



Teaching Council letter writing campaign

Letter-writing is a useful part of a well-planned campaign strategy. It shows that people feel strongly about an issue, and this puts pressure on decision makers.

We're asking PPTA members to write to members of parliament and party candidates who are standing in 2020 General Election.

This letter-writing campaign relies on PPTA members building a personal connection with government decision-makers. Letters written in people's own words show that they really care about the issue and can be very powerful and persuasive; they must be heartfelt and genuine.

At this point in our campaign to overhaul the Teaching Council it's useful for us to let our decision-makers know exactly what the solutions are to the issues we have. Our aim is to make them feel confident to take and support the actions we want, and also to feel responsible for making them happen.

We need these people to feel an emotional connection to our cause, believe that change is possible and understand their role in the change.

Here are the things to cover in your letter, in your own words:

A personal connection

Do some research about the MP or candidate.

Have you met them before?

Do you live in the same community?

Have they said anything useful to our cause in the past?

Are there values that you share?

How much do they know about the teaching profession?

Problem

After over a decade of trying to work with the Teaching Council and its predecessors to create a system that provides a quality service that meets teachers' needs, with no success, the time has come to take a different approach.

In 2010 the purpose and functions of the Teaching Council were changed to include professional development, leadership, setting the direction of education, enhancing the status of teachers, sharing best practice and appraisal.

This is an unusually large and vague remit for a regulatory body and has meant the council has moved far from its original purpose.

Those functions are an important part of a healthy education system but should not be sitting with the same body that is in charge of teacher registration and dealing with competency and disciplinary issues.

New Zealanders need a council that is trusted by the profession and that fulfils only the basic and necessary functions of registration and conduct.

Cause

The Teaching Council's purpose and functions were expanded by the last National-led government far beyond what a regulatory body should do and it is now acting contrary to the needs and wishes of the profession it purports to serve.

Action

We need our elected representatives to make the changes to the law required so that New Zealand has a functional and efficient registration body that keeps children and teachers safe.

Decision-makers can help their colleagues understand the issues and solutions. They need to support our plan to overhaul the Teaching Council so it becomes a regulatory body that serves the needs of the public and the profession.

This would remove any provision for pedagogical or professional leadership, which teachers believe sits with their subject associations and professional unions, and not with the body that registers and regulates them.

Outcome

A teaching registration body that sets and maintains high standards for the teaching profession through registration and conduct processes and the regulation of initial teacher education, so that all learners in early childhood, primary, secondary, and senior secondary schooling in English medium and Māori medium settings have access to safe and quality education.

Values

It's a good idea to link what we are asking for to our union values of fairness, equity and solidarity. Talk about these values harmed by the current situation.

Tone

Consider your wording: you may be frustrated and furious, and with good reason. By all means express that in your letter, but it will be more effective if the main focus of your letter is dedicated to calling for solutions to the problems.

A typical letter would include:

Your name and address

Day, Month, Year

Hon. Jane Bloggs
Minister of Education
Freepost
Parliament Buildings
Private Bag 18041
Wellington 6160

Tēnā koe

First paragraph: Say why you are writing e.g. to let them know how they can help fix the Teaching Council so that teachers can trust it again. Say that you are writing as a teacher and a member of PPTA. Say why you teach and why this issue is important to you.

Second, third paragraphs and body of letter: Talk about the problem, the cause and what action you want them to take. Make it feel do-able by talking about the outcome we want to achieve and the values you hold e.g. ask them to commit to changing the law to limit the functions of the Teaching Council

Final paragraph: State again what action you would like the politician to take e.g. Support our plan to overhaul the purpose and function of the Teaching Council so it meets the needs of the teaching profession.

Nāku, nā

Your signature, name etc

Cc: PPTA president, Jack Boyle