



## **2020 General Election Campaign Plan**

### **Introduction**

2020 is a significant year for MERAS. We will be completing work on the Midwifery Accord and the Midwifery Pay Equity claim. We will be developing our bargaining strategy for the DHBs MECA, which will be underway by the end of the year.

The World Health Organisation has designated 2020 the Year of the Midwife to acknowledge the vital role midwives play in providing essential and effective health services worldwide. International Midwives Day (5 May) is an opportunity to organise workplace activities or activities being held as part of the College of Midwives #backmidwives campaign.

It will be 30 years in August 2020 since the passing of the Nurses Amendment Act which recognised midwifery as an autonomous profession in its own right with direct entry midwifery training.

MERAS is actively involved in the Council of Trade Unions' campaign to re-elect a progressive Government and this forum will be an opportunity to inspire workplace reps to maximise our members' participation in the campaign.

### **Objectives of the MERAS Election Campaign**

- 1 To campaign for the election of a Labour-Greens Government, and in doing so, create a public groundswell that will see the incoming Government prioritise progressive change for women, their babies, and their whanau.
- 2 To celebrate the gains for employed midwives in 2020, including the Accord and Pay Equity, and to elect a Government that will ensure these gains continue.
- 3 To make the resourcing of midwives an Election issue in collaboration with the College of Midwives.
- 4 To provide opportunities for our members to participate in campaign activities (i.e. MERAS, the College and cross-union campaign activities).

### **Policy Priorities**

The MERAS campaign will have a wellbeing/equality focus with a broad emphasis on issues that impact on better health outcomes, such as accessible health services, living wages, housing, and social security, and with a particular emphasis on issues that directly impact on women, their babies and their whanau.

To this end, we have been contributing to CTU development of the following policy areas:

- Public service reforms
- Health sector priorities
- Equal Pay and Pay Equity
- Parental Leave

The Covid-19 national emergency has highlighted some strengths in our nation's ability to respond to a health emergency, while at the same time, some weaknesses in our economy that has made us vulnerable to international upheaval. Below are specific priorities which MERAS will highlight in our comms, both internal and external.

### **Maternity priorities**

- Pay Equity (conclude pay equity processes for both hospital and community midwives)
- Prioritisation of women's health (adequate funding of all maternity services, support for new families including extension of paid parental leave, wrap-around services for vulnerable women and their babies, community breastfeeding initiatives)
- Funding to support upgrade of maternity facilities and provision of publicly funded primary birthing centres where needed
- Review of the model and funding of DHB contracted-out maternity services and facilities

### **Broader societal priorities**

- Community health and wellbeing (a slower pace of life, connection with whanau and the value of human friendship, as opposed to an emphasis on economic growth)
- Prioritise people and our Planet (tackle climate change, biodiversity, waste reduction, clean air, clean water)
- Reprioritise investment (invest in health and education, services for women and their families such as those services that address family violence, affordable housing)
- Reorganise work (living wage for essential workers, redeployment and retraining for workers displaced by economic downturn)
- Reset our economy sustainably (e.g. local manufacturing to secure supply chain for essential products such as PPE and pharmaceuticals, food resilience)

### **Campaign Approach**

Our approach will be to utilise social and mainstream media with members telling stories that highlight the issues we have identified as being important to progress. A key date in this was International Midwives Day on 5 May which we celebrated in our workplaces and with a specific Update.

We are part of a CTU cross-union campaigning group where we are sharing resources and expertise, and extending our reach, particularly in terms of social media. We also have access to media through our association with the College of Midwives.

The MERAS website has a Campaigns section where we are housing Election resources which can be used on workplace noticeboards. We are also including Election Campaign information in our monthly MERAS Updates, also displayed on workplace noticeboards.

MERAS has a strong emphasis on workplace representative education. We will emphasise our key policy areas and campaign approach in our introductory courses for new workplace reps: "Midwives Getting Organised" and "Midwives Standing Up". Part of this is to encourage reps to organise engagement with local Labour and Greens candidates to educate them around midwifery issues.

Unfortunately the uncertainty around Covid has meant we have had to postpone our Workplace Reps Forum past the Election. However, we can still use the Workplace Reps Forum to highlight pay equity, collective bargaining, and campaigning around midwifery issues post the Election.

MERAS has shown that we have the ability to mobilise our members around key issues and that we can achieve a very high level of member participation when it counts. Our workplace reps have been critical in this, as has social media.

## Timeline

### February 2020

- Participate in CTU policy development in key priority areas for MERAS
- Meet with CTU on election strategy (Tuesday, 11 February)
- CTU National Affiliates Council meeting (Wednesday, 26 February) to confirm member survey distribution and campaign policy asks

### March 2020

- International Women's Day (8 March)
- MERAS NRC – endorse Election Campaign Plan (9-10 March)

**Central North Island and South Island “Midwives Getting Organised” courses, Palmerston North (24 March) and Christchurch (31 March) – postponed to May/June**

### April 2020

- Upper North Island “Midwives Getting Organised” course, Auckland (7 April) – postponed to 16/17 June

### May 2020

- CTU media/social media on key issues
- International Midwives Day activities (5 May) – MERAS Update issued
- Lower North Island “Midwives Getting Organised” course, by Zoom (26 May)
- Pre-Budget media release highlighting MERAS priorities for midwifery and maternity services (12 May)

### June 2020

- South Island and Upper North Island “Midwives Getting Organised” courses by Zoom, (2 June), and Upper North Island (16/17 June)
- MERAS NRC meeting – finalise Workplace Reps Forum programme (9-10 June)
- CTU National Affiliates Council meeting (11 June)

### July 2020

- Lower North Island “Midwives Stadning Up” course rescheduled to 2 July
- South Island “Midwives Stadning Up” course rescheduled to 21 July
- Auckland/Northland “Midwives Stadning Up” course rescheduled to 28 July
- Upper North Island “Midwives Stadning Up” course rescheduled to 29 July
- Community and Unions Local joint election planning (outreach)
- CTU candidate survey finalised and launched
- Electoral Commission to launch its enrolment update campaign (6 July)

### August 2020

- MERAS AGM by Zoom (11 August) – Election Campaign launch
- MERAS Workplace Reps Forum (12 August) – postponed to 11 November
- Parliament dissolves (12 August)
- CTU National Affiliates Council meeting (27 August)

**September 2020**

- Advance voting (opens 7 September)
- Suffrage Day Election (19 September)
- Confirm attendance for Workplace Reps Forum (11 November)