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## **SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF CRACK WAGE FREEZE**

Thousands of school support staff who are members of the education union NZEI Te Riu Roa will get a pay increase next year following a long hard fight for a fair deal.

After months of negotiations and action around the country highlighting their issues of low pay, they have reached a settlement with the government in their collective agreement.

School support staff include teacher aides, librarians, office managers, ICT specialists and therapists. They work at the frontline of education supporting teaching and learning yet are among the lowest paid workers in the country. During months of negotiation they continued to be offered what amounted to a 0% pay increase. With the support of their schools and communities they responded with a vigorous campaign to demand fair pay.

NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter says these workers - who are almost all women - were determined to have the work they do valued and recognised and not be frozen out of a pay increase.

“Their fight saw them transform from an invisible army of school workers into a very visible pink and black army who made their presence felt and issues heard in communities throughout the country.”

He says they’ve also managed to lead the way in cracking the ongoing wage freeze in the state sector which is a significant achievement.

The settlement will see the hourly rate for support staff at the bottom of the scale move from \$12.94 to \$14.00, while all those earning more than \$14.62 will receive a 1.4% increase.

The agreement runs for 15 months and will expire on 31 March 2011.

It will be sent out to NZEI members for ratification in February when schools reopen.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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