



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 3 December 2018

Hawkes Bay Anaesthetic Technicians to strike for 48 hours

Anaesthetic Technicians (ATs) employed at Hawkes Bay District Health Board (HBDHB) have given notice of what will be their third strike in as many months. The strike will run 48 hours and is planned to start on the morning of Monday 17th December, running through to Wednesday 19th December.

HBDHB's Anaesthetic Technicians have successfully secured some of the best terms of employment of any ATs in the country in recent years. This has enabled the region to retain a fully-staffed and therefore highly effective and efficient surgical service, despite the emergence of a national workforce crisis in the wider AT profession in New Zealand.

In a complete departure from what has been an effective approach, HBDHB is now offering its ATs significantly lower pay increases than those offered to other ATs and comparable public health professional groups across the country.

According to APEX National Secretary Dr Deborah Powell, HBDHB is making "a huge mistake". She says, "New Zealand is in the midst of a growing workforce crisis for ATs, and instead of fighting to retain their competitive edge, HBDHB is throwing in the towel. Not only are they offering their ATs proportionally worse gains than any other comparable group in the health sector, but they are also abandoning their position as the best DHB employer of ATs in the country. This is a real kick in the teeth for the ATs, but, actually, the people of Hawkes Bay will reap what the DHB is sowing if this goes ahead. Our ATs are striking because they don't want Hawkes Bay to go the way of Northland, where almost a third of the AT positions remain unfilled due to poor pay and local people are routinely having their surgeries cancelled and postponed as a result."

ABOUT ANAESTHETIC TECHNICIANS

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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

National Secretary Dr Deborah Powell is available for comment on (09) 526 0280.