

**NGĀ PARIRAU
MĀTAURANGA TRUST**

KAITIAKI O TE KURA HOURUA KI WHANGARURU
SPONSOR OF WHANGARURU PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL



RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF PERFORMANCE

FINAL REPORT

20TH March 2015

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BACKGROUND

On the 20th February, 2015 the trustees of the Nga Parirau Matauranga Trust met with the Hon. Hekia Parata, Minister of Education, and received from the Minister a Performance Notice and Intention to Audit by way of letter pertaining to the partnership school at Whangaruru, now known as Te Pumanawa o te Wairua.

The undated letter highlighted a number of areas of concern while specifically drawing attention to two performance standards that had not been met:

1. Unjustified Absences
2. Enrolment Variance

These two areas of concern pertain to statistics gathered in the 2014 school year.

The Minister also highlighted her review of provisional data on student achievement which has also caused her concern. No data was produced in the letter to substantiate this concern.

The Minister further instructed the trustees to address governance and management issues that exist at the school.

The trustees were given 28 days to formally address these concerns, prior to the specialist audit then taking place.

The information from this report and the pending audit will assist the Minister in reaching a decision as to the continuation of the Kura.

MANAGEMENT/ GOVERNANCE

Senior Management Team

The Kura has a Senior Management Team (SMT) consisting of a school manager, curriculum director and an administration manager. The school manager was formerly a trustee of Nga Parirau Matauranga Trust and was placed as a manager in or around August 2014 following the end of a 3 month contract of a CEO position, which was held by a secondment from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The Trust has been debating the value of services by way of output of the school manager just prior to Christmas and the ability of the incumbent to remain impartial to the curriculum director, given their close relationship. Impartiality between the two roles has been raised with the Trust previously by staff and was viewed by the Trust as a major theme to address going forward.

The curriculum director was also the person responsible for bringing the Kura from an idea to an operational identity. Her passion and drive was never an issue, however her ability to work with and alongside others has been a highlighted point of discussion since the first day of operation as a Kura. Personalities clearly were defining factors in reaching decisions and

although various personnel some appointed and one seconded from MSD did not leave any significant measurable changes to the SMT or their modus operandi. While acknowledging some good may have been done by these changes, none were sustained once their term was complete.

The Trust responded in part by placing a recent trustee, who joined the board in September 2014, to sit alongside the school manager as an attempt to address these issues. Given the Christmas break and this trustee main stay income as a local camp ground manager, the intent was for him to start in earnest at the end of February, coinciding with the end of the peak camping season.

Upon receipt of the Performance Notice, the Trust sought legal advice and embarked on a course to restructure the Senior Management Team with a view to strengthening and improving educational achievement, recruitment and student retention.

The Trust considered a number of options and decided to disestablish the Curriculum Director and School Manager roles and replace these with a Principal. The incumbents have been advised of the decision which will take effect from the 2nd April, 2015.

Governance

The trustees see a need to upskill in the area of governance. Te Puni Kokiri (Whangarei) were approached by the trust to give assistance in this area. Immediate assistance was given by way of 4 hours over two meetings, whereby we discussed addressing the immediate needs outlined in the Ministers correspondence to the trust. This advice was most helpful in [re] focussing our efforts on the pressing issues. Sound advice was offered.

Governance training per se has been further followed up. Initial contact has been made with both the Institute of Directors (Wellington/ Auckland) and Shea Pita and Associates (Auckland), who offer trusteeship/ governance training. Trustees are keen to proceed with Shea Pita as they have conducted this training in Whangaruru previously with the Whangaroa Ngaio Tonga Trust and are a distinct Maori organisation.

Trustees are committed to this training proceeding with confirmation of the continuation of the Kura and will liaise further with either of the two providers listed.

We also see the need to bolster the trust with expertise and experience. This will be facilitated in due course. The Ngatiwai Trust Board have indicated their assistance, as have other organisations and we are grateful. It is fair to suggest that at this point such a discussion needs to occur more rigorously among the current trustees (ourselves) in determining a way forward in bolstering trustee capability through the appointment of additional trustees.

Appointment of a Principal

Given the above redundancies taking effect at the end of the first school term, the trustees are also committed to appointing a suitable principal to over-see the operation and management

of the kura. Given the tight time frame and knowing the need to appoint a perfect match for the position, the trustees are relying on names for this role being recommended to us.

Several names for the role of Principal have been recommended and the Trust is currently carrying out an assessment of each to ensure maximum traction. The local Regional Director of the Ministry of Education will be consulted for input into the process.

In the event a Principal has not been recruited to start in the beginning of the second school term, the Trust has appointed Wayne Johnstone (also a trustee) in an interim capacity to work alongside our most senior teacher to ensure the continuation of the Kura.

The Trust is aware that appointing the right person as Principal is paramount and request additional time to carry this process out in an effective manner.

UNJUSTIFIED ABSENCES

The Trust acknowledges the issues raised concerning unjustified absences. In this regard the Trust and Management has reviewed its policies and procedures and two interventions aimed at reinforcing intervention have been implemented immediately:

- Hui with parents and supporters to improve student connectivity with the Kura and learning by confirming the school vision and the Trusts commitment to student and whanau aspirations.
- Role clarity within the management team to ensure that absences are confirmed and appropriate follow up where absences are unexplained.

ENROLMENT VARIANCE

At the conclusion of the 2014 school year we had around 46 students enrolled at the kura, down significantly from the 71 students who started the year. The reasons for the decline in roll numbers included the following:

1. The beginning of the 2014 school year presented challenges from students were or whose parents were , gang affiliated. The associated amount of grief and behavioural problems that accompanied these students to school surpassed the available help available as provided by the Kura. Over time the majority of these students stopped coming to school as policies and procedures were implemented to address their needs and behaviour
2. The effect on other students who did not share the same life ambitions of the behavioural challenged students above sadly resulted in a number of them also leaving the Kura

The current school year of 2015, sees a significant change in our student composition. The troubles of 2014 are almost non-existent at the Kura. Where as in 2014 there was a period of time where 15 incidents were recorded daily, now we have on average 3 incidents recorded per week. The composition of the school has changed. Students are eager to better themselves through schooling. We have a qualified social worker on site 3 days per week to assist us with behaviour and associated problems as they arise.

In 2015, we are contracted for 40 students. The roll currently stands at 35 students. We have had 4 students leave the kura since the Performance Notice was given. There is uncertainty among the school community however the staff and all concerned have endeavoured to advocate a message of retention to students and parents alike.

The trustees are committed to reaching and maintaining our roll of 40 for 2015.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In meeting with our [former] curriculum director on this matter, the following was expressed:

1. Student base line entry data for 2014 highlighted a serious need for scholastic achievement, in particular among the senior students
2. Senior students were projected on an achievement course that would take two years to achieve NCEA, due to their entry data results
3. Many of the junior students sat and achieved NCEA credits in 2014
4. [REDACTED] senior students sat NCEA and [REDACTED] passed

s 9(2)(a) OIA

However the trustees realise that we can do better and have contacted [REDACTED] a specialist in student achievement, to ask for her advice. [REDACTED] has indicated that she is willing to help and that her assistance will be a koha to the Kura. We are willing to purchase her expertise. [REDACTED] has asked in the first instance, for a list of what are the achievement goals of the Kura (as per the Charter) and details of achievement to date. Her request is currently been collated and will be emailed to her shortly. The Ministry of Education have also signalled their assistance by offering the services of the Student Achievement Transition Team.

SUMMARY

The trustees have responded with both urgency and conviction that Te Pumanawa o te Wairua should remain open. There is still alot of work to do. We have meet with parents, students and staff and all have a resolve to keep the Kura open. A number of corners have been turned within the 28 day period, a few more need addressing and turning so as to establish a solid platform. We appreciate those who are/ have offered assistance, some of whom we have been mentioned in the body of this report. Phone contact has been made with Chris Saunders who is due back today from overseas and he has expressed a willingness to assist where possible.

If the Kura remains open, any changes MUST be sustainable. Our approach has this key ingredient in mind as we have made changes, both to staff and our own mind sets. Given our 15 months in operation, against the back drop of some significant challenges, we remain resolute in our belief that our students deserve a chance, many of them it is their only chance at an education.

The Kura today is a different school to that of 2014.

Signed by the Trustees

Hori Parata (Chair)

Rose MacLean

Robert Carpenter

Wayne Johnstone

