

4 April 2019

Consultation on the Tomorrow's Schools Review

We are pleased to provide comment to the Ministry of Education as part of the consultation on the Tomorrow's Schools Review.

About Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand is a national organisation that promotes high-quality early childhood education (ECE) through initial teacher education, professional development, leadership programmes, advocacy and membership services. We represent early childhood education services and the teachers who provide education and care to thousands of infants, toddlers and young children. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based and privately-owned education and care services, home-based services and kindergartens.

Te Rito Maioha is also one of New Zealand's top providers of initial teacher education for ECE teachers and recognised as a leader in bicultural teacher education.

General comments

We do not wish to comment on the specific recommendations of the Tomorrow's Schools Review, except to note that we think the Taskforce's recommendations largely ignore the need for a fully integrated education system.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that what happens in early childhood education makes a difference for a child's learning journey and life outcomes, so it is vital that early childhood education be included in overarching system design, with policy settings covering 0-18 years and beyond. Seamless transitions, complementary curricula, well-qualified teachers and ongoing access to learning support are central to children and young people's educational success across the system. We continue to be concerned that the government is not abiding by its impact statement "Establishing enduring goals or objectives for education for children and young people aged 0-18."

We anticipate that the response to this criticism will be that early childhood education is outside the scope of the Taskforce's work, other than to consider transitions to school. However, under the Terms of Reference (Annex B), the Taskforce was required to make connections with other education priorities that were being worked on, reviewed or reformed in 2018. There is little evidence that the Taskforce has given any consideration to the Early Learning Strategic Plan or looked for opportunities to align Te Whāriki, the Early Learning Curriculum, and the New Zealand Curriculum, for example.

We are concerned that the many and various recommendations of the concurrent education reviews will not bring the different education sectors together into a cohesive and interconnected system, without a clearly articulated and cohesive reform approach and robust change management. We do not have confidence in the current capacity or capability of the Ministry of Education to manage such significant change effectively, something the Tomorrow's School Review and other education consultations are silent on.

Submission to Ministry of Education by 7 April 2019: tomorrows.schools@education.govt.nz

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