

## Proposed new STONZ SECA – FAQs

The below are questions received from Members. If your question is not answered here, please email [communications@stonz.co.nz](mailto:communications@stonz.co.nz)

### Remuneration

**The SECA expired on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2026, and this offer says it is from the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2026 – we will receive back pay to the beginning of March if the offer is ratified on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April?**

One of the positive aspects of this offer from Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ, if ratified, means that the new SECA rates would be effective from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2026, which means there will be no time that members are without a salary increase.

As part of the payroll implementation, if this offer is ratified then members will receive a back-pay to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March. \*

Increases include:

2.5% salary increase across all salary scales from 2 March 2026.

2.5% salary increase across all salary scales from 1 March 2027.

\*Current members who were covered by our SECA on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March will get back dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, however if a RMO joins STONZ for example on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, then they will only be backdated until the date they joined and became full members.

**Who is eligible for the Lumpsum Payment? I'm considering joining STONZ – when would I need to join to receive the payment?**

All STONZ members will receive the LSP if the offer is ratified.

The offer includes a one-off \$3,000 gross lump sum payment (LSP) (rated by FTE) for STONZ members at ratification.

The lumpsum payment represents the equivalent of an additional one-off 2% for someone on registrar step 3, category C.

If you are not a member of STONZ and are eligible to join – you would need to be a full member by the 28<sup>th</sup> of April (date of ballot closing), and if the offer is ratified by members, you would then also receive the LSP.

Note: If you're currently an NZRDA member or have resigned from NZRDA after the 18th of June 2024, you are unable to be covered by another union's terms and conditions until 60 days prior to the expiry of the current NZRDA SECA, which is Monday, 1 June 2026.

As such, if you want to join STONZ and be covered by our terms and conditions, you would not be able to be covered until this date. Unfortunately, if you cannot be covered by our terms and conditions until 1 June 2026, you would not be entitled to the lump sum. Depending on the union policy, you may also be required to provide notice of your membership resignation to NZRDA.

### **I am currently on Parental leave – am I eligible for the lumpsum payment?**

Yes, if you are a member of STONZ as at the date of ratification, this will be applied on your return from parental leave and will be pro-rated to the FTE you are returning on. If you are returning from parental leave to another district or another contract i.e., as an SMO, please contact [support@stonz.co.nz](mailto:support@stonz.co.nz) prior to your return from parental leave so we can assist with liaising with HNZ.

### **Can you please clarify the date of ratification? Is that the date negotiations started or the date the agreement will formally be signed off?**

The date of ratification is the date at which members vote and agree to support the offer.

Currently, the ballot will close on Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of April at 6pm, and if members vote in support, the new SECA will then be 'ratified', and the effective date will be the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2026.

If members do not support the offer and vote 'no' then the deal will not be ratified, and we will head back to the bargaining table.

### **How does this offer compare to CPI? And what was STONZ strategy going into bargaining?**

The [consumer price index \(CPI\)](#) is a measure of inflation for New Zealand households. It records changes in the price of goods and services. It influences interest rates and is used to calculate changes to benefit payments.

CPI is currently 3.1%, and we acknowledge that the salary increases negotiated are less than this.

The initial mandate from HNZ was significantly lower, and we had to push hard to increase this up to 2.5%.

In terms of the environment – we have seen other settlements recently which have included salary increases ranging from 1.5 – 2.5% and small lumpsums. And for many groups, there were lengthy periods where there were expired contracts.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) have also stuck firm so far to their stance on 'no back dating', which was another reason we started bargaining early and met frequently.

Despite the increase in inflation, we are not seeing wages increase across the workforce, both public and private. We believe that, whilst a one-off, when combined with the LSP, this gets us close to CPI.

We have spent a lot of time considering what a 'suitable offer' might look like and throughout ensured that we were constantly reflecting on what members outlined as priorities in the surveys as well as direct feedback from queries, our delegates and challenges we were experiencing with HNZ.

We recognise this year brings significant uncertainty, particularly given the cost-of-living crisis and rising fuel prices, the full impact of which is still unfolding and that this year is an election year.

As outlined in the webinars, we felt there were two possible options, firstly we could pursue a long-term bargaining strategy: the political and economic environment might change in our favour (it may not).

Or fight for a 1<sup>st</sup> March settlement (current SECA expired 29<sup>th</sup> April): meaning no period of no pay – no wage deduction for time off to take industrial action – or impact on training time.

The approach we took was to try and secure the best deal possible without a prolonged period of no pay rise or likely industrial action. Given the potential impact of extended industrial action on members, training, and the union, we believe accepting this offer is the best option.

However, if members wish to pursue a more protracted bargaining strategy with uncertain outcomes, we will support that choice. The key priority is that members make this decision with a clear understanding of the risks and opportunities involved.

We have been closely watching other bargaining strategies and settlements reached. Holding out might get more but comes with risks and we believe that we have found the right balance between risk and reward with this offer.

**Is there any further room to move on the remuneration proposed given recent inflation was 3.1% but we are only increasing by 2.5%?**

This offer is above what was initially presented to us, and we had to push hard to move the limits put in place by the Public Service Commission.

There is more information in the full Bargaining Report about our analysis and the process undertaken to get to this point.

The STONZ team believes that without protracted industrial action (i.e. significant strike action) this is the best offer that Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ can make under the current government settings.

We acknowledge that the percentage increases do not reach the levels from our 2024 settlement where members accepted a differential pay increase to re-set base wages and re-set the differential following the pay equity claims which nurses received. Re-basing the salary scale meant that the average pay increase for members was 18% but some members also received nothing. So, at the time we were very clear that for this set of negotiations our aim was to move everyone forward together which is what we believe this offer does.

## Re-introduction of Non-Service Increment

**I note that the offer includes a one-step increase on the salary scale after passing the Part 1 examination.**

**Could I please clarify whether this will also be applied to registrars who have passed their Part 1 examination already, but did not receive a step increase at the time?**

Yes, for any member who became eligible during the term of the last SECA will be entitled to have this applied effective the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2026. However, there will be no back pay for that period.

RMO units may not be aware or have a record of who has passed exams and is therefore entitled to the NSI, so please get in touch with your RMO unit directly if you believe you are entitled.

**Does the re-introduction of the NSI override the current clause 12.3.3 whereby a non-trainee cannot progress beyond step 5?**

No, the re-introduction of the NSI does not override the rule that employees who are not on a training programme cannot progress beyond Step 5.

However, you will still be entitled to the NSI once you are able to progress past Step 5.

In practice, this means that if your salary is currently capped at Step 5 and you are therefore unable to receive the NSI, you will become eligible for the NSI once you are accepted onto a training programme and can access the remainder of the salary scale.

**Is the NSI linked to the Senior Registrar rates?**

No, these clauses are separate, they have different eligibility and do not reference one another.

**What happens if I passed my Part 1 exam during the time the NSI was suspended and are now at the top of the PayScale. What will the new proposed agreement allow in that scenario?**

If an RMO is already on step 9 of the PayScale on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, then there would be no further increases as the top of the scale has already been reached.

**Does my normal Anniversary date, where I step up a salary step each year still apply?**

Yes, RMOs will continue moving up the salary scale each year on your anniversary.

The NSI, is an additional salary step to recognise passing specific exams.

**Do I need to be on a training programme to receive the NSI?**

No, the criteria are that you:

- Are a registrar
- Completed 5 years post-graduation
- Passed your part 1 (or equivalent) exam – required as part of acceptance to, or as a requirement of a vocational training programme.

If you have already reached the salary cap for non-training registrars, you will receive the non-service increment when you are accepted on to a training program and can access the remainder of the salary scale.

Link to Part 1 Exams or equivalent can be found in the [National Manual](#). Note: this list will be reviewed as part of implementation if offer is ratified.

## Additional Duties / enhanced rates

**How long are the enhanced rates that were put in place during COVID staying in place for?**

As outlined in our Bargaining Report, the enhanced additional duty rates (including cross-cover) have now been in place for four years, and since COVID have become embedded and expected within the system.

Our view is that while post-COVID staffing volatility has stabilised, chronic gaps persist in rosters across many services. These gaps continue to place pressure on RMOs, making fair and competitive compensation for additional duties essential.

Whilst these rates have never been written into our collective agreement before, we have negotiated that the enhanced rates remain in place and are guaranteed for at least the next 26 months while we work with Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ over what a longer-term solution looks like.

**When will the change to the Senior Additional Duty rates entitlement take effect? (Change from an 'an advanced training program' to 'an Australasian Vocational Training Program')? And will RMOs be backdated?**

The change will be in place from 1 March 2026; there will not be backdating further back than this date. If there is a delay from payroll implementing these changes, for RMOs who are entitled from 1 March 2026 it will be backdated until this date.

**Can I ask for some clarification around the interpretation of additional duties rates in the context of call backs for registrars who are on call?**

On call and callback rates remain as per the current SECA. The exception to this is if an RMO picks up an 'additional' on call shift, in which case, as this is an additional the call backs should be paid at the escalated rates and the on-call payment as the on call extra rate of \$25 per hour.

We did spend significant time advocating for a change to the base on-call rates, however after a lot of back and forth with HNZ, it was clear this was not an aspect that the PSC was going to move on. They were concerned about the 'flow on' effects to other CAs as the rates are standard across many employment agreements.

Whilst we could not get an increase in rates across the line, there is an acknowledgement about the impact that On-Call has on those doing it regularly and for long periods of time. Because of this, we will begin a piece of work in collaboration with HNZ to examine on-call rosters and associated fatigue management. District input will be sought to identify best-practice approaches. Guiding principles will be developed and incorporated into the National Manual. We will also use any findings to put forward to the next round of negotiations.

## House Officer Grant

**What are the main changes to the House Officer Grant? Can I access this now as a PGY1?**

Clause 10.9 was introduced to help House Officers support their career development as getting accepted onto training programmes is becoming more competitive.

We have extended the scope of eligibility to PGY1s as well as removing the limitations of what this can be used for. This means it can now be used to support purchase of textbooks, subscriptions to journals, subscriptions to vocational education websites, personal computers / tablets, personal surgical / medical equipment or attendance at conferences. However, it is important to note that tech can only be purchased in PGY2 onwards and the grant is capped at \$1000.

This grant remains in addition to all the reimbursable items already covered under clause 10 that are required to apply for training programmes.

## Transfers / Relocation

**I saw the new clause about working the weekend prior to transfer. Is this referring to the weekend of transfer, i.e., the Sat and Sun before starting in the new hospital, or the week prior?**

The proposed offer has a new clause 6.11.4 which states:

*“Where an RMO transfers under the provision of clause 33.1, they shall not be rostered to any weekend, overnight on call or night duties in the 7 days immediately prior to the last day of work before the Transfer.”*

So, for example, if your last day of work at District A is Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2026 – and you are due to start your new role at District B on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of May. The 7-days prior to cover the period from the Monday 4<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> of May (inclusive).

The 7 days immediately prior relates to the 7 days ‘before’ you are due to start at your new District regardless of when your last ‘rostered shift’ is. i.e., if you already rostered off for the weekend immediate prior it does not extend the 7-days any earlier.

Where rosters are already published and leave is already approved, we expect there may be a transition period while districts implement these changes (if ratified).

**It is generally expected and anticipated that RMOs outside of training must move at least once to broaden skills and get the much-needed points. This is a huge financial undertaking. Is funding provided to registrars out of training for at least one move to another centre?**

Yes, during our last SECA negotiations in 2024 we successfully negotiated the ability for Registrars to get paid for their first move, regardless of whether they are on training or not, which was not previously covered, as we agree it is a huge financial undertaking.

## Salary and Sun setting clause

**NZRDA are telling everyone STONZ has accepted that everyone will no longer have sleep recovery days included in salary calculations, pushing everyone down a pay category. Is this correct? I.e. cat C to D.**

No, this is not correct.

We have negotiated to extend sunset expiry clause (12.1.2c) to six-months post expiry of the collective agreement (31 October 2028).

Since STONZ’s inception, both parties have worked toward improving transparency and accuracy in RMO remuneration. Following the Sapere report, the referred approach was a system that pays RMOs for actual hours worked, with penal rates applied where appropriate.

However, implementing this system requires significant payroll technology upgrades by Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ. STONZ has accepted this limitation and agreed to an end date for the current arrangement, anticipating progress toward a new system. Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ has signalled that these upgrades remain a long-term goal.

STONZ proposed removing the end date and revisiting remuneration changes once the necessary technology is in place. However, this was not something we were able to achieve but have got a commitment to extend and following bargaining we will meet with HNZ again to make a plan around future state and how to get there.

If this deal was not accepted by members, the extension of this date is something STONZ would continue to ensure was part of any deal negotiated.

**What happens to RMOs who are on Step 9 of the Salary Scale? There are lots of surgical registrars in particular who are in the position where we will max out the registrar steps as it continues to take so long to get on to surgical training.**

During the 2024 negotiations, Step 10 was removed to bring money forward and into RMOs' pockets earlier. It is STONZ's view that a long salary scale benefits Health New Zealand as they can pay RMOs less for longer.

Delays in access to vocational training positions, limited training numbers, and college-controlled entry requirements mean many RMOs are spending longer at registrar level than the salary scale was originally designed to accommodate. These bottlenecks sit within the broader training and workforce system and are not issues that can be resolved through the salary scale alone.

STONZ continues to raise concerns about these pipeline constraints and the need for coordinated action across Health New Zealand, training programmes, and colleges to ensure training pathways are adequately resourced, timely, and aligned with workforce needs.

**I'm a Rural hospital Medicine trainee and this technically isn't a 'Australasian' training programme – does it still count for being able to receive Senior Registrar rates when applicable?**

Yes, the DRHM is under the umbrella of RACP and a NZ training programme. We have confirmed in writing with HNZ that Rural Hospital Medicine is covered under this clause.

## House Officer Salary Scales

**With the removal of the first year House Officer scale, as a PGY1 what will I get paid?**

We have removed the first year House Officer scale for those working a schedule 10 roster.

This means that as a PGY1 you will be paid on the main House Officer scale with salaries ranging from \$84,040 as a category F up to \$153,258 for a category A run.

## General Questions

### **What is the impact of the proposed legislation changes to the Employment Relations Amendment Act 2026 i.e., the change on limit to be able to raise Personal Grievances (PG's) for those earning over \$200k – was this addressed in bargaining?**

The changes to the [Employment Relations Act](#) were passed in February 2026.

The changes we are waiting for a decision from Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ about in regard to how they plan to implement are:

- The [30 day Rule](#) for Collective Agreements and,
- The rules around [Personal Grievances](#)

Employees on current agreements have 12-months before the threshold applies to them. The rules around personal grievances in particular have been raised by several unions, including STONZ to Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ in bargaining and as part of bipartite meetings between unions and the employer. We were not able to progress this during bargaining and Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ have still not decided how they will progress; they are currently seeking input from their legal teams and working through the implications of any change. We will keep members updated as we know more.

### **Why is the future of the meals pilot being discussed?**

The current meals pilot project, of having an option to receive a payment rather than a meal while on duty, commenced as a fixed-term arrangement as part of a joint project between Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ and STONZ.

The purpose of the pilot was to understand how the provision of a meal allowance in lieu of providing a meal to RMOs could be implemented and to identify any operational challenges or issues RMOs may face with such an approach. As this has now been in place for 2+ years, we have the data that the project set out to gather.

Any continuation or alternate arrangements will need to be agreed upon between the parties. If this offer is ratified, we will then arrange to meet with HNZ and discuss next steps and how to progress.

*We have tried to answer these questions as accurately as possible and to the best of our knowledge and interpretation of the offer. For any specific questions, please continue to email [communications@stonz.co.nz](mailto:communications@stonz.co.nz)*