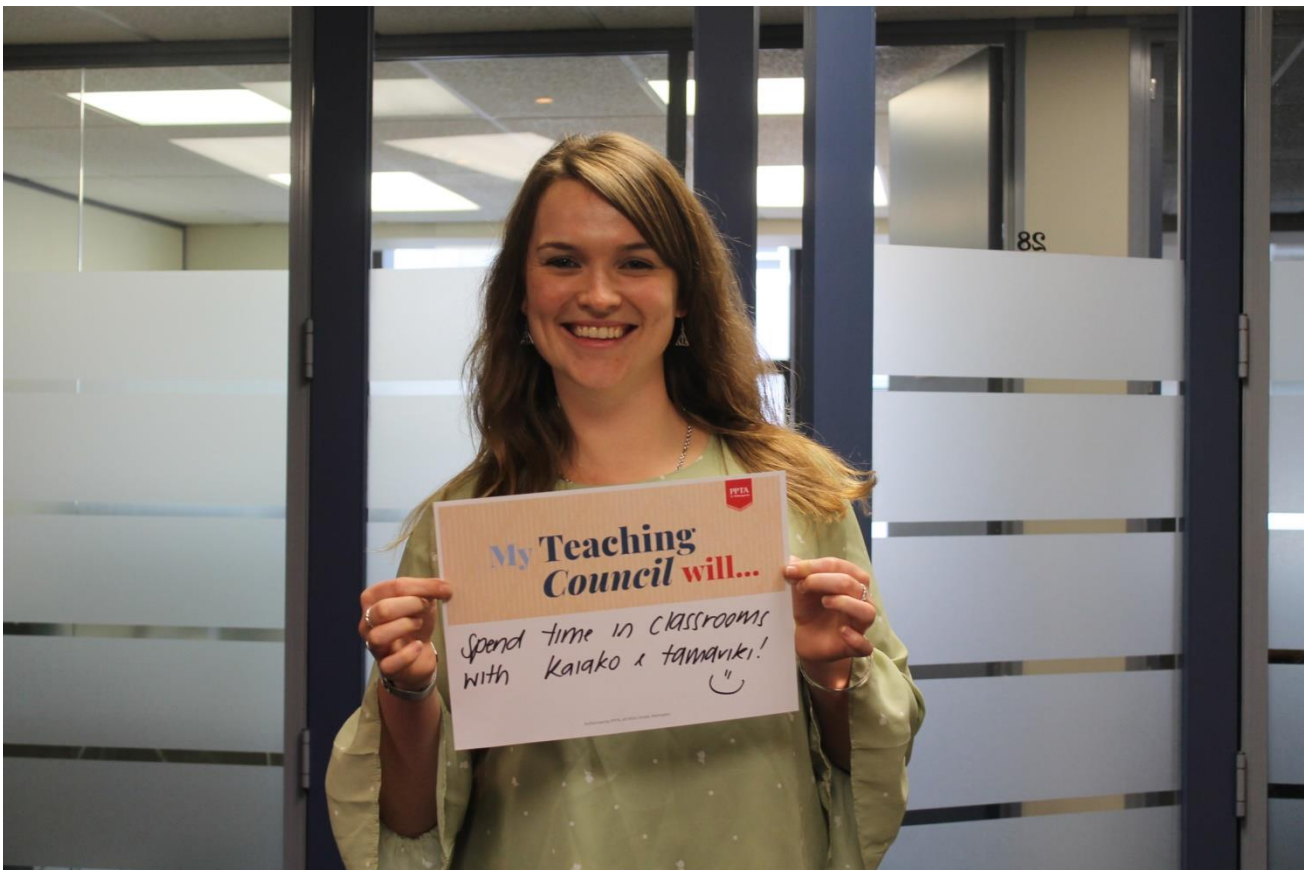




PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

# A COUNCIL FOR TEACHERS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report is received.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 For more than a decade PPTA Te Wehengarua has sought to work with the Teaching Council (and its predecessors) to create a system that provides a quality service that meets teachers' needs. These efforts have not been successful, as confirmed beyond all doubt this year. The council badly misjudged the timing and tone of its communications, conducted a disingenuous consultation process, and announced a new fees structure that is inequitable and unreasonable. The continued claims by the council that they are the "professional body for teachers" and able to speak for them, whilst at the same time ignoring teachers' concerns about ever expanding functions and costs of the council, have led to us to the point where teachers have lost confidence in the Teaching Council. It's time for a new model.

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## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (the current Teaching Council) is the fourth registration body for teachers.

2.2 The Teacher Registration Board was created in 1989 as part of the Tomorrow's Schools reforms, as a body to register and discipline teachers. In 2002, it was replaced by the New Zealand Teachers Council. The Council's purpose as an Autonomous Crown Entity was set down as "*to provide professional leadership in teaching, enhance the professional status of teachers in schools and early childhood and contribute to a safe and high quality teaching and learning environment*". The seeds of future trouble were thus sown in this wide-reaching, vague legislative mandate.

2.3 In 2015, the Teachers' Council was replaced by the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Council), also known as EDUCANZ. Changes to the council were introduced that remain deeply unpopular:

- no accountability to the profession;
- ability to raise fees at the council's discretion, with ongoing increases in running costs to be funded entirely by teachers;
- increased purpose and functions; and
- auditing 10% of appraisals.

2.4 In 2017, changes were made to address some of the concerns raised by teachers and their unions. The council was renamed the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand and the governing body increased from 11 to 13 members, seven of whom were elected teacher members.

Nonetheless, a significant number of the concerns raised in 2015 remained unaddressed, and the Teaching Council continued to expand its role, whilst forcing ever increasing fees on the profession.

- 2.5 Ongoing concerns about the direction of the Teaching Council came to a head at the start of 2020 and worsened as the year progressed. On 28 January, the first day of the school year, teachers received an email announcing the intention to increase fees from \$221. The Teaching Council only wanted consultation on two options, either \$470 for everyone or \$300 for PCTs and \$500 for everyone else. In response, the PPTA called branch-based paid union meetings to confirm that teachers opposed these proposed fees increases, to authorise further actions, and to allow teachers time to make submissions on the proposed changes. These meetings took place at the end of February, and in total the Teaching Council received more than 20,000 submissions.

On 14 May, the first day back at school under COVID alert level 2, the announcement was made that certification would move from triennial to annual, and come at a blanket cost of \$157 per year. PPTA branch meetings were held and a vote of no confidence was taken in the current model of the Teaching Council.

Executive met via Zoom on 14 June 2020 to consider what a new body, in which teachers could have confidence, might look like. They endorsed a new model which focussed on core functions relating to ITE, teacher registration and compliance with the code of professional conduct.

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### 3. THE NEW MODEL

- 3.1 The Teaching Council remains an independent statutory body.
- 3.2 Reduce the number of board members from 13 to 11.<sup>1</sup> This is a slightly smaller board than many of our Australian counterparts<sup>2</sup> but decreasing the number would be a way of reducing costs and therefore fees to teachers, and allows for flexibility in negotiating a successful outcome.
- 3.3 Seven elected sector members (elected by each sector, accordingly):
- one teacher, and one centre leader, representing the early childhood education sector;
  - one teacher, and one principal, representing the primary education sector;

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<sup>1</sup> PPTA advocated for the increase from 11 to 13 to include greater representation of the secondary sector. Under this model, that representation is retained while the ministerial representation is greatly reduced.

<sup>2</sup> Australian states have professional teaching councils of varying from 7 – 17.

- one teacher and one principal, representing the secondary education sector; and
- one initial teacher education representative.

Four appointed members:

- One ministerial appointment.
- Three union appointments, one from each education sector union (NZEI Te Riu Roa, PPTA, TEU).

### 3.4 The purpose and functions of the Teaching Council

Changes to the legislation would be required to remove the elements that teachers consider to be outside the remit of a regulatory body.

Change the purpose statement to:

*The purpose of a teaching registration body is to set and maintain high standards for the teaching profession through the regulation of initial teacher education, registration and conduct processes. This is to ensure 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.*

Limit functions to:

- Setting expectations of teacher practice and behaviour (Code and Standards).
- Setting requirements for approving and monitoring Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes.
- Processing teacher registration and certification applications; and
- Managing complaints related to conduct and competence.

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.

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## 4. REDUCING COSTS

- 4.1 A “pared-down” Teaching Council serves two purposes. One is to keep the registration body out of the space of educational leadership where teachers do not feel it belongs. The other is to reduce costs. We can point to aspects that we believe will decrease the spending.
- 4.2 Streamlining conduct and competency proceedings. After the 2016 law change that introduced mandatory reporting, the number of cases referred to the Complaints Assessment Committee

(CAC) and Disciplinary Tribunal increased and these cases were taking as long as two years to make it through the system. The need to review this part of the legislation and undertake a range of changes to procedure is an area in which PPTA and the current Teaching Council are in agreement and work is currently underway on these changes.<sup>3</sup>

- 4.3 An audit of salaries for managerial staff. In 2019, the Teaching Council paid 12 “key managerial staff” a total of \$2,248,000, which is an average of just over \$187,000 each. Given that the top of the scale for teachers is \$90,000 (as of 1 July 2020) and principals in the largest schools receive \$161,000 (as of 20 August 2020), it is hard to justify that teachers then pay much higher salaries for council managerial staff out of their own pockets. A review of these salaries, and others that make up council’s 100-strong workforce, could potentially limit the costs associated with personnel, which are currently forecast to make up 57% of total operating costs of the council. Linking them to the teachers’ and principals’ pay scale may give a sense of equity and reduce costs.
- 4.4 Limiting of functions. The Teaching Council divides its operations into three areas: professional responsibility (conduct and competency), registration and contact centre (registration and certification) and professional leadership and teacher capability. It is this last area that we aim to reduce or eliminate, by removing reference to professional leadership in the legislation. These costs currently make up 27% of the Teaching Council’s forecasted costs. Removal of these services (such as the production of podcasts and the delivery of workshops) would make a significant difference to the costs that are passed on to teachers.
- 4.5 Automatic re-certification. Making the re-certification process automatic has two benefits. It reduces workload for all parties – teachers, principals and Teaching Council staff. It will also reduce the Teaching Council’s costs, and allow teachers to pay annually without having to participate in a low trust model that requires evidence and appraisal. This is the model used by the Ontario College of Teachers. Once initially registered, teachers’ certification is automatically renewed on annual payment, with no requirement to provide evidence that standards are being met.

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## **5. CAMPAIGNING FOR THE NEW MODEL**

### **5.1 Goal**

An independent regulatory body to manage teacher registration and conduct and competency.

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<sup>3</sup> HX20-004 Options to improve Teaching Council Conduct processes.

## 5.2 Objective

Limit potential future unreasonable fee increases and compliance workload for teachers by altering the legislation that governs the current Teaching Council. This will limit it to managing teacher registration and conduct and competency, and therefore prevent it from usurping our role as the professional association for teachers.

## 5.3 Strategy

Our best chance of success is to use the momentum of the 2020 general election. Our strategy is to convince all political parties to commit to changing the form and function of the Teaching Council in the first 100 days of government.

As such, this is a political campaign and not a public one, and the actions outlined will differ from those used in the Bring out the Best campaign, in which public opinion was a key factor.

We are planning further action for next year should we be unsuccessful achieving our goals this year.

## 5.4 Pre-election campaign activities

Campaigning activities in the lead up to the campaign include:

- A letter to the Teaching Council, copied to the Minister of Education, advising that secondary teachers have no confidence in them.
- Briefing our sister unions (TEU and NZEI Te Riu Roa) and asking them to join our campaign.
- Writing to the Minister, explaining what we want and why, and letting him know we will be campaigning hard.
- Briefing all political party's education spokespeople and asking them to amend their education policies.
- Supporting members/branches/allies to campaign through letter writing, meetings and candidate panel evenings.
- Arranging meetings with local MPs to talk about our plans to change the Teaching Council.
- PPTA News stories
- Social media activities