



# Submission

To the People's Select  
Committee

On Pay Equity

## About PPTA Te Wehengarua

PPTA Te Wehengarua represents the majority of teachers engaged in secondary education in New Zealand, including secondary teachers, principals, and manual and technology teachers.

Under our constitution, all PPTA Te Wehengarua activity is guided by the following objectives:

- to advance the cause of education generally and of all phases of secondary and technical education in particular;
- to uphold and maintain the just claims of its members individually and collectively; and
- to affirm and advance Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

## This submission

PPTA Te Wehengarua is sharing this submission to the People's Select Committee on behalf of its secondary and area school teacher and principal members, whose access to a fair and robust pay equity process has been removed by the 2025 Equal Pay Amendment Bill.

This written submission aims to:

- Provide information on the assessment process that was being undertaken by PPTA Te Wehengarua and NZEI Te Riu Roa in collaboration with the employer parties (Ministry of Education and 524 ECE employers)
- Outline the impact of the 2025 Equal Pay Amendment Bill on PPTA Te Wehengarua members' ability to achieve pay equity
- Highlight wider impacts and consequences of the 2025 Equal Pay Amendment Bill
- Share the recommendations that PPTA Te Wehengarua would have made during a select committee process

PPTA Te Wehengarua would also like to make an oral submission.

## Teachers' Pay Equity Claim

In late 2020, PPTA Te Wehengarua and NZEI Te Riu Roa each raised a pay equity claim for teachers, following the 2020 amendment to the Equal Pay Act 1972 that provided a legislative process for pay equity claims. The two claims were consolidated by the Secretary for Education in early 2021, becoming the Teachers' Pay Equity Claim. The claim was deemed arguable by the employer parties in 2021.

The claim covered around 95,000 teachers and principals/leaders across the education sector – from private and community-based ECE services, kindergartens, primary, secondary and area schools. It was the biggest pay equity claim to date. It was a multi-employer claim; the employer parties were the Ministry of Education and 524 ECE employers.

During the assessment phase, the unions and the Ministry worked together to conduct over 300 interviews with teachers and school leaders (plus another 300+ interviews with their supervisors).

The purpose of these interviews was to fully scope the work performed by teachers and school leaders.

We used the questionnaire (interview guide) from the PEAM (Pay Equity Aromatawai Mahi) tool. This work assessment tool was developed by NZEI Te Riu Roa, Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa (School Boards Association) and the Ministry of Education in 2018. The tool was endorsed by the Public Service Commission as gender-neutral and compliant with the Equal Pay Act 1972. The PEAM tool was used to settle six education sector claims between 2020 and 2025 – for teacher aides, school librarians and library assistants, school science technicians, kaiārahi i te reo Māori, and school administration support staff.

The tool assesses a range of 'factors', including the skills and experience required to perform the work, the responsibilities undertaken, the working conditions and the demands placed on the employee. This allows the parties to uncover the less visible aspects of the work that are often overlooked and can lead to undervaluation.

Once the initial interviews were completed, the unions and employer parties analysed the data. We shared the findings with the people covered by the claim (the claimants) to give them an opportunity to highlight any missing information, and we conducted further interviews to fill those gaps.

We also interviewed several potential comparator roles (using the same tool) whose work was scored using the same 'factors'. We were preparing to begin the factor scoring process, using the PEAM tool, where the different elements of the work are categorised into scores, turning qualitative into quantitative data. Under the 2020 amendments, this is what enabled comparison of work from different professions and across different sectors. Factor scoring identified areas where the same degrees of responsibilities, skills and demands that were performed by the comparators were being undervalued in the claimant group due to sex-based discrimination.

However, it was not all smooth sailing. The union parties had experienced an increase in pushback from the employer parties over time. This included a growing desire from those parties to use female-dominated comparators (from pay equity settlements in the education sector and the nurses' pay equity settlement) rather than continuing to look for new male-dominated roles.

There was also increased pressure from the employers to focus on lower-paid and lower-skilled comparator roles. This pushback was particularly noticeable after the release of the Pay Equity Reset Cabinet Paper in 2024. The paper stated that Ministers would have to seek Cabinet approval to establish a pay equity bargaining contingency, sized by '*an assessment of its obligations including an appropriate Pay Equity comparator assessment*'. This was likely an effort to reduce the potential cost of a settlement (at the cost of ensuring that any settlement was truly equitable).

We ask that the People's Select Committee note that the process under the 2020 amendment to the Equal Pay Act 1972 was thorough, robust and underpinned by strong evidence. We therefore refute the Government's suggestion that claims '*have been able to progress without strong evidence of undervaluation*'<sup>2</sup>.

PPTA Te Wehengarua has committed significant time, effort and resources to progressing the Teachers' Pay Equity claim. Our members were extremely dismayed when the Government, under urgency, passed the Equal Pay Amendment Bill 2025, which cancelled all active pay equity claims, including the claim for 95,000 teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> Cabinet paper, Pay Equity Reset. <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Pay-Equity-Reset.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Press release, Changes to improve pay equity process. [Changes to improve pay equity process | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/news/changes-to-improve-pay-equity-process)

## Impact of the 2025 Amendments

Overall, the changes caused by the amendments make it impossible for secondary teachers and principals to raise and progress a new pay equity claim.

The main reasons are outlined below, with an explanation of the impact on PPTA Te Wehengarua:

### 1. Higher bar to enter a claim

- 2020 amendment: approximately 60% female workforce, historically or currently undervalued, short explanation required.
- 2025 amendment: 70% female workforce for 10 consecutive years, must prove the work is both historically AND currently undervalued (for a claim said to 'have merit').
- Unions must now present substantial evidence up front – making it harder and take much longer just to start a claim.

**What this means for PPTA Te Wehengarua:** Secondary teachers don't meet the 70% threshold, as they are around 63% female. OIA documents<sup>3</sup> confirm that the Minister of Education and other relevant Ministers were advised before the amendment was introduced that secondary teachers and principals would not meet this new threshold. Even if PPTA Te Wehengarua attempted to raise a claim for registered teachers only (with NZEI Te Riu Roa, as primary and ECE are more than 85% female) there are real risks due to the increased employer powers listed below.

We are also uncertain whether the rich data gathered collaboratively with the Ministry in the Teachers' Pay Equity claim would be allowed to be used again, or if we would have to start the entire process from scratch.

### 2. More Power to Employers

Under the 2025 amendments, Employers:

- Have more time to respond (60 working days instead of 45).
- Can decide a claim does not have 'merit' and stop it before it starts.
- Can opt out of multi-employer claims without good reason, forcing separate processes.
- Can decide that the work performed by people in the claim is not the same or substantially similar and shut the claim down.
- Can decide there are no 'appropriate' comparators and shut the claim down.

**What this means for PPTA Te Wehengarua:** Under the previous pay equity process, all roles covered by the teachers' claim—including classroom teachers, school leaders (such as principals, deputy and associate principals), and specialist teaching staff (such as guidance counsellors, itinerant teachers of music, e-learning teachers, Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), Learning Support Coordinators, and Special Educational Needs Coordinators)—were treated as performing 'the same or substantially similar' work.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education OIA response 1349117 - impact of Equal Pay Act changes on the raising of a teachers' claim, 2 July 2025

This was because they are all required to hold a current practising certificate and meet the same Teaching Council standards. The teachers' claim also included untrained and unregistered teachers (e.g. those holding a LAT (Limited Authority to Teach) in the schooling sector and untrained ECE teachers). This was because the unions' view was that these roles were performing substantially similar classroom teaching work.

However, the Government's amendments create significant risk. Even if a new claim were lodged by the PPTA with NZEI Te Riu Roa, an employer could now determine that the work of certain employees is not 'the same or substantially similar', effectively reducing the scope of the claim. This amendment appears designed to allow employers to fragment claims and exclude groups, such as principals and other leaders, based on arbitrary role-specific functions (e.g. time spent in offices versus classrooms), even though they share the same professional credentials and standards as teachers.

This provision could also be used to exclude other certificated roles that have always been included under the umbrella of the teaching profession in pay equity work to date.

The most significant barrier, however, is the amendment regarding comparators. Even if a new claim were able to proceed, employers would likely declare that no suitable comparators exist, due to the Government's new imposed hierarchy for assessing comparability—effectively preventing teachers from ever being able to progress a claim.

### **3. Comparator Rules Make Claims Impossible**

The new law imposes a rigid hierarchy for choosing male-dominated comparator jobs, stating they must be performing the same or substantially similar work:

1. Within the same employer.
2. From similar employers.
3. From the same industry or sector.
4. From other settled claims – but only those settled after 2025.

**What this means for PPTA Te Wehengarua:** These rules deliberately block teachers from finding valid comparators, because the whole education sector is female dominated. While there are small pockets of male-dominated roles, for example, school ground staff and caretakers, their work is not the same or substantially similar to teaching and therefore not comparable.

Moreover, the Government has chosen to rule out female-dominated comparators from claims settled before the 2025 amendments. This is an intentional decision to prevent teachers from making comparison with education roles that have received pay equity settlements – including school therapists, school librarians, school science technicians, teacher aides, kaiārahi i te reo Māori, and school administrators. Comparison with these roles would have led to a significantly sized settlement for teachers, which the Government is refusing to pay.

**Bottom Line:** The amendments to the Act entrench sex-based pay discrimination. They lock work that's important to all of us – like care, education, administration – into being undervalued. They take money from the pockets of workers it should have gone to – who are mostly women, in low-paid mahi.

The Government's changes make it impossible for secondary teachers to raise or progress a pay equity claim. This dismantles an agreed process, wastes years of work, and undervalues the profession.

PPTA Te Wehengarua refutes the Government's assertion that '*these changes will mean the pay equity claims process is workable and sustainable*<sup>4</sup>'. Instead, the 2025 amendments have created an unworkable system and have effectively removed the rights of workers to pursue pay equity claims under the Equal Pay Act 1972.

Crucially, pay equity settlements for those in the public sector have been '*a key contributor toward closing public service pay gaps*<sup>5</sup>' – for example, in the largest drop in that pay gap on record (2019), one third of the reduction was directly linked to the 2018 pay equity settlements for Oranga Tamariki social workers and education support workers.

Without access to fair and effective pay equity processes for workers like teachers, we will likely see the gender pay gap start to grow again. Pay equity processes provide a fundamental mechanism for recognising the dignity, value and social contribution of women's work, and must be protected and enhanced.

### **Additional consequence: secondary teacher supply crisis**

Rangatahi/young people in Aotearoa New Zealand rely on having subject specialist teachers in secondary schools to ensure that they have access to the depth and breadth of learning across the New Zealand Curriculum. However, we are experiencing an acute shortage of secondary teachers across the country and particularly in STEM subjects, te reo Māori and in rural areas.

These shortages cause school principals to cancel subjects, to ask teachers to teach out of their areas of expertise, and to increase class sizes. Teacher shortages limit student achievement and force schools to make compromises which reduce the quality of education for their students.

The Ministry of Education's own forecasts<sup>6</sup> demonstrate the seriousness of the issue, with their 2024 projections indicating secondary schools would be short 500 teachers in 2025, 550 teachers in 2026 and 330 teachers in 2027 – based on medium supply scenarios. This data is supported by PPTA Te Wehengarua's 2024 Secondary School Staffing Survey Report, which shows a continuing problem with secondary teacher recruitment<sup>7</sup>.

Becoming a registered secondary teacher requires at least a three-year undergraduate degree (for example, a Bachelor of Teaching). The entry level salary for a first-year teacher with this qualification (known as G3 on the teaching scale) is \$61,329. For those with an undergraduate specialist degree and Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (G3+), the entry salary rate is \$64,083.

Compare this with a graduate nurse, who earns \$75,773 after their three-year bachelor's degree (following the nurses' pay equity settlement). Or a hospital health care assistant, whose role has no qualification requirement and starts at \$60,100. Looking across the public sector, we can see that a graduate police officer (following 20 weeks of paid training) also earns over \$75,000. Entry rates

<sup>4</sup> Press release, Changes to improve pay equity process. [Changes to improve pay equity process | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/news/changes-to-improve-pay-equity-process)

<sup>5</sup> Public Service Commission report, Pay Equity Background and Current Context. <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Report-Pay-Equity-background-and-current-context.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Education Counts data presentation. [https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/249604/A3-TDS24-National-picture.pdf](https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/249604/A3-TDS24-National-picture.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2024 Secondary School Staffing Report Survey. <https://www.ppta.org.nz/advice-and-issues/teacher-supply/document/2409>

into teaching are not high enough to attract new teachers, when New Zealanders can see that their work will be more highly valued in other professions.

Declining teacher salaries relative to the median wage is an important factor that impacts teacher recruitment and retention. The Teaching Council's 2023 Snapshot of the Teaching Profession stated that '*the origins of the current teacher staffing crisis are no mystery*' as domestic enrolments in initial teacher education (ITE) fell by 28% between 2005 and 2022<sup>8</sup>. Over the same period, data from Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreements and median wage information from Stats NZ reveal that the relativity between the weekly wage of a G3+ secondary teacher and the median weekly wage decreased by 24.37%.

PPTA Te Wehengarua viewed the pay equity process (under the 2020 amendment) as a means of helping to restore the median wage relativity of teacher salaries to a level that would entice university graduates to enter, and encourage trained teachers to remain, in the teaching profession.

During parliamentary question time on 3 June 2025, Minister of Finance, Nicola Willis, responded that a woman whose pay equity claim had been cancelled would be able to bargain for increases to wages '*whether via a collective bargaining process or through an individual employment process*'.<sup>9</sup> However, the 2024 Government Workforce Policy Statement requires the public sector to ensure that the outcomes of '*collective bargaining are affordable within an agency's baseline*', '*respond to the current fiscal context*' and '*should not lead labour market movements and trends*'.<sup>10</sup> The offers for 1% increases that we are seeing across the public sector demonstrate, without a doubt, that collective bargaining under the current fiscal constraints directed by the Government will not lead to equitable rates for women.

The Government's decision to cancel the Teachers' Pay Equity claim will mean that teachers' pay rates will remain stagnant and the teacher supply crisis will be exacerbated.

### **Additional consequence: equity issues within schools**

While the previous section highlighted the discrepancies between entry pay rates across the public sector, PPTA Te Wehengarua Secondary Principals' Council members have raised an additional immediate impact for schools – inequitable pay rates across education roles within a school.

By choosing to apply the 2025 amendments retrospectively, thereby cancelling the Teachers' Pay Equity claim, the Government has caused a situation where there is an imbalance of pay rates between employees who have received the benefit of a pay equity settlement, and those who have not.

Secondary Principals' Council reports that this is causing tension between their employees. This could look like:

- An untrained classroom teacher (LAT – with limited authority to teach) is earning roughly the same pay as the teacher aide who is under their supervision in their classroom
- A special education satellite class, where the head of faculty is earning less than the Ministry therapists in her team

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<sup>8</sup> Teaching Council Presentation 2023, Snapshot of the teaching profession. [Snapshot of the teaching profession 2023](#)

<sup>9</sup> Hansard Transcript, 3 June 2025, Question number 5. [Oral Questions – Questions to Ministers - New Zealand Parliament](#)

<sup>10</sup> Public Service Commission, Government Workforce Policy Statement 2024. [\\*Government-Workforce-Policy-Statement-2024.pdf](#)

- Kaiārahi i te reo Māori (specialist te reo roles who work under the direction of classroom teachers and syndicate leaders) earning more than a secondary teacher of te reo Māori
- The librarian helping an English teacher's class to select novels for an assessment earning more than the teacher who is responsible for the students and their achievement
- The school science technician who is helping a year 10 science class with an experiment earning more than the science teacher

One principal described it like this:

*'It takes [trained] teachers seven years to get to the top of the scale and it's still lower than [what other roles in the school are earning] and it is becoming very visible when they work alongside each other.'*

Secondary Principals' Council wanted to emphasise that the roles that had received pay equity settlements absolutely were worth those equitable rates. However, the removal of access to a pay equity settlement for secondary teachers has left school principals navigating a difficult situation with their staff members.

Moreover, there is a risk that this equity issue in schools will also exacerbate teacher supply shortages. After all, why would someone put themselves through four years of tertiary study, acquiring significant student debt, to start on \$64,083 when they could earn up to \$69,118 as a grade B teacher aide or from \$64,396 to \$76,273 as a grade B school librarian, both without required tertiary qualifications?

### **Additional consequence: barriers for equitable pay for Māori and Pacific teachers**

As previously mentioned, pay equity settlements since 2018 have had a considerable impact on the public sector pay gap for women. The overall gender pay gap for women was 8.2% in June 2024<sup>11</sup> and for the public service, it was down to 6.1%<sup>12</sup>. However, ethnic pay gaps are much larger – at 15% for Māori women<sup>13</sup> and 17% for Pacific women<sup>14</sup> in December 2024.

In secondary schools, we know that Māori and Pacific teachers often undertake additional unpaid roles and responsibilities to support students, whānau and colleagues. This can include cultural and pastoral support and relationship building with learners and their families, providing cultural leadership, and formal and informal mentoring and professional development for teachers<sup>15</sup>. The 2021 NZ Council for Educational Research National Survey of Secondary Schools indicates that the additional strain of these responsibilities may impact the retention of kaiako Māori, with data showing *'Māori were also more likely to want to change schools or leave the profession entirely before retirement, compared with non-Māori teachers'*<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Women webpage, Gender Pay Gaps. [Gender pay gaps | Ministry for Women](#)

<sup>12</sup> Public Service Commission, Āputa utu – Pay Gaps. [Pay gaps - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Women report, Wāhine Māori and the Gender Pay Gap. [Report: Wāhine Māori and the Gender Pay Gap | Ministry for Women](#)

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Women report, Pacific Women and the Gender Pay Gap. [Report: Pacific Women and the Gender Pay Gap | Ministry for Women](#)

<sup>15</sup> NZCER report on Wāhine Māori in Leadership. [Me aro ki te hā o Hine-ahu-one – Wāhine Māori in leadership.pdf](#); NZCER report, 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools. [Secondary teachers' perspectives from NZCER's 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools \[Full Report\].pdf](#); NZCER report, How schools support ākonga Māori and Pacific students to attain University Entrance. [Poipoiā kia puāwai - How schools support ākonga Māori and Pacific students to attain University Entrance \[Full Report\].pdf](#)

<sup>16</sup> NZCER report, 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools. [Secondary teachers' perspectives from NZCER's 2021 National Survey of Secondary Schools \[Full Report\].pdf](#)



PPTA Te Wehengarua viewed the Teachers' Pay Equity claim as a pathway towards formal acknowledgement and recognition, from the Ministry of Education, of the cultural responsibilities of all teachers and - in particular - of the additional responsibilities of Māori teachers. The 'General Areas of Responsibility' (GARs) document, that contained a summary of the claimant interview data, included both a general 'cultural practices and behaviours' section and an additional section for the further responsibilities held by Māori teachers.

PPTA Te Wehengarua felt that we would be in a strong position to advocate for financial and time recognition for teachers with additional cultural responsibilities as part of a pay equity settlement. This would have helped to improve retention of Māori and Pacific teachers and the ethnic pay gap. This opportunity has now been withdrawn by the government.

### **Additional impacts and implications for secondary teacher members of the cancelation of the teachers' pay equity claim**

PPTA Te Wehengarua teacher members have shared how they have been affected by the Government's decision to cancel the teachers' pay equity claim.

These impacts fall under four categories:

#### **- Loss of future earnings and financial impact**

PPTA Te Wehengarua members have shared that the cancellation of the teachers' pay equity claim will further aggravate the challenges they are facing due to the cost-of-living crisis. They are concerned that the removal of access to a pay equity settlement will intensify the secondary teacher shortage.

*'As a single mother raising two children on one income, losing any possible claim will also make it harder to pay my mortgage and provide for my family.'*

*'I'm a solo mum - full time teacher, and busy as heck. Pay equity would give me the opportunity to ensure my children don't miss out on things I worry about regularly. They wouldn't have to hear mum say, "I can't afford that at the moment".'*

*'As a secondary physics and maths teacher, the changes to the Pay Equity Act will make it impossible for me to earn anywhere near as much as I could if I used my skills in other sectors. This makes it harder for me to choose to stay in teaching, as it is becoming increasingly difficult for me to support for family on my current wage. Teacher shortages, especially in STEM subjects, are already having a big impact on student outcomes; true pay equity is necessary to improve teacher retention.'*

*'As a teacher with eight years of study and postgraduate qualifications, I earn less than my husband, a tradesman with no degree. He enjoys weekends and evenings off, while I spend mine marking and planning. We'd like him to stay home when we have a baby, but my lower income means we don't have that choice. Removing the pay equity claim reinforces gender inequality and undervalues the vital, skilled work teachers do every day.'*

- **Loss of dignity and impact on wellbeing**

PPTA Te Wehengarua members have described the effect that the announcement of the cancelled claim has had on their hauora/wellbeing, leading to feelings of loss of hope, deflation and feeling second-rate.

*'It makes me lose hope. I escaped an abusive family and I am trying to set up my life on my own. All while teaching fulltime. I have no one to support me and I was counting on the pay equity outcomes to help me establish my life. But now that has been ripped away.'*

*'I am a highly qualified Secondary school teacher with a wealth of experience and knowledge. I have been teaching in NZ since 2003. Now, 20 years on and still in education; I am a single mother of 2 children with a couple of degrees and post grads under my belt and weekly I am wondering how I will keep a roof over my children's head. More than that, I now feel deflated, discouraged and undervalued for the contribution that I as a teacher make to the country.'*

*'It is incredibly disheartening after being involved in some of the extensive work out into making the claim.'*

*'This legislation makes it extremely difficult for a claim to progress, because the frame for it is so limited and the rules make it easier for it to be dismissed especially given input by employers. It relegates a mainly female workforce to a second-rate position in relation to male dominated fields.'*

*'Being treated like a second-class citizen.'*

- **Impact on job satisfaction and remaining in the profession**

PPTA Te Wehengarua members have shared that the cancellation of the Teachers' Pay Equity claim may push them to leave the profession. This sentiment, if felt more widely throughout the sector, could have an additional effect on the teacher supply shortage.

*'I'm in my 6th year of teaching and the pay equity claim gave me hope to stay. Teaching demands everything - weekends, health, relationships - for little recognition. This decision sends a clear message: our wellbeing is expendable. I'm exhausted by constant change, public dismissal, and burnout. Pay equity wasn't just about money. It was about respect. Its removal makes me question my future in this profession.'*

*'I was an engineer and wanted to help the next generation of engineers. But that meant losing over a third of my revenue. But I knew that with pay equity eventually I would get that back. Now I am creating the next generation of engineers while being paid less than they start out at! And I have to choose whether to continue being undervalued or go back to my old job. Pay teachers what they're worth!'*

*'It's the last straw. I am leaving teaching at the end of this year. My degree can earn more elsewhere.'*

*'I had been toying with leaving NZ due to financial struggles, coupled with expectations to do, what the school calls co-curriculars, but are really extra-curriculars. When the government passed the*

*law to scrap pay equity, that was the last straw. Such a blow in the gut. Such a feeling of dismissal. I am now going to a 30k teaching payrise in a country with significantly! lower living costs. My flight leaves in 3 weeks. I don't think I'll return anytime soon.'*

- **Impact on teachers' relationship with the Crown**

PPTA Te Wehengarua members have described the effect of the Government's decisions, including the use of urgency, on their relationship with the Crown. This is a concerning indication of an attitude shift for public sector educators.

*'The removal of the teachers' pay equity claim has really undermined my trust of the government. Having it happen without consultation and under cover of darkness made it feel like a shameful piece of legislation, one that the government was fearful of the public response to.'*

*'The removal of this legislation makes me feel as though the government values tax cuts over equal pay.'*

*'I am personally and professionally horrified by the incompetence and duplicity of this coalition government in its readiness to sacrifice the economic wellbeing of current and future women workers for the short-term, claimed, need to shift this funding to other - and possibly already privileged - areas of the economy.'*

*'The removal of the teachers' pay equity claim is disheartening for many female teachers, as it reinforces the historic undervaluation of a female-dominated profession. It delays progress toward fair pay, limits ways to challenge inequality, and impacts morale. The decision signals that the skilled, demanding work of teaching is still not valued equally to male-dominated fields, highlighting ongoing gender bias in pay and recognition.'*

*'The title "Equal Pay" has misled many Ministers about the legislation's intent, which was originally about justice. The amendment continues inequity by requiring comparisons to female-dominated roles, ignoring historical inequality. The amendment needs to be appealed.'*

*'It feels like our profession is incredibly undervalued and unappreciated by our current government.'*

*'I was devastated when the Pay Equity Act was amended under urgency, discarding years of work. I've worked in a male-dominated field with better pay, benefits, and respect—despite equivalent qualifications and fewer demands. I love my current job, but why must female-dominated roles be seen as “callings” done “for the children”? They deserve respect and fair pay. This government's actions on pay equity claims were disgraceful, misleading, and set gender equality back significantly.'*

*'It removes my right to be fairly paid for the value of the work I do as a kaiako. As a Māori kaiako I am further disadvantaged...the manaaki and aroha or care that I show my tauira, I know makes a*

*difference...I am deeply angry that the Pay Equity legislation was removed. I strongly urge the government to reinstate the legislation.'*

### **PPTA Te Wehengarua Recommendations:**

Had the Government followed a full legislative process for the 2025 Equal Pay Amendment Bill, these are the recommendations that PPTA Te Wehengarua would have made to a parliamentary select committee:

- 1. That the Government maintain all 33 current pay equity claims – including the teachers' pay equity claim, covering 95,000 teachers and school leaders.**
- 2. That the Government scrap the 2025 changes to the Equal Pay Act, that make it impossible for secondary teachers to achieve pay equity.**
- 3. That the Government deliver and fund pay equity settlements to every worker who was covered by a pay equity claim.**
- 4. That the Government establish a process to review the Equal Pay Act to determine if changes that can be made to improve the legislation.**