

THE ACTIVIST



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PRIME MINISTER BREAKS PROMISE ON CHANGES TO HEALTH & SAFETY LAWS

The CTU is appalled with the report released today by the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee. It considers the Prime Minister's promise, that our laws would take "no steps backwards", broken.

CTU President Helen Kelly is deeply concerned about what the impact will be on workers and their families. "The Government is trying to say that their changes are minor - this is simply untrue. These changes mean that work will be less safe - that is not minor."

"We are especially concerned that the Government has stripped away so much of workers' rights to take an effective role in their own health and safety. The health and safety issues and risks in small firms are at least as great as in any other business - disenfranchising their workers is simply the result of the Government listening to those small businesses that don't want to prioritise safety for their workers rather than the evidence that this is where most accidents occur. In larger businesses the Government has allowed employers to choose which workers have representation. That encourages employers with poor practices to resist change."

"This is a major neglect of duty to present the law with these changes and a further betrayal of those that died at Pike River." Kelly said.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REFORM BILL ACTION - CHRISTCHURCH

Saturday 1 August from 10am, EPMU 298 Cashel St.

Making of crosses, bring hammer, saw, paint brushes. Around 200 crosses to be made

Action

Monday 3rd August 1pm at Old Crowne Plaza Site, Corner Durham and Kilmore Streets. Then a walk to Nicky Wagner's office in Salisbury St

LABOUR WILL FIX BROKEN HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL

Labour has heeded forestry widow Deborah McMillan's protest outside National's conference today and is stepping in to fix the government's broken

health and safety law, says Labour's spokesperson for Labour issues, Iain Lees-Galloway

"We have amendments to the government's bill up that will keep New Zealanders safe at work. These are small but critical changes that will help save New Zealanders' lives and I'm calling on other parties to support them.

"After the Pike River disaster the Government promised changes that are desperately needed to reduce New Zealand's appalling workplace death and injury rate. But they have failed to deliver.

"Since then hundreds of New Zealanders have died at work and now we're faced with a watered-down law that actually removes some protections for Kiwis.

"That's wrong, and it's a broken promise from a government that's more interested in



Safetymatters

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

placating its backers than protecting New Zealanders' lives.

"Mainstream business has called for changes to this law - National needs to realise they are siding with a fringe of bad employers against the well-being of working Kiwis," says Iain Lees-Galloway

MORE IMPROVEMENT NOTICES FOR KIWIRAIL

KiwiRail has been issued two improvement notices by Worksafe NZ to fit fire suppression to 55 hi-rail vehicles following a fire in a rail maintenance machine in Mainline Tunnel Number 1 in January this year.

The two improvement notices are aimed at reducing the risk of fire in tunnels. KiwiRail will be required to fit fire suppression to 55 Hi-rail vehicles. A second improvement notice requires contractors working in tunnels to also have fire suppression fitted to machinery such as excavators.

KiwiRail has two weeks to appeal Worksafe's decision.

RMTU FILM OF LYTTELTON PORT DISPUTE

The RMTU has commissioned a professional film production company, Orly Productions Ltd, to make a film for training and publicity purposes of the dispute we had with LPC over 2014-15.

The film is in its post-production phase now, and features a number of members and officials as 'talking heads', as well as footage of Lyttelton Port and the inland port at Woolston. It will be just over 21 minutes long - which is shorter than our General Secretary's usual speeches to membership meetings - and should be an entertaining and educational experience for those watching.

We will use this film in training seminars, membership meetings and at conferences with our fellow New Zealand and overseas unions. We're aiming to have the film competed over the next couple of months so look out for showings in your area.

WAIKATO RAIL BRANCH IMPOSE SAFETY RULE

After a long intense discussion at our last branch meeting the Waikato Rail branch of the RMTU have determined that the continued running of trains north of Palmerston North with limited or no Dynamic or Regenerative braking is an accident waiting to happen so feel under the H&S Law that we must act.

The members have determined that 3 categories of operation be established immediately in the interest of H&S.

1. Trains with a single loco and no working dynamic or regen Brake the load must not exceed 650 tonnes (750 tonnes if Loco weight included)
2. Trains with 2 Loco's and no working dynamic or regen brake must not exceed 1200 tonnes (1400 tonnes if loco weight included)
3. Trains with 2 Loco's and 1 working dynamic or regen brake working Load not to exceed 1520 tonne (1320 tonnes if Loco weight included)

MEMBERSHIP DATABASE UPDATES

UPDATE
YOUR
DETAILS!



The RMTU membership database is an important tool in contacting Union Members or ensuring members are kept up to date with the latest information. We are concerned at the number of "unknown" or "return to sender" envelopes returned to National Office as part of this year's officer elections. We remind members that if you wish to exercise their rights and participate in the decision making aspects of the Union they should ensure they inform National Office of any change of address or contact details as soon as possible. This includes any change of designation or employer.

Branch Secretaries hold "update of membership forms" that you can post or fax in or alternatively for immediate action members are reminded to utilise the update of membership details link on our website www.rmtunion.org.nz.

For example – All national Union elected positions are up for election this year and so there may be votes conducted by mail. If we have the incorrect address info you will not get a vote as you will never receive a voting paper. **Update now!**

C3.

Earlier this month C3 were successful in retaining their On-board Stevedoring Contract for Sulphur Point, which meant that 51 union member's jobs were saved, the delegates, Trevor Huta-Martin, Rangi Gear and John Taumatiene did a great job working with C3 in helping to set up the new contract.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – KIWI RAIL INDUSTRIAL COUNCILS

Nominations are called for following Council Representatives:

- **KiwiRail Freight Industrial Council, and**
- **Interislander Industrial Council, and**
- **KiwiRail Mechanical Industrial Council, and**
- **KiwiRail I & A Industrial Council, and**
- **KiwiRail Metro Industrial Council.**

The Joint Industrial Councils have governing terms of reference signed by the Union and KiwiRail Ltd. They are intended to be the escalation centre for industrial issues which arise during the course of the employment relationship on a day to day basis which have not or cannot be resolved at a local or branch level or issues that have national significance. The term of office is 2 years.

Union policy as determined by Biennial Delegates Conference requires that any member of the Union's National Management Committee (NMC) who is eligible for nomination to a position on an Industrial Council shall be deemed to have been elected to that position.

KiwiRail Freight Industrial Council

Following the recent NMC election, Barry Simpkins will fill the Locomotive Northern position and Mike Williams the Locomotive Southern position.

Nominations are called for:

Locomotive Central – Incumbent Les Perrin.

Upper North Island Terminals – Incumbent Dean Ngatai.

Lower North Island Terminals – Incumbent Rick Barnes.

South Island Terminals – Incumbent Marty Duncan.

C T Site – Incumbent Antoon Whiu.

Position Description:

Locomotive Central

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd as a Locomotive Engineer in the Central Freight Region (Taranaki, Palmerston North, Hawkes Bay, or Wellington) then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Upper North Island Terminals

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Rail Terminal Site in the Northern Freight Region (Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty or King Country) then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Lower North Island Terminals

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Rail Terminal Site in the Central Freight Region (Taranaki, Palmerston North, Hawkes Bay, or Wellington) then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

South Island Terminals

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Rail Terminals Site in the South Island then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

C T Site

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a designated CT Site anywhere within NZ then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Interislander Industrial Council

There are no Interislander Representatives on the NMC and therefore all positions on the council are open for nominations.

Nominations are called for:



Scale 1 (Inside Wellington Terminal) – Incumbent Chris Hanna.

Scale 1 (Inside Picton Terminal) – Incumbent Tania Haraki.

Ferry Operations (Wellington Outside Terminal) - Incumbent John Finch.

Ferry Operations (Picton Outside Terminal) - Incumbent Vern Steele.

Position Description:

Scale 1 (Inside Wellington Terminal)

If you are employed by Interislander in an occupation which works predominantly Inside the Wellington Terminal then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Scale 1 (Inside Picton Terminal)

If you are employed by Interislander in an occupation which works predominantly Inside the Picton Terminal then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Ferry Operations Wellington Outside Terminal

If you are employed by Interislander in Ferry Operations Outside the Wellington Terminal then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Ferry Operations Picton Outside Terminal

If you are employed by Interislander in Ferry Operations Outside the Picton Terminal then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Kiwirail Mechanical Industrial Council

There are no KiwiRail Mechanical Representatives on the NMC and therefore all positions on the council are open for nominations.

Nominations are called for:

Train Examiner Maintenance – Incumbent Shane McNae.

Hutt Workshops – Incumbent Paul Morrison.

Wellington EMU Depot - Incumbent Danny Singh.

Servicing Mechanical – Incumbent Logan

Kahui.

North Island Depots – Incumbent Rudi Brens.

South Island Depots – Incumbent Guy Miller.

Position Description:

Train Examiner Maintenance

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a TXM Role in freight group anywhere in New Zealand you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Hutt Workshops

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd within Hutt Workshops then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Wellington EMU Depot

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd within the Wellington Tranz Metro EMU Depot then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Servicing Mechanical

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a servicing role in a Locomotive Depot anywhere in New Zealand then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

North Island Depot

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a North Island Loco or Wagon Mechanical Depot then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

South Island Depots

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a South Island Loco, Wagon or Waltham Passenger depot then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Kiwirail I & A Industrial Council

There are no KiwiRail I & A Representatives on the NMC therefore all positions on the council are open for nominations.

Nominations are called for:

Infrastructure Bridges & Structures – Incumbent Lou Watene.

Infrastructure Mechanical – Incumbent Jerry Hohepa.

Infrastructure Track Supervisors – currently



vacant.

Operations Scale 1 – currently vacant.

Operations Train Control – Incumbent Geoff Young.

Infrastructure Trackworker – Incumbent William Lanigan.

Infrastructure Sigs, Comms, Traction – currently vacant.

Position Description:

Infrastructure – Bridges and Structures

If you are employed within the Bridge or Structures gangs specialised area of KiwiRail I & A then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

Infrastructure – Mechanical Group

If you are employed within the track machine and mobile mechanised groups, plant fitter specialised area of KiwiRail I & A then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

Infrastructure Track Supervisor (incl Ganger)

If you hold a position of a Track Supervisor, Ganger, Leading Hand or Foreperson in any area of KiwiRail I & A operation then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Operations – Scale 1

If you are paid under payscale 1 of the MECA and employed within the clerical, administration, codes and standards and technical areas of KiwiRail I & A then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

Operations – Train Controller

If you are employed within the Train Control specialised area of KiwiRail I & A then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

Infrastructure Track Worker position

If you are employed by KiwiRail I & A as a track worker/maintainer (other than leading) anywhere within NZ then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Infrastructure – Signals, Comms, Traction

If you are employed within the Signals, Communications, Traction specialised areas of KiwiRail I & A then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

Kiwirail Metro Industrial Council

There are no KiwiRail Metro Representatives on the NMC and therefore all positions on the council are open for nominations.

Nominations are called for:

Locomotive Engineer – Incumbent Michael Nicholson.

EMU Depot – Incumbent Keith Whittaker.

Scale 1 Operations – Incumbent Dave Sharma.

Scale 1 Sales & Communications – Donna Campbell.

On Board – Incumbent Harvey Paterson.

Yard Operations – Incumbent Glen Hughes.

Position Description:

Loco Engineer

If you are a Locomotive Engineer employed by KiwiRail Ltd in Metro Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Mechanical

If you are a Mechanical Engineer employed by KiwiRail Ltd in Metro Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Scale 1 Operations

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a role in Operations which is paid under payscale 1 in Metro Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Scale 1 Sales & Communications

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a role in Sales & Communications which is paid under payscale 1 in Metro Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

On Board

If you are employed in an on-board services capacity by KiwiRail Ltd in Metro Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Yard Operations



If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a Terminal Operations capacity in Metro Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Nominations MUST be in writing on the official Nomination Form and contain the signed consent of the candidate, be proposed and seconded by financial members (Rule 1) of the Union from the equivalent industry designation or operating area/sector.

Official Nomination Forms are available on the RMTU Website www.rmtunion.org.nz or from the National Office by contacting Julia on 04-499-2066, or emailing julia@rmtunion.org.nz.

Correctly completed nomination forms must be received by the National Returning Officer at the National Office of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, PO Box 1103 Wellington 6140 no later than 1700 hrs. on Friday 21 August 2015.

In the event that there is more than one nomination for any position, a postal ballot shall be run. Nominees must have their photo and a short promotional statement of up to 150 words to the National Office no later than 1700 hrs on Friday 28 August 2015. Electronic receipt of this information is preferred.

Please ensure you advise National Office if you have changed addresses or your designation in the Company since the last RMTU mail-out. Call RMTU 04-4992066 or alternatively update your details online www.rmtunion.org.nz or email julia@rmtunion.org.nz.

Signed:

Howard Phillips

National Returning Officer

LYTTELTON PORT AREA OPERATIONAL FORUMS

One of the key things we fought for in our dispute with LPC was a degree of industrial democracy so workers could have more say

in how the port was run. In our view this is the only sustainable way to achieve productivity gains and a safer, healthier workplace.

The result was that the RMTU and LPC agreed the establishment of Area Operational Forums in the various departments with management and worker representation. The first forum, in the Maintenance Workshop, is up and running and has done some work on rosters and is about to raise the issue of revised trade rates. Other forums are being established and elections are being held across the port and at the inland port.

This is a positive step, and one that our Branch Officials, particularly Secretary Heiner Benecke and President Andy Kelly have put a great deal of work into. We also owe LPC Industrial Relations Manager Sally Williams a vote of thanks for her commitment to making this happen.



ADELAIDE SETS NEW PUBLIC TRANSPORT PATRONAGE RECORD

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has congratulated the South Australian Government and the people of Adelaide on their record breaking public transport patronage figures, reaching almost 67 million trips in just the past year.

Acting Chief Operating Officer of the ARA, Phil Allan, said that this was a classic 'if you build it, they will come' success story, with a large portion of the increased patronage being credited to the electrification and extension of the Seaford line, which was completed in February 2014.

"The people of Adelaide have embraced their public transport network because of the significant \$400 million investment from the State and Federal Government in providing a more efficient, cleaner, faster and effective rail network," said Mr Allan.

"The electrification of rail lines has a track record of increasing patronage in Australian and New Zealand cities as far back as the revival of Perth's rail system in the 1990s. Adelaide's patronage growth is also being replicated on the newly electrified suburban rail system in Auckland, New Zealand which was completed earlier this year.

"Urban rail is a key solution to our nation's increasingly serious economic, social and environmental problems such as traffic congestion, transport emissions, fluctuating fuel prices and the continued growth of our major cities," Mr Allan concluded.

PORT OF NAPIER.

We settled the Port of Napier Mobile Harbour Crane Collective Agreement on the 21st of July, and we are working thru finalising the Terms of Settlement. The Union's negotiating team is Tony Andrews, Phillip Taana, Dave Marden and Phil Spanswick. We are in mediation with the Port of Napier on the 13th August to try to resolve the Section J dispute, which is over Section J's member's entitlement to superannuation on the same basis as the rest of our members who are covered by the PONL/RMTU Collective Agreement. The Union's team will be Dave Marden, Campbell Angus and Phil Spanswick.

I&E INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL UPDATE

Your Industrial Council Reps had a teleconference with management on Wednesday 29 July:

We were represented by Geoff Young, Ian Walker, Lou Watane and John Kerr. Jerry Hohepa and William Lannigan apologised. John Bannerman and Phil Kearns are no longer on the Council as they have been promoted to management roles. I know all of you will join us in thanking them for the sterling work they did on behalf of members.

Kevin Morgan, Todd Moyle, Steve Collet, Janine Benson and Maryann Street were on for management.

The agenda was:

- Auckland productivity trial rollout
- Motor vehicle rationalisation update

- Rule 902 sub group - follow on from IC discussion - RMTU delegate nominees required

KEY IS TRADING AWAY NEW ZEALAND LAND AND HOMES

John Key yesterday admitted what National dishonestly refused to confirm in Parliament last week – he is trading away New Zealand's right to control who buys our homes and land, says Opposition leader Andrew Little.

"The Prime Minister must now answer the question: how will he protect our land under an agreement that he admits will stop a future New Zealand Government from banning non-resident foreign buyers?"

"National is being disloyal to New Zealanders by refusing to fight to protect the sovereignty of our country and the Kiwi dream of home ownership.

"Home ownership is now the lowest in over 60 years and dropping. Our rural land is also under threat.

"Labour protected Kiwis under the China FTA, which allows bans on foreign buyers unless National trades that away under subsequent FTAs.

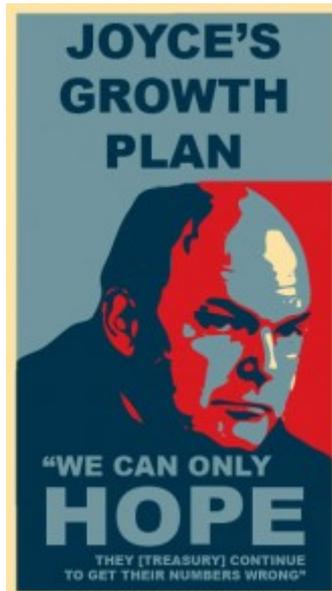
"Australia has banned foreign buyers of their homes. So has China in its largest cities. New Zealand should too.

"Non-resident foreign buyers, especially in Auckland, are fuelling housing demand that is pushing up prices to levels most New Zealanders cannot afford.

"Millions of young New Zealanders, and low and middle income groups of all ages, are increasingly tenants in their own country. Maori and Pasifika people are worst affected but Kiwis of all ethnicities are struggling to get into homes.

"Under Labour, if you have the right to live here you have the right to buy here, but not otherwise. Residency applies whether you're a recent arrival or born here. Investment in new housing adds to supply and will be allowed.

"Enough is enough – New Zealanders must be able to control who owns our land," says Andrew Little



LYTTELTON CONTAINER TERMINAL RESTRUCTURE

There is a proposal on the table to restructure aspects of the Container Terminal, namely the Foremen and Logistics Officers' areas of responsibility. The RMTU has been engaging with LPC and will be submitting a formal response on Friday 31 July.

The proposal is seeking to address productivity and envisages some fairly drastic changes, such as the disestablishment of a number of Foreman's positions and creation of Supervisor roles. In our view there are plenty of ways to boost productivity without resorting to such extreme changes and we'll be advocating strongly for these.

PRODUCTIVITY TRIAL ROLL OUT

This involves extending the successful productivity work we did in Auckland to all Auckland Gangs and countrywide. See past issues of The Transport Worker and The Activist.

It works well if the boss listens to the workers and key delegates. There is something in it for us in that guys get better gear and better ways of working IF THE BOSS LISTENS. Then we get boosted productivity which means we can use that as leverage in forthcoming wage talks.

Of course it's a big 'if' – there are some bosses out there who will do it well and others who will mess it up. You all know who they are...

REAL COST OF PHARMAC BETRAYAL REVEALED

Hundreds of millions of dollars will be added to the taxpayer tab with John Key's sell out of New Zealand's drug buying

agency, as indicated by the savings of just one drug purchased by Pharmac, Opposition leader Andrew Little says.

"John Key has finally admitted that drug patents will be extended under the TPP agreement that his Government seems intent on signing.

"If that had happened to the cancer drug Glivec, an example of the type of medicine that will cost much more under the TPP, the cost would have risen from \$9000 per patient to \$60,000 per patient each year – a combined additional charge to taxpayers of \$84 million if the patent was extended for seven years.

"If that is the cost of just one drug, then the Government is setting Kiwi taxpayers up to give hundreds of millions of unnecessary dollars to multi-national drug companies who have been lobbying Governments to sign this agreement.

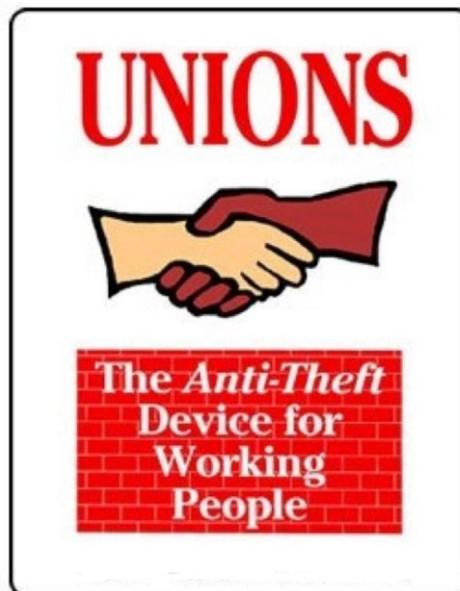
"These additional drug costs will mean New Zealanders will miss out on life-saving drugs because Pharmac can't afford them, or taxpayers will have to pay many millions more for them.

"Labour is pro free trade as seen in the China FTA we signed in 2008. But signing free trade agreements has never before required us to give up important institutions like Pharmac.

We have clearly stated that protecting Pharmac is one of Labour's bottom lines when it comes to the TPP. It sits alongside being able to restrict sales of our land to foreigners, not allowing corporations to successfully sue our Government for legislating in the public interest and ensuring meaningful gains for our farmers.

"These revelations about the TPP come at a time when the Government has slashed \$1.7 billion from the health budget and DHBs are struggling to cope.

"John Key is gambling away some of our most valued New Zealand institutions and sovereign rights. It is a betrayal of New Zealanders," says Andrew Little.



MOTOR VEHICLES

KR want to trim \$2m off a \$12m motor vehicle budget this year. They've already had a go at people who have had a car as part of their IEA and now they want to look at those of you who take home Operational Vehicles. We've warned them of the implications of this for the willingness of guys to do call outs but they still want to do it. So when the proverbial hits the fan you can say 'we told you so'.

Not that that's any comfort. We didn't agree to them doing this, we agreed that they have the right to do it – there's a subtle but important difference. Managers are supposed to be 'consultative' in their approach. The good ones will be. Our advice is get your delegates in and explain the implications to managers of messing with this.

IXOM.

The Ixom Morrinsville collective agreement negotiations came to a stop, as the employer considered the financial implications of our wage claim, however we meet again on 11th August in Mount Maunganui, the union team is Kurt Spencer and Phil Spanswick.

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTIES IN NEW ZEALAND

As a country, we reached our highest level of home ownership in the early 1990s, with about 74% of the dwelling occupants in this category. By 2013, this had decreased to around 65%. Since the early 1990s, family trusts have become an increasingly prominent feature - to the point where it is estimated that around one in five properties are now owned by these entities. Around 50% of family owned dwellings are mortgage free. This is logical, as there is a high level of home ownership among retired people, who are no doubt mortgage free. It is easier to become mortgage free in a number of provincial cities and towns, where houses are cheaper. There is less information on the number of houses owned by offshore parties. It is fair to say that it is growing, but the Government's new requirements (for offshore parties to

have a tax number and a bank account here) will, in a few year's time, ensure there is more information available on this subject.

RULE 902

There was a working party on this on which the RMTU were ably represented by John Bannerman and Geoff Young. Kiwirail want to reconvene it. They got rid of the management contractors who were running it and it's been given to Peter Dix. He's been told to get moving on it. Geoff will stay on the working party but with John going into a management role then we needed to get someone on there. The Council members nominated Jerry Hohepa. We agreed we can pull in additional expertise as and when we need to as it was acknowledged there are some pretty smart people out there – Doug Tamatea, Dave Sparrow and Bruce Lord were mentioned, amongst others.

UNION MERGER

Delegates of the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union voted July 2 in favour of merger with the Service and Food Workers Union, said the union in a statement. According to EPMU, the merger proposal will now go to the full membership in a postal ballot. "This is a tremendous milestone for the merger, which has been under discussion for quite some time," said Bill Newson, EPMU national secretary. He said the merger would also be "a significant step forward" for New Zealand's labour movement. "The role of unions has never been more important. As the nature of work changes, and exploitative trends like offshoring jobs, zero-hour contracts, and down-skilling technical jobs become more common, workers need strong support and advocacy to ensure they get a fair deal." SFWU national secretary John Ryall said the new union would free up resources so that more time would be dedicated to assisting workers who wanted representation but could not get it. If approved by both memberships, the new union would be the second-largest union in New Zealand with more 50,000 members. The tentative launch date is set for October.



TRUSTS - DO YOU STILL NEED ONE?

The managing of trusts is becoming more onerous. It is also getting harder to appoint professional trustees. Part of your annual review with your trust, should be whether the trust still meets the objectives for which it was originally set up to achieve. If the answer is "no", then the trust should be wound up. Until a few years ago, gift duty would have been charged, if the trust was above a certain size and was being wound up. Gift duty has now gone, so it is easier and cheaper to wind up a trust, if it is no longer serving its original purpose. If you are thinking of this course of action, it is important that you obtain some legal advice on this important issue.

PORT TAURANGA D&A

After a very long period of consultation (negotiation) of 16 months we finally have concluded the D&A policy. Our thanks to Kelvin Marten for his involvement, he is now taking a well-earned break in the US.

Jobs confidence dropped to a two-year low as the number of workers getting a pay rise in the last year dropped sharply, according to Westpac McDermott Miller consulting's research unit. The firm's employment confidence index fell nearly three points to 102.8 in the three months to June. An index above 100 represents more optimists than pessimists. "The number of workers who reported a wage increase over the past year is at its lowest since the global financial crisis. That could be a bit of a concern for the economy if it starts to pass through to spending," said Westpac senior economist Satish Ranchhod. He said weak earnings growth, the recent rise in unemployment and low inflation make it more difficult for workers to negotiate pay

raises.

RISING HOUSE PRICES

There is considerable discussion in the media about the continued rise in Auckland house prices – they have increased by 14.6 % in the past year. Taking a broader view, this is not just an Auckland phenomenon. In the past year, house prices have increased by 14.9% in Sydney, fuelled in part, like the Auckland market, by wealthy offshore buyers. A similar thing is occurring in London, with house prices rising by 12% to the end of March this year. Since the election there, a few weeks ago, the housing market has continued to firm.

P LABS

The production of "P" is a major scourge in our society and is doing considerable harm. Most "P" is manufactured in backyard operations in residential dwellings. It is a significant problem in state houses, but also being done in both rental and owner occupied dwellings as well. The problem with the manufacture and use of this drug, is

that it leaves a long duration toxic residue. It is now such an issue, that if you are spending hundreds of thousand on a property, then it is a good idea to get a test to see if this drug residue is present in your proposed new house. If you move in and find it is present, it can cost tens of thousands of dollars to make your house safe, as it may affect your health. You should check with your solicitor whether you should get your new home tested, before your sale and purchase agreement becomes unconditional.

BITS AND BOB'S

- Dan Ensor has decided after 11 years working for C3 to resign and to look at other employment opportunities. All the best Dan.

