KĀPITI COAST LIBRARIES

Olivia Groube Customers Services Librarian. Image credit Kāpiti Coast District Libraries.

Ian Littleworth discusses Kāpiti Coast District Libraries' pilot of Te Tōtara Workforce Capability.

The Te Tōtara Workforce Capability Framework was developed as part of the New Zealand Libraries Partnership Programme (NZLPP). It includes the elements required for working in the library and information sector, including underpinning kaupapa, ethics and context, the core capabilities needed for most roles and reflection ideas and pathways to build capability in the workforce.

To meet the needs of all libraries within the sector, the framework can be updated and adapted, depending on the role of the organisation's sector, its size and its focus. Kāpiti Coast District Libraries was an early adopter and looked at how the framework might be used by their team and in the wider context of public libraries.

Ian Littleworth was the director of Kāpiti Libraries at the time. He felt a workforce capability framework was needed in the sector.

"Without a doubt. There were some excellent bits and pieces around that some libraries had done to fit their needs but nothing that provides a comprehensive sector-wide view on learning and development as Te Tōtara framework."

Because the role of libraries is evolving so much and will continue to change, Ian said taking part in introducing Te Tōtara was an opportunity for them to prepare, think ahead and position their library team for what may be coming.

"It was great to take a sector-wide approach to capability building. But in hindsight, it's a beast of a thing. The huge benefit is that you now have it all in one framework, which works for all areas of our diverse library and information sector. It provides the ability to go in and take slices from the framework to fit your organisation's needs, and work through them over time."

The other important thing, said Ian, is that the framework is based on capability building. This elevates the conversation where the focus is on defining the capabilities needed in a future-focused and evolving library.

COMPETENCY VS CAPABILITY

A competency is the skill, knowledge, talent and attitude needed to fulfil a task, job requirement and expectations. A competent employee can do anything their job requires and do it well.

A capability goes beyond a competency. A person's capability is a measure of their potential and includes all the attributes that show how fit they are to do their job, now and in the future. Capabilities include a person's set of competencies, their ability to develop and apply other skills, their experience, professional networks, confidence in doing a good job and any other job-related soft skills, attitudes and beliefs.

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"The way you grow the relevant capabilities is through building on the competencies and skills that sit under these. As an example, if a capability that will move your library service forward is enabling personal growth and well-being, the bits of the jigsaw puzzle to make this happen might be to support staff to study at the wānanga or undertake some other well-being activity. The framework enables these types of conversations to happen."

> The way that Kāpiti Coast Libraries approached using Te Tōtara was to make the framework the foundation for their council performance development process.

"The beauty of the framework is you can slice and dice it as you want. The pilot we were doing was focused on taking the framework at 70 or 80 pages, developed for the whole sector and including an extensive workbook, and make it fit for a medium-sized library like Kāpiti. We trialled the workbook, and it is a great tool, but too much for our staff.

It is used as a resource for managers, and Kāpiti has now developed a trimmed-down version, a four-page worksheet for staff. This became Pātorara, the interactive worksheet for those short on time.

The worksheet looks at the capabilities identified and staff mark themselves where they think they fit. They may identify strengths in a particular area or may need to grow in another. It's the start of our performance development planning, Ian says.

Personal and team goals were set based on **the seven principles that form the roots of the totara tree** and support the team's growth and development.

Appointing Watene Kaihau into a new role as Te Kaitohutohu Ratonga Māori, Whare Pukapuka) / Māori Services Advisor (Libraries) meant Watene could support the team in growing their understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Ao Māori and in kaupapa Māori, on which the roots of the Tōtara framework is based.

Their focus is also on articulating what the seven principles mean for them as a library, as a team, and for staff individually. The seven principles are:

- Rangatiratanga (self-determination and leadership)
- Kotahitanga (strength in unity and teamwork)
- Manaakitanga (kindness, respect and hospitality)
- Pūkengatanga (continuous development)
- Whanaungatanga (kinship and relationships)
- Ūkaipōtanga (place of belonging and nourishment)
- Kaitiakitanga (guardianship and protection)

"It's an evolution, people can't work on everything at once, but they can focus on one area before moving to another."

The Kāpiti team has included the Kāpiti District Council vision and objectives in their tree trunk/ Te Tīwai to represent the values, ethics, and wider context for the sector. Their first step was to make sure that staff understood the core Kāpiti Council and library objectives before including other areas.

> "What do I like about this framework? It is a massive resource intended to be used by the whole sector, so everything that you will need is there. But it will be used differently depending on what part of the sector you are in, what the requirements there are for your library, and where you want to evolve in the future. For us, there are also parts in there that we aren't covering yet, such as AI, but these give us areas to aspire to in the future."

It's also about growth – there are steps in there to cover the cycle of learning. They go from the foundational kōrero-discussion level to mōhio-knowledge (comfortable level), mārama-understanding and the level of mātau-wisdom which is the capable level.

The Kāpiti team responded well to the framework. Through a number of workshops and staff sessions, they have talked about the principles and what they meant to them, and what to include in Te Tīwai.

"In our annual performance development process, we have used Te Tōtara as the basis for our goal setting with one performance goal around a capability, one based on a Te Tōtara principle, one on health and safety, one on a wellbeing goal, and one on a learning and development goal."

> The process took nine months of workshops and discussions as the team decided what each part meant to them, for instance, manaakitanga in their library and work. It's been an important process for engaging the whole team in what they are doing.

Kāpiti Coast District Libraries have chosen to use Te Tōtara in this way because it works with where they are as a library and where they want to head in the future. Other libraries may choose to use the capability framework in a completely different way and that is the enduring benefit of this amazing resource.

Read Diego Pedrioli's case study on introducing Te Tōtara to his Kāpiti team.

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