

PPTA NEWS

The magazine of New Zealand secondary teachers



Branch chair goes
above and beyond
– pg 4

PPTA News



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An opportunity to reshape our world

PPTA president Jack Boyle looks to the future after a nationwide lockdown.



Jack Boyle | NZPPTA President

Teachers have made a huge collective effort alongside the rest of our country over recent weeks. Following the unprecedented decision to implement a nationwide lockdown, and being tasked with supporting learning from home since late March, we have all had to work together (from our bubbles) to achieve a common purpose – keeping each other safe during a global pandemic.

While we have not had to be on the front lines during Level 4 in the same way as health professionals or supermarket workers – we have certainly been doing our part. All of us across the communities of Aotearoa have. And the signs are that together we have not only flattened the curve of infection but smashed it.

We will meet these challenges

Of course there is much more to do. For each of us the essential work of supporting children and their whānau will continue. In fact, providing structure and connection alongside the necessary learning opportunities for young people will be more important this year than ever. For most it will be balancing our more traditional teaching tasks with other responsibilities – including trying to respond to the social and emotional impacts of the lockdown on the children and whānau we are connected with. For a time some of us will continue to work digitally. For all of

us it will be new...and challenging. But by staying connected and putting the wellbeing of children, our communities and each other at the forefront we will meet these challenges – just as we have as a country met the challenge of Covid-19.

For many of us focusing on what is immediately in front of us is more than enough to be going on with. It's perfectly understandable for teachers to be concerned about the impacts on learners completing their NCEA or how certain groups of learners might be able to catch up on what they might have missed in their learning.

A focus on collaboration

To a certain extent we've been doing that at PPTA too, by focusing on health and safety, equity and wellbeing to underpin our collective response to the tasks we have needed to undertake at Levels 4 and 3 (and not feeding the media panic by making alarmist statements or unjustified demands).

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History shows us that after a crisis or calamity there is an opportunity to reshape our world anew.
.....

But for those of us who have time and space to juggle yet another thing, perhaps what will emerge is a focus on collaboration, the collective good and an opportunity to influence our shared future in ways that are more equitable and more sustainable.

The Overton Window

What I'm talking about is the Overton Window I spoke about at our Issues and Organising Conference at the start of this year.

History shows us that after a crisis or calamity there is an opportunity to reshape our world anew. For instance, following the World Wars in the early 20th Century there was a noticeable shift in the ideology of social services from one of 'social change' to one emphasizing 'individual' change (and often blaming the victims for not adjusting to degrading social conditions). In the ensuing years

several different social movements, from civil rights to women's rights from LGBTQI+ to disability rights and equal employment opportunities grew as collective responses to this dominant individualist ideology. The same will happen in response to Covid-19.

Education will not be immune

In some countries a panicked population will be sold on the necessity for radical changes including attacks on social protections to avoid economic apocalypse. In others the old hegemony will be weakened or out-numbered by a new coalition of common interest.

Education will not be immune. Of course, quite what the "new normal" will look like for children, schools or communities is uncertain. We know Covid-19 has shone a light on many systemic inequities and the way New Zealand has chosen to respond, for instance by connecting more whānau and ākonga to the internet, may provide green shoots for a fairer future. But at the same time the mushrooming of new technologies, assessment platforms and expectations for on-going digital learning in our schools could just as easily exacerbate the inequality that already exists if we don't work calmly, slowly and collectively to consider the benefits, the potential and the costs.

A collective reimagining

And we have an election at some stage in the not too far away. The idea that some families might have laptops and internet connections funded by the state or that teachers should be able to access uncapped data as a tool of trade, while understood during a time of crisis, is likely to be revisited by politicians or the public. Some will call it socialism (as if that was a bad thing).

Either way, public awareness of how socio-political conditions impact the wellbeing of individuals and communities will be at the forefront of political discussions here in Aotearoa for years to come and we, as teachers and leaders, as a collective, have the opportunity to advocate for which way our country goes.

I hope those of you who can take the opportunity to be part of the collective reimagining that just might be possible.

20 years of supporting teachers recognised

Tangaroa College branch chair Imeleta Faumuina has received the Guy Allan award for branch activism.

A PPTA branch chair who has gone above and beyond to support her members is the latest recipient of the Guy Allan award for branch activism.

For nearly 20 years Imeleta Faumuina has been either branch chair or secretary for Auckland’s Tangaroa College, coordinating, supporting and organising branch activities.

She has provided individual and collective support, including coming up with innovative ways to encourage involvement with PPTA, such as organising breakfast meetings where members are provided with a meal.

Going out of her way to serve, help, and support

Imeleta goes above and beyond what most would do in her position, which is what encouraged branch member Faleata Valesi to nominate her for the award.

“She goes out of her way to serve, help and support teachers. Imeleta is always thinking of ways to get members involved and attend meetings.

“Imeleta is continuously encouraging members to become more active in what is happening in our school as well as across the country. She is always pushing for members to actively respond, whether by attending meetings or writing letters,” he said.

Helping individuals

Imeleta has also been the support person for many teachers when they have needed to take action, Faleata said.

“Imeleta has supported many teachers over the years when needed by contacting the field officer or finding out what needs to be done in that particular situation.”

“Imeleta has been tireless in her work in our school to spread the good news of PPTA and the collective benefits for us all,” he said.

Service to the branch and members who teach in it

Imeleta received the award in a ceremony on March 4, attended by her branch in the Tangaroa College staffroom.

“The Guy Allan award is an award with a distinct purpose, service to the branch and the members who teach in it. Imeleta is the perfect embodiment of that,” PPTA general Secretary Michael Stevenson, who attended the ceremony with president Jack Boyle, said.

The award was presented by Tamaki Makaurau Auckland deputy regional chair Paul Stevens. Counties- Manukau regional chair Jan Snowden also presented her with a certificate and a book voucher.



Tangaroa College chair Imeleta Faumuina receives the Guy Allan award.

Waking up the West Coast

West Coast regional chair Vanessa Pringle talks with PPTA News about growing activism in an isolated region.

One of PPTA's most geographically spread regions has a full complement of branch chairs for the first time in 14 years.

West Coast regional chair Vanessa Pringle said there had been branch contacts in West Coast schools, but this is the first time the region has had this level of commitment and connectivity in the time she has been in the role.

And commitment is the operative word. The West Coast region covers a huge area and, while meetings are spread throughout the region, members travelling from places like South Westland or Karamea can be travelling three to four hours each way to attend.

"I do understand the difficulties – it's a big commitment for them to get to a regional meeting, particularly if they are three hours' drive away. If the meeting is after school it could be midnight by the time they get home."

The final school to join the regional branch chair team was Karamea Area School, and being an area school this was actually a pretty big deal, Vanessa said.

"It's particularly important for area schools where there might only be one or two PPTA members, it can get quite lonely. It can also be tough if you are in an area school with a non-union principal, she said. "We need to support these members and show solidarity with them."

Solidarity through strike action

Vanessa believes it was the strike action during the Secondary Teacher Collective Agreement negotiations last year that activated the region and that those gains were cemented by the branch based PUMs held shortly after to address issues around the teaching council.

"It fired people up in terms of working together, the strike and then having the PUMs about the teaching council straight after that. It was a good way of establishing and reinforcing networks," she said.

The strike brought the region together, Vanessa said. "For the first time in 10 years West Coasters really stepped up. We often feel very isolated here – that



actions don't really apply to us. The MPs are in Wellington so there's no point standing outside their buildings, but this time everyone was out in the main street. NZEI was out with us, we had community support. The strike certainly reenergised them" she said.

Vanessa believes the region reactivating goes back even further, to the joint PUMs with NZEI that defeated bulk funding. "We built those connections then and are seen to be a powerful force in the region," she said.

Running branch based PUMs with confidence

The way the branch based teaching council PUMs were run also gave branch chairs in the region confidence, Vanessa said.

They had the offer of support from her as regional chair as well as PPTA staff and executive members, but many felt confident with the material sent out to them by national office.

"All the information sent out by PPTA, the speeches, powerpoints and arguments made really clear, made it easy for them. It was clear what people needed to do as branch and regional chairs and if people had any questions staff were available to give it more context," she said.

"I made sure the chairs knew that if they needed support they could contact me. They could call up and

say 'it's the middle of the meeting and it's all gone to hell' and I would be available for them. I had the support of my principal to be able to do that if I needed to, but in the end they were all good."

Connecting during lockdown

The West Coast region has found ways to keep in touch during the Covid-19 lockdown, with their last regional meeting held online through Google Meet. It was a good way to get together without the travel, but Vanessa still feels face to face is best.

She also felt the region had a good digital connection with the union during lockdown, particularly through Bring out the Best member only Facebook page. "You know that it is the PPTA you are talking with, that the president, general secretary and staff are all on there. If people comment they know they are both talking to PPTA and that they are the PPTA," she said.

"Knowing that members are the PPTA and have the power to control the direction the association travels in is really important. The teaching council says it wants to be the independent voice of teachers, but it can't be. The PPTA is its members and is accountable to us in a way the teaching council will never be," she said.

Abridged – for full version visit ppta.org.nz

The council doesn't speak for or listen to teachers

PPTA branches consider a vote of no confidence in the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Secondary teachers throughout the country are considering a vote of no confidence in the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand.

At the time of publication PPTA branches were meeting in response to the council's announcement that it would increase fees by 115 percent and require annual certification from 2020. An announcement made just as schools were being reopened at level 2.

"Teachers are feeling let down, unheard and angry," PPTA president Jack Boyle said.

"Our concerns and the concerns of more than 90 percent of submissions the council received during its 'consultation' have been ignored – so, not a consultation at all," he said.

Rubbing salt into the wound of the fee increase was the added disadvantage of the increased workload of applying for certification every year, Jack said. "It shows no consideration for the fact this will disproportionately affect our most vulnerable teachers – new teachers, relievers, those on maternity leave and those with whānau commitments."

"They claim to have listened to our feedback that teachers want to be able to pay annually – twisting it to mean annual certification," he said.

Overwhelming member opposition to fee increase

In February this year more than 350 PPTA branches took part in union

meetings in response to the proposed fee increases.

Despite initially only being given three weeks to provide feedback at one of the busiest times of the school year, members pulled together to discuss the issues, make submissions to the council and vote on questions that would guide PPTA's next steps.

The results of the voting showed clear opposition to the fees increase and gave PPTA executive approval to take further action should the increases go ahead.

Teaching council must be limited to core functions

On top of the massive increase and shift to annual certification, the council had completely failed to acknowledge the heart of teachers' concerns, Jack said.

"The teaching council does not speak for teachers, nor does it listen to them. Teachers were very clear – we do not wish to fund the teaching council's expansion into areas beyond its remit.

Members were not opposed to the concept of a teaching council as such. They accepted the need for teachers to be registered and for there to be a disciplinary body to keep standards high. However they strongly objected to the size of the proposed increases and the bad faith consultation process.

Feedback showed teachers did not consider the council to be an appropriate location for professional learning and particularly did not want to fund a Centre for Leadership Excellence, Jack said.

"This only amplifies the mistrust teachers feel in a body that claims to represent their best interests while ignoring their concerns."

Our vision for a functioning teaching council

PPTA and the Secondary Principals' Council have a shared vision for a teaching council that meets the needs of teachers.

"The teaching council should be an independent body that processes teacher registration and certification and deals with conduct and competency issues. Nothing less and certainly nothing more, Jack said.

"The teaching council is not, and should not be, an institution that provides educational leadership or professional development. It should not provide workshops, professional conversation platforms, podcasts or videos. It should not be promoting itself online, providing email updates or conducting surveys. The teaching council should never purport to be the 'voice' of teachers," he said.

Principals were just as concerned as teachers about the implications of the teaching council changes and had been included in the nationwide meetings. Representatives of principal groups, SPC and SPANZ had also written to the council voicing their disappointment, Jack said.

Keep an eye on ppta.org.nz for the latest updates.



PPTA members have shown overwhelming opposition to the teaching council's plans

Undermining public education during a pandemic

For-profit consultant Crimson Education has been using the Covid-19 pandemic to tout its services.

While teachers and schools were finding ways to make online learning work during lockdown, a profit-making organisation was using the Covid-19 pandemic to undermine them.

Crimson Education is a tutoring company that charges parents significant amounts of money to get their students into international universities.

Late last year it launched the Crimson Global Academy, an online high school for years 9 to 13 pushing an alternative to NCEA run by global education publishing giant Pearson.

As New Zealand went into lockdown Crimson ramped up its advertising, offering 'together we are strong – at the time of crisis' webinars, complete with union/collective inspired imagery.

In a press release Crimson offered to support the Ministry of Education to assist schools to transition online, while at the same time advertising its own school that openly challenged our national qualification.

There are certain things that should never be for profit

PPTA vice president Melanie Webber says making money out of education is morally reprehensible.

"I believe in public education. There are certain things that should never be for profit. Education and health are two of these."

Crimson Education's fees started at \$15,000 but were more likely to add up to between \$30,000 and \$60,000 with its tutoring and counselling services, she said.

She also believed Crimson's advertisements for their new online school were disingenuous, implying it had an established programme when it had only begun this year.

This is not learning

Melanie believed Crimson Education's tutors seemed to focus more on gaming the system for grades than education. "We have had situations where tutors (not specialised in the area they are tutoring in) have 'taught' students essays for their exams. This is not learning."



As recently as December last year the company's co-founder, Kiwi millionaire Jamie Beaton was defending against accusations it used untrained tutors.

Former Prime Minister Sir John Key's son Max was one of Crimson's tutors from 2015 to 2017 and Sir John Key himself has now joined the Crimson Global Academy online school board as an advisory member.

No real advantage

Crimson provided no real advantage to students wanting to apply to American universities that couldn't be gained for free through the American Embassy, Melanie said. "If you look at the numbers of students who were applying to and being accepted to US universities before the advent of Crimson and after, there is no difference," she said.

Melanie believed Crimson's services further imbalanced the playing field for students from low-income backgrounds.

The organisation's marketing involves offering 'scholarships' as prizes, targeting already very high achieving students to increase its profile and acceptance rates, she said.

Undermining NCEA

Melanie feels strongly about the organisation's attempt to undermine our national qualification by focussing on one run by a for-profit organisation. "They have chosen to use Pearson's Edexcel platform rather than NCEA. Pearson are educational profiteers," she said.

Inventing its own league tables

Crimson is also engaging in the

destructive practice of ranking schools, according to its own criteria.

This led to one school reassuring its parents by lashing out at the organisation in a newsletter.

"Some of you may have read the New Zealand Herald article that purports to rank schools according to some random criteria developed by Crimson Education. Please note that Crimson is a business that charges significant amounts of money... at no point has Crimson asked for any data from us. We hope that you will see through Crimson's ranking as self-promotion, which of course it is," the newsletter says.

Disaster capitalism and edupreneurs

Crimson's push during the Covid-19 pandemic has echoes of the private profiteering threatened in the aftermath of the 2011 Canterbury quakes, when charter schools were being heavily promoted.

In response Parents Across America founder Karran Harper Royal gave a keynote speech to PPTA's 2012 annual conference on how the introduction of charter schools after Hurricane Katrina decimated the New Orleans public school system.

In 2016 Massey University professor John O'Neill conducted research for PPTA, NZEI and the New Zealand Principals' Federation on how international organisations at elite levels of society were shaping education policy in New Zealand.

Abridged – visit ppta.org.nz to read more on Karran Harper Royal's visit and professor O'Neill's research.

Bittersweet change from terrible events

Linwood College principal Richard Edmundson shares his thoughts on life and learning in Canterbury a year on from the March 15 mosque attacks.

Linwood College at Ōtākaro Tumuaki-principal Richard Edmundson has seen bittersweet changes in his community in the wake of both the March 15 terror attacks and the 2011 quakes.

A year on from the Al-Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre mosque attacks he shares his thoughts on how the education landscape in Canterbury has changed.

The events of March 15 had a cumulative effect on a community already recovering from the 2011 quakes, Richard said. “It would have had a shocking effect by itself, but it layers in existing fragility,” he said.

The attacks had a deeper effect on those students and staff who were already sensitive post-earthquake, he said.

“It adds a whole different context to the world our children live in. Students are constantly under pressure and that’s their normal. Psychologists say this is the case for many people in Christchurch.”

New ways of understanding

There had been some excellent post-quake research done, in East Christchurch in particular, which is relevant for students affected by the shootings as well as the current Covid-19 crisis, Richard said.

University of Canterbury associate professor of health sciences Kathleen Liberty had conducted studies into how the mental health of children suffering post-earthquake stress dramatically improves with small changes to their school environment, while Dame Sue Bagshaw championed youth mental health through her work with PTSD-affected children now becoming teenagers.

In the wake of the terror attacks there had also been excellent work done by child trauma expert Nathan Mikaere-Wallace on how to talk with young people about the attacks.

“It’s not all ‘woe is us’ there are things we can do. We are learning about trauma informed practices, schools can get PLD on it and there is some excellent New Zealand research on it,” he said.



Being human isn’t enough

Richard feels for his staff and all teachers in Canterbury, who are now expected to be so much more than good teachers.

“What was considered standard good teaching won’t cut the mustard for these children. In this sort of environment to be a competent teacher you have to be on top of your game all the time, which adds more pressure in terms of workload and what is expected. In a sense it’s unfair to teachers when the students are bringing in outside tension and they have their own to deal with. It’s like being human isn’t enough.”

Increased police presence

The increased presence of armed police, and more recently police helicopters, was also part of Christchurch’s new normal, Richard said.

“The normalisation of police with guns is polarising. Some feel safer, and some less so.” At the time PPTA News spoke with Richard (close to the anniversary) a police helicopter flying around Christchurch was a normal sight. “It seems to be flying over particular suburbs more often than not,” had said.

“There’s no doubt there’s a need for it, and some people find it reassuring, but the noise of the helicopters and the compounding noise of sirens put many people on edge. Like when there’s an earthquake, we tense up.”

Creating connectedness

Richard believes there are four ‘posts’ schools and their communities in Canterbury are dealing with – post

colonialism, post neoliberalism, post-earthquakes and post mosque shootings.

Despite the above, he has seen the triumph of the human spirit with individuals, family, staff and boards of trustees looking to do what they can do support each other and creating connectedness through whakawhanaungatanga.

“Before the quakes we had the Tomorrow’s Schools attitude - 2500 self-managing schools in their own little autocratic fiefdom. It was each school for themselves, declaring what they thought was the right thing for their community without really knowing,” he said.

Christchurch has since collectively realised that working together as a network is the best way for the school community to do well, he said.

“There’s absolutely no doubt the Christchurch schooling community is more aware of the impact their actions have on the rest of the network,” he said.

In the secondary sector all Christchurch schools had signed a memorandum of understanding that they would work towards an equitable and sustainable education community, Richard said.

It was a wonderful result of terrible events and gave him hope for the future.

“It helps us remember that schools are healthy and wonderful places. Parents and new teachers coming into the profession are more savvy and aware. They understand the bigger picture and are committed to doing things right,” he said.

Teacher only days and NCEA changes

Temporary changes to NCEA and confirmed teacher only days for 2020

Members will have seen in the news that changes to NCEA for this year have been announced.

We are very pleased that PPTA's unremitting advocacy has resulted in such a measured, timely and practical result. We hope you will see your feedback reflected in the new learning recognition credits.

The changes reach a good balance for teachers and learners, and will support planning for the rest of the year.

Implications of changes for teachers and schools

The wellbeing of students and workload of teachers continue to be of paramount importance. Schools should now be focussing on adjusting courses as appropriate to accommodate the reduced credit requirements over the remainder of the year. There are several ways this could happen but not all of these would work for all students, nor indeed for all schools as there would be timetable implications for some options.

- A blanket reduction of credits across all courses may work for some students but may not provide the best opportunities for students to complete a cohesive programme.
- Reductions might happen for some students in some subjects and for other students in other subjects.
- Some students might be better to drop an entire subject rather than bits of each subject.

Schools will not need to run catch up classes

Schools will not need to run catch up classes to complete courses and assessments missed during the lockdown

If there are exceptional cases, (for example if there are particular pre-requisites at level 3 to meet university course entry requirements) and there remains a need for catch up work which cannot be accommodated by adjustments to the NCEA programme for the remainder of the year, then teacher participation in additional classes must be voluntary and cannot be a requirement.

- Payment from the Board of Trustees for additional hours can be sought under the overtime provisions of the STCA and ASTCA



NCEA changes recognise impact of Covid-19

- Teacher workload must be the first consideration and therefore relievers should be utilised wherever possible – or part time teachers picking up additional hours if appropriate.
- It is a breach of the PPTA code of professional ethics to offer additional tuition to another teacher's students without the agreement of their regular teacher; and seek payment from your students for additional tutoring.

Subject Association support

NCEA courses are likely to need to be adjusted for the remainder of this year to reflect the lower credit requirement for completion of level 1-3.

The PPTA has approached the subject associations and asked them to:

- Help teachers prioritise the key standards to offer and,
- Where practicable encourage schools to reduce the number standards they offer
- Provide resources and assessments for those standards

Change to school timetables

Some schools may decide to change the school's timetables to meet the needs of the students. Now that schools are largely back to normal any changes are subject to proper change management processes, which involve consultation with teaching staff.

PPTA advice for dealing with the changes in different situations and additional detail from NZQA can be found at ppta.org.nz

If you have any questions or concerns about what's happening at your school, please get in touch with your field officer.

Teacher only days - SPC and SPANZ announcement

As part of the settlement of the secondary teachers' collective agreement last year, the Tripartite Accord between NZEI, PPTA and the Ministry of Education approved eight teacher only days to support the implementation of changes to NCEA. There were to be two days in 2020, three in 2021, and three in 2022.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the Accord group, along with the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ), and New Zealand Secondary Principals' Council (SPC), have agreed to make the following changes to the yearly allocation:

- There will be no teacher only day in August 2020. Schools and students need this time for teaching and learning.
- There will be a teacher only day in November 2020 which will occur while senior students (Years 11, 12 and 13) are sitting their external exams.
- The focus of the teacher only day in November will focus on changes to NCEA. Details will be confirmed closer to the time.
- The teacher only day originally scheduled for August 2020 will now be used in 2022. This means that the eight days will now be allocated as follows: one day scheduled for 2020, three for 2021, and four for 2022.

Networking, learning and collaborating at I and O

A look inside PPTA's Issues and Organising conference.

“Our values are strong. Our union is powerful. We can change the world,” PPTA president Jack Boyle told activists gathered at PPTA's annual Issues and Organising conference.

Held in Wellington on March 7-8, more than 170 PPTA members, including teacher trainees, were able to sink

their teeth into the crunchier issues facing education.

Appraisal, wellbeing at school and our union led PLD were among the many topics discussed. Keynote speaker British academic and writer professor Gregor Gall spoke about how unions could maintain forward momentum and members learned how to use the science of story to create a better future through New Zealand researcher

and communicator Dr Jessica Berentson-Shaw.

The tables were then turned through an un-conference session – a series of participant-driven workshops, where members shared their expertise or facilitated discussion on topics they wished to know more about. As you can see from these images I and O is a great place for networking, information gathering and collaborating.



Trainee teachers and the challenges of the profession

Teacher trainee Ben King shares his experiences at PPTA's Issues and Organising conference, which was opened to trainee teachers for the first time this year.

This year, for the first time, trainee teachers were invited to join the PPTA Issues and Organising conference. PPTA News speaks with Auckland University of Technology teacher trainee Ben King about his experiences.

How did you find out about the Issues and Organising conference?

I found out about the conference from my partner who is an active PPTA member. I didn't know very much about it, but thought it would be a good experience and that I would meet some new people who were dedicated to secondary education. I wasn't disappointed.

How did you find the experience?

I found the experience very rewarding and above everything, fun! Everyone was very welcoming and approachable and I felt that they valued having us student teachers there. If I felt a bit disorientated or confused, no one hesitated to kindly show me where to go.

I think it is important for student teachers to understand the issues and challenges that are facing the profession so that when they enter into it they are aware that there is a large organisation that has recognised them and is working to rectify them and that you can be a part of that change.

What sessions/workshops did you find the most useful?

I found the workshop on the changing of the decile system very interesting. I didn't know an awful lot about the system beforehand, and the workshop helped to clarify how it worked and why it needed to change.

It also challenged some of my previous understanding of the system. As I will be entering the profession at the same time the decile system is being changed, I think it was valuable to understand the new system and how it will affect the schools I will be working in.

What do you think we could do to make the conference more appealing for teacher trainees?

I think it could be made appealing by the same method for increasing membership among student teachers... advertise! By which I mean, I had no



Ben King (back row, third from right) joins PPTA NETs and teacher trainees at I and O.

idea that membership was even open to student teachers until my partner told me.

I think if more student teachers were aware of this, then many more would be happy to join up and come along. It is comforting as a student teacher to know that there is an organisation that is working for them and that there is this huge resource of connections and advice that is available to them.

How are you feeling about entering the profession?

Naturally I am feeling a combination of excitement and apprehension. I think to say anything else would smack of arrogance! I am under no false impressions that teaching is an easy profession, especially considering the challenges that the profession faces.

However, I have known for a long time that it is the profession I want to dedicate myself to so I am excited to get into the classroom. Hopefully the challenges of Covid-19 will highlight to the community the importance of teachers and that that will have a carry-on effect in addressing the issues that teachers have had to put-up with.

Perhaps the parents and community members who have undervalued teachers in the past will have a new perspective after trying to home-school for six weeks.

What are your future plans?

My future plans are to finish my qualification and to get a job!

What has it been like being in lockdown as a trainee teacher?

Being a student teacher under lockdown has been quite challenging.

I had the first day of my first practicum at Rangitoto College on the day before schools closed for Level 4. It was quite a shock from having mentally prepared for two weeks of practicum only to suddenly have four weeks of holiday.

The university (AUT) was a bit slow in communicating to us about how our course was going to change which led to quite a lot of frustration among my colleagues. Some assignments were changed, others postponed or pushed back.

I think not having that full first practicum has knocked the confidence of my cohort as we were raring to get into the classroom only to be thrust into idleness and isolation. Every teacher I have spoken to has said that practicum is where you really learn about the job, and I think it is true; you can only learn so much from books and lectures so the practicums are essential to the course.

With the return to Level 2, I think many of us are worried that our presence as student teachers in the classroom will only add to the stress of our ATs and the students so I am glad that the university has pushed back our practicum dates to allow time for schools to get back into a rhythm before we come in.

Teacher trainees are eligible for free PPTA membership while they are training. They can join online via ppta.org.nz or by contacting our membership team at membership@ppta.org.nz

Opportunities and wake up calls

PPTA News speaks with members about teaching and learning during the Covid-19 crisis.

Rachelle Hautapu is Kaiako Reo Māori at Te Kāreti Tamatāne o Te Whanganui-a-Tara – Wellington College, a position she started this year.

“I te taha o tōku matua, nō Ngāti Porou, nō Te Aitanga-ā-Hauiti awau. I te taha o tōku Kōkā, ka tū ake au hai Pākehā. Ko Rachelle Hautapu tōku ingoa. On my father’s side, I’m from Ngāti Porou and Te Aitanga-ā-Hauiti on the East Coast. On my mother’s side, I’m Pākehā. However, I grew up on the Kapiti Coast. Aside from several years overseas, I lived my adult life in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. I’m a Kaiako Reo Māori at Te Kāreti Tamatāne o Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington College). I worked previously at Porirua and St Mary’s Colleges, and while training, I had a year-long placement at St Patrick’s College (town).”

An opportunity to think deeply about her role as a teacher

Rachelle says the Covid 19 rāhui (restrictions) provided her with an opportunity to think deeply about her role as a teacher. “To create, adapt and update resources that (I hope) are culturally sustainable, meaningful and may work on a long-term basis, an opportunity I wouldn’t normally have. I’ve also had the benefit of lots of online conversations with other Kaiako Reo Māori to debate and think these things through with,” she said.

“Although no one in their wildest dreams would wish for the circumstances we find ourselves in, overall I’ve loved this period of time for several reasons. First and foremost I got to spend quality and quantity time with my three boys. I note though that my immediate and wider whānau and friends have not experienced major illness, death or job losses. My heart goes out to those who have suffered in any way. I have loved the change of pace and time to reflect on our normal lives.”

Resources and support

Rachelle’s teacher friends have offered advice and teaching resources, she said. “Some amazing people have popped up online to support Kaiako Reo Māori – shout outs to Ako Panuku and the Digital Teaching Te Reo Māori Facebook page.”



Rachelle Hautapu

The support from Wellington College had been amazing Rachelle said. “I am utterly grateful that our senior leadership team is humane, considered and pragmatic. The quality of communication has been outstanding, as has their constant, unwavering support. I am extremely fortunate to be working with such an exceptional group of people. I do not envy them their responsibilities.

Every student’s home situation is different.

Rachelle said it had been a wake-up call to see who did and didn’t work with her online.

“In several instances, students I’ve had a tougher time getting to know and figure out what makes them tick have really responded to an online environment. Again, in several instances, students I work well with in class have not been as responsive,” she said.

“I think the key is to be empathetic. Every student’s home situation is different. Some will have responsibilities at home whilst carrying out their school work, so flexibility is key. Some are worried about a parent or parents who are essential workers. Some dislike the physical absence of grandparents and elders, friends and other important people in their lives.”

NCEA flexibility is a simplistic argument.

At the time of being interviewed Rachelle was extremely concerned about the ‘business as usual’ approach

by NZQA, especially in terms of equity. “Even though the Ministry of Education has gone to great lengths to provide devices, many households are still without one or sharing devices or without online connections. What about children and teenagers living in marginal situations? What about the psychological impact of Covid-19 and the ongoing effects of it post-rāhui? A ‘business as usual’ approach will not work when this is not ‘business as usual,’” she said.

“I think it’s easy to say that NCEA is a flexible qualification – that’s true – however, most teachers will have pre-planned their term-long or year-long programmes based on their or students choices of standards. The time to adapt those programmes and/or switch standards was minimal, albeit for the best of reasons, and at a time when they had reason to be concerned for their personal safety and that of their loved ones. Flexibility is a simplistic argument.”

Too much emphasis on assessment

A huge issue lockdown has thrown up is the over emphasis on assessment, Rachelle said. “This period makes it apparent how much emphasis there is on assessment and how little there is in the development of the New Zealand Curriculum’s key competencies – thinking; using language, symbols and texts; managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing.”

“The amount of time and resource given to curriculum per se versus the so called ‘soft-skills’ is, in my opinion, out of balance,” she said.

Focussing on opportunities the rāhui has offered.

Rachelle’s advice to readers is to focus on the positive outcomes of the situation. “For myself I find it easier to focus on the opportunities the rāhui has offered us,” she said.

“There have been winners from this, not the least of which are most families, in terms of spending time together – and ourselves in terms of having time to reflect and change the course of our lives, and the environment.

“Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawhū tonu.”

Abridged: For Rachelle’s full story see ppta.org.nz

Navigating the Lego-field

One member shares their struggle with work-family balance during lockdown

Covid-19 has showcased how teachers can adapt to a crisis, but it has also thrown up equity, engagement and personal issues.

A number of members have been in touch with PPTA News about their experiences with remote teaching and learning. Sharon's* story echoes many we have heard.

My workspace is one half of a small table in a room shared with a nine-year-old. Getting to it is something of a minefield – or rather Lego-field. Zooming in the early morning or late afternoon works best, otherwise the sun is rather blinding. I have a TELA leased ancient Toshiba and have bought myself a graphics tablet so I can write equations and diagrams on the 'board' for my senior maths students.

The problems are going to be similar for many people working from home, so we can't complain too much, after all, we have jobs. But there are some peculiarities for teachers.

We are expected to provide our own set up – schools are not providing the equipment that we need to do the job, but parents are still asking us to scan/photo work and are expecting live teaching and videos of key teaching points. People are cobbling together innovative solutions to enable them to record classes and they are buying hardware and software to support their work with no hope of their costs being recovered.

Our "clients" only work from 9-3 and most schools seem to be trying to keep a school timetable, so we cannot do our contact time in the evening. That's great if you don't have children to look after. But if you have your own, particularly primary aged, children to look after you are being asked to do two jobs simultaneously.

Inevitably this means that the paying job gets done – because I can't say to my school that I can't work because I have a child to care for. Their answer would be, well, send him to school, but his school chose not to open because I was the only parent who needed them to open.

My own son has gotten used to just having hours a day when he is ignored because I am working with my school students. There is no other adult in the house to entertain him.

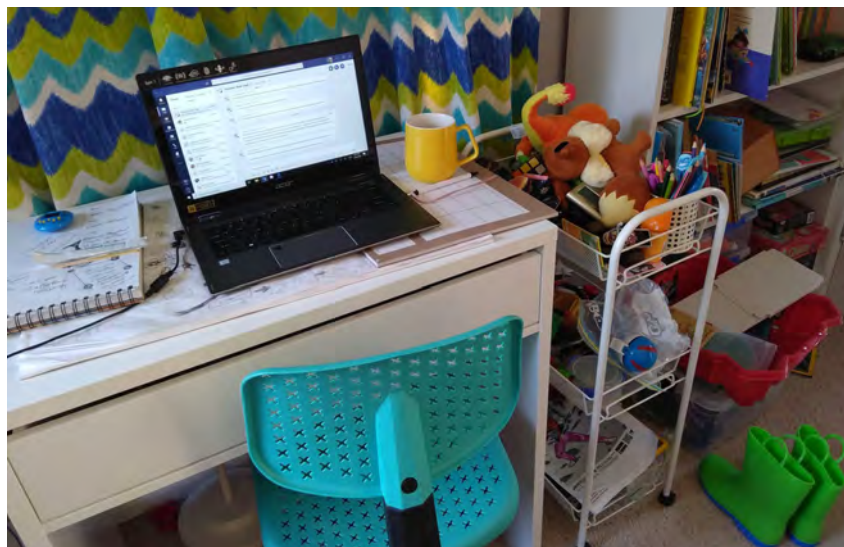
Te Kura is used to doing this and has suggested we are all trying to do it the wrong way. That we should not be

replicating our class set ups but should instead work asynchronously. It has really excellent class materials, with recordings and interactive materials, but has taken years to develop these resources – and its staff don't work from home doing two jobs at once.

**Not her real name*

Home offices PPTA style

From sharing desks with Pokemon to very attentive fur-colleagues, PPTA members working from home set ups were many and varied. Below are some examples, visit ppta.org.nz for more.



Top: Pokemon and dinosaurs kept Sarah Parder company while she worked during lockdown.

Bottom: Music teacher Jane Egan gets creative with her home office.

You need every member of your school community

Kapiti College principal Tony Kane shares his experience of school leadership under Covid-19.

Kapiti College principal Tony Kane is proud of how his school community has stepped up to face the Covid-19 crisis.

“I have felt really proud of the way our teachers - and I think this is true across the profession as a whole - just got on with the job and managed the shift to online teaching,” he said.

“We learned about moving to level 4 on the Monday, then met as a staff on Tuesday morning and discussed what we needed to do. Our ICT experts led professional development sessions over the next couple of hours and we were into preparation. By first thing Wednesday, there were learning materials up for every student.

“We tried to remain the activators of learning, keeping in touch with the kids through online face-to-face meetings, as a class, in smaller groups and even individually.”

Surveys and discussions with students, as well as looking at what they were producing, suggested they had adapted very well, he said. “We have all been learning to balance our loads, whether teachers or students, and to let things go that are not important.”

Principals need to support the wider community

Tony says the key role for him as principal was to ensure there was

accurate and timely information to whānau, students and teachers.

“In a situation such as this, you depend upon every member of the school community, so in that sense everyone has stepped up,” he said.

Tony stressed the importance of principals supporting the community good as well as providing support for their students. “Not all of us helped the profession by the response to the level 3 announcement. There was some anti-teacher backlash which was unfortunate. It is hard for people outside to see how hard teachers are working. They see a group still on full pay reluctant to help the community get back to work...I don't think it reflected what the vast majority of us were doing,” he said.

Ensuring safety at level 3

When it was announced that schools would reopen under level 3 for students who needed them the College immediately surveyed parents to find out whose needs it needed to meet.

“Again there was a balance between reassuring parents that we had safety systems in place and ensuring things would not be too draconian,” he said.

Community feedback had been very positive, he said. “We had a 99% response rate to the survey which is astonishingly good. The vast majority were keeping the kids home, but

appreciative of the school's efforts to make it easier for them to return if they needed to do so.”

To keep staff and students safe the school followed the Ministry of Education's “very comprehensive” guidelines. “Separate groups, regular use of hand sanitiser, temperature testing, PPE available if any doubt etc.”

Building the aircraft mid-flight

The rapidly evolving situation meant schools had to process a number of thorny issues they hadn't necessarily dealt with before, Tony said.

“We all launched into this so quickly that we have really not had time to work through all the ethical issues. For example, if I am using a Meet or a Zoom, I am potentially in a child's virtual bedroom. What is the risk here for both parties and how is this managed? What happens when kids go ‘silent’ online? How do we know whether too much pressure is being placed on a student? Pastoral care is much more complicated when you can't see the kids or don't know who is listening in or whether anything is being recorded.

“It isn't that a particular problem is emerging as a major issue, it just reflects the fact we are building the aircraft in mid-flight,” he said.

Abridged – for full version visit ppta.org.nz



Kapiti College principal Tony Kane is proud of how teachers managed the shift to online learning.

Feeling connected is fundamental to wellbeing

Secondary Principals Council chair James Morris shares his thoughts on the increasing role social media plays in how we connect.

Schools work hard to build connections between people: students, staff, families and community. I believe that doing this is key to being successful in educating our children. Feeling connected is fundamental to wellbeing.



James Morris

The more a student feels connected to their school the better their wellbeing and their learning is likely to be. In the same way a school connected to and supported by their local community brings benefits that are difficult for a school standing alone to achieve.

The speed and reach of social media is a benefit and a challenge

Social media is playing an increasingly central role in how we connect and communicate as a community, both locally and internationally. Social media provides excellent opportunities for

people to keep in contact, make links, trade and seek help.

The speed and reach of communicating via social media are both its benefits and its challenges. A key issue we face however is that individuals are able to make comments online that are hurtful and often untrue.

Such comments are made in a moment and generally without considered thought for the impact and damage. Others may then also choose to wade in with further vitriol and accusations. In a school community this can lead to significant hurt and fracturing of relationships that results in division rather than working together.

If personal attacks become the norm the whole community loses

Schools and their staff are in a central and often public role in their community. Due to professional standards, the targets of online attacks are often not in a position to be able to defend themselves. It also unfairly impacts their families.

If school staff and Board of Trustee members are fearful of being publicly pilloried, they will increasingly be unable to perform their jobs to the best of their ability. Good people may choose to leave their positions rather than work in such a climate. If this happens, the whole community loses.

If as a community we see such personal attacks as acceptable, then this becomes the norm and all individuals in the community risk being the target of them. One protection we

have is that individuals can also come to the support of others and express concern at online behaviour that they believe is unacceptable. In addition, the administrators of social media sites can be proactive in responding to damaging comment.

Building connections despite not always agreeing

There are laws of defamation and digital communication that may be breached and remedies can be found in this way; but such strategies are time consuming and costly and do not tend to repair the damage done. As adults we set the example to our children about what is right and wrong. They watch us closely and follow our lead. They will learn how to deal with conflict by seeing how we do it. If they see us publicly insulting others, then they will do this too.

It is OK to disagree with a decision; this is a fundamental right of our democracy, but people need to be kind to each other and challenge decisions in a respectful manner. Schools and school staff will make mistakes and decisions will be made that some do not agree with.

Whilst best efforts are made to avoid mistakes and disagreement, they will happen. All schools have published complaints procedures for dealing with these situations. If we can find ways to build connections, despite not always agreeing, will be doing a great service to our children's education.

This article was first published in Principals Today magazine.



Photo by Sara Kurfeß on Unsplash

The safety of our people comes first

PPTA's Māori Teachers' Conference and the Ngā Manu Kōrero secondary school speech competitions have been cancelled for 2020.

It is with the safety of our people in mind that PPTA made the call to cancel the annual Māori Teachers' Conference when New Zealand went into lockdown due to the Covid-19 crisis.

A major national event held in July every year, the conference is aimed at Māori teachers working across the curriculum, including guidance counsellors and transition teachers, teachers of Te Reo Māori and teachers involved in Māori medium education.

PPTA Apiha Māori Te Mākao Bowkett said it was with a heavy heart the cancellation of the Hui-ā-Tau was made but the priority was the safety of our people.

Kia tau i runga i te rangimārie.

Ngā Manu Kōrero 2020 cancelled

The Ngā Manu Kōrero secondary school speech competition regional coordinators' moved unanimously to cancel the regional and national competitions when it met in Te Whanganui-ā-Tara on March 19-20.

On behalf of the 2020 Ngā Manu Kōrero Regional Coordinators' Kōmiti Whakahaere Dr Te Mākao Bowkett said the decision was made in light of the Covid-19 crisis.

"This decision was made in the best interests and survival of our tamariki mokopuna, kuia koroua and whānau whānui. Ngā Manu Kōrero has an enduring essence that permeates within our important values of whakawhanaungatanga and aroha. Mā te Atua koutou e manaaki," she said.



Attendees at the 2019 Māori Teachers' Conference



PPTA
 NEW ZEALAND POST PRIMARY
 TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
 TE WĪHENGARUA

**Conference for
 provisionally
 certificated teachers**
9 - 10 July 2020

The Provisionally Certificated Teachers' Conference is now virtual. The Provisionally Certificated Teachers' Conference will still go ahead on July 9-10 but will be held in the digital space rather than face to face.

This conference is for secondary teachers, including those in area

schools, who are provisionally certificated and working towards becoming fully certificated.

We want to support our PCTs to have the best start possible in their teaching career so they can be successful. The conference will include session on what good induction and mentoring looks like, support with pedagogy and classroom management and be an opportunity to network (virtually)

with other PCTs and a panel of experienced, but still early career, teachers sharing their experiences and advice. We plan to make the conference as interactive as we can.

This conference will have free registration.

To register, visit the PLD fund section of the PPTA website.

Once you have registered, we will update you regularly on the status of the conference.

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 on 1 October 2020 (World Vegetarian Day)

New faces in the field

Introducing PPTA's newest field officers Marie Blackley and Ahmad Osama.



Marie Blackley

Architecture, anthropology, selling fish and teaching, Canterbury and Aoraki's newest field officer had a varied career before coming to work for PPTA.

Originally from Dunedin, Marie Blackley has lived in Christchurch for six years.

Before joining the team at PPTA's Christchurch field office she studied at Victoria University School of Architecture and became a project and construction manager, then returned to university (Otago) to complete a Graduate Diploma in Anthropology. After a brief stint as a fishmonger, she worked as a human resources manager and then assistant store manager for Woolworths New Zealand.

After completing her OE (which involved working as a chef, personal assistant and boat crew) she returned to New Zealand to retrain as a teacher, graduating in 2003 from Otago University College of Education.

Marie taught technology and graphics at Kaikorai Valley College in Dunedin, but after a spinal injury she broadened her subject areas to include French and mathematics as teaching in the workshop was no longer doable. Since moving to Christchurch in 2014 she has taught mathematics at Cashmere High School.

Marie has been involved with PPTA since she joined the association as a student teacher. "I have been the branch chair at both of my schools and on the regional committee for both Otago and Canterbury," she said.

In term 2 of 2019 Marie was appointed to a temporary field officer position to provide additional support in the wake of the Christchurch mosque shooting.

It was the passion of teachers that made her decide to apply for the fulltime field

officer role. "Teachers are so passionate about the success of their students and frequently make sacrifices because they care so much. I wanted to support teachers and make sure they are getting treated fairly," she said.

Marie is already providing that support. "I have met many very lovely PPTA members around the Aoraki and Canterbury regions and love that I have been able to help a few already."

She sees her biggest challenge as getting teachers to put their own needs first occasionally. "You can't help others unless you've put on your own oxygen mask."

Marie is proud to be a part of PPTA. "Every time I have been to the PPTA annual conference I am blown away by how much we, as an association, care about the education of our ākongā. I am proud to be part of an organisation that has this much passion and purpose," she said.



Ahmad Osama

The Central Plateau/Manawatū-Whangāi region's new field officer has a strong background in PPTA activism.

Ahmad Osama has been involved with PPTA from early on in his teaching career. He spent the majority of his time teaching at two schools – Hawera High School and, more recently, Aotea College.

"My first school was a great place to develop as a beginning teacher. At my last school I was a dean and an assistant Head of Department. I thoroughly enjoyed those roles and they gave me a good understanding of the complex issues teachers face," he said.

Ahmad taught science, focussing in biology and environmental science and

even did a year teaching a bit of junior maths. "I particularly enjoyed teaching junior science as it was great seeing students develop a passion in this area," he said.

Ahmad took on the roles of PPTA branch chair and Taranaki Network of Establishing Teachers representative during his second year teaching. "Being NETs rep was great. I was part of the Taranaki Regional Committee which had a great bunch of people who were very supportive," he said.

He also spent some time as treasurer for the Taranaki region, which he describes as a more challenging role. "I can still remember spending significant time trying to find where that last 58 cents had gone on the spreadsheet. I found it eventually!"

While teaching at Aotea College Ahmad was shoulder-tapped by Wellington executive member Kevin Greig who advised him of an upcoming regional chair vacancy. "It was a great opportunity to work with a passionate team on the Wellington Regional Committee and we achieved a lot together," he said.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved in a wide range of roles in PPTA where I have been able to represent members and advocate for them. I have appreciated the opportunity to be involved in planning events such as branch officer training and professional development opportunities which many members engaged with. I want to do more of this as a field officer so that I can encourage more members to take up the opportunities that allow them to get involved in their union," he said.

Ahmad started his field officer role just as the country went into lockdown due to Covid-19 so his first experiences in the job were remote. "Because I was in the classroom recently it does give me a good understanding of what teachers are facing in the online learning environment and the unique challenges it creates. I am looking forward to the challenge of supporting members in online teaching and the issues they will face as they support their students through this journey."

He was however most looking forward to getting out in the field to visit branches and meet member to support them with the issues they are facing.

Stability and support for victims of domestic violence

Advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers on domestic violence leave.

Domestic violence is an insidious and often hidden reality for many New Zealanders. There are many barriers that make it difficult for people experiencing violence to make changes to their situations, which make it difficult to safeguard themselves or their children.

Since April 1 2019 New Zealand has legal provisions to help employees dealing with the effects of domestic violence. The purpose of this legislation is to make it easier for people experiencing violence to continue their employment while dealing with things such as counselling, making police statements, doctor's visits and being out of home. It does not matter if it is the employee themselves who is the victim or if they are supporting a dependant in their care – the law guides employers to respond appropriately to provide stability and support.

It does not matter when the domestic violence occurred, it may predate the employee's current employment – however entitlement to the provisions does require the employee to have worked for at least six months with their current employer.

Under the Domestic Violence – Victims' Protection Act 2018 employees have a right to:

Take at least 10 days of paid domestic violence leave (this is separate from annual leave, sick leave and bereavement leave)

Ask for up to two months of flexible working arrangements

Not be treated adversely in the workplace because they might have experienced domestic violence.

Domestic violence leave is an annual entitlement and is not able to be carried over into a new year, or accrued

Employees seeking to access leave or flexible working hours need to let their employer know on or before they are meant to work that they want to take domestic violence leave. They may be expected to provide some proof of domestic violence - but PPTA

encourages employers to take a person's word - victim support agencies and the police will be able to provide this discretely if required.

This legislation applies to all employees in New Zealand, not just teachers. You

can help by spreading the word in our wider community that this legislation is available to support victims of domestic violence.

Ask your field officer if you would like further information.

A pathway to safety

You can now take up to 10 days leave a year to deal with the effects of domestic violence.

Leave
Domestic violence can affect every part of a victim's life. It is important to be able to stay in your job and also have time to sort things out. You could use this leave to

- look for a house
- settle your children in a new school
- get some counselling
- attend court proceedings
- and more

Flexible work
You can also ask for flexible working arrangements. Changing your routine can help if you're trying to get safe and stay safe.

You can talk confidentially to your PPTA field officer about how we can support you.

Where to get help:

 WOMEN'S REFUGE Crisisline 0800 733 843 womensrefuge.org.nz	 shine* Helpline 0508 744 633 2shine.org.nz	 FAMILY VIOLENCE IT'S NOT OK 0800 456 450 areyouok.org.nz	 If it is an emergency call 111
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“Getting teachers home safe and healthy”

PPTA Regional Wellbeing Workshops

Creating Positive Workplaces

Workshops are now online visit ppta.org.nz

The aims of the wellbeing workshops:

- to identify the features of proactive, respectful school-place cultures;
- to identify the negative features of school environments;
- to explain the definitions of bullying and harassment (including harassment from students to teachers)
- to review the legislation and duties of Reps, teachers and principals;
- to use a risk-management approach to build positive and respectful school-place cultures.

The workshops will be based on case studies that are relevant to teachers, senior staff, principals and boards of trustees. We will be offering regional wellbeing workshops throughout 2020.

STARTING TERM 1 2020

Kaimahi Mātauranga Workers' Education Trust

WorksafeReps is owned and operated by the Workers' Education Trust, established by the PPTA and other unions to provide education courses in health and safety at work.

For more information contact peter.scanlan@worksafereps.ac.nz

www.worksafereps.co.nz

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