


Event backgrounder: Hon Chris Hipkins presenting the 2018 Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards on the 13 September 2018

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
Cc:	Hon Kelvin Davis and Hon Jenny Salesa, Associate Ministers of Education
From:	s9(2)(a) Manager Strategy and Priorities, Delivery
Date:	6 September 2018
Reference:	E/18/00576

Purpose

1. This paper provides information for your attendance at the annual Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards. It includes:
 - a. background information on the Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards;
 - b. details of the Sustained Excellence Award recipients (attached as Appendix A);
 - c. details of the Excellence in Supporting Pacific Learners and Prime Minister's Supreme award recipient (Appendix B)
 - d. who is speaking, who will be attending and who runs the awards; and
 - e. your draft speech (Appendix C).
2. For an event backgrounder it will say: You are scheduled to attend on 13 September 2018 at 6:00pm at the Banquet Hall, Parliament Buildings.
3. We recommend that you release this aide-memoire in full once it has been considered by you.

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Manager Strategy and Priorities, Delivery
Tertiary Education Commission

6 September 2018

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

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The event will be hosted by yourself and Parmjeet Parmar at the Banquet Hall, Parliament Buildings

1. Parmjeet Parmar is the Chair of the Education and Workforce Committee. The Awards will run from 5.30 - 9.00 pm on 13 September 2018.

You will attend the Awards from 6.00pm – 8.20pm. The order of events is as follows:

Time:	Description:
6:00pm	You will arrive and be met by Helen Lomax, Director of Ako Aotearoa. Pre function networking event in Banquet Hall
6.10pm	Guest are welcomed into Main function area
6.35pm	Dinner is served
7.05pm	The Award presentations will commence with a speech by Helen Lomax.
7:15pm	The MC for the evening, Pio Terei, will introduce you, and you will make a short speech.
7:20pm	You will present the 2018 Sustained Excellence Awards and the Kaupapa Māori Awards.
8:00pm	You will present the Endorsement for Excellence in Supporting Pacific Learners Award and announce the Prime Minister's Supreme awardee and present the award.
8.15pm	Following the Supreme Award presentation the 2017 recipient of the Supreme Award, Dr Te Taka Keengan will hand over the Māori Cloak to this year's Supreme Award recipient, Fa'afetai Sopoaga.

The Awards recognise and encourage excellence in tertiary teaching

2. They provide an opportunity for teachers to further their careers and share good practice with others. This is the seventeenth year of the awards have been held.
3. Up to twelve Sustained Excellence Awards, of \$20,000 each, are awarded annually. There are three categories of awards:
 - a general category (up to ten awards);
 - a Kaupapa Māori category (two awards) recognising sustained excellence of teaching work in a Māori context; and
 - the Endorsement for Excellence in Supporting Pacific Learners category (one award). This is the first year it will be awarded.

4. A Prime Minister's Supreme Award of \$10,000 is also awarded to one of the recipients of a Sustained Excellence Award who best exemplifies the overall criteria for the general category.

The Awards Committee is made up of tertiary education senior representatives and interest groups

5. Nominees prepared portfolios detailing their demonstration of sustained excellence in tertiary teaching. A total of 20 portfolios were received. Of these; two were submitted for the Kaupapa Māori category. This year there were 16 nominees from universities and four from Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics.
6. The Awards Committee members individually considered each portfolio against the criteria set for the Awards, before meeting to determine which nominations would be forwarded to you for endorsement. The Awards Committee selected the 10 nominees listed in Appendix A as worthy award winners.
7. The Awards Committee for in the general category assess how the nominee is student-centred, proactive in their professional development, has had a positive influence on teaching practice and demonstrates sustained excellence.
8. The Kaupapa Māori award also focuses its criteria on mana, leadership, Māori knowledge and teaching excellence. To receive the Excellence in Supporting Pacific Learners Endorsement applicants must show understanding of the enabling factors for Pacific learners that are related to prior learning through their background and culture and their ability to form good relationships with Pacific learners and their communities.

Sector leaders will also be speaking at the event

1. Speaking at the event will be:
 - Mr Kura Moeahu, Parliament's Kaiwhakarite (who will open the evening with a mihi);
 - Dr Graeme Benny, Chair, Ako Aotearoa;
 - Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission;
 - Parmjeet Parmar, Chair, Education and Workforce Committee;
 - Phil Ker, Chair, Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards Committee; and
 - Helen Lomax, Director, Ako Aotearoa.
2. The audience will include:
 - Ako Aotearoa Board members;
 - Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus members;
 - Ako Aotearoa Pacific Peoples Caucus members;
 - Ako Aotearoa Reference Group members;
 - Members of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards Committee;
 - The Executive Committee of the Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence;
 - Representatives from the Tertiary Peak Bodies;
 - Board Members of the Tertiary Education Commission;
 - Senior Managers of the Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Qualifications Authority and Ministry of Education;

- Award winners, their guests and their nominators; and
- Media are likely to attend this event.

Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, run the Awards

9. Ako Aotearoa supports tertiary teaching capability. A central aim of Ako Aotearoa is to promote teaching excellence, share good practice and encourage collaboration between educators. They have continued to grow and evolve their role in the sector and undertake a wide range of activities to achieve this.
10. Ako Aotearoa has recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary and has launched a new strategic direction in building capability in the sector. A key part of this is the development of professional teaching standards for the tertiary sector.
11. Dr Graeme Benny is the Chair of the Ako Aotearoa Board, and Helen Lomax has been recently appointed as the Director.

Appendix A: Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awardees

The following awardees will be aware that they have been successful, but they will have been asked to keep this knowledge confidential prior to the formal announcements at the Awards ceremony. However, the announcement of the Prime Minister's Supreme Award, from the 10 awardees, will not be made until the evening of the Awards ceremony.

The information on the awardees is provided from Ako Aotearoa.

Sustained Excellence award recipients

This award recognises that these teachers are student-centred, proactive in their professional development, have had a positive influence on teaching practice and demonstrate sustained excellence.



Dr Rebecca Bird

Department of Anatomy

University of Otago

Rebecca is one of those rare teachers who inspires and arouses a love of deep learning in her students, triggering the same passion she felt when exploring human biology. She is student-centred, inclusive and at the heart of everything she does are her student's unique needs, motivations and dreams. She is passionate about helping Māori students to succeed and those who struggle and are at risk of failing. She sees her role as a guide helping students find their way through the often overwhelming path through university, and she couldn't imagine doing anything else.

It is this extraordinary ability to nurture individual students' academic ability combined with pastoral care experiences that have profoundly affected them. Her talent has also made her a natural leader of her peers. Students attest to Rebecca being their inspiration. One writes, "I wouldn't be in medicine without her assistance and teaching throughout the year". While a peer states that she models her training sessions on Rebecca's teaching so that she too can get the best out of the students.



Dr Donella Cobb

Faculty of Education, Te Hononga Curriculum and Pedagogy
University of Waikato

“I was four years old when I decided I wanted to be a teacher” but it wasn’t until 2011 when Donella discovered her passion and love for the tertiary sector. Starting off her career in primary education, Donella spent over ten years teaching children in New Zealand, England and Australia, before continuing to enhance her cultural awareness by teaching and developing practices in Rwanda. “It was this experience that opened my eyes to the power of tertiary education as a platform for transformative change.”

As a teacher educator, Donella is extremely passionate about sharing her knowledge and encouraging others to be great teachers. “You really reinforced the kind of teacher I aspire to be, you are a prime example of the way I hope my students feel about me”. Her portfolio highlights her philosophy of pedagogy; having a student-centred approach, embracing cultural diversity and building robust relationships with students. A senior lecturer colleague concurs, “her sincerity, patience, competence, demeanour, warmth, work ethic and never-ending smile ensure that all students feel welcome and supported.



Dr Kathryn Hay

School of Social Work
Massey University

Kathryn’s commitment to social justice has driven her work in social work field education for the last 15 years, this commitment is evident in her teaching approach which focuses on participation, inclusion and empowerment. One student said, “you are very attentive and inclusive, which made it easy to engage and share”. Her innovative practice breaks down the boundaries between theory and practice to help students navigate the challenges inherent in field placements. She facilitates student engagement through media-rich interactive and authentic learning experiences, and by providing safe spaces in which students can share their histories and emotions, and critically reflect on their learning in practice.

Kathryn brings a wealth of leadership experience to social work field education through her contributions to local and national committees, her research and scholarship, and resource development. However, what brings her “joy” is being part of her students’ personal and professional development and educational success. Hence her constant focus on teaching excellence. A colleague commented she is “an excellent teacher committed to her students and in providing high-quality learning experiences”.

Kaupapa Māori Award recipient



Manuka Henare

Business School

University of Auckland

A whakatauki says ‘whaia te pae tawhiti kia tata, whaia to pae tata kia maua’. Pursue your dreams on distant horizons, bring them close and so they may become your reality. That whakatauki encapsulates Manuka Henare’s teaching career. Manuka has shown outstanding leadership and innovation in developing indigenous business, knowledge and health education programmes. Manuka led the organisation of the Māori Business Leaders Awards.

As an organic Gramscian leader he has built the turangawaewae communities from which the students originate and helped accomplish the emancipatory dreams of his students and their whanau, hapu and iwi. A student, now successful consultant said: “It gave me confidence that the tools from Te Ao Māori are awesome in business”. Another business owner wrote “It has helped me set up the style of business I now feel comfortable with which is based on Māori values and protocols” His Dean wrote, “Manuka’s many activities, in total, constitute a very distinguished enduring commitment to Māori and Pacific education.”

In summary, Manuka Henare is an excellent educator, counsellor, developer, researcher, kaumatua and leader.



Andrew Martin

School of Sport, Exercise and Nutrition

Massey University

Andy’s teaching is a unique blend of enthusiasm, student-centred learning and subject passion, and it is evidence and research-based. Learners’ undertake a critical analysis of literature, reflection (personal and professional), and the use of real-world experiences. Andy really inspires sport management students. They say, “you’ve been the lecturer (by a long mile) with the greatest passion and desire to be the best they can be”, “you are the one who fuelled my passion to carry on”. This educator listens carefully to students and openly admits to learning much from them, “My expertise is also the result of 25 years of students giving me good ideas”. Central to Andy’s teaching philosophy is inspiring students to build professional relationships with each other and teachers.

His excellent teaching has received several awards including the Massey University Vice Chancellor’s Award for Sustained Teaching Excellence and the Academic Fellowship Award. Andy is an inspirational teacher who maintains a critical balance between the demands of his subject and the dynamic challenges of exceptional teaching practice.



Sheila Skeaff

Department of Human Nutrition
University of Otago

Sheila's sustained record of excellent teaching has been recognised by students and fellow academics throughout her 29 years of teaching nutrition. Her teaching has evolved from delivering content to facilitating learning. It is distinguished by innovative, engaging, hands-on interactive learning exercises and precise student feedback. Her essence is summarised by a student description "Sheila teaches her student how to learn, how to think critically and how to tackle issues. She transfers so much more than academic knowledge through her teaching, and, instils life skills that will set students up for their career ahead".

A former student wrote to Sheila, "Dear Sheila, I was only a baby nutritionist, then you inspired me and guided me to become a nutritionist who can contribute to the nutrition world like you are doing now, I don't think I could of managed without your support and guidance". A teaching Fellow extolled Sheila's excellent methods by saying "She is an exemplary teacher that I hope to become over the course of my teaching career".



Fa'afetai Sopoaga

Associate Professor and Associate Dean (Pacific)
University of Otago

Transformational describes Faumuina's Teaching and Commitment to all her students at Otago, throughout Aotearoa and the Pacific region. There are a growing number of Pacific students who have progressed and completed their studies and attribute their success directly to her inspirational teaching and design and intense personal relationships and support. A medical student wrote about Faumuina's Pacific Immersion Programme, "The experience made me aware of my privilege and the inherent bias that I perceive the world with and enables a transformation of our preconceived ideas and beliefs, and greater empathy and understand of under-served populations". Testimony from a colleague says "She is a passionate and highly effective academic leader of all things Pacific in the Division. Her contributions to Pacific curriculum development and to the academic and pastoral care of Pacific students is truly exceptional."

In her portfolio, Faumuina wrote "The University of Otago's motto is "Dare to be Wise"... I dared to hope I could make a difference ...A Vision was born" That vision is fulfilled, Faumuina merits both awards for her innovative contributions to curriculum development and teaching, and, for unparalleled support and encouragement provided to Pacific learners.

Kaupapa Māori Award recipient



Michelle Thompson-Fawcett

Department of Geography

University of Otago

Michelle Thompson-Fawcett was once described by her students as a “taniwha” – a mythical creature, often feared, but likewise something with mana and strength, presence and power. This reference is a useful metaphor for her approach to teaching and learning. She is passionate and engaging, a leader and innovator – kaupapa driven and student-focused. She encourages interaction and dialogue between herself and her students; providing opportunities for them to experience learning in real-world settings and environments, to relate theory to what they see around them and to real-world history and events.

A colleague wrote “She embraced me and instilled in me the confidence and integrity to dream of and implement curriculum and teaching practices that made sense to us as Māori”

Michelle, therefore, is indeed a taniwha – a leader and visionary, compassionate and driven, sharp and sincere, but always with her students front and centre. Tihei mauri ora.



Ekant Veer

Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship

University of Canterbury

Ekant originally embarked on a career in corporate marketing, but soon realised that the people who had the greatest impact on his life were not brand managers or CEOs, but his teachers. He returned to academia, determined to have the same impact on the lives of others.

Ekant’s goal is simple: for his students to leave his classroom better than when they entered – not just in terms of better knowledge of skills, tools, and theories, but a better understanding of themselves, the world, and their role in society. As one student notes, “I learned more about life in one course from Ekant than I have learned throughout almost my entire student career.” Using fun, humour, theatrics, and even song, Ekant has cultivated a teaching approach that reflects “total accessibility, pastoral care, and an absolute commitment to equity and diversity within the university environment.”

A colleague wrote about his larger than life persona, infectious enthusiasm, inclusive learning environments and mentorship of new teachers.

He is the epitome of a student-focused teacher.



Christine Woods

Business School

University of Auckland

Christine is a scholar and teacher of entrepreneurship “willing to push herself outside her comfort zone”. Her teaching uses “the space in-between” where teachers and students co-create the learning experience. Her teaching philosophy acknowledges where students are at, adapts teaching to suit each situation and advances the collective knowledge of teacher and class.

“Chris does something many lecturers neglect – she makes her students feel special. Chris shows her students they are forces to be reckoned with, helping them grow into world-class leaders and innovators. I have never seen a lecturer believe in her students so much”.

She takes her innovative approach to the business world, winning multiple awards for the work through velocity and Icehouse to grow enterprises. In 2016 she started Girls Mean Business to grow female entrepreneurship in schools.

A colleague states “Chris continually innovates in whatever ‘classroom’ setting she works. She routinely engages with students of all ages and backgrounds and cares deeply that students are simultaneously challenged to achieve to the best of their ability and extend their learning and disciplinary knowledge while supporting them to succeed”.

Appendix B: Excellence in Supporting Pacific Learners and Prime Minister's Supreme Award recipient

Fa'afetai Sopoaga has been chosen to receive both the Pacific Endorsement award as well as the Prime Minister's Supreme award.

Excellence in Supporting Pacific Learners award

This is the first year this has been awarded. This award has focuses on the awardees ability to form good relationships with Pacific learners and communities as well as the awardee showing understanding of the enabling factors for Pacific learners that are related to prior learning through their culture and background.

Prime Minister's Supreme Award for 2018

The Committee reviewed all 10 winners recommended for the Sustained Excellence Awards for 2018 and selected the portfolio they considered most deserving of receiving the Prime Minister's Supreme Award. The Committee selected:

Fa'afetai Sopoaga to receive the Prime Minister's Supreme Award.



Fa'afetai Sopoaga

Associate Professor and Associate Dean (Pacific)
University of Otago