

# **STRONGER TOGETHER FOR FAIR PAY**

- What is the issue?
- What needs to happen
- What should we do?

## **Mid-term goals:**

- Improve members' pay and conditions
- Introduce an improved pay scale
- Increase support staff membership.

## **Long term goals:**

- All core support staff positions to be centrally funded
- All other support staff positions to be more appropriately and more securely funded.



# WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Since 2005, a series of 12-16 month support staff collective agreements have been negotiated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) while NZEI has been engaged with NZ School Trustees Association (NZSTA), the Ministry of Education (MoE) and other national groups (NZPF, PPTA, SPANZ) in reviewing schools' operational funding.

Two of NZEI's key objectives were to deliver improved support staff pay rates and scales and to ensure that schools had adequate and identifiable additional funding to cover the cost of those improvements.

- There was general agreement among the stakeholders in this group that operations grants had to be significantly increased and that at least some core support staff roles (e.g. senior administrative roles) should be centrally funded.
- While that funding work was underway, the support staff collective agreement has continued to be negotiated, and ratified by members, with a series of cost of living increases and some other important gains.
- In 2006 all the groups developed a joint report for the Minister of Education which clearly showed that support staff salaries and ICT costs were the main financial pressure points on schools' operational funding.
- Unfortunately the findings of the sector group working on the operations grant were not reflected in the Government's 2008 budget. Once again the government put the whole issue of support staff funding into the "too hard basket" and did nothing to address it.
- Subsequently, however, the Minister has indicated that he will be supporting a significant increase in the rates of pay for school cleaners and caretakers and to provide schools with additional funding to cover the pay increases. One result of this would be that cleaners would then be on significantly higher pay than many teacher aides and some school administrative staff.
- The government must address the low pay issue equitably and fairly and must provide funding over and above what is currently available in the operations grant.

**So what can we do, working together, to achieve this?**

**Read on.....**

## **SHORT TERM GOAL**

### **BRIEFING NOTES FOR NZEI WORKSITE REPRESENTATIVES AND SUPPORT STAFF CONTACTS**

The Minister of Education has indicated that school cleaners may shortly settle their collective agreement which we understand will significantly raise the minimum rate for school cleaners and caretakers.

This would bring school cleaners in line with increases won recently for hospital cleaners by the Service and Food Workers union.

NZEI congratulates the Service and Food Workers Union for their campaign so far.

We don't think it's fair for the Government to address the issues of low pay for one group of workers in schools while some of their support staff colleagues remain on unacceptably low rates of pay. For example Associate Grade A members are paid \$12.69 to \$13.53 per hour.

We understand the Government is also providing additional funding to cover the increases for cleaners.

The Minister of Education is quoted as saying in the NZ Herald on 1 August:

*"I can give an assurance that the Government is committed to addressing the issues of low pay in the school sector"*

We now need members to put pressure on the Government to urgently address the issue of low pay for school support staff .

## **IMMEDIATE RESPONSE – AUGUST 2008**

NZEI urged its members to write, email or fax Finance Minister Dr. Michael Cullen<sup>1</sup> to ask for new funding to fix low pay for support staff and to pay them fairly compared to other workers in the sector.

We distributed a template letter and requested that members email, fax or post their own version of the letter to the Minister of Finance, Dr Michael Cullen immediately.

NZEI sought a meeting with Dr Cullen to outline the issues and concerns to him. That request was denied. However, it was critical that Dr Cullen and his colleagues were made aware of the strength of members' views about the failure of the government to adequately address the issues of low pay for school support staff.

To achieve this, NZEI wanted to ensure that Dr Cullen received as many messages from NZEI members as possible before a critical Cabinet meeting on **Monday August 11<sup>th</sup>**.

## **FURTHER ACTION**

**The following pages outline the proposed actions to ensure that our goals are met.**

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Michael Cullen, Freepost Parliament, PO Box 18 888, Wellington; email [mcullen@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:mcullen@ministers.govt.nz), fax 04 4958442.

## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

<b>TIMELINE</b>		<b>ACTION I CAN TAKE</b>
<b>2008 August 4-15</b>	Contact with Michael Cullen's office "Frustration with no action on funding"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support staff have written, faxed, emailed, contacted Michael Cullen's office</li> </ul>
<b>August 18</b>	SS Contact/WSR Seminars begin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with colleagues on site. Gauge members' willingness to engage the campaign.</li> </ul>
<b>22-24</b>	Support Staff conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register &amp;/or find out who is attending, ask for report back</li> </ul>
<b>Aug/Sept</b>	DC, Branch, network, all rep meetings, Annual Meeting Reps' meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend, make issues clear, ask for supporting action.</li> </ul>
<b>Sept/Oct</b>	Annual Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the issues with members and Politicians.</li> <li>• Organise T-shirts for AM to be paid for by the branch Slogan: 'Stronger Together for Fair Pay'</li> <li>• Look ahead – activate members to attend PUMs</li> </ul>
<b>October 20</b>	Paid Union Meetings (PUMs) beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate colleagues to attend PUMs.</li> <li>• Attend with all colleagues from site.</li> </ul>
<b>November</b>	Claims presented.  General Election.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you vote!</li> </ul>
<b>2009 January</b>	2% increase from previous negotiations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your e-payslip!</li> <li>• Help your friends check theirs</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	Negotiations begin.	

RECRUIT RECRUIT RECRUIT

## **What NZEI Will Be Doing Nationally and Regionally**

- Lobbying government politicians to ensure the low pay and underfunding issues are well understood
- Building sector wide support for a campaign for fair pay for support staff – e.g. with principals' groups, other education unions and NZSTA

NZEI believes that principals and boards will strongly support a campaign for better pay for support staff, provided that they receive additional government funding to enable them to pay higher rates

- Continuing to work on restructuring the pay scales for support staff
- Designing and distributing resources to support the campaign
- Arranging, resourcing and facilitating members', paid union meetings in November
- Supporting members in their efforts to build support staff membership and actively encouraging non members to join

▪ **WHAT SHOULD WE DO?**

**STRONGER TOGETHER FOR FAIR PAY**

ACTIONS I CAN TAKE	<b>RECRUIT RECRUIT RECRUIT</b>	HOW I WILL ENGAGE COLLEAGUES	
Support Staff have written, faxed, emailed, contacted Michael Cullen * resources available (NZEI News, e-fax, Rourou)			
<b>Organise meeting with colleagues on site</b>			
<b>Talk to one support staff colleague at your school who is not a NZEI member and encourage them to join</b>			
Willingness to be part of the campaign – ask them to do even one thing			
<i>Attend DC, Branch, Network and AM reps meetings, make issues clear, ask for supporting action</i>			
Raise the issues with members and Politicians. Organise T-shirts with the branch			
<b>Activate colleagues to attend PUMs Attend with all Support Staff colleagues from site</b>			
Claims presented.			
General Election			
2% increase from previous negotiations			
Negotiations begin			

# Recruitment Practise Script

I am \_\_\_\_\_ your contact/Worksite  
Representative  
(name)

NZEI, our union works to improve our pay and conditions.

Have you been asked about joining NZEI?

At the moment, we're campaigning to change the way the Government funds schools to pay us. We're some of the lowest paid people working in schools.

Governments take notice when unions or groups of people work together to get a better deal.

We need as many people as possible to be part of the union, and support fair pay for us. At the moment, we have just over ½ the number of support staff working in schools as members. Stronger together we can make a greater difference.

Will you join us?

**Are you in?**

# SUPPORT STAFF IN SCHOOLS COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT (SSCA) CLAIMS DEVELOPMENT

## Part 1 – Restructure of Pay Scales

One element of the SSCA settlement in 2007 was agreement to a work programme to investigate the creation of new pay scales for support staff. This is a joint investigation involving the Ministry of Education, the NZ School Trustees Association and NZEI.

From NZEI's perspective there were a number of key objectives:

- to improve support staff levels of pay;
- to merge and simplify the pay scales;
- to make the pay scales more equitable;
- to provide clear definitions for grades;
- to reduce the number of steps required to reach the top of a grade;
- to remove the range of rates in grade C.

There are a number of problems with the current scales, over and above the basic issue of the pay rates being too low.

- There are inequities between the administrative and associate scales.
- Many of the steps overlap – e.g. Admin A step 5 is the same as Admin B step 2.
- There are too many steps in most grades – e.g. Admin B has 15 steps which mean that someone initially employed as Admin B step one would need 15 years continuous service to reach the top of the grade. In most cases, they would be fully skilled and experienced in the role much sooner than that.
- There is no grade / pay scale that covers the work of senior level support staff in schools.
- Grading definitions remain unclear and open to interpretation.

## Restructure Of Pay Scales – NZEI's preferred option

This was the option overwhelmingly endorsed by members during last year's round of Paid Union Meetings.

- Maintain a grading system; and
- Amalgamate the administrative and associate scales; and
- Remove the overlapping steps between the grades: and
- Standardise each grade with six steps; and
- Introduce a new grade D for those in senior support staff roles such as executive officers and office managers.

*Note: NZEI would insist on translation to these new scales being on the basis that each support staff member would translate to a step equal to or greater than their current step and the new top step in each grade would have to be no less than the current top step in that grade*

**NZEI believes this model will meet our key objectives for  
the restructuring of the pay scales.**

**WORKSITE CONSULTATION MEETING  
RESPONSE FORM**

*Worksite name:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1 – Restructure of Pay Scales**

1. Do you support the proposal to restructure the support staff pay scales as outlined?

Yes (Number)

No (Number)

2. What issues can you see with the preferred option?

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**Part 2 – Other Issues**

Apart from the salary scale and pay increases, what are **TWO** issues you believe NZEI should seek to address in the next negotiations?

**Issue 1:**

**Reason/s:**

**Issue 2:**

**Reason/s:**

**RETURN BY Thursday 4 September**

**TO: Kevin Burrows NZEI Te Riu Roa National Office FAX: 04-384-9401**