

2 June 2021

Consultation on the Education and Training (Grants—Budget Measures) Amendment Bill

We are pleased to provide comment to the Education and Workforce Committee on the Education and Training (Grants—Budget Measures) Amendment Bill.

About Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand (ECNZ) is an Incorporated Society of members committed to high quality early childhood education for every child. Established in 1963, the organisation is an influential leader in shaping today's early childhood sector through advocacy, policy, tertiary education qualifications and professional development programmes.

We advocate for early childhood education services and the teachers |kaiako who provide education to thousands of infants, toddlers, and children |tamariki. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based, privately-owned, kindergarten and homebased early childhood education services.

Te Rito Maioha is also a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) with the highest Category One rating for a tertiary provider. We are accredited and approved by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to deliver a range of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate qualifications (levels 4-9), including specialist teacher |kaiako education, both nationally and internationally.

We are committed to achieving high-quality teaching and learning by:

- increasing teachers' |kaiako knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Aotearoa New Zealand's dual cultural heritage;
- providing access to online blended delivery of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate tertiary education programmes leading to recognised and approved qualifications;
- promoting quality teaching and leadership through ongoing professional learning and development programmes;
- providing a range of unique resources and services to our members.

General Comments

While we support the intended outcome of this bill, that is to provide early childhood teachers parity with kindergarten teachers now and always in the future, we are concerned with the wording of the Bill and the financial risks this presents to education and care services.

We are very concerned that for such a broad provision this has been introduced with no prior consultation with the sector and with a minimal consultation window.

Wording of the Bill

The wording of the Bill is very broad. It not only allows the Minister of Education to put conditions around the funding rates paid to centres based on remuneration (attesting to paying hourly rates as per the Kindergarten Teachers Collective Agreement (KTCA), but also allows conditions to be set for other

employment conditions. This could potentially override good faith bargaining between parties to the ECECA. The Bill is silent on the government having to match “like for like” in funding the ECE sector to ensure teachers are paid in parity always.

We too are concerned with the risk that this legislation could be used to determine other aspects of employment relations that may challenge the basis on which privately or community owned early childhood centres wish to operate and wish to employ their staff. If this were to happen, government funding would need to be fully sufficient to cover the cost of the imposed employment conditions.

Financial Risk

If a centre does opt into the higher funding rates as per the KTCA, then finds that as teachers move up the pay scales, they are financially worse off, it is practically impossible to opt out as they would be contractually obliged to continue to pay teachers the higher salaries. Assurances of fully aligned funding rates to the KTCA now and into the future is required for parity for all teachers.

We look forward to more detail being provided as the Bill progresses.

Make submission to ew@parliament.govt.nz by 4 June 2021.

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