



November 2023

What's happening with the SECA negotiations?....

Now that Midwives have voted to accept an offer to resolve the pay equity claim we are expecting to have a proposed Te Whatu Ora SECA* for members to vote on before Christmas. As mentioned in the August update the timing of the SECA and Pay Equity discussions needed to be carefully managed to ensure increases negotiated in the SECA were not swallowed by Pay Equity wage corrections and instead apply on top of Pay Equity.

Your MERAS team have a few key claims on the table awaiting formal offers from Te Whatu Ora before we are able to bring these to members.

These include wording around overtime, leave calculations after maternity leave, the senior midwives scale and of course a wage increase. MERAS is hoping that the Te Whatu Ora team will be able to make a wage offer at our next meeting.

Senior midwives pay scale

A key focus for MERAS in these negotiations has been a review of the senior midwife pay scale to ensure it meets the needs of midwifery workforce, reflects the Midwifery Career Pathway and respects and rewards midwives taking on those roles and responsibilities. As part of this work a series of zoom meetings were held with senior midwives in the various roles to hear their ideas on the pay scale. These meetings were very well attended and there was a lot of consistency in how those midwives felt the senior midwife pay scale should be structured.

MERAS does not want to hold up wage increases for all our Te Whatu Ora midwives whilst we do the detailed work required to restructure the senior midwife pay scale so this work may continue as a working group and then be incorporated into the Collective once completed.

Te Whatu Ora restructuring

The restructuring within Te Whatu Ora to merge 20 DHBs into a single organisational structure has also impacted on the availability of some of the employer team for our negotiations as staff roles within the People & Capability team change.

*Single Employer Collective Agreement (SECA)

Holidays Act Compliance Review

The Auckland districts (Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata) have paid current staff monies owed. Unfortunately, payments for other districts will not occur until 2024. Holidays Act compliance means several changes to leave to ensure you get your entitlements so watch out for briefings on what these mean for you.

Former Employees

The portal for former employees around the country to register has now been activated. Details of this will be on the MERAS website shortly and can be found on the Te Whatu Ora platforms. This includes those who have changed districts but still work for Te Whatu Ora.

Multi-jobbers

One area still under discussion is the way leave entitlements are applied for those staff working in multiple roles with different rates of pay.

Do not sign new employment agreements confirming separate employment or resigning roles/hours while we try to reach an agreement on this which we are satisfied respects your leave entitlements. Please contact us if you for advice if you're unsure or have been impacted by these changes.

Definitions of casual

Most midwives on casual contracts do not meet the legal definition of 'casual' because they work regularly and are often prebooked for shifts. They would more appropriately be referred as 'part-time no fixed hours'. As part of the Holidays Act fixing, those working regularly will now be entitled to annual leave and shift leave. Following that, those workers should be offered guaranteed hours of work. They do not have to accept this change to employment status however we would encourage the job and income security this brings and are happy to support members with these offers.

Caroline Conroy & Sam Jones

MERAS Co-Leaders.