

“Tui tui tāngata, tui tui korowai”

Bringing people together is like weaving a fine cloak.

A korowai is a traditional handwoven Māori cloak featuring hukahuka (tassel adornment), worn for important occasions. The korowai represents the vocational education system and the way it operates is represented by how the korowai is woven together. Like a korowai, the system wraps around the learner, their whānau, iwi and industry to deliver the skills that learners, employers and communities need to thrive in Aotearoa New Zealand.

How the key objectives of vocational education are signified by the korowai



Learners / Employers: at the centre of the korowai

The learner is at the centre of the system or korowai where they are supported to learn relevant skills.

- Vocational Education and Training (VET) is relevant to the workplace, fulfilling regional and national workforce needs.
- Industry has a strong voice in the development of programmes and qualifications, so learners can feel confident they are learning industry-relevant skills.
- Learners have the flexibility to study throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and choose from classroom, workplace or online learning.
- The system is inclusive and equitable for all learners to provide equal opportunity for success.

Honouring Te Tiriti: the taniko (collar) of the korowai

The section of the korowai known as the taniko, closest to the upoko (head) of the learner communicates the utmost importance that vocational education places on honouring Te Tiriti. The taniko is integral to the foundation of the korowai, just as the commitment to Te Tiriti underpins the vocational education system. The taniko is the horizontal muka (flax) strands into which all the other vertical muka fibres get woven into/from. Organisations participating in the VET system are empowered to actively engage with ākonga (students), whānau, iwi and hapū in decision-making and prioritise Māori cultural knowledge and capability.

Tertiary Education Organisations: on the shoulder of the cloak

Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) are the frontline of the VET system and are expected to provide high-quality, culturally responsive education with a focus on learner wellbeing. In the korowai, the TEOs are represented near the upoko of the learner, which signifies their importance and shows how the strands of the TEOs are woven into the system.

Qualifications informed by Industry, Regions and Māori Leadership:

Vocational training qualifications and programmes will be developed by organisations tasked with ensuring it is relevant to industry and regional needs and supports Māori-Crown partnerships. This flow of information is presented in the korowai by the interwoven muka fibres which create the garment.

Workforce Development Councils (WDCs):

Like strands of muka in the korowai, the six WDCs help to hold the system together by giving industry a much greater leadership voice into the setting of standards and developing qualifications in their respective sectors. The councils consider the input of industry leaders, employers, iwi, and Māori businesses to determine the skills needed for work in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs):

These 15 regional bodies work with local employers and leaders to identify upcoming skills needs and provide regional solutions to regional problems. Where a national response is required, RSLGs are connected to the right parties to start that response.

RSLGs are represented by the interwoven muka strands that run perpendicular to the WDCs' muka to reflect how they work together to identify future skills needs and to develop and endorse qualifications that align with government priorities.

Taumata Aronui:

An independent group that helps form government priorities and advises to improve outcomes for Māori learners and uphold the values of Te Tiriti. In the korowai, Taumata Aronui is represented by the clasp that holds the collar (Te Tiriti) and the entire garment together. This important placement reflects how Taumata Aronui and Te Tiriti is integral to the system: if we remove the collar/clasp, the korowai will fall to the ground.

Government Enabling System Change:

Represented by the muka strands that bind together to form the structural fabric of the korowai.

- The new funding framework has been designed to encourage TEOs to put the needs of learners at the centre and ensure they can access training that is right for them, at the right time and in the right place.
- Investment in VET is conducted through the Unified Funding System (UFS) which puts learners and their whānau at the centre, supports work-based learning and adapts to deliver the skills that are needed by learners, employers and communities.
- Vocational Education qualifications are simplified to enable learners to easily transition from the classroom to a work environment depending on their needs, and more consistency in skills learned across different regions.

Values of the Vocational Education and Training System:

Underpinning the system (the korowai) and the way it operates (is woven together) are key shared values:

Kaitiakitanga Shared Guardianship

Learners are provided with a caring environment that encourages them to have a connection with the training they receive.

Whakapono Trust

Learners and employers should trust that the system delivers training and skills that meet their needs and are relevant to their region.

Manaakitanga Service to others

The focus of vocational education is to support learner wellbeing and benefit the economy and wider community.

Kotahitanga Collaboration

The vocational education system has a collective responsibility to support individuals to achieve their aspirations, and this can only be achieved by collaboration between entities, employers, and learners.