

Rautaki Ōritetanga me te Angitu Ākonga

Equity and Ākonga Success Strategy

2023–2033



Kupu whakataki | Introduction

As one of seven key changes of the Reform of Vocational Education, Te Pūkenga is required to put learners at the centre, honour Te Tiriti, and focus on those who have not been well-served by the current system. This includes Māori, Pacific, and disabled ākonga. Te Pūkenga has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redesign the system in a way that ensures all ākonga (learners) have the opportunity to experience success at Te Pūkenga in a way that embraces who they are.

By 2023 Te Pūkenga will be large by global standards, with around 270,000 ākonga supported by 10,000 kaimahi (staff).

Based on in-depth research across Aotearoa and integrated data, we now better understand our ākonga cohorts and the barriers and enablers to their success. This has led to the development of an evidence and needs-based Equity and Ākonga Success Strategy for Te Pūkenga.

Summary of Strategy

The **Equity and Ākonga Success Strategy** provides a ten-year road map for how Te Pūkenga creates equitable access and participation for all ākonga and increases the responsiveness of learning and support practices. It describes how Te Pūkenga will seek to remove barriers to access, participation, persistence, and completion of qualifications, through changes to learner support, qualification design, kaimahi and employer capability, and through an increased understanding of ākonga socio-cultural and financial realities.

The Strategy sets out:

- 1.** The vision
- 2.** Goals and measures
- 3.** ‘Momentum strategies’ to be implemented across various organisation capabilities

There is no ‘silver bullet’ for achieving an equitable system. This will take time across our future horizons. Please see our [What you can expect document](#).

Equity requires a systemic change so that we can understand and meet the needs of underserved ākonga by correcting structures, systems, cultures, and policies that create stratification, and working in partnership to create environments that our ākonga experience as fair, affirming, and inclusive.

Vision

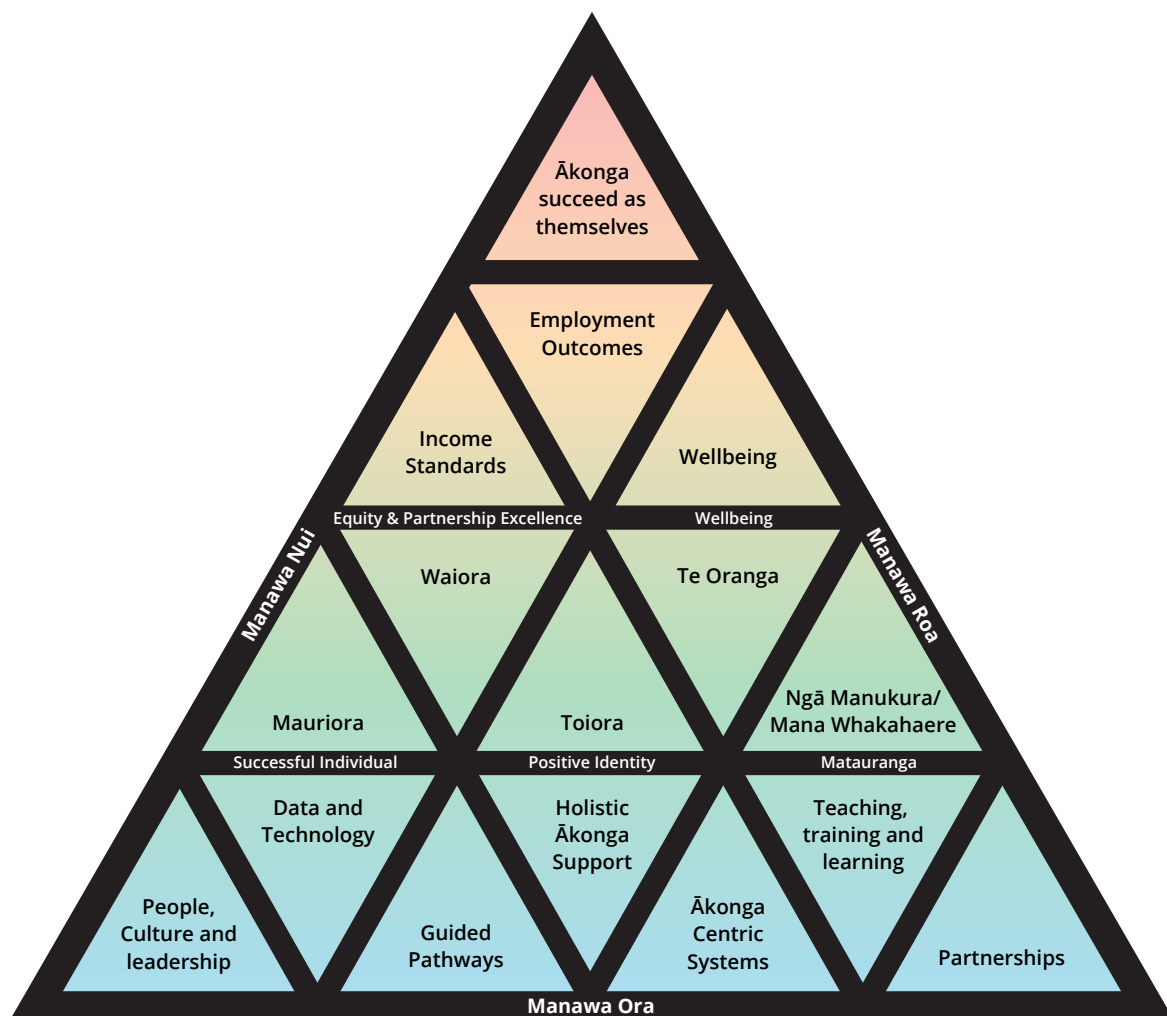
Through equitable education experiences, more ākonga (with whānau) will experience the long-term benefits of increased wellbeing, stronger learning and employment outcomes which are fit for the future, and increased living standards.

Strategies will be delivered through our wellbeing framework, the six dimensions of Te Pae Māhutonga. This will ensure that holistic wellbeing of ākonga is sustained during their journey with us. This is particularly important in the current Covid environment.

We will achieve this through the intentional implementation of momentum strategies across seven organisation capabilities established as necessary for system-level change: people, culture, and leadership, holistic ākonga support, teaching, training and learning, guided pathways, data and technology, ākonga centric systems and partnerships.

Our values, Manawa nui, Manawa roa, Manawa ora, guide our behaviour and how we engage with our ākonga, and how we help them navigate each stage of the learner journey.

Figure 1 A Vision for Learner and Whānau Success



Strategy Goals and Measures

This table outlines the success and equity goals Te Pūkenga has for ākonga, and how we expect to see them play out over time.

Goal	We will know this is happening when	Leading to	Evidenced by
1 More equitable access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are accessing optimal provision for their learning needs. • Learners have access to Te Pūkenga services in their communities and workspaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced attrition overall and reduced attrition for priority learners. • Increased perseverance. 	<p>Indicators of the Living Standards Framework, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment – longitudinal tracking of Te Pūkenga learners to determine progression from low to high skill employment, employment in the area of study, and duration in employment.
2 Stronger participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems, structures, and services are provided to increase learner access, engagement and success, across levels of study, subjects and modes of delivery (work-based, distance and on-campus). • Te Pūkenga consistently provides learning environments that increase participation, progression, completion and - ultimately - success for priority learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced attrition overall and reduced attrition for priority learners. • Increased perseverance. • Stronger responsive practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income – longitudinal tracking of income benefits for learners, across New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) subject areas, as well as full-time and part-time study benefits.
3 Stronger responsive practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching, training, employers, and support staff demonstrate culturally responsive and inclusive practice to meet the needs of underserved ākonga. • Te Pūkenga structures and systems (governance, leadership, operations) give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and partner for learner voice and agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased course and credit completion. • Increased programme and qualification completion. • Net Promoter Score (Overall Te Pūkenga, Teaching/Training and Ākonga Services). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social capital – a sense of community and connection.

Goal	We will know this is happening when	Leading to	Evidenced by
4 More equitable outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit, course, programme, and qualification outcomes are at parity for priority learners across work-based, distance and on-campus delivery. • Better employment, social and cultural outcomes for priority learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased course, programme, and qualification completion. 	
5 Increased wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic wellbeing needs of ākonga are known and met, so they can thrive in the tertiary environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ākonga Health Score (across Te Pae Mahutonga dimensions). 	



Momentum Strategies

This section helps us to understand the challenges and inequities that currently exist, and the momentum strategies that could be implemented across our organisation capabilities to improve access, participation, retention, and successful outcomes for all ākonga. These draw on what learners told us through the Ākonga at the Centre research and the resulting Te Rito reports, as well as data about our ākonga cohorts.

People, Culture, and Leadership

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learners can leave education and feel frustrated if their voices have not been heard. ● Inconsistent learner feedback is gathered across the network. ● Remuneration provided to learner leaders and the degree of training provided to representatives and leaders is inconsistent. ● Benchmarking has shown that there is significantly lower levels of expenditure on learner services across the subsidiary network when compared to other sectors. ● Kaimahi ethnicity is not reflective of our ākonga population. Te Pūkenga Equal Opportunity Employment practices need to ensure that barriers do not exist for the recruitment, selection and onboarding of Māori, Pacific and disabled kaimahi. ● Employers have asked Te Pūkenga to partner with them, to enable growth in cultural knowledge and skills, increased access to Māori and Pacific mentors, trainers, and agencies, to create a more culturally competent eco-system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A learner engagement eco-system, which creates a consistent structure for learner representation at governance, management and operational (including regional) levels. ● Investment in learner leadership capability building, to ensure that our leaders have access to the skills, mentoring and training needed to support successful leadership outcomes. ● Attraction, recruitment, and onboarding focusses on ensuring that no barriers exist for the recruitment of Māori, Pacific, and disabled kaimahi, and that career advancement is intentional to foster career and leadership opportunities. ● Te Pūkenga kaimahi and employer partners are supported through a values-based development programme and workshops to develop cultural and disability confidence. ● An employer partnering service for ākonga career pathways, work placement and wellbeing. ● Learning environments are designed to reflect and meet the needs of underserved ākonga.

Guided pathways

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breadth of access and participation by priority learners is limited. ● Pathways and transitions into Te Pūkenga have not been optimised for priority learners. ● Pathways and progression across TEOS are unclear and, in some areas, competitive to the detriment of the learner. ● Foundational pathways are not necessary enabling progression to higher levels of study. ● Pre-requisite foundational pathways can be a barrier to learner participation at higher levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pathways for underserved ākonga are designed into programme transition and transformation, with a focus on increasing access and participation and reducing attrition. ● Clear pathways are designed across all delivery modes. ● ‘Success Academies’ for ākonga whose prior learning achievement could place them at risk of not being successful in their programme. ● ‘Smart Start’ credits are embedded within Programmes that enable ākonga to work on skills that will help them succeed in their learning, including the development of success plans. ● Increasing secondary to tertiary partnerships to create additional pathway options for priority learners into Te Pūkenga, through integrated curriculum with secondary sector and employer partners. ● Access is enhanced through a national, standardised recognition of prior learning services for Te Pūkenga ākonga.

Data and Technology

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There has been limited ability to take a macro-view of ākongā performance across programme portfolios and delivery modes.• There is currently no function that assesses institutional performance and effectiveness focused on learner equity.• There is currently no national data infrastructure or governance framework.• Performance data is held across multiple independent systems, and reporting is on an ad-hoc basis, and requires significant manual querying. There is no national set of ākongā success goals, outcomes, and measures.• There is no national analytics framework that can be used to identify triggers that could signal that an ākongā might require assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capability to understand a network view of ākongā success, including learner performance (EPIs) experience (course, programme evaluation) learner needs, graduate destinations, and outcomes. These are combined with Ako Delivery Network performance and employer insights to become the engine that informs, directs, and tracks ākongā success and outcomes.• An alert and case management system is required for ākongā holistic services, to enable Te Pūkenga ‘navigators’ to manage engagement with ākongā, deploy interventions, actions, and resolutions. This “triggers and alerts’ system underpins the navigation model and enables rapid response to ākongā need across the learner journey.• Te Pūkenga Outcomes Framework establishes integrated ākongā success performance and accountability framework for the network, with data governance guidelines.



Holistic Ākongā Services

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attrition numbers show that ākongā need proactive and personalised support, helping them with their academic and personal needs. ● There is limited ability to scale holistic support, and it is unevenly distributed across campus, work-based and distance delivery. ● Ākongā are bounced between services and currently there is a lack of connected support and guidance. ● There is limited availability and access to the services that are needed most by ākongā, those being mental health and addiction, food pantries and financial services and coaching. ● There is limited access to mentoring, role models or tuākana, so ākongā can learn alongside peers and those who have already walked their path. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A team of navigators to walk alongside our ākongā, helping them with their academic and personal needs and ensuring they are seamlessly connected to resources and services. This is across work-based, campus and distance delivery modes. ● Pre-start Whakawhanaungatanga activities to enable meaningful and early connections. ● A national Tuākana-Teina and peer mentor network. ● Expanded national mental health and addiction services. ● A national network of food pantries to assist with ākongā basic needs. ● A network-wide financial services and coaching service. ● A suite of cultural services and active living activities that bring ākongā together within a region. ● A culturally responsive and timely disputes resolution service for ākongā that includes an independent advocacy service for learners.

Teaching, Training and Learning

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Across levels of study, be it campus, work and distance delivery, and full or part-time study, successful completions are lower for our Māori and Pacific ākonga ● An opportunity exists to identify subject areas that lower the chances of successful credit, course and programme completion. ● Tutors, trainers and employers have a desire to increase their cultural and disability confidence. ● Employers have asked for a safe space for learning, so they can grow cultural knowledge and skills and stay up to date with the learning needs of employees, while not impacting their business operations. ● Programmes need to have a range of delivery options, so that ākonga can fit learning around their lives. ● Assessments and learning should be more relevant to the mahi being done in the workplace and classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At the heart of our ākonga experience are our tutors, trainers, and employers, and our Ako teaching pedagogy. An 'Equity Institute', will deploy high-impact equity teaching and training practices across Ako networks, focusing on embedding cultural consciousness, disability confidence and Ako orientation, using action-based strategies in teaching practice and models. These will be for tutors and trainers, with specifically-designed capability support for work-based employer partners provided. ● Supplementary, non-credit bearing learning is designed to enable learners to make sense of their learning and enabling higher credit, course and qualification achievement in high-volume subjects. ● Courses and credits within programmes where lower grades, marks or completion rates have a disproportionate effect on the learner are reviewed and redesigned for ākonga relevance, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assessments structures ● scheduling ● increasing mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori embedded within the curriculum. ● The standardisation of trainer and teacher education programmes to increase staff confidence in areas of Ako competence, professional practice and research.

Partnerships

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There has been limited national vocational education response or alignment to iwi educational strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted pathways, designed with secondary school partners and employers, for priority learners.• Proactive engagement with iwi education strategies and pathway alignment.• Increased partnering with communities, iwi and hapū to create learning environments that best meet the needs of our ākonga.• Some services will be best provided by the own communities of ākonga, as some external organisations have expertise and skills that Te Pūkenga does not.• Work alongside our employer partners to further build trainer capability, cultural and disability confidence.• Partnering with TEOs in communities of practice for ākonga equity and success.

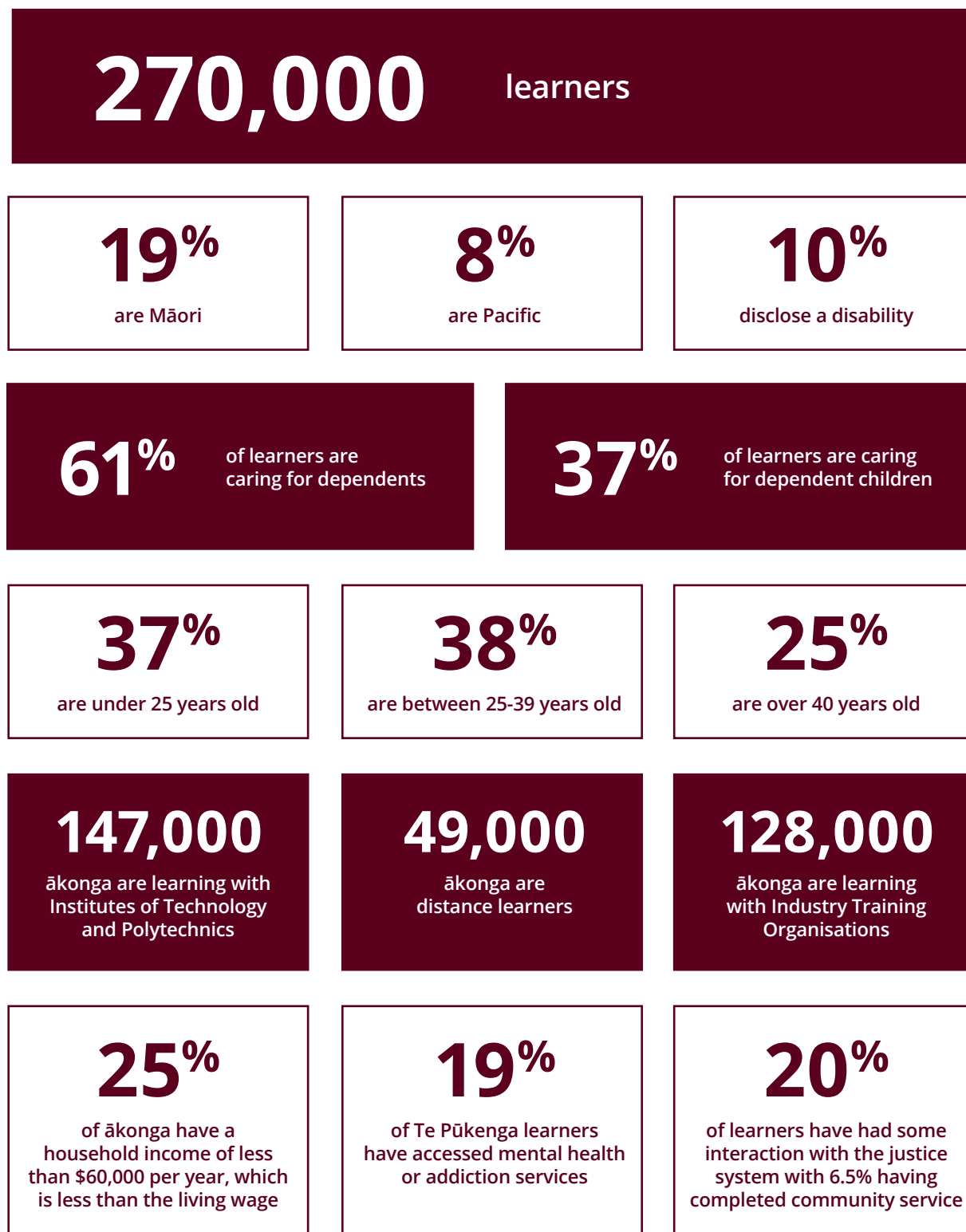


Ākonga Centred Systems

Challenges and opportunities	Momentum strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Systems, structures, and services have not been designed with an understanding of ākonga equity, their experiences or needs. ● Current policies and procedures have not been written through a lens of ākonga equity, their experiences or needs. ● Access to barrier and stigma-free information continues to be a barrier for under-served learners. ● Food, housing, and technology insecurity are significant barriers to ākonga participation and success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A co-design facilitation team, supported by an equity-based approach to co-design, will ensure equity is embedded in the way our services and teams work across the organisation. ● Whiria Ngā Rau and the Accessibility Charter shape the way we engage with our ākonga partners and how we will increase access for disabled learners, in particular through meeting the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard and Web Usability Standard. We will also expect this of our vendors. ● We will prioritise the development of learner-facing policies to ensure that our equity strategies are supported in practice by our policy framework. ● Ākonga will continue to be supported through a hardship fund.

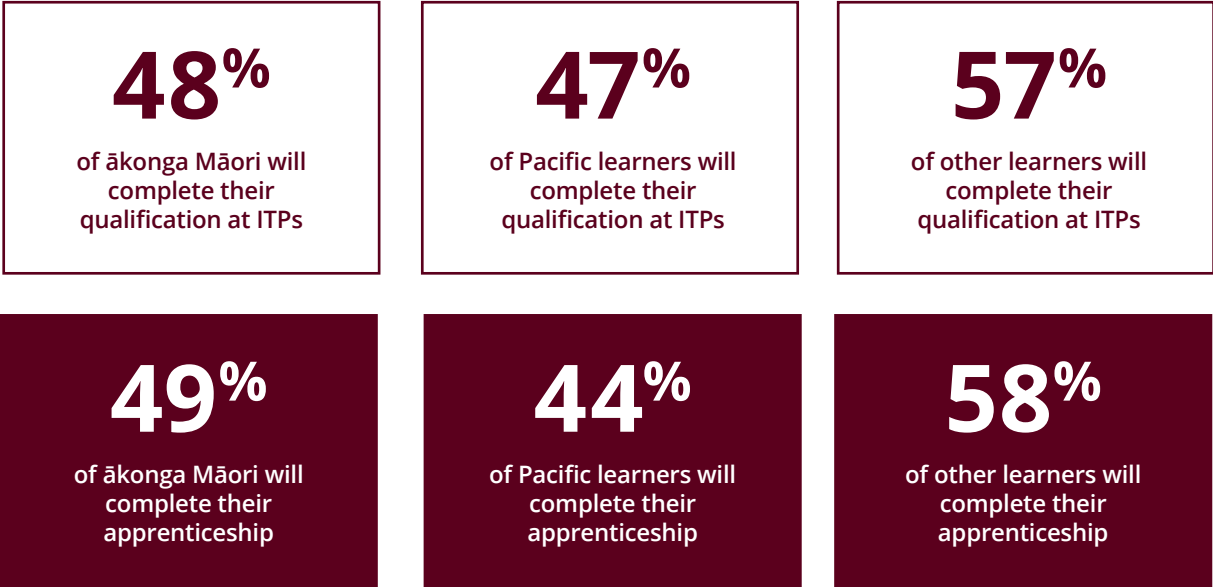
Appendix 1 – Understanding Te Pūkenga learners¹

Demographics

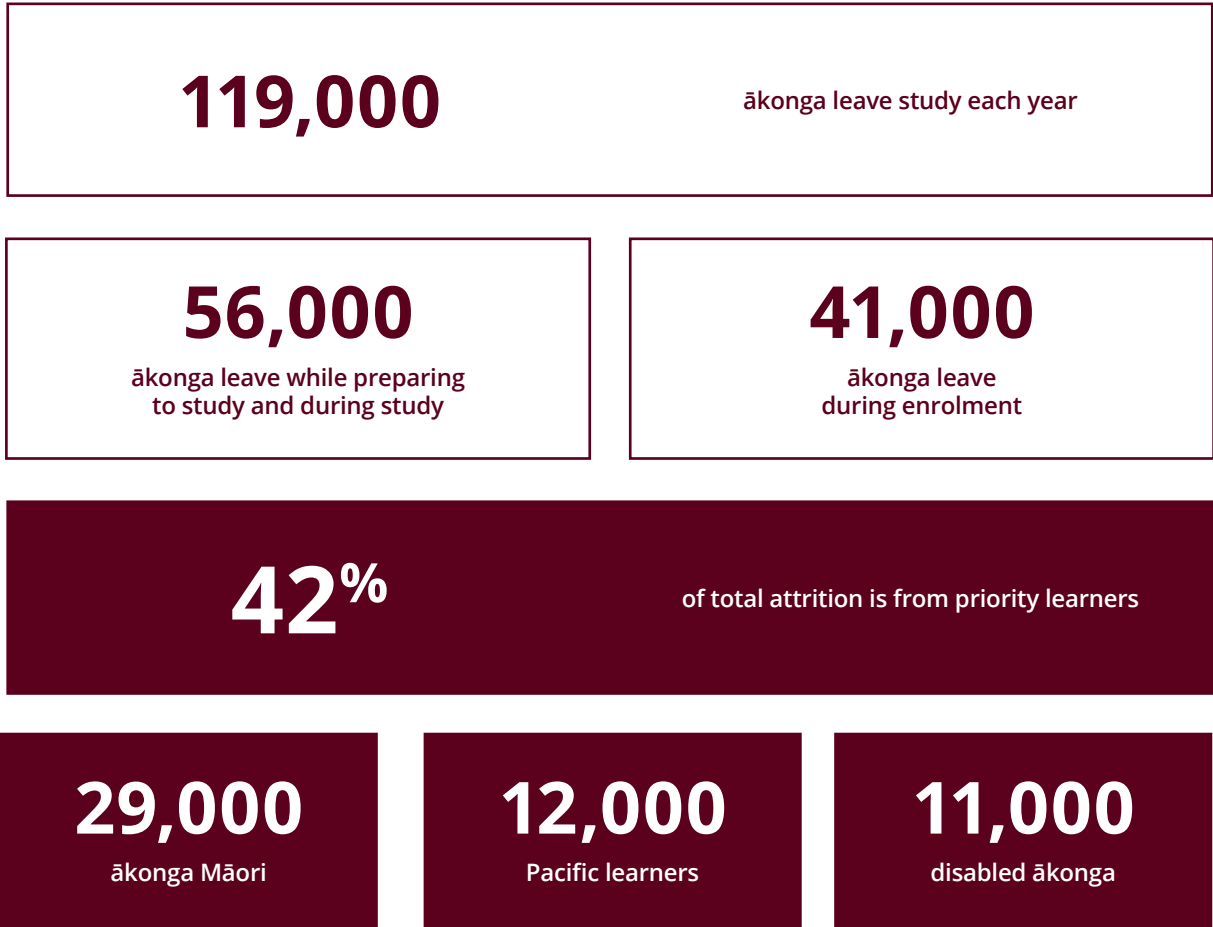


¹ Learner and Whanau Success Reports: Learner Origins, Composition and Destinations, 2022. Data used is 2020 enrolments.

Completion



Attrition



Participation

71%

of Te Pūkenga provision
between Levels 1 to 4
(per learner headcount)

70%

of our ākonga Māori
are enrolled in
Level 1 to 4 programmes

58%

of Pacific learners
are enrolled in
Level 1 to 4 programmes

76%

of qualification
portfolio is
participated by
ākonga Māori

62%

of qualification
portfolio is
participated by
Pacific learners

50%

of ākonga Māori
enrolments sit within
ITPs 18 qualifications.

50%

of Pacific learner
enrolments sit within
ITPs 21 qualifications

Opportunity cost

6-12%

of learners are at high risk
of dropping out
due to financial stress

72,000

ākonga will have a financial
shortfall of around \$2,500
per year while studying

1 in 4

ākonga have unmet
financial needs

Understanding our Ākonga

We need to understand the experiences of our ākonga within the education system that result in the outcomes above.

This requires us to understand the distinct interests, aspirations, cultural backgrounds and life complexities of our ākonga, in order to better their outcomes.

[Te Rito research](#) which was undertaken in 2020 resulted in three reports that provided a clear view of what learners felt that they needed to achieve their version of success. 74 opportunities to enhance learner success were identified which were summarised into 12 objectives.





Te Pūkenga