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THE HORIZON MOVES WITH US: REIMAGINING POWER, PRACTICE, AND PURPOSE

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THE HORIZON MOVES WITH US: REIMAGINING POWER, PRACTICE, AND PURPOSE

Rachel McNamara and Jan Hendrik Roodt

This year, artist Pieter du Plessis provides us with a cover image filled with the colours of a new horizon. At first, it appears peaceful. Look for a little longer and it becomes less settled. The water holds patterns but continues to ebb and flow. The boat sits within conditions it cannot control. Land, water, and sky meet, but the line between them depends upon where we stand.

We encourage you to open the cover wide and move the book about. Different colours and features will catch your eye. The view changes with the movement. So does the horizon. A horizon can appear to mark the distance between where we are and where we need to go. However, it does not offer a fixed destination. It moves as we move. Our understanding develops, and what once seemed distant takes on a different shape. Work is reimagined in much the same way, through technologies and structures, but also through relationships, identities, and choices.

The theme of this eighth issue of *Scope (Work-based Learning)* is Work Reimagined: Reframing Power, Practice, and Purpose. Its seven contributions begin in different places but converge on a shared question: what does it mean to practise well when neither work nor the conditions surrounding it remain still?

We begin with Michelle Te Koeti, who "mov[es] Māori success from the margins to the centre." Drawing on her Master of Professional Practice research, she shows that success for ākonga Māori cannot be separated from mahi, whānau, identity, and everyday life. Cultural grounding, flexibility, and lived experience are not additions to learning. They help make learning meaningful. Te Koeti also keeps the facilitator visible. Facilitators walk alongside ākonga as mentors, advocates, and trusted partners. They listen, question their assumptions and hold the learner's 'why' in view. Together these practices ask educators to reconsider whose realities shape the learning environment and where responsibility for learner success is located. This learner-attentive orientation anchors educational purpose in the people education is intended to serve.

Bronwyn Alton and Matthew Miller carry this concern with relationships into their study of the leadership journeys of women in the Bay of Plenty. They explore what women value in mentoring, the barriers they encounter, and the support they seek. Informal relationships, trust, challenge, and access to networks emerge as important. At its best, mentoring creates room for voice, reflection, and informed choice. Power can be used to open pathways rather than guard them.

Relationships help people navigate work in a rapidly changing landscape. In their contribution to this issue, Favour Atubi and Clinton Atubi turn towards artificial intelligence (AI) and the gap

between its use for academic tasks and the capabilities required in contemporary workplaces. They consider interdisciplinary learning, curriculum development, industry collaboration, continuing professional development, and entrepreneurship as ways of preparing learners for AI-enabled work. The water in Pieter's image offers one way of thinking about technology: as an environment with currents, patterns, and uncertainties that influence where work may go. Like the horizon, however, its possibilities shift as people move, learn, and make choices. AI does not determine the direction of travel. Educators, institutions, and learners shape how it enters practice. Questions of access, privacy, ethics, and sustainability therefore sit alongside challenges of technical skill. Work readiness also requires judgement about when, why, and in whose interests the technology should be used.

At the midpoint of the issue, Amanda Cossham and Mary-Liz Broadley look back across more than twenty years of transformation at Open Polytechnic. Systems and technologies are part of that history, although organisational transformation is lived through people. In this article, long-serving kaimahi describe changing roles, redistributed responsibilities, and the continuing work of keeping learners at the centre. Change that appears sudden from a distance is often accumulated through years of adaptation, professional learning, and negotiation. Agency moves among people, policies, technologies, and specialist roles. Organisational memory allows these movements to be seen. Reflection in action is one of the ways transformation is lived and made meaningful.

As organisations change, the boundaries of professions change with them. Steph Mann draws unexpected parallels among Large Animal Veterinary Technicians, deer management, and search and rescue in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each domain developed from relatively informal and community-based practice through training, regulation, technology, and a growing sense of professional responsibility. Looking beyond her own field helps Mann see familiar patterns differently. Professionalism is not simply a title bestowed from outside. It develops through competence, community, and conscience. Sometimes we recognise our own practice more clearly when we encounter it, in another form, elsewhere.

Leigh Quadling-Miernik then turns the lens towards the practitioner herself. Across five years of contributions to *Scope*, she has documented her Doctor of Professional Practice journey. In this final piece, the question changes from what she has done to who she has become. She moves from being a teacher who does towards a researching teaching practitioner who also asks what it means to be. This is not a tidy arrival. Theory has given her new language for understanding a career rich in practice, while the doctoral journey has turned the inquiry back upon the researcher. The work and the person investigating it have changed together. The lens used to examine practice also changes the person looking through it.

Becoming may also require us to release control. Ingrid Campbell closes the issue by reconsidering success through succession. Her Master of Professional Practice developed her understanding of sustainability, relational accountability, and trauma-informed leadership. The work that followed required her to embody those ideas within governance, community practice, and the realities of personal capacity. In her article, Campbell distinguishes service from over-functioning, and care from becoming indispensable. Sustainable leadership creates conditions in which others can contribute, question, and lead. Goodwill may begin a kaupapa, but structure is needed to sustain it. Succession becomes an ethical practice through which power is shared and responsibility matures into stewardship.

Here we return to the boat. A capable navigator cannot calm the waters or fix the horizon. What can be developed is the judgement to read changing conditions, choose a direction and make room for others to take part in the voyage. Agency does not mean controlling the environment. It means acting thoughtfully within it.

Across this issue, work is reimagined at several scales: around the lives of ākonga, through mentoring and technological judgement, as organisations and professions adapt, as research reshapes the researcher, and as leadership moves from personal endurance towards collective continuity. These voyages are not separate. Power concerns who can speak, choose, and act. Practice concerns how judgement develops within real conditions. Purpose returns us to the people, communities, and futures the work serves. The horizon connects them, not as a destination, but as an invitation to keep looking and moving.

The contributions leave us with questions that extend beyond this issue. Whose voices shape learning, and where does meaningful choice reside? How does research into practice also become research into the self? What might education look like as lifelong learning and as service? Which knowledge traditions guide us? And what becomes visible when work-based learning is understood as a technological, cultural, and civic practice? These are questions we will carry into *Scope (Work-based Learning)* in 2027. The horizon remains open.

We thank the authors and the editorial team for the care and work they have brought to this issue. We hope you will find within it ideas that inform your own practice, unsettle something that has become too settled, and bring a little more of the horizon into view.

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