

Media Release

Tuesday 27 January 2015

Lyttelton Port workers vote to escalate dispute and fully withdraw labour

Members of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) at Lyttelton Port today voted to escalate their industrial action.

Around 200 RMTU members have been operating an overtime ban since 17 December and today they endorsed a series of full withdrawals of labour at the port.

Our members have voted to escalate their campaign for a just and fair collective agreement and this afternoon, and we have issued notice of the first full 24 hour withdrawal of labour from midday on 11 February, said RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson.

The overtime ban has had a big impact on the port's operations, leading to closure of the container terminal at night for the last six successive weekends, due to the lack of safety critical maintenance staff. Whilst this limited action has led to Lyttelton Port Company (LPC) amending their bargaining position it has not resulted in management making an acceptable offer to our members, said Wayne Butson.

The two major sticking points are pay and coverage. LPC are offering the equivalent of a less than 2% annual pay increase and are rejecting the inclusion of port workers in the Woolston inland port from the agreement, said Butson.

This is in the context of LPC's Chief Executive Peter Davie receiving an 18% boost in his pay packet last year taking his earnings to \$1.2m, he said.

The exclusion of the inland port workers, some of whom earn \$6 per hour less than our members on the waterfront in Lyttelton, is nothing less than economic apartheid, he said.

Our members are angry and having given the Union leadership a strong mandate to issue notices of further stoppages after 11 February and we will be doing so. In the meantime we have a couple of weeks to get around the table with management and thrash out a deal, he said.

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