

Media Release

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Health scholarship scheme supports equity in the workforce



Maia Lingman grew up in Papamoa, knowing she wanted to be a dietitian once she left school.

“I noticed that many whānau in my community struggled with chronic health conditions like diabetes and kidney disease and I really wanted to do something in order to support them and give back,” she says. “I feel I’m in a great place to do that at the moment.”

Maia, who is of Ngāti Manawa, Ngāi Tūhoe, and Whakatōhea descent, is among 20 health professionals who this month celebrated their graduation from a Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand scholarship programme for Māori and Pacific students in Waitematā.

Another 18 students were welcomed into the programme.

Maia has worked at North Shore Hospital in Auckland as a kidney dietitian for nearly five months and says the programme was hugely helpful – linking her with other students from similar cultural backgrounds and providing her with a “safe space” to work through her studies.

“I found it to be so supportive in my journey to becoming a dietitian and the connection with my peers made something that was actually quite difficult seem a lot easier,” she says.

The scholarship programme is designed to help achieve equity within the health sector workforce and is targeted at Māori and Pacific students who are studying to complete an undergraduate health science degree with an accredited New Zealand tertiary provider.

It offers financial support of up to \$5000-a-year and help with employment opportunities upon graduation. Recipients also have access to an associated network of contacts.

Maia says she is now well-placed to realise her childhood ambitions and help make a difference – especially in the Māori community.

“I’ve definitely noticed that patients often feel a little bit more comfortable to have people with the same background and culture caring for them.

“I’m quite fortunate in my current role because I get to work with a lot of Māori and Pasifika people and their whānau every day. It is exactly what I want to do.”

Applications for the next scholarship programme intake will open in early 2023.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

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Caption: Health scholarship graduate Maia Lingman is drawing on her own cultural background to help achieve more equitable health outcomes for Māori.

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