### Briefing Note: Meeting with the Board of New Zealand Foundation of Conductive Education

| **To:** | Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education |
| **Cc:** | Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education |
| **Date:** | 27 February 2019 | **Priority:** | High |
| **Security Level:** | In Confidence | **METIS No:** | 1178703 |
| **Drafter:** | Hanna Burnstead | **DDI:** | S 9(2)(a) |
| **Key Contact:** | Susan Howan | **Round Robin:** | No |
| **Messaging seen by Communications team:** | No |

**Purpose of Report**

*Note* your office has requested briefing notes for your meeting with the Board of New Zealand Foundation for Conductive Education (NZFCE) at 10.30am on Friday 1 March 2019 at the Beehive.

*Agree* that this briefing will be proactively released.

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**Susan Howan**
**Associate Deputy Secretary Strategy and Implementation**

**Hon Tracey Martin**
**Associate Minister of Education**

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3/1/19
New Zealand Foundation for Conductive Education (NZFCE)

Contact Name: Trudy Heath  
(Principal)  
$9(2)(a)$

Contact Name: Sally Thomas  
(National Co-ordinator for NZFCE)  
$9(2)(a)$

Address: Beehive, Molesworth St, Pipitea, Wellington

Key People

1. The Board of Trustees members are:
   - Trudy Heath, Principal, Addington School - Chairperson
   - Rebecca Courtney, Manager, Conductive Education Canterbury, Treasurer
   - Sharon Harris, Centre Manager, Conductive Education Early Intervention Centre Hamilton - Secretary
   - Murray Booten, Principal, Naenae Primary School
   - Kim Theyers, Tumuaki, Westown School
   - Craig Neilson, Chairman of Conductive Education, Taranaki Trust

Advisory Trustees
   - Linda Harris, Parent
   - Sally Thomas, National Co-ordinator, NZFCE.

Background

2. Conductive Education was developed in Hungary in 1945 by Professor Andras Peto and was based on newly discovered scientific evidence at that time, which described the brain's unique capacity to form new connections despite the damage that occurred within. This was groundbreaking in the 1940's but is now well recognised and accepted internationally.

3. Conductive Education is a holistic programme for all areas of development – gross motor skills, fine motor / hand skills, cognitive abilities, communication / social skills and life skills. It focuses on developing independence and provides practical advice to individuals and their families with access to a network of other support people.

4. Parents of children with physical disabilities, many of whom had visited Hungary where the programme originated, lobbied government hard in the early 1990's to have this programme introduced into New Zealand.

5. The programmes are delivered by qualified and skilled “Conductors”, whose role is that of health professional as well as educator. Conductors work as part of a multi-disciplinary team which includes a range of other specialists depending upon the needs of each individual supported.
6. The Conductor is a specialist teacher, qualified to educate and rehabilitate individuals with motor disorders. Conductors undertake a four year training course in a specialist overseas training institution, where they gain a qualification. This qualification which is recognised in New Zealand as equal to a New Zealand University degree.

7. The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) provides additional funding to five schools who provide Conductive Education:
   - Woodstock School, Hamilton
   - Westown School, New Plymouth
   - Naenae Primary School, Lower Hutt
   - Cashmere High School, Christchurch
   - Addington School, Christchurch.

New Zealand Foundation for Conductive Education

8. Conductive Education in New Zealand is supported by a national body. NZFCE was formed in September 1993 by the groups providing Conductive Education.

9. The purposes of NZFCE are:
   - To promote and raise the profile of Conductive Education
   - To promote cooperation between the groups providing Conductive Education
   - To advocate for those involved with Conductive Education
   - To network with the disability community
   - To facilitate research into Conductive Education
   - To promote standards for Conductive Education in New Zealand
   - To support the establishment of new Conductive Education Centres throughout New Zealand where there is an identified need.

10. NZFCE has a number of high profile ambassadors
    - Mary Lambie, Television Presenter, Newsreader, Reporter and Writer
    - Chris Harris, Former New Zealand Cricketer
    - Laura McGoldrick, Television Presenter and Actress.

11. The National Co-ordinator, Sally Thomas, has a long involvement with Conductive Education since its establishment in Christchurch. Sally has a child who was one of the first participants in the New Zealand programme.

Funding

12. The Ministry provides funding through each school’s operations grant, special education transport assistance, property where necessary, and through funding generated by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

13. The Ministry has also provided further funding to the New Zealand Foundation for Conductive Education.
14. The \( s^{9(2)(j)} \) was to be the amount of specialist support that Conductive Education programmes did not access from the Ministry because of the holistic nature of their programmes. It was also to make up for the Additional Therapy position that Addington School lost when the positions were grand parented in 2010.

15. \( s^{9(2)(j)} \) is distributed between the five schools. The schools have an agreed fair process for distributing the additional funds based on numbers of children in their programmes.

16. The funding agreement has been extended until 31 December 2019.

17. NZFCE is concerned with the level of all funding that the schools currently receive, as the need for their services grow.

How does this relate to your portfolio?

18. Conductive education programmes are part of the network of learning support that falls under your portfolio. They provide learning support to 280 families who would otherwise be receiving their support through the Ministry’s Early Intervention and school based services.

19. Parents who choose to participate in Conductive Education programmes do so over the Ministry’s early intervention services.

Key Risks

20. NZFCE feels there is a gap between providing their services and the funding provided by Learning Support. The national body advises that the accountability and expectations for their services have increased, while funding provided has not increased or kept up with inflation.

21. There has been an increase in children requiring the Specialist Early Intervention service, however there has not been an increase in places.

22. There is a risk that the board may raise transportation to providers as an issue, as the standard policy is to only fund taxi’s to a child’s nearest local school. The Ministry is not aware of any applications for transport to a conductive education centre being declined.

Other Relevant Information

23. The scope of practice that Conductive Education provides now, includes children who have complex and severe cognitive, social and learning disabilities, not just those with physical disabilities. NZFCE has proposed that their programme can have benefit for children and young people with a range of disabilities. Should they have increased funding/places they could provide specialist early intervention services.

24. NZFCE is looking to fully establish the programme in Taranaki and is discussing this with the local Ministry office. NZFCE is looking to expand the programme, which would be based at Westown School. NZFCE is looking to have Addington School (Christchurch) as fund holder. Addington School is the fund holder for the other conductive education programmes.
Possible talking points for the Minister

25. Ministry staff are expected to inform parents about the full range of early intervention services and providers. It is the parent’s decision on which service their child will attend.

26. The Minister might like to ask where the touchpoints are in the increasing costs of providing the service provisions.

27. The Minister might like to visit one of their Early Intervention programmes.

28. The Minister might like to ask how they are communicating their changed scope of practice to include children with complex and severe cognitive, social and learning disabilities to parents, early learning centres and Ministry staff.

Proactive Release

29. We recommend that this briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.