27 November 2025

New Zealand SOCIETY OF Anaesthetists | Ngā Ringa Tauwhiro o Aotearoa

Tom de Koning
Group Manager, Future of Health Workforce
Office of the Chief Executive
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

Re: NZSA feedback on Statement of Intent – Private Training

Tēnā koe Tom,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the drafted *Statement of Intent – Private Training*. This letter highlights areas where further consideration and deliberate planning will allow the Statement of Intent to support a positive and effective anaesthesia training programme that may be implemented in the private hospital setting.

The New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists – Ngā Ringa Tauwhiro o Aotearoa (NZSA) is a professional medical society that supports our community of over 700 medically registered specialist anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians. The Society supports members throughout their career, from trainee to retired, working in both public healthcare and private practice across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The NZSA recognises the assistance private facilities can provide to support our public health system in reducing elective care waitlists. We also understand the implications this may have for our registrar groups. Aotearoa's future healthcare workforce must have access to a safe, structured and supported training environment. However, the Society emphasises that outsourcing and subsequently any introduction of training in the private sector should only occur in parallel with efforts to establish long-term solutions to safely and sustainably increase public health services.

A clear Statement of Intent (SOI) with principles for registrar training in the private sector will be essential to ensure consistent standards, to preserve workforce satisfaction and uphold the safety of both patients and clinicians.

Summary of key recommendations:

- Include a clear definition of *supervision* to maintain focus on meaningful teaching.
- Using a voluntary uptake model to uphold a quality learning environment.
- Clarify responsibilities towards ensuring supervisors are appropriately skilled to teach in the private setting.
- Focus on case selection that allows registrars to gain meaningful experiences not available in the public sector.
- End point 4.2 at '*health sector'* to encourage a collaborative, cohesive and equitable approach.
- A broader, more flexible approach to supervisor eligibility than point 6.3.2 currently allows.
- Remove '*initially*' from point 6.3.6 and establish monitoring and strategies to mitigate any impact on efficiencies.

Fostering a quality learning environment

Our first recommendation is to include an explicit definition of *supervision* within the SOI, to maintain clarity and ensure focus remains on facilitating meaningful teaching.

Willing participation from all clinicians, including anaesthetists and surgeons, is fundamental to successful implementation. Not all anaesthetists may be willing to supervise a registrar while working in private care, and forcing participation may undermine success and a quality learning environment.

The NZSA recommends a voluntary uptake model, supported by:

- A clear process for clinicians to express interest and opt into supervising registrars in the private setting.
- Appropriate scaffolding to ensure supervisors are both willing and appropriately skilled to teach.
- Clarity in the SOI identifying who is responsible for ensuring private-sector supervisors are suitably qualified to support registrars. This responsibility should not default to supervisors of training, who already have a significant workload and may not have adequate oversight within private facilities.
- A focus on case selection that allows registrars to gain meaningful experience that is not available in the public sector. Registrars should not be present solely to achieve VOP without practical learning opportunities.

Workload impacts

SOI point 6.3.2 Limiting supervision to consultants known to the registrar reduces the pool of potential supervisors and disproportionately increases the workload for anaesthetists who work across both public and private sectors. This restriction may also limit registrar access to specific case types that are performed predominantly or exclusively by consultants working solely in private practice.

A broader, more flexible approach to supervisor eligibility would better support training quality and equitable case exposure. Whilst also protecting workforce satisfaction.

Private healthcare in Aotearoa can be utilised to help cover the needs of the public health system. However, a cohesive and well-considered approach that protects patient safety and staffing availability is vital. The encouragement of competition, as included in *point 4.2*:

- discourages an equitable health system,
- risks depleting workforce numbers in the public system,
- is contributing to contracting arrangements that fall below market rate, making some private work less attractive.

We recommend that *point 4.2* end at ‘health sector’ to prevent unintended impacts on workforce stability and service quality.

Impact on efficiency and productivity

The NZSA recommends removing the word ‘initially’ from *point 6.3.6.* Safeguarding efficiency should remain an ongoing priority, not a temporary consideration. To support this, clear metrics for monitoring productivity and well-designed strategies to mitigate any impact should be established.

In private practice, registrar presence and possible reduced efficiency may not only affect throughput, but also clinicians’ risk and income. Reimbursement arrangements vary across hospitals and contracts, often

between time unit-based payments or fixed fees per case. Any additional time and risk associated with training must be recognised and remunerated fairly and consistently.

We also note that outsourcing is managed differently across regions. In some facilities, outsourced cases are incorporated into mixed ‘lists’ alongside private cases. Flexibility to encompass the range of structures should be considered to reduce any barriers to safe, efficient services and quality learning for registrars.

Thank you for considering our suggestions during the planning stage. We believe these recommendations toward the Statement of Intent – Private Training will assist in supporting a model that enhances training, maintains workforce satisfaction and contributes constructively to our health system.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of the points we have raised.

Ngā mihi,

Dr Jonathan Panckhurst
President, New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists – Ngā Ringa Tauwhiro o Aotearoa