

## **Business Roundtable Says Charter School System Could Transform Lives**

The Business Roundtable welcomes the charter school initiative announced this week, New Zealand Business Roundtable chairman Roger Partridge said today.

Mr Partridge outlined the Business Roundtable's views on the charter proposal in an article *Charter Schools: A Dove Among the Pigeons* published on the organisation's blog *Policy Matters* ([businessroundtable.wordpress.com](http://businessroundtable.wordpress.com))

"Business people, along with most other sectors of the community, are deeply concerned about New Zealand's shameful rates of educational underachievement, especially in the country's most disadvantaged communities.

"It's not just about the need to equip our children well for employment in an economy that has to compete with the rest of the world; it's about ensuring they can be happy, confident and achieve their potential, and that young lives are not blighted by failure at school.

"Many children are well served by our current state education model, but far too many are not. Around 20 percent of children leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills. Since many of these children are already disadvantaged, an unproductive education is just one more step in a downward spiral into joblessness and social alienation.

"No one could argue that the current system is working for these children, and there are no other meaningful solutions on the table.

"While the proposed pilot charter school system is not a panacea or a silver bullet, it is soundly based, builds on a great deal of positive international evidence, and is well worth a try. It enables firms, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, iwi and community organisations to play a real part in the solution.

"How anyone who cares about children's achievement and well-being could object to it is hard to understand", said Mr Partridge.

He said the proposal includes all the essential features of successful international charter school models, is specifically targeted at areas of greatest need, and proposes an entrance system open to all comers, regardless of ability or circumstances.

8 December 2011

For more information contact:

Roger Partridge  
Chairman  
Tel: +64 21 660 965  
Email: [rpartridge@nzbr.org.nz](mailto:rpartridge@nzbr.org.nz)

Dr Bryce Wilkinson  
Acting Executive Director  
Ph: +64 4 499 0790  
Email: [bwilkinson@nzbr.org.nz](mailto:bwilkinson@nzbr.org.nz)

[www.nzbr.org.nz](http://www.nzbr.org.nz)