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# *Simon Kenny*

## *McDonald's Head of Communications*

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I can still remember when I started at McDonald's a decade ago being told that part of my role was to oversee some scholarships we did with AUT University. Kelly Gunn was in the McDonald's comms team already, and early on she noted (positively, but firmly) that the interviews and selection for the 'McDonald's babies' was something she valued highly to be involved with.

Message received.



I spent most of my time in my first few years listening and observing the 'old hands' like Hariata Mareroa, Kitea and Wiremu Tipuna to understand what underpins the relationship and how it had become such a successful model. This also sparked conversations at McDonald's and about our approach to te ao Māori. The 20th anniversary event was one of my first experiences of the strong connection those associated with the karahipi maintain. And boy did the floating pavilion rock that night.

Over the last six to seven years my involvement has been more first hand. Spending many hours in cars with Hariata, and lunch and dinner stops with Wiremu Sarich, has given me more food for thought, evolved my views on the role of the scholarships, how we pick our recipients, and how we celebrate what success looks like.

While meeting the young people who have bravely put themselves forward for consideration is always inspiring, I often find the 'corridor conversations' we have at schools helps to articulate for me the strength of the scholarship. I hear first hand comments from teachers, parents and others associated with the scholarship about how alumni are going - jobs, further study, children, travel overseas and returning to Tai Tokerau. The positive impact comes in many forms and it is not a linear journey.

Recently, the McDonald's global team showcased the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau scholarships as best practice for community connection. We've welcomed a global McDonald's CEO onto the AUT University Marae and last year the current CEO Chris Kempczinski posted on LinkedIn in te reo Māori. Makitarana's in Aotearoa is still on a journey with te ao Māori, and those associated with the karahipi continue to help and inspire us to continue.

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# *Kitea Tipuna*

## *Te Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive*



When one considers the adage that it takes a village to raise a child, one can but only think that McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship for Māori students to study at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is an apt description for this scholarship programme.

With its 30 year history, it is one of the longest running and most successful scholarship programmes in the county, creating intergenerational success for many whānau and communities across Tai Tokerau Northland and bringing opportunities to whānau and communities who without this scholarship might have seen very different outcomes.



When you seek to transform individuals the unintended consequence is that you transform entire communities and begin to nurture a culture of success that ripples across generations.

This scholarship programme was the brain child of then CEO of McDonald's New Zealand Alan Dunn who had a vision to support rangatahi from Tai Tokerau Northland to realise their potential through University study. For many Tai Tokerau rangatahi, University study was not an option given that many whanau in the North believed the costs to be too prohibitive, so McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship programme was born.

AUT was selected as an appropriate partner as there was an existing relationship between the University and McDonald's NZ and staff worked together to develop a holistic programme that went beyond simply giving rangatahi money to go off to Auckland to study. The scholarship programme's fundamental approach was centred on whānau support and whānau success, from partnering with Northland schools, in particular principals, teachers, guidance counsellors and careers advisors who believed in the philosophy of whānau support and whānau success. Schools needed to trust that their students would be supported to be successful when they went to University. Parents and whānau needed to trust that their babies would be supported to be successful. AUT and McDonalds New Zealand was charged with this entrustment. The programme included recruitment strategies that were particularly designed to complement this whānau approach. Students would be interviewed by staff of AUT and McDonald's NZ and by association, their schools and their whānau, who also took the opportunity to ask questions of the scholarship panel. The relational approach which was developed over time and based on whakawhanaungatanga and deep trust went both ways.

Successful scholarship recipients were then brought onto the University in a way that encouraged whanaungatanga. Five scholarship recipients lived together in a University apartment and as well as supporting each other to be successful, the University implemented a tuakana teina and whānau support programme that followed the students throughout their studies. Upon graduation, additional support was offered as well as an alumni programme for graduates to connect with new cohorts of scholarship recipients to share with them their wisdom and experience.

I know many would join me in particularly acknowledging Hariata Mareroa, also known as Māmā. The deep relationships she has created, the many doors she has opened, and the many students who have passed through her office and across the graduation stage are testament to not only her, but also of her unrelenting passion for and her single minded focus on seeing rangatahi of Tai Tokerau Northland succeed and bringing that success back to the North for the benefit of whānau and communities of her home rohe of Te Tai Tokerau Northland.

I am proud to have added my small bit to this scholarship programme and am only one of many in this village we call our McDonald's Scholarship Whānau. I have many wonderful memories of the scholarship programme and the people I have had the privilege to meet and work with.

Memories include principals and teachers who would meet us at the school reception area to take us through to the interviews and as we would walk for the three minutes or so, they would express everything great about their student without taking a breath saying 'we have the perfect student for your programme.'

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Parents beaming with pride as we interviewed their babies but you knew that they were praying deep down that their baby would be one of the successful scholarship recipients because their hands would be white from clenching throughout an hour long interview.

Students so confident and nervous that you wanted to give every single one a scholarship but you knew you couldn't.

Having to make phone calls to unsuccessful recipients, that was particularly difficult, but there was such grace and humility in those phone conversations.

Attending school prize-givings to present the scholarship and seeing an entire school perform haka to say congratulations or seeing a student give a speech of thanks and break down in tears and seeing a mum walk onto the stage to hold her baby as she tries to complete her speech.

Hariata always had tissues in her bag for these occasions.

The trials and tribulations of supporting students as they studied, from disappointing grades and relationship breakups to new friendships and the stresses of exams and assignments, and even going to the apartment for dinner with the students and realising that in one particular year, none of the students knew how to cook as we were served raw chicken for dinner, thank goodness for McDonald's vouchers. That was an important lesson for all of us and became a very important question in the interviews.

Knowing that all this effort was seeing students walk across the graduation stage in full regalia receiving their degree, again Hariata would have tissues in her bag for such occasions. And now we see students who have become successful professionals in business, health, communications, science, hospitality, tourism and many more professions and they have families of their own and the next generation of scholarship recipients are getting ready to apply. Intergenerational success within whānau that ripples across Northland. The scholarship programme has a long and wonderful history and I have no doubt that it will continue to be successful due to the hard work and dedication of many.

It is an honour and a privilege to be part of such a wonderful scholarship programme and I am excited to now see the expansion of the scholarship programme into my home rohe of Te Tairāwhiti East Coast which acknowledges the principles with which the scholarship programme is based on.



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*Tangata ako ana i te whare,  
te turanga ki te marae, tau ana.*

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# Gráinne Troute

*Former McDonald's Managing Director*

“ At the time I became involved, the McDonald's AUT scholarship programme had been in place for several years and the structure, with its unique fusion of financial and socio-cultural support, had largely been established.

McDonald's philosophical and cultural alignment with AUT was very strong, along with our shared long-term commitment to the programme. I have treasured memories of visiting schools and marae across Northland to meet the remarkable, high-potential candidates who were often accompanied and supported through their interviews by whānau.

I particularly recall the joint determination between McDonald's and AUT to not exclude any high-potential candidates for whom, due to specific personal circumstances, there was a higher risk they would be unable to complete their studies. The scholarship's kaupapa was that it was important to embrace that increased risk because with it came enormous opportunities for impact.

This scholarship is something special. I am so very impressed with everything these rangitahi Māori have achieved over the years and warmly wish them all every future happiness. ”



## **Kate Porter**

### ***Former McDonald's Regional Manager***

“My first conversation with Hariata was when she told me (firmly) that we'd be taking my car. It was the first of many, many orders I was given by this tiny human; diminutive in size but larger than life in every other way.

I had been in my role at McDonald's for a few months when I found out I was going to be travelling north and interviewing for the McDonald's AUT Scholarship. I was excited - my partner and I were regular visitors to Tai Tokerau, and the chance to get out of Auckland and out of work for a few days sounded great.

I didn't know however that I'd be travelling for five days straight with Hariata and Wiremu in my car, nor that we would spend every waking moment together, and I certainly didn't know at that point that Hariata could out-talk me or that Wiremu's search for good kai knows no bounds.

But I also had no idea how much this trip would end up meaning to me, or the next four years of Northland trips I was lucky enough to be invited on.

“ ***I was crying for the amazing young people I had met.*** ”

On the second night together, after our first day of interviews, I came out of the final school and cried. Then I went back to the motel and cried. Then I called my mum and cried. I wasn't crying out of pity for the lives I had the privilege of experiencing for a moment; I wasn't crying out of shame for the inequity in our education system; but I was crying for the amazing young people I had met, and their incredible teachers, whose hope and passion I was part of, even for just an hour.

I remember saying to my mum, how can I possibly be involved in a choice? How can I possibly stand up and say to someone, you get to go and you don't? And that's how it felt. Like a privilege to introduce someone to the AUT McDonald's whānau. It wasn't the scholarship money that was important - I soon learnt that. It was the house, the togetherness, the awhi.

I had some amazing moments over my time involved with the scholarship - like driving through horrendous weather to Panguru and feeling like we were truly in Middle Earth, or arriving at Opononi Area School and wishing everyone had that view to learn from; meeting Blue from Ōkaihau College, or the wonderful John Tapene at Northland College.

Katene leading Te Iwi E at get-togethers, Hariata's continual pointing and waving at family members as we drove. It's a time in my life that I will always hold so close.

But one memory stands out. I'm not sure what year it was that Hariata made me sit on stage with the teachers at the Whangārei Boys High prize giving. I had to sit for two hours in the front row on stage facing 1000 teenage boys, and the testosterone was overwhelming!!

Then, when our recipient was announced, a powerful haka rang out from a huge group of his school mates, which he then answered with a solo haka in response. I'm not sure I've ever pinched myself harder to hold back the tears as our scholarship recipient stood there surrounded by his peers who were so proud of him, and then proudly stood his ground in return.

It's been said before, and before, and before...He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata. But it's not just people who make the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship so real, it's the land, it's the history, it's the Hariata, it's the Wiremu, it's the Kitea, it's the house, it's all of it together. We will all never be the same for our experience, and that's a good thing.

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# Kimberly Bartlett

## **Former Communications Manager for McDonalds**

“ Ko Kimberley Bartlett toku ingoa - I worked on the scholarship mahi from 2012 until 2016. It was hugely interesting and rewarding work, and my trips to Te Tai Tokerau with Wiremu and Hariata were also formative in the way they gave me a framework to, for the first time, connect into my whakapapa (Tūwharetoa, Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Whakaue).

“ ***I have come leaps and bounds  
since then.*** ”

Doing the scholarship work I felt deeply connected to my purpose, and it's one of the work experiences that has led me to where I am now - studying the profession of counselling at Massey University at the ripe old age of 41!

I am so grateful for my time on the scholarship waka.

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## *Joanna Redfern-Hardisty*

### *Former Director of Communications*

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I was fortunate to be involved with the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship during my time with McDonald's New Zealand in the 2000s. From initially drafting the profiles of successful students to being part of the interview process with the AUT team Hariata and Kitea – what an honour to have a small part in this incredible journey. The kaupapa this programme is based on is unwavering and uplifting, with every student, whānau and school embraced and encouraged.

Whānau dinners at McDonald's Head Office were always a firm date in the diary and an exciting opportunity to hear how our students, past and present, were tracking with their studies, careers and in their personal lives.

Acknowledgement to past McDonald's New Zealand CEO Alan Dunn for launching this programme, my previous McDonald's manager Liam Jeory for allowing me the opportunity to be involved, and to Hariata, Kitea and the AUT team for truly making the programme sing, offering this unique opportunity for Tai Tokerau Northland rangatahi and supporting them every step of the way. To all the students – ngā mihi for allowing us to be part of your journey, you have all learnt and taught us so much and I wish you well.

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“ Ka waiho iho e au, ma koutou te moemoea,  
He mea piripoho nei naku,  
me oku hoa maha i roto i ngā tau. ”

