



## Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Youth

### **Mā te tuakana te teina e tōtika, Mā te teina te tuakana e tōtika**

The older will lead the younger and the younger will lead the older

### **Congratulations**

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Youth. We look forward to working with you to make a real difference for New Zealanders and especially our young people.

### **Our vision for youth in Aotearoa**

The PSA's vision for young people in New Zealand is that every young person is encouraged, enabled and supported to **participate** confidently, actively and creatively in their community, workplace and society.

We believe that participation is a value in its own right. Yet it is also an important tool to create, access or seize **opportunities** important to young people's and New Zealand's future.

### **Our priorities**

Young people are an important part of NZ's workforce. They are also an important part of the PSA.

The **PSA Youth Network** consists of over 17500 members and is the biggest network within the PSA. Over the last 6 years, between 30-45% of new recruits to our union each year have been under the age of 35. The PSA Youth Network runs regular leadership training, host local events and makes sure that the youth voice is represented at all levels of the PSA's governance structure.

The growth in youth membership is particularly important to support the sustainability of unions and the crucial role they play within the New Zealand economy and society. Young people not only help to transform the union movement but also to increase the diversity of New Zealand workplaces. The world of work is changing rapidly. The changing nature of work and the associated need for a variety of skills, different experiences, diverse ways of thinking, innovative solutions and a range of forms of representation calls for young people's strong involvement.

This briefing highlights our key priorities for youth participation

1. Employing and training young New Zealanders in the wider public and community sector
2. Active participation of young people in the workplace
3. Secure and decent work
4. Equal pay
5. Transparency on pay and progression

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### **1. Employing and training young New Zealanders in the wider public sector**

The PSA considers young people as an asset rather than a risk in the workplace. When young workers are treated as a risk they are offered insecure and temporary work trial periods and relatively lower wages and salaries. When treated as an asset, they will have their development and skills invested in by organisations. The future of a well-functioning and sustainable public sector depends on young people and their active contribution. The PSA strongly advocates for employing young New Zealanders. This is part of the state being an exemplar employer, having a public sector that looks like the communities it serves, and is instrumental to the public sector investing into its future.

The perception among young people of the public sector as an employer might not be positive overall. The public sector needs to strike a better balance between organisational needs and the needs of young people. Lifelong learning is continuous over the life course regardless of age. Lifelong learning, including inter-generational learning, is an important factor to ensure the sustainability of work over one's life. It prepares organisations, the collective workforce and individual workers for transformations on an institutional, collective and individual level.

The PSA encourages the state to take an active role in providing more and better training for young people via cadetships through the service and by providing more internships in industry as well as exploring enhancing its role as an employer of trades people and technicians to support more apprenticeships.

To contribute to the sustainability of the public sector the PSA recommends to

- Institutionalise more and better paid internships, graduate programmes and mentorship arrangements across the public sector
- Employ Affirmative Action recruitment processes
- Continue to implement the gender pay principles
- Offer young entrants to the public sector permanent and secure employment with exemplar terms and conditions, including salaries.
- Design and implement employment arrangements that support whole of system mobility, inter-agency learning and career opportunities (vertical and horizontal)

### **2. Active participation of young people in the workplace**

The PSA's strategic goal 'Transforming our workplaces' is supported by the PSA youth network to create better working lives for our members including our young members.

The PSA asks the Minister for Youth to actively promote young people to make their contribution to transforming workplaces across New Zealand. This means specifically:

- To increase young people's skills and experience through training and other opportunities

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- To support and value young people as individuals who do not lack opportunities, are not discriminated against or harassed
- Young people can contribute to healthy and safe workplaces within which their wellbeing matters
- Create a culture of work where diversity is encouraged, and worker voice is actively sought out and
- one where young people are trusted and are enabled to confidently and creatively work smarter and be part of decisions about how their work is both structured and conducted..

### 3. Secure Work

Young people -like everyone else- deserve to be paid fairly, enjoy decent working conditions and have job opportunities. Ensuring secure work opportunities for young people entering the workforce supports a secure future for young people. Many of our younger members are facing significant housing insecurity, quickly increasing rents and large student loan burdens, all of which increases the generational wealth gap and makes it harder for young people to set up for their futures.

In addition, through the Covid19 pandemic we have seen both a generational and a gendered lean in job losses. More young people and women are the most likely to have job losses along with other minority groups. This is another example of our marginalised being the most negatively affected by the difficult changes facing our world.

### 4. Equal Pay

Considerable progress has been made to achieve pay equality in the term of the last two governments, but we still have a way to go. The current gender pay gap (GPG) according to Stats NZ is 10%. This statistic compares the mean hourly pay of all women with that of all men. The GPG for wahine Maori compared to all men is 17.9% and for Pasifika women it is 21.5%. Comparisons with Pakeha men highlight ethnic pay disparities even further. Achieving equal pay will automatically impact young working people in a positive way, setting them up for fair and equitable job opportunities.

### 5. Transparency on performance pay and pay progression

Young people are committed to and serious about their professional development. In their endeavour to contribute in the best possible and meaningful way young people's professional development needs adequate

- funding for learning and development,
- paid study leave,

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- unpaid study leave for extended periods,
- employee driven professional development agreements with employers,
- access to equal opportunities.

Learning and continuous improvement on behalf of the young person is linked to being recognised and rewarded for it in the workplace. A crucial way of recognising and rewarding a young person's qualification, training, experience, competence, skill, and expertise is via pay increases.

To ensure fair recognition and rewarding of young people in the workplace a transparent remuneration system is required. Young people need to be clear about their technical responsibilities and what expectations they need to meet to achieve pay increases. A transparent pay system also enables young people to plan long-term with a view to founding a family or buying a house. In this sense, a transparent performance system contributes to a more secure future for young families in New Zealand.