

Bargaining Trends

The Employments Agreements Update Seminar, attended by APEX, revealed some interesting bargaining trends:

1. Average annualised wage increment for year to June 2017 across all collective agreements was 1.9%.
2. Average annualised wage increment for year to June 2017, in central government (including DHBs), was 1.8%. Within the health sector as a whole it was 1.7%.
3. Collective bargaining coverage in the public sector has increased by 1.4%, or 2700 people.
4. Two-thirds of collectives are for 24 months or longer. 90% of workers in public sector covered by 24 month or longer agreements.

Incident Reporting

Incident reporting systems (IRS) are an important tool in the everyday working of the Health sector. They have the ability to influence patient care, the health and safety of employees, practises and policies.



APEX, along with the NZ Resident Doctors' Association, surveyed members on their IRS provisions. Key findings were:

- 20% of ASTs do not currently use their DHB's IRS.
- Only 12% of people rated the currently provided IRS as being good/very good.
- 70% of those surveyed do not report a near miss incident.
- 74% of all members reported that it required longer than 10 minutes to complete a report.
- 72% of ASTs and 90% of resident doctors felt that filling out an incident form saw no resultant meaningful change.

Read the full APEX/NZRDA report on IRS use within DHBs on the APEX website [here](#).



Election Policies 2017



An APEX summary of the election policies of the major parties.

National

Health: National is running on their claim of "delivering better results for New Zealanders and their families": less waiting, more operations, and more doctors and nurses."



- Nearly 50,000 more elective surgeries.
- 6,100 more doctors and nurses.
- 93% of 8-month-old babies immunised.
- Cancer treatment begins within 4 weeks.
- 780,000 children benefitting from free GP visits/prescriptions for under-13s.
- National bowel screening programme.

Employment relations: National has not signalled any significant ER policy changes. They do have a private member's bill on pay equity, which would allow contracting out of PG protections for those earning 150K plus.



Labour

Health: Labour plans to invest

\$8 billion more in health than was proposed in Budget 2017:

- Extend their School-based Health Services programme into all public secondary schools.
- Run a 2-year pilot of primary mental health teams to increase access to counselling, capacity of GP intervention, and co-ordination with NGOs.

Employment relations: Labour are running their campaign based on "backing fair pay and conditions":

- Provide 26 weeks paid parental leave.
- Eliminate 90-day trial periods, restore reinstatement as primary remedy for unjustifiable dismissals, and strengthen the rights of unions and delegates.
- Raise minimum wage to \$16.50, and then to two-thirds of average wage. Ensure all core public service workers are paid a living wage, and address pay equity claims.
- Consult on minimum redundancy protections, and double the number of labour inspectors.
- Extend rights to elect H&S reps, and provide assistance to unions and employers who wish to implement high performance engagement systems.
- Encourage multi-employer bargaining and create fair-pay agreements with minimum conditions across industries.

Greens

Health: Greens' areas of focus:



- Increase health funding, prioritising prevention and early treatment, and make primary care more affordable.
- Legislate to prevent illness caused by tobacco, alcohol and obesity.
- Implement workforce solutions through the joint involvement of unions, professional organisations, DHBs, and consumers.
- Allow access to medically assisted dying-at-home for the terminally ill.
- Strengthen Whānau Ora and prioritise care for children and youth.

Employment relations: The Greens' employment relations policy is based on their commitment to "protect workers bargaining rights, ensure workplace safety, and guarantee an adequate income":

- Investigate a 35h working week, and raise the minimum wage to 66% of average wage.
- Require employers to consider in good faith flexible working requests from parents.
- Complete review of Employment Relations Act, improve union representation, MECA bargaining reimbursement and rights to strike, and strengthen accident compensation and pay equity.
- 13 months of paid parental leave, and provision for breastfeeding breaks.

NZ First

Health:



Describing health as a "critical investment in New Zealand's human resource", NZ First are campaigning on:

- Establishing a commission of inquiry into the public health system.
- National strategy for areas of concern: cancer, rural and provincial health, men's health, child/youth mental health.
- Support DHB amalgamation and centres of excellence for specialist services.
- Cap places in medical training for foreign students.

Employment relations: NZ First wants an ER environment based on "fairness, flexibility, and neutrality":

- Raise minimum wage to \$17/h and strengthen rights of casual workers.
- Train NZers in areas of skill shortage rather than recruiting off-shore.
- Focus on training for aged care.

Flexible working arrangements

One of the most common enquiries we receive at the APEX office is from people wanting to know about their rights to flexible working hours.



Flexible work is regulated by Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 and is becoming a more and more common part of the workplace – especially for parents and those of us who balance commitments in the public and private sector.

What are flexible arrangements?

All employees can ask at any time to change their hours, days, or place of work. Some common requests we see are: wanting to change from 5 x 8h days to 4 x 10h days; wanting to reduce hours to part-time; and wanting to fit work and holidays around school terms.

How do I make an application?

Your application must:

- Be in writing, and have your name and the date on it.
- State that the request is being made under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000.
- Explain the working arrangement you are seeking and whether you want it to be permanent or temporary.
- State the date you want the new working arrangement to start and, if the new working arrangement is for a set period of time, the date you want the arrangement to end.
- Explain why you are requesting a flexible working arrangement. For example, to provide better care for your parent or child.
- Explain, in your view, what changes (if any) the employer may need to make to their current business arrangements if the request is approved. For example, possible changes to the way the team works together, the physical set up of the workplace, etc.

We also advise you to copy your union delegate into your email and request a meeting with your manager to talk through the application.

What happens next?

Your employer must consider your request fairly and in good faith. Apples need to be treated like apples. The employer has one month to provide a response in writing either approving or refusing the request. The employer can only refuse requests under certain grounds, such as the request having additional costs, or having a detrimental effect on ability to meet patient demand.

If the manager dealing with your request seems reluctant to allow it, then you might want to suggest a trial period of one month, after which you and they meet again to review the impact of the arrangement.

Sounds easy, but what if I get stuck?

Flexible working request are fairly straightforward. However, if you run into problems, get in touch with your delegate.

Meet Your Delegates

The MRT Executive: Sheena Hewitt and Pam Aitkin

Sheena Hewitt is the President of the Medical Radiation Technologists' division of APEX, and Pam is the Secretary. We talked to Sheena and Pam at the recent APEX AGM about their experiences with the union.

Tell us a bit about yourselves?



Sheena: I qualified as an MRT in 1985 from the Christchurch School of Radiography. I worked first in Kaitia before moving to Hawkes Bay, where I've been ever since. I'm currently

the Angiography team leader in the Radiology Department at Hawkes Bay DHB. I've been in my career for nearly 35 years, and have been an APEX delegate for around 20 years. A long time!

**Welcome to the Hawkes Bay Sterile Services Group!
We look forward to working with you as part of APEX.**

Pam: I work at the Auckland DHB, where I'm the clinical specialist in the Emergency Department. I have a leadership and guidance role in teaching students and new graduates. I joined APEX as a third-year student, and have been a delegate since 2004.



The MRT Action Committee — MRTAC — has been great in generating buy-in from service managers — Pam

What does APEX offer?

Sheena: APEX works for us because, as MRTs, we can bargain as a group. We've had some great successes with APEX, one of which was getting everyone onto the national MECA. This allowed us to get all our members onto fairer pay rates. Another big win was getting all MRT members onto 40h weeks, which was achieved during the last round of MECA bargaining — prior to that we were all on different hours.

Pam: I agree, the 40h weeks was a huge hurdle for us to get across. Equally important are our CPD provisions. There were inconsistencies across the country in how CPD was provided, and in some cases CPD was not even available. We used to have to jump through so many hoops just to get a taxi to go to a conference! We've progressed these provisions hugely in the last couple of rounds of bargaining.

What would you say to people looking to join APEX?

Pam: As a student, you hear that this thing called a "union" exists, but people don't talk about it much. My first experience of the power of the union came when, after qualifying, I learned that through APEX's actions I was to receive an instant ten-grand pay rise. That experience was the first thing that got me really passionate about APEX membership. I'd say to those thinking about joining that you absolutely should: you will learn so much about your profession and do a whole lot of good.

Sheena: The key thing about APEX as opposed to other unions is how receptive it is to the individual groups that constitute it. APEX is very helpful if you have a specific need for your profession, or even your department. If you're thinking about joining APEX, do it! You'll never regret it.