Te Reo Ākonga i Tēnei Wā | Te Pūkenga Learner Voice Current State

Pūrongo whakarāpopoto | Summary report

May 2021

Te Pūkenga

Ngā Ihirangi | Contents

Whakarāpopototanga | Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the insights from a stocktake conducted to understand how learner voice is currently captured and used to improve learner outcomes and experience throughout the network.

The stocktake consisted of a series of interviews with learners and staff of Te Pūkenga subsidiaries and New Zealand Student Association representatives. Key questions sought to identify, scope and understand the:

- common enablers and barriers to collecting, sharing and responding to learner voice
- key opportunities to better enable effective learner voice
- types of surveys used to collect learner voice, how they were used, their feedback mechanisms and response rates
- learner representative and group structure and function
- learner representation on subsidiary committees
- representation of underserved groups within the above
- informal mechanisms utilised to collect, share and respond to learner voice
- representation of subsidiary learners on National Student Associations

Variation across subsidiaries was common across many of the above areas, including: learner representative and leadership group structure and function, the way learner voice is captured and shared with the learner body and staff, remuneration provided to learner leaders and the degree of training provided to representatives and leaders.

The insights detailed in the report will be used to help inform recommendations and next steps to strengthen learner voice systems, to enable effective learner voice across the network.

Pūtake o tēnei pūrongo | Purpose of this report

This report provides a summary of the insights from 34 interviews conducted with staff and learners of the ITP subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga and New Zealand Student Association representatives. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how learner voice is currently captured and used to improve learner outcomes and experience throughout the network. The insights from this research will be used to help inform recommendations and next steps to improve the collection, use and influence of learner voice across the network.

Huarahi i whāia | Approach

- 34 interviews were conducted across all subsidiaries and with National Student Association representatives from Te Mana Ākonga, Tauira Pasifika, New Zealand Union of Student Associations, New Zealand Disabled Students Association and New Zealand International Students Association in March / April 2021 to understand the current state of learner voice systems and processes and to identify key enablers, barriers and opportunities to learner voice across the Te Pūkenga network.

- Both learners and staff were interviewed. Learner and staff interviews were conducted separately.

- Learner participants were generally Class Representatives, Student Council members and/or Student Association members.

- Staff participants varied across interviews however generally Student Support/Success Leaders and team members, Student Voice Co-Ordinators and Survey Administrators were involved.

- These interviews were conducted via Zoom and Skype and were between 45 mins to 60 minutes long.

- Interviews followed a set format and approach and all interviewees were asked the same questions.

- Notes were taken during the interviews and shared with attendees for validation. These notes form the basis of the summary report.

Ngā here | Limitations

- Questioning focused on underserved learner representation and learner voice mechanisms to elicit voice from underserved learner groups. In particular, further work is needed to establish Te Tiriti approaches to learner voice and to ensure Māori learner voice is empowered.

- TITO learners and staff were not engaged in this phase of the learner voice stocktake. Further work needs to be done to understand the current state of learner voice in TITOs.

Ngā mea hāpai, ngā taupā me ngā huarahi i tohua| Key enablers, barriers and opportunities identified

Enablers to collecting, sharing and responding to learner voice

Common enablers to collecting, sharing and responding to learner voice were raised through the interviews, these include:

- **Formalised and well-structured learner leadership and representative groups** such as Student Associations, Student Councils and Class Representative systems with good reach into the learner body and strong links to leadership teams. Student Association, Student Councils and Class Representative systems worked well when learners had clearly defined roles and responsibilities, scope of work and formalised process for escalation.

- **Formal feedback mechanisms** demonstrate to learners how their feedback is being valued and actioned, for example "You said – We Did" posters.

- **Empowering learners and providing support** to enable effective learner voice, for example by giving them full voting rights on boards, having clear lines of communication with managers and faculty leaders, involvement and commitment of Executive leadership and providing training/mentoring support.

- **Creating "safe spaces", informal mechanisms and one to one relationships with learners to collect feedback** such as informal hui, common spaces for underserved learner groups and close informal kōrero with tutors and student representatives. These were viewed as an important way to elicit some of the most valuable feedback from learners.

- **Formal mechanisms to track learner voice and actions arising from the learner voice** such as integration of learner voice into faculty and department action plans, tracking and reporting on learner voice initiatives.

- **Strong data collection, analysis and sharing mechanisms** to understand and share collective learner voice within a subsidiary and between subsidiaries for continuous improvement.

Barriers to collecting, sharing and responding to learner voice

Common barriers to collecting, sharing and responding to learner voice raised through the interviews include:

- **A lack of clear roles, responsibilities and formal processes.** This leads to poor communication, visibility and accountability to respond to the learner voice within learner voice structures and systems

- **Limited reach of formal learner leadership groups into the wider learner population.** Some subsidiaries learner leadership groups may not directly connect to many of the currently underserved learner groups such as Pacific, Disabled and International and learner groups, or fulfil te Tiriti obligations to Māori learners.

- **The voice of underserved learners within current systems and structures is limited**, **including representation in learner leadership roles.**

- **Accessibility barriers for learners to provide feedback.** Where there are no virtual feedback portals it is inconvenient for learners not on campus, as they are unable to drop their feedback into physical feedback boxes. However, when only online / virtual feedback mechanisms are offered this can still be inaccessible for those in regional and rural campuses and or those with limited access to devices and the relevant technology.

- **Inadequate resourcing and training for learners in leadership roles.** A number of learners reported limited training opportunities, information and resourcing available to enable them to be effective and confident in their roles.

- **Lack of effective feedback mechanisms.** Learners become disengaged with learner voice initiatives such as surveys when they can't see how their voice has been valued and actioned.

- **Competing time demands may limit learner involvement in learner leadership or representative groups.** Many learners noted that learners are often enrolled for short-term studies and may have other responsibilities and priorities demanding their time. As a result, they notice there is often not the same desire (or it is not as practical) for learners to step into representative or learner leadership roles.

- **Siloed collection and limited sharing of information within subsidiaries.** Often survey results or themes from learner voice are not shared widely within the subsidiary, for example across faculties/departments and with other learner leaders/representatives. This limits visibility of learner voice and the ability to make wide-scale improvements.

- **Lack of defined roles, responsibilities and formal processes.** Clearer accountability between subsidiary leadership and learner leadership groups would improve learner voice outcomes.

- **Subsidiary learners are not well represented or connected to National Student Associations.**

Key opportunities identified to enable effective learner voice

Key opportunities to better enable effective learner voice identified through this process included:

1. Learner leaders have clear and structured roles, are representative of diverse learners and have clear processes to escalate learner voice to the appropriate level for institutional response.

2. Learner leaders are well connected to and collect diverse learner voice (especially those underserved) to understand and represent collective learner voice, with clear feedback loops.

3. Tiriti partnership approaches are applied to student representation, leadership and decision making and Māori learners are enabled to be active participants at all levels of learner voice.

4. Subsidiary leadership has a strong and formal link to learner leadership and is responsive and accountable to learner voice, with closed feedback loops.

5. Learner leaders are trained and resourced appropriately to be enable and empower them to represent learner voice effectively.

6. Learner experience data is collected through a variety of appropriate channels, analysed robustly, themes shared widely to inform change and learners shown their voice has been heard.

7. Learner voice engagement and response channels within subsidiaries and at a Te Pūkenga network level are clear. Groups (both learner to learner and learner to institute engagement) are well connected to ensure visibility of learner voice at both a local level and across the network.

8. Te Pūkenga and National Student Associations work together to progress common goals for the benefit of all Te Pūkenga learners.

9. Learner voice is understood and valued by learners and staff and there is a desire to shift towards a model of partnership.

Ngā kitenga matua | Key findings

The following sections describe and detail the various mechanisms and initiatives used across the subsidiary network to gather, share and respond to learner voice.

Use of surveys to collect learner voice

Surveys are a common method used by subsidiaries to elicit feedback from learners on their experience, both academic and overall.

Types of survey used

Surveys used by subsidiaries range from general surveys (such as first impressions and course completion surveys) to targeted surveys to elicit feedback on specific services and areas of interest.

Examples of specialist surveys used are Māori and Pacific voice, accommodation, and Covid-19 response surveys.

All subsidiaries conduct academic surveys such as course and teacher evaluations and 14 out of 15 subsidiaries conduct some form of a learner success survey such as learner satisfaction surveys.

Using data from learner surveys

The process for analysing, sharing and actioning data from learner surveys is varied across the different types of surveys and the different subsidiaries.

- Some subsidiaries utilise reporting dashboards as a tool to share survey results with different faculties, departments, and levels of staff while others rely on manual reporting of findings.

- Academic survey findings are typically incorporated into formal action plans and findings are usually shared with Academic Boards and Committees.

- In some cases there is a clear connection between survey findings and the incorporation of findings into formal action plans. However, in many cases this is not formalised or tracked and findings are actioned in more of an informal way.

> **Example of current practice: Southern Institute of Technology (SIT)**
> - If the student satisfaction rate is below 65% for an academic or non-academic support service issue, the relevant faculty/service area consults with learners to get further details in order to better understand the feedback gathered and how to address it.
>
> - An action plan is then formulated and implemented by the relevant faculty/service area. It is also submitted to the academic committee.
>
> - After the action plan has been implemented the faculty/service area follows up with learners to see if actions have had an impact.

Survey feedback mechanisms

Although surveys are a common tool used by subsidiaries, the mechanisms used to provide information to leaners and staff on the results and actions arising from surveys varies widely across the network.

- Seven subsidiaries report having no formal mechanism to provide feedback to learners on the results of surveys and no mechanism to communicate the actions taken as a result of survey results. Anecdotally this was noted by staff and learners as a cause of poor response rates to surveys.

- Less than half of the subsidiaries share survey results/findings in some form with learners, through mechanisms and channels such as 'You Said – We Did' posters or through online learner platforms.

However, despite formal mechanisms often being in place to report back on survey results and actions to learners, learners from all subsidiaries reported that they do not feel well informed about how their voice is being actioned.

A number of learner leaders also expressed an interest in seeing high level (anonymised) results or themes from surveys as a key learner voice input to be aware of in their roles. Some councils and associations have requested this information though this request hasn't progressed.

The feedback loop to learners through surveys is an area that most institutes have identified as an area for development. This is discussed further in the themes section.

Response rates

Response rates for surveys ranged from 10% (lowest reported) to 70% (highest reported) across the network, with the average being 32%.

Overall, course-specific surveys had a higher response rate than institute-wide surveys.

Survey response rates for underserved learner groups were not discussed widely in the interviews, though it was raised by a small number of staff and learners that surveys did not typically get a high response rate from Māori and Pacific learners in particular and that other mechanisms were needed to ensure these voices are heard.

Example of current practice: Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

- The Learner Pulse System (the system) is an online system comprised of forums, online attendance register calls and other support phone calls. This system is used to collect learner voice on their holistic, academic and personal experience across the whole learner journey.

- Data collected from the system is collated into a series of reports - institute level as well as centre, programme and cohort-specific (e.g. Māori and Pacific).

- Themes, trends, and hot spots are identified and discussed by the Executive team. The results are also reported at several committees including: Komiti Āpiti Tuwhiri (Pulse and Impacts sub-committee); Komiti Āpiti Akoranga (Academic Quality subcommittee); the Te Tiriti Equity and Outcomes Committee); and during Wintec board meetings.

- A plan is created with the Dean around any hotspots identified within faculty to address target areas and action points.

- These are then reported to learners who were surveyed through the system.

- Learners are surveyed again to gauge their response to the change implemented.

- If hotspots occur outside of faculty, the appropriate business unit manager is identified and asked to create an action plan to address the issue.

- Positive feedback is also distributed through these channels.

Table 1: Key cited factors contributing to low and high engagement in surveys

Factors contributing to high engagement in surveys	Factors contributing to low engagement in surveys
- When lecturers encourage learners to complete surveys and allocate time during class for learners to complete them - When there is a clear line of sight for learners between survey completion, results of the survey and actions taken (e.g "You said" "We Did" posters or tutors relaying information back in class) - When surveys have a relationship-based element associated with them (e.g. through support staff sharing surveys directly with learners when engaging with them, or through interviews) - When incentives such as food vouchers, cash vouchers and electronics are offered (and fully known by learners)	- When learners do not know what will happen as a result of their feedback or they don't see the results and or actions being taken from the survey - When there is a high volume of surveying, causing survey-fatigue - When surveys are only sent via institute emails, which are often not checked regularly by learners - When surveys are administered during busy times such as exam periods - When surveys contain closed-answer questions, that limit the ability of the learner to share their authentic voice

Factors contributing to high engagement in surveys	Factors contributing to low engagement in surveys
• When the frequency and timing of surveys are well considered/planned	

Incentives are commonly used for larger surveys such as student satisfaction surveys. The most common types of incentive used is vouchers. However, many learners reported not knowing that survey incentives existed.

Learner Representative and Leadership Groups (Subsidiary Level)

Learner representative and leadership group structure and function across the network varies significantly.

Class representative systems are the most common structure to enable learner voice, with twelve subsidiaries adopting a class representative system. The use of Student Councils and Student Associations is lower with five subsidiaries adopting a Student Council and four adopting an Independent Student Association. Only one subsidiary has adopted a Learner Advisory Group structure.

Table 2: shows the variety in learner representation and leadership groups across the network

Institute	Independent Student Association	Student Council	Learner Advisory Group	Class Rep. system
Ara Institute of Canterbury (Ara)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT)	Yes	No	No	Yes
Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT)	Yes	No	No	Yes
Northland Polytechnic (Northtec)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Open Polytechnic	No	No	Yes	No
Otago Polytechnic	Yes	No	No	Yes
Southern Institute of Technology (SIT)	No	No	No	Yes
Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP)	No	No	No	No
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (Toi Ohomai)	No	No	No	Yes
Unitec Institute of Technology (Unitec)	Disestablished in 2017	Yes	No	Yes
Universal College of Learning (UCOL)	Defunct	No	No	Yes

Institute	Independent Student Association	Student Council	Learner Advisory Group	Class Rep. system
Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)	Yes	'Student Forums'	'Learner Ref. Groups' to come	Yes
Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT)	No	'Student Leaders group'	No	Bachelor of Nursing only
Whitireia Community Polytechnic and Wellington Institute of Technology (W&W)	No	Yes	No	Yes

Many subsidiaries have either recently gone through a review of representative/leadership structures or are currently doing so. There is an interest from both staff and learners to strengthen and formalise current structures, their function and processes to enhance learner voice.

How these groups commonly gather the learner voice

Learner voice is gathered and shared within subsidiaries in different ways both across the different types of structures and across the different subsidiaries. Generally speaking:

- **Student Associations and Councils** – portfolio holders engage directly with the relevant faculty(s) or community(s) by hosting or attending events, attending faculty or community meetings and making their presence felt in areas such as the Marae or common rooms. The portfolio holders then raise any issues or suggestions collected via these mediums at association/council meetings.

- **Advisory Groups** – the learners on advisory groups (note that currently only Open Polytechnic uses this structure) are expected to represent their own views as a learner and not to represent the whole learner population. Therefore, there is no mandate to perform learner voice gathering activities. Their voice is mainly gathered through providing a learner perspective to key questions asked by the organisation through an online platform.

- **Class Representatives** – Class representatives liaise directly with their peers to gather their issues and suggestions, which are shared with other class representatives at c meetings (usually at a faculty level). At these meetings, common themes are raised and picked up by a key faculty member. In some subsidiaries this information is also shared with the student council or association.

Across all structures, a key theme noted by staff and learner leaders is that 'learners talking to learners' is the most effective way to capture learner voice. For example, a learner talking directly to a learner leader or a class representative talking to a student association/council member.

Learner voice is often relayed informally through relationship-based channels within these structures and not captured through a formal mechanism such as minutes or otherwise. Interviewees suggested there may be a need to formalise this process to avoid a loss of visibility and hence accountability (both in terms of response and feedback loop) on wider topics and or issues coming through.

Learner leaders reported close relationships between learner leaders and subsidiary staff as a key enabler to ensure that learner voice reaches and is valued by the appropriate members of staff and helps to ensure there is a response to what has been raised. Relationships with executive level

staff and faculty heads were particularly valued as this showed strong commitment to learner voice and the importance of their roles. In some cases, these relationships are formalised through regular meetings, for example the Otago Polytech president meets with the executive leadership team every two weeks.

A commonly reported limitation by staff and learners was that at many institutes, the majority of learners are enrolled for short-term studies and may have other responsibilities and priorities demanding their time. As a result, there is often not the same desire (or it is not as practical) for these learners to step into representative or learner leadership roles.

> **Example of current practice – Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT):**
>
> - **Class representatives** – raise the issues and ideas around teaching and learning from their class to the school representatives. Class representatives meet with school representatives every month to discuss the issues happening across different classes.
>
> - **School representatives** – represent the voice of their school or programme by raising any academic or facilities related issues specific to their school to the student council. They also deliver communications passed down by the student council and organise events for their schools.
>
> - **The student council** meet with school representatives every month to identify themes across the school.
>
> - **Māori, Pasifika and LGBTQI+ representatives** have been introduced to the student council this year. The intention is for them to reach out to their committees and raise their voices at the student council level. The student council is also looking to establish a Māori and Pacific student association.

How these groups capture and share the learner voice

The way learner voice is captured and shared with the learner body and staff varies across the network.

- Most leadership structures formalise their discussions by taking minutes, with some tracking and monitoring key actions.

- It is generally the responsibility of learner leaders to track and follow up on actions from matters raised. However, in some cases the actions are shared with and owned by staff.

- Sharing of minutes (or information in other forms) from student council/association meetings with the institution varies. In some subsidiaries, minutes are officially shared with the relevant Director, or ELT, whereas in others these are not currently shared.

- Some learner leadership groups share their minutes (or learner voice information in other forms) with learners via online learner platforms or Facebook, whereas other structures do not share this information with learners unless requested.

There is opportunity to share information back to the learner body and to the institution, through a formalised and streamlined process to ensure learner voice is communicated to learners and key staff.

> **Example of current practice – Northland Polytechnic (Northtec):**
>
> - Class representatives attend fortnightly faculty meetings with faculty staff and have a standing agenda item to provide a learner perspective and present any issues that may have been brought forward to them.

- Class representatives meet with learners from their faculty once a fortnight to gather any new issues or ideas arising and to feedback what has been discussed with faculty staff/address previous matters raised.

- Note: these meetings are only currently taking place in some faculties. Northtec is looking to scale this system up from 2021.

Processes for institutional 'response' to learner voice

Learner voice systems typically do not include formal processes that ensure institutional accountability to learner voice raised through learner leadership groups or representatives.

- A number of learner leaders and representatives noted the need for staff to be more responsive and accountable to the learner voice information shared with them. Learners are often not provided an update or response until the learner initiates a follow up. In some cases, the learners do not receive any update from staff. In most cases there was not a formal process that defined how learner voice needs to be responded to.

- Learners from subsidiaries that have a range of learner voice initiatives generally reported the institute as being more willing and proactive at keeping learners in the loop about the status of matters raised. In these subsidiaries, learners are also encouraged to directly reach out to faculty leaders or managers to get answers, rather than having to relay information through a staff representation.

- There is also an opportunity to review how learner voice systems can include formalise processes to ensure accountability, i.e. to ensure there is a response to learner voice raised.

Example of current practice: Ara Institute of Canterbury (Ara)

- Class representatives are provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting, at the beginning of all faculty representative meetings. Faculty staff are responsible for owning and tracking any programme concerns that are raised at class representative meetings. The student voice co-ordinator is responsible for resolving and tracking any non-academic concerns.

- This information is shared back to learners through class representatives and to the student council via the student voice co-ordinator who attends all faculty meetings.

- The student voice co-ordinator also tracks the actions from student council meetings and provides an update at the beginning of every meeting.

Learner autonomy and ownership in learner leadership and representative structures

The level of learner autonomy varies across the different structures.

- **For Associations**, learners lead their structure and processes and report back to the subsidiary as per their service agreements. Associations also serve other functions outside of collecting and responding to learner voice, such as providing services (for example advocacy).

- **For Councils**, learners generally lead the kōrero and set the direction of their mahi while being supported or co-ordinated by subsidiary staff (usually a student voice co-ordinator or senior manager/director). Some have specific terms of reference or guidelines they are expected to follow.

- **For Advisory Groups** group members are consulted on matters defined by the subsidiary to provide a learner response.
- **For class representative systems**, the representatives hold the relationship with learners within their class. They then action this feedback with either their tutors or through representative meetings generally convened by senior staff within their department or faculty.

Learner representation on subsidiary committees

Some subsidiaries have learner representatives on their subsidiary committees, this is most commonly members from learner leadership and representative groups (e.g. from student councils). Commonly, this is the student association president or student council chair.

- Nine subsidiaries have learner representatives on their academic committee, this includes Ara, EIT, MIT, NMIT, Open Polytechnic, Toi Ohomai, Whitireia/Weltec, Wintec and WITT.

- Seven subsidiaries have learner representatives on other committees. For example:

    o Ara has a learner representative on the Teaching and Learning Committee, Sustainability and Advisory Committee, Health and Safety Working Group, Customer Experience and Engagement Leadership Team and Pacific Advisory Group.

    o NMIT has a learner representative on the Health and Safety Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and on the Misconduct Panel.

    o Otago Polytechnic has learner representative on the Otago Tertiary Chaplain Board, Library Committee and Open Board Limited meetings.

    o At SIT some learners sit on faculty Advisory Boards.

    o At Toi Ohomai learners sit on the Learner Quality Standards Committee and Health and Safety Committee.

    o Wintec has learner representatives on the Change Management Board.

    o WITT has learner representatives on the Health and Safety Committee, Chaplaincy and Māori Board.

In some cases, learners have a standing agenda item at committee meetings, to provide a learner voice update. Some learner representatives reported that they do not currently have a standing agenda item to provide a learner voice update but noted that this would be preferable to better enable the learner voice at meetings.

Voice of underserved learner groups

Representation on learner representative and leadership groups from underserved learner groups

Representation from underserved learner groups (Māori, Pacific and disabled learners) on learner representative and leadership groups is varied across subsidiaries. Very few subsidiaries mandate

representation or hold fixed roles on learner representative and leadership groups for representation from underserved learner groups (table 3).

Table 3: shows the number of subsidiaries that hold a fixed role on learner representative and leaderships groups for underserved learner groups

	Fixed roles/representation from currently underserved groups (Y/N)				
Institute	Māori	Pacific	Disabled	International	LGBTQI+
Ara	Yes	Yes	'Wellbeing'	Yes	No
EIT	No	Yes (Leadership Group)	Yes (Leadership Group)	No	Upcoming
MIT	Yes	Yes	'Wellbeing'	Yes	Yes
NMIT	No	No	No	No	No
NorthTec	No	No	No	No	No
Open Polytechnic	No	No	No	No	No
Otago Polytechnic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SIT	No	No	No	No	No
TPP	No	No	No	No	No
Toi Ohomai	No	No	No	No	No
Unitec	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
UCOL	Yes (only Whanganui campus)	Yes (only Whanganui campus)	Yes (only Whanganui campus)	No	Yes (only Whanganui campus)
Wintec	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
WITT	No	No	No	No	No
W&W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Though many subsidiaries do not have mandated or fixed roles for currently underserved groups, many actively encourage learners from these demographics to apply for leadership roles. For example, NMIT and WITT actively call for representation across all these underserved learner types through connecting with these cohorts.

Even when subsidiaries have a mandated role or actively look for representation from underserved groups (for example though selection and assessment processes for members) a number reported that it was often difficult to find learners from those groups wanting to step into these roles.

Other mechanisms to gather voice from underserved learner groups

Many subsidiaries reported other mechanisms they use to gather the voice of learners from underserved learner groups specifically.

Some examples include:

- **One to one kōrero** either formal or informal and often facilitated through liaisons.

- **Designated spaces** for underserved groups to gather and connect as a community. Learner leaders or staff often visit these spaces and use kōrero as a keyway to hear learner voice.

- **Targeted focus groups** for underserved learner groups facilitated by staff to understand key concerns and to elicit suggestions for improvement across academic and general student experience.

- **Targeted surveys** or separate analysis of results from underserved groups conducted by the subsidiary, one example of this happening is at SIT where the underserved voice is identified in the learner satisfaction surveys and actioned separately to 'all data'.

- **Designated hui** for underserved learners and their whānau. For example Northtec held a get-together event across all campuses for all first time Māori ākonga. A number of subsidiaries also hold regular lunches for Māori or Pacific learners to connect which is a good opportunity to share their experiences in an informal setting.

Māori and Pacific learners and staff noted the importance of kanohi ki te kanohi based mechanisms to hear the voice of Māori and Pacific learners. Gatherings of learners with kai were reported as a key enabler to hearing these voices at a grass-roots level.

Example of current practice: Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) - New Student Enrolment and Retention (NSEAR) project:

- Identifies programmes which have the lowest completions and highest attrition for Māori and Pacific learners.

- The project is data driven and identifies where in their journey learners are dropping out. Interventions are then developed, and implementation plans developed by programme.

- Ōritetanga momentum strategies are trialled at scale, across the learner journey, from enrolment through to the end of semester. Implementation plans are used for all interventions and learnings are collected and used to inform the next iteration of work.

- Centre directors, team managers, programme coordinators, lecturers and support services work together to develop and implement the interventions, with feedback from all stakeholders, including learners, contributing changes that are impactful for students.

Example of current practice: Otago Polytechnic:

- There is currently a Māori, Pacific, International, Rainbow and Disability representative on the executive team of the Otago Polytechnic Student Association (OPSA). These representatives are elected by the communities themselves, rather than the wider learner population.

- In addition, Māori and Pacific students have their own designated area on campus to socialise and collaborate. The Pacific representatives are particularly active in using and visiting this designated area to connect with learners and feed their voice back to the Association.

- OPSA also hosts lunches for underserved learner groups and pays for some of their events.

Informal mechanisms

Most subsidiaries have other informal mechanisms to capture learner feedback or input. Some examples include:

- One on one kōrero between learners and lecturers
- One on one kōrero between learners and student support/service staff
- Suggestion boxes placed in common places such as cafeteria or libraries
- Online feedback forms

Informal mechanisms, particularly relationship-based methods were reported as being highly valuable in eliciting important learner voice. For example through informal gatherings of learners, one to one kōrero with learners accessing support services and learners talking to tutors or class representatives. This is particularly apparent for Māori and Pacific learners.

Learner voice gathered through informal mechanisms is generally not formalised and insights gathered do not always get shared widely or to leadership teams and decision makers. Learners and staff reported that this may cause a loss of wider visibility of topics raised. Interviewees also felt there is an opportunity for these systems to be strengthened, and in particular for mechanisms to be developed to enable insights to be shared more widely and ensure greater visibility.

Supporting and enabling learner voice

Training

Training for members of student councils and association is varied across the network but usually includes some form of induction and sharing of key information such as terms of reference. In the case of associations, outgoing executives often run a handover session for the incoming executive. Some subsidiaries provide full day leadership training courses for learner leaders. Formal governance training is not offered by many subsidiaries.

> **Example of current practice – Western Institute of Technology Taranaki (WITT):**
> - Learner leaders are provided a full leadership training day where they are introduced to different leadership styles, how to recognise their own leadership style, and escalation processes at WITT.
> - Learner leaders also receive training on minute writing, communicating with stakeholders as well as key contact information for relevant staff at WITT.

Training for learner class representatives is varied. Most receive some form of induction, a role description, expectation documents, handover documents and training. However, in some cases no training was offered to class representatives and roles and expectations were unclear. In most cases this training is provided by learner voice or faculty staff, however in some cases this is run by learner leaders.

Role clarity was noted by a number of learner leaders as being a key enabler to their effectiveness as a learner leader/representative and a lack of role clarity was reported as a key barrier. Furthermore, many noted that the role was not well explained to them up front when staff presented the opportunity to be a class representative, which made it daunting for learners to put their name forward.

Remuneration

Pay and remuneration for learners on representative and leadership groups varies across subsidiaries and there is inconsistent reimbursement of learner leadership roles.

- Two subsidiaries pay student association and student council members:

    o Unitec pays student council members and representatives sitting on the Programme Academic Quality Committee (PAC). They are paid the living wage as casual staff members with set weekly hours for their roles.

    o The Open Polytechnic pays the three student advisory group representatives that sit on the academic committee for meeting attendance and covers their travel expenses to attend meetings.

- Five subsidiaries provide an honorarium to learner leaders:

    o At EIT, Younited Students' Association pays student association board members for meeting attendance. General board members receive $500 per year, the vice-president receives $2,500 per year and the president receives up to $5,000 a year. This remuneration is provided to cover meeting fees and the cost of attending meetings.

    o MIT pays student council members monthly with the amount varying depending on the role; general council members receive $120 and the president receives $200.

    o At Otago Polytechnic, the president of OPSA is the only paid employee and receives remuneration of $10,000 annually.

    o Whitireia/WelTec provide an honorarium to student council members (amount not reported).

    o Wintec provides an honorarium for student association executive board Members (amount not reported).

Learner perspectives on the topic of pay for their involvement varies:

- Some were of the opinion that an honorarium or payment should not be required for involvement as learners who sign up for these roles and shared concern that offering financial compensation for the role could attract the 'wrong' kind of people to the role.

- Some were of the opinion that learner leaders should get compensated for their involvement as it takes a lot of time and energy to collect and distribute learner voices to the appropriate people. They noted that every hour a learner leader spends on advocating for student voice is an hour they are not spending on their studies. Learners are open to receiving compensation other than financial.

- It was also noted that many learners must forego other paid opportunities or commitments to carry out their learner leader duties and therefore, some form of reimbursement should be provided to compensate for their involvement.

Learners noted that those involved at a class representative level generally do not require financial compensation due to their level of involvement/time commitment outside of class but shared their appreciation of these meetings being catered or their contribution being recognised through letters of recommendation.

Staff support

Six subsidiaries employ student voice co-ordinators or similar roles to provide dedicated support to learner voice. Where there is not a designated student voice staff member often a senior member of staff such as student support/student success director acts as the key support role for learner leaders.

A number of learners indicated that from a learner perspective there is not enough dedicated staff support available to support and advocate for learner voice.

Mentoring is another form of support provided by a small number of subsidiaries. This support is offered to learner representatives sitting on institute committees and is reported by learners as an enabler to being confident and effective in these roles.

> **Example of current practice – Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT):**
>
> - A Student Relationships Advisor (SRA) role was recently established by NMIT learner services to oversee learner complaints and advocate for the learner voice centrally. The SRA attends all class representative meetings hosted by the student association. The SRA also works with the student association to ensure institute action is taken and followed up on when necessary.

Learner representation on national student associations

Membership

Subsidiary learner involvement is varied across the National Student Associations:

- Te Mana Ākonga current membership includes Ara and EIT (not active participants).
- New Zealand Union of Students' Associations current membership includes Unitec, Wintec, EIT, Weltec and Whitireia, NMIT and UCOL.
- New Zealand International Students' Association current membership includes WelTec and Whitireia, Otago Polytechnic and Unitec.
- Tauira Pasifika current membership includes Ara and EIT.
- New Zealand Disabled Students' Association does not currently have any official members as yet, as they are still in their establishment phase.

Membership fee structures are varied for each of the national student associations:

- Te Mana Ākonga annual membership fees are negotiated when members first join and can be re-negotiated.
- NZUSA membership runs January - December and is based on EFT (equivalent fulltime) learner numbers, $2.40 (full) or $1.60 (associate) per EFT. Membership costs are discussed on a case by case basis and discounts sometimes applied to enable membership.
- NZISA membership is $0.45c per enrolled International student based on published numbers for the previous year (regardless of whether learners are studying onshore or offshore).
- Tauira Pasifika operates with no cost to members.
- The NZDSA constitution states that a fee will be charged per member (either a group or a representative). Cost of membership not yet defined.

Key themes from national student associations

- **Membership or involvement in their associations from Te Pūkenga subsidiaries is significantly lower compared to membership from the university sector**. Each association wanted to see membership increase to better enable and empower learner voice within subsidiaries.

- **The associations provide advocacy support** to members that is flexible and responsive to meet the individual needs of members.

- **While associations provide training opportunities to members**, type, mode and frequency of training varies.

- **Representatives expressed concerns that learner voice was less enabled and empowered within the ITP sector compared to the University sector.** Representatives noted the need for cultural change, awareness building of the value of learner voice and partnership from subsidiaries.

- **Representatives raised that Te Pūkenga can play a key role in connecting national student associations with subsidiary learner leadership structures** as national student associations seek to strengthen these relationships and increase their membership reach across the Te Pūkenga network.

- **Associations expressed an interest in working together with Te Pūkenga** to progress common goals for the benefit of all Te Pūkenga learners.