

THE ACTIVIST



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RMTU ANNUAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE BRIEFING

The Union held a very successful delegates Conference 23 to 25 October 2012 at the Porirua Police College. A range of speakers and varying subject matter ensured that the delegates have gone home with a wealth of knowledge to pass on to branch members.

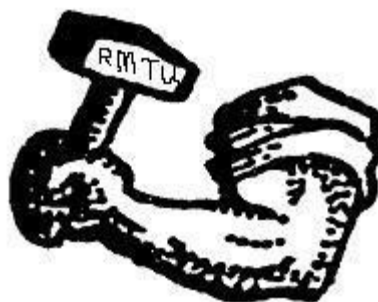
The Conference is the supreme governing body of the Union and so a number of key decisions can only be made by this group in accordance with the rules and standing orders of the Union.

Headline items from Conference are;

- Change in timing of Conference from Annual to biennial (2 yearly)
- National Union Fee to increase by 1.0% (\$0.10 per week) from 1 November or pay period nearest
- Creation of a solidarity Fund with a further 1% (\$0.10 per week) increase to the National Union Fee from 1 November or pay period nearest
- Change to the Union rules to ensure compliance with the Tau Henare inspired Strike Action amendment (secret ballots) to the ERA.
- Excellent addresses from the leaders of Labour, Greens and NZ First
- Delegate reports on branch activity and event attendance

A more comprehensive report will be contained within the December issue of The Transport Worker.

The next Conference will now be held in 2014 with a Ports Forum in 2013.



COMPANIES MUST PAY WHAT THEY OWE TO WORKERS

The Labour Minister should publicly commit to keeping the protections for vulnerable workers in the Employment Relations Act, the Green Party said today.

Last night the High Court released their decision that Pacific Flight Catering must pay the accrued leave owed to their previous employees who were transferred when the catering contract changed hands. The Employment Relations Act 2000 has protections for workers whose employers lose contracts, so that they can transfer to the new company without losing their accrued leave.

"This High Court decision means that the law is working as it should," Green Party industrial relations spokesperson Denise Roche said.

"Companies have been lobbying the National Government to slash these protections in a review of the Employment Relations Act but their assertions that the current law is unworkable are now proven to be unfounded," said Ms Roche.

"Cleaning company Crest's Managing Director Grant McLauchlan has been quoted saying that these protections were "poorly drafted and controversial", but the High Court shows that is not true.

"The reason we have this law is because when contracts changed hands, workers were doing exactly the same job just in a new uniform having lost all of their entitlements, and that was not fair.

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

"Companies that may lose a contract still owe their employees their proper allowances and this decision means they have to pay it.

"The Minister of Labour, Kate Wilkinson, needs to make a commitment to keeping these protections unchanged in the law as there is no legitimate reason to remove them.

"This Government's anti-worker stance does not give me confidence that it will keep these protections for vulnerable workers so I want to hear the Minister making that commitment.

"The law works, and there is no need for the Government to make changes to reduce protections for vulnerable workers," said Ms Roche.

INTEREST RATES

The Reserve Bank, under the new Governor Mr Graeme Wheeler, kept the Official Cash Rate unchanged at 2.50%. The Governor noted that the economy remains fragile but sentiment has improved a little, compared with earlier this year. Inflation now is officially under 1.0% at 0.8%. The high dollar is causing concern among a number of our exporting businesses.

We believe the OCR should be cut, as inflation is no longer an issue and our manufacturers and exporters need all the relief they can get from the high New Zealand dollar. It is interesting that the Australian Reserve Bank is thinking of making further cuts over the next few months to their OCR. We should follow suit.

GISBORNE LINE

The RMTU condemns the Government's decision to mothball the Napier to Gisborne Line. The RMTU has donated funds to the local group to assist with the review that they have initiated using BERL to challenge the Government's choice. It is ironic that there is no money to repair the line and yet there is money to improve the highway.

All eyes' now turn to the North Auckland line which is in the Governments gunsights for mothballing or closure.

Is all of this what we envisaged when we fought, and poll's showed 72% of NZ'ers supported, renationalisation of Tranz Rail? Should the parties of the centre/left (Labour, Greens and NZ First) win the election in 2014 the current KiwiRail board MUST be gone by lunchtime!

KIWI RAIL MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

KiwiRail have responded to the RMTU's concerns regarding access to medical information by HR managers or other management staff.

They have deleted wording in the Periodic Medical Questionnaire that said HR Managers and management staff would be able to view individuals medical information. The preamble has been corrected to say "All information provided in this questionnaire and obtained in any medical assessment will be handled in the strictest confidence.

Completed questionnaires and medical assessments will be stored offsite in a secure location. Pursuant to the Privacy

Act 1993 you have the right to access and correct your personal information at any time.

The 'Predict' database used by KiwiRail is designed to prevent unauthorised disclosure of medical information. KiwiRail HR or other managers receive information relating to whether a person is fit or unfit for duties they are not permitted to access or receive individual medical information.

The RMTU now has no objection to employees completing the questionnaire to ensure the process of periodic medical assessments continues.

RMTU TRANSPORT WORKER DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions to the final issue for 2012 of our flagship publication "The Transport Worker" is 19 November



2012. Please send all branch notes, letters to the Editor etc to.....

wbutson@rmtunion.org.nz or Box 1103 Wellington.

NEW MANUFACTURING INQUIRY WEBSITE TO TAKE SUBMISSIONS

The leaders of four political parties are calling on New Zealanders to find out more about the joint-Parliamentary inquiry on manufacturing and make submissions by visiting the new website.

The Labour Party, the Green Party, New Zealand First and Mana are holding a Parliamentary inquiry into manufacturing and are now taking submissions on this important issue.

David Shearer, Russel Norman, Winston Peters and Hone Harawira believe that real change and new ideas are needed to protect and grow manufacturing in New Zealand, and that the National Government has failed to provide any leadership on this issue.

The parties invite submissions from all people with an interest in manufacturing.

We are particularly interested to learn from the personal experiences of workers and businesspeople and experts in the manufacturing sector and hear their ideas on how government can give manufacturing the support it deserves.

More information can be found at www.manufacturinginquiry.org.nz.

The Committee will hold hearings of oral submissions in several cities in early December.

Written submissions and requests to present oral submissions can be sent by email to manufacturinginquiry@parliament.govt.nz or via the form on the submissions page. The deadline for written submissions is November 30th.



KIWI RAIL MECA UPDATE

The parties met in Wellington 19 October 2012.

The talks were very productive and a proposed settlement has been agreed for presentation to members. The negotiating team voted unanimously for the Union to recommend to members that the proposed settlement be ratified.

The parties are finalising the Collective Agreement wording and updating the Memorandum of Understanding which will be updated as part of this settlement

Currently the parties are jointly developing the briefing material to be presented to members. The locations to be visited are;

Whangarei, Auckland,
Hamilton, Taumaranui,
Mount Maunganui, Kawerau,
Stratford, Whareroa,
Palmerston North, Napier,
Wellington, Picton, Westport,
Greymouth, Christchurch,
Timaru, Dunedin and
Invercargill. It is expected
that members in outlying
locations will be able to
travel to their nearest
location to attend a meeting.

Week commencing 19 November 2012 is being targeted for the meetings and for the despatch of the ratification materials from National Office.

H&S REVIEW TASKFORCE – CALL TO ACTION

Follow this You tube link to promote the Health and Safety Taskforce submission process. It's a call for action from Helen Kelly:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Paw3eijHGcE>

LEAKY HOMES

For over fifteen years there has been the leaky building issue. Many people who have bought modern or brand new houses have found, to their detriment, that their home have a weather tightness issue. This has exacted a heavy toll on a number of people,

both emotionally and financially. Homeowners have had to borrow extra to repair them, been unable to sell or had to accept a lower sale price.

The issue is: who is at fault over this debacle? Earlier this month our Supreme Court, in a case involving the Spencer on Bryon development on Auckland's North Shore, held that the local council was at fault. This is rational, as they are the ones who issue the building consents and the codes of compliance. The downside of all this, is that everyone will ultimately pay through higher rates.

LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE & REMEMBER.....

- Maintain situational awareness at all times;
- Ensure all are aware of the work to be performed;
- Make safety your first priority;
- Make sure you will go home safe and sound at the end of your shift;
- Make sure your workmate will go home safe and sound at the end of their shift;
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted.
- Do not make assumptions

We're Stronger Together!

