

Welcome to New Zealand.

Godzone. Paradise on earth.



You have chosen to come 'down under' – a great choice! You've joined a growing body of UK doctors who have seen the light and realised that the British Isles can no longer offer doctors the life or career they want, at least for now. Some of you have been drawn to New Zealand by the training opportunities; others, by the chance to enjoy unrivalled outdoor sports or other activities. For many, it's a much-needed change of scene after a six- or seven-year hard slog to get full GMC registration.

A number of you will plan to return home, a number will plan to stay permanently, and a few will change your minds after experiencing the classic kiwi lifestyle, recognising the many fantastic benefits and opportunities of life here.

Haere mai: Welcome to our world.

New Zealanders are known for simply getting on with the job and finding solutions. It's a product of our relatively recent pioneering background when people had no choice but to get things done using whatever resources were at hand.

As fantastic as this attitude is, we all can benefit from having someone to help support us and fight for our rights. This is where the New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association, the RDA for short, comes in.

We are run by resident doctors for resident doctors. Since its establishment in 1986, the RDA has represented and advocated for the interests of Registered Medical Officers (RMOs) within the New Zealand Health sector. (RMOs comprise trainee interns, house surgeons, senior house officers, and registrars). The RDA's main purpose is to look after and promote the interests of our members. This includes protecting doctors' rights and interests at work, within the health sector, and in the wider community. The philosophy of the NZRDA is based on community,



support and union principles such as democratic structure and quality service delivery to members.

Over the last 30 years, our members have fought to maintain and improve the conditions that all RMOs currently enjoy. It has not always been smooth sailing, but generations of RMOs before you have made considerable sacrifice so that each new generation is in a better position than the last. The RDA has continued to grow in strength over time, and recently ran the successful “Safer Hours, Safer Rosters, Safer Doctors and Safer Patients” campaign to improve the conditions experienced by RMOs.

The RDA works because RMOs in New Zealand have a strong collective conscience. The “all in” slogan is not just a philosophy; it’s a way of life with RMOs in New Zealand. It’s a bit like herd immunity. There will always be a few misguided but well-meaning parents who do not vaccinate their children. Likewise, there will always be doctors among us who do not become members. Those doctors reap the benefits of immunity, but do nothing in return.

Unfortunately, these doctors undermine the collective good the RDA is trying to maintain and improve upon. To hold the attitude of “this isn’t my problem or fight” whilst continuing to benefit creates a social dilemma, which goes against the classic kiwi psyche that “Together Everyone Achieves More”.

Still unsure about why you should become a member?

The RDA has fought for better pay, increased leave entitlements, better work-life balance, and increased health and safety provisions... just to name a few of the battles undertaken.

As an NZRDA member, you will receive all the benefits of belonging to a professional and employment-related union, including advocacy advice and support related to employment issues. Such support might include promoting contract compliance, enforcement and individual representation if required. Personal and professional support through the RDA can be accessed 24/7. The union and the District Health Boards (DHBs) do work together; however, it is not uncommon for DHBs to contravene your contract and, as with any job, employment issues can and do arise.

So where to now that you’ve decided to fight the good fight?

You can fill out the application form online, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.nzrda.org.nz/how-to-become-an-nzrda-member/>

If you have any further questions, the lovely team at the NZRDA is available to help you every step of the way. Contact us at ask@nzrda.org.nz.

