



Briefing Note: Update from the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
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Summary

- Attached is an update to you from the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG). This document is an amended version of their 3 August 2018 update [METIS 1144200 refers] to reflect their latest thinking.
- The MAG tested the 3 August version of their emerging ideas with the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Reference Group (Reference Group). This informed work at the MAG's 5 and 6 September meeting to clarify and further develop their ideas. The most substantive changes are the addition of an idea for supporting the design of responsive local curriculum, and foregrounding of their idea for rich records of learning.
- This version of the MAG's emerging ideas will form the basis of engagement through the Reference Group and their networks in the sector and wider community.



Pauline Cleaver
Acting Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

10/9/18

Annexes

Annex 1: Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group: Update to the Minister of Education

Proactively Released

Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group: Update to the Minister of Education

10 September 2018

Purpose and introduction

We provided you with an update on the work and initial thinking of the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on the 3rd of August. This document is an amended version of that update to reflect our latest thinking.

Our process so far

To date we have had four MAG meetings. We are actively working together as a bicultural MAG to ensure we are inclusive of both schooling curricula while also ensuring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi remain front of mind. This includes deliberately making space to consider the respective needs of ākonga Māori (Māori learners) and ngā kura reo Māori (Māori-medium schooling) to ensure that our recommendations take into account the range of Māori interests in education.

Following our first meeting, the MAG co-chairs met with the Reference Group to discuss our initial thinking about the challenges, principles and considerations that need to inform our work.

Between the dates of our first and third meeting, the Reference Group facilitated a conversation seeking to understand the current status of assessing curriculum and student progress. This included surveys as part of Kōrero Mātauranga for educators, school communities and learners. We also asked the Reference Group some specific questions, including: How might we measure progress and achievement across a rich curriculum?; What makes a rich curriculum?; What information does each stakeholder – students, teachers, parents and whānau, boards of trustees, Ministry – need to know to do their job well?; What supporting conditions do you see as critical? We received some reflections on our questions and a final report from the Reference Group on their survey which we will continue to take stock of in the next phases of our work alongside further engagement with the Reference Group and their networks.

We shared our emerging ideas and our 3rd of August update to you with the Reference Group at their 9 August 2018 meeting. Our co-chairs and some MAG members attended this meeting. Feedback and discussion at the Reference Group was broadly positive about the direction of travel and there were some useful questions, reflections and insights. Reference Group members had further discussions with their networks during August, and provided some additional feedback from these as input to our 5 and 6 September 2018 MAG meeting.

At our 5 and 6 September meeting, we focussed on further developing and clarifying our overall vision and emerging ideas for change. This work will support wider engagement on the potential of these ideas to make a difference for teaching and learning. As well as testing the ideas, this next phase of engagement will provide insights to inform our advice on the change and implementation implications for achieving our vision.

Challenges – Ngā wero

The specifics of our task are set out in our Terms of Reference and the context provided in the April 2018 Cabinet paper. We have framed this into two central challenges or wero to guide our thinking:

1. To enable all school students to experience rich opportunities to learn through a curriculum that recognises their local context, agency and potential, and builds on what matters to each of them; and
2. To provide a way for students, teachers, parents, whānau, school leaders, boards of trustees and the ministry of education to notice, recognise and respond to tangible progress in the learning that matters for all school students in bicultural New Zealand.

As you have discussed with us, there is a potential tension between the two that needs to be reconciled so that all children learn across the breadth and depth of the National Curriculum (comprising Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum) in ways that protect and enhance their wellbeing and help them to grow as good citizens. We cannot, and should not aim to have robust measures for everything in the curriculum. We need to ensure that we do not just assess things that are easy to develop measures for at the expense of things that are important, but more difficult to measure robustly.

Principles – Ngā mātāpono

We developed the following principles to guide our work. These principles also align well with the principles guiding the work of the other groups providing advice as part of the Education Work Programme. These have been tested with the Reference Group, and may be further refined through the next phases of our work.

We believe our responses to the challenges above will be effective if they:

1. Respect the potential of all students, demonstrate a commitment to each student's overall wellbeing and offer learning pathways that build on students' interests, support their agency and enable them to achieve the important knowledge and capabilities outlined in our national curriculum.
2. Ensure design solutions engender a sense of ownership across all stakeholders, that is, they are designed "for the people, by the people".
3. Acknowledge our bicultural national foundation based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, hei tūāpapa o Aotearoa, and acknowledge cultural diversity so that every learner is secure in his or her identity. Use relational/responsive pedagogy to enable Māori to achieve success as Māori.
4. Support an inclusive education approach that strives for equitable educational outcomes, and encourage collaborations across diverse perspectives to support authentic learning partnerships with students, parents, whānau, iwi and communities through power sharing. Recognise that each community has its own definition of success.
5. Balance the tension between local curriculum adaptation and innovation, while maintaining coherence across the system and supporting coherence within, and synergies across, the national curricula for early learning and schools: Te Whāriki, including Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo; New Zealand Curriculum; and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.
6. Acknowledge the status and quality of teachers; honour teachers as professionals who respond to their particular learners; support teachers to be 'Learning Designers'; and create greater efficiency for teachers, principals and boards, and across the system.
7. Ensure students, teachers, parents and whānau, school leaders, and the ministry have the progress and achievement information they need to do their jobs well and contribute to and benefit from each others' knowledge and insights through well designed feedback loops.

The 'puzzles' we are grappling with

When we dug into the core challenges or wero, we identified some underlying 'puzzles' that we need to work out as we form our advice. The puzzles we have identified so far include:

1. How the National Curriculum work together with other curricula, guidance and influences (for example, Te Marautanga o Te Aho Matua-, Kāhui Ako-based curriculum and/or achievement challenges) to guide the decisions made about the teaching and learning that happens within each kura and school's own curriculum so that every child gets the important learning they are entitled to.
2. How to design and provide access to scaffolds and supports that make it doable for every teacher, kaiako, school and kura to put diversity, difference and equity at the heart of how they design rich opportunities to learn while maintaining their own wellbeing.

3. How far we can go towards addressing challenges and wero through additional supports and guidance, or whether there is an opportunity to reduce 'clutter' by clarifying the direction in the National Curriculum documents, learning from what is already working well in each document while also being mindful of what we can learn from Te Whāriki and Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo.
4. How to facilitate and encourage the development of policies and practices that enable all children to learn in an environment that reflects their identity and is truly bicultural.
5. How to shift from reporting to parents and whānau as a twice yearly 'compliance' activity to ongoing information sharing with students, parents and whānau as part of educationally powerful partnerships for learning.
6. How to enable parents, whānau, iwi and the wider community to partner with schools and kura in the design and delivery of rich curriculum, while recognising their diverse contexts and perspectives and avoiding inequities because of those.
7. How the education system can maximise its impact on achieving equity in learning outcomes in a world where each child's 'out of school curriculum' (informal and formal learning at home and in everyday life) is impacted by individual families' experiences of disadvantage, contexts, and the influence of the wider community. Keeping in mind that addressing equity also reflects addressing and acknowledging 'privilege'.
8. Ensuring that every teacher, leader, school and kura have access to the right amount of support and scaffolding for their needs, while not constraining those with the capacity and capability to design their own approaches and drive innovation in curriculum, teaching and learning.
9. How to design a system where improvement across the system is driven by harnessing the ideas and practices of those teachers, kaiako and leaders working at the leading edge of innovation in teaching and learning.
10. How we can get to a point where there are no 'time lags' in the system between what evaluations and feedback are telling us and what is available to support teaching and learning for different students, particularly for Māori medium and students with disability and learning supports needs (including those with complex and interrelated needs).

Across these puzzles there are two particularly difficult issues which impact not just on our work, but across the work programme as a whole. While our work can contribute to these being addressed, any final recommendations are likely to need to be complemented by changes in areas outside of our scope.

Re-setting the bicultural view

The existence of the Māori-medium and English-medium education pathways is often viewed as reflecting a 'bicultural' education system. We think this can be more accurately described as a 'bi-ethnic' as opposed to a 'bicultural' position, and that this is also true of many 'bicultural' practices in English-medium schools. To truly embrace biculturalism across the education system of Aotearoa-New Zealand, we must first overcome the dominant thinking, including distorted historical narratives, of this country. Residues of outdated colonial thinking continue to render Māori experience invisible and reinforce subtle forms of social privilege. The concept of Māori children enjoying school and achieving success 'as Māori' counters the tendency to see the addition of 'Māori content' in terms of advantages for non-Māori.

The use of assessment and aromatawai information at different levels of the system

We understand that the Independent Taskforce is considering how individual school and kura performance, and the performance of the schooling system as a whole, can best be evaluated. We also understand that you have not asked us for advice on what information could be used for national level decision making and stewardship of our national curricula. This is because you want the focus within our work to be on supporting students, parents, whānau, teachers, kaiako, leaders and boards to notice, recognise and respond to student progress across the National Curriculum as a critical contributor to addressing our equity challenges.

Our discussions about some existing assessment tools have signalled that there are barriers to teacher use because of the possibility of league tables. This has implications not just for existing tools, but any future enhancements that may be made or new tools that may be developed as a result of our advice.

There is an opportunity for an open conversation about different stakeholders' assessment information needs (students, teachers, school leaders, boards of trustees, Kāhui Ako, iwi, and the Ministry of Education) and different ways that these could be met in the context of a focus on improving curriculum, teaching and learning. By having an open conversation with all interested parties we believe that a path forward may be found for meeting those needs while also reducing the risk of unintended adverse consequences for student learning and equity.

To help with our own discussions we asked the Ministry to provide us with clarity on the different purposes for which assessment and aromatawai information is, or could be, used at the national level and how that would enable better decision-making that impacts positively on student learning outcomes. This may help us think about how tools that help schools and kura notice and recognise learning progress could best be designed to maximise benefits for learning and avoid the adverse consequences of labelling and league tables. This may be helpful to you when considering advice from others on understanding education system performance.

Initial thinking on possible ways forward

Our emerging ideas have evolved since our last update to you. Following initial Reference Group feedback, we added a focus on local curriculum and made changes to clarify what we mean by some of the other ideas. At our most recent meeting we spent time sharpening our ideas and how they fit together. As part of this, we have now foregrounded our idea for rich records of learning, rather than focussing on aromatawai and assessment tools, which are enablers to our ideas. These changes are reflected in the summary on the next page.

Our emerging ideas together reflect that, **to create a system that learns**, we need:

...to recognise that a learning system is inherently relational. It requires **people** across the system to work together, each with an unremitting **focus on ākonga**. Progress and achievement are fostered by strong **partnerships between kaiako and whānau** and strong **collaborative inquiry networks** across the system.

...people who are **focused on ākonga progress** as they notice, recognise and respond to learning and who are highly capable **inquirers and evaluators**. Effective inquiry and evaluation demands high levels of **aromatawai/assessment and data literacy**.

...to ensure there is clarity about **curriculum aspirations** at both the national and local levels to help kaiako create the **rich opportunities for learning** that make realising those aspirations possible. The creation of **rich records of learning** allow ākonga and whānau insights into progress and achievement. They may also allow people across the system to notice patterns in ākonga progress and respond in ways that promote equity and enable national and local curricula to **evolve**, be **responsive**, and **improve**.

Our MAG also proposes that a curriculum and assessment institute is established to grow curriculum and assessment knowledge across the system. In particular, we are developing our thinking about how this function could support our vision for a system that learns. We will pass this thinking on to the Independent Taskforce reviewing Tomorrow's Schools.

Overview of emerging ideas

COMMIT TO A SYSTEM THAT LEARNS

Commit to an inclusive, bicultural education system where students are at the centre, the national curriculum underpins learning, and all those with a concern and interest in student learning (including teachers, parents, whānau, boards of trustees, iwi, the Ministry of Education and other organisations and agencies) contribute to and benefit from each other's knowledge and insights. In a system that learns, well-designed feedback loops create an interactive process through which people across the system are able to learn from and with each other, and all stakeholders engage with this feedback and use it to improve their support for student learning.

DESIGN AND TRIAL RICH RECORDS OF STUDENT LEARNING

Design and trial student-owned records of learning that:

- capture rich learning
- support students' transitions across the schooling system
- evaluate and communicate progress in critical learning across the breadth of The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT PROGRESS

Develop and trial descriptions of critical domains of learning across Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum and incorporate progress markers that build on the learning outcomes described in Te Whāriki. These descriptions and markers will demonstrate how important learning related to dispositions, key competencies, and disciplinary knowledge come together at each curriculum level.

ESTABLISH A CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE

This institute would challenge the status quo of curriculum and assessment with bold, future-focused ideas across English- and Māori-medium settings.

DESIGN A PROCESS FOR EVOLVING NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN MĀORI AND ENGLISH

Design and implement a process for regular review of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum. This will ensure that our national curriculum can evolve over time in response to new learning about needs, opportunities, and priorities.

BUILD ASSESSMENT, INQUIRY, AND EVALUATIVE CAPABILITY

Build capabilities to gather, analyse, and use assessment information to support progress and achievement in critical learning in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum. Grow and develop the aromatawai/assessment tools, processes, and literacy that are integral to inquiry and evaluation. Provide support and an accreditation process to ensure that there are a minimum number of data-literate teachers in every school and/or kāhui āko.

GROW LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND WHĀNAU

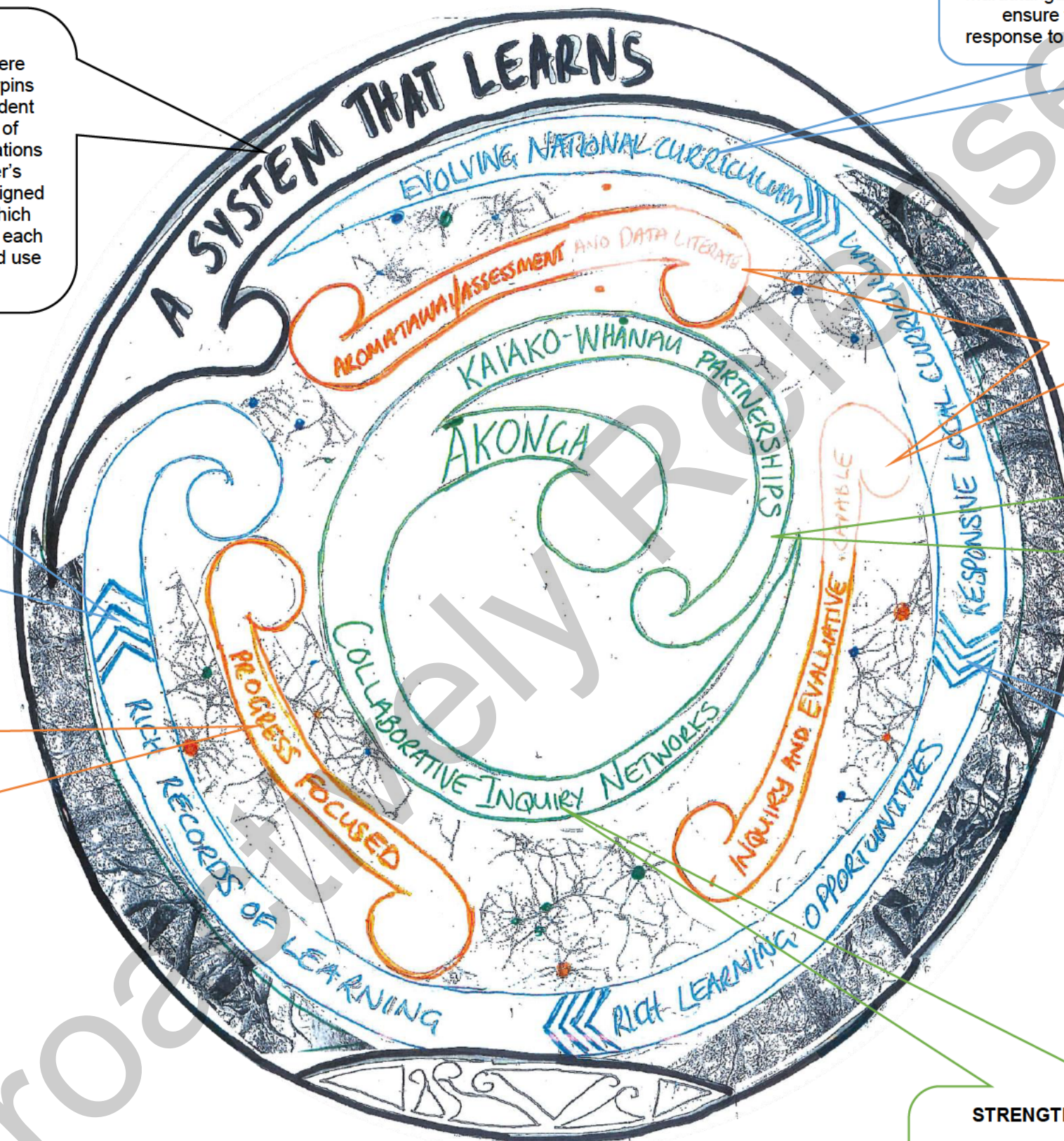
Remove the requirement to report to parents and whānau in writing twice per year and instead grow and spread effective practices for ongoing information sharing between teachers, students, parents, and whānau, recognising that parents have diverse needs and a range of effective communication methods is essential for building educationally powerful partnerships for learning.

SUPPORT THE DESIGN OF RESPONSIVE LOCAL CURRICULUM

Develop tools and resources that schools, kura, and kāhui āko can use in conjunction with progress markers to design and review their marau-ā-kura or local curriculum in collaboration with their students, parents, whānau, iwi, and wider community. This will enable students to learn with and contribute to their communities in real contexts that are responsive to local values, local questions, and local priorities.

STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY NETWORKS

Strengthen professional and partner networks and links to iwi educational plans and aspirations in both English- and Māori-medium settings to leverage expertise in ways that grow capability to support progress for all students' learning.



Our next steps

We will be continuing our work together to further develop the thinking described in this paper and prepare our advice to you. We will provide you with our final report in December 2018. We are committed to ensuring that the needs of those least well-served by the education system are considered as part of our advice. This includes Māori and Pacific students, students with disabilities and learning support needs, and their respective families, whānau and wider communities. We will continue to discuss how our advice will be presented in our final report to ensure that all the advice will be relevant to Māori and non-Māori alike.

During October and November, we will be working with the Reference Group to continue the conversation across the sector and wider community about curriculum, progress and achievement. To support the Reference Group to meaningfully test our ideas we are preparing material which sets out the context and rationale for each idea, what each idea is intended to achieve, and how the idea could work in practice. We need to hear the range of different perspectives there will be on whether or not our ideas will have the intended impact on teaching and learning that we are seeking, what it would take to implement them successfully, how they could be improved, and how much appetite there is for them to be put in place. We also need to hear what other ideas people have that we haven't thought of. We will also be discussing these ideas with relevant members of the Opposition as we hope that their active involvement in the conversation will support us to advise you on a bipartisan path forward that will provide a stable direction for curriculum and assessment of student progress and achievement.

Some of these ideas will need to be considered as part of, or alongside, other reviews and strategy work you have underway. The MAG co-chairs met once with the chairs of the MAGs and Independent Taskforce, and our chair is now attending the monthly meetings organised with the support of the Ministry of Education. These meetings provide an important mechanism to support coherency in our advice to you, and to ensure that our combined recommendations provide coherency for learners along their education pathways. In relation to the National Certificates of Educational Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group, we are connecting up particularly on their 'big opportunities' around strengthening literacy and numeracy, the Record of Achievement and refocusing on powerful learning. For the Early Learning Strategic Plan Ministerial Advisory Group, there is a particular connect around how learning progress is understood through the use of progress markers. As well as our idea for a curriculum and assessment institute that we will pass on to the Independent Taskforce, we are cognisant of their thinking around an Education Advisory Service and Leadership Council, and about how the whole education system can work together as a 'learning ecosystem'. There is an opportunity to think about the role assessment information plays in that learning ecosystem.

Critical to the success of anything we propose is the education workforce. We understand that the Quality Teaching and Wellbeing Working Group are working on an Education Workforce Strategy, so we will keep them informed of our thinking and are happy to talk to them about our ideas and possible implications for the Education Workforce Strategy at the appropriate time in their process.