



LINC PUĀWAI

HELPING CHRISTCHURCH RANGATAHI TO BLOSSOM

Puāwai means to blossom, and blossoming is exactly what has happened for the rangatahi who have completed the Christchurch-based Puāwai youth-leadership programme, delivered by Leadership Lab.

Several rangatahi from the first two Puāwai programmes are now working as junior tuākana (mentors) for the 2022 intake. They are supporting more senior tuākana to deliver the 9-month programme to another 60 rangatahi from six communities – Māori, Pasifika, rainbow, disability and care-experienced,

as well as 'cross-cultural' communities including Filipino and Bhutanese groups. Others have become even more deeply involved in their own communities.

“When the rangatahi come together, many are initially cautious and they really grow in confidence because it’s a safe space for them,” says Leadership Lab Co-Director Chris Jansen.

In addition to activating skills and confidence, Puāwai focuses on diversity and inclusion, weaving connections and belonging.

Puāwai participants work in rōpu (small groups), first as individual rōpu and then at monthly hui attended by all the rōpu and finally through a series of “activator” events such as facilitating a public event or organising a service opportunity.

Puāwai is one of three programmes in LinC (pronounced Link), the Leaders in Community project set up in the aftermath of the 2011 Christchurch earthquake.

LinC now has three strands. The first is the 10-month Incubator programme to support adult grassroots community leaders. The second is Puāwai, which was developed specifically for rangatahi aged 15 to 18 who show potential as leaders but who are overlooked by their schools because they come from marginalised communities.

The third strand is Rourou, which brings together diverse adult and rangatahi leaders to amplify marginalised voices for advocacy and to collaborate with other local and national organisations to provoke systems change.

“We are strongly oriented to advocacy and equity,” says Erica Austin, the Rourou project lead.

The Todd Foundation funds LinC Puāwai alongside the J R McKenzie Trust and the Ministry for Youth Development, with in-kind support from the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust.

