



# Matariki ki Waikato 2024

## Festival Report



## **Matariki ki Waikato 2024**

**Serving the entire Waikato region, with a population of 458,202 people the Matariki ki Waikato Festival has successfully hosted events that engage and educate the community about the cultural and spiritual significance of Matariki, with a vision to embed local puuraakau, history, and knowledge.**

Each event is a collaboration among numerous local organisations and mana whenua, transforming the festival into a series of mini-festivals across different areas, different rohe.

This year, the festival also celebrated the release of the historical feature film “Ka Whawhai Tonu,” set in 1864 during the Battle of Ōrākau—a poignant reminder of those who have gone before and what drives the Matariki ki Waikato Festival to pursue change every day.

# Chairs Report

Since its founding in 2009, Te Ohu Whakaita (TOW) Charitable Trust has been guided by the principles of Te Pahi O Matariki, including Kotahitanga, Manaakitanga, and Mana Motuhake. The Matariki ki Waikato (MKW) Festival has grown significantly but remains focused on connecting with our Taiao, celebrating Te Ao Maaori, and strengthening our communities.

Matariki ki Waikato is more than just a series of events; it's a time for communities to come together, honour the vision of Matariki, and embrace the significance of our cultural celebration. It brings together diverse

organisations across the Waikato rohe, offering kaumaatua, rangatahi, and tamariki events. We sincerely thank our sponsors and contributors for their support in making these events a success and helping us to celebrate and honour Matariki.

Te Ao Maaori reminds us that all things are interconnected. Matariki is a time to reflect, enjoy the present, and plan for the future, understanding that our actions today shape the world we leave behind. The following report details the events and how your funds were used.





## Objectives

### **Engage and Educate**

Foster community understanding and appreciation of the cultural and spiritual significance of Matariki by integrating local stories, history, and knowledge into the festival's activities.

### **Preserve and Innovate**

Celebrate both traditional and contemporary Matariki practices through active community involvement, strategic partnerships, and accessible programming that honours the past while embracing new traditions.

### **Inspire and Connect**

Create an accessible and meaningful celebration of Matariki for all families within the Waikato region, highlighting historical puuraakau to reflect on the past and inspire future growth and change.



## **Festival Attendance**

**The Matariki ki Waikato festival attracted over 20,000 visitors in the Waikato region. Since many of our events are non-ticketed, we gathered information on our audience through observations, registrations, intentional interactions at events and crowd counts.**

These showed that we had a mix of families, young professionals, and tourists, with many attendees aged 25-45 years. This variety shows that our promotional efforts reached a wide range of people.

 **Snapshot**

**250 hours of kaupapa Matariki events**

**58 events**

**42 venues**

**6 marae**

**Across 7 Council districts**

**200+ organisations**

**18,000+ attendees**

**From Pookeno to Putaaruru,  
Koopuu to Kaawhia,  
Waitomo to Whaingaroa,  
Te Kuiti to Te Winika**





## **Signature events**

**This year, reducing the signature events from 7 to 6 allowed us to concentrate our efforts on enhancing the visibility and impact of the festival's core attractions, drawing more attention to the festival's highlights which set the stage for the remainder of the season.**

# Te Karanga o Te Tau Hou

**Te Karanga O Te Tau Hou, also known as the Matariki Breakfast, has evolved into a cornerstone for a broader series of community activities, including workshops, exhibitions, and various celebrations.**

This event marks the beginning of the Matariki Ki Waikato festival, which is more than just a sequence of events; it represents a significant period for communities to unite, honouring the essence and vision of Matariki.

On the event day, our volunteers began their preparations at 4:30am on a crisp, chilly morning. As dawn broke, kuia from Ngati Wairere and Raukawa performed the karanga, guiding guests to Turtle Lake. The Kaumaatua then cleared the spiritual path with a wairea, setting the tone for a deeply moving dawn ceremony.

Hautapu, which marks the ascension of Matariki and provides a space to remember those who have passed, saw each guest contribute to the fire with kindling, symbolising the remembrance of loved ones and reflecting on the cycle of life.

After the ceremony, guests were invited into the Pavilion for breakfast, where the atmosphere was filled with the vibrant sounds of kapa haka and enriching words from guest speakers. The distinguished attendees included Iwi leaders, business representatives, council members, sponsors, and community members, all coming together to celebrate Te Karanga O Te Tau Hou. This event was more than a ceremony; it was a heartfelt celebration of life, community, and the promise of new beginnings.



# Kaumaatua Matariki Ball

The Kaumaatua Matariki Ball provided a special occasion for our kaumaatua to come together and celebrate their significant contributions to the community. The event honoured their leadership and wisdom while offering a platform for the wider community to express appreciation for their role in preserving cultural knowledge and nurturing community values.

The Ball featured ceremonies and activities that highlighted the importance of kaumaatua in guiding cultural traditions. It was a moment of gratitude and camaraderie, allowing kaumaatua to enjoy an evening with peers and supporters. The event also

included entertainment with beloved old songs, creating a festive atmosphere that evoked nostalgia and personal connection for the kaumaatua.

As a central part of the Matariki Ki Waikato festival, the Kaumaatua Matariki Ball fostered community unity and respect. The lively dancing and celebratory spirit of the event not only honoured the kaumaatua but also strengthened community bonds, ensuring that the legacy of Matariki continued to thrive through shared experiences and mutual acknowledgment.



## Matariki in the City

**Matariki in the City (MITC) is a vibrant annual event held in Hamilton, designed to unite whaanau and celebrate Matariki through an engaging mix of traditional and contemporary Maaori knowledge.**

This year's theme focused on Ururangi, the star representing the winds of the sky, highlighting its significance in Whakaaratamaiti Matariki Taiao Planting Day cosmology. The festival offered a range of free activities, including arts, crafts, and games, making it accessible to all.

In collaboration with the Matariki ki Waikato (MKW) Market Day, MITC extended its reach and impact. The partnership brought together a diverse array of local vendors and artisans, enhancing the festival's offerings and creating a bustling environment filled with cultural expression. The synergy between MITC and MKW Market Day attracted over 1,000 attendees, marking a significant increase in community engagement and ensuring a broader audience experienced the rich tapestry of Matariki celebrations.



# Whāngai Te Hautapu

**This year, the Māori Achievement Unit at Wintec worked in collaboration with mana whenua and Matariki ki Waikato to create and facilitate Whāngai te Hautapu at Te Kōpū Mānia o Kirikiriroa Marae on 25 June, 2024.**

The event was capped at 200 attendees, with a minimum of 50 spots allocated for kaimahi and aakonga. Based on the promotional efforts by Matariki ki Waikato, we anticipated an attendance of approximately 100-150 participants, which we ultimately exceeded.

Feedback gathered from both verbal and written sources from Wintec kaimahi highlighted the following key insights from the formal evaluation:

- Knowledge and Understanding: 91% of participants reported an increased understanding of Matariki and its significance to Māori.
- Welcoming Atmosphere: Every participant (100%) felt welcomed at the event.
- Future Intentions: 100% of participants indicated they plan to return next year and would recommend the event to others.
- Information Clarity: 91% of participants found the information provided to be adequate for grasping the event's objectives and activities.
- Representation: 100% of participants observed that Mana Whenua representatives were prominently involved in co-leading the ceremony with the Māori Achievement Unit.



# Manu Tukutuku Kite Day

Picture a Sunday where whaanau come together for a day filled with joy, creativity, and cultural celebration—this is the essence of Manu Tukutuku Kite Day. Stepping away from the usual weekend sports activities, this free event invites everyone to delve into the enchantment of kite-making and flying, featuring Manu Tukutuku and Peter Lyn paper kites. It's not just about having fun; it's an immersive experience celebrating Matariki, the Maori New Year.

On the event day, Turtle Lake Hill buzzed with the lively presence of tamariki, whaanau, volunteers, and committee members, all beneath a sky dotted with vibrant kites. The festivities began with a karakia led by Mark Ruka, followed by a warm welcome from Matariki ki Waikato Festival Director, Waimihi Hotere, acknowledgments of sponsors, and a rundown of the day's activities. Children enthusiastically registered to receive their free kites and enjoy sausage sizzles. Although there was a slight decrease in kite flyers, the steady flow of visitors ensured a lively atmosphere throughout the day.



# Whiti

**With invaluable support from TKD EVENTS LTD and Two Wise Kumara Arts & Events, we enlisted Beau Monga to spearhead this year's kaupapa for our rangatahi. Known for his win on Series II of NZ X-Factor, Beau is not only a distinguished musician but also a passionate mentor dedicated to inspiring young people and helping them realise their full potential.**

Leveraging Beau's broad appeal, WHITI 2024 showcased an eclectic lineup of performers spanning various genres. From a lineup of looping artists and DJs to a broad spectrum of musical

performances, the event showcased the rich and varied talents found within our region.

This year, WHITI drew an audience of approximately 70 patrons, alongside performers and event staff. As an integral part of Matariki ki Waikato, WHITI continues to foster an appreciation for the arts among our rangatahi. Each year, the event strengthens our cultural identity, and we are committed to its growth, aiming to further enrich the artistic landscape for our youth.



## **Event Highlights**

The year's festival featured a diverse array of events, performances, and activities, captivating attendees throughout its duration. Key highlights included...



The image shows the interior of a futuristic spaceship. A large, arched window in the center provides a view of a dark, cratered planet surface, likely Mars. The interior is dimly lit with warm, orange-toned lights. On the right side, there are various pieces of equipment, including what appears to be a life support system or a control panel with a circular opening. The overall atmosphere is high-tech and immersive.

## Tūārangi: Matariki Space Journey

Passengers booked tickets to board the spaceship at Matai Whetū Marae in Hauraki for Tūārangi, an interactive visual space flight in te reo designed to expand our imagination around Matariki. Whaanau embarked on an indigenous galactic voyage, exploring the cosmos in a unique cultural experience. Matariki ki Waikato are proud to be in a position to pilot new innovations that can bring the world AND the universe to our marae.



## **All-star Matariki Music Magic**

Over the Matariki public holiday weekend, Shapeshifter electrified with their genre-blending sound, while L.A.B's return to Hamilton's Globox Arena, featuring Stan Walker and Corrella, showcased new tracks from L.A.B VI and a debut acoustic unplugged set. We can't wait to have you back in Waikato!

## Matariki Rising Southside

**The active participation of rangatahi was a standout feature of Matariki Rising Southside.**

Two deputy head boys from Mangakōtukutuku College played a crucial role in setting up, and the Kapa Haka delivered an impressive performance, showcasing their talents.

Our focus was on highlighting the exceptional contributions of these young people, who often face scrutiny due to the actions of a few, but truly deserve recognition for their positive impact.



# Matariki ki Whaingaroa



**Matariki ki Whaingaroa 2024 marked Matariki by intentionally celebrating the power and possibilities which reside within Indigenous knowledge.**

This included an exhibition of local Maaori artists, koorero from local speakers doing inspirational work and films celebrating indigenous knowledge. The exhibition received 450+ visitors over the 11 days with many returning throughout the season to watch indigenous films and take part in the activities.

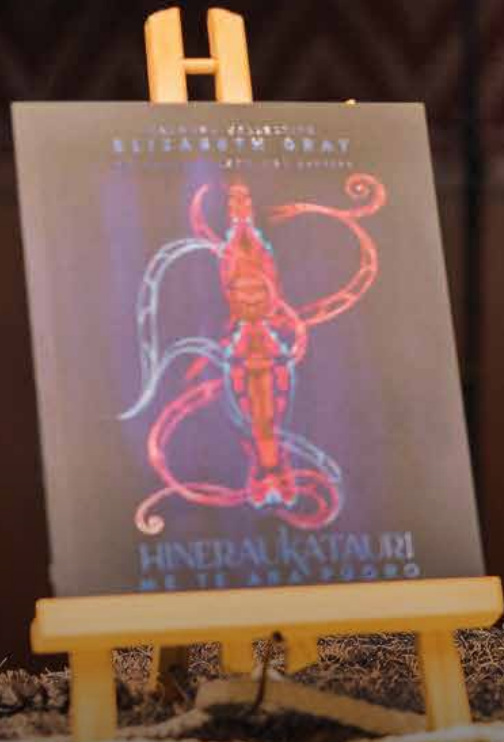


## Tiaho Mai – Matariki ki NGĀ Art

The exhibition showcased a wide range of works that explored both historical and contemporary interpretations of Matariki and its significance in Maori culture, sparking meaningful discussions.

A particularly special aspect of the event was featuring artwork from students of eight schools, whose creations highlighted the maatauranga learned in their workshops. The pride displayed by parents, who saw the work on display by their tamariki, was a testament to the impact and success of the exhibition.

# Hineraukauri me te Ara Pūoro - Book launch



**Haumanu Collective with HUIA Publishers presented their first collaborative children's publication Hineraukauri me te Ara Pūoro.**

Written by Elizabeth Gray the book takes the reader on a journey as Hineraukauri receives her musical sounds and gifts from the various atua Maaori. The launch was held at The Pā, The University of Waikato and included an exclusive live reading of Hineraukauri and performance of taonga puoro from Haumanu Collective.



## Whakaaratamaiti Matariki Taiao Planting Day

**The Whakaaratamaiti Marae committee was thrilled to host their first Matariki event, thanks to funding from Matariki Ki Waikato.**

Despite the gloomy weather, spirits were high as whaanau arrived with gumboots and planting tools, eager to celebrate Matariki as a whaanau and connect with the taiao. After a welcoming karanga, everyone enjoyed a lively Matariki quiz and a delicious breakfast. Highlights of the day included planting fruit trees and harakeke, with tamariki, parents, and kaumaatua learning and laughing together. What began under overcast skies turned into a vibrant celebration of whaanau kotahitanga.

# Matariki ki Pokeno

The positive impacts of this event have been remarkable.

An Indian taane inquired about the Kua Wheturangitia Wall, and it was explained to him that the wall represents the night sky, where participants can write the name of a loved one on a star and place it on the night sky. He returned home, printed a picture of his mother onto a star, and came back to place it on the wall. For the organising Trust, this act symbolizes the pinnacle of building relationships with the wider community and demonstrates the success of sharing the Matariki kaupapa through such a simple, yet meaningful gesture.





**Manuhiri and whaanau eagerly attended Pō Kiriata at Te Kauae Marae, an evening of sharing local puuraakau through short films.**

The visual storytelling event began earlier in the day when new light installations and pou whakairo were unveiled by the hau kaainga. Created through interviews with whaanau in collaboration with production company, Nimbus Media, guests enjoyed local puuraakau from Ngaati Huiiao and Ngaati Kinohaku kaumaatua, with the film stars in attendance. The evening concluded with heartwarming waiata and hearty kai.



**This year's Matariki celebration was truly special, with a 150% growth as 250 people joined in a warm, authentic atmosphere.**

Highlights included a 6am hautapu, waka ama on the Waikato River, storytelling, Maaori board games, and a tree-planting bus trip and all before midday! The diverse turnout reflected our community's spirit, and planting 800 trees symbolises connection to the whenua. We're excited to meet again in September to plan an even more inclusive event for 2025.



**Matariki Karapiro 2024**

## **Strange Resting Places**

**The theatre play, *Strange Resting Places* shines a light on the emotional bonds of New Zealand's wartime and marked a great start for the brand-new Mangakōtukutuku College and their Drama department.**

The main goal was to provide the aakonga with a positive live performance for the community and successfully sold out all 180 seats over 3 nights. A highlight was playwright, Rob Mocaraka joining them for the final performance, sharing his energy and koorero.





## Matariki at the Museum

Te Whare Taonga o Waikato became a Matariki hub with family-friendly activities, presentations by guest speakers from the community and Te Whare o Poohutukawa -an immersive digital experience that allowed visitors to honour loved ones as they transformed their names into stars on the Marae Aatea.

The final event, Te Whakataa a Te Winika, brought local iwi, carvers and waka practitioners together to share stories before resting the taonga until December.





## Taatai o Matariki

Hosted in the Nancy Caiger Gallery, Taatai-o-Matariki inspired the community in a celebration of the Maori new year, bringing whaanau and friends together.

The exhibition featured seven works by seven special artists, each encompassing one of the whetuu (stars) within the Matariki constellation as celebrated by Tainui waka. Each of the works was given a special introduction by each of the artists. Alongside these stellar creations, the wider community was asked to share their reflections and expressions of Matariki.

# Festival Engagement

This year, objectives for our media engagement were:

1. **Tautoko** all of the events in the Matariki ki Waikato festival calendar for 2024.
2. **Elevate** the presence of the festival's Signature Events and community Matariki celebrations in local and national media.
3. **Highlight** the elements of the festival that are unique to the Waikato rohe and celebrate the festival's connection to local puuraakau that embody its Waikato identity and whakapapa.

16 waikatoherald.co.nz | Friday, June 21, 2024

## What's on in the Waikato

**French Film Festival, now until June 26, Lake Taupo Racecourse**  
The annual festival is back with a range of Cannes-winning French movies. For the 10th annual programme visit frenchfestival.co.nz.

**Matariki Ki Waikato Festival, now until to July 28**  
Matariki Ki Waikato Festival is the national celebration. Trust is bringing Waikato back to more than 30 events to mark the Matariki New Year. It is a celebration of the present, but also a time to remember the past and looking ahead. The full programme is available via [matarikiwaikato.nz](http://matarikiwaikato.nz).

**Southern Cross Regional Waikato Music, now until event, June 22, 7pm at Clarendon Street Theatre, Hamilton**  
Southern Cross Regional Waikato Music, event giving young musicians the opportunity to perform in a professional setting, at venues from Northland to Southland.

**Whakarekarekare Youth Orchestra Waikato, concert, June 22, 7pm at Colgate Academy of Performing Arts, Gate 20, Rangiwhiri Rd, Hamilton**  
Join the Youth Orchestra Waikato for a programme of orchestral gems including Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8 and Mozart and Johann Gregor von Dreyse's King from the Hall of the Mountain King from Peter Dinklage's Kolya entry.

**Taiti-o-Matariki, exhibition, June 25-July 27 at the Nancy Gageby Gallery, Mount Thomas, Hamilton**  
The exhibition aims to inspire the community in a celebration of the Matariki new year. Bringing whānau and friends together. It will feature several works by artists specialising in Matariki, including the Taiti Matariki competition.

**Tu Pae Kōwhiri Tāneke Winter Warmers Opera Gala, concert, June 25, 7.30pm at St John's Cathedral Concert Chamber, Rangiwhiri Rd, Hamilton**  
A special Matariki event where the Auckland New Zealand Opera Studio (Tāneke) Artists Jordan Feroz, Francesca, Jennifer James, Michael McKeever, Rōpū-Pōhaka, Tāneke Willbank and Katherine Whaitiana will sing beloved operatic arias via Tu Pae Kōwhiri.

**Matariki Family Festival, community event, June 28, 5pm at Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato, Hamilton**  
Come along to Waikato Museum to celebrate the Matariki public holiday! There will be live music, crafts, activities, and a play area.

**Whakarekarekare Matariki, concert, June 28, 7pm at Hamilton Lake Domain**  
The annual community event to welcome Matariki is back for 2024. It promises to be a family friendly evening filled with live music, entertainment, food and markets.

**Shogakukan, concert, June 28, 7pm at Dobson Arena, Clarendon St, Hamilton**  
Shogakukan, a highly diverse Christian Church, returns to Hamilton to celebrate their 25th birthday. The five strong line-up of 10 Open-Vocalists, Sara Twyford & Igatao (mother/japan), Dan McCrear (father/singer), Nick Robinson (bass/singer) APC, and

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**Smoked Paprika won the Soukai-redevelopment 2023.**



**L.A.B. are hitting the road for their only New Zealand show this winter to celebrate their new album.**

Darius Matheson (bass) and crew created their very own heavy soul. To join us live via YouTube.

**Little Shop of Horrors, Theatre performance, June 29-July 4 at Southland Performing Arts Centre, 200 Pongakawa Rd, Hamilton**  
19 Paul's students have prepared this performance. Experience the darkly humourous tale of Little Shop of Horrors through the eyes of Servant, a final year student, who navigates the

being a student of Imani, live, just a few minutes past normal Academy II. Tickets via [theatretickets.co.nz](http://theatretickets.co.nz).

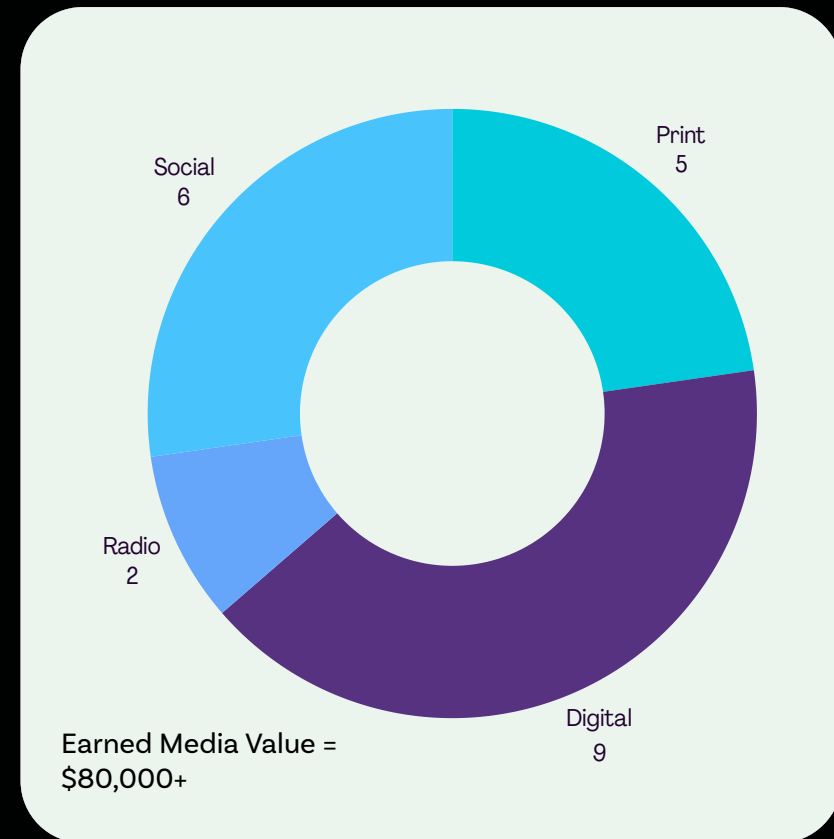
**L.A.B. concert, June 29, 6.30pm at Dobson Arena, Clarendon St, Hamilton**  
L.A.B. are hitting the road for their only New Zealand show this winter to celebrate their new album, L.A.B. VII. Open Matariki weekend, L.A.B. returns to Hamilton with Stan Walker and guest rapper Corrina. Tickets online via [theatretickets.co.nz](http://theatretickets.co.nz).

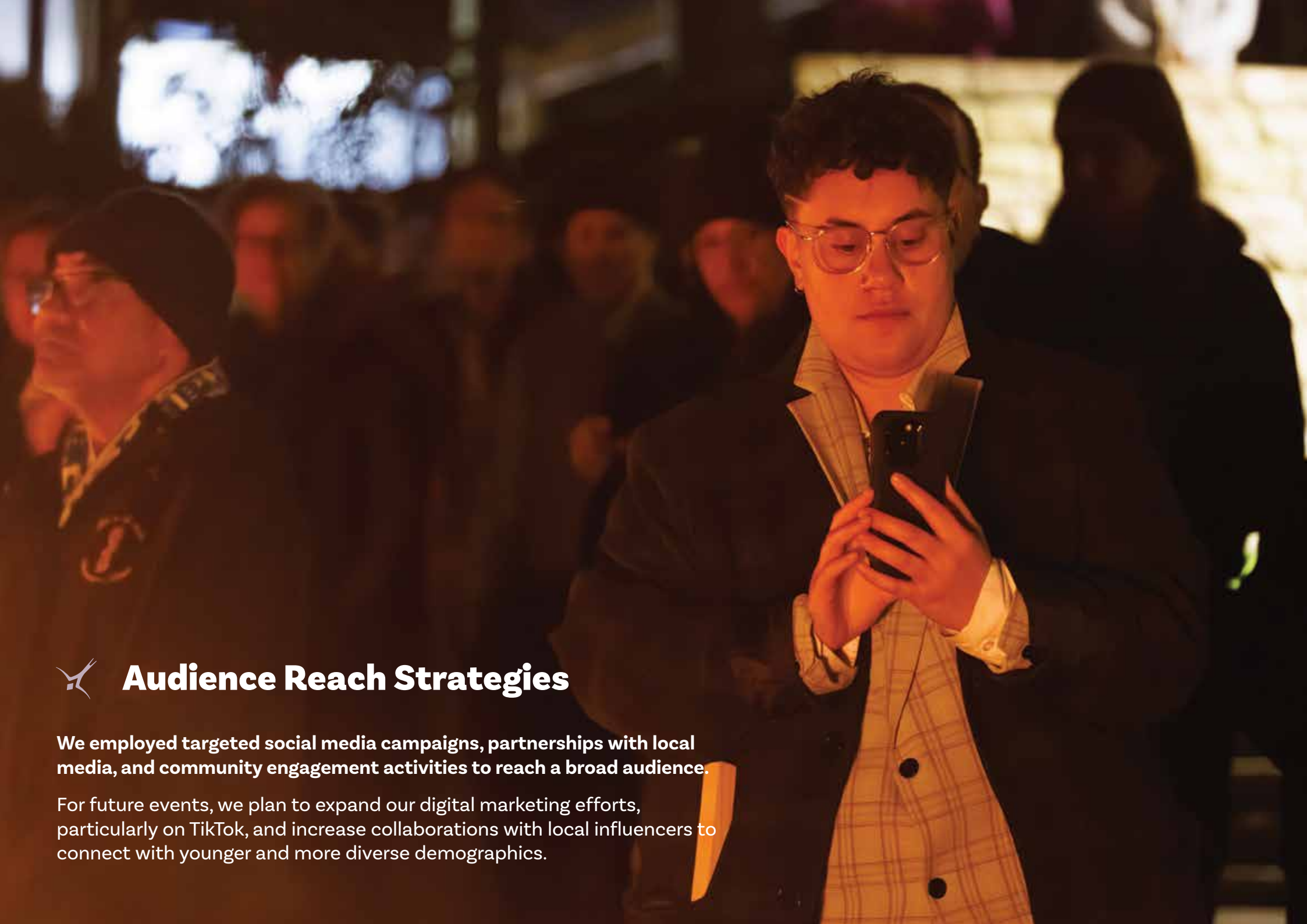
**Whakarekarekare A Celebration of Indian Music & Dance, concert, June 30, 7.30pm at The Mount Theatre, Hamilton**  
This vibrant programme showcases the talents of dancers from the acclaimed Madhava Dance Company, accompanied by an ensemble of South Indian musicians. Event is presented in collaboration with Chandee Music New Zealand. Tickets via the Helix website.

# Earned Media Results

**Matariki ki Waikato Festival 2024 featured prominently in online articles which boosted our national and local visibility.**

We frequently secured valuable coverage on the NZ Herald online where festival events were highlighted most weeks. Valuable print mentions appeared in the Waikato Herald, where the festival was regularly showcased to our target local audience. Additional coverage from Stuff, RNZ, and The Waikato Times around the Matariki public holiday was also significant given the breadth of events across the motu this year. We also received attention from Scoop, Aukaha News, Tainui Live, Ngā Iwi FM, and The Spinoff, demonstrating the festival's diverse interest and community impact. Interviews on RNZ and Radio Waatea further amplified the reach of the kaupapa this year.





## Audience Reach Strategies

**We employed targeted social media campaigns, partnerships with local media, and community engagement activities to reach a broad audience.**

For future events, we plan to expand our digital marketing efforts, particularly on TikTok, and increase collaborations with local influencers to connect with younger and more diverse demographics.

# Media Coverage and Social Media Impact



The festival received extensive media coverage across national and local outlets, with significant engagement on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

These efforts boosted sponsor visibility, with metrics showing a 50% increase in Facebook followers and 5,000 likes on TikTok posts, reflecting strong audience interaction and brand recognition.



# Key Social Media statistics

## Facebook

- Likes: Increased from 2.9k pre-festival to 4.5k post-festival.
- Followers: Grew from 5.6k to 6.7k.
- Post Engagement: 3,000 likes, 90 shares, 2,400 comments.
- Post Reach: 26k people.

## Instagram

- Followers: Increased from 1,444 to 2,194.
- Engagement: 921 likes, less than 20 shares, 99 comments.
- Post Reach: 890

## TikTok

- Followers: Increased from 776 to 1,278.
- Engagement: 5,000 likes on festival-related posts.

## Focus Point for the Year Ahead

Leverage TikTok for Broader Engagement: Given the strong growth and high engagement on TikTok, prioritise creating more dynamic, short-form content tailored to this platform. This will help us continue to attract and engage younger audiences, maximising our digital reach for future festivals.





## Integration of Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship was carefully integrated into the festival through branding at key events and acknowledgment in promotional materials.

Moving forward, we can offer sponsors more visibility through bespoke events, co-branded social media campaigns, and onsite activations that align with the themes of Matariki, ensuring their contributions enhance maatauranga Matariki and align with mana whenua aspirations.

# Sponsorship and Partnerships

## He mihi whakamiharo ki ngā kaitautoko o Matariki ki Waikato





## Rangatahi Engagement

Engaging our rangatahi in performances and event management as wayfinders enhanced the festival experience, while their hospitality support for the opening ceremony was crucial in maintaining smooth operations and a vibrant, inclusive atmosphere. We look forward to growing our rangatahi engagement space to include their voices in the programming of the festival.



## Maaori Wardens

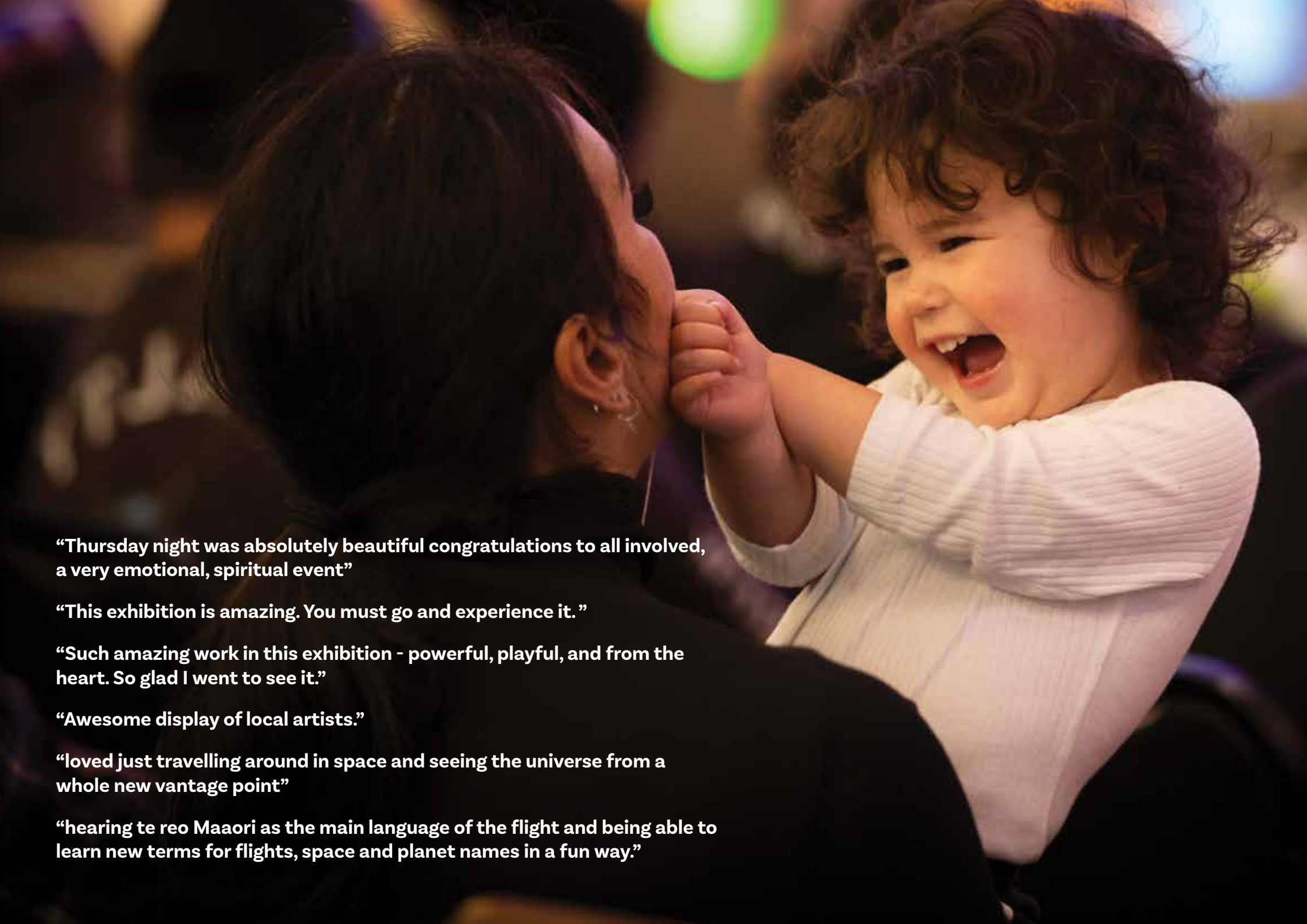
We are proud to have Ngā Wātene Māori (Maaori Wardens) return to support our Matariki ki Waikato festival events. Ngā Wātene Māori bring a great sense of ease and calm when engaging with our audiences. With a history rooted in community support, they are skilled in providing the right assistance at the right time, especially in kaupapa Maaori events. Their presence not only upholds the integrity of the event but provides an instant whanaungatanga, making everyone feel welcomed and cared for. Their ability to connect with diverse communities further enhances the inclusive aspirations of our Matariki ki Waikato festival.





## Feedback - Attendees

Overall the feedback was extremely positive for Matariki ki Waikato Festival 2024. With attendees surprised that events of such a high quality were happening in their own backyard.



**“Thursday night was absolutely beautiful congratulations to all involved, a very emotional, spiritual event”**

**“This exhibition is amazing. You must go and experience it.”**

**“Such amazing work in this exhibition - powerful, playful, and from the heart. So glad I went to see it.”**

**“Awesome display of local artists.”**

**“loved just travelling around in space and seeing the universe from a whole new vantage point”**

**“hearing te reo Maaori as the main language of the flight and being able to learn new terms for flights, space and planet names in a fun way.”**



## Summary

**Our Matariki ki Waikato Festival thrives through the support of mana whenua and visionary funders and sponsors who understand the power of kotahitanga. This festival forges deep connections between people and communities, creating shared spaces to envision the future together.**

Through interactive activities, diverse performances, and educational programming, the festival reached a wide audience, ensuring maatauranga Matariki was celebrated by all. Moreover, by connecting mini-festivals across the region, we amplified the collective spirit, allowing each community to contribute uniquely while being part of a larger, cohesive celebration. This focus on active community involvement, regional partnerships, and the inclusion of historical puuraakau not only honoured our past but also inspired future growth, making the Matariki ki Waikato Festival a vital and evolving cultural event for everyone.



