



te ara  
hihiko   
by tuanz

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Connecting Aotearoa Summit 2026

## What we identified in 2024

- Elevate **everyday** Māori and Pasifika tech leaders to inspire
- Promote collaboration over competition/gatekeeping
- Strengthen industry and community connections
- Make tech careers visible, attractive **and** accessible
- Grow mentorship opportunities

## Two areas of focus

1. **Empowering Tomorrow's Workforce:** Established te ara hihiko rangatahi panel with Pukekohe High School
1. **Tackling Entry Barriers:** Diving deeper on sensitive issues facing talent when they experience our sector from recruitment onwards

**Mā te kimi ka kite, mā te kite ka mōhio, mā te mōhio ka mārama!**  
Seek and discover, discover and know, know and become enlightened!

## 1 - The core revelation - it's not "uncool"; it's "unsafe".

- **The Myth:** We assumed rangatahi found the tech sector "boring", "uncool" or lacked awareness of the opportunities and pathways.
- **The Unfiltered Truth:** The Pukekohe High School panel revealed the barrier is "emotion based." The sector is perceived as "unsafe," "hostile," and "unwelcoming".
- **Key Descriptors from Rangatahi:**
  - "Scary," "condescending," and "competitive".
  - "Full of city slickers" and "smart, unfriendly white people".
  - "No support" for people who look like them.
- **The Whānau Barrier:** Families often associate tech companies with stress (bills, disconnections) rather than opportunity, reinforcing the lack of trust. **Whānau won't support what feels stressful.**

**The Result: perception shift - rangatahi felt relieved, inspired, seen, and authentically interested.**

## 2 - The Barriers Holding Change Back

- **The CV Blind Spot:** A “messy” CV often reflects unequal access to support, not lack of potential. Our current hiring processes do not value capability and lived experience.
- **Interview bias:** Quietness, limited self-promotion or little eye contact are often misread as disengagement or lack of skill, when they may reflect cultural respect or lack of guidance and support for recruitment processes.

**The Result: Our standard processes are actively sabotaging our diversity goals.**

## What we want to see happen?

- **Redesign Recruitment:**
  - Move beyond "perfect on paper."
  - Encourage hiring managers to value transferable skills (e.g., customer service in supermarkets, soft skills required to juggle family/cultural duties)
- **Prioritise Psychological Safety:**
  - Culturally safe recruitment processes.
  - Meaningful gestures and experiences that demonstrate genuine support.
- **From Corporate Outreach to Community Immersion:**
  - Stop expecting them to come to us. We must "take corporate to the community".
  - Engage with the mahi on the ground to build trust.



Thank You  
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