

# THE ACTIVIST



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## **TOLL TRANZ LINK BARGAINING**

The RMTU negotiating team comprises Advocate Scott Wilson, Brian Walters (Auckland, Pat Frelan (Hamilton) and Steve Brinson (CHCH). We are finalising dates for the bargaining TO COMMENCE as we go to print.

## **KIWI RAIL MECA UPDATE – JOINT NOTICE 2**

The RMTU and KiwiRail wish to advise members and staff of the status of the bargaining process. Since the Union's initiation of bargaining on April 2 KiwiRail and the Union have met together in Wellington on May 7th, 8th, 15th and 16th.

During the latest meeting the RMTU team finalised and approved the final claims document for submission to KiwiRail.

On 15 May KiwiRail GM Finance and Corporate David Walsh gave the RMTU wider consultation group an overview of the current financial state of KiwiRail. A robust question and answer session followed.

On 16 May the parties negotiated, agreed and then signed the Bargaining Process Agreement (BPA) as required by the Employment Relations Act 2000.

Also on 16 May the RMTU presented its claims, on behalf of members, for the renewal of the Collective Agreement. Some questions and answers were dealt with to clarify a claim.

Following the Union's presentation the KiwiRail advocate advised that KiwiRail had no claims at this time but advised that the company reserved its right to present "issues" for discussion and resolution at another time.

The RMTU suggested that the most expedient manner for dealing with the claims was for them to be distributed amongst smaller working groups involving the relevant Industrial council and the steering group.

KiwiRail requested time to give full and meaningful analysis and consideration to the claims presented by the RMTU before the parties meet again. This was agreed.

The parties have agreed to reconvene the full group again in Wellington on 19 and 20 June 2012 where a final decision on process will be made together with the

company providing its initial response to the Union claims.

**FOOTNOTE:** Copies of the claims and the bargaining process agreement are available from the KiwiRail RMTU delegates or by going to the Union website [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz)

## **AFFCO DISPUTE SETTLES**

The New Zealand Meat Workers Union and AFFCO NZ Ltd reached an agreement on a new collective employment agreement at 5am this morning ending the twelve week industrial dispute.

AFFCO workers will be back on pay from today and returning to work over the next



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

short period. Ratification meetings for the agreement will be completed by next Monday.

Union President Mike Nahu said "The settlement secures the core issues of concern to our members. It retains protection of wages and employment security and ensures workers continue to have their terms and conditions set by a union negotiated agreement".

"These twelve weeks have tested our union and its members to the core and they have shown incredible commitment to their principles and to each other" Mike Nahu said. "Families have suffered extensive hardship and they will be extremely relieved to see the end of the dispute and to return to jobs they love and know they are good at".

"The union wants to acknowledge the magnificent support it has received from Iwi Leaders to bring about this result. Maori dominated this group of workers and Iwi recognised the interest of their members were at stake on the picket line. They showed incredible skill, resolve and solidarity in working with us and the Company right until the documents were signed and I know the members of the union are extremely grateful and proud of the role they undertook" Mike Nahu said.

Company Director Andrew Talley said "This settlement is welcome at the end of a difficult time for everyone. I am looking forward to spending additional time around the meat plants and working with the union and its members to continue to improve these meat plants making them the best performing in the country."

Ken Mair representing the Iwi Leadership Forum played a key role in brokering the settlement along with other leaders from the group. "Our role was to bring an end to the hardship our Whanau were suffering and to find a way to meet the needs of both parties into the future. I know our communities will be greatly relieved that this dispute is over and we are committed to continuing to support a better relationship between the company and the union in the future." Ken Mair said.

## UNION REPORT

Here is the link and details for this week's Union Report - with CANZ President Beven Hanlon and the PPTA's Angela Roberts

Issue 1: National promised not to cut back frontline services, how much more frontline are teachers? Are larger class sizes the answer?

Issue 2: Who should have the power to incarcerate - The state or a private company? What is the real cost of prison privatisation?

Issue 3: Are the new labour law announcements a negative for workers and unions?

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrejg0rsBro&lr=1&feature=results\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrejg0rsBro&lr=1&feature=results_video)

## INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) Rail Section Steering Committee is meeting in London late May. Wayne Butson is attending as the Asia Pacific Rail Section chair.

Wayne will then meet up with National Vice President Howard Phillips to be invited guests at the Confederation of Japanese Railway Unions (JRU) 25<sup>th</sup> Congress in Tokyo Japan.

Todd Valster will be acting RMTU General Secretary from Monday 28 May through to 6 June 2012.

## IMPROVEMENTS TO EMPLOYMENT LAW ANNOUNCED?????

Labour Minister Kate Wilkinson has announced a package of measures that will extend workers' rights to request flexible working hours and ensure a fair and flexible collective bargaining environment.

The changes were approved by Cabinet today and are expected to go before Parliament this year.

"These improvements are a reflection of National's election manifesto, and show that we're keeping our pre-election promises," Ms Wilkinson says.



"We are extending the right to request flexible working arrangements to all workers, right from their first day on the job. Under the current law this is only available to caregivers, and only then after six months of employment.

"Modern lifestyles are changing, and workplaces need to reflect this reality. Flexible working arrangements will boost productivity and help employees find the work-life balance that works for them and their family.

"Flexible hours are often agreed to informally, and by extending eligibility to all employees, we hope to encourage agreement without having to go through a formal process."

Ms Wilkinson says that the modest changes to collective bargaining will address the fact that some of the current rules are overly bureaucratic, limit choice and reduce the effectiveness of the bargaining process.

"The changes we are making are about improving efficiencies and making it fairer for both workers and employers."

The changes include:

- A return to the original position in the Employment Relations Act where the duty of good faith does not require the parties to conclude a collective agreement.
- Allowing employers to opt out of multi-employer bargaining.
- Allowing for partial pay reductions in cases of partial strike action
- Removing the 30-day rule that forces non-union members to take union terms and conditions.

"In addition to these manifesto policies, parties will be required to provide notice of a strike or lock-out. We will also fix the anomaly where there are different time frames for unions and employers to initiate collective bargaining," Ms Wilkinson says.

Ms Wilkinson says that the changes reflect a pragmatic approach to improving fairness and flexibility in employment law that will improve work-life balance, increase productivity, and help create higher paying jobs for all New Zealanders.

**FOOTNOTE:** Anyone admitting voting National or not voting (which is the same thing really) in the last General Election?

## PORT MARLBOROUGH CA

The RMTU / Port Marlborough CA is up for renewal (expiry 30 June 2012). The RMTU negotiating team comprises of Lindy Burns, Murray Burgess, Scott Golding, Debbie McManaway and Todd Valster.

We met with Port Marlborough management on May 8th where the Bargaining Process Agreement was agreed, signed off and claims exchanged. We are due to carrying on discussions on Wednesday 30th May 2012 and Thursday 7th June 2012.

## STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RELATIONS

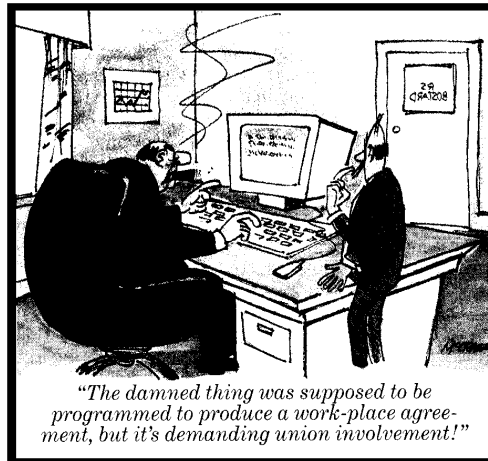
The Australian and New Zealand Productivity Commissions are conducting a study, at the instruction of the two Prime Ministers, into "Strengthening economic relations between Australia and New Zealand". They have published an issues paper, available at

<http://transtasman-review.productivity.govt.nz/> and called for submissions.

The NZCTU and ACTU are writing a joint submission to the Commissions.

## PORT TARANAKI CA

The RMTU / Port Taranaki CA is up for renewal (expiry 31 March 2012). The RMTU's full negotiating team comprises of Daniel Manu, Robin (Biggles) Maindonald, Larry O'Byrne, Aaron



Hodges, Bradley Gyde, Albert Plant, John West, Barry Williamson and Todd Valster.

We met with Port Taranaki management on May 3rd where the Bargaining Process Agreement was agreed, signed off and then claims exchanged on May 4th. A further two days of talks took place on May 15th & 16th. We are due to carrying on discussions on Friday 1st June 2012.



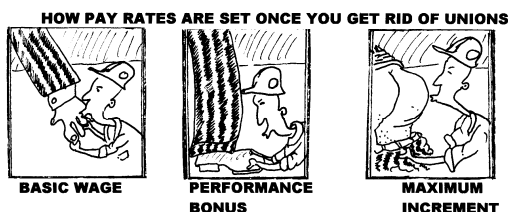
## TOLL MULLING SELL-OFFS AFTER PROFIT DOWNGRADE

Toll Group founder Paul Little's past expansion strategy is being questioned in light of the company's profit downgrade, with several of the former MD's acquisitions reportedly being under consideration for divestment. First to go is Toll's motor vehicle preparation and distribution business Toll AutoLogistics, which managing director Brian Kruger said will be sold off into its finished vehicle distribution service with automotive storage, processing and rectification specialist PrixCar, the 50-50 joint venture between Toll and K-Line Auto-Logistics Pty Limited. (Coincidentally half of the shares in K Line Auto Logistics are owned by Qube Logistics, the ports and distribution vehicle of Paul Little's nemesis Chris Corrigan.)

The net impact of the sale will be a \$75 million after tax cash inflow to Toll, and a pre-tax gain of approximately \$47 million (\$37 million after tax). Toll will retain its 50 per cent interest in PrixCar.

"We are taking a close look at underperforming businesses and are already undertaking strategic reviews of Footwork Express, Toll Marine Logistics Asia and Toll Refrigerated.

"Despite the challenges of the external environment, the majority of our businesses have continued to perform well, providing a strong contribution to overall group earnings," Mr Kruger said.



"The deductions from workers' pay for partial strike action is another attack on the rights of workers. It is designed to force workers either into a full strike or to abandon any action. It is punitive and one-sided

when the major industrial relations problems we face are extensive lockouts."

Helen Kelly said that recent research has shown that inequality is lowest where unions are prevalent.

Toll Group shares opened at \$4.33 on Friday, down from a high of close to \$6.00 in April.

## GOVERNMENT UNDERMINES BARGAINING TO REDUCE PAY AND CONDITIONS

The Council of Trade Unions today slams another attack by the National Government on workers' pay and conditions.

Helen Kelly, CTU President, says "the Government has a responsibility to promote collective bargaining. Instead they are undermining it and they know this will further reduce pay and conditions for New Zealand workers."

"I call on other parties in Parliament to unite to defeat these attacks."

"We have seen over 53,000 people leave for Australia in the last year. We need a law that can lift pay and conditions through industry standard agreements rather than another round of attacks on worker' rights."

Helen Kelly said that the changes are not minor, but significant.

The removal of the duty to conclude collective bargaining will be seen as the 'Port of Auckland clause' because the Government knows that the port wanted to abandon collective bargaining and instead contract out.

"And removing the 30 day protection for new workers when they start a job in a workplace with a collective agreement is heartless," she said. "It is making vulnerable workers even more vulnerable."

"We don't believe these changes are good for business. We are calling on businesses with modern workplace approaches and who work well with workers and their unions to oppose these changes with us."

## PRIME PORT TIMARU

Matters are ticking along at Prime Port. The shipping days have changed so the combined Maersk-Hamburg Sud service is now worked Sunday night- Monday morning. The change has obviously put some pressure on the Port to retain labour as we had some members who were put in an awkward position in that they had worked these Sunday and Monday elsewhere, whilst being available for port work on other days.

The upshot has been that five people had their guaranteed hours increased to be 32 hr/week which was good for them and secured their availability for the employer.

Members have been closely watching events in the AFFCO and Ports of Auckland dispute, given that South Canterbury is still a meat producing region and Timaru has a port that draws on a large hinterland.

## HEALTH BUDGET ON TRACK FOR A \$150M SHORTFALL

A pre-Budget analysis of government health expenditure released today by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions estimates that if the current funding track for Vote Health is continued this year, there will be a \$150 million shortfall that must be met by cuts in services, increased user charges or efficiency or productivity increases.

The Budget track for Health has been that it receives \$420 million in new money each year says Bill Rosenberg, CTU Economist.

Bill Rosenberg said "the government has already announced approximately \$23 million of those cuts and increased user charges, including the rise from \$3 to \$5 in prescription charges. We estimate that to avoid cuts in services or increased user charges, the Health Vote would need to increase by at least \$570 million just to keep pace with population growth, ageing, increases in costs, and the spending

announcements made by the government to date."

"We estimate that \$506 million would be needed without the new spending announcements, including \$411 million for District Health Boards (DHBs). DHBs usually receive \$350 million of the increase. If that happens again, they will have a \$61 million shortfall." "Given that there has been a shortfall of over \$220 million over the last two years, significant productivity improvements will be increasingly hard to find," says Bill Rosenberg. "That suggests we will see more deterioration in services or increased user charges." "The CTU and its affiliated health sector unions have made this estimate so that we and the public can judge whether the Health vote announced in the Budget on 24 May provides for improved health services, or is really a cut in those services, or a standstill," said Rosenberg.

In the last two years, the CTU carried out a similar analysis prior to Budgets. "Our estimate of the increase needed simply to keep up with costs and population increase was within 1 percent of that provided by the Ministry of Health in 2010 and 2 percent in 2011. Last year we estimated that \$564 million was required, compared with the Ministry's estimate of \$576 million. In addition we allowed for new treatments and an increase in productivity, both which the Ministry did not allow for. Our estimates therefore tend if anything to underestimate the needs of Vote Health."

## LACK OF CASH FOR CAPITAL CONNECTION CONCERNS COUNCILS

Two regional councils say the fate of the Capital Connection train service between Palmertson North and Wellington hinges on the Transport Agency, which is refusing to stump up cash for the service.

The Capital Connection has been losing several hundred dollars a day since other commuter trains began servicing Paraparaumu and Waikanae more than a year ago and KiwiRail says it can't keep absorbing the losses.

The Wellington, and Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Councils, both say they would



subsidise the service if the Transport Agency contributed, too.

But the Transport Agency says there is no congestion problem between Wellington and Palmerston North, so there is no justification for it investing.

## INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR TALLEY'S AFFCO WORKERS

The International Union of Food Workers has today passed a resolution of support from their Geneva Congress for Talley's AFFCO workers who are locked out or on strike.

Helen Kelly, CTU President says "over 500 delegates, representing millions of workers in the food, agriculture, hotel and catering sectors at the International Union of Food (IUF) global Congress today unanimously passed a resolution of solidarity and support for workers locked out and striking to fight for their rights at work at Talley's AFFCO."

"The resolution adds to our call for Talley's to end the lockout and negotiate a fair and just collective agreement with the Meat Workers Union."

Earlier this week, Peter Conway, CTU Secretary attended the Australian Council of Trade Unions Congress in Sydney, and met with the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU), National Union of Workers (NUW) and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) to discuss the Affco dispute.

The ACTU Congress then passed a resolution that Congress support and stand with these 1300 Talley's Affco workers, and called on the company to lift its lock out immediately and unconditionally and negotiate a fair and just collective agreement with the New Zealand Meat Workers Union.

Helen Kelly says "workers around the world are standing up and showing their support for these workers. They are calling on Talley's AFFCO to negotiate in good faith for a collective agreement that respects the

workers. These resolutions and signs of international support will bring international attention to the completely unacceptable and uncaring approach Talley's AFFCO are taking in this dispute."

## GOOD NEWS.

C3 has been successful in winning back the NZ Steel contract, despite stiff competition from other contractors. The RMTU's partnership approach with C3 greatly helped in the decision.

The C3 negotiations have picked up pace with three days set down over the next two weeks.

## GOVT FAILS TO HONOUR PIKE RIVER PROMISE

The Government has let down the families of the Pike River miners by allowing their body recovery to be conditional on the commercial viability of the mine, the Green Party said today.

"John Key told the Pike River families the Government would do all it could to recover the bodies. That promise has not been honoured," said Green Party West Coast based MP Kevin Hague.

"If Solid Energy determines that Pike River can't be mined then the bodies will not be recovered.

"Pike River is a tragedy of national significance. To sully the

tragedy by making body recovery contingent on commercial viability reduces its importance to the whole country.

"The Government should honour its commitment to recover the bodies regardless of commercial deals," said Mr Hague.

The Green Party is also concerned that a privatised Solid Energy may be less likely to focus on body recovery.

"While the requirement to attempt body recovery would be transferred as part of any sale, we are concerned that the partial sale of state owned Solid Energy could make body recovery even less likely as commercial imperatives are increased in a privatised company.



"The pressure for dividends by big offshore shareholders could play a part. They tend to be less concerned for matters that impact on their bottom line," said Mr Hague

"The Government has seriously let down Pike River families and created the dangerous prospect that the bodies will never be recovered."

## RESEARCH TO ALLOW FREIGHT TRAINS TO RUN AT 200 KM/H

Anyone who has travelled on trains in Europe or Japan rocketing along in silence and comfort wonders why Australian train continue to trundle at 1940s speeds. It's not the train or even the lines, but the rocky foundations (or ballast) on which the rails are laid, and results in strict speed limits for trains. The problem is these fist-sized rocks move when trains pass over them. It's a grinding motion which causes the ballast to spread out and disintegrate. This makes the lines unstable and in severe examples can lead to derailments. In NSW alone, maintaining the ballast is a \$15 million annual cost. Khaja Syed from the University of Wollongong says that about ten years ago engineers identified a solution. This was to place a plastic mesh ('geogrid') underneath the rocks to hold the ballast in place.

"Currently, the average speed of freight trains in Australia is about 80 kilometres per hour. Normal rail track can't cater for speeds approaching 200 kilometres per hour, which Australia needs for high-speed, heavy freight trains," says Mr Syed. "By upgrading to high-speed freight trains, we can improve the efficiency of transport for sectors such as agriculture and mining," says Prof. Indraratna. "That also makes transport more resilient and cheaper in the future."

"Everywhere else in the world people talk about speeds exceeding 300 kilometres per hour when they talk about high-speed rail, but our current maximum speeds are just over 150 kilometres per hour." Prof. Indraratna's team, of which Mr Syed is a part, are some of the only researchers in Australia looking at high-speed rail tracks instead of just super-charged engines or locomotives. "We need this research," he

says. "It's like having the fastest Porsche without the road to run it on."

## SHOW US THE MONEY – PORT TAURANGA

In the POT negotiations, the POT have put a proposal on the table, so a number of report back meetings will take place to discuss a number of claims, before we meet on the 28th May. The security part timers is a top issue, along with contracting out.



## DECISION TO BE MADE ON FATIGUE MANAGEMENT

Australia's transport ministers will come together to consider a Regulator Impact Statement (RIS) regarding whether the new Rail Safety National Law should further regulate, and place limits around, hours of work and rest for rail safety workers, including the national harmonisation of shift limits for train drivers. The reform would see the national harmonisation of rail safety regulation by removing 12-hour shift limits for train drivers. Under the new law, each rail operator would need to be able to demonstrate to the National Rail Safety Regulator (NRSR) that their fatigue management program satisfies the requirements as stipulated in the two pages of regulations (known as regulation 29).

Australasian Railway Association (ARA) chief executive Bryan Nye told Rail Express that over-prescriptive regulation that limits work hours would stop industry innovation and restrict the industry from the benefits of its work with fatigue experts.

However, the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) maintains that, "Academic research



has now clearly shown that the only way to ensure fatigue related accidents and fatalities are minimised is to extend the NSW shift length maximums [12 hours] nationwide," a spokesperson for the RTBU told Rail Express. "It is vital that minister's vote to include maximum shift lengths and minimum rest breaks in national law," the spokesperson said.

## RAILCORP SPLIT IN TWO, 750 JOBS CUT

The New South Wales Government has announced that it will axe 750 jobs at RailCorp as it moves to split the NSW passenger operator in two – the biggest shakeup to the state's railways in a generation. Transport minister Gladys Berejiklian said the government's "Fixing the Trains" program was about "slashing the top heavy, back office bureaucracy".

The government's initiative would see RailCorp broken up into two specialist organisations, Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. The former would serve customers who need quick, frequent and reliable trains in the greater Sydney suburban area, while the latter would serve intercity, regional and country customers who travel longer distances and need comfortable and reliable services, with on-board facilities.

Up to 750 voluntary redundancies would be offered to RailCorp middle management, mostly in Head Office, to simplify processes and reduce bureaucracy.

The government said no frontline staff would be affected by the job cuts but the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) was quick to refute this.

"Coming on the back of the shedding of 600 transit officer jobs we are very concerned that this is just the start of rolling job cuts," RTBU NSW secretary Alex Claassens said.

Claassens said

- the government had not consulted with workers or unions before announcing the job cuts through the media on Tuesday morning.
- "This shows a blatant lack of respect to workers and their families who woke up to read that their jobs may be on the line,"
- commuters were looking for long term transport solutions, driven by sensible reform, not cost cutting and job losses,
- "They want more services, better passenger safety, a simpler ticketing system, and better coordination of timetables."

## EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION AT PORT OF NELSON

RMTU Delegates have begun talks with Port of Nelson to develop an employee participation agreement (EPA). The purpose of the agreement is to improve health and safety on site by encouraging a collaborative approach to safety that values and encourages union participation. Working together to develop an EPA is also a requirement under the Health and Safety in Employment Act. The Company and the RMTU will meet shortly to discuss the draft document.

## RAIL GRINDER

KiwiRail is negotiating with Australian Company SPENO for a 2 year contract to undertake rail grinding in NZ. KiwiRail has been consulting with the RMTU on this matter. The grinder is a highly specialized machine and the operators are very highly skilled. For example we are informed by KiwiRail that the grind and machine operator requires a minimum of 12 months training to become competent on the machine. The machine is currently operating in Victoria and will be shipped to NZ on a specialized heavy lift ship. The RMTU has sought assistance from the RTBU and MUA on details around the grinder.

The discussions between the RMTU and KiwiRail have bogged down on a request by the RMTU for SPENO to become a subsequent party to the rail industry MECA and for SPENO to be required to pay no less than (they can pay more) the terms and conditions within the MECA for similar roles. The Union may require assistance from members to enforce this requirement if agreement cannot be achieved.

## OTIRA TUNNEL

The joint KiwiRail and RMTU safety review of the Otira rail tunnel is well underway with a report to the steering group expected shortly. The tunnel is 8.5km long and situated between Arthurs Pass and Otira. It is used predominantly to carry coal from the West Coast to Canterbury.

The joint working group has systematically identified the hazards in the tunnel and is





reviewing the current safety procedures including personal protective equipment. An independent Air monitoring company is conducting environmental monitoring to assess whether exposure levels are within the Workplace Exposure Standards.

Other aspects of the review include emergency preparedness and systems for reporting hazards.

## LIVING WAGE AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

As the gap between the rich and poor grows in New Zealand and poverty increases, more and more New Zealanders don't get paid enough to meet their needs, enjoy their lives and participate in society.

All over the world communities are uniting to address poverty and inequality through living wage campaigns. The Living Wage Campaign in Aotearoa New Zealand is being initiated by the Service and Food Workers Union Ngā Ringa Tota. It aims to connect unions, community and faith-based organisations together around a common goal of achieving a living wage as a necessary step in reducing inequality and poverty in our society.

How will the Living Wage Campaign become a reality?

- Local and central government should lead by example and ensure their employees are paid a living wage
- All publicly-funded bodies should operate "responsible contractor" practices that guarantee a living wage for workers indirectly employed within their business
- Corporates and other employers who can pay should lead the private sector by paying a living wage

What will the Living Wage Campaign do?

- Call for a living wage that is based on an independently calculated rate
- Work with local networks to build local organisation to address local needs
- Acknowledge the many facets of a living wage including tax, transfers, and social services

- Recognise the many voices in our community that are fighting for a just society for those in and outside of paid work
- Make the living wage a real issue that unites communities

Why do we need the Living Wage Campaign?

- New Zealand has gone from one of the most equal countries in the OECD to one of the most unequal in the past 20 years
- The richest 150 people in New Zealand grew their wealth by 20% in 2010 while wages moved by less than 2%
- The top 1% of earners has more wealth than the bottom 60%, or three times more than the combined cash and assets of the poorest 50 per cent
- 200,000 NZ children are likely to be living in poverty – one in six Pakeha, one in four Pacific, and one in three Māori children

The Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign says: A living wage is the income necessary to provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life. A living wage will enable workers to live with dignity and to participate as active citizens in society. We call upon the Government, employers and society as a whole, to strive for a living wage for all households as a necessary and important step in the reduction of poverty in New Zealand.

## PORT CHALMERS

The Combined Unions, RMTU and MUNZ have initiated bargaining for a new collective agreement at Port Otago.

Our current agreement expires on 9 July and we are in the preliminary phase of gathering and preparing remits and claims from the membership and sorting out a bargaining process arrangement with the Employer.

Our hope is that we get round the table and ideally reach an agreement before expiry. Whether that happens given the current climate of industrial relations, both nationally and locally remains to be seen.

The Port Otago Branch RMTU Executive attended a two day seminar on bargaining that our union organised last month, so are



well prepared in one sense for the challenges of the bargaining round.

We are also in mediation with the employer this Friday over the redundancy of the receptionist's position – an issue that prompted a picket that was widely supported by our fellow RMTU members in the Otago Rail Branch and other Dunedin unionists and generated considerable publicity in the local media.

## GOVT MUST HEED LATEST COURT VICTORY FOR CARERS

Victory in the Court of Appeal for families caring for disabled family members should be taken notice of by the Government, Green MP Catherine Delahunty said today.

Parents caring for their disabled children haven't been paid for this work. However in 2011, the Human Rights Review Tribunal ruled that such families were being discriminated against. The Government appealed this decision to the High Court and the Court of Appeal. Today the Court of Appeal upheld earlier decisions siding with the carers.

"The Government must cease any further legal action," said Ms Delahunty.

"The Government needs to start working with the families caring for their own disabled family members.

"All the carers want is the same amount that a stranger providing the same standard of care would receive," said Ms Delahunty.

"The years of legal action by the Government have been hard on the plaintiffs who have just been trying to get some financial assistance for the work they do caring for their disabled children.

"The money the Government has spent on legal fees fighting these families would be much better spent on providing financial assistance to these carers."

Earlier this year, in response to an oral question from Catherine Delahunty, it was revealed that the Ministry of Health and Crown Law had spent just under \$1.4 million in legal action relating to this case.

## GOVERNMENT ACTION ON FOREIGN CHARTER VESSELS WELCOMED

The Council of Trade Unions welcomes the latest announcement by the Government on Foreign Charter Vessels in our fishing industry. Peter Conway, CTU Secretary, says that the Government has taken a strong stance to fully phase out the use of charters and this is fully justified.

Union submissions to the Foreign Charter Vessels Inquiry highlighted the shocking treatment of workers, the need for more investment in on-shore processing and local jobs, and the harm to New Zealand's international reputation.

"A lot of the focus has been on procedures that could be put into place for observers, or immigration rules, revised Codes, and other measures that would improve the working conditions for these workers. But what we also need is a structural change so that reliance of foreign charter vessels is removed," says Peter Conway. "Unions proposed the phasing out of Foreign Charter Vessels so that all ships catching our quota were flagged in New Zealand and therefore subject to full compliance with our maritime and employment laws. The Government has now taken that step."

Peter Conway said that unions also advocated for more training and an industry development project so that the economic returns from fishing could result in more jobs for Kiwis, including value-added on-shore processing.

"We want to work with the Government and the industry to make sure that this occurs alongside the phasing out of Foreign Charter Vessels."

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

**"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"!**

