

Port Otago workers launch “campaign of resistance” over mismanagement

Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ), and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) joint media release

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Workers at Port Otago are going on the front foot in a public campaign to change aggressive management tactics which are threatening the future of the region’s export hub.

A meeting on Wednesday 16 December of over one hundred members of the combined port unions, the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ), and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU), unanimously passed a motion that ‘This meeting of Combined Unions at Port Otago call upon management to abandon their aggressive approach to industrial relations at our Port and endorse a campaign of resistance.’

RMTU South Island Industrial Organizer John Kerr says the meeting brought together a united workforce who had contributed a massive amount to the region over a tough and uncertain year.

Port workers are essential workers on the front line, whose challenging jobs were complicated by dealing with overseas crews during a pandemic, he says.

Mr Kerr says Port Otago workers were no longer prepared to deal with aggressive management attitudes that were out of step with what was required during a vulnerable economic situation.

The meeting heard about management bullying, a ‘sinking lid’ approach to staffing and contemptuous treatment of union representatives.

A campaign plan to change management’s approach and achieve a more co-operative industrial relations environment was endorsed.

He says similar problems over recent years at the Port of Lyttelton concluded with a clear out of senior management and board members.

ENDS

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