

DHBs refuse to share the money

Despite insisting that there will be no wage increase for union members this year District Health Board negotiators have revealed that they have received a 3.19% funding increase from 1 July 2009.

They also revealed that they received a 3.3% increase last year despite only passing 2.6% of this on to our members in a wages top-up on 1 July 2008.

Both the Minister of Health Tony Ryall and the Minister of Finance Bill English are saying that there will be no wage increases in health or education and so, despite receiving a funding increase the DHBs are forced to parrot the same line.

While the DHBs are telling the lowest paid that they cannot have an increase they have just paid out a 4% pay increase to nurses and health care assistants in March and a 4.25% pay increase to doctors.

The only good news received by the Union's DHB MECA National Negotiating Team was an offer on 26 June by the DHB negotiators to withdraw their previous claims for:

- No movement up the current wage scales for 12 months
- Converting the two top steps on the scale into merit steps
- Extending the veto on moving to Grade 5 to those workers employed in hospitals in the Waikato and Canterbury DHBs outside of Hamilton and Christchurch.

However, this offer was conditional on the union accepting a nil pay increase and settling a collective agreement for 12 months.

Union negotiators have rejected this offer and, while we are concentrating on some non-monetary areas of the collective agreement, even these areas are difficult with the DHBs rejection of claims for new workers to be introduced to a union delegate and that service with public hospital contractors be recognised for sick leave accumulation and other leave conditions.

There is another whole day meeting with the DHBs on 16 July.

Turn over for more...



Report # 3

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The contractors sing the same song

The “there is no money” tone was repeated with the **Spotless** negotiations on 18 June and the **Compass** and **OCS** negotiations on 23 June.

Spotless said that they couldn't afford anything above what was in the current National CEA and they would like to reduce the shift leave, management of change provision and overtime on the 6th and 7th day.

They are also interested in introducing new performance criteria for progression up the wages scale and want to delete the retirement gratuities and the 3 hour minimum for part-timers.

OCS failed to even table an offer claiming that they needed more time to consider what the union had put forward and while **Compass** have made some offers, these are around some non-monetary issues.

ISS have been dragging their feet about meeting with union negotiators, but we have finally pinned down a meeting on 17 July. An additional issue for ISS is the separate collective agreement we want for the security workers they employ in hospitals, whose employment conditions are well below those that prevail in public hospitals for directly-employed security workers.

It is very interesting that all the contractors have accepted that the recognition of “service” will include service with the DHBs and the contractors and all have either accepted or are considering putting into their CEAs for all new staff to be introduced to a union delegate.

Given that many of the hospital cleaning, food and orderly contracts have been re-tendered or reviewed since our wages scale was accepted in July 2007 union negotiators find it unacceptable that the contractors can claim that they didn't tender on the basis of the known scale and an estimated inflation increase.

Talk to other hospital workers

We are urging our members to talk to other hospital workers about the wage freeze that is being imposed on us by the DHBs.

Other hospital workers should realize that if we settle our agreement for a nil increase in pay then that will set a precedent for all those agreements that follow us.”

We have produced an A4 poster for putting up on union noticeboards and will shortly produce some more material for giving not just to our own members but to other hospital workers from other unions.



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