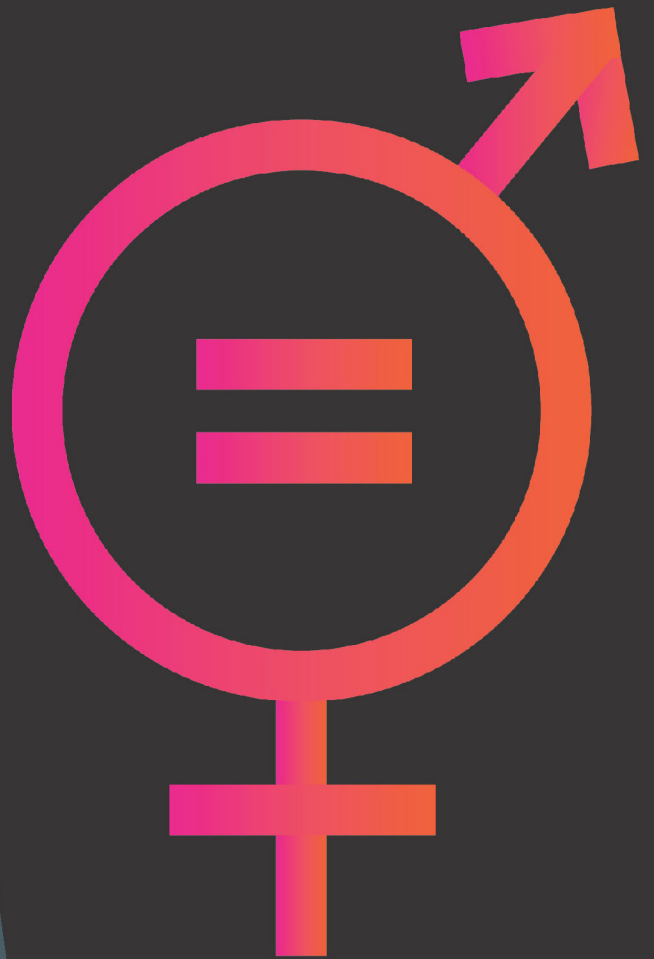


PAY EQUITY

NEWSLETTER
19 OCTOBER 2022

Dear APEX Te Whatu Ora members,

It has been a while since we communicated directly with you exclusively about progress on the AST Pay Equity Claim. It is not because little has been happening, quite the reverse in fact.



At the outset of our claim there was anxiety that we needed to get a wriggle on since the NZNO pay equity claim was on the brink of settlement and implementation. To the extent that the anticipated increases would see AST members who were traditionally paid on a par – or close to it – with similarly experienced nurses suddenly paid as much as ten to fifteen thousand dollars behind their nursing colleagues, we knew that we had to put our shoulders to the wheel!

If you have been following the reports in the media regarding the NZNO pay equity claim, you will be aware that it is in serious trouble. Their proposed settlement is now bogged down in the legal system on two fronts. Firstly, the matter of whether every nurse covered by the claim **must** have their pay equity increase backdated

to December 2019 (i.e., individually calculated for around 30,000 employees) as opposed to being paid an approximate lump sum perhaps in exchange for more generous salary rates going forward, is before the Employment Court. Secondly, there is a dispute about whether the pay equity assessment itself is accurate and robust, especially as it affects senior nurses. This matter is being considered by the Employment Relations Authority (that's one step down from the Employment Court), and if agreed between the parties that the entire assessment needs to be checked and reviewed, tantamount to having to begin all over again.

So, what are the implications of this for our claim? Most significantly for our processes are the lessons we are learning from the NZNO experience, and the approach that we are taking as a result to avoid pitfalls. It also means that it is now possible that far from chasing the NZNO settlement, we may in fact pull ahead of it, despite our claim being inherently so much more complex.

October has been full of what is known as 'work assessments', which are the meetings where the role profile for each profession is scored against the pay equity tool (EJE). Representatives from APEX, PSA and the employer are present in these meetings, each having the opportunity to provide their reasoning for each of their individual scores. Many of these people have no prior knowledge as to the level of expertise and responsibilities of each of your professions, hence it is crucial that the role profiles accurately represent the professions. This may mean including parts of your occupation that seem trivial to you; in this process, every little point counts. Pay equity is an opportunity to be honest about how important the work we perform is in each of our workplaces, and to not be afraid to champion our skills and attributes.

Finally, whilst the pay equity process is an enormous opportunity for APEX members, it is of course complemented by all the other work that APEX does on behalf of our members. Collective agreement bargaining continues, as does the APEX initiative to improve employer superannuation contributions continues. The very serious task of ensuring that the Health reforms lead to an improved situation for our members on all fronts - e.g. pay, conditions, Health and Safety at work and professional development – also continues. One of the major strengths of APEX is in not putting all our eggs into one basket, and to remaining nimble as we respond to changing circumstances.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns at payequity@apex.org.nz.

Kind Regards,
APEX Pay Equity Team