



TUPU 2022

Project Report

ABSTRACT

This report discusses the results of the devised work 'Tupu' that was toured to nine schools in the Marlborough Region. The report provides insights from participants, audience members and artists.

Fua Creative

Summary

Tupu was an original devised multi-disciplinary work created by Fua Creative in collaboration with Pacific Artists from Marlborough and Auckland. The project had the following objectives:

Artistic outcomes

1. High quality multi-disciplinary artwork is created and presented to children within Marlborough
2. Visibility for Pacific artists (particularly) males is increased.
3. Audiences in Marlborough are developed in multi-disciplinary arts from Pacific Artists in the region.
4. Pacific Artists continue to develop their artistic practice and diversify their portfolio of work
5. Emerging Pacific artists gain mentoring, experience and exposure through working with professional artists to develop and present a new work.
6. Professional artists and aspiring young artists work collaboratively to grow the creative capabilities and opportunities with the region of Marlborough.

Quick Stats

- The Tupu show reached 9 schools across the Marlborough region.
- 2500 + children and their teachers attended as audience members.
- 350 children participated in workshops prior to the show & were included as performers.
- 6 project-based roles were created for local Pacific Artists, director and a producer.
- A high-quality multi-disciplinary show was developed that all artists involved can add to their portfolio of work.

Artists involved

- Tevita Vaka – Director/Curator
- Nicole Vaka – Curator/Producer
- Onetoto Ikavuka – Curator/performer
- Fili Moala-Fotu – Collaborator/performer
- Terian Tenoa – Collaborator/performer
- Joshua Leota – Collaborator/performer

In order to assess if we achieved our artistic outcomes, we collected insights via a survey from schools (students and teachers) as well as the artists involved - below is a summary of the responses.

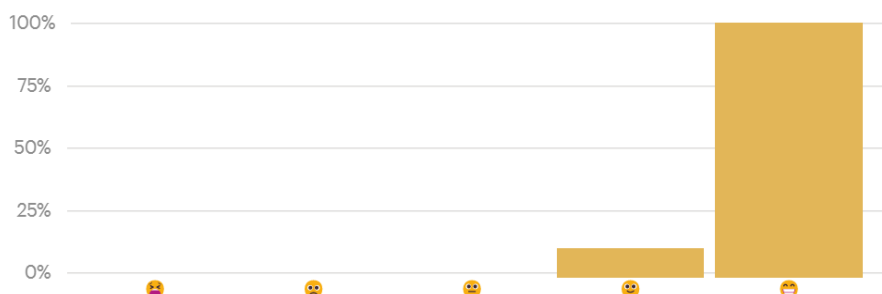
Insights from schools – children and teachers

How would you rate the overall show (out of 5)?

Question 1 has 20 answers (Range) Avg rating: 4.9



“How would you rate the overall show?”



What schools enjoyed about the show:

"The story was great. The performance was full of energy and the tamariki really got into it. The music and singing were really impressive too."

"The 4 actors were great to watch, the performance/acting was great, interacted with the audience well and made it a safe place for the kids to be part and 'see' the imaginary world they had travelled to. Great message as well. "

"The whole performance was entertaining from start to finish. The comedy was great, and the dancing was a highlight for the students in my class. I especially loved the end when the Springlands School Pasifika group came up and danced too! Loved the opening song too!"

"Very engaging and funny for the kids"

"Good pace, good choreography. Nice message."



"We enjoyed the pace and energy of the show. The fabulous skills displayed."

"We enjoyed the energy and connections with the audience."

"Fast moving, child centred and good audience participation encouraged. Time frame was accurate. Fun time for all"

"It was full of so much energy and was mesmerizing "

"Humour, student focus, messages, amazing acting, relevant"

"The message of teamwork was very clear. It was presented in a fun and engaging way. It was great having our Pasifika community represented. "

"The interactive nature. The amazing enthusiasm of the actors. Great pace and storytelling. Great to have a workshop prior and give students the opportunity to be part of the show. "

"Great message, energy, fun, music and dance"

"I love the story you told about kindness, finding your strengths and teamwork. The music, songs and dance were awesome - what a talented bunch of young men! The storytelling was engaging and interactive pitched at the right level for our primary school. The tamariki and teachers were smiling all the way through. Well done to all involved!"

"You are all (directors and performers) incredibly talented and such lovely role-models for children. Loved the creative story, the take-away message for children and the fun!"

"The show was a show for all ages! It was fun, and had a cool storyline that really got the students hooked in. Absolutely awahi the opportunity for students to attend a workshop and be part of the show as this promotes positive self-esteem. The show highlighted local talent and the joy of performing was evident in their energy. "

"Fun, interactive, variety, good message, appealed to all ages, talented performers"

"We enjoyed all of it! Children enjoyed taking part and interacting."

"I liked that it showed Pasifika values in a modern way. "

What children enjoyed about the show

"I liked when they had their eyes closed and they were leaning on each other's shoulders and they were saying tick tock tick tock". - Zoe

"I liked it when they got the teachers to go up and dance. It was funny. I think everything was really funny. I liked when they pretended that they didn't know where they were - but they really did. - Frank"

"The songs and beatboxing and that our teacher got to go up and danced"



"The performers were really good. It wasn't babyish."

"The singing and that it was funny"

"The beat box and the dream."



"Denver and Nina said that you were working as a team and using your bodies show the good messages, and I liked the last song/dance. The show was fun."

"The acting and the challenges the characters completed. There were lots of funny things in the show that made us laugh. We enjoyed the beatboxing and singing. "

"It was one of the best shows I have seen, funny, loved the dancing and singing"

"I loved the actors and the story"

"I liked the message that you should use your skills and help others develop theirs."

"It was fun and we got to join in."

"The imagination included within it. inclusive, more props

"It was great, I really enjoyed it"

"It was funny and I liked the rapping."

"I liked getting up on stage and joining in with the dance."

Target age of the show/appropriate for the audience

Out of 20 responses, 19 reported that the show was appropriate for all ages levels, 1 response advised that the junior students weren't able to clearly understand the storyline, however this wasn't a common response and all other schools advised the juniors were really engaged in the show.

"Perfect for all year groups!"

"Yes, there were connections for all students "

"The story behind the show went over the heads of my junior students, they weren't sure of the story when I asked them. "



"Yes, I watched the young and older students with big smiles on their faces."

"I think each year group took different things from it. I have talked to students across all year groups and they were all positive and reported enjoying the show."

"Definitely! Our junior school children absolutely loved it and had to be held back from running on stage when the workshop children were invited up! The message in your show is expressed beautifully for children to understand, but isn't forced. Thought it was awesome! Also, it was really refreshing to have something contemporary (beat boxing etc). We haven't had many experiences like that for the children at our school."

"Yes, great for our Pasifika students "

"Yes! The juniors were captivated by the storyline and the older students were inspired by the dance moves, raps and quality of the performers, knowing that they too could aspire to a career in the performing arts."

"Yes, it was fantastic"

Areas of further development/ Further feedback

"More!"

"More teacher engagement "

"Thank you for performing today. It was a fantastic show that kept the students attention throughout. It was brilliant to see our own students having a role within as well."

"I thought it was engaging and fun! Loved the bright backdrop against the simple outfits of the performers."

"I would like to wish you all the very best for your future, you can all go places with such talent. It was a breath of fresh air in the last week of term. I would like to see more next year."

"Can't think of a thing - it was an outstanding, high-energy performance with great themes for kids to take home"

"The acting was great! And it was a great show."

"It was wonderful. "

"Wow, Fua Creative. You are amazing We are really appreciative that you gifted our school this free show. Can you please pass on to the performers that their energy was amazing and they have absolutely beautiful singing voices. Blenheim is very lucky to have such a talented organisation. I hope that we get to see more of you at school! Thank you again and all the best with the rest of your performances!"

"Just keep on creating!"

"A longer show would be even better, female representation "

"Short introduction of each performer, so that the students can hear how they came to be and do what they are doing now. Their passions for the performing arts and their aspirations for their futures."

"It was great - thank you for providing the show, such a bonus to be free!"



Artist Insights

A central part of this project was to create an opportunity for emerging Pacific artists to develop their skills, experience and portfolio of professional work. Through Tupu we have been able to provide the opportunity for emerging Pacific artists in Marlborough to grow their creative and artistic practice and portfolio locally within the region. This is significant because previously emerging Pacific artists would need to leave the region to upskill and have opportunities to perform. This project gave the emerging artists a local opportunity to build their experience and portfolio and works towards retaining Pacific artists within the Marlborough region. All the roles were paid and while this was a short-term job opportunity, it continues to build towards the sustainability of careers for Pacific Artists in the Marlborough region.

Artists Profile

Filimoe'ulie Moala – Fotu | 21 | Tongan

Terian Tenoa | 18 | Kiribati

Joshua Leota | 20 | Tongan & Samoan

Onetoto Ikavuka | 29 | Tongan

How did Tupu provide you with the opportunity to develop your artistic practice?

Through Tupu I learnt how to adapt and learn different techniques within the craft of performing arts. I've gained confidence to push myself to certain levels of performing and setting good expectations for myself to showcase professionalism. Tupu gave me an experience of what it would be like working in the performing arts industry. We got to work with Toto as a cast member from Auckland and this also helped me to understand a wider perspective of the arts.

- Fili Moala-Fotu

The Tupu programme helped develop my artistic skills mainly by working with my peers and directors. Feedback was an essential factor in developing my artistic skills. In the past I had only worked with big groups and could never really get clear proper feedback. It was great to have positive feedback from both my peers and mentors. The Tupu programme was a devised piece, and in my time in the creative arts, I have only been used to a 'teacher-student' way of learning. Where someone would teach / direct what to do, and I would follow. I loved how the Tupu programme was different. I was able to add some 'flavour' from me. Such as helping form a scene, helping my peers find dialogue and vice versa.

- Terian Tenoa

Tupu provided me the opportunity to develop my artistic practice by allowing me to be part of a show that encouraged creativity and ideas. A lot of shows I've done usually are scripted beforehand and it's mainly just the director's vision and you follow along. Tupu just had a foundation and this allowed me and the other artists to feed our ideas and perspective into it. There weren't any "scripted lines" which allowed me to come up with not only my character's lines but also how they would walk, talk, interact with others, how they think and act. I

haven't done something like this before so at times it was uncomfortable but I like being put into situations like that as it encourages growth with my artistic practice.

- Josh Lota

Tupu created a platform for creative artists like myself to devise and workshop a theatrical piece with other emerging creative artists.

- Onetoto Ikavuka



How did Tupu enable you to build your track record of work and diversify your portfolio of work?

I have previously done many things like shows gigs and performances through the form of singing, dancing, spoken word, film and acting. What set Tupu apart was the experience and creative knowledge, as well as being able to be exposed to a different element of performing live theatre and it being a kids show. The process was interesting for me to take note of how different it was working alongside Vita, Nicole and Toto as they are professionals at what they do and have experience doing something like this before. It was also amazing being able to do my first tour with a show and being able to experience what it's like moving from one space to another within a small amount of time the schedule was busy but I am very grateful for the opportunity.

- Fili Moala-Fotu

The Tupu programme helped me step out of my comfort zone and learn new skills within the creative arts. My strengths in the creative arts are pacific dance / familiarity with other dance styles. Being part of the Tupu programme I was able to learn a new skill (acting) within the creative arts that I always wanted to try. I picked up a new skill of acting. I had never done acting in the past, and it was such a great experience to 'break walls' and to pick up on this. From having no experience in acting, I can now say, I am somewhat confident in this art and would love to continue acting in future shows / programmes.

- Terian Tenoa

Tupu enabled me to build a track record of work as it was something new that I hadn't done before. I had only done a few theatre shows, dance shows, short films but not a theatre show that tours primary schools. This was a totally new experience which came with a whole heap of new learnings that I wouldn't have got from any other work I had done previously.

- Josh Leota

I have done similar work in the North island but I've never done work out in the South Island before. Tupu has given me the opportunity to work in the South Island with other creative artists and broaden my scope of work as an artist.

- Onetoto Ikavuka



What mentoring, skills and experiences did you gain through the Tupu workshops/show?

Being able to work alongside professionals gave me a different mindset working towards the show. We only had a limited amount of time and that showed me how to be productive as well as adapting to different situations and taking initiative when needed. It's given me an insight of what it's like working in the industry but through the experience I've gained a lot of confidence, resilience and personal growth as an artist and learning different techniques and strategies that I can use in my own practice - there are not many experiences or opportunities like this I'm Marlborough so it was an honour to be a part of the team.

- Fili Moala-Fotu

Vita, Nicole and Toto were excellent mentors for this programme. They were very professional but also very relatable / easy to get along with. Having this factor contributed drastically to my learning experience with them. When coming to learning new things, I personally can get 'lost' in how people direct / teach. It was awesome having them break down and explain things in a way where I would easily understand, they always left me feeling confident and hopeful in this programme, especially on the acting side of this programme - I had also only worked in big groups and it was great to experience working with a smaller group. I was able to have more one-on-one time with Vita and Toto which positively contributed to my artistic skills as well as mental skills, such as setting right

mindsets and seeing/thinking of things in different ways. The directors have shown me how you can be professional as well as how to have fun at the same time.

- Terian Tenoa

I gained a lot from working with Vita, Toto and Nicole. As an aspiring actor/performing artist there were so many gems dropped throughout the workshops that I've taken on board and will keep in mind for future projects. As an aspiring director, their attention to detail was the biggest takeaway. Being able to look at your work and look at the finer details you can fine tune to make it even better. As an aspiring actor, I learnt about how the directors were big on intention and being in the moment, which I will take on to develop my practice. These skills meant a lot as it changed my perspective fully on how I performed on stage.

- Josh Leota

I've learnt about time management and how important it is to be organized and how effective planning and being prepared is vital when it comes to creating a piece in a small amount of time.

- Onetoto Ikavuka

Do you think opportunities like this in Marlborough are very common? If not, how has Tupu provided you with the experience to grow as an artist in the region?



Not many opportunities like this come around in Marlborough for professional artist in Blenheim to get paid for the work they do. Tupu has helped with giving me a platform to do something I love and getting the opportunity to work alongside creative professionals.

- Fili Moala-Fotu

Opportunities like this aren't very common in Marlborough. As a male Pacific Islander. I felt like Tupu had given me the opportunity to be a role model to the next generation of

upcoming artists. In Marlborough it is rare to see male Pacific Islanders as creative artists, especially in shows such as Tupu. Just by standing on stage and performing, I felt as if my stage presence inspired other Pacific Island youth and males to give the creative arts a try. In a small region such as Marlborough, it would be great to have the next generation gain interest in the creative arts so that the creative arts will be recognised more.

- Terian Tenoa

I don't think many opportunities like this are common in Marlborough. With the experience I had with Tupu, it flipped a switch for me making me want to grow as an artist especially in a region where the arts are quite overlooked. Being able to experience high calibre directing, intense workshops and being able to perform a high-quality show was definitely what I needed. I've done quite a bit of community creative projects where I've helped take lead in teaching and mentoring which started to take a toll on my artistic practice. At one point it burnt me out and I wasn't as passionate about it only because I wasn't able to grow myself as a creative artist. But being able to do a show like Tupu was refreshing in many aspects. It allowed me to become a student again, it allowed new experiences and most importantly it allowed growth.

- Josh Leota

No. Tupu has rekindled a flame that I thought was burning out. My love for the arts has grown since the Tupu show.

- Onetoto Ikavuka



Where to from here? How will you use what you have gained through Tupu to continue your creative aspirations?

From here I want to continue my growth gaining skills and knowledge to further my craft and seek out more opportunities for that will help build my creative profile. Through Tupu, it's given me a professional drive to strive for what I'm passionate about and that's the arts. With the confidence I have gained I want to continue to challenge myself and do things that are outside of my comfort zone but will benefit me personally to help me grow as a creative.

- Fili Moala-Fotu

I feel as if the Tupu programme has made me feel very comfortable in the creative arts. I am now familiar with almost every form of performing / creative arts. I can now say I am more confident to put myself out there and to engage in different opportunities I can get. Ranging from auditioning for different shows and connecting with others in the arts, such as dance crews and choirs.

- Terian Tenoa

From here it was definitely a confirmation to pursue acting whether it be on screen or theatre. As mentioned, before it was like a spark that ignited something. I will use this experience from Tupu to hopefully go to a drama/performing arts school to further work on my craft. Not only work on my craft but like Tupu help inspire other local creatives. Whether this is through collaboration, shining on their work, etc. There's so much untapped potential in this region.

- Josh Leota

I will continue to create and write my own work, and hopefully one day I can tour it like the Tupu show.

- Onetoto Ikavuka

Any further comments/feedback including any ways to improve or further development for next time?

Had a great experience working alongside like-minded people and it was great to hear the amazing feedback from the community about the show.

- Fili Moala-Fotu

I have no complaints with how Tupu was run. I loved being a part of it. I was able to grow as an artist and I had fun doing it. I would love to do this type of work again.

- Terian Tenoa

I was more than happy with my experience from Tupu. Only thing I'd comment on is how honoured I was to be asked to be part of this show specifically. It was significant in many aspects. As a Pasifika male it was definitely cool to be able to perform in front of Pasifika students. Especially for males in this region, rugby is heavily pushed as we are seen as only rugby players, but showing young Pasifika males that they can do performing arts if they wanted to meant a lot

- Josh Leota

Directors/Producer Insights

Tupu was a really significant project because I was able to extend myself as a director in ways that I haven't been able to in a long time. For many years I have been working with mainly community and school projects where the participants usually have no or little experience in the artforms being taught. As a director I usually need to reconsider and adapt my artistic vision to suit the participants. While this in itself is a skill, I felt like I was becoming

stagnant in my own artistic practice as I wasn't able to apply and extend my vision and skills to the place that I wanted too. That's the reason I think it can be quite isolating for creatives, especially Pacific creatives in a small town, because you don't have a lot of people to bounce ideas off and the calibre of participants you are working with doesn't necessarily suit your artistic vision – but then you are limited because we live in a region. Curating and directing Tupu was like professional development for me as I was able to work with emerging artists who wanted to pursue this as a career and they were very professional because they were getting paid to do this work. Their skill, attitude and willingness were refreshing to work with and as a artists and director I was able to try new things with the cast and challenge myself creatively. I was really proud of the work that was created and as an artist that feels really good. While the community and arts education stuff have a great purpose, I needed to create some high quality art work that I was proud to showcase. I definitely think paying the emerging artists contributed to the successful process and end product – the artists were valued and this put them in a different headspace to work. This opportunity also meant that I could keep creating and working as an artist in a region where this type of work is not very common. I'm really glad I had the opportunity to do this and more so that we could provide the opportunity for other emerging Pacific creatives to be paid to do what they are passionate about – Tupu seemed to spark joy in them and inspire them to continue to pursue their creative aspirations.

- Vita Vaka

Tupu was a really fun project to create and produce – seeing the response of the children in each school was really rewarding. I'm glad we were able to provide this opportunity to emerging Pacific artists to be able to develop their practice and build their portfolio of work, because opportunities for emerging artists in Marlborough are scarce. Being able to offer paid employment in the arts was also a really great thing to see for our Pacific artists in this region. I was speaking to a teacher from one of the Primary schools and she told me about a behavioural student that she was working with – he had been really into gangs and wanted to make money selling drugs and doing illegal activity, but after he watched Tupu, he asked the teacher if the performers get paid to do that. The teacher told them yes, I think they get paid really well and the student replied with "I think I want to do that performing stuff instead." Through the project we definitely saw role modelling of Pacific males as role models and pursuing alternative careers like the arts and getting paid for it, just like they would with any other jobs. It showed young children that this is something they can do as a career.

This project allowed me to develop both my artistic and professional practice, especially on the producing side with rehearsal and show scheduling across all the schools. Tupu would be the first tour we have done and the biggest number of shows, so it was definitely scaling up work that we had done in the past and this provide professional development for me as a producer. I hope that we can continue to create new work and provide opportunities for employment for Pacific artists and other artists in the Marlborough region.

- Nicole Vaka

