

# Ngā piki, Ngā heke

## A big year for VET

It has been a big year for the vocational education sector. As the Reform of Vocational Education changes continue to develop, we have seen the establishment of [Te Pūkenga](#) and interim establishment boards set up for Workforce Development Councils and Regional Skills Leadership Groups. And then there were the ever-changing responses to COVID-19.

Despite the complexities that 2020 has presented, the TEU has maintained influence through engagement with government, sector leaders, and industry. Our ongoing influence continues to ensure our voices are heard in the development of Te Pūkenga and more broadly in the new vocational education system.

**In this final RoVE Newsletter for the year we reflect on all we've achieved together and look forward to more 2021 meetings and actions.**

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### Making our voice heard

In TEU research and member meetings, the importance of staff voice in the direction, policies, and processes of the sector is raised repeatedly. In the RoVE space, members have raised concerns around staff consultation, inclusion, and collaboration – as well as support for staff development and wellbeing. There has also been concern over who will decide on the teaching delivery, methods, and future content for the network; and, discussion over whether the new network will see an emphasis on vocational 'readiness' or a broader academic focus.

This is why in our [Briefing](#) to Te Pūkenga Chief Executive Stephen Town, TEU made clear that there is a need to keep staff voice high in the development of Te Pūkenga.

And we've worked hard to ensure that the voice of TEU members has been present and heard throughout the development and consultation process through our regular meetings with government officials and sector leaders, including regular meetings with:

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- Te Pūkenga Chief Executive, Stephen Town;
- Te Pūkenga Council Chair, Murray Strong;
- the Te Pūkenga HR team;
- the project leads of Te Pūkenga's Te Pae Tawhiti;
- the Minister of Education
- leaders at the Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Education NZ, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority; and,
- the Programme Director of RoVE, David Strong.

We have also had TEU staff involvement with the interim Regional Skills Leadership Groups, Workforce Development Council Design Groups, and the Council of Trade Unions' Industry Training Group.

We are standing together to ensure Te Pūkenga lives up to the legislated requirement to empower staff.



The poster can be found [here](#).

The high level of engagement is set to continue throughout 2021. If you have ideas, critiques, or suggestions that need to be raised in the regular catch-ups, head to the TEU [RoVE webpage](#) and submit your ideas to us.

**So, what has all this input into Te Pūkenga meant? And what have we told the leaders of the reform? Here's a snapshot of the work undertaken by TEU.**

## Staff committee under development

Building on our influence throughout the tertiary education sector, we celebrated the Government putting into legislation the empowerment of staff in the vocational education and training network. The question now is how to make this work within Te Pūkenga.

Using the Education Act as the starting point, the TEU has [proposed](#) how staff voice can contribute to the strategic decision-making of Te Pūkenga Council and subsidiary boards and have recommended that Te Pūkenga Council establish a policy that requires it to consult the staff committee on all policy decisions relevant to staff as well as on matters of strategic direction.

Early in the new year we'll be making sure that all staff have opportunities to comment on proposed structures for the staff committee.

## Getting Te Pūkenga's Poari Akoranga back on track

Poari Akoranga (Te Pūkenga's Academic Board) and its national committees are one of the most important vehicles in Te Pūkenga for ensuring the empowerment of staff and students across academic matters. In particular, that must mean that the voice of staff who are currently and actively involved in teaching and learning, as well as research and innovation – and not just academic and quality managers who have previous experience – is represented on the Board. One reason for this is the rapidly changing environment in academic content development and delivery that will prevail in Te Pūkenga over the next few years.

Through our consultations with Te Pūkenga, we have argued that adequate numbers of academic staff and learners are required on the main Board of Poari Akoranga, and on its national committees and workstreams. Their selection should involve the opportunity for staff to vote on those they would like to see involved. We have stated that allied staff should also be represented by at least two members on the Board itself.

Representation by allied staff will be invaluable to Poari Akoranga for their experience and knowledge across learner support, research coordination, learning resource collation (including librarians), learning and teaching innovation in face-to-face and online formats, and administrative challenges.

We have proposed that TEU facilitate the nomination of at least one allied and one academic staff member to Poari Akoranga. So, watch this space to see if Te Pūkenga's leadership responds positively to our suggestions.

## Mobilising the New World

Taken together, the seven [Mobilising the New World Interim Reports](#) developed by the IST Establishment Board and published by Te Pūkenga set a promising foundation for the future direction of vocational education in Aotearoa.

We had three TEU representatives – Sarah Proctor-Thomson, Jill Jones, and Phil Edwards – directly involved in the Mobilising the New World working groups, who were able to further provide union voice and their own expertise in the creation of a more sustainable and fit-for-purpose sector.

Our [response](#) to the Interim Reports noted that if Te Pūkenga is to genuinely “mobilise the new world” of vocational education it must avoid strategies and structures that resorted to the competitive business model that plagued the previous system

While the staff committee structure that will have input to the national council of Te Pūkenga is co-designed and constituted, TEU has had interim representation in the form of a half-hour slot in the closed session of the Council's monthly meetings. This time has been shared with TIASA. We have also spoken, in the open session, to correspondence we have sent the Council around such things as staff representation in Poari Akoranga. We hope that direct TEU input to Council will become a permanent feature of Te Pūkenga, alongside national and local staff committee input.

We have also worked with Te Pūkenga staff on an interim arrangement that will ensure staff throughout the network who are actively involved in teaching, learning, and research have input to Poari Akoranga. This interim representation will draw on staff of this kind who are currently on subsidiary academic committees, while also having regard to Te Pae Tawhiti, the Tiriti excellence framework of Te Pūkenga.

### Voices of the Sector Forum

On 17 November, the *Voices of the Sector Forum 2020* brought together leaders in the tertiary education sector to discuss the issues and opportunities for international education in Aotearoa, the cascading complications posed by COVID-19, and the cracks it has revealed in the operation of the international education sector.

At the Forum, participants agreed that re-thinking the 'why' of international education will be crucial to *building back better* and ensuring a tertiary education system that genuinely meets the needs of all.

You can read the Forum statement [here](#).



### Myth busting

In our regular meetings with RoVE Programme Director David Strong, it became clear that myths regarding TEU collective agreements continue to be spread. In particular we were again hearing claims that the TEU agreements led to constraints on the capacity of members to work flexibly and in unsociable hours.

In order to bust these myths, we connected David and his colleagues – TITO Transition Project Lead, Rob Wiles, and Project Manager, Nic Wright – directly with members involved in vocational education and training provision. Nothing beats face-to-face conversations in which the lived experience and expertise of members is presented directly to sector leaders.

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In the October meeting, members emphasised the many ways in which collective agreements foster flexibility across the sector with on-the-ground examples. These examples included innovative teaching formats, special projects, and field trips which occur during weekends, as well as hospitality and agriculture courses which require early starts and late nights.

The conversation was also intended to initiate a constructive dialogue about how the arranging, supporting, and assessing of on-the-job training – alongside the staff who currently do this



work in Transitional Industry Training Organisations (TITOs) – might successfully transfer to Polytechnics.

### Pulse surveys show wellbeing decline

Throughout the year, TEU has worked hard to keep members informed and up-to-date on issues that impact on their working lives, and to gauge how members have been affected by the significant changes forced upon the sector as part of the necessary response to COVID-19.

### The Qualifications Review Framework

NZQA are engaging the VET sector on the review of their qualifications framework. During December, workshops are being held at each Te Pūkenga subsidiary so that staff have an opportunity to learn more about the review, ask questions, and provide input as the new framework is developed.

However, NZQA were unable to visit providers outside of the main campuses. So TEU reps asked for, and got, two additional Zoom workshops so that staff located outside of the main centres were able to attend, remain informed, and have their expertise drawn from as this important aspect of the RoVE changes gets underway.

If you have something to add around the early qualifications framework review all you have to do is:

- Click [here](#) to download NZQA's PowerPoint presentation
- Send project lead at NZQA, Frannie Aston, any questions and ideas: [frannie.aston@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:frannie.aston@nzqa.govt.nz)

[Tertiary Lives | COVID-19: A Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Education Staff](#) captured a real sense of both commitment and concern during extreme change and disruption. The detail gained through the survey indicated a workforce ready and able to produce a dedicated response to the continuation of teaching and learning for all tertiary students in difficult times.

Our second survey, [Tertiary Lives | COVID-19: Part II: A Follow-up Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Education Staff](#) built on the first report and confirmed what union leaders had heard from hundreds of members attending

annual meetings across Aotearoa during September 2020 – high-level change is needed immediately to support the wellbeing of all students and staff in the tertiary education sector. Current reports from members are of continuing, unsustainable increases in workload as expenditure cuts are made across the board in institutions.

Watch out in March 2021 for the third COVID-19 Pulse Survey.

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## TEU Forum on Te Pūkenga's Operating Model

Over 27-28 January 2021, TEU will be hosting *Designing Together – A Conversation about Te Pūkenga's Operating Model*.

At the hui, union reps and ITP sector leaders will talk about the core principles and approaches needed to ensure an operating model for Te Pūkenga based on a strong public network of vocational education that ensures good learning and working conditions.

Reps from across the country have been chosen for the forum, but a few more places are available for members who are keen to get involved. Email [events@teu.ac.nz](mailto:events@teu.ac.nz) and we'll see what we can do.

## Te Pae Tawhiti Framework

Te Pūkenga Council has now agreed on the working draft of its Te Tiriti o Waitangi Excellence Framework for use within Te Pūkenga as well as across all subsidiaries. [Te Pae Tawhiti](#) is an essential step for Te Pūkenga in creating a meaningful "Māori partnership and equity" space.

TEU agrees 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 sure the tertiary education sector supports strong outcomes for ākongā Māori.

However, TEU members are concerned that they did not have an opportunity to contribute to the development of Te Pae Tawhiti as a 'working document.' TEU has outlined these concerns in more detail in a [letter](#) to the Board Chair, Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executive Partnerships and Equity, and will be formulating a fuller response to the draft in the new year.

Feel free to talk with you branch reps or send us feedback on the TEU website about Te Pae Tawhiti.

Te Pūkenga's national council are asking all subsidiaries to develop Tiriti partnership agreements with local iwi, where these are not already in existence.

## And finally, a big thank you ...

Over the last year, hundreds of TEU members have participated in forums, surveys, Zoom calls, and in-person meetings to help to shape the direction of the vocational education and training sector.

**Our voice has been strong. Our voice has been welcomed.  
Our expertise and experience have formed the basis for change.**

If you want to join in the conversations, be sure to ask TEU about joining the RoVE reference group, take part in forums, or ask about being an active part of your branch. To do this you can send us a message through our website or email us at [teu@teu.ac.nz](mailto:teu@teu.ac.nz).

**For more information on RoVE head to [teu.ac.nz/campaigns/rove](https://teu.ac.nz/campaigns/rove)**

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