

# Final step for Tuhoe building

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TUHOE will learn in the new year whether its revolutionary headquarters building – Te Kura Whare – has met the international Living Building Challenge.

Over the past 12 months the Tuhoe staff has been collating data to show the building, in Taneatua, has met the challenge's stringent conditions.

When the tribe's governance arm, Te Uru Taumatua, decided to build the headquarters it also set out to ensure it was more respectful of nature.

It signed up to the Living Building Challenge, which demands the building must be self-sustaining in terms of energy and water needs and therefore cannot rely on connection to any mains supply.

While the building is connected to the national electricity grid, it also generates its own power, which is fed back into the grid during times of surplus. The net effect of this ebb and flow of electricity must be that over 12 months the building has contributed more power to the grid than it has taken.

Te Kura Whare treats its own wastewater and collects its own drinking water.

Te Uru Taumatua communications manager Waikare Kruger said the idea of aligning the Te Kura Whare building project with the challenge was first suggested by the late Ivan Mercep, a founding member of the architectural firm Jasmex, which designed the building.

"The philosophy and principles of this green-building certification programme were somewhat consistent with Tuhoe values around what our new building should consist of and represent.

"Therefore, the idea of the challenge was sown at a very early stage, which was important as alignment to the programme also requires consideration during the design stages."

Ms Kruger said during the design and construction phase, the building was referred to by many as "Te Whare Hou o Tuhoe", which could be translated as

"The New Building".

"It represents a new phase in the life of Tuhoe and is a symbol for a more prosperous Tuhoe future. An improved future for Tuhoe will require determination, collaboration, pushing of boundaries, creating new structures and processes, thinking outside the box, innovation and more. These aspirations are reflected in Te Kura Whare."

She said accreditation under the challenge was awarded after the building had been used for at least a one-year period and data submitted for this period demonstrated it complied with Living Building Challenge conditions during this time.

"Projects must be occupied for a minimum 12 months and must meet a series of ambitious performance requirements around aspects such as design, construction, materials makeup and supply, self-sufficiency and minimising waste.

"The [challenge] has a red list, which identifies hazardous ingredients that can't be contained in any of the building materials.

"The programme promotes principles of equity, promoting benefits of local communities, materials and businesses. It also aims to ensure minimal disturbance and damage to the construction site and surrounding environment.

"Those involved in the [challenge] programme play an important part in promoting the message of sustainability, advocating for change to many industry practices and materials no longer considered appropriate."

Ms Kruger said the tribe expected to receive accreditation next year.

"The actual construction work on the building has been completed at this stage. We are now in the final process of collating all documentation and other supporting evidence to submit to the International Living Future Institute.

"This documentation will be assessed against the criteria of the challenge and, if successful, it is anticipated Te Kura Whare will receive final accreditation as a living building early in 2016."