

NZEI Negotiation News (GSE Support Staff) 2009/02
To: All GSE Support Workers

NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN ON 11/12 AUGUST

July 2009

KEY POINTS:

- Following lengthy delay negotiations will start on 11 and 12 August.
- NZEI's claim is based on the findings of the pay investigation.
- The Pay Investigation proved support workers are worth more – it's now up to the Government to show whether it has a commitment to reversing this historic undervaluing of support workers.

WORKSITE REPS:

- This newsletter has been mailed to support worker members' home addresses.
- Enlist the help of the EI teams and lead workers to recruit support workers as NZEI members.
- It pays to be a NZEI member. The pay investigation showed that union members get paid on average more than non-union staff.

ENQUIRIES:

For any enquiries regarding this newsletter, please contact 0800 NZEI HELP (0800 693 443).

This is your second GSE Support Worker NZEI Negotiation News for 2009.

23 July 2009

Nga mihi nui kia koutou katoa

Earlier this year members overwhelmingly endorsed the union claim that is based on the findings of last year's pay investigation.

Since then we have constantly asked the Ministry to set dates to begin negotiations. Finally this week the Ministry assured us it would be ready to start on 11 and 12 August.

The union's negotiation team comprises members' representatives Denise Tetzlaff (CSW, Auckland), Kathy Power (ESW, Christchurch) and NZEI staff advocates Karen Whibley and Fran Renton. The team is supported by a members' reference group: Helen Brent-Jones (ESW, North West Auckland), Marianne Field (ESW, Christchurch), Claire Graves (ESW, Masterton), May Jones (CSW, Masterton) and Michael Graves (BSW, Lower Hutt).

The Claim – A 3-step pay scale \$21.28, \$22.32, \$23.44 phased in over 3 years

Main points:

- That support workers are predominantly women is the main reason pay rates are low and your work is undervalued. This is what the pay investigation set out to determine.
- The rates in the claim are based on those paid to corrections officers. Corrections officers are a male dominated workforce and were used as the comparator group for support workers (a female dominated workforce) in last year's pay investigation. When jobs were compared it was found that overall both jobs had the same level of skills, responsibilities, demands and working conditions. But...pay rates for corrections officers were much higher. This doesn't mean that support workers and corrections officers do the same work but that their work should be valued equally.
- You can read the whole pay investigation report and executive summary – www.nzei.org.nz/payinvestigaton.

Government Budget

In May the Government made substantial cuts to the Education budget. Across special education NZEI members employed in the lowest paid jobs will feel the immediate impact. In the budget there were no increases to the funding rates that pay support worker wages or to the ORRS rate paid to schools for the employment of teacher aides. Negotiations begun earlier for school sector teacher aides are stalled with the Ministry refusing to consider even a modest increase to the \$12.94 starting rate.

School support staff are taking a number of actions to promote a fair deal in their negotiations. You can check these out at www.fairdeal.org.nz and on NZEI's website www.nzei.org.nz.

Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

The investigation and report are important for all women working in undervalued jobs. However, this Government has backed away from pay and employment equity and has axed all pay investigations. On 30 June it disestablished the Department of Labour unit that had oversight of this work.

A broad coalition of community, employer, union and academic groups that includes NZEI is committed to putting pay equity issues back on the Government's agenda. The Pay Equity Challenge began with a rally at Parliament on 30 June. Further events are planned to keep the pressure on.

While waiting for the Ministry to come to the negotiation table the reference group has been considering ways to ensure the findings of the historic pay investigation are not lost.

NZEI's position is that the pay investigation for support workers was completed and we expect the joint report to form the basis of negotiations this year as previously agreed. The Ministry for its part has begun to distance itself from the report. We will get the Ministry's formal response to the union's claim at negotiations and will keep you informed by newsletter.

Kia kaha, kia toa, kia manawanui



Karen Whibley and Fran Renton
NZEI Advocates