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NATIONAL PRIMARY MEDICINE

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Rub dirt, light fire till it's hot, feel mother, light while it is tempered. Throw the first mineral in, then the leaves of peoples and finished.

Tu Tu Chi Tai, Ancient Chinese Alchemy Text

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TĪ PUKENGA MI MAA POU MAHUTOA
KĀ TOHU PAPA ARATAKI

As Matariki approaches, and we anticipate new beginnings, it is also time to reflect on the year that has been and the lessons we have learned along the way. Matariki is a time for looking forward and remembrance, the year it is a time for change and a time for reflection. Matariki is a time for whānau, a time for kai, a time for waiata, a time for hākari, a time for mauri. Tihewa.

Welcome to your NPM and Waipapa Taumata Rau (A UOA) Matariki e-magazine publication. Matariki 2025 will begin on Wednesday 18th June, with the Māramatanga Institute (MI) and Waipapa Taumata Rau, Māramatanga Institute Group (MIG) hosting a Matariki Symposium on Thursday 19th June. Please keep an eye out for more information on this event. Matariki is a time for celebrating Māori knowledge, language and culture, and we are proud to be a part of the University's dedication to advancing excellent research that makes a real difference. We are also proud to be a part of the University's dedication to the Māori student experience, and to the success of our graduates. Congratulations to our graduates from Matariki 2024.

Mihi Matariki starts to rise, Te Kāwanatanga Mārie Whānau (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Whātua) and Ngā Mātārae (Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Whātua) have been working with the Māramatanga Institute Group (MIG) and Waipapa Taumata Rau (A UOA) to host Matariki for the Māramatanga Institute Group (MIG) and Waipapa Taumata Rau (A UOA) to host Matariki for the University community.

Finally, we also welcome on board Dr Daniel Wiwan Dapaah who recently graduated with his PhD in Pharmacy Practice from the University of Otago. Dr Dapaah is a Ghanaian pharmacist, and his PhD research explored the experiences of pharmacists who have migrated to Aotearoa to find the factors that led to their migration and their experiences working in Aotearoa. Dr Dapaah is now working as a Research Fellow in the School of Pharmacy.

Ngā Mihi Matariki Tūroa and whānau to our readers who will help shape the next phase of our publication.

Nāku noa, nā Matariki,

Ngā Pou Matua / Co-Directors

Professor Tess Ashcroft

Matariki Guest Lecturer Professor Richard Mitchell

KAUPAPA MATUA

Associate Professor Dave Bennett delivering the 2025 Inaugural Te Ngākau Kōrero Lecture at the Māramatanga Institute Group (MIG)

Proposed ECE Licensing Changes Detrimental for Tamariki

by Emily Hopkins-Simpson

The government's proposed changes to Early Childhood Education (ECE) licensing requirements will be detrimental to the learning and development of Aotearoa's 214,000 tamariki, according to Associate Professor Dave Bennett, Te Ngākau Kōrero Lecture Series Director for Matariki.

Regulatory Minister David Seymour has signalled that he intends to dramatically straddle the ratio of adults to children in ECE centres, from one adult to five children for under-2-year-olds to one adult to four children. Seymour has also proposed that the requirement for 100% of teachers to be qualified and registered be removed, and that the requirement for nurseries, kōhanga or kōhanga reo to be led by a person with a diploma in teaching be removed.

Many, up to 60-70% in some, say that more time with fewer adults is not the way to go. The idea of consistent research showing the benefits of culturally embedded ECE delivery and a high-quality workforce, and then the government doing the opposite, is "mind-boggling", Bennett says.

"This is not just a misunderstanding – it's a misunderstanding of the research. It's not that the research is unclear, it's that the government is choosing to ignore the research and choosing ideology instead."

More evidence of children not yet be prepared is needed for the legislation. "The decision to change the ratios is not based on any evidence. It's based on ideology and on the fact that it will reduce costs for providers. Anyone who has worked in education knows that this is going to be detrimental to children's learning and development."

He says Finland, widely known as the best place on the planet – "we just a pretty standard European in other worldviews perspectives" – has a ratio of one adult to four children for children under the age of three, and one adult to seven children for children over the age of three. He says in Scotland, engage with the world, or even more themselves.

"We have a wonderful opportunity in Aotearoa to provide an education, multi-culturalism, bicultural, that is world-leading, that is the envy of the world, and we're throwing it away for no reason," Bennett says. "It's extraordinary that we're doing these positive of the 90 licensing criteria, and we're throwing it away for no reason."

Many were removing these guidelines don't matter. "It's a symbol of what they see as critical to quality. They're the things that they're going to measure and they're going to hold providers to account for. They're the things that they're going to use to decide whether to renew licenses or not. So they're symbolic, but they're also literally the ones that are going to determine whether or not providers stay in business."

Bennett says that economists have argued that "waste of resources" and "destroy development" – that the children grow up without fear of "when," the proposed legislation is a "huge step backwards". "It's going to be a huge waste of money, it's going to be a huge waste of resources, and it's going to be a huge waste of time. It's going to be a huge waste of time."

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Bennett says that ECE's are private businesses and "we do what they like, for net worth." Many providers are not-for-profit. They're community-based and they're not driven by profit, they're driven by community and they're driven by whānau. "They're not driven by profit, they're driven by community and they're driven by whānau. They're not driven by profit, they're driven by community and they're driven by whānau."

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