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Wāhine Māia: Being Bold and Courageous when faced with Adversity

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Abstract (approximately 250-300 words limit)

In 2023, Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (Toi Ohomai) launched a pilot initiative, 'Wāhine Māia,' to break barriers and create space in vocational training for ākonga wāhine studying a trade programme. Wāhine Māia was created to disrupt the status quo of male domination in trades and highlight the distinctive position wāhine can have in these industries across Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the world. While numbers of wāhine enrolling in Trades programmes, and employed in the trades is increasing, the gender pay gap still highlights inequities.

Wāhine Māia, the name gifted by Hinemaea Ngatai-Smith (Tangata Whenua) encapsulates the belief of wāhine being bold and courageous in the face of adversity. Wāhine Māia is co-led by Toi Ohomai senior leaders, Suzanne Brotherton (Tangata Tiriti) [previous] Associate Dean, Faculty of Primary Industries, Trades and Infrastructure (PITI) and Melanie JM Katu (Tangata Whenua), Māori Success Manager, Māori Success Directorate – Equity & Ākonga Māori. Together they leaned into indigenous knowledge to establish a uniquely Māori-based delivery framework deep rooted in the

kaupapa Māori values of whanaungatanga (establishing relationships), manaakitanga (caring and nurturing one another), kotahitanga (unity in purpose), and wheako (sharing experiences).

Wāhine Māia uses wānanga as an indigenous approach as the platform for trades wāhine to gather, share and reflect on working in male-dominated environments. An important feature are the guest speakers who are wāhine trade apprentices and / or employers, sharing their own journey, decision-making and success strategies. Campus wharehau offer safe and familiar spaces for open discussion and help to build bonds of trust and connection amongst wāhine participants.

This oral presentation will share the Wāhine Māia delivery framework, the collaboration of kaimahi as well as insights and experiences from participating ākonga wāhine. We anticipate that the Women Summit 2025 delegates will gain insight of the uniquely indigenous framework of delivery, and takeaway ample transferable learnings from the experiences of the co-leads, kaimahi and ākonga wāhine participating in the Wāhine Māia programme.

Keywords

Trades women; kaupapa Māori; indigenous framework; multi-discipline collaboration; academic support; women in trades; vocational trades training; networking; collaboration Māori success; equity;

Recent Publications: Minimum 3 publications to be included (Not mandatory)

Presenting Author Details and Photo

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Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology



I have an educational background spanning the secondary school and tertiary sectors leading out kaupapa to ensure ākonga Māori belong and can connect to their learning environments. As a leader

within Student Support Services and more recently in the Māori Success Directorate I am a strong advocate of an integrated model of provision. This means my team is not stand alone, and that we lean into other kaimahi and teams to strengthen the mahi we do and to amplify the outcomes we need to achieve.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini

Success is not the work of an individual, but the work of many

Suzanne Brotherton

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[Previous] Associate Dean – Carpentry, Construction, Engineering & Electrotechnology

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With a background in the construction industry to management level, I began tertiary teaching in the business school at Tairawhiti Polytechnic in 2005. I have held a number of roles, moving into the Associate Dean position in the Faculty of Primary Industries, Trades and Infrastructure at Toi Ohohmai, in 2020. I am passionate about supporting wāhine to achieve in the trades environment and believe through collaboration within an organisation, the Wāhine Māia initiative with its kaupapa Māori focus can support all learners to achieve their goals and successes, as they perceive them.

Glossary

ākonga wāhine	Female students
Wāhine Māia	Being bold and courageous in the face of adversity
wāhine	Women
Tangata Whenua	Indigenous Māori people of Aotearoa/New Zealand
Tangata Tiriti	People of Aotearoa/New Zealand who are not indigenous of the land
Ākonga Māori	Māori student/s
Whanaungatanga	Establishing relationships

Manaakitanga	Caring and nurturing one another
Kotahitanga	Unity in purpose
Wheako	Sharing experiences
Wharehau	Māori cultural meeting house
Kaimahi	Staff (of Toi Ohomai)