

What happens when the **MECA EXPIRES?**



"What?!" you cry. "The MECA expires?!"

If you heard yourself saying this in your own head, you really (I mean really) need to read on.

Yes, the MECA expires. All MECAs have a term: ours was until 28 February 2018, so it is nearly a year since it expired. But the Employment Relations Act provides for an additional year after expiry during which parties, in our case the DHBs and NZRDA, are meant to finish bargaining for its renewal. However, at that one-year point, if the parties haven't negotiated a new contract, the MECA really does expire – and this is where things get difficult. For us, this date is that's 28 February 2019. Watch [this video](#) in which Dr Deborah Powell, NZRDA National Secretary, explains what happens after expiry.

One of the things the existence of a MECA does is ensure that all new employees get employed under its terms and conditions. For us that means every time we change employer (DHB) we continue to be employed under the MECA. **If there is no MECA, the employer can offer you any terms and conditions of employment they like.** That is enough of a risk – but it gets worse.

In our case, there is another MECA – the SToNZ MECA. If NZRDA does not secure a MECA before 28 February and you change employer, **you will become employed under the SToNZ MECA regardless of your union membership.** For those who have not caught up on the loss of terms and conditions under that MECA, please see [this document](#) and watch the Dr Courtney Brown's NZRDA President's video message [here](#).

This scenario, in which an inferior collective agreement exists and employers delay until expiry to force new employees onto those inferior terms and conditions, is called **undermining**: undermining of your terms and conditions, and undermining of the union without a collective agreement. You can learn more about undermining by watching [this video](#).

Long story short: it is really important we get our MECA settled, and soon. **The employers now have an incentive not to settle – to force the claw-back of the terms and conditions that we and previous RMOs fought hard to secure.**