



Briefing Note: Visit to Whangarei Boys' High School

To:	Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education – (Māori Education)		
Cc:	Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	12 October 2022	Priority:	Low / Medium / High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1295955
Drafter:	Erena Brew	DDI:	04 631930
Key Contact:	Christie Uffindell	DDI:	9(2)(a)
Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes / No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Briefing Note

- The purpose of this paper is to support your visit to Whangārei Boys High in Whangārei on Friday 21 October 2022 from 10am – 11.30am to formally open the rebuild of the school.

Proactive Release

- Agree:** we recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. A run sheet for the visit is attached. Annex 1 refers.



Scott Evans
Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Puna Hanganga, Matihiko

Agree Disagree



Hon Kelvin Davis
Associate Minister of Education
(Māori Education)

12/10/2022

15/10/2022

Core School Information

Whangārei Boys High School 15

Contact Name: Keir Morrison
09 4304170 / 9(2)(a)

Address: 245 Western Hills Drive
Avenues
Whangarei 0140

Key People

Principal Karen Gilbert-Smith
09 430 4170 / 9(2)(a)

Acting Principal (Term 3) Keir Morrison
09 430 4170 / 9(2)(a)

Ministry Officials: Hira Gage Director
09 436 8914 / 9(2)(a)

Profile Information

Authority	Whangarei District
School Type	Secondary (Year 9-15)
School Gender	Boys
Education Medium	Mainstream
Equity Index Rating	467
Electorate	Whangarei
Te Mahau Region	Te Mahau / Te Tai Raro

The August 2022 breakdown of roll information by ethnicity is shown below:

August 2022 Roll	Number	Percentage (%)
Māori	504	43.%
Pacific	38	2.%
Asian	54	4.%
Other ethnicity	22	1%
European/Pākehā	630	50%
International	2	0
Total	1250	100%

School Context

- 1 Whangārei Boys High School (WBHS) has had a vibrant history and strong traditions since 1881. With their eyes trained firmly on the future, the schools' innovative methods, and curriculum, continue to build on the honourable traditions of their history.

Property

- 2 In 2018 the Labour-New Zealand First Coalition Government agreed for the Ministry to progress the rebuild project through a conventional procurement method, and under the Ministry of Education's own project management process.
- 3 This Ministry led Capital Works Project was a redevelopment funded project with a budget of just over \$50m. The project brief was to rebuild approximately 80% of the school. The existing gymnasium, pool area, historical building, and some ancillary buildings, (around 20% of the school) were not included in the rebuild project.
- 4 To avoid as much disruption to the school daily activities as possible, the new school was constructed on existing sports fields to the east of the school site; this meant that, once complete, the school could move directly from their existing classrooms and into the new school.
- 5 The rebuild project scope included:
 - Replacement of nine relocatable classrooms, and six leased classrooms, with a new 12 classroom block. The new build has 46 teaching spaces, including specialist technology classrooms, breakout spaces, a library, cafeteria, Whare, Auditorium and Horticultural area.
 - Drainage upgrade works to the school sports fields.
 - The supply of a new entrance bridge to run from state Highway 1- over the neighbouring creek - into the school and new carparking area; building on the existing sports fields required a new entrance into the school.
 - Refurbishment and relocation of the existing Whare.
 - Demolition of the existing campus.
- 6 Local Iwi were engaged throughout the design and build process, they advised on cultural design, the placement of local carvings, and the new site placement of the refurbished Whare. Iwi also ensured any indigenous flora were relocated, or protected where possible, and the local stream was protected from any construction residue.
- 7 Delivery of the new school was originally scheduled for 18 months, however the impact of COVID pushed the completion date out to just over 2 years. The Ministry's Capital Works Delivery Manager for Tai Tokerau, Gene O'Neill, attended school board meetings to provide project updates throughout the construction period. The Ministry has a positive relationship with the school principal, Karen Gilbert Smith.

- 8 Almost 50% of the work was completed by local contractors, with some offering students the opportunity for apprenticeships. The firms involved are listed below:

Project Role	Company
Main Contractor	Leighs Construction
Bridge Contractor:	United Civil
External PM consultant:	BECA
Quantity Surveyor and Engineer to Contract:	BBD
Lead Architect	ASC Architects
Lead services	WSP NZ
Demolition Contractor	McMahons

- 9 Currently, the existing school is being demolished and the area made good. This activity is nearly finished with a completion date - end of 2022.

Known risks or issues

- 10 The school principal has advocated for additional funding to repair an existing Council owned drain that runs through the school property, this has been an ongoing issue for the school as the Council will not repair the drain. The drain runs parallel beside the new classrooms on the Eastern side, between the school and the sports fields. It is a large open deep covert drain that is overrun with weeds and materials and blocks up and does not flow well. The Ministry has completed some drainage works on the sports field to help mitigate this.
- 11 At the beginning of September 2022, Whangārei Boys High School Board of Trustees announced the closure of Carruth House. The boarding hostel was no longer financially viable. Carruth has played a significant part in the history of WBHS. The number of hostel students has been declining for several years, despite successive Board's efforts to address this.
- 12 COVID-19 saw the loss of International Students as well as the buildings requiring a complete refurbishment. Schools have been unable to use Operations Grants to fund hostels and they must stand on their own financial feet.
- 13 The school gymnasium was re-roofed with 5YA funding but has since had a few leaks occur, a solution for this is currently being investigated.

Education Review Office

- 14 The school was last visited by the Education Review Office (ERO) in 2017 where ERO recommended that the school continues to develop good practices in inquiry and evidence-based evaluation to guide curriculum that supports students as confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

- 15 ERO concluded that the principal, senior leaders, teachers and trustees have worked together to significantly improve practices that promote student engagement and successful learning.
- 16 Under the new ERO model the approach is driven by ERO's whakataukī: Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa | The Child – the Heart of the Matter.
- 17 Whangārei Boys High have an ERO partner who meets regularly with a team led by the principal to focus on Māori Achievement.

Kāhui Ako | Communities of Learning

- 18 The school belongs to Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangārei Kāhui Ako Group 2. This Kāhui Ako is part of the wider Whangārei Hub where five Kāhui Ako collaborate and share Achievement Challenges on Literacy, Well-being and Cultural Competencies.

Learning Support

- 19 The school belongs to Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangārei Kāhui Ako Group 2, which has been allocated one Learning Support Coordinator (LSC).
- 20 There is one LSC based at the school and five shared across the cluster due to the small sizes of the schools.
- 21 The school has nine current Learning Support cases and six Ongoing Resourcing Scheme students.
- 22 Whangārei Boys' High School has a team established to assist students with special needs. This team is led by the Head of Inclusive Learning and is supported by the Learning Support Co-ordinators and Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour.
- 23 The school is not a big referrer to the Learning Support service, as it has its own processes in place to assist students with special needs.

Participation in government programmes

School Donations Scheme

- 24 The school opted-in to the School Donations Scheme for 2022 and has opted-in for 2023. The school received \$178,350.44 in lieu of donations in 2022 and will receive \$192,033.52 in 2023 based on the September Provisional roll return.

Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunch Programme

- 25 The school is ineligible for the programme.

Creatives in Schools

- 26 The school did not apply for Rounds 1, 2 or 3 of Creatives in Schools.

Impact of COVID-19

- 27 During 2022 COVID-19 has caused disruption to attendance as both staff and students were affected. During Term 1 the school had a rolling attendance with a year level working at home one day per week. Although there continued to be a high rate of illness during Terms 2 and 3, the school managed to keep all classes working on site.
- 28 The students were well-equipped with devices and Hybrid Learning continued throughout the terms enabling students who were required to isolate at home to continue their learning. Where some subjects required hard packs, these were provided to the boys.
- 29 During Term 3, Laptops have been provided by the Ministry to all the Pasifika students and their families.
- 30 The school received \$ 64,340 in URF funding in 2021 and used the money to employ a Student Support person to visit families and offer support to re-engage the boys back into school. This was a very successful project and the school benefited in boys returning to school.

Ministry Attendees

Name	Role	Contact
Hira Gage	Director of Education Tai Tokerao	094368914 / 9(2)(a)
Christie Uffindell	Regional Infrastructure Manager Tai Tokerao	094368034 / 9(2)(a)
Gene O'Neill	Delivery Team Manager	096329439 / 9(2)(a)
Malcolm Gamet	Programme Manager	096329423
Tim Anderson	Principal Advisor Tai Tokerao	094368945 / 9(2)(a)
Lesley Parton	Senior Advisor Tai Tokerao	094368950 / 9(2)(a)
Brent Stephen	Lead Advisor Network	04368058 / 9(2)(a)