

THE ACTIVIST



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REMEMBER WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL

This year's workers' Memorial Day theme is "Good Occupational Health for All Workers". The purpose behind Workers' Memorial Day has always been to "remember the dead: fight for the living" and unions are asked to focus on both areas, by considering memorials to all those killed through work but at the same time ensuring that such tragedies are not repeated.

This can best be done by building trade union organisation, and campaigning for stricter enforcement with higher penalties for breaches of health & safety laws. RMTU members are asked to once again stop work (wherever you are) at midday on the 28 April to remember workers here and internationally who have been killed and seriously injured in work accidents. The RMTU will be joining millions of workers around the world who are also commemorating this day. Some RMTU Branches will be conducting commemorative meetings at the memorials unveiled in previous years. Please advise National Office if you are holding a ceremony in your area. If you wish to invite a National Office speaker then please do so now.

We must continue to remind ourselves that we lose real workmates and working men and women in these accidents and not let them become simply statistics!



MECA BALLOT RESULT

The result of the recent Multi Employer Collective Agreement procedural ballot as required by the Employment Relations Act 2000 is shown below. The legislation prescribes that if more than 51% of the members, who reply to the ballot, working for each employer vote in favour of the Union negotiating a MECA then the Union may initiate with both employers for a MECA (Sec 45 (4) ERA).

ONTRACK NZRC

Total ballot papers issued:	85
Total ballot papers returned:	49
Total ballot papers yes :	39
Total ballot papers no :	10

79.59% of members agreed to the MECA

Ontrack infrastructure

Total ballot papers issued:	51
Total ballot papers returned:	20
Total ballot papers yes :	19

94.15% of members agreed to the MECA

Therefore a Multi Employer Collective Agreement will be initiated by the Union on behalf of RMTU members falling within the coverage of Ontrack NZ Rail Corporation & Ontrack Infrastructure Limited Collective Agreements.

Please Post On Noticeboards

RECORD LOW FIGURES GOOD NEWS

Record low unemployment figures are good news, and enable a renewed focus in 2008 on supporting those in work to lift skills, as well as try to go even lower than 3.4 percent for the unemployment rate, CTU secretary Carol Beaumont said. Statistics New Zealand's Household Labour Force Survey out this morning has unemployment at 3.4 percent, the lowest rate ever recorded in the survey.

"The CTU will continue its call for decent work for all New Zealand workers, which addresses issues around work-life balance, better pay, productivity and secure hours. There were still 77,000 people out of work though, and once we add those discouraged or presently unable to work the figure becomes 146,000."

There were also 88,000 people looking for more hours, and ethnic disparities in unemployment figures remained – unemployment for Maori (7.3%) and Pacific people (4.7%) are both down but still higher than Pakeha (2.3%), Beaumont said.

"This shows that with a concerted approach we can still improve on the very good figures out today, and our goal still remains full employment. For example, the CTU is working with Business New Zealand and Government on strategies to support workers' transition into new employment when they lose a job."

TOLL – VEOLIA MECA

The Union is planning to renew the above Multi Employer Collective agreement this year. No secret ballot of members is required as the replacement MECA will meet the requirements of Section 48 of the ERA 2000. These essentially are;

- The MECA will replace a MECA that is in force
- The same parties are involved
- The scope of coverage clause is the same.

The Union will initiate bargaining with Toll – Veolia 60 days before the expiry date of the current CA (30 June 2008) in accordance with Sec 41(3)(a) ERA 2000. This will occur on 2 May 2008.

BLACKBALL TO CELEBRATE STRIKE THAT CHANGED HISTORY

The historic West Coast town of Blackball will mark the centenary of the landmark Blackball Miners' Strike next month with a three-day celebration that is expected to draw crowds from across the country.

The eleven-week strike was a formative event in New Zealand's history and laid the foundations of the modern union movement and the Labour Party. Event co-coordinator Jane Wells says the commemorations will centre on the strike's role in changing New Zealand's political history.

"The Blackball strike was the birth of the modern labour movement and its three main leaders went on to recreate unionism and in the case of Paddy Webb and Bob Semple went on to found the Labour Party itself.

"Many of the work rights we take for granted now have their origins in the Blackball strike and the later work of its leaders and we think this needs to be celebrated and remembered."

The commemorations will begin with a dinner on Friday the 21st of March and a series of events including book launches, a parade, a seminar and a theatre presentation will take place over the following days. The event will close with a dance at the community hall.

All events are open to the public, who are welcome to register through the website: www.blackballmuseum.org.nz, by emailing wkultur@ihug.co.nz

CLAIMS REMIT CALL FOR – TOLL NZ AND VEOLIA TRANSPORT

Branches and members are asked to commence discussion on remits for the forthcoming wage round with the above two companies. The MECA expires 30 June 2008.

All remits MUST come through the local RMTU branch. Remits coming direct from members will be rejected and sent back to the local branch secretary. The remit must have a branch stamp on it and have been passed at a properly constituted branch meeting.

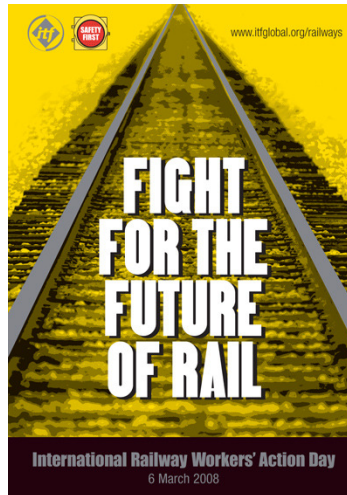
We urge members to give serious consideration on remit claims and only claims that members are willing to mount industrial action to achieve should come through.

Remits for Toll NZ and Veolia Transport will close on 1 April 2008.

UNITED GROUP RAIL

The Union and UGL met on 29 February 2008 to negotiate the bargaining framework agreement and to exchange claims. The RMTU negotiation team comprised Wayne Butson, Henry Fagaiava, Tim Spence, Phil Bosworth, Shane McNae and Rudi Brens.

Copies of the Union consolidated claims document shall be distributed to branches. The employer tabled.



RAILWAY ACTION DAY – 6 MARCH 2008

Hundreds of thousands of trade unionists across the world will unite in a day of action next week to call for the release of Iranian bus workers' union leader Mansour Osanloo.

Events on 6 March will take place worldwide, including London, UK, where trade unionists and human rights activists will participate in a demonstration outside the Iranian embassy. The ITF campaign day, supported by the UK trade union movement as well as Amnesty International, will also see a red double decker bus visit London protest sites during the day.

Solidarity actions, including demonstrations, will also be held at Iranian embassies, in cities, railway stations and at border crossings in Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, The Netherlands, **New Zealand**, Norway, Peru, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey. Other countries are planning activities.

The "free Osanloo day" is receiving particular backing from railway workers and their unions who have voted to dedicate a planned rail action day – which traditionally promotes rail safety – to campaigning on Osanloo's behalf.

David Cockroft, ITF General Secretary, commented: "The Iranian government's continuing mistreatment of Mansour is a running sore. He has asked only for his basic rights and has been answered with fists, truncheons and manacles – but he has not been forgotten. On 6 March we will once again prove that he has friends and supporters around the world."

Mansour Osanloo is President of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, which has been targeted by the Iranian authorities. He is being held in Tehran's Evin prison on trumped up charges. The ITF and International Trade Union Confederation have spearheaded the campaign to defend him and he has been declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.



GLOBAL SOLIDARITY



The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) warned President Yudhoyono he would pay a heavy price domestically in Indonesia and internationally if he went through with a visit to Iran. "The international community will certainly question the current government's credibility and commitment to

democracy, and he (Yudhoyono) himself will pay an expensive price in the 2009 presidential election if he turns a blind eye to the ongoing labour oppression in Iran," ITF Indonesia coordinator Hanafi Rustandi told The Jakarta Post.



RAIL INDUSTRIES NZ GOLF ASSOCIATION - NATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

He said that in addition to the controversy over Tehran's nuclear program, Iran had yet to show its commitment to respecting human rights or workers' rights, including freedom of association and collective bargaining.

"With various political tricks, the Iranian government has refused to release Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi who have been jailed without trial for their struggle for Iranian workers' basic rights and social welfare," Hanafi said.

The ITF and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) have declared March 6 as International Action Day and are calling upon all affiliates in 156 countries to show their solidarity with Iranian workers.

"Both Mahmoud and Mansour have health problems which need immediate medical treatment outside the prison, which the Iranian authorities continually deny," said David Cockroft ITF Gen Sec.

UGL PROPOSE TIME CLOCKS

UGL NZ managers and RMTU National Reps met on 11 February to discuss the feedback received from branches to the UGL proposal to initiate the use of time clocking. The reps passed onto management the very strong view received from delegates around the country that the use of finger scans was unacceptable.

A national tour around depots will be conducted jointly by RMTU and UGL to have face to face dialogue on the proposal. UGL is adamant that the introduction of the time clocks is not associated with any allegation of fraud or timesheet falsification but if you go to the manufacturers' website then this is all that they go on about and is their justification for the introduction of the system.

CHRIS CAIRNS
FOUNDATION



This Tournament is to be held at Wainuiomata Golf Club, Lower Hutt on Monday and Tuesday 10th and 11th March 2008.

All past and present Rail Industry employees are welcome to attend. Entry forms or further information can be obtained from Adrian Douglas, National Secretary Email: adrian.douglas@ontrack.govt.nz or ext 42066 or 04 498 2066.

BIG NAMES COME ONBOARD

Chris Cairns is delighted at the big names that have come on board to back his Chris Cairns Foundation dinner to be held in the Sky City Convention Centre on Saturday, March 15th 2008. This year a key guest will be former Australian international test cricketer, AFL footballer and current cricket commentator Simon O'Donnell. Simon scored over 1200 runs and 100 wickets for Australia and was a part of the winning 1987 Cricket World Cup team. He was voted the International Cricketer of the Year in 1991 and is currently the host of the Cricket Show; he has also been a part of Nine Network cricket commentary team since 1997.

The main auction prize on the night will be six nights in London attending a New Zealand test match at Lords hosted by Chris Cairns and gaining access to places not normally open to the public. Two signed guitars to be auctioned off have also been supplied from two of the biggest names in music, one from Paul McCartney and the other from U2. Signed gear from Tiger Woods will also be on offer. Hosts for the night will be Carol Hirschfeld and John Campbell from TV3.

There will also be an opportunity for the attendees on the night to buy a place next to Chris on the start line of his walk planned for later this year. Chris is walking from Auckland to Rolleston the site of where his

sister Louise was killed in 1993 after a truck drove into the train she was a passenger on.

These positions will be auctioned off to a limited number of people who will walk the first 3km of the journey from Auckland.

The dinner will be a five star event with the theme being Ladies at Ascot that will include a "Fashion in the Field".

PROPOSED LAND TRANSPORT RULE: OPERATOR LICENSING AMENDMENT

The yellow draft of Land Transport Rule: Operator Licensing Amendment (Rule 81001/1) is available for public comment.

The proposed Rule amendment has five components. It would:

- require a vehicle that is involved in a service that is subject to transport service licensing, to display a Transport Service License (TSL) card;
- provide for Area Knowledge Certificates to be more relevant to the areas in which operators work;
- exempt an Approved Taxi Organisation from requiring a person in control to hold a Certificate of Knowledge of Law and Practice in specified circumstances;
- require all operators of taxi services to belong to an approved taxi organisation; and
- prohibit 'special interest vehicles' from being used in a transport service.

You are welcome to call the Land Transport NZ Help Desk on freephone 0800 699 000 to obtain a copy of the draft Rule. The draft Rule will also be available, with supporting information, on the Land Transport NZ website at www.landtransport.govt.nz/consultation/operator-licensing-amendment

We look forward to receiving your comments on this draft Rule. To help you, details on making a submission are

included in the overview. It would be appreciated if you could send your submission by email, or by using the on-line submission form on the above website. Postal submissions, however, are also acceptable. Please note the closing date for submissions, which is 7 March 2008.

NATIONAL NEEDS TO COME CLEAN ON WAGES

The Council of Trade Unions last week called on the National Party to come clean on wages, after mixed messages in recent public statements on the matter.

"John Key and National need to front up with some consistency on wages, after comments reported this week about his desire for wages to drop," CTU president Helen Kelly said last Wednesday.

Comments from John Key [1] (PDF) to a business audience in Northland in December were revealing, she said, where he said he would love to see wages drop.

"The CTU knows that wages need to go up, and we have a plan on how to do it."

"Everyone agrees with the need to close with wage gap with Australia, but leaving it to taxes alone is a joke."

"Will National support regular increases in the minimum wage to lift people out of poverty wages, or freeze it like they did last time when it was increased by less than a dollar over 9 years?"

"Will they support strengthening collective bargaining provisions in employment law so that low wages can be addressed at an industry level by workers and employers, or remove collective bargaining rights like they did last time which saw wages drop dramatically?"

"National needs to come clean on their intentions for wages in New Zealand. The best way to put more money into workers' pockets is through decent wages, and National's tax cuts favouring the rich ignore the needs of working people," Helen Kelly said.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES GOOD START - IMPLEMENTATION NEEDED

The CTU has welcomed a new **health and safety information pack** [2] released by the Minister of Labour today, and says that the challenge now is to implement good practises.

"Recognition that health and safety is everyone's responsibility, and that investment in staff welfare and development makes good business sense is encouraging, and confirms our view on the key role of health and safety in productive workplaces," CTU secretary Carol Beaumont said this Friday.

"The report's findings and their case studies provide the practical framework which the Health and Safety in Employment Act sets down. It recognises the importance of a collaborative approach towards managing health and safety, through employee participation and a commitment by management towards resources for health and safety management."

"The challenge for companies and organisations now is to recognise this and make health and safety a top priority."

"For our part, the CTU is proud to have trained 18,000 health and safety reps elected under the Health and Safety in Employment Act. Elected health and safety reps make an important contribution to improving New Zealand's safety culture. This representative model of worker participation is a significant step towards a productive, participative workplace," Carol Beaumont said.

BITS AND BOB'S

- Toll Operating Council meets in Wellington at the Woburn training centre this week for their normal quarterly meeting.
- The rail industry Telarc audit of Toll, UGL and Veolia is about to get underway. It is essential that we have good levels of participation in the audit of RMTU delegates.
- On train violence toward members highlighted as a major issue at an Auckland Branch meeting over the weekend. The RMTU is to ratchet up the pressure on Veolia management to ensure the safety of our members at all times whilst at work.
- UGL wage talks resume in Wellington this Thursday and Friday.
- Stopwork meeting in Port Tauranga this Friday in preparation to the wage talks beginning on the renegotiation of the port branch CA. Workers are angry at the company claims at a time of very high profit.
- Union National Management Committee meets in Wellington for the first meeting of 2008 on 11 March.
- ONTRACK Infrastructure Wages Working Party meets in Wellington Wednesday and Thursday to sign off the terms of reference and to begin the challenge of meeting workers expectations and the employers' wishes for change.
- Union hopeful that a settlement agreement for the litigation resulting from the ONTRACK release of the "building our futures" booklet will be signed this week.

**LET'S BE SAFE AND LOOK AFTER
ONE ANOTHER!**