



Submission by  
Te Roopu Maori to the  
Otago University  
2007

## **Mihi**

Te Roopu Maori (TRM) would like to acknowledge the support we have received from both the Maori community and from The University of Otago.

Our networks with kaumatua and Maori community groups in the region have provided TRM with much needed support and encouragement. Our close relationship with the Maori Centre has allowed TRM to re-establish itself on campus while also playing a support role in terms of space allocation. Links with the other Otago Maori student associations (Te Whai Putake and Te Oranga ki Otakou) has meant TRM has been able to reach a broader range of students in an endeavor to foster whakawhanaungatanga (family atmosphere) on campus. Our networks with other Maori student associations around NZ and our affiliation with Te Mana Akonga have provided TRM with a strong support base.

We would also like to acknowledge the support TRM has received from The University of Otago. The support from Student Services has meant TRM has continued to hold on to 527 Castle St despite the collapse of our association in 2005. We cannot thank Property Services enough for their efforts in maintaining our premises, despite the challenges it presents. Finally yet importantly, our efforts in re-establishing TRM could not have been as successful without the support, both financial and operational, of OUSA.

## **Executive Summary**

- TRM is the Maori students association at The University of Otago representing all Maori students.
- TRM presents this submission on behalf of all Maori students at the University of Otago.
- TRM believes that the provision of a suitable building would greatly enhance the recruitment and retention of Maori students and further highlight the University of Otago's commitment to Maori student achievement.

## **Proposal**

1. That TRM have a suitable building in close proximity to the Maori centre to enable us to provide an overall quality service to Maori students. This initiative would ensure greater participation and representation for Maori and be consistent with the objectives set out in the Equal Educational Opportunities Policy.
2. That TRM have a suitable building in close proximity to the Maori Centre that enables us to provide students with a strong Maori base. This initiative would ensure Maori students receive academic, cultural and social support consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations as set out in the University Profile (2007-2009).

## **TRM attempts to find a solution**

Past executive members have sought various solutions to the problem of working in an inadequate facility. During the years there have been applications for funding made to agencies to renovate or rebuild the whare. Building plans have been drawn up and submitted along with submissions for improvements to the existing building.

Delays were experienced in 2000 when a possible project to demolish the whare was put on hold pending a new Space Advisory Committees consideration.

TRM sort OUSA support in seeking a resolution to the state of our building. Andrew Campbell (OUSA President 2000) contacted Graeme Fogelberg (past Vice Chancellor) asking that the University do an audit report on the house. In Campbell's opinion the building was sinking and questioned whether the University was fulfilling its Treaty obligations as stated in the University Charter and within the Education Act. He referenced recommendation 15 of the Treaty of Waitangi review which notes the establishment of Maori student associations in different faculties, of which TRM is the umbrella student association.

In 2000, a letter from Kalyan Mondal (Property Services) to Graeme Fogelburg (Vice-Chancellor) outlined what was required to get 527 Castle St up to an acceptable standard. Hadley and Robinson Ltd Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers report of 2000, confirmed that the foundations had subsided in the south-west corner resulting in the settlement of the house along the northern boundary. The life of the house was estimated to be 10-15 years and given the costs involved in improving the house, the letter stated that there were three potential options. The first option was to do nothing, the second, to re-pile the house and the third to re-pile and re-level the building at a cost of \$40k-\$50k. Given that the house was only valued at \$105k, the third option would mean 48% of the buildings value would be needed to bring the building up to an acceptable level. The letter stated the preferred option would be to do nothing substantial until a decision was made by the Space Allocation Committee.

Along with past TRM executives, we have attempted to find a solution to the condition of our whare. Each avenue explored has either been financially restrictive, too far off campus or subject to significant time delays.

Report by Toni Sinclair (Kaiwhakahaere for Te Roopu Maori)

*In the past year, I have made contact with Murray Hamilton and Barry McKay of Property Services to look at the feasibility of doing some repairs on the house at 527 Castle St. However, on inspection, Property Services made a decision not to spend any money on the house deciding it was not financially viable. Given the space shortage at University, I then approached OUSA for assistance. They were unable to offer us a solution due to their own space constraints. I have thought about the option of renting a property close to the University however this would*

*mean a large cut to our small budget and students would need to leave campus to use our services. At the beginning of 2007.*

## **Problems associated with working in sub-standard premises**

We are trying to work with the restrictions that the house at 527 Castle St offers us, but we would be able to attract a lot more students and therefore provide for a broader range of our students if we had a building that was not so dilapidated.

Currently on campus, we have a number of Maori Student Associations. Te Whai Putake (Maori Law Students), Te Oranga Ki Otakou (Maori Medical Students), Nga Mokai o te Whetu (Maori Dent Students), Te Roopu Kapa Haka, Maori Dentistry students, Te Mokopuna ki Aoraki, Maori social work students and soon to be established, Maori Students Commerce Association. We have set aside a space for Te Whai Putake complete with a computer and desks. We would like to see other Maori student associations have a place on campus whether that be in the TRM building or in their distinct areas.

This year, not unlike previous years, we have asked Property Services if they would consider upgrading the house. As detailed by David Richardson in a submission he submitted to the Capital Development and Space Allocation Committees,

*The house occupied by Te Roopu is beyond its economic life and is fit only for demolition.*

*(Property Services have a report from consultants to this effect)*

Given that space within the University is at a premium, TRM has had no option but to continue operating out of 527 Castle Street.

Despite our efforts, TRM cannot be seen to be a legitimate organisation given the substandard condition of the house. The state of the house also reflects badly on the University when we have visitors. Given the disparity we experience in comparison with other Maori Student Associations, the level of commitment shown by the University of Otago is visible and noticeable within Te Ao Maori. Recently we had students from other Universities visiting during an NZUSA conference. Due to the state of the house at 527 Castle St, we had to accommodate them in the already over-crowded, over-used, small **staff** kitchen of the Maori Centre.

We would like to be able to provide accommodation for manuhiri (visitors) so that we might host some of the various hui (conferences) currently held each year by other Universities. In order to do this effectively we would need a suitable kitchen, bathroom facilities and room where guests could sleep. Although we are aware that the Halls of Residence can cater for these needs outside of the University calendar, most of the conferences are during term. Also we envisage holding weekend wananga reo (total immersion Maori language workshops) and would like the

opportunity to host our manuhiri, “marae style”, however this option is not available given the dilapidated state of our building.

Despite our efforts to make the space more comfortable by re-topping tables, recovering chairs and purchasing computers etc, we still have to contend with rooms that have sloping floors, mice, pitted walls and ripped lino. Along with the problems our students face, Te Rito (TRM executive) are subject to working in those same conditions which doesn't do a lot for morale. It is hard to continue to work towards having a better association when you have to work in this sub-standard house. At the moment we are faced with a storage problem and are having to chain some of our equipment to the walls. We could purchase a shed but then would have to pay to have concrete laid and given that we are looking for an alternative property, we do not want to waste our money. We are therefore looking at the option of building shelves over the bath in the toilet. Clearly this is not preferable but we have no choice.

We have identified a need to preserve the art of making Maori food, so that these important skills are not lost. We would like to run workshops, run Kai time (fortnightly soup kitchens) and be able to make food for fundraising purposes. Our kitchen does not meet the requirements that the Council requires for a commercial kitchen nor does it meet our everyday needs. We have contracted a cleaner through Property Services however there is only so much a cleaner can do. Our efforts in achieving these goals are hindered due to the suitability of our kitchen. In the past TRM has made our facilities available to Pacific Student groups and we would hope that this could continue.

We are unable to cater to students with disabilities having no access into the building and given the state of the uneven floors, limited access within the building.

There will be students that we will never attract given the state of our house as evidenced by these comments when asked about their first impressions of the house.

*“My first impression of the house was that it was ugly, smelly, falling down, damp and generally not a nice place to be. The carpets were old and stained”*

*“This building needs a bulldozer”*

Although a few students made these comments, they represent the need for premises that are conducive to study and comfortable. Students expect more.

### **Achievements towards our objectives so far:**

- The purchase of four computers for students with the aim of installing another four, totaling eight computers by Semester Two, 2007.
- The purchase of a printer which can be used like lab printers, costing students 10c a page

- The purchase of a commercial hangi machine which has allowed students to make Hangi for fundraising and whakawhanaungatanga purposes already
- The purchase of a BBQ which allowed the Maori Centre to provide free sausages to students during O Week and can be used in the future for fundraising initiatives.
- Recovering seats at TRM and the re-topping of all our tables has meant some students have started using TRM as a place of study because it is more conducive to study
- Lockers. We have purchased 32 lockers with the view of buying another 32 if they prove to be popular, providing students with a much-needed service.
- The purchase of a dishwasher to maintain good hygiene practices.
- Negotiating with Property Services for the installation of pin boards in the hallway in an attempt to hide the state of the walls as well as provide essential notice boards.
- Negotiating with Property Services for the installation of a zip.
- The purchase of an outdoor BBQ table to provide a nice lunch area for our students.
- Taking registrations from people interested in Kapa Haka as well providing the leader of the group, a resource kit.
- Commercial cleaning services obtained to keep the whare clean
- Critic articles detailing upcoming events and issues for Maori students
- Attendance and participation in Reviews of departments
- New microwave and kitchen utensils
- We are also now actively supporting other Maori groups on campus by providing space and materials to support their needs.
- We are reorganising our organisation with the support of OUSA. OUSA is helping by taking over the accounting role and we are rewriting our constitution so that we are future proofed.
- Being clearly visible during O Week, encouraging participation by taking registrations for Kapa Haka, Mau Rakau, Seafood Gathering Day, Wananga, Sports Teams etc
- Made contact with Property Services to organise the refurbishment of tables, a new toilet, plumbing maintenance, repair of the floors in one room, the installation of combination locks and quotes on possible refurbishments.
- Purchase of basic Maori language posters to encourage Te Reo for beginners in an effort to be inclusive of all Maori students, regardless of their Maori language proficiency.
- The purchase of two office computers, one printer/fax/photocopier machine and stationery.
- We have approved a grant application for Te Kaik (Maori radio show on Radio 1) in order to support their programme. This means Maori students are able to keep up with current Maori events and music.
- We have set up a TRM Art Exhibition prize for Maori artists in an effort to foster more integration and also as a way of working together with OUSA during the Art Exhibition week.

## History of Te Roopu Maori

Te Roopu Maori has a proud history of assisting Maori students during their time at Otago University. Students have gained a sense of whakawhanaungatanga when participating in the numerous events sponsored/run by TRM. TRM has provided students with:

- Recreational activities – Sports Teams
- Annual Maori student Ball
- Learning workshops incorporating cultural knowledge
- Soup Kitchens enabling students to meet one another
- Fundraising initiatives
- A well run association where exec members were available to students and active in their roles within University structures
- The establishment of the Maori Centre through successful lobbying
- The establishment of Maori Student graduations through successful lobbying
- Seats on Council in order to advocate on behalf of Maori student interests
- Creation of a National Maori student collective, Te Mana Akonga
- Links to the Maori community, (Runanga, Hauora and local kaumatua)

In the last two years with the added responsibility of managing the funds (previously done by OUSA) and running an organization without staff, we have seen a decline and eventual collapse of our association. Services for Maori students have been non-existent and the accountability of the association questionable. This has eventuated in the misuse of funds, lack of equity within the student body and lack of systems within the association during 2004 and 2005. Given the problems experienced by TRM in the last few years, we have made a decision to give our accounts back to OUSA, as they have the internal accounting structures required to run an association. To avoid the association being subject to personalities each year, we have identified a need for an office manager who can provide direction and support to exec members and therefore students.

TRM has moved on from the problems experienced in 2004 and 2005, having paid all our outstanding debts. Since August 2006, we have set about rebuilding our association and we are now in a strong position going ahead. With the continued support of the University, OUSA, Maori community and our Maori students, TRM will once again be an association, we can **all** be proud of.

## **Te Roopu Maori Objectives relevant to this submission**

- Be an initial point of contact with the Maori community on campus for both students and their whanau, increasing potential for further recruitment.
- The concept of whakawhanaungatanga is that of bringing together people as though they were family. Providing a space where this can be achieved is essential to TRM's success and therefore the success of Maori students.
- To create a culturally positive, safe and inviting environment that is uniquely Maori.
- Provide a user-friendly, inclusive facility open to the whole university community.
- To act as a support base for Maori students and thereby increase retention and the numbers of Maori graduates.
- To work closely with the Maori centre to act as a support base.
- Provide a facility that is an ideal study environment for Maori students.
- To allow for academic achievement and therefore retention of Maori students through the allocation of space for tutorials and study.
- To provide services which address not only the academic needs but also social and political needs of Maori students at Otago University.
- Working with the University to meet the goals of the "Equal Educational Opportunities Policy"
- Be an independent political voice for Maori students. This enables us to advocate strongly for Maori on arising student issues on local and national levels.
  - To promote and encourage active participation in the association from a broader range of students.
  - To promote the use of Te Reo Maori, tikanga Maori and mana Maori.
  - To liaise with the broader Maori community at local, regional and national levels.
  - To uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and its provisions in the pursuit of these objectives.
  - To provide unique cultural events based on a Maori worldview such as Kapa Haka, which specifically cater to the social, cultural and spiritual needs of Maori students.
  - To host manuhiri in a culturally appropriate way by being able to accommodate them, provide them with meals.

## **University Community and Te Roopu Maori**

TRM is the parallel student body to OUSA. We have a Memorandum of Understanding whereby each organisation recognises the autonomy of the other and strive to reflect the economic and political equity envisaged in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. While the respective memberships have many similar concerns, being two autonomous organisations allows for distinctive focuses and issues.



Having TRM at the University of Otago raises the profile of the University within the Maori community. As an association, our primary goal is to encourage more Maori to come to Otago University and to act as a support base for those who attend.

We have a close relationship with the Maori Centre and work together with them on many events during the year. We participate in the graduation ceremonies, O Week and various hui in order to achieve our combined goals of recruitment and retention of Maori students.

We are aware that there are space constraints at the Maori Centre and if TRM had adequate facilities, we would be in a position to provide assistance.

TRM are in the position to help the University and the Maori Centre by providing a space for IT resources, including cal computers for students and a lab printer all connected to the University system.

Given our desire to host visitors, we would also be in a position to provide temporary accommodation for students during an emergency/natural disaster.

#### Building requirements.

1. Study/Library/Archives Area – Desks, Chairs, Shelving, Lockable storage (3)
2. Offices – for secretary and exec members (1)
3. Computer room – computer desks, chairs, computers, printer (1)
4. Hui room – table and chairs (1)
5. Locker area (1) (could be inside or outside)
6. Kitchen that meets food and hygiene standards– storage, bench space, space for whiteware, oven and servery
7. Bathroom with 2 toilets and 2 showers to be host manuhiri (visitors)
8. Laundry – whiteware, hot water cupboard, 2 basins, storage for linen
9. Dining Room – tables and chairs to run good soup kitchens and cater for manuhiri (visitors)
10. Storage room – shelves

Some rooms within the facility would inevitably be multi-purpose. Study rooms could double as meeting rooms and dining rooms if necessary.

## Conclusion

It is the TRM submission, with the support from the Maori community that the University of Otago take responsibility for ensuring that the facilities of TRM are of an acceptable standard. It is our submissions recommendation that the University of Otago takes action in working towards finding a suitable building.

Unfortunately, TRM have lodged submissions regarding the same issue since 1993, with no resolution yet. We envisage being an association that pursues and achieves both our aims and those of our students. We believe that the allocation of an adequate building will make the pursuit of these goals that much easier.

In order to achieve this, TRM is prepared to be involved in the refurbishments of a building by providing assets that are appropriate to our association while also adding value to the property. This would ensure the whare meets **both** TRM and Otago Universities needs, now and in the future.

We look forward to your prompt response regarding this urgent issue.

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