

TE TOI UKU

Annual Report 2025



Executive summary

A Thriving Museum at the Heart of the Whau

In 2025, Te Toi Uku continued to celebrate and safeguard the rich heritage of Crown Lynn ceramics and West Auckland's clay industry. Despite economic pressures and temporary closure for renovations, our museum remained a vibrant community anchor through partnerships, outreach, and resilient programming.

Highlights

- **Broad Community Reach:** We delivered over 50 on- and off-site activities—from clay workshops to heritage talks—reaching diverse communities.
- **Audience-Centred Programming:** Free and low-cost events ensured accessibility. Our new website and expanded digital presence improved public engagement.
- **Māori and Pacific Outcomes:** Embedded Te Reo and cultural narratives in exhibitions; highlights include Poata Alvie McKree's kōrero ahead of *The Handlers* restaging.
- **Volunteer and Youth Development:** Young volunteers gaining Service IQ credits; staff pursued museum qualifications.
- **Grant-Supported Projects:** Successfully delivered several major projects thanks to Whau Local Board and other funding partners.

Looking Ahead

Reopening August 2025 marks a new chapter. Priorities include:

- **Operational Resilience:** Introducing a co-ordinator role to support core functions.
- **Community Hub Development:** Strengthening the Ambrico Hub to deepen local engagement.
- **Education Strategy:** Expanding outreach and curriculum-aligned resources.
- **New Offerings:** Launching a Ceramics Trail Map and expanding outdoor activities post-roof renewal.

Our Call to Stakeholders

To fulfil our mission and grow impact, we seek multi-year operational funding, collaborative partnerships, and community investment. Te Toi Uku is more than a museum—it's a place of identity, connection, and pride for all who call the Whau home.

Key Challenges

- **Financial Sustainability:** Reduced paid tour group visits and delayed renovation timelines affected revenue. Core operations still rely heavily on contestable grants.
- **Understaffing:** A single part-time director and a Saturday museum host manages daily operations, programming, and fundraising—posing sustainability and wellbeing concerns.
- **Space Constraints:** Limited indoor capacity restricts in-museum activities and education programming.

Context

Te Toi Uku – our Story

- Opened in 2015 by the Portage Ceramics Trust
- Preserves Aotearoa's most extensive Crown Lynn ceramics collection
- Tells the inspiring stories of West Auckland's clay industry
- Showcases the last surviving brick kiln in Auckland
- Connects Whau communities with their unique identity and heritage
- Promotes pride, belonging and sense of place

Te Toi Uku – a thriving community Museum

Free entry – accessible for all

Inclusive welcoming space
for all - from kindergarten
children to Age Concern
groups

Ambrico Community hub
serving the Ambrico
Neighbourhood

**Community connection for
Whanaungatanga and
Hauora** through public
programmes, creative art
workshops and museum
tours

**Tell our local and national
history for education,**
meeting curriculum needs of
Whau schools with a focus
on Pacific peoples and Māori
stories

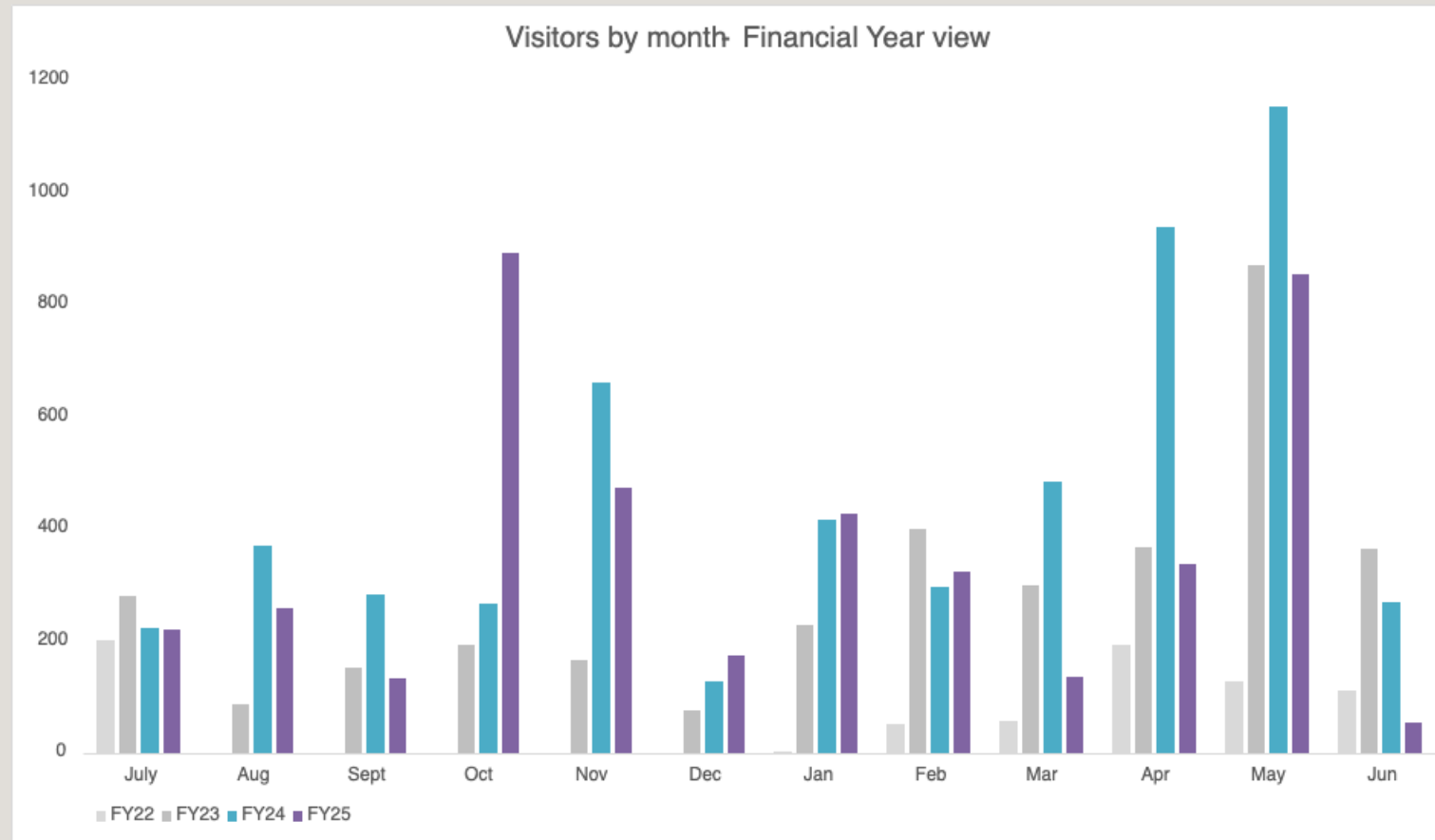
Te Toi Uku 2027– Strategy Summary

OUR ASPIRATION	Te Toi Uku is a thriving community museum telling the stories of Crown Lynn ceramics and West Auckland’s clay industry.				
OUR AUDIENCES Key audience segment Te Toi Uku serves, enriches, inspires and hopes to retain	Ambrico Neighbourhood Our immediate neighbourhood including diverse ethnicities and recent immigrants	Māori Māori people and communities, in particular ex-Crown Lynn employees	Pacific People Pacific people and communities, in particular ex-Crown Lynn employees that migrated to Aotearoa	Children & young people Students participating in education and informal creative learning	The Whau Our wider diverse Whau community
OUR FOCUS Enabling capabilities that help Te Toi Uku deliver its aspiration	Operational Sustainability We operate with responsible financial management and care for our people, meeting best practice museum policies and procedures	Community Connections Our strong collaborative community relationships enable us to deliver quality on and off-site programmes	Education Our valuable educational resources deliver to schools and meet the curriculum needs of learners	Public Programming We deliver inclusive and fun community activities and programmes both on and off-site to share our rich heritage	
OUR STAKEHOLDERS Key stakeholder groups enabling Te Toi Uku’s strategy	Core Funders Our core funders enable our museum to operate as a sustainable cultural and heritage facility	Strategic Partners Our strategic partners support us to develop and deliver community and education projects and activities	Community Partners We collaborate with community partners to serve our communities together	Supporters Our supporters facilitate us in a wide variety of ways to be a thriving museum	

FY25 Key Achievements

Engaging our community and off-site outreach activities drive consistently high visitor numbers

We've seen a significant decline in audience number from the second half of last year, notably from paying tour groups. We attribute this decline to the difficult economic conditions affecting households.



Proactive public programming delivered a wide range of free or low- cost community activities

Collaborations with other community organisations to deliver off-site programmes significantly contributes to participant numbers. This strategy addresses the limited physical capacity of our building. Our range of on and off-site activities offered include:

- clay & mosaic workshops
- Crown Lynn markets
- festival activities
- heritage talks
- school activities
- tours
- community events
- displays & exhibitions

Te Toi Uku - FY 2024-25 Summary Statistics	
Total Audience	4,288
Individual Visitors (on-site)	1,021
Tour Groups (on-site)	13
Programmes	73
On-site Participants	1,025
Off-site Participants	2,067
Exhibitions & Displays	18
Volunteer Hours	367
Programmes with Māori Outcomes	7

Major operational & programming projects delivered with grant income

Project / Purpose	Funding Source	Amount
Te Toi Uku website	Auckland Regional Arts and Culture Grant	\$18,000
Māori & Pacific Exhibition Programme	Creative Communities Scheme	\$9,500
Holding Collection Project	Lotteries Environment and Heritage Grant	\$15,000
40ft Container off-site storage	MOTAT and Private Donation	\$8,500
Ambrico Community Connectedness	Whau Local Board Grant	\$5,000
Pacific Crown Lynn employee interviews	Ministry of Education Funding	\$15,000
Part-time Museum Host	The Trusts Community Foundation	\$14,000

Public endorsement contributes to our audience growth

...what our visitors say:

"Love the new website! You must be very proud of it!"

MOTAT chair

"Thank you both very much for the warm welcome yesterday, the team thoroughly enjoyed and valued the time with you both. Before, heading to the Kelston Hub, we went to the Margan lane project and the team were very impressed; the mural, colours and planter boxes are beautiful and make such a difference. So pleased to hear from you both, that this project connected many people."

Whau Local Board new staff members

"It was a fantastic day! Thank you to all who contributed 👍" and "Thank you again for organising and hosting this lovely market. Always fun, interesting and heartwarming. X." Crown Lynn Market visitor

"This was an amazing art class with the clay. It was a good experience to learn about my family history."

Siapo Talanoa & workshop participant

"Thank you very much for hosting our Rangitahi last week. They had a great time."

Green Bay High School

"Great gem of NZ history."
Visitor book comment

"By elevating the story of Crown Lynn, we elevate the broader history of New Zealand industry and the people who made it thrive."
Poata Alvie McKree

"You and the team did such an amazing job putting together the workshop and talanoa that day, I cant give you enough praise. It would be a pleasure to work together again in the future". Doron Semu, Siapo artist

Increasing our Māori outcomes

We are committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles across programming and operations and increasing Māori outcomes:

- Te Reo is incorporated into our social media and recent displays, including full translations for “The Handle Room” display.
- A highlight was our Kōrero at Te Toi Uku with Poata Alvie McKree on her sell-out play “The Handlers”, ahead of its re-staging at the Kia Mau festival.



Poata Alvie McKree at Te Toi Uku

Our Future - Challenges and Opportunities

Our Future – Operational sustainability

Operational sustainability – sustainable financial future

Challenges:

- Securing operational funding and diverse streams of income remain a key concern.
- Challenging economic climate, high cost of living is impacting on museum visitor numbers, donations and retail sales.
- The museum closure for renovations from May – August 2025 had a significant impact on visitors and income. As the planned closure date kept shifting it was difficult to schedule public programmes since December 2024.

Opportunities::

- Develop a funding strategy prioritising operational sustainability over delivering multiple projects to ensure a secure foundation. Increased funding from the Whau Local Board contributes significantly to our sustainability.
- We're looking forward to re-opening from August 16th and welcoming visitors back. Our focus is to attract new tour groups.
- The trustees are proactive in developing key stakeholder relationships and development projects to contribute diverse ongoing support for the museum.
- Implement efficiencies across areas of museum management towards our operational sustainability. These include stream-lining retail management processes, expenses tracking processes and object entry collection management processes.

Our Future – Operational sustainability

Operational Sustainability – looking after our people

Challenges:

- The museum is staffed by a director (32 hours) and Saturday museum host (10 hours). This under-staffing poses well-being, and health and safety issues, regarding workload and lone-working in the museum.
- Day-to-day museum management, delivering major projects, ensuring quality public programming, authentic engagement with our community, taking care of stakeholders, seeking funding and implementing necessary operational efficiencies, currently puts considerable pressure on the small team of part-time staff and volunteer trustees.

Opportunities:

- Increased funding would enable us to look after our people and operate sustainability. A proposed new museum co-ordinator (32 hours) role would provide support and resourcing for Te Toi Uku .
- The Ambrico community co-ordinator based at Te Toi Uku (10 hours) implements Ambrico Community Hub activities in partnership with Te Toi Uku. This is a new initiative and in the early stages of being established with further funding from the Whau Local Board.
- Te Toi Uku is proud to support its young volunteers to gain Service IQ qualifications. This includes our part-time Museum host who is completing a Level 4 Certificate in Museum Studies and two volunteers gaining credits for Customer Service units towards a pathway for future qualifications.

Our Future - Community Connections

Community Connections – collaborations

Challenges:

- We don't have multi-year funding certainty; therefore no long-term community engagement can be formed. Feed-back from the community is scepticism about long-term projects.
- We have limited space due to our relatively small building; therefore community engagement and public programming are limited by our capacity to host a maximum of twenty-five people inside.

Opportunities:

- The developing Ambrico Community Hub is embedding the museum in the Ambrico and wider New Lynn neighbourhood.
- Host stakeholders and community partners in small groups in our new staffroom / meeting space.
- We already have a strong relationship with a network of community organisations in the Whau which we are building on.
- We are establishing our presence as part of a network of community hubs to serve the Whau area.
- Strong relationships with local community organisations enable us to share resources.

Our Future - Education

Education – excellence as an educational resource

Challenges:

- Lack of capability and capacity to develop education resources supporting school curriculum needs.
- Space limitations create similar challenges as with our community engagement and public programmes.

Opportunities:

- Develop curriculum aligned education resources building on the research by a Ministry of Education Pacific Support fund. This research follows the stories of Pacific migrants that came to work at Crown Lynn.
- Develop education kits for outreach programmes in schools drawing on the materials discovered as part of the Holding Collection project.
- Further leverage our new website launched March 2025 as an effective platform for students and teachers.
- Continue to develop collaborations with contemporary artists building on the success of the Siapo and Clay Talanoa and workshop.

Our Future – Public Programming

Public Programming – share and inspire

Challenges:

- Lack of resources to develop accessible exhibition and display materials for diverse needs.
- Lack of a kiln to take advantage of the demand for creative ceramic workshops.

Opportunities:

- Continue to develop engaging and inspiring public programmes that generate overwhelmingly positive feedback.
- Leverage the What's on section and booking capability of the new website to increase engagement with our programmes.
- Continue to collaborate with a range of community organisations and funding partners to offer activities from free family friendly workshops to artist talks.
- Utilise our new staffroom meeting space for small bespoke art and creative workshops, and community activities.
- Utilise the extra outdoor cover from our roof renewal to host activities outdoors.
- Develop a New Lynn Ceramics Trail Map, funded by a Te Papa National Services Te Paerangi grant, promoting the rich ceramics heritage of the area.

Ngā mihi nui

Thank you to our funders

Core Funder:



Grant partners:

