

Torona Pakiakatia Stretching Deep

Māori and Pacific Conservators & Curators
Workforce Development Plan

Te kano ki te rau Report summary

The Māori and Pacific Conservators & Curators Workforce Development Plan addresses the critical need for indigenous perspectives in the culture and heritage sector of Aotearoa. This plan has been developed to ensure taonga are preserved, treated and cared for in ways that honour tikanga, mātauranga and indigenous whakapapa. The research reveals that combining indigenous knowledge with Western conservation methods produces the best outcomes for preserving taonga, ensuring cultural values are honoured while applying necessary technical expertise.

The challenge

Census 2023 data reveal a significant workforce shortage:

- **69 conservators** recorded nationwide, with minimal representation of Māori and Pacific people.
- **597 Gallery or Museum Curators**, including only 60 Māori and 18 Pacific people.
- **69.19%** of the Museum Operation industry workforce is European, while Māori representation is at 13.94% and Pacific at 4.61%.

Key barriers identified

Our research identified several critical barriers preventing Māori and Pacific people from entering conservation and curatorial careers:

- Western qualifications are favoured over cultural expertise and mātauranga.
- Significant financial barriers and lack of local training opportunities.
- Conservation training requires overseas study.
- Limited formal curatorial training available in Aotearoa.

Kia pai i te hua Strategic goals and recommendations

Ngā keri Toi Mai actions

Toi Mai to undertake a review of the NZQA Level 4 New Zealand Certificate in Museum Practice with a goal of strengthening indigenous knowledge and skills within the qualification.

- Toi Mai to consider developing a strand/specialisation for indigenous conservator technician.
- Toi Mai to investigate further options for work-based learning at a sub-degree level in the museum sector.
- Toi Mai to explore apprenticeships, internships, traineeships and vocational qualifications.

Toi Mai to continue to provide advice to the Tertiary Education Commission around the need to invest in vocational training for curators and conservators.

- Toi Mai to continue gathering data about workforce needs.

Ngā kō Our recommendations

Toi Mai recommends that if conservators and curators transition to an Industry Skills Board (ISB), the ISB should partner with Manatū Taonga | Ministry for Culture & Heritage and other stakeholders – including iwi, Māori, Pacific and sector groups, and education providers – to address mutually agreed priorities from the draft Amplify strategy.

- **Make cultural education accessible:** Develop a systematic approach to culture and heritage education by potentially offering secondary schools' vocational pathways, such as developing culture and heritage practice at NZQA levels 2 and 3.
- **Integrate or consolidate current training programmes:** The proposed ISB should undertake a critical assessment of existing cultural practitioner programme offerings to determine how learning content and outcomes can be better marketed, integrated or consolidated. This assessment should aim to:
 - deliver programmes that directly address the strategic cultural priorities of all stakeholders
 - identify critical workforce skills and training gaps that still need addressing to meet iwi and sector needs for vocational education and training.
- **Further research into Pacific peoples working in the culture and heritage sector:** The findings from this research are limited about the provision of equitable workforce development and training pathways for Pacific people in cultural practitioner roles, including conservation and curatorial roles. To explore and understand this through further research is likely to inform effective and strategic planning for Pacific peoples' workforce growth.