



## **PNA Report for the MHNS Forum Friday, March 24th 2023**

Thank you to the Mental Health Nurses Section (MHNS) national committee who have shown leadership and professional engagement these past two years. Their participation in the complex mental health sector is valued by NZNO. Thanks go to the committee members for helping to organise today's forum and BGM.

NZNO relies on the work of volunteers as a membership organisation and acknowledges the work made to the Mental Health Nurses Section by the committee over and above their own personal and professional commitments. This voluntary work makes a difference to mental health nurses' professional standing, and is complemented by personal growth, and the friendships formed.

I extend my thanks to Helen Garrick who has worked collaboratively alongside the committee, and with external stakeholders. My thanks also go to the national committee for their contribution to the ongoing engagement with mental health issues as your representatives.

It is important to note that Jennie Ray has been the committee member who has taken the lead in arranging this Forum (despite it having been cancelled twice before due to COVID). Jennie deserves our thanks. Jennie has given a significant amount of her own time to the Forum's development and organising detail so we are grateful for her commitment.

Please feel free to contact the committee through [MHNS@nzno.org.nz](mailto:MHNS@nzno.org.nz).

## **NZNO News**

NZNO is currently shaping itself around the **Maranga Mai!** Campaign [[Maranga Mai - Rise Up! \(nzno.org.nz\)](https://nzno.org.nz)] that began soon after the appointment of CE, Paul Goulter in March 2022 in concert with the NZNO Board of Directors. **Maranga Mai!** means 'Rise Up!' and this campaign is a call for **NZNO members, whatever sector they work in (and their communities), to come together and take united action. The aim to win the political and resourcing commitments needed to address the nursing shortage crisis permanently – and across the whole health sector. As Paul Goulter wrote on March 4th, "We need to show the politicians they need to make the lack of health resourcing a number one issue and that we will not go away as we take our campaign to the streets."**

The campaign is based on the simple charter of demands (or 'The Five Fixes') that includes:

1. Te Tiriti actualised within and across the health system
2. More nurses across the health sector
3. Pay and conditions that meet nurses' value and expectations
4. More people training to be nurses
5. More Māori and Pasifika nurses

A National Action Day around Maranga Mai! Is being planned for Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> across the country. The new Director of Campaigns, Tali Williams, has joined NZNO with a wealth of industrial experience to help give the members a clear voice across the country about the many issues facing

nursing. This Action Day will be your opportunity to add to nurses' strength and visibility. If you have any questions about the Day of Action or have some useful ideas for it email Tali Williams via [Tali.williams@nzno.org.nz](mailto:Tali.williams@nzno.org.nz).

NZNO is now made up of over 57,000 members. As of February 23rd, there were 57,056 members including 2413 students (with another 200 new applications still to process).

### **NZNO/Te Whatu Ora Collective Agreement (CA) 2022 Update**

The latest two-day round of bargaining for our Te Whatu Ora Health NZ collective agreement concluded on Tuesday 28 February. NZNO is disappointed with what Te Whatu Ora (TWO) brought to the table (no firm pay offer yet received), but at least there is now a clearer understanding of the TWO position on our claims around health and safety, safe staffing and funding for the settlement.

As a result, NZNO also has a clearer understanding of the total funds Te Whatu Ora has available for this settlement, including for pay and other conditions. Disappointingly, the total funding falls considerably short of our cost-of-living claim. Further, there doesn't seem to be additional funding to address the problems around the senior nurse rates arising from the Agreement in Principle.

### **From Kai Tiaki, March 20th 2023**

- 'Immediate' pay boost needed for struggling senior nurses, say nurse leaders. Senior nurses and leaders are pleading for more support over low morale and burnout as the pay gap with registered nurses (RNs) narrows. [Interim equity-related pay lifts](#) made this month to Te Whatu Ora members varied across roles, with RNs on the highest pay step, seven, receiving a rise of up to 14.6 per cent, while senior nurses only got a 4.5 per cent rise. A spokesperson for Verrall said senior nurses' pay relativity, now their junior colleagues were so much closer to them, was a "known problem" she was keen to see settled. However, "it's not in the minister's hands to solve that — it's for the union and their employer". She said any immediate action was unlikely as senior nurses' pay was one of the issues currently before the Employment Relations Authority (ERA), as part of the NZNO-Te Whatu Ora [nursing pay equity claim](#). But NZNO industrial advisor David Wait said there was nothing stopping Te Whatu Ora from making a wage offer to senior nurses as part of bargaining currently underway. "There's absolutely no restriction on them making a wage offer to senior nurses that restores relativity. They could do that at any point." NZNO had raised the senior nurse relativity issue with Te Whatu Ora in January, he said — however, it was yet to make an offer on wages. NZNO's senior nurses told an Nursing Leadership Section (NLS) survey they were "squeezed" from above and below while trying to support understaffed teams, she said. Senior nurses and leaders were also "desperate" for more professional support, through mentoring, coaching or supervision, the survey found.
- Matanga tapuhi / nurse practitioners say revised guidelines on their role from the Royal College of GPs (RNZCGP) are "denigrating" and "disappointing", implying they must consult with GPs before making decisions. RNZCGP has released a revised position statement, ['nurse practitioners' contribution to general practice teams'](#) for its members, which it says "clarifies the difference" between NPs and specialist general practitioners. The revision follows angry reaction to its initial statement, published a month ago, which stated NPs needed just six years' training against 11 years for GPs. In reality, it took at least nine years to qualify as an NP, and required a clinical masters' degree, Nursing Council chief executive Catherine Byrne told *Kaitiaki*. But the average practising experience of the

country's 621 NPs was far longer — 27 years. Just two had achieved it in nine, she said. Nurse Practitioners NZ (NPNZ) and the College of Nurses' Aotearoa asked RNZCGP to withdraw and correct its statement, offering to work with them on a more accurate one. But their offer was not "effectively" taken up, NPNZ chair Sandra Oster said. The revised statement failed to reflect the true scope of NP practice and was "disappointing", Oster said. At a meeting, RNZCGP agreed to correct the training requirements "but not the text or intent of the document". College of Nurses' Aotearoa executive director Kate Weston said the statement "devalues" NPs and showed "limited understanding of the scope and capability of the scope and capability of the NP role. "It undermines and devalues the role of NPs — perhaps based on a misapprehension that NPs and, for that matter, RNs, are working under the direction, delegation or supervision of GPs — which is NOT the case," Weston said, in a joint statement with NPNZ. Under the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act, NPs — like GPs — are accountable for their own practice, Weston said.

- Health Minister Ayesha Verrall paid a visit to nurses at Wellington's new regional children's hospital today to mark the completion of \$500 million in [interim equity payments](#) to Te Whatu Ora nurses. "A large proportion" of registered nurses (RNs) would receive an extra \$12,000 per annum in base pay — a 14 per cent increase, Verrall said in a statement. "After years of falling behind, these payments recognise the significance and importance of a group that has been historically undervalued based on gender." NZNO delegate Mel Anderson also raised with Verrall the pay scale for senior nurses — who now get paid the same or even less than a level 7 RN after a 14 per cent increase for RNs. "As a step 7 RN, I get my PDRD [professional development and recognition programmes] money and pens — we're taking home more than our senior nurses now," Anderson said. Recognising nurses' post-graduate study with higher pay would also be appreciated, as was the case in Australia, she said. "It's only a \$1 [per hour more], it's not much but it's recognition you have actually done some higher learning to have a better knowledge of something . . . and not just be a nurse that never wants to learn or expand themselves." [Thanks, but where's the rest? Nurses challenge Minister of Health on back pay – Kaitiaki Nursing New Zealand](#)
- Read here about nurses' stories and how they and their communities have been affected by the recent turmoil generated through Cyclone Gabrielle. Many nurses have given of themselves over-and-above their professional obligations in order to ensure that patients' needs could be met under the circumstances. This care, of course, includes ensuring the continuity of cancer treatment, when possible. [Emotional exhaustion hits nurses, two weeks after Cyclone Gabrielle – Kaitiaki Nursing New Zealand](#)

### Relevant and recent news/media snippets:

- [Greytown's doctor crisis](#)  
*Wairarapa Times Age*, 17 March 2023  
Nurse practitioner and NZNO board member Lucy McLaren said the emotion in the room should be redirected. "This anger and passion here is at a health system that is completely and utterly falling over. This is an election year – take some of this to the politicians, ask them what they're going to do about it."
- [How we can better protect the wellbeing of New Zealand nurses](#)  
*The Spinoff*, 16 March 2023  
...nursing is facing critical staffing shortages, with NZNO President Anne Daniels calling the situation "horrendous".

- ['Failure': Govt's \\$500k health worker recruitment campaign resulted in just 3 interviews](#)  
*Newshub*, 9 March 2023  
It's a significant amount of money," said NZ Nurses Organisation Kaiwhakahaere Kerri Nuku. "It's failed to deliver according to what I believe was its purpose."
- [Te Whatu Ora boosts nurses' pay by thousands but 'irritation' remains](#)  
*Stuff*, 7 March 2023  
This isn't a cost of living payment, this is to correct gender discrimination that is widely and deeply felt," NZNO Chief Executive Paul Goulter said.
- [Verrall promises extra funding if community nursing pay disparity found](#)  
*Radio New Zealand*, 10 March 2023  
[NZNO Chief Executive Paul] Goulter said paying different wages to nurses across the industry created distortions in the labour market, as nurses leave jobs at GPs and move into hospitals.

In summary, we all know that the health environment is complex and is in the process of undergoing significant changes, or so we are told. We are waiting for Te Whatu Ora to ultimately make its policies clear through sound information-sharing and valuing our feedback in contributing to their consultative processes.

This is an election year so is more acute in the pressure that can be applied in trying to influence the way forward in health. It is essential that nurses become increasingly aware and involved through networking, watching and absorbing the media outputs with critical analysis, being prepared to discuss the options open to the workforce, and understanding the impact decisions made will potentially have on patient outcomes.

NZNO is here to help nurses develop their voice so that it is heard consistently and listened to with respect. Nurses have tolerated being overlooked for many years. It is only through growing awareness that nurses are no longer prepared to settle for less than they deserve. It takes patience and practice to gain confidence in articulating your voice and making it heard. I encourage you to get involved through increasing your wider knowledge of the health system and its potential so that we can ensure that the profession of nursing becomes an integral decision-maker of its future impact.

Wishing you an interesting and satisfying year ahead.

Anne Brinkman, PNA