

INTRODUCING: UNTEACH RACISM TRANSCRIPT

With Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand Chief Executive Lesley Hoskin

The Teaching Council has responsibility for setting the Standards for the Teaching Profession, setting the Code of Professional Responsibility for teachers. In those documents it talks about having places of learning that are safe, that make our learners well, that acknowledges and tends to cultural needs of our learners.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner released their report on Education Matters in 2018. Personally I was really affected by it. That really just called out the fact that our children and young people, rangatahi, were saying that they experienced racism. They experienced it in the classroom, they experienced it on the way to the classroom. The urgency of the change that was needed really struck home. So that became our call to action. It was our motivation to step into this space and start to create something specifically for teachers that supported them in the spaces they're in to have really hard conversations about the subject of racism. So I approached the Human Rights Commission. They have the mandate, to, if you like, to dismantle racism and to lead in that space of human rights.

We worked with people at the Ministry of Education, the Department for Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Ministry of Justice, Te Papa, academics, and importantly, we've worked with the teaching profession. People who are doing the job today. To learn from them, to join with them, and then taking our unique area of influence and responsibility to support teachers. And they will spearhead this change on behalf of all of us. I just wanna be really clear that there's Te Hurihanganui that's being launched by the Ministry of Education, there's a national action plan, many different industries and sectors and agencies are looking at how we tackle this policy problem.

I know teachers are busy. I know that there are many different things that you are attending to. So what we've done is try to create something that's accessible. You can go to a website and download an app (text on screen: Join the movement at www.unteachracism.nz).

This app is designed to, module by module, support a teacher to reflect and to think about what they know about racism, to be able to unteach it in the classroom. What we've done is looked at the knowledge base in three different sections. The first one is to identify racism. And that's where we'll start. The second one that we will move to is confronting racism. And then dismantling it.

The big picture – you can say it in one word and we probably overuse it these days – but it's equity. Those – and it's mostly tāngata whenua – who are being disadvantaged because of their race. We can't have our kids experiencing racism.

It's a call to action now. We need to. Covid-19 showed us – in a time of crisis we called on the teaching profession, on those education leaders, to stand up and lead.

Teachers are human rights advocates. Not just in their classroom or school or early childhood centre but in society. It will take all of us, they can't do it for us, but they are certainly in a unique position, shaping the hearts and minds of the next generation.

And so our job I think is really to get around them and to support them to teach in a way that means that racism will be dismantled. And the hope one day of course is that racism won't exist in this country, it will be intolerable.

Unteach is a call to action.

We invite you, we implore you to help us make that change.

UNTEACH RACISM

Credits (UNTEACH RACISM, Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, Give Nothing to Racism, New Zealand Human Rights)

JOIN THE MOVEMENT AT WWW.UNTEACHRACISM.NZ