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Tēnā koe Patrick

Letter of Expectations – Response to Phase 1 findings

The Teaching Council has a responsibility to ensure it operates in a way that keeps children safe and maintains public confidence in the teaching profession.

Phase 1 of Katherine Anderson KC's review identifies repeated and serious failures in critical systems and safeguards. These findings point to repeated failures in regulatory practice, process and judgement. These are not minor or technical matters that can be addressed through incremental change. The Council must act decisively and operate as an effective regulator focused on child safety, teaching quality and public protection.

Child safety must be the Council's top priority and must drive every decision it makes. No teacher should be working with children without a current and compliant practising certificate. High-risk cases, particularly those involving vulnerable complainants, victims or witnesses, must be identified early and progressed urgently.

I support the Governing Council's direction to the Chief Executive and its requirement for a detailed action plan setting out clear sequencing, timeframes, accountabilities and measures of success. But an action plan alone is not enough. I am encouraged that you and the other members recognise the extent of change that is required and the importance of taking decisive action and providing strong leadership in that process.

In particular, I expect urgent and rigorous action to:

- complete the data-matching audit of teacher certification to identify every employed teacher without a current practising certificate and take prompt compliance action to ensure that no teacher is working with children without a current and compliant practising certificate;
- establish a regular cycle of audits and assurance checks, supported by the effective use of data-matching arrangements with Education Payroll and the Ministry of Education;
- ensure a risk-based approach is applied to case triage so that high-risk cases, particularly those involving vulnerable complainants, victims or witnesses, are identified early and progressed urgently. This requires a fast-track pathway and clear performance targets for high-risk matters, while bringing the number of cases in triage down to no more than 20 at any one time;
- have a clear approach to building a stronger competence and conduct system, including robust appointment, character and fitness checks; induction and ongoing specialist

- training for decision-makers; timely, well-reasoned decisions; access to appropriate pastoral support; and regular reviews of committee and tribunal performance;
- develop stronger entry controls for the profession by piloting the proposed character and fitness assessment, ensuring rigorous reference and background checks, and moving to proactive testing of fitness to teach;
- improve communications and support for complainants, potential victims, principals and other mandatory reporters, including regular status updates and welfare checks where appropriate; and
- implement sector guidance when emerging conduct or competence risks require action.

To provide Ministers and the public with confidence that change is being delivered, I expect the Council to report monthly to the Ministry of Education against the agreed Action Plan. Reports must be frank, evidence-based and focused on results. I expect the first report within one month of the date of this letter and for each report to include:

- actions completed during the reporting period;
- progress against agreed milestones and timeframes;
- current volumes, age profiles and trends relating to practising certificates, case triage and high-risk cases, including progress towards the expectation of no more than 20 cases in triage at any one time; and
- a concise assessment of whether the Council is on track to deliver the intended outcomes, together with supporting evidence and corrective actions where performance is off track.

I also expect to be informed of any risks, barriers and additional actions required to accelerate progress, including any legislative or system roadblocks that require support from the Ministry or the Government.

I expect the Governing Council to respond with urgency and strong leadership. The Government must be confident that the Council is carrying out its duties competently, supporting teachers to meet the standards expected of them and, above all, keeping children safe. Parents, teachers and the public should expect nothing less.

This letter addresses the immediate safeguarding and regulatory failures that require urgent action. I will write separately about my broader expectations for the Council's statutory performance.

Nāku noa, nā



Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

CC: Sean McKinley, Chief Executive, Teaching Council

Andy Jackson, Deputy Secretary, Te Pou Kaupapahere, Policy, Ministry of Education

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