



# *Nyena Weeds Kawai*

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The McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau scholarship has been important to me and my whānau because it has allowed me to connect with my ancestry and Māori heritage which I may not have had the opportunity to do otherwise.

When I applied for the scholarship in 2017, I had very little connection to my Māori heritage because my great grandmother had been forbidden to speak Māori by her Pākehā stepmother. Unfortunately, this meant that my family never learnt about this part of our history, and it was not until I applied for and received the scholarship that I felt encouraged to learn more about my heritage.



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## *Graduate: Bachelor of Sport & Recreation*

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My dad and I travelled to Tolaga Bay in 2018 after he contacted my grandfather's cousin, and we were able to learn about our iwi, its history and we were even able to visit our maunga and awa, seeing them in person for the first time. This gave a new meaning when I spoke my pepeha and I felt I had a real connection to these places. I also discovered that I am distantly related to Trent Dallas who was my Māori Liaison Officer at the time which was incredible to discover!

I truly believe receiving this scholarship opened my eyes to a part of my heritage I had not been able to connect with previously. However, a big part of this was also due to my amazing friends and fellow scholarship recipients Kapua Harris-Otene and Qianna Titore. They opened my eyes and showed me there is no such thing as "not Māori enough" which is something I was told growing up.

I have lived with Kapua and Qianna since our first year in the Akoranga student village and have been so blessed to have lived with them for the past 4 years. They have always encouraged and supported me in everything I have done, and I am so grateful that through this scholarship I have met two of my closest friends who I consider whānau.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Whaea Hariata who has been so supportive to me throughout my time at AUT. I truly cannot thank Hariata and the McDonald's team enough for taking a chance on me and providing me with this opportunity which has given me friendships that will last a lifetime.

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# Ngato-Zharnaye Livingstone



“The McDonald’s Te Tai Tokerau scholarship was important to me and my whānau because it was the first tohu, the first sign for myself to realise “Hey, I have potential!”. It was the kūaha, the doorway for my whānau to step into the world of university and see what it’s like, considering I was the first in my whānau to even go.

The scholarship allowed me to live and experience my first year with excitement and at ease. I was able to live with complete strangers, who later became people I grew fond of, people I was able to experience Auckland with for the first time.

One special memory I have is how Maia, Danyon and I went to Maungauika (the Northern Head tunnels in Davenport) because we heard about it from an RA downstairs.

The sun was setting and the sky was filled with hues of pink and orange - it was beautiful.

Yet, what made that paramount was the fact that it was a new place and experience for all of us, it makes me happy thinking on it now and even mokemoke knowing that moment can’t be lived again.

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## ***Graduate: Bachelor of Communication Studies***

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After that time, we ended up doing a couple more trips around Northcote as a trio, and I would have never been able to have made those memories and bonds without this scholarship, which I must say I am grateful for. Even amongst some deep challenges that rose during that first year of uni, I was always reaffirmed with the fact that I was always supported by the inklings the scholarship had to offer; from shuttle bus cards, to the everlasting manaaki of the Maccas alumni/whānau that I was able to connect with.

Despite my family living in Te Tai Tokerau and myself living without them, I always knew I was supported by the Maccas fam in anyway, which in turn allowed my whānau to let me live independently away from them without worry.

The McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau scholarship was important to me because it allowed me to experience moments, create connections and ease throughout my uni experience yet in turn, also allowed me to share this whole experience with my whānau as well.

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“ *Despite my family living in Te Tai Tokerau and myself living without them, I always knew I was supported by the Maccas fam.*

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## *Terzha-Jayd Blithe*

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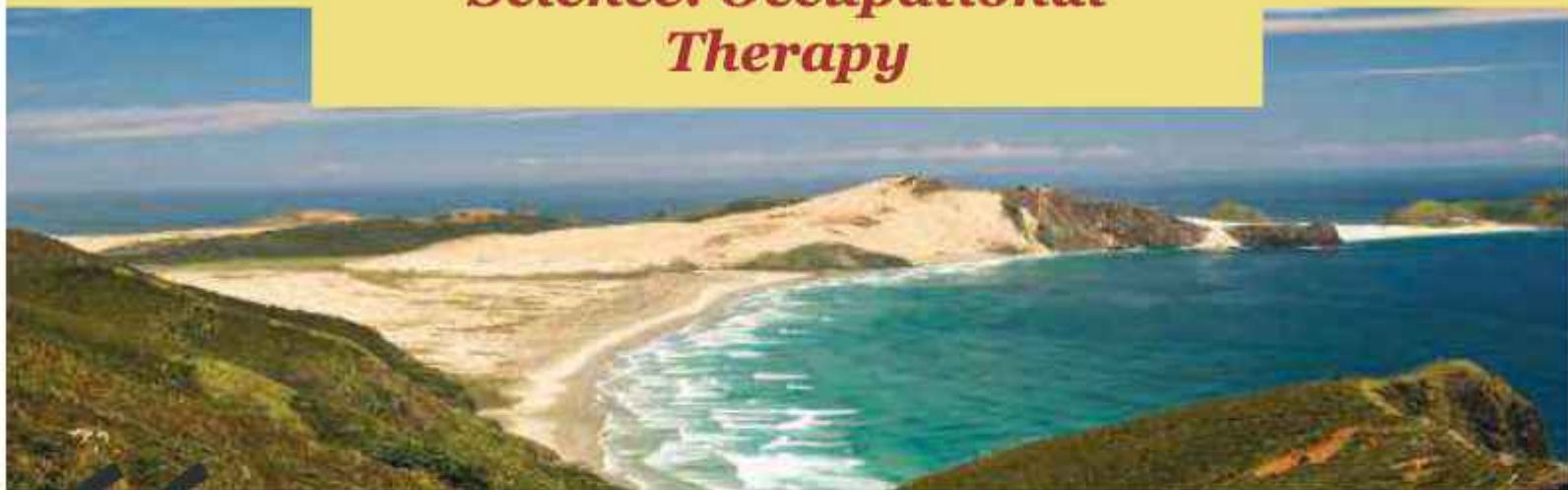
The McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau scholarship was important to me and my whānau for several reasons. First and foremost, this scholarship has allowed me the opportunity to attend university straight out of high school. This was really important for me because it meant I did not have to take a gap year like many students, in order to start working in the hope that I would be in a financial position to follow my dream to become an Occupational Therapist and fund the course on my own. It was also important for my whānau because they are not able to support me financially, even though they both work very hard.

During my studies, made possible by being awarded the scholarship, I have had the opportunity to stay away from my whānau by moving from the far north, into the student village. This was again very important for me and my whānau because the scholarship went a long way to alleviating a great deal of stress and anxiety by helping me pay for my accommodation. There was absolutely no way that my whānau and I could have afforded the expense of staying on campus, which in turn would have resulted in me simply staying home and trying to find work, unqualified and uneducated.

Growing up in the far north meant I grew up in a small, tight-knit community. The transition to AUT was frightening to contemplate initially, knowing I would be among complete strangers without any of my friends from high school and whānau, and away from familiar surroundings. This was made much easier for me to cope with though as I was brought into the McDonald's whānau, along with other Māori students from different parts of the country, who were fellow recipients of the scholarship. I realise this is important because I was quite a shy person and found it difficult making new friends, but having the McDonald's whānau, we became a whānau and looked after each other.

This was really helpful.

## ***Final Year Bachelor of Health Science: Occupational Therapy***



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***I will be able to return home to my people and provide those in our community with the professional care they need and deserve.***

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I also really appreciated the fact that when I attended the first interview for the scholarship, I met whaea Hariata and she did such a fantastic job of supporting me right through my tenure here at AUT, making sure I had everything I needed, and was like a mum to me while away from home.

The scholarship was more than just a great financial benefit for me. As a recipient of this prestigious award, I was paired up with a mentor and fellow student of the same discipline who had started at AUT a year before me, and she was also a ‘Maccas’ student. This was important to me because it gave me access to a student who understood the challenges I was facing as I battled to come to terms with concepts and principles of Occupational Therapy.

Finally, in closing, the greatest reason the scholarship has been so important to me is that it has allowed me to study, and ultimately when I qualify and gain the necessary experience, I will be able to return home to my people and provide those in our community with the professional care they need and deserve from an Occupational Therapist who is Māori, and therefore cognizant of Māori protocols and customs – help the people whoever they are, whenever they need it, and do it with aroha.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We cannot express enough thanks to all those that have contributed to and been involved with the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship. To McDonald's New Zealand, your dedication to Māori excellence and continued support for the Tai Tokerau, Wairau and Gisborne regions has been invaluable for the past 30 years and we cannot express enough our deep and sincere gratitude.

To AUT Te Ara Poutama, you have given our recipients and our staff a place of safety and growth, a chance to develop and become who we were always meant to be, we would like to offer our most sincere appreciation for the hard work, support, and aroha that you have provided this programme. To our McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship recipients, past, present, and future, without you this programme would not be possible. You have allowed us to serve, protect, and aid you in one of the most important journeys you have made in life, and we look forward to all your accomplishments and successes.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your stories.



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# *Karakia Whakamutunga*

## *Te Pae o Mahara*

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Tēnei au e noho nei i te pae o mahara. I sit on the bench of memories  
Te titiro whakawaho ki ngā kapua Looking otwards to the clouds on the  
E tere mai nei Horizon passing me by.

He Aomihia Some greet  
He Aotangihia Others weep

Ka mahea mai te rangi. The sky clears  
Ko Tamanui ka hoki ki tōnā rua. As the sun returns passes from sight.  
Ka tō te rā, haramai te pō. And as the sun sets, the night begins.  
Ka ngaro rā ngā hihī The light of day is now lost,  
Ko Hinenui ka whakakau mai. As the moon rises in the distance.  
Tīaho mai i runga, The night sky is bright  
Mārama mai i raro. and the land shines in her light.

Ākuanei rā, e Tama Soon, the sun will rise again,  
Ā te atatū Just after the last moments of night  
Ā te ata-ka-pakarū. As its light creeps into the sky again.

Whano, Whana, Until then  
Haramai te toki. Let us rejoice and celebrate.  
Hauma, Hui e! Shout aloud and together!  
Tāiki e! Let our reality be so!