

TAI TOKERAU NORTHLAND

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

2017 - 2027

FOREWORD

The world we live in is evolving fast, and to help our rangatira (young people) prepare and adapt to this change, we need to be looking ahead. Change is visible in every sector, including education, and is affecting why, how and where young people choose to study.

We have a responsibility to prepare Northland students to think and learn like global citizens; one of the best ways to achieve this is to bring the world to them, by growing our international education sector.

With the rapid development of online learning platforms, adoption of technologies like virtual reality and the freedom we now have to travel to many corners of the world, our children and their children will be living in a world where they can experience many cultures, and even 'visit' – virtually or otherwise – multiple countries in just one day.

Our children's future is a multicultural global village that requires acceptance, respect and resilience. Success in tomorrow's world will be the ability to work in multicultural teams, to possess and demonstrate cultural empathy, to understand other languages, to demonstrate acceptance and intelligence, and be open to the unlimited possibilities that this brings.

Northland also needs to be open to these opportunities, in considering the social, cultural and economic benefits available to the region through welcoming international students to our region and acknowledging the international education sector as a catalyst for opportunity and growth.

This strategy is one step on the path to success for young people in Northland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International education is a complex global market that is constantly being influenced by political and social change as well as the ongoing disruption from new technologies. Despite this, millions of students still choose to travel to other countries for an educational and cultural experience and this migration is expected to grow.

There are currently five million students studying away from their home country. By 2025, this figure is expected to reach 8 million. The international education sector in New Zealand has grown considerably over the last decade – from 95,294 students in 2006 to 131,609 students recorded last year in 2016. International education is now New Zealand's fourth largest export industry, behind tourism, dairy and related products, and meat. The industry is valued at an estimated \$4.5 billion and is responsible for more than 32,000 jobs nationwide.

Across New Zealand there is a focus on regional programmes to relieve growing pressure on the main centres such as Auckland and to deliver more meaningful, vocational-focused learning programmes in an environment where students can also experience New Zealand's unique culture and have opportunities to engage with 'the locals'.

Northland is perfectly positioned to take advantage of this future direction, with a small but strong base of existing international student programmes, and experienced and committed individuals in organisations such as NorthTec, QRC and a number of secondary schools who are dedicated to achieving positive growth for the region. The true brand value for international education in Northland will come from a students' overall experience, meaning the region as a whole - including providers, business, tourism, communities and local government - need to work together to ensure a consistently high level of programme delivery and student experience.

A common sentiment from those engaged in the development of this strategy was that any growth in international education must not come at the expense of domestic students, but rather enhance learning and cultural opportunities for local students. There are many ways international education can add value to Northland, not just to its students but the wider community, and these opportunities are explored in this strategy.

Like other regions across New Zealand, Northland is faced with an ageing population, intensive shifts in technology that are driving the need for a younger, more diverse workforce, and skill shortages in our core industries that require global talent attraction programmes. International education has the potential to provide solutions to all of these challenges as a key driver and activator for change. This strategy addresses these opportunities on many levels, working towards creating a more welcoming, understanding, student-centred, culturally diverse community with high quality education and employment opportunities.

While this strategy focuses on international education, there is clear value in investigating and developing a wider International Strategy for the region, encompassing other sectors such as trade, tourism and investment to see how these sectors can work with, and for, each other. It is recommended that this is explored further by Northland's local authorities and Northland Inc, to investigate development of a full regional international strategy that brings together onshore and offshore collaboration and capacity building across all sectors. Such an international strategy would acknowledge the potential full lifecycle of an international student, from tourist to student to community member to qualified graduate to key contributor to New Zealand's economy.

At the same time, this strategy looks inwardly, considering how growth in the international education sector could also create opportunities and enhance the education of our domestic students and our wider communities. Northland students who have the opportunity to meet, share and learn with students from around the world will grow a greater understanding of other cultures and have greater insight into the opportunities available to them beyond New Zealand's shores. As a wider community, Northland will also gain greater cultural understanding and awareness. These connections, insights and relationships will create opportunities for domestic students that they would otherwise not have.

Working within Northland's current international education sector are a number of experienced individuals creating positive results in their respective institutions. However, overall the number of providers is small and many programmes are either new or small scale. The existing cluster entity, Education Northland, works well at a secondary school level, but there is no resource within this group for strategic planning to help grow the overall sector. While there are other schools and institutions keen to enter the sector, some are lacking the knowledge or support needed to make it happen. When surveyed, schools cited lack of staff support and difficulty finding homestays as two key challenges to hosting more students, including groups¹.

NorthTec has played a key role in the growth of Northland's international education sector over the last few years, with numbers growing from 370 in 2014 to 799 in 2015 and over 800 in 2016. The organisation has developed a number of key initiatives to support this growth, including establishing a permanent presence in the China and India markets, opening campuses in Auckland and strengthening of student support for international students. With the establishment of QRC's Paihia campus, and more recently its culinary school in Kerikeri, as well as newly launched PTEs such as Adventure for Good, there is a strengthening base for tertiary level training in Northland.

This tertiary base is important to meet student demand for work opportunities, and also for 'strengthening the education pipeline from secondary to tertiary and through to employment', as highlighted in the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan (TTNEAP)¹¹, released by Northland Inc in February 2016. This is relevant to both international and local students and is an area that is addressed in this strategy, to recommend employment pathway opportunities for international students coming to Northland. The proposed tertiary hub in Whangarei would add to this further.

Until recently, international education was not viewed as a key sector for Northland's economic growth, with other industries, such as primary industries (agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry) and tourism taking the spotlight as key priorities in the TTNEAP. However, with the development of this strategy, Northland Inc is now proposing to incorporate international education into the TTNEAP as a new coalition project, focused on bringing industry representatives together to achieve economic gains and efficiencies through collaboration and resource sharing.

Combined with the growth targets in this strategy, such as the goal to triple the economic value of international education in Northland to \$30 million by 2027, there is the opportunity for international education to become a key business development priority for Northland in the future.

With the constant evolution of the international education sector and ongoing refinement of Northland's economic development priorities, it will be prudent to review and update this strategy every three years to ensure it is still relevant and meaningful to Northland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategy has been made possible with support from Education New Zealand, which provided funding through the Regional Partnership Programme, and Northland Inc, which recognised the value in bringing this strategy to life.

The recommendations outlined in this strategy are designed to build on the long-standing efforts of education providers who have been successfully attracting students to Northland for many years. Significant growth at the tertiary level has been achieved in the last few years alone through NorthTec initiatives to create a permanent presence in key markets such as China and India, and to establish campuses in Auckland.

The Education Northland cluster has also been working hard to achieve positive results for Northland. On the whole, there is strong engagement and agreement that there is an identified need for a cohesive and collective approach to growing the sector.

This strategy has also been well supported by the Strategy Reference Group¹¹, which was appointed to support and advise on the strategy development, and included industry representatives from the education sector (primary, secondary, tertiary, PTEs, private) as well as local government from across Northland, Iwi, tourism, MSD and Immigration New Zealand.

In addition, we would like to thank those international students who have contributed to this strategy.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Tai Tokerau Northland International Education Strategy has been led by Northland Inc - Northland's Economic Development Agency – and endorsed by Education New Zealand (ENZ). The purpose of the strategy aligns with the strategic direction and objectives of both Northland Inc and ENZ.

STRATEGY PURPOSE

To deliver a long-term strategic plan that will identify opportunities to increase the economic value of Northland's international education sector to meet agreed growth targets by 2025.

NORTHLAND INC

Northland Inc is charged with the growth of economic development in Northland, Northland Inc's mission is "to strengthen, diversify and grow the Northland economy".

In February 2016, Northland Inc launched the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan (TTNEAP), outlining priority areas of investment and growth for the region, focusing on four areas of Enablers, Land and Water, Specialised Manufacturing and Services and Visitor Industry. Following the completion of this strategy, it will be included in the TTNEAP pipeline, and will transition to the TTNEAP during the refresh of this document, currently underway.

Northland Inc has stated: "The International Education Strategy aligns well with the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan. From the need for a range of skills to build a strong, resilient sustainable workforce that matches industry and business needs, to entrepreneurship and improved management. Building stronger relationships with schools, tertiary training providers and within the industry provides a robust platform for the goals of the Plan including growing businesses, attracting investment and boosting the economy of Tai Tokerau."

EDUCATION NEW ZEALAND

Education New Zealand is New Zealand's government agency for international education and raises awareness of New Zealand as a study destination and supports education providers and businesses to export their services and products.

The Government released a Leadership Statement in 2011, and this was reviewed and reported back on in the 2014 Progress Update^{iv}. There is currently an updated national strategy under development. The following vision and goals are explored in more detail in the 2014 Leadership Statement.

Vision: New Zealand's quality education services are highly sought after internationally, and expand our international social, cultural and economic engagement.

Goal 1: New Zealand's education services delivered in New Zealand are highly sought after by international students.

Goal 2: New Zealand's education services in other countries are highly sought after by students, education providers, businesses and governments overseas.

Goal 3: New Zealand makes the best possible use of its international education expertise to build skills in our work force, to grow research capability and to foster wider economic connections between New Zealand and overseas firms.

Regional Partnership Programme Framework

Education New Zealand (ENZ) has a Regional Partnership Programme to enable sustainable international education growth and capability building across all of New Zealand, for the benefit of regional economies, communities and education providers. This strategy has been developed with the assistance and support of Education New Zealand under the Regional Partnership Programme, in order to enhance and support the growth of Northland's international education sector.

While education providers may have their own international education strategies, this strategy is designed to enhance and support those providers to grow the 'Education Northland' brand and provide opportunities for providers to cooperate and collaborate, for the benefit of all.

STRATEGY RESEARCH / METHODOLOGIES

Research in the field of International Education is relatively limited, especially when considering the social and cultural impact of international education. For the purposes of this strategy, data was collected from wide number of sources, including Education New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Whangarei District Council, Far North District Council, Kaipara District Council, Immigration New Zealand, educational institutions in Northland and across New Zealand, regional education bodies, as well as individuals in the industry, such as students, teachers, international programme leaders and homestay coordinators. Valuable contributions were also made during our strategy workshops.

In determining growth targets for the international education market in 2022 and 2017, the following matters were considered:

- inflation / cost of living (calculations were made based on a forecast per annum increase of 1.9%)
- population growth (calculations were made based on an average forecast increase of 1.8% per annum across Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei Districts)
- proposed development of a tertiary hub in Whangarei, as per TTNEAP
- survey results from Northland schools

In the development of this strategy, consultation has involved a number of key stakeholders in Northland and throughout the country. This has included schools and institutions, government agencies and other regional bodies working in the international education sector and has taken the form of one-on-one meetings, interviews by phone and workshops.

A key collective for contributing input and feedback was the Tai Tokerau Northland International Education Strategy Reference Group, which was appointed to provide advice and guidance to the strategy. The Group's members have contributed to the development of this strategy through ongoing dialogue, meetings/interviews and feedback opportunities.

Two regional workshops have been held with available members of the Strategy Reference Group, as well as other interested parties, in Whangarei and Waitangi. Strategy developers have also attended regional meetings of the Education Northland cluster group and the ENZ Regional Workshops held in Napier, Wellington and Christchurch.

Research and consultation has been undertaken with a number of other regions across the country, including Tauranga, Queenstown, Taranaki / Western Bay of Plenty, Christchurch, Dunedin and Wellington. Methods have included meetings with key staff to share data, learnings, templated documents, strategy development tools and advice. A range of supporting documents has also been gathered and reviewed.

CONSULTATION

Key representatives from a wide range of sector groups and community stakeholders generously provided support and input into this strategy, through a number of channels including meetings, workshops, data provision and feedback surveys. Students from both secondary and tertiary schools in Northland also generously shared their experiences and insights for this strategy, as well as national organisations including Education New Zealand and regional sector bodies.

A range of schools across Northland were also surveyed, including primary, intermediate, secondary and private schools. This included schools that already have an established international programme, and others that do not. This data has helped contribute to the current snapshot of international students in Northland, and provided valuable information about the demand from new schools keen to enter the sector.

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

In order to guide the future direction of international education in Northland, it is first important to determine the current social, cultural and economic value of Northland's international education sector.

On average, Northland has attracted between 480-551 international students^{vi} over the last five years. This is less than half a percent (.42%) of the total number of international students in New Zealand and less than half a percent (.29%) of the Northland's population, with one international student for every 338 Northlanders. In a recent study commissioned by Education New Zealand, the financial value of these students to Northland has been measured at \$10.1 million^{vi}.

Northland currently offers a range of high quality educational opportunities for international students, predominantly at the secondary and tertiary level. Most of these programmes are based in Whangarei and the Bay of Islands (specifically Kerikeri), with approximately two-thirds being tertiary students studying at NorthTec's Whangarei campus and many of the remainder being secondary school students. Over the last few years, there has been a small number of international students studying at primary or intermediate level (less than 10 per year), and while the quality of education is high, the recruiting of these students has been opportunistic, rather than planned.

EXPANDING NORTHTEC DELIVERY

NorthTec has the strongest international programme in the region by far, with over 900 students attending NorthTec courses in 2016^{viii}. Because approximately 600 of these students studied at NorthTec's Auckland campuses, they are not included in the Ministry of Education international student statistics for Northland.

Since 2013, NorthTec has been implementing a range of strategies to grow its international student population, including increasing its number of agents in China and India, strengthening partnerships with schools in China and India and establishing campuses in Queen Street and Newmarket in Auckland. Most of NorthTec's international students are from China and India, although overall the institution attracts students from approximately 20 countries each year. Most of NorthTec's international students are studying Business, Nursing, English, Trades and Arts, Commerce and Applied Science.

NEW TERTIARY OPPORTUNITIES

Also in the tertiary sector, QRC opened its Paihia campus in 2016 and in April 2017 opened a culinary school in Kerikeri. QRC is accepting international students from July 2017, and is well positioned to support these students, following on from strong success at its Queenstown campus, where up to 30% of students are international.

There are currently no other well established tertiary offerings for international students in Northland, although there are several PTEs looking to offer niche programmes to the international market, such as The Developer's Institute and Adventure for Good, which offers a range of course options, from a 12 week 'Masterclass in Adventure' through to weekend leadership and team building adventure camps.

CORE SECONDARY CLUSTER

Within the secondary sector, there is a core group of schools with established programmes. Most of these schools support one another informally through a cluster group known as Education Northland. This cluster has undertaken some collective offshore marketing but has struggled to develop a strategy or build reserves or resources to expand their marketing or future planning. Most of these schools undertake independent offshore marketing, however the cost of this travel can be significant in relation to the budget for a single education provider.

Some schools have found their programmes developing organically, simply through contacts in the community, while others cater more to niche groups like sailing families who seek short-term education for their children after deciding to spend longer on New Zealand shores than originally planned.

Within the current school offering in Northland, international students have a range of choices, including Academic Plus programmes (offered by a number of schools including Rodney College and Kerikeri High School, where students incorporate activities such as sailing, surfing or volunteering into their curriculum), Cambridge curriculum (Springbank School in Kerikeri and Huanui College in Whangarei), Catholic (Pompallier Catholic College in Whangarei), single sex (Whangarei Girls' and Boys' High Schools), authentic rural (Matarau School and Tauraroa Area School), and intermediate schools (Whangarei and Kamo Intermediate Schools).

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

It is difficult to determine the current social and cultural value of international education with such a low number of students currently in Northland. However it is possible to review the level of integration and the engagement between international and domestic students.

Every provider has unique practices and processes for integrating students into their institutions. All students undergo an institutional orientation of some description and most providers also provide a city or regional orientation, including taking students to local tourism attractions.

Some Whangarei students partake in a mayoral welcome, facilitated by Whangarei's mayor, while other providers use a 'buddy' system to ensure new students have a local friend at school, to support them through their first few weeks. Students receive pre-arrival guidance and advice of varying degrees from their provider, and most also receive information via a student agent. In some schools with stronger international programmes, there are cultural clubs set up by domestic students who are interested in learning about other cultures and languages.

The school's international students support these clubs and engage with local students to teach them language, culture and games/activities from their home countries. Cultural exchanges are also taking place at some schools.

NorthTec has worked hard in the last two years to implement a cultural programme at its Whangarei campus that celebrates and shares the cultures of its international students. This has increased the social interaction between domestic and international students, and the local community, with events like Holi Festival and Diwali. NorthTec's Chinese Student Association also organises a range of cultural activities such as music and dance performances and film showings. NorthTec has also introduced an overnight stay on the campus marae on arrival to New Zealand, as a unique opportunity to experience Maori culture.

OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ALLiS

Another positive influence on the social and cultural acceptance of other cultures in Whangarei has been through the Asian Language Learning in Schools programme (ALLiS), with Onerahi Primary the lead school in a Whangarei cluster that received central government funding for 2017. The ALLiS programme supports the teaching of Asian languages in state and state-integrated schools. According to the Ministry of Education website, "New Zealand needs to increase the number of students learning Asian languages to support our growing trade and international relationships".^{ix}

Through the ALLiS programme, Mandarin Language Assistants have been made available to seven schools in Whangarei, and a very successful cultural festival day was also held in 2017. While these activities all support cultural and social exchange, it is very difficult to put a measureable value on such activity.

ECONOMIC VALUE

International education is not currently regarded as a high economic growth priority for Northland, due to its relatively low impact on the region's GDP and the sector's overall visibility. Up until this year, there was no true economic measure of its value. However recent data released from Education New Zealand in its 'Economic Impact of International Education Report 2015/16 for Northland' has provided insight into the economic impact of international education in Northland.

It measures the combined direct and indirect value to Northland from the 551 international students in the 2015/16 year at \$10.1m, with foreign exchange earnings amounting to \$14.0m in the same financial year.

The Northland report, which details overall value, mean living costs and tuition fees, the number of jobs supported and value added spend, has shown the average Northland student spends \$26,036 per year: \$18,910 on living costs and \$7126 on tuition fees, and earn an average of \$564.

In addition, the industries that directly supply goods and services to international students generate value added of \$6.6m and 63 jobs. Incorporating indirect and induced effects raises employment to 95 jobs and value added to \$9.4m. With indirect taxes the latter accounts for about 0.17% of Northland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The equivalent nationwide proportion is 1.7%.

DATA EXCLUSIONS

It is also noteworthy that approximately 600 of NorthTec's international students were not counted among these statistics, as they were based at NorthTec's Auckland campuses. While this means their living costs contribute to the Auckland data, their tuition fees would more accurately be allocated to Northland. In fact, last year about 11% of all students registered with NorthTec were international.

In addition, this data does not capture the spend of the families of international students, which was reported in 2014 by the Tourism Industry Aotearoa as being \$3,600 per annum, per family^x.

OPPORTUNITIES

Northland is well positioned to build its international education brand on the back of a strengthening national brand – Think New – and a growing demand for regional programmes in New Zealand.

EARLY ADOPTERS

There are a number of Northland schools that are currently signatories to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice and eager to accept more international students, but have no strategy or resources in place to grow their international programmes. With the support of a regional sector body, these schools will be in a position to establish programmes quickly, which will help build capability in the short term.

PRIMARY SECTOR DEMAND

There is increasing national demand for primary education in New Zealand, especially from China, and Northland has a number of primary schools that are well positioned to accept international students, to help meet this demand. These schools can also be supported by the recently established SIEBA School Business Hub.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

There is growing demand for cultural intelligence and awareness education, in the international sector (for students and educators) and beyond. This is a two-way conversation which must also include New Zealand's cultural history. Northland is very well positioned to deliver on this education, with the cultural significance of the region and the strong bicultural approach by many education providers.

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Northland is in the fortunate position of having strong support from national government (Education New Zealand), local government (Northland Inc) and the regions' providers and institutions. This will ensure the sector body is well positioned for a sustainable and successful future.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

International students will bring cultural diversity to Northland, which has one of the lowest cultural diversity indexes in New Zealand, being a largely bicultural European/Maori mix, with just 7% of people living in Northland identifying with other ethnicities^{xI}. There are numerous benefits of an ethnically diverse society, ranging from economic growth and productivity to providing international connections and attracting talent. By default, diversity tends to result in the meeting and melding of different cultures leads to continuous innovation in many fields; social, economic, cultural and environmental^{xII}.

INDUSTRY SKILLS MATCHING

Northland's economy relies heavily on primary industries and the region needs to be able to attract the necessary skills for these sectors to grow. International students could be part of the wider solution for the region's skills shortage, alongside creating opportunities for Northland's young people. This is particularly relevant with Northland's proximity to Auckland, home to New Zealand's largest cohort of graduating international tertiary students.

NORTHLAND-BASED AGENTS

There is growing interest to establish education agencies in the region, such as Compass Education, which could give Northland preference over other regions. This model is working well in Tauranga, where local Korean agents have a very positive impact on the region's international education sector.

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Compared to other regions, Northland has a relatively small range of educational products and services to offer. This creates an opportunity to identify market needs and develop programmes, such as cultural or environmental experience programmes, to meet these needs, with a focus on the overall student 'experience'. New 'products and services' could focus on supporting the student's wellbeing and cultural enrichment, rather than the direct delivery of education. This is particularly relevant with Auckland as the region's closest neighbour, where examples of programmes being delivered include a Maori culture weekend at Piritahi Marae on Waiheke Island^{xIII} or at Awataha Marae on Auckland's North Shore.

CHALLENGES

While Northland is well positioned to achieve strong growth, there are also significant challenges for the sector. As a whole, New Zealand's international education sector is exposed to a wide range of external influences, including global issues such as politics, war and currency fluctuations, and local issues such as changes in legislation and leadership, and negative media commentary regarding international students.

DELAYED RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Building up an established sector in Northland will take time, through the continued high quality delivery of programmes and strengthening relationships with key partners. This means the return on investment for the region will take time and any damage to the region's reputation through non-delivery or poor experience could have a lasting impact.

LIMITED TERTIARY OPPORTUNITIES

Northland's lack of a strong tertiary offering significantly limits the region's ability to attract a larger, more diverse group of international students. The proposed tertiary hub for Whangarei addresses this situation, although it will take a number of years to establish such a facility and build a strong reputation internationally. Graduating students are very focused on work opportunities so to attract more international students into tertiary, there also need to be strong job opportunities available.

LIMITED FACILITIES; RURAL ENVIRON

There are also more practical, logistical challenges for education providers. Students are seeking products that some providers cannot deliver on, such as outdoor education and language programmes. Northland's remote rural environment and lack of modern classroom facilities is another barrier for many international students, who prefer to live in bigger cities with more options for extra curricular activities. This rural isolation also makes it harder for some schools to work collaboratively and to support one another.

ACCOMMODATION

Schools also raised concerns about the ability to find homestay families. There is a real risk around the lack of accommodation for both school-age and tertiary students, because without homestays there are few options available. QRC is addressing this matter in Paihia with a boarding facility and other providers may need to follow suit.

STRATEGY VALUES

This strategy has shaped its outcomes and objectives around a value framework that will underpin the establishment and operation of Northland's international education sector body, including engagement with students, education providers, the wider community, local and regional authorities, business partners and other stakeholder groups.

Whanaungatanga – sense of belonging

It is important for the success of this strategy that there is an overarching sense of Whanaungatanga – for the providers, the community and above all the students. Our research, and that of others in the industry, points to a common message from international students of 'wanting to belong' and 'being accepted' – into their education institute, their classes, their homestay and their peer groups and their community.

Equally, for the strategy to be a success, education providers must feel that same sense of connectedness to each other through Northland's international education sector body, to nurture the collaboration and cooperation that will generate success for the wider region. Engaging in positive and collaborative relationships, with all stakeholders and the wider community, will be critical to demonstrating the value of 'Whanaungatanga'.

Manaakitanga – being caring and welcoming towards others

The value of Manaakitanga reflects the importance of welcoming and accepting visitors, and caring for their wellbeing in a holistic and inclusive way. This is critical when considering the learning and home environments we invite international students into, to ensure we help them experience the very best we have to offer.

Manaakitanga reflects the need to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Manaakitanga is the underlying principle of building the social license for international students across Northland – it speaks of being a kind and generous host, and including visitors in a holistic way, regardless of ethnicity.

Hauora – holistic health and wellbeing

Linked to Manaakitanga is the Maori philosophy of health and wellbeing: Hauora. Hauora is a holistic view of wellbeing, encompassing the following four pillars: Taha tinana (physical), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional), taha whanau (social) and taha wairua (spiritual).

To fully support international students and provide them with a positive, meaningful and engaging experience, all stakeholders in the sector must work together to care for their Hauora – ensuring all aspects of their health are considered and cared for.

The Ministry of Education has recently launched New Zealand's first International Student Wellbeing Strategy^v in acknowledgement of this, in response to feedback from students that a more student-centric approach was needed to identify and implement opportunities for strengthening wellbeing.

VISION

Northland has a flourishing, diverse and well supported international education sector that is contributing positively to the region's cultural, social and economic wellbeing through authentic cultural exchange.

VALUE PROPOSITION

FOR NORTHLAND'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR

Welcoming the discovery and exchange of authentic culture and learning.

10 YEAR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- 1** Northland's international education sector has strong leadership and strategic direction, supporting cooperation, collaboration and sustainable growth
- 2** Northland's international education brand is strong and unique and recognised both nationally and internationally
- 3** Northland delivers a high quality, culturally unique learning experience, attracting a diverse international student population
- 4** Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students
- 5** International education is recognised as a key contributor to Northland's economic, social and cultural wellbeing
- 6** Cultural exchange and knowledge sharing is celebrated and encouraged by Northland education providers and the wider community.

10 YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1** Northland will have an established, well supported and financially sustainable sector body for international education, with appropriate staffing and governance support to ensure timely delivery on strategic goals
- 2** Northland's international education sector will have a strong brand identity, both nationally and internationally, with targeted and relevant marketing to successfully promote the region
- 3** The economic value of international education in Northland will triple by 2027 to \$30 million
- 4** Education providers in Northland will be delivering 'best practice' care and support for international students, supported by resources and marketing collateral from the sector body
- 5** International student numbers in Northland secondary schools will triple, to 400 students per year (FTEs) and primary and intermediate enrolments will grow ten-fold, to 200 students per year (FTEs)
- 6** International student numbers in Northland tertiary institutions (ITPs, PTEs and universities) will increase to 900 students per year (FTEs) (NB. proposed tertiary opportunities in Whangarei could see this number grow to 1500)
- 7** The Northland community, including Iwi and Hapu, will have many opportunities to connect with international students in a meaningful way, and in turn benefit from the social, cultural and economic advantages international students bring to the region
- 8** Strong relationships will be in place with all education providers, local authorities, tourism providers, education agents, media and community organisations to create opportunities for international students to support and engage with Northland communities
- 9** Strong relationships will be in place with Northland's business community to create employment pathway solutions for international students to meet Northland skills shortages
- 10** Code signatories in Northland schools will increase by 30% from 22 to 30 by 2022, and up to 35 schools by 2027.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME: 1

Northland's international education sector has strong leadership and strategic direction, supporting cooperation, collaboration and sustainable growth.

Developing dedicated international education sector resources and representation is a critical first step in creating a framework for the ongoing ownership of this strategy and delivery of its objectives.

Looking to other regions around New Zealand and abroad, it is very apparent that dedicated resources, including personnel, are needed to drive a regional programme. This is typically most successful when these resources are aligned with and integrated into the region's Economic Development Agency – in Northland's case, Northland Inc.

If an independent sector body is developed, it is recommended this body be established as a charitable trust, in order to retain financial independence, while allowing for governance input and funding from organisations such as Education New Zealand and Northland Inc. This also creates opportunities for funding and revenue streams from other sources, such as local government long term planning and national funding bodies relevant to education, to assist with long term viability and financial sustainability.

Alternatively, international education sector resources and representation could be housed within Northland Inc as the region's economic development body, to allow for greater efficiencies and more effective integration with Northland Inc's wider economic development programmes. It is critical that all parties are mindful of funding expectations, and integration into both providers and local council/ economic development agencies' plans will be important for future viability.

A natural extension of this regional international education strategy is the development of a full International Strategy for Northland that would also incorporate other sectors such as tourism, trade, investment, immigration, employment and skills attraction. This bigger picture approach creates opportunities for cross-sector promotion and development, with education, tourism and trade all working together, both locally and offshore, to collaborate and ultimately build the regional brand, which enhances the success of all sectors. An example of a region that has an established and successful International Strategy is the Western Bay of Plenty^{xiv}.

To ensure this strategy is successful and sustainable, it has been firmly aligned with the national strategic direction for international education, as well as linking in locally to Northland's regional promotion strategy via Northland Inc. Being a part of ENZ's Regional Partnership Programme ensures there is ongoing support and guidance within this national forum, and reflects direct support from central government.

1. Northland's international education sector has strong leadership and strategic direction, supporting cooperation, collaboration and sustainable growth

Action / project	Description	Impact / Purpose
Secure seed funding from ENZ and Northland Inc	Seed funding of up to \$500,000 is required for the establishment phase of Northland's international education sector body (2017-2020) to provide financial security during start-up.	This funding will ensure the sector body can focus on putting processes and systems in place, building sector relationships and growing the sector body brand.
Secure ongoing commitment from Northland Inc	Commitment from Northland Inc is important to provide continued support to the sector body under its regional economic activity planning, including the refresh of the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan (TTNEAP).	This support will help to ensure the long-term and sustainable viability of the sector body and assist capacity building in the sector, as well as facilitating opportunities for economic growth in other related sectors.
Develop independent sector representation	Establish independent representation for Northland's international education sector body, either within Northland Inc or as a charitable trust structure, to provide a clear framework and accountabilities.	This framework will support a membership model for the sector body and could also allow for a range of funding avenues in the future (e.g. national funding bodies, local authorities, ENZ, commercial / business sponsorship).
Appoint a regional coordinator	The regional coordinator will lead the establishment of Northland's international education sector body and in turn delivery of Tai Tokerau Northland's International Education Strategy.	This position is critical to give the sector a key point of contact for stakeholders, providers and the community, and provide dedicated (and objective) resource to represent the sector and advocate for its growth.
Appoint advisory board for Northland's international education sector body	An advisory board will provide strategic and governance support and advice to the regional coordinator and will include representation from primary, secondary, tertiary, tourism/trade, local government and economic development.	This board will ensure the strategic direction and development of the sector body is in line with the regional strategy, and continues to reflect the region's needs, the sector's needs and changes in the wider international education market.
Develop 'stakeholder' structure for Northland's international education sector body	Stakeholder membership will include a Memorandum of Understanding or Service Level Agreement, Terms of Reference and possible fee structure for all members keen to align with the sector body's strategy.	This membership/stakeholder programme will encourage providers to engage with the sector body and provide a structure for engagement, collaboration, cooperation and ongoing support for the sector.

1. Northland's international education sector has strong leadership and strategic direction, supporting cooperation, collaboration and sustainable growth

Action / project	Description	Impact / Purpose
Engage all Code* Signatory schools / institutions	Code Signatories who are currently accepting international students are best positioned to become founding members of the sector body and will be the first to be engaged by the sector body as members. *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice	As a founding member, Code Signatories will have the opportunity to assist in the establishment phase of the sector body, including contributing to the development of the brand and marketing collateral.
Seek new stakeholder membership	Promote the sector body across school networks in Northland in order to seek new stakeholder membership. This membership drive will focus on existing signatories to the Code and schools who are in the process of becoming signatories.	This will help achieve early growth for the sector body, providing a base from which to support those new schools who are interested in becoming Code signatories and accepting international students; it will also strengthen the region's product offering.
Establish agreed action plan for rollout of all strategy outcomes	The action plan will be an extension of the strategy and will include clear timeframes, key responsibility holders and a review process to ensure the plan stays on track.	The action plan will ensure activity is coordinated and that milestones are achieved in a timely fashion.
Undertake detailed consultation with providers	Consultation will include emailing, phone calls, regional meetings and surveys to promote the new sector body and the benefits and opportunities it provides to Northland's education sector.	Consultation will help providers understand the value of the regional sector body and encourage early engagement to take advantage of the opportunities the sector body can provide to assist regional growth.
Establish regular meeting schedule	Meetings will be held for both advisory group and stakeholder groups, to provide updates on strategy development, share sector information and plan future activities.	This will ensure regular cross-sectoral communication to build trust and collaboration, and encourage cooperation and knowledge-sharing within the sector.
Facilitate opportunities for cross-sector engagement	In addition to advisory group meetings, it is important to allow 'offline'/networking conversations and group discussions for individuals working in different sector to share knowledge, feedback, ideas and support.	This will support better understanding of the different demands and opportunities within each school sector, and also improve student pathways between institutions - primary, secondary and tertiary.

1. Northland's international education sector has strong leadership and strategic direction, supporting cooperation, collaboration and sustainable growth

Action / project	Description	Impact / Purpose
Build relationships with local government agencies and local authorities	Relationships with key staff in government agencies, including district Mayors, council CEOs and key staff in Northland Inc, will be important to raise the profile of international education as a sector and realise opportunities between the sector and local government (e.g. cross-over of cultural and social opportunities).	These connections will help identify opportunities to better support international students in ways that will deliver on the outcomes of this strategy (e.g. social and cultural benefits) as well as the objectives of the local government agencies and local authorities (e.g. development of Sister City relationships, creating opportunities / providing facilities/events for domestic students).
Establish feedback channels for students	Established 'international education in Northland' social media and other feedback channels will allow students to share their Northland experiences, both inside and outside the classroom.	These channels will capture evidence of the 'student experience' and contribute back into the ongoing refinement of this strategy, as well as give a window into the student experience.
Establish regular provider surveys	Regular surveying of education institutions will help to gather regional data and, more importantly, build a culture of openness and knowledge sharing among Northland providers.	This data will help create a knowledge base around international students in Northland that can in turn be used to guide future marketing activity and refinement of the overall strategy.
Work with local businesses for sponsorship opportunities	Developing corporate sponsorship agreements for Northland's international education sector body and providers to help offset the ongoing operational costs of the sector body.	Corporate sponsorship will increase sustainability of the organisation and minimise flow-on costs to members/ providers, as well as building connections with Northland's business community.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME: 2

Northland's international education brand is strong and unique and recognised both nationally and internationally.

In order to stand alongside the other New Zealand regions, and other countries marketing to international students online and offshore, Northland needs a strong and unique brand that is professional, memorable and reflective of what the region offers international students, , as well as what Northland can offer the international education industry.

Over time, the brand for international education in Northland will become known both nationally and internationally, and will come to be synonymous with Northland's wider brand values, as well as high quality education-based and experiential products and services.

Feedback from education agents is positive in regards to regional or 'cluster' organisations, because it gives them assurance of local government support, quality delivery and greater opportunities for their prospective students. It will be important to intensively promote and market Northland's new

international brand once it is completed.

The brand will not just be a logo, but will represent the entire 'look and feel' of international education in Northland, including the brand story, key messages and imagery that will collectively tell the region's story.

Creation of this brand, including the brand story and brand collateral, will require the support of external providers. It is also recommended that the branding is developed via a series of workshops, to ensure providers, stakeholders, students and funding partners have an opportunity to contribute.

2. Northland's international education brand is strong and unique and recognised both nationally and internationally

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop a unique value proposition for Northland's international education sector	While a proposed value proposition has been developed with this strategy, it will be critical that this value proposition is reviewed, amended as needed, and agreed to and supported by the newly formed advisory group, regional coordinator and providers who make up the founding members of the sector body.	This unique value proposition will be based around the values and vision outlined in this strategy and will give Northland a unique position in the international education landscape, to set the region apart from the rest of New Zealand, and the world.
Develop a unique brand and brand style for Northland's international education sector	This brand style must align with ENZ, the New Zealand Brand Story and the wider 'Northland' branding. To ensure engagement and commitment with this process, it is recommended that branding workshops are held with all key stakeholders, including the advisory group, the Strategy Reference Group, providers (across tertiary, secondary, PTE and primary) and most importantly, students.	This brand will be the 'face' for international education in Northland and help ensure that across all providers there is consistent messaging and imagery to tell our regional story.
Develop the brand story and key messages	The brand story and key messages can be framed on the back of the brand, brand style and unique value proposition. The messages will reflect Northland's unique offering and align with the objectives of this strategy and Northland's specific product offerings.	The brand story and key messages provide a framework for telling the story of international education in Northland and ensure all marketing collateral carries messaging that is consistent, accurate and in line with the region's international education 'brand' and product offering.
Develop an image library for Northland's international education sector	It is anticipated that ENZ (through its Brand Lab) and Northland Inc will both be able to contribute significantly to the image library via their own digital resources, which will ensure the imagery being used to promote Northland is high quality and relevant.	An image library will support development of marketing material and ensure all imagery being used for marketing purposes aligns with the brand and brand values.

2. Northland's international education brand is strong and unique and recognised both nationally and internationally

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop a regional education website	Prior to development, it will be important to determine the scope, purpose, structure, user profiles and messaging for the site, as well as considering translation and 'enquiry/call to action' requirements. The site will closely align and link with the international marketing of Northland's key industry and government bodies.	A website promoting Northland's international education sector will provide a strong online presence for Northland's international education products and services and provide a central point of contact for students, agents and others.
Develop a digital marketing strategy	This will incorporate the website, social media channels, content marketing and other online platforms and activity (as deemed appropriate).	This strategy will manage the online promotion of international education in Northland's key markets.
Develop print and digital resources	These resources will support promotion of Northland's international education brand, starting with the brand launch for the new sector body. This will include printed and digital resources, such as student testimonies, school videos and brochures.	These resources will help to 'tell the story' of international education in Northland and to assist providers, industry, media and other interested parties to better understand the role of Northland's sector body.
Hold a brand launch	Once the brand and baseline collateral has been developed, a brand launch with providers, government agencies, local authorities, education agents and media should be held.	The brand launch will kickstart awareness raising for the brand and the sector body, as well as creating an opportunity to promote the value of international education to Northland.
Develop marketing and communications strategy and action plan	A marketing strategy and action plan for 2017-2020 will provide detailed scheduling of all marketing and communications activity, including awareness-raising of the new sector body and its brand, defining key markets and growth opportunities for the sector. The plan will clearly map out marketing activity for the next 12-24 months, including commercial sponsorship opportunities.	This strategy and action plan will help raise the profile of the sector body, provide a clear reference for education providers about future activities so they can in turn build their own marketing around this activity, support cohesion and collaboration in the region and assist with budgeting, planning and analysis of activity.
Build relationships with onshore and offshore agents in key markets	It will be important to build relationships with onshore and offshore agents under the new sector body brand. This can be achieved through an extension of existing relationships held within the sector and also as part of Education New Zealand's regional marketing story.	These relationships will be key to helping educate key markets (through their agents) about the region and what Northland has to offer in order to attract and recruit students.

2. Northland's international education brand is strong and unique and recognised both nationally and internationally

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Work with Northland Inc's tourism team	This will identify opportunities for collaboration and cross-sector promotion.	This will provide added benefit to both sectors (e.g. ensuring that any inmarket promotion targets media as well as agents / industry reps) and align with the TTNEAP goals to enhance integrated regional tourism promotion.
Develop risk mitigation plan	It is recommended this is undertaken in consultation with ENZ and other emergency response organisations in Northland.	This plan will help to manage communications when faced with potential risks to the market e.g. natural disasters, student accident or death.
Develop student Alumni programme	To allow current and former students to share and promote Northland experiences to their networks.	This will help raise the profile of Northland providers, as well as the region, and help build brand ambassadors who will continue to promote Northland as a study destination.
Develop interactive communication channels	As well as online forums for students to share their Northland experiences, it will be important to create channels where prospective students are encouraged to engage and share their contact details for continued communication.	This will encourage more direct engagement and buy-in with online marketing and draw leads for follow-up.
Develop media toolkit	The media toolkit will provide an overview of the regional sector body, the region's education offering, the current situation and future aspirations – including the sector's value to the region, and opportunities for story-telling.	A media toolkit will help local and national media better understand, and positively promote, the cultural, social and economic benefits of international education in Northland.
Build relationship with local and offshore media	Media coverage is important for connecting with the community and showing international markets the value that is placed on international education in Northland. It is therefore important that the sector body works hard to build relationships with local media and offshore media in key markets to encourage regular, positive media coverage.	To encourage positive media attention for the industry and improve social awareness of international education activities, both onshore and offshore.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME: 3

Northland delivers a high quality, culturally unique learning experience, attracting a diverse international student population.

Often students have little idea of what to truly expect when they come to New Zealand, and Northland. Some expect to play rugby. Some are surprised by how relaxed and casual we are. Some find the Māori culture beautiful and others struggle with our 'remoteness'. To ensure a high quality, culturally unique and meaningful learning experience, we need to help prepare students before they arrive, to manage – and then ideally, exceed – those expectations once they are here.

The first step is to engage with students pre-arrival, to arm them with the information they need to understand Northland's education offering, what they can expect life to be like once they are here and to get them excited about all the experiential opportunities outside of study that make Northland so unique.

Once students arrive, it is appropriate that they are all officially (and authentically) invited into region, showing them they are special, respected and welcome. While it is very important that a student's educational programme is delivered to a high standard, there are many other key factors that influence the overall sense of quality for their experience, including what they did (and didn't) know before they arrived, their homestay, their engagement with the community and how welcome they are made to feel.

To enhance sustainability for the sector, it is valuable to consider the needs of both domestic and international students. The success of all students is intrinsically linked, and therefore any new initiatives should bring social, cultural and economic value to both domestic and international students.

There are currently gaps in Northland's international education product offering, with a low number of primary and intermediate schools accepting international students and no tailored English language programmes. While NorthTec has a strong tertiary level English language programme, there is a need for intensive introductory or upskilling English courses to meet the wider needs of international students of all ages.

The sector has also recognised a demand for more PTEs and tertiary offerings. One of the 'Enabler' projects identified in the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan is a collaborative project to develop a central tertiary hub for Whangarei, involving NorthTec, University of Auckland, Massey and TEC. Over time, the development of such a central tertiary hub would be of significant benefit to both domestic and international students.

By working towards a strengthened tertiary offering through the development of new PTEs or the formation of a central tertiary hub, Northland's international education offering could be significantly enhanced, and in turn have a substantial impact on sector growth to support a more diverse student population and a wider product offering.

In most regions, growth in international education is driven predominantly by the tertiary sector. This has been the case in Northland over the last few years, with NorthTec's students representing two-thirds of all international students. If NorthTec's Auckland-based students were included, this percentage would be closer to 80%. However, Northland is also in a unique position of having extensive opportunity for growth in the primary, intermediate and secondary sectors. This strategy targets growth across all sectors.

3. Northland delivers a high quality, culturally unique learning experience, attracting a diverse international student population

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop pre-arrival information pack (online delivery) for international students	<p>With the combined resources of the region, there is the opportunity to develop such a product to create a detailed offering to all international students in Northland. NorthTec has a good example of this in place already. Other regions are also offering pre-arrival 'parent' ambassadors, who make themselves available to talk to the parents of the children coming to New Zealand, to offer reassurance and confidence in their decision.</p>	<p>This pack will to help to manage expectations and improve understanding of key information regarding arrival options, transport, cost of living, our 'way of life', our history and culture, banking, shopping and support services etc. It could also include digital resources, like 360 videos to show students where they are coming (town, beaches, typical supermarket, typical home etc) and cover study and work options, cultural intelligence etc.</p>
Develop culturally appropriate welcome protocol	<p>This welcome protocol will relate to all schools hosting international students in Northland, and will include a regional welcome pack, access to pre-arrival information pack (mentioned above) and powhiri (provided by the schools themselves or a centrally organised city/community/regional powhiri where all students can come together to be welcomed). Powhiri are currently held by some schools and NorthTec also runs an overnight marae stay, however many providers do not have the resources to offer this.</p>	<p>This protocol will ensure all students receive the same quality of welcome to Northland, which will help to ensure they feel well informed and prepared for life in New Zealand. A powhiri will ensure their welcome is culturally appropriate.</p>
Develop 'starting out' toolkit for early adopters	<p>This toolkit will provide support and assistance for new providers wanting to host international students, including those that are yet to become Code Signatories. Through this strategy development, several early adopters have been identified, keen and ready to develop an international programme.</p>	<p>This toolkit, coupled with mentoring and support from schools with established programmes, will help to build capacity in Northland and strengthen the industry as a whole.</p>
Establish regular statistical data capture of international students in Northland	<p>This data capture will help the sector body to better understand student trends and plan for the future. This is being successfully achieved in other regions with regular surveying of providers, coupled with regional and national data being collated by ENZ and NZQA.</p>	<p>This data will show patterns in market behaviour and help identify potential new markets and product offerings.</p>

3. Northland delivers a high quality, culturally unique learning experience, attracting a diverse international student population

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Engage SIEBA to support new schools through the SIEBA Business Hub	SIEBA – or Schools International Education Business Association – is the peak body established to give schools a national voice in the international education sector. The Business Hub is a new service that supports schools new to international education with all the administrative tasks associated with enrolling international students, including application and enrolment, visa requirements, immigration and fee payments.	The SIEBA Business Hub will allow schools to more easily begin hosting international students without needing additional staffing to manage the administration, creating a low risk, low cost entry point.
Build relationships with education agents	The focus will be on building relationships with those agents representing key markets, in line with target markets of existing education providers in Northland, Education New Zealand's national and international data, as well as developing a schedule for inmarket promotion of Northland's international education brand, in collaboration with other sectors such as tourism.	Approximately 70% of all international students in New Zealand come through agents and it is therefore critical to the success of the sector body to build and maintain strong agent relationships. This will also support the relationships agents have with individual education providers.
Facilitate famil tours of Northland	It is important for educational agents to understand what they are promoting. Famil tours, delivered in coordination with Northland tourism operators, will help to showcase the region, and give them a firsthand experience of life in Northland.	These famil tours will help education agents fully understand the benefits to their students of living and studying in Northland.
Facilitate group tours into Northland	Facilitated group tours across several schools will give schools and their communities a low-risk opportunity to experience hosting of international students, without the stress of managing agent relationships, administration and group coordination. Group tours are typically 1-4 weeks, and focused on cultural exchange, rather than an intensive educational programme.	Group tours allows schools to gradually introduce their international programme to the school community and build interest and engagement in hosting future longer-term students. There is currently demand for group tours so this would also provide some early 'wins' for the region.

3. Northland delivers a high quality, culturally unique learning experience, attracting a diverse international student population

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Investigate opportunities for joint regional promotion	<p>There are opportunities to promote jointly with other regions, in particular Auckland. As Northland's closest neighbour, Auckland has a very strong reputation for international education and Northland has the advantage of offering a very different, and therefore complementary, value proposition. Discussions within the Upper North Island Story collective may also be of value.</p>	<p>As well as attracting new students to the region from offshore, there is an opportunity to attract Auckland-based students to Northland for short-term tourism experiences, including educational, cultural and environmental offerings.</p>
Support efforts to establish strengthened tertiary offering in Northland	<p>There is currently a proposal in the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan to develop a central tertiary hub in Whangarei. It will be important for the sector body to support this or any tertiary sector growth projects, as they will have clear benefits to the international education sector, as well as Northland as a whole.</p>	<p>The development of a central tertiary hub in Whangarei could - in time - significantly change the international education landscape in Northland and help to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the sector, with the additional product offerings of university-delivered diploma and degree programmes.</p>
Investigate establishment of tailored English language services	<p>While there are existing English language providers in Northland, the programmes are targeted to migrants or longer term tertiary students and don't necessarily reflect or meet the needs of all international students.</p>	<p>By addressing this gap in the market and offering English language programmes relevant to the needs of all international students, Northland would be in a position to attract more students, for longer.</p>
Investigate demand for 'Study Plus' programmes	<p>This model is working successfully in Kerikeri High School with Study Plus programmes being offered for special interests such as surfing and sailing. This could be extended to other schools to offer different specialist areas that are relevant to the providers' community or natural environment, such as farming, marine, horse riding, diving, hospitality, design etc.</p>	<p>This could be jointly delivered across schools and/or tertiary providers to enhance collaboration and provide students unique and specialist opportunities which will strengthen the wider product offering of Northland.</p>

3. Northland delivers a high quality, culturally unique learning experience, attracting a diverse international student population

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Work with Northland marinas and ports to promote international education	<p>There are a number of international sailors needing short or long term schooling for their children while they are in New Zealand. In Whangarei, there are a number of schools within walking distance to the marina, and with Opuā's recent marina expansion, the area is likely to attract more international sailors, who could stay in port for longer.</p>	<p>The offer of high quality local schooling could also enhance the offshore marketing for the ports and marinas themselves and build a stronger, longer stay international sailing community, which adds additional economic benefit to the region.</p>
Support development of targeted special interest programmes	<p>One example is Whangarei Boys' High Schools' Golf Academy. This academy has been promoted by Whangarei Boys' and Girls' High Schools in the past but it has typically been under-utilised. Discussions are currently underway with an interested international party to further develop the academy.</p>	<p>There is potential to bring in international stakeholders (along with investment and skills) to better promote the academy offshore and strengthen the quality and scale of the programme.</p>

STRATEGIC OUTCOME: 4

Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) recently completed the 'International Student Experience Project', talking to hundreds of students about what they consider to be the 'necessary', 'satisfactory' and 'delightful' elements of the international student experience. The overwhelming response from the students was their desire for opportunities to connect with 'real' New Zealanders, through authentic experiences.

The student experience underpins every action point in this strategy, and covers everything from recruitment to living, studying, working, graduation and post-study experiences as Alumni. It is critical students are supported to have, as much as possible, a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience in Northland.

This can be achieved in a number of ways, including assisting students to learn about Northland before they arrive, creating opportunities for them to engage with the community in meaningful ways (for example, by joining a sports team or volunteering in the community), being well supported in their homestay, having the opportunity to experience authentic Maori culture, ensuring they have a support person on arrival at their institution and being given the opportunity to tell their story and share their own culture while in New Zealand.

These action points are intended to not only ensure a positive, engaging and rewarding experience for students, but also build community engagement and awareness of international students, to grow understanding and acceptance.

4. Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop regional welcome pack	This pack will be a standardised pack supporting the region's brand and messaging and will cover key information from the pre-arrival pack, such as the cost of living, our 'way of life', our history and culture, banking, shopping etc. In addition, schools will add provider-specific material.	This welcome pack will create a simple 'value add' for the students on their arrival into Northland, and could promote local tourism opportunities (possible student discounts), as well as local business through product samples.
Create personal development opportunities for international students	By building relationships with community organisations (e.g. Volunteering Northland, Sport Northland, sports/ cultural clubs, Youthline, job seekers) and setting up programmes to facilitate community engagement, the sector body can support students to better connect with the community to provide a more fulfilling experience.	International students will meet their desire to engage with the local community in a more meaningful way, to build cultural and social connections that will strongly impact on their overall wellbeing and contribute to an overall positive experience.
Develop homestay resources to educate and support new and existing homestays for the sector	People choose to open their home to international students for many reasons, and these resources will help explain the legalities around provision of care for homestay students, the opportunities having a homestay student brings to the home, cultural awareness and understanding (all cultures have unique habits in the home) and to provide clear advice about how to deal with challenging situations.	Securing enough accommodation – namely homestays – for growing international students is critical to the growth of the sector. By educating and supporting homestay families, it will minimise dissatisfaction and misunderstandings in order to maintain a strong homestay network for Northland.
Develop homestay support network to build a collective knowledge base in Northland	This network will contribute to resources regarding homestay protocols, practices and learnings that can then be shared between institutions.	Homestay coordinators can feel isolated in their roles, so this network will help them to feel more supported. This network can also assist in marketing efforts to seek new homestays, which has been identified by some schools as a barrier to growth.
Investigate developing a homestay database for the region	The database would allow providers to cross-reference new homestay enquiries to ensure there had been no issues in the past and also to share information about homes.	This database will ensure a higher quality of homes being offered by all providers, and help providers more accurately match families with students and in turn improve the overall student experience.

4. Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Build communication channels between institutions	This will support collaborative learning, resource-sharing and student interaction with the community. There are a number of possible communication channels, and it will be key to get buy-in from all the providers before this is established.	It will be critical that under the new sector body, providers have an opportunity to share, offload or ask for advice from other providers in a respectful and safe way to ensure the wider group feels supported and connected.
Partner with local Iwi and Hapu	International education provides opportunities that will support the development of Northland's rangatahi (young people) through providing authentic cultural experiences for international students. One such example is the opportunity to deliver Maori cultural experiences, introducing students (both domestic and international) to the language, the tikanga and the traditions of Maori culture.	Northland Iwi and Hapu are well positioned to take a lead role in imparting cultural knowledge and understanding to international students in the region and beyond. As well as providing a meaningful experience to the international students, this model could create opportunities for learning and leadership for rangatahi, as well as economic benefits to Iwi and Hapu.
Investigate the development of an App for international students in Northland	Where possible, students would prefer to access information via digital, mobile data, including information about the region, events, places to go and the option to connect with others, and an app would meet this need. A good example of this is the Christchurch Student Guide App ^{xx} .	This app would encourage students to more readily engage with regional information and ensure they were better informed. Given Northland's smaller student population, the development of this App could be linked to a wider tourism visitor market.
Develop appropriate welcome / powhiri process for international students to Northland	With the support of local Hapu, this programme would best be delivered on marae and would acknowledge proper tikanga (process) for manuhiri (visitors).	This process would support genuine cultural exchange between rangatahi (young people) and international students, helping them truly connect and engage with New Zealand's culture. It would also help international students better understand the significance of Northland as a people and as a land to be treasured.
Develop district-wide and region-wide events for all the region's international students	Region-wide events, such as Sports Days, would bring the students together with local students and the community, for fun, cultural exchange and sharing.	These events would create opportunities for the local community to better engage with the students, to help make the students more visible and to create opportunities to tell their stories, strengthening ties with the local community and enhancing relationships with local students.

4. Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop links with Northland's migrant communities	Linking in with Northland's migrant communities would widen the support network for students, encourage information sharing and link into migrant events and celebrations. It is also important to make sure schools are aware of the extensive migrant pre- and post-arrival resources already available to students and families.	These linkages will help students better connect with the wider community and build understanding to ultimately enhance their overall experience.
Work with Northland tourism providers	Together with tourism providers, there is the opportunity to develop dedicated educational experiences, purposefully designed for students, their needs and their interests. In other regions of New Zealand, a Regional Passport is being developed to provide international students with recommendations for key activities and potential discounts.	This would encourage students to see more of the region, promote top tourism attractions, provide students with special deals and ultimately provide them with a better experience.
Establish regular community engagement experiences	These experiences will give international students the opportunity to contribute to the community (e.g. tree planting on Arbor Day).	This strengthens the connection students will have to Northland and give them a tangible link to the land. It also fulfills their desire for authentic, meaningful experiences, while at the same time supporting the community and our environment.
Build relationship with ATEED and Study Auckland	Through ATEED and the wider Auckland, student population, the sector body is in a position to promote Northland-based educational programmes and learning experiences to the 85,000-strong Auckland international student market.	This will support the development of cultural, environmental and educational tourism experiences that would benefit international and domestic students in Northland, as well as those in Auckland, in addition to the value added to those Northland businesses and communities delivering the experiences.
Develop 'international ambassadors' programme	This programme will see all school-age international students arriving into Northland connected with a local 'buddy' student.	This sense of immediate friendship and support is highly rated by students as being critical to a positive experience, and would in turn support cultural intelligence and understanding among local students, as well as strengthening global connections among the students.

4. Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Provide 'cultural intelligence and awareness' learning	This learning will be relevant to teachers, school support staff, school management, homestay families, hostel staff and anyone else directly linked to the students through school. With support, this could be extended to external providers in the community.	Cultural intelligence and awareness is critical to build understanding of the needs of international students, which will in turn improve cultural understanding, exchange and communication.
Investigate 'student experience' coordinator role	This role would manage programmes for all youth in Northland, including international students. This role could sit with local authorities and be a key bridging role between the community, local youth, international students, council, migrant groups and more.	This role would raise the profile of community-driven activity, encourage engagement from local youth and better promote local events, which would all add to the overall sense of engagement for international students also.
Hold 'welcome fair'	The fair would provide information to students (face-to-face) regarding laws (police), migrant and employment services, the cost of living, our 'way of life', Northland's history and culture, banking, shopping etc. This could be supported by government agencies (MBIE - immigration), local authorities (councils) and community organisations (Migrant Centres, Volunteering Northland, Citizens Advice Bureau, Sport Northland etc).	The benefit of this fair would be to give students access to a wide range of relevant information in an engaging way, with the ability to ask questions and have face-to-face conversations. This will help to ensure they have a more positive experience in Northland by ensuring they have a clear understanding of the opportunities available to them and the rules / laws that apply to them.
Develop 'Telling My Story' programme	This will allow international students to 'tell their story' to the community through an education role. This programme would give students the opportunity to share knowledge and information, including the language, of their home country into primary, intermediate and secondary schools.	This would strengthen cultural exchange and help build greater understanding of other cultures for domestic students. This programme will also create great marketing content for promoting the region's international education sector.

4. Studying in Northland is a positive, engaging and rewarding social and cultural experience for international students

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop Employment Pathways Project	In conjunction with tertiary providers and Northland Inc, international students would be supported into employment, particularly those industries where there are known skills shortages in Northland. There are basic tools that can be developed, such as a 'job seekers' guide for international students (promoting resources such as 'Careers NZ'), although the wider project will need to link in immigration and regional employers, to look at the sectors facing longer term skill shortages and how international students could be supported into those roles.	By working closely with Northland Inc, the region's business community, Immigration and the region's tertiary sector, opportunities will be identified to match international graduates with employment opportunities in sectors where there are skills shortages. This meets the student's need for employment and assists industry by addressing the region's skills shortages in key industries. NorthTec has already started some work in this area.
Develop regional Alumni Programme	An Alumni Programme provides a dedicated 'community' identity and space for Northland's past students to stay connected and continue to share their experiences.	This provides invaluable intel into the 'post-education' student experience and also supports the ongoing story-telling of Northland's students, particularly around their continued success.
Develop annual International Student Awards event	Such an event would bring together the students, providers and sector stakeholders to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of both the students and the sector.	Such events allow for individual students, schools, institutions and sector groups to be acknowledged for their contributions to the sector in Northland, as well as providing opportunities to celebrate the value international education brings to Northland.
Develop family/partners support programme	This programme would be in line with support services available through Immigration New Zealand to provide assistance to those parents/guardians wanting to come to New Zealand.	This would strengthen Northland's offering to the primary and tertiary sectors, by providing better support for the guardians of young children and for the partners of tertiary-trained students so they choose to stay and work in the region.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME: 5

International education is recognised as a key contributor to Northland's economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

As New Zealand's fourth largest export industry worth more than \$4.5b, the potential value of international education to the Northland economy is clear.

The market is responsible for more than 32,000 jobs nationwide and is currently centred around Auckland where approximately 60% of New Zealand's international students live. 76% of the 125,000 international students enrolled in New Zealand institutions in 2015 were studying in ITPs, PTEs, English language schools and universities. The remaining 14% were enrolled in primary, intermediate and secondary schools. The number of students choosing to study overseas is expected to rise from 5 million in 2015 to 8 million in 2025.

Education New Zealand reports growing trends towards demand for primary^{xv} and as a result of the Regional Partnerships Programme^{xvi}, regional New Zealand is being seen as a viable alternative to the Auckland market, which is experiencing intensive growth.

As well as the direct revenue into the region from international student fees and living costs, international student graduates are also acknowledged as a solution to New Zealand's growing skills shortages in key industries. In the Tai Tokerau Northland Growth Study commissioned by Northland Inc in 2015, international education was identified as a "potential future source of skills". The report goes on to say, "trends in international student numbers also provide an indication of the value proposition of the region as a place to learn and live".

This is an approach being embraced around New Zealand, with specific projects in cities such as Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Wellington, to prepare international students for employment. Examples include the Job Ready Programme in Otago and Christchurch^{xvii}, and Project Skills in Auckland^{xviii} supported by ENZ, INZ, ATEED and Auckland Councils. Focused around hosting Industry Connect bootcamps, Project Skills aims to connect international students studying Level 7 and above with industries facing long-term skill shortages, to better meet the labour market needs of the region.

There is scope for Northland to better connect graduating international students with job opportunities in the region, to help meet demand for specialist skills in local industry. Work is already being undertaken in this area by NorthTec and QRC and there is an opportunity to take a more regional approach, both as part of marketing education in the region, and coordinating opportunities for graduating students.

It is noteworthy that while the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan (TTNEAP) did not specifically address international education, it has since been included in the project pipeline and will transition to the TTNEAP during a refresh process that is currently underway.

Addressing, and measuring, international education as a key contributor to Northland's social and cultural wellbeing is challenging as there is no recent research on this subject. This strategy focuses on the opportunities international students will bring through improved cultural awareness and understanding, to ultimately improve the social license of international education in Northland.

To first gain credibility and then the trust of the community in this matter, anecdotal evidence reinforces the need for genuine, meaningful encounters and engagement between international students and members of the community. These encounters provide the students with authentic, meaningful social and cultural experiences, and help to reduce and dispel misunderstandings and potential prejudices.

In addition, there is also a need for community education, which will be supported by building cultural understanding through knowledge sharing. One way this is being addressed in Queenstown, where there are large numbers of international students and tourists, is the QRC Ambassador Programme^{XX}.

The Ambassador Programme gives participants the tools and knowledge to engage with visitors and their community – and has a secondary goal of profiling the value of tourism to a region's economy, reminding participants of the important role all members of a community play in contributing to the visitor experience. The programme was initially developed for the tourism industry, but is now being sought by the wider community, including schools and local government staff.

This strategy recommends a number of programmes that serve the dual role of providing international students with a better experience, and also raising the profile – and value – of international education for the local community. Examples are community volunteering, connecting with sports organisations, district and region-wide student events, Telling my Story programme, provision of Cultural Intelligence and Awareness Training, and social/economic opportunities like the Employment Pathways Programme and connection with ATEED.

5. International education is recognised as a key contributor to Northland's economic, social and cultural wellbeing

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Secure establishment funding from NINC and ENZ	This establishment funding will support the initiatives outlined in the first three years of this plan, including appointment of a regional coordinator role and advisory board, and brand development.	This funding will ensure Northland's international education sector body is financially supported through the establishment phase, before seeking alternative funding for ongoing growth.
Integrate international education into the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan (TTNEAP)	While the initial edition of the TTNEAP did not specifically address international education, Northland Inc has since recommended the delivery of this strategy is included as a new project in the TTNEAP refresh, as a key enabler for the region.	By acknowledging the outcomes of this strategy as a new project in the TTNEAP, there will be greater security for the strategy with ongoing support from local government and better integration into the wider economic programme for Northland.
Acknowledge and promote international education as a growing economic contributor to Northland's future economy	Recent data from Education New Zealand has assigned an economic value to international education in a number of regions, based on 2015 student data. It is important to continue to measure future growth and successes to provide evidence of this economic contribution to the region.	ENZ's recent research gives a clear economic value to international education in Northland and this position needs to be promoted to the sector, to media and to local government to support the growing social and cultural integration of international students and the growth of the sector.
Support development of international strategies in Northland	Northland's local authorities have an opportunity to follow other regions, such as Western Bay of Plenty, in the development of a wider international strategy that encompasses trade, tourism, education, investment and more. Through the establishment of this strategy, education is in a position to be a leader and facilitator in this space.	A wider international strategy for Northland would acknowledge the importance of international activity, including tourism, trade, skills, investment and relationships, to support sustainable growth for the Northland region. Specific to this strategy, it would also give greater strength to the international education sector by acknowledging and building on cross-sector opportunities with tourism, trade, investment, skills and relationships.

5. International education is recognised as a key contributor to Northland's economic, social and cultural wellbeing

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
<p>Encourage opportunities for Sister City relationships, using education as a platform to connect with other cities.</p>	<p>Sister City relationships between Northland's local authorities and key markets, have the opportunity to offer economic, social and cultural benefits to Northland. Where there is an established relationship with the education sector, such as the relationship between Whangarei and Haikou in China, there is now the opportunity to leverage education relationships to open doors into other sectors. Education New Zealand actively promotes the value of Sister City relationships, especially in countries such as China, Japan and South Korea, where government to government connections are highly regarded.</p>	<p>There are currently very few Sister City relationships in place across Northland and evidence from other regions points to Sister City relationships being a valuable strategy to build relationships and connections to another city to encourage cultural exchange for its students and trade.</p>
<p>Work across all Northland Inc's work streams, including Maori, trade and tourism</p>	<p>This could create mutually beneficial cross-sector opportunities to promote Northland offshore and onshore. As one example, there are independent delegations from Northland heading offshore for tourism, trade and education, and often to the same markets.</p>	<p>Cross-sector promotion strengthens the regional brand overall, creates a point of difference and produces efficiencies in getting to market.</p>
<p>Develop a full communications strategy</p>	<p>Currently the international education sector in Northland carries a low profile, because student numbers and the value to the industry, are relatively low. As more skilled graduates complete their training in Northland, it will become more important for the business community, as well as media and the wider community, to understand the cultural, social and economic value of international education.</p>	<p>A full communications plan will ensure businesses, media and the wider community have a clear understanding of the scope and value of the international education sector. To engage the wider community and augment international education's social license, regular positive communication and monitoring of social commentary will be critical.</p>

5. International education is recognised as a key contributor to Northland's economic, social and cultural wellbeing

Project / programme	Description	Impact / Purpose
Develop a regional Job Ready programme	Job ready programmes are currently being provided in varying degrees by individual Northland institutions, and these could be consolidated and combined to provide a regional focus. Strong regional programmes are already in place in areas like Canterbury and Otago.	A region-wide Job Ready Programme, supported through a collective approach from all relevant institutions, would provide efficiencies and more opportunities for students through better links into the business community.
Develop migrant skill matching opportunities within the Northland business community	Work with Northland Chambers of Commerce and government agencies (including INZ, MSD) to create graduate / business networking events, work ready programmes targeting key industries such as technology and professional industries, and guest speakers at business events.	These opportunities would help to promote the value of hiring international students for Northland businesses and introduce international graduates to potential employers.
Investigate opportunities for commercial partnership	Commercial partnerships could include providing in-kind services to the sector body, supporting offshore and onshore marketing and adding value to the student experience in Northland.	Commercial partnerships will be an important alternative funding stream to offset the sector body's operational costs and build stronger links with the business community.
Investigate internship programme for Level 5+ international students	Internships would be relevant where there is a clear skills match between a Level 5+ international student and a local business.	Such internships would give students valuable work experience and allow Northland businesses to engage meaningfully with an international student, to build understanding and potentially provide the student with career opportunities.
Explore development of educational, environmental and cultural tourism products	There is growing demand, both from international students and the wider community, for authentic and meaningful cultural, environmental and educational tourism experiences. Northland is knowledge-rich in this space and therefore has the potential to become the leading destination for educational, environmental and cultural tourism.	The development of educational, environmental and cultural tourism products could benefit international students, but more importantly, create economic growth opportunities for Northland communities.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME: 6

Cultural exchange and knowledge-sharing is celebrated and encouraged by Northland education providers and the wider community.

One of the most important elements in developing and growing Northland's international education sector is to engage the communities of Northland to share and understand the benefits that international students can bring, to augment the social license of international education in the region.

The growth of international education in Northland relies on the support of Northland's communities, including its schools, homestays and wider communities.

Without the providers and the homestays, international education programmes are not possible. And without support from the wider community, students will not enjoy a positive experience, which will ultimately negatively impact on the region's international education brand.

The whole student experience is central to their overall impression of Northland – from the messaging and information they receive before they arrive in New Zealand, to their arrival at the airport and everything they experience before they leave.

The education component of their experience is relatively limited compared to the many encounters they will have in the community outside of their learning institute, from their homestay family to the local supermarket or restaurant, to the services they use and products they purchase while they are here.

Many of the action points outlined throughout this strategy are designed to achieve multiple goals, not only to support international students or create opportunities for domestic students, but also to contribute to positive cultural exchange and knowledge sharing.

This strategic outcome will be achieved by the combined delivery of Outcomes 1-5.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ All Northland schools were given the opportunity to complete a survey relating to international education in May 2017. 18 schools responded; results are available on request.
- ⁱⁱ The Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan was commissioned by Northland Inc, and first published in February 2016. The Action Plan followed the Tai Tokerau Northland Growth Studies Opportunities Report, produced by Martin Jenkins for Ministry of Primary Industries in February 2015. Both documents are available here: <http://www.northlandnz.com/business/ttneap>
- ⁱⁱⁱ A Strategy Reference Group was appointed to support the development of this strategy, and to ensure input from a wide range of stakeholders across Northland. A list of all reference group members is available on request.
- ^{iv} The full Progress Update can be reviewed here: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/international-education>
- ^v The International Student Wellness Strategy was launched in June 2017 by Minister Paul Goldsmith and is available here: <https://education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/overall-strategies-and-policies/wellbeing-strategy/>
- ^{vi} Statistics relating to the number of First time and Total Student Visas is collated and analysed by the Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand. This information can be reviewed here: <https://enz.govt.nz/news-and-research/> and here: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/international-education>
- ^{vii} The Economic Impact of International Education in Northland 2015/16 Report was published in March 2017 for Education New Zealand and is available here: <https://enz.govt.nz/news-and-research/research/the-economic-impact-of-international-education-20152016-in-new-zealands-regions/>
- ^{viii} 2016 international student data for NorthTec is outlined in its 2016 Annual Report and can be reviewed here: <http://www.northtec.ac.nz/about-us/annual-reports>
- ^{ix} <https://education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/asian-language-learning-in-schools-programme/>
- ^x The TIA states that “families of international students spend an average of \$3600 per visit on tourism, significantly more than other international visitors...That, in itself, provides a huge incentive for tourism to much better link arms with export education.” <http://www.tourism2025.org.nz/about-tourism-2025/in-action/target/unlocking-international-student-potential/>
- ^{xi} http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx?request_value=13068&tabname=Culturaldiversity
- ^{xii} <http://www.wdc.govt.nz/PlansPoliciesandBylaws/Plans/SustainableFutures/Pages/Research-and-Reports.aspx#Expand>
- ^{xiii} <https://www.languages.ac.nz/students-learn-about-maori-culture-at-marae-on-waiheke-island-2/>
- ^{xiv} The Western Bay of Plenty International Strategy document can be viewed here: <http://www.priorityone.co.nz/strategies-and-reports>
- ^{xv} <https://enz.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/International-Student-Numbers-January-to-August-2016.pdf>
- ^{xvi} <https://enz.govt.nz/support/funding/regional-partnership-programme/>
- ^{xvii} <http://getworkready.co.nz/dunedin/> and <http://www.christchurcheducated.co.nz/live/job-ready-programme/>
- ^{xviii} Project Skills is being run in Auckland, supported by ENZ, INZ, ATEED and Auckland Councils. Updates on the project can be reviewed here: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/settlement-actionz/actionz7/project-skills>
- ^{xix} <http://www.queenstownresortcollege.com/better-business/ambassador/>
- ^{xx} <http://www.christchurcheducated.co.nz/play/app/>

