

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO  
TE WHARE WĀNANGA O WAIKATO**

**THE TASKFORCE**

**Background**

In September 2020 Council commissioned the Hon Hekia Parata and Sir Harawira Gardiner to undertake an independent review of recent public claims of structural and systemic racism at the University of Waikato, the issues that had given rise to those claims and the University's progress in meeting its Treaty obligations. The report of the review (the 'Parata Gardiner Report') was received by Council at a special meeting on 22 September 2020. Council welcomed the report, agreed to all of the recommendations set out within it and made a number of future-focused resolutions, including:

That Council:

...

10. Agreed to an immediate plan of action that has the following features:
  - a. The establishment of a taskforce with agreed terms of reference to consult more widely.
  - b. The appointment of Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Professor Alister Jones as co-chairs of the taskforce, with further members to be appointed in the near future.
  - c. A fully supported implementation process for the plan that would commence during 2021 utilising resourcing consistent with the financial environment of the University in 2021 and 2022.
  - d. Agreed communication about the plan and its implementation<sup>1</sup>

**Purpose**

The taskforce offers the University an exciting challenge and a unique opportunity globally to construct a new and different way of participating in partnership in a University setting.

The taskforce will offer opportunities for staff and students to envision the future, seek change and contribute to a vision of what the future might look like, where Te Tiriti o Waitangi The Treaty of Waitangi and matauranga Māori is embedded in the University's values, people, systems, spaces and scholarship with integrity.

The taskforce is comprised of people chosen for their relevant skills, knowledge and experience and for the range of perspectives they bring to the challenge rather than on a 'representational' basis. It will be supported by an Advisory Group (External) bringing together national race relations and tertiary sector expertise and international counterparts. Consultation Groups including formal committees and informal staff and student groups will be offered a range of opportunities to participate and to contribute ideas. A dedicated web presence will provide a source of engagement, and will both provide information and receive it.

The taskforce will begin by conducting a review of where we stand today before it embarks on its journey. It will conduct a range of whakawhiti kōrero (dialogue) sessions over coming months to seek contributions to new ideas and new thinking and it will then develop a plan for a positive future for the University, to be implemented from 2021. The role of the taskforce is not to solve problems but to set a path forward into the future for long-term, sustainable change.

**Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith**  
**Professor Alister Jones**

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on 22 September 2020.