



**Media Release**  
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**Rail & Maritime Transport Union**

## **Industrial Action at Lyttelton Port Looks Inevitable as Mediation Fails**

It is highly likely industrial action at Lyttelton Port of Christchurch (LPC) will start on 17 December with an indefinite overtime ban after mediated talks between the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) and the port company failed to reach agreement today.

‘A couple of weeks ago the RMTU issued notice of an indefinite overtime ban at the port commencing on 17 December, today we met with the port company in a mediation meeting provided by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and we failed to reach agreement. That means the overtime ban will go ahead unless something happens before next week,’ said RMTU South Island Organiser John Kerr.

‘Lyttelton Port management will be saying the impact will be minimal yet the reality is this place runs on overtime. Our union covers half of the frontline employees directly employed by LPC and all of those working in safety critical areas like marine services, civil and plant maintenance and security. The reality is that if these areas aren’t covered the port slows down and eventually stops,’ he said.

‘We also cover workers at the inland port in Woolston and this is a key link in the supply chain to and from the waterfront, so there will be an impact there as the ban begins to bite,’ he said.

‘What disappoints us the most is that our key claims include the establishment of a strategic relationship with the employer in order to address issues like productivity and efficiency on a continuing basis through an industrial council, and management are rejecting this. It beggars belief that here we are trying to bring industrial relations at LPC into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and management don’t want to,’ he said.

‘Regarding wages, whilst it’s true that LPC CEO Peter Davie’s 18% pay rise this year has inflamed members’ expectations, all we’re asking for is a wage deal that’s comparable to those our union has achieved in other New Zealand ports. There is a need to ensure that trade rates are aligned with the Christchurch market but that’s in the employer’s interests as well as our members- after all they need to be able to recruit staff,’ he said.

‘We remain open to further discussions but LPC need to understand we are under considerable pressure from our members to get this issue fixed. They’ve voted for a series of full stoppages in addition to the overtime ban but we’ve held off from that in the hope the employer will see reason,’ he said.

**ENDS**

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