External Evaluation and Review Report

The Whanganui Learning Centre Trust

Date of report: 16 July 2019

About The Whanganui Learning Centre Trust

Whanganui Learning Centre Trust (WLCT) is a not-for-profit organisation delivering adult and community education (ACE), particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. This education delivery takes place within WLCT's wider role as a community development and social enterprise agency.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	232 Wicksteed St, Whanganui
Code of Practice signatory:	Not a signatory
Number of students:	Domestic: 250 part-time (60 per cent Māori, 5 per cent Pasifika, 30 per cent Pakeha)
	International: nil
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalent and three part-time
TEO profile:	See NZQA - Whanganui Learning Centre Trust.
Last EER outcome:	WLCT's previous EER outcome in 2015 was Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The EER looked at one focus area: ACE courses – which covers all courses delivered by WLCT. ACE courses are funded by the Tertiary Education Commission.
MoE number:	7956
NZQA reference:	C34595
Dates of EER visit:	28 and 29 May 2019

Final Report

Summary of Results

There is clear and comprehensive evidence that WLCT is providing quality education and training leading to positive outcomes for its students, their families and the community.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Students are highly engaged in their learning and well supported to succeed in both gaining confidence and interpersonal skills and achieving formal assessment where appropriate.

- Education is delivered in contexts appropriate to student and community needs. Stakeholders confirm that WLCT students and graduates are making positive changes in their lives and the lives of their families and communities as a result of the education and learning they gain at WLCT.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and purpose that is reflected throughout the organisation. The activities are well resourced and WLCT uses its resources effectively. Important compliance accountabilities are being well managed.

- The practice of self-assessment is not new at WLCT. Records and discussions indicate that self-assessment is well embedded and has been practised for many years.

- Self-assessment at WLCT is comprehensive, authentic and transparent. NZQA is highly confident that WLCT will continue to use findings insightfully to bring about worthwhile and ongoing improvements.

Final Report

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Both the organisation and its staff have a strong focus on student achievement. The courses that WLCT delivers are structured with the presumption that every student will complete, and staff expect no less. The majority of courses are ACE funded and are not formally assessed. Achievement and value are gauged by measures of positive change in the lives of students and their whānau.[2] Feedback is rich and qualitative, characterised by consistent endorsement of the positive transformations in the lives of graduates, their families and their communities because of their experience at WLCT. Students are improving their well-being and acquiring useful skills and knowledge, including 'soft skills' such as teamwork, communication and confidence. Most importantly, students' strengths are validated and they can plan for their future education and other priorities. Valued outcomes are being realised across all programmes through improved family and community life. Outcomes often lie outside the scope of traditional educational measures. For instance, local schools report improved children's education as a result of better parent engagement by the graduates of WLCT. Māori make up approximately 58 per cent of the student cohort, with Pasifika students representing about 7 per cent. Completion rates for Māori and Pasifika students are at the same level as the cohort as a whole. Staff at WLCT demonstrate a good understanding of, and

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

[2] Refer to the WLCT Theory of Change diagram in Appendix 1.

Final Report

	commitment to, the factors that lead to student achievement and regularly analyse and discuss ideas for improving achievement. The organisation has weekly staff meetings where ideas for improving course delivery and student achievement are discussed and agreed. WLCT has a wealth of feedback and data which they use intuitively to respond to change and inform developments in delivery and direction. The opportunity exists for WLCT to consider more formalised amalgamation of enrolment and achievement data which will provider richer analysis over time.
Conclusion:	Students are consistently achieving well where there is formal assessment, and achieving significant personal benefit and growth in the ACE activities where there is no formal assessment. In both scenarios, students, families and communities gain significant value.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	WLCT's efforts to meet the personal and academic goals of every student is a compelling feature of the organisation. The organisation believes that a critical factor in its success is its reputation for providing good value to its students, which in turn will have a positive effect on the lives of their children and their families. WLCT has regular, ongoing interaction with a wide stakeholder group through varying mechanisms and at all levels of the organisation as a core feature of its operation. These mechanisms include: daily contact with students; student satisfaction surveys; regular staff meetings; surveys undertaken with staff and stakeholders; participation in professional networks; community projects; consultation with teachers, professional agencies and parents; and local liaison committee meetings. The information from these interactions is fed back through the board to inform future strategy and programme planning. Every intending student is interviewed prior to committing to study, and from that discussion an individual learning plan is co-

	created with the student. Students interviewed at this EER understood the methodology and how it was transposed into their leaning activity, and they found it empowering. Students regularly complete surveys to provide feedback on the learning methods, course delivery and their learning environment. The results of this feedback are analysed and used effectively to inform improvements to course delivery.
	As previously discussed, the nature of ACE courses means there is little formal or summative assessment. Nevertheless, the PTE has detailed systems for internal moderation and has met external moderation requirements. Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated – WLCT contracted external expertise to assist them to review their one training scheme in 2018 to ensure it remained fit for purpose.
Conclusion:	WLCT's regular and ongoing interaction with its students and stakeholders – ensuring that programmes and activities meet the existing and emerging needs of students, families and community – is a stand-out feature of the organisation.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students at WLCT receive active, integrated and ongoing social and academic support from staff at all levels of the organisation. Intending students are well guided into courses that are appropriate to their aspirations and capabilities. Teachers and students described numerous activities and initiatives that motivate, engage and encourage students to get the full benefit from their time at WLCT.
	Students are highly engaged in their learning, and they have opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in a range of contexts that are relevant to their needs. Student learning goals are well understood and individual learning plans are co-created to match their needs. This has brought about high achievement and retention.
	Teachers provide timely, ongoing feedback to each student on their progress.
	Staff have strong cultural competency which enables robust

	educational support for students and a very inclusive environment. The community development nature of the organisation means that its staff go above and beyond the scope of a traditional education organisation to provide social and community support.
Conclusion:	Students at WLCT are experiencing a strongly supportive and caring learning environment, which is well reviewed within a reflective organisational culture, ensuring its ongoing effectiveness.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	WLCT is a not-for-profit charitable trust, governed by a board of trustees. There is strong educational, financial and legal expertise within the board which has recently undertaken extensive self-review and engaged external expertise to assist with this process. As a result, they have strengthened as a board and are committed to continued capability building.

The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy, purpose and values which are evident throughout the organisation. As a charitable organisation that is largely non-government funded, WLCT relies heavily on fundraising and volunteer support. In doing so, it uses what resources it has very effectively within a sustainable business model. Staff are valued for their expertise and provided with the right support and opportunities for professional development to support them in their roles.

WLCT has well-established administration and management systems and procedures in place, with ethical practices. An open-door policy and clear communications have created a welcoming environment and very positive atmosphere within the organisation.

The organisation encourages reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to how it meets the needs of students and other stakeholders. Self-assessment is being well led by management and is comprehensively understood and adopted throughout the organisation. |

Conclusion:	WLCT has a clear vision and understanding of its enterprise, and strong leadership committed to providing effective support for educational achievement. Monitoring of performance within WLCT is regular and transparent and effective.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	WLCT has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages effectively to ensure obligations are met. Compliance is overseen by the manager and reported regularly to the board. The manager has a detailed compliance calendar to assist with bring-up of deadlines and management of required actions.

Indications of effective compliance management include:

- NZQA attestations and returns have been submitted within required timeframes. There is no recent 'risk' history with NZQA.

- The courses at WLCT are being delivered consistent with their one NZQA-approved training scheme.

- The organisation has 28 funding partners, all of whom require regular evaluation and reporting. Management has good systems to ensure that these reporting accountabilities are met in a timely and accurate manner.

- WLCT has charitable status, so financial auditing is strict and up to date to comply with the Charitable Trusts Act.

- WLCT has met compliance obligations associated with NZQA moderation.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: ACE Programmes

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

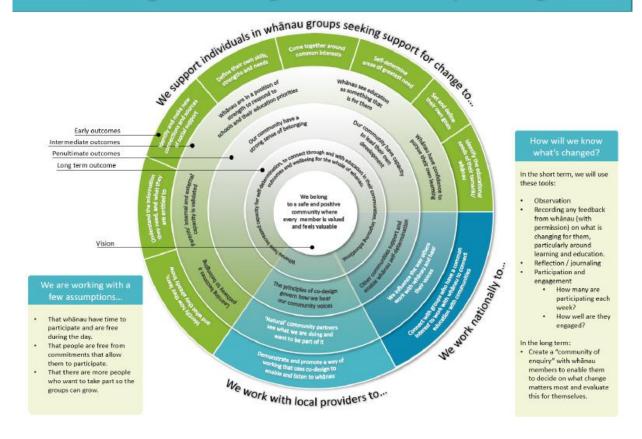There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Whanganui Learning Centre Trust Theory of Change

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. 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.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[3]*

- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*

- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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[3] NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*

- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*

- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, training schemes and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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). All rules cited above are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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Final Report