

13 September 2024

Te Wiki o te Reo Māori a chance to join Te Reo journey



Tania Bermudez, a digital channel manager at ANZ, with her silver tohu.

ANZ New Zealand is celebrating Te Wiki o te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week) as more and more of our staff embark on their own Te Reo Māori journey.

Te Wiki o te Reo Māori 2024, which runs from September 14 to 21, is a chance for ANZ and its customers to show their support for the Māori language.

One way we're doing this is with special tohu (badges) worn by staff members who have completed ANZ's Te Waka Ā Reo language programme.

"The tohu are a way to celebrate the achievement of our staff who committed time and energy to engage in ANZ's flagship reo and cultural competency programme," says Karleen Everitt, ANZ's Kaitohu Rautaki Māori (Head of Te Ao Māori Strategy).

"It also is a great expression of ANZ's commitment to Te Ao Māori."

More than 1200 of ANZ's 8000 staff have engaged with the bank's Te Reo Māori programme.

Te Reo courses were introduced as part of ANZ's Tākiri-Ā-Rangi Te Ao Māori strategy in 2022, and this year the third level of the language course - Te Wānanga Tuatoru – was made available to staff.

"The tohu signify that a staff member has taken part in the courses, knows basic greetings and is in the process of learning more about Te Reo Māori."

ANZ Bank New Zealand Limited

ANZ Centre, Ground Floor, 23 – 29 Albert Street, Auckland 1010

The tohu – first introduced for Matariki this year - feature a waka designed by artist Geoff Popham. They are being produced by Waikato tohunga mahi toi (artisan) Tamiaho Herangi-Searanke of Taiora Taonga and come in two colours – silver and gold.

Silver tohu are awarded to staff who have completed level three of the course, and gold tohu are presented to those who have achieved level four proficiency.

“Te Waka Ā Reo; ANZ’s reo Māori programme celebrates our unique culture in Aotearoa New Zealand and enhances the work we do for and with our customers,” says Karleen.

“Introducing the tohu is a chance for our staff to proudly share their journey of learning Te Reo Māori and their commitment to Te Reo and tikanga Māori, to Te Ao Māori.

“This Te Wiki o te Reo Māori, we encourage our customers to join us on the journey.”

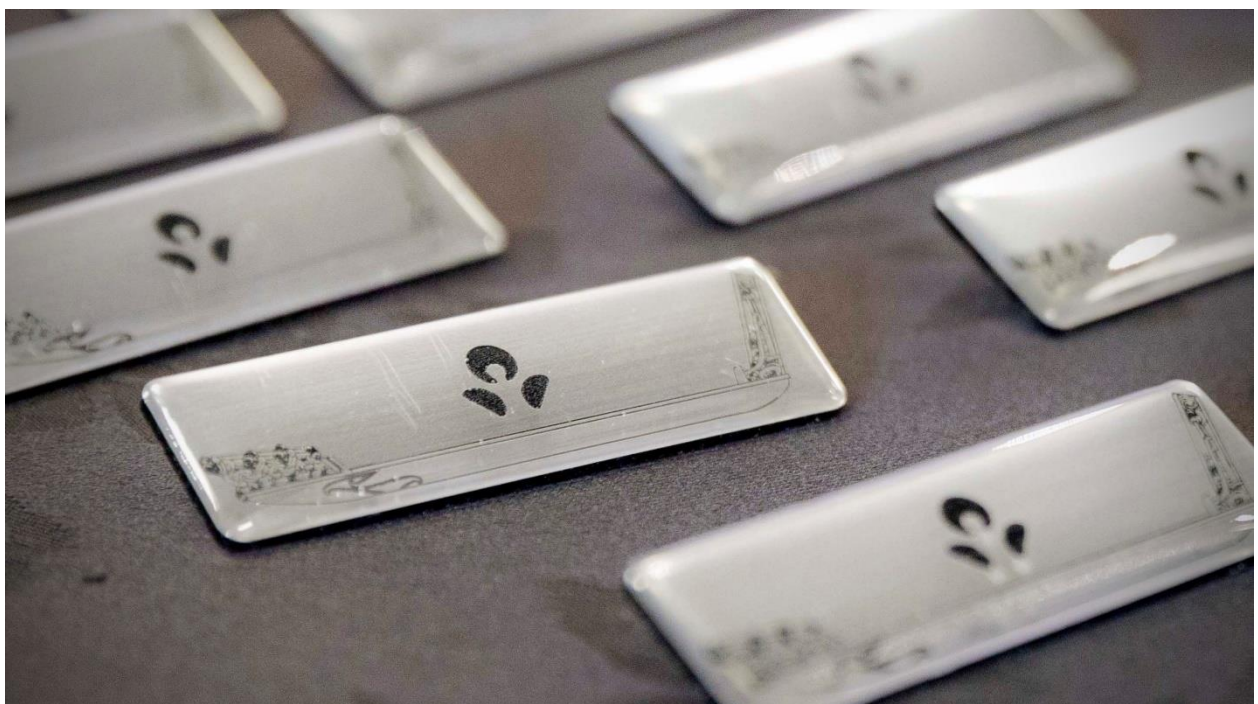
ANZ Capability Design Manager Erica Te Huna said Te Waka Ā Reo is designed to create a safe environment for all staff across Aotearoa to embrace Te Reo Māori, and the uptake of the courses has been inspirational.

“This programme is unlike anything ANZ New Zealand has ever created,” Erica said.

“It connects deeply to the culture of Te Ao Māori and our whakapapa to this country of Aotearoa New Zealand.”

Demand for the programme has exceeded expectations, Erica said, with staff asking for more courses to extend their knowledge and skills.

“Since the introduction of Te Waka Ā Reo, the cultural competency of ANZ staff has visibly grown, with staff at different levels more confidently using Te Reo Māori within ANZ and with customers,” Erica said.



The tohu for staff members who have completed ANZ's Te Reo programme.

ANZ digital channel manager Tania Bermudez, who proudly wears a silver ANZ tohu, said she jumped at the chance to embark on her own Te Reo journey when the programme was introduced.

"I knew there would be a lot to gain from learning Te Reo Māori. It's learning a new language but also a new way of thinking," she said.

Tania, who was born in Canada, said learning Te Reo had been hugely beneficial, both professionally and personally.

"It means honouring this country that I live in and it means learning and developing as an individual myself. The language and ideas that come with it are beautiful, useful and valuable."

Her advice to ANZ staff and customers considering learning Te Reo is simple: "Don't hesitate. Just dive in and get amongst it."

At ANZ we are embracing this year's theme for Te Wiki o te Reo Māori "Ake ake ake – A Forever Language", representing the resilience and endurance of Te Reo Māori. It's a time dedicated to acknowledging the journey of Te Reo Māori, the Māori language, an official language of New Zealand.

You can find out more about Tākiri-Ā-Rangi, ANZ's Te Ao Māori strategy [here](#).

For media enquiries contact David Rowe 021 221 6625