

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Aronui Technical Training Centre

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 18 April 2012

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MoE Number: 8925
NZQA Reference: C06779
Date of EER visit: 8 and 9 February 2012

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

Location:	12 Elliot Street, Papakura, Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	19 November 1990
Number of students:	218
Number of staff:	Eleven full-time Three part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Horticulture (Advanced) (Level 4)• National Certificate in Nga Mahi a te Whare Pora (Pae Tuatoru) (Level 6)
Sites:	The head office/campus is based in Papakura, South Auckland with additional sites in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Hawke's Bay, and the East Coast.
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Aronui Technical Training Centre (Aronui) is a Māori-owned and managed PTE and is grounded in Māori customs and values. Although the majority of learners are of Māori descent, Aronui has a number of non-Māori learners attending its programmes including those of Asian and Indian descent.</p> <p>Aronui offers 13 qualifications from level 3 to level 6. Seven are local qualifications leading on to six national qualifications. The qualifications cover Business, Information Technology (IT), Trades, Health, and Kaupapa Māori programmes. The</p>

range of qualifications allows for learners to experience a variety of subjects in a PTE setting.

The provision of four level 3 foundation qualifications provides a platform for learners to enter and succeed in the tertiary system. The remaining nine qualifications provide a variety of programmes for learners to progress before exiting to employment or higher study.

Recent significant changes: As a consequence of the 2011 EER, Aronui has co-opted expert advisors onto its advisory boards to provide external integrity to Aronui programmes and ensure that industry standards are being applied and met within those relevant programmes. In September 2011 an academic manager was appointed by Aronui to oversee action plans developed to address the concerns of the 2011 EER report.

Previous quality assurance history: Aronui underwent an EER in March 2011. The organisation received statements of Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy. In addition, the following programme focus areas were evaluated:

- National Certificate in Horticulture (Advanced) (Level 4)
- National Certificate in Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora (Pae Tuatoru) (Level 6).

The National Certificate in Horticulture was selected because the programme had received a poor moderation report at the time of the 2011 EER, and Aronui had undertaken remedial work to ensure the programme met appropriate delivery and assessment standards. The focus would provide an opportunity for the EER to ascertain how Aronui had responded since the 2011 EER.

The National Certificate in Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora (Pae Tuatoru) programme, which focuses on raranga and rakau whakairo¹, was selected to highlight the kaupapa Māori aspect of Aronui as well as demonstrate the management of programmes at different sites, including marae-based studies.

¹ Weaving and carving

Although Aronui is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, NZQA did not require international students as a focus area. At the time of the EER, Aronui had only one international student who was near the end of study. The other international students had already completed their programmes.

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 external evaluation and review was conducted over two days by two evaluators who visited the Auckland sites of Papakura, Drury, and Otara.² The evaluation involved engagement with:

- Students from the focus areas selected
- The chief executive officer
- Academic manager
- Marketing manager
- Executive finance officer
- Two senior tutors and one other tutor
- Three stakeholders of Aronui who provide employment pathways for Aronui learners.

In addition to documents provided for the EER scoping exercise, the EER team was provided with a range of operational documents (including current self-assessment materials³, management and operational policies, planning documents), a variety of quantitative data relating to student achievement and satisfaction, and related analysis.

² Aronui operates programmes in a number of sites outside of Auckland.

³ These documents complemented the self-assessment material provided as part of the scope of the EER.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Aronui Technical Training Centre**.

Aronui statistics show that learners are attaining good course and qualification completion results as evidenced by the most recent (2010) PTE sector Tertiary Education Commission educational performance results. Course qualifications were 82 per cent, slightly above the sector median of 75 per cent, while course completions were 74 per cent, slightly below the sector median of 79 per cent.

Learners described their studies at Aronui as life-changing and transformational. In addition to a qualification that was seen by learners as a tangible goal they could aspire to, the actual accomplishment of the qualification provides learners with opportunities and lifestyle choices. At the individual level, learners from both programmes commented that they had seen an increase in their commitment to study and increased confidence and self-worth which has in turn led them to actively focus on future prospects, including better employment opportunities and greater participation in family and extended family activities.

Māori learners spoke of the increase in personal knowledge and understanding of te reo and tikanga Māori, which for many was very limited at the start of their studies. For these learners, this has been one of the most positive changes.

Other skills identified and gained by learners in both programmes were: ethical work practices including consistent application of those practices, improved time management, improved communication skills, and improved marketing skills.

At the commencement of all programmes, learners, together with Aronui staff, collaboratively develop individual development plans which help identify learner needs. These are actively monitored for the duration of the programme to ensure that learner needs are being pursued and achieved. The weaving and whakairo programmes, particularly the marae-based programmes, have been developed in collaboration with and endorsed by iwi. This ensures that stakeholder needs have been identified and addressed. In the industry-based courses, Aronui has gone to great lengths to ensure that feedback is actively sought from industry, particularly the big commercial operations. This strategy has seen graduates of Aronui from previous horticulture programmes being employed by these firms based on the reputation of the tutoring staff.

Staff of Aronui are highly qualified, with the senior tutor of the Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora programme at the helm of the Whakaruruhau of Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora as its chairperson. Currently this group is revising the standards of raranga and utilising the Aronui programme as the pilot site to implement the changes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Aronui Technical Training Centre**.

In the 2011 EER, external moderation by two standard-setting bodies showed two programmes having a negative impact on the education outcomes achieved. This galvanised Aronui into developing action plans to address these shortcomings.

Aronui ensures that all its statistical data for each of its programmes is accurately recorded and submitted to the main office in sufficient time to allow its management team to analyse the data, ensure course objectives are being met, and ensure that any issues raised can be identified and addressed appropriately. This has seen a positive increase in accurate data being recorded and management provided with robust information to make programme improvements.

The appointment of an academic manager provides Aronui with a dedicated person whose primary responsibility will be to oversee programme quality and monitor learner achievements. In addition, expert advisers have been engaged by Aronui to sit on its advisory panels to ensure there is sufficient expert advice provided to teaching staff on the programmes. Within the programmes, staff are required to undertake annual appraisals conducted by the chief executive officer. Self-assessments are initially conducted by staff and these form the basis of the appraisal. The appraisals were considered by Aronui management as very effective in ensuring that staff were meeting programme targets and addressing issues expediently and appropriately.

In the weaving programme, tutors are peer reviewed internally and externally to ensure standards remain high. This process also allows for staff to enhance their skills as they become exposed to other tribes' weaving methods. These are then brought back to Aronui, where some aspects are able to be incorporated into the teaching.

In the horticulture programme, the external expert adviser on the advisory panel is also a previous national moderator for the industry training organisation. He provides useful advice and support for the tutor. In addition, active and ongoing feedback is sought from produce growers in the region on the productivity and progress of horticultural graduates. This provides Aronui with the most current industry practice standards as well as immediate destination feedback on graduates.

Findings⁴

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Aronui statistics show that learners are attaining reasonably good course and qualification completion results as evidenced by the most recent (2010) Tertiary Education Commission PTE sector educational performance results. Course qualifications were 82 per cent, slightly above the sector median of 75 per cent, while course completions were 74 per cent, slightly below the sector median of 79 per cent. In addition, internal 2011 data collected for the learners on the National Certificate in Horticulture programme indicate that all five that began the programme have completed, while in the National Certificate in Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora, nine out of 11 learners completed the level 5 programme and qualification and are currently studying towards the level 6 diploma qualification.

Learners described their studies at Aronui as life-changing and transformational. In addition to a qualification, which was seen by learners as a tangible goal that they could aspire to, the actual accomplishment of the qualification provides learners with opportunities and lifestyle choices. At the individual level, learners from both programmes commented that they had seen an increase in their commitment to study and increased confidence and self-worth which has in turn led them to actively focus on future prospects, including better employment opportunities and greater participation in family and extended family activities. This was particularly so for the Māori learners completing raranga and whakairo programmes.

Māori learners revealed that at the commencement of their studies they had either very limited or no understanding of te reo or tikanga Māori, yet as their programme progressed and their knowledge base increased, they were able to converse and understand to a certain extent some of the intricacies and nuances of the language and its customs with reasonable competence and confidence. For many of these learners, understanding te reo and tikanga Māori has been the most positive transformational change for them because, in addition to being able to contribute something positive to their people, they are able to be confident within their own abilities and within their identity as Māori.

Other skills identified and gained by learners were: ethical work practices including consistent application of those practices, improved time management, improved communication skills, and improved marketing skills. These skills were all

⁴ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

recognised as having been attained in both the Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora and the Horticulture programmes and seen as positive transferable skills for the learners.

In the 2011 EER the results of external moderation reports by two standard-setting bodies showed two programmes having a negative impact on the education outcomes. This galvanised Aronui into developing an action plan to address these shortcomings. By involving the standard-setting bodies and engaging expert advisers, Aronui has managed to improve its moderation results to the extent that it has received a report stating that the New Zealand Horticulture Industry Training Organisation has the confidence that Aronui can meet its moderation requirements. Within the Ngā Mahi a Te Whare Pora (Pae Tuatoru) programme, Aronui has nationally recognised weavers who are also part of the standard-setting group piloting the new standards for raranga. This group provides expert self-assessment capabilities in this particular programme.

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 **Good**.

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

Aronui offers programmes whose outcomes are valued by stakeholders. The programmes are typically designed based on community demographics, local high school statistics and government strategies such as the Tertiary Education Strategy of increasing the number of under-25 year olds achieving level 4 qualifications or higher. The programmes are delivered within a kaupapa and tikanga Māori framework which enables Aronui to provide qualifications with a high utility factor. Learners are also able to increase their capability in the use of te reo Māori and its associated customs. This was evident in the number of learners making interior tribal meeting house adornments, including woven flax panels and traditional mats. Learners feel these new skills will enable them to provide their whānau, hapū, and iwi with an enduring legacy for many years.

The non-Māori learners from the horticulture programme are able to attain a qualification that has seen a number of recent graduates being sought after by large commercial fresh produce growers. Of immediate value to the commercial operators is that the Aronui graduates have experience working in a commercial environment, as these are the conditions in which they are being trained. Much of the produce grown on the Aronui farms is eventually sold at local markets. This is carried out by the learners under supervision from staff. This activity provides learners with experience in marketing, art exhibitions, and improved communication skills.

At present, Aronui is developing an environmental pathway programme for the local high school. The plan is to provide experiential learning opportunities in the horticulture programme for senior students with a view to providing a learning pathway to the certificate and eventually the diploma programmes. The value of

this endeavour for school leavers is that they will have a plan developed for them while they are still attending school and can easily transition from school to a course with high-utility potential. This would also provide much-needed sources for commercial growers to recruit appropriately trained workers.

In terms of quality assurance with regards to teaching and learning, the horticulture programmes are judged in the main by the produce that is sold at market. Because the programmes operate under commercial conditions, there is very little room for mistakes or sub-standard work as the presentation of the produce and the profit earned through sales are the indications of success.

Within the Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora programmes, particularly the marae-based programmes, much of the review of success is judged by the iwi. It is the iwi that must approach Aronui to have programmes taught on marae, and therefore much of the quality assurance is measured by them. However, Aronui has nationally recognised tutors, or otherwise ensures that work quality is maintained. The recent review of the weaving programme has improved the qualification and Aronui is currently piloting these changes on behalf of NZQA. This initiative is being led by the head tutor who is also the current chair of the standard-setting group.

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 **Excellent**.

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

At the commencement of all programmes, learners together with Aronui staff collaboratively develop individual development plans which help identify learner needs. These are actively monitored for the duration of the programme to ensure that learner needs are being pursued and achieved. The weaving and whakairo programmes, particularly the marae-based programmes, are developed in collaboration with and endorsed by iwi. Marae approach and discuss with Aronui their specific needs, and programmes are designed within the scope of accreditation to provide these courses. The primary motivator for many of the learners attending the kaupapa Māori programmes is to enable them to engage with their whānau through the use of newly acquired skills which are viewed by many whānau as a lost art and an asset that needs to be protected.

Learner needs are addressed by ensuring that the learning environments, particularly for the industry-based courses like horticulture, are similar to the commercial conditions that learners are likely to encounter if they pursue a career in the industry. Each part of the programme is assessed against unit standards and tested in a real-life situation as most of the produce from the farms is eventually on-sold at local fresh produce markets. These types of learning environments provide stakeholders with the confidence to engage graduates with a learning foundation that is suited to their operations. Commercial fresh produce owners spoken to commented that all they needed to offer in terms of training for

graduates from Aronui was training in the context of that company's own specific operations. They said that the work ethics and skills gained by many of the Aronui graduates were more than sufficient for their operations and that they did not have to carry too much expense in inducting the new worker into their operations.

Active and ongoing feedback is sought from produce growers as to the productivity and progress of horticultural graduates. This provides Aronui with the most current industry practice standards as well as immediate destination feedback on graduates, which Aronui tries to be cognisant of for current and future programmes.

In relation to the Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora programme learners, progress is typically under review from whānau as many of the artworks produced, particularly the weaving products, are being made specifically for marae under the guidance and monitoring of tribal cultural advisers.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Aronui teaching staff are highly qualified, have relevant skills, and are empathetic with the learners. For example, the senior raranga tutor is the current chairperson of the Te Whakaruruhau o Nga Mahi a te Whare Pora⁵, which is currently reviewing the raranga standards for NZQA. This provides confidence that Aronui assessments in Ngā Mahi a te Whare Paora programmes are at a national standard.

A whanaungatanga/collegial mentoring philosophy is practised by the teaching staff and tutors and is wholly supported by the chief executive officer who is actively involved in staff professional development. The teaching and learning environment at Aronui promotes open and frank discussions in a safe environment, to the extent that knowledge is shared, particularly by those staff who have been with Aronui over many years, to ensure that adequate and appropriate support is provided to tutors to help learners achieve their personal and educational goals.

As a part of their employment requirements, all tutorial staff are expected to complete training in adult teaching which includes the Certificate in Adult Teaching as well as training in assessment and moderation. Staff appraisals are conducted at least once a year where staff are asked to complete an initial self-assessment followed up by a meeting with the chief executive officer. Random classroom observations are also carried out by the chief executive officer and the operations manager. In addition, moderation and assessment training is also provided by Aronui to staff as part of their professional development.

⁵ This is the standard-setting body for raranga accreditation.

Learners interviewed expressed a high level of satisfaction with the organisation and management of the programmes and in the course content and delivery. Within the industry-based programmes learners are exposed to real-life commercial operations, which provide invaluable experience, particularly for second-chance learners. Learners commented on how relevant both the courses were, with the horticulture programme enabling graduates to seek appropriate employment in the industry, and the weaving and whakairo programmes enabling learners to promote their skills either in commercial ventures or in activities resulting from the renaissance of tribal customs and practices as well as the restoration of traditional meeting houses.

In addition, the Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora programmes incorporate te reo and tikanga Māori, which adds a cultural context for learners, providing an extra dimension to their learning and skill acquisition. This is important to learners because te reo and tikanga Māori are taonga (treasures/skills) that are in drastic decline in many tribal areas. The acquisition of these skills provides a tangible asset base for tribes as well as an opportunity for learners to actively contribute to their tribe.

Aronui has also appointed an academic manager to oversee and monitor all the programmes offered by Aronui. This appointment has provided the chief executive officer with added support to ensure programmes are meeting their objectives and learner achievement target rates are being met.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Learners interviewed by the evaluation team commented on the intensive support provided by Aronui staff from the time their individual development plans are constructed at the beginning of the programme through to its end and, where appropriate, after the programme. The evaluation team heard from learners how the tutors would take extra time to support learners through difficult periods, not only those related to programmes but also when some of the learners had personal problems. They said that the teaching environment was more whānau-oriented, with shared meals, waiata (singing) practices, and opportunities for learners to immerse themselves in the culture. Learners commented that they considered Aronui as their second whānau, and that they would recommend the organisation to other prospective learners. The value of this type of support, particularly for the Māori learners, is that learners were able to better focus on their learning because the learning took place within a Māori-centric context.

Learners commented that although the teaching staff were strict, it was acceptable because they were recognised as experts in their fields and insisted that high standards be maintained and that learners remained focused. Learners

commented that staff were approachable and supportive and the learners were very appreciative of the ongoing feedback provided by staff.

1.6 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 **Good**.

The governance board of Aronui comprises 12 trustees and seven external trustees, and the other five made up of internal staff. Governance meets up to three times per year, and with a quorum of three trustees per meeting Aronui is able to operate within the rules of its constitution to enable it to function properly.

Aronui has a clear vision and purpose of providing quality programmes with quality outcomes for disadvantaged youth and the unemployed. There is a strong commitment by Aronui to ensure that appropriate systems and processes that comply with relevant standards are in place and being appropriately applied. This was evidenced in the management team of Aronui taking note of the recommendations made in the 2011 EER report and developing action plans to address these. Two of these actions include the appointment of an academic manager and ensuring that external expert advisers are appointed to programme advisory panels to provide industry-related experiential advice.

Programmes appear to be well resourced to enable teaching to occur in realistic conditions. This includes operating within a commercial environment for all of the industry-based programmes and for the kaupapa Māori-based programmes, ensuring that cultural protocols and practices are strictly adhered to.

Aronui has established strong networks within the community as well as within the industries related to the programmes being taught. This has required Aronui to ensure its programmes are of a high standard so as to continue to maintain and enhance the relationships with these networks. They include the Auckland horticulture business community and iwi within a number of tribal areas such as Tainui, Ngā Puhī, Ngāti Porou, and Ngai Tahu.

As a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, Aronui has embarked on a focused marketing drive to attract more young learners as well as to increase the intake of international students. The intent of these actions is to increase learner numbers and to provide an attractive option of study for learners which has potential for individual growth and employment prospects. This has seen the marketing manager and other Aronui staff travel overseas to recruit prospective learners. The strategy has been to establish and develop credible networks overseas whereby Aronui can put in place processes that ensure learners are fully supported from the time they apply in their country of origin through to their arrival and during their studies. The value of this strategy is that it will safeguard international learners and the reputation of Aronui as well as

the cultural values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and aroha which underpin the philosophy of Aronui towards its learners.

As part of the collective effort led by its chief executive officer, Aronui has addressed many of the concerns raised in previous moderation reports and has been given positive responses by the relevant national standard-setting body. This shows the commitment and determination of Aronui to quickly address issues raised and find appropriate solutions. NZQA is confident that Aronui now has the internal capability to identify and resolve issues within its programmes of study.

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 **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Horticulture (Advanced) (Level 4)

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

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

2.3 Focus area: National Certificate in Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora (Pae Tuatoru) (Level 6)

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

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eeer/introduction/>*

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