

Dear Members

The Professional Teachers' Council NSW invites all members to engage directly with the Honourable Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning.

I was fortunate to be able to meet with the Minister last semester to discuss several concerns including the curriculum reform timetable, NESA accreditation decisions and general issues facing member associations across NSW during the current COVID-19 pandemic. While the Minister was very positive and expressed her support for the work of Professional Teacher Associations (PTAs), there has been no action resulting from our very cordial, but none-the-less, frank conversation.

I feel it is timely to re-engage with the Minister and to raise our collective concerns on two key areas which impact all member PTAs and their members. We are seeking positive action and not warm platitudes and supportive rhetoric.

The first issue to raise is the lack of transparency and productive, genuine consultation in the curriculum review that has resulted from the Master's Report. According to NESA, the review is proceeding under the terms of a series of 'concept papers' that have been drawn up by 'experts'. However, these documents cannot be shared with the professionals, the classroom experts, who are expected to implement the reformed curriculum. PTCNSW members who attend one of the NESA stakeholder meetings are gagged from disseminating any of the relevant information presented. It seems that NESA has re-introduced the administrative regime of the 1990s where 'secret curriculum business' replaced stakeholder representative Syllabus Committees. Being told about decisions after they have been made is not consultation! While PTCNSW has been assured regularly that PTAs are considered as essential participants in the reform process, it is obvious that the use of the Teacher Evaluation Networks (TENs), nominated by the 'jurisdictions', to trial and 'debug' the curriculum, has sidelined the PTAs. Again, the lack of transparency on who the TENs members actually are, and the confirmation that they, as individuals, have had to sign confidentiality agreements, is also a concern when they are directly influencing what should be public curriculum direction and implementation in New South Wales. The obvious question is, why all the secrecy?

The second issue is the dismantling of the Professional Learning (PL) accreditation process and the consequent devaluing of PTCNSW accreditation in the aftermath of the Latham 'Review'. The value and capacity of PTCNSW and member PTAs to deliver quality PL, which is directly supportive of the Minister's directive of what PL should be, have been commented upon regularly by NESA, but all attempts to have the current status quo reconsidered have been dismissed, at all levels.

The Minister, at our meeting, indicated that she was willing to approach NESA to consider the PTCNSW be granted the same status as the Association of Independent Schools, as a registered provider. Correspondence with NESA has clearly indicated that they do not have any appetite to review the current situation until early 2022 at the earliest, and that there is no guarantee that PTCNSW or PTAs will be included as accredited providers. All PTA's have an acknowledged, acclaimed, history of providing quality professional experiences for members across NSW for decades, however this record seems to be meaningless. The recent release of a new 'form' for application that requires details of 'research' and 'references' for any proposed PL event is both

unduly onerous and, frankly, insulting, with the implication that PTCNSW and PTAs have previously been unprofessional in their design and delivery of PL courses.

I am urging all PTA's to write directly to the Minister, as I will be, and to put your individual voice to these concerns and to request serious consideration of the issues presented. I will be requesting a combined meeting with the Minister to allow her to hear first-hand from member PTAs and to give PTAs an opportunity to clarify any issues.

Please send a copy of your letter to the Minister to PTC NSW CEO, David Browne. We will publish each letter on our website and reference them when we next meet with the Minister.

I wish you all the very best for Term 4. Stay safe and well!

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis Mootz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Denis Mootz  
PTC President