Proprietors Meeting Minutes
Monday 15 September 2025 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Rod Webster, Rhiannon Jarvis, Lucy Bayliss (staff representative), Tara Israelson, Hayley Luan (minutes), Krista Kerr, Dannielle King

Apologies: Rachel Visser (Student Representative), Jenny Jellicoe

The meeting began with a karakia.

Te Akapūmau-Protecting and advancing Te Tiriti in Education

Krista and Dannielle recently attended a summit called Te Akapūmau representing MANZ and Wā Ora Montessori School. The summit was orgainsed by Te Akatea (Māori Principal's Association) with a theme of protecting and advancing Te Tiriti in Education. The goal of the theme was to create an Action Plan for schools to follow up.

Krista presented the Action Plan that was compiled at the summit. She noted that the Action Plan is at the strategy and governance level. It was compiled based on the acknowledgement of the mahi of the teachers, staff, ākonga and the Board members and is quite proactive. It was noted that if we are not protecting te tiriti in action, there is a health and safety issue for Māori learners and Māori staff. It is suggested that a steering committee should be formed to direct the progress of the work required.

Dannielle presented a summary of the highlights of the summit and a specific Action Plan that is aligned to the Wā Ora Charter. She noted two documents were released at the summit, one refers to the recolonisation of New Zealand curriculum in 2025 which was presented by Te Atekura and PPTA. The other report referred to Māori equity in Education which contains a lot of background information regarding the reasons for Māori Equity in Education. It was noted that the content of the Māori Equity in Education report should not be reproduced or stored without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Ava noted that it would be useful if some of the main points in the shared papers can be added to the school Annual Plan from 2026 and this should be fed to whānau hui as well. Tara questioned if there was a Te Tiriti partnership report presented to the Board every year? It was noted that it will be useful for the Board to receive such a report. Stacey questioned what the steering committee may look like and who should be involved. It was noted that the steering committee may contain a parent representative, staff representatives, a whānau hui representative, a Board member and a SLT member.

Rod noted it is positive that both Krista and Dannielle attended the summit to share their knowledge with other people. Krista noted that all the attendees were placed into different discussion groups to share their knowledge including 11 Iwi and the Teaching Council representatives. There will be two more summits coming up before the election in 2026 and a small committee has been formed to follow this up.

Byron noted this should be taken into account when developing the school Strategic Plan for the next 3 years. It will be a good point to bring people together to discuss Te Tiriti goals for the plan. It was noted that part of the responsibility of the steering committee is to make decisions on how to measure outcomes and who should take what responsibilities going forward.

The Council thanked Krista and Dannielle for attending the summit and sharing the papers with the Council.

Krista and Dannielle left at 7:15 pm.

Tara suggested the Board/Council members to say maku when moving a motion at the Board/Council meetings.

Ava questioned if this should be included in the curriculum cycle and reported to the Board every three years. Question raised as to who should present the Te tiriti report? Tara noted the teachers should be able to reflect it in their daily teaching. Ava will talk with Dannielle and the steering committee regarding this.

The Council welcomed Lucy to her first meeting as Preschool DP. Tara will be co-opted to the Council as a Montessori specialist at the October meeting after the Board by-election is completed.

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Rhiannon has a conflict of interest for property maintenance projects regarding plumbing and drainage.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Motion: The minutes of the last Proprietors' meeting held on Monday 18th August 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved by Stacey; Seconded by Ava; All in favour motion carried

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Property Committee Updates

Byron presented the Property committee update. The recent property committee meeting was held last week. There have been discussions about the pigeon problem at the High School and there may be a possible solution for it. The Primary 6-9 decking and veranda will be built over the summer holiday. The Primary grass field will be drained and levelled over the summer holidays as well. The large amount of dirt on the High School grass field is a good barrier to prevent people from entering the High School site. Once the dirt is moved to the Primary site to assist levelling up the Primary grass field, temporary fencing will need to be installed to prevent people driving onto the field.

The new fencing around the Primary basketball court will be taken down and strengthened during the September holidays.

Financial Update

Hayley presented the September financial updates.

BDO is taking over from Deloitte for the 2025 Council audit. The interim audit will be booked for November with the final audit being scheduled for February 2026. The large spending in the Council miscellaneous account was for the insurance premium paid back to the Trust. The last instalment will be made in October. An additional insurance premium of about $350 was paid to cover the High School prefab and transport in an insured event. The total coverage is about $100k. This was neglected over the previous years and has been picked up by the new insurance broker. The major maintenance projects in September included the new shade sail for the Playgroup outdoor area and the new car park at the High School. The High School car park is covered by government policy one funding. The Preschool cash flow looks healthy for 2025 and the forecasted closing bank balance is around $200k. It is unsure how much the teachers' pay increase will be in 2026.

Preschool Fee Increase

Rhiannon noted that although it was moved at the last Council meeting to increase the Preschool fee by 10% from Term 1 2026, the fee increase will only make the Preschool break even over the next 3 years. If the Council commits to not increasing the Preschool fees in three years, there should be a buffer to prevent any unexpected events. It was suggested that the Council should be looking at a 15% fee increase in the Preschool. Everyone is very aware of the rising cost and the food pricing has gone up by 16% over the last 3 years. The Montessori materials, environment and Montessori staff training all cost a lot of money. Due to the current low Preschool fee, increasing the fee by 15% is not going to put us higher than other local ECE centres. We still charge a lower fee compared to Capital Montessori School who provide a similar programme. Capital Montessori is $158 per week including after school care and students bring their own lunch. We want families to believe in Montessori and not treat us as a cheap alternative. By Increasing the Preschool fee by 15%, the term fee will increase from $1,017 to $1,170, which is an increase of $15 a week. It was noted that Preschool parents are able to claim for the family boost to reduce the financial burden.

Question raised as to whether there is a discount to existing families with siblings to relieve their financial burden? Is there a way to add the cost to the holiday programme? It was noted that families with 3 children enrolled at Wā Ora receive 10% off their Preschool fees and donations and those with 4 children enrolled receive 20% off.

Byron noted it is worth a discussion and a 15% increase sounds reasonable. Tara questioned if we are going to increase the Area School donations at the same time? Byron noted that is a different topic and he believes that both entities should charge a similar amount despite being funded differently. All new parents are informed of the Preschool term breaks. It was noted that the Preschool provides good food. Lucy noted compared to other mainstream day cares, our Preschool fee is significantly cheaper even though the Preschool is closed over summer holidays. The only other places that are cheaper than us are the kindergartens and they operate for shorter hours. Byron noted our goal is to have a Preschool fee increase every 3 years and eventually charge a similar fee to other centres. Tara noted that we stand out as a Montessori school and we keep almost all the children until they turn 6. The fact is that people are leaving the country and some children have to leave the school to move overseas with their parents.

It was noted that people choose us because we provide Montessori education to their children. Stacey noted that we have to be careful that we do not change the character of our community in a way that we do not intend. We value that we have a community

that believes in Montessori and see the value for our children. Tara questioned if a fee increase would make us more expensive than other local Preschools? It was noted that the Council will reassess and make a new decision when it comes to the time to have another Preschool fee increase. Ava noted we are not a charity and parents have to pay the Preschool fee to keep their children enrolled in the Preschool. It does not have to be a 15% increase every three years.

Tara noted that there may be single parents or some whānau who have financial difficulties, however the Preschool has to be able to operate with the rising costs. Rhiannon noted that the reasons for the Preschool fee increase should be communicated with the Preschool community properly. Stacey noted the ECE funding is roll sensitive. If the roll stays stable, it could relieve some pressure off the Preschool cash flow. Ava noted that we always aim to have 100 in the Preschool and there are people who want what we offer and recognise what we offer. Tara noted that some parents may choose to send their children to a state school when they turn 5 years old and there may be some whānau who are already struggling that choose to leave the school due to the Preschool fee increase. The benefit is that whānau can see a pathway for their children to attend up to High School. The High School tours are positive and showcase to the parents what it looks like in the High School. At present, every sector is full. The High School did not take in any new students this year and only 4 new students were taken in the Primary. Tara noted that whānau know that if they go to another school, they would not be able to come back as there may be no space available for their children.

Motion: That the Council agrees to increase the Preschool fee by 15% to $1,170 per term from Term 1 2026. The Preschool fee is fixed for the next three years.

Moved by Rhiannon; Seconded by Byron; All in favour motion carried

Proposed 9-year-old Transition

Ava presented the 9-year-old transition proposal. The second plane of development is for 6-12 years old and we break it down to 6-9 and 9-12 at Wā Ora. At present, there is a major transition for the Preschool children when they move up to the Primary when they turn 6 years old. Students move up to the 9-12 classes in the following year after they turn 9 years old. The proposed change is to move those students who turn 9 in Term 2 to the 9-12 programme (if they are ready). For those who turn 9 in Term 3 and Term 4, they will stay in the 6-9 classrooms until the following year (as is currently). There will be some children who turn 9 in Term 2, but are not ready to move up, so they will stay in the 6-9 classes until the following year.

The transition may happen on the same day as the children's 9th birthday or at the beginning of Term 3 for all those children who are moving up to the 9-12 classes. It was noted that there are 5 children who turned 9 in Term 2 this year. This is to help the children who do not get any further benefit from the 6-9 programme and are ready to move to 9-12. The 6-9 teachers know those who are ready to move up and they will talk with whānau regarding the transition. Those children who move up to 9-12 in Term 2 start their Year 5 journal about 2 terms earlier compared to others.

Stacey questioned if there is an overlap between 6-9s and 9-12s. Ava noted the early transition is to give the children more settled time and the Montessori materials are all there. It is more of a social transition and a natural progression. Tara noted that Nadine and Anna are both AMI trained for 6-12s and they have the knowledge to teach 6-9 students with the help of Montessori materials. It is good for the school to follow the children who are ready to move up and for those who are not ready yet.

Tara noted that moving some children earlier in the year may give them more time to fit into the environment and get themselves ready. The 6-9 teachers know the transition process well as they are taking in 6 year olds throughout the year. The 9-12 teachers can plan for the transition and there is plenty of familiarity between the 6-9 and 9-12 classes. There is continuity and the likelihood of them getting a friend in the 9-12s feels more natural.

Stacey questioned when is the Year 4 sleep over? Ava noted that the Year 4 sleep over happens at the end of each year. Those who move up to the 9-12 classes will miss the Year 4 sleepover and they will attend the 9-12 camp at the beginning of each year whilst in the 9-12 classes. The year 7s have just done an overnight camp last week. Byron questioned if it is possible to move the Year 4 sleep over to earlier in the year? Ava noted the sleepover is to value the growth of the Year 4 students and it is better to have it at the end of the year. It was noted that the children who move up to 9-12 classes are welcome to attend the Year 4 sleepover, however they may not want to come back to that class. The number of Year 4s may decrease by a couple of students due to the early transition, which may alleviate the pressure of the big 6-9 classes.

Ava noted that the teachers are in favour of the early transition as it is for a limited number of students and can be planned beforehand. The Council is in charge of Montessori philosophy and the early transition is about how the school expresses the philosophy. The Council endorsed the change of moving the 9-year-olds to the 9-12s if they are ready in Term 2.

Ava will communicate with the Primary parents in Term 4 for the change in 2026.

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Risk Register

Nothing to discuss.

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm

The next Proprietors' meeting is scheduled for Monday 20th October 2025 in the Tāwari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 17/11/25

Action	Personnel	Due
Dannielle and Krista to form a steering committee to integrate Te Tiriti in the school charter and the strategic plan	Dannielle and Krista	By the end of the year
Byron to send out a community notice to increase the Preschool fee by 15% for Term 1 2026	Byron	At the beginning of Term 4 2025
Ava will communicate with the Primary parents in Term 4 for the 9 year old early transition	Ava	By the end of Term 4

2025 Council/BOT Meetings

7.00pm at Wā Ora Montessori School – Tāwari Classroom

January – No meeting
Monday 17 February 2025 (Week 3, Term 1)
Monday 17 March 2025 (Week 7, Term 1)
April – No meeting
Monday 19 May 2025 (Week 4, Term 2)
Monday 16 June 2025 (Week 8, Term 2)
July-No meeting
Monday 18 August 2025 (Week 6, Term 3)
Monday 15 September 2025 (Week 10, Term 3)
Monday 20 October 2025 (Week 3, Term 4)
Monday 17 November 2025 (Week 7, Term 4)