Ministry releases secondary teachers’ work study

A study into secondary teacher workloads shows that teachers work extremely hard in the interests of their students and many feel that their workloads are excessive, Secretary for Education Howard Fancy said today.

“However, the study showed that although the actual number of hours worked by teachers and middle managers in secondary schools is high, it is comparable with hours worked by teachers in other countries and by people in similar professions, “said Mr Fancy.

The report, released today, is a result of research commissioned by the Ministry of Education following on from the November 2003 report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Secondary Teacher Remuneration.

“A comprehensive survey of secondary schools during 2004, as well as case studies from a range of schools, were used to gather detailed information on secondary teacher workloads.

“The study suggested that the essence of the workload problem related more to stress than to the number of actual hours worked,” said Mr Fancy.

Middle managers (mainly Heads of Departments) were clearly the group most affected by workload, largely related to their responsibilities in the areas of assessment, curriculum and performance review.

“A number of government initiatives and strategies, related to improved effectiveness of teaching, are currently being implemented. The government has established joint working parties with the Post Primary Teachers’ Association and the New Zealand School Trustees Association to address teacher workload, recruitment and retention issues.”

The report suggests that some issues could be dealt with through identification and sharing of “best practice” examples. Many schools have already found ways to ensure effective practice is supported and encouraged e.g. by managing time allocation to provide teachers and Heads of Departments with time for collaborative planning and support to improve practice.

The research was undertaken by the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) in association with the New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZCER).

For further information: Anne-Marie Johnsen, (04) 463 8011 or 027-244 2030