



## Event backgrounder: Education Minister meeting with Auckland University of Technology Vice-Chancellor and Chief of Staff

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Minister of Education
<b>From:</b>	Deirdre Marshall, Manager Delivery and Projects
<b>Date:</b>	29 May 2023
<b>Reference:</b>	E-23-00450

### Purpose

1. You are hosting Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Damon Salesa, and his Chief of Staff on Thursday 1 June 2023.
2. At the meeting AUT will provide you with a high-level briefing about the university and its priorities, and share what it is doing to foster equity, student engagement, and student success. AUT will provide you with an update on its Financial Recovery Programme and would also like to discuss opportunities for employing other models of funding to address student needs.
3. This event backgrounder provides you with a brief summary of AUT; and current issues of interest involving the university (aligned to AUT's own high-level briefing topics). 9(2)(b)(ii)  
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4. We recommend that you release this event backgrounder, with some information potentially withheld to protect the confidentiality of advice and to maintain the effective conduct of public affair through the free and frank expression of opinions.

### About AUT

5. AUT was founded as Auckland Technical School in 1895, offering evening classes only. Daytime classes began in 1906 and its name was changed to Auckland Technical College. In 1913 it was renamed Seddon Memorial Technical College.
6. In the early 1960s educational reforms resulted in the separation of secondary and tertiary teaching; two educational establishments were formed; the tertiary (polytechnic) adopting the name Auckland Technical Institute (ATI) in 1963 and the secondary school continuing with the same name.
7. For three years ATI and the secondary school co-existed on the same site, but by 1964 the secondary school had moved to a new site in Western Springs and eventually became Western Springs College.

8. In 1989, ATI became Auckland Institute of Technology (AIT), and then Auckland University of Technology (Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau) on 1 January 2000 when the polytechnic was granted university status.

## **Current issues of interest**

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### **Ki Uta Ki Tai – AUT’s learner success approach**

9. To elevate learner success and achieve educational equity, AUT has introduced Ki Uta Ki Tai, a new approach centred around the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This approach seeks to dismantle barriers inhibiting academic, cultural, and personal outcomes.
10. Guided by the Vice-Chancellor and Provost, the Senior Leadership Team, supporting committees, and student representatives oversee the implementation of Ki Uta Ki Tai. AUT is committed to weaving a cultural development approach into a centralised strategy encompassing the entire organisation. The goal is to ensure culturally competent, mana-enhancing student support services and staff professional development. Additionally, they are developing an integrated student service model to provide timely and proactive support for all learners.
11. Ki Uta Ki Tai symbolises AUT's ongoing quest for educational equity and learner success. Underpinned by strong leadership, dedicated commitment, and an unwavering focus on learner outcomes, the commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and the centralisation of its strategies will reinforce this vision.

### **Setting up the Tūwhitia! Accelerating Learner Success Fund**

12. We have recommended to you that we need a dedicated funding stream to drive learner success. The key aims of this investment would be to:
  - increase the likelihood of tertiary education organisations (TEOs) successfully implementing learner success initiatives;
  - accelerate their initiatives so more learners are successful earlier;
  - broaden the scope of learner success initiatives so more learners can be positively affected; and
  - reduce cost barriers for those TEOs that do not have the resources to invest to the level required.
13. Whole-of-organisation change initiatives will have benefits for all learners, but especially underserved learners.
14. A dedicated fund for non-volume-based learner success initiatives sends a strong signal from government that better supporting underserved learners to achieve equity of participation and achievement is important and urgent.

9(2)(f)(iv)

### Financial Recovery Programme

17. In September 2022, AUT announced it was implementing a Financial Recovery Programme that could result in up to 230 job losses. The key reason given was the impact of COVID-19 on international students, declining domestic enrolments, higher inflation and economic pressures.

18. In early 2023, the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) ordered AUT to withdraw its notices of termination to Tertiary Education Union (TEU) members affected, due to the university not following the terms of the Collective Employment Agreement properly.

9(2)(ba)(i)

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A reduction of 170 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) was still achieved, split relatively evenly across academic and professional staff. The programmes that were targeted had low demand or were generally underperforming.

9(2)(ba)(i)

21. The Vice-Chancellor has been clear with staff that no large scale financial driven changes will be made this year (although there may be targeted changes as AUT responds to shifts in demand, as it would in any year).

22. The savings made through the Financial Recovery Programme will allow AUT to be able to invest in new areas, including learner success initiatives.

### Exploring other models of funding

23. As a university of technology, and Aotearoa New Zealand's youngest university, AUT considers it is unique compared to the rest of the sector.

24. AUT delivers to a large proportion of Māori and Pasifika learners, especially from deprived areas and lower decile schools, with a large presence in South Auckland.

25. Given the learner support required for many of its students, AUT has consistently noted it wants to discuss opportunities for models of funding with you that better address the needs of all learners.

26. We consider AUT is likely to want to discuss three key areas with regards to funding:

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*Deirdre Marshall*

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Manager Delivery and Projects,  
Tertiary Education Commission

29 May 2023

*Hon Jan Tinetti*

**Hon Jan Tinetti**

Minister of Education

01/06/2023

9(2)(b)(ii)

## Appendix B: Biography

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### Vice-Chancellor: Dr Damon Salesa



Dr Damon Salesa was appointed Vice-Chancellor Auckland University of Technology in March 2022. Previously he was Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific at the University of Auckland. During his time at the University of Auckland, Dr Salesa served on the Executive Committee tasked with the strategic leadership and governance of the organisation.

Dr Salesa has also served as Co-Head of Te Wānanga o Waipapa (School of Māori Studies & Pacific Studies) at the University of Auckland. He previously worked at the University of Michigan for ten years holding roles of Director of the Asian Pacific Islander American Studies Program and as an Associate Professor in the History Department and Program in American Culture.

He is a prizewinning historian and former Rhodes Scholar. After obtaining his MA with first class honours at the University of Auckland, he completed his doctoral studies at Oxford University. He is the author and editor of many books and academic articles and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, and currently serves on their Council.