

# Principal's Update

20 May 2019

## Pōhutukawa Iti



Onyu Kim, Marcus Waterman-Kerr, Archy Parker, Kody Moana, Dontae Tawhana, Tyson Holt and Damien Woodnutt with St John's ambulance officer Jono.

What an exciting week it has been for the students in Pōhutukawa Iti. Not only did they get to enjoy exploring and learning all about ambulances and the work of St John's, but they also got to meet our local Fire Service Officers who brought a Fire Engine to school! To see the excitement this visit generated please have a look on our school Facebook page as a number of teachers will be sharing photographs on there.

You may or may not recall from earlier Updates that our staff have decided to call their teams or departments after native trees. Fitting then that our primary classes chose Pōhutukawa Iti, which simply means little pōhutukawa.

For many, it is the start of a journey deepening their knowledge and understanding of nature, most especially the importance of developing a sustainable future of which trees play a vital role. Perhaps in the years ahead we will join the Enviroschools programme, like many other schools in our Kāhui Ako and wider Christchurch communities.

For now, it is great to see our students engaged in a wide array of school and community based experiences and our thanks and appreciation go to the whole staff team in Pōhutukawa Iti for making these opportunities consistently available to our ākonga/learners.



Below is an extract from another principal's newsletter which was shared with me over the weekend. It clearly articulates the reasons why the upcoming strike is happening, so with her permission I am sharing it with our community.

Please feel free to contact me at the school if you wish to discuss anything to do with the Strike and closure days.

## May 29 National Strike Day for Teachers

"I stand here writing this newsletter, on a **Sunday**, with thunder and lightning, and rain belting against the windows. I feel saddened for my profession and worry even more about who will be teaching the children in the coming years. This is not a single teacher, school or community problem, it is everyone's. With schools having increasing difficulty filling positions in New Zealand, it must be said, it will be even more difficult to encourage teachers to the Chatham's without significant changes in what is offered.

Yesterday was my first day away from the school since returning to the island from the Easter break. The current offer, spread out over 3 years, is not going to do anything to address the workload that all teachers and principals find themselves under or bring salaries to a level that will retain or attract.

The decision to take further strike action was not taken lightly by any of us. For the first time, both primary and secondary teachers are striking together because the crisis in education hits us all very hard and we need the Government to understand how serious it is.

Schools are grappling with the fallout of a 40% nosedive in the number of people training to be teachers between 2010 and 2016, even while the population grew by 400,000. While the situation improved a little last year and the Government has announced an urgent \$95m package to recruit teachers, this is not sufficient to address the crisis.

The fact is that teaching is no longer considered an attractive profession due to long-term under-funding of the education sector. A significant pay jolt is part of the solution, alongside significant improvements to our heavy workloads."

Thank you to Vicky Biltcliff, Tumuaki/Principal of Kaingaroa School for allowing me to share this.

### What can you do to help?

Send messages to your local MP in the support of teachers and their claims. Let him know that you agree that teaching needs to be a valued and sustainable career. That principals and teachers need time to teach and school leaders need time to lead so that children have time to learn.



Dr Duncan Webb

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