

## Appendix 3:

### Interview with CPPA executive who led CPPA’s response and support to principals affected by the earthquakes and the Government’s 2012 *Shaping Education Strategy*. N = 6

#### 1. Please rate your experience of the information received and communication that you had with Government and or MOE officials?

- Poor – well below what was needed
- Fair – mainly well below what was needed
- Good – Generally helpful and appropriate
- Very Good – Almost always appropriate, timely and helpful
- I don’t know

|               | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | N/A or don’t know or it depends when? |
|---------------|------|------|------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>No = 6</b> | 1    | 2    |      |           | 3                                     |
| <b>100%</b>   | 17%  | 33%  |      |           | 50%                                   |

#### Comments:

- There were some shocks and surprises when information was delivered to the sector with the Lincoln meeting being one of the worst examples
- I think the information received was inconsistent. There were too many MoE hoops to jump through in order to access help at the expense of schools needing it. There were mistakes made e.g.: The MoE thought my DP was the principal based on outdated information on their data base from when I was on a sabbatical and my DP was acting principal. Initially the MOE were sharing information with her not me.
- Some of it was good and other bits were poor. It depended on who you were working with. There were lots of contradictions and there were confusing messages. At times it felt like the MoE was making it up as they went. They didn’t always understand the context of each school and that a one size fit wouldn’t work. One of my jobs was to help schools access information they needed. Many schools were overwhelmed. People inside schools were feeling anxious and at risk. CPPA principal helpers were needed to interpret and simplify the messages. Wellington MoE people came to Christchurch and “did it to us”. Local MoE staff were mainly empathetic.
- After the September quake the MoE (especially the local MoE under the then Acting Regional Director’s leadership and Wellington based Deputy Secretary of Special

Needs and the earthquake recovery) communicated and responded well. After the February 2011 quake and leading up to The Shaping Education – Future Direction the MoE stopped talking to CPPA. There was a huge amount of pressure put on schools to open after the 2011 February earth quake and some principals were threatened with having their BoT's disestablished. The push came from Wellington. There was a lack of understanding as to why some schools took longer to open than others.

- It was a moving feast as some of the messages were hopeless at the beginning but as CPPA learned to work with the MoE it got better. MoE messaging was often obscure and complicated leaving the sector unsure as to what to do. The CPPA principals supporting schools helped them to make sense of what was required or wanted. Feed back to the MoE resulted in clearer messaging.
- Initially for the first 6 – 9 months after the earthquakes it was good possibly because the Ministry of Education (MoE) needed CPPA. Leading up to the launch of *Shaping Education – Future Direction* Sept 2012 strategy the relationship changed from genuine partnership to a group that the MoE information shared with. From then on it was fair.

## 2. Please rate your experience of the adequacy and appropriateness of resources received

- Poor – well below what was needed
- Fair – mainly well below what was needed
- Good – Generally helpful and appropriate
- Very Good – Almost always appropriate, timely and helpful
- I don't know

|               | Poor  | Fair  | Good | Very Good | N/A or don't know or it depends when? |
|---------------|-------|-------|------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>No = 6</b> | 1     | 1     | 3    |           | 1                                     |
| <b>100%</b>   | 16.6% | 16.7% | 50%  |           | 16.7%                                 |

### Comments:

- From the beginning there was no central hub (war room) where everyone knew what was going on. There were silos happening making consistency of decision making and communication difficult. The pressure from Wellington to open schools after the February 2011 earthquake was immense especially on the East side of town where access to support and trades people was problematic

- Some things were good e.g. extra staffing provision. The MoE did respond to individual school needs in an ad hoc way and that is my criticism. It shouldn't depend on who you know and what you know. The CPPA executive group were in the front line supporting school leaders and their staff who were adversely affected by *Shaping Schools - Future Directions*. I don't believe the MoE fully understood what it was like for these principals trying to hold it together
- The resources given to CPPA to mentor school leaders and to advocate for them was appropriate. Extra staffing, access to EAP, locking in staffing levels for all of 2011 and other just in time resources were helpful. CPPA needed to be there for principals and their schools. They were able to broker on behalf of schools. They were trusted by school leaders and provided a multi-faceted response. There was a toll on these CPPA principals as they front footed a mix of emotions including despair, anger, confusion, stoicism and resignation to their fate coming from school leaders and staff who were losing jobs and whose lives and careers were disrupted.
- I think the resources given to schools at this time were good and included much needed items like water tanks, water, just about anything required. The issue was that not everyone knew what was available and how to access it.
- When there was a clear stated need resources were funded. The negotiated deal with Red Cross provided much needed supplementary funds. The MoE officials and contractors wearing high Vis jackets and hard hats coming into schools (often unannounced) to gather information and not sharing it was unhelpful. Extra staffing, confirmed staffing for all schools in 2011 and 2012 and EAP were helpful. It was a mixed bag. The MoE did do some things that we asked them to do.
- In 2011 the resourcing was very good because of the genuine partnership that existed between CPPA and the MoE. This was the time when Wellington based Deputy Secretary of special needs and the earthquake recovery and Acting Regional Director based in Christchurch were the voice of the Ministry. When there was a change of MoE officials working with CPPA (in late 2011 – 2012) there was a change in the relationship from partnership to information sharing. This meant resources to be approved took time because everything had to be approved and there were political imperatives coming into play at this time.

**3. Please rate your experience of the fairness and consistency of approach by Government and MOE in devising and applying the post-earthquake school property programme**

- Poor – well below what was needed
- Fair – mainly well below what was needed
- Good – Generally helpful and appropriate
- Very Good – Almost always appropriate, timely and helpful
- I don't know

|               | Poor   | Fair | Good | Very Good | N/A or don't know or it depends when? |
|---------------|--------|------|------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>No = 6</b> | 5      |      |      |           | 1                                     |
| <b>100%</b>   | 83.33% |      |      |           | 16.67%                                |

**Comments:**

- There is inequality in the system. Look at the new schools and the difference of provision and budgets used depending on where they are or when the school was built and what funding stream was used. Decisions that were reversed on school closures and merges for some but not others with reasons for these decisions not transparent.
- It was a case of who you knew and what you knew. We are 5 years down the track and they (MOE) are still trying to sort out their "shit". Inconsistency with messages, priorities and budgets are still happening. Schools in the post-earthquake era were asked to care for their students and communities suffering from post-traumatic stress, introduce and embed national standards, deal with the Novo pay debacle, prepare their staff and community to explore and make sense of new collaborative pedagogies and consider how their building budgets would be used to set up their schools for the future. All of this against a backdrop of ongoing aftershocks and high levels of trauma within and outside the school gate.
- Some people were listened to more than others. Higher decile schools seemed to have more voice possible due to their communities' ability to articulate needs. Shaping Education – Future Direction 2012 set schools against each other as there was a scramble by those identified to close or merge to find reasons to prove the decision was wrong. Shaping Education was a rushed process, happening too early and it resulted in disharmony and sadly it tried to minimise the trauma Christchurch had gone through. They (Govt. and MoE) just wanted to get on with it leaving schools affected by their decisions demoralised, further traumatised and angry.

- There had been large numbers of building consultants visiting schools and undertaking inspections. The information gathered wasn't allowed to be shared with schools. This was during the time of heightened secrecy leading up to the 2012 Shaping Education strategy. There was repetition of information gathered. We didn't know what the end game was! Principals were sharing with CPPA their frustration about the state of their buildings and with frozen property budgets they had to go to the MoE and ask/ beg/ for minor health and safety property maintenance. Communities were wanting answers and principals were under pressure.
- This is complicated because of all factors in play. It began with the appalling gaffe at the Lincoln meeting as to how the Shaping Education strategy was communicated. From that point there were time delays and uneven communication with the sector. Wellington based Deputy Secretary was positive and there was genuine engagement. The then acting Christchurch's Regional Director meant well and maintained a good relationship with the sector. The MoE decisions on closures and merges did seem to be influenced by vocal opponents who lobbied behind the scenes. Those schools identified to close or merge had to jump through hoops just to understand what their next steps were. Underpinning all of this are the political realities of the situation.
- The Government and MoE did what they believed they needed to do. Changes did need to happen and post-earthquake was an ideal time to do it. The impact of changes on the wider Christchurch schooling community wasn't equitable mainly due to political realities that came in to play.

#### 4. Skill and responsiveness of people or agencies there to help

| Was effective and helpful<br>N = 6  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree    | Neutral     | Agree       | Strongly Agree | N/A or don't know |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Change Agent                        |                   | 1<br>16.66% | 1<br>16.67% | 1<br>16.67% |                | 3<br>50%          |
| MOE Liaison Official                |                   | 2<br>33.33% | 1<br>16.66% |             | 2<br>33.33%    | 1<br>16.66%       |
| STA                                 | 4<br>66.67%       | 2<br>33.33% |             |             |                |                   |
| CPPA                                |                   |             |             |             | 6<br>100%      |                   |
| Union                               | 2<br>33.33%       | 3<br>50%    | 1<br>16.67% |             |                |                   |
| Property Consultants and architects |                   | 1<br>16.67% |             | 2<br>33.33% |                | 3<br>50%          |

## Comments:

- Too many inconsistencies around provision of emergency support. It depended on who you knew. STA was missing in action. Too many Wellington MOE officials coming in and taking over. Wellington based Deputy Secretary was the exception but left during the process. The then acting Christchurch's Regional Director was effective. Union didn't seem to know what their role was. CPPA was in there from the beginning and filled lots of gaps including organising the emergency schooling pods at a variety of locations. It is appreciated that the MoE was prepared to listen to CPPA and the local MoE meet on a regular basis with CPPA. In particular providing certainty of staffing for Ch.Ch. schools, funding support roles within CPPA to help schools and providing access to EAP were helpful measures.
- Whilst there were people in the above list who were amazing there were some who weren't. Having MoE people from Wellington arrive in Christchurch to deliver the decisions they had made and then leave again was unhelpful. They didn't know what Ch.Ch. people were going through. It would have been better to have had the local MoE more involved during this time. In general they had the respect of the sector. The plethora of people coming into the school to check and inspect buildings. They wouldn't / couldn't share the information with schools. The paper work required for schools closing and merging was onerous and confusing. The sector wanted and expected openness, fairness, transparency and instead they got secrecy leading up to the Lincoln meeting. Was anyone held accountable for that meeting?
- Ok it depends on who the people were. There were some who were there for the fees. There were some amazing local MoE officials trying their best to process information and implement decisions coming from Wellington. These decisions were rushed and often confusing. STA wasn't there. They didn't contact BoT's of schools most affected by the change. The exception was the field officer who was highly engaged and effective. STA's National Office didn't engage. NZEI gave contrary and conflicting advice. It was difficult to get NZEI involved and to advocate for individual members. There was a NZEI National Office vs local office mismatch of information happening.
- STA were missing in action during the school closure and merger stage. Schools affected didn't hear from them. There were no calls to check up on and advise BoT's. Unions didn't seem to know what to do. Some change agents were good others weren't and seemed to be there to collect their fee.
- The Local MoE were trying to work positively with CPPA and Christchurch schools to be helpful and effective. The Wellington MoE were following political imperatives. This proved to be a complete dog's body to a working relationship with the sector. STA national office were unhelpful and didn't see any reason for them to be involved unless an individual BoT asked for help. If CPPA hadn't stepped up to help the

outcome would have been worse. On a personal level this was the most stressed time for this respondent. S/he paid a price. NZPF awarded the CPPA principals who helped during this stage with a medal of service and this is worn with pride. The union wasn't proactive or forward looking. Dealings with property people were generally good.

- In 2011 I would agree the MoE was effective and helpful because of the true partnership and collaboration existing between the schooling sector via CPPA and the MoE. As the 2012 Shaping Education strategy was being formed and leading up to its release as well as the changes in MoE personnel the relationship went back to the bureaucratic – sector power relationship. Information sharing then became the extent of the interaction. During this time I would disagree that the MoE was effective and helpful. The 2012 post Wellington based Deputy Secretary's era began badly with the debacle of the meeting at Lincoln.

**5. What do you identify as the main effects of Government/ MOE "Shaping Education – Future Direction on children?**

- The effect on children at the time was huge and it remains so 5.5 years on. The uncertainty around provision of schooling and the unequal impact of the earthquakes on schools resulted in some children being affected negatively. Some of the decisions made by Government and MoE to close and merge schools have negatively impacted on children in the short term and for some in the long term
- The children have been adversely affected by the stress and strains on staff caused mainly by the way "Shaping Education – Future Directions 2012) was implemented. Principals and staff have ended up being social workers in schools due to complex and growing children's needs resulting from trauma. This took staff away from teaching and learning.
- Some children are ok and some aren't. There is evidence of child trauma across the city so it is hard to say whether school closure or merges are the cause. Interim Response data would be useful to look at from 2008 – present day and could provide some of the answers.
- It seemed that the emphasis and focus from the MoE was on the move towards Innovative Learning Pedagogies and Environments and the building programme. Children's health needs didn't seem to be at the forefront of decision making.
- The effects on children have taken longer to become apparent. We now (2015 – 2016) have affected 5 – 7 year olds in our schools and affected whānau displaying signs of PTSD. There are separation anxiety issues being exhibited by children and their families. There are more complex issues with children than there used to be.

- Ultimately I believe the Shaping Education had to happen. Michael Fullan says the biggest barrier to change is the status quo and the earthquakes took the status quo away. It was an ideal time to look for system wide change. How it was done was part of the problem. The Lincoln meeting proved to be a less than ideal way to begin the process and with some principals stirring up children and their whānau's anxiety by personalising the decisions was also problematic. Some of the problem lies in self-management because the decisions to close or merge schools meant principals and some staff were going to lose their job without any right of tenure anywhere else. It was hard for these people not to personalise the situation. Competition between schools (which is part of self-managing schools) with funding dependent on school rolls meant schools were competing to stay open and to change the original decisions to benefit their community without too much concern for the Christchurch school community as a whole. There were possibly political realities coming into play here where changes to the original decisions seemed to benefit some communities over others.

**6. What do you identify as what could have been done to minimise these negative effects on children?**

- At the end of the day schools are special because they care for children and need to be safe and secure environments. Any decision on the future direction, or mergers and or closures of schools needs to be made after a full risk management plan is undertaken to identify the possible harmful effects on children and strategies to mitigate these. The pace of change post-earthquake was harmful leading to stress and trauma for children whose school was closed or merged.
- Give schools resources to meet the needs of their community especially the needs of children i.e. extra staff. You end up having to prioritise support and this will place an extra load on staff. The Red Cross money was a life saver. The MoE needed to re-write the rule book so that they funded and supported schools as needed. Acting Christchurch's Regional Director did a great job at this time and did understand school needs.
- Post-quake social workers needed to have been placed in schools as of right. Children's resilience comes from connections. The best way is to support whānau and school initiatives that built connections. More support and resources available for the community to access.
- Slow down the pace of change. Focus on people and especially on children. Get back to business as usual before embarking on restructuring and change. Set up systems that support communities helping each other. Provide counselling support for the long term and communicate to schools and communities on how to access support.

- The enormity of what has happened in Christchurch may have been underestimated. PTSD among a high proportion of children and adults should have been expected. There is a sense of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the response needed. The response to date by Government agencies including the MoE has been good in some areas and less than what is required in others.
- The Shaping Education – Future Directions was the result of an unexpected national disaster. A risk management approach was needed to protect children from being adversely affected by the proposed changes. It was predictable that school communities negatively impacted by the 2012 Shaping Education Strategy would question and debate the decisions in public and wouldn't simply and quietly accept their fate. To mitigate this risk could there have been some flexibility around financial and or employment options to help these people adjust to their new reality?

#### 7. What do you identify as the main effects of Government/ MOE “Shaping Education – Future Direction on staff?

- Staff were the unsung heroes who supported children and their whānau post-earthquakes even when they had serious personal and property issues to resolve. Kids came first!
- It depended on the phase staff were in – The immediate post-earthquake heroic stage to being in the pit of anger and tiredness due to their own personal circumstances or their school being identified to close or merge. It is similar to going through a grief process and you have to make the journey and go through the stages. Special note needs to be made of the load principals carried who were in schools closing or merging. They had to front foot some unwanted behaviours and learning needs that came out of earthquake trauma, staff anger and disappointment that came out of the Shaping Education – Future Direction strategy, community anger and disappointment. They were accountable for doing what Government and MOE asked them to do over this period. There was a cost also on those CPPA principals who undertook the support work on behalf of CPPA. **To this day the courage and tenacity of these principals hasn't been acknowledged.** Some staff from schools merging or closing felt abandoned by their peers and agencies. They were demoralised and were going through a grieving process. There was some conflict during this time within merged schools as staff learnt how to work together and respect each other.
- Principals and BoT's in general worked hard to protect staff from some of the more adverse effects happening.

- Staff were dealing with similar issues that the rest of the community were dealing with. But for some staff their jobs were being lost or their work context was changing. It was a stressful and difficult time in particular for these staff.

- Some stories coming from closures, merges and re-builds in the East and red zone are horrific. Our job was to cut these principals and staff some slack and to support them as much as we could.

- Similar answer to what I said for the effect on children

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#### 8. What do you identify as what could have been done to minimise these negative effects on staff?

- Access to EAP has been very helpful. . The pace of change post-earthquake was harmful leading to stress and trauma for staff who worked in schools which were closed or merged.
- Schools needed support, resources and guidance to understand the complexity of PTSD and how to manage this by reducing negativity and making school a good place to be in. Staff needed support to deal with personal issues. Helping agencies including NZEI, STA, EAP, CPPA and MOE working together to ensure staff who were losing their jobs were supported, treated with dignity and received all entitlements owed to them.
- School leaders and BoT's could have set up systems in their school so staff were supported to deal with their issues. EAP was a needed resource although it has only been recently that more staff have accessed it. Reduce the work load of staff and provide PLD to support staff to self-manage and live a healthy life style i.e. sleep, good nutrition, exercise and being with family and friends for support. Extra resources and support to schools to do this work would be helpful.

- More self-help and guidance on how to do this. EAP was there and reminding staff that it was there. Monitor staff work load.
- Lots of measures to support staff were implemented including less Professional learning and after school meetings, access to EAP, giving them time to sort their own housing issues. These measures were crucial to the well-being of staff.
- Similar answer to what I said for the effect on children  
*The Shaping Education – Future Directions was the result of an unexpected national disaster. A risk management approach was needed to protect staff from being adversely affected by the proposed changes. It was predictable that staff and their school communities negatively impacted by the 2012 Shaping Education Strategy would question and debate the decisions in public and wouldn't simply and quietly accept their fate. To mitigate this risk could there have been some flexibility around financial and or employment options to help these people adjust to their new reality?*

**9. What do you identify as the main effects of Government/ MOE “Shaping Education – Future Direction on whānau?**

- The signs of trauma among a large cohort of whānau who are part of a school’s community is very evident 5 years on. World-wide research on post disasters tells us to expect this yet as a city we seem ill-prepared. The need for mental health provision has been seriously under estimated.
- Whānau from schools merging and closing felt abandoned and like the children and staff they were demoralised and were going through a grieving process. There were some unpleasant things said by whānau to nearby school whānau over this time.
- There was a huge impact across the board including a sense of loss for communities that lost their schools. Many people in Christchurch knew of someone who died, someone who was hurt or someone who lost their house. Families were faced with several weeks, months and some years in rental accommodation while houses were fixed or rebuilt. For those whose local school was closing this was a double negative which added more stress and strain.
- Not knowing why decisions were made and feeling a lack of trust in the process.
- The enormity of what has happened in Christchurch may have been under estimated. PTSD among a high proportion of adults should have been expected. There is a sense of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the response needed. Schools are increasingly dealing with whānau who are angry and upset by a variety of issues.
- Similar answer to what I said for the effect on children  
*Ultimately I believe the Shaping Education had to happen. Michael Fullan says the biggest barrier to change is the status quo and the earthquakes took the status quo away. It was an*

*ideal time to look for system wide change. How it was done was part of the problem The Lincoln meeting proved to be a less than ideal way to begin the process and with some principals stirring up children and their whānau's anxiety by personalising the decisions also was problematic. Some of the problem lies in self-management because the decisions to close or merge schools meant principals and some staff were going to lose their job without any right of tenure anywhere else. It was hard for these people not to personalise the situation. Competition between schools (which is part of self-managing schools) with funding dependent on school rolls meant schools were competing to stay open and to change the original decisions to benefit their community without too much concern for the Christchurch school community as a whole. There were possibly political realities coming into play here, where changes to the original decisions seemed to benefit some communities over others.*

**10. What do you identify as what could have been done to minimise these negative effects on whānau?**

- Improve support to school communities so that it is better co-ordinated and consistent. It seemed a case of who you knew! There needed to be a “war room” approach with representatives of agencies co-ordinating the response. Prioritise need not the loudest voice. Schools had too many liaison people to communicate with. There should have been one main contact. MOE should have a disaster response plan ready and rehearsed so when this happens again they are prepared.
- Schools needed support, resources and guidance to understand the complexity of PTSD and how to manage this by reducing negativity and conflict. Whānau needed support to deal with issues they were facing. Helping agencies including Not for Profit helping organisations and MOE working together along with the school's leadership and BoT to ensure whānau who were stressed and upset were being supported.
- Slow down and be more open and transparent. If the Government and MoE had worked with the sector when they were putting together Shaping Education the outcome would have been quite different. More collaboration would have helped.
- Make it more transparent how whānau could access support. The Red Cross money was very helpful for schools trying to support whānau and children but this support shouldn't have been reliant on charity it should have been there as of right.
- Provide support services and engage with the sector on what is required to support children, whānau and staff. Get in touch with local principal associations and stay in touch with them. Set up a steering committee post disaster a.s.a.p and work collaboratively with all groups that form this committee. This eventually happened in Christchurch and from a bad beginning good things have come. This respondent has a great sense of pride and professional satisfaction on what has been achieved.
- Similar answer to what I said for the effect on children

*The Shaping Education – Future Directions was the result of an unexpected national disaster. A risk management approach was needed to protect whanau from being adversely affected by the proposed changes. It was predictable that school communities negatively impacted by the 2012 Shaping Education Strategy would question and debate the decisions in public and wouldn't simply and quietly accept their fate. To mitigate this risk could there have been some flexibility around financial and or employment options to help these people adjust to their new reality?*

### **Background Information:**

The researcher was asked to interview 6 CPPA executive who were charged to work with and to liaise with schools most effected by the Sept 2010 and February 2011 and to do this in partnership with the MoE. The idea was to short circuit bureaucracy in order to provide just in time support and help to schools who needed it most. The local knowledge and relationships CPPA had with primary principals and the resources and responsibility the MoE had to implement government directives meant both groups were able to help and support each other.

### **Discussion and Conclusions CPPA principal executive involvement in the Post earthquake response and recovery**

The partnership worked well during term 4 2010 – EOY 2011. This is attributed to the Wellington based MOE Deputy Secretary in charge of Special Education and the Christchurch earthquake recovery and the then Christchurch's Acting Regional Director and CPPA executive who pragmatically saw the advantage of such a partnership and recognised the benefit to the Christchurch schooling sector. Both of them genuinely recognised and welcomed the contribution principals could make to the schooling sector recovery when working with the MoE to deliver government resources and communicate government strategy and direction.

The resources allocated to schools during 2010 -2012 by the MoE were seen as just in time and in general appropriate and needed. The issue arising though, is that not all schools knew what was available and how to access it.

Sadly the Deputy Secretary left the MoE at the end of 2011 and the Acting Christchurch Regional Director returned to the North Island during 2012 resulting in the special partnership from that point changing possible due to the new era Christchurch was about to go through from earthquake response to recovery. Whatever the reason CPPA principals report that the relationship changed from active partnership and collaboration to being the recipient of information sharing controlled by the MoE as its officials saw fit and appropriate.

CPPA principals are very certain their help was needed and at times they felt they were holding it together as the angry and personalised response from some school principals and BoT's identified to close or merge became loud and public. The principals describe that they were often overloaded with responsibility to listen to and support principals who were upset and angry at the cards dealt to them. The Lincoln meeting was a bad start to the *Shaping Education* response.

These principals gave it their all and were exhausted and to some degree traumatised by the extent of the negativity being played. Some principal colleagues contributed to the negativity, fear and anger in their community and this was challenging to deal with. There were examples of unwanted behaviours happening including schools and communities being set against each other in their

efforts to stay open or to access resources. Was it acceptable for principals to tell their school children and whanau that the plan for them to close or merge was terrible and catastrophic and did this increase the anxiety and fear children and their whanau were going through?

The “Shaping Education – Future Directions” strategy 2012 was designed to be ambitious and innovative. Post-earthquake Christchurch was seen as an opportunity to set the schooling sector up for its future. However many school staff and communities weren’t ready for it and don’t understand it. Others doubt it is the right direction. More time was/ is needed to allow school communities to understand what innovative learning practices are and how architecture and school design can enhance these practices. The process was rushed, poorly communicated and explained adding to the anxiety, trauma, cynicism and anger already visible in communities. Four years on we are partially through the process and the success or not is still to be measured. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that school communities have mixed feelings and understanding on the *Shaping Education* building programme.

It appears (from recent research) that post-earthquake trauma on children and their whanau has been underestimated. Learning from the follow up response and recovery strategies is to do less more slowly, to set ethical guidelines and expectations for the sector, to use the local MoE officials more when working with schools, to use the expertise and networks of local principal associations and to be flexible with financial and career support to those most impacted by decisions to rationalise schooling.

Overall officials within the local and Wellington MoE, Christchurch principals and their staff and the CPPA group of six principals worked incredibly hard to respond to the needs of the Christchurch community and in particular children and their whanau during the response and recovery stages and for that we should be grateful.

Hind sight learning as to what went well and what didn’t needs to be done so when the next disaster happens these learnings will be used to ensure the same mistakes aren’t repeated.