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# External Evaluation and Review Report

High Wire Charitable Trust

Date of report: 20 September 2021

# About High Wire Charitable Trust

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*High Wire Charitable Trust develops and empowers young people and children through providing adventure opportunities and life skills. These include operating a school services (military) academy in three secondary schools, and alternative education programmes for primary-aged children in two primary schools.<sup>1</sup>*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	159 Dominion Road, Redhill, Papakura, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 181 part-time secondary students engaged in the school services academy across three secondary schools (in term 2, 2021)
Number of staff:	15 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	<a href="#">High Wire Charitable Trust</a> (NZQA website)  High Wire Charitable Trust (High Wire) runs a service (military) academy in three secondary schools. Learners are secondary school students, and participating in the school service academy is an elective integrated into the school curriculum. High Wire tutors teach at the school and have Limited Authority to Teach. <sup>2</sup>
Last EER outcome:	This is the first EER of High Wire.
Scope of evaluation:	The School Services Academy includes three training schemes: Cadet Forces Foundation Skills Leadership; Outdoor Recreation; and Self-management.
MoE number:	9131
NZQA reference:	C39371
Dates of EER visit:	17 and 18 May 2021

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<sup>1</sup> The EER did not include an enquiry into the alternative education programme High Wire Charitable Trust is operating under a memorandum of understanding with two local schools.

<sup>2</sup> Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) enables people without a teaching qualification to teach in positions where there is a need for specialist skills or skills are in short supply. Schools apply direct to the Teaching Council for LATs.

# Summary of Results

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*High Wire Charitable Trust provides alternative options for school students interested in the military or who are in need of different approaches to keep them engaged in school. High Wire's approach is relational, supported by meticulous attention to systems and processes, and a depth of experience and knowledge pertaining to the military. Achievement and outcomes for students are positive and meeting a need.*

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## **Confident in educational performance**

## **Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- High Wire school service academy students achieve a range of life skills and knowledge in addition to achieving standards and credits that contribute to their achievement of NCEA. Systems are in place to monitor and track the achievement of all students.
- High Wire responds to schools, which are the main stakeholders. Programmes are well designed to meet the needs of students who need alternative options to keep them engaged in their learning. The relevance and effectiveness of programme design and delivery is continuously reviewed and improved where possible, based on director and school feedback.
- Schools support students with their pastoral and academic needs, allowing the directors to focus on delivering the programme to academy students.
- High Wire management brings a depth of experience in the military including training experience. The organisation has a strong purpose and mission and aligns resources accordingly.
- Compliance is well managed.
- High Wire is three years into its PTE journey and has the capability (systems, resources and staff) to extend its self-assessment practices and continue to make improvements.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>3</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Hire Wire students achieve well, as evidenced by the successful completion of unit standards; students gaining skills and knowledge that support personal and collective responsibility; and continued engagement in secondary school education. Māori and Pasifika student achievement is also reviewed and analysed by the High Wire academic manager, and shows no inequities for Māori and Pasifika learners.</p> <p>The target audience for High Wire school service academies is year 10-12 students who are at risk of disengaging from school. However, a broad range of other students, some of whom are considering a career in the services, also opt to attend the academy. Withdrawals from the programme are low and often a result of the student leaving school to pursue employment or other training opportunities.</p> <p>High Wire has a very detailed system for tracking student progress which is monitored by the academic manager. Information is provided to the academic manager by the tutors (referred to as directors by High Wire) on a weekly basis through situation reports, and then on a monthly basis by the academic manager to the chief executive officer. Achievement data is also held in the schools' KAMAR system for ease of access by students and whānau.</p> <p>Regular collation and analysis of achievement data at least annually would add to High Wire's understanding of educational performance (refer also to 1.2) and form the basis of reporting to key stakeholders including the High Wire board, schools, parents and whānau. This could include the total numbers of students who have completed the training scheme(s) each year and the number that have progressed.</p>
Conclusion:	High Wire school service academy learners acquire a range of life skills and knowledge relating to the outdoors and the

<sup>3</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

	military. Students also gain credits that contribute to their NCEA. Data collation and analysis is an area for improvement.
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## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>High Wire operates from a strong values base informed by the principles and objectives of school service academies specifically<sup>4</sup>, but also the military more broadly. Its main intent is to provide an alternative educational and vocational option for students in school who are at risk of disengaging. Evidence from interviews and testimonies from schools demonstrates high value for students and the school community from the programme, which includes improved behaviour, confidence and direction.</p> <p>Progression data shows that only a small percentage of students who started the academy at year 10 have stayed in the academy until year 12.<sup>5</sup> Most students only complete one year. It was intended that students who complete all three training schemes would graduate with a National Certificate in Cadet Forces. However, the certificate has expired and has not been replaced with a New Zealand qualification. Credits gained from the awarding of unit/achievement standards, however, contribute to students' NCEA results.</p> <p>Valued outcomes include improved student wellbeing (mental and physical), whānau relationships and teamwork, as shown through student feedback. However, this evidence could be further tracked over time and collated as evidence to understand High Wire's impact and to guide improvements. While High Wire retains withdrawal data, it could also reach agreement with the school community through its memorandum of understanding to</p>

<sup>4</sup> School service academies facilitates the engagement of students at risk of disengaging from secondary schools by addressing or modifying suboptimal and attitudinal behaviours; instilling in students the values of courage, commitment and integrity; and fostering an environment which positively supports students while sharing what the military has to offer. [Services academies / Homepage - Alternative education provision \(tki.org.nz\)](https://www.tki.org.nz/Services-academies/Homepage-Alternative-education-provision)

<sup>5</sup> The year 12 students have not graduated yet so there are no graduates of the three-year academy programme.

	gather destination data, (that is, where students go once they leave the academy).
Conclusion:	High Wire provides value and outcomes valued by schools and students at risk of disengaging from the school system. Improvements include strengthening the collation and analysis of data to provide evidence for its contribution to valued outcomes.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The High Wire school services academy is situated within the schools, and its training schemes are embedded in the school curriculum. Delivery and content is systematically reviewed by Hire Wire on a weekly basis and at team conferences in the school holiday break.</p> <p>High Wire is both responsive and considered in how it meets stakeholder needs. For example, High Wire is delivering a bespoke programme to year 9 students based on a need requested by the school; it has also adjusted the delivery of its training scheme in 2021 in an Auckland-based school to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on student progress.</p> <p>Academy directors are valued specialist staff members within the school. They form part of the school teaching fraternity; they attend teacher meetings and teacher professional development sessions organised by the school; and have access to school resources.</p> <p>Academy directors have the resources they need to deliver the training scheme, including lesson plans and teaching aids supplied by High Wire.</p> <p>Academic standards are maintained through external moderation which have generally met NZQA and industry training organisation requirements; areas requiring improvement are considered and addressed. Assessments are purchased and therefore aligned to learning outcomes. Assessment is open book. Practical assessments are recorded for moderation purposes. High Wire also internally moderates during team</p>

	conferences as a development exercise; staff have appropriate adult teaching qualifications; directors are endorsed by schools as part of their applying annually for Limited Authority to Teach certifications; and directors have years of experience as subject specialists in the military.
Conclusion:	High Wire's school service academy provides high value programmes that meet the needs of students and schools. Self-assessment is ongoing and appropriate and supports performance.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The academic and pastoral needs of academy students are met by the school. The academy also considers itself to be a 'fair, friendly yet firm' pastoral intervention for those students who would flourish in the academy environment. Academy students have the opportunity to understand boundaries, structure, responsibility and consequences and to use those skills in learning and in life.</p> <p>Students can elect to attend the school service academy, and some are referred through the school dean. Protocols for the academy class are established by the students, which sets the basis for a strong code of responsibility to each other.</p> <p>The programme structure enables students to apply their knowledge and skills in a range of outdoor experiences in and outside of the school.</p> <p>High Wire has embedded the values of the Whare Tapa Whā model<sup>6</sup> in its approach, and the impact this model has on students is gathered in formal feedback forms. Evidence shows that this approach resonates with the students, of whom nearly 50 per cent identify as of Māori and/or Pasifika descent. Similar to the achievement and valued outcomes previously discussed,</p>

<sup>6</sup> The Whare Tapa Whā model developed by Sir Mason Durie is a holistic view of wellbeing and is inclusive of family/whānau, and mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing. Students are asked to reflect on improvements in their wellbeing as a result of the programme in their student feedback forms.

	High Wire should consider monitoring student wellbeing over time to understand its contribution to creating shifts in wellbeing for academy students (including by ethnicity); and use this as a basis for improvement.
Conclusion:	High Wire has strong classroom-based processes and protocols to support learners which sit within the wider pastoral supports offered by the school. An opportunity exists to use data already gathered from students, to be collated and analysed as part of organisational self-assessment.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>High Wire is a charitable organisation and provides programmes and experiences to young people who would not normally have the opportunity to engage in a range of outdoor activities.<sup>7</sup> High Wire has a strong organisational purpose based on developing youth through building adventure and life skills underpinned by military values, including building personal and collective leadership.</p> <p>While High Wire is relatively new as a PTE, it has been developing a range of life skill programmes for young people since 2010.</p> <p>Academic leadership is maintained through the academic manager who is experienced and has clear procedures and oversight. High Wire tutors are also supported by the academic leadership team within the schools. Tutors and learners have appropriate resources to support learning, provided by the host school, and High Wire also subsidises or fully funds resources for students on camp. High Wire head office operates from a well-resourced, spacious and well-maintained facility in Papakura.</p>

<sup>7</sup> High Wire runs school camps from its satellite site in Awhitu, and provides alternative education options for primary and intermediate-age children. The EER did not review the quality or appropriateness of programmes offered for primary/intermediate-aged children under agreement with these schools.



	<p>Staff are recruited for their experience in the military in a range of roles, including training roles. Support and training is also provided to the directors to prepare them for teaching young people. The directors are supported by a training officer who visits regularly and supports them with the resources and development they need. The training officer also observes and provides feedback on teaching practice. Systems are in place to manage performance, and High Wire has, in the past, removed directors who were not a good fit for the students/schools.</p> <p>High Wire is adaptable and responsive to change, as reflected in its short history as a PTE. This includes adapting and responding to Covid-19 lockdowns and to the diverse needs of schools and students. The PTE fully funds the academies, so there is no cost to the schools. It has explored and continues to explore innovative, paid solutions to supporting schools that are looking for approaches that better meet the needs of their students.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>High Wire has an effective management team with a range of complementary skills and experiences to provide safe and quality learning experiences for young people, underpinned by strong values. Self-assessment is purposeful and suitable for its context. However, there is an opportunity to extend analysis of data to support High Wire's understanding of how well it is contributing to its own purpose and mission.</p>

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance management is a strength for High Wire. The PTE has strong oversight and systems in place for managing compliance with NZQA rules and regulations, as well as meeting its health and safety compliance.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>The training coordinator and directors ensure compliance responsibilities are met. Staff have appropriate teaching qualifications to support learning and, while not sighted, they have a Limited Authority to Teach organised by the school. Agreements with schools are formally arranged through</p>

<sup>8</sup> High Wire's adventure activities are audited by Qualworx.

	<p>memorandums of understanding which are reviewed regularly. Robust systems are in place for reporting credits, which are completed by the secondary schools<sup>9</sup> after verification by High Wire's chief executive officer.</p> <p>First aid is delivered under a sub-contracting arrangement approved by NZQA.</p> <p>It is recommended that High Wire ensure that its policies, procedures and agreements with schools adhere to guidelines for working with vulnerable children, specifically primary-aged children on its premises.</p>
Conclusion:	Systems are in place for compliance management and are well managed.

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<sup>9</sup> Credits are reported by the school using High Wire's Ministry of Education number.

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: School Services Academy

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>

# 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.*

NZQA recommends that High Wire Charitable Trust:

- Strengthen organisational self-assessment by regularly collating, analysing and reporting (to governance) achievement, outcome and wellbeing data for all secondary students. This information will provide High Wire with even stronger evidence of its contribution to developing and empowering young people to succeed.

# 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

## 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<sup>10</sup>
- 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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<sup>10</sup> 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](http://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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