



The human cost of ACC cuts

Bruce and Kate Simpson's story **p4**

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# PPTA NEWS

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As this issue of PPTA News went to print president Robin Duff was in South Africa at the Education International Conference. Former PPTA president Ruth Chapman (1988-89) wrote to PPTA and we've shared her letter with you.

**Performance pain**

I taught Heather Roy many years ago and recently she acknowledged me by describing me as an inspirational teacher. In the same article she outlined the advantages of performance pay – perhaps she believed that I would benefit from a performance-pay system.

It got me thinking . . .

I had to drag at least two clever but reluctant boys through my English class for them to gain their university entrance – I had the feeling that “old dragon” would have been their description of me. For other students my contribution may have been a boost to their self-esteem or a gift of respect, and maybe something I and the school did not notice at the time.

I thought about the students who only remembered something from a teacher years after the event; in the same way I remember “gems” from my former teachers. On the other hand I thought about the power to do ill, to knowingly damage a student's self-esteem and confidence in themselves and their learning. This is the scary thing about teaching and why we should give teachers time to think carefully about their daily practice.

I reminisced about the fact that I loved the classroom but probably wouldn't have enjoyed today's more

structured regime; and the fact that there were other teachers who were better than me at classroom management, assessment, administration and curriculum development. Would they have been beneficiaries of the performance element of their pay?

I was involved in the union from early on in my teaching career, at a branch, regional and national level. That didn't always make me popular in my school. Would the very teaching that inspired Heather Roy have been cancelled out by the demerits earned by standing up in unpopular situations? I feel proud to have been part of the campaign to abolish university entrance while working in a school where the principal strongly opposed the campaign.

It got me remembering 1987 when we were first presented with an employer claim for performance pay and how we spent hours going over the arguments for and against it, and looking at the success or otherwise of those schemes in teaching. We concluded that they would only work if there were fair and objective criteria to assess performance and enough money to reward all those who got over the bar. When we were pushed, we fell back on the argument that performance pay might work in other industries but teaching was too complex, with too many hidden elements, for it to work.

In the early 1990s, in the heyday of individualisation and merit schemes, I left teaching and went to work on an individual employment contract (collective arrangements did not exist) where we were forbidden to tell others what we were paid and where increases were based on performance. The system began with no apparent or transparent criteria and then changed to one where we set our own objectives and received the increase if we met them. I felt degraded by both.



by Ruth Chapman

It was as if I was seen as someone who would only work if there was an extrinsic reward at the end of it, as if no-one believed that a fair remuneration and the joy and satisfaction of doing a good job for its own sake were enough for me.

I now work in a job under a collective employment agreement with a performance-pay element. The criteria are laid out in minute detail but they cannot cover all the skills and attributes which are important in all the jobs within the organisation – so they fail the first test that we set at PPTA over 20 years ago. There is also a fiscal cap so that not all the people who deserve the increase can get it, so they fail the second test as well.

I still do the best job I can when I go to work, just as I did when I was teaching Heather Roy. I would love not to feel demeaned each time the salary review comes round, regardless of whether I get the increase or not. The system implicitly assumes I will work well, only for the extra money. I would love not to feel angry that the performance-pay system I work in is the unsound practice we feared all those years ago.

So thanks Heather for letting me know that I was the teacher I tried to be for you and for giving me the opportunity to reflect on performance pay again. You'll see I've never really stopped ... but I would have to say no thanks to the offer of more money. I'd settle for fair pay for me and for all my colleagues. •



"Your classroom management techniques work in practice but not in theory. That worries me."

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# The human cost of ACC cuts

Your life can change in an instant: *PPTA News* met a teacher who had a work place accident that changed everything.

**P**ink is the first thing you notice about Kate; her hair neatly frames her face and is adorned with a black floral headpiece.

It distracts the eye and keeps it focused. This is the way Kate wants it so people don't notice her sudden movements because they're looking at her hair.

She has involuntary movement in her head, tongue, shoulder, arms and hands.

"I have to tell my body what to do all the time. It's not an automatic model, it operates on manual control," she explains.

The mental control needed to tell her body what to do stops as her energy levels drop.

Her arms wave and her speech reverts to sounds like "da-da-da" when she's mentally exhausted.

The 50-something relief teacher from South Waikato draws attention wherever she goes.

Students approach her on the streets of Tokoroa to check and see how she is.

Kate was a relief teacher at Forest View High School.

"If you ever feel stale, the kids keep you on your toes – you have to be smarter than a 14-year-old," she says.

"The kids are often really mean and in Tokoroa some of them live in really desperate circumstances and school really is a sanctuary. By the time they get to about year 12 they all sidle up to you and say things like, 'Miss, you know how I was so mean all the time – I'm sorry about that aye'".

Kate's work in the classroom was dramatically cut short during winter in 2009.

"I settled the senior class in the computer suite, then shot down the corridor to the year nines. The kids had been playing with the fire hose and the corridor was slightly wet."

It was too late before she noticed a piece of lunch wrapper on the wet surface and crashed to the ground.

She put both arms out to break her fall shattering the long bones in her

arms. The bones in her wrists separated and she broke a bone in her foot.

Kate could not move. She sat in the corridor while school staff stayed by her side until an ambulance came an hour later taking her to the emergency department in Tokoroa for x-rays.

Kate remembers the pain saying it was worse than child birth.

"They offered no useful pain relief. They reduced the fractures by pulling my hands and arms individually to align the bones, but of course they were in a thousand pieces."

**"I have to tell my body what to do all the time. It's not an automatic model, it operates on manual control."**

"They gave her a couple of panadol and sent her off to Waikato," says husband Bruce.

The road between Tokoroa and Hamilton was being dug up so the journey was slow and excruciating for Kate.

Bruce met her at Waikato hospital where she was told her wrists needed to be operated on but the surgeon was away. She would have to wait eight days.

"The hospital wanted Kate to go home and wait for surgery," says Bruce.

"I didn't realise until I got home that I couldn't turn on taps, cut up food, go to the toilet or shower," says Kate.

Bruce had to care for Kate full-time abandoning his new contract and income.

When Kate had the surgery, plates were inserted into her wrists.

The nightmare of the accident did not end here for Kate and Bruce.

Bruce says there were early signs that Kate's injuries would go on to cause long-term suffering.

"Kate was in the recovery room after surgery. The blood oxygen satu-

ration monitor at the end of her bed started alarming. The nurse came in and turned up the oxygen on the mask and then went away. The alarm went off again and the nurse did the same. When it happened a third time she said, 'we'll just turn that off,' and went away."

Kate was running short of oxygen when she came out of the surgery and she developed a clot on her lung from lying on her back for too long.

Kate and Bruce say their experience with care at the hospital was shocking.

"Meals were plonked down and patients were told to start looking after themselves. I had to get out of bed with one functioning foot, and push my trolley over to somebody else who was worse off than me because they wouldn't feed you or cut up your dinner," says Kate.

Before Kate was released, a woman from Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) visited the hospital registering.

Three weeks after the accident and Kate and Bruce had not received any paper work or compensatory income from ACC.

The costs of travel to Waikato and medical expenses began to cripple the pair financially.

They visited their family doctor who said they weren't registered with ACC and they say it took three separate efforts to get fully registered.

Kate and Bruce's dealings with the corporation began the year ACC minister Nick Smith confirmed millions of dollars of funding would be cut from the system.

In that financial year ACC turned down 3500 more claims for surgery than the previous year.

Tightening the rules meant the National-led government clawed back \$310 million.

In 2010 ACC was accused of illegally denying cover to Kiwis with legitimate workplace injuries in its bid to cut costs.

The grim reality for Kate was a



Bruce and Kate Simpson: "We were so involved with just trying to deal with day-to-day survival."

constant battle with ACC to get financial cover for lost income and cover for ongoing operations.

ACC delayed cover of Kate's lost teaching income. They told Bruce and Kate they could not pay, but said they would break the rules and loan the couple money but it had to be paid back.

"I'm thinking... you're going to lend us money when you stuffed up on the paper work and owe us," says Bruce.

Trish Priscott and Doug Clark from Forest View High School visited Kate and Bruce with food packages when they heard about the couple's struggle and asked them why they hadn't been to PPTA for support.

PPTA took on their case by taking ACC to review twice, helping them get surgery after Kate was turned down for secondary surgery twice.

PPTA organised funding for the couple were surviving on a minimal income.

"We were so involved with just trying to deal with day-to-day survival," says Kate.

The first inklings of a neurological condition came at Waikato Hospital when Kate's hand therapist noticed a twitch in her hand and thought it was a neurological condition.

"The casts had suppressed a lot of movement but when they came off we noticed a tremor that got progressively worse."

What started as a small twitch in her hand led to shoulder movements,

then her head started moving and then her speech was affected.

Kate was admitted to Waikato Hospital's neurology ward at the end of 2009.

Psychologists and a neuro-specialist diagnosed Kate with conversion disorder a sort of post-traumatic stress condition.

Kate and Bruce spent some of their PPTA grant money on going to a leading neuro-psychiatrist who said Kate needed a high resolution scan to get a closer look at her brain to see if there were any physical problems.

"We went to ACC and said 'look she's got a neurological condition'. Our doctor said it was clearly a lack of oxygen in some parts of the brain, based on her having oxygen alarms during her recovery period."

ACC told them they would have to file a separate claim as it was considered a treatment injury. Their claim was declined.

PPTA field officers Gavin Kay and Erin Polaczuk took the case to review.

It was upheld with direction – ACC had to go back and follow the directions the review office had made to get a high resolution brain scan to determine if there was a physical condition involved.

"That was a break-through but it still took months to get the scans," says Bruce.

Kate had three high resolution brain scans. What was revealed shocked the couple.

A virtual star field of white specs showed cell death littered Kate's brain.

"We got the MRI and they said there's definitely a major problem with your brain. There's a large amount of cell death. They said it could be a degenerative vascular disease," says Kate.

Kate and Bruce were unhappy with the suggestion of vascular disease and went to their family doctor in Mangakino to discuss the findings.

The doctor suggested a fat embolism explaining they were common with broken bones.

This seemed more likely as Kate's bones were severely crushed and left to sit for up to eight days.

He said the fat tissue from the marrow in her bones may have travelled into the blood stream and around the body getting stuck in capillaries stopping the blood flow and gradually lodging in the brain.

PPTA are supporting Kate and Bruce as they try to get continual cover from ACC and an acknowledgement of a link between her accident and her neurological condition.

The case has gone to the medical committee in Rotorua for a decision as ACC have said there's not enough evidence to link Kate's neurological condition to her accident.

Kate says the mental energy required to push her case has been exhausting.

"This is not how I imagined my life to turn out. This can happen to anyone," she says.

"I do want to impress upon you how grateful I am for the help I've received from my work place, students and the union. Without the PPTA's help Bruce and I would have just let it go because there's a limit to how much you can put yourself through."

Kate doesn't think she'll ever teach again.

"I would like a more automatic measure of control, but the thing is if I get a fright or something is wrong then I am right back to 'da-da-da'. While I still do that I cannot be in charge of a classroom. It's not professional. I am not in a state where I can be responsible for 30 children. If something happens it would be irresponsible for me to be there so I am happy to work behind the scenes." •

## Ministry "perks" justify Tomorrow's Schools review

**P**PTA president Robin Duff says that a second report from the Auditor-General citing concerns about unlawful payments to principals is more evidence for PPTA's call for a review of Tomorrow's Schools.

The Auditor-General's 2009/10 audits published in December 2010 included a report on payments made to secondary school principals about normal salary.

The report found that in 2009 additional salary payments totaling \$785,000 were approved by the Ministry of Education to principals in 63 of 411 secondary schools. The payments ranged from \$3000 to \$21,000. A further 46 boards of trustees made additional payments without the ministry's approval. The report also identifies 82 schools where auditors found additional payments were either made without approval or the board of trustees were not clear if they would need ministry approval.

Unlawful "perk" payments included paying domestic telephone or internet bills where principals of 52 of 411 schools were reimbursed for some or all of this cost.

Other unauthorised spending included \$10,000 on a rental car, \$3500 for income protection insurance, \$3000 for medical insurance, Koru Club membership of \$745, an expenses account of \$2000, an overseas travel allowance of \$4200 and \$6000 for house master duties.

"While boards may wish to reward principals they need to remember that school funding is taxpayer's money and it must be used transparently," said Robin Duff.

The Auditor-General's report calls on the ministry to show leadership over unlawful payments made to principals by creating clear guidelines for boards of trustees about what payments need to be signed off by the ministry. The current guidelines are too ambiguous.

Integrated schools pose a particular problem for the Auditor-General.

Payments from an outside body are inconsistent with the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975.

The report found one principal at an integrated school received \$31,500 for managing a hostel – \$14,500 more than the ministry would have approved if the hostel were owned by a board of trustees.

"Another principal in a similar position receives \$22,500 a year," it found.

"At two other integrated schools, the principal received remuneration from the board for managing the proprietor's hostel, with the approval of the ministry, and they also received remuneration from the proprietor for what appears to be the same duties, possibly on the basis that the two bodies

were sharing the costs.

One principal received \$13,300 from the board and \$20,000 from the proprietor. The other received \$11,300 from the board and \$26,000 from the proprietor."

At another integrated school payments were made of \$10,000 for "special character", \$10,000 for "senior college", a \$15,000 performance payment, and \$5,000 for incidental entertainment and mileage totaling \$40,000 a year.

Other payments to a state integrated school principal included a \$14,300 payment and a rent-free house.

"It may be that integrated schools that were previously private schools have not fully appreciated the level of accountability required for public money," said Robin Duff.

The Auditor-General is also clamping down on payments from other third parties.

Some schools have set up a charitable trust to receive payments from the third party and the ministry said it did not need to approve any payments made from such trusts.

The Auditor-General has issued a word of warning that the ministry's central control of pay is designed to help maintain pay parity between schools.

"If schemes of this kind became widespread, there is a risk that they would undermine this policy objective... Charitable trusts could be established so that they are not controlled by schools, the schools could help the trusts with raising funds from the local community, and then the trusts could make payments to school employees without (the) ministry's approval and without paying tax," said the report.

The report found unlawful payments have decreased since a similar investigation in 2004 but still asked the ministry to increase its monitoring of boards by getting regular statements of all money paid directly to school staff.

It also noted that it is the responsibility of the ministry to recover any funds that were wrongfully paid but left it up to the ministry's discretion if it would be appropriate to try to recover the money.

The report makes a specific push for the ministry to recover money and regulate payments to principals of state integrated schools.

The ministry announced it had created a finance circular addressing the matters identified in the Auditor-General's review that would be circulated to schools late this month.

"There is a very definite contradiction here between the ideal of self-managing schools and the increasing need for central monitoring and control. That is why PPTA would rather see a full review of tomorrow's Schools instead of constant and optimistic tinkering" said Robin Duff. •



## Practices and values at the heart of education

The theme "Te ao wairua reflected positively in secondary school practices and values" was explored by keynote speakers at the 17th PPTA Maori Teachers' Conference in July.

**T**he broad spectrum of views on how the spirit manifests in the daily world of secondary education was explored while stories and reflections on the spirit in the lives of each speaker were presented.

Mary Potter Hospice CEO Ria Earp opened the conference with stories of how whānau could be more connected with the process of death.

Stories of her work were double-edged: both somber and uplifting. She talked about how families could be connected to the dying of a loved one through song, creativity and celebration removing the clinical experience some families have when their loved ones die.

For some the idea of death being positive and uplifting is a hard one to grasp.

"When most people think of a hospice they think of it as a place to go and die," said Ria.

She said some people came to hospice for a short time; for respite and to make adjustments to their medication before they returned home.

Ria talked about incorporating tikangi into the hospice culture and said the philosophy of the organisa-

tion was viewing death as social and not medical.

She said there were useful things that teachers could use in the classroom to help their students deal with grief and loss.

She gave the example of creating a taonga by using a plaster cast to set the imprints of a loved one's hands. When they pass away family can reconnect with the person by touching the hand prints.

Wally Penetito professor of te kura Māori, faculty of education at Victoria University talked about what it meant to be Māori today and the role of Māori secondary school teachers in ensuring Māori youth succeeded educationally.

He talked about how Māori had been isolated from academic success – "it's been made into a problem for us," he said.

He used the example of his own education where he visited the UK and Scotland and said he knew about the places he visited.

"I knew about Robert the Bruce and the battle of Bannockburn, in a place 1200 miles away. How come I didn't know things about my own backyard," he said.

"There is so much mana attached to the things you learn at school. It stinks that we don't always get taught about the history of our own country."

He said it was vital for teachers to know about where they came from and that a culturally grounded curriculum were important.

"You as Māori have something in the education system that nobody else had. If you don't impart your knowledge nobody else will. You have a duty to see that culture



Ria Earp, Mary Potter Hospice CEO, talks to the hui about assisting students deal with grief and loss.

is perpetuated through the curriculum," he said.

Wally talked about secondary education in New Zealand being specifically geared for a "Pakeha middle-class male."

"It has a stranglehold on what and how one gets an education in this country. They determine the key values and how those values will be reflected in educational institutions, especially at secondary level," he said.

He thought Māori educational underachievement was fundamentally a systemic problem.

"We need new theoretical frameworks informed by Māori indigenous practices."

Wiremu Flavell, another speaker at the conference became a secondary school teacher because he was concerned with the poor academic achievement of Māori students.

He said he wanted to see more Māori from Te Taitokerau, "particularly Māori boys", achieving success at the highest level at secondary school and then embarking on further educational pursuits at tertiary institutions.

Māori teachers shared their experiences of being educators in New Zealand while discussing the issues and successes of their practice. •



Attentive and creative: Teachers Alamein Connell and May Ward work while they listen to keynote speakers.

## Australian union tackles Aboriginal issues in education

Waine Donovan is a country organiser for the NSW Teachers' Federation and Amy Paron is a primary school teacher and a member of the NSW Teachers' Federation Aboriginal Members' Committee.

Amy and Waine held a workshop at the Māori Teachers' Conference about what they are doing to support Aboriginal youth in schools in Australia.

Amy has been a teacher for four years and says there are 160 children at the primary school she works in.

"Of these children 20 are Aboriginal children but only six of them identify as being Aboriginal," she said.

Amy, who has Aboriginal ancestry, said she found schooling smooth but said that was not the reality for many Aboriginal children today.

"I wasn't recognised as being Aboriginal at school. When I was at

school I was just another kid. I have had to acknowledge my heritage and as I get older I am embracing it more," she said.

"My dream is for Aboriginal kids to have the same schooling as non-Aboriginal kids and for them to be as successful," she said.

"They need to know their heritage, I don't know much about mine."

Amy told the group she'd recently found out she had Aboriginal ancestry and was on a continual journey to connect with her history.

Amy said information about Aboriginal history had been so suppressed that she was learning more about her history through the Aboriginal Members' Committee meetings and conferences.

"I am jealous of the language spoken in New Zealand and the cultural sharing," she said.

Waine Donovan said the NSW Teachers' Federation was the most

active education union in Australia on issues about Aboriginal youth in education.

Waine taught in schools for 27 years and said he was concerned that government were trying to follow a similar system to New York.

He said the funding received by schools in Australia was disparate with private schools receiving 75% of the funding and public 25%.

Waine campaigned directly on Aboriginal people's rights in education but was equally involved in campaigns around the direction education is taking in Australia.

He said he was concerned that private schools in Australia were exempt from the anti-discrimination act.

He said one of the greatest successes he's had in his role is having the process of acknowledgement of country promoted and adopted by many organisations. •



Photo: Powhiri Rika-Heke

the divine spark within.

She also said the origin of the hongi was to acknowledge that all of human kind are related. •

and obtained a Doctorate of Literature at Victoria University the same year.

She told Māori teachers she sees the "divine spark" in everyone and that all people are sacred.

"If I forget to be divine, I just say that was my human side," she joked.

Her wit and sense of humour had Māori teachers uplifted as she talked about her deep connection with herself and those around her.

She said she'd worked with what many people would label the most hardened criminals, but said she still held a deep compassion for them as people and chose to remain neutral.

Her love of herself inspired the audience as she said, "I am an awesome being."

"No one is going to love you if you don't love yourself," she reminded.

She explained the term "kia ora" as one that could be likened to the universal "om" vibration or the word "Namaste" - an acknowledgement of

## Divine inspiration

Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere proved a conference highlight for many with teachers queuing to buy a copy of her book *Te Wheke - A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom* which is an introduction to her teachings.

Her messages about te ao wairua were loud and clear as she offered a deep interpretation of the conference theme.

She said she was influenced by teachings that went back over 12,000 years and said she had traveled worldwide sharing her ideas.

She has written books and papers on education including, *Concepts and Learning in the Māori Tradition*.

She has taught from preschool age children to tertiary level and is a holder of the 1990 Commemoration Medal and was honoured as a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire 1996

## Libraries belong at the hub of schools

A low or zero budget to fund school libraries means many secondary schools are missing out on quality information services.

PPTA and the School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (SLANZA) are calling for consistency across secondary school libraries.

"We would like to see all secondary and area schools have a well-resourced and staffed library," said president Robin Duff.

"The lack of cohesion of library services across New Zealand's secondary and area schools meant some students were missing out on vital skills."

Ministry of Education funding is not specifically tagged for school libraries. Schools are left to use their discretion on how funding is allocated.

Library manager at James Hargest College and former president of (SLANZA), Senga White, says forcing schools to fund their libraries out of the operational grant is failing.

"Some schools value libraries but some simply aren't aware of the benefits of putting their money into them," she said.

"Schools spend money as they see fit which means that there isn't any continuity for service across the country.

"A lot of school librarians fear for their jobs and are concerned they won't get any budget at all," she said.

Long gone is the government-funded trained teacher-librarian role; a tagged staffing position with direct funding allocation for secondary and intermediate schools.

This was scrapped in 1991 by the national government minister of education Lockwood Smith.

Some schools chose to hold on to this position, while others couldn't financially sustain the role.



**"The lack of cohesion of library services across New Zealand's secondary and area schools meant some students were missing out on vital skills."**

In 2003 Cambridge High School abandoned its school library in favour of a cyber café.

Former principal Alison Annan indicated she saw the library as archaic by calling it a "museum".

In 2005 the Hon Trevor Mallard spoke at the opening of the reinstated Cambridge High School library saying, "today marks a fresh

start for one of the most important facilities in your school".

He referred to *The School Library and Learning in the Information Landscape: Guidelines for New Zealand Schools (2002)*.

PPTA is concerned that there is no legal mandate for schools to provide their students with a library.

A PPTA 2005 annual conference paper *Secondary and Area School Library: Staffing and Funding for A Crucial School Facility*, produced by the Wellington region, recommended it should be mandatory for all secondary and area schools to

have a well resourced and staffed library.

The paper detailed how schools can approach the provision of library services.

It placed the provision of trained teacher-librarians as central to a good service recommending the position of full-time trained teacher-librarian be restored in all secondary and area schools.

"A school librarian should be employed as one of the school staff with status equal to that of the other teachers," said the paper.

The paper noted the hypocrisy in the Education Review Office's report on Cambridge High School that placed the responsibility for the meeting of information literacy requirements with individual schools.

"It is incumbent on the Ministry of Education to ensure that the Guiding Principals are able to be implemented by all schools and not, as currently, only by the financially advantaged" said the paper.

Through its report the PPTA have called on the ministry to ensure schools are in an adequate position to be able to fund their school library services. •

## Cathedral College gets back on track



used because they're in the "drop zone" of the badly damaged Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

The cathedral's dome has been taken down and the highest and most dangerous parts of the building are being deconstructed.

PPTA branch chairperson Glenn Hooper talked about the sense of euphoria on the grounds. Students seemed happy on site and teachers relieved to be back at "home".

"We want to achieve as close to normality as possible," said Deputy principal Justin Field.

He said they were grateful for the hospitality

St Thomas College had shown them and looked forward to making the same gesture to Marian College.

The school is suited to accommodate another school as it was originally set up as two schools in the late 19th century.

The sense of camaraderie amongst the teachers at Cathedral College is strong.

They talk openly and laugh about their experiences but are all too aware of the struggles they still face.

"Three of our teachers still don't know what's happening with their homes," said Glenn.

He said three teachers had decided to leave because it was too difficult to live in a disaster zone and they were uncertain about the results of the July roll return.

"When your quality of life is eroded you have to decide if you're going to stay and you make the best decision for you and your family," said Glenn.

The teachers' memories from the February earthquake are still fresh.

They'd opted to go to the afternoon session of the PPTA union meeting at the town hall so were either parking their cars in the central city or walking through the city.

Music teacher Sophie Ralph said she hit the ground as the quake threw

the city into upheaval and lay in the middle of the road on Colombo Street.

"So you were planking on Colombo Street," joked Justin.

"It's really good to be back, it's a bit like when you've been staying in someone else's house," she said.

She said they were scared about where their students were on the day as school had closed at lunch time.

Sophie spent her school holidays setting up the new music classroom. Her old room is next to the cathedral's drop zone and is out of bounds.

She said she had about 15 minutes with an engineer to retrieve musical equipment from the space – equipment that would be too expensive for the school to replace.

It's this kind of time commitment that Justin Field would like the government to acknowledge.

"The government should give Christchurch teachers one week paid special leave as compensation for all their additional work," said Justin.

"We had 14 days to get the place set up and the doors open, it was a huge job," said Glenn.

He said it involved setting up classrooms and a lot of moving of equipment into the new block.

Justin said they were concerned about the effect site-sharing could have on NCEA results.

"One credit is about 10 hours of work. Some students have lost the equivalent of 90 teaching hours, so nine credits," he said.

"No one seems to be willing to look at the case. Our major stresses are around NCEA and rolls."

Shirley Boys' High and Avonside Girls' are still site-sharing but education minister Anne Tolley recently announced they would return but only for up to two years as the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority is yet to determine if rebuilding can occur.

Other schools still site-sharing include Marian College at St Bede's, Avonside Girls' High at Burnside High, Shirley Boys' High at Papanui High School and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti at Halswell Residential College. •

## Still some uncertainty about jobs and schools

PPTA's earthquake taskforce put crucial questions to education minister Anne Tolley on behalf of secondary school teachers in Christchurch.

The taskforce was pleased that the minister was able to attend its meeting on 4 August.

She acknowledged the difficulties that teachers were facing, but said she saw huge potential in education in Christchurch.

"I think you're in for a really tough time over the next two years, in fairness," she added.

"But it's a huge opportunity to think about education in the 21st century. It may be that some schools will have to merge.

"We will do our best to get an idea from families in Christchurch about what their long-term plans are," she said.

The minister told the taskforce she understood teachers were dealing with a lot of uncertainty and that she and the ministry were aware that families were not only facing uncertainty in their school environment but also had to deal with losing their homes.

She assured the taskforce that there weren't many schools that wouldn't be rebuilt.

"It's going to take five to six years and nothing is going to happen fast," she said.

She told the taskforce that although a single-sex school had not been built in New Zealand for some time she saw a continued future for single sex education on the east side of Christchurch.

Taskforce chair Jacinta Grice asked the minister how we could establish a collaborative process for rebuilding and repairing earthquake affected schools in Christchurch.

"The reason you haven't had many answers out of the Ministry of Education is we don't have them," said the minister.



Anne Tolley - "We're really focused on the schools that are sharing and making sure we have a plan for them."

"We're really focused on the schools that are sharing and making sure we have a plan for them," she said.

She told the taskforce a cabinet-level group called Ad hoc Canterbury Earthquake (ACE) had been set up and included Gerry Brownlee and herself and was held weekly.

The minister said she relied on the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority who had decided schools like Avonside Girls' High School and Shirley Boys High School could only be given the certainty of two years on their former sites.

"Sometimes they make a decision and it's in the media before we know about it."

"We have to wait for decisions about the land to be made before we can make decisions about schools. We do ask to get as much advance notice as possible so we can inform schools," said the minister.

When asked what was the best

way for communicating major decisions about the secondary school network, the minister said "a case-by-case basis" was best.

The crucial question on the minds of both secondary school teachers in Christchurch and PPTA's earthquake taskforce group are about job security for teachers.

Jacinta asked what the options were for working together to stabilise the trained and qualified teacher workforce in Christchurch.

The minister said she had discussed possible solutions for keeping secondary teachers in Canterbury where there was a roll decline as a result of the earthquakes with PPTA president Robin Duff.

She encouraged the taskforce to work with ministry officials including Nick

Pole where shared interests around keeping teachers in Christchurch existed.

"Certainty of work over the next two years is going to be really difficult."

"I can't guarantee everybody jobs for the next 12 months but I am willing to talk about something sensible. It's about finding a middle-ground," she said.

The minister talked about getting secondary school students through NCEA and said she would continue to work with NZQA to further extend the date for students wishing to withdraw from some achievement standards.

The taskforce felt the meeting with the minister was an important step and that some progress had been made on issues facing Christchurch schools. The group will continue to work with the minister in the interest of Christchurch teachers and students •

## PPTA general secretary elected to international teachers' body

PPTA general secretary Kevin Bunker was elected to the steering committee of the Commonwealth Teachers' Group (CTG) at the Education International Sixth World Congress held in Cape Town in July.

Education International is an affiliation of more than 400 unions and professional bodies representing 30 million teachers and other education workers across the globe.

The CTG comprises Education International affiliates from countries in the (former British) Commonwealth.

Representing the association at the congress, Bunker and PPTA president Robin Duff shared the experience of attending the five-day event with over 1600 delegates.

"The principal theme of the congress was 'quality education for all' especially in the light of the responses by governments to the global financial crisis that is continuing to afflict world economies," said Bunker.

"It was alarming to hear the stories from those from the stronger economies of Europe and the Americas of drastic cuts to education spending, attacks on teacher professionalism, casualisation and losses in pay and conditions."

Bunker was nominated to represent the Asia-Pacific region on the CTG steering committee by the Australian Education Union.

"It's a vast and diverse region to be representing," said Bunker.

"It stretches from Pakistan in the north to New Zealand in the south. It's quite an honour."

The CTG helps organise the Commonwealth Teachers' Forum, which is held in tandem with the triennial meetings of Commonwealth education ministers, and provides support to unions and teachers facing hardship or oppression from less-than-friendly regimes.

The group also developed the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol adopted by ministers in 2004.

"This protocol is aimed at preventing 'richer' nations poaching teachers on lesser pay and conditions, and often with dubious immigration



Kevin Bunker

status, from their 'poorer' relations," said Bunker.

"The protocol has proven to be a successful instrument and has now been picked up by Education International to promote to world governments in the light of significant growth in the trafficking and exploitation of teachers from

developing to developed countries."

The Congress was opened by South Africa's deputy president, Kgalema Motlanthe, who recalled his nation's struggle from oppression under apartheid and how education in South Africa is now a national priority for the future well-being of its people.

Education International president Susan Hoggood (Australia) picked up on this theme and spoke of the enormous debt owed to Nelson Mandela for what he taught people about the struggle for freedom and respect for human rights – a struggle that continued in many parts of the world. •

## Helping parents get to grips with the system

### Understanding NCEA

By Irena Madjar and Elizabeth McKinley

NZCER PRESS, \$19.95

Review by Kate Shuttleworth

Parents told the PPTA in a recent focus group on public education that NCEA was serving their secondary school-aged children well but they all agreed the qualifications framework needed to be demystified.

A lack of knowledge on how NCEA works can be a barrier to student success, as students can be left alone to navigate their way through the

NCEA, potentially making serious mistakes that adversely affect their future choices.

The intricacies of NCEA are laid bare in *Understanding NCEA* and presented in plain English by drawing on the experiences of over 100 students who have navigated the many NCEA pathways.

Key information is fully accessible setting out how to select subjects with sections for students aiming for fields like science, the arts, social sciences, business and commerce.

The reflections of students make for easy and useful reading.

It features key information about the design and reporting of NCEA

and it's kept brief and to the point.

Parents are given guidance on what they can do to help in a short section packed with good advice for those confused about the school system and NCEA.

Authors Irena Madjar and Elizabeth McKinley are from Auckland University's Starpath Project. It works with mid and low decile secondary schools to help them improve student achievement in NCEA, particularly for Māori and Pasifika students.

This book would be a welcome addition to New Zealand families and school libraries or worth a mention in school newsletters. •

## Minister invites RTLB teachers to leap into precarious employment

PPTA president Robin Duff expressed surprise and concern over education minister Anne Tolley's pre-emptive comments about the restructuring of the Resource Teachers – Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) service.

The service helps schools deal with challenging student behaviour, but Duff said the ministry's restructuring proposals will create jobs that are severely short of employment security and professional support.

"We have been raising serious concerns with the ministry for the last four months about its apparent disregard for looking after specialist

teachers' employment protections and contractual entitlements when there is an acknowledged shortage of behaviour management specialists," he said.

"I'm surprised the minister announced the restructuring of the service as an apparent fait accompli.

"The ministry may not have kept her informed of the potential legal challenge PPTA is considering.

"The proposal is to disestablish RTLB positions with their current employing schools and move them arbitrarily to new places," he said.

"RTLB will have no certainty about which school they will actually be based in. The ministry



has not provided assurance that these teachers' current contractual protections will be respected. It is important to respect the law in such matters."

"Neither has it assured RTLB that those who may be pushed into a highly precarious new employment situation will not be disadvantaged by doing so." •

## Petition a rallying call for Pasifika peoples

PPTA Komiti Pasifika spokesperson Natalie Faitala (right) said a petition presented to Parliament at the start of August for bilingual Pasifika/English education programmes in schools gives the government "some clear ideas" about the importance of lifting the success of Pasifika students.

The 6,000 signature petition calls on the government to fully fund Pasifika languages literacy and English literacy development through optional bilingual education programmes for Pasifika students.

It was organised by the Bilingual Leo Pacific Coalition which is comprised of over 300

organisations calling for the official recognition of Pasifika languages and their inclusion in our education system. The organisations include many tertiary educational institutions, schools and unions including PPTA.

"By being able to read and write in a Pasifika language and in English and to use that biliteracy in other curriculum areas, Pasifika children will become much more successful academically," she said.

"Research shows that where indigenous bilingual programmes have been developed overseas, heritage languages have been revived and indigenous people have been able to make greater

social and economic contributions in their respective countries."

"The Ministry of Education's recent decision to cut all Pasifika reading materials for students who already understand and speak a Pasifika language was deplorable given its claim that Pasifika achievement is a government priority."

The petition calls for the ministry to continue to create resources for bilingual programmes in the five main Pasifika languages; Cook Island Maori, Vagahau Niue, Tokelau, Samoa and Tonga.

Pictured left is Komiti Pasifika representative Manu Faaea-Semeatu. •



## Out in the field

## Sickness at home leave and EBS benefits

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

Jean is a secondary teacher and a member of the PPTA. Her partner who is not a teacher was seriously ill last year. Jean wanted to take leave to care for her partner in their home.

She contacted her field officer to find out what her entitlements were.

The field officer explained the entitlement she had if she took leave for sickness in the home [STCA 6.5.3] which comes off the teacher's sick leave balance.

The field officer also explained another entitlement to Jean whereby she could take some paid leave for limited periods on account of either a serious accident, or the severe illness of a partner (and specified others).

The field officer explained that the employer does have some discretion about how many times leave with pay is granted in the same year for both these forms of leave. This is set out in part six of the STCA and part five of

the ASTCA.

Jean was then confident enough to

tell the school that she would be seeking some leave for sickness in the home also knowing that, if there was a crisis in her partner's illness, she could claim some paid leave that didn't come off her sick leave balance. Her employer accepted that Jean had the right to take such leave.

Because Jean was entitled to a comprehensive range of low-cost medical benefits by being an Education Benevolent Society (EBS) subscriber, the field officer advised her to contact EBS (claims 0800 800 441) and check what she might be able to claim in respect of her partner.

She was pleased to find out that on the standard plan there were entitlements for hospital expenses,

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medical treatment, major diagnostic work, complementary medical expenses, sick leave without pay and bereavement.

Incidentally Jean also found out that she could claim 50% of the cost of her new hearing aid to a maximum of \$300 a year.

She was able to access the appropriate forms of leave while her partner was ill, and access financial assistance from EBS. This made a difficult year for her family a bit easier.

If you are an EBS subscriber remember to make claims. If you're not a member it's worth your while to join. For information see our regular advertisement on page 2 or phone 0800 268 3763 or email contact@ebs.org.nz. •

## Extending national standards to year 9 and 10 would've hastened a teacher meltdown

Dear Mrs Tolley,

Thank you for your very clear comment in *The Dominion Post* that, despite Gary Hawke's recommendations, national standards will not be extended to years 9 and 10.

You have been consistent with this message and we support you in that decision. Introducing national standards for these two years would be adding yet another layer to an already overly assessed secondary school system.

As you are aware most secondary schools use assessment tools for teaching (asTTle) or progressive achievement test (PATs) for testing in the junior school and these results are usually discussed with the students themselves and parents. There is so much material we can give the students so they understand the level they are attaining – how else would

we be able to give them good guidance about their pathways for the senior school?

I think you are also aware how fragile the teaching service is at present. You granted two teacher only days this year to help with a tiny part of the investigation into how to implement level 2 in its new form next year,

but 2012 and 2013 will have just as many pressures as the new level 3 and university entrance requirements come into effect.

I am worried we are heading to meltdown with a number of our teachers who are basically exhausted – we have already seen a drop in staff taking co-curricular activities



Julia Davidson

and being prepared to go to things like school balls or on camps. I can't imagine this is going to get better in the near future and it is a real concern as it will change the nature of New Zealand secondary schools.

Having your clear message about not introducing national standards to years 9 and 10 will at least make staff aware that they can relax and get back to enjoying their teaching again without worrying about yet another change.

I applaud your comments.

Kind regards,

Julia Davidson  
Chair, New Zealand Secondary  
Principals' Council



### Suspended teacher-blogger keeps her job

A Philadelphia high school teacher suspended for blogging about her “generally annoying” and “frightfully dim” students will get her job back this month teaching the same classes and the same students, the *Intelligencer* newspaper reports.

Natalie Munroe, an English teacher at Central Bucks East High School, had been writing the blog for close friends for several months before students and school administrators found it in February.

Although Munroe never used a student's name, nor identified her school or colleagues, some of her comments were too much for her employer.

“My students are out of control. They are rude, disengaged, lazy whiners,” she wrote.

“They curse, discuss drugs, talk back, argue for grades, complain about everything, fancy themselves entitled to whatever they desire and are just generally annoying.”

Her suspension, where she was escorted out of the school by both the principal and a security guard, was followed by a frenzy of media interviews and TV appearances in which she defended her right of free speech.

Munroe claimed her suspension was an over-reaction as the majority of her postings had “absolutely nothing to do with school or work” and had only nine followers registered, “two of whom were myself and my husband”.

She said she still stands by what she wrote and hopes people are now more aware of some “serious problems” with America's education system after reading her comments.

The school recently confirmed she would be returning to work in August but said little else.

### Never too old

Nganga Maruge, an 84-year-old man from a small village, made international headlines a few years ago when he decided to take the Kenyan government up on its offer to provide free primary education to everyone.

The former Mau Mau guerrilla fighter put on a school uniform and showed up at his local primary school to get the education he was denied as a youth. His determination impressed the school principal who enrolled him in a class full of six-year-olds. But parents and Kenyan school officials weren't impressed that the school would waste scarce resources on educating an old man.

Maruge's struggle is now told in the film *The First Grader* that screened at the New Zealand International Film Festival earlier this month. Look out for the DVD. •

## Chalkdust: a look into PPTA's past

A series looking at education through the eyes of the PPTA Journal. This month we dig into the publication's precursor, *the STA Newsletter*, and travel back to 1936.

### An early argument for sex education?

“Biology, dealing as it does with life processes, is now being recognised as a science eminently desirable in a school curriculum. In schools where the subject is taken it has proved interesting to boys and girls, but apart from this it would seem that there is a serious neglect

in our educational system when we send pupils into the world lacking any knowledge of the body's processes, how to conserve its energies and thus obtain maximum efficiency from it.”

*From a report from the Auckland Chemistry and Physics Teachers' Group*

### Dramatic dangers

“The merit of acting as a feature of the curriculum is that it overcomes shyness and may ease the passage of



the gawky inarticulate youngster by encouraging him or her to stand up and speak up and move with some ease and grace within a small area ... On the other hand the danger is the encouragement of exhibitionism ... There is no doubt, I think, that, where a precocious child shows tendencies to vanity, the inclusion of much play-acting in his or her curriculum is risky. I would never suggest that school theatricals are dangerous ... on the other hand, excess of them, without wise

guidance, may turn the quicker brain to a certain giddiness and encourage some young people to a better opinion of themselves than the facts will warrant.”

*Reprinted excerpt by Ivor Brown from an issue of Schoolmaster*

### The Devil will find work ...

“One of the greatest problems of education at present was whether people were being trained to use their leisure. If a boy or girl was going to have a very large and increasing proportion of leisure, it was going to make all the difference between their being good and poor citizens whether they spoiled themselves in that time – as they easily might do – or whether they were going to use the time that they would become good citizens and useful members of the community.” •

*E.N Hogben in a talk about agriculture and education*

## Focus on NCEA alignment

A series of updates casting a wary eye on the NCEA standards alignment process.

**PPTA has continued to criticise elements of the change process at all opportunities. These include:**

- the lack of professional development opportunities to support teachers in the full range of subjects.
- the timelines for delivery of level 1 final standards and resources – but these have improved for level 2.
- communications issues.
- the expectation that teachers have spare capacity to do this work on top of their existing loads.

**However, there are signs that we are being heard. These include:**

- the minister of education's announcement of two teacher only days before the end of the year for level 2 alignment work.
- NZQA's publication of an NCEA resource kit to help teachers with alignment work and how to find what they need. Visit [www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea-resource-kit](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea-resource-kit). The "workload busters" section

of this kit is a really useful tool to rebut some of the misinformation that has spread about things such as the number of credits, storing student work, and further assessment opportunities.

- a big burst of activity around Technology assessment resources so that most of them are now available. See [www.nzqa.govt.nz/technology](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/technology) then click Curriculum Standards Realignment for information about this.
- the recommendations of the NZQA advisory group on NCEA Workload have been referred to the NZQA board and to the Ministry of Education. If they were all accepted, they could really help to reduce teachers' workloads. (These will be released very soon.)
- Research New Zealand has a website for online consultation for the alignment of level 3 standards. Visit <https://surveys.researchnz.com/NCEA> to participate – it closes on 25 September. Paper submissions will also be accepted.

**PPTA** Seek  
^ political  
office  
for 2012 - 2013



All PPTA members are eligible to run as candidates for PPTA president, junior vice-president and positions on the executive. If this sounds like you, ask your branch chair for nomination information and application forms or download it all from [www.ppta.org.nz](http://www.ppta.org.nz).

**Nominations close 5.00pm Friday 2 September 2011.**

If this isn't you and you're just content with voting, we will feature candidates' blurbs in the next issue of *PPTA News*.