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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 10 May 2017

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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:	Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	5 November 1999
Location:	Alexandra Community House, 14-20 Centennial Avenue, Alexandra
Delivery sites:	Some tutoring is done off site in Cromwell and Wanaka, using other organisations' facilities.
Courses currently delivered:	Intensive Literacy and Numeracy and Adult and Community Education
Code of Practice signatory:	No, all domestic students
Number of students:	Domestic 2016: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy, 29 students; Adult and Community Education, 379 students Female 88 per cent; Māori 19 per cent; New Zealand Pakeha 42 per cent; Asian 3 per cent; Middle Eastern/Latin American/African 11 per cent; unknown 25 per cent International: nil; all students are New Zealand residents
Number of staff:	Three full-time; 21 part-time
Scope of active	Approved training scheme – 'Not Just Words 1

accreditation:	Literacy and Numeracy' plus a range of unit standards across business administration, accounting, computing, information technology, core generic, financial management, work and study skills, communication, science, maths, food safety and nutrition, personal finances and social and cooperative skills.
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Community-based adult Intensive Literacy and Numeracy learning and other programmes to meet community requirements, such as gifted, Te Reo, Enviroschools and at-risk programmes in primary schools; the Early Childhood Education programme and a range of adult programmes including strengthening families, parenting, sustainable living and careers.</p> <p>Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP) is part of a national organisation of 13 REAPs located in rural areas throughout New Zealand. Adult and Community Education occurs alongside the formal education system, is open entry and accessible to all. Learning is purposeful, informal and does not necessarily lead to a qualification.</p>
Recent significant changes:	An Early Childhood Education tutor with 30 years' experience in the sector recently resigned; however, Early Childhood Education was not in scope for this review.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the most recent external evaluation and review (EER) in 2013, Central Otago REAP was found to be Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Other:	Alexandra Community House is a purpose-built building which provides a base for 16 social, community and education agencies in Alexandra.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were governance and management and Adult and Community Education. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funds two programmes: Adult and Community Education and the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy 'Choices' programme. The Choices programme develops literacy skills

and provides opportunities to develop new practical skills, team skills, personal goals, communication skills, career pathways, qualifications and credits towards NCEA, budgeting skills and building confidence. It is designed to meet students' individual needs while they work at their own pace. Adult and Community Education and the Choices programmes encompass the greatest number of students at the organisation.

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.

The EER team comprised two evaluators and an observer and occurred on-site at Alexandra over two days. The observer was an internal NZQA staff member and did not take any part in the decision-making at the EER. The evaluators met the director, principal, the board chairman, sector coordinators, tutors across the programmes in focus, and a small group of current and previous students. A group of external stakeholders (based at Alexandra Community House) were also interviewed. A wide range of documentation was also reviewed, including the self-assessment summary, minutes of governance and management meetings, evidence of the Ministry of Social Development on-site review, annual reports and the 2016 Choices programme review.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme** for the following reasons:

- Students (many not successful in the compulsory school sector) are empowered to understand their 'life journey' through a combination of an open, warm, caring environment, non-judgemental acceptance and individual attention. Structure is provided to all aspects of a learner's life through comprehensive needs analysis leading to individual learning plans and goal-setting. These processes identify specific learning and interpersonal goals and provide a baseline for measuring progress. Depending on needs, a range of individualised options are available to minimise barriers to learning progress. These options vary widely and may include intensive literacy and numeracy tuition, computing, personal development or practical farm skills.
- Through successful learning experiences, coupled with highly effective small group interactions with staff and other students, constructive and purposeful relationships with other students, staff, family and the community begin to develop. An open-door policy and continued support is offered to students to help them pursue their chosen pathway once classes are completed.
- Governance and management are motivated by learner well-being and progress. It is informed by regular systematic reporting and review against government targets and national involvement in the adult education sector. Passion for education as a change agent and providing the tools and resources to enable learners to contribute as fully as possible to their families and community drives governance and management.
- Leadership is highly effective. It is stable, strong, inclusive, community-oriented and informed by local knowledge and the principles of life-long learning. Decision-making is shared and transparent and involves consideration of the needs of all stakeholders, including learners, leading to high levels of stakeholder engagement.
- Staff are valued, highly committed, collaborative and experienced practitioners who share a learner-centred philosophy that provides consistency for students. Staff understand and enjoy working with their students, give their time generously, share resources and expertise willingly, and model constructive relationship-building skills.

- Authentic and robust self-assessment has led to worthwhile improvements. Effective compliance management processes assure NZQA that policies and practices are legal and ethical, health and safety concerns are well-managed, and that staff are well-supported to provide students with relevant teaching and learning.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

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

Most students have no or low qualifications. In 2015, 90 learners participated in Intensive Literacy and Numeracy and digital literacy and three courses were run to deliver te reo and tikanga. In 2016, 29 learners were involved in Intensive Literacy and Numeracy, delivered over 2,900 hours; and 379 Adult and Community Education learners over 4,966 hours, meeting TEC participation targets (figures for 2017 are not yet available).

Educational and personal targets are established at enrolment. Most learners need to re-engage with education, so formal assessment is not the primary driver of achievement. Progress is established by meeting attendance and personal outcomes satisfactorily. However, some students also complete credits towards qualifications. Students progress at their own rate with ongoing encouragement from tutors. This gives students control over their own rate of learning (sometimes for the first time) and freedom from the anxiety of 'trying to keep up with a class'. These factors lead to successful outcomes, which increases confidence and further enhances learning progress.

Choices learners use the TEC adult literacy and numeracy assessment tool which measures literacy learning progression at the beginning and end of the programme. The progress is not always positive, but most learners make progress, as required by the TEC contract. Tutors work closely with individual students to review progress and set new targets to ensure learning remains relevant and appropriately challenging.

A holistic approach to student progress ensures that non-educational barriers, such as lack of child care or transport, are recognised and accommodated where possible. However, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own lives and learning as preparation for more effective adult participation in the community. The overwhelming success of the learner-centred approach was evident from personal accounts, student evaluations and destination data provided by learners, staff and relevant stakeholders.

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

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

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

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

The greatest value for students is that they meet others, reduce their social isolation, and feel more valued. This renewed sense of connectedness improves mood and contributes to a sense of belonging. In combination with intensive individual attention by tutors, learning is enabled. Class behavioural expectations also contribute significantly to successful outcomes. Any situation or behaviour that does not contribute to enhancing the self-worth of an individual student or others is not tolerated. Several students attributed their success to the value placed on their individuality and encouragement to express themselves without fear of criticism. This was also evidenced by the open and honest communication of the students with the evaluators.

Student achievement is enhanced by the flexibility offered. For example, a student may enter a programme and then encounter an issue that prevents them from continuing, such as family illness. Students can re-enrol as their needs progress and change over time. This flexibility encourages students to take control and plan their lives effectively with the knowledge that they will be welcomed back enthusiastically, without criticism. In this way, students are able to exit the programme and re-enter as their circumstances dictate.

Central Otago REAP has a leadership role in the Adult and Community Education sector. This ensures that all levels of the organisation, including the governance team and management and staff, are actively contributing to the strategic direction of the Adult and Community Education sector and being informed by the sector. For example, work on developing Adult and Community Education learner pathways at a national level has been used to identify Central Otago REAP's pathways for their learners, as discussed below.

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

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

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

The design, delivery and assessment activities of the Choices and Adult and Community Education programmes are closely matched to individual student's needs. The Choices programme develops literacy skills and provides opportunities

to develop new practical skills, team skills, personal goals, communication skills, career pathways, qualifications and credits towards NCEA, budgeting skills and building confidence. Student interests and hobbies noticed by the tutors are used to promote learning opportunities and engender greater student confidence. Examples include jam making, baking and field trips to local areas of interest.

Tutors meet often to review student progress, cross-moderate assessments and discuss students' needs. Staff are enthusiastic and passionate about their teaching and ways to better serve the educational needs of the region. This is reflected by the teaching offered at Ranfurly, Wanaka and Cromwell, where tutors go to the regions to ensure delivery meets local requirements. A recent example was the identification of a group of migrant workers' wives who were isolated at home while their partners were away working. A staff member set up a meeting to discuss their needs in a sensitive and proactive manner.

REAP managers meet at least three times a year to review and share knowledge. While there are regional differences in relation to population composition and workplace opportunities, there are the shared priorities (including government priorities). These include improving literacy, language, numeracy and electronic media skills; increasing the number of young people (under 25) engaged in educational pathways; and increasing the number of Māori in Adult and Community Education activities. Central Otago REAP has been highly successful in increasing Māori participation. In 2013, there were seven Māori students; in 2014, there were five Māori students, and in 2015 numbers had increased to 31. The reasons for this involve marketing and the close relationship with the Alexandra Community House agencies who refer individuals to the most appropriate on-site service. The percentage of under-25s has also increased over these years, but it remains difficult to attract younger men to the programmes.

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

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

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

Central Otago REAP benefits greatly from being in a small community whose members know and care about each other's welfare. It also attracts well-educated and motivated retirees. These people are used to contributing in their communities of origin and continue to do this in both voluntary and paid positions. This is reflected by some staff who are highly skilled educational practitioners, including several retired school principals. These people bring a wealth of experience to the organisation and relish the opportunity to work one-to-one with students. The various skill-sets of the staff group are considerable. If any expertise is not

available inside the staff group, it can be found from one of the on-site agency groups or from the wider community. This process enables students to access relevant support promptly, and further enhances community engagement. The communication itself may lead to other outcomes, such as a work opportunity.

Students sometimes require formal professional assistance, such as the services of a counsellor or social worker. Tutors are skilled at knowing when to refer students to others. There are clear policies and procedures to follow in the event of any emergencies, such as a suicidal student. Staff mutually support each other (both professionally and personally) to assist with stressful situations, so they can continue to support students appropriately.

The ongoing needs analysis – both at enrolment and as a student progresses in a class – ensures that students are directly involved in reviewing their progress, reflecting on their goals and establishing new goals. Student feedback to the evaluation team and student evaluations over time indicate that staff and student expectations are high and that the support students are offered (including to each other) is a key factor in the positive progress made; as is the realisation that ‘learning makes a difference’.

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

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

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

Rolling enrolments and high-needs students provide daily challenges, both educational and personal, for staff. The purpose-built Alexandra Community House provides an excellent physical and social environment and is an outstanding example of governance, management and the local community working together to support community agencies and educational achievement. The governance team of six share expertise across financial management and other relevant skill-sets, with the board chairman having a previous leadership role at a university. Succession planning is underway to ensure continuity of educational provision when significant staff retire.

Central Otago REAP operates a ‘whānau model’ which accepts people as they are and works to either guide/enhance or change their pathway to develop more useful ways to engage educationally and function personally. This requires a level of wrap-around care that may involve staff out of work time. This added level of commitment is essential to help change students’ poor patterns of behaviour and is willingly given by staff. Regular debriefing and discussion occur informally and, if required, more formally. However, this level of support is not formally recorded (and therefore unable to be quantified) and may lead to levels of stress that are

difficult to manage over time. It also puts stress on other staff who are required to offer their support. Some staff use the on-site resources, for example trained counsellors, to get informal supervision, but others do not.

While no incidents of staff 'not coping' seem to have occurred, the evaluation team recommends that the director continue regular external supervision (from outside the Alexandra Community House's acknowledged expertise). This will provide opportunities to discuss and review her own and other staff member's actions and to assure the governance team that there is a structured, reflective approach to ensuring ongoing safety of the whānau – students, staff and managers.

Performance reviews, peer observations and ongoing professional development occur regularly. In addition to these methods for reviewing performance, it is recommended that governance and management discuss with staff other opportunities to support staff to manage their interactions with students, many of whom have high needs. This suggestion was discussed with the director at the evaluation closing meeting and appears as a recommendation at the end of this report.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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

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

Compliance with the Education Act, NZQA rules and the delivery of approved programmes is managed by 'standing items' at governance and management meetings, monitoring of the NZQA website, and by high-level engagement within the Adult and Community Education sector. Central Otago REAP has robust mandated processes to ensure quality and accountability. These include REAPANZ (the 13 REAPS' umbrella body) biennial peer reviews and Ministry of Social Development social sector accreditation audits against standards to assure quality of delivery. Each of these review outcomes are reported to the board with any resulting actions required. The most recent Ministry of Social Development audit in 2016 met seven standards and partially met three. Those partially met were discussed at the EER, and the evaluators were satisfied that the required actions had been taken to the ministry's satisfaction.

The quality management system is up-to-date and reflects business as usual. It is reviewed each year and on an as-needs basis. The organisation manages compliance with the relevant NZQA rules and regulations. Programmes are delivered according to the programme approval documents. If there is a fault in programme delivery, it would be that the organisation sometimes 'over-delivers', at

its own cost. An example would be exceeding funded hours for literacy to ensure a student reaches the necessary level of literacy attainment to meet their goals.

The EER in 2013 recommended that: 'Central Otago REAP build on and continue to develop the planning and structure for self-assessment to ensure that information gained is shared across the organisation and able to be monitored over time, consider reviewing the student evaluation form/survey to determine how well social, personal and employment-readiness skills are progressed'.

The value of aggregating data across highly individualised learning continues to cause some tension. However, there was considerable evidence at this EER that communication across all parts of the organisation was exemplary and that key data is aggregated and analysed, for example Māori rates of participation.

Self-assessment is widely used to understand strengths and areas for improvement, and to benchmark individual learner's progress and that of priority learners. Ongoing internal reviews occur with the key evaluation questions used as a framework for discussion at staff and management meetings. There are a range of reporting mechanisms at all levels of the organisation. These include the director's six-monthly reports to the board around performance and contractual obligations, risk management and health and safety. The latter was evident when the evaluators and observer were required to sign a form indicating that they had read the safety and evacuation instructions for the building in the event of an emergency.

The synergies afforded by the shared space at Alexandra Community House include the ability to gain access for students to professional expertise around, for example, mental health, legal requirements, pregnancy help and women's issues. The inter-agency accessibility also provides staff with ready access to professionals who understand legal and compliance requirements across the full range of social services, adding value to Central Otago REAP's management of compliance accountabilities.

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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Adult programmes including Adult and Community Education

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Central Otago REAP's governance and management consider discussing with staff the value to them and the organisation of staff participating in external support mechanisms to discuss, develop, review and enhance strategies for managing learners.

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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