

TRAINEE INTERNS' NEWSLETTER



May 2020

What are the Main Differences Between NZRDA and STONZ?

Trainee interns have a choice of union between the New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association (NZRDA) and the Specialty Trainees of New Zealand (SToNZ).

Prior to 2018 there was only one union representing resident doctors – the NZRDA. We have represented RMOs since 1985, but in 2018 that changed when a group of orthopaedic registrars set up SToNZ.

There is a fundamental philosophical difference between the two unions in that SToNZ view a close relationship with the DHBs as primarily important; we believe that as a union we should hold the DHBs to account on matters that affect RMO and that means we sometimes disagree.

This difference of view is important as not all conversations with DHBs end up with outcomes that assist RMOs, a case in point being the recent joint decision between SToNZ and the DHBs to delay changeover. NZRDA opposed this change as it would negatively impact on training and was unnecessary.

Why were NZRDA and SToNZ set up?

The NZRDA was established in 1985 to guarantee RMOs independent representation; an organisation run by RMOs for RMOs. Only RMOs can hold voting positions on NZRDA's national executive (our national secretary is an administrative non-voting position) and

only RMOs can be full members (TIs are associate members). We have maintained a long history of not only being seen to be independent, but importantly being independent, so RMOs can have confidence that our focus is to advance and protect RMOs interests. We are not affiliated to any other organisations.

It is through that independent voice for RMOs we have achieved greater advancement of our terms and conditions of employment and ensured we got access to the highest quality training, safe working conditions, and adequate remuneration for the difficult and onerous work we do.

The main reason SToNZ was set up was because a group of surgical trainees opposed the implementation of new rosters that had been agreed to in schedule 10 of the NZRDAMECA after the NZRDA campaign for safer rosters in 2016-7.



What does schedule 10 require of rosters?

Before 2016 most RMO rosters consisted of stretches of day shifts worked of 12 consecutive days on followed by 2 days off. And when RMOs worked night shifts, we worked 7-night shifts in a row, followed by two days off.

The result of these rosters was a lot of mistakes were being made, our colleagues were falling asleep behind the wheel driving home, and life for many RMOs was incredibly tiring. The evidence was clear; our rosters were fatiguing and what we were experiencing in real life was a direct consequence of our levels of fatigue.

After the Safer Hours campaign, a process was agreed to move 150 rosters, the schedule 10 rosters, to being 10 days on, 4 days off. And having a maximum limit of 4 nights in a row.

Why did SToNZ oppose Schedule 10 rosters?

SToNZ opposed schedule 10 rosters because they believed its implementation would potentially lengthen the time it took to get through their training programme.

What happened next?

At the same time as we were negotiating a new MECA in 2018, SToNZ was formed and registered as a union and negotiated their own MECA with the DHBs. The SToNZ MECA did not include schedule ten and whilst on paper contained higher rates of pay*, they gave up other terms and conditions of employment.

What is different about the SToNZ MECA to the NZRDA MECA?

SToNZ used our MECA as a starting point so there are many parts of the SToNZ MECA and the NZRDA MECA which are identical but there are also some important differences. Here are some of the main ones (for a full description of the differences go to <https://nzrda.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/SToNZ-vs-RDA-comparison.pdf>).

Safer Hours Survey Results NZ RMOs - 2016:

Have you ever been so fatigued as a result of working long hours that you have worried you may have made a clinical mistake?

Yes - 91.28%

Have you ever been so fatigued as a result of working long hours that you have almost fallen asleep when driving home?

Yes - 73.82%

Have you ever been so fatigued as a result of working long hours that you actually have fallen asleep (had a micro-nap) when driving home?

Yes - 21.6%

Have you ever been so fatigued as a result of working long hours that you had difficulty recalling common facts (such as what day of the week it is)?

Yes - 72.82%

	NZRDA	SToNZ
Rosters	<p>Maximum 2 long days in 7 days.</p> <p>A maximum of 10 consecutive days on acute on-duty rosters (Sch. 10).</p> <p>No more than 4 consecutive night shifts on acute on-duty rosters (Sch. 10).</p>	<p>More than 2 long days in 7 days can be worked.</p> <p>RMOs can work up to 12 consecutive days.</p> <p>RMOs can work 7 consecutive night shifts.</p>
Remuneration	<p>Our ordinary 40 hours are protected (paid hours whether you work them or not) Monday to Friday to form the basis of Run categories: after hours work (both rostered and non rostered) is averaged out over 13 weeks and paid on top of this. The final run category is the combination of these two. This acts as an incentive for DHBs to work you in normal working hours (important for training such as SMO teaching on ward rounds etc)</p>	<p>From December 2020 there are no protected hours, but RMOs paid a salary on the hours you work. This change incentives DHB to shift based rostering on ward-based runs.</p>
Sick Leave	<p>30 days per annum upon commencement of employment.</p>	<p>10 days per annum upon commencement of employment.</p>
Changes to Run Descriptions	<p>Can only occur with 2/3rds agreement of the affected RMO's, irrespective of SMO decisions.</p>	<p>Will occur unless 1/3rd of the affected RMO's disagree. That is, actively tell SMOs that you do not want to move to proposed run description.</p>
Weekly Protected Training Time	<p>House officers eligible to between 2-4 hours protected time for teaching.</p>	<p>House officers entitled to only 2 hours for house officers protected time for teaching.</p>
Costs of Training	<p>DHB reimburses all costs on the pathway to obtaining vocational scope of practice.</p>	<p>DHB reimburses direct costs of training and only to training registrars.</p>

***Why are SToNZ categories paid higher than RDA categories?**

SToNZ agreed to a change in the remuneration model for RMOs, and these changes, which will be fully in effect by December 2020 will see many runs under the StoNZMECA drop categories. The effect of the changes agreed by StoNZ will mean the more nights worked on a run, the more likely a run will drop categories.

After December 2020 following roster pattern (note week 6 leads into week 1) for a possible PGY1 would be paid a category B under the RDA MECA (\$96,585 urban/\$100,449 non urban) and a category D under the StoNZ MECA (\$82,900 urban/\$92,200 non urban).

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
RMO 1	Day shift	Day shift	Day shift	Rostered Day Off	Rostered Day Off		
RMO 2	Night shift	Night shift	Night shift	Night shift	Sleep Day		
RMO 3	Long Day	Day shift	Day shift	Day shift	Long Day		
RMO 4	Day shift	Long Day	Day shift	Long Day	Day shift		
RMO 5	Day Shift	Day shift	Long Day	Day shift	Night shift	Night shift	Night shift
RMO 6	Sleep Day	Off	Off	Day shift	Day shift	Long Day	Long Day

Why are explicit provisions such as safer hours required in a MECA?

Prior to schedule 10 our DHB employers could have introduced safer hours: the previous MECA did not stop safe rosters. And NZRDA had been working in partnership with the DHBs to address the issue of fatiguing rosters. We jointly ran a training programme for all RMOs, and those who manage RMOs, about the impact of fatigue and better rostering practices. We also successfully trialed some rosters in Northland DHB. But that is where progress stopped.

Without explicit provisions in the MECA requiring safer rosters, the DHB put other priorities ahead of the safety of RMOs and their patients.

Do I have to join STonZ if I want to do surgery?

No, many RDA members are surgical trainees, and employment and training decisions are not impacted by union membership. The college (RACS) has categorically confirmed that union membership has no influence on their selection process, which is one of the most objective and transparent of selection processes amongst the colleges.



This is a friendly reminder that whilst membership is free as a Trainee Intern you will need to start paying fees (\$40 per month when you are working as a House Officer. Don't worry, we will send you a reminder closer to the time (we allow time for you to get this organised). If you have any questions about RDA membership please do not hesitate to [visit our website](#) or email us at membership@nzrda.org.nz – we are happy to help wherever we can!

Contact us

The next NZRDA trainee interns' newsletter will be published in June. If you have any specific issues you would like us to cover in our upcoming newsletters, have some interesting information you would like us to include, or if you have any general queries, please [email us](#) to let us know! We love feedback and will do our best to accommodate your wishes.

CONTACT DETAILS

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