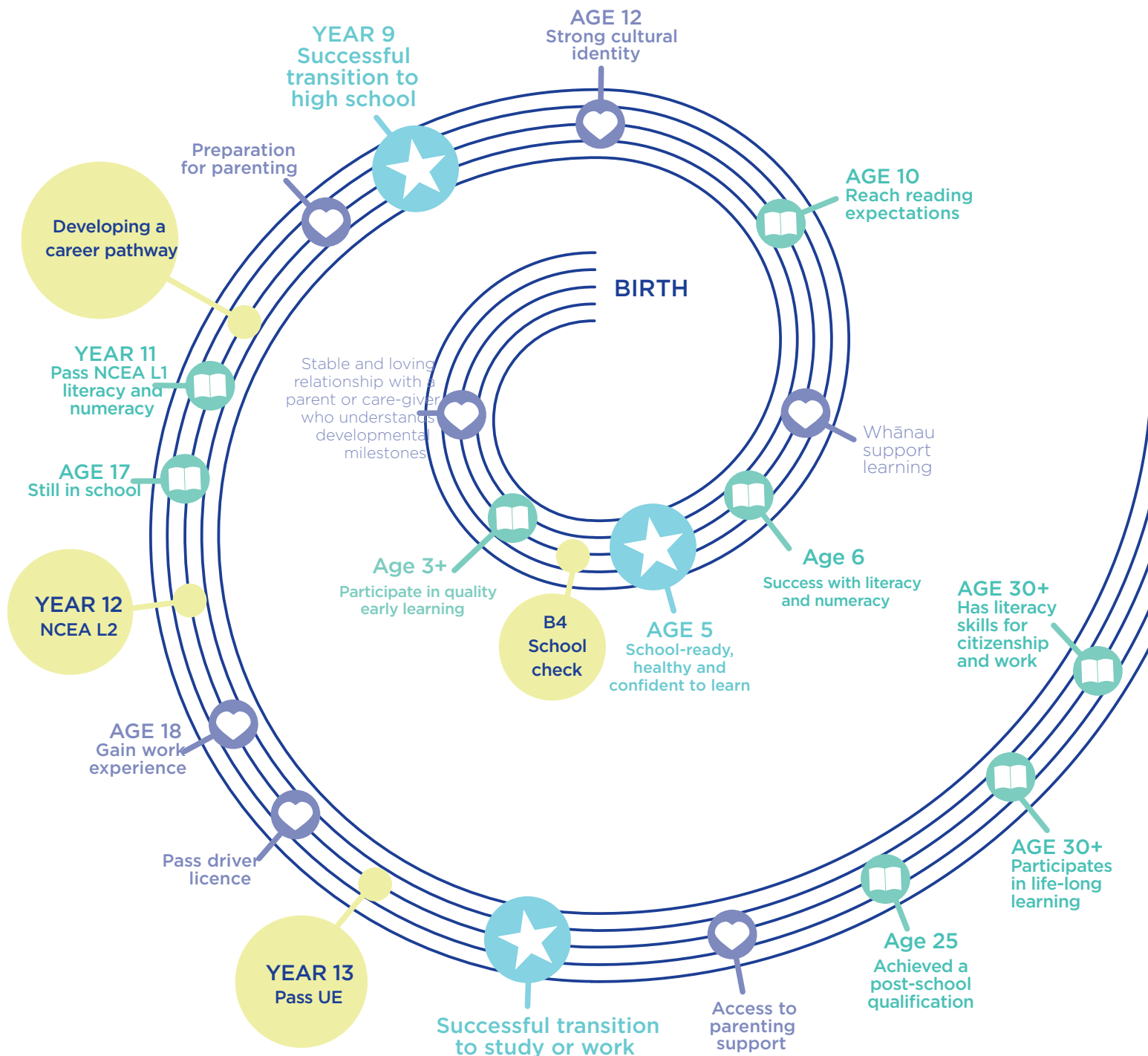


TE HONONGA
AKORANGA

COMET



PATHWAY TO SUCCESS FOR ALL AUCKLANDERS



LEGEND

- ★ Key transition point
- ♥ Social and emotional factors
- 📖 Academic factors

Foreword

Kei ngā mana whenua o
Tāmaki Makaurau, tēnā koutou

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā
iwi, e ngā hau e wha

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou,
tēnā tātou katoa

As Aucklanders we are privileged to live in a city with a beautiful environment and a diverse and rich culture. It gives us all choice and opportunity in where we can work, learn and relax, and where we can enjoy a stable, prosperous and peaceful life.

To ensure that a great life of opportunity is available to all who live here, Auckland must be more inclusive.

This means helping those who, for many different reasons, are not able to reach their full potential, including new immigrants and children in low decile areas. And it means focusing our support on Māori and Pasifika families whose children are not doing as well as they could at school.

Helping those who need it most not only lifts families up, it unlocks the potential and talent in all of our people, creating vibrant communities and a world-class Auckland.

To build a high-value, high-tech Auckland we need to provide the motivation and opportunity for people of all ages to acquire skills - both academic and trade - and to keep learning throughout their lives. We must also prepare young Aucklanders for a rapidly changing world of work and counter our city's high number of young people not learning or earning.

Central to creating employment and opportunities is education. It not only gives our young people the skills and ability needed to succeed in our rapidly changing world, but helps inspire the creativity and innovation our economy needs to be successful.

Ensuring educational services in Auckland are delivering for our people requires a joined-up approach between a multitude of organisations, and a voice to advocate for education across our city.

This is the value of COMET. Its role is to address system-wide education issues around our region by connecting and partnering with policymakers, educators, businesses, learners and community organisations to deliver high-impact educational programmes in Auckland.

Congratulations to COMET for its five years of service to Auckland and for setting out in this report the five key challenges and trends facing our city in skills and education.

These are the challenges that COMET can help us tackle so that we can build a vibrant and exciting city which is culturally rich, creative, innovative and a centre of learning – a world class city where talent wants to live.



Phil Goff,
Mayor of Auckland





Then Auckland mayor Len Brown, educator Te Kapa Stirling and students from Papakura South School at COMET Auckland's launch five years ago.

MAKING OUR MARK



Bernardine Vester | founding chief executive

We've come a long way since 1999 when COMET set up shop in a converted storage cupboard at Manukau Institute of Technology to join the dots between education, employment and economic development. What we started doing for south Auckland, we're now doing at a more strategic level and for the whole of Auckland. We're celebrating five years since relaunching as COMET Auckland, looking back at our achievements and at the challenges ahead.

Cast your mind back to the 1990s. Auckland was a patchwork of seven individual councils, Jim Bolger was Prime Minister, MMP was introduced and, according to COMET's founding chief executive, Bernardine Vester, the state of education in south Auckland was described as "dysfunctional" by an Education Review Office report.

"This greatly concerned the mayor of Manukau, Sir Barry Curtis," she says. "Sir Barry and Dr Jack McDonald from Manukau Institute of Technology who was leading the Manukau City Council development strategy, came up with the idea for a standalone education-focused entity to work alongside Manukau's economic development strategy. Then we realised that one of its most important functions was to connect the dots, as no one was responsible for what education in south Auckland should look like."

Long-term COMET chair Stuart Middleton takes the story on. "COMET came from a report that said that employment was critical to south Auckland, an employment report said education is critical, and an education report said we needed a voice for education across the south.

"COMET was a unique organisation from its first day in 1999, and did some great work over the next ten years to reflect the needs of the south. Among many things, it created some significant reports, introduced the very successful Principal For A Day, and was a strong contributor to council policy."

When the super city was proposed by the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance in 2009, Bernardine says it became clear that once a single Auckland Council was formed a focus just on south Auckland couldn't continue.



Stuart Middleton | former chairperson

"We knew that the council would be required to deliver across the whole of Auckland. Inevitably political needs had to be addressed across the whole of the city, instead of being community-focused."

This meant that for months leading up to the establishment of the super city, big questions were being asked, including: Would COMET remain in Manukau? Should COMET think about moving out across the region? Should it be part of the council?

Susan Warren, who succeeded Bernardine as COMET chief executive in September 2011, says that after a few meetings, the picture started to become clear. "COMET needed to grow regionally to be more effective. Council wanted to go ahead with a plan to shift our focus region-wide, and Mayor Len Brown, having grown up in the south, and being a big promoter of the power of education and skills, supported this shift."

A detailed process then took place to engage COMET stakeholders in providing input as to what they wanted to see in the vision, mission, and purpose of a city-wide organisation.

"This transition was all about COMET supporting the educators, employers and community leaders of Auckland to come together and collaborate around common goals..."

"We went through a lot of legal preparation that lasted over a year between the new council and COMET going region-wide. During that time, we had already been making connections and doing more things region-wide."

And then came 23rd July 2012: The big day of The Launch, in possibly the

most central location in Auckland – The Cloud on Queens Wharf. In front of 150 people from across the education sector, the mayor officially launched Auckland's newest council controlled organisation.

"The big impression for me that day was the view out of the huge window of The Cloud," says Susan. "I could feel the city around us, with our partners there – including people from the very beginning of COMET. As I looked out over all of these great people, it underpinned for me the importance of all of us working together and the value of collaboration."

"This transition was all about COMET supporting the educators, employers and community leaders of Auckland to come together and collaborate around common goals – doing things in a more connected way. As I said in my speech that day: 'With only 74 per cent of students leaving school with level 2 NCEA, 6,078 15 to 17 year olds out of education or employment and a further 410,000 adults living with low literacy, it's clear that an educated and engaged population is the only way Auckland can reach its economic and social potential. We can only do this if we work together.'"

Resonant ribbons

One of the things that made the COMET Auckland launch day so special was a symbolic interweaving of participants' hopes and dreams for education across Auckland.

Every seat at the launch had a ribbon draped on it, and every person present wrote their hope on their ribbon. Some of the dreams included: *"Educational success for all ... engaging and encouraging culture, heritage, language, resources"*, *"Every child reaches their potential"*, *"Leaving no-one out"*.

After the event, once all the dreams had been recorded, the ribbons were woven together into a magnificent korowai that hangs on COMET's office wall today.

"The ribbons ensured that important voices have been heard," says Susan Warren. "They continue to guide and inspire us today. Every new team member hears the story of the korowai, our boardroom window bears many of the dreams, and sometimes at team meetings we will read a few out. It is a way to remember why we are here, and what we do this for."



Artist Vicki Morehu designed and wove the korowai, which now has pride of place in the COMET Auckland office.

From relaunch day to today



COMET Auckland kaumatua Papa Kūkupa Tirikatene greets Te Kepa Stirling at the COMET Auckland launch.

So much has happened since we re-launched as COMET Auckland at The Cloud in July 2012, not least of which has been a physical move into the centre of the city - a move that came from an in-depth consultation with COMET's partners.

"In the new city structure, I felt that COMET could be a more effective voice for the south if it wasn't in the south," says Stuart Middleton. "COMET's strength was its patronage from council and its independence, not representing various education sectors. So, if we seriously saw ourselves as a regional entity we had to be closer to the centre, working more effectively if we were closer to the council."

After twelve years of free accommodation within MIT, the move was a logistical and financial challenge. However, when the office moved to Princes Street in central Auckland, it made a strong statement of city-wide intent that was welcomed by many educators across the city.

"I had always hoped that COMET would be able to move away from a purely Manukau focus," says Chris McLean, who was at the time coordinator for a cluster of schools in west Auckland. "People in west Auckland have a pocket of need as well. My hope at the launch therefore was that COMET would focus on learning throughout the city, and that we could liaise with them more. I had high expectations that COMET would be able to bring people together, to draw networks together across the city."

Angus Fletcher, executive chairman of the Fletcher Trust and involved long-term with COMET, says that it is to COMET's considerable credit that it has evolved into an Auckland-wide education initiative with an aspirational and strategic approach to advancing learning for all Aucklanders.

"I personally wasn't sure how the Trust would undertake and effect that transition, but COMET has very effectively transitioned into its role as a conduit and advocate for the education sector to council as well as connecting with Auckland communities as a promoter of educational improvement and learning."

The shift to a regional focus has led to greater clarity of purpose, too. Susan Warren says that although COMET's vision remains the same, the mission has focused over time.

"We've always been about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to reach their aspirations - to be the person they want to be and live life how they want - through learning."



*Angus Fletcher | Executive
Chairman of Fletcher Trust*



Chis McLean | Core Education

"We've always been about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to reach their aspirations - to be the person they want to be and live life how they want - through learning. However, we are much clearer now that our role in bringing that vision about is systems change. We know we need greater equity, and we know our role is most exclusively around collaboration and connecting to make changes together, so Auckland can reach its economic and social potential."

This focus has led to a much more strategic approach to COMET's work, says Susan. "We have made a gradual but consistent shift away from running smaller programmes and projects in isolated areas, to thinking bigger picture, looking at the system. If we do projects, we trial new ways of working and then pass them on. It is a shift in our role that's about thinking how we can best make a difference regionally - and that's with systems change."

Susan adds that since the launch, one of COMET's key roles has been to be selective to maximise impact. "It's about seeing the gaps or opportunities and asking how could things be better? How can we make a difference to the way the system works, so that groups of people can have a better deal? We are constantly looking at where we can make the biggest difference. We have to be selective, listening to our partners, bringing our advisory groups together and looking at the data, asking what have we got that we can bring to the table? What skills and partnerships have we got, and how do they fit best with the areas in need?"

“And when we shine a light on a particular thing – whether it is financial literacy, employability, or talking with babies, part of it is about what we can do with our partners so they can go away and take action.”

Stuart Middleton says that in taking this approach COMET has become a very smart organisation. “It remains a unique organisation, making a contribution that no other organisation makes. As the only education body in Auckland that speaks across all the school sectors, I’ve always said we should be asking what can we do to help the council, not the other way around. If we want an important role

“...to effect change in educational systems...you need both a collaborative approach and engagement at the community level.”

we have got to be willing to say things to the city about the aspirational things we want to do.”

One of the areas that COMET has succeeded in shining a light on is the importance of language in a multi-lingual city, says Chris McLean. “The push on te reo that COMET has had is so necessary, and what they are doing to support youth and get people into jobs has been really positive. COMET’s literacy focus has been great. I think it’s got a lot of value and is something that needs to be pushed.”

Angus Fletcher says that COMET has understood and effectively applied both ‘top down’ thinking and ‘bottom up’ engagement in its strategising on Learning Auckland. “The staff and trustees understand that it is critical to form views based on evidence, but to effect change in educational systems and improvement in educational outcomes you need both a collaborative approach and engagement at the community level. This is very demanding and time consuming and is not the standard approach for government agencies - particularly central government - but it is, in my opinion, the only approach that actually leads to long term systemic change and improvement.”



View from the chair – Ginie Denny

Our first five years as an Auckland-wide council controlled organisation have been productive as well as challenging. COMET has embraced working across a wider community whilst retaining our focus on areas of highest educational need.

Auckland is a changing super city. Not only are we growing in numbers, we are growing in diversity. Recognised as one of the most diverse cities in the world, we face increasing challenges in how we shape and talk about our New Zealand and Auckland identity, finding ways of living and working together that embrace and value difference and ensuring that we all prosper equally.

COMET facilitated and co-authored the Auckland Languages Strategy, Ngā Reo o Tāmaki Makaurau, which has a shared agenda of multilingualism to support, promote and foster all the city’s diverse languages and cultures. The strategy provides a tangible example of systems change generated by COMET. Further, our ability to leverage council funding to engage with larger more influential pieces of work is strengthened and we will continue to look for ways to maximise council funding to benefit Aucklanders.

COMET’s reputation and influence is growing locally, nationally and internationally. COMET brings trusted educational expertise and, increasingly, requests come to COMET for our project learnings to go to regions throughout New Zealand e.g. the YEP model is being trialled in six other regions with scope to grow further. COMET is regularly called upon by international agencies to offer a critical and constructive perspective on educational matters.

What’s in a name?

Once upon a time, COMET stood for City of Manukau Education Trust. In 2012 the name was reviewed as part of the city-wide transition, and it evolved into COMMUNITY Education Trust Auckland, or COMET Auckland.

The strength of COMET is reflected in its Māori name: Te Hononga Akoranga - The Bonding of Learning and Teaching. The name, and accompanying logo, also give life to COMET’s whakatauhaki: The tapestry of understanding, which was written by kaumātua Kūkupa Tirikatene ONZM. As he says: “Each of your team have their own personal skills, yet the focus of COMET is to bring together like-focused groups to improve outcomes, which COMET does so well. The many focused groups are the Strands being brought together and the improved outcome is the Tapestry of Understanding. The COMET team are the Weavers.”



FIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

Whānau Ara Mua: Turning lives around



*Judy Solomon | Founding Director
of Solomon Group*

Whānau Ara Mua (Families Facing Forward) is a superb example of a programme that has come through COMET's development process and has now been passed on to become part of the system. It's a free, year-long intergenerational family learning and literacy programme for adults.

Developed by COMET in collaboration with Manukau Institute of Technology, Whānau Ara Mua is now delivered by Solomon Group. It helps put learning and literacy at the heart of family life,

recognising the close link between children's educational achievement and the literacy levels of their parents.

Over the past five years, 488 adults have successfully graduated from Whānau Ara Mua, with the great majority of graduates being Māori and Pasifika sole parents. And the Whānau Ara Mua experience has enhanced the lives of their children - more than 1,000 youngsters.

Some of the many great examples of how the programme is changing lives through innovation include the ANZ MoneyMinded programme, which has been a catalyst for confidence and stable financial lives through budgeting and saving – described by Rob Stock in the East & Bays Courier as “proof that financial literacy can turn around lives”. Then, the Building Awesome Whānau parenting programme, which draws on the wisdom of Māori ways of being, doing and knowing, is packed full of great ideas and positive stories of parents on the journey with their own tamariki. And the Cook'n Kiwis programme provides not only great information about diet and nutrition, but gets people cooking, and sitting down to eat.

Founding director of the Solomon Group, Judy Solomon, says the

programme is so successful because it is intergenerational. “Whānau Ara Mua is the only course of its type in New Zealand that integrates early childhood and tertiary education.

“The ‘whole of whānau’ focus is truly unique and by providing parents, grandparents, and caregivers with the tools and desire to educate themselves, we are seeing profound changes in their lives and the lives of their children.”

Judy and husband Frank Solomon, the co-founder of the Solomon Group, are both passionate about the programme as they see the tears of gratitude at the many graduations of the Whānau Ara Mua students. It is a life-changing experience for students and for their whānau.

A former Whānau Ara Mua student says the most important benefit they gained from the course is the strengthening of relationships within the whānau. “My parenting skills improved a great deal and we lead a happy family life now. We have been having lots of fun. From this course I have become more patient with my kids and I am less stressed. We really enjoy learning and having lots of laughs. I wish I had known about this course years ago.”

Learning Auckland: Youth Voice

Learning Auckland has been a consistently powerful thread through the life of COMET Auckland. In May 2011, 200 leaders came together from education, industry, philanthropy, local and national government to discuss how to make learning effective for 100 per cent, rather than the current 80 per cent, of Aucklanders.

The group concluded that we need to stop waiting for central government to do it, and to do it ourselves in a planned manner.

Learning Auckland is all about taking action - a collaborative, ground-up movement for individuals, organisations and groups to create positive changes that support lifelong learning and skills.

Within this initiative, Learning Auckland magazine is produced by Education Today, with the support of COMET and in line with the Learning Auckland accord, Whakakotahitanga te Ara Mātauranga. Launched in June 2012, the publication goes to schools, educators and decision-makers throughout New Zealand, sharing innovative practice and raising issues that affect learning.



Charlotte Collins | Student Editorial Team Leader

As part of the Auckland Plan strategy of 'putting children and young people first', many of these stories are written by students. Young people from a range of primary, intermediate, secondary and tertiary education settings across Auckland come together with a professional editor, to discuss the issues they think need to be addressed, learn journalism skills and work together to plan their stories. The result is a

unique magazine featuring articles, opinion editorial, photographs and even comic art that together give an insight into learners' concerns and hopes.

Charlotte Collins, a leader of the student editorial team that contributes to Learning Auckland (and also a student rep on the Learning Auckland leadership table) says that as writing is a strong passion of hers, the magazine has provided her with both a creative outlet and a way to express things and issues she thinks need to be heard.

"In my experience with the magazine, I have been able to get a real sense of the importance of young people needing to speak up in order to get their voice heard. I'm constantly reminding students that you shouldn't be afraid to speak – your voice does count, it's a valid opinion, you have a right to express it.

"Thanks to COMET for helping provide the platform to allow us to do this and for the amazing support that we get – it is such a massive role. I would also just like to let students know that they matter, you matter, you make a difference."

The Power of Data



Lemauga Lydia Sosene, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board Chair

An essential part of the strategic leadership role COMET plays in the Auckland community is to draw attention to issues in education and skills that need more focus.

COMET publishes regular data sets in infographic snapshots that visually convey the pathway for learners and progress against that in particular parts of Auckland in any given year. While there is a wide range of information

available, almost nobody has the data at their fingertips in a singular, whole-picture format.

By pulling together all the relevant metrics into engaging infographics, COMET clearly highlights the interdependencies between each age and stage and identifies where things are working well or not so well, in order to lift the standard of learning across the board.

Specific uses of the snapshots as identified in COMET's 2016 stakeholder survey include:

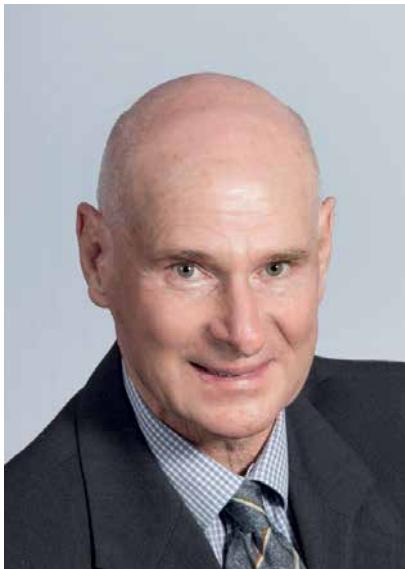
- As a tool to prompt discussions with employers regarding literacy and numeracy education (particularly highlighting Pasifika and ESOL needs)
- As an introduction to the education and learning eco-system and how COMET fits within that
- As a reference tool to shape and ensure community education programmes are targeted towards the needs of a community.

Local board chair for Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Lemauga Lydia Sosene, says the snapshots have proven to be an invaluable resource for their purposes.

"We have the youngest population out of all the wards in Auckland along with the lowest preschool participation rate so being across the broader education needs landscape is crucial. More often than not the reports in this space can be hundreds of pages long and too wordy. The snapshots COMET provides us with allow quick analysis in a short timeframe in a way that is easily digestible.

"In addition to the snapshots COMET is also very helpful on the stakeholder front. We have many complex social problems in Māngere-Ōtāhuhu and sometimes need the right people in the room to go forward to find solutions.

"COMET is a big help on this front with their extensive relationships and strategic advice. A big thank you to Susan and the team and their governance and trustees for their support. Keep up the good work."



Michael Burgess | YEP Steering Group Member



Youth Employability Programme

The Youth Employability Programme (YEP) is a cross-sector, business-led initiative by COMET Auckland and its partner organisations in response to industry concerns that young people may not be developing some of the skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

YEP aims to improve the employability of school graduates with skills training designed to transform students into highly employable young people.

Learning activities as part of the programme include workshop-based learning and extensive work experience, aimed at building the real-world competencies business leaders have said they want to see young people display.

A YEP steering group member, Michael Burgess of the Employers and Manufacturers' Association, says the findings from a 2015 EMA employers survey really highlighted the need for the programme.

"What employers were saying is their number one priority was the ability to get on with other people and other soft skills such as teamwork and problem-solving. But, on discussing these findings with students, it's clear that most were reasonably dissatisfied with

how well they were being equipped with these skills. It was at this point when we knew we needed to do something about it."

"It makes me feel proud and satisfied when a number of these employers then take the young people on."

While still being tested and fine-tuned, the programme has been picked up by several regions outside Auckland to the point that there are around 1,000 students enrolled in YEP, with 39 schools and other providers delivering the programme.

After completing YEP, graduates are awarded certificates that demonstrate their skills to potential employers.

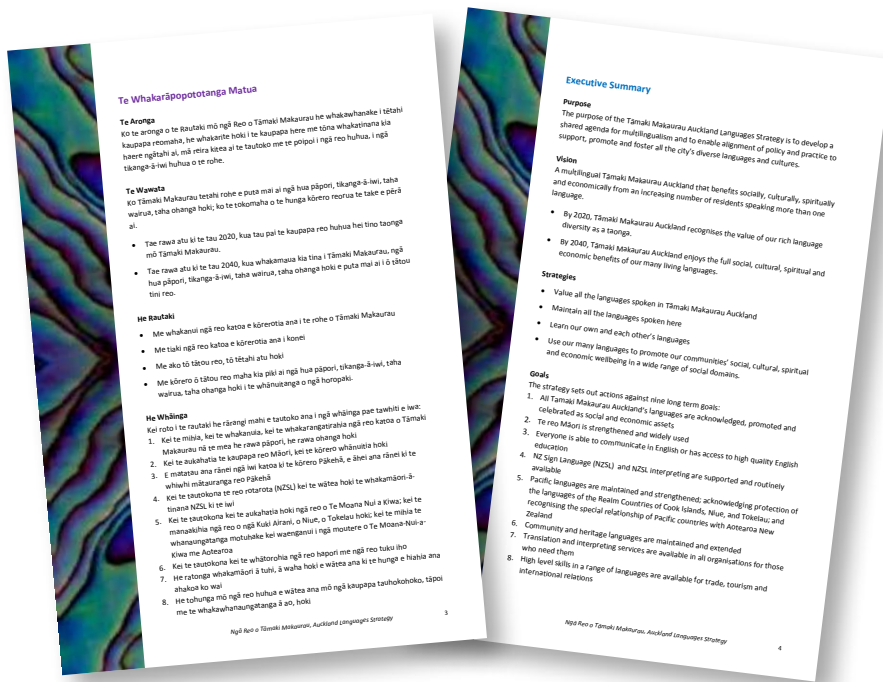
Michael says the Licence to Work ceremony reinforces the difference being made.

"The graduation and certificate-receiving ceremony is a celebration that allows everyone to see how the learning and experience all comes together. It makes me feel proud and satisfied when a number of these employers then take the young people on.

"We must focus on the youth market, as it is critical to the future of New Zealand. There is a huge skills shortage currently, with 10,000 new jobs created every month. It's also a chance for employers to support their local community and raise their profile and access new pools of talent too."

★ **YOUTH** ★
EMPLOYABILITY
PROGRAMME





Dr Tania Ka'ai | Professor of Language Revitalisation at AUT

Advocating for Te Reo Māori

"Language is the carrier of culture and memory. To starve or kill a language is to starve and kill a people's memory bank."
– Tania Ka'ai

Over the last 30-40 years there has been a huge shift in the recognition that te reo Māori is a vital part of Māori culture and a defining feature of Aotearoa New Zealand's education system. No other country in the world has national curricula in two languages that are not direct translations of one another.

The Auckland Languages Strategy, Ngā Reo o Tāmaki Makaurau, aims to develop a shared agenda for multilingualism and to enable alignment of policy and practice to support, promote and foster all the city's diverse languages and cultures.

Dr Tania Ka'ai, Professor of Language Revitalisation at AUT, emphasises that she would love to see te reo Māori taught as a compulsory language at primary school and to have this sufficiently resourced.

"I would really like to see Auckland, as such a diverse community, have as one of its strategies to become the first super city that's bilingual in Māori and in English since Rotorua is New Zealand's first

bilingual city. This is hugely important to me, as we are a gateway to the world. Furthermore, over 80 per cent of Pākehā New Zealanders in our 2015 pop-up survey have indicated that te reo Māori should be compulsory – they want their children to learn te reo in primary school."

"COMET plays a great role in strong advocacy of the importance of languages in every form."

Professor Ka'ai says that to normalise te reo Māori in New Zealand, it needs to be adopted by the nation and people who come into the country.

"People coming into New Zealand are seeking out the opportunity to learn the

Māori language and culture, because they recognise the need to understand the culture associated to the land. They are respecting the indigenous people of the country and their language.

"Many corporates are now also learning the language. They have to be at the same table as iwi, and it is having a huge influence on shaping New Zealand's economic development – an important marker of our commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand.

"If there is an acceptance or appreciation for the Māori language by wider society, this will make a significant difference to the status of the Māori language. COMET plays a great role in strong advocacy of the importance of languages in every form – through education, through community, research, the symposium and everything it does. Their work keeps important issues in education and languages to the fore – they work very hard in supporting organisations with lobbying government for reforms and policy changes regarding languages and the right to language."

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

1. OUR STARTING POINT

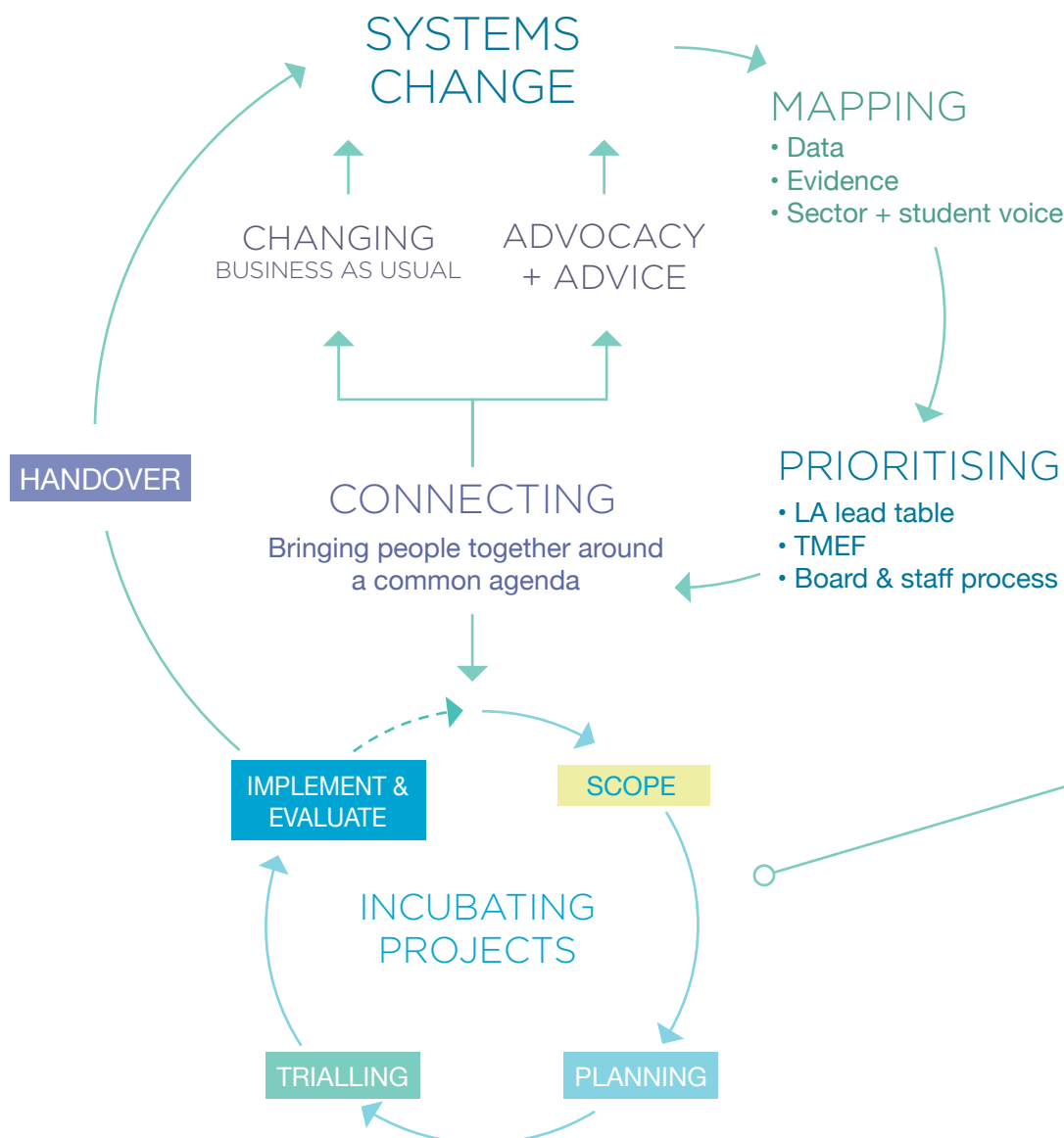
Our mission

Driving systems change to make education and skills more effective and equitable across Auckland.

Our Vision

All Aucklanders have the right to shine and realise their dreams through lifelong learning.

3. OUR APPROACH



2.

OUR GOALS FOR LEARNERS

We worked with experts from across the system to identify the key milestones that evidence shows enable learners to reach their aspirations and contribute to their family and community. Together these milestones create a continuous pathway of learning for Aucklanders of all ages, summarised in the Pathway to Success diagram on the inside front cover.

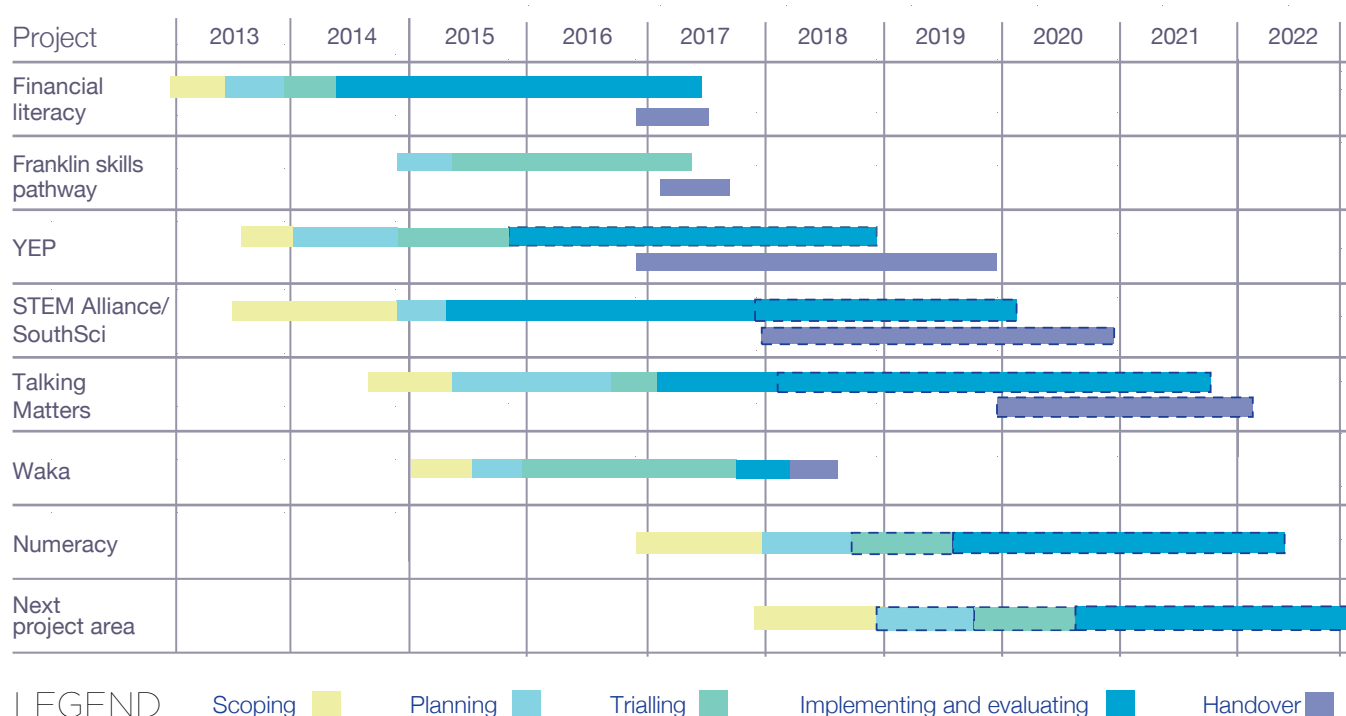
4.

OUR JOURNEY TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

Using our mission and vision as the origin point for everything we do, we use the evidence-based milestones for learners that we developed with a group of experts (expressed in the Pathway to Success diagram) to guide our planning. We then work with partners to prioritise the areas in the Pathway to Success where we can jointly make the biggest difference for equity. Briefly, our work involves: Sector leadership – mapping data and evidence, working with sector leaders to identify and prioritise the most pressing areas of focus, and connecting people around that common agenda, to plan collaborative action. That can then lead to advocacy or changes to partners' business as usual, or sometimes to planning and trialling new ways of working (incubation projects). Projects generally develop through scoping and planning to trialling, and then implementation and evaluation, with the goal of handing them on once they are fully developed, so we can move on to focus on another part of the system.

INCUBATING PROJECTS detail

How our projects develop over time



THE VIEW AHEAD

Helping our children and young people to prosper means understanding the key trends and challenges for Auckland's education and skills system. We've invited five thought-leaders to look ahead for the next five years - maths teaching innovator Dr Roberta Hunter of Massey University, Tame Te Rangi of Ngāti Whātua, Sue Wright of the Brainwave Trust Aotearoa, Kim Campbell from the Employers and Manufacturers Association, and diversity advocate and lawyer Mai Chen. We start with COMET's view from chief executive Susan Warren and our inaugural chairperson, Colleen Brown.

Although much has been achieved over the past five years to drive systems change and create opportunities for Aucklanders through learning there is so much yet to be tackled, says Susan Warren.

"One of the things that has changed in the last five years of data is that the percentage of kids getting NCEA qualifications by the end of school has increased nationwide," she says. "On the surface it looks really good: The Ministry of Education says the gaps between Māori and Pasifika, Pākehā and Asian students are closing. But I'm not convinced; I don't see the gains in the system.

"We still have an issue of equity and equality of achievement, and so many young people who may have NCEA on paper, nevertheless don't have the credits they need for the study or work they were aiming for. Many kids are being channelled into courses that are easier to pass, but are not necessarily taking them where they want to go."

To compound the problem, adaptability is an issue in our rapidly changing world, says Susan.

"At COMET we are always thinking about transferable skills - from school into work, and then on. Joining these dots is about giving people and their families information, the power to influence the pathways that young people can take. We need much more coherent support for young people as they move into secondary school and then into work, to help them plan their next steps.

"Further, as jobs change, the need for interpersonal skills and problem solving skills is high, but our system is not good at providing ongoing training for adults. There's a systems-level need for retraining adults, supporting them in re-educating themselves through their lives. We all need to be literate to keep pace with technology. We need to drive our future world and not be driven by it."

Susan explains that a core ongoing focus for COMET is to support lifelong language learning.

"Studies show that building strong language development in the early years is crucial, particularly in the first three years of brain development. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of family in this: The power of parents and whānau, talking with children. Our question is how do we best support parents in their role? Talking Matters is working hard on this.

"All our children and their parents need to be able to dream of a brighter future."

"And then we need to focus on languages too, if we want to leverage Auckland's diversity, which is our city's enormous strength. Our kids should have the potential to come out of school speaking three languages, or be at least bilingual. We should be teaching te reo in all schools, and we are also encouraging employers to support their people in using their diverse language skills. If we don't build on the strengths of our Māori, Pasifika and migrant communities, we miss a key opportunity for our economy. There is such huge potential there but at the moment we are not reaching it."

This is given additional punch by Colleen Brown, a teacher in the south for her entire professional career, as well as former Manukau City councillor and the first chairperson of COMET.

"Often our children don't believe that they are special. They aim low. They don't have the mentors to show them how to develop their extraordinary abilities. When the red stain of socio-economic deprivation indexes slash across every community where you, your extended whānau and friends live, it is



Susan Warren | Chief Executive, COMET Auckland



Colleen Brown, former COMET board chair

hard to dream beyond those borders. All our children and their parents need to be able to dream of a brighter future.

"We are making some steps in increasing quality ECE provisions, encouraging families to talk to each other, and increasing our NCEA pass rates but the insidious challenge is poverty. COMET's stark message is a reminder to us all - if we want to prosper as a city, it should not depend on your postcode whether this happens or not."

Five leaders - five views



Dr Roberta Hunter | Massey University

Every child, no matter what, needs the same access to education as every other child. However, children in Auckland get uneven access to education, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, although we have many really good teachers in Auckland, we have a major teacher shortage, which is causing greatest harm to the children with the greatest need. High poverty schools are down about 2-3 experienced teachers - they just don't have access to them - and many schools are struggling to get teachers in front of children.

Dr Roberta Hunter - Education needs a shake up

It's about housing and the cost of living in Auckland, and it's about the poor economy: People are not going into teaching as it costs money to become one. And then teachers don't live in high poverty areas. They have to travel in, which takes time and is expensive. Further, teachers need to be in tune with the diverse nature of Auckland and its inhabitants.

Secondly, students need the type of teaching that matches what they bring to school, rather than the teaching that suits the general school population. They also need a future. Consider how in the past young people did apprenticeships. Now they have to do papers, when many just want to move on to work. If all we did was rethink education and training programmes so kids had access to free, high-quality apprenticeships in high poverty areas we could change the dynamics of employment. Instead, what we have done is set up courses with fees, and cause families hardship and sacrifice.

Thirdly, the latest international mathematical studies show that in New

Zealand the social disparities between haves and have-nots is huge. When you have achievement either at the top or bottom, the bottom drags the top down. It doesn't take a brains trust to think 'let's focus on bottom, as it will drag everybody up'. The Ministry is not prepared to do that - they say they are, but they are not. Worse, the new Ministry professional learning and development programme has taken money from priority learners and spread it out, and higher decile schools now access the limited funds.

We need a plan for the future that creates access to quality teaching, no matter what. Government planning and policy needs a complete shake up. I challenge the MOE constantly to do a stocktake of the transient patterns of teachers in high poverty schools and make it really public.

It all comes down to the fact that education is a political ballgame. Let's take it out of the political arena, stop the Minister calling the shots, and develop some really good policies based on the best education systems in the world.

Tame Te Rangi - Education: A vehicle for empowerment



Tame Te Rangi | Ngāti Whātua

The demographic profile of Tāmaki as a region highlights an opportunity to accentuate the distinction of the Māori component.

When people speak of education as a vehicle for empowerment, they usually refer to their aspirations as a people rather than as individuals. Quite often, such education initiatives are at odds with government authorities because of their insistence on responding to community imperatives first, before considering state requirements. This priority given to communal development places the institution in a very different posture in relation to its clientele than that of institutions whose primary concern is development of the individual.

Increasingly, Māori people are pursuing education on their own terms as a means of maintaining their cultural integrity, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Of growing importance to local education efforts are traditional ways of constructing, organising and using tribal knowledge. A common consideration in this regard is the traditional emphasis on orality over literacy as the primary means for transmitting knowledge.

Taking the issue one step further is to attempt to outline a theory of

education, training and development, including an alternative set of standards which can be used as a basis for judging the efficacy of educational programs designed to serve people, including:

Spirituality - appreciation for relationships;

Service - education for emancipation;

Diversity – alignment with whānau, hapū, iwi and their respective communities being joined up;

Culture - determined ways of thinking, communicating and living;

Tradition - continuity as well as inter-generational succession;

Respect - relationship between individual and group recognised as mutually empowering;

History - appreciation of the facts, including the loss of the tribal estate and continuing racial, tribal and political oppression;

Relentlessness - commitment to the entitlements for our successive generations;

Vitality - recognition of the strength of people and culture;

Conflict - understanding dynamics and consequences of oppression;

Place - importance of sense of place, land and territory; and

Transformation - commitment to personal and societal change.

The unique cultural adaptations in community-led initiatives offer valuable lessons for anyone seeking to construct an educational alternative to the dominant, Western-style institutional model.

The first five years of transition provides COMET a sound basis to address such issues. Setting an influential role for the next five years within the Tāmaki context will not only contribute to the well-being of the immediate communities, but also to the wellbeing of the total population.



Sue Wright - Early brain development key to human potential



*Sue Wright | Executive Director,
Brainwave Trust Aotearoa*

When people think about the brain they see it as something that creates thought. They often overlook the other important roles it plays in helping us be social human beings. In particular its ability to process, manage and regulate our emotions and feelings. This is fundamental to the way we feel about ourselves and how we form relationships with others.



A baby's brain grows to 70 per cent of adult size in the first year of life. This huge growth is in response to experiences he or she has from the world around them, which literally shape their brain and the way it works. This development builds the template for lifelong relationships and learning.

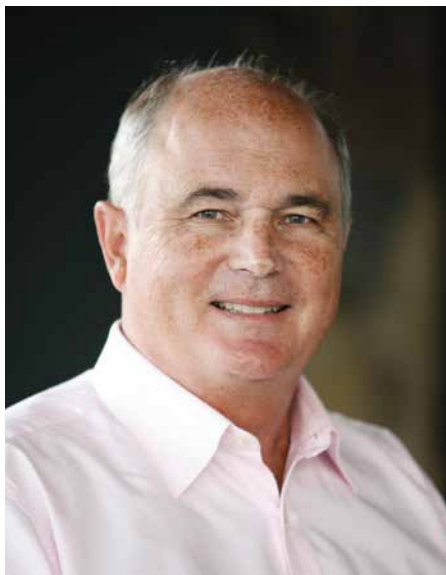
In these early years a child will form an attachment relationship with a key adult, often their mother, who is critical in helping that little person survive, thrive and reach their potential.

Currently in society there are emerging and established trends that ignore the importance of these attachment relationships for early brain development. For instance there is an increased trend in society to encourage people back to work, and therefore place their child in the care of others. There are many reasons for this, but we need to do this consciously knowing that what a baby needs is love, nurture and responsive 'parenting'.

We need to focus on the basics and defining how we can meet the baby's needs. From there the key is to work with families and early childhood teachers and carers to build initiatives that are about strengthening their care for babies and children.

Initiatives like Talking Matters can have a lifelong effect on a child's potential. It reinforces the belief that building relationships has a long term impact on the development of our children.

As we move forward we need to focus investment and activity on these early years as it is the greatest opportunity to invest in brain development. We have to be clear that the heart of effective change will come through building relationship-based change, so I encourage government and providers to pay more attention to strengthening the resources and capabilities of families. Then they can support their babies' and young children's development.



*Kim Campbell | Chief Executive,
Employers and Manufacturers Association*

Kim Campbell - Match learning with the modern workplace

When it comes to the future needs of Auckland's workforce we are dealing with a many-headed hydra. More than ever, there is now a need to match education and learning with the modern evolving workplace.

In Auckland, and New Zealand in general, there is a need to deal with a growing skills and labour shortage and contemplate a workforce where thinking is valued over doing.

This direction needs to come first from the government. It has to send clear signals and funding for the kinds of training in areas of employment where there are skills and labour shortages.

Lifelong learning is something that institutions and workplaces now need to prioritise. When I started work there were no fax machines, no credit cards, and you even had to book overseas phone calls. To remain relevant you have to continuously update yourself to match the evolving and changing requirements of the workforce.

We are already seeing a number of businesses emphasise continuous learning. But over the next five years we need to see more organisations willing to commit to harbouring unskilled people through schemes like cadetships and apprenticeships. We need to change the thinking so workplaces are thought of as long-time learning environments, places where someone can learn workplace skills, socialisation and personal development.

Lastly, we need to invest in a society where individuals want to invest in themselves. We need to teach them to have a desire to learn skills and embrace lifelong learning. We need to show them that if they read, go to courses and have a positive attitude then they have unlimited career opportunities.

Never has a young person anywhere in the world had more opportunity than right now in New Zealand. It is our challenge to make sure this opportunity is embraced through the power of education and lifelong learning.



Mai Chen | Managing Partner, Chen Palmer Partners

Mai Chen - Embrace diversity to maximise Auckland's potential

Auckland is one of only a small number of cities in the world that is classified as super-diverse, meaning more than 100 nationalities are represented by the resident population: Auckland has more than 200 ethnicities.

When it comes to dealing with this super-diversity and multiculturalism, Auckland does well - we have relatively good cultural intelligence given our Treaty of Waitangi relationship with tangata whenua and our special relationship with Pasifika, given that Auckland is the biggest Pasifika city in the world. We are number two on the 2017 Global Peace Index. But we must not take this for granted.

In the last five years, the country has witnessed unparalleled demographic change. Auckland now has a critical mass of people living in the city who were not born in New Zealand. Great challenges lie ahead for the city, as its diversified society continues to grow. Statistics NZ has projected that by 2038 one in three people in Auckland will be of Asian ethnicity and 51 per cent of New Zealand's population will identify as Māori, Asian and Pasifika (although 65 per cent of the population will also identify as Anglo-Saxon, given the increase in mixed race marriage and the offspring produced).

Auckland now has the opportunity and challenge to become an example for other super-diverse cities in the world to follow. To do this the current status quo attitude towards diversity, being that if it is ignored it will look after itself, needs to change. Diversity is about everyone, because diversity means difference and we all have a different gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and dis(ability). We need to openly discuss Kiwi culture and values and how that differs from the values and cultures of those New Zealanders born elsewhere. We need to be more deliberate about what a

superdiversity framework for society looks like and what a multicultural society on a bicultural basis looks like. We must avoid policies, actions, or behaviours that marginalise people who were not born in New Zealand because, in doing so, we create challenges for ourselves.

In doing this we will have a better chance at maximising the potential of all people living in Auckland and in New Zealand.

Education is the coalface of superdiversity. School is where kids go to learn things they cannot learn at home, including Kiwi culture and English language. The learning environment is a vital place where new migrants learn about culture and language. Because of this we need to build the cultural intelligence of organisations, especially those who operate in early childhood education, with families and employers.

In a city where almost 50 per cent of the population was not born here, COMET Auckland plays a vital role in developing the understanding of a need for cultural intelligence. Partnering with other organisations in Auckland is critical in helping them meet the needs of people from all walks of life.



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hope
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