

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.

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.

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!

Each year the RMTU produces a special commemorative poster and this years recognises the tragic death of member Shaun Smith at Ohinewai on 19 June 2007. The Waikato branch is participating in a function in Hamilton at 1400hrs on the day. ONTRACK has agreed to release members



who wish to attend the service to do so on full pay. This ceremony will also mourn the death of the Waikato Fire-fighter recently. General Secretary Wayne Butson will address the rally with other speakers.

The Hutt Workshops branch will be holding a service at 1400hrs at which the Prime Minister Helen Clark and CTU President Helen Kelly will speak.

The Mount will have a service 3 May at 1100hrs to enable the local community to attend as a non work day.

Dunedin, Christchurch, Nelson, Napier and New Plymouth will have their usual service at the usual location.

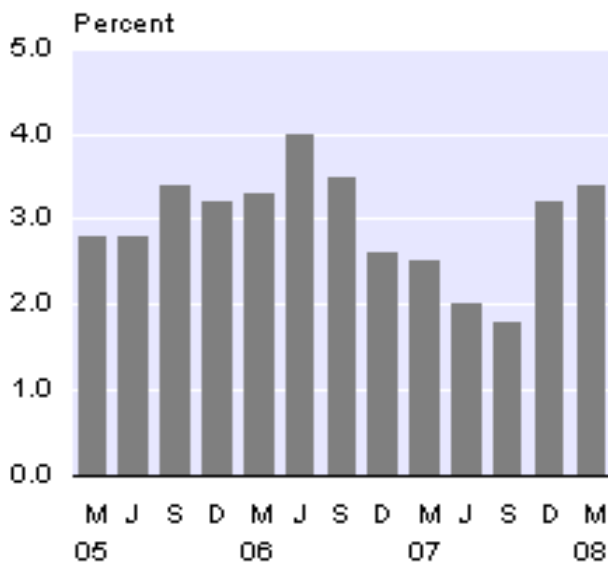
CONSUMERS PRICE INDEX LATEST

- The Consumers Price Index (CPI) rose 0.7 percent in the March 2008 quarter.
- Food prices increased 1.8 percent, with the main contribution coming from higher prices for grocery food, in particular cheese.
- Housing and household utilities prices rose 1.0 percent, driven by higher prices for actual rentals for housing.
- Transport prices rose 0.8 percent, driven by higher prices for petrol.
- Prices for recreation and culture fell 1.2 percent.
- The CPI increased 3.4 percent for the year to the March 2008

This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

Consumers Price Index

Annual percentage change



WELLINGTON REGION ANZAC DAY CEREMONY 25 APRIL 2008

An invitation has been received from the Chairman of the Petone Community Board for RMTU members to attend the ANZAC Memorial Flagstaff Ceremony at the Petone Railway Station on Friday 25 April 2008 commencing at 7am. The General Secretary will be attending and laying a wreath on behalf of the RMTU. Members are advised there is no alternative venue therefore be prepared for inclement weather.

BREAKS & INFANT FEEDING BILL

New legislation that will enshrine into law workers' rights to rest and meal breaks and infant feeding breaks was debated at parliament for the first time on 9 April. Labour Minister Trevor Mallard led the first reading of the Employment Relations (Breaks and Infant Feeding) Amendment Bill in the House.

"This bill reflects the Labour-led government's firm commitment to protecting low paid and vulnerable workers, and mothers who wish to breastfeed at work," he said. "The bill amends the Employment Relations Act 2000 to require employers to provide appropriate facilities and breaks for employees who wish to

breastfeed or express breast milk either at work or during work time.

The bill also amends the Act to provide employees with rest and meal breaks. I want to acknowledge the hard work of Labour MP Sue Moroney, whose private members bill formed the basis for the rest and meal break provisions; and also of Labour's Steve Chadwick whose private members bill was the base for the infant feeding provisions.

"It may surprise many people that no statutory requirement for meal and rest breaks exists - and minimum entitlements to rest and meal breaks during a working period are already in the vast majority of collective agreements. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the service and manufacturing sectors in particular and sectors where there are many vulnerable workers, may be providing less than minimum breaks. So the government is making sure that there is absolutely no doubt that these basic entitlements must be provided for."

Under the proposed meal and rest break provisions, employees will be entitled to:

- one 10-minute rest break if they have worked four hours or less;
- one 10-minute rest break and one 30-minute meal break if they have worked between four and six hours; and
- two 10-minute rest breaks and one 30-minute meal break if they have worked between six and eight hours.

More details on the bill are in Trevor Mallard's first reading speech on www.beehive.govt.nz/mallard



TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIAN "PATRICKS" DISPUTE

REMEMBERED

Dockers from all around the world have gathered in Australia this week to mark the tenth anniversary of the "Patrick's" waterfront dispute that threatened the job security of some 2000 Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) members.

Australian Dockers throughout Australia took part in a one minute stoppage on 7 April to commemorate the Patrick dispute. The dispute saw security guards with dogs storm every dock in Australia run by Patrick Stevedores and the sacking of 2000 unionised workers and the forcible removal from their jobs. "It was an extraordinary dispute, even given the long history of organised labour in this country. How many workers have been frog-marched out of their workplace by security guards in balaclavas and dogs on chains? How many have been replaced by former defence personnel secretly trained in Dubai? All with the full cognisance and support of their elected government. These were ordinary people thrown into an extraordinary showdown," explained MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin.

Delegates attending the first day of the ITF affiliated MUA national conference, which represented the Patrick's workers, also remembered the anniversary with one minute's silence on 8 April. The union was that week holding its conference at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour. The RMTU was represented at the conference By Vice president Aubrey Wilkinson and SI ports rep Ruth Blakeley.

The anniversary comes as the MUA renews its call for documents withheld by the government led by John Howard, who had been in power at the time of the dispute, to be released and the full story of the war on the waterfront to be told.

A week-long arts festival of film, photography, painting and theatre commemorating the dispute is taking place at the Australian National Maritime Museum in the Sydney.

More information and to view clips from the MUA conference visit:
<http://www.mua.org.au/news/general/confab1.html> and
<http://www.mua.org.au/news/general/confabday2.html>

NATIONAL CLARIFIES ITS WORKER RIGHTS' POLICY

National party leader John key has confirmed that workers could be forced to sell their fourth week of annual leave under a National led Government.

Recently John Key confirmed to a Christchurch radio station that the contents of a 2007 speech by the party's Labour and Industrial relations spokesperson Kate Wilkinson remain National Party Policy. This included;

- Employers would have the right to dismiss workers unfairly for a probationary period, and perhaps indefinitely in small business
- Workers could be forced to sell their 4th week of annual leave
- Vulnerable workers (such as cleaners) would lose rights to keep their jobs after a business was sold or transferred
- Employers could force workers onto individual agreements
- ACC would be privatised
- Statutory holiday pay could be cut
- Union rights would be reduced



COMMUNICATION TO ALL ONTRACK INFRASTRUCTURE RMTU MEMBERS

ONTRACK and the RMTU held its first wages working party meeting on the 2nd and 3rd of April 2008.

The meeting was facilitated by Bernard McIlhone of the Partnership Resource Centre, which was established to assist employers and unions build positive workplace relationships.

Wayne Butson and William Peet set the scene and expectations for the wages working party meetings.

The group identified the challenges facing ONTRACK and agreed on the three top priorities that needed addressing. These are:

- Skills based pay. Teams are currently being established to progress this.
- Identifying the hours of work changes that will drive productivity increases. This includes analysing call backs, shift work, night work, 24/7 staffing and fatigue management.
- Structure Proposals regarding working hours will be presented at the next meeting as will an update of where we are at with the skills based pay system.

The next meeting is on 21, 22 and 23 April 2008 in Wellington.



SALAHI RELEASED!

The ITUC, ITF and Amnesty International welcomed the release from Sanandaj prison, of independent labour activist Mahmoud Salehi. He had been imprisoned for one year. Salehi, one of the co-founders of the Bakery Workers Trade Union in Saez, had been the object of strong international lobbying by the international trade union and human rights' organisations since 2007, when the ITUC, ITF and Amnesty International launched a series of joint demonstrations and protests in front of Iranian embassies around the world.

Salehi was originally sentenced to four years of imprisonment for having organised an independent workers rally on International Labour Day, in Saez on 1 May 2004. His sentence was reduced on appeal to one year prison and three years suspended, which he finally started serving on 9 April 2007 in Saez, before being transferred to a high security prison in Sanandaj, capital of Kurdistan Province. His state of health severely deteriorated while in jail, after prison authorities repeatedly denied him proper medical care for acute kidney failure and other serious ailments.

An international Day of Action on 6 March 2008 brought trade unionists and activists into the street in 35 countries, demonstrating for Salehi and President of the Tehran bus drivers' union (Sherkat-e

Vahed), who remains in detention at Tehran's notorious Evin Prison. One week later, the authorities levelled new charges against Salehi, who had originally been due for release on 23 March. Observers believe the new charges were brought against him as a reaction to the Day of Action and in retaliation for solidarity messages which Salehi had managed to smuggle out of jail. Salehi was eventually released on Sunday 6 April, reportedly on bail, and has since returned to Saez, where he was met by family and friends.

The ITUC, ITF and Amnesty International express their satisfaction at Salehi's release, but remind Iran's authorities that Mahmoud Osanloo and other unjustly imprisoned trade unionists must be freed and all other threats of imprisonment against independent trade unionists for their legitimate activities be lifted. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is expected next month to examine a number of international trade union complaints lodged against

the Iranian government for violations of the internationally-guaranteed right to form and join trade unions.



ANZ NATIONAL PROPOSAL PUTS PROFITS BEFORE PEOPLE WITH UP TO 500 KIWI JOBS GOING TO INDIA

Bank workers' union Finsec says that today's announcement by ANZ National proposing to send up to 500 New Zealand jobs to Bangalore puts increasing their billion dollar profits ahead of their Kiwi customers and staff.

"ANZ National is leading a race to the bottom for cheap labour in India by proposing to send these jobs offshore. ANZ National keeps increasing its profits so there is no need to take these jobs away from Kiwi workers and from the local economy," said Finsec Campaigns Director Andrew Campbell.

Campbell said the jobs being sent to India are good jobs with good wages, some of which are in the top third of New Zealand

incomes. "ANZ National is an Australian owned company that is a guest here. Customers and local communities expect the bank to be loyal to New Zealand rather than abandon us for the lowest bidder," said Campbell.

Union member Bernadine McGinniss works at one of the affected sites and says that staff are shocked by the announcement. "We've been recently meeting with the bank about increasing staffing numbers here. Now, we find out they have been planning to get rid of us. This announcement heralds a bleak time for hundreds of ANZ National staff not knowing what our future will be," said McGinniss.

McGinniss said the proposal shows how little the bank values their own people and that the offshoring would affect morale right throughout the finance industry.

Finsec is launching an email campaign where customers and their communities can tell ANZ National how they feel about this proposal and voice their opposition to it.

"Bank workers are asking for the support of customers and the public to argue against this proposal. Banks listen to customers and together we can fight for a fair banking system that delivers good jobs and good customer service in this country," said Campbell.

All RMTU members who are ANZ customers are asked to consider advising the bank of their anger and outrage at this appalling move. We think that a worker in India pulling up our confidential personal details on a computer screen is pretty undesirable. This is not the move of a bank we would care to do business with as a Union.

ANTARCTIC YOUTH AMBASSADOR

The Sir Peter Blake Trust in partnership with Antarctica New Zealand is running the 2nd year of the Antarctic Youth Ambassador programme, giving the chance for an individual to get involved with

Antarctica's environmental issues. This is a once in a life time opportunity.

Please circulate this notice to anyone who may be interested in applying for this amazing opportunity, or anywhere that may have suitable candidates. Applications close Friday 30th May 2008, and criteria follows. To apply to be an Antarctic Youth Ambassador you must be:

- 18-25 years of age at time of application;
- A New Zealand citizen or a New Zealand resident;
- Able to demonstrate a passion for and contribution to New Zealand's natural environment;
- Able to demonstrate experience in remote outdoor settings;
- In exceptional health with a high standard of fitness;
- Able to show leadership potential;
- Hard working, adaptable and a team player;
- Independent, self-confident and self-reliant;
- Articulate and experienced at presentations and public speaking;
- Able to show a high standard of writing ability.



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.

PORTS FORUM

The 2008 RMTU Ports Forum will be held in Wellington on 4 and 5 June.

The union is keen to hear ideas from port branches on what they would like to achieve at the Forum, but proposals so far include:

- An analysis of the Napier dispute – what happened and why
- Progress on the Government's transport strategy
- Reports on the round of port negotiations under way at present
- Methyl bromide
- Maritime NZ's Operation Afloat activities

Port branches should tell the National Office who their delegates will be, as soon as possible, so that bookings can be made.

CLAIMS REMIT CALL FOR – TOLL NZ & 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 May 2008.

LABOUR PARTY CONGRESS

The RMTU attended the party congress in Wellington over the weekend 12 and 13 April. As an affiliate of the Labour Party the Union will be seeking volunteers to assist in the re-election of a Labour led Government later this year. The general election is our opportunity to ensure that we get a worker friendly Government. To do this we will need to examine each party's policies and assess them for their friendliness to workers.

Delegates from the Union made a special point of noting the strong and unequivocal support that the Government has shown toward the rejuvenation of rail and the significant funding provided for rail public transport.

The important thing right now is to ensure that you are all enrolled to vote by being on the electoral roll. Get on the Roll so that your vote can count.

KIWISAVER TAKES ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

From 1 April 2008 it is compulsory for an employer to contribute to

your Kiwisaver account by 1% (unless you are already getting a subsidy from the employer to a registered superannuation scheme). This 1% subsidy will grow each year until a contribution rate of 4% is reached on 1 April 2011. These employer contributions are funded by employer tax credits.

EPMU TO FIGHT NATIONAL'S ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY

The Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union say it will vigorously oppose the National Party's attempts to silence its 50,000 members.

On Friday the EPMU received notice that the National Party is appealing for a judicial review into the Electoral Commission's decision to allow the union to register as a third party under the Electoral Finance Act, as well as an injunction to silence the union until after the case is decided.



The High Court met with lawyers this morning, although no firm date has yet been set for a full hearing.

EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says National's actions reveal the truth behind its rhetoric about free speech and democracy.

"This is not a noble crusade by the National Party for truth and justice, but an attempt to shut out the voice of working New Zealanders from debating employment policies and issues during the election campaign.

"The union has advised the High Court that it is not affected by a further delay in being registered as a third party and we will cooperate with the court to have the matter heard as soon as possible."

The EPMU is New Zealand's largest private sector union and in 2006 led the campaign to defeat National's attempt to remove the right of workers to appeal against unfair dismissal during their first 90 days in a new job. This is still National Party policy.

TRANSPORT CHANGES AGAIN

On 1 July Land Transport NZ and Transit NZ will become the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

RMTU SUPPORTS IPRC AMENDMENT

The RMTU appeared before the Industrial Relations and Transport select committee accompanied by Brownie Bristowe a medically retired Loco Engineer to support the passage of a Government sponsored amendment which will see post traumatic stress arising from workplace significant incidents become a "covered" illness under ACC. Brownie was medically retired from train driving after he had a second trespasser fatality in a short time at almost the same place on the Hutt Valley line in Wellington. Brownie's submission was very moving and received widespread coverage in the media. Thanks brownie we know that the submission will not help you but it will

help any future LE's once it is passed into law.

BE WARY OF PRIVATISATION BY STEALTH GREENS SAY

The Green Party is challenging John Key to say whether his commitment to not privatise state assets includes not opening up ACC to private competition, or even dismantling it entirely.

"Selling assets is just one way the National Party might effectively privatise New Zealand's assets," Green Party Spokesperson on ACC Sue Bradford says.

"Key's assurances say nothing about opening up state assets to private competition, or even dismantling them, as has previously been spoken of by National. This would be privatisation by stealth.

"National has been forthright about their willingness to open up ACC to private competition, and the Green Party challenges them to produce a list of assets which would be safe not only from sale, but from competition on the open market, or partial or even full dismantling.

"People hearing Key's assurances that assets will not be strip-mined, must be aware that there are a lot of things the National Party can do that are just as destructive as selling them off, including contracting out services or even removing Government from services entirely.

"Given the National Party's previous position on ACC, which they have said they would open to competition, the Green Party remains sceptical.

"The National Party's 1999-2000 involvement of private insurers in accident compensation was a disastrous experiment for many ACC claimants. In too many cases, private insurers motivated by profit simply refused to grant cover and entitlements that injured workers should have rightfully received."



FISHER & PAYKEL DITCHES NZ FOR CHEAP LABOUR

Fisher & Paykel is closing its plant in Dunedin because it wants cheap labour, says the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

The profitable company has announced it will be moving production of its dish-drawers and cookware to Mexico – a move that means more than four hundred jobs will be lost in Dunedin with jobs also lost from plants in Brisbane and California.

Contrary to statements this morning from Fisher & Paykel CEO John Bongard, the EPMU was not consulted about the decision. The union will start a consultation process now which is contained in the collective agreement.

EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says Fisher & Paykel has lost sight of its Kiwi origins and lost its heart and soul.

"Most exporting manufacturers in New Zealand are struggling with a high US-NZ dollar but you expect companies the size of Fisher & Paykel to work hard to keep jobs here.

"The Free Trade Agreement with China guarantees the current level of tariffs for the next four years, whereas manufactured goods imported from other countries face the possible removal of those tariffs over the next year or two.

"When Fisher & Paykel talk about compliance costs they really mean the cost of providing decent standards to their staff such as proper health and safety and fair wages, all of which are core Kiwi values but by making this move they are ensuring their products no longer represent these values.

"We have not been properly consulted on this decision. I was told about the impending decision of the board and when I asked what could be done to keep the work here I received no answer.

"The purpose of the consultation period now is to look at all the relevant information to see if we can challenge the decision, and otherwise make sure people

are treated properly in the redundancy process."

"We will also be looking to the international trade union movement for information and advice about conditions in Mexico and measuring conditions there against conditions here."

The EPMU represents more than 370 workers at Fisher and Paykel's Dunedin plant.

THE \$61 MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION – HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

"With an after tax profit last year of \$61 million, how much money for shareholders does Fisher and Paykel Appliances, a profitable company, think they really need?" Council of Trade Unions president Helen Kelly said today.

"The company's announcement today should be seen for what it is – a move to make redundant hundreds of skilled workers in order to maximise profits by shifting production to countries where labour is cheap."

"This move will take a heavy toll on Mosgiel and the wider Dunedin community. These were good jobs that didn't need to be lost."

"Today's announcement reinforces the need for an acceleration of investment in modernisation, infrastructure and skills in New Zealand."

"We acknowledge the significant investment in skills by this government but we want to accelerate this, see significant uptake of technology and research and development and use of the R & D tax credits, and ongoing investment in infrastructure like broadband and transport."

The CTU has also supported changes to monetary policy to relieve pressure on the exchange rate and reduce interest rates, Helen Kelly said.

"There is a whole programme of lifting investment in New Zealand that we are focused on, and this is the only way to secure New Zealand's future."





SOUTH AFRICAN DOCKERS ACT AGAINST ZIMBABWE ARMS

SHIPMENT

The ITF has expressed its firm support for its South African transport workers' affiliate SATAWU, following the unions' declaration that its port members will not unload the cargo of the Chinese vessel An Yue Jiang, which is due to dock in the port of Durban, with a cargo of arms destined for Zimbabwe.

The union met with Durban port managers this morning to discuss the situation. It has also declared that none of its members in the trucking sector will move the cargo, which is due to be moved to Harare by road.

SATAWU, a member of the COSATU trade union national centre says the An Yue Jiang, which is owned by Chinese shipping giant COSCO, must return to China with the arms on board, and a peaceful solution must be sought to the political instability in Zimbabwe.

The ITF's FOC Inspector in Durban, Sprite Zungu, is set to go onboard to investigate the situation and make links with the Chinese crew, who are members of the Chinese Seafarers' Union (CSU). The ITF is in contact with the CSU.

"This is a significant act of solidarity with Zimbabwe's working people. The ITF fully, strongly and uncategorically supports SATAWU's actions and will be following this case with the closest of interests," said General Secretary David Cockroft.



RAIL UNION TO PICKET NEW FILM ABOUT TUBE SUICIDES

THE INDEPENDENT (UK)

Members of the British Train Drivers Union (ASLEF) will picket the premiere of a film that is about a Tube driver who encourages people to commit suicide under his train so that he can receive a pay-off. Three And Out, a comedy starring Mackenzie Crook, who rose to fame as Gareth in BBC's The

Office, sees the driver of a London Underground train (Crook) seek out suicidal Tube users when he hears that three fatalities in a month results in job loss with compensation.

Bizarrely, permission to advertise the film at Tube stations was granted, despite Transport for London's policy of strictly monitoring posters. Monday's premiere will be attended by Crook and his co-star Imelda Staunton.

Yesterday ASLEF, the union that represents train and Tube drivers, made it clear it would picket the red-carpet event at the Leicester Square Odeon, to point out that train drivers find fatalities on the Tube "distressing" and "never funny".

"These incidents can mean life-changing traumas for drivers," said Keith Norman, ASLEF's general secretary. He insisted he did not want the union to be seen as "a killjoy organisation – because we're not", but said "there are issues which we shouldn't ignore and this is one of them".

The union will hand out leaflets at the premiere, saying: "We hope you enjoy the movie tonight, but please remember that for train drivers like ourselves, deaths on the railway are never funny."

Mr Norman added: "I want the public to be aware of how distressing it can be for a driver to discover a body under the wheels of his or her train."

TRANSPORT WORKER DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The deadline for member contributions and branch notes contributions is 9 May 2008

BITS AND BOB'S

- Kathy Whelan the ITF NZ FOC Co-ordinator has resigned her position. The RMTU acknowledges Kathy's contribution to seafarer's and the maritime industry over the years and also her comradeship with the RMTU. We wish Kathy well in her future endeavours.
- Port Lyttelton strike action commences this week.

LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE!

