

THE ACTIVIST



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14TH RMTU CONFERENCE

The Union's peak body will meet 14, 15 and 16 October 2008 in Porirua. Delegates from throughout NZ will come together for 3 days of talking Union. Highlights of Conference include;

- Opening address – Dr Michael Cullen
- CTU President Helen Kelly
- CTU Secretary Peter Conway
- Port Talk – Tauranga CEO Mark Cairns
- KiwiRail – William Peet
- International guests RTBU, TWU, ASLEF and MUA

Conference theme for this year is "Organising to elect a Labour Led Government".

UGL RATIFICATION BALLOT – RESULT

Following the counting of the above ratification ballot the following is the official result;

- Ballot papers issued – 346
- Ballot Papers returned – 51 (13.58% against)
- Invalid votes – 4 (1.16%)
- Accept Ratification – 295 (85.26%)

The ballot was counted in the presence of two Hutt Shop scrutineers Rob McDougall and Michael Kyle and is approved by the National Returning Officer Henry Fagaiava.

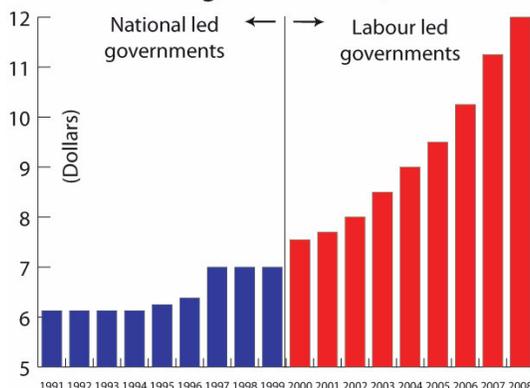
The General Secretary will sign the CA on behalf of the Union.

NATIONAL'S KIWISAVER CUTS DOUBLE WHAT IS REPORTED

"Further reading of National's economic management plan shows alongside National's plans to cut employer contributions to 2 per cent and abolish the employer tax credit, it will also cut the government contribution (member tax credit) to 2 per cent, leaving many workers earning under \$52,000 much worse off."

"While somebody on an income of over \$52,000 would still attract the full current \$1,040 government contribution, because National have reduced the minimum contribution rate to 2 per cent, they have also said they will cut the government contribution to this minimum rate

Minimum wage movements, 1990-2008



also."

"So a worker on \$30,000 a year contributing 4% to KiwiSaver will lose \$440 a year from the member tax credits, plus the employer contribution would be reduced to 2 per cent – which sees them losing another \$600 a year. These workers would be worse off by \$20 a week."

"In addition, National is misrepresenting the union position on KiwiSaver. Unions did not want a 2+2 option that removes employer tax credits. That will make it much harder to persuade employers to contribute more than 2% and will also mean that some employers will put pressure on workers to fund the

employer contribution out of a wage increase."

"Unions also support a 4 per cent supported option for workers who choose it, and recognise that hundreds of thousands already have, and will be hugely disadvantaged if National implements their changes."

ONTRACK MECA

The full RMTU bargaining team (comprising Brian Cronin, Jerry Hohepa, Buzz Terrey, Alby Barr, Kevin Gubb, Alan Hatcher, Derek Lorimer, Sam Kahui, Kevin Jones and Phil Kearns) met with Ontrack on Wednesday 1 October 2008. This meeting followed the member rejection of the previous proposed settlement.

We now advise that an improved proposed/provisional settlement has been achieved with the employer which is, of course, subject to ratification by the membership who fall within the coverage of the proposed MECA for Ontrack Infrastructure and Core.

Ratification will be conducted in the usual manner by postal ballot and papers are expected to be posted out to all members covered by the MECA during the week commencing Monday 20 October 2008. We may be able to get them out earlier during the preceding week subject to the pressures of holding Annual Conference on 14-16 October 2008. The ratification vote will be one count covering all members (from both Infrastructure and Core groups) participating within the ballot.

Full and clear details of the Provisional Settlement will accompany the Ballot Paper.

UNIONS RELEASE ELECTION POLICY STATEMENT

On the eve of a week in which incomes policies will be under scrutiny in the election campaign, the Council of Trade

Unions has today released its election policy statement, setting out how to lift incomes and protect workers rights in New Zealand.

"There is more to lifting incomes than taxes alone," CTU president Helen Kelly said today. "What really impacts on workers' wage packets are the wages they are paid, and the social services we all enjoy. Parties need to spell out clearly how they will lift wages and protect core social services. National has linked tax cuts to cuts in public services – which workers will not support."

The document sets out the CTU's medium term policy goals, including increasing the minimum wage to two-thirds of the average wage (\$15 in the interim), 26 weeks paid parental leave, moving to 56 weeks, boosting investment in skills and technology and lifting the rate of multi employer collective bargaining and industry agreements.

The CTU's election campaign centres on the three themes of rights at work, strong public services and higher wages, and the document also sets out CTU goals in

a range of other areas, including economic policy, public services and health and safety.

"The CTU has met with all the major parties over this statement in recent months, and looks forward to comparing the parties' policies on wages, jobs and incomes, including at a special CTU Employment Relations Election 08 forum in Wellington this Thursday," Helen Kelly said.

The CTU will also this week launch 300,000 copies of its new election leaflet, with a second national day of action on Tuesday - World Day for Decent Work - targeting transport hubs across New Zealand. Including the earlier 'What's at Stake' leaflet the CTU is distributing half a million leaflets during this election campaign.

Download the full Election Policy Statement or a summary version here: <http://union.org.nz/policy/ctu-2008-election-policy-statement>



TRANSPORT POLITICAL PANEL

You are invited to be part of "The Trafanz Transportation Political Panel" Ilott Chamber, Wellington Town Hall Wednesday 22nd October from 10 – 12 noon.

The importance of this discussion was, and has been again, clearly demonstrated by the total commitment of all political parties to be part of this key, and very important, forum prior to the general election. As planned for the conference, the intention is for the interview to also be on NZ TV, radio and within newspapers.

The interview will be conducted by Trafanz President, CR Andy Foster.

The Panel discussion will include:

- Peter Brown MP – NZ First
- Hon Peter Dunne – United Future
- Hon Harry Duynhoven – Labour
- Jeanette Fitzsimons MP – Green
- Rahui Katene – Maori
- Heather Roy MP – ACT
- Hon Maurice Williamson – National



Sustainable Transport is a major issue for New Zealanders; we look forward to again obtaining your confirmation to be part of the answers and the way forward in transport for NZ communities.

Debate Questions:

1. What are the three key things your party wants to achieve in the transport system within the next 3 years and how will you do it?
2. The Land Transport Safety Strategy 2020 targets are currently being established. What does your party see these need to be, and how in concrete terms will your party seek to achieve them?
3. How will your party enable and encourage communities to take responsibility for their travel, their

behaviour, and their impacts on the environment?

It is important that the answers to these questions include government ENABLING of the three "E's" Education, Enforcement and Engineering.

Each Party will be asked to briefly respond to the above questions. The key areas are likely to include alcohol limits, speed management, driver age, investment in infrastructure, vehicles, topical safety issues and sustainable issues. DO NOT miss out please confirm your attendance by RSVP via email to The Secretary dhill@dcc.govt.nz

KIWI RAIL – VEOLIA MECA – VEOLIA UPDATE

Talks with Veolia are progressing and a further round of talks occurred on 23 September 2008. A further round of meetings is anticipated in late October following the Union Conference.

KIWI RAIL – VEOLIA MECA – KIWI RAIL UPDATE – JOINT NOTICE

The finalising of the terms of Settlement, the memorandum of Understanding and the wording for the Collective Agreement are taking the parties longer than anticipated. It is necessary for all documentation to be finalised prior to undertaking the report back meetings in order to comply with an Employment Court decision precedent with the ADHB and PSA. Having all the material finalised also assists in being able to fully answer any member question which may arise and also to ensure consistency of approach by the report back teams nationwide.

The parties anticipate being out to report to members early November 2008. The ratification postal ballot will run concurrently. The report back meetings will be conducted jointly with Union and management presenters. The ratification will be a recommended settlement by the

negotiating team. This year's negotiating team was the largest ever and ensured that all sectors of membership was represented and had a voice at the table.

NOMINATIONS CALLED FOR KIWI RAIL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL (KIC)

C.T. Site Nomination called

Nominations are called for a National C.T. Site representative for the KIC.

Tranz Scenic On-Board Staff representative nomination called

Nominations are called for an On-Board Staff Tranz Scenic Staff representative for the KIC.

NOTE:

All nominations must be moved and seconded by financial members of the Union and the nominee must

also signify their acceptance of the nomination on the nomination form. Nominations must be made and seconded by members employed within the area of occupation of the position advertised. The nominee must also work within the area of representation.

Nomination forms are available from the Union National Office by calling Julia on 04 4992066. All nominations must be sent and received in National Office as well as being correctly filled out, to be valid.

Nominations close 1700hrs, 17 October 2008. In the event of more than one nomination being received for a position then a secret postal ballot will be conducted within the representative area of occupation.



ATTENTION ONTRACK INFRASTRUCTURE MEMBERS – WHAT RATE DO YOU BOOK AS TRAVEL ALLOWANCE?

Section 3 of the allowances of the Ontrack Infrastructure Collective Agreement states;

"If you work between 2000 and 0600 hours and live more than 2kms away from work \$4.41 is paid for the work period. If you are called back to work between work periods you are paid \$4.41 **OR** the Company rate for the use of your vehicle, at **your** option. These payments do not apply if you have a Company vehicle for travel to and from work."

We can confirm that the company rate stated in this clause is currently \$0.62 per km **AND** it is also a non taxable allowance.

You can choose which rate you would prefer to be paid, either the \$4.41 or the \$0.62 per km.

Reports into National Office thus far are that the 62 cents per km appears to be the most favourable to members. Particularly as a majority of member's distance travelled when called back to work exceed the \$4.41 payment when the kms are totaled for payment.

If you wish to claim the 62 cents per km you should fill out an expense form available from your local manager, keep one copy for reference and submit the original copy to your manager.

Please note: If you choose to book up the normal rate of \$4.41 then continue to do so by booking accordingly on your timesheets.

Those choosing to book the 62cents per km must fill out the expense form in addition to their timesheets to claim the allowance for that period.

NAT'S CUTS WILL INCREASE DEBT, POVERTY AND DECIMATE R&D

Green Party Co-Leaders have called National's proposed tax a 'fake free lunch' which will increase New Zealand's debt and the gap between rich and poor, and suck resources out of research and science.

"Key pretends he has found a free lunch and will not increase borrowing, but this is a sham.

"National's proposals will increase New Zealand's debt, increase the gap between high and low incomes, make families with kids relatively worse off than others, and decimate funding for science, research and technology," Jeanette Fitzsimons and Dr Russel Norman say in their joint statement.

"Reducing saving by cutting KiwiSaver is the same as increasing debt. It won't show on the Government's balance sheet, because Key has swapped Government debt for private debt. Lower savings will show up on households' balance sheets as increased private debt, which is already too high," Ms Fitzsimons says.

"Funding tax cuts for people on higher incomes out of the science budget mortgages the future even more.

"A strong sustainable economy will be based on good science and research. They are currently underfunded. National wants to strip them even further.

"It is also a flip flop. Last Thursday, speaking to agricultural scientists in Hamilton, National announced that it would scrap the \$700m Fast Forward fund for agricultural research and move some of the R&D tax credit for business to fund science directly.

"Now they plan to take the whole tax credit - \$208m this year, and rising - for personal tax cuts. So under National, we will see our brightest scientists leaving for overseas as there will be no funding here for any new

projects - and our economy will be robbed of the information needed to adapt to a quickly changing world.

"Most of the benefit of Key's proposed tax cuts will be felt by those on above average incomes. Even a one cent drop in the top rate is a big windfall for those earning half a million a year. Meanwhile families earning less than \$14,000 will get nothing," Dr Norman says.

"It's all very back-to-the-'90s.

"Borrowing for more new roads will make our transport crisis worse, putting the country in debt for roads we don't need and won't be able to afford to drive on.

"In contrast, the Green Party would invest in infrastructure that will protect us from rising prices in the future - fixing up our rail system, improving public transport and making more affordable homes available."



REDUNDANCY MOVES THE RIGHT ONE

A proposal to look at guaranteed redundancy payments for workers is a good step forward and deserves cross party support, the Council of Trade Unions said today.

"At a time when many fat cats offshore are getting big packages despite creating the global credit crunch, it is good to see the

prospect of ordinary workers having decent compensation when they are laid off," CTU president Helen Kelly said.

"Being made redundant is a stressful time for workers both personally and financially. The greater the assistance available to them the better. The reality is that when business is failing the burden of that failure falls unfairly on workers when they are laid off without compensation."

"It is good to see that the Advisory Group on redundancy and restructuring agreed that the Government should consider a statutory requirement for notice and compensation. This is another step forward, following the inclusion of redundancy as a priority

payment in insolvencies, and adjusting the tax on workers' redundancy payments."

"Many union members are already protected through collective agreements. But redundancy should be part of the minimum code of work rights that covers all workers."

The CTU would consult with affiliates and take an active part in proposed consultation next year, Helen Kelly said.

UNIONS APPLAUD RETRAINING FOR LAID-OFF WORKERS

A retraining allowance will assist long-service workers if they are made redundant says Helen Kelly, Council of Trade Unions' President.

The Labour Party yesterday announced a new retraining allowance (on a similar basis to the student allowance) to apply to workers with five or more years' service if they are laid off.

Helen Kelly says that the CTU has been working with business groups and the Government on a programme called 'Security in Change' which aims to provide coordinated support for workers and firms when there is restructuring and likely redundancies.

"This new retraining allowance will be a welcome and very important addition to other types of assistance such as helping with CVs, advice, job-search and relocation".

Helen Kelly says that this sort of approach works well in many Scandinavian countries and sits alongside other progressive measures such as paid parental leave and free early childhood education to support high levels of workforce participation.



BANKS SHOULD OPT FOR DEPOSIT GUARANTEE - TIME TO SUSPEND TARGETS AND PROTECT JOBS

Bank workers' union Finsec says that all our major banks should immediately sign up to the government's plan to guarantee bank deposits.

"Our banks are in a strong position with good profits," said Finsec Campaigns Director Andrew Campbell. "They should reinforce this position by agreeing to Labour's plans announced yesterday. This would give customers greater certainty about the security of their deposits."

Finsec is also calling on the banks to take two additional steps to ensure economic stability; a suspension of sales targets for bank staff and retention of existing staffing levels.

"It is unbelievable that in the midst of this crisis, some banks have made moves to actually increase sales targets for staff to sell products, including

debt products."

"Now is the time to suspend or significantly reduce sales targets to ensure that customers are not getting into debt they may not need or be able to afford, especially if this recession deepens. Our major banks need to seriously rethink the system of sales targets in response to the global credit crisis."

Finsec is also calling on the banks to ensure the protection of jobs in the sector. "The big banks are some of our largest and most profitable employers. With the added protection of the government's deposit guarantees, there should be no reason to cut any more jobs from the finance industry."

Campbell said that the banks should return the trust given by the New Zealand government and their Kiwi customers and retain good stable jobs in this country. "Large companies that can afford to should be making commitments to job security. Employment stability at this time is in the interest of the banks themselves, their staff

and customers and the wider economy," he said.

MINOR PARTY LEADERS TO FRONT UP ON CAMPBELL LIVE

The minor party leaders will be appearing individually on Campbell Live, commencing on Tuesday, October 14 at 7.00pm with New Zealand First Leader Winston Peters. The network will also be screening a Leader's Debate between Prime Minister Helen Clark and National Leader John Key on Monday, November 3 at 7.30pm, hosted by John Campbell. Throughout the campaign viewers will be able to submit questions for all party leaders via 3 NEWS' dedicated election website decision08.co.nz

3 NEWS' Election night coverage on November 8 will begin at 7.00pm with John Campbell presenting a live broadcast from the Auckland studio. He will be chairing a panel of New Zealand's top political commentators and analysts, including former cabinet minister the Hon. Steve Maharey, political journalist Linda Clark, leading political scientist Jon Johansson, political commentators Chris Wikaira and Matthew Hooton and former Independent editor Jenny McManus, who will give viewers extensive and immediate analysis of results as they unfold. Leading up to the election, 3 NEWS will be running weekly polls, in the 2005 election 3 NEWS polls gave the closest reading to the actual election results.

3 NEWS will utilise its highly experienced team of political reporters, lead by Political Editor Duncan Garner and including John Campbell, Scott Campbell, Sia Aston and Ali Ikram. 3 NEWS will also be working in conjunction with Maori Television to give viewers exclusive access to information on key Maori seats.

To complement the broadcast coverage, decision08.co.nz will be simulcasting each of the minor party leaders, the Leader's Debate and election night coverage. Electorate results will be updated in real time, giving web users the most immediate online coverage available. The site also features extensive party information, blogs and a policy comparison section.

Mark Jennings, Director of 3 News and Current Affairs, says "This is the most interesting election New Zealand has had for some time and 3 News will put more resources than ever before into keeping our viewers on top of the play. John Campbell, the best political interviewer on television will elicit the facts and expose the pretenders."

Let's Be Safe
Out There &
Remember.....

“WE'RE
STRONGER
TOGETHER”!

