

**Ka mihi nui ki a koutou katoa - Greetings to you all.**

2021 has been an interesting year, with many unique experiences for us all. Our staff and students have worked through the constant changes and challenges and continued to provide, and participate in quality learning experiences. Although our year has been impacted by Covid-19 again, the creativity, resilience and problem solving skills of our staff and students has ensured that the year has been a successful one.

The highlight for 2021 has definitely been our involvement in Te Ara Taiao. Our kaimahi (staff) and ākonga (students) have had the opportunity to work with representatives from our local hapū, Ngāti Tairi, as well as the staff and students from Ōmata and Coastal Taranaki Schools on this collaborative environmental learning initiative. Our staff have been learning about local areas of significance such as Pukeiti, Okorotua Marae, Puke Ariki and the Papa Rererangi i Puketapu/our airport. We have engaged with local experts regarding our environment and learned about and participated in strategic environmental actions in our rohe (area).



One of our main areas of focus for learning this year has been ‘Wai/Water’. This involved our kaimahi (staff) learning about the Māori world view of water and then incorporating this knowledge into our Oakura School Curriculum. We worked with representatives from our hapū and iwi who generously shared their knowledge and mahi with us. This included Matua Damon Ritai speaking about water as a source of life; Emily Tuhi-Ao Bailey speaking about clean waterways and the importance of healthy wai for the future; Taipuni Ruakere sharing about the work that Taranaki Iwi are undertaking through Taiao, Taiora, an iwi led Environmental Management Plan; Tāne Manukonga speaking about Te Ara Taiao and educating students as future

kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of our precious wai and environment for future generations; and Sean Zieltjes from Taranaki Mouna project talking about restoring ecosystems and the mahi that is going on within the predator free initiative. Not only have we learnt about and contributed to the environmental strategies in the Kaitake rohe, we have also learnt about the cultural narratives and perspectives of our local iwi and hapū. These learning opportunities will be significant in supporting our implementation of Aotearoa NZ Histories Curriculum in 2022.

We also formed a Te Ara Taiao student leadership group who worked with students from Coastal Taranaki and Ōmata Schools at Pukeiti to form a common understanding of the initiatives they would participate in and develop in our schools and community. They were very fortunate to be involved in the kiwi release at Pukeiti with one of the kiwi who was named by our students, Kowhai.



Participation in sport has been more locally-based this year, with only a few interschool events able to go ahead. The times we did manage to get together with other school groups our students made the most of the opportunity. We had experts from a range of different sports provide skill development sessions for our students, within our school physical education programme. These included: Central Football; Taranaki Hockey; Taranaki Cricket; Swimsafe Instruction; Tempofit - year 7 & 8 running programme; Taranaki Athletics. Kiwi Sport is a government funded initiative that supports student’s participation in organised sport. The funding that the school received this year has been used to provide specialised sports coaching and access for students to attend interschool sports events and competitions. We are also very fortunate to have the Oakura Junior Sports Club (OJSC) operating in our community. Through the dedication of this group of volunteer parents, our students get a wide range of quality sporting experiences. The high level of enjoyment and sporting achievement gained by our students reflects the commitment of these parents and the students themselves.



**OAKURA SCHOOL**



Cultural events continued this year, but with less opportunities for our students to perform to an audience. Our Puanga performance moved online, music, dance and drama were performed within teams and the Oakura Idol performances were enjoyed by small audiences.

The major roll growth property project is underway and we are excited about the wonderful learning spaces this will provide. There have been challenges with this build, including delays in accessing materials, cost increases etc. We had hoped to have at least two of the rooms ready for the beginning of the 2022 school year. However, due to the delays we have experienced we have decided to start one of our year 5&6 rooms in the Pohutukawa Centre for 2022 to ensure less changes in term 1. Over the summer holidays room 6 will start to be demolished.



We farewell Nigel (Noddy) Jury this week. Noddy has been our school caretaker for twenty-six years. His connection to our kura goes well beyond this though, as he was a past student of Oakura School. Noddy's commitment and loyalty to our school and community has been greatly appreciated by us all.

Friends of Oakura School Committee (FOOS) is a group of parents who generously give their time to support our students, teachers and whānau. Even under the challenging alert level requirements they have come up with ways to raise money so that the school can purchase resources that complement our school programmes and school environment. We thank them for their dedication and commitment to supporting our school and the children in our community. If you are not a member of this group please consider joining in 2022 as many hands make light work - he rau ringa e oti ai. Your children are the ones who truly benefit from the events they organise.

Thank you to all the people who have supported our school programmes this year in so many different ways: supporting your child's home learning, parental involvement in sport (interschool and OJSC), Friends of Oakura School Committee (FOOS), morning crossing duty, library help, PMP helpers, parent help in classrooms, transport assistance and supervision during school trips and activities. We haven't been able to thank you in person this term, but without your help we wouldn't be able to offer as many opportunities for our students as we do. We truly value your support.

Once again we want to acknowledge and thank our wonderful staff, students and community for all that you do to make Oakura School a special place to be. We wish you all a happy and fun-filled summer holiday with your family and friends.

Lynne Hepworth  
PRINCIPAL

Chris Ferguson  
BOT CHAIRPERSON

