



- **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up between Martinborough, where my grandparents settled after leaving Pāhauwera before they had their babies. My Papa George Hawkins was key in setting up Hau Ariki Marae there, a Ngā hau e wha marae where whānau who were living away from home could tangi and be. After my parents separated we moved to Kāpiti.

- **What was your favourite subject at school and why?**

My favourite subjects at school were te reo Māori, English and Art. All of them allowed me space to be creative, learn about myself and the world around me.

- **Have you ever failed at something?**

Ugh, so many things! I didn't get my driver's license until I started teaching, I suck at Maths so bad even my friends failed Y11 with me and I can't swing a poi to save myself.

- **How did you get into poetry?**

I started writing poetry to help me process how I was feeling in the world and in my workplace as a young wahine Māori. From there I started sharing my writing with a couple of tuakana poets who gave me feedback and kept me going.

- **Who was your favourite teacher and why?**

Paora Trim was my favourite kaiako. Patient, funny, empathetic and beyond committed to the learning of his taura. Even when he was growling at us, we always knew how much he cared.



Ko wai tēnei?

Nicole Titihuia Hawkins (Ngāti Pāhauwera, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa) is a writer, teacher, home baker and proud māmā. She lives in Te Awakairangi and runs side hustles with her besties in her spare time. Her collection, Whai, won the Jessie Mackay Prize for best first book of Poetry at the 2022 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

Nicole



- **What do you recommend to help someone get through a bad day?**

Hā ki roto, hā ki waho. Talk to your mates. Find a way to have a laugh. Talk to your tīpuna and remember how loved you are. I've found speaking to a counsellor to be really helpful. However bad things are, they won't be this bad for long and there's nothing your whānau can't help you get through.

- **What's your favourite food in the whole world?**

Food is one of the loves of my life - I can't choose just one! Steak, roast pork, Mexican, Thai and Vietnamese food. I love to bake. Steamed pudding.

- **Can you share your whakapapa from a Pāhauwera ancestor?**

My grandfather was George Hawkins, his mother Tureiti Aranui and her mother Ruiha Aranui was one of the Henrici sisters.

- **Tell us about one of your favourite whakataukī and why it's a favourite.**

"Mai i te Kōpae ki te Urupa, tātou ako tonu ai" - because it reminds me that we don't have to be masters at everything and no matter how old you get there's still so much to learn

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