



## Briefing Note: Meeting with English NZ

<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	29 June 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1264157
<b>Drafter:</b>	Lucy Nie	<b>DDI:</b>	
<b>Key Contact:</b>	Jeet Sheth, Senior Policy Manager	<b>DDI:</b>	9(2)(a)
<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Report

You are meeting with Darren Conway and Kim Renner of English New Zealand on 29 June 2021 at 5.15-5.45pm. This briefing provides background information and talking points to support you at this meeting.

**Agree** that this Briefing will be proactively released following the meeting.

**Agree**

**Disagree**



Belinda Himiona  
**Group Manager, International Education**  
**Te Ara Kaimanawa**

29/06/2021



Hon Chris Hipkins  
**Minister of Education**

29/ 6/ 2021

## Background

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1. You are meeting with English New Zealand representatives (Darren Conway, Chairman; and Kim Renner, Executive Director) on 29 June 2021 at 5.15-5.45pm. Ministry of Education and Education NZ officials (Belinda Himiona, Group Manager, International Education; and Di Solomon, Director, Education NZ) will also be in attendance.
2. English New Zealand is the peak body for English language schools. English New Zealand are active in the Ministry's International Education peak body meetings, including fortnightly engagement on border developments and decisions.
3. English language schools are an important part of the Private Training Establishment (PTE) subsector, which has been hardest hit by COVID-19 due to reduced international student numbers. They also form an important pathway for other tertiary providers.
4. In April 2021, Mr Conway wrote to you seeking a meeting to discuss extending targeted support for English language schools. The need for further support was reiterated at their Annual General Meeting on 25 June 2021, which was attended by Grant McPherson from Education New Zealand and Belinda Himiona from the Ministry of Education.
5. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
6. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
7. Information on each matter is set out below. Proposed talking points to support you at this meeting are attached as **Annex 1**.

## Further information on key topics

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### Next steps on the update of the International Education Recovery Plan

8. In May 2021, you met with international education peak bodies (including English New Zealand) and outlined the expected outlook for 2021 and 2022, and your immediate priorities for the sector's reset and recovery. You then issued a letter reiterating the key messages from the meeting, which has been shared with the wider sector.
9. 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
10. You have asked officials to undertake some early engagement on the draft consultation materials with sector peak bodies in the week of 28 June 2021. This provides an opportunity for us to inform the sector about the upcoming public consultation and

incorporate any preliminary feedback in the consultation materials ahead of public release.

11. 9(2)(f)(iv) at your meeting with International Education Ministers on 1 July 2021. Following this meeting, you will be attending an event with the wider sector in Auckland on 13 July 2021. At this event, you could signal the upcoming consultation, or (subject to the timing of Cabinet approvals) launch the consultation.

### Border response

12. 9(2)(f)(iv) English New Zealand has informed us that there could be some pathway students who would be interested in entering New Zealand under the PTE student cohort.
13. The Ministry will work with the sector to support student entry via the new cohort classes. This will include assessing the viability of English language students returning.

### Possibility for further targeted funding

14. The subsector has received Government funding over 2020/21 through:
- a. the \$10 million Targeted Assistance Fund (TAF) for private training establishments
  - b. the \$1.5 million ESOL Provision Fund which expanded delivery of English language training to partners and dependents of New Zealand citizens and residents.
15. In their paper *'Targeted assistance funding for the English language teaching (ELT) sector'* (sent to your office on 22 June 2021, and updated on 28 June 2021), English New Zealand posited that:
- a. unfunded English language schools contributed over \$738 million to New Zealand's GDP (higher than any other parts of the sector other than universities)
  - b. the level of support provided through TAF to the international PTE and ELT sector was, relative to economic contribution, significantly less than related sectors (e.g. tourism)
  - c. English language schools are at significant risk of wholesale closure if no further support is provided after 30 June 2021
  - d. this could lead to a loss of capacity and capability, and low quality providers taking their place when borders reopen (potentially compromising the quality and reputation of New Zealand education).
16. 9(2)(f)(iv). They note that the subsector generated \$100 million in indirect taxes in 2017/2018 and could continue to do so in the future if the foundations of the subsector were preserved.

17. No new funding has been made available through Budget 2021. Following budget announcements, the Ministry confirmed with English New Zealand that the existing funding through TAF and the ESOL Provision Fund will not extend beyond 30 June 2021. We have encouraged English New Zealand to contact the Tertiary Education Commission to discuss other potential funding sources for ESOL provision that are currently available.
18. 9(2)(f)(iv)
19. English New Zealand is funded solely through membership fees, which rely on international student revenue. Education NZ agreed to reprioritise a portion of its Future Focus Programme funding provided to English New Zealand and redirect it toward providing professional services to support the subsector's rebuild. Of the \$200,000 provided to English NZ, \$120,000 was reallocated with a contract variation agreed requiring the peak body to implement deliverables relating to consultation, engagement, professional development, intelligence gathering and input into sector recovery plans.

#### **Face-to-face instruction for student visa holders at language schools**

20. Under current immigration requirements, student visa holders must attend study at an approved course for at least 20 hours a week. However, the way in which courses must be delivered is not specified.
21. English New Zealand strongly believes international students should be taught face-to-face with other learners of similar level for most of their 20 hours. A small amount of self-access (guided or independent) could be incorporated, but English New Zealand considers this should be in addition to the 20 hours of face-to-face instruction.
22. English New Zealand is concerned that some student visa holders are undertaking guided self-study to meet the 20 hours study requirement. They also note that NZQA has currently approved a language school to teach online (i.e. self-guided) courses onsite for 20 hours per week.

23. 9(2)(f)(iv)

#### **Designating English language schools as a separate category PTE**

25. English New Zealand has long advocated for designating English language schools as a separate sub-category PTE. This is because they consider that:
- a. the type and nature of the courses they offer, their target audience and the key outcomes they aim to deliver are different from other parts of the PTE sector

- b. they do not fit into the NZQA qualifications and quality assurance frameworks for PTEs, as they offer neither training courses nor micro-credentials.
- 26. In their view, designating English language schools as a separate category PTE would lead to a more fit-for-purpose and fairer regulatory framework for the sub-sector, with reduced compliance and fewer costs.
- 27. You agreed to progress this work in July 2019 [METIS 1192963 refers]. New legislative provisions were subsequently created through amendments to the Education Act 1989. These enabled new sub-categories of PTEs to be defined through Gazette notice.
- 28. The disruptions caused by COVID-19 have led to a substantial reprioritisation of international education policy work and paused the work to create a new sub-category for English language schools.

#### **Code of Practice changes**

- 29. As part of the consultation on the Code of Practice, English New Zealand has raised concerns about the perceived level of prescriptiveness in the proposed changes. English New Zealand has also asked for the scope of the Code to be reduced and for processes to be removed from the Code (this last request is not consistent with the Act).
- 30. The intent of the Code is to have the right balance of detail and flexibility, to allow appropriate differences in approach which reflect student needs. You have agreed that provider peak bodies, including English New Zealand, can confidentially review the draft Code after your feedback: this should occur in the next week. NZQA will develop further guidance to assist with the implementation of the Code.