

# Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



27 August 2021

Nicola Ngarewa  
Board Chair  
Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

Ref: CH7312

Lesley Hoskin  
Chief Executive  
Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

Dear Nicola and Lesley

Thank you for the frank and constructive discussion with the governing Board and leadership of the Teaching Council on Tuesday 24 August. It was useful to hear about the work you have been doing with the sector to develop and progress Rauhuia | Leadership Space.

As you are aware it is my view, and that of the Government, that the Council, as an independent body, should be self-sufficient, rather than relying on funding from the Government. But I also consider that any delivery functions in relation to leadership should not be funded through registration fees and should only be funded through direct Government funding and/or through other means.

As we discussed, many in the profession do not seem to have heard this message. There are many misconceptions out there about the underlying reasons professional fees have increased. This, among other things, has contributed to tensions between the Council and many in the profession. I note that both the PPTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa have been critical of the Council in their submissions on the Bill currently before the House.

I am concerned that Council has not acknowledged, in the context of the Court's findings, that consultation on fee setting could have been done better. The Council had an opportunity to do so during its oral submission to the Education and Workforce Committee on 25 August but did not give a clear message in this regard.

Given the submissions I have seen and the emails and letters I have been receiving, my view is that, regardless of whether it is strictly required or not, avoiding a full re-consultation process following the passage of the Bill would risk damage to the Council's relationship with the profession.

In introducing the current Bill before the House, it was not the Government's intention to validate any aspect of the fee setting process that was brought into question by the Courts. Indeed the Council's request for the Government to validate the fee that was quashed by the Court was categorically rejected. Instead it was our intention to validate previously collected fees, clarify the extent of the Council's fee setting powers, and effectively provide a 'blank page' from which the Council can move forward.

It is my expectation that the Council will undertake a full and thorough consultation process to determine future fees. I would encourage you during that process to provide the profession with a detailed breakdown of what their fees fund, making it clear that the leadership work of the Council has a negligible impact on the rate of overall fees.

Ultimately, a key priority for both the Council and the Government is to work towards a state where the Council has the full backing of the profession and where the profession has a strong sense of ownership of the Council. That was one of the key drivers behind our Government's decision to reinstate elections for the majority of the Council members. As we discussed at our meeting, achieving this goal will require time, work and compromise from all.

I look forward to receiving further advice from you on Rauhuia | Leadership Space and other work you are progressing in partnership with the profession.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CHIPKINS', written in a cursive style.

**Chris Hipkins**  
**Minister of Education**