

Te Whāiti-nui-ā-toi Scholarship

Tēnā koe

The Te Whāiti-nui-ā-toi Scholarship scheme has played an important part in the development of Lindisfarne College since 1972, in providing educational opportunities for rangatahi Māori.

Through this scholarship, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ in partnership with Lindisfarne College, has been able to make a significant contribution towards the education of rangatahi Māori boys. In the early years, it provided an educational service to Māori people with whom the Church has been most closely associated - the Tuhoe people of the Eastern Bay of Plenty and Te Urewera. In the last 20 years, the scheme has broadened to provide support for young men from other iwi.

The scheme is named after the Presbyterian Church farm at Te Whāiti, situated on the Waikaremoana-Rotorua road, which was developed in 1937 from land made available by the Ngāi Tuhoe iwi. The farm was established to provide theoretical and practical training for Māori tamaiti tāne boys in the farming of their land and basic education. In the 1960s, the training school closed, but the land continued to be successfully farmed. The profits from the farming years of the late 1950s and early 1960s along with the wise investment of the money, enabled the establishment of the Te Whāiti trust. The trust was further enhanced by the proceeds from the sale of the farm in the early 1980s.

In 1972 the Church approached Lindisfarne College with a proposal for boys to attend the College under a scholarship for full boarding fees. This was enthusiastically accepted by the Rector, Mr Jim Pine, who worked alongside High Court Judge, Mr Rodney Gallen, (later Knighted as Sir Rodney Gallen) and the Te Whāiti-nui-ā-toi Scholarship was born, creating a strong bicultural partnership.

There have been many benefits of the scholarship for the boys involved and for the College itself. For the rangatahi Māori boys, especially in the early years of the scheme, came the inherent personal growth that pupils gain from a Christian-based education. The Te Whāiti boys became part of the Māori community of Heretaunga, Hastings and surrounding districts, combining with the Hastings Girls' High School Māori Group to represent Ngāti Kahungunu at various events and celebrations. The hosting of the visiting Māori Synod representatives at Lindisfarne College gave Te Whāiti scholars opportunities to engage with leading figures in the Māori community. They also had the opportunity to learn through the skill and expertise of a local kaumātua the art of Toi whakairo (Māori carving).

The establishment of kapa haka groups under the guidance of kaumātua gave all students at the College a chance to learn a repertoire of haka and kapa haka. Together with various waiata, these are performed on special occasions for the whole school community. Te Whaiti scholars also have an opportunity to visit the Māori Synod Marae at Ōhope each year, and to associate with Synod and Ngai Tuhoe elders and their families on the Marae.



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In the early days of the scholarship, the introduction of aspects of Māori culture gave the College community opportunities to engage with Te Ao Māori and these have been consolidated over the intervening years, often with Te Whāiti scholars taking leadership roles. Today the year begins with a Pōwhiri for all new students and staff. The College has an annual House haka competition, and waiata have been an important part of House music and chapel services. In 2012 several Te Whāiti students, with the support of kaumātua and te reo Māori teacher, Mr Reimana Johnson, composed a haka for the College and gifted it to the school as a leavers' gift. The first performance was at the end of year prize giving, and it was a special occasion for all concerned. To perform a haka that truly represents the various elements of Lindisfarne's culture is a moving experience for all students.

The official photo of the 1987 Te Whāiti-nui-ā-toi boys is mounted in the College dining hall. This was the year when the scheme was possibly at its height, and the photo depicts eighteen boys from Year 7 to Year 13. The huge majority have gone on to enjoy successful careers. There are three law degrees, one knighthood, five accounting degrees, two secondary school teachers and the others are in responsible leadership roles in business and administrative areas. Many played representative rugby and cricket in the Hawke's Bay region and two became All Blacks.

In recent years, reduced church funds have meant that the scholarship provides partial fees, this has been generously supplemented by Lindisfarne College. An increasing number of Māori boys have entered the College without the support of the scheme and in 2024, some 12% of the College were of Māori descent. The Kapa Haka group continues to flourish with a core of Te Whāiti students leading the way, and te reo Māori is available as a subject to all boys.

The Te Whāiti scheme has transformed the lives of many rangatahi Māori and, has produced successful and significant men of character. It has been a shining light illustrating what is possible when young men are given opportunity to flourish in an environment that brings out the best in them. Te Whāiti and its partnership with Lindisfarne College, stands as an example of what is possible.

Te Whāiti-nui-ā-toi

The Te Whāiti Scholarship relies on the generosity of the Presbyterian Church to make a difference to the lives of our young men. With additional funds, it can help more rangatahi Māori discover their potential. If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund, please contact the Rector at the College, email rector@lindisfarne.school.nz. Giving to the Scholarship Fund is a chance to leave a legacy and invest in the future of our nation.

Nāku noa



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