

Bullet points for talking to community groups about the Fair Deal campaign

Tips for getting started

- Appoint one main spokesperson
- Do a quick round of introductions first
- Each person should say their name, where they work and what they do (e.g. – my name is June Bloggs, I work at x school as a teacher aide along side children with special needs)
- Thank the group for inviting you/having you along
- Check how long you have got and leave time for questions
- Make sure you ask the group to take an action in support of the campaign
- Undertake to keep in touch and check who is the appropriate contact person

Bullet points for the spokesperson

- Those of us who have come along today represent some of the school support staff working in this community. Other school support staff are librarians, school secretaries, sports co-coordinators, physiotherapists etc.
- The work of school support staff is absolutely essential to the life of the school and the education of the young people we work with.
- Note: Tell at least one story about the type of work you actually do locally. Emphasise the difference this work makes to the children and students in this community and how much this means to the local families. Emphasise how demanding the work is, but also say how rewarding it is because of the contribution school support staff are able to make to the community.
- For this demanding work, school support staff we can earn as little as \$12.94 an hour – just 44cents above the minimum wage. It will be no surprise I am sure, that school support staff are overwhelmingly women.
- School support staff are currently in negotiations with government. Government will not budge on their zero percent pay offer.
- Government is blaming the recession and saying everyone needs to tighten their belts because we are in tough economic times.
- But we are not asking a lot. We are simply asking Government to care. To care about the education of the children we work with by valuing our role.

- We know this “offer” does not value our work and does not value the education of the children we work with. All we want is a fair deal. That’s why we’ve called our campaign the Fair Deal campaign.
- Teachers, principals and school cleaners and caretakers have all had a pay rise. The cleaners’ and caretakers pay rise means that those who clean the school can earn significantly more than school support staff. While we are pleased they have had a pay increase it is simply not fair that school support staff are so undervalued for the work we do.
- We have been strongly supported in our campaign by disability advocacy organisations such as IHC, CCS and Down Syndrome Association because these organisations know how important our role is. We have also been strongly supported by women’s organisations such as Business and Professional Women and Rural Women NZ who recognise that the very low pay rates are about undervaluing our work.
- Today we have come to you to seek your support. We know as a local community organisation that you care about our community. Please stand up for our children’s education by supporting this campaign.
- What really helps strengthen our campaign is the strong voice of the community urging government to come back to the negotiating table and demonstrate they value the work we do by making a fair pay offer.
- There is an action your group could do that would assist the campaign. We’d like to ask you to write to our local collation MP and urge them to take up this issue with the Prime Minister and Minister of Education on behalf of this community.
- If you are able to take that action, we would also appreciate a copy of the letter for our files and you letting us know the response of the local MP.
- We are interested in hearing any other ideas you have for our campaign and we’d like to keep you updated on the progress of the campaign.
- Do you have any questions?
- Thank you for meeting with us – we will be in touch soon.