



Ara Institute of Canterbury Council

AGENDA

Tuesday 22 September 2026 – 9.00am
Ara Council Room, City Campus and online [if required]

Council Members: Hugh Lindo [Chair], Michael Rondel [Deputy Chair], Rick Hellings and Andrea Leslie.

**Note: Ara Council only time 8.30am to 9.00am and the public meeting commences from 9.00am.*

Item	Subject
1) Meeting Business	1.1 Welcome and Apologies
	1.2 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest
	1.3 Confirmation of Council Minutes [Public] Meeting held 3 August 2026 a) Approval of minutes b) Matters arising c) Action List
	1.4 Correspondence
2) For Discussion	MONTHLY REPORT 2.1 Chief Executive a) Ara Performance Summary and 2025 Educational Performance Indicator [EPI] Sector Data b) Financial Performance Summary c) Safety, Health and Wellbeing d) Highlights and Achievements e) Media and Communications
	2.2 TKM Quarterly Reports
3) For Information/ Discussion	MONTHLY REPORTS
	3.1 Chair [Verbal] Subcommittees 3.2 Audit and Risk Committee [2 September 2026]
4) For Information	STANDING ITEMS
	4.1 2026 Council Work Programme
5) General Business	

NOTE: 10.30-11.00am Tour of Ōtautahi House, Student Accommodation

ARA PUBLIC EXCLUDED COUNCIL MEETING

It will be moved that the public be excluded from the meeting.

The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded is:

Item	Subject	Clause
6) Meeting Business	6.1 Confirmation of Council Minutes Public Excluded Meeting held 3 August 2026 a) Approval of minutes b) Matters arising c) Action List	[s9(2) (f), (i), (j)]
	6.2 Correspondence – Public Excluded	
7) For Discussion	7.1 Ara's Future Strategy a) Chief Executive Progress Update b) Strategy Session [25 August 2026] – Actions	[s9(2) (f), (i), (j)]
	7.2 Chief Executive Report – Summary a) EPI and Student Achievement b) Financial Performance c) Strategic Business Priorities d) Safety, Health and Wellbeing	
8) For Decision	8.1 Property Disposal	[s9(2) (f), (i), (j)]
	8.2 C Block	
9) For Information	9.1 Chair Monthly Report [Verbal]	[s9(2) (f), (i), (j)]
	9.2 Risk Register Subcommittees 9.3 Audit and Risk Committee [2 September 2026]	
10) General Business		

This resolution will be made in reliance on s48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interests protected by s9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the proceedings of the meeting in public.

The sections of the Official Information Act which applies are shown below:

- *Matters involving confidential information about an identifiable person*
s9(2)(a) – Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons
- *Submissions to Parliament and other formal advice*
s9(2)(f) – Maintain confidential conventions which protect political neutrality, and the confidentiality of communications and advice tendered by officials
- *Commercially sensitive financial data*
s9(2)(i) – The Crown or any Department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities
- *Negotiations in progress with other organisations*
s9(2)(j) – Enable a Minister of the Crown or any Department or organisation holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)



2026 Register of Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Records held as of 22 September 2026

Ara Council Members

Hugh Lindo [Chair]	• Simpson Grierson [Partner]
Michael Rondel [Deputy Chair]	• Christchurch City Holdings Ltd [Director] • Environment Canterbury [Independent Chair, Audit and Risk Committee] • Comcare Charitable Trust [Trustee] • Golf New Zealand Inc [Director/Chair] • BDO Christchurch [and related BDO entities] [Director/Partner]
Richard [Rick] Hellings	• Helmac Action and Advisory Ltd [Part owner and Chair]
Andrea Leslie	• Y Central South Island [Chair] • Food and Fibre PTE Interim Board [Board Member] • South Canterbury Kindergarten Association [Board Member]

Ara Council Officers

Darren Mitchell Chief Executive	• Ara Foundation [Trustee] • Ōtautahi Education Development Trust [Trustee] • RR Turnbull Family Trust [Trustee] • WorldSkills NZ [Trustee] • Quotezi Ltd [Shareholder and Director] • CAANZ [Member]
Christina Yeates Council Secretary	Nil



Ara Council Meeting Minutes

Monday 3 August 2026 – 9.00am
Ara Council Room, City Campus

These are the **minutes** of the meeting of the Ara Council held on 3 August 2026 in the Ara Council Room, City Campus.

1. MEETING BUSINESS

The meeting was opened with a mihi from the Council Chair.

1.1. Welcome and Apologies

Attendees

Ara Council members present: Hugh Lindo [Chair], Michael Rondel [Deputy Chair], Rick Hellings and Andrea Leslie [via Teams].

Hugh Lindo acted as chairperson of the meeting.

Other attendees present: Darren Mitchell [Chief Executive] and Christina Yeates (Ara Executive Assistant/Council Secretary).

Apologies Nil.

1.2. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

- a) Nil declarations were recorded for the matters of business for this meeting.
- b) Noted any revisions to the register should be notified to the Council Secretary.

1.3. Confirmation of Council Minutes [Public] – 23 June 2026

[Res#24/030826](#)

*It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Ara Council held on 23 June 2026, be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.*

H Lindo/R Hellings

CARRIED

- a) **Matters Arising** Nil raised.
- b) **Action List** Noted with all actions now completed.

1.4. Correspondence Nil received.

1.5. Meeting papers All papers were taken as read.

2. FOR DISCUSSION – Monthly Report

2.1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE The report was taken as read. Discussion as follows:

- a) The Chief Executive provided an enrolment update, noting a snapshot of 7,030 enrolments and commenting that this was a positive position, particularly given the volatility that can occur around the second semester start date and the importance of reliable retention data.
- b) Council also noted the media highlights included in the report.

Res#25/030826

It was resolved that the Chief Executive's report be received and contents noted.

H Lindo/A Leslie

CARRIED

2.2. Te Kāhui Arataki Leadership Development Programme

- a) Council received an update on the Leadership Development Programme. The programme is focused on building organisational capability, with particular attention to the mid-tier management layer.

3. FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION – Monthly Report

3.1. Chair – nil discussion items.

3.2. Academic Committee Quarterly Report

Res#26/030826

It was resolved that the Ara Council receive the Academic Quarterly Report for Quarter Two and note the sub-delegations exercised and the associated approvals.

H Lindo/M Rondel

CARRIED

4. FOR INFORMATION – STANDING ITEMS

4.1. 2026 Council Work Programme

- a) Council discussed the 2027 meeting dates and the upcoming strategy topic scheduled for 25 August, which will include Budget 2027 and a verbal update by the Chief Executive on Ara's Future Strategy.
- b) The session will provide a high-level overview of the budget process, with the full budget to return to Council for approval in October. It will provide a consolidated Ara view, built up from the planned mix of provision and a core set of assumptions and targets. Noting TEC has already allocated funding based on the mix of provision.
- c) Rick Helling's apologies were noted for the Ara Spring Graduation on 17 September.

4.2. 2027 Council Meeting Dates

- a) All were encouraged to advise their availability to the Council Secretary by the next meeting date to ensure the 2027 schedule can be confirmed.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS – Nil.

Closure

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the public section of the meeting closed at 9.20am.



17 September 2026

To: Chairs of Polytechnic Councils

Introductions and changes at NZQA

Tēnā koutou

As Chief Executive at the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself and connect with you as governors of the re-established institutes of technology and polytechnics. I have recently been appointed to this role as longstanding Chief Executive, Dr Grant Klinkum has stepped down due to ill health.

At NZQA, our role as a regulator in the tertiary education system is to maintain confidence in New Zealand's qualifications and credentials, ensuring they are recognised as credible, robust, and internationally recognised. We do this through our stewardship of the qualifications system, the regulation and quality assurance of tertiary education organisations (excluding universities). We also administer the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

As I have started in my role, I recognise the critical role that polytechnics play in delivering vocational and applied education that supports learners, communities, and New Zealand's workforce needs. I also recognise the important role that the Councils play in maintaining the quality and integrity of qualifications and programmes across institutions.

NZQA is committed to building strong relationships across the reshaped polytechnic sector and supporting quality outcomes for learners. As part of my introduction and NZQA's ongoing engagement, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with polytechnic Councils to discuss NZQA's role, our quality assurance processes, and areas of mutual interest.

Through our Quality Assurance Division, NZQA will also continue to engage with the polytechnic leaders to discuss matters that are currently shaping our focus and the wider tertiary education environment. These conversations provide a valuable opportunity to share perspectives, discuss emerging challenges and opportunities, and strengthen our collective understanding of how we can continue to support high-quality education and learner success.

A current example is an *NZQA | Polytechnic Transnational Education Working Group* chaired by NZQA's Deputy Chief Executive | Quality Assurance, Emily Fabling, which includes six Polytechnic representatives (two Chief Executives, two Academic Managers, and two International Managers). The focus of that group is ensuring the regulatory requirements set

by NZQA enable innovation and sustainable growth in transnational education, while protecting the credibility and integrity of New Zealand qualifications overseas. We recognise that striking this balance is not always straightforward, and we appreciate the robust and purposeful discussions so far.

Once again, I look forward to meeting you and working with you and your leadership teams. If there is an upcoming meeting, forum, or gathering that would provide an opportunity for me and Emily to meet with you and your colleagues, we would welcome the chance to attend. If no suitable opportunity is planned in the near future, I would be happy to arrange an online meeting at a time that suits you collectively, or personally.

If you wish to contact my office about a meeting, please get in touch with Elizabeth Templeton at elizabeth.templeton@nzqa.govt.nz.

Thank you for your contribution to New Zealand's tertiary education system.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C Hawkesby', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Christian Hawkesby
Chief Executive

CC Emily Fabling, Deputy Chief Executive | Quality Assurance
All Polytechnic CEs

Ara Council 22 September 2026	Agenda Item	2.1
	Discussion Item	
PUBLIC	Presented by	Darren Mitchell

ARA COUNCIL REPORT SUMMARY	
TITLE OF REPORT	Chief Executive's Report
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE	To provide Council with an overview of significant matters, activities, decisions, stakeholder engagements and emerging issues that have occupied the Chief Executive during the reporting period and which are relevant to Council's governance oversight responsibilities.
RECOMMENDATION(S)	That the Ara Council Receive the Chief Executive's Report Note the contents of the report, which include the quarterly reports from the individual portfolios and; Provides feedback on any matters it considers warrants further attention.
LINK TO ARA STRATEGY	- Seven Strategic Business Priorities - Vision 2030
KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED	Legislative updates [Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 and the Employment Leave Act 2026] will require structured preparation before implementation in 2027 and 2028 respectively.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ARA	Ara remains in a strong financial position, however there are risks in achieving the overall forecast.
RISK IMPLICATIONS FOR ARA	The principal revenue risk remains EFTS delivery, although this risk has reduced significantly following completion of the second semester enrolment period.

Chief Executive's Report

Public Meeting

1 Overview

1.1. Strategic Leadership and Organisational Performance

- a** Management's focus has remained on progressing Ara's transition from organisational stabilisation to execution of Vision 2030 priorities. Particular emphasis has been placed on strengthening organisational performance, accountability, strategic planning disciplines and enterprise leadership capability. This has included further refinement of senior leadership accountabilities, strengthening enterprise performance and risk reporting, and embedding a more disciplined approach to strategic delivery across the organisation.
- b** Leadership development remains a significant priority. Work has continued through the Te Kahui Arataki programme to strengthen leadership capability, accountability, vertical leadership development and organisational alignment. Executive coaching and leadership workshops continue to support this work and reinforce expectations around enterprise-wide leadership practice.
- c** Portfolio performance remains mixed. Several faculties are demonstrating positive financial, enrolment, academic quality and learner outcome indicators, while continued oversight is required in areas including EFTS delivery, budget recovery, annual leave liabilities, health and safety remediation, placement-related costs, research activity thresholds and uneven portfolio performance.
- d** The Seven Business Priorities are now operating as the principal delivery mechanism for Ara's transformation agenda, with key areas including internationalisation, delivery models, workload efficiencies, the QMS reset, research and development, and Ara's market positioning moving progressively from design into implementation.

1.2. Growth and External Partnerships

University of Canterbury Partnership

- a** A significant milestone during the reporting period was participation in the formal signing of the renewed partnership arrangement between Ara and the University of Canterbury. This partnership remains strategically important to learner pathways, joint programme opportunities, regional collaboration and the broader tertiary ecosystem within Canterbury.

Sector Leadership

- b** I continued active participation in the national Chief Executive network and sector discussions concerning vocational education reform, workforce capability, funding arrangements and emerging strategic issues affecting tertiary providers.
- c** I also participated in the Canterbury Ambition Workshop on 1 September, focused on workforce, immigration and investment priorities for the region. This workshop, led by Business Canterbury, asked industry and training providers to consider how the needs for skills development across the region could be better supported by the training network.

International

- d** International recovery remains positive, with continued development of opportunities across China, India and Sri Lanka. Recruitment for the Strategic International Growth Manager is progressing and remains important to building Ara's future growth capability.

1.3. Government Engagement and Policy Development

- a** Ara has engaged actively in several significant national policy discussions.

Youth Guarantee Redesign

- b** Ara submitted detailed feedback to the Ministry of Education concerning the proposed redesign of Youth Guarantee. The submission supports a differentiated model recognising varying learner needs and advocates stronger alignment between funding, learner support requirements and performance expectations. The submission emphasises progression pathways into vocational education, apprenticeships and employment.

Tertiary Research Excellence Fund

- c** Management continues to monitor developments relating to new Tertiary Research Excellence Fund settings. While headline funding allocations remain broadly unchanged, further work is underway nationally concerning the operationalisation of research capacity measures, with potential implications for Ara's future research strategy and investment decisions.

NZQA Integrated Quality Assurance Framework

- d** Ara also provided feedback to NZQA on the proposed design of the Integrated Quality Assurance Framework quality descriptors. The response noted the broad alignment between the proposed framework and Ara's current quality improvement direction, including the QMS Reset, Vision 2030 and the shift toward a more mature quality enhancement model. Feedback focused particularly on the proposed quality descriptors, the weighting of criteria, the importance of learner outcomes and teaching quality, and the need for any public descriptor to provide a fair, evidence-based and improvement-oriented view of provider quality.

1.4. Campus and Asset Strategy

Oamaru Property Disposal

- a** Progress continues regarding disposal of the former Oamaru property.
- b** Completion of statutory due diligence and updated valuation work has enabled progression through the required Public Works Act and Treaty settlement processes. Council will be aware that disposal of surplus assets forms part of Ara's broader property rationalisation programme and supports long-term financial sustainability objectives. Management has identified potential community perception risks associated with the disposal and appropriate communications will accompany any next steps.
- c** *A specific decision paper is included in this month's meeting pack.*

1.5. Academic Delivery and Workforce Planning

Academic Workload Allocation

- a** Work has continued on development of a standardised workload allocation approach across Ara.
- b** Pilot activity has established a baseline understanding of current faculty practices and informed development of common workload allocation principles and business rules.

This work is intended to improve transparency, consistency and workforce planning capability while ensuring equitable approaches to workload management across the institution.

Delivery Innovation

- c** Operational work continues on flexible and blended programme delivery models designed to improve accessibility, learner success and programme sustainability. Initiatives under consideration include greater use of hybrid delivery approaches and better utilisation of digital learning technologies.

Learner Success

- d** The Equity and Ākonga Success Strategy 2026–2029 is being established as Ara’s institutional framework for improving access, engagement, retention, progression, completion, wellbeing and post-study outcomes, positioning learner success as a whole-of-organisation responsibility.

1.6. Risk, Health and Safety, People, and Organisational Resilience

- a** Management has continued to strengthen organisational resilience and risk management capability.
- b** Council's September review of the Strategic Risk Register highlights continued focus on:
 - Financial sustainability
 - Student wellbeing
 - Health, safety and wellbeing
 - Cyber security
 - Business continuity and emergency preparedness
 - The future operating environment for vocational education
- c** Recent operational events reinforced the importance of maintaining strong incident management and business continuity capability. An organisation-wide Incident Management Team capability development programme is scheduled for October to further strengthen readiness and resilience.
- d** I also participated in a Business Leaders Health and Safety Forum workshop on 4 September, which reinforced the importance of visible leadership, proactive risk management and organisational culture in sustaining strong health, safety and wellbeing outcomes. The focus of this workshop was on a concept referred to as “the centre of gravity” and was intended to take your thinking beyond the usual mindset related to business continuity and into the realm of how would a significant crisis impact your ability to operate.
- e** Digital capability continues to mature as a strategic organisational enabler across learner experience, teaching and learning, automation, AI, data, resilience and governance. Cyber security indicators remain positive, with no known material cyber incidents or reportable data breaches during the reporting period.
- f** Research, development and portfolio work are moving toward a stronger evidence and market-intelligence base; however, recruitment of specialist business insights capability remains a constraint and a key dependency for accelerating this work.
- g** Industrial relations activity remains an area of governance interest. The AASC Collective Agreement has been ratified, TIASA bargaining is progressing toward settlement, and TEU bargaining remains the primary employment relations matter requiring ongoing monitoring.

1.7. Chief Executive's Overall Assessment

- a** The organisation continues to make progress against its strategic priorities.
- b** The reporting period was characterised by:
 - Continued strengthening of strategic partnerships
 - Progression of international growth opportunities
 - Ongoing focus on financial sustainability
 - Advancement of workforce and operating model reforms
 - Strengthening of leadership capability and organisational accountability
 - Active engagement in government policy development
 - Continued focus on enterprise risk, resilience and long-term sustainability
- c** My assessment is that Ara remains well positioned to continue executing its Vision 2030 priorities while carefully managing the financial, operational and strategic risks facing the vocational education sector.
- d** Further detail on items highlighted in my report can be found in the commentary provided by TKM members that is contained in the [appendix](#).

2 Ara Performance Summary – as at 10 September 2026

APPLICATION SUMMARY

	Pre App Closed	Pre App	Active App	Unsuccessful App	Converted App	Re-enrolm... and Other
Ara Overall	Est. req. Apps (Full Year)	Last year (Full Year)	Current Tracking	Last year Tracking	Req. EFTS Growth	Actual YTD App Growth
	28,089	27,037	28,598	26,613	3.9%	7.5%

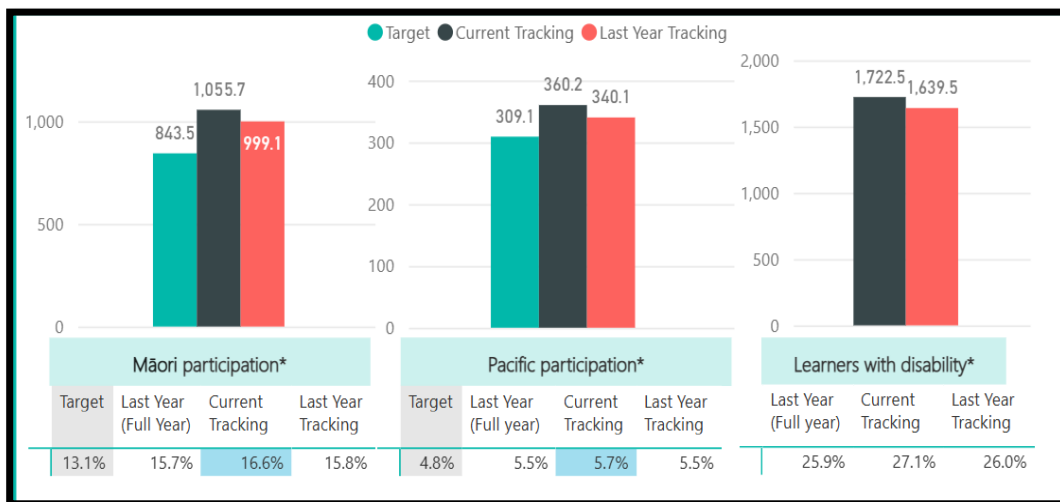
ENROLMENT SUMMARY (EFTS)

Enrolment Summary (EFTS) - Programme				Current year compared to		
Select EFTS type to include:				Last year		
	Active	Committed	Future	Potential		
Ara Overall	Target (Full year)	Last year (Full Year)	Current Tracking	Last year Tracking	Req. Growth	Actual YTD Growth
	7,109.3	6,843.1	7,003.0	6,850.3	3.9%	2.2%
International/Domestic						
Domestic	6,439.3	6,302.9	6,362.3	6,310.8	2.2%	0.8%
International	670.0	540.2	640.7	539.4	24.0%	18.8%

ENROLMENT BY LOCATION (EFTS)

Location						
⊕ All Other	6,787.0	6,481.2	6,695.0	6,486.6	4.7%	3.2%
⊕ South Canter...	322.3	361.9	304.5	363.7	-10.9%	-16.3%

PRIORITY LEARNER PARTICIPATION



3 Financial Performance

Executive Financial Summary as at 31 August 2026

% of EFTS budget enrolled	96%	96% of the 2026 EFTS Budget was enrolled by month end. At the same time last year 98% of final 2025 EFTS had been enrolled.
YTD EBITDA	\$7.4m	The year-to-date EBITDA is \$7.4m, which is \$3.1m better than the budget of \$4.3m. In the prior month EBITDA was \$3.9m better than budget.
YTD Total Revenue	\$96.2m	Year-to-date revenue is \$96.2m, which is \$0.1m lower than the budget of \$96.3m. Prior month revenue was \$0.4m higher than budget.
YTD Total Personnel Exp [ex annual leave impact]	\$57.7m	Year-to-date personnel costs (excluding net annual leave) are \$57.7m, which is -\$1.0m lower than the budget of \$58.7m. Note that teaching staffing is above budget with non-teaching, due to vacancies, is below budget.
YTD Net Surplus / (Deficit)	\$8.4m	The net surplus is \$8.4m, which is \$2.9m better than the budget of \$5.5m. The prior month variance was \$3.7m, better than budget.
Cash	\$103.3m	Current Cash Position is \$103.3m. This has increased by \$0.2m from the prior month.
Cash Cover	10.1 months	Measures ability to meet costs in absence of funding. TEC benchmark is minimum 2 months.
YTD Capex	\$8.0m	Capex commitments year-to-date are \$8m against a full-year budget of \$16.6m.

4 Safety, Health and Wellbeing

4.1 Current Activity and Performance

- a Work continues to strengthen Ara's health and safety governance, reporting, accountability and action-management practices.
- b Current priorities include:
 - Improving visibility of corrective and preventative actions.
 - Strengthening management accountability for action completion.
 - Improving reporting to senior leadership and governance.
 - Supporting leaders to understand and meet their health and safety responsibilities.
 - Continuing to develop wellbeing initiatives and support for kaimahi.
 - Strengthening the identification, monitoring and management of critical risks.
- c These activities are intended to improve organisational assurance and maintain a safe and healthy environment for kaimahi, learners, contractors and visitors.

4.2 Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 - Legislative Update

- a The Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 9 July 2026 and will come into force on 1 April 2027. The amendments represent the most significant reform to New Zealand's health and safety system since 2015.
- b The reforms place greater emphasis on identifying and managing critical risks, strengthen the distinction between governance and operational responsibilities, and introduce changes to officer due diligence obligations and approved codes of practice.
- c The current risk rating is moderate. The legislative changes are not expected to create immediate compliance concerns but will require structured preparation before implementation.

4.3 Employment Leave Act 2026 [Holidays Act Reform] - Legislative Update

- a The Employment Leave Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 6 August 2026 and will replace the Holidays Act 2003 from 6 August 2028.
- b The legislation substantially changes how leave is earned, taken and paid and is intended to simplify a historically complex area of employment legislation.
- c The current risk rating is moderate. Whilst implementation of these legislative changes remains some time away, the scale of organisational and system change required is significant and will require careful planning.

4.4 Emergency Management and Organisational Resilience

Current Position

- a Following the June 2026 campus evacuation resulting from a hoax bomb threat, a comprehensive review of Ara's emergency response arrangements was undertaken.
- b The review considered incident management, communications, business continuity arrangements and overall organisational preparedness. Insights were also informed by participation in a national crowded places security forum involving government agencies, emergency services, tertiary institutions and security specialists.

Strategic Implications

- c The June incident provided a valuable opportunity to assess organisational resilience in a live environment. The review highlighted opportunities to strengthen organisational maturity across emergency management, communications, leadership capability and business continuity planning.

5 Highlights and Achievements

5.1 Faculty of Culture and Services

- a The New Zealand Broadcasting School [NZBS]:**
 - i hosted prospective secondary-school media learners at the annual National On Air Workshops which included radio, screen and journalism experiences.
 - ii provided live national coverage of the 2026 Tertiary Futsal Championship Finals, with first-year screen ākonga running a large-scale outside broadcast for Freeview 200 from Parakiore Recreation & Sport Centre.
- b Fashion ākonga** Alex O'Hagan claimed three major honours, including the overall award, at the 2026 Hokonui Fashion Design Awards. Other Ara recipients included:
 - i Open Gala Award Runner Up - Holly Liberona
 - ii Open Avant Garde Award Highly Com - Isabella Fenton
 - iii Best use of fabric Award Winner - Alex O'Hagan
 - iv Award of Excellence Winner - Alex O'Hagan
- c Taster activities** were held for school ākonga across hospitality and services for baking, beauty therapy, hairdressing, music arts and art and design.
- d Ara talent** takes center stage at The Court Theatre's Teenage Dick opening in September 2026, with a mix of Ara graduates performing and set design by Ara's Portfolio Manager, Creative and Media.
- e NASDA** productions continue to be well patronised, with productions of The Wizard of Oz, World Goes Round and Beauty and the Beast at 80-100% ticket sales capacity.
- f** Development of the Business Certificate programme, which will form part of the Ara programme delivery in Shaanxi Business College in 2028, is progressing well.
- g** Rapid programme audits were undertaken across Te Reo Maori, Cookery and MAINZ DJ.

6 Media and Communications

6.1 Media engagement and coverage

- Streem, our new media monitoring platform, recorded 62 media items during August, 16 attributable to proactive media activity. The coverage had a combined potential audience of 3.3 million and an estimated advertising value equivalent of \$87,664. Online coverage accounted for 60% of mentions, followed by print at 19% and radio at 11%. Overall sentiment was predominantly positive or balanced, with 14.5% of coverage categorised as trending negative.
- Key proactive activity included the announcement of the Ara and University of Canterbury (UC) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which generated local and national coverage highlighting new pathways between vocational and university study. Other positive coverage included the new Pacific Culture and Health programme, architecture education and mentoring, Open Day, fashion and performing arts graduates and ākonga success stories.
- Ara also featured in wider sector coverage concerning employment opportunities for nursing graduates and collective bargaining. These matters contributed to the volume and sentiment of coverage and continue to be monitored.
- August is the first month of reporting through Streem. Its data will provide a baseline for more consistent analysis of media visibility, sentiment, themes and the contribution of proactive media activity.

6.2 Storytelling and Content

a Website

- Fourteen [news stories](#) and 35 Ara social media posts (Facebook and Instagram) were created during August. Content highlighted Ara's partnership with UC, Open Day, architecture, Pacific health education, research, scholarships and ākonga and graduate achievement.

b LinkedIn

- LinkedIn activity continued to grow [Ara's professional audience](#), which now has 18,523 followers. Stream recorded 68 social mentions and 2,700 engagements during August. The strongest-performing post featured the [launch of an architecture mentoring initiative](#), generating 2,400 engagements and approximately 2,000 reach.

6.3 Internal Communications

- Internal communications supported kaimahi understanding of organisational developments and strengthened connection across Ara. This included communicating the Ara and UC agreement, secure campus access, compulsory learning and Holidays Act remediation, alongside communications support for Priority 5, Celebration of Our People and emergency preparedness.
- Regular leadership and organisation-wide channels were maintained through Ara Pānui, Waituhi and the August Ara Update, which attracted 40 in-person and 95 online attendees.
- Waituhi engagement remained strong during the first half of August, with around 1,000 unique weekly viewers and between 38,560 and 41,989 weekly hub visits. The Ara and UC agreement was the most-viewed story, indicating strong kaimahi interest in Ara's strategic partnerships and future direction.

6.4 Visual highlights



Hon. Minister Penny Simmonds addresses a standing-room-only audience at the signing of the Ara and UC MoU.



Professor Pedro Lee from UC and Peter Sauer from Ara sign the engineering pathway agreement.



Ara postgraduate art ākonga Sierra Bright unveils her new work at Te Matatiki Toi Ora The Arts Centre.



Tāne (men) at Te Waka on Avon, part of Te Ara Kura a Tāne, a noho (overnight) experience which explored identity, wellbeing, culture and voice.



Ara hosts valued partners from ShaanXi Business College.



Close to 1,550 prospective learners attended Ara's Open Day in August.

Appendix to Chief Executive's Report TKM Quarterly Portfolio Performance Reports

An additional focus of this month's report is to provide a quarterly performance overview across each of the leadership portfolios.

1.1 **Corporate Services**

Activities

- a** The L Block project is progressing, with meetings held with the Armitage Williams executive team to maintain focus on programme milestones and delivery timeframes. Practical completion is now expected by the end of January, later than the preferred pre-Christmas timeframe, but still targeted to enable occupation before staff and learners return. Earlier access to the second floor may be possible, which would allow the library collection to be moved before Christmas. The immediate priority remains completing the project, while contractual matters, including extensions of time and notices of delay, will be managed in accordance with the contract, which includes liquidated damages.
- b** Facilities Operations Managers, Facilities Management, and Health & Safety continue to work together to strengthen collaboration and undertake coordinated reviews of health and safety concerns and or maintenance requests within the department.
- c** Secure access controls have now been implemented across the campus, with swipe-card access required for staff and learners. Public-facing areas remain accessible without a swipe card.
- d** The 2027 budget submissions have been completed and are currently being reviewed by management. The proposed budget will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in October, with final Council approval sought in November. This will include updated out-year modelling to identify the savings and growth expected from the seven priority areas and strengthen the organisation's ability to achieve financial sustainability through its core activities.

Outcomes

- e** Finance Business Partners are working closely with the departments, to monitor and manage financial performance to ensure we achieve our updated forecast.
- f** Facilities Management has strengthened campus security through the implementation of swipe-card access, progressed the L Block seismic strengthening project, and established a more coordinated approach with operational and Health and Safety teams for reviewing maintenance requests and workplace concerns, this area continues to be a focus.
- g** The Health Centre has maintained continuity of learner support during the transition away from on-campus GP services. Nursing, counselling and social work services have continued, clear referral arrangements have been established for learners requiring GP care, and communications have been coordinated to ensure learners and staff understand the services available.

1.2 **Ako Excellence**

Summary

The Ako Excellence Division continues to make strong progress across research, academic quality, and kaiako capability. Work undertaken during the quarter demonstrates a clear shift from planning into implementation and capability building, strengthening Ara's quality systems, research culture, and teaching practice. The division remains well positioned to support Vision 2030 through enhanced educational quality, stronger academic assurance, increased research activity, and a sustained focus on learner success.

Activities

Research

- a Research activity across the division has continued to strengthen, with Faculty Research Groups now operational and implementing actions to support a more connected and productive research culture. The team has provided support for external research grant applications and is working closely with organisers of the upcoming CITRENZ Conference, hosted by Ara in October 2026. Reviews of key research, ethics, and postgraduate study policies are underway to ensure they remain current and supportive of quality research practice. Significant progress has also been made in partnership with Māori Student Success on the development of Ara's draft Rangahau Strategy and implementation plan.

Academic Excellence

- b Work within Academic Excellence remains strongly focused on quality enhancement and the continued implementation of Strategic Business Priority 7 – Quality Management System (QMS) Reset programme. Activity has shifted from planning into integration and capability development, supporting a sustainable quality culture across the organisation. Internal Programme Evaluations are scheduled throughout September and are being positioned as development opportunities to strengthen programme teams' self-assessment capability. The team has been engaging closely with the Manufacturing and Engineering Industry Skills Board (ISB) through moderation workshops and relationship-building activities. Ongoing policy review work continues, alongside contributions to discussions relating to My eEquals implementation and feedback on NZQA's proposed Quality Descriptors. The team also remains heavily involved in programme development activity for our relationship with Shaanxi Business College (SNBC) and recently presented to visiting delegates on NZQA offshore delivery requirements and programme development processes.

Kaiako Capability

- c Kaiako Capability has maintained a strong focus on building teaching capability and supporting quality practice across Ara. Developmental classroom observations continue to be highly valued by kaiako, with feedback consistently highlighting the supportive and mana-enhancing nature of the approach. Significant progress has been made in developing the Quality Teaching Toolkit, which will provide practical resources to support reflective practice and quality teaching processes. The revised Quality of Teaching Survey process has been implemented, and Peer Observation of Practice (POP) continues to encourage collaboration and the sharing of effective teaching practice across faculties.

- d The team successfully delivered the third Ako Exchange and has commenced planning for the fourth event, continuing to foster collaborative professional learning. Work has also begun on a Dual Enrolment capability initiative designed to strengthen learner success through increased collaboration, learner voice, resource sharing, and kaiako development. Support for new kaiako has continued through classroom visits, developmental conversations, workshops, and targeted guidance, including support for the effective use of AI in teaching and learning environments.

Performance

Research

- e Performance indicators demonstrate encouraging progress across Ara's research environment. Three Ara Foundation grant applications were successfully funded, while 35 submissions have been made to OPSITARA – a collaborative research conference between Ara, Otago Polytechnic and SIT, being held in Invercargill in December. Twelve abstracts and conference papers were submitted to CITRENZ, an ICT tertiary delivery focused conference, reflecting strong engagement from Ara researchers. Inaugural Faculty Research Group meetings have now been established across faculties, providing an important platform to foster research activity and collaboration.

Academic Excellence

- f Academic Excellence has continued to deliver against critical regulatory and quality assurance commitments. All Type 2 degree-level programme changes were submitted to NZQA on time for the July deadline. An Academic Risk Register has been established and is now reported through both the Portfolio Assurance Committee and Academic Committee, providing greater visibility of risks and mitigation activities. Targeted support continues to be provided to programmes and faculties to strengthen assessment and moderation practice, with all degree monitoring visits completed for 2026. Two monitoring reports remain outstanding and are expected to be finalised by October.

Kaiako Capability

- g Approximately nine developmental observations were completed during the reporting period, generating valuable insights into emerging teaching capability needs. Feedback continues to confirm that kaiako highly value the developmental and mana-enhancing nature of the process. Cross-faculty POP activities remain active and continue to support professional learning across programme areas. Assessment and moderation workshops have identified additional capability needs, resulting in an expanded programme of support. Work with new kaiako through classroom visits and developmental conversations has also provided important insights that are informing future resources and professional learning opportunities.

Outcomes

Research

- h Key research outcomes achieved during the reporting period include the submission of an external grant application to BRANZ, the launch of Dominic Chilvers' Routledge social work publication, and the completion of a draft Rangahau Strategy and implementation plan developed in partnership with Māori Student Success.

Collectively, these achievements strengthen Ara's research profile and support future research growth.

Academic Excellence

- i Ten Rapid Programme Audits were completed during August, with findings scheduled for reporting to the Portfolio Assurance Committee in September. Pleasingly, no Requests for Information (RFIs) have been received from NZQA regarding Ara's degree-level submissions as of September, providing confidence in the quality and completeness of those submissions.

Kaiko Capability

- j Developmental observations continue to create meaningful opportunities for reflective teaching practice and continuous improvement. Insights gathered through observations, workshops, moderation activities, and support provided to new kaiako are enabling capability interventions to be increasingly targeted and responsive to programme needs. The development of the Quality Teaching Toolkit is creating a more consistent and accessible framework to support quality teaching practice across Ara. Moderation workshops have also increased visibility of assessment and moderation challenges, particularly within Trades programmes, enabling priority areas for support and improvement to be identified. Collectively, these activities are creating a stronger evidence base to inform future capability priorities and direct support where it will have the greatest impact on learner success.

1.3 **Strategy, Planning and Performance**

Summary

Progress has been visible across learner success, internationalisation, work-based learning, digital capability, cyber security, portfolio development, marketing and recruitment, and institutional assurance. The Seven Business Priorities continue to provide a formal governance and delivery mechanism for Ara's transformation agenda. Alongside these areas, the Division has progressed future-focused work across portfolio development, flexible and blended delivery, timetabling, QMS reset, website remediation and regional provision. Collectively, this work is strengthening Ara's readiness for 2027 and moving a number of long-standing areas from analysis and design into implementation.

Highlights at a Glance

Area	Progress
Transition	Formal transition programme closed; remaining maturity work embedded through Te Kāhui Arataki and BAU.
Learner success	Equity and Ākonga Success Strategy 2026–2029 will be established as the institutional framework, with diagnostic and indicator work under way.
International	International EFTS recovery remains strong; Strategic International Growth Manager recruitment is at interview stage; China, India and Sri Lanka opportunities continue to be progressed.
Work-based learning	Formal consultation is under way on the future Industry-Based Learning model, with implementation still targeted for January 2027.
Digital	Digital capability is increasingly positioned as a strategic enabler across ākonga experience, AI, data, automation, teaching and learning, resilience and governance.
Cyber security	No known material cyber incidents or reportable data breaches; Secure Score improved to 77.91% and phishing click-through reduced to 3.85%.
R&D / portfolio	Programme and market intelligence work is progressing; specialist Business Insights Analyst recruitment will return to market for a fourth round.
Assurance	Policy, Privacy and Complaints are operating at BAU; refreshed compulsory privacy and disability confidence training modules are being progressed.
National AI leadership	The Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance is a member of the national TEC/CAUDIT AI working group and is the only Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) representative, giving Ara direct visibility of and input into sector-wide AI development.
Earn As You Learn	A new industry partnership is progressing through the Earn As You Learn manufacturing programme, combining provider-based learning with paid industry placements and strengthening pathways between study and employment.

Strategy, Planning and Performance

- a** Continued to support Ara's strategic planning, performance monitoring and 2027 readiness. The 2027–2030 Investment Plan has progressed through formal submission and engagement processes, with informal feedback received from TEC.
- b** The Seven Business Priorities remain the principal programme structure for strategic delivery, spanning Internationalisation, Delivery Modes, Workload Efficiencies,

Research and Development, Campaign to Position Ara, Work-Based Learning and QMS Reset.

- c The reporting period has also marked a clear shift from transition activity into embedding systems, accountability and sustainable operating practice

Learner Success and Disability Action Plan

- d Ara's Equity and Ākonga Success Strategy 2026–2029 now provides the institutional framework for improving access, engagement, retention, progression, completion, wellbeing and post-study outcomes. The strategy is aligned to the Ōritetanga Learner Success Framework and positions learner success as core business and a whole-of-organisation responsibility.
- e The Disability Action Plan has moved into implementation. Current activity includes review of a compulsory staff training module to strengthen disability confidence and inclusive practice. This sits alongside planned work on accessibility, learner voice, Universal Design for Learning, hardship and support processes.

Enrolment and International Performance

- f Recruitment for the Strategic International Growth Manager is currently at interview stage.
- g Recent market activity in India and Sri Lanka occurred only a few weeks ago, so it is too early to report substantive new outcomes. The immediate focus is on consolidating relationships and progressing Ara's existing pipeline of opportunities across China, India and Sri Lanka. Visa processing delays remain an external constraint on conversion.

Marketing and Recruitment

- h Marketing and Recruitment has continued to support domestic and international recruitment, community engagement and Ara's wider market positioning. Open Day attracted more than 1,546 registrations, representing strong prospective learner interest. Final attendance and downstream conversion data are not yet available.
- i The Campaign to Position Ara continues through existing internal, external and digital channels, with work progressing across the narrative bank, Hono storytelling, Spotlight on Research, Success Your Way, stakeholder mapping and communications intelligence.

Industry-Based Learning

- j The Work-Based Learning priority has moved from design into active consultation and implementation. Formal consultation with affected kaimahi is currently under way, with the future model focused on clearer responsibilities across faculties, training advisers, employers and apprentices.
- k The programme remains focused on establishing the new Industry-Based Learning function from January 2027
- l Ara has also progressed a new partnership through the Earn As You Learn manufacturing programme. The model combines provider-based learning with three 10-week industry placements, with learners employed and paid during their placement periods. This provides a stronger connection between learning and employment, supports industry workforce development and creates an additional pathway for Ara to grow industry-based delivery.

Delivery Models, Timetabling and Quality Management System [QMS]

- m** The Delivery Modes work has completed its initial phases and produced clear recommendations around learner-centred timetabling, an Ara-wide blended delivery framework, targeted flexible options and stronger learning-design capability. The next phase is focused on implementation and testing in areas where learner demand and programme readiness are strongest.
- n** The revised centralised timetabling process has been approved by TKM and moved into implementation. Workload allocation has also progressed through pilot analysis and engagement, with implementation planning continuing.
- o** The QMS Reset has progressed from a single framework into a connected suite of QMS documents. The overall architecture has been broadly agreed and work is now focused on the integration plan, including what should be retained, reviewed or retired.

Digital and Cyber Security

- p** Digital capability continues to broaden from a service and systems focus into a strategic organisational enabler. Current activity spans ākongā experience, teaching and learning, automation, AI, data, resilience and governance. Live or emerging capability includes the website chatbot, Capture, PebblePad, Cogniti, Microsoft Copilot, AI agents, digital sign-offs and future data platform planning. Tribal upgrades remain pending.
- q** Ara is also contributing directly to national sector thinking on artificial intelligence. The Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance is a member of the TEC/CAUDIT national AI working group and is the only ITP representative, providing Ara with a direct connection to emerging sector practice, opportunities and expectations.
- r** Website remediation is in active rebuild, with the discovery and environment setup phases complete and the core platform rebuild under way.
- s** Cyber security performance remained strong through May–August. No known material cyber incidents or reportable data breaches occurred. Microsoft Secure Score increased to 77.91%, compared with 73.79% in Q1, and remained well above the benchmark for similar-sized organisations.
- t** Kaimahi security awareness also improved, with the latest phishing simulation recording a 3.85% click-through rate, down from 9.72% in Q1. Ongoing priorities include vulnerability management, identity protection, cloud-managed devices, disaster recovery and AI-enabled threats.

Research, Development and Portfolio

- u** The R&D priority is establishing a more systematic approach to understanding market demand, reviewing existing provision and identifying future programme opportunity. Work is progressing on programme performance and workforce intelligence capability, alongside external research support.
- v** Ara has also progressed future-focused portfolio work across postgraduate provision, accelerated Masters delivery, digital apprenticeship pathways, work-based engineering options and further offshore partnership opportunities.
- w** Recruitment of the specialist R&D Business Insights Analyst remains a constraint. Ara has found it difficult to secure the right capability for the role and will return to market for a fourth recruitment round. This remains a key dependency for accelerating the data and market intelligence components of the R&D function.

Policy, Privacy, Complaints and Assurance

- x** Policy, Privacy and Complaints are now operating as established BAU assurance functions. The emphasis remains on timely management of obligations, consistent practice and organisational learning.
- y** A refreshed compulsory privacy training module is being prepared for kaimahi. This complements the disability confidence training activity and supports Ara's wider focus on strengthening organisational capability and assurance.

Outcomes and Forward Focus

- The formal transition programme is closed, with remaining maturity work embedded through Te Kāhui Arataki and normal business structures.
- Learner success is moving from strategy into a more coherent institutional operating model.
- International recovery remains positive, with continued market development and recruitment capability building.
- Work-based learning has moved into formal consultation and implementation.
- Flexible delivery, timetabling and QMS work are moving from design into implementation.
- Digital and cyber capability continue to mature, with measurable improvement in security indicators.
- R&D and portfolio work are moving towards a stronger evidence and market-intelligence base, while specialist recruitment remains a constraint.
- SPP functions are increasingly operating as integrated, mature institutional capabilities supporting Ara's 2027 readiness.

1.4 **People and Culture**

Summary

The People and Culture Division has continued to support Ara's strategic priorities through collective bargaining, workforce and organisational development, employment relations advice, health, safety and wellbeing improvement, and preparation for significant legislative change.

Key developments during the reporting period include:

- Successful ratification of the AASC Collective Agreement.
- TIASA bargaining progressing to its final stages and settlement will be subject to endorsement by Council and member endorsement and ratification.
- Continued national bargaining with the TEU now seeking mediation following the Employment Relations Authority's decision not to grant facilitation.
- Enactment of significant changes to New Zealand's health and safety legislation, which will take effect on 1 April 2027.
- Enactment of the Employment Leave Act 2026, which will replace the Holidays Act 2003 from 6 August 2028.
- Continued delivery of leadership, workforce capability, health and safety, and organisational development initiatives.

Overall, the People and Culture position remains stable. Industrial relations activity is progressing positively in relation to AASC and TIASA. TEU bargaining and the implementation of legislative reforms will require continued monitoring, planning and governance oversight.

Activities

AASC Collective Agreement

- a Bargaining with the AASC concluded successfully, with the proposed settlement ratified by AASC members.
- b The new collective agreement applies from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027.

Financial and Operational Implications

- c An important financial outcome relates to the clarification of the provisions applying to casual kaimahi. The agreed wording confirms that casual kaimahi will not receive an additional casual loading on top of holiday pay.
- d This provides greater certainty regarding the correct treatment of casual remuneration and helps mitigate the risk of additional and unintended employment costs.
- e The settlement also clarifies several provisions that had been open to differing interpretations. This should support more consistent application across Ara and reduce the likelihood of future disputes.

Strategic Outcomes

- f Several outcomes developed through the joint working group process have been incorporated into the collective agreement. This demonstrates that structured engagement outside formal bargaining can produce practical outcomes that are acceptable to both Ara and employee representatives.

- g** The agreement to continue supporting the Workload Allocation Tool and reviewing professional development processes is also strategically important. This work will help ensure that:
 - i Workload is allocated using transparent and consistently applied principles.
 - ii Professional development time and funding support workforce capability.
 - iii Investment is aligned with organisational priorities.
 - iv Ara can demonstrate a clearer return on its investment in professional development.
 - v Academic workforce arrangements contribute positively to learner and organisational outcomes.

TIASA Collective Agreement

- h** Bargaining with TIASA is nearing completion, with the substantive terms of settlement largely agreed. The remaining steps relate to final endorsement of the proposed settlement package and member ratification.

TEU Collective Bargaining

- i** National bargaining with the Tertiary Education Union continues across the former Te Pūkenga network. A central point of difference remains TEU's preference for a Multi-Employer Collective Agreement, while a number of institutions, including Ara, have expressed a preference for Single Employer Collective Agreements that better reflect local financial, operational and organisational circumstances.

Current Position

- j** TEU applied to the Employment Relations Authority for facilitation of collective bargaining. The Authority declined the application after determining that the statutory grounds for facilitation had not been met.
- k** Following that decision, TEU filed for mediation. At this stage, the specific purpose and intended scope of the mediation remain unclear.
- l** Ara remains committed to participating constructively and in good faith. Further clarity will be sought concerning the matters TEU intends to address through mediation and the outcomes it is seeking from that process.

Strategic Implications

- m** Ara will continue to support constructive bargaining while maintaining a focus on:
 - i Achieving sustainable employment arrangements.
 - ii Preserving the ability to respond to local operational circumstances.
 - iii Managing potential financial impacts.
 - iv Maintaining constructive relationships with employee representatives.
 - v Monitoring the possibility of further escalation or coordinated national industrial activity.

Communication - Strategic Communications and Reputation Monitoring

- n** Ara has implemented the Stroom media intelligence platform to strengthen organisational awareness of media coverage, stakeholder sentiment, emerging issues and reputational risk across print, digital, broadcast and social media channels. The platform provides real-time alerts, social media listening, stakeholder intelligence, reporting, analytics, benchmarking and trend analysis. This supports earlier identification of emerging risks and opportunities and enables a more informed, evidence-based approach to strategic communications. Over time, Stroom will provide Council and management with improved visibility of the drivers

of organisational reputation and external stakeholder perception, supporting proactive risk management and governance oversight.

Performance

Te Kāhui Arataki Leadership Programme

- o** Since the launch of Te Kāhui Arataki in July, participants have completed two leadership wānanga focused on vertical development and the application of MyWorldView insights to themselves, their leadership and Ara. Learning between workshops is supported through Peer Learning Trios and coaching conversations with TKM members.
- p** Participant feedback highlights self-awareness and reflection as important foundations for development, alongside the value of learning with colleagues from across Ara through Peer Learning Trios. As the programme progresses, participants are beginning to apply these insights to leading self and others through change, including exploring different leadership responses and reflecting on organisational culture and their contribution to shaping it.

Outcomes

- q** The reporting period has delivered several positive outcomes for Ara, including increased industrial certainty through the ratification of the AASC Collective Agreement and progress toward settlement with TIASA.
- r** Employment relations risk continues to be actively managed, with TEU bargaining remaining the primary matter requiring ongoing monitoring and governance visibility.
- s** The organisation is also better positioned to respond to forthcoming legislative change, with early preparation underway for both health and safety reform and the replacement of the Holidays Act.
- t** Implementation of Stroom, continued leadership development activity, and the review of emergency management arrangements strengthen Ara's organisational resilience, reputation monitoring and decision-making capability.
- u** Overall, the People & Culture portfolio remains stable, with key areas of continued governance focus being TEU bargaining, implementation planning for legislative reform, and sustained improvement in health and safety accountability and assurance.

FACULTIES

1.5 Faculty of Culture and Services

Activities

- a** Please refer Item 5.1 in the Chief Executive Report.

Performance

- b** As of September 2026, financial performance is on track. The faculty is tracking ahead of budget (\$268K as of the end of August).
- c** Enrolments are tracking at approximately 2514 EFTS (98.5% of target). Degree and Foundation levels are continuing to show positive enrolments with particularly strong performance in Business, Broadcasting, Music Theatre and Music. In the Certificate and Diploma areas, enrolments are not tracking at expected levels (95% of target).

Outcomes

- d** While the Faculty has made progress toward stabilising its financial and academic position, it is important that continued savings are made during the last quarter of 2026. Vigilance is required around certain staffing pressures and expenditure areas that continue to warrant close oversight.
- e** Savings targets and plans have been identified in the 2027 budget.
- f** The Faculty remains focused on:
 - i** Strengthening financial performance through disciplined portfolio management
 - ii** Continuing industry engagement to ensure programme relevance and quality
- g** Overall, Te Waka Aronui enters the last quarter of 2026 in a positive position. Continued focus is required on maintaining (and increasing) savings while also implementing the targeted savings plan for 2027.

1.6 **Faculty of Applied Technology**

Summary

The Faculty of Applied Technology continued to make progress across academic quality, programme renewal, industry engagement, research capability, and learner achievement. Significant achievements included the engineering articulation agreement between Ara and the University of Canterbury, programme renewal initiatives, and strengthened research and industry partnerships. Financial performance, EFTS delivery, and health and safety remediation remain key areas requiring continued oversight.

Activities

Academic Quality and Governance

- a Academic quality remained a priority through the reinstatement of Faculty Board of Studies meetings, submission of programme evaluation reports, and implementation of an improvement plan following the Built Environment academic audit. The engineering articulation agreement with the University of Canterbury creates clear learner pathways, strengthens recruitment and retention opportunities, and supports regional workforce development. Attention also remains focused on addressing external monitor and moderation feedback, particularly within Engineering Trades.

Programme Renewal and Development

- b Programme redevelopment progressed across several qualifications, including Carpentry Level 4, Pre-Trade Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Level 3, Automotive Refinishing, Bachelor of Architectural Studies, and Bachelor of Information Technology. Development of a new manufacturing programme in partnership with industry is planned for delivery in February 2027 and reflects strong employer engagement and workforce alignment.

Research, Industry and Learner Engagement

- c Research capability continued to strengthen through the establishment of a Faculty Research Group and development of a Faculty Research Strategic Plan. Computing is planning a national research conference and faculty participation in OPSITARA is expected to increase research outputs. Industry engagement remained strong through initiatives such as Tradies Breakfast, Emerge, ArchEngBuild Challenge, Constructlab, and He Toki Māori Trades Training partnerships.

People, Leadership and Change

- d Leadership focus centred on staffing, organisational change, and operational accountability. A new Faculty Operations Manager has been appointed following a highly competitive recruitment process. The Te Kāhui Arataki leadership programme has commenced, supporting capability development across Ara. Proposed changes to industry-based learning management aim to allow academic staff to focus more fully on teaching and learner success.

Health and Safety

- e Health and safety became a major operational priority following the annual audit. A coordinated action plan is in place with focus on high-risk workshop and machinery

environments. External specialists Safe and Sound have been engaged to support risk assessment, machinery compliance, and development of sustainable controls.

Performance

- f** Financial performance remains a concern. Revenue and net contribution are below budget and EFTS delivery is behind target. Teaching staffing and operational costs are above budget in some areas, requiring ongoing expenditure discipline.

Outcomes

- g** Key priorities for the next quarter:
 - i Manage budget performance and prepare 2027 budget.
 - ii Complete high-priority health and safety audit actions.
 - iii Address moderation and academic quality findings.
 - iv Ensure readiness for new and renewed programme delivery.
 - v Manage organisational change effectively.
 - vi Strengthen leadership capability, staff wellbeing, and research outcomes.
- h** The Faculty achieved significant progress in academic quality, industry collaboration, programme renewal, research capability, and learner engagement. The next quarter will require disciplined execution of financial recovery, health and safety improvements, and academic quality commitments to ensure sustainable performance and continued learner success.

1.7 **Faculty of Health, Science and Sustainability**

Summary

The Faculty recorded a strong overall quarter, with financial and EFTS performance ahead of budget, continued curriculum and programme development, strengthened academic and research governance, and positive learner outcomes. Key matters requiring continued oversight are annual-leave liabilities, placement-related costs, uneven portfolio performance and gaps in approved research activity.

Activities

Academic governance and programme development

- a The second quarterly Board of Studies meeting was held on 19 August, embedding reporting deadlines and action tracking. Oversight included qualification completion, placement capacity, learner support, assessment and artificial intelligence, programme redevelopment, regulatory engagement, Pacific learner achievement and non-starter withdrawals.
- b The Child Health and Development micro-credential commenced in July following NZQA approval. The fully online, competency-based course supports osteopaths and other health professionals to strengthen capability in assessing and treating children.
- c Development continued on the Bachelor of Nursing and Diploma in Enrolled Nursing curricula, Te Ata Māhina Bachelor of Social Work, the Graduate Certificate in Nursing review and more flexible delivery models.
- d The compulsory Pacific Culture and Health course was delivered for the first time within the Bachelor of Applied Science, with more than 90 ākonga enrolled. Three staff appointments, including two supporting the new course, strengthened delivery capability.
- e Rangatahi from the Tupaia STEAM Academy participated in practical sport and exercise science activities and were introduced to tertiary and career pathways in sport, nutrition and health promotion.

Leadership, research and wellbeing

- f Ara's Head of Nursing commenced on 29 June and was welcomed at Manawa in July. Recruitment also began for two permanent Nursing Portfolio Manager positions. A Principal Academic Staff Member for Osteopathy was also welcomed to the faculty on 24 August.
- g The Faculty Research Group became operational. Seventy-five per cent of eligible staff held a research allocation, but nine did not yet have an approved project and three programmes were below the minimum research-activity threshold. Managers were tasked with supporting project registration, activity or allocation realignment.
- h A consolidated health, safety and wellbeing overview and dashboard was established across Madras, Manawa and Timaru. Health and safety is now a standing Faculty Leadership Team item.

Performance

Delivery and Operational

- i International delivery was slightly below planned levels. Annual leave balances remain an area requiring active management, and placement and accommodation pressures are expected to continue impacting operational delivery.

Portfolio

- j** Health and Community continued to perform strongly, particularly within Medical Imaging, Osteopathy and Midwifery. Community Studies remained below target and requires ongoing monitoring.
- k** Nursing maintained strong programme delivery, led by the Bachelor of Nursing. Enrolled Nursing remained below target, while placement capacity and high annual leave balances continue to require active management.
- l** Science, Sustainability and Early Learning remains the Faculty's principal area of concern, with all delivery units performing below expectations. Continued focus is required to improve programme performance across the portfolio.

Outcomes

Learner achievement and programme quality

- m** Bachelor of Nursing graduates achieved a 98 per cent success rate in the most recent Nursing Council State Final Examinations, significantly above the national average.
- n** Bachelor of Applied Science successful course completion increased from 92.3 per cent in 2025 to 96.1 per cent in 2026, attributed to close monitoring and strong pastoral care. All academic staff in the programme remained research active.
- o** Revised Sustainability and Outdoor Education qualifications were approved for NZQA submission, strengthening Te Tiriti alignment, science content and study pathways. Revised Sustainable Practice postgraduate qualifications were also approved, including a 90-credit thesis pathway.
- p** Research and professional impact
- q** Indigenous midwifery research informed the redesign of the unified Bachelor of Midwifery, embedding mātauranga Māori across all four years. Additional outcomes included completed doctoral research in virtual reality for midwifery education and publication of a social work practice framework.
- r** Medical Imaging capability was strengthened through two full-time clinical tutor appointments and establishment of a research group. The programme remained below the Faculty research-activity threshold at the August review.
- s** Overall, the focus will now be to maintain oversight of four areas:
 - i** reduction of annual-leave balances;
 - ii** management of nursing placement and accommodation expenditure;
 - iii** recovery of Science, Sustainability and Early Learning delivery;
 - iv** and completion or realignment of research activity below required thresholds.

Ara Council Audit and Risk Committee Minutes 2 September 2026

Minutes of a meeting of the Ara Council Audit and Risk Committee held on Wednesday 2 September 2026 at 3.30 pm in the Council Room G202, City Campus and via Teams.

1 Welcome and Attendance

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members.

1.1 Present

a Voting Members

Michael Rondel [Chair], Hugh Lindo, Rick Hellings and Andrea Leslie [online].

b Non-Voting Members

Darren Mitchell [DM – Chief Executive], Tilly McKay [TM – Chief Financial Officer] and Christina Yeates [CY – Minute Secretary].

1.2 Apologies

Nil.

2 Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Minutes of Council Audit and Risk Committee Meeting – 3 June 2026

*It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 3 June 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.*

R Hellings/A Leslie

Carried

2.2 Action List

a Action #2 – Work Schedule 2026

DM and the Chair agreed to discuss and include 2027 planning in addition to the remaining 2026 schedule.

3 Work Schedule 2026/2027

As per action #2 above, to support preparing the draft 2026/2027 Work Schedule, the Committee had previously discussed including the following areas of focus:

- Longer term financial strategy discussion
- Timaru campus master plan refresh, including opportunities for promotion and profiling the Timaru campus, particularly the trades facilities

- Capital Asset Management Plan and associated financial implications – maximising the return on capital expenditure
- Cybersecurity – regular updates

4 Public Excluded

*It was **resolved** that the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.*

M Rondel

Carried

The general subject of the matters considered while the public was excluded was:

4.1	Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 June 2026	s9(2)(i)
4.2	Correspondence – The Audit Office	
4.3	Risk Report and Register	s9(2)(i)
4.4	Cybersecurity	s9(2)(i)
4.5	Academic Quality Assurance - Update	s9(2)(i)
4.6	Audit NZ – 2026 Audit Plan	
4.7	Internal Audit Programme - Update	s9(2)(i)
4.8	L Block Project - Update	s9(2)(i)
4.9	Treasury Performance Report	s9(2)(i)
4.10	Insurance Collective Programme Renewal	s9(2)(i)

This resolution was made in reliance on s48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interests protected by s9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the proceedings of the meeting in public. The section of the Official Information Act which applies is shown beside each item considered while the public was excluded:

- *Commercially sensitive financial data*
[s9(2)(i)] – The Crown or any Department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities

At the conclusion of the Public Excluded section of the meeting, the Committee moved back into open meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.30 pm.

READ AND CONFIRMED

Chair:

Date:

Audit and Risk Committee Minutes [Public] – Action List as of 2 September 2026

Action Number	Date	Agenda Item	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Status	Due
2	5 March 2026	5.1	Work Schedule 2026	Work programme to be drafted for ongoing assurance and circulate via email, outside of the meeting cycle.	DM	In progress	27 Oct
	Updated 2 September 2026	2.2	Work Schedule 2027	Action updated to include discussion with the Chair and Chief Executive on 2027 planning .	DM/MR		

Ara Council Meeting Schedule - Work Programme 2026

as at 22 September 2026

Month		Topics	Notified Non-availability
February	4	Induction and Strategy Day	
	18	Ara Whakatau Semester One – Woolston	
	19	Academic Committee	
	24	Council Meeting (Christchurch)	
March	4	Ara Whakatau Semester One – City	
	5	Audit and Risk Committee	
	11	Ara Whakatau Semester One – Timaru	
	13	Autumn Graduation (Christchurch)	
	18	Ara Whakatau Semester One – Manawa	
	24	Council Meeting (Christchurch) - Quarterly TKM Reports - Health and Safety Walkabout - Academic Committee Quarterly Report	
	26	Academic Committee	
April	28	Council Meeting [Christchurch] STRATEGY TOPIC	CE 8/4 to 27/4
	30	Timaru Graduation	
May	7	Academic Committee	Chair 28/5 to 20/6
	26	Council Meeting (Timaru) - Report on Affixing of Common Seal - Campus Tour and Health and Safety Walkabout [Timaru]	
June	3	Audit and Risk Committee	Chair 28/5 to 20/6
	18	Academic Committee	
	23	Council Meeting (Woolston) - Draft Investment Plan 2027-2029 - Quarterly TKM Reports - Fee Setting - Health and Safety Walkabout	
July	22	Ara Whakatau Semester Two – City	
	23	Academic Committee	
	29	Ara Whakatau Semester Two – Timaru	
August	3	Rescheduled July Council Meeting [Christchurch] Academic Committee Quarterly Report	
	11	Ara Whakatau Semester Two – Woolston	
	12	Ara Whakatau Semester Two – Manawa	
	25	Council Meeting (Christchurch) STRATEGY TOPIC	
	27	Academic Committee	

September	2	Audit and Risk Committee	
	17	Spring Graduation (Christchurch)	
	22	Council Meeting (Christchurch) - Quarterly TKM Reports - Ōtautahi House Site Visit	
October	15	Academic Committee	
	27	Audit and Risk Committee 2027 Budget -pre Council review - Annual Report 2025 – content/format	
November	19	Academic Committee	
	24	Council Meeting (Christchurch) 2027 Budget Sign Off - Planning 2027 - Report on Affixing of Common Seal - Academic Committee Quarterly Report	
	24	Remuneration Committee	
December	8	Council Meeting (Christchurch) (if required)	

Ara Council meeting timings

8.30am – 9.00am Council only time

9.00am – 12pm Council meeting

Ara Council and Committee meeting venues

Christchurch – Room G202, Council Room, Te Kei, Christchurch City Campus

Timaru – Room TA210, Board Room, Timaru Campus

Woolston – Room V140, Board Room, Woolston Campus

Waitangi Day – Observed Friday 6 February
 Otago Anniversary – Mon 23 March (Oamaru campus closed)
 Good Friday – Fri 3 April
 Easter Monday – Mon 6 April
 Easter Tuesday – Tues 7 April
 ANZAC Day observance – Observed Mon 27 April
 King's Birthday – Mon 1 June
 Matariki – Friday 10 July
 South Canterbury Anniversary Day (Timaru campus closed) – Mon 28 September
 Labour Day – Mon 26 October
 Canterbury Anniversary/Show Day (Christchurch campuses closed) – Fri 13 November

Note: 2027 Proposed Meeting Dates for the Ara Council: Tuesdays 9-12 [Council only time 8.30-9am]*23 Feb**23 March**April – no meeting**4 May – Timaru Graduation and Council meeting [venue Timaru Campus]**25 May**22 June**27 July**24 August**28 September**26 October – noting 25 October is Labour Day**23 November**7 December [if required]*