



Merry Kirihimete and a Happy New Year From everyone at MERAS

This year has been a challenging and stressful year for most MERAS members with significant midwifery vacancies in many workplaces, busy workloads and Covid to contend with. Christmas provides an opportunity to reflect on the year and whilst there are huge stressors in the workplace, the year has also seen some positive outcomes for MERAS members.

Midwifery Accord has achieved significant initiatives to support a more sustainable midwifery workforce. Including enhanced support for student midwives, funding from the MoH for Midwifery Clinical Coach roles and a Midwifery Career Pathway framework.

CCDM and Trendcare has seen increased budgets in most DHBs for midwifery staff. Finally, the workload of hospital midwives is being recognised. The challenge now is to fill those midwifery positions.

MERAS MECA settlement has seen MERAS members working in the DHBs receive pay increases and lump sum payments, some of which are linked to the Midwifery pay equity claim. There were also a number of other initiatives, including a professional development fund.

MERAS Collectives with non-DHB facilities have either been renewed or are in the process of being renewed with a focus on maintaining pay parity with the DHB pay rates.

Pay Equity assessments progressed on Zoom, and MERAS twice went to mediation with the DHBs over unresolved issues. DHB members have received “down payments” on the settlement in the form of lump sums and increased pay rates. Finally, we have made it to the bargaining end of the process.

Holidays Act remediation projects continued with DHBs focussing on fixing their payroll systems to comply. MERAS is on the steering committees at each DHB, and the Expert Working Group that is resolving issues escalated by DHBs.

Maternity care assistant roles introduced as part of the MERAS MECA settlement provide an opportunity for student midwives to work as MCAs and earn some money within the DHB maternity facilities.

MERAS support over Christmas and New Year. Caroline will be available by phone or email for any urgent enquiries from members. Ph 027 6888 372.

We hope that you all find some time for rest and relaxation with family and friends. Best wishes from all of us at MERAS. Arohanui ki a koe me tō whānau.

MERAS Co-Leaders Caroline Conroy and Jill Ovens, MERAS Organiser Karen Gray, Membership Secretary Lisa Donkin, Website Administrator Hannah Coleman, and MERAS NRC Chair Victoria Christian.