



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 26 September 2018

Northland DHB Anaesthetic Technicians to Strike

Anaesthetic Technicians employed at Northland District Health Board have given notice of strike action. The strikes will take place over two days: Wednesday 3 October and Thursday 11 October. Each strike will begin at 7am and continue for 24 hours.

SERVICE IN PERIL

“The Anaesthetic Technician workforce at Northland DHB is in crisis,” says Dr Deborah Powell, National Secretary of APEX. “The Northland DHB cannot fill its 5 full-time vacancies out of a total of 19 positions – the service is at best “stuttering along” with one-quarter of positions vacant. Around 50 surgeries in the past 2 months have been cancelled as a direct result of insufficient Anaesthetic Technicians.”

“The cause of the recruitment and retention problem Northland DHB faces is clear,” says Dr Powell. “Other employers are paying Anaesthetic Technicians up to \$30,000 more than the DHB.”

“Despite all these factors, and after 10 months of bargaining, the DHB offered a paltry overall increase of 2.43%, and failed to address our substantial claims. We need a settlement that enables the DHB to retain its current staff and recruit to fill vacancies – and this simply won’t do it,” says Dr Powell.

Mediation between APEX and the DHB has been scheduled for Thursday 27 September with the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (NZMBIE).

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

Dr Deborah Powell is available for comment on 021 614 040