



Submission of the New Zealand Post
Primary Teachers' Association

to the

Education and Science Select Committee

on the

Education (Polytechnics) Amendment Bill

September 2009

- 1 The New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association, representing some 17,000 teachers in State and integrated secondary and area schools and other State institutions employing secondary teachers welcomes the opportunity to present a submission on this Bill.
- 2 PPTA supports the submission made by the Council of Trade Unions opposing this Bill.
- 3 PPTA shares the CTU view that removal of stakeholder and union representation and their replacement with Ministerial appointees is undemocratic. It may mean that polytechnics are not able to adequately represent regional and community voices. At the very least the Select Committee ought to give consideration to establishing guaranteed positions for Maori and for staff.
- 4 It seems ironic that the Government is prepared to intervene in governance of polytechnics in such a heavy-handed manner while allowing community boards to run 2,500 schools. It would appear to PPTA that the financial and educational risk in schools is no greater than in polytechnics suggesting some inconsistency of policy.

5 The Association is not convinced what amounts to corporatising the polytechnic sector will result in the financial and educational benefits that the legislation promises. We have been here before. In 1989 the national network of polytechnics was fragmented into bulk-funded, competing units. The result was a rise in the status and salaries of the CEOs and a reduction in pay and conditions for other employees. Competition fuelled the growth of low-quality courses with the highest returns; many institutions gave up trades courses and workshops because they were expensive to operate and moved to compete with universities and secondary schools in more generic areas. This was the genesis of the skills shortages New Zealand faces now.

6 In respect of s 17, the tertiary high school model, PPTA is not entirely convinced that this model has application beyond the pilot and await the research outcomes with interest. We are pleased to note, however, the intention of 4 (a) which encourages a collaborative approach between the Manukau Institute of Technology and the partner school and ensures that the interests of the students are paramount.

7 In summary, New Zealand needs an effective national polytechnic system if we are to begin to address skill shortages. That requires national leadership and direction aimed at enhancing regional educational needs rather than the atomisation that is a likely consequence of a governance system that is open to political patronage.