



Pay equity and the teacher aide claim

What is pay equity?

- ▶ Pay equity means that people are paid equally for doing work of equal value.
- ▶ Achieving pay equity means we have to compare the way that we value and pay for work that we perceive to be very different.
- ▶ Pay equity recognises that while on the surface two jobs may look very different to each other, they actually require the same or similar skills, responsibilities, experience and effort of employees, working in the same or similar conditions.
- ▶ It also recognises that in some instances, wages for workers in female dominated occupations have suffered from gender-based discrimination because of perceptions and prejudices about the value of “women’s work”, and a tendency to minimise the skills, responsibilities, conditions and effort required by this work.
- ▶ Pay equity is an attempt to ensure that the wages paid to workers in female-dominated occupations are free of assumptions and prejudices about the value of that work because it is done mainly by women.
- ▶ By comparing the work and pay of female-dominated occupations with male-dominated occupations, pay equity ensures that workers in female-dominated occupations receive pay that fairly recognises the value of the work that they do.

A teacher aide who is on the most common rate – the top of Grade B, will see their pay rate move from \$21.31 per hour to \$26.54, effective from 12 February 2020. In November their rate will go up to \$27.34 and by 2024 they will be on \$30.34, which takes into account the annual progression of the new pay scale.

The teacher aide claim: how did we get here?

- ▶ In June 2016, NZEI Te Riu Roa (the union who represents teacher aides), notified the Secretary of Education that, because teacher aides are mostly women their work is likely to be undervalued and underpaid.
- ▶ NZEI Te Riu Roa claimed that this undervaluation meant that their pay rates were unlikely to represent the true value of their work because they were affected by gender-based discrimination, contrary to the Equal Pay Act (1972).
- ▶ This was the same part of the Equal Pay Act that Kristine Bartlett and E tū used to achieve pay equity for care and support workers in 2015.
- ▶ The Secretary of Education and NZEI Te Riu Roa entered into a joint process with the support of the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) to examine the pay equity claim in July 2017. NZSTA represent Boards of Trustees who employ teacher aides.
- ▶ Everyone agreed to work in partnership to resolve the detailed and complex claim, following the Pay Equity Principles to ensure the correct processes were used.
- ▶ During the investigation stage 842 schools were contacted, 800 job descriptions assessed, and 365 in-depth interviews were conducted. The process was thorough and collaborative to achieve an outcome that is robust, fair and equitable for the 22,000 teacher aides who work in schools and kura across the country.

Examining the claim: a joint process

- ▶ From mid-2017 to mid-2019, the Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZSTA worked together to research the teacher aide occupation and the work of three male-dominated comparator occupations¹.

Together we:

- interviewed 92 teacher aides, 82 supervisors, 87 principals and 56 employees and 48 supervisors from the comparator organisations.
 - researched and analysed data on the historical movement of women into the paid workforce and the history of the teacher aide occupation.
 - collated and analysed data from job descriptions, collective agreements and other relevant documents.
- ▶ We had to conduct a gender-neutral assessment of the skills, responsibilities, conditions and demands of the work of teacher aides and the comparator occupations in order to answer two key questions:
 1. Are teacher aides' remuneration rates affected by gender-based undervaluation?
 2. If so, what is the extent of the undervaluation and how can it be corrected?

You can read the teacher aide pay equity claim report online at www.education.govt.nz/teacher-aide-pay-equity-claim

¹ These are: Residential Youth Workers employed by Oranga Tamariki, Customs Officers employed by the New Zealand Customs Service, Corrections Officers employed by Corrections NZ.

The findings

- ▶ The investigation of the claim found that although the work of comparators required the same or similar level of skills, responsibilities, conditions of work and degrees of effort as teacher aides, the teacher aides were paid less.
- ▶ The conclusion of the investigation was therefore that teacher aides' pay suffered from gender-based undervaluation and needed to be corrected.

Agreement on pay equity issues

- ▶ The new rates will range from \$21.20 to \$34.68 per hour, and be effective from 12 February 2020. For the majority of teacher aides, this is an increase of 19-30% over the rates paid in 2019.
- ▶ Teacher aides who perform tiaki duties (formerly 'dirty work') on a regular basis, will also receive an extra \$2.59 per hour on top of their hourly rate, while those who perform these duties occasionally will see their allowance increased from \$3.85 to \$4.81 if the work is performed on that day.

Agreement on matters other than pay rates

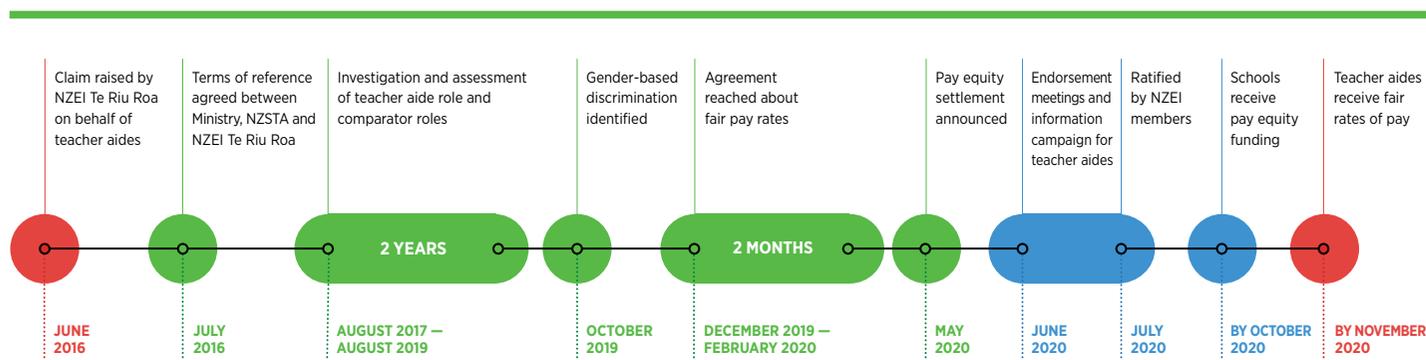
- ▶ Professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities for teacher aides will be more readily available. The PLD fund agreed as part of the *Support Staff in Schools' Collective Agreement* settled at the end of last year, will be boosted by \$1.5 million, to \$2.29 million.
- ▶ Teacher aides will have more certainty around the hours they work. Permanently employed teacher aides will only be able to have their hours varied by a maximum of 25% in any twelve month period. Currently under their employment agreement, there is no limit to the amount of hours that could be varied.

Longer term work

- ▶ The Ministry of Education, NZSTA and NZEI Te Riu Roa recognise that for teacher aides to provide the best support they can for our learners, there are broader workforce matters that need addressing. This longer term work includes:
 - a commitment to reviewing the way schools are funded for teacher aides
 - providing guidance on the use of Fixed-term Agreements to ensure they are being used appropriately
 - establishing a working group to explore career pathways and professional development for teacher aides.

What happens next?

- ▶ Details of the settlement have been widely communicated to all teacher aides to help them understand the changes and seek their general endorsement. At the end of June, NZEI Te Riu Roa members voted on a variation to the collective agreement which includes the settlement outcomes.
- ▶ We are developing detailed operational guidance, tools and support for teacher aides, schools and kura. We need everyone to understand the settlement and what they need to do to ensure that all teacher aides benefit from it. This information will be available in Term 3 from our website – www.education.govt.nz/teacheraides
- ▶ Schools will receive the additional funding by October 2020 to meet the costs arising from teacher aides translating to the new pay equity rates, and all eligible teacher aides will receive the new pay equity rates in November 2020, backdated to 12 February 2020. The payroll will automatically translate union members and staff who have signed the new teacher aide IEA onto new rates, according to the agreed translation rules.
- ▶ If schools and kura do not offer staff the new pay equity rates, the additional pay equity funding provided specifically for this purpose will be recovered.



Did you know?

This pay equity settlement follows a recent pay increase for teacher aides as part of their collective agreement bargaining in November last year. Rates of pay increased to \$21.15 per hour for staff earning less than this, or by 3% if they were earning more. A further 3% increase follows in November 2020 for all teacher aides.