



Briefing Note: Fono with NZEI Te Riu Roa on Pacific Language ECE services

To:	Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
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Drafter:	Francine Harland	DDI:	04 4631943
Key Contact:	John Brooker	DDI:	9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
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Purpose of Report

This briefing note provides you with background information on NZEI Te Riu Roa and its concerns about Pacific Language ECE services. This is to support your fono with NZEI on Tuesday 6 September. The note also provides material on work programmes relevant to strengthening Pacific Language ECE services and talking points for the fono.

Proactive Release

Agree that this Briefing Note will be proactively released with any information that may need to be withheld done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree.

John Brooker
Group Manager
Te Puna Kaupapahere

31/08/2022



Hon Aupito William Sio
Associate Minister of Education

22 12 2022

Minister Sio's comments: I would like a national forum with key ECE representatives to begin collaborating on what a Pacific early learning model would look like. It is important that Pacific early learning centres collaborate. It does not need to be big or perfect, but to start momentum and discussions in a coherent way.

Background

Meeting with NZEI TE Riu Roa

1. You are meeting with NZEI Te Riu Roa (NZEI) on Tuesday 6 September. The following NZEI representatives are attending:
 - Stephanie Mills, National Secretary
 - Laures Park, Matua Takawaenga
 - Caroline Mareko, Pasifika Leaders' Group
 - Tute Mila, Pasifika Leaders' Group
 - Anastasia Aukuso-Lolo, Pasifika Leaders' Group.
2. John Brooker will attend in support from the Ministry.
3. The meeting follows up on NZEI's letter to you of 19 August in which it signalled a wish to discuss concern about the 'precarious state of Pasifika language services in the early childhood education sector'. The letter states that the most recent symptom is shown by its analysis of Pacific language ECE services that have opted in and out of the Ministry's pay parity funding rates, which were introduced this year.
4. The letter also noted that the number of bilingual and immersion Pacific language ECE services has not significantly increased over the past decade. They are concerned there are not enough immersion services for Pacific children.

Pacific early learning services

5. You have identified Pacific early learning services, including a'oga amata, as one of your three key priorities for education. A'oga amata are classified as coming under the education and care service type (teacher-led, centre-based) in early learning.
6. The 2021 ECE census identified 46 bilingual¹ and 58 immersion Pacific language ECE services. The number of immersion Pacific language services in all service types has stayed fairly constant over the past decade, although the number of bilingual services has started to decrease since 2016 (see Annex 1).
7. The number of education and care services teaching in a Pacific language at an immersion level has decreased since 2011 from 57 to 33 services. Home-based (largely immersion-level) services made up the remainder of ECE Pacific language service types in 2021 and have increased in number in recent years. There were no kindergartens identified teaching at a bilingual or immersion level in 2021.

NZEI Te Riu Roa

8. NZEI is New Zealand's largest education union with members in both the early learning and primary sectors. In ECE, the union represents some of the teachers and support staff working in a range of early learning service types including kindergartens, kōhanga reo, language nests, home-based services and education and care services.
9. NZEI:
 - Develops policy, analyse and comment on proposals from the government.
 - Shares information with members about political matters affecting education and employment in New Zealand.

¹ The Ministry defines bilingual as 51-80% of teaching time in a single language other than English, and immersion as 81-100% of teaching time in a single language other than English. There is no difference in funding between bilingual and immersion provision in ECE.

- Lobbies to support the views of members on political matters around employment and education.
 - Negotiates collective employment agreements. The main collectives it bargains in early learning are the ECE Collective Agreement, involving a minority of education and care services, and the Kindergarten Teachers, Head Teachers and Senior Teachers Collective Agreement (KTCA), which covers almost all kindergarten teachers.
10. NZEI also provides members with education and professional development opportunities and hosts national conferences for early childhood teachers. NZEI's Pasifika Network hosts an annual National Fono for members interested in learning more about Pacific culture to support their work with Pacific children.

Current relationship and engagement with the Ministry

11. NZEI is involved in several Ministry-run ECE groups and committees including:
- the Ministry's longstanding formal early learning sector group, the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC). Allanah Clark, Zane McCarthy and Stephanie Mills are the NZEI Te Riu Roa representatives on ECAC.
 - The Expert Advisory Group for the Ministry's Pay Parity Funding Review. There are two NZEI-nominated members, Adele Hall and Tere Gilbert, on the Group. The Group is assisting the Ministry as it develops options to better enable funding to be delivered for teacher pay parity. The Ministry also discusses pay parity matters directly with NZEI.
12. NZEI is also involved in bargaining discussions with the Ministry on the KTCA.

Teacher pay parity

13. In its 2020 Election Manifesto, the Government committed to move towards pay parity for certificated teachers working in education and care early learning services with their counterparts working in kindergartens. Pay parity is paying education and care service certificated teachers the same as their equivalents in kindergartens. Education and care teachers are paid considerably less than kindergarten teachers, on average.
14. While pay parity is largely a matter of fairness between teachers², education and care services may benefit too because better pay can support recruitment and improve retention of teachers. This may help to keep Pacific teachers working in Pacific ECE services or services with a high proportion of enrolled Pacific children.
15. Pay parity also supports workplace satisfaction and wellbeing of teachers through increased morale and motivation and a more stable workforce. These factors can help improve teaching quality to benefit children in education and care services, including Pacific children in Pacific ECE services.
16. The majority of Pacific ECE services and services with a high proportion of enrolled Pacific children are education and care services. Therefore, efforts to get these services onto pay parity funding rates directly impact these services and their certificated teachers.

² This is because both education and care services and kindergartens are defined by regulations as teacher-led, centre-based services. They are essentially very similar services with equally qualified teachers doing the same work.

Funding services for pay parity

17. Considerable new funding is being injected through ECE hourly funding rates for education and care services to help resource pay parity. The amount of funding needed to meet the teacher pay gap is large though. It is therefore being sought over multiple budgets and implementation rolled out in a stepwise fashion.
18. The mechanism to implement pay parity is the offering of higher funding rates where education and care services agree to pay certificated teachers pay steps from the eleven-step salary scale in the kindergarten teachers' collective agreement.
19. From 1 January 2022, new parity funding rates were made available to services that opted in to these parity rates if they agreed to pay their employed certificated teachers steps according to the first five pay steps and in accordance with the qualification and experience criteria in the KTCA. Services were first able to opt in to the funding rates in October 2021 with the pay rates effective from 1 January.
20. From 1 January 2023, another set of extended parity funding rates will become available for services that agree to pay their certificated teachers additional pay steps. A further tranche of funding through Budget is needed to include all steps.

Pacific services opting out of pay parity

21. NZEI's letter to you provides a list of Pacific ECE services and ECE services with a high proportion of enrolled Pacific children that have opted in and then out of receiving parity funding rates. This list consists of three Pacific ECE services and five services with a high proportion of enrolled Pacific children. These services have opted out as of July 2022.
22. We note there are currently 88 Pacific ECE services in the education and care sector. These are made up of gagana Sāmoa, including a'oga amata, lea faka-Tonga, gagana Tokelau, te reo Māori Kūki 'Āirani, vagahau Niue and other Pacific language and cultural services. As of July 2022, 77 of these services (87.5%) had opted in to the parity funding rates. By comparison, across all 2,776 education and care services, 2,330 have opted in (83.9%). This shows that the Pacific ECE service opt in rate itself is, in fact, above sector average.
23. As of July 2021,³ there were 128 education and care services that had more than 50% Pacific children attending their service. Of these, 110 services (85.9%) had opted in to parity funding rates as at July 2022. Compared to the 83.9% overall opt in rate, it appears that the opt in rate for education and care services with more than 50% Pacific children is again, above sector average.
24. Nonetheless, we do not want to see services opting out once they have opted in. It is likely that Pacific services opting out are facing similar difficulties as other services in this position. We are aware of several reasons for services not opting in to pay parity in the first instance, including:
 - a. A fundamental difficulty with the standard hourly funding services that services are paid. These funding rates, including parity rates, do not change to reflect the actual certificated teacher salary cost in individual services. This cost will vary service by service depending on the mix of pay rates its teachers are on.

³ <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/directories/early-childhood-services>

- b. Services with a more expensive mix of teachers (ie, higher average pay steps), are at a greater risk of finding the rates do not sufficiently cover their costs and so may not opt in.
 - c. Services paying salaries lower than the sector average may find it more costly to opt in, due to the larger gap between their existing pay rates and the new minimum pay rates required.
 - d. Some services have either higher other costs (eg, rent), lower private revenue (eg, parent fees), or both. Therefore, they have a more limited ability to meet increased salary costs not fully met by parity rates if they opt in.
25. In addition, under the funding approach in place, services that have opted in may find that their salary costs change over time, for example, as teachers stay and go up the pay steps making the salary cost higher. Funding rates do not adjust for this and so what was a viable decision to opt in subsequently becomes unviable. We also know some services have opted in without the full knowledge required to assess which pay steps their teachers fit into. Once they have this information, they may have reconsidered their decision to opt in.

Pay parity funding review

26. The issues mentioned above have led to the Ministry undertaking a pay parity funding review. The review seeks to better align ECE funding more closely with the cost of certificated teacher salaries in individual services. We are working with the Expert Advisory Group mentioned earlier in this briefing on options to achieve this. The intention is to consult publicly on options later in the year. Reworking the funding system to achieve this purpose smoothly poses considerable challenges.
27. The Minister of Education's intention is that a new funding system with better alignment of funding will allow all education and care services to offer pay parity, including Pacific ECE services.

Strengthening Pacific Bilingual and immersion education

28. You have committed to the development of a policy on Pacific bilingual and immersion education, through the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030.
29. This policy statement is intended to set the direction for Pacific bilingual and immersion education in the early learning, schooling and tertiary education systems and embed a high-quality delivery model to achieve this direction. The intent is for this policy to address a gap in Ministry strategy and policy settings so that there is explicit, clear direction for and acknowledgment of Pacific bilingual and immersion education.
30. The scope of the policy statement explicitly includes Pacific bilingual and immersion services in early learning, including a'oga amata.
31. The intent of this work is to also align with the strategic direction of the Pacific Languages Strategy, led by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and the operational and pedagogical direction of ERO's work to develop a quality framework for Pacific bilingual education.
32. You have recently agreed that the policy statement will be included in the refreshed version of the Action Plan for Pacific Education, expected to be finalised and published in April 2023 [METIS 1291566 refers].

33. As part of agreeing the policy statement content, you have agreed that the focus will be on Pacific Bilingual Education and Pacific Languages in Education to address matters such as:
- the alignment of this work to the overall Education Work Programme and the Pacific Languages Strategy;
 - the modes of education delivery for Pacific languages, based on community, demographic, sociolinguistic and education factors; and
 - the priority actions we will undertake to progress this work.
34. The scope of this work is intended to create a clear, strategic framework for the provision of Pacific languages in education, including Pacific language and Pacific bilingual services in early learning.
35. The inclusion within the Action Plan has not been formally discussed within the sector but will be released as part of the proactive release of that advice, due for release on 2 September 2022.
36. The timeline for the development of the statement is to align with the timeline for the refreshed Action Plan:

Table 1: Timeline for refresh of Action Plan for Pacific Education

Date	Milestone
August 2022	Identification of new actions and gaps
September 2022	Identification of new actions and gaps Development of Monitoring Report on implementation of Action Plan to date Education Report: Pacific Education priorities within Budget 2023
October 2022	Sign out of new actions and gaps Draft 2023 Action Plan Education Report: Revised Approach to Key Shift 1 (this will include a particular emphasis on our work to support Pacific Bilingual education and Pacific Languages in Education).
November 2022	Education Report: Updated Work Programme (2022-2024)
December 2022	Education Report: Draft Cabinet Paper
January 2023	
February 2023	Agency and Ministerial Consultation on Draft Cabinet Paper
March 2023	Cabinet Paper considered by Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee
April 2023	Launch of updated Action Plan

37. Engagements are currently underway with Pacific communities to develop the policy on Pacific bilingual and immersion education. Current engagements have reached a number of community groups and networks, including some representatives of Pacific

bilingual and immersion early learning services and umbrella early learning groups [METIS 1292711 refers] but NZEI has not yet been engaged formally as a group.

Other relevant work: reviewing qualification settings for Pacific Education and Care Centres

38. In the Early Learning Action Plan, the Government agreed to regulate for 80% certificated teachers to work in early childhood centres.
39. Meeting the proposed 80% certificated teacher regulation may be difficult for some Pacific language ECE services. Due to teaching supply and funding challenges, the Ministry considers that Pacific language bilingual and immersion services may require alternative pathways and additional support to meet qualification requirements.
40. Providing additional support aligns with the Government's commitment to strengthen Pacific language pathways for learning Pacific languages and learning in Pacific languages.
41. You and the Minister of Education have agreed to review the qualification settings for Pacific language education and care services. This process will involve engagement with the Pacific language ECE sector to look at options for recognising what quality teaching is for Pacific services and potential alternative pathways to the proposed 80% certificated teacher regulation.
42. We are currently preparing to engage with Pacific language early learning centres, teachers and support staff through regional talanoa. Invitations are scheduled to be sent in September. There will also be opportunities for discussions within different language groups at each workshop. We also plan to engage with other groups in the sector, and we are happy to meet with NZEI, either separately or through the regional talanoa.
43. The aim of this work is to ensure the implementation of an 80% certificated teacher regulatory standard does not lead to closure of Pacific language bilingual and immersion services.

Annex 1: Number of Pacific bilingual and immersion services by year

Number of Pacific Bilingual Services (51-80% teaching time in a Pacific language)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Education & Care	38	38	41	33	49	49	53	45	41	39	42
Home-based*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	14	22	26	26	22	18	4
Kindergarten	1	1	1	2	1	3	0	0	1	1	0
Total	39	39	42	35	64	74	79	71	64	58	46

*Home based services were only categorised in 2015.

Number of Pacific Immersion Services (81-100% teaching time in a Pacific language)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Education & Care	57	53	54	61	52	47	43	39	42	40	33
Home-based*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	11	8	18	17	20	25
Kindergarten	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	59	54	54	61	55	58	51	57	59	60	58

*Home based services were only categorised in 2015.

Total number of Pacific Bilingual and Immersion Services (51-100% teaching time in a Pacific language)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Education & Care	95	91	95	94	101	96	96	84	83	79	75
Home-based*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	33	34	44	39	38	29
Kindergarten	3	2	1	2	1	3	0	0	1	1	0
Total	98	93	96	96	119	132	130	128	123	118	104

*Home based services were only categorised in 2015.