He waka eke noa: The journey of moving Accommodation from more than a bed and some fun events to an environment that supports positive transformations

Jacob Waitere, The University of Auckland

Accommodation at the University of Auckland is one of rapid growth and change. Over the last 8 years the University has more than doubled its accommodation on offer, starting with 1300 beds and in 2020 offering over 4500. At a time of extreme growth, Accommodation was challenged to review how it operated, what the value proposition of accommodation was and review our practice and ideals’ outcomes.

Change first began with Accommodation reviewing its core function within the University. This was soon followed by reviewing engagement opportunities and student voice, developing a wellbeing framework, re-thinking RA training, implementing PASS mentoring and creating a new customer care charter. These initiatives have had positive impacts on student learning, satisfaction and engagement.

To support this project there was a focus on student consultation, research and review of theoretical frameworks. Changes were implemented using an ADKAR model of change and including staff in the decision making process. The changes have led to a caring community focused on success not only for students but all members of the Accommodation whanau.

The cultural change within the residential community has come about as a direct result of the practical application of theoretical approaches to working with people, with a focus on relationship and capacity building. The resulting transformation that has progressively been taking place has been vital for the wellbeing of the community and staff that work to support residents.

Learning outcomes:
- To inform participants on the wellbeing focused structures and frameworks in place at the University of Auckland
- To demonstrate the value of a learning outcome approach to residential programming
- To promote the importance of having various levels of student voice in a residential programme
- To promote the benefit of an integrated student accommodation model to fellow professionals

Presenter

Jacob Waitere, The University of Auckland

Jacob Waitere – Area Manager (Residential Experience), The University of Auckland

Jacob is a student accommodation and service professional with 10 years’ experience of working in the profession. He has been the Area Manager responsible for the Residential Experience at the University of Auckland for the last five years. In this varied role Jacob is responsible for the management of over 1500 beds, the strategy and delivery of pastoral care, academic support, conduct, student staff and engagement for all 3600 students living on campus and summer accommodation operations.

Jacob holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education and English Literature from Victoria University of Wellington and is a professional member of the Institute of Leaders and Managers Australia/NZ. Jacob is the Immediate-Past-President for NZATEAP, and the Vice-President for the Asia-Pacific Student Accommodation Association.

Jacob is a staunch advocate for the benefits and transformative potential of student accommodation. He works from a partnership approach with students and fellow professionals to ensure the best outcomes for all students.