

Vote to be held on DHB MECA Deal

Meetings will be held between 16 and 25 March of SFWU members employed by District Health Boards to vote on a deal that we hope will flow on to our members employed by contractors as well.

We have been negotiating since May 2009 with DHBs and the four contractors (Compass, Spotless, OCS and ISS) over the renewal of our collective agreements, and despite a national stopwork meeting, and the 27 November strike, up until now we had not been offered a wage increase.

Our decision at the February membership meetings for a combined bargaining approach with the Nurses Organisation and the PSA has meant that there is now a wage deal on the table.

This deal is being recommended by the SFWU National Negotiating Team. It will come into effect if it is ratified by all three unions.

What is in the Deal?

1. A common pay increase for all three unions of 2% coming into effect nine months from the date of expiry of the previous MECAs. The operative date for the SFWU pay increase would be 1 April 2010, and this increase would be in addition to any move up the wages scale.
2. A common term for all of the MECAs of 18 months. This means the SFWU DHB MECA expires at the end of this year and we will be into negotiations again in November.
3. Outstanding issues from the last MECA at Auckland, Counties-Manukau, Waitemata, Lakes, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Hutt and Otago DHBs resolved.
4. A bargaining fees arrangement to ensure non-union employees have to pay to access the MECA.
5. New agreed national and local processes that will bind the three unions together in dealing with some major DHB restructuring that is about to start.
6. A new alternative disputes resolution process for a prompt dealing with issues, such as the ones mentioned in point 3.
7. Some agreed action points around implementing healthy workplaces.

Please turn over





Why is the SFWU Negotiating Team Recommending it?

The National Negotiating Team is recommending members vote for this deal because after 10 months of bargaining we think it is the best that we are going to get.

We could reject the deal and fight for some backpay, but given the offer means that our MECA expires in December, the loss of income through striking would not be worthwhile.

We have also taken into account the following issues:

- Major restructuring is starting in DHBs with the movement of all payroll, finance, IT and human resources management into the National Health Board
- Planning is currently underway for some DHB services to be hived off to Primary Health Organisations
- The DHBs are all planning reductions in services in order to save up to \$500 million they may be short of this year in their Government funding.

All of these issues will have an effect on our jobs and the access of our members and our families to public health services.

We want to focus the combined resources of the unions on ensuring a good outcome in this restructuring for public health workers and New Zealanders using the public health system.

What happens if all three unions do not ratify?

If all three unions do not ratify we would revert to our own union bargaining processes.

We may be offered the same deal as an individual union, but we would have to discuss any acceptance or rejection of this with the other two unions.

What is happening with the contractors?

We are continuing to negotiate with the contractors, but they are awaiting the outcome of the DHB ratification process. We expect the contractors to match the DHB deal.

