

# Midwives Vote YES to DHBs MECA settlement

**26 April 2019**

MERAS midwives employed by DHBs have voted overwhelmingly YES to the DHBs MECA pay settlement. The MECA has been signed off and can be downloaded from the MERAS website.

DHBs are working on implementing the new pay rates, lump sums and backpay. We have given each DHB a list of MERAS members and asked for their implementation timelines. The experience of other unions is that some DHBs took months to process the backpay, while others did so relatively quickly.

## Pay Equity process underway

The pay equity process for midwives is already underway, the Terms of Reference having been signed by MERAS, the DHBs and NZNO. A project team is meeting weekly to progress the plan.

MERAS is running courses for our workplace reps to outline the pay equity process. The courses start next week in Auckland and Hamilton, and then in Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin in the next two weeks after that.

Pay equity is about “equal pay for work of equal value”. It involves assessment of the skills, responsibilities, conditions of work and degrees of effort of the work undertaken by occupations or professions that are dominated by women.

The outcomes of the assessment are then compared with the same assessment process done with occupations or professions dominated by men. The goal is to produce evidence that the women-dominated occupation or profession has been undervalued and therefore underpaid.

We will be conducting interviews with midwives in selected DHBs to capture factors that are commonly overlooked or undervalued in women-dominated work such as social and communication skills, responsibility for the wellbeing of others, emotional effort, cultural knowledge and sensitivity.

We will also be conducting interviews with male comparators performing work which is the same or



*Caroline Conroy signs the Midwifery Accord with Minister of Health David Clark, Minister Julie Anne Genter, and representatives of the DHBs, Ministry of Health and NZNO.*

similar to the work of midwives, or who perform different work that involves skills, responsibilities, etc, which are the same or substantially similar to your work.

The conclusions from the interviews will be validated by relevant research and legislative requirements, including your scope of practice as midwives.

The final stage is settlement of the pay equity claim. Any new pay rates will be negotiated into the MECA at the time, effective 31 December 2019.

## Midwifery Accord signed off

A separate Midwifery Accord was signed in an official launch held in Health Minister David Clark’s office last week. The Accord will address challenges in the midwifery workforce, including safe staffing, retention of existing midwives, the re-employment of those who have left midwifery, recruitment and encouragement of new midwifery graduates.

## Other news

In other news, MERAS midwives at the two Hamilton private birth centres, River Ridge and Waterford, also voted YES in the ratification ballot for their MECA, and this has been signed off.

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