

ARMS 2024 CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Theme: Effective collaboration with external stakeholders

Title: Sharing and refining research management best practice across the tumultuous New Zealand tertiary vocational education sector.

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Abstract:

In early 2019, the Government announced that New Zealand's sixteen independent institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) and nine industry training organisations (ITOs) would be unified into a single national entity called Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology. This unification began in stages from April 2020, creating a single provider with over 9,000 staff, a new head office and regional structure, and serving 270,000 students at more than 90 sites around the country. However, as of November 2023 minimal unification of research management functions or structures had taken place within Te Pūkenga, leaving the former ITP research offices still operationally independent. In December 2023, the new Government announced that Te Pūkenga would be dissolved and replaced with eight to ten institutions, and as of April 2024 no further details are known about the future structure of the sector. This presentation will explore and reflect on the opportunities and challenges that have arisen while collaborating on research management across our unifying and now de-unifying sector. These will include the achievements of an informal community of practice founded by the research managers and rangahau Māori leaders of the independent ITPs; the strategies used to maintain continuity of research management functions across Te Pūkenga through major organisational change; and how working together as a sector has facilitated our participation in new academic spaces and organisations including ARMS.