

# Hon Chris Hipkins



MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

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Daryl Streat  
President  
TESOLANZ

17 JUN 2020

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Dear Daryl

Thank you for your letter of 8 May 2020 about New Zealand's English language teaching sector in light of COVID-19. I appreciate you sharing your concerns and suggestions, and I apologise for the delay in you receiving a response.

The Government recognises the severity of the impact the border closure has had on international education and on the English language sector. I acknowledge English language provision is critical across many parts of our international and domestic education system, and that the challenges facing international education at this time will also affect other aspects of the system.

The initial response to COVID-19 was focused on protecting the health of New Zealanders. As we come out of the immediate response and into recovery, it is important we strike the right balance of restarting international education, but not putting the gains New Zealand has made in eliminating COVID-19 at risk. Assuming New Zealand's path towards virus elimination continues, risks at the border will remain the greatest public health threat until a vaccine is developed.

As you will know, the decisions around how and when the border re-opens will be made by the Prime Minister and Cabinet, based on health evidence and advice. Easing restrictions for international students to enter New Zealand needs to be done in a way that is consistent with the management of the border. Work is currently underway across government to look at how we might allow greater people movement.

A robust regulatory framework for required quarantine and managed isolation is being developed to guide the re-opening of the New Zealand border. Health officials are looking at border control options and what quarantine arrangements would need to look like, and I will be an active participant in any Cabinet discussions on this matter.

As you know, English language schools have had access to the support all businesses have had, including the wage subsidy. I acknowledge some PTEs have been hit extremely hard, and may be eligible for the extension of the Wage Subsidy Scheme.

The high demand for New Zealand education is encouraging, and thanks to our strong response to COVID-19, we are in a good position to take up the opportunity to again deliver high-quality international education. I assure you we want the international education and English language sectors to recover as soon as possible, and to protect as many providers as we can.

There are a range of different factors to consider and we will be talking with those in the sector, such as TESOLANZ, to help inform future decisions. International education is a valuable industry to the New Zealand economy, and international students are a valuable addition to our communities.

Thank you again for writing, and I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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