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From NZEI Te Riu Roa	EMBARGOED 8 th March

GOVT SHOULD HONOUR PAY EQUITY ON INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa is calling on the government to support International Working Women's Day (Sunday 8th March) by honouring the findings of a pay equity investigation for education support workers.

The government announced last month that it was halting all further work on pay and employment equity investigations, which are aimed at addressing the pay gap between men and women in the public sector.

One of the investigations involved thousands of Ministry of Education support workers who work with special needs children. They are very low paid, with many earning just slightly above the minimum wage, and are an almost completely feminised workforce.

NZEI says a two year pay investigation has found they are significantly underpaid in terms of their skills, responsibilities and the demands of their jobs.

NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter says these workers are due to go into pay negotiations shortly and clearly deserve to see significant wage improvements.

"The government should not be allowed to ignore the results of the pay equity investigation and should deliver on its findings. Education support workers are committed to working with New Zealand's most vulnerable and needy children and they deserve the same level of commitment back."

"What they don't deserve is to have their pay rates tied down in some sort of gender related and discriminatory time warp," says Mr Goulter.

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