

Support from NZ for victimised Australian teacher

28 July 1998

A New Zealand teacher has sent the following letter to the authorities in the Australian state of Victoria demanding the reinstatement of victimised teacher, Geraldine Rawson.

Peter Allen,
Deputy Secretary (Director of Schools)
Department of Education
Melbourne, Victoria.
Via e-mail to: di.burns@dse.vic.gov.au
Sir,

Many teachers in New Zealand have followed, with growing concern, the attacks on the public education system by successive state governments in Victoria.

We have taken note of the wave of school closures such as those at Brighton and Richmond, and have viewed with alarm the growing number of teacher sackings, now numbering in their thousands. There is a common interest among teachers, students and parents on both sides of the Tasman in the protection of a quality state education system. Access to education in both countries is becoming increasingly inequitable, as the gap between rich and poor communities and rich and poor schools inexorably widens.

It is in this context that I write to protest against the victimisation and dismissal of Geraldine Rawson from her teaching position at Buckley Park Secondary College. Having followed this matter closely, it seems to me that there is a political issue involved here, and that is the use of so-called 'competency' procedures for no other purpose than that of culling teaching staff -- particularly the removal of older and more experienced staff and their replacement with younger, cheaper and contract teachers.

This further involves attempted intimidation of teachers into accepting growing workloads, pay restrictions and the devastation of schools, most notably those in working class areas. We in New

Zealand are becoming increasingly familiar with this agenda through National-NZ First coalition government's drive for 'bulk funding'.

If Geraldine Rawson's case does not have this political objective, what explanation is there for the use of such a draconian regulation as TSO140 against her? This regulation, which is a fundamental attack on the democratic rights of teachers, has deprived her of any right to a fair hearing, and has been invoked in order to try to bar Geraldine and others in her position from any avenue for taking their case to fellow teachers and to parents.

Yours faithfully,
John Tapp,
Porirua College,
Wellington,
New Zealand.

See Also:
Australia: Support won for victimised teacher
[23 July 1998]
Victimised Australian school teacher dismissed
[15 July 1998]
Further moves to privatise education in Australia
[17 June 1998]



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