

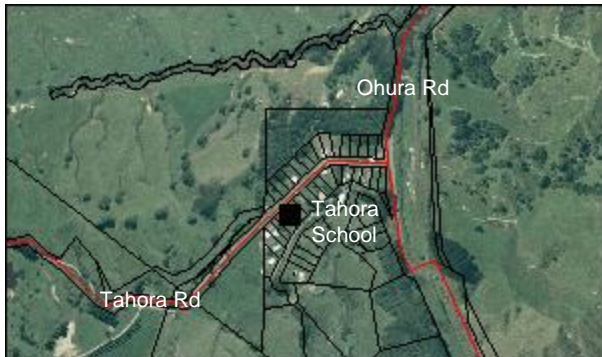


Tahora School

Tahora Rd

1897

Use:	None, former school (closed Dec 2006)	Historic Value:	1 out of 5
Materials:	Weatherboards	Architectural Value:	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered:	Not registered	Technical Value:	- out of 2
Legal Description:	Secs 12 - 19 60 Tn of Tahora Blk VI Pouatu SD	Symbolic Value:	- out of 3
		Rarity Value:	- out of 2
		Townscape Value:	- out of 2
		Group Value:	- out of 2
		Overall Heritage Value:	2 out of 20



The first school in the Tahora district was started in 1897, the same year that the settlement began. Nine pupils were taught by Miss L.F. Worm in a slab whare loaned by the Crown Lands Board on Mr. F Coxhead's property, which was at the foot of the Tahora Saddle.



For the first three years of its existence, the school was known as Upper Whangamomona School. However, in March 1900 a school district was defined, and it was decided in May to alter the name to Tahora, following a report made to the Board by Mr. W.L. Kennedy. The Board also decided to take over the building used by the school and have it painted. The school roll at this time was 12. The first school inspection occurred early in the next year, and Tahora was given a good report.

In 1907, Tahora became a half-time school; sharing a teacher with Hurimoana (a primary school on the Whangamomona side of the Tahora Saddle). This meant the teacher would spend three days a week at each school. This situation remained until July 1912, when Tahora once again became a full-time school.

Tahora Township was surveyed and laid off in 1911, with a site being set aside for the school. In March 1915 the School Committee made an application for a new school, as the old whare building had become too small. With a lack of funding, Tahora was not able to start building a new school until a grant was approved. This did not happen until August 1917, when a grant of £391 was made available, and work was started straight way.

By February 1918 the new Tahora School was ready, built at a total cost of £463 (this was including the piano which was bought for the school). This was a welcome relief from the conditions of the whare, which had been rather cramped with the school roll of 55 pupils. The new school came with perfect timing, with the town beginning to prosper as many new families were moving into the district to work on the railways. For this reason, two years after the new school had opened, it was realised that the building was too small. The Public Works Department agreed to shift a removable room from Whangamomona to Tahora to solve this problem, and the room was carefully placed by the actual school building to allow for optimum sun-light and ventilation, leaving space for possible additions.

By 1921 Tahora had a roll of 73 pupils. However, after the railway was finished in 1924, job opportunities decreased, and many families left the district. This caused the school roll to decrease – by 1929 there was an average of 22 pupils – and the school never recovered, with a portion of the building being moved to Raekohua in 1926.

In 2005, Tahora received an excellent ERO report that highlighted the attractive, well-maintained grounds, the upgraded buildings (with a new tennis court and a recently added swimming pool), and the well-resourced and attractive classroom. However, due to the small roll size (down to eight pupils) that reflected the remote rural area of Tahora, the school's doors were closed for the last time at the end of 2006, after 110 years of successfully educating and equipping the young children of the area.

Bibliography

Tahora and Raekohua, Upper Whangamomona School Centennial, 1897-1997
History of Whangamomona County (p114)