

## **Haka Warriors: Giving voice to Pasifika Youth through cultural identity**

PCYC Haka Warriors, a transformative and values-driven program, continues to make waves in the community since its launch in 2019. **The 2024 Haka Warriors finale will be held on the 15th of November at Ken Rosewall Arena, Sydney Olympic Park at 9am.** The finale will have 480 students from 14 high schools from Sydney performing the Haka and a cultural dance. The Haka is not only a show of physical prowess but also an expression of cultural pride, strength, and unity.

The inspiring 20-week program, developed by PCYC Blacktown in partnership with NSW Police, nurtures Pasifika youth by connecting them with their cultural heritage through Haka. By instilling a sense of pride in their cultural identity, and encouraging young individuals to make positive choices, new leaders have emerged with a stronger sense of identity and confidence.

“Haka Warriors is a reminder of how cultural identity can positively shape young lives. Witnessing these young people find pride, purpose, and leadership in their culture is incredible. Each young person that participates in the program, carries forward a piece of their heritage, ready to lead with strength and unity, and that impact resonates far beyond the program,” says CEO of PCYC NSW, Ben Hobby.

Haka Warriors is a collaborative effort between PCYC staff, local police, community leaders, dedicated Pasifika volunteers, school staff and young people. The team visits high schools to facilitate mentoring and leadership sessions, where students not only learn the Haka but also values that stem from it such as resilience, identity, decision-making, fostering a strong and safe environment of holistic growth, and personal development.

This unique approach has proven to be instrumental in nurturing the confidence for young people to find their voice, proud and knowledgeable in their cultural identity. The young people and schools trust the Haka Warriors leadership and delivery team because they are truly authentic.

Haka Warriors continues to set new benchmarks in promoting cultural pride, leadership, and unity among Pasifika youth and their peers. With an unwavering commitment to shaping the leaders of tomorrow, this initiative strives to create a positive ripple effect in the community.

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**EVENT DETAILS: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 2024 at Ken Rosewall Arena, Sydney Olympic Park Opening Ceremony at 9am, followed by Haka performances 9.15am onwards.**

**About PCYC NSW:** *PCYC NSW is a registered charity established in 1937, whose mission is to empower young people to reach their potential through Police and community partnerships. With over 66 clubs across the state, PCYC initiates quality mission-based programs and*



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*sporting activities in a safe environment. We work with at-risk youth to break the cycle of disadvantage through crime prevention, vocational education, youth capacity building and social responsibility programs to change the life outcomes of over 70,000 youth per year.*