

MEDIA RELEASE
Rail & Maritime Transport Union

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RMTU: Lyttelton Port locks out workers in petty and revealing move; Christchurch City Council must step in

Lyttelton Port Company has issued a lockout notice against its own workers rather than go back to the table and negotiate with them in a constructive and respectful way.

The letter from Port CEO Peter Davie, sent after workers voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action, states the lockout is being done “with a view to compelling employees to comply with LPC’s demand” that they accept lower pay rates than those already offered to port workers represented by the other union on site.

“This move by LPC shows very clearly that their priority is bullying RMTU members into submission, not getting the port working,” says John Kerr, organiser for the Rail and Maritime Transport Union.

“They’ve stalled, and delayed, and now that it’s clear our members demand fair pay and proper health and safety at work, they’re making threats and refusing to negotiate.

“From day one, what port workers have asked for is to be paid the same as other people doing the exact same work. They’ve asked for proper processes to manage fatigue so the port can operate safely 24/7.

“This is perfectly reasonable, and the decent thing to do. But Lyttelton Port is determined to treat them unfairly.

“It seems there’s no option now but for Christchurch City Council, as the 100% shareholder of the Port, to step in and tell Peter Davie that Canterbury needs its port working, and when he’s taking home nearly \$1 million a year he can afford to treat our members properly.

“Port workers have taken strike action because they have no other way to show how important they are to Lyttelton Port. The company isn’t listening. We need our elected representatives to start.”

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