

TUJA

2026

PROSPECTUS





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The Power of Weaving Connections

Tōia mai ngā tāonga a ngā mātua tīpuna. Tuia i runga, tuia i raro, tuia i roto, tuia i waho, tuia te here tāngata. Ka rongo te pō, ka rongo te ao. Tuia ngā rangatahi puta noa i te motu kia pupū ake te mana Māori. Ko te kotahitanga te waka e kawe nei te oranga mō ngā whānau, mō ngā hapū, mō ngā iwi. Poipoia te rangatahi, ka puta, ka ora.

The name ‘Tuia’ is derived from a tauparapara (Māori proverbial saying) that is hundreds of years old. This saying recognises and explains the potential that lies within meaningful connections to: the past, present and future; to self; and to people, place and environment.

The word ‘Tuia’ means to weave and when people are woven together well, their collective contribution has a greater positive impact on community. We as a rangatahi (youth) leadership programme look to embody this by connecting young Māori from across Aotearoa/New Zealand - connecting passions, aspirations and dreams of rangatahi to serve our communities well.



How Tuia Works

Tuia is an intentional, long-term, intergenerational approach to develop and enhance the way in which rangatahi Māori contribute to communities throughout New Zealand. We look to build a network, learn local history for rangatahi to help support them in their contribution to their communities. This is done through developing relationships between a diverse range of rangatahi throughout the country that recognises, accepts and celebrates diversity.

Three pou make up the Tuia rangatahi experience:

- 1. Mentoring
- 2. Community contribution
- 3. Wānanga

At a local level, a mayor will select a rangatahi Māori from their district who they will develop a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship with, in order to enhance their ability to contribute well to community. This will happen on a monthly basis, involving both informal meetings and participation at formal occasions. The relationship will also provide both parties with the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into inter-generational issues, cultural values and experiences.

Selected rangatahi will be encouraged to undertake a community contribution project in their respective communities.

Rangatahi will also attend five wānanga in different parts of the country over the year to build networks, obtain support and have exposure to a diverse range of people from across the country.

Identifying Future Leaders

Who is eligible for the programme and how will they be selected?

The mentor will select a young Māori using the following criteria.

The rangatahi selected must:

- Be aged between 18-25 years old;
- Be actively involved in contributing to the wellbeing of their community at some level;
- Be able to commit to being involved in this part-time programme of three three-day and two four-day wānanga (leadership forums) over a period of 12 months;
- Have support from others to participate in the programme (whānau/hapū/pakeke/ employers/community etc.);
- Be open minded and willing to contribute to discussions and workshops; and
- Be well organised and have the ability to manage their time and commitments effectively.

Your Pathway to Choosing Well

Each participating mentor in partnership with their community and past rangatahi participant (where applicable) will select the candidate against the criteria outlined on the previous page. Each mentor will determine what process they deem to be the most effective in order to identify their candidate.

Selection process examples are:

- Personal application (e.g. essay / presentation)
- A nomination and selection process
- A personal choice
- In consultation with community groups
- On the advice of iwi and hapū groupings
- On the advice of the council's community development advisors

Mentors should consider the following:

- Compatibility (shared interests)
- Gender (may be relevant)
- Connection to the community

NB: A Tuia Mentoring Toolkit is available and will be distributed to those participating mentors. This will include a range of strategies and experiences mentors can use to support the development of their rangatahi.



Your Role in Their Journey

Mayors/mentors who agree to become a mentor recognise the potential this approach has to effect long-term positive change in the life of the rangatahi they are mentoring and through them, many communities around the country.

Your commitment shapes their future:

- Meet with the young person at least once a month;
- Involve the young person in community activities that will assist their development as a leader;
- Financially support the young person to attend five wānanga (leadership forums) per year. (Domestic transport costs only: approx. \$1000-\$3000 per year - variance in cost is largely relative to geographical considerations – earlier bookings beneficial);
- Attend a one day mentoring training opportunity (optional).



Mayor Nadine Taylor
Marlborough District Council

"I am really proud and pleased to support the Tuia Kaupapa during my term as Mayor. It's a positive and uplifting experience to work with rangatahi from our local community. My approach has been to work in partnership with Iwi leaders to identify rangatahi to attend the programme, with the goal of adding value to the leadership they offer. I have enjoyed developing a personal connection with each rangatahi and watching their development and growth during the year. The magic that happens at the Wānanga is inspiring!"

Rangatahi Expectations

Young people who agree to take part in the programme will make the most of this unique opportunity by participating in all of the planned activities and meetings.

The young people will commit to:

- Meet with their Mayor/mentor at least once a month;
- Be involved in additional community events at the invitation of the Mayor/mentor (where practical);
- Attend three three-day and two four-day wānanga (leadership forums) per year;
- Community contribution project(s) over a 12 month period (approx 100hrs).



Transforming Communities Together

Community Contribution

General Guidelines

Hours

- The encouraged commitment for this is approximately 100 hours for the year, which equates to approx. two hours per week.
- There is no need to record hours of community contribution - the focus is on giving to the community rather than fulfilling a requirement.
- The hours can be made up of many small projects, one large project or a combination.

NB: Many rangatahi are already contributing to their communities - if this is the case for your rangatahi, then those contributions would count towards those 100 hours.

Projects aim/nature

- There are no strict requirements for the aim or nature of the contribution activity. See next page for examples of past community contribution projects.
- The benefits of this is for rangatahi to be able to share their experience, practice new strategies, obtain peer support and demonstrate leadership skills.

Reporting

- While not a formal requirement, some form of reflection about service activities is recommended.

Stories of Impact



Shardae Wanoa Herring – He uri tenei no Ngati Pōrou. I have led a series of hononga (connection) events within the Whakatū hāpori, aimed at uplifting and supporting at-risk and vulnerable tamariki and rangatahi. These initiatives were developed in response to a clear need for safe, empowering spaces where young people feel seen, valued, and celebrated.

Each event has fostered environments where rangatahi can ignite their mauri, strengthen their mana, and experience genuine belonging. Beyond connection, these gatherings have made tangible contributions to community wellbeing - through initiatives such as distributing hygiene packs and partnering with clothing providers to offer free apparel to whānau, upholding dignity and meeting essential needs.

Mentored by Whiriwhiria Charitable Trust 2025



Taane Te Aho combined his two majors, Te Reo Māori and Māori & Indigenous Studies by tutoring Te Reo Māori for Ngāti Koroki Kahukura wānanga and the University of Waikato’s flagship immersion course - Te Tohu Paetahi. Taane has also collated a report of Indigenous Rangatahi based on invasive and taonga species for the NZ BioHeritage Science Challenge. As a result of his experience in Tuia, Taane is inspired to capture the work of his iwi in relation to Maara Kai, Poukai and Hītori which can serve as a valuable resource for future generations.

Mentored by Susan O’Reagan Mayor of Waipā District Council 2024



Wānanga

There will be five marae-based wānanga throughout the year. The wānanga are an opportunity for rangatahi to connect with one another, as well as to connect with a variety of places, people and communities around Aotearoa.

The wānanga are structured according to an ancient tauparapara (Include the name) that connect rangatahi with one another, to whenua, to people and to communities across Aotearoa. Rangatahi will have the opportunity to explore local ancestral stories, learn from subject matter experts, and consider together how they can apply what the have learnt to their daily lives. There are five marae based wānanga, three three-day wānanga and two four-day wānanga that follows:

- March: Wānanga one - Tuia i Runga (Weaving above), Waikato
- May: Wānanga two - Tuia i Raro (Weaving below), Waiariki/Bay of Plenty
- July: Wānanga three - Tuia i Roto (Weaving within), Te Waipounamu
- September: Wānanga four - Tuia i Waho (Weaving without), Hawkes Bay
- November: Wānanga five - Tuia te Here Tangata (Weaving the threads of humanity), Wellington

Any alterations to wānanga, whether caused by Covid 19 or other factors will be communicated as soon as possible based on the latest information.

Additionally, its important to note that travel expenses for rangatahi attending wānanaga are anticipated to be covered by their sponsoring person or organisation.



Rangatahi Stories



Arlin's Story

Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Tūwharetoa

Kia ora e te whānau, Ko Arlin Wikaira tōku ingoa,

I'm privileged to be able to take part on the Tuia 2025 kaupapa journey through Waimate district council.

Tuia has brought me closer to my Māoritanga. Before Tuia I was thinking to myself on how unconnected I was to my culture. Through Tuia I have built up the courage to say I am Māori enough.

My journey with Tuia started with my Mum. My support, my rock and my bone. She had sent me through a message that was posted on the Mayors task force for jobs. I won't lie, I looked at it and had no idea what it was. But shortly after that I was writing a letter to my local council on how I'd love to be the candidate for 2025. Tuia has healed me in a lot of different ways through the 5 wānanga throughout the year.

The immense privilege and aroha I feel for the kaupapa is beyond what words can say. This has brought me to make closer relationships with all the rangatahi that I met. Tuia has also taught me more knowledge about the importance of intergenerational connections. Earlier on in my mentoring it was brought up with my Mayor Craig and Deputy Mayor Sharyn, that we need more support in mental health for our rangatahi. Not only was rangatahi brought up but also our kaumatua. The importance of mental health was mainly recognised from my first wā from Matua Marcus's Korero. This is why I hold it close to my heart. In the future I hope that I can make a change within my district and bring

many different support systems in. Even if it is just going out for a walk, lunch or even activity with our rangatahi.

I hope that Tuia keeps flourishing within every district across the motu. I stand strong in my mana. Tēnei au, tō pou Whirinaki! - I'm here, i'll support you!

Nga mihi nui nui,

Arlin Wikaira

Mentored by Craig Rowley, Waimate District Council





Tilly's Story

Ngāti Raukawa, Te Rarawa, Te Arawa, Ngāti Porou

When I first came into this wānanga, I felt unsure about where I was heading. I knew I had skills and passions, but I didn't yet know how to use them in mahi that truly mattered to me. I was searching for direction and a sense of purpose.

Tuia has become a journey I didn't realise I was waiting for. It has allowed me to look inward, to discover new strengths, and to reconnect with parts of myself that I had set aside. One of the greatest taonga of this kaupapa has been the connections with other rangatahi Māori. Walking alongside them, learning, laughing, and sharing our dreams has created friendships that will last well beyond the wānanga. Through all the changes we've faced as a rōpū, I've always felt held by the safe and supportive space that Tuia creates.

I also hold deep gratitude for our tuakana and kaiwhakahaere. They've shown us what leadership looks like in practice — serving, guiding, listening, and standing alongside us. Their commitment has left a strong impression on me, and I aspire to carry that same manaaki and aroha forward when it's my turn to step up as a tuakana.

This journey has reminded me that Tuia is about more than just individual growth. It has shaped us into stronger kaitautoko — for our mahi, our people. We are learning to be weavers: weaving together the knowledge of those who came before us, the foundations that hold us, the strengths that live within us, and the possibilities that lie ahead. These are the threads that bind us together as one. For me, this is the true essence of Tuia.

I leave this journey carrying mātauranga, whakapapa, and kōrero that fill my kete and guide me into the future. Tuia has encouraged me to be vulnerable, to speak my truth, and to stand confidently as myself — in te ao Māori and in every other space I walk into.

Looking back, I can see the shift in myself. I came into this kaupapa with uncertainty, and I leave with a stronger sense of identity, clarity, and purpose. Tuia has given me not just direction in mahi, but also connection, belonging, and belief in the kind of leader I can become.

Naku Noa

Tilly Marsh

Mentored by David Trewavas, Taupō District Council





Aimee's Story

Ngāti Rarua, Te Atiawa, Ngāti Toa, Rangitane

It's hard to put into words the impact of Tuia. It's something you feel within your wairua. It provides you with constant opportunities to take chances on yourself and inspires you to dream for the betterment of our people.

I was nervous going into Tuia. I didn't know what to expect. I was constantly questioning if I was the right person for the kaupapa and if I would be able to give to it in the way I thought it deserved. On the first night of Tuia-i-runga, we listened to Marcus's kōrero. In part of it, he turned around and said, "Of all the people who could have been given the opportunity to be on this kaupapa, every single one of you was chosen. You have all shown up; out of anywhere you could have been, you are here and are meant to be here." That's when it all clicked for me. I knew this was going to push me outside my comfort zone, and I was going to come out a better person because of it.

Tuia allows you to be tupuna-driven and future-focused in a safe environment, surrounded by rangatahi Māori who are like-minded and authentically themselves. It allows you to be Māori no matter where you are in your journey, without fear of judgment. One thing that stood out to me was the ability to continuously wānanga openly with everyone—listening to other people's kōrero from many walks of life and then being able to build, strengthen, and develop my own whakaaro based on knowledge I would never have gained if I wasn't part of Tuia.

Throughout the wānanga, you inherit key takeaways that allow you

to weave together new understandings around the tauparapara that makes up Tuia—how it is embedded in our everyday lives and how to be more aware of it. Engaging in Tuia forces you to consistently ask questions in and out of wānanga. It allows you to dream of different opportunities as if there were no obstacles and offers you the chance to develop as a leader. Being more aware of all this made me think about how I engage in a kaupapa that is bigger than ourselves.

There is truly nothing quite like the impact of Tuia. You learn from people you may never have met, gain a deeper understanding of what it means to give back, and develop and foster relationships with some of the greatest gifts to the world. It is a kaupapa I will forever be privileged to be part of, as it has helped me grow in ways I didn't know were possible and will allow me to give back to a kaupapa that has given and will continue to give so much to our people.

Aimee Sandrey

Mentored by Mayor Nadine Taylor Marlborough District Council



The Journey Ahead



2025

November

- Selection Process initiated
- Confirmation of commitment to 2026 programme

2026

February

- 11th of Feb - Selection of rangatahi participant confirmed
- First mentoring meeting with Mayor/mentor (this can be earlier if preferred)

March

- Wānanga 1: Tuia i Runga (Waikato)
- Mentoring training
- Second mentoring meeting/Community contribution project identified

April

- Third mentoring meeting

May

- Wānanga 2: Tuia i Raro (Waiariki/Bay of Plenty)
- Fourth mentoring meeting

June

- Fifth mentoring meeting

July

- Wānanga 3: Tuia i Roto (Te Waipounamu)
- Sixth mentoring meeting

August

- Seventh mentoring meeting

September

- Wānanga 4: Tuia i Waho (Hawkes Bay)
- Eighth mentoring meeting

October

- Ninth mentoring meeting

November

- Wānanga 5: Tuia Te Here Tangata (Wellington)
- Tenth mentoring meeting

December

- Final mentoring meeting for 2026
- Begin selection process for 2027

NB: each Tuia wānanga is held on the first weekend of every second month from March unless otherwise communicated.



Key Contacts

North Island Mentoring Support

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South Island Mentoring Support

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Wānanga Coordinator

Jazmin Henare

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Participating Councils, Iwi & Organisations

Ashburton District Council, BGI, Central Otago District Council, Christchurch City Council, Clutha District Council, Dunedin City Council, Far North District Council, Gisborne City Council, Grey District Council, Hastings District Council, Hato Hone St John, Kapiti District Council, Marlborough District Council, Masterton District Council Nelson City Council, Ngati Kahungunu (Wairoa Taiwhenua) Inc, Ōtorohanga District Council, Palmerston North District Council, Palmerston North District Council, Project, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Rangitikei District Council, Ruapehu District Council, Selwyn District Council, South Taranaki District Council, South Wairarapa District Council, South Waikato District Council, Tapu Te Ranga Trust, Tasman District Council, Taupō District Council, Waikato Regional Council, Waimate District Council, Waipa District Council, Wairoa District Council, Waitomo District Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Whiriwhiria Charitable Trust.