

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Aotea Community Trust Incorporated
trading as Kapiti Skills Centre

Not Confident in educational performance

Not Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 July 2015

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Aotea Community Trust trading as Kapiti Skills Centre
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	35 Ihakara Street, Paraparaumu, Kapiti Coast
First registered:	January 1994
Courses currently delivered:	Outdoor programmes delivered in conjunction with Captivate Adventures (www.captivate.net.nz)
Code of Practice signatory?	No
Number of students:	To the best of the evaluation team's understanding, there were no active students enrolled at the time of the evaluation team's on-site visit.
Number of staff:	One full-time and two part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation Skills (Level 1)¹• National Certificate in Computing (Level 2)• A variety of sub-fields and domains for delivering alternative education: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=944634001
Distinctive characteristics:	Aotea Community Trust was incorporated in December 1992 as a non-profit charitable trust, with the aim of assisting disadvantaged groups within the

¹ Approved training scheme

Kapiti Coast and Horowhenua communities.

Kapiti Skills Centre is one of the initiatives of the trust, targeting youth who do not fit well into the mainstream education system and equipping them with social and life skills through vocational training.

Kapiti Skills Centre was a provider for the Training for Work programme (funded by Ministry of Social Development) and Youth Guarantee (funded by the Tertiary Education Commission).

- Recent significant changes:
- Funding for Training for Work lost mid-2013.
 - Voluntarily gave up funding for Youth Guarantee in February 2014.
 - Kapiti Skills Centre delivered some outdoor programmes and some parts of its approved training scheme in 2014.
 - No delivery in 2015 to date (being to the time of the on-site visit by the evaluation team).

Previous quality assurance history: The previous external evaluation and review of Kapiti Skills Centre was conducted in 2011. NZQA was Confident in both the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

Results from the 2013 NZQA national external moderation of unit standards for Kapiti Skills Centre were:

- Out of the three unit standard assessment materials sampled, two met national moderation requirements and one required modification.
- All 15 assessor decisions met national external moderation requirements.

Results from the 2014 NZQA national external moderation of unit standards for Kapiti Skills Centre were:

- Out of the three unit standard assessment materials required for sampling, two were not submitted. The remaining one that was submitted did not meet national external moderation requirements.
- Assessor decisions were unable to be verified.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

For some time prior to, as well as throughout the external evaluation and review, Kapiti Skills Centre was faced with significant challenges and continued on its journey to identify the most financially feasible way to meet its social objectives. The organisation had minimal delivery in 2014, taking its time to seek solutions to its problems, and at the time of the scoping of this external evaluation and review, was yet to confirm its definitive intention on future directions.

As such, it was agreed that the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy would be the only focus area for this external evaluation and review.

NZQA and Kapiti Skills Centre also agreed, prior to the on-site visit, that two of the key evaluation questions – ‘How effective is the teaching?’ and ‘How well are learners guided and supported?’ – may be of little relevance to the outcomes of this external evaluation and review and may be deemed to be not applicable, given the context described above.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA’s published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

This external evaluation and review was deferred from November 2014. Self-assessment materials were delivered to NZQA to inform the scoping.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators. The on-site visit lasted one day, during which the evaluation team visited Kapiti Skills Centre’s new head office at 35 Ihakara Street, Paraparaumu.

The evaluation team interviewed three of the four trustees of Aotea Community Trust, including one who currently acts as the caretaking manager of Kapiti Skills Centre. The quality assurance coordinator, who is also a tutor, was also interviewed. A draft strategic plan for 2015-2018 was tabled by Kapiti Skills Centre at the on-site visit.

Other than minutes of meetings of the board of trustees, material documentary evidence requested by the evaluation team prior to the on-site visit, such as learner achievement records and information on graduate destination outcomes, remained unavailable at the on-site visit. Additional time was given to Kapiti Skills Centre to submit further information upon the conclusion of the on-site visit. No evidence was tendered within the agreed timeframe. Two weeks after the on-site visit, some

further evidence on processes was delivered, but still no evidence on outcomes. The evaluation team therefore had no choice but to complete the external evaluation and review without sufficient evidence for key evaluation questions 1 and 2 (learner achievement and value of outcomes).

Some evidence on outcomes was eventually submitted as part of Kapiti Skills Centre's submission to the draft evaluation report. The materials were reviewed by the evaluation team and the findings in this report were revised upon considering the new evidence.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Confident** in the educational performance of **Kapiti Skills Centre**.

NZQA is **Not Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Kapiti Skills Centre**.

- The governance function is not being performed effectively. The board of trustees does not demonstrate sufficient capability, in terms of the knowledge required, for operating within a complexity of legislative frameworks.
- Some trustees appear confused by recent major decisions made by the organisation. For example, confusion was evident among some trustees and staff as to the consequences of the voluntary transfer of Youth Guarantee funding to another regional training provider. This decision – exercised by one trustee of the board – appeared to be contrary to the understanding of other members within Kapiti Skills Centre.
- Despite the organisation having almost a full year for reflection, Kapiti Skills Centre was still unable to demonstrate to the evaluation team a definitive, plausible and financially viable path for its future.
- There is no evidence of community involvement during this critical period. In fact, the organisation admitted that many of its networks had not been actively maintained in the recent past. It was not clear to the evaluation team how Kapiti Skills Centre continues to understand and meet the changing needs of the community without such liaison taking place.

Aotea Community Trust is governed by a group of trustees with good intentions for the communities they serve. The Kapiti Skills Centre initiative may have produced many successes and positive outcomes over the past 20 years. However, it was evident to the evaluation team that the organisation has failed to keep abreast of the changes in its operating environments. For example, a realisation of the changes to performance criteria for Training for Work funding came too late to reverse the poor employment outcomes from the programme. This led to a loss of half of the organisation's funding in 2013. A series of subsequent poor decisions further led the organisation to the current state, where it continues to struggle to define its actual purpose for being. Notwithstanding the good intentions and stated objectives of the trust (along the lines of generating positive social outcomes for the disadvantaged), it remains unclear what programmes Kapiti Skills Centre intends to deliver in order to achieve those objectives.

Therefore, at this stage, NZQA is unable to express confidence in the future of Aotea Community Trust, trading as Kapiti Skills Centre.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Poor**.

Despite advance notice in writing from the evaluation team that evidence of the educational performance of Kapiti Skills Centre – in terms of past performance of programmes the organisation is accredited for and had delivered in the recent past – is required for the external evaluation and review, no achievement statistics were prepared for the evaluation team's on-site visit. Kapiti Skills Centre was given further opportunity to submit any further information to inform the judgement for this key evaluation question, but the organisation failed to respond to that offer.

Anecdotal evidence did suggest that around 350 and 450 learners each year from various high schools have participated in the outdoor programmes delivered by Kapiti Skills Centre. However, Kapiti Skills Centre advised that the learners gained unit standards 'using the college's accreditation', not that of Kapiti Skills Centre.

Subsequent to the release of the draft evaluation report, Kapiti Skills Centre submitted some statistics on learner achievement. While Kapiti Skills Centre failed to meet funding targets for Training for Work, educational performance for Youth Guarantee programmes was good, with 73 per cent course completion and 86 per cent qualification completion rates reported, and with Māori completion rates comparatively higher than other ethnic groups. However, the statistics did not come with any analysis. There were also questions on the validity of achievement due to poor national external moderation results in 2014.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Poor**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Poor**.

There may be some anecdotal evidence, in the form of local newspaper clips from before 2012, that Kapiti Skills Centre produced some positive outcomes for the Kapiti and Horowhenua communities. However, no evidence or recent examples were tendered to the evaluation team. No evidence on the value of outcomes was provided as part of Kapiti Skills Centre's submissions to the draft evaluation report.

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

Regardless of whether a private training establishment is currently delivering or not, evidence of outcomes remains crucial for an external evaluation and review on educational performance. Unlike the two key evaluation questions on process that were agreed to be not applicable, the above two key evaluation questions on outcomes must be answered, and this was the understanding of Kapiti Skills Centre prior to the on-site visit.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Poor**.

Kapiti Skills Centre positioned itself as a provider to youth who did not possess any academic skills and had little achievement in the mainstream education system. The emphasis was, in the opinion of the evaluation team, rightly on equipping these learners with the soft skills (such as confidence, social and life skills) required for further education and integration back into mainstream education. There is sufficient anecdotal evidence of success for this goal.

However, beyond the needs of learners and their immediate families, the evidence on how Kapiti Skills Centre matches the needs of other stakeholders is not as convincing. It is apparent to the evaluation team that the board of trustee is overly complacent, relying on the organisation's past achievements (as evident in the trustees' frequent reference to successes over the past 20+ years during the interviews with the evaluation team). There is no evidence of community involvement during the critical period when Kapiti Skills Centre was contemplating its future direction. In fact, staff admitted that many of its community networks had not been actively maintained in the recent past. This casts doubts on whether the organisation continues to understand the current needs of the communities it serves. It is a significant concern when staff were unable to answer fundamental, factual questions such as 'How large is your target market?'

While the organisation appears to grasp that employment opportunities in the localities it operates in tend to be in the retail and aged care sectors, there has been no action to date on tailoring its vocational training towards employment in these sectors.

The government has, in the past, funded programmes delivered at Kapiti Skills Centre. Training for Work was funded by the Ministry of Social Development. Trustees admitted to a late realisation of a change in performance criteria, too late to reverse the poor employment outcomes from the programme, which led to the loss of half of the organisation's funding in 2013. Although remedial action was taken to salvage performance in the Youth Guarantee programme, the above evidence demonstrates an inconsistent performance as well as significant capability weakness in understanding and meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Not Applicable**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Not Applicable**.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Not Applicable**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Not Applicable**.

NZQA and Kapiti Skills Centre agreed that the above two key evaluation questions on process are of little relevance and are immaterial to the statements of confidence, as the organisation was – and still is – uncertain about its future direction. In this instance, the past performance in teaching effectiveness and guidance and support to learners may not necessarily be indicative of the future capability of Kapiti Skills Centre, given the current state of the organisation. Thus, in an unusual move (but allowed within the rules and spirit of external evaluation and review), the evaluation team ruled the above two key evaluation questions to be not applicable.

1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Poor**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Poor**.

Governance is unacceptably weak at Kapiti Skills Centre.

The majority of trustees interviewed were confused about the way funding was lost in 2013, and the events around early 2014. Opinions differed among trustees and staff on the actions and rationale that led the trustees to voluntarily transfer the Youth Guarantee funding and market share to another regional training provider. There were also significant differences with regard to what was perceived as the agreed outcome by the board of trustees (which was to create a partnership arrangement for co-accommodation and pooling of resources to realise the benefits of economies of scale). The evaluation team noticed ongoing, material inconsistencies in board meeting minutes in relation to the events (whereby the proposal was referred to as a partnership, transfer, and a sale in different meetings), but apparently no trustee questioned the difference. In fact, it appears that some trustees were unaware of the significance of the discrepancies until pointed out by

the evaluation team. This is representative of the significant weaknesses in capability and operations at governance level.

None of the trustees appear to possess the required level of knowledge of tertiary education systems and social services sector as they exist today. It appears to the evaluation team that the board of trustees is aware of the challenges associated with a shift of government priorities towards qualification completion. However, in terms of the compatibility of funding criteria with Kapiti Skills Centre's social objectives, there are at present no practical solutions proposed that would meet both government funding and the organisation's social objectives. In fact, despite the organisation having almost a full year for reflection purposes, Kapiti Skills Centre was still unable to demonstrate to the evaluation team a definitive, credible and viable path for its future direction. Opportunities in very diverse areas had been identified (activity-based youth programmes, care and community services, digital literacy, tailored workplace training and teacher education), but it was unclear whether and how Kapiti Skills Centre has gauged the needs of the community and arrived at those directions – see also Findings 1.3.

Overall, the evaluation team found the organisation to be lacking a realistic strategic direction. It is unclear how Kapiti Skills Centre will evolve, but it is clear that simply relying on 'a good history in delivering outcomes', as the board of trustees and the management team has been doing in very recent times, is insufficient for its continued operation. The organisation must build sector knowledge as a priority, enhance its capability to respond to change proactively, re-engage with its communities to understand their needs, and give serious consideration to how its structure, resourcing and operations must be adjusted in order to deliver its vision.

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Poor**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Poor**.

Recommendations

There are no explicit recommendations arising from this external evaluation and review other than those mentioned and/or implied throughout this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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