



**SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.**

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**President's Comment 4**

Dear Colleagues

At our first meeting for the year Executive had the opportunity to raise a number of issues with the Secretary for Education, Karen Sewell. The changes to the Employment Relations Act that are due to come into effect on 1st April, specifically the matter relating to meal breaks, was discussed at length. We wrote to the Secretary for Education and to the Industrial Relations Unit of the Ministry of Education last year expressing our concerns with the PPTA's published interpretation of the changes to the Act that were circulated to secondary schools.

In her response the Acting Manager of the Industrial Relations Unit says *"While we respect the right of any union to communicate with its members, it is always our preference that advice on the interpretation of collective agreements or applicability of employment legislation into schools is combined advice from both employers and employees."*

*The Ministry provides advice to boards of trustees on changes to employment legislation through its contract with the New Zealand School Trustees Association. We are currently engaged in discussion with them as to whether the advice in schools about this legislative change needs clarification. In respect to that I note your suggestion of a circular to school boards."*

The Secretary for Education informed us that she is now convening a meeting with NZSTA, PPTA and NZEI officials which will take place next week. She gave us an undertaking that she is committed to assisting with the resolution of this issue and communicating the outcome of the meeting to schools electronically.

**Peter Gall**  
**SPANZ President**