

**TE AUTE TRUST BOARD  
REMARKS TO GENERAL SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE  
STEPHEN JACOBI  
CHAIRMAN**

**3 MARCH 2016**

- Thanks for the opportunity to join you today in my capacity as Chairman of the Te Aute Trust Board
- Towards the end of last year I believe the St John's Trustees sought your guidance about the governance arrangements which had been put in place for the Te Aute Trust Board. This arose because questions had arisen about the propriety of these arrangements given that the same individual Trustees are governing both boards. I believe the St John's Trustees shared with you a legal opinion they had commissioned on the subject and requested any comment you would like to make
- I understand you decided not to offer any new guidance on these arrangements. The Te Aute Trustees welcome your continuing confidence in us
- These arrangements were made at a time of crisis for the two schools, which were threatened with imminent closure. They were adopted after extensive consultation with this body and with Te Kotahitanga and Te Pihopatanga. They were not entered into lightly but after what was (I hope) sober and careful reflection. It is of course quite appropriate that we should keep these arrangements under continuing review so I am pleased, as always, to meet with you today
- It has been two years since the present Te Aute Trustees were appointed by Te Pihopatanga. As I will be reporting to General Synod, in this time much has been achieved but there remains much to do. I do not believe we are yet in the position to hand over the trusteeship to new Trustees but I am confident that the day is surely coming when we will be able to do so in the knowledge that past problems are resolved
- I can report to you today that the kura are in good heart. The rolls have increased substantially. There are 111 boys at Te Aute (82 in hostel) up from 91 in 2015. There are 90 girls at Hukarere (70 in hostel), up from 66 in 2015. 16 girls transferred from Turakina Maori Girls' College with the support of the Tipene and Wikitoria Schools Trust Board which provided a scholarship for which we are very grateful
- In terms of academic Performance, thanks to the hard work of our Boards of Trustees and our Principals and staff, the kura are well ahead of national averages for all students and significantly above for Maori students:

	Hukarere	Te Aute
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Level 1	100%	95%
Level 2	100%	100%
Level 3	100%	100%

- The schools' special character and hostel operations have been significantly advanced through the hard work of our Proprietors' Board chaired by my fellow Trustee Maui Tongahau: the chaplains are fully resourced, the teaching of te reo has been enhanced by the appointment of specialist teachers and pastoral care assured by new social worker services. The contribution our pupils make to the life of our church at tangi and other significant occasions is always much appreciated
- The Proprietor's Board is now assisted by the appointment of Rev John Fairbrother as our part time Operations Manager in Hawke's Bay. John's brief is to help drive efficiencies across our operating environment working closely with the Principals and hostel managers
- The schools and hostels are undergoing significant refurbishment with:
  - new water supplies
  - new heating
  - new painting
  - new beds and mattresses
  - a refurbished sports field at Hukarere and a refurbished pool at Te Aute
- It gives me great pleasure to confirm today that we have also begun to build a new chapel at Hukarere, restoring to the kura its spiritual heart, which was the original gift and vision of Sir Apirana Ngata. Trustees have advanced this project in the knowledge that God's blessing will be upon the school as it grows in worship and whakaponu
- The iconic chapel at Te Aute is also undergoing refurbishment with the help of several partners
- We very much hope that members of General Synod will visit both schools in May and see this tangible progress for themselves
- This is all very good news but there are continuing problems:
  - the financial performance of the hostels still a concern to Trustees with both hostels still running at a loss
  - The financial results from our two farms are mixed:
    - Te Aute Farm (beef and sheep) is performing well
    - Ngawapurua Farm (dairy) is not performing well with issues still needing to be resolved.

- the farms are paying dividends to Trust but not at a sufficient level
- the loss of ownership of Rua Roa was a financial blow to the Trust, with the Court of Appeal deciding not to overturn the Maori Appellant Court decision
- We continue to take legal advice on the Trust's ground leases, which deliver a very inferior rate of return (1934 Ha of leased land returning it \$230,000 pa! or \$120/Ha p.a). This is now a significant matter between iwi, the church and the Government and we are in direct dialogue with the Attorney General in an attempt to find a solution
- I hope you will agree that we have not wasted these last two years! With careful governance, and with the continuing support of the church through the St John's Trustees, a bad situation is slowly but patiently being reversed
- I believe God is doing a new thing with these two schools. As the Psalmist says "If the Lord does not build the house, then those who build it work in vain"
- I cannot tell you exactly today when we will be able to ask Te Pihopatanga to appoint new Trustees. I hope we can start that conversation next year and that new Trustees can be appointed within the expiry of the initial mandate we were given which was five years. In the meantime the Te Aute Trustees continue to work for the best interests of the two schools and are grateful for the trust placed in them by the church
- We ask for your prayers for our schools, for the students, their families and their teachers. Ma te Atua aroha ratou e manaaki, e tiaki.