

Murray Strong, Board Chair, Te Pūkenga  
Stephen Town, Chief Executive, Te Pūkenga  
Ana Morrison, Deputy Chief Executive Partnerships and Equity, Te Pūkenga

*Sent via email attachment*

6 November 2020

E ngā rangatira, tēnā rā koutou

Ko ngā mihi manahau ki a koutou i roto i ngā āhuatanga maha o te wā.

We commend Te Pūkenga for taking the initiative and leadership to develop Te Pae Tawhiti Framework. This is an essential step for Te Pūkenga in creating a meaningful “Māori partnership and equity” space. Te Pae Tawhiti is a critical document in guiding our practice in Te Pūkenga to “ensure our systems and services work well for Māori; and respond with excellence to the priorities of ākonga Māori and their whānau; and to the wider aspirations of hapū and hapori Māori throughout Aotearoa; in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.” (Living Document – Te Pūkenga Programme Workstreams).

The aspiration set out in Te Pae Tawhiti and draft FAQs, shared with us by Phil Alexander-Crawford, is for Te Pūkenga to lead and enact a step change towards equitable education outcomes for Māori. We endorse the view that there is an urgent need to critically reflect on the existing Te Tiriti relationships that have been created within the sector and to build a strong foundation for making significant change in the future structures and processes that support outcomes for ākonga Māori and their hapori. We also welcome the prioritisation of continuous self-reflection within that overall process.

Overall, our members were concerned that they did not have an opportunity to contribute to the development of Te Pae Tawhiti as a ‘working document’. There appear to be some critical absences and missteps that might easily have been avoided had staff voice been adequately incorporated into the drafting process. In particular:

- The document creates an artificial distinction between ākonga Māori and hapori ‘out there’ and Te Pūkenga. It looks over the heads, as it were, of kaimahi Maori, from management to ākonga and their hapori, totally missing the possibility that kaimahi Māori *within* Te

Pūkenga are the key to leading and guiding practice that will best serve ākongā Māori and hapori.

- Kaimahi Māori are already members of Te Pūkenga subsidiaries and their own hapū, iwi, and hapori. They are part of the hapori that Te Pūkenga and Te Pae Tawhiti hope to serve; they grew up in these hapori, it is where their tamariki grow and are educated hapori and often they are leaders within these hapori. The “Kōrero about the future of Māori Education” appended at the end of Te Pae Tawhiti document noted that “Māori want tino rangatiratanga – agency and authority – over the education of Māori learners. This means there needs to be a genuine partnership approach across the education system, with leaders who believe in Māori and understand te ao Māori”. Kaimahi Māori are key participants in enacting this vision.
- Given the cornerstone role of kaimahi Māori, Te Pūkenga needs to employ active recruitment and development strategies to attract, nurture, and retain kaimahi Māori. Again, the “Kōrero about the future of Māori education” points in the right direction stating the need for, “A workforce that is representative of and responsive to Māori”. Kaimahi Māori need better support and recognition. More Māori academic, professional, and allied staff are needed. That is particularly the case in areas such as te reo Māori, learning support, and social services, but also applies across all disciplines in the network. Nevertheless, Te Pae Tawhiti as it stands has nothing to say on this issue.
- Te Pae Tawhiti reproduces deficit model language that has been roundly critiqued for some time. There is an urgent need to refashion the language so that it builds from a strengths-based approach. Kaimahi māori are ideally placed to contribute in that process.

In summary, if ākongā Māori are to be placed at the centre of Te Pūkenga then kaimahi Māori must be involved in all aspects of the ongoing development of Te Pae Tawhiti as well as in the processes of self-reflection and critique that it fosters. It is kaimahi māori, after all, who will be most directly responsible for enabling ākongā māori to succeed and flourish with the framework Te Pae Tawhiti provides. That also requires that kaimahi Māori are attracted, nurtured and retained in Te Pūkenga in increasing numbers.

The initial development of Te Pae Tawhiti without the involvement of TEU members was a missed opportunity for Te Pūkenga. We will be formulating a fuller response to the draft, but wanted to lodge early the need for a strong debate on Te Pae Tawhiti. We would welcome being part of a discussion on how TEU members might have an active role in re-working the “working document”, and take an exciting role in its implementation that will truly transform the institute and its network.

Awahi atu, awahi mai – tātou, tātou e.

Nā mātou ko,

Dr Michael Gilchrist  
**National President, TEU**

Dr Sandra Grey  
**National Secretary, TEU**

Hūhana Wātene  
**Te Tumu Arataki, TEU**