

# PPTA News

Uniting secondary teachers of Aotearoa



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## PPTA News

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# Farewell, Melanie Webber

Melanie Webber, former PPTA Te Wehengarua president, will be remembered as a brilliant, passionate, and endearing advocate for secondary education



**"Make sure my skirt isn't tucked into my knickers when I come out of the toilet and that I don't have lipstick on my teeth." Those were the instructions given to me when I asked Melanie Webber about what being her junior vice president would involve.**

That response was typical of Melanie – extremely witty and grounded in reality. At the same time as ensuring the practical and day to day details were attended to, she never lost sight of the big picture and what mattered strategically.

Melanie spoke truth to power time and time again for teachers and students – particularly around NCEA as she knew that getting that right was crucial.

Melanie's leadership as President carried us through one of the toughest periods our association has ever faced. Ensuring schools were safe spaces for everyone during COVID was her driving focus.

Your contribution to education will never be forgotten, Melanie Webber, e hoa. Moe mai rā.

## Pathway to pay equity torched

Tuesday 6 May will go down as one of the darkest days for women in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Government's announcement that it was urgently extinguishing all existing pay equity claims and moving the goalposts to make it harder for claims to be made, came completely out of the blue.

PPTA Te Wehengarua, as part of the teachers' claim representing 95,000 claimants, has been working for three years on the development of our claim. Hundreds of members have put in a huge amount of time and effort helping our advocate on this complex journey. Three years of work was obliterated and rendered meaningless in less than 33 hours.

The fight back is on – and it is amazing. A big shout out to our members who have turned out in great numbers to rallies around the motu and particularly our women activists who have made their

voices heard in the media. As the familiar chant goes, 'workers united will never be defeated'.

Arguably the most shocking aspect of this situation was the way in which it was done. The announcement came out of nowhere and changes were made at lightning speed without any opportunity for people to have a say. It is not included in any of the coalition agreements and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety had never signalled it. It was undemocratic, underhand and cowardly.

**Hundreds of members have put in a huge amount of time and effort helping our advocate on this complex journey. Three years of work was obliterated and rendered meaningless in less than 33 hours.**

At the time of writing, the Budget was yet to be delivered, but we expect it to confirm just how low this Government has been prepared to go to avoid addressing the just claims of hundreds of thousands of workers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Improving the conditions of teaching and learning

Of course, such desperate moves by the Government suggest that it will argue there is very little money for improvements in our collective agreement, for which we have initiated bargaining.

The Government has also brought in the Public Services Commissioner to take charge of the negotiations. Clearly, it regards teachers' collective agreement negotiations as a trend setter for the public sector.

All this means that we will be in for a difficult round. Of course we are very experienced with difficult times.

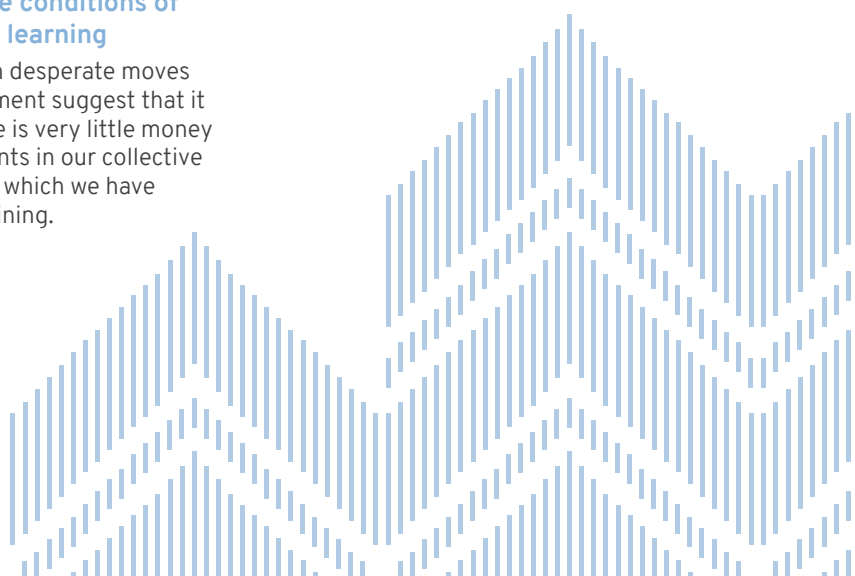
Teaching is highly challenging and the challenges have increased.

Students with unmet learning or mental health needs can struggle at school and create disruptions to the learning of other students. We need the supports available in schools to make sure that students' needs are met so that they can participate and learn.

We are short of around 800 secondary teachers this year. This means some students are not being taught by specialists in every class. The shortage also increases class sizes, affecting student learning and behaviour.

I sincerely hope that the Public Services Commissioner agrees with us that the way to solve these difficulties is to increase salaries and decrease workload to recruit and retain the teaching workforce that young people need.

Time will tell.







# One of the greatest people you will ever meet

Melanie Webber, a passionate and brilliant advocate for education, will be remembered by many PPTA Te Wehengarua members as a nurturer, writes Lawrence Mikkelsen

I met Melanie in 2009. I was halfway into my first year as a Media Studies teacher at Selwyn College, and she was halfway through hers at Western Springs. It was a national “Jumbo day” because NCEA standards were being “aligned”, and a heap of Media Studies teachers - or, to use the phrase our friend Daniel McQuillan came up with - an implication of Media Studies teachers - met in a science lab at the recently rebranded One Tree Hill College.

Deb Thompson, who I'd met before, introduced Melanie to me as her new protégé. But mostly, I chose to sit next to Melanie because she was wearing silver Dr Martens boots and a Doctor Who badge, which made her, I thought, the coolest person in the room. And because Auckland is a small town, it only took a couple of minutes of chit-chat to work out that she had (briefly) gone to school with my wife Vanessa. In 2009 that was a tenuous enough link to warrant a Facebook friend request.

What cemented our friendship, though, was a

“date” (not actually a date obviously, I'm a married man) to see Zombieland in the school holidays a few months later. It was around the time the Newmarket flyover was being rebuilt, and I'd picked up a brochure about the rebuild. “Are you, perchance, interested in major infrastructure projects?” I asked. She was. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Over the last 17 years our friendship was like a big Venn Diagram. It was a friendship that intersected our love of movies, television and popular culture, an appreciation of quality footwear, The Pet Shop Boys, our love of teaching Media Studies and, and of course, our passion for public education.

In 2017 Melanie, Chris Abercrombie and I all unseated some long-standing union stalwarts on the PPTA executive. We came in - we thought we were young (we weren't) and we thought we were invincible. And whilst I treaded water as your basic-model executive member, Melanie quickly rose through the ranks, becoming Junior Vice President and eventually President.

Unfortunately, she became President at pretty much the exact same time as the entire world closed for business for two years, meaning she missed out on much of the baubles of power, and was unable to attend the sorts of overseas conferences PPTA presidents usually get to go to.

Despite the lack of opportunities for overseas travel and having to spend much of her

presidency either locked in her apartment in Auckland, or else stuck in Wellington when Auckland was still locked down, she made the most of her time. She was passionate about curriculum and NCEA change and worked furiously over this time.

Everyone who knows Melanie knows just how smart she was, and how “well brought up” she was. She wasn't afraid to speak truth to power. But, even when tearing you to shreds, she was unfailingly polite and classy. And speaking of class, looking through photos these last few weeks, I've also noticed that Melanie was pretty much the Princess Diana or the Imelda Marcos of the PPTA. Look through a hundred photos of her, and you'd be hard pressed to find a picture of her wearing the same outfit. That woman knew how to dress.

I've been spending a lot of time talking to friends, colleagues and union comrades about Melanie over the last few months, and one thing that is really clear is what a nurturer she was. So many people have a “Melanie story” - a word of encouragement, a quiet word of congratulation, or the offer of help with a paper or a moving speech.

I know Melanie would be incredibly annoyed if I started talking about her “bravery” or her “cancer journey”, because it was always really clear that she didn't want cancer to become her entire personality. But she faced her oncoming death with something of a dark sense of humour, which could be sometimes a little disarming for her friends. Only a few weeks ago she'd been threatening to haunt her sister Andrea's recently sold house, and having recently found out that PPTA Annual Conference will be taking place in Christchurch this year, rather than in its usual home of Wellington, she said “tell them at my funeral that Melanie didn't want to live in a world where PPTA Annual Conference wasn't at the Brentwood”.

So, here's to Melanie – cool boots, Doctor Who badge, fierce intelligence and the uncanny ability to write a conference paper, settle a union debate and make







you laugh, all before cheese scones and lamingtons at smoko.

She left the world far too soon, but with her trademark style, kindness, and just the right amount of righteous indignation. I hope wherever she is, the meetings are productive, the outfits are fabulous, and the conference venues have decent coffee. And, most of all, I hope you get to see those last couple of episodes of Married at First Sight Australia. Because that is some champagne television.

Goodbye, friend. You were, and always will be, one of the cool kids and, to quote Janis Ian from Mean Girls, one of “the greatest people you will ever meet”.

*\*Lawrene Mikkelsen is a PPTA Te Wehengarua national executive member. This is an excerpt from his eulogy at Melanie's funeral.*



## Melanie Webber service award

To honour Melanie Webber's outstanding contribution to PPTA Te Wehengarua, the national executive has created a new service award.

Members who are eligible for the award will have demonstrated at the branch, regional or national level, leadership, problem-solving and nurturing abilities, and actively advanced the goals of PPTA Te Wehengarua.

Nominations are now being called for the 2025 Melanie Webber Award. The closing date for nominations is 5pm Monday 30 June.

Full details are available at [www.ppta.org.nz/MelanieWebberAward](http://www.ppta.org.nz/MelanieWebberAward)





# Valuing the mahi

The community liaison role trial acknowledges the mahi that teachers do over and above their teaching and is greatly appreciated

A bridge between the community and the school, is how Porirua College teacher Toa Mailo-Alexander describes the work he does outside of his teaching duties.

“If there are any issues that have arisen in the community, if there’s any strife or tension, we can quite easily step in and support whānau. We are from this community.”

Toa and several of his colleagues are participants in the community liaison role (CLR) trial, part of the current Secondary Teachers’ Collective Agreement. The CLR trial gives teachers a time and money allowance in recognition of the additional work they do with students, parents and whānau in their communities.

## Opportunity to acknowledge mahi

“The main thing about the trial is that it has given the school an opportunity to acknowledge those of us who are already doing this mahi. It’s a motivator too – it motivates you to carry on.”

For example, Toa supports students who are leaving school. “I support them moving to external providers and I keep in contact with them to make sure they’re still going to course and they’re getting the support they need.

“So, although they’re off our roll I’m still engaging with and supporting those students. I check regularly to see if they have enough money to get to course, and what the plan is when they finish their course – that sort of thing.”

Toa’s colleague, Povalu Kelemete, says community liaison happens inside the school as well as in the wider community. “We do step in a lot to support our students and our colleagues, especially those teachers who are new to Porirua College and are not from Porirua.

“It’s a culture shock for them when they come to Porirua College. They want to be here so they call on us to help them support our students the best they can.”

Joy Tuitupou spends a significant amount of her time building up the confidence of students who have only been living in



Community liaison role allowance holders, l-r: Povalu Kelemete, Toa Mailo-Alexander, Joy Tuitupou, Maiava Vitoria Ape

New Zealand for a few years, particularly supporting them with the literacy and numeracy corequisites which are now part of NCEA.

“We tell these students, if you are here from the island and you’ve only been in New Zealand two years and you don’t have the amount of English for literacy (co-requisite), remember that you’ve got 100% of your own language. You can communicate yourself - and you will achieve, with us to help you. It’s not just looking after them but building their trust and self-confidence.”

## Opening the door for engagement

Maiava Vitoria Ape works mainly with Samoan parents of Porirua College students. “Being able to feel comfortable about engaging with the school is kind of a first step. Having a teacher who can speak the language and understand the culture is really important.”

Maiava also runs Talanoa Aka (conversations about learning) sessions with a local church. “This is a church I’m not even familiar with myself because I live on the other side of Porirua but being in this community and teaching and working here, it opens the door for that engagement to happen.

“There are a lot of people in that church whose kids come to this school, so it is really good to be able to have those conversations and allow them to feel comfortable about asking questions. To be a face of the school in the community so they know there is someone they can speak to in their own language and if we don’t know the answers we can find the answers for them.”

An interim report into the CLR trial, carried out by the Ministry of Education, says the allowance has provided important recognition for the mahi that kaiako were already doing.

“This formal acknowledgment has legitimised their expertise and increased the visibility of their work. Kaiako expressed that this recognition bestows mana on their community engagement efforts, empowering them to advocate for, and implement changes that benefit ākonga Māori and Pasifika students.”

In this year’s collective agreement negotiations, PPTA Te Wehengarua is claiming for the CLR allowances to be made available permanently to all eligible schools.



## Action-packed hui

Placards, megaphones and chants were out in force at this year's establishing teachers' conference

**They entered the conference venue like ordinary hotel guests – next minute they emerged chanting, with megaphones and placards in tow.**

Participants in the Network of Establishing Teachers' (NETs) Conference, in April, were treated to a presentation which resulted in them taking to the streets outside the conference venue to stage a real live protest.

The session presenter, Simon Oosterman, is a prominent unionist and advocate who coordinated Unite union's 'Supersize My Pay' campaign targeting the fast food industry and advocating for the abolition of youth rates.

Louise Ryan, a NETs committee member, said Simon's presentation and the practice protest were a highlight of the hui. "It was great to put this learning into action and practise all the steps required when holding a protest. For many of our attendees this was a first-hand look into what goes into these sorts of events."

She also enjoyed hearing from union colleagues from the Australian Education Union. "It is so important to share and learn from other teacher unions to understand our collective beliefs and vision for education."

Wellington establishing teacher, Charlie Myer, said a particular highlight for him was hearing about the opportunities for de-streaming through the important mahi of Kōkirihiā - led by Kylee Houppapa and Daniel Hapuku.

"The conference was a great opportunity to bring together new and establishing teachers to discuss issues that pertain to being new to the union."

Charlie particularly appreciated the gracious welcome by Ngāi Tai and Ngāti Paoa that featured a special kōrero about the history of the surrounding whenua.

NETs is open to teachers in the first 10 years of teaching. If you are interested in coming to a NETs Conference, the next one will be held in 2027.

Sign up to the NETs newsletter for specific updates on upcoming conferences. You can do this by updating your details on the MyPage section of the PPTA website, [ppta.org.nz](http://ppta.org.nz)

Or you can email [membership@ppta.org.nz](mailto:membership@ppta.org.nz) and ask to be added to the newsletter distribution list.





# Professional Learning and Development update

**The inclusion of teachers' voices is crucial to relevant and accessible PLD, writes Angela Roberts**

## Subject Association Grants extended

It is great to be able to announce that we have confirmed an extension of some of the projects supported by the Professional Learning and Development (PLD) fund. The Subject Association Grant, which supports kaiako to attend approved subject association conferences, is now available until the end of 2025. The value - up to \$750 for expenses such as travel and accommodation - and number of grants remains the same, so make sure that you apply early and don't miss out.

You can find information about subject association grants at [ppta.org.nz](https://ppta.org.nz) → [pld-fund](#) → [grant-to-attend-subject-association-conferences](#)

## More micro-credentials supported

We can now also support more micro-credential courses at Victoria University of Wellington. There is to be an additional cohort of both the Contemporary Secondary Teaching Approaches for Aotearoa New Zealand and the Effective Mentoring Practices for Secondary Teachers in Aotearoa.

Both courses have had incredibly positive feedback. Many teachers say that the courses are proving to be transformative across their professional practice. These courses are always over-subscribed, so again, get in quick.

To register for the courses, check out [ppta.org.nz](https://ppta.org.nz) → [pld-fund](#) → [micro-credential](#)

## Secondary education leaders hui

The Secondary Education Leadership Summit, another significant PPTA PLD project, took place in the Term 1 break. The summit, at Te Pae in Ōtautahi Christchurch, attracted a wide range of education leaders, including principals, aspiring principals, senior leaders, heads of departments, Kahui Ako leads, and deans. As a result, there was a diverse range of topics and issues covered by keynote speakers, panel discussions and in workshops.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was a common theme that ran through the events. There was consideration of how we can develop and implement effective AI strategies across the system and in our schools and classrooms.

## Evidence -based practical AI guidance

It was great to see strong evidence-based leadership and reassuringly practical guidance from our most innovative academics and teachers. Delegates reflected that they felt much better prepared and confident to effectively lead their school's AI strategies, which is especially notable given the incredibly dynamic nature of the issue.

**Delegates reflected that they felt much better prepared and confident to effectively lead their school's AI strategies, which is especially notable given the incredibly dynamic nature of the issue**

It isn't often that the 'system' takes the time to support our school leaders to grow in their role as pedagogical leaders. As well as being able to take the time to deal with very practical issues such as AI, summit delegates reflected that they appreciated the time to consider leadership more broadly. They felt inspired and invigorated by the challenging range of perspectives brought to the floor and shared how they intended to shift their approach on their return to school.

Summit participants told us how valuable it was to have the opportunity to connect and collaborate, to have the chance to really consider, alongside other school leaders, the implications of the gnarly issues of the day - from streaming to grappling with curriculum and assessment.

## Summit resources available online

True to our name, the pūtea, or pool of resources, which were generously contributed to the summit by our presenters, are available for all teachers on the PPTA website. Visit [ppta.org.nz](https://ppta.org.nz) → [events](#) → [the-national-secondary-education-leadership-summit-2025](#)

Whether it is vocational pathways, Kahui Ako, AI, change management, or leadership development, there are now a wealth of additional resources available to support our work. We hope that these materials continue to serve as valuable references for education leaders beyond the summit.

Thank you to our Secondary Principals' Council for their guidance that helped to deliver a summit that delegates have told us gave them both some practical tools and inspiration to help them and their schools thrive into the future.

## Delivering impactful PLD

As we begin to evaluate all the projects that we have had the privilege to deliver for our members over recent years, we are learning about how to effectively deliver impactful PLD. The fact that most projects are over-subscribed - the PCT Conference, to be held in the next term break, already has a waiting list - tells us that we are doing something right.

The research is suggesting that one of the factors that may have helped us to provide practical and transformative PLD is the inclusion of teachers' voices, through the PPTA, in the design process. This seems to have helped ensure that both the content and the delivery of PLD has been relevant and accessible.

Hopefully we will have the opportunity to continue to build a national PLD system that delivers timely and useful support for all our secondary teachers in the future. Teachers need, and deserve, these development opportunities so that you can continue to do what you do best - design and deliver teaching programmes that are responsive to students' needs and aspirations.





# Sustainability in action

There is something growing at Rongotai College, and it isn't just the tomatoes, writes James Richardson

For the past four years, Rongotai College has been on a journey to improve our positive impact on the planet and reduce our negative impact.

As a traditional boys' secondary school it may seem a challenge to fit this extra-curricular work in between the rugby and football practice. However, a core group of students have sprouted a number of projects. Our successes - and failures - have demonstrated the value of "making a difference" and learning by doing to boys' education. They have also highlighted two qualities sometimes missing from boys' education: service and empathy.

## Our action plan

In the hopes of embedding earth care (kaitiakitanga) into our school culture, our school community developed a sustainability action plan and have even had it approved at the board level.

The plan focuses on action to reduce waste, decreasing carbon emissions, and improving food security and food production knowledge.

It challenges teachers and students to both discuss sustainability and do something about it - a step sometimes missing in schools.

## Thriving recycling programme

These broad objectives have seen us develop a thriving recycling programme, build a school garden, greenhouse and pizza oven - with the help of the parents' association and materials technology classes. They have helped us improve our active transport options with refurbished bike sheds and bike lanes, in consultation with Wellington City Council.

We have also decreased our carbon footprint with a new woodchipper and tree planting programme with help from the council, Wellington Airport and the college's Old Boys' Association.

Importantly, what we've done is just as important as who was involved. In our case, our success is built on strong support from students, teachers, whānau, the community, and local businesses.



The college's greenhouse

## Making a difference

I've asked some of our students why they joined the group and what they learned. Ahmed Abi says he joined the Enviro Club as he believed that small actions could make a big difference. "It's a chance not only to learn about environmental issues but also take steps towards creating a more sustainable future".

## Our success is built on strong support from students, teachers, whānau, the community, and local businesses

Another student, Angus Galloway, says he got involved because he wanted to help make a positive change in our school.

## Guiding principles

To help other schools learn from the lessons we've learned, here are a few important guiding principles:

1. Create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time sensitive) goals so you know when you've succeeded at something.
2. Sustainability needs to taste good! The garden is most active (and well-managed) when there is pizza waiting from our student-made pizza oven.



A student-built pizza oven is part of Rongotai College's sustainability action plan

3. Choose simple solutions to complex problems rather than complex solutions to simple problems.
4. Some things are sacred and, despite the urgency of action required to adapt and mitigate against climate change, it is worth treading lightly around things like transport. Instead, model alternatives yourself - e.g. biking and walking to work - to show what is possible.
5. Be kind to yourself - the challenge of "saving the world" is too big and hard to put on one student, teacher or school. Indeed it will take all of us doing our best, improving a little bit each year.
6. Consider co-benefits. People do environmental work for a variety of reasons. We need not agree on all motivating factors - just what we should do about it.
7. The work takes all kinds of people and is a journey for all of us.

Something is definitely growing at Rongotai College. The small efforts at a school scale can plant the seeds for positive growth and change in how we think and what we do in our school, cities and beyond.

*\*Dr James Richardson is a member of PPTA Te Wehengarua Climate Justice Committee*





## Keeping our cultural practices strong

**Succession planning is a vital way to ensure PPTA Te Wehengarua tikanga Māori practices are performed well now and in the future**

Succession planning and investment are crucial to maintain the calibre of PPTA Te Wehengarua tikanga, and ensure the level of whaikōrero and karanga reputation of PPTA Te Wehengarua leadership in the cultural space remains strong.

For the last two years, PPTA Te Wehengarua has held a number of karanga and whaikōrero wānanga to ensure that tikanga Māori practices at PPTA Te Wehengarua conferences are performed well today, and in the future. Ngā mihi nui to all those members who have stepped forward to upskill in cultural spaces that are not easy to fill.

Whaea Kaitautoko, Whaea Tihi and whaea's husband, matua Wiremu Puanaki, lead the karanga wānanga. Whaea Tihi has been a long-time member of PPTA Te Wehengarua, a strong advocate for te Ao Māori and an expert tikanga practitioner. The level of mātauranga Whaea Tihi brings to wānanga is one that very few practitioners can emulate. We are very lucky to have the agreement of both Whaea and matua to lead our succession tikanga plan.



Participants at a karanga wānanga earlier this year



Whaea Tihi and matua Wiremu Puanaki

Our Mataroa, Daniel Hapuku, a former student of Whaea Tihi, leads the whaikōrero wānanga. An excellent speaker

of te reo Māori, Daniel attributes much of his skill to Whaea Tihi.

The karanga wānanga cater to all levels of understanding and practices of karanga for beginners and advanced. There is a balance of reo karanga practices and tuhi examples of karanga to use and opportunities for those who are more confident to compose for different Kaupapa.

If you are interested in coming to a karanga and whaikōrero wānanga, email Angela O'Donnell-King, PPTA Te Wehengarua kaihautū Māori, at [Ao'donnell-king@ppta.org.nz](mailto:Ao'donnell-king@ppta.org.nz)



## Calling all new teachers

**Make sure you update your membership details to ensure you get the latest from PPTA Te Wehengarua and can access all the benefits of belonging**

If you joined PPTA Te Wehengarua as a teacher trainee, and are now teaching, you will need to update your contact and new school details.

You can do this either online at [www.ppta.org.nz/membership](http://www.ppta.org.nz/membership) or you can email the PPTA Membership Team at [membership@ppta.org.nz](mailto:membership@ppta.org.nz)

Also make sure you are part of PPTA's network of establishing teachers (NETs). NETs provide support for teachers in the first 10 years of their career.

New teachers have the opportunity to attend the biennial NETs conference. NETs members are represented by the Establishing Teachers' Committee, which



is highly active in the PPTA, meeting regularly, and advancing the concerns of beginning teachers at a national level.

To join NETs, email a brief request to [nets@ppta.org.nz](mailto:nets@ppta.org.nz) or tick the box on the PPTA membership application form online.



# Farewell, Penny Dunckley

**Penney Dunckley was a staunch, authentic and courageous unionist, writes Judie Alison**

**It was a shock to learn of the sudden death in February of one of Southland's staunchest activists, Penney Dunckley.**

Penney was the PPTA Te Wehengarua national executive member for Southland for many years and represented the region with great dedication and courage.

After a first career as a drafts person, Penney became a teacher, specialising in Technical Drawing, which became Graphics and then Design and Visual Communication. She was one of the many teachers in the Technology area who was caught by the Alternative Disputes Resolution body's controversial "solution" to settle the collective agreement in 2002.

Penney was on the national executive at the time, and found herself in an invidious situation, understanding the executive's unwillingness to refuse a settlement that included pay increases greater than the union had even claimed, but at the same time feeling the pain and humiliation of those who were left behind.

**One of her greatest strengths was her authenticity; she showed no fear and spoke truth to power.**

In an interview for the 2023 PPTA history, *A Union of Professionals*, Penney remembered feeling "gutted that we were no longer valued for the work we were doing in an area that did not have many university courses applicable. It felt like academic snobbery – our past work and education was now somehow valued less than it was when we started teaching."

However, not one to sit around feeling aggrieved, Penney got on and did the qualification that gave her a route back to the top of the pay scale. She described it as "not too difficult, just time-consuming". During her oral presentation for assessment, the examiner told her she had already made the grade and needn't carry on, but she told him that she had done the work so he could listen to the end!



Penney Dunckley

Another area in which Penney made a big contribution was representing PPTA Te Wehengarua on the NCEA Leaders' Forum, the Education Ministry's primary consultative mechanism for development and monitoring of the qualification. Penney was one of the longest-serving members of the forum, and her voice as a practising teacher, and someone close to members in her region, was highly valued at those meetings. One of her greatest strengths was her authenticity; she showed no fear and spoke truth to power. In the 1990's, Penney represented PPTA Te Wehengarua on the restructuring of schooling in Invercargill. This was a fraught process, but Penney was staunch about equity, insisting that the poorer parts of Invercargill must end up with high quality schooling.

In May 2011, PPTA established the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Taskforce, and Penney served on that, as an Executive member from a region largely unaffected, till its winding up in 2017. She felt passionately that the union must do everything it could to support members and to advocate for fair

processes about the future of schooling in Christchurch and later in Kaikoura. Her experience from the Invercargill restructuring was relevant here.

Penney was a great friend, and I was sad that I could not attend her funeral and speak of my great admiration for her, as I was at the deathbed of a family member at the time. Penney was loyal and kept in touch with many of her former Executive colleagues and PPTA staff.

Sometimes her involvement in Evergreens softball tournaments brought her to Wellington, and sometimes we caught up when I was in the lower South Island.

In her later years, after the death of her loved husband John, Penney did some overseas travel. Her last big trip was with Intrepid, and the itinerary certainly sounded to fit the name. Coincidentally, the word also fits Penney – an intrepid union woman who has left us much too soon.

*\*Dr Judie Alison is a former PPTA Te Wehengarua national executive member and advisory officer, and author of A Union of Professionals.*



## A place to call home

**PPTA Te Wehengarua Waikato field staff have a home – after several unsettled years**

After several years of working from home, cafes, their cars and temporary office space, PPTA Te Wehengarua Hamilton-based field staff finally have long-term premises again, in the central city.

When the COVID lockdowns ended in 2022, Hamilton-based field staff found themselves without an office to return to as ongoing maintenance issues meant it was no longer suitable. New offices have now been found in Collingwood Street.

When the new Hamilton field office (Kirikiriroa Tari Whakatuwheratanga), was formally opened at the end of March, a large number of Waikato and Tāmaki Makaurau executive members and other field staff came to support their colleagues who had been through a difficult few years. Here's to many long and happy years in your new abode.



A great turnout of PPTA executive members and staff at the opening of the new Hamilton Field Office



Hamilton-based field staff, l-r: Jason Smythe, Jessica Ashworth, Kathleen West, Fiona Wolff

## Take some time out for Men's Health Week

**Men's Health Week is a great opportunity for men to think a little bit more about your health**

Men's Health Week, June 9 – 15, aims to help you get right on top of your most important asset – your health.

PPTA Te Wehengarua men's network is encouraging men to start with the small steps that can enable you to turn your health issues around.

Little steps can – and will – make big differences. We just have to start.

Men's Health Week is designed to remind men of the small things you should be doing, the health routines you can understand and control. Living longer, more enjoyable lives takes a little work, but we're all up for it.

Spend some time during Men's Health Week to look after yourself and one of the best ways of doing that is spending some time with your male colleagues and friends.

The Men's Network would like men who are members of PPTA Te Wehengarua to take some time out during Men's Health Week this year to enjoy a regional or branch social event with fellow male teachers or just take some time to think about your health.

Check out the new PPTA's men's network page on the website for more details about Men's Health Week [ppta.org.nz/communities/mens-network](https://ppta.org.nz/communities/mens-network)





# Help is at hand

A range of support is available for new overseas trained teachers so it's important to know how to access it

**Nic is the HoD and has a new staff member this year, Jess. Jess is an overseas trained teacher who is in their first teaching position in New Zealand. Nic realises that Jess needs some help in understanding NCEA.**

Nic is also concerned that Jess, despite being an experienced teacher overseas, is required to prepare evidence against the NZ teaching standards and be provisionally certified for one year. Nic does not have sufficient time allowances to give Jess detailed feedback on this evidence.

Nic goes onto the PPTA website to find out what support could be provided to Jess. Nic finds a recording of a webinar specifically for overseas trained teachers and realises that Jess can access a time allowance of 2.5 hours per week for two terms. Nic asks Jess to check the eligibility criteria and then asks the Principal to apply for this time allowance through EdPay.

Nic and the Principal meet with Jess to discuss how this time allowance could be used. They all agree that every two weeks for the first term, Jess will have a day of professional development, including observing two other teachers in their department, an hour of time with the Specialist Classroom Teacher, and two hours of self-directed NCEA planning, including half an hour with Nic during one of Nic's non-contact hours. The Principal ensures this is timetabled.

Jess uses one of these days to attend the PPTA Mahi Tika Provisionally Certificated Teachers (PCT) programme, where they learn about how to set mentoring goals, and some tips for naturally occurring evidence for each of the teaching standards.

In the second term, the timetable doesn't support Jess having one day of time allowance per fortnight, so they agree with Nic and the Principal that they will have one week of time allowance in the middle of the term. Jess uses this week to travel to a neighbouring school and

observe the Maths department, look over their NCEA resources, and Jess includes notes from this professional development into their evidence document.

Jess also learnt from the Mahi Tika course that they have some relevant experience that hasn't been recognised in their salary assessment. Jess uses part of the week of time allowance in the second term to gather statements of service from previous employers, following the template provided on the EdPay website. From this relevant

previous experience, Jess gains a half credit for two years of previous experience to move one more step up the pay scale and receive some backpay.

Jess completes two more terms of a full-time timetable, continuing to add to their evidence against the teaching standards and taking NCEA PLD opportunities that are offered to all staff. Nic supports Jess to meet with the Principal to ascertain endorsement for their full certification application towards the end of the fourth term.

## Relevant facts

- 1 Depending on overseas experience, overseas trained teachers have to be provisionally certificated for one or two years before they can apply to be fully certificated. They would have been informed of their period of provisional registration in an initial letter from Teaching Council.
- 2 The slides and recording of the Overseas Trained Teacher webinar can be found on the PPTA website under Communities > Network of Establishing Teachers > Support for Overseas Trained Teachers. This webinar covers registration and certification, salary assessment, time allowance, the overseas relocation grant, and other sources of support for overseas trained teachers.
- 3 There are a number of eligibility criteria to check for the overseas trained teacher time allowance, which are specified in clause 3.8C of the STCA and clause 2.18 of the ASTCA.
- 4 The 0.1 FTTE time allowance for 20 weeks can be used in whichever way is agreed by employee and employer, including using this time allowance each week or accruing this time allowance to use in bigger 'blocks'.
- 5 The Mahi Tika PCT course is open to non-members as well, although there are some additional costs for non-members. Our PCT course includes overseas trained teachers, because they are provisionally certificated for at least one year.
- 6 The EdPay website provides a template for statements of service from previous employers as well as the requirements for two other pieces of evidence that could be submitted if a statement of service is not possible.
- 7 Relevant previous experience can result in full, half, or third service credit, depending on the qualifications that a teacher had at the time and the relevance of the experience.





# Aotearoa New Zealand – but not as we know it

Teachers will be at the forefront of some huge demographic changes over the next 10 to 20 years

Aotearoa New Zealand is undergoing a demographic transformation, and many people don't understand just how extensive it is, says Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul Spoonley.

Professor Spoonley told participants in the PPTA Te Wehengarua Issues and Organising seminar, earlier this year, that New Zealand's population was ageing and our fertility rates are declining.

"The impact of this is going to be felt very much in our school population. Between now and the early 2030s our school population is going to decline."

## Falling fertility rates

He said Generation X and millennial women, particularly, were having a huge impact on fertility rates.

New Zealand reached a rate of 4.3 births per woman during the post World-War 2 baby boom, and we are now down to 1.56. This means that with each generation that is born now, it is a quarter smaller than the previous generation. The Ministry of Education anticipates that by 2032, there will be 30,000 fewer children in our education system – mostly in the primary school sector.

Declining fertility was happening in many countries around the world. If a woman is tertiary qualified and has a job and a career there's possibly a 25-30% chance she will choose not to have children.

"So, what we're seeing is none, and one and done, is an increasingly common pattern amongst millennial women. That is why it's going to have a big impact on our society and a big impact on you in our educational system, because the pipeline is just going to be that much smaller."

The combination of the ageing population and declining fertility rates means we are beginning to see growing workforce shortages.

"It's a peculiar fact of a modern economy that we've got rising unemployment and shortages occurring at the same time. A record 80,000 people are leaving New Zealand to work overseas each year at the moment. We're exporting some of our unemployment."



Professor Paul Spoonley

## Heading north

Despite the number of people leaving New Zealand and the fertility rates, our population will grow, largely because of immigration and net migration. At least half of the growth will occur in Auckland.

"The largest growth points are Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga – the golden triangle. Within two decades we expect that three quarters of New Zealanders will live in the top half of the North Island and 40% of all New Zealanders will be Auckland residents."

**There are implications for where you do your schooling, the facilities that you can access for your schooling, and there are major workforce challenges**

"There are implications for where you do your schooling, the facilities that you can access for your schooling, and there are major workforce challenges there."

"Governments can do something about this, but nobody seems enthusiastic about a population policy and serious regional development. You're just not getting any engagement here."

## Ethnicity changes

The changing composition of New Zealand's population, particularly the ethnic composition, was also part of the demographic transformation. There are two key components, firstly Māori fertility rates are much higher than non-Māori. More Māori women are of a younger age, so are having more children and increasing the Māori population.

"So, there will be parts of New Zealand where Māori will continue to dominate in terms of the proportion of the population which will become even more significant, e.g. East Coast and Northland."

The second component influencing our population growth is immigration. In 2024 253,000 permanent migrants came to New Zealand mostly from India, the Philippines, China, Sri Lanka and Fiji.

"Previously, I would have talked about brain exchange but increasingly in regard to the record numbers of New Zealanders leaving, I'm going to talk about brain drain. They're 20-something New Zealanders, who are often tertiary qualified."

"By 2043, 21% of all New Zealanders will self-identify as Māori, 24% will self-identify as Asian – that is a huge change – and 11% will self-identify as Pasifika. However, among 0-14-year-olds those statistics will be 33%, 25%, and 19% respectively."

"So, our education system in terms of ethnic identity will look very different to what you see today."



## Leaving teaching? Please fill in our survey

PPTA Te Wehengarua runs an ongoing survey to provide annual information from secondary teachers and school leaders on why they leave teaching in New Zealand schools.

This information is not collected by the New Zealand Ministry of Education or any other organisation from those who leave. We believe this information is essential in planning for the future.

The survey can be completed in five minutes and responses will be anonymous. Just go to [ppta.org.nz](http://ppta.org.nz) and search 'leaving teaching'.

If you have any questions about the survey please contact Rob Willetts – [rwilletts@ppta.org.nz](mailto:rwilletts@ppta.org.nz)

## Members – update your details with us!

At PPTA Te Wehengarua, we share a lot of vital information with our members, but we can only do this if we know where to find you.

If you have changed your school, address, email address or phone number, please let us know.

### You can do it online...

Did you know, as part of the PPTA Te Wehengarua whānau, you can update your details with us online?

All you need to do is visit [ppta.org.nz](http://ppta.org.nz) and look for the 'My Page log-in' tab at the top right of the page. Once logged in, you will be taken to the member dashboard, where you can update your details by selecting the 'manage profile' tab.

If you have any difficulty logging in, just email [webmaster@ppta.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@ppta.org.nz)

### Or talk with a human

If you would prefer to get in touch with our dedicated PPTA Te Wehengarua membership team, they will be more than happy to help.

You can reach them at [membership@ppta.org.nz](mailto:membership@ppta.org.nz) or call our national office on 04 384 9964.

