

Venture Up

KICKSTARTING CAREERS
WITH INNOVATION

PROGRAMME REPORT



PROGRAM
EPC

REPORT

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What is Venture Up?

VENTURE UP IS AN IMMERSIVE ONLINE COURSE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT YOUNG ASPIRING LEADERS AND CHANGE-MAKERS IN BUILDING THEIR BUSINESS IDEAS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET.

This practical way of learning ensures youth are equipped with the tools, techniques and mindset to practice innovation in the modern-day workplace or turn passions into successful ventures.

Who delivers Venture Up?

CREATIVE HQ, NEW ZEALAND'S INNOVATION EXPERTS, HAVE BEEN RUNNING VENTURE UP SINCE 2015 WITH THE BACKING OF OUR INCREDIBLE SPONSORS, THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT.

We ensure youth have the best support during and beyond the programme, with mentorship from the best entrepreneurs, investors and leaders.



Venture Up
VENTUREUP.CO.NZ

Participants of the 2021 programme had a mix of in-person and digital workshops, speaker events and coaching sessions.

The new, hybrid delivery method still prioritised the three core values of Venture Up, building confidence, realising capability and expanding connections.

Confidence

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY WILL PUSH YOUTH OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONE AND PROVIDE CHALLENGES THROUGHOUT. OUR AIM IS THAT BY THE END OF THE PROGRAMME, PARTICIPANTS FEEL MORE CONFIDENT TO SELF-MANAGE, NAVIGATE AMBIGUITY AND WORK WITH UNCERTAINTY.

Venture Up builds confidence within participants by exposing them to relatable entrepreneurs so they can see even their greatest business heroes started somewhere and went on a journey of highs and lows to achieve success.

In addition, participants complete Creative HQ's CH3 Innovation assessment, a tool that allows individuals to assess their innovation skills so they can identify their own personal strengths and areas of improvement when working within an entrepreneurial environment.



Capability

VENTURE UP BRINGS TOGETHER TOOLS FROM THE STARTUP WORLD AND LESSONS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS WHO HAVE DONE IT ALL BEFORE TO INSPIRE AND BUILD PARTICIPANTS ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPABILITY.

With a focus on the three most common methodologies from the startup and innovation world – including those used at Google, Toyota and IDEO – youth learn to identify an urgent customer problem that needs solving, before diving into analysing existing solutions, prototyping and testing potential solutions with customers.

The recently-released Venture Up digital platform hosts a carefully assembled set of these innovation tools to enable participants to work on their ventures when it best suits them. We do, however, understand that internet is not a given for all and participants did have access to printed workbooks, if necessary.

Connections

VENTURE UP UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING STRONG NETWORKS EARLY ON.

Throughout the programme and beyond, participants are introduced to, and supported by, Creative HQ innovation coaches and the wider community of mentors and advisors. These key people share their insights and expertise to inspire participants so they can take the learnings from these shared journeys to build their own.

The programme has developed over the years from a full-time in-person programme to a completely digital experience. There are benefits and disadvantages to both. However, we've quickly learnt that some combination of in-person workshops and events is crucial for the participants to gain the most value from one-another and the wider startup community.

Kick-off Workshops

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPANTS TO MEET OTHERS IN THEIR REGION, BE INTRODUCED TO THE INNOVATION TOOLS AND CONNECT WITH THEIR CREATIVE HQ COACH.

For the 2021 programme, we held a workshop in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. We used this as an opportunity to connect with local alumni. This meant a typical workshop started with an alumni reunion before a selected group of alumni were invited to share their post-Venture Up journeys with the current participants.

Each team then shared their ideas or problem focus areas with one-another, before some time spent goal setting and with their Creative HQ coach to establish a programme action plan. This noted what innovation tools they should first use and offers of connections to support their journey.



Coaching Sessions

THESE REGULAR MEETINGS ENABLED PARTICIPANTS TO ENGAGE WITH A CREATIVE HQ COACH FOR TAILORED SUPPORT OF THE INNOVATION TOOLS AND NETWORK CONNECTIONS.

Every participant had the opportunity to book 30-minute coaching sessions when required. These were typically held virtually and when possible in-person at Creative HQ. These were used as a chance for the participants to share what they're working on, identify the struggles that they're facing and gain the support or connections needed to tackle them.

Digital platform

THIS IS A LIBRARY OF LESSONS FROM SOME OF NEW ZEALAND'S BEST BUSINESS LEADERS, ALONG WITH TOOLS TO HELP PARTICIPANTS ACTION THEIR IDEAS.

This virtual version of Venture Up's previous workbooks provided participants with the theory and methodologies behind the entrepreneurial journey. Its digital form allowed them to participate around their other commitments.

The course mirrored what a good business pitch looks like. A pitch template was provided along with all the innovation tools needed to practically complete each section with confidence; from writing a solid problem statement, to interviewing customers or validating an MVP.

The Ultimate Business Day

A DAY OF INSPIRATION AND CONNECTIONS. PARTICIPANTS WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER TO HEAR FROM EXPERIENCED ENTREPRENEURS AND NETWORK WITH EACH OTHER.

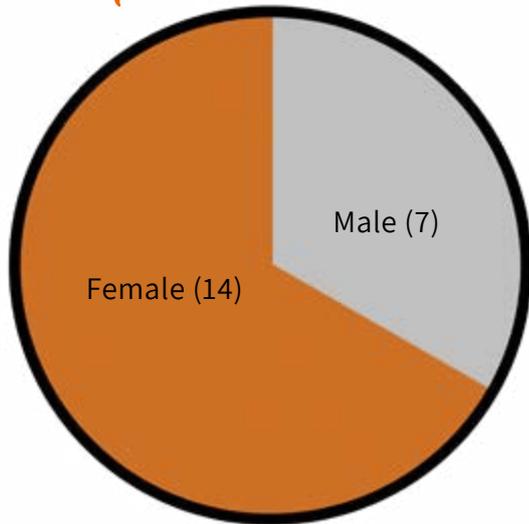
A digital programme makes Venture Up more accessible to aspiring entrepreneurs across New Zealand, however participants find it extremely valuable to meet each other in person.

All of the 2021 programme participants met in Auckland with those from out of town being flown in for the day. The speakers covered topics such as; validating your idea, customer-centric product design, raising investment, pitching your business and more.

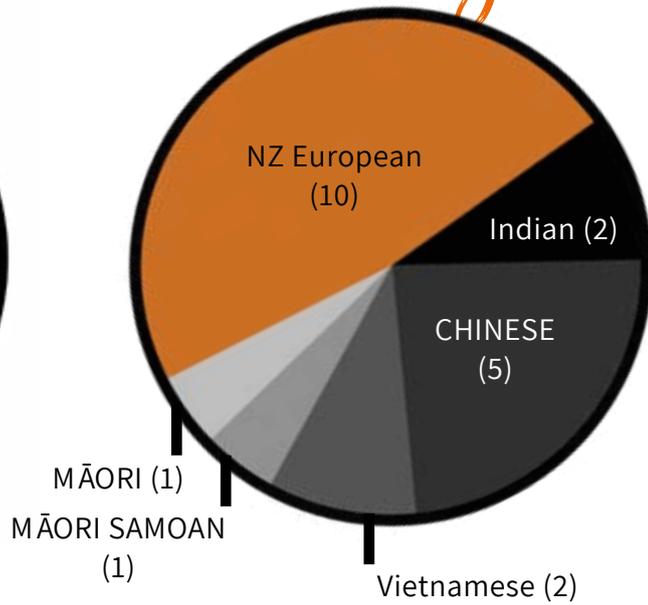


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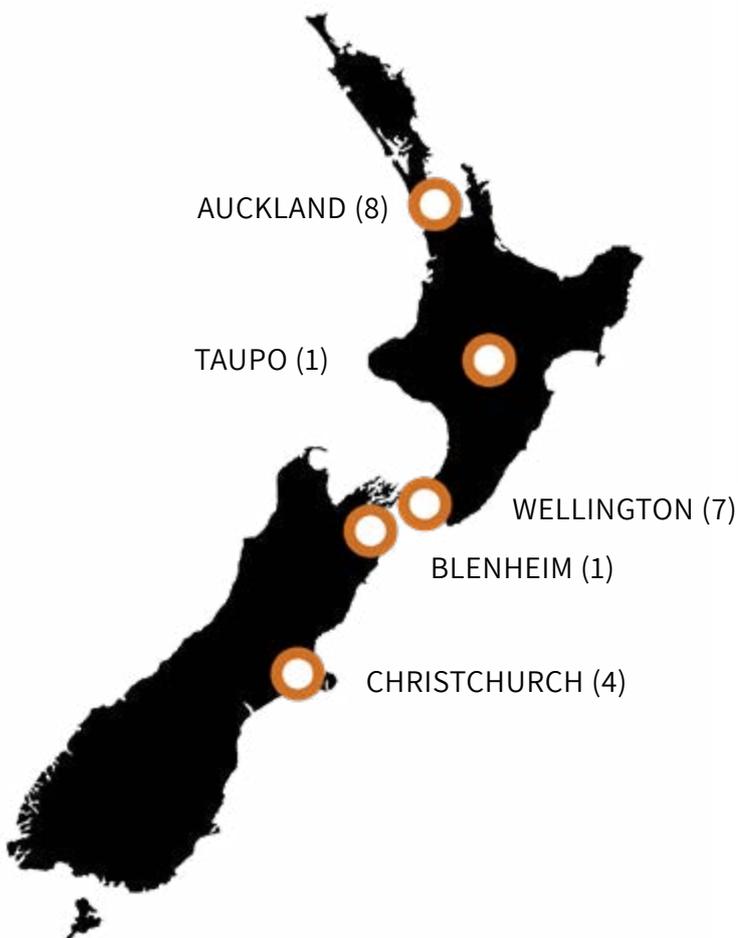
Gender



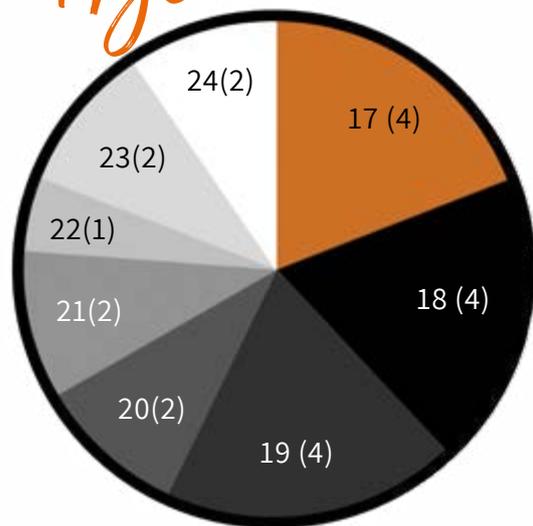
Ethnicity



Location



Age



9/21

PARTICIPANTS ARE
YOUNG ENTERPRISE
STUDENTS OR ALUMNI

DEMOGRAPHICS



THE HYBRID DELIVERY STYLE OF VENTURE UP HAS CHANGED THE WAY PARTICIPANTS FORM TEAMS AND PURSUE IDEAS.

Upon applying, everyone is asked what problem they are passionate about solving. They may be running a business that already addresses this, want to pursue a venture to explore it further or select any idea in order to practice the innovation process and learn.

The coaching sessions and digital platform provides the flexibility for participants to work on completely different ideas, at varying stages.

Existing Businesses

SUDMERGE

EMILY WHITE & SOPHIE PALMER

SUDmerge have created a Dish-washing Sprinkle as an environmental and septic tank safe alternative to liquid detergent. Coming from a rural community, their aim was to help reduce plastic and chemical waste through 'Clean Dishes, Cleaner Future'. During Venture Up, they focused on product development – specifically to stop their product from clumping. They were connected with a chemical engineer who helped them address this issue.

RECYCLE.IT

DANIELLE SMITH

Recycle.IT is an app that allows users to scan bar codes on existing packaging to find out the recycling information. It is a community-based initiative that relies on the public to input information which can be accessed by all. Danielle explored the problem she was addressing further by conducting customer interviews, which lead to a change in the target market.

HAAST LAW

MEGSHYAM PRAKASH

Access to Justice is one of the biggest impediments in the legal industry. It stops people from accessing the proper justice they need and, all too often, disputes just aren't properly settled. That's where Haast Law comes in. Their online platform allows every kiwi to find and access a wide repository of legal articles, published by a wide range of law firms across New Zealand, and be able to learn and easily digest this information.

EASYRENT

TOBY THOMAS-SMITH & EMILY NGUYEN

Toby founded EasyRent, a platform that provides academic-year rental options for university students, while optimising rental returns for landlords using 9+3month lease options. Emily is a full-stack developer and helped Toby during Venture Up. Throughout the programme, Toby narrowed down his problem area scope and will now be focusing on the verification of reliable and trustworthy student tenants. Although not joining full-time, Emily will support the future tech development when necessary.

TING DESIGN

KELLY TING & JOSH TING

Brother and sister duo Kelly and Josh launched Ting Design after seeing success in helping family friends who are business owners with their online presence and sales. With a goal to be Christchurch's leading design agency, the team used their time in Venture Up to establish their niche and build their customer acquisition strategy.



“

I love how personalisable the programme was. My brother and I didn't really have high hopes in applying for the programme as with ours being web design, where the service we provide is about improving instead of innovating, it doesn't fit the 'startup' category. However, the programme turning out to be very rewarding – directed us to take the right steps towards our goal of one day becoming THE web design business in Christchurch.

”

KELLY TING

New Ideas

MILLI KUMAR

NOVELL NATURALLY FERMENTED ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE

During her fourth-year Food Technology honours project, at Massey University, Milli conducted market research and R&D towards developing a novel, naturally fermented alcoholic beverage, with low-carbohydrate, low-sugar and pro-biotic elements - inspired by the recent kombucha trends. While participating in Venture Up, she refined her target market which helped build a future marketing plan. Her aim now is to keep developing this product until it is ready for market, as part of Masters in 2021, and create a business venture using this product post-study.



NINA BROWN

BOUTIQUE SOAP PRODUCTS

Nina came into Venture Up with a passion for reducing single-use plastic in everyday consumer goods. As a side hobby, she had been developing luxurious soaps out of natural ingredients. During Venture Up, Nina worked with Creative HQ coaches to identify her target market which helped create the brand story around her product.

CHANTELLE TAN

STUDENT UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Chantelle was solving an existing problem relating to the student experience in tertiary education. The idea was a page-a-day calendar where content/design made by students, for students. The idea has evolved through customer interviews in terms of really defining the problem/common themes of the student experience and other potential options to digitise the idea.

Learning Opportunity

BRITTANY HARRISON

CONSUMABLE NEWS

Brittany set out to make news media more accessible for their consumers. It evolved as she began to understand the complexities within the industry after interviewing individuals involved in the business of news. The problem changed to try and tackle the lack of funding within news.

SOPHIA LIM

UNIVERSITY LIFE EDUCATION

Initially, Sophia wanted to target the gap of women in STEM- particularly for female high-school students being unaware of the opportunities that may lie ahead in that area. Then, after researching the market and identifying the problems she and her friends were facing, she decided to broaden the issue a little bit to target the general gap between high-school students and the next step they must take (into uni, work, etc).

TYLAH FARANI-WATENE

EDUCATING RANGATAHI IN CIVICS EDUCATION

Her focus for the course was educating youth in civics education, with a specific focus on Pasifika and Māori rangatahi, so that we can create new systems and institutions in Aotearoa that are inclusive of our diverse communities, while holding the Crown accountable to becoming better Te Tiriti partners.

Tylah was mentored by Dr Kathie Irwin, who has over 20 years experience in senior management and governance across the public sector, championing the Treaty, diversity and inclusion.



QUANG LE

MITIGATING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Quang has been mentoring youth with the ambition of mitigating juvenile delinquency across schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. He's seen first-hand the difference it can make and wants to increase the reach of his work without diminishing the quality. During Venture Up, he made progress on refining the services he wants to provide in order to make the greatest impact. The core of his idea has stayed the same, which is to inspire young people to dream, learn, and for them to have a role model that does not give up on them.

ADAM SPURGEON

REMOTE PEST TRAP MONITORING

Adam's idea involved remotely monitoring traps to reduce the time wasted checking empty traps and to provide data to target areas requiring more traps to control pest populations. After conducting a competitor analysis, Adam identified differentiating features that would make his future product stand out.

HANNAH COMANS

FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION

Hannah clearly identified the problem of lack of financial literacy education for young people ages 23–27. Her idea has evolved and she is now more focused on talking to and understanding her customers which will dictate the solution she can provide them.

BROOKE MORE

PET FOOD MEDICATION

Brooke's idea progressed during Venture Up, from its origin of creating multi-sensory dining experience – which she struggled with identifying the problem in a post-Covid environment.

After talking to family members, she ended up changing to a cat food which included a worming solution. Brooke conducted interviews with vets and received plenty of positive response on the much needed solution.

MICHAEL LOUGH

VIRTUAL MEDITATION

As a trained yoga teacher, Michael understood the importance of meditation and the positive effects it can have on mental health and well-being. His idea progressed to providing more audio opportunities and virtual reality experiences to address clinical mental health issues.

SHANNON MCLEAN

BUDGETING TOOLS

Shannon came into Venture Up with the idea of digitising receipts and using technology to help people budget better. She refined her problem statement, identified her target personas and conducted many interviews to inspire a solution.

SAMUAL WONG

DIGITAL FITNESS OPTIONS

Samual identified the increasing need for health and fitness-related products and services. Particularly in the COVID environment, it has been very difficult to work out, as options to exercise are very limited. His idea focused on bringing “fitness into the home”.



Participants

THE PARTICIPANTS OF VENTURE UP 2021 WERE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL AND HAPPY WITH THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE PROGRAMME.

Common threads from the feedback included the strong appreciation of the freedom given to each project and how helpful it was to have the digitally-delivered model so they were able to join alongside other commitments.

Many participants also commented on their enjoyment of the Ultimate Business Day and how great it was – not only to hear from the entrepreneurial speakers but most importantly to meet other like-minded individuals who were completing Venture Up across the country.

100%

were happy with their experience of the programme

94%

increased their awareness of business models and entrepreneurship

70%

developed their soft skills such as communication, listening, leadership and teamwork

100%

met people who inspired and supported their development

71%

connected with individuals or organisations who can offer mentoring or further development

100%

were happy with the people running the programme

89%

developed their business or enterprise knowledge such as business strategy, marketing and financial literacy.

100%

feel more confident in themselves and their abilities

89%

felt more resilient

100%

have experiences that supported their growth and development

89%

understand themselves better through the experience

FEEDBACK

Favourite Things

Felt empowered to continue reaching goals with the support, like-minded people and great speakers.

Talking with other people in similar positions was great for refining my idea and listening to other's projects also provided some relevant ideas for my project.

Meeting different people, hearing all their ideas and collaborating.

I really enjoyed the Ultimate Business Day. I think it offered loads of insight into the industry and I felt empowered talking to like-minded people. I also thought the video components that made up the online course were very helpful.

The good thing about the programme is meeting people and hearing their insights. Also, since the programme is delivered digitally this year, I was able to join alongside my other commitments. My favourite part though is probably meeting everyone in-person at the Ultimate Business Day.

The Ultimate Business Day was awesome, it was cool to hear from such successful people and meet like-minded people from all over the country. I learned to focus more on connecting and understanding people/customers first, and then create the idea from that information.

It was really good to form new connections and be put in touch with mentors in the areas that you need help with the most. It was also great to meet new, like-minded, young people who are on a similar path of trying to solve a problem. Also, the food was amazing.

I really enjoyed the Auckland visit, as this gave me the chance to network with others. The speakers were all very informative and provided good advice. I loved how open and honest they all were about their experiences, especially about raising capital.

My favourite thing about the programme was meeting everyone at the Ultimate Business Day and hearing their ideas. It was also great doing video calls with Jenni and Steph because they gave great advice and really helped out.

LOVED the Ultimate Business Day! The structure, the speakers, the people, the workshops – all incredible! I made some amazing connections and friends that day, who all think in the same way I do (which is not very easy to come across at high school). The speakers provided great insight, teaching me about starting a business and just worldly knowledge that I wouldn't find sitting in my typical classroom. In addition, I really appreciated the private mentoring with Steph. She always gave me really helpful feedback and connected me with new ideas and resources.

I really enjoyed being able to meet the other participants and work together in the pitch. I also really enjoyed the speakers because they had a lot of awesome knowledge to share.

I loved the resources and online platform. The day was beautiful hearing from speakers and engaging with other like-minded youth. I learned about just going for things and failing. **It reminded me to create and dream!**

FEEDBACK

Improvements

Perhaps if the online model continues again, hosting more get-together events? It would be quite nice to spend more time with the Venture Up participants and it could also be good for accountability and having more shared experiences. I like the flexibility of being able to participate in the content when it suits you, but a downside would be that you get what you give – if you don't actively work on the modules you're not getting much out of the experience. I think even having a Venture Up workbook that has the interactive components of the online resources in it can be helpful too.

Was great, would be great to connect with more people.

More time!!!

Having the opportunity to meet with the other group members, either virtually or in-person would have been a cool way to kick-start the course. I found that I was missing the collaborative component of idea generation.

As the programme is delivered digitally, I think it would be better to group people according to location as it would be much easier to form connection and idea together in person alongside the digital course.

Being able to attend this in-person. I would have liked more 1:1 time to talk through my ideas and questions.

Not having a really early flight to Auckland, but there wasn't much that could have been done about that.

Perhaps next time more interactive activities, such as the pitching activity we did as a group, it was challenging but a very fun experience at the same time.

More one-on-one time with mentorship to develop idea concepts. Also more information regarding the course available before it starts.

Maybe having a few more in-person days but otherwise it was such a great experience.

I loved it but personally, I was not the biggest fan of the digital programme. I understand why it was made digital and the digital programme was still very helpful, and probably far more convenient, but there wasn't that level of connection that could've been made if it were in-person. However, while the Ultimate Business Day was definitely a nice bridge into that, I just wished I could have more days similar to it.

Maybe more workshops perhaps?

Longer, more speakers and more people! Just bigger!

FEEDBACK

Highlights

HOW DID VENTURE UP HELP CONNECT YOU WITH MENTORS, POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AND OTHER PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

“Steph linked me up with Lucy at ‘shit you should care about’ which was a massive boost. Meeting the speakers on the Ultimate Business Day was also really helpful for the future.”

“We were able to contact a chemical engineer to help with a problem with our product. We were also able to make many other connections with a range of people who we may be able to get help from in the future.”

HOW DID YOU FIND THE SPEAKERS AT THE ULTIMATE BUSINESS DAY? DID YOU HAVE ANY FAVOURITES AND WHY?

“I liked the variety, my favourite was the panel where we got to ask questions, everyone had such a different perspective and background which made it interesting.”

“They were all relevant, down-to-earth and unique in their personalities, presentation styles and experiences. I truly enjoyed what they had to say and my favourite speaker was Rebecca from Xero because we had a good conversation after the panel, shared some similarities and I appreciated her advice to my questions.”

“The speakers were knowledgeable, especially when talking about the next steps for a startup, including funding, feedback, co-founders and iteration.”

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM ATTENDING THE VENTURE UP ULTIMATE BUSINESS DAY?

“Being passionate about what you’re solving helps motivate you and nothing will stop you”

“I learned a bunch! I really enjoyed seeing how ideas had developed into fully-fledged businesses. Learning about the journeys individuals had taken and seeing that there is no clear path to being a successful entrepreneur was very insightful.”

“That there are so many amazing businesses out there doing awesome things that I don’t know about. My definition of success has changed slightly and being around like-minded people really gave me a confidence boost.”

“I learned about getting investors, which I thought was interesting because it’s not something that is really talked about at school.”

“I loved how each of the entrepreneurs had different journeys and how they all differently perceived what success looked like. It was really incredible to hear from people in all different backgrounds; tech, finance, insurance, etc, and how they’ve all created something to solve a problem in their lives/that area.”

FEEDBACK



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

**MINISTRY OF YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT**

Dibs Patel

ALUMNI SPEAKERS

Emily Blythe

Nick Jackson

Arron Prattley

YOUNG ENTERPRISE TRUST

Liz Pittman + Team

RED BULL

Craig Johnston + Team

BUSINESS DAY SPEAKERS

Emily Heazlewood

Amelia Gain

Justin Lim

Olivia Dobrowolski

Rebecca Jury

Ezel Kokcu

VENTURE UP 2021 WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS, GUEST MENTORS AND SPEAKERS WHO ELEVATED THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME.

The collective specialities, connections and resources embedded within the programme were both exemplary and humbling.

On a personal note, the Venture Up team would like to acknowledge the overwhelming support of their partners, family, close friends, Creative HQ and the wider New Zealand startup ecosystem.

Your guidance and faith was critical to our success as individuals and as a team.



THANK YOU