



MERAS MECA PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

2 April 2019

What has been achieved?

- Employed midwives took strike action, picketed, marched on Parliament, and became much more visible
- Midwifery was recognised as a profession in its own right; even the Ministry of Health has to engage with MERAS now!
- MERAS grew in numbers and strength (from 950 members in May 2018 to 1405 members in March 2019 –virtually all employed midwives)
- DHBs realised that midwives can't be replaced
- A separate pay equity process for midwives
- A separate Midwifery Accord has been agreed to address challenges in midwifery workforce

What is on offer: The backdating

- \$2000 lump sum (pro-rated including casuals, based on contracted hours or hours worked up to 1 FTE; this is equivalent to 3% of Step 5 core RM scale)
- 3% increase backdated to 4 June 2018 + extra 1% for senior midwives
- 3% increase backdated to 6 August 2018

This is a total of 6% backpay (7% for senior midwives) on total earnings (including overtime and penal rates), plus the lump sum.

What is on offer: 2019 increases

6 May 2019: New step 6 on RM scale = 3% increase; effective immediately for those with 12 months or more on Step 5, plus...

- 3% increase on Step 8 community midwives' scale
- 3% increase on top steps of senior midwives' grades

8 August 2019: 3% increase on all steps (new step 6 increases to \$75,132 a year)

This is a total of 6% in 2019 for most MERAS members, 60%+ of whom are currently stuck on Step 5 of the RM scale.

What is on offer: 2020 increases

4 May 2020: New step 7 on RM scale effective immediately for those with 12 months on step 6

1 August 2020: 1.25% increase on all steps, plus...

- Midwifery grads to start on step 2 from 1 August 2020; those on Step 1 move to Step 2 and then to Step 3 on their Anniversary date

The August 2020 pay increase and Midwifery grads' step will come in the day after the NZNO MECA expires and will also be available to those who were previously NZNO and have since joined MERAS.

Percentage increases

Midwifery grads' start rate: **19.8% increase from now to August 2020**

Core midwives currently on Step 5: **17.4% increase from now to August 2020**

Community midwives on Step 8: **14% increase from now to August 2020**

Senior midwives currently on top step of Grade 4: **15% from now to August 2020**

Pay equity process for midwives

- Process starts now with interviews of midwives in selected DHBs
- New pay rates will be negotiated based on pay equity findings and incorporated into MECA by way of a variation to the MECA at the time
- New pay rates backdated to 31 December 2019 should deliver the pay differential we were after

Midwifery Accord agreed

- Separate agreement with Ministry of Health, DHBs and NZNO
- Focus on safe staffing including retention, the re-employment of those who have left midwifery, recruitment and encouraging new grads
- Timeline for completion by end of 2019



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Gains consistent with NZNO settlement

- On-call allowance increased to \$8 an hour (\$10 on public holidays), backdated to 4 June 2018
- Higher duties allowance paid after 3 x 12-hour shifts
- New Parental Leave clause aligned with new legislation
- \$38 million for additional staffing includes midwives
- Pay equity settlement effective 31 December 2019 (only NZNO and MERAS have guaranteed backdating if the process goes into next year)

Additional gains for MERAS members

- New midwifery grads to start on Step 2 from 1 August next year
- Another pay increase on 1 August next year
- Meal allowance increased to \$10 (NZNO is still \$7.95)
- Minimum of 4 hours paid leave to prepare for and attend MSR
- Up to 4 days paid leave to attend NZCOM National Board or MERAS National Representatives Council
- MERAS Staffing Standards to be used as resource for developing CCDM in maternity
- DHBs encouraged to have a designated senior midwife on all shifts
- Working party to come up with consistent approach to education allowances
- Working party to look at senior midwives' roles, grades and titles; also remuneration

The proposed term of the MECA

The proposed MECA will expire 31 January 2021. We are planning to start our internal claims process in August 2020.

By then the Pay Equity process will have been completed and new midwifery rates will have been incorporated into the MECA.

Recommendation to accept

We would not have won a separate pay equity process for midwives if you had not stood up for your profession!

The Ministry of Health now has to engage with MERAS because we are the majority union for midwives.

Most MERAS members are on Step 5 of the RM scale, or Step 8 of the Community Midwife scale and will gain big pay increases.

The senior midwives' working party will open up more opportunities for recognising clinical expertise.

Plus, a working group to update and establish a consistent approach to education allowances available to midwives (e.g. some DHBs contribute to NZCOM fees).

The DHBs now recognise that they have to find ways to attract new grads; the higher starting rate is just a start.

Your negotiating team believes nothing more will be achieved by further strike action or legal action. It is time to settle the MECA and focus on the pay equity and the Accord.

The voting process ("ratification")

Members who are covered by the DHBs MECA get to vote on the proposed changes to the MECA, which are outlined in the offer, and include the Terms of Settlement.

A copy of the MECA as it will be if you vote in favour of the changes is also on the MERAS website and has been sent to your workplace reps.

Members can either vote at your workplace where your reps have set up a ballot box and will give you a ballot form, or you can request a special vote by emailing Lisa Donkin, membership@nzcom.org.nz

The ballot will open on Wednesday, 3 April, and close on Friday, 12 April. The outcome of the vote will be determined by a simple majority (50%+1) of those who participate in the vote.