



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SToNZ - Surgical Trainees of New Zealand**

**30 August 2018**

The NZRDA\* is disappointed by the statements of SToNZ, a newly formed Union comprising of surgical trainees whose primary focus is to avoid working safer hours.

"Resident doctors have a proud history of fighting for safer hours of work not only for their own wellbeing but in the knowledge that fatigued doctors risk harming patients" says Dr Courtney Brown, National President of the NZRDA.

"SToNZ is choosing to ignore the irrefutable evidence directly linking fatigue with poor performance and error. In stating that their actions are in the interests of training they are also ignoring the fact that fatigued trainees do not learn" says Dr Brown.

NZRDA represents nearly 3500 resident doctors employed in DHBs and in the community, including many surgical trainees. "NZRDA is committed to the health and wellbeing of our members, quality care for our patients and excellent training" says Dr Brown. "However advancing our own interests, including getting through our training quicker, should never be put ahead of our patients right's to safe care."

Dr Brown says the personal motivation of STONZ members in putting their training ahead of safe patient care demonstrates an outdated attitude. Fatigue is a recognised risk under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. This demands we take active steps to minimise those risks imposed on both the doctor and the patient.

"It will be a sad day if the safety of patients in surgery comes down to which union your doctor is a member of" says Dr Brown.

Dr Courtney Brown,  
National President  
New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association  
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#### **Resident Doctors**

Resident doctors (RMOs, or Resident Medical Officers) are registered medical practitioners, and range in experience from first-year qualified doctors to those with more than 12 years' experience. They

\*the union which represents Resident Doctors in New Zealand

primarily work in the public sector, where they are employed by all 20 District Health Boards.

Resident doctors staff New Zealand's public hospital system, delivering 24/7 care to patients, and also utilise this time to gain specialist qualifications as surgeons, physicians, paediatricians, etc.

Resident doctors are also employed in general practice as GP trainees; however, these doctors are not involved in this dispute as they are not DHB employees.