**Post 2 - Ms Stanford speaks to the PPTA Leadership Conference - 20250415**

As part of her 60-minute address to the conference, Ms Stanford answered the following questions about the future of Kāhui Ako. In her answers, Ms Stanford summarised her reasoning for proposing to close off the IES policy and Kāhui Ako.

I have set out her comments and, in the final section, under considerable restraint and politeness, dismissed her concerns and rationale as weak and as a caving into malign actors determined to ignore the gift IES is to those Leaders, ASTs and WSTs who had the ambition to become highly effective professional practitioners.

**Question: What is the future for Kāhui Ako?**

*I know there was a leak earlier in the week, which was really very frustrating out of the Ministry, but I can't discuss anything about that.*

**Question : But notwithstanding anything in the budget that you obviously can't talk about do you think Kāhui Ako work?**

*I think there is some Kāhui Ako who have excellent practice but I think it is very, well I know, because you’ve told me, it is highly variable - and actually, since that leak, which I can't talk about that, the feedback which I've had from principals who have texted me out of the blue saying our Kāhui Ako does not work, student outcomes have not improved, and the best thing you can do is ring fence it for something else - so it's variable and I have had ERO look into it – the outcomes for the amount of money that we spend, the opportunity cost, putting that into the classrooms into resources, into learning support, into our teachers is the question that we have to ask ourselves supplementary.*

**Question : Can you share with us the research evidence provided since 2017 that shows that Kāhui Ako are not having the impacts on achievement and lifting workforce effectiveness IES was designed to effect?**

*I’m not sure why 2017- but well,* *every single PISA, every single TIMMS, every single PIRLS, NCEA, CIPS literally, everything has gone backwards, so I'm not sure what more data you need because if they were the tool that was going to change everything, everything would have changed, everything has not changed, so there are some things I’ve asked ERO to pull together as well, and it shows actually that things have got worse.*

**My summary of Ms.Stanford’s reasoning – these are all my words in the nature of a paraphrase**

Ms. Stanford says in effect, that as not every Kāhui Ako is thriving, therefore, they should all be closed. But this *evidence* comes from the anecdotal comments she receives from critics of Kāhui Ako during her time as a Minister. But as a matter of fact, Ms Stanford admits that she has no knowledge of any evidence to show that Kāhui Ako are NOT succeeding since 2017. Why 2017? because there is some evidence from studies of the *earliest* sense making by Kāhui Ako about what to do but nothing since then of the evolution or impacts or outcomes.

M. Stanford says that ‘*principals, who have my cell number, text me to say get rid of Kāhui Ako. You, the sector, have told me Kāhui Ako does not work.*’ Nobody I know would say that because we know there is evidence if she would only look. But then my echo chamber is people who understand what a Kāhui Ako is and who are working in one. Clearly, this is not the case for some of the high-profile critics of Kāhui Ako in Ms Stanford’s Auckland echo chamber.

Because neither the Ministry nor anyone else has gathered any evidence that might soundly evaluate the impact of Kāhui Ako, Ms Stanford, along with many critics of Kāhui Ako, asserts that there has been no improvement in student outcomes. However, as yet another inconvenient fact shows, improvements in student outcomes have occurred, and there is evidence that supports this. Ms. Stanford and the Ministry are, of course, entirely unaware of this evidence and have shown no desire or commitment to gather or consider it. Indeed, the Secretary of Education could hardly have acted more quickly to close the monitoring and evaluation programme funded for IES and to take the funding to appoint more managers. The researchers were gone within 2 years – so much for the longitudinal study that might have been, and where is the accountability for this disastrous and astoundingly short-sighted action?

Ms. Stanford says in effect that, *‘the IES policy and Kāhui Ako have been responsible for improving student outcomes since 2015. However, student outcomes (progress and achievement) have not improved; therefore, IES has failed.’* This might be the most slippery of Ms. Stanford’s rationales. No such preposterous claim was made for the possible impact of Kāhui Ako. What was claimed was that, because it was designed to align with the best research evidence on how shifts can be stimulated in the actions of professionals in their everyday work, and according to sound theories of how adults learn, a carefully monitored cycle of double-loop learning would, over time, raise the effectiveness of the 58,00 teacher workforce so that student progress and achievement would indeed improve. But that’s strategic thinking, and that doesn't get MPS re-elected.

Ms. Stanford says, in effect, *‘that there is and was nothing in Kāhui Ako for teacher resources, for teacher careers, for teacher PLD, and there was nothing in IES that addressed or ameliorated school responses to increased needs for learning support across all of the schools in the Kāhui Ako.’* This is completely false. The 220 Kāhui Ako and the annual cohorts of ASTs and WSTs have been producing stellar resources for 10 years. Of course, the Ministry doesn’t know about them, they haven’t looked, and Ms. Stanford has not troubled herself to get behind lazy slogans and gossip about what Kāhui Ako do and have accomplished, so she has no idea either.

And what has the Ministry done in 10 years to support, store and make available all of the resources Kāhui Ako have generated so that the fantastic resources can be shared, that workloads can be reduced and that the best of resources and practices can be shared to lift the effectiveness and efficiency of the teacher workforce? Absolutely nothing. Truly staggering neglect and evidence of a complete abandonment of any pretence at caring in the slightest about the effort teachers put into improving the effectiveness of their daily classroom practices. Absolutely nothing – incredible.

Ms. Stanford’s enthusiasm for solving a complicated and long-standing problem with a simple and obvious resource-based solution blinded her from taking the time to learn more about the complex and profound responses of Kāhui Ako to the learning support needs of their students and teachers. She never looked past the whispering and whining in her ears, past the strutting few who had her cell phone and could txt her.

Ms. Stanford says, airily, on the question of the impact of Kāhui Ako, *‘I have had ERO look into it’.* What ERO has done for Ms Stanford demonstrates that during the life cycle of Kāhui Ako, *‘things have got worse’,* she says. First, really, what has ERO actually done? I asked them – no answer for 45 days. A quick check around Kāhui Ako couldn’t find one that had been visited. Has ERO been quietly maintaining a sound longitudinal evaluation? A rhetorical question surely.

But it is true that in the last years, *every single PISA, every single TIMMS, every single PIRLS, NCEA CIPS literally, everything has gone backwards*,’ But Ms. Stanford is not a statistician and doesn’t know that correlation is not causation. It is also true that in that same period, everything in the world has altered and significantly, during that same period, 2015 until 2025, the life cycle of ERO, the very same ‘things have got worse.’ The Minister might therefore consider closing ERO and, frankly, Te Mahau because they were expressly intended to improve whole system achievement and have nothing to show.

I was impressed with Ms. Stanford’s assured confidence and ready command of many of the sectors’ TLAs and frankly challenging issues needing to be dissolved. I am also impressed with her energetic pursuit of her six priorities. But signs of an overweening confidence that her decisions must be correct emerged. Her rationale for closing Kāhui Ako was weak. Her evidence was all hearsay and gossip. Her mind was clearly made up around May or June 2024, and having her eye on the prize, she is not for turning. The sector will pay a dreadful and long-lasting price for her hubris.

After 50 years, it has come to this: a staggeringly short-sighted and deeply disappointing act that sabotages an innovation that could have restored professionalism to classroom teachers. Instead, there is to be a resource grab for a few. For me, the truly appalling feature of this decision is the craven behaviour of people who have undermined the professional autonomy of their colleagues, who have demonstrated that, for money, not education, they will trample on the careers and professional futures of my colleagues

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