

**Media Statement: 24 May 2023**

## **Nurse pay boost announcement is premature and insulting**

Stressed and struggling family doctor services are insulted by the [government's announcement](#) today of pay boosts for general practice nurses aimed at reducing the unfair pay gap between them and their nurse colleagues employed in hospitals.

General Practice Owners Association of New Zealand (GenPro) Chair, Dr Tim Malloy says it is positive the government has recognised the unacceptable pay gap, but the Minister of Health's announcement of pay rises of 8% on average is premature and lacks good faith.

“What is concerning is the government appears to suggest an 8% funding boost for general practice nurses is to be celebrated. This is an insult to those hard-working nurses whose pay is up to 27% less than their equivalent hospital employed counterparts.

“It will do nothing to address the workforce crisis in our sector that is leading to reduced services and reduced operating hours, and leading to people having to wait weeks to get an appointment to see their family doctor.”

Dr Malloy says general practice will continue to struggle to attract and retain nurses as, despite this potential small pay increase, nurses will choose to work in hospitals or overseas where they are better paid and feel more valued.

GenPro Chief Executive, Philip Grant, describes the announcement from the Minister of Health, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, as premature and lacking good faith. “Our latest meeting with Te Whatu Ora officials was only yesterday and we believed our discussions were ongoing with some significant barriers still to be addressed, such as certainty of future funding, before any offers are put to our nurses.”

The announcement also failed to recognise the contractual process required for pay bargaining with employee representatives before a formal offer can be put to nurses. “Employers have yet to receive an appropriate funding offer from the government which recognises that nursing workforce costs are an on-going annual expense that cannot be solved with a simple one-off payment.”

Mr Grant says earlier this year the [Minister celebrated a 14% pay increase](#) for Te Whatu Ora hospital-based nurses along with additional lump sums and back pay of up to \$20,000. That increased the pay gap to 27% for the majority of nurses. “To now offer general practice nurses only 8% from 1 July this year by comparison will do nothing to address this country's recruitment and retention crisis for these essential front-line professionals.”

GenPro conducted a member survey late last year that found half of all general practices had a vacancy for a nurse, with an average 1.6 vacant roles for those affected. It left those practices missing 30% of their required nursing workforce. Nearly half (46%) of the 185 practices that responded to the survey reported losing at least one nurse in the previous three months.

Ends.

**Further information can be obtained from:**

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