



New Zealand

# PRINCIPAL

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

November 2022  
Volume 37, Number 4



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# CONTENTS

NOVEMBER 2022

- 2** EDITORIAL  
Liz Hawes, Editor
- 3** PRESIDENT'S PEN  
Cherie Taylor-Patel
- 7** HAPPY BIRTHDAY NZPF!  
Liz Hawes
- 11** DENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND  
Liz Hawes
- 17** COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE  
Dr Denise Quinlan
- 22** NZPF CONFERENCE – CHRISTCHURCH  
Liz Hawes
- 33** OPINION – FALLING ON YOUR FEET  
Martin Thrupp
- 35** OPINION – KIA WHAKATŌMURI TE HAERE WHAKAMUA  
Helen Kinsey-Wightman



Jules Newman and Pat Newman wearing his recently awarded ONZM medal at NZPF 40th birthday celebrations



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# EDITORIAL

Liz Hawes EDITOR



**NZPF HOSTED A CRACKER** conference in September. If you didn't get to Christchurch for the conference, there is a full report in this issue of *NZ Principal* (p.22–30). It was a future looking conference, designed to help us imagine how our education system might look beyond Covid. Keynote speakers embraced the theme enthusiastically. What was particularly telling was the way each, in turn, involved learning from the past when looking to the future.

Dr Cheryl Doig took the view that we should look, not so much at the negative impacts of Covid, but at what Covid has enabled for education. She saw the past, present, and future as one thing and illustrated this well with a whakatauki: *Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua* I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past.

Dr Farah Palmer similarly was respectful of the women who had toiled so hard to give women's rugby the status it deserved, so it could become the sporting force it is today. She also acknowledged the trail-blazers and past mentors who have inspired women in their rugby and ultimately shaped their future.

Te Kahu Rolleston said he didn't have an avenue to express himself back in his school days, but drew on knowledge of his ancestry saying, 'My ancestors used metaphor to remember things and Bob Marley put important information into a song.' He realised that by looking back to those who had gone before him, he could find a way forward for himself. This knowledge, he said, allowed him to benefit from his schooling, and helped inspire his oral poetry and rap career.

Scott Robinson also emphasised the importance of the past for future (rugby) performance. He said, stories matter. They help us remember the past and learn, so we don't repeat mistakes. The past also inspires and motivates us. We listen to past role models who have shown integrity, grit, determination, and commitment. In the Crusaders team, he said, there has been a succession of great players and every one of them belongs to us. To play for the Crusaders means you are part of a long line of great players. If we ignore the past, we have nothing to draw on to build the future.

In October, a public debate arose on the failure of Creative NZ (CNZ) to continue funding the Shakespeare Globe Centre NZ (SGCNZ). Tens of thousands of secondary school students in New Zealand have participated in Shakespearean productions through the SGCNZ for over twenty years. Arguments emerging

from CNZ to support their decision, included that Shakespeare is 'located within a canon of imperialism.' Further questions were raised by others including that Shakespeare can't possibly still be relevant to young people after 400 years and young people cannot understand Shakespearean language so therefore won't engage.

Many would not accept these arguments and a robust public debate ensued, which had everything to do with the importance of learning from the past. Arguments included that Shakespeare's themes and stories are timeless and have continued to be relevant, four centuries after his death; it is important to study Shakespeare in

order to understand the modern world, indeed to understand people; it shows what has come before and helps us understand how our society has been built, and yes, it also helps us better understand colonialism/imperialism/take-overs and just how dangerous and threatening powerful despots can be.

You don't have to search far to find a line from Shakespeare that describes life today. Take this one from *Henry IV Part 2*:

Upon my tongues continual slanders ride, the which in every language I pronounce, stuffing the ears of men with false reports.

This could well be a description of the former US President Donald Trump, or the current Russian President Putin. It is exactly relevant to debates about 'fake news' and the dangers of the 'dark web' which propagates falsehoods on many issues. Microbiologist Siouxsie Wiles has recently warned of 'The Disinformation Dozen' and why internet platforms must act on twelve leading online anti-vaxxers.

A contemporary of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, once wrote 'Shakespeare's work was not of an age but for all time.' We still use phrases like 'That's seen better days', a direct Shakespearean quote from *As you like it*, or 'You have to be cruel to be kind' from *Hamlet* or 'What's done is done', *Macbeth*, and 'All that glitters is not gold' from *The Merchant of Venice*.

We now wait to see how schools will tackle their future challenges. A quick sprint back to Shakespeare's plays might just be useful. After all, it is said characters in *A Game of Thrones* by George R.R. Martin are loosely based on Lady Macbeth (Cersei Lannister), Falstaff (King Robert Baratheon) and Iago (Littlefinger). If schools can draw on the great bard and stimulate student imagination like George R.R. Martin did, then we will certainly have an exciting future for education.

... **STORIES MATTER.**  
They help us **REMEMBER**  
the past and **LEARN**, so  
we don't repeat mistakes.  
The past also **INSPIRES**  
**AND MOTIVATES** us.

# PRESIDENT'S PEN

## Creating a culture of collaboration

**Cherie Taylor-Patel** NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION



**THE NEW ZEALAND** education system is one of the most devolved in the world. At a time when other jurisdictions developed more layers of education organisation, New Zealand moved to fewer – national, regional and local levels. The current Te Mahau MOE restructure will add a fourth layer between the national and regional levels, to serve our 2,500 schools.

At a national level, the Ministry of Education, 'ITE' providers, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa, Sector Groups, NZSTA, the unions and external PLD providers, all support education. How they do this is influenced by organisational culture, competition for resource, funding mechanisms and political decision-making. Joint projects are developed when agendas align, but organisational priorities ensure most work on individual tracks, running in parallel.

Regional offices implement a mix of national, regional and local initiatives. Information is communicated and collected, but there is little opportunity to use the expertise that lies within each group for joint projects to thrive.

Similarly, since 1989 individualism has underpinned the role of the principal. Principals develop and lead the school charter, curriculum priorities and pedagogical practices, informed by the community they serve. Schools have evolved within a culture of competition, reinforced by funding mechanisms linked to schools' roll size.

Education research tells us we have more within-school differences in teaching practice than there is between schools. Some schools have schoolwide pedagogical practices, while other schools do not. In the secondary system, subject teachers use different teaching strategies that have evolved from different disciplines. Consequently, learning experiences vary.

My question is, how do we strengthen collaborative capacity at each level of our system and better support students?

### Time for a reset

Through Covid, traditional ways of working were abandoned. National and regional offices collaborated to share information, procure resources and problem solve. To accommodate home and school learning, teachers and whānau collaborated in new and different ways.

This was a significant paradigm shift from individualism to collaboration. At every level, we metaphorically met at the train station, left our individual tracks, linked up carriages, combined our engine capacity, pulled together and took the best track forward, making sure no one was left behind.

### Collaboration – more than just sharing

Collaboration is joint inquiry, where information is shared and

then used to develop new learning, new understanding and better solutions and outcomes.

It requires:

- A. Time for people to share their views,
- B. Time to reflect upon what has been shared, and then
- C. Time to jointly construct something new, based upon the combined contributions of the group/s.

Effective collaboration is when the outcome of the joint work is greater than the sum of the parts. It is based upon a distributed leadership model, where all contributions are valued and heard. Decision-making through the process is shared, transparent and owned by all the participants. Trust is built as new ways of working are developed, tested, reviewed and improved in an open-ended cycle of continuous improvement.



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## Collaborative change – harnessing our collective potential

At a national level, there are encouraging signs that new systems of communication established during Covid will be retained. This year our Ministers have linked with the sector through Zoom and regional meetings, sharing their priorities and workstreams. In the process of appointing new Leadership Advisors, principals were invited to engage in Zoom breakout rooms, to share their thinking about how these new roles could best support them. The recent Zoom webinar on the 'Professional Growth Cycle', involving NZPF, NZEI and the Teaching Council of Aotearoa, used collective expertise to support principals setting up appraisal processes for 2023.

Collaboration results in the best outcomes and we can continue this practice over the next 3–5 years as we work through the Curriculum Refresh process and as we re-engage learners lost through Covid. We could participate in a collaborative inquiry process, linking leaders from across the system. These projects could be led by the newly appointed Leadership Advisors and Curriculum Advisors. More agile schooling systems already do

this. They quickly 'turn data and evidence to practical experimentation and innovation, with the right experts, the right resources, and the right supports, at the right time, to make a practical difference for learners/ākonga' (Our Schooling Future; Stronger Together, 2018, Pg 17).

At a local level, many school leaders already work with Kahui ako colleagues and network partners. New collaborative partnerships are being created through changes to the appraisal process, through links with community groups, universities and iwi groups.

Finally, we want to enrich our students' learning by drawing on the experts in our local communities. We want opportunities and time to collaborate with teachers, students and whānau, to give our students the best possible education.

As individuals, we can do so much. In collaboration with others, we can do so much more for all ākonga in Aotearoa.

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# HAPPY BIRTHDAY NZPF!

Liz Hawes



**SUNBEAMS STRUCK THE** watery surface sending sparkly eruptions across the inner harbour. Mooring ropes held firm, as gentle waves lulled the rows of tethered vessels. Wellington had unexpectedly turned on a warm and windless Spring day!

Tranquility on the wharf broke soon enough with the arrival of fifty NZPF life members, former presidents, award winners and current executive members. They drifted noisily into Wellington's iconic 'Shed Five', to celebrate a birthday.

NZPF had turned 40. Flutes of bubbly and canape platters competed with nostalgic chatter. Old friendships were re-kindled, stories shared and promises of future catchups pledged. Inside, the living 40-year history of NZPF sat down to lunch.

Celebrations began with former president and life member, Geoff Lovegrove, presenting a potted history. He astonished newcomers with tales of sacrifice and dedication that seemed too excessive to be real. These included the remarkable tale of Tom Brown, one of

NZPF's founding members. Tom recognized that if the concept of a National Federation of school principals was to take off, principals would need to debate the idea. That meant travelling the country to meet up – but there were no funds. Tom's answer to that challenge was to mortgage his own home. 'That is how much Tom was invested in creating a National Federation to support his colleagues,' said Geoff.

'Momentum,' he said, 'was driven by the idea that a national organization of principals could generate much needed PLD for principals, connect principals nationally, link different levels of education seamlessly, and provide opportunities for aspiring principals to learn what would be required of them in the role of principal.'

He explained why the entity 'Federation' was chosen over 'Association'. 'The notion of Federation,' he said, 'encompassed all, including small, isolated, and rural schools where principals not only led their schools, but also taught. It was an inspired choice, as post the *Tomorrow's Schools* policy of the late 1980s,

schools became even more diverse. The second reason was to provide a mechanism for principals, of all education levels, to interact nationally.'

Like so many organisations, Geoff explained, NZPF was established through the hard graft of a group of enthusiasts. Standouts included the late Ian Payne, who had earlier visited and studied a North American Principals' Federation. He shared the merits of that example, alongside his own ideas and energetic aspirations. The late Ross Whimp organized a national

tour to recruit support for establishing NZPF; Jock Spence from Northland introduced the notion of political influence and principals having a national say in educational policy. Jack Archibald, the principal of the North Shore Teachers' College threw his weight and influence behind the idea and the late Don Le Prou and longtime editor of *NZ Principal* magazine, Ken Morris, rallied the Waikato principals. The role of the Federation would be purely for the



Roll call for the 40th birthday

professional betterment of principals and would have reach from the pre-school to the Technical Institute, as endorsed by Minister of Education, Merv Wellington at the 1982 inaugural conference. 'The Minister wholeheartedly supported the establishment of NZPF,' said Geoff, 'and offered his on-going support.'

Later, during that inauguration conference, Tom Brown was popularly elected as NZPF's first President. Today the membership includes over 8 per cent of all eligible principals. Key to the success of the organization over the years, Geoff told his audience, has been a focus on the professional as well as the social interactions of the subsequent executive committees. To be successful, he said, requires common purpose, positive relationships, mutual confidence, and co-operation. That included the support of partners and spouses.

He noted the early connections made with Australian colleagues through the Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA), and said that by 1983, two NZPF delegates were dispatched to attend the APPA conference in Sydney. This, he said, led

to broader engagement with the fledgling International Confederation of Principals (ICP). It was a short few years later that NZPF began its involvement with New Zealand business sponsorship, with Air New Zealand and Avis Rental Cars featuring prominently. Sponsorships boosted NZPF's financial security and later fostered many long-term partnerships with businesses such as Furnware and Scholastic that persist today.

Not only was NZPF developing a strong financial base, but to support the ICP, NZPF held a hugely successful international conference in Auckland, the profits from which gave ICP its first real injection of funds. Further, said Geoff, NZPF had the honour of seeing one of their own, Nola Hambleton, elected President of ICP – the first woman and the first New Zealand ICP President. 'These were very proud moments,' he said, 'which made us feel we were now all members of a global community of educators.'

Dozens of those attending the party showed keenness to share their own memories and they got their chance at various points during the luncheon. The stories ranged from shenanigans following executive meetings – like racing down Invercargill streets late at night hurdling parking meters (I still struggle to believe Pat Newman was one of that group ...) to wild goats mounting car bonnets in the dark outback roads of Gisborne following a regional principals' gathering (I can believe this one because Perry Rush is a magnet for the bizarre), to the special friendships formed which have endured over many years.

Many mentioned the generous mentoring they received from those early NZPF members which in turn led them to stand for the executive later in their careers. As former NZPF president, Judy Hannah, said, 'John Boyens and John Fleming took me under their wing and encouraged me to stand for NZPF.'

Iain Taylor similarly referred to the coaching and mentoring he received from Tom Brown as a first-year teacher, and the encouragement from John Fleming later, to join NZPF. Once on the executive committee of NZPF Iain said he was well supported by Nola Hambleton, Judy Hannah and Russel Young. He was delighted to see all three were present so he could thank them personally.

Madeleine East, Ernie Butveld, Phil Harding, Peter Simpson, Paul Drummond and Whetu Cormick all had their say, covering the establishment of the NZPF Moot, the early ICP conference in NZ, the birth of PB4L, national standards sagas, the importance of adhering to NZPF values, the Christchurch earthquake response, battles with the structure of Kahui Ako, the *Tomorrow's Schools Review* and the birth of the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum. All concluded that the greatest value was the PLD they experienced just from being a member of the executive, the close relationships built with

sector heads, Ministers and their own executive members and the tight friendships that developed, grew and endured. It may be summed up, as Paul Drummond said as Fun, Frankness and Friendship.

Paddy Ford talked about the importance of the NZPF conferences which principals flocked to because they were such great quality PLD in an environment where PLD was scarce. A memorable moment, he said, was his first TV interview as president. With his makeup applied and interview concluded he headed to the supermarket – where people kept staring at him. He didn't realise that the TV makeup had made his face bright orange!

Nola Hambleton reminded the gathering of the huge influence of the Auckland Primary Principals' Association in establishing NZPF. 'Today,' she said, 'we have three former presidents from Central Otago. Forty years ago, the executive members were all from Auckland bar one.' She also talked of her ICP days, such as travelling to Israel and taking a photo of Geoff Lovegrove floating in the Dead Sea. 'I still have that photo,' she taunted Geoff.

Barry Hambleton talked about his early days on the executive and with Russel Young the treasurer, starting up the first sponsorship deals with Air NZ and Avis rental cars. These were followed by a stable of sponsors, many of whom remain with NZPF today.

Denise Torrey talked of the political battles she had with then Minister Hekia Parata back in 2015. The goal was to establish a Principal Leadership Advisory (PLA) Service. Well known for her tenacity, Denise was not backing off and finally Minister Parata gave in saying, 'Alright then, you can have your PLAs, now be off!'

Russel Young shared his experience of Government relations during his time and being sponsored to go to Melbourne to investigate funding mechanisms for special education. 'I wrote up all the interviews and presented the paper to Minister Lockwood Smith, who then said it would go to the new Minister of Education, Wyatt Creech. We were delighted because Minister Creech allocated \$27million – then the Government changed and with it went the \$27million!' Similar close relationships were later built with Associate Minister Leanne Dalziel resulting in the \$9million Elective Programmes Fund. 'We had become a trusted professional organization and it helped that we had no union connections,' he said.

President Cherie Taylor-Patel summed up the memories of the gathering just in time to call on the eldest present (Russel Young) and youngest (Iain Taylor) to cut the cake. Not to be outdone, the present and former female presidents got in on the act and made their special mark on the occasion with a slice of their own!

Happy Birthday, NZPF. Welcome to middle-age.



The oldest in the room (Russel Young) and the youngest (Iain Taylor) cut the birthday cake



# HOW TO HAVE A BLAST TEACHING STEM

The Wonder Project Rocket Challenge continues to get Kiwi kids excited about STEM, and it's set to blast off in Term 1 and 2 for the first time ever in 2023. The free schools programme seamlessly blends the thrill of launching rockets with STEM learning, increasing teacher and student confidence in STEM along the way.

The Wonder Project Rocket Challenge, powered by Callaghan Innovation, will run in both Term 1 and Term 2 in 2023, with enough free kits to support 800 classes to inspire rangatahi with STEM. Almost 20,000 students in 545 classes across Aotearoa participated in the challenge last year, effortlessly reciting Newton's Laws of Motion while they designed, built, and launched their own water rockets.

By connecting classes with volunteer STEM industry professionals, as well as supplying teaching resources, student resources, and a challenge kit for free, the Wonder Project supports schools to teach STEM with confidence. In fact, over 90% of teachers consistently report that their confidence in teaching STEM increases after doing the Rocket Challenge:

"[The Rocket Challenge] has inspired and given me confidence to teach in subjects that are not my strongest, for example science and technology" says a teacher from Ōtaki College.

Feedback on last year's challenge was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting that the opportunity to deliver a fun and dynamic hands-on learning challenge has not only kept students engaged with STEM, but also made the experience teaching STEM more enjoyable. And the statistics speak for themselves:

- 90% of teachers and 86% of students said they would do it again
- 85% of students were fairly or completely engaged in the learning
- 54% of students were more interested in STEM jobs after the challenge.

"[The Rocket Challenge] was one of my favourite units of work over my teaching career thus far" says a teacher from Raumati Beach School.

Wonder Project challenges are designed to be accessible for kids from all backgrounds to help bridge the gap of women, Māori and Pasifika working in STEM fields. Everyone that signs up for the Rocket Challenge in 2023 will have the option of using student activities in English, or te reo Māori, so all schools across Aotearoa can have a blast learning STEM.

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# FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH

Liz Hawes

A **CHILDREN'S HEALTH** report (TV1 News, 22 June 2022) uncovered alarming rates of poor dental health for 40 per cent of our country's five-year-olds. The research was undertaken by 'Cure Kids', New Zealand's largest charitable funder of medical and scientific research for children's health. The report testifies that, '... it partnered with the Paediatric Society of New Zealand, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and the New Zealand Child and Youth Epidemiology Service at the University of Otago, to analyse data for the report.'

The TV1 news report read, 'Data from 2019 revealed that 41% of five-year-olds had evidence of tooth decay, that rates of tooth decay and hospitalisation were consistently the highest for Māori and Pacific Island children, and those living in the most deprived areas had three times the number of tooth extractions as those in the least deprived areas.'

The report also found rates of hospitalisations for children with serious dental decay had increased steadily since 2000, despite average rates of decay declining overall.

The research also examined other health markers in children and prompted the Children's Commissioner, Frances Eivers, to say, 'On many measures, New Zealand is currently one of the worst places in the developed world to be a child.'

Harsh words indeed from our Children's Commissioner. It is not that we don't know child poverty exists, it is alarming that it has become so pervasive. Societal inequities are now feasting on a generation's future.

Whilst poverty undoubtedly influences the dental health of our young ones, there is another factor one might loosely call, a 'hangover from the past' that deters families from seeking dental care. *The Listener*, 3 July, 2021, captured the history of New Zealand's publicly funded school dental service well. The article was entitled 'Tales of the Murder house', a chilling encapsulation. The article reveals that in New Zealand, the school dental service began 100 years ago. We were the first country in the world to establish free school dental care. All medium to large schools

boasted a dental clinic, staffed by a fully qualified dental nurse. If your school was too small to have a clinic, you were ushered off to a nearby school that did. Every child received an annual check up and short of orthodontic specialist procedures, for which you were sent to a dentist, the dental nurse took care of children's oral health needs. From my own personal experience, the nurse would also give you unequivocal instructions on how to brush

your teeth and sometimes your visit might include a spontaneous 'lecture in nutrition' to dissuade you from eating sweets.

So why the 'Murder House'? In part, dental clinics earned this label from the outdated tools that equipped the clinics and the tendency of nurses to 'drill and fill', as the *Listener* article explained. Children had to endure the slow, belt-driven, 'pedal power' treadle drills operated by our dental nurses even though by 1949, a Kiwi dentist had invented the high-speed drill. They also had very low dosage and largely ineffective anaesthetic for tooth extractions and nurses were not allowed to use the nerve blocks commonly used by dental nurses in Australia, Canada and other countries. It was argued that the risks of new equipment like the high-speed drill and nerve blockers were too high for our dental nurses who were not trained in their use.

Nurses in turn were instructed to fill even the tiniest of cavities with the silver and mercury filling compound,

later found to be a potent neurotoxin. The logic behind this practice was to prevent future decay and extractions but is now seen as somewhat misguided reasoning.

Reports from youngsters of the time show that the expectation of a visit to the dental nurse was associated with high anxiety and dread. Whether every child's dental visit was a highly painful experience is doubtful, but this fear and loathing of the dental clinic became embedded in the psyche of several generations of Kiwi kids. Despite the horror stories, the school dental nurses performed an important function, keeping check on the dental health of our nation's children. There's something to be said for a dental service that was free, compulsory, and regular.



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School Dental Clinics were phased out in the 1990s, mainly because the buildings had not been maintained and the costs of upgrading equipment was prohibitive. Instead, the Government would fund dental care, through contracts with local District Health Boards (DHBs), for children up to secondary school age, and later up to age eighteen. Children and young people would attend their own family dentist for free treatment.

We may well ask, if dental care for our young people is free up to age 18, why are they not regularly attending their dentist? The answer is multifaceted. For many youngsters, it is not easy to access the dentist without a parent taking a day off work to get them there. For others, dental health is not top of mind given the complexities of some families, especially those living in poverty or who are low paid shift workers or the working poor. We now see the results of the shift from attending the dental clinic at school to attending your own private dentist in town. It means 40 per cent of five-year-olds suffer tooth decay and it is worse if you are Māori or a Pacific Islander.

One excellent answer to this dilemma is to have mobile dental units setting up on school grounds, only this time, the dental units would have state of the art equipment. That is the concept *Dental Planet* has adopted. Alfred Rico, general manager of *Dental Planet* took me to visit two of their mobile units. One was operating out of Glendowie College carpark in Auckland's Eastern suburbs and the other was on the school grounds of a Glen Eden Kura Kaupapa Māori School in South Auckland. I spoke to some of the students attending the service.

Rogan, at Glendowie College, told me that year 13 students, such as himself, have their dental treatment in the first term of school, '... so that the dental visit doesn't interfere with assessments.' He was pleased to attend the mobile unit because it meant his teeth were checked and x-rayed every year and it was all painless enough. More importantly, it all occurred at school and didn't disrupt his learning.

Another Glendowie student, waiting for his check-up, told me a similar story. He probably wouldn't be getting his teeth checked if he had to go to his own dentist, because of the time to get there and back. He



was enrolled with the mobile dental unit because it was right here on the school grounds, and he could have his check up during school hours.

The key to the popularity of the Glendowie College mobile dental clinic was the connection with the school. Through the relationships built up with the school *Dental Planet* has a good understanding of the students' schedules, the school understands what *Dental Planet* is trying to achieve for the students' dental health, and they work together in partnership.

In the South Auckland Kura, the two dental chairs in the mobile unit were both occupied, and more students were waiting their turn. The Oral Health Therapists (OHTs) working on the students' teeth engaged easily with the students, some of whom were concerned about how they would continue with their dental health once they were out of school and over 18 years old.

'It is so important to have these students' teeth in the very best condition possible,' said Patrick, one of the Dental Assistants, 'because once they have left school, they might not see a dentist again for a very long time.'

Patrick, of Pacific Island descent, joined the mobile unit team straight out of school. He has been trained by *Dental Planet* to be a Dental Assistant which includes a yearlong course. *Dental Planet* paid his fees. He would now love to continue to train as an OHT, and perhaps even win a scholarship to train as a dentist one day. 'I love this work,' he says, 'and just want to go on, learn more and one day become a dentist,' he said. '*Dental Planet* has given me the start to a great job, and I want to keep going.'

Alfred explained that through their careers programme, they want to encourage especially Māori and Pacific Island secondary students to make dentistry their chosen profession. To achieve this goal, they work alongside careers advisors in schools and the 'Gateway' programme, which provides students with structured workplace learning across a range of industries while they continue to study at school. By giving interested students a taste of dentistry, they have managed to attract those like Patrick, to train with them.

Whilst they currently offer five full scholarships a year for OHT training and Hygienist training, they want to



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build on that. They want to offer many more scholarships and include support for a full dentistry degree for some of those who aspire to be fully qualified dentists.

The *Dental Planet* team's interest in improving dental health is not limited to the students, they also offer free annual hygienist appointments for the school staff and 10 per cent discount on any dentistry work a staff member requires. Further, they encourage the students to bring their parents to the local *Dental Planet* Surgeries, where they will be assisted in accessing any dental health subsidy they are entitled to.

The mobile service so far reaches only secondary schools, although Alfred assures me the company is very keen to extend their services to primary and middle schools as well. They are a new company and so far, operate mobile clinics and dental surgeries in Auckland and mobile units in the Waikato. They are aware of the inequities in dental care and that is why they have chosen to set up mobile units initially in South Auckland. They also work alongside Māori Health providers to encourage whānau to 'take the chair' and have their teeth checked too. In some cases, the Māori Health providers cover the costs of dental care for their people so that there is no financial barrier to accessing the oral treatment they need.

'We have our own surgeries in South Auckland but not yet in the Waikato. For now, staff of Waikato schools are treated in the mobile units, just like the students,' explained Rico.

Education is just as important as dental treatment for the *Dental Planet* team. 'We ask schools to give us some of their assembly time to educate students in how to take care of their

own teeth better,' says Alfred. 'This is part of our programme to prevent teeth developing decay in the first place,' he said.

Thinking to the future, the *Dental Planet* team is already looking to acquire further agreements with the Auckland, Waitemata and Counties Manukau DHBs to help primary and intermediate aged students, and to expand services in the Waikato region. The team also recognise that adults could benefit from having mobile dental units in their communities. 'Not all people have access to our dental surgeries or any other dental surgeries,' says Rico. 'That is where our mobile units are so useful because we can take our services to the people.'

The *Dental Planet* team may not yet be the complete alternative to the free, compulsory, regular dental service every school aged child once had in Aotearoa New Zealand, but they are a responsive, modern, mobile dental health service, meeting the needs of many thousands of young people today, at least in the South Auckland and Waikato regions.



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# COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE

## How principals can strengthen their schools to cope with challenge and change

**Dr Denise Quinlan** CO-FOUNDER, NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE



### **'Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini'**

**THE PANDEMIC YEARS** have presented Principals with enormous and ongoing challenges. It wouldn't be surprising if you were sick and tired of 'the R word'. Exhortations to 'be resilient', focusing exclusively on the individual, sound suspiciously like 'take a concrete pill and harden up'. They also miss an important part of the picture – the fact that resilience grows between us as well as within us. Collective resilience grows in teams and schools where you are known as a person and cared for, where you have each other's back, and are committed to helping each other.

Far from becoming an irrelevant luxury in pandemic times, the wellbeing and resilience agenda remains essential and integral to surviving and thriving. In this article I've distilled the lessons from schools that have coped well through the pandemic and the research behind their approach. Not surprisingly, the seeds of their success were planted several years before 2020 and read like a charter for whole-school wellbeing. I hope this article will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on the good work you are already doing in your school as well as offering some further ideas to support your teams.

### **What is resilience and why does it matter?**

Resilience is typically defined as your ability to withstand and recover, sometimes over time, from challenge. First, let's acknowledge the fact that resilience is not being indomitable or immune to challenge. It's about being bent but not broken by challenge. It matters that you are aware of, and can acknowledge when challenge has brought you, if not to your knees, perhaps to a place of irritability, cynicism, and ineffectiveness. Those characteristic signs of burnout.

Secondly, resilience is influenced from inside *and* out. Your personal resilience is influenced by how you think and act. It's also supported by connections to culture and identity. Most of us are aware of this, but less attention has been paid to the fact that resilience is also influenced by the context in which you operate. Which means that resilience is a collective capacity as well as individual: it grows between us as well as within us, a fact that has had insufficient attention over the past few years. Not having a supportive work context is an important factor driving burnout at work, and through 2022 has been fuelling what's known as 'the great resignation', particularly in the USA and further afield. Millions of workers have chosen to leave toxic workplaces and bosses rather than return after pandemic lockdowns and working from home.

### **Collective resilience**

Collective resilience is influenced by the quality of the connections that shape the environments in which you operate – whether that's work, home or play. It is the outcome we achieve when we build schools and communities that enable belonging and inclusion; where people feel safe to contribute, to learn and to make mistakes; where it's safe to challenge, express alternative viewpoints, to innovate and change. This isn't news to most of us, but somehow, over the years, other things have made it to the top of the priority list – computer systems, curriculum changes, staffing or timetabling challenges . . . All of which are important, but people, not equipment and scheduling are ultimately what make our schools.

### **How can we build collective resilience?**

Fortunately, there are many ways to build collective resilience. Some of the approaches advocated by researchers over the years include: social capital; psychological capital; cultural responsiveness and cultural sustainability; belonging and inclusion; diversity, equity and inclusion; and psychological safety. Are you surprised by the sheer number of approaches to developing the belonging and inclusion essential for collective resilience? Perhaps researchers over past decades have been trying to get leaders' attention. Hoping the next concept might finally convince organisations (including schools) that paying attention to the humanity of the people we work and interact with is a worthwhile endeavour.

The evidence from these approaches makes quite a heap of reading but the results are clear: teams do better when members feel they belong, can express their views, are safe to contribute, learn and make mistakes. This applies whether you're operating in a financial tech company or a small rural school. Staff members are less likely to burn out, and more likely to have higher engagement, stay in their jobs, and perform at a higher level.

### **What can you do?**

Every school in New Zealand is aware of strategies to build belonging and inclusion, but not all have built psychological safety for both students and staff. This kind of change is achievable only when it's baked into the system, an integral part of how we function.

That's why, at the New Zealand Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience, we believe successful change occurs when it's baked into existing work routines. The following strategies to build collective resilience are not complex. To succeed, however, they



need to be designed and implemented to fit with your school context, and to become part of the way you operate.

Research demonstrates that psychological safety grows when work routines:

- **Enable people to get know other team members as people** – shown to increase inter-personal generosity and flexibility.
- **Connect people to the positive impact of their work on others** – shown to increase motivation to help others.
- **Enable people to help each other** – a powerful tool for building a culture of inter-personal helping.
- **Foster collective gratitude by affirming each other's contributions** – leading to more information sharing, kindness, and 'high quality connections'.
- **Provide more reward for collective than individual behaviours** – shown to increase mutual reliance and helping behaviours.

Where we've seen schools create supportive environments, we've witnessed the building of collective resilience across the community, making it easier for the people in that community to be more personally resilient. These resilient communities are not mythical or perfect, but do in fact exist around us. Here we share their stories to illustrate and inspire.

### **Waimairi-iri Kāhui Ako: A case study of collective resilience**

Principal Matt Bateman of Burnside Primary is a co-leader of Waimairi-iri Kāhui Ako in Ōtautahi Christchurch along with Raewyn Saunders, Principal of Fendalton Open Air School and Eddie Norgate, Principal of Cobham Intermediate. The long-term commitment and practice of these educational leaders can best be characterised as 'building a school culture of caring, connection, collaboration, and celebration'. While this is clearly a long-term commitment, their story includes practical strategies and ideas school leaders can readily implement to support staff, student, and community resilience.

### **Caring – building a culture of caring and support**

Every school's contribution to this Kāhui Ako has been valued from the outset. Smaller primary schools that might have lacked curriculum expertise or deeper pockets have been valued for their cultural leadership and support for the different cultural and ethnic communities across the Kāhui Ako. When a school knows their contribution will be valued, opportunities to share its knowledge and support provided, it becomes easier for schools to engage and contribute to a Kāhui Ako. It helps them move beyond the question, 'what's in it for me?' to also ask, 'how can we contribute?'; thereby enabling genuine community to develop.

Teachers and individual school leads knew they were valued last year when the Kāhui Ako leadership said, 'don't organise relief teachers and come to the meeting, we're coming to you – with coffee and cake'. Feeling the pulse of their schools and knowing when teachers need support, or a boost, enables the leadership to take supportive action when needed. When the leadership visits each school during this stressful period, the response is 'thanks for coming to me, this has done more for my wellbeing than attending a meeting ever could'.

A recent Staff Only Day was used to demonstrate to staff that prioritising time for wellbeing was important. After one hour on wellbeing and resilience, the rest of the day was dedicated to

recreation pursuits. How did they make sure the activities met teacher need and were therefore actually taken up? The design of the day was handed over to teachers, with a broad input to ensure the widest variety of interests and activities were provided for. The result? Super high attendance, and some feedback on how to make it even better next time.

### **Connecting – no one is left isolated or alone**

Connecting students to their cultural identities, connecting whānau to the school and to each other, connecting leadership across schools, and connecting interest groups across the Kāhui Ako. This cluster of schools brings people together in groups that are relevant and supportive. Ongoing learning groups include new teachers, SENCOs, teachers of Māori, teachers of digital technology, teachers of the new NZ history curriculum. By creating multiple ways to bring people together over their shared interests and needs, this community has built trust and a sense of getting to know each other as people. They've been continuously willing to learn about each other, and to be known. The ability to drop the 'strong leader façade' has potentially been accelerated by working together through extremely challenging times – namely the recovery and rebuild following the earthquakes that devastated the greater Christchurch area in 2010–14. They have since had to support each other through fire, flood, and a devastating terrorist attack. After the Mosque attacks in 2019, schools sent relieving teachers to badly affected schools within the Kāhui Ako.

### **Collaborating – together we are stronger**

A hard job shared becomes easier and more gets done. This principle has been applied throughout the Kāhui Ako to everything from leadership, through helping students and their families connect to their cultural identity, to finding the experts to take on aspects of the Ministry of Education's mandated Curriculum Refresh and to tackle the challenges of developing teaching for the NZ History curriculum.

Leadership is shared between three Principals in the Kāhui Ako on a rotating basis. As one leader exits, the new incumbent is mentored by two experienced leaders. Every school leader knows they will have a turn leading the group, with succession planning built into the model.

Cultural leadership in the Kāhui Ako doesn't have to come from the largest school. Instead, it comes from a diverse primary school whose experience and success has been embraced by the group. The strengths of each school are valued and able to make a valuable contribution. When Burnside Primary hosted iwi and Pacific Island representatives to connect their community to their cultures, students from other schools were invited too. Learning about each other's strengths has enabled these schools to form an effective division of labour to complete the required Curriculum refresh and be ready to teach the new NZ History curriculum – a powerful example of enabling support to lift morale for educators who have been through a challenging few years.

### **Celebrating – other people's successes**

In this wider school community, people are regularly celebrated and acknowledged. That's common enough within schools, but here, the success of the diverse leadership team of one school was celebrated recently. Celebrating a team of very different personalities, with different styles was a deliberate choice. It was a reminder that diversity can work in leadership too,

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encouraging other schools to consider how they could learn from this approach.

Studies highlight how the celebration of others' successes is an important factor in building trust. When staff see their success being celebrated and appreciated, rather than envied or

resented by their colleagues, this builds trust. Trust is an essential ingredient in psychological safety, and a culture of helping each other.

### Cultural sustainability

When an approach is baked into the system it becomes sustainable. That is exactly the approach this Kāhui Ako has taken to valuing and supporting the cultural identity of its students, staff, and community. Paying attention to culture and identity is now an integral part of how this group has committed to operate. One recent example from Burnside Primary demonstrates how this commitment to cultural sustainability is built on foundations of caring, connection, collaboration, and celebration.

In September of this year Burnside Primary School hosted 'Way Finder', 'Night Sky', and 'Navigation' sessions in an inflatable planetarium at the school. By day, students were able to programme two Mars rovers to cross a crater-field, while a telescope-station focused on the sun, allowing viewers to see solar flares, spots, and constant activity on a screen next to the telescope. In the evenings, Board of Trustees and community took part in sessions after a pot-luck meal together.

As well as learning about the science, Matt describes these sessions as 'giving everyone a chance to reconnect with who they are, and where they come from, and to do this through the stars.' He adds, 'many of our cultures have a rich astronomical history, which they have personally lost, but this "ancient" knowledge really resonated with them. Our Northern hemisphere cultures, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Italian and many more, were all able to reconnect to another part of "who they are" and to celebrate their culture. Our Southern Hemisphere Polynesian cultures, Samoan, Tahitian, Hawaiian, and Māori felt elevated by learning more about their cultures' exceptional navigational journeys. All through the night sky.' Never one to miss an opportunity to embed learning in culture, Matt has encouraged the school's major cultures to create a Cultural Festival item with a star or constellation theme.

Since the start of 2020, educators in New Zealand and around the world have provided practical, emotional and education support to students and their families, pivoted to online and hybrid learning, and become experts in viral hygiene and public health requirements, all whilst dealing with their own challenges at home and worrying about their own families. If ever a group of people deserved to turn the light of caring and connection inwards to support each other, it is our educators. Doing so begins with valuing the time we so often try to squeeze out of busy agendas – the time where we connect as people, as humans who have cherished lives beyond the school gates, and work to make each other feel seen, valued, and supported.

(You can listen to School Principal Matt Bateman's interview with Denise on her awardwinning podcast, Bringing Wellbeing To Life). {<https://nziwr.co.nz/category/education/>}

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Denise Quinlan is co-Founder of the New Zealand Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience, creator of practical, teacher-friendly online wellbeing programmes for schools, and the author of the Educators'

### FREE RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

Principals and teachers have told us that the challenges of the past few years have depleted wellbeing and resilience, leaving them more in need of support, but with less time to access it. The New Zealand Institute of Wellbeing & Resilience (NZIWR) would like to share two wellbeing resources: one for educators personally, and one designed to support a wholeschool approach to wellbeing.

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Guide to Whole-school Wellbeing. Denise has worked with thousands of educators throughout NZ and around the world. Denise's work was recognised in 2021 with the International Positive Psychology Association's Positive Education Practitioner Impact Award, received with her co-Founder at NZIWR. This award cited the ground-breaking work she has done in taking wellbeing to scale through wellbeing for Communities of Practice and advocating for culturally responsive practice as part of wellbeing. Her concern for educator wellbeing led to the creation of Teacher Boost in 2022, a free online community dedicated to supporting wellbeing and resilience. Denise's awardwinning podcast, Bringing Wellbeing to Life, explores wellbeing topics with leading researchers and practitioners from around the world.

# MOTAT'S EDUCATORS ARE HELPING TAMARIKI SOLVE TODAY'S PROBLEMS WITH TOMORROW'S INNOVATIONS

MOTAT and Samsung have been collaborating to promote the *Solve for Tomorrow* competition for two consecutive years now. The competition challenges school-aged children to solve a problem with an innovative solution. In return, first and second-place winners get cash and Samsung tech for their school to foster further STEAM education.

This year's winners were Howick College students Eva Malex, Htet Waiyan, Lennox Dilworth, and Kurt Marshall, who created a "Non-Invasive Diabetics Device," from scratch, which aimed to provide a more practical and less invasive way for diabetics to measure their glucose levels.

Second place was awarded to a group of students from Mount Richmond Special School, for their idea *Kitchen Tools Reimagined*. The group designed disability-friendly kitchen utensils which allow people of all abilities to participate in food preparation activities.

Both MOTAT and SAMSUNG understand the need to engage tamariki in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, Mathematics) so ensuring year-round support is available to schools that enter the competition is critical.

It all begins with MOTAT's mission: Inspire the innovators of tomorrow. The Museum's team of highly skilled educators create

lessons and materials for students and their Kaiako who are thinking of entering *Solve for Tomorrow*. This support provides comprehensive education and guidance for tamariki who are creating their own innovations.

MOTAT supports schools who are wanting to enter *Solve for Tomorrow* with:

- Webinars throughout the year for teachers to discuss the marking rubric for the competition to better understand how they can help guide their students.
- The *Life Hack!* programme gives students a taster of the design thinking process to ensure they are confident to begin the journey. During the *Life Hack!* session, students are supported through the five-stage iterative process to solve an identified problem.
- MOTAT STEAM Cells (portable education trailers) are also used to share the competition information with students and schools, and to answer any quick questions either may have.
- Prejudging – as part of the judging, MOTAT is involved in giving students feedback on their proposal part way through the competition time, so that they can resubmit a stronger entry.



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Liz Hawes EDITOR

Ian Chadderton, PhotoLife PHOTOGRAPHY

**CHRISTCHURCH EARNS ITS** title as ‘Garden City’ in the Spring. In the central city, carpets of daffodils and bluebells etch out the grassy edges of the vast Hagley Park and cherry blossom trees mark the perimeter of the avenues from which the city spreads. The riverside cafes and restaurants buzz with joy as locals and visitors delight in both indoor ambiance and outdoor fresh Spring air.

It is a youthful city, having sprung from the wreckage of the 2011 earthquakes, with renewed energy and imagination. It is acutely aware of preserving its heritage and at the same time rebuilding the city anew. In an inner-city precinct, New Regent Street, with its Spanish Mission architecture, has been restored to its 1930s charm. Pedestrian only access attracts bustling café crowds and retail shoppers, while a stone’s throw away the brand new, recently completed landmark, Te Pae Conference Centre, draws on both environmental features and modern architecture in its stunning design, creating a pleasing, functional asset for the city. It is also the venue for NZPF’s 2022 annual conference.

A thousand school principals, exhibitors and business partners gathered at Te Pae, to be welcomed by the tangata whenua of the city and entertained by the students of Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kura Whakapūmau i te Reo Tūturu ki Waitaha.

As is tradition, the **Minister of Education, Hon Chris Hipkins**, opened the conference with three acknowledgements. First, to celebrate Māori Language week, secondly, to mark the recent passing of our Head of State, Queen Elizabeth II and thirdly to acknowledge the Covid disruptions of the last three years.

He congratulated principals on the way they adapted schooling to the Covid lockdowns and partial lockdowns providing home learning and hybrid learning for the nation’s young people. He thanked them for their incredible efforts saying:

‘You rose to the challenges, and we look forward to a much more settled 2023.’

He then looked back to 2017 and explained how his government had addressed challenges they inherited. The population had grown by half a million, twice as fast as ever before, while there had been no new schools since 2008. That meant catch-up. A decade of national standards had narrowed the curriculum. With national standards gone, a new focus on curriculum began. There were also 30 years of growing inequality to address. Decile funding played a part in that, he explained, and that would go too.

With the 2017 Kōrero Mātauranga, the uppermost issue was student wellbeing, which became the priority, as the reform agenda got underway. Alongside wellbeing was teacher supply. ‘We want more young people in teaching,’ he said. ‘While

recruiting from overseas is a short-term measure, long term we need to grow our own teaching workforce.’ He noted that post-Covid, ‘School numbers were down but . . . we don’t want to create disruption for something that might be temporary.’ He recognized the acute relief teacher shortage as the Omicron variant took hold and said, ‘The relief funding is usually \$145m but we added another \$17m to that.’ He noted that a further \$20m has been made available to support learners who have missed out during Covid and need extra support to re-engage and get through NCEA levels.

School attendance, he said, continued to be a problem and while he acknowledged there are issues outside the school’s purview, he asked principals, who have connections to whānau, to voice what they need. He was clear that any attendance support was best located closer to the school.

In addressing other inequities, he said his government had introduced ‘Food in schools’ and there are now 220,000 young people getting free meals at school. ‘I would like that expanded,’ he said. There had also been \$350,000 allocated for free ‘period products’ to be made available in schools.

As we move forward, he said, the immediate focus for the Ministry will be:



The Minister’s message is always highly anticipated by the conference audience



New Regent Street



Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre

- Curriculum and Assessment and embedding the NZ Histories Curriculum
- Engaging students
- Keeping a balance between achievement and wellbeing
- Introducing the Equity Index to end the use of the decile system

He thanked principals again for their commitment and invited them to continue to engage with him constructively and collaboratively.

**NZPF President, Dr. Cherie Taylor-Patel**, noted that it was a privilege to be holding a record breaking gathering of 860 principals at the amazing new Te Pae Conference Centre in Ōtautahi, Christchurch. The last NZPF Christchurch conference, she said, was held in 2009 at the Christchurch convention centre, which was demolished after the 2011 earthquake.

As Minister Hipkins had already mentioned, Taylor-Patel also noted the toll Covid had taken on school leaders and teachers. It was not just the daily logistics, she said, it was the plethora of information pouring into principals' inboxes every day. A new phenomenon emerged, she said, called 'Bulletin Trauma'. Her comment drew loud assent from the audience. Every-

body knew exactly what she was talking about. As the laughter, sighs and groans subsided she launched into an attack on inequities that Covid had highlighted.

'We want a system for the future that is sustainable, equitable, responsive, and personalized to meet the needs of all our ākonga.



NZPF President Cherie Taylor-Patel addresses the conference

That means it is time for competition, performance indicators, targets, standardisation, tests, and top-down accountability to go! No more winners and losers.'

She then turned her attention to our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi saying that too often we have failed to honour our side of the partnership.

'From the assimilation policies of the past, the near decimation of te reo and the low education expectations of Māori, we have much to think about. It does not take a big leap to realise that so much of the inequity we experience as a country, is linked to this issue.'

She agreed with the Minister that the new Histories curriculum coupled with a strong commitment to teach te reo and tikanga in every classroom in Aotearoa was a powerful recipe to help heal the past and build a strong bicultural future.

No President's speech would ever be complete without something to say about the impossible state of learning support and the expectation that schools will enrol all children irrespective of the severity of their mental ill-health, learning, behavioural or social problems and whether or not they have adequate support.

'Schools alone cannot be expected to solve these problems,' she said. 'These students need professional help, and professional therapy and counselling. We welcome the Government's efforts to put more counsellors in schools, but so much more is needed, including

viable alternative pathways so that these students receive the education they rightly deserve.'

She encouraged her audience to involve themselves in the Curriculum Refresh, to bring their excellent ideas to the discussion tables, and to help shape future learning for our



A small corner of the auditorium of the 680 principals attending the conference

young people. She also had a message for the Minister saying, 'What we need are navigators to direct this process. We also need a commitment to reinstating a Curriculum Advisory Support team.'

Next was leadership PLD, its inherent inequities and what NZPF is doing about it.

'This year, NZPF developed the Raranga Tira Leadership Framework. Designed as an organizer, it is underpinned by principles of whakapapa, whanaungatanga, kotahitanga, auaha, mana and rangatiratanga and addresses the current inequity of access and the lack of systemic ongoing leadership PLD in Aotearoa,' she said.

'It is collaboration through new approaches like this that we, as leaders, will grow new leaders, and maintain sustainability,' she said.

She left the principals with a list of questions to ponder as they engaged with the conference presenters.

The theme of the conference was Hihiri Whakamanawa Auaha / Inspire Stimulate Innovate and the whakatauki was Aotearoa ki te whai ao! / Aotearoa and beyond! It was a future looking conference, designed to help us imagine how our education system might look beyond Covid.

### NZPF Awards Ceremony

This year, two NZPF members (one former member) were nominated for awards. These were Julie Hepburn and Jill Corkin.

**Julie Hepburn**, principal of Red Beach School, was awarded the Associate Membership Award in recognition of her twenty-two years as a member of the NZPF executive committee, which is more than half of its entire 40-year history. She has held

the position of Secretary for the past twelve of those years and has led the work of the NZPF help-line for many years. Julie is also renowned for ensuring the driving force behind the annual NZPF Moot is manaakitanga, with all regional presidents warmly welcomed. She has led both rural and urban schools, large and small, and brings her career experiences to executive discussions.

**Jill Corkin**, former principal of Snells Beach School, was presented with the Service with Distinction Award. During her time as principal, Jill was president of the Auckland Primary Principals' Association and sat on many task force groups including the payroll advisory group during the novopay debacle. It was through the leadership of principals such as Jill, that change was eventually reached. She was a lecturer at the



Julie Hepburn receives Associate Membership and Jill Corkin, Service with Distinction Award, (L to R) Jason Miles (NZPF Vice-President), Julie Hepburn, Jill Corkin, Cherie Taylor-Patel (NZPF President)



Chris Bartells, Safe Kids In Daily Supervision (SKIDS) receives a long service award from Gavin Beere, Business Partners' Convenor, at the President's Drinks evening



The Programmed Property Services Christchurch Representative, Eru Tini, celebrates 20 years of service to NZPF with Gavin Beers and Cherie Taylor-Patel

Wellington School of Education, training newly formed Boards of Trustees, and later established principal training courses through Massey University. She also worked as a Limited Statutory Manager, supporting Boards. Most recently Jill has applied her considerable organisational skills to convening the conference committees of several NZPF conferences.

NZPF congratulates both Julie and Jill for their achievements.

**Kaila Colbin** is the CEO of Boma, an organisation that supports leaders and changemakers to be more intentional, intelligent and courageous about the future. She entitled her presentation 'The future we're living into'.

Leadership, she said, is about our own tino rangatiratanga and is based on collective effort. That takes courage. There are four skills of courage, she said, vulnerability, values, trust and resilience. It comes from within, and only through courageous leaders can we build the world we want to live in.

She invited her audience to think about the purpose of education. 'How do you define success?' she asked. What if

education was about wellbeing? she prompted. What if it is about creating a safe and just world? She used the research of Kate Raworth, described as 'doughnut economics', to illustrate how inequities evolve and how the earth's resources can be exhausted. When our social foundations lead to shortages in housing, education, health, income, energy, water, food, social equity and the like, we get biodiversity loss, air pollution, climate change, she said. The safe and just place for humanity and a regenerative and distributive economy has been passed over. 'Is that the world we want for children of the future?' she asked.

As leaders, we must be intentional and deliberate about our choices, invoke clear ethical values and be courageous, she warned. Collegial and responsible leaders can have positive impact, she said.

**Te Kahu Rolleston.** If the conference theme was to inspire, innovate and stimulate then Rolleston was the perfect choice. 'At school,' he said, 'I didn't have an avenue to express myself.'

He became a rapper as a kid, and later decided to put his skills



Kaila Colbin explains how a single factor (exponent) rises or expands rapidly, to show how earth's resources can be exhausted



Te Kahu Rolleston could not resist sharing some of his poetry with his audience

into something productive and empowering. The boy who grew up on Matakana Island, in the western Bay of Plenty, runs spoken word workshops with rangatahi these days, to give them a love of reading and spoken word poetry. He wants learning for them to be joyful and fun.

As a schoolboy, he said, he used mnemonic devices to remember facts and rules and strings of information. ‘My ancestors used metaphor to remember things, he said, and Bob Marley put important information into a song.’ In other words, there are many ways to remember and learn. I later learned Community Law, he said. I listened to the lawyers giving information to the students then I turned their information into rap song.

In his poetry he draws on all the skills he has learned throughout life including kapa haka, whaikōrero and other oral traditions. ‘Poetry gives you access to information you might not otherwise have. That’s the power of it,’ he says. It allows people to communicate on their own terms. There are no boundaries. He used the example of a poem he performed about the Rena disaster, to illustrate. ‘This is not about how to save the tourism of Tauranga, it is the truth as my people saw it.’

Rolleston attended the whole conference and on the final day gave a summary of the presenters’ collective messages in a humorous, informative rap song, of course.

**Dr Cheryl Doig**, entitled her presentation, ‘Navigating the future: rips, rollercoasters and realities’. She is no stranger to principal audiences in Christchurch. She was once a principal herself and was born and bred in the Port Hills of Christchurch. Speaking of her principal life she said ‘Some will love you, others not so much. Some will like you one day and not the next. It’s all rips and roller coasters,’ she said, ‘and it’s become more and more complex.’

Three big issues affect us all at present, she said. Climate change, conflict and Covid. We see the effects of climate change across the globe, and it is front of mind for young people. Our job is to keep hope alive. It is not hard to find conflicts either, she said. As a result of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the UK is experiencing a surge in the number of households struggling to afford heat and electricity. It has been suggested that schools might reduce their opening hours to three days a week to conserve energy. Covid, as we are aware, is not going away. These three things affect the role of education leaders right now, she said.



Cheryl Doig talking about what strategic foresight isn't

She showed the eight priorities of the OECD post-Covid with wellbeing, PLD and teacher support and hybrid learning amongst them. While these are all important, Doig’s question was ‘What has Covid enabled?’

While we long for certainty and to return to the way things were, that will not happen. Strategic foresight is not certainty, it is not finding the right answer. It is not prediction but anticipation and neither is there one future, but multiple futures.

She encouraged principals to frame their questions positively. Instead of asking ‘How can we get back to normal in our schools?’ ask ‘How might we take the best of our learning from Covid and amplify it so all benefit?’ Instead of asking ‘How can we stop extremists from being elected to our Boards? Ask ‘How can we create conditions where our community want to positively influence learning?’ Importantly she said, see the past, present and future as one thing. She concluded with a whakatauki: Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua – I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past.

**Dr Farah Rangikoepa Palmer, Ngati Maniapoto**, self-confessed (women’s) rugby head and academic, shared her leadership messages with a presentation entitled ‘Leading from the front row – the good the bad and the ugly! ‘I’m Farah Palmer, she said – named after that cup!’ It was a joke of course, but as she explained, the ‘Farah Palmer Cup’ is now better recognised than she is. Quite a tribute to the place of women’s rugby in Aotearoa New Zealand right now. ‘I grew up in the small Waikato town of Piopio, where we had a teacher for Highland dancing, girls played netball and boys rugby and the less coordinated played hockey,’ she joked. The stereotype was that Māori are good at sport, ‘So I decided to excel academically and, in the end, did a PhD,’ she said.

She opened her address with a poignant quote from Warren Bennis about the process of becoming a leader:

*No leader sets out to be a leader. People set out to live their lives, expressing themselves fully. When that expression is of value, they become leaders. So, the point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely – all your skills, gifts, and energies – in order to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing. You must, in sum, become the person you started out to be, and to enjoy the process of becoming.’*

She outlined the Māori Rugby Strategy 2022–2025 to show the components that ensure positive outcomes for Māori.



Farah Palmer talks about life as a women’s rugby player and a leader



Some former NZPF Presidents turned up at the President's drinks  
 (L to R) Ernie Butveld, Peter Simpson, Perry Rush, Cherie Taylor-Patel (current President), Denise Torrey, Phil Harding, Whetu Cormick

In the shape of a waka, the base is the whakapapa – who you are. The waka head is led by tikanga and te reo (doing things our way using our language). The values include kotahitanga (unity, solidarity), manaakitanga (respect, generosity and care for each other), and wairuatanga (spirituality). The sail to move the waka forward includes rangatiratanga (self-determination), kaitiakitanga (guardianship and protection), whanaungatanga (relationships, kinship, sense of family), taumatatanga (striving for excellence) and poutamatanga (striving to improve). We aim to grow Māori leaders in rugby and we want to see our Māori culture valued. To do this we need resourcing and good decision makers, she said.

In this time of chaos, uncertainty, and challenge, she said, we need to be courageous as education leaders, so we build forward better and address issues of equity, social justice and racism. We need to pass back what we have learned, giving agency to

those who follow us, and kick forward, to provide direction, momentum, and motivation. All leaders need their support team, so find your 'tight five', she said. 'Leadership is the work of many, not one.'

'When I was invited to be on the rugby board, I talked to my teammates and those before me like Louisa Wall. Their message was to take that space and make changes and space for others. You need to be in the starting fifteen, otherwise you can't have influence.'

Our rugby way is to be welcoming, be passionate, be our best and play fair. These are good messages for all leaders, she said.

**Dr Siouxsie Wiles**, a microbiologist who became a household name during the Covid pandemic and is well known for her communication skills, was a popular draw card for principals. Her presentation focus was on communicating science. This message resonated with principals who all realise how critical communication is in leadership roles.

She took her audience on a journey through her own career as a microbiologist, keen to share her science knowledge with a wider audience. They learned how she studied bacteria behaviour by placing 'glow in the dark animal poop' inside the animals. By observing the light, she could ascertain whether bacteria were growing or not. She won an award for her work in 2005 from the NC3Rs – The National Centre for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. Media however were not at all interested.

She turned to school students to communicate her work and they were excited about her research. Next came writing a blog in an endeavour to get science into the news. 'I wanted to learn how to write beyond academic peer review,' she said. 'I wrote about infections and outbreaks around the world. This included food poisoning in Germany and how infection could get inside salad leaves. This story broke in New Zealand, and I had my first interview with Mike Hoskings. Radio New Zealand followed with more science stories including how scientists research new cancer drugs to assure the public that they work.'



Siouxsie Wiles is Ambassador for House of Science, providing free Science kits for schools

By 2013 Wiles was making videos about her own research using the 'glowing poop'. She also talked about how NASA used fireflies to see if there was other life in the universe.

She then collaborated with artist Rebecca Klee to make an artwork out of naturally glowing bacteria, in the field of bioluminescence, using marine bacteria. This won her the Prime Minister's Science Media Communicator's Prize. By 2020 she was collaborating with artist Toby Morris producing world leading coverage explaining the Covid-19 pandemic. All her previous media experience came to the fore. 'I understood media timelines and what was needed,' she said.

There is no doubt that communities that look after each other come through disasters with the best outcomes. A tweet from Jill Harris drew Wiles' attention. When you get many cases escalating, you have to flatten the curve to prevent the health system being overwhelmed. This gives power to the people but doesn't quite show people how they can help. A collaboration with cartoonist Toby Morris, released under creative commons license, was the result and became an iconic image which the public understood. It went viral and was used by our own Prime Minister, the Huffington Post, bus stops in Germany and the USA and finally the World Health Organisation.

'In a pandemic you must consider the environment. The social, political and the geopolitical,' she said. 'Humans, and how they behave, is the most critical element. You can't just have the economists and the scientists. It takes a whole team,' she said. 'That team was the team of five million in New Zealand.'

Trusted voices, she said, are what people will listen to and you need different trusted voices in different communities.

Turning to her audience, she said, you (as principals) are the

trusted voices of your community, so schools can model how we navigate this new world. You give the next generation knowledge about climate change and diseases. There is another wave of Covid coming that we have to deal with. While we have antivirals and vaccinations, and the next wave may not be so serious to health, there are still many affected by long-Covid. Across the globe there are 150 million with long-Covid which calculates as a loss of \$100million a week. Covid is not just respiratory. It also affects the circulatory system and we may in the future see an increase in strokes in young people who otherwise have no precondition for strokes. Different countries will have different responses. There are inequities. We have safe water but we also need safe air and ventilation.

She concluded with a tip for schools, 'Check out the "House of Science" which is free for schools. They will give you a free kit for science teaching, which you then return for the next teacher.' Wiles is a proud ambassador for the House of Science.

**Fi McMillan, Lawyer for Principals' Advice and Support (PASL)**, is no stranger to NZPF members who also subscribe to PASL. She is the lead legal counsel for the scheme which addresses employment issues for principals and has been in the role for over 15 years. The most common issues arise from complaints about the principal which come either from Board members, including the chair, from the community or parents of students at the school, or from teachers.

As Fi noted, issues can escalate very quickly when principals are left unsupported and vulnerable. When principals have the support of PASL, however, issues can frequently be addressed and resolved at a much lower level, provided the principal acts quickly and seeks advice quickly.

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August

Tue 16

- Y5 & 6 Inner City Speech Comp @... 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
- Pymble Homework Help @ Classro... 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm
- REMINDER RE: Parent/Student volunteer for Po... In a 'normal' year, road patrol is a Year...

Wed 17

- Rm 8 Library Day

Thu 18

- Pymble Homework Help @ Classro... 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm
- Ponsonby BOT Meeting 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- Y8 & 9 Catch-up vaccination dTpa/...
- REMINDER RE: RSVP for Think Pymble Employ...



Fi McMillan is an experienced employment law expert in the field of education

Over 1200 principals subscribe to PASL and in 2021 about 70 were advised on issues affecting their employment and another 40 on Board matters causing concern. A further 25 reported more serious issues and nearly half of those cases resigned from principalship.

‘You shouldn’t have to remind the Board that they have a duty to be a good employer and treat you in good faith,’ she said, ‘but clearly there are Boards out there who fail in this respect.’

She encouraged principals who wanted to talk with her during the conference, to take advantage of her availability and confidential space where she could meet with them and discuss their issues.

**Professor Russell Bishop** is well known for his work in secondary schools with the highly successful kotahitanga programme. Te Kotahitanga is a research and professional development programme supporting teachers to improve learning for Māori by creating a culturally responsive context. It enables school leaders to change school structures to support teachers more effectively in achieving this goal. He referred to the programme, saying that while it was being funded, schools made excellent progress in lifting the achievement of Māori students, but as soon as the funding stopped, over 50 per cent stopped engaging.

The focus for his conference address was literacy, and he made the same point very strongly. ‘As leaders you must ensure that your literacy programme is fully funded, at all times,’ he said. ‘You cannot compromise.’

He talked about his latest research into literacy with a case study of 3 schools. Importantly, he said, you implement your chosen strategy with fidelity and sustained practices and outcomes. In Māori, tikanga is the word for fidelity, he said. The job of leaders is to enable this to happen. He talked about teaching to the north-east, in other words on an upward trajectory.

We should not be having a literacy crisis, he said. All children should leave infant classes able to read. Yet at year 8, we have 56 per cent of students who are not reaching the curriculum level in literacy. Māori and Pacific Island students are affected the worst, and I can’t accept that, he said.

He talked about instructional leadership where goals are

set, the pedagogy is agreed, the infrastructure is set up and fully supported by the leadership. Then you get spread and finally assess for evidence, so you clearly know the next steps.

Using his case studies to illustrate he said all the schools had goals for excellence and equitable education which included raising Māori achievement. They ensured that Māori learned as Māori and did not leave their culture at the classroom door. To make a difference the schools included coaching of teachers through observations and feedback. They had meetings for collaborative interrogation of the evidence of student performance and they reviewed policies. They also included parents and families which added value and improved student learning.

His strongest message to his audience was to say, ‘If the principal is not leading the literacy programme, forget it. It won’t happen.’

### Contributions from students

Student contributions, at different points in the conference, were inspiring, uplifting, compelling and challenging. Ranging in age from Year 6 to Year 13, they shared learning experiences that shaped their views on education, role models who had impacted on their lives and their thoughts about what leaders needed to do to improve education in Aotearoa. Their messages were direct.

- Let us speak and learn in our language – Te Reo Māori.
- Get our names right. Say them correctly and work at it until they are right.
- Sort out toilets so there are gender neutral options.
- Be prepared to change things at school so learning can work better for students.
- Don’t stand by and let students bully students. Help us when we are struggling with peer relationships.
- Listen to students’ ideas and then commit to actioning them.
- Don’t expect us to be perfect. We’re not – and neither are you.
- Accept us for who we are, not just the ‘best version of ourselves’ – to be a perfect person 24/7 is exhausting.
- Know that learning is 24/7 – and not all the best learning happens at school.



The student voice was warmly welcomed by principals who appreciated the passion behind it

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**Scott Robinson**, rugby coach of the very successful Crusaders team for several seasons, was the final speaker of the conference and did not disappoint. He warmed his audience at the start with a simple toss of a coin 'heads or tails' game, with winners given a Crusaders cap.

His job, he said, is to be the talent ID and selector. 'Take a look at my wife,' he smiled, 'The best long-term signing I ever had!'

Significant in my career, he said, was Gordon Titchens (the NZ Rugby Sevens Coach). I was in the New Zealand Colts team at the time but knew I had to be educated, having left Mt Maunganui High School a bit early. So, I went to Lincoln University. Titchens was my mentor, he said. All leaders need one.

He then launched into the purpose of his address which was about building culture, which comes from the Latin 'cultus' meaning care. When you care, you give, then receive. Culture is about symbols, sounds, smells and stories, he said.

We pick a theme or vision for the year, he said. He used 'kings' as an example because they reign and have a succession of rulers. It's the same in the Crusaders he said, you don't walk alone ever. You are part of a long line of kings. You are only ever beaten when you give up as a team. When you can't take one more step, your brothers are there with you. Strength comes in numbers not individuals. 'We learned this from Muhammad Ali's shortest ever poem – "Me We", which expresses a sense of community and an appreciation of togetherness,' said Robinson. The 'me' is being mindful and executing your job. The 'we' is working together as a team. He used the Golden Gate bridge as another symbol of the importance of team. The bridge can withstand an earthquake, he said and what keeps the bridge up is the foundation, the structure and the steel the 'we' maintains the tension, the design is about keeping the nuts and bolts and the support wires connected. 'It all falls down if we loosen the connections,' he said.

Stories matter. They help us remember the past and learn from it, so we don't repeat mistakes. 'In 1996 we were last in the competition. We need to tell that story, so we reflect and don't repeat it,' he said.

Sounds also matter. 'We ring a bell every time we go out on the paddock. It reminds us we're going into battle. It's like the alarm clock in the morning, or the sound of church bells. There's a purpose.'

Smells matter too. 'Think Sunday night roast dinner from your kitchen at home. Those things, he said remind you of family and feeling good at home. So, three times a week, we have family time in our training room where the boys discuss their home life, the renovations they're doing or how the baby is growing. Then they have a good week before a big match.'

'In our team, the players vote for the MVP (most valuable player). We sing for them and we give them a spade,' he said. 'Every human loves to be praised. It's affirmation that you are valued and belong. When you feel good, you perform better.'

In leadership you swap roles from time to time. 'I stand behind the coaches who are guiding the players. I'm observing and noticing,' he said. 'That's a leadership role too.'

Robinson gave a different perspective of leadership in sport, with humour and fun, as the audience expected. He was the perfect speaker to conclude what had been a hugely successful and informative conference.

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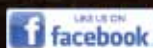
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# FALLING ON YOUR FEET

## Doing my pepeha

Martin Thrupp [thrupp@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:thrupp@waikato.ac.nz)



OVER THE LAST year or so it's become a feature of our university staff meetings for one or two people to do a pepeha, followed by a few minutes of explanation in English of the various points made. It's both a way of building staff confidence in using te reo Māori and of understanding and appreciating our colleagues more.

Although I'm not Māori, on the face of it I should have a bit more confidence in te reo than many. As a young teacher in the Horowhenua I did Te Ataarangi night classes, learning to speak te reo through the use of coloured Cuisenaire rods, starting with a very humble, 'Te rakau kowhai'.

It worked well for me, and I made progress with the patient support of my now-deceased teaching colleague and mentor Matt Mataira. Eventually I became capable of speaking when taking my social studies classes onto local marae. Subsequently I've sometimes been a speaker at powhiri, able to do some basics when someone more proficient was not available.

Still, that's whaikōrero, and when it came to offering my pepeha at our staff-meeting I held back because I wasn't quite sure what I should say.

There's often been an expectation in the past of naming your landmarks like maunga and awa and the people you identify with. Some Pakeha might like doing this but for me it's always felt a bit fake. I've lived in lots of places and don't really have such commitments.

Luckily, it turns out that for those of us who are not Māori there's no need to take such an approach to one's pepeha and many Māori would prefer that we didn't. As explained by Keri Opai in a recent online article in E-Tangata (Opai 2022a), for Māori the pepeha is about whakapapa affiliations which is why 'the ancestral mountain, river, waka, iwi, hapū, marae and other kinship ties' are so important.

In short, for those who are not Māori it is not just a matter of choosing a river or mountain that you feel an affinity with because you grew up near it, in the way many of us have probably learnt to do in the past.

Opai provides a very helpful alternative pepeha template for people who are not Māori. Instead of just repeating him here, let me do mine based on his template as I gave it in our recent staff meeting, with some interpretation and comments in English:

Opai provides a very **HELPFUL** alternative **PEPEHA TEMPLATE** for people who are not Māori.

**Tēnā tātou katoa**  
**Greetings to us all.**

**Ko Ingarangi te whakapaparanga mai Engari**  
**My forebears came from England.**

**But . . . (A chance to emphasise that much of my own life has been in Aotearoa)**

**Ko Remutaka te whenua tupu**  
**I grew up in the Upper Hutt area.**

**Ko Kirikiriroa te kāinga**  
**Kirikiriroa/Hamilton is my home.**

**Kei Kirikiriroa au e noho ana**  
**Kirikiriroa/Hamilton is where I live now. (I expect this one would be especially helpful for anyone who wasn't living in the place they call home).**

**He hoa pūmau ōku ki Ingarangi me Finirana**  
**I have long-term friends in England and Finland. (This line is not from Opai but I got advice and added it in. I wanted some way to acknowledge the significance of six years living in England in my thirties and my more recent experience of working in Finland as well).**

**Ko Martin Thrupp taku ingoa**  
**My name is Martin Thrupp**

**Tēnā tātou katoa**  
**Greetings to us all.**

As you can see, nothing at all here about rivers or mountains. It allows non-Māori to avoid using Māori ways of identifying. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery but not in this case.

As time goes on and te reo becomes more widespread it's becoming more and more important for Pakeha to avoid appropriation of Māori terms and concepts where they are not suitable. To me it's a sign of both respect and cultural confidence to know one's limits and to realise that boundaries are shifting over time.

For further guidance on this it's well worth reading another informative article by Keri Opai in E-Tangata (Opai 2022b). And while you are there, have a careful look at what my former Waikato colleague Carl Mika is saying (Mika 2022). Mika, now a professor at the University of Canterbury, has long been concerned about inappropriate, tokenistic uses of te reo Māori.



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He says '... there may be times when the taonga status of the language can only be honoured when we decide *not* to use te reo in certain circumstances.'

I'm also reminded of concerns in Nelson recently where Ngāti Koata has been pursuing a housing development in the Kākā valley up the Maitai river. It was reported that Ngāti Koata kaumātua had found the cultural appropriation of te reo Māori words, songs, and practices by submitters opposed to the development 'highly offensive'.

The only caution I would raise about the charge of cultural appropriation is that it may become weaponised during moments of political tension. It would be naïve not to recognise that drawing attention to someone's apparent lack of cultural competence can sometimes be a convenient means of dismissing their arguments.

For instance, would the manner in which people in Nelson used te reo Māori as part of their submissions opposing the Kākā valley development have been so offensive to Ngāti Koata if its proposals were being supported? One suspects not: it's only human to be less offended when things are going your way.

We have seen a related problem in politics recently where Māori ministers in the Labour Government have attacked Māori MPs in ACT for their supposed lack of Māori values. It would have been better to just focus on ACT's right-wing arguments and agenda. It can be a great challenge in the heat of debate to stick to the issues: to play the ball and not the person.

In any case those of us who are not Māori remain obligated to do our best to understand and respond to genuine Māori concerns about inappropriate use of te reo. If we do that, then accusations of cultural appropriation will be less easily levelled in the first place.

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# KIA WHAKATŌMURI TE HAERE WHAKAMUA

I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past

HELEN KINSEY-WIGHTMAN

**MY 12 YEAR** old son reads beautifully in both his languages but never picks up a book out of choice. Just before the holidays a colleague mentioned they were considering Pōrangī Boy by Shilo Kino as a new text. The book is about Niko, a 12 year old Northland boy and his relationship with his elderly koro whom many label pōrangī|crazy. The story is based on the 2002 Ngāpuhi protests over the building of the Ngawha Prison. Manu and I started reading it together last night, after two chapters he took over the reading because my pronunciation was making him laugh and when it was time to sleep, he told me to take it out of his room overnight because he didn't want to read on without me. Thank you Shilo Kino!

Reflecting on the importance of storytelling in our teaching of history, I am reminded that most of our Kiwi teachers have grown up without being taught our own stories. Until Jacinda Ardern's announcement in 2019, we were the only country in the OECD that does not mandate the teaching of its own history.

Young people have led the way in championing the movement for our histories to be taught in schools. In 2015, Ōtorohanga College students Leah Bell and Waimarama Anderson petitioned Parliament for a National day of commemoration for the New Zealand Wars. In their petition, they suggested the New Zealand Wars ought to be compulsory teaching. In July 2019 Youth MP Christian Dennison challenged the Government to introduce compulsory teaching of 'accurate domestic' New Zealand history. These calls have been vociferously supported by the New Zealand History Teachers' Association.

If you need any further persuasion that our young people really care about learning the history of our country, listen to the speeches of rangitahi participating in Race Unity Speech Awards (Zimbabwe-born Takunda Muzondiwa's calls for educational institutions to place a greater emphasis on language, culture and history) Ngā Manu Kōrero (Te Ariki Te Puni of Palmy Boys' High shows his knowledge of Aotearoa history in his 2015 speech) or Ngā Manu Pirere slam poetry awards (check out Te Utanga

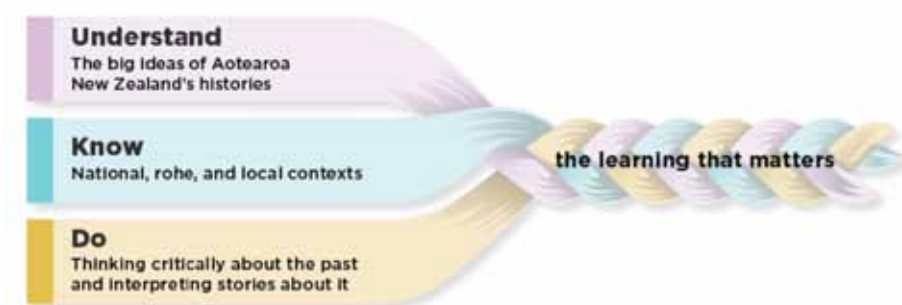
Tautuhi's powerful slam poetry on Te Pakanga o Pukehinahina | the battle of Gate Pā).

Yet whilst the imperatives are clear, the challenges are significant. Findings from the 2021 school engagement on the draft ANZH curriculum content indicate that schools feel these are the greatest challenges across all year levels:

- Finding the time to develop and implement an engaging programme and being supported with appropriate resources and professional support.
- Delivering with authenticity and pitching delivery and content at an appropriate level to make it engaging and understandable for young learners; addressing teacher unconscious (or conscious) bias; and finding specialist teachers at secondary level.
- Building and strengthening relationships with the local community (parents, whānau, hapū, iwi, marae) and breaking down prejudices and racism in the community.
- Building upon learner's prior knowledge, empowering learners to engage in and share their inquiries, developing critical thinking skills and having the confidence to teach the curriculum with integrity including pronouncing te reo Māori correctly

While most schools will have already begun to tackle the curriculum content – this being part of a familiar curriculum planning process – we may not have talked about how we will deal with the racism that has inevitably become part of our own thinking and will likely be voiced by students in our classrooms. Young teacher Airana Ngarewa talks about his experience as a student of high school history:

It was a platform for prejudice, every misinformed idea given a microphone in the spirit of open debate. It was not uncommon to hear my peers describe tangata whenua as gangsters and criminals. It was more common to hear

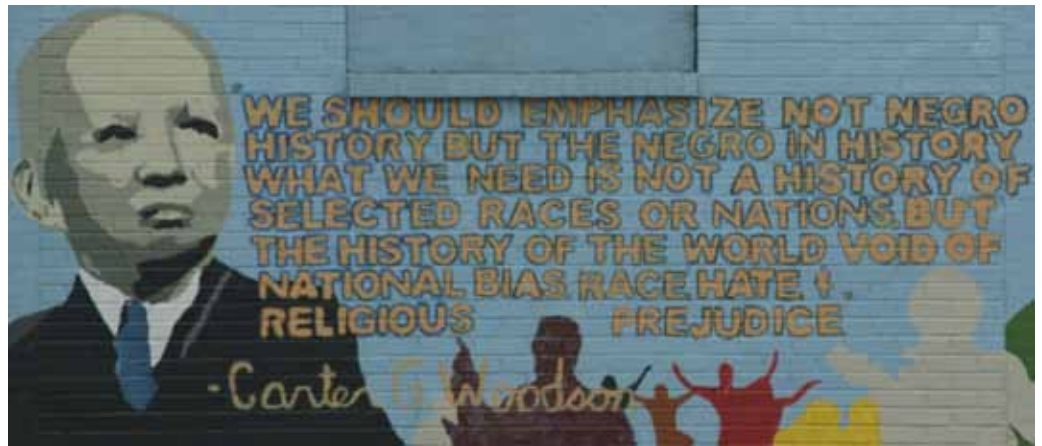


them label my tūpuna savages and suggest Māori were lucky Pākehā came along before they wiped themselves out.

Just as our LGBTTIQ+ young people need to hear teachers support them when homophobic language is used in our classrooms, our taurira need to hear us speak out against racism. The Unteach Racism tools provided by the Teacher's Council would be a good starting point for having these conversations in the staffroom.

Obviously, the fact that history is uncomfortable is not a reason to avoid it and we are certainly not the first nation to grapple with this challenge. American studies professor Ben Railton quotes Carter Woodson, the educational pioneer who founded Negro History Week (the predecessor to Black History Month), 'We should emphasize not Negro history, but the Negro in history.' Railton goes on to add, 'Of course adding Black history to American curricula was and remains a vital step for Black students, to see themselves better represented in their own education. But it is even more crucial for white students . . . recognizing that Black history is American history.'

Returning to my current reading, Shilo Kino wrote *The Pōrangī Boy*, 'for kids like me who struggle to see themselves in

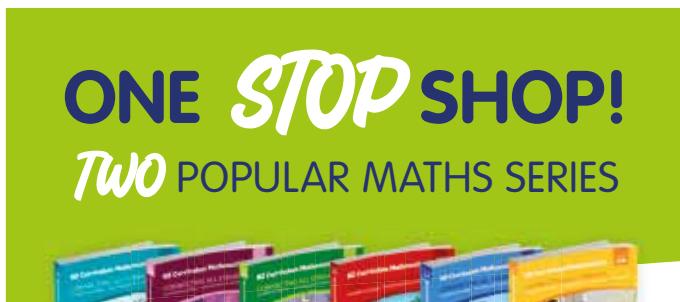


stories. For those who feel like they are on the outside watching, observing, but never quite belonging. I wrote it for people like me who were forced to learn about their own culture through the eyes of the coloniser. I wrote this for people who think Māori activists are pōrangī for fighting for our land back, land that belonged to us in the first place.'

For all New Zealanders, we have a responsibility to take the time to get it right. As Airana Ngarewa wrote, 'Fortunately, teachers have a year to prepare for New Zealand history in schools. We have a year to plan how we might work alongside local iwi who remain the keepers of so much rarefied history, a year to determine how we might ensure our classrooms remain a positive learning environment, and a year to think through how we might manage the misinformation and disinformation young people are inundated with online and at home.'

It is time to have some brave conversations about what we have done so far and what we still need to do so that our young people grow up understanding Aotearoa history and we can together walk backwards into the future with our eyes fixed on our past.

#### REFERENCES



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