

# Education

## Education



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### Introduction

Education is a key factor in improving individual and community wellbeing. It enables people to gain the knowledge and skills to participate fully, socially and economically, in the community. Education can influence career choices, employment, income and the standard of living that people enjoy. It can help people access services, exercise civil and political rights and reach their full potential.

### Major Policy Influences and Directions

- The re-introduction of school zoning has led to pressures on the rolls of some schools.
- The NCEA Qualification framework is a change in the way educational outcomes are assessed at the high school level.
- Waitakere's "baby blip" (i.e. the children of the baby boomers) has now moved from primary to secondary school.
- A national Early Childhood Education Strategy, Pathways to the future: Nga Huarahi Arataki, has been developed and is being implemented in Waitakere. Increasing participation in early childhood education is a key goal.
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) was established and is overseeing a centralised funding of tertiary education, with a new emphasis on collaboration between providers and minimising duplication in provision.



<sup>1</sup> Data for this chapter has been collected from the Ministry of Education unless otherwise specified.

- Under the changes brought in through the TEC, there is now a closer linking of Adult and Community Education to vocational education.
- A national Modern Apprenticeships scheme has been introduced to promote training in the trades.

## Key Issues

- The number of Waitakere students leaving high school without any qualifications continues to rise.
- A number of schools are facing operational grants that are not keeping pace with the costs of running and maintaining a school.
- There is still a significant flow of students commuting outside the city every day for secondary schooling.
- A drop in the number of overseas students has had a negative impact on the funding that local schools can call upon.
- The availability of suitably qualified teachers remains an issue for schools.
- The cost of attending early childhood education centres is an issue. Free childcare is available only at limited times which do not always suit workers.
- Preschool programmes and early learning centres need to be established for children from migrant and other ethnic groups.
- Mainstreaming, along with additional administrative requirements, has put substantial pressure on teachers. Schools face challenges in meeting the different learning needs of different students.
- Perceptions around the quality of schooling, particularly high school education, is an important issue for Waitakere City. It is an issue

both for the children attending schools and for families making decisions about where they will live based on the quality of the local education available for their children. While many local schools have worked very hard to provide a high quality education (and some are experiencing rising rolls as a result), there is still a perception that the schools are not attractive enough to many families who have choices.<sup>2</sup>

- There is a mismatch between students' aspirations and the actual jobs available. We are not meeting skill shortages directly.

## Some Highlights

- Unitec has established a campus in central Henderson.
- Waitakere City Council and Unitec are working together to develop a major new library in Henderson.
- New schools (Summerland School and St. Pauls Primary) have opened in the city and a couple are in the pipeline: a state secondary school in Hobsonville and the Sunderland private development (pre-school to high school) in Whenuapai.
- Adult Learners Week has focused attention on literacy needs in Waitakere.
- The Waitakere Employment and Skills Project (WESP) has been successful in attracting resources and partners to a demand-led approach to meeting labour market needs in Waitakere.
- The Early Child Education Call to Action under the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Strategy has been instrumental in bringing

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<sup>2</sup> Economic development in Waitakere City: Issues and Options report, 2003.

together a diverse network of early childhood education agencies for the first time.

- A kura kaupapa (a total Maori immersion primary school) has been opened at Hoani Waititi Marae.
- Waitakere now has a number of early childhood education training opportunities.
- A directory of ESOL provision in Waitakere and a network of ESOL providers are being developed as part of the Waitakere Employment and Skills Project.
- Many schools are actively addressing the needs of students with additional needs. For example, there are truancy initiatives, programmes to reduce suspensions and programmes to support Maori and Pacific students.
- There are some great alternative education programmes in Waitakere such as He Wero Nga Wahine.
- Public health nurses and school health nurses are working with many Waitakere main stream and alternative education schools, with the support of Primary Health Organisations and local GPs.
- Waitakere City Council has committed to the promotion of lifelong learning as one of its key strategic platforms and has identified key actions to include: promoting community access to information and learning opportunities, developing world-class tertiary education facilities including wananga, supporting youth into sustainable employment or training, providing opportunities for continued learning and supporting a “great start” for children to learning and education.

## Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The preschool years lay the foundation for learning and achievement in later life.

Research suggests that children who experience good quality preschool education with high calibre teaching are getting a “great start” and the effects are long lasting.

Participation in early childhood education has been rising in New Zealand over the last 15 years. Nationally most (88%) of new entrants at school have attended some form of licensed early childhood education in their preschool years. Maori and Pacific children have lower participation rates.

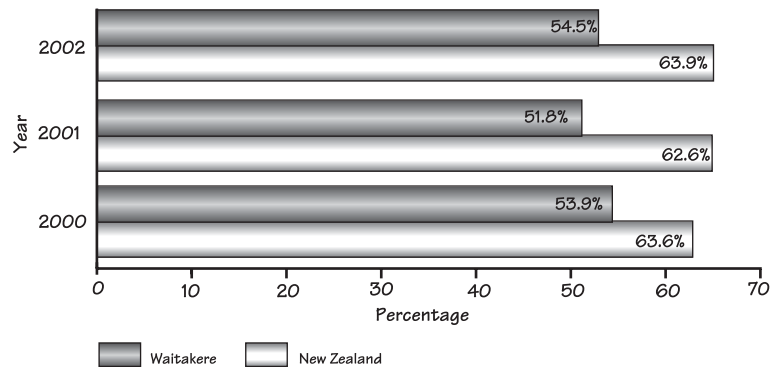
### In Waitakere City

- 7700 children were enrolled in early childhood services in Waitakere in 2002.<sup>3</sup>
- During 2000-2002 just over half of the children under 5 years attended a state funded preschool in Waitakere. This is lower than the percentage of children nationally.

<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that there were just over 14,000 children aged under 5 years in Waitakere City in 2002.

<sup>F</sup> “Competent children” cited in the NZ Herald, 26-27 June 2004.

Percentage of Children Aged Under 5 Years Enrolled in a State-Funded Preschool 2000-2002



Source: Ministry of Education 2004

“There are financial barriers preventing parents from accessing pre-school facilities.” Lisa Woolley, Community Services Director, Friendship Centre Trust

### Type of Services

A wide variety of early childhood facilities are offered in Waitakere.

- Most children attending preschool attended a kindergarten or education and care service.

- Over 200 children attended a Kohanga Reo (Maori early education centres) or Nga Puna Kohungahunga (Family/Whanau playgroups based on Tikanga Maori and Te Reo).

### Numbers of Children attending Early Childhood Services

Type of Service	2000	2001	2002
Kindergarten	1676	1603	1653
Playcentre	358	289	314
Education & Care Service	3931	3853	4043
Homebased	382	415	290
Te Kohanga Reo	205	211	202
ECD Playgroups	802	761	886
ECD PIECG	263	185	239
Nga Puna Kohungahunga			73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7617</b>	<b>7317</b>	<b>7700</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, 2003

“There are really good programming practices, really good professional development contracts and the ‘Pathway to the Future’ – the National strategic plan for early childhood education, has provided a focus. There is a need for a more diverse learning environment and our relationships with primary schools could be better.” Cissy Rock, ECE Waitakere Network Co-ordinator.

“We need places where kids from different ethnic groups can come together and share each other’s culture before they go to school – we

need to look to Te Kohanga Reo and Pacific Island language nests as a model.” Praveen Chandra, President Waitakere Ethnic Board.

### Schooling

In 2004 there were 71 schools in Waitakere City:

- 18 full primary schools (Years 1-8)
- 31 contributing schools (Years 1-6)
- 6 intermediate schools
- 9 secondary schools
- 4 special schools and 3 composite schools.<sup>4</sup>

### Students’ Perception of Schools

Attending school and feeling safe are important factors in the healthy development of Waitakere young people.

A study of 717 students at 8 secondary schools in North and West Auckland in 2003 found that:

- Most students felt that people at their school cared for them (males 86.7%, females 89.3%)
- Most students said they liked school or thought it was OK (males 88.3%, females 86.8%).
- Over 80% said that their teachers treated them fairly.
- Around half said they tried hard to do their best at school (males 49.4%, females 58.3%)

- Most (over 95%) said that their parents and caregivers felt it was very important that they do well at school.
- Most students felt safe at school but a few (males 7.7%, females 2.5%) said they were bullied weekly or more often.<sup>5</sup>

For those students surveyed, school appears to provide a safe, caring environment and they enjoy being there.

However, some students reported being badly affected by bullying and say they have taken time off school as they felt unsafe.

### School Decile Ratings

The Ministry of Education uses a decile rating system to set school funding levels. Higher funding is given to schools with students from low socio-economic communities as these children tend to face greater learning barriers.

Each decile contains approximately 10% of schools nationwide.

Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Schools in decile 10 have the lowest proportions of these students.

<sup>4</sup> Contributing schools are those offering education up to intermediate school – years 1-6. Composite schools offer both primary and secondary education – years 1-13. Special schools are either special character schools e.g. those that are predominantly religious, or special needs schools.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Auckland Northwest youth: A profile of their health and wellbeing. Youth 2000, University of Auckland, 2003.

- There was a ratings change in 2003. New figures released by the Ministry of Education state that 18 schools in Waitakere went up a decile between 2002 and 2003, and 10 went down.
- In 2002 there were no decile 1 schools in Waitakere City. There are now two; Henderson South and Birdwood School in Ranui.

### Numbers of Waitakere Schools in each Decile

Deciles	Number	Percentage of Waitakere Schools in each Decile
Decile 1	2	2.9
Decile 2	3	4.4
Decile 3	21	30.9
Decile 4	12	17.7
Decile 5	8	11.8
Decile 6	7	10.3
Decile 7	4	5.9
Decile 8	4	5.9
Decile 9	4	5.9
Decile 10	3	4.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, 2004

“People think that the decile rating is actually a ranking of how good the school is. That is actually the role of the Education Review Office (ERO)

reports. Decile rankings are used by the Ministry of Education to fund schools. Low decile schools do not mean a poor education. On the contrary, some of the best and most creative learning opportunities take place in low decile schools.” Teacher, Primary School.

“The Schools Operation Grant is insufficient to provide for the day-to-day needs of the school and at the same time set money aside for cyclical management. Our Principal currently has 9 funding applications on the go to try and replace things like rotting pool fences, cracked and broken concrete areas, dilapidated learning resources. None of these are possible from the money we receive from the Ministry, yet each of these are needs not wants.” Chairperson, Fruitvale School Board of Trustees.

### Qualifications

Educational qualifications have an influence on job choices, earning potential and quality of life. Those with relatively few educational qualifications are more likely to be unemployed and, on average, have lower incomes when in work.

### Waitakere City

- At the 2001 Census, more than one quarter (28.9%) of people aged 15 years and over in Waitakere City had a post-school qualification, compared with 32.2% for New Zealand as a whole.
- Between 1996 and 2001 there was an increase in the percentage of people in Waitakere City who have a school qualification or a degree.
- The percentage of people in Waitakere City with no formal qualifications decreased from 32.6% in 1996 to 22.6% in 2001.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census 1996, 2001.

- 40% of Maori (4587) in Waitakere City said they have no formal qualifications.

**Percentage of the Population aged 15 years and over within highest qualification categories (1996, 2001)**

	Waitakere	Total	NZ
No Qualification	1996	31.6	32.2
	2001	22.6	23.7
School	1996	27.8	26.5
	2001	37.9	34.5
Vocational	1996	17.7	17.7
	2001	16.5	17.6
Degree	1996	5.9	8.0
	2001	8.1	10.1

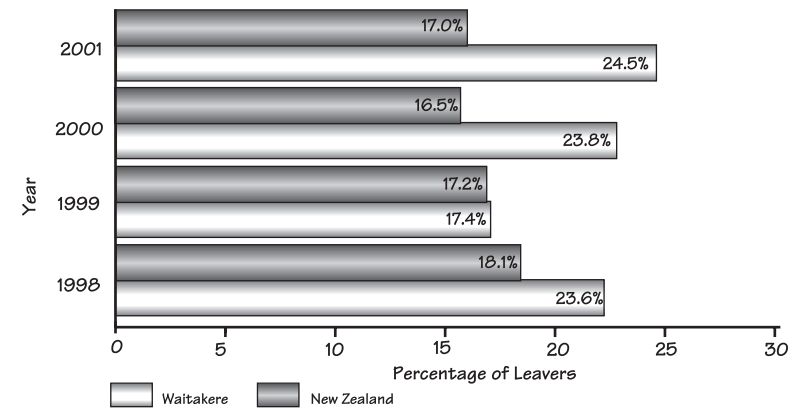
Source: Statistics NZ Census 1996, 2001

**School Leavers without Qualifications**

When young people leave school without qualifications, they may face limited opportunities later in life. In addition a highly skilled work force is critical to an innovative economy.

- In 2001 almost one-quarter (24.5%) of Waitakere students left school with no formal qualifications. This is higher than the national average (17%).

Percentage of school leavers with no formal qualifications



Source: Ministry of Education, 2002

**Ethnicity**

**Percentage of Students Leaving School in Waitakere with No Formal Qualifications by Ethnicity 1999 – 2001**

	1999	2000	2001
European	35.2	41.3	38.9
Maori	32.5	25.5	29.4
Pacific	23.5	25.9	21.9
Asian	4.6	4.7	5.1
Other	3.8	2.4	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, 2002

“Education is very important because it links in to improvement in all other aspects of life. Pacific peoples have always taken education as one of the main reason for coming to New Zealand.” Reverend Tovia Aumua

## Truancy

- The Waitakere City district truancy service dealt with 540 truancy cases in 2003. This is up from 472 in 2002 and 488 in 2001.
- Of the 540 school truants, 321 (59.5%) were under the age of 13 years.

### Referrals to Truancy Services 2001-2003

Year	School Referral	Percent	Non-school Referrals	Percent
2001	415	85	73	18
2002	440	93	32	7
2003	439	81.3	101	18.7

Source: Waitakere City Improving School Attendance Programme, MOE, 2004

“The increase in non school referrals is because the Police, Child Youth and Family and other agencies are more aware of the programme and are referring children to it.

“We encourage referrals relating to children under 13 years. If we can be proactive and alter poor patterns before they get to High School,

there is a higher chance of success.

“The younger the children are, the more parental involvement there is in truancy. However, it can also be because schools are not engaging the children in an appropriate way. By the time students get to 14 or 15 it is generally their decision not to go to school.

“We have an 80% success rate in getting them back to school and/or on to alternative courses. We are not going to achieve a 100% success rate with the older ones.” Margaret Campbell, Waitakere City Improving School Attendance Programme.

## School Suspensions and Stand-downs

Suspensions and stand-down are used by schools to manage student behaviour.

A stand down removes a student from the school for a limited period of time.

A suspension removes a student until the Board of Trustees decides on the next steps. This may include permanent exclusion from the school.

Although the Ministry of Education issues guidelines for schools, the use of stand-downs and suspensions varies between schools.

In Waitakere in 2002:

- 650 students were stood down
- 195 were suspended.

The rates in Waitakere are similar to national rates.

### Number and Rate of Suspensions at State Schools 2002

Status	Waitakere	Waitakere	New Zealand	New Zealand
	Number	Rate per 1000 students	Number	Rate per 1000 students
<b>Stand downs</b>	650	23	17,912	24.2
<b>Suspensions</b>	195	7	4937	7

Source: Ministry of Education, 2004

"The needs of students excluded from school are not being effectively addressed – a package of support needs to accompany each student." Ray Clarke, Coordinator Waitakere City Effective Practice (Strengthening Families).

"There are some children who are so damaged that they do not fit the criteria of social services. There is another group who miss out as they are in the highest need category. Some students are bouncing between social services. Children need to be assessed on social criteria and services need to be wrapped around them." Gilli Sinclair, WEST.

### Alternative Education

The Ministry of Education provides funding for education programmes for young people, aged 13 and a half to 15 years, who have become

alienated from school. The criteria for young people being placed on an alternative education programme include the young person:

- having been out of school for two terms or more;
- having multiple exclusions (urban - more than one school, rural plus other factors);
- having a history of dropping out of mainstream schooling after being reintegrated;
- having dropped out of the Correspondence School after enrolment as an 'At Risk Student'.

"Waitakere have set up an excellent system of co-operatively working with students who have been excluded or are at risk of being excluded. This involved the principals of the secondary schools working together to form Futures West and co-ordinate an alternative education consortium. This provides an excellent framework but we still need to look at the needs of these young people and look at innovative ways of addressing them. We also need to look at the needs of students who are still at school but are at risk of exclusion." Gilli Sinclair, WEST.

### Maori Education

Schools have legal requirements in relation to Maori under the Education Act (1989). The Act requires schools to include in their charter aims that reflect the unique position of Maori culture (s63 (a)). The views and concerns of Maori communities must be considered before a school's charter is prepared or amended (s62 (1)). On average, Maori have lower levels of educational achievement than non-Maori. While the reasons are complex, a factor may be the failure

of the mainstream education system to adequately meet the education needs and aspirations of Maori.<sup>7</sup>

A recent study found the majority of teachers believed that the major influence on Maori students' educational achievement was the children themselves, their family/whanau circumstances, or 'systemic/structural' issues. The study found that these views were actually contributing to Maori underachievement.<sup>8</sup>

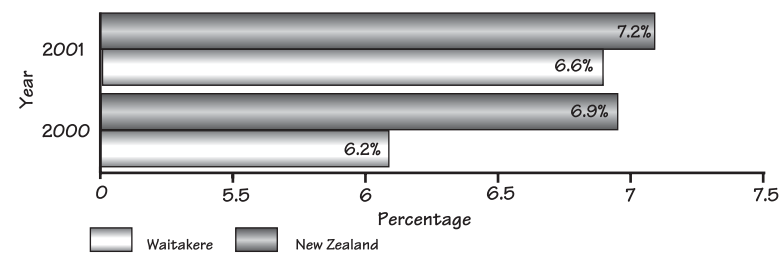
In fact, the study found that the major influence was the students' relationship with their teachers. Where teachers were given training to recognise their role in the achievement of Maori students, an understanding of cultural issues and given strategies to improve their interactions with Maori students, the behaviour and achievement of these students improved, in some cases dramatically.<sup>9</sup>

## Community Education

Community education programmes allow Waitakere residents to gain further skills and knowledge. Community education does not include study for degrees or higher level qualifications. The funding of community education is shifting from the Ministry of Education to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

- There was an increase in the percentage of people in Waitakere City participating in Ministry of Education funded community education between 2000 and 2001.
- The percentage of those in Waitakere participating in Ministry of Education funded community education was lower than the national percentage.

Percentage of Population aged 15 years and over who participated in community education (2000, 2001)



Source: Ministry of Education, 2002

"Although the Waitakere figures appear lower than those for New Zealand as a whole, there is a lot of community education that is not included in Ministry of Education figures. Te Whanau o Waipareira Trust, Pacific Island churches, environmental groups and many community organisations provide learning opportunities that do not show up in the Ministry's figures." Dorothy McGray, WEA

- In 2003, 25% of Waitakere residents stated that they had attended a self improvement or education course in the past 12 months.<sup>10</sup>

"There is an increasing focus on pathways to employment. Pathways into either tertiary education or employment are very rarely straightforward. Community courses that are often criticised e.g. belly dancing are often the first step on that pathway because they give

<sup>7</sup> Source: Te Puni Kokiri, 2004. [www.tpk.govt.nz/maori/education/default.asp](http://www.tpk.govt.nz/maori/education/default.asp)

<sup>8</sup> Source: Te Kotahitanga, Ministry of Education, 12.12.2003.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Te Kotahitanga, Ministry of Education, 12.12.2003.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Waitakere City Council, 2003.

people self confidence, raise self esteem, encourage their love of learning, encourage social cohesion and are affordable. A lot of our courses have the value of supporting life long learning and that life long learning is valuable in and of itself regardless of whether it leads DIRECTLY to employment.

“As our population ages, community education programmes offer opportunities for social interaction, physical and mental stimulation and a general sense of wellbeing, which have obvious benefits not only to the individual but to the community as a whole,” Margaret Stewart, Community Education Coordinator, Rutherford College.

### **Literacy**

Many New Zealanders lack essential reading and writing skills. A literacy survey in 1996 found that:

- Over one million adults were below the minimum level of competence to meet the demands of every day life.
- One in five adult New Zealanders have poor literacy skills.
- 70% of Maori failed to meet the minimum level of competence (level 3 or higher).
- 40-45% of Pacific people were at the lowest level of literacy (although 70% were born outside New Zealand).<sup>11</sup>

Although there were no statistics for Waitakere City, literacy is a problem for many Waitakere residents.

“You need literacy to participate fully in the community. There are some people on our courses who don’t have the literacy skills to be able to

cope with the day to day demands of life such as writing their address or signing their name. They can feel unconfident about seeking medical help when they need it , participating in their children’s education, or simply finding their way around the community. We currently have about 150 people on our books.” Cherie Barford, Co-ordinator of Waitakere Adult Literacy.

### **Questions Arising from the Community**

How do we improve access to tertiary education and make it more affordable?

What is the social cost of low literacy skills?

What is the real impact for the child, their family and the community of being excluded from school?

Who is responsible for a child’s education?

Are there adequate education options in Waitakere to meet the diverse needs of its population i.e. affordability, cultural appropriateness, accessibility and offering a variety of teaching/learning models?

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<sup>11</sup> Source: More than Words: The New Zealand Literacy Strategy, 2001.