

Opportunities for businesses to support Māori and Pasifika pathways and careers in NZ's digital and technology sector

Environment scan and interviews by MartinJenkins
Commissioned by Air New Zealand



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Introduction

Following the recent Air New Zealand business delegation to New York, Air New Zealand commissioned MartinJenkins to:

- 1. conduct an environment scan** of current private sector and community initiatives promoting pathways and careers for Māori and Pasifika in digital technologies sector
- 2. identify potential opportunities** for business leaders to support these initiatives
- 3. prepare a brief report** for the business delegation ahead of their upcoming meeting.

This report summarises what we found from the environment scan and key insights from interviews with eight Māori and Pasifika leaders.

02

Why is this important?



Why is it important to support Māori and Pasifika participation in digital technologies?



The Draft Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan—developed in collaboration between industry and government—sets out an overarching vision for the sector:

The world looks to Aotearoa New Zealand as a leader in ethical, innovative, inclusive and sustainable digital technologies.

These technologies enable our economy to prosper, help our businesses grow stronger and compete internationally, and contribute to the wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

1 Digital technologies is a key sector in our future economy



The draft plan states:

As a key sector in our future economy, there is a need to ensure that Māori are empowered to participate in the way that works best for them. That is, whether as SMEs and start-ups, Māori authorities, employees or rangatahi, Māori recognise the future-proofed potential of the digital technologies sector.

Source: Draft Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan.

2 Disproportionate under-representation



Research shows:

NZ Tech research found that less than three percent (**2.8%**) of the tech workforce are **Pacific people**, just **4% percent** are **Māori**.

Source: Draft Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan.

3

Mismatch between skills needed and skills available

This mismatch results in our over reliance on immigration: high demand is making the global market very competitive, potentially leaving New Zealand vulnerable.



The draft plan states:

The Digital Skills and Talent Plan calls for a rebalancing and investment at various levels, including a stronger domestic talent pipeline supplemented by immigration, to support the sustainable growth of the sector and the overall New Zealand economy.

Source: Draft Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan.

4

A point of difference to leverage

Our Māori and Pasifika perspectives and values are our advantage and can help sharpen NZ tech sector's competitive edge.



The draft plan states:

...Te ao Māori perspectives, values, language and purpose-driven approach to life also have significant potential to help grow and invigorate New Zealand's global success in this sector, though great care must be exercised with the marketing of mātauranga.

Source: Draft Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan.



Interview insights:

Indigenous superpower

“ The world has a poverty of spirit—it is hungry for humanity and ideas to better service the planet and community—indigenous people have that.

“ We are connected and guided by our values and principles: tapu (sacredness), wairuatanga (spirituality), kotahitanga (unity) whakapapa; connection to the environment, the land and each other.

“ ...Through our rituals and practices, we can create safe places to look after each other and the planet.

“ Māori and Pasifika are one of the fastest growing groups and connected through indigenous links 'when we come together, we are a superpower—you see it in our waiata, drums and cultural practices'.

“ If you're not cognisant of Māori values, you're not attracting the best.



Interview insights:

'Tech + culture'

“ We have exportable assets: cohesion, responsibility, obligation, vision, ideas.

“ Cultural values for Māori and Pasifika are inseparable from their tech skills.

“ The roots of our future will grow from creativity—release the old ways of doing things.

“ We are creatives, innovators, entrepreneurs, creators.

“ How do we show the world we are set apart? Kiwi's are doing incredible things under the radar globally, we have something the world needs.



Interview insights:

But we can be shy about it...

“ We value modesty and humbleness and may be too whakamā (shy) to sell ourselves.



Whakatauki: Kāore te kumara e kōrero mō tona ake reka —the kumara doesn't speak of its own sweetness.

03

**What are
some of the
challenges?**



Challenges



- 1** Disparities in participation in tech starts as early as high school¹.
- 2** There are limited role models for rangatahi to be inspired, the pathways into digital technologies training and careers are often difficult to identify and navigate².

TABLE 6: Diversity shortfall throughout the talent pipeline, 2019

	Secondary School	NCEA Technology	IT Degree Graduate	IT Workforce
Females	50%	39%	22%	27%
Māori	23%	14%	10%	4%
Pacific People	9%	9%	5%	2.8%

Source: New Zealand Digital Skills Survey, NZTech, Oct 2020 n = 149.

1. Digital Skills For Our Digital Future 2021
2. Draft Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan

Challenges



3 Programmes targeted at building skills for Māori or supporting Māori enterprise are often **disconnected**, with limited awareness and ability to learn from one another.

4 Very limited junior roles being created and internships are hard to come by, but interns convert well into employees.



Only 1-in-6 to 1-in-7 tech students are placed in an internship in any given year. Only 42% of organisations in the 2020 Digital Skills survey have taken on an intern in the past year.



Most employers who took on interns ended up placing them in permanent roles—internships can be seen as an effective recruitment mechanism.



Businesses perceive their lack of capacity to support and develop interns as a key barrier to offering internships—saying they need more senior staff, and finding suitable interns and suitable projects.

Challenges

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5**
- 6
- 7
- 8

5 Te Au Hangarau Research into factors influencing Māori participation in tech found...



The 'capability gap' cuts both ways—beyond talking about capability of the youth and the education system, industry also need to assess their cultural competency—being an organisation that is considered culturally safe—where rangatahi would be welcomed and nurtured.



Improving access and opportunities is fundamental. Need to facilitate more affordable, inclusive education pathways including equitable access to education.



Sense of belonging and a community is important—entry into tech and retention—can be strengthened by connection to other Māori peers, and role models, mentors.



Need to recognise Māori aspirations, not just industry needs—importance of self-determination, desire and responsibility to serve and uplift iwi, hapu and whānau.

Source: Te Au Hangarau research by AATEA Solutions and Korou Digital Agency Ltd, commissioned by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited and Spark Foundation, in conjunction with Te Matarau, Māori Tech Association.

Challenges



We also heard similar sentiments from the people we interviewed...

“ Being brown in a white space.

“ Lack of equitable access to investment (no funding for innovation).

“ Māori and Pasifika continue to experience internet poverty, device poverty, training poverty.

“ You cannot be who you cannot see.

“ Its not just recruitment, its also about retention.

Challenges

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

6 From survival to aspirational



Interview insights:

“ Immediate demands on whānau can be all consuming. There is still a mind shift that needs to happen to create a real lift.

“ We need to start the tech journey earlier—right from kōhanga and create aspirational memories, moving from consumers to creators. Help whānau see tech as a real option that could be a game changer for the whole whānau.

7 Concerns about digital safety

“ Whānau may be distrustful of tech and digital—what are the dangers? Safety is paramount.

“ What will be the impact of AI on the workforce—job losses? How are we protected?”

Challenges



8 Industry must also change



Interview insights:

“ Don't just focus on the pipeline and filling the gaps, we need to move beyond entry level and build power and mobility around the margins.

“ Industry also needs a mind shift based on equity and system change to move into a new paradigm that is based in the community and more aligned with community purposes and values.

04

**What's
happening
already?**





Interview insights:

Māori and Pasifika are active in digital technologies—in a variety of ways

Indigenous tech communities and networks —Te Matarau (the Māori Tech Association)

Animation

Diversity in cyber security

Creative services

Indigenous archiving of genealogy and genetic information

Augmented reality

Indigenous Digital archiving (whakapapa, genetic information)

Game design and development

Māori Minecraft universe

Podcasting and live streaming

Digitising Māori land data and access

Te Reo Māori and Artificial Intelligence

Social enterprises

Iwi Chairs Forum—Data and tech strategy, ngā rangatahi a iwi (youth representation)

E-commerce

Māori Tech and Entrepreneurs Summit

Collaborative communities (co-location)



Initiatives currently in place that support Māori and Pasifika pathways and careers in digital technologies.

Many are still in early stage of development and small scale.





Initiatives currently in place:

Initiative	Aim	Activities	URL
Ahau	Helps whānau, hapū, Iwi capture, preserve, and share important information and histories into secure, whānau managed databases and servers.	Whānau data platforms.	https://ahau.io
Amazon Web Services re/start	Kick starting careers for women.	Cohort-based workforce development training program.	https://aws.amazon.com/training/restart/
Amazon Web Services Hapori wāhine	Helping you learn some practical skills and gain the globally recognised AWS Cloud Practitioner Certification.	Training programme for women.	https://awscloudup-haporiwahine.splashthat.com/
Digital Natives Academy	To inspire the next generation of digital leaders.	Coding, animation, esports.	https://digitalnatives.academy/
DXC technology	Embracing Māori and Pacific culture through business, employment opportunities and community initiatives.	Māori and Pacific Peoples Program.	https://dxc.com/nz/en
Fibre Fale	Achieve equal population representation in tech by 2042.	Education, advocacy, and facilitation	www.fibrefale.com
Haututu	Inspiring Māori and Pasifika to lead the world in tech innovation.	Education programmes, Pastoral care, Recruitment pipeline to work experience, internships, and graduate roles.	www.haututu.com
Ko Mauī Hangarau	Awaken, inspire and ignite our Rangatahi into pathways in tech, innovation and entrepreneurship!	Māori in tech, Entrepreneurs Summit	www.kmh.nz



**Initiatives
currently in
place
(continued):**

Initiative	Aim	Activities	URL
Make Everything Achievable	Enable intergenerational change and acknowledging the power of strength in partnership.	Indigenous social impact.	www.mea.nz
Ngahere Communities	Ngahere cultivates communities that enhance creativity and innovation by using collaborative spaces, common values, and co-designed programmes.	Social enterprise.	www.ngaherecommunities.nz/
Pasifika in IT	To see Pacific Island Communities educated, equipped and employed across all areas of the IT industry.	Apprenticeships, mentoring programmes.	www.pasifikainit.com/
Pūhoro STEMM Academy	kaupapa Māori approach to STEMM and seeks to improve equitable access to Pūrau (STEMM) education.	Internship programmes, training and learning programmes.	puhoro.org.nz
Qrious Academy	data analytics pathway programme for women, Māori, and Pasifika.	Internship programme, scholarships.	www.qrious.co.nz/news/qrious-data-academy
REA	Rea combines technical training with measurable soft skills development to ensure graduates are productive from day 1.	Online training.	https://rea.coach/about/
Te Hapori Matihiko	A community for Māori in digital and tech.	Mātauranga session, Matihiko Awards.	www.matihiko.nz/
Te Matarae – Māori Tech Community	Representative body for Māori working in the tech industry.		www.tematarau.tech



**Initiatives
currently in
place
(continued):**

Initiative	Aim	Activities	URL
3Bags Full	Challenges tradition, unlocking the potential of our Māori and Pacific people to support and grow New Zealand's Tech industry.	Digital education, employment, mentoring.	https://3bagsfull.co.nz/
Tonui Collab	Celebrates learning through exploration, learning through fast fails, and collaborative problem solving.	Bilingual STEM education in Tairāwhiri.	www.tonuicollab.com/
Toro Academy	creates training pathways enabling our local youth and career changers to access both the local and global production industry.	Hands-on animation, production skills and soft skills for entering the creative tech industry.	www.torostudios.nz/toro-academy
Tupu Toa	Increasing Māori and Pacific representation in leadership positions in the corporate sector.	Internships, cadetships, employment pathways, digital skills training, pastoral care.	https://tuputoa.org.nz/

As well as targeted recruitment programmes for Māori and Pasifika, some larger corporate organisations are also developing internal cultural capability programmes.

And they are developing partnerships with schools.

Iwi are also developing partnerships in this space.



Te Rūnanga o NGĀI TAHU

In partnership, Ngāi Tahu with Datacom are delivering tech projects for Māori youth.

DATACOM



Iwi chairs Forum focused on data sovereignty, blue and green tech space and rangatahi voices.

amazon

Programmes in schools and communities, career opportunities.



Global indigenous strategy.

Google

Providing resources to schools.



Scholarship programme, Spark Foundation.



Providing resources to schools.

05

**Opportunities
for businesses**





Interview insights:

What can be done collectively to draw social, political and community threads together?

“ Don't just cheer us on, let's sit together at the table.

“ Understand who we are and build genuine partnerships early on, based on trust.

“ Business leaders must navigate the grey space, and move beyond the minimum to create something special.



Interview insights:

What can be done collectively to draw social, political and community threads together?

“ Piloting, learning, and scaling is a good approach—building capacity will take 30 years.

“ Be aware it's not just one or two things; everything is interconnected, a series of things creates collective impact to shift the dial.

“ People need resources, handshakes, access to networks, influence, experiences, mentoring —share your experiences.

“ BUT Do a few things together—iwi, business and community.

Source: Interviews conducted by MartinJenkins

What can your business do?

Look inward first, do you embrace and embed Māori and Pacific values and tikanga?

Can you attract and retain Māori and Pasifika talent?

What support do you provide?

Four actions for businesses:

- 1 Reflect on your organisations strategies. Check what actions you are taking to build your cultural capability and grow your Māori and Pasifika workforce and leadership. Keep reviewing and monitoring your progress. Hold yourselves to account.
- 2 Check your organisations recruitment strategies to ensure you are valuing Māori and Pasifika knowledge and skills.
- 3 Build your relationships and credibility with Māori and Pasifika communities and leaders.
- 4 Reach out to Māori and Pasifika leaders in the sector. Be open minded about how you can support them.

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