



THE SOUTH  
ADVANTAGE  
COLLECTIVE

# Growing the innovation ecosystem in South Auckland



R E P O R T



## ABOUT US

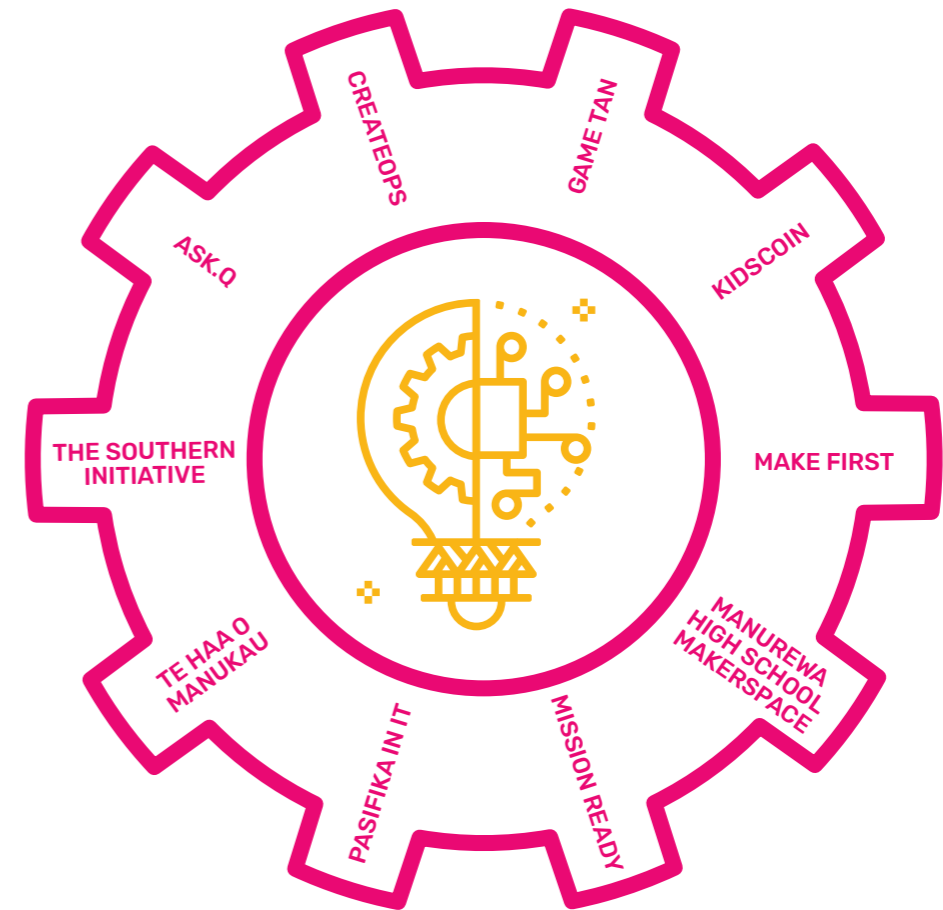
The South Advantage Collective is a network of South Auckland innovators committed to positively impacting the lives of our people so that they can create a future full of opportunities.

Since 2018, the Collectives' Members have been building a pathway to ensure South Aucklanders, with a focus on Māori and Pasifika, can thrive in the digital economy.

This report outlines the milestones and practices that the group has been spearheading for the past two years and lays out a bold vision for South Auckland's digital future in a post-COVID-19 world.



## COLLECTIVE MEMBERS



## SOUTH ADVANTAGE COLLECTIVE

THE COLLECTIVE'S ECO-SYSTEM APPROACH TO BUILDING DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT



### EXPLORE AND EXCITE

*Provide opportunities to explore technology, sparking interest and excitement*

Collective members:  
**AskQ, GameTan, Make First**



### DEVELOP AND DEEPEN

*Nurture interest and deepen curiosity about technology and its opportunities.*

Collective members:  
**Manurewa HS, Pasifika in IT, CreateOps**



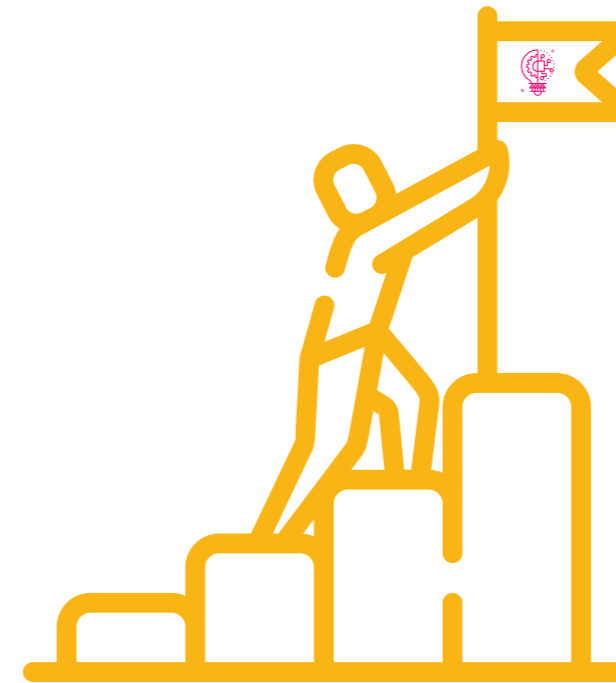
### ACTIVATE AND ACCELERATE

*Provide further education and entrepreneurial opportunities to turn interest and skills into viable tech careers or ventures.*

Collective members:  
**KidsCoin, Mission Ready HQ**

# VISION

South Auckland  
is thriving  
in the digital  
economy



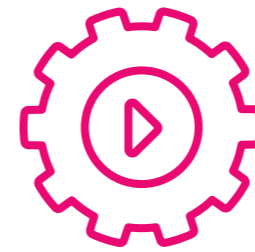
The new economy that emerges from COVID-19 will undoubtedly be different. It will require different thinking, different behaviours and different innovative models and practices - but our kaupapa remains the same.

Our goal is to connect and create digital empowerment opportunities, tools, skills and resources for South Auckland that focus on:

1. Leading innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship
2. Improving digital equity, confidence and well-being
3. Creating pathways into tech-enabled careers

# GOAL

# THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE (TSI)



TSI is a social innovation unit nested within Auckland Council, we support the evolving South Advantage Collective and the wider innovation ecosystem by:

- Convening the collective and providing coordination and facilitation support for joint projects
- Overseeing the Makerhood STEAM activations and UpSouth digital engagement platform
- Acting as lead proponent in joint funding applications
- Establishing relationships with funding partners and social investors and tap the collective as delivery partners for joined up projects
- Growing the innovation ecosystem by co-designing tech solutions and prototypes with partners

***“Reciprocity is a defining feature of this emerging innovation ecosystem. South Auckland changemakers and TSI are working hard together to create future career pathways for Māori and Pasifika youth. By working together, we can help to create the conditions for exciting opportunities that will enable rangatahi to uncover their aspirations, embrace the changing face of work, and achieve success.”***

***Gael Surgenor, TSI Director***

## OUR STORY SO FAR



This report documents how the South Advantage Collective came together, what we've learnt and how important this innovation ecosystem is to the economic prosperity and wellbeing of South Auckland.

The South Advantage Collective's original inspiration was the TSI's 'South Auckland Maker City Strategy', a vision that champions effective private-public-philanthropic collaborations in the tech space to support innovation, economic development and social transformation.

Through word of mouth, various contacts and fortuitous meetings, TSI began making connections with South Auckland creatives, makers, innovators and entrepreneurs working in various settings, either self-employed or employed. Exchanging ideas and visions illuminated a need and the will to create a more connected and stable long-term South Auckland movement of change. Woven together with South Auckland energy, culture and flair, the South Advantage Collective now has 10 core partners who are, themselves, inspiring role-models. Through their organisations, they are pioneering a range of tech-related initiatives all aimed at cultivating a new generation of passionate Māori and Pasifika creatives, makers, innovators and entrepreneurs.

The South Advantage Collective (the Collective) initiatives take different forms but all combine a tech focus with culture, creativity, learning and

collaboration. Apprenticeships, mentoring, individual and team projects, corporate internships, and other hands-on, tailored learning opportunities allow rangatahi to experience and progress towards future work pathways. Whānau, schools and communities connect through exhibitions and events that showcase their local talent, raise awareness of the growing impact of technology on work, and encourage them to support their youth.

The Collective is now seeking to develop a more joined-up approach with government and the industry. We have partnered with the Ministry of Youth Development, Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development (ATEED) and Panuku Development Auckland (Panuku) to strengthen economic development opportunities and support placemaking initiatives aimed at transforming Manukau into a thriving business hub. In addition, the group is working with the tech industry and the AUT to create step change in South Auckland.

***“If people feel like they have ownership, they develop a sense of investment in making something work.”***

***South Auckland changemaker***

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**Why tech? Why now?**  
**Why South Auckland?**

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## COVID-19 AMPLIFIES OUR PURPOSE

The recent unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has proven the resilience of the tech sector and highlighted the urgency of our role as a Collective to help reset the digital future of South Auckland. Established tech firms like Amazon, Microsoft, IBM, Facebook and HP are growing, producing more innovative products and services and hiring people in an environment where every other sector has been adversely affected. Local tech entrepreneurs have been using their experience and imagination to create solutions to support businesses, communities and the government. Conversely, on the ground in South Auckland the depth of digital inequity during the lockdown has amplified how socially and economically isolated our communities are.

## WHY TECH? WHY NOW? WHY SOUTH AUCKLAND?



### THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

The future of work presents significant challenges and opportunities for Aotearoa New Zealand and especially South Auckland. A globalised economy and rapid technological innovations (including robotics, machine learning, artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality and genetics) are changing the nature of work, creating new and different jobs and evolving more flexible, independent work arrangements. The tech industry offers diverse roles with ongoing industry-based learning and progression opportunities, and not all entry-level positions require a university education. The challenge is to ensure South Aucklanders are equipped to embrace new ways of working.

### SKILLS SHORTAGES AND UNDER-REPRESENTATION

A significant skills shortage in the tech industry (globally and nationally) is hampering New Zealand's economic growth. We currently source employees from beyond local talent pools to bridge the digital skills gap but there's an opportunity to grow and develop this talent locally. New approaches are also needed to overcome the under-representation of women, Māori and Pasifika peoples in the tech industry.

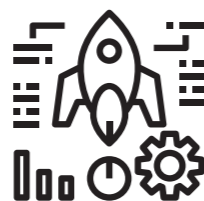
### CONNECTING PATHWAYS

Accelerating a cross-sector approach, with industry, government, education

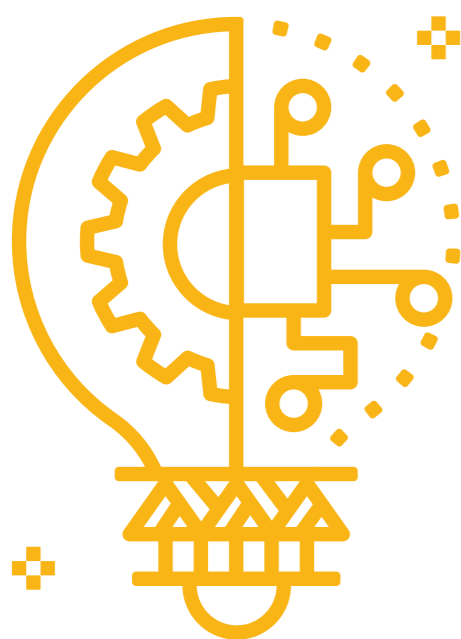
and philanthropy working together, will help ensure a digitally skilled and diverse future workforce. To help create pathways to future study and employment, from 2020, New Zealand schools are required to implement a new digital technologies curriculum – Hangarau Matihiko. To find their place and achieve in a highly technological world, South Auckland rangatahi (youth) need culturally-centred learning opportunities, tailored support, exposure to technologies and industry settings, connections to diverse networks, and accessible pathways to new and different jobs.

### NEW AND EXCITING POSSIBILITIES

Some South Auckland communities continue to suffer negative labelling, and the impacts of intergenerational poverty are hugely constraining for children, youth, whānau and communities. Fostering a sustainable movement of change through tech learning and innovation will contribute positive social, cultural and economic impacts across South Auckland. In particular, Māori and Pasifika tech entrepreneurs offer a unique blend of culture, creativity, resilience, networks, and concern for their communities. Investing in these role models, through the South Advantage Collective, will show rangatahi new and exciting possibilities for their future, and enable them to develop relationships with a talented group of creatives, makers, innovators and tech entrepreneurs.



# The South Advantage Collective's outlook in numbers



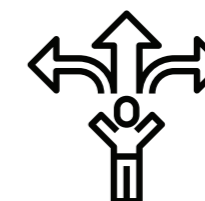
## THE SOUTH ADVANTAGE COLLECTIVE PERFORMANCE TO DATE:

- **17 rangatahi** graduated from the Mission Ready's tech career accelerator programme, **10 are now employed, 3 set up their own tech ventures, 4 went to university** for further studies
- **392% measurable benefits** calculated as part of the social return on investment of Manurewa High School Makerspace
- **28 mentees** from schools matched to Pasifika in IT mentors in NZ's top IT firms, including Microsoft, AIR NZ and Xero
- **10 high school** students employed as tech apprentices in the 3 Bags Full Programme of KidsCoin - a Māori fintech start up company with another 6 currently being trained.
- **12 female students** participated in Informed Choices, a 10-week tech internship with CreateOps with **20 more students** in the pipeline to expose them to the tech industry work environment
- More than **50 Makerhood Science Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM)** activations and workshops attended by more than 1,200 children and young people
- 187 students from **7 schools** participated in a tech exchange .....
- Game Tan's game club engaging hundreds of young people into online gaming and e-Sports
- Ta Haa o Manukau, South Auckland's premier shared working space was created.
- Upsouth - a digital engagement tool that rewards young people for their ideas and opinions with micropayments - has engaged more than **4,000 young people** in South Auckland through **21 Callups** and have distributed **\$33,000 to rangatahi**
- About **\$1million investments** unlocked to support Māori and Pasifika rangatahi into innovation pathways that are future focused



## EXTERNAL INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

- Technology could move **a quarter of Auckland's employment growth towards high-skilled**, knowledge intensive roles in management and professional services (*Martin Jenkins & Associates, 2019, p. 13*).
- In 2017, research predicted **270,000 jobs may be lost** to automation, with Māori and youth most at risk (*Martin Jenkins & Associates, 2019, p. 10*).
- According to 2013 data, **less than 1% of Māori** doing tertiary studies were pursuing an ICT qualification. (*MBIE, 2015, p. 22*).
- In 2015, **only 2.5% of the total Māori** workforce were employed in the ICT sector (*MBIE, 2015, p. 25*).
- In 2016, **only 36% of computer science** and information technology students were female (*Digital Skills Forum, 2018, p. 15*) and **only 8% identified as Māori and 6% as Pasifika** (*p. 29*).
- **More than 30% of New Zealanders** experience "digital exclusion", among them a disproportionate number of Māori and Pacific people (*Motu, 2019*). Census data from 2013 found around **a third (32%) of Māori** households did not have internet access at home, compared with 14% nationally in 2012 (*MBIE, 2015, p. 15*).



## EXTERNAL INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

- With a median salary of **\$82k** in 2017, work in the IT sector offers improved social prosperity for whānau (*Digital Skills Forum, 2018, p. 6*).
- In 2016, there were **14,000 new ICT jobs**, but **only 5,090 students** graduated from tech-related studies (*Digital Skills Forum, 2018, p. 6*).
- The tech sector is growing fast. In a recent survey, **120 tech firms** planned to create more than **3000 new digitally skilled roles** in the next two years (*Digital Skills Forum, 2018, p.15*).
- Tech firms favoured 'on-the-job' training and mentoring as the best way to develop the skills and capabilities needed for tech-related work. (*Digital Skills Forum, 2018, p. 41*).
- Research highlights the urgent need to introduce youth to the possibilities of a career in digital technologies, enhance digital technologies education, increase access to career pathways, and support the transition into digital roles (*Digital Skills Forum, 2018, p. 6*).
- A Productivity Commission Report released in March 2020 called Technological Change and the Future of Work stresses the need for New Zealand to adapt more technology and make training systems more flexible and accessible.
- The tech sector will be less affected by the Covid-19 pandemic compared to the Manufacturing, Transportation, Tourism, Retail and Energy sectors with some areas such as cloud services, hardware and communications platforms, growing rapidly (*Computer Economics, 2020*).





## The South Advantage Collective's approach



Weaving mātauranga (indigenous knowledges), western science and design methods, The South Advantage Collective is striving to develop new approaches, practices and technologies that can create sustainable socio-economic transformation in South Auckland.

Across the school years, the South Advantage Collective creates tech-learning opportunities for children and youth to gain access to programmes, platforms and networks that cultivate competencies critical to the future of work. The South Advantage Collective has developed a stepping-stone approach, so youth can transition from one tech-learning experience to the next, broadening and deepening their learning along the way.

Rangatahi learn 'hard' skills or technical know-how such as coding and programming languages or artificial intelligence and machine learning concepts. They also learn crucially important 'soft' skills such as entrepreneurship, experimentation, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, communication and teamwork.

Through the Collective, rangatahi (and organisational partners) get to work

with inspiring Māori and Pasifika role-models (creatives, makers, innovators and entrepreneurs) in diverse settings through workshops, tech-activations, mentoring, internships, apprenticeships and tech accelerator programmes. They learn how to develop an idea into a project – articulating concepts, planning, executing, trialling, performing and reporting.

*“Partnering with wide-ranging organisations has allowed us to invest in inspiring Māori and Pasifika role models who show youth and others what we're all striving to achieve.”*

*Joel Umali, TSI Lead- Social Intrapreneur for Innovation and Technology*

## LONG TERM IMPACT

**The South Advantage Collective's collaborative activities over the past two years have demonstrated the value of acting together for multiple stakeholders, including:**

### **RANGATAHI / YOUTH**

Youth learn while having fun and building vital connections to self, friends, school, community and their future. Harnessing the rich resource of their cultural identity and connections to place, they develop positive peer relationships, critical thinking, creativity, and entrepreneurial flair. Increased confidence, resilience and wellbeing supports youth to develop a clearer sense of their talents, study options, employment aspirations, and future direction. Access to tech learning opportunities grows their sense of belonging in the working world of technology and the creative sector.

### **WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY**

Learning about the foreign world of tech encourages parents to inspire their youth to explore opportunities. When whānau move forward together, they activate a

healthy domino effect, encouraging those around them (neighbours, community) to consider new ways of thinking and available opportunities.

### **DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE BUSINESSES**

Businesses recognise the ROI that diversity brings, be it profitability, stronger governance, better customer representation, increased creativity, the evidence is clear. However, businesses urgently need a pipeline of diverse talent. The South Advantage Collective is creating this - a future workforce of diverse, creative, tech-savvy South Auckland youth, many of whom are Māori or Pasifika.

### **TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS**

Teachers learn experiential, project-based, inquiry-led approaches they can use to equip students with 21st century skills aligned to the new digital curriculum. Technology is more accessible and schools can extend their offerings and open new career pathways. School culture and outcomes are enhanced through activities across year groups and beneficial cross-sector partnerships.

### **CREATIVES, MAKERS, INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS**

Shared work spaces create connections, spark ideas and foster collaboration. Experiencing

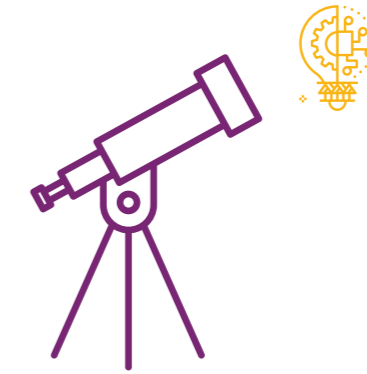
different working arrangements and environments helps young creatives and entrepreneurs to figure out what works best for them. Crucial business knowledge supports sustainable self-employment. Activations and events provide a platform for creatives to train, create and perform.

### **SOUTH AUCKLAND**

Activating an innovation ecosystem shows potential for wide-ranging positive outcomes. The group connects students, schools, creatives and entrepreneurs across South Auckland to social innovation networks that support a regional strategy focussed on the future of work. People, groups and schools are becoming more joined-up within their community, as a city and as a region.

### **COUNCIL / GOVERNMENT**

The South Advantage Collective demonstrates how to develop effective cross-sector collaborations that progress a shared vision towards achieving individual, whānau, community, business, city and government aspirations. Growing the innovation ecosystem will capitalise on existing investments, strengthen and expand networks, generate new initiatives and collaborations, and ensure its long-term sustainability, with potential to become an exemplar that influences council and government policy.



## CATALYSING THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

**TSI is supporting the growth of the collective and the wider innovation ecosystem.**

**Its job is to:**

**LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES:**

look for an opportunity to grow the ecosystem and open up tech-learning pathways for rangatahi. TSI might develop an idea for an initiative, co-design an idea with an entrepreneur, or get in behind a community proposal.

**IDENTIFY PARTNERS:**

identify other creatives, makers, innovators or entrepreneurs who may be interested or able to support. It also brings potential partners and thought leaders to the table to discuss possibilities, explore options and clarify commitments. TSI works with industry for internship and employment opportunities.

**PROTOTYPE AN IDEA:**

secure seed funding to enable an entrepreneur or group to then prototype an idea and gain insights that will improve its delivery.

**PURSUE FUNDING:**

Beyond prototyping, TSI plays a crucial role in procuring resources needed to further develop innovations. TSI may develop proposals, a case for funding and investment plans. It facilitates Council social procurement processes, engages with potential investors, and pursues government and philanthropic funding.

**PROVIDE SUPPORT:**

Along the way, TSI provides advice and support on operational matters and business development. It also manages some contracts to enable groups to get on with delivery.

**ADDRESS PROBLEMS:**

help entrepreneurs to address issues or problems as they arise, recognising that uncertainty and change are part and parcel of innovation.

Negotiating challenges requires a big-picture vision, expertise, judgment and a flexible approach. Inevitably relationships are tested as initiatives roll out, so practising patience, humility, generosity, empathy, and perseverance is also crucial.

**LEARN FROM DOING:** TSI is constantly learning from its work with partners. Documenting stories and investing in evaluation keeps a strong focus on learning for everyone. Reflecting on experience has taught TSI the importance of doing the work of partnering upfront, specifying interests and developing clear expectations to guide shared understandings going forward, which is not always so straight-forward when things are evolving. Also, sharing responsibilities and workload ensures all partners feel a sense of ownership. It can be hard for TSI to predict how and when to step away, to allow entrepreneurs to fully take over, but doing so is crucial for a healthy sustainable ecosystem.



# Voices of the South Advantage Collective

## IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING RECIPROCAL

"South Auckland is probably one of the biggest places in New Zealand that has a lot of programmes come and go. It's awesome TSI see value in the people who are here. They work hard to create opportunities for us to help them with their goals but also allow us to strive and succeed at our goals. ... Joel is always thinking of us in everything he does; he's always thinking about developing the movement and creating opportunities to help grow us within our own businesses. ... The fact these guys at TSI are all about being reciprocal, it makes me feel I really want to ensure every day when I work with them that I'm doing the same because it makes the world a better place for everyone. For me, it's also a spiritual thing; it's about the journey."

**Keu Aorangi, Tech Entrepreneur, ASK.Q**

## IT JOINS US UP

"It enables our school to involve the outside world in learning. Our students get to work with new people and they love it. ... It's a really smart strategy because it's going to enable them to create income for themselves and for their families, and to be able to apply the knowledge they get from using technologies to make a difference in their community. ... None of that would be happening without TSI. ... we're actually joined-up to a wider regional strategy. ... My sense is that's only going to grow bigger and bigger. ... It joins us up as a community, then as a region, then as a city."

**Leanne Gibson, Director, Manurewa High School Business Academy**

## OPENING DOORS, CREATING OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGING YOUR IDEAS

"It's the importance of relationships; of having a network of like-minded progressive people who care. It's about opening new doors, creating new opportunities and challenging the status quo. It's about not getting comfortable with where you start and not being afraid to change for the betterment of those we serve. We have to become comfortable with change and constantly evolve and challenge our own products, brand and the impact we want to make. Having a partner like TSI, especially if you're a start-up, is invaluable; it's almost like having a guiding light, someone with whom to have those courageous or robust conversations."

**Diana Sharma, Co-founder & Mission Director, Mission Ready**

## HAVING THAT CONVERSATION

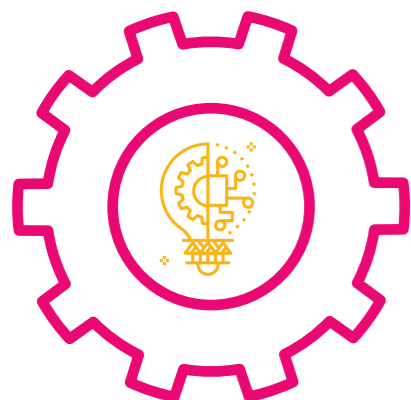
"... it's about community and having that conversation.... It's not just a conversation to see what you're doing; it's more like networking. Let's collaborate; can we work together and, if so, let's get going and sign on the dotted line. We've gotten a good handful of clients from being able to network either directly or indirectly. ... I think that's great. ... If you talk to someone who randomly walks into Te Haa, they'll say, "I'm here working on a project to influence my community." You never hear people saying, "I'm here to make a million bucks." The main focus is to make positive change in this community. Sometimes it takes that one person or that small thing to make something possible."

**A Te Haa tenant**

## KNOWING WHO IS DOING AMAZING THINGS, SHARING INSPIRING STORIES

"Some incredible Māori/Pasifika artists, entrepreneurs, creators and innovators in South Auckland are doing their own thing but it would be great to be aware of who they are and what they're doing so we can start looking at how we can collaborate and cross-germinate our thinking. ... So many Pasifika people are also doing amazing things out there. If the families in South Auckland just knew of some of those stories, they would be inspired and begin to develop a sense of aspiration and know they can have their own story. It's going to be challenging and hard but to have the desire and the motivation to make change, that's a start."

**Joanna Welch, former Board Director, Pasifika in IT**



## THE COLLECTIVE MEMBERS' PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

<b>ASKQ</b>	- tech workshop and activations
<b>CREATEOPS</b>	- tech internship programme
<b>GAME TAN</b>	- gaming for engagement in tech
<b>KIDSCOIN</b>	- digital tool to improve financial literacy and tech apprenticeship programme
<b>MAKE FIRST</b>	- tech workshops into STEAM
<b>MHS MAKERSPACE</b>	- space and access to tech in school
<b>MISSION READY</b>	- tech career accelerator
<b>PASIFIKA IN IT</b>	- mentoring with Pasifika IT experts
<b>TE HAA O MANUKAU</b>	- shared workspace
<b>THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE</b>	- Makerhood STEAM workshops and UpSouth



## LOOKING AHEAD

The Collective is a group of optimistic and talented local entrepreneurs committed to reimagining South Auckland's digital future. If you're interested in learning more and investing in its evolution or supporting an initiative, please make contact to start that conversation.

TSI and South Advantage Collective encourage shared ownership and direct contact. You can approach TSI's Innovation and Technology Lead, Joel Umali, to discuss opportunities or you may want to approach core partners directly to discuss their unique initiatives.

[www.southadvantage.nz](http://www.southadvantage.nz)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION :

### **Manukau Makaurau, Manukau Herehere | The Southern Initiative**

#### **Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland Council**

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