

# THE ACTIVIST



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## FAIRNESS AT WORK RALLIES - 21ST AUGUST

The CTU is holding Fairness at Work Rallies in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin on Saturday 21st August from 1 pm to 3 pm. Exact venues for the march and rallies are to be confirmed. These rallies are aimed at:

- Demonstrating our concern about employment law changes proposed by the Government.
- Reaching out to the wider community to get support for Fairness at Work.

The CTU will be supplying Fairness at Work flags and placards on the day. A further campaign meeting for affiliates is scheduled for:

The rallies are only one aspect of the Fairness at Work Campaign. Unions are holding discussions on combined activity. Planning is already under way for Helen Kelly to visit regional centres for a day including meeting affiliates, a site meeting, media and public events. Many more activities are planned.

**All members of the Union are strongly urged to get active and to support the rallies and the campaign.**

**All major Union's and Union Leaders were criticized in the 1990's for not leading a more active fight back against the Employment Contracts Act at the time.**

**We now face similar attacks and so the Union leaders are willing and keen to fight this time -**

## ARE YOU?

## UNIONS WITHDRAW CO- OPERATION ON TRADE ISSUES

The Council of Trade Unions is withdrawing co-operation with the Government on trade agreement issues.

Helen Kelly, CTU President, said: "We have always raised our concerns - sometimes very strongly - about trade agreement negotiations in terms of tariff reductions, labour standards and other matters but we have also been prepared to work with government and business to promote the best possible outcome for New Zealand."



"But now this Government has gone down a path which tries to compete with other countries through reducing fairness at work for New Zealand wage and salary earners."

The Government had invited Richard Trumka, the President of the AFL-CIO (central union organisation in USA) to New Zealand and a visit was scheduled for early next year. This visit would have been significant for both countries. The CTU has agreed with the AFL-CIO that he should now not come given the attacks this Government has unleashed on wage and salary earners. It would be untenable for him to be here meeting a Government that stands against all he believes in.

"It is one thing to co-operate with trade negotiations in the context of a domestic programme which invests in skills, promotes fairness at work and respect for the role of unions. But we cannot work with a Government on trade matters when the protection against unfair dismissal, the right to a meal break, the right to access union advice and support at work, are all

This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

undermined. That can only result in one thing – as it did in the 1990s – lower wages and conditions for workers.”

“There are no good reasons for these attacks. There have been no issues about access to unions for workers. The number on unemployment benefits fell from 162,000 in 1999 to 17,465 in May 2008 without the 90 day law. Every wage and salary earner should have protection against unfair dismissal. We can agree to trial periods. They apply now. We can agree to fair dismissal. That applies now. But we will not agree to unfair dismissal with no right of appeal.”

“Instead of legislating for unfairness at work, the Government should be working with unions, employers and the wider community to promote decent jobs, and get the economy moving again in a positive direction.”

## ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY

Todd Valster will be acting as General Secretary whilst Wayne is attending the 42<sup>nd</sup> ITF World Congress together with Vice president Aubrey Wilkinson. Both Aubrey and Wayne are taking a bit of annual leave whilst they are overseas. The period of Todd holding the fort is 3 to 24 August 2010.

## METALS' MECA SETTLES

Nearly 2000 engineering and manufacturing workers will have pay increases above inflation and an extra day holiday in 2011 after EPMU members voted overwhelmingly to ratify the Metals and Manufacturing multi-employer collective agreement (MECA) today.

The new agreement provides for a 3% increase on all printed wages and allowances this year, followed by a 3% increase next year, and a one-off holiday to acknowledge that, for the first time, Anzac Day will fall on the same day as the Easter Monday holiday in 2011.

“This is a good outcome for members. Our aim was to get them a pay rise above inflation at a time when prices are rising

and the government has announced a GST hike, which will hit workers’ pay packets,” says Andrew Little, EPMU national secretary.

“EPMU members around the country responded strongly to our argument that they deserve the extra holiday in 2011, so we’re pleased the employer parties have agreed this as well,” he says.

“The trend-setting Metals agreement is now set to grow, with EPMU members at other sites organising to join its coverage”, he says.

“If small to medium enterprises can offer a 3% pay rise and an extra day of holiday then there’s no reason why larger, more profitable employers can’t do better,” he says.

The Metals and Manufacturing MECA is the EPMU’s largest multi-employer collective agreement, representing nearly 2000 workers at 120 firms.

## A RECENT INCIDENT REPORT IN THE RAIL INDUSTRY

Dear Sir,

*At approximately 0830 hours today bosun Neville launched QUINN 1 (ed: This is a small Stabicraft boat) in the Glenmark ponds surrounding bridge 52 on the main north line. While fixing a course towards the 1st pier of the bridge at the south end he came under attack. The assailant was a large BLACK SWAN (ed: A notified hazard).*

*The Black Swan made a terrible hissing and struck an awesome figure as it puffed up and streaked across the open water and launched itself in full attack mode at Bosun Neville piloting QUINN 1.*

*Bosun Neville became absolutely terrified at this furious onslaught and made a strategic and hasty retreat.*

*As close tactical support was on its way in Commodore Terrey, who had the firepower in a 4 inch bladed slasher, the Swan thought better of having this confrontation on and retreated to a secluded cove amongst the nearby vineyards.*

*Bosun Neville who was by this stage recovered from his terror and emboldened by the reinforcements attempted to goad the*



*swan into having another go at him. But alas the Swan decided to let discretion be the better part of valour and chose to remain in the secluded cove with the vines.*

*A truce has been established with all parties and life has returned back to normal on the pond.*

## KIWI RAIL DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY

KR and the RMTU met again on 26 July to further discuss the D&A random testing by customers. The RMTU expanded its team to bring in reps from sites affected by the KR CEO's wish to subject KR staff to Customer (Solid Energy, NZ Steel etc) testing policies (Greymouth, Westport, Kawerau and Waikato) and it was agreed that CEO Jim Quinn, KR Freight GM Ian Hill and Networks GM Rick van Barneveldt to be present throughout the meeting.

### Meeting Report

RMTU representatives and KiwiRail management met on 26 July 2010 to discuss the KiwiRail CEO's desire to include a statement in the new draft drug and alcohol policy that KiwiRail employees meet customer drug and alcohol policy requirements when on customers' sites.

Bernard McIlhone from the PRC - DOL facilitated the meeting.

RMTU Attendees - Wayne Butson, Scott Wilson, Todd Valster, George Laird - RMTU, Brian Armstrong, Phil Kearns - Chch, Les Ingram - Hillside, Hayden Smith - Wgtn Metro, Paul Foscett - Greymouth, Barry Simpkins - Hamilton, Doug Blakie - Timaru, Kelvin Collings - Kawerau and Kevin Gubb - Westport

KiwiRail Attendees - Jim Quinn - CEO, Rick van Barneveldt, GM KR, Iain Hill - GM KRF, Graeme Boomer - Industrial Relations Manager, KR and Robin Nicole - HR Manager KR

The KR CEO has agreed to delink the customer testing issue from the current MECA round and so a joint working group will continue following ratification to work

on this issue seeking a solution agreeable to all parties.

## REMOVING EMPLOYEE PROTECTION IS BIG STEP BACKWARDS FOR NZ, ACADEMIC WARNS

An employment relations Professor says proposed changes to employment relations legislation will support inefficient and disorganised employers.

Professor Erling Rasmussen, editor of a new book 'Employment Relationships: Workers, Unions and Employers in New Zealand' being launched at AUT, says New Zealand is heading in the wrong direction by letting employee protection slip out the back door.

"Law changes will mean employers that don't have suitable HR systems in place won't need to change their practices and are in fact supported by legislation," he says. "This is a big step backwards in protection of employees."

Proposed changes include new workers no longer being able to file a personal grievance claim following dismissal (by extending the 90-day trial period to all new employees), the possibility of requiring a medical certificate for one day of sick leave, and changing process requirements at the Employment Relations Authority.

Professor Rasmussen says New Zealand is moving towards a US style of HR practice with an at-will employment approach where employers can get rid of a new employee for any reason and he warns this will be damaging for the country.

"Asking employees to get medical certificates for taking a sick day, for example, is hugely inefficient," adds the Professor, "and employers already have the possibility of dealing with employees abusing sick leave entitlements."

The proposed new legislation puts pressure on New Zealand which is once again facing issues of brain drain and youth dropping out



of the workforce altogether, he says.

"We're currently in the situation where once again people are moving to Australia and overseas," says Professor Rasmussen. "Alongside this, around 17% of our young people are unemployed with some being shut out of the workforce permanently.

"If we're not careful, our brightest workforce will disappear and we'll create a low-skilled, casualised workforce, and that's recipe for economic disaster."

### **The Employment Relations Act**

Professor Erling Rasmussen adds that ten years on the Employment Relations Act 2000, which was aimed at driving better productivity and flexibility, hasn't worked as intended.

"Unfortunately, we now have the situation where the government is avoiding a debate about how the workplace can contribute to solving the country's productivity issues and instead it relies on traditional cost-cutting and flexibility measures," he says.

"Its focus is on tax cuts, extracting resources, making the public sector more efficient and restricting growth in areas like tertiary education.

"Furthermore," says the Professor, "public policy changes appear driven by anecdotes and hearsay, rather than solid research and statistical information."

Professor Rasmussen says the announced changes will reduce employee protection adding that it won't mean they will become more efficient or productive.

"This practice is not balanced or sustainable," he cautions. "We're not building a high waged, highly skilled, highly productive economy."

'Employment Relations in New Zealand' brings together the views of employers, unions and academics. High profile contributors include former speaker of the house, Professor of Law and Public Policy, Margaret Wilson, former government minister Laila Harré, employment lawyer Andrew Caisley and employer and union representatives.

It looks at the major issues from the perspectives of all the major players: public policy, collective bargaining, employee representation, labour market adjustments, productivity, changes in employment law and trends in employment institutions.

## **KR – VEOLIA MECA - UPDATE**

### **KiwiRail Group**

Work on the consolidation of the wages scales has continued and the cost of moving to "the best of best" identified.

A team of 2 representatives from the wider reference group (WRG) for the wagheround for each "company" will be brought together to do a final "check" of the draft MECA to ensure that no provision has been omitted or overlooked. Once this is completed the WRG will be brought together to see if we have a proposed settlement which can be put to members for ratification. This is subject to us reaching agreement on the D&A clause to be inserted into the draft MECA.

### **Veolia**

The respective teams met again last week in Auckland for two days to continue to work through the respective issues which exist between the parties. Good progress has been made, with the words by and large agreed, but there remain a few issues which will require compromise by both parties and a settlement eludes us. More talks are scheduled.

## **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NEEDS TO BE A TOP PRIORITY, SAYS MAJOR EEO PROJECT**

A youth-to-work plan for every individual young New Zealander to improve their employment prospects and choices is one of the major recommendations in the National Conversation about Work report undertaken by the Human Rights Commission. The two-year project, led by Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner Judy McGregor, represents the views of over 3000 employers and employees working in a



wide variety of industry sectors in the 16 regions of New Zealand.

"The high unemployment of young Māori and Pacific people and the current bias against hiring some young people are issues we all need to be concerned about," says Dr McGregor.

"Currently, we are failing too many young people who are not well prepared for their first job. The National Conversation about Work showed there was a need for every young person, not just some, to have access to quality school-based careers advice, the ability to access apprenticeships or other launch pads in their regions. There were great examples of innovation for youth employment in the regions but these are not universally available and funding is often precarious."

The National Conversation about Work identifies a number of priorities to make New Zealand workplaces fairer for everyone:

#### **Youth to work**

Develop a national youth-to-work strategy for every young person in New Zealand that has cross party political support and long term funding.

#### **Disabled people**

Increase the labour market participation of people with disabilities through active employment policies addressing attitudes, access to work and reasonable accommodation.

#### **Migrant workers**

Develop codes of practice in partnership with industry groups, in particularly dairying and viticulture, to ensure fairness to migrants and to guide employers on best practice.

#### **Looking after the children**

Ensure children have access to quality, affordable early childhood education in all areas of New Zealand, including active government policies to ensure coverage in provincial and rural communities.

#### **Pay and employment equity**

Implement pay and employment equity strategies already developed by the Department of Labour across the labour

market, and reform and extend the Equal Pay Act to include equal pay for work of equal value.

#### **Older workers**

Urgently adopt a national programmatic approach managing ageing workforce issues, including models of labour market participation for older workers and transition strategies for different industry sectors.

#### **Adequate standard of living**

Progressively increase the level of both the minimum wage and benefit levels to ensure universal entitlement to an adequate standard of living.

#### **EEO across all sectors**

Review existing equal employment opportunities legislation across the public and private sectors, including amending the Employment Relations Act 2000 to include a positive duty to be a good employer.

To progress EEO across both public and private sectors, the Human Rights Commission will offer advice and guidance to business agencies working with small and medium enterprises.

Information about employment trends also need to be disaggregated within regions so diverse cities and towns within a region have a better picture of the job market. Use the following link to the summary report;

[http://www.hrc.co.nz/hrc\\_new/hrc/cms/files/documents/19-Jul-2010\\_09-16-34\\_HRC\\_What\\_Next\\_Report.pdf](http://www.hrc.co.nz/hrc_new/hrc/cms/files/documents/19-Jul-2010_09-16-34_HRC_What_Next_Report.pdf)



## **FAST-TRACK THE CBD RAIL LOOP**

The CBD rail loop is a public transport project that has the potential to transform the Auckland rail network, giving Aucklanders real transport choices. It will revitalize the Auckland CBD and is an essential first step to getting rail links to other locations such as the airport and North Shore in future. We have launched the Fast-Track the CBD Rail Loop Campaign to convince the government to provide

funding for this crucial project in the 2011 budget.

### What you can do?

Please help us to show the government that Aucklanders want, and need, construction of the CBD Rail Loop to start as soon as possible. You can do this by:

- signing [our online petition](#) to Fast-Track the CBD rail loop
- email [Steven Joyce](#), the Minister of Transport, asking him to provide funding for the loop as soon as possible
- joining our Facebook page - Fast-Track the CBD Rail Loop - to show your support online!

For more information, email Gareth Hughes Green Party Transport Spokesperson or have a look at the background information about the CBD Rail Loop (<http://www.greens.org.nz/factsheets/background-information-cbd-rail-loop>). Or just go to [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz) and go to campaigns and follow the links there.

## DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR REPORT FAILS TO UNCOVER REAL STORY OF 90-DAY FIRE-AT-WILL LAW

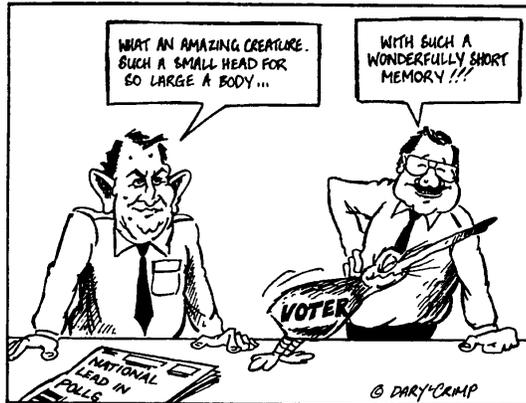
A Department of Labour report commissioned to measure the impact of the 90-day trial employment law, fails to reflect the real consequences of the legislation on employees.

"Some 3,532 employers and 13 employees were contacted as part of this report. Such imbalanced methodology is not going to uncover any meaningful data on the impact of the 90-day employment probation period," says The Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (PSA) National Secretary Brenda Pilott.

"Workers' voices have been shut out of this report. As a union, we've heard that voice and the stories it tells are shocking. People

dismissed without cause during a 90-day trial period are suffering from sleepless nights, financial hardship and relationship breakups. These consequences impact whole families, not just individuals.

"If the government was interested in how this legislation impacted workers, the research would have surveyed an equivalent number of employees. Of the 13 workers who were interviewed, some were referred to the researchers by their employers and some were still on their trial probation period so they were hardly going to share any criticism they may have had of



it.

"A strong legal framework already exists for employers to use against workers who are not pulling their weight.

"By asking the Department of Labour not to include an equitable number of employees in this research, National gleaned the result it was looking for to extend the 90-day trial period to all employers and implement a law that will affect everyone's job security.

"We challenge the government to conduct a meaningful survey around this legislation.

"In the run up to the election National accused Labour of using the public service for its own ends and won support on a campaign to de-politicise the public service. Now it's in power it's doing what it promised it wouldn't do.

"National is now going to use this skewed research to extend the 90-day probation law to all employers. Hundreds of thousands of workers look to change job each year and now they will all be put on probation because a public department has been used as a political pawn, says Brenda Pilott.

"Extending the 90-day fire at will law alongside restricting workplace access to union representatives; demanding a doctor's letter after just one day off sick; exchanging holidays for pay; and weakening workers' rights to personal grievance proceedings – all of this adds up to a cumulative erosion of

workers' rights and a rise in draconian employment laws that are a huge step backwards for our nation's social progress," says Brenda Pilott.

## RAILROAD RIDERS RALLY

Friday 26th, Saturday 27th, Sunday 28th  
November 2010 - Cass

The 2010 Rally will be held in conjunction with the World Famous Cass Bash. Accommodation for Riders will be in the University of Canterbury Hostel which provides dorm and twin rooms. Sleeping bags needed.

The Cass Bash provides quality music, food and drinks on a "one charge cover all" based on each day's attendance. Costs being prepared and all will be advised ASAP.

On Saturday (weather dependent) we will ride over mountain passes to points of great historical significance (Pubs). Upon arrival back at Cass time will be allowed to clean up bikes prior to the "Line Up" where others may view the machines and choose a "crowd favourite".

STOP PRESS: Mini golf 10.00hrs Sunday on the High Country's No1 Golf Course at CASS

More info and numbers attending:  
murray.gaidunlop@clear.net.nz.

## SEAFOOD INDUSTRY PETITION

At the last CTU National Affiliate Council, we endorsed this petition and affiliates undertook to get signatures to SFWU.

It would be appreciated if RMTU branches could send those forms on to the SFWU.

Completed petitions should be returned to Neville Donaldson, SFWU by 31 August 2010, Physical address: 19B Selwyn Place, Nelson 7010. Post: PO Box 1076, Nelson 7015

Petition and details in this link:

<http://www.sfwu.org.nz/index.asp?pageID=2145880630>

## ITF: PORT LOCKOUT 'A

## NEEDLESS OVERREACTION'

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) today labelled the Port of Montreal lockout "a needless overreaction" and called for an immediate return to negotiations by the employers' association.

Frank Leys, Dockers' Section Secretary of the ITF, of which the Syndicat des Debardeurs, which is part of CUPE (the Canadian Union of Public Employees) is a member, commented: "A solution to the dispute at the port was within everyone's reach. This lockout risks kicking it over the horizon and out of sight."

He continued: "We'd remind the employers' association that overtime is voluntary; not providing it is not a reason to be shut out of your job. Renegotiation of an existing agreement - which is what this is all about - isn't done by barring the doors on those affected. Negotiation is the only way forward. The union is willing. It's up to the employers to rescind this pointless ban and resume talks."

The Syndicat des Debardeurs has described the lockout, which began yesterday, as "incomprehensible and pointless" and said that when the news reached them they were in the middle of a general meeting to cancel the planned application of pressure tactics. The union and the employer had met all afternoon on Sunday and planned to continue ongoing negotiations during the week.

"The best way to disrupt the functioning of the port is to lock up and send the workers packing. The solution is for the employer to let the work continue, in the port and at the negotiating table, and in the next few weeks, we'll have an agreement," said union representative Michel Murray.

According to the Syndicat des Debardeurs, on June 27 the employer changed the working conditions of 169 dockers with the least seniority. The longshoremen responded by refusing to work overtime as of July 9. "We wanted to demonstrate that our 169 colleagues are essential. The employer had to reinstate them to cover the overtime," said Murray.



## HELP US TO END PIRACY: SIGN OUR PETITION AND SPREAD THE WORD



In the last two years over 1,800 seafarers have been kidnapped by pirates. There are currently 348 seafarers being held hostage. Seafarers are risking their lives every day, in the world's busiest shipping lanes. This needs to stop!

The ITF is aiming to pressure governments to step up their efforts to end piracy, by collecting 500,000 signatures for a global petition by World Maritime Day 23 September 2010.

Almost 150,000 signatures have already been collected. But we need more!

This is a workers' rights issue. Please do whatever you can to help:

Sign the petition yourself  
[www.endpiracypetition.org](http://www.endpiracypetition.org)  
 ("http://www.endpiracypetition.org" target="\_blank")

Forward the link [www.endpiracynow.org](http://www.endpiracynow.org)  
 ("http://www.endpiracynow.org" target="\_blank") to all your contacts/networks/friends/family, ask them to sign the petition and spread the word.

Add the petition link to your email signature.

Promote the petition at union events and meetings.

A hardcopy of the petition (in English ([http://www.itfglobal.org/files/seealsodocs/23335/Piracy\\_Petition\\_Form.pdf](http://www.itfglobal.org/files/seealsodocs/23335/Piracy_Petition_Form.pdf) target="\_blank")) Please return hand-signed petitions to the address on the form.

## NATIONWIDE MEETINGS ON EMPLOYMENT LAW CHANGES UNDERWAY

Workers in Tauranga and Napier have today kicked off a series of meetings to discuss proposed changes to employment law.

For the next two weeks up to 3,000 members of National Distribution Union in the retail, logistics, wood and textile

industries will attend stop work meetings across New Zealand.

NDU General Secretary Robert Reid said that workers at meetings this morning had expressed their opposition to National's weakening of work rights.

"Of particular concern to members at the meetings earlier today was the impact of the proposed law changes on workers who didn't have union protection," he said.

"Workers were also concerned at the extension of 90 Day Fire at Will provisions to all firms, and the proposal that allows companies to prevent workers accessing their union official when they need her or him," Robert Reid.

The meetings are electing delegations to meet with government MPs based in their area.

Further meetings are being held in Waipukurau and Whakatane this afternoon, and in Levin, Te Aroha and Rotorua tomorrow.

The NDU will also be participating fully in national activities through the Council of Trade Unions, including rallies on August 21st, Robert Reid said.



## 42ND CONGRESS - INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is an international trade union federation of transport workers' unions. 759 unions representing over 4,600,000 transport workers in 155 countries are members of the ITF. It is one of several Global Federation Unions allied with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The ITF's headquarters is located in London and it has offices in Nairobi, Ouagadougou, Tokyo, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Amman, Moscow and Brussels.

The ITF represents the interests of transport workers' unions in bodies which take decisions affecting jobs, employment conditions or safety in the transport industry, such as the International Labour

Organisation (ILO), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The 42nd Congress runs from 5 to 12 August, it will be the ITF's largest ever and the first to be held in Latin America. Some 1376 participants from 368 trade unions in 112 countries are expected to attend the event, which sets the agenda for the global organisation for the next four years and elects its president, vice-presidents, general secretary and executive board.

The congress is the supreme governing body of the ITF and meets four yearly.

During this time all sections of the ITF will hold their sectional meetings (Rail, Seafarers, Dockers, Inland Transport, Aviation, Road Transport and Urban Transport) as well as Women and Youth Conferences. Plenary sessions will occur where ITF policy will be debated and set.

The RMTU will be represented at the Congress by National Vice President Aubrey Wilkinson and General Secretary Wayne Butson.

Two important new meetings will be held before the congress begins. These are a one day young transport workers' conference on 3 August and a climate change and transport conference on 4 August.

A press conference will be held at the congress venue, the Hilton Mexico City Reforma Hotel & Convention Centre (<http://mexicocityreforma.hilton.com>), on 5 August at 13:30, and the opening ceremony will be held at 10:00 which (subject to confirmation) will feature Armando Quintero Martinez, Transport Secretary, Mexico City; Benito Miron Lince, Labour Secretary, Mexico City; and Marcelo Ebrard Causabon, Governor of Mexico City.

Meanwhile the congress can be followed online, using the dedicated web press area at [www.itfcongress2010.org/press.cfm](http://www.itfcongress2010.org/press.cfm) where you can find free downloadable photos, press releases, the history of the congress, speaker biographies and more. A

constantly updated general guide to the congress, how it works and its daily progress can be found at [www.itfcongress2010.org](http://www.itfcongress2010.org).

## FAIRNESS AT WORK RALLIES ON 21ST AUGUST

The Council of Trade Unions has announced that it will be holding Fairness at Work rallies on 21st August in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

CTU President Helen Kelly said: "These are just the start of what we expect to be a long campaign to promote Fairness at Work in the face of a Government which is tilting the balance in favour of employers – particularly bad employers."

Helen Kelly said that unions are not opposed to trial periods, and believe employers should have the right to dismiss workers fairly. But every wage and salary earner should have the right to

appeal against unfair dismissal. For instance, if a worker raises a question after 6 weeks in a new job about a health and safety concern and then gets dismissed, shouldn't that worker have the right to appeal against that dismissal?

It is also vitally important that wage and salary earners have access to union advice and support in the workplace.

Helen Kelly said that it is entirely voluntary to join a union and 380,000 workers have chosen to do so. But the Government now wants to restrict access for members to talk to their union representative and to make it difficult for workers to discuss joining the union.

As for sick leave, under current law, the employer can ask for proof of illness within three calendar days – including for one day's absence - if they have reasonable grounds to suspect the sick leave is not genuine. They need to inform the employee as soon as possible, and they must agree to meet the employee's reasonable expenses in getting this proof. Why is there any need to change this?

In addition to rallies in several cities, unions will be holding meetings in regional centres. Today Helen Kelly is in Tauranga meeting



with local union officials and delegates to discuss the campaign and Peter Conway, CTU Secretary, is in Palmerston North.

Helen Kelly said she expects legislation to be introduced to Parliament in 4-6 weeks and for a vigorous debate to occur through the Select Committee for the rest of the year. We will be building the momentum on the Fairness at Work campaign throughout this period.

## 2 NEW INDUSTRIAL COUNCILS – RAIL

The Union has reached agreement with KiwiRail on the Terms of Reference of a Mechanical Group Industrial Council (MIC). The MIC shall have 7 RMTU reps on it. They are;

- Jim Kelly – Hillside
- Terry Duffy – Hutt
- Howard Phillips – Passenger
- Rudi Brens – NI Depots
- Tim Spence – SI Depots
- Shane McNae – Servicing
- Brian Cronin – RMTU Organiser.

We are hopeful that the MIC will commence operation shortly and begin the challenge of resolving a number of outstanding industrial issues within the group. The MIC replaces the UGL NCC and grows the representation in recognition of the joining together of all the Mechanical functions of KR Group.

The Union has almost completed the Terms of Reference for the Passenger Group Industrial council (PIC) and we are hopeful that we will soon reach agreement. The council shall have 6 RMTU reps and they;

- Hayden Smith – LE Metro
- Hayden Harwood – Terminal Op's Metro
- Harvey Patterson – Train Manager Metro
- Brian Armstrong – Train Attendant Long Distance
- Tamati Heraud – Scale 1
- Wayne Butson RMTU.

We are hopeful that this council will commence operations once final agreement is reached on the Terms of Reference soon.

## Bits and Bobs

- Next meeting of the RMTU-MUNZ Alliance Charter Steering committee is in Wellington on Tuesday 7 September 2010. Branches are requested to advise any items for discussion at this meeting ASAP together with full background and briefing material.
- A reorganisation of territories and responsibilities has seen the West Coast return to be under the South Island based Union Organiser Brian Cronin. The reorganization has been a result of shifting Union membership and the need to maintain relativities in Organiser workloads.

# “WE’RE STRONGER TOGETHER”!

