How the Principles of Good Curriculum Development are Playing Out



PPTA | PO BOX 2119, WELLINGTON 6140 | P. +64 4 384 9964 | E. ENQUIRIES@PPTA.ORG.NZ
FILE NUMBER: G/AC/2026/CP/UPDATED POST CONF

Recommendations

1. That the report be received.
2. That PPTA Te Wehengarua call for the urgent establishment of a Te Tiriti-led independent statutory agency to provide stable, evidence-informed stewardship of curriculum and assessment across electoral cycles.
3. That PPTA Te Wehengarua call for the government to immediately commit to an ongoing and transparent review process of the new curriculum, that meaningfully includes a diverse range of teachers, to be led by the independent agency.
4. That PPTA Te Wehengarua call for the government to resource the curriculum fully and in a timely fashion, delivering culturally responsive and sustaining materials and exemplars, such as Learning Kits that cover all of the final New Zealand Curriculum content across all learning areas for both Year 9 and 10 before the end of 2026.
5. That PPTA Te Wehengarua insist that any curriculum supporting vocational pathways is developed with meaningful input from the profession, and that vocational and academic pathways are aligned in ways that ensure equitable access, coherent progression, and parity of esteem across subjects.
6. That PPTA Te Wehengarua call for a delay to the compulsory Phase 5 rollout for the purposes of piloting, resource creation, and review of teacher consultation, acknowledging the implications for the timing of changes for senior assessment.

"The speed in which these changes are occurring lead to uncertainty on what knowledge, content, topics, and skills teachers need to know or plan for, and leads to these teachers feeling under prepared, under pressure and generally unsure." *(New and Establishing Teacher)*

Contents

1 Introduction 4

2 Critique by principle 5

3 Discussion 13

1 Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on curriculum development since the 2024 Annual Conference paper *What Good Curriculum Development Looks Like* and critiques the current reform programme against the five principles for good curriculum development agreed by members. It acknowledges that the scale and pace of current curriculum change facing the sector is unprecedented, and that visible, practical support for implementation remains limited. Drawing on member feedback, the critique identifies the likely impacts of these changes and the practical implementation issues that will need to be addressed as the reforms progress.

1.2 What changes have taken place?

1.2.1 The government began consideration of how the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) could be strengthened in 2018. The refresh, intending to ensure that the NZC was more explicit about what learners need to understand, know, and do started in 2021 and a new Te Mātaiaho framework was ready for release just prior to the 2023 election. In 2024, with a change of government there was a decision to investigate how "the curriculum could be further strengthened by being knowledge-rich and using the science of learning."[1] Despite this seemingly small change of approach, the sector has been delivered an entire re-write of the NZC.

1.2.2 The Ministry describes the new curriculum as knowledge-rich, grounded in the "science of learning" and being more explicit about what students should know and be able to do at each year level. There has been more attention placed on 'carefully sequenced' progressions, learning to support cumulative learning and mastery. The curriculum will provide clearer guidance about what to teach and when - the intent of this level of detail being to reduce the need for teachers to develop their own learning progressions and sequences. There will also be increased focus on assessment and monitoring.

1.2.3 The current implementation plan is:

- **2026:** Years 0–10 English, Mathematics and Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira, and Pāngarau.
- **2027:** Years 0–8 Science, Social Sciences, Pūtaiao, and Pūmanawa Tangata; Years 9–10 all learning areas and wāhanga ako
- **2028:** New Year 11 curriculum all learning areas
- **2029:** Years 0–8 remaining learning areas (including Health and PE, The Arts, Technology, Learning Languages and Māori-medium equivalents); new Year 12 curriculum all learning areas
- **2030:** New Year 13 curriculum all learning areas

1.2.4 While most in the sector agreed with the need for clearer guidance, it is the significant changes to the content of the curriculum that has proven to be the main concern in many learning areas.

1.2.5 The sense of urgency for this work appears to have overridden any commitment to best practice reform. The haste with which the curriculum has been written has resulted in considerable changes to the implementation timeline and rushed decisions and communications that have resulted in errors, confusion and an incoherent plan, especially for the learner. The lack of visibility around most of the process, including who was involved in the writing and decision making, and the rationales behind large, unexpected changes in direction has eroded trust in the ability of the ministry to deliver on the goals of the reforms.

[1] The New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho October 2025

2 Critique by principle

2.1 The following critique considers the current curriculum reform programme against the five principles for good curriculum development agreed by members at Annual Conference in 2024. These principles provide the framework for assessing not only the content of the proposed changes, but also the process, pace, resourcing, transparency and likely impact on schools, teachers and ākonga.

2.2 PPTA Te Wehengarua has a range of member networks and committees that meet regularly and provide direct insight into how curriculum changes affect different groups across the profession. Executive member representatives from a number of these networks were invited to consider the likely implications of the curriculum changes for different groups across the profession, and to identify the forms of support those groups would need if the changes proceed.

2.3 The selected member quotes included are not presented as exhaustive evidence, but as grounded examples of members' lived experience. They show how the principles play out in practice and highlight the likely consequences of the reforms for curriculum breadth, teacher workload and wellbeing and equitable access to learning experiences for ākonga.

2.4 In addition, this paper draws from our extensive engagement with Subject Associations' and the Ministry of Education, our involvement with the Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry into the phase 1-4 curriculum development and the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho Framework (2025), the curriculum pulse check with members last year and ongoing feedback from the Curriculum Advisory Committee of the Executive.

2.4.1 Principle 1: Te Tiriti is valued and is visible

2.4.1.1 PPTA Te Wehengarua takes its commitment to affirming and advancing Te Tiriti o Waitangi seriously and expects curriculum reform to give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, protect and enhance the mana and dignity of Mātauranga Māori as knowledge in its own right, and be underpinned by transparent, principled engagement with Māori partners.

2.4.1.2 PPTA Te Wehengarua has significant concerns that the current approach to curriculum reform fails to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi both in process and content.

2.4.1.3 Te Mātaiaho 2023 explicitly located all curricula within a Tiriti-based framework,[2] and began to redress the impact of colonisation on the curriculum, through the incorporation of Mātauranga Maōri and more emphasis on local curricula. This kaupapa has been substantially diminished or abandoned in subsequent materials including the NZC Framework (Te Mātaiaho 2025). The removal of Mātauranga Māori as a foundational organising principle represents a loss of coherence, intent, and equity, particularly for Māori learners.

2.4.1.4 The lack of genuine co-design with iwi, hapū, Māori educators, and communities during the writing of the new curriculum stands in tension with Crown obligations to actively protect Te Tiriti rights and uphold partnership. Accelerated timelines, limited transparency, and the use of non-disclosure agreements have further eroded trust in the process.

[2] The Kaupapa of Te Mātaiaho 2023 Video https://vimeo.com/757359115

2.4.1.5 Principals identify concerns that Te Tiriti o Waitangi, mātauranga Māori, culturally grounded concepts, hauora, Te Whare Tapa Whā and Aotearoatanga may become less explicit in the curriculum, while middle leaders connect these concerns to the wellbeing of Māori ākonga, culturally safe pathways, and the need for a curriculum that respects the cultural fabric of Aotearoa.

2.4.1.6 Additionally, in April 2026, five PPTA Te Wehengarua claimant briefs of evidence were presented to the Waitangi Tribunal in relation to The Education and Training Amendment Act and Te Mātaiaho Urgent Inquiry (Wai 3553). The key evidence presented covered:

- The effect of removing the Te Tiriti obligation in the Education Act 127 (1) (d)1; and
- The planned changes to the Te Matāiaho curriculum[3]

2.4.1.7 Regarding changes made to phases 1-4 documents since consultation was completed in April, the Ministry has acknowledged the following about Te ao Māori knowledge and local context in more recent iterations of curriculum documents:

"there have been improvements in cultural responsiveness and clearer opportunities to include local context; however, further work is needed to embed this authentically across the curriculum"[4]

2.4.1.8 The Waitangi Tribunal have released an initial report that identified that the Crown has breached the treaty principles of partnership, active protection and good government, and prejudicially affected Māori. A fuller second report is due to be released.

2.4.1.9 PPTA Te Wehengarua is yet to canvas members on the draft phase 5 documents (released in three groups May – July, 2026) as some are still out for consultation, however comments from subject experts about some of first two subjects indicate that there are still major concerns.

"Commitments to mātauranga Māori and culturally responsive science are entirely absent from the content." (Science expert) [5]

"Mātauranga Māori — any implied commitment to bicultural education in the subject description is entirely absent from the content and practices." (Biology expert)[6]

Māori and Pacific perspectives not deeply embedded and optional" (Social Sciences expert)[7]

2.4.1.10 Selected member feedback

- "Middle leaders also need a curriculum that respects the cultural fabric of Aotearoa, protects the wellbeing of ākonga, and gives schools the support needed to implement change safely, sustainably and justly." (Middle Leader)

[3] PPTA Te Wehengarua Waitangi Tribunal claim 3553
[4] personal communication to Chris Abercrombie 3 July, 2026
[5] Sciences Phase 5 Consultation Guide
[6] Sciences Phase 5 Consultation Guide
[7] Social Sciences – Civics, Politics and Philosophy (Years 12–13)

- "The ultimate professional allegiance belongs to the wellbeing of ākonga and the cultural safety of Aotearoa, not top-down political mandates." (Middle Leader)

- "Broad support exists for greater curriculum clarity, sequencing and a more knowledge-rich approach, but the recurring question remains: whose knowledge? (Principal)

- "Te Tiriti o Waitangi, mātauranga Māori, culturally grounded concepts, hauora and Te Whare Tapa Whā appear less explicit or less prominent in some draft curriculum documents." (Principal)

2.4.2 Principle 2: Learners are at the centre so that the curriculum is inclusive

2.4.2.1 PPTA Te Wehengarua maintains that curriculum development must reflect the lived realities of learners, uphold the right of all young people to access a rich and future-focused curriculum, and embed equity as a foundational principle rather than an optional add-on.

2.4.2.2 In addition, PPTA Te Wehengarua is clear that an appropriate curriculum is as important for students with additional learning needs as it is for all students. The rewritten New Zealand Curriculum appears to be intended to address this need, but it needs considerable work. A full set of curriculum documents, including realistic and useful achievement descriptors, for students with additional learning needs, that covers the full breadth of the curriculum, is a bare minimum if these young people are to be served in this reform process.

2.4.2.3 In both Te Mātaiaho 2025 and across all draft learning area documents seen at time of writing, there is little evidence that learners' diverse identities, languages, cultures, and learning needs[8] are meaningfully incorporated in the curriculum changes. The year-by-year teaching sequencing exacerbates this as it appears to remove the ability for individual teachers to deliver the curriculum at a level appropriate for each learner.

2.4.2.4 We are deeply disappointed by the loss of explicit youth voice between Te Mātaiaho 2023 and the 2025 New Zealand Curriculum [Te Mātaiaho] Framework.

2.4.2.5 In the 2023 framework, learner voice was structurally centred through Mātaitipu, described as "the educational vision for young people, as conceived by young people", affirming ākonga as active contributors to curriculum design, relevance, and understandings of success. The removal of this explicit positioning in the 2025 version represents a substantive shift, not merely a change in language: learners are reframed from partners with agency to recipients of a pre-determined curriculum. If learners are genuinely to be placed at the centre, youth voice must be restored as an explicit, operative commitment rather than left implicit or rhetorical.

2.4.2.6 PPTA Members have concerns about accessibility, responsiveness, equitable access to specialist pathways, and the risk that compressed, overly prescribed or under-resourced change will make it harder for schools to provide inclusive, high-quality learning for all ākonga.

[8] Including but not limited to needs relating to: neurodiversity, adverse childhood experiences, trauma, mental health conditions, cognitive issues, learning challenges, transience/absence, non-engagement, physical disability, health challenges, and needs of English language learners.

2.4.2.7 These concerns also point to insufficient attention to inclusion, particularly for disabled students, neurodivergent learners, and those who do not fit linear or standardised progressions. There is a need for realistic curriculum documents and achievement descriptors for students with additional learning needs across the full breadth of the curriculum.

2.4.2.8 The proposed direction risks narrowing, rather than strengthening, senior secondary learning options for students in Years 12 and 13. The concern is not only about assessment pathways, but about whether the curriculum itself will continue to allow flexible, locally responsive programmes of teaching and learning that do not sit neatly within traditional or newly prescribed vocational subject boundaries.

2.4.2.9 Many schools currently design coherent learning programmes around the needs, interests and futures of their students, drawing on contexts such as Gateway, STAR, trades academies, tertiary-linked learning and other community or workplace-based opportunities. If the curriculum is developed primarily as a set of fixed vocational subjects, those programmes may become harder to sustain, even where they continue to provide meaningful learning contexts and support students to experience success.

2.4.2.10 This is a significant inclusion and equity concern. Students who are not yet able to access literacy and numeracy co-requisites, students requiring learning support, and students whose engagement depends on practical, applied, or flexible provision are likely to be most affected. A curriculum cannot be considered inclusive if the learners who most need flexible senior secondary options are effectively excluded from them.

2.4.2.11 Inclusive curriculum design requires public schools to be resourced and supported to meet the needs of all learners within mainstream provision. If the curriculum narrows around selected subjects, or reinforces siloed curriculum structures, schools may become less able to offer the broad and balanced education ākonga need. An over-emphasis on some subjects at the expense of others risks reducing subject availability, particularly in smaller or less well-resourced schools, and may push students toward charter schools, private training establishments, or other external providers simply because their local public school can no longer sustain the breadth of provision required.

2.4.2.12 Selected member feedback

- “Students may benefit from learning that better reflects the digital skills required for tertiary study, employment and future careers, but access may depend on the size and resourcing of their school.” (Health and Safety representative)

- “Smaller and rural schools may not have sufficient staffing or student numbers to offer multiple specialist pathways alongside existing subjects, creating an equity issue that should be carefully considered.” (ICT kaiako)

- “Students need equitable access to specialist programmes regardless of where they attend school, clear information about future pathways into tertiary education, apprenticeships and employment, and opportunities to experience Digital Technologies alongside Business Studies and other curriculum areas to support informed course selection.” (ICT kaiako)

2.4.3 Principle 3: The curriculum is manageable, is well resourced, coherent and well communicated

2.4.3.1 PPTA Te Wehengarua expects curriculum implementation to be supported by realistic timelines, alongside funded release time and access to high-quality professional learning and development. Clear, coherent national guidance is also essential to ensure schools are supported to enact change in a manageable and sustainable way, rather than being overwhelmed by competing demands. We note that there have been sustained and widespread calls for centrally-resourced collective PLD opportunities, such as subject 'jumbo days' that have been such an integral part of successful curriculum and qualifications reform in the past.

2.4.3.2 The current policy direction cannot be described as coherent, well resourced, or well communicated unless the Government and Ministry provide transparent evidence about which students currently rely on flexible senior secondary provision, which schools offer it, and what will replace it if existing options are removed or reduced. For vocational learning, being well resourced must include access to the additional infrastructure and partnerships required for delivery, such as trades academies and polytechnics, as well as the workforce needed to teach, coordinate, and sustain the curriculum in practice.

2.4.3.3 Particular caution is needed with language such as "pathways", "alignment", "coherence", "flexibility", and "parity", because these terms can be used to imply that current policy settings already meet the principle. These goals are not being achieved if subject choices and flexible forms of provision are removed without credible, resourced, and publicly accountable alternatives.

2.4.3.4 Decisions of this scale should not proceed without clear evidence, realistic implementation planning, adequate resourcing, and a guarantee that students will not become collateral damage in the redesign of senior secondary curriculum.

2.4.3.5 Concerns are consistent across the teaching profession. New teachers describe uncertainty, pressure and the difficulty of learning new content quickly; senior leaders describe the operational impact on staffing, timetabling, professional learning, communication, assessment and reporting systems; and middle leaders emphasise the need for slowed timelines, funded support and meaningful kanohi ki te kanohi professional learning.

2.4.3.6 Members' concerns under this principle are not limited to the speed of change; they point to a wider implementation risk created by overlapping reforms, unresolved curriculum sequencing, uneven alignment across phases and learning areas, and insufficient time for professional scrutiny before schools are expected to act.

2.4.3.7 Teachers and leaders report that Phases 1–4 and Phase 5 are being developed and released in ways that make it difficult to see a coherent curriculum system – for example earlier phase materials still being finalised while Phase 5 writing had begun. Without clear national implementation plans, adequate time for professional input, subject-specific PLD, consistent definitions of key concepts, and clarity about what is compulsory within and across learning areas, schools are being asked to interpret and implement major change before the curriculum is fully coherent, resourced, or ready for sustainable enactment.

2.4.3.8 Selected member feedback

- "The speed in which these changes are occurring lead to uncertainty on what knowledge, content, topics, and skills they need to know or plan for, and leads to these teachers feeling under prepared, under pressure and generally unsure." (NET)

- "Reduced time for planning, collaboration, and building relationships with students may also negatively affect teacher wellbeing and limit schools' ability to provide responsive and inclusive support for learners." (Health and Safety representative)

- "Middle leaders would need the timeline halted or significantly slowed, not more 'digital roadshows.'" (Middle Leader)

- "They need targeted, funded, kanohi ki te kanohi regional support, especially for rural and isolated schools where generic Zoom links are inadequate." (Middle Leader)

2.4.4 Principle 4: Teachers are valued as curriculum designers and their expertise and specialisation are recognised and valued

2.4.4.1 For a number of PPTA Te Wehengarua members, the current reform approach positions teachers primarily as implementers, rather than as curriculum professionals with disciplinary expertise. For these members, across Phases 1–4 in particular, teacher voice was limited or marginalised; subject associations and professional networks were hardy involved and decisions appeared to have been made in advance of consultation. [9]

2.4.4.2 Indeed, The Minister of Education has not denied that expertise was sought from outside Aotearoa New Zealand having contracted the services of Learning First to source content for the New Zealand Curriculum.[10]

2.4.4.3 Teachers are held professionally accountable for curriculum and assessment decisions yet were excluded from meaningful participation at key stages of curriculum development. It is important to acknowledge that curriculum development and the education systems that the curriculum sits inside are of interest to us all, are often highly contested, and involve many stakeholders and multiple components. These education systems are 'made up of a large number of actors (teachers, parents, politicians, bureaucrats, civil society organisations) interacting with each other in different institutions (schools, ministry departments) for different reasons (developing curricula, monitoring school performance, managing teachers). All these interactions are governed by rules, beliefs and behavioural norms that affect how actors react and adapt to changes in the system'.[11]

2.4.4.4 PPTA Te Wehengarua believes that 'Curriculum making strategies that allow actors to experience themselves as trusted and capable participants in curriculum making and make sense of it together with others are the most effective ones – 'effective' meaning here that people relate to the aims of the curriculum they co-construct and feel ownership, and through that are willing to adapt and develop not only curriculum, but

[9] Pulse Check: Results from Surveys on Draft [phases 1-4] documents
[10] Australian firm's involvement in school curriculum rewrite comes under scrutiny | RNZ
[11] Global Education Partnership. (2019). Country level evaluations (Synthesis Report).

also the educational system and settings within which they work". [12] PPTA Te Wehengarua asserts that curriculum legitimacy depends on trusting teachers as knowledge experts, because excluding their professional expertise undermines effective implementation and educational quality.

2.4.4.5 Our members emphasise that teachers, curriculum leaders and school leaders hold practical expertise about what is realistic, sustainable and workable in classrooms and schools, and that meaningful consultation must treat their professional knowledge as central to curriculum design rather than as an afterthought.

2.4.4.6 Selected member feedback

- "It is important that any consultation is done in good faith, which means actually listening to the experts." (NET)
- "Feedback grounded in practical experience provides the strongest evidence to help shape a curriculum that is both ambitious and achievable." (NET)
- "Senior leaders are responsible for translating policy into practice and are therefore well placed to identify practical implications, resource requirements, and unintended consequences that may not be visible at a national level." (Senior Leader)
- "Teachers, curriculum leaders and schools have valuable professional knowledge that should inform the final curriculum." (ICT kaiako)

2.4.5 Principle 5: The curriculum is regularly reviewed through research on effective practice to make sure it is fit for purpose

2.4.5.1 PPTA Te Wehengarua argues that curriculum reform is only evidence-informed when it is grounded in Aotearoa New Zealand-based, Tiriti-honouring scholarship, open to challenge and revision, and responsive to subject-specific evidence about coherence, accuracy, teachability, learner experience and the conditions required for effective implementation. PPTA Te Wehengarua has called on the Ministry of Education to publicly release the research base informing curriculum changes, and to establish a clear, ongoing review process that enables the key actors in the education system to respond coherently to system-wide needs, emerging evidence, identified gaps, and developments that can enhance teaching practice.

2.4.5.2 Across the curriculum development process, however, members have raised serious concerns about what counts as evidence, whose knowledge is privileged, and how research is being interpreted and applied within the draft curriculum materials. In particular, teachers report that the rationale for major changes is poorly articulated, that concepts such as "knowledge-rich" and "evidence-based" are used without shared definition or professional clarity, and that the research underpinning these decisions has not been made available for scrutiny or debate. Any review process must therefore involve the teaching profession and give due consideration to the

[12] Alvunger, D., Soini, T., Philippou, S. & Priestley, M. (2021). Conclusions: Patterns and trends in curriculum making in Europe. In: M. Priestley, D. Alvunger, S. Philippou. & T. Soini, Curriculum making in Europe: policy and practice within and across diverse contexts. Bingley: Emerald. The original publication is available at https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83867-735-020211013

impact on learning and teaching programmes, including the time, professional learning, materials and other resourcing needed for effective enactment.

2.4.5.3 Members also express concern that narrow interpretations of learning science are being used to justify increased specification, sequencing, and comparability, while sidelining relational, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions of learning that are well supported by Aotearoa-based research, Māori educational scholarship, and professional practice. The research base underpinning key decisions has not been clearly articulated or made available for professional scrutiny.

2.4.5.4 As Ford and Jepsen (2025) argue, without transparency and critique, the language of 'knowledge-rich' and 'evidence-based' risks enabling greater standardisation and central control, with consequences that echo longstanding colonial patterns within curriculum design. They further assert that this selective and decontextualised use of evidence risks repositioning knowledge as neutral, technical, and culturally universal, rather than as socially situated and historically shaped.

2.4.5.5 This approach aligns uncomfortably with patterns of recolonisation, where overseas frameworks and Eurocentric assumptions are recentralised, Māori knowledge systems are diminished or instrumentalised, and professional and cultural authority is removed from those closest to learners and communities. [13] Our Māori members are telling us that they share these concerns about the process and some aspects of the substance of these draft curriculum materials.

2.4.5.6 Other members also point to the damage caused by repeated, politically driven change without transparent consultation or coherent explanation. Across these groups, the alignment is around the need for stable, evidence-informed review processes that build trust, avoid reform fatigue, and ensure curriculum change remains fit for purpose over time.

2.4.5.7 Selected member feedback

- "The utter lack of transparent consultation, the enforcement of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) on working groups, and the deliberate sidelining of the profession has created an environment of unprecedented distrust." (NET)
- "A more coherent explanation of the Ministry's approach is needed so principals can lead change in a way that feels justifiable and logical." (NET)
- "The current environment is marked by a 'lack of transparent consultation,' the use of NDAs, and the 'deliberate sidelining of the profession,' creating 'unprecedented distrust.'" (Middle Leader)
- "Principals need a more coherent explanation of the Ministry's approach so they can lead change in a way that feels justifiable and logical." (Principal)

[13] The Recolonisation of the Aotearoa New Zealand Curriculum in 2025 Final

3 Discussion

3.1 When tested against the five principles of good curriculum development agreed by members at Annual Conference in 2024, it is no surprise that the combination of the scale of change and the hastiness of the development process has done little to ensure confidence in what the final NZC will look like and whether it will be able to be well implemented.

3.2 Alongside the new NZC must come a rich and full set of resources and Professional Learning and Development. For teachers to be able to bring the NZC "to life" in "responsive ways" requires the Ministry of Education to do two things. Firstly, they must provide a full set of "Learning Kits" to teachers in a timely manner and secondly, that they invite teachers to participate in an iterative process of refining the kits as they get realised in classrooms from the start of 2027.

3.3 The Ministry has made a commitment to providing teaching resource packages (Learning Kits), based on the draft curriculum; including annual plans, unit plans, and detailed lesson plans designed to help teachers implement the refreshed national curriculum. The intention is that it will "allow teachers to use and adapt them while unpacking the knowledge-rich draft learning areas." Teachers can "pick them up and try them out or use as exemplars that help ...(them) plan and practise...(their) own knowledge-rich units and lessons." [14]

3.4 While this is a useful start, the Ministry must commit to delivering Learning Kits that cover all of the final NZC content across all learning areas for both Year 9 and 10 before the end of 2026.

3.5 The Ministry must be clear that these resources aren't just a small set of exemplars to guide teachers as they build and deliver an entirely new curriculum at year 9 and Year 10 in 2027 but rather, will provide a starting point for all changes required next year. Teachers should be able to pick and choose which units or lessons they will take straight from the kit, which they can easily adapt to be more responsive to the needs of their students, and which can be blended with or simply be replaced by existing plans in schools. The Ministry must be clear that they fully support kaiako to adapt and localise the NZC material.

3.6 Opportunities for teachers to access expertise and to collaborate on the implementation of the new NZC must be resourced and ongoing. This will enable continued refinement of the curriculum and the resources as well as provide opportunities to improve teaching and learning practices. This is required if we aspire to embed a curriculum that supports equity and excellence.

3.7 The Ministry says that they "take an iterative approach to all teaching resources development and continually work to improve the support [they] provide to school leaders and teachers." [15]these are encouraging words, especially when combined with the Secretary for Education's statement that they are "committed to creating... feedback loops that support us to be "an education system that learns". This commitment must be a priority if there is any hope of catching and remedying the issues that have arisen due to the hastiness of the process. The review strategy should be determined with urgency so that the "feedback loop" is ready for the start of the 2027 school year and refinement happens in a useful and timely manner.

3.8 Following implementation, the Ministry intends to move to a regular curriculum review and update cycle, rather than long periods between revisions. However, it is not clear how these reviews and updates will take place, nor who will be involved.[16]

3.9 Call for a cross-party agency

3.9.1 In the last six months, PPTA Te Wehengarua has also been involved in discussions with other peak bodies to consider a proposal for a cross-party agency for curriculum and assessment.

[14] New teaching resources for New Zealand Curriculum available - Ministry of Education
[15] New teaching resources for New Zealand Curriculum available - Ministry of Education
[16] https://tahurangi.education.govt.nz/our-story

3.9.2 The proposal under discussion responds directly to the instability created when curriculum and assessment reform is reshaped by short political cycles. A permanent, independent statutory body would provide long-term stewardship across Te Whāriki, The New Zealand Curriculum / Te Mātaiaho, and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, while retaining ministerial direction and final government approval. Its purpose would be to run predictable, evidence-informed review cycles, commission research before major change, pilot proposals before rollout, align curriculum, assessment and implementation, require costed implementation plans, and report publicly to the Minister and Parliament.

3.9.3 This aligns closely with the PPTA Te Wehengarua principles for good curriculum development. The 2024 Annual Conference paper rejects political interference in curriculum development and calls for curriculum change to be inclusive, coherent, well resourced, professionally informed, and regularly reviewed through research on effective practice. A Curriculum and Assessment Council would give institutional form to those principles by ensuring that teachers, subject associations, iwi and Māori education partners, academics, communities and learners have meaningful roles in shaping change, rather than being asked to respond to decisions made through rushed or opaque processes.

3.9.4 The Council would not remove democratic accountability; rather, it would protect curriculum and assessment from ad hoc political reversals while making change more transparent, evidence-based and manageable for schools. For PPTA members, this is important because teachers and school leaders are currently expected to absorb major curriculum, assessment, qualification, reporting and implementation changes at the same time, often without sufficient clarity, time or support.

3.9.5 International examples exist, as do local precedents such as Te Waihanga, the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission[17], and the Retirement Commission[18], which provide independent policy stewardship and regular review mechanisms that sit beyond short-term political pressure. Education warrants a comparable level of long-term commitment.

[17] Te Waihanga
[18] Office of the Retirement Commissioner | Te Ara Ahunga Ora Retirement Commission