

MERAS/DHBs MECA update

18 October 2018



DHBs MECA ballot underway

The MERAS MECA ballot is underway. The ballot opens at 8am, Friday, 19 October, and will close at 12noon, Monday, 5th November.

The MECA negotiating team is recommending rejection of the offer because the DHBs are refusing to include a pay differential for midwives, a key claim your MERAS team has been arguing since negotiations started more than a year ago.

The DHBs rejected the MERAS proposal for a further 3% for midwives on top of the pay scales agreed by NZNO for nurses and their midwifery members. They also rejected a “retention allowance” after the Ministry of Health said they had other ideas to retain employed midwives.

We have been told the Government is adamant that the NZNO deal is “it” and that this is what the clinical groups within the PSA were also told. PSA Allied staff start voting on the same settlement from next week.

Our ballot asks you about action you are willing to take if you vote NO to the offer. This includes a range of actions from lobbying MPs, a postcard campaign targeting the Minister of Health, emails to DHB CEOs, to industrial action. All these options will be needed to shift the DHBs’ position.

A NO vote to the offer will trigger strike action.

In the two weeks between issuing the strike notices (from 7th November) and the strikes actually starting (from 22nd November), there will be mediation and out of this we would aim to bring an improved offer. There will also be negotiations around provision of life preserving services.

It may be that recognition and remuneration for DHB-employed midwives ultimately comes as a result of the pay equity process. But what we know is that if we don’t fight for that recognition and build community support, it won’t just happen.

What is on offer

- The MECA will expire 31 July 2020 (and will come into force on 1 November 2018).
- Three base salary increases over the term of the Agreement for all members being:
 - 3% as at 4 June 2018, an additional 1% on the Designated Senior Midwifery Salary scale, and
 - 3% as at 6 August 2018, and
 - 3% as at 5 August 2019.
- A lump sum payment of \$2,000 pro rata FTE for all full-time, part-time and casual employees payable to those employed by the DHBs as at the date of ratification.
- A new Step 6 on the RM salary scale, being \$72,944 effective from 6 May 2019, and moving to \$75,132 on 5 August 2019.
- A new Step 7 on the RM salary scale, being \$77,386, effective from 4 May 2020.
- Community Midwife salary scale step 8 will increase by 3% effective from 6 May 2019, moving to \$80,541, and then to \$82,957 on 5 August 2019.
- For the Designated Senior Midwifery salary scale, the top step of each grade will increase by 3% on 6 May 2019.
- Increases in the on-call allowance from \$4.04 per hour and \$6.06 per hour to \$8.00 per hour and \$10.00 per hour effective from 4 June 2018.
- 4 hours paid release to attend MSR.
- A working group on education allowances.
- A working group to review midwives’ remuneration structure, and senior midwives roles, grades and titles.
- A pay equity process for midwives with payment effective 31 December 2019.

For further details, check out

<https://www.midwife.org.nz/meras>