

10 May 2024

## Consultation on the language competency for teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand policy

We are pleased to provide comment to the Teaching Council on the Language competency for teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand policy.

### About Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand (Te Rito Maioha) is an Incorporated Society of members committed to high quality early childhood education for every child. Established in 1963, the organisation is an influential leader in shaping today's early childhood sector through advocacy, policy, tertiary education qualifications and professional development programmes.

We advocate for early childhood education services and the teachers | kaiako who provide education to thousands of infants, toddlers, and children | tamariki. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based, privately-owned, kindergarten and homebased early childhood education services.

Te Rito Maioha is also a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) with the highest Category One rating for a tertiary provider. We are accredited and approved by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to deliver a range of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate qualifications (levels 4-9), including specialist teacher | kaiako education, both nationally and internationally.

We are committed to achieving high-quality teaching and learning by:

- increasing teachers' | kaiako knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Aotearoa New Zealand's dual cultural heritage;
- providing access to online blended delivery of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate tertiary education programmes leading to recognised and approved qualifications;
- promoting quality teaching and leadership through ongoing professional learning and development programmes;
- providing a range of unique resources and services to our members;
- providing a safe and inclusive learning environment that supports the aspirations of Pacific learners, fanau and communities

### General comments

We are extremely pleased that the Teaching Council is focused on developing pathways to support Pacific bilingual and immersion in teaching and learning.

We have advocated for a number of years about the importance of having teachers | kaiako that are able to engage with tamariki, colleagues and fanau in Pacific languages and that the English language requirements for teacher registration have long been a barrier for indigenous Pacific language speakers.

We understand the balance the Teaching Council is proposing between recognising the value and contribution of indigenous Pacific language, identity and culture and the need for English language competence to undertake all aspects of the teaching role including communicating with non-Pacific families as government officials.

## Recommendations

### ***Recommendation 1 – Introducing an indigenous Pacific languages pathway***

**We strongly agree** that the Teaching Council should develop an indigenous Pacific language competency pathway that has different expectations for English language competence.

**We agree** that removing the Council's current English language competency requirement will help reduce barriers for speakers of Pacific languages.

### ***Recommendation 2 – Expanding English language evidence criteria***

**We strongly agree** with expanding the English language criteria for both ITE entry and teacher registration to include Tokelau, Niue, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Fiji and Kiribati.

Having the Council undertake an attestation process with each Pacific country to confirm English as the medium of instruction for schooling would greatly simplify and reduce barriers to the application process for ITE students.

### ***Approach to implementation***

While we understand the phasing needs to allow sufficient time for the Council to develop the criteria for evidence of Pacific language competence, the Council has given no indication as to how long this may take.

Expanding the evidence will mean that potential students who may have been put off applying for an ITE qualification will be more likely to apply. This will be a useful interim measure until the Pacific language competency track is implemented.

## Questions

**No 1. We agree** that the Council should develop an indigenous Pacific language competency pathway.

**No 2. We agree** that as an interim measure, the Council's current English language criteria for entry to ITE programmes be reduced to level 6 for applicants who are speakers of indigenous Pacific languages.

**No 3.** In terms of evidence of Pacific language competency, we believe *criteria a* and *b* are best. A testimonial could work but the Council would need to specify who could make the testimonial – i.e. would it be made by an employer? Language proficiency examinations could also work as these could be standardised. **We agree with *criteria c*, but** ITE providers would not necessarily have proficient speakers in all languages to carry out interviews and we do not think the Council would have the personnel or resources to do this either, so if this is going to be a criterion this needs to be worked through in terms of practicalities.

**No 4. We agree** that the Council should add schooling and tertiary study completed in the listed countries to the evidence list for demonstrating English language competency.

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Make submission to the Teaching Council by 10 May 2024 to  
[LangCompConsult2024@teachingcouncil.nz](mailto:LangCompConsult2024@teachingcouncil.nz)

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