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North Tec

TAI TOKERAU WĀNANGA

*Submission Response Overview
to the*

**Review of
Vocational Education**

*Mā tāu raurau, mā tāku raurau, ka ora ai te iwi
With your basket, with my basket,
the people will prosper*

Date: 5 April 2019

The Tai Tokerau RoVE Implementation Model - Mana Ōrite in the Regions

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Overview of Tai Tokerau Wānanga/NorthTec's submission to Phase 1 of the RoVE

Introduction

The release of the Review of Vocational Education (RoVE) Consultation Documentation on the 13 February 2019 has resulted in much discussion around the future of vocational education in Aotearoa. Whilst there have been strong views expressed, there has been general acceptance of the need for significant change to address the problems facing the sector and to prepare it for the future.

This document presents Tai Tokerau Wānanga/NorthTec's submission to the three Phase 1 change proposals requested in the RoVE consultation exercise.

Phase 1 of the Review addresses proposed changes to the State provision of vocational education (excluding the wānanga and private providers). The focus of these Phase 1 proposals is on sector structure, governance and funding.

The tension in these proposals which has sparked much debate is between the requirement, on the one hand, for a future system that is demand-centred, highly responsive to relatively small centres of specialised need, and can deliver on its mission in a world where there is a multiplicity of ways to access education. On the other hand, there is a need for a system which can deliver the benefits of centralisation and consolidation.

Getting this balance right is a critical issue for Northland, for Tai Tokerau Wānanga/NorthTec and, we suggest, other regions in New Zealand.

The proposals offered in this review, in our view, provide an important foundation for the future vocational education training (VET) system. They are a necessary, *but not sufficient*, prescription for a major step-up in vocational educational performance especially for regions such as Northland. The proposals and the design sessions have allowed for input from ITPs to address their views of the sector changes needed.

Regrettably ITOs have not been part of this process.

Our submission is, as requested, separated into the Consultation and the Technical Discussion sections of the three Proposals and answers the questions posed by the Review team. We understand that response sections will be streamed to RoVE review teams who will frame and analyse all responses. This means that our responses are somewhat fragmented and repetitive in nature.

To assist with clarity of our submission we have prepared this overview summary of our key themes. We have highlighted those aspects that we believe are important for the future of vocational educational delivery in our region and we outline areas where we believe the RoVE project needs to intensify or change its scope.

Our submissions are grounded in our future-based view of vocational education delivery for Northland as a region. We share many of the challenges and barriers to success with other regions in New Zealand.

For us the key challenge is *not* the quality of our educational delivery. While our goal is to strive to improve, we currently sit at #2 amongst all ITPs in our academic success ratings on a cohort qualification completion basis, a strong achievement considering the issues that impact upon our delivery. We are not “broken” in this regard.

Our key issue is the growing difficulty in attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of learners to form minimum economic delivery units or cohorts. The current strong employment market makes this an even greater challenge.

This is made worse by our need to manage learning centres across a far-flung, thinly populated region, where travel to our main campus can be a 4-5 hour daily return drive or bus trip.

Northland has a very large proportion of Māori population and a growing population of Pasifika peoples. With our strong focus on primary industry it is vital that we partner successfully with Māori and Pasifika communities to ensure that they can fully participate in the economic and social life of the region. For Māori, a learner experience based on Tai Tokerau tikanga is critical. We are investing in unique new educational partnerships with Māori.

Northland is characterised by many small enterprises, many with quite specialised needs.

For Tai Tokerau Wānanga/NorthTec therefore, the ability to form meaningful relationships and delivery partnerships in the region, with customisation of programmes, funding and channels is vital for our future success.

Learning delivered by digital technology is a key part of our strategic mix, so that we can overcome the tyranny of distance. However a key success factor in delivering good educational outcomes is the need for “wrap-around” pastoral support. It is a well-researched fact that there is an inverse relationship between the level of pastoral care and the educational level being delivered. Lower educational levels require more face-to-face learning support. This means that we will need a blend of digital learning and facilitated guidance within our learning spaces to meet the needs of our learners. We are investing in leading-edge digital programme delivery to achieve this.

This, then is the “current state” context for our response to the Phase 1 proposals. We focus in this overview below of what we see as key aspects of the RoVE project. Our detailed response to the Consultation Discussions and the Technical Discussions for Proposals 1, 2 and 3 follows this overview.

In a nutshell – 6 key points in our submission overview

<p>Regional VET integration and empowerment</p>	<p>We see an opportunity to take a major and positive step further in reducing the fragmentation and competition within the sector by expanding the scope of the new system to include all VET providers within a regionally-driven collaboration model. We develop this concept with a Regional Leadership Board to drive the Northland regional investment plan, utilising our initial work with the TEC on a regional VET funding and provision model (Tai Tokerau Regional Investment Plan or TRIP)</p>
<p>Direct industry co-design of curricula</p>	<p>A group of National Industry Skills boards are proposed. We believe that overall sector priorities and standards can be better managed by a <i>single</i> central Industries Skills Board. We propose that existing Industry representative bodies, at both regional and national levels, are the best placed to identify new programme needs and to work collaboratively with the curriculum design agency, or agencies, to establish qualifications and programmes. We name these as Regional Industry Skills Groups (RISGs) and National Industry Groups.</p>
<p>Strategic investment for Māori and Pasifika VET outcomes</p>	<p>There are many “Māori success” initiatives across the VET Sector. To deliver a sustainable lift in Māori achievement we propose a sector-wide approach combining the cultural transformation of IST providers through the Regional Board model with the decentralisation of provision to Māori entities in a partnership of pastoral care and VET Delivery. Tai Tokerau Wānanga/NorthTec wishes to become a CoVE for Māori VET outcomes.</p>
<p>A balanced IST governance model</p>	<p>The new model must optimise decision-making to balance a regional sense of local ownership and responsiveness to local needs with the benefits of national consolidation. We support a NZ-wide IST with a central governance entity. However we propose that its charter be specific to IST governance level management with most operational management at regional ISTs, shared service centres, and the curriculum development entity. Network teams can provide national network integration and leadership.</p>
<p>Managing our investment in future learning models</p>	<p>The future of VET education will rely heavily on the most effective blend of digitally-based delivery media and direct learner contact to ensure world-leading outcomes. The mix of delivery components will change according to both local markets and global innovation and change. We believe that RoVE should step away from backing a singular approach or solution as part of this review and pass the decision to the new IST governance structure to manage as part of their strategic portfolio</p>
<p>A sustainable funding model</p>	<p>All financial risk in the polytechnic sector is currently centred on ITPs. A combination of under-funding, a high fixed cost structure and an inflexible and, at times, punitive funding regime has exposed ITPs to downturns in enrolments. With the move to a converged VET model sufficient funding is required to fund the transition, support the new business model and (for Northland and others) to urgently recapitalise balance sheets.</p>

Overview - Key aspects of the RoVE model proposals

Centralisation versus regional autonomy

Over the past few weeks, one area which has been the subject of public debate has been that of “regional autonomy”. However upon closer inspection, many of these arguments for the retention of “autonomy” have in fact been arguments for “institutional autonomy”, not *regional* autonomy.

Tai Tokerau Wānanga /NorthTec has been successfully working on a model of *genuine regional autonomy* for approximately one year now. The Minister observed this on his visit to our Raumanga campus on the 27th of February noting that he viewed us as being well ahead of the sector in regional integration.

The TRIP model

This model, the Tai Tokerau Regional Investment Plan, (TRIP), represents the Northland “network of provision” concept in action for vocational education. It has the expressed support of industry and key local stakeholders, including iwi and hapū, local government, the Northland Intersectoral Forum, and other key Tai Tokerau agencies. It also has central government support through the TEC. It has been created using co-design principles with the tangata whenua, and reflects the partnership principles of Te Tiriti through its co-governance and co-management approach.

TRIP’s priorities are in meeting the needs, demands and requirements of regional industry, iwi and hapū, and community stakeholders by delivering vocational educational provider collaboration in the region to better meet learner needs. It sets the platform for genuine cultural and behavioural change within the VET sector in Northland. The release of “He Whenua” as the first stage of TRIP is a milestone for determining the key needs of stakeholders locally, and the key factors impacting on vocational tertiary education provision in Tai Tokerau.

As such, it represents the start of *genuine* regional autonomy of the region in vocational education decision-making, as opposed to seeking to retain local institutional autonomy for regional planning and delivery for each Northland VET provider.

This approach has direct synergies with the proposals put forward within the Review of Vocational Education consultation document. It can be easily adapted for the proposed new IST model and provides a major step forward to meet the goals of reduced sector fragmentation of provision, better integration and greater collaboration of the vocational educational system with better outcomes for learners, industry and other partners and stakeholders.

We consider the formal regional planning and monitoring model based on the TRIP approach to be a key factor in the retention of a critical regional focus for the new Northland IST.

It is an important counterweight to the tendency over time to see the reduction of regional representation, with growing central consolidation. A link to further information about TRIP can be found in Appendix 4.

The RoVE model

The organisational components of the proposed vocational education model are, in our view, as follows. (Our submission includes detailed specifications for these entities and these are included as Appendix 1).

NZIST

We support a single NZIST to facilitate and deliver world class training outcomes for New Zealanders and overseas students throughout New Zealand. We see the NZIST is primarily accountable for making major strategic decisions and to invest for optimum return with respect to the educational outcomes of its learners and industries, and the social, cultural and environmental development of the regions in which it operates. It will be accountable for the financial sustainability of its delivery and operations nationwide. It will have a future-focused strategic view. It must have sufficient control of funding allocations and the national programme portfolio to set and manage national vocational educational priorities. It must also promote and sustain regional governance with the flexibility to make local decisions to meet local needs within the national framework. We do not see national functional leadership as part of the organisation structure within the NZIST central entity. To avoid over-centralisation these roles can be held within regional IST entities as part of the cross-functional functional networks detailed later.

Regional IST campuses

The regional NZIST campuses exist so that the economic, environmental, cultural, and social prosperity of their region grows through education. They are responsible for this and for the financial sustainability of local delivery and operations. Their main objective is to deliver and upskill in the classroom, in industry, and in other approaches in order to meet their purpose. A critical success factor is to ensure that the regional campuses have the fluidity and flexibility to change elements of programmes, delivery and channels to maximise the national IST goals. As always this will require a delicate balance to allow regional ISTs to be agile in response to local demand while retaining the interoperability and the common currency of qualifications across the network. A major fear of local stakeholders is that Tai Tokerau Wānanga/NorthTec will lose this responsiveness and this will impact on regional industry's competency and competitiveness. We propose the retention of strong local governance to ensure this regional focus, although the composition and nature of the governance group will be different from the current governance model. It is important that key functional leadership is retained within the regional IST. These include marketing and recruitment, relationship management and communication, programme management (with programme development centralised), student management (with registry information centralised) and academic delivery. Other support functions such as finance operations, facilities and services, information and technology and HR advisory can be consolidated into shared service centres with local operations providing operational staffing.

Regional Leadership Boards

We are proposing Regional Leadership Boards (RLBs) taking the Regional Leadership Group concept from the RoVE Proposals and repositioning it as a formally constituted region-wide VET planning, monitoring and reporting entity, (including wānanga and PTEs). The Regional Leadership Board's role is primarily to coordinate, determine, and submit the region's tertiary education investment plan to TEC and the IST. In addition it provides leadership, coordination, governance and informed direction to national agencies on regional requirements and to regional stakeholders on national requirements. It monitors the delivery of the regional plan by the regional network of provision and reports to the TEC and the IST (and other providers) on meeting plan targets. We have termed these as *Regional Leadership Boards* to underline their regional autonomy as autonomous Government entities. The Northland TRIP planning and network of provision model provides the governance model and the methodology for the work of these Regional Leadership Boards.

Industry Skills Board

We propose one national Industry Skills Board (ISB). The national Industry Skills Board will coordinate national industry training issues and provide industry-informed direction to the NZIST, the TEC, NZQA, the national curriculum development factory, the Regional Leadership Boards and the Regional National Industry Skills Groups. The current proposal sees a proliferation of Industry Skills Boards generating qualifications standards. We believe this will not work. What is required is one representative Board made up of Industry skills groups, many of whom are currently in existence, to act as the governance body to set national skills strategies and priorities from the competing demands of industry. The process of rationalising programme bids from the many players in the sector will be a complex one and we outline in our responses a proposed way to do this. Importantly, we believe that while the ISB may input into the specification decision it cannot be the developer of industry assessment standards. This task is given to key national industry groups (e.g. IPENZ, the Nursing Council, etc.), working with experienced pedagogical and assessment experts, (including those in NZIST and NZQA), as part of a co-designed curricula development process.

Regional Industry Skills Groups

Regional Industry Skills Groups (RISGs) are currently in place in the primary industries in Northland (as the first stage of the TRIP). They are industry stakeholder groups in the TRIP process, reporting training and education needs to the current TRIP Regional Leadership Group. The development of the TRIP model within the new Regional Leadership Board is planned to see other Northland industry groups, many currently in existence, join as regional stakeholders.

For the new sector model we see that Regional Industry Skills Groups will provide leadership to their industry locally; coordinate, determine, and submit their industry's recruitment, training and development needs, along with any other relevant information regarding their industry; engage with the NZIST campus locally, and report through the Regional Leadership Board to the ISB through their national bodies.

National Industry Groups

Many of these are in place and are a ready-made forum to receive information on regional skills development priorities from the Regional Skills Groups and make representations to the ISB. When development priorities, nationally, have been agreed we are proposing a co-design process between a National Industry Group, who will nominate their industry experts, and a curricula design team to develop new qualifications

Centres of Vocational Excellence

Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) represent *a targeted means of lifting quality and relevance and achieving world-class excellence in areas of vocational education of strategic importance to New Zealand* and are judged and assessed on their outcomes in these. We note that the principles driving the development of CoVEs were light in the Proposal document and more work is required to fully understand the value they can deliver and their role in the new system. We propose that they are based on key forward-looking industries, areas and techniques, and should be limited in number to ensure sufficient depth of resource, possibly to a maximum of seven. These include

1. Primary industries,
2. Health care
3. Māori and Pasifika learning and achievement
4. Information technologies
5. Engineering
6. Service industries

7. Science.

An alternative approach to the above could see the School-to-Employment Vocational Pathways Model utilised for the CoVEs, however this would necessitate determining the CoVEs into a system of ordering disciplines, as opposed to areas of specific need for vocational excellence.

We seek to become a national Centre of Excellence for Māori and Pasifika VET Learning and Achievement.

TEC and NZQA

We propose that the role of TEC is constrained to one of the allocator of Crown investment and the assessment of investment returns for the segment of the State-owned VET sector. The TEC is the appropriate agency to provide the broad split of funding amongst entities in the VET sector and to assess the outcomes from the Crown investment in terms of the Government of the day's economic priorities and the relevant current Tertiary Education Strategy.

However to be effective the new IST must be able to control the allocation of resources, through its funding methodology. To achieve this we propose that the TEC will effectively bulk-fund the new IST and assess its performance based on its educational and economic returns.

The role of NZQA with respect to the IST should revert to one of specifier (or the acceptance of IBS-tabled specifications), and auditor against compliance, and not of managing programme assurance. The new IST needs to have both accountability and responsibility for academic and programme quality assurance. NZQA expertise in this area would be better utilised elsewhere in other agencies (in the development and maintenance of curriculum for example).

Figure 1 overleaf summarises the proposed programme priorities and funding model.

Figure 1: Proposed programme priorities and funding model

