

Public Hospital members vote on action plan

Meetings of our public hospital members have voted on a union action plan to break the Government-imposed wage freeze.

The District Health Boards and contractors have all given our union negotiators the same answer to our claim for a 3.119% percentage increase on our existing wage scales backdated to 1 July this year and the fifth week's annual leave after five years service. **The answer is a big fat NO!**

The DHB and contractor representatives have said that there will be no increase in any wage rate, allowance or any other working condition that causes any DHB to incur additional costs.

The DHB reps have also said that they would have to get specific Government permission if they were to offer our members, or members of any other health union, a pay increase during this financial year.

When we asked the DHBs about the 3.119% future funding track money they had received from Government for the 2009/10 financial year they told us that it had already been spent.

South Island Clerical get same offer

The South Island PSA Clerical Administration workers, who currently have a scale that starts below \$12.50 an hour, have also been offered a "nil" increase after seven days of negotiation.

To add insult to injury they were offered the possibility of a 1% increase if DHBs could afford it during the second year of a two-year agreement.

The PSA members have also been holding meetings voting on a campaign of industrial action.

State Sector freeze

The Government has imposed a wage freeze not just in the public health sector but right across the state by imposing strict conditions on any employer bargaining team to get sign-off by a Ministerial Committee before any monetary offers are made.

After a lengthy delay before they got their instructions the Ministry of Education has offered a "nil" increase to primary and secondary school support staff and they have indicated that this will also apply to our caretaker and cleaner members.

The Professional Firefighters' Union has given notice of industrial action from 10-17 September following another "nil" offer from the Fire Services Commission.

Turn over for more...



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Other unions get into gear

The Nurses MECA expires in March next year but the NZNO is already commencing meetings with delegates and members to discuss improvements in their Agreement.

The Laboratory Technicians, Radiographers and Junior Doctors are all preparing for the re-negotiation of their collective agreements, which are all due to expire before Christmas.

The NZ Council of Trade Unions has warned the District Health Boards that the public health system will be in for a rough ride unless some sanity is restored to the DHB position.

There will be a meeting between the major CTU-affiliated health sector unions and the DHBs on 28 September to discuss the position further.

Get the postcards signed

The union is printing 25,000 postcards to be sent to the Minister of Health Tony Ryall to protest about the wage freeze and to complain that none of the 3.119% Government funding has been passed on to our members by the DHBs.

It is important to discuss our campaign with other health workers, our families and our communities so that they understand that a wage freeze is not just bad for workers on low incomes but for the NZ economy. This is only going to get worse if no one has any money to spend.

Building community support

During the next month we need to build up wider community and political support to break the wage freeze.

If you are asked to be part of a delegation to visit your local MP, Mayor, City Councillor or District Health Board member please make sure that you volunteer.

There is also a union delegation going to the Labour Party Annual Conference on 11-13 September. They will be presenting their stories to a fringe meeting organised by the affiliated unions. They will also be getting Labour Party rank and file members to sign our postcards and demonstrate their support.

Moving up the scale

While we have not yet achieved an increase to our current wages scales union delegates are enforcing members' current rights to move up to the next step on the scale once they reach their anniversary of employment.

Each member's anniversary will occur at a different time. You need to check out your anniversary date and, if you think it is wrong, get your union delegate to help you take the matter up with your manager. You might need some evidence of when you actually started.

This anniversary increase has nothing to do with the 3.119% wage increase that we are seeking from 1 July 2009. We want the 3.119% wage increase in addition to our movement up the scale.



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