



**AOTEAROA**  
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
TERTIARY TEACHING  
EXCELLENCE

COLLABORATING ON TERTIARY  
TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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# AKO AOTEAROA alert

NEWSLETTER OF AKO AOTEAROA

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The Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus established this February: standing from left to right are Anania Randall (Caucus Chair, Ako Aotearoa Board Member), Associate Professor Rawiri Taonui (University of Canterbury, nominated by Te Kahui Amokura), Dr Peter Coolbear (Ako Aotearoa Director), and Turoa Royal (Te Taihū o ngā Wānanga). Seated from left to right are Dr Kathie Irwin (Ako Aotearoa Board Member) and Dr Khyla Russell (Otago Polytechnic, nominated by ITPNZ).

## Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus

The full Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus met for the first time at the end of February. The caucus is the Ako Aotearoa Board's only standing committee and has a critical governance function for Ako Aotearoa to develop and oversee a Māori strategy for the centre.

As the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, Ako Aotearoa is committed to supporting Māori development through enhancing teaching and learning for Māori. We also believe that the rest of the sector has much to learn from Mātauranga Māori and Kaupapa Māori.

Currently, Ako Aotearoa has committed over \$820,000 of its discretionary funding to work specifically in supporting Māori learners and/or Mātauranga Māori. We are in the process of recruiting a kaihautā whakawhanake Māori (senior Māori development manager) to support this work and that of the caucus.

## Welcome

The 2009 year is shaping up to be an important one for Ako Aotearoa. With the successful projects from the National Project Fund 2008 getting underway (and exciting things already happening), we are now launching the 2009 round. Page 3 features information on the National Project Fund 2009 and further details are available on our website.

We have begun a significant internal project to evaluate current research into tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand and, as a result, are firming up a view of how we might best foster high-quality use-focused research and implementation projects in the future.

Since our inception as an organisation, we have held the principle that we should support work that has the greatest demonstrable potential to benefit learners. How we translate this principle into practice is open to debate and, to this end, we will be running a series of workshops over the next few months for potential applicants to our funding schemes. Our regional hubs will keep you posted about when these will be held in your area.

The development of resources on our website continues apace and we have also established a regular electronic newsletter, the *Ako Aotearoa Website Bulletin*, which complements *Ako Aotearoa Alert*. This is available to all registered users of our website and features the latest resources available and planned new developments. So, if you have yet to register on the site, want to know the latest about what we are doing and planning to do, or – just as importantly – want to tell us what you think we should be doing, please do so.

Later in the year we will be scoping out the next major development phase of our website and will be surveying registered users for their views about what does and doesn't work well, and what new features might improve our services to you in the future.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With very best wishes

**Dr Peter Coolbear**

Director, Ako Aotearoa

# The National Project Fund

## 2008

### Supporting major initiatives across the tertiary sector

We were delighted to announce in February that eight major projects had joined the three previously announced doctoral scholarships to receive funding through our National Project Fund (NPF) in its inaugural round.

These 11 projects have significant potential to enhance learner benefits and provide exemplars of cross-departmental and cross-sector collaborations.

Our congratulations go to the teams and their associated organisations. Many of the projects are already underway and we are excited to see them develop.



Te Kupenga o Mātauranga Taranaki project team with Ako Aotearoa research manager Kirsty Weir. From left to right are Kirsty Weir, Ngahua Washer, Cat Mclsaac, Deleraine Puhara, and Naumai Edwards. Kataraina Houia-Rongonui is not in the photograph but is also part of the team.

Visit our website – [www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/national-project-fund](http://www.akoatearoa.ac.nz/national-project-fund) – for more information about each of the following projects.

### Research and implementation projects

Project title	Funding (excl GST)	Project leader/s	Collaborating organisations
Assessing Hauora Māori in Medical Students in Clinical Settings	\$124,597	Dr Rhys Jones	University of Auckland
Best Practice in Supervisor Feedback to Thesis Writers in New Zealand Universities	\$85,268	Professor John Bitchener	AUT University, Unitec, University of Auckland
Dedicated Education Unit: Enhancing Clinical Teaching and Learning	\$94,044	Dr Willem Fourie, Beverley McClelland	Manukau Institute of Technology, Counties Manukau District Health Board
Engaging Learners Effectively in Science, Technology, and Engineering: The Pathway from Secondary to University Education	\$86,000	Professor Tim Parkinson	Massey University
ITO Workplace Assessment Structures	\$98,111	Nicholas Huntington, Dr Karen Vaughan	Industry Training Federation, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Creative Trades ITO, Careerforce, Competenz, ETITO, Retail Institute

### Māori initiative projects

Project title	Funding (excl GST)	Project leader/s	Collaborating organisations
Exploring Challenges Māori Learners May Face in Daily Use of te Reo	\$132,810	Deleraine Puhara	Te Kupenga Mātauranga o Taranaki, Taranaki Environmental Education Trust
Tātou Tātou/Success for All: Improving Māori Student Success in Health Professional Degree-level Programmes	\$111,921	Dr Elana Curtis	University of Auckland
Te Kāwai Kūmara – A Pilot for the Synchronous Delivery of a Common Postgraduate Programme in te Reo Māori across Multiple Sites	\$128,889	Professor Tania Ka'ai	AUT University, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, Victoria University of Wellington

## Doctoral scholarships

Project title	Project leader	Collaborating organisations
An Investigation of Undergraduate Medical Students' Discourses of General Practice and Surgery	Dr Chrystal Jaye	University of Otago
Integrating Information Literacy, and Learning to Write with Authority within a New Zealand Tertiary Context	Dr Lisa Emerson	Massey University
Māori Learning Māori: What Works for Māori Adults Learning Māori as a Second Language?	Professor Stephen May	University of Waikato

# 2009

## Kirsty Weir highlights new features of the NPF for 2009

We established the NPF last year to support large-scale research and implementation projects with a strategic focus on improving tertiary teaching and learning. Applications for the 2009 fund open in April, with \$1.4 million available. The overarching goals of the fund are to enhance educational outcomes for learners, promote collaboration, build research capability and capacity, and contribute to a more coherent knowledge base of effective tertiary teaching.

All applicants were surveyed on completion of the 2008 round, as part of the evaluation process. We are pleased that 80 percent of respondents reported that the overall process was either good or excellent. As with any process, however, there are areas for improvement and we will focus on these during 2009.

## Additional support provided to applicants during 2009

In a recent article for the *New Zealand Education Review* ("Reflections on Tertiary Teaching Research", Feb 13, 2009) Dr Peter Coolbear highlighted key limitations of the unfunded NPF 2008 applications. The most common were: a lack of robust evidence that the work was needed, a lack of strategic perspective, a lack of clarity about what was being proposed, and a lack of a strong dissemination plan.

We will again be looking to support projects that are use-inspired, that is, projects that seek to both advance our fundamental understanding of tertiary teaching and learning as well as impact upon practice.

In line with our commitment to work in partnership with project teams, we are going to provide additional support to applicants by holding a series of workshops on "How to get NPF funding". The workshops will be presented by the national office and hosted through our regional hubs. We will also develop a written guide to the application process for project teams. Individual support from the national office will continue and we encourage applicants to contact us to discuss their project ideas.

## Policy and process changes

During 2009 we will no longer distinguish between research and implementation projects. This has been prompted by the legitimate combination of research and implementation components in several 2008 applications. When a project has a clear implementation element, however, we will require inclusion of an independent evaluation of that project.

From the outset, we have designed this fund to be inclusive across the whole tertiary sector. With this in mind, we are going to restrict project leaders to submitting one application only across the three major funding streams, rather than one per funding stream. We will also encourage the selection panels, when making their selections, to consider portfolio balance in light of projects currently funded. This balance will relate to both discipline and priority areas.

## Structural changes

There will be two structural changes to the NPF during 2009. First, we will establish a new funding stream for Pacific Peoples' projects to support major research and implementation projects (up to \$150,000) to enhance the educational outcomes of Pacific learners. We hope to fund one-to-two projects during 2009.

Secondly, we are not looking to fund any new doctoral scholarships in 2009. We funded three last year, but, given both the long-term commitment of these scholarships and our intention to maximise funding to research and implementation projects, we will not award any additional scholarships before 2010.

## Closing dates for the National Project Fund 2009

The closing dates for the research and implementation projects, Māori initiative projects, and Pacific Peoples' projects funding streams are as follows:

### Friday 21 August 2009, 5pm

*Expressions of interest close*

### Friday 18 September 2009

*Applicants notified of result*

### Friday 30 October 2009

*Full proposals close*

### Friday 20 November 2009

*Applicants notified of result*

All information is available at [www.akoaoaterrora.ac.nz/national-project-fund](http://www.akoaoaterrora.ac.nz/national-project-fund)

## National Project Fund: close up

During 2009 we will feature two NPF projects per newsletter. This issue, Ako Aotearoa research manager Kirsty Weir talks about her visit with the Manukau Institute of Technology and Counties Manukau District Health Board's Dedicated Education Unit at Middlemore Hospital, and the collaborative Te Kāwai Kūmara project team led by AUT University.



Kirsty Weir visiting staff at the Dedicated Education Unit at Middlemore Hospital. Project leader Dr Willem Fourie of MIT is pictured centre back.

I was delighted to visit the Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) with project leader Dr Willem Fourie. This project aims to improve the quality of clinical learning among nursing students while on placement. The traditional model of placements is to facilitate learning through the pairing of nursing students with a specific staff member. In a DEU, however, the ward as a whole commits to nursing education, and student learning is facilitated through designated liaison nurses (both clinical and academic).

It was great to meet the students on placement in the units and hear first hand their comments about how they are already noticing benefits to their learning – after only a few weeks; one student commented that it allowed for “a smooth transition between classroom and clinical practice”. The DEU approach enables staff and students to learn individually and in groups, as well as providing additional support networks for students. A key feature of these units is they allow students of different levels to learn together and from one another. I am sure many will watch this project's progress with interest.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with Professor Tania Ka'ai (AUT University) and her collaborators from Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, Te Parekiretanga o Te Reo programme at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, and Victoria University of Wellington. What struck me most about this project is its considerable potential to influence the sector by modelling both a truly inclusive collaborative model, as well as efficiently delivering higher qualifications in fields where expertise is limited but demand is high. Te Kāwai Kūmara will utilise smartboards and other technologies to deliver a unified course in te reo Māori across multiple organisations, simultaneously. By delivering this synchronised course the project team aim to build language capability among future Māori leaders, so there is sufficient proficiency to supervise postgraduate theses in te reo. Professor Ka'ai comments: “This project is exciting because it contributes to the regeneration of Māori language by engaging nationally recognised experts in Māori language and culture and maximising the transfer of their knowledge and skills to learners of the Māori language at the higher degree level.”

Both implementation projects represent a significant commitment to the ongoing sustainability of the work, teaching excellence, and to cross-organisational collaboration.

All NPF-funded projects have individual project spaces on the Ako Aotearoa website. These will be updated regularly by project teams and provide information on each project's progress, up-and-coming events, and outputs relating to the work. We encourage you to visit these project spaces to stay up to date with the latest developments: <http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/projects>



Professor Tania Ka'ai, AUT University – project leader for the Te Kāwai Kūmara project.

# Project spotlight: targeting student retention

In this issue we highlight the tertiary projects currently supported through our regional hubs to enhance student retention.

## Northern Hub projects

Associate Professor Emmanuel Manalo from the Student Learning Centre at University of Auckland is leading a collaborative project to explore student learning support programmes and initiatives that demonstrate positive impacts on student retention, success, and completion.

According to Emmanuel, there is a lot of work currently being undertaken in tertiary organisations regarding retention, but he believes this work tends to be marginalised or mostly hidden, and previous projects have not included contributions from tertiary learning advisors (TLAs). He anticipates the project will contribute to redressing this imbalance.

The team, also comprising University of Auckland colleague Jenny Marshall, Cath Fraser from Kahurangi Student Services at Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BOPP), and Fe Day from The Learning Development Centre at AUT University, will conduct a two-day hui in April, bringing together invited representatives from learning support programmes of institutions across the northern region. This will provide a means for participants to share and promote tested and successful programmes that have produced demonstrable tangible outcomes for student retention, success, and/or completion.

During the hui, the team will collate these effective programme summations into a document that will be made available for any educator to incorporate into their teaching practice. The summations will be disseminated through the Ako Aotearoa website and posted in wiki format on the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa New Zealand (ATLAANZ) website so that TLAs can utilise them and give feedback on their



Northern Hub's Ruth Peterson (right) meeting with University of Auckland's Emmanuel Manalo and Jenny Marshall, who are leading the collaborative student retention project.

experiences and possible enhancements. The team also intend to present a paper on the project at the ATLAANZ conference in November.

Two other retention-related projects are taking place within the Northern Hub. At Laidlaw College in Auckland, Mark Nichols is researching which purposeful interventions influence student retention in online distance education, while his colleague Alison Matai'a is focusing on purposeful interventions and how they influence Pacific students' success and retention in tertiary education.

## Central Hub projects

Aaron Jarden, psychology lecturer at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ), is in the final stages of a project that identifies relationships between important personal values, hope and grit, and retention and success in first-year tertiary study.

Aaron and Dr Alexander Mackenzie, University of Canterbury, surveyed 438 students in their first semester across the two tertiary organisations; 237 involved in distance education at TOPNZ and 201 contact students at University of Canterbury.

The 81-question online survey administered in the second semester of 2008 identified valuable information about the relationship between the levels of grit (perseverance), hope and personal values, and the ability of students to successfully complete their first year of study.

The study revealed distinctly different personal values and grit profiles between distance and contact education students. For example, distance students display higher levels of total grit and the sub-factor persistence of effort, and may benefit from motivational strategies that tap into self-enhancement values and promote ambition.

Contact students, on the other hand, display higher levels of the grit sub-factor ambition and the value of security, indicating they may benefit from motivational strategies that tap into conservative values and reinforce effort (for example, Carol Dweck's fixed mind set work).

Results also indicate that all students would benefit from identifying what is important (that is, personal values) and taking steps to live in alignment with their values, and from having their interest in study consistently engaged.

Aaron believes the findings from the study can be utilised to enhance teaching effectiveness by aligning initiatives that focus on the common issues identified for students learning via each particular mode.

The Central Hub is also pleased to support Dr Simon Nash, School of Health and Social Services, Massey University, with his project to develop a phone and e-based support resource, in the form of a mentoring resource manual, to support first-year extramural students.

## Celebrating good practice

The 2008 Good Practice Publication Grant recipients were announced earlier this year and we are delighted to acknowledge these people again in our first issue of Ako Aotearoa Alert for 2009. Our congratulations go to each of the tertiary educators selected.

- **Vanessa Andreotti, University of Canterbury:** Videoing 'enactments' of their own insights – \$4,556.25
- **Diana Ayling, Unitec:** Portfolio assessment in a business practice based learning (PbL) course – \$3,600
- **Kris Bennett, Otago Polytechnic:** Assessment of prior learning against undergraduate degrees using graduate profiles – \$5,000
- **Leigh Blackall, Otago Polytechnic:** Open education resource – \$4,950
- **Colin Carson, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology:** The provision of quality education and training for students with an intellectual disability – \$1,996.88
- **Dr Wayne Clark, University of Auckland:** Creating peer supported learning communities – \$3,000
- **Thomas Cochrane, Unitec:** Engaging students using mobile 2.0 – \$5,000
- **Jean Cory-Wright, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology:** Using physical problem-solving activities to foster deeper learning in outdoor education – \$2,500
- **Paul Dalziel, Lincoln University:** Innovation to improve learning outcomes for environment students studying economics – \$3,000
- **Ann Fitzgerald, Aoraki Polytechnic:** Teaching New Zealand sign language using full immersion teaching – \$3,000
- **Phillipa Fowler, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand:** Wonderwebbers – \$5,000
- **John Hannam, YMCA Education Centre:** Focusing on strengths for challenging youth – \$5,000
- **Charlotte Heather, Agribusiness Training Ltd:** Tutor Hubs – A Spotlight on Quality and Consistency – \$3,000
- **Christine Herzog, Auckland Workers' Educational Association:** Managing resistance to challenging ideas – \$5,000
- **Dr Heather Kavan, Massey University:** Using film to teach communication concepts – \$5,000
- **Associate Professor Pare Keiha, AUT University:** The teaching and learning of te reo Māori using digital technology – \$5,000
- **Sergiy Klymchuk, AUT University:** Enhancing student's critical thinking skills and conceptual understanding in undergraduate mathematics through counter-examples – \$3,000
- **Adrian McDonald, University of Canterbury:** Using online and classroom debates to enhance learning engagement and outcomes – \$3,000
- **Nicholas McGuigan, Lincoln University:** Study TXT – \$3,000
- **Dr Sharon McKenzie Stevens, Massey University:** Information maps: supporting students throughout their research and writing process – \$3,000
- **Rotu Mihaka, Te Tara Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association:** Waiata Tamariki to support all practitioners within the early childhood sector – \$3,000
- **Billy O'Steen, University of Canterbury:** Enhancing student learning through feedback, formative evaluation, and self-assessment – \$4,612.50
- **Nina Pelling, Unitec:** Kaupapa Māori architectural education – \$4,162.50
- **Nuddy Pillay, Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT):** The development of a collaborative multi-media interactive teaching/learning resource – \$5,000
- **Tracy Riley, Massey University:** Viewing giftedness through different lenses – \$2,105
- **Catherine Ross, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand:** Facilitated online study skills workshops for first year students – \$5,000
- **Dr Khyla Russell, Otago Polytechnic:** Using computer gaming technology to record oral histories – \$4,981.87
- **Kevin Stewart, Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec):** Using stories in human science lectures to demonstrate relevance – \$3,000
- **Dorothy Thwaite, National Association of ESOL Home Tutors:** Innovation pilots to support quality of services – \$2,000
- **Leo Vanhanen, Lincoln University:** An interactive system to gather, share and disseminate biochemistry laboratory class information, raw data and results – \$5,000
- **Valerie Weir, YMCA Education Centre:** Working with young people with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other learning disorders – \$3,000
- **Marjolein Wesseling, Samala Robinson Academy:** The effect of using a set day of the week for catch up classes – \$2,596.15
- **David Whyte, Zestos:** An innovative way of conveying written communication skills to science and engineering students – \$3,000

For more detail please go to: [www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/good-practice-publication-grants](http://www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/good-practice-publication-grants)

### Conference sponsorship 2009

Ako Aotearoa is delighted to support a number of tertiary organisations with their conferences and events during 2009.

Full details of our sponsorship programme are available on the Ako Aotearoa section of our website.

The Upcoming Events sidebar of the homepage also provides information on these and other diarised events.



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