

Te Ao Mārama

5 Heriot Drive, Elsdon, Porirua.

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\$9M

**Commenced
March 2024**

**Completed
January 2025**

Client: Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Architect: APG Architects

Te Ao Mārama is Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's flagship educational facility in the Wellington region, designed to provide the tools, resources and support for kaimahi and taura to succeed, and continue their vision of whānau transformation through education.

The 50-year-old former Todd Motors cafeteria building is an example of Brutalist Architecture, with strong geometric forms, exposed concrete structure, exposed aggregate pre-cast panels and wood/cement blend soffit panelling.

These important features were kept intact within the new design, with some significant improvements by way of a new roof structure, new roofing, new aluminium window and door joinery, fibre-cement cladding, and feature metalwork panelling and screens – to revitalise and modernise the campus, making it fit-for-purpose and addressing historical weather-tightness and functionality issues.

A full interior strip-out and fit-out was undertaken over an accelerated 9 month build period, with new building services installed throughout, a new commercial kitchen, a cafeteria, 5 classrooms, large tutor and staff areas, and a dedicated space for noho marae.

The design of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Te Ao Mārama reflects a commitment to creating a welcoming and functional environment for learning, reflecting the tikanga of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa as well as providing a connection to the local culture and community. The waharoa was designed as a modern steel and perforated metalwork structure, whilst still maintaining its ceremonial function and creating a contemporary Māori identity with coloured concrete pavers laid in poutama weave pattern which continues inside with the carpet lay pattern.

The new 4.8m high reception and lounge space was designed to showcase 6 pou gifted by Ngāti Toa, providing an impressive sculptural entry space ; and partitions and layouts have been designed to showcase Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's extensive Māori carving and artwork collections.

With 7 years of design challenges and budget planning leading to the completion of the Te Ao Mārama refurbishment in January 2025, the new campus marks a significant milestone in the modern history of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

