THE ACTIVIST



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REMEMBER WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL

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. The key themes of this year are;

- Address the causes of occupational and environmental cancers at the workplace, and;
- Demand safety and health standards and enforcement, and;
- Build on Global Union campaign activities on banning asbestos and HIV/AIDS
- Say NO to Violence in the workplace

Some RMTU Branches will be conducting commemorative meetings at the memorials unveiled in previous years. We have been advised of:

 Christchurch's Workers Memorial Day is 28 April at Science Alive Reserve from 11.30 -12.30 Hutt Workshops on 28 April starting 1200hrs at the memorial garden. Helen Kelly (CTU), Ross Wilson (KiwiRail and ACC Boards) will be speaking.

Please advise National Office if you are holding a ceremony in your area. If you wish to invite a National Office speaker then 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!

POSTERS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO BRANCHES SO MAKE SURE YOUR NOTICEBOARD HAS 1 OR 2 OR 3....



ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER CLOSURE: PACIFIC BRAND'S NZ WORKERS GET THE BAD NEWS

"New Zealanders must join the chorus of opposition from across the Tasman at the decision of Pacific Brands to cease its manufacturing in Australia and New Zealand and move operations to

China and other low waged countries," says Robert Reid, President of the National Distribution Union.

Last week PacBrands told its Australian workforce that it was closing its Australian manufacturing plants. Today it gave a similar announcement to workers at its Christchurch and Palmerston North factories.

The National Distribution Union represents textile and clothing workers at both plants. A total of 38 workers including 9 salaried staff are employed in Christchurch and 51,

including 5 salaried staff are employed in Palmerston North.

Workers at both plants were called to meetings at 2.00 pm today where the company told them of the company's new manufacturing policy and announced that it was formally beginning the consultation process with the union as required by the Collective Employment Agreement.

"The PacBrands story reads just like a rerun of Feltex and we fear that PacBrand workers will suffer the same fate," says Robert Reid.

"In 2001 PacBrands was bought from Pacific Dunlop for AUD \$730 million by the

private equity funds CVC Asia Pacific and Catalyst Investment Managers backed by the Macquarie Bank.

"Australian analysts say that the private equity funds took AUD \$100 million out in cash, loaded the company with debt and then sold it on the share market for AUD \$1 billion. A cool AUD \$370 million profit. At the same time PacBrands

told its NZ workers that it could not afford decent wage increases and from time to time forced them onto 4 day weeks.

"Today, PacBrands shares are only worth AUD 17 cents, the banks are breathing down Pacific Brand's neck and the Australian public is rallying behind calls to boycott the iconic brands marketed by the firm.

"On one hand, like the Australian Unions we want to work with PacBrands to see if there is any way the plants can remain open and jobs can be saved.

"But on the other hand we want to ensure that PacBrands' workers redundancy payments are safe if closure and redundancy is the final decision.

"The redundancy payments for NZ Pacific Brand workers are very modest. They are just over 1/3 the entitlements that Australian Pacific Brands workers will receive and nowhere near the AUD \$4 million redundancy that the former CEO received last year," Robert Reid says.

"The NDU is demanding that Pacific Brands immediately puts the redundancy compensation in trust to ensure that it is safe for workers if redundancies do occur," Robert Reid says.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – RMTU NATIONAL PRESIDENT

In accordance with Rule 24 of the Rules & Standing Orders of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union nominations are hereby called for the position of National President.

Nominations must be in writing and contain the signed consent of the candidate.

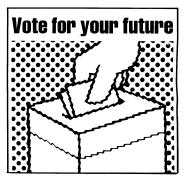
Nominations shall be proposed and seconded by financial members (Rule 1).

Nominations must be received at the Union's national Office by the Returning Officer no later than 8am on Wednesday 29 April 2009.

Nominations are open to all financial members of the

Union

- The term of the office is for 2 years (Rule 24.2)
- This is an honorary position and NOT full time
- Duties are as contained in Rule 27 of the Union's Rules & Standing Orders.
- All nominee's (the person being nominated) MUST be financial members of the Union at the time of nomination – Rule 24.5
- The nominators and seconders must all be current financial members of the Union
- Nomination forms are available for download from the Union website or by contacting National Office on 04-499-2066.
- The incumbent advises that he shall be seeking re-election.
- Should a ballot of members be required (if there are more than 1 nomination after the date of nominations closure) then it will be conducted under 42. This





will be a full postal ballot of all financial members of the Union.

• The Returning Officer for the election shall be the General Secretary.

LABOUR PARTY REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Dates for regional conferences are as follows:

- Region 1 15/16 May in Auckland
- Region 2 6/7 June in Hamilton
- Region 3 2/3/ May in Bulls
- Region 4 16 May in Wellington
- Region 5 6/7 June in Greymouth
- Region 6 23/24 May venue to be confirmed.

The RMTU is affiliated to the Labour Party and so will be represented at the conferences. If you are interested then contact your regional Union organiser or Branch Secretary.

SEALORD TO CUT 160 JOBS IN NELSON

160 workers at Sealord in Nelson are to lose their jobs through restructuring, within days of the Job Summit called by the Prime

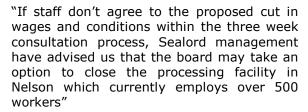
Minister to work out how to save jobs.

At a time when unity and collective cooperation between unions, employers and the Government is making headlines, Sealord have just demanded that their

employees must accept a reduction in wages to increase profits or face dismissal.

"Sealord intends to lay off around 160 staff immediately, and have indicated to us that they may close the processing plant in the near future unless staff agree to what is effectively a \$70 a week cut in wages across the board." said Neville Donaldson, SFWU Assistant National Secretary.

"At a time when most businesses are saying they are prepared to make less profit in order to secure employment, Sealord have demanded that workers increase the company profits by \$1.8 million through wage and condition cuts."



"Although our union will do our best to protect the jobs and working conditions of our members, much more needs to be done. Sealord is an iconic New Zealand company and high level discussions need to happen urgently to stop this situation getting any worse."

"Given the commitment from the Job Summit we are expecting immediate support from the Government to save these jobs".

STOP PAYING DOCTORS TO PUSH PEOPLE OFF ACC

The Green Party wants Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) to stop paying doctors to push people off ACC.

ACC pays doctors \$50 for each patient they move into the "Better at Work" pilot in Taupo. There are also additional incentive payments for participation in the scheme.

The aim is to save money by stopping support for accident victims - the savings made will be shared between ACC and the doctors.

"We support helping injured people back into work," Green Party ACC Spokesperson Sue

Bradford said today.

"But paying doctors extra to remove people from income-related support more quickly provides a perverse incentive to force accident victims into work before they are ready.

"Doctors should provide neutral medical advice on rehabilitation for accident victims. A scheme that pays doctors to push people into work does not achieve this.

"Providing financial incentives to health professionals to reduce the number of people receiving ACC needs to stop.





"Better at Work" will be piloted with the 25 doctors at the Lake Taupo Primary Health Organisation. When it finishes on 31 August, ACC will consider a nationwide roll out for 2010.

"However, before 'Better at Work' is imposed on ACC claimants around the country it needs to be radically reworked to remove financial inducements to doctors.

"Doctors are trained to obtain the best medical outcome for their patients - this should be their motivation, not private profit at the patient's expense.

"This new ACC payment scheme looks like the misguided work of free-marketers, rather than a project aimed at optimising the rehabilitation outcome for accident victims," said Ms Bradford.

For further information on the "Better at Work" Pilotsee:

http://www.nzdoctor.co.nz/news?article=544af3ea-964b-49e4-87df-9bbb0e124b85

http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD_EXT_CSMP/groups/external_providers/documents/internet/prd_ctrb109014.pdf

PORTS FORUM

An interesting and challenging programme is in store for delegates attending the 2009 National Ports Forum in Wellington on 5 & 6 May 2009. The Forum will continue some of the themes of previous forums;

- Organising mapping for growth and power
- unity of the RMTU members on the waterfront,
- o bargaining and core term discussions,
- health and safety matters of particular concern to waterfront workers,
- ACC past/present & future,
- effects on New Zealand Ports caused by the recession
- the demise of the Seachange Strategy will be outlined

- Discussion on the ITF and MUA approaches to the recession
- Discussion and report on the Port Tauranga "Port of Convenience" issue

Port branches are urged to ensure they are well represented at the Forum, an opportunity to keep abreast of the latest developments affecting port workers, network with comrades at other ports and make the most of an industry specific conference which is just for port workers.

Port branches MUST advise the National Office who their delegates will be, as soon as

possible so that all arrangements can be made.

Registration forms are available from your branch secretary or contact Julia at National Office on 04-4992066 or julia@rmtunion.org.nz.

Once bookings are made any subsequent alterations which incur additional cost (air travel

particularly) will be invoiced to branches.



The National Government's decision to take a dividend from TVNZ needlessly risks the livelihoods of the broadcaster's workers, say the Public Service Association and the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

The decision comes despite the fact that last month TVNZ revealed that due to the recession advertising revenues were 10 percent below budget, which represents an annualised shortfall of income of \$30m. Staff cuts have not been ruled out.

Broadcasting Minister Jonathan Coleman has repeated Prime Minister John Key's position that he is still expecting TVNZ to pay the government a dividend.

"Jobs at TVNZ are definitely on the line but the government is showing no sympathy and continues to demand a dividend," says PSA national secretary Richard Wagstaff.

"John Key talks about bailing out the private sector to save jobs but won't lift a finger to save jobs at TVNZ.



FAIRNESS AT WORK

"It appears that workers in the public sector are expendable and the government is quite prepared to see productive public sector workers consigned to the dole queue."

EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says the government's actions don't make business sense.

"It's irrational for any shareholder to demand a business-as-usual dividend from a company that has been hit hard by recession, let alone a government shareholder that has been claiming it wants to save jobs.

"The minister needs to explain why the government's efforts to keep Kiwis in work don't extend to the Kiwis that work for TVNZ."

Staff at TVNZ have been told the crown

owned company needs to cut its costs by \$25 million.

TVNZ paid a \$10.3 million dividend to the

government in the last financial year that ended on June 30, 2008.

The PSA and EPMU represent 100,000 working New Zealanders including more than 200 frontline TVNZ staff.

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 is 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!

NELSON PINE LAYOFFS A BLOW TO REGION

Nelson Pine's announcement that it plans to shed 60 jobs is a further blow to a region already reeling from job losses at Sealord, say the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union and the National Distribution Union.

The announcement was made this afternoon and is being blamed on falling demand in international markets.

NDU southern regional

secretary Paul Watson says: "We will be working as hard as we can to ensure everything possible is done to save every job possible.

"Now is the time to roll out some of the 'innovative solutions' talked about at the Jobs Summit."

EPMU national timber industry organiser Alan Clarence says the redundancies are a sign the global recession is starting to have a local impact.

"The timber industry relies heavily on the international building industry but the global recession means that market is drying up and there's falling local demand as well.

"We will be consulting with the company over the next few weeks to try to mitigate the impact of this announcement."

The EPMU and NDU represent 160 workers at Nelson Pine.



LOW WAGES TOO HIGH A PRICE FOR CHEAP AIRFARES - EPMU

Jetstar's low-wage business model is not welcome in New Zealand, says the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

The call follows Jetstar's announcement that it is replacing Qantas, an EPMU unionised company, without union consultation as well as reports by business analysts that the company plans to compete using lower staff costs.

EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says Jetstar's low-wage model is unacceptable in New Zealand.

"Jetstar may be offering low cost tickets but they will come at the price of lower wages for working Kiwis."

"As the biggest union in New Zealand's aviation industry we'll be making sure we make contact

with Jetstar staff to let them know exactly what the industry standards are and to offer them the chance to negotiate through the EPMU.

"There's a lot of talk about Jetstar increasing competition in the industry but when it's a competition to lower wages it's one we can do without."

The EPMU represents more than four thousand aviation industry workers in New Zealand including Qantas ground staff.

NMC ALTERS FOR 2009 ELECTION

A discussion paper was tabled for consideration and adoption by the members of the National Management Committee (NMC) of the RMTU at the 11 March meeting. The paper outlined a number of options for this year's NMC election. The representation options can be summarised as being;

- Status Quo 2 Port, 2 Non Core rail and 2 Core rail
- 2. A move to sectoral representation based upon occupational lines

 The alteration of the distribution of positions between core and noncore rail to reflect the movement of members back into the Core category with the renationalisation of rail. This would mean 3 core rail, 1 noncore rail and 2 Port reps on NMC.

A major consideration was whether a major change like option 2 could and should be done by the NMC outside of Annual Conference and it was felt that it was not appropriate as the membership should be given the opportunity to determine such a major change. It was felt that the status quo

would be nonsense as this would mean there were 2 positions to represent 646 members in noncore whereas there would be 2 for 2818 in core rail.

NMC resolved to adopt option 3 above for the 2009 election.

NMC nominations will be called for the positions later this year with the National President position being called on 1 April 2009. The

National president and NMC positions have an office term of 2 years and the General Secretary is 4 years.

KEY AND ENGLISH SENDING CONFLICTING MESSAGES

New Zealanders need more certainty from the National Government about how it plans to fight the global recession, not conflicting messages from John Key and Bill English, Labour's Finance spokesperson David Cunliffe said today.

"Bill English is again out of step with the Prime Minister about how New Zealand will come out of the recession," David Cunliffe said.

On TVNZ's Q+A yesterday Bill English said "I think one of the features of this recession is that we're unlikely to aggressively grow out of it".

But John Key on the same programme two weeks earlier said "I think by the end of 2009 early 2010 this time next year we'll be starting to come out of that and I think actually starting to come out of it reasonably aggressively,".



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"If they can't agree with what the problem is, how are they going to develop a solution? What are Kiwi's workers and business owners meant to take from the confusion between the PM and his deputy," David Cunliffe said.

"This only serves to confirm what I have been saying consistently.

The Government has no comprehensive plan to tackle the recession.

If they did, both leaders would be signing from the same song sheet. But there appears to be some disharmony.

"It could also be that Bill English is continuing his crusade to undermine the Prime Minister. What about Bill English's other greatest hits -

'[John Key's] always got 10 ideas - that's the trouble with him. Getting on those bloody planes he comes back with 10 different things. I just say we'll look at that.' -NZ Herald, 21 Jan 2009

'I'm a stayer, he's a sprinter. I grind away, John just bounces from one cloud to another.'-North and South, July 2007

'[On John Key's Cycle-way] We won't be spending \$50 million dollars on it this year, or next year, or the year after.'-TVNZ Q+A, 5 April 2009

"It's time John Key and Bill English quit the power games and came up with a real plan to shelter New Zealanders from the economic crisis," David Cunliffe said.

MAYDAY @ BLACKBALL

"without our brain and muscle not a single wheel will turn"

It is intended to commemorate the Mayday event in Blackball as usual. This is an 'early warning' notice of the event.

Draft programme for 2009 Celebration of 1908 Blackball Strike.

- Friday 1st May 8.00pm, The Hilton -Songs of working people
- Saturday 2nd May 10.00am, Working Men's Club - Forum: The legacy of neo-liberalism. Can we

think the system or does the system think us? What should we be talking about?

- o Workers rights? Money?
- Social dysfunction? The planet?
- o Food? Revolution? Culture?
- o Housing? State surveillance?
- And what action should we be taking?

Saturday 2nd 2.00pm, Working Men's Club - Workshop on '08 Strike Memorial Project

Saturday 2nd 8.00pm, Blackball Church. Theatre: The Curator of Baghdad, a story from Guantanamo Bay (with Paul Maunder, Caroline Selwood, Garyth Bensley)

Lunch, Dinner and Accommodation available at The Hilton bbhilton@xtra.co.nz

Further information: wkcultur@ihug.co.nz or www.blackballmuseum.org.nz or

037324010

NOT AT WORK.

MATE



The deadline for all branch notes, letters to the editor or other contributions (including photos) is 8 May 2009.

Contributions from Branches who have been absent to date would be particularly welcome as would individual letters from members on topics they feel strongly about.

Remember it is YOUR magazine.

NAB / BNZ'S PLAN TO CUT DIVIDENDS - NOT JOBS

Bank workers' union Finsec says that BNZ parent company NAB's decision to cut its forthcoming half year dividend by 25% is a more socially response to the recession.

"We have already lost too many jobs in the banking sector to restructuring and offshoring," said Finsec General Secretary Andrew Casidy. "We hope that NAB's



announcement today represents a shift to shareholders sharing the pain of the recession, rather than forcing it all on to workers."

"The BNZ and the other big Australian owned banks in New Zealand now enjoy taxpayer guarantees and therefore operate with far less risk to shareholders," said Casidy.

"The other half of that equation is that the banks should take responsibility for protecting jobs by maintaining their current staffing levels. During this recession, dividends should take a back seat to investing in the local economy."

Andrew Casidy said that the NAB announcement included plans for some restructuring and that the union would be watchful that New Zealand jobs are not lost as part of that process. He accepted the BNZ's assurances given this morning that NAB's announcements today will not lead to any reduction in New Zealand jobs. "Everyone is sighing with relief given the speculation recently that hundreds of jobs could be lost as a result of this process."

"We will be looking for government to work with us to ensure that banks that benefit from being underwritten by the taxpayer commit to protecting Kiwi jobs," said Andrew Casidy. "This would build on the

work that the banks, government and unions began at the Jobs Summit."

OIA REQUEST

Recently TV3 made an Official Information

Request on KiwiRail group about bonuses. Here is the answers;

- Yes (we do pay performance-based bonuses).
- No other bonuses are paid.
- What are these bonuses called? NA
- Bonus payments in 2008: To former Toll NZ employees - \$2,184,968; to ONTRACK employees - \$195,839
- Bonus payments in 2007: Toll NZ employees – prior to Crown ownership; ONTRACK - \$144,026

- Payments to CEOs: Toll CEO unknown;
 ONTRACK CEO \$58,526 for 2007 and \$78,339 for 2008
- Former Toll staff bonuses were based on EBIT achievement and individual KPIs; ONTRACK employees' bonuses were based on achievement of KPIs determined by the Board in the case of the CEO and by the CEO in the case of other staff.

Note: the payment to former Toll employees was a contractual obligation between the company (Toll) and its employees, acquired as part of the Crown's purchase of the rail and ferry businesses. The obligation was disclosed in due diligence carried out as part of the purchase process.

UNEMPLOYMENT HITS 11.3%

The number of Australians out of a job is significantly more than widely reported, with The Australia Institute putting the figure at 11.3 per cent.

An analysis of new Australian Bureau of Statistics data by The Australia Institute reveals that in September 2008 there were 780,900 people who did not have a job, wanted to work but were not included in the unemployment figures.

Taking account of these 'hidden unemployed'

brings Australia's real rate of unemployment to 11.3 per cent. The official rate is currently stated as being 5.2 per cent.

`For every person officially recorded as unemployed there are some 1.6

people, the hidden unemployed, who would also like to work and are available to start,' commented David Richardson, Senior Research Fellow at The Australia Institute.

'Combining the official unemployment rate with the hidden unemployment rate gives a more accurate picture of the number of iobless in Australia.

'With the global financial crisis causing further deterioration in the job market and a surge in welfare claimants forecast as a result, it is time for the Government to address the inadequate benefits available to the unemployed.'





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The Australia Institute recommends that unemployment benefits be increased by \$56 a week for singles and \$64 for couples to bring their payments in line with the age and disability pensions.

'Newstart Allowance has been steadily declining relative to average incomes and the age pension for some time. This widening gap between the unemployed and the rest of society needs to be tackled at some point and the current economic crisis provides an obvious opportunity,' concluded Mr Richardson.

ACC Is A Public Good -**FUTURES COALITION**

ACC must be kept as a public good was the message from the ACC Futures Coalition at its launch this morning in Wellington.

The Coalition, which is comprised of health providers, ACC consumers and unions, has been formed to provide balance and information to the debate about the future of ACC.

Coalition spokesperson and ACC advocate Armstrona savs the compensation scheme is vital to New Zealand and New Zealanders.

"When it was introduced ACC was a groundbreaking scheme and it is still a world-leading model that delivers real benefits to hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders at a cost that is far smaller than other systems in other countries.

"Despite this fact the compensation system

determined to turn it into a political football and open it to competition.

"The ACC Futures Coalition aims to build cross-party support for retaining status of ACC as a publicly-owned single provider because we want to maintain and the improve

provision of injury prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and no fault compensation social insurance system that benefits all New Zealanders."

Today's launch marks the start of the Coalition's campaign, with a call to send an open letter to Hon Dr Nick Smith Minister of ACC and all the members of parliament to commit to the retention of ACC as sole provider of accident compensation in New Further information can Zealand. obtained at www.accfutures.org.nz

BITS & BOBS

- A by-election is required for the Mount Albert electorate. Helen Clark has been appointed as Administrator of the UN Development Programme. prospective Nominations from candidates are being called by labour.
- Greymouth LE Gary Martin is retiring this month with 53 years of rail and UNION service. A "do" is being held in Greymouth with a few beers on for the "boys".

LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE & REMEMBER.....

"We're Stronger Together"!



