

# Future directions in New Zealand schooling: The case for transformation

Rob McIntosh

SEMINAR SERIES 266

# What are we going to look at?

- ▶ The purpose of education
- ▶ What does the changing world mean in terms of what and how young people learn in order to achieve that purpose?
- ▶ How are we doing?
- ▶ What does that mean for what we should do now?
- ▶ How do we do it ?

# What's the purpose of schooling?

- ▶ Many different terms that can be used ... promote student “success” or “wellbeing”, “realise potential” ....
- ▶ Dangers in being too narrowly focused
- ▶ *“Education can never be reduced to a mere economic output. It has the potential to transform the lives of individuals and whole communities. Its focus must be broad and empowering, not narrow and confining”*  
*Clarence Beeby*
- ▶ “Today education has to be about learning to thrive in a transforming world” (Valerie Hannon)

# “Thrive in a transforming world”

- ▶ Technology and globalisation and the nature of work
- ▶ Environmental challenges
- ▶ Changing political dynamics
- ▶ Increasing diversity in society
- ▶ Changes in ways of communicating and relating

Thriving in this context means our young people need to develop new capabilities in order for them and society collectively to thrive in the future.

# A specific example of how things are changing : the world of work

Some projections (Foundation for Young Australians) :

- ▶ 40% of current jobs are at high risk of automation in the next 10-15 years
- ▶ 90 % of future jobs will require digital literacy and 50% will require advanced digital skills
- ▶ 75% of future jobs will involve science, technology, engineering and maths

Occupations high in creative and social intelligence at lower risk. High skill and high wage occupations are the least vulnerable.

# So what does this mean for what young people need to learn?

- ▶ Numeracy and literacy (including digital)
- ▶ Capability in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and increasingly Arts is being added as well (STEAM)
- ▶ The six Cs of “communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, character and citizenship” (Michael Fullan)
- ▶ Enterprise Skills
- ▶ Values
- ▶ Learning to learn

The key capabilities that we need to develop are the ones that most uniquely make us human

# So what does this mean for how our young people need to learn?

Learning that provides what our young people need:

- ▶ Is not primarily about the transmission of knowledge
- ▶ Integrates knowledge and competency development to tackle authentic real world problems that are meaningful to the learner
- ▶ Often involves project based learning “focusing on the production of a tangible output”
- ▶ Is not only about technology but recognises the critical role of technology

# So what does this mean for how our young people need to learn?

Such learning:

- ▶ Is both highly personalised and highly collaborative
- ▶ Responds to the needs of the learner, not the convenience of the learning institution.
- ▶ Recognises that learning occurs in a multitude of contexts outside the school walls.
- ▶ Makes the learner a partner in the learning process

# The five questions test

New Zealand Deputy Principal Richard Wells has identified five questions to remove from classrooms in order for such learning to occur:

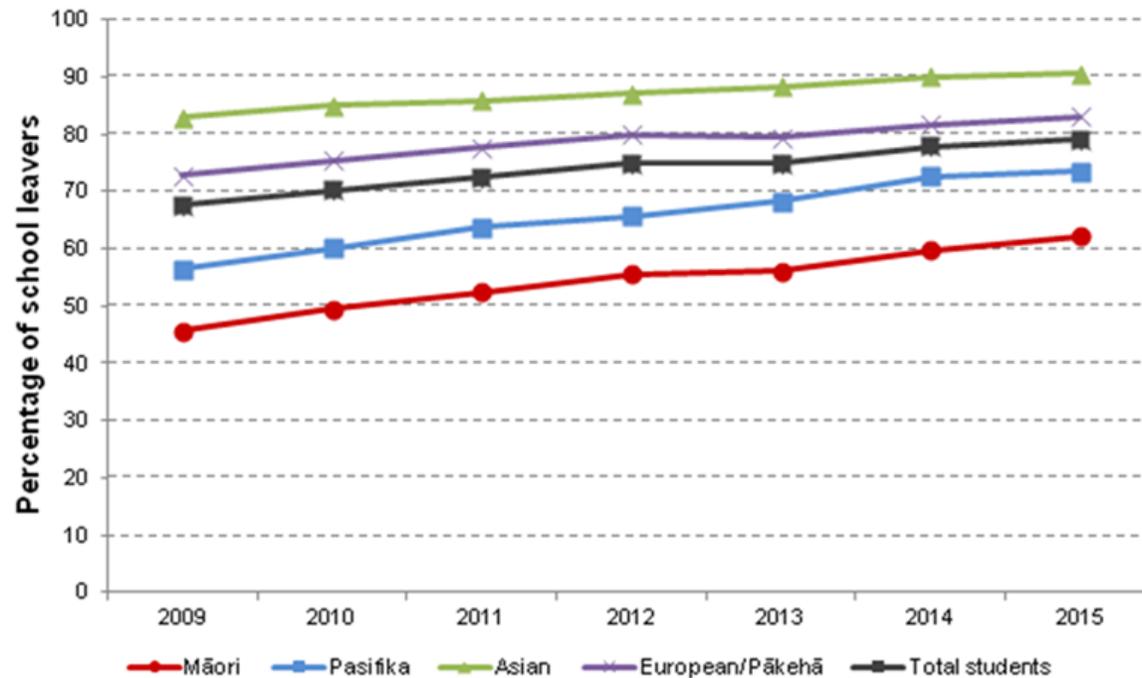
- ▶ What are we doing today?
- ▶ What do I do next?
- ▶ Is this on the test?
- ▶ Which App should I use?
- ▶ Is this good enough?

# How well are we equipping our young people with what they need for the future?

- ▶ Student centred learning an accepted concept
- ▶ The New Zealand curriculum includes values and core competencies along with traditional curriculum areas - well accepted by the profession.
- ▶ But the implementation of what are profound changes in the curriculum has been largely left to the leadership of individual schools.
- ▶ So what does the data say about current outcomes for NZ students?

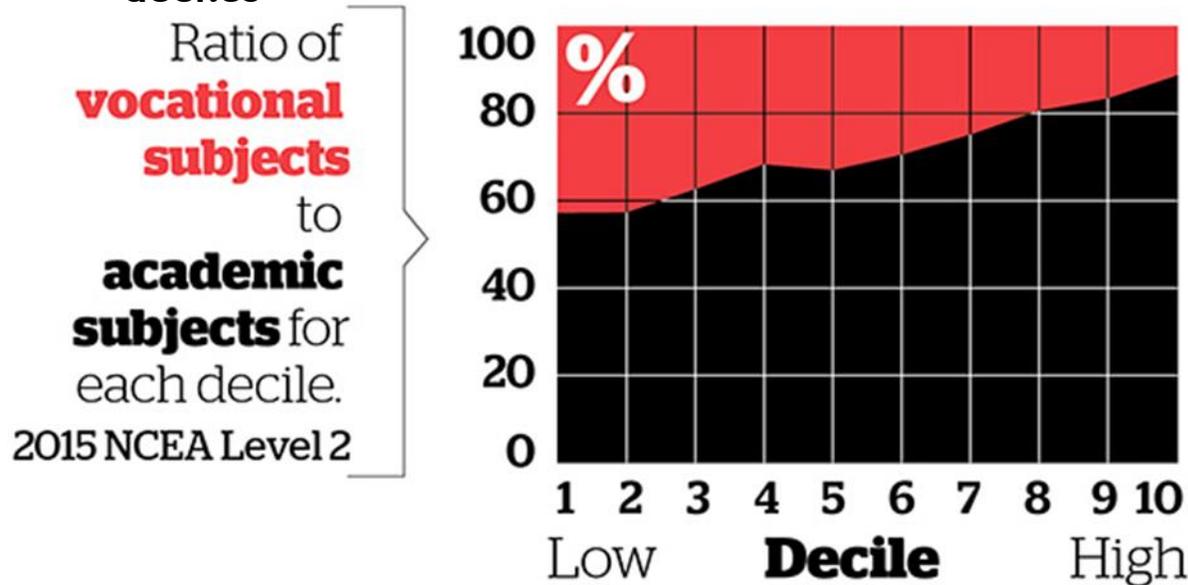
# The good news ... NCEA achievement has been improving for fifteen years and there has been some narrowing in disparities

Percentage of school leavers with at least an NCEA level 2 qualification or equivalent



# But ... there are still strong underlying differences in patterns of achievement between socio-economic and ethnic groups

Different compositions of NCEA participation across school deciles



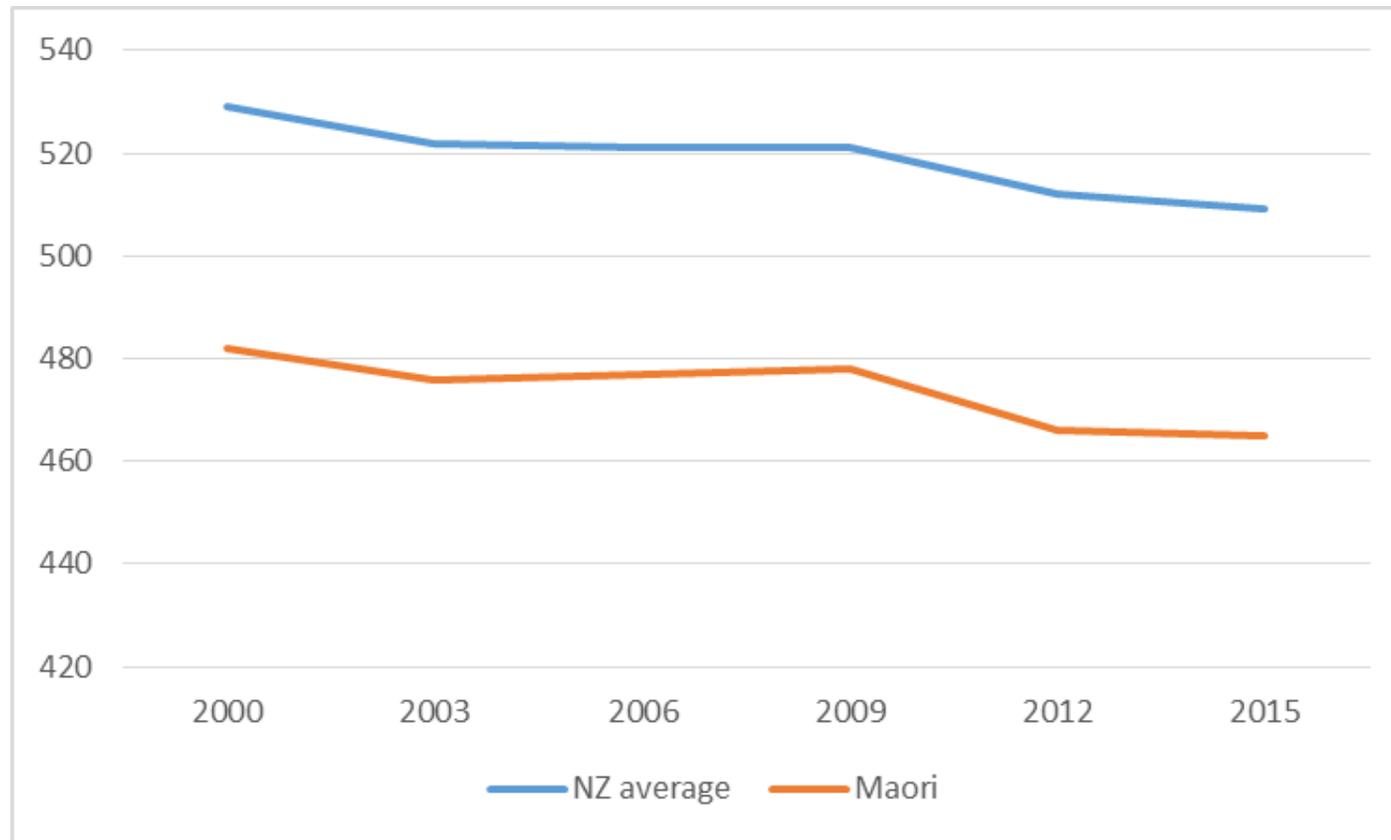
Māori, Pasifika and low-decile students were more likely to be enrolled in "unit standards", gaining skills-based credits in more vocational subjects, most which are not university-approved. Source: New Zealand Herald

International studies show a different trend in outcomes - three different assessments over nearly twenty years show stagnation or decline

Assessment Study and Focus	Time period	Direction of Any Significant Change
PISA Reading	2000 - 2015	Decline
PISA Maths	2003 - 2015	Decline
PISA Science	2006 - 2015	Decline
TIMSS Maths Yr 5	1994 - 2014	Improvement
	2002 - 2014	No change
TIMSS Maths Yr 9	1994 - 2014	No change
	2002 - 2014	No change
TIMSS Science Yr 5	1994 - 2014	No change
	2002 - 2014	Decline
TIMSS Science Yr 9	1994 - 2014	No change
	2002 - 2014	No change

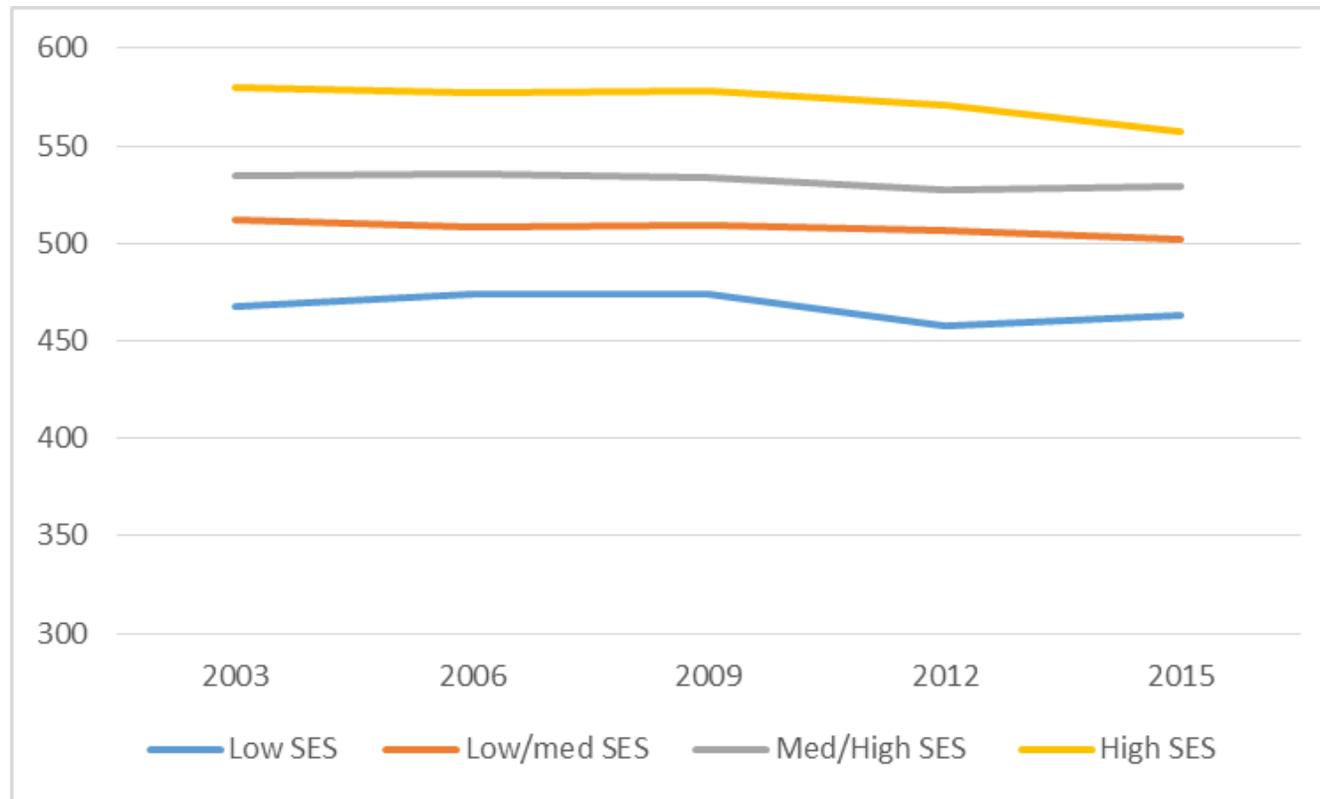
# And little narrowing of disparities

Trends in average PISA reading scores for Māori and all New Zealand learners

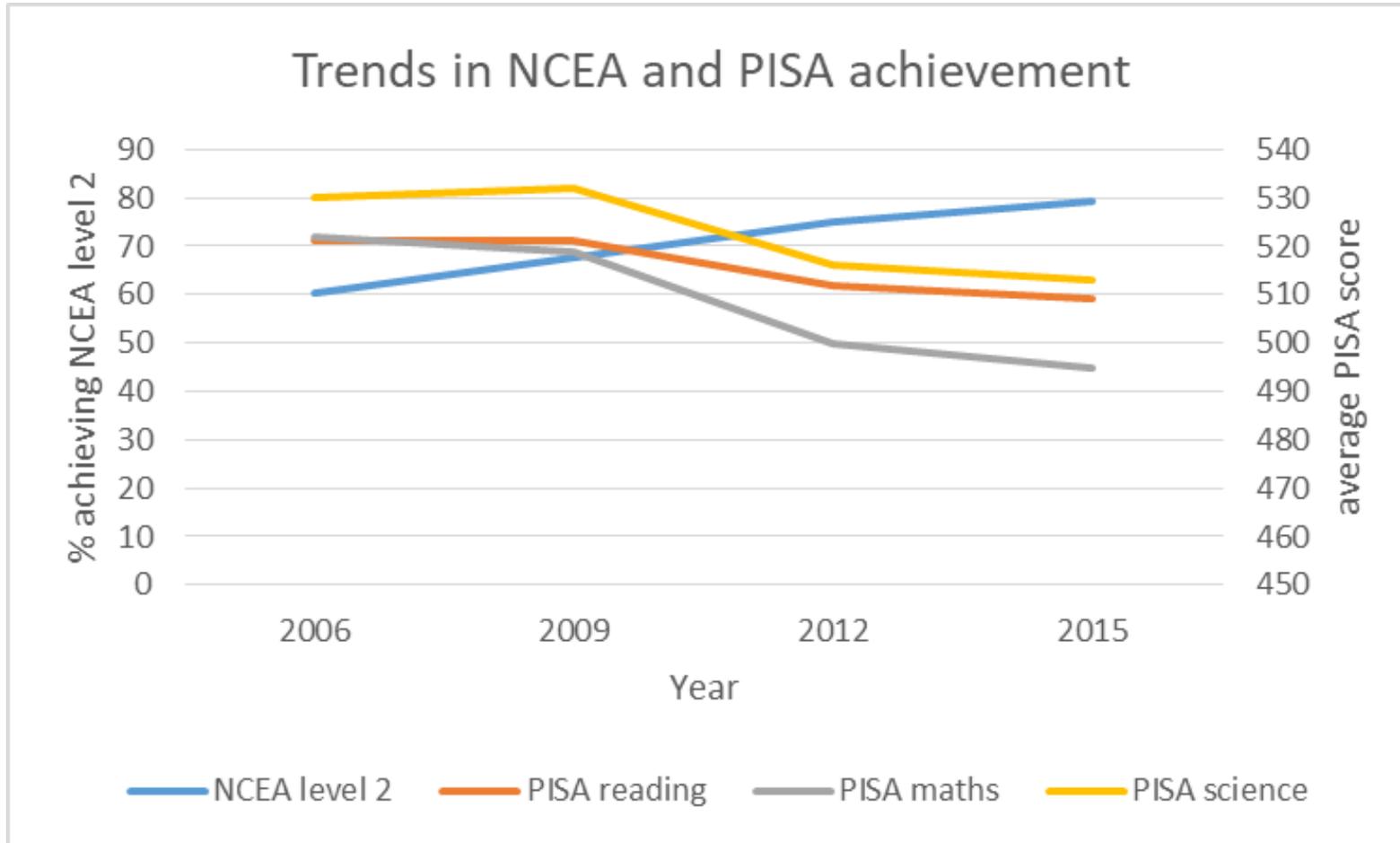


# And little narrowing of disparities

Trends in average PISA reading scores for different socio-economic groups



# The indicators show conflicting information about how we have been progressing



# Other indicators are mixed

- ▶ Good in some key future focused areas
- ▶ Enjoyment of learning maths and science not great and attitude to learning science gets less positive as the learner gets older
- ▶ New Zealand learners report experiencing bullying more frequently than learners in many other countries
- ▶ Recent Children's NZSTA survey of learners shows significant issues in learner experience of school remain
- ▶ Rising levels of anxiety and mental health issues in our young people

# What do we conclude?

- ▶ There are areas of strength in terms of outcomes
- ▶ Many New Zealand educators are committed to implementing the approach to learning we need
- ▶ But we are still well short of where we need to be

Especially it is clear that **disparities in our outcomes are still very significant, emerge early and are enduring**

**Failure to address this will, more than ever, mean increasing social and economic deprivation with high costs for the individual and society.**

# Why haven't we made more progress in tackling inequity?

- ▶ Hasn't been for a lack of effort but focus has primarily been about making improvements to current practice
- ▶ Some recent initiatives, despite good intentions, have risked adverse side effects
- ▶ What we haven't had is an intensive system wide attempt to change the fundamentals of teaching and learning in our schools.

# So what do we do?

- ▶ We need to adopt a comprehensive approach to transformation in teaching and learning
- ▶ We need to recognise this approach to teaching and learning that offers us the best chance of addressing the inequities in our system once and for all

Change will happen without it but too slowly

Many of our students will miss out in the meantime and those most likely to miss out will be those groups of students who have always missed out

# Why is a new approach to teaching and learning the best way to tackle inequity?

Such learning:

- ▶ is strengths based rather than deficit focused
- ▶ engages the whole person providing a stronger level of emotional wellbeing for every learner
- ▶ recognises the reality of each learner's life and creates learning that is relevant to that life
- ▶ values the culture of the learner as an asset in the learning process
- ▶ welcomes the input of family/whānau, hapu and iwi and broader community

# Fine in theory - what about in practice?

An example: Te Kotahitanga

- ▶ Research on perceived barriers to learning: 60% of teachers identified students' home and family background while 80% of students identified their relationship with their teacher
- ▶ A cultural approach to relationships “that listens to and is responsive to Māori students”
- ▶ Results: the achievement of Māori students (as measured by NCEA levels 1-3) improved at around three times the rate of Māori in comparison schools

# Another example

Tai Wānanga - year 9-13 state secondary school with a 100% Maori roll based in Ruakura, Hamilton and Palmerston North

- ▶ Every student has an individual education plan which sets out their aspirations for when they leave school
- ▶ Learning programmes are designed to support these aspirations
- ▶ NCEA achievement rates are very high though the school's view is that achieving a student's leaving aspiration is more important than NCEA results.
- ▶ Each student leaves with a 'graduate profile' which presents a total view of a young person's qualities and attributes

Te Moana - an example of project based learning

# So what do we do?

Build agreement about the future purpose of education and what sort of learning and teaching is required

Because:

- ▶ We need all of these groups to both support change and be involved in creating the future we need - the concept of ecosystem
- ▶ Without understanding we will risk endless debate and disagreement as to what we should do and why we are doing it.

The Government's proposal to establish a 30 year vision for education

# What else?

- ▶ Invest in the required teaching and leadership capability
- ▶ Provide the resources needed
- ▶ Build an education innovation system to enable cross system learning.
- ▶ Support the emergence of learning ecosystems
- ▶ Put in place the system policy frameworks to enable the fulfilment of the vision.

# Next steps in this work

Further work to:

- ▶ Examine the impact current innovative practice is having
- ▶ Develop system policy recommendations from the insights of current innovative practice

Foster the further development of local learning alliances to support new ways of learning on the ground

# What can you do? Three questions to consider

- ▶ If you are currently involved in work to support improved education outcomes, is it in the context of change to the approach to teaching and learning?
- ▶ How can the system as a whole benefit from the local initiatives that you are involved in?
- ▶ What is the input that you will make into the education summits and reform processes that the Government is running through the course of this year?

# Questions

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.

Contact details:

[Rob.mcintosh02@gmail.com](mailto:Rob.mcintosh02@gmail.com)

Ph 0274411392

I would be happy to send you a copy of my paper if you leave or e-mail me your details and to talk further with you about the contents of what I have said