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PPTA NEWS

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Avondale College
Implementing PB4L

Mana College
Helping secure fair pay
for Pak N Save workers

Respect and identity
Workshops to support
transgender issues in schools

Jekyll or Hyde?

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at the negotiating table
this year?

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PPTA NEWS



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Jekyll & Hyde

Dealing with the government in recent times has been a little like trying to work with Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. I am moved to wonder: which government will arrive at the negotiating table this year?

Will it be the government that has shown it understands that the best way to develop education policy is to sincerely and robustly engage with teacher unions? Even though it was difficult to do so, last year we sat at the table with the government and hammered out a useful way to lock in pay and conditions for those of our members who will be involved in the IES initiative from this year. It would be great if they could finally concede that the traditional ideology of the right (that nothing good can come from working with unions) has been resoundingly proven wrong. Is it possible that John Key may want to continue to work with us to strengthen pay and conditions through our collective agreements?

“Which government will arrive at the negotiating table this year?”

Will it be the government which has a minister of finance who recently demonstrated in the media his understanding of the difference between real and nominal pay rises? Bill English recently noted that we have had “quite a lot of restraint over recent years”. Five years of restraint,

in fact. This will require a pretty good nominal increase to simply catch us up and close the real wage gap that has emerged. It's good to know that we're on the same page with that argument. If we want to avoid recruitment and retention problems then we must ensure fair pay and good working conditions. If we want a strong and successful public education system we need to invest in the profession.

The nominal wage increase that we need, however, will require more than just a catch-up. English has acknowledged the current demand for skilled people and stated his desire to “make sure that we've got public servants who feel they're well motivated”. Great to hear.

It all sounds very encouraging but I'm nowhere near convinced that we will have a sensible bargaining round this year. The legislative changes pushed through by the government at the end of 2014 suggest that it does not really care about working people and doesn't value teachers.

In throwing out the Teachers Council and replacing it with EDUCANZ, a body that will use stunts such as compulsory audits of appraisal and a code of conduct to control teachers, this government is showing how little respect it has for our profession. They appear to believe that we are so untrustworthy we can't have any representatives that are accountable to teachers involved in the regulation of our own profession. This is despite the thousands of select



by Angela Roberts

committee submissions that explained how destructive this move will be.

The government has also shown it doesn't believe that workers have a fundamental right to access a collective agreement. With the removal of the obligation for employers to conclude the bargaining of collective agreements, I suspect the argument that “we should be grateful that the government is even at the table” will be trotted out at some time. How tiresome.

So, despite some promising signs that the government is prepared to move outside of its comfort zone when working with us I suspect, when it comes down to discussing cold hard cash during bargaining, that it will revert to type. A strong collective membership voice will be required to persuade them what “fair” really looks and feels like. Any discomfort at the table will, I'm sure, see Dr Jekyll very quickly replaced by Mr Hyde.



On debut

The new year brings two new faces to PPTA's national office.



Yvonne Oldfield started as deputy general secretary (membership) in January this year, replacing Erin Polaczuk who has been appointed national secretary of the Public Services Association.

In her role she has oversight of PPTA's field service, operating from regional offices in Dunedin, Christchurch, Palmerston North, Hamilton and Auckland.

Originally from Auckland, Yvonne has a background in employment law. She began her career in the union movement as a legal officer, educator and advocate, and later taught employment relations at tertiary level. For a number of years she was also an employment mediator and adjudicator.

Immediately before coming to PPTA Yvonne was in a dispute resolution role at Victoria University while at the same time completing postgraduate study herself, graduating with an LLM (Master of Laws) in December last year.

Yvonne is very excited to be working in an education sector union where she can put her skills and interests in both workers' rights and education to good use. During her induction she will be travelling around the country and looks forward to meeting as many members as possible.



Doug Clark, will bring a touch of Scottish to the office as he takes over the advisory officer position left vacant when Michael Stevenson became general secretary.

Doug will focus on industrial relations, health and safety, Komiti Pasifika, surplus staffing, conditions strategy and ICT.

Hailing from Scotland via Tokoroa for 23 years and living in Thames for two, Doug has been a physics teacher and head of science in the Bay of Plenty and Central Plateau, stood on PPTA executive and represented the association as regional chair.

Doug is looking forward to taking part in this year's Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement negotiations and improving working conditions for all members.

Doug has an affinity for the ocean — a keen fisher and diver he is also an active Coastguard operational crew member. He is also seeking sponsorship for Leukaemia and Blood Cancer NZ's Shave for a Cure, so we expect to see the beard disappear at some point.

From the HEART

Auckland's Avondale College is one of many schools throughout the country taking up the challenge of implementing the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) behaviour management programme. *PPTA News* caught up with staff and management at the school last year to see how they were making it work.

PB4L is a suite of programmes aimed at helping “parents, whānau, teachers and schools address problem behaviour, improve children and young people’s wellbeing and increase educational achievement”. It arose from a 2009 sector-wide education hui, the Taumata Whanonga behaviour summit, to help address the issue of disruptive and antisocial behaviour in schools.

Avondale College is a school with 2700 students. They come from right along Auckland’s western corridor and bring with them a dynamic and modern mix of cultures and ethnicities.

The college took on aspects of the PB4L programme (PB4L School Wide) with the assistance of a 10-person team made up of staff. Decisions made by that group then go to an executive team of eight senior leadership representatives before being signed off by the principal — ensuring a robust level of scrutiny and that all decisions made around PB4L have the buy-in of the whole leadership.

An example of this was last year when the PB4L team had built a reward system for students. They were unsure as to exactly what they were going to reward so new deputy principal Kiely Murphy delayed the process to allow further consideration.

While there was a danger of being seen as the Grinch who stole the rewards she stuck to her values, focussing firmly on reducing the amount of time a teacher had to spend on behaviour rather than flashing around rewards. This gave staff time to buy in to the change management process.

Avondale College PPTA branch chair and PB4L team member Shawn Cooper also put out a challenge to staff in relation to student lateness asking, “What are you going to do to change these statistics?” Together they focussed on the data. Lateness entries had been sporadic and needed to be tidied up in order to give a better understanding of the problem. So the team started by defining lateness.

This enabled staff to make consistent entries so the PB4L team had a clear view as to what was happening. As the data was corrected there was a spike in lateness often seen in PB4L School Wide schools. The team were able to identify that Pasifika boys in Year 12 were particularly likely to be late at the start of period 4. This was because many of them were playing rugby and ball games down on the field. This gave the team the data they needed to provide support to the boys and the teachers to change the statistics.

The school took on the challenge of embedding PB4L School Wide at the same time as constructing new buildings, leading to a unique blend of new initiatives and old traditions.

Kauri stumps drawn from the school’s original foundations are now beautifully displayed in a new atrium, just as the college’s historical roots and traditions shine through in a new values system called Heart: Honesty, Endeavour, Atawhai (to show kindness to), Respect and Responsibility and Tenacity.

Principal Brent Lewis said the values behind HEART came from the Kauri heartwood.

“When Heart was pulled into the history of the school it made complete sense. No one needed to be convinced. The recycled wood is the old school holding up the new,” he said.

Lewis said Murphy had handled the change process well devolving robust discussion across the staff.

“Looking at the data and responding to it flattens the hierarchy,” he said.

PB4L is about schools recognising that they have a school culture that is unique and gives them control over their own data so that they have the information to make a difference.

Good change management takes consistency and keeping the staff in the loop with what is happening, Cooper said.

“This has particular challenges in a big school, but with a joined-up approach the benefits are obvious.”

Respect & IDENTITY

New information about transgender students in New Zealand schools is being taken out to teachers this year in PPTA's "Safer Schools for All" sessions.

These professional development sessions, which are run in a school at the invitation of the principal, are now in their fourth year of being offered by PPTA, and demand is as high as ever, says PPTA advisory officer Judie Alison, who leads the "Safer Schools for All" work.

This year, the data presented from the Youth 2000 series of surveys of New Zealand secondary school students will include information about transgender students. It's possibly the first random sample of secondary school students in the world that has included a question about whether students see themselves as transgender.

In the 2012 survey, 1.2% of respondents (96 students) answered "yes" to the question "Do you think you are transgender?" (This is either a girl who feels like she should have been a boy, or a boy who feels like he should have been a girl (eg Trans, Queen, Fa'afafine, Whakawahine, Tangata ira Tane, Genderqueer).") Another 2.5% (202 students) chose "not sure" as their response.

While these figures seem high, they do not surprise Judie.

"Over recent years PPTA has received many inquiries from schools which have

enrolled a transgender student, or have a student who wishes to transition while at school. These schools are looking for advice from the Ministry of Education, and there is nothing at all available," she said.

Judie ran a workshop about transgender students at the guidance counsellors' conference in Auckland last year, and said there were at least 40 guidance counsellors present who were either currently working, or had worked with, a transgender student in their school.

The Auckland University team that runs the Youth 2000 surveys has published a fact sheet on transgender students, which can be downloaded from their website, along with an academic article detailing what the survey revealed about the health and wellbeing of these students. This material, and other information about the surveys, can be downloaded from: www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/adolescent-health-research-group/publications-and-reports.html.

Some of the issues that troubled guidance counsellors working with transgender students were how to manage the situation when a parent was not supportive of the student's choice to identify with the other gender, what rights they had to amend the

gender in Enrol, how best to provide for the student's needs around toilet and changing facilities, and how to ensure that all teachers and students responded appropriately to the student in their new identity, Judie said.

The Youth 2000 study shows transgender students have on average significantly poorer mental health than non-transgender students. For example, 40% reported significant depressive symptoms, and nearly half had self-harmed in the last 12 months. Nearly 1 in 5 had experienced bullying at school at least weekly, and more than half were afraid someone at school would hurt or bother them.

About half of the students had wondered about whether they were transgender before the age of 12, but only a third had disclosed that they were transgender to anyone close to them. This means for teachers that many of the students who are feeling that they are, or may be, transgender will be coping with this alone.

"The more that schools can do to make it okay for students to be transgender, or lesbian or gay or bisexual, the better the health and wellbeing, and also engagement and achievement, of these students will be," Judie said.

If you think "Safer Schools for All" would be helpful for your school, have a talk with your leadership team. They can contact Judie at jalison@ppta.org.nz. For more information about PPTA's Rainbow Taskforce visit: www.ppta.org.nz/communities/glbti-teachers.

Supermarket heroes

Assisted in part by a local PPTA branch, workers at Porirua Pak N Save won a four-month pay dispute.

The Pak N Save workers, members of First Union, had been negotiating improved wages and conditions to put them on a par with the local Countdown and a neighbouring Pak N Save in Kilbirnie, but the employer's best offer was still well short.

With nothing to lose, the workers turned to the community for support, calling on locals to join pickets, send messages to the store manager and even to take their grocery dollars down the road.

Local school communities were well aware of the dispute, with a number of parents and secondary students employed by Pak N Save, so they needed little invitation to act.

Mana College PPTA branch chair Pauline Thorby said the school was very aware of the effect low wages had on the community and the level of achievement and opportunity for its students.

"Our branch had earlier approached our own principal and board of trustees to discuss becoming a 'living wage' employer at the college so we understood the issues," she said.

"We felt supporting the Pak n Save workers was actually a tangible way of supporting our students and their whanau, many of whom work there."

She said staff at Mana College's special needs unit, who regularly bought meat and veges from Pak N Save for hangi fundraisers, sent the store manager a letter to the effect that it would be going elsewhere until the store's workers' pay concerns were met.

"A member of the branch attended the picket lines and met a number of past Mana College students, parents of existing Mana College students and those who support some of our special



Pickers installed a giant, inflatable rat as a symbol of corporate greed.

“ We felt supporting the Pak n Save workers was actually a tangible way of supporting our students and their whānau, many of whom work there.”

needs students on work experience at the supermarket. They were very happy for the support,” she said.

Bill Bradford, an organiser with First Union, said the Mana College teachers' letter was a huge boost for the workers who were all new union members and taking industrial action for the first time in their lives.

"It was also a blow to the employer, as was the presence on the picket line of supporters and the coverage in the local media," he said.

"I have no doubt these things combined played a large part in convincing the employer that the reputational damage his business was sustaining needed to be stopped."

A final settlement between the store's workers and management was reached during mediation on 27 November.

The settlement allowed every worker with one year's service to go immediately to \$15.80 an hour with a further increase in August 2015 to \$16.20.

Those working the night shift got an allowance of one dollar an hour on top of this. There were also increases for supervisors and the introduction of a pay scale for tradespeople.

There were significant improvements in other conditions. The 90-day trial period was thrown out, redundancy provisions put in place, sick leave was increased and union rights, such as access and provision for delegates meetings, were agreed on.

"Overall this meant a very significant pay rise and improvement in conditions for a very low-paid group of workers most of whom were previously getting the bare minimum in both pay and other entitlements," Bill said.

"Support from other unions, the living wage campaign, and the wider community was very important in convincing the employer they needed to improve their offer."

Bill said that although the dispute was difficult, and the employer found it hard to accept they needed to make big improvements, First Union believes mechanisms are now in place to build a much more constructive relationship with them.

Pauline said it was great to see what can be achieved when union members across different workforces stand together.

"It was also a timely reminder to look at wages," she said.

Paid parental leave has been extended

Pregnant or adopting? Good news. You might be entitled to 16 weeks paid parental leave from the beginning of April this year.

You will be eligible if:

1. You are a female employee who gives birth to a baby and either:
 - The expected date of delivery is on or after 1 April 2015 and the baby is born before, on or after that date; or
 - The baby is born on or after 1 April 2015 but had an earlier expected date;

OR

You are part of a couple adopting a child under the age of 6 and the date that you assume care of the child (and take parental leave) is on or after 1 April 2015;

AND

2. You meet the working hours test (if you have worked for the same employer for an average of at least 10 hours a week, and at least 40 hours in every month in the 12 months immediately before the baby's expected due date or the date you assume care of the child).

Note that paid parental leave may be transferred (in whole or part) to the spouse or partner if they otherwise qualify.

PPTA

For more, and to find out if you qualify, phone IRD on 0800 227 774 or refer to their website:

www.ird.govt.nz/yoursituation-ind/parents/parents-paid-parental-leave.html?id=201405MegaMenu

Caregiver's equal pay win a boost for all women

Last year was a turning point for women in New Zealand.

The Court of Appeal judgment on the Equal Pay Act 1972 and the Supreme Court's rejection of an appeal made by Terra Nova Homes will make a huge difference for the pay and conditions of women workers.

The case, taken by Kristine Bartlett and supported by the Service and Food Workers Union and New Zealand Nurses Organisation, sought a clear interpretation of when employers may be in breach of their equal pay obligations under the act.

The challenge was not just about equal pay between men and women for the same job in the same industry (eg two teachers with the same experience and responsibility) but where equal pay may be denied in women-dominated industries, such as caregiving.

In this case, Kristine argued that her pay as a caregiver (\$14.46/hour) was less than would be paid to a male-dominated industry with the same, or substantially

similar, skills, effort and experience.

The successful case potentially has ramifications for a lot of industries where the majority of workers are women - including teachers.

While important, this is just the starting point. Now that there is a clear case stating what the act means, it is expected that there will be cases brought by women workers and industries to challenge the low pay rates and conditions in individual sectors.

In 2008, the National-led government disestablished the Pay and Employment equity unit at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. This was a big loss to progressing improvements to the pay and conditions of women teachers - including non-contact time



Kristine Bartlett's win may have ramifications for pay in women-dominated fields such as teaching.

for part-timers, responsibility and unit allocation, and flexible working arrangements. Pressure will be back on the Government as a result of the case, which will be important for the Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement industrial bargaining round this year.

Recognition for services to Pasifika education



Late last year former PPTA general secretary Kevin Bunker attended a Komiti Pasifika meeting in Hamilton as a special guest.

The Komiti presented Kevin with an award in recognition of his services to Pasifika education. Komiti Pasifika executive member and chair Natalie Faitala noted

Kevin had always been a strong advocate for Pasifika members and Pasifika education throughout his time as general secretary. In particular he had been involved in the genesis of the komiti and had always been supportive of PPTA's involvement in COPE (Council of Pacific Education).

The komiti shared their experiences of Kevin's support on both a personal and organisational level and wished him well for future endeavours.

From left: Jess Earnshaw, Natalie Faitala, Pushpa Reddy, Vijeshwar Prasad, Kevin Bunker, Maria Lemalie, Andrew Barron, Eva Hartshorn-Sanders.



**Komiti
Pasifika**
PPTA

Call for Pasifika voices

Nominations are open for **one** more member of PPTA's Komiti Pasifika in Area 2 (which includes the regions Hawkes Bay, Manawatu-Wanganui, Wairarapa, Wellington, Hutt Valley, Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast, Canterbury, Aoraki, Otago and Southland).

Come and join a fun and inspiring team who are keen to promote issues that are important to Pasifika teachers and Pasifika students.

To find out more and to request a nomination form, please email Wendy at wdaniell@ppta.org.nz.

Nominations close Tuesday, 24 February 2015.



HUB with ripples

Teachers and schools are exploring a new way of sharing digital resources through a platform called Pond.

Designed to “act as a central hub for digital discovery where educational resources can be accessed and shared easily” – Pond is the brainchild of Crown-owned company N4L (Network for Learning), originally set up to build a managed network for New Zealand schools to access fast internet.

Access is free for all educators working in New Zealand schools.

PPTA president Angela Roberts was encouraged by the enthusiasm of teachers already involved in using Pond, but sought reassurance from the Ministry of Education that workload monitoring and ongoing professional development

would be provided for this resource.

“An excellent way to make a start in supporting teacher digital literacy would be to provide for at least two teacher only days over the next few years to support teaching and learning with digital technologies,” she said.

An evaluation of the National Education Network (NEN) (which the managed network and Pond stemmed from) noted teachers’ professional and administrative workloads had increased as a result of the trial.

“What will be the workload effect on teachers as they join and use Pond?” Roberts said.

Pond encourages collaboration between schools and teachers, supporting the use of Creative Commons policy.

Roberts supports the promotion of collaboration and sharing but questions how schools will be encouraged to move away from the competitive model of Tomorrow’s Schools where teacher-developed learning resources are considered part of a school’s intellectual property,

not to be shared in case it gives another school an advantage.

She also questioned how Pond would pull together in a coherent way all the “authoritative” sources of information such as the TKI (Te Kete Ipurangi), Ministry of Education and NZQA websites.

The 2012 21st Century Learning Environments and Digital Literacy report recommended government “in consultation with the education sector, consider whether there needs to be any policy changes to take into account potential workload changes as a result of online learning”.

“Professional development for teachers is essential if Pond is to become a trusted and reliable resource hub,” Roberts said. ■

Signing up to Pond

Just visit pond.co.nz, go to the Educators tab, click the Sign Up button and follow the steps using your school email address.

Pond – one teacher’s experience

Wellington High School Science teacher Tony Cairns is sold on Pond.

He has been involved with the platform since its inception and sees it as a great way of helping teachers to find, use and share the best resources.

Teachers can store “buckets” of files on particular topics, breaking them down into areas, levels and types of information for students.

“If I’m doing a unit on immunisation I can pull together resources on immunity, same with plants and plant reproduction. I can tag particular resources anywhere on the net and immediately make those resources on Pond,” he said.

Teachers can add each other’s resources to their own and get in touch with other New Zealand teachers working in their field.

Early adopters of Pond had helped iron out bugs and N4L had been very responsive to any suggestions about changes, Tony said.

“Initially it was quite hard to access – requiring an education sector log in – but now it can be accessed through virtually any school address and is a lot easier to use.”

Teachers can communicate and make comments (called “ripples”) on others’ resources and show approval by giving a thumbs up. They can share how resources worked with students, why they worked and what could be done to improve them.

Pond is moderated by teachers, with irrelevant information tested and weeded out.

“You are moderated once you log on and if inappropriate material is put up there teachers can report it and have it taken down,” he said.

Teachers can also control access levels to certain information

“There will be controversial topics up there. For example, if I want to put up resources around a ‘Je suis Charlie’ discussion I



Tony Cairns

can restrict the content to certain groups. It is self-monitoring, providing different resources for different audiences,” he said.

Tony was very positive about the time and professional development provided by N4L to help develop Pond.

“They gave us days out of school and funded us to create resources to help make Pond better,” he said.

“The beauty is its opt-in. If you don’t want to do it you don’t have to. Nobody is forcing anybody, it’s an option.”

Education Law Conference 2015

9.00am to 5.15pm, Tuesday 3 March 2015,
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Join the discussion

Education is a topic that generates huge amounts of discussion and there are a number of ways PPTA members can take part.

PPTA website: ppta.org.nz has a vast amount of information that can be accessed, shared and commented on. Virtually all of the site's information can be accessed without having to log-in and more sensitive information is available via a members-only page.

PPTA blog: The Pigeonhole is a blog that is not afraid to ruffle some feathers. Opinions expressed are the personal opinions of the bloggers and commenters and may not necessarily reflect the position of PPTA. The blog can be accessed at: <http://www.ppta.org.nz/resources/ppta-blog> and on the right-hand side of the PPTA homepage. Members who are interested in contrib-

uting a blog or an idea for one can email akirtlan@ppta.org.nz

Twitter: PPTA's main Twitter account is **@PPTAWeb**. Other PPTA voices include professional issues (@PPTA_PIU) and establishing teachers (@PPTA_NETs) – all accounts are happy to interact with members so feel free to join the conversation

Facebook: PPTA has a number of Facebook groups including the open NZPPTA, PPTA Women and PPTA Pasifika pages and more private invitation-only forums such as PPTA Establishing Teachers and a Rainbow Taskforce page which can be accessed by emailing jalison@ppta.org.nz



G+: There is also a NZPPTA Google Plus page which we hope to develop more this year.

YouTube: Campaigning clips and comments at www.youtube.com/user/NZPPTA.

ATTENTION TEACHERS

O-I New Zealand Environmental Fund

Expressions of interest to make application for a grant from the O-I New Zealand Environmental Fund are invited. Up to \$25,000 will be available in total for suitable environmental projects. For application forms and guidelines see our website www.recycleglass.co.nz or contact:

O-I New Zealand Environmental Fund:

PO Box 12345 Penrose, Auckland 1642

Phone. 09 976 7127 Fax. 09 976 7119

**Deadline for expression
of interest is 31 March 2015**





“The key argument from New Zealand Police appears to be that police vetting is not seen as a public good.”

Charges **LIKELY**

The government wants teachers to pay for their own police background checks (vetting) with even higher registration fees a distinct possibility.

The government appears to have found a new way to charge teachers for doing their job, says PPTA president Angela Roberts.

The Policing (Cost Recovery) Amendment Bill has been introduced into parliament and is currently being considered by the Law and Order Select Committee. The bill would enable police to start charging cost recovery fees for core services and explicitly includes police vetting as one of those services.

Teachers are required to obtain a police background check as part of their registration and this is renewed every three years. The cost of a police vet is included within teachers' practising certificate fees.

If police vetting becomes part of a new cost recovery regime then teachers' practising certificate fees will also increase and the cost will be passed on directly to teachers, Roberts said.

“The key argument from New Zealand Police appears to be that police vetting is not seen as a public good and that there is a private benefit to be gained, which

justifies passing on the cost.

“This sentiment is not shared across government and there is real concern that this will undermine the Children's Action Plan work and the policy to require or encourage more people to have police vets before working with children or vulnerable people.

“These workers are usually in the public sector or charitable organisations,” she said.

Charging for police vets was not a popular policy, Roberts said.

“Public services should be paid for by the government.”

PPTA had reviewed the policy documents leading to the bill, and charging for police vets was opposed by other government departments including the Ministry of Education, Child Youth and Family Services and the New Zealand Teachers Council, Roberts said.

More than half of the submitters on the public discussion document were either mostly opposed (27%) or totally opposed (31%) to cost recovery for police vetting services.

“Public services should be paid for by the government,” she said.

While not unsympathetic to an increased workload for police, any increase in revenue should be through increasing the allocation in the government budget rather than expecting public servants (like teachers) and charities to foot the bill, Roberts said.

“There are also efficiencies to be found in the current system. The New Zealand Teachers Council has done an enormous amount of work to make the police vetting system for teachers as automated as possible, to minimise the workload for police. This could be available for other users of the police vetting service.”

PPTA has made a written submission on the bill (available at www.ppta.org.nz) and has asked to present an oral submission.

All there in **BLACK & WHITE**

How well do you know your collective agreement?

This was the question posed by Western Springs College PPTA branch chair and western ward representative Melanie Webber at an Auckland regional planning day last month.

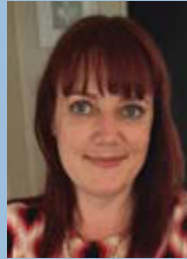
Melanie came up with the idea of putting collective agreement need-to-know posters up in school staffrooms after a discussion with her deputy principal, who had no idea she was entitled to a day off to attend her daughter's wedding.

This got Melanie thinking about what else might be in the collective agreements that people didn't know about.

She looked into long service leave, study grants and teachers' rights on returning to a school after resigning for a period of childcare. "These are the things you don't know about unless you are reminded. This is what we are entitled to thanks to our contract," she said.

Melanie's first poster focussed on the wedding question.

The simple one-pager reads:



Melanie Webber

- A) Their own wedding or civil union
- B) The wedding or civil union of a child
- C) The wedding or civil union of a sibling
- D) The wedding or civil union of a grandchild
- E) The wedding or civil union of a grandparent
- F) All of the above"

Melanie also publicised a payment that recognises extra work done by teachers to gain additional qualifications - called the service/qualifications increment. This payment is an incentive for those who stay in the classroom rather than seeking management positions, which is why it is not paid to teachers with more than

"A teacher may be granted one day's paid leave per year, plus travelling time, for the following occasions,

one permanent management unit. This entitlement can be backdated for up to 36 months. Teachers can be eligible for this if they entered the profession with a level 8, 9 or 10 qualification (usually a masters or doctorate) or if they have completed an additional qualification above level 5 (usually certificates or diplomas). Melanie described the service increment as one of her best finds. "It's definitely something a lot of teachers don't know about," she said. Melanie ran the information for the posters past her PPTA field officers to make sure it was correct and encouraged other schools to do the same.

If you're interested in looking at Melanie's templates email akirtlan@ppta.org.nz.

Held at Western Springs College the Auckland goal setting and planning hui was aimed at putting a plan in place to grow activism in the region.

"It was a worthwhile event and I'm quite pleased with what we've come out with," Auckland regional chair Michael Tarry said.



Auckland PPTA regional planning meeting

Out in the field

Fixed term appointments - ground hog day?

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers.

Readers of this column may have a sense of déjà vu - the current legislation dealing with fixed term employment came into effect 14 years ago, but non-permanent teachers seem to still be confronting the same issues around tenure.

Section 66 of the Employment Relations Act 2000 means that boards of trustees must have a "genuine reason based on reasonable grounds" for legitimately making a non-permanent appointment. It requires that:

- both parties agree in writing at the outset to the employment being for a fixed term (including the reasons for it and the way in which it will end); and
- that fixed terms cannot be used to determine the suitability of someone for a particular job or to exclude or limit their rights (eg to holiday pay) during their employment.

Why are schools using them?

There are a variety of genuine reasons why a school may need to employ a teacher for a fixed term. For example, to provide cover for someone who is on parental or study leave, or where there is

a special project to be undertaken. Unfortunately, there has been a notable trend of fixed term appointments being made for unspecified or disingenuous reasons.

One of the reasons we have observed schools giving teachers to justify a non-permanent appointment is "...an uncertain or fluctuating school roll." This reason will not be legitimate unless the Ministry of Education has instructed the school to make no permanent appointments. If it eventuates that a staffing reduction is required at the end of the year due to a declining roll only permanent teachers are entitled to receive the redundancy benefits of the surplus staffing provisions in the collective agreement – so tenure is very important.

We have also anecdotally noted that fixed term appointments seem to be disproportionately affecting provisionally registered teachers, women returning to work, and migrant teachers. These members are often least likely to challenge an appointment of this type – so branch support is critical.

What can your branch do about it?

- Keep an eye out for fixed term advertisements in the *Education*



Gazette to establish if there is a pattern emerging at your school.

- When new teachers join your school introduce yourself, invite them to become a PPTA member and try to find out: (i) whether they have been appointed for a fixed term; and (ii) if they know the reason why they were appointed in that way.
- If there is a trend of fixed term appointments without genuine reason emerging:
 - you could meet with management to raise concerns collectively; or
 - (with the permission of the individual teachers affected) ask for the tenure of particular appointments to be reviewed.
- If the management team are not responsive, get in touch with your PPTA field officer for further advice about what legal remedies might be available.

Register now

Delegate Leadership Development Workshop Friday, 6 March 2015

Issues & Organising Seminar Saturday - Sunday, 7 - 8 March 2015

Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie, Wellington

Everyone planning to attend the I & O seminar and/or the regional officers training day can download and complete a registration form by going to www.ppta.org.nz and visiting the "Events" section.



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