

**NZEI TE RIU ROA SUBMISSION
ON NEW MODELS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION
TO THE
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION**

PO BOX 466
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To: The Productivity Commission

New Models of Tertiary Education

NZEI Te Riu Roa Submission

INTRODUCTION

1. NZEI Te Riu Roa (“NZEI”) is the professional organisation and industrial union that represents the interests and issues of its 48,000 members. 2,600 members are student teachers. Our members are employed as teachers in the early childhood and primary sectors (including Kura Kaupapa Māori and Wharekura), support staff in the primary, intermediate, and secondary sectors, school advisers employed by Universities and Colleges of Education, and Special Education staff employed by the Ministry of Education.
2. NZEI Te Riu Roa is a Treaty of Waitangi based organisation. Therefore we expect any models of tertiary education to uphold the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi.
3. The main objective of NZEI is to advance the cause of education generally while upholding and maintaining the just claims of its members individually and collectively.
4. NZEI is one of the largest unions and professional bodies in New Zealand and has a long history of playing a positive role in the education sector in particular, and on wider social issues that might affect our members and the children they serve.

NZEI POSITION

5. Having been made aware of the outline of the submission of the NZCTU and TEU we support the themes of those submissions.
6. Our overall position is that tertiary education is a public service and enables the working age population to participate in the workforce with relevant and current skills. Our teacher members are predominantly a degreed workforce and are obliged to demonstrate their commitment to lifelong learning in order to maintain their professional standards/appraise beginning teachers in their initial years of their professional practice.

7. Academic freedom should be upheld so that tertiary employees are able to exercise innovation without limiting constraints.
8. Education is a basic human right and a public good in New Zealand. The notion of the Knowledge Economy suggests that an academically agile workforce is well positioned to innovate and contribute to the wider social and economic wellbeing of Aotearoa and respond to shifts in globalisation.
9. Teaching graduates generally perform well within the current workforce conditions. It is essential that initial teacher education programmes equip teachers with a high degree of critical thinking, intellectual rigour, social and practical skills to respond to learners in the 21st century.
10. Currently there are 156 programmes delivering 82 teaching qualifications by 25 providers (Education Council, 2016). This translates as both an oversupply of graduates and providers. Initial teacher education providers are under pressure to produce graduates due to government policy directions.

The Inquiry Terms of Reference

1. There are five key trends identified in the tertiary education sector: technology changes, costs, internationalisation, employment and demographic shifts. These trends are also evident in the wider education sector.
2. The [Terms of Reference](#) instruct the Productivity Commission to look at the [Tertiary Education Strategy](#), address obstacles to innovation and “increase the benefits from adopting new models of tertiary education.” Reference is made to Maori and Pasifika populations underrepresented in tertiary education and learners with minimal access to campus-based tertiary provision.

The Issues Paper: An NZEI Te Riu Roa overview

1. The paper begins with a broad definition of tertiary education which encapsulates higher education, vocational training, foundation education, second chance learning, English

language learning for new migrants, refugees and international students, adult and community education and secondary-tertiary programmes. This broad approach acknowledges the diverse demographics and learning dispositions of tertiary learners.

2. The paper overlooks workplace-based education. Their unique needs are a concern. There are early childhood undergraduates undertaking field-based undergraduate degrees with sound completion rates, particularly Maori graduates. It is understood that an ongoing Inquiry will cover work-based education and training.
3. There are some broader modes of training to consider including trade union leader education. Developing industrial leadership skills (for the workplace) contributes to positive workforce participation and can reduce employer: employee disputes.
4. There is a strong emphasis on technology in the paper. Technology is a single learning instrument and not universally available to learners in lower-socio-economic regions; it is not a substitute for academic rigour, reciprocal critical thought, Socratic methodology and authentic participation in critical debate and innovative research. We endorse the CTU view that exploring good practice models of tertiary education, innovation and research dissemination is useful.
5. Absent in the paper is any discourse on adult literacy, learning and numeracy (LLN), which is one of the features of the Tertiary Education Strategy. Significant investment has been apportioned to LLN over the last decade.
6. Lifelong learning is a central issue in workforce development and has obvious impacts on the social and economic wellbeing of New Zealand. Teachers design and deliver education in increasingly complex communities of socio-cultural, economic and technological variables. Therefore lifelong learning is an adaptive feature of this and many other professions. Government has a governance role to exhibit in relation to policy, infrastructure and equitable funding levels that keep pace with CPI.
7. If we accept the theory New Zealand is part of the Knowledge Economy, investment in lifelong learning is essential to both national and international workforce participation.

The purpose of Tertiary Education

1. The Education Act 1989 ([Section 159 Part 13](#)) sets out the purpose of tertiary education. The purpose is broad and highlights the need for scholarly pursuits.

2. Education reforms since the 1980s have seen the reframing of the purpose of tertiary education to an economic privilege, rather than a key feature of a socially adaptive and educationally innovative society. The shifts to a user pays model and the implementation of the Performance Based Research Fund has increased competition between providers, eroded scholarly collaboration and equitable access to tertiary education, particularly for Maori and Pasifika learners. There is a high demand for fluent teachers of Maori, particularly in hard to staff schools (Careers NZ, job database) and for fluent Pasifika early childhood teachers.
3. Equitable access to tertiary education is essential for social cohesion, economic prosperity and enables the working age population access to meaningful employment.
4. We endorse the TEU definition and purpose of Tertiary Education (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2016. PG 29):

“Tertiary education has the capacity, if well-funded, to provide much needed skills and knowledge that can contribute to a strong and sustainable economy and vibrant positive communities...tertiary education provides individuals with the opportunity to continue and develop their human and social potential through the advancement of knowledge and the acquisition of skills. The purpose of tertiary education extends beyond acquiring skills for employment, by providing individuals with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the wellbeing of their communities and our society.”
5. It is critical that tertiary education has a broad purpose to avoid applying narrow measures and limiting outcomes. We concur with the CTU that tertiary education and training responds to learners work aspirations, their professional careers and their lives.

System Performance Issues

1. NZEI Te Riu Roa has concerns about the shifts in employment trends in the early childhood sector due to funding reforms. Changes to early childhood funding models in the early 2000s has meant qualification levels for early childhood teachers have been reduced. Systemically speaking this has seen inconsistent education delivery across the sector and this in turn, impacts upon the learning and development interactions of children in the presence of unqualified staff. The impact of these reforms is the erosion of professional judgement, agency and democratic professionalism. (Biesta 2013).
2. In the interests of a cohesive education system from early childhood to graduate levels NZEI Te Riu Roa maintains its position that teaching should be a degreed profession so that

professional standards are consistent and every child in the presence of a teacher can be assured that their learning and development are intentionally planned and assessed based on academically grounded and inclusive pedagogy.

Skills and Training

1. The tertiary education needs to offer skills development in a fast-paced global community of work. This means that continual learning is a feature to ensure that skills match evolving competencies in workforce development.
2. Teaching graduates are generally performing well within current employment conditions. It is essential that ITE programmes equip teachers with critical thinking, intellectual flexibility and relevant skills to respond to learners in the 21st century. (Zhao 2014)

The Labour Market and the Role of Unions

1. Enabling shared interests between workers and employers via collective bargaining, consistent dialogue and representation is an essential union role. These features combine to promote positive workplaces where workers can apply and share skills and knowledge.
2. There is an obvious relationship between skills and pay. Simply put, employers lose highly competent staff, which can result in turnover costs and reductions in collective staff morale.
3. We are concerned about support staff (e.g. teacher aides and school/centre office managers) who are affected by inconsistent special education funding levels. This means that their operational funding and employment arrangements are tenuous and their professional status is largely unrecognised. Support staff form one-third of the education workforce and are an essential part of 21st century teaching and learning. There is growing agreement that greater professionalization of this workforce, including the provision of appropriate professional learning and the development of qualification frameworks is needed. The joint NZEI Te Riu Roa – Ministry of Education work stream on support staff and [Communities of Learning](#) has recommended, for example, that there should be “engage[ment] with relevant Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) to encourage them to become more proactive in the qualifications/professional learning and development (PLD) space by:
 - Creating/publishing a stock take of quality assured qualifications relevant to support staff
 - Publishing a stock take of quality assured PLD relevant to support staff
 - Actively promoting its services to school support staff.

Innovative models and initiatives

1. The Terms of Reference describes exploring new models of tertiary education. If levels of funding are the barrier to innovation in tertiary provision it is recommended that the resourcing that enables innovative delivery is provided.
2. We endorse the TEU's position on measures to sustain innovation in Tertiary Education and Learning. The principles the TEU submission describes are:
 - Diversity of learning approaches
 - Collaboration with colleagues and other institutions
 - A dedicated permanent workforce
 - Trust and full engagement in decision-making
 - A focus on the important of life-long learning

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NZEI Te Riu Roa

Biesta, G. (2013). The Beautiful Risk of Education London Paradigm Publishers

Zhao, Y. (2014). Who's afraid of the big bad dragon?: Why China has the best (and worst) education system in the world. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.