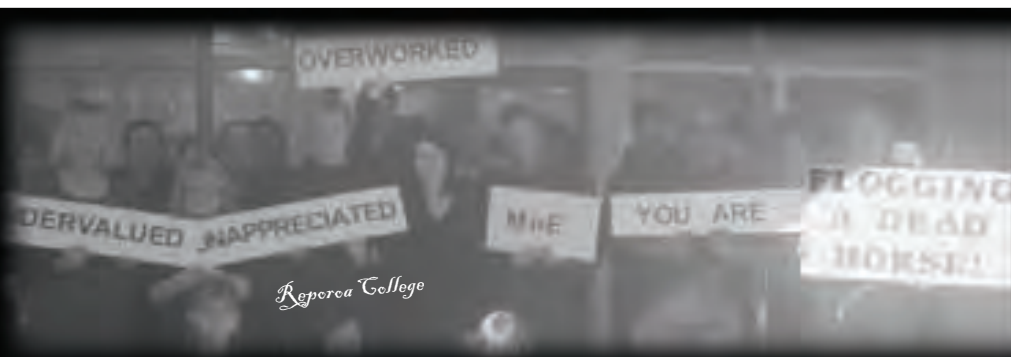


www.ppta.org.nz

PPTA NEWS

Volume 31 • Number 6 • Hōngongoi / July 2010



Rosera College



Kaiapoi High School

Marlborough Girls' College

Mairahau High School

On 1 July PPTA members in schools across the country expressed their

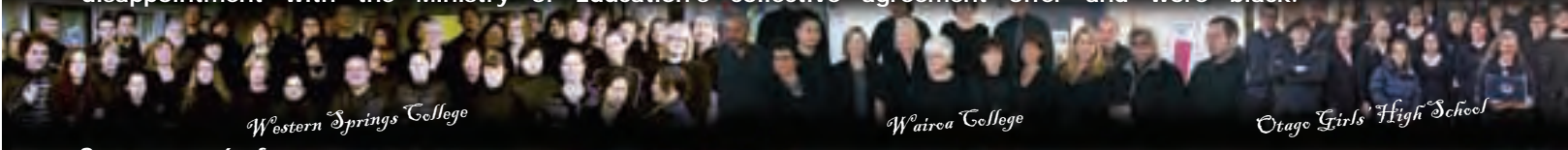


Stratford High School

Rangitikei College

Wellington Girls' College

disappointment with the Ministry of Education's collective agreement offer and wore black.



Western Springs College

Wairoa College

Otago Girls' High School

See page 6 for more ...



Rodney College

Ruawai College

Forest View High School



Northcote College

Gisborne Girls' High School



Kaikoura High School

Auckland Girls' Grammar School

Epsom Girls' Grammar School



Manurewa High School





PPTA News is the newsletter of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. Approximately 18,000 copies are distributed free to secondary and area schools and other institutions. Not all the opinions expressed within *PPTA News* reflect those of the PPTA.

Editorial and advertising

Enquiries should be addressed to:
The Editor, PPTA News, PO Box 2119, Wellington, New Zealand. Ph: 04 384 9964; Fax: 382 8763; Email: akirtlan@ppta.org.nz
PPTA website: www.ppta.org.nz
Editor: Anna Kirtlan
Layout and Design: Ben Weston
Prepress by Toolbox Imaging Limited.
Printed by The Print Room.
Visit www.ppta.org.nz for *PPTA News* ratecard information.

Deadlines

August edition
5pm, 26 July for articles and advertising.
September edition
5pm, 27 August for articles and advertising.

PPTA field officer contacts

PPTA members! Contact your local field office for all queries about your collective agreement entitlements or for assistance with employment relationship problems.

Auckland

4 Western Springs Road, Morningside
P O Box 52 006, Auckland
ph (09) 815 8610 fax (09) 815 8612
email: auckland@ppta.org.nz

Hamilton

Level 1, ANZ Building, 650 Te Rapa Rd, Te Rapa
P O Box 20 294, Hamilton
ph (07) 849 0168 fax (07) 849 1794
email: hamilton@ppta.org.nz

Palmerston North

Guardian Trust House, cnr The Square and Main Street
P O Box 168, Palmerston North
ph (06) 358 4036 fax (06) 358 4055
email: palmerston@ppta.org.nz

Christchurch

Latimer View House, 215 Gloucester Street
P O Box 13-005, Christchurch
ph (03) 366 6524 fax (03) 379 4011
email: christchurch@ppta.org.nz

Dunedin

Queens Garden Court, 3 Crawford Street
P O Box 1561, Dunedin
ph (03) 477 1311 fax (03) 477 1804
email: dunedin@ppta.org.nz

PPTA member benefits

Joining PPTA entitles you to discounts on travel and insurance services.



Education Benevolent Society

Life Cover - Income Protection - Disablement
- Living Assurance.
EBS Health Care provides a comprehensive and growing range of low-cost medical benefits.
Ph 0800 268 3763 www.ebs.org.nz



Joining Southern Cross Healthcare through PPTA entitles you to discounted premiums, giving you great cover at a great price. To find out more about discounted Southern Cross Health Insurance and the benefits available to you email your name and contact phone number to:
0800 GET COVER (438 268)
or getcover@southerncross.co.nz



Tel: 64-9-446 1166
Fax: 64-9-445 8832
insure@uni-care.org www.uni-care.org



Hertz rental car

PPTA members can receive special member rates - quote CDP no 1674602 when booking.
Ph 0800 654 321 www.hertz.co.nz

Top stories

2011 term dates & Rugby World Cup 4
Ops grant funding by term 5
STCA negotiations update 6-7
Ministry disregards Technology 8

Genuine value

Why is it that if you want the rich to work harder you pay them more but if you want everyone else to work harder you pay them less?

Taking into consideration inflation and the coming tax change, the government's offer of 1.5% now and 1% next year would mean the take home pay of a teacher at the top of the basic scale would actually buy 4% less in July 2012 than it did in July 2009.

Meanwhile, prime minister John Key has explained that the reason for the proposed tax cuts and GST increase is that people in the top tax bracket are "core and critical categories" for the economy "without those people" he says "all the rest of us will either have less (sic) people paying tax or fundamentally less services that they provide. They include doctors, entrepreneurs often, scientists, engineers, lawyers, accountants, school principals and nurses".

Well that puts us in our place. Teachers are not "core and critical categories" and would be no loss to the country if they left. If they are going to stay they need to know that the prime minister thinks that the work they do has a minus value to the economy.

That should cheer teachers up as they deal with the behemoth that the curriculum alignment of standards

has turned into. What the ministry described as a simple exercise has wound up as extra workload. No surprises there. As well as all the regular assessment work schools have to deal with, they must now take account of:

- the requirement that all level one standards be at level six of the curriculum, and the elimination of lower level standards. The net result is all but 21 standards have changed significantly.
- the decision to make all curriculum-referenced standards achievement standards.
- the requirement that no more than three standards in a subject be externally assessed.
- the new literacy and numeracy requirements, with alternative pathways via unit standards.
- the introduction of course endorsement for all levels from the start of 2011.
- a new MNA (managing national assessment) process that focuses on school self-review.
- the pending changes to university entrance requirements, due to be consulted on later this year.
- new developments in the secondary-tertiary-workplace area, such as trades and service academies and Youth Guarantees.



by Kate Gainsford

Add to that the extra moderation that has been dumped on some schools and teachers. Many could now be forgiven for thinking they are labourers indentured to NZQA.

And what is the response of their employers to this soul-destroying increase in workload? A claim to restrict teachers' entitlement to guaranteed non-contact time and an expansion in the demands around call-back days. This week PPTA received a letter from the minister of education refusing to approve two teacher-only days this year to help teachers get on top of the standards alignment process.

Members have asked nothing more than that they be made a fair and reasonable offer for settlement. They want one that keeps up with the cost of living, enables schools to retain and recruit teachers and goes some way to addressing at least some of their concerns about health and safety, equity and professional learning.

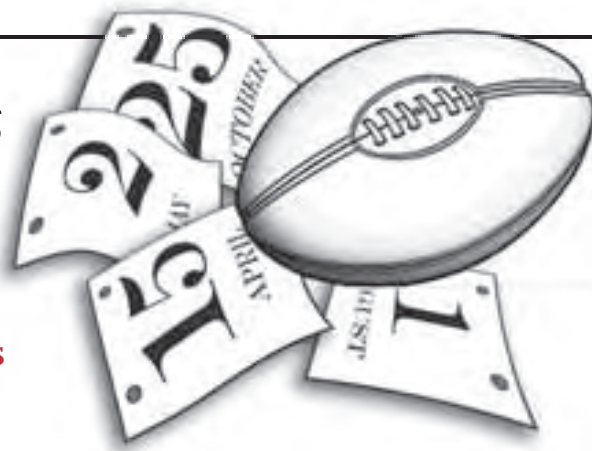
The complete failure of our employers to respond to that request sends a powerful message to secondary teachers, and indeed anyone thinking of becoming a secondary teacher, that their work is not valued.

The irony in this is that teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions so if you don't value teachers then the reality is that you don't value students and you certainly don't value education. ▪



A game of four halves

The government's decision to rearrange school terms around the Rugby World Cup next year has prompted strong reactions in the education sector, with arguments both for and against the changes. This month *PPTA News* looks at both sides of the issue.



A PPTA website poll asking the question “should the school terms be altered to accommodate the 2011 Rugby World Cup?” drew 819 responses with 26% voting yes and 74% no.

Those against the changes cited students’ education being compromised as the biggest problem, while those in favour believed it could work if NZQA changed exam times to suit.

The case for

Those who felt the change was a positive move thought it would allow students, parents and teachers to travel to attend games, events and training sessions and also believed there would be employment spin-offs.

“It will allow students to take advantage of the many temporary employment opportunities that having a large number of visitors will generate. These will not only be in Auckland but in other areas as well, particularly tourist centres such as Rotorua and Bay of Islands.”

“The large number of extra visitors expected, in Auckland in particular but in other centres as well, will be disruptive to traffic and public transport – if schools are on holiday during this time it will ease the problems.”

The case against

Those against the changes feared students’ NCEA exams would be compromised for the sake of sport.

“I know from experience that the timing of this face-to-face learning is vital to their success and I feel angry that it has been trivialised in the interests of commerce.”

“Hiring out school buses might be the priority for Auckland but it’s not our issue in Otago – our issue is making sure our students are properly equipped to achieve.”

“Why on earth couldn’t it be split more evenly? Perhaps someone at the MOE failed Maths at school – and for senior students it’s a short term four and then off on study leave. Madness.”

“Governments and councils should have sorted the infrastructure and transport problems many, many years ago.”

Changing the exam dates

One respondent suggested that if NZQA started NCEA exams two weeks later in 2011 there would be no effective change for schools.

“The students will be advantaged because they would have two extra weeks of school before exams start... It is possible. The government stands to gain substantially financially from the Rugby World Cup, with higher levels of GST and excise tax from the large numbers of expected visitors – it must be prepared to spend some of this to facilitate the event.”

NZQA however said this would not be possible.

Qualifications deputy chief executive Bali Haque said the difficulty in moving the exams was that it would not allow enough time for marking and result publication for the new school year.

“If, for example, examinations were started on 24 November, that would mean markers would have to mark during the Christmas period,” he said.

“Obtaining markers who would work during and after this period would be extremely difficult and results would get to NZQA two weeks or more later, depending on markers availability.

“Results would arrive with students two weeks later (late January/early February) and universities would not

get results in time to make decisions on course entry for 2010. Deans would also not have adequate time to make class allocations for the 2010 school year,” he said.

Haque said the same amount of teaching and learning time would be available to students in 2011 as in previous years prior to examinations.

“The issue remains the placement of the October holidays which makes for a very short term four,” he said. ■

Extra time?

The Ministry of Education has instructed schools to adjust their school terms to allow for a longer than normal holiday in October when New Zealand hosts the final stages of the Rugby World Cup.

Term start and end dates for secondary and composite schools:

Term 1 start date: Between 31 January (at the earliest) and 7 February (at the latest).

Term 1 end date: 15 April (100 to 110 half-days).

Term 2 start date: 2 May.

Term 2 end date: 15 July (108 half-days).

Term 3 start date: 1 August.

Term 3 finish date: 7 October (100 half-days).

Term 4 start date: 25 October.

Term 4 end date: No later than 13 December (72 half days).

Source: Ministry of Education

Reading the rolls

The 2010 Budget proposes sweeping changes to the formula for funding schools that could penalise students and throw budgeting into turmoil, PPTA president Kate Gainsford says.

Currently schools' operations funding is set by the 1 March roll and paid out quarterly, so schools can plan programs for the year with some certainty.

However, in the Budget the minister of education Anne Tolley said these counts must be made quarterly and funding adjusted accordingly.

Almost every secondary school's roll falls during the year and the government believes this will amount to a "saving" of \$19million from school grants over three years, Gainsford said.

"The danger lies in the disincentives that exist in such an ill-considered move."

One Auckland school calculated it would face a 2% cut in real funding at a time when schools struggled to manage with the funding they already had. In 2008 around 53% of schools had operating deficits.

Quarterly roll-adjusted income penalises schools when students leave for reasons beyond their control and undermines the delivery of courses for those students who remain in school, Gainsford said.

"Marginal courses will fold if funding is cut when students leave, as most schools are too small to carry loss-making courses – and this means regular timetable changes," she said.

Students left school mid year for a number of reasons from economic, to seasonal to behavioural and if funding reflected this it would hit struggling schools the hardest, she said.

"The impact is unequal. Some schools are less able to carry the funding cut that would be incurred. Rural schools exposed to seasonal shifts in employment also become vulnerable to this bureaucratic imposition."

Quarterly roll counts would also increase school administration – without compensation for extra work and inconvenience – and create perverse incentives, Gainsford said.

There would be less incentive for

schools to place students in work schemes or employment through programs like STAR or Gateway if it amounted to a cut in their funding.

"The more successfully a school met those needs, the less funding it would get. This is not smart."

Long-term planning would become difficult, she said.

"Most school spending is committed by 1 March. There are few savings when a student leaves during the year (perhaps photocopying and toilet paper) and schools would have to under-resource courses from the start of the year to compensate for funding cuts later in the year."

Attaching a financial penalty to a student leaving would mean that hard decisions about whether to suspend or expel students who were a significant risk to their classmates could be tainted with doubts about whether they were driven by economic factors or the best interests of students and the school community, she said.

It would also discourage the collaboration between schools that serves students best, Gainsford said.

The process adds yet another layer of bureaucracy and tallying with schools sending even more returns to Wellington than before – and this from a government that said it wanted to reduce bureaucracy.

"The secretary for education sought to reassure PPTA that this would not be an overly bureaucratic process because we could rely on the software in schools to do the job with relative ease. Watch for the Tui ad.

"It is a step towards vouchers where all funding follows the student between institutions – school to school, school to tertiary, school to work. How long will it be before the government wants to apply term-to-term funding for staffing as well?"

The proposed funding change



would have a negative impact on school staffing levels, Gainsford said.

"Although the ministry has said the quarterly funding only applies to schools' operations grants, and not staffing, this is not strictly true. About 1000 teachers are ops funded – some through special education money and some from general operations. With seasonally adjusted funding we can expect to see some positions reduced because the school has less money than it started with," she said. ■

Out the gate

Why some students leave during the school year.

- Employment growth.
- Changes in seasonal employment.
- Successful interventions like Gateway and STAR.
- Mid year intakes to the armed services, police, polytechnics etc.
- Population shifts (new housing estates or a local industry closing).
- Disruptive/dangerous antisocial behaviour.



The state of play

After 12 full days of negotiations since the beginning of May PPTA members overwhelmingly (98%) rejected an offer made by the Ministry of Education.

On 16 June the ministry presented a take-it-or-leave-it offer with only two components: a small salary offer over two years and changes to call-back days which could essentially amount to 10 extra days in school for most teachers. None of the members' claims about professional support for teachers, health and safety, fairness and equity or teaching and learning conditions were addressed at all.

A member-wide straw poll in the last two weeks of term two rejected the offer and at the same time called for an improved offer that includes:

- a salary offer that values the vital work of secondary teachers and supports recruitment and

retention over the term of the settlement.

- the removal of all attacks on current provisions.
- offers addressing the PPTA's claims that seek to create safer school environments and better learning conditions for students.

What's next?

The ministry has been informed of this overwhelming rejection and the kind of offer that members expect. At the time of printing the PPTA executive was deciding whether it was worth bringing the negotiating team back to the bargaining table. A ministry press release urged PPTA to come back to the table. PPTA has signalled

it was prepared to do this if the ministry was prepared to negotiate constructively.

If there is no progress by the executive meeting on 29-31 July, decisions will be made about further actions for term three. In all likelihood members will be being asked about industrial actions in paid union meetings that will be held later in the term.

Meanwhile the expired collective agreements (for secondary and area school teachers and all principals) are still applicable with all their current terms and conditions intact.

Members have been adamant in their view that they will not accept erosion of any current conditions. ▪

Disappointment en masse



PPTA members at Southland Boys' High School were some of the thousands who dressed in black on 1 July to mark the expiration of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement and to express their disappointment with the Ministry of Education's offer. More pictures can be found on PPTA's website at: www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/blackthurs-photos

Telling it like it was a voice from the bargaining team

The ministry bargaining team came to the table saying they had three priorities.

1. That “outcomes from bargaining are consistent with ongoing improvements in education”.
2. “To allow boards and principals to manage the delivery of quality education”.
3. “A simple and modern agreement”.

Well, the first one's ok – that's what our claims are about. Why manage though? I thought boards were about governance – that's a bit odd! Simple and modern – it's only three years old and we're constantly updating – what are they on about?

Then they presented their claims. They said that their claims in totality were put forward with number one priority in mind – and that “a constructive forward-looking relationship and industrial stability are key objectives in this regard.”

Well, b....r me! I thought Why did you then claim to remove a whole raft of current provisions from the teachers' agreement – that's very constructive – that will make teachers pretty mad, I thought. I wonder who dreamed up that strategy?

They then said clarity and certainty for boards and principals would be provided by removing provisions that “inhibit boards ability” and that have “largely proved unworkable”.

Well that's a weird one – remove provisions and make things more certain and clear – bit back-to-front if you ask me! And what's not working and who says so? NZSTA surveyed boards back in March – better ask how many schools responded and what did they say? Oh, so you're



not going to provide that data even though you're supposed to under good faith provisions....Hmmm – let's ask a few folk ourselves! “No, our board wasn't surveyed – and heavens what do they think they are doing – this would create a heap more work for boards!” So, how's that for another bright idea!

And words such as streamline, merge, revise, delete, clarify, review, transparent and logical were littered throughout their claims.

What! You want to rip out all the things that we've spent years achieving? Have you no idea that with schools you are dealing with hundreds of different employers, and lay boards at that – all of whom rely on the STCA provisions for fair processes – this would open up all sorts of risks for them. This isn't like the rest of the public service where there are whole human resource departments for employment matters. Pretty dim idea I'd say.

Then we went through our claims: claims focused on making things better for teaching and learning – focused on improvements for students and teachers in schools. Claims, we thought, definitely “consistent with ongoing improvements in education”. But this didn't seem to apply to our

claims. Here's the kind of responses we heard over and over – to all our claims.

“There is no place for professional issues in the collective agreement.”

“It doesn't make better use of existing resources.”

“We see no merit in your claim.”

“This claim has substantial flow-on implications.”

From what they said at the table it appeared that

neither the ministry nor the School Trustees Association were interested in:

- promoting best practice for PLD for teachers or smaller classes.
- health and safety and the provision of basic tools for the job.
- recruitment and retention over the next few years.
- quality public education for all kids in all schools.

It would seem that the ministry is interested only in:

- savings over improvements.
- increasing managerialism over a professional collegial culture in schools.
- transferring central costs to boards and schools and therefore, often, to teachers.

When I next get called back from school to the bargaining table I want to know that we will be properly bargaining about things that matter in schools – that will take us towards a ratifiable settlement – not a take-it-or-leave-it offer.

Actually what made me maddest over those days was that they said I would just have to prioritise my work as other public sector workers have to.

What! Do I teach, mark or do reports? Do I have a choice? – I don't think so. ▪

Ministry disregards Technology advances

The Ministry of Education has retracted a claim to remove year 7-8 Technology teachers from PPTA coverage – but the fact it was suggested at all shows blatant disregard for the importance of the subject, president Kate Gainsford says.

Gainsford was disturbed by the potentially destructive and divisive impact of this aspect of the ministry's claim and believed the government had "returned to form" by seeking to divide rather than unite the sector.

"This type of thinking fails to acknowledge the importance of year 7-8 Technology as a stepping stone to Technology in secondary schools," she said.

Gainsford's concerns have been echoed by Technology teachers, with one head of department (HoD) saying the counter claim had sent "shock-waves" through a subject that had

finally stabilised after decades of division and uncertainty.

"Technology has been through more than its share of disruption and despair, compounded by curriculum changes, G3 and G3+ access issues and under-resourcing. This counter claim seems intent on returning the community of practitioners to that," he said.

The teacher has 14 years experience as a Technology teacher, nine of those as a secondary school HoD. He believes broad engagement with the subject at years 7-8 creates a foundation for programmes at secondary level.

Year 7-8 Technology teachers were polled along with the rest of PPTA's members about the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) negotiations and support the rejection of the ministry's offer, Gainsford said.

"These teachers are our members



and we intend to support them.

"The government seems happy to pump money into Technology related programmes such as trades academies and the Youth Guarantee once the students have left school, but is not supporting the basic skills," she said.

While it is good that the threat of removing year 7-8 Technology coverage from the STCA had been removed for now, Gainsford said it was shocking to see it there in the first place.

"We intend to fully support all our members and will keep a close eye on developments in this area," she said. •



Hands-on experience

In our technology centre this term, students are solving their "bug" challenges with original designs and construction of: quilts to keep warm in winter with panels embroidered in scientifically accurate insect illustrations; baking international breads, making yogurt, ginger beer and cheeses; constructing bug traps to eradicate pests and electronically interactive bug board games.

Enthusiastic students are learning about different bacteria, insects and materials while gaining safe practical skills in an engaging process they all enjoy immensely.

If you ask any of these students they will share the details of a manual experience in technology education.

Thank you Kate for making the time in your very busy schedule to visit our members and discuss implications of ill-conceived clawbacks in the Ministry of Education collective agreement proposal.

*Tom Smith
Technology Team Leader
Tauranga School*

Blog of the month

Bulk Funding is Back(wards)

By Observer

MP Roger Douglas is trumpeting the fact that his private members' bill aiming to bring in bulk funding and site contracts has been drawn from the parliamentary ballot.

According to Douglas, his Education (board of trustee freedom) Amendment Bill would, if passed, enable boards of trustees to manage their own affairs by having full control over the employment of teachers at their school.

He seems to be under the illusion that currently teachers' pay is set by "Ministry of Education bureaucrats dictating salaries from their offices in Wellington." Even though he was once a Minister of Finance, he appears to have forgotten that salaries are in

fact dictated by the amount of money the government sets aside for that purpose. A zero pay offer made by boards not the government is still a zero offer.

The Labour Party, the Greens and the Māori party oppose bulk funding and before the election the National government indicated that it would not re-introduce bulk funding. It will be very important to keep the politicians honest when this bill makes its way into the House. A final thought: Will the ACT Party also be proposing that MPs salaries be set by a panel of taxpayers rather than being "dictated by the bureaucrats on the Higher Salaries Commission?"

If you want to know how destructive and divisive bulk funding was see the documentary *A Civilised Society*. •



Have a burning education issue you'd like to blog?

Like to see what is on teachers' minds? Check out PPTA's blog - The Pigeonhole <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/ppta-blog>.

Send all blog ideas or content to akirtlan@ppta.org.nz.

A Civilised Society – free download

NZ On Screen has published the documentary *A Civilised Society* for free viewing and download and it is available on the PPTA website.

It is the story of the battle

of ordinary New Zealanders against education policies such as bulk funding and individual contracts – policies they believed would wreak havoc in education.

You can find the film, background information and an interview with filmmaker Alistair Barry at: <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/civilised-society> •



Success in stilettos

Teaching teens how to teeter their way to success in six-inch stilettos is the aim of a government funded course in the UK. The six-week programme for 16-year-olds claims to prepare young women "for the business world and their social lives." Organiser Chyna Whyne set up the lessons at South Thames College because she got back problems from wearing heels as a back up singer. "The earlier young ladies learn how to walk in heels, the better it's going to be in the long run – with business and social lives. The statistics of women with shoe-related injuries and foot problems are un-

believably high," she said.

Heel graduate Celina Mystery said the course had boosted her confidence, "I no longer feel pain on a night out – I can finally rock my heels." Perhaps now Anne Tolley might stop being so hard on Moroccan cooking.

Government interference

Picture a union meeting – collective agreement negotiations have stalled and a secret ballot is being held to decide whether to strike. Now picture presenting the results to a government official sitting in the corner whose job it is to count them.

This vision, which breaches International Labour Organisation standards, appears in a bill presented by Tau Henare aimed at restricting union members' rights to strike over pay and conditions. Other restrictions include setting thresholds for votes beyond

50% – something we note they are not proposing for themselves! *PPTA News* also wonders whether government officials would have to draw straws for the vote counting job, we can't imagine them queuing up to sit in a room full of disgruntled union members!

Roger Award nominations

Nominations are open for the Roger Award for the worst transnational corporation operating in New Zealand in 2010. Categories include economic dominance, impact on people – workers and the community, impact on the environment and political interference. Previous awards have gone to ANZ Bank, British American Tobacco (NZ) and Tranz Rail. If you have a horror story you would like to share a nomination form can be downloaded at: <http://canterbury.cyberplace.org.nz/community/CAFCA/publications/Roger/index.html> •

Out in the field

Bereavement / tangihanga leave

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

A recent case highlighted the differences between statutory entitlements and the provisions and operations of the STCA.

Mary's mother died during the holidays. Mary took no bereavement leave as the school was closed for instruction. Several weeks later, when family members from overseas were able to get to New Zealand, there was a service for her mother in another city followed by the spreading of her ashes in several locations in New Zealand.

Mary applied for bereavement leave to attend the service and ashes ceremonies. The school refused paid leave. Mary sought PPTA advice.

The STCA was not clear on this situation. Clause 6.4 Bereavement/Tangihanga Leave gives an entitlement to teachers "to discharge their obligations and to pay their respects to a deceased person with whom they have had a close association". This does not have to be a blood relation-

ship. The amount of time off is not defined, although there are criteria listed to assist in deciding. Travel leave of up to one week (clause 6.9) can be granted.

The employer argued the teacher's obligations and need to pay their respects were limited to the funeral.

The Holidays Act 2003 sets out the minimum bereavement entitlements for all workers in New Zealand (after 6 months continuous employment). The approach here is more prescribed than the Collective Agreement. The Holidays Act 2003 section 69 (2) (a) lists a number of relationships:

- (i) spouse or partner
- (ii) parent
- (iii) child
- (iv) brother or sister
- (v) grandparent
- (vi) grandchild
- (vii) spouse's/partner's parent.

These relationships have an entitlement of three days' leave. Other rela-

tionships which are defined by closeness, responsibility for arrangements, or cultural responsibilities, have a minimum entitlement of one day.

The Department of Labour issues fact sheets on bereavement leave and how it operates. These can be downloaded from www.ers.dol.govt.nz/holidays_act_2003/bereavement.

Their advice is that employees do not have to use bereavement leave immediately, nor on consecutive days. They give examples of how this may operate, including one that allows for a later service in another city, one to take leave later to attend an unveiling and one where bereavement leave is taken to settle a close relative's estate.

The STCA leave entitlement is more generous and not so closely prescribed but the statutory entitlement gives some guidance in how the law makers intended bereavement leave to operate. •

Field officer vacancy AUCKLAND OFFICE



A permanent full-time field officer position will become available in 2011 in the Auckland office of the PPTA.

Employment of the successful applicant will begin on 1 February 2011, with term one being a period of induction.

The appointee will work as part of a team of four Auckland-based field staff and will have responsibility providing services to PPTA members in the area.

Skill or experience in one or more of the following is sought: dispute resolution, advocacy, union organising, adult education. Secondary teaching experience or knowledge of or a qualification in employment law is an advantage.

PPTA is committed to partnership in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. A commitment to union goals and a high quality public secondary education service is essential.

Salary will be within the range awarded to secondary teachers. A staff collective agreement covers conditions of employment. PPTA is an equal opportunities employer.

Applications must be received by **5:00pm Friday 27 August 2010** and should be marked Confidential and addressed to:

Julie Elliott
(Staff Vacancy)
New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association
PO Box 2119
WELLINGTON

You may obtain a job description from Julie Elliott by phoning (04) 913 4228 or email jelliott@ppta.org.nz. Queries about this position should be addressed to Colin Moore, Deputy General Secretary, Ph (04) 913 4225, Email cmoore@ppta.org.nz.

Professional Learning & Development toolkit



PPTA's toolkit for branches to assess the quality and provision of professional development offered to teachers is nearly ready for publication.

You can help us by offering to comment on, or trial, the draft. If your branch would like to get involved, email us at piu@ppta.org.nz

The toolkit looks at:

- good principles and practice for teachers' professional learning and development (PLD)
- staff appraisal
- using student voice
- how to assess the quality of provision in your school
- how to approach school leadership to discuss staff concerns about PLD.

Letters

How many more teachers will we lose?

Dear editor,

I just resigned today – and it feels really good. I intend to undertake relief teaching while studying – retraining in a different career.

The main reason I have resigned is because I am too busy and do not have enough time both to do my job, and still have a life. I am over the long hours, I could do less – but then I would not feel good about that as the students would suffer.

I wonder if the National led coalition continues with their current agenda how many more teachers will resign? I state this because I have left

due to the workload, and I believe their policies will mean more work for teachers.

There is nothing more rewarding than teaching, but teachers deserve a life too, and (as I understand) over the last 30 years teachers have been required to do more – yet rates of (real) literacy are slipping in this country. How can more effort produce less when it comes to education outcomes?

Does more professionalism mean more paperwork to justify jobs in Wellington to create measure for outcomes, which were once there, but are not now? Teachers struggle

to do paper work instead of actually supporting their communities and teaching.

When it comes to paperwork, the government should resource the schools better – with more admin staff (ours are wonderful!). I understand in England the teachers union said enough was enough – no more new initiatives without admin support and resources.

Might this not be a good policy for the PPTA to consider – just say NO – unless there is clear evidence of additional resources and support!

Mr Brown (abridged)

Taking the Teachers Council to task ...

Dear editor,

My notice regarding teachers' registration arrived via email some time during the second week of the October holidays whilst I was attending a U-Learn conference. I noted the expiry date for my registration was 8 January 2010. Why is it due at that date?

Term four 2009 was a very busy term followed by NCEA marking finishing up on 23 December. On Boxing Day I began to complete the teacher registration form, discovering I had to obtain my principal's signature. He was on holiday. So I emailed the Teachers Council informing them that I would post the completed form as soon as I had obtained his signature. I never received a response.

On 21 January I posted off the signed application form.

On 29 January I received this auto response email: "Acknowledgement of receipt of application – reference

XXXXXX. Thank you for your application. Before the application can be processed the following is required: You have sent the incorrect processing fee for this application. A total fee of \$170.00 is required... Your application can not be processed any further without this payment".

I replied by email explaining why my registration application was posted post due date. After several emails backwards and forwards I received this response on 12 February: "In any case, once received, applications can be kept open if a certain requirement is being waited upon". I considered the email I sent on 26 December would cover this statement.

A letter was sent to my principal. He notified them that he was aware of the situation. I notified the PPTA – yes, technically I was an unregistered teacher.

On 8 April I emailed Teachers Council chair Dr Peter Lind. On

4 June my principal met with me expressing concern that I was still an "unregistered" teacher. I contacted PPTA and got this response back: "Peter Lind rang me and said he is getting back to you and wants to apologise because your email ended up in his junk file".

On Monday 14 June a copy of the letter sent to me from the Teachers Council was placed in my pigeonhole by the principal. He received a copy of the letter before I had received my personal copy in my pigeonhole later that day.

What have I learned from this experience? The tardiness of the Teachers Council in responding and how ineffective they are as administrators (with the numerous emails they have sent, their work output has not been cost effective.) – and now they are putting the registration fee up by extraordinary amounts.

Michelle (abridged)

... and the Teachers Council responds

The Teachers Council is certain that the vast majority of teachers support the need for a well trained and qualified profession. This is evidenced by the fact that most teachers employed in a teaching position do ensure that their practising certificates (PC) are renewed and current. However, there has been a group of teachers that have not

maintained current PCs when they are legally required to. In this financial year, we received 37,000 applications and of these 11% have been late and been charged a late fee.

So what? Because legally we can only approve the PC from the date an application has met all the requirements, it means that there will always be a period of time teachers

who apply late have had a "free ride". This slippage is unfair on teachers who apply in good time because they continue to subsidise those who haven't. I thought that would be a reason of major concern for teachers. It certainly is for the council, hence the strong position taken.

Peter Lind
Director, Teachers Council

Indian cremation workers helped by UnionAID

By Helen Wilson

UNION identity cards have stopped police harassment of some Indian cremation workers, according to Allahasami, the Cremation Workers' Union president and thanks, in part, to the support of UnionAID.

Since joining the Tamil Nadu Labour Union (TNLU) these illiterate workers asked for a union membership card. They now carry these ID cards, which they designed themselves, at all times as a safeguard against police intimidation and harassment.

At a field meeting with UnionAid executive chair Ross Wilson late last year, a crowd of at least 50 workers waved their ID cards with obvious pride. For them,



An Indian cremation worker proudly holds up his union card

the card is not only proof of union membership but a concrete symbol of their new status as human beings.

The majority of Dalit and tribal workers suffer gross exploitation and discrimination with cremation workers considered the most oppressed. They languish at the bottom of a caste system which imposes a rigid occupational hierarchy on all Hindus. Because

they deal with dead bodies, they are considered dirty and unreachable. Even their shadows were thought to contaminate anyone they touched.

In spite of their critical importance to the community, they are often not paid for their labour or the fuel to burn the bodies. Instead, they had to go from house to house to beg for food and materials.

The lives of these workers have changed dramatically. Those in authority now listen to their demands and treat them with dignity. They are no longer beaten or harassed and are now paid a small monthly wage by the village council. They can afford to send their children to school and, like parents everywhere, they hope that education will give their children the choices and opportunities that they have never had.



Become a Kiwi Solidarity member

Your regular donations mean that UnionAid can guarantee funding to its projects. A small amount each month makes a real difference to people's lives.

Sign up for monthly donations now.

UnionAID
P O Box 6689, Wellington
unionaid@nzctu.org.nz

YOUR union charity spending YOUR dollars wisely



Mapping teachers' professional lives
Wellington Convention Centre
18 - 20 April 2011

Themes: Leadership
Engagement
Professional activism

Keynotes: Ben Levin
Christine Richmond
Judyth Sachs

Register online at www.eenz.com/ppta11

\$150 for PPTA members. Day registration available.

Follow us @Edscapes on www.twitter.com

For more information, registration enquiries, or if you would like to run a workshop at the conference, email us at piu@ppta.org.nz.