I TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI **Wai 3310**
IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL **Wai 762**

KEI RARO I TE MANA O te ture o te Tiriti o Waitangi 1975

Ā

I TE TAKE O the Education Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai 3310)

I TE TAKE O a claim by Te Urunga Evelyn Aroha Kereopa on behalf of the Kereopa whānau and members of Te Ihingārangi, hapū of Maniapoto

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BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF TERE NGĀWAI GILBERT

Date: Friday, 20 December 2024

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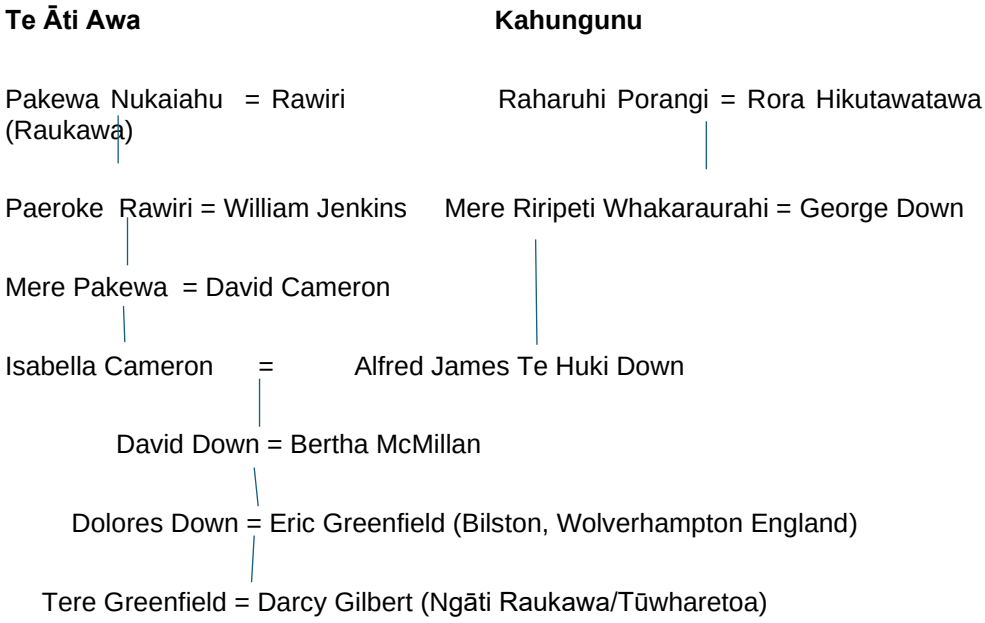
INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Tere Ngāwai Gilbert. I was born in Mangakino and grew up in Tūrangi, Aratiatia, and Mangakino. My whānau is of Māori and English descent. My father is English, and my mother, Te Āti Awa, is affiliated with Ngāti Puketapu, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngai Tamao, and Ngāti Raukawa. I spent much of my childhood amongst Ngāti Hauiti at Rata Marae, surrounded by my grandparents, parents, and extended whānau.



LEARNING TE REO

2. I was involved in culture club in Tūrangi from a young age. Learning to speak Māori was a natural progression for me at school. I attended Hukarere and as a young mum attended Kōhanga Reo learning with our tamariki. I completed some reo Māori papers at the University of Waikato after moving from Waiouru with my young family. My tamariki at Kōhanga initially inspired me in my early career. My own tamariki and mokopuna have also inspired me as I have always supported their reo journeys, lobbying for a bilingual unit in Waiouru and then being able to support them at Kura Kaupapa Māori ("**Kura**") and Wharekura in Hamilton.

Inspiration to teach te reo

3. I love te reo, our ways of being and doing, our values. It seemed natural for me to follow this path. Te Reo Māori was absent from my mothers and possibly grandfathers generations and subsequently my generation in our Down Whānau because of the assimilation policies of Governments at those times.

4. I have always loved being around young tamariki, When I was a child myself in our neighbourhood in Tūrangi I helped other whānau with tamariki, babysitting and being with whānau. I only had older siblings. I decided while I was in Kōhanga Reo that I needed to pursue a qualification that was achievable for me at the time with 5 tamariki and a husband away a lot on Army manoeuvres.

5. My journey to become a teacher was a long one and started when I had my tamariki. I began with a Certificate in Childcare from NZ Childcare Association (1993-95) (NZCA) while I was a kaiāwhina at Kōhanga Reo in Waiouru. I then upgraded to a Diploma of Teaching ECE (1996) with Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa (previously called NZCA). We had moved to Hamilton and I was working in a Kōhanga Reo where I undertook te Reo Māori papers, some ECE papers and completed a Higher Diploma of Teaching (2000) on a Teacher Study Award at the University of Waikato. This course was delivered in te reo Māori. With everything I had completed and gaining teacher registration, I only had 3 papers to complete my teaching degree, A great way to spend parental leave! I decided to complete a post-graduate diploma in education after receiving my degree.

6. I gained a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Waikato/Tainui College for Research and Development. I also graduated from the Pinakitanga class at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. I am a proud recipient of an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) award for services to Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Māori language education.

TEACHING TE REO MĀORI

7. I began as a mum in Kōhanga Reo in Burnham Military Camp in 1984. I attended with my tamariki, learning alongside them. Some of us moved to

Waiouru in 1986 and established a Kōhanga Reo there. We built a whare at the old marae site and I was employed by the whānau as a Kaiāwhina. I started my Certificate in Childcare and travelled to class in Palmerston North once a week.

8. I struggled getting my kōhanga whānau in 1993 to support my choice to pursue a mainstream qualification, however, they did eventually. Whānau were no longer attending with tamariki at Kōhanga. They needed to go to work or study and needed their tamariki to stay immersed in reo and tikanga and quality care while they did this.

9. In 1994 I took up a position at Kōhanga Reo in Hamilton as my husband was posted there with the Army. I completed my Certificate in Childcare in Hamilton. Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka whānau supported Kaiāwhina to become qualified teachers after I completed my certificate. The Kōhanga became a teacher-led Kōhanga Reo and had to follow a plan of supporting staff to gain qualifications as the regulations for 'teacher-led' required a percentage of staff to be qualified in order to claim the higher teacher-led funding. I became Tumuaki at Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka and managed building extensions, staff and other kaupapa that supported tamariki and their whānau.

10. In 2015, I left Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka to work for Te Kōhao Health and managed the first Puna Reo – Te Kōhao Kōhungahunga. Our second Puna Reo was opened in 2017. Although a Tumuaki, overseeing 2 Puna Reo, I am often still part of the teaching team covering teachers, being where I am needed. He kanohi kitea mō ngā tamariki, me ngā kaiako. I am on my second generation of tamariki immersed in our reo at Puna Reo. I taught their parents when they were at Kōhanga Reo.

11. It is very difficult to find qualified teachers who speak te reo Māori. In Kōhanga Reo (teacher-led), I supported and encouraged many of our staff to train for a Bachelor of Teaching ECE. I am very proud of all our kaiako that did and although some have moved on from teaching, we are still connected.

12. The desire to teach te reo Māori and contribute to its revitalization stems from a profound love for the language, culture and values of my ancestors. As a child of parents who experienced the loss of the language due to government assimilation policies, my motivation grew from seeing the effects of language loss in my own whānau and community.

Concerns with the State, retention and use of te reo Māori.

13. I have grave concerns for te reo Māori because:

a. There are not enough qualified teachers who can speak Māori and fluently with tamariki;

b. Puna Reo have to limit enrolments to ensure compliance with ECE regulations for 50% qualified staff;

c. There are not enough kura or places in kura for our tamariki to continue their learning in te reo. This has been the case in Hamilton for over 10 years despite hui with the Ministry of Education. We now have kōhanga and puna graduands growing whānau. We will need at least 2-3 times as many kura.

d. Whānau are having to pay to send their tamariki to Puna because the government funding does not provide enough to pay teachers for the work they do and with the higher bar they must be qualified and fluent in te reo Māori.

e. Some Puna Reo are struggling with the critical teacher supply and some have had to close. Therefore, limiting choice for whānau and their tamariki. Not only in Puna Reo but their whole kaupapa Māori journey.

f. Puna Reo have to ‘grow their own’ teachers by supporting fluent speakers into training for teaching qualifications – there are high costs for both the Puna Reo and the teacher-in-training.

14. We have shown that this kaupapa breeds success for tamariki Māori who grow up confident in their language, identity and culture. It needs to be supported both at the Puna Reo level, Kura, and Wharekura so it can grow and not be limited as it has been for a number of years. Assistance and incentives for training teachers and their Puna Reo/Kura are required. Growing more kura so that we are also growing more speakers ensuring our reo grows for our mokopuna and their mokopuna.

15. My concerns for my own whānau were influential in my journey to learn te reo and become a kaiako. After years of assimilation and generations of language loss in my own whānau, we now have fluent tamariki and mokopuna. We were lucky that in the city our tamariki had the opportunity to continue from kōhanga to kura.

16. At my current Puna Reo, our success initially came from the community who did not have reo speakers in their house but loved the kaupapa so much they ended up enrolling their tamariki in Kura Kaupapa. This community is one of the lowest socio-economic classes in Hamilton.

NGĀ PUNA REO

17. Ngā Puna Reo o Aotearoa (NPRA) began initially as a small group of people in 2021. I was approached after a comment I made at a research hui and from there a meeting was convened by a Ministry of Education ("**MOE**") advisor and some other people working in Puna Reo across the country. From here we formed a governance group – Te Mana Tōpū – and set about establishing NPRA as an entity – it was incorporated in 2022 and registered as a charity. We meet monthly with MOE officials and 4 times per year in person. We successfully applied for establishment funding in 2022 to help with setting up systems and operational matters.

18. There are approximately 50 puna reo, 43 are affiliated to Ngā Puna Reo o Aotearoa. We employ 180 to 200 teachers. MOE does not collect data on Puna Reo enrolments, so they do not know that we have approximately 2000 tamariki enrolled.

19. Our kaupapa is to support

a. Puna Reo and lobby for visibility,

b. te reo Māori specific kaupapa in education i.e. recognition that te reo is a taonga,

c. whānau by lobbying for 30 hours funded ECE for all tamariki in Puna Reo so whānau should not have to pay fees to reclaim reo Māori.

d. Kaiako, who have a higher bar to attain as they must be qualified **and** speak Māori:

   i. Support kaiako to attain qualifications and teacher registration.

   ii. Have the same conditions and salaries as Kura Kaupapa Kaiako – Puna reo are one of the huarahi for entry to kura. Kindergartens are funded higher than Puna Reo, their salaries and conditions are higher than Puna Reo kaiako – they are part of the State Sector Act.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

20. Kaiako in Puna Reo are often enticed into roles in Kura, Kāhui Ako, consultancies and with the Ministry of Education because of their reo and skills.

21. Puna Reo are in an ongoing cycle of supporting kaimahi and whānau to successfully complete a teaching degree and full teacher registration, A journey usually of 5 years. At the two Puna Reo I manage, we have had 5 kaimahi in training in 2024. One has completed and the others at various stages.

22. The cost to both the kaimahi and the Puna is immense – 4-5 weeks per year away on practicum, study days, noho marae. Relievers to cover the absence.

23. There are not a lot of incentives for Kaiako to stay in Puna Reo – they get the lowest pay/funding.

24. Teachers who speak Māori are very difficult to find or recruit. If a Puna Reo does not have the required amount of teachers as per the ECE regulations (50% of staff must be qualified), they may be closed. There are 5 funding bands for child funded hours in ECE – 100% certificated teachers, 80-99%, 50-79%, 25-49% and 0-24%, they are difficult to sustain. The percentages are averaged each month. The percentages are based on a certificated teacher being beside tamariki every 15 minutes of the day.

25. As per the ECE funding rules, a teacher is not counted when they have lunch, are sick, are on leave, are doing professional development or are 'off the whāriki' completing the required documentation such as learning stories for their tamariki.

26. These funding percentages are also based on the regulated ratios for the amount of tamariki in attendance each 15 minutes and their ages – over two years and under two years old. The danger here, as has happened to our Puna Reo, is a puna could drop a funding band if a teacher leaves or teachers are away.

27. Puna Reo are not funded if there are days closed – e.g. public holidays, teacher only days, Christmas closedown. In order to sustain funding bands, a puna needs to employ more teachers because of the funding rules

28. There are not a lot of incentives to entice teachers away when the funding is low and salaries are lower than Kindergarten and Kura.

29. The recruitment of te reo Māori teachers for NPRA is done through online advertising such as The Education Gazette, Seek and our website.

30. All staff including teachers must undergo a 7-point safety check before commencing employment. This includes police vetting – which can take up to 20 working days, checking referees, interview, checking registrations etc. Documentation of this must be kept.

31. Prospective applicants must have a Diploma of Teaching ECE, Bachelor of Teaching ECE or Bachelor of Teaching (Primary). Qualifications must be accredited by the NZ Teaching Council for teacher registration. We often get applicants who don't read or understand the specification for te reo Māori. We get applicants from Asia, Afrika, India or no applications at all.

32. TeachNZ relaxed the requirement for Puna Reo applicants to enrol in specific Māori medium qualifications as the applicants already had te reo me ngā tikanga. Some applicants prefer online learning and others kanohi ki te kanohi.

Ngā Puna Reo requests for assistance

33. NPRA has raised and continues to raise many concerns with the MOE regarding teacher recruitment issues. The TeachNZ scholarships are one of the solutions that we managed to negotiate with MOE. Other solutions were the implementation of LAT (Limited Authority to Teach) type qualifications for our Matanga Reo i.e. Kaumātua and even Wharekura graduands. Another solution was to recognise kaimahi in training for the time they are training (up to 3 years) for what we called Atakura – where they are deemed qualified and counted in the teachers percentages on a beginning teacher salary.

34. Many Puna Reo cannot pay pay parity rates of salaries as prescribed in Appendix 4 of the ECE Funding Handbook. This is because puna reo are a community-based non-profit organisation. They therefore may not charge fees, have smaller licensed premises which leads to fewer tamariki, and are stand-alone services – i.e. not part of large associations or corporate providers such as Kindergartens and the day care chains that operate in New Zealand.

MITA implementation – Labour government

35. The Māori Immersion Teachers Allowance (MITA) / Waha Rūmaki – has made a big difference in the retention of teachers at Ngā Puna Reo. It has also contributed to a higher number of applicants for scholarships and training places. However, it is too early to determine whether it will make a difference in relation to the recruitment of teachers. Waha Rūmaki has

merely topped up a low salary for some, so its impact has worked only towards achieving pay parity as opposed to actually incentivising people to take up teaching in te reo Māori. A copy of a report provided by a senior MOE advisor to the (then) Minister of Education seeking agreement to implement the Māori Immersion Teachers' Allowance (MITA) and to create a service type for Ngā Puna Reo is **attached** and marked '**A**'.

36. We refer to the funding levels outlined in MITA. For example, the base MITA allowance for 81%-100% immersion learning is $6000, after 3 years' service the allowance is $10000 and after 6 years-service it goes to $12,000. This only partly goes to resolving the issue of attracting and retaining teachers. The teacher is guaranteed the Waha Rūmaki (MITA) allowance amount.

37. The Waha Rūmaki is an incentive, however, the base salaries are not funded well enough for Puna to afford to pay them. In 2024, the ECE teacher salaries dropped below Kindergarten and kaiako in Kura. Ahakoa kei hea te kaiako e mahi ana, he kaiako tonu. A teacher is a teacher is a teacher. **This is grossly unfair and inequitable**.

38. I am very concerned that we will not be able to keep pace with competitive salary rates for Kura kaiako in the future.

Coalition government

Letter to Minister for Education

39. Before meeting with Ms Stanford, the current Minister for Education, we sent a letter briefing her as to who we are, what our issues were and our achievements thus far. We re-iterated that teacher supply has been a longstanding issue and remains relevant today. A copy of the MOE briefing paper and the letter are **attached** and marked "**B**".

Meeting with Associate Minister Seymour

40. In September this year, we met with Associate Minister for Education, David Seymour, as he is responsible for Early Childhood matters. We also wrote

a briefing letter to Minister Seymour similar to the letter to Ms Stanford and raised the following issues:

a. The need for a teacher training drive as teacher supply was still a barrier to the demand for puna reo,

b. Mentoring hubs to provide support to ensure maximum success rates and support from study to full registration,

c. Regarding scholarships, relaxing criteria for applying, 4 weeks training support for practicums and support for puna reo losing staff members for practicum.

41. Minister Seymour said that he supported choice. He listened to us but no promises were made and there was no follow up. There may have been one outcome from that hui, the scholarship criteria for Waka Whakarākei has been relaxed from 10 years working to 7 years this round.

TEACHER TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

42. MOE provides scholarships for people who wish to study to become a teacher, such as the Waka Whakarākei, Career Changer scholarships, and the Tipu Whakarito scholarships. Ngā Puna Reo o Aotearoa submitted 32 Whakarākei scholarships applications. 20 Whakarākei scholarships were offered but we do not know why some were declined and others that we submitted online had not been received. We are still following up on the 12 who were not awarded scholarships. I am unsure of the number of Tipu Whakarito scholarships that were offered and accepted.

43. The reduction in MOE staff has impacted this work. Discussions with MOE's workforce group were initially favourable in 2023, however there has been no more discussion in 2024.

44. The Teach NZ scholarships are effective, but the application process can be difficult. All our applicants should get scholarships. We cannot recruit from overseas and therefore relocation support is not afforded to Puna Reo Kaiako. The scholarships should ensure kaiako in training are paid for their

practicums of up to 5 weeks each year. We had asked also for regional mentoring programmes to support our kaiako in training through the degree to full certification. This has not happened.

45. We are grateful for the scholarships however; more scholarships are needed. In addition, the allowances need to be timed better to cover the academic year, there should be paid practicums and regional mentoring hub support from training to full teacher certification should be implemented.

46. Teaching needs to be a desirable profession. It should be funded well. Puna Reo teachers should be on the same salaries as Kaiako Kura and Kindergarten. Kindergarten has pay parity with Primary school teachers. Puna Reo should have the same. We are protecting te reo but currently one section of ECE is regarded as higher, receiving higher funding, pay and conditions than all others.

47. Teaching at Ngā Puna Reo requires a teacher to speak te reo and spend longer hours on the floor with the children. When a teacher is not beside tamariki they do not count towards ratio of percentages for funding. It is an oppressive model of funding where even though we have to have more teachers to meet this, we are not compensated for it. These absences are basic employment rights. Puna Reo are open longer hours to meet the needs of the community and whānau. Every Puna Reo is different. Our Puna Reo is open 7.45am-5.15pm to meet the needs of the workforce and students. Teachers are often on the floor 7-8 hours per day. If our puna close, we are not funded. We are therefore open 50 weeks each year to cater to whānau needs. We must ensure we have enough teachers for those 50 weeks to meet compliances.

48. The government supports ECE and schools by recruiting teachers from overseas. We are very disadvantaged by this policy. We need teachers who speak te reo. That resource could be used to help us with our mentoring hubs, teacher practicums and support.

PAY PARITY

49. Because we are under early childcare services, there are different child funded hourly rates. Those rates depend on your percentage of qualified teachers and which pay parity you are paying, as there are three types. The pay scale for qualified certificated teachers is **attached** and marked '**C**'. Every four months we have to attest to paying the teachers the correct salary amount in order to receive the rate of funding that we are entitled to. Puna Reo around the country will potentially sit on any of those scales, because it depends on whether they can pay the teachers the extended or full parity.

50. Most Ngā Puna Reo cannot afford to offer full pay parity as the funding is not enough to support it when they may be on a low funding band.

Kindergarten salaries

Qual Notations	Step	Rates effective 3 July 2023	Rates effective 1 Dec 2023	Rates effective 3 April 2024	Rates effective 2 Dec 2024
P3E	1	$56,757	$57,358	$59,027	$61,329
P3+E	2	$59,948	$61,948	$61,948	$64,083
P4E	3	$62,133	$64,133	$64,133	$66,586
P5E	4	$65,794	$67,794	$68,122	$70,779
	5	$69,776	$71,869	$72,512	$75,340
	6	$74,243	$76,261	$77,213	$80,224
	7	$79,702	$81,566	$82,890	$86,123
	8	$84,178	$85,915	$87,545	$90,960
P3M	9	$90,620	$92,175	$94,245	$97,920
P3+M, P4M, P5M	10	$95,400	$96,820	$99,216	$103,086

ECE salaries full pay parity

eligible to receive the Full Parity Funding Rates.

Minimum salary scale for certificated teachers

Step	Qualification Group Notations	Salary from 1 November 2023	Indicative hourly rate*	Salary from 1 December 2023	Indicative hourly rate*
1	P1E, P2E, P3E	$51,358	$24.69	$57,358	$27.58
2		$53,544	$25.74	$59,544	$28.63
3	P3+E	$55,948	$26.90	$61,948	$29.78
4	P4E	$58,133	$27.95	$64,133	$30.83
5	P5E	$61,794	$29.71	$67,794	$32.59
6		$65,776	$31.62	$71,869	$34.55
7		$70,040	$33.67	$76,261	$36.66
8		$75,190	$36.15	$81,566	$39.21
9		$79,413	$38.18	$85,915	$41.31
10	P1M, P2M, P3M	$85,490	$41.10	$92,175	$44.31
11	P3+M, P4M, P5M	$90,000	$43.27	$96,820	$46.55

Primary School; Salaries

Unified Base Salary Scale for Trained Teachers:

Step	Qualification Group	Current Rates	Step	Rates effective 3 July 2023	Rates effective 3 April 2024	Rates effective 2 December 2024
1	Q1E, Q2E, Q3E	$51,358	1	$56,757	$59,027	$61,329
2		$53,544				
3	Q3+E	$55,948	2	$59,948	$61,678	$64,083
4	Q4E	$58,133	3	$62,133	$64,086	$66,586
5	Q5E	$61,794	4	$65,794	$68,122	$70,779
6		$65,776	5	$69,776	$72,512	$75,340
7		$70,040	6	$74,243	$77,213	$80,224
8		$75,190	7	$79,702	$82,890	$86,123
9		$79,413	8	$84,178	$87,545	$90,960
10	Q1M, Q2M, Q3M	$85,490	9	$90,620	$94,245	$97,920
11	Q3+M, Q4M, Q5M	$90,000	10	$95,400	$99,216	$103,086

51. Full Pay Parity came in on 1 November 2023 and increased on 1 December 2023 for ECE services that opted in. Kindergarten and Primary Teachers have had 2 pay increases in April and December 2024. Even at Full Pay Parity, Kindergartens are remunerated more per annum. The gap increases if Puna Reo can only afford the extended pay parity or the basic pay parity.

52. Ngā Puna Reo teacher remuneration rates are lower than that available under Kura Kaupapa Māori as Kura are covered under the Collective Agreement. Not only do Ngā Puna Reo teachers lose out to Kindergartens, but also to Kura. Teachers move on for better salary and conditions if they can.

53. There are differences in working conditions between Ngā Puna Reo, Kura, and Kindergartens:

    a. Kura and their Kaiako are not penalised for being off the floor. They have funded release time for teacher certification and planning, funded teacher only days, less contact with tamariki and they have a collective agreement that provides many benefits.

    b. Kindergarten teachers have maximum contact hours per week, senior teachers might get sabbaticals, they get more non-contact time. They generally do not have under two-year-olds.

Kindergartens are in the State Sector Act. They have a collective agreement negotiated by NZEI-Te Riu Roa and MOE.

54. In addition to being paid less and having less than ideal working conditions, Ngā Puna Reo teachers have higher standards to meet. They must have proficiency in te reo Māori, teacher certification (no release time), more contact time and less non-contact time. Ngā Puna Reo contact hours are excessive. This can cause burn out over time. Many teachers are also having to support tamariki with diverse learning needs who require 1 to 1 assistance. Learning support from Ministry of Education is slow and hours provided are not adequate if the tamaiti gets learning support or education support hours at all.

55. To assist Ngā Puna Reo teachers to achieve the standards they are expected to achieve, MOE needs to get rid of some of the funding rules and ensure NPR are funded appropriately. There should be funding to employ extra staff at full pay parity to ensure conditions for non-contact documentation and employment rights are met. Ngā Puna Reo should also be funded for teacher only days for reo strengthening and whole of Ngā Puna Reo professional learning.

56. A pay parity exercise was conducted recently that highlighted a $75,000 difference between funding for Ngā Puna Reo in comparison to Kindergarten. The scenario used a 35-place puna reo with a mixture of over twos, under twos and 3-5 year olds. We used the 80-99% teacher funding rate for Jan 2025 and compared the child funding between the same scenario using Kindergarten funding rates.

57. The MOE is aware of the differences in rates between Kindergarten and Ngā Puna Reo but have done nothing to address it. To eliminate the inequities in funding between Ngā Puna Rua, Kura and Kindergarten, MOE should:

a. fund all NPR at the 100% rate if we have 100% reo Māori and qualified Kaiako

b. NPR should get the same Maori Language Factor Funding per licenced place as Kura. Current provision of Equity C Funding for

"services that operate in languages other than English" does not even recognise te reo Maori as the taonga it is.

58. The calculation of the pay parity funding is unfair and unreasonable for NPR. It means NPR has to employ more teaching staff or find a reliever just to meet ratios. Finding qualified relievers is non-existent. Ngā Puna Reo manages to operate only because many teachers volunteer to do their documentation in their own time. The priority is teachers with tamariki, so other necessary work can only be done in the teachers own time.

59. Ngā Puna Reo is about to be granted our own service type. We hope this will enable the other conditions we have asked for to be realised – e.g. Mātanga Reo recognised, Atakura (teacher in training) recognised, Te Reo Māori recognised and acknowledged as our kaupapa, 30 hours ECE for tamariki for language immersion during optimal language development 0-5yrs.

INHIBITED LEARNING PATHWAYS

60. Due to the growth in our rolls, an increasing number of tamariki will soon be ready to transition to Kura. Unfortunately, there aren't enough spaces for new entrants. Tamariki are placed on a priority list for kura, and while they wait, they spend their time at NPR. This is a common situation, and it continues to be a challenge in two of our puna reo. It is also causing disruptions for whānau with siblings already attending kura. Over the past 10 years, I have met with the Ministry of Education twice, but it takes at least 5 years to build a kura, and no plans have been announced to address this. As kura increasingly transform into Wharekura, it is putting additional pressure on infrastructure, as there aren't enough classrooms to accommodate the growing number of tamariki staying at kura.

61. At present, I have two tamariki waiting for spaces at kura. One is a tamaiti who will turn 6 next week. He has a brother already enrolled at kura and has been waiting all year for a space. Other tamariki have already started before him. Despite his wait, he still doesn't have a place at kura with his brother for Term 1, 2025 and will need to attend mainstream school until a spot becomes available. Additionally, I have a kotiro, also turning 6 in January, who has been waiting all year and will begin at another kura in February

2025. Last year, I had a tamaiti with three siblings already attending kura. He was nearly 6 years old when he was offered a space just three weeks before the end of the school year. This situation is happening regularly, so we cannot allow tamariki on our waiting list to start until we have a confirmed date for the 5-year-olds to begin kura.

62. To resolve this, more kura should be built to cope with the demand. In the meantime, while kura are being built, satellite classrooms should be offered to bridge the gap.

CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

63. The lawyers have told me that the government introduced a new curriculum for Māori medium schools in March, but no resources were provided. I am not aware of this new curriculum or that there is no funding.

64. MOE should provide Professional Learning Development with real practical tailored learning. They have done it for other resources why can't they do it here?

65. There are some online resources provided on the MOE curriculum website but there are not enough.

66. I have previously discussed the Māori Language Factor Funding in comparison to Kura Kaupapa Māori. Ngā Puna Reo is eligible for the Equity Funding Component C, which is intended for "Services that operate in a language other than English." The current funding rate is $441.81 including GST per month, based on the number of tamariki in your puna, which totals around $5,300 per year. In contrast, Kura Kaupapa at level 1 immersion receives Māori Language Factor Funding of $1,630.08 excluding GST per child per year in 2024.

SCHOOLS FOR PROFIT?

67. I've been told that the MOE is conducting a regulatory review, the results of which should be available soon. I am not optimistic as to what that review will show. I expect there will be a watering down of rules, quality for tamariki.

Ka u tonu ki te tika me te pono. I just hope that the people working on the whāriki and whānau are heard in this review.

68. I hope the review does not water down our kaupapa, our quality for tamariki and whānau and our condition for kaiako, or make it even more difficult with our teacher supply and training of kaiako.

CONCLUSION

69. NPRA has expressed many concerns to the MOE about teacher recruitment challenges. There is an urgent need for a teacher recruitment initiative, as the shortage of teachers continues to hinder the growth and development of puna reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori for tamariki Māori.

70. Additional scholarships are required to support individuals aspiring to become te reo Māori teachers. Furthermore, the timing of allowances should be better aligned with the academic year, provision made for paid practicums, and regional mentoring hubs should be established to support trainee teachers to full teacher certification.

71. Teaching must be made an attractive profession with adequate funding. Puna Reo teachers should receive salaries comparable to those of Kaiako Kura and Kindergarten teachers. This would not only boost interest in becoming te reo Māori teachers but also improve teacher retention for puna reo.

72. As our rolls grow, an increasing number of tamariki will soon be ready to transition to Kura. Unfortunately, there aren't enough spaces for new entrants. More kura need to be built to meet this demand, and the kura will require te reo Māori teachers. Therefore, there should be focused effort to increase the supply of te reo Māori teachers. In the interim, while new kura are being established, satellite classrooms should be provided to help bridge the gap.

73. When Ngā Puna Reo is granted its own service type, we hope it will strengthen our ability to advocate for an increased teacher supply and for the implementation of initiatives that we have proposed, such as Mātanga

Reo, Atākura, and providing 30 hours of ECE for tamariki to support language immersion during the critical 0-5 years of language development.

Dated at **KIRIKIRIROA** this **20th** day of **December 2024**

TERE NGĀWAI GILBERT