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## **EDUCATION WORKERS THROW WEIGHT BEHIND PAY EQUITY PETITION**

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa is welcoming today's launch of a petition calling for the reinstatement of pay equity investigations in the public sector.

Last month the government announced 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. One of the investigations was due to look at the work of thousands of frontline, low paid school support staff.

NZEI is appalled these investigations have been abandoned, and views it as an attack on women and low paid workers.

The petition, launched by Labour MP Sue Moroney, also backs NZEI's call for the government to commit to the results of a recently completed pay investigation. It involved around 800 Ministry of Education support workers (97 percent are women) who work with special needs children. It found they are significantly underpaid and undervalued in terms of their skills, responsibilities and the demands of their jobs, when compared to male workers in other sectors whose jobs have similar skill levels and demands.

NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter says the investigation identified a clear gender pay gap and the need for significant wage improvements and the government should honour that in upcoming pay negotiations.

"It also shows that the pay investigation process is a useful tool and has set the record straight for one group of low paid workers. Now is not the time for the government to be denying others the same opportunity," he says.

NZEI will be encouraging its 50,000 members to back the petition.

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