**PPTA ADVISORY TEAM WORK PROGRAMME REPORT, FEBRUARY 2019**

Since we met last year PPTA’s Advisory Team has been working hard to advocate for members’ interests across the industrial and professional domains, and to make sure that PPTA’s voice is heard loud and clear on educational issues.

**Political climate**

The pronouncements of support for the teaching profession and public education that the component parties of the new government made before taking office have made for a change of style, but not so much of substance. Since taking office, the government’s self imposed budget responsiblity rules have meant incremental rather than transformative change in spending on public services. The Prime Minister has promised that 2019 will be the year of delivery, and we will continue to push for them to follow through on that.

Public sentiment backing working people to achieve decent pay-rises, and in particular community support for teachers remains strong. Industrial action from working people in both the private and public sector has been picking up, as economic growth and large surpluses fail to ‘trickle down’ into decent wage increases. The CTU has shown that over the last thirty years the ‘labour share’ of income has been steadily and systematically declining.

Around the world, and in particular in the USA, teacher activism is going through a renaissance. Teachers in West Virginia, Colorado and Los Angeles, amongst others, have undertaken long strikes to win much needed improvements to pay and conditions. The framing of this action has been focused strongly on teachers’ care for their students, and the public are behind them. Excitingly, in West Virginia just two weeks ago, teachers struck to defeat a bill that would have introduced charter schools to the state.

The Labour-led government here is facing increasing calls to deliver on its promise of fairness and caring for working class and marginalised people. Despite the unpopularity of the leader of the opposition, and their lack of coalition partners, it’s clear that the election in 2020 will be tight, as they always are under MMP. Labour cannot take its support for granted, and if voters get disillusioned and if their coalition partners drop below 5% then they will be in trouble.

**Industrial matters**

STCA bargaining is a major focus of the Issues and Organising Conference, so this update won’t cover it in too much detail. In short, we have been in bargaining since August 2018, and have received three offers from the government. Each has increased in value, and the latest has been for three salary increases of 3% each year at the top of the scale, and new top step of 3%. Without taking industrial action so far PPTA has achieved some wins at the bargaining table: succeeding with some elements of our claim and getting the Ministry to drop proposed claw-backs. However, the fundamental issue is that the value of the package on offer seems too far away from the value of the claim. It is hard to see how the very real supply crisis will be resolved with a gradual approach that does very little to redress the slippage against the median wage - the objective which forms the basis of our claim. On workload, the Ministry’s interest seems to be in workload reduction rather than hours release time. This may have some merit, but will need to be locked into the collective agreement in a way that all members can easily enforce it and see results.

Bargaining for PPTA’s other collective agreements is also getting underway – in particular Area Schools and Principals. Members in covered by these agreements face similar issues to the STCA, and the broad parameters of what we win in the STCA and NZEI win in the PTCA set the direction of these agreements.

Other industrially significant matters this year include the part-time pay equity case. PPTA’s long mahi for pay-equity and equal pay will come to a crescendo this year in May, when we have our court case set down to be heard. Our four plaintiffs have boldly stood up on behalf of the 3500 part time teachers, and PPTA has invested the resources and time to make sure this case has a strong chance of success.

The industrial team continue to work tirelessly on resolving issues around the collective for particular groups of members.

**Professional matters**

PPTA’s professional team have been heavily engaged with the reviews of NCEA and Tomorrow’s Schools, and a range of new and ongoing work that is underway by the Ministry and various other agencies schools rub up against.

The NCEA review’s advisory groups are reporting soon, and we are hopeful that a more sensible approach to summative assessment will be in the offing. NCEA’s strengths and shortcomings are well understood, but making big change is always hard, as there will be people committed to elements of the existing system. PPTA’s focus is on meaningful workload reduction to enable teachers and students to focus on learning rather than assessment.

Secondary teachers have had a win in regaining the right to elect representatives on the Teaching Council, and we now have 18 candidates standing for election. This bodes well for a high voter turn-out, which is important for the crediblity of the elected positions. There are some familiar PPTA faces amongst the candidates.

PPTA’s Executive has approved the holding of a professional conference in 2020, which will be the first in over a decade. There is so much change happening in education at the moment, it seemed a good time for PPTA to demonstrate its leadership in this space and engage with members about the direction of secondary education in coming years.

PPTA’s professional advocacy shows real thought leadership in the field of secondary education, and reflects well on the Association.

**Communications**

Having honed our communications over the last year, PPTA now communicates directly with a much wider range of members than before, and is focusing on quality over quantity in print communications.

We now produce 10 regular email newsletters that go out at least once a term, as well as negotiation updates which go as required to the appropriate members. The PPTA News magazine is down to seven issues, which will run more feature-style and opinion stories, leaving time-bound updates to email.

In the public sphere PPTA’s Bring Out The Best campaign has been highly visible and effective. We have run nationwide advertising in cinemas, online video, and poster campaigns around the country. Some regions have also had stalls and flyer drops to communicate directly with the public. These approaches have engaged hundreds of thousands of the public with a positive values based message, something that the overseas unions are beginning to do effectively, and we are quickly learning from.

A new development for this round of STCA negotiations is the use of a closed facebook group to connect with members and discuss the campaign. Around 1400 members belong to this group now, and it is a useful resource for activists to share stories and campaign ideas, to ask questions of staff, and for staff to get a sense of the mood out there in schools.

Through our media spokespeople - our president and vice president, regional chairs and executive members- we have a strong presence in media. Monitoring last year indicated that our coverage was close to that of NZEI and this year we have been able to create strong synergy in our messages.