



***On behalf of MERAS best wishes to all members for Christmas and the New Year. Hope you get to spend some time relaxation time with family and friends. Look forward to meeting with many of you next year.***

***24<sup>th</sup> December 2018***



### **Ballot results**

There was a strong rejection of the offer with 88% of those who voted saying NO. 88% voted in favour of the January strikes and 91% voted in favour of the February strike. The turnout was 70% -- not bad for a short timeframe and for this time of year!

### **The impact of the ballot vote**

The threat of strikes by MERAS members in January has encouraged the DHB negotiating team to agree to urgent facilitation in the second week of January.

A decision on whether the January strikes go ahead will be made by December 27<sup>th</sup>. The strike dates have already proved effective in getting the DHB team back to the negotiating table.

If the facilitation does not result in a settlement that members find acceptable we will go ahead with the February strikes.

### **Facilitation**

MERAS had filed for facilitation as a way of progressing a settlement. Facilitation is a process where a Member of the Employment Relations Authority considers the case that MERAS has put forward that the DHBs have not been bargaining in good faith and listens to our arguments for a midwifery differential before making a non-binding recommendation.

### **Midwifery Allowance**

MERAS has asked that a 'Midwifery Allowance' be considered as a means of achieving a settlement. This would create a differential as well as well as being viewed as a 'retention allowance'. This proposed allowance would be on top of the pay rates already offered to MERAS members.

### **MERAS Pay Equity Claim**

We met with the DHB pay equity team last week and are keen to get a timeline from them. We will be able to use some of the material from the LMC co-design work to support our pay equity case. Your letters to CEOs and MPs will also be helpful.

### **Midwifery Accord**

Jill and Caroline have also been pushing for a Midwifery Accord as part of any settlement. The Accord will be between the DHBs, Ministry of Health, MERAS and NZNO and will focus on addressing the issues facing the midwifery workforce.

There is some resistance from the Ministry to the inclusion any reference to the MERAS Staffing Standards in the Accord even though the standards are being used as a framework to aspire to by many DHBs.

### **Check pay for LPS payments**

Please check your payslips to ensure that you were paid correctly during the MERAS strike period. LPS 'on duty' or LPS 'on site on call' are both paid at normal rates for that shift, but if you have been called in when you were off-duty, that is a call-back and should be paid at overtime rates for a minimum 3 hours.

### **Letters to CEOs and meetings MPs**

The recent letters to DHB CEOs and the meetings with MPs are proving effective in raising awareness about the role of hospital midwives. The discussions that follow when you post these on fb have helped inspire others to write their own deeply personal experiences of your working conditions.

### **Safe staffing and meal breaks**

Make sure you take meal breaks or notify your ward or duty manager where this will be difficult due to workload. Also, complete incident reports where midwifery staffing levels are inadequate for the workload. Whilst the manager might not be able to provide any staffing assistance, the incident report does highlight the situation.

### **Christmas MERAS staffing**

Caroline and Jill will continue to be available during the Christmas period for urgent matters.

Caroline 027 6888 372  
Jill 021 598 530