

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



Tui Ah Loo
Chair
Te Rūnanga o Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka
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Ref: CH1500

Dear Tui

Thank you for your letter of 18 January 2020, in which you raise serious concerns on behalf of members of Te Rūnanga o Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka and Te Roopu Mataara, regarding the governance and management restructure of Unitec that has resulted in the appointment of a single chief executive and consolidated management team.

I appreciate and sympathize with the concerns you have raised in your letter. As you point out, Unitec has made significant progress in recent years on the back of a culture of transparency, communication, partnership and a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as well as by putting learners and the community at its centre.

Indeed, these are similar to the expectations that I have challenged Te Pūkenga to deliver on. My formal Letter of Expectations requires Te Pūkenga to demonstrate genuine commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the principles that underpin the relationship between the Crown and Māori. This is more than consultation with Māori. It is partnering effectively with Māori, ensuring Māori are actively engaged and able to participate in decision-making, and interrogating governance and leadership decisions for their ability to transform the status quo and deliver equitable outcomes for Māori. Similarly, Te Pūkenga has the same expectations of its subsidiaries during the transition phase through to December 2022.

Te Pūkenga must give effect to its Charter, as set out in the Education and Training Act 2020. This states that Te Pūkenga must operate in a way that allows it to reflect Māori-Crown partnerships in order to:

- ensure that its governance, management, and operations give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi; and
- recognise that Māori are key actors in regional social, environmental, and economic development; and
- respond to the needs of and improve outcomes for Māori learners, whanau, hapū and iwi, and employers.

Finally, my Letter of Expectations also requires Te Pūkenga more widely to work collaboratively, collectively and inclusively through partnerships and to ensure all stakeholders are valued, trusted and included in decision-making. Room must be made in the decision-making process for stakeholder views to be properly taken into account.

Based on your letter, it is evident that both my expectations and your expectations have not been delivered on. I have made it clear to the Chair of Te Pūkenga, who is copied in to this letter, that I expect Te Pūkenga and its subsidiaries to fully give effect to its Charter and my Letter of Expectations, and these must drive how Te Pūkenga operates and makes decisions on a day-to-day basis. As Te Pūkenga sets about building and transitioning to its new operating model there will many new ways of delivering in the vocational education and training sector.

As the Minister of Education, it is not appropriate for me to intervene in Unitec's operational matters, including staffing decisions. However, while the subsidiaries and Te Pūkenga, as the parent organisation of the 16 subsidiaries, have the operational independence to make decisions on staff as well as how it organises and runs its network, Te Pūkenga is fully accountable to me as Minister.

More specifically, it is my expectation that iwi leaders and Te Rūnanga o Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka are involved in any major decisions made at Unitec.

Thank you again for your letter. I sincerely hope that these issues can be addressed, and Te Rūnanga o Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka can partner with Unitec and Te Pūkenga to work collaboratively on delivering a vocational education system that delivers for students, employers, iwi and New Zealand as a whole.

Yours sincerely



Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

cc Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education
 Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education
 Hon Jacinda Ardern – Member of Parliament for Mt Albert
 Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission
 Murray Strong, Chair, Te Pūkenga
 Stephen Town, Chief Executive, Te Pūkenga
 Peter Winder, Chair, Unitec New Zealand Limited