

## IYM Online 2025 Programme Wrap-Up



# » OUR STORY

**Innovative Young Minds Charitable Trust (IYM) offers young women in Years 11 and 12 the opportunity to learn about the wide range of research and career opportunities available to them in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and high-tech manufacturing). IYM seeks to encourage diversity in New Zealand's science and technology industry by inspiring a new generation of female innovators and industry leaders.**

Created in response to COVID-19, the virtual IYM Online programme uses Zoom and Google Classroom to connect participants nationwide with inspiring science and technology content through interactive virtual experiences. IYM Online 2025, held during the April school holidays, featured career panels, interactive Q&A sessions, and a team challenge led by industry experts, providing an engaging experience thanks to the support of various organisations.

The IYM team were delighted to deliver an engaging programme to young women from all over Aotearoa New Zealand. This would not be possible without the support of many wonderful organisations who contributed their time and expertise during the week.

## THANK YOU FROM THE IYM TEAM



**Jacquie Harper**  
General Manager



**Olivia Pilalis**  
Programme Manager



**Emily Macnee**  
Funding and Communications



**Paul Newsome**  
Trustee & Challenge Facilitator



**Sophie Handford**  
Facilitator



# OUR PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

**IYM Online 2025 included four half-days packed with amazing speakers and interactive sessions, including:**

## MONDAY

**Building Research Association of New Zealand, BRANZ** kicked off the week introducing the work they do to ensure our homes are safe, warm, dry and fit for future generations. Thanks to **Vicki White**, Senior Research Scientist, **Katy Stokes** Senior Materials Scientist, **Amy Knight** Social Scientist and **Yu Wang** Research Scientist.

Physicist-turned-science journalist **Laurie Winkless** explored the surprising science behind icy surfaces used in Winter Olympic sports. After her physics degree and a postgrad in space science, Laurie joined the UK's National Physical Laboratory as a research scientist where she first started communicating science to the public. Since leaving the lab, Laurie has worked with Nobel laureates, scientific institutes, engineering companies, universities, and astronauts, amongst others, setting up her own business **Winkless Science Storytelling**.

**IYM alumnae, Wendy Su, Sienna Mitchinson and Nina Brown** concluded the day by sharing their current endeavors. Wendy is pursuing a Masters in Science in Psychology at the University of Auckland. Sienna is completing a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology at the University of Otago. Nina, after studying finance and economics at Victoria University of Wellington, now works as a mathematical modelling analyst at PwC. All three are active members of the IYM Alumnae Council, contributing to program development and delivery.

## TUESDAY

On Tuesday morning we joined **University of Otago Medical School** staff and students virtually at their Wellington Hub. Facilitated by **Dr Kathryn Hally**, Senior Lecturer and Biomedical Scientist, other panel members contributing to the discussion and answering questions from our participants were **Associate Professor Kirsty Danielson** Cell and Molecular Biologist, **Billie Mudie** Director of the Bachelor of Radiation Therapy and a senior lecturer, **Dr Emma O'Loughlin** senior lecturer and Sports Physiotherapist, and fifth-year medical students **Jun Chong** and **Hayley Ngo**.

In the afternoon we heard from **Alice Lamb**, Business Continuity Programme Manager for **Chorus**. Alice grew up in the North Island, and attended university at Massey in Palmerston North where she completed a Masters in Chemical Engineering. Alice shared her career journey through various industries, from mining and manufacturing, to logistics and infrastructure, now based in Nelson and working to keep kiwis connected to world-class broadband fibre.

## WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday we took a deep dive into the sustainable management of New Zealand's aquatic resources and environments with a team from **National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, NIWA** including; **Dr Beata Bukosa** Atmospheric Modeller, **Dr Denise Fernandez** Physical Oceanographer and **Dr Jess Hillman** Marine Geoscientist.

In the afternoon, we enjoyed a coding demo with participants having a go at coding with the team from **Hot Girls Code**. Created by Fullstack Developers **Aorthi** and **Lola**, the Hot Girls Code podcast makes tech relatable for young women and encourages their involvement in the industry. Aorthi has 6 years of experience designing frontend and backend technical solutions. Lola has 5 years of tech experience, including roles as a Delivery Lead.

## THURSDAY

Throughout the week, participants took part in the Innovation Challenge, a series of team building and design-thinking sessions facilitated by IYM Trustee, **Paul Newsom** from the **Young Enterprise Scheme**, with support from IYM alumna and IYM Alumnae Council member **Wendy Su**.

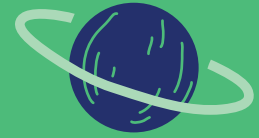
This year Paul worked with **BRANZ** to co-develop the challenge topic – “an innovative solution to improve the quality of indoor environments in New Zealand homes”. Paul and Wendy supported the participants as they came together in teams to brainstorm solutions to the challenge. We wrapped up the week with each team pitching their idea to a very impressed BRANZ judging panel.

Our thanks go out to all those who contributed to presentations, panel discussions and innovation challenge sessions.

*“I’ve always loved the idea behind IYM, it’s such an inspiring and important initiative. When I was first invited to be part of it, I didn’t hesitate for a second. It’s exactly the kind of programme I wish I’d had access to as a student. Creating platforms like this for young women interested in STEMM is absolutely vital – it shows, through real examples, just how powerful and capable we are. And the best part? Seeing the incredible impact it has on the participants.”*

**DR BEATA BUKOSA**, Atmospheric Modeller, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research

# » OUR STUDENTS' FEEDBACK



“ IYM Online has been an outstanding experience as I have met new people with similar interests in STEMM areas, as well as professionals who answered all our questions with expertise! ”

**Bernardita**, Year 11, Carmel College

“ I feel much more inspired and feel that I have a clearer understanding of what I wish to do once I leave school and which field of science I want to go into. ”

**Isabella**, Year 12, Kerikeri High School

“ I had no idea about the broad range of different career paths and fields of research that all stem from science and technology so will definitely be taking a further look into that now. ”

**Jenny**, Year 12, Taieri College

“ IYM is the best STEMM course that I have ever done! ”

**Lizzie**, Year 12, Kuranui College

“ I really enjoyed the programme overall!!! It was a really great experience to listen to amazing people from different STEMM careers. I will look into a wider range of possible careers, it has made me want to work harder at school so I can achieve my goals. It has also made me want to learn more about science in my own time. ”

**Zoe**, Year 12, Green Bay High School







## OUR IMPACT

IYM's goal is to make STEMM accessible to young women from diverse backgrounds. Our supporters are committed to creating a diverse and innovative future workforce in the science and technology sectors.

We know our programmes are making an impact. Research completed in 2024 shows more than 80% of IYM participants who have graduated high school have gone on to study a STEMM based course at university.

Our IYM alumnae have gone on to achieve incredible things. 2017 alumna Sophie Handford was voted joint Wellingtonian of the Year in 2019 for bringing the School Strike 4 Climate movement to New Zealand, and is now a Paekākāriki – Raumati Ward Councillor on the Kāpiti Coast District Council. She is also chairing its Strategy, Operations and Finance Committee. Sophie has represented Aotearoa on the Ship for World Youth and at APEC, bringing the intersection of youth voice and climate justice to the fore. She has joined us as MC for IYM Online since 2022.

We are excited to expand our impact on young women across Aotearoa New Zealand, with ongoing support from our contributors and alumnae.

*"As an early-career woman in science, I was fortunate to have many female role models who influenced pivotal moments in my development, beginning in high school. Their support and example shaped not only my career but also my confidence and ambition. Now, it is a real privilege to give back – to share my experiences and to encourage the next generation to believe in their potential and pursue their dreams in science and innovation."*

**DR KATHRYN HALLY**, Senior Lecturer Department of Surgery and Anaesthesia, University of Otago

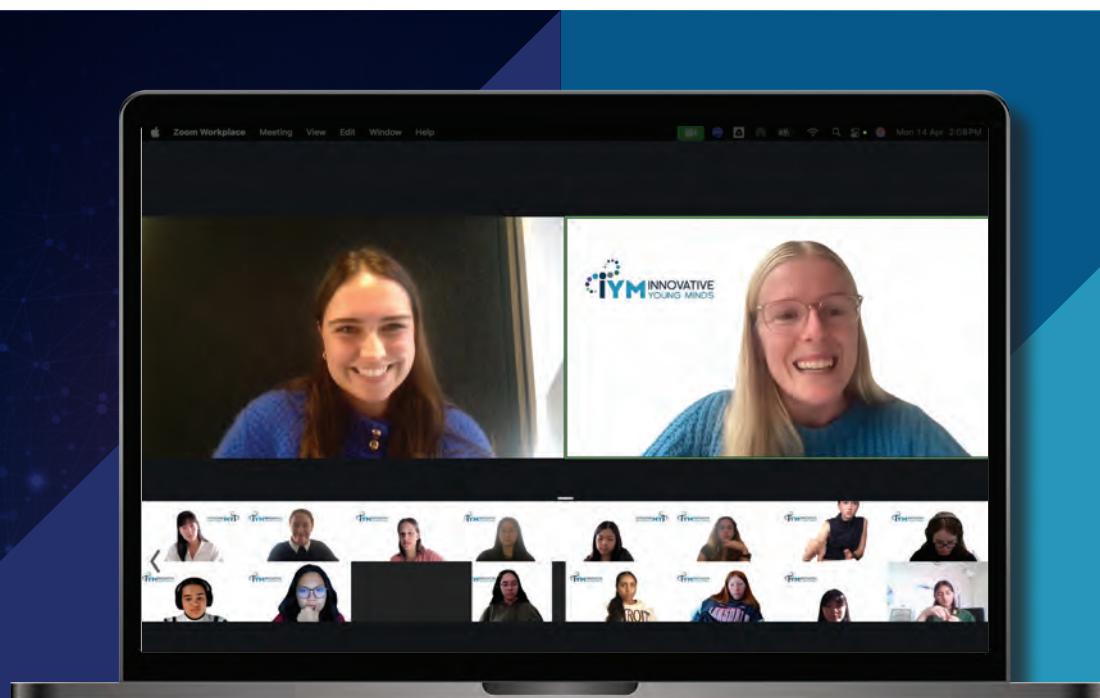
# » OUR SUPPORTERS – THANK YOU!

IYM Online 2025 would not have been possible without our wonderful contributors. Our programme was a success thanks to the valuable contributions made by:

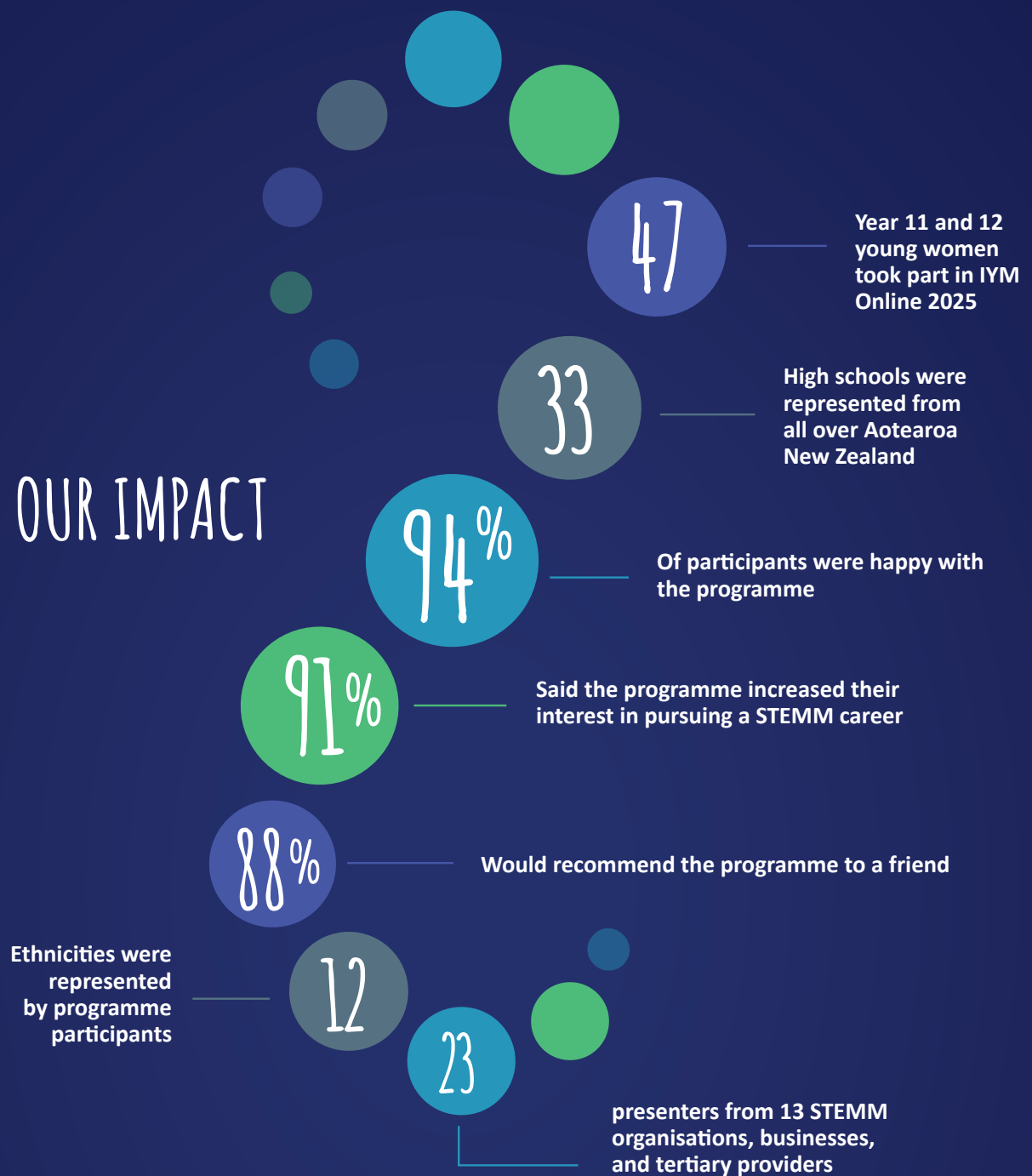
## Founding Partners



## Contributors



## » OUR IMPACT



To find out more about IYM or how you can help, go to [www.iym.org.nz](http://www.iym.org.nz) or email us on [info@iym.org.nz](mailto:info@iym.org.nz)

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