



TEU

TERTIARY EDUCATION UNION
TE HAUTŪ KAHURANGI

Submission of

**Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education
Union**

to

Te Pūkenga

on the

Proposed Te Pūkenga Operating Model

08 November 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education Union (TEU) welcomes this opportunity to respond to Te Pūkenga on the *Proposed Te Pūkenga Operating Model*.
- 1.2. The TEU is the largest union and professional association representing 10,000 academic and allied/general staff in the tertiary education sector (in universities, institutes of technology/polytechnics, wānanga, private training establishments, and rural education activities programmes).
- 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 *Proposed Te Pūkenga Operating Model*:

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 *Proposed Te Pūkenga Operating Model* 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.
- 1.6. We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the TEU members who took the time to attend hui, read and discuss the proposed Operating Model, and contribute to the writing and proofing of this submission – we are particularly appreciative of this given we know the work pressures that our members face throughout the vocational education and training sector. Also, many thanks to our Te Pūkenga Liaison Officers and other members of TEU staff that contributed to this submission.

2. Preamble

- 2.1. TEU commends the extensive work that has gone into the development of the proposed Te Pūkenga Operating Model. On the whole, TEU members are pleased to see a draft Operating Model which is explicitly informed by the Te Pūkenga Charter and oriented toward creating a vocational education and training network which integrates – yet goes beyond – what is already working across the sector. Additionally, by placing ako – or the relational nature of teaching and learning – at the centre of the model, it is clear that Te Pūkenga leadership recognises the pivotal role of Te Pūkenga staff in prioritising and addressing the needs of those learners traditionally underserved by the system.
- 2.2. For TEU staff that were privy to an earlier draft version of the Operating Model in September, seeing the above elements come to the fore is particularly welcomed: not only do we think that, following the inclusion of much of our feedback, the current iteration of the Operating Model is vastly improved, we also think that these improvements illustrate the advantages that come about when meaningful and reciprocal relationships are valued and genuine collaboration is enacted.
- 2.3. However, in the interests of continuing to harness the positive momentum apparent in the direction of the proposed Operating Model, our submission outlines various points of constructive criticism with regard to a number of inconsistencies and issues that have been identified by TEU members during hui we undertook throughout October.

2.4. Before outlining the detail of those issues, there are also a number of broader concerns that will need to be addressed if Te Pūkenga is to deliver on its Charter and the intended outcomes of the Operating Model.

Staff as “our people”

2.5. Many members have expressed frustration regarding the lack of certainty and information about how they ‘fit’ within Te Pūkenga and the new network. This isn’t an issue of how they *will* fit come January 2023; it is an urgent issue regarding how they *currently* understand and perceive themselves in relation to Te Pūkenga. Although the ‘Our people’ and ‘Staff insights’ sections of the draft Operating Model document reflects many truths about the skills, passion, and existing relationships of staff (pp.10-11, p.21), the TEU members being described here, in reality, feel very disconnected from Te Pūkenga. This issue is exacerbated due to statements in the draft Operating Model document which allude to Te Pūkenga working “in partnership with” staff (e.g., p.4, p.19) alongside employers and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners to realise the changes that the proposed Operating Model seeks to achieve. There are two factors which will help to mitigate this confusion.

2.6. Firstly, in future iterations of the Operating Model documentation, it will be helpful to distinguish between:

1. Te Pūkenga in general as that which comprises the new network as a whole;
2. ‘Te Pūkenga leadership’ and ‘Te Pūkenga staff’; and
3. Within ‘Te Pūkenga staff,’ kaimahi Māori, ‘academic’ and ‘allied/general’¹ staff.

2.7. These distinctions will help clarify the notions that, on one hand, staff are ultimately “our people” in the sense that they constitute the head, heart, and hands of Te Pūkenga, and, on the other, that for the intended outcomes of the new network to be realised, Te Pūkenga leadership and Te Pūkenga staff will be

¹ Hereafter referred to as ‘general’ staff.

the integral “partners” who, in turn, will work in partnership with employers and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners.

- 2.8. Additionally, Te Pūkenga leadership and the design of the Operating Model must recognise that kaimahi Māori hold a unique position within the new network in that they cross the boundary between “our people” and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners. In other words, explicit recognition is needed surrounding the fact that Te Pūkenga has Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners within its organisation, and that they are connected in responsibility and accountability to their respective whānau, hapū, iwi, and hapori.
- 2.9. Secondly, from this point on, clear and consistent communications from Te Pūkenga leadership directly to Te Pūkenga subsidiary staff will be crucial if staff are to begin to see that Te Pūkenga leadership genuinely perceive staff as the head, heart, and hands of the new network. For many members, a sense of disconnection is due to [1] primarily receiving communications about the current changes from their subsidiaries rather than Te Pūkenga leadership, and [2] their current workloads mean that, even when they receive invitations to get involved, they are heavily constrained in their capacity to engage and contribute to the consultation about these changes.
- 2.10. Members are willing to engage in co-designing and co-producing a strong network of provision, yet their primary commitments mean that they are often not in a position to do so. We recognise there is a dedicated ‘Communications’ function within the proposed Operating Model (p.89); however, to get staff engaged, connected, and onboard with the changes that are inevitably continuing to happen around them, rectifying these issues – i.e., ineffective communications and the workload constraints which impede the capacity of staff to engage in consultation (the latter of which has been exacerbated by COVID-19 [see Sedgwick [2020a](#); [2020b](#); [2021](#)]) – need to be prioritised between now and the implementation of the Operating Model.

Resourcing

- 2.11. For those that have had the capacity to engage with and understand the proposed Operating Model, the ambitious and bold nature of what is being put forward has generated an immense sense of hope regarding the future state of our vocational education and training sector. As demonstrated in a Zui between members of Te Pūkenga leadership and TEU members and staff on Friday 5 November 2021, this is particularly the case for ākonga Māori and kaimahi Māori.

- 2.12. However, historical failures across our sector mean that this great sense of hope is inevitably accompanied by a fear that, in practice, the ambitions and intended outcomes of Te Pūkenga are overly idealistic and will not be realised. More specifically, many members are not convinced that the degree of funding and resources required to realise such ambitions will be forthcoming.
- 2.13. For the sake of both our current learners and the future generations that will look to the vocational education and training sector to improve their knowledge, skills, and life circumstances, we cannot let the ambitions set out in the proposed Operating Model be undermined by inadequate funding or any return – unintentionally or otherwise – to a model premised on competition.
- 2.14. TEU is committed to working alongside Te Pūkenga leadership to lobby the Tertiary Education Commission and ensure the true costs of implementing the Operating Model are understood and that necessary funding is available. The main sections of our submission outline a number of examples where appropriate resourcing will be crucial to the success of Te Pūkenga. It is important to note, however, that the examples included in this submission are not intended to be seen as exhaustive of the factors TEU members think need to change; rather, they are illustrative of the future work that needs to be done in relation to these areas.

'Single hub network' vs 'distributed delivery' functions

- 2.15. Following this point, attempting to foresee what will work best regarding the designation of functions as either 'single hub network' or 'distributed delivery' has been difficult. Members have noted that many of the proposed functions will only work if they contain a 'balance' of 'single hub network' and 'distributed delivery' elements within each function. Regarding this issue, we think there is further work to be done, and the next iteration of the proposed Operating Model should include a more nuanced way of designating the 'functional categorisations' – again, the specific examples included in this submission pertaining to functional categorisation should be seen as illustrative, rather than definitive.
- 2.16. The significance of getting this balance right pertains to the fact that staff must have sufficient autonomy to tailor classes and services to meet the specific and evolving needs of learners and communities, particularly those located throughout our regions. TEU members are concerned that if the balance of functional categorisation isn't right, there is a risk of inadvertently creating a

system comprised of processes which alienate, rather than engage, learners and staff.

Operating Model principles

2.17. In January 2021, TEU facilitated *Designing Together – a Conversation about the Operating Model of Te Pūkenga*. The outcome of this forum was a number of principles that TEU considered essential to the underlying design of the Operating Model. However, although there is crossover with the design principles outlined in Appendix 7 of the draft Operating Model document (p.81), future work on the Operating Model needs to more explicitly consider the seven principles that emerged out of *Designing Together*. In particular – and although we recognise a ‘Sustainability’ function has been included in the Enabling functions (p.91) – we think there is greater scope to include sustainability as an explicit principle as work continues on the Operating Model which includes issues of Just Transitions and the Future of Work (i.e., not solely environmental sustainability in a conventional sense).

2.18. The remainder of our submission is structured in the following way:

- **PART ONE** – our assessment of the Operating Model in relation to the Te Pūkenga outcomes
- **PART TWO** – our constructive commentary on various elements of the Operating Model, including feedback on specific functions and services

2.19. Again, TEU commends the considerable work that has gone in to the development of the proposed Operating Model up until this point, and we look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to inform what is undeniably a complex-yet-crucial element of the future success of our vocational education and training sector.

3. PART ONE

3.1. This section outlines our assessment of the proposed Operating Model in relation to each of the nine outcomes which appear on pp.13-17 of the draft document.

Outcome 1 – Give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in all that we do

3.2. From the perspective of TEU members, it is clear that Te Pūkenga are making a genuine commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by partnering and consulting with Māori at all levels of the organisation. By embedding Mātauranga Māori,

prioritising Māori success, engaging with hapū, iwi, and hāpori, and holding the network accountable for ensuring cultural awareness and capability of all staff and employers (see *Staff and professional development* below), Te Pūkenga will be well-placed to enable and deliver a long-awaited transformation: the decolonisation of vocational education and training.

- 3.3. However, certain sections of the draft document inadvertently imply that Te Pūkenga is the entity that is granting power to Māori. This needs to be rectified in a way which, instead, recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as that which empowers Māori in the first instance. Here, Te Pūkenga is secondary in the sense that it is the channel through which the power provided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi is activated within the context of the vocational education and training sector.

RECOMMENDATION 1

We recommend the following changes are made to the text on page 14:

- **Current wording:** “Empower Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners to co-decide on significant decisions. Empowering Māori-led approaches and recognises their rangatiratanga”
- **Recommended wording:** “Co-decide on significant decisions with Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners, enabling Māori-led approaches and recognising their rangatiratanga”

- 3.4. Regarding the place of ‘Our people’ (pp.10-11) and ‘Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners’ (p.22), greater recognition needs to be included relative to the roles of kaimahi Māori. As kaimahi Māori are situated as both staff and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners, their unique position within the network will open up important opportunities regarding many of the functions and services that are part of the proposed Operating Model. However, as noted below, recruitment, retention, and adequate resourcing will be essential to kaimahi Māori fulfilling their desired contribution to the new network.
- 3.5. Lastly, TEU provided [robust feedback](#) on a draft version *Te Pae Tawhiti*. However, it is not clear that this feedback has been integrated into the most recent version of *Te Pae Tawhiti*.

RECOMMENDATION 2

We recommend that *Te Pae Tawhiti* is updated to reflect the input of [TEU's submission](#), and that future iterations of the proposed Operating

Model integrate the content of our submission.

Outcome 2 – Provide exceptional learning experiences and equitable outcomes for Māori

3.6. Following our commentary on Outcome 1, we recommend the following changes are made to the wording of the detail of Outcome 2 (p.14).

RECOMMENDATION 3

We recommend the following changes are made to the text on page 14:

- **Current wording:** “To enable this Te Pūkenga will need to prioritise equity and inclusivity for Māori and the need to increase access, relevant provision, engagement, and success for Māori learners, staff, and their whānau by:
 - Encompassing Māori and Māori needs into planning, decision-making and reporting processes.”
- **Recommended wording:** “To enable this Te Pūkenga will need to prioritise equity and inclusivity for Māori and the need to increase access, relevant provision, engagement, and success for Māori learners, staff, and their whānau by **partnering with Māori to:**
 - **Encompass** Māori and Māori needs into planning, decision-making and reporting processes.”

3.7. Additionally, providing exceptional learning experiences and equitable outcomes for kaimahi and ākonga Māori will require dedicated teams of kaimahi Māori. This will only be realised through a robust Māori employment strategy which leads to teams of kaimahi Māori who are enabled to recruit, welcome, mentor, guide, and teach ākonga Māori throughout the various phases of their vocational education and training, and into further studies, meaningful work, and/or business ownership.

RECOMMENDATION 4

On this point, we recommend the following bullet-point be added to the detail of Outcome 2 on page 14:

“To enable this Te Pūkenga will need to prioritise equity and inclusivity for Māori and the need to increase access, relevant provision, engagement, and success for Māori learners, staff and their whānau by”:

- Co-developing a structured and future-focussed kaimahi Māori employment strategy to ensure the sustainability of high-quality learning environments, mentors, and role models for ākonga Māori and leadership for other kaimahi Māori.

Outcome 3 – Be learner-centred. Recognise the diverse and unique needs of all learners, empowering diversity, belonging, and wellbeing

- 3.8. It is clear that the draft document situates ākonga – and ako – at the centre of the new network. Additionally, for TEU members who work with neurodiverse learners and learners living with disabilities, the proposed Operating Model is a significant improvement for learners living with disabilities. Overall, however, there needs to be greater emphasis that Te Pūkenga is a learning organisation where learners and staff are provided with opportunities to learn, grow, and develop to their full potential.
- 3.9. TEU recognises and commends the shifts included in the draft Operating Model that pertain to: acknowledging that systems, not people, are disabled; whānau-centred support for learners; enabling connections with communities and accessibility-friendly employers; the implementation of Universal Design Principles through identifying barriers to access; engagement with learners throughout the co-design of the proposed Operating Model; and the validation of individuality.
- 3.10. Staff are enthusiastic about the enablement of ‘disability confidence’ (although see *Glossary of Terms* below) and the role they might play relevant to this element of the Operating Model. However, the Operating Model must also acknowledge the need for improved support, accessible workplaces for both staff and learners, and appropriate time, resources, and support to improve confidence in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 5

We recommend the Operating Model explicitly includes:

- greater support provisions for staff who are aiming to achieve ‘disability confidence’; and
- recognition and associated accommodations relative to the needs of staff living with disabilities, as per the recommendations outlined in the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#).

- 3.11. Regarding the Learner Personas (pp.66-68), we note that 'disability' tends to be understood primarily in terms of those learners living with *physical* disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION 6

We recommend that the Operating Model accounts for the necessity of understanding the circumstances and needs of learners and staff who live with non-visible disabilities, including mental health challenges and neurodiversity.

- 3.12. The Charter states that Te Pūkenga must ensure “the needs of adult and second-chance learners are afforded high priority.” Although the proposed Operating Model states that the 'Pathway planning and support' function “Supports second chance learners to transition back into learning” (p.86), overall there is little reference to the specific needs of adult and second chance learners.

RECOMMENDATION 7

We recommend that Outcome 3 should make explicit reference to adult and second chance learners and the necessity of understanding their unique strengths, challenges, and motivations.

Outcome 4 – Partner with employers to deliver relevant work-integrated education and training that meets skills needs

- 3.13. TEU members have voiced concern that the Operating Model is skewed in the direction of viewing vocational education and training as primarily being about employers, industry, work-based skills, and securing work for learners. This emphasis could potentially lead to undesirable outcomes, thereby taking away from the broader, transformative elements of education and the endeavour to foster lifelong learning (e.g., p.41).
- 3.14. TEU members note, for instance, that there has been a tendency within the vocational education and training sector to focus on the specialised needs of individual employers and workplaces, as opposed to the broad range of skills, knowledge and expertise required to work across the entire industry.
- 3.15. Within many trades, employers often work in very narrow segments of their area of expertise. Their apprentices and trainees therefore have limited or no access to the broader range of skills, experiences, and knowledge required in

their industry. Again, it is vital that there is continued engagement between staff and employers to ensure the needs of employers and industry are balanced by the pursuit of more generalised education outcomes. Additionally, learners need to have the space and encouragement to consider future developments and opportunities within industry that may occur due to technology, innovation, and the changing priorities of society.

3.16. The imbalance between the educational outcomes of learners and the needs of employers and industry is apparent in the functional element of the proposed Operating Model (p.32). Although the draft document states that Te Pūkenga “orient[s] the whole model towards [the ‘teaching, learning, support, and navigation’] functions” (p.32) (as opposed to the ‘Enabling’ or ‘Strategic’ functions), *what* these functions will do is, in part, outlined as: “Deliver high quality relevant learning options that integrate work-based learning with other *complementary* modes of delivery to suit the needs of learners and rhythms of a wide range of workplaces” (p.32, italics added). In other words, there is a clear emphasis on work-based modes of delivery; an emphasis which is also apparent throughout the draft document in:

- the ‘My Teacher, My Way’ service concept (p.40, pp.42-43);
- the ‘Match and Mentor’ service concept (“The tool provides online digital communities for work-based learners”) (pp.44-45); and
- the network shift associated with the ‘Learning and support delivery’ operating model component (“Integrated teaching and learning options across our network of delivery recognise the criticality and value of employers and work-based learning in our network, and the value of combining different modes of delivery to meet learner and employer needs, and align with the varying rhythms of the workplace in new and exciting ways”) (p.52)

3.17. We acknowledge that the Operating Model states: “Our goal is to enable all our learners to build skills and knowledge, in a way that supports their future success – whether that is to obtain an apprenticeship, grow confidence, get a job, complete post-graduate study, return to work or study, or support their entrepreneurial aspirations as an employer or future employer” (p.3). However, in relation to the above points, it is vital that the Operating Model ensures the right balance between quality educational provision and meeting the needs of employers. Not only will this be more conducive to the intended outcomes of the Operating Model being realised, the Te Pūkenga Charter explicitly refers to “*education and training*” throughout. Meeting both the short- and long-term

needs of learners whilst aligning education and training delivery in a way that is conducive to achieving the unique social and economic goals of local communities (as set out in the Charter) requires, on one hand, explicit acknowledgement of the range of education and training options that polytechnics offer, and, on the other, the wide variety of motivations that underpin learners' reasons for pursuing education throughout their lives. Although not all study is undertaken in the interests of securing work, all study enriches the lives of New Zealanders.

RECOMMENDATION 8

We recommend that the statement on page 3 pertaining to the goal of Te Pūkenga is amended to include the following learner aims, and that future iterations of the Operating Model are designed to reflect these factors:

- contribute to the future wellbeing and success of their whānau and communities;
- pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions;
- learn in the interests of knowledge acquisition, personal transformation, and future innovation and opportunities; and
- Acquire the skills and abilities to navigate a changing future.

Outcome 5 – Be responsive and empowering to staff and learners

- 3.18. The Operating Model clearly situates staff as integral to the new network and explicitly notes that realising each of the nine outcomes will require partnering with, and empowering, staff (pp.4, 6, 13, 14, 19, 25, 33, 45, 50).
- 3.19. However, in relation to Outcome 5, the Operating Model includes a number of problematic inconsistencies pertaining to equity, the 'key network shifts' and associated operating model components, and professional development.

Staff and equity

- 3.20. Regarding equity, the document includes the explicit recognition that "not all of our learners and staff are currently enabled to succeed to their full potential" and goes on to note that the "Operating Model must specifically address how we move our network closer towards equity for all our learners, with a focus on Māori, Pacific, and disabled learners and further empower our staff to do this" (p.9; see also p.20). Here, there is a disconnect between staff empowerment and

staff equity. For TEU members, these two factors are inherently related: empowerment requires equity and vice versa. In other words, if equity for all learners relies on staff empowerment, staff must also be *consistently* included in the equity objectives of the Operating Model.

- 3.21. This issue is partially addressed on page 21 where it is stated that Te Pūkenga is “committed to working towards equity for staff of different genders, ethnicities, cultures, and abilities as set out in our Charter and making sure staff are empowered and have a strong voice.” However, beyond “grow[ing] a workforce” (p.21), there is no allusion to the actual mechanisms through which Te Pūkenga intends to realise such equity objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 9

We recommend that the Operating Model must include explicit targets pertaining to staff recruitment, progression, recognition, and retention for those groups of staff currently experiencing inequity – this will be a necessary actionable step toward achieving staff equity (and empowerment).

If there is an ‘Outcomes Framework’ already being developed by Te Pūkenga, this should be explicitly referenced in the proposed Operating Model documentation.

Staff and the network shifts

- 3.22. The Operating Model outlines a number of ‘key network shifts.’ These ‘shifts’ are considered necessary for the transformation of the vocational education and training sector and are outlined in relation to the six components of the Operating Model. Although these ‘shifts’ are understood “through the lens” of staff (p.50), there are several notable omissions within this aspect of the Operating Model.

- 3.23. Firstly, where the ‘Organisation and people’ component involves, among other things, “strengthening staff practice” (p.52), we assume that this component is tied to, at a minimum, the ‘People, culture and wellbeing’ and ‘Internal capability development’ functions. Here, there appears to be a deficit lens regarding the capability of staff, rather than recognition of the expertise and passion that staff bring to the relationship of learning for students and for themselves. What is also not acknowledged in the above component and functions is the fact that any upskilling of staff will require [1] understanding the true needs of staff and

[2] appropriate resourcing – i.e. funding that aligns with the true costs of meeting the needs of staff, and suitable time allocation relative to pre-existing workloads.

RECOMMENDATION 10

We recommend that, firstly, the deficit lens be removed regarding staff and that, instead, the expertise and commitment of staff is acknowledged in conjunction with the necessity of [1] understanding the true needs of staff and [2] appropriate resourcing is explicitly included in relation to the ‘key network shifts’ section of the Operating Model, as well as in the functions associated with the ‘Organisation and people’ component.

- 3.24. Secondly, the Operating Model includes several references to the notion of staff being empowered to have influence on the network (p.21, p.76, p.92). However, regarding the ‘Governance and strategy’ component, staff are notably absent. This is despite there being, firstly, the clear inclusion of learner voice and engagement with Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners on governance structures (p.53), and, secondly, a distinct ‘Staff voice and engagement’ function included in the Strategic functions (p.92).

RECOMMENDATION 11

We recommend that staff – including kaimahi Māori as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners – are explicitly included in the ‘key network shift’ associated with ‘Governance and strategy’ component of the Operating Model.

- 3.25. Thirdly, although we recognise staff are considered as ‘our people’ throughout the Operating Model (as opposed to partners of Te Pūkenga), we reassert the notion that there is valuable insight to be gained from staff due to their vast experience and organisational and community skills, expertise, and pre-existing connections.

RECOMMENDATION 12

We recommend that, where the ‘Partnering and ecosystem’ component notes that “Insights and information gathered, especially the voice of learners and employers, will be shared across the system to help guide

wider system transformation, steward the system and advocate for change” (p.54), staff voice is also included as a fundamentally important source of insight relevant to the educational and ako-related factors that will inevitably underpin the ongoing transformation of the network.

- 3.26. Lastly, we make the following recommendation in relation to the necessity of appropriate resourcing and the aims of the ‘key network shifts’ that are part of the ‘Policies, processes and measures’ and ‘Technology, data, and insights’ components of the Operating Model.

RECOMMENDATION 13

We recommend that, where the ‘Policies, processes and measures’ component involves performance frameworks which “include expectations of the cultural capability of staff” (p.55), appropriate resourcing is explicitly included within this component of the Operating Model and its associated functions.

Likewise, where the ‘Technology, data, and insights’ component aims to, among other things, “strengthen digital capability” (p.55), we recommend that explicit recognition of the necessity of appropriate resourcing relative to the support for, and upskilling of, staff is included within this component of the Operating Model and its associated functions.

Staff and professional development

- 3.27. TEU members are pleased to see an emphasis on staff training and professional development within the proposed Operating Model. Opportunities for both staff training and professional development – particularly in a phase of immense change in processes, systems, and policies – will be vital for the future of Te Pūkenga.
- 3.28. The ‘People, culture, and wellbeing’ function states: “Opportunities for learning and development for all Te Pūkenga staff are made available and strategic approaches to building fulfilling career pathways are taken” (p.90). As an educational entity, support for learning and development must be integrated into the culture as well as the practise of the organisation. For many TEU members, it is important that these opportunities are seen as essential to the core roles of academic and general staff; they should not, as is currently the case, be considered as ‘nice to haves.’ Appropriate resourcing must be made

available for these opportunities to be taken up as a core part of the work and development of staff. Appropriate time and resourcing must be available to facilitate both staff training and professional development.

RECOMMENDATION 14

We recommend that appropriate resourcing is made available for learning development related to Te Pūkenga staff.

Outcome 6 – Become a connected, relevant, and future focused education provider driven by innovation, research, data driven decision making and teaching excellence

- 3.29. In part, the ‘Technology, data, and insights’ component of the Operating Model aims to “meet the digital access requirements of all learners and employers, particularly to those in remote and work-based learning environments, all learners and employers will be provided with equity of access to digital solutions” (p.55).
- 3.30. However, TEU members remain concerned about the ‘digital divide’ that exists for some learners and communities. Additionally, it is important to note that technology can both enable and constrain learners and staff depending on their needs and circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 15

We recommend that the Operating Model includes clear reference to the mechanisms through which the proposed digital access requirements will be met and resourced.

- 3.31. The Operating Model must clearly reflect the fact that vocational education and training providers are places of both vocational education and training and scholarship that offer both research and practice-based training. There needs to be greater opportunities and support for staff who want to engage in research, even if they teach below degree level (see also our commentary below in *Staff and the functional element*).

RECOMMENDATION 16

We recommend that the third bullet-point of Outcome 6 should be amended to read:

- “Protecting the academic integrity, including Mātauranga Māori, of the education and training programmes delivered **by drawing on up-to-date theories of teaching and learning to inform decision-making around curriculum design, delivery models, and learning formats, and providing research opportunities for staff at all levels.**”

Outcome 7 – Delivering regional flexibility and nationally consistent outcomes. Create barrier free access, mobility across, and clear pathways within the network for learners

Regional provision

3.32. The Charter states Te Pūkenga must offer a mix of education and training in each region. A [report](#) by the Tertiary Education Commission concluded many students will not travel more than 50km for study – particularly Pasifika learners – with those who choose not to travel resorting to simply studying what is on offer, rather than undertaking studies in their preferred programme. If the Operating Model is to genuinely place ako at the centre, there needs to be improved access to both online and face-to-face provision and learning support. This will mean working with hapū, iwi, communities, local schools, REAPs, and employers across Aotearoa to ensure equitable and accessible face-to-face provision and support.

RECOMMENDATION 17

We recommend that for learners studying at levels:

- 1-3, access to educational provision must be located within 20kms of where they live; and
- 4-7, access to educational provision must be located within 50kms of where they live.

3.33. The Operating Model states “Service delivery includes a role for Te Pūkenga to facilitate connectivity, supporting clear pathways and successful transitions for learners into learning, and to employment post training” (p.52).

RECOMMENDATION 18

We recommend that, as per TEU’s submission on *Te Pae Tawhiti*, the

Operating Model must, in its endeavour to create clear pathways from secondary to tertiary education, clearly state how Te Pūkenga will support the transition of both ākonga and kaimahi Māori from Kura Kaupapa and Māori Medium Education to Te Pūkenga.

Outcome 8 – Become a sustainable network of provision creating social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing

- 3.34. To solve the problem of climate change we need all our learners and researchers to be aware of the issue, to be up to date with current knowledge and best practice, and to be capable of contributing to the ongoing development of climate change solutions. However, we also need our tertiary education providers to lead the way.
- 3.35. TEU members welcome the inclusion of ‘Sustainability’ as an Enabling function (p.91), and references to both environmental sustainability targets and the principles of kaitiakitanga. However, despite the proposed Operating Model including a ‘holistic’ approach to wellbeing (p.93), there is less evidence of how Te Pūkenga, as Aotearoa New Zealand’s largest vocational education and training provider, will consider the future of work and contribute to Just Transitions and Future of Work in a changing world increasingly challenged by climate, environmental, and industrial crises.

RECOMMENDATION 19

We recommend that, if Te Pūkenga is to operate as a future-focussed organisation guided by the principle of kaitiakitanga (p.91) the Operating Model encompasses an explicit focus on Just Transitions and the Future of Work.

Additionally, we recommend that the phrase ‘Mahi tūturu’ be used in relation to the Future of Work. The word ‘tūturu’ has multiple meanings, such as permanent, real, actual, authentic, and legitimate. Within the context of the quality of mahi, ‘mahitūturu’ means secure and legitimate mahi – i.e., mahi that is permanent, whether part- or full-time, and meaningful to the person undertaking such mahi.

Outcome 9 – Focus on efficient and cost-effective delivery across the network

- 3.36. TEU members note that hastily conceived and short-term focussed decision-making that is not grounded in the knowledge of staff, students, and industry

has often led to inefficient use of resources within the vocational education and training sector.

RECOMMENDATION 20

We recommend that Outcome 9 includes an additional statement outlining a commitment to long-term thinking in decision-making pertaining to all aspects of the network.

Doing so will mitigate the risk of short-term “cost-effectiveness and efficiencies” leading to long-term problems for learners, staff, and employers.

- 3.37. To ensure both efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and reduce duplication of functions, it is important the Operating Model also provides a strengths-based understanding of what currently works well in our regions and communities.

RECOMMENDATION 21

We recommend that, further to the statement “Building, over time, towards a dynamic network that leverages wider network connections and capabilities” (p.17), an additional statement be included that acknowledges the strength and importance of existing community networks and relationships, as well as the importance of maintaining these networks and relationships through a period of transition and into the future.

4. PART TWO

- 4.1. This section includes our commentary on various elements of the Operating Model, including feedback on specific functions and services. As noted above, the examples and recommendations included here should be considered as illustrative of future work that needs to be done, rather than as a definitive and exhaustive list of factors that we think need to be changed.

The functional element

- 4.2. Taken together, the 74 functions – arranged in to 3 groups, designated as either ‘single hub network’ or ‘distributed delivery’, and not necessarily aligned with 74 separate teams of people (pp.26-34, pp.86-93) – will provide the necessary teaching and learning, shared support, and strategic functionality relative to Te Pūkenga achieving its intended outcomes. We think this is particularly the case if

the genuine intention of Te Pūkenga is to “orient the whole model towards these functions” (p.6).

- 4.3. However, outlined below are a number of issues pertaining to both the design and categorisation of the functions as a whole, as well as specific functions. Underlying these issues is the necessity of appropriate resourcing required to enable the intended outcomes of the Operating Model.

Staff and the functional element

- 4.4. The Operating Model is comprised of two primary parts – a functional element and a service element. Together, these elements outline how Te Pūkenga will create desired future experiences and achieve its intended outcomes (p.26). As such, it is clear that the functional element constitutes a substantial part of the Operating Model. However, although many of the 74 functions will involve, and have implications for, staff, the criteria through which the functional groupings have been determined do not include consideration of staff-related matters (see p.27). Additionally, there appears to be no explicit staff-related considerations given to, firstly, the ways in which functions have been designated as either ‘single hub network’ or ‘distributed delivery’ (p.30) and, secondly, the functions that have been grouped under ‘Teaching, learning, support, and navigation’ (p.32).

RECOMMENDATION 22

We recommend that a bullet-point (or other appropriate wording) referring to staff-related considerations is added to the following aspects of the functional element of the Operating Model:

1. the list on page 27 which outlines the factors that are to be considered in relation to determining how the functions will be grouped;
2. the penultimate paragraph on page 30 which outlines the impacts relevant to whether a function is designated as either ‘single hub network’ or ‘distributed delivery’;
3. the list on page 32 which outlines what the functions grouped as ‘Teaching, learning, support, and navigation’ do; and
4. the list on page 34 which outlines what the functions grouped as ‘Strategic’ are intended to do (this is particularly salient given one of the Strategic functions is ‘Staff voice and engagement’)
5. Appendix 8 where the impacts of ‘distributed delivery’ and ‘single

hub network' functions are outlined.

Once these amendments are in place, the functions and their groupings should be re-assessed accordingly.

No 'Academic research' function

- 4.5. Although the 'Research delivery and support' function (p.88) covers research conducted by Te Pūkenga relevant to the needs of learners and their whānau, staff, employers, industry, and communities, there appears to be no function dedicated to the research work that is an inherent part of the roles of many staff throughout the vocational education and training sector.

RECOMMENDATION 23

We recommend the above issue is rectified by adding an 'Academic research' function within the 'Teaching, learning, support, and navigation' functional grouping so that staff are in a position to carry out research and scholarship work.

Learning resource creation (p.87)

- 4.6. This function is designated as 'single hub network.' Following this, there is concern that this function may limit innovation relative to the expertise of staff and the unique needs of our regions. TEU members agree that some learning resource development – i.e., that which demands a high level of time and money and has broad national and industry and sector relevance (e.g., high quality digital resources and nationally relevant teaching materials) – would be best co-ordinated and resourced from a 'single hub.' However, there is also the expectation that there will be scope and resourcing (i.e., time and appropriate funding) allocated for distributed teaching and learning experts to develop learning materials that are relevant to their specific regions and learner groups which can supplement standardised resources.

RECOMMENDATION 24

We recommend that clarification is provided to ensure that, firstly, despite this function being designated as 'single hub network,' any centralised learning resource creation does not result in provision being constituted by 'lessons in a box,' and, secondly, staff are ensured autonomy and the resources to provide education that meets the specific needs of their

learners and communities.

Employer relationships (p.89)

- 4.7. The 'Staff insights' section of the draft document notes that "staff have [...] existing relationships" (p.21). For TEU members, this is the case with regard to relationships with employers throughout their communities.

RECOMMENDATION 25

Given the importance of these pre-existing connections (particularly during the transition phase) – in conjunction with the need to foster new relationships across the network – we recommend that staff-employer relationships are explicitly recognised in the 'Employer relationships' function.

This will be particularly important to ensuring the success of both the 'Te Pūkenga Community Facilitators' service concept as well as the initiatives oriented toward regional collective impact.

Excellence, quality assurance and evaluation (p.92)

- 4.8. This function aims, in part, to understand "what quality looks like in the educational context of the organisation, how the organisation knows they are meeting the needs of ākonga, whānau, hapū, iwi, hapori, employers and other accountabilities, whether the organisation has sufficient capacity and capability to deliver and sustain education outcomes, and how well the organisation reflects upon its delivery to improve its overall educational performance" (p.92).

RECOMMENDATION 26

We recommend that [1] staff are explicitly included in the list of those who Te Pūkenga intends to meet the needs of, and [2] involve staff as those with expertise relative to understanding the best ways to improve the overall educational performance of Te Pūkenga.

Strategy and planning (p.93)

- 4.9. This function aims to ensure the Te Pūkenga strategy is driven by "a strong understanding of learners and their whānau, employer and regional needs, as

well as the needs and aspirations of Māori, iwi, hapū, hāpori Māori and Māori employers” (p.93).

RECOMMENDATION 27

We recommend that the strategy needs to include a comprehensive understanding of the needs of staff, particularly where strategic planning work involves responding to “the strategic imperatives set by the Charter” that relate directly to the empowerment of staff.

Tiriti futures (p.93)

- 4.10. This function, in part, aims to partner “with Māori to collaborate and innovate on opportunities to progress Te Tiriti excellence for learners, whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori employers and Māori communities” (p.93).

RECOMMENDATION 28

We recommend that kaimahi Māori – as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners – be explicitly included in this function (see our commentary on Outcome 1).

The interrelationship of teaching and pastoral care

- 4.11. For TEU members, there is concern that pastoral care provision will be separated from their teaching and academic support roles. In practice, pastoral care provision is inherent to the teaching-learning relationship.

RECOMMENDATION 29

We recommend that the functions and services pertaining to pastoral care provision are explicitly integrated with functions relating to teaching delivery.

Ako networks

- 4.12. Although TEU members expressed broad support for Ako Networks, there is scope to develop similar communities of practice relative to the work of general staff.

RECOMMENDATION 30

We recommend that consideration is given to the notion of including Ako Networks that relate to the work and roles that general staff will have within the new network.

Cycle of reflective practice

- 4.13. For staff, it is vital that time is allowed for self-reflective practice and that new systems and emphasis on individualised learner preferences do not exacerbate workloads and prevent self-reflective practice.

The service element

- 4.14. TEU members remain concerned about various elements of the proposed service concepts.

RECOMMENDATION 31

We recommend reviewing the [TEU submission](#) on the service concepts so that the perspectives contained therein are integrated into future iterations of the service concepts and, by extension, the Operating Model.

Additionally, the 'A Good Place to Work' service concept needs to, firstly, be developed to include aspects of good work that contribute to the wellbeing and development of learners, including but not limited to diversity in the workplace, and, secondly, also reflect a commitment improving working conditions for staff, and ensuring any new, but altogether positive focuses of the network, not only provide positive outcomes for learners and communities, but for staff.

Ecosystem / partnerships with unions

- 4.15. Unions are key partners for Te Pūkenga across the following areas: with kaimahi Māori through CTU Rūnanga structures; with Pasifika communities and with disabled people through our union representative groups; with learners as workers and as lifelong learners through the unions in their industries; and with the staff of Te Pūkenga through their unions.

RECOMMENDATION 32

We recommend that the Operating Model reflects the necessity of maintaining a strong regional and mobile presence, with capacity to

engage closely with workers and their unions, as well as employers and student unions.

Glossary of Terms

- 4.16. It has been suggested that, though helpful, the Glossary of Terms included on pp.62-63 could be more comprehensive. Although TEU supports the incorporation of Te Reo Māori in formal Te Pūkenga documentation, many staff throughout the sector are not yet at the stage where undefined terms are commonly understood. Added to this, many concepts and phrases used throughout the document – e.g., cultural capability; disability confident; practice with potential – are not clearly defined. As such, engagement with the content of the draft document was unnecessarily difficult and off-putting for some members.

RECOMMENDATION 33

We recommend that a comprehensive Glossary of Terms is included in the introductory pages of future Te Pūkenga documentation.

Language

- 4.17. Despite the Operating Model being oriented toward moving the vocational education and training sector “away from competition to collaboration” (p.9), there are occasional instances of language throughout the draft Operating Model document which reflect “business speak.” For example, references to “products” (p.9) and “run[ning] our business” (p.27) undermine both the central place of education within the Operating Model and the important relationship and role Te Pūkenga has within the tertiary education sector.

RECOMMENDATION 34

We recommend that future Te Pūkenga documentation uses language which reflects the educational focus of the new network, as opposed to the business- and competition-oriented language which undermines the primary impetus of Te Pūkenga.

Focus on digital technology

- 4.18. TEU members have expressed concern that the proposed Operating Model includes an over-emphasis on the use of digital modes of delivery. This concern has emerged from statements such as those included in the detail of Outcome 6: “Delivering a focus on digital and work-based learning and the use of technology to strengthen curriculum development and delivery” (p.15).

RECOMMENDATION 35

Although TEU broadly supports the use of digital technology, we recommend [1] clarity is provided pertaining to what it means, in practice, to “strengthen” curriculum development and delivery through the use of digital technologies, and [2] ensure that digital technologies are not adopted as a substitute for face-to-face modes of delivery – this is particularly important in relation to Outcome 7 and the endeavour to “enable easy and equal access for all learners, whoever they are, wherever they are [i.e., located in the regions] and at whatever stage of their life” (p.16).

Te Pūkenga and the wider tertiary education sector

- 4.19. A Partnership Agreement has been signed between Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Te Pūkenga, yet Wānanga as a whole are not included as part of the ‘RoVE system connections’ outlined on page 65 of the draft Operating Model document.

RECOMMENDATION 36

We recommend that further clarity and detail is included in the Operating Model pertaining to the relationship between Wānanga and Te Pūkenga.

- 4.20. For the new network to be successful, students should be able to move between Te Pūkenga, universities, and Wānanga. There are currently a number of highly successful degrees delivered through partnership between vocational education providers and universities (e.g. the AUT Bachelor in Sport and Recreation delivered by NMIT). Nevertheless, there is no mention of universities being part of the vocational and tertiary ecosystem in the document (p.12).

RECOMMENDATION 37

We recommend that further clarity is included in the Operating Model

pertaining to universities and Te Pūkenga.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. TEU commends the extensive work that has led to the proposed Operating Model. Many TEU members consider the proposed Operating Model as genuinely reflecting the ambitions of the Charter, intended outcomes of Te Pūkenga, and the wider RoVE project.
- 5.2. However, in addition to many of the specific issues outlined in this submission which pertain directly to the proposed Operating Model, there are broader factors – recognition of the skills and expertise of staff; constraints on staff due to workloads; ineffective communications; and the necessity of appropriate funding – that require urgent attention if the intended outcomes of Te Pūkenga are to be realised for generations of learners to come.
- 5.3. We are pleased to see earlier feedback from TEU explicitly integrated into the proposed Operating Model, and we look forward to collaborating as work on the Operating Model continues.