

## **New Zealand transport unions back Wellington Bus Drivers**

International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) New Zealand affiliates media release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Thursday 25 September 2008

Pressure is mounting in support of Wellington bus drivers as major New Zealand transport unions affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) met today in Wellington and made a statement in support of locked out Wellington bus drivers.

ITF affiliates in New Zealand include the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, Maritime Union of New Zealand, Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union, National Distribution Union, Merchant Service Guild, and Aviation and Marine Engineers Association, representing tens of thousands of New Zealand transport workers.

Members of the ITF-affiliated Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) at bus company Go Wellington have today been suspended from their jobs in addition to several hundred locked out bus drivers.

12 operations controllers who are RMTU members refused to cross the bus drivers picket line on health and safety grounds.

New Zealand ITF convenor Wayne Butson says support for the bus drivers and other workers was strong and would be ongoing until a resolution was found. Mr Butson is General Secretary of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union.

"This is an unacceptable situation and wage increase drivers are asking for is modest considering their current wage level and recent cost of living hikes."

Another ITF affiliate the Maritime Union of New Zealand says it is supporting the locked out workers 100% and had joined other unionists on picket lines this morning.

Maritime Union General Secretary Trevor Hanson says bus drivers have a heavy responsibility in their job but get paid abysmally low wages.

"Most workers will be very sympathetic to their cause."

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is made up of 681 unions representing 4,500,000 transport workers in 148 countries. It is one of several Global Union Federations allied with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

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