



# JUNE 2020 REPORT

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*Grounded in Papatūānuku, Te Rito Toi is at the centre and soul of healing, for even amongst the chaos of seasonal transitions, elemental effects and changes, Te Rito remains strong as the heart of the kōrari (harakeke)*

## **Executive Summary**

Te Rito Toi, an online resource to support teachers as they returned to classrooms was launched on April 24 2020. The resource was the result of a partnership led by the University of Auckland alongside the NZ Principals' Federation, NZEI, The Sir John Kirwan Foundation and part funded by the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO. In the first month of it being online over 37,000 teachers accessed the site with over 250,000 page views. Webinars about the use of the arts and a focus on wellbeing attracted over 30,000 teachers in Australia and New Zealand. As a result, the arts and wellbeing became the focus for many students as they returned to school in New Zealand and Australia. A global push for this approach was picked up by UNESCO and the World Alliance of Arts Educators.

## **Te Rito Toi**

The rito, is the seedling that sits at the centre of the harakeke bush. If hurt the seedling and then the plant dies. The rito is kept safe by the leaves that surround it. Te Rito Toi recognises that the seed of the arts that start when we are young need to be protected and that the arts also protect and help nourish the young.

At a time of crisis, Te Rito Toi reminds us of the power of metaphor, of the grace and beauty to be found in understandings that derive from the natural world and from te ao Maori. We are indebted to Michael Steedman, Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei, Ngāti Whātua, Te Uri o Hau, Kaiarataki at the University of Auckland for gifting the project this poetic and beautiful name that is now known around New Zealand and the world.

At the heart of Te Rito Toi is the understanding that schools have a role not just in preparing students for the future, they also need to help them make sense of the present.

After disasters and crises, schools must as a first priority help learners safely explore the changed world in which they live. The stories, concerns and questions children have need to be addressed in classrooms. Teachers should lead learners to engage with possibility and to reimagine a better world. Based on international research that confirms the central role of the arts in meaning, making and the renewing of hope, Te Rito Toi positions the arts at the centre of children’s return to schooling after disasters and crises.



Te Rito Toi is built on research and engagement by University of Auckland scholars with schools post-disaster in diverse settings including Christchurch post-earthquake and post-terror attack, Mexico City post-earthquake and in Australia earlier this year following the bushfires.

Research has identified that when classrooms reopen following or during ongoing crisis teachers need research-informed support to manage the stories, questions and issues children inevitably bring to their classrooms during or post-disaster. Therefore, Te Rito Toi focused on the classroom pedagogies most appropriate when schools return after crisis. In other words, what teachers should do with their children in their classrooms. Te Rito Toi’s key objective was to provide clarity and reassurance with research

informed processes for teachers to make sure the return to school was a positive and life affirming experience for children.

The project privileged arts-based pedagogies as ways for teachers to safely and appropriately reconnect students to learning. The online support included arts based lesson plans, links to useful picture books ( known to be particularly useful in these situations), advice for managing stories and questions and advice for teachers and principals for general management.

A team of writers was led by Professor Peter O'Connor. A series of lesson plans focusing on anxiety was supported by the Sir John Kirwan Foundation and written by Dr Darren Powell. A series of nga toi lessons was provided by The Poutokomanawa Project.



Arts education experts, Professor Julie Dunn and Professor John O'Toole from Australia adapted materials to provide rich sophisticated drama lessons. Ginnie Thorner who led the Teaspoon of Light Theatre in education company in

Christchurch after the earthquakes provided materials that focused on making sense of social distancing and Associate Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh provided a poetry lesson. These resources were the first substantial curriculum resources in the arts and mental health for Primary schools in at least fifteen years. Professor Carol Mutch, based on extensive research in schools post-disaster, provided detailed advice for teachers and principals and Briar O'Connor used her PhD studies to provide advice around family violence and child abuse post-COVID-19.

Since Te Rito Toi's launch on April 24 thousands of New Zealand teachers have focused on the arts and the health and wellbeing of students as classrooms have reopened. Over 270,000 page views of the online resource and nearly half of all Primary teachers in New Zealand visiting the site has seen a proliferation of the arts in New Zealand schools at a time

when they are most needed. The overwhelming uptake in the resource led Perry Rush, President of the NZ Principal's Federation, to [call on the Ministry of Education to rebuild the arts in schools](#). The article attracted both national and international interest and support.

Countries around the world have looked at similar approaches as 1.2 billion children return to schools after lockdowns. Canadian, Hong Kong and Australian educators are looking at using local expertise to build their approaches. Te Rito Toi has been viewed and accessed by people in 112 countries around the world. This global push for a return to classrooms through the arts saw Te Rito Toi highlighted by UNESCO and the World Alliance of Arts Educators in a webinar held on May 20. [Watch the webinar here](#).



### **Timeline of Project**

- Commencement of project April 1 2020
- Construction of website and collation of resources April 1- April 23
- All work for site finished April 23 2020
- Website live to public / all audiences April 24 2020
- Promotion of the website undertaken by University of Auckland, New Zealand, Principals Federation, NZEI, Sir John Kirwan Foundation April 24 2020
- Media and promotion of the website continues. Promotion from: Te Hiku Radio, Scoop Education, Mantle of the Expert, Education HQ, School News NZ, UNESCO, Auckland Council, NZ Principals Federation, Ministry of Education, TV Three News, Primary English Teaching Association Australia, New Zealand Herald, Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI), Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, World Alliance for Arts Education, NZEI, TVNZ, Teachers'

Refresher Course Committee, Education Gazette, The University of Auckland, Sir John Kirwan Foundation April 25 – PRESENT

### **Partners in the Project**

- The University of Auckland
- The Chartwell Trust
- New Zealand Principals' Federation
- NZEI Te Riu Roa, New Zealand Educational Institute
- Sir John Kirwan Foundation
- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Arts Educators
- Drama New Zealand
- Music Education New Zealand Aotearoa, MENZA
- Dance Subject Association of New Zealand, DSANZ

### **Writing Team**

- Professor Peter O'Connor, The University of Auckland
- Professor Carol Mutch, The University of Auckland
- Professor Julie Dunn, School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University
- Professor John O'Toole, The University of Melbourne
- Associate Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh, The University of Auckland
- Priya Gain, Makaira Waugh, Rawiri Hindle and Bert Van Dijk – The Poutokomanawa Project
- Ginnie Thorner, Specialist Dance and Drama Teacher, Christchurch
- Dr Darren Powell, The University of Auckland
- Briar O'Connor, The University of Auckland

### **Design Team**

- Tema Kwan, Marae Tech Ltd
- Nikora Ngaropo Motion and Design
- Jenny Keate Ltd

- Alex Harvey, The University of Auckland

### Website Analytic Details

- 24 April 2020 (website release day)
  - o 18,268 page views, 2,953 users
  - o 3,252 sessions
  - o 93.87% (2,772) NZ user
- 28 April 2020
  - o 49,412 page views, 7,215 users
  - o 8,580 sessions
  - o 91.84% (6,607) NZ user
- 8 May 2020
  - o 104,689 page views, 17,694 users
  - o 24,075 sessions
  - o 90.96% (16,146) NZ user
- 15 May 2020
  - o 203,891 page views, 31,187 users
  - o 48,316 sessions
  - o 89.24% (27,863) NZ user
- 22 May 2020
  - o 246,379 page views, 37,410 users
  - o 60,486 sessions
  - o 81.05% (30,305) NZ user
- 29 May 2020
  - o 263,894 page views, 40,454 users
  - o 66,213 sessions
  - o 77.01% (31,215) NZ user
- 5 June 2020
  - o 272,731 page views, 42,430 users
  - o 69,402 sessions
  - o 74.18% (31,470) NZ user
- 12 June 2020
  - o 277,029 page views, 43,052 users
  - o 71,038 sessions
  - o 73.11% (31,667) NZ user



### Media and Comms

- Te Hiku Radio Interview April 24 2020

<https://tehiku.nz/te-hiku-radio/taumatahanga/12396/te-rito-toi-lessons-and-activities-for-teachers>

- Scoop Education, “Creative Resource All Ready To Go For Schools Next Week” April 24 2020  
<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED2004/S00053/creative-resource-all-ready-to-go-for-schools-next-week.htm>
- Mantle of the Expert 26 April 2020  
<https://mantleoftheexpert.co.nz/te-ritotoi/>
- Education HQ, “Creative arts-based resources ready for teachers as schools re-open”, April 28 2020  
<https://educationhq.com/news/te-rito-toi-providing-teachers-with-confidence-to-navigate-pandemic-issues-and-concerns-76367/>
- School News New Zealand, “Beautiful, creative resources ready for teachers as schools go back” April 28 2020  
<https://www.schoolnews.co.nz/2020/04/beautiful-creative-resources-ready-for-teachers-as-schools-go-back/>
- New Zealand National Commission (UNESCO) Facebook post promoting Te Rito Toi April 29 2020  
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/UNESCONZ/posts/>
- Speaker Series 1: Developing Resilience: people, places and spaces, “Connecting to Grief Through Creativity and Reimagining Play – For Young and Old”, Auckland Council, May 1 2020  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ8sssp2V2Q&feature=youtu.be>
- President’s Message, Issue 15, New Zealand Principals’ Federation 1 May 2020

<https://nzpf.schoolzineplus.com/news?nid=53>

- Learning from home, Ministry of Education New Zealand  
<https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/resources/te-rito-toi>
- TV Three News Piece, “The education tool addressing COVID-19 student anxiety” May 5 2020  
<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2020/05/the-education-tool-addressing-covid-19-student-anxiety.html>
- Primary English Teaching Association Australia Live Webinar, “Peter O’Connor on Te Rito Toi” May 6 2020  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEWtoyvtPwg>
- NZ Herald, “Covid19 coronavirus: Principals call for the arts to return to the classroom” May 9 2020  
[https://www.nzherald.co.nz/arts-literature/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=18&objectid=12330258&fbclid=IwAR2qVYXk6FSExsUit5B6zF6-mhBunodneWqqjcE37sFb3NWj7OPLhq2JmGE](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/arts-literature/news/article.cfm?c_id=18&objectid=12330258&fbclid=IwAR2qVYXk6FSExsUit5B6zF6-mhBunodneWqqjcE37sFb3NWj7OPLhq2JmGE)
- Literacy Online, Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) May 15 2020  
<https://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/News/Te-Rito-Toi>
- Australian Teacher Response Campaign Interview, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership May 21 2020  
<https://vimeo.com/422665615/2d1577adb3>
- World Alliance for Arts Education and UNESCO Webinar for International Arts Education Week, “Te Rito Toi: Returning to School After Traumatic and Life Changing Events” May 25 2020

<https://www.waae.online/te-rito-toi-returning-to-school-after-traumatic-and-life-changing-events.html>

- NZEI Te Riu Roa Webinar, “Te Rito Toi – support students in the return to school”  
<https://mylearning.nzei.org.nz/te-rito-toi/>
- TVNZ Evening News Piece, “Students’ wellbeing should be schools’ top focus after lockdown upheaval – education professor”  
<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/students-wellbeing-should-schools-top-focus-after-lockdown-upheaval-education-professor>
- Networks of Expertise Newsletter, Teachers’ Refresher Course Committee June 4 2020  
<https://mailchi.mp/b17fbf6c9bd0/test-4038177>
- Education Gazette, “Arts support innovation and wellbeing” June 11 2020  
<https://gazette.education.govt.nz/articles/arts-support-innovation-and-wellbeing/>
- New Zealand Principals’ Federation Magazine, “Arts in the time of COVID” June 17 2020

- [http://nzprincipal.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NZP\\_T2\\_2020-web\\_part-4.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0mEOTjpCkBZPd\\_34q1GITVSjUIkV-s9JdfOG5YUdSaX7tV3Let2YRfIOI](http://nzprincipal.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NZP_T2_2020-web_part-4.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0mEOTjpCkBZPd_34q1GITVSjUIkV-s9JdfOG5YUdSaX7tV3Let2YRfIOI)

