

takirua

2024 Annual Report



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Te Pūrongo a Ngā Kaihautū Chair's Report

Tēnā koutou katoa, ngā manu kōrero o Te Whare Tapere o Rēhia. Tēnei te reo pōwhiri ki a koutou ngā iwi o ngā tai e whā kia rongō mai ai koutou ki ngā kōrero mō tō tātau kaupapa, arā, ka pēhea tōna ahunga atu ki ngā taumata e hiahiatia ana.

Heoi anō kai te tangi tonu te ngākau mō taku hoa rangatira me te heamana takirua a Toni, tatū atu ki a Simon kua hinga i ngā wiki tata. Nā reira e ngā mate haere ki te tini kua nunumi atu ki te pō.

Waihō mātau ki muri nei!

We open with aroha and remembrance for those who have passed across the motu. We honour their memory and acknowledge the legacy they leave in our care. Our thoughts and condolences remain with the whānau who continue to grieve. We pay special tribute to former board member Simon Garrett and former co-chair Toni Huata, both of whom passed away recently. Their leadership, passion, and unwavering dedication to Taki Rua will be deeply missed and long remembered.

Te Haukāinga – Our Home Base 2024: A Year of Transition and Resilience

2024 was a challenging year for Taki Rua, marked by significant transition. We acknowledge and commend the dedication of our staff who continued to guide the waka with strength and commitment during the search for a new Tumu Whakarae following the departure of our former Kahukura, Tānemahuta Gray.

After a thorough and considered search by the board, we are pleased to welcome Willie Craig Fransen as our new Tumu Whakarae. Willie brings with him a deep passion for theatre, having worked as an actor and playwright. A former teacher, he most recently served at NZQA and is well connected within the national education sector, with strong relationships across a wide network of teachers throughout Aotearoa.

We are excited for the journey ahead under his leadership.

Ngā Kaiurungi o Taki Rua – Our Board

To the Board of Taki Rua, thank you for your consistent commitment and hard work throughout the year. Your governance, guidance and belief in the kaupapa has upheld the organisation's direction and strength.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and farewell to outgoing board members Sasha Gibb, Grant Roa, and Hera Clark-Dancer. Ka nui te mihi ki a koutou. Your invaluable contributions, leadership, and dedication to the kaupapa of Taki Rua will never be forgotten.

We also acknowledge the staff who have departed following the recent restructure. To all kaimahi – past and present – we express our deep gratitude for your commitment, creativity, and service to Taki Rua throughout 2024. Your mahi has shaped the journey of this organisation, and we thank you sincerely.



Te Pūrongo a Ngā Kaihautū Chair's Report

Acknowledgement of Funders

Our sincere thanks to our key funders and supporters, whose ongoing investment makes our work possible:

- * Creative New Zealand
- * Ministry for Culture and Heritage
 - * Wellington City Council
 - * Te Mātāwai
 - * Pelorus Trust
- * Aotearoa Gaming Trust
- * Eastern and Central Community Trust
 - * Wellington Energy Trust
 - * Sargood Bequest
 - * Lion Foundation
 - * Bay Trust
 - * Foundation North
- * Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori
- * Blue Sky Community Trust
 - * Trust Tairāwhiti
 - * One Foundation
- * Grassroots Trust Central
- * Farina Thompson Charitable Trust
 - * Rotorua Trust

We also acknowledge the generous sponsorship from FNZ and the Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts.

Your unwavering support ensures Taki Rua continues to fulfil its responsibilities as a ****Toi Tōtara Haemata**** organisation, nurturing and championing Māori theatre across Aotearoa.

Hei konā mai – with heartfelt thanks,

**Ngā Kaiurungi o Taki Rua
Co-Chairs – 2024**



Adrian Tangaroa Wagner

Te Ātiawa, Te Whānau-ā-Āpanui,
Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, Ngāti Apa,
Ngāti Hauiti, Ngāti Kahungunu
Kaihautū / Chairperson

Te Pūrongo a Te Kaitiaki Pūtea Treasurer's Report

E rau rangatira maa e reo karanga ki a koutou.

2024 was the start of the economic challenges faced by Taki Rua, due to less funding available for the sector.

An achievement amongst this economic climate was the fruition of our main stage production *Hatupatu / Kurungaituku: A Forbidden Love*, after a year of preparation for it. We again mihi to all those involved who worked tirelessly to bring this awesome production to fulfilment.

The funding issue identified that we had to review our Operations. The completed review indicated that changes had to be made for us to stay financially viable. Changes were implemented across the board. However, the most affected area was staffing.

Pre-review:

- Seven permanent positions
- Three fixed positions
- Two contractor positions

Post review:

- Four permanent positions
- Four contractor positions

Advisory panels

- Kahui kaumatua
- Artistic advisory

We know that these economic challenges will continue for at least the next two years. To help counteract these obstacles, we have implemented more prudent financial practices. While still continuing to seek opportunities for sustainable growth.

The 2024 audited financial statements are provided in this report.

Nooku te aroha ki ngaa kaimahi i mahi ai i teenei tau uaua.

He pouri teeraa waa ki te wehenga oou etehei i te paheketao ohaoha o te whare nei. Heoi anoo e piataata mai ngaa pukenga me ngaa maatauranga ki oou raatou mahi hou. Koia kei a raatou.



Roimata Tauroa

Ngaati Korokii Kahukura, Ngapuhi,
Ngaati Tuwharetoa, Ngaati Maniapoto,
Ngaati Kea Ngaati Tuara
Kaitiaki Pūtea/Treasurer



Tumu Whakarae Chief Executive Officer's Report

As the newly appointed Tumu Whakarae of Taki Rua, I have spent my first months in 2025 getting to know the company, the people, and the path that led us here. The 2024 year was one of major transition, challenge, and renewal for Taki Rua—a year that set the stage for our future.

Following the resignation of Tānemahuta Gray at the end of 2023, who stepped away from his role as CEO to direct *Hatupatu / Kurungaituku: A Forbidden Love*, the company entered a sustained period of restructure and reflection. With no Tumu Whakarae in place, company operations were led by Producer Paul McLaughlin and Alex McKellar, supported by a lean but committed team.

In 2024, the company presented three significant works:

Hatupatu / Kurungaituku: A Forbidden Love, was a major production—an ambitious large-scale aerial work that premiered in Pōneke and toured to Tāmaki Makaurau, Ōtautahi, and finally Rotorua. This visually striking blend of theatre, music, aerial choreography, and design resonated strongly with audiences across the motu, with a particularly emotional return to its Rotorua roots.

Te Aka Tawhito, written by Tere Harrison, was the Te Reo Māori Season offering. A high-energy tour of Te Ika-a-Māui that also reached Rakiura—an historic first for Taki Rua—it was warmly received by kura and local communities, reinforcing the vital role of reo Māori theatre.

Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere, an adaptation of Patricia Grace's beloved story, toured to kōhanga reo and early childhood centres. With the unforgettable Amanda Noblett returning as Kuia and a cast that brought spiders and humour to life, this show again proved the demand for quality theatre for our youngest tamariki.

With no permanent Production Manager in place, the company brought in Toi Whakaari graduate Geoff Pinfield in an interim capacity. His quick step-in and professionalism ensured seamless delivery of our touring works and upheld Taki Rua commitment to excellence on the road.

Open auditions were held for both *Te Aka Tawhito* and *Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere*, part of a renewed focus on inclusion of new talent. Several outstanding practitioners joined the Taki Rua whānau through this process, bringing new energy to our work.

In the background, Jeremy Hunt extended his contract to support Alex McKellar with the increasingly demanding funding environment. With fewer funds available from historic supporters, the team worked hard to maintain affordable pricing and ensure accessibility across our programme.

Former kaimahi Ash Ryan (née Moor) continued to offer critical support with administrative and invoicing systems. Her behind-the-scenes work brought consistency and continuity to operations while she also welcomed her first child. We extend our deep thanks to Ash for this vital contribution.

Throughout the year, the Board led a detailed and consultative restructure process, engaging widely with past and present kaimahi, whānau, and the broader arts sector. By the end of 2024, that mahi had laid the foundation for a stronger and more focused organisation.

Alongside the delivery of our 2024 programme, considerable planning and budgeting work was undertaken to prepare the company for the year ahead. This included building a robust structural framework to support the incoming Tumu Whakarae. I am grateful to step into a role that has been carefully and thoughtfully prepared. I also acknowledge the transparent and regular communication with Creative New Zealand, whose continued support was crucial throughout this transition.

Despite the internal challenges, the creative work on stage and on tour in 2024 was remarkable. The response from audiences and partners alike reaffirms the enduring significance of ngā kaupapa o Taki Rua and its place in the theatre landscape of Aotearoa.

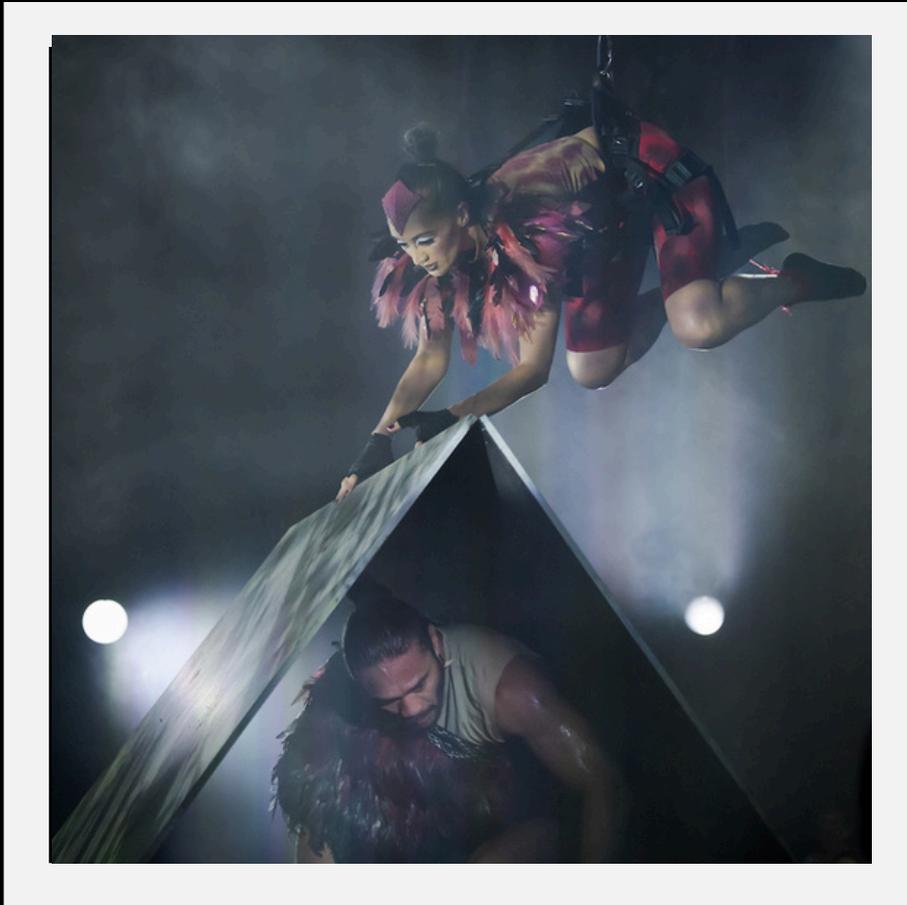
Craig Fransen

Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Te Aupouri, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Horana
Tumu Whakarae / Chief Executive



Ngā Uara Our Values

Our Taki Rua whānau are continuously building on a hauora policy for our kaimahi, freelancers, board and community that will support the health and well-being of our sector. We have five core values, uara, which guide our processes. These values are represented by the front aspect of a whareniui.



Manaakitanga (amo): Taki Rua engagement and relationships with all persons and groups is based on mutual trust, honesty, respect and reciprocity.

Whanaungatanga (amo): The importance of collaboration and mutual support in accordance with the dynamic of whanaungatanga is acknowledged in Taki Rua internal and external relationships.

Pūkengatanga (raparapa): We aspire towards excellence in all of our dealings with others in order to create high quality outcomes in all areas.

Kotahitanga (kōruru): By working together we will enhance and support the mana and aspirations of Taki Rua, advancing the interests of Māori theatre in Aotearoa.

Kaitiakitanga (tekoteko): We have responsibilities as kaitiaki of the past work of Taki Rua, its members and the wider Māori theatre community. This also relates to the taonga and mātauranga that is shared through Te Whare Tapere

Te Whānau Our Family

Ngā Kaiurungi Board Members

Adrian Tangaroa Wagner **Kaihautū / Chairperson**

Roimata Tauroa **Kaitiaki Pūtea / Treasurer**

Jamie Ferguson

Pearl Sidwell

Taylor Terekia

Sasha Gibb (Outgoing)

Hera Clark-Dancer (Outgoing)

Grant Roa (Outgoing)

Toni Huata (Departed)

Ngā Kaimahi Staff Members

Craig Fransen **Tumu Whakarae / Chief Executive Officer**

Alexandra McKellar **Kaiwhakahaere Whakawhanake Taura Here / Partnerships and Audience Development Manager**

Paul McLaughlin **Kaiwhakaputa / Producer**

Jade Te Kira **Kaiwhakarite Pūtea Pākihi / Finance and Business Coordinator**

Joyce Kupe Stephens (Finished)

Jeremy Hunt (Finished)

Theresa Hanaray (Finished)

Ngā Kaitautoko Contributors

Cohen Stephens Kaitautoko **Rorohiko / IT Support**

Helena-Jane Kilkelly **Kaiwhakarite Pukapuka / Book Project Manager**

David O'Donnell **Kaituhituhi / Author**

Nicola Hyland **Kaituhituhi / Author**



Te Whānau Whānui Our Extended Family



Supported by

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



AOTEAROA
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FESTIVAL OF
THE ARTS



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Eastern and Central Community Trust

Sargood Bequest

Bay Trust

Te Taura Whiri

Trust Tairāwhiti

Grassroots Trust Central

Rotorua Trust

Ministry of Culture and Heritage

Te Mātāwai

Aotearoa Gaming Trust

Wellington Energy Trust

Lion Foundation

Foundation North

Blue Sky Community Trust

One Foundation

Farina Thompson Charitable Trust

RDU



Te Tohu Tiketike o Taki Rua – Supported by the Judith Dale Estate



Wi Kuki Kaa
Rona Bailey
Tūngia Baker
Keri Kaa
Bob Wiki
Nancy Brunning
Simon Garrett



Rangimoana Taylor
Sunny Amey
Jim Moriarty
Apirana Taylor
Tanea Heke
Hone Kouka
Mere Boughton

Tūngia Baker & Taki Rua Emerging Māori Writers & Actor Scholarships

Tanira Kingi

Maioha Riwai-Couch

Rongopai Tickel

Huia Max

Mihiroa Fox

Myciah Keall,

Īhaka Martyn

Ngā Kaupapa Whaihua Snapshot of 2024



Total audience members
across the year:

16,127

Tamariki and rangatahi performed to:

10,710

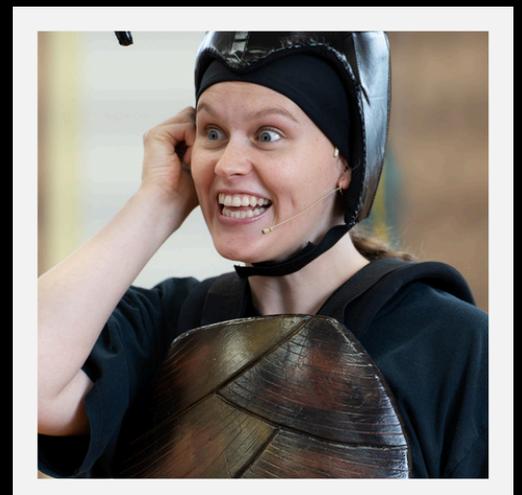


Number of shows:

129



Regions performed in:
18 from Cape Reinga to Rakiura!



Whakanuia, whakamihia a Toni Huata, tō tātou ake māreikura o ngā toi



I te Mane te rā tekau o Pepuere ka rangona kua mate te Manu Tioriori, a Toni Huata. I te Turei te tekau mā tahi o Pepuere ka tae atu ngā tini me ngā mano ki Pipitea Marae mō tana poroporoaki ki Pōneke i mua i tana tangihanga ki Heretaunga. Such was the great love for Toni that her many friends, admirers, current and past workmates, whānau and fellow entertainers would arrive on-mass from far and wide to celebrate what a wonderful lively character she was. E ai ki tētahi she 'had a smile that would light up the place' and many times at Pipitea Marae that morning faces lit up as people spoke about her life.

Before making Wellington her home, Toni was originally from Hastings, with her tribal affiliations being Ngāti Kahungunu and Rongowhakaata. She was also proud of her tauwi Welsh, Irish and Lebanese roots. She was Takirua personified. It is therefore no surprise that our theatre company, Taki Rua Productions, has been a big part of her Wellington world. Initially attracted to Kaupapa Māori Theatre by Jimmy Moriarty mā through their Te Rākau Hua o Te Wao Tapu theatre company, it was only natural that she would also become involved in Taki Rua whakaari. These included some of the earlier Te Reo Māori Season shows in the late 1990's. More recently she was a Takirua board member and at the time of her passing, she was still co-chair of the company.

As one of the leading Māori female solo musical artists, Toni has performed on stages and venues in countries across the world including Aotearoa whānui, Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada, The United States, The South Pacific, Australia and Asia. Always abiding by the mantra of 'Treating other people well and others will treat you well', Toni has collaborated with some of New Zealand's most celebrated musicians including Gareth Farr, Brannigan Kaa, Tehimana Kerr, Ariana Tikao, Ngahiwi Apanui and Kirsten Te Rito. When she passed, Toni was the producer of the Pao Pao Pao music showcase and Kaihautū Pūoro Māori (Director of Māori Music) at SOUNZ Centre for New Zealand Music.

Kei te maumahara tātou ki tōna māia, ki tōna manawanui, ki tōna kaha ki tōna atawhai me tana ngāwaritanga. Kei te tangi tonu te ngākau, kei te hotuhotu tonu te manawa.

E te Māreikura o ngā toi, moe mai, moe mai, moe mai rā.

Hatupatu | Kurungaituku: A Forbidden Love

Main Bill

TAKI RUA PRESENTS THE FNZ NATIONAL TOUR OF

HATUPATU

KURUNGAITUKU

A Forbidden Love



**BREATHTAKING
IMMERSIVE AERIAL
THEATRE**

Inspired by the
Te Arawa iwi kōrero

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Tānemahuta Gray
MĀUI | TIKI TAANE MAHUTA

KAPA HAKA CHOREOGRAPHER
Wētini Mītai-Ngātai
TE MATARAE | O REHU

In early 2024, Taki Rua premiered *Hatupatu | Kurungaituku: A Forbidden Love*, a groundbreaking aerial dance-theatre work that reimagined the Te Arawa pūrākau of Hatupatu and the bird-woman Kurungaituku. Directed by Tānemahuta Gray, the production combined kapa haka, contemporary dance, and immersive multimedia to deliver a visceral exploration of love, betrayal, and survival. The show toured to Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Rotorua, and was widely acclaimed for its innovation, ambition, and cultural depth.

This large-scale work was made possible through the strong support of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage via the Te Urungi – Innovation Fund, naming sponsor FNZ, Creative New Zealand, Wellington City Council, and many other financial and in-kind partners.

The narrative followed Hatupatu, killed by his brothers and later revived and ensnared by Kurungaituku. Their complex and shifting relationship unfolded through aerial performance and striking choreography, culminating in Kurungaituku's self-sacrifice to save Hatupatu. The production featured Eds Eramiha as Hatupatu and Kasina Campbell as Kurungaituku, supported by a talented ensemble. The creative team included Wētini Mītai-Ngātai (kapa haka), Regan Taylor (Direction), Helena-Jane Kilkelly (Producer), John Verryt (set), Elizabeth Whiting (costumes), Paddy Free (sound), Jo Kilgour (lighting), and Delainy Kennedy and Rachel Nesor (AV).

Audiences were fully immersed in the environment, with performers soaring overhead and the staging evoking the geothermal landscapes of Rotorua. The show's cultural authenticity and powerful design resonated deeply—particularly in Rotorua, where the story holds strong ancestral connection.

This was one of the most aspirational and technically complex productions for Taki Rua to date. It placed significant demands on the company and the large team of creatives and production staff.

While the process presented real challenges, it also offered valuable opportunities for both experienced professionals and emerging artists, continuing our commitment to knowledge-sharing and the development of theatre at scale.

Hatupatu | Kurungaituku: A Forbidden Love exemplified the kaupapa of Taki Rua, presenting Māori narratives through contemporary theatre, blending tradition and innovation to move and inspire audiences across Aotearoa.

Te Aka Tawhito

Te Reo Māori Season



The Taki Rua 2024 Te Reo Māori Season featured *Te Aka Tawhito*, a high-energy new play by Tere Harrison, directed by Regan Taylor. The show followed Rongotai, a young DJ reconnecting with her roots through the guidance of Kui Hauora, her cousin Whaiora, and the magic of ancestral sound. Performed entirely in te reo Māori, the production balanced humour, heart, and kaupapa Māori values, connecting with tamariki across Aotearoa.

The show toured extensively throughout the North and South Islands, reaching thousands of students and kura. A standout moment was the company's first-ever performance on Rakiura (Stewart Island), where the team were warmly welcomed and tamariki responded with huge enthusiasm to experiencing theatre in te reo Māori. Strong new connections were also formed with kura and kōhanga reo, including at Okere Falls near Rotorua.

This year's season combined fresh talent with experienced leadership. Monica-Ellen Graham-Vincent and Parekawa Findlay joined the tour for the first time, alongside recent Toi Whakaari graduate Olivia Cowley as Stage Manager. Long-time performer Amanda Noblett brought deep experience and guidance, supporting the kaupapa of tuakana-teina within the team.

The tour was artistically successful, culturally rich, and a clear highlight of the Taki Rua 2024 programme.



Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere

Te Reo Tātarakihi Season

The Taki Rua 2024 Tātarakihi Tour featured *Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere*, Jamie McCaskill's warm and playful adaptation of Patricia Grace's beloved story. Designed specifically for kōhanga reo and younger tamariki, the show brought to life the characters of Kui and the spirited spiders in a te reo Māori performance full of music, laughter, and heart.

This was the second Tātarakihi tour for Taki Rua, focused on Te Ika a Māui, with Te Waipounamu scheduled for 2025. The cast included Mycah Keall, Amanda Noblett, and two exciting new talents discovered through open auditions: Waitahi Aniwaniwa McGee and Manahi Taoho. Manahi was a new find for Taki Rua, having applied via open auditions. His mahi on the show was outstanding and soon after the completion of the tour he was accepted for the Actor Training Course at Toi Whakaari. Amanda Noblett again delivered a warm and hilarious Kui, anchoring the show with her experience and charisma.

Stage Manager Olivia Cowley, fresh from Te Aka Tawhito, continued to impress in her second tour with the company.

The tour confirmed once again that there is strong appetite for theatre made specifically for early learners. Tamariki across the motu were captivated by the cheeky spiders, the wise fireant and the unforgettable Kui, reinforcing the value of high-quality te reo Māori storytelling for our youngest audiences.



Ngā Pūrongo Pūtea Financial Statements