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Budget only a Start for Education

Source: NZ Principals Federation

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'Yesterday's Budget is a good first step for education,' said Whetu Cormick, President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation.

The Federation has been outspoken about teacher shortages, the lack of planning for roll growth and the woeful state of special education for the past months.

'Having an extra \$272.8 million for special education is a welcome boost for schools trying to access the expertise and specialist help they need for children with learning challenges,' said Cormick. 'Special Education has been a source of enormous stress for teachers and school principals for a long time and this announcement goes some way to alleviating that intense pressure,' he said.

The Budget has also taken steps towards addressing roll growth with \$394.9 million going into new schools and new classrooms and \$370.0 million for 1,500 new teacher places.

'We know there are areas of the country where schools are at breaking point trying to accommodate roll growth and not having the funds to build new classrooms or in some cases new schools. This Budget puts a lot of money into capital expenditure which has been neglected for too long,' said Cormick.

While many will register disappointment at the minimal increase to operations grants and the Budget is silent on pay increases for teachers and principals, which might make it difficult to fulfil the promise of 1,500 new teacher places, Cormick was optimistic that future Budgets will address these issues.

'I have called this Budget a good first step and expect that next year and the following year we will see more expansive Budgets to fund substantial increases in salaries and lift the status of our profession,' he said.

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For further commentary contact Spokesperson for NZPF, Whetu Cormick

Mobile: 027 332 2398

Email: whetu@nzpf.ac.nz

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For more information contact:

Liz Hawes | Communications Manager, NZ Principals Federation

Email: esm@nzpf.ac.nz, Tel: +64 (0)4 471 2338, Mobile: +64 (0)21 847780