



Government approves interim midwifery pay equity rates

An interim pay equity adjustment for midwives was approved by the Government last week.

We have not seen what is in the proposal that Te Whatu Ora put to the Government and won't be seeing it till next **Monday 24 April** when the two unions and Te Whatu Ora bargaining teams meet.

MERAS put up a proposal based on the nurses' interim pay equity rates, but taking into account the differentials for different nursing and midwifery roles that had been assessed using equitable job evaluation scores.

In simple terms, our proposed midwifery rates were more than the nurses pay equity rates. This was fully supported by NZNO, which is a joint party to the midwives pay equity claim.

On Monday, we will be asking Te Whatu Ora to approve paid union meetings all across the country for **Friday, 5th May, International Midwives Day**. We will be advising members of the outcome of Monday's discussions in the days after the meeting and then the 5th May meetings will be your opportunity to discuss the detail with colleagues.

The meetings will run from 10am till 12noon and, as we would have to provide cover on the shift, we could do two one-hour meetings within the time frame to allow every member on the shift to participate.

We will be asking Te Whatu Ora to also pay those not on duty at the time. In addition, we will run some Zoom meetings later that day for those unable to make the stop-work meetings.

At this stage we don't know if there is agreement to our proposal to backdate the interim adjustment to April 2022, or, if backdating is agreed, what will be done about those who have left Te Whatu Ora.

This is not the final settlement. That is subject to a Court case in September about the backdating to 30 December 2019, and also to the MERAS challenge in the Authority, which is likely to be heard in November. Decisions on the legal actions will take some time after that. This is why an interim pay equity adjustment is so important.

Funded sector pay equity claim

MERAS filed a claim with 13 private primary maternity units and hospitals in September 2022. We have met with the Te Whatu Ora commissioning people twice since then.

We know the employers cited in our claim have recently met with each other, and on Monday afternoon, there is to be a meeting with the providers, Te Whatu Ora, and MERAS advocates to progress the claim.

SECA bargaining continues

We have had six days of SECA negotiations for Te Whatu Ora directly-employed members, including maternity care assistants and midwives.

We will know more about the pay claim when we see the proposed interim pay equity rates. We are seeking a cost-of-living increase on top of these rates.

Last week we tabled a new senior midwives pay scale to remove the overlaps in the grades and ensure consistency of grading across Te Whatu Ora.

We will meet again with the Te Whatu Ora SECA team on **Thursday, 20th April**. At that meeting we will be discussing consistency of payments for additional shifts for midwives across Te Whatu Ora and night shift penal rates.

Jill Ovens, outgoing Co-leader (Industrial)

Sam Jones, incoming Co-leader (Industrial)

Caroline Conroy Co-leader (Midwifery)