



**Rail & Maritime Transport Union
Media Release**

Port Company Resorts to Bully Boy Tactics Before Mediation Says Union

The Rail and Maritime Union (RMTU) says Lyttleton Port Company (LPC) is trying to intimidate port and rail workers ahead of tomorrow's mediation to try and settle the continuing industrial dispute at the port.

Eleven of LPC's Logistics Officers, who plan and run the operation of the loading and unloading of ships, have been taking limited industrial action since last Friday and are saying they will stop work for two days from 17 May.

'This afternoon we received a threatening letter from the Port's lawyers saying they had heard we were considering pickets if tomorrow's mediation is unsuccessful and if we mounted pickets that "interfere with the company's employment agreement and operations" -whatever that might mean- then they will apply to the courts for an injunction and also sue us for damages,' said John Kerr, RMTU South Island Organiser.

'This all seems a little premature given we have agreed to enter into a mediated conference to try and resolve this dispute tomorrow. Clearly, if LPC are intransigent and the negotiations fail then we will be looking at all of our options, including picketing to inform others about the actions of LPC, but we fail to understand what is unlawful about a peaceful picket explaining our position to other port workers and to rail workers and truck drivers who bring goods to and from the port,' he said.

'We also have the right to peacefully demonstrate to get our point across to the public. This dispute is over \$10000, which is the difference between the Port Company's offer of a 2.85% wage rise and our claim of 4%. So for \$10000 it could be resolved, and yet instead of negotiating LPC seems to prefer intimidation and would rather spend the money on lawyer's letters,' he said.

'LPC is largely owned by Christchurch City Council through its investment arm Christchurch City Holdings, the public have a right to know what is going on,' he said.

'The RMTU would much rather LPC got back to doing business rather than threatening its workers,' he said

'We hope LPC come to tomorrow's mediation in a more conciliatory frame of mind,' he said.

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