

MERAS Election Priorities

The MERAS Election 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 proposed specific priorities to build on our initial thinking for discussion and endorsement by the NRC which we can then 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 and review 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)