

Strong call for Taha Maori in Technical Institutes

It's no secret that taha maori is almost non-existent in technical institutions.

That's why 80 people, including principals, Maori and Pacific Island tutors and liaison officers met at Koriniti marae, 40 kilometres from Wanganui city.

Ties and three piece suits were soon replaced by tracksuits, neutralising all the 'titles' one may have.

Discussions ranged from staff training facilities to the role of the liaison officer, the words 'maori' and 'pacific island' coming up quite often.

Since the adoption of Maori and Pacific Island liaison officers in 1982, there has been steady progress concerning our students.

Besides encouraging more Maori

students to complete courses, the liaison officer counsels, consults, arranges or rearranges finances, to meet the needs of the student.

It's a 48-hour a day job. But for most, it's only part-time.

Ellen Weneti is employed as half a liaison officer and half a maori tutor at Carrington Technical Institute, Auckland.

She spends most of her time on the road. Visiting colleges, talking to students and hopefully, recruiting them for next years technical courses.

But it's finally paying off. She says that colleges around Auckland are starting to open their doors and minds to her frequent visits.

"It's a good feeling to see the students working for what they want. And I'm here to help them get it," she says.

This is typical of many technical institutes. But in most others, there is only one liaison officer for the whole area.

But more is needed. The number of Maori and Pacific Island students in technical institutes is still low. And no-one knows how best to boost the numbers.

A number of suggestions were recommended to the principals present by the Maori and Pacific Island representatives.

Taking courses to the marae, boosting Maori staffing numbers and holding off-campus activities could encourage and make people aware of what technical institutes have to offer.

Principals made their fair contribution to these discussions, echoing what the Maori and Island representatives had to say.

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