart Foundation Pacific Research Fellow

Description
This project aims to gain a comprehensive picture of discharge planning for heart failure across public hospitals in Aotearoa New Zealand and to determine the approaches that work best for Māori and Pacific heart failure patients. A key outcome is to improve the quality of life for Māori and Pacific people with heart failure through a consistent evidence-based heart failure care pathway and enhanced coordination of care by streamlining communication between hospital and community providers, and by centring patients/whānau as partners in self-management. The investigation aims to inform nationwide strategies to coordinate cardiac services that work for Māori and Pacific people.

Progress in 2025
Dr Sandra Hanchard has made significant contributions in year three of her Pacific Fellowship across research excellence, health system impact, academic leadership, and capacity-building. Her second major project investigates AI-enhanced digital health support for community-based heart failure management for Pacific peoples. The project aims to address language and cultural barriers to improve symptom recognition and confidence in accessing care, thereby reducing unplanned hospital readmissions and improving long-term outcomes.

Guided by Pacific methodologies, including the Tongan *Kakala* framework, phase one has explored acceptability and feasibility with patients, families, and providers. Key milestones include protocol development, ethics approvals, establishment of Pacific and clinical governance, and near completion of data collection. Early conclusions suggest that AI-enhanced digital heart failure support may be acceptable for Pacific communities when culturally grounded and co-designed with patients, families and providers. Digital tools must strengthen trusted relationships between people and services to enable effective and sustained management. The project has established transdisciplinary collaborations and secured $80,000 in additional funding from a HealthTech Award, supporting the further development of an innovative, community-grounded hybrid large language model (LLM).

Dr Hanchard's research is informing equity-focused models of care through Pacific governance roles in the health system, including the National Cardiac Clinical Network and its Heart Failure working group and the Digital Council for Te Whatu Ora. Dissemination has been through peer-reviewed publications and conferences, including invited presentations at the prestigious Cardiac Society (CSANZ) Indigenous conference in Sydney and Queenstown Research Week scientific meeting. Dr Hanchard's leadership is reflected by an invited Stewardship role on the AI in Health Research Network. She also contributes through supervision and mentorship of Māori and Pacific doctoral students, helping to build a workforce equipped to deliver equity-focused outcomes.

Dr Anna Ponnampalam

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Improved targeted framework for gestational cardio metabolic management among Māori and Pacific women*
Award amount: $733,312
Fellowship Duration: December 2022 - September 2026

Description
Gestational Diabetes (GDM) is a common complication during pregnancy that increases the risk of developing future cardio-metabolic diseases in both the mother and child. The prevalence is disproportionately higher among non-European women. Anna's Fellowship aims to understand the mechanisms of GDM and, with patient communities, explore a number of potential interventions. She is interested in identifying an optimal maternal macronutrient diet that could reduce the risk of developing GDM.

Progress in 2025
To this end, Anna has engaged with communities in South Auckland and developed a framework for addressing inequities.
Remarkably, she has discovered that when a father to be is exposed to an unhealthy diet also causes pathological changes in heart structure and function in his offspring. Thus, the type of diet to mum and dad matters for the health status of their children. This success has led to additional grant awards to further investigate her novel finding of paternal influence on children's heart disease risk. She has found sex-specific differences in the offspring. Her goal is to determine the potential effectiveness of dietary interventions that will disrupt the cycle of pathological cardiac programming and its associated health issues across generations. Anna's fellowship is providing evidence to underpin changes in public health policy by identifying key perinatal factors that enable the introduction of early preventive measures to improve parental health and thereby optimise the health of their children.

Grants awarded in 2025
Auckland Medical Research Foundation project grant (2025-2027; NZ$177,574)

Project title: *Paternal diet and future heart health of the mother and child*

Dr Debbie Zhao

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Project title: *Redefining references ranges for heart health in Aotearoa*
Award amount: $843,039
Fellowship Duration: October 2023 - September 2026

Description
Dr Zhao's fellowship project integrates biophysical modelling and artificial intelligence to make cardiac magnetic imaging more efficient, accurate and accessible for Aotearoa New Zealand's population. Standard ranges used in diagnosis of heart disease are based on European measurements which do not provide an accurate diagnosis for Māori and Pacific Peoples. Her research aims to redefine what is normal in terms of heart size (a reference range) and function for Māori and Pacific Peoples and reduce the bias in outcomes and the waitlist for cardiac imaging. In collaboration with her Māori and Pacific team members, Dr Zhao has begun her research work by developing culturally tailored frameworks for both Māori and Pacific participants to ensure that there is a mutual understanding on what normal/healthy means for them.

Progress in 2025
That seemingly simple question - what is normal/healthy for Māori and Pacific Peoples has taken Debbie on an unexpectedly long and enlightening journey. Debbie's team has made good progress on the development of novel frameworks for quantifying health and wellbeing in Māori and Pacific contexts. This development reflects an unexpected and previously unknown pre-requisite as a direct result of extensive consultation and engagement with Māori and Pacific cultural advisors, health experts, as well as communities during the study planning phase (i.e., the need to define "healthy" in a meaningful and applicable way, before trying to define healthy reference ranges for cardiac measurements in a clinical context).

Determined to use best practice when engaging with participants in the study, Dr Zhao and her team have developed relationships with range of Māori and Pacific health providers to ensure that if they encounter individuals with any health issues - from heart conditions, diabetes, other metabolic disorders or physical health issues through to mental health needs - they can refer them to an appropriate health provider.

The team presented their work on *Developing a Māori health questionnaire based on Te Whare Tapa Whā* and *Development of a Pacific values-based framework for assessing heart health using the Fonofale model* at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference in Sydney in June 2025. Encouraged by interest in the frameworks from other researchers, Dr Zhao plans to develop and publish a broader version of the frameworks that can be used by other health researchers.

During the project, Pacific research nurse Mardi Heath also had the opportunity to learn how to acquire an echocardiogram. Mardi plans to use her new skill to do scans at Rheumatic Heart Disease clinics.

Pono – Authenticity in Research at the 2025 Heart Health Forum

The 2025 Early Career Heart Health Forum brought together 41 heart health researchers from across Aotearoa New Zealand, fostering connections between diverse areas of expertise and worldviews.

Held in Rotorua on the 21 and 22 May, the event was primarily funded by the Heart Foundation, with additional support from Pūtahi Manawa.

The Forum was put together by a dedicated volunteer Organising Rōpū, chaired this year by Dr Andree Pearson. "*Our committee feels strongly that education around diversity, inclusion and cultural safety is relevant and pertinent for all heart researchers in order to address the health inequities in Aotearoa New Zealand.*"

The multi-disciplinary forum allows for real conversation for change. "*We heard from one speaker, who is on the front line with patients, about a case which was particularly harrowing. This had an impact on everyone in the room*", explained Dr Pearson. "It sparked discussion on how well-targeted research could influence policy to prevent further similar outcomes."

A central focus is addressing the persistent equity gap in heart health outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples. "*This is an important issue that requires upskilling of all researchers to effect change*", stated Dr Pearson.

Experts in elevating Pacific family voices, Mary Roberts and Loata Tiapapa from Moana Connect, imparted real advice to the researchers and clinicians on engaging with Pacific communities. A poignant talk that ended with creative expression and cultural exchange, making 'ei katu, a Cook Islands flower crown.

The 2025 Heart Health Forum Organising Rōpū was chaired by Dr Andree Pearson, University of Otago, strongly supported by emerging researchers in heart health: Erina Korohina & Hannah Lowe, Manawaora Integrated Health & Research Integrated Health Research, Dr Brendon Roxburgh and Gemma Moir-Meyer, University of Otago, Dr James Hewett, University of Canterbury, Dr Amelia Power, Dr Randall D'Souza and Dr Debbie Zhao, University of Auckland, Carlos Meza Alvarado, Massey University and Mei Ye, Pūtahi Manawa.

2025 Early Career Heart Health Forum attendees wearing their 'ei katu

Ulima Tofi: championing wellbeing for the Māori and Pacific heart health workforce

For Vaea Ulima Tofi (Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Maniapoto, Tufulele, Vaipuna), pursuing research has sprung from his ultimate life purpose: serving his people. Supported by a Pūtahi Manawa Māori and Pacific Doctoral Scholarship, Ulima is on a mission to give Māori and Pacific heart health professionals a tool to assess an organisations safety and readiness to be a good employer. To do that, Ulima is uncovering what makes a good workplace for Māori and Pacific heart health workers, beyond a short commute and good parking.

From physio to PhD: a journey rooted in service

Ulima's path into research wasn't mapped out from the start. Vaea Ulima Tofi, who holds the matai title Vaea from Matāutu Apia in Samoa, originally trained as a physiotherapist. He found purpose in mentoring and supporting students, new graduates, and colleagues. As his career evolved, so too did his perspective. Working in hospitals and around clinicians, he noticed a pattern: Māori and Pacific workers often grappled with a sense of not quite belonging. Conversations revealed experiences of cultural marginalisation, professional isolation, and burnout — all of which deeply impacted their wellbeing and ability to serve their communities.

"*I love people, and I want our people to be the best they can," Ulima says. "But how can we expect our clinicians to care for others when they're not being cared for themselves?*"

This insight sparked his passion for research focused on the workforce experience of Māori and Pacific health professionals — their retention, wellbeing, and what makes a workplace safe and enjoyable.

Why this research matters

While the push to grow the Māori and Pacific health workforce has gained momentum, Ulima's research explores what happens *after* these individuals enter the system. How long do they stay? What's the quality of their experience? Are health organisations truly prepared to support and uplift Indigenous clinicians?

"*We've got plenty of initiatives to recruit us, but nothing that captures what it's like to be us in the workforce,*" Ulima explains. "*We don't just need more people, we need better spaces.*"

Ulima's work delves into the lived realities of Māori and Pacific heart health workers — the good, the bad, and everything in between. He's especially interested in developing tools that clinicians can use to critically evaluate whether an organisation is truly safe, inclusive, and culturally ready for them.

"*Everyone wants us. But not everyone deserves us,*" Ulima says. "*We need to flip the script. Give our kaimahi (workforce) the power to ask: Is this place ready for me?*"

A global relevance grounded in Indigenous knowledge

Ulima's research has the potential to influence health systems locally, nationally, and globally. As the world increasingly turns to Indigenous knowledge systems, his work reinforces the importance of culturally grounded, values-based approaches, not just in patient care, but within the workforce itself. Flying to Australia this year, Ulima sparked conversations at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference in Sydney.

"*We talk a lot about cultural safety for patients,*" he says, "*but what about for us - the Māori, Pacific, and Indigenous staff?*"

Fuelled by faith, family, and legacy

Ulima's drive to serve comes from deep roots. His parents, who returned to university later in life, modelled the power of education and service. His father, a Samoan migrant and factory worker, earned a psychology degree in his 40s. His mother, a teen parent, worked as a social worker, lecturer, and in management and education for over 40 years, also pursued higher education as an adult, all while raising a family.

"*I never thought education was beyond me because my parents never let it be,*" Ulima says. "*They did the hard yards, so I didn't have to.*"

Guided by faith, family, and the legacy of service on both his Māori and Samoan sides, Ulima sees his research as a career path and a calling.

Supported by a Kaupapa-Driven network

Alongside his Pūtahi Manawa doctoral scholarship, Ulima is also a recipient of the New Zealand Heart Foundation Māori and Pacific Research Fellowship (three years). He acknowledges the support of key mentors and organisations — including Te Whare Tukutuku, Manawaora Integrative Health and Research, and The Centre for Health — who have backed his journey and continue to walk alongside him.

Ulima with Prof Alika K. Maunakea, University of Hawai'i and Dr Allamanda Faatoese, Deputy Chair, Pūtahi Manawa Pacific Leadership Team at the CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference. Photo by orlandosydney.com

Hoe Ngātahi ki Tua | Partnering for Purpose

Meaningful change begins with meaningful relationships. At Pūtahi Manawa, making connections means bringing together communities, researchers, clinicians, educators, and partners to transform heart health outcomes across Aotearoa collectively.

Grounded in trust and long-term relationships, we continue to open doors for Māori and Pacific communities in ways that are mana-enhancing, honour community leadership, shared knowledge, and lived experience. These connections create opportunities for Māori and Pacific Peoples to participate in, shape, and lead research and education initiatives that are designed with communities, for communities.

Over the past year, we have continued to meet people where they are — through in-person community events, cultural gatherings, digital platforms, and strategic partnerships. Our growing presence across online channels, alongside strengthened engagement through our website and national conversations on heart health equity, has expanded our reach and deepened our impact.

This section reflects the power of connection: between people, disciplines, and communities, and the collective commitment required to challenge inequities and create lasting change.

Mā pango, mā whero, ka oti te mahi

Through black and red, the work will be completed.

O le tele o sulu e maua ai figota

Through collaboration, even the most difficult tasks can be achieved.

Partnering for Impact

Our new partner organisations

We are delighted to welcome two new partner organisations to Pūtahi Manawa - CureKids and Manawa Ora Integrated Health and Research.

Cure Kids

Our collaboration with CureKids has already borne fruit, hosting our newly-funded Pacific-led IRM - *Moana Nui-a-Kiwa Vuvale Bulabula: Pacific Rheumatic Heart Disease Pathways*. The project also collaborates with CureKids Pacific to develop culturally appropriate

Linda Fotherby, Operations Manager, and Tracey Kellett, Communications and Marketing Advisor, on the Pūtahi Manawa stand at the CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference. Photo: Orlandosydney.com

models of care in Aotearoa New Zealand and Fiji with learnings applicable across Pacific nations. Read more on page 33.

Manawa Ora Integrated Health and Research

The research arm of our existing partner - The Centre for Health. This formalised partnership strengthens our continuing relationship.

How Research and Community Align with NZ's New University Priorities

Soteria Ieremia speaking at the Times Higher Education event with fellow panelists. Photo: Soteria Ieremia

Pūtahi Manawa was proud to represent the Centre of Research Excellence sector at Times Higher Education Campus Live 2025, hosted for the first time in Aotearoa at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury. As the only national CoRE invited, Soteria Ieremia contributed a Pacific community perspective to sector discussions on how universities across Aotearoa, Australia, and the Pacific can work together to address global challenges.

Ieremia highlighted how Pūtahi Manawa's interdisciplinary model already delivers on the emerging government priorities for the tertiary sector through strong partnerships across universities, industry, and community, translating research excellence into real-world impact for heart health and broader social wellbeing. Our presence at this forum reinforced Pūtahi Manawa's reputation as a national exemplar of co-designed, community-led research and our growing influence in shaping conversations across the tertiary education and research landscape.

Hīkina Kia Tutuki

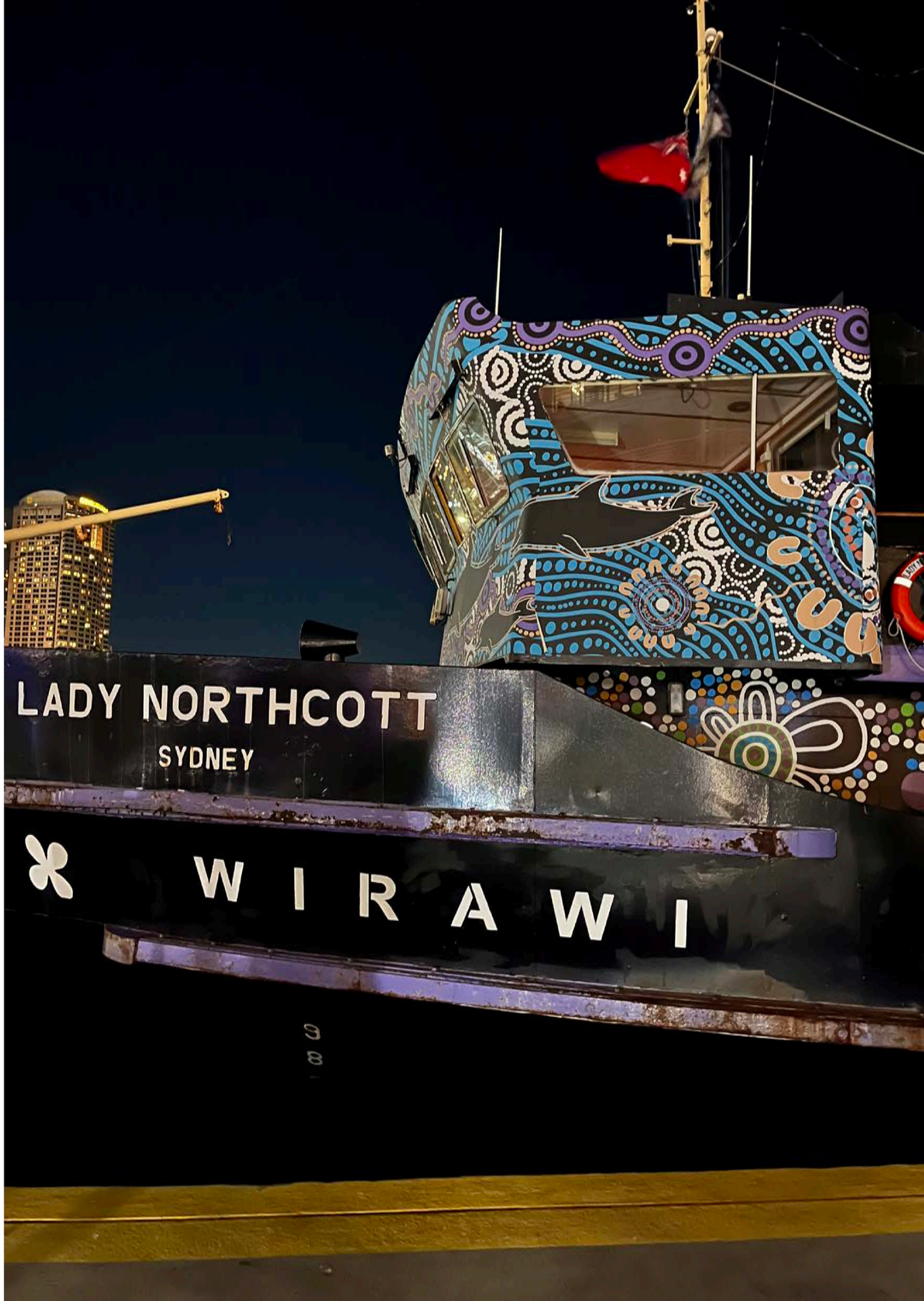
Pūtahi Manawa Co-Directors Julian Paton and Soteria Ieremia were invited to Hīkina Kia Tutuki: Rise to the Challenge – Researchers with Global Impact at the Fale Pasifika, Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland, on 9 April. This reflects the growing national and international profile of our research leadership.

The event showcased the global impact of research emerging from Aotearoa and reinforced the essential role that Māori and Pacific communities play in enabling research excellence and relevance. Professor Paton highlighted the urgent burden of rheumatic fever for Māori and Pacific tamariki and shared his team's pioneering work towards developing a living heart valve, demonstrating the translational potential of world-leading cardiovascular science. Pūtahi Manawa member Professor Chris Bullen presented his internationally recognised work addressing nicotine addiction, alongside other leading researchers from across the University. Engagement with the European Union Ambassador to New Zealand, Lawrence Meredith, further strengthened international visibility and highlighted the significance of New Zealand-led research on the global stage.

Opportunities such as this continue to enhance Pūtahi Manawa's strategic partnerships, reputation for excellence, and influence in shaping research that delivers meaningful outcomes for our communities.

Healthy Futures Summit

Dr Karen Brewer and the Pūtahi Manawa team joined Health Coalition Aotearoa's Healthy Futures Summit in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, on 22 August, a powerful gathering focused on building a healthier and more equitable Aotearoa. Hosted at Te Mahurehure Cultural Marae, the summit brought together leaders across health, research, policy and economics to challenge current systems and advocate for prevention-focused, long-term solutions. A strong theme throughout the day was the need to address the social determinants of health and invest in change that endures beyond political cycles. Reflecting on this, Dr Brewer highlighted the vital role of Centres of Research Excellence in supporting sustained, long-term approaches, including growing and nurturing the Māori and Pacific workforce. The voices of rangatahi were a particular highlight, reinforcing that young people are already leading change today. We are proud to be part of this collective movement towards a health system grounded in equity, prevention, innovation and compassion.



Pūtahi Manawa funded many of the attendees from Aotearoa to the Indigenous conference in Gadigal Country also known as Sydney. Photo: Orlandosydney.com

Reimagining Cardiovascular Care: International Indigenous Leadership at the Forefront

The 2025 CSANZ Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference was a powerful platform for Indigenous-led research, cultural knowledge, and collaboration, amplified by Pūtahi Manawa's leadership, sponsorship, and community-driven impact.

Pūtahi Manawa Centre of Research Excellence was powerfully represented at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) 4th Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference, supporting 10 researchers, 10 students, as well as leadership and staff to attend and present at the conference.

Co-convenor and Aboriginal health equity leader Professor Alex Brown (Wadi Wadi, Yuin Nation) praised the Centre's contribution:

"I don't think thanking you for your sponsorship does true justice to the contribution made by your people and the people you helped to attend. It made the conference a lot richer, a lot stronger, a lot more important for us."

As proud sponsors, Pūtahi Manawa seized the opportunity to deepen global academic connections, launch an international Indigenous travel grant, and build momentum for cross-cultural research collaborations aimed at improving heart health outcomes for Indigenous communities.

Professor Julian Paton reflected on the Centre's impact: "*Pūtahi Manawa had a strong showing. We had 39 presentations from our researchers and leadership, covering a wide range of interventions, findings, and Māori and Pacific Peoples-led solutions in action. Our session highlighted Indigenous-led or partnered models of care - grounded in cultural knowledge and driven by communities that conventional health systems have long under-served.*"

A Māori health and equity professional echoed his sentiment:
"I was extremely impressed with your team - Matua Joe Pihema, Dr Brewer's presentations, and Saraya's amazing geneticist 101 kōrero and the Pūtahi Manawa Kaupapa. I learned so much in the two-hour session!"

Despite decades of targeted research and intervention, indigenous cardiovascular health outcomes across Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the broader Pacific remain a stark reflection of systemic inequity.

"*This is not due to a lack of knowledge or effort, but because systems have failed to centre Indigenous voices and leadership,*" says Dr Karen Brewer.

The conference was held during the official celebration of Matariki (Māori New Year) that runs throughout the month. Matua Joe Pihema, shared the significance of Umukohukohu Whetū, an ancient ceremony offering food to the Matariki star cluster.

"As the Umukohukohu feeds the stars, the knowledge sharing, connections, and learnings over the next two days will feed everyone here so they can continue to do their important mahi (work)."

Academic connections forged, enriching Pūtahi Manawa's Scientific Review Committee and International Funding Panel for 2025, with members from Hawai'i and Australia, increasing the research centre's international indigenous strength.

Opening Doors for Future Leaders

Elai Tuivaiti, Kura Raumati student, presents his summer research. Photo: Tracey Kellett

Pūtahi Manawa supported six Kura Raumati and four Fatu Malosi students to give poster presentations at the conference and attend the Indigenous Workforce Day, reflecting our commitment to growing indigenous capability. Poyer Reihana-Finau, Fatu Malosi student, reflected on his experience:

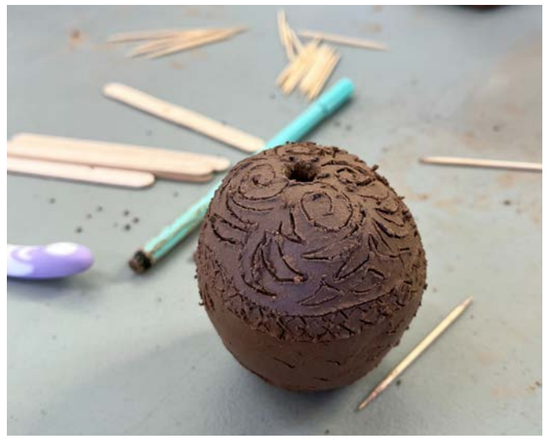
"Some key learnings I took away from attending the CSANZ conference include the power research has to bring meaningful and equitable change to our people, as well as the multiple approaches researchers use to achieve the same collective outcome. As someone new to the research space, these insights have opened my eyes to what I can potentially look into doing in the future, highlighting that you are only limited to what you can imagine.

With this in mind, my future plans are to be part of the growing number of Māori and Pacific researchers by completing my physiotherapy degree, undertaking Honours in my fourth and final year, and potentially pursuing a Master's or PhD to develop a kaupapa that bridges physiotherapy, cardiovascular health, and tikanga Māori and Pacific values.

While I am still working out what that looks like, I have continued to network with other Pacific physiotherapy researchers who share the same vision of closing this knowledge gap."

- Poyer Reihana-Finau.

Te Whare Tukutuku 2025: Healing, Connection, and Leadership



The group was led by master ceramist Matua Wii Taipa in a restorative clay session. Photo: Tracey Kellett

The Challenge

Despite making up a substantial portion of Aotearoa's population, Māori and Pacific peoples are severely underrepresented in the medical workforce. Māori doctors comprise just 4.7% and Pacific doctors just 2.3% of the total, a disparity that fuels systemic inequities and professional isolation.
At the 2025 Te Poutoko Ora a Kiwa research symposium, Director of Public Health Dr Corina Grey said:
"Pacific Peoples make up 9% of the population but only around 5% of nurses, 3% of midwives, doctors and pharmacists, and just 2% of psychologists and dentists. Not one of these workforces reflects a representative proportion of Pacific peoples."

Workforce forecasts from Te Whatu Ora, New Zealand's national health agency, show only modest gains over the next decade, far short of what is needed for true equity.

Representation Saves Lives

The need for culturally aligned care is urgent. Māori are twice as likely to die from heart disease as non-Māori, and Pacific peoples are at even greater risk. A representative workforce helps dismantle barriers to

care, challenge institutional racism, and rebuild trust in the health system.

"When Māori are looking after Māori, outcomes are better" - Dr Harrison.

"It's also vital for our rangatahi to see themselves represented in health roles," - Professor Stiles.

A Cultural Response to a Systemic Issue

In response, the New Zealand Division of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) launched Te Whare Tukutuku—a dedicated network for Māori and Pacific heart health professionals and researchers. Co-founded in 2022 by Dr Anna Rolleston (Director of the Centre for Health), interventional cardiologist Dr Wil Harrison, and Dr Grey, the initiative is now in its third year of fostering connection, strength, and collective healing.

Dr Rolleston said a group of Māori and Pacific colleagues and friends initiated Te Whare Tukutuku three years ago.

"We were sharing our challenges and decided it was really hard to look after ourselves while working in the contentious spaces we were in. We decided to get the Māori and Pacific health workforce together so that we could have the collective look after us".

Dr Harrison felt that the traditional heart health workforce networks weren't capturing Māori and Pacific health professionals as well as they could.

"The Cardiac Society is traditionally limited to cardiologists and those with PhDs, but the Māori and Pacific workforce is a lot broader than that. It's vital we have a forum for all of those voices to be heard, and Te Whare Tukutuku does that."

2025 Wānanga - Aotearoa: A space for healing and growth

In Rotorua on the 22nd of May, attendees reconnected, issued calls for collaboration on key projects, and spent the day nurturing both spiritual and physical health through activities.

Attendees travelled from all over New Zealand and included Māori and Pacific researchers, Nurse Specialists, Equity Advisers, Cardiologists, Allied Health and more.

Pūtahi Manawa had strong representation at the gathering, with members accounting for about half of the attendees. Dr Karen Brewer said:

"Māori and Pacific kaimahi (workers) are vitally important in the heart health space. We are committed to working alongside CSANZ and Te Whare Tukutuku to develop and support our Māori and Pacific workforce".

In 2025, the network extended across the Tasman to Australia, successfully connecting Indigenous Peoples from the heart health leadership and workforce in both nations and across the Pacific.

Collaboration Across Moana and Country

For the first time, Māori, Pacific, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heart health researchers, students and professionals came together in Australia to share knowledge and cultural connection, supported by CSANZ and led by Te Whare Tukutuku. Seventy-seven people attended the inaugural get-together on 17 June at the University of Sydney to become a unified collective of Indigenous peoples supporting each other.

"There's so much shared experience and connection between us as people of land and sea," said Aunty Vicki Wade (Noongar), who attended both the Rotorua and Sydney events.

Panel Discussion L - R: Professor Alex Brown, Dr Wil Harrison, Aunty Associate Professor Vicki Wade, Dr Allamanda Fa'atoese, Associate Professor Justine Camp. Photo: Tracey Kellett

"Being out in the community with my people - that's how I stay spiritually well in this tough space."

The workforce day preceded the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand's 4th Indigenous Cardiovascular Health Conference, Gadigal Country - Sydney and acted as a conduit for relationship building in a relaxed atmosphere.

2025 Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting

Pūtahi Manawa played a leading role at the 2025 CSANZ New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting in Rotorua, one of the most significant events on our annual calendar. Across a week that included the Early Career Researchers Heart Health Forum and Te Whare Tukutuku Indigenous workforce day, our team contributed to national conversations on cardiovascular research, clinical practice, and workforce development. We hosted a dedicated equity-focused session that brought together Māori and Pacific researchers and clinicians leading critical research to address persistent inequities in cardiovascular care. Presentations explored disparities in outcomes for congenital heart disease, the role of whakawhanaungatanga in culturally safe cardiac and genetic care, and the ongoing systemic barriers to equitable treatment.

The strong kaupapa Māori, Pacific, and Indigenous lens evident throughout the conference reinforced the growing momentum toward more inclusive and culturally grounded approaches to heart health. Our contribution at CSANZ reflects Pūtahi Manawa's leadership in driving sector-wide change and advancing equity in cardiovascular outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples across Aotearoa.

Student representation

Pūtahi Manawa supported three Fatu Malosi students - Emeline Manako, Tebi Tabokaai and Te Paea Ma'u, who gave poster presentations at the Meeting.

Community Engagement

Bringing Heart Health to Waitangi

Waitangi Day is a moment when the pulse of the nation is most visible, making it a powerful opportunity for Pūtahi Manawa to step beyond the walls of academia and engage directly with the communities we serve.

As a Tiriti-led Centre of Research Excellence, our inaugural presence at Waitangi this year reflected our commitment to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and ensuring our research remains grounded in the realities, needs, and aspirations of whānau and communities across Aotearoa.

Joe Pihema reflected on the significance of being present at Waitangi:

"As a Tiriti-led kaupapa, it is of the utmost importance for Pūtahi Manawa to be at Waitangi."

Led by the operations team and represented by three Kura Raumati students, one research fellow, one IRM lead, two operations team members, a registered nurse, and a bright purple tent that couldn't be missed, Pūtahi Manawa was seen and heard at Waitangi. For many visitors, the Pūtahi Manawa marquee became an accessible space for connection, learning, and practical support for heart health. Around 100 people of all ages engaged through interactive displays, demonstrations, and health checks designed to raise awareness of cardiovascular wellbeing. The response was marked by strong curiosity and enthusiasm, reinforcing the importance of meeting communities where they are.

The day also highlighted the value of accessible community-based health engagement. Dr Fiona McBryde, Sweet Pressure IRM Co-Lead, shared a powerful reflection from one kaumātua who said he returned each year to have his blood pressure checked at Waitangi because it was easier than travelling from his Northland farm to see a doctor. Moments such as this underscore the real-world barriers many communities face in accessing timely care.

Partnering with Te Hononga o Tāmaki me Hoturoa, a Tāmaki Makaurau-based Māori health provider to deliver clinical oversight for the blood pressure activity, the presence of a registered nurse ensured participants were clinically safe, and represented. Our presence also created opportunities to connect with other frontline providers and community organisations.

Interest in Te Korowai, Pūtahi Manawa's latest project fund, sparked important conversations with Māori health providers about strengthening kaupapa Māori cardiac services and supporting research already underway in their communities.

Being at Waitangi reaffirmed the importance of listening, partnering, and working alongside those on the frontline of heart health equity, further advancing our mission to improve outcomes for Māori and Pacific Peoples.

We aim to be at Waitangi again in 2026, led by our newly-appointed Maori Engagement Advisor.

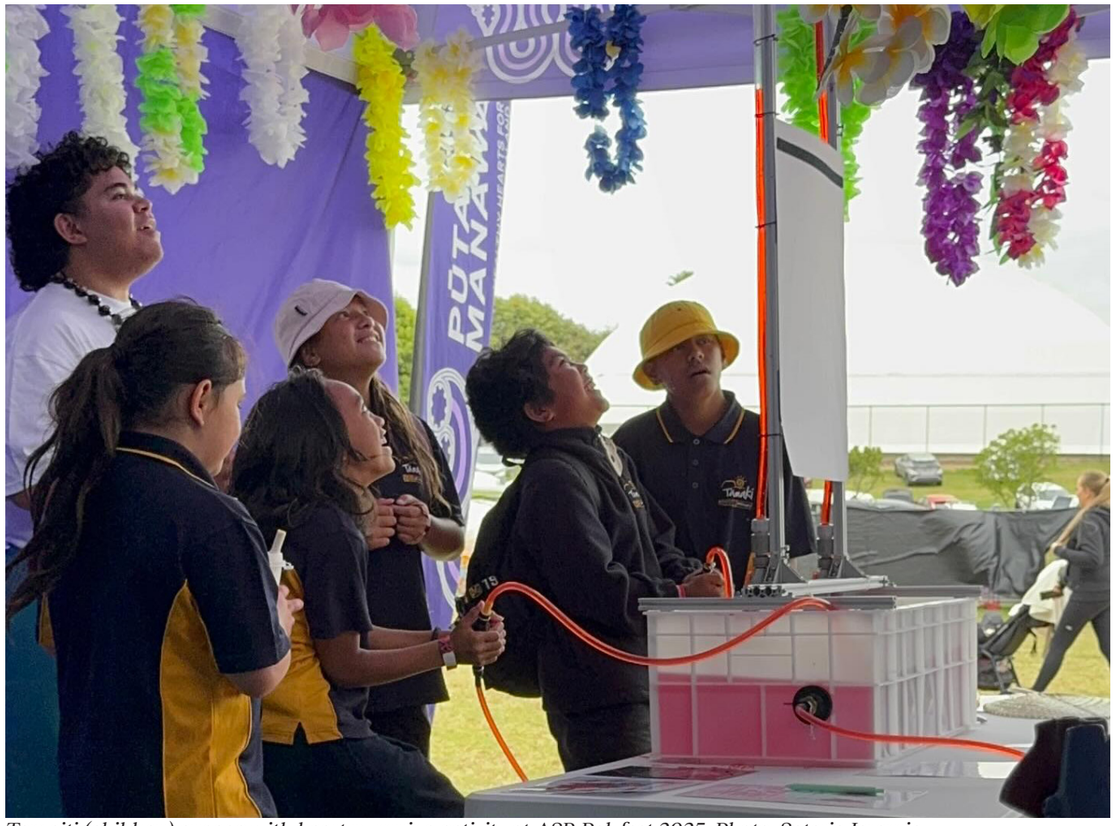
Inspiring the Next Generation Through Community Connection

In 2025, Pūtahi Manawa strengthened its Pacific community engagement through major cultural events, including SpacPac Canterbury Polyfest in Ōtautahi Christchurch and ASB Polyfest in Tāmaki Makaurau. These events provided valuable opportunities to connect directly with tamariki, rangatahi, whānau, and communities in spaces that celebrate culture, identity, and aspiration.

At SpacPac Canterbury Polyfest, Pūtahi Manawa collaborated with the Christchurch Heart Institute and Pūhoro STEMM Academy to demystify heart health and inspire future pathways into science and research. Through hands-on activities, including heart ultrasounds, ECG demonstrations, blood pressure checks, and interactive heart models, attendees engaged directly with cardiovascular science and learned more about heart health research opportunities.

At ASB Polyfest, our Pacific team engaged with hundreds of tamaiti (children), tupulaga talavou (youth), tagata mātua (adults), and community members through STEM activities and heart health education. Despite challenging weather conditions, community enthusiasm remained strong, reflecting the importance of visible, culturally grounded engagement. The presence of our Pacific medical and health sciences students was particularly significant, providing relatable role models for younger generations and reinforcing pathways into higher education, research, and health careers.

These events continue to play an important role in building trust, strengthening community connections, and inspiring the next generation of Māori and Pacific leaders in heart health and research.



Tamaiti (children) engage with heart pumping activity at ASB Polyfest 2025. Photo: Soteria Ieremia

Kia Eke Ai te Kaupapa | Enabling Us for Excellence

Our ability to deliver on Pūtahi Manawa's priorities is underpinned by the people, leadership, and partnerships that enable excellence across every aspect of our work. From the strategic stewardship of our Board and Directorate, to the dedication of our staff and the support of our host institution, the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, this collective foundation ensures we remain focused on achieving meaningful impact in heart health equity for Māori and Pacific Peoples. Grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, guided by our Māori and Pacific leadership, and strengthened through institutional partnership, this section highlights the systems and people who make our outcomes possible.

Directorate

Co-Director Māori – Dr Karen Brewer (Whakatōhea, Ngai Te Rangi), Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Co-Director – Professor Julian Paton, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Co-Director Pacific – Soteria Ieremia (Vaie'e, Saoluafata, Lepea and Faleasiu, Samoa), Pacific-i Ltd

Pūtahi Manawa's directorate remained stable throughout 2025, providing consistent leadership and strong governance to support delivery against the Centre's strategic objectives and performance expectations. With no changes to the directorship, this continuity has enabled effective oversight of outcomes delivery, clear accountability for performance, and disciplined stewardship of investment across the CoRE's portfolio of activities. The directorate has maintained a strong focus on aligning resources, partnerships, and research programmes to the Māori and Pacific strategic priorities that were developed in 2024, ensuring progress remains measurable, coordinated, and impact focused. This stability has positioned the Centre to sustain momentum and deliver on its commitments to advancing heart health equity for Māori and Pacific communities.

Advisory Board

Board membership as of December 2025.

Co-Chairs

Dr Mataroria Lyndon (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Whātua, Waikato-Tainui) (Tangata Whenua Co-Chair)
Senior Lecturer, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, Co-Founder and Clinical Director - Tend Health
Kent Gardner, (Tangata Tiriti Co-Chair), CEO Evans Randall Investors

Tangata Whenua members

Professor Sue Crengle (Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha to Kāi Tahu)
General Practitioner, Professor, Public Health Physician, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago
Sharon Shea, MNZM (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Haua, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Hako)
Principal, Shea Pita & Associates Ltd. CEO, Manawaroa Ltd
Tamati Shepherd-Wipiiti (Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngāti Kahu) CEO, Ngati Hine Health Trust Group

Tangata Tiriti members

Professor Simon Holdaway, (Ex officio)
Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Performance and Reputation, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
Professor Palatasa (Tasa) Havea, ONZM (Vava'u, Tonga)
Dean Pacific, Pacific Success Office, Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa | Massey University,
Second Pacific representative (vacant)

Early Career Researcher Governance Observer

Dr Julie Winter-Smith, Professional Teaching Fellow, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

This role provides emerging leaders to learn governance practice through real-world experience by observing and participating in board processes and enables early career perspectives to inform Board discussions about research strategy, equity and impact. The Early Career Researcher Governance Observer is not a formal member of the Advisory Board.

Board membership update

Our Advisory Board continues to support and advise the Directorate and the Vice-Chancellor's delegate for our host institution, the University of Auckland. We thank the Board members for their continued service throughout 2025. In particular, we thank returning Board members Dr Mataroria Lyndon, Mr Kent Gardner, Ms Sharon Shea, Prof Sue Crengle and Prof Tasa Havea for renewing their Board membership for a further term, until the end of 2028; giving us the benefit of their experience and advice going forward.

We also thank Prof Frank Bloomfield, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, University of Auckland for his advice and support before leaving the Board at the end of 2024. The ex-officio position for the host institution is now filled by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Performance and Reputation at the University of Auckland under delegated authority from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research. The Board and Co-Directors continue to report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and the Vice-Chancellor via the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Performance and Reputation.

Our thanks to Prof Mark Battley who sat on our Board in the first half of 2025 while on secondment to the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Performance and Reputation, and we welcomed Prof Simon Holdaway to the Board on his return to that role.

Congratulations to Dr Mataroria Lyndon on his appointment as our inaugural Tangata Whenua Co-Chair and welcome to Tamati Shepherd-Wipiiti who has been appointed as our third Tangata Whenua Board member.

New Board appointments

Dr Mataroria Lyndon - inaugural Tangata Whenua Co-Chair

(Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Wai, Waikato-Tainui)

Dr Mataroria Lyndon has been a member of the Pūtahi Manawa Board since its establishment in 2021. He is also Co-Chair of our Māori Leadership Team. Dr Lyndon is a Senior Lecturer in Medical Education at the University of Auckland and co-founder of Tend Health. He completed his Master of Public Health at Harvard University as a Fulbright Scholar and his PhD focused on medical education.

With governance roles spanning health and academia Dr Lyndon is also a Board member of Te Tiratū Iwi Māori Partnership Board, Rangitāmiro Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, Waitangi National Trust, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare Foundation, Aktive Sport and Recreation, and was previously Deputy Chair of Te Hiringa Hauora Health Promotion Agency, and Board member of the Northland DHB and Te Aka Whai Ora Māori Health Authority.

Professor Simon Holdaway, Tangata Tiriti member, ex-officio

Professor Holdaway's role as Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Performance and Reputation of our host institution, the University of Auckland, means that he sits on the Boards of all the Centres of Research Excellence hosted at the University of Auckland. We are lucky to benefit from his considerable experience.

Simon is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Auckland. He was educated at the University of Otago before taking up a Fulbright Travel Scholarship to study at the University of Pennsylvania.

He first lectured in archaeology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, before returning to take up a lecturing position at the University of Auckland in 1999. He has research interests that cover the archaeology of Australia, Egypt, and Aotearoa.

Tamati Shepherd- Wipiiti, Tangata Whenua member
(Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngāti Kahu)

Tamati is the CEO of Ngati Hine Health Trust Group - the largest provider of health, social services, mental health, justice and housing in Te Tai Tokerau. He brings significant experience building profitable businesses, delivering service transformation enabled by digital technologies, designing and implementing large scale business transformations that deliver financial benefits and drive improved outcomes for Indigenous communities across Australia and at home in Aotearoa.

Tamati is also a Board member for Community Care Greencross, Whānau Āwhina Plunket and the Health Education and Community Industry Skills Group.

Māori Leadership Team (MLT)

Dr Karen Brewer (Whakatōhea, Ngai Te Rangi), (Co-Chair)
Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Māori, Associate Professor, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Dr Mataroria Lyndon (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Whātua, Waikato), (Co-Chair)
Senior Lecturer, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, Co-Founder and Clinical Director - Tend Health, Deputy Chair - Te Hiringa Hauora Health Promotion Agency

Matua Joe Pihema (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei), (ex officio)
Pou Tikanga Pūtahi Manawa, Trustee, Taumata-a-Iwi - Auckland Museum, Senior Tikanga Advisor, Ngāti Whātua ki Tāmaki

Elaijah Tuivaiti (Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Whakaue, Taranaki; Upolu: Savaia - Lefaga, Levi - Falelātai, Samoa) Medical student, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Assoc Prof Justine Camp (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Waitaha), Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor Māori, Health Sciences Divisional Office, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Māia Lockyer (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou, Rongomaiwahine), Medical student, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Dr Rāwiri Keenan (Te Atiawa, Taranaki), General Practitioner, Associate Professor, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | University of Waikato

Takiwai Russell-Camp (Kai Tahu, Kati Mamoe, Waitaha, Rapuwai), Kairuruku – Research Fellow and Associate Dean Māori, Faculty of Medicine, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Associate Professor Matire Harwood (Ngāpuhi) (Adviser), Deputy Dean, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland; General Practitioner, Papakura Marae Health Clinic

Māori Leadership Team Update

We appointed our first two student members to the Māori Leadership Team, Elaijah Tuivaiti and Māia Lockyer, strengthening our Pou Tāhu - capacity, capability, and confidence building of our Māori heart health workforce.

Increasing clinical and academic workloads led to changes among some of our long-serving members. Dr Wil Harrison, Dr Anthony Jordan, Dr Karaitiana Taiuru, Geremy Hema, and Bren Tai-Rakena all stepped down, and Prof Matire Harwood moved into an advisory role. Pūtahi Manawa are grateful to our outgoing members for sharing their time and expertise with us and for their ongoing work supporting Māori communities.

New Appointees

Elaijah Tuivaiti
(Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Whakaue, Taranaki; Upolu: Savaia - Lefaga, Levi - Falelātai, Samoa)

Elaijah is a Kura Raumati graduate from the 2024/25 programme and recently completed his Bachelor of Medical Science (Hons) degree funded by Pūtahi Manawa which investigated bariatric surgery outcomes in Aotearoa. He is now studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland.

Māia Lockyer
(Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Ngāti Porou, Rongomaiwahine)

Māia is a fifth-year medical student at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago and a Pūtahi Manawa Kura Raumati graduate from the 2024/25 programme. She is one of the Emerging Leaders on the 100 Māori Leaders website. Maia was appointed as a representative for 2025 on the Te Oranga (National Māori Medical Students' Association) executive team.

Māia Lockyer

Manawa Ora Māori Strategy

Manawa Ora Vision Statement

Tirohanga Whānui:

E ngana nei mātou, mā te rangahau kounga, te whakapiki ake i te manawa ora o te iwi e pai ake ai tō tatou hauora ki Aotearoa, ki tāwāhi anō hoki.

Vision Statement:

Through research excellence, we will strive towards equity in heart health for Māori to improve our well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand, and elsewhere.

See Appendix 1 on page 96 for the Manawa Ora Māori Strategy

Progress

Having finalised our *Manawa Ora* Māori Strategy last year, in 2025, we began to implement it. In October Katarina Morgan was employed as Pouwhakarite, Katarina spent the summer assisting Erina Korohina to run our highly successful Kura Raumati programme before turning her focus to enacting *Manawa Ora*.

A major achievement of 2025 was Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa, a funding round for translational kaupapa Māori research, placing emphasis on supporting Māori communities into heart health research. Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa addresses all four Pou of our

Manawa Ora strategy through building our strategic relationships and networks (Pou Mua), building Māori research capacity (Pou Tāhu), creating value, impact, significance and meaning (Poutokomanawa), and protecting and maintaining our kaupapa Māori agency and authority (Poutuarongo).

MLT administered the Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa fund, with support from Erina Korohina, who worked with community-based researchers to develop their projects, and from Senior Research Operations Coordinator, Mei Bray, who undertook all administrative tasks. A call for expressions of interest (EOIs) resulted in 12 submissions, most of which came from Māori community-based groups. MLT members met with each research team to discuss their research plan and ascertain the support required. As a result of these meetings, ten EOIs were invited to proceed to a full application, with six ultimately being funded for projects lasting between one and three years. In December, the Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa research teams came together in Auckland for whakawhanaungatanga. Members of the MLT, and our Pouwhakarite, will continue to meet with the teams throughout the duration of their projects, to foster relationships within the cohort and provide research support as needed.

Read more about Te Korowai Pūtahi Manawa on page 20.

Pacific Leadership Team

Soteria Ieremia (Vaie'e, Saoluafata, Lepea and Faleasiu, Samoa) (Chair)
Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director Pacific, Pacific Leadership Team Chair, The Kudos Science Trust, Chair, Pacific-i Ltd, Director & Founder

Dr Allamanda Faatoese (Samoa, Tuvalu) (Deputy-Chair)
Research Fellow, Christchurch Heart Institute; Associate Dean (Pacific) Strategic, School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Otago

Prof Daryl Schwenke (Alamagoto, Samoa)
Professor, Biomedical Sciences, University of Otago

Dr Joshua Agnew (Oire Niako, Mangaia, Aiutaki, Cook Islands)
Paediatrician, Tauranga Hospital

Pacific Leadership Team members, left to right: Dr Simone Watkins, Dr Monica Leva, Dr Joshua Agnew, Soteria Ieremia, Dr Allamanda Faatoese and Dr Julie Winter-Smith

Dr Julie Winter-Smith ('Alaki Fonua Pelehake and Fatai, Tongatapu, Tonga)
Professional Teaching Fellow, University of Auckland, Fatu Malosi Lead, Pūtahi Manawa

Dr Monica Liva (Mali, Samoa and Vaea/Avatele, Niue)
General Practitioner, Turuki Health Care

Dr Simone Watkins (Mo'ototua, Samoa)
Paediatrician, Senior Lecturer, Paediatrics, Child and Youth Health, University of Auckland; Senior Registrar, Health New Zealand, Te Tai Tokerau Northland

Dr Tua Taueetia-Su'a (Avao, Safune - Savaii,Samoa)
Community researcher, Clinical Nurse

Prof Asiata Dr. Satupaitea Viali (Samoa) (Adviser)
Vice Chancellor - Oceania University of Medicine

Pacific Leadership Strategy

Purpose:

To protect, enhance and positively impact Pacific Peoples heart health through research excellence.

Vision Statement:

To reduce Pacific Heart Health Inequities and grow the Pacific Health workforce to improve Pacific Heart Heath outcomes.

See Appendix 2 on page 98 for the Pacific Strategy

Progress (2025 – 2026)

Having only recently entered its second year, and with Pacific leadership established from November 2024, the Pacific Strategy has already delivered significant progress across workforce development, leadership, and community engagement.

The Fatu Malosi Summer Research Programme received 63 applications for 2025–26, with placements expanded from 15 to 25 interns, and an active waiting list established. The high standard of student research presentations reflects strong capability and culturally grounded delivery.

Workforce representation has shifted markedly, with Pacific supervisors increasing from approximately 10% (2024–25) to nearly 90% (2025–26), strengthening Pacific leadership across the research pipeline.

Through the Le Alamea Fund, five Pacific-led projects have been awarded to begin in 2026, implementing a distinct model of community-led research, where communities lead and research expertise supports delivery. In parallel, two large Pacific-led research projects - one Integrated Research Module ($1.5million) and one major project ($1million) have been established. This marks a shift from no major Pacific projects to two, signalling system-level change in research leadership.

Community engagement through Polyfest outreach demonstrated strong impact, with increased student participation and intergenerational engagement. Daily interaction reached an estimated 120–180 participants, alongside consistent uptake of health screening and referrals.

Delivery across the portfolio is now more cohesive, aligned, and consistently expressed, following the appointment of dedicated Pacific leadership, strengthening impact across programmes and partnerships.

Engagement now spans students, researchers, clinicians, communities, and industry partners, reflecting a more connected and integrated ecosystem.

These shifts indicate early but clear progress toward addressing inequities, with increased Pacific leadership, participation, and access across the system.

Funding Panel Co-Chairs

Assoc Prof Anna Pilbrow, Research Associate Professor, Christchurch Heart Institute, University of Otago and Deputy Head of Department for Medicine, University of Otago (Christchurch).

Assoc Prof Sereana Naepai (Nakida, Natasiri - Fiji), Associate Professor, School of Sociology, University of Auckland.

We thank outgoing Funding Panel Co-Chair, Assoc Prof Anna Pilbrow, for her work co-chairing our funding panel since 2023. Anna's guidance of our funding rounds has been exemplary, and her contribution has ensured that Pūtahi Manawa's assessment of funding applications has been fair and rigorous.

Assoc Prof Sereana Naepai will continue to Chair our funding panel in 2026. Her research focuses on higher education, Pacific research methodologies, racism, decolonisation and Pacific communities' lived experiences in Aotearoa NZ. Her expertise in these areas is invaluable on our panel to ensure the research we fund truly embodies our funding principles.

Operations Team

Research Operations Manager – Linda Fotherby (Ngāpuhi, Airihi, Ingarihi)

Pou Tikanga (part-time) – Matua Joe Pihema (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei)

Senior Research Operations Co-ordinator – Mei Bray

Research Operations Co-ordinator and Fatu Malosi Co-Lead – Nuseta Hope (Funafuti & Nukulaelae - Tuvalu; Atafu & Fakaofo - Tokelau; Saleimoa - Samoa)

Pouwhakarite | Māori Strategy Support Adviser, - Katarina Morgan (Te Arawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa)

Marketing and Communications Adviser – Tracey Kellett (Ngāpuhi, Pākehā)

Kura Raumati Co-Lead (part-time) – Erina Korohina (Ngāti Porou)

Fatu Malosi Co-Lead (part-time) – Dr Julie Winter-Smith (‘Alaki Fonua Pelehake & Fatai, Tongatapu, Tonga)

Nau mai, haere mai, Katarina Morgan

We are very pleased to welcome Katarina Morgan as Pouwhakarite | Māori Strategy Support Adviser, who joined the team in October 2025. Below is an introduction from Katarina.

Tēnā koutou katoa,
Ko Katarina Morgan tōku ingoa. He uri ahau nō Te Arawa waka. Ko Te Arawa me Ngāti Tūwharetoa ōku iwi. Ko Tūhourangi, Ngāti Wahiao me Ngāti Te Rangiita ōku hapū.

I’m based in Rotorua, where my partner and I are raising our three tamariki. I’ve recently joined the Pūtahi Manawa team as the Pouwhakarite | Māori Strategy Support Advisor. With over 14 years’ experience across the education sector, I am passionate about supporting ākonga Māori and kaupapa Māori.

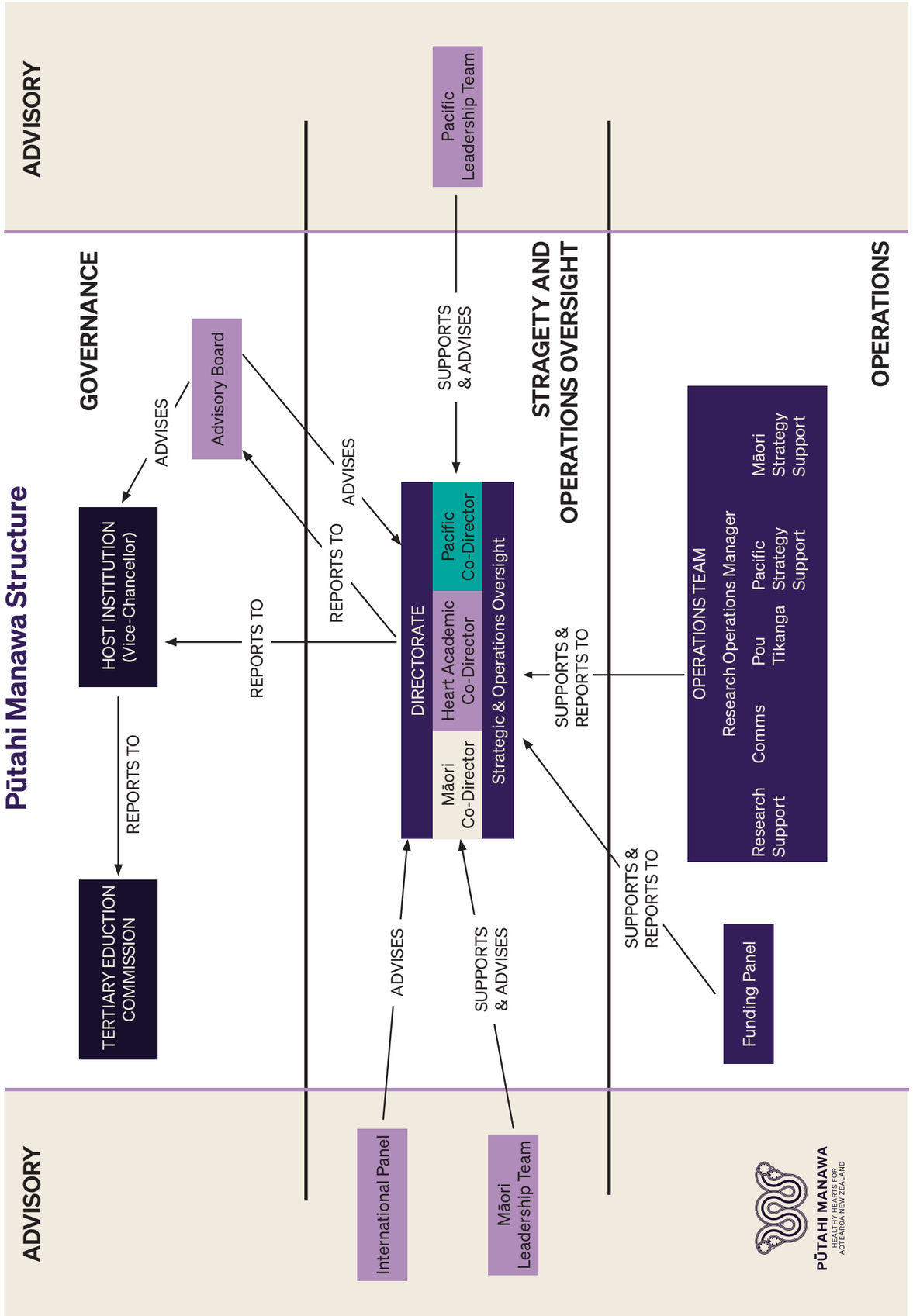
I’m excited to contribute to this kaupapa and support the important mahi ahead.

Ngā mihi nui, Katrina Morgan

Farewell to Dr Anuj Bhargava

We wish to congratulate Dr Anuj Bhargava on his role in co-directing a new first year course entitled Waipapa Taumata Rau. This is a course for all first-year students in the Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences and introduces students to Te Tiriti, concepts of positionality, knowledge systems and ethics. It is part of the curriculum transformation project. As a result, Anuj left Pūtahi Manawa in April 2025.

We thank him most all his outreach and education efforts with the Pūtahi Manawa’s journey to date. He will be greatly missed by all in Pūtahi Manawa. Dr Bhargava was fundamental in initiating our outreach and education programmes, for which we are so grateful. We thank him for his commitment, effort and perseverance in the heart health equity space. His contributions to our summer research programme – Kura Raumati have helped make it the success it has become.



Manawa Ora – Māori Strategy

Kupu Whakataki

Kei tēnei rautaki ko te whare hei ariā e pai ai tā tātou whakaū me te whakakaha anō hoki i ngā mātāpono me ngā kōrero tuku iho ki ngā whāinga rautaki.

Within this strategy, the concept of a whare is utilised to bind and strengthen cultural philosophy and narrative to our strategic goals.

Te Kaupapa o Manawa Ora

Kaupapa: Ko Manawa Ora te ingoa o te rautaki nei, ā, ko ia anō hoki te ingoa o te whare e pupuri nei, e whakaruruhau nei i te mauri o te rautaki. Ka mutu, ko te tumanako mā Manawa Ora te manawa Māori e puta atu ai i ngā hēmanawatanga e patu nei ia, haere ake te wā.

Purpose: Manawa Ora is the name of this strategy and the name of the philosophical carved house that holds and shelters the life-force of this strategy. It is our belief this strategy will significantly improve Māori heart health going forward.

Tirohanga Whānui (Tekoteko)

Tirohanga Whānui: E ngana nei mātou, mā te rangahau kounga, te whakapiki ake i te manawa ora o te iwi e pai ake ai tō tatou hauora ki Aotearoa, ki tāwāhi anō hoki.

Vision Statement: Through research excellence, we will strive towards equity in heart health for Māori to improve our well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand, and elsewhere.

Tō Mātou Aronga (Kōruru)

Aronga: Nā te Māori, mā te Māori
Focus: By Māori, for Māori.

Context: Manawa Ora is a Māori Leadership Team (MLT) led strategy to guide Pūtahi Manawa thinking and key actions to maximise efficacy and reach within whānau and Māori communities.

Te Whainga nui o Manawa Ora (Tāhūhū)

Whāinga nui: Kia noho ō tātou whānau Māori ki te puku o ā tātou mahi katoa.

Key Objective: That our Māori communities and whānau be located at the core of all aspects of our work.

Ngā Pou Matua o Te Whare Pūtahi Manawa

Pou Mua: The Pou Mua is the post that stands on the porch beneath the tekoteko. It faces outwards and greets our visitors and guests. The Pou Mua focusses on our strategic relationships and networks such as universities, iwi health providers and the Heart Foundation.

Pou Tāhu: The Pou Tāhu is the post that stands on the inside of the doorway and holds up on end of the main ridge pole. The Pou Tāhu was traditionally used to help lift the ridge pole into position during construction. This pou focusses on capacity building in general and includes capacity building of researchers and clinicians around heart health.

Poutokomanawa: The Pou Tokomanawa is a place of high importance and value that elevates the 'heart' of the house. This can be seen as the people's aspirations and goals. This pou focusses on the creation of value, impact, significance or meaning such as key research findings that improve prevention, approaches, procedures, and/or treatment.

Poutuarongo: The Poutuarongo was a place where tohunga would commune with the ao wairua and meet to undertake wānanga regarding matters of mana, tinorangatiratanga, identity and culture. This pou focusses on the protection and maintenance of our kaupapa Māori agency and authority. This includes the strengthening of Te Tiriti o Waitangi within our governance structure.

Ngā Wāriu o Te Whare Pūtahi Manawa

Values: These are the current values of Pūtahi Manawa and are reflected in the rafters (heke) of the whare. The heke are connected to the Tāhūhū (Key Objective) and provide guidance to our daily thinking and behaviours.

Toitoi Manawa	Encourage and inspire
Tānga Manawa	Feeling safe
Manawa Popore	Being considerate
Manawa Whānau	Team and stakeholders working together
Manawa Tina	Being decisive
Manawa Rahi	Being resilient
Manawa Ora	Being strong through connections
Puna Manawa	Our source of our being

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Tūāpapa)

Tūāpapa
Ko te Tiriti o Waitangi te takapau wharenui i whānau ai tō tātou whenua hou nei a Aotearoa New Zealand me ōna uri, a tangata whenua rāua ko tangata tiriti. Waihoki, koia tēnei ko te tūāpapa e tū nei te kāwanatanga hei hoa mahitahi me te Māori e puta ai te ihu Māori i ngā hēmanawatanga o te wā.

Foundation
The Tiriti o Waitangi is the sacred mat upon which our modern-day country Aotearoa New Zealand was born, including its two peoples; tangata whenua and tangata tiriti. Furthermore, it is the foundation upon which the Government exists as a partner for Māori to ensure Māori are able to progress and flourish.

Pou	Strategy
Pou Mua Strategic relationships and networks	Nurture and grow our relationships within Aotearoa and with Indigenous groups internationally, including: • Māori communities • Māori members of Pūtahi Manawa • Kaimahi Māori with clinical and research roles in heart health • Māori health providers • Māori education organisations • Non-Māori allies • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kaimahi with clinical and research roles in heart health in Australia • Indigenous groups globally
Pou Tāhu Capacity building	Increase Māori research capacity, capability and confidence in heart health by: • Supporting early career Māori researchers • Supporting Māori clinicians to engage in research • Increasing the number of qualified Māori supervisors and supporting them in their role with Māori student researchers • Connecting with trusted allies who can tautoko Māori students and researchers • Nurturing kairangahau Māori through an integrated summer studentship programme • Funding scholarships for Māori postgraduate students conducting heart health research, and pursuing ways to make them accessible to aspiring kairangahau Māori • Working with community groups to create, and fund, translational research projects through which local kairangahau develop research expertise
Poutokomanawa Creation of value, impact, significance or meaning	Fund high quality kaupapa Māori research and ensure this is carried out in a timely manner to achieve equity in heart health. Ensure that all Pūtahi Manawa research involving Māori is culturally safe and equity-focused. • Embed Kaupapa Māori research approaches within the CoRE • Identify and address research priorities and activities that contribute to equity in Māori CVD outcomes • Demonstrate how to perform effective community-based research using kaupapa Māori methodologies for improving heart health equity so that our processes become accepted nationally and adopted in other health areas • Deliver on the equity-focused outcomes within the existing outcomes framework
Poutuarongo Protection and maintenance of our kaupapa Māori agency and authority	Kaupapa Māori agency and authority are protected within Pūtahi Manawa governance and operations as well as within relevant research funded by Pūtahi Manawa. Decisions about Māori matters, including how to allocate funding for Māori research, are made by Māori, under the leadership of the Māori Leadership Team and Co-Director, with the guidance of the Poutikanga

STRATEGIC PLAN | PACIFIC LEADERSHIP TEAM | 2025 to 2028

VISION

TO REDUCE PACIFIC HEART HEALTH INEQUITIES AND GROW THE PACIFIC HEALTH WORKFORCE TO IMPROVE PACIFIC HEART HEALTH OUTCOMES

PURPOSE

To protect, enhance and positively impact Pacific Peoples heart health through research excellence

OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure Pacific/Pacific Peoples/Pasifika (Diversity of communities and knowledge) are represented across Pūtahi Manawa Healthy Hearts Aotearoa NZ structure and functions to lead the CoRE for Pacific Heart Health.
2. Capacity and Capability: Develop pathways for Fatu Malosi and Pacific students to progress in heart health research to build the workforce, including pathways for more Pacific cardiologists.
3. Establish PLT processes:
   - High Quality Care: Connect the evidence to primary care/GPs to deliver what our communities deserve.
   - Launch a central Pacific Heart health platform through the life course.
   - Embed Pacific values, world views and methodologies within Pūtahi Manawa to protect Pasifika workforce and community.
4. Foster and support Pacific Heart Health Research excellence through establishing a genuine and purposeful Pacific funding strategy.
5. Connect Pacific research to inform policy and affect system change.

OUTCOMES

1. Establishment of the first Pacific Heart Health Centre in Aotearoa and the Pacific region.
2. Run the first annual Pacific Heart Health Symposium in Aotearoa including the Pacific region.
3. Establish and grow a collaborative and cohesive global network of Pacific partners, including researchers, clinicians, scientists and innovators to improve Pacific heart health equity.
4. Engagement with Pacific community to enact translational science and research and identify gaps across the heart health landscape.
5. Increased number of Pacific researchers.
6. Adequate renumeration for Pacific researchers.
7. Leadership to change policy, systems and barriers that obstruct Pacific advancement in Heart Health.
8. Create a pathway for GPs/Nurses in research and foster research opportunities.

VALUES

By Pacific, for Pacific Guided by the Fonofale Pacific Healthcare model, supported by four pou	**Pou Fa'aleagaaga** (Spiritual Wellbeing)	**Pou Fa'aletino** (Physical Wellbeing)	**Pou Mafaufau** (Mental wellbeing)	**Pou Isimea** (Other aspects of wellbeing)	**Te Tiriti O Waitangi** Acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua and committed to Te Tiriti.

Āpitihanga 3: Ngā whainga | Appendix 3: Outcomes Framework

PŪTAHI MANAWA
HEALTHY HEARTS FOR AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

PŪTAHI MANAWA OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

VALUES	CRITERIA	OUTPUTS WHAT WE PRODUCED	WHO WILL BENEFIT	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES MAKING A DIFFERENCE	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
Toitoi manawa| Encourage and inspire We encourage and inspire behaviours and actions that align and reinforce our vision and mission **Manawa whānau | Team and Stakeholders** Our team and stakeholders are the foundation of our work **Tānga manawa | Place of refuge** Our approach is unified and collective, we create safe spaces to engage and work **Puna manawa | Spring of water** The source (or spring) of our vision and mission is the source of our mana. Through knowing the source, we can extend our care within our team and to our communities. **Manawa ora | Breath of life** We acknowledge the connection between us all through the breath of life. Identifying and acknowledging our connections gives us strength **Manawa rahi | Resilience** When faced with challenges we remain firm and optimistic in seeking positive outcomes **Manawa tina | Decisiveness** Our vision and mission encourage and inspires a decision-making process which is underpinned by our shared values, due diligence, and transparency **Manawa popore | Considerate** We are committed to an approach that enhances the mana and general well-being of others through considered behaviours, language, and actions	Equity Focussed[2]	#/% of Māori[2], Pacific & women fellowships compared to general population #/% of Māori[2], Pacific & women PhD students compared to general population # of researchers engaged in equity focused training # of early career researchers supported # and value of equity grants funded # of grants and value of grants funded that focus on Māori[2] heart health # of grants and value of grants funded that focus on Pacific People's heart health # of grants and value of grants distributed that focus on women's heart health	Māori Pacific Women Researchers Clients Whānau Community System Stakeholders	Māori, Pacific and women researchers active on heart health projects Researchers report that they feel more able to imbed equity in their work compared to before attending the training Early career forum established Māori, Pacific and women are active research participants Research focused on priority populations compared to general population	Māori, Pacific and women researchers remaining within the heart health workforce Māori, Pacific and women researchers progressing through tertiary qualifications Early career researchers engaged in numerous workstreams Māori, Pacific and women are seeing health benefit from involvement in research projects Funding value to priority communites increased as more equity focussed projects are submitted Funding distributed to priority populations compared to general population	Māori, Pacific and women researchers leading work in heart health Māori, Pacific and women researchers promoted to roles of signficance in Universities and Communities Early career researchers are integral within all workstreams Māori, Pacific and women from our communities are engaged in heart health research and their whānau and communities are seeing health benefits Changing ethos in heart health research about the funding, conduct and intention of research work	Improvement in the heart health of all New Zealanders Māori and Pacific People have experienced a positive impact from the work undertaken by the CoRE Improved capacity and capability for Māori and Pacific People in heart health research
	Te Tiriti o Waitangi Embedded	#/% of partnership with iwi & Māori organisations compared to non-Māori organisations[5] #/% of engagements with Māori communities compared to non-Māori communities[4] #/% of Māori in leadership roles compared to non-Māori #/% of kaupapa Māori projects compared to non-kaupapa Māori projects[1] # of TToW focussed professional development opportunities for CoRE members[3] # of attendances at TtoW focussed professional development opportunities[3]	Māori organisations Māori researchers Tauiwi researchers	Māori organisations are key stakeholders in research and outreach/education work Māori hold key leadership roles across Pūtahi Manawa Mātauranga Māori is starting to be imbedded into research projects[1] Kaupapa Māori projects funded Learning opportunities for Pūtahi Manawa members to grow within Te Ao Māori[3]	Māori organisations are directing research and outreach/education work Māori organisations are engaging directly with Pūtahi Manawa Māori within Pūtahi Manawa have a collective capacity to direct research intentions across the CoRE Kaupapa Māori research is routinely funded Kaupapa Māori methodologies are applied within outreach and education activities Researchers report that they feel more comfortable within Māori communities compared to before attending learning opportunities	Māori organisations are authentic partners in research and outreach/education work Kaupapa Māori and Te Tiriti focussed activities are business as usual Tauiwi researchers are role modelling authentic working partnerships with Māori	
	Co-design	# and value of projects that include co-design as a research methodology funded # of co-design / communitiy engagement hui/fono held # of kaupapa Māori codesign (mahitahi) projects funded[1,4] # of kaupapa Pacific codesign projects funded # of codesign projects funded with women as the co-design partners	Researchers Clients Whānau Community	Researchers and communities building relationships around heart health research Māori, Pacific People, women are active in co-design teams as part of research projects	Strong trust relationships exist between communities and researchers Communities engaged with Pūtahi Manawa are represented in codesign teams Co-design projects prioritise Māori, Pacific People and women	Communities pose research questions to researchers for proposals Communities are leading codesign Research is supported, impactful and meaningful to communities	
	Multidisciplinary and Collaborative	# of Pūtahi Manawa members by discipline # of projects funded that are multidisciplinary	Researchers	Relationships across disciplines being initated Researchers are learning about outreach and education activities	Researchers have estabilised working relationships with peers from other disciplines	A strong network of heart health researchers connect and collaborate in a non-competitive way	

		# of education and outreach activities by research teams # of activities that are collaborative between projects	System Stakeholders	Research funding takes into account multidisciplinary teams Collaborations are encouraged	Researchers are active participants in outreach and education activities Funding decisions support non-competition and collaboration	Outreach and education activities are standard within research projects about heart health Multidisciplinary and collaborative teams influence the funding, conduct and intention of heart health research work	
	Translational	# of dissemination events within Māori and Pacific Communties # of dissemination events focussed on women # of research outputs/findings/interventions active within Māori and Pacific communties # of stakeholders engaged # of academic publications # of reports of work to government organisations # of next user engagements from funded research # of media engagements # of direct translation events into clinical spaces	Clients Whānau Community Researchers Clinicians	Communities are involved in outreach and education activities Communities are involved in telling their stories Increased understanding of the benefit of academic and community focussed dissemination Media engagement by Pūtahi Manawa members starting Clincial members engaged in research projects	Communities are guiding dissemination events and the development of community appropriate dissemination resources Communities are supported to tell their stories in their own way Career progression and CV enhancement Research progression by next users is beginning Media engagement by Pūtahi Manawa members is common Clincial members collaborating across research projects to support clinical translation	Māori and Pacific communities are seeing health improvements from Pūtahi Manawa research Women are seeing health improvements from Pūtahi Manawa research Pūtahi Manawa has a steady stream of publications Media regularly seek engagement by Pūtahi Manawa members Evidence-based research is improving clinical practice for heart disease	
	Research Excellence	# of publications in peer-reviewed journals # of Pūtahi Manawa projects supported or funded by other funders # invitations to write reviews and speak at meetings # of prizes awarded to Pūtahi Manawa members # of summer, Masters and PhD students # of communities engaging with Pūtahi Manawa	Researchers System Stakeholders	Research is presented at national and international meetings Press releases and media attention on publications (e.g. radio, tv) Securing grant funding on basis of prior CoRE research	High citation rates on published work Commercial/industrial interest in the work Attraction of funding from commercial sector Adoption of methods/data/knowledge by others	Improvement in heart health equity in Aotearoa as defined by life longevity in Māori & Pacific Heart health policy changes based on CoRE research nationally & internationally Research methodologies and process of Pūtahi Manawa reflected across other research entities in Aotearoa National and international recognition for the research	

TE TIRITI PRINCIPLES are represented within the Outcomes Framework
[1] Tino Rangatiratanga, [2] Equity, [3] Active Protection, [4] Options, [5] Partenrship

- **Tino rangatiratanga**: The guarantee of tino rangatiratanga, which provides for Māori self-determination and mana motuhake in the design, delivery, and monitoring of health and disability services.
- **Equity**: The principle of equity, which requires the Crown to commit to achieving equitable health outcomes for Māori.
- **Active protection**: The principle of active protection, which requires the Crown to act, to the fullest extent practicable, to achieve equitable health outcomes for Māori. This includes ensuring that it, its agents, and its Treaty partner are well informed on the extent, and nature, of both Māori health outcomes and efforts to achieve Māori health equity.
- **Options**: The principle of options, which requires the Crown to provide for and properly resource kaupapa Māori health and disability services. Furthermore, the Crown is obliged to ensure that all health and disability services are provided in a culturally appropriate way that recognises and supports the expression of hauora Māori models of care.
- **Partnership**: The principle of partnership, which requires the Crown and Māori to work in partnership in the governance, design, delivery, and monitoring of health and disability services. Māori must be co-designers, with the Crown, of the primary health system for Māori.

Āpitihanga 4: Ngā Tohu Me Ngā Whiwhinganui | Appendix 4: Member Awards And Achievements

Dr Malcolm Legget

Honouring a legacy of dedication and innovation in cardiology

We acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievements of the late Dr. Malcolm Legget, whose contributions to cardiology and cancer treatment have left an indelible mark on New Zealand's healthcare system. His Majesty's New Year 2025 honours of Dr Malcolm Legget to be a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit was granted before his passing and reflects the immense impact of his life's work.

Dr. Legget's extraordinary career was defined by innovation, compassion, and a relentless commitment to improving lives. While the Director of Echocardiology at Greenlane Hospital (1995–2000), Dr Legget co-founded the private cardiology group The Heart Group in 1997, which pioneered a new model of care that introduced life-saving procedures and access to services that might not otherwise have been available. His contributions to technologies, such as 3D imaging and cardiac CT angiography, led to the mainstream uptake of these tools.

Dr Legget was a fellow of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and a supporter of Pūtahi Manawa. Professor Julian Paton, Pūtahi Manawa co-director, says, "*Dr. Legget was committed to improving heart health equity and we were so fortunate to have his full support for Pūtahi Manawa. We are deeply saddened by his loss but we will continue to drive his and our agendas into the future.*"

Prof Julian Paton

Congratulations on an epic journey and fundraising achievements

Professor Julian Paton, Director of the Centre for Heart Research - Manaaki Manawa, University of Auckland and Co-Director of Pūtahi Manawa, has raised over $180,000 to help combat Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) in children whilst travelling from Dunedin to Auckland in February in Aotearoa's first ever Landrover. Māori and Pacific children are over-represented in Rheumatic heart disease, so Manaaki Manawa and Pūtahi Manawa work in partnership with Māori and Pacific communities for better heart health outcomes.

Professor Paton met some incredible people along the way, including Landrover enthusiasts, people working in heart health, and Olympic gold medallist Rob Waddell, who stopped by to sit inside the now semi-famous vehicle.

Julian says every gift, large or small, will help move Drive4Hearts and this ground-breaking research forward. Donations are still being accepted.

Prof Julian Paton with Olympian Rod Waddell during the Drive4Hearts fund raiser

Dr Corina Grey

Pūtahi Manawa congratulates Dr Corina Grey on her new role as the Director of Public Health at The Ministry of Health. Dr Grey has worked closely with Pūtahi Manawa as a member of our Pacific Leadership Team, funding panel chair, and remains a member. We acknowledge all her work towards health equity, particularly for Pacific People in Aotearoa New Zealand. Pūtahi Manawa Co-director Māori, Dr Karen Brewer says this is great news for Māori and Pacific equity.

Professor Suzanne Pitama

(Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Whare).

The University of Otago - Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, has appointed Professor Suzanne Pitama, the first wāhine Māori, to the role of Dean at the Otago Medical School – the second time a wāhine has been selected for the prestigious role at Aotearoa New Zealand's oldest university and medical school. https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/newsroom/university-of-otago-medical-school-appoints-first-wahine-maori-dean

Dr Monica Liva

Congratulations to Dr Monica Liva, who sits on the Pūtahi Manawa Pacific Leadership Team. A well-deserved recipient of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) Community Service Medal.

Dr Aniva Lawrence

Dr Aniva Lawrence was recognised for her outstanding service, leadership and advocacy for Pacific health equity, community service and medical education on a local, national and international level by the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) with a Distinguished Fellowship.

Te Whare Tukutuku organising rōpu

Congratulations to Te Whare Tukutuku organising Rōpu for the well-deserved recognition with the Indigenous Prize at the CSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting in Brisbane.

Professor Matire Harwood

Professor Matire Harwood is the first indigenous person to win the Gaston Bauer Prize. She presented the Lecture at the CSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting in Brisbane last week.

Dr Ellen Woodcock

Dr Woodcock was awarded Sonographer of the Year at the Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) Awards of Excellence 2025 held in October.

The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) is the leading multidisciplinary society dedicated to advancing the safe and effective use of ultrasound in healthcare across Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Anna Rolleston

Congratulations to Dr Anna Rolleston (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangi, Ngāti Pukenga) on the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand's Indigenous Health Lifetime Award. Dr Rolleston was the founding Co-Director Māori of Pūtahi Manawa.

Dr Anna Rolleston with her CSANZ Indigenous Health Lifetime Award in Gadigal Country / Sydney, June 2025. Photo: Orlandosydney.com

We also congratulate Dr Rolleston on her appointment as a Commissioner for the *Lancet Commission on Tackling Cardiovascular Disease in the Asia-Pacific Region* in May 2025.

Linda Fotherby

Pūtahi Manawa Operations Manager, Linda Fotherby received the Stuart Glasson Special Achievement Award

as part of the 2025 Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences Professional Staff Awards December 2025.

This award recognises and rewards a significant, specific contribution or achievement by a professional staff member or team to the Faculty.

"*There is so little opportunity in academia to recognise those working away tirelessly, often out of the limelight behind the scenes. Yet, it is essential that we recognise these people who give their all and make things happen. Linda has done that through hard work, intelligence and persistence for Pūtahi Manawa. She's trailblazed to get around a major roadblock that has helped us meet our mission of providing tomorrow's workforce of Māori and Pacific Peoples doctors and researchers.*" - Professor Julian Paton, Pūtahi Manawa Co-Director

Pacific Academy of Science

Professor Satupaitea Viali (Samoa), cardiologist and Vice Chancellor and President of the Oceania University of Medicine, Pūtahi Manawa affiliate member and adviser to Pacific Leadership Team and **Professor Sir Collin Tukuitonga (Niue/New Zealand)**, a pioneer of Pacific public health and Pūtahi Manawa member, have been elected as new Fellows of the Pacific Academy of Sciences (PAS), recognising their outstanding contributions to science, education, and leadership across the region.

Academic Promotions

Congratulations to the Pūtahi Manawa members who received academic promotions this year.

Promotion to Professor

Dr James Fisher - Physiology at the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland.

Dr Nikki Moreland - Molecular Medicine and Pathology, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Promotion to Associate Professor

Dr Karen Brewer, Pūtahi Manawa

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Dr Kenneth Tran - Auckland Bioengineering Institute, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Dr Manar Khashram - Surgery, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Dr Olivia Harrison - Psychology, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Dr Angela Curl - Public Health, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Dr Jamie Lee Rahiri

Dr Jamie Lee Rahiri is one of four 2025 L'Oréal UNESCO For Women in Science Fellows for Australasia, and represented Aotearoa New Zealand.

The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Australia & New Zealand Fellowships have been awarded each year since 2007 to outstanding early-career female scientists. The award acknowledges Dr Rahiri's research that seeks to embed equity, improve cultural safety and effectiveness of surgical care pathways in Aotearoa.

"*As a mother of three daughters, it's important that they see that you..... can be here with surgical excellence with our values and grounded in Tikanga Māori.*"

Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri

The 2025 award ceremony was held in Naarm Melbourne, and TV show, The Hui, joined Dr Rahiri at the awards.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR8K3c88g9w

Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri was also acknowledged at the recent Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa - Māori Medical Practitioners scientific conference in Ōtaki by members of Te Oranga Māori Medical Students. Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri received the **Ngā Rangatira Matahīapo o te Hauora Award,** presented by Te Oranga Māori Medical Students, to a Māori doctor who has been identified by their members as significantly contributing to their learning.

Further congratulations to Dr. Jamie-Lee Rahiri for her very well-deserved Royal Australasian College of Surgeons prestigious **Dr John Corboy Medal.** The John Corboy Medal recognises exceptional service by a Trainee and is awarded on the recommendation of the RACS Trainees' Association.

Dr Rahiri supervises and mentors a number of Pūtahi Manawa student researchers. Over the summer, she shared her expertise with all of our Māori summer research students at their wānanga, demonstrating just some of the remarkable leadership that this award recognises.
www.putahimanawa.ac.nz/news/member-spotlight-dr-jamie-lee-rahiri

Celebrating our members' success in Heart Foundation Grants

We are proud to celebrate the achievements of our members who were successful in the latest round of Heart Foundation grants, awarded in August 2025.

Dr Nikki Earle — Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland — Heart Foundation Senior Fellowship (3 years)

Dr Andree Pearson — University of Otago — Hauora Manawa mō ngā Kaumātua me ngā Whānau | Heart health in older Māori and families — $249,390 over 2 years

Assoc Prof Anna Pilbrow — Department of Medicine, University of Otago — Who is really at risk? Developing an epigenetic biomarker to predict incident CVD in heart-healthy populations — $249,962 over 2 years

Dr Catherine Tsai — Molecular Medicine & Pathology, University of Auckland — Engineered probiotic bacteria as a mucosal vaccine against rheumatic heart disease — $245,627 over 2 years

Assoc Prof Jichao Zhao — Auckland Bioengineering Institute, University of Auckland — Optimising atrial fibrillation treatment: advancing patient stratification with cardiac CT — $249,982 over 3 years

Ms Jingyuan Liang — Epidemiology & Biostatistics, University of Auckland — Contemporary lipid profiles and lipid management in all adult New Zealanders — $102,513 over 1 year and 6 months

Dr Sarah Appleby — Department of Medicine, University of Otago — Exploring the gut-heart axis in post-MI heart failure progression — $250,000 over 2 years

Dr Anna Rolleston — Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research — The impact of binaural sounds on heart rate variability — $19,985 over 1 year

Dr Debbie Zhao — Auckland Bioengineering Institute, University of Auckland — Advancing diastolic function assessment in atrial fibrillation with artificial intelligence — $15,773 over 4 months

Dr James Hewett — Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of Canterbury — Total artificial heart development for Heart Hackathon competition — $20,000 over 1 year

Vaea Ulima Tofi — The Centre for Health Ltd — Reconnecting with the moana: relationship building and community connection to explore the experience of Māori & Pacific heart health workers and their whānau in Aotearoa — $20,000 over 6 months

Associate Professor Sereana Naepi

Congratulations to Assoc Prof Sereana Naepi on the publication of her new book of edited essays, Oceans Between Us. Dr Naepi is a Pūtahi Manawa member and Funding Panel Co-Chair.
www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2025/07/09/oceans-between-us-an-unflinching-examination-of-racism.html

100 Māori Leaders

Noah Appleby, Simone Ada, Maia Lockyer and Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri, have all been announced as Emerging Leaders by Te Rau Ora on their 100 Māori Leaders site.

https://100maorileaders.com

Dr Joshua Agnew

Congratulations to Dr Joshua Agnew who was appointed to the Pasifika Medical Association Membership Board.
https://pmagroup.org.nz/updates/dr-joshua-agnew-joins-pasifika-medical-association-membership-board

Dr Siobhan Tu'akoi

Congratulations to Dr Siobhan Tu'akoi on her University of Auckland Early Career Research Excellence Award. Siobhan has been a supervisor for our Fatu Malosi summer research programme.
www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2025/07/15/tongan-excellence-shines-at-research-excellence-awards.html

Associate Professor Andrew Reynolds

Rowheath Trust Award and Carl Smith Medal for Research Impact

Associate Professor Andrew Reynolds has been recognised for his research excellence, including leading a successful community-led diabetes and obesity trial in Ōtepoti Dunedin.
www.putahimanawa.ac.nz/news/celebrating-excellence-andrew-reynolds-receives-rowheath-trust-award-and-carl-smith-medal-for-research-impact

Āpitihanga 5: Ngā Pia Raumati | Appendix 5: Summer students

Kura Raumati students

Angel Hillman (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Ngai Tūhoe, Tuwharetoa)
Project title: *He Ngākau Hou*
Supervised by Anita Rangitutea (Te Puna Hauora o te Raki Paewhenua)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science in Physiology, Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

Arihia Waitai-Morehu (Ngāti Tamatera, Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei, Ngāti Whātua ki Kaipara)
Project title: *Ngā Manawa o te Iwi: Cultural Narratives of the Heart in Ngāti Whātua* Ōrākei
Supervised by Rowena Dunn (Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei) & Erina Korohina (Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Waipapa Taumata Rau

Clive Hook-Pomare (Ngāti Kuri, Ngāti Kahu)
Project title: *Improved ways to measure Cardiovascular Function*
Supervised by Prof Andrew Lowe & Yung Yu (AUT)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Waipapa Taumata Rau

Clive Hook-Pomare presenting his summer research project at the end of programme event

Dezaia Walker (Ngati Kahu, Waikato, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngai Tai)
Project title: *Investigating novel therapies for diabetic heart disease*
Supervised by Assoc Prof Kim Mellor (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago

Georgia Pringle (Ngāi Tahu)
Project title: *Hauora manawa mō ngā kaumātua me ngā whānau*
Supervised by Dr Andree Pearson & Dr Christina McKerchar (University of Otago)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Dental Surgery, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Jacob Dorset (Ngāti Whakaue, Taranaki Iwi, Te Atiawa)
Project title: *Kete of knowledge*
Supervised by Prof Johanna Montgomery (University of Auckland) & Erina Korohina (Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Nina Turner (Te Aupōuri, Ngapuhi, Ngati Ruamahue)
Project title: *Prioritising Māori and Pacific-specific miRNA Variants & investigating miR499 in the heart*
Supervised by Dr Megan Leask & Prof Rajesh Katare (University of Otago)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Biomedical Science, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Oaklea Bowden-Morris (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki)
Project title: *A love letter from the pharmacist*
Supervised by Tyler Grey (Ngāti Porou Oranga) & Mariana Hudson (Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science Honours in Physiology, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Waimania Papuni (Te Whānau A Apanui, Ngāti Porou, Ngai Tūhoe, Te Whakatohea)
Project title: *From fatass to badass: how an online wāhine-led fitness programme can support heart health in a rural community*
Supervised by Mariana Hudson (Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research) & Violet Williams & Courtney Papuni (Squad Nation)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Criminology & Māori Studies, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | University of Waikato

Returning students from 2024

Holly Kewene (Tainnui, Ngāi Rangiwewehi)
Project title: *Documenting a co-design process: comic strip resources for Māori heart health*
Supervised by Erina Korohina (Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Waipapa Taumata Rau

Jaime Rose Anderson (Ngāti Ranginui)
Project title: *Kai and Hauora: learning from our tipuna, growing well today*
Supervised by Assoc Prof Andrew Reynolds & Takiwai Russell-Camp (University of Otago) & Erina Korohina (Manawa Ora Integrated Health & Research)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Kaiah Arona (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Ngāti Tuwharetoa)
Project title: *Mapping Pacific food security policies and strategies: a desktop scan to inform heart health equity*
Supervised by Dr Fa'asisila Savila (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science, Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Neave Burgess (Te Atiawa, Ngaruahine, Taranaki)
Project title: *Tokoroa access to cardiology study*
Supervised by Liam Gilheany- Black (Te Whatu Ora Waikato)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Waipapa Taumata Rau

Shane Ormond (Rongomaiwahine)
Project title: *Mechanical hearts: literature review and indigenous perspectives*
Assoc Prof Rohit Ramchandra, Prof Julian Paton, Daniel McCormick (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Waipapa Taumata Rau

Fatu Malosi students

Annette Asopesio Fotu (Kolomotu'a - Tongatapu, Leimatu'a - Vava'u islands, Tonga)
Project title: *Pacific-wide data and surveillance for rheumatic fever, rheumatic heart disease, invasive Group A streptococcus (iGAS), and poststreptococcal glomerulonephritis (PSGN): a stocktake and summary of Ministry of Health responsibilities*
Supervised by Mary Silcock, Alfred Soakai (Ministry of Health)
Studying towards a PGDip Health Science, University of Auckland.

Eleanor Lafaitele (Fasito'otai, Sapunaoa Falealili, Faga - Samoa)
Project title: *Let's not be sympathetic to blood pressure and diabetes*
Supervised by Dr Fiona McBryde & Prof Julian Paton (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science (Physiology), University of Auckland.

Honora Lynch (Vava'u Utui, Ma'ufanga - Tonga)
Project title: *Can loss of a ‹hunger› hormone increase CVD in Pacific peoples?*
Supervised by Dr Ana Sayegh & Prof James Fisher (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science (Physiology), University of Otago

Jayda Matara (Tongareva - Cook Islands; Faleolo Safune, Leauva'a - Samoa)
Project title: *Trends and outcomes of valvular heart disease in pregnancy, Counties Manukau 2014–2024*
Supervised by May Soh, Dr Kara Okesene-Gafa (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, University of Otago

Jayda Matara with family at the Pūtahi Manawa summer research awards ceremony

Jeziah Stevens (Salelologa, Fa'a'ala - Samoa)
Project title: *Mechanical hearts (literature review).*
Supervised by Assoc Prof Rohit Ramchandra, Dr Daniel McCormick & Prof Julian Paton (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science, University of Auckland.

Jonine Tiakia (Lakepa Maleloa - Niue; Māori)
Project title: *A scoping review of the link between oral health and cardiovascular disease in Pacific populations*
Supervised by Prof Vili Nosa and Nalei Taufa (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Dental Surgery, University of Otago

Larafina Stowers (Vaiala, Moata'a, Safotu, Sato'alepai, Saleaula - Samoa; Atafu - Tokelau)
Project title: *Pacemaker access, use and management for Pacific Peoples: a scoping review* Supervised by Prof Vili Nosa and Dr Julie Winter-Smith (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science, University of Auckland

Lauryn Ah Mu (Aleisa, Malaela, Aleipata -Samoa; Malapo, Holonga - Tonga)
Project title: *Lived experience support initiatives for Indigenous people with RHD/ARF - A scoping review*
Supervised by Monleigh Muliaumasealii & Dr Ainsleigh Cribb-Su'a (National Hauora Coalition)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science, University of Auckland.

Layla Thomas (Vaimoso - Samoa; Fasi, Lapaha - Tonga)
Project title: *From gener-AI-tion to generations*
Supervised by Dr Aniva Lawrence (University of Auckland) & Dr Allamanda Fa'atoese (University of Otago)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, University of Auckland

Leilani Kwan-Him, Nofoali'I (Samoa)
Project title: *Exploring the links between blood pressure, body composition and full blood counts in Māori and Pacific participants*
Supervised by Dr Chris Puliuvea (AUT)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science (Neuroscience), University of Otago

Lisi-Malia Pereira (Taufusi, Vaivase-Tai, Alafua, Saleufi, Lalomanu, Laulii, Lepa, Aleipata, Solosolo - Upolu, Salelologa, Vaisala, Papa Sataua, Patamea, Satupaitea - Savaii - Samoa; Tupapa, Arorangi, Ngatangiia - Rarotonga; Areora - Atiu, Tautu, Amuri, Vaipae, Arutanga - Aitutaki - Cook Islands; Tokelau; Tahiti; Tonga)
Project title: *Strengthening hypertension management in Samoa: a scoping review of health system readiness*
Supervised by Dr Fa'asisila Savila (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons), University of Auckland

Lucy Keung (Rarotonga & Penrhyn - Cook Islands; Tahiti; Māori)
Project title: *From gener-AI-tion to generations*
Supervised by Dr Aniva Lawrence (University of Auckland) and Dr Allamanda Fa'atoese (University of Otago)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, University of Otago

Pooja Rattu (Nautoka, Ma'ufanga, Makaunga & Kolomotu'a - Tonga)
Project title: *GoodSam responder attendance by ethnicity*
Supervised by Assoc Prof Bridget Dicker (AUT)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedicine), AUT

Punipuao Marine (Sapapali'i, Satuiatua, Ululoloa - Samoa)
Project title: *The role of social media for dissemination of rheumatic fever awareness in Pacific communities*
Supervised by Dr Siobhan Tu'akoi (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science, University of Auckland.

Seita Meneua (Funafuti - Tuvalu)
Project title: *How CVD is portrayed in educational resource images*
Supervised by Dr Samuela 'Ofanoa (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science, University of Auckland.

Silvia Pritchard (Vaigaga, Luatuanu'u - Samoa)
Project title: *Availability and cultural accessibility of cardiovascular disease education materials for Pacific Peoples.*
Supervised by Dr Tua Su'a (Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Nursing, Otago Polytechnic

Te Ropere Tipene (Navunievu Village, Bua, - Fiji; Māori)
Project title: *Healing in two worlds: the role of indigenous beliefs, Christian faith, and biomedical science in the recovery of Pacific children post-heart surgery*
Supervised by Dr Jekope Maiono (University of Otago)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, University of Otago

Vaaiga Purcell (Malaela, Lalomanu - Upolu - Samoa)
Project title: *Sore throat swabbing rheumatic fever prevention for Māori and Pasifika whānau in South Auckland (Māngere)*

Supervised by Dr Monica Liva & Susan Fuiavailili (Turuki Healthcare)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, University of Auckland

Valerie Cokanasiga (Natauloa Nairai Lomaiviti, Somosomo Taveuni Cakaudrove - Fiji)
Project title: *Improved ways to measure cardiovascular function*
Supervised by Prof Andrew Lowe (AUT)
Studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science at the University of Auckland.

Returning Students from 2024

Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein (Fasito'otai, Eva - Upolu - Samoa; Te Āti Awa)
Project title: *Characterising a novel arrhythmia-associated cardiac ryanodine REceptor (RyR2) variant using a new assay*
Supervised by Prof Pete Jones (University of Otago)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science (Hons) (Biomedical Science), University of Otago

Jesse Winter ('Alaki Fonua, Pelehake, Fatai - Tonga; Daku - Fiji)
Project title: *The role of occupation in cardiovascular health: Pacific Island Peoples' lived experiences*
Supervised by Renee Fitisemanu & Dr Jenni Mace (AUT)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy), AUT

Left to right: Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein, Jeziah Stevens & Jesse Winter at the summer research presentations

Mele Manako (Longolongo, Tava Tu'u Tolu, Kolomotu'a - Tongatapu; Leimatu'a, Taoa, Masilamea-Neiafu - Vava'u - Tonga)
Project title: *Codesigning artificial intelligence-enhanced support for Pacific Peoples with heart failure*
Supervised by Dr Sandra Hanchard, Dr Claris Chung & Assoc Prof Vanessa Selak (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science, University of Auckland

Tebi Tabokaai (Aranuka, Arorae, Nonouti, Tarawa - i-kiribati)
Project title: *Lived experience support initiatives for indigenous people with RHD/ARF: a scoping review*
Supervised by Monleigh Muliaumasealii & Dr Ainsleigh Cribb-Su'a (National Hauora Coalition)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Population Health, University of Waikato

Te Paea Ma'u (Kolomotu'a - Tongatapu, Vaimalō, Masilamea - Vava'u - Tonga; Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Apakura, Te Aitanga-ā-Māhaki)
Project title: *Wāhine experiences of atrial fibrillation*
Supervised by Prof Johanna Montgomery (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Science) at the University of Auckland

Carmel Ah Chong (Leauva'a, Saleimoa, Aleipata - Samoa)
Project title: *Long-term heart health after gestational diabetes & pre-eclampsia for Pasifika*
Supervised by Dr Kara Okesene-Gafa & Dr Charlotte Oyston (University of Auckland)
Studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at the University of Otago

Āpitihanga 6: Ngā Mema O Pūtahi Manawa | Appendix 6: Pūtahi Manawa members

NAME	ORGANISATION
RESEARCHERS	
Adam Dennison	Te Whatu Ora
Ajay Iyengar	Te Whatu Ora
Alana McCambridge	AUT
Alexander Wilson	Unitec
Allamanda Faatoese	University of Otago
Amelia Power	University of Auckland
Amio Matenga Ikihele	Moana Connect
Amy Maslen-Miller	University of Auckland
Ana Luiza Sayegh	University of Auckland
Andrea Kwakowsky	University of Auckland||Other
Andree Pearson	University of Otago
Andrew Kerr	Te Whatu Ora
Andrew Lowe	AUT
Andrew Reynolds	University of Otago
Anna Pilbrow	University of Otago
Anna Ponnampalam	University of Auckland
Anna Rolleston	Manawa Ora Integrated Health and Research
Anneka Anderson	University of Auckland||Other
Annie Jones	University of Auckland
Azam Ali	University of Otago
Barry Palmer	Massey University
Brendon Roxburgh	University of Otago
Bridget Dicker	AUT
Candice Mariner	Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley
Carol Bussey	University of Auckland
Carolyn Barrett	University of Auckland
Cassie Withey-Rila	University of Otago
Catherine Tsai	University of Auckland
Chelsea Cunningham	University of Otago
Chris Bullen	University of Auckland

NAME	ORGANISATION
Chris Charles	University of Otago
Chris Pemberton	University of Otago
Chris Puliuvea	AUT
Craig Green	Other
Cris Print	University of Auckland
Daniel Cornfeld	Mātai Medical Research Institute
Daryl Schwenke	University of Auckland
David Crossman	University of Auckland
Debbie Zhao	University of Auckland
Dillon Manuirirangi	Other
Donna Kielar	Other
Edward Watson	Other
Ekta Dahiya	AUT
Elizabeth Auina-Jones	Te Whatu Ora
Ellen Woodcock	University of Otago
Erina Korohina	Korohina Rangahau
Evie Templeton	University of Otago
Fa'asisila Savila	University of Auckland
Faletoese Asafo	Moana Connect
Felicity Ware	Other
Fiona McBryde	University of Auckland
Fraser Beck	Other
Fuarosa Ah Lam	Moana Connect
Gael Mearns	AUT
Gautam Anand	AUT
Gerald Naepi	Other
Gerald Naepi	Other
Gerhard Sundborn	University of Auckland
Gerry Devlin	Heart Foundation
Gillian Whalley	University of Otago
Helen Eyles	University of Auckland
Ivan Sammut	University of Otago
Jacinta Fa'alili-Fidow	Moana Connect
Jacoba Matapo	AUT
Jaime Rose Anderson	University of Otago
James Fisher	University of Auckland

NAME	ORGANISATION
James Hewett	University of Canterbury
James Wasmer	Black Grace
Jamie Iro	University of Auckland
Jamie-Lee Rahiri	Other
Janice Chew-harris	University of Otago
Janine Paynter	University of Auckland
Jason Tuhoe	Other
Jaxson Murphy-Winterstein	University of Otago
Jennifer Roberts	Te Whatu Ora
Jess Hutchings	University of Auckland
Jichao Zhao	University of Auckland
Jim Cotter	University of Otago
Joanne Harrison	University of Otago
Joanne Murray	Other
Joel Rindelaub	University of Auckland
Johanna Montgomery	University of Auckland
Joshua Agnew	Te Whatu Ora
Julia Shanks	University of Auckland
Julian Paton	University of Auckland
Julie Winter-Smith	University of Auckland
Justine Camp	University of Otago
Jyotishna Mani	Cure Kids
Kahiwa Sebire	Other
Kamal Kishore	Other
Karaitiana Taiuru	Taiuru & Associates
Karen Brewer	University of Auckland
Kataraina Davis	Heart Foundation
Kate Thomas	University of Otago
Katrina Poppe	University of Auckland
Kava Fuavao	University of Auckland
Kenneth Tran	University of Auckland
Kim Mellor	University of Auckland
Kiri Parata	Other
Kylie Short	University of Canterbury
Kylie Short Kylie Short	University of Canterbury
Larry Chamley	University of Auckland

NAME	ORGANISATION
Leila Rex	University of Auckland
Liam Gilheany-Black	Te Whatu Ora
Lilian Lima	University of Auckland
Lina Goldstein	University of Otago
Linda Elvines	Other
Lisi-Malia Pereira	University of Auckland
Lorraine Skelton	Te Whatu Ora
Manar Khashram	Te Whatu Ora
Marcus Ground	Other
Mardi Heath	mardi.heath@auckland.ac.nz
Margaret Forster	Pūhoro STEMM Academy
Maria Baker	Te Hiku Hauora
Mariana Hudson	Manawa Ora Integrated Health and Research
Marie-Louise Ward	University of Auckland
Mark Greenslade	Te Whatu Ora
Mark Trew	**University of Auckland**
Martyn Nash	University of Auckland
Maryam Tayebi	Mātai Medical Research Institute
Mataroria Lyndon	University of Auckland
Matire Harwood	University of Auckland
Megan Leask	University of Otago
Meredith Peddie	University of Otago
Michael Kingsley	University of Auckland
Michelle Brett	Hato Hone St John
Michelle Munro	University of Otago
Misty Edmondz	Iwi United Engaged Ltd
Monleigh Ikiua	University of Auckland
Mridula Pachen	University of Auckland
Muhammad Qasim	**Other**
Nalei Taufa	University of Auckland
Nic Daniels	University of Otago
Nicola Scott	University of Otago
Nigel Lever	Te Whatu Ora
Nigel Wilson	Te Whatu Ora
Nikki Earle	University of Auckland
Nishith Patel	Te Whatu Ora

NAME	ORGANISATION
Noah Appleby	University of Auckland
Oka Sanerivi	Mātai Medical Research Institute
Olivia Harrison	University of Otago
Pete Jones	University of Otago
Polona Le Quesne Stabej	University of Auckland
Prashanna Khwaounjoo	University of Auckland
Pritika Narayan	University of Otago
Rachael Augustine	University of Otago
Rachel Mukwezwa Tapera	University of Auckland
Rachel Webb	University of Auckland
Rheanna Dreaver	University of Otago
Richard Troughton	Te Whatu Ora
Ridvan (Riz) Firestone	Massey University
Riripeti Haretuku	Te Puna Ora o Mataatua
Robert Doughty	University of Auckland
Rochelle Ellison-Lupena	Victoria University of Wellington
Rod Jackson	University of Auckland
Rohit Ramchandra	University of Auckland
Rory Miller	University of Otago
Rowena Dunn	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
Sandra Hanchard	University of Auckland
Sarah Appleby	University of Otago
Sarah Harris	University of Otago
Sarah Penney	AUT
Sean Coffey	University of Otago
Shamirah Nabbosa	Massey University
Shanthi Ameratunga	University of Auckland
Silmara Gusso	University of Auckland
Simon Malpas	University of Auckland
Simone Ada	University of Otago
Simone Macmil	University of Otago
Simone Watkins	University of Auckland
Sinclair McGaffin	University of Auckland
Susannah Smith	University of Canterbury
Suzanne Pitama	University of Otago
Takiwai Russell-Camp	University of Otago

NAME	ORGANISATION
Taria Tane	University of Auckland
Tausi Tausi	University of Otago
Teuila Percival	Te Whatu Ora
Thrianja Babarenda Gamage	University of Auckland
Tongakilo-Rhys Tohovaka	University of Otago
Tonja Emans	University of Auckland
Tracey Haapu Jeffries	Other
Tracie Mafileo	Mana Pacific Consultants
Tua Taueetia-Su'a	Other
Ulima Tofi	Manawa Ora Integrated Health and Research
Virginia Tamanui	Other
Wendy Mohi	Mātai Medical Research Institute
Whetu Marama Manihera	Manawa Ora Integrated Health and Research
William Schierding	University of Auckland
Zoe Ward	University of Auckland
Other members	
Anuj Bhargava	University of Auckland
Ben Finau	Other
Bevan Rakoia	Other
Carlton Irving	Ngā Ringa Ngaio Whakaora
Clare O'Donnell	Te Whatu Ora
Corina Grey	Other
Evelyn Leef	Other
Fakaanga Mapa	Other
Fiona Doig	Te Whatu Ora
Gareth Mackin	Te Whatu Ora
Jenna Keepa	Other
Jithendra Somaratne	Te Whatu Ora
Jordan McIntyre	Te Whatu Ora
Karishma Lal	Other
Leigh Potter	Mātai Medical Research Institute
Madison McKenzie	The Centre for Health
Mark Richards	Te Whatu Ora
Martin Stiles	University of Auckland
Mary Roberts	Moana Connect
Mereana Te Paa	Other

NAME	ORGANISATION
Regis Lamberts	University of Otago
Richard Scott	Other
Sapati Tima	Other
Sarah Fairley	Te Whatu Ora
Sebastian TuiSamoa	University of Otago
Sosefa Tuinukuafe	Other
Sryana Sukhdev	University of Auckland
Stacey Neilson	Te Whatu Ora
Steve Waqanivavalagi	Other
Terisa Tagicakibau	University of Auckland
Tom Donoghue	Te Whatu Ora
Tracey Kellett	University of Auckland
Zoe Bristowe	Other
Student members	
Adeleine Eli	University of Otago
Amanda Groenewald	University of Auckland
Anita Clark	University of Otago
Annette Fotu	University of Auckland
Arihia Waitai-Morehu	University of Auckland
Asetoa Sam Pilisi	University of Auckland
Brooklyn MacDonald-Tibble	University of Otago
Carmel Ah Chong	University of Otago
Cherie Timoti	University of Otago
Cheynes Kuka	University of Auckland
Clive Hook-Pomare	University of Auckland
Danielle Rewi	Pacific-i Ltd.
Elizabeth-Jin Pearce	University of Auckland
Elle Lafaitele	University of Auckland
Emeline Manako	University of Auckland
Eva Moody	University of Otago
Faith Fineanganofo	University of Auckland
Flynn Macredie	University of Auckland
Georgia Pringle	University of Otago
Georgia Walsh	University of Otago
Grace Carston	University of Auckland
Harata Pano Flavell Huaki	University of Auckland

NAME	ORGANISATION
Honora Lynch	University of Otago
Jade Tierney	University of Otago
Jamiellenah Lauvi-Istolo	University of Otago
Jayda Matara	University of Otago
Jesse Winter	AUT
Jessica Mill	University of Auckland
Jonine Tiakia	University of Otago
Joshua Matenga	University of Auckland
Jyotishna Mani	University of Auckland
Kaiah Arona	University of Otago
Kalei'aloha Nginingini	University of Otago
Karaitiana Clarkin	University of Otago
Karangatai Piripi	Other
Kate Johnstone	Other
Kiara Henry	University of Otago
Lauryn Ah Mu	University of Auckland
Layla Thomas	University of Auckland
Leila Belt	University of Auckland
Loughlin McGrath	University of Auckland
Lucy Keung	University of Otago
Luisa Taufa	Massey University
Maddison Oliver-Coffey	University of Auckland
Manisha Prema	University of Auckland
Mary-Ann Moller	University of Otago
Maryanne Lei Sam	University of Auckland
Mason Hedger	University of Otago
Matangirau Whaanga	University of Auckland
Mia Brown	University of Auckland
Michael Peti	University of Auckland
Nina Turner	University of Otago
Oaklea Bowden-Morris	University of Otago
Pooja Rattu	AUT
Punipuao Mariner	University of Auckland
Rolland Isaiah	Other
Samisoni (Sam) Pailate	University of Auckland
Seita Meneua	University of Auckland

NAME	ORGANISATION
Simone Cree	University of Auckland
Taasha Ngerengere	University of Auckland
Tahi-Ora Tito	University of Auckland
Tasha Burton	University of Otago
Te Paea Ma'u	University of Auckland
Te Puawai O Te Ao Rogers-Hall	University of Auckland
Te Ropere Tipene	University of Otago
Tebi Tabokaai	University of Waikato
Thaya Shaw	University of Otago
Tiana Giles	University of Auckland
Tui Barrett	University of Waikato
Tupou Kaufonononga	University of Otago
Vaaiga Purcell	University of Auckland
Valerie Cokanasiga	University of Auckland
Affiliate members	
Amiria Mita	Other
Anne-Marie Jackson	Rehutai
Anita Rangitutia	Te Puna Hauora o Te Raki Paewhenua
Cameron Reburn	University of Canterbury
Collin Tukuitonga	University of Auckland
Edith Moore	Other
Erini Kala	Other
Francesca Higgins	University of Auckland
Fulton Shannon	Other
Jekope Maiono	University of Otago
Jo Wells	University of Otago
Josefa Sceats	Other
Katarina Morgan	University of Auckland
Lena Kemp	Other
Louise Robertson	Other
Lynley Lewis	University of Otago
Melissa Tafea	AUT
Merryn Jones	Other
Monica Liva	Other
Nicole Hemsley-Pakura	Te Whatu Ora
Rangikahiwa-Juliet Ratima	University of Otago

NAME	ORGANISATION
Robert 'Atiola	University of Auckland
Sangata Kaufononga	Other
Selina Camillo	University of Auckland
Selu Tauess	Other
Soteria Ieremia	Pacific-i Ltd.
Tatiana Marich	Other
Taupo Tani	Other
Tereki Stewart	University of Auckland||Other
Vito Niuloa	University of Otago
Yin Hwee Lim	Other

Āpitihanga 7: Pūrongo-ā-pūtea | Appendix 7: Financial report

	ACTUALS
Funding Received	
Tertiary Education Commission grant	$5,400,000
Surplus carried forward	$8,578,000
Total funding received	**$**13,987,000
Expenditure	
Salaries Funded by CoRE	**$2,275,000**
Other Costs	
Overheads	$1,561,000
Project costs	$5,867,000
Travel	$207,000
Postgraduate students	$633,000
Equipment depreciation/rental	0
Subcontractor(s) specified	0
Extraordinary expenditure	0
Total other costs	**$8,268,000**
Total expenditure	**$10,543,000**
Net surplus/(deficit)	**$3,444,000**

Āpitihanga 8: Ngā Whakatairanga | Appendix 8: In the media

Dr Joshua Agnew

"Some stuff just isn't going to work for Pacific people, so having an understanding of what is and isn't going to work is really important.

"Time and time again, when we look at culturally led programmes, we see much better outcomes."

Dr Joshua Agnew was appointed to the Pasifika Medical Association Membership Board earlier this year and recently spoke to PMN News about the Māori, Pacific, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce initiative supported by CSANZ.
https://pmn.co.nz/read/health/indigenous-heart-health-network-expands-across-nz-and-australia

Prof Suzanne Pitama

First wāhine Māori dean focuses on minority health
Waatea News: waateanews.com/2025/02/10/first-wahine-maori-dean-focuses-on-minority-health/

Dr Mataroria Lyndon

Emphasizing that removing cultural requirements from healthcare regulation would be "irresponsible, inequitable, and dangerous."
Waatea News: waateanews.com/2025/05/02/dr-mataroria-lyndon-senior-lecturer-in-medical-education-at-the-university-of-auckland/?utm_term=ma,hea,caf,pol

Prof Martin Stiles

Media attention, political pressure credited with solving cardiac surgery waitlist at Waikato Hospital

"It was really frustrating at the time, because what we were telling patients was, 'yes you do need an operation, but no we can't do it this week, or next week, or even the week after"

Professor Martin Stiles spoke to Radio New Zealand about the waitlist for cardiac surgery at Waikato Hospital.
RNZ: www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/564567/media-attention-political-pressure-credited-with-solving-cardiac-surgery-waitlist-at-waikato-hospital

Professor Martin Stiles on fixing heartbeats

Martin Stiles is the man credited with fixing the heart rhythms of some of our great Olympians.
RNZ: www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetonoon/audio/2018985781/professor-martin-stiles-on-fixing-heartbeats

Prof Matire Harwood

Interview with Radio NZ on her appointment as a professor at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland
RNZ: www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/mapuna/audio/2018991462/dr-matire-harwood-now-a-professor-at-waipapa-taumata-rau

Dr Sereana Naepi on the release of her new book

Associate Professor Sereana Naepi on her new book of edited essays, Oceans Between Us. Dr Naepi is a Pūtahi Manawa Funding Panel Co-Chair.

PMN News : https://pmn.co.nz/read/education/pacific-scholars-confront-racism-in-nz-in-ground-breaking-book
E-Tangata: https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/racism-is-not-a-dirty-word/

Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri

The wāhine from Tokoroa at the cutting edge of international scientific research
The Hui : www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR8K3c88g9w

Prof Julian Paton

A pacemaker that could help the heart heal

For more than half a century, pacemakers have had one main job: keep the heart beating steadily. Now University of Auckland researchers are testing a device that does something extra, syncing the heartbeat to breathing in a way that might help damaged hearts repair.

Professor Julian Paton spoke to Nikki Mandow on the Ingenious Podcast by Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland about his pacemaker research.
Newsroom: https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/12/02/a-pacemaker-that-could-help-the-heart-actually-heal/

New research into blood pressure

"*What we've landed on, is something that you would never have predicted. Quite a remarkable finding.*"

At least one in five of us has high blood pressure, but most of us don't know we have it. Untreated, it can lead to serious problems like stroke, heart attack and kidney failure. This makes a new discovery by researchers at Waipapa Taumata Rau - The University of Auckland, all the more exciting. Professor Paton spoke to Kathryn Ryan on RNZ: www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/2019002514/new-research-into-blood-pressure

The heart researcher with a love for vintage Land Rovers

Some of Professor Paton's discoveries have resulted in first-in-human trials for treating neurogenic hypertension, sleep apnoea and heart failure. In his spare time, Professor Paton restores and drives vintage Land Rovers, including the oldest Land Rover in the country - a 1948 Series I - nicknamed "20" after its serial number.

Earlier this year he drove it from Dunedin to Auckland raising money for heart valve research to assist children with Rheumatic Heart Disease. Professor Paton tells Kathryn Ryan that 17 day trip has been life changing.
www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetonoon/audio/2018997767/the-heart-researcher-with-a-love-for-vintage-land-rovers

Prof Johanna Montgomery

Professor Johanna Montgomery on Brain Plasticity, Heart Neurons & Psychedelics
Common Ground: www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTBbxBVXm04

Āpitihanga 10: Ngā Tānga Tiketike | Appendix 9: Publication highlights

This is a selection of 79 publications from 199 total publications reported by our members.

AUTHORS	JOURNAL NAME	ARTICLE TITLE	VOLUME	PAGES
Appleby N; Tuivaiti E; Ada S; Kahi M; Harwood M; Selak V; Rahiri J	Heart Lung and Circulation	Summarising the Evidence Regarding Access to Publicly Funded Bariatric Surgery in Aotearoa, New Zealand—A Systematic Review	34	s74
Arias-Mutis R; Calvo D; Bizy A; Guzmán E; Such-Miquel L; Such L; Alberola A; Zhao J; Chorro FJ; Zarzoso M	Journal of Physiology	Ventricular remodeling in diet-induced metabolic syndrome driven by regional electrophysiological differences	In press	
Ashton JE; Prince B; Sands GB; Argent L; Anderson M; Smith J; Tedoldi A; Ahmad AM; Baddeley D; Pereira A; Lever N; Ramanathan T; Smaill B; Montgomery JM	Journal of Physiology	Electrophysiology and 3D-imaging reveal properties of human intracardiac neurons and increased excitability with atrial fibrillation	603(7)	1923-1939
Babbage T; Sayegh ALC; Fan JL; Gant N; Paton JFR; Fisher JP	Journal of Physiological Science	Influence of endurance versus resistance exercise training on central and peripheral chemo-reflexes in young healthy individuals	75	100027
Bai J; Wang W; Zhang X; Zhang H; Panfilov AV; Zhao J	PLOS Computational Biology	A Novel Pipeline for Identifying Gender-Specific Class III Antiarrhythmic Drugs using in vitro, in silico and ML approaches	In press	
Bradbury KE; Coffey S; Earle N	Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews	Riboflavin supplements for blood pressure lowering in adults	10	CD015464
Bradbury KE; Earle NJ; Rolleston A; Fyfe C; Grey C; Korohina E; Wall C	Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases	Dietary patterns of patients with Acute Coronary Syndrome in the Multi-Ethnic New Zealand study of Acute Coronary Syndromes (MENZACS)		104037
Brett A; Watling M; Bright F; Penney S; Dicker B; Howie G; Brewer KM	New Zealand Medical Journal	Accessing care in an unfamiliar environment: Experiences of tūroro Māori and their whānau when transported outside their local area after a cardiac emergency	138(1611)	24-32
Brewer K; Taueetia-Su'a T; Hanchard S; Vaka S; Ameratunga S; Tane T; Harwood M	Heart Lung and Circulation	Māori and Pacific Families' Experiences and Perspectives of Cardiovascular Care	34	s58
Butters A, Thomson K, Harrington F, Henden N, McGuire K, Byrne AB, Bryen S, Leask M, Ackerman MJ, Atherton J, Bos JM, Caleshu C, Parikh VN, Day S, Tardiff JC, Dunn K, Hayes I, Juang J, McGaughran JM, Nowak N, Ronan A, Semsarian C, Tiemensma M, Merriman TR, Skinner JR, MacArthur DG, Siggs OM, Bagnall RD, Ingles J	European Heart Journal	A rare splice-site variant in troponin-T: The need for ancestral diversity in genomic reference datasets		
Chan JA; Munro ML	Journal of General Physiology	Time-dependent effect of FKBP12 loss in the development of dilated cardiomyopathy	157(1)	e202413673
Chan NI; Atherton JJ; Thomas L; Whalley G; Stewart P; Mallouhi M; Vollbon W; Prasad SP	Echocardiography	Sex Differences in Diastolic Function Following Myocardial Infarction	42	e70164
Chang JW; George B; Pachen M; Shanks J; Ramchandra R	Hypertension	Cardiac Sympathetic Nerve Activity Is Not Elevated in Ovine Hypertensive HFpEF	82(8)	1401-1411
Clowsley AH; Meletiou A; Janicek J; Bokhobza AFE; Lucinskaite E; Bleuer G; Jansen I; Jones PP; Louch WE; Soeller C	Nature Communications	MINFLUX microscopy resolves subunits of the cardiac ryanodine receptor		
Collins BEG; Gordon BA; Wundersitz DWT; Carey D; Kingsley MIC	Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation and Prevention	The Dose-Response Relationship of Aerobic Exercise on Cardiorespiratory Fitness in Cardiac Rehabilitation	45(6)	E53-E70
Dicker B; Selak V; Drake H; Howie G; Swain A; Newport R; Harwood M	New Zealand Medical Journal	Variation in emergency medical service use for ACS by ethnicity	138(1611)	33-54
Doudesis D; Lee KK; Anwar M; Singer AJ; Hollander JE; et al	Eur Heart J Acute Cardiovasc Care	Machine learning to optimise use of natriuretic peptides in diagnosis of acute heart failure	14(8)	474-488
Earle NJ; Bradbury KB; Rolleston A	Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases	Dietary patterns of patients with Acute Coronary Syndrome (MENZACS)	35	104037
Earle NJ; Poppe KK; Pilbrow AP; Logue G; Rolleston A; Wihongi H; Henare K; Lumley T; Porter G; Kerr AJ; Devlin G; Stewart R; Cameron VA; Legget ME; Doughty RN	Cardiology	The Prognostic Value of Cardiac Troponin in a Revascularized Cohort with First-time Myocardial Infarction		
Eyles H; Rapson J; Fuavao K; et al	BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health	Sodium, potassium, and iodine excretion and blood pressure of New Zealand school children: a cross-sectional study and comparison with recommended guidelines		

AUTHORS	JOURNAL NAME	ARTICLE TITLE	VOLUME	PAGES
Felippe ISA; Babbage TL; Shaheen R; Basseto M; Fan JL; Pauza A; Gold O; Thakkar P; Dawes M; Bates ML; McBryde F; Fountain SJ; Fisher JP; Paton JFR	Cardiovascular Research	Vitamin B6 antagonizes carotid body P2×3 receptors in hypertension		
Fernandes JF; Zhao D	Eur Heart J - Cardiovasc Imaging	Pressure-volume loops and cardiac energetics: finally, is it time to translate historical knowledge to clinical routine?		
Gonano LA; Kinns AM; Bergan-Dahl A; Louch WE; Jones PP	Circulation Research	Interplay Between Ryanodine Receptor Arrangement and Function	137(6)	
Hanchard S; Ameratunga S; Selak V; Harwood M; Grey C	Heart Lung and Circulation	Applying an Equity-Focused Implementation Science Lens to a National Stocktake of Heart Failure Discharge Planning	34	s62
Herring N; Ajijola OA; Foreman RD; Gourine AV; Green AL; Osborn J; Paterson DJ; Paton JFR; Ripplinger CM; Smith C; Zucker IH; Ardell JL	Journal of Physiology	Neurocardiology: translational advancements and potential	603	1729-1779
Kerr A; Harwood M; Grey C; Mehta S; Stone T; Lee M; Poppe K	New Zealand Medical Journal	Half a century of declining acute coronary syndrome incidence is ending and ethnic inequity is rising: ANZACS-QI 88	138(1627)	42-54
Keys T; Greer C; Adamson PD; Pickering JW; Pilbrow AP; Frampton C; Hayek S; Troughton RW; Doughty RN; Richards AM; Pemberton CJ; Chew-Harris J	European Heart Journal Open	Soluble urokinase plasminogen activator receptor for risk stratification from undifferentiated acute chest pain through to convalescence after acute coronary syndromes	5(5)	
Krstic A; Moammer H; Hassan S; Bai J; Kallingappa P; Hou Y; Annandale M; Taberner A; Han JC; Mellor KM; Ward ML; Barrett CJ; Crossman DJ	Acta Physiologica	The absence of collagen VI reduces systolic function but increases Ca2+ release	242(1)	e70144
Kulathilaka A; Sharma R; Kennelly J; Li N; Bai J; Smaill BH; Trew ML; Fedorov VV; Zhao J	Journal of Physiology	Structural determinants of re-entrant drivers in atrial fibrillation: insights from digital twins of 3D micron-resolution imaging of human heart	In press	
Legget ME; Earle NJ; Poppe KK; Bradbury KE; Pilbrow AP; Logue G; Choi Y; Devlin G; Gladding PA; Grey C; Harrison W; Henare K; Howson JMM; Jones GT; Kerr AJ; Lumley T; Pera V; Porter G; Richards AM; Stewart R; Troughton R; Wihongi H; Cameron VA; Rolleston A; Doughty RN	Atherosclerosis	Lipoprotein(a) concentrations and secondary outcomes following first-time acute coronary syndrome: The Multi-Ethnic New Zealand Study of Acute Coronary Syndromes (MENZACS)		
Lei TH; Wei X; Wang F; Chen J; Goulding R; Cotter JD; Lee JKW; Tan B; Amano T; Tomomi F; Fujii N; Kondo N; Mündel T	European Journal of Applied Physiology	The effect of hypohydration before and different rehydration strategies after severe intensity exercise on post-exercise hypotension in men	125(7)	1971–1982
Li N; Webb A; Kennelly J; Sharma R; Whitson B; Mohler P; Hummel J; Zhao J; Fedorov VV	Circulation: Arrhythmia and Electrophysiology	Heart rate mystery unveiled: sex differences in human sinoatrial node genes and female tachycardia	In press	
Magalhães KS; Martins Sá RW; Salim N; da Silva TM; Machado BH; Paton JFR; Moraes DJA	Circulation Research	Lateral parafacial expiratory oscillations drive neurogenic hypertension		
Matyevich M; Kingsley MIC; Bice R; et al	Behavior Research Methods	Reliability and reactivity of heart rate variability and pupillometry in response to controlled autonomic perturbations in university students	57(9)	267
Meade RD; Akerman AP; Notley SR; McGarr GW; McCourt ER; Kirby NV; Costello JT; Cotter JD; Crandall CG; Zanobetti A; Kenny GP	Nature Communications	Meta-analysis of heat-induced changes in cardiac function from over 400 laboratory-based heat exposure studies	16(1)	2543
Meehan T; Pham T; Tran K; Taberner AJ; Han JC	Journal of Physiology	Danicamtiv increases cardiac mechanical efficiency		
Mellor KM; Varma U; Koutsifeli P; Curl CL; Janssens JV; Daniels LJ; Bernasochi GB; Raaijmakers AJA; Annandale M; Li X; James SL; Taylor DJ; Raedschelders K; Weeks KL; Mills RJ; Parton RG; Hu X; Bell JR; O'Brien TJ; Katare R; Porrello ER; Hudson JE; Xiao RP; Van Eyk JE; Gottlieb RA; Delbridge LMD	Nature Cardiovascular Research	Targeted glycophagy ATG8 therapy reverses diabetic heart disease in mice and human engineered cardiac tissues	4(11)	1487-1500
Menuet C; Ben-Tal A; Linossier A; Allen AM; Machado BH; Moraes DJA; Farmer DGS; Paterson DJ; Mendelowitz D; Lakatta EG; Taylor EW; Ackland GL; Zucker IH; Fisher JP; Schwaber JS; Shanks J; Paton JFR; Buron J; Spyer KM; Shivkumar K; Dutschmann M; Joyner MJ; Herring N; Grossman P; McAllen RM; Ramchandra R; Yao ST; Ritz T; Gourine AV	Nature Reviews Cardiologyl	Redefining respiratory sinus arrhythmia as respiratory heart rate variability: an international Expert Recommendation for terminological clarity	22(12)	978-984
Meza-Alvarado JC; Pilbrow AP; Frampton CM; Cameron VA; Richards AM; Troughton RW; Doughty RN; Page RA; Mallard B; Bromhead C; Palmer BR	BMC Cardiovascular Disorders	VEGF-A cis-located SNPs on human chromosome 6 associated with VEGF-A plasma levels and survival in a coronary disease cohort	25	290
Moore MK; Jones GT; Whalley G; Williams M; Stewart R; Coffey S	New Zealand Medical Journal	The prevalence of aortic stenosis in Māori undergoing clinically indicated echocardiography	138(1608)	84-93
Musgrave JH; Han JC; Ward ML; Taberner AJ; Tran K	Journal of Physiology	Metabolite-sensitive cross-bridge models of human atria reveal the impact of diabetes on muscle mechanoenergetics	In press	
Musgrave JH; Ward ML; Han JC; Kang N; Taberner AJ; Tran K	Cardiovascular Diabetology	Human cardiac tissues produce lower contractile stress and exhibit slower cross-bridge cycling in type 2 diabetes	24	1–15

AUTHORS	JOURNAL NAME	ARTICLE TITLE	VOLUME	PAGES
Nishiyama C; Kiguchi T; Okubo M; Al-Araji R; Amorim E; Alihodzic H; Iwami T	Resuscitation	Characteristics of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest worldwide: ILCOR report		110852
Paton JFR; Zera T; Herring N; Paterson DJ	Nature Cardiology Reviews	Multi-modal therapeutic targeting of the cardio-vascular autonomic nervous system: now and tomorrow		
Patu M; Kerdemelidis M; Summers N; Monk NJ; Philpott A; Beard A; Pitama S	New Zealand Medical Journal	Introducing the Hauora Māori Equity Toolkit for Specialist Healthcare Services (HMET-SHS)	138(1622)	80-93
Pauza A; Thakkar P; Shen X; Felippe I; Rossmann K; Oya M; McBryde F; Nakamura K; Broichhagen J; Hodson D; Pauza DH; Murphy D; Paton JFR	Circulation Research	Melanocortin system activates carotid body arterial chemoreceptors in hypertension	137	967-982
Pauza AG; Xin S; Gold O; Paton JFR	Cardiovascular Research	Age-dependent remodelling of arterial chemo-afferent innervation in hypertension		
Pearson A; Troughton R; Kane J; Lewis L; Woodcock E; Pearson J; McKerchar C; Cunningham M; Patu M	Heart, Lung and Circulation	Methodology of Hauora manawa mō ngā kaumātua me ngā whānau Heart Health in Older Māori and Families	34 (S2)	S41-S42
Pearson AG; Pearson JF; Lewis LK; Fa'atoese A; Poppe KK; Pemberton C; Devlin G; Lund M; Richards AM; Troughton R; Doughty RN	ESC Heart Failure	NT-proBNP plasma concentrations differ between New Zealand European and Pacific patients with heart failure		
Pearson AG; Pearson JF; Lewis LK; Fa'atoese A; Poppe KK; Pemberton C; Devlin G; Lund M; Richards AM; Troughton R; Doughty RN	ESC Heart Failure	Lower NT-proBNP plasma concentrations in Pacific peoples with heart failure		
Pickering JW; Joyce L; Devlin G; Pemberton C; Troughton R; Richards AM; Than MP	Emerg Med J	Improving care with first high-sensitivity troponin T measurement (ICare-FirsT)		
Plunkett MJ; Paton JFR; Fisher JP	Experimental Physiology	Autonomic control of the pulmonary circulation: Implications for pulmonary hypertension	110	42-57
Pugh GE; Thomas KN; Fan JL; Fisher JP	Am J Physiol Heart Circ Physiol	Central arterial stiffness, flow-mediated dilation and venous function in postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS)	in press	
Rahiri J-L; Tuhoe J; Hanchard S; Houma A; Appleby N; Brewer K; Harwood M	New Zealand Medical Journal	Te ara o Manawataki Fatu Fatu-Kaupapa Māori and Pacific qualitative co-design hui to explore cardiovascular disease care for Māori and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand	138(1626)	Dec-25
Rahmani M; Pham T; Crossman DJ; Tran K; Taberner AJ; Han JC	Cardiovascular Diabetology: Endocrinology Reports	Sex differences in cardiac energetics in diabetic rat ventricular muscle		
Roxburgh BH; Campbell HA; Cotter JD; Williams MJA; Thomas KN	Temperature	Both hot- and thermoneutral-water immersion reduce 24-h blood pressure in people with hypertension: a randomised crossover study	12(2)	166-178
Schaapveld T; Bartholomew K; Maxwell A; Chambers E; Poppe K; Doughty RN; Murphy T	SSM - Health Systems	A scoping review of health co-benefit tests in the setting of a screening or health programme: Limited data to inform their potential use to address inequities	5	100084
Selak V; Paynter J; Hanchard S; Brewer KM; Taueetia-Su'a T; Mehta S; Harwood M; Grey C	BMC Global and Public Health	CVD risk assessment by ethnicity in Aotearoa New Zealand: a national observational study	3(1)	94
Shanks J; Pachen M; Lever NA; Paton JFR; Ramchandra R	Basic Res Cardiol	Reinstating respiratory heart rate variability improves hemodynamic responses during exercise in heart failure with reduced ejection fraction	120(4)	745-759
Shanks J; Ramchandra R	Autonomic Neuroscience	Cardiac Vagal Nerve Activity During Exercise: New insights and future directions	258	103254
Tane T; Selak V; Eggleton K; Harwood M	Journal of Primary Health Care	Rural Māori experiences of accessing heart health care: a Kaupapa Māori qualitative analysis	17(1)	53-62
Taueetia-Su'a T; Brewer KM; Ameratunga S; Hanchard S; Selak V; Dicker B; Harwood M	Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health	Provider perspectives on heart healthcare inequities among Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand: A qualitative study	50(1)	
Toro EF; Emans TW; McBryde FD; Paton JFR; Müller LO	Journal of Physiology	Unveiling the role of the venous system in arterial hypertension: A computational study		
Varghese LN; Sheard PW; Schwenke DO; Katare R	Am J Physiol Cell Physiol	Sex-specific dysregulation of cardiac-enriched microRNAs with age in Drosophila melanogaster	328(6)	C1743-C1751
Warnakulasuriya T; George B; Lever N; Ramchandra R	J Soc Cardiovasc Angiogr Interv	Mechanical Circulatory Support Reduces Directly Recorded Cardiac Sympathetic Nerve Activity in Ovine Acute Myocardial Infarction	4(6)	102642
Watson LE; Annandale M; MacRae CL; Bai J; Dayaram J; Burgess N; Puliuvea C; Hedges CP; D'Souza RF; Merry TL; Mellor KM	Physiological Reports	Exercise has differential cardiometabolic effects in male and female mice	14(2)	e70656
Weeks KL; Bernardo BC; Bell JR; Delbridge LMD; Mellor KM	Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology	New insights into diabetes-induced cardiac pathology	203	76-81
Wheeler A, Rahiri JL, Ellison-Lupena R, Hanchard S, Brewer KM, Paynter J, Winter-Smith J, Selak V, Ameratunga S, Grey C, Harwood M	The Lancet Regional Health – Western Pacific	Assessing the gaps in cardiovascular disease risk assessment and management in primary care for Māori and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand—a systematic review	56	

AUTHORS	JOURNAL NAME	ARTICLE TITLE	VOLUME	PAGES
Wheeler A; Rahiri J-L; Ellison-Lupena R; Hanchard S; Brewer KM; Paynter J; Harwood M	Lancet Regional Health Western Pacific	Assessing the gaps in cardiovascular disease risk assessment and management in primary care for Māori and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand- a systematic review	56	101511
Williamson JM; Whalley GA; Morris P; Bruce D; Cursaro M; Horton A; Justo R; Mylrea C; Davy-Snow S; Takau S; Wheaton G; Zanker A; Wang Z; Remenyi B	Heart, Lung & Circulation	Echocardiographic Diagnosis of Rheumatic Heart Disease	34(9)	900-907
Williamson JM; Whalley GA; Thornley S; Marangou J; Morris P; Francis JR; Wade V; Remenyi B	Global Heart	The Impact of Acute Rheumatic Fever Diagnosis on Rheumatic Heart Disease Severity	20(1)	72
Winter-Smith J; Grey C; Paynter J; Harwood M; Selak V	Heart Lung and Circulation	Should Heart Health Outcomes of Pacific Peoples be Disaggregated? Findings From a Pacific-Led Analysis of National Datasets in the Integrated Data Infrastructure	34	s71
Wittenberg P; McBryde FD; Korsak A; Rodrigues KL; Paton JFR; Marina N; Gourine AV	Journal of Physiology	On the regulation of arterial blood pressure by an intracranial baroreceptor mechanism		
Woodcock E; Pitama S; Wilson L; Troughton R; Bridgman P; Chan C; Whalley G	Heart, Lung and Circulation	Indexing of Left Ventricular (LV) Mass to Account for Body Habitus in an Aotearoa Population	34 (S2)	S26-S27
Woodcock E; Pitama S; Wilson L; Troughton R; Bridgman P; Chan CW; Whalley G	Heart Lung and Circulation	Indexing of Left Ventricular (LV) Mass to Account for Body Habitus in an Aotearoa Population	34(Suppl 2)	S26-S27
Xu F; Tu W; Feng F; Yang J; Gunawardhana M; Gu Y; Huang J; Zhao J	Computers in Biology and Medicine	BSA-Net: Boundary-prioritized spatial adaptive network for efficient left atrial segmentation	196	110851
Żera T; Paleczny B; Siński M; Conde SV; Narkiewicz K; Ponikowski P; Paton JFR; Niewiński P	Journal of Physiology	Translating physiology of the arterial chemoreflex into novel therapeutic interventions targeting carotid bodies in cardiometabolic disorders	603	2487-2516
Zhang L; Power AS; Kang N; Ward ML	Physiological Reports	Myocardial Composition and Contractile Function of Right Atrial Trabeculae from Type 2 Diabetic and Non-Diabetic Male Patients		
Roxburgh B; Cotter JD; Fujii N; Masodsai K; Thomas KN	Journal of Applied Physiology	Hot-water immersion: a (not so) new therapy for the primary and secondary prevention of hypertension?	in press	

PŪTAHI MANAWA

HEALTHY HEARTS FOR
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

putahimanawa@auckland.ac.nz