

2018-10-02 Speech to conference

Rob Torr, member of the PPTA negotiation team

Tēnā koutou katoa.

Thank you for that powerful and moving testimony about the situation we find ourselves in, and the demonstration of how the current offer we're voting on today completely misses that reality.

First I would like to address *[any questions or points that came from the floor]*.

We have had the details of the offer for over a week. PPTA members have pored over it, with branches and members discussing what it would mean for them, their colleagues and the students that they teach. The message that we've received at executive and here from the conference floor is loud and clear.

This is not an offer that we can take out. It is quite obviously far from what's required to solve the challenge of the situation that we're in.

The outcome of the vote today is the next step in our campaign, and in the process of negotiating for the STCA. Following this we will communicate your messages clearly to the Ministry, and the government will hear them too.

Secondary teachers have stood up for the profession and the education system many times in the past, and we're being called upon to do the same again. While Joe and I here are on the negotiating team, all of us have responsibility for and a stake in this.

From here we have the chance for a much needed break, but then it's back to school for a few weeks of intensive work with our seniors and then we head into regional paid union meetings – getting the members out, ready and informed for the next steps. It's important that we hold these meetings to keep the momentum of our campaign and make sure we're in a good position as we head into the summer break.

We may have an offer to take out by the time we meet with all our members in November. If we don't, we will need to be prepared for what happens next.

One thing that we need to keep in mind is that parents and communities support us and know the challenges that we face.

The Ministry of Ed conducted research to inform their new ad campaign a few months ago and asked the public whether teachers were adequately valued. 74% said no – as a country we should place greater value on the teaching profession. 86% said teaching is the most important profession when it comes to shaping future generations.

As we know, from the research we conducted earlier in the year – they strongly support significant pay increases for teachers.

And what's fascinating in the Ministry research, something which I'm sure they weren't expecting or hoping for – the strike action that NZEI carried out earlier this year actually had a net positive impact on the public's view of teachers – with 29% viewing teachers more positively and only 14% the reverse, as a result of the strike action.

This shows that the support for teachers, and the understanding of our situation and the importance of getting this right is strong.

What this needs to translate into is support from the government. The government has a choice now – to back the profession that the public says is the most important for the future of our young people, or to leave schools to struggle on – cutting corners to try and hold things together for the students in our care.

We're standing here for the future of our profession and the students that we teach.

That's why I ask you to vote in favour of all the recommendations today.