

DIETITIANS' NEWSLETTER

March 2021



Dear members,

The end of 2020 through early 2021 was a busy period for the Dietitian Division of APEX. The highlight of this was the newly formed APEX Dietitian Multiple Employer Collective Agreement (MECA), congratulations to the teams at Midcentral, Whanganui, Northland and Taranaki DHB's. This document is the first Dietitian specific collective agreement covering dietitians from more than one employer.

This, and other updates, are discussed in this newsletter.

MECA

The formation of the MECA itself has been a milestone for your division. This is something we have been working on for a number of years. Being in a MECA makes you as a profession stronger, with more members across more locations uniting to try and achieve the same terms. We have more industrial power going forward and will be able to push harder for the conditions that are specific to dietitians.

There are a number of improved terms in this agreement including an immediate \$1500 increase on all salaries under \$100,000. Additionally dietitians employed at Taranaki DHB are trialling a telephone call allowance for calls not requiring a return to the workplace outside of ordinary hours, the allowance is \$10 per call under 15 minutes and overtime rates if longer. Once this trial has completed, it will inform a claim if

required for other DHB's at next bargaining. A working group is also being formed to put together a national merit progression criteria for dietitians.


APEX DELEGATES TRAINING

After delays due to COVID, we had our in-person delegate training in Auckland last month. This was a great event attended by a number of your dietitian delegates. We discussed common problems in workplaces, your role as a delegate, and some of the upcoming changes and challenges for all allied scientific health workforces following the Health and Disability Sector Review completed last year.

We are hoping to have another training soon and are always keen to have more Dietitian delegates. If you would like to be a delegate for your DHB, please [get in touch](#).

PRESIDENT STANDS DOWN

Brenda Szabo has been President of the Dietitian division of APEX for a number of years and in that time has contributed greatly to not just the profession at her DHB, but to dietitians employed across the country. Brenda took the



decision to step down from this role at the end of last year and we would like to thank her for the hard work and dedication she has put into it.

This leaves a gap in the executive of the Dietitian division and we are now taking expressions of interest for those who would like to be President of the division. With the formation of the National Divisional Council last year where the executive of the union meet twice yearly to strategies and discuss divisional workplans, and national projects. It is now more important than ever we have a strong dietitian voice leading them. This is a hugely rewarding role, and if you would like more information about it or wish to put yourself forward, [please email us](#).

THE FUTURE

Just because we have settled the MECA doesn't mean the work stops. Over the course of the agreement, we are wanting to grow the MECA to cover more DHBs. This is where our members and delegates come in. You will all have connections across the profession and we are asking you to use these connections to spread the word about the MECA. A subsequent parties clause in the MECA allows us to bring new DHBs into the MECA just by balloting the members at that DHB and does not require agreement from any of the employers. For those choosing to join the agreement, they would receive an immediate \$1500 increase on their salary if earning under \$100,000 per annum as well as the host of other benefits discussed above. Let your advocates know if you have any questions or contact/s you would like to pass on to us. Similarly, the more members in more locations we have, the stronger the MECA is and our ability to negotiate better terms and conditions for the dietitian profession, so if your colleagues are currently not members of APEX let them know they can join and receive the improvements you have achieved in the MECA settlement immediately.

DIETITIANS & PAY EQUITY

APEX has lodged a pay equity claim for Dietitians employed at DHBs, as part of a wider claim encompassing all our members working in majority female professions. However, it is important to be realistic about what it can do and also to note a few things.

Whilst the pay equity route is another 'string to the bow' of opportunities for improving pay, it involves a long and what can be an arduous process and is arguably not going to be the primary method by which dietitians continue to improve pay and conditions now and in the near future.

Pay equity processes cannot be used to deliver other important conditions, like CPD funding and study leave or additional annual leave. It can only deliver pay, albeit that this can relate to all aspects of the pay packet including penal and overtime pay, and allowances. That means pay equity is not a short cut to a better contract overall.

So, a pay equity claim is on the table for DHB Dietitians and other DHB employed Allied Scientific and Technical Workforces APEX represents, but we should not hold our breath or even more, count our chickens before they hatch. The process in Allied Health sector will be very complex and may take years to determine. APEX intends to be active in pursuing pay equity on behalf our female dominated professions. However, in the Dietitians division we must not be too distracted by this long-term slow-burn and must concentrate our thinking on the 2022 bargaining. That bargaining will be on us before we know it and will involve claims to improve all aspects of the MECA, not just pay. Check out the latest Pay Equity newsletter for updates!

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