

Media Release: Rail and Maritime Transport Union

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## **Lyttelton Port Should Negotiate and not Litigate**

Lyttelton Port of Christchurch (LPC) should negotiate and not litigate, says the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) after the port failed to injunct workers who walked off the job on grounds of health and safety on Friday night.

"Workers at LPC walked off the job on Friday night after management failed to properly staff safety critical maintenance jobs during an overtime ban being run by our union," said RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson.

This meant one vessel from a major shipping company was delayed by over six hours before staff numbers reached an adequate level to do the job safely,+ said Wayne Butson.

It's disappointing that instead of addressing the workers' health and safety concerns LPC resorted to legal action,+said Butson.

The urgent injunction LPC sought was all about ordering our members to work in unsafe conditions,+he said.

Yesterday the Employment Court rejected the application, clearly stating that in this instance the issues of safety outweighed the port's loss of profits.+

We're pleased the Court rejected the injunction. Lyttelton's wharves have a tragic history: three workers have been killed in workplace incidents and Worksafe have had to enforce safety conditions 26 times in the past year.+

Our members are rising to meet the safety challenge. In collective bargaining we proposed the creation of an industrial council that works on safety and productivity issues.+

LPC have stubbornly rejected that proposal so far. We hope that this decision will encourage them to negotiate instead of litigate.+

- Ends.

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