

# Executive Summary

Job evaluations for six groups of support staff in New Zealand schools have been conducted for the first time. The reasons for this are:

- Support staff in New Zealand had not previously had their jobs evaluated.
- There is a lack of rationale for current pay and other rewards
- Employees were dissatisfied with current reward structures
- Retention of skilled, experienced staff is an issue
- Low pay for support staff is seen as related to gender stereotyping

The six groups are: Administrative Grades A, B and C, and Associate Grades A, B and C. Data was collected through interviews with job-holder and job descriptions. Indicative job evaluations using job descriptions were also conducted with three comparator groups: caretakers, cleaners and corrections officers. The information was processed using the Spotlight Skills Recognition Tool (Department of Labour 2009a) and the Equitable Job Evaluation Factor Plan (Department of Labour 2009b). Use was also made of the Australia/New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations skill levels (see Appendix B).

The findings are summarised in the tables below.

## Summary tables

**Table 1: ANZSCO skills levels<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Job title</b>	<b>ANZSCO skills level</b>
<b>Teacher aide</b>	4
<b>Librarian</b>	1
<b>Library Assistant</b>	4
<b>Receptionist</b>	4
<b>Office Manager</b>	2
<b>Cleaner</b>	5
<b>Caretaker</b>	5
<b>Corrections Officer</b>	4

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in ANZSCO classifications the higher the number, the lower the skill level.

**Table 2a: Associate Grades – job points<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Grade A Associate</b>	<b>Grade B Associate</b>	<b>Grade C Associate</b>
<b>1. Knowledge</b>	58	65	72
<b>2. Mental skills</b>	42	56	50
<b>3. Interpersonal/ communication skills</b>	70	70	70
<b>4. Physical skills</b>	28	42	28
<b>5. Responsibility for people leadership</b>	15	15	90
<b>6. Responsibility for resources</b>	15	30	30
<b>7. Responsibility for organisational outcomes</b>	45	45	67
<b>8. Responsibility for services to people</b>	60	75	75
<b>9. Emotional demands</b>	19	19	10
<b>10. Sensory demands</b>	15	19	15
<b>11. Physical demands</b>	13	19	13
<b>12. Working conditions</b>	19	13	9
<b>Total points</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>529</b>

**Table 2b: Administrative Grades: job points**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Grade A Admin</b>	<b>Grade B Admin</b>	<b>Grade C Admin</b>
<b>1. Knowledge</b>	44	58	80
<b>2. Mental skills</b>	42	50	70
<b>3. Interpersonal/ communication skills</b>	70	70	70
<b>4. Physical skills</b>	56	42	50
<b>5. Responsibility for people leadership</b>	15	30	75
<b>6. Responsibility for resources</b>	30	45	60

<sup>2</sup> By contrast, with job points, the higher numbers relate to higher skill levels

<b>7. Responsibility for organisational outcomes</b>	30	60	75
<b>8. Responsibility for services to people</b>	45	60	75
<b>9. Emotional demands</b>	15	13	15
<b>10. Sensory demands</b>	19	19	22
<b>11. Physical demands</b>	19	13	13
<b>12. Working conditions</b>	7	7	7
<b>Total points</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>612</b>

**Table 2c: Comparator groups' job points**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Cleaners</b>	<b>Caretakers</b>	<b>Corrections Officers</b>
<b>1. Knowledge</b>	16	30	58
<b>2. Mental skills</b>	28	28	56
<b>3. Interpersonal/ communication skills</b>	28	42	70
<b>4. Physical skills</b>	42	42	28
<b>5. Responsibility for people leadership</b>	15	45	14
<b>6. Responsibility for resources</b>	15	30	45
<b>7. Responsibility for organisational outcomes</b>	15	37	45
<b>8. Responsibility for services to people</b>	30	30	75
<b>9. Emotional demands</b>	7	19	25
<b>10. Sensory demands</b>	7	19	19
<b>11. Physical demands</b>	19	19	7
<b>12. Working conditions</b>	19	15	19
<b>Total points</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>461</b>

**Table 3: Pay and skills: support staff and comparator groups**

Job title	ANZSCO skill level	Job points	Minimum hourly rate, 2010
Admin Grade A	4	392	\$14.00
Admin Grade B	4	467	\$14.62
Admin Grade C	2	612	\$18.26
Associate Grade A	4	399	\$14.00
Associate Grade B	4	468	\$14.62
Associate Grade C	2	529	\$18.26
Cleaners	5	228	\$14.84
Caretakers	5	356	\$15.34
Corrections Officers	4	461	\$21.29 (based on annual starting salary of \$44,272)

### Key findings and recommendations

#### Issue 1: Pay of Grade A Administrative and Associate Support Staff

Administrative Grade A and Associate Grades A support staff in schools are at ANZSCO skills level 4. Both cleaners and caretakers are at the lower ANZSCO skills level, level 5. Until relatively recently Grade A support staff in schools earned more than caretakers and cleaners. However, currently Grade A support staff in schools have lower starting rates of pay (\$14.00 per hour) than cleaners (\$14.84) or caretakers (\$15.34 per hour for a part-time assistant caretaker).

Cleaners and caretakers are a low-paid group. However, Grade A support staff starting pay is even lower - only \$1.25 above the minimum wage. This is for work with a need for knowledge skills, communications and interpersonal skills, emotional demands and responsibility for providing quality services to a wide range of people, some of them extremely vulnerable.

#### Recommendation 1:

***Grade A Administrative and Associate support staff in schools should have a higher starting rate than the \$15.31 per hour currently paid to an assistant part time caretaker, on the grounds that Grade A support staff have higher ANZSCO scores and higher job points. Recommended minimum starting rate: \$16.00.***

#### Issue 2: Pay of Grade B Administrative and Associate Support Staff

The Associate Grade B and Administrative Grade B support staff and Correction Officers are all at ANZSCO skill level 4, and have virtually the same number of job points. However, whereas Corrections Officers' starting pay is \$21.29 per hour, Administrative and Associate Grade B support staff in schools start on only \$14.62 per hour.

**Recommendation 2:**

*Grade B Administrative and Associate support staff starting pay should be raised in stages to the same level as Corrections Officers. The first increase should at the very least take their starting rate to above that of cleaners and caretakers. Recommended minimum starting rate: \$16.62 per hour.*

**Issue 3: Incorrect categorisation of Grade A staff**

The rationale for Grade A positions is that the jobs require close supervision and do not have to exercise judgment. However, evidence from the interviews was that Grade A Associate and Administrative staff do not require close supervision once they have learned their job. They are of the view that they are being held unfairly in low-level positions with no scope for progression.

**Recommendation 3:**

*It is recommended that there be only one step at Associate Grade A and Administrative Grade A. Subject to satisfactory performance, job-holders should be enabled to progress through to step one, Grade B after one year.*

**Issue 4: Pay of Grade C Administrative and Associate Support staff**

Administrative Grade C and Associate Grade C staff members start on \$18.26 per hour compared with the Corrections Officers' starting pay of \$21.29 per hour. However, the Administrative Grade C Office Manager job involves not only knowledge and skills of the Grade B staff but also responsibility for managing other staff and significant financial and other resources. Associate Grade C (teacher aide coordinators and school librarians) also have responsibility for managing other staff. Their job may be more equivalent to a Senior Corrections Officer position.<sup>3</sup>

**Recommendation 4:**

*Administrative Grade C staff starting rates of pay should be aligned with the top of the Corrections Officer Grade of \$26.21 per hour.*

**Issue 5: Career and pay progression for Administrative Grade C**

Administrative Grade C top rates of pay are higher than those of Associate Grade C, in recognition of the fact that the top administrative positions in the bigger schools are large and complex, with significant responsibility for financial and other resources and for a major part in longer-term planning. At present there is no higher position for these administrators to aspire to, and staff retention is an issue.

**Recommendation 5:**

*A higher grade, D, be created for top administrative positions in schools.*

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<sup>3</sup> The top salary of a Corrections Officer is \$54,529, before promotion to senior Corrections Officer.

**Issue 6: Higher duties allowances (all support staff)**

Higher duties allowances are currently paid to support staff in schools at the rate of 5% of the normal rate for the higher job. However, in the case of school caretakers it is not uncommon for higher duties to be paid at 100% of the rate of the higher job. There may be a gender equity issue at work.

**Recommendation 6:**

*Where a support staff member performs the duties of a more senior staff member for 2 working weeks or more, they should receive the same rate of pay as that staff member.*

**Issue 7: Allowances for relevant qualifications (all support staff)**

Staff are entitled to only a small increase to pay if they have gained relevant qualifications. Staff and principals are of the view that it is valuable to have well qualified staff, but that the financial costs to staff of formal education and training can outweigh the rewards at present. There is a disincentive to staff to gain professional qualifications, and this is a barrier to professional development of the workforce.

**Recommendation 7**

*Staff with recognised qualifications should receive a higher hourly allowance for these. It should be possible to claim an allowance for more than one recognised qualification.*

**Issue 8: Payment for lunch breaks and school holidays (all support staff)**

Most of the support staff who took part in the project were obliged to take an unpaid lunch break. However, this often coincided with a busy time of day, so that staff would be obliged to continue working even though they were not being paid. This was a source of great resentment. They felt they should not be expected to work for free at lunch times.

Support staff felt even more strongly about not receiving payment during the school holidays. Many had opted for annualisation of earnings, but this brought their average take-home pay down below the level of the minimum wage in many cases.

**Recommendation 8**

*8a: Support staff should either receive payment for the lunch break or a paid staff member should be allocated to cover for them while they take a break.*

*8b: Support staff should be paid for the school holidays in the same way as teachers.*

**Issue 9: Income Security (all support staff)**

Interviewed staff at all levels expressed concerns about income security. Many support staff members were on fixed term contracts year on year. However, even senior, long serving support staff were vulnerable to having their hours cut as schools' budgets were under strain.

***Recommendation 9: Support staff contracts should be made permanent if the work is ongoing, in line with the Employment Relations Act. Principals and Boards of Trustees should be reminded that cutting support staff hours of work (and hence their take home pay) is not good employment practice.***

**Issue 10: Funding sources (all support staff)**

Support staff pay depends on funding from either their school's operations grant (which is often under strain) or from a number of government bodies that provide temporary payments to assist disabled children. This is a barrier to equitable pay, income security and professional development for support staff in schools. Interview data revealed that both support staff and Principals believed that central funding via the Ministry of Education is the best way to address this issue.

***Recommendation 10: Support staff should be paid by the Ministry of Education, in the same way as teachers.***