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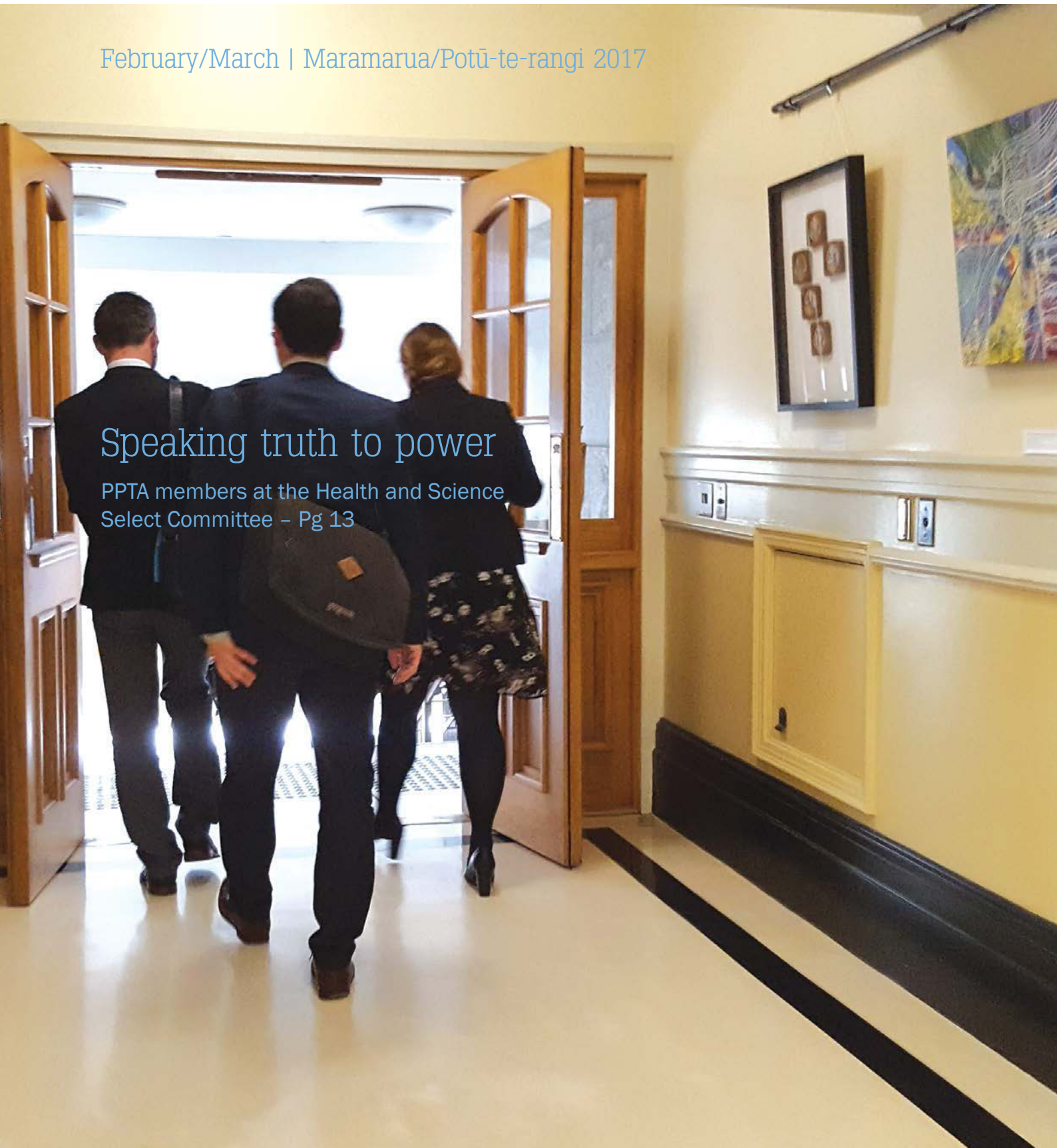
# PPTA NEWS

The magazine of New Zealand secondary teachers

February/March | Maramarua/Potū-te-rangi 2017

## Speaking truth to power

PPTA members at the Health and Science  
Select Committee – Pg 13



## PPTA News



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## The cost of change for change's sake

PPTA president Jack Boyle examines the impact of new year initiatives on building relationships



Jack Boyle | President, PPTA

As a teacher the start of the year can see a bit of a tension between what you want to do and what you end up doing.

You come in fresh for a new year, with a list of resolutions for those few things you want to do differently, but often this seems to bang up against the constant churn of new initiatives, structures and people that a new year brings. Some may say 'this is just the life of a teacher,' but I say, 'at what cost?'

The introducing, unlearning, thinking and adapting that happens each year as we acclimatize to 'a new way' can come at the expense of time and energy that could be put into building relationships with colleagues and - most importantly - the incoming student cohort. Sadly, over my 12 years in the classroom, having time for conversations in the first weeks of school with my returning students became as likely as a sunny day in Wellington. Nevertheless, I would

always try and make time for them (even if it meant I was a week late handing out course outlines because I hadn't made it to the photocopier). For me, that investment of time always paid dividends.

Invariably there are changes at the start of a school year - to timetable structure, reporting and communication, new technologies and approaches to pedagogy or pastoral care. There may also be whole school PLD, new spaces to move into and new admin processes. Of course, some of these changes may be good, but they also occupy time and brain power to implement and adapt to.

We all know the importance of building relationships - but in the constantly evolving landscape of teaching it almost appears to be deprioritized. I'm not suggesting we be change averse - as professionals we are constantly looking to evolve and refine our practice. However, changes should be done in a way that gives them the best chance of making the difference worthy of our time and energy (I've lost count of the number of 'new' admin procedures and IT solutions introduced in the first weeks of a new school year only to be consigned to the dustbin the next).

So, how do we create the space to change what needs changing?

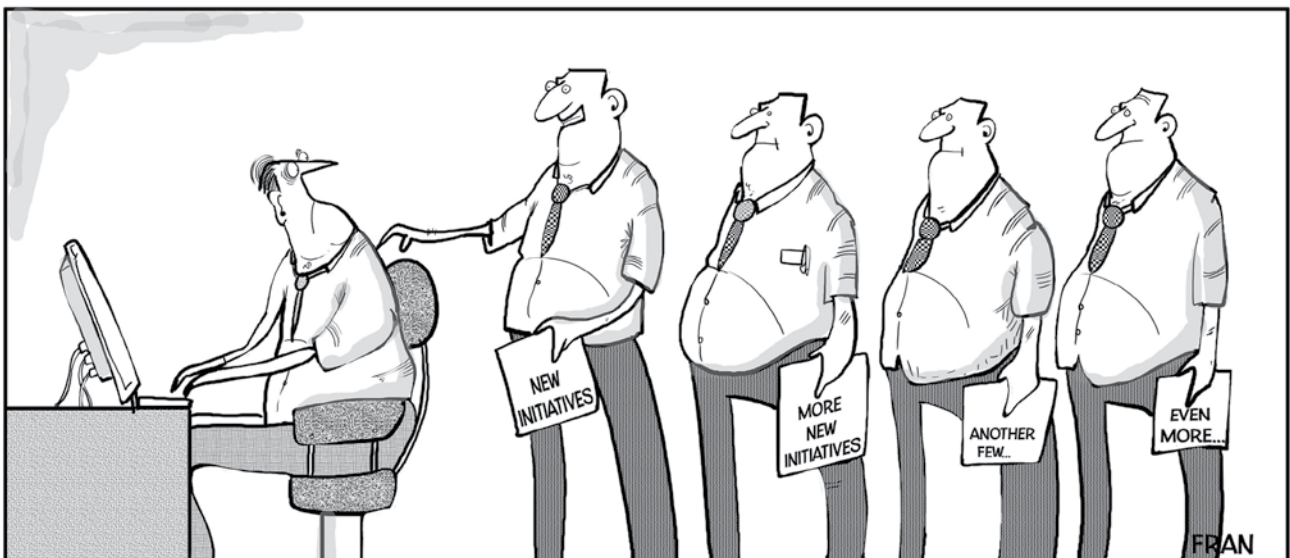
Firstly, schools may need to become more adept at how they manage

change. Building in time to implement new ways of working makes sense (and doing only one new thing rather than 5 or 6 at a time would allow those changes that do occur to be made with fidelity). School leaders probably need to acknowledge that too much change can make any change negatively charged.

At the same time teachers may need to be given messages that, while change can be good, not changing isn't necessarily bad. If schemes, assessments and lessons are working, why recreate them?

The education sector has some parallels to the constant changes faced by teachers returning to school: new directions, initiatives and structures to meet new imperatives will no doubt coalesce for many school communities in 2017. The Communities of Schools initiative will create a new set of changes for teachers, the latest iteration of Professional Learning will diffuse for some and concentrate for others, while the development of a new Code of Professional Responsibility and Professional Standards will also occupy time and energy.

It seems to me that one of the lessons of Mindfulness and living in the present is being ok with divesting oneself of the need to change something for change's sake. Perhaps we should make that a resolution for the new academic year?



# Bulk funding - gone by morning tea time

Last year thousands of teachers united to defeat bulk funding in schools. Now it is time to celebrate

Last year, because we stood together, we defeated bulk funding. Now is the time to get together and celebrate our win.

PPTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa are shouting morning tea for all teachers and support staff in every secondary and area school around the country.

The win was critical. In the 1990's, we were tied down for a whole decade trying to fight off bulk-funding. In the end, it took a change of government to see that policy off. Fast-forward to 2016 and we managed to win in six months by working together.

Taking bulk funding off the table is a big win for public education and for the thousands of teachers and school support staff who united in

unprecedented numbers at more than 50 union meetings around the country.

Parents and educators had rejected bulk funding because they realised it was a cost cutting tool that would force schools to make trade-offs between hiring teachers and other costs.

This win over bulk funding was a direct result of collective action.

PPTA members are encouraged to get together and organize a #winning morning tea. Choose a time that works for the majority of teachers and support staff at your school. Any time in term 1 is fine.

The morning teas are open to everybody – teachers, principals, support staff, members and non-members

Email Liz Robinson [lrobinson@ppta.org.nz](mailto:lrobinson@ppta.org.nz) and Neil Hammond [neil.hammond@nzei.org.nz](mailto:neil.hammond@nzei.org.nz) to let

us know when and where it's going to be happening.

The fight for fairness isn't over. The government's funding review still contains some serious potential fish-hooks for all schools, staff and students.

Support staff are still bulk-funded. They're in bargaining for their collective agreement now and it's going to need all our support to pressure the Government to fund a fair pay increase. We can help each other by providing support and solidarity.

Together we're stronger and we've proven that when we stand together we can win.

Send your pics and messages of solidarity for your support staff colleagues to [lrobinson@ppta.org.nz](mailto:lrobinson@ppta.org.nz) or [melissa.schwalger@nzei.org.nz](mailto:melissa.schwalger@nzei.org.nz).

#WINNING

#NOBULKFUNDING!



# From fat cats and competition to classroom champions

## Introducing the new faces of PPTA, president Jack Boyle and junior vice president Melanie Webber

### Jack Boyle

PPTA's new president Jack Boyle pledges to fight for what's good for education and is looking forward to working for teachers and students.



Jack Boyle

"At the outset I'd have to say teaching is an amazing, rewarding and full-on job. From my school days in the Hawkes Bay in the 1980s through more than a decade as an English and Drama teacher in Lower Hutt, I've always been inspired by the incredible efforts teachers make to make a difference for young people," he said.

Jack has served PPTA members from the branch level through to roles on executive and as junior vice president and looks forward to continuing that work as president.

He has no doubt there will be challenges.

"For whatever reason teacher unions are not always viewed positively, despite the critical work they do," he said.

"But I'm pretty thick-skinned and I'm certainly motivated to advocate more visibly for good education policy and supporting the people who support students every day in classrooms all over our country. I firmly believe that what education unions fight for is what's good for education."

Raised in Hawkes Bay and having lived in London, Auckland and Wellington, Jack has now laid down roots in the bush clad Western hills of the Awakairangi with his wife and four children.

Before becoming a teacher Jack was in the competitive commercial entertainment industry and has managed a commercial business while teaching. This has given him a real appreciation of the scale of what teachers do.

"I'm pretty sure teachers work harder than almost anyone, but the rewards for their efforts in terms of remuneration and acknowledgement are less tangible than they are in other professions.

"I think it's important the profession starts to address that to help manage workload and remove some of the barriers to recruiting and retaining good teachers," he said.

"If there was an overarching goal for me in taking on this role it would be wanting to ensure teaching remains a great job. I want to do everything I can to ensure our professional roles are supported by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and increasing access to high quality professional learning so we can continue to make that difference to NZ students. Together, I'm confident we can make that happen."

### Melanie Webber

Junior vice president Melanie Webber has made a career change for the better – from slimming down chubby moggies on television to shaping the future of young people.



Melanie Webber

Auckland born and bred, Melanie teaches media studies at Western Springs College. She has been in the classroom since 2008.

Melanie worked in the media, particularly television, for a long time but ended up searching for something more fulfilling.

"It was when I got a job on a show called 'Downsize Your Pet' I started thinking 'there must be more to life than this.' I wanted to have achieved something more at the end of it all than helping a cat lose 500 grams."

So she signed up to become a teacher.

"I naively thought it would be less work with more structured time, but I soon realised what a mistake I had made. Television programmes, especially ones like New Zealand Idol, can have a ridiculous workload, but teaching even more so.

"And these young people, your job is to direct their learning, which is a bit more important than who wins on a singing show."

Melanie spent six months at Takapuna Grammar, before she ended up at Western Springs, "a really strong union school."

"I never joined PPTA at Takapuna because no one asked me. When I went to Springs the office lady handed me the PPTA forms and said 'everyone's a member here.'"

Melanie went from branch secretary to chair and was later shoulder-tapped to become Auckland regional secretary. It was her experience working with the teacher supply taskforce that inspired her to run for junior vice president. She was particularly interested in workload and why people weren't going into teaching.

"The question was asked would you recommend teaching to your best and brightest students, and the answer was – 'I don't know that I always would.' We need to talk about this more. Teaching should be a first choice profession because we want the best in front of our students.

"I'm really looking forward to getting more involved with these issues. I'm a practising teacher and it's important those voices are heard at a ministry level. I also think it's important that there's an Auckland voice. Auckland covers a considerable teaching area with its own unique issues and a huge number of low decile schools."

## Asking questions about inquiries

Recently retired Otumoetai College branch chair Larry Dixon writes about the state of the profession, workload increases and the effect on teachers



Larry Dixon

I have just retired after 28 years at Otumoetai College, 16 as Head of Social Science, having been a teacher since I first walked into a classroom in London in November 1974.

I have experience on MOE expert panels reviewing the curriculum and on NZQA expert panels developing unit standards; for over 16 years I was an NZQA moderator and national moderator; I was an NCEA facilitator with Waikato University's School Support Services; I have four times been an acting deputy principal; I was staff representative for three terms on my school's board of trustees; and for more years than I care to remember I was PPTA branch chair.

I am well placed to comment on the inquiries teachers are now required to do each year.

I am deeply concerned about workload increases being added to the already heavy load that teachers face. When I started teaching we worked under a high trust model. That has changed. Not only do we have to do what we do, but increasingly we have to prove we are doing it. Teacher refresher courses, appraisal and teaching as inquiry have all been added to the work we do as teachers. Interestingly, we still teach as many classes as we did before.

I think the teaching as inquiry paradigm presents significant challenges to teachers. We're now expected to undertake an inquiry every year. In 2016, the inquiry process was restructured at my school to make it more manageable, more achievable, and I believe more useful to the teacher. But ERO expressed concern

that what we did was insufficient; that it was not transformational.

I have a problem with this idea that an inquiry has to be transformational. From my experience, teachers develop their pedagogy and their personal 'style' of teaching over time. We change our practice incrementally.

**“Not only do we have to do what we do, but increasingly we have to prove we are doing it”**

If I look over my teaching career, there is a single moment when my practice was 'transformed'. In the 1980s, I was a dean at Selwyn College and I needed to get a student out of a colleague's class. The colleague was, at that time, deputy principal at Selwyn and later principal at Glenfield College. He taught a 5th form geography class and when I went into the classroom, he was at his animated best; chalk and talk and heaps of interaction with the students. I ended up sitting in his class until the end of the period and when I walked out I thought: "I can teach like that, I can do as he did". That was transformational!

Every other change to my practice has been incremental. And I believe that should be the goal of an annual inquiry: to tweak our practice, to test out new ideas. The inquiry process must be realistic. To suggest that a teacher's inquiry may be inadequate because it does not transform the teacher's practice is disingenuous.

Teaching as inquiry can lead to pedagogical change, but the inquiry must be made manageable. It is unrealistic to expect that teachers will transform their practice year after year.

I would argue, that requiring teachers to undertake an annual inquiry will quickly lead to teachers being very cynical about the process. Perhaps it already has! Having to come up with new inquiry questions every year is unsustainable. Teachers will develop strategies to minimise this extra work, and thereby minimise its usefulness.

A colleague who retired at the same time as me, suggested in his farewell speech that "all questions about teaching will be answered with 18,000 [his figure] teachers around the country presenting the results of their inquiries." His comment may be frivolous, but it is indicative of a developing cynicism towards the inquiry process.



# Excessive teacher workload is hurting students

A joint PPTA and Ministry of Education report shows excessive workload is taking teachers away from the classroom.

Unproductive demands within our education system are taking teachers' time away from the young people they are educating and their own children and partners.

A joint PPTA and Ministry of Education report shows unreasonable expectations are leaving teaching professionals feeling unable to properly fulfil their classroom, management and pastoral care duties.

The excessive workload demands are causing teachers to leave the profession and deterring potential teachers from entering at all.

The report mirrors PPTA's own Workload Taskforce Report released last year. Both found the key areas of pressure to be NCEA, compliance and administration, suboptimal school management practices, poorly planned and implemented initiatives and lack of time and people to do all the jobs that have to be done.

PPTA president Jack Boyle said excessive workload had a serious impact on the government's goals of achieving the best outcome for students.

"This completely undermines the goal of having fair and equitable access to a high quality education for every student," he said.

Boyle said if sufficient steps weren't taken to address the issues brought up in both reports the profession may have to step in.

"There is little doubt that, to protect the health of their profession and the quality of their students' education, teachers could be compelled to make the next moves."

The joint ministry-PPTA 2016 Workload Report is the second multiparty report to the Minister of Education to come out of the 2015 Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement settlement. It had representatives from PPTA, the ministry, the School Trustees Association (NZSTA) secondary principals and the Education Council.

The issues identified by PPTA's Workload Taskforce at the start of 2016 fed into the joint report.

In the second half of 2016 the joint PPTA-ministry group opened the doors



Excess paperwork is taking teachers from the classroom.

for submissions from individuals and groups of secondary teachers. There were presentations from outside groups and consideration of a number of New Zealand and overseas reports on teacher workload.

Both reports identified significant excess workload problems for secondary teachers, feeding into supply problems, particularly for middle leadership positions where a combination of low relative pay and excessive workload pressures is a deterrent.

"Members indicated a range of things they wanted to change to allow them to have a manageable and productive work life that did not require them to keep making daily personal sacrifices in order to try to maintain the quality of the education they were able to deliver to students," Boyle said.

The report was given to the Minister of Education in December 2016 but at the time of writing was still not available on public websites.

PPTA's Workload Taskforce report can be found at [ppta.org.nz](http://ppta.org.nz) in the Advice and Issues section.

The joint report makes recommendations in key areas, plus a specific consideration of workload issues particular to Maori and Pasifika teachers.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority

(NZQA) in particular had been very positive in looking for ways in which it could reduce the administrative workload pressures on teachers, Boyle said.

However, the government-funded agencies (the ministry, the Education Council, NZQA and NZSTA) would not agree to recommendations in critical areas where workload could have been most effectively responded to (e.g. setting credit limits on programmes of learning and providing additional resources.)

The ministry has indicated it is willing to look at how some of the recommendations it agreed to - those that have no cost or which it was working on beforehand, could be progressed, but as yet no visible movement has been made.

Boyle believes that while a little movement straight away may be a step in the right direction, only looking to implement small steps will not be enough.

If the government was not willing to fix the situation then it would be up to the profession, he said.

"It would be unethical to continue to accept a system that was preventing people from being able to properly fulfil their professional responsibilities, limiting access to high quality teaching specialists and undermining the quality of teaching and learning," Boyle said.

## Dealing in students' "musical currency"

Green Bay High School music teacher Jeni Little talks about the level 3 NCEA songwriting standard she helped develop

A new NCEA standard in songwriting has caused quite a stir – and one PPTA member has been involved right at the ground floor.

There has been excitement among musicians and concerns among the more conservative about the new standard, which music teacher Jeni Little has had a hand in developing.

Jeni has taught music at West Auckland's Green Bay High School for almost nine years and this year marks her 29th in the classroom.

"This is where I choose to be. I am passionate about music education and the importance of the arts as a whole," she said.

After active consultation with music teachers the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) decided a new standard should be added to the Music matrix at level 3.

Originally the only option was the composition standard, which has an expectation of formal written representation (notated music). The composition standard is still available but the songwriting standard allows students to progress in a different format.

"The new standard allows for the marriage of original music and lyrics to be marked for credits, with the "notation" being the recording. Each standard now makes explicit that the "notation" is appropriate to the genre," Jeni said.

Jeni's involvement stemmed from her work with the Rockquest and Play it Strange student music and songwriting competitions.

Play it Strange CEO Mike Chunn had long held a belief that there should be a stand-alone music standard which specifically assessed the craft of songwriting, Jeni said.

Jeni's students had been able to access the composition credits from the old standard, but the notation expectation often meant lower grades, even when hearing an imaginative, detailed and well-recorded song.

"I believe that songs are the musical "currency" of young people and that



Jeni Little with her 2016 year 13 music class

much musical learning can be gained by the inclusion of music from a wide variety of sources," she said.

Jeni was one of the first teachers to trial and test the concept with students and worked towards convincing NZQA to add a new music standard.

"Along with a team of educational experts from multiple agencies, a meeting was held which convinced them, we then created a draft for teacher consultation which we finalised late in 2016," she said.

Jeni says she has chosen to work in the classroom despite it being more financially lucrative to move to management positions.

"My strongest skills are in working with students and supporting their development as creative musicians. I have strongly advocated for my students throughout my teaching career and will continue to do so. Despite criticism from some members of the music world, I would do it all again – such is my belief in the importance of this standard."

There has been some backlash against the standard from people in the music world who take a more

traditional view of things, but Jeni believes there will always be those who are suspicious of change.

"I believe whenever there is a shift or innovation in any discipline, there will be some who prefer to stick with the old," she said.

She also believed some of the negative criticism stemmed from patch protection.

"People wanted to keep their own "relationship" with Western European Art Music intact. Some people are deeply suspicious of "popular" music and do not hold any value in those genres and some feel that it means teachers won't teach formal notation in classes anymore – which is absolutely not the case," she said.

"I believe as music teachers it is our job to prepare students for pathways which provide opportunity and rewards. I have made sure that my students are exposed to a wide range of music, but I know that most of my music graduates will move into the music industry. This new standard now gives the opportunity to hone expressive skills that lead to earning a living or having a healthy outlet in a positive hobby."



## Pride in union

PPTA Rainbow Taskforce member Jerome Cargill shares his experience of, and PPTA's contribution to, the 2016 Out@Work conference

At the end of last year the Out@Work Biennial Conference/Hui was held in Wellington.

The theme of the conference was pride, power and politics as relating to issues faced by workers of minority genders and sexualities. A diverse range of unions across the country were present including the PPTA.

The PPTA was represented at the conference by Kirsty Farrant (advisory officer) and Jerome Cargill (Rainbow Taskforce), who ran a workshop titled 'Changing a Work Culture'.

This presentation used the 'Safer School for All' workshop, which the Rainbow Taskforce has delivered in more than 60 secondary schools across New Zealand in the last few years, as an example of the direction that other unions could take. The workshop addresses the bullying of students

and other members of the wider school community who are perceived to be different because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The argument made was that the issues faced by workers of minority genders and sexualities could be challenged by more education for our young people who will be our next generation of workers. By creating safer and more accepting spaces in schools, we will create the expectation that workplaces follow the same principles.

It was an exciting opportunity to share this work. Feedback from the workshop reinforced that professional development and education is the best way forward for changing heteronormative and cisnormative cultures (the presumption that almost all people are assigned a gender at birth they feel comfortable with). Environments where heterosexuality is expected and binary views of gender dominate are likely to contain discrimination on some level.

The conference reinforced that PPTA is leading other unions in the way that formal structures exist in order to deal with the issues faced by the diverse workforce. We are fortunate to have the active voices of the Rainbow Taskforce which enables education of these important issues to be delivered across the union.

The conference featured a dinner as part of the programme attended by guest speakers Grant Robertson, Jan Logie and Kevin Hague. Each delivered a passionate speech about their experience fighting for equal rights for this community.

Kevin Hague made the point that despite our positive steps forward legislating equality through means such as the Marriage Amendment Act 2013, coming out for a young person today is just as scary as it was for someone 30 years ago. This speaks to the need for educators to continue to work towards providing inclusive environments for all students, as there is still a long way to go.



Kirsty Farrant and Jerome Cargill present a workshop during Out@Work

## An inspiring mentor for younger women

Longstanding PPTA staff member and relieving field officer Helen Pearce farewells PPTA's second woman president, Helen Ryburn

Helen Ryburn M.A. 1925 – 2016

In 1973, Helen Ryburn, principal of Auckland's Westlake Girls' High School, was PPTA's second woman president, the first being Julia Wallace in 1961.

Brought up in India where her parents were Presbyterian missionaries, Helen attended an international school there and back in New Zealand where she became a teacher, graduating with a Master of Arts in 1952. That year she began three years of teaching Social Studies and History at Auckland Girls' Grammar School. After country service in Huntly, she went to Westlake Girls' High School in 1960 where she was principal from 1968 to 1982.

On retirement, she took her formidable organising talents and community commitment to local body activities on Auckland's North Shore, becoming a city councillor, helping establish the Mairangi Bay Arts Centre and later, the University of the Third Age on the North Shore.

Girls whom she taught, including myself, benefited enormously from her stimulating teaching of Social Studies and History and enjoyed her human warmth, wit and vibrant personality. Her influence has been lifelong.

Helen's background gave her a deep concern for social justice so from early in her teaching career she was an active member of PPTA, at a time when few women took office. Helen was an extremely articulate and confident public speaker with complete mastery over meeting procedure. She was elected one of the three Auckland region national executive members in 1967, junior vice president in 1972 and then president in 1973. After her year as senior vice president in 1974, she returned to activity in the Auckland region, serving on the regional management committee ending as chairman (sic) in 1979. Helen was an inspiring mentor for younger women, both as a teacher, and within PPTA. Maryan Street who was a young teacher at Westlake Girls' describes her as "brave and powerful." Charmaine Pountney benefited greatly from Helen's support and friendship when she became PPTA Auckland region chair in 1971 and then national executive member in 1974.



Helen Ryburn

The big issues of the 1970s were curriculum review, salary and the future of private schools. The Catholic Church had told the government it could no longer fund its schools whose students would have to be absorbed into state schools. Helen was one of PPTA's chief negotiators of the solution, the 1975 Private Schools Integration Act, resulting in all Catholic primary and secondary schools becoming state integrated schools. Other church schools followed. This was a huge change to the New Zealand schooling system.

Helen was also a leader in the problem of the position of women teachers and girl students within the school system. In 1975, International Women's Year, the Department of Education held a conference entitled Education and the Sexes. As a follow up, Helen and Charmaine prepared an Auckland

region paper, Equality of the Sexes in Education. Successfully presented to the 1976 annual conference by Helen and myself, it resulted in the establishment of the Sex Equality Advisory Committee which played a crucial policy role in challenging the unequal place of women and girls in the school system of the day.

Helen contributed enormously to the education of girls through her teaching and professional leadership and acted as a wonderful inspiration and mentor to women teachers, at school and national level. She was an extremely capable leader of PPTA at national and regional level during a time of great challenges for schools and teachers. On a personal level, she was a great friend and colleague, a lover of life with wide interests who was always stimulating company.

# The boss that always cared

Recently retired PPTA deputy general secretary, Colin Moore, tragically passed away on 8 December 2016. PPTA general secretary Michael Stevenson shares his memories of him

I am very fortunate I got to work for Colin as a PPTA field officer for 5 years – followed by a further 5 years working alongside him at national office.

Colin took a punt – giving me a chance to work for the PPTA at young age and very early on in my teaching career.

But as was the case for so many other people who worked for Colin – he gave far more than opportunities. He was the ear at the end of the phone, the mentor who always seemed to be able to glide you towards the right course of action, the rock of the PPTA field service and the fountain of knowledge. But most of all – he was the boss that always cared.

None of these attributes will come as any surprise to anyone who crossed Colin's path during his working life. Whether you were a student in one of his English classes, a fellow teacher, a PPTA activist or staff member – Colin was the man who had your back – and he never expected anything in return.

Colin will be remembered by many for his quarter of a century long service in the association's management team at national office where he led the field service. But Colin also had many other important roles in PPTA. He was a branch officer at Central Hawke's Bay College, served on the Hawke's Bay regional committee and worked as a field officer from 1984-1989 covering a vast area from the Hutt Valley in the South to the East Cape in the North and everywhere in between.

Colin led the PPTA field service through a difficult time. His appointment as Deputy General Secretary came at the same time the fourth Labour government was on the way out and a newly elected National government entered power with the express intent of destroying unions and national employment agreements with the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act. This did not scare Colin. Instead of retreating and taking a defensive approach – Colin and his team simply prepared for the worst case scenario by developing a comprehensive "What If" plan. This meant branch and regional officers,



Colin Moore

alongside his field service, could go about their work with a brave face knowing Colin had a well-considered and thought-through plan.

Fortunately, the government did not succeed – thanks in part to Colin – and secondary teachers retained their national contract and professional voice.

Under Colin's leadership PPTA membership increased steadily and this allowed for the field service to grow too. When Colin started in the role there were six field staff. By the time he finished there were 25 staff

including 15 field officers.

Colin was much loved by the people who worked with him. He will be remembered as being calm, kind, non-judgemental and supportive. So many people reading this would have benefitted from Colin's wise counsel, principled approach to negotiation and compassion.

Because of Colin's hard work and intellect – PPTA, secondary education and public education is much better placed today than it would have been. Thank you Colin.

# The commodification of kids – online schools in the US

US professor Gary Miron explains the pitfalls of virtual schools

Private companies using cartoon television networks to market online schools directly to children – it sounds far-fetched but it is happening in the United States right now.

PPTA was privileged to have US academic Gary Miron as a guest last year. He talked to parents, teachers and communities around the country about online schools – the good, the bad and the ugly.

Professor Miron is himself a teacher and has decades of experience in education, including opening a school. He has done extensive research in the education field, including on charter schools, school choice policies and virtual schools.

He is an entirely credible voice which is one of the main reasons PPTA invited him to New Zealand.

Gary Miron is for online and virtual learning – passionately so: but he has the evidence for what works and what doesn't.

And what doesn't is full time virtual schools owned and run by the private sector. His evidence shows, once money is involved, students' achievement and well-being move quickly from the centre of decision-making.

The results have been "devastatingly poor" with thousands of students dropping out of the courses before completion. "How can we make them serve the children before the serve themselves?" he asks.

Gary talked about virtual schools, also called online schools or cyber-schools.

New Zealand already has what's called blended learning – where schools use a combination of face to face and online teaching and learning. It works well. There are many options when it comes to using new computer and communication technologies.

"There's a lot going on in your state schools already. It's exciting," Gary says.

Full time online schools have all curriculum delivered via the internet. In the US there are more than 500 virtual schools, which have around 300,000 students enrolled. Over 40% of virtual schools are owned and run by large for-profit education management



Professor Gary Miron shares the US experience with virtual schools with the NZARE conference in the wake of the government's COOLs proposal

organisations, accounting for around 75% of students.

The numbers have a lot to do with a massive advertising budget, marketing the schools directly to children.

"They put a lot of resources into advertising on children's television channels such as Nickelodeon, Gary says. "It's not the parents that are seeing this advertising; it's the children watching television."

And these companies certainly have the money to advertise. (The chief executive of K-12, one of the US's largest online education providers, is paid \$17million a year). When student turnover reaches unheard-of proportions companies like K-12 simply advertise for more students.

Gary says the model is not working in the US because the focus is on getting numbers through rather than whether online learning is the right method for a particular student.

The model is based around having an educated adult in the household to assist the student, alongside the online teacher. Sadly, it is the most vulnerable students who are being targeted by these companies, and they are the least likely to have this support at home.

Gary recounted a story of a grandmother contacting him in tears after desperately trying to get

assistance from K-12. She was trying to support her granddaughter but it wasn't working. "They just don't understand," she said. "I'm illiterate."

Accountability measures are profit related rather than student related, which leads to an incredibly high attrition rate, Gary says.

Gary is calling for a moratorium on new online schools or adding students to current schools in the US. He believes they should put the brakes on and develop a new model with input from educators, researchers and families.

His advice for New Zealand? Take your time.

"Study and better understand current practices in state schools and your Virtual Learning Networks. Find out how best to support them," he said.

He believes teachers and state schools should be incentivised to continue expanding their online services, through technical assistance, time and a national support agency.

He believes new providers, especially private, for-profit ones, should be restricted – although they may have a role in developing and delivering individual courses.

"Instead envision the future and plan and work systematically to improve and expand online and blended learning options for students."

# Speaking truth to power

## PPTA at the Education and Science Select Committee

PPTA members from throughout the country took their concerns about the Education Amendment (Update) Bill, currently before parliament, right to the seat of power.

Many PPTA branches and members have stepped up for democracy and a quality education system and taken their concerns with the Education Amendment (Update) Bill directly to parliament.

Over the last couple of months the Education and Science Select Committee has been hearing oral submissions about the Bill.

Without exception, all were worried about what the proposed changes would mean for students, particularly the Communities of Online Learning (COOLs) proposal.

PPTA president Jack Boyle said there were parts of the bill that will introduce more competition, increase privatisation and undermine access and provision of quality public education for all our students.

The parts that are weakest are those not supported by evidence and where there has been completely inadequate consultation with the sector.

Actually being in the room was interesting. Some members of parliament were engaged, interested and enquiring, and asked insightful and thoughtful questions. Sadly, others were slumped in their chairs, scrolling through their phones and seemed not to be attending to the submissions at all. Perhaps their minds were already made up?

The report of the committee, once they have considered all the submissions will be telling.

Here's what PPTA members told the Education and Science Select Committee about COOLs. We hope their voices will be heard.

"Why, why, why does the minister think COOLs are a good idea? Even the kids are adamant. A student said to me recently, 'School is where you discover who you are.'"

"We shouldn't underestimate the richness of the school experience – everything from camps and tramps to protests and skipping class. There is nothing like face to face learning. That's why this select committee is face to face – because it works."

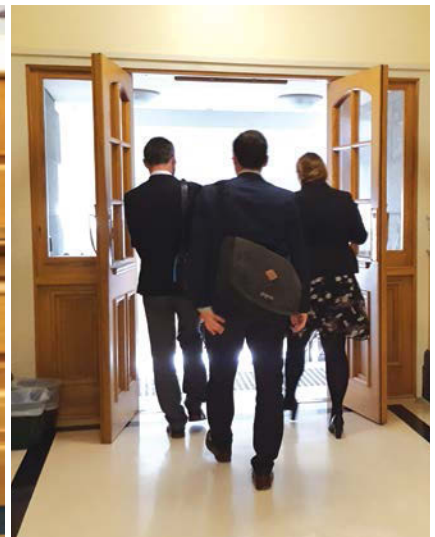
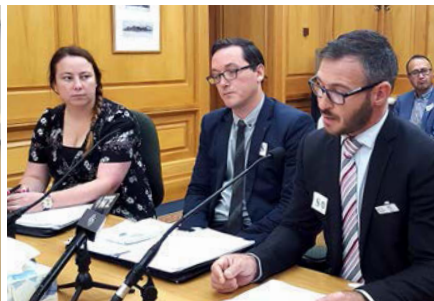
"You can't do drama online!"

"We're not just a school, we are community."

"We identify and address student issues; we grow and maintain relationships. We provide an environment for students to develop social and physical skills."

"COOLs will fracture connectedness – students will become separated from their communities. If we are to use technology it must be teacher and student driven within the school."

"Striving for the best outcomes for students should have nothing to do with profit."



PPTA members and president Jack Boyle take their concerns to select committee

## New graduates – keep an eye on your entitlements

Information and advice from PPTA's intrepid field officers

Jodi and Terry are new College of Education graduates and have taken up work in the same town but different schools. They moved to the new town and have just joined a flat of other professionals. Terry has a permanent job but Jodi is long term relieving for the first term only.

On the first pay date they compared pay and were surprised to find considerable differences.

Jodi's school required her to be on site for a professional development "call back" day on 26 January and a teacher only day on 27 January. She was shocked to find she wasn't paid for those days. The school was open for instruction from 30 January. The first pay date was 1 February so Jodi only received 2 days' pay. However her pay slip showed her as T3 (G3+E) \$50,268.

Terry had been at the school preparing lessons and getting his PE gear organised since 25 January when most of the teachers were on site. The first official teacher only day was 30 January and he too only got two days' pay. However he was surprised to find he was being paid on the same step as Jodi as he had applied for 6 years of service credits for his work as a personal trainer abroad.

They also found that Terry had got removals paid from Auckland to the provincial town but Jodi had been declined.

On the advice of their respective branch chairs, they rang the field office to check their salaries and entitlements.

Their field officer advised them that the first official day for the school year is 28 January. The Ministry of Education does not start new teachers on the payroll prior to that. Schools may however require staff to be present prior to the first official day in which case the school will be directly responsible for paying the new teachers for the extra day or days.

In Jodi's case, 26 January was a call back day as per clause 5.4 of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement. Current teachers were paid for this day automatically as they



When in doubt, call your PPTA field officer

were on holiday pay at the time. The teacher only day was an induction day for all staff and they were required to be there. With Jodi's permission the field officer rang the principal to discuss this. The principal agreed that he had required Jodi to be present at work and said he would instruct the school's executive office to pay for those days.

Because teachers are paid a salary, weekends are treated as paid days so that Jodi was now paid for 26 and 27 January and the weekend 28 and 29 January, meaning she had worked 6 days for her first pay. This also has ramifications for both holiday pay (these 6 days generate 2 days of holiday pay) and for sick leave which starts to accumulate immediately.

The field officer rang Terry's principal. He felt that he hadn't required Terry to be at school and Terry was only doing what any good teacher should be doing at that time of the year. He acknowledged existing staff were being paid even if Terry wasn't. However he acknowledged he had specifically asked

Terry to attend an induction course on Friday 27 January and agreed to pay Terry from that date. Terry was then paid for that weekend as well.

Terry had sent his documentation of his overseas relevant work service to the Salary Assessment Unit, PO Box 9290, Christchurch 8149 but had not heard from them. The field officer contacted the unit to find they didn't have the new address for Terry. They wanted to get in touch with him as there were some problems with his documentation.

Terry needed to have documents stating he had worked for the company from specific dates, and the nature of the work he was doing and that it was full time. In this case the letter on letterhead did not state it was full time work. That needed to be clarified before they could credit him the service. Terry undertook to write to the company and get that done.

Terry received removals as it was his first permanent appointment (STCA 8.1.1 (d)). Jodi didn't as her position was LTR or fixed term less than a year.

# Looking out for the new kids

## Advice for members to support beginning teachers

It's the beginning of the school year, which means a new crew of beginning teachers may be arriving at your school.

A supportive PPTA branch makes a huge difference to beginning teachers; it's important that we welcome them, support them and ensure they are being fairly treated.

If you know of a beginning teacher at your school, please take the time to ensure they are receiving their entitlements.

Firstly, see if they have been asked to join the union and if they haven't been, ask them to. Many will have joined as student members but need to re-join as full members. If they are members but have changed schools, get them to check their payslip to see if the subs are coming through, as Payroll still haven't quite mastered

the art of transferring the deduction authority from school to school. This applies to all members.

We know that beginning teachers are disproportionately appointed as fixed term teachers. The law requires that all positions are permanent unless there is a genuine reason based on reasonable grounds for it to be otherwise, such as parental leave cover. Roll uncertainty is not a genuine reason (unless the board of trustees has been instructed by the Ministry of Education not to appoint permanently). The law also specifies that "trying someone out" is not a genuine reason. The letter of appointment needs to state the reason; if there is no reason stated or that reason is not genuine then the position should be permanent.

Ensure that new teachers are receiving their beginning teacher time

entitlement. Boards are funded for this and it should be provided for that purpose to ensure careers start off positively and successfully.

The branch should meet with beginning teachers, check their membership status, their tenure (fixed term/permanent) and beginning teacher time entitlements. If there are issues to discuss with management then it will be safer and more successful to do this collectively. Field staff are available to support branches with this function.

Help get beginning teachers' on board with PPTA, suggest they attend the Mahi Tika Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) course and get along to the Network of Establishing Teachers conference, which will be held in Christchurch on 18-20th April this year (see back page).



Support for beginning teachers: PPTA's Network of Establishing Teachers (NETs) is for teachers in their first 10 years of teaching who are establishing themselves in the profession.

## Taking on the Tiger Teachers

PPTA member Samantha Mortimer reviews controversial book  
*Battle Hymn of the Tiger Teachers – The Michaela Way*

*Edited by Katharine Birbalsingh*  
Publisher: John Catt Educational  
Ltd ISBN: 978-1909717961

Last year, while reading the news, I found out about Michaela Community School, a non-denominational, non-fee paying, 11-18, mixed Free School which opened in London in 2014.

I was intrigued by the arguments that arose in the media after the school decided to exclude one student from the rest during lunch because their family had not paid the lunch money. I didn't have to wait long before it appeared on my social media feeds as well. I discovered this is the school where students were silent for a great deal of the day in class, between classes and when they walked to their sports grounds.

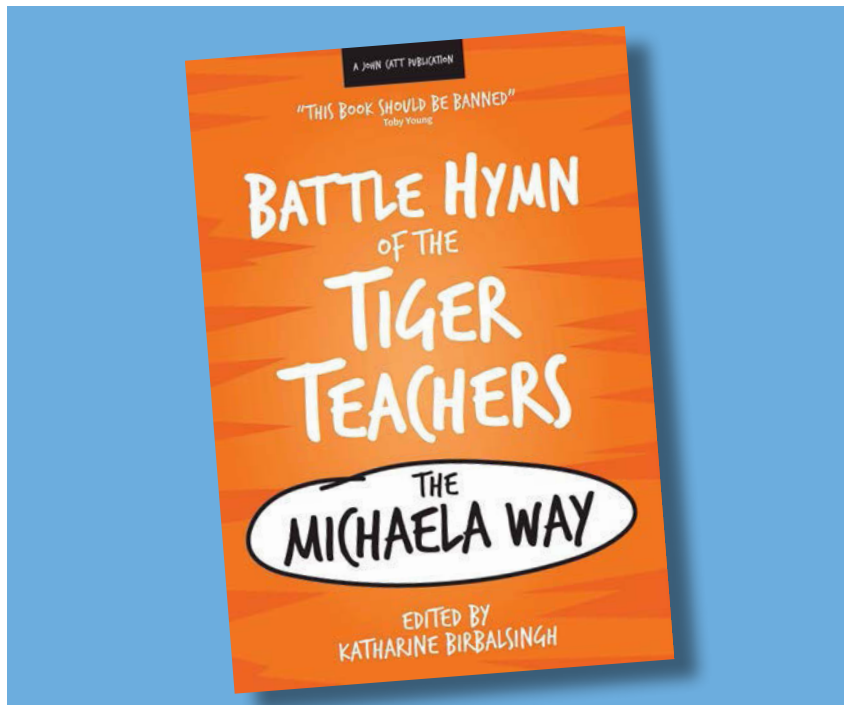
This is also the no-excuses school where every student is expected to do what was asked, including homework, even if they had special needs or were caring for younger children. If they didn't they were punished. After a week or so the feeds stopped and Michaela went somewhere into my memory until I was given the opportunity to read and review the book written by the school's teachers, senior leaders and principal.

The book itself is an easy read but it made me think and question the whole time. The staff are a mixed bunch, some having more than 20 years teaching experience, others beginning teachers and interestingly about 30% unqualified.

The title is based on Amy Chua's controversial book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* about raising children with tough love. The Michaela School is all about tough love. Respect for all staff is a given. The teacher knows their subject incredibly well and drills the students into learning it.

One of their mantras is "knowledge is power" and they expect students to have learnt off by heart any number of pieces of information, all leading to the goals of getting excellent A levels, a university placement and ultimately a successful profession.

Even though they are only into their third year with students from years 7, 8 and 9, the results do look impressive.



To some New Zealand teachers this might sound like heaven but to others it might go against everything they believe in. They might ask: "where is the skills based learning, thinking skills, personal responsibility for learning, ako...?" They might, like I did, coming from a liberal, progressive, learner-centred way of thinking, question why Michaela thinks this is the best way?

The answer comes across strongly in the book as it appears the whole Michaela staff have strong beliefs in social justice. They have seen the system consistently fail inner city children, many schools are not only difficult places to learn in due to bad behaviour but also often very unsafe.

I worked in two inner city schools in Manchester and at times felt the same.

They believe to learn there needs to be order and the rules have to be black and white. They argue, and here they have a good point, that if the rules are the same across the whole school it is then easier for all teachers to teach, not just the charismatic and/or senior ones.

Teachers at Michaela are their most important commodity and they are treated as such. Planning is all done in teams, there is minimal homework, minimal marking, very little use of

technology, behaviour issues are non-existent, teachers are held up as experts and parents held accountable for their children's behaviour.

There are definitely things I agree with including whole school visioning and planning, department planning and professional learning time.

However, I am not totally convinced. It seems the students are part of a totalitarian regime with mass chanting of poems such as *Invictus* and constant messages about how great Michaela is and how bad the surrounding schools are. There would be not much room for a Community of Learning at this school! I question whether the students are learning more than surface knowledge, rather than deep knowledge needed to grow higher level thinking skills.

Overall this is an interesting read especially as I have been reading around progressive ideas and pedagogies for a while. Yet I also know the system does not work for everyone.

As teachers I believe it is vital we read critically about a wide variety of teaching philosophies as there is not one solution that fits all. I recommend you read the book or at least Google Michaela School and have a look for yourself. I will be following them with interest.



# Compulsory English in schools

Guest columnist Dave Armstrong on the demise of the English language



Dave Armstrong

Ni hao, Marhabaan, Malo soifua, Kia ora and Hello! Welcome back to school.

I hope that 2057 will be a good year for you. 2056 was certainly a dramatic year with the surprise result in the US presidential election and the subsequent building of the North Atlantic Ocean Wall, not to mention Britain leaving the Eurasia trade group for Eastasia.

Here at home, with the retirement of long-serving septuagenarian Mount Albert MP Jacinda Ardern causing a by-election, the usual suspects have caused a ruckus with calls for making English compulsory in our schools.

New Zealanders must face the fact that the English language is dying. After all, what use is English anymore?

Today, more Americans speak Spanish as their first language, and in many parts of Britain, English is only spoken occasionally. In New Zealand, Asian and Pacific languages are far more prevalent in our big cities. Tetreodarin is by far the biggest written language amongst teenagers, and since Te Reo Maori was made compulsory in the 2020s, Maori is the language of the countryside.

Yet the dreamers from the Opposition parties now want to make English compulsory. Can you imagine the cost of putting at least one English teacher in every New Zealand school? It will bankrupt the country.

Advocates of compulsory English say that to truly understand a culture you must know the language. That may be true but do we really want our children learning a whole lot of mythical gobbledegook about kings who slay make-believe dragons and queens who are chosen by God to rule? And if England is so great, why is the greatest play in the English language set in Denmark?

New Zealand once had a visionary Education Minister called Hekia Parata who famously said 'compulsion breeds contempt.' If we force children to speak English then surely they'll resent it? Though it's interesting how Parata only

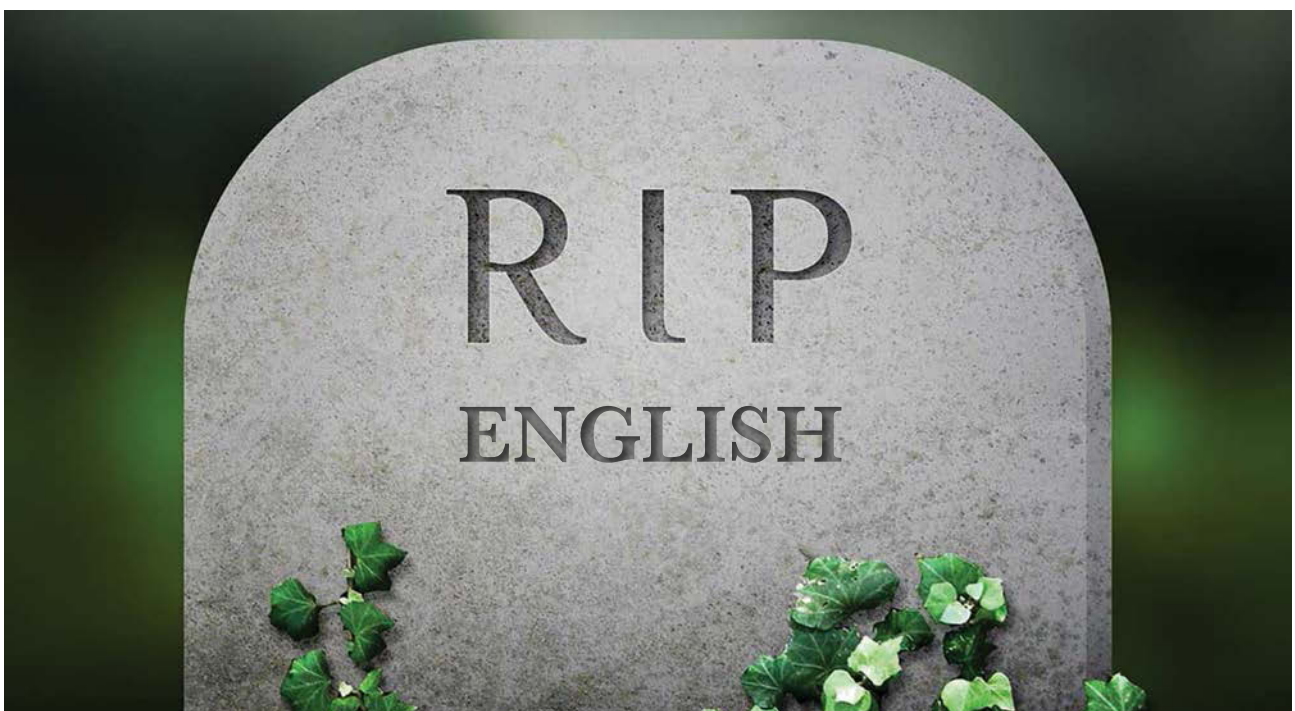
said that compulsion breeds contempt when talking about compulsory Te Reo Maori, not other compulsory subjects like Maths or Science.

If children really want to speak English then fine, but I think there are far more useful languages such as Mandarin, Hindi, and the language of our biggest meat importer, Persian.

And does our already crowded curriculum have space for another subject? Imagine how furious parents would be to learn their children were doing less Media Studies or Self Esteem Workshops because some English teacher wanted them to read a poem.

The best description of how the English language should be viewed today can be summed up in a phrase first used by a now-forgotten prime minister called, ironically, Bill English. He talked about things that were 'nice to have's'. Surely in this modern world where more people speak Portuguese, Spanish, Hindi, Mandarin and Arabic than English, then English is a 'nice to have'?

We've got to stop artificially propping up a dying language. Let English become extinct and go the way of the kiwi, National Standards, Charter Schools and the four-term year.



## A look into PPTA's past

A series looking at education through the eyes of the PPTA Journal

This month we travel back to 1965.

### An impudent question

In 1965 PPTA carried out one of its first membership-wide surveys. It turned out not everybody was pleased with the questions. Fortunately they had cutting edge technology to protect their privacy.

*"A few schools and individuals unaccountably objected to some questions. The question asking for the teacher's age appeared to cause most concern, particularly in girls' schools...all information has been kept strictly confidential and an individual's return is only known to the Punch Card machine and its operator."*

### Concern over contemporary writers

A piece entitled The Study of the Novel in the Sixth form, laments the study of so much 'recent' literature.

*"I am dubious about the wide-spread practice of choosing so many recent novels. Analysis of last year's Entrance Scholarship papers showed that the five novels on which candidates wrote most frequently were, in order, Wuthering Heights, The Power and the Glory, Great Expectations, The Horse's Mouth and Passage to India...Are safe, established upper-middle-brow contemporary writers the best novelists for study at school?"*

### Students interested in wine? Never!

From a review of the book Winemakers of New Zealand

*"Although we should hardly expect our students to be interested in wine, they should find plenty to interest them in this well-written and generously illustrated history"*

### Short and sweet



A student poem published in the May 1965 PPTA Journal that took our editor's fancy.

*"The black cat sleeps  
Like a little piece of darkness,  
Left over from the night before"*

Tom Waru, Kaitaia College

# 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](http://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 2017**





*A course for*

# principals

*and those those who deputise for them*

## Employment relations in state secondary and area schools

Enrol now for this one-day course run by PPTA and the NZ School Trustees' Association.

Registration is limited to 24 people and costs \$250. Contact PPTA for more information 06 358 4036

**12 June 2017**  
**Oriental Bay Copthorne Hotel**  
**100 Oriental Parade**  
**Wellington**

**26 June 2017**  
**Rydges Latimer Christchurch**  
**30 Latimer Square**  
**Christchurch**

# PPTA MEMBERSHIP ALERT

Have your circumstances changed?  
New job? New address? Let us know!

## Starting Teaching?

Teacher trainees – if you've been appointed to a teaching position for 2017, please remember to fill out an application to join us as a full member of PPTA. Application forms can be downloaded from [www.ppta.org.nz](http://www.ppta.org.nz)

## Leaving Teaching?

If you are resigning from teaching please let us know so we can remove you from our membership records. Honorary PPTA membership is available. For information email [membership@ppta.org.nz](mailto:membership@ppta.org.nz)

## Does Your Payslip Stack Up?

Please remember to open and check your next payslip. Payroll errors can affect your PPTA subscription as well as your pay. If you're a member and your payslip is not showing a subscription deduction, you need to email [membership@ppta.org.nz](mailto:membership@ppta.org.nz) immediately. For other payroll errors contact your school's salary officer.



# LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

## PPTA NEW TEACHERS CONFERENCE 2017

### 18-20 April 2017

Registrations close on 7 April

### Venue

Blue Skies Conference and Training Facility, Kaiapoi, North Canterbury

### Fees

Free for members (including meals and accommodation), \$500 for non-members

### Conference includes

- Launch of 'Promise to New Teachers'
- Political panel
- Teaching in ILEs
- and more...

### Registration

For further information and registration forms check out the NETs community page at [ppta.org.nz](http://ppta.org.nz) or email Kirsty Farrant at [net@ppta.org.nz](mailto:net@ppta.org.nz)

**PPTA** **NET**

NETWORK OF ESTABLISHING TEACHERS