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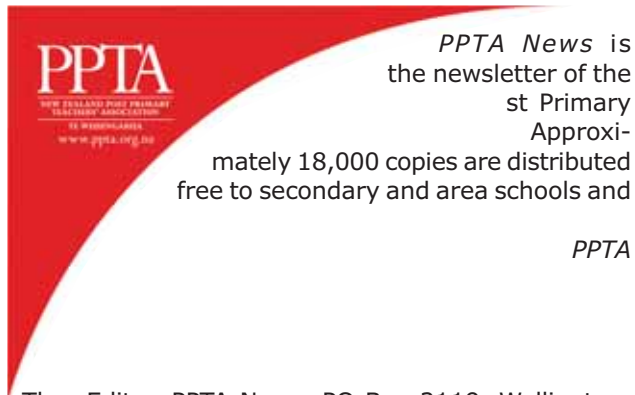
PPTA NEWS

Volume 29 • Number 7 • Whiringa-Ā-Rangi / November 2008



**Calculating
the importance of
agriculture study** **page 4**

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Wine or vinegar?

As I write this the shape of the new government is emerging out of the mist and like all MMP governments it is a mix of sweet and sour ingredients which might produce a fine wine or, conversely, very bitter vinegar.

We congratulate Anne Tolley for being the first woman appointed as New Zealand's minister of education. In our meetings with her as education spokesperson, we found her to be a straight talker who is willing to consult, listen to other viewpoints and someone who does her homework. Long may this continue!

She will have her work cut out stopping the education portfolio from reeling to the right under the influence of the ACT party which has a single goal for education – to get the taxpayer to subsidise private school fees.

And times are tough and set to get tougher. The job losses in banking and finance are now being followed up by the probable collapse of the “big three” American car companies with redundancies reaching three million not counting the downstream job losses. In Europe, Volvo sold 115 heavy trucks in the third quarter of this year, when last year, in the same quarter, sales were 41,970.

At least there have been some lessons learned since the depression of the 1930s, or one in particular, that retrenchment makes things worse. We don't expect anything as drastic as 20% wage cuts in the civil service (including teachers), cuts to the pensions (Supreme Court judges were exempted), closing down teacher training, compulsory manual work for the unemployed and the funding of the unemployment benefit through increased taxes on wage-earners. Women and Māori workers were required to pay the additional tax even though they were ineligible for unemployment assistance.

This time, the world is to spend its way out of trouble, though so far most of the income support seems to have been in the form of corporate welfare. New Zealand is not heading down the path of massive corporate

bailouts but private organisations are set to benefit from taxpayer largesse either through direct subsidies as in the case of private hospitals, schools and other educational organisations, or via the more opaque public private partnership arrangements.

So what is there in the mix for those that teach over 96% of New Zealand students in state secondary schools?

There may be good news on salaries because a National government wanting value for money may not be as wedded to the debilitating entrenchment clause as the Labour government was; the bad news is that money is going to be very tight in the state sector.

Don't expect an increase in the operations grant beyond what Labour was offering. Private schools may be getting a \$30 million bonus but state schools will have to continue to rely on fundraising, moreover in a climate where other sources of finances will dry up.

There is bad news on the transfer of the 3% employer subsidy from the Teachers' Retirement Scheme into Kiwisaver which has fallen into a black hole and could emerge as 2%. The good news is that National has indicated that it wants to explore this problem – which was actually created by the last minister of education, Chris Carter. He was asked to approve a variation to lock the 3% into the collective agreement but, lackadaisically, never got round to it.

The sliding economy can be good news for teacher supply because people who have lost jobs in other sectors of the economy may decide to become teachers. National has signalled that it wants to address qualifications barriers that keep teachers, especially Technology teachers, out of the service. On the other hand, National's youth guarantee policy could cost jobs in secondary schools which would then reappear (at a lower salary) at the private tertiary providers.

Helen Clark announced at PPTA Annual Conference that there would be a secondary staffing review to



by Robin Duff

finally address all the staffing pressures in secondary schools. It's not clear whether the new government will continue the review or agree to act on its findings but it has said it will honour existing agreements and has talked about putting money back into the frontline. Could we see the return of the senior subject advisors?

While the prospect of “slashing the bureaucracy” is always regarded as good news by the electorate it's not so welcome when the problem for secondary teachers is that there is actually a shortage of secondary expertise in the Ministry of Education and NZQA. How many years has it been now since Annual Conference first asked for a reasonable number of high quality nationally-developed resources and exemplars for NCEA to be available for all subjects?

The irredeemably bad news is the bizarre proposal that National, Act and the Māori Party are to set up a working group to report on funding and regulating schools to increase parental choice and autonomy. New Zealand already has the most devolved system in the world and as a consequence, one of the greatest disparities between high and low achievers. In the words of Lady Caroline Lamb this proposal is simply; “Mad, bad and dangerous...”. (She was actually referring to Lord Byron and the whole quotation was “Mad, bad and dangerous to know”. As his lover, she probably knew what she was talking about.)

In short, we will be living in interesting times. ▪

Ag and Hort concerns bear fruit

The number of students taking up Agriculture is dropping drastically, as is the number of teachers prepared to tackle the subject. But steps are now in motion to protect the future of one of the country's primary industries.

Concerns voiced by PPTA have been taken on board by the Primary Production Select Committee and one has already been acted on by government.

Earlier this year PPTA was asked by the committee to give its view on why fewer young people were taking up Agriculture as a subject at secondary school.

Former Agriculture/Horticulture senior subject advisor Ross Redpath, Agriculture teacher and PPTA executive member Brian Harrison and PPTA junior vice president Kate Gainsford shared their concerns about the future of Agriculture in schools.

These included the negative image of Agriculture, difficulties in recruiting specialist teachers and the lack of recognition of excellence in the subject.

Of particular concern was the drop in Agriculture students since the introduction of NCEA. Gainsford told the committee that Agriculture was the only subject that did not move across to Scholarship when NCEA was introduced – which severely hurt its academic credibility.

The pressure in this area appears to have borne fruit however, with NZQA announcing last month that Agriculture and Horticulture students will be able to take scholarship exams from next year (2009). It is the first in what PPTA hopes will be many victories in the bid to get these subjects recognised.

The select committee released its report last month, which picked up on a number of the issues PPTA put to it.

It strongly urged the government to acknowledge the issues in the report and put forward a number of solutions including reinstating Agriculture scholarships (which has already been done), re-introducing



specialist subject advisors across the country, considering the introduction of teacher education scholarships for career changers willing to retrain as Agriculture teachers, widening access to Agriculture courses offered by the Correspondence School and urging the Ministry of Education to review its role of supporting schools to promote agriculture.

The committee acknowledged a “drastic” shortage of specialist teachers in the subject and pointed to the lack of continuing professional development for Agriculture teachers as one of the factors behind this.

“We are aware that there is also a lack of specialist agriculture advisors and resources to support them, both of which are sorely needed if there is to be a better and more equipped pool of skilled and willing Agriculture teachers,” the report reads.

The committee also agreed with PPTA's concern about the poor public image of agriculture.

“There is a widespread perception that a career in agriculture is unfulfilling, involving too much hard work for little reward, and a farming career in particular is better suited to non-academic people ...

“A more accurate awareness of the nature of work in the sector is needed. Working in the agriculture industry requires and accommodates a huge variety of talents and skills and should be able to attract a sizeable and capable workforce ...” the report says.

The committee said the issues in

the report needed to be addressed urgently by the government because New Zealand's economy relies so heavily on agriculture and agriculture-related industries.

The PPTA is pleased the committee listened to its concerns and hopes its advice will be taken onboard by the incoming government. •

Rapid decline

- **As a subject area, Agriculture is scarcely mentioned in the New Zealand curriculum. While it can be studied at NCEA levels 1, 2 and 3, it is offered in less than half of our secondary schools.**
- **Between 2003 and 2007, the number of students studying agriculture at a secondary school level dropped by 13% (from 11,734 to 10,107).**
- **Correspondence School enrolments have more than halved. These accounted for nearly 10% of all Agriculture students nationwide in 2003 and now numbers have dropped from 1072 students to 473 this year – a fall of 56%. •**

Putting the brakes on workload

From 1 April 2009 an amendment to the Employment Relations Act will kick in that creates minimum rest and meal breaks for all employees. Schools will be required to provide all teachers with set breaks during the school day.

PPTA has produced a detailed booklet *Changes to the Employment Relations Act*, to help guide schools and teachers through the change. It sets out the new entitlements and employer requirements and can be downloaded at www.ppta.org.na/index.php/collectiveagreements.

PPTA president Robin Duff said while the changes to the act applied to all professions, there were potential implications for schools to manage the legal requirements.

The important thing was for everyone to work together to make them work in schools while still meeting the requirements of the law, he said.

"It needs to be carefully worked through in individual schools. This is what PPTA's advice is about – making sure that there is sensible discussion about when the breaks will occur. "We are sure though that with calm and sensible deliberation over this term, there will be a variety of solutions generated by schools which will balance their responsibility to meet the requirements of the law and the efficient operation of the school. There's no need for there to be a problem, provided people sit down around the table and talk about what would be fair, practical and reasonable.

"We should applaud the intent of the law. People deserve breaks when they work at stressful activities and there is no denying teaching is a stressful activity," he said.

Robin said it was important that schools got on to thinking about how they would operate the new legal requirement immediately. Although it did not take effect until 1 April, it would be disruptive for schools to start the year with one timetable and then switch over in April.

The scheduled breaks needed to be separate from a teacher's non-contact time, Robin said.

"Principals are doing their teachers a disservice if they are suggesting this is 'free time'. Timetable non-contact is time when teachers are working on many other duties. Suggesting that the only work teachers do when they are at school occurs when they are face to face with students is silly. There is a huge amount of administration and preparation, pastoral and other work teachers have to do during the day," he said.

In anticipation of the law change PPTA raised the matter of formal-

ising a half-hour meal break in the STCA (Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement) during negotiations last year. The NZSTA (New Zealand School Trustees Association)/ministry response was to reject discussion with the "witty" comment 'teachers will be wanting tea breaks next!' "Had STA the foresight to grasp the opportunity, schools would have had 12 months more to work through the practical issues. Now we are all faced with a very short time frame indeed," Robin said. •

Setting the record straight

NZSTA has recently put out an email saying that:

"... we do not agree with the position taken by PPTA and certainly not the restrictions they wish to apply in terms of the operation of the school day and timetabling."

PPTA believes that schools are required to follow the law and is advising its members on how the requirements of the recent amendment to the act will impact on schools. It is not seeking to apply restrictions to school operational times but to identify what restrictions the act imposes. Ignoring the law is not an option to employers or employees.

The "restrictions" PPTA identifies in its advice are as follows.

1) There must be three breaks (including a 30 minute lunch break and two 10 minute breaks) over a 7 hour day. This is a specific requirement of the act.

2) The breaks must be free from duty. This is an implied requirement since it is an amendment introduced to

provide breaks from work and this necessarily means breaks from work-related duties.

3) Timetabled non-teaching time is not duty-free time which can be used for breaks. This is based on the STCA provision 5.2.1 which states explicitly that the non-contact time is provided for the performance of duties other than classroom duties which teachers are required to undertake while schools are open for instruction. These duties are listed in 5.1.1 (a), (b) and (c) of the STCA.

4) If there isn't agreement then specific times apply when the breaks must occur. This is also a specific requirement of the act.

PPTA has pointed out in its advice that the act does allow different break times to operate if there is agreement between the employer and the majority of employees (provided that the minimum requirements are met), and times other than those generated by the formula in the act certainly could suit schools better. •

Unexpected honours

When the school bell rings at the end of the day the work doesn't end for Motueka High School teacher Moeke Paaka.

If a student needs help or advice at 2am Moeke is just a phone call away – and that is the way he likes it.

Moeke's work with students in the community – and in particular some of the more challenging ones – has now been recognised through a NEiTA foundation excellence in teaching award. The award acknowledges teachers with exemplary classroom skills and dedication, who demonstrate innovative approaches to teaching. It is presented at both a regional and national level and is awarded every two years. More than 200 people were nominated for the regional award, and this was whittled down to 20, who were invited to an award ceremony at parliament.

Moeke was nominated by people within the school community – but still has no idea who they were. In fact, the award came as a complete surprise.

"I had no idea – when the letter (announcing his nomination) arrived, I thought 'what the hell is this?'"

He was equally unimpressed when told he had to write about himself.

"I was asked what I did for the kids. I was really embarrassed to write about it, but the principal made me," he said.

However, the award came with a catch. Moeke then found himself in the running for the national award and had to give a five minute speech in front of a panel – something he had to be bullied into doing. The winners were then taken to Parliament where they lunched with education minister Chris Carter and were presented with awards and vouchers for their schools.

Just when he thought all the excitement was over, Moeke was called back to the principal's office late last month, only to be told he had won the national award.

The first Māori to win the award, he was presented with a crystal apple and \$2500 for the school.

Moeke's dedication to his students is



"We can all walk on water, as long as the puddles aren't too deep."
- Moeke Paaka

likely to be what clinched him the award. He has been working with Motueka High School for 18 years, impressing an expectation on students, families and the school that young people need to stay in education until they are ready to take on the outside world.

"Who cares if it takes a year or two longer (to gain qualifications) for some?" he said.

Moeke doesn't judge. If a student calls him at 2am and says "I've done something that's not right", he will not berate them. He will let them know they are not a bad person and help them work through their difficulties.

"I'm always just a phone call away."

A large part of Moeke's drive has always been to improve the abilities of the school's Māori students. When he started there were only 18 indigenous students – now there are 94.

Part of his innovative approach was to encourage the students to set their own code of conduct. "I said, stuff the school rules – what kind of rules would you work under?"

Interestingly enough, what the students came up with was very close

to the actual school rules.

"No smoking, drugs or alcohol in school time, attend all classes, no stealing, respect each other and honour the code..."

"Basically it's grass-roots stuff, it works, and it helps most of them stay in school until year 13. I also have an open-door policy for them and their parents. I've felt the change in Māori students – they want to learn, but often there are huge gaps in their education. What we do is concentrate on the positives not the negatives."

Moeke has also been involved with work in the community through a drug and alcohol clinic, programmes aimed at getting young mothers into further education and an off-campus alternate learning centre for students who do not fit into mainstream education called The Motueka High School 8 Ball Unit.

Moeke is modest about his achievements, however. His future plans are to live life to the fullest and continue working with students for as long as they need him.

"We can all walk on water, as long as the puddles aren't too deep," he says. ■

PPTA News would like to congratulate Motueka High School teacher Moeke Paaka and Hastings Girls' High principal Geraldine Travers for receiving National Excellence in Teaching and Leadership Awards (NEiTA).



"Schools are a team, and it's hard to extract one person from that."

- Geraldine Travers

"I am not publicly a very emotional person, but when I received a standing ovation from the students that just went on and on, I had to take a few deep breaths to keep it together".

This sort of recognition for the school was very important to the students, Geraldine said.

"North and South (magazine) described us as the best state school in New Zealand, and that added so much to the students' perception of themselves. This award was really the icing on the cake".

Working at a lower decile school has been a great challenge for Geraldine.

"When I worked in an integrated school the girls turned out well, but they were the sort of girls who would turn out well anyway. Where I am now what we do is so very important.

We do have a really positive effect on the lives of our students and to know that we really make a difference has a positive impact on our lives," she said.

Geraldine did, however, find the award a little embarrassing.

"Schools are a team, and it's hard to extract one person from that. But it's a sort of affirmation in a sense." •

When you look back at the careers of most principals they tend to move up the deciles, heading to schools in more affluent areas – not so Geraldine Travers.

Geraldine is one of the few principals to have deliberately moved to a lower decile school, and it is her dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of her students that has netted her a NEiTA leadership award.

Like Moeke, Geraldine was nominated and presented with the regional award, and was equally unimpressed when she discovered she had to write a 3000 word essay about herself.

"It was quite a grueling process", she said.

She managed to exact her revenge on those who nominated her though. "They were all running around asking 'is there anything I can do?' – I got quite a bit of mileage out of it."

Geraldine believes her nomination had a lot to do with the growth of her school.

"In 1998 Hastings Girls' High had a seriously declining roll, but since then we have completely reinvented ourselves. Now we are one of the lowest decile schools with an enrolment scheme and a waiting list. We are so much better perceived in the community," she said.

Geraldine said the school had always had fabulous staff who had helped change the school's fortune through focusing on internal marketing, giving students the chance to get out in the community to learn, entering competitions and keeping high uniform standards.

"We foster a high standard of student behaviour and this creates a positive working environment for both students and teachers."

Geraldine was presented with the national award at school assembly, and also received \$2500 for her school.

She admits to being somewhat taken aback by the response from her students.

Do you have a good news story?

If you or someone you know has had or should have their efforts recognised, let us know. Email akirtlan@ppta.org.nz.

Teachers going overseas - boomerangs or a braindrain?

PPTA News received a lot of feedback to its article about the loss of teachers to lucrative jobs in the Middle East (October 2008, p4.) Below is an article by Cognition Consulting chief executive Dr John Langley and a reply from the PPTA.

Many people would have read the article in *PPTA News* or an article published in several national newspapers regarding Cognition and its work overseas. Basically the PPTA stated that Cognition is “trafficking” quality educators out of New Zealand to the detriment of the New Zealand education system.

Firstly, we agree that we have quality educators working with us! It is, in fact, quite ironical that within New Zealand both teachers and schools regularly get criticism heaped on them and yet are so much in demand overseas. However, we strongly disagree that the scale of our work is to the detriment of the New Zealand education system.

In 2004 Cognition had six people based offshore and a small permanent team in New Zealand. By early 2009 we will have over 200 consultants working for Cognition in a variety of locations in New Zealand and internationally. Our work now ranges on a continuum from policy to practice, and from research and evaluation to educational innovation. This extraordinary growth has been made possible by dedication, ability, and skills of those who have, and continue to, work with us. This means that a broad range of New Zealand teachers and leaders have had the opportunity to work and live in another environment while gaining new professional skills, knowledge and experience. We are proud to have been able to provide this opportunity.

Our people come to us for a variety of reasons – it may be the challenge of working in a reform environment, the chance to work in a team with other capable people, an attractive package, or simply the opportunity to “re-charge” the batteries after years of service in public education in New Zealand. Regardless of the motivation

Cognition has consistently attracted quality people to do important work. People choose to work with us.

The vast majority of our people are on fixed-term contracts because our clients contract us for set periods of time to support specific initiatives. Therefore our data shows that most consultants who work with us will return to New Zealand to take up new positions, or resume their previous one. And when they do, they have taken back a new set of experiences, skills and knowledge that is transferable to a New Zealand setting.

However, we recognise that we also have employed a number of educators who are nearing the end of their career. We see this as a great opportunity for them to share their knowledge with other New Zealanders, and their wisdom with teachers and leaders from other countries.

Cognition is a wholly owned subsidiary of Multi Serve Education Trust. This trust established Cognition Education Research Trust (CERT) in 2006 to benefit schools in New Zealand. CERT has committed nearly \$1.5 million of funding to high quality research right across the school sector. CERT is a non-governmental body which contributes to building a stronger research base for New Zealand’s education system.

In the last year we have given significant grants to individuals for doctoral research in education, schools, and to researchers and institutions.

Cognition is growing to become one of New Zealand largest export earners. As such it is making a significant impact on New Zealand’s export growth and through this a contribution to the New Zealand economy. Cognition has the full support of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) and regularly liaises with government ministries and departments.

In addition to any economic

benefit to New Zealand it is arguable that an even greater benefit is that through our involvement in educational reform and improvement in the Middle East we are clearly taking our place in the international community in an area in which we have significant strength. Much is made of the need to do this but when it happens, organisations such as PPTA cannot seem to see beyond the end of their noses.

We are proud of our success. We are proud of the difference we are making to New Zealand and its education system and to be able to give career opportunities to New Zealanders. Cognition will continue to grow, and as it does, continue to make a difference.

Like the PPTA, Cognition shares the belief that New Zealand needs to continue to explore ways to make education a more attractive profession for those making career choices. They are one example of many individuals, groups and organisations trying to improve New Zealand education. We believe that dialogue about how to improve education in New Zealand is critical to the future of the country.

Cognition will continue to be prepared to work with any group to make this a reality and welcome responses in this regard. ▪

PPTA responds

Dr Langley has certainly provided an in-depth description of what Cognition Consulting does as a company. However, we do not feel this goes anywhere near addressing the issues faced by the New Zealand teachers and schools that are hemorrhaging staff.

He says Cognition strongly disagrees that the scale of its work is detrimental to the New Zealand education system, but fails to address

the fact that a large number of schools are already hurting – some having had their entire management structure decimated.

The PPTA is first and foremost a secondary teachers' union and our duty lies with our members who are being adversely affected by the loss of their colleagues.

To this end we have written to

the Ministry of Education asking for an investigation to gather data on the number of secondary teachers, advisors, ministry and other educational agency officials that are being recruited in the Middle East, the methods by which they are being recruited and the effect this is having on secondary education in New Zealand.

We have also asked how the ministry can be assured it is not inadvertently supporting these companies to poach New Zealand teachers on behalf of foreign governments and whether it is appropriate to continue to support these organisations with taxpayer funding. ▪

- Editor

Only extra funding can save our schools

Dear editor,

Reading the cover story of the October issue of *PPTA News* reinforces the total lack of commitment any political party in New Zealand has to improving the state our education system.

Let's face it – many of our schools are in crisis. A lack of New Zealand trained teachers sees many principals spending tens of thousands of dollars on overseas junkets looking for staff. One presumes that this must come out of the meager operations grant that schools are meant to exist (more like subsist!) on. Experienced staff are being lured by the promise of filthy lucre to prop up overseas education systems. The remaining teaching workforce is an aging one – I can't even bear to think about the stats of the aging population that I have seen being bandied around. In six years at my current school not one of my senior students has considered going into secondary teaching. When asked why by Mr Key and Dr Hutchinson

during a "political fact-finding" tour late last year, a group of my students responded with " *&%# all money and too much stress".

I'm not sure that National's policy of doubling money to private schools, introducing some form of performance pay and standardised testing is going to solve anything. Mind you, I also don't believe that Labour's policies would do any better for us. And for me that is now a major concern.

I haven't even touched on the appalling state that some of our schools are in, and the total lack of adequate funding available to upgrade them, so that they are capable of providing a truly twenty-first century environment. If you are lucky enough to work in a school that is less than six years old, you may not appreciate what I mean here. My own school has grown by 50% in the last four years. We have built 10 new classrooms – but that is all we have done. Our staffroom was built for 30 staff – it now houses over 50. There's

no money available to upgrade. Our gymnasium is woefully substandard, our library archaic. We have no funds to do anything. No drama room, no auditorium ... scary really. We are in that unlucky position of being in the mid-decile range. At decile 4 we get about a 40% take on school "donations" but do not get enough of the pie to make any significant inroads into the bottomless pit that is our "necessary list" (as opposed to wish list), the things we need to run the school effectively as a creative and connected twenty-first century learning environment.

To those of us at the chalkface the answer is simple – put more money into schools and school resourcing. Pay teachers more, pay students A LOT more to train to be teachers. Maybe look at the Finnish model as a guide – where teachers are highly paid, highly qualified and highly respected and where there is no teacher shortage.

A Cleary



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PPTA a servant of two masters?

Dear editor

When you try to please two masters you end up serving neither very well. It seems at times that PPTA national office is trying to serve the interests of the Labour Party as well as that of its members. The interests of both are opposed at times.

PPTA seems to have sought to please the Labour government by seeking soft settlements. I well remember the totally unacceptable package that the PPTA Executive tried to foist upon us a few years ago.

The policy of soft settlements has continued since then. They bring to us proposed settlements that are below the going rate and/or less than the rate of inflation and state that this is the best they can manage (unless you want to fight said in discouraging tone). The executive allows “weasel” words in contracts like “endeavour

to”. What does this mean? They allow the government to put things into our contract that the government does not fund! Teacher’s expectations are that these things will be provided.

The onus now is on principals and boards of trustees to come up with the funds. Thus the source of conflict becomes between staff and boards, not staff and government. The government allows things it does not fund and our executive goes along with this, trying to serve two masters.

Nine years of financial prosperity have not brought us much. I want an executive with a bit of fire in their belly. Instead we get an election issue *PPTA News*, which tries to influence how we should think about political issues. We are old enough to think for ourselves. We do not need to be lectured by those who think they know better than us what we should think. If executive wants to politic,

stand for Parliament.

PPTA needs to forget trying to deliver political favours and concentrate on its core business serving the best interests of all of its members.

*A W Tritt
Morrinsville College*

Editor’s note

As we have stated a number of times, PPTA is not affiliated with any particular political party. This is because of the diverse nature of our members who cover a wide political spectrum. We reserve the right to critique any party that puts forward policies that could be detrimental to our members, and have done so a number of times with Labour policies. We have also met, and will continue to meet with, members of all political parties in order to serve the best interests of our members. ▪

PPTA Pasifika *The Niu Generation* Conference

16 – 17 July 2009, Waipuna Hotel, Mt Wellington, Auckland

The focus of the 2009 PPTA Pasifika Conference will be on teaching Pasifika students. The conference will be open to all PPTA members who teach Pasifika students or who have “a Pasifika heart”.

The Conference theme, The Niu Generation embraces the many concepts of the niu:

- Nourishment
- Robustness
- Flexibility
- Adaptability
- Resilience
- Versatility

Watch for your branch PPTA Collective News and the PPTA website for programme and registration details as they are confirmed.



PPTA welcomes new advisory officer

PPTA national office would like to congratulate its newest addition – advisory officer Sarah Dalton.

Sarah comes to head office from Aotea College where she has taught English and Social Sciences and was assistant principal since 2005.

Much of her work at school has focused on curriculum and staff professional development, and she plans to bring this experience into her new role.

“It’s a different world from schools and classrooms, but a

fantastic chance to work at the policy end of education,” she said.

Sarah’s position will focus on professional issues – a role she is looking forward to sinking her teeth into.

“I’m pleased this role keeps me working on professional issues, including the New Zealand curriculum, the induction and mentoring of new teachers and working with the Senior Positions Advisory Committee. It’s great that PPTA represents members at all levels of secondary teaching.” ▪



Sarah Dalton

At-risk youth dare to move on

New resources are now available to help at-risk teens tackle tough issues like binge drinking and sexual pressures.

The new skills-for-life youth programme is being rolled out nationwide by the DARE foundation of New Zealand.

DARE, which stands for Decision making, Assertiveness, Responsibility and Esteem, operates as a partnership between community agencies, youth professionals, parents and police.

The programme, called DARE To Move On, uses a story-telling method to engage with at-risk youth (14+ year-olds). It aims to help them develop insight and understanding about making more positive choices

when faced with conflict in their lives.

It is based around a young adult novel, *Smashed*, which centres on a group of teenage friends who have to deal with challenging issues like binge drinking, date rape, guilt, pain and revenge. It was written by award-winning writer and former special needs teacher Mandy Hagar especially as the basis of the new programme.

DARE To Move On has been successfully trialled in Hawkes Bay and Southland with year 10 and 11 students who had come to the attention of their school guidance counselors.

Deans and school principals from both areas have reported students becoming settled, focused and

contributing more in class. Many had also formed new friendships and become involved in kapa haka groups.

Aurora College guidance counselor Jenny Corlet said the programme filled a gap “because it’s an intervention programme for older students who are experiencing challenging issues and situations in their lives which put them at risk.

“It shows them that choices and behaviours have consequences and offers them time to reflect on the choices the characters make in the book – and thus the choices they make themselves.”

For more information on this and other programmes, go to www.dare.org.nz. ▪



West Coast DARE participants at the conclusion of their skills-for-life programme.

Manage employment issues before they begin

PPTA and NZSTA invite principals, and those who deputise for them, to attend *Employment Relations in State Secondary and Area Schools: A Course for Principals*, a two-day training course that focuses on building productive employment relationships.

This is a hands-on course that aims to enhance the skills of principals. Each course is limited to 20 enrolments.

It provides participants with practical approaches for dealing with a range of employment relations issues such as conflict resolution, interpreting the legal framework, working with the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement and clarification of the roles of principals and boards of trustees.

The two-day course is offered in the following locations:

- Auckland (Mangere), 27-28 November 2008
- Wellington, 19-20 March 2009
- Christchurch, 11-12 June 2009.

Employment Relations in State Secondary and Area Schools: A Course for Principals has been co-developed with the Department of Labour Mediation Service, who assist with its delivery.

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