

# DELEGATE CONFERENCE & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It's a sign of how much things have changed since our last delegates' conference that Derek Wright, Waikato DHB's interim Chief Executive, and Dr David Clark, the Minister of Health, will open the biennial APEX delegates' conference in Auckland on 7 August.

Between 7 and 9 August, over a hundred delegates will come together for three days of delegate education around the theme of leadership. Two Allied Scientific and Technical Directors – Stella Ward from Canterbury DHB and Martin Chadwick from Bay of Plenty DHB, will also speak at the conference.

The conference will include workshops on how to write rosters, prepare for bargaining, read contracts, and support members through disciplinary processes.

Dr Philippa Gander from Massey University's Sleep/Wake Research Centre will come to discuss their latest research and answer questions on fatigue.

During the conference, the APEX Annual General Meeting will also take place. It will begin at 16:30 on Tuesday 7

August at Novotel Hotel, Auckland Airport, and all APEX members are welcome to attend. There are still a few places available for delegates during the conference. Email [ask@apex.org.nz](mailto:ask@apex.org.nz) to register.

# DHB LETTER OF EXPECTATIONS

In his first letter of expectations to District Health Boards, David Clark has signalled the Government's "Increased priority for primary care, mental health, public delivery of health services, and a strong focus on improving equity in health outcomes". The expectations for 2018/9 thanks DHB employees for maintaining health outcomes during years of underinvestment and "for their commitment and service to the public, particularly during difficult times". The letter also calls for better relationships between DHBs and the Ministry and notes the Minister will hold DHB Chairs "directly accountable for their DHB's performance". Dr Clark states,

To deliver affordable, accessible and quality care, workforce changes will be needed. This includes greater utilisation of different



workforces in primary care settings. With a growing and aging population, there will be more work for all, and an increased emphasis on the use of generalist workforces for less specialised tasks will be required. Health care professionals from allied health, nursing, medicine and related fields will need to operate at the top of their scope of practice. I expect DHBs to be bold in their vision for change while also remaining responsive to the concerns raised by the workforce.

You can read Dr Clark's full letter [here](#).

# BARGAINING

The direction of health sector bargaining remains in limbo.



Nearly ten Multi-Employer Collective Agreements and dozens of single-employer collective agreements with District Health Boards sit unresolved. The situation is a result of the Government's offers to settle collective bargaining with the Nurses' Organisation falling over, and strike action pending.

# Nurses' Organisation

The situation has been incredibly frustrating for us, as DHB negotiators seem to be spinning out bargaining, without any intention to try and settle collective agreements until the nurses' settle.

Nurses, as the largest component of the health workforce, are expected to set new standard salary increases, as well as putting in place protections against under-staffing.

After decades of relative quiet, nurses appear to have found their voice in the latest bargaining round, with an increasingly vocal membership, wanting to make up for lost ground on salary rates. Where and how this all will end is anyone's guess.



[www.facebook.com/apexunion](http://www.facebook.com/apexunion)

# TARANAKI LABORATORY PRIVATISATION CANCELLED

Taranaki DHB's proposed privatisation of their medical laboratory has been sent to the dustbin of history.



An autopsy of this proposal was given by Dr Powell in a recent Taranaki Daily News story:

Medical Laboratory Workers' Union APEX's National Secretary Dr Deborah Powell said the DHB's attempt to set up the new lab had been a mess from the beginning.

"It comes after a very long and tortuous, and in our view, badly managed process," she said.

"We raised concerns from day one."

She said there were a number of issues with the way the DHB went about finding a provider, and the lack of preparation they had put into developing specifications that provider would need to meet.

"It's been a shambolic process."

Despite the way it had been handled to date, Deborah Powell said a new lab was essential for the running of the healthcare system in Taranaki.

This was heightened by concerns the current laboratory posed health and safety risks and was in danger of not meeting the requirements for recertification as an accredited medical laboratory, she said.

"A new lab has to be a priority for this district health board."

The news will be a relief to our laboratory members as well as the wider hospital and Taranaki community.

## Submission to the Mental Health Inquiry

APEX has submitted an 80-page document to the Government's Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction on behalf of our Psychology members.



The document is based on the responses of our members to open-ended questions regarding the current status and, importantly, the future direction of mental health care.

An APEX delegate is set to meet with the Inquiry on Wednesday 20 June to discuss the report and answer any questions the Inquiry may have.

Our ten key recommendations:

- Increase funding, staffing and services in DHBs, primary care services and schools
- Focus on families and early intervention
- Address social and systemic issues
- Facilitate closer collaborations between services
- Build an integrated system that works from primary to specialist services
- Ensure the working environment has a positive influence on the work of psychologists and their colleagues
- Integrate the model of care
- Develop the workforce
- Improve managerial systems
- Educate the public.

# NELSON STOPWORK

APEX members at Nelson Marlborough DHB stopped work at Nelson for a union meeting on 6 June.

Deborah Powell, APEX National Secretary to discuss shared workplace issues.

There were some common themes that emerged from the discussion:

- Management failure to progress matters to resolution and in a timely fashion;
- Demanding hours of work, overtime and on call;
- Pressure on physical facilities, including cupboards being turned into offices;
- Short-staffing, workload and availability to take annual leave.

Booking travel effectively and efficiently was another issue of shared concern, as arduous and labyrinthine application processes are causing some people to miss early-bird bookings.

We followed up this meeting with correspondence to Peter Bramley, the DHB's chief executive.



Nelson Marlborough DHB

**STOP  
WORK  
MEETING**

Wednesday 6 June | 9am to 11am

Nelson Hospital  
Seminar Rooms 1 & 2

Wairau Hospital  
Radiology Seminar Room

[ask@apex.org.nz](mailto:ask@apex.org.nz)

Over 60 members at Nelson Hospital, and linked in via video-conferencing from Wairau Hospital, met with Dr