

16 April 2018

**New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) Submission on the  
EDUCATION COUNCIL – PROTECTING PUBLIC INTEREST**

**To: The Ministry of Education**

**Personal Details:**

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The New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF) is the largest professional organisation for lead educators representing the interests of 2,259 Principals of Primary, Intermediate, Area and Secondary Schools. Principals are from public, integrated and independent schools and are spread throughout New Zealand. NZPF aims to be the most influential advocate for school principals to enable high quality, well supported leadership for school learners in New Zealand.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the legislation change proposal to further protect the public interest in the work of the Education Council.

**Introduction**

NZPF commends and fully supports the Government's Bill, already in train, proposing to inject democracy into the processes for electing members to the Education Council. Further we commend the proposal to change the name of the Council to better reflect ownership for the teaching profession.

We also acknowledge the current administration for its clear intention to operate, in general, in a broadly collaborative way, building strong relationships across the sector and creating a high trust environment with all groups engaged in the education portfolio. What is particularly encouraging is the Government's stated intention of wanting to involve relevant parties early in the process of any policy and legislation change and development rather than presenting an already crafted policy for comment. We believe that this approach will not only ensure professional and public ownership of policy and policy change, it will also ensure our future education policies are robust, relevant and workable. Implementation processes too will therefore be smoother. By consulting widely and valuing the contributions of all, there will be greater public accountability.

The Teaching Council is an independent body, funded by the profession it is intended to serve. A tension arises between the Council's right to make its own decisions for its members, independent of Government influence, and the Government's responsibility to provide a system of education for all citizens that is funded by the State and staffed by the profession.

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We appreciate that there are Council functions, including maintaining an on-going supply of high quality teaching professionals, that have high public interest and implications for the Government which is responsible for education provision.

Below we provide commentary on the two proposals for legislative change to address these tensions.

### **REQUIREMENT FOR THE COUNCIL TO CONSULT WITH GOVERNMENT ON DECISIONS RELATING TO TEACHER EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION**

NZPF accepts that there are implications for the Government in respect of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and registration and that ITE decisions of the Council impact on other areas of Government responsibility such as the tertiary sector, through which professional ITE and training takes place.

NZPF further accepts that the Government has a public responsibility to ensure an on-going supply of high quality professionals staffing our schools. We also recognise that decisions of the Council may impact on teacher supply.

With teacher shortage a matter of critical focus right now, the public is putting pressure on the Government to act decisively. It is therefore clear that Government responsibility to provide an assurance to the public that teacher supply will be restored and the Council's function to determine entry requirements and standards for the profession, which influence teacher supply, are closely interconnected.

NZPF maintains that the Teaching Council must have ultimate decision-making power in respect of its functions. That said, NZPF has no objection to the Council engaging in **consultation** processes with Government, on the single issue of teacher education and registration which is so interconnected with the Government's own responsibilities to its citizens.

### **POWER FOR THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO ISSUE A GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION TO WHICH THE COUNCIL MUST HAVE REGARD**

The proposal to grant power to the Minister of Education to issue Government policy statements on matters relating to the teaching profession to which the Council must have regard, would create a 'top-down' directive, inconsistent with the power of the Council to make its own decisions independently.

Further, it is inconsistent with the Government's stated intention to operate within a high trust environment, build strong relationships and work collaboratively.

NZPF agrees that in an effective education system, Government policies for the system would be reflected in the policies and procedures of the Teaching Council and it is also our belief that it is possible to achieve such a system when the culture is built on high trust and open collaboration.

NZPF therefore does not believe that it would be helpful, nor do we believe there is a need to change legislation to accommodate such a change.

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