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External Evaluation and Review Report

Whenua Iti Trust Incorporated
Outdoor Pursuits Centre

Date of report: 20 August 2019

About Whenua Iti Trust Incorporated Outdoor Pursuits Centre

Whenua Iti provides outdoor education courses for primary and secondary students who are enrolled and recommended through schools, trades academies or the Ministry of Social Development as part of their educational experience.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Moutere Highway, Lower Moutere, Nelson
Code of Practice signatory:	Not applicable
Number of students:	Domestic: 33 EFTS (equivalent full-time students); 40 per cent Māori, 3 per cent Pasifika, 57 per cent NZ European/other
Number of staff:	30 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – Whenua Iti Trust Inc Outdoor Pursuits Centre
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment at the previous EER in 2015
Scope of evaluation:	Trades academy ¹ -recommended courses for secondary school students: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manaaki Tāpoi (Level 3)• Adventure Tourism Leadership (includes training scheme) (Level 2)
MoE number:	9858
NZQA reference:	C34593
Dates of EER visit:	29 and 30 May 2019

¹ Trades academies facilitate programmes for senior secondary students to keep them engaged in education. The programmes are delivered through partnerships between schools and tertiary organisations.

Summary of Results

Whenua Iti is conclusively meeting its purpose to provide experiential learning to influence positive changes in students. The benefits are evident in the changes to individual lives through the development of valuable life skills.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- The course outcomes are of value to students, their teachers and parents, as well as local trades academies. Students gain valued interpersonal communication and social skills to help them with their personal growth and to make decisions about their future.
- Courses are tailored to suit individual and stakeholder needs, with a structure based on outdoor learning principles and practices. A robust review process underpins delivery to ensure courses continue to meet all needs.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Planning and review of activities includes a strong emphasis on safety, both mental and physical.
- An active, skills-based board provides clear direction and monitoring towards goals to ensure the PTE's mission and purpose are met. Board and staff members also ensure activities are carried out in accordance with the organisation's kaupapa.
- Whenua Iti has a comprehensive, systematic approach to understanding how well students achieve and the value of the outcomes. Since the previous EER, this has been enhanced by social impact reports that demonstrate the value of the learning with case studies and monitoring of progress. This supports Whenua Iti's strong culture of reflection and making changes that lead to improvements.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Qualification achievement is 100 per cent for those students who attend trades academy courses. Achievement data does not include students who register but do not start the course for various reasons (they have an opportunity to attend at a later date).</p> <p>Qualification achievement for Māori and Pasifika students is similar to other students when collated across all of Whenua Iti's courses (e.g. Youth Justice, STAR, Gateway), with some courses showing higher rates of achievement than others. Overall, the rate is 94 per cent for these students compared with 95 per cent for all other students. This shows that courses are suitable and that students are well supported and encouraged to achieve.</p> <p>Whenua Iti provides a report to the student and their school showing unit standards achieved and feedback at the end of each of the four-week courses, delivered over 16 weeks. The reports help schools to select the right students to refer to courses, ensuring that students do not have other school commitments that may prevent them from completing. The achievement data is also used to show that Whenua Iti is meeting contractual arrangements with the trades academies.</p>
Conclusion:	High achievement is supported by a culture of review and identifying the support the students need to be successful.

² 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?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The primary value of course outcomes is the development of students' confidence and communication and interpersonal skills. Feedback from students shows they become more outward looking, and schools report that the students gain a more positive attitude to life. This is seen in re-engagement with education and social interactions, leading to better educational and personal outcomes.</p> <p>NCEA-level achievement is one of the many valued outcomes for some students who may not achieve well within a school-based curriculum but do better with outdoor education. This is a key reason why schools send many of their students to Whenua Iiti. Graduates also gain outdoor skills which have enabled them to find careers as paramedics, firefighters, outdoor leaders and tutors.</p> <p>The organisation has trialled ways to capture information about learner outcomes and recently introduced a new questionnaire to measure individual goal achievement over the duration of the course. Although the data is not yet available, the organisation is keen to develop ways to capture the value of outcomes since the previous EER. As such, it has published an annual social impact report, which is now into year three. This is an important publication which provides case studies of positive changes seen by youth workers, school principals and school counsellors, as well as the graduates themselves.</p> <p>Feedback from trades academies and parents confirms the findings of research around outdoor education and the positive impact it has on helping youth to improve their quality of life.</p>
Conclusion:	Students achieve valuable skills that give them a more positive outlook on life. This is an important outcome for a group of students who come to the PTE not having experienced recent success in their education, or with low expectations of themselves (from school or their own family).

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:	<p>Whenua Iti has a close relationship with community organisations, schools and the industry. This has enabled the organisation to carry out comprehensive needs analyses to ensure the courses are designed to meet stakeholders' needs. A reflective culture is embedded into the review processes to ensure courses continue to meet needs.</p> <p>For example, the Manaaki Tāpoi tourism course was introduced in response to Top of the South Trades Academy identifying a need for a Māori-focussed and led course to help students not achieving well at school. It is recognised as innovative for its residential marae-based delivery. Manaaki Tāpoi is based on a previous course structure but with the involvement of local iwi, Whenua Iti created a tourism-related course that incorporates local tikanga. The principle of manaakitanga (including hospitality) underpins the learning activities.</p> <p>Manaaki Tāpoi provides a safe and relevant learning environment with activities leading to the assessment of unit standards, contributing to NCEA or to assist with further study for qualifications in tourism or hospitality. Students' and secondary school principals' feedback is highly positive and shows that the course is effective in meeting needs.</p> <p>Adventure-based learning is delivered using industry-standard operating procedures specific to each topic to ensure the equipment operating and safety steps are followed. The tutor-to-student ratio is 1:6, allowing close supervision for safety and support. New tutors are mentored and receive comprehensive training in their role. Many come from teaching at other outdoor education organisations, so bring with them a range of knowledge and experience.</p> <p>Regular reviews analyse achievement data, moderation and feedback from students, tutors and stakeholders, leading to improvements.</p> <p>The moderation system is robust, with tutors using industry guidelines for peer assessment. A lead tutor submits the</p>

	assessment outcomes for checking by the programme manager. Further oversight is provided by a quality committee that moderate samples of assessments. The good results from Skills Active ³ and NZQA external moderation confirm that the process to ensure assessments are valid works well.
Conclusion:	Courses are highly relevant and well planned, with activities designed with students' safety in mind. The professional staff and ongoing nature of reflective practices help ensure the courses meet stakeholder needs.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The 'Whenua Iti way' or kaupapa is core to the outdoor education approach, which links to te ao Māori and tikanga Māori. This is seen in the inclusive approach to education and relationships to whānau contributing to parity and high rates of achievement and success for all learners.</p> <p>Robust processes ensure that students' academic and medical backgrounds prior to enrolment are identified to provide appropriate levels of support. Whenua Iti liaises with school counsellors and career advisors to ensure that the students are referred to the right courses. A no-exclusion policy ensures that every effort is made to remove any barriers to participation on programmes. Processes are regularly reviewed to ensure that the necessary information is gathered prior to enrolment, and the PTE has processes to review incidents and take appropriate action.</p> <p>Courses are strategically planned to ensure the tutors are right for the student group. In turn, tutors are provided with student information summaries to support individual needs identification and support. These support systems and the professionalism of staff ensure the students are expertly guided to overcome challenges, whether anxiety about working with others or physical activities such as riding a bicycle. Where issues occur outside of their area of expertise, tutors can refer to professionals, and supervision is available to tutors if required.</p>

³ Skills Active is the industry training organisation for sports, exercise, recreation and the performing arts.

	Regular debriefings provide opportunities for feedback and ensure that students' learning and personal needs are catered to. Students receive a certificate on completion which, along with the friendships gained and the confidence developed through positive experiences, helps with their return to school. Parents attend graduation to celebrate success.
Conclusion:	The organisation's policies and procedures, along with the professionalism of staff, ensure that the support for students enables achievement.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Whenua Iti has an experienced board with a range of skills and connected to community networks to help meet its purpose. The board is active in building strategic community links. There is clear direction and monitoring of core operational areas using key performance indicators. The management team provides effective leadership to ensure that systems support the achievement of organisational goals and that students are succeeding. Regular reporting on activities from each level, as well as the social impact reports, provide robust information to inform decision-making across the organisation.</p> <p>The organisation has managed a changing funding environment and subsequent growth well. It provides ongoing support for staff professional training to ensure its standards are met. The recruitment and development of staff is well managed to ensure staff have suitable facilitation and outdoor skills to cater to each group of students.</p> <p>The board supports innovation and reviews courses to identify new developments to meet changing needs. An example is a recent development of an adventure therapy course adapted from an overseas course to suit a New Zealand context.</p> <p>Whenua Iti is continuing to build its relationships with iwi across the Nelson/Marlborough region to ensure its capability in responding to the future needs of Māori.</p>
Conclusion:	The organisation is innovative and responsive, while upholding its purpose and mission. Clear direction and monitoring, along with

	embedded kaupapa and values, ensures the delivery of courses that result in high student achievement.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Organisational policies have been established relating to the Health and Safety in the Workplace Act 2015 and Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014. There are strong health and safety practices, with any complaints or any safety issues dealt with in accordance with policies. Actions taken are timely and appropriate.</p> <p>All staff have rigorous background checking, and staff training complies with the Vulnerable Children’s Act. A comprehensive quality management system schedules timetables and ensures systematic review of organisational policies.</p> <p>External education quality requirements, such as compliance with NZQA rules and external moderation, are timetabled and managed by a quality committee overseen by the general manager.</p> <p>Whenua Iti has met all external audit requirements, including those of Skills Active and the Ministry of Social Development.</p>
Conclusion:	The organisation is effective in managing compliance requirements with systems for identifying when compliance action is required by the management or board.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Trades Academy – Adventure Tourism Leadership (Level 2)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Focus area: Trades Academy – Manaaki Tāpoi (Level 3)

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.

NZQA recommends that Whenua Iti Trust Incorporated Outdoor Pursuits Centre:

- Incorporate all information used in course reviews into one report, include the analysis leading to actions for improvements.

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 fraud⁴*
- *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.*

⁴ 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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