

Robert Newport

Careers Advisor – Ōkaihau College

At the time the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship was brought to my attention I was newly appointed as a Careers Advisor in a Decile Two Year 7 to 13 College in Northland, liaising with Auckland Institute of Technology to get some of my students moving on to exciting futures in education with limited whānau support and very limited means.

I have always been extremely grateful for the initiative of McDonald's in providing this Scholarship. It offered a way of helping students with the transition from the Far North to the "Big Smoke-Auckland". The Scholarship was unique in that it provided financial support, mentoring and accommodation. For students from my small rural setting these critical elements were a way forward.

The first Scholarships were awarded for Business programmes and my first recipient transitioned to a Certificate in Business which empowered her to an amazing future both here (Aotearoa) and Australia. The most important element of the Scholarship is the mentoring and with this I have enormous respect for Hariata Mareroa who through the full 30 years has been Māmā to my students while in Auckland. Her door was always open often for a quick catch up or even some food. Many times Hariata would email me to write a reference for a student to apply for extra funds to ensure they were housed and fed. The original structure guaranteed a recipient work at McDonald's to support their financial commitments. This was a brilliant scheme in every way and I believe Ōkaihau College has benefitted enormously for this link with AIT and later AUT. I think Ōkaihau College has had in excess of 10 recipients which has seen an investment from McDonald's of over half a million dollars over this 30-year period.

The creator of this Scholarship is to be honored as the model is the very best I have ever encountered. McDonald's must be also honored for staying the course and sticking closely with the original concept. Many young Māori from the North have wonderful lives as an outcome of this programme.

This Scholarship is the original corporate model for changing outcomes in education. McDonald's have never publicly paraded the brilliance of this Scholarship and the outcome it has generated. I believe that is well overdue as the alumni of this program should make it public how amazing the scholarship is or has been for them. On behalf Ōkaihau College and all the whānau who have benefitted from this Scholarship I thank McDonald's, AUT and Hariata for this long journey and the amazing successes my students have had.

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Patrick Wilson

Former McDonald's New Zealand Managing Director

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The McDonald's leadership team always looked forward to the annual catch-up with McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship participants, past and present. It may sound like a cliché, but it was always very humbling and 'soul lifting' being involved with young people full of potential, energy and hope. Being such a positive experience, we never struggled to have McDonald's team members in attendance. I was especially proud that McDonald's never actively tried to publicly promote its involvement.

The longevity and success of the scholarship program is a testament to everyone involved. In particular, I cannot praise enough the great work of the AUT University team. There are many talented and great characters but front and centre is the marvellous force of nature that is Hariata Mareroa.

Hariata epitomises the dedication, passion and deep care the good people of AUT take with each and every scholarship recipient.

Sometimes it feels like things are just meant to be.

I was deeply saddened when Kitea announced he was leaving Auckland to take up a new job in his home town of Wairoa. The prospect of losing someone that had contributed so much was the catalyst to making the decision to create the Tairāwhiti Scholarship. I had always wanted to extend the McDonald's Scholarship in a meaningful way that didn't risk diluting what was already a successful program. The addition of a scholarship for the Tairāwhiti region was a perfect way to achieve this, with the added benefit that in time it could prove to be a blueprint for further extensions in the future.

I will be forever grateful for being afforded the opportunity to participate in the scholarships.

Thank you again to all that helped make it what it is today.

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Jason Haitana

First McDonald's Scholarship Graduate: Bachelor of Communications

“My name is Jason and I along with Ursula from Dargaville and Consuela from Opononi were the very first selected for the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship. Times were different then; this is 1992, and Tāmaki Makaurau for us all was an exciting adventure.

For myself, and others, the vision and the heart behind the scholarship shifted when Hariata took over from Hana Wilcox. Though Al Dunn and Charles Joe were there, we knew that things would never be the same.

When Hariata took the reins, she gave us hope and the desire for advancement.

The scholarship and Hariata inspired us to look into ourselves and be authentic. She gave us love and made us examine our souls, with her help we were able to determine where and what we wanted for ourselves and our lives.

Without whaea Hariata our lives would not be as rich as they are now, and we would not have the skills or drive to enrich the lives of others.

For many of us we never reach our potential; with this scholarship we found the hope that we could achieve the dreams and desires that burned in us wherever we are in the world, and to never to give up.

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William Kaipo

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In 1994 I was a 7th Form (Yr13) student that received a break and opportunity to move from the Mangakahia Valley to Auckland. I began studying at the Auckland Institute of Technology (AIT) at the Akoranga Campus in semester 1 of 1995 and graduated with a Bachelor of Business from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in 2000.

Since then I have married and had 4 beautiful children. I have worked in both the Public and Private sector predominantly in the area of supporting whānau in Te Tai Tokerau. Today I am currently the CEO of Tai Timu Tai Pari Ltd which is an organization established to continue that mahi at a strategic level, supporting the many Māori Providers in Te Tai Tokerau to enable them to support whānau. I am also very conscious of my good fortune and believe in social contribution so spend much of my time volunteering and giving back to the Community where the opportunity exists.

I met my wife at AIT in the Akoranga Campus Student Hostel. We completed our studies there and moved home to Whangārei. We now work together supporting whanau through our mahi in the Health and Social Services Sector. Our eldest daughter began her journey at AUT this year in the very place her mother and I met.

Our second daughter is a Year 12 student at Epsom Girls Grammar, our first son is a Year 9 at Mt Albert Grammar School, and our baby son lives at home with us and attends the local Glenbervie Primary School in Whangārei. We currently care for two whāngai moko, girl (4yrs) and her brother (3yrs).

I attended the wedding of a McDonald's Baby a few years ago and the Father of the Bride (my Fathers best friend) came to me and said, "I remember you as a young boy, you had very little but always found ways to play and entertain yourself with what you did have.

When you grew up and received the McDonald's Scholarship, from our little community of Nukutawhiti/Pakōtai

“ *I was paving a pathway for many more to come...and they did.* ”

(in the Valley of Mangakahia), you showed me that *anythiAng* was possible. You showed me that I could dream these things for my own children and so I dreamed!

For this I thank you!”

This humbled me like I had never ever been humbled before, nor have I since. It was at that moment I realized others had been following and observing my journey. I realized that my merely receiving a scholarship to study became far more important to my whānau than just me.

Graduate: Bachelor of Business

In 1995 I was about the 3rd intake and became one of the first of our cohort to graduate. That was close to 30 years ago. Our Makitanara Whānau have grown significantly since then.

I consider myself immensely fortunate for all that I have in my life. The most cherished of all I have of course is my whānau, my wife and our children. None of this success can be claimed without the acknowledgement of my beautiful wife. Without her by my side I would not have achieved what I have, individually, but also what we have together, so thank you McDonald's Scholarship for giving me my whānau!

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge a few people who some may not know but had a huge impact on the McDonald's Te Tai Tokerau Scholarship Programme in the beginning.

Alan Dunn, Former Managing Director of McDonald's (NZ), Grainne Troute, Former Managing Director of McDonald's (NZ), Charles Joe Maori Liaison Unit AIT, Jeanette Wikaira Maori Liaison Unit AIT, Hana Wilcox and the many other Board Members that supported this Kaupapa.

Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa.



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***You showed me that I could
dream these things for my
own children and so I
dreamed!***

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Joe Clarke

“ I feel like I am back at AUT writing my assignment the night before it is due, 20 years has passed and some things haven't changed.

Over the course of my life those formative years at university take up a disproportionately large part of my life. It was a stepping-stone to the person I have become. The paths I have walked, places I have been, the friends I made, skills learned and the experiences that made my world so much bigger.



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Funny now that I have been working for years, I look back and realize you never hustled us out the door.

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The thing I appreciate about the scholarship is that you scouted out our people who had the potential to succeed. Looking past just grades on a piece of paper. That got us there, but it was the love and support of having someone in your corner when living so far from home at what seemed like a young age that kept us going.

Thank you Hariata and Kitea for all your support.

It was amazing being there in the early days and being part of and seeing how the scholarship has evolved over time. When our plans changed at university such as moving away from business to another career path there was no “that’s outside our scope” there was only support and love to make it happen. To let us walk through that door and succeed.

I remember arriving in Auckland so nervous and so excited. The Big Smoke. I remember all those times when one of us would drop into your office for a chat so we could feel like there was someone looking out for us. You always made time for us and made us feel welcome. Funny now that I have been working for years, I look back and realize you never hustled us out the door when I am 100% sure you had a ton of work you needed to get finished.

So young and so naive. So thank you!

Graduate: New Zealand Diploma of Business, Graduate Diploma in Multimedia

After University I was lucky enough to get a job through contacts I made at University as a video editor at Pūkana for five years. Then my wife and I went on our OE. We spent 9 years overseas in Hong Kong leaving with two backpacks and returning with two children. I am now back and have been living down in Pāpāmoa for the last six years. I work for myself filming, editing and creating motion graphics for local and overseas clients. In our downtime we like to hit the beach, surf, fish and enjoy the sun.

Coming from Kaihu I was one of the first of my cuzzies to go to Uni but not the last. I am proud to see so many of them go on to higher education and always encourage them to take that step. There are many paths through life and I think we all need to see there is so much more of the world out there and in turn really appreciate the beautiful places we have come from and the whānau and people who gently guide us or sometimes push us to get us where we need to be.

I feel truly grateful for the scholarship and wouldn't be the person I am today without the love and support of so many people.



