

2018-10-02 speech to conference  
Joe Hunter, PPTA negotiating team member

Kia ora tātou o Te Wehengarua – ngā mihi i runga i te kaupapa matua o te wā.

PPTA is at the forefront of education – we model good practice, we are evidence-based, we advocate for thoughtful and coherent change. And now our profession is facing a unique challenge - the compounding and connected issues of worsening teacher shortages and excessive and growing workload.

Our country needs teachers; enough teachers; teachers with the skills, knowledge and empathy to bring out the best in every young person. And each one of those teachers need to be supported to do that.

To make this vision a reality, the government needs to support us properly and treat us fairly. It is through the collective agreement that our terms and conditions of work are jointly agreed upon. Collective agreement negotiations are one time where we are equal partners with the government; we must take full advantage of this opportunity.

We now have a government that, like us, values a quality public education, a Prime Minister who speaks of kindness and compassion, of family-friendly policies, of supporting local public schools, and of lifting the wellbeing of our people.

Our goals this year are simple: solving teacher shortages and excessive workloads by negotiating fair pay and good working conditions. Our collective agreement is the only place where we can get the changes we need, and the ability to make those changes stick.

When we met with members covered by the Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement in term 2 this year we received unprecedented support for the claim we, on the executive, were suggesting. The resolve was clear and strong in terms of where our colleagues are at and what matters.

I'd like to talk a little bit now about the negotiations. We are pleased that we are able to bring this offer from the government directly to you, our delegates, at annual conference.

We are sharing this with you, so that all our members can see exactly what the government's response to our issues is.

PPTA has worked long and hard to ensure that the ministry of education not only understands our issues but also understands that they are fair, reasonable and evidence-based. There is extensive research that shows that we can't fix teacher shortages without improving pay and conditions.

We presented our claim to the ministry team, with each and every point open to their scrutiny and interrogation. We ensured adequate time and support for the ministry to carefully consider the claim. Through a series of meetings – eight full days so far, our

understandings have been teased out. We have provided costings, explanations and descriptions.

Following this, the Ministry team presented their offer.

So – I know you've had the chance to read the offer, and many of you will have analysed it, talked about it, gathered feedback from your colleagues and probably ended up with some strong and well-founded opinions on it. Before we get into that, I think it's worth re-emphasising the key points of the government's offer.

The Ministry's rationale for their **salary offer** is based on being consistent with salary increases across the state sector and within the fiscal constraints of the government. They do not believe that an increase in the order of what we are seeking is what is required to fix the teacher shortages.

The offer is a world away from our claim, but worse than this, it demonstrates a complete lack of acknowledgement that inadequate teacher pay is one of the main drivers of teacher shortages.

As for the **middle management and senior management allowances**, the ministry has provided no rationale as to why they have increased the allowance by 40 percent and not the 50 percent we claimed.

The way in which the ministry has constructed the salary increase and management allowance offer may be their way of trying to limit flow-on costs to our primary colleagues. This is likely given there has been nothing in the offer for management units which are subject to the NZEI entrenchment clause.

The offer of a **three year term** is no surprise. This position is to establish stability across the state sector, to take them deep into the term of this government and into the next. We will continue to make our case for a one year term.

Now to the **Māori Immersion Teacher Allowance**. The wording in the offer is from the Primary Teacher's Collective Agreement. We advocate using the wording from the Area Schools agreement. It better reflects the intended use of the immersion programme categories.

Our claim for the **High Priority Teacher Supply Allowance** was for the difference in payment between fully certificated and provisionally certificated teachers to be removed. The ministry offer does include this, but there is still negotiation to be had regarding the wording. The ministry does not acknowledge the specific targeted purpose of the allowance. The government's view is that the 2018 budget supply initiatives will address those issues.

There are a few parts of the ministry's offer that do address the problem of excessive workload. We welcome the **15 percent increase to the number of middle management allowances**; it's something that we have advocated for in numerous forums over quite some time.

The proposed changes to the ratio of **fixed term / permanent allocations**, and who they are allocated to, has been proposed in a number of previous negotiations and should be rejected. This is also a part of the offer where the negotiating team believes the ministry is targeting provisions that will not incur the cost of flow-on to primary teachers.

PPTA sought to address the gendered language in the current **parental leave** clauses and update them in line with the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act. Many of our amendments have been accepted by the ministry, but we will need to continue to negotiate on the wording.

The government's offer contains a significant clawback. The ministry wants to make the **parental grant** payable upon return to work, not when the baby is born! The purpose of the grant is to assist with the costs of preparing for the arrival of a baby and immediately after the birth. The ministry's rationale for this change is that paid parental leave is a substitute for the grant... Let's be clear conference, this is harking back to a bygone era and is an insulting and embarrassing attempt to create a pitiful government saving at the cost of our whānau.

Our claim to increase the number of **leave days for partners** to attend the birth of their child, from two to five days has not been included in the offer. The ministry has moved a little though – the clause would now apply to all teachers regardless of their employment status.

The ministry claimed for a reorganisation to the **surplus staffing and merger provisions** in the agreement. PPTA's Surplus Staffing Taskforce has done a significant amount of work on this and has secured some improvements to this area.

A ministry claim about **hours of work** is hard to understand. It wants to enshrine in our collective agreement that teachers may, or may not, be required to work 40 hours a week. I know! It makes absolutely no sense and is unacceptable.

The ministry's claim about **conduct and discipline** should also be rejected.

Obviously, there are a number of **our claims** that have not been included at all in the offer. The offer does not include

- an increase to the value of units,
- more non-contact time for teachers and unit holders,
- an accommodation allowance,
- the payment of Education Council fees,
- careers advisor increases or time allowance,
- service increment increases,
- salary bar for short term relievers, and
- a working party for guidance counsellors.

The ministry has made numerous references to the government's Education Work Programme. They believe the major issues of supply and workload will be addressed through this programme.

Worryingly, they also believe our collective agreement is a separate and unrelated document that has little connection to creating a significant improvement to supply and addressing workload issues. They tell us that they are exploring "other remedies" instead.

We need a comprehensive approach with some immediate action.

**This offer does not address teacher shortages and excessive workload.**

That's why we, your representatives on the executive, are recommending that PPTA rejects this offer.

We have also called for paid union meetings in week's four to six of term four.

We recommend that this conference calls on the government to make a significant improvement to the offer, in time for members to consider it at the meetings in November. If an improved offer is not forthcoming, or if the offer is unacceptable, those meetings will be to vote on the next step, which is industrial action.

So, now you have two recommendations to discuss and vote on.

I want to hear your views, and what you're hearing from your regions on the offer – and following that we'll take the vote.