



Proposed Fees and Levy

To: The Teaching Council: feesconsultation@publicvoice.co.nz

Introduction

1. NZEI Te Riu Roa (NZEI) is the professional organisation and union that represents the interests and issues of its 49,000 members. Our members are employed as kaiako, tumuaki and kaimahi in mainstream and kura Kaupapa Māori early childhood education and primary sectors, support staff in the early childhood, primary, intermediate, and secondary education sectors, school advisers employed by universities, and Learning Support staff employed directly by the Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga.
2. The main objective of NZEI Te Riu Roa is to advance the cause of quality public education generally while upholding and maintaining the just claims of its members individually and collectively.
3. NZEI Te Riu Roa is one of the largest unions and professional bodies in Aotearoa and has a long history of playing a positive role in the education sector and on wider social issues affecting our members and the tamariki and whānau they serve.

General Comments

4. Significant input into proposed changes to the Teaching Council fees and levy has already been provided to the Council by NZEI Te Riu Roa. We have consistently maintained our view on the lack of affordability of the proposed increase and remain deeply disappointed that the Teaching Council and government have not managed to come up with a better solution. This is especially demoralising for teachers given the commitment they have shown during the pandemic and in the current context of increased costs of living.

5. NZEI Te Riu Roa supports an independent professional body for the teaching profession that is by teachers, for teachers. We want to see a Council that can play a stronger leadership role in professional issues. This includes ensuring alignment of Initial Teacher Education, professional learning and development, and leadership strategy.
6. Any organisation asking its members for an 100% increase in fees must expect to have a significant response, particularly if there is no clear link to improvements in service delivery.
7. For the credibility of the Council and to avoid a significant impact on teachers, NZEI Te Riu Roa encourages the Council to introduce any fee increases in a phased manner over a period of time.
8. The proposed increase sends a negative signal in the context of the current teacher shortage in both the early childhood and compulsory sectors. In particular, the increase fails to take account of the additional burden that will be placed on those in insecure employment, such as relievers and those new to the profession. The impact on early childhood teachers, who are currently paid considerably less than their peers in primary and secondary teaching, is significant. The increase is another factor in the financial pressure faced by these groups, potentially encouraging them out of the profession prematurely, and exacerbating the teacher shortage.
9. Given the size of the increase it would be prudent for the Teaching Council to provide different payment options, such as annual fee payments, rather than only once every three years. NZEI Te Riu Roa acknowledge that this would require upfront investment in platforms or tools to enable the Teaching Council to do this.
10. Ensuring we have a high-quality teaching profession is in the public interest as well as in the interests of teachers themselves. We therefore urge the Government to work with the Teaching Council to bridge the gap and come up with a sustainable solution that shows both it and the Council truly value the essential contribution teachers make, especially during the pandemic.
11. We recommend that the government provide funding to the Council for increased conduct and competency cases until new efficiencies and reporting thresholds are implemented.

Other actions

12. An action that NZEI Te Riu Roa would encourage the Council to take is to highlight the work that is done by the Council that does not entail censuring teachers. This would enable registered and certificated teachers to see greater value in the Teaching Council.
13. In conclusion, we urge the government and the Teaching Council to work with the sector to develop a fairer and more phased approach to financial sustainability.

Oral Submission

14. We welcome any occasion to speak to the Teaching Council about this submission.



Liam Rutherford

Te Manukura | National President

1 April 2022