

# Exploring access and challenges for tertiary education in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland)

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## Kia tu tangata ai tātou, puta noa i te ao We will stand with confidence and competence anywhere in the world

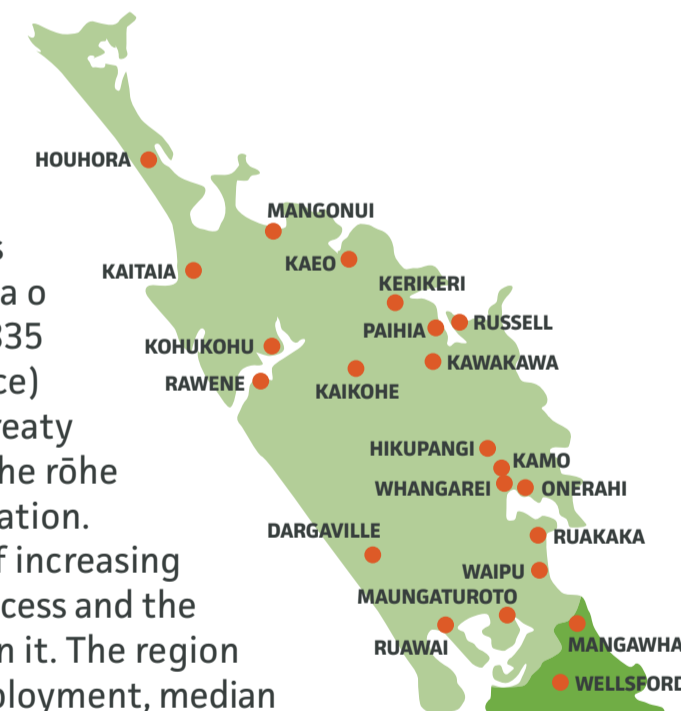
### What we are doing

The Matarau Education Trust, NorthTec and Ako Aotearoa share with our learners a common vision. We all want greater success for our Te Tai Tokerau taurira (learners). A key vehicle for that is education. We sought the whakaaro (voice) of our learners – their experiences in tertiary education in Te Tai Tokerau, their motivations, aspirations and the issues that impacted on their ability to achieve their full potential. We want to design practical solutions – from the region and for the region. Solutions that address both the institutional and individual barriers to a taurira completing their study and moving into mahi (work). This is founded upon five core values for supporting all our learners:

- **Hu tangata** – A focus on people development
- **Tu tangata** – A sense of affiliation is key
- **He tirohanga Māori** – A Māori world view
- **Tu motuhake** – Promote self-reliance
- **Mahi tahi** – Team work and cooperation

### A unique setting

Te Tai Tokerau has a proud history as one of the first places in Aotearoa to be settled by both Māori and Europeans. It is also the setting for two key founding documents for our nation: He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene, 1835 (The Declaration of Independence) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, 1840 (Treaty of Waitangi). Many taurira from the rōhe (region) have succeeded in education. What remains is the challenge of increasing the breadth of taurira/learner success and the individual heights attained within it. The region still has lower than average: employment, median household income, rates of formal qualification and satisfactory housing. We also have great strengths and stories of resilience, growth and success.



From the region and for the region

### How we found out about our students, and their issues

In 2015, we distributed surveys to all our NorthTec students. A total of 1269 surveys were collected. A comparative analysis was conducted against a number of variables, including programme level, discipline, trade versus non-trade, region within Te Tai Tokerau, and Māori versus non-Māori. In addition, a significant amount of verbatim comment was collected, following kaupapa Māori research principles, and an action research approach, which was analysed according to thematic content. Next, a literature review identified a range of tested strategies associated with key themes.

### What our learners told us

Our learners are motivated and aspire to study and work in Northland.

The desire for work was the most common motivation for enrolling in tertiary study

52% of learners planned to undertake more study at a higher level

One in 5 learners were hoping for a job in the trades

Half of the learners who responded want to stay in Northland

The majority of our learners face significant challenges to successfully completing their tertiary study.

#### FINANCIAL

Study affordability and finances are an issue for one third of our learners

#### WHĀNAU

Whānau and child care commitments were identified as a major challenge to starting or completing their course of study for many of our learners

#### TRANSPORT AND INTERNET

38% of our learners don't have access to reliable transport

One in 5 learners have no driver's licence

30% of learners do not have internet access

#### HOUSING

More than half our learners do not live in family owned homes and 37% are renting

Our learners want help to achieve their goals by gaining:

Support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and competencies

Qualifications

Work experience

Access to transportation

References and introductions to employers

## How we are responding

### A call to action

We have a population of learners who are motivated and inspired to upskill and work in Te Tai Tokerau. There are barriers that we will address with learners, their whānau and other stakeholders. The model of engagement below outlines how we will shape this mahi to become praxis, wherein new practices are informed by action research and authentic engagement. We begin with selected key actions, agreed with our partners, within a framework that is measurable and empowering.

### What do we need to do?

- Nurture and extend strategic partnerships at national, regional, and organisational levels to have a voice in policy and decision-making
- Recognise that some of the solutions learners need to have require institutional changes within our partnerships
- Ensure these strategic partnerships have clear kaupapa/philosophy connection with what the learners are aspiring to achieve in life, study and work
- Where needed, bring changes within teaching and learning, research and the wider culture to ensure the experience for learners is maximised
- Have clear shared goals and incorporate these into an agreed plan of action, with annual targets to be reported against
- Continue to help learners and their whānau be the driving voice behind what is needed and actioned, and continually seek their input
- Ensure our mahi is founded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi

## Helping our learners to be Life Ready, Study Ready and Work Ready

