

MĀ PANGO, MĀ WHERO, KA OTI AI TE MAHI MĀORI PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY SUMMARY REPORT

*Prepared for the
Electricity Sector —
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INTRODUCTION

Our workforce needs are changing dramatically, with migration all but stopping due to COVID-19 restrictions, an aging trades sector workforce and a growing skills shortage. Added to these workforce challenges is the impact of climate change driving the shift to green energy and a green economy. As the aging Pākehā population growth slows, the Māori population is growing fast, and becoming an increasing percentage of the workforce. However, Māori are currently under-represented in the electricity industry.

As part of the electricity industry commitment to increasing Māori participation in the sector, Tokona te Raki was commissioned to conduct research with a view to understanding the current barriers and potential solutions to increasing Māori, and in particular Māori women in the sector. While attracting Māori into electrical careers is the starting point, understanding what is required to retain and scaffold them into long-term leadership positions is an important consideration included in our research.

In contrast to the current situation, Māori have had a long and proud history within the electricity sector. Anecdotally, Māori industry leaders spoke of there being a stronger Māori presence 30 years ago compared to today. As a rule, the industry doesn't collect workforce ethnicity data, therefore this cannot be verified – however, it is indicative of a lack of industry data regarding Māori participation. Added to this, is that where industry data is available, making use and meaning does not always happen

A number of overarching themes emerged from the research. Among these was the invisibility of career options in the electrical sector. For those in the industry, they mostly got there by chance. The research also identified a systemic disconnect where Māori are enrolling in pre-trade electrical through the Māori Pasifika Trade Training (MPTT)¹, but very few are achieving their goal of moving on to an apprenticeship at the end of their course. This pathway to an apprenticeship requires the input of both the TEOs (polytechnics) and ITOs, however they tend to work in isolation. The majority of those starting apprenticeships tend to come via a totally different door. The data gathered indicates that of those Māori males entering apprenticeships, around 90% complete. More research is required to confirm and explore this. For those Māori working in the industry, job satisfaction is high, being viewed as an industry that is easy to progress in. However, for Māori women, the industry is perceived as a male domain and unwelcoming.

The report provides a blueprint to plot a pathway to a better and more equitable future within the electrical industry. The challenge is for companies to cast aside business as usual, and adopt new practices that are effective in recruiting, welcoming, retaining and scaffolding Māori. There is research available that reinforces the need for change. Included in this report is a case study of Genesis Energy – an exemplar of how change can be effectively achieved. Further, there are a number of strong Māori leaders in the industry whose influence in connecting with and engaging rangatahi in the industry is potentially enormous and the value of this to the industry cannot be under estimated.

¹ Following the Christchurch earthquakes, the Māori and Pasifika Trade Training scheme (MPTT) was established, funded by the Tertiary Education Commission. Nationwide, there are 16 consortia that involve iwi, industry and polytechnics working together. Pre-trade courses offered include electrical engineering.

METHODOLOGY

This research project was largely qualitative in nature, that is it focused on understanding the perceptions and experiences of a range of Māori stakeholders from 16-50 years of age. Quantitative data was gathered in the form of reports to identify trends and completion rates. 44 participants were interviewed (26 male and 18 female). The primary question underpinning the research was to understand Māori recruitment, training, retention and promotion within the electricity sector. The sub research questions focused on understanding the perceptions of high school students and school leavers in relation to their understanding of the opportunities in the electricity sector. Further, case studies were gathered to exemplify

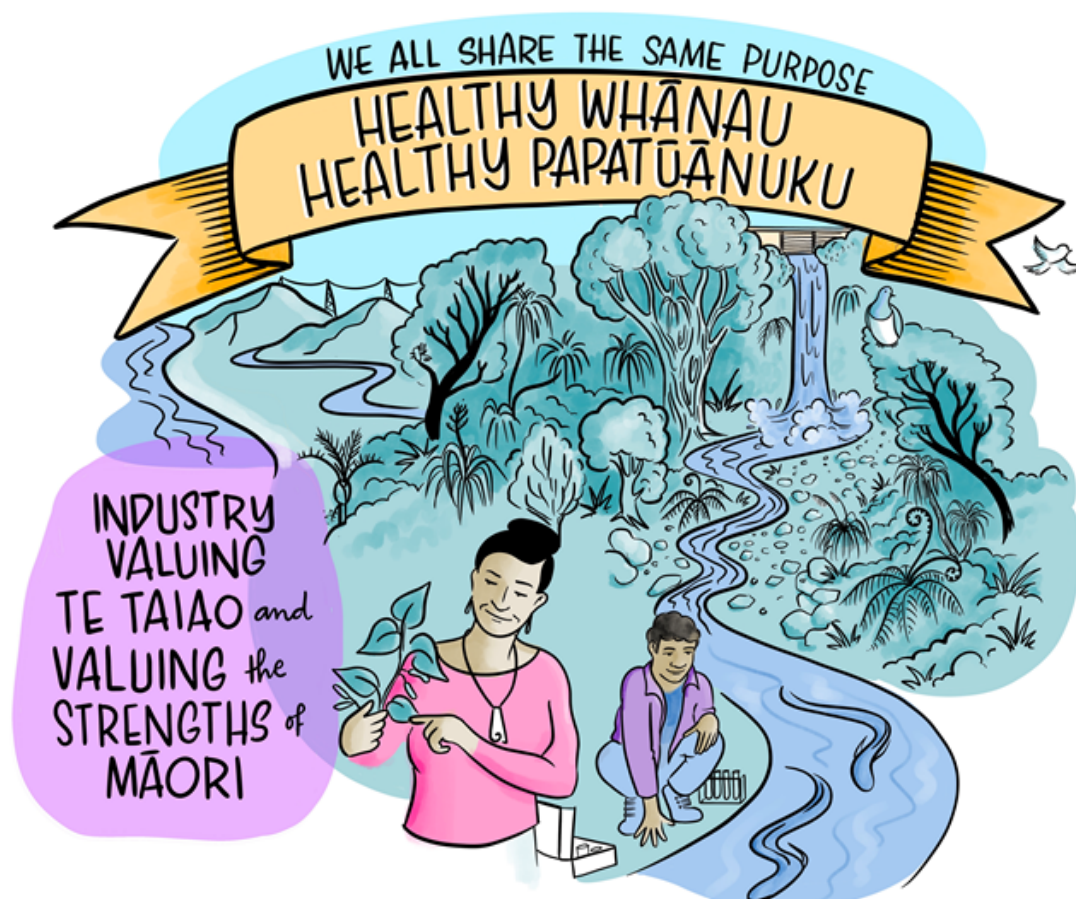
good practice. The findings from the focus groups, interviews, hui, and existing research, were analysed to identify emergent themes. These themes consisted of insights, ideas, perceptions, and suggestions that summarise the range of responses from the research participants. These were then clustered around a theme.

Presented under overarching research questions, these emergent themes are presented supported by a sample of just some of the responses given. In many cases the participant responses in italics offer even more detailed information about these themes.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings outlined below highlight some of the barriers to Māori participation and, at the same time, provide insights into further areas of exploration, particularly in relation to understanding the systemic issues that

continue to hold inequitable practices in place. They have been grouped into identified strengths (opportunities), barriers, and our recommended potential solutions.



STRENGTHS

1. High job satisfaction

The Māori staff we spoke with shared with us their positive experiences of being in the industry, the value in the mahi and the remuneration for hard work.

2. Job progression is visible and attainable

Māori staff noted, once you are in the industry, progression is relatively straight forward and so too is job stability and variety – there is plenty of work in the sector and plenty of different kinds of specialty areas you can work within.

3. MPTT Pre-electrical courses provide a rich resource of potential Māori talent to the industry

Students noted that by completing the pre trade course it set them up to enter the industry with a solid base line of knowledge.

4. Students enjoy the course material while studying electricity

The Māori MPTT learners we spoke with who were currently studying electrical engineering at polytechnic, spoke highly of the course material, the tutors and the balance between theory and practice.

5. Course grants enable learners to feel equipped to enter job sites

The participants noted the support of the MPTT course grants in enabling them to buy tools and in some cases to get their license. They offer a head start when first entering the trade.

6. Māori student cohorts

The learners commented on the strength of studying together as a Māori cohort and the impact this has on their learning. They also see value learning and working with other Māori.

7. Most Māori males successfully complete apprenticeships

Emerging data indicates that for Māori males, successful completion of apprenticeships is high (around 90 percent), and is likely higher than for many other trades. The same data indicates a much lower completion rate for Māori women. More research is needed to validate these findings and to explore what factors are leading to the success of Māori males and how this success can be replicated with Māori women.

8. There is strong Māori leadership in the sector

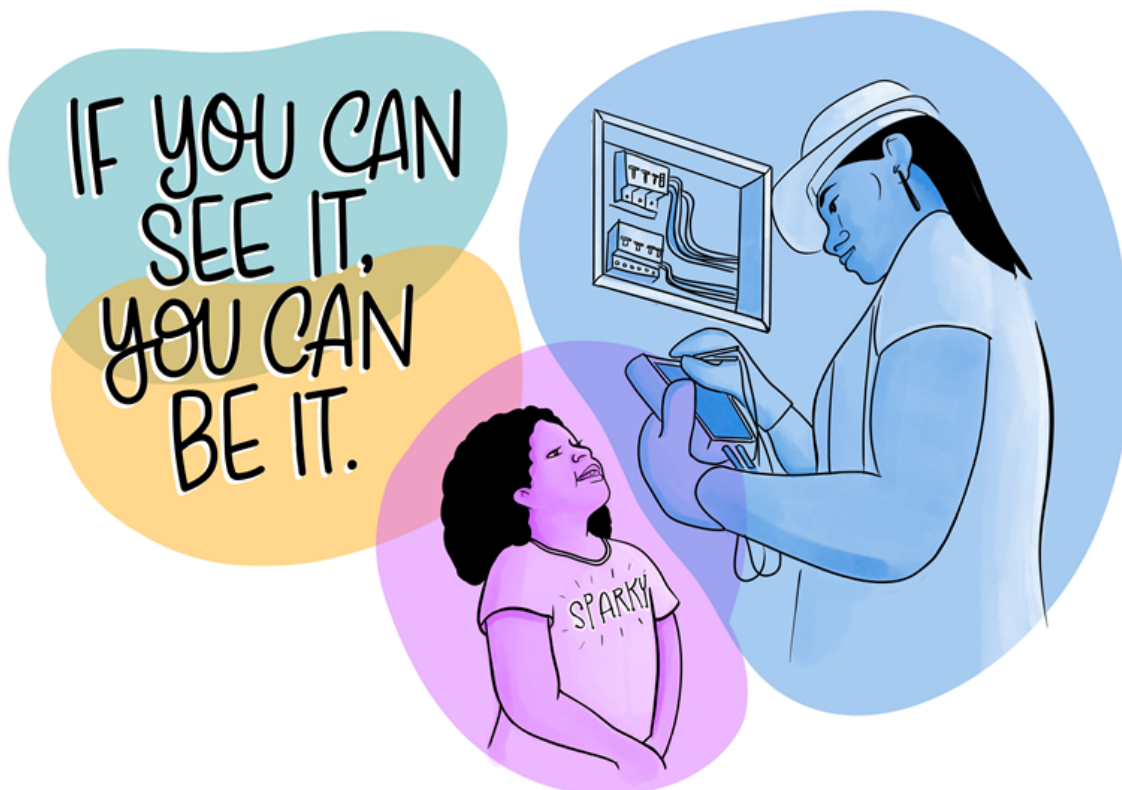
Our research identified a number of Māori owners, CEOs and managers in the industry. This is an industry strength.

BARRIERS

1. Limited knowledge of the electricity sector

What became evident through the research was that rangatahi Māori have a limited understanding of the electricity sector in general, and little to no understanding of the range of career pathways.

Furthermore, those that were currently training noted that they had no prior knowledge of the industry before enrolling, it was more by chance that they ended up studying the qualification.



2. Male dominated industry

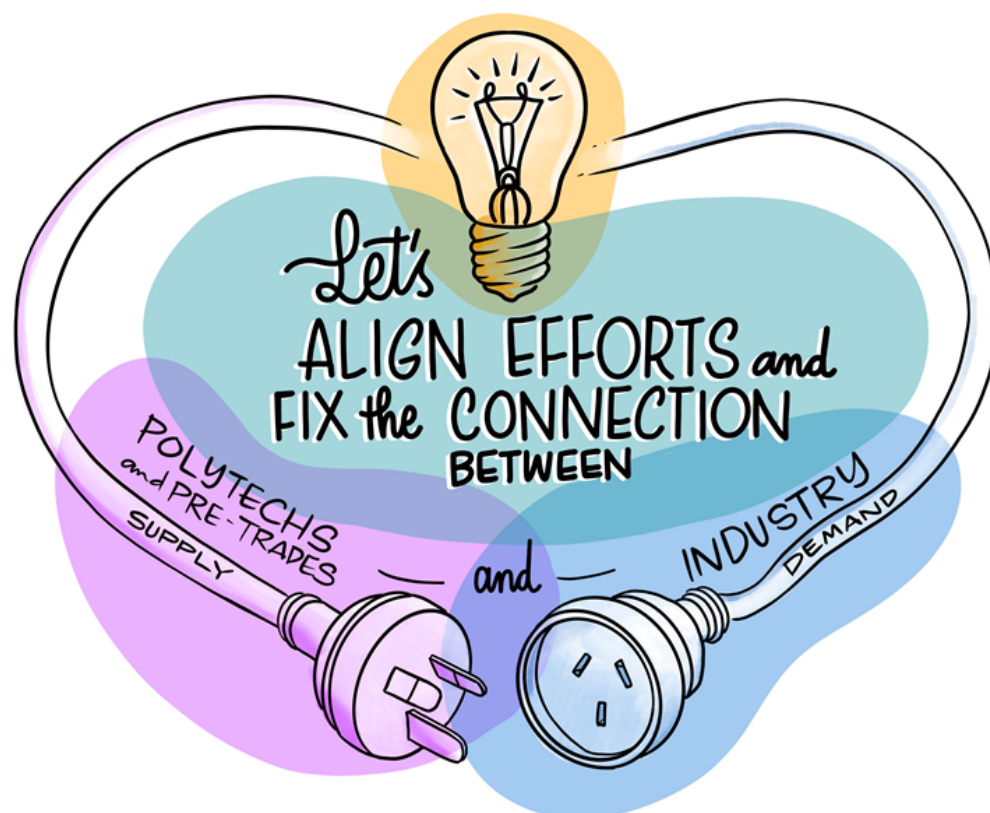
The females we spoke with shared with us their perceptions and experiences of the industry as being male dominated, and at times the environment being uncomfortable for them to be a part of. They noted the lack of female leadership and role models, and of the sheer lack of representation of Māori in the workforce which creates feelings of isolation.

3. Lack of work experience opportunities

The current MPTT trainees interviewed told us that getting work experience is tough and that not many companies are willing to take them on as work experience students.

4. Access to apprenticeship opportunities

Further to the work experience barriers, the MPTT taurā find it challenging to find an employer who is willing to take them on as an apprentice. The MPPT Evaluation (2017) found only 10 percent of MPTT students and only 6 percent of other students went on to gain apprenticeships in the industry. The majority of MPTT funding is provided to the TEOs and is driven by training course completion, effectively discouraging a focus on apprenticeships. The TEO relationship with the student stops after graduation. Transitions to work/job brokerage and employer networks are not core business for TEOs.



5. ITO dissatisfaction with the current model

The ITO spoke of their dissatisfaction with the current model, in particular the disconnect between themselves and the polytechnics, however the disconnect they had a desire to go into the polytechnics. They also acknowledged that their Māori and Pasifika strategy needed attention.

6. Racism in the industry

A number of our interviewees shared their experiences of being confronted with racism in the industry.

7. Lack of/visibility of data

Very few companies gather data on ethnicity. If you can't measure it, it remains invisible, and you can't change it. There were examples where insightful raw data around ethnicity was available, but had not been collated, analysed or made visible.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

1. Sustainability

Throughout the interviews, rangatahi told us that sustainability and environmentally friendly practices were essential to the kind of organisations they wanted to be a part of. While we understand the electricity sector has made shifts in its core practices, there are additional changes that could be made to the way the industry operates. Rather than just thinking about recruitment at a surface level, it may be time for the industry to think systemically about the long-term values they need to adopt to not only attract but retain talent and provide ecological solutions across Aotearoa New Zealand.

2. Companies are keen to hire more Māori and Women

While women are a minority in the electricity sector, participants acknowledged that there is a willingness across the industry for more Māori and more women.

3. Embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Further to the goodwill to hire more Māori, and to encourage women into the industry, one employer spoke about creating workplace cultures that reflect our bicultural nature and the need to embed the Treaty of Waitangi into their organisation as a way of addressing equity in the workplace.

4. Tikanga Māori has an important role in the workplace

Tikanga Māori, especially whakawhanaungatanga, linked with trust and safety, was seen as being valuable to the industry.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of the electricity industry has never been greater, nor have the challenges been so critical here in Aotearoa New Zealand. The industry has a huge responsibility in leading the battle against climate change. New solutions, new thinking, and new ways of doing things are needed – no longer will business as usual suffice. Rangatahi Māori are a potential future power-house, they are looking for career pathways and want to know more about what the industry offers. The solution will require a sustained, multi-pronged and collective industry approach. The following are some key steps we believe are required to achieve the desired outcomes:

1. That all companies gather workforce ethnicity and gender data and make this accessible to an industry body.

2. Industry draws upon existing research to develop and implement a strategy to welcome, retain and scaffold a Māori workforce.

3. The current disconnect between pre-trades and apprenticeships be addressed.

4. Māori leaders within the industry consider their role in leading and supporting change in the industry as a group.



TUAKANA-TEINA
MENTORING

what
can
COMPANIES
do?



LEADERS
CHAMPIONING CHANGE



COHORTS OF MĀORI



COMPANY EMBRACING
CULTURE



CHALLENGE
DEFICIT ATTITUDES

CASE STUDY - GENESIS ENERGY – AN EXEMPLAR OF WHAT CAN BE DONE

Genesis Energy has created a programme focused on the communities where they generate electricity. Michaela Latimer – Pou Hāpori Community Liaison Manager explains:

“Ngā Ara – Creating Pathways’, is about inspiring young people to become the energy innovators of the future. It aims to give the communities a head-start to fill these future roles with local people and is focused on rangatahi Māori and females. It brings together many organisations collaborating for a common goal. To date:

1

1,300
RANGATAHI
REACHED

2

90
*students hosted
at 4 Girls with High
Vis events*

3

200
*secondary students have
attended classroom
workshops and/or site
tours*

4

800
*secondary and tertiary
students at STEM/
career events and Pūhoro
wānanga*

5

21
*rangatahi have attended
a one-week residential
programme, ‘KiwiForever’,
with Ngāti Rangī and DOC*

6

5 CO-DESIGN HUI
*held with more than
100 students, school
leadership teams,
teachers, whānau
and others from the
mana whenua STEM
community, to co-
design how we can
best attract, nurture
and engage learners
in STEM pathways*

7

**SUPPORTING PŪHORO PROGRAMMES
TO LAUNCH IN TWO NEW REGIONS,
IN THREE OF OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS.**

This initiative is still at the beginning of its journey, however the vision is there for youth in the local communities to pathway into highly-skilled and well-paid jobs where they can directly contribute their innovative ideas and diverse thinking to ensuring a more sustainable New Zealand”.

For more case studies, see the full report

