



2025 Programme Report



INSPIRING
FUTURE FEMALE
INNOVATORS

» OUR STORY

Innovative Young Minds (IYM) offers young women in Years 11 and 12 the opportunity to learn about the wide range of research and career opportunities available in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and high-tech Manufacturing).

In July 2025, the IYM team were delighted to deliver an inspiring and engaging programme hosting 40 young women from the Greater Wellington Region, Horowhenua and Manawatū. Attending our six-day residential programme our programme participants were inspired by local researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs who are themselves making cutting-edge advances in STEMM.

Now, more than ever, we need to build a better future for everyone, with the next generation of innovators representing our diverse society. This is why it is so important for IYM to play its part in encouraging more young women to embrace career paths in science and technology.

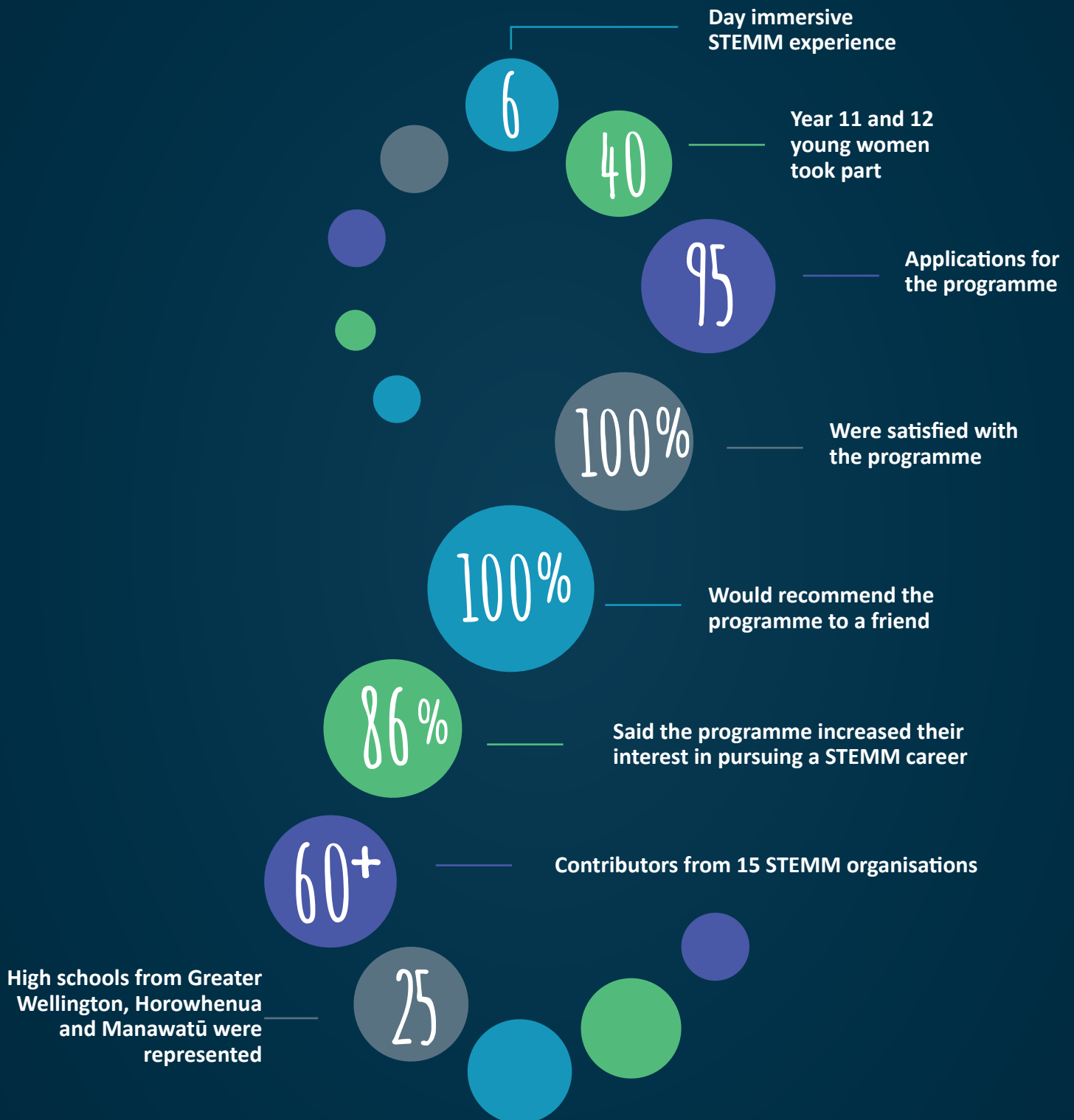
The success of this year's Residential Programme was made possible by the invaluable support of our sponsors, volunteers, and contributors, who generously shared their time and knowledge.

Thank you from the IYM Team





» OUR NUMBERS

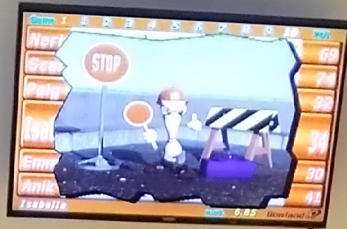




Scoreboard 1:

Game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Lain	12	0	7	4	4	9	1	3			46
Dana	0	8	14	21	29	33	42	43	43	46	339
Dana	0	5	0	19	20	20	33	40	47	37	224
Dana	1	5	4	10							20
Dana	1	1	10	19	19	19	19	28	28	28	143
Dana	0	2	7	6	6	6	3				39
Dana	0	15	21	19	47	50	53	53	70	74	422
Dana	0	5	5	15	1	9					45
Dana	0	5	5	11	11	12	21	29	29	39	181

To Start a New Game
Player 1 Commence Bowling



Scoreboard 3:

Game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
STOP											

STOP

» OUR PROGRAMME

SUNDAY

After introductions and ice-breakers, **Paul Newsom** IYM Trustee and representative from the **Young Enterprise Scheme**, kicked off this year's Innovation Challenge. Developed in collaboration with the CEO from **TransportingNZ**, Dom Kalasih, this year's student teams were asked to develop a way to reduce carbon emissions from road freight transport in Aotearoa.

Opening speaker **Laurie Winkless**, a physicist and science communicator, shared her inspiring career journey. From research scientist at the UK's National Physical Laboratory to establishing her own business, **Winkless Science Storytelling**.

IYM alumnae **Wendy Su**, **Sienna Mitchinson**, **Amelia Fitton** and **Nina Brown** concluded the day by sharing their current endeavors. All are active members of the **IYM Alumnae Council**.

MONDAY

The group visited the **University of Otago's Wellington Hospital** campus. Hosted by the Department of Surgery and Anaesthesia, the comprehensive tour offered insights into physiotherapy and radiation therapy, a visit to the pathology museum, hands-on lab testing, and CPR training. The visit concluded with suturing practice, providing an excellent glimpse into medical life.

In the evening, the students received an introduction to the vast array of tech careers, thanks to **TechStep**.

TUESDAY

The day kicked off with an early morning exercise session led by the **NZ Institute of Sport**. Later, the group delved deeper into laboratory work at **Victoria University's Ferrier Institute**, where they gained hands-on experience making aspirin.

In the afternoon, participants heard from our principal sponsor, **Pertronic**. Print Board Assembler **Christina Asiata**, shared insights into her work at the Lower Hutt-based manufacturing firm, who produce world-class fire detection and alarm systems.

A **WētāFX** session offered a glimpse into visual effects production and varied careers within the company including Software Engineers and a Compositing Supervisor. The day wrapped up with an engaging presentation by Haritina Mogoşanu and Samuel Leske from **SpacewardBound**, including a visit to their mobile indoor planetarium.

WEDNESDAY

Day four featured a trip to the **Earth Sciences Institute** (formerly NIWA), where participants visited the wet lab, invertebrate collection, and participated in a science 'speed-dating' session with women from the organization, allowing them to ask career-related questions.

In the afternoon, the group explored **Wellington Airport** to learn about behind-the-scenes career opportunities, including visits to the Emergency Management Office, Operations Control Centre, and Airport Fire Services.

The day concluded with social bowling and an opportunity to engage with some of our alumnae, followed by an intense and fun networking 101 session led by IYM Trustee and business coach, **Gaylene Hughes**.

THURSDAY

Our last site visit was hosted by **Building Research Association NZ (BRANZ)** where participants explored the structural, flooding, ventilation and lab testing sites, and had the opportunity to visit the brand new fire testing lab.

After a final Innovation Challenge planning session, participants attended the annual IYM **Parliamentary Reception**, hosted by local MP Hon. Chris Bishop. This event recognised Pertronic and all of our supporters, contributors, and allowed attendees to network with local businesses, Rotary Clubs and our wider IYM alumnae. The day wrapped up with a very special graduation dinner hosted by our very own alumnae council.

FRIDAY

The programme concluded with a Graduation Ceremony, where families were invited to see the teams pitch their innovative solutions. Families and judges alike were amazed at the incredible quality of these presentations. A big thank you to Dom Kalasih from **TransportingNZ**, Amie Cripps from **Aspeq**, and Rangimaria Aperahama from **Motu** who judged the pitches and selected the winner.

"I WAS STAGGERED AT HOW WELL THEY CONSIDERED OUR TRANSPORT DECARBONISATION CHALLENGE. THE CONFIDENCE, RESEARCH, INVESTIGATIVE DETAIL AND TECHNICAL THINKING WAS OUTSTANDING. OUR COUNTRY AND OUR INDUSTRY HAVE A LOT OF CHALLENGES AHEAD, BUT THESE YOUNG WOMEN SHOWED THERE IS A LOT OF GREAT POTENTIAL AMONG OUR YOUNG PEOPLE."

Dom Kalasih, Chief Executive, Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting NZ

» OUR STUDENTS' FEEDBACK



“ The programme has been a once in a lifetime experience and I am incredibly grateful I got to be a part of it. The many site visits allowed me to explore possible job options and listening to many speakers and the career path they went down to get to where they are today was very inspiring.

Yuvin Cho, Year 12, Palmerston North Girls' High School

“ This experience helped me make lots of new friends and it has also made me more confident when it comes to talking in front of large groups of people.

Jaseka Maseeh, Year 12, St Catherine's College

“ As a result of the program I have been encouraged to put myself out there and go out of my comfort zone more. I've also been encouraged to look at a few new things within science such as biomedicine and the idea of working in the lab. I'd say I've definitely been given the courage to pursue my passion and dream of working in medicine.

Aisha Wright, Year 11, Wellington East Girls' College

“ Since participating in IYM I have gone on to research more about roles within a lab that also include field work. IYM has inspired me to delve deeper into more out of the box careers. I have realized that I am studying subjects in school which can be applied into real life.

Anonymous



“ Before IYM, I couldn’t see myself pursuing a career in STEMM, but the programme has completely changed that. The site visits, industry speakers, and innovation challenge opened my eyes to the incredible opportunities in STEMM and showed me how my love for science and maths could translate into real-world careers. Highlights like visiting Wellington Hospital, the Ferrier Institute, and hearing from Wētā FX and space science experts were truly inspiring. I’ve gone from not seeing myself in STEMM at all to imagining a future in so many areas that I’m now excited to explore career pathways with my school advisor.

Beyond the academic experience, IYM allowed me to connect with like-minded peers and industry professionals who shared valuable insights and advice. I’ve learned that careers are rarely linear and that I don’t need to have everything figured out right now; I just need to keep pursuing what I love. IYM has been life-changing, and I’m incredibly grateful to have had this opportunity.

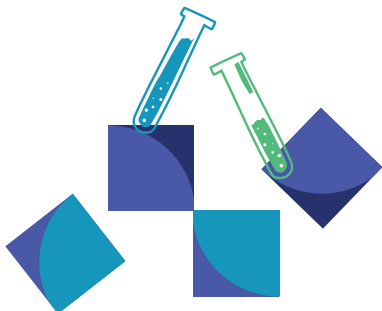
Jeshna Madaan, Year 11, Samuel Marsden Collegiate

“ I found a new interest in chemistry that I am now looking forward to pursuing at university. [The programme is] a great way to connect to people you would never usually connect with. The opportunities you participate in are not things you can do everyday. I had the best time with IYM.

Lauren Alexander, Year 11, Fielding High School

“ Thank you all so much for the incredible opportunity! I had an amazing time and would definitely recommend it to everyone who’s interested in STEMM or is maybe a bit unsure about what they want to do when they leave school. It was such a valuable experience.

Eve Comber, Year 11, Newlands College





OUR IMPACT

We know IYM's programmes are making a difference. Each year we survey our programme participants and alumnae to measure our impact. We are genuinely interested in how IYM has influenced the many young women who have attended our programmes.

982

young women from around Aotearoa New Zealand have been positively impacted by IYM's programmes.

92%

of IYM attendees who are still at high school plan to pursue STEMM.*

80%

of high school graduates who attended IYM are studying or working in STEMM.*

IYM's mission is to break down barriers and encourage young women to enter the STEMM sector and to do so we must ensure that our programmes are as engaging and accessible as possible. This is only possible with the help of our dedicated sponsors and supporters. With our two annual programmes – IYM Online and IYM Residential – we look forward to making an impact on the lives of even more young women and creating a better future for everyone.

*2024 Alumnae survey results

"THE IYM PROGRAMME IS A FANTASTIC WAY TO SHOWCASE THE RANGE OF CAREERS AVAILABLE, GIVING STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH WOMEN WORKING IN THE STEMM SECTOR AND ASK QUESTIONS IN A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT, AS WELL AS MAKING NEW FRIENDS AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED STUDENTS."

Vicki White, Senior Research Scientist, Building Research Association NZ



OUR SUPPORTERS – THANK YOU!

IYM Residential 2025 with Pertronic would not have been possible without our generous sponsors and supporters. Our programme was a success thanks to the valuable contributions made by:

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Naming Sponsor



Programme Sponsors



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South Wairarapa Rotary Club
Tawa Rotary Club
Wellington Rotary Club
Wellington North Rotary Club

Programme Contributors

IYM is grateful to its dedicated volunteers and more than 60 staff from 15 STEM organisations who generously gave their time and knowledge.

