



Pānui pāpāho | Media release

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NMIT whānau shine at Te Matatini

Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) is buzzing after several of its talented staff members and students made history at this year's *Te Matatini o Te Kahui Maunga* festival. They were members of the two incredible Te Taihū (top of the south) kapa haka groups: Te Kuru Marutea and Kia Ngāwari, delivering outstanding performances at the biennial national kapa haka festival.

Te Kuru Marutea achieved a historic victory by being chosen as the recipient of the inaugural *Kohine Ponika 'Aku Mahi' Memorial Trophy*. This new award, which was determined by an online audience vote, recognised the group's powerful performance. Their waiata tira (choral performance), which featured outstanding soloists Bailee Hart Tava and Naia Beard, went viral on TikTok, earning over a million views and widespread praise for the striking vocal talents of its performers.

It was a proud moment for NMIT as among the performers were NMIT tutors from the Mātauranga Māori curriculum area: Tiana Alesana, Te Atapō Matthews, and Kowhai de Thierry, along with many NMIT students.

Tiana Alesana, tutor of Te Kuru Marutea, and teacher of the NZ Certificate in Te Reo Māori, Kaupae 1 at NMIT says, "Hearing our Iwi of Te Taihū being named, and celebrating what makes our rohe special was a highlight for me. Kapahaka is more than a competition – in preparation for the performance you immerse yourself in te reo Māori, tikanga Mārae, the history of our people and karakia."

Kia Ngāwari, another representative group from Te Taihū, delivered an impressive performance. Founded by kaumātua Whaea Priscilla Paul and her husband, the late Matua Joe Paul, Kia Ngāwari holds a special place in the region's cultural history. Whaea Priscilla and Matua Joe have both held the role of kaumātua at NMIT.



NMIT's support of local kapa haka extends beyond cheering on the participants and their performances. For many years, NMIT has provided access to training facilities on its Nelson campus as they prepare for Te Matatini and other kapa haka events and competitions.

Nicole Akuhata, NMIT's Director Māori and Learner Services, attended Te Matatini with her whānau and expressed her immense pride in the performances of both groups from Te Taihū and the involvement of NMIT staff and learners.

"It was an absolute privilege to watch our whānau shine at Te Matatini! The calibre of their performances showcased the incredible talent and dedication of our staff and ākonga. We are so proud of their achievements on the national stage. Ko aku mihi nui ki a koutou katoa."

For more on Te Matatini, visit the official website: [Te Matatini](#)

Attached photo: Te Kuru Marutea perform at Te Matatini. NMIT kaiako Tiana Alesana front right. Credit: Te Matatini Enterprises

For further information:

Jody Bennett, Senior Communications Advisor, NMIT

021 344489, comms@nmit.ac.nz



Credit: Te Matatini Enterprises