



NEW ZEALAND

Medical Laboratory Workers

UNDER The MICROSCOPE

MARCH 2016

Notices

SERVICE PERFORMANCE SURVEY

Recently, the NZMLWU office staff came together outside of the office to plan for not only 'today' but also for what is upcoming on the horizon – it was a productive two days! Amongst other things we discussed the results from the survey that was recently sent out about how well we deliver services to all of you. A big thanks to all of you who participated in the survey and shared your thoughts with us. Overall the results were positive and we received helpful comments about how we can improve in certain areas going forward. As always, we feedback to our members and a summary report on the survey findings will be coming your way shortly.

NEW EMAIL SYSTEM

On that note we will be changing our email system to improve responsiveness to you. There will be 3 general email addresses: membership@nzmlwu.org.nz – for all membership enquiries, secretary@nzmlwu.org.nz for Deborah and ask@nzmlwu.org.nz for all member queries. ask@nzmlwu.org.nz will be monitored daily with all emails triaged and forwarded to the correct advocate to assist you. The advocates will also have their own email address e.g. denise@nzmlwu.org.nz for which they will reply so you have a direct line of contact. These changes will take effect on April 1 2016.

BARGAINING NEWS

Wellington SCL bargaining has received an offer from the employer and the members are currently voting on this. The offer includes a harmonisation of some members' terms and conditions from the previous Aotea Pathology CEA and the NZMLWU DHB and NZBS MECA with the expiry set to enable this entire group of lab workers to be covered by the SCL MECA in July 2016. Work over the term will be done to improve rostering. Existing terms and conditions are protected.

Members have recently voted in favour of the offer made by Laboratory Services Rotorua (LSR). The offer includes a 2% salary increase for a 16 month term, an additional step (\$55,812) on the top of the Medical Laboratory Technicians Scale for multi-skilled technicians working out of hours, and a site specific merit progression process.

Meet your Delegates

Each issue of 'Under the Microscope' will now include a short piece introducing you to one of your current delegates. Our delegates do such a great job on the 'laboratory' floor and are a helpful first point of call to members when you have a workplace issue.

ANNA ODERMATT



Born in London, my family moved to Dunedin where I grew up. Whilst studying for a NZ Dip in Science Level 6 I was employed as a Food and Veterinary Microbiology Technician at

Labnet Invermay where I gained LAS (IANZ) Signatory status. In 2002, Labnet became part of Gribbles Veterinary Pathology. In 2008 my husband and I and our two children moved to Wellington where I took up a position of Senior Microbiology Technician at Environmental Laboratory Services. My passion was in Medical Science and in 2011 I was employed by Capital & Coast DHB Laboratory as a Specimen Services Technician. I became involved in Clinical Trials and now oversee this department in the laboratory.

I became a NZMLWU delegate in early 2014 because I wanted to help and support my union colleagues and have a positive say in our working conditions ensuring our voices are heard.

Big changes for CCDHB Laboratory and Aotea Pathology came in 2015. SCL had been successful in winning the contract to provide both hospital and community laboratory testing to the Capital and Coast, Hutt and Wairarapa DHB's. On 1st May 2015, Aotea Pathology became a wholly owned subsidiary of SCL. The laboratories transitioned to Wellington SCL on 1st November 2015.

Four months on and WSCL is starting to

take shape. It hasn't been an easy road with glitches and teething problems along the way but these are slowly being ironed out. The success of getting this lab up and running lies with the staff as without all their hard work, effort and dedication things wouldn't have gone so smoothly. Throughout this transition I was able to offer support and guidance to our union members. I hope to continue in this role, even though it is challenging it is also very rewarding.

Delegate Pre-Bargaining Meeting

The SCL MECA and the DHB NZBS MECA expire in September and June respectively, and delegates met on Wednesday 2nd March in Auckland (see more on this meeting below) to discuss bargaining. Please feel free to contact delegates or the union office directly with your issues / claims or thoughts on the bargaining as we propose to enter bargaining in May – July respectively.



On Wednesday 2nd of March the NZMLWU met with delegates to discuss issues for bargaining of the DHB and SCL MECA's later this year. It was a busy day with the morning used to discuss the changing nature of working in labs, how increasing automation of processes might affect the future workforce and how best NZMLWU can improve contact with their members. With the issues important to the members' in mind we then split in to a DHB lab and SCL group and spent the afternoon brainstorming the key issues for bargaining. Some of the main issues raised were around pay increases and scale extension; both DHB labs and SCL felt that the processes around CPD needed to be improved. We finished the day with a discussion around organising union

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meetings in the workplace. In response to the recent members' survey and feedback given around communication at the meeting the NZMLWU team also discussed going on a roadshow to visit each site for face to face meetings in the next year.

Changes to scope of practice

Several changes to scope of practice for the medical laboratory science profession are being introduced by the Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand. Read the below summary of the changes outlined in the 2016/2017 APC Guide (available in full on the Medical Sciences Council website).

• APC Renewal Dates

Note: the dates for renewal are from 1st February to 31st March 2016. Your current 2015/2016 APC will expire at the end of 31st March 2016.

• Medical laboratory scientists

If you were a medical laboratory scientist (MLS) before the scope of practice review changes, you are still a MLS now. Nothing has changed for you. You will re-new your APC as a medical laboratory scientist.

• Medical laboratory technicians

If you were a medical laboratory technician (MLT) before the scope of practice review changes, and you had no condition on your practise restricting you to phlebotomy or donor technology you are still a MLT now. There has been no change in your scope of practise. You will re-new your APC as a medical laboratory technician.

• Phlebotomists and donor technicians

If you were previously registered as a MLT with a condition on your practise restricting you to phlebotomy or donor technician, your scope of practice has now been changed to that of a Medical laboratory pre-analytical technician (MLPAT). There is no change to how you practise. You will re-new your APC as a medical laboratory preanalytical technician.

• Working Under Supervision

Supervised practice means you will work under the supervision of a registered health practitioner who has been approved by the Council. If this applies to you please see the full document to read more about the process and requirements of working under supervision.

• Practising under Direction

If you are "practising under direction" you will take full responsibility for your practice with general oversight by a registered

medical laboratory science practitioner or other appropriately qualified and registered health practitioner who must be available for consultation if you need assistance.

• Supervisor

If you are a supervisor there are no significant changes you need to be aware of. The only change is the terminology of the title "supervisor".

• Practitioner providing supervision

This applies to practitioners providing supervision to any practitioner who is provisionally registered. If this applies to you please see the full document to read more about the process for registration and applying for your APC.

• Practitioner providing direction

This applies to practitioners providing direction to MLT and MLPAT practitioners who are fully registered. If this applies to you please see the full document to read more about the process for registration and applying for your APC.

Health and safety – the new law is imminent

The new Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 supported by its regulations will come into force on the 4th of April this year. Read on to find out about one of the new regulations 'Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation' established to encourage commitment by all employees to workplace health and safety.



This legislation is a result of the work carried out by the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety established in 2012 following the Pike River Coal Mine disaster. 'Working Safer : a blueprint for health and safety at work' is the government's response to the recommendations of the Taskforce and is essentially a plan of attack outlining how to improve New Zealand's workplace health and safety system for the

benefit of both employers and employees.

Worksafe New Zealand aims to reduce (serious) workplace injury and death by at least 25% by the year 2020 – the new law is part of the overall reform directed at achieving this goal. New Zealand has a high record of workplace related injuries and deaths. Every year around 50 people die 'on the job', hundreds are seriously injured and more than 600 people die from work-related diseases. This new law is based on Australian health and safety legislation where there has been a 16% reduction in work-related deaths since the law changed in 2012.

There are a number of regulations supporting the Health and Safety at Work Act. Of note are the regulations for worker engagement, participation and representation which outline the procedural requirements that apply when workplaces have health and safety representatives or committees that are initiated by an employer (known under the Act as a Person Conducting a Business of Undertaking (aka PCBU)) or requested by workers. According to Worksafe New Zealand, the overall aim of this regulation is to promote open communication and a culture in which health and safety is integrated into everyone's working lives. Some important points about the regulation:

- The regulation prescribes the minimum ratio of health and safety representatives for a work group as 1 representative for every 19 workers;
- The health and safety representative(s) is elected by the members of a work group;
- The term of office for a health and safety representative is for no more than 3 years (or a lesser period if agreed);
- The regulation also provides for training for health and safety representatives, requiring the employer, amongst other things to pay the costs of, and reasonable expenses for, training;
- The employer must give written notice of its decision as to whether to establish a health and safety committee 14 days after the date of the decision;
- The employer who establishes a health and safety committee for a workplace and the workers at that workplace (or their representatives) must agree on the membership of the health and safety committee;
- At least half of the members on the committee must be workers and must represent the workers at the workplace;
- The committee must meet at least once every 3 months.