



TOI

**Te Kura
Toi Whakaari
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand
Drama School

Te Pūrongo

Annual Report 2025



Ngā Ihirangi

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Tō Mātou Kura

Our School



We are Toi Whakaari

We stand tall alongside unique people like you, enabling you to express your true creative self.

In our creative village, your individuality and passion for the performing arts is shared, celebrated and nurtured. We care deeply about you and your unique place in our whānau. To us manaakitanga – care, respect and enhancing each other's mana – really does matter.

Our distinctive learning approach, built on the mātauranga and tikanga of our whakapapa, enables our tauira to tell their, and our nation's, unique story.

As New Zealand's premier school of performing arts, our legacy has always been to train the best performers, designers and craftspeople from here and from around the world.

Taught by renowned experts and educators with broad industry and community connections, our prestigious qualifications are a mark of quality that opens doors to a successful career. And that's why our talented alumni are sought after, in front of and behind the scenes, by world-leading productions.

Being part of our kura is more than just gaining qualifications. Here skills are gained, perspectives are shaped, connections are made, and potential is revealed. We recognise all our students as future rangatira. They emerge from here – knowing who they are and where they stand – ready to add their value to Aotearoa New Zealand's thriving performing arts community.

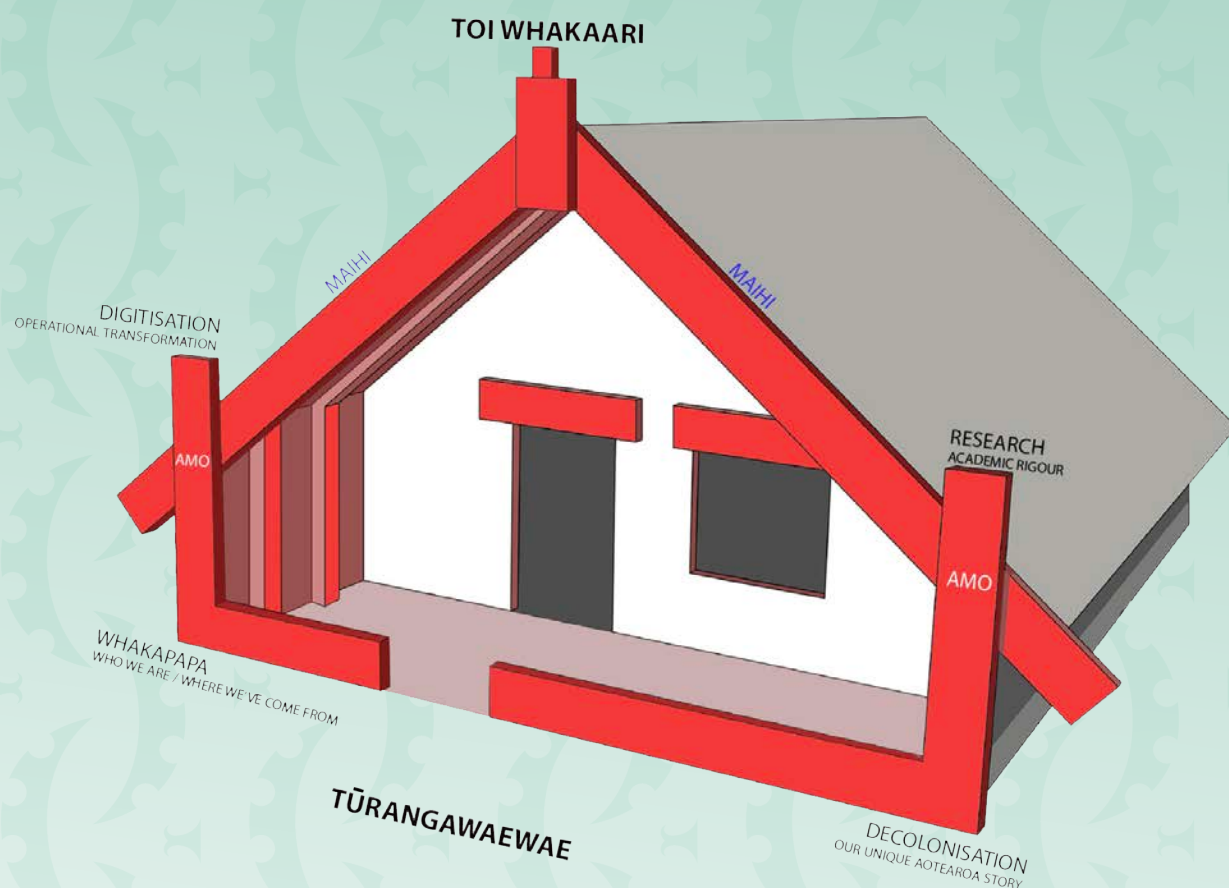
If you're a past, present or future tauira; a valued staff member, industry partner or funder; or a member of the many communities we're part of, we stand with you. We're proud to take this creative journey with people as unique as you.



Our Purpose

Hei Whakanui I Tō Tātou Ao

We reveal and connect Aotearoa story-makers

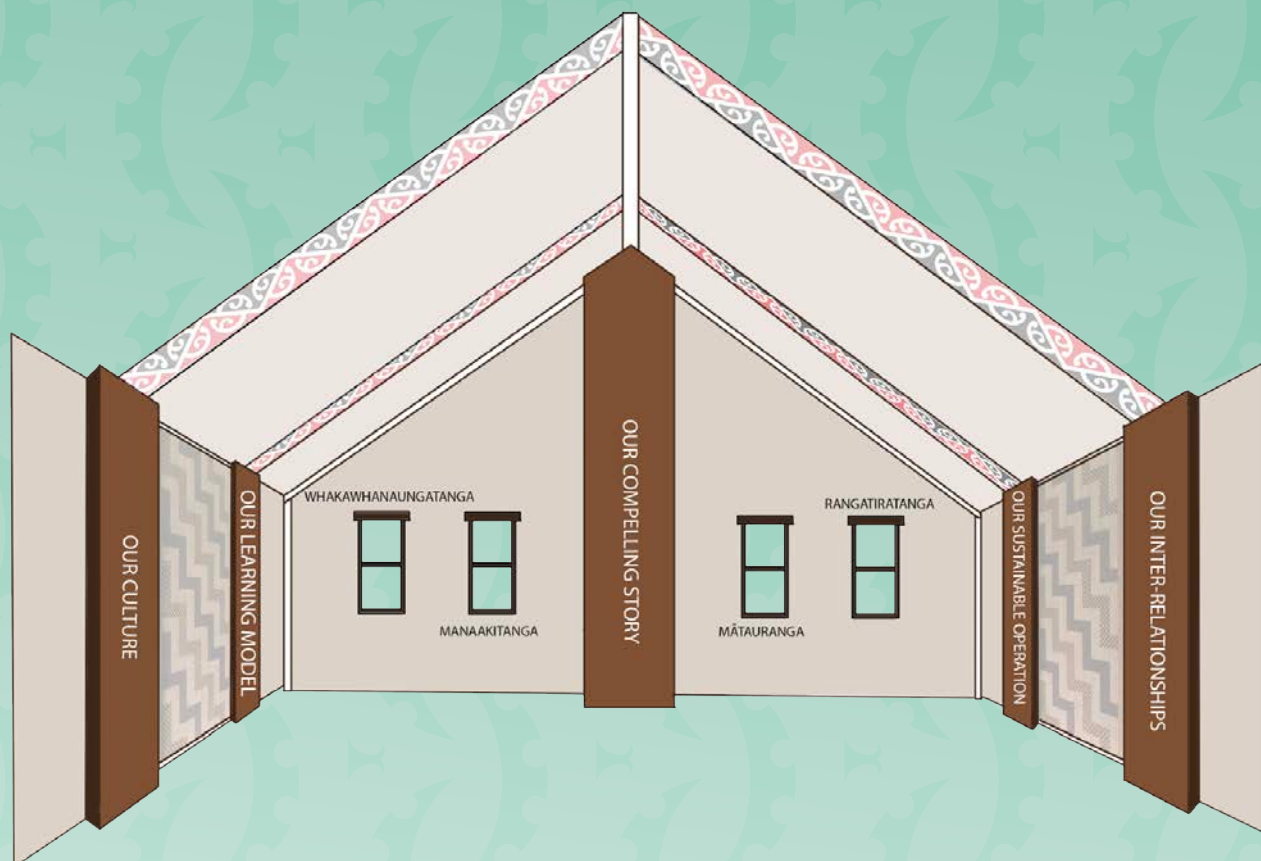


Our Mission

From our whare standing on whenua in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, we nurture talented students in performance arts through innovative, co-creative and recognised learning programmes to realise their creative potential and navigate sustainable paths forward.

Our Vision

A home for Te Ao Māori-framed creative learning and development practice, playing a leading role in our global region and beyond.



Our Values

Whakawhanaungatanga

We foster a whānau community that holds high expectations around respect and positive working relationships within the kura, and with those externally

Manaakitanga

We work together in ways that enhance each other's mana. We encourage and support one another and ourselves to reach our full potential

Rangatiratanga

We recognise that everyone has potential to be leaders and that their training helps them develop and hone these skills

Mātauranga

We value knowledge acquisition and transmission, particularly through tuākana tēina

Our Focus

Our Learning Model

The learning model(s) of the kura, course structure, course offerings and business model are developed to deliver optimum outcomes

Our Interrelationships

Identify, prioritise and manage – to optimise the value of – relationships and interrelationships within a defined ecosystem model

Our Culture

A 'one whole kura' professional leadership capability and culture at all levels, with the structural and role clarity, right skills and development to be effective

Our Sustainable Operation

Sustain and grow the financial and operational capability/functionality to ensure we operate in a viable, professional, legal, sustainable and efficient way

Our Compelling Story

Communicate a clear and relevant value proposition and narrative, developed and leveraged to build student development, awareness, financial and other support and success



Tā Te Tiamana

The Chair's Report

2025 has been a year of transition, recalibration, and growing confidence in the future direction of Te Kura Toi Whakaari o Aotearoa.

As a Board, we have remained focused on stewarding the kura through a period of significant change while continuing to hold firmly to our long-term vision: to become a recognised global home for Te Ao Māori-framed creative learning and development.

Central to this work is our purpose: to reveal and connect Aotearoa story-makers. This purpose continues to guide our decision making, our strategic priorities, and our aspirations for the future of the kura. Through our mission — to nurture talented students in the performing arts through innovative, co-creative and recognised learning programmes, enabling them to realise their creative potential and navigate sustainable paths forward — we continue to strengthen the role Toi Whakaari plays within the cultural and creative life of Aotearoa.

This year we saw many of the foundations laid over recent years begin to take visible shape. The successful accreditation of the refreshed Bachelor of Performing Arts, alongside the introduction of the Master of Creative Performance Practice, reflects the commitment of the kura to delivering learning that is artistically rigorous, future-focused, and deeply grounded in the cultural identity of Aotearoa. These achievements are a testament to the dedication and creativity of our kaimahi and leadership team, who continue to serve our tauira with care, courage, and excellence.

A significant milestone this year was the completion of the recalibration of our Academic, Engagement, and Library faculty structures — the culmination of a substantial three-

year process of organisational transformation. Change of this scale is never easy. It requires honesty, resilience, and a shared commitment to the long-term wellbeing of the institution. We acknowledge with deep gratitude all kaimahi who contributed to this work, including those whose journeys with the kura concluded during this period. Their impact on Toi Whakaari and on generations of ākonga remains enduring and deeply valued.

Alongside this operational progress, the Board remains committed to strengthening its own capability to support the decolonisation ambitions of the kura. Our commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embedding Te Ao Māori frameworks across governance, leadership, and strategy is ongoing and intentional. We recognise this as long-term mahi — work that calls for humility, openness, and sustained commitment.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of those Board members who completed their service to the kura during this period. We thank them sincerely for the wisdom, advocacy, and leadership they brought to Toi Whakaari during a time of significant evolution. Their contribution has helped position the kura strongly for the future.

At the same time, we warmly welcomed new members to the Board whose expertise, insight, and energy have already enriched our governance table. Their willingness to contribute their time and knowledge to the future of Toi Whakaari reflects the strength of belief that exists in the kaupapa of this kura and the important role it holds within the creative and cultural landscape of Aotearoa.

The Board is encouraged by the progress made across the organisation during 2025. Financial and operational

systems have continued to mature, leadership alignment has strengthened, and the kura is increasingly well-positioned to respond to the changing expectations of both the tertiary sector and the creative industries. Importantly, these advances have not come at the expense of our values. Instead, they have reinforced the importance of kaupapa-led decision making, collective responsibility, and the centrality of ākonga success.

To our ākonga, our alumni, our kaimahi, our partners, sponsors, our wider whānau and our Board — thank you. The progress reflected throughout this report has only been possible through your dedication, trust, and belief in the future of this kura.

As we move further into Te Ao Hou, we do so with increasing clarity about who we are, what we value, and the future we are collectively shaping together — revealing and connecting Aotearoa story-makers for generations to come.

Roman Rogers

Tiamana, Chair



Tira Mana Kōkiri

Our Leadership

Toi Whakaari is managed on a day-to-day basis by three co-leaders operating collectively as Tira Mana Kōkiri. The leadership rōpū consists of the dual role of Tumuaki (Director) and Poutūhono (Engagement-focused), the Poukōkiri Mātauranga (Academic-focused), and the Pouhāpai Ahurea (People-focused).

Our current Tira Mana Kōkiri members:

Dr Michelle Johansson
Poukōkiri Mātauranga

Tanea Heke
Tumuaki/Poutūhono

Hinauri Mead
Pouhāpai Ahurea





Te Rūnanga a Toi

Our Governance

The Tumuaki role and the operations of the school is overseen by a Board of Trustees. The Board is made up of volunteers who are passionate about seeing the next generation of performing arts practitioners succeeding in their careers.

Te Rūnanga a Toi Whakaari, Toi Whakaari Board of Trustees

Roman Rogers	<i>Chair</i>	Jane von Dadelszen	<i>External Board Member</i>
Fiona Cassidy	<i>Deputy Chair</i>	Hone Hurihanganui	<i>External Board Member</i>
Angus Evison	<i>Treasurer</i>	Jamie Lambert	<i>External Board Member</i>
Anapela Polataivao	<i>External Board Member</i>	Adelyn Love	<i>External Board Member</i>
	<i>(Outgoing)</i>	Tanea Heke	<i>Ex-Officio/Tumuaki</i>

Te Roopū Whakahaere o Toi Whakaari, Māori Advisory Board

Briar Grace-Smith	Mikaere Paki
Helen Pearse-Otene	Rangimoana Taylor
Hone Hurihanganui	Tānemahuta Gray
Kahu Hotere	Tanea Heke
Ross Himona	Hinauri Mead

Te Pae Kiritangata, People, Plant and Risk Committee

Angus Evison	<i>Chair</i>
Roman Rogers	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Adelyn Love	<i>Committee Member</i>
Waikamania Seve	<i>Student Representative</i>
Tanea Heke	<i>Committee Member</i>
Hinauri Mead	<i>Committee Member</i>
Dr Michelle Johansson	<i>Committee Member</i>

Te Pae Pākaha, Academic Board

Jane von Dadelszen	<i>Chair</i>
Anapela Polataivao	<i>Deputy Chair (Outgoing)</i>
Jamie Lambert	<i>Committee Member</i>
Prof. David O'Donnell	<i>Committee Member</i>
Dr. Suzanne Little	<i>Committee Member</i>
Dr Sean Coyle	<i>Committee Member</i>
Te KuraHuia Henare-Stewart	<i>Student Representative</i>
Ayush Singh	<i>Student Representative</i>
Tanea Heke	<i>Committee Member</i>
Hinauri Mead	<i>Committee Member</i>
Dr Michelle Johansson	<i>Committee Member</i>

Te Pae Tūhono, Engagement Committee

Fiona Cassidy	<i>Chair</i>
Zody Takurua	<i>Student Representative</i>
Mathieu Rata	<i>Student Representative</i>
Tanea Heke	<i>Committee Member</i>
Hinauri Mead	<i>Committee Member</i>
Dr Michelle Johansson	<i>Committee Member</i>



Tā Te Tumuaki

The Director's Report

**He pō, he pō. He ao, he ao.
Tākiri mai te ata, korihi te manu,
Ka ao, ka ao, ka awatea.**

As we emerge from the darkness, the rising sun heralds the beautiful melodies of our birdlife, and the promise of a new day.

From Te Pō we find ourselves meeting Te Whai-ao, the glimmer of dawn. After years of navigating change, laying foundations, and doing the quiet, courageous work of transformation, 2025 brought with it the first light of what we have been working towards. Threads that had been carefully woven over many years began to tie together, and the shape of a new way of being as a kura, Te Ao Hou, began to come into view.

2025 was a year of significant milestone achievements. Our refreshed Bachelor of Performing Arts (with endorsements in Acting, Design, Production, Creative Performance Practice) received accreditation and approval for delivery in 2026, a landmark moment representing years of development and vision. We celebrated our largest graduation ceremony to date, as the inaugural cohort of seven Master of Creative Performance Practice graduates crossed the pae. We also deepened partnerships that strengthen pathways and support for our taura.

Our decolonisation journey continues to grow and deepen, as we strive towards becoming a recognised global home for Te Ao Māori-framed creative learning and development. There are so many wonderful stories in this year's Te Pūrongo, and I invite you to read them further on.

The recalibration of our Academic, Engagement, and Library teams was completed in 2025, bringing a three-year process to a close. This recalibration was a critical step in aligning our staffing structure to the new ways of working and delivery that underpin our refreshed Bachelor of Performing Arts. This was not a small undertaking, and we are deeply grateful to all who contributed to and through that journey. We farewell valued colleagues whose mahi has left a lasting mark on our kura and our taura.

Dr Melody Nixon was among the first to teach in to our new Master of Creative Performance Practice, and we thank her for the knowledge and dedication. Paula van Beek's skill and mentorship were greatly valued across our Arts Management and Design programmes. Leimomi Oakes gave dedicated and caring service to our Costume Construction programme. Dr Nicole Gaston, our Library and Research Coordinator, provided integral support to our staff research strategy. Lisa Hampl gave many years of loyal service to our kura as a librarian. And Michelle Healey, our Taituarā, brought infectious positivity to supporting our leadership team each day. We thank them all and wish them well on the paths ahead.

We also acknowledge the departure of Board member Anapela Polataivao, and thank her warmly for the time, alofa, and expertise she generously gave to our kura during her tenure.

Into our whānau we welcomed Letizia Simonetti, who joins us from ACE Training as our new Taituarā, Executive Assistant. We also established a new role this year, Kaiārahi Whakarawe, Development Manager, and were delighted to welcome Anne-Elise Smithson to lead it. With a decade of experience as a professional fundraiser

for children's health, her passion and expertise will be invaluable as we build critical fundraising foundations for the school's future. Finally, H-J Kilkelly joined us in a permanent fractional role, bringing their vast production knowledge to the role of Kaitātaki Waihanga, Discipline Specialist Production.

To our Board, our staff, our sponsors and our whānau whānui, ka nui te mihi. We have arrived here because of the collective courage and commitment you bring to this kura every day.

Ko te pae tawhiti, whāia kia tata. Ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina!

We have held fast to what we have built, and the horizon we have long been walking towards is within reach. Te Ao Hou awaits.

Tanea Heke

Tumuaki, Director





Arotakenga

Our Year In Review

In 2025, Tira Mana Kōkiri prioritised five key areas of focus for the kura: our journey to decolonise, our academic programmes, staff recalibration, supporting staff to grow rangahau and research, and building industry partnerships with our community. The stories that follow reflect the mahi undertaken across these areas, and the many ways they intersect, reinforce, and enrich one another.

Highlights

Our Stories

Towards 'Te Ao Hou', our journey to decolonisation
Staff Research, Industry Practice and Alumni Excellence
A New Chapter for Performing Arts Education
Celebrating Postgraduate Success
Our Journey Towards Transformation
Paving Pathways: Our Partnerships

Our Productions



Highlights

Productions

4 Live Events
(Term 2 Production of *Ka Tito Au*, Term 4 Production of *The Haka Party Incident*, Costume Showcase, Solos Season)

35 Total Shows

2,859
Audience Members

Industry Mentorship

9 Guest Directors & Facilitators

80+
Industry Internships

100+
Industry Guest Tutors and Mentors

Major Builds

9 Major Costume Works

Major Set Builds **2**

Graduate Exhibitions **14**

Whanake Festival of Work in Development

19 Theatre

3 Film Screening

7 Performance Art

2 Other

4 Dance

5 Installation

3 Music

1 Script Reading

44 Total events across the festival

Towards 'Te Ao Hou', our journey to decolonisation

Deepening our commitment to decolonisation and imagining new futures

At Toi Whakaari, our journey towards decolonisation is not just a strategy, it is a profound and ongoing shift in how we understand ourselves, our responsibilities, and our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Building on the foundations laid in previous years in alignment with our strategic pou 'Our Culture', 2025 saw us continue to deepen this work with the leadership of Tira Mana Kōkiri and wisdom of our Cultural Advisor, Hone Hurihanganui (Te Rōpū Whakahaere).



The Toi Whakaari graduation production of The Haka Party Incident by Katie Wolfe.

In 2025, world-renowned decolonisation scholar Dr Linda Tuhiwai-Smith continued to walk alongside our kura, delivering workshops to deepen staff pedagogy and strengthen our collective understanding of what it means to educate differently. Framing her kōrero around Educating for a Different Future, Dr Tuhiwai-Smith challenged our staff to interrogate their positionality as educators — questioning our ways, our thinking, and our modes of practice. She invited us to consider what curiosity, flexibility, critical thinking, imagination, and the capacity to change might look like embedded in our work.

These sessions moved beyond theory into action. Staff worked together to identify constructs worth dismantling, to locate the policy spaces where change is possible, and to ask bold questions about how the words and labels we

use tell stories about us, both internally and externally.

Central to this journey is our continuing relationship with mana whenua, Te Āti Awa, who have stood alongside us at significant moments throughout the year, including the pōwhiri welcoming our new students into the kura, and the opening night of our graduation production of *The Haka Party Incident* by Katie Wolfe.

The year 2025 also marked a landmark milestone: the graduation of our first cohort of the Master of Creative Performance Practice (MCPPE). Years in the making, this practice-based, research-led postgraduate programme was developed by the Toi Whakaari team and approved by NZQA in 2022 with commendation. Rooted in kaupapa informed by Te Ao Māori, inclusivity, and excellence,



the MCPP offers creative practitioners a meaningful pathway to deepen their professional practice. To see our inaugural seven graduates cross that threshold in 2025 is a testament to the vision, dedication, and courage it takes to build something new.



The first cohort of the MCPP graduated in December 2025.

Our students have walked alongside us in this journey too. In a kura where tauira spend much of their time immersed in discipline-specific training, the wānanga held each term offers a rare and vital a moment where the whole school comes together as one. These gatherings provide dedicated space for learning embedded in Te Ao Māori, and are complemented throughout the year by workshops, classes, internships, and engagement with industry experts across the kura. This is also reflected in the plays we choose for our major productions, which in 2025 were both plays from Aotearoa; *Ka Tito Au* by Apirana Taylor and *The Haka Party Incident* respectively.

These shared moments are where the kaupapa of decolonisation moves beyond the classroom and becomes

something lived and felt. A collective experience that strengthens the bonds between our tauira and deepens their understanding of themselves as practitioners in Aotearoa.

In our final staff workshop with Dr Smith in December, she challenged us to “dismantle constructs, question what counts as normal, and question everything.” This has reinforced our understanding that reshaping a 56-year-old institution built on Western foundations is an ongoing journey of structural and cultural change, one that requires both quiet assurance and courageous action going forward into Te Ao Hou, a new world or way of being.

Staff Research, Industry Practice and Alumni Excellence

Celebrating the scholarship, creativity and impact of our people in the kura and beyond

At Toi Whakaari, the relationship between academic research and industry practice is central to who we are. In 2025, our staff continued to push the boundaries of their fields, contributing to international scholarship, creating bold new work, and bringing those experiences back into the kura to enrich the learning of our taura.



Emele Ugavule presenting during the 2025 ADSA Conference.

Innovative Scholarship and Research

Kaitātaki Whakaari Emele Ugavule undertook a significant research project titled 'Embodied Timeways: Movement, Memory, and Temporal Sovereignty in Pacific Creative Practice', an inquiry grounded in performance-based and talanoa research exploring how Meke, as a living intergenerational archive, can inform contemporary creative practice and resistance to colonial time structures. The project included participation in Meke and Movement facilitated by revered iTaukei knowledge holder Simone Sevudredre, and attendance at the invite-only No Space is Empty symposium, a gathering of 30 Indigenous scholars and artists from across Te Moananui a Kiwa. Emele shared her learnings with our kura through a lunchtime presentation, and published a critical-creative essay on her blog Seismic Temporal, exploring Pacific futurisms, decolonial dramaturgy, and embodied research.

Kaitātaki Whakaari Anya Tate-Manning continued her ongoing research into comedy, solo performance, and the development of artistic voice, attending the Melbourne International Comedy Festival to support the premiere of *Welcome To My Dream* by long-time collaborator Abby Howells. This research, which sits at the intersection of feminist comedy and storytelling, directly informs Anya's teaching practice and her facilitation of students' own creative voices.

Kaitātaki Waihangā Dr Sam Trubridge remained a formidable presence in international performance and scenography circles. In 2025 he served as Executive Director of The Performance Arcade, contributed an essay to the publication *Scénographies #1* by L'Entretemps Press, and continued his role as Oceania Convenor for LIRIS, presenting a study day in July and delivering a contributing lecture and programme at the LIRIS colloquium in New



York City in November. He also convened a programme of three presentations about The Performance Arcade at the ADSA Conference in December.

Kaitātaki Waihanga Tony De Goldi and collaborator Mark McEntyre, presenting as GOM Arts Collective, contributed the installation *Pae Noho/Nofo Lalo, 30 odd years of sitting around* to the ADSA Conference, representing three decades of work exploring domesticity in Contemporary Māori and Pacific Theatre.

Manutaki Tohu Paerunga Bronwyn Bradley co-authored a chapter with Dr Sean Coyle — Today — published in *Actor Trainers on Acting: For the Twenty First Century* (Routledge, 2025), edited by A. McNamara.



Bronwyn Bradley in *Happiness* (Greenstone TV).

Industry Recognition and Creative Output

Bronwyn Bradley's screen work in 2025 reflected the breadth of her industry standing, with credits including *Happiness*, *Brokenwood Mysteries*, the international feature film *Heart Eyes*, and *Crackhead* for Warner Bros NZ.

Alongside her leadership of the kura, Tanea Heke continued her work as a screen actor, with credits including *Dead Ahead*, the international co-production *The Gone Season 2*, and *Holy Days*.

Manutaki Whakaari, Salesi Le'ota, took to the stage in *The Aotearoans* by Ihaka Martyn, which presented in Circa Theatre as part of Kia Mau Festival 2025.



Salesi Le'ota in *The Aotearoans*. (Photo by Eugenie Aran)

Tony De Goldi and Alex Fisher served as designers for the Term 2 production *Ka Tito Au* by Apirana Taylor, with Tony using the project as a teaching opportunity for Set and Props students. Alex used this experience as part of his lighting design investigation into light holding locational storytelling, explored further through lighting design roles in external productions *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Te Kōkī NZ School of Music, and *Amélie the Musical* by WITCH Music Theatre.

Tony also designed and constructed Ngā Tūrua Kiwi, an interactive play space for Experience Wellington, which

generated four paid internships for second and third year students.



Tony De Goldi with students Amy Roscoe and Halina Smith at the opening of Ngā Tūrua Kiwi.

Dr Sam Trubridge brought his scenographic expertise to two development seasons in 2025, designing sets for *Oh Dear!* choreographed by Lucy Marinkovich for Borderline Arts Ensemble at Hannah Playhouse, and *Challa* by South Korean theatre company Elephants Laugh at Te Whaea National Centre for Dance and Drama.

Staff also attended Nui Te Kōrero 2025, Creative New Zealand's national arts leadership gathering, connecting with peers and leaders across the sector.

Co-Hosting the ADSA Conference

A particular highlight of 2025 was Toi Whakaari's co-hosting of the Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies (ADSA) Conference, Manaakitanga: Performing Welcome, Care and Respect, held in Te Whanganui-a-Tara from 1–5 December, in partnership with Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington. Welcoming performance scholars from around the world into our whare was a profound moment, enabling Toi Whakaari to participate in rich international dialogue about performance, the arts, and manaakitanga, and to demonstrate what that looks like in our kura. We acknowledge Dr Nicole Gaston and Dr Michelle Johansson for their vital roles on the organising committee.

Alumni Awards and Achievements

The impact of a Toi Whakaari education continues to ripple through the creative industries of Aotearoa and beyond. In 2025, our graduates were recognised across stage and screen with remarkable breadth.

At the Wellington Theatre Awards, Toi Whakaari alumni shone:

Most Promising Newcomer Award in honour of Willem Wassenaar: Te Ani Solomon — Papa, The Handlers

Lighting Designer of the Year: Natasha James — The Sound Inside

Set Designer of the Year in honour of Raymond Boyce: Meg Rollandi — The Sound Inside

Director of the Year in honour of Richard Campion: Stella Reid — The Sound Inside

Most Original Production of the Year: Tom Knowles — ROADKILL: The Uber-Cool Musical

The Backstage Production Award: Michael Lyell-O'Reilly

At the New Zealand Screen Awards 2025, our graduates claimed major accolades:

Best Director, Documentary Feature: Katie Wolfe — The Haka Party Incident

Best Actress in a Feature: Anapela Polata'ivao — Tinā

Best Actor in a Series: Stephen Lovatt — Shortland Street

Best Supporting Actor in a Series: Peter Hambleton — Happiness

Best Presenter Entertainment: Brynley Stent & Kura Forrester — Bryn & Ku's Singles Club

Best Script, Series: Tim Balme — The Brokenwood Mysteries

These achievements are a testament to the enduring quality of the training our taura receive, and the extraordinary talent they carry out into the world.



Award-winning alumni Katie Wolfe at the opening night of the Toi Whakaari graduation production of *The Haka Party Incident*.

A New Chapter for Performing Arts Education

From vision to reality. The refreshed Bachelor of Performing Arts arrives

In 2025, what had been years of careful development, consultation, and courageous reimagining became reality. The Bachelor of Performing Arts (with endorsements in Acting, Design, Production and Creative Performance Practice) (BPA) — Toi Whakaari's bold and future-focused refresh of its undergraduate offering — received full NZQA accreditation, and with it, a new chapter in performing arts education in Aotearoa began.



Students across disciplines working in collaboration on Term 2 production Ka Tito Au.

The accreditation journey moved swiftly and purposefully through 2025. Early in the year, Toi Whakaari responded to NZQA's requests for information and prepared for the accreditation panel. In May, a three-day panel visit brought together a distinguished group of industry and academic experts. We extend a heartfelt mihi to our panel members Dr Shane Edwards, Professor Karyn Paringatai, Jason Te Kare, Anna Cameron, Sima Urale, Barbara Lofgren, Nicola Bermingham and Emma Ransley, whose expertise and generosity of time made this process possible. By June, approval was confirmed.

In July, we were proud to announce the accreditation to our community. The BPA (with endorsements in Acting, Design, Production, and Creative Performance Practice) replaces the former Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting), Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management), and Bachelor

of Design (Stage and Screen), bringing Toi Whakaari's undergraduate offering into a unified, contemporary qualification. This programme centres decolonised worldviews and considers the essential attributes of collaboration and flexibility required to develop and sustain a career in the creative arts — looking towards a range of professional outcomes that extend beyond the established live or screen sectors to encompass both new and traditional ways of working.

From July through to the end of the year, staff threw themselves into preparing for delivery through a series of collaborative 'Programme Jams', developing course materials for Year 1 while recruitment was underway to welcome the first intake of BPA students in 2026. Subsequent years of the programme will roll out through to 2028.



This achievement belongs to many, but a special acknowledgement is owed to those who led the application: Bronwyn Bradley, Dr Sean Coyle, Dr Michelle Johansson, Juanita Hepi, and Paula Van Beek — alongside the wider Toi Whakaari team and support network whose valued contribution made this possible.

Fittingly, the year closed with further good news — in December, NZQA approved changes to programme approval and accreditation for the New Zealand Diploma in Costume Construction and the New Zealand Diploma in Scenic Construction and Properties. Our diploma programmes are brought along on this journey too, aligning to the refreshed vision and approach that now shapes our degrees.

After fifty years of training some of Aotearoa's most celebrated creative practitioners, Toi Whakaari steps into its next chapter — grounded in what has always made this kura exceptional, and boldly reaching towards what it can yet become.

Celebrating Postgraduate Success

The Master of Creative Performance Practice celebrates its first graduates and welcomes a new cohort

In 2025, the Master of Creative Performance Practice (MCPP) marked a profound milestone. Our inaugural cohort, welcomed in 2024, completed their programme with a 100% completion rate, a testament to both the extraordinary dedication of our taura and the strength of the programme itself.



Talaucaka by Emele Ugavule

Their research culminated in a rich array of creative outcomes, spanning live performance, installation, documentary film, poetry, and digital works. One standout example was *Talaucaka*, the creative thesis of Kaitātaki Whakaari Emele Ugavule. A haunting hybrid performed reading set in a dystopian future England after ecological collapse, *Talaucaka* follows four women navigating the ruins of the British Museum, now an e-waste processing facility. A bold exploration of temporal sovereignty, cultural identity, and collective memory, *Talaucaka* exemplified the ambitious, practice-led scholarship at the heart of the MCPP. Audiences were invited not only to witness the performance but to experience an accompanying interactive installation, live DJ set, and post-show gathering.

In March 2025, we were delighted to welcome our second cohort of MCPP students: John Butterfield, Mile Fane, Amo Ieriko, Sahara Pohatu-Trow, Jo Smith, Jan Smolira, and Glenda Tuaine. Their research inquiries speak to the breadth and ambition of the programme, spanning questions of identity, indigeneity, land, community, and form:

- An exploration of the social and cultural structures underpinning masculine identity and their reinforcement across society and community contexts, realised through live performance.
- An inquiry into how Mana is exchanged, shared, transferred, or blocked in creative performance



practice, reframed through the lived experiences of deaf communities and Indigenous creators in Kuki 'Āirani and Moana Nui a Kiwa, realised through a portfolio.

- An exploration of the physical and emotional ramifications of embodied storytelling and the demands of performance through a holistic lens, considering the deep connections between the actor, the land they stand on, and the communities they represent, realised through a portfolio.

- An inquiry into how a writer might create a screen narrative that centres the whenua as an autonomous character, without a human to carry the story, realised through a portfolio.

- A personal exploration of the dramaturgical landscape of Ōtepoti through the lens of its creatives, specifically women who have significantly shaped one practitioner's development as an artist, realised through a podcast series.

- An inquiry into how Kaupapa Māori and Kaupapa Pasifika approaches might inform and sustain succession planning for the Pasifika arts community in Aotearoa, ensuring continuity through ancestral wisdom, mentorship, and culturally grounded leadership development, realised through a portfolio.

- An exploration of how choreographic methods might destabilise Western hegemonic ideas of binary gender, bringing complexity and nuance to political conversation, and how an audience's meaning-making is impacted

through interaction with contemporary dance, realised through live performance.

The MCPP continues to grow as a genuinely distinctive offering in postgraduate performance studies in Aotearoa, and we could not be prouder of what it is becoming.



John Butterfield speaking at the mihi whakatau for the new cohort of MCPP students.

Our Journey Towards Transformation

Embedding change from structure to culture, from language to practice

The transformation of our kura is not a single moment but a living, ongoing process. 2025 was the year much of that work began to embed itself into the fabric of everyday life at Toi Whakaari, aligning with our strategic pou 'Our Learning Model' and 'Our Sustainable Operation'.



Bachelor of Performing Arts Management and Acting students working collaboratively to present a touring children's theatre show.

Cross-disciplinary learning, which saw significant growth in 2024, continued to deepen and expand. A highlight of the year was Screen Test; a major screen project forming part of the second-year Acting curriculum, in which students work on scenes from television and film. What made 2025's Screen Test particularly significant was its reach across the kura: Bachelor of Design and NZ Diploma in Scenic Construction and Properties students constructed and dressed the sets, while second-year New Zealand Diploma in Costume Construction students stepped into the role of costume assistants. It was a vivid, practical demonstration of what interdisciplinary learning looks like when it comes to life; taura from different disciplines working together towards a shared creative outcome.

The interdisciplinary exchanges between the Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management) and Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) programmes also continued, with

activities such as Text Lab and Solos, while Bachelor of Design (Stage and Screen) and NZ Diploma of Scenic Construction continue to strengthen their co-delivery model. All this further strengthening the collaborative foundations being laid ahead of the new BPA delivery in 2026.

Transformation at Toi Whakaari is not only visible in our classrooms, but also equally present in the quiet, ongoing mahi happening behind the scenes. Guided by our strategic focus 'Our Sustainable Operation', our ancillary staff have been working to increase transparency across their workstreams, identifying better ways of collaborating, highlighting where responsibilities intersect, and uncovering opportunities to share knowledge and work more effectively together. This shift from isolated silos of information towards collective, shared knowledge mirrors the same kaupapa driving change across the rest of the



kura. We continue our transition towards a paperless environment and remain committed to repurposing and reusing materials and resources to reduce our environmental footprint. The transformation of our kura reaches every corner of our operation.

Alongside this shift, 2025 also saw a meaningful evolution in the everyday language of our kura. In alignment with our decolonisation kaupapa, our academic recalibration, and the broader transformation underway, we refreshed the terms and frameworks through which we understand ourselves. The siloed language of 'departments' gave way to 'disciplines', a shift that better reflects the interconnected, collaborative nature of our work. We established 'Whakaari' and 'Waihanga' as the two distinct arms of our teaching practice: performance and production respectively, from which our programme disciplines branch. And our timetable structure moved from terms to semesters, aligning with the wider tertiary sector and signalling our continued evolution as an academic institution.

These changes in language may seem subtle, but language shapes culture. In naming things differently, we begin to see them differently, and in seeing them differently, we begin to build something new. This lexicon was introduced to the wider community as we began recruiting for our 2026 student cohort, marking the moment these internal shifts became visible to the world outside our walls.

Together, these threads; cross-disciplinary practice, cultural recalibration, and a renewed shared language paint a picture of a kura in purposeful, confident motion.

The transformation is not coming. It is here.

Mā te rongo, ka mōhio. Mā te mōhio, ka mārama. Mā te mārama, ka mātau. Mā te mātau, ka ora.

From listening comes knowledge. From knowledge comes understanding. From understanding comes wisdom. From wisdom comes well-being. This is the unique journey our kura walks, and we walk it together as one kura.

Paving Pathways: Our Partnerships

Strengthening the connections that shape our tauira and our sector

Anchored in our strategic focus on ‘Our Interrelationships’, our partnerships are built on whanaungatanga, shared values, and a mutual belief in the power of creative practice to transform lives and communities. In 2025, we deepened existing relationships and forged exciting new ones across industry, education, and international networks.

Industry Partnerships

On 25 June, we were welcomed into the whare of the Royal New Zealand Ballet for the official signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between our two organisations. For many years, our two organisations have collaborated informally to create opportunities, pathways, and internships for our tauira. But this MOU marks an important and meaningful step forward, formalising a relationship built on whanaungatanga and a shared commitment to the performing arts in Aotearoa.



Signing of the MOU between Toi Whakaari and Royal New Zealand Ballet, marking an important step forward for both organisations.

We were also proud to deepen our relationship with Kia Mau Festival, the biennial arts festival, founded in 2015 by Toi Whakaari graduate Hone Kouka alongside Mīria George. The festival showcases innovative Indigenous performances by leading Tāngata Whenua, Tāngata Moana, and global Indigenous artists. In 2025, we partnered with Kia Mau to programme our Term 2 production of *Ka Tito Au* by Apirana Taylor within the festival programme, giving our tauira real

world experience in a festival context, while deepening our connection to the wider industry and advancing our goal of becoming a Te Ao Māori-led learning environment.

Toi Whakaari has long been a supporter of the Show Me Shorts Festival, sponsoring the Toi Whakaari Best Actor Award. We were delighted to celebrate the 2025 recipient Dahnu Graham for ‘Flagfall’, a truly compelling performance. We also continued our longstanding sponsorship of the SGCNZ National Shakespeare Festival, supporting rangatahi and future performing artists at secondary school level.

Educational Partnerships

We signed a new and updated Memorandum of Understanding with Massey Health, Counselling and Accommodation, acknowledging and celebrating the ongoing relationship we have held with them for many years. Their continued provision of crucial health and wellbeing services for our tauira remains an invaluable part of our pastoral care network.

At the end of 2025, we were excited to announce a significant new partnership with Whitireia and WelTec. From February 2026, both new and returning tauira enrolled in Whitireia and WelTec’s New Zealand Diplomas in Drama, Dance, and Performing Arts (Musical Theatre), as well as the final year of the Bachelor of Creativity



(Performing Arts), will be welcomed into te whānau whānui o Toi Whakaari. Under this subcontracting arrangement, learners are enrolled with Whitireia and WelTec as the TEC-funded providers, with Toi Whakaari delivering programmes on their behalf at our whare in Newtown, Te Whanganui-a-Tara. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to providing high quality performing arts education and strengthening pathways for tauira across the region. Recruitment, staffing, and studio capacity were all carefully considered and aligned to absorb this exciting new cohort of learners seamlessly into our kura. Central to this preparation was the fixed-term appointment of Kate Marshall as Manutaki Whitireia, working tirelessly to establish the foundations for successful delivery in 2026.

Toi Whakaari, introduced through Education New Zealand. Our students and staff welcomed the delegation with a whakatau, followed by a kōrero and presentation about our programmes. Areas of shared interest included discipline development and talent cultivation, research collaboration, and long-term cooperation mechanisms.

In October, we were pleased to welcome a delegation from Nanjing University of the Arts, a leading Chinese institution comprising 15 schools and over 30,000 students, further strengthening the partnership between our two organisations and exploring future opportunities for collaboration.



Visiting delegation from Nanjing University of the Arts hosted at Toi Whakaari in October.

International Connections

2025 also saw us welcome international visitors to our kura, strengthening connections with leading performing arts institutions beyond Aotearoa. In August, representatives from the Department of Science Theatre at the Central Academy of Drama (CAD) in China visited

Our Productions

A year of bold storytelling, creative courage, and vibrant student mahi

2025 was a rich and full year of performance, exhibition, and creative output at Toi Whakaari. From community tours to festival stages, from developing work to the Embassy's big screen, our taura brought their training to life in front of audiences across Te Whanganui-a-Tara and beyond.



Photos by Jode Wade Lee

Text Lab

Text Lab is a cornerstone of the first-year acting curriculum, providing students with the opportunity to deeply engage with dramatic texts and explore the nuances of character portrayal. This year, first-year Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) and Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management) students rehearsed and presented four open rehearsal showings of *Another Mammal* by Jo Randerson, performed 14-16 August in Drama One studio.

Term 2 Production

Our Term 2 production took to the stage of Hannah Playhouse from 30 May to 7 June as part of the 2025 Kia Mau Festival programme. *Ka Tito Au* by acclaimed playwright and poet Apirana Taylor (Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-a-Apānui, Ngāti Ruanui, Pākehā) is a stream of rich poetic consciousness weaving together multiple pūrākau to celebrate Kupe, explorer, navigator, legend. His love for his people, his dreams, and his heroism lead to a climactic battle with the giant octopus Te Wheke-a-Muturangi. Directed by Regan Taylor (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Pikiao), the production was a powerful celebration of Māori storytelling and a proud moment in our growing partnership with Kia Mau Festival.





Photos by Jode Wade Lee

Whanake Festival of Work in Development

Our beloved annual showcase of final-year independent research projects took on a new name in 2025. Formerly known as the Festival of Work in Development (FWD), the festival has been rebranded as Whanake. The name honours the mōteatea composed and gifted to the kura by graduate Ngamako Rota, which references the whakatauāki by Kīngi Tāwhiao: “Tupu Te Toi, Ora Te Toi, Whanake Te Toi, Te Toi I Hawaiki”. Grow the treasure, sustain the treasure, develop the treasure, the treasure that stems from Hawaiki. Running across four days from 19-22 August in various spaces throughout Te Whaea, Whanake featured the full breadth of what our tauira are capable of. New voices, bold ideas, and work that challenges, inspires, and pushes boundaries with commitment, care, and courage.

Photos by Maeve O'Connell

Costume Showcase

The annual Costume Showcase returned in September, with graduating students presenting major works demonstrating millinery, pattern-making, and historical costume, while first-year students presented two completed costumes testing essential garment construction skills. Four showings were presented in Te Whaea Theatre, supported by management students and a large cast of student models. A vibrant celebration of textile artistry that delighted audiences.



Solos

The annual Solos season opened on 28 October and ran through to 2 November at Basement Theatre, presenting 22 original pieces of live performance which equates to six hours of entirely new work. With total freedom over style, form, and content, Solos is where first-year Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) students develop their individual craft and artistic voice in collaboration with Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management) students. The season was facilitated by graduates Matu Ngaropo and Sean Rivera, with mentorship from Gen Poppe and Kaitātaki Anya Tate-Manning, Theresa Hanaray, and Alex Fisher.



Manifest

Manifest returned as one of the most anticipated events of the year, a celebration of emerging professionals from our design and set and props programmes. Digital portfolios showcased the breadth of design work across live and screen performance, while set and props students presented stunning craftsmanship across a multitude of mediums. The exhibition, held in the Te Whaea Foyer, offered attendees an exciting glimpse into the world of these bold new practitioners, and once again, the quality and ambition of the work was truly prodigious.

Tautoro

Tautoro, our annual community tour performance, saw 22 second-year actors bring to life a 45-minute song cycle devised around the provocation of ngā moemoea, dreams, set to the music of Bic Runga and Stan Walker. Directed by Salesi Le'ota and Emele Ugavule with music direction from Hayden Taylor, the performance blended conventional acting with physical theatre, choreography, and ensemble work. The season toured to St Patrick's College before returning home to be performed for our whānau whānui at Toi Whakaari on 20-21 October.



Graduation Production

The highlight of our performance year was undoubtedly our graduation production. *The Haka Party Incident*, written by Toi Whakaari graduate Katie Wolfe and directed by fellow graduate Jason Te Kare, resurrects the momentous day in Auckland in 1979 when a group of University of Auckland engineering students rehearsing their annual mock haka were challenged by activist group He Taua. An incident that lasted three minutes and changed race relations in Aotearoa forever.

Presented at Te Whaea Theatre from 16-25 October, the production season was opened with a whakatau by Ali Houpapa and Koro Kurt Smith-Komene of mana whenua. The season achieved a 90% attendance rate, our most successful graduation production to date, and received an excellent review from Theatreview. Jason Te Kare's direction brought together students from every discipline in a fully rounded, experiential theatrical experience that left staff, tauira, and audiences moved and inspired.

Toi Film

Toi Film is a final-year multi-disciplinary production project that partners the best filmmakers in Aotearoa with Toi Whakaari students. In 2025, three short films were produced: *YES DAVID* directed by Ghazaleh Gol, *Chain Reaction* directed by Shane Rangī, and *Birthday Girls* directed by Amelia Addis and Ebed Pohl. All three films premiered at the Toi Film Premiere held at the Embassy Theatre on 11 November. A fitting celebration of student mahi that coincided with our graduation week events and brought the year's creative work to a magnificent close.



Photos by Maeve O'Connell





Ko Wai Mātou

Our People

Tira Mana Kōkiri, Leadership

Tanea Heke

Tumuaki and Poutūhono, Director of Kura and Engagement

Dr. Michelle Johansson

Poukōkiri Mātauranga, Director of Academic Programmes

Hinauri Mead

Pouhāpai Ahurea, Director of People, Culture and Operations

Te Tira Pākaha, Discipline Leads

Salesi Le'ota

Manutaki Whakaari, Discipline Lead Performance

Theresa Hanaray

Manutaki Waihanga, Discipline Lead Production

Bronwyn Bradley

Manutaki Tohu Paerunga, Postgraduate Studies Lead

Emma Ransley

Kaiārahi Whakapūmau, Academic Quality Manager

Tira Whakaako, Teaching Staff

Anya Tate-Manning

Kaitātaki Whakaari, Discipline Specialist (Performance)

Emele Ugavule

Kaitātaki Whakaari, Discipline Specialist (Performance)

Erina Daniels

Kaitātaki Whakaari, Discipline Specialist (Performance)

Kaarin Slevin

Kaitātaki Waihanga, Discipline Specialist (Costume Construction)

Leimomi Oakes

Senior Tutor, Costume (outgoing)

Dr. Sam Trubridge

Kaitātaki Waihanga, Discipline Specialist (Design)

Alex Fisher

Kaitātaki Waihanga, Discipline Specialist (Production)

Paula van Beek

Tutor, Arts Management & Design (outgoing)

Tony De Goldi

Kaitātaki Waihanga, Discipline Specialist (Set & Props)

H-J Kilkelly

Kaitātaki Waihanga, Discipline Specialist (Production)

Juanita Hepi

Kaitātaki Tohu Paerunga, Lecturer Decolonising Creative Contexts

Dr. Melody Nixon

Lecturer, Research Methodologies for Creative Performance (outgoing)

Te Tira Whakahaere, Operations Team

Tamara Aluwihare

Kaiārahi Pūtea, Finance Manager

Craig Atkins

Kaiārahi Rēhita, Registrar

Ash Ryan

Ringamahi Pūmanawa Tangata, People and Talent
Advisor

Anneliese Mudge

Ringamahi Rauemi, Resources Coordinator

Tyla-jai Ryder

Ringamahi Whakahaere, Operations Delivery Specialist

Tony Toufexis

Kaiārahi Rēhita, Registrar

Chandrika Patel

Kaimanaaki, Administrator Operations and Kaimanaaki
Tohu Paerunga, Administrator Postgraduate Studies

Michelle Healey

Taituarā, Executive Assistant (outgoing)

Letizia Simonetti

Taituarā, Executive Assistant (incoming)

Tūhono, Engagement

Anne-Elise Smithson

Kaiārahi Whakarawe, Development Manager (incoming)

Taylor-Rose Terekia

Kairuruku Kōrero, Communications and Marketing
Coordinator

Nola Millar Library

Dr. Nicole Gaston

Library and Research Coordinator (outgoing)

Lisa Hampf

Librarian (outgoing)

Student Health and Wellbeing

Herbee Bartley

Ringa Poipoi, Student Health and Wellbeing



Ō Mātou Tauira

Our Students

Total enrolled

154

↑ from 140 in 2024

Graduates

61

↑ from 42 in 2024

Māori students

26.6%

Target 14%

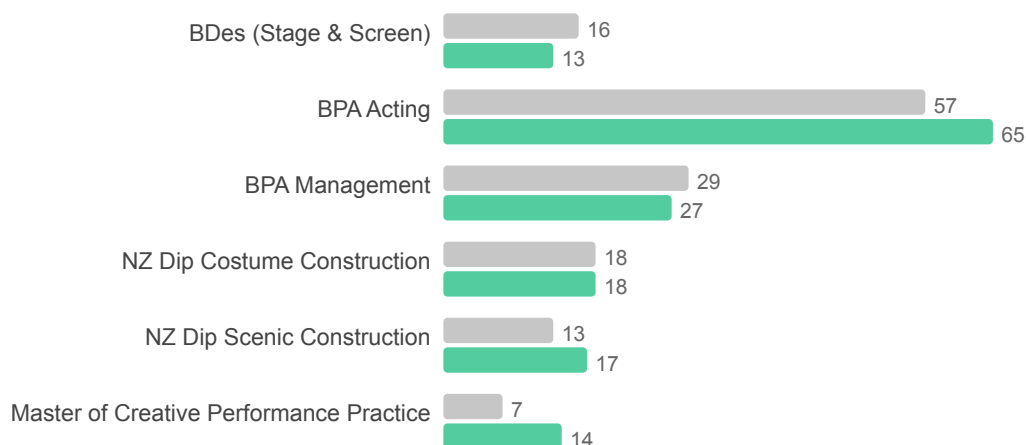
Pasifika students

19.1%

Target 10%

ENROLMENTS BY PROGRAMME — 2024 VS 2025

■ 2024 ■ 2025



Tauira Hauora, Student Health and Wellbeing

Building a kura that holds the whole person

Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai.

Nurture the seed and it will blossom.

This whakataukī sits at the heart of our approach to student wellbeing. At Toi Whakaari, we understand that for our tauira to reach their fullest potential as artists and practitioners, they must first feel held, supported, and seen as whole people. In 2025, we took significant steps to deepen that commitment and expand our pastoral care offerings, building new community connections, and ensuring our tauira are nurtured at every stage of their journey with us.



Central to this work was the appointment of Herbee Bartley to the newly established role of Ringa Poipoi, Student Health and Wellbeing. Herbee brings a wealth of experience across the arts sector, most recently as Creative Director Pacific at Toi Rauwhāangi, College of Creative Arts at Massey University. His role provides confidential, student-led support pathways including one-on-one engagement, informal assessment, practical referral and resolution, aligning with the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021. In a short time, Herbee has made a profound and tangible difference to the culture of care at our kura.

A number of meaningful initiatives took place across the year. Whānau Wednesdays created a warm, relaxed

space for students across all disciplines to come together, to rest, mingle, or study, with occasional pop-up guests sharing kōrero about their creative practice. Breakfast Mondays continued to provide kai before scheduled classes each week, and our partnership with Wellington Kaibosh, rescuing food from across the city, kept students nourished on Fridays. These initiatives may seem small, but they speak to something important: that a well-fed, well-connected tauira is a tauira who can learn.

A particular highlight of 2025 was Toi Whakaari hosting Kava Night for the first time on site, inviting the Massey Association of Pasifika Students (MAPS) to join us at our whare. Kava Night Thursdays at the Massey Pasifika Fale have been running for three years, organised by Te Tira



Ahu Pae and MAPS, and Toi Whakaari has long held a warm relationship with Massey, Toi Rauwhāangi, MAPS, and the Pasifika Fale. This moment of hosting felt like a natural and joyful deepening of that bond.

We were also proud to welcome the Burnett Foundation, who opened a new satellite clinic at Te Whaea, a significant step towards improving access to sexual health services for our community. Alongside this, we introduced Professional Respect Workshops for all first-year students as part of their orientation to the kura. Delivered by sexual harm prevention specialists Rachel Harrison and Melanie Calvesbert, and developed in conjunction with SoundCheck Aotearoa, this bespoke full-day training equips students with practical knowledge around consent, workplace safety, bystander intervention, and support pathways. This prepares them not just for life at Toi Whakaari, but for the professional environments they will enter beyond it.

supporting mental health and wellbeing in the arts community. This partnership will see CoLiberate deliver both a full-day certification training and a half-day kura-wide training during Semester 1 Wānanga in 2026, with an early opportunity for a small group to attend off-site training in December 2025. We look forward to seeing this relationship grow.

Finally, this year we introduced a new process as part of our Applicants Weekend, a one-on-one wellbeing kōrero with each prospective student. This simple but meaningful addition allows us to begin understanding and holding the full person before they even arrive at our kura, ensuring we are best placed to support their hauora from day one.



Herbee Bartley (centre) with sexual harm prevention specialists Rachel Harrison and Melanie Calvesbert.

Towards the end of the year, we were excited to announce a new collaboration with CoLiberate, a social enterprise co-founded by theatre practitioners passionate about

From Library to Learning Centre

After years of conversation dating back to 2018, 2025 marked a turning point for the Nola Millar Library. A review completed in April, encompassing an evaluation of library services across tertiary institutions in Aotearoa, provided the foundation for an exciting decision made at the end of the year: to relocate the library and evolve it into a dedicated Learning Centre.

More than a change of location, this transformation reflects a shift in philosophy towards a space that is student-focused, responsive to diverse learning needs, and designed to foster an inclusive and positive environment for all tauira. The centre will continue to operate as a library service while expanding its capacity to support the broader academic and creative journey of our students.

We look forward to welcoming our community into the fully developed Learning Centre in 2026.





Tautokotia

Supporting Toi Whakaari

Help us grow the next generation of creative leaders in Aotearoa

The work of this kura, training the performers, designers, directors, and craftspeople who go on to shape the cultural life of Aotearoa and beyond, depends not only on government funding, but on the generosity of individuals, businesses, and communities who believe in what we do. There are many ways to be part of that unique story.

How you can support

The Production Fund

Each year, Toi Whakaari delivers around 35 productions, graduate exhibitions, major costume works and set builds, engaging over 5,000 members of our community. These productions are the training ground where our tauira bring everything together, telling their stories and our nation's stories on stage. The Production Fund supports the lighting, sound, set, music rights, photography, and specialist expertise that make this possible. Your contribution ensures these experiences remain extraordinary.

Individual Giving and Bequests

Whether a one-off donation, monthly giving, or leaving a legacy through a bequest, every contribution helps future-proof the Aotearoa arts industry and ensures that the next generation of creative leaders has the training they deserve.

Corporate Partnership

We welcome businesses who want to invest in the future of the performing arts in Aotearoa. From naming rights and event hosting to digital and print presence across our platforms, there are many ways to align your organisation with the mahi of Toi Whakaari. Get in touch with Anne-Elise to explore what a partnership could look like for you.

Join Our Online Community

Our social media platforms are one of our most vital engagement tools, acting as a window into the everyday life of our kura. Whether you are a graduate, a current tauira, a prospective student, an industry partner, a stakeholder, or simply a fan of what we do, our social platforms offer a weekly glimpse into the mahi, the milestones, and the moments that make Toi Whakaari what it is.

We warmly invite you to follow along and be part of our online community.



@toiwhakaari



@toi_whakaari



@toi_whakaari

Toi Whakaari is a registered charity (CC20345). To find out more or to discuss how you can support our kura, please contact our Development Manager Anne-Elise Smithson at anne-elise.smithson@toiwhakaari.ac.nz.



Ngā Tauākī Pūtea

Financial Statements

The Auditor's Report

Statement of Service Performance

Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expenses

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Cash Flows

Notes to the Financial Statements



Tā Te Kaitātari Kaute

The Auditor's Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF TE KURA TOI WHAKAARI O AOTEAROA: NZ DRAMA SCHOOL

Opinion

We have audited the general purpose financial report of Te Kura Toi Whakaari o Aotearoa: NZ Drama School ("the School"), which comprise the financial statements on pages 49 to 62, and the service performance information on pages 43 to 48. The complete set of financial statements comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025, the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense, statement of changes in net assets/equity, statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion the accompanying general purpose financial report presents fairly, in all material respects:

- the financial position of the School as at 31 December 2025, and (of) its financial performance, and its cash flows for the year then ended; and
- the service performance for the year ended 31 December 2025, in accordance with the entity's service performance criteria,

in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Standards Reduced Disclosure Regime ("PBE Standards RDR") issued by the New Zealand Accounting Standards Board.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit of the financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand) (ISAs (NZ)) and the audit of the service performance information in accordance with the ISAs and New Zealand Auditing Standard (NZ AS) 1 *The Audit of Service Performance Information (NZ)*. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the General Purpose Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the School in accordance with Professional and Ethical Standard 1 *International Code of Ethics for Assurance Practitioners (including International Independence Standards) (New Zealand)* issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient

and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other than in our capacity as auditor we have no relationship with, or interests in, the School.

The Trustees' Responsibilities for the General Purpose Financial Report

The Trustees are responsible on behalf of the School for:

- (a) the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and statement of service performance in accordance with PBE Standards RDR;
- (b) the selection of elements/aspects of service performance, performance measures and/or descriptions and measurement bases or evaluation methods that present a statement of service performance that is appropriate and meaningful in accordance with PBE Standards RDR;
- (c) the preparation and fair presentation of the statement of service performance in accordance with the School's measurement bases or evaluation methods, in accordance with PBE Standards RDR;
- (d) the overall presentation, structure and content of the statement of service performance in accordance with PBE Standards RDR; and
- (e) such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements and statement of service performance that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the general purpose financial report the Trustees are responsible for assessing the School's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the School or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the General Purpose Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole, and the statement of service performance are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (NZ) and NZ AS 1 (Revised) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate or collectively, they could

reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of this general purpose financial report.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the general purpose financial report is located at the XRB's website at

<https://www.xrb.govt.nz/standards/assurance-standards/auditors-responsibilities/auditreport-14-1/>

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Who we Report to

This report is made solely to the School's Trustees', as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the School and the School's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

BDO Wellington Audit Limited

BDO WELLINGTON AUDIT LIMITED

Wellington

New Zealand

27 March 2026

Description of Entity's Outcomes

Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School is New Zealand's national drama school. It was established in 1970 and is located in Wellington at Te Whaea: National Dance & Drama Centre. Toi Whakaari offers training in acting, costume construction, set and props construction, performing arts management, design for stage and screen and creative performance practice. Toi Whakaari graduates are confident and talented theatre, screen and events practitioners.

Te Kura Toi Whakaari o Aotearoa Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Our priority areas for 2025

The strategic plan outlines a critical period for Toi Whakaari - balancing consolidating key strengths of the kura, while focusing on key shifts in terms of purpose. The impact of these will see a greater focus on:

- Advancing a new student outcomes centred-purpose, to which all initiatives will be prioritised and aligned;
- Furthering our decolonisation strategy, positioning Toi Whakaari as a recognised home of Te Ao Māori-framed creative learning and development practice by 2033, with a leading influence across our global region;
- Proactively align learning programmes with emerging sector trends and robust data insights, while responding to students' values, aspirations, expectations, and the wider contextual landscape;
- Taking an intentional and active role in building an interconnected creative ecology that supports student development pathways and long-term institutional sustainability; and
- Strategically evaluating and advancing digital approaches, integrating philosophical, pedagogical, commercial, and technological considerations to enhance learning, access, and organisational resilience.

In 2025 Tira Mana Kōkiri prioritised the following areas within the kura and has therefore reported against these in this years report:-

1. Our Journey to Decolonise
2. Our Academic Programmes
3. Staff Recalibration
4. Supporting our staff to grow rangahau and research
5. Building industry partnerships with? our community.

Our Journey to Decolonise

Toi Whakaari is committed to Decolonisation. Our vision for 2033 includes being recognised as a home for Te Ao Maori framed creative learning & development practice. This journey begins with ongoing support, and professional learning and development for our staff.

In 2025, world renowned Decolonisation scholar, Dr Linda Smith, continued to walk alongside our staff, delivering two of ten workshops to support staff pedagogy and professional learning. Her final workshop in December challenged us to "dismantle constructs, question what counts as normal and question everything". This has reinforced our understanding that reshaping a 56-year-old institution built on Western foundations is an ongoing journey of structural and cultural change.

We continue to provide learning for our students in alignment with our decolonisation journey. They have had wānanga each term, and have had the opportunity to engage with industry experts across the kura, providing workshops, classes, internships and learning that is embedded in Te Ao Māori.

Journey to Decolonise	2025	2024
Decolonisation workshops for staff	10	16

Our Academic Programmes

Repositioning the Kura around a clearly defined, student-outcomes-centred purpose necessitated a strategic review of our undergraduate and degree programmes. Our new degree and diploma programmes have been developed following a wide range of internal and external stakeholder consultation including, staff, students, graduates, other providers, and other relevant communities. This has ensured that our academic programmes are consistent with data-based trends and strongly aligned with student values, aspirations and expectations, and those of the wider creative community..

Degree Approval and Accreditation was awarded by NZQA for the new Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPA) with endorsements in Acting, Design, Production, Creative Performance Practice, after a three day panel visit in May. This programme centres decolonised worldviews and considers the essential attributes of collaboration, and flexibility, that are required to develop and sustain a career in the creative arts, looking towards a range of professional outcomes that look beyond the established live or screen sectors to encompass both new and traditional ways of working.

In December, NZQA also approved changes to programme approval and accreditation for New Zealand Diploma in Costume Construction and the New Zealand Diploma in Scenic Construction & Properties.

Our Students

Enrolment in 2025 continued to exceed our allocated EFTs. Ongoing overenrolment has forced the Kura to rely on the lever of funding available for overdelivery in both the degree and diploma funding categories. While this is not ideal, it speaks to the need from the sector for the programmes offered by Toi Whakaari. We are oversubscribed and would ideally like to be funded for more enrolments.

This year we celebrated the graduation of our inaugural masters cohort.

	*Targets	2025	2024
Student numbers by department			
Bachelor Design (Stage and Screen)		13	16
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting)		65	57
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management)		27	29
NZ Diploma in Costume Construction		18	18
NZ Diploma in Scenic Construction and Properties		17	13
Master of Creative Performance Practice		14	7
Total Students enrolled		154	140
Student Ethnicity			
Asian		4.70%	8%
Māori	14%	26.60%	27.5%
Pasifika	10%	19.10%	16%
International Students		3(1.94%)	5 (3.5%)
Graduates in total		61	42

Successful completion of year		2025	2024
Bachelor of Design (Stage and Screen)			
BDES1 (Year 1)	90%	No intake	83%
BDES2 (Year 2)	90%	100%	100%
BDES3 (Year 3)	90%	100%	100%
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting)			
BPAACT1 (Year 1)	90%	100%	100%
BPAACT2 (Year 2)	90%	100%	100%
BPAACT3 (Year 3)	75%	100%	100%
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management)			
BPAM1 (Year 1)	90%	78%	82%
BPAM2 (Year 2)	90%	100%	100%
BPAM3 (Year 3)	90%	100%	100%
NZ Diploma in Costume Construction			
NZDC1	90%	100%	100%
NZDC2	90%	100%	100%
NZ Diploma in Scenic Construction and Properties			
DSP1	90%	89%	89%
DSP2	90%	100%	100%
Master of Creative Performance Practice			
MCPP801	90%	100%	100%
MCPP802	90%	100%	100%
MCPP901	90%	100%	N/A

*Target rates are based on performance measures for domestic students required by the Tertiary Education Commission for Government funding.

Our Annual Events

Our Annual Events are at the core of our taura journey. They provide valuable, real-world assessment opportunities, and provide the sector with the chance to witness the final evaluations of their study. Toi Whakaari delivers roughly 35 productions, graduate exhibitions, major costume works and set builds extending to around 5000 members of our community per year. These productions provide the opportunities for students to hone their skills in everything from acting, costume construction, arts management, and design for stage and screen.

This year we looked to optimise our industry and community partnerships with Kia Mau Festival for our Term 2 Production, *Ka Tito Au*, held at the Hannah Playhouse to a wider audience network.

Below are the major events of the Toi Whakaari academic calendar:

	Ticket sales in 2025	Ticket sales in 2024
Toi Film Premiere - final-year multi-disciplinary production project that partners Aotearoa's best filmmakers	Free Public	Free Public
Whanake - Festival of Work and Development (FWD) - school wide showcase of art installations, performance art showings, film screenings, play readings, multi-disciplinary live performances and exhibitions	Free Public	Free Public
Costume Showcase - students showcase major work	471	507
Term 2 Productions (Formally Double Bill)	781	1138

Solos - Y1 students experiment with performance	659	665
Manifest - final year students work of design and set and props	Free Public	Free Public
Term 4 Production, Graduation Season	948	467
Tautoro - Y2 student work of live theatre devised	Free Public	Free Public

Our Student Health and Wellbeing

Guided by an annual review of pastoral care and processes outlined as a target for 2027, the Kura created its first dedicated role focused on Student Health and Wellbeing. This is the role of Ringa Poipoi which was established this year. The role provides confidential, student-led support pathways including one-on-one engagement, informal assessment, practical referral or resolution and aligns with the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

Our Culture

The Kura-wide calibration is now complete, following the recalibration of the Academic staff, Tūhono and the Nola Millar Library. Our new school structure is modelled on the Niho Taniwha and advances the 10-year vision and values of the Kura.

Staffing	2025	2024
Teaching staff	17	14
Executive and Support Staff	16	17

Our Library

The review of the Nola Millar Library was completed in April. This included an evaluation of the current shape and service of libraries within tertiary institutions of Aotearoa was completed in April.

Our Research

Our strategic plan includes the objective of developing and implementing a 2022-2030 ecosystem plan. In 2025, we focused on the review of our Kura wide research agenda and how we grow rangahau and research. Staff are already delivering on the 2027 Target “for staff connections to a sharing/contributing community of local/global/academic/industry research”. The recalibration provided a clear distribution of duties within position descriptions to align with our aspirational research goals.

Toi Whakaari Research Committee grants Awarded to staff	2025	2024
Grants awarded	1	6

Our Partnership

One of our strategic foci is to identify, prioritise, manage and optimise relationships and interrelationships within our ecosystem. This year we celebrated two major milestones.

Firstly, we signed an MOU with Royal New Zealand Ballet, on our shared vision based on philosophical alignment and the development and retention of New Zealand talent.

Secondly, we engaged in an Educational Delivery Subcontract Agreement with Whitireia and Weltec in respect of their Performing Arts Programmes:

- New Zealand Diploma in Dance;
- New Zealand Diploma in Drama;
- New Zealand Diploma in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre); and
- Bachelor of Creativity (Performing Arts).

Through this two year agreement, Toi Whakaari will deliver the qualifications, provide infrastructure and facilities, employ and manage teaching staff, and manage pastoral care.

We continue to maintain strategic relationships with key industry stakeholders such as NZ Opera, Tawhiri, RNZB, Auckland Theatre Company, New Zealand International Film Festival, WOW, Court Theatre, Drama New Zealand, New Zealand Film Commission, Taki Rua, Kia Mau, NZ Festival of the Arts and Silo Theatre.

Toi Whakaari sponsored the Best Actor Award at the 19th annual *Show Me Shorts* Film Festival, New Zealand's leading international film festival, which screened through cinemas nationwide during the month of October.

We hosted delegations from NUA, Nanjing University of the Arts and also the Central Academic of Drama from Beijing, exploring the possibility of partnerships with both institutions. We continue to maintain our relationship with CUZ, Communication University of Zhejiang, and are looking at enrolling postgraduate students for 2027.

Our Compelling Story

One of our objectives is “to communicate a clear and relevant value proposition and narrative, developed and leveraged to build student development, awareness, financial and other support and success”. Social media is our main tool for engagement and we are very active in this space. With a wealth of content, we have steadily grown our community with annual campaigns that focus on recruitment, ticket sales for productions, and celebrating student achievement, while providing insight into Kura activities.

Our new Development Manager is responsible for “raising the awareness and understanding of the organisation's story by target audiences”. Our social media following and website are two of the key pieces of collateral to our wider ecosystem.

January to December	2025	2024
Meta		
Link clicks	26,475	6,257
Impressions	1,530,845	850,795
CTR (click-through rate)	2.78%	0.73%
CPC (cost-per-click)	\$0.27	\$0.55
Leads	652	120
Page Engagement	81,239	49,636
Google		
Clicks	22,389	11,370
Impressions	963,371	185,537
CTR (click-through rate)	2.32%	4.85%
CPC (cost-per-click)	\$0.24	\$0.65

Our Applications

Student application processes ensure a holistic approach to selecting the optimum cohort of students. Focusing on this object has opened the door to review whether our selection process is still built for purpose. The annual application process for applicants or prospective students has always involved an application and an interview within their discipline. This year we held additional structured wellbeing interviews.

	Offer of place in 2025	2025 applications	2024 applications
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Management) Year 1		0	15
Bachelor of Design (Stage and Screen) Year 1		7	7
New Bachelor of Performing Arts (Production)	9		
New Bachelor of Performing Arts (Design)	5		
NZ Diploma in Costume Construction Year 1	9	29	29
NZ Diploma in Scenic Construction and Properties Year 1	8	11	11
Master of Creative Performance Practice	7	8	6

	2026	2025	2024
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) Year 1 applications		136	136
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) Year 1 auditionees		130	130
Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) Year 1 offers for study		22	22
New Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) Year 1 applications	151		
New Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) Year 1 auditionees	124		
New Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) Year 1 offers for study	28		

Our Sustainable Operation

Our objective is to sustain and grow the financial and operational capability/functionality to ensure we operate in a viable, professional, legal, sustainable and efficient way. We continue to maintain the targets of our TEC Funding Agreement, NQZA compliance and submission of our Annual Programme Evaluation Report. All 2025 educational performance reporting was completed on time.

Our Board

We are grateful for the wealth of experience and expertise each of these leaders brings to our kura: Board members Roman Rogers (Chair), Angus Evison (Treasurer), Fiona Cassidy (Deputy-Chair), Jane von Dadelszen, Jamie Lambert, Adelyn Love, Hone Hurihanganui and Tanea Heke (Ex-Officio/Tumuaki). We are very grateful to the term Anapela Polataivao gave in service to our Kura.

Toi Whakaari continues its 56-year legacy in actively contributing to the local live performance and screen industry. The training Toi Whakaari offers is critical to the success of not only its graduates and the wider alumni but to the industry as a whole.

Te tauākī aroā ā-pūtea whiwhi, ā-pūtea whakapaunga

Statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses

for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2025 Budget	2024 \$	2024 Budget
Revenue from Exchange Transactions					
International Student Fees	5	60,810	163,893	98,427	145,623
Student Services Levy	6	83,375	83,157	56,178	66,913
Sundry Income	7	267,535	245,501	277,027	531,900
Total Revenue from Exchange Transactions		411,720	492,551	431,632	744,436
Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions					
Government Funding		2,388,931	2,400,214	2,347,780	2,332,451
Domestic Student Fees	5	1,088,113	1,095,321	698,665	817,810
Fees-Free Tertiary Education Funding	5.1	-	-	250,574	145,000
Grants and Donations		40,005	45,000	35,542	40,000
Total Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions		3,517,049	3,540,535	3,332,561	3,335,261
Total Revenue		3,928,769	4,033,086	3,764,193	4,079,697
Expenses					
Depreciation	8	175,046	193,000	189,649	200,000
Administration	10	1,315,522	1,135,183	1,223,376	1,328,065
Audit Fees	10.1	18,775	17,000	17,373	16,000
Engagement, Marketing and Outreach	11	174,283	210,500	154,198	258,400
Teaching and Delivery	12	1,279,748	1,451,513	1,228,452	1,327,359
Library		84,509	85,485	88,852	90,870
Premises Costs		97,632	108,000	103,113	103,900
Project Costs	13	178,240	177,700	178,433	215,277
Shared Services Fee	20	565,145	654,152	521,727	584,653
Whitireia and WelTec	23	13,340	-	-	-
Total Expenses		3,902,240	4,032,533	3,705,173	4,124,524
Surplus/(Deficit) before Net Financing Activities		26,529	553	59,020	(44,827)
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		26,529	553	59,020	(44,827)
Other Comprehensive Revenue and Expense					
Total Comprehensive Income for the year		26,529	553	59,020	(44,827)

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the Financial Statement

Te tauākī o ngā whakahaerenga hou mō te mana taurite

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	Equity	General Reserve	Student Assistance Reserve	Asset Replacement Reserve	Total Equity
Opening balance 1 January 2025		695,050	600,000	337	80,783	1,376,170
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		26,529	-	-	-	26,529
Movement During the Year				(337)		(337)
Closing Equity 31 December 2025	15	721,579	600,000	-	80,783	1,402,363
Opening balance 1 January 2024		636,030	600,000	337	80,783	1,317,150
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		59,020	-	-	-	59,020
Closing Equity 31 December 2024		695,050	600,000	337	80,783	1,376,170

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the Financial Statement

Te tauākī aroā pūtea ā-tūranga

Statement of Financial Position

as at 31 December 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2025 Budget	2024 \$	2024 Budget
Equity	15	1,402,363	1,376,723	1,376,170	1,194,434
Represented by:					
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash equivalents		194,989	384,410	322,009	500,931
Accounts Receivable	16	363,928	118,000	203,594	11,800
Public Trust Account	17,19	29,679	63,000	45,225	25,000
Term Deposits	19	414,602	399,655	399,655	382,475
Prepayments		61,686	50,000	47,251	33,000
Sub Total Current Assets		1,064,884	1,015,065	1,017,734	953,206
Non-Current Assets					
Property, Plant and Equipment	8	593,667	617,952	630,951	649,229
Intangible Assets	9	147,458	161,707	54,723	
Sub Total Non-Current Assets		741,125	779,659	685,674	649,229
Total Assets		1,806,009	1,794,724	1,703,408	1,602,435
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and Accruals	18	303,483	321,000	232,438	301,000
GST Payable		19,475	34,000	28,287	34,000
Revenue in Advance		80,687	63,000	66,513	73,000
Sub Total Current Liabilities		403,645	418,000	327,238	408,000
Total Liabilities		403,645	418,000	327,238	408,000
Net Assets		1,402,363	1,376,723	1,376,170	1,194,434

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 27 March 2026.

Trustee: 
[R Rogers \(Mar 27, 2026 10:46:49 GMT+13\)](#)

Trustee: 
[Angus Evison \(Mar 27, 2026 15:35:23 GMT+13\)](#)

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the Financial Statement

Ngā tauākī pūtea hokohoko

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Cash was applied from:			
Government Funding		2,278,908	2,386,374
Student Income		1,252,357	864,591
Grants and Donations		40,005	35,542
Sales of Merchandise		-	1,348
Sundry Income		320,621	272,646
Cash was provided from		<u>3,891,891</u>	<u>3,560,501</u>
Personnel Costs		2,313,917	2,246,954
Payments to Suppliers		1,406,356	1,307,606
Net GST Paid		8,812	20,633
Cash was applied to		<u>3,729,085</u>	<u>3,575,193</u>
Net Cash (used in)/from Operating Activities		<u>162,806</u>	<u>(14,692)</u>
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Cash was applied to:			
Purchase of fixed assets	8	142,425	111,926
Intangible Asset	9	92,735	54,723
Payments to other parties		337	500
Interest Income		44,046	52,894
Increase in deposits		14,947	17,181
		<u>294,490</u>	<u>237,224</u>
Net Cash (used in)/from Investing Activities		<u>(294,490)</u>	<u>(237,224)</u>
Cash Flows from Financing Activities			
Cash was received from:			
Income from other parties		4,664	214
Net Cash from Financing Activities		<u>4,664.00</u>	<u>214</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in total cash held		(127,020)	(251,702)
Add cash at start of year (1 January)		322,009	573,711
Cash balance at end of year (31 December)		<u>194,989</u>	<u>322,009</u>
This is represented by:			
Bank Current and Call Accounts held with banks in New Zealand		194,989	322,009
		<u>194,989</u>	<u>322,009</u>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the Financial Statement

Ngā tuhinga mō te tauākī ā-pūtea

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Reporting Entity

Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School (the School) is registered as a Charitable Trust under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957. The primary activity of the School is to provide specialist training to those aspiring to a professional career in theatre, film and allied industries. The School is a Public Benefit Entity for the purposes of financial reporting in accordance with the Financial Reporting Act 2013.

2. Basis of Preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with New Zealand Generally Accepted Accounting Practice ("NZGAAP") with Tier 2 Public Benefit Entity (PBE) Financial Reporting standards. They comply with New Zealand equivalents to not-for-profit Public Benefit Entity Standards Reduced Disclosure Regime (PBE Standards RDR) and other Financial Reporting standards as appropriate to Public Benefit Entities. The School qualifies as a Tier 2 not-for-profit public benefit entity as it has operating expenditure above \$5m but below \$33m. The School does not have any public accountability.

The financial statements have been prepared on the basis of historical cost, using the accrual basis of accounting, and have been prepared on a going concern basis. They are presented in New Zealand dollars, which is the School's functional currency rounded to the nearest dollar.

3. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The accounting policies have been consistently applied to all years presented in these financial statements.

The significant accounting policies used in the preparation of these financial statements are summarised below:

Revenue

Revenue is classified as either exchange revenue or non exchange revenue and is accounted for as follows:

Exchange Revenue includes International Student fees, Student Services Levy, Merchandising income and other income.

Revenue is recognised as exchange revenue when the School receives approximately equal value from another entity in exchange for the goods or services delivered.

International Student fees

International student fee revenue is recognised in the period in which the tuition is delivered

Sundry income

Sundry income is recognised in the period in which the service is delivered

Non-exchange transactions includes grants and donations, government funding and domestic student fees and Fees-Free Funding. A non-exchange transaction is where the School receives value from another entity without directly giving approximately equal value in exchange.

Government tuition funding and Domestic Student Fees

Government tuition funding is recognised as revenue when received, unless there is an obligation to return the funds if the conditions of the funding have not yet been met. If there is an obligation to return funds, only the entitled funding amount is recorded as revenue and the balance is accrued under current liabilities.

Student fees are primarily recognised as revenue entitlement when received. There is a withdrawal period in which students have the right to a refund, in which case this is recognised as a liability in the balance sheet.

Grants and donations

Grants and donations received for a particular purposes are recorded as revenue on a cash received basis through the statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses. If there is a condition attached, it would be recognised as a liability until the condition is met, at which time it would be recognised as revenue.

Fixed assets

Fixed assets are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Gain or loss on asset disposals are reported net.

Depreciation

Depreciation has been charged to allocate the cost of assets over their estimated useful life.

The following rates have been used:

• Furniture and Fittings	6% - 28% SL
• Plant and Equipment	5.5% - 100% SL
• Theatre Equipment	6% - 48% SL
• Building Alterations	3% - 20% SL
• Library Books	10% SL
• Library non-books	33 - 33.33% SL
• Motor Vehicle	40 - 40% SL

Ticket income

Box office income is recognised when earned.

Loans and Accounts receivable

Loans and Accounts receivable are recorded at net realisable values.

Foreign Currencies

Foreign currency transactions are converted at the NZ\$ rate of exchange ruling at the dates of the transactions.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

All amounts are recorded exclusive of GST except for Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable which are stated inclusive of GST. The GST residue at balance date is shown in the Statement of Financial Position.

Taxation

The School is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2005 and is exempt from income taxation.

Financial Instruments

(a) Recognition and initial measurement

Trade receivables are initially recognised when they are originated. All other financial assets and financial liabilities are initially recognised when the School becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

A financial asset or financial liability is initially measured at fair value plus transaction costs that are directly attributable to its acquisition or issue. At initial recognition, an entity may measure short-term receivables and payables at the original invoice amount if the effect of discounting is immaterial.

The School derecognises a financial asset when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire, or it transfers the rights to receive the contractual cash flows in a transaction in which substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of the financial asset are transferred or in which the School neither transfers nor retains substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership and it does not retain control of the financial asset.

(b) Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial assets

On initial recognition, all of the School's financial assets are classified and measured at amortised cost.

A financial asset is measured at amortised cost if it meets both of the following conditions:

- it is held within a management model whose objective is to hold assets to collect contractual cash flows;
- and
- its contractual terms give rise on specified dates to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding

These assets are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The amortised cost is reduced by impairment losses. Interest income, foreign exchange gains and losses and impairment are recognised in surplus or deficit. Any gain

or loss on derecognition is recognised in surplus or deficit.

(c) Impairment of financial assets

The School recognises loss allowances for expected credit losses (ECLs) on financial assets measured at amortised cost.

The School measures loss allowances at an amount equal to lifetime ECLs, except for the following, which are measured at 12-month ECLs:

- bank balances for which credit risk (i.e., the risk of default occurring over the expected life of the financial instrument) has not increased significantly since initial recognition.

Loss allowances for trade receivables are always measured at an amount equal to lifetime ECLs. When determining whether the credit risk of a financial asset has increased significantly since initial recognition and when estimating ECLs, the School considers reasonable and supportable information that is relevant and available without undue cost or effort. This includes both quantitative and qualitative information and analysis, based on the School's historical experience and informed credit assessment and including forward-looking information.

The School assumes that the credit risk on a financial asset has increased significantly if it is more than 30 days past due.

The School considers a financial asset to be in default when the financial asset is more than 90 days past due.

ECLs are a probability-weighted estimate of credit losses. Credit losses are measured as the present value of all cash shortfalls (i.e., the difference between the cash flows due to the entity in accordance with the contract and the cash flows that the School expects to receive). ECLs are discounted at the effective interest rate of the financial asset.

Accounts Payable

Short term creditors and other short-term payables are recorded at the net realisable value.

Employee Entitlements

Employee entitlements are recognised when the School has a present obligation.

Liabilities in respect of employee entitlements that are expected to be paid or settled within 12 months of balance date are accrued at normal amounts, calculated on the basis of current salary rates.

Annual leave for staff has been accrued based on employment contracts/agreement entitlements using current salary rates of pay. Annual leave is classified as a current liability. No staff qualify for long term leave.

Superannuation Schemes

Defined contribution scheme: Obligations for contributions to Kiwisaver are recognised as an expense as incurred.

4. Going Concern

These Financial Statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, the validity of which depends upon the School's ability to obtain future Government funding. Government funding is received from the Tertiary Education Commission. The following allocation has been notified to the School:

2026 : \$2.169 million (2025: \$2.4 million)

The Trustees therefore believe the going concern assumption is appropriate.

5. Student Fees and Scholarships

Domestic and international fees reflect fees received net of scholarships internally funded by the School and scholarships funded by external providers. Donations from external providers towards scholarships are included within Grants and Donations (Note 8).

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Domestic Student fees	1,091,594	706,059
Less: Internal Australian Scholarships	-	-
Less: External Awards	(3,481)	(7,394)
	(3,481)	(7,394)
Total Domestic Fees	1,088,113	698,665
International Student Fees	60,810	98,427
	60,810	98,427
Less: Internal International Scholarships	-	-
Total International Fees	60,810	98,427
Total Student Fee Income	1,148,923	797,092

5.1 Fees-Free Tertiary Education Funding

“fees-free” funding was available for enrolled students who are eligible for fees-free tertiary education in the first year of study.

The first-year fees free has now ended. It has been replaced by final-year Fees Free on 1 January 2025 and School didn't receive fees free funding in 2025.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Tuition fees	-	232,783
Student Services and Pastoral Care Levy	-	17,791
	-	250,574

6. Student Services Levy/Other Student Charges

The services funded by the student services levy and the related income and costs are as follows:

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Income from Student Services Levy		
Student Services Fees	83,375	56,178
Student Services Fees paid by Fees-Free Tertiary Education Funding	-	17,791
	83,375	73,969
Related Costs:		
Health services	21,913	20,087
Counselling services	35,572	27,360
Sports, recreational and cultural activities	21,301	23,242
Pastoral Care & Wellebing Services	4,249	4,363
Total Cost of Services funded by Levy	83,035	75,052

In 2025 the Student Services Fees was \$655 (including GST) for domestic students and \$470 (including GST) for international students. The Student Services Fee income and associated costs are separately accounted for in the accounting system.

7. Sundry Income

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Venue Hire	156,375	137,474
Merchandising Income	-	1,348
Audition Workshop Fees	5,165	5,165
Interest Income	44,046	52,894
Other *	46,165	48,524
Production Income	15,784	14,231
Public workshops	-	17,391
	<u>267,535</u>	<u>277,027</u>

* Other income includes Library Service fee (\$22.1K) and other miscellaneous income in 2025 (2024 : Library Service Fee \$40K)

8. Property, plant and equipment

	Building Alterations	Theatre Equipment	Plant and Equipment	Furniture & Fittings	Library book collection	Library other media	Software	Motor Vehicles	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Cost and valuation									
Balance as at 1 January 2024	1,022,001	335,869	796,743	339,207	894,501	104,469	3,124	11,296	3,507,211
Additions	28,975	-	91,288	11,389	7,448	585			139,585
Disposals and reclassifications	-	-	(27,656)		-				(27,656)
Balance as at 31 December 2024	1,050,976	335,869	860,375	350,497	901,949	105,054	3,124	11,296	3,619,140
Additions	8,888	-	107,450	19,521	6,481	86	-	-	142,425
Disposals and reclassifications	(34,044)	(39,599)	(129,329)	(159,433)	(655,459)	(14,503)			(1,032,367)
Balance as at 31 December 2025	1,025,820	296,270	838,496	210,585	252,971	90,637	3,124	11,296	2,729,198
Depreciation									
Balance as at 1 January 2024	736,448	238,435	619,664	254,339	858,397	104,280	3,124	11,296	2,825,983
Depreciation for the year	49,280	29,875	82,427	19,946	7,928	193	-	-	189,649
Disposals and reclassifications	-	-	(27,444)	-	-	-	-	-	(27,444)
Balance as at 31 December 2024	785,729	268,310	674,648	274,285	866,325	104,473	3,124	11,296	0
Depreciation for the year	48,612	23,295	77,896	18,341	6,694	207	-	-	175,046
Disposals and reclassifications	(34,044)	(39,599)	(125,910)	(158,189)	(655,459)	(14,503)			(1,027,704)
Balance as at 31 December 2025	800,297	252,005	626,634	134,437	217,560	90,177	3,124	11,296	2,988,189
Net book value									
As at 1 January 2024	285,553	97,434	177,079	84,869	36,104	189	-	-	681,227
As at 31 December 2024	265,248	67,560	185,727	76,212	35,624	581	-	-	630,952
As at 31 December 2025	225,523	44,265	211,861	76,148	35,411	460	-	-	593,667

9. Intangible Assets

Capitalisation of costs : Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPA)

This programme centres decolonised worldviews and considers the essential attributes of collaboration, and flexibility, that are required to develop and sustain a career in the creative arts, looking towards a range of professional outcomes that include and look beyond the established live or screen sectors to encompass both new and traditional ways of working. These programmes seek to develop practitioners that will enrich and broaden the landscape of creative performance practices in Aotearoa, utilising contemporary practices and kaupapa informed by a broad and inclusive world view, nurtured in a context that embraces Te Tiriti and Te Ao Māori,

uplifting inclusivity, and striving for excellence.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Opening balance	54,723	-
Additions	92,735	54,723
Closing balance	147,458	54,723

Accumulated Amortisation

Opening balance	-	-
Amortisation Expenses	-	-
Closing Balance	-	-

Net Carrying Value	147,458	54,723
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Total Intangible Assets	147,458	54,723
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Method of amortisation : Straight-line method

The costs of the total programme development will be amortised from 1 January 2026 onwards for 5 years.

10. Administration expenditure including salaries and wages

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Director's Dept and Operations	1,018,810	987,924
General Administration	178,502	154,112
Educational Compliance	30,218	21,766
Course Costs	8,032	13,855
Cost of Sales	-	1,421
Professional Fees	79,960	44,297
	1,315,522	1,223,376

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
10.1 Audit Fees		
Statutory financial statement audit	17,275	15,873
Other assurance services	1,500	1,500
	18,775	17,373

The other assurance services are comprised of a report on factual findings related to the school's prudential financial statement calculations and an opinion on the school's compliance with NZQA student fee protection rules.

11. Engagement, Marketing and Promotions

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Marketing and Promotion	173,411	152,979
Business Development Expenses	872	1,219
	174,283	154,198

12. Teaching and Delivery

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Classes:		
Acting	404,342	428,437
Arts Management	239,687	235,218
Design	129,132	167,762
Context and Practice	478	1,215
Costume	153,881	161,251
Set & Props	144,950	127,977
Master's Programme	174,456	106,592
Academic Salaries	32,822	
	<u>1,279,748</u>	<u>1,228,452</u>

13. Project Costs

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Production Costs	178,240	170,063
Public workshops	-	8,370
	<u>178,240</u>	<u>178,433</u>

14. Staff related costs

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Employee and Contractor entitlements*	2,313,917	2,246,954
	<u>2,313,917</u>	<u>2,246,954</u>

Note*-The Employee and Contractor entitlements are included in the relevant cost centres disclosed in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses

15. Equity

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Retained Earnings	<u>721,580</u>	<u>695,051</u>
Other Reserves		
General Reserve	600,000	600,000
Student Assistance Reserve	-	336
Asset Replacement Reserve	<u>80,783</u>	<u>80,783</u>
	<u>680,783</u>	<u>681,119</u>
Total Equity	<u>1,402,363</u>	<u>1,376,170</u>

The General Reserve is a contingency fund established to provide financial protection of approximately three months operating expenses that can only be drawn on in the event of significant unforeseen financial impact(s).

The Asset Replacement Reserve is to fund the replacement of assets.

The Student Assistance Reserve is to enable assistance to be given to students facing hardship.

16. Accounts Receivable and accruals

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Accounts Receivable	21,218	36,005
Accrued Interest	9,411	3,151
Other Receivables (Te Whaea Services)	105,878	46,457
Tertiary Education Funding receivable	227,421	117,981
	<u>363,928</u>	<u>203,594</u>

17. Public Trust Account

The balance held in the Public Trust Account consists of student fees held in trust for the following academic year. The School uses this fee protection mechanism to meet its obligations under the NZQA Student Fee Protection Rules 2013 (v5). The School requires all students to remit student fees payments directly into Public Trust Account and all refunds are managed through the Public Trust per TEC and NZQA registration requirements.

18. Accounts Payable and accruals

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Accounts Payable	47,348	22,308
Accruals	41,770	33,262
Employee Entitlements	196,944	163,097
Other payables	17,422	13,187
Tertiary Education Funding payable	-	584
	<u>303,483</u>	<u>232,438</u>

Employee entitlements

Annual leave	98,275	86,219
Accrued salaries and wages	24,662	35,016
PAYE and Kiwisaver	74,007	41,862
	<u>196,944</u>	<u>163,097</u>

19. Financial Instruments

The accounting policies for financial instruments have been applied to the line items below:

Financial Assets

Classification of financial assets depends on the purpose for which the instruments are acquired. All financial assets are classified at amortised cost.

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Cash and Cash equivalent	194,989	322,009
Term Deposits*	414,602	399,655
Debtors and other receivables	363,928	203,594
Public Trust	29,679	45,225
	<u>1,003,198</u>	<u>970,483</u>
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities at amortised cost		
Accounts Payable excluding accruals	17	47,348
	<u>47,348</u>	<u>22,308</u>

*All term deposits are placed with New Zealand registered trading banks with Standard and Poors credit ratings above AA as per the School's Investment Policy (Ref 9.6).

20. Prepayments and Related Parties

Rental, building management fees and repairs and maintenance were paid by The New Zealand Schools of Dance and Drama Premises Management Trust trading as Te Whaea Services ("TWS") who lease the buildings from Wellington City Council. The New Zealand School of Dance and Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School license part of the premises from TWS.

The TWS Board of Trustees comprise members appointed by the Board of Trustees of each School, being

- Ian Pike (Chair) Jointly appointed by the Schools from 26 June 2020
- Jane Von Dadelszen (appointed by Toi Whakaari from 6 June 2019)
- Mary Ann Slater (appointed by New Zealand School of Dance from December 2024)

Te Whaea Services charges an annual service fee to the Schools to administer the sharing of facilities, resources, staff and information by the Schools. The fee for 2025 was \$311,409 (2024: \$271,432).

In 2025, Te Whaea Services also made payment of certain expenses on behalf of the Schools for commercial expediency. Such expenditure was recoverable from the Schools on a monthly basis.

TWS Services payment Summary

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Service Fee	311,409	271,432
Outgoing and Rent (Note 21)	253,736	250,295
Total	565,145	521,727

Accounts Receivable and accruals

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Other Receivables (Te Whaea Services)	105,878	46,457

Accounts Payable and accruals

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Included in Other payables	3,919	-

Key Management Personnel

The School has a related party relationship with its Trustees and other key management personnel. Trustees serve voluntarily and are not paid any fees.

The School paid professional consultancy fees in 2025: Nil (2024: \$33,058) to firms owned by Trustees. Apart from these, there no other transactions with the Trustees that require disclosure in the financial statements.

Remuneration for key management personnel is as follows:

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Salaries and other short-term employee benefits	346,112	341,240
Number of key management personnel (FTEs) as at year end	2.5	2.9

This role also included additional teaching responsibilities on an ad-hoc basis invoiced for \$28,692 in 2025 (2024 : Nil). These payments are included in the benefits paid to KMP but we have not been able to assign an FTE to that amount.

There are no other transactions with key management personnel that require disclosure in these financial statements.

21. Commitments**Capital Commitments**

The capital commitments at 31 December 2025 : Nil (2024: \$22,050)

Licence to Occupy

The School has a Licence to Occupy building premises from Te Whaea Services. The licence fee and outgoing in 2025 was \$253,736 (2024: \$250,295).

The Head Lease with Wellington City Council was signed on 18th January 2021.

The sub-lease with Te Whaea services was signed on 24 November 2024, effective 1 January 2023, for a term of 21 Years, expiring on 1 January 2035. The School has the right to renew for another 21 Years until 31 December 2055.

22. Events after Balance Date

No events occurred subsequent to balance date (2024: Nil).

23. Educational Delivery Subcontract Agreement with Whitireia and WelTec

Toi Whakaari : NZ Drama School has entered into two-year collaboration with Whitireia and WelTech to delivery the Performing Arts Programmes as set out in the agreement.

The Agreement will commence on 19 January 2026 and Expire end the Academic Year 2027 or end of Academic 2028 in the case of a teach out of the New Zealand Diplomas. Information as per the Schedule 1 of the Subcontractor Agreement.

Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School as the Provider is responsible for providing all facilities, materials and equipment necessary to provide the Education Services otherwise than as set out in this Agreement.

In 2025, Toi Whakaari incurred costs to the facility ready with two studios to start delivery of these programmes from 2026 onwards.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Personnel, Overheads, IT and Other resources	13,340	-

He Mihi

Acknowledgements

He mihi maioha tēnei ki ngā kaitautoko o tō mātou kura. We greatly appreciate the financial and in-kind support from our funders, sponsors, partners, wider school whānau and community.

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Awards and Scholarships



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Funders







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New Zealand Drama School

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