

Media Release	November 26th, 2009
From NZEI Te Riu Roa	For Use November 27th, 2009

## **“THINK PINK”**

### **ACTION FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF**

MPs will be asked to walk in the shoes of school support staff for a day as part of two days of “Think Pink” action to highlight school support staff’s ongoing fight for a fair deal.

Support staff, such as teacher aides, librarians and administrators, work at the frontline of education yet are among the lowest paid workforces in the country. Their collective agreement expired in March and despite negotiations throughout the year, the government has shown no inclination to recognise their contribution to children’s learning nor address their issues of low pay.

The two days of action kicks off today (Friday 27 November) with pink-themed events in individual schools around the country. Support staff will also take part in nationwide lunchtime “Lift the Freeze on Low Pay” rallies with other unions.

The action will culminate in Auckland tomorrow (Saturday 28 November) when an army of people wearing pink and black will march up Queen St at 12pm to a rally in Myers Park.

As part of the in-school activities, MPs will be sent invitations to “Walk in our Shoes” by living on \$12.94 an hour for the day. They will then be asked to donate the difference between that and their salaries to charity. They are also being asked to spend a day in schools and experience first hand the duties and responsibilities of support staff.

NZEI National Executive member Gaye Parlane says “we’ll have schools and communities taking part in activities and thinking pink because they know support staff deserve a fair deal. It’s about time the government got on the same page.”

She says Saturday’s march in Auckland will be a powerful, visible and “very pink” show of the mounting frustration and impatience support staff are feeling. Hundreds of support staff, teachers, principals and school communities will take part. The march will go from Queen Elizabeth Square at 12pm and finish with a rally in Myers Park.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

NZEI SPOKESPERSON: Gaye Parlane 021590086  
NZEI MEDIA OFFICER: Liz Brown 04-3822703 or 0272683291