



**BRIEFING NOTE:** Meeting with Mr Simon Britten, on Monday  
10 February 2020 at 4.30pm – 5.00pm

<b>To:</b>	Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	7 February 2020	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1219021
<b>Drafter:</b>	Jennifer Margaret	<b>DDI:</b>	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Key Contact:</b>	Sean Wheeler	<b>DDI:</b>	

**Purpose**

Your office has requested briefing notes for your meeting with Mr Simon Britten, on the Monday 10 February 2020.

Please find attached the briefing notes as requested.

**Agree** that this Briefing will be proactively released.

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree

  
Susan Howan  
Associate Deputy Secretary  
Sector Enablement and Support

7/2/20

  
Hon Tracey Martin  
Associate Minister of Education

9/2/2020

## Background

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- 1 Simon Britten is an elected member of the Waipapa/Papanui-Innes Community Board and holds the role of Deputy Chair of the Board.
- 2 Simon is the founder and curator of the Think Papanui Community Engagement initiative. Think Papanui is an information source focused on the Papanui Ward, and aims to share information on City Council consultations, Community Board agenda items and decisions, local projects in action, and generally what's happening in the community.
- 3 Simon works in a leadership role at Papanui-based youth and community development organisation Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi since 2011. A significant focus of Simon's work involves working with the school Attendance Service, supporting children, family and whānau, and schools. In his role with Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi, Simon has also been involved in the area of youth employment.
- 4 Simon attended the Alternative Education Provision redesign hui held at the Ministry National Office in February, a workshop in June 2019 and the second hui in September 2019.

### Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi

- 5 Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi Incorporated (Te Ora Hou) is *'a group of people, mostly Māori, committed to the holistic development of young people, their whānau and communities'* and who are involved *'in a wide variety of youth and community development initiatives at a local, regional and national level'*. The services they provide include Attendance Service, Youth Work, Alternative Education (AE) and Social and Community work.
- 6 Te Ora Hou is the contracted service provider for the Attendance Service for both the Canterbury and Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast regions.
- 7 Te Ora Hou is one of the five providers that are sub-contracted by Cashmere High School to provide the Alternative Education provision in Christchurch. The name for their service is *Te Kaupapa Whakaora*.
- 8 Their original Attendance Service contract started in 22 December 2015 and was due to expire on 21 December 2018. At the end of 2018 the Ministry executed the right of renewal to extend the contract for another three years. The current contract will end 21 December 2021 and has a lifetime value of **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**
- 9 With the support of a grant from the Vodafone Extension Fund, Christchurch based AE providers and other relevant stakeholders have carried out over the last three years the AE Futures Project. This is a collaborative project that considered how to effectively share resources, ideas and programmes, identify and understand gaps, build on strengths and get "best fit" for young people.

## Issues

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- 10 Simon Britten has previously, through the Think Papanui Community Engagement initiative, provided information related to the consultation regarding changes to Papanui High School and Burnside High School enrolment schemes which were actioned at the start of 2020. He regularly provides updates through Think Papanui on the implementation of the subsequent changes made to these enrolment schemes.

- 11 Attendance Service staff and local office Ministry of Education managers and advisers report that achieving effective and timely placement of non-enrolled students is increasingly more challenging. This is resulting in more enrolments being secured through section 11P of the Education Act 1989 (directed enrolment). Ministry regional staff have suggested that a contributing factor to the challenge of securing an effective and timely placement, is that most Christchurch schools (and all Christchurch Secondary schools) now have their own enrolment schemes.
- 12 The Attendance Service report that local demand on the service exceeds the volume of their current contract. Service demands on the local service provider frequently cannot be met with the provider highlighting that they are not funded to provide the quantum of service to meet the need.
- 13 s 9(2)(g)(i)
- 14
- 15 The current Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi Incorporated Attendance Service contract is due to expire 21 December 2021.
- 16 The local office of the Ministry works closely with the Attendance Service to provide advice and support and to problem solve around the needs of particular students. This includes brokering connections with other government and non-government agencies that work with families/whānau to support them in getting their children enrolled and attending school regularly.
- 17 The Director of Education for Canterbury/Chatham Islands has recently initiated an internal process to review local attendance data and other related information to develop new approaches to supporting schools to increase the rate of attendance.

#### Additional programmes in Christchurch

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- 18 A significant number of Christchurch schools run ROCKON programmes. ROCKON is an inter-agency process with schools working with Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police, Mental Health, the Attendance Service and others to collaboratively problem solve the issues influencing poor attendance.

#### Proactive Release

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- 19 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.

# School Attendance Service

Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi, February 2020

## Context

Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi (TOHO) is a kaupapa Māori faith based youth and community development organisation based in Christchurch and affiliated to our national network through Te Ora Hou Aotearoa.

Since 2013 TOHO has been the contracted Attendance Service provider for most of the South Island – approximately 17% of New Zealand's population (and 33% by land area). In Christchurch, TOHO staff work directly with students, whānau, and schools, while for the rest of the service area we re-contract to local providers, mostly the schools and community organisations that held the local District Truancy Service role prior to 2013. This arrangement enables us to provide a back-office function and support with practice, while empowering local communities to meet needs in ways that suit them best (within constraints of the contract).

## Issues

We have positive relationships with schools and local Ministry of Education staff, and dedicated kaiāwhina who work hard to achieve positive outcomes for young people and whānau. Our key frustration can be summarised as a lack of a partnership approach by the Ministry of Education, noting in particular:

- No national hui for Attendance Service providers since 2017
- A really unpleasant contract renewal experience at the end of 2018
- No contact or engagement with any work or review in MOE on non-attendance and transience, despite: being the contract holders; having 7+ years experience in school attendance specifically; 30+ years experience in kaupapa Māori youth development; commissioning and sharing research into what works with youth engagement in education; and the positive engagement that we have experienced with the work on the future of Alternative Education.
- We continue to raise a range of system issues in our reporting to the Ministry, but we don't hear back.

## The role of the Attendance Service

Our current contract is in the form of an Outcome Agreement, but without any outcome measures. It describes a service that "*achieves a sustainable return to school for students who have persistently not attended or were not enrolled in school*" but it also has a KPI that expects results in four weeks (which is an activity measure, not an outcome measure). This is an ambiguity that leads to a mis-matching of expectations – from our values base we have a child- and youth-centred practice, but the Ministry expects a fast throughput, high turnover model that can triage, diagnose, and refer on, but that does not follow through (and of course there is often no one else with capacity for us to refer on to).

Compare this with two other TOHO contracts – Oranga Tamariki Transition from Care, and Ministry of Social Development Youth Service, both of which specify intensive case management / journeying, and low caseloads (15-20 young people).

We see the Attendance Service kaiāwhina as a navigator, someone who can whakarongo, who can get through the front door and connect with priority groups including Māori and Pasifika, and who has strong school relationships.

## Next steps

The key missing ingredient right now is a constructive future-oriented relationship between Attendance Service providers and the Ministry of Education. This could start with involvement in the current review, exploration and agreement on the role and expectations of the service, in turn enabling agreement on good practice and outcome measures, which in turn can inform a revision of the Outcome Agreement between providers and the Ministry.

For more information

Simon Britten, [sbritten@teorahou.org.nz](mailto:sbritten@teorahou.org.nz), 021 859 727

