



Northland DHB Anaesthetic Technicians to strike for 72 hours

Wednesday 13 February

Northland Anaesthetic Technicians who are members of APEX will strike for 72 hours, from 0700 on Tuesday February 26th until 0700 on March 1st, 2019.

The strike is a result of Northland DHB rejecting a recommendation for settlement of their collective agreement from the Employment Relations Authority.

Northland Anaesthetic Technicians have already undertaken seven 24-hour strikes. According to APEX advocate Luke Coxon:

“We were hopeful that the Employment Relations Authority recommendation would bring an end to this protracted dispute. It is disappointing that Northland DHB has rejected the recommendation of the Authority, which has led to our members voting for a three-day strike.”

“We hope some common sense and integrity prevails, and that Northland DHB agrees to accept the Authority’s recommendation,” says Mr Coxon. “If not, the strike will result in the avoidable and unnecessary cancellation of elective surgery.”

FURTHER INFORMATION

Luke Coxon is available for comment on 021 904 888.

BACKGROUND

The Anaesthetic Technicians at Northland DHB have been trying to address a recruitment and retention crisis. More than 30% of Anaesthetic Technician positions are vacant, requiring those remaining on the job to work additional shifts and overtime. Surgeries have also had to be cancelled due to insufficient staff numbers. Meanwhile, Anaesthetic Technician pay rates in the private sector are up to 30% higher than those in the DHB, which exacerbates staff shortages as staff leave the public health sector for better pay.

Anaesthetic Technicians are essential members of the surgical team. They work mainly in operating theatres, providing skilled assistance to the Anaesthetist. Anaesthetic Technicians check and maintain the anaesthetic machines and other related equipment, ensure appropriate equipment and drugs are available, assist with inserting airway devices and venous/arterial cannulas, and act as advocates for patients. While Anaesthetic Technicians work predominantly in operating theatres, they are called upon to work in any area where an anaesthetic may be given, including CT, MRI & radiology, ED & intensive care.