



TEU

TERTIARY EDUCATION UNION
TE HAUTŪ KAHURANGI

Submission of

**Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education
Union**

to the

**New Zealand Institute of Skills and
Technology (NZIST)**

on the

Mobilising the New World Interim Reports

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1. Preamble

- 1.1. Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education Union (TEU) welcomes this opportunity to respond to the *Mobilising the New World Interim Reports*.
- 1.2. The TEU is the largest union and professional association representing nearly 10,000 academic and general/allied staff in the tertiary education sector (in universities, institutes of technology/polytechnics, wānanga, private training establishments, and REAPs).
- 1.3. The TEU actively acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation for the relationship between Māori and the Crown. We recognise the significance of specific reference to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the Education Act and the emergent discourse resulting from this. We also accept the responsibilities and actions that result from our nation's signing of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.4. The TEU expresses its commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by working to apply the four whāinga (values) from our *Te Koeke Tiriti* framework as a means to advance our TEU Tiriti relationship in all our work and decision-making – with members and when engaging on broader issues within the tertiary sector and beyond – such as our response to the *Mobilising the New World Interim Reports*:

Tū kotahi, tū kaha: We are strong and unified; we are committed to actions which will leave no-one behind; we create spaces where all people can fully participate, are fairly represented, and that foster good relationships between people.

Ngā piki, ngā heke: We endure through good times and bad; we work to minimise our impact on the environment; we foster ahikā – the interrelationship of people and the land, including supporting tūrangawaewae – a place where each has the right to stand and belong.

Awhi atu, awhi mai: We take actions that seek to improve the lives of the most vulnerable; we give and receive, acknowledging that reciprocity is fundamental to strong and equitable relationships; and we work to advance approaches that ensure quality public tertiary education for all.

Tātou, tātou e: We reach our goals through our collective strength and shared sense of purpose, which are supported through participatory democratic decision-making processes and structures.

- 1.5. Our response to the *Mobilising the New World Interim Reports* stems from our commitment to the whāinga expressed above and our wish to see these enacted in the tertiary education sector and in our society and communities.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Taken together, the seven *Mobilising the New World Interim Reports* developed by the IST Establishment Board and published by the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) set a promising foundation for the future direction of the vocational education sector of Aotearoa New Zealand. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for a unified vocational education sector underpinned by the principles set out in the NZIST Charter – Tiriti partnerships, collaboration, empowerment, and high quality regional provision – is more pressing than ever. However, if NZIST is to genuinely “mobilise the new world” of vocational education, any resort to models, strategies, and structures that either imply or explicitly promote “business as usual” need to be reassessed and transfigured. With this in mind, TEU members have expressed concern pertaining to a number of general problem areas that appear throughout the interim reports.
- 2.2. As technological advancements continue to develop and shape our everyday lives, the temptation to utilise technology in the interests of pedagogical innovation and advanced support services is, in many ways, understandable. Yet, the possibility of extending such services so they are available to learners on a 24/7 basis inevitably gives rise to a number of problems. Unrealistic staff workloads continue to be a major constraint on the wellbeing and capacities of academic and general staff throughout the tertiary education sector. If the implementation of 24/7 provision is pursued without adequate attention to staff needs and input, it is inevitable that pre-existing problems pertaining to workload will be exacerbated, with the flow-on effects impacting negatively on students’ conditions of learning. Added to this, there is the possibility that having education services available 24/7 will foster unhealthy study and, in particular, time management habits – factors that will only diminish the

educational experiences and outcomes of learners. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed, in a roundabout way, the benefits of face-to-face learning as well as the significance of ensuring learning environments which enable genuine peer support and interaction. With these factors in mind, it will be necessary for NZIST to understand, firstly, the true degree of demand for 24/7 operations, and, secondly, the wider contexts and circumstances – including the ‘digital divide’ – faced by those working and learning throughout the sector so that the implementation of 24/7 services can be adapted accordingly. Any urge to initiate strategies premised on technological determinism need to be reconsidered.

- 2.3. Additional concerns relate to the emphasis on the “new world” of vocational education being increasingly constituted by on-job training. If vocational education is to be conceived of and enacted in a way which realises the wider public benefits of life-long learning, there must be a balance between, on one hand, accommodating the needs of industry and, on the other, facilitating the development of broader, transferable “soft skills” as learners proceed through their vocational education journey.
- 2.4. With regard to academic decision-making, members have asserted that decisions surrounding teaching and learning are best made by those working closest to the level at which the results of such decisions are being implemented. Currently, the ‘architecture’ often involves decisions being made at higher levels of institutional structures without adequate consultation with those who will be required to implement any potential changes. Here, it is essential to recognise the experience, knowledge, and expertise held by academic and general staff throughout the vocational education sector – their voices must be not only heard, but influential if NZIST is to live up to its Charter obligations. This includes instances where the upskilling of NZIST staff is encouraged – staff need to have input in determining the nature of their professional development opportunities, as well as be provided with adequate resources and time to engage in ongoing professional training.
- 2.5. The remainder of our submission turns to each of the Workstream reports and the various recommendations therein. Where page numbers and recommendations are referenced, the context should make it clear which report

is in question. NZIST's *Mobilising the New World: Interim Report Executive Summaries* document is abbreviated as *IBES*.

- 2.6. We look forward to further engagement in all of the Mobilising the New World work, and to collaborating with the NZIST to ensure that all staff are empowered to be part of the ongoing design and development work. We will encourage TEU members to participate in the Zui on Tuesday 21 July, and will ensure any additional thoughts are compiled and submitted by Tuesday 28 July.

3. Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream

- 3.1. There are many elements of the *Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream* that are commendable. In particular, the TEU considers the principles that underpin the recommendations included in the report – accessibility, inclusivity, holistic support, empowerment, and improved outcomes – to be essential to the learning potential and wellbeing of staff and students, and, by extension, the success of NZIST and the pivotal role it is set to play within the context of the wider vocational education system. By focussing on the needs, aspirations, and constraints faced by learners that have traditionally been under-served by the education system, the approach of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream aligns with the TEU's third whāinga: *awhi atu, awhi mai* – “we take actions that seek to improve the lives of the most vulnerable.”
- 3.2. The TEU supports the implementation of, as per **Recommendation 1**, a proactive alert and case management system designed to provide holistic support for learners. However, implementing the factors relegated to footnote 1 on page 9 of the *IBES* document – piloting, adequately resourcing, and co-designing the systems in conjunction with the conclusions drawn by the various other Mobilising the New World Workstreams – will be essential to ensuring the aims of the systems are successfully realised. Furthermore, in the endeavour to provide genuine proactive holistic support, it will be necessary to consider the distinction between, on one hand, ‘identifying,’ ‘monitoring,’ and ‘targeting’ learners (as per the terminology used throughout the reports), and, on the other, inadvertently ‘surveilling’ students as a result of utilising technology in an instrumental, deterministic manner.

- 3.3. The emphasis throughout the report pertaining to the significance of fostering and maintaining meaningful relationships is also one that the TEU strongly encourages. As such, the implementation of a tuakana-teina mentor programme (**Recommendation 2**) and the development of a values-based framework aimed at cultivating meaningful relationships through the embedding of whakawhānaungatanga (**Recommendation 4**) both resonate with the TEU's first whāinga: *tū kotahi, tū kaha* – “we create spaces where all people can fully participate, are fairly represented, and that foster good relationships between people.” However, cultivating and sustaining relationships is a complex and, at times, difficult undertaking and, again, adequate resourcing, robust review procedures, and collaborative design processes – as alluded to in footnote 2 on page 9 of the *IRES* document – will be essential to the success of the tuakana-teina mentor programme and associated values-based framework. It is also important to note that recent trends across the tertiary education sector have seen specialist Māori roles – roles not unlike those required for a successful tuakana-teina mentor programme – generalised, or “whitestreamed.” On this point, we direct the NZIST Council to the TEU's recent report *Project Whitestreaming: A Report on the Generalising of Māori Specialist Staff Positions in the Tertiary Education Sector* (Potter and Cooper 2016) which outlines the causes of “whitestreaming” in conjunction with the predominantly negative impacts this phenomenon has had on Māori staff and students.¹ It is the TEU's view that the success of any tuakana-teina mentor programme will hinge on recognising and pushing back against such trends.
- 3.4. Regarding **Recommendation 3**, the TEU supports the ensuring of learning environments that are accessible to, and supportive of, all, particularly those learners (and staff) living with disabilities. Again, we think it is important to reiterate the necessity of allocating adequate resourcing so that the ‘key features’ of **Recommendation 3** (20-21) can be successfully implemented and the related ‘measures of success’ (*IRES*, 10) can be met. Recent research indicates that the effectiveness of student support services across the tertiary education sector has declined during the last several years (Sedgwick and Proctor-Thomson 2019, 25). As such, it will be necessary to consider and account for these trends by directly including learners with disabilities in

¹ See also Sedgwick and Proctor-Thomson (2019, 25, 36-37).

relevant design and testing processes. We also recommend ongoing communication with other Mobilising the New World Workstreams, as well as continued consideration of the work being done as part of both the Ministry of Social Development's Disability Employment Action Plan² and the Ministry of Education's *He Whakaaro: The Educational Experiences of Disabled Learners*.³

- 3.5. The TEU supports the notion of meeting the needs of learners by providing flexible learning options (**Recommendation 5**). However, there are potential flow-on effects linked to increased flexibility – namely, increased workloads for staff – that need to be closely considered in the development of this aspect of NZIST's system. Unrealistic, unsustainable, and non-negotiable staff workloads are a pre-existing problem area which continues to be detrimental – in a variety of ways – to the provision of quality tertiary education. Research conducted by the TEU has demonstrated that unrealistic workloads: mean that staff are less likely to be in a position to provide pastoral support to students; have a gendered element in that they place greater constraints on female academic staff, and; cause decreased levels of work satisfaction (Sedgwick and Proctor-Thomson 2019, 1-2, 16-20). The issue of increased flexibility and its correlation with the problem of unrealistic staff workloads is also inherent to the 24/7 Learner Support Service proposed in the *Report of the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams*. We recommend that the issue of workloads be addressed across each of the Mobilising the New World Workstreams, and it will be particularly important that the Learner Journey Mapping, Education Products and Services, and Online Arrangements Workstreams work collaboratively on these points.
- 3.6. The TEU recognises the embedding of ako, whakawhānaungatanga, and manaakitanga as key to developing a system which ensures cultural safety and inclusiveness (**Recommendation 6**) – *awhi atu, awhi mai*, “we give and receive, acknowledging that reciprocity is fundamental to strong and equitable relationships” (TEU whāinga #3). Regarding the development of a values-based framework in the interests of enhancing staff capabilities in the area of cultural

² See <https://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/disability-services/disability-employment-action-plan/index.html>, accessed 12 July 2020.

³ See <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/he-whakaaro-the-educational-experiences-of-disabled-learners>, accessed 12 July 2020.

competency, it will be necessary to involve staff in the development of these programmes so that their needs are met. More broadly, it is the view of the TEU that the effective implementation of such programmes will contribute to NZIST's capacity to uphold the principles of the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and, specifically, work toward achieving the goals set out in Objective 1 of the TES ("Learners at the Centre") by addressing racism, discrimination, and stigma throughout the tertiary education sector. For examples of issues with current practices surrounding professional development, we would be happy to connect with TEU members working throughout the vocational education sector.

- 3.7. With regard to the 'next steps' outlined on page 26 of the *Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream*, we support the further mapping of learner journeys, as well as the mapping of the journeys of tutors and employers. Using the results of this type of mapping in a way that informs all levels of the design of the new system will be key to ensuring the needs of learners are met. The TEU recommends the establishment of a research unit designed to collect and analyse data relevant to ensuring the NZIST Charter is adhered to.
- 3.8. Lastly, as a more general point, we recommend that, due to the frequent use of the term 'holistic' throughout the *Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream*, outlining an explicit working definition of this concept may help ensure coherence and clarity as the Mobilising the New World project continues to proceed.

4. Report of the Employer and Community Engagement Workstream

- 4.1. In broad terms, the TEU supports the 'ideal future state' of NZIST as constituted, in part, by an Employer and Community Engagement Model that "embodies positive Tiriti relations" (2). We also agree that if participation, accessibility, and success relative to vocational education is to be improved for learners, communities, hapū, employers, and industry, then factors such as cultural competency and understanding the needs of partners at national, regional, and local levels should be an explicit part of any such engagement model – *awhi atu, awhi mai*, "we work to advance approaches that ensure quality public tertiary education for all" (TEU's third whāinga). However, where the intention is to ensure "improved relationship *management* practice across the network" (2, emphasis added) by implementing a Strategic Partnership Strategy involving a

Key Account Relationship Manager Model, there is concern that the “new world” will inevitably perpetuate the managerialist culture and structures that continue to be highly problematic throughout the current tertiary education system. These elements of the proposed Employer and Community Engagement Model need to be reassessed if NZIST is to genuinely usher in a “new world.”

- 4.2. Acknowledging and building on existing relationships throughout the vocational education system will be paramount to maintaining engagement and confidence on the part of learners, employers, industry, communities, and NZIST subsidiary staff. As such, the TEU strongly supports **Recommendation 1**. However, it will be necessary to acknowledge and honour the less-visible relationships that extend beyond formal staff-manager networks; that is, the pre-existing relationships between NZIST subsidiary staff and local community and industry personnel will need to be recognised, integrated, and allowed to flourish if, firstly, certain issues outlined in the ‘What’s not working?’ column of Table 2 (7) are to be successfully addressed, and, secondly, the ‘strategic priorities’ on page 6 – which the TEU also strongly supports – are to be realised *in practice*. Regarding the Workstream’s strategic priorities, the TEU, in particular, agrees that the “competitive model must give way to a collaborative and cooperative approach to providing quality vocational education and training opportunities to all” (6). Here, however, it is necessary to flag the potential problem that will arise pertaining to the ‘lack of competition’ risk identified in Table 6 (24) and the associated mitigation strategy which forms part of **Recommendation 3** – i.e. the development of a Key Account Relationships Manager Model. We elaborate on this problem below.
- 4.3. Regarding **Recommendation 2** – the co-development of a Mana Ōrite Te Tiriti framework designed to guide NZIST’s governance, operations, and Strategic Partnerships Strategy – we acknowledge and strongly support the explicit inclusion of, among other schemes, the TEU’s *Te Koeke Tiriti* framework as a point of reference for the NZIST leadership as it conducts this work. Again, it is worth reiterating that genuine co-design processes need to be implemented in the development of the Mana Ōrite Te Tiriti framework, and the TEU broadly supports the ‘purposes’ and ‘principles’ of engagement outlined in sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the report (8-10). Related to this, the TEU agrees that, as per the recommendation on page 18 of the report, further work needs to be done to

understand ‘personas’ beyond the ‘worker,’ ‘employer,’ and ‘Pacific people’ profiles outlined in section 5.1. Doing so will help ensure NZIST’s engagement model represents a true diversity of voices – *tū kotahi, tū kaha*, “we create spaces where all people can fully participate, are fairly represented, and that foster good relationships between people” (TEU’s first whāinga).

- 4.4. The TEU supports the development of a Strategic Partnership Strategy which will include tools for developing NZIST’s community and employer engagement rationales and processes, as well as metrics for assessing the quality and impact of engagement at local, regional, and national levels (**Recommendation 3**). Explicating a robust strategic plan will be essential for ensuring key stakeholders and priority groups are included, varying engagement types, levels, and priorities are differentiated and understood, and the obligations and principles outlined in the NZIST Charter, Tertiary Education Strategy, and Regional Economic Development Strategies and Action Plans are fulfilled. However, as noted above in our commentary on **Recommendation 1**, where the Strategic Partnership Strategy aims to “identify and agree on local versus national roles and responsibilities” (*IRES*, 15) pertaining to engagement, the ‘lack of competition’ risk identified in Table 6 (24), and the mitigation of that risk by way of involving a Key Account Relationship Manager, it is the TEU’s position that such a strategy will inevitably perpetuate the problems tied to managerialism which have afflicted staff throughout the tertiary education sector. Here, we recommend as an alternative the development and implementation of a ‘social contract’ model which would outline the roles, rights, and responsibilities of stakeholders and partners, each of which would need to agree to uphold their respective roles and responsibilities in order to partake in the new vocational education system.⁴ Such a model would, in particular, incentivise employers to take up the challenge of explicitly contributing to the success of the new system as a whole. With regard to formulating the details of a ‘social contract’ model, we would be happy to engage in further discussions. Lastly, where PTEs are identified as stakeholders within the new system, it is the TEU’s position that such private entities are engaged only in their capacity to provide skills training in niche areas; in order to truly “mobilise the new world,” NZIST should be

⁴ The ‘number of dimensions’ (14) by which it is suggested stakeholder mapping is developed provides an appropriate starting point for those that would be expected to uphold the ‘social contract.’

considered the heart of vocational education in Aotearoa New Zealand and, by operating as the primary provider, minimise any competition with and between private providers.⁵

- 4.5. Following these points, the TEU supports ongoing development of the Employer and Community Engagement Model through co-design processes involving Māori, Pacific, learners with disabilities, employers, and industry (**Recommendation 4**). Indeed, with regard to terminology, we recommend that those referred to as ‘stakeholders’ or ‘partners’ throughout the report would be better conceived of as ‘co-producers’ of the new system and its component parts, models, and principles. Also in-line with **Recommendation 4**, we strongly support the notion that such co-design processes should be implemented not only in the development of NZIST’s engagement models and strategies, but at all levels and across all facets of NZIST.
- 4.6. Whereas **Recommendation 5** suggests greater engagement with industry representatives and “other aggregations” as a means to create and coordinate opportunities between NZIST, employers, and learners, it is the TEU’s recommendation that “other aggregations” explicitly include relevant unions. Related to this point, unions should be added to the list of “key future partners and stakeholders” outlined in Table 5 (23-24).
- 4.7. Despite Day One having already passed, the TEU supports a joint communications/engagement strategy that involves NZIST hosting regular forums at all subsidiaries and with local partners, meetings with emerging groups within the new vocational education system – including the TEU –, and clear communication surrounding, among other things, progress, key milestones, and new partnerships and opportunities (**Recommendation 6**). Operationalising clear communication on NZIST’s part will be vital to ensuring the confidence of stakeholders and partners is maintained, and the desired shift in culture (*IRES*, 15) – a shift that realises the mandated vision of collaboration and empowerment as outlined in the NZIST Charter – comes to underpin the “new world.”

⁵ See also our commentary on the place of PTEs within the new system as outlined in the *Report of the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Workstream* below.

- 4.8. The TEU broadly supports the **Recommendations for December 2022** provided the relevant points outlined above are considered during the transitional phase, particularly the proposed implementation of Key Account Relationship Managers as part of the Strategic Partnerships Strategy.

5. Report of the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams

- 5.1. The TEU is broadly supportive of the 'learner support and engagement' initiative which includes **Recommendations 1 and 2** of the *Report of the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams*:

- **Recommendation 1:** 24/7 Learner Support Service – for all learners in all learning modes and contexts whose support advisors have a 360° view of learners, are able to proactively identify possible learner needs, and to reach out to offer effective support, particularly to priority learners
- **Recommendation 2:** Learner Digital Home – an easy to navigate, single point-of-access that connects to everything learners need

- 5.2. The proposed uses of technology outlined in **Recommendations 1 and 2** builds on existing practices – our suggestions below centre on how these uses of technology might be further developed and adapted to NZIST. There are two critical limits to technology-enabled practices that must be acknowledged, and additional approaches developed in response. Regarding **Recommendation 1**, these limitations relate to staffing capacities, workloads, and the need to support staff in providing high-quality support to students, based around the benefits of face-to-face interaction and reproducing those benefits to the greatest extent possible. Following this, the limitations of **Recommendation 2** relate to the 'digital divide' and the need to fully recognise this limit and develop alternative, positive strategies as a way forward. These strategies should aim to support those most affected by the digital divide by utilising community and campus resources to provide accessible spaces and equipment, and facilitate learning.

- 5.3. **Recommendation 1** proposes that "the 24/7 Learner Support Service is the game changing initiative to improve learner success" (2). This suggests that the

term '24/7 Learner Support Service' names something that goes well beyond the literal descriptive elements in that term. Here, some form of support that spans all hours of the day and night will be an important component of what the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams envisage, but the Recommendation is clearly talking about something much larger. It would be helpful, then, to use terminology that keeps this larger concept in view. As preliminary examples, we suggest:

- Integrated Learner Support Service
- Integrated Learner Response System
- Wrap-around Learner Support Service

5.4. Following this, the TEU supports the recommendation for an integrated learner support service. However, we think the following caveats must be considered.

5.5. With regard to the notion of 24/7 support, it is clear that many learners are active in the evenings and on through to the early hours of the morning. One second-chance learner with young children has described rising at 3:00a.m. each morning to do her work at home when a quiet space is available. However, there cannot be full, real-time interactive support with human beings for 24 hours of the day unless the institutes are to hire three shifts of staff covering seven days a week. Perhaps, in a national network, this is a possibility on a limited scale and should be considered. Two larger shifts covering 6:00a.m.-10:00p.m. might be an option, with a smaller shift covering the 10:00p.m.-6:00a.m. period. Staff who are willing and experienced enough to provide quality support at unsociable hours may be able to do so from home. However, the need for shared de-briefings and trainings, and contact with fellow workers may also be extensive. Furthermore, all the health and safety hazards of shift work would need to be considered and mitigation strategies developed. We elaborate on this point below.

5.6. Tutors and lecturers are currently prepared to work at unusual hours. In order to assist with getting learners to their on-job or on-campus commitments, it is not uncommon for lecturers and tutors to start their work at unconventional working hours early in the morning; they also often teach classes late into the evening. Despite the myth propagated in some quarters that polytechnic teachers are less inclined to do this than those working in ITOs who currently

support on-job training, the factors such as those outlined above are a reality for many lecturers and tutors. However, workloads must be managed – there must be a workloads model across the whole of NZIST that allows for this. As the role of supporting and advising trainees on-the-job comes over to NZIST employees, this need will only be emphasised. Such a model must provide for workloads that are reasonable, equitable, safe, and transparent.

- 5.7. We support the use of a variety of media in which to provide integrated learner support services, including face-to-face interaction as the gold standard. We agree that venues other than campuses may be needed in which to provide this support and also to carry the message and present the possibility of vocational education into the extremities of our regions. We agree that phone, text, chat, and video support are all good options, but they must be adequately staffed to avoid becoming a source of frustration for learners and increased workloads for staff. There must also be a role, as the recommendation notes, for chatbots and asynchronous support. These would deal with problems that can either be resolved at the time, as the bot learns answers to typical questions, or establishes a time with the learner when they can be contacted by a human if further information or interaction is required. However, having said all this – and bearing in mind the recommendations of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream and the sensitivity of learner success to a range of personal factors – providing the necessary quality of support over 24 hours remains challenging. Feedback from TEU members suggests that this is because in-depth knowledge of the content of a course, or of the skills being acquired on an apprenticeship (delivered on-the-job, on-campus, and also possibly online), as well as some knowledge of the student themselves, including their personal and behavioural challenges, is needed for developing the main aspects of a successful relationship between the learner and the provider, broadly conceived. It is worth re-iterating here that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to online provision are only now beginning to be understood; the true impacts are yet to be seen.
- 5.8. A workload model that recognises all these unseen sources of work and maintains appropriate staff-student ratios for the traditional learning facilitators, especially tutors is therefore crucial. It must provide a sustainable model so that staff are retained and learners gain the benefits of a stable staff

with manageable workloads. The TEU's *The State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector Survey, 2018* (Sedgwick and Proctor-Thomson 2019) provides further information on what staff need to support student success.

- 5.9. Some of the innovations recommended can certainly assist in providing the level of informed support learners need. The recommendation talks of delivering personalised and pro-active support, with support advisors having a 360° view of the learner. It also talks of “a data warehouse that aggregates learner data from student management, learner management, Customer Relationship Management Systems and other systems” (3). We agree that a learner profile that can be accessed by anyone providing support – and sit in front of them while they give that support, highlighting the particular needs of a learner in particular areas – would be highly desirable. Such integrated systems, in which one system talks to another and keeps a central resource up to date are, however, notoriously difficult to achieve. A central profile that highlights the learning needs of ākonga and provides links to other relevant systems so that an up-to-date picture can be quickly and easily constructed by the support advisor may be achievable, however. The learner should be enabled to give permission to the advisor, if the learner wishes, to access any material to which privacy considerations might apply. We say more on this below.
- 5.10. We support **Recommendation 2** – the development of a Digital Home for each learner. In the example of an institution like Toi Ohomai, learners have access to a Student Hub App where they can access a wide range of tools and information. Here, learners are able to, among other things, change their password, access their learning management system for courses, plan their degree, view their timetable, manage their library withdrawals and fines, and get information on career opportunities.⁶ It is an ‘aggregation of services’ as envisaged by the report. The site where these services are collected does not require a password – passwords may be required to enter each tool but will soon be learned by a device, allowing immediate access.
- 5.11. In terms of **Recommendation 1**, then, it may be that another service or tool is required to be added to the kind of suite to be found at Toi Ohomai’s Student

⁶ See <https://toiohomai.ac.nz/current-students>, accessed 15 July 2020.

Hub App, as described above. This would be a personal learner profile, consisting of the kind of personal information identified in the *Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream* – that is, obstacles and enablers to learning, strengths and weaknesses, and perhaps some recent history of support previously provided. These must include the extent to which the learner has access to online devices and other technology, as well as accessibility to suitable spaces at home with which to use them – these factors could be understood by implementing an ‘interview-on-entry’ system. This can be updated by learners in response to prompts by the tool, as well as those providing support to ākonga. It is transparent to the learner and the learner would need to give permission to make it available, on a case-by-case basis, to any advisor with whom they are engaged.

- 5.12. However, these considerations do not take account of the digital divide. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the extent to which many learners do not have the necessary devices, spaces, or resources that allow for internet access and/or sufficient data to take advantage of online (or ‘technology enabled’) learning opportunities. They may also live in parts of the country where there is a limited degree of reliable cell phone or internet connectivity. In these regions, internet access may be many times more expensive than in the cities, on a ‘per-data’ basis. The digital divide involves both socio-economic and regional elements. These disparities often coincide, with the more remote regions often being poorer regions. It is also broadly true that the most vulnerable learners – those who have not done well in the education system up to the point they join NZIST – are more likely to need social and peer support, the interactions that physical learning spaces and face-to-face teaching itself provide. Learners need to build relationships with teachers and peers, so they are better placed to build relationships with employers and co-workers – online learning is less conducive in this regard than face-to-face learning.
- 5.13. If we are to take seriously the imperatives in the legislation around RoVE and the requirement in the NZIST Charter that NZIST will be responsive to “the needs of the regions of New Zealand and their learners, industries, employers, and communities,”⁷ then we must reject from the outset the platitude that

⁷ See <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0001/29.0/LMS245837.html>, accessed 06 July 2020.

online delivery of learning will allow vocational education and training to penetrate the outlying regions. The opposite is, in fact, more likely to be the case. Incoming NZIST Chief Executive Stephen Town has expressed the intention of beginning from the 'extremities' of the regions, developing models that work in those spaces, and adapting them progressively to more urbanised and higher socio-economic areas. The TEU certainly supports this approach; it keeps technology firmly in the role of a response to properly identified learner needs and prevents it from determining teaching methods and creating gaps in provision for learners. This technological determinism is certainly one way in which learners can be set up to fail in the vocational education system.

- 5.14. A further, related way in which learners can fall through the cracks has to do with the mix of delivery. Expert assessment is needed to determine the optimal mix of online and face-to-face, practical, and theoretical teaching that is best suited to the subject matter and the stage at which it is taught, as well as to the academic and cultural characteristics of a cohort of learners. There is a risk, therefore, that arises from the legislated role of WDCs in determining the modes of delivery for skills training. Indeed, this role seems a curious addition to their distinctive and appropriate role in setting standards, identifying graduate profiles and learning outcomes and assisting with assessments. It seems that this aspect of the legislation is, at least partly, a result of perennial over-enthusiasm for online modes of delivery. NZIST will need to take steps to mitigate against this risk should it arise in practice. Perhaps it is also motivated by a fear that classroom based teaching has been preferred over on-job training – or will be preferred when NZIST takes over arranging and supporting on-job training and apprenticeships. Either way, determining the mix of provision requires expert input from teaching and learning professionals in careful collaboration with employers and industry representatives. It must be noted that there is very often a false dichotomy that is assumed between on-job and on-campus learning. A recent chef training course at Weltec, for example, developed through careful consultation and work with local employers, has learners spending about half their time in a commercial kitchen and half their time in a kitchen on the Weltec campus in central Wellington, with the division occurring at least week-by-week, perhaps even more frequently. Building trades are also trained by building houses, on campuses all over Aotearoa New Zealand, although, in this case, there is not presently a lot of back and forth

between on-campus and on-job training. Most importantly, though, NZIST will need to take steps to mitigate against the risk that online delivery is seen as a panacea for under-served learners, should this risk arise in practice. In general, TEU members have maintained the strong view, which has only been reinforced by their experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown period, that online delivery is a very valuable supplement – but a very poor substitute – for face-to-face teaching.

- 5.15. Given these considerations, the TEU recommends that a careful and realistic assessment of the digital divide is undertaken, beginning from the geographical outer limits or ‘extremities’ of NZIST and progressing inward from there. This could be based on some higher-level profiles and statistics concerning the different types of learners that NZIST is seeking to connect with, beginning with the most under-served, and it should be informed by post-COVID-19 economic and labour market conditions. It should be possible to get help with this work from the newly established Interim RSLGs and their MBIE support staff.
- 5.16. Similarly, an inventory of methods for overcoming the digital divide needs to be developed, beginning from strategies that provide physical campus or campus-like spaces that make digital learning and support (technological, pedagogical, and technical) accessible for regional students. They also need to allow for some face-to-face interaction as far as that is possible. As the workstream suggests, this may involve co-opting spaces in community venues like libraries, or simply renting modest spaces that also serve the function of making tertiary education visible in the community (as Whitireia New Zealand has done at times in Porirua township, for example). This is in addition to carefully researching ways to make technologies (other than just cell phones) available in learner’s homes in ways that are useful, sustainable, and well supported.
- 5.17. The TEU agrees all of the preliminary views expressed in the ‘employer support and engagement’ section of the report which includes the following recommendations:
 - **Recommendation 3:** Employer Digital Support Service – a network-wide digital service that gives employers the right support at the right time in an easy to use way

- **Recommendation 4:** Network-Wide Applied Research Coordination Service – to bring existing network resources together to focus on real world problems and development needs

5.18. The potential is obviously huge for further development, premised on a situation in which employees of ITPs can collaborate rather than compete and in which intellectual property will be jointly owned by creators and just one national organisation. An early stage might be to seek expressions of interest from academic staff wanting to advertise the research they are doing in a certain area and trying to gain collaborators and further institutional support. Centres of Vocational Excellence would be one of the first areas to do this but it would be good to ensure this process is democratised. Anyone can put their hand up with a research proposal and see what response they get across the network of colleagues. At the same time thought will need to be given to the assistance that could be provided in gaining external funding, gaining internal funding (a portion of the innovation funding NZIST receives should be put into an internal research fund), and to the other practical assistance in working across the network that could be provided. Universities offer various models that could be followed, now that NZIST has the scale to allow for more administrative and financial support for research networks and more concerted research projects as such.

5.19. Regarding the ‘network-wide learning design and development service’ initiative, **Recommendation 5** is one of the key areas in which staff are seeking benefits from the creation of a nationwide network of provision – perhaps it is the central area in which staff hope to see benefits:

- **Recommendation 5**
 - Network-wide Learning Strategy – to deliver on Charter expectations
 - Design and Development Service – to develop products to agreed learning design principles and quality standards, and to identify and, if necessary, develop quality-assured learning resources
 - Learning Library – of quality-assured learning resources for use in network-wide learning delivery in all delivery modes

5.20. Those hopes are well captured in the Charter expectations identified and described in the first part of this section. The key for staff is getting the balance

right between two extremes. It is important to begin by describing these extremes.

- 5.21. At one extreme there is an overly prescriptive learning programme – ‘lessons in a box.’ Staff fear being reduced to teaching robots, with the other aspects of their job disaggregated and assigned to others. This is a kind of Taylorisation of the teaching and learning process. Those other aspects of the job include the design and delivery of assessments, the development of courses and the academic – and to some extent pastoral – care and guidance of students. Engagement with the community and local industry can also be separated out and given to ‘engagement’ managers. This is a fear that has already been realised to a significant extent at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and its teaching-at-scale project. Staff teach five courses a year to large numbers of students as other aspects of the job – aspects other than delivering material – are allocated elsewhere, at least in theory. Staff feel the rounded, human aspects of the job have been lost. This loss has to be taken seriously. New staff will need to be attracted, from trades and professions. The job will need to have its full human dimension and the varied rewards of teaching preserved. No one is going to do the job just for the money – and not just because the remuneration on offer is so modest. Teaching on polytechnics – by which we mean ‘learning facilitation’ of all kinds is a labour of love in polytechnics. At the same time, it must be understood that learning design centres and assessment centres are not able to produce work of good quality with constant input from teachers and those with the experience and expertise gained from working directly with learners. It is not work that *can be* successfully disaggregated. This is particularly the case as those arranging and supporting on-job training come into NZIST as part of the objective of better integration and unification of the system. So, excessive prescription, specialisation, and disaggregation of tutor and lecturer work must be avoided.
- 5.22. Specifically, the appeal to specialised learning design – and the proposal for a Design and Development Team – need to be treated with real caution. There must be a high degree of access by staff to the design and development team – indeed, a collaborative approach in which the team coordinates input from those who worked in the same area across the network is needed. The team would be better called a design and development *coordination* team. This is

envisaged to some extent with regard to *materials*. This central team is charged with identifying best practice and good examples. But it must involve the *people*, teachers and facilitators themselves, first of all, in an ongoing feedback process. Of course, development and design must also involve WDCs, RSLGs, CoVEs, employers, industry representatives, communities, learners and their representatives, and so on. The team will need to coordinate with those groups and individuals as well – but a primary vehicle for this coordination will be teachers and other learning facilitators within NZIST.

- 5.23. One simple means of achieving this coordination and participation is an annual get together of subject matter experts, from within NZIST and, to the extent possible, from those other groups mentioned above. The Design and Development Coordination Team members could take their lead from this conference, as well as feeding back to practitioners. They can establish the guidance and relationships they will need throughout the year. Some discussion in the report anticipates this kind of process to some extent and the TEU obviously supports this. For example, under Next Steps: “the newly formed LDSS should establish a team drawing on network-wide expertise to begin development of the NZIST learning strategy and associated processes.” However, there needs to be considerably more clarity around the LDSS coordination role.
- 5.24. At the other extreme is a situation that is perhaps best captured by the phrase ‘business as usual.’ The TEU survey of staff – undertaken earlier this year before COVID-19 had an impact – showed the great appetite for reform amongst staff, along with considerable concerns that genuine reform would not eventuate. Competition for inadequate funds has wrought a lot of undesirable changes in polytechnics in terms of teaching and learning. There is:
- Excessive distinction between courses in different institutions.
 - Excessive reliance on an institution-learner marketing model. Too often courses are designed just to be saleable to potential learners rather than being developed closely with industry, employers, communities, iwi, and others – those others including staff and consideration of their wellbeing and vocational engagement.
 - Understaffing has caused a drop in delivery standards in some cases.

- Academic input onto academic committees and quality assurance processes has been severely attenuated. There is excessive managerial dominance in this area and, in at least one case, academic committee does not appear to have the power to management decisions about courses, programmes and qualifications, even if it were to reach an academically based decision on the merits of a given proposal.
- There is excessive managerial dominance in other areas, including external engagement.
- COVID-19 has raised fears of excessive reliance on online teaching methods.

5.25. In meeting the objectives that are successfully identified for a network-wide Learning Design and Development Service (LDSS) in the proposal, then, there have to be mechanisms that will disrupt some aspects of the current operating model in polytechnics. It must be remembered that this model is an inevitable result of a competitive market model and uses those managerial approaches. We say more about this below – but we agree with the report that the ‘senior NZIST academic executive’ will have a key role to play, in terms of a learning strategy that begins to be implemented by the NZIST Academic Board and its Chair.

5.26. We agree that developing a network-wide learning strategy, the first element of this proposal, is a priority (although please see our recommendation below regarding terminology and the use of word ‘product’). We contend that this should consist in identifying, in the first instance, some minimal requirements of subsidiary behaviour around courses, programmes, training schemes, apprenticeships, and qualifications. These requirements would be aimed at fulfilling the Charter expectations. They needn’t be heavy-handed, but a gradual process of adjustment and feedback must be initiated. It can’t all happen at once after December 2022. If that were ever a possibility (which we don’t believe it was) the government has asked for an acceleration of the RoVE process in support of economic recovery. For example, continuing with ‘business as usual’ in subsidiaries (which is in fact a continual state and/or cost-cutting flux), with continuing changes in academic offerings risks making the harmonisation of offerings in the system much more difficult than it needs to be. An example is changing the structure of a degree like Bachelor of Computing Science from a

two semester per year structure to a four term per year structure. Subsidiaries need to be asked to show that this is in accord with the objective of learner mobility across the network and is not out of step with the offerings of other institutions. In time, there may also be requirements to show that it meets certain best practice parameters in terms of academic integrity and learner experience. Network-wide parameters for such things should be allowed to evolve, as an example of 'suitable models of learning and assessment.' This requires that NZIST's academic board is suitably constituted and empowered – which would require a much broader process of constitution including the election of academic staff members and a much longer board.

- 5.27. At this point, however, we must contend strongly that, for all the reasons given above, the market terminology of 'products and services' and 'product market position' must be dropped in favour of accurate terminology such as courses, training schemes, programmes, qualifications, apprenticeships, and the like – or possibly 'offerings' where a more general and economical terms is needed. In the case of 'services,' this should at least be qualified by terms like 'support' or 'health' or replaced by 'pastoral care,' and so on.
- 5.28. With regard to a quality assured learning library, a common repository of resources is well supported by members as an obvious gain that could be made in the network. However, our remarks above about processes that involve people from throughout the network and the VET system also apply here. There will need to be criteria and parameters evolved that provide structure in the repository and help identify best practice the experience elsewhere may be repeated. That is, pools of resources can quickly become swamps with limited utility.
- 5.29. The proposal that NZIST makes possession of an advanced practice-based teaching qualification mandatory for all NZIST learning facilitators is one on which we believe further consultation is needed. While we support the broad principle that might lead to such a requirement, there is much work that would be done to ensure it is implemented fairly, with adequate support for staff, recognition of existing qualifications and experience and due regard to other demands and priorities.

6. Report of the Work-Based Learning Workstream

- 6.1. Regarding the broader risks outlined on page 2 of the *Report of the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Workstream*, the TEU agrees that ensuring employers and learners remain confident in the system is imperative to the success of NZIST. However, it will also be essential that subsidiary staff do not lose confidence in the system. For this reason, NZIST should – in addition to working alongside TITOs and the TEC – endeavour to operate in conjunction with the TEU to ensure staff remain reassured of the integrity of the new system during – and beyond – the initial transitional stages.
- 6.2. The TEU supports **Recommendation 1** – to build capability and capacity for work-based learning into NZIST. However, in-line with bullet-point 5 of the Recommendations and Risks Matrix on page 26 of the report, we think it is important that this transition occurs within the next 12 months. Hastening this process will not only help enhance NZIST’s understanding of work-based learning models and contribute to sooner realising a “unified culture” (26), it is now also necessary given the aims of the government in relation to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸ As such, **Recommendation 7** – which allows for the completion of the transfer of TITO capabilities and provisions by 2022-2023 – is rendered non-applicable.
- 6.3. As noted above, it is the TEU’s perspective that ensuring the confidence of *all stakeholders* as the new system gets underway will be key to the success of NZIST. Therefore, we support ensuring the capabilities of ITO Training Advisors are retained (**Recommendation 2**). With regard to the risk of ITPs unnecessarily duplicating the roles and functions of ITOs and their Training Advisors (bullet-point 2, page 27), it will be, again, necessary to include the TEU in the “clear communication strategy” noted in bullet-point 1 on page 27.
- 6.4. As per **Recommendation 3**, the TEU agrees that developing detailed employer personas will be vital to understanding the circumstances and requirements of the range of employers that exist as potential components of the new system. In particular, understanding and accounting for the self-employed as well as small-

⁸ See <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/proactive-release-2020-june/Tertiary-Education-Report-COVID-recovery-opportunities-to-accelerate-aspects-of-RoVE.pdf>, accessed 12 July 2020.

to-medium size enterprises throughout Aotearoa New Zealand – that is, enterprises that often don't have the machinery and other resources to provide training for the skills and aptitudes beyond those directly related to their particular trade – will allow for complementary configurations between online, on-job, and on-campus training, thereby also increasing the opportunities available to learners. Here, it will be important for the Work-Based Learning and Learner Journey Mapping Workstreams to work in conjunction with each other.

- 6.5. The TEU supports the notion that, as outlined in the Table associated with **Recommendation 4** (18), having a range of work-based learning delivery options is essential for the new system to operate successfully. As iterated above in our comments on **Recommendation 3**, it will be necessary to understand the 'personas' of both employers and learners, and, by working with the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream, NZIST and the Work-Based Learning Workstream should aim to be in a position to advise on which learners are likely to be best-suited to which work-based learning delivery option. However, there are issues with the central place of PTEs within the Provider, Apprenticeship, and Corporate delivery types outlined in the Table on page 18 of the report. In our view, NZIST should be at the heart of work-based learning provision: if consistency, quality assurance, life-long learning, and, significantly, adequate pastoral care are to underpin the "new world" of vocational education, then NZIST needs to operate as the primary provider across the system. It is the TEU's recommendation that PTEs are utilised only in their capacity to deliver training in areas that are commonly considered to be niche.
- 6.6. **Recommendation 5** aims to instil and uphold components of the new system which are mandated in the NZIST Charter by fostering coherent communication and collaboration between NZIST, its subsidiaries, and WDCs. The TEU supports the NZIST Charter and, more broadly, organisational cohesion across the vocational education sector. By extension, we support **Recommendation 5**.
- 6.7. As noted in our comments on **Recommendation 4**, NZIST, from the TEU's point-of-view, should operate as the heart of vocational education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Following this, we support the development of a nationwide organisational structure of provision which supports work-based, provider-based, and online learning (**Recommendation 6**). Structuring NZIST's provision in this way will mean that learners are better placed to engage in peer-to-peer

learning and study support, whilst having greater capacity to move seamlessly from one campus or geographical location to another – these are factors which will likely increase retention rates and have positive outcomes for Māori, Pacific, and learners with disabilities. Again, in order to ensure the development of these nationally-structured provisions are optimal, it will be important for the Work-Based Learning Workstream to seek and integrate input from the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream. Additionally, as outlined in our comments on the *Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream*, it will be important to also consider the work being undertaken as part of the Ministry of Social Development’s Disability Action Employment Plan⁹ and the Ministry of Education’s work on the educational experiences of disabled learners.¹⁰ Ideally, a separate Workstream constituted by disabled learners and experts in specialist learner support should also be formed in order to assist in guiding these aspects of the new system.

- 6.8. It is the TEU’s perspective that the capabilities and provisions of ITOs should be integrated into NZIST within the next 12 months (see our comments on **Recommendation 1**). As such, **Recommendation 7** – “If required, complete the transfer of TITO capabilit[ies] and provision[s]” – is non-applicable.
- 6.9. The TEU strongly supports the notion that, as per **Recommendation 8**, the unified funding system is a key enabler relative to ensuring the successful integration of work-based learning within the new system. As such, it is also our view that, in order to ensure competition and confusion between ITOs and NZIST subsidiaries is avoided, the unified funding system needs to be implemented with urgency. The TEU recommends that NZIST work in conjunction with the TEC to ensure that the new unified funding system is in place at the beginning of the 2022 academic year.
- 6.10. The TEU supports **Recommendation 9**.

⁹ See <https://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/disability-services/disability-employment-action-plan/index.html>, accessed 12 July 2020.

¹⁰ See <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/he-whakaaro-the-educational-experiences-of-disabled-learners>, accessed 12 July 2020.

- 6.11. The TEU supports the implementation of systems to manage, track, and monitor apprentices and trainees, as well as the provision of 24/7 access and support (**Recommendation 10**). However, there are important factors to consider regarding, firstly, the inadvertent surveillance of learners, and, secondly, the issue of 24/7 support in relation to the pre-existing problem of unrealistic staff workloads throughout the vocational education sector. On these points, see our commentary above on the *Report of the Learner Journey Mapping Workstream*, and the *Report of the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams*.

7. Report of the New Architecture Working Group

- 7.1. Regarding **Recommendation 1** and the membership and composition of Poari Akoranga, the TEU supports the decision to pursue a skills- and knowledge-based cohort drawn from networks across the sector. However, we would like to reiterate our frustration surrounding the lack of consultation that went in to the seeking of nominees to be considered as members of Poari Akoranga. As noted in our letter to Murray Strong and Chris Collins dated 04 June, the fact that NZIST subsidiary staff throughout the sector knew nothing of the selection processes underway means that principles central to the NZIST Charter – inclusivity, equity, empowerment, collaboration, and giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi – have already been undermined. This is unfortunate given NZIST is still in its early stages, and is a factor that will need to be rectified proactively as further committee and board selection processes are enacted.
- 7.2. The TEU supports the proposed NZIST Academic Architecture which forms **Recommendation 2** of the *Report of the New Architecture Working Group*. In addition to, beginning in 2021, ensuring that subsidiary committees include appropriate expertise and representation, we also recommend that the new structure, as a whole, is reviewed within 18 months. As part of this review, it should be made clear where and how staff are able to provide input based on their experiences and knowledge of the early phases of the new architecture.
- 7.3. The TEU recognises the importance of including the voices and expertise of those throughout both the ITO and ITP sectors as NZIST continues to get underway. Additionally, as the TEU recognises the significance of honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi in reference to the Education Act and the NZIST Charter, we

strongly support **Recommendation 3** and the prioritising of the formation of Komiti Ōritetanga.

- 7.4. The TEU supports, as per **Recommendation 4**, the drafting of Poari Akoranga's Terms of Reference. However, in addition to the socialising of a glossary of terms associated with the Terms of Reference, we think it is important that each subsidiary academic board has sufficient time and opportunity to consider, critique, and provide feedback on the Terms of Reference themselves prior to approval by the NZIST Council. Also, further detail surrounding the ways in which the Terms of Reference relate to the auditing practices of the TEC, as well as other entities such as NZQA, WDCs, RSLGs, and Te Taumata Aronui should be clearly laid out in documentation and policies of Paori Akoranga.
- 7.5. The TEU supports the development of a workplan for Poari Akoranga (**Recommendation 5**). However, the workplan should identify mechanisms that advise and allow staff to inform, for example, the formation of relevant disciplinary networks – a part of the process which the high-level timeline on page 13 of the *Report of the New Architecture Working Group* indicates is already underway. More specifically, we recommend that any processes that require staff input should allow sufficient time – 6 weeks as a general starting point – for collective debate and the formulation of comprehensive submissions. Further to this, in order to ensure staff are fully-informed about the issues potentially effecting them, webinars and other information sessions run by NZIST are advisable.
- 7.6. Regarding **Recommendation 6** and the implementation of a harmonisation project, the TEU supports both this endeavour as well as the intention to establish Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) forums. Again, it is crucial that academic staff throughout the sector are aware of the processes being undertaken in relation to the harmonising of academic matters and the selection processes for SMEs.
- 7.7. The TEU supports the new delegations assigned to subsidiary academic committees, as outlined in **Recommendation 7**.
- 7.8. Although the central components of **Recommendation 8** are no longer applicable, the TEU supports the proposal that the New Architecture Working

Group continues as a Reference Group in order to oversee ongoing, relevant issues.

8. Report of the Internationalisation Working Group

- 8.1. The TEU supports the underlying approach taken by the Internationalisation Working Group and its orientation from ‘international education’ toward the ‘internationalisation of education.’ However, it is clear that the thinking that has gone into the *Report of the Internationalisation Working Group* was developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. And although many components tied to the ‘ideal future states’ outlined in the report may remain valid, we assume that the Internationalisation Working Group and NZIST are working to reassess certain details and recommendations contained throughout the report in light of the implications and problems that the pandemic has given rise to. Here, the TEU’s position is that a nationwide hui is required in order to coordinate a national response to the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the tertiary education sector more broadly.
- 8.2. A vocational education system which presents opportunities that foster the development of globally minded learners and citizens is vital if Aotearoa New Zealand is to remain relevant on the global education stage. As such, the TEU broadly supports the recommendations included within the scope of **Priority 1: Global Mindset and Opportunities**. In particular, we think it is important to understand and emphasise the value and *non-financial* contribution of international learners (10). Following this, recognising the non-financial value of international learners will need to extend to certain other **Priority 1** recommendations such as the expectations that, firstly, international learners embrace and contribute to regional life, and, secondly, that NZIST graduates promote their experience and the NZIST brand offshore (11). Additionally, where academic staff are expected to uphold “an international lens and competence” so that their programmes “reflect international content,” adequate resourcing and opportunities for professional development must be an explicit component of the **Priority 1** recommendation centred on “identifying opportunities for growth” (11).
- 8.3. With regard to **Priority 2: Learner Wellbeing and Experience**, the TEU broadly supports the recommendations to “provide reassurances” to learners and

“prioritise learner wellbeing” (12-13). Where the intention is to develop a “Pastoral Care of International Learners Toolkit” and enable a “nationally consistent positive learner experience model that is used across all subsidiaries” (13), NZIST should be doing so in conjunction with the Education (Pastoral Care) Amendment Bill¹¹ and the results of the government’s recent Inquiry into Student Accommodation.¹² Additionally, to develop a “national model for work placement and internships for international learners” (13) the Internationalisation Working Group should be operating in a way which includes the work of the Work-Based Learning Workstream.

- 8.4. The TEU broadly supports the recommendations under **Priority 3: Pathways and regional impact**. However, where the intention is to provide clear pathways for international learners alongside the creation of “a pool of employers keen to take on learners” (14), further mapping – as per the work of the Learner Journey Mapping and Employer and Community Engagement Workstreams – may be required in order to understand the circumstances and needs of learners and employers within, specifically, the context of internationalisation. Furthermore, if NZIST is to carry out an “awareness campaign demonstrating the value of international students to regions” (14), any such campaign needs to explicitly illustrate, as per our commentary on **Priority 1** above, the *non-financial* value of international learners.
- 8.5. Regarding **Priority 4: Quality and Innovation**, the TEU broadly supports the recommendations to internationalise products, services, and delivery. However, establishing positive working relationships with, among other entities, RSLGs and WDCs will be paramount to ensuring the work of the Internationalisation Working Group understands and accounts for regional skills shortages. Here, it is recommended that the Internationalisation Working Group draws on the principles of engagement and Strategic Partnerships Strategy being developed by the Employer and Community Engagement Workstream. Additionally, the long-term recommendation to “[r]esearch current products and services contrasting international trends with evaluation informing the development of

¹¹ See <http://legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2019/0184/latest/LMS265142.html>, accessed 12 July 2020.

¹² See https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/52SCEW_SCF_INQ_98038/inquiry-into-student-accommodation, accessed 12 July 2020.

education products and services” (15) will require collaboration with the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams.

- 8.6. The TEU broadly supports the recommendations to “understand the “full” value of internationalisation” and “deliver value” as they are outlined under **Priority 5: Define and Deliver Value**. Again, however, the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic mean that any resort to “business as usual” (16) with regard to preserving Aotearoa New Zealand’s international education reputation will need to be reassessed. Additionally, if NZIST staff and stakeholders are to achieve the targets established relevant to ensuring the value of internationalisation is realised (16), appropriate resourcing and professional development provisions for staff need to be made available. Lastly, as noted above in our commentary pertaining to education products and services, it will be necessary for the Internationalisation Working Group to work with the Education Products and Services and Online Arrangements Workstreams if products that “meet a more sophisticated marketing and international development approach” (17) are to be developed efficiently and without duplicating other products.
- 8.7. Regarding the branding and marketing strategy of NZIST within the context of internationalisation, the TEU broadly supports the recommendations under **Priority 6: Tell the Story**. This is particularly the case where the aim is to promote the “value of international education as more than just revenue generation” so that “its contribution to NZIST, the regions, and the New Zealand economy is a visible and well-understood story” (17).

9. References

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