

Board Statement on the role of association vs union November 2022

NZSTA STANDS WITH SLTS

The NZSTA Board wants to let members know that it has been grappling with its role as members strive to improve their economic, health, and well-being in their daily work lives.

The Board stands behind our colleagues and empathises as they strive towards improved pay and conditions. We are the national body representing speech-language therapists and believe that hauora, a holistic understanding of health and well-being, encompasses healthy and humane work conditions.

The Board is entirely in support of the current pay equity claim related to women and men receiving the same payment for doing different jobs but of equal value.

The separation between the professional associations and unions (NZEI, PSA or TEU, for example) is quite distinct in the speech-language profession.

The New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (NZSTA) empowers and supports speech-language therapy and the interests of the individuals (members) engaged in that domain. More recently, with the introduction of self-regulation, NZSTA also acts to protect the public interest.

The NZSTA's principal activities include programme accreditation, certification, codes of conduct and ethics, the scope of practice, standards of professional practice, continuing education and professional development, and public awareness and engagement.

Unions tend to help members with specific work-related issues or rights. Unions have the legal right to negotiate on behalf of employees, bargaining to protect and advance their members' work interests, including remuneration, benefits and working conditions.

An issue that arises from time to time is whether the NZSTA should take a more active role in the work lives of its professionals by assuming collective bargaining responsibilities. The NZSTA Board has reflected on this issue and believes separating roles and responsibilities best serves our membership.