

Adult Learners' Week

He Tangata Matauranga

8-14 September 2003

The Week is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) initiative designed to celebrate adult learners.

The aims of the Week are to:

- Celebrate the efforts, achievements and contributions of adult learners, educators and providers.
- Foster cooperative networks and pathways among those who share an interest in adult learning.
- Promote the importance of adult learning to the wider community.
- Encourage more adults to access learning opportunities.

A highlight of the Week will be the presentation of a range of Awards. The purpose of the Awards is to recognise and celebrate the full variety of contributors to adult learning, including the learners, educators and providers.

Adult Learners' Week He Tangata Matauranga is coordinated nationally by the Adult Learners' Week Network. It is primarily funded through the Tertiary Education Commission and also supported by the NZ Commission for UNESCO, National Resource Centre Trust, ACE Aotearoa and CLASS. The Week is also supported by corporate sponsorship including The Warehouse.

WAITAKERE ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION INC.

History of Waitakere Adult and Community Education Association (WACEA)

In 1987 a group of people working in adult and community met to discuss the need for a network that would provide a political voice for non-formal adult education in West Auckland and a forum for people to meet to discuss common educational issues.

Since then the organisation has met regularly to share knowledge and information and to organise educational activities, in particular International Adult Learners' Week. A typical meeting will be attended by people from a range of organisations from schools or tertiary institutions to community houses and the WEA.

The current organisation started as an informal network and later moved to become a branch of the NZ Association of Community and Continuing Education. As a result of changes to the structure and funding of adult and community education a new national body ACE Aoteroa has been formed. The Waitakere network has recently applied to become a constituent member and will subsequently change its name to Waitakere ACE Aotearoa.

AIMS:

WACEA recognises the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand and within this framework aims to:

- provide a political voice for West Auckland on adult and community education policy;
- encourage partnership between community providers and institutions;
- create an information and resource centre;
- support new/small informal groups;
- initiate research in adult education;
- overcome barriers to access;
- provide training for network members;
- provide a meeting place for people with an interest in adult and community education.

2003

After many years of neglect and under-resourcing Adult and Community Education is experiencing a time of positive change. The sector, now part of the new Tertiary Education Commission and is receiving greater Government recognition. Significant policy changes will hopefully lead to increased funding, more cooperative ways of working, a fairer distribution of resources and an emphasis on meeting the needs of the identified priority learning groups and learning needs.

ACE organisations in Waitakere City are well placed to take advantage of the new environment, to the benefit of adult and community education in Waitakere City.

SPEECH NOTES FOR MAYOR BOB HARVEY
FOR WEST AUCKLAND ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION

DOROTHY MGRAY

Distinguished guests

Kia ora,

Malo lelei

Dobro Dosli

I am delighted to be here this morning.

So much of Adult Education is about
reinventing yourself.

And I have to say I understand entirely how
difficult making that decision is.

For the first forty years of my working life I was
in advertising.

And that was a lot of fun. Running campaigns
for Fisher and Paykel, for the Labour Party, for
any number of good products.

But by the end of the eighties the culture of
advertising had changed.

Greed was good, and I wanted to get out of that.

And so I came to a point in my life when I had to make a decision, or it was going to be made for me.

Running a business that size is not good for your health.

And so I stopped.

Sold the business, and spent a lot of time at Karekare beach, swimming

What I needed was time to reflect. And in this world there is no let-up for people who need to regather themselves.

Not for me, not for you.

What everyone in this room has done is take the brave step of stopping what they are doing, and say, I am going to change my life.

Do something different.

And I won't sit still waiting for this new era in my life to just happen around me. I'm going to make it.

That takes determination. We have to take on new skills along the way.

Right at that moment, you need all the help you can get.

And that's where adult education steps in.

The new life that I ended up with was, as you have gathered, to be Mayor.

And I would have to say that at the moment we are only doing a reasonable job of supporting Adult Education.

Which is the crucial transition point in a life.

The most important support that a City can do to support this transition is in our libraries.

Which is why I can say we are only doing a reasonable job of supporting you so far.

But we are addressing this.

Between October this year and February next year we will be starting construction on three major libraries.

The first is Glen Eden Library, which will also have a fully integrated Citizens Advice Bureau in it.

What I want to see is a lot more academic course books in the reference and non fiction section to help research along.

We begin construction in 6 weeks time.

The second library is Henderson, and this facility will have a major research institution next to it.

We have gone into a formal partnership with UNITEC, and together we are investing over \$7 million dollars for a state of the art facility.

The collection will include many of the course materials for UNIETC courses.

We want to see a real synergy between the needs of the adult learner community and UNITEC, and the City's libraries.

The direction we are taking in supporting adult education can be clearly seen in the Massey library and leisure centre.

That facility is a coordinated café, gym, and library – a comprehensive community facility. It is proving hugely popular.

We will also be providing advanced sports education and fitness programmes for adults at the new Waitakere Stadium.

This facility is now under construction and will be complete by July next year.

The final facility we have underway is the new Lynn library, and that too will have a significant research facility.

As a whole, this represents over \$40 million of public investment into education and community learning.

We have clearly identified a need and we are responding to it.

At gatherings like this, it would be easy to just talk about how hard it was for the speaker growing up.

But I'm not going to give you lots of advice. You have already taken the bold decision to change your life for the better.

Instead, I'm just going to say just one thing.

It's all right to ask for help.

One day I will leave this job and I will go through another transition.

You are here because you believe in yourself enough to want to change it.

You believe in yourself and you're not afraid to take a gamble.

Dare to be different and dream huge, for yourself and for your children.

Dreaming big and getting there means a willingness to have the courage. And to back yourself.

I think my thoughts are best summed up in a quote from James G. Martin.

He was a former Governor in the United States.

A political lightweight, but on this subject he said something that I wanted to share with you this morning.

I quote:

“I dare you to achieve greatly.

I dare you to cause good things to happen.

I dare you to make the personal commitment to become the best at what you do.

To learn what it takes to rise to a position of leadership in your field.

And then work to get there.

I dare you beyond that to leave your community better than you found it.”

That is something I try to live by. As a person. As a father. As a Mayor.

And it is something I challenge you to do.

In fact I dare you.

Thank you.