

# E Tū Ma Tātou

Our People. Our Challenges. Our Future.

## PROPOSAL TO MERGE: SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the proposal to merge our two institutes. This paper provides a summary of views expressed.

All Whitireia and WelTec staff and students were invited to provide feedback. Over 700 stakeholders were also advised of the proposal and invited to comment. The proposal was published on Whitireia and WelTec websites and promoted via Twitter, Facebook, and staff and student-only channels.

### **132 submissions were received, predominately from staff**

#### **Staff: 81 responses**

Whitireia staff: 28

WelTec staff: 24

WelTec & Whitireia staff: 26

Unknown: 3

#### **Students: 25 responses**

Whitireia students: 17

WelTec students: 7

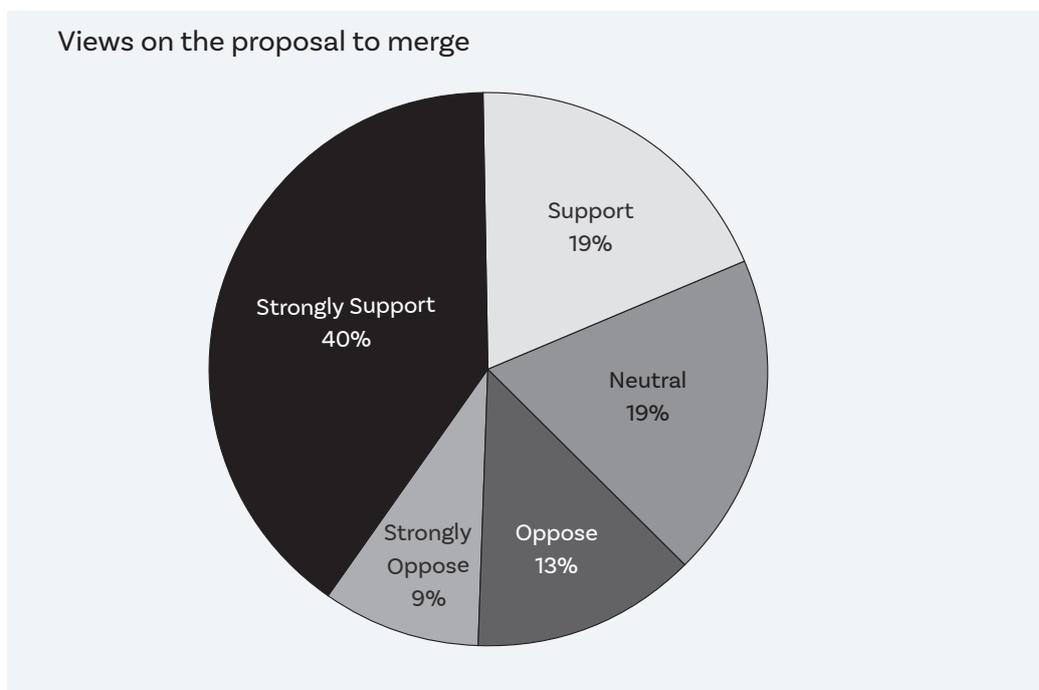
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#### **Stakeholders: 26 responses**

Varied including the Tertiary Education Union (TEU), former staff, iwi and Pacific community leaders, other education providers including high schools and tertiary institutes, employers and industry representatives.

## *Strong support, overall, for the proposal to merge*

Overall, 59 percent of respondents supported or strongly supported the merger proposal. 22 percent were opposed or strongly opposed. The remainder (19 percent) were neutral.



Stakeholders were generally more supportive of the proposal to integrate with 66 percent expressing support or strong support and 17 percent were neutral.

Views of staff varied depending on their relationship with each institute:

- **WelTec staff:** 75% supported or strongly supported the proposal; 13% were neutral; 12% were opposed or strongly opposed.
- **Whitireia staff:** 38% supported or strongly supported the proposal; 31% were neutral; 31% were opposed or strongly opposed.
- **Whitireia and WelTec staff:** 73% supported or strongly supported the proposal; 19% were neutral; 8% opposed or strongly opposed.

Due to the small number of responses from students, a breakdown has not been provided. Overall, views of students were more negative toward the proposal.

## *Predominant themes*

### **One new combined institute would deliver regional focus – but not all agreed**

Many who were supportive of, or neutral about, the merger believed the merger would result in stronger provision of education in the Wellington region. Other benefits included: less confusion for students, removing duplication and saving money. Many also expressed the view that a merger was inevitable and should have occurred earlier.

As acknowledged above, 22 percent of respondents opposed or strongly opposed the proposal.

### **Mixed views on name**

55 percent of respondents expressed a view on what the new institute should be called if the merger proceeded. Some also offered views on a possible logo or visual identity.

- 38 percent of respondents who answered this question preferred the name Wellington Institute of Technology. Many acknowledged this was the best decision in light of the financial state of both Whitireia and WelTec. Almost all expressed support for creating a new logo and using a new colour palette to capture the new identity of the two institutes under one umbrella. Many endorsed the idea of giving each campus a Māori name, including continuing to refer to the Porirua campus as Whitireia.
- Over a quarter (27 percent) were supportive of using the name WelTec. These were predominately students and staff of WelTec, although this view was not universal among these groups. Many wanted to recognise Whitireia in the logo, for example using the W from the current Whitireia logo or a combined colour palette.
- Over a quarter (26 percent) wanted to find a new name for the merged institute. A number suggested working with iwi to agree a Māori name.
- Nine percent wanted to continue using the name Whitireia.
- Shaping up and communicating our new joint vision and values was identified by many as very important. There was a very strong desire to co-develop new values for the new institute, in recognition that an institute's identity is far more than its name.



### Concern for loss of Whitireia

- There was strong concern expressed that the merger would result in a loss of identity, community connection, reputation and culture. There was also concern that the academic performance of Whitireia would be weaker.
- Some opposed the merger because they believe it would be a takeover of Whitireia by WelTec. They expressed concern for the negative outcomes this would create for staff, students and the Porirua community. There was very strong concern that it would result in a weaker focus on, and connection with, the Porirua community.
- Others wanted to see the two institutes come together as equals.
- Students expressed concern that some highly regarded Whitireia programmes, for example nursing, may not be recognised by employers if they were a Wellington Institute of Technology programme.

### Senior leadership

- Some respondents wanted to see the Chief Executive and Joint Leadership Team held to account for what they described as a too-slow response to the financial situation.
- Some welcomed the Minister's decision to replace the Council with a Commissioner, saying it was important the Council were held to account for their role.
- There was a desire expressed by some staff to reduce the number of senior managers at tier 2 and 3.

### Concerns for WelTec too

- There was a view among some WelTec staff that WelTec would be weakened by having to absorb the debts of Whitireia.

### **Te Kāhui Auaha campus is the root of many of the problems**

- A view was expressed by some staff that neither institute would be in this financial situation but for the decision to build Te Kāhui Auaha.

### **Need to ensure merger process supports staff, is inclusive and keeps people well informed**

- There was a strong desire among staff for an inclusive change programme that supports staff, keeps people informed, and provides clarity on the scope and path for change.

## *Strengths of the proposal*

Respondents identified the following as main strengths of the proposal:

- We would continue to serve the Wellington region.
- Easier for students to access wider range of courses.
- Better chance of financial sustainability/cost savings/streamlining and consistency. Makes sense in terms of cost.
- A single institute means less confusion, integrated marketing effort, clearer brand, stronger voice in the ITP sector.
- Whitireia can benefit from WelTec's stronger international brand.
- Opportunity to retain the high performing programmes of Whitireia.
- Students get to complete their qualifications.
- Opportunity for future focus, build on core strengths of both.
- Whitireia staff may get to keep their jobs compared to the alternative.

## *Weaknesses of the proposal*

Respondents identified the following as main weaknesses of the proposal:

- Worry that the value of Whitireia degrees would be lessened/less well recognised by employers.
- May lose the strengths of Whitireia e.g. student diversity, identity, community and whānau focus.
- The academic performance of Whitireia may be weakened.
- The Whitireia nursing programme has a great reputation. Students would like the option of graduating as a Whitireia student.
- Potential for student confusion.
- Fear about job security.
- Loss of frontline/back office staff may have a negative impact on student experience, tutor workload.
- Would be a challenge to bring the two institutes' different cultures together.

## *Other themes included:*

- Hope that the ITP Roadmap 2020 will address funding issues faced by the sector.
- Students don't feel informed about the changes that have been made across both institutes over the past 12 months. They are concerned about increased costs especially for travel if they need to shift to a new campus.

