



## Education Report: Ministerial Appointments to the Ngamatapouri School (2407) Board

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	14 September 2023	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1317926
<b>Drafter:</b>	Mark Corrigan Senior Adviser Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū	<b>DDI:</b>	06 349 6305
<b>Key Contact:</b>	Marlene Clarkson Director of Education Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū	<b>DDI:</b>	06 349 6304
<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Report

This paper is to ask you to appoint Alastair White to the Ngamatapouri School (2407) Board in accordance with the school's alternative constitution.

### Summary

1. Ngamatapouri is a small and very isolated community in the Waitotara River Valley in South Taranaki. The school's roll has averaged ten students over the last decade and currently sits at five.
2. Ngamatapouri School's alternative constitution invites you to appoint up to two Board members. The alternative constitution has been in place since 2006, to manage the risk to the school in times of conflict within the small community.
3. To date, the Board has had just one Ministerial Appointee in place at a time, and this has been sufficient to meet the governance need. The Appointee has the duty to co-opt two other Board members. Co-opted members have previously come from the parent body.
4. The previous Ministerial Appointee resigned in September 2021. The Board and Ministry consulted the community about the alternative constitution, confirming the need and desire for a Ministerial Appointee. On your behalf, we have sought and evaluated candidates for your consideration.
5. The Board agrees that Alastair White would be a suitable Appointee.

6. The Board is open to future appointments being made by the Director of Education for Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū.

### Recommended Actions

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The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **agree** to appoint Alastair White to the Ngamatapouri School Board

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree

And if you agree:

- b. **sign** the attached letters to the Appointee and to the Presiding Member of the Ngamatapouri School Board, confirming the appointment

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree

We also recommend that you:

- c. **agree** that this Education Report be proactively released. Any information that might need to be withheld, will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

☒ Proactively release / ☐ Not release

- d. **agree** that the Ministry consult the Ngamatapouri community on your behalf about the possibility of future appointments being made by the Director of Education for Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree



**Jocelyn Mikaere**  
Hautū | Deputy Secretary  
Te Mahau | Te Tai Whenua (Central)

15/09/2023



**Hon Jan Tinetti**  
Minister of Education

24/09/2023

## Background

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- 1 Ngamatapouri School is a year 1-8 school that serves an isolated community in the Waitotara Valley, 90 minutes' drive from Whanganui. There is just one road into the community.
- 2 The roll has fluctuated between 5 to 14 over the past 20 years. The number of Māori students has ranged from 0 (currently) to six. The school's Equity Index number is 473.
- 3 The late 1990s and early 2000s was a time of community and school conflict. ERO reports highlighted poor performance in the school's governance and leadership. There were nine different board chairs between 1999 and 2005. The resignations of three different boards triggered the appointment of a commissioner in 2002, 2003 and 2005. There were also frequent changes of Principal during this time.
- 4 In 2005, the Commissioner led a community consultation process about an alternative constitution. In March 2006, the Minister approved an alternative constitution under section 98A (1) of the Education Act 1989 (*New Zealand Gazette* notice number 2006-go1692). The consultation allowed for up to two Ministerial Appointees and one co-opted member. The main purpose of the appointment was to manage the risk to the school in times of community conflict, and to add capability to the board.
- 5 In 2017, the alternative constitution was amended to allow for a second co-opted board member (*New Zealand Gazette* notice number 2017-go4225).
- 6 The first Appointee was in place from 2006 until 2017. The second served from 2017 and resigned in September 2021. Ngamatapouri School Board is currently made up of two co-opted board members, including the Presiding Member, and the Principal. New Zealand School Trustee Association (NZSTA) has provided governance support for the board since the appointee's resignation.

## Consultation

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- 7 As part of the (re-)appointment process every 3 years, the Ministry has consulted the Board and community about the need for the appointment and the desirable attributes of the appointee. We have used criteria agreed to in 2014 by the Board, Ngaa Rauru iwi, and Ministry.
- 8 The consultation process with the community and board late in 2021 reaffirmed their need for an appointee. A candidate was identified and introduced to the board in December 2021.
- 9 In March 2022, having consulted NZSTA and reflected, the board expressed a desire to return to a standard constitution. In May, the board and Ministry agreed to advertise for an appointee while also consulting the community about a possible return to a standard constitution.
- 10 After advertising and canvassing potential applicants via word of mouth, there were no applicants for the Ministerial Appointee role. (The candidate who had earlier met with the board did not apply due to a change of personal circumstances.)
- 11 Consultation about the school's constitution was completed in November 2022. We learned that:
  - All community members strongly preferred a school at Ngamatapouri over bussing the children to Waitotara, a 58-minute drive away.

- People had confidence in the current Principal and Board
  - Some people agreed with the need for an appointee, some believed the community could elect and support a board, and others thought it could work either way
  - People were not confident that three or more candidates would stand for each Board election in the medium to long term.
- 12 In December 2022, the board noticed the decline in roll for 2023 (due to families moving on because of a downturn in the local honey industry). The board opted to stay with the alternative governance arrangement because they lacked confidence in attracting enough board candidates for each future election,
- 13 We continued the search for a suitable appointee. In March 2023, a candidate was identified and introduced to the Board. In May 2023, he withdrew from the process.
- 14 In July 2023, Alastair White was identified as an appointee. He expressed interest in the position after meeting the board. The Board's view is that he is a suitable candidate for appointment.

## The Candidate

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- 15 Alastair White spent his working life as a teacher and Principal, mostly in small schools. In 2014, he retired early from his role as Principal of Kai Iwi School, (which remains part of the West Country Schools cluster with Ngamatapouri School). In this role, and in his work as a relieving teacher since then, he has visited Ngamatapouri many times. He has retained his teacher registration.
- 16 Alastair was previously Principal at Hunterville School and Deputy Principal at Rutherford Intermediate, (now Rutherford Junior High School.)
- 17 s9(2)(a)
- 18 s9(2)(a)
- 19 Alastair can join board meetings in person when required and can join meetings via video conference from his home in Whanganui or from Auckland.
- 20 The Ministerial Appointment of board members to the Ngamatapouri Board is conducted every three years. These appointments align with the triennial election of the board, so that appointed members can take office in line with the elected staff representative. Alastair's appointment, if made, will be for just over two years, through to the next triennial board elections in 2025.

## Further Consultation

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- 21 The Board are open to the possibility of future appointments being made by the Director of Education for Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū, rather than the Minister. This may offer a more practical local link with future appointees.

## Risks

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- 22 The decision to appoint Alastair White is considered low risk. He is a well-regarded local educator. The board is happy for the appointment to be made and is eager to work with him.
- 23 There is a medium risk if no appointment was made. s9(2)(a) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Without an appointee, there is no lawful way to co-opt a second board member. It would leave just the Principal and Presiding Member on the Board.

## Proactive Release

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- 24 It is recommended that this Education Report be proactively released. Any information that might need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Information Act 1982.

## Annexes

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- Annex 1: Letter to the Appointee  
Annex 2: Letter to the Ngamatapouri School Board

Proactively Released

**Hon Jan Tinetti**

Minister of Internal Affairs  
Minister for Women  
Associate Minister of Education



Alastair White

Tēnā koe Alastair

I am pleased to confirm that I have appointed you to the Ngamatapouri School Board in accordance with its constitution.

You have been appointed because of the skills, experience, and attributes that you bring to the board. I am confident that with your experience, you will support sound governance practice, provide direction, and contribute to the ongoing development of the board during your appointment term.

Your appointment is for a term of office of just over two years, commencing today. Your term will end seven days after the date of the next triennial board elections in 2025. Before that time, the Ministry of Education will commence the process for the next three-year appointment, and you will be welcome to reapply for selection.

I have advised the Ngamatapouri School Board of your appointment. Angela Sherwood, the Presiding Member, will be in contact with you soon to inform you of the details about the board, including when and where board meetings will be held.

Thank you for your willingness to accept this appointment and to act in the best interests of the students attending the school. I congratulate you on your appointment and wish you a rewarding and successful term of office.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Tinetti'.

Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Minister of Education**

Proactively Released



## Hon Jan Tinetti

Minister of Internal Affairs  
Minister for Women  
Associate Minister of Education



Angela Sherwood  
Presiding Member  
Ngamatapouri School  
[sthlandman@hotmail.com](mailto:sthlandman@hotmail.com)

Tēnā koe Angela

I am pleased to confirm that I have appointed Alastair White to the Ngamatapouri School Board in accordance with the school's constitution.

Alastair's appointment takes effect today. His term of office will end seven days after the date set for the next triennial board elections in 2025. Before that time, the Ministry of Education will commence the process for the next three-year appointment and will update the board on these processes at that time.

I have written to Alastair to let him know of his appointment. Please contact him soon to discuss details of the Board, including meeting dates and times.

I look forward to the contribution the appointee will make, building on the work already undertaken by the board, for the benefit of students.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Tinetti'.

Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Minister of Education**