

# Fighting for our rights!

Lecture by Lisa Terreni



Examining early childhood teachers and workers struggle for adequate pay and conditions 1958 – 2017

What are some of the 'rights'  
teachers should expect in  
their workplace?

Discuss

<http://www.thesite.org/workandstudy/working/workersrights>

Some of the Acts that protect teachers and workers:

The Employment Relations Act  
2000

The Disabled Person  
Employment Promotion Order  
2002

The Human Rights Act 1993 The  
Privacy Act 1993

The Parental Leave and  
Employment Protection (Paid  
Parental Leave) Amendment Act  
2002.



# The Little Unions That Could

The Kindergarten Teachers Association (KTA), established in 1958, was New Zealand's first early childhood industrial trade union. 99.9% women, KTA was a very small but it became a very noisy and stroppy union.



1975 – 1984 Muldoon's National Government and Merv Wellington, Minister of Education gave KTA members lots of grief. Serious political advocacy started to gain traction among kindergarten teachers.



*KTA wage negotiating team*





Kate Marshall,  
Sonja Davies,  
Jeanie Truell,  
Jean Pearson,  
Helen May,  
Hilary Watson  
after the  
registration of  
ECWU as an  
industrial union

Pay and conditions were much worse for childcare workers so the Early Childhood Workers Union was born in 1982 ... it was even smaller than KTA but was also 99.9 % women.



*KTA conference at the Tauhara Centre in Taupo 1988*

KTA conferences were where members learnt about teachers and workers rights and how to advocate for these. It was also where a lot of professional development took place.



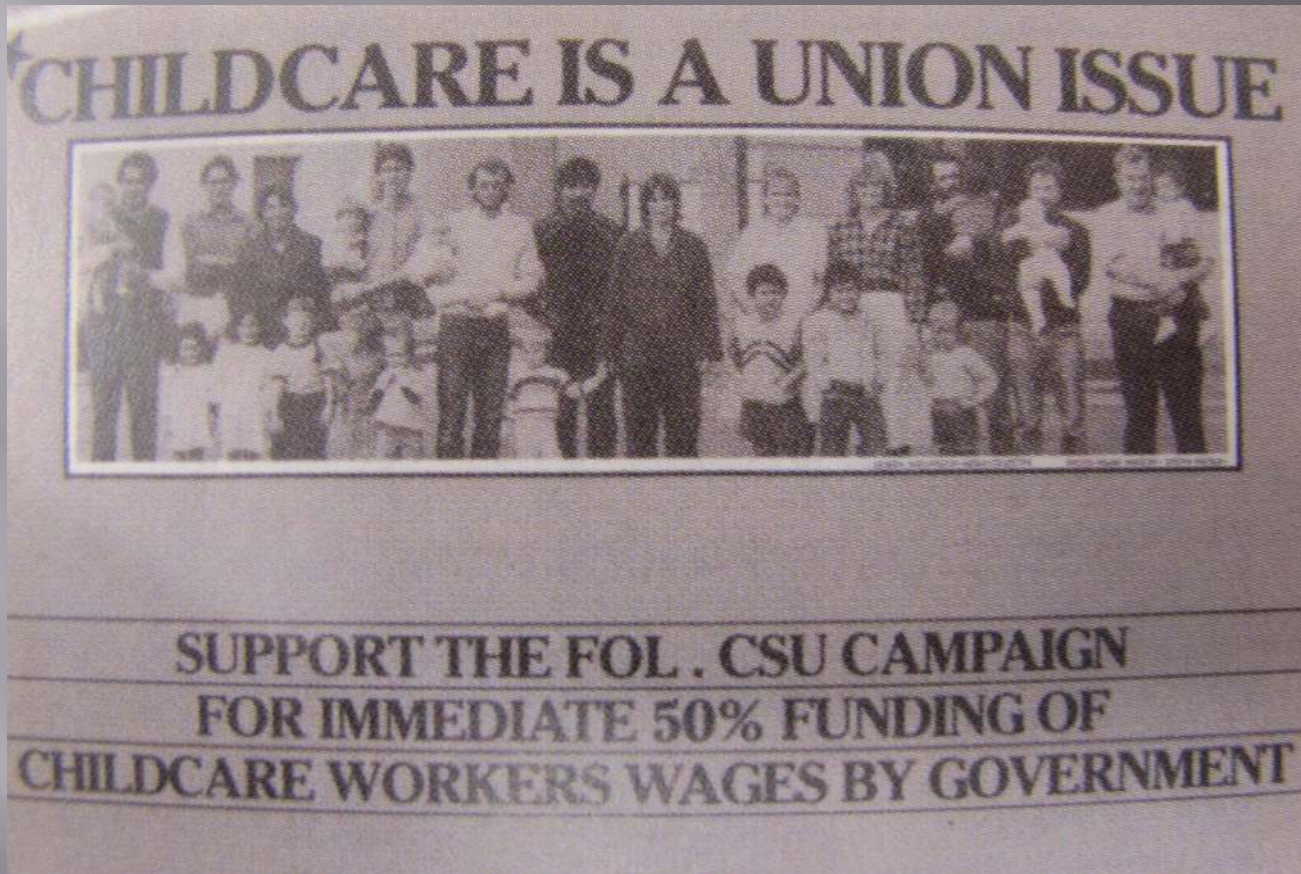


We took political advocacy very seriously and we made sure we were never called 'kindy' teachers ever again because we felt this term was demeaning and underestimated the seriousness of our work as teachers.





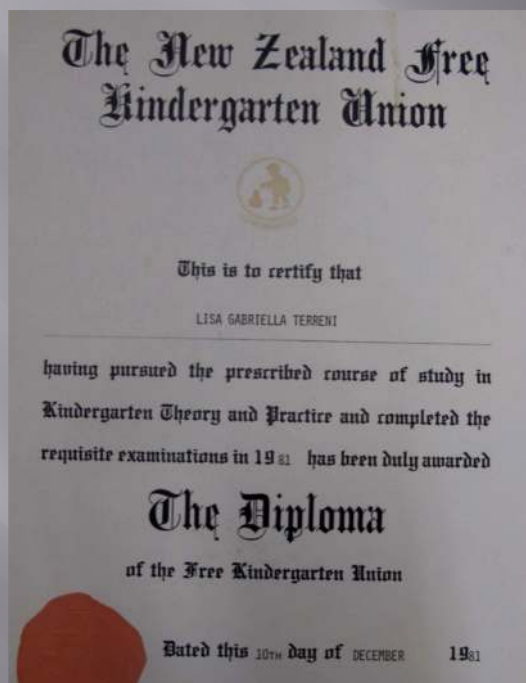
In 1984 Kindergarten Teachers held their first national strike but in that same year the government changed. The 1984 – 1990 Labour Government was more favourably inclined towards the ECE sector. Russell Marshall (1984-1987) and David Lange (1987-1990), were the Ministers of Education.



ECWU's campaigns eventually lead to increased funding and improved pay for EC workers. The first Collective Award (employment agreement) for childcare (Consenting Parties) was agreed. 1987 saw a 9% wage increase in the CP award and a 24% increase in the national Award!



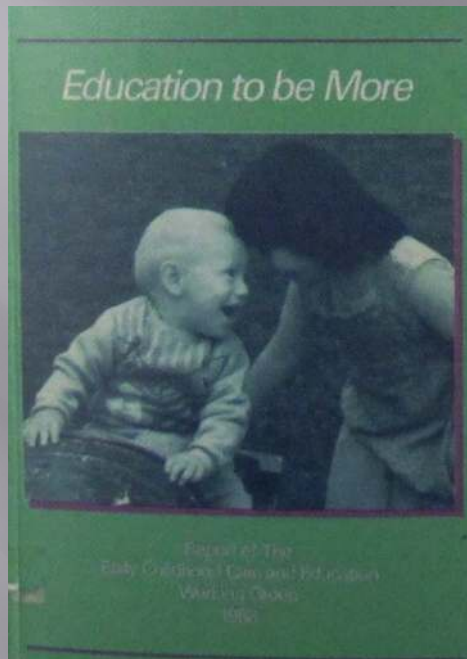
1986 was a very important year in our EC history because childcare was moved from Dept of Social Welfare to Dept of Education and this led to the establishment of a National Childcare Award that same year.



Kindergarten Teaching Diploma for 2 years training

Three year training for ECE teachers (formerly two years for kindergarten and one year for childcare teachers) was introduced.





In 1988 two significant ECE reports were released - *Education to Be More*-, and then the Governments' report - *Before Five*, were released. These advocated strongly for quality ECE provision and became an important part of Labour 's education policy. A fair funding formula for all services was developed after the release of these reports.

In another development the Ministry of Education replaced the old Department of Education ... but the early childhood union campaigns for improved funding continued.

# *The 1990's - Days of despair: New right political agendas*

1990 – 1999 saw a national government take power. In Bolger's national Government were John Luxton, Brian Donnelly, Tau Henare, Nick Smith, Bill English who were all Ministers/ Associate Ministers of Education.



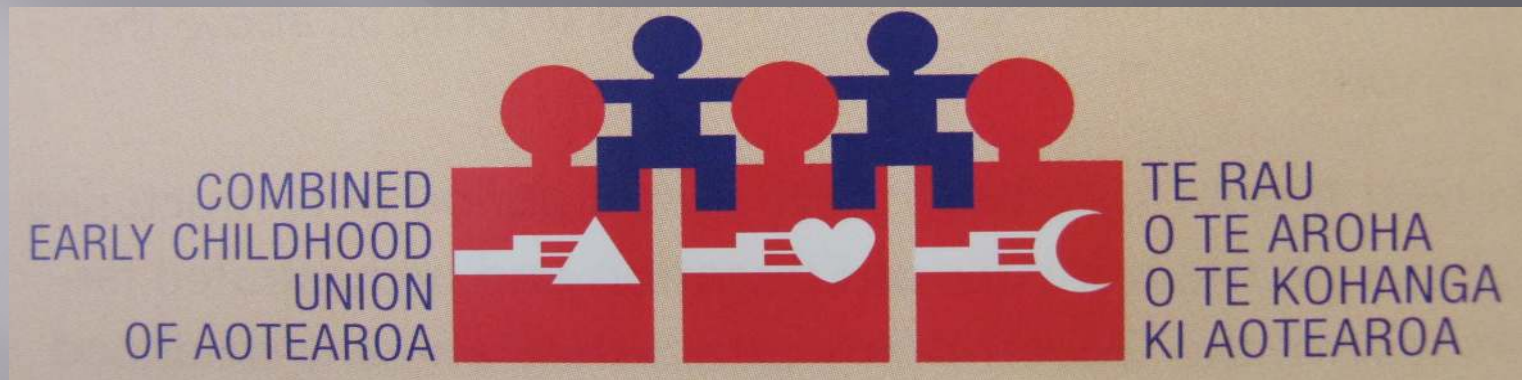
1991 saw budget cuts to ECE and the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act

1992 saw the introduction of bulk funding of kindergarten teachers salaries and this resulted in protracted kindergarten contract negotiations



Many ECE teachers and workers were involved in protest against ECA





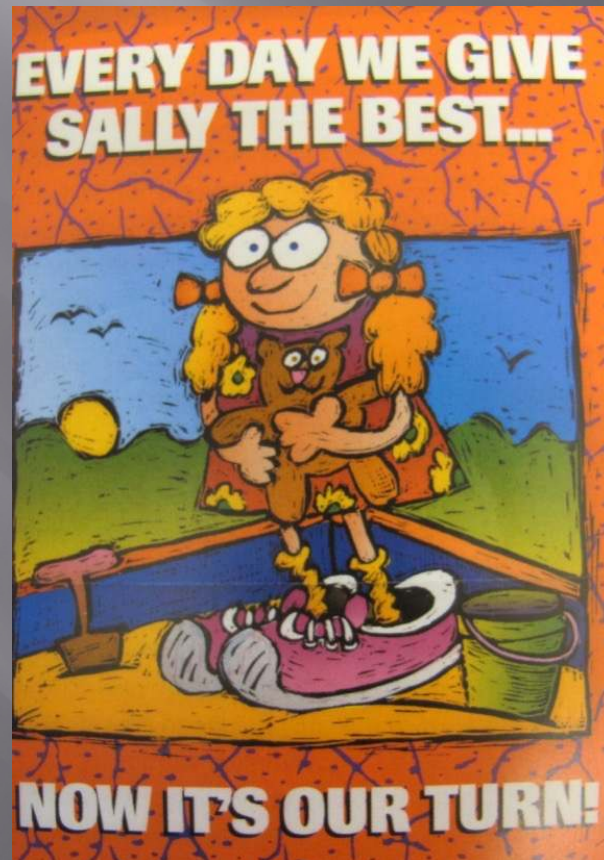
In 1990 the unions merged and became the Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa (CECUA). All trade unions were under attack by government and it seemed that our strength lay in unity.



*CECUA*

*Wellington  
branch  
protesting in  
Cuba Street  
1988*

In 1994 it was decided that to maintain a strong ECE position we needed even more muscle power so CECUA and NZEI amalgamated to become NZEI Te Riu Roa. NZEI's campaigns promoted pay parity.





1996 saw the release of two positive documents for ECE – the Early Childhood Project *Future Directions* Report which advocated for pay parity, and the launch of *Te Whāriki*.



Playing at the launch of Te Whāriki



But it was also a year that Kindergarten teachers took strike action!



In 1997 Kindergarten teachers were removed from the State Sector by the National government which provoked a huge storm of protest and action.





# Campaign Red Alert



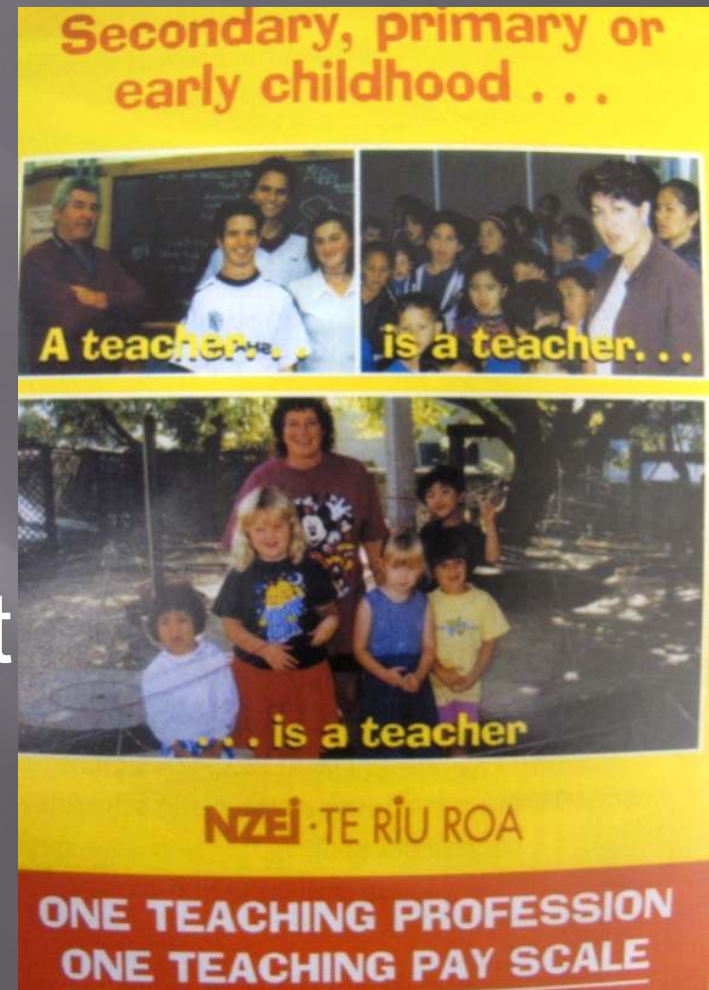


In 1999 Helen  
Clark's  
Labour-led  
government  
took power  
with Trevor  
Mallard and  
Steve Maharey  
as Ministers of  
Education



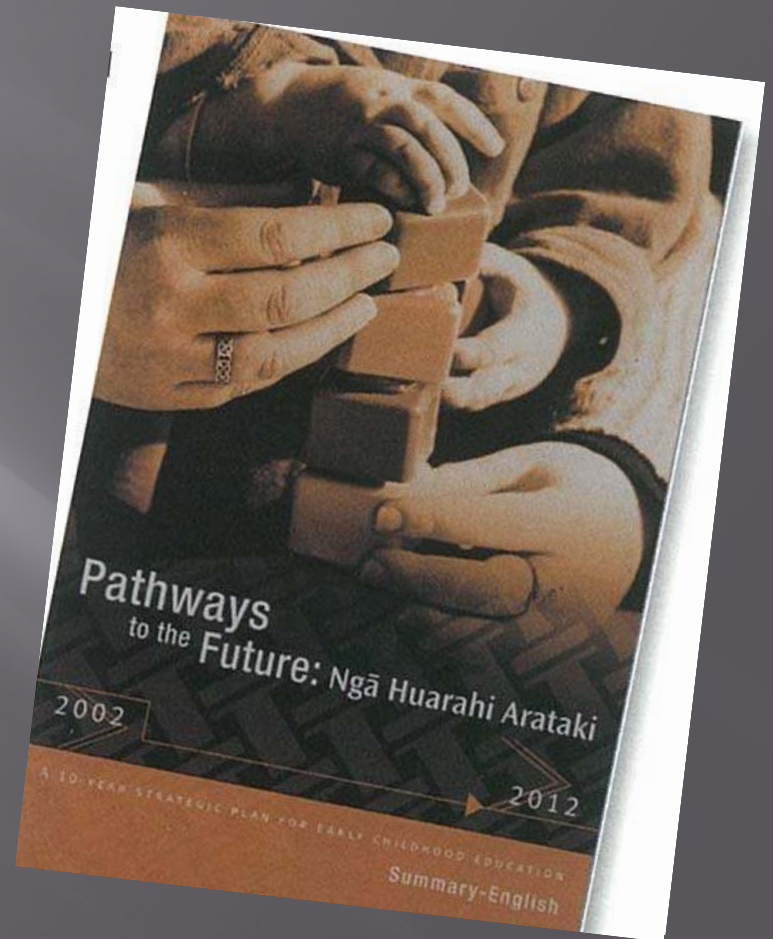
1999 saw the Kindergarten Job Evaluation which established the case for pay parity.

In 2000 the Employment Relations Act saw Kindergarten teachers returned to the State Sector.





2000 also saw the development of a cohesive 10 year strategic plan for the EC sector based on the government's belief that a better way of delivering ECE services was needed and it also addressed ways to adequately deal with issues about teacher qualifications and funding.



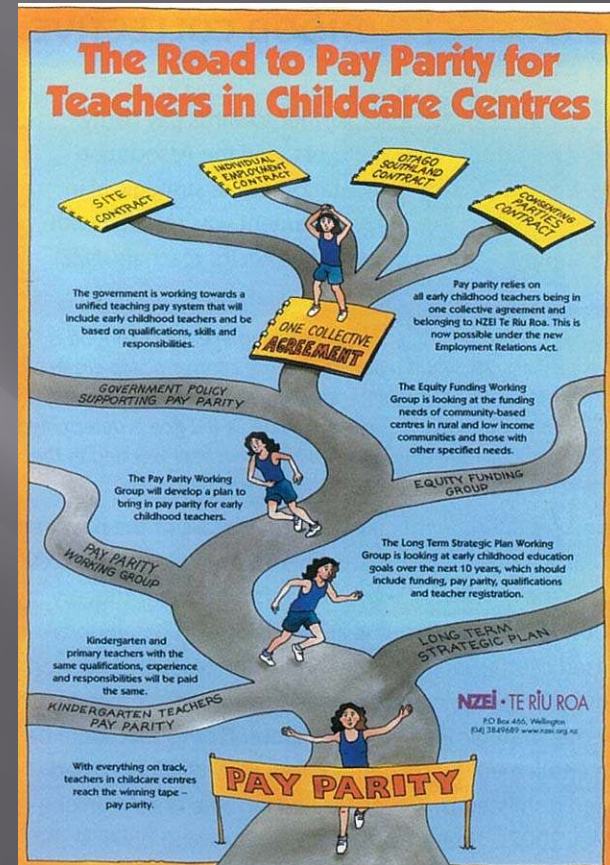
right!

# *A monumental step forward: Pay parity*

After a three decade campaign pay parity was introduced in 2002.

Many people did not support this !  
For example, secondary school teachers, and child care workers felt they had missed out.

A Dominion headline read “ Pre-schoolt eachers win 61% pay rise – A job that’s child’s play?

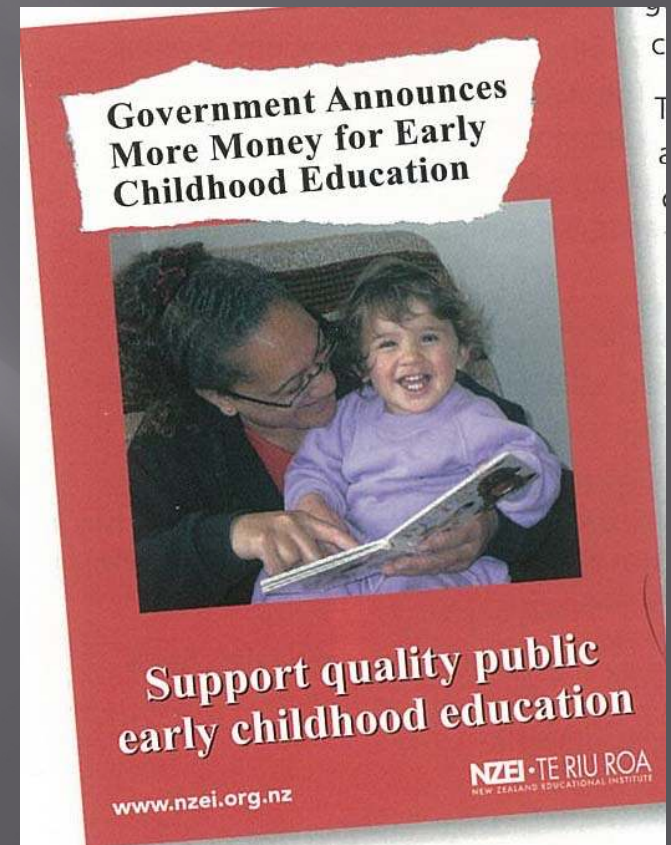




# *Another milestone: Consenting Parties agreement*

NZEI worked hard to get an improvement for childcare workers and CP “inched further towards pay parity” (May, 2005, P. 14).

July 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 “thousands of teachers received the first stage of pay parity thanks to the efforts of many, many people, concerned about children and their teachers” (p. 17).



# *And now in 2010?*



In 2008 a National government resumed power. The 2010 budget announced the Government's decision to cut funding for those centres with 80 per cent or more qualified staff .

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/3909601/Anger-over-cuts-to-early-childhood-funding>



# THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE NEEDS TO KEEP:

THE HAND  
THAT ROCKS  
THE CRADLE

SHOULD ALSO  
ROCK THE  
BOAT.

**ROCKING**



**PROTESTING**



**NEGOTIATING**



**MARCHING**

(May, 2005, p. 17)

But wait..there's more!



Tauranga kindergarten teachers' protest  
August 2010



And even more recently

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/really-tough-make-ends-meet-those-teaching-our-littlest-children-say-they-deserve-big-pay-rise>

NEW ZEALAND

## 'Really tough to make ends meet' - those teaching our littlest children say they deserve a big pay rise

Mon, Jun 26

Share



Source: 1news

New Zealand's early childhood education (ECE) workers say their pay just doesn't add up, and now they're launching a campaign for pay equity.

Those teaching some of our littlest children say they deserve a...



Early childhood teachers can be paid as much as \$9000 per year less than kindergarten teachers.

Source: 1 NEWS

*Chorus:*

Don't be too polite girls, don't be too polite!  
Show a little fight girls, show a little fight!  
Don't be fearful of offending in case you get the sack.  
Just recognise your value and we won't look back!

You name it and we do it in the child care trade  
Since men don't do the job, I can't ask for higher pay  
The people at the top rarely offer something  
More,  
Unless the people underneath are walking out the door.

*Chorus*

*Chorus*

Don't be too afraid, girls, don't be too afraid,  
We're clearly underpaid girls, clearly underpaid.  
Though equal pay in principle is every woman's right  
To turn that into practice we must show a little fight.

*Chorus*

'We can't afford to pay you,' say the masters in their wrath.  
But woman says 'Just cut your coat according to the cloth.  
If the economy won't stand it then here's your answer boys,  
Cut out the wild extravagance on the new war toys.'

*Chorus*

All among the bull, girls, all among the bull,  
Keep your hearts full, girls, keep your hearts full.  
What good is a man as a doormat or following close at heel?  
It's not their balls we're after, it's a fair square deal.





# references

- ▣ May, H ( 2005). *Twenty years of consenting parties: the politics of 'working' and 'teaching' in childcare 1885 – 2005*. Wellington: NZEA Te Riu Roa.
- ▣ Rosier, P (1992). *Broadsheet : Twenty years of Broadsheet magazine*. Auckland, NZ: New Women's press.