

THE ACTIVIST



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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, JOYOUS AND SAFE 2008!

Where has the year gone? It's been a great year for the labour movement and for the RMTU. We continue to make gains on behalf of members in all areas and to prove that Unionised workers are paid and treated better than non union workers.

Have a good break and return refreshed to face the challenges of 2008.

There will be many challenges for us in 2008 were sure, but through Unity, Solidarity and purpose of mind we will prevail because we are driven by **NEED** not **GREED**.

Unity is strength! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

UNION OFFICE CLOSURE

The Union's National and regional offices will close at 1700hrs on 21 December 2007 and reopen on 7 January 2008 @ 0830hrs.

The Emergency "on call" roster for Union Industrial matters during the closedown period is;

Scott Wilson 22 - 24 December 2007 inclusive 0272464961

Henry Fagaiava 25 - 27 December 2007 inclusive 0276006581

Todd Valster 28 - 31 December 2007 inclusive 0274454691

Brian C 1 - 3 January 08 inclusive 0272464941

Wayne Butson 4 - 6 January 08 inclusive 0274962461

PORT OF NAPIER



Port of Napier unsuccessfully sought an injunction last week to force our crane drivers to train ISO staff. The Employment Court accepted the seriousness of the health and safety concerns our members raised. That issue is going to mediation, and if not resolved by agreement, to a dispute in the Authority. Since last Saturday Port of

Napier has had a MUNZ picket line across all entrances since Saturday early Morning. Our Port and Rail members have refused to cross the picket line since this time. On Tuesday the Port obtained an injunction forcing our members across the picket. The health and safety issues involving ISO staff remains a very important issue, and we will keep you posted. We are all proud to be RMTU today!

TANGIWAI 24TH DECEMBER 2007.

The Palmerston North Rail branch of the RMTU has taken responsibility for a vast number of years of placing a wreath into the river off the Overnight Northerner Passenger service to remember the lost souls on the fateful passenger train crash at Tangiwai on

Christmas Eve in 1953. RMTU particularly remembers the Enginedriver Charlie Parker and the Fireman Lance Redman.

With the demise of the Northerner train in recent years the branch has had to adopt alternative strategies to ensure that we continue to remember the loco crew and the others who died that night in the cold harsh waters at Tangiwai. This year the plan is to have two floral tributes. A larger tribute for the memorial site to be delivered, possibly by the LE on car-244, and a smaller for LE on 200, both to be delivered on the day. This worked well last year, with a small group at the site at the time who happened to be passing by. A BIG thank you to the Palmy Branch!

UNION MEMBERSHIP UP AGAIN

"The numbers of workers joining together in unions is increasing steadily with further growth in 2006, particularly in the private sector," CTU secretary Carol Beaumont said today, in response to Victoria University's annual survey of union membership.

"Union membership has increased every year for the last seven years, with a lift of 5,000 members in 2006 meaning that there are 80,000 more workers in unions since the end of 1999."

"Critically, we are seeing growth in the private sector. This area demands our attention, and we have plans to keep on growing."

"The dedicated union activity in retail and hospitality has seen the biggest rise in this sector last year for some time. While there is still a lot of work to increase the numbers of workers coming together collectively in these sectors to challenge low pay, the signs are positive."

"2006 was a significant year for union activity; including a huge union campaign against an attack on workers' rights

through the 90 Days No Rights Bill, and union leadership and solidarity at all levels played a crucial role in beating the brutal lockout of 500 supermarket supply chain workers."

"The union movement is positive, growing and determined. We have become a more active and visible union movement over recent years. Our union agenda for workers is broad, and we will continue to campaign for decent conditions and a fair share at work," Carol Beaumont said.

UNION FEE INCREASE

Union fees were increased by unanimous vote of the delegates to the National Conference to the following:

- \$7.30 per week for full-time members
- \$14.59 per fortnight for full-time members
- \$31.66 per month for full-time members
- \$1.08 per day for daily casuals
- \$3.65 per week or \$7.30 per fortnight for part-time employees working less than 20 hours per week
- \$3.65 per week or \$7.30 per fortnight for trainees/apprentices earning remuneration below a determined



amount.

All employers (excluding those Port employers where our members pay above the new union fee) have been sent letters on 20 November requesting that fees be increased immediately from the next pay period.

WANTED: NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman and Trustees of The New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Sickness, Accident & Death Benefit Fund, 'the Fund' are pleased to announce that the

negotiations with the Company have been completed which has increased benefits payable with no increase in contributions for Post 2004 Members.

We now invite prospective members to apply for membership.

Benefits include an increase in the Loss of Certificate which is based on age of joining and age at date of loss, as well as an increase in the Death Benefit by 26.9%.

Before applicants can be approved by the Trustee's for membership of the Fund, applicants must:

- Be a full time Employee of Toll NZ Consolidated Ltd, Alstom Transport NZ Ltd, or Connex Auckland Limited,
- Hold a Locomotive Engineers Certificate, and
- Have completed medical examination within four (4) months of application (at employer cost).

For further information and an application form contact the Fund Secretary Julia Harrison on (04) 499-2066 or email julia@rmtunion.org.nz.

Benefits and contributions for Pre 2004 Members have also increased by 26.9% and receive benefits as detailed in the First Schedule of the Trust Deed.

RMTU MEMBERSHIP DATABASE UPDATES

The RMTU database is an important tool in contacting Union Members or ensuring members are kept up to date with the latest information. National Office staff are concerned at the number of "unknown" or "return to sender" envelopes returned to National Office and reminds members that if they wish to exercise their rights and participate in the decision making aspects of the Union they should ensure they

inform National Office of any change of address or contact details as soon as possible. This includes and any change of designation or employer. Branch Secretaries hold update of membership forms that you can post or fax in or alternatively for immediate action members are reminded to utilise the update of membership details link on our website www.rmtunion.org.nz.

For example - All rail industry employment agreements expire in 2008 and so there will be ratification votes conducted by mail. If we have the incorrect address, employer info you will not get a vote as you will never receive a voting paper.

Update now!

ONTRACK MECA

Our ONTRACK members will be wondering where their MECA information and ballot papers are? Well, there is a complication.

The Infrastructure CA expires 31 March 08 and the Network on 30 June 2008. The Employment Relations Act has a very prescriptive timeline for when ballots are to be conducted and so the ballot papers cannot leave National Office until the

beginning of January 08. Therefore the ballot papers will be posted on 7 January. The ballot will close at 0900hrs 28 January 2008 and be counted on the 29th.

If you have not received a ballot paper by 14 January 2008 and you work for either ONTRACK or ONTRACK Infrastructure then please contact National Office immediately on 04 499 2066.

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT – COMPLETE IT AND SEND IT IN AS SOON AS IT ARRIVES.



CLAIMS REMIT CALL FOR – ONTRACK CORE AND ONTRACK INFRASTRUCTURE

Branches and members are asked to commence discussion on remits for the forthcoming wage round with the above two companies. Both Collective agreements expire 31 March 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.

CLAIMS REMIT CALL FOR – UNITED GROUP RAIL

Branches and members are asked to commence discussion on remits for the forthcoming wage round with the above company. The Collective agreement expires 31 March 2008. All remits MUST come through your 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 to the negotiation team.

The negotiation team shall comprise the elected members of the UGL National

Consultative Council supported by an organiser.



RAIL INDUSTRIES NZ GOLF ASSOCIATION - NATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

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.

BITS AND BOBS'

- Organiser Kelvin Rush has decided to return to working for C3 (Toll Owens). Thank you Kelvin for your efforts on behalf of members whilst working for the RMTU. We now

look forward to the same work as an UNPAID organiser!

- Also as this issue goes to press we have received a letter of complaint from Toll on the medical issues in the 3 December issue of this great newsletter. In their letter Toll request that the RMTU remove the specific reference to the Doctors in question from the online version of The Activist forthwith, and that both the RMTU's website and the next copy of The Activist include an apology.. The RMTU is taking advice on the response to Toll.

Let's be safe and look after one another!

PROUD to be RMTU!

On behalf of the Union's National Management Committee and Staff we wish all members and their families a happy, joyous Xmas. We also wish you a healthy, safe and prosperous (the only way with collective bargaining) 2007.

