

Adult & Community Education Newsletter



It's a Wrap!, page 6

Maranga|Rise Up



In Whakatū, Nelson, there is a special programme underway that's delivering tangible outcomes for young tāne in the region. Maranga|Rise Up is providing valuable support to enable life-changing decision-making and it's achieving results.

The programme is managed by Mākoī Takao and Cameron Forbes of Intentional Education (INTENT). Mākoī has been working with rangatahi in the region, delivering kaupapa Māori programmes for more than seven years. He started his work with development of a peer support programme, Te Rōpū Taitama, designed for young men and aligned with family violence prevention programmes. The programme adopted a tuakana-teina approach where an older or more expert tuakana (brother, sister or cousin) helps and guides a younger or less expert teina. This model was, and still is, an integral part of traditional Māori learning models. The programme identifies leaders who create the culture within

the group and who are supported to build their own capacity and competency aligned with the kaupapa of te rōpū.

Mākoī says that taking tāne out of their environment and away from distractions acts as a disruptor and enables them to take a fresh look at things. "We visit sites of significance and do activities that enable traditional pursuits like mahinga kai (food collection). We will also determine who is to be our kaikōrero on the marae and we sometimes invite guests who provide a positive role model for the taitama."

Meanwhile, Cameron had been working with young men on a programme that had previously won an ACE Aotearoa annual award called Fresh Tracks that delivered life skills and adventure activities for those on probation.

Armed with this invaluable experience the two have joined together and taken the best elements of both their programmes to develop Maranga.

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Whakatauki

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi.

With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive.



There are currently 23 tāne aged between 18 and 30 on the Maranga programme and they have just completed a pilot programme with funding from both the Lotteries Commission and Te Pūtahitanga o te Waipounamu.

So, what is Maranga wānanga all about?

Each month for six months a weekend wānanga is held for the group. The wānanga are kaupapa Māori and are held at places of historical significance for Māori around the rohe. Between 8 and 14 ākonga attend each wānanga where they learn about tikanga, karakia, waiata and mahinga kai. The tāne also learn about topics for life: brain development, the effects of trauma, goal setting, values identification and visualising their best selves. There is usually an adventure education component to the weekend, e.g. waka ama, high ropes, or hīkoi. They also participate in exercises such as touch rugby, cold-water swims, soccer, press ups and team building.

Often a guest presenter will speak at the wānanga, with Cameron and Mākoī seeking out people who are role models for those attending.

Most, but not all, attendees are Māori. Currently there are two Pasifika learners and one Pākehā.

Cameron says some of the ākonga have complex needs.

“When we are together it’s about the mauri of the place and the mauri of the tāne. There is a strong sense of brotherhood, a lot of love and a real vibe and depth to what we are doing. Some of these men may have failed in the traditional school



system, but they thrive in the environment that we foster on our wānanga.”

The rōpū leave Nelson on Friday morning headed for their destination. Recent wānanga have been held at Marahau, Tuao Wharepapa/Mt Arthur, the approach to Maungatapu and Te Hoiere/Pelorus Sound.

They have developed their own karakia and Cameron says this forms an important part of the rōpū. “The tuakana on the programme run their own sessions where ākonga are encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions in a non-judgemental, accepting and mana-enhancing environment. The men face their personal challenges and insecurities.”

Mākoī says people sharing their fears can be very moving and it creates a significant bond.

“The premise of the wānanga is based on the principles of engagement, exposure and excitement and we always exercise kotahitanga, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga,” he says.

Stated goals for the programme include:

- Gaining knowledge of whakapapa, identity, tikanga Māori, te reo Māori, karakia and waiata
- Engaging within te taiao and learning about the pūrākau significant to the rohe where each wānanga is taking place
- Understanding how to keep safe when engaging with wāhine/tāngata, whānau, hapū, iwi and hapori
- Developing the ability to articulate fears/insecurities and identify how growth can happen through issues and worries
- Exploring individual strengths and learning how those can be built for future aspirations
- Becoming aware of boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others
- Experiencing fun activities like haka, team building, tramping, fishing, exploring caves, ball sports
- Connecting with health, education, employment and housing services as needed.

In between wānanga, the tāne are provided with ongoing support kanohi ki te kanohi and via social media and telephone to encourage them in their endeavours and assist them to manage challenges. At the start of the programme the tāne establish goals, with progress monitored throughout the journey. Cameron says he and Mākoī are proud of some of the results.

“Three of our participants have attained full- or part time work, one has managed to purchase their first home, two have achieved their weight-loss goals, five have reduced their use of substances and one person attained their driver licence. However, the gains we really love are changes in attitude resulting in gains in empowerment and reduction in anxiety.

“We have demonstrated that our programme works, that the wānanga and support we are providing are valuable and that tāne do better when they are engaged with a programme like this.”

Cameron and Mākoī’s roles with Maranga are part time, with both having other jobs.

“Next year we are hoping to develop what we offer further and increase the amount of people we can offer it to,” Cameron says. “There is room for a full-time navigator on the programme and it needs more of both our time. Of course, this will take additional funding, but we believe it’s 100% worth it.”



Tararua REAP – a community responds

Earlier this year Tararua REAP hosted a community learning session with Peter Thorburn, the director of Meth Education and Solution Services (MESS). Peter ran a day-long hui on methamphetamine addiction, with learnings and lessons targeted at friends, family and whānau of those affected, and community and health practitioners. The session followed on from other successful mental health workshops held recently by the REAP, including ‘A Good Yarn, a mental health workshop’ and ‘Shot Bro’, a story of depression, suicide and healing.

Elaine Reilly, General Manager at Tararua REAP, said this particular topic was identified in 2023 after they were approached by representatives from Women’s Refuge who had attended a similar workshop in Levin.

“The group that had attended the session in Levin thought our community would also benefit from hosting a session in Dannevirke. We identified that this was an important kaupapa and we were privileged to have Peter attend the session at the Hub in Dannevirke with a group of around 50 people. It wasn’t always an easy session to listen to and participate in and it was confronting for many, but as one delegate said, ‘everyone should pay attention to this information because it affects all of us.’”

Peter became a mental health specialist and advocate following his own personal journey to overcome addiction to meth. He spent 23 years addicted, eight of those addicted to methamphetamine. At one point in time, he

was acknowledged as one of New Zealand's most notorious meth cooks and as a result he served time in prison for committing up to 100 crimes related to burglary and supply of drugs.

Peter shared his early life story with the group and emphasised that his downward spiral into addiction started when he was at boarding school where he was severely bullied. Until that point, he had been both a New Zealand representative age-group swimmer and a Northland football representative.

When Peter left prison in 2005, he experienced a period of transformation that has seen him spend the last 18 years as a mental health specialist and advocate. His transformation was only able to occur because he had the right people offering the right choices at the right time.

With a strong support group, he studied at the University of Auckland. He gained a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science and a Postgraduate Diploma in Addictions, adding a Diploma of Counselling from Manukau Institute of Technology to complete his qualifications.

He has since put this learning and expertise to good use spending his time talking to a diverse range of groups, from gang members to school students, whānau, members of the police force and addiction services.

In 2017 Peter established MESS NZ with a philosophy based around the need for society to work to support addicts and to give those wanting to break the drug cycle acceptance of who they were and how best to support them. This could include things like providing alternatives to drugs, such as jobs, sports and friendships.

Those who attended the REAP day said the session gave them better education about the dangers of meth and addiction as well as providing some potential solutions to help people with their journey to sobriety. Specific commentary and feedback included the following:

I enjoyed hearing from someone who has lived with addiction and who is now clean and living a better life and inspiring others to be better.

Pete was raw, authentic, humorous and engages his audience. Great learnings presented in a totally people friendly way – would recommend to anyone at any stage of the addiction education spectrum.

The REAP hopes to bring Peter back next year to continue the community's education and assist the community with finding solutions to recovery.

Raising the Bar: consent in circus education

When we talk about education, it's not just about knowledge—it's about building relationships, fostering respect, and creating environments where everyone feels safe to thrive. The "Consent Workshops for Circus Educators" project by The Dust Palace Charitable Trust embodies these principles, delivering a profound impact on the circus community in Aotearoa while addressing key priorities of New Zealand's Tertiary Education Strategy.

This wasn't just a project; it was a kaupapa—a mission to uplift, educate, and inspire a culture of consent, safety, and well-being in a sector where physical interaction is central to the craft. The results speak for themselves: empowered educators, stronger communities, and a clear pathway for lasting change.

Consent is the heart of safe and respectful teaching, especially in circus arts, where close physical contact and collaboration are part of the craft. It's more than a box to tick—it's about creating environments where learners feel empowered to set boundaries, where educators navigate power dynamics with care, and where trust and accountability are woven into every interaction. By embedding consent practices, educators not only foster safer, trauma-sensitive spaces but also enrich learning experiences, ensuring that respect and well-being remain at the centre of their teaching.

Educators left these workshops with more than just knowledge—they gained new ways to connect with their students, set boundaries, and create safer spaces. For many, this was the first time they'd been given structured guidance on embedding consent into their teaching. It wasn't about starting from scratch but about reinforcing the good mahi already happening in the sector and pushing it to the next level.

At its heart, this project was about empowering the people at the frontlines—those who shape the experiences of learners every day. The workshops provided educators with:

- **Clear strategies** for establishing consent in physical interactions.
- **Trauma-informed approaches** to teaching, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity to learners' diverse experiences.
- **Resources and ongoing support** to make consent practices sustainable and adaptable.

These tools weren't theoretical—they were tested, refined, and grounded in the realities of teaching circus arts in Aotearoa. The result? Educators felt equipped and ready to make meaningful changes in their practice.

Culture doesn't change overnight, but it starts with conversations, actions, and leadership. These workshops sparked that shift within the circus industry, encouraging open dialogue about consent and creating a sense of shared responsibility for learner well-being.

One of the most powerful aspects of this project was its focus on



community. The workshops didn't just deliver information; they created spaces where educators could connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. This collective approach strengthened bonds within the sector and set the stage for long-term cultural change.

No kaupapa worth pursuing comes without challenges, and this project was no exception. Yet, The Dust Palace Charitable Trust showed incredible adaptability and commitment to getting it right. For instance:

- **Time and Development:** The initial 240-hour allocation for development quickly doubled as the team prioritised nationwide consultation. While this added to the workload, it ensured the workshops truly reflected the needs and aspirations of the circus community.
- **Evolving Workshop Structure:** Feedback from prototype workshops led to a redesign, interweaving activities and discussions throughout the session rather than separating them. This made the workshops more dynamic, engaging, and impactful.
- **Compensating Educators:** With additional funding, the Trust ensured that participants' time and expertise were valued, recognising their role in shaping the future of the sector.

These adjustments weren't just practical—they reflected a deep respect for the people involved and a commitment to delivering something truly transformative.

A total of **253 circus educators across Aotearoa** took part in the "Consent Workshops for Circus Educators," reflecting incredible reach and engagement within the community. Initially, it was estimated there were around 280 circus educators, but through the project, this was revised to 345—a testament to the growing recognition of this vital mahi. Impressively, the workshops reached **87.5% of this updated total**, demonstrating widespread commitment to embedding consent practices across the sector. Even more encouraging, 237 attendees provided feedback, showing not only strong participation but a deep engagement with the kaupapa and its life-changing potential.

If you want to create real change, you need to start by reflecting the communities you serve. This project embraced that challenge, with its development team representing diverse voices from across Aotearoa:

- 35% Queer/Takatāpui
- 23% Māori
- 25% Neuro-diverse

These perspectives weren't just tokenistic—they shaped the workshops, ensuring they were inclusive, culturally responsive, and relevant. This diversity strengthened the kaupapa, making the training richer and more meaningful for everyone involved.

The Tertiary Education Strategy calls for education to be learner-centred, culturally responsive, and future-focused.

This project hit those priorities head-on:

- **Learner Well-Being:** By embedding consent practices, the workshops created safer learning environments, prioritising the emotional and physical safety of students.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** The inclusion of Māori, queer/takatāpui, and neuro-diverse voices ensured the workshops reflected the richness of Aotearoa's communities.
- **Sustainability:** Designed to be repeatable and adaptable, these workshops set a precedent for consent training not just in circus arts but in other sectors like dance and gymnastics.
- **Innovation:** This was the first initiative of its kind in the circus industry, addressing an unmet need with creativity and vision.

The impact of this project doesn't end with the final workshop. The Dust Palace Charitable Trust has ensured its sustainability by creating resources that educators can use for years to come. The workshops have already sparked interest from other sectors, and there's no doubt this model will continue to influence education across creative and physical disciplines.

This project wasn't just about teaching consent—it was about embodying it, weaving it into the very fabric of the circus community in Aotearoa. By doing so, it has set a new standard for what it means to teach, lead, and learn.

The "Consent Workshops for Circus Educators" remind us of the power of education to shape not just individuals but entire communities. It's a challenge to all of us—to keep learning, keep adapting, and keep striving for environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered.

Because when we build a culture of consent, we're not just protecting people—we're creating spaces where they can truly soar.

The Dust Palace Charitable Trust was a recipient of an Innovation Professional Development Grant.



It's a Wrap!

Risingholme Learning in Ōtautahi Christchurch completed its year of 80th birthday celebrations in style, with a final celebratory function held in the centre's beautiful grounds on a balmy October night. With the Risingholme Orchestra setting the ambience for the occasion, a dedicated group of tutors, learners, staff, invited guests and members of the wider ACE community came together for the formal cake cutting and unveiling of 14 history panels that shared the story of Risingholme as a place of learning and leisure.

Current Risingholme Community Centre President Damian Sims spoke about the vision behind marking the significant milestone and reflected on some of the celebratory highlights. The core values of Risingholme were central to the events throughout the year, with a focus on enjoyment, enhancement, effortless learning and tradition. Events through the year included Community Cuppas, free course tasters for Have a Go Day, an art exhibition called Rise Up – celebrating 80 years of creativity at Risingholme, and a showcase of Risingholme's heritage through the development of permanent historical panels, just in time for Christchurch's Heritage Festival.

Risingholme Director Lynda Megson acknowledged Risingholme's long legacy within the ACE sector and its wider role as a community centre. She noted how the panel project offered an opportunity to delve into their archives and begin piecing together some of the stories, events, and key people who collectively contributed to Risingholme's history.

"Community is at the heart of who we are and what we do. When planning our big 80th we wanted to create collaborative events that showcased the wonderful work of the people who have helped Risingholme grow and thrive as an organisation."

Like any great party, there was a cake, cut by life member Judith Bradshaw before the history panels were unveiled by life members Mary Simons and Raewyn Cooke, who is also a former director.

The 14 panels installed in the Risingholme Homestead cover the period from 1864 to today and are divided into four sections



that capture the community spirit and legacy of learning.

The first tells the story of Risingholme Homestead and its background as a private residence, including memories from Peg Moorhouse who lived there when it was a private home.

The second section covers the transition from a private home to a public community centre. From this emerges the story of Risingholme as an important place for the community to gather, covering topics like the early programme and facilities built for and by community members. The final section explores the story of Risingholme as a place of learning with pull-out stories focusing on themes such as women in leadership and collaborations with other organisations, including ACE Aotearoa.

Bojana Rimbovska, Community Liaison Coordinator at Risingholme Learning, said Risingholme was fortunate to receive two grants from Christchurch City Council to help fund the costs of an archivist for the project and to assist with the production costs of the panels which will remain in the house permanently.

"The panel unveiling and official 80th function was a great event and a fabulous way to conclude our celebrations. Having the orchestra there, which also played at our 50th jubilee, as well as so many life members really helped with acknowledging the historical significance of reaching 80 years.



We brought together our complete learning community including people from ACE Aotearoa, AKO and our personal community of tutors and supporters. This was particularly special because it is central to our philosophy of embracing community and learning."

During September, Risingholme hosted the exhibition Rise Up: Celebrating 80 Years of Creativity at Risingholme showcasing both tutor and learner works. More than 300 people attended the weekend event and 52 learners and tutors exhibited their work, with some pieces available for sale. Nearly 100 art works were exhibited by learners, from pottery and painting through to Zentangle, patchwork and wood sculpture.

Bojana said the exhibition not only gave people a chance to share their work, it also provided the opportunity for artists to understand the process of exhibiting in a supportive environment. "We had learners buying work from each other, cross pollination as learners made the decision to join another course, and we had visitors who were new to Risingholme keen to enrol in a future course. It was a great weekend."

One of the exhibitors, Sarah, said the day was all about exhibiting her work and being part of a community enjoying its art. "It was a wonderful opportunity to get out and show the world what we do."

Flexible Adult Learning Provision: what it is, why it matters, and how to make it work

In August 2024, new unemployment figures showed that 33,000 more New Zealanders were jobless compared to the same time in 2023, bringing the total number of unemployed to 143,000. The unemployment rate reached a three-year high of 4.6% in the three months ended June 2024, up from 4.4% in the previous quarter. The figures also showed that people aged between 15 and 24 made up almost half of the newly unemployed, and many of them want more work but cannot get the hours. Further commentary suggests that the unemployment level will increase to 5% by the end of 2024 and young people will continue to be overrepresented in the figures.

Gaining new skills to participate in a changing workplace and upskilling to better meet market demands are both options for people looking for new work opportunities, with new skills often seen as one of the main solutions to the challenges of a low employment market.

However, a recent OECD report – OECD (2023), Flexible adult learning provision: What it is, why it matters, and how to make it work – highlights that while adult learning plays a key role in raising the skill levels of individuals and populations, it is the weakest link in the lifelong learning agenda. European figures show that many countries are struggling to increase participation in adult learning in general and, in particular, to close the participation gap between more- and less-advantaged groups.

The report outlines the view that this lack of progress can be explained by the fact that adults (including young adults)

face multiple, interrelated barriers to participation in learning. These include concerns about their ability to succeed; situational barriers, such as caring responsibilities or lack of employer support; and institutional barriers, such as a lack of learning opportunities tailored to their specific needs and, according to German research, low-skilled adults face a greater number of barriers than those with higher skills.

Across OECD countries, lack of time for work-related reasons is the main barrier to participation in training both for low-skilled and high-skilled adults, with 31% of high- and medium-skilled adults who wanted to participate in learning and 22% of low-skilled adults citing this as the main reason.

For low-skilled adults, the second most important reason is lack of time for family reasons (18%), such as caring responsibilities, followed by lack of financial resources (17%).

The report found that adult learning systems need to do better for those currently least likely to participate in education and training. The lack of progress in closing participation gaps and the persistence of barriers to participation highlight the need for a systematic reform of adult learning systems, in particular the need to give individuals greater choices and make adult learning provision more flexible.

Flexible learning options will recognise the constraints of people who are working, have family or other responsibilities and are trying to improve their skills at the same time, and the report recommends that options should enable them to combine or move easily between education, training and employment.

The report outlines the four key dimensions where greater flexibility can be offered to learners, and these

are applicable to both formal and community education.

The four factors defined are time, place, mode and content.

Time

Offering more flexibility in terms of when learning opportunities take place, how long they last, and how much time learners need to dedicate to them makes a difference.

Place

In addition to timing issues, an inconvenient location is frequently cited as a reason for not participating in learning. This barrier can partly be addressed by offering distance or online learning options, allowing adults to learn at a place that suits them.

Mode

Offering a variety of learning modes accommodates learners with preferences for different learning styles. It can also significantly reduce the time cost of training: for instance, the use of online delivery reduces commuting times to and from a venue.

Content

The most challenging dimension to offering greater flexibility is in the content of programmes, courses and other learning opportunities, essentially enabling adults to create individual learning experiences that meet their needs.

Synchronous and asynchronous learning concepts cut across several of the factors that offer greater flexibility. Synchronous learning describes a situation where instruction and learning take place at the same time. This could be in the same physical place, such as a classroom, or in an online environment, such as a virtual learning platform. The key feature is that the instructor and learner(s) can interact in real time.

Asynchronous learning describes a situation in which the instructor and the learner(s) are not interacting with each other in real time. In some cases, there may not even be an instructor. This type of learning can be virtual, for example, in the form of pre-recorded video lectures, or face to face, such as a self-directed practical exercise in a learning workshop.

The OECD report also found that policy development was important for encouraging and supporting adult education both in the community and the more formal tertiary sector.

As a sector, this report provides valuable learnings in terms of factors we must consider when developing our programmes. You can read the full report here: <https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/topic/policy-sub-issues/adult-learning/booklet-flexibility-2023.pdf>

This is an adaptation of an original work by the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed in this adaptation should not be reported as representing the official views of the OECD or of its member countries.



Equipped for Diversity

Everyone has the right to live a life free from violence and abuse in all its forms. This principle lies at the heart of the work undertaken by Respect, a community organisation based in Takapuna, Auckland. Respect's purpose is to facilitate respectful relationships, and the organisation achieves this by offering support and education programmes both for victims and perpetrators of violence, as well as children who are impacted by violence.

Respect has been operating for more than 30 years and was previously known as North Harbour Living Without Violence. In 2018 the organisation underwent a rebrand to better reflect what they want to be and what they want to bring to people's lives, as well as what they want to work towards. Hence the name Respect.

During its 30-year history Respect has continued to grow and extend its services. About 1000 people access its services each year and there are about 30 staff on the team at any one time. This includes 11 full-time employees, 10 contractors, and nine trainee counsellors who are generally placement students.

Respect's General Manager Bridget Gundy says they currently have trainees working with them from several tertiary institutes including psychotherapy students from AUT, Laidlaw College

and MIT. "We have a very strong relationship with the tertiary sector and student placements with Respect offer opportunities for growth. Many students choose to stay and work with us permanently after their placement has finished."

One of the courses Respect offers is the Strengthening Women's Group, a support programme for women experiencing family violence. The women come from all backgrounds and the full spectrum of ages from 18 years up. Some of the women are still with abusive partners and others have left theirs. The women are dealing with a complex range of issues, says Keryn Grogan, Funding Coordinator and Facilitator with Respect.

"We offer a psycho-educational programme in a supportive environment that facilitates growth in confidence. Most women choose to participate face to face in the programme, but we also offer access via zoom. Topics covered during the two-hour sessions include understanding emotions and understanding power and control and the dynamics of that."

The sessions are discussion-led with a trained facilitator, and with women staying in the programme as long as they feel the need. "This means we have a great mix of people in the group, some new to Respect and others with

more tenure who approach things in a different way and are able to offer support," Keryn says.

"Often women in violent relationships also suffer isolation, and our sessions and the connection they provide help to lessen that sense and make them feel stronger. It can be a very powerful and empowering process."

Both Keryn and Bridget acknowledge the complexity of the work they do in terms of co-occurring conditions in people living with family violence. People on their courses, men and women, will often also have symptoms of PTSD, addiction and neurodiversity challenges, and these needs are growing in complexity. Providing appropriate support within a learning environment requires highly specialised facilitators who understand the complexities of family violence.

For the team at Respect this means continually upskilling and providing the right training for the team to help them assist with appropriate support. Respect has recently completed a series of professional development (PD) sessions for facilitators and counsellors to ensure they are well equipped for their learning environment and to build capacity. It was important for Respect that each session contributed to its priority areas of learners at the centre, barrier-free access and quality

teaching and leadership, as well as improving the quality of adult learning services and reducing barriers to access for ACE learners.

Fourteen separate training sessions were held over the year for educators and facilitators, including research-informed Family Violence training, De-escalation/ Whakatarā Hei Oranga, ADHD and Neurodiversity, and Understanding Pasifika.

“The training in some areas has completely changed the way we work,” Bridget says. “For example, the Pasifika training encouraged us to take a more relationship focus to our work. We are now taking greater time to connect with individuals before moving straight to the assessment questionnaire. While the session on neurodiversity has helped me to understand an individual’s responses and subsequent actions better. I can now better tailor my approach

She says they always have challenges getting counsellors and facilitators together for PD. While they have fortnightly peer supervision and best-practice workshops, the more intense and time-consuming PD is difficult to manage and deliver. However feedback has been that this has been time well spent.

The training has provided unintended bonuses as it has enabled facilitators to identify a leaning towards a preferred practice, such as neurodiverse specialisation, and to develop subsequent layers of complexity in specialised areas. This means other team members can lean into their expertise.

“At the end of the day our comprehensive PD sessions mean that our teams are better equipped, so our learners are better supported. The flow-on impact of this is that they then go home with a greater range of tools to help and support their whānau. Let’s face it, that’s what our work is all about really,” concludes Bridget.



Keep It Current

Success over decades comes with the ability to reinvent yourself and meet everchanging and intergenerational needs, which is what Southland Education | Te Wāhi Ākoranga o Murihiku has consistently done throughout its long history.

“To be sustainable and achieve longevity you must reinvent yourself and increase your diversity,” says Lesley du Mez, Manager, Southland Education. “This means delivering what the community wants in a way that they want it.”

Southland Education was set up in 1915, part of the original group of WEAs (Workers’ Educational Associations), and has been in its current premises since 1969.

“People don’t know that Invercargill is the home of coffee,” Lesley says. “It’s where instant coffee started and where it was patented, and we are housed in Strang’s Coffee House, which was the original premises the business operated from. So, not only does our organisation have a long history in Invercargill, but our building is also a reflection of the history of our community.

Lesley has been with Southland Education for more than 20 years and over that time she has ensured the organisation continues to evolve and remain relevant by driving change and delivering on learner requirements.

“Southland Institute of Technology (SIT) no longer has as much of a focus on visual arts, as they have moved into the digital space. We identified that this shift left a gap that our learners were keen to see filled so, more recently, Southland Education has shifted into providing more hands-on learning in the visual arts, including acrylic and water colour painting, drawing and stained glass. This has become our core offering over recent years alongside some of the longstanding courses such as yoga and cake decorating,” Lesley says.

“Our painting classes are usually fully subscribed with around 14 learners in each class, depending on venue room size. We are finding that it is hard to keep up with the demand in this space.”

Southland Education coordinates and hosts the Southerly Art School, held annually over King’s Birthday weekend. The event provides learners with the chance to explore a range of visual arts, which vary each year. Workshops for 2025 will include painting with acrylics, etching, stone sculpting, mosaics and frottage. Three years ago, the centre was lucky to have Palmerston North-based mural artist and tattooist Swift Mantis use their building as his canvas, resulting in a fabulous mural of Horace the cat. Lesley says this highly visual and unmissable

artwork continues to generate a great deal of interest in the Southerly Art School programme with about 90 people attending sessions over this year's King's Birthday.

"The Art School brings in new learners, many of whom choose to enrol in a course at Southland Education once they've had a taste of what's on offer. We also manage to source new course tutors at the event, which is a real bonus for us."

Lesley says that to maintain an everchanging programme for the Southerly Art School, Southland Education will often have to recruit tutors from outside the district to meet demand.

Each term between 130 and 150 learners attend classes at the centre with demand growing each year. Southland Education receives excellent support financially from the community, which enables them to continue with their annual programme. In addition, learners pay a small fee to attend classes which helps to cover tuition costs as well as centre expenses. Lesley says that charging learners a small fee encourages learner commitment and means people tend to place more value on the experience on offer.

One of the key changes Lesley has witnessed during her years with Southland Education is the increasing expectations of learners in terms of tutor expertise and the availability of resource.

"Our learners have enhanced expectations and for us to be successful we must meet those expectations through our offering. We know that learners have a great deal of choice now, with our main competition coming from online learning. What that doesn't offer is the social aspect that is available through Southland Education and the benefit of face-to-face connection with tutors who are able to offer instant feedback."

In further pursuit of their commitment to developing and hosting opportunities to explore visual arts, Southland Education is a regular participant in the Southland Arts Trail run by Arts Murihiku. This year the centre hosted an open day

with eight tutors on hand to enable visitors to explore and try new experiences.

"Participation in open days and arts events means we stay top of mind with the arts community, and it helps when we are seeking both tutors and learners," Lesley says.

Over the past few years Southland Education has been able to offer tutors professional development, and they have hosted the Successfully Teaching Adults course with Jennifer Leahy as tutor, which Lesley says was extremely beneficial as many of their tutors come with no teaching experience.

"Tutoring can be an isolated experience, so it is important that we are able to offer support on their personal learning journey. The course was excellent. It gave our tutors the opportunity to stop and reflect on their practices and for many it provided the first chance they have had to get together and touch base."

She says the course clearly illustrated the structures behind adult learning and the concepts that bind it all together. "I can now clearly identify when some tutors are struggling, and I have the tools to offer practical support. Our tutors have said that the course has helped them to realise the importance of building relationships and making sure they give students what they want. They are now far more able to pinpoint issues and determine solutions."

Southland Education has followed up the course with a session facilitated by Mary Geary, former manager with the Ministry of Education and current President of the Dunedin WEA. This session allowed for tutors to build on the Successfully Teaching Adults programme and further develop their teaching practice, Lesley says.

"We were lucky to receive a small professional development funding grant from ACE Aotearoa to enable us to undertake both these PD opportunities. It is great for our organisation to feel included in a bigger structure of learning that offers supported growth."



The Confidence of Quality Delivery

ACE providers operate from hundreds of locations across the motu. From small, isolated communities through to our larger cities and towns, we know there are people, groups and organisations delivering quality adult community education across a broad range of subjects.

We also know that often smaller providers are forced to operate in isolating circumstances for a range of reasons, including financial constraints, geographic location and resource restrictions. A key question for these independent providers is: how do we know that we are delivering good process and quality learning? Providing the support needed to confidently answer that question is central to ACE Aotearoa.

The membership body is tasked with supporting our sector to deliver centrally coordinated, structured learning, with our three key focus areas being strategic sector leadership, sector capability building, and sector coordination. To assist with ensuring quality delivery, the ACE Quality Assurance framework, or ACE QA tool as it's known, was created in 2008 by sector representatives.

The QA framework demonstrates to learners our providers' commitment to quality learner satisfaction; it fosters a culture of improvement, improves work processes and efficiency, and it gives our providers the confidence that they are delivering according to best practice. It provides a valuable tool to help ACE providers understand how they are performing and gives



suggestions to address identified improvement areas. The framework uses a self-assessment approach and can be adapted to fit the size of the organisation. Importantly, the focus of the ACE QA tool is on quality not compliance.

Central to delivery of the framework is the description of a capable learning organisation, underpinned by the values of rangatiratanga, manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and the guiding principle of ako.

The framework was developed by reviewing a range of ACE providers' systems and processes across governance, management and teaching and learning areas. As part of the review, ACE Aotearoa

assessed the framework by comparing it with the requirements of those providers who participate in the NZQA external evaluation review process, commissioned analysis by EvaluationConsult and linked with outcomes model achievement with line-of-sight contribution to government goals and priorities. We also invited the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities to review the document and give feedback. They provided support and recommendations to add more opportunity for learner involvement in measuring quality for learning services.

The ACE QA has been routinely reviewed over the years to ensure currency and to maintain relevant standards in line with sector expectations.

In 2010 ACE Aotearoa commenced sector workshops for socialisation, training and mentoring of the ACE QA tool. These have subsequently become a core service, offering a credentials' pathway for staff and providers working towards achievement of the Quality Mark.

Analiese Robertson, QA workshop facilitator, has completed delivery of a series of QA workshops during 2024 with valuable attendance from a range of organisations within the sector seeking the assurance that comes with achieving the ACE-approved certificate or Quality Mark.

"It's important to view the QA framework as part of a system of delivery," Analiese says. "It doesn't sit alone but is part of a larger

quality delivery structure. Within that structure sits the Teaching Standards and Learner Pathways, which are professional tools designed by and for the sector.

“The objectives of the Teaching Standards are to ensure increased recognition of good teaching practices and ensure reported improvement in learner experiences in ACE programmes, while the Learner Pathways support our learners to identify various education roadmaps for their learner journey. This ensures that they are partners in the design and delivery of their individual learning experience.”

Any ACE practitioner and provider can register their interest in being assessed for the certificate and/or Quality Mark. The process includes attendance at one of the ACE Aotearoa regional workshops, followed by tailored support from ACE with the review process. Providers then undertake an individual or organisation-wide self-assessment, provide information to show how well they or their organisation is performing and identify areas for improvement. Once the improvement plan has been developed and implemented, they will be assessed for the certificate and/or Quality Mark.

“I really encourage staff and organisations delivering adult community education to start the organisation self-assessment process and get underway to achieving the Quality Mark. The process is designed for immediate applicability of the ACE Quality Assurance Framework and its management tools. The approach is strengths based, a focus on celebrating what is working well, and it's an opportunity to develop an organisation transformation plan. The intention is to increase visibility with the quality mark branding, so that learners are able to identify providers who meet the ACE Quality Assurance requirements,” Analiese says.

QA – a continuing journey

Introduction

Skillwise in Ōtautahi has received the ACE Quality Assurance quality mark and staff share their story of discovery and delivery.

SkillWise

Ōtautahi-based SkillWise works alongside people with learning disabilities to help them develop the skills and knowledge to participate in their communities in a positive way. Every year more than 170 people access SkillWise services with 80 of them undertaking ACE learning.

In 2021 SkillWise had a new leadership team in place, and they were asking themselves challenging questions around service transformation and delivering against best practice in a learning environment. At the heart of their transformation ideals lay the need to align their practice with Enabling Good Lives Principles (EGL) which take a bottom-up approach to empowering and enabling everyone to live good lives.

With this at the centre of their objectives, the SkillWise project team made up of learners, family/whānau members, frontline staff, leadership team and the Board chair looked at their business strategy, services and systems alongside the EGL principles. As part of the analysis and review, the team specifically looked at learning opportunities for the people they work with.

Group Service Lead, Frank Manzano says research quickly bought the team to the realisation that they needed to understand what “good” looked like as an ACE provider.

“We didn't want to reinvent the wheel. We knew there would be resources available to help us with developing our systems and that's when we discovered the QA documentation on the ACE website. This helped us to identify what we were doing well and what we needed to do to fill the gaps,” he says.

“This isn't a box-ticking exercise. It's not about being perfect, but it is about progressing and moving forward on the spectrum of continuous improvement.”

The first step for SkillWise was asking the question – how can we create good systems that ensure we don't continue to make the same mistakes, and that we fix things in a more permanent fashion as we go about providing opportunities and quality learning?

Frank says the QA Framework documentation was easy to follow and had good guidelines that enabled them to unpick process and pack it back together in a way that suited their needs. The team met fortnightly for six months and held a half-day workshop with a focus on working through the process.

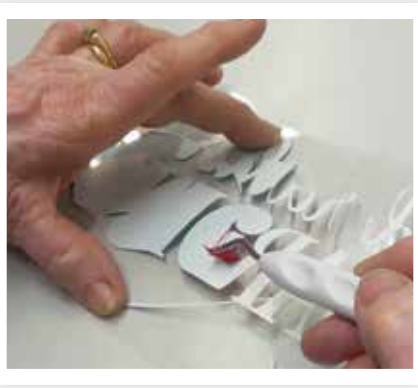
“The process has given us a clear idea about the outcomes that we want our learners to have from being a part of ACE. We developed an outcomes model to provide context for our decisions, which helped us to clarify and share where we wanted to contribute within the wider sector. It helped us to answer the question about our unique place within the sector and it helped us to collect evidence about outcomes around the development of new programmes and courses that reflect learners needs and wishes.”

Frank says he would 100% recommend the exercise to others within the ACE sector.

“Having the Quality Assurance mark speaks to the work you have completed as an organisation to ensure you have best-practice measures in place. This is about our learners getting the most out of their experience. It helped us understand how we can improve our processes.”

All the documents are available online and completed documentation will be reviewed by QA workshop facilitator Analiese Robertson.

“This is an ongoing journey. It's not like you get to the end and say OK, we've done that. We are continuing to trial, improve and tweak,” says Frank.



Know your Cricut from your Cricket!

When Napier Libraries talk about Cricut, they don't mean the ball game! The three Cricut machines owned by the libraries are integral to the Creation Station, the makerspace at Taradale Library where they run adult learning programmes. A Cricut is a cutting machine designed specifically for crafting, capable of cutting more than 300 different materials. They allow users to cut out all sorts of intricate, customised designs from sticky vinyl, paper, card, wood and more! The Cricuts are highly sought after tools, not only used by local crafters, but also by the librarians to deliver workshops, teaching how to use the machines and the software that comes with them.

Taradale Library holds its adult learner classes twice a week with a range of skills on offer, including a Repair Café for mending clothes, such as missing buttons or tears and rips, basic sewing workshops, and using a 3D printer as well as use of the Cricut.

The Cricut machines, sewing machines and overlockers are expensive pieces of machinery and having them as part of the Creation Station gives people the opportunity to try them out, complete a one-off project, or learn a new skill without the cost of the equipment being a barrier to the learning experience.

Workshops host between three and six learners on each course with two tutors, which means learners have an intensive session with time dedicated to their individual needs, says Napier Library's Holly Weston.

"We get a wide and diverse range of people attending our classes. Sessions can run from 30 minutes to an hour. We often have people coming in to have a look at the classes being run, interested in what we are doing. This is a great way for us to get new people to attend our workshops."

The library also holds tech one-on-one sessions with 20-minute time slots where people can get help tailored to their individual needs. The 20-minute slot allows learners to get lessons in what they specifically would like to know without going into information overload. Beginners have found that this allows them to learn to use their devices in bite-sized chunks. They often go away and practise what they have learnt during the week, being very proud to show off their new skill and learn a new one in the next session.

The tech one-on-ones start with asking what the learner wants to use their phone for and where they would like to start. Holly says sessions have covered everything from how to turn your phone on and off, to how to download files on your phone and then where to find them, and how to customise device settings.

"We find out what our learners want to know and tailor the training to fit those needs. We also encourage them to go home and play with the phone with the knowledge that we can fix things that might go wrong, so they feel reassured and confident enough to really experiment. Learners come back the following week for a follow-up session where we can put anything right that might have gone awry as they figure things out by themselves."

Napier Libraries has been running adult education for many years and has recently ramped up its programme. It now has five people in the Community Engagement Team who run the programming, each with their own specialities and who share their skills with other team members to bring them up to speed.

Learners come from broad and diverse backgrounds, with everyone from retirees to small business owners to those just wanting to learn new skills on the weekend.

"We really do get a broad range of learners. We keep our topics diverse and this attracts a growing pool of new learners," Holly says.

The team also creates community connections with businesses and local groups who are welcome to use the library spaces. More recently, local banks have run courses in the library reading lounge on many topics, including demystifying banking terms, how to spot a scam and what to do if you have fallen victim to one.

"Our success is due to the fact we are a library-based service. We are not a traditional learning environment and so people who may not have been in a classroom for a while, or who may have had a bad experience in the classroom, feel more comfortable with us. There's lots going on in the library so it doesn't feel as formal, which can take away some of the anxiety and pressure. We are a non-judgemental space, and we encourage our learners to have fun when they are in our space."

Board Talk



Poroporoaki Pale Sauni

Pale Sauni completed his term on the ACE Aotearoa Board at our AGM this year. Pale was elected to the Board in 2014 and then again in 2017 and was co-opted to the Board in 2021 to serve until 2024. We thank Pale for his unforgettable time on the Board and the huge contribution he made. We are grateful that Pale will continue to contribute to the sector and champion the ACE kaupapa among Pasifika communities. Here we share with you Pale's thoughts and farewell.

Talofa, malo le soifua.

When asked if I could pen some reflections on my time on the ACE Aotearoa Board, I began with a smile. A big smile. A sigh of satisfaction, that for a short time in my education work life, something that mattered, materialised in a governance that made sense.

In a world of social media, live feeds and AI, nothing was more satisfying and redemptive than being able to sit with a team of forward-thinking and purposeful Board members to create, design, maintain and define ideas and strategies which would benefit and accelerate the understanding of appropriate teaching and learning. All this while eating, laughing, sometimes crying, always challenging and mocking, debating, agreeing and disagreeing and most importantly, still remaining friends. Why? Our purpose.

Each meeting included caucus discussions around cultural practice, catching up with our personal lives, what was top of mind, the latest in education and health trends, what the government was saying, and the community priorities and aspirations for the learner. As much as I had contributed to the whole Board, there was so much more that I have learned from the collective.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity to serve in this way. I am grateful to the late Jo Lake, and more recently Analiese Robertson for steering this ship and further enhancing my migration story.

Fa'afetai, la manuia

Pale

Save the Date!

Hui Fono and ACE Sector Conference

June 10-12, 2025

Rydges Latimer Christchurch

In 2025 ACE Aotearoa will be taking a new approach to Hui Fono and the ACE Conference. The two events will be held consecutively in Ōtautahi (Christchurch). The bringing together of our signature events will be led by Analiese Robertson, premised on the whakataukī, *he waka eke noa – we are all in this together*, to design a programme that is philosophically connected to adult learning principles and an indigenous education paradigm. Thus, bringing together the best architecture of the Hui Fono and Conference events.

The two events will be hosted at the same venue – Rydges Latimer – and will have the same theme and a scaffolding programme. The theme, AI, will explore the interface of Artificial Intelligence and Ancestral Intelligence and will bring together educators, technologists and community leaders.

Our aim is to foster dialogue that honours indigenous wisdom while embracing innovative AI applications in community and education.

We have already secured our opening keynote speaker, Dr Karaitiana Taiuru, Māori AI, data and emerging tech ethicist, kaupapa Māori researcher and data sovereignty expert.

To make both events accessible, we continue to offer financial assistance on application with priority criteria.

Here's the detailed schedule to help you plan ahead:

Hui Fono

Tuesday, 10 June 2025, 9:00 am-5:00 pm:

A dedicated professional development event tailored for Māori and Pacific educators and leaders. Participants are also encouraged to attend the ACE Conference.

Pre-Conference Networking Event

Tuesday, 10 June 2025, 6:00 pm-8:00 pm:

Connect and network with peers and colleagues from across the sector and the motu.

ACE Aotearoa Annual Awards Dinner

Wednesday, 11 June, 7:00 pm-9:00 pm:

An opportunity to recognise excellence in teaching, ACE programme innovation, leadership and service within the sector.

Adult and Community Education (ACE) Annual Conference

Wednesday and Thursday, 11-12 June 2025, 9:00 am-3:30 pm:

An opportunity for those working in the sector to gain new knowledge and insights into community learning and development issues. The Conference showcases cutting-edge leaders and offers a dynamic, practical workshop programme.

Save the dates now. Book your flights early. Registrations for both events are now open. Please register for the conference at <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/events/ace-conference> Please register for Hui Fono at <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/events/hui-fono>

ACE News

ACE Aotearoa Annual Awards 2025

Nominations are open for the ACE Aotearoa Annual Awards 2025. These prestigious awards recognise excellence in teaching, ACE programmes, and leadership within the sector and are an opportunity for you to acknowledge your colleagues and the wonderful work they do.

The Awards are one of the highlights of the ACE calendar and are presented at our conference dinner. Award recipients receive complimentary travel, accommodation and registration to attend the conference.

We encourage you to begin thinking about nominating someone in your team or wider ACE community, a programme you are proud of, or a person who has demonstrated leadership through contributions to governance, management, research or innovation. We have streamlined our process for 2025 so that once you have provided some information about your nominee, we will do the rest.

Nomination forms are available for download at <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/events/ace-aotearoa-annual-awards>

A new online nomination form is also available.

You can check out our 2024 Awards recipients at <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/news-and-resources/news/adult-and-community-education-aotearoa-annual-awards-2024>

Nominations for 2025 close on March 31 and will be considered by an external panel of judges.

We look forward to receiving your nominations.

Noticeboard

Membership renewal for 2025

Membership of ACE Aotearoa offers significant benefits. You have access to our carefully curated and well-thought-through suite of courses that are ACE focused. You receive regular updates on the sector and initiatives that are changing the way we work; you can attend the annual ACE conference and your support helps us to deliver the advocacy and policy advice that keeps our sector strong. The cost of membership is extremely affordable and your support enables us to support you. You might also want to share membership benefits with other organisations and encourage them to join our movement.

To help make the process as easy as possible we have included a membership renewal form in this issue of the newsletter or you can visit our website <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/who-we-are/membership>

Update our Mailing List and Send in Your News!

ACE Aotearoa currently sends out hard copies of the quarterly newsletter to those on our mailing list. But did you know the newsletter is also available on our website? If you want to save paper and postage costs and just download the newsletter from the website, then please email Viv Reti at ACE Aotearoa: Vivienne.Reti@aceaotearoa.org.nz and we will remove your hard copy subscription.

If you have any stories you would like to share, please email the editor: jackie@cherryred.co.nz

ACE Aotearoa Office Christmas Hours

The ACE Aotearoa office will close on Christmas Eve (24 December) and reopen on 6 January 2025.

Have a Great Break

On behalf of the team at ACE Aotearoa we wish you all a restful and peaceful break. We hope that each of you gets time to relax and hopefully enjoy some sunshine and downtime. We look forward to working with you in the New Year to continue our partnership work within the sector.

