

Media Release	September 17th, 2009
From NZEI Te Riu Roa	For immediate use

## **PAY EQUITY PETITION SHOULD FORCE GOVERNMENT TO SIT UP AND LISTEN**

The education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa says a petition on pay and employment equity should make the government sit up and listen to the voice of low paid women workers.

Labour MP Sue Moroney is presenting her 15,000 signature-strong petition at parliament this afternoon. NZEI members are committed to eliminating the gender pay gap and strongly backed the petition, collecting more than 10,000 signatures. It calls for the reinstatement of pay equity investigations in the public sector and for the government to honour the results of those already completed.

One of the completed investigations involved Ministry of Education support workers. It found they are significantly underpaid in terms of their skills, responsibilities and the demands of their jobs.

NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter says incredibly the government has decided to ignore the considerable work put into the investigation. Support workers go back into wage negotiations next week, but so far the government has refused to discuss how to redress this clear and proven example of pay inequity.

“The pay investigation result should have been something for these women to celebrate. It delivered a clear message – that where work is of equal value then pay should also be equal. This government seems determined to turn back the clock by continuing to undermine and undervalue the rights of all low paid women workers,” he says.

In deciding there will be no more pay investigations the government has also poured cold water over the aspirations of another group of NZEI members – those thousands of women who work as teacher aides in primary and secondary schools.

Paul Goulter says it’s sad to think that New Zealand women were the first to get the vote, but are being held back in their fight to achieve true pay equity.

NZEI applauds Sue Moroney for her petition and its own members for their support. It’s now time for the government to sit up and listen and play its part.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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\*Sue Moroney is launching her petition on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 12.30pm in the Beehive Theatre.