



Flexible Learning Association of New Zealand

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**Enhancing Education Access
in the New Zealand Schooling Sector
Through Online Networked Learning**

Authors FLANZ

The Flexible Learning Association of New Zealand (FLANZ) works to enhance flexible learning practices across all sectors of education in New Zealand and advance current thinking and contribute to research and scholarship, in Open, Distance and Flexible Learning (ODFL). FLANZ believes that OFDL will continue to be an important influence on the education system and for learning, and needs to be sustained and supported. This report identifies areas in the New Zealand schooling sector (years 0 to 13) needing advocacy and support.

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Disclaimer Regarding Views: It is important to state clearly that while the feedback received was integral to the development and refinement of this paper, the policies, direction, and specific conclusions articulated within this final document remain solely the responsibility of FLANZ. The participation of any organisation or individual in the review process should not be construed as an endorsement of the final policy decisions, nor does the inclusion of their feedback imply that their specific views were adopted in their entirety.

Executive Summary

This advocacy report addresses distance learning in the New Zealand schooling sector (years 0 to 13). Currently there is a policy gap, funding is unstable, and there are issues with equity, access, and teacher capability. FLANZ recommend policy changes and sustainable funding to enable Virtual Learning Networks to provide year-on-year networked learning services that enhance learner curriculum access, better utilise teaching resources, and support continuity of provision of mainstream schooling during crisis.

A national study recently identified the current lack of provision in the legislative or regulatory environment for distance, networked learning educational programmes, that result in both non-profit and for profit providers operating outside of any formal regulatory regime beyond the ones that they create.

Distance Learning, where the student and teacher are geographically separated from one another, occurs in the public school sector mainly through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura). Te Kura is the largest distance learning provider in the New Zealand education sector and is legislated in the Education and Training Act (2022). They currently deliver more than 90% of secondary distance learning and 62–74% of primary distance learning. Distance learning also occurs through Virtual Learning Network (VLN) organisations.

The Virtual Learning Network (VLN) school led non-profit organisations include: Kōtuiti Ako and NetNZ supporting mainstream schools; and Te Whare Angitu initiative by Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa supporting secondary Kura Māori. VLN activity is partially funded by the Ministry of Education for VLN Primary operations and more recently as announced in the 2025 budget for a new Virtual Learning Network (VLN) for STEM subjects in Māori medium and Kaupapa Māori education. However, VLN is not supported by sustainable funding or supporting policy, which has the potential to compromise its ongoing effectiveness.

Networked Learning with the VLN connects New Zealand school students to real-time synchronous and asynchronous online classes with registered teachers. The VLN enables schools to collaborate in online networks to extend curriculum delivery by matching teaching capability with learner demand across schools (Virtual Learning Network Community, 2022).

Benefits of an enabling policy framework, characterised by recognition of the role of VLNs and year-on-year sustainable funding, include:

- Extended equitable curriculum access, improved outcomes, and educational extension opportunities for learners;
- Greater utilisation of teacher workforce skills;
- Increased school resilience to local, national and global disruption events;
- A coherent, durable national distance learning approach where providers collaborate.

Our vision is to ensure consistent, high-quality education for all learners in New Zealand, regardless of their location, ability, or external circumstances. **This paper recommends system changes to support flexible, equitable and accessible networked learning for all learners across school networks.**

Recommendations

- **Policy and Regulatory Framework:** The Ministry of Education will develop comprehensive policies and regulatory guidelines to govern networked learning, ensuring consistency and high standards across the education system.
- **Formal Recognition and Support for VLN Organisations:** Organizations like Kōtuiti Ako NetNZ, which are instrumental in providing networked learning in New Zealand schools, and Te Whare Angitu initiative by Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa which provides networked learning in kura Māori, receive formal recognition and sustained support within the education system.
- **Sustainable Funding:** VLN providers and their participating schools will be equipped with sustainable funding to fully leverage the benefits of networked learning.
- **Enhanced Teacher Capability:** Opportunities for professional learning will be readily available and further integrated into Initial Teacher Education programs, fostering and sustaining teacher expertise in online and hybrid learning environments. It will build on existing expertise to strengthen teacher capability nationwide.

If the role of Virtual Learning Networks was recognised and had the assurance of ongoing funding; more learners will have increased equity of access to curriculum learning and extension that they may not otherwise have; more schools will have access to teacher resource and expertise needed; more teachers will invest time in online teaching capability development; the resilience of the schooling system will be enhanced.

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Significance

This paper builds on a recent FLANZ supported comprehensive national study that examined the regulation, governance, and scope of activity of distance learning providers in New Zealand's schools (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2024). The study estimated distance learning currently impacts approximately 36,000 students or just over 4% of all school sector students who are in either supplemental or full time learning. The study identified a current lack of provision for educational programmes in the legislative or regulatory environment resulting in both non-profit and for profit providers operating outside of any formal regulatory regime beyond the ones that they create.

Terms

Open Flexible Distance Learning (OFDL),

Open Flexible Distance Learning (OFDL) is used to describe learning that is supported through technology, often online, where the student and teacher are geographically and/or temporally distant from one another (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2024). Commonly associated terms include distance learning, virtual learning, online learning and e-learning.

This report uses the term distance learning to refer to all modalities of education where the student and teacher are geographically separated from one another. Distance learning currently has an established and necessary place in the New Zealand school sector through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura), New Zealand's sole designated Distance School. The legislation that supports this is the Education and Training Act 2020 which refers to distance schools (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Virtual Learning Network (VLN)

Virtual Learning Networks (VLNs) are public distance learning organisations that facilitate networked learning by enabling schools to collaborate online. Through this collaboration, VLNs enhance curriculum delivery by effectively matching teaching expertise with student demand across multiple schools. They harness the shared capacity of their members, relying on the reciprocal contribution and participation within the network. VLN learning is both synchronous and asynchronous independent knowledge building learning activities (Virtual Learning Network Community, 2022).

Networked Learning

Networked Learning is used to describe the modality of education, such as VLN organisations provide, where learners connect online with teachers, resources, and other learners, using digital communication technologies to facilitate interaction and collaborative activities, independent of physical location, in real-time online classes (Networked Learning Editorial Collective, 2020; Virtual Learning Network Community, 2022). [Current Status](#)

VLN Online Synchronous & Asynchronous Learning

'Virtual school' learners attend mainstream schools and also access real-time online classes with registered teachers at another location plus asynchronous independent learning. VLN provides weekly timetabled Zoom or Google Meet classes with registered teachers and independent learning activities via learning management systems (Lindsay & Whalley, 2020;

Whalley & Barbour, 2025). However, to support learners' equity of access to subjects, mainstream schools must broker and fund student registrations in the VLN classes. Furthermore, schools must balance the possibility of the VLN providers failing to gain funding, causing disruption and inability for learners to access some subjects.

There is an immediate problem of providing confidence to school leaders that virtual learning networks will be available year-on-year so that learners' curriculum choices will continue to be available as they progress.

VLN Funding Not Reliable Nor Sustainable

VLN organisations do not have a reliable funding stream to ensure their work is sustainable into the future. Kōtuiti Ako Virtual Learning Network (Kōtuiti Ako VLN) and NetNZ are not funded to provide services to schools seeking to connect expert Secondary teachers to learners (Kōtuiti Ako, 2025; Sudlow, personal communication, October 2025), or to support learners who need additional support in subjects such as Mathematics (Whalley, 2025). Schools themselves need to provide funding to enable secondary VLN to operate and to fund additional curriculum needs. Primary VLN services have maintained Ministry of Education funding support for operations (Whalley & Barbour, 2025), although this has been ad-hoc and uncertain from year to year. Virtual Learning Networks (VLN) have utilised short term Ministry of Education funding to provide curriculum opportunities to learners with specific curriculum needs such as during Covid lockdowns.

Lack of Policy Guidance

VLN learning has been operating without policy guidance, and its provision has remained relatively static, while the need for networked learning capability has grown in the last five years. A shortage of experienced teachers, a need to enhance curriculum choice, including support for both remedial and accelerated learners, and the risk of future classroom disruption, are driving this need. Education conversations, leading to the review of Tomorrow's Schools, sought to promote a more equitable and integrated approach to supporting networked learning. However, successive changes in Government have not yet established a cohesive policy environment for the integration of networked learning into mainstream schooling.

Stable funding will enable current providers and schools to develop robust networks of provision, agree on protocols and standards, and invest in necessary teaching workforce digital capability.

Discussion

Significance

Distance learning participation grew significantly post-pandemic, primary students participation increased by 25.5% and secondary students by 26.7% between 2019 and 2023. Distance learning is a small but significant fraction of New Zealand's education sector. On average, one in 25 students enrolled in at least one distance course, with participation rates of approximately one in 12 secondary students and one in 125 primary students (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2025b).

Despite various initiatives and legislative efforts over the past two decades, networked learning has seen limited fundamental changes. Although progress has been made in physical infrastructure, such as N4L connectivity and digital devices for schools, current policies are primarily designed for face-to-face schools and do not fully accommodate an integrated approach to distance learning. There is a need to accurately track and monitor the evolving distance learning educational landscape (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2025b).

Issues of curriculum access, constrained funding, and the need for system-wide standards are evident alongside the need to address the sector's resilience when schools are faced with local or national disruption.

Key Providers and Initiatives

Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (formerly the Correspondence School)

Te Kura is a major provider of distance education, offering a wide range of courses from early childhood to secondary education. It is designated as a distance school under the *Education and Training Act 2020*¹. School sector distance learning has occurred in New Zealand since The Correspondence School in 1922 delivered asynchronous primary and secondary schooling at a distance (Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu –The Correspondence School, 2011). Te Kura is the dominant distance learning provider in the school sector, currently delivering more than 90% of secondary distance learning and 62–74% of primary distance learning (Mark, personal communication, 2025). Their instructional model is primarily asynchronous (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2024).

Virtual Learning Network (VLN)

Public non-profit organisations, **Kōtui Ako** and **NetNZ**, operating as charitable trusts, work collaboratively with schools across New Zealand to increase their access to subjects. Kōtui Ako with primary and secondary schools and NetNZ with secondary. There were 262 VLN member schools in 2023 (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2025b). Kōtui Ako (Primary) uses a mainly synchronous model supported by asynchronous platforms. Kōtui Ako (Secondary) and NetNZ use a mainly asynchronous model together with regular synchronous sessions.

The importance of open, flexible and distance education has been recognised by successive governments for more than three decades, however rather than being fully integrated and

¹ Two other types of special schools, three Health Schools and Ko Taku Reo - Deaf Education NZ have legislated regulatory requirements and engage in online networked learning.

sustainable, there has been a succession of 'ad-hoc' and/or 'short-term' initiatives outside or on the fringes of the current legislative and policy frameworks (Wenmoth, 2021). The VLN has existed for 30 years through the efforts of principals and teachers 'on the ground' (Wenmoth, 2011).

The Ministry of Education has funded Kōtui Ako VLN Primary operational costs since 2011. These contracts are often short term (sometimes 6 monthly) and uncertain in their renewal. Schools fund the Secondary VLN operational and leadership costs as well as providing an e-Dean for student support in their own school. Schools' contributions fund Kōtui Ako and NetNZ e-teachers, or schools provide their own e-teacher in reciprocity. Any New Zealand school/kura can become a member of Kōtui Ako (Primary). Any New Zealand secondary school can become a member of Kōtui Ako (Secondary) or NetNZ. Member Schools have access to the full range of courses made available through the wider collective of schools and can register their students in any of these courses.

Te Whare Angitu public initiative within **Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa** provides VLN Secondary STEM for students in kura Māori such as Kura Kaupapa Māori and Ngā Kura ā Iwi since 2022. Te Whare Angitu uses a mainly synchronous model supported by asynchronous platforms.

These VLN organisations connect schools that want to share teacher expertise with schools who do not have that expertise available locally. In this way the provision of networked learning, regulated within the existing policy, is able to relieve issues of limited teacher supply and curriculum choice, particularly for learners at small rural schools and kura.

Other

For-profit private enterprises operating as private companies have learners who are classified as home-based education students. The majority of private distance learning providers use an independent learning model that is individualised or personalised to the student as their dominant instructional model (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2024).

Recently the Government funded charter school, Aotearoa Infinite Academy, parent company Crimson Global, which will offer online schooling. O'Neill notes "we already have Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, our national online correspondence school, NetNZ, and Kōtui Ako the Virtual Learning Network Aotearoa as integral parts of our shared state schooling network" (2025, para. 12).

Government and Regulatory Framework

The Education and Training Act shapes the policies and operational aspects of the MoE's work and covers staffing, enrolment, assessment, seat-time (attendance) and school day/year. The current Education and Training Act is primarily designed to address regular, brick and mortar school contexts, and the policies and operational aspects haven't been designed to accommodate networked learning.

The issue with The Education and Training Act remains that Virtual Learning Networks are seen as an 'extra' and not intrinsically a part of the way in which quality education programmes and services can be offered to all learners.

In particular, the lack of certainty about the availability of online network services year-on-year has made it difficult to create an online network for learning available for all learners (Barbour, 2023).

Equity in Education

Small, Rural, Remote schools Benefit Research indicates small, rural and remote primary schools particularly benefit from the collective capacity of Kōtui Ako VLN (Johnson, 2022). Schools gain access to expert teachers in curriculum areas that they might not otherwise have, such as Mathematics Extension, Languages, Digital Technologies, and te reo Māori. Evaluation of a 2022 funding initiative for U1-3 schools found that Principals valued access to specialist teaching provision that they were not able to access in their own schools. For sole charge Principals in small rural schools, Kōtui Ako VLN extended their curriculum provision and enabled opportunities for learners to develop their key competencies of participation, contribution and self-management. The evaluation found that sole charge teaching Principals felt that their small and isolated schools were disadvantaged compared to larger schools and that costs to participate in Kōtui Ako were a barrier. The Principal Evaluator recommended that the Ministry of Education “review curriculum and school funding models to enable greater access for small rural schools to the VLN Primary, thus creating greater equity for our U1-3 schools” (Johnson, 2022, para. 22). Access to VLN services relieves pressure for sole charge Principals who have to teach year 0 to 8 across the whole curriculum (Whalley, 2024).

Mainstream Primary and Secondary te reo Māori VLN networked learning fosters the growth of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in mainstream primary and secondary schools who would otherwise find it challenging to find teachers proficient in this New Zealand Curriculum requirement (Education Gazette Editors, 2020; 2024). Māori and Pasifika learners benefit from being able to access language programmes and to connect with other ākonga. (Some Pasifika languages are available through the VLN Learning Exchange.) Alexander (2022), in her study on engagement of Māori learners in the Virtual Learning Network, states that Whanaungatanga (relationships), Kotahitanga (working together), and Manaakitanga (caring and respect) are important to engage Māori learners in an online environment. Building and maintaining positive relationships for all students, particularly Māori learners, is important in the virtual setting. The most effective strategies for student engagement were found to be prompt, personalized feedback and strong, reciprocal teacher-student relationships with high expectations.

Kura Māori Māori were amongst the pioneers of online teaching and learning with the KAWM (Kaupapa Ara Whakawhiti Matauranga) network initiative, begun in 2000, which enabled several school clusters, consisting of Wharekura, East Coast area schools & Māori boarding schools, to use video conferencing to provide online classes and professional development for teachers (Waititi, 2005).

Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa has been delivering online NCEA level STEM subjects to students in kura Māori such as Kura Kaupapa Māori and Ngā Kura ā Iwi. Students in kura Māori face greater cultural and language challenges in order to access a broad curriculum. In addition to the lack of staff, and lack of subject specialists in small, rural kura whose main language of delivery is te reo Māori, these challenges are magnified because they require

teaching expertise in a subject together with reo Māori capability (Simmonds, personal communication, October 2025).

Recently funding for a new Virtual Learning Network (VLN) was announced to deliver online teaching and learning of STEM subjects in Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium education at Wharekura and secondary immersion levels in Years 9 to 13 (Ministry of Education, 2025).

A Kaupapa Māori framework is essential for a Virtual Learning Network (VLN) that effectively meets the needs of Māori. This requires sustained investment and robust systems, a governance structure where Māori hold genuine decision-making authority, dedicating resources to developing authentic, high-quality digital content based on Māori knowledge and data sovereignty, and building resilient technological and staffing systems to ensure digital access and strong relational support for every learner and their whānau.

School Funding Constraints and Consequent Curriculum Limitations

Schools indicate that funding is a constraint to participation in VLN non-profit services, such as Kōtui Ako VLN Primary (Johnson, 2022). Although the operational costs of Primary VLN are partly funded by MoE (which is uncertain from year to year), schools must fund the cost of the online teachers' time through reciprocity of teachers or collective resourcing throughout the network. Secondary VLN networks (Kotui Ako and NetNZ) are self-funded with member schools contributing staffing, funding and teachers to enable both operations and teaching across the VLN network. Schools must prioritise distance learning against other needs with their limited operational funding. This has resulted in lower numbers of schools accessing the VLN networks. Consequently, there is a relatively low uptake of online teaching capability development and restrictions in curriculum choice, which is particularly impacting for learners in small schools.

User-Informed Systems and Standards Development

The current funding model does not enable the development of system-wide standards, rather it places the onus on schools or groups of schools to develop what works for their situation. This disjointed approach creates risk for both the provision of quality of education and resilience of the online education network. Virtual Learning Networks introduce a consistent and pedagogically sound approach across the schools involved. This provides school system level gains, and benefits for online networked learning that go far beyond the individual learner or school. There is benefit to the digital capability of not only the supporting teachers at the VLN member schools, but also to the wider educational landscape, and contributions to education system-wide teaching and learning capacity and resilience.

Need for Sector Resilience - Lessons from COVID-19 Pandemic

Distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the potential and the challenges of networked learning throughout the education sector. The NZ Royal Covid-19 Commission of Inquiry Phase-1 report recommends that we "Continue to coordinate planning work within the schooling sector (including peak bodies) which will allow schools and places of education to remain open as much as possible in a pandemic – by, for example, pivoting to remote learning, flexibility of the curriculum, teacher capability for teaching in online and hybrid learning environments, and planning for student access to

digital devices and connectivity." (NZ Royal Covid-19 Commission Covid 19 Lessons Learned, 2024, p.100).

The need for coordinated planning is supported by a comprehensive overview of over 40 national and international research reports that were completed in 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic caused schools to close and moved teaching and learning online, stating that “almost all research reports from New Zealand made mention of the need for a cohesive digital ecosystem to ensure that all learners and their whānau could participate fully in remote learning contexts” (Wenmoth, 2021, p.15).

Teachers and learners who were experienced in VLN distance learning greatly contributed to the sector resilience at their schools during the 2020 lockdowns (Lindsay & Whalley, 2020). This recent experience indicates that the networked learning capability of learners and teachers significantly contributes to the resilience of the sector during local and national disruptive events (Lindsay & Whalley, 2024).

Positive Impact of Change

If the role of Virtual Learning Networks was recognised and had the assurance of ongoing funding:

- Teacher subject expertise can ss in education [that] support the diversity of students”.

Enhancing Curriculum Choice Through Collaborative Online Networks

Over a quarter of New Zealand schools have fewer than 100 students. These learners sometimes do not have the subjects of their choice available at their local school. This particularly impacts remote and rural areas, small schools, Area schools and Kura Kaupapa.

Some schools access online classes through schools-based collaborative networks such as Kōtui Ako VLN and NetNZ. These networks facilitate a reciprocal teaching and learning exchange across participating schools and kura. This enables the curriculum choices students enjoy, such as at Ngamatapouri School (Whalley, 2024). It relieves pressure for sole charge Principals who have to teach year 0 to 8 learners across the whole curriculum. It enables senior secondary students access to specialised subject choices. In addition to broadening the future career choices for individual students, there are huge benefits to local communities when learners are able to stay connected with family and community rather than having to travel away (Langley, 2003). VLN Secondary (Kōtui Ako and NetNZ) have assisted schools in acquiring specialist teachers to teach online where recruitment locally has not been possible.

A policy and resourcing environment that acknowledges the equivalence of online teaching to mainstream face-to-face teaching, including stable funding to support schools' participation in online networked learning services, will increase student participation in online classes, and enhance access where curriculum choice is currently constrained (Lindsay & Whalley, 2020; 2024).

Teacher Professional Development in Flexible Learning

Maintaining and building a capable online teaching workforce helps mitigate potential inequities associated with access to subjects for learners, particularly those in remote, rural and Area schools.

VLN supports online teacher Professional Learning Development. A VLN supported online Network of Expertise (NEX), Kōtuitui, provides targeted support for online teachers, with support for curriculum change, and expanding literacy and numeracy capabilities. They bridge gaps for rural, isolated, and early-career teachers (Teacher Development Aotearoa, 2025).

Acknowledging and supporting a permanent role for virtual learning networks will encourage teachers to develop online teaching capability with the confidence that their capability will be relevant to a growing number of schools' participating through virtual learning networks and strengthen the sector's capability in online and hybrid delivery.

Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of flexibility and adaptability in the education system. Educators and analysts agree, there needs to be an emphasis on developing sustainable and resilient online learning models that can respond when faced with future disruptions (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2024; Lindsay & Whalley, 2020).

During nationwide school closures in 2020 existing VLN schools adapted well. Staff who supported VLN learning, through their experience at these schools adapted confidently to learning online and supported others (Education Gazette editors, 2020). School closures also occur regionally due to weather events (such as Cyclone Gabrielle), or locally such as at Takapuna Grammar School (RNZ, 2025) and Tauriko School (Bay of Plenty Times, 2024). During the school closure at Tauriko School, Kōtui Ako VLN learners connected to their regular online school classes. Capable online teachers increase the resilience and capability of the provision of learning when online schooling is needed due to local or national disruptive events that impact mainstream schools ability to remain open (Lindsay & Whalley, 2020).

Future Directions

The future of OFDL in New Zealand looks promising, and with continued investment in digital technologies and infrastructure, the use of data and evidence to inform decision-making, improved achievement and optimised system performance will expand. Integral to this is the development of flexible networked learning options for learners who have restricted curriculum choice through lack of expert teacher availability due to their school's size or location.

A coherent national system where public distance learning organisations collaborate within a national digital learning strategy would maximise efficiency and impact. The goal is to ensure equity of access, particularly for priority learners; address resourcing challenges across all distance providers; build on existing expertise to strengthen teacher capability nationwide. Policy and funding frameworks could align with Te Kura's legislated role; promoting system

coherence rather than fragmentation, ensuring a consistent, fair, and durable model across the sector. By adopting a cohesive, collaborative approach, the sector can create a resilient and equitable system that delivers high-quality learning opportunities for every learner in New Zealand.

Collaborative efforts between government, educational institutions, and technology providers are essential to create a robust and inclusive distance learning ecosystem (Barbour & Wenmoth, 2024; 2025a). Policy and sustainable funding will enable VLN organisations such as Kōtui Ako VLN, NetNZ, and initiatives such as Te Whare Angitu to continue to support the schooling sector with access to specialist teachers and a rich curriculum delivery where they are needed the most.

Recommendations

Our vision is to ensure consistent, high-quality education for all learners in New Zealand, regardless of their location, ability, or external circumstances. There is a need to address the policy gap, unstable funding for VLN organisations, gaps in provision that result in issues with equity and lack of access for some learners. If schools can more easily participate in VLN classes, the networked learning infrastructure and systems will become more coherent, more teachers will develop capability in online teaching, and the resilience of the education system will be enhanced.

This paper recommends system, policy, and funding changes to support flexible, equitable and accessible networked learning for all learners across school networks:

- **VLN Policy and Regulatory Framework:** The Ministry of Education develops comprehensive policies and regulatory guidelines to govern VLN networked learning, ensuring consistency and high standards across the education system.
- **Formal Recognition and Support for VLN:** Organizations like Kōtui Ako VLN, NetNZ, and Te Whare Angitu which are instrumental in providing public networked learning in New Zealand schools and kura, receive formal recognition and sustained funding and support in a cohesive system that is strategically aligned within the current education system.
- **Sustainable Funding:** VLN non-for-profit public organisations and their participating schools are equipped with sustainable funding to fully leverage the benefits of networked learning.
- **Enhanced Teacher Capability:** Opportunities for professional learning are readily available and further integrated into Initial Teacher Education programs to foster and sustain teacher expertise in online and hybrid learning environments.
- **Research:** Ongoing further research into outcomes and benefits of VLN learning for New Zealand school learners is carried out.

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