

## **Media Release – For immediate release**

25 October 2022

### **Pay equity settlement recognises undervaluation of community social workers**

Social Service Providers Aotearoa is today welcoming a landmark Cabinet agreement to settle a pay equity claim against five representative iwi and community social service organisations.

As announced by Minita Kelvin Davis, Cabinet has approved the pay equity settlement and funding to address the undervaluation of ‘workers performing social work’ at Barnardos, Christchurch Methodist Mission, Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services, Stand Tū Māia and Wellington Sexual Abuse Help. Social Service Providers Aotearoa has co-ordinated and represented the social service organisations in the claim since it was lodged in August 2019 by the PSA.

Social Service Providers Aotearoa Chief Executive Dr Claire Achmad says the Government approval and funding for the settlement clears the way for a wider solution to address pay inequity across the community-based social services sector.

"We are grateful that the Government has taken this first key step towards addressing the significant gender pay gap for kaimahi performing social work. The settlement is a huge milestone for the community-based social work sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, including our iwi and NGO social services. It is an important first move towards ensuring we have a workforce across that is fairly paid — removing the pay inequity that this female dominated workforce has suffered, and in far too many areas continues to experience, across our social services," Dr Achmad says.

The settlement provides parity for community social workers in the five employer organisations with the pay rates of Oranga Tamariki social workers.

Brenda Pilott ONZM, SSPA's Pay Equity Co-Ordinator, says that while the settlement has been a long-time coming, it will have a significant impact, and has been achieved through a huge amount of commitment, hard work and collaboration.

"The PSA lodged this pay equity claim against the five employers over three years ago – so we are tremendously pleased that a settlement has finally been reached. We acknowledge the immense commitment, and the workload carried by the five representative employers, in particular their CEOs, and members of their teams who have contributed significant time and effort to work assessments and data/information gathering that have informed the claim. We also acknowledge the ongoing support of the wider SSPA membership, the open and co-operative process with the PSA, and with Oranga Tamariki as the lead funding agency", Ms Pilott says.

Ms Pilott says it is positive that the settlement also includes funding to cover costs of social worker registration, professional development and supervision.

While the settlement directly affects only the five representative employers in the PSA claim, a plan and process are underway to extend the benefits of the settlement to the wider sector. The work to extend the benefits of the settlement to the people in social work roles in the

wider sector is led by Te Kawa Mataaho | The Public Service Commission. Dr Achmad says SSPA and social service providers are working hard to support that process. “This is essential, so that the benefits of this pay equity settlement will be experienced by all those kaimahi performing social work throughout iwi, kaupapa Māori and NGO social services, and in turn to strengthen our social services workforce,” she says.

The PSA has lodged a separate pay equity claim against the five representative employers, covering most other social service workers outside the scope of the first claim of ‘workers performing social work’.

Dr Achmad says that “the ball can start rolling on that second claim now, with this first claim having reached settlement. We expect this to be another complex and time-consuming claim due to the wide range of social services roles potentially covered, and we will be working hard to achieve a good outcome. As with the social work claim, we would expect to see the representative claim extended to others in the social services sector. It is only right that those kaimahi walking alongside families and whānau are appropriately valued and paid for the hard and tireless work that they do every day, too.”

ENDS

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#### **Editor’s Notes:**

#### **About Social Service Providers Aotearoa | [www.sspa.org.nz](http://www.sspa.org.nz)**

Social Service Providers Aotearoa is a membership-based organisation, representing some 200 non-profit, community-based organisations from around Aotearoa. Our member organisations are diverse, including small rural organisations, Iwi and kaupapa Māori service providers, Pacific providers, and large national children’s organisations. Our member organisations have been providing life-changing and often life-saving services and support in their communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SSPA *Agenda for Change: Big Ideas to Tackle Big Problems* is available at: <https://sspa.org.nz/information/agenda-for-change>

SSPA’s members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on working alongside children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services, and organisations and individuals working in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.

SSPA’s vision is that Aotearoa’s community-based social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa’s social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.