



*Farewell to 2021:  
ADHB midwives  
Donna Raymond,  
Angela Harvey  
and Beatle  
Treadwell*



## Pay equity delays resolved

Dates have been set to start pay equity bargaining on 22 December with further bargaining in January 2022, subject to the DHBs securing a mandate from the Government.

MERAS and the DHBs attended mediation on 23 November to discuss concerns we raised in relation to the progress of the pay equity settlement bargaining for midwives, after MERAS filed proceedings in the Employment Relations Authority earlier in November.

As a result of the mediation, both parties committed to negotiating in good faith and seeking to conclude a pay equity settlement by mid-2022. In the meantime, the DHBs have agreed to pay MERAS members an advance pay equity lump sum payment of \$1,000.

The payment will be pro-rated by contracted FTE or actual hours worked over the 12 months before 30 November 2021 and by service (for those with less than one year's service). It will be taxed. This is for MERAS members covered by the MERAS MECA as at 30 November 2021. The payment is likely to be in the New Year.

The matter of the \$6000 pro-rated pay equity lump sum not having been paid out in a timely manner, as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding that formed part of the MERAS and DHBs MECA settlement, was resolved before the mediation with a commitment by the DHBs to pay it out promptly.

During the mediation, MERAS reps spoke about the pressure on midwives, including the severe staffing shortages. NRC Chair Victoria Christian and Deputy Chair Michelle Archer said members felt disrespected by the delays in implementing the MECA settlement.

MERAS also raised concerns about the fact that pay equity bargaining had not commenced in the timeframe agreed in the MoU and further, that agreed dates in October and November had been cancelled by the DHBs.

The DHBs listened to these concerns and acknowledged that the commencement of bargaining had taken longer than they also expected. We agreed to meet with the DHBs for a further mediation meeting on 13 December to resolve any outstanding preliminary issues. Representing MERAS are Jill and Caroline, Karen Gray, Victoria Christian, and Michelle Archer.

**Caroline Conroy, Co-leader (Midwifery)**  
**Jill Ovens, Co-leader (Industrial)**

### Midwifery Clinical Coaches a popular choice

The new Midwifery Clinical Coach role, an outcome of the Midwifery Accord, is proving a popular career move for midwives with DHBs reporting high quality applications. This role is 100% funded by Ministry of Health in the first year.

The purpose of the role is to provide clinical support and coaching to 'return to practice' midwives, new graduates, new to service and any DHB or LMC midwife wanting support to develop or enhance clinical skills.

MERAS is establishing a network group for midwives in the role. If you have been appointed to this role, please email Caroline so that you can be added to the network group.

### Maternity Care Assistants being recruited

DHBs are currently recruiting to the new Maternity Care Assistants role and the student midwives working in this role will be a welcome addition to the maternity ward team.

This new role was established in the MERAS MECA to provide the opportunity for midwifery students to earn some money and to become familiar with the DHB maternity ward settings.

A national position description has been agreed, the purpose of which is to provide housekeeping and care assistant duties in the maternity setting.

Having this role available on shifts will allow midwives to focus on providing midwifery care, whilst the maternity care assistant focuses on the housekeeping tasks. It is important that the student and healthcare assistant roles are not blurred. Maternity care assistants cannot be deployed elsewhere in the hospital.

### New Midwifery role titles being implemented

The Midwifery Career Pathway has now been included in the MERAS MECA and as a result the Midwifery role titles in the Pathway are being implemented in DHB maternity services.

These titles will provide a consistent approach to midwifery titles across the country and more clearly define midwifery roles. The main change has been ceasing the use of 'charge' and 'associate' and also making sure 'midwife' is included in all midwifery roles.