Final report of the Evaluation of the Hamilton Kauri Centre

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank …

The Kauri Centre Management Group, for your well developed sense of humour, for being supportive of the evaluation, and for letting me come to meetings and ‘observe’ you all. You have a clear determination to make a positive difference in the lives of these young people and to ensure they have the opportunities they deserve. You have always maintained that you wanted to know how the Kauri Centre was doing – good and bad – so you could make it the best it could be. That attitude is music to an evaluator’s ears and it allowed me to do my job.

The Kauri Centre staff, for letting me ‘hang around’ and fossick through records and ask all those questions. Your dedication to the lives of these tamariki and rangatahi is phenomenal and it is that which makes such a difference for them. You provide the opportunities for them to take up. Celebrate your successes.

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The Kauri Centre students, of course, because this is all about you. Thank you for making me welcome, answering my questions, and always setting a place for me at the table. It was a privilege to meet you and a privilege to watch you grow and change. You have your whole lives ahead of you, and you can make the difference. Take this opportunity for a new beginning and make the most of it. Kia kaha e hoa ma.
Executive Summary

1.0 Background

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Hamilton Kauri Centre undertaken by Momentum Research and Evaluation, for Child Youth and Family (CYF) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) The evaluation commenced in April 2006 and continued through to December 2007. The focus of the evaluation of the Kauri Centre was two-fold. CYF and MoE were interested in evaluating both the collaborative model of working as well as the impact on clients in order to provide feedback for further development and improvement of the service. The evaluation aims were to:

1. determine the extent to which the collaborative model is effective in delivering services for clients of Child Youth and Family (including descriptions of the challenges faced by working collaboratively, and how these issues were addressed and overcome);
2. determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims (including outcomes for clients in the short and medium term and effectiveness over time)\(^1\).

The evaluation objectives were to:

(i) document processes used to set up the Kauri Centre;
(ii) explore positive and negative experiences of stakeholders in setting-up and maintaining the Kauri Centre;
(iii) assess how well the service team is delivering on its aims;
(iv) assess components for developing a best practice model;
(v) ascertain any advantages and disadvantages from a stakeholder perspective of working in this way compared to the situation prior to the Kauri Centre being established.

The information gathering for the evaluation involved conducting 70 interviews with Kauri Centre staff and students, and key personnel from MoE, Hamilton’s Fraser High School (HFHS), CYF and other agencies involved with the Kauri Centre; reviewing academic literature, student records and files, minutes of meetings, and other documents; and being a participant observer at the Kauri Centre, and at meetings and other fora.

Literature was reviewed and summarised, qualitative information was analysed for themes, quantitative data was collated and tabulated, and four in-depth case studies of Kauri Centre students were written based on information from interviews with students, social workers and staff, and CYF, Police, MoE, and Kauri Centre records and files.

2.0 Key findings

- As a collaborative inter-agency solution to the problem of accessing and providing an education for some of CYF’s most troubled young people, the evaluation found that the Kauri Centre is a successful and effective solution. It is achieving what it was set up to do; that is provide an education for children in CYF custody who are not attending or disengaged from school, and, it is doing this very well.

- The Kauri Centre includes many of the best practice components that have been identified in research literature as important, in order to successfully provide education for vulnerable, underachieving children and young people in care (e.g. small classes; warm, encouraging, flexible environment; quality staff; celebrating and valuing Te Ao Maori; positive role models and mentors; individualised learning programmes; meeting belonging and cultural identity needs; having a holistic approach).

\(^1\) For the purpose of the evaluation, medium and short term outcomes, and effectiveness over time were defined as (i) improving the clients’ educational achievement and behaviour while attending the Kauri Centre (medium term); (ii) clients successfully transitioning into education, training courses or employment (short term); and (iii) clients remaining in education, training courses or employment for up to three months after transferring out of the Kauri Centre (effectiveness over time).
Education, attendance and behavioural findings show that the majority of the students attend the Kauri Centre regularly, that their behaviour improves, that they are learning and achieving academically and socially, and that they are setting goals.

Outcome findings show that the majority of students leaving the Kauri Centre went either to school, training courses or work, and remained in their placement for up to three months. Over half are currently still in school, work or training, and many of these had exited the Kauri Centre between one and three years ago.

The case studies demonstrated that all five case study students were clearly headed on a negative trajectory (e.g. offending, sexual risk-taking, disengaged from school) prior to being referred to the Kauri Centre. The Kauri Centre was, for all of them, a key factor in their shift to a more positive trajectory (e.g. enrolled and achieving at school, working fulltime, not offending).

Social workers and staff, and the students themselves, agreed that without the Kauri Centre the children and young people would, at the least, not be getting an education, and at the worst, be getting into trouble.

There is unanimous support from all stakeholders - Management Group, Kauri Centre staff, social workers, MoE and CYF staff, and the Kauri Centre students – to keep the Kauri Centre open as it meets the need that it was set up for.

Overall the Kauri Centre is an excellent example of a well-functioning inter-agency initiative that is achieving its aims.

The following is a summary of the contents of the report and the key points identified in the body of the report.

3.0 Hamilton Kauri Centre

3.1 Description of the Kauri Centre

The Hamilton Kauri Centre is an alternative education facility, established in 2004 as a local level inter-agency initiative between CYF (Waikato) and MoE (Central North Region) to provide educational input for children in CYF custody. The Kauri Centre initially operated from a church hall while awaiting the refurbishment of its current premises, an old CYF family home, which they moved into in mid 2004. The Kauri Centre currently employs two teachers, five educational support staff, and up to two extra support staff, as required for individual students, and has two ‘host’ schools – Hamilton’s Fraser High School and Kimihia Primary School. Children or young people must be in the custody of CYF and disengaged or not attending school, in order to be eligible for referral to the Kauri Centre.

Since 2004 the Kauri Centre has had a total of 77 children and young people referred and of these, 65 were accepted and 60 have attended the Kauri Centre. Male students outnumber female students with nearly four times more males (60, 78%) than females (17, 22%) being referred. Maori outnumber non-Maori, with 68% (53) of the children or young people referred identifying as Maori, and 18% (14) identifying as Pakeha/ European. Most (61%, 39) students are aged between 13 and 14 years at enrolment, with a range from eight years to 15 years.

The Kauri Centre is overseen by a Management Group who meet regularly. The group is comprised of CYF managers, MoE staff, HFHS and Kimihia Primary School representatives, and the Kauri Centre director. At meetings, the Kauri Centre provides updates on all students enrolled, referred, and exiting, and any issues related to the operation of the Kauri Centre or the students, are discussed, and decisions are made jointly. Funding is also jointly provided, and was initially on

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2 The children and young people had to be enrolled in a school and, as an alternative education centre, the Kauri Centre had to be ‘hosted’ by a school in order to meet this criteria.
a year by year basis, until 2006 when both MoE and CYF were able to access funding for three years from MOE national office Alternative Education funding and the Blueprint Investment Strategy (BIS).

2.2 Development of the Kauri Centre

The establishment of the Kauri Centre arose out of a concern for children in CYF custody being unable to access education. This had been an ongoing issue for some time but in 2003 MoE and CYF staff started meeting to discuss children they had in common, and it was at this time that a centre was proposed. Managers from CYF and MoE were approached to discuss the issues and possible solutions, and the process of establishing a centre began. Between them the two agencies were able to allocate funding and resources to establish a centre, and to locate a host school. A teacher and teacher aide were appointed, premises located, and in February 2004 the first students started.

The Kauri Centre is an evolving entity - always moving forward in response to the needs of the children and young people - and it is quite different in 2008, to what it was in 2004, and even to what it was in 2006 when the evaluation began. In 2004 the Kauri Centre had two staff, and a few students, attending a few hours a day and doing correspondence work and now (January 2008) has up to seven permanent staff, and 10 to 12 students, attending for six hours a day, completing individualised and varied programmes, and where possible, gaining Unit Standards. Other innovations since the Kauri Centre first started include the development of Te Kauri Centre Scheme 2007 (a formalised document of the vision and the theoretical base for the Kauri Centre programme), the introduction of Te Taaku Ara: My Pathway (a standardised assessment and learning plan document), a regular holiday programme in each school break, and improved exit transition processes.

2.3 Challenges and success factors in developing the Kauri Centre

Establishing and maintaining the Kauri Centre has involved a number of challenges for those involved. Accessing funding, finding a venue, hiring staff, determining the programmes, the referral criteria and processes, and finding a ‘host school’ were some of the early challenges. Once it was set up, funding was an ongoing yearly challenge, until the three year BIS funding and MoE national office funding was accessed. However, funding is once again a challenge as the three years are coming to an end. Developing Te Kauri Centre Scheme 2007 was a huge undertaking for the teaching staff. Finding a new host school when NZCS did not work out was a challenge, and the volume of administrative work for Kauri Centre staff was, and still is, significant.

The evaluation identified seven key success factors that assisted the Kauri Centre and the Management Group to firstly, establish the Kauri Centre, and secondly, to meet the ongoing challenges to keep it operating. These are:

- the timing coinciding with a national push toward cross-agency collaboration;
- having management involvement;
- having good working relationships within the management group;
- being solution-focused;
- having a passion to make a difference;
- employing skilled and experienced staff, and
- having a vision and a sound theoretical base.

3.0 Summary of the literature review findings

The review of the academic literature found the following key findings relevant to providing an education for children in care.

- Children in care fare less well on most measures of health and wellbeing, than their peers who are not in out of home care; they typically have lower rates of educational achievement, higher rates of anti-social behavior and more likelihood of engaging in juvenile offending.
One reason for this is that children in care commonly have histories of maltreatment which can cause cognitive, developmental and academic delays, attachment disorders, the development of problem behaviors and conduct disorders.

Other factors related to being in care such as unstable care placements and frequent school moves have also been linked with low academic achievement and, in some cases, the likelihood of becoming a juvenile offender.

These developmental delays, problem behaviours, frequent school moves, and unstable placements, can make fitting in and achieving in an educational setting very difficult, often resulting in low academic achievement, truancying, and suspensions.

On a population basis, tamariki and rangatahi Māori tend to be over represented in negative statistics, (e.g. in CYF care, juvenile offending, school suspension, educational underachievement).

The research is clear that the reason for this over-representation is not ethnicity. One explanation is that Māori are over-represented in the risk factors (e.g. lack of educational achievement, unemployment, poor health, low socio-economic status).

There is also research evidence that a lack of cultural pride and cultural identity, lack of knowledge of whakapapa, limited contact with whanau or the influence of whanau or whakawhanaunga who are engaged in offending or other anti-social behaviours and, being in an environment where to be Māori is not valued, is linked with educational underachievement and other negative outcomes, including offending.

Research has identified a number of factors that help to mitigate risk factors for vulnerable children. These include:

- stability in school and care placements;
- meeting their needs to belong and to feel safe and secure;
- helping them to develop a positive cultural identity – to know who they are, where they are from, and to be proud of that;
- having positive adult role models (mentors); and
- access to and achievement in education.

In terms of what works in engaging vulnerable children and young people in education, the research shows that key factors are having:

- quality staff, who can build relationships of mutual respect;
- an environment where the child and their culture is valued, accepted and celebrated;
- a compact setting;
- a warm and inviting ‘home-like’ space;
- small class sizes;
- high staff pupil ratios;
- an ability to tailor the educational programme to the child’s needs;
- an understanding of the interplay between social and emotional wellbeing and educational achievement; and
- for tamariki and rangatahi Māori specifically, programmes that are based in tikanga and kaupapa Māori, where Te Ao Māori is represented and celebrated, and where the relationships with teachers are respectful and positive.

4.0 Outcomes for clients

4.1 Case studies

All the children and young people in the cases studies were on track for negative life trajectories. Nicola was engaged in significant sexual risk-taking behaviour and constant running away. Tane was on record for threatening teachers and other staff with weapons on more than one occasion, and was roaming the streets, drinking and abusing drugs. Daniel and Maui had started offending and this was escalating from minor to more serious offences, and they were and both hanging out with gang-affiliated peers and had Police records. None of the children were attending school and most had been suspended, stood down or excluded from at least one school and had had multiple school and/or care placements.
The Kauri Centre was a turning point for all of these young people. For some the change happened fairly quickly – within a few months they had made significant changes in attitude – while for others it took a little longer. They were all at different stages – Tane was still angry and still suffering effects of his brain injury when he came to the Kauri Centre while Maui had spent some time in residence and had started there, to make some changes. Nicola expected the Kauri Centre teachers to be like all the other teachers she’d had and not listen to her and tell her she was dumb. Daniel was struggling with his identity and where his life was going.

Nicola, now aged 17 years, exited the Kauri Centre over three years ago, and is working and studying, with plans to go on to tertiary education. Tane, now aged 16 years, exited the Kauri Centre over one year ago, and is working fulltime in a trade. Maui, now aged 15 years, exited the Kauri Centre four months ago, and is enrolled fulltime in mainstream school. Daniel, now aged 14 years, exited the Kauri Centre four months ago, is avoiding his negative peers, is applying for part time work, enrolled in an alternative education programme, and has plans to be a social worker.

Key factors that the Kauri Centre offered these children and young people were:
- an individualised approach to their needs;
- acceptance of them if not their behaviour;
- caring and supportive staff who were positive role models and mentors, who took the time to listen to the young people, and who followed through on their commitments; and
- for the tamariki and rangatahi Māori specifically, Māori staff who were positive mentors and role models and an environment where to be Māori, was valued and celebrated.

4.2 Education outcomes for clients
The Kauri Centre is a very positive learning environment for the children and young people. All Kauri Centre students are assessed and have an individualised learning plan completed within one month of enrolling. They all receive support to develop basic numeracy and literacy skills, and make progress in educational achievement. In the past 18 months, 15 Kauri Centre students have worked on Unit Standard credits, and have gained a total of 314 credits over five terms. All students receive significant support with developing life skills to meet their needs, and most of those interviewed could articulate goals for their future.

The evaluation identified five key factors at the Kauri Centre that contribute to student’s learning successfully. These are:
- high staff-student ratios and small class sizes;
- flexibility in the timetable and the programme;
- a holistic programme that integrates life skills and other learning together;
- individualised learning plans;
- celebrating Te Ao Maori; and
- quality staff who care for and respect the students and are positive role models.

4.3 Behaviour outcomes for clients
The behaviour of the children and young people improves during their time at the Kauri Centre. The majority of the children and young people attend the Kauri Centre regularly. The average attendance rate over the past four years was 73%, with some students attending 100% of the time. Kauri Centre students show more settled behaviour and have less incidence of running away, and there is a reduction in the incidence of acts of violence from the students. Most of the children and young people were able, in interviews, to articulate an understanding of their own behaviour and in some cases this understanding was profound.

The evaluation identified three key factors at the Kauri Centre that contributed to students’ high attendance levels. These were:
- having a ‘transitioning in’ process to familiarise the student with the Kauri Centre;
- having a van to transport students to the Kauri Centre; and
- creating an environment that the children and young people want to be in, where teachers listen to them and they feel valued and respected.
In terms of improved behaviour the evaluation noted nine key factors that contributed to the improved behaviour. These were:

- having high student staff ratios;
- having behaviour monitoring processes;
- having experienced staff who are ‘aware’ of the dynamics within the centre;
- the student having to ‘face’ the person they have wronged;
- being accepting of the child or young person, but not their negative behaviour;
- fostering belonging and identity
- staff role modelling appropriate behaviour;
- having appropriate consequences; and
- encouraging leadership skills.

4.4 Short term outcomes for clients and effectiveness over time

50 students have exited the Kauri Centre, since 2004, with six having exited twice. The majority (31, 57%) of the students successfully transition into mainstream education, training courses or employment. Most (30 out of 31) students who transferred to a school, course or work, remained in their placement for up to three months. Longer term data is also promising. Data on the ‘current status’ shows that over half of the 31 children and young people (19, 63%) who left the Kauri Centre to go to school, work or a course, are continuing to attend school or training courses, or are working. While some of the current status data is for students (3) who have exited within the past six months, the other students exited between one and three years ago and are still doing well, which indicates that there has been some excellent longer term outcomes for many of the Kauri Centre children and young people.

The evaluation identified that there are three key times at which students appear to be particularly at risk of a ‘negative’ outcome (i.e. absconding, residence). These are

- the entry transition;
- when they are experiencing outside stressors (e.g. at home or in their care placement); and
- the exit transition.

The Kauri Centre staff are aware of these crucial ‘risk’ times and have processes and strategies in place to manage these times.

4.5 Student feedback about the Kauri Centre

Student views of the Kauri Centre were overwhelmingly positive. A number stated that the Kauri Centre was ‘a place for second chances’ and that it was ‘like a home’. ‘Being listened to’ was also an important aspect of the Kauri Centre for the students, and one of the main reasons why they attended and why they stayed. Students also ‘advised’ other children and young people being referred to the Kauri Centre to make the most of it as the Kauri Centre was a “mean as” place to go to, and was their opportunity to succeed. When asked where they would be without the Kauri Centre the students’ answers matched those of social workers, staff and others who were interviewed as part of the evaluation. That is, all students reported that without the Kauri Centre they thought they would not be attending school or getting an education, and they would either be sitting at home, roaming the streets, or getting into trouble.

5.0 Concluding comments

The evaluation findings clearly showed that the Kauri Centre is a successful initiative. The agencies work well together, and the children and young people attend the Kauri Centre regularly, show improvements in behaviour, and achieve academically and socially. When they leave, the majority of the students transfer either to school, training courses or work, and remain there for up to three months, and over half are still in school, work or training, between six months and three years later. The literature review identified key components of best practice relevant to the needs of children in care and to successfully providing education in an alternative setting, and the evaluation identified that these components were present in the Kauri Centre and contributed to its success.
The evaluation findings clearly indicate that the Kauri Centre should continue, as it is meeting a very real need to provide an education and a greater likelihood of a positive future, for some of our most vulnerable and damaged young people. It seems appropriate to end with the words of one of the students who, when asked what the Kauri Centre was for, had this to say.

The Kauri Centre is ...
"for kids who haven't really made the best choices before they come, ...
and other schools won't give them a chance.
It's for kids who would be getting stoned or drunk or in lock up, like I would be, if I didn't come here. The Kauri Centre is a place for a new beginning."

*Kauri Centre student, aged 14 years*
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Children and young people in care and protection have complex and multi-faceted problems that are beyond the scope of one agency to solve. Addressing the health and education needs of these children is essential to their care and protection, and their future health and wellbeing. For some of these children and young people, remaining in a mainstream school is often not an option for a variety of reasons, and alternatives must be sought. An effective multi-agency approach may be vital to encourage best possible outcomes for these children and young people.

1.2 Hamilton Kauri Centre

In 2004, a collaborative cross-agency initiative, the Kauri Centre, was trialled in Hamilton. The Kauri Centre has been operating since February 2004 and is a Child Youth and Family Services (CYF) and Ministry of Education (MoE) joint initiative to provide education and wrap-around services for CYF clients, who have high-intensity needs across several sectors.

Initially operating from a hall while awaiting the refurbishment of the CYF family home, where it is now situated, the Kauri Centre employed a teacher and a teacher aide and the children and young people were enrolled with the New Zealand Correspondence School. In 2005 Hamilton's Fraser High School (HFHS) was approached and agreed to have the Kauri Centre as a satellite campus. The older students were enrolled through HFHS and complete an educational programme designed by the Kauri Centre teacher. Initially the younger students continued their enrolment with the New Zealand Correspondence School. In 2007 a local primary school, Kimihia Primary School was approached and agreed to work with the Kauri Centre and to include the primary-aged children on their roll.

Since it began in 2004, and up to December 2007, the Kauri Centre has had a total of 77 children and young people referred and of these, 60 children and young people have attended the Centre.

After its first year (2004), funding was sought and granted for the Kauri Centre to operate for another year (2005) and in July 2005, funding was approved for a further three years (July 2006 to June 2008) through the Blueprint Investment Strategy (BIS), with funding also provided for an evaluation of the service. At this time MoE also secured three years of funding through Alternative Education funding.

1.3 Evaluation

In 2006, Ruth Hungerford of Momentum Research and Evaluation was contracted to undertake the evaluation of the Kauri Centre.

The focus of the evaluation of the Kauri Centre was two-fold. CYF and MoE were interested in evaluating both the collaborative model of working as well as the impact on clients in order to provide feedback for further development and improvement of the service. Key aims are:

1. determine the extent to which the collaborative model is effective in delivering services for clients of Child Youth and Family (including descriptions of the challenges faced by working collaboratively, and how these issues were addressed and overcome);
2. determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims (including outcomes for clients in the short and medium term and effectiveness over time).

The evaluation objectives were to:

(i) document processes used to set up the Kauri Centre;
(ii) explore positive and negative experiences of stakeholders in setting-up and maintaining the Kauri Centre;
(iii) assess how well the service team is delivering on its aims;
(iv) assess components for developing a best practice model;
(v) ascertain any advantages and disadvantages from a stakeholder perspective of
working in this way compared to the situation prior to the Kauri Centre being
established.

The evaluation commenced in April 2006 and data was collected up until December 2007. Within
that timeframe, two interim evaluation reports were completed; one by September 2006, and one
by June 2007. The first interim report (September 2006) focused primarily on documenting the
development and establishment of the Kauri Centre, from 2003 to 2006. The second interim report
(June 2007) documented the ongoing development of the Kauri Centre, and reported on
achievements of students and provided feedback to assist the further development of the service.

A final evaluation report was to be completed by June 2008, but at the request of CYF, an earlier
date of 31 March 2008, was agreed to. This report is the final evaluation report and includes
findings collected during the period April 2006 to December 2007. The report includes data from
the two interim reports where relevant, as well as other data collected during 2007, and focuses on
both aims of the evaluation, and, as well, the objectives (i) to (v).

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Participants
In order to gather information related to the Kauri Centre, its collaborative process, and its impact
on the children and young people who have attended, interviews were undertaken, in 2007, with:
- CYF social workers and supervisors (19)
- Staff of the Kauri Centre and Hamilton’s Fraser High School (7)
- Currently enrolled students of the Kauri Centre (15: 9 in February 2007 and 11 in
  November 2007; 4 interviewed twice)
- Interviews with case study students (3)
- CYF social workers who had referred clients who were case study ‘subjects’ (3)

In 2006 interviews were undertaken with the following people, and where necessary, the data from
these was referred to, for this report as well:
- Representatives from CYF (Waikato) (4)
- Representatives from MoE (4)
- Representatives from Hamilton’s Fraser High School (2)
- Staff of the Kauri Centre (4)
- Representatives from the Hamilton Police (4)
- Representatives from Hamilton’s YOT (1)
- Representatives from Mental Health (1)

Documents were also reviewed. These included:
- Minutes of meetings of the Management Group
- Minutes of meetings between CYF and MoE
- Files held at the Kauri Centre, and at CYF and MoE (Hamilton offices)
- Police files
- Attendance and referral records
- The Kauri Centre Scheme Volumes 1 and 2
- The Kauri Centre Teaching Plans 2007
- Students’ Taaku Ara and other assessments

Other data sources included:
- Observations at management meetings, staff meetings, and student meetings
- Meetings with Kauri Centre, CYF and MoE staff
- Observations of the classrooms and other activities
- Academic and other literature
1.4.2 Process

1.4.2.1 Literature
A range of literature was sourced which was relevant to children and young people in care and best practice in alternative education for vulnerable children. Literature was sourced from academic journals, both hard copy and full text electronic journals using ERIC, Proquest 5000, Google Scholar, and the University of Waikato library. Reference lists from literature reviews and online New Zealand and international government websites and clearinghouses were also sourced for other articles.

1.4.2.2 Interviews with social workers
The process for interviewing the social workers, involved sending an email to the site managers, copied to the service centre manager, requesting permission to contact social workers by email. Once permission was granted a letter was drafted and emailed for approval to the site managers, who then forwarded it to all social workers in their sites. Two social workers responded to the letter and interviews were booked with them.

No further social workers contacted the evaluator so permission was sought from, and granted by, the site managers to telephone social workers directly. The sites’ staff telephone list was accessed and social workers were telephoned to request permission to interview them. Initially social workers who had referred a child that was currently, or had recently, been enrolled in the Kauri Centre were telephoned, followed by those that were known to have referred a child in the past, then those that were not known to have referred any children or young people. One supervisor also introduced the evaluator to their team, following an interview, and some interviews were booked that way.

A total of 22 social workers agreed to be interviewed, and of these three social workers cancelled interviews due to other work commitments. Of the 19 interviewees, three were supervisors, and 16 were case workers; four social workers had never referred a child to the Kauri Centre, one had made one referral that was declined, and the rest had referred or had a child or young person at the Kauri Centre at some point within the past four years.

1.4.2.3 Interviews with children and young people
The process for interviewing the first group (9) of children and young people involved talking at the student hui, about the evaluation and asking them to participate. Students came out of class, one at a time, to talk with the evaluator. They were told again, individually, that it was voluntary and confidential and if they did not want to answer the questions then that was acceptable. All agreed to be interviewed and answered the questions. Interviews took about ten minutes each.

The second series of interviews took place in November 2007 and used a similar process as the first series, although it was not necessary to talk at the hui again as most of the students were aware of the evaluator’s role. For students that were enrolled after the first series of interviews, the evaluator spent time at the beginning of the interview explaining her role and asking for any questions. Four students were happy to be interviewed together, so two interviews were ‘group’ interviews and the others were all individual interviews. Most interviews took about 30 minutes.

A total of 15 children and young people were interviewed. They were all enrolled at the Kauri Centre at the time of the interview. Of the 15, 11 were interviewed twice (once in February and again in November) and the remainder (4) were interviewed once (either in February or November).

1.4.2.4 Case studies
Data for case studies was collected from a range of sources. Currently enrolled students were interviewed at the Kauri Centre, one past student was contacted via letter and then interviewed over the telephone. Other data sources included staff interviews, MoE files, Police files, CYF files and interviews with three social workers.
1.4.2.5 Interviews with staff and stakeholders
The process for interviewing staff of the Kauri Centre and Hamilton’s Fraser High School involved
approaching staff in person and making an appointment with them for a suitable day and time.
People from agencies outside the Kauri Centre were contacted via ‘phone or email and suitable
times arranged. Interviews took place at the Kauri Centre, in one of the smaller meeting rooms, or
at the person’s workplace, and ranged from 30 minutes to three hours.

1.4.2.6 Documents
Documents were accessed during Kauri Centre visits, with some being copied, and others viewed
either at the Kauri Centre or taken off site. Other documents and files form CYF, MoE and Police
were viewed onsite.

1.4.2.7 Participant observation
Participant observation is a method that requires the evaluator to spend time at a site, to build
rapport, and to become an accepted presence in a programme. The purpose of participant
observation is to gain an understanding of the practical realities of a programme in practice and to
collect information on the various processes and dynamics that occur in order to put other
information collected into context.

At the start of the evaluation, the evaluator held a planning meeting with staff and as part of this
discussed the most appropriate ways to approach this part of the evaluation. The feedback from
staff was that it needed to be a process; that ‘dropping in’ was a good way to begin in order to
slowly integrate into the programme and to become a familiar presence. This then was the method
that was employed; in Terms Two and Three of 2006, the evaluator ‘dropped in’ at various times,
often staying for morning tea or lunch.

In Term Four of 2006 the evaluator spent four Wednesday mornings at the Kauri Centre assisting
students and observing the classroom work, and other activities, as well as continuing to ‘drop in’
at other times during the week. The informal ‘dropping in’ visits have continued into 2007.

The evaluator also attends management meetings which occur six weekly, onsite at the Kauri
Centre, and have attended a number of staff meetings, planning meetings and meetings between
the Kauri Centre director and CYF social workers.

1.5 Organisation of the publication
This document reports on the findings of the evaluation of the Hamilton Kauri Centre, from April
2006 to December 2007. There are ten chapters including this one. While the report is structured
to be read as one document it is possible to read the chapters as separate stand-alone pieces.
They have been written this way in recognition that the document may be used as a reference
document. Each chapter also has a summary at the end, in order to again, facilitate the use of the
report as a reference document.

- Chapter Two summarises and reviews key literature.
- Chapter Three documents the processes used to set up the Hamilton Kauri Centre and the
  key factors that contributed to its successful establishment.
- Chapter Four details the available demographic details on students.
- Chapter Five is a series of four case studies of Kauri Centre students.
- Chapter Six details findings related to educational outcomes for the children and young
  people.
- Chapter Seven details findings related to behavioural outcomes for the children and young
  people.
- Chapter Eight details findings related to post-Kauri Centre outcomes for the children and
  young people.
- Chapter Nine reports on student feedback about the Kauri Centre.
- Chapter Ten discusses and draws conclusions from the overall evaluation findings.
2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

As part of the evaluation of the Kauri Centre a literature review was undertaken. The purpose of the literature review was to provide context for the evaluation by reviewing literature relating to the provision of education for children in care.

Most of the children and young people referred to the Kauri Centre have histories of maltreatment and/or negative, punitive, or detached parenting, and/or neglect which has manifested (in some cases) in limited academic abilities and/or anti-social, self-harming, and risk taking behaviours that have ultimately led to them being excluded or disengaged from school. They have commonly experienced multiple care and educational placements which have left gaps in their education and caused feelings of displacement and being unwanted. Others have started offending and truantaing and have come to the notice of the Police. Many have diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Conduct Disorder and Attachment Disorder.

The Kauri Centre is an alternative education centre, set up and managed as a local inter-agency collaborative initiative between CYF and MoE. It differs from other alternative education settings in New Zealand in that all the children enrolled are in CYF custody.

Given the above factors relevant to the Kauri Centre and the evaluation, it was decided to focus the literature review on the following two areas:

(i) issues specific to vulnerable children and young people in care (e.g. foster care, care and protection factors; abuse; attachment disorder), the relationship of these to behavioural and educational issues (e.g. absconding; anti-social behaviours; disengagement from school; offending); and
(ii) research on best practice in relation to education and alternative education, particularly for vulnerable children and young people in care.

In addition, as the majority of children and young at the Kauri Centre identify as Maori, factors unique to Maori children and young people and education were also sought.

Literature was sourced from academic journals, both hard copy and full text electronic journals using Proquest 5000, Google Scholar, reference lists from literature reviews, online New Zealand and international government websites and clearinghouses, and the University of Waikato library online databases and journals. Key phrases used in the search were foster youth, children in care, child abuse, child maltreatment, vulnerable youth, alternative education, education, juvenile offending, Maori children and youth, and combinations of these phrases (e.g. foster youth and education).

Although key literature has been sourced for this review, it is not intended to be an exhaustive coverage of literature in the area. It is intended to be an introduction to, and overview of, the key issues and general trends regarding ‘the provision of education for children in care’ in order to inform and provide context for the evaluation.

2.2 About this chapter

The literature review starts with a definition of ‘children in care’ and the New Zealand welfare system approach to the care and protection of children and young people, which differs in some significant ways from approaches in other countries, particularly in its approach to the wider family and community of a child. This is followed by discussion on child maltreatment and its effects on development and behaviour, issues for children in care, issues specific to tamariki and rangatahi Māori, resiliency factors, and what works for vulnerable children in education.
2.3 Children in care

‘Children in care’ is a term used to describe children who for a number of reasons have been placed in the custody of welfare services. Other terms that are common in the literature include ‘foster’ children (or youth) and children (or youth) in ‘out-of-home-care.’ While a small number of children may be in care because they are orphans, and some youth enter care as a result of their juvenile offending behaviour, most are in care because they have been exposed to some form of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect either as victims or witnesses or both (Fernandez, 2007) (see Box 1 for a description of the how children typically enter into care within the New Zealand welfare system).

Box 1: Children in care: The New Zealand approach

The object of the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 is “to promote the well-being of children, young persons, and their families and family groups” (s.4). As part of this, the Act provides for “the protection of children and young persons from harm, ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, and deprivation” (s.4,(e)).

When a child or young person is considered to be in need of care and protection (e.g. if their living situation is placing them at some risk of harm, or if they are causing harm to themselves by their behaviour), they may removed from their living situation, and application made to place them in custody (Children Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989, s.101, s.78). The Act states that a child or young person may be placed in the custody of:-
(a) the Chief Executive Officer
(b) An Iwi Social Service,
(c) A Cultural Social Service
(d) The Director of a Child and Family Support Service; or
(e) Any other person (Children Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989, S.101).

Another way in which young people may be placed in custody is through a youth justice process. The Children Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989, limits charges in the youth court to young people aged 14 to 17 years. For young people who offend and who are aged under 14 years and over 10 years the Act provides for responses to be made through either a care and protection, or youth justice, Family Group Conference (FGC) (Children Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989, s.14(1)(e),(e); s.18). Thus a young person who has come to the attention of the Police through their offending behaviour, may, through the FGC process, be referred to the custody of CYF or another agency.

If children or young people are taken into the custody of CYF to be placed in an out-of-home placement that placement may be a whanau placement (with a member of their whanau or family) or a non-whanau placement (with a caregiver who is not a member of their whanau / family), which may be with a family or in a CYF Family Home. New Zealand is one of the few countries whose welfare system specifically recognises the importance of maintaining familial links in order to promote family connectedness and to improve outcomes for vulnerable families and children.

(Sources: www.cyf.govt.nz; www.legislation.govt.nz)

Researchers have studied the histories of children in care, and the impacts of being in care on behaviour, education, cognitive development, and a host of other factors (Fernandez, 2007). This research has shown that children in care typically fare less well on most measures of health and wellbeing, than their peers who are not in out of home care (Briscoe-Smith & Hinshaw, 2006; Putnam, 2006; Veltman & Brown, 2001). What are some of the reasons for this?

2.3.1 Child abuse and neglect

One of the reasons why many children in care have less favorable life trajectories is because they have often been victims of abuse and neglect, and child maltreatment has been shown to impact negatively on behaviour, development, and educational achievement. While the effects on a child of the maltreatment will vary depending on the nature of the abuse, the age(s) they were when it occurred, the amount of time it continued for, the environment in which it occurred, and how the post-abuse trauma is managed (Sternberg, Lamb, Guterman, & Abbott, 2006), the research is clear that child abuse and neglect is linked with insecure attachment, development delays,
emotional, physical and psychological damage, and the development of anti-social behaviours and other disorders, and in some cases, this damage can be profound (Ethier, Lemelin & Lacharite, 2004).

**Attachment and bonding**

Attachment theory is centred on the premise that the mother-child bond is a key factor in child development and was based on field work, observations and experiments carried out by Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby (Ainsworth, 1968; 1989; Bowlby, 1981; 1990; Bretherton, 1992; Perry, 2001). According to attachment theory, it is through interactions with caregivers that children develop internal working models of themselves, others and relationships. Children will display one of four distinct attachment styles - secure, insecure-avoidant; insecure-resistant; or insecure-disorganised disoriented. A securely attached child, who has generally experienced consistent and sensitive care, is likely to develop a model of the other person as responsive, themselves as worthy of love and competent in eliciting attention, and the relationship as rewarding. An insecurely attached child will likely develop a model of other people as unpredictable, themselves as not worthy of love and unable to gain positive attention, and the relationship as unsatisfactory (Bowlby, 1981; Francis & Meaney, 1999; McLewin & Müller, 2006; Morton & Brown, 1998; Perry, 2001; Schore, 2001; Willemsen & Marcel, undated).

Unsurprisingly, insecure attachment styles are common in abused and neglected children. Morton and Brown, (1998) analysed 13 studies on attachment, and found that significantly more of the maltreated infants displayed insecure attachments; 76% of maltreated infants were classified as insecurely attached compared to only 34% in the control, (non maltreated infant) groups. Being insecurely attached has far reaching consequences for the child’s development and ability to function emotionally and socially both as a child, adolescent, and even through to adulthood (Egeland, 1991; Perry, 2001; Venet, Bureau, Gosselini, & Capuano, 2007). Children who have insecure attachment styles, can suffer from a range of problems such as developmental delays, aggression, cruelty, lack of empathy and poor impulse control, bizarre soothing behaviours (e.g. head banging, rocking, self-harm), and other emotional problems (Perry, 2001).

**Brain development**

The physical brain development of maltreated children is also comprised by exposure to abuse and neglect. Brain development plateaus relatively early in life, with 90% of total brain growth occurring by age three (Perry, 2005; Purves, 1994; Shore, 1997). The early years of life are critical as there is the potential for permanent damage to the brain arising out of both negative early experiences and the absence of positive experiences (Schore, 2001; Shore, 1997; Smith, Grima, Gaffney, Powell, Masse & Barnett, 2000). Perry and Pollard (1997) found that the brains of grossly neglected children, were significantly smaller in size than non-neglected children’s brains. This damage is permanent. Other brain researchers have also demonstrated physiologically, that many of the environmental factors, identified by Bowlby, Ainsworth and others, and including physical, social, emotional, cognitive and nutritional conditions, all contribute to the critical shaping of brain cell connections in infancy and beyond (e.g. Dobbing & Sands, 1979; Pollitt, 1996; Schore, 2001; Tanner & Finn-Stevenson, 2002; Wismer Fries, Ziegler, Kurian, Jacoris, & Pollak, 2005). What is of interest with Perry and Pollard’s (1997) and others’ research is that the observed damages are not caused by an injury to the brain (i.e. from a physical assault or battering) but by neglect, and while this may include depriving a child or baby of enough food, it also includes a lack of being loved and cared for.

**Anti-social behaviours**

Behaviours such as increased aggression, hostility, difficulty with anger management, impulsivity, and physical attacks, have been linked to physical abuse (e.g. Bolger & Patterson, 2003; English, Marshall, & Stewart, 2003; Fancourt, 1997; Margolin & Gordis, 2000; Ososfky, 2003; Widom, 1997; 2003). According to Fancourt (1997), the brain of the traumatized child will learn highly adaptive behaviours (i.e. vigilance, watching for threat and harm, hyperarousal, constant anxiety) which are useful in the violent environment for avoiding harm, but are maladaptive in other social settings (i.e. the movement of a teacher walking towards the child may be perceived as threatening and result in an eruption of aggression which is seemingly unprovoked).
ADHD has also been linked with maltreatment. Briscoe-Smith and Hinshaw (2006), in their matched comparison sample study found significantly higher rates of abuse in the histories of girls with ADHD when compared to a comparison sample of girls without ADHD. Other researchers have also noted the behavioural similarities between ADHD diagnosed children and maltreated children (e.g. Ethier, et al., 2004; Mannuzza & Klein, 1999, in Briscoe-Smith & Hinshaw, 2006), which has engendered some debate as to whether, in some cases, abuse may precede ADHD and / or whether some young people have been mis-diagnosed with ADHD instead of post-abuse trauma-related symptoms.

**Educational underachievement**

The link between abuse and educational underachievement has been the subject of a number of studies. According to Putnam (2006) at least half of all victims of child maltreatment will experience serious problems in school. Veltman and Brown’s (2001) review of child maltreatment research and the implications for school years led them to conclude that “the majority of the studies cited in this review indicate that child abuse is related to delayed language, cognitive development, low IQ, and poor school performance in some way” (215).

Egeland’s (1991) longitudinal study gives some insights into how physically abused and neglected children may behave and how this impacts on their schooling. Their study showed that at two years of age, the physically abused and neglected children exhibited more anger and frustration, and at pre-school were more non-compliant and less enthusiastic than their peers. When they started school they were hyperactive, distractible, lacking in self-control and expressed more negative affect, and the teachers rated them as inattentive, unpopular, aggressive, self-destructive, obsessive-compulsive and lacking in self-control, and all except one were referred to special education services. Similar results were found in Anthonysamy and Zimmer-Gembeck’s (2007) study of young children (aged four to eight years) who were in the first four years of school and who had a history of maltreatment. They found that the maltreated children were significantly more disliked (by their peers), and significantly more physically/verbally aggressive, withdrawn, and less pro-social, compared with their classmates. These behaviours - the outcomes of and adaptations to, early trauma - are behaviours that are difficult to manage in a school setting and which limit the amount of learning the child can undertake as they are too busy being aggressive or out of control or being disciplined, to spend time learning.

**Juvenile offending and other risk-taking behaviour**

As the abused or neglected child gets older, problem behaviours may escalate into sexual risk taking behavior, absconding, criminal offending, mental health problems, eating disorders, and suicidal behaviour. Researchers undertaking longitudinal studies with adults who were victims of child abuse and neglect, have found that, insecure attachment styles, particularly those characterized by a negative view of self, are predictors of developing post-traumatic stress symptoms and other psychopathologies as adults (e.g. McLewin & Muller, 2006; Muller, Giebel-Fabbri, Diamond & Dinklage, 2000; Roche, Runtz, & Hunter, 1999).

A number of New Zealand studies have investigated the trajectories of abused and neglected children. For example, researchers utilising data from the Christchurch Health and Development study found that children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to have adjustment problems in young adulthood including juvenile offending, substance abuse, suicide, low self esteem, and mental health problems, have increased risks of anxiety, conduct disorder, problems with alcohol and criminal offending, and are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour and have a greater risk of pregnancy at ages 15-25 years (e.g. Beautrais, & Fergusson, 2006; Boden & Horwood, 2006; Boden, Horwood & Fergusson, 2007; Fergusson & Horwood, 1998; Fergusson & Lynskey, 1997).

Another study by Maxwell and Robertson (1995) used a retrospective approach, looking at the histories of child offenders in New Zealand. As part of the study, they reviewed the backgrounds of

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3 The Christchurch Health and Development study is a longitudinal study of 1265 Christchurch children, born in mid1977, who have been studied at birth, 4 months, one year, annually until 16 years, 18 years, 21 years and 25 years.
109 child offenders (i.e. aged 10 -14 years at the time of the offence). They found that the majority of the children had had at least one change of caregiver or family constellation (65%); other trauma (i.e. abuse or neglect) (60%); parents who were unable to cope (76%); problems at school (86%) and a history of involvement with CYFs (72%). Other research by Maxwell and colleagues found that young people in CYF custody (either for care and protection or via a youth justice FGC) were more likely to be convicted as an adult (Maxwell, Robertson, Kingi, Morris, & Cunningham, 2004).

2.3.2 Issues specific to children in care
If a child has been identified as being in need of care and protection and removed from the unsafe situation they have been in, then it is hoped that they are safe from further abuse and that their life trajectory is potentially more positive. While this holds true for some children, international research has linked underachievement and other negative educational outcomes specifically with being in out-of-home care (e.g. Burley & Halpern, 2001; Courtney, Terao, & Bost, 2004; National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 2006; Smithgall, Gladden, Howard, George & Courtney, 2004). Studies in the USA, for example, show that foster youth are more likely than other youth to have academic and behavioural problems in school and are less likely to achieve educational qualifications than non foster youth (e.g. Burley & Halpern, 2001; Courtney, Dworsky, Cusick, Havlicek, Perez, & Keller, 2007; Uriquiza, Writz, Peterson & Singer, 1994; Veltman & Brown, 2001). Burley and Halpern (2001) found that children in foster care scored significantly lower on standardised tests, were more likely to be enrolled in special education, more likely to change schools, and more likely to repeat at least one grade. Smithgall et al., (2004) reported an achievement gap of about half a year’s learning between students in care and students not in care. Scherr (2007) in a meta-analysis of 31 studies regarding the educational status of children in care in multiple countries, found that children in care were over-represented in special education, were prevented from moving ahead in grade levels, and were disciplined frequently in the school setting.

Changing schools
Research identifies that one of key factors associated with being in out-of-home care that can impact negatively on educational achievement and life trajectories, is mobility. Children in care are more likely to change schools than children not in care (Burley & Halpern, 2001). Blome (1997), for example, in a matched sample analysis of longitudinal data found that youth in foster care were twice as likely to change schools three or more times, than students who were not in care. Another USA study found that 34% of the sample of 732 foster youth had experienced five or more school changes since entering care (Courtney, et al., 2004). One of the reasons why foster youth change schools is due to changes in their care placements (Staub & Meighan, 2007). When a child first enters into care or changes placements, they may not immediately start attending school. This may be because there new placement is in a different area, so they have to change schools and there are delays with school records and the enrollment process. Frequent moves may mean that the children or youth spend significant proportions of time out of school (Leathers, 2006; Skyles, Smithgall & Howard, 2007). A New York study for example, found that 42% of the children and youth did not begin school immediately upon entering foster-care (Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000), and18% of the 732 foster youth in Courtney, et al.’s (2004) study had missed at least a month of school due to changes in their foster care placement.

Changing placements
Changing placements is common for children in care. New Zealand CYF data indicates that the average number of care placements for New Zealand children in care is 3.1 placements per year (Child Youth and Family, 2001a). These frequent placement changes have been shown to be stressful for children and young people and are linked to higher rates of anxiety and depression symptoms, lower rates of self esteem, adjustment issues, and increased potential to offend as a juvenile (Fernandez, 2007; Lewis, Dozier, Ackerman & Sepulveda-Kozakowski, 2007; Ryan, Hernandez, and Herz, 2007). An Australian longitudinal interview and survey study with 59 children and young people in care found that children in the study who had experienced more placement moves reported more anxiety (“sometimes I get really scared, ’cause sometimes I get worried that I have to move again and I don't want to move ever again”), and more issues with self esteem (“it's like we're second hand kids”) (Fernandez, 2007, p. 353). These issues can, and often
do, manifest themselves into behavioural difficulties which in turn can lead to a downward spiral of
more moves and more instability (i.e. children manifest difficult behaviours which caregivers find
hard to manage and eventually the placement breaks down) (Lewis, et al., 2007). Ryan et al.,
(2007) in their retrospective US study of 294 young men who had exited foster care, found three
offending trajectories amongst the sample; (i) non-offenders – had no offending record (52% of the
sample); (ii) desistors – offended between 17-19 years of age then stopped (21% of the sample);
and (iii) chronic offenders – frequent and continued offending past 20 years of age (27% of the
sample). Further analysis of their histories revealed that those who had experienced placement
instability in the foster care system (defined by having three or more changes in placements) were
significantly more likely to be early / short term (desistors) and long term (chronic) offenders.

2.4 Tamariki and rangatahi Māori

Although there have been some improvements in statistics for Māori4, on a population basis
tamariki and rangatahi Māori still tend to be overrepresented in CYF statistics, juvenile offending
statistics, school suspension statistics, and school underachievement statistics (e.g. see Bishop,
Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007; Bishop, Berryman, Powell & Teddy, 2007; Bishop,
Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003; Doone, 2000; Hema, 1999; 2000; Maynard, Coebergh,
example, Māori students are four times more likely to be suspended and three times more likely to
be excluded, up to five times more likely to be frequent truants, are 2.7 times more likely to leave
school earlier and 2.5 times more likely to leave school with no formal qualification than their
Pakeha peers (Bishop et al., 2003; Ministry of Education, 2007). What are some of the reasons for
these over-representations in negative statistics?

Over-represented in risk factors

There are a number of reports that have reviewed the literature and research in relation to
rangatahi Māori and offending behaviour (e.g. Doone, 2000; Hema, 2000; Te Puni Kokiri, 2000).
These reports have shown that while there is an understanding that rangatahi Māori are over-
represented in offending statistics (Te Puni Kokiri, 2000), the research clearly shows that ethnicity
is not a risk factor for offending; that is being Māori in itself does not cause criminal behaviour. One
explanation given for this is that Māori are over-represented in the risk factors that contribute to
criminal behaviour (e.g. lack of educational achievement, unemployment, poor health, low socio-
economic status, a dysfunctional family and a negative peer environment) hence Māori are over-
represented in crime statistics (Doone, 2000). Similar understanding has been identified in
education. For example, schools in low socio economic areas have higher rates of suspensions,
exclusions, truanting and early leaving, indicating a link between socio economic factors and
educational outcomes (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; Bishop et al., 2003; Ministry of
Education, 2007).

Culture-related factors

Research has identified, however, some culture-related factors that that may increase the risk of
negative outcomes for Māori. Maynard et al., (1999) identified the following four potential culture-
related risk factors for offending and re-offending by Māori:

(i) Cultural identity – lack of pride or comfort in being Māori or antisocial perceptions of being
Māori;

(ii) Cultural tension – negative thoughts and feelings about situations where there is a
perceived conflict of cultural values, beliefs and practices;

(iii) Whānau – lack of, or limited contact with, whānau causing personal distress, whānau
socially endorsing or practically supporting offending behaviour, and situations affecting the
whānau that impact negatively on the youth; and

(iv) Whakawhanaunga – association with antisocial or pro-criminal peers who play a whānau-
like role.

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4 For example, in education, a Student Engagement Initiative was established in 2001 to reduce the disproportionately high number of Māori suspensions. The 63
schools who joined the SEI have shown a 52% decrease in their suspension rate for Māori students compared to a 6% increase in schools that never joined (Ministry
of Education, 2007). Other statistics show that on a population basis Maori have the highest levels of participation in tertiary education (18% compared to 13.7% for
the total population); Maori participation has increased at more than twice the rate of the general population since 1999 (Ministry of Education, 2007).
Maxwell and Morris (1999) also suggest that a lack of cultural pride and knowledge of ancestry (whakapapa) are associated with offending. Bishop et al., (2003; 2007a; 2007b) identified some similar factors related to Māori achievement within mainstream schools. They found that the primary impediment to Māori children’s engagement and achievement in school was the view of the teacher about Māori. Specifically, if the teacher had low expectations of Māori children, this created an environment where to be Māori was not valued, and this in turn created a downward spiralling of failure amongst Māori students. Biddulph et al. (2003) note that there are a number of New Zealand studies that indicate clearly that mainstream school culture is not always supportive of Māori children’s sense of identity and well-being, and that this can impact negatively on achievement.

2.5 Resiliency factors

Resilience is the capacity for successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Waller, 2001, in McLewin & Muller, 2006). Various studies have tried to identify mitigating or resiliency factors that offset or overcome the effects of child abuse and neglect or other negative life experiences (i.e. factors associated with being in care as discussed above) (Masten, & Powell, 2003). Early intervention is a key factor. Research indicates that helping vulnerable families, via early intervention services, to provide a more nurturing and positive environment for their children can significantly increase the chances of better outcomes in adulthood (Robilliard, 2005; Sykora, 2005). Services which are intensive, of high-quality, intervene early (preferably in pregnancy), are of a lengthy duration, provide for a range of needs and have high quality professional staff, are most effective (Hungerford, 2006; Sykora, 2005).

However, for most of the children and young people referred to the Kauri Centre, early intervention has not usually occurred; they have commonly experienced abuse and neglect, multiple care and educational placements, and have reached an age where their behaviour is such that they are either disengaged or not attending school and their potential life trajectory is not hopeful. What then are some of the resiliency enhancing factors that can make a difference for them?

**Stability**

There is a general consensus within the literature that stability, both in care placements and in school placements, is correlated with more positive outcomes. Placement stability was identified by Ryan, et al., (2007) as a protective factor for reducing offending potential. It is also a protective factor for educational achievement, self esteem, and behaviour (Fernandez, 2007). A US study by found that youth in care who had one fewer placement moves per year were almost twice as likely to graduate high school (Pecora, Williams, Kessler, Downs, O’Brien, Hiripi et al., 2003). School stability is also associated with more positive outcomes (Staub & Meighan, 2007). Biddulph, et al., (2003) in their review of the evidence on influences on children’s achievement in New Zealand, found that frequent mobility was correlated with lower achievement; children who had attended less than four schools by age ten achieved better, on academic and social measures, than those who had attended four or more schools.

**Belonging**

Human development theories indicate that one of the important factors for optimal human development is ‘belonging’. Maslow’s hierarchy is probably one of the most well-known theories that recognises the importance of belonging in human development. Maslow (1968) was one of the first psychology theorists to explore normal development rather than abnormal which had been the traditional psychology focus. He saw human beings’ needs arranged like a ladder. The most basic needs, at the bottom, were physical (air, water, food). Then came safety needs (security, stability), followed by psychological, or social needs (belonging, love, acceptance). Then came self esteem, and at the top of it all were the self-actualizing needs (the need to fulfil oneself, to become all that one is capable of becoming). Maslow (1968) felt that unfulfilled needs lower on the ladder would inhibit the person from climbing to the next step. Other theories (e.g. Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Wha) also have an element of ‘belonging’ to individuals, to whanau, and to community, as important aspects for overall health and wellbeing (Durie, 1994).
Identity
Related to ‘belonging’ is another important resiliency factor – identity – people need to know who they are, where they are from, and how they fit within their society. If that identity is a positive one (i.e. they know who they are and feel proud of who they are) then they are better able to cope. This is important for all children and young people, but is particularly noticeable for cultures that are in the minority in a society as the structures (e.g. the education system) tend to be moulded after the norms and values of the dominant culture, and often therefore to be in the minority culture is to be less valued. A number of New Zealand reports have highlighted the importance of cultural identity and cultural pride as a factor that impacts on Māori educational achievements (Bishop et al., 2003) and an absence of cultural identity and pride is a risk factor for potential to get involved in juvenile offending (Maynard et al., 1999).

Adult mentors
Mentors can make a positive difference, particularly with adolescents. Longitudinal studies have identified that high risk children and young people who have a supportive relationship with a positive adult role model function well compared to others with that support (Ahrens, Richardson, Lozano, 2008; Egeland, 1997; McLewin & Muller, 2006). Ahrens et al., (2008) matched samples of youth who had been in foster care, categorising them into mentored youth and non-mentored youth and compared them on a range of outcomes. Mentored youth were defined as those who had had a non-parental adult mentor in their life between the ages of 14 and 18 years and that the relationship had lasted at least two years. Mentored youth had on average significantly more positive outcomes than the non-mentored youth; they had better health, reported less suicidal ideation, were less likely to have contracted a sexually transmitted infection (STI), were less likely to have hurt someone in a fight in the past year, and were more likely to have participated in higher education. In another study by Skyles et al.’s (2007), one young person explained that he had succeeded in his education despite multiple placements while in care, because he had found positive male role models to inspire him (p.17).

Education
Having access to education is a factor that is associated with more positive life outcomes including high school achievement, tertiary education enrolment, career opportunities, job performance ratings and future earnings (Maxwell, et al., 2004; Redd, Cochran, Hair & Moore, 2002). Likewise a lack of access to education is associated with negative outcomes. Ryan, et al., (2007) found that non enrollment in school increased the likelihood of both short term and long term offending amongst adolescents leaving the foster care system. However, as was discussed above, access to education can be compromised for vulnerable children due to factors like their developmental delays, behavioural issues, and living situations and for children in care due to factors like multiple placements and disrupted schooling. Researchers in a US study on school engagement amongst youth who run away from care, interviewed 46 youth who had run away and 16 professionals working with the youth. The researchers found that most of the youth wanted to attend school and they, and the study participants, concluded that “the child welfare system has to identify how to engage disconnected youth in school and to think creatively about ways to sustain their engagement in their education while they are living in care” (Skyles, et al., 2007, p. 7).

In Hamilton, the Kauri Centre is an example of a ‘creative solution’; it is an alternative educational setting specifically for children in CYF custody who are disengaged or not attending school. There is a large body of research on what works in education, and in alternative education. The next section summarises what the research evidence has shown about what works in education for vulnerable children and young people.

2.6 Education: what works?
There have been a number of literature reviews and evaluations of alternative education settings in New Zealand (O’Brien, Thesing, & Herbert, 2001; Te Puni Kokiri, 2004) and overseas (Kendall,
Kinder, Halsey, Fletcher-Morgan, White, & Brown, 2003; Redd, et al., 2002). The Ministry of Education have also published a ‘best evidence synthesis’ for diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003); and another one on community and family influences on children's achievement (Biddulph, et al., 2003). Bishop et al (2003; 2007a; 2007b) have spent a number of years investigating what works to improve achievement for Maori children in school, and as well, other teacher professional development programmes (e.g. Te Kauhua) have been implemented and evaluated in mainstream schools (Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins, & Broughton, 2004). There has also been research into other types of ‘programmes’ for young offenders in New Zealand and reviews of ‘what works’ (Hema, 1999; McLaren, 2000; Singh & White, 2000), and there is some international research into what works for children and young people with behavioural issues (e.g. van Acker, 2007) or those in care (e.g. Skyles et al, 2007). A summary of the key success factors identified by these research studies, reviews and meta-analyses is provided below.

Quality staff
In Kendall et al’s (2003) evaluation the quality of relationships between staff and young people, emerged as the most critical factor in young people’s successful re-engagement (both socially and educationally). Young people in Kendall et al.’s (2006) evaluation particularly valued being treated like an adult and that interaction and relationships were based on mutual respect. O’Brien, et al., (2001) noted that "teachers are the most important resource in alternative education". They found that students needed staff who respected them, acknowledged them, and appreciated them as people if they were going to increase self esteem and confidence as well as connect them with learning. Skyles et al., (2007), in their interview study with foster youth found that the schools that the foster youth enjoyed attending were ones where the teachers valued them and ‘helped them.’

Flexible programme
Flexibility and variety are key success factors. Kendall et al. (2003), O’Brien et al. (2001), and Hema (1999) noted the value of tailoring programmes to the individual student, which build on their strengths rather than focusing on deficiencies. Having individual learning plans, a timetable that is flexible to allow for dealing with problems or issues immediately that they occur, and a variety of activities and supporting subjects (e.g. life skills, whakapapa, work skills, music) were also important aspects. In addition, in Kendall et al.’s (2003) evaluation, having an option for students to enrol part time – with the option to increase their hours when they were ready - was a key to re-engaging some youth, particularly those who had been disengaged for a significant period of time.

A warm and inviting place
O’Brien et al., (2001) note that quality programmes need to be based in compact settings that are unlike school. The setting needs to engender a sense of belonging and emotional security, to be informal, warm and inviting, and “like home” (p.iii); the staff need to create “warm, nurturing, intimate environments where students feel comfortable, confident, and are able to power share” (p.33). Alternative education providers in Kendall et al.’s (2003) study tried to avoid having settings that resembled mainstream classrooms as they were cognisant of the fact that their students typically harboured bad memories of mainstream school, so in the interests of avoiding stirring up negative emotions, they created atmospheres that were more inviting and informal.

High staff pupil ratios and small group sizes
Both O’Brien et al., (2001) and Kendall et al. (2003) found that having smaller classes and higher student staff ratios was beneficial as the teachers were able to give each student more time and attention. Students in Kendall et al.’s (2003) study reported that having less people meant less distractions so they were able to concentrate more, and they were able to get more help from the teacher as the teacher had fewer students to attend to.
Pastoral care

Of key import in Kendall et al.’s (2003) study was a recognition that there was an interplay between social and emotional well being and educational performance; staff need to be aware of what is happening for the child or young person and be able to recognise signs of stress or anxiety. If there are problems with placements or other issues in the home environment then this will impact on behaviour in the educational setting. The student cannot be viewed in isolation but as part of a family, a whānau, and a community and programmes that are able to build links with family and caregivers and assist them to support the child are more successful (Bishop et al.; 2003; O’Brien et al., 2000). O’Brien, et al., (2001) also stressed the importance of attending to the student’s hierarchy of needs (e.g. food, transportation, safety, emotional needs) so that they are ready to learn; and Hema (1999) notes that effective programmes for reducing offending are holistic, dealing simultaneously with many aspects of the young person’s life.

Transition

O’Brien et al., (2000) found that the transition periods (i.e. entering or exiting the programme) are crucial points in the alternative educational process. Children and young people are most at risk for failing as they move either into a new programme or from a programme back into a mainstream or onto work or further training. Programmes need to have specific strategies in place to support students at these times.

2.6.1 Education: What works for tamariki and rangatahi Māori?

According to Bishop et al. (2003), for Māori students to achieve we need to create educational contexts where “to be Māori is to be normal; where Māori cultural identities are valued” (p. 13). In relation to the physical classroom setting this means ensuring that the classroom setting represents and celebrates the Māori world. In addition, Bishop et al., (2003; 2007a; 2007b) found that the most important influence on Māori students was the quality of relationships and interactions between teachers and Māori students. Māori learners achieved best when the teaching style was more inclusive, more interactive, where there was a strong and genuine relationship and culture of care operating between themselves and their teacher, where Māori words and names were pronounced properly and where positive relationships were forming.

Singh and White’s (2000) summary of New Zealand research about reducing juvenile offending amongst Māori found that alternative education programmes based specifically on kaupapa Māori, tikanga Māori and ‘Māori ways’ of doing things were likely to be more effective than mainstream designed and delivered programmes. Key success factors of these programmes were the adoption of a whānau-focused approach; taking the time to find out the young person’s (and their family’s) needs; consistently offer acceptance and aroha; acknowledging the importance of identity, cultural knowledge and history; addressing academic, vocational and employment needs, and financial management and emotional stability; teaching young people about the relevance of Māori values and ways; and being provided by people (preferably Māori) who have mana and with whom young people can identify.

2.7 Summary: Literature review

Research has shown that children in care typically fare less well on most measures of health and wellbeing, than their peers who are not in out of home care. Children in care typically have lower rates of educational achievement, higher rates of anti-social behavior and more likelihood of engaging in juvenile offending. One reason for this is that children in care commonly have histories of maltreatment which research shows can cause cognitive, developmental and academic delays, attachment disorders, the development of problem behaviors and conduct disorders. Other factors related to being in care such as unstable care placements and frequent school moves have also been linked with low academic achievement and in some cases the likelihood of becoming a juvenile offender. These developmental delays, problem behaviours, frequent school moves, and unstable placements, can make fitting in and achieving in an educational setting very difficult, often resulting in low academic achievement, truanting, and suspensions.
On a population basis, tamariki and rangatahi Māori tend to be over represented in negative statistics, (e.g. in CYF care, juvenile offending, school suspension, educational underachievement). The research is clear that the reason for this over-representation is not ethnicity. One explanation is that Māori are over-represented in the risk factors (e.g. lack of educational achievement, unemployment, poor health, low socio-economic status). There is also research evidence that a lack of cultural pride and cultural identity, lack of knowledge of whakapapa, limited contact with whanau or the influence of whanau or whakawhanaunga who are engaged in offending or other anti-social behaviours, and being in an environment where to be Māori is not valued, is linked with educational underachievement and other negative outcomes, including offending.

Research has identified a number of factors that help to mitigate risk factors. While one of the key factors is early intervention with a family, for most children in care, early intervention has not occurred. Resiliency factors relevant to children and young people in care include stability in school and care placements, meeting their needs to belong and to feel safe and secure, and helping them to develop a positive cultural identity – to know who they are, where they are from, and to be proud of that. Positive adult role models (mentors) have been shown to be important for vulnerable youth, and access to, and achievement in, education remains a key predictive factor in positive life outcomes.

In terms of what works in engaging vulnerable children and young people in education, the research shows that a key factor is having quality staff, who can build relationships of mutual respect, where the child and their culture is valued, accepted and celebrated. Also relevant are the findings that the children and young people will benefit from a compact setting, a warm and inviting ‘home-like’ space, small class sizes, high staff pupil ratios, an ability to tailor the educational programme to the child’s needs, and an understanding of the interplay between social and emotional well being and educational achievement. Tamariki and rangatahi Māori achieve better in programmes that are based in tikanga and kaupapa Māori, where Te Ao Māori is represented and celebrated, and where the relationships with teachers are respectful and positive.
3 The Hamilton Kauri Centre

3.1 Introduction

The first, second and fourth and fifth objectives of the evaluation of the Hamilton Kauri Centre were: to "document processes used to set up the Kauri Centre"; to "explore positive and negative experiences of stakeholders in setting-up and maintaining the Kauri Centre"; “assess components for developing a best practice model”; and to “ascertain any advantages and disadvantages from a stakeholder perspective of working in this way compared to the situation prior to the Kauri Centre being established”.

These objectives were part of the evaluation aim of "determining the extent to which the collaborative model is effective in delivering services for clients of Child Youth and Family, including descriptions of the challenges faced by working collaboratively, and how these issues were addressed and overcome."

As part of the evaluation, information was sourced from observations at the Kauri Centre, reviews of documents and meeting minutes, and interviews with staff and key informants involved in establishing the Kauri Centre.

The process of researching and documenting the development and set up of the Kauri Centre, as per the requirements of evaluation objectives one and two, highlighted the fact that the Kauri Centre is not a static entity. It has evolved and developed over time, expanding and changing, in response to the needs of the children and young people and the skills and experience of the staff.

3.2 About this chapter

This chapter describes the development of the Kauri Centre since inception and through to December 2007. There are three main sections:

(i) Before the Kauri Centre (2003) describes the issues that were facing CYF and MOE, and the process that occurred in establishing a learning centre as a solution. Also provided is a flow chart of the establishment process, and a description of the challenges that occurred and how they were overcome;

(ii) The Hamilton Kauri Centre Now (January 2008): A description, describes the location, facilities, resourcing, staffing and programme of the Kauri Centre, as it is now, and highlights any key developments and changes in the four years it has been operating.

(iii) Challenges in establishing and maintaining the Kauri Centre summarises the key points and provides evaluative comment on the development of the Kauri Centre as per the objectives.

One of the key points for the reader to be aware of, when reading the following sections, is that many of the developments described have taken a great deal of time, effort and commitment from the Kauri Centre staff, to implement. A written description can sometimes fail to effectively communicate the amount of work that has been undertaken to get changes and developments up and running, and as such it is important to acknowledge the work that has been, and is still, undertaken at the Kauri Centre to improve and evolve and meet the needs of the students and staff. Quotes in this chapter are from key personnel from CYF, MoE, NZCS, and the Kauri Centre who were involved in establishing the Kauri Centre.

3.3 Before the Kauri Centre (2003)

This section describes, the issues prior to the Kauri Centre being established that were the impetus for setting up the Kauri Centre, and the process that was undertaken up to the establishment of the Kauri Centre, in February 2004 and the move to its current location in August 2004.
3.3.1 The issues identified
Prior to the Kauri Centre being established in 2004, CYF workers had experienced difficulties in getting children in CYF care enrolled in school. There were a number of reasons for this including, the temporary nature of the children’s placements, their schooling history which could include truancy, suspensions, exclusions, multiple schools, or behavioural issues, and their academic ability or lack of it. In some cases the offending history of some of the children or young people in care, particularly those who were also Youth Justice clients, was also a barrier to their enrolment at mainstream schools.

Historically, we have several family homes in Hamilton that have been operating for 20 or 30 years. We have had difficulty placing the children into school because they are in the home for a short period and then they’re moved, so no school wants them.

We have them sitting in Family Homes for three or four months waiting while decisions are made re: their placement. For example, we had an IHC boy, nine years old, no school would take him. Other boys, sitting around, getting bored and going out offending. Also many of the kids in CYF care hadn’t been going to school anyway before they came into care.

Legally schools can refuse enrolment. What CYF were finding was that if social workers approached a school with a student then the school’s antennae went up. Schools may have been dumped on by fragile students before [so don’t want to take the risk again]. There wasn’t a way to bring the two together - school plus high need students.

A number of different options had been trialled with children and young people in CYF care who were unable to be enrolled in a mainstream school. One option was to enrol them in The New Zealand Correspondence School (NZCS) and pay supervisors to supervise them. Another option was to book motel rooms and provide ‘minders’ to stay with the child or young person during the day. However these options had not been effective in providing an education for the children and young people.

3.3.2 Inter-agency collaboration
In 2002 central government was encouraging greater collaboration between agencies such as CYF, MoE, Police and Health in a recognition that many vulnerable families have multiple agency involvement and that a coordinated approach was likely to be more effective in preventing problems and intervening earlier and more appropriately. In Hamilton between 2001 and 2003, a number of inter-agency meetings and initiatives were beginning to form.

In Hamilton, in 2003, regular meetings began between CYF and MoE to discuss children and young people that they had in common. During these inter-agency meetings, a CYF supervisor raised the issue of children in CYF care not attending school. A dialogue subsequently developed between the CYF and MoE representatives in response to the issue, with the idea of determining a solution to the problem.

[The MoE] had a special education facilitator who was working with kids with special needs to try and engage them in education, and also battling with children with ‘baggage’. So we set up monthly meetings between CYF and MoE to talk about children we had a common interest in. It came up - the problem of getting kids [in CYF custody] into school.

We had had about four or five meetings and [CYF representative] was saying at each meeting "it's very hard to get our kids enrolled in schools."

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6 The New Zealand Correspondence School does have some Alternative Education (AE) places for their students, and in 2001 the Minister of Education agreed that it was appropriate for these places to be used for clusters of CYF clients eligible for alternative education (source: Ministry of Education, meeting minutes, 15 August 2005). A Ministry of Education document dated August 2005, indicates that in 2005, The New Zealand Correspondence School had 42 allocated AE places.
As a result of their discussions the MoE and CYF representatives arranged a meeting between their managers, in late 2003 to discuss whether their idea for a joint initiative was feasible.

There was a conversation between a CYF supervisor and someone from MoE about these kids and they were "why don't we talk to our bosses about a centre or something?" So it got raised with the managers from CYF and MoE and it went from there.

The managers were supportive of the idea, added their own ideas to the mix, and began to explore ways that it could become a reality.

There was support from that meeting. It was seen as a need. It was seen as a need for all organisations to improve the relationships. People were seeing that we could make a difference at the local level. Then everyone worked together.

Once the CYF and MoE managers had become involved, regular meetings were instigated to discuss a solution to the problem of accessing education for CYF clients. Minutes from two of these meetings, (13/11/2003 and 11/12/2003), show that attendees included, CYF and MoE managers and staff, Group Special Education7 (GSE) staff, and NZCS representatives. During these meetings it was decided to set up an educational centre, and the logistics of doing this were discussed, planned and implemented.

Both CYF and MoE had some discretionary funding that could be used for local initiatives and by pooling resources they were able to meet the budgetary needs of the Centre for the first year. CYF (Waikato) committed to providing the premises and contributing to the resources and costs, including employing a teacher aide. In order to be eligible for MoE funding the children had to be enrolled in a school and so discussions were undertaken with NZCS who agreed to enrol the students and provide the work for the students.

NZCS would also employ the teacher, although the money for the salary was put forward by MoE (Northern Regional), out of Innovations Pool8 money and some funding for Alternative Education places. The teacher and teacher aide would supervise and be there to assist the children with the work as needed, and it was envisaged, GSE would also provide assistance.

CYF said we'll get a venue if MoE can get a teacher. MoE found dollars from the Innovations Pool and there were four AE [Alternative Education] places in the local budget which gave MoE enough to pay for a teacher. Then CYF paid for the teacher aide, and minders for the kids. MoE purchased computers and CYF put some dollars in for resources.

3.3.3 Staffing and other matters

According to the original timetable it was hoped to have the Centre ready to open for the beginning of the 2004 school year (February 2004). There were a number of key tasks that needed to be completed including hiring staff, finding and outfitting premises, and purchasing resources as well as deciding on eligibility criteria for students, determining referral processes, curriculum planning and the overall purpose and expectations for the Centre.

3.3.3.1 Staffing

In late 2003 the positions of teacher and teacher aide were advertised, interviews were held by a panel made up of CYF, MoE and NZCS representatives and, in early 2004, a teacher aide and a teacher appointed. The teacher was primary teacher trained, had a background in working with children and youth with behaviour management issues and had previously worked at the Amber Centre and also a residential school in Auckland.

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7 Group Special Education (GSE) is the arm of the Ministry of Education that works with children with special needs. Schools can refer difficult students and those with special needs to GSE for assessments and interventions.
8 The Innovations Pool was available to schools to apply to for innovative solutions to local problems.
3.3.3.2 Referral criteria and processes

Another matter that had to be determined was the criteria for referral to the Kauri Centre. According to the criteria on the referral form:

- All children or young people referred [to the Kauri Centre] must be in the custody of the Chief Executive of Child Youth and Family either under Care and Protection or Youth Justice and must have a case worker.
- Children or young people referred are not currently attending school or [an] alternative education programme.

Although there is not an official age criteria, the age range that the key personnel believed the Kauri Centre would cater for was nine to 14 year olds. Most students have been within this age range although there has been one child aged eight years at enrolment and five aged 15 years at enrolment (see Chapter 4 for student demographic details).

It was clear from the beginning that the children for whom the Kauri Centre was being established were to be in the custody of CYF. Given that there are quite a few children in this category, the second criteria, was that they had to be disengaged or not attending school. One interviewee recalled that the original group of CYF and MoE representatives wanted to ensure that the Kauri Centre was available for the children or young people in CYF care who were most in need - that is those for whom getting into a mainstream school was highly unlikely due primarily to their personal and family histories which had left them damaged and in most cases, very disruptive, within a mainstream setting.

We wanted to keep it for the more extreme kids, not all the CYF kids. In CYF custody, and with little likelihood of being enrolled in mainstream, who had multi-issues that required some management.

Determining a referral process was another important matter. The referral process that was developed, and which essentially remains the same today, was as follows:

(i) social worker identifies a child or young person that meets the criteria;
(ii) social worker refers child or young person to the Kauri Centre, via a referral form which may be emailed, faxed, or posted;
(iii) the Management Group9 meets to discuss the referral, and decides whether to accept the child / young person or not;
(iv) the Management Group notifies the social worker of the acceptance or decline of the child / young person.

The Kauri Centre Strategic Plan Annual Plan (2006, p. 6) has a flow chart to detail the referral and admission process that developed (see Appendix 1). One significant factor, as the flow chart and data from the interviewees indicates, is that the acceptance of the child into the Centre is at the discretion of the Kauri Centre. This was instigated at the outset and continues to be of key import, as it was recognised early on that the ‘mix’ of students was crucial to the Centre’s smooth running and effectiveness. Getting prompt access to the Kauri Centre was also an important consideration for CYF social workers in particular, as they were concerned about the children sitting in Family Homes or waiting for placements and wanted to get them enrolled in the Centre as quickly as possible.

3.3.3.3 Educational component

Another concept that had to be determined was the educational component of the Centre, and what the expectations were. Minutes from the 2003 meetings indicate that there was an expectation that the students would undergo educational assessments (CYF/MoE joint project minutes, 13/11/2003). This was particularly important as many of the children had not historically had any regular or consistent assessments completed and it was important to get an

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9 The Management Group was originally made up of the Kauri Centre teacher, the CYF representative (manager) and the MOE representative (manager/ or other student services representative). The social worker might also attend the referral meeting.
understanding of what level they were at in the curriculum and where the gaps were. According to the minutes there was an expectation that the teacher would do the initial assessment and that GSE would also have some involvement (CYF/MoE joint project minutes, 13/11/2003).

As it happened, GSE did not have the involvement that was anticipated at the beginning. One reason for this was that the Kauri Centre was viewed as an Alternative Education (AE) centre and had some students over 14 years and GSE’s brief was to work within under 14 year olds and only in mainstream school settings.

Part of the concept was that because the children hadn’t been at school we didn’t know where they were at, so we needed to get some educational assessments done. So we thought that GSE would do the assessments and that The Correspondence School was the school.

GSE was supposed to be involved right from the beginning, - doing behaviour plans for the kids. But they didn’t believe that these kids sat within their jurisdiction because their brief was to work with kids under 14 and the Kauri Centre had kids over 14. And the Kauri Centre was seen as an AE Centre and their brief wasn’t to work in AE Centres.

Following the assessments it was intended that an individual plan would be developed for each student. Although NZCS was to supply the lessons, there was an expectation that the teacher would adjust the lessons according to the students’ individual needs.

We had access to correspondence, but in other cases the teacher was able to provide some extra individualised programme.

The idea of an individualised plan appears in many of the documents relating to the Kauri Centre including the Kauri Centre Strategic Annual Plan Draft (2006) and the Kauri Centre General Handbook (2005).

3.3.3.4 Resources and premises
Various resources were purchased such as desks and chairs, stationery, and computers and then a suitable venue had to be located. Finding suitable premises was something that the CYF manager had agreed to take on. He had the idea to use a former CYF Family Home. The Family Home had been closed for some years as some of the children from the home had been involved in offending in the area, which resulted in a directive from CYF National Office that the Family Home be closed permanently. So while it remained a CYF property, it was being rented out.

The CYF manager sought permission from CYF National Office, to use the Home for the Kauri Centre and this was granted. The local residents were approached, particularly those whose properties bordered the Home, to discuss the proposed Centre. The CYF manager put a lot of work into ensuring that the local residents were comfortable with the Centre, including giving them his cell phone number so they could call at any time. Once they moved into the Home, the teacher visited the residents at least once a month to check that they were happy and to ensure they had no concerns. The Hamilton City Council also had to agree to the property being used as a school rather than a residence. There were various stipulations regarding the use of the facility, such as its hours of operation, the children and young people being transported to and from the facility, and the supervision of the children and young people.

The CYF manager did a lot of PR with the local residents. He gave them his cell phone number so they could call him if they had any concerns. One of the neighbours said [recently] “I never worry because as soon as I hear a child’s voice, I hear an adult’s voice.” The kids are never unsupervised outside.

Once the various permissions had been granted and various stipulations agreed to, the Home was inspected and, as it was in a state of considerable disrepair, refurbishment was undertaken. The
process of obtaining and refurbishing the Family Home took longer than anticipated with the result being that the Management Group had a teacher and teacher aide employed, children ready to attend, and nowhere to go. A temporary alternative venue was needed and CYF quickly located a church hall and arranged to use it for the first term of 2004.

The church hall in _______ road. A [CYF] staff member suggested it and the clerical staff tracked down the owners and started discussions about using it. We paid a weekly rent and had to guarantee that we would pay for any damage\(^\text{10}\).

3.3.4 Kauri Centre opens (2004)

By February 2004 the teacher and teacher aide had been employed, students were ready to attend, a temporary premises had been located, computers and other resources had been purchased, and the Kauri Centre was ready to open.

3.3.4.1 Planning

There were some learning curves for CYF workers regarding the Kauri Centre. Interviewees explained that there was an initial expectation that once the teacher and teacher aide were employed, they could start the next day, taking ten students for five hours a day.

However, the teacher they had employed who was very experienced in teaching difficult and vulnerable children, quickly put in place some fundamental principles to ensure that the children would be able to manage and that the Kauri Centre would have more chance of success. She stipulated that the staff needed some time to plan and to get the resources and premises prepared, and this was duly arranged with the two staff spending some time together organising what was needed. She also knew that with children that have been disengaged from school for long periods of time, and who have some behaviour issues, sitting still for five hours a day, five days a week is unlikely to work very well. She stipulated that the hours needed to be shorter initially, and slowly built up, and that the mix of students needed to be carefully managed.

The social workers had ideas about what would work. From their point of view they thought “great”; they [Kauri Centre] can take ten kids. But the teacher in her wisdom said “that’s not going to work with these kids.” She looked at the kids and said “two hours, short periods of time, separate them, e.g. girls in the afternoon, boys in the morning, this young boy on his own at lunchtime. Get the mix right.”

The roll from 2004 indicates that the first two students started at the Kauri Centre on 27 February 2004, with two more starting at the beginning of March 2004. By the end of the first term (9\(^\text{th}\) April 2004), there were seven students on the roll of the Kauri Centre. All of the students came with a minder, employed by CYF, who worked with them to manage behaviour and assist them with their work if needed.

3.3.4.2 Inter-agency meetings

Once the centre had opened, inter-agency meetings continued. The CYF and MoE representatives who had been involved since the beginning of the project met monthly with the teacher and teacher aide to discuss the students and their progress. These meetings continued for the first year.

3.3.4.3 Relocating premises

By July 2004, the Family Home was fully refitted and available to move into. One of the points made by interviewees was that the refitting of the Home was managed at a local, rather than a national level and this was an advantage for two reasons: (i) decisions about the refitting process, including managing contractors, and dealing with any of the issues that inevitably arise in a building renovation project, could be made quickly by local people and therefore the refit was able

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\(^{10}\) Note: There was no damage to the hall.
to progress without too many delays; and (ii) Kauri Centre staff were able to have input into the process and discuss the options for how best to set the house up for its new role as a learning centre, which gave a sense of ownership and which also ensured that the place was refitted in a way that made it suitable for its purpose.

The roll from 2004 indicates that the school moved premises in the week of 2nd August 2004, with students starting there on 9th August 2004.

3.3.3.4 Hamilton’s Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Kauri Centre

There are some links between Hamilton’s Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Kauri Centre. In fact, some of the interviewees were under the impression that the Kauri Centre was originally a YOT initiative. However the idea and the initiative for the Kauri Centre came from a different forum to YOT, although the CYF and MoE managers were also involved with YOT at around the same time that the Kauri Centre was being established. In addition some of the young people that were going to be attending the Kauri Centre were Youth Justice clients so the Centre was viewed as one of the possible collaborative strategies that YOT would support. At the present time, although the Kauri Centre is not a YOT initiative, some Kauri Centre management team members are also members of the Hamilton YOT.

The CYF and MOE managers are both on the YOT. Although we went and did it [the Kauri Centre] anyway [outside of YOT] we saw it as under the auspices of YOT as it was an example of collaboration.

3.4 Summary: Establishing the Kauri Centre

In 2003, meetings between CYF and MoE staff highlighted the fact that the agencies had children in common that they were struggling to provide an education for. The various options that were available (alternative education centres, mainstream schools, supervised correspondence) were not working for these young people and they were sitting in motel rooms or family homes with minders, disengaged and not attending school. The idea to establish an alternative school for these children and young people was suggested. Managers from CYF and MoE were approached, became involved, sourced funding and premises, hired a teacher and a teacher aide and in February 2004 the Kauri Centre opened. By the end of Term One 2004 there were nine children on the Kauri Centre roll and by August 2004 they had moved into a re-furbished Family Home (see Figure 1, overleaf).
Figure 1: Flow Chart of Process of Establishing the Hamilton Kauri Centre (2003 to August 2004)

2003
Social workers having difficulty enrolling children in CYF custody in school.

MoE special education advisors having difficulties with children not attending school. Some of these children are in CYF custody.

Meetings between CYF and MoE start, in order to share information about the children they have in common.

Social workers raise the issue of not being able to enrol some children.

Late 2003
Meeting with CYF/MoE managers is arranged to discuss options for CYF children who are not in school.

At the meeting a Centre is proposed and there is support for it.

Early 2004
MoE commits to funding a teacher, some resources, and facilitating NZCS involvement.

Further meetings are held to plan and action establishing a Centre.

Teacher and teacher aide are hired.
Resources are purchased
Children and young people are enrolled.

Temporary premises are found at a church hall.

February 2004
Kauri Centre opens.
First students arrive.

July / August 2004
Family Home refit is completed and Kauri Centre is moved into the old Family Home.
3.5 The Hamilton Kauri Centre Now (January 2008): A Description

3.5.1 Location and Facilities
The Kauri Centre is housed in what was originally a CYF Family Home, located in a residential suburban area in Hamilton. It consists of three buildings. The main building is a large house which has a classroom, dining room and kitchen, a computer room and a music room, two offices, a resource room and a small meeting room. A smaller outside room was lined and carpeted for use as a games room, but is now used as a second classroom. The third building is a double garage and workshop, which is equipped with car repair and maintenance tools, as well as vehicles that the students are working on, and is used for workshop lessons. The buildings are sited within a large section, complete with three vegetable gardens. The vegetable gardens are maintained by the students and staff as part of the Kauri Centre programme, and the vegetables are used in the preparation of kai. There are also other gardens around the buildings and these have been developed by, and are maintained by, students and staff.

Figure 2: The Kauri Centre

Figure 3: The Kauri Centre back garden
3.5.2 Resourcing

Keeping the Kauri Centre operating was initially a year by year occurrence. After the successful first year, further funding was needed to continue. At the end of 2004, MoE managed to secure one year’s funding from national office as an interim measure for 2005 only. This money was secured under the Special Reasons Teaching Allowance provisions, and a submission also went to the Minister of Education to seek approval for further resourcing for operations funding (source: MoE file documents, proposal 15/8/2005). CYF continued to provide the Family Home and pay for its upkeep, including keeping it clean and maintaining the grounds, covering phone and power costs, and funding extra staff and minders as needed.

At the end of 2005, when the Kauri Centre had been operating for two years, the key agencies from the management group (MoE and CYF) once again needed to secure some funding. CYF was able to secure three years further funding from National Office through the Blueprint Investment Strategy. MoE worked on gaining funding to secure the teaching salaries and was able to get Alternative Education funding for three years, through National Office. The Kauri Centre is currently funded until June 2008, after which further funding needs to be found if it is to continue.

3.5.3 Host schools

In order for the Kauri Centre to operate as an educational setting and to have the involvement of MOE, the children and young people have to be enrolled at a school. Initially the NZCS was involved in order to meet this criteria. However that arrangement was not the most optimum for a number of reasons, such as the physical distance between the Kauri Centre in Hamilton and the NZCS campus in Wellington, multi staff changes and restructuring occurring in Wellington, and difficulties associated with the work provided not being suitable for the Kauri Centre students some of whom were operating at well below their age level.

So after the first year of operation the Kauri Centre management group sought an alternative – a high school who would be willing to ‘host’ the Centre as part of their alternative education programme. They initially approached the Northland Health School but this did not work out. However HFHS was willing to undertake the role. After HFHS became involved with the Kauri Centre, the primary-aged children, at the Kauri Centre, continued to be enrolled at NZCS. However, by 2007 it was determined that another solution was needed for the primary aged students. A number of options were considered and towards the end of 2007, Kimihia Primary School in Huntly was approached and agreed to enrol the Kauri Centre primary-aged students, in an arrangement similar to the one with HFHS. This arrangement will commence in the 2008 school year.

3.5.4 Staffing

The Kauri Centre began with one full time teacher and one full time teacher aide, and most, but not all, of the students were accompanied by a minder who might also help them with their school work. There are now seven full time staff at the Kauri Centre – one director / teacher, one secondary teacher, and five educational support staff who do teacher aide work, minder work and administration work. There are also occasionally ‘extra’ minders who are assigned to specific children, a music teacher who comes in twice a week and a cleaner who comes in daily.

The director oversees the management of the Kauri Centre and also teaches the primary aged students. She has been with the Kauri Centre since its inception and was originally the sole teacher who was hired. The secondary teacher has been at the Kauri Centre for the 2007 year and is responsible for the older students educational programme. The educational support staff include one administration person who looks after the school office work, and four staff who work with the students assisting them with their school work and their behaviours, and taking lead roles in specific curriculum areas such as hospitality, workshop, and physical education, depending on

31 A child may have a minder assigned to protect them from being picked on or abused (e.g. sexual abuse victims may have a minder) or to prevent them from absconding or the minder may be there to protect others from the behaviour of that child (e.g. violent behaviours). Minders are often paid by CYF, although other agencies such as ACC or MoE may fund some or all of their wages. Some of the young people have minders assigned on a temporary basis; that is they accompany them for the first few weeks or month until the young person settles in. Other young people have a minder on a more permanent basis.
their specialist skills. These four staff have all been at the Kauri Centre for between two to three years.

The evolution from two fulltime staff to seven fulltime staff happened gradually. When they shifted into the new Kauri Centre premises in July 2004, the staff suggested that they have an onsite minder / youth worker, to work with the young people and diffuse any tense situations and also because the Home was so big – they needed more staff to supervise students working in different areas of the Home.

We had multi rooms at the new venue that the kids could be in and we couldn’t be in all the places. We needed more staff for the safety aspect, because it was such a big facility.

Another reason for wanting an onsite minder was to create more stability for the students; having different minders coming and going with the children and young people was at times disruptive to the classroom dynamics. This was agreed to and the wage funded by CYF. Two other minders/teacher aides also started at the Kauri Centre, assigned to specific high need students, so there were at least three minders/teacher aides on site at any one time. In April 2005 a second teacher was hired. The salary was funded 0.5 by MoE and topped up by CYF to be the equivalent of a fulltime salary.

So, by the end of 2005 the Kauri Centre had five fulltime staff - one teacher/ director, one classroom teacher, one teacher aide/administration person, three minder/teacher aides – and a cleaner, and assorted other minders as needed for specific children/ young people. All these staff were funded in different ways and from a range of different sources. For example: the teacher/director and the teacher were paid by MoE through HFHS; the teacher aide/administrator was paid by CYF; the minders/teacher aides were paid by a combination of CYF, MoE, GSE, and ACC; the other minders and the cleaner were paid by CYF.

By mid-2006 the Kauri Centre’s mix of students included a number of younger children (under 14 years). As younger children have different educational needs to older children, it was decided to trial splitting the students into two classrooms – one for primary-aged children and one for high school-aged children. The games room was designated to be the second (primary) classroom. The director was to teach the primary-aged children and the other teacher, the high school-aged children, with both teachers being assisted by the minders.

Towards the end of 2006 the positions of the support staff (teacher aides, minders, youth workers) were reviewed, and steps taken to make their employment contracts a fairer representation of the work that they provided. As a result of this, five staff are now employed, as Educational Support Staff, on contracts, until end of 2008, commencing in January 2007.

Figure 4 is a visual diagram of the way in which the staffing has evolved over time. One of the key factors that Figure 4 shows is that the original teacher (A) is still at the Kauri Centre as was the original teacher aide (R) up until last year, and that many of the other staff have remained at the Kauri Centre for a significant period of time (e.g. B, M, P have been employed for the past 2½ to 3 years).

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22 The issue of how the minders and other staff were paid was raised in the first interim evaluation report. “The other issue that was raised in relation to staffing was the extent to which staff were valued. This was particularly in relation to the minders and other staff who are on hourly rates (wages), do not get paid in the holidays and are not entitled to paid sick leave. Three interviewees (who are from outside the Kauri Centre and its management) commented that the staff needed to be paid well and supported well. They made the point that the staff are working with society’s “worst kids” and yet they are often paid at a lower rate than a teacher in a mainstream school who has much easier and more manageable children to work with. (Momentum, 2006, p. 29). Changing the contracts for the support staff involved a significant amount of time and commitment from the Kauri Centre director; the process began in October 2006 and was not able to be finalised until the end of January 2007.

23 Note: these contract changes have not altered where the funding comes from, to pay the staff.
Figure 4: Hamilton Kauri Centre Staff (2004 – December 2007)

February 2004
One Teacher
(A)
One Teacher Aide (R)

One minder
(H)

July 2004
One Teacher
(A)
One Teacher Aide (R)
One minder
(H)

Other minders accompany students as needed

February 2005
One Teacher
(A)
One Teacher Aide (R)
One Minder (Z)

Other minders accompany students as needed

April 2005
One Teacher/Director
(A)
One Teacher (R)
One Teacher Aide / Administration (R)
One Teacher Aide with specific student (B)
One Minder (Z, then P (July))
One minder with specific student (P2)

January 2005
One Teacher/Director (A)
One Teacher (R)
One Teacher Aide / Administration (R)
Two Teacher Aides with specific students (B, M)
Two Minders / Teacher Aides (P and P2)
Other minders accompany students as needed

June 2006
One Teacher/Director (A)
One Teacher (R, now T)
One Education Support Staff (Admin) (R, now A2) and four Education Support Staff (Minders / Teacher Aides) (P, P2, B, M)
Other minders accompany students as needed

December 2007

Minders accompany students as needed
3.5.5 Management of the Kauri Centre

The Kauri Centre is overseen by a management group, consisting of the Kauri Centre director, MoE student services representative (Senior Adviser Inter-Agency), CYF representative (Waikato Service Centre Manager), HFHS representative (Deputy Principal), and CYF Site Managers.

In order to operate effectively the Kauri Centre management group and staff have a number of regular hui/meetings (see Table 1). These hui include management group meetings, referral/admission meetings, inter-agency meetings, Family Group Conferences (FGC), Kauri Centre staff meetings, student hui, and meetings between HFHS and the Kauri Centre. The number of hui that the Kauri Centre director needs to attend is significant; she is offsite, and at meetings, two half days a week, plus at management meetings (onsite) once a month, and when required, at inter-agency or FGC hui (usually offsite) or referral/admission (usually onsite) meetings. This is on top of her classroom planning and teaching workload.

It is also important to note that the MOE, CYF and HFHS representatives are involved in other meetings and activities, to manage issues that may arise in relation to the Kauri Centre (for example, securing funding for the Kauri Centre).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hui</th>
<th>Regularity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management Group</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Operational issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikato Service Centre Manager (CYF)</td>
<td>At Kauri Centre</td>
<td>Update on students, referrals, exits, other needs or issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikato Site Manager (CYF)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Update on Kauri Centre Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Deputy Principal (HFHS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Services Inter Agency Advisor (MoE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton’s Fraser High School and Kauri Centre</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Budget and payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Deputy Principal (HFHS)</td>
<td>At HFHS</td>
<td>Update for HFHS on Kauri Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Staff Hui</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>Overall running of Kauri Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Kauri Centre staff</td>
<td>At Kauri Centre</td>
<td>Update on students, Review of week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Student hui</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Plans for the day or week ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Kauri Centre staff and students</td>
<td>At Kauri Centre</td>
<td>Any student or staff issues, concerns or points for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre and CYF</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Case discussions</td>
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<td>Kauri Centre Director</td>
<td>At CYF</td>
<td>Policy and working relationship between CYF and Kauri Centre</td>
</tr>
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<td>Waikato West Site Manager (CYF)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikato East Site Manager (CYF)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre and CYF Case Workers</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Case discussions for each student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Director</td>
<td>At CYF</td>
<td>Update on student progress and issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ case workers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Referral / Admission meeting</td>
<td>As required</td>
<td>Determine whether to accept or decline a child or young person to the Kauri Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikato Service Centre Manager (CYF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Deputy Principal (HFHS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Services Inter Agency Advisor (MoE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-agency meetings</td>
<td>As required</td>
<td>Review specific options or issues for a child / young person at the Kauri Centre. Put in place or create a care or intervention plan for child or young person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Director; Kauri Centre staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS; GSE; YHT; MOH; Hauora Waikato; MoE CYF case worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Group Conferences</td>
<td>As required</td>
<td>Review specific options or issues for a child / young person at the Kauri Centre. Put in place or create a care or intervention plan for child or young person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauri Centre Director; Kauri Centre staff</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS; GSE; YHT; MOH; Hauora Waikato; MoE CYF case worker, whanau members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14 Most of the detail for this table was sourced from a similar table in The Kauri Centre, Scheme 2007, Vol 1.
3.5.6 Educational programme

3.5.6.1 Vision and theoretical base

The Kauri Centre programme was developed, based on the work of a number of key theorists - Abraham Maslow, David Ausubel, Paul Goodman, Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Lev Vygotsky, Russell Bishop, Benjamin Bloom, Howard Gardner, Carl Rogers, Mason Durie, and Robbie Gilligan (see Appendix 2 for details of their theories). The way the theory is interpreted in the Kauri Centre setting, is encapsulated in the Kauri Centre vision:

We at “The Kauri Centre” are committed to the many young people who are disengaged from learning by historical or sociological inequities, attitudes and/or circumstances. We value highly the rich diversity that our Centre incorporates and recognise the significant number of Tangata Whenua on our roll; striving to be cognizant of their cultural needs at all times. Staff at the Centre, believe all learners access knowledge in differing ways; the Centre’s programme is committed to meeting this unique need. The modelling of respect and genuine care, we believe, can transform and support the journey of growth, these young people are on as they seek their place in this society and hence in their future.

(Te Kauri Centre Scheme 200715, Vol 1, p11)

The vision (above) recognises the unique needs of the children and young people at the Kauri Centre, and also underpins the philosophy, aims and objectives, emphasis and priorities, and achievement goals for the Kauri Centre (see Appendix 2 for details of these).

Most of the children and young people who attend the Kauri Centre are of Māori descent, and many, but not all, of the young people have gaps in their cultural understanding and knowledge around being Māori. In 2006 a lot of work was put in by Kauri Centre staff to increase the amount of tikanga and Te Reo Māori within the Kauri Centre with the desire to also provide for students to gain Unit Standard credits in tikanga Māori. This process took a significant amount of time and effort. One of the primary roadblocks was difficulties in sourcing information on the way in which the Kauri Centre could teach tikanga Māori Unit Standards, in English. Various people and organisations were approached but they could only provide advice and information for teaching tikanga in Te Reo Māori, but not in English. Eventually one teacher was located, who was teaching Māori Unit Standards, in English, and she proved to be very helpful, although by the time she was located the 2006 school year was more than half over. This work was however, built on and developed further for the 2007 year, and the place and role of tikanga Māori within the Kauri Centre is summed up, in Te Kauri Centre Scheme as follows:

Te Ao Māori:

The vital strands within our Centre that underpin our aspirations for equity ...

- Tikanga Maori is modelled, lived and honoured, not taught, in this centre.
- Powhiri or whakatau or mihimihi
- Māori dimensions, contexts, and priorities are part of the day to day processes of the experiences and classroom teaching.
- Waka is part of the centre’s culture with all students having the opportunity at some stage
- Each day will begin and close with karakia.
- The Kauri Centre programme operates around a central tenet of Māori knowledges, priorities and expectations.
- There are five staff this year [2007] who are of Māori descent.

(Annex 1, Vol 2)

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15 The Kauri Centre Scheme Volumes1 and2, developed by the Kauri Centre staff during the December 2006 / January 2007 school break, detail the history, philosophy, vision, aims, objectives, referral and admission criteria, curriculum and programme outline, assessment, units taught, and special projects, as well as referral forms, and entry and exit procedures for the Kauri Centre.
Evaluation observations and interviews indicate that the weaving of tikanga Maori into the programme is happening, and with positive results.

3.5.6.2 Curriculum programme and timetable
The Kauri Centre curriculum programme is structured within a framework of the model developed by Mason Durie, Te Whare Tapa Wha (see Appendix 2). Te Whare Tapa Wha recognises four key strands that must be considered for a person’s health and wellbeing - te taha wairua (spiritual well being), te taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing), te taha whanau (extended family well-being), te taha tinana (physical wellbeing) (Durie, 1998).

The timetable for each day varies but the general outline includes kai and clean up, a team game (e.g. touch rugby) then a class hui in the morning, followed by classroom-based activities (kaupapa reo and pangarau), then other subjects (e.g. food technology, workshop, computers), leading into lunch (prepared and served by students), with afternoon subjects being more physical (e.g. music (individual and band), gardening, physical education, swimming, gym, waka ama, bone carving). There is a clear structure of beginning and end, both to the days, the week, and the activities; that is hui, welcome, karakia, and farewell are used to mark the beginnings and endings.

Students also have work placement opportunities and other off site learning opportunities include Department of Conservation work (planting native trees at reserves), overnight bush experiences, and day trips (e.g. fly fishing at Rotorua). A newsletter is also produced once a term by the Kauri Centre and students are actively encouraged to contribute to it (see Appendix 3 for copies of newsletters).

3.5.6.3 Taaku Ara: My Pathway – Individualised Learning Plans
Although all the students at the Kauri Centre participate in all aspects of the Kauri Centre, they all have individual needs (educational, behavioural, social) dependent on their history (both personal and educational), their current living circumstances (foster care, family homes, or with whanau placements), their personal abilities (intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially), and their age, which dictate the details of their educational work programme.

At the Kauri Centre each student has an individualised learning plan16, called Taaku Ara: My Pathway. When a child or young person enrols at the Kauri Centre they are assessed by the teachers, and their needs and goals discussed with them, and from this their individual Taaku Ara is developed. Each Taaku Ara identifies the level the student is at and details specific learning goals and strategies for achieving the goals for the student. Taaku Ara form the basis of the educational programme for each student and are reviewed twice a year in consultation with the student.

3.5.6.4 Unit Standards
Unit Standards have been a part of the Kauri Centre programme since 2006, and students are achieving credits in Unit Standards within a varied teaching and learning framework. For example, for Unit Standard 8808 (read an inclusive range of written texts (six texts) and record the reading experience), students read a story (in group, individually, and silently), discuss it as a group, then write their personal response to it, then type it up. These are then assessed, weekly, marked and relevant comments included to assist them to progress.

In 2007, senior students achieved a total of 314 Unit Standard credits, which is excellent, particularly since these students are only in Years 9 or 10 (see Chapter 6 for detail on student educational achievement)

16 Note: as noted in section ‘3.3 Before the Kauri Centre’, it was originally hoped that GSE would be involved with assessments and assist with developing educational and behavioural plans for the students but that this did not eventuate.
3.5.6.5 Holiday Programme
A holiday programme was trialled for the first time in the first two week holiday break of 2006 and was so successful that another was run in the second break, and they continue to be run for at least one week of each holiday break.

There were a number of reasons for running the holiday programme. The primary reason was that the staff had found that the students were more unsettled both before and after the holiday break as the children / young people were anxious about what they were going to be doing without the daily routine of going to the Kauri Centre and after the holidays took time to settle back into the routine. The idea of a holiday programme to give them something to look forward to and to partake in a wider range of safe and positive activities was proposed by some of the staff, and activities were suggested by the students, so they are involved in the programme planning as well.

The holiday programme has had some very positive spin-offs: (i) students are more settled after the break; (ii) students work together better as a group; and (iii) staff and students get to know each other better and form a better working relationship.

3.5.6.6 Exit process
Transitioning out of the Kauri Centre into mainstream schools or work or training opportunities is another part of the programme. As each child has different needs, the transition process also differs accordingly. However, the general process is that once a child or young person is ready to move on, the staff and management group work on locating a placement that will best meet the child or young person’s needs. Once a placement has been located a transition plan is determined, which will gradually integrate the child or young person into their new environment.

This may mean for example, that a student starts off attending their new school or training centre, one or two mornings a week or one or two classes a week. They may start their day at the Kauri Centre then get transported to school and collected from school for the first few weeks, with this gradually building up to them getting themselves to the school by bus or bike. Their days or classes will increase at their pace and eventually they will be ready to move permanently to their new placement. This process may for some students take up to two terms and for another a few weeks, depending on their needs.

A similar process may occur with a student planning to go to work – they will have been doing weekly work experience, building from one day to up to three days a week, and getting to a point where they are expected to transport themselves to their work experience. Once these skills have been developed then they will be encouraged to find other work opportunities.

Where students transfer out of Hamilton a different process is utilised. This involves the staff ‘following up’ students that have left, to provide ongoing support for them and to assist them to transition into their new environment. Every second Friday afternoon has been allocated for ‘follow up’ time. Four of the Educational Support Staff undertake the follow up work. This includes a range of activities, such as phone calls and/or visits, depending on where the child or young person has gone and what they might need.

3.6 Challenges in establishing and maintaining the Kauri Centre
As the previous sections have described, prior to the Kauri Centre being set up, CYF and MoE staff were experiencing problems in accessing education for some children and young people. A series of inter-agency meetings initially started in order to share information about mutual clients, resulted in the idea to set up a joint initiative to address the problem. Managers from CYF and MoE were approached and became involved as key drivers of the project. Each organisation contributed what they could to the project. MoE provided resources to fund teacher salaries and CYF provided

37 The Kauri Centre provides a settled routine and place to go where the students can feel safe and where they know what is going to be happening each day. The holidays are commonly a stressful time for them as this routine is broken.
a venue and support staff. Both organisations contributed to purchasing educational and other resources, and within six months of the idea being mooted, the Kauri Centre was opened.

Establishing the Kauri Centre involved a number of challenges for those involved. For example, funding was needed to pay teachers and support staff, buy educational resources, and have a venue. A venue needed to be found that was affordable and met the needs of an educational centre. The right staff had to be hired and a host school was needed to enrol the students in. Administrative processes such as referral criteria, referral processes, aims and objectives of the centre had to be developed.

Maintaining the Kauri Centre has also had its challenges. For example, funding was an issue for the second year and while the BIS funding was a positive step it comes to an end in 2008 so further funding is required. Developing Te Kauri Centre Scheme 2007 was a huge undertaking for the teaching staff, and when the NZCS did not work out as a host school, finding new host schools was a challenge. There was and is still a large volume of administrative work for staff to manage the centre, process referrals, assess and teach the children and young people, liaise with the host schools, CYF and MoE, be available for interagency meetings and FGCs, and find and manage transitional placements.

### 3.6.1 Success Factors

There are a number of factors that the evaluation has identified as having contributed to the successful development and maintenance of the Kauri Centre. Some of these factors have been highlighted by interviewees and some have become obvious from an analysis of the process and other data. The factors should not be viewed individually as singularly responsible for the successful development of the Kauri Centre, nor one factor as more or less important than the other, but in combination with each other as contributing factors; that is without all the factors in play the Kauri Centre may have never been set up nor continue to be in place. These factors are as follows:

**Timing**

In 2003 there was a growing recognition of the need to work across agencies. This was being encouraged at a national level, partially as a result of investigations into some high profile criminal cases (e.g. 'The Choy Report', Young, 2002) which had highlighted a lack of knowledge-sharing between agencies as a factor that could be changed to possibly prevent similar outcomes in the future. Various initiatives such as YOT were being developed and trialled nationally, although in Hamilton some agencies were initiating their own collaborative meetings such as with the Youth Justice Collaboration (which became YOT) (Atkinson, 2004). Prior to 2003, the problem of CYF children being disengaged or not enrolled in school had long been of concern to both MoE and CYF and yet a solution had not been found. The combination of the changing climate to one of collaboration and the need to find a solution for the children coincided and contributed to the successful setting up of the Kauri Centre.

**Relationships**

Although in 2003, there was a move towards collaboration across agencies if the people involved could not work together or were interested in 'empire building' or had personal issues with their counterparts in other agencies, it is unlikely that the Kauri Centre would have been a successful collaborative initiative. One of the themes that emerged in the interviews was that it was “the relationships” that made the Kauri Centre work. Good working relationships are a key factor in effective inter-agency collaboration, and the relationships between the various personnel in the Kauri Centre are workable and collegial. Whilst the personnel involved in the setting up and ongoing management of the Centre, represent their own agencies they also recognise the need to work together in the best interests of the children and young people.

**Management involvement**

The people involved from CYF and MoE were at a management level that had the discretion to make decisions at a local level for their local issues. If the managers had not been keen and involved then it would never have moved past the inter-agency management meeting that the CYF
and MoE representatives organised. The idea would have stopped at that point as the two representatives did not have the appropriate authority to action the Centre establishment. Having the managers involved also enabled the group to act more efficiently and quickly – they could make decisions at meetings and action them. This enabled them to keep the momentum going with getting the Kauri Centre up and running. When they encountered difficulties or delays (e.g. with the Family Home being outfitted) they were able to act quickly to find alternatives.

**Solution focused**
The people involved in setting up the Kauri Centre were (and still are) solution-focused. They saw a problem and determined a solution. As the Kauri Centre has continued to expand, other issues have arisen (e.g. funding for each year; enrolment at NZCS) and as each issue arises, they focus on finding solutions, rather than apportioning blame or other fruitless activities, like ‘giving up’. This has also been a success factor in the ongoing running of the Kauri Centre as the group acts quickly to solve a problem or find a solution, when an issue or an incident arises.

We had to be continuously conscious of, had to be able to respond with a crisis quickly for example if we were having difficulties with getting a kid in to the Centre we had to be able to say “I’ll get another aide or minder for that kid”. You had to think on your feet.

**Passion**
There was, and is, a genuine passion and concern for the young people in CYF care, and the staff in MoE and CYF were willing to take a risk and to think outside the square in an attempt to make a difference for these children and young people. The problem that had been identified was not a new one, but previous solutions were not working and a new approach was needed. The passion to make a difference is one of the key aspects that led to people being willing to step outside the square, to look at ways to fit the Kauri Centre into the system, and to find solutions to any problems that arose. For example, when the NZCS did not work out, they did not give up on finding an alternative, even when their first option (the Northland Health School) did not eventuate. They persevered and managed to encourage HFHS to become involved.

**Quality staff**
The Kauri Centre management group were fortunate to initially employ a teacher who was skilled and experienced in working with vulnerable children and young people. The teacher was aware of the strategies that needed to be in place if the Centre was going to have the best chance of success. For example, the need to start new children just a few hours a day, at first, to build up their tolerance to being in a structured educational environment. Without the teacher’s skill, experience and the authority to set the policies, the Centre may not have thrived or may have closed down.

The Educational Support Staff employed are also highly skilled and experienced in working with vulnerable children and young people. Many have now been employed continuously for a number of years which adds to the continuity for the children and young people. This is particularly important as many of the children and young people have experienced multiple placements, social workers, minders, schools and teachers, which can be very unsettling. Having some adults in their lives who are constant and consistent in their lives gives them some structure and some stability.

**Theoretical base**
The development of *Te Kauri Centre Scheme* while a huge undertaking for the staff involved, assisted with refining the vision of the Centre, and grounding it in a sound theoretical base. This has helped to formalise the structure and the focus of the Kauri Centre, and it draws on proven educational models that are shown to be successful with tamariki and rangatahi Māori and vulnerable children and young people in care, and within alternative educational settings.

Overall, setting up the Kauri Centre was very successful. It started with some general discussions about problems enrolling students in school as experienced by CYF and MoE staff, and evolved into an alternative education centre that has been operating for four years. It has undergone many operational changes over that time. In its early days in 2004 it had two staff, and a few students,
attending a few hours a day and doing correspondence work and now (January 2008) has up to seven permanent staff, and 10 to 12 students, attending for six hours a day, completing individualised and varied programmes, and where possible, gaining Unit Standards.

3.7 Summary: The Hamilton Kauri Centre

The Hamilton Kauri Centre officially opened in February 2004 in response to the problem of accessing education for some of the more troubled children and young people in the custody of CYF. Funding was initially on a year by year basis, until 2006 when both MoE and CYF were able to access funding for three years from MOE national office and the Blueprint Investment Strategy. In 2005 Hamilton Fraser High School came on board as the host school for the seniors and in 2007 Kimihia Primary School became the host school for the junior students to be enrolled in.

The Kauri Centre is also an evolving entity; always moving forward in response to the needs of the children and young people. Innovations since it was first started include Te Kauri Centre Scheme which was developed over the 2006 school break in time for the 2007 school year, and is the formalised documentation of the vision and the theoretical base for the Kauri Centre programme. Te Taaku Ara: My Pathway, a standardised assessment and learning plan document, a regular holiday programme in each school break, and the offering of Unit Standard work.

Establishing and maintaining the Kauri Centre has involved a number of challenges for those involved. Accessing funding, finding a venue, hiring staff, determining the programmes, the referral criteria and processes, and finding a 'host school' were some of the early challenges. Once it was set up, funding was an ongoing yearly challenge, until the three year BIS funding and MoE national office funding. Developing Te Kauri Centre Scheme and Taaku Ara, attending to the volume of administrative work and meetings, and addressing student related issues as they arise are ongoing challenges for staff and others.

The evaluation identified some key success factors that have assisted the Kauri Centre and the Management Group to firstly, establish the Kauri Centre, and secondly to meet the ongoing challenges to keep it operating. These factors are:

- **Timing** - the combination of inter-agency collaboration being encouraged and the need to find a solution for the children coincided and contributed to the successful setting up of the Kauri Centre.
- **Relationships** - the relationships between the various personnel managing the Kauri Centre are workable and collegial, and there is a recognition of the need to work together in the best interests of the children and young people.
- **Management involvement** – having managers involved means that decisions can be made and actioned efficiently and quickly.
- **Solution focused** - The people involved in setting up and managing the Kauri Centre are solution-focused. They do not waste time apportioning blame, but act quickly to solve a problem or find a solution, when an issue or an incident arises.
- **Passion** - There was, and is, a genuine passion and concern for the young people in CYF care and the staff in MoE and CYF were willing to take a risk and to think outside the square in an attempt to make a difference for these children and young people.
- **Quality staff** - The Kauri staff employed are highly skilled and experienced in working with vulnerable children and young people. Many have now been employed continuously for a number of years which adds to the continuity for the children and young people.
- **Theoretical base** - The development of Te Kauri Centre Scheme assisted with refining the vision of the Centre, and grounding it in a sound theoretical base.
4 Demographics of Students

4.1 Introduction

This section reports on the statistical data available regarding the Kauri Centre students who have attended from February 2004 through to December 2007. The numbers of referrals, acceptances, declines and enrolments are reported on, as well as the number of male and female students, their ethnicity, and ages at enrolment.

4.2 Student demographics

As Table 2 indicates, 77 children or young people have been referred to the Kauri Centre since it began in February 2004, and up to 31 December 2007. Of these 77, 65 were accepted, 11 were declined, and one has no records of acceptance or decline. Of the 65 accepted students, five did not attend as they either absconded (3) or were referred elsewhere (2); therefore a total of 60 students have been enrolled and attended since the Kauri Centre began, in 2004 and up to December 2007.

There have been nearly four times more males (60, 78%) than females (17, 22%) referred. Of the 11 students that were declined, five were female and the remaining six were male. Reasons for declining students include:

- student has an intellectual disability (4);
- student has not been excluded from school (2);
- student out of the area (1);
- student too old (16 years) (1); and
- reason not recorded (3).

As to numbers on the roll, no more than ten or 12 are enrolled at any one time. The total enrolled in 2004 was 22 students, in 2005 was 19, in 2006 was 22, and in 2007 was 22. Some of the students have been enrolled over more than one school year, some have been enrolled, left and then re-enrolled in the same year, and some have been referred more than once, in different years.

Table 2: Gender and Numbers of Students Referred February 2004 to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Referred</th>
<th>Referral Outcome</th>
<th>Total on the roll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTALS 60 17 77 11 65 1

Notes:
1. Of these 23 accepted students, one was accepted then absconded and one was accepted but was referred to Youthlink, so both did not attend the Kauri Centre.
2. Of these 15 accepted students, two were accepted then absconded so did not attend the Kauri Centre.
3. Of these 14 accepted students, one was accepted but did not attend the Kauri Centre.
4. Where the number on the roll is higher than the number of referrals, some were students in the previous years and continued to be enrolled in the next year.
5. In 2007 there were actually 14 referrals made to the Kauri Centre but of these 14, two had been enrolled previously, so were being re-referred.

¹ 6th April 2007 was the last day of Term One, 2007.
Table 3 shows that most (68%, 53) of the children or young people referred to the Kauri Centre are Maori, with 18% (14) being Pakeha/New Zealand European, 4% (3) being of another ethnic group and 9% (7) having no ethnic group recorded.

Table 3: Ethnicity of Students Referred February 2004 to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53 (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakeha/NZE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>77 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those students accepted for enrolment most (61%, 39) students are aged 13 or 14 years when they first enrol, although the range is from eight years old (one student) through to 15 years (five students) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Age at First Enrolment of Students Enrolled February 2004 to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Summary: Student demographics

A total of 77 children or young people have been referred to the Kauri Centre since it began in February 2004 and up to December 2007, and of these, 65 were accepted and 60 have been enrolled in the Kauri Centre. Male students outnumber female students with nearly four times more males (60, 78%) than females (17, 22%) being referred. Maori outnumber non-Maori, with 68% (53) of the children or young people referred identifying as Maori, and 18% (14) identifying as Pakeha/European. Most (61%, 39) students are aged between 13 and 14 years at enrolment, with a range from eight years to 15 years.
5 Case Studies

5.1 Introduction

One of the aims of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims, including the outcomes for clients in the medium and short term and effectiveness over time. For the purpose of the evaluation, medium and short term outcomes, and effectiveness over time have been defined as findings related to (i) improving the clients’ educational achievement and behaviour while attending the Kauri Centre (medium term); (ii) clients successfully transitioning into education, training courses or employment (short term) and (iii) clients remaining in education, training courses or employment for up to three months after transferring out of the Kauri Centre.

As part of the determining the impact of the Kauri Centre on the clients, a sample of children and young people who had or were currently attending the Kauri Centre were chosen to write case studies on. Four students were chosen to be the ‘subject’ of a case study.

The purpose of the case studies is to give the reader an insight into the lives of the children and young people who attend the Kauri Centre, in order to understand the factors that impact on their lives and the ways in which the Kauri Centre can make a difference. They are also intended to provide a ‘human’ element and a qualitative context for the other, more quantitative, impact and outcome data (see Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 for other impact data). The case studies are not a representative sample of the Kauri Centre students but are examples of the ‘types’ of children and young people – ages, gender, ethnic group, educational and personal histories - who are referred and enrolled at the Kauri Centre.

Information for the case studies was collected from staff interviews, social worker interviews, student records and files, Police files, CYF files, MoE files, and interviews with the children and young people.19

5.2 About this chapter

The following sections detail the stories of the four children and young people and their journey through the Kauri Centre. The case studies follow a general format of the child or young person’s social, behavioural, mental and academic history prior to attending the Kauri Centre, key factors during their time at the Kauri Centre, outcomes once leaving the Kauri Centre, and a discussion of the critical success factors. Please note that in order to protect their identity, names have been changed as have some of the other details which might identify them.

5.3 Case Study One: Nicola

Nicola was a 13 year old girl of European descent, and in the 3rd form (Year 9) when she was referred to the Kauri Centre in 2004. She had a history of running away from home and school and had already been stood down from the high school she had just started attending.

5.3.1 Background

Nicola’s early history is one of disruption and dislocation with numerous agencies being involved. Her father, a local businessman, was well known in their small town and her mother looked after the children. As a family they were reasonably well-off financially. Nicola was the youngest of three children – she had two older brothers, and initially the family lived together. When Nicola was six years old her parents’ marriage broke up.

Her mother was granted custody of the children, but there were ongoing issues between Nicola’s parents. This was partly related to her father being investigated for a series of complaints related to his business. These were being publicised in the local media. Her mother was involved in the process as a witness for the prosecution, and was not coping well, and she had taken out

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19 All students except two were able to be located for an interview.
protection orders against her former husband. The children were being adversely affected, as their mother was unable to cope with caring for the children due to her emotional state.

At this time a number of agencies became involved with the family. Community Mental Health referred the family to Parentline (a child advocacy and counselling service). Parentline made a referral to CYF as they were concerned that the mother was unable to care for her children. Nicola was eight years old at the time of the referral. A Family Group Conference (FGC) was held with no agreement being reached and the children being returned to their mother’s care. CYF did however remain involved with the family. Nicola’s CYF file notes that eight months after the FGC, CYF arranged for the children to stay with Barnardoes’ caregivers as respite care for the mother. A re-referral by Parentline resulted in an investigation which found that, there was a lack of adequate supervision -children were being left home alone - there was poor household management, inadequate food and emotional abuse by the parents.

A number of respite care placements occurred over the next few years and by the time she was nine years and eight months old, Nicola was living with Parentline caregivers as her own parents were “unable to support or care for her.” Eight months later another FGC recommended an application for custody and by September 2001 custody of Nicola, under Section 101 of The Child Young Persons and their Families Act (1989), had been granted to CYF. By this time the Parentline caregivers had asked for Nicola, who was now aged 11 years, to be removed from their care, as they could not manage her behaviour.

What followed the granting of custody, was numerous placements, numerous schools and numerous attempts to control Nicola’s absconding and other behaviours. The following is an excerpt from her CYF file notes which gives a snapshot of what was happening for Nicola.

December to May  Nicola [aged 11.5 years] in Care and Protection Residence. Didn’t make much progress there.
May to July  Placed in Youth Residential Placement. Absconded twice and trashed her room.
March to May  Returned to Care and Protection Residence because there was nowhere else for her to go.
May  Went to her fathers. Lasted one week. Had an argument with the stepmother and stormed out. Placed in CYF Family Home but immediately absconded.

Between September 2001 and July 2003, while in CYF custody, Nicola had had well over 38 placements. These included placements in care and protection residences (Epuni and Puketai) as well as Youth Horizons Trust20 (YHT), and with CYF caregivers and within CYF Family Homes.

In terms of schooling, Nicola had attended 14 different schools, before the age of 13 years, including three residential placements. Her attendance was usually only for a matter of months, with some, a matter of days. She truanted, absconded, was non-compliant, and verbally assaulted teachers and caregivers. Special Education Services (now GSE) had first become involved in 2000 as her behaviour at school began to deteriorate.

By the time she was 13 years old and enrolled in Year 9 she was using drugs and alcohol, was sexually active and was known for absconding and swapping sexual favours in exchange for lifts around the country -she could get from Hamilton to Wellington, this way, in eight hours. She absconded six times from one placement in Auckland and performed sexual favours to get back to Hamilton. When her social worker asked Nicola about why she did this, Nicola replied that she “ran away to get away from her life.”

20 YHT is a residentially based therapeutic programme for young people aged 11 - 15 years who are diagnosed as suffering Severe Conduct Disorder.
After being suspended from high school, after only being enrolled for a few weeks, Nicola, who was now living in a CYF family home, was referred to the Kauri Centre.

5.3.2 The Kauri Centre: The last resort
By the time she was referred to the Kauri Centre at age 13, Nicola’s case file made bleak reading. She had serious attachment issues, a history of constant absconding from care placements (which by then numbered 38), she had been to more than 13 schools from which she truanted whenever she could, and was on record as physically and verbally abusive to teachers and caregivers. She had begun to abuse alcohol and drugs and seemed on the verge of becoming a runaway and a prostitute.

Nicola's life trajectory was not hopeful. Her sexual risk-taking (swapping sex for rides) and use of drugs and alcohol put her at serious risk of both physical harm and sexual assault. Nicola’s formal education had stalled, having exhausted all the options for formal education, the Kauri Centre was the last in a long line of school placements for Nicola. Kauri Centre staff recall that Nicola presented to the centre as an angry and confused young woman, who felt unwanted and uncared for. She saw no point in staying in school, had no goals, little self worth, and seemed to see no future for herself,

Her second day at the Kauri Centre was particularly memorable. She had "a hell of a stand up argument" with the teacher, which was also witnessed by the CYF manager who happened to walk in as this was going on. The argument primarily consisted of Nicola yelling at the teacher that "nobody listened, nobody cared" and that "everyone thought she was dumb and that she sucked." This was punctuated with a lot of swearing and name-calling. The teacher listened and agreed with her – she was right, nobody did listen to her. The teacher then told Nicola that she was not dumb, that she had a brain and that she was a worthwhile person. At one point Nicola turned to the CYF manager and asked him if he would be prepared to give her a job as a social worker, when she was older, to which he replied "yes". The teacher noted that after this altercation Nicola “never yelled again. We had some heated discussions, but she never yelled. She stopped running and knuckled down.”

After ten weeks at the Kauri Centre, it was clear that Nicola had undergone a major transformation in her self esteem and attitude towards school and the future. There was no further absconding and she attended 42 out of 49 days. She worked hard and despite a disjointed school career which undoubtedly had left gaps in her academic knowledge, she was soon working at well above her age level. Upon leaving the Kauri Centre, Nicola transferred to an alternative education provider in her home town, where she remained for the next eighteen months, continuing her studies via the New Zealand Correspondence School. She also returned to her mother's care during this time and was discharged from CYF custody in January 2005.

Today Nicola continues her studies, is in fulltime employment and reports a good ongoing relationship with her mother. She is able to appreciate her own intelligence and talent and can envision a future for herself. Her personal goals include considering tertiary education in the future.

5.3.3 Critical success factors
Nicola credits the Kauri Centre with being the catalyst for change in her life. The following excerpt from an interview with Nicola, now aged 17 years, describes in her own words how the Kauri Centre was a turning point for her. What stands out in this excerpt is the belief that the teacher had in her, showing her that she was not stupid and not giving up on her, despite her self-acknowledged ‘bad’ behaviour. A key factor for Nicola was the realisation that she was not stupid. These were, according to Nicola, critical factors in her turning her life around.

The Kauri Centre really helped me. Especially education-wise. [The teacher] showed me what I was capable of instead of shoving me to the back of the class, and telling me to give up, that I was stupid. She sat by me and guided me. She never gave up - because - well, I had quite a temper. They had to put up with a lot that normal teachers don't have to. These kids come from traumatic
backgrounds, they are all in Family Homes (or were then), and these are the worst of the worst, and there’s these teachers going up against these kids. The Kauri Centre was definitely a turning point – made me look at things a lot differently. It was a different view of life - it was only when I started going there that I started pulling my head in. I don’t know – I just woke up one day and decided to behave myself. Almost gave my social worker a heart attack!

While the Kauri Centre staff helped Nicola to decide to “behave herself”, her social worker and staff from other agencies, also played important roles as they supported Nicola and her change of heart, during this period of time and helped to successfully transition her back into her mother’s care.

5.3.4 Summary: Case Study One (Nicola)
The portrait of Nicola, which emerges from the case files and the interviews with social workers and teachers, is that of an angry 13 year old displaced by break-up of her family, and moved frequently between care placements. Nicola’s negative and self-destructive behaviours, constant absconding and disinterest in school can be seen as an attempt to gain a measure of control by resisting authority. Having exhausted almost all other placement and mainstream options she was referred to the Kauri Centre where she was able to turn things around for herself.

Although she initially tried to resist this placement also, reacting with her customary verbal abuse and ‘temper’, she did not meet with the usual response from teachers and carers. What was different at the Kauri Centre was the staff’s response to her behaviour. Instead of moving to correct or punish the negative behaviour, Kauri Centre staff were sufficiently skilled and trained to recognise Nicola’s behaviours for what they really were: an attempt to be heard and understood.

At the Kauri Centre Nicola felt that she was treated with respect, that her teachers listened to her and saw her as intelligent and worthwhile. Crucially her teacher did not give up when Nicola’s verbal abuse made educating her difficult, and believed in her when she was unable to believe in herself. Nicola identifies the teacher’s acceptance as the catalyst for changing her attitude towards education and turning her life around. She stayed at her transitional placement for 18months, and currently she is continuing with her correspondence study, working two jobs, and has plans for tertiary education in her future. The Kauri Centre was, for Nicola, the right people and the right place at the right time.

5.4 Case Study Two: Tane
Tane was a 13 year old boy of Maori descent and in Year 9 (3rd Form) when he was referred to the Kauri Centre in 2005. He had a history of verbal and physical assaults and threats towards teachers and students both, and had recently been excluded from his local high school for threatening a staff member with a knife.

5.4.1 Background
Tane was born and raised in a small Waikato town. His parents separated when he was four years old and at this time he went to live with his Aunt and Uncle. From then on he mostly remained living with his Aunt and Uncle, as his mother was very transient and there were issues of violence and gang involvement in her household. He had an older brother who lived in another household, and a number of half brothers and sisters who also lived with his Aunt and Uncle for part of the week. When Tane was 9 years old, his father committed suicide. While he had not been the most supportive of fathers, his suicide was still traumatic for Tane; sending a message to a young child, even if subconsciously, that his father did not care about him enough to stick around.

Despite the traumas of his family background, Tane grew into a boy of average intelligence, who was described by teachers and other people as “enthusiastic”, “obliging” and “good at sports”. He excelled at rugby league, and was proud of his sporting achievements. Originally enrolled in a Kura Kaupapa, he transferred after six months to a mainstream school. He continued to live with his Aunt and Uncle who were able to provide a reasonably stable environment for him. He stayed at his new school, attended regularly, and was achieving at an acceptable level, with no recorded incidences of violence, aggression or truanting behaviour.
Tane's entire world changed when he was 12 years old and he suffered a head injury while playing league. Incredibly an injury which occurred in just an instant, would lead to devastating and profound changes in his health, behaviour and self esteem for the next three years. Tane was unconscious on the field for a few minutes and was hospitalised overnight. Following his discharge from hospital he continued to suffer from common symptoms of brain trauma, including headaches, seizures and fatigue. But, for Tane, even worse than any bodily pain, was the fact that he was unable to play any contact sports - what he believed to be the ‘one thing’ he was good at. This key fact impacted negatively on Tane’s self-esteem - and coupled with other changes to the personality centres of the brain that commonly accompany head injuries – this was thought to be at the heart of the mood swings, aggression and physically violent behaviour which began to emerge after the accident.

Tane became verbally and physically violent both at home and at school. Within six months of returning to school, following the injury, he was suspended for threatening a teacher with a knife. The suspension was lifted with conditions, and within a week of returning to school, he was excluded for bullying other students and physical aggression towards the same teacher. At this point he was referred to GSE. Enrolled at a new school and having turned 13, the pattern of aggressive behaviour, bullying and disobedience continued. During one violent incident in which Tane used a weapon (an umbrella) against teachers and other staff, Police were called to restrain him. Further stand downs, and suspensions followed, plus a referral to Health Camp, from which he was also removed due to physically aggressive behaviour. He was eventually excluded from this new school after just four months.

His exclusion occurred toward the end of the year (October), and so he did not return to Year 8 but remained out of school until the new year, where he was enrolled in his local high school. During the first term his family took him out of the country and he was absent from school for most of the term. Upon his return he started attending high school and over the next three months his violent and aggressive behaviour continued. He was disciplined numerous times for violent and aggressive incidents towards teachers and students, was officially stood down twice, and his Uncle was called a number of times and asked to remove him to ‘give the teachers a break.’ He was enrolled with the high school’s alternative education provider, where he threatened a staff member with a craft knife. He was suspended from the high school.

Unsurprisingly Tane was also ‘out of control’ at home, roaming the streets, his caregivers unable to keep him home, and he had begun to use drugs and alcohol. In addition to the struggles Tane was having with the effects of his brain injury, he was being beaten by his mother’s new partner. Although still mostly living with his Aunt and Uncle he would occasionally stay with his mother, his young siblings, and her partner, where he would often ‘get the bash’.

After his latest incident and suspension, Ministry of Education staff asked CYF to consider some involvement with Tane. An interagency meeting was called. He remained living with his Aunt and Uncle but was referred to the Kauri Centre, where it was hoped his education could be got back on track and his behaviour managed. He would have to be accompanied at all times by a minder to ensure the safety of himself and other students.

5.4.2 The Kauri Centre

By the time he was referred to the Kauri Centre at age 13, Tane’s file made concerning reading. He had a history of being physically abused by family, who had gang affiliations and drug and alcohol abuse issues. He had suffered a head injury which had resulted in brain damage, and had been suspended from three of the four schools he had attended. He was on record as a bully and as verbally abusing teachers and students, had pulled knives on teachers on at least three occasions, and had a record with the Police. He was out of school and had recently begun to roam the streets.

Tane’s life trajectory was not hopeful. His violent behaviour, use of drugs and alcohol, and family gang affiliations put him at serious risk of physical harm and of becoming involved in violent criminal activities. One of his psychologists was concerned that his violence could escalate to him...
fatally injuring someone or being fatally injured. Tane’s formal education had come to a halt, having been excluded from two schools and recently suspended from his latest school and their alternative education centre, no school was willing to take such a violent young man. He was in urgent need of some intervention.

Kauri Centre staff remember that Tane presented as an angry and violent young man, with a startling mohawk hairstyle, whose school, GSE, and community said was ‘beyond them.’ His arrival at the Kauri Centre was eventful as he proceeded to inform the staff that he “wasn’t coming to any f***ing school”. His Aunt, who had accompanied him, was embarrassed and upset that he had behaved so badly on his first day.

But despite his inauspicious start, Tane was enrolled and began attending the Kauri Centre. His behaviour remained appalling. He had to do his school work on his own with a minder, in a separate room, as he was too disruptive in the classroom setting. He was verbally and physically aggressive, and staff had to restrain him on a number of occasions. He had a number of serious incidences recorded, including pushing a staff member, and swearing at teachers. He refused to speak to the women staff. After each incident, particularly if he had to be restrained, Tane would ‘shut down’ and be non-communicative for some time. This reaction probably developed as a result of being badly beaten as a child. And despite all this the learning continued. The staff recalled that although some days Tane arrived too hungover or stoned to take part and had to be sent home to ‘sleep it off’, “he continued to turn up every day and he never ran away.”

When Tane had been at the Kauri Centre for a few months, a new minder came on staff at the Kauri Centre - a calm, quietly spoken Maori man who played sport and was interested in hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits - and was assigned to Tane. Tane had found a mentor. When Tane showed signs of being moody or aggressive, this man would take him outside and together they would work in the Kauri Centre gardens, planting vegetables, digging and weeding. This seemed to help Tane to calm down – he was good at physical things and was a hard worker and he began to take pride in the garden – he would complain if he came in to find that the plants had not been watered on a day he was away. He seemed to enjoy working outside and was encouraged in it.

When he had been at the Kauri Centre for about six months his home situation deteriorated. He had been living with his mother and stepfather, as he was concerned for his younger stepsisters whom he would look after while his parents went out partying. His stepfather was still physically abusing him and one night when he was being bashed he reacted by grabbing his stepfather’s gun and threatening him with it. The Police attended the scene and took Tane to the station – he was once again on the Police files. Kauri Centre staff, including the man who had become his mentor, went to the Police station. They listened to him explain what had happened and helped him to write up the story to take to court. He was required to attend counselling, undertake five days community work and was placed with a caregiver outside the whanau.

This situation and the Kauri Centre staff’s reaction to it were a turning point for Tane. He continued to attend the Kauri Centre, and his behaviour began to improve, the aggressive incidences became less common. He was soon working in the classroom with other students, and had started on work experience which he really enjoyed even signing on to do extra (paid) work in his holidays. He was learning how to manage his own behaviour, developing goals, working hard and he had people who listened to him and believed in him. Staff recall that “the day he got his haircut – came in without the Mohawk - we knew we’d won!”

Tane remained at the Kauri Centre for the rest of the year, and continued to attend the following year. In total Tane was enrolled for 43 weeks and he attended 176 out of 211 days (86%). This attendance rate is pretty impressive for a boy who had been through three schools in less than a year, who had been roaming the streets, getting stoned and drunk, and who was too disruptive to have in a classroom, and yet here he was turning up at the Kauri Centre to get an education. Upon leaving the Kauri Centre, Tane got a job with a tradesperson, where he remains working fulltime.
and “earning heaps”. He still lives with his Aunt and Uncle, has not had any more run-ins with the Police, and still keeps in contact with his mentor.

5.4.3 Critical success factors
Persistence, being accepted, having an individual programme, a positive Māori male role model (a mentor), and valuing his strengths were some of the keys to success with Tane. While his behaviour was not acceptable, he was accepted as a person. If he misbehaved or turned up drugged or hungover, staff managed the situation – sending him home if need be, taking him for a walk outside, expecting him to apologise - and then welcoming him back the next day. He was not going to be kicked out and so he eventually settled down and began to learn how to manage himself.

The Kauri Centre staff arranged for him to work individually when he was unable to manage his behaviour in the classroom. They recognised the value of a positive mentor for him and so this was encouraged and supported. They told him he was a hard worker, they recognised his strengths and arranged work experience for him, and encouraged him to be responsible for the gardens. The Kauri Centre was able to work with this troubled young man in this way because they had a higher student / staff ratio than other schools and they could adapt the programme to suit his needs. A turning point for him seemed to be that when things deteriorated at home to the extent that he ended up in Police custody, the Kauri Centre staff were the people that were there for him. They listened to him, believed him, and helped him to take responsibility for his actions and to explain his side of the story. It was after this that he really seemed to change and move forwards.

5.4.4 Summary: Case Study Two (Tane)
Tane was a young boy who had been doing ‘okay’ in spite of his family background - a mother involved with drugs and gangs, who is unable to care for herself or him, a father who killed himself when Tane was nine years old, and a stepfather who gives him the bash. But despite these issues, Tane was attending school, living with an Aunt and Uncle, and was good at sports. But then a head injury on the sports field results in him being unable to play sports – the only thing he’s good at – and the combination of this blow to his self esteem and the effects of a brain injury see him develop into an extremely violent young boy who threatens teachers with knives.

Having been excluded from two schools and suspended from the third, no school would take him and the Kauri Centre was a last resort. Although he initially continued to behave with his usual verbal abuse, angry outbursts, and violence, he slowly changed his behaviour, began to spend time working in the gardens, doing school work and attending work experience. Crucially the staff did not give up when Tane’s behaviour made educating him difficult. They just arranged for him to work on his own, in a separate room, and found him someone that he could relate to, who became a mentor. When he ended up at the Police station, they went there, listened to him, helped him write his story for court and supported him to complete his ‘sentence’ requirements. They did not accept his anti-social behaviour, but they did accept him.

Tane stayed at the Kauri Centre for just over one year (43 weeks), and upon leaving there he got a job and has remained there for over one year. He says he is happy, is earning money, and he still keeps in contact with his mentor and the Kauri Centre.

5.5 Case Study Three: Daniel
Daniel was a 14 year old boy of Pakeha / New Zealand European and Māori descent and in Year 10 (4th Form) when he was referred to the Kauri Centre in 2007. He had been placed in the custody of CYF as a result of a youth justice FGC which was convened to address his recent and escalating offending behaviour. A referral to YHT in Hamilton, and the need to find him a school placement, resulted in a referral to the Kauri Centre.

5.5.1 Background
Daniel is the youngest of three children and was born in Wanganui. His sister is three years older than him and his brother, four years older. His mother is of New Zealand European/ Pakeha descent and his father is Māori of Tainui iwi. There were issues of family violence within the household, and when Daniel was a young baby of only six months, his father beat his mother,
breaking her nose. Following this episode his mother left the relationship and has remained separated from the children’s father ever since. When Daniel was two or three years of age his mother left Wanganui and relocated, with Daniel and the two older children, to Tauranga. His father remained in Wanganui and Daniel has no memory of ever meeting or seeing his father, except in photographs.

Following the separation his mother initially struggled with parenting her three children and the CYF files show that there were a number of notifications, once when Daniel was two years old, then again when he was seven years old. These notifications were for emotional and physical abuse of the children and resulted in his mother agreeing to attend parenting courses. CYF social workers monitored the interventions, noting that Daniel’s mother did attend the parenting courses and they had resulted in “some improvement” in the way she parented. The social worker was satisfied that the mother was coping better and the file was closed. A few years later CYF again became involved, as Daniel’s older brother was showing some problem behaviour, however the nature of this behaviour is unclear although it appears to have been resolved and the files show no records of any further notifications being made.

In many ways Daniel’s family background is less physically abusive than many of the children at the Kauri Centre have experienced. His mother left her violent husband when Daniel was only a baby thus protecting him from further witnessing, or being the victim of, his father’s physical violence. He also has not had the trauma of any deaths of those close to him, although this may be as a result of having little contact with extended family in his formative years. However his home was an environment where there was neglect of his emotional and psychological needs. His mother is perhaps best described as an unmotivated person; she shows no inclination to work or set goals, she receives a benefit and intends to stay on it. The children were not encouraged to develop any interests, they did not play any sports, they had very little contact with extended family, and Daniel himself described growing up in his home as “boring”. There was no attempt made to connect the children with their culture heritage (both Māori and Pakeha) and this left a ‘gap’ in their lives where their identity should be.

Daniel’s primary and intermediate school years appear to have passed without any major incidences. He attended school regularly, was never suspended or expelled, and was never bullied nor was he a bully. However things changed in his first year of high school. By July of his first year at high school, Daniel was 13 and a half years old and had come to the notice of the Police. He was showing signs of conduct disorder21, had stopped attending school because “he hated it”, had started hanging out with some other boys his age, who had links with gangs and who were not attending school, and they had started offending. The Police had Daniel on 18 counts of ‘breaking and entering’ plus three counts of ‘wilful damage to property’. There was definite concern that unless something was done, Daniel’s offending was going to escalate further. In addition, Daniel was being disruptive at school when he was there, which admittedly was not often, he had no respect for his mother whom he said did not listen to him, and his mother admitted she was unable to control his behaviour.

A youth justice FGC was convened and as a result an application was made for Daniel to go into CYF custody. This was granted and he was placed in a family home run by an iwi social service. At this point an educational assessment was undertaken which indicated that Daniel struggled academically, although this differed from his school who had assessed him as being of above average ability. There was clearly some confusion as to how capable Daniel was academically, however this became a bit of a moot point as initial attempts to enrol Daniel back in school were unsuccessful. He simply refused to go, and told the principal that he would be disruptive and that he would not behave if he was enrolled there. Consequently the school said they would not take him back.

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21 Conduct disorder is a pattern of repetitive behavior where the rights of others or the social norms are violated. Possible symptoms are over-aggressive behavior, bullying, physical aggression, cruel behavior toward people and pets, destructive behavior, lying, truancy, vandalism, and stealing.
Some intervention was needed. Daniel was still hanging out with the boys he had committed offences with and with no school or anything else to fill his time, he was likely to continue with his criminal behaviour, and, somehow, Daniel also needed to get an education. His social worker managed to get Daniel enrolled in a three month intensive ‘boys to men’ personal growth course. This course provided Daniel with a whole range of different activities – group work, drug and alcohol education, outdoor pursuits, and also addressed some of his cultural needs. He developed an interest in kapa haka, realised that he liked physical activities, and completed the whole course. Following this course his social worker enrolled him in another outdoor course, about sailing.

While Daniel was making some progress, and was developing some interests, he was still refusing to go to school, was developing a taste for alcohol, and was still involved with his young ‘criminal’ friends. His social worker and the Police wanted him moved out of town, away from the bad influences. His social worker applied for him to go to YHT in Hamilton, as a way to remove him from the negative influences and to get some help with his behaviour and attitudes. He was accepted into YHT and as a part of that placement he was to attend the Kauri Centre. So mid-2007 saw him being transferred to Hamilton and being enrolled in the Kauri Centre.

5.5.2 The Kauri Centre

By the time he was referred to the Kauri Centre at age 14 years, Daniel had the makings of a young offender. While he had only recently started his criminal activities the previous year, he already had 21 offences listed. Daniel’s outlook was not a positive one. Although he had made some progress with his personal development course, with the ongoing influence of peers with gang affiliations, few other interests and no schooling, he was heading for further criminal activity. Given that Police were well aware of him he would have eventually been picked up for more offending, which is likely to have become more serious as he had already moved on to causing property damage. He would no doubt have spent some time in youth justice residence, and eventually have become a fully fledged juvenile offender.

It is difficult to pin down exactly why Daniel’s behaviour at school deteriorated when it did. However comments from interviews with Daniel, Kauri Centre staff and his social worker give some indications as to what may have occurred. Daniel did not feel that he was listened to by teachers. He also felt that he was made fun of by teachers, and when he was struggling with some academic work, they did not help him when he needed it. He also felt that the teachers did not keep to their word – they did not do what they said they would do and this upset Daniel. While these occurrences may have been, in reality, fairly minor (e.g. perhaps the being made fun of was just the teacher’s sense of humour and no real harm was intended) but to a child like Daniel from a home where he was the youngest, where he had both Māori and Pakeha heritage but no cultural identity, with an absent father who had little or no interest in him, not listened to by his mother, picked on by his brother and feeling that no one ever took his side, these incidences added to his feelings of being unheard and unimportant. His truanting, disruptive behaviour, and offending may be seen as an attempt by a young boy to be heard, to be noticed, to feel that he mattered.

The Kauri Centre staff recalled that when Daniel first arrived, he was not aggressive or violent and there were no altercations with other students and that he quickly found his place in the pecking order without any issues. This in itself was unusual as most of the students seem to go through a settling down period which generally involves some verbal and/or physical aggression. However what Daniel was, was argumentative and extremely stubborn – he refused to participate in certain activities – stating "I don’t do that", and then shutting down, refusing to discuss it and refusing to participate. Staff soon figured out a way to get through to Daniel when he reacted in this way; they realised that Daniel could not be ‘told’ what to do, and they suspected that his shut down behaviour was a defense mechanism because he was anxious about learning new things. Daniel had to be reasoned with, so, they reasoned with him, and he needed to be carefully introduced to new activities, so, they carefully introduced new things.

One opportunity came after he had been at the Kauri Centre for about two weeks. He was rostered for kai duty and he said “I don’t do kai”, the teacher recognised the ‘shut down’ signs and took him
aside and talked to him to pull him out of his shut down mode and Daniel ‘did kai’. By the time he left the Kauri Centre Daniel was doing menu planning and thoroughly enjoying learning how to cook. Slowly Daniel’s argumentative behaviour changed, as the staff carefully introduced him to new things. He was participating in activities that he had said he ‘did not do’, he had started Unit Standard work and was well on his way to gaining a number of credits, and he was learning about ‘who’ he was as a young person of Māori and Pakeha heritage and to be proud of that.

Daniel was only at the Kauri Centre for two terms and in fact, he had asked for an extension to his time at YHT so he could finish the year at the Kauri Centre and gain more Unit Standard credits. In that time he showed that he was a caring and helpful young man who was a positive role model for the younger students and a good diffuser of conflict situations. His academic achievement, particularly for a boy who had not been attending school for the better part of the previous year, was impressive – he achieved more than 50 Unit Standard credits in only half a year.

His YHT placement ended and so Daniel headed back to Tauranga at the end of 2007. His social worker cannot believe the change in him. She describes him as “motivated, more focused, has a great attitude, knows what he wants”. Daniel had originally planned to go on an alternative education course but he has told his social worker that the boys on it are in the gangs and so he doesn’t want to go there. He has decided to work part time and has been busy applying for jobs and for an alternative education programme that he has chosen. He is living back home with his mum and the local YHT is continuing follow up work with him. He is keen to finish his education and has plans to be a social worker.

5.5.3 Critical success factors

In the beginning, Daniel was not too happy at the prospect of attending the Kauri Centre. Although when asked if he had wanted to go there he said “I didn’t care”, he also stated that he had had no choice, he had to go. When asked what he had expected the Kauri Centre to be like his answer indicated that he thought it would be like other schools, and he was prepared to dislike it. He was however, pleasantly surprised. He found that the teachers helped him, treated him with respect, listened to him, and stuck to their word, and he enjoyed the life skills and physical activities as well.

Daniel credits the Kauri Centre with getting his education back on track, and helping him to turn his life around. In his words “the Kauri Centre has helped me get my education up and running. Meeting such great and successful people here has helped me turn around for the better.” He also acknowledged the Kauri Centre staff, YHT staff and others who have helped him while he has been in CYF care for “seeing something in me that I couldn’t see in myself.” He says that he is proud of himself and what he has achieved and that he now knows that he doesn’t need gangs to have an identity. When asked where he’d have been without the Kauri Centre he replied “I’d still be hanging out with gangs”. And his advice to other young people referred to the Kauri Centre? “Make the most of it. Do all you can while you’re here and don’t stuff it up!” (his emphasis).

While the Kauri Centre staff helped Daniel to recognise his talents and abilities, his social worker and the local Police also played important roles as they had intervened early and put interventions in place to try to change where he was headed. Staff at the YHT programme were also important people in the process, assisting Daniel to manage his behaviour, believe in himself and set goals, allowing him stay longer to finish the year, and continuing to follow him up as he transitions back into his mother’s care.
5.5.4 Summary: Case Study Three (Daniel)
Daniel grew up in a family where his emotional and psychological needs were not being met. As a child he did not know his father and had little contact with extended family. His mother struggled with parenting her children early on, using emotional and physical punishment to the extent that CYF were notified and got involved in putting some interventions in place. While these interventions helped somewhat she did not see the need to encourage her children to develop other interests or to have any goals, so that when Daniel got to early adolescence he was bored, lacked positive male role models, was not sure where he fitted or ‘who’ he was, and had little respect for his mother. He started high school but did not enjoy it, felt he was not listened to by teachers, became disruptive, and started hanging out with peers who were truanting and offending and within a very short period of time he was breaking into houses and stealing money. By the time the Police picked him up for the burglaries, he had progressed to damaging property as well.

Daniel’s referral to the Kauri Centre came about because of a referral to YHT in Hamilton which was initiated in an attempt to get him away from negative peer influences in his home town. He did not want to attend the Kauri Centre but felt he had no choice. Although he argued with the teachers and refused to participate in some activities the Kauri Centre staff listened to what he had to say, reasoned with him and encouraged him to participate. Soon he was enjoying learning new things, participating fully, gaining Unit Standard credits and talking about wanting to be a social worker.

He has returned to his home town with a change of attitude and a determination to continue his education and achieve his goals. He is making every effort to stay away from the negative peer influences and to make a go of his life. Daniel was just a boy who wanted to be heard, and when he was heard, he changed his life.

5.6 Case Study Four: Maui
Maui was a 14 year old boy of Māori descent (Nga Puhi, Ngati Porou, Waikato) when he was referred to the Kauri Centre in 2007. He had recently been released from three months in Youth Justice residence, where he had been sentenced for his part in some serious offending

5.6.1 Background
A middle child, Maui is the third of five children. He was born in the Far North. When Maui was young the family were transitory, moving between Waikato and the Far North region, eventually settling in the Waikato when the children began attending school.

Maui’s family environment was one of violence and neglect. His father was often absent for long periods of time, and when he was at home he beat Maui’s mother, often very seriously. Although the children were not beaten they were often witnesses to their father beating their mother. Drug and alcohol abuse were also a common feature in the family home, with both his parents being heavy drinkers and cannabis users. As an infant and young child Maui’s childhood had some positive aspects. One of which was his Nanny – his mother’s mother - with whom he spent a lot of time. He was very close to his Nanny, often staying with her, and had formed a significant attachment to her. However, when he was four years old he was staying with her and found her dead in her bathroom. It was a huge shock for a young boy – to find his beloved Nanny dead.

By the time he started primary school Maui was showing signs of behavioural problems as a result of being raised in such a dysfunctional family environment, characterised by violence and drug abuse, and with the added grief and trauma of finding his grandmother dead. He began to act out aggressively at school and was referred to the Social Workers in Schools22 programme that was operating in his school. This intervention resulted in a referral to Health Camp, counselling and another kaupapa Māori programme for troubled tamariki. These interventions appeared to have some positive impact on Maui. His behaviour mostly settled down at primary school, as he learnt to manage his anger a bit better, although his attendance was spasmodic at times due to his family’s transitory and dysfunctional nature. Not surprisingly he did not achieve at school to the level that he was capable of.

He enrolled at high school in 2006, but his attendance was very irregular and by November of that year his truancy was so bad that an FGC was convened to address it. His mother explained his

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22 Social Workers in Schools is a government-funded initiative.
absences from school by stating that the family had moved to live at some considerable distance from the school, thus making it difficult for Maui to get to school. The FGC was apparently successful however as his attendance is recorded as 'regular' from then until the end of the year. On the positive side he was good at sport, and by the time he was 14 years had played at representative level in rugby league and rugby. At age 14 years he was in an under-15 rugby league team and his coach confirmed that he was a very talented and key player on the team.

Over the years various agencies have been involved with Maui, his siblings and family. There is a history of notifications to CYF, FGCS, Social Workers in Schools, interventions and referrals to Health Camps and other initiatives and involvement by the Police. The local Police have attended more than 53 incidences of family violence at Maui's house, his older siblings are known for their offending behaviour, and drug and alcohol abuse is described as “rife” within the whanau. Despite this multi-agency involvement however, Maui and his siblings were not taken into custody of CYF. In fact, Maui was considered to be the one child that had somehow emerged from this whanau, relatively 'well-adjusted' – although this definition of well-adjusted is debatable as Maui had in fact showed signs of stress. His aggressive behaviour and constant truanting were obvious symptoms that things were not okay at home; he also showed 'withdrawal' type symptoms – hanging back, an arrogant demeanour and a tendency to react with violence when feeling threatened or not in control.

Another way that Maui coped within his family was to take on a 'parent' role - people who have observed Maui and his whanau state that he essentially "parented his parents”. This reaction has been observed with other maltreated children and is essentially a coping mechanism. The child becomes the 'responsible' one, (e.g. the one who sorts the parents out when they are attacking each other or gets food for the younger ones), as the parents are so 'irresponsible'.

However the influence of older siblings and other peers, was very strong and eventually Maui, began using drugs and alcohol, and was encouraged to begin offending. He got involved in 'minor' offending – e.g. tagging, wilful damage, fighting - and hanging out with a negative peer group. This culminated in his taking part, after being egged on by peers, in an aggravated robbery (he held up a shop with a weapon), in 2007. The Police charged him with the crime, he appeared in the Youth Court, and was remanded into CYF custody.

Maui was initially placed in a CYF Family Home and appeared to be settling in well. However one month later the placement broke down. Maui’s parents had come to the family home, unannounced, to visit him. During this visit they gave him cannabis, which he later smoked in his room. When the caregivers found out they searched his room and found more cannabis hidden there. Maui reacted angrily to being told that his behaviour was not acceptable, and the next day he ran away. He had run home to his mother’s house. His social worker went to see him and after some discussion Maui agreed to return to the Family Home. However this lasted less than a day as, after being told by the caregiver that he could not be trusted, Maui absconded again. During the time he was absent, he then became involved with an older sibling and his partner in a high speed chase. The sibling and partner robbed a house and Maui, although only 14, drove the ‘getaway’ car.

Another arrest, a remand into Youth Justice residence, and another appearance in the Youth Court found Maui being placed in a Youth Justice residence, where he remained for the next two and a half months. His parents visited a week later and, despite what had happened previously, and despite having promised not to pass contraband to him during visits, once again gave him tobacco and cannabis which was duly found by Youth Justice staff. Despite this setback early on, Maui did well in residence. Away from family influences and the negative peers he participated in the programmes and worked hard. After two and a half months in residence Maui was released and a whanau placement was found for him with a cousin. The placement was located in Hamilton and he was zoned for a local high school. His social worker, however decided to refer him to the Kauri Centre. She felt he would have a better chance of succeeding under the individualised and
supportive Kauri Centre programme, and as well, it would keep him away from some negative peer influences at the high school.

5.6.3 The Kauri Centre
By the time he was referred to the Kauri Centre Maui was a young person who was at a crossroads. At the age of 13 he had taken part in an aggravated robbery, and at 14, a high speed car chase. He was using drugs and alcohol and had a history of truancy, absconding and aggressive behaviour. His interrupted schooling meant that he had little idea of what he was capable of. His life trajectory was not looking good. He was on track for continuing with his juvenile offending. If he was going to resist the family influence, stop the offending and choose another path, then he needed some help.

When he first came to the Kauri Centre staff described Maui as “lost”; as a result of his behaviour he had lost his family, his freedom, his school and his chance of a future. He had coped with this by developing a ‘cocky’ exterior. He was, staff recall, “very slick”. He had a self-contained, aloofness about him which some of the other young people interpreted as arrogance and took exception to. This ‘arrogance’ was the trigger for an argument between Maui and another student which took place when Maui had only been at the Kauri Centre for a few days. However this was quickly sorted out and Maui learned a valuable lesson about how he was viewed by others. Now, the staff describe him as self-assured but not arrogant, with good goals and a healthy self-belief.

The Kauri Centre was a significant learning curve for Maui. He learnt, when he participated in the Kauri Centre physical activities, that, despite his sporting prowess (he was still playing league), that he was not as tough or as fit as he thought he was, being unable to lift the weights or swim the lengths the other boys could. This was a humbling experience for the ‘arrogant’ boy that had first come to the Kauri Centre. He did not give up but took it as a challenge and a few months later was proud of how much more he could lift and could swim.

He worked hard academically too. Kauri Centre staff initially spent a considerable amount of time finding out how many Unit Standards credits he had when he entered the Kauri Centre, and then arranged for him to do more so that by the time he had a total of 46. The Kauri Centre staff taught him that he had choices, and that while he had not made some good choices in recent times, he didn’t have to continue on that path if he did not want to. He soon found his place in the student hierarchy and with the staff.

At the Kauri Centre Maui attended the Kauri Centre regularly, stayed with his cousin, and stayed out of trouble. He also began to take responsibility for his actions, and expressed remorse over the trauma that he had caused to the victim of the robbery he had committed. By the time he had been there three months he was ready to make the transition back to mainstream school and was keen to move on. A church school for boys was chosen as an option for Maui, because, firstly, it would meet his academic needs as he had proved to be quite intelligent, and, secondly, he did not know anyone else at the school – i.e. there were no negative peer influences to set him back. However he had to get into the school, and as the school only took a small percentage (5%) of non-churched boys each year, competition was high.

Maui took up the challenge and supported by his cousin, his social worker, and the Kauri Centre teacher, he went through a series of three panel interviews at the school. His past was known to the panel and as part of the interview he was asked to talk about his actions and to explain how he thought his actions had impacted on the victim of his crime. With tears in his eyes he told the panel that he had “changed her life” and not for the better, and that he was trying to change his life and maybe the school would “walk’ with him to help him do this. He was offered a place at the school and he started attending one or two days a week at the end of Term 4, enrolling there full time in 2008. He describes the school as “mean as”, and he is attending and achieving.
5.6.4 Critical success factors

Maui’s social workers were instrumental in Maui’s success. They were quick to act when Maui began absconding from placements, tracking him down and working out some options. Then when he was released from Youth Justice they recognised the risks of putting Maui back into mainstream and instead referred him to the Kauri Centre.

Maui credits the Kauri Centre with helping him to get his life back on track. He went there expecting it to be "a kiddie place" but instead found a supportive nurturing environment, where he was expected to achieve and to behave, where he was valued and where he was given a second chance if he chose to take it.

The supportive staff were positive role models and mentors. They helped him to believe in himself, to take responsibility for his past mistakes, and to set goals and choose a better path than the one he’d been on. They taught him to be proud to be Māori, how to socialize and get along with people, and they followed through on their commitments to him; spending hours time tracking down his previous records and finding out what credits he had, helping him prepare for his interviews, and going along to support him.

Academic success was also an important factor for Maui. With his disrupted schooling history and all the other stressors to deal with at home, it was not surprising that he had not realised his potential before. However once he did realise what he was capable of, he took to it, worked really hard, and began to see that education could give him the option of a different future.

5.6.5 Summary: Case Study Four (Maui)

Maui was a boy headed for the New Zealand prison system. He came into the Kauri Centre after doing time in Youth Justice for his part in an aggravated robbery, and a high speed car chase. He had a history of minor offending, truancy, absconding, and aggressive behaviour. His family was well known to the local police for their violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and criminal activities. He was using alcohol and drugs which were supplied to him by his parents, even while he was in residence, and while he did well in residence, without help on the outside, he looked set to continue a juvenile offending career.

A decision by his social worker to refer him to the Kauri Centre, instead of putting him back in a mainstream school was a turning point for Maui. He went to the Kauri Centre prepared to do his time there, expecting a boring place with little to offer him educationally or otherwise, What he found was an environment which was supportive and understanding and people who expected him to ‘step up’ and take some responsibility for himself. After a few weeks he was working hard at his work and enjoying achieving academic success. He was also realising how much he could do and also how much he could not do – learning that the other boys were fitter than he was and better at the physical activities.

Soon he was setting goals and looking ahead to his future. He wanted to return to mainstream but not to a school where there were peers that were potentially a negative influence. A church school was chosen but he had to get accepted – and the school only took 5% non-churched boys. He had three panel interviews at the school, supported by his cousin and the Kauri Centre staff, and he won himself a place there. He is now attending mainstream school fulltime.

5.8 Summary: Case Studies

All the children and young people in the cases studies were on track for negative life trajectories. Nicola was engaged in significant sexual risk-taking behaviour and constant running away. Tane was on record for threatening teachers and other staff with weapons on more than one occasion, and was roaming the streets, drinking and abusing drugs. Daniel and Maui had started offending and this was escalating from minor to more serious offences, and they were and both hanging out with gang-affiliated peers and had Police records. None of the children were attending school and most had been suspended, stood down or excluded from at least one school and had had multiple school and/or care placements.
The Kauri Centre was a turning point for all of these young people. For Nicola, Daniel and Maui the change happened fairly quickly – within a few months they had made significant changes in attitude – while for Tane it took a little longer. They were all at different stages and had different needs. Tane was still angry and still suffering effects of his brain injury when he came to the Kauri Centre while Maui had spent some time in residence and had started, there, to make some changes. Nicola expected the Kauri Centre teachers to be like all the other teachers she’d had and not listen to her and tell her she was dumb and Daniel was struggling with who he was, his identity, and where his life was going.

Nicola, now aged 17 years, exited the Kauri Centre over three years ago, and is working and studying, with plans to go on to tertiary education. Tane, now aged 16 years, exited the Kauri Centre over one year ago, and is working fulltime in a trade. Maui, now aged 15 years, exited the Kauri Centre four months ago, and is enrolled fulltime in mainstream school. Daniel, now aged 14 years, exited the Kauri Centre four months ago, is avoiding his negative peers, is applying for part time work, enrolled in an alternative education programme, and has plans to be a social worker.

Key factors that the Kauri Centre offered these children were an individualised approach to their needs, acceptance of them if not their behaviour, and caring and supportive staff who were positive role models and mentors and who took the time to listen to them and followed through on their commitments. Having Māori staff who were positive mentors and role models was another crucial success factor for some of the boys – for some like Daniel, needing a cultural identity was part of why he was hanging out with the gang-affiliated boys in his home town. The Kauri Centre environment was a place where to be Maori was valued.
6 Medium Term Outcomes: Education

6.1 Introduction

As was explained in Chapter 5, one of the aims of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims, including the outcomes for clients in the medium and short term and effectiveness over time. For the purpose of the evaluation, medium term outcomes have been defined as findings related to improving the clients’ educational achievement and behaviour while attending the Kauri Centre. The following are the key educational outcome measures that the evaluation has looked at to ascertain the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its medium term aims.

- Educational measures
  - All students have an assessment and individual learning plan (ILP) completed within one month of enrolment.
  - Students receive support to develop basic numeracy and literacy skills to meet their needs.
  - Students make progress in educational achievement.
  - Students receive significant support with developing life skills to meet their needs.

In addition to the above the evaluation also sought to gather information from the students regarding their views of the Kauri Centre and the programme. Key outcome measures looked at were:

- Students can articulate what they have learnt at the Kauri Centre
- Students show an interest in having goals and plans for the future

As part of the evaluation, information was sourced from interviews with staff, students and social workers and key informants, observational activities, and reviews of documents and files, related to the impact of the Kauri Centre on the children and young people.

6.2 About this chapter

This chapter reports on the educational outcomes for the children and young people who have attended the Kauri Centre. Included is an overview of Taaku Ara: My Pathway (individual leaning plans) and the extent to which students have a Taaku Ara, data on unit standards achieved, participation and progress in life skills, the extent to which the young people have goals for the future, and a summary of key success factors and strategies.

Where available, data is given for all students enrolled from 2004 through to December 2007. However, as a consequence of the different record keeping formats, different types of assessments, and programmes employed at the Kauri Centre since 2004, some of the data either cannot be amalgamated or compared across years as the formats are incompatible or it is unavailable for earlier years as the programme did not include that particular measure or assessment. Where data is not provided for all students enrolled since 2004, the relevant dates are specified.

6.3 Individual learning plans, educational assessments and achievements

6.3.1 Taaku Ara: My Pathway

As part of the Kauri Centre educational programme each student has an individual learning plan, called Taaku Ara: My Pathway, which is based on the framework of Te Whare Tapa Wha. Taaku Ara: My Pathway was put in place at the beginning of 2007 therefore only students who were enrolled in 2007 have a Taaku Ara: My Pathway (See Box 3 for a brief description of Taaku Ara and the types of goals included). Prior to 2007 all students had individual learning programmes,
Educational assessments are an integral part of the Kauri Centre and the *Taaku Ara* process for new students. The Kauri Centre teachers use a series of different assessments to determine the educational levels and abilities of the students. These include STAR (Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading), Probe test of reading comprehension, BURT Word Reading Test, ASTLE Math and ASTLE English. Prior to the 2007 year all the students enrolled had individual learning programmes and records indicate that they were assessed for basic literacy and numeracy, soon after enrolment.

6.3.2 Literacy, numeracy and Unit Standards

All students have to cover literacy and numeracy as part of the Kauri Centre programme. The programme is structured to include maths and written work every morning. The evaluation observation findings indicate that the students work through maths workbooks, individually, relevant to the educational level they have been assessed at. They receive support from teachers and educational support staff who will sit with them one on one and help them to work through the problems. Reading and writing are handled in a similar manner with each student working at their own individual pace. Some students, working at a higher level, may be reading and writing texts and other books at Unit Standard level, while others may be behind in their literacy and are given one on one assistance. As students progress they will be encouraged to work independently to help them develop self-responsibility, motivation, and study skills. The Kauri Centre newsletter is another avenue for teaching students literacy skills, and all students are encouraged to submit written work for inclusion in the newsletter.

Most students, in the interviews, could articulate what they had learnt or were learning. One younger student (age 11 years) in particular, talked excitedly in his interview, about his educational achievements since starting at the Kauri Centre. His enthusiasm was palpable!
I’m learning how to work and how to play games. Like touch, rugby league. Swimming. I can now swim five laps! I couldn’t even swim one lap before. Doing reading, writing, spelling, maths. I didn’t know how to do times tables, now I do; times-ing by hundreds and tens. And I’m the highest in reading!

In 2006 (Terms Three and Four) and 2007 the older\textsuperscript{23} students at the Kauri Centre were given the opportunity to work towards gaining Unit Standard credits. Students have been working towards credits in the following Unit Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Standard Number</th>
<th>Unit Standard Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8489 Numeracy</td>
<td>Solve problems requiring calculation with whole numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8490 Numeracy</td>
<td>Solve number with calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8491 Numeracy</td>
<td>Read and Interpret information in graphs etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8492 Numeracy</td>
<td>Measurements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5230 Statistics and Probability</td>
<td>Carry out a statistical investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8808 Literacy</td>
<td>Record the reading experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8812 Literacy</td>
<td>Transactional written text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8816 Literacy</td>
<td>Deliver transactional oral text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8817 Literacy</td>
<td>Listen attentively and interact in a discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2977 Literacy</td>
<td>Reading texts for practical purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10792 Writing</td>
<td>Write formal personal correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11920 Interpersonal &amp; Social Skills</td>
<td>Identify and share own whakapapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3503 Interpersonal communications</td>
<td>Participate in a team or group to complete a routine task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10790 Interpersonal communications</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1294 Interpersonal communications</td>
<td>Be interviewed in formal situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3483 Form Filling</td>
<td>Filling in a range of forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504 CV Writing</td>
<td>Produce a CV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 Business Info Processing</td>
<td>Develop and use keyboarding skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 Business Info Processing</td>
<td>Consolidate keyboarding skills and produce accurate text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16677 Business Info Processing</td>
<td>Key in text at 15 words per minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6401 Core Health</td>
<td>Provide first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6402 Core Health</td>
<td>Provide resuscitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>543 Work based</td>
<td>Starting work in new place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 Core Skills</td>
<td>Maintain personal presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since Term Three 2006 and up to the end of Term Four 2007, the total number of credits achieved by students at the Kauri Centre is 314 (see Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Term(s)</th>
<th>Number of Students working on the Standards</th>
<th>Number of Credits earned</th>
<th>Cumulating total for Kauri Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the Kauri Centre began offering Unit Standard work in 2006, 15 students have worked towards achieving credits. One student achieved 51 credits in total, and did this in only three terms as he was referred and enrolled in Term 2 2007. Another student has achieved 50 credits, one 46, two 35 each, one 31, and the remainder between 2 and 16 credits each (see Table 6). It is also important to note that these students have done particularly well given that they are Year 9 or Year 10 students and therefore, at another school, it is unlikely that they would have the opportunity to do Unit Standard work.

\textsuperscript{23} The older students are those aged 14 years and over.
Table 6: Unit Standard Credits Achieved by Kauri Centre Students in 2006 & 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Unit Standard Number</th>
<th>Unit Standard Content</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tahi</td>
<td>8490</td>
<td>Solve problems with calculator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8491</td>
<td>Read and interpret graphs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8489</td>
<td>Solve problems with whole numbers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8492</td>
<td>Measurements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2977</td>
<td>Reading texts for practical purposes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8808</td>
<td>Record the reading experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8812</td>
<td>Transactional written text</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8816</td>
<td>Deliver transactional oral text</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8817</td>
<td>Listen &amp; interact in discussion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3503</td>
<td>Participate in a group to complete routine task</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3483</td>
<td>Form Filling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6401</td>
<td>Provide First Aid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6402</td>
<td>Provide Resuscitation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 Business Info</td>
<td>Use Keyboarding skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>102 Business Info</td>
<td>Consolidate keyboarding skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10792</td>
<td>Write formal personal correspondence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>504 Wk Study Skills</td>
<td>Produce CV</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16677</td>
<td>Key in text 15 wds/min</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62 Core Skills</td>
<td>Maintain personal presentation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1294 Communication</td>
<td>Be interviewed in a formal situation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10790</td>
<td>Hold a conversation with others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rua</td>
<td>8490</td>
<td>Solve problems with calculator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8491</td>
<td>Read and interpret graphs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8489</td>
<td>Solve problems with whole numbers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>8492</td>
<td>Measurements</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Reading texts for practical purposes</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>543 Work based</td>
<td>Starting work in new place</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8808</td>
<td>Record the reading experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8812</td>
<td>Transactional written text</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>8817</td>
<td>Listen &amp; interact in discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3503</td>
<td>Participate in a group to complete routine task</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3483</td>
<td>Form Filling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6401 Core Health</td>
<td>Provide First Aid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6402 Core Health</td>
<td>Provide Resuscitation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 Business Info</td>
<td>Use Keyboarding skills</td>
<td>3</td>
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6.3.3 Life skills

Assisting the children and young people to learn life skills is an important aspect of the Kauri Centre programme. Life skills are defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as "those skills that are needed to make the most of life" (www.unesco.org). Box 3, which describes the UNESCO definition of life skills and ways in which they can be learnt, is essentially a description of the way in which the Kauri Centre approaches the teaching of life skills – i.e. life skills "must be modelled" and must "be part of the design of any learning process or programme."

The Kauri Centre educational programme includes teaching practical life skills such as kai preparation, hospitality, how to use public transport, budgeting, and also psycho-social life skills such as developing an identity and a sense of belonging, knowing how to interact, to relate to others and to feel valued, and to be independent and take responsibility for oneself and one's life, and this focus permeates all aspects of the centre. One of the teachers who had been involved in a trip to observe three other educational facilities in New Zealand, for 'troubled youth', gave examples of how the Kauri Centre differed from some of the other places they had visited, particularly in how the Kauri Centre integrated life skills into the programme.

The Kauri Centre staffing and programme is far more individualised and life skill focused than the three places we visited. One place was studying a vegetable garden but the kids could only view it from the distance - it was outside the fences. At another place the cooking was done as a lesson but was not eaten, as the students returned to the residences to eat. At the Kauri Centre we grow the food, prepare it, and eat it together. The Kauri Centre is focused and flexible and far more student-focused.
The following sections detail the evaluation observation and interview findings about the types of life skills, and specific ways in which these skills are taught, at the Kauri Centre, illustrated with examples of student life skill development.

### 6.3.3.1 Maslow’s hierarchy

As was reported in the literature review, Maslow (1968) viewed human beings’ needs arranged like a ladder, with bodily needs at the bottom (air, water, food), followed by safety needs (security, stability), psychological, or social needs (belonging, love, acceptance), self esteem, and finally self-actualisation (becoming all that one is capable of).

One social worker commented on the way the Kauri Centre provided for her client by meeting some of his bodily needs (food, hygiene) as part of the programme. While Kauri Centre staff are undertaking some of these tasks for him, the child who is ten years old, is also learning how to do these tasks (washing, preparing kai), and the importance of these activities for his own wellbeing. These are not skills that he is learning in his home environment.

[Child] doesn’t get fed at home so what he gets at the Kauri Centre is all he gets for the day. They meet this health issues too e.g. showering and washing his clothes.

The importance of developing a sense of identity and belonging is one of the psychological needs on Maslow’s Hierarchy. Other research and models (e.g. Te Kotahitanga, Bishop et al., 2003; 2007a; 2007b; Te Whare Tapa Wha, Durie, 1998; Maxwell & Morris, 1999) also recognise the importance of belonging. One staff member articulated how they saw the Kauri Centre programme fitting within Maslow’s hierarchy. The first focus was to meet, or ensure that the students’ basic needs were met, then progress to belonging, and so on, up the hierarchy. They believed that without a sense of belonging and knowledge that they were cared for, students would be unable to learn and, therefore achieve.

Without being dramatic, part of this place is to keep these young people alive, then to go down Maslow’s hierarchy. To teach them that people do care for them and they are important. These kids have got to this part of their life with huge gaps [in their basic needs].
6.3.3.2 Te Ao Māori
Tikanga and Te Reo Māori are important aspects of the programme within the Kauri Centre. They are not ‘extra’ subjects but are interwoven and integrated into the programme. As was detailed in the literature review (Chapter 2), the importance of celebrating Te Ao Māori and integrating tikanga Māori into the programme, was one of the key findings of Bishop et al.’s (2003; 2007a; 2007b) research into improving educational achievement amongst tamariki and rangatahi Māori. Other research has found that a lack of pride in being Māori is a risk factor for juvenile offending (Maynard et al. 1999, Maxwell & Morris, 1999) and that the most successful programmes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori include, among other things, acknowledgement of the importance of identity, cultural knowledge and history, and teaching young people about the relevance of Māori values and ways (Singh & White, 2000).

One social worker reported that she had noticed that her client, who was ten years old, had learned a lot about his identity, about being Māori and being part of a whanau, and that this, in her view, was very important for him as it was a significant gap in his development due, partly, to having had 17 placements in his life with mostly Pakeha caregivers.

[Child] did a lot of work around being Māori [at the Kauri Centre]. Those sorts of things are really important for him. He has had 17 placements in his life, many with Pakeha. What the Kauri Centre is doing for him [about being Māori] is really important. (Interviewee’s emphasis)

Another student demonstrated his learning about himself as Māori, in another way. When he started at the Kauri Centre he identified primarily as Pakeha/ European, insisting on using his European name, and showing in a range of other ways that he was ‘ashamed’ of his Māori heritage. However over time as he learned more about Te Ao Māori, he came to have pride, not shame, in being of Māori descent, and eventually asked staff and students to call him by his Māori name. Another example from observations over time regards the saying of karakia. Students are encouraged to take turns to say karakia, at appropriate stages of the day, and while many started with saying karakia in English and/or reading out karakia, by the end of only one term students were observed as being willing, and able, to stand and recite karakia in Te Reo Māori from memory.

6.3.3.3 Practical and psycho-social skills
Some of the practical life skills that are taught are job-related skills. Older students who are planning to transfer to a job or a training course are given work experience opportunities. If a student has a particular career they want to follow then the staff try to find work experience that is tailored to that career. For example, one student who wants to be an auto-mechanic, began work experience, three days a week at an auto-mechanic’s workshop. He described it as “Pretty choice. Pretty mean” and when asked the question ‘what’s the best thing about the Kauri Centre?, he replied “Going to work. I like it because I get to work on cars.”

One way that both types of life skills (practical and psychosocial) are taught is to place the practical life skills, such as kai preparation or budgeting for example, within a context of respect for others and working together. For example, participation in kai preparation at least once a week is compulsory. Some of the learning goals of the kai part of the programme are to learn how to cook, how to clean up, and to respect the people who prepare the food. The staff member who teaches the kai preparation always works with at least two students at a time. Although it would be easier to only have one student, it is important that the students learn how to work together and how to share the chores. Meals are eaten together, with staff, students and any visitors, at the tables in the dining room. During this time the teaching continues. Karakia is always said and the children and young people are encouraged to take a lead in this. While having kai they learn table manners, how to sit together with whanau and friends to eat a meal, to thank the people who have prepared the food, and to clear the table and do the dishes, before they can go outside.

Learning to use public transport is another practical life skill that is taught. Sometimes this involves students being sent off to use buses (with staff supervision) to reach certain destinations and
return with evidence of having got there (e.g. a receipt from a specific shop). However another way that this is taught is to get a student to a point where they will take responsibility for using the public bus service to get themselves to the Kauri Centre and home again. The process is that they learn the basics of bus timetables, bus routes, and money, and they then have to catch the bus to the Kauri Centre once a week. This is built up until they are catching the bus to the Kauri Centre most days, and sometimes home again as well. Sometimes there are setbacks. For example, a child may not turn up, in which case he is 'phoned and if necessary the van goes out to pick him up. While the staff will indicate their disappointment, they allow the child to come to his own decision about this. This strategy teaches self-responsibility in tandem with other practical (i.e. using public transport, reading timetables, handling money) life skills. One student (aged 13 years) demonstrated the success of this strategy. He had been referred to the Kauri Centre because he had refused to go to school ("no other school would take me because I just wouldn't go"). He had started at the Kauri Centre only two months prior to the interview, but in that time he had improved so much that he was now, proudly, taking responsibility for getting himself to the Kauri Centre ("now I get up and go to the bus stop!").

Another strategy is to use other curriculum activities (e.g. physical education) to teach team work and getting along with other people. Box 4 is a description of the Kauri Centre programme written by a student who, at the time, had been enrolled for one month. The young person describes how the programme is structured and how the life skills are integrated into the academic programme and also how the programme is tailored to the individuals ("some boys work in the gardens: it depends on their day"). What is of particular interest is how the young person understands the purpose of the games ("to settle us down"). The games (i.e. touch rugby, basketball, volleyball) before breakfast and after lunch, were introduced to help teach the boys to work together, to be a team, and to learn how to get on with others of different abilities and strengths. Interestingly some of the older students had also recognised the underlying reasons for the games. One student (aged 14 years), who had been at the Kauri Centre for over a year, when asked the question, what do you think is the purpose of the Kauri Centre?, said that it was "to change people" then continued on to talk about how the staff were teaching him to get along with others and the ways they were doing this.

The staff are teaching us to get along. [How are they doing this?] They do things to help us get along, like playing games together, like touch [rugby].

**Box 4: A Week at the Kauri Centre**

Here at the Kauri Centre we play a game most mornings after breakfast. Before we play, we have to pack up the tables and do the dishes so all is clean. When you are on dishes you only have to put them in the dishwasher and wipe down the tables and benches; the next day though you get changed so that you have to clean or weed gardens or sweep and mop floors.

After the game, we come in for our hui; which is when we talk about what is happening at the Centre that day and also what is of interest in the news. Sometimes we do map work and talk about Māori learning too. This is when we do karakia and prepare for the day. From there we are off to our classrooms for maths, reading and other topics; it is book work. Some of the older boys work on the cars in the workshop on some days and other boys are on preparing our lunch time meals. Some boys work in the gardens too; it depends on their day.

After our lunch, it is time to do the jobs needed doing round the Centre and then on some days we also get a short game to settle us for the afternoon. Some afternoons, we go to the Gym, others to the pools, and still others, we go to band, music, computers or special tasks. On a Friday, our last day of the week, we have a special cooked breakfast of bacon and eggs. It is a half day so we leave at 12.00noon to go home; our week is over. I have been here for about a month and since I have been here, it has been pretty mean!
6.3.3.4 Goals for the future

One of the important aspects of education is to help prepare children and young people for the future and to this end, they need to believe that they have a future. For many Kauri Centre children and young people their life experience to date has taught them that life is often unfair, sometimes unsafe, and that they are not particularly valued. Part of life skills at the Kauri Centre is to engender some hope and a sense of purpose; to help the young people plan for the future. As part of the evaluation students were asked to comment on whether they had any future plans. Almost all the students could articulate some goal or future plan and could see the value in having an education.

For some of the younger students, transferring to a mainstream school was one of their goals. One student, aged 11 years, has a history of verbal and physical aggression, multiple stand-downs, transient schooling (he attended at least six primary schools prior to coming to the Kauri Centre), and referrals to GSE. He had been at the Kauri Centre for one year when he was interviewed and, while he was enjoying being at the Kauri Centre, he had a goal to return to mainstream school.

Next year, I'm coming here [Kauri Centre]. I would like to get back to normal school, so I can get more mates and do more work and stuff. But there's nothing wrong with here! Maybe ... I'd like to stay in school <smiles>!

Another student, aged 13 years, who had been disengaged from school prior to his referral, and who had been at the Kauri Centre for two months, attending regularly, spoke about staying at the Kauri Centre for a few months to catch up on his school work, with the intention of then returning to mainstream school. Given his history of refusing to go to school, this represented a significant turn around in his attitude to school.

I'll come here [next year] for the first couple of terms. Catch up on schooling. Then maybe back to a normal school.

Many of the older students and those who had been at the Kauri Centre longer, often demonstrated an understanding of how their education could impact their future. One student, aged 14 years, who had been at the Kauri Centre for over a year, had in February 2007 when he was aged 13 years, talked about how he wanted to go back to “high school to make more friends” and “I would like to be a fire fighter”. While these answers demonstrated some thought for the future, he could not, at the time, explain any process to achieving these goals. One year later, in November 2007, he demonstrated a greater understanding of his role in his future. He told me that he wanted to work, but he wanted to get a lot more Unit Standard credits (he currently has 50 credits), and perhaps NCEA 2 so that he could get work that would pay more. The link between education, qualifications and work options was something he was beginning to understand.

I want to work. I want to get heaps of [Unit Standard] credits. To get NCEA 2, and then I can get heaps more dollars!

The student, referred to in the previous section who wants to be an auto-mechanic, is aged 15 years, and has been at the Kauri Centre for one year. He has spent a lot of time at the Kauri Centre in the workshop, and had a clear plan to continue with his work experience, achieve more Unit Standard credits (he had 35 credits by the end of 2007), and then leave to work in an auto-mechanic’s workshop.

I want to be a mechanic. Next I'll come here and get credits, then in April I'm going to work at ________ [mechanic's workshop].

One of the case study students (Daniel), aged 14 years, who was leaving the Kauri Centre because he was moving out of Hamilton, did not really want to leave the Kauri Centre. He had been out of mainstream school for a year before coming to the Kauri Centre and in only two terms
there he had achieved 51 Unit Standard credits. The educational environment at the Kauri Centre was a good fit for him. Despite not wanting to leave, he showed that he had put a lot of thought into how he was going to manage when he went back to his home town, to stay out of trouble and to get an education so he could achieve his goal to be a social worker.

I have to leave [Hamilton]. I was meant to go back to a course that I was on before I came here, but there are too many gangs there [attending the course]. I asked if I could go on [another course] because I don't want to get into the gangs again. I'm just not going back to [mainstream] school. I am going to get a job (part time). Get on a course. I want to [eventually] get into social work. [Why?] I want to help people, like me.

6.4 What works? Why do they learn?

The evidence from the evaluation is that students at the Kauri Centre are receiving an education they are achieving, and in some cases, achieving exceedingly well academically, they are all individually assessed, have an ILP, are learning practical and psychosocial life skills, and have goals for the future. So what are some of the factors that contribute to their ability to learn?

Student-staff ratio, smaller groups
At the Kauri Centre there is a high student staff ratio and smaller class sizes. There is a tuakana (senior/secondary) class and a teina (junior/primary) class, each with one teacher and two education support staff. This ratio means that the children and young people can have more one on one help when needed. This appears to make a significant difference to their ability to learn. Two students, aged 14 and 15 years, who had been at the Kauri Centre for just over a year explained how having more teachers meant that they were helped more and that was why they found it “easier to learn” at the Kauri Centre, than at a mainstream school.

At a normal school there is only one teacher. There's more one on one here. At a normal school teachers don't come and help you as much. There's more one on one here so it's easier to learn more.

The importance of high staff ratios and small groups has also been reported, by other researchers, to be a key success factor in alternative education (e.g. Kendall et al., 2003; O'Brien et al., 2001).

Holistic programme
The Kauri Centre programme weaves life skills, tikanga Māori, Unit Standards, physical education, kai, and maths and reading into a holistic programme, where skills are not only taught, they are modelled and promoted in a range of different ways. For example saying karakia before meals encompasses Te Reo and tikanga, taha wairua, belonging, identity, ritual, social skills, and self esteem; playing touch rugby in the mornings encompasses team work, anger management, physical fitness, communication, relationships and sports skills. This integration is deliberate on the part of Kauri Centre staff and is effective because students are able to learn in ways that work for them (e.g. teaching boys to play touch rugby without getting into ‘scraps’ is more effective than a classroom seminar on anger management or teamwork).

Flexibility
O’Brien et al., (2001), Kendall et al., (2003), and Hema (1999) all report that flexibility is important for success in alternative education settings. The Kauri Centre programme is flexible, and adapts to the needs of the students. If things are getting a bit out of hand in the classroom, then they might stop work and take the boys out for a game of touch rugby to calm them down. Conversely if they are working well, then lunch might get postponed for half an hour so they can finish what they’re doing. This is described in the following quote from one of the Kauri Centre staff, who was commenting on reasons why the students have achieved so well in their Unit Standard credits.

When we do Unit Standards with them we hand out the reading, read quietly, read out loud, then write about it, but in an ordinary mainstream school, the bell would ring. If we want to we
can send out to the kitchen to hold lunch, and then we can complete the assessment in two days. We are achieving this because we have the flexibility. Within the next two weeks, some would have achieved 14 credits each for 2007. That's huge. At that rate, over one year they would have 56 credits and they are only fourth form. They've worked really really hard.

There is also enough range of activities that interest the students for these to be used as incentives to do other work. For example, two students who are very kinaesthetic learners, tended towards being disruptive and less inclined to do maths and other classroom based work, but they loved working in the workshop. Therefore the teachers made 'workshop' an incentive; they ensured that for those students, workshop followed other work, (i.e. they had to complete their maths or other work before they could go out to the workshop). Similarly if they achieved more than expected in the classroom then they might get extra time in the workshop. Other students like music or swimming or gym or working on the computers, so these are their 'incentive' activities.

Individualised learning programmes
Each student at the Kauri Centre works at their own pace. This is important as the students are of different ages and as well they are all at different stages, and often have gaps in their knowledge. For example, one child may be reading at two years above his age level but not know his timetables, while another child of the same age is struggling with both reading and maths. The importance of early assessment and the ability to provide a tailored programme means that learning gaps can be identified and addressed, and importantly for self esteem, each child can proceed at their own pace and experience success. Other research in alternative education also identifies individual learning plans as important (Kendall et al., 2003; O’Brien et al., 2001)

Celebrating Te Ao Māori
Most of the students at the Kauri Centre are Māori. They come to the Kauri Centre with different levels of knowledge, understanding and pride in being Māori. At the Kauri Centre staff have worked hard to create an environment where, as Bishop et al. (2003) states “to be Māori is to be normal; where Māori cultural identities are valued, valid and legitimate” (p. 13). In this environment the Kauri Centre students learn to be proud to be Māori, they learn what it is to be Māori, and this helps to give them a sense of identity and of belonging, and in this environment, they can learn.

Quality staff
The quality of the staff cannot be underestimated in any consideration of why the students learn at the Kauri Centre. Other research (e.g. Bishop et al., 2003; 2007a; 2007b; Kendall, et al., 2006) has shown that it is the teacher that makes the most difference. Students need teachers who care, who respect them, who value them as people, and who listen to them and help them24, if they are going to increase self esteem and re-engage in learning. For tamariki and rangatahi Māori, positive Māori role models are also important (Singh & White, 2000). The Kauri Centre staff embody these characteristics. They are caring and skilled, they listen to the children and young people, and there is a majority of Māori staff who provide mentoring and role modelling for the rangatahi and tamariki Māori.

6.5 Summary: Education outcomes
Evaluation findings show that the Kauri Centre is a very positive learning environment for the children and young people. All Kauri Centre students are assessed and have an individualised learning plan completed within one month of enrolling. They all receive support to develop basic numeracy and literacy skills, and make progress in educational achievement. Fifteen Kauri Centre students have worked on Unit Standard credits, and have gained a total of 314 Unit Standard credits over five terms. All students receive significant support with developing life skills to meet their needs, and most of those interviewed could articulate goals for their future.

24 See Chapter 9: Student Feedback for the Kauri Centre students' views on the importance of teachers' 'listening and helping'.
The evaluation identified five key factors at the Kauri Centre that contribute to student’s learning successfully. These are: having high staff-student ratios and small class sizes; flexibility in the timetable and the programme; an holistic programme that integrates life skills and other learning together; individualised learning plans; celebrating Te Ao Māori; and having quality staff who care for and respect the students and are positive role models, for the students as young people, and where relevant, as young Māori.
7 Medium Term Outcomes: Behaviour

7.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 5 one of the aims of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims, including the outcomes for clients in the medium and short term and effectiveness over time. For the purpose of the evaluation, medium term outcomes were defined as findings related to improving the clients' educational achievement and behaviour while attending the Kauri Centre. The following are the key behavioural outcome measures that the evaluation has looked at to ascertain the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its medium term aims.

- Behavioural measures
  - Students attend the Kauri Centre regularly.
  - Students show more settled behaviour and have less incidence of running away.
  - There is a reduction in the incidence of acts of violence from the students.

In addition to the above the evaluation also sought to gather information from the children and young people regarding their views of their behavioural issues. The key outcome measure looked at was:

- Students show an understanding of their own behaviour.

As part of the evaluation, information was sourced from interviews with staff, students and social workers and key informants, observational activities, and reviews of documents and files, related to the impact of the Kauri Centre on the children and young people.

7.2 About this chapter

This chapter reports on the behavioural outcomes of the Kauri Centre students as per the measures detailed above. Included is data on behaviour during time at the Kauri Centre, including statistics on attendance, information on acts of violence, truancy and absconding, social worker and staff observations of student behaviour, students’ self reported behaviour, and a summary of key success factors and strategies.

7.3 Attendance and behaviour

7.3.1 Attendance

Most Kauri Centre students do not attend the Kauri Centre for a full year, as they are either referred partway through the year or transfer out partway through the year. In order to determine an average attendance rate per year, data for all students for each year was been converted to a percentage. These results are reported in Table 7.

As Table 7 shows, the average attendance rate for Kauri Centre students has gone from 69% in 2004 to 79% in 2007 with some students attending 100% of the time. While the range is from 10% to 100%, the data shows that less than 10% (i.e. no more than two students in any one year) attend less than 25% of the time, with most students (52%) attending more than 75% of the time. Some students (e.g. three out of the 21 students in 2007) have a 100% attendance rate.
Table 7: Average Attendance at Kauri Centre 2004 - 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Attendance (% and number of days)</th>
<th>Range (% and number of half-days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>69% (124/180)</td>
<td>13%-100% (23 - 180 / 180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>72% (130/180)</td>
<td>17% - 96% (31 - 173 / 180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>75% (135/180)</td>
<td>19% - 100% (34 - 180 / 180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>79% (142 / 180)</td>
<td>10% - 100% (18 – 180 /180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>73% (131 / 180)</td>
<td>10% - 100% (18 - 180 /180)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the students of the Kauri Centre have a history of absconding from their placements and/or truanting from their schools. The case studies (see Chapter 5) while not a representative sample are good examples of the kinds of school attendance histories common to the Kauri Centre children and young people. The attendance data shows that very few Kauri Centre students truant on a regular basis while enrolled at the Kauri Centre. Further analysis indicates that if the child or young person does not run away within the first couple of weeks enrolled then they are likely to remain. This finding is consistent with O’Brien et al.’s (2001) review of alternative education which noted that transitioning into a programme is a critical time period for engagement and continued attendance.

7.3.2 Acts of violence and other anti-social behaviour

Most of the students attending the Kauri Centre have been excluded or stood down from at least one school and most have had multiple stand downs, and for many, it is their behaviour that the school has difficulty managing. This behaviour commonly includes sexualised behaviour and/or verbal or physical aggression and/or truancy.

Observations at the Kauri Centre of staff and student interactions, and students’ interactions with one another, confirm that the atmosphere is generally calm and relaxed. Incidents do still happen at times, but they are not common, tend to be more likely to occur when a child or young person is newly enrolled, and tend to reduce over time, as the child settles in. In terms of property damage the Kauri Centre has never been tagged or vandalised, and only two windows have been broken, accidentally, by students in four years.

There are many individual examples of children and young people changing their behaviour at the Kauri Centre. One student who was one of the more violent students that was referred to the Kauri Centre was the subject of a case study (see Chapter 4, Case Study Two: Tane). An analysis of his history is a good example of how behaviour improves in the Kauri Centre setting. In summary, Tane had been excluded from two schools and suspended from the third for multiple incidences of violent behaviour including three incidents of threatening teachers with knives. At the Kauri Centre he was, initially verbally abusive and physically aggressive, and the staff had to physically restrain him numerous times in the first few weeks. But slowly, with patience, positive role modelling, and other strategies, his behaviour improved, and he stopped the violent outbursts.

Two other students who were interviewed together talked about how they had personally changed their behaviour. They had replied, in answer to the question about the purpose of the Kauri Centre, that it was “to change people...to change people's behaviour”. They attributed this change directly to the Kauri Centre and the staff who had taught them “to get along with other people” and “to be better people”. When questioned further about whether their own behaviour changed and if so, how, they laughed and were initially a bit self-conscious, and then proceeded to speak proudly about how they were “more mature” and specifically that they were fighting less and listening more.
I'm more grown up. More mature. More brainier. Not scrapping so much. (aged 14 years, been at Kauri Centre for one year)

I've matured more. I'm listening now and following instructions. (aged 15 years, been at Kauri Centre for one year)

These students, aged 14 years and 15 years, were reasonably well known to the evaluator as they had both been at the Kauri Centre for some time, and the evaluator had observed their behaviour over that time. Observations confirm that their self report of their behaviour is quite accurate – they do behave in a more mature way than they did a year earlier, they are listening and not fighting and scrapping, and as well, they are good role models for the younger students.

Social workers who had children or young people enrolled at the Kauri Centre were asked about what, in their understanding, the Kauri Centre was like for the child or young person. The overall perspective was positive. Most social workers interviewed had noticed an improvement in their client’s behaviour.

For my client, it is working extremely well. ... it is excellent - he is not displaying any violent behaviour and his education standard is improving with the one on one.

One social worker commented on her a client, a younger child (aged ten years at enrolment), who had been excluded from his school for aggressive and violent behaviour; he would lash out at other people – students and staff – when he felt threatened. He initially continued this behaviour pattern at the Kauri Centre, and when he started at the Kauri Centre he had a ‘minder’ with him every day to help control his behaviour. His social worker recalled that she had frequent calls from Kauri Centre staff to inform her of what was happening, and although she acted on them, she commented that she had felt a little annoyed at how much time it was taking up. She changed her view when she realised that by the time the child had been enrolled for a couple of terms, his behaviour improved and she was getting less calls.

[Child] was attending [mainstream] school, but school said “he can't come back”. He had been [physically aggressive towards] students and teachers - his behaviour was out of control and the school couldn't deal with it. At an inter-agency meeting it was decided that if we sent him back to another school it would set him up to fail, so we decided to try the Kauri Centre to get him stable, settled. With [child] initially it was hard because his behaviour continued so he needed a minder to 'hold him'. Every day something would happen, but this term it’s only about once a week and his caregiver has said that he has improved. It’s been positive for him.

The child referred to above, is still at the Kauri Centre, is now aged 11 years, and has not had a minder for most of the past year. He had been at the Kauri Centre for just over one year, when he was interviewed for the evaluation. In his interview he talked about his behaviour and explained that one reason why he had stopped fighting with other students was because the other students were his "mates now". The staff had fostered his development of friendships in a number of ways, through playing team games, role modelling and other strategies, one of which was to take him and another student (that he did not get along with) and two staff on an overnight bush trip. They returned, if not close friends, at least as ‘mates.'

They're my mates now, so I don't fight so much. (aged 11 years, been at the Kauri Centre for one year)

Another event occurred recently (February 2008) with the same child, which illustrated how much he had changed. It was kai time and most of the students including the child referred to above, and staff were in the dining room eating. In another room they could hear a young boy who had started at the Kauri Centre the day before. This young boy was swearing and yelling and generally being...
abusive towards some of the staff who were with him. Someone said "Remember what _________
was like when he came here" (indicating the child referred to above), who immediately replied "I
wasn’t that bad," then said "Well, yeah, I was. But that’s in the past. I don’t want to talk about it."
What was interesting about his reaction was that he had ‘owned’ his behaviour (which was a huge
step for this young boy who in the past would have tried to hit whoever had made the comment),
and then went on to state clearly in front of all the staff and students that he had changed ("that’s in
the past").

7.4 What works: Why do they attend and why does behaviour improve?

7.4.1 Attendance: What works?
As discussed above, the majority of the students at the Kauri Centre attend the Kauri Centre most
of the time. The interview and observation data provided some insights into why the attendance
rate is so good.

‘Transition in’ process
O’Brien at al. (2001) noted that alternative education centres needed to have processes in place
for transitioning students into the ‘centre’ as if this was not done well then they were less likely to
engage and attend. At the Kauri Centre the new students usually come to the centre a few days
before they are to start, to meet the teachers and staff and get shown around. Their social worker
will usually accompany them and sometimes their caregiver or whanau members will come. This
process is to help familiarise them with the Kauri Centre and staff, so that on their first day it is not
all new. Depending on their background some students may start with just a few hours a day for
the first week or so. These processes appear to help the students to transition into the Kauri
Centre more easily.

Having a van
Another factor that helps with attendance is having a van to pick up the students and take them
to the school. Not all the students are picked up by the van — some have caregivers who will bring
them to school, those living at YHT get dropped off and picked up, and some have progressed to
going themselves to school by bus or bicycle (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.3 for more discussion on
this). The remainder of the students and ones that are newly enrolled are collected by the van.
While the students are asked to be ready and waiting to be picked up, sometimes they are not.
They might be still in bed and their caregivers cannot get them to get up. In those situations the
van driver may go in, wake them up, tell them to get ready and get them out to the van. After a few
days of this, (or in some cases, weeks), they get the message and they are waiting to be picked
up. Transport is a key issue as most of the children and young people do not live in the area the
Kauri Centre is located in, and this coupled with their history of not getting up and going to school,
means that if they can be collected (at least initially) they will get there. This finding is consistent
with O’Brien et al. (2001) who saw transportation as one of the factors in an alternative education
student’s hierarchy of needs; meet that need, by removing the barrier to getting to school, and then
they are ready to learn.

Students want to be there
Another reason why students attend the Kauri Centre is because they like it there; it is meeting
their needs and providing what they want, and staff listen to them. For example, one student (aged
13 years), who had been at the Kauri Centre for a couple of months at the time of the interview
explained that previously he had not been attending school for “a long time” and he came to the
Kauri Centre because “I had to”. He had thought that the Kauri Centre would be “like a normal
school, but it’s not”. What came through as most important to this child and the reasons why he
attended was that the teachers listened to him. Throughout the interview he referred a number of
times to his non-attendance at other schools and emphasised his attendance at the Kauri Centre,
and when he was asked how the Kauri Centre had helped him he replied, quite simply “I attend
school. I come here”.

25 The van was purchased in 2005.
[What do you think of the Kauri Centre?] It's pretty alright here. It's different to a normal school. It's good, because I didn't do good at a normal school.

[What's good about it?] The teachers listen. The tutors are pretty cool.

[Why did you come here?] I was at _____ School but I hadn't been going for a long time because I didn't like the teacher, but no one listened to me, so I got angry. Here, they listen to me, most of the time <smile>, that's a good thing.

[Is it what you expected?] Not really. Thought it would be a normal school but it's not. Now I get up and go to the bus stop [to get to the Kauri Centre each morning].

[Where do you think you would be without the Kauri Centre?] Probably still be at home because no other school could take me because I just wouldn't go.

[How has the Kauri Centre helped you?] I attend school. I come here. (Interviewee's emphasis)

7.4.2 Behaviour: What works?
As has been discussed above, the children and young people’s behaviour does improve and ‘settle down’ at the Kauri Centre. When they first enrol they may continue their anti-social behaviour for a few days or even weeks, but over time and with patience this behaviour eventually changes and they learn more pro-social ways to behave26. The following are some of the strategies that are employed at the Kauri Centre and which are key to effecting change.

Staffing ratios
Staffing ratios are an important strategy for managing behaviour. The ratio of teaching / education support staff to students is about 1:2.5. This is an approximate as there are anywhere from 12 to 14 students enrolled at any one time, two teachers (one of whom often has to be off site at meetings), four classroom-based education support staff plus (usually) one or two extra support people (minders / youth workers who may be employed to support a new student). So, 12 to 14 students and seven staff is a ratio of 1:2 but not all staff are there all the time due to being at meetings and/or there may be no student that warrants funding the extra support person, so a ratio of 1:2.5 on a day to day basis is probably more realistic. There is a policy that staff generally work in twos, unless they are working with just one student, so that if an incident occurs there are two staff on hand to manage the incident and/or the other students. The need for high staff student ratios was also reported in other research about what works in alternative education settings (e.g. Kendall et al.,2003; O’Brien et al., 2001).

Behaviour monitoring
Behaviour is monitored on a weekly basis, by teaching staff, who record any issues (positive and negative) for each student and report it to the staff meeting on a Friday. Each student is discussed possible issues identified, and possible solutions posed if there are any concerns. This keeps all staff up to date with anything that is happening with each student and it also allows staff to get a ‘bigger picture’ of why some of the behaviours may be happening. From this meeting some interventions (e.g. shifting students around so they are not working near someone that they are having issues with) may be put in place the following week.

Staff awareness
Another key factor is ‘staff awareness’. The staff have all received training in behaviour modification and they all have significant experience in working with vulnerable young people. While these are important factors the staff also have to be always ‘on duty’ - vigilant, aware of the

26 See the case studies in Chapter 5, particularly case studies of Tane and Nicola, for good examples of initial anti-social behaviour that settles down over time.
dynamics, knowing the children and what triggers their anti-social behaviour, stepping in to diffuse situations, taking a child out for a walk to calm down, not leaving the children or young people unsupervised at any time, and role modelling communication and respect. When a new child is enrolled staff will spend time with them, getting to know them, and observing how they interact with others. If they see a positive friendship forming with another student they might encourage it; conversely they might discourage friendships that may be detrimental. Usually one staff member will work with a child early on to get to know them and who this is, depends on the child or young person and who they seem to relate to best. The importance of having quality and experienced staff is consistent with other alternative education research (e.g. Kendall et al., 2003; O’Brien et al., 2001).

Accepting the person
Another key strategy is to operate a policy where the behaviour is not accepted, but the person is. This was summed up by a social worker as “at the Kauri Centre – if they flip out then they can go home and be welcomed back the next day.” The past experience of many of the children and young people is that if they lash out, they’ll get stood down. However at the Kauri Centre, if you lash out then that incident is managed at the time in whatever way is most appropriate, then you’re accepted back the next day. The children and young people soon learn that while some of their behaviour is unacceptable, they are acceptable. This acceptance policy is consistent with research findings into ‘successful’ programmes. For example, Singh and White (2000) noted eight factors in successful programmes for rangatahi Maori, two of which were: taking time to find out the young person’s (and their family’s) needs; and consistently offering acceptance and aroha.

Face to face
One staff member explained that one of the differences at the Kauri Centre, compared to a mainstream school is that you are “face to face with whoever you’ve offended” and that in that environment it is difficult to maintain anti-social behaviour. For example, if a child at the Kauri Centre is abusive to someone (student or staff) then they aren’t sent out of the room to the dean or deputy principal. Depending on the nature of the incident, they may be removed from the situation and then are assisted by staff (sometimes it may even be the staff member they have been rude to), to calm down. They may be taken home or for a walk around the block. Apologies are expected to be given if not straightaway then at a point in the future. Then either that day or the next they are back in the room with the person they have offended, working in the classroom with them, sharing kai, sitting across the table from them. It is difficult to maintain negative and rude behaviour to someone when you want them to pass you the salt or an extra helping of pudding. In this way the Kauri Centre is like a whanau, like a home. In their interviews, students talked about the Kauri Centre as being like a home (see Chapter 9 for more on this). Other research has also highlighted creating a home-like environment as a key success factor (e.g. O’Brien et al., 2001).

Belonging and role modelling
In 2007, staff instigated a policy of not using physical restraint unless there were absolutely no other options. One of the reasons for this was that they wanted to model other ways of dealing with conflict, and they hoped that this, together with the focus on identity, belonging and learning to respect others, could effect more change in the students’ behaviour. No one was restrained in 2007. In an interview one of the students, who is aged 14 years and has been at the Kauri Centre for over a year, explained how because the staff were teaching them how to ‘get along’ they were better people and this had directly impacted on the aggressive behaviours of the children and young people at the Kauri Centre.

Last year they had to restrain someone ‘every day’. All this year no one has been restrained. There’s only been five scraps through the year; last year there was ‘hundreds’, because we’re better people now. They (staff) teach us to get along.

Consequences
Consequences are used when necessary, and one of these is to remove a child from the mainstream classroom and put them in another room one on one with a staff member. One of the
students from 2007, who is aged 11 years, and has been at the Kauri Centre for a year, talked to me about a recent spell that he had ‘in solitary’. As a result of a series of incidents he was told that he was going to be working from then on, in the back room, one on one with one of the staff, and he would not be able to participate with the other activities and students until he could control his outbursts. This period of ‘solitary’ went on for some weeks, and eventually he was reintegrated back into the main classroom and allowed to participate in other activities. He told me in the interview that he was behaving himself now, because he had realised that his behaviour was not acceptable and also because he didn’t want the consequences (i.e. to have to be by himself in the back room).

**Encouraging leadership**

Another strategy employed by the Kauri Centre is to work on encouraging leadership and mentoring qualities amongst the older students and the indications are that this has been a successful strategy. The young people are ‘stepping up’ to the mark and behaving more responsibly and modelling pro-social behaviours to younger and also newly-enrolled, students.

> With the kids - the sort we have here - they've made the changes too. They use their manners, do the dishes, want to help. Before they didn't want to do anything, and now they're jumping up to help. [Young person] has done a lot - he wouldn't do anything last year and now he's telling the kids "you gotta do the dishes". He used to lose it - we would restrain him two or three times a week. Now, he's like one of the prefects.

> We have a core set of kids that understand the expectations and as new ones come in they learn from each other.

### 7.5 Summary: Behaviour outcomes

Evaluation findings show that the behaviour of the children and young people improves during their time at the Kauri Centre. The majority of the children and young people attend the Kauri Centre regularly. The average attendance rate for Kauri Centre students for the past four years was 73% (ranging from 69% in 2004 to 79% in 2007), with some students attending 100% of the time. Kauri Centre students show more settled behaviour and have less incidence of running away, and there is a reduction in acts of violence from the students. Most of the children and young people were able, in interviews, to articulate an understanding of their own behaviour and in some cases this understanding was profound.

The evaluation identified three key factors at the Kauri Centre that contributed to students’ high attendance levels. These were: having a ‘transitioning in’ process to familiarise the student with the Kauri Centre, having a van to transport students to the Kauri Centre, and creating an environment that the children and young people want to be in, where teachers listen to them and they feel valued and respected. In terms of improved behaviour the evaluation noted key factors that contributed to the improved behaviour. These were: having high student staff ratios; having behaviour monitoring processes and weekly communication about these observations at staff meeting; having experienced staff who are ‘aware’ of the dynamics within the centre; the student having to ‘face’ the person they have wronged; being accepting of the child or young person but not their negative behaviour; fostering belonging and identity; staff role modelling appropriate behaviour; having appropriate consequences; and encouraging leadership skills.
8 Short Term Outcomes and Effectiveness Over Time: Leaving the Kauri Centre

8.1 Introduction

As was mentioned in Chapter 5, one of the aims of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims, including the outcomes for clients in the medium and short term and effectiveness over time. For the purpose of the evaluation, short term outcomes were defined as findings related to clients successfully transitioning into education, training courses or employment. Effectiveness over time was defined as findings related to clients remaining in education, training courses or employment for at least three months after transferring out of the Kauri Centre. The following are the key outcome / transfer measures that the evaluation has looked at to ascertain the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims.

- Outcomes / Transfer measures.
  - The majority of the students successfully transition into mainstream education, training courses or employment.
  - Students who have transitioned to mainstream education, training courses or employment, successfully remain there for at least three months.

As part of the evaluation, information was sourced from interviews with staff, students and social workers and key informants, observational activities, and reviews of documents and files, related to the impact of the Kauri Centre on the children and young people.

8.2 About this chapter

This chapter reports on the outcomes for children and young people leaving the Kauri Centre including statistics on length of time enrolled prior to transfer, outcome placements in the short term and effectiveness over time, and key factors related to successful transfers. Where available, data is given for all students enrolled between 2004 through to December 2007. However, as a consequence of the different record keeping formats, different types of assessments, and programmes employed at the Kauri Centre since 2004, some of the data either cannot be amalgamated or compared across years as the formats are incompatible or it is unavailable for earlier years as the programme did not include that particular measure or assessment. Where data is not provided for all students enrolled since 2004, the relevant dates are specified.

8.3 Numbers of students exiting the Kauri Centre

Table 8 shows the available data on students that have exited the Kauri Centre since it began enrolling students in 2004. Students who were enrolled but never attended are not included. As Table 8 shows, in total, 50 students have exited the Kauri Centre, with six having exited twice. While the ‘average’ length of time that a student is enrolled at the Kauri Centre before exiting is 21 weeks, the range is from two weeks to 120 weeks. The reason for the large range is because of the individualised approach to the children and young people. For example, the young person who was enrolled for 120 weeks (student ‘8’ in the Table) had significant issues that made mainstream school an unsafe environment for him to be in, so he stayed at the Kauri Centre until those issues were minimised sufficiently for him to be reintegrated. He has recently transferred out of the Kauri Centre to a mainstream school and indications so far are that he is doing well. Another child (‘22’) was enrolled as a temporary measure while a new care placement was being determined, and once this was finalised, after two weeks, he enrolled in the mainstream school his caregivers were zoned for and left the Kauri Centre.
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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
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<th>2005 weeks enrolled</th>
<th>2006 weeks enrolled</th>
<th>2007 weeks enrolled</th>
<th>Total weeks enrolled before exiting</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Student names have been removed from the table for confidentiality purposes.
2. Where students have been enrolled in more than one year before exiting, their numbers of weeks are added up across all the years enrolled.
3. Where the figures are noted with a + sign, that indicates that they exited twice. The numbers are the weeks they were enrolled each time before exiting.
4. NR data is not recorded
5. DK data is unknown
8.4 Outcomes: where they go to when they leave

When a child or young person exits the Kauri Centre, where they go to, is recorded in the attendance register. Outcomes are also recorded by Kauri Centre staff, for most students, for up to three months after exiting the Kauri Centre, but after that no further records are kept. In order to determine outcomes for the children and young people past three months post-Kauri Centre various methods were employed. The Kauri Centre staff and the CYF social workers were the primary source of information as some of the young people are still in CYF custody and/or keep in contact with the staff or social workers. However, for some of the young people too much time had elapsed or they were no longer in CYF custody or had moved away from Hamilton and in those cases their six months post-exit, and current (February 2008) whereabouts was unable to be determined.

Table 9 details positive and negative outcomes for all exiting students, and Table 10 details the outcomes by students at exit, three months, six months (where known), and currently (where known). Up to December 2007, there were 56 recorded outcomes for the 50 students that have exited the Kauri Centre. Some students (six) have had more than one outcome recorded, as they have exited the Kauri Centre, then re-enrolled at a later date.

Overall outcome findings are positive. Table 9 shows that the majority (32, 57%) of exiting outcomes were positive; students either went to a training course (16, 29%), to school (13, 23%) or to work (3, 5%). Thirty percent (17) were less positive outcomes; students either went to secure residences (6, 11%), absconded (7, 13%) from their care placements, or are recorded as ‘at home’ (i.e. they are not attending school) (4, 7%)27. Of those that had ‘at home’ outcomes recorded, one was aged over 16 years so was eligible to leave school, and the other three outcomes were for two students (i.e. one has been enrolled twice) and they were aged under 16 years, so were not eligible to leave school without an exemption. The remainder of the outcomes are categorised as ‘neutral’ (7, 13%) as they left the Kauri Centre because they moved away from Hamilton (i.e. due to a change of care placement).

Table 9: Total outcomes for exiting students, at exit, 3 months, 6 months and ‘now’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>@ Exit</th>
<th>@ 3months</th>
<th>@ 6months</th>
<th>Now (if known)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total positive outcomes</strong></td>
<td>32 (57%)</td>
<td>38 (69%)</td>
<td>25 (48%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Outcomes</td>
<td>16 (29%)</td>
<td>17 (31%)</td>
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<td>Course</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total negative outcomes</strong></td>
<td>17 (30%)</td>
<td>11 (20%)</td>
<td>8 (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absconded</td>
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<td>Residence</td>
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<td><strong>Total neutral outcomes</strong></td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
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<td>Neutral Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total unknown outcomes</strong></td>
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<td>7 (13%)</td>
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<td>14 (27%)</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>52 (100%)</td>
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</table>

Notes:
1. The results for six months are too unreliable to convert to percentages as the number of unknowns is very high
2. Includes one student who exited twice, both times to school.
3. Some students exited more than once so the total ‘exit outcomes’ are 56 even though only 50 students exited, and for ‘now’ outcomes, two young people are doing two things (working and school or working and course) so the total is 52.

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27 Percentages have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.
Table 10 shows that most (30 out of 31) students who transferred to a school, course or work, remained in their placement for up to three months (see students numbered ‘1’ to ‘31’). The six month data for these students is less reliable due to the large number of unknowns (14), although 16 (52%) of the 31 students were known to be at school (9), in work (4) on a training course (3), at six months post-exit. The ‘current status’ data for these 31 students has less ‘unknowns’ (8), and shows that over half of the 31 children and young people (21, 67%) are continuing to achieve; currently seven of the 31 students (23%) are at school, two (6%) are on a training course, 12 (39%) are working, and one (3%) is back at the Kauri Centre. It is also important to note that although there are eight ‘unknowns’ in the ‘current status data, even if all of those unknown outcomes were negative, the positive outcomes would still be in the majority. While some of the current status data is for students (3) who have exited within the past six months, other students exited up to three years ago (e.g. ‘3’, ‘8’, ‘11’), while others exited two years ago (e.g. ‘21’) or one year ago (e.g. ‘7’ ‘29’) and are still doing well, which indicates that there has been some excellent longer term outcomes for some of the Kauri Centre children and young people.

### Table 10: Outcomes for exiting students, at exit, 3 months, 6 months and ‘now’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>2004 wks enrolled</th>
<th>2005 wks enrolled</th>
<th>2006 wks enrolled</th>
<th>2007 wks enrolled</th>
<th>Total wks enrolled</th>
<th>Exit</th>
<th>@3mths</th>
<th>@6mths</th>
<th>Now (if known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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28 31 students transferred to school, course or work although there are 32 positive outcomes as one student (number ‘7’) transferred out twice to school.
8.5 Factors related to positive and negative outcomes

Further analysis of the outcome data as well as other interview, case study and file data indicates that there are three key times at which students appear to be particularly at risk of a ‘negative’ outcome (i.e. absconding, residence). These are (i) the entry transition, (ii) when they are experiencing outside stressors (e.g. at home or in their care placement), and (iii) the exit transition.

Entry transition

In terms of the entry transition, analysis of the outcome data indicates that some students who are enrolled for only a short period of time seem to have more negative outcomes. As Table 10 shows, there were 13 absconding or residence outcomes recorded. For nine (69%) of these outcomes the student was enrolled for five weeks or less before absconding from their care placement and/or ending up in residence. As well, the children and young people who tend to have a positive outcome (and to be able to maintain that) have usually been enrolled for longer than six weeks.

Student ‘7’ (Table 10) appears at first glance to be an exception to the finding that ‘less weeks enrolled leads to less engagement, which leads to more likelihood of negative outcomes’, as he was only at the Kauri Centre for two weeks, yet had a positive outcome (school). However further analysis shows that this student was only being placed at the Kauri Centre temporarily while his care placement was being sorted out, and he then went to a mainstream school that his new placement caregivers were zoned for. He remained at that school for more than a year, before he returned to the Kauri Centre, was enrolled for 13 weeks then was transferred out to another school where he is still enrolled (and has been for one year) and is doing well.

These findings do suggest that the transitioning in period is important. If a child or young person does not successfully engage with the Kauri Centre within the first few weeks, they seem likely to get into a situation (either through absconding from care placements or offending or other behaviour) which results in them leaving the Kauri Centre and ending up in, for example, youth justice or care and protection residence. Likewise if the child or young person does engage successfully during the first six weeks, they tend to have more positive outcomes and to be able to...
sustain these. These findings are consistent with other research. For example, O’Brien et al. (2001) reported that the transition periods (both in and out) are crucial.

**Outside stressors**

While the above findings indicate that entry transition period seems to be crucial, Table 11 shows that there are other students that seem to be at the other end of the scale; they have been enrolled for a significant period of time and yet also have a negative outcomes (e.g. students ‘32’, ‘33’, ‘39’, and ‘43’ in Table 10). Further analysis of the files related to these students show that they had other pressures and stressors occurring prior to their exit. Two students (‘33’ and ‘43’), had family and friends who were gang-affiliated and/or offenders who were encouraging them to get involved in their activities, while another (‘31’) was struggling to cope with his parents’ expectations. Another student (‘39’) who was eligible for high and complex needs funding due to the multiple issues in her life, had her care placement break down which was a catalyst for a whole range of acting out and other behaviours, and coupled with turning 16 and being eligible to leave school resulted in her eventually disengaging and leaving the Kauri Centre. Box 5 is a case summary of one example of what happened for one of these students (‘32’), and is provided to give some insights into how outside stressors can impact.

**Box 5: The impact of outside stressors on successful outcomes**

Mark had been in CYF care when he was first referred to the Kauri Centre as his parents could not cope with him. He was a young boy struggling with his identity and where he fitted, and he had some emotional and behavioural issues that his family and schools had found difficult to manage. He worked hard on his behaviour in order to get placed back with his parents and after this occurred he did his best to ensure he stayed there. His parents’ way of working with Mark was to be very strict, and have many rules. They operated a ‘tough love’ philosophy. After a few months in which Mark struggled and failed, to keep to his parents’ rules, his parents said he was to leave, and he was placed in a CYF Family Home.

Mark was an angry and hurt young boy who felt unwanted and unloved. At the Family Home he had difficulties with the other children and young people. The Kauri Centre staff were aware that he was not coping well and they worked hard to help support him, while he was at the Kauri Centre. However, he started running away from his placement and getting involved in some minor offending, and was eventually placed in Residence for his own care and protection. Up until the point where his placement broke down he had been achieving well at the Kauri Centre and had been making progress with his behaviour.

These findings indicate that a key time in which the chances for negative outcomes or conversely the time to have strategies and supports in place for the child or young person, is when the child or young person is experiencing outside stressors, (e.g. placement breakdowns, family issues, pressures form gang-affiliated family and friends). These stressors can result in the child or young person running away or behaving in other anti-social ways or offending, either to get some sense of control or to gain acceptance with gang-affiliated family or friends. These findings are consistent with other research has also found links between placement issues and children’s levels of anxiety, behaviours, and educational outcomes (e.g. Fernandez, 2007; Lewis et al., 2007; Pecora, et al., 2003). In addition Kendall et al., (2003) found that where the children or young people had problems with placements or other issues in the home environment then this impacted on their behaviour in the educational setting.

Many of the strategies employed at the Kauri Centre, that were discussed in previous chapters (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7) such as behaviour monitoring, being accepting of the child or young person, having a holistic approach, are also relevant to managing ‘risk’ times when students are experiencing outside stressors, and are key factors in ensuring that most of the students do not end up with a negative outcome. One of the case studies (see Case Study Two: Tane) is a good example of how staff may help students when they have outside stressors. For example when Tane was being bashed by his stepfather, staff were aware that there were problems and when this escalated into Tane being taken into Police custody, Kauri Centre staff were supportive of him.

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29 The Kauri Centre does have a transitioning in process. See Chapter 7 for more detail on this.
and the court process. This was a key turning point for Tane and if staff had been less aware and less supportive it is possible that this could have been a turning point in the opposite direction.

Exit transition
O’Brien et al., (2001) in their review of alternative education in New Zealand, noted that the time of transitioning out of an alternative education setting to a new placement is one of potential risk and that programmes needed to have strategies in place to manage it. This factor was also observed at the Kauri Centre. Essentially, Kauri Centre students have high personal, social and academic needs as a result of significant neglect, abuse and other issues in their upbringing. They enrol at the Kauri Centre with a long term history of transience, multiple educational and care placements, multiple stand downs, disengagement from school, and anti social behaviours. They manage to settle, stabilise and start to achieve within the Kauri Centre with its holistic programme, supportive and skilled staff, smaller class numbers, and higher student staff ratio. If they then transition back to a mainstream environment, without adequate student support, then there is a greater chance of the placement breaking down.

There is no ‘optimal’ amount of time that support may be required, as it depends on the needs of the individual child or young person. Box 6 is a case summary of one of the Kauri Centre children which illustrates how a school placement which was initially going very well until support was withdrawn, and then it rapidly broke down.

Box 6: Case Summary: What happens when support is withdrawn?
Wiremu was first enrolled at the Kauri Centre at age of eight years old. He had a history of suspensions and exclusions for physical assaults, had been stood down from his most recent school, and so was referred to the Kauri Centre. At the Kauri Centre his behaviour stabilised, he settled in well and was learning. After a few months, it was decided to transition him back to school. He was very excited about this and keen to make it work.

The process of transitioning him involved a number of meetings between Kauri Centre staff and the school principal and teachers, and a number of school visit, for a few hours each day, during which the child was accompanied by a Kauri Centre staff member. The visits increased until he was eventually attending the school every day. Funding had been secured to provide him with a student support worker to help him manage his behaviour in the school setting and this continued for two terms. All went well during this time.

After two terms the funding for the student support was withdrawn. This decision was questioned by Kauri Centre staff who were concerned that the child would not be able to manage. Unfortunately they were proved right, as within a few weeks, the Kauri Centre was asked to take him back due to an incident at the school. He had been experiencing some issues with his care placement and was anxious and not coping well. He took offence to some teasing by other students, physically lashed out at them, verbally took his frustration out on staff, and then proceeded to damage school property. It is highly unlikely that the incident would have escalated to the point that it did if he had had his student support person with him as they would have understood where his anger was coming from (anxiety due to placement instability), and been able to work with him, listen to him and calm him down, as they had for the previous two terms. But he had no one to turn to, so he was suspended again, and he returned to the Kauri Centre.

The Kauri Centre has always had strategies in place to support the children and young people transitioning out, and they have also improved on their strategies over the years, although sometimes as the above case summary illustrates, they may have little control over the factors (i.e. support being withdrawn) that ultimately cause a school, work or training placement to breakdown. The Kauri Centre’s exit transition process includes firstly choose the right placement for the child or young person based on their needs and strengths, then transitioning them slowly into the new environment, accessing support where possible, and in some cases staff following up students to provide ongoing support for them and to assist them to transition into their new environment.
We keep in touch. Keep that contact because [child] has no family. [shows that] we still care. We're still interested in them. We see ourselves as giving the boys hope. It's making a difference to how they're going. [Kauri Centre staff member]

There are many examples of students transitioning successfully. One example is of a student, transferring to high school who was integrated into the school over two terms. He had been at the Kauri Centre for over three years so changing to a mainstream school was a big step. Box 7 is a piece he wrote about the transfer process and is a good illustration of the Kauri Centre exit process in practice. In his piece, the student explains how he felt at first - not belonging to either the High School or to the Kauri Centre – and that this was a struggle for him. But he persevered and says that returning to mainstream has made him “happier” and given him more options, and that it was worth the struggle he felt at the beginning. He has now been enrolled full-time at mainstream school, for two months, and is doing well so far.

Box 7: Transferring back to mainstream
When you have been out of any mainstream school for a long period of time, you may not get a second chance to get another shot at getting back in again. Some of us kids here at the Kauri Centre do get such a chance, if that is what we really want to do and have worked hard towards achieving the required skills. The kids who don’t go to mainstream and don’t come to the Kauri Centre, have to do correspondence school work. When you do that work it is harder to achieve and that makes it harder to get NZQA or Unit Standard credits I reckon. We all know that without credits, it is so much harder to get a job. I am one of the ones who over these last two terms has begun a full transition back to a mainstream school.

I started my return with just taking one subject, “workshop technology”. Later, when it looked like I was achieving that subject they introduced “art” then “social studies” and finally “library” and “guidance time”. Going back to school after such a long time out was very hard at first; it was hard to fit into something that was so big, and which had so many new faces and names to remember. I already knew some of the people there and that allowed me to fit in quicker I believe. I got bored when I was only allowed to take one subject as it seemed that I did not belong there at all and now that I was spending more time away from the Kauri Centre, I felt I did not really belong there either. As more subjects were added I felt better and the transition was speeded up.

Returning to a mainstream school has made me happier and given me more options. Not everyone gets this opportunity however, when other Kauri Centre students get offered that chance, I hope they take it and give it a real go. I had to wait four years to get my second chance and I am really grateful. It is worth all that struggle I first felt upon my return. Next year may be the year for others to take up this challenge; I wish everyone who has a return offered to them the best of luck. Next year sees my full time entry to High School as a Year Ten; I am off so goodbye and thanks Kauri Centre for all that has gone before.

8.7 Summary: Short term outcomes

Evaluation findings show that 50 students have exited the Kauri Centre, since 2004, with six having exited twice. The average length of time that a student stays at the Kauri Centre before leaving is 21 weeks, and the majority (57%) of the students successfully transition into mainstream education (23%), training courses (29%) or employment (5%). Most (30 out of 31, 97%) students who transferred to a school, course or work, remained in their placement for up to three months.

Longer term data is also promising. Data on the ‘current status’ shows that over half of the children and young people (67%) who left the Kauri Centre to go to school, work or a course, are continuing to achieve; currently 23% are at school, 6% on a training course, 39% are working, and one (3%) is back at the Kauri Centre. While some of the current status data is for students (3) who have exited within the past six months, the other students exited between one and three years ago and are still doing well, which indicates that there has been some excellent longer term outcomes for many of the Kauri Centre children and young people.
Evaluation findings from the outcome data, and interview, case study and file data indicate that there are three key times at which students appear to be particularly at risk of a ‘negative’ outcome (i.e. absconding, residence). These are (i) the entry transition, (ii) when they are experiencing outside stressors (e.g. at home or in their care placement), and (iii) the exit transition. The Kauri Centre staff are aware of these crucial ‘risk’ times and have processes and strategies in place, such as a transitioning in process, and a supported exit transition process which includes following students up after they leave. As well the staff are aware of the outside stressors that are impacting on the students and do what they can, to continue to support the child or young person and to allow for and mitigate the effects of these issues on the child or young person.
9 Student Feedback about the Kauri Centre

9.1 Introduction

As part of the evaluation the children and young people who were enrolled in 2007 were interviewed. The first set of interviews occurred in February 2007, in which nine students were interviewed, and the second set of interviews occurred in November 2007 and 11 students were interviewed. Five students were interviewed twice as they were enrolled throughout 2007, and the others were interviewed once.

Their replies were analysed for key themes. Some of the findings from these interviews were related to educational, life skill, behavioural and future outcomes and were reported in Chapters 6 to 8. There were however a number of other key themes that emerged from the interviews that did not fit neatly into the previous chapters. These findings provide important feedback from students about the Kauri Centre and what works for them as children and young people with the issues that they have. They are particularly relevant to the evaluation objectives (iv) and (v), and to the aim related to the outcomes for clients of the Kauri Centre.

9.2 About this chapter

The following sections present interview findings related to the five themes that emerged from student interviews. These themes were:

- A place for second chances
- It's like a home
- Being listened to
- Advice to others
- Options without the Kauri Centre

9.2.1 A place for second chances

The view of the Kauri Centre as, 'a place for second chances', came through in a number of the student interviews. One of the case study students (Maui), who was aged 15 years, and who had been at the Kauri Centre for two terms, clearly viewed the Kauri Centre as his second chance.

To give kids an opportunity in life; a second chance. To prepare young men for the future.

School to me wasn’t like that - I didn’t like school until I came here. [Is this what the Kauri Centre is to you? A second chance?] Yes. It has been a second chance for me. An opportunity.

When asked what his expectations had been before coming to the Kauri Centre, it was clear that he had not initially thought of the Kauri Centre as a second chance, but had thought it would be more of a glorified babysitting service (“I thought it was a kiddie place”).

I thought it was a kiddie place where you do little kid activities. Something to get you out of the house. But it’s good. It’s helpful. They need more places like the Kauri Centre in New Zealand. It’s prepared me for mainstream. My academic work and socialising skills have improved. And you have to work here. If you don’t get along with people here then … you don’t get anywhere. And it’s not a little kid place!.

Another student (aged 14 years), who had been at the Kauri Centre for two terms, when asked about the purpose of the Kauri Centre gave an answer which demonstrated a significant self-awareness of his own behaviour (e.g. “haven’t really made the best choices”; taking alcohol to school “to be cool”), understanding of where he would be without the Kauri Centre (“getting stoned or drunk or in lock up”), knowledge of what the Kauri Centre offered (“a place for a new beginning”) and could clearly explain what he had learnt about himself (“the world doesn’t revolve around me”).
It’s for kids who haven’t really made the best choices before they come, and other schools won’t give them a chance. For kids who would be getting stoned or drunk or in lock up, like I would be, if I didn’t come here. The Kauri Centre is a place for a new beginning. [Before I came here] the only school that gave me a chance was because the principal knew the principal from the school that suspended me. That school was going pretty good until I took alcohol to school and started playing up (to be cool). Getting stoned at the back of the school and falling asleep in class. The Kauri Centre has made me feel like the world doesn’t revolve around me. I’m not the only boy that had to go through stuff. I shouldn’t just think about me. Like [another child from here] – going down his driveway to take him home - man I wouldn’t want to live at his house.

9.2.2 Kauri is like a home

The theme of the Kauri Centre as being ‘like a home’ came through in a number of interviews. This was particularly interesting as a key component of the 2006/2007 programme had been to instil a sense of identity and belonging, a sense of place, in the children and young people. Various activities (e.g. planting a kauri tree, playing team games, preparing and eating kai together, celebrating successes) were included quite deliberately in the programme partially to help the students feel that they had a place where they belonged; that they had a ‘home’ and a ‘whanau’ at the Kauri Centre. This was in recognition of the fact that many of the children and young people at the Kauri Centre are displaced, living in family homes or with caregivers, have had multiple moves and placements, and often have limited contact with or knowledge of, their whanau or where they come from. This finding is also consistent with other research on success factors in alternative education (Kendall et al., 2003; O’Brien et al., 2001), and with vulnerable tamariki and rangatahi Māori (Maynard et al., 1999).

The fact that the Kauri Centre is based in a house (rather than a school building) is something that initially was a matter of practicality (i.e. it was available to be used) rather than design, however it has come to be seen, by staff, as an important part of the learning environment. This was articulated by the teachers in a report to the Management Group, following visits to a number of other alternative education settings for ‘troubled youth’, as follows:

"[There is] value in using an actual house as opposed to using an institution for the teaching and caring of these young people. These taiohi [at the other settings] seemed to be in institutions as opposed to being in nurturing environments (Senior Management meeting minutes, 11 April 2007).

One student, aged 14 years, who had been out of mainstream school for a year before enrolling at the Kauri Centre, and had been at Kauri Centre for two terms, commented about how the Kauri Centre was like home. When asked to explain this, he gave an answer which indicated that it was the people within the Kauri Centre who made it a home, because they got along; they were in essence, like a whanau, an extended family.

Kauri is more like a home - get free lunches <laughs>! [Why is it like a home?] Because everybody just gets along; because there are only a few people here. It’s good.

9.2.3 Being listened to

A consistent theme for many of the young people was that at the Kauri Centre they were listened to. One student, aged 12 years old, who had been at the Kauri Centre for one year explained in the interview that he wanted to stay at the Kauri Centre because the teachers listened to him. He explained how at a previous school other students had lied to the teachers about him, and so he had retaliated violently ("I smashed them"). His perception was that the teachers had believed the other children and not him, and that the difference at the Kauri Centre was that he was listened to.

I would rather come back here [next year] because I don’t like the other schools. The teachers [at other schools] because the teachers listen to other people, instead of the people
being picked on. Other kids lied to get me in trouble, so I smashed them. The teachers here listen.

Another student, aged 13 years who have been at the Kauri Centre for two months, related a similar story of not feeling that he was listened to at other schools, and that at the Kauri Centre he was listened to.

What do you think of the Kauri Centre? It’s pretty alright here. It’s different to a normal school. It’s good, because I didn’t do good at a normal school. What’s good about it? The teachers listen. The tutors are pretty cool. Why did you come here? I was at ______ School but I hadn’t been going for a long time because I didn’t like the teacher, but no one listened to me, so I got angry. Here, they listen to me, most of the time <smile>, that’s a good thing.

In tandem with being listened to, the Kauri Centre staff also received a lot of general praise from the students (e.g. “the staff are cool”).

The best thing about the Kauri Centre? All the staff are cool. (aged 14 years, been at Kauri Centre for two terms)

I like the teachers because they are cool. (aged 11 years, been at the Kauri Centre for one term)

The Kauri Centre is a good school. You learn better, get good kai, good education, looked after, not much bullying, good staff, play sport. That’s good. (aged 13 years, been at Kauri Centre for one month)

I like the people [staff] here. It’s cool. (aged 11 years, been at Kauri Centre for one year)

9.2.4 Advice to others
Children and young people who were interviewed in November 2007, were asked what advice they would give to other children or young people being referred to the Kauri Centre. Two of the older students, gave answers that reflected an awareness of their own ability to implement change in themselves and the value of what they have learnt.

It’s a great place. Gather the knowledge and information you need and move on (aged 15 years, been at the Kauri Centre for two terms).

Make the most of it. Do all you can while you are here and don’t stuff it up! (aged 14 years, been at the Kauri Centre for two terms).

Other were more general in their advice but the overwhelming themes were positive; that the Kauri Centre was a good place to go to and that anyone referred there should make the most of it, take responsibility for their behaviour, and not ruin their opportunity.

Tell them ... don’t backchat [staff member]! <smile> It’s good to come here ... and there’s mean feeds. (aged 14 years been at the Kauri Centre for two terms)

You should come here. It’s mean. (aged 14 years been at the Kauri Centre for one year)

Yeah bro, it’s mean as, bro. (aged 15 years been at the Kauri Centre for one year)

It’s good here. Behave and then you’ll be sweet. (aged 11 years, been at the Kauri Centre for one year)
9.2.5 Options without the Kauri Centre

As part of the evaluation students were asked to comment on where they thought they would be if they had not come to the Kauri Centre. Most replied that they would not be doing anything worthwhile.

Sitting at home. (aged 14 years, been at Kauri Centre for one year).

Nowhere. Sitting at home. Roaming around. (aged 15 years, been at Kauri Centre for one month)

I’d probably still be at home because no other school would take me because I just wouldn’t go (aged 13 years, been at Kauri Centre two months)

Some said that they would be getting into trouble of some kind, and some that they would probably have been stood down from another school.

Still hanging out with gangs. (aged 14, been at Kauri Centre for two terms)

Sitting getting stoned or drunk or in lock up, like I would be if I didn’t come here. (aged 14, been at Kauri Centre for two terms)

I’d probably be at home sitting on the couch [because] I would probably have got kicked out of another school. (aged 11, been at the Kauri Centre for one year).

Only one said that he would have been at another school then admitted that it was unlikely that he would actually be attending that school.

Maybe at ______ College. Not sure if I would have been going to school. (aged 15, been at Kauri Centre for two terms)

The answers given above by the children and young people showed a significant insight into themselves and their behaviour. None of them thought they would be attending school or getting an education if they had not come to the Kauri Centre. They would either be sitting at home, roaming the streets, or getting into trouble.

The children and young peoples’ answers match with the views of other people who were interviewed as part of the evaluation. Social workers, staff, and other agency personnel were asked to comment on what the options would be for the Kauri Centre students, without the Kauri Centre. All agreed that there were no other facilities that would cater adequately for the children or young people at the Kauri Centre. The most likely scenarios given were that some of the children or young people would have minders assigned to watch them during school hours or they would be “roaming the streets” or “at home doing nothing”. No one considered that the children or young people, without the Kauri Centre as an option, would be able to attend a mainstream school or alternative education centres, unless they had a fulltime minder assigned to them.

I suppose the fact that [child] has been at the Kauri Centre for [as long as he has is an example of it working]. He would have been kicked out of any other school by now.

It’s a good option. It’s a really good option for these long term Family Home kids. If there wasn’t the Kauri Centre, then so many would just get into trouble.

Good question. None of those boys could have gone to a mainstream school. At 15 get them an exemption and get them on a course. Alternative Education Centres? Probably for some boys we would definitely have to provide minders. Others would play up once or
twice and get kicked out of there and that would be that.

I've had kids in the past that didn't fit anywhere. For example I had a kid, we had to hire a room and have two minders to look after him for 9am to 2pm. Have had other kids where we have had to have minders. The kid was isolated.

All social workers interviewed stated that the Kauri Centre should continue to operate. It filled what otherwise would be a gap in services; that is it provided a placement for CYF children and young people who, for a number of reasons, were unable to attend a mainstream school.

I don't know of any other alternative education place that will take children of such a young age who have been expelled. These young people need to be doing something. [Without the Kauri Centre my client] would be at home, roaming the streets, getting into trouble.

They provide a service that's needed.

It serves a purpose [because] education is an area we are struggling to fit kids in to.

9.3 Summary

Student views of the Kauri Centre were overwhelmingly positive. A number stated that the Kauri Centre was 'a place for second chances' and that it was 'like a home'. 'Being listened to' was also an important aspect of the Kauri Centre and one of the main reasons why they attended and why they stayed. Students also 'advised' other children and young people being referred to the Kauri Centre to make the most of it as the Kauri Centre was a "mean as" place to go to and was their opportunity to succeed. When asked where they'd be without the Kauri Centre the students' answers matched those of social workers, staff and others who were interviewed as part of the evaluation. That is, students reported that, without the Kauri Centre none of them thought they would be attending school or getting an education; they would either be sitting at home, roaming the streets, or getting into trouble.
10 Discussion and Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

The evaluation of the Hamilton Kauri Centre had two main aims.
1. to determine the extent to which the collaborative model is effective in delivering services for clients of Child Youth and Family (including descriptions of the challenges faced by working collaboratively, and how these issues were addressed and overcome); and
2. to determine the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims (including outcomes for clients in the short and medium term and effectiveness over time).

10.2 About this chapter

This chapter draws together the findings of the evaluation and discusses them in relation to the evaluation aims. The effectiveness of the collaborative model, challenges, and key success factors are discussed, followed by a discussion on the extent to which the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims, and finally, concluding comments.

10.3 Effectiveness of the collaborative model

As a collaborative inter-agency solution to the problem of accessing and providing an education for some of CYF’s most troubled young people, the evaluation found that the Kauri Centre is a successful and effective solution. It is achieving what it was set up to do; that is provide an education for children in CYF custody who are not attending or disengaged from school, and it is doing this very well.

There were some key challenges for stakeholders in setting up the Kauri Centre. These included accessing funding, finding a venue, hiring staff, determining the programmes, the referral criteria and processes, and finding a ‘host school’. Once the Kauri Centre was opened funding was an ongoing yearly challenge. Although the three year BIS funding and MoE national office funding solved this issue for awhile, funding once again is a key challenge for the Management Group as the three years are coming to an end and they need to source new funds. The evaluation identified seven key success factors that have assisted the Kauri Centre and the Management Group to firstly, establish the Kauri Centre, and secondly, to meet the ongoing challenges to keep it operating.

The timing of setting up the Kauri Centre was a key factor in its successful establishment, as the move towards more interagency collaboration that was being encouraged nationally coincided with the need for CYF and MoE staff to find a workable solution for the children and young people in care who were not receiving and education. Having management level involvement both in the beginning and now, contributes to success as it essentially speeds up the process - decisions can be made and actioned efficiently and quickly. Having good working relationships is also crucial. The relationships between the various personnel managing the Kauri Centre are workable and collegial, and there is a recognition of the need to work together in the best interests of the children and young people.

Two of the more intangible qualities that were determined to be key factors were being solution focused and having a passion to be creative and make a difference. The people involved in setting up and managing the Kauri Centre are solution-focused. They do not waste time apportioning blame, but act quickly to solve a problem or find a solution, when an issue or an incident arises. They also all have a genuine passion and concern for the young people in CYF care and they were, and still are, willing to take a risk and to think outside the square in an attempt to make a difference for these children and young people.

The importance of quality staff can also not be underestimated in the Kauri Centre’s success. The Kauri Centre staff employed are highly skilled and experienced in working with vulnerable children...
and young people, and there is a good balance between those with the teaching backgrounds and those with the experience in working with vulnerable youth and there is a majority of Māori staff which is a good match as the majority of students are Māori. Many of the staff have now been employed continuously for a number of years which is also important as it helps to provide some continuity and stability for the children and young people. Having a sound theoretical base (documented in Te Kauri Centre Scheme 2007) is also a key success factor as it provides a clear vision of the Centre, grounds it theoretically and gives structure and focus for staff and students.

10.4 Whether the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims

Education, attendance and behavioural findings show that the majority of students attend the Kauri Centre regularly. While they are there, their behaviour improves, they learn and achieve academically and socially, and begin to set goals. When they leave the Kauri Centre most students have positive outcomes, transferring to school, work or training courses where the large majority remain for at least three months. Longer term outcomes are also promising with approximately half of the students who left the Kauri Centre within the past four years, being either at school, on a training course or working. Many of the children and young people viewed the Kauri Centre as a place for a ‘second chance’ - an opportunity to start again, get an education, and work towards a better future. All stakeholders, including the students themselves, unanimously agreed that without the Kauri Centre the children and young people would, at the least, not be getting an education, and at the worst, be getting into trouble.

The evaluation findings clearly indicate that the Kauri Centre is delivering on its aims; that it is making a positive difference for the children and young people enrolled there, and is providing them with a greater chance of improved life trajectories. So what is it that works? Why do children with histories of absconding, violence, truancy, offending and disengagement from school attend the Kauri Centre regularly, improve their behaviour, and achieve academically? Of key import according to both the research literature (e.g. Bishop et al., 2003; Hema, 1999; Kendall et al., 2003; O’Brien et al., 2001; Singh & White, 2000; Sykles et al., 2007), and the evaluation findings, are the staff and the environment.

Having quality, experienced, staff who care for and respect the students and are positive role models and mentors, and who can build relationships of mutual respect is crucial. The children and young people need teachers who listen to them, and who can give them the time in the classroom because the class sizes are small and the student teacher ratio is high. Creating a learning environment that the children and young people want to be in is also crucial. The children and young people need a warm, home-like environment where they feel accepted, valued and respected, where their belonging, identity, social, emotional and cultural needs are met, where the educational programme is individualised and tailored to their needs, and specifically for tamariki and rangatahi Maori, an environment where Te Ao Māori is represented and celebrated, and where, to quote Bishop et al., (2003) “to be Māori is to be normal.”

Also of importance according to other research on alternative education (e.g. O’Brien et al., 2003) and the evaluation findings, is the need to be aware of the key times at which students may be at particular risk of a ‘negative’ outcome, and to have strategies in place to manage these times. Specifically, these times are (i) the entry transition, (ii) when they are experiencing outside stressors (e.g. at home or in their care placement), and (iii) the exit transition. The Kauri Centre staff are aware of these crucial risk times and have entry and exit transition processes and behaviour monitoring and other strategies in place to manage these as effectively as possible.

10.5 Concluding comments

Overall the evaluation findings clearly showed that the Kauri Centre is a successful initiative. The agencies work well together, and the children and young people attend the Kauri Centre regularly, show improvements in behaviour, and achieve academically and socially. When they leave, the majority of the students transfer either to school, training courses or work, and remain there for up to three months, and over half are still in school, work or training, between one and three years
later. The literature review identified key components of best practice relevant to the needs of children in care and to successfully providing education in an alternative setting, and the evaluation identified that these components were present in the Kauri Centre and contributed to its success.

The evaluation findings clearly indicate that the Kauri Centre should continue as it is meeting a very real need to provide an education, and a greater likelihood of a positive future, for some of our most vulnerable and damaged young people. Simply put, the Kauri Centre is, to quote one of the students … “a place for a new beginning.”
References


Bretherton, I., (1992)., The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Developmental Psychology,28,759-775


United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [online] www.unesco.org


Appendix 1: Kauri Centre Admission Procedure
Figure 1: Admission Procedure to Kauri Centre

Social worker identifies child who is in custody of CYF and not accessing education.

Social worker makes a referral to the Kauri Centre using referral form signed by Supervisor and Practice Manager. This is faxed or hand delivered to the Kauri Centre.

Referral will contain Care Report and any other reports that have been written by CYFs, Health, Education and counselling services that will add to the student’s referral.

Kauri Centre Director will contact social worker within 24 hours of receiving referral.

Decision will be made by Kauri Centre Director based on admissions criteria.

Student meets criteria and process for entry is instigated. Notify MoE of student’s details.

Social worker will make an appointment for student to visit the Kauri Centre. Discussion on policies and expectations. i.e. absconding and serious incidents. Kauri Centre staff will be responsible for analysing information from students' success plans.

Start date is confirmed.
Enrolment of Correspondence School and Hamilton Fraser High School is completed.
CYF letter to Correspondence School signed
CYF letter for permission for EOTC restraint signed.

Student visits, signs student contract and meets staff and students.

All agencies involved meet within three weeks of entry to identify goals.

Source: Kauri Centre Draft Strategic Annual Plan, (2006), p. 6
Appendix 2:

The Kauri Centre Scheme:

- Ten Point Programme Philosophy
- Programme Aims and Objectives
- Programme Emphasis & Priorities
- Personal Goals and Methods of Achievement
- Key Philosophical Underpinnings and Research Rationale
The Kauri Centre Key Philosophical Underpinnings and Research Rationale

Researched and written by T Harris 2006. A very brief over view of theoretical perspectives that support teaching practice innovation within the New Zealand Classrooms.

Here are very brief outlines of some of the general thinking which underpins some educational theories lending support to innovative, inclusive, culturally aware and student centred programme development. For a more in-depth discussion on these theories and their core tenets, generic and relatively short readings from web research are also included here. Each includes web site addresses so that further and more detailed information on content and application can be accessed easily.

NB. These brief descriptions of each theory are not meant to represent the theory in its fullness. They are written simply to give the reader the briefest overview on the generic content nature and possible relevance to education and classroom practice that each may have. The reader is encouraged therefore to read more widely; a valuable start possibly being to go to the web links and simply type in each theorists name.

**Maslow, Abraham:**

Maslow is famous for his “Hierarchy of Needs”. Simply put, he suggests strongly that unless a learner had been adequately fed, is not thirsty, has had enough sleep, feels loved, has sense of belonging and has access to shelter, that he or she can not learn effectively. He stressed that unless the “basic human needs” of a person were met, higher order “self actualisation” could never happen. He says we need to deal daily with the basic human needs of those in our care before we attempt any thing else!

**Ausubel, David:**

Ausubel believed that we all learn by attaching new learning to old learning; to knowledge that we already know. He believed that if a teacher linked new learning to concepts already known by the learner then the new connection hence learning will take place with more ease. He believed that we can look at any object that we have not seen before and by simply applying a raft of knowledge we already have we can begin to make informed predictions as to what the new object is. His theory has some technical aspects that are easy to learn eg “Advance Organisers”, we can all learn but essentially it is about helping create classroom climates where by prior learning is encouraged to be used to assist new attempts.

**Goodman, Paul:**

Goodman was a critique of formalised education and in particular schools. He was a “de-schooler” from the USA and wrote a great deal in the 60’s to 80’s about why schools and teachers were damaging learners. He believed that learners would generally be better off and more well and whole, if they never attended school. He raises questions that challenge teacher’s basics assumptions on the need and worth of schools. He believes learners and programmes in schools teach little of worth, and that most of it is simply propaganda. He believes that real learning should be about thinking and questioning and that those are not the skills and values schools in the western world value and encourage. He aligns himself amongst others to Neill of Summerhill fame, and is a good read if teachers want the content and philosophy of their teaching practice and programme to be questioned.
Piaget, Jean:

Piaget is known as the theorist that believed that all children have four stages of development to go through before they reach the adult fully thinking and independent stage. He believed it is important to know what skills and learning outcomes each child can make at each. He believed that children had to complete each stage before moving on to the next. Piaget believed that by observation and testing, a teacher could ascertain what level of development the learner was up to and therefore what that same teacher could expect of that learner. He also believed that knowing the stage of a learner should help design the content and skill outcome levels for learners in a programme. Each stage represents the child’s understanding of reality during that period he believed and that each, except for the last, is an inadequate approximation of reality. It is a good read for teachers who believe that children do develop through stages and that each is linked to completion of it before they can move on.

Bruner, Jerome:

Bruner was similar to Ausubel in that he believed that learning was and should always be an ‘active process’. He believed that learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge. He went a little deeper re the process requirement for this to happen. He thought that learners select and transform information, develop hypothesis, theories and predictions and make decisions and new learning, all based round what he termed “cognitive structures”. He believed that when learners had an experience, they attached the learning to ‘schema or mental models’ that they hold in their brains of other similar experiences that they have had. Through comparison and theory they then gain new meaning. He believed therefore that learning must be active and learners needs as many different experiences as is possible. They learn by doing and comparing and linking and finding similarities.

Vygotsky, Lev:

Vygotsky believed that the culture of a child was the most influential variable influencing their learning. He said that the human animal was the only species to have created culture and that every child develops within a context of a culture. He stressed that culture included family culture as well as ethnicity and class. He believed that through culture children gain much of the content of their thinking which really means their knowledge formation. He concluded that the surrounding culture or cultures of a child provides the process or means for them to think. He believed that culture taught learners what to think and how to perceive hence how to think and interpret. He believed that teachers had to understand the cultural contexts of learners as it was the greatest determinant of human development. Teachers must know the cultural context and possibly constraints that their class members exit and operate in.

Bishop, Russell:

Bishop is a Waikato University researcher who leads the research and implementation phases of the Te Kotahitanga Project. This is a programme designed and researched on Year 9 and 10 Maaori learners and is designed to help mainstream teachers develop better teaching methods when working with tiaiohi Maaori. Bishop’s research in 2001-2003 found that Maaori learners achieved best when the teaching style was more inclusive, more interactive and when there was a strong and genuine relationship and culture of care operating between themselves and their teacher. In a nut shell, the research and Bishop say that classrooms displays should represent and celebrate the Maaori world, that Maaori words and names need proper pronunciation and that there needs to be positive relationships forming. Research has showed that in the schools where this work has been introduced, there have been positive changes noted for many Maaori learners re outcomes.
Bloom, Benjamin:
Bloom developed a taxonomy to identify, explore and categorise the levels of abstraction found in the types of questions asked as parts of learning tasks and in the testing of children/learners. He believed that there were so called “lower order”, simple recall type questions round “knowledge and Comprehension” which were in the main more ‘straight forward’ for candidates to offer an answer on. He also believed that at the other end of the questioning continuum lay more difficult question options. Here were the questions that focused the candidate on the areas of thinking that required ‘analysis, synthesis and evaluative’ thought. They were a lot more difficult to answer. He believed that by developing the taxonomy, he could help teachers and others to become more aware of higher and lower order questioning and hence allow teachers to use them more deliberately in assessment and work tasks. This is an interesting read as it helps with setting of classroom tasks and assessments.

Gardner, Howard:
Gardner was the researcher who worked in the area of ‘multiple intelligence’. He believed that all learners have different strengths and learning styles and that class instruction therefore needed to be developed where by teachers could deliver to any student through their particular strength in learning style or intelligence. This researcher suggested that each teacher should, when designing their lesson, make deliberate attempts to include activities which accommodate or utilise at least three or four styles or intelligence. He believed that many children can not access their learning because the delivery mode used by the teacher does not fit with the receptive or learning style of the learners. This is a real challenge to the average teacher as they tend to deliver in only one or two ways only. Learners often are kinaesthetic or musical, linguistic, interpersonal, mathematical, indeed even artistic spatial to name but a few. Gardner’s writing explores them in more detail and includes some of his more contemporary additions such as “environmental, spiritual and naturalistic intelligences.

Rogers, Carl:
Rogers is a Humanist. He believed simply that the greatest power a person could have of and over another was that of “unconditional regard”. He believed that the power of genuine care and a relationship which was real would allow all other obstacles including learning and behaviour difficulties or issues to be over come. He believed that all people needed to feel that they were cared for and that they were valuable. He believed that people would attempt changes in how they faced up to and operating with in their world if the person standing with them genuinely cared for them and the outcomes. Teachers each have the chance to do this within their classrooms; the challenge to each teacher being to develop genuine relationships with all students before attempting to formally teach them. It is about connecting at the human level and when this happens management is all about relationship and hence respect and not simply about authority and discipline.

Durie, Mason:
Mason is a Maaori academic who works mainly in the field of health. He has written extensively on the environmental, ecological and human needs and uniqueness of Maaori. His theorising contents;
- Compares health to the four walls/cornerstones of a house
- Suggests there are four basic ingredients for good health/wellness
- All four components being necessary for strength and symmetry, that each representing a different dimension
- Consistent theme of integration- individual health is built into wider system, the boundary between personal and family identify blurred
- Also the division between temporal and spiritual, thoughts and feelings mental and physical are not clear cut
Gilligan, Robbie:

Gilligan, Professor Social Work at Trinity College Dublin, addresses some of the requirements needed to attune social policy and provision for vulnerable children/taiohi. The article contained here in this section, considers the parts children, families, communities, professionals, government and the wider public can play in creating conditions under which children can thrive. It argues that our approaches generally must be guided not only by an application of knowledge but also by a sense of hope. This article lends strong support to a more humanly focussed educational delivery for such young people/taiohi.
Appendix Three: Taaku Ara Newsletter