

The development of wananga: Politics and vision

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I shall be discussing the development of the newest Crown tertiary institution to enter the educational landscape and focus on a number of issues such as the special character of Wananga, the nature of the whare Wananga in place now, where the idea of ahuatanga Maori came from, the special case of Te Wananga O Raukawa and some of the political issues which hamper effective planning.

Introduction

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The Education Act 1989 introduced some important reforms into the administration of education. This was the Act that established the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (Part XX), the Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA) (Part XXI), Private Training Establishments (PTEs) (Part XVII), Kura Kaupapa Maori (Section 155) and Wananga (Part XIV, Section 162). Under the heading 'Establishment of institutions', the following words appear:

(2) Subject to subsections (3) to (5) of this section, the Governor General may, by Order in Council made on the written recommendation of the Minister, establish a body as a college of education, a polytechnic, a university, or a wananga, as the Governor-General considers appropriate (Education Act 8162.82).

This statement introduced the wananga as a new tertiary institution and grouped it with a college of education, a polytechnic and a university. The Minister of Education is given the power to recommend to the Governor-General that a wananga be established.

Subsections (3) to (5) spelled out some conditions that had to be met before an institution could be registered as a Crown tertiary institution, under this Act. These are:

a) The Qualifications Authority advised the Minister 'on the matter' and time had to be allowed for this to happen.

In practical terms a panel of experts selected by NZQA meet the organisation applying and conduct what may be described as a due diligence enquiry of the institution. It is clear then that the NZQA has an important part to play in any application for wananga status.

b) The Minister had to consult 'such institutions, organisations representing institutions, and other relevant bodies, as the Minister considers appropriate' (S 1 62.S(3)(b)).

This means that before a body is registered other like bodies are consulted for their views, objections or support as the case maybe.

1. Tertiary institutions in the list were required to 'have one or more' of the following characteristics:

- They are primarily concerned with more advanced learning, the principal aim being to develop intellectual independence.
- Their research and teaching are closely interdependent and most of their teaching is done by people who are active in advancing knowledge.
- They meet international standards of research and teaching.
- They are a repository of knowledge and expertise.
- They accept a role as critic and conscience of society.

The next part of the sub-section described each of the institutions and identified some defining feature of each described as follows:

First was a college of education which was:

A college of education is characterised by teaching and research required for the pre-school, compulsory and post-compulsory sectors of education, and for associated social and educational service roles.

Then a polytechnic was described as:

A polytechnic is characterised by a wide diversity of continuing education, including vocational training, that contributes to the maintenance, advancement, and dissemination of knowledge and expertise and promotes community learning, and by research, particularly applied and technological research, that aids development.

A university, it read:

is characterised by a wide diversity of teaching and research, especially at a higher level, that maintains, advances, disseminates, and assists the application of knowledge, develops intellectual independence, and promotes community learning.

You who are here today can be the judge as to whether your institution meets this characterisation and description of what it is required to do.

The important description for the purpose of this talk is that which describes a wananga. This is how it is defined in the Act:

A wananga is characterised by teaching and research that maintains, advances, and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding *ahuatanga Maori* (Maori tradition) according to *tikanga Maori* (Maori custom).

According to this description a wananga appears to be very similar to a university and shares several characteristic features with it. For example, both are concerned with teaching and research, with developing intellectual independence and both accept a role as critic and conscience of society.

It is the task of NZQA to report on whether the group applying for wananga status has developed an institution which complies with the Act. There is a process to follow and there are many authorities to please along the way. The Ministry of Education and the NZQA are powerful players who take their role quite seriously.

I return now to the definition of wananga. While I have noted similarities with universities, there are significant differences which are signaled by the inclusion of four Maori words, *ahuatanga Maori*

and *tikanga Maori*. Wananga are charged to assist 'in the application of knowledge regarding *ahuatanga Maori* (Maori tradition) according to *tikanga Maori* (Maori custom).'

No other tertiary institution is charged with this task of applying *ahuatanga Maori* and *tikanga Maori* to its work. The inclusion of these words in the Education Act 1989, is in my view a stroke of genius. It is doubtful that such words could be included in a similar Act under the present Government. They have great difficulty including the Treaty of Waitangi in any Act and that term includes only one Maori word.

One can immediately ask the question as to what these Maori words mean? *Ahuatanga Maori* is translated as Maori tradition? What is the Act referring to here? Similarly, *tikanga Maori* is translated as Maori custom but which particular customs are meant here? These concept terms are very general and open to a range of interpretations. Because this is the case I believe they are very useful concepts, especially in assisting each Wananga define its unique characteristics. Or in all of them working together to attempt to agree on the general characteristic of wananga as they exist. As it happens each is different.

There are three Wananga established under the 1989 Education Act:

Te Wananga O Aotearoa, 1993.

Te Wananga O Raukawa, 1993.

Te Whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi, 1997.

There is a long history to how each institution became a Wananga and not one their leaders would say that the process of being registered and finally funded by the Ministry of Education was an easy matter. But I wish to leave this aspect of Wananga development to the side for the moment and focus instead on what they have achieved.

Bulk funding 1998

The following table shows the EFTS allocations to each wananga and indicates the progress being made in attracting students.

Wananga	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Actual
Aotearoa	64	200	336	420	450	484	820
Raukawa		81	137	171	244	284	460
Awanuiarangi					161	253	260
	64	281	473	591	855	1,021	

Figure 1: Bulk Funded EFTS Places

When translated into money which the Ministry of Education pays out to wananga one can see that the total package is growing year by year and this might be one reason why the Ministry may not be keen to see too many Wananga established. The basis of funding is the same for all Crown tertiary institutions.

Wananga	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Aotearoa	366,563	1,658,163	2,552,193	2,751,573	2,973,400	3,261,608
Raukawa		513,554	847,224	1,069,230	1,562,199	1,834,876
Awanuiarangi					1,216,742	1,788,395
	366,563	2,169,717	3,399,417	3,820,603	5,752,341	6,684,879

Figure 2: Bulk EFTS Funding (GST inclusive)

Within a short time the three Wananga have introduced more than 2000 Maori funded students into tertiary education and several hundred unfunded students (Figure 1). By being in place opportunities have been provided by Wananga for Maori to participate in education programmes delivered in a Maori friendly environment. These are students who may not have attended any other tertiary institution.

Wananga policy

It may come as a complete surprise to you, to learn that the Government has no wananga policy, nor has the Ministry of Education. But there are three wananga in existence today and though the three have been on the educational landscape for a few years now Government officials are still not sure what wananga stand for, what they do and how they fit into the nation's education system.

There is no Government policy at present relating to how many wananga should be established, where they should be established, where they should be established, how big they should be, and even as to what constitutes a wananga. However, there are several applicants waiting to be admitted to the status of wananga. But there appears to be no great enthusiasm in the Ministry to add more wananga to the three already in existence. So for the moment, because there is no policy, no more wananga are being registered.

Empowering Iwi

It should be noted that the 1989 Act which empowered Maori organisations to establish a tertiary institution that is bound to include ahuatanga Maori and tikanga Maori in its curriculum and in its practices, is a wonderful and positive idea. It enables Maori to become providers of knowledge and teachers of matauranga Maori (Maori knowledge) to and for Maori. Mainstream people often fail to understand the importance of this idea and its significance to Maori. It is an empowering and liberating mechanism and despite all the difficulties of compliance with Ministry of Education and NZQA regulations, wananga are seen to be very desirable and necessary.

The prime object or prime model

But where did this concept come from? The Act was passed in 1989. In the literature on art history there exists the idea of a prime object that was enunciated by George Kubler in his book *The Shape of Time*. This is a benchmark creation, an exciting invention, an object that becomes a model and provides inspiration for years afterwards. Such an example, is the carved meeting house, Te Hau ki Turanga at Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, which is still studied and admired by the artists of today. Was there a prime object for Wananga? The answer is yes there was.

According to Turoa Royal, chairman of the Council (Te Komiti Whakahaere) of Te Wananga O Raukawa, the idea of establishing a wananga was discussed by the Raukawa Trustees representing Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Toa and Te Ati Awa in April 1981. The Trustees appointed a Working Party consisting of Professor Whatarangi Winiata, Jim McGregor, a retired Secondary School Principal and Whata Davis, chairman of the Trustees, to explore the idea. The Working Party conducted a survey of what the Marae Committees and the hapu regarded as their priority needs.

The survey pointed to a universal need among the three iwi for knowledge in tikanga Maori and expertise in te reo Maori. Cultural revival and human development were identified as high priorities. Information gathered in the survey set a direction for the new tertiary level institution which the Trustees decided to establish. The decision came after weeks of debate and discussion about what the institution should be called. The Raukawa Trustees set up the first wananga in the early 1980s and it became a prime object and a model that very definitely became an inspiration for others.

Establishing the three Wananga

There is quite a story to tell about how Te Wananga O Raukawa was established in Otaki by the three iwi, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Toa and Te Ati Awa. That emerged well before the passing of the Education Act, 1989. In fact although it was the prime object Te Wananga O Raukawa did not register under that Act until 1993 and was not funded under the Ministry's EFTS system until 1994. Thus the prime object for Wananga was established at Otaki in the early 1980s by the Raukawa Trustees. The Trustees also established the name wananga so that people would not confuse this new institution with the traditional 'whare wananga' which the universities are using in Maori translations of their names.

There is a different background altogether to the establishment of Te Wananga o Aotearoa at Te Awamutu. That organisation had also been in place for some years before applying for registration as a Wananga. It was called Te Kuratini O Nga Waka which indicated that the founders saw it then as being closer to a polytechnic than to a university and it looked at employment issues. Te Wananga o Aotearoa was actually the first to be registered under the 1989 Act and it is the fastest growing of the three as it combines both polytechnic and university type programmes. It was registered in 1993.

The third wananga began in 1991 as an iwi development initiative. It was established by the Runanga O Ngati Awa at Whakatane as a PTE. Funding came from the Ministry of Education through a conduct system of working with other tertiary institutions: Waikato University, Waiariki Polytechnic and the Auckland College of Education. The founders of Te Whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi chose to use the term 'whare wananga' from its inception. That was partly because it was seen as a university type institution very much like the prime model. The whare Wananga was established to lift educational standards within the tribes of Mataatua. It was later that Te Whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi took on teacher training as one of its major offerings, so that it is now partly a College of Education. It is a registered teacher training institution. It was not formally registered under the Education Act 1989 until the 1st January 1997 after numerous letters, Sunday meetings, much lobbying and many visits to Wellington. The difficulty was the lack of a clear government policy.

Legislating for Wananga

Having a prime object or prime model in place inspired officials of the Ministry of Education and others to include this new idea into the package of other new ideas that excited the reformers of the period, when David Lange and Phil Goff were Ministers of Education. This was the time of *Tomorrows Schools* 1988, the *Picot Report* 1988, *Learning For Life 1* and *Learning For Life 2*, and

Curriculum Reviews 1986 & 1987. It was an exciting time for educators and there was some enthusiasm for reform.

But who were the movers and designers, the thinkers and the legal people who shaped the legislation? Wiremu Kaa was Director of Maori Education and head of the Maori Unit within the Ministry of Education at the time. He was one of the main thinkers. He is now a lecturer in Maori Studies at Victoria University. John Tapiata had a part to play as did Awi Riddel. Both are well known to Maori educators. Monte Ohia also had some influence on the legislation. Monte Ohia was for a time in the NZQA and he was a helpful advocate for the three Wananga when they were going through the due diligence phase. He is now head of the Maori Education Unit at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. Lyall Perris, an official in the Ministry and Maris O'Rourke, Secretary for Education, were two who assisted in preparing the legislation.

I have attempted to discover who assisted in defining a wananga and who thought of adding the concept of *ahuatanga Maori* and *tikanga Maori* to the description. Wiremu Kaa has confirmed that he was the person who included the concept of *ahuatanga Maori* because terms such as *kaupapa Maori* and *tikanga Maori* were being over used. *Kaupapa Maori* had become inextricably associated with *Kura Kaupapa Maori Schools* (Part XII, *SI 55*), so that it was best not to use this term again within the same Act, to characterise wananga. Wiremu Kaa deliberately sought a more general term to replace *kaupapa Maori*, thus emerged the concept of *ahuatanga Maori* which has now become a critical concept in defining the special character of a wananga.

What is *ahuatanga maori* and *tikanga Maori*

The two concepts of *tikanga Maori* and *ahuatanga Maori* give cause for much discussion as people endeavour to understand them. They are different concepts and the most important aspect about them is that they empower Maori to be innovative in their teaching methods, to incorporate Maori perspectives without guilt, to accept the challenge of teaching *te reo Maori* and *tikanga Maori*, to find ways of building *tikanga Maori* and *tikanga Maori* into all of the programmes taught at a wananga, and to accept without qualification that a wananga has to provide the best education it is able to give because of *tikanga Maori*, and because we owe this to our people.

Each of the wananga have attempted to define the unique features of their institution and representatives from all three have met to try and design a profile of today's Wananga. Here is a list of features:

1. A wananga is a Maori tertiary institution of the same order as colleges of education, polytechnics and universities.
2. *Matauranga Maori* is a dominant part of the curriculum of a wananga but is not restricted to it.
3. *Te Reo Maori* and *Tikanga Maori* are given primary importance in Wananga.
4. Wananga are primarily concerned with teaching and research and with the advancement of knowledge.
5. Wananga are exponents and guardians of *ahuatanga Maori* and *tikanga Maori*.
6. Wananga are *iwi* based and their governing Councils reflect this fact. They are accountable to *iwi* and well as to the Minister of Education.
7. Wananga is where *matauranga Maori* is validated by Maori for Maori.
8. Wananga believe in a philosophy of excellence not only with respect to *ahuatanga Maori* and *tikanga Maori* but to all aspects of their work.
9. Wananga accept a role as a critic not only of Maori society but also of society as a whole.

10. Wananga accept a responsibility in helping to lift educational standards in Maori communities.
11. Wananga position themselves within the networks of Indigenous tertiary institutions across the world or with institutions which have large student populations of Indigenous Peoples.
12. Wananga develop among their students confidence in their culture, pride in being Maori, independence in their thinking, and empower them to lead useful lives wherever they are and whatever occupation they take up.

Ahuatanga Maori is embodied in these twelve features. It signals a commitment to Maori education to Maori people and to Maori culture. Ahuatanga Maori is a pervasive quality that underpins the culture of the institution. All three wananga acknowledge a clear commitment to te reo Maori and tikanga Maori. All of the wananga have a strong Maori presence about them because the student and staff bodies are almost completely Maori. They also sound Maori.

A Wananga is a Wananga?

One of the difficulties for Government planners could be that three Wananga established so far are very different in the programmes they offer, in styles of operation, and in emphasis. They could be characterised this way: one is more like a university, one is more like polytechnic and one is more like a college of education. But this is an oversimplification.

Te Wananga O Raukawa offers degree programmes up to Masters level and in a variety of fields. It specialises in running short te reo immersion courses that are well patronised by students from all over Aotearoa. It is also involved in the reo and tikanga aspects of teacher training.

Te Wananga O Aotearoa offers a range of Polytechnic type courses and offers some ETSA funded programmes. It specialises in Maori fine arts and performing arts. Through its partnership with Awanuiarangi it is involved in teacher training both in Hamilton and in Auckland. It is moving towards degree programmes.

Te whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi began with diploma and degree programmes and offers programmes at Masters level. It specialises in Indigenous Studies and will be introducing a degree in Environment Studies. It is also heavily involved in teacher training and its programmes are offered at Whakatane and Te Kaha and through Aotearoa at Hamilton and Auckland.

All Wananga offer programmes in te reo and tikanga but at this stage only Raukawa and Awanuiarangi take this to Masters level. The latter two Wananga are both planning to move in to Doctoral level programmes in the near future.

The reasons for the diversity of approach are historical as well as planned. The Raukawa Model of aiming at university level programmes is followed by two of the Wananga. The Aotearoa Model is different and focuses on a mass client base. The Awanuiarangi Model is a combination of university and college of education, which is quite common in the United States.

The three Wananga have been launched at a time when there is fierce competition for students, limited Government funding, rising student fees, increasing economic problems for Maori, bad socio-economic statistics for Maori, high unemployment for Maori, and an increasing need for Maori to gain tertiary level qualifications. The Wananga is a comparatively new player in this environment.

The case for capital funding

In establishing Wananga one of the great difficulties experienced in all three cases has been the lack of capital funding in the funding policies of the Ministry. Capital funding is required in order to provide good facilities for the task of providing sound tertiary education. The Pakeha institutions,

the Colleges of Education, the Polytechnics and Universities were all given substantial government funding to allow them to become adequately established. Some have been back for a second lot of funding. All of the Universities have large buildings and well-equipped libraries that were funded by the Government. The National Government changed the policy at the time when Wananga were being established, so none have received proper establishment funding. Wananga have been pressing the Ministry of Education to provide such funding but there is continuing resistance from Treasury and from Cabinet.

Recently, the three Wananga organised a protest in front of Parliament during an extremely wet day. It is most unusual for the three Wananga to do this but some political action was necessary to bring about a change in a policy that prejudiced Wananga and on the face of it, appeared to be absolutely unfair to Maori. In addition a claim was filed with the Waitangi Tribunal to grant urgency to the plight of the Wananga. A conference was called by the Waitangi Tribunal on 30 June 1998 to hear an application for an urgent hearing. The claim WAI 718 was filed 11 May 1998 by Rongo Herehere Wetere and others. On the 23rd July 1998 Judge R. R. Kearney issued directions from the Waitangi Tribunal which among other things said.

The Tribunal having carefully considered all the material placed before it finds that the application for urgency has been made out. The application is therefore granted.

The three Wananga are thus engaged in preparing their evidence for a hearing, which will be heard within the next few weeks.

Matters of unfairness

The Wananga are handicapped for lack of capital funding. Each has had to provide its own facilities the best way it could and always in a context of shortage of funds so that proper facilities for staff and students could not be provided adequately, staff could not always be paid a fair wage, and teaching spaces could not be provided when needed. There is a danger of Wananga failing at a time when they are needed to help bridge the gap in education which the recent Te Puni Kokiri Report highlighted. There are echoes of the Maori School system emerging here. Maori communities were required to provide the land for the school and the Government paid for the buildings. It is a sort of Treaty of Waitangi model, which was applied in establishing Maori schools.

In the case of Wananga the iwi is required not only to supply the land but also the buildings and the facilities, as in the example of Te Wananga O Raukawa and Te Wananga O Aotearoa. A wanuiarangi has had to pay for its buildings and facilities out of its EFTS funding but it has always been behind the needs of the students and the staff. Eventually the institution caught up with the classroom needs of its main campus but in doing so got into some financial difficulties. Nowadays it is very bad for a tertiary institution to go into deficit.

It is not clear whether some devious mind in Treasury revived the Treaty of Waitangi partnership model for funding Wananga or whether there was some more innocent motivation for denying capital establishment funding for Maori. The Minister claims that the present regime of funding is fair to Wananga and that there is a capital funding component in the EFTS funding but as the value of an EFT diminishes there is actually no capital component left. Small and new institutions suffer most from the present policies.

I am quietly confident that the Wananga will win their case before the Waitangi Tribunal.

Towards a Wananga policy

The final matter I wish to discuss is Wananga Policy. It might be helpful to offer some ideas. The first point is that the funding regime should be fixed and corrected before any new wananga are admitted. Some certainty in capital establishment funding is necessary. The next point is to identify

some principles and priorities. Should Wananga be regional? If so, which regions? Or should the principle be that Wananga are built near centres of large Maori populations. In which case these population centres are identified. Should Wananga be established in the large cities where there are big Maori populations or in provincial areas which lack tertiary facilities. Is the aim to provide first chance opportunities for the communities who do not have any tertiary institution? Or should the aim be to provide even more choices for the city dwellers? For example, the present three Wananga were established in smaller towns where there were no tertiary institutions: Otaki, Te Awamutu and Whakatane. Should that be the policy? Or should it be one of treating each case on its merits?

He piko he Wananga (at every bend a Wananga)

The next question is to determine how many Wananga are required to cover the country adequately. Obviously no Government will not agree to every iwi establishing a Wananga which will be the responsibility of the Crown. The Government would prefer PTEs which belong to the iwi or the community. There are already hundreds of them in existence and they better fit the Treaty of Waitangi Partnership Model mentioned earlier. Whatever the Government intentions one can be sure that there will be a cap on how many Wananga are allowed to be established. The applicants waiting for the Minister's recommendation are Waipareira, Ngati Porou, Ngati Kahungunu, Te Taitokerau. There may be others that I am - not aware of. If these are established there will be seven Wananga at which point a Government might well call a halt. They might actually want to stop at three.

Conclusion

Wananga are an exciting intervention into the education system. It allows Maori to participate as a provider of education at the highest levels. At the same time the context of learning is changed where Maori provide for themselves. They run the organisation, they do the lecturing and the research, in which the students learn in an environment they like, and they are enriched. Excellence remains an important challenge for all to aspire to. There is little or no cultural alienation and no big issues about identity. The students know who they are. There is an immediate communication with the iwi through the students who are often the parents and sometimes the grandparents. Information flows back and forth. The present Wananga are iwi based and they serve to inform, to uplift, to connect with the wider world, to liberate the minds and seek new goals, to excite the imagination, to enquire, to read, to search, learn their own history, and hopefully get a job afterwards.

As well as being an educational and cultural institution the Wananga is also an enterprise and an industry which provides opportunities for jobs in secretarial tasks, managerial work, financial matters, cleaners, menders, providers of technology, builders of facilities, electricians, plumbers, suppliers of paper, books, pens, markers, and sundry other things. There are librarians, researchers, and lecturers. They do all of these things for the students. When the students are present the institution is a hive of activity. It is alive and ahuatanga Maori is everywhere. Without them there is no Wananga and no reason for tikanga Maori.