



# PRINCIPAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

THE MOST RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL ADVOCATE FOR NEW ZEALAND'S PRINCIPALS

Level 8 The Bayleys Building,  
36 Brandon Street  
Wellington NZ 6011

PO Box 25380  
Wellington 6140  
[nina.netherclift@nzpf.ac.nz](mailto:nina.netherclift@nzpf.ac.nz)



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### President's Message



Kia ora e te whānau

One of the privileges of being your National President is having the opportunity to connect to members and local associations throughout our beautiful country.

Over the past few weeks, I have been on the road almost constantly visiting some extraordinary folk.

The goal of the visits is to understand the context in which principals lead and hear first-hand the successes and struggles of principalship.

Last week, I was delighted to visit Aotea Great Barrier Island, accompanied by Liz Hawes, our Executive Officer, who was covering the visit for the New Zealand Principals' Magazine. The Island is home to three schools and while they are all distinctly different a common feature was that they connected their curriculum to the unique whenua and moana.

First stop was *Mulberry Grove School* in Tryphena, a school situated on the shores of Tryphena Bay. The principal, Ally Gibbs was a gracious host. I was thrilled to see her staffroom used by her students, who routinely popped in for a chat. One youngster was most distressed that a hole had formed in her favourite soft toy. In short measure, Ally had the needle and thread out and mended the toy, while continuing our

conversation about the learning support challenges of her young people, given the remote location of the Island.

Next, we travelled north one hour on the one laned road to *Kura o Okiwi*. Colin Griffiths, the principal, was on leave but we were well taken care of by the staff. The Okiwi whānau have a deep commitment to kaupapa Māori. We were engrossed by the stories of each student as they introduced themselves and told us about their families and the things they most loved to do. We were also stunned by the beautiful waharoa in the process of being carved for the school. The visit ended with a scheduled visit from Fisheries Officers who had come to educate the students on Fisheries regulations. However, every question asked of the Okiwi whānau was volleyed and returned with interest. They knew everything there was to know about catch limits and sizes for the different varieties of kaimoana, and had questions of their own about how to prevent debris entering their beautiful Bays! Impressive stuff.

The next day began at a café where we sipped coffee, watching dolphins frolicking in the water directly in front of us. *Kaitoke School* in Claris was our final stop. Principal Leo de Beurs introduced his fantastic students and I played drama games with them, discovering some sharp thinkers and keen actors. Two senior students joined us for morning tea and I got to hear about the difficult choices surrounding secondary school options. There is no physical secondary school on the Island so they either take the expensive option of Boarding School on the mainland or attend the Te Kura (Correspondence School) hub on the Island. Challenges with equity are alive and well in our rural, isolated and remote communities!

What a great privilege to have spent time in all three communities in this small slice of paradise. Special thanks to the principals and whānau of all three schools.

This week I had the pleasure of speaking to the Howick Primary Principals' Association in East Auckland. The breakfast meeting was a treat and my thanks go to the President Fintan Kelly from Pakuranga Heights School and to East Auckland colleagues for such an enthusiastic turnout and the opportunity to discuss the current and future work of NZPF.

Finally, I write to you from Nelson. I have just driven up from St Arnaud's in the Nelson Lakes where Hieke-Nelson Principals' Association have been holding their Annual conference.

In addition to the excellent professional speakers, a two-hour period was spent on Rotoiti in Waka Ama. The challenge of paddling in unison as a team was a salient reminder of our current challenge to be more joined up as principals on the issues that matter.

Whānau from Ngāti Apa honoured us with karakia and korero to start the day at Rotoiti and attended the Waka Ama later in the day. It was a privilege to experience the togetherness and camaraderie of the Hieke principals who remained relentlessly good-humoured despite the gentle rain that fell all day.

Any principal association beginning their conferences with piles of whitebait sarnies in Room 403 have their priorities right!

Maintaining energy, connection, and commitment to our professional and personal collegiality, within our local principal associations, is vital to our health and wellbeing.

Thank you to all the principals I have spoken with over the past few weeks. I have appreciated hearing your successes and the problems and issues you are grappling with. I can assure you that these conversations influence our future together. They inform my advocacy work in Wellington, on your behalf.

Let's keep finding the opportunities to meet together, to learn from each other and to simply just have fun.

We need more of it and with greater frequency.

Ngā manaakitanga

Perry Rush

[perry@nzpf.ac.nz](mailto:perry@nzpf.ac.nz)

## NZPF Notices



### Rural Principals' Groups - Grant Applications Closing Soon!

NZPF annually awards grants of up to \$1000 to assist local Rural Principals' Groups to run their own seminars and conferences. Applications need to be made now to fund your event in 2021.

For further information and an application form click [here](#). Applications close on 1 November.



### NZ Principal Magazine also Online

You and/or your team members can easily access the NZ Principal Magazines online, as an e-magazine or as a PDF. Additionally you can search for a previous issue, an article by title or by the author of the article. All magazines back to Term 1 2012 are available in this format. To view or search click [here](#).

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Rachel Whalley, VLN Primary School

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