

Tuatarara Collective Annual Impact Report 2025



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Haere Mai | Welcome

Message from Kaiwhakahaere
Artistic Director Jason Te Mete



Pāpaki tū ana ngā tai ki Mauao
i whakanukunukuhia
i whakanekenekehia
i whiua reretia e Hotu a
Wahinerua ki te wai
ki tai wīwī, ki tai wāwā
Ki te whai ao, ki te ao mārama
Tihei mauri ora!

Welcome to Tuatara Collective's Annual Impact Report 2025.

At the heart of everything we do is a simple whakaaro:

Our art is important. Our art is rongoā.
Our art, our people. Our people, our future.

This is not just our motto – it is our lived practice and it is why we show up in our communities. Tuatara Collective exists to champion powerful storytelling by Māori, Pasifika, and rainbow LGBTQIA2+ artists, particularly rangatahi, and to create spaces where art heals, connects, and strengthens collective futures.

2025 was a powerful celebration of storytelling, community, and creative impact across Aotearoa.

From ANZAC remembrance to festivals, wānanga, and mass sing-alongs, our mahi brought people together in theatres, RSA halls, kura, and public spaces, centering culture, identity, and rangatahi leadership.

Our moving ANZAC tribute *For The Fallen* toured through Western Bay of Plenty and Coromandel, creating moments of reflection grounded in whakapapa and shared history. Our HAU Festival 2025 at Auckland's Basement Theatre amplified bold indigenous, Pasifika, Māori, and LGBTQIA+ voices through works such as *Tāne Rore* and *Survive*, affirming the power of contemporary performance as both resistance and healing. Meanwhile, *Battle Chorus* continued to grow as an iconic community singalong experience, uniting voices in Auckland, Tauranga, Nelson, and Wānaka.

Community connection remained at the centre of everything we do. Our Pasifika Theatre and Wellbeing Wānanga nurtured new creative pathways for emerging artists, while collective joy rang out through *Waiata Mai*, *Battle Chorus*, *Christmas in the Park*, and *The Mount Christmas Singalong*. Our kura collaborations included the interactive MAUAO - a mountain of memories that challenged how stories can be shared, empowering rangatahi to explore complex and controversial history through performance, and *Ngā Koha o Kirihimete*, a children's show performed entirely in te reo Māori which not only develops confidence in language acquisition, but also provides neat opportunities for our tamariki to hear and engage with te reo Māori outside of the classroom. Across every project, 2025 reaffirmed that art is more than performance – it is connection, rongoā, and belonging.

The impact of this work has been deeply felt. Māori, Pasifika, and rainbow LGBTQIA2+ young people and artists found spaces where their identities were affirmed, their voices valued, and their leadership nurtured. Many stepped into creative confidence for the first time; others strengthened pathways toward sustainable careers in the arts (including 3 who were selected for *Toi Whakaari* and completed their first year successfully). These outcomes speak to the transformative power of culturally grounded, community-led practice.

This report reflects a year of growth and consolidation. Inside, you'll find insights into our evolving strategy, the projects that shaped 2025, and the people who made it all possible - our artists, facilitators, trustees, volunteers, and collaborators. It also outlines how we are positioning Tuatara Collective for the future: deepening impact, strengthening partnerships, and continuing to advocate for the importance of art as a vital force in our communities.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our supporters, funders, partners, and the local communities who welcomed us into their spaces and trusted us with their stories. Your belief in our kaupapa enables this work to exist and to thrive. As you read on, we invite you to see not just a record of activity, but a reflection of collective care, creativity, and vision. Together, we are shaping futures where our people are seen, heard, and celebrated.



Mō Mātou | About Us

Tuatara Collective has established itself as an important incubator for rangatahi and emerging artists to express themselves within a safe and supportive environment.

By developing and advancing our innovative Rātā Initiative supporting mental health in the Arts industry, we can continue to strengthen holistic wellbeing safely with robust cultural competency and mātauranga. Rātā is designed to cultivate whakawhanaungatanga and actively foster diversity and inclusion by encouraging the safe expression of ideas and emotions. This results in the creation of high-quality theatre and performing arts opportunities in Aotearoa that are authentic, culturally appropriate, meaningful and relevant for local rangatahi to participate in, and communities, hapū and iwi to experience at minimal or no cost.

We are healing our communities through the creative arts by integrating Te Ao Māori perspectives into our practices. We utilise culturally-specific spiritual and mindfulness practices to help young people release, clear and manage their own psychological and spiritual distress. Historical and intergenerational trauma from colonisation has alienated our communities from our own stories, leading to a lack of self-representation. This disconnection can hinder the ability to envision positive futures. However, when we reimagine the narrative we have limitless potential and diverse possibilities when trauma is not a barrier, but instead is a catalyst for transformation.



We share the aspirations of our community for Māori whānau, hapū and iwi to have story sovereignty and to grow culturally strong, resilient and proud change-makers, story-tellers and leaders in our young people who face prejudice, racism and challenges to their cultural identity on a daily basis.

Our 2025-2027 Programme of Works consists of 51 creative projects, 1769 active participants and a projected 27,400 audience members. Of those, 33 projects, 1586 active participants and 18,750 audience members are local (BOP/Gisborne). Over 80% of the active participants are rangatahi (young people), most of whom are of Māori or Pasifika descent.

We have strengthened our relationships with venues and organisations around the region, especially Te Wharekura o Mauao, Ohomairangi Trust, Ahipoutu Collective and the Tauranga Arts Festival Trust, and our community-lead collaborative programmes are known throughout Tauranga Moana Iwi and Hapū. Engagement is evident through various access points, our 5 work strands include Rangatahi Entry level, Rangatahi Graduate level, Established artists, Public, and Development. These layers provide a clear pathway for growth and progression in artistic practice.

What gives Tuatara Collective a clear point of difference from other arts organisations and sets our Rātā initiative apart, is our foundation in Te Ao Māori. This perspective brings a rich cultural context that enhances the mental health support provided. The emphasis on wairua (spirituality), atua (ancestral connections), and holistic wellbeing ensures that the initiative is not only effective but also culturally resonant and inclusive. This culturally responsive approach honours Māori traditions and values, setting a powerful example for how mental health support can be woven into the fabric of creative endeavours.

“Ware ana a Rātā, tū ana te aka o Tānemahuta.”

When the Rātā seed calls, its tuakana will reach out and provide support.

nā Chris Winitana



Kaupapa | Strategy

Our Vision

Serve and benefit the community of Aotearoa by developing and delivering an innovative arts practice that supports mental health in the creative arts industry for artists and audiences.

Our Mission

- Provide a platform to share open kōrero and inspire healing through the creative arts, engaging support and collaboration with professional health professionals and Kaupapa Māori services
- Identify, mentor and nurture emerging, aspiring and professional artists working in the creative arts, providing educational support and opportunities in the industry.
- Create a safe and secure collective that fosters creative development, expression and growth, especially for Māori, Pasifika and/or LGBTQiA2+ artists to share their own stories authentically.
- Develop programmes and works that bring progressive voices and marginalised communities together and provide safe spaces to discuss social, cultural and political change.
- Identify, build and strengthen relationships with Iwi, Hapū and other community groups and organisation that deliver the objectives of the Trust whilst further promoting the discipline of unique multidisciplinary arts practices in Aotearoa.

Our Values

Manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, kaitiakitanga, pono, aroha, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga, tikanga Māori, whakapapa, ako, mana, mana ngātahi.

Our Impact in 2025

We're proud of the impact Tuatara Collective has made through working with taiohi to become culturally strong, resilient, and proud change-makers, storytellers, and leaders across the motu.

Area of Impact	Key Metrics
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 678 participants including 624 Māori, 282 Pasifika, 469 rangatahi, 589 artists, 72 LGBTQiA2+• 7,415 audience members• 49 performances/events
Hauora	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 mental health support & training sessions
Artist Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 wānanga/workshops
Community Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22 collaborations/partners• 238 volunteers (includes participants in performances)
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change of structure from limited company to charitable trust• 2 new trustees onboarded
Financials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 grants received• 50+ koha received

“Seeing both my nans with wet eyes, and seeing my father and my mother crying and saying they were very proud of me, was something better than words - I cannot explain it but I loved it.”
- Participant

“Thank you for bringing into light things that are hard to talk about. This show will save lives.”
- Audience

“Nōku te waimarie!! Being in the presence of this group of rangatahi for the last 5 days has been simply amazing. I'm in awe every time they perform and their natural talent oozes out. These kids can stand proud knowing they touched the hearts of all those that were fortunate enough to watch their show.” - Parent

Mahi | Projects

We are incredibly proud to share the projects we delivered in 2025.



For The Fallen

Staged in a restaurant or the nearest RSA, For The Fallen commemorated the Māori Battalion in WWI and WWII. It featured war-time songs, dance, and text, including letters, personal accounts from local veterans, and poetry by Alistair Te Ariki Campbell.



Pasifika Theatre & Wellbeing Wānanga

A six-day wānanga including educational workshops, Māori mindfulness practices, acting, dance, haka, and waiata. Each wānanga culminated in an epic showcase that wove together tradition and contemporary mahi toi.



Battle Chorus

Battle Chorus was a social sing-along experience that brought people together for an unforgettable night of iconic melodies. Under the guidance of two Aotearoa musical heavyweights, audiences formed two teams and battled it out with an epic medley of songs.



Waiata Mai

Waiata Mai was a large community sing-along that formed part of the Tauranga Arts Festival. It was a free event for Tauranga Moana, where everyone brought their whānau together to sing waiata.

Mahi | Projects Continued

HAU Festival 2025 celebrated original Indigenous and rainbow art.



HAU Festival: Tāne Rore

Tāne Rore was a devised, bilingual theatre experience that shared authentic storytelling from five BIPOC male performers. It featured music, song, dance, haka, monologue, and poetry. Review available [here](#).



HAU Festival: Survive

SURVIVE featured three 45-minute solo performances by local Aotearoa LGBTQIA2+ artists, each delving into themes of identity, authenticity, and navigating the trials and triumphs of life within the diverse spectrum of the rainbow. Review available [here](#).



HAU Festival: Garage Party

To celebrate Matariki 2025, we hosted a one-night-only free event featuring a line-up of BIPOC LGBTQIA2+ singers and songwriters. It was an old-school jam session with music, kai, and a couple of inus.



Christmas

We produced 3 events: Ngā Koha o Kirihimete, an original te reo Māori kids' show for tamariki (yr 0-3), a performance by Tuatara Collective Choir at Tauranga Christmas in the Park, and the Mount Christmas Sing-along, where carollers learned 16 bilingual waiata over 3 sessions before singing along Mount Mainstreet.

Kaimahi | Team

We are powered by our dedicated operations team and Board.



Jason Te Mete, Kaiwhakahaere

Jason (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi te Rangi), is a Tauranga-based multidisciplinary artist with over 20 years of experience. He is dedicated to empowering rangatahi through creativity and expression, and supporting mental health in the arts industry.



Tāwera Ormsby, Kaiwhakahaere

Tāwera (Ngāti Porou, Ngāpuhi) has over 20 years experience in administration and group facilitation work and māmā of three. She is an advocate for Māori and Pasifika whānau and community development, the performing arts, and kapa haka.



Tūi Matira Ranapiri Ransfield, Mātanga Mātauranga Māori

Tūi is a descendent of Ohomairangi & Mākuratawhiti of Ngāti Ohomairangi. A highly skilled Māori performing artist, Tūi is an expert in Mau rākau a Matarua and a senior wahine karanga for her many pā.



Poari Kaitiaki | Board of Trustees

The board comprises Michael Hudson-Croft (Chairperson), Jason Te Mete, Tāwera Ormsby, Lynne Cardy, Kathy Lloyd-Parker, and Teresa Lee.



Ngā Mihi Nui | Thank You

We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for all the people and organisations who have contributed to and supported our kaupapa. A huge thank you!




Whakapā Mai | Contact Us

To learn more about Tuatara Collective
or support our work, please reach out.

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 @tuataracollective

 Tuatara Collective

Tuatara Collective is a registered charity (CC60869)

