

Media release: Supporting learners of te reo Māori in tertiary education organisations

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Te reo Māori learners need more support to realise their language aspirations at tertiary education organisations (TEOs). A recently published study shows that although te reo Māori is central to learners' identity, support for learning and using te reo Māori at tertiary level is variable. The report includes tools to help TEOs consider how they can improve their support for te reo learners.

Ka whānau mai te reo: Kei tua o te kura —Understanding how tertiary education organisations are supporting the transitions of reo Māori learners and speakers is part of a series of research reports looking at the transitions between education organisations, from pre-school to tertiary. These transitions are crucial yet vulnerable times for language learners.

Kei tua o te kura explores the support offered to reo Māori learners and speakers as they move in and out of TEOs.

The tertiary sector does not have a common set of strategies, policies, and practices for supporting reo Māori learners and speakers. A well-prepared organisation needs multiple, inter-related policies and practices. The study found while some TEOs are developing and customising practices to support reo Māori learners and speakers, others have fewer supports in place.

A set of tools for TEOs and whānau was developed from the study findings. The tools work together to encourage increased levels of support for te reo Māori learners and speakers.

'This work complements Ako Aotearoa's other activities that support cultural competency in tertiary education, especially as the reo is so central to building that competency,' said Ako Aotearoa Deputy Director Māori, Dr Joe Te Rito.

Dr Te Rito is excited and pleased at the completion of this project and looks forward to its active sharing across the tertiary sector.

'Now organisations have access to a framework and practical tools that enable them to better measure their own provisions for te reo Māori teaching and to support their Maori learners better,' Dr Te Rito said.

'For many learners, te reo Māori is more than an academic subject, it is connected to their sense of who they are and connects them to whānau, hapū, and iwi,' said NZCER General Manager Māori, Sheridan McKinley.

Tertiary organisations play a crucial role in enabling or constraining learners' language aspirations. The learner and their whānau need to be able to access information about what the organisation offers and how that will support their reo.

Kei tua o te kura combines findings from a case study and a survey of TEOs. The case study looked at the transition practices and processes at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, an iwi-established organisation that has pioneered the application of kaupapa and tikanga to the advancement of Māori within tertiary education. An online survey included staff from 22 tertiary education organisations. The research project was co-funded by Ako Aotearoa and NZCER.

The [Kei tua o te kura](#) report is the fourth from the [Ka Whānau Mai te Reo research project](#) that aims to support whānau reo Māori development in their transitions to and between kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa primary, wharekura, secondary, and tertiary education.



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