

# CHANGING LIVES

## Education Forum

7 July 2008



## Report



## Editorial

### Russell Marshall Chair of the Steering Group



I welcomed the opportunity offered by Don Campbell, CEO of Whitireia Community Polytechnic, to chair the Porirua Education Forum. It is good and appropriate that Whitireia, now widely recognised as an outstanding polytechnic, should be exercising this leadership role. For my part, having worked in and around education for much of the last 30 years, and with Porirua connections going back to the mid 1980s, I am very pleased to be involved in an initiative which seeks to advance what is done in education for our community.

The Forum we held in the new Wikitoria Katene building at Whitireia on 7 July was the beginning of a journey we intend to take. A significant element of the early section of the journey will be in discovering what is actually going on in schools and other places of learning around us - from Early Childhood to Tertiary, and including places such as Te Wananga o Aotearoa and the private providers.

We then want to look at ways in which we might facilitate closer co-operation across the various parts of the education sector. Much good, excellent, even outstanding work is being done across the board by our local schools and other education providers. Those of us involved in taking the July Forum forward believe that by working more closely across the sector we will be able to do even better by all our learners, and that we can build a story even more worth telling.

We hope that you will join us on the journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

## Summary of presentations

This is a summary report of the papers presented and the key themes emerging from the Education Forum held at Whitireia Community Polytechnic on 7 July 2008.

The Forum was a successful gathering of approximately 80 educators from early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors as well as community. Chaired by Russell Marshall the Forum commenced with five presentations followed by discussion groups and a report back plenary session. Participants seemed very enthusiastic about the value of the Forum.

This report has been compiled at the request of participants and the steering group who planned the Forum. Copies of presentations are available from the Whitireia website: <http://www.whitireia.ac.nz/educationforum>

A brief summary of each presentation is as follows:

### **Early Childhood – Amanda Coulston (General Manager, WRFKA)**

An outline of the kindergarten network across the region was provided along with a case study outlining current innovative approaches being used in early childhood education.

### **Primary schools – Janice Shramka (Principal Karori West Normal School)**

If we believe that: most of our primary aged students will have jobs that have yet to be created; have many different careers and many of those careers will be in the service sector; be part of a society that will become increasingly more diverse, more multi-cultural while at the same time recognising the tangata whenua.

Then, schools should focus on two main areas. Firstly, they should focus on developing students who are positive, independent and socially able citizens by developing positive and appropriate relationships with their students, recognising that modeling is not enough and we explicitly teach values as the revised New Zealand Curriculum is encouraging us to do.

Secondly, schools should focus on developing students who know that learning

involves thinking and risk taking by knowing that there is not a set body of knowledge. But literacy and mathematics do need to be carefully and explicitly taught; teaching thinking processes; developing risk taking skills.

### **Secondary schools – Mike Webster (Principal Mana College)**

A series of questions were posed around choice of College, what do Colleges achieve, what do people want from a College, why do people leave the area from secondary education, and around the vibrancy and talents of our community

### **Tertiary sector – Don Campbell (Chief Executive, Whitireia)**

The key themes emerging from this address included the need for research which originates from rather than colonises particularly the Porirua area; the lack of research information about the area; the increased expectation of collaboration across the tertiary sector; the impact of a capped tertiary funding environment; the outcomes of the regional facilitation process managed for the Wellington region by Whitireia and WelTec with support from TOPNZ; and the importance of education in lifting the whole community.

### **Community sector – Dr Roger Blakeley (Chief Executive, Porirua City Council)**

This presentation covered our population which is growing, ageing and ethnically diverse. Long Term Council Community Plan outcomes and progress were reported. Priorities are seen to be early childhood education, celebrating educational excellence and increasing achievement rates for NCEA.

Recent successful results for Education include an increase in under fives in early childhood education, improved school rolls for all ethnic groups, growth in tertiary education enrolment, increase in industry-based training and modern apprenticeships and an increase in residents over 15 years with tertiary qualifications.

Challenging results are lower attendance in kindergarten particularly for Pacific Island and other ethnic groups, larger proportion of residents with no qualifications than Wellington, and higher number of school leavers with lower attainment than New Zealand wide figures.

## Group work

Participants were divided into five facilitated groups which were cross sectoral and posed questions about the key issues for education in our region, how we can lift educational performance, and the key messages for all stakeholders about needs in our region.

A summary of the key themes emerging from these groups was as follows.

### 1. Key issues

#### **Challenges**

- Movement of students out of their own area
- Students leaving without a qualification
- Literacy and numeracy levels in the workforce still low for some groups
- Teacher shortages
- Capacity growing of Pasifika and Māori teachers and specialists.

#### **Government Policy**

- Clarity needed on performance indicators and policy areas
- Cultural identity needs to be a part of curriculum
- Funding for infrastructure and school systems

#### **Public Relations and communication**

- Success stories not well enough communicated
- Participation by minority groups
- Need to change from deficit models, and to sell region's talent and positive accomplishments

**Research**

- Research information not generated from Porirua perspective
- More information gathering required about Education in Porirua City, eg retention rates, Ethnic group data, qualifications, programmes, initiatives

**Inter sector**

- Collaboration between institutions within and across sectors appears to be limited
- Sharing of academic data between education sectors (trends and patterns)

**2. How can we lift Educational Performance?****Policy suggestions**

- Foster school-home educational programmes
- Provide and resource more pathways and alternatives to secondary schools
- Middle schools for 10-16, 'muddle in the middle' for which local research is being done, more needed
- Child centred academic tracking
- Increased parental involvement in child's education
- Full reinstatement of ante-natal education
- Community Education
- Reduce restraints on flexibility – eg. timetables, transport, availability of specialists?
- Porirua Digital Strategy and teacher professional development
- Develop Centres of Excellence
- Address staff shortages
- Schools plus – an opportunity for collaboration

**Public relations and communication**

- Build confidence in local educational opportunities
- Congruence between learner, environment and curriculum
- Need for greater collaboration and breakdown in patch protection
- Improve transition between education sectors, align timetables
- High Whitireia success rates with Maori and Pacific

- New curriculum including 2nd languages, an opportunity for Porirua, need to work together
- Are there things that Whitireia could share with the Colleges?
- Look at what City Council/Ministry measures – results or progression?
- Opportunity afforded for cultural diversity by Wellington regional strategy

### 3. Key messages about needs in our region – for all stakeholders

#### **Research**

- Funding - how is it being used?
- Academic tracking for every child, Years 1 to 13

#### **Action**

- More local data needed
- Owning our own research, telling our own story
- Move from competition to engaging with other institutions

#### **Public relations and communication**

- More communication across sectors
- Awareness of Porirua as an identity
- Local is good – collaboration; lifting perceptions; strength based; more than Rugby and music/arts; reporting academic achievement and those going on to further learning
- Focus on basics of reading, writing, maths, develop a passion for learning and how it relates to the rest of our/their lives

## Recommendations from Group work

The following recommendations are provided to pick up on the issues identified in the group work.

### Recommendations:

1. A political forum be held to seek to influence policy makers over the issues which need addressing in education in Porirua eg School Plus, teacher strategy especially in specialist areas, teacher professional development.
2. Seek to align the Porirua Digital Strategy with teacher professional development to ensure increased skill levels of teachers for the digital age.
3. Porirua City Council work with education providers to ensure increased promotion of Porirua to address issues of students going out of Porirua and to attract teachers to the region. Representatives of primary, secondary, tertiary education to meet with Ministry of Education officials to develop a central tracking system for students in the Porirua Community.
4. Develop a Research Unit to provide a sound research basis and information on local educational issues.
5. Develop a set of key indicators, linked to community outcomes, which identify the health of education provision across the sector and the region and to monitor them on a regular basis.
6. Primary, secondary and tertiary schools to embark on a project to improve collaboration and break down barriers to better align provision eg. develop better pathways between provider, facilitate shared specialist provision via video conferencing.
7. Work towards improved child centred academic tracking across all education sectors in Porirua City.

## Outcomes

In addition to the recommendations from group work, the following are outcomes from the Forum.

1. The Steering Group which organised the Forum was asked to prepare a report for circulation to attendees and invitees and to consider the next steps in the journey of collaboration we have embarked on.
2. Being election year, it was proposed to hold a political forum in education where politicians would be invited to listen to educators perception of needs. Note this will be held on 30 October at 5.00pm (Lecture Theatre, Whitireia Porirua).
3. A subsequent discussion indicated interest in an Education Forum for Māori and this will be picked up by participants.
4. There was also subsequent discussion about a similar forum for Kapiti Horowhenua educators. Given that this forum was designed for Porirua and Kapiti educators but the focus and attendance was predominantly for Porirua this also seems worthy of follow up.
5. A discussion during the break indicated a serious shortage of technical teachers in secondary schools. This was picked up by a subsequent meeting of secondary Principals and has resulted in an application to the Education Innovation Fund by Whitireia and Victoria University for funding to develop a programme to address this need.
6. Russell Marshall has been visiting local schools and meeting with Principals and Chair of Boards to identify issues which might be taken up by the Education Forum.

## Steering Group Education Forum 2008

*Russell Marshall*, Chair  
Education Forum

*Don Campbell*, Chief Executive  
Whitireia Community Polytechnic

*Arthur Graves*, Chief Operating Officer  
Whitireia Community Polytechnic

*Susan Cauchi*, Director Academic & Planning  
Whitireia Community Polytechnic

*Taku Parai*, Pou Arahi  
Whitireia Community Polytechnic

*Dr Roger Blakeley*, Chief Executive  
Porirua City Council

*Hedley Aitken*, Principal  
Bishop Viard College

*Mary Jones*, Principal  
Pukerua Bay Primary school

Tēnā Koe/Koutou,

Nau mai, Haere mai Ki tēnei hui Mātauranga – Hui, Hui, Hui, Huia!

# CHANGING LIVES

## Education Forum 2008

**You are invited to a meeting chaired by Russell Marshall  
with educators and organisations involved in education  
in the Wellington west coast region.**



Kia orana, Talofa lava, Kia ora, Malo e lelei, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula vinaka and Greetings

- to explore issues of current and future significance
- to identify solutions and innovations
- to influence education policy directions



COMMUNITY POLYTECHNIC  
Te Kara Matatini o Whitireia

Wineera Drive  
Private Bag 50910  
Porirua City 5240  
Phone: 04 237 3100

[www.whitireia.ac.nz](http://www.whitireia.ac.nz)

0800 Whitireia (0800 944 847)