



M&C Workers News

JOURNAL OF THE MANUFACTURING & CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION

Union to support living wage campaign for Council sub contractors

Last year Wellington City Council voted to pay its employees no less than the minimum living wage. It is the first City Council in New Zealand to do so.

From July 1 all Council entry level roles will reflect the minimum living wage. The Council has already brought some work back in-house, such as parking attendants, ultimately lifting the wages paid by \$4 plus per hour.

The Living Wage Campaign is working to try and extend the living wage to employees of Wellington City Council's contractors and sub contractors.

The union has already endorsed the living



wage and will now join the campaign to support the extension of the living wage to Council subcontractors.

Continued on page 7

Also in this issue...

From the workfront... pages 2 -3

Go Wellington is undermining collective bargaining - the union responds

Collective agreement negotiations... pages 4 - 7

City Care agrees to pilot oral swab testing to detect drug use in the Wellington Region

Graeme Clarke looks back

and forward after 40 years of service to the union... pages 8,9 & 13

Health & safety... page 10
It has been a hot summer, the hazard of heat is discussed.

International news... pages 14 - 15

The world needs a pay rise as global poverty increases



New union organiser starts

Kevin Aitken has decided not to continue working for the union after his years unpaid leave. The Wellington District has hired a replacement, Andrew Hamilton.

Andrew for the past 3 years has been at Community Law Hutt Valley and Wellington on the Refugee and Immigration Legal Advice Service.

DEGREES

He holds degrees in Accounting Information Systems and Law. Previously Andrew worked as a business consultant and tutor. In his spare time he seems to find

myself helping people with their ventures, "Although I'd prefer to just watch football and television," Andrew says.

After some initial training Andrew will pick up some of union General Secretary Graeme Clarke's duties

and help new General Secretary George Larkins. It is intended that Andrew will be available to assist any section of the union on legal matters. The arrangements will be discussed at the next union annual conference.

Strong increase in housing prices

Prices recorded an overall drop in the December 2014 quarter compared with the September quarter.

A drop sometimes occurs in the December quarter. In 2011 the December quarter recorded a 0.3% fall, and in 2012 it was a 0.2% fall. The consumer's price index (CPI) fell 0.2 percent for the three months ending 31 December 2014.

The main contributor to the overall price drop was petrol prices which fell 5.7%.

Vegetable prices were down by 14% but this was a smaller than usual seasonal fall.

International air fares increased 7.3% and domestic 8.3%, also a seasonal rise. When demand for

airfares increase during the holidays airlines raise prices.

Prices for newly built houses excluding land rose by 1.7%, a strong rise.

For the year December 2013 to December 2014 the CPI increased 0.8 percent, down from 1.6% for the 2013 calendar year.

Cigarettes and tobacco prices increased 11.9%, influenced by a tobacco excise duty rise in January 2014.

Prices for newly built houses excluding land was up 5.4%, and rentals for housing up 2.1%. Electricity also increased by 3.6%.

Petrol was the main downward contributor falling 4% over the course of the year.



Andrew Hamilton

From the work front...

Go Wellington undermines collective bargaining prompting legal proceedings

Bus company Go Wellington has been undermining the collective agreement. The union has commenced a case in the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) to stop them.

The company has been "negotiating" flat rate individual employment agreements with any union member who will resign their membership. There is thought to be have been four such agreements put in place.

CLAIMS

At the last collective agreement negotiations the company put forward a lot of claims relating to breaking down overtime and penal rate payments in the collective agreement. The union offered to establish a working party with the company to explore options. This offer was accepted by the company and ratified by all union members including some of those who subsequently left the union.

During the term of the collective agreement the union has requested the company on three occasions to get the working party going. The company has done nothing other than tell individuals that they can't pay anything more than what the collective agreement allows as they are union members.

I AM BETTER THAN THEM

One former member told the union organiser that he had approached the company for a wage increase because he was a "better worker" than others who he suggested did not put in a good days work. The company misrepresented the collective agreement to him saying it prevented offering higher wages to union members.

In fact the collective agreement expressly states that the wage rates in it are a minimum - a floor not a ceiling - and the union has always supported anyone who wanted something more.

The former member who valued

himself more than his workmates accepted the company's prompting and resigned from the union to get a higher flat rate.

The union's claim in the ERA says that these company actions breach the collective agreement and its duty of good faith.

The collective agreement contains a provision which says the company will apply only the terms of the collective agreement to "employees" engaged to do work covered by the collective.

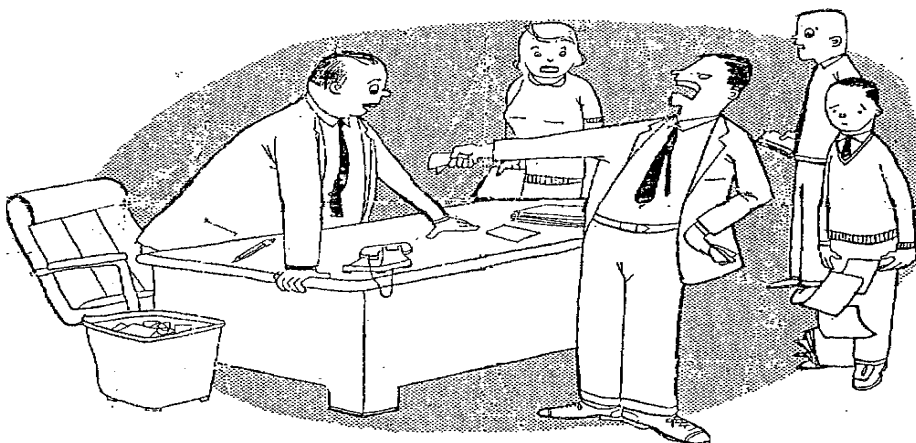
This provision came into the collective agreement, along with another which made it a condition of employment to accept the provisions of the collective agreement, in 1996. It came about because the company imposed inferior conditions on new employees prior to that.

AGREEMENT CHANGES

When the Employment Relations Act came in the law said to be covered by a collective agreement a new employee had to join the union. The rule that for the first 30 days the collective agreement had to be the new employees individual agreement was also included in the collective. In 2005 the company agreed to a bargaining agents fee for anyone who got the benefit of the collective but was not a union member.

The creation of individual flat rate agreements for non union members opens up some additional interesting issues.

THAT'LL BE THE DAY!



"I can't accept this raise. The union got it and I don't belong"

Continued on page 11

Collective agreement negotiations...

City Care agreement introduces oral swab drug testing

Collective agreement negotiations between City Care (Wellington) and the M&C Union, EPMU and AWUNZ were concluded November 2014. A number of gains were made including a 2.25% increase on all paid and printed rates over a term of one year.

It was the first time in the negotiation of the Wellington Region collective agreement that negotiations took more than a day. There were a number of claims about overtime.

NIGHT WORK

A Union claim that if planned night work is performed by an employee on the Stand-by roster the three hour minimum payment will apply, the Company agreed to include the wording in the Terms of Settlement "an employee on the Stand-by roster shall not be allo-

cated overtime at the end of their ordinary hours for the day". This should allay members fears of the potential for periods of unsafe periods of work when on call.

The Unions claim for overtime to be paid at time and a half after 40 hours was not agreed to by the Company; however additional wording was added to the Meal Allowance clause (7.3) stating that an employee must take a meal break after continuous work equal to or over 14 hours and 30 minutes. This meal break will be a paid break.

SWAB TESTING

The Union claim for swab testing to be used instead of urine testing when determining impairment was partially agreed to with the Company agreeing to a six month pilot scheme with swab testing being used initially and urine testing being done if the swab test proved

positive.

Other Union claims agreed to were the Company continuing Kiwisaver contributions after age 65 until retirement, facilities at the Arlington site to be cleaned regularly and the interior to be improved by separating the toilet from the general space.

The Company claims on hours of work, annual leave and redundancy were withdrawn.

There was also some discussion about employment of new staff. An error was pointed out to the company where a new employee had been started on less than the rate in the collective agreement. While the company knew about the qualifications, and these were relevant, the employee had been started on a semi-skilled rate.

LAW CHANGE IMPACT

There was a general discussion about the change to the law on 6 of March that allows new employees to have something different from the collective agreement. The agreement has a no pass on provision. This says that non-union employees must not be given what the union has negotiated.

The unions expressed the view that any new employee who did not want to become a member of the union would have to be started on something much less than the collective agreement as the terms of the collective were far superior to what had applied before the first collective agreement was negotiated.



Improved bargaining prospects at Van Lines

The first day of negotiations for a new collective agreement with NZ Van Lines took place in Auckland in late January.

With the First Union getting some members in Auckland and our union having members in Wellington and Christchurch the unions are now better placed to get an agreement. The NZ Van Lines Union, established to give the company an easy ride, seems to have lost membership and is no longer capable of undermining real negotiations.

PAY GRADES

The company agreed in the negotiations that a new pay grading system had to be developed. The previous system was done in 2001 and was no longer being followed. It was agreed to complete the review by 31 March. Following that

the company will respond to the claim for a pay increase.

Other claims raised by members were discussed in negotiations. These included

- provision of safety footwear
- non slip ramps and maintenance issues
- hi viz water proof jackets being supplied
- overtime after 8 hours per day or 40 per week
- an extra weeks leave after 5 years service
- increase of the meal allowance to \$10 to be provide for working at 6.30pm
- increased sick leave.

The company rejected a number of the claims and indicated they would consider others .

In the negotiations it was agreed to have one trained health and safety rep per site.

Interim pay increase agreed with Spotless

Collective agreement negotiations with Spotless for Palmerston North hospital electricians stalled last year due to disagreement over a company completeness claim.

Electricians conditions of work were not adequately dealt with in previous agreements. The union members did not want to lose the few specific relevant provisions they had managed to obtain.

This would have been the outcome if the completeness claim, acceptance of which was a condition of Spotless's collective agreement offer, was accepted.

On rejection of the completeness clause the company agreed to a union request to negotiate a full collective agreement over the next six months. This would enable a document to be agreed that was specific to electricians.

IEA PAID RATES INCREASED

To enable that negotiation to take place union members accepted a backdated pay increase of 1.5% on their current individual employment agreements.

It is hoped that being able to spend a bit more time on negotiations will produce a document relevant to the electrician's actual work.

Collective agreement briefs...

The collective agreement with Rangitikei Aggregate was renewed at the end of last year with a 50 cents per hour increase. This increase ranged from 1.8 to 2% on existing pay rates for union members at the Marton-based company.

NZ POST

The NZ Post collective agreement was varied to extend the term and provide for a pay rise in April 2015.

The pay increase is 2.5%. The agreement term is extended until 31 March 2016 from the current expiry dated of 30 June 2015.

The variation came about at the initiative of NZ Post. With major restructuring ongoing that would have clashed with bargaining for the collective agreement scheduled for the middle of the year the company wanted to avoid having to bargain. The variation was endorsed by members because it secured a higher payment for those to be made redundant in delivery when the frequency of delivery is changed, and pay increases have been low in the previous two negotiations.

CONVERGA

A roll over of the NZ Post subsidiary's collective agreement is being sought by the union. A 2% pay rise has been offered but the CEA remains unsettled on the issue of red circling those on pay rates not specified in the CEA.

T&G trots out the loss story again

ENZA bargaining has taken on a new flavour. The union represents 6 of the 7 maintenance engineers at the site. The previous managers dealt with are no longer with the company. The company is now owned by Turners & Growers who utilise Auckland based HR and a locally based new manager at Hastings to bargain.

Issues previously dealt with, like the 90 day probation law, that were put to bed many years ago with the previous negotiators have resurfaced.

While the new owner of the business publicly listed a record profit, we were told by them that ENZA, as a newly purchased asset to the larger business, must stand on its own in respect to being able to deliver an increase to workers.

\$10 MILLION LOSS CLAIMED

Negotiators were told that ENZA has made yet another loss as was the case in the previous year and it is forecast to make a lesser loss next year. There was a large capital investment into the plant, particularly a new juicer that our members are getting up and running. While exact figures were not provided on the day union negotiators were advised that the loss was approximately \$10 million, the capital investment was several million and the annual turnover for ENZA approximately \$50million. This picture along with a zero increase offer for members is what management has delivered at bargaining.

The company's stance in bargaining did not square with the com-

pany's audited accounts. These record 12 years of profitability for ENZA's processing segment and a one off loss of \$3.1 million last year occasioned by higher wages for seasonal labour and spending on research and development. However, ENZA as a whole contributed significantly to Turners & Growers record profit.

LESS SICK LEAVE

The company has sought to grandparent some terms and conditions such as the current 65 days sick leave

per annum reducing that to 5 days per year, as well as a clause allowing the fire at will law of 90 days probation.

M&C Union members are vital to the plant and deserve more consideration than a zero offer given their demonstrated dedication to the needs of the business over many years.

Members claimed a 5% increase to the top salary and an equalisation of the base rate given they can all perform all tasks required to the required level and above. Management at bargaining did not believe that all members were equal in work performance, however, they could not deny that all members are often required to work alone on shift and have performed all tasks to the required level when doing so. Members do not accept that a higher base pay for someone doing the same work is fair or reasonable. As per their claims, members believe the only difference in the current salary packages should be via a service allowance/reward.

The company proposed that a Matrix should be developed that would



put people on to the correct pay scale against qualifications, service, skill, ability etc. Our negotiators fully supported this notion as all members would end up at the same base rate which would be in line with our equalisation claim. On the second day of bargaining the company withdrew the matrix proposal stating the cost of administering a matrix could not be justified.

CONSIDERING

Members are not seeking a firming up of the first 30 day law and rather have put forward a claim to strengthen their no pass on provision clause in an attempt to be in a position to protect their CA against freeloading when that law changes. To date, members have stated categorically that they will not ratify any agreement that contains the 90 day law or any agreement that has a zero increase. Members are considering the grand-parenting of the 65 days but only on the basis that company agrees to a higher level of sick leave than offered which is the current legal minimum. Both parties are considering their options.

UNION SUPPORTS LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

Continued from page 1

One of the Council's sub contractors in Wellington is Freemantle Enterprises. The company is involved in recycling Wellington's rubbish. Last year the union negotiated the first collective agreement with the company managing to secure an increase over the minimum wage of \$14.25 per hour for the first time. But there are major difficulties in securing more.

RECYCLER

Freemantle Enterprises recycles rubbish collected in Wellington City's kerbside recycling bins and bags. It is contracted to Full Circle a division of Carter Holt Harvey now owned by Japanese paper company Oji.CHH is contracted to Wellington City Council.

As a subcontractor to Full Circle Freemantle is entirely dependent on CHH for its income. CHH operated a lazy business model - pay the bare minimum. It could get away with this because it stood between the Council and Freemantle. CHH wants the paper to recycle

through its mills, the plastic and metal is sold off on global markets.

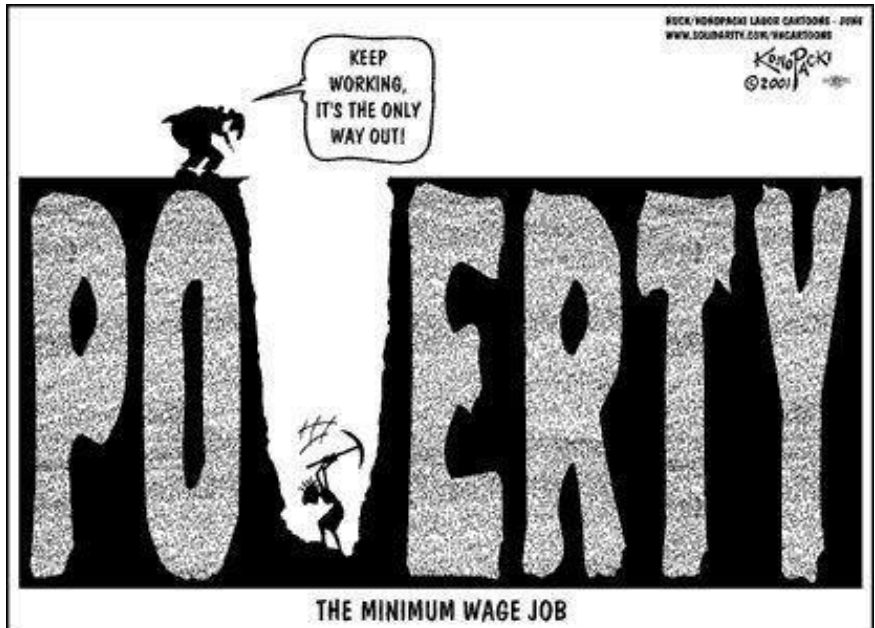
COUNCIL FUNDS

The money that CHH gets from the waste it sells or uses itself is not the full source of its income. According to Wellington City Council the cost of household recycling is paid by a levy on each tonne of waste going to a landfill and from the cost of rubbish bags. The money needed by the Council doesn't

come from rates.

In the union's view the Council can afford to require Full Circle to ensure everyone gets paid a living wage, sub contractors included.

The rumour seems to have been started by Oji that if it is required to pay more it will bring in automation so less workers are required. That threat shows that recycling must be quite profitable because robots generally cost a lot more than workers!



Ultraglass rejects collective agreement

Negotiation for a collective agreement at Ultraglass was initiated last year.

Claims were discussed prior to Christmas. Claim included a number of safety issues, a pay rise, and

the introduction of a fine system for anyone who was abusive towards a union member.

The company responded after Christmas by saying they did not want a collective agreement, even though nearly everyone had joined the union. The company wanted to pay people "what they were worth" and did not want a minimum pay rate to be applicable in case they

wanted to employ someone on the minimum legal wage.

The employers failure to agree to a collective agreement occasioned a resolution carried in a secret ballot to take on the job industrial action to reduce output.

In mid February the union put a proposal back to the company to create a minimum rate document. The company rejected every proposal and stated that they did not want a collective agreement. The company wants to do entirely as it pleases. This will be discussed by members.



Ultraglass

“I hope to have left organisation and traditions that can begin the recovery” - Graeme Clarke

Graeme Clarke was interviewed to mark his 40th year of service to the union.

This issue of M & C Workers News appears just before the union General Secretary turns 65. Staff in the Wellington office told him he was not allowed to retire so from 1 May he will be working part-time.

How did you come to work for the union? elected.

I was elected as union delegate at Todd Motors for the Coachworkers Union. I had trained as a teacher after studying at university. But I failed to get my teaching certificate because I adhered to union principles. A mate of mine, Don Franks, worked at Fords and he suggested I get a job at Todd's new Porirua car assembly plant. After I had been there 8 months I was

What was the union like back then?

The union had over a thousand members at Todds but was disorganised. There were only two delegates. So with help from the likes of Con Devitt I set about getting more delegates elected. I used to make left hand Hillman Hunter doors. Because it was not on a moving line I could work ahead and create free time to turn members little grievances into disputes. These small disputes are the life blood of the union because this shows members that by supporting each other then they can improve working conditions and get a better deal.

What was your first dispute?

We had an issue with safety glasses. You got your first set free from the company. But if you needed a new pair they made you pay for them. You couldn't work if you didn't have safety glasses. As a result

of this company policy if you left your safety glasses lying around someone would take them so they could make sure they wouldn't have to pay for a new set. Safety glasses became a valuable commodity.

The company had a safety check and about half of the workers in my shop didn't have any. We refused to work overtime that night and when we signed for our new glasses we put **“UNDER DURESS”** under our signatures authorising the deduction for new glasses.

The company backed down and after that safety glasses were always free.

When were you elected as a full time union official?

That happened in 1977. I became Secretary of the Coachworkers Union and held that position until the Manufacturing & Construction Workers Union was formed in 1988 when I was elected to my current position.

The car industry in Wellington was known for having industrial disputes, tell us about the most successful one.

That happened in 1984. All the Wellington car assembly companies negotiated a combined collective agreement. In the late 70s and early 80s we adopted the strategy of isolating one company by staging a strike there. The members in the other sites paid a levy to help those on strike.

The company responded to this



Graeme Clarke - aged by disputes!

strategy by threatening to lock out the entire New Zealand motor industry. On two occasions the lock out threat was used and other unions from around the country demanded we go back to work.

For a few years in the early 1980s there was a wage freeze. The freeze was ended when the Muldoon government fell in '84.

Our union decided that we would not succumb to industry lock out threats or other unions telling us to go back to work. So we secretly planned a mass strike for the first negotiations after the freeze was lifted.

The employers offered us about 5%. We decided we could get more. In the space of one day we had 8 stop work meetings at all sites in Wellington.

By the end of the day the entire industry in Wellington was closed. The employers couldn't threaten a mass lock out because we were already all out. After a strike that lasted 4 days, comparatively short by industry standards at the time, the employers got us back to work with a 9% pay rise.

Did union tactics remain the same?

No. There is a principle in industrial life - for every action there is a reaction. The employer can be expected to respond to your new tactics. You have got to be ready to respond to whatever they come up with.

So how did tactics change?

We learned from Pulp and Paper workers in Kawerau that it was always better to be locked out than go on strike. We worked on tactics to force the employer to lockout. Lockouts, provided members remain united, seldom go well for employers.

The government has changed the law to give the employer the right

to make deductions from wages for partial strikes to counter these kinds of tactics. We have worked out a new strategy.

The motor industry closed in the 1990s, was this due to disputes?

The disputes in the car industry reduced by the end of the 80s as the employers learned some respect for their workers. By that time all car assemblers were foreign owned. They were only interested in selling cars, not making them. One by one all the car assemblers and component makers closed.

New Zealand car workers made a high quality product and wages were less than 4% of the car's price. The industry closed because the government decided it would and foreign owned companies weren't interested in anything other than our market and taking money out of New Zealand.

South Pacific Tyres illustrates this. Even in a bad year the company made a good profit. It was owned by Goodyear and as well as profits they paid royalties to the US for the use of their own tyre designs. Goodyear was on the verge of bankruptcy, the Upper Hutt tyre factory was efficient enough to export tyres to the USA, but Goodyear still closed it down.

The closure of the car industry must have caused the



Talking to the media about a lockout at Mitsubishi

union lots of difficulties.

It certainly did. It was over half the union's entire membership when the union was founded, and over 90% of members in Wellington. It closed during the 1990s when laws, as they still do, hugely advantaged employers.

We have all had to work really hard to build up membership in new industries to keep the union going. We wanted to make sure that the style of unionism developed in the car industry, and in places like Kawerau, continued. We hope that these traditions will serve members when conditions provide an opportunity to improve the wages and conditions of working people. Workers in New Zealand have been going backwards for 25 years. We are at a point now where we can begin the reverse that.

Concluded on page 13

Heat exhaustion - a summer hazard

This years summer has been hot raising a number of safety issues at work.

Employees of New Zealand Post at Porirua were left exhausted by the end of the day after temperatures soared over 30 degrees. They had moved to the old Mitsubishi car plant and their sectioned off work space had no air flow.

Posties who needed to cover up to stop exposure to uv found the current uniform not suited to high temperatures.

LONG CLOTHING REQUIRED

Members in construction required to wear long clothing also found that this contributed to the heat hazard.

The problem with heat in New

Zealand is that it generally doesn't last long enough to get acclimatised. Before that happens a southerly arrives and temperatures plummet. Heat is a definite hazard in summer.

32 DEGREES

Temperatures at 32 degrees or above create a risk of heat exhaustion. The more the temperature rises the greater the risk. For those that work outside the temperature on the TV weather is lower than the actual temperature experienced in direct sunlight.

Heat exhaustion and lead on to heat stroke, which can be fatal.

When temperatures exceed 28 degrees the hot conditions can result in lost concentration and this too will cause accidents.

There are two types of heat exhaustion, water depletion and salt depletion. Signs of this include excessive thirst, weakness, headaches, nausea muscle cramps and dizziness.

If anyone has symptoms of heat exhaustion it is essential to immediately get out of the heat and rest, preferably in an air conditioned room, or, if outside, in a shaded place. In addition the following remedies to lessen the problem can be used

- drink plenty of liquid (avoid coffee/caffeine)
- remove any tight or unnecessary clothing
- apply cooling measures such as fans
- take a cool shower.

Continued opposite

UV protection and overheating

There is a conflict between the requirements of uv protection and overheating at work when long clothing is worn during summer.

In the union's view employees should choose the clothing required to be worn during working hours so as to protect against uv rays and, where there is no uv hazard, to protect against overheating or cold.

The following should guide decisions:

- When working indoors no uv protection is required.
- When exposed to the sun for 10 minutes or less intermittently during the day, use sun screen

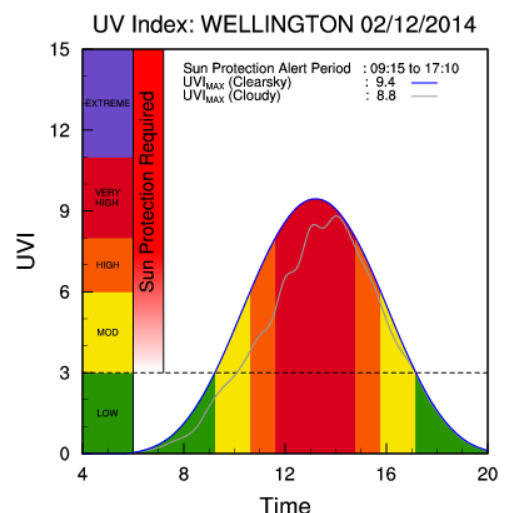
protection, November through to March inclusive.

- No UV clothing protection is required from mid April to mid September as there is no uv hazard
- If your shadow is longer than you are tall there is no uv hazard.

If in doubt consult the NIWA uv index: <https://www.niwa.co.nz/our-services/online-services/uv-and-ozone/forecasts>

On the NIWA index 0 – 3 is low uv. There is no hazard. 3 – 6 on the index is moderate uv. A fair skinned person at the uv 6 level will take 24 minutes of uv exposure to burn. 12

on the uv index is an extreme hazard level. At 12 a fair skinned person will take 12 minutes of uv exposure to burn.





The job of a Postie requires high physical effort and hot conditions are a hazard that should be managed by frequent breaks

If you have worked in high temperatures and suffered the effects of heat exhaustion you will be more sensitive to high temperatures during the following week - it takes time to acclimatise.

HUMIDITY

High humidity increases the risk of heat exhaustion. A relative humidity of 60% hampers sweat evaporation, which hinders your body's

ability to cool itself.

The union's advice to members, such as those working for Post in Porirua, is that when the temperature hits 28 degrees a 10 minute rest break should be taken every hour in an air conditioned room, and cold drinks should be supplied by the employer in the workplace. This is an interim solution pending air conditioning being installed.

GO WELLINGTON UNDERMINES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROMPTING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Continued from page 3

If the case goes to court the union will argue that the flat rate agreements, being only available for non union members, are an illegal preference.

BREACHED COLLECTIVE

The union will also argue that the variation provision of the current collective agreement obliged the company to talk to both the individuals and the union about any proposals being considered to have a flat rate. In not talking to the union the company has breached the collective and undermined collective bargaining. There is a large

penalty in the Employment Relations Act for undermining collective bargaining.

The claim before the ERA went to mediation in early February. It was agreed in mediation to start the working party process and to try and reach an agreement by the end of March, and to put the ERA case in abeyance until the end of March.

The stance the union will take in these discussions is that it supports members having a choice between a flat rate and penal rates, provided no-one is forced to take one or the other.

Whether the litigation proceeds will be decided after the working party has completed its work.

Paid parental leave increase

Changes to Paid Parental Leave (PPL) will come into effect on 1 April 2015. These changes extend the maximum amount payable from 14 to 16 weeks. The changes apply to an employee if:

- the expected date of delivery of their child is on or after 1 April 2015, but the child is born before that date or;
- the child is born on or after 1 April 2015; or
- in the case of adoption, if the date on which the carer assumes the care of the child is on or after 1 April 2015.



ATTEND!

2015 NATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2015 National Annual Conference of the union will be held at the Trades Hall 126 Vivian Street Wellington commencing at 1.00pm Tuesday 28 April 2015.

AGENDA

- Minutes of the 2014 National Annual Conference
- Matters arising
- General Secretary's report
- Remits
- Elections of Officers
- General Business

REMITs

Any Branch, Industry Council, Union or member may submit remits for consideration by the National Conference. Remits should be sent to the General Secretary, M & C Workers Union, P O Box 6287 Wellington.

ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Nominations are called for the following positions

- President
- Vice President
- General Secretary
- Trustees (two)
- Accountant

Nominations may be in writing and signed by a mover and seconder who shall be financial union members, and signed by the nominee. Nominations should be sent to the Returning Officer at the above address so as to be received no later than 27 April 2015. Alternatively nominations may be made from the floor of the conference prior to the election.

HAQAR THE HORRIBLE



ORGANISATION AND TRADITIONS TO BEGIN RECOVERY

Continued from page 9

It's been my unfortunate lot to see things go backwards during my working life. I hope I have left organisation and traditions that can begin the recovery.

How do you see the future of workers and unions in New Zealand?

If we remember the three basic union principles - solidarity, democracy, monopoly - and apply those to our work along with other unions, then we will improve things.

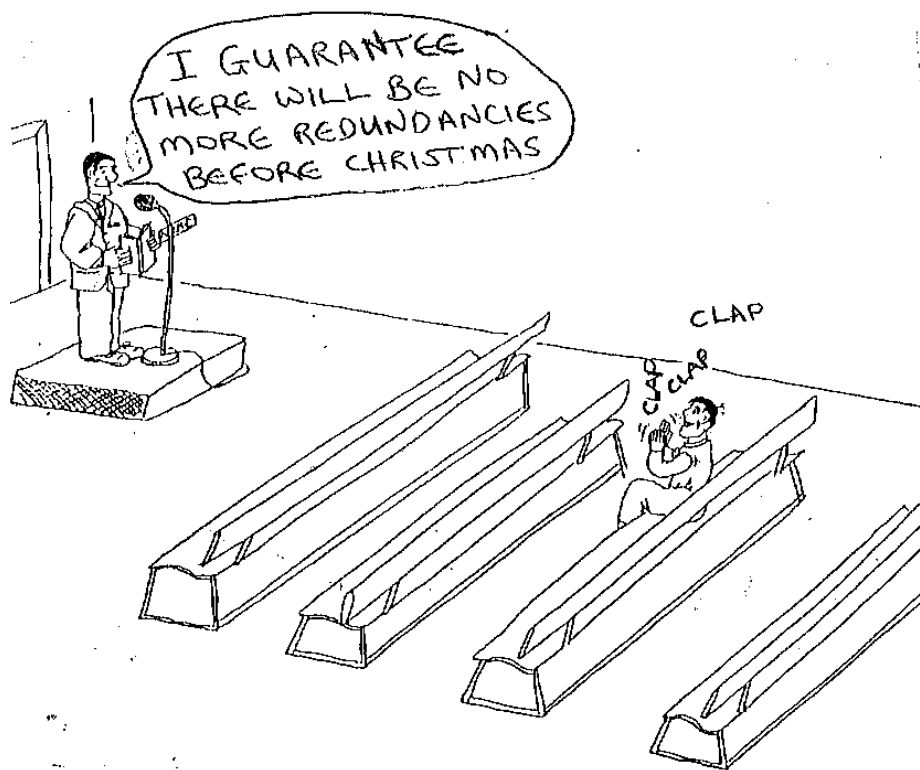
I think that the unions need to develop a broader social role in New Zealand.

There is a problem with loan sharks and high interest rates. I think unions should develop their own fully fledged bank so that we are no longer dependent on the large financial institutions that bleed billions back to their foreign owners, nor the local loan sharks who lend the high risk money that the large banks won't.

I think we can use organised workplaces to develop a greater say in the community. Local bodies are important in our lives. Why shouldn't workers representatives, answerable to stop work meetings, get elected and work to make our communities better places for us? We have the votes if we can get ourselves organised.

Can you explain the basic union principles you mention?

Solidarity is the most important. It means "I support you, you support me". It is mathematical principle that where "everyone for themselves" is abandoned, and we



This Kiwi motor workers cartoon commenting on the closure of the industry circulated around the world being published in many countries.

support each other, collectively we are better off. This principle was discovered by a mathematician who won a Nobel Prize for his work. The film "*A beautiful mind*" starring Russell Crowe depicts the discovery of this theory. Democracy in a union means talking with each other and trying to get a consensus. It should not just be about 50% plus one of the votes. A consensus supported by the large majority is always the strongest stance. You can't get that if everyone is not allowed to voice their opinion and if we don't listen to each other.

Monopoly simply means "single seller". The union is workers collectively selling their labour with a single voice. The best monopoly is 100% membership. If you have that you will get a better deal than with 99% membership.

It is not an accident that militant

employers tactics towards unions are always about trying to split workers. They know if they can get some to go on their own, or if they have competing unions, they will keep more for themselves.

The better these principles are understood and applied, the better our lives and those of our children and grandchildren will be.

Do you think you will be missed?

I hope not. No-one achieves anything on their own. I have had lots of support from my partner Jan and the kids. Older trade unionists like Con Devitt and Pat Kelly taught me lots. We had great delegates like Mike Sinai and Jim Fogarty. The individual isn't really that important - it is the collective wisdom and strength of the members that really underpins everything and which endures.

Growing world poverty caused by economic policies

A recent study by British charity OXFAM found that – on current trends – by next year, 1% of the world's population will own more wealth than the other 99%.

The share of the world's wealth owned by the best-off 1% has increased from 44% in 2009 to 48% in 2014, while the least well-off 80% currently own just 5.5%, OXFAM says.

DANGEROUS

Winnie Byanyima, executive director of Oxfam International said the increased concentration of wealth seen since the deep recession of 2008-09 was dangerous and needed to be reversed.

"The message is that rising inequality is dangerous. It's bad for growth and it's bad for governance. We see

a concentration of wealth capturing power and leaving ordinary people voiceless and their interests uncared for."

80 people in the world own the same amount of wealth as more than 3.5 billion people, half the world's population.

GAP WIDENING

Byanyima said: "The scale of global inequality is quite simply staggering and despite the issues shooting up the global agenda, the gap between the richest and the rest is widening fast."

Separate research by the Equality Trust, which campaigns to reduce inequality in the UK, found that the richest 100 families in Britain in 2008 had seen their combined wealth increase by at least £15bn, a period during which average income increased by £1,233. Britain's

current richest 100 had the same wealth as 30% of UK households, it added.

New Zealand has mirrored the increasing inequality and poverty seen in the rest of the world. Taxes on working people have increased via the rise in GST. Taxes on wealth such as a capital gains tax has been vigorously opposed by the current government. Wealth inequality and poverty in New Zealand is now one of the more extreme examples amongst developed countries.

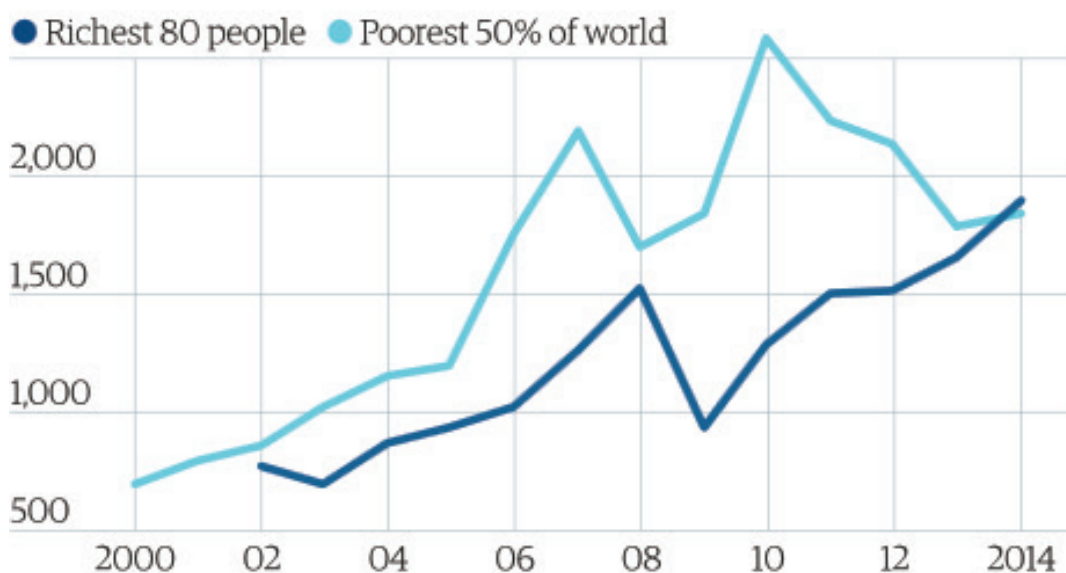
SQUEEZE ON LIVING STANDARDS

Inequality has moved up the political agenda over the past half-decade amid concerns that the economic recovery since the global downturn of 2008-09 has been accompanied by a squeeze on living standards and an increase in the value of assets owned by the rich, such as property and shares.

Oxfam said the wealth of the richest 80 doubled in cash terms between 2009 and 2014, and that there was an increasing tendency for wealth to be inherited and to be used as a lobbying tool by the rich to further their own interests. It noted that more than a third of the 1,645 billionaires listed by Forbes inherited some or all of their riches, while 20% have interests in the financial and insurance sectors, a group which saw their cash wealth increase by

Wealth of the richest 80 people

Combined wealth in current \$bn



Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.



- Nelson Mandela

11% in the 12 months to March 2014.

Oxfam said it was calling on governments to adopt a seven point plan:

- Clamp down on tax dodging by corporations and rich individuals.
- Invest in universal, free public services such as health and education.
- Share the tax burden fairly, shifting taxation from labour and consumption towards capital and wealth.
- Introduce minimum wages and

move towards a living wage for all workers.

- Introduce equal pay legislation and promote economic policies to give women a fair deal.
- Ensure adequate safety-nets for the poorest, including a minimum-income guarantee.
- Agree a global goal to tackle inequality.

“Extreme inequality is not just an accident or a natural rule of economics. It is the result of policies and with different policies it can be reduced. I am optimistic that there will be change”, Byamyima said.

PAY RISE NEEDED

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Federation, has told Industrial affiliates, “the world needs a pay rise.”

“Major companies are making enormous profits while workers at the production base are earning wages on which they can’t live. This deepening inequality... is a human tragedy. And it is not acceptable,” Burrow says.

180 million workers in the world belong to unions, only 7% of all workers. 80% of workers believe that the minimum wages in their



Sharan Burrow

country are not sufficient for leading a decent life.

“Organising workers and collective bargaining are key to delivering living wages,” Burrow says.

“It’s the same the whole world over...”

50,000 Indonesian workers went on strike when employers announced a 4 - 10% increase in the minimum wage, lower than the rate of inflation. Police attacked the strikers critically injuring three.

GENERAL STRIKE

The two central union organisations staged a 24 hour general strike in Belgium in December. A new right wing government has frozen wages for two years, cut 4 billion Euros from employer superannuation contributions, increased the retirement age to 67, reduced pensions and benefits and increased education and health costs. Industrial actions are on-going.

JOBS SECURED

1200 Turkish tyre workers employed by sub contractors at two transnational tyre companies were made permanent employees by the principal companies as a result of a union campaign. Employees of sub contractors have no job security and lower pay and conditions.

METAL WORKERS STRIKE

15,000 Turkish metal workers went on strike on 29 January because of breakdown in wage negotiations. The workers are employed by multinational companies, including ABB. The employers’ offer did not meet the needs of those on the lowest wages.

Union wins members reinstatement in ERA

A recent decision of the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) has supported a member's good intentions in refusing to carry out his employers decision regarding work allocation.

Kingi Delamere is employed at pulp and paper company Asaleo Care Limited (Asaleo, formerly SCA) as a Senior Chemical Assistant. He works as part of the Beater Crew that shares the yard area with Yard Workers.

CLEAR BROKER BAILS

In August 2014 Asaleo asked its Beater Crew to clear waste broker bails from the yard. Kingi did not comply with this instruction be-

cause he believed that under the terms of the collective agreement the Yard Workers were responsible. Kingi, being a long standing member of the union, did not wish to take others work.

DISPUTE

At the beginning of September, the Union became involved in the dispute. On 9 September the union reached an agreement with Asaleo that Beater Crew members such as Kingi could clear waste broker bails but only when expressly instructed by their supervisor.

That day Kingi complied with his supervisors request to move the broker bails. Because he was never requested to do so Kingi never again cleared the waste broker bails. However on 19 September



Asaleo dismissed him for failing clear waste broker bails.

PERSONAL GRIEVANCE

The union filed a personal grievance for Kingi with the ERA for unjustified dismissal. On 16 January 2015 the ERA determined that the only lawful and reasonable instruction that Kingi had to follow was to remove the waste broker bails "when requested by his supervisor". This meant that

any request before the Union agreement on 8 September and any request not expressly made by a supervisor subsequently was invalid. Consequently Asaleo was not justified in dismissing Kingi Delamere.

The Authority ordered Asaleo to pay Kingi lost wages and allowances for a 3 month period and reinstated him to his job.



Asaleo Care's Kawerau mill, scene of the dispute about clearing bails from the yard.

Issue number 104 of "M & C Workers News" was prepared by the National Office of the Manufacturing & Construction Workers Union.

The union may be contacted at PO Box 6287 Wellington New Zealand. Phone (04) 3858264, Fax (04) 3848007, email to m.c.union@TradesHall.org.nz

The articles published in M & C Workers News are not necessarily the same as the policies of the union