

THE ACTIVIST



Published Regularly - ISSN 1178-7392 (Print & Online) 21 August 2012

PORT ANNOUNCEMENT SOUNDS DEATH KNELL FOR OVER 50 JOBS

Prime Port in Timaru today announced a proposal to axe more than 50 jobs on the waterfront by the end of September, something the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) says is a direct result of the lack of a national ports strategy.

'This government isn't interested in an integrated and

planned approach to getting our export goods to market and New Zealand workers and businesses are paying the price. Since Maersk and Hamburg Sud announced they were pulling out the Timaru container trade our members have been left wondering about the extent of job losses on the waterfront, today they found out. For us, it's cold comfort to say to Government 'we told you so,' said RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson.

'The lack of a national ports strategy condemns ports to compete with one another for trade

and the losers are Kiwi workers, ratepayers, and local businesses,' he said.

'Timaru District Council invested in their container port and were successful in attracting business in the short term but

now the foreign owned shipping companies have left town and the result is workers lose their jobs and exporters pay higher costs to get their goods to market' said Wayne Butson.

'This makes no sense, Timaru's economic hinterland is huge, most of the export traffic that goes over the wharf is produced in the region and the Christchurch earthquake demonstrated the importance of having a contingency in the event of disruption to other South Island ports,' he said.

'Two weeks ago John Key was very happy to visit Timaru to open a swimming pool but he refused to acknowledge port workers faced with being thrown on the scrapheap. He's happy to do the fluffy stuff but dodges the tough issues. We challenge him to come and front up to these port workers with a strategy to protect jobs and business in the heartland of New Zealand,' said Wayne Butson



NETWORKS COST REDUCTION PROGRAMME – I&E MEMBER UPDATE

- KiwiRail management have concluded their round of meetings to publicise the so called 'cost reduction' programme.
- The RMTU has, through its delegates, been providing localised responses pointing out flaws with, or alternatives to, the proposal. The deadline for providing responses is 22 August
- The Union has been holding meetings with members, either as part of the consultation process, or during the current cycle of Branch AGMs to vote on resolutions condemning the short sighted vision of the cost cutting programme and

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

also seeking a mandate for a response up to and including industrial action if management target RMTU officials, delegates and active members or pursue an agenda of contracting out of core rail work beyond what may be done currently

- We understand the response to the call for volunteers for redundancy in I & E has not been strong
- The RMTU has sought KiwiRail's CEO's agreement that all suitable vacancies in KiwiRail be frozen and reserved for members affected by the disestablishment of their jobs and have received no response to date
- The RMTU will be working to ensure that KiwiRail meets all its legal and contractual obligations in the event of compulsory redundancies being required
- The RMTU KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council members will seek an urgent meeting with KiwiRail management to discuss the above at a date to be advised.

Please ensure your delegate and/or Branch officials and National Office has up to date contact details for you, including cellphone number and e-mail address where applicable. Do not put yourself in the position where you do not know what is going on.

KEEP OUR ASSETS

A huge thank you to everybody who has signed and collected signatures for the Keep Our Assets petition. The petition phase is now reaching its crucial concluding stages.

The RMTU and heaps of other groups are calling for a Citizens Initiated Referendum on National's privatisation plan before any of our state-owned energy companies or Air New Zealand is sold.

This campaign must succeed if we are to keep New Zealand assets in public hands. The evidence is clear: the needless loss of the 18.5% shareholder return on our state owned companies will only leave New Zealand more indebted in the long run.

The great news is that more than 215,000 people have now signed the petition, bringing us more than halfway to our goal.

We are committed to getting more signatures by the end of September in a final push to stop the first asset sale. Only then can we go beyond collecting signatures and actually stop this from going ahead.

Go to www.rmtunion.org.nz to download a petition form and get those signatures NOW!

ITUC CONDEMNS LONMIN KILLINGS

The International Trade Union Congress has described the wave of violence at South Africa's Lonmin Marikana platinum mine as appalling, with as many as 36 killed yesterday when police opened fire on striking miners. 10 people had previously been killed in the past week as violence at the mine escalated.

"Every worker should be able to go to work knowing that their life and physical safety is guaranteed. We send our deepest condolences to all those who have lost loved ones, and plead for all those involved to renounce violence and solve the dispute peacefully. We trust that the South African authorities will ensure a full investigation into the Lonmin violence, both the appalling killings yesterday and the spiral of violence which led up to it. Those responsible must be brought to justice," said Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary.

Conflict within the mine between rival groups of workers aligned with different unions has intensified in recent weeks, along with episodes of violence elsewhere in the mining sector. On top of demands for better pay, abysmal living conditions for many miners have exacerbated tensions.

"The only way to resolve this situation is through negotiation and dialogue. We trust that intervention from the leadership of both unions, NUM and AMCU, as well as responsible behavior from the mine management which itself has a major responsibility for this situation, will

I LOVE NEW ZEALAND

so much, I want to cut it up into little pieces and give it to all my friends

Don't let him get away with it. No Asset Sales!



bring calm and an agreed settlement that brings justice to all the workers," said Burrow.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 308 affiliated national organisations from 153 countries and territories.

TOLL NETWORKS (TRANZ LINK) PROPOSED SETTLEMENT CA RATIFICATION RESULT

The negotiations and the national round of ratifications meetings have all been completed and the vote is in. The Toll Networks proposed settlement for a 2 year Collective Agreement is ratified by a heavy majority of members. The deal is essentially a 2 year term with annual increases of 2% plus 2% which is good in the current climate. The actual detail is;

Toll Networks Collective Agreement Ballot Results

August 2012

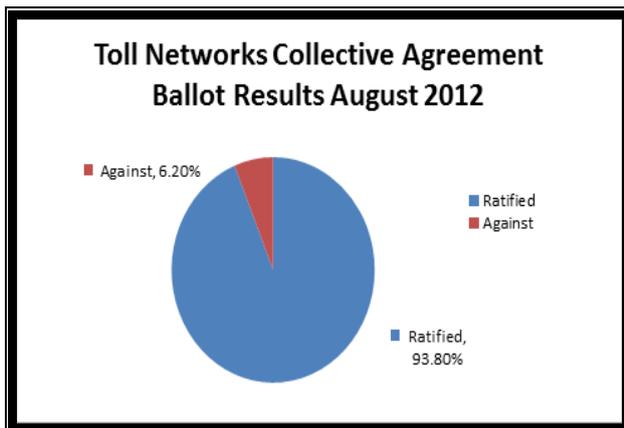
Ratified 93.80% 121

Against 6.20% 8

Total Votes Cast

by members

attending meetings 100.00% 129



KIWI RAIL MECA UPDATE

The parties met in Wellington mid July for 3 days. Robust discussion saw the parties make further progress on some of the claims and others require further work. A further joint statement will be issued by the parties soon. No date is set for further talks at this stage with KiwiRail doing further work on some of the Union's key claims. The process is approaching a critical stage.

THE UNION REPORT

Please watch and share!
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQSgTtifDwo&feature=youtu.be>

The Union Report with CTU's Dr Bill Rosenberg and NZEI's Vice-President Frances Guy.

Issue 1: Unemployment has risen to 6.8% - what should the Government be doing to get NZ back to work and what damage is occurring in our migrant work force?

Issue 2: If Charter Schools are the answer, what on earth is the question?

and Issue 3: A new study shows NZ nurses are battling 'moral distress', what are public servants supposed to do when they see the system failing?

RECORD OUTFLOW TO AUSTRALIA

Statistics New Zealand have reported today that the net loss of migrants to Australia in the July 2012 year was 39,800. This equals the highest ever net loss to Australia, previously recorded in both the April 2012 and June 2012 years. The July 2012 annual figure resulted from 53,900 departures to Australia (a record), offset by 14,000 arrivals from Australia. In both directions, most migrants were New Zealand citizens.

Peter Conway, CTU Secretary said that it appears the Government has no plan to address this outflow.

Before being elected the Government was quick to criticise the emigration of Kiwis to Australia. But now it appears to regard this loss as business as usual".

Peter Conway said that workers will stay here if there are enough jobs that pay well and provide decent conditions of work. That means we need to lift the minimum wage, promote industry bargaining which in Australia covers 60 percent of the workforce compared with 18 percent here, and boost productivity while ensuring the benefits flow to workers.

"Instead we are seeing bosses getting big pay increases here while there is an increasing trend towards casualisation and

mistreatment of workers, including low-paid migrants."

PORT TRANSPARENCY OVERDUE

On the week the Maritime Union has written to the Auckland Council seeking for the Port to be accountable for the money squandered on its ill-conceived contracting plan, it is great news that Labours Darien Fenton has had her Bill seeking to increase transparency for our publically owned ports, pulled from the ballot today. The Bill puts Ports into the coverage of the Official Information Act and creates Good Employer obligations.

Helen Kelly, CTU President says "bringing the same transparency to our publically owned Ports as almost every other public entity will stop us from being kept in the dark about the Ports, and how they make their decisions. The Minister of Transport has previously refused to release any information to us under our Official Information requests, despite the fact there was clear public interest in the long running dispute, especially earlier in the year."

"The ongoing dispute with the Ports of Auckland really brings focus to the anomaly that excludes the public from the right to seek information from the Ports that they own. The Ports were able to develop and progress their 'strategy' of seeking to sack all the wharfies and contract out their work, a failed plan that cost it millions of rate payers' dollars and without any right for the public to request information from the Ports regarding how they developed that strategy."

The Bill would also bring the Ports into line with other requirements of the Local Government Act, including that to be a good employer.

"We hope the government supports moves to bolster requirements on the Ports to act as a good employer. The Auckland Council has previously stated that they were hamstrung as to how much influence they

can have over the Ports as an employer, bringing publically owned ports into the Local Government Act could have given the Council a legislative platform to have more influence over the way the Ports act in regard to their employees."

INDEPENDENT ACC CLIENT SURVEY

Acclaim Otago (Inc) is a support group for injured people and their families. We have been an incorporated society since May 2003. We have become concerned that there is very little independent data available to accurately describe an injured person's experience with ACC.

We are also concerned that people may be being exited from ACC without first receiving meaningful rehabilitation. ACC has recently said that "rehabilitation always comes first" but we have no simple way of finding out if this is correct or not.

Acclaim Otago's survey aims to find out some of what happens to people who are clients of ACC. If you would like to assist us to identify systemic issues and gather REAL data then you can find the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ACCLAIMsurvey1> or from the link on our home page www.acclaimotago.org

GOVERNMENT SPENDS \$8M+ TO CONVINCING PUBLIC THAT NEW ROADS AREN'T A WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY

Over \$8 million has been spent by the Government on promoting a series of wasteful motorway projects, according to documents made available through the Official Information Act.

"The Government has been concerned that a lack of 'messaging clarity' would undermine the credibility of the \$12 billion so called "Roads of National Significance" spend up", says Silvia Zuur, Smart Transport coordinator.

A huge amount of public money has been invested to try and manufacture consent for



the RoNS, despite the government's own commissioned SAHA report confirming their minimal economic benefit.

"With instructions such as: 'Lack of messaging clarity may undermine the credibility of the programme or leave the way open for critics' these documents make clear that the government has been preoccupied with neutralizing opposition to the RoNS, rather than evaluating their value to taxpayers and communities", says Ms Zuur.

Instead of investing in smart transport options, the Government is wasting billions of dollars on a few massive motorway projects, which by any measurement offer a very poor return on investment.

Ms Zuur says: "These motorways, which, it now also emerges will require substantial borrowing, will be an enormous drag on the economy and divert precious transport funding away from essential, everyday transport options, which offer a far better return to taxpayers"

"Instead, the Government should be prioritizing buses and trains, safer walking and cycling, and more cost-effective road improvements" she says.

Smart Transport points out that elsewhere, regions once considered the most car-centric, are now investing substantially in smart transport projects. Los Angeles has now committed to building 1600 miles of cycleways, because of clear economic, social and health benefits.

The Smart Transport Network calls for the Minister of Transport, Gerry Brownlee to stop wasting public money trying defend the indefensible, and to start investing money into a smart transport plan that will benefit all New Zealanders.

METAL'S MECA RATIFIED

More than 1,000 workers at over 100 engineering and manufacturing shops ratified a new multi-employer agreement that guarantees them wage increases for the next two years, reports the NZ Engineering, Printing & Manufacturing Union (EPMU). The

Metals & Manufacturing MECA is the EPMU's largest multi-employer collective agreement. In a statement, the union reported the agreement provides for two pay rises of 2.8 per cent and 2.1 per cent over the next two years, as well as increased employment protections for casual and temp workers.

"This settlement shows that despite the tough economic times, workers who belong to unions are still winning above-inflation pay increases", said EPMU manufacturing industry organiser Louisa Jones. "Multi-employer agreements like the Metals mean there are common conditions and wage increases across the industry. That means companies are free to compete on quality and productivity rather than who can pay the lowest wages."

She said the union will continue to oppose the government's plans to make it harder for workers to be part of multi-employer agreements.



HELP BURMA'S WORKERS BUILD A UNION MOVEMENT

For the first time in generations workers in Burma are now free to form trade unions. But they are starting from scratch in a country slowly emerging from dictatorship and extreme poverty. Please help them by supporting TUC Aid's Burma Appeal.

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-21325-f0.cfm>

Visit the address above to view the document in full, in print format or in text-only format.

ALLIANCE COUPLER – TRANSITION HEAD CONCERN

The RMTU's safety concerns regarding the manual handling of transition heads during shunting operations, as a result of KiwiRail implementing a regime of new wagons being fitted with alliance couplers (auto couplers) have been expressed to KiwiRail by the RMTU's H&S Organiser Karen Fletcher. This is an issue which is causing great concern amongst yard operating members as the new wagons are NOT block marshaled and so it is requiring operating staff to fit

transition heads to standard hook buffers so as to enable the differing couplers to couple. The RMTU concerns include (but are not limited to);

- Manual handling of heavy transition heads (up to 30kg) is a significant hazard for employees. The risk of harm is compounded by the requirement to lift weight over a remote control pack which is strapped to the body. The presence of the pack prevents the employee from performing safe lifting technique.

The KiwiRail Review of Remote Control Operator Job task for Lifting of Transition heads and wearing a remote control pack (26 March 2012) identified the risks of harm. We note there was no RMTU representation in the review. The hazards identified in the review include;

- Excessive flexion when bending
- Excessive rotation when bending and lifting transition head
- Forceful static movement to lift, manoeuvre transition head into lock
- Asymmetrical loading to the body when lifting, maneuvering transition head into the lock

The RMTU understands that shunting staff at Middleton rail yard are currently performing on average 17 changes of transition heads per shift per person. This level of manual handling presents an unacceptable level of risk of serious injury. Furthermore the frequency of handling transition heads will substantially increase by the end of August when demand increases as we enter "the season".

We have been advised that KiwiRail is "striving" to improve management and work practices across the network with respect to minimising the exposure of staff to needing to lift and fit transition heads between wagon fleets by organising wagon at terminals such that "packs" of auto-coupler wagons are operated together. Please provide us with an update on implementation of these controls.

Additionally the RMTU has requested from KiwiRail the following information;

- Advise if any members have been deemed unfit for this manual handling task.

- Evidence of the current number of transition head changes required per person per shift and projected lifts when demand increases.
- Information relating to KiwiRail's response regarding hazard notices that have been submitted since the introduction of the IAB/IAC wagons
- Summary of incidents/injuries that have occurred since the introduction of the IAB/IAC wagons relating to manual handling of transition heads
- The risk assessment of the introductions of the IAC and IAB's

The RMTU has sought clarification regarding the following points;

- The lack of RMTU representation on the review of the RCO Job task for lifting transition heads with remote control packs?
- How many wagons are still required to be fitted with auto couplers?
- What is the expected time frame for the conversion of UK, PL wagons and the JPS and CG fleets to automatic coupling?
- How are the minimisation controls being monitored as per Section 10 of the HSE Act?

We are awaiting receipt of KiwiRail's substantive response and will keep branches and members informed. Other branches may wish to follow the lead of the Canterbury Rail Branch in placing the company on notice of H&S action around this issue.

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY?

To ensure members who fall within the coverage of Collective Agreements etc receive their ballot papers We MUST know your current postal address. Please let National Office know your current mailing address or update your details online www.rmtunion.org.nz

NEW DL LOCO'S USE 1970'S TECHNOLOGY

KiwiRail bought 1970s technology when it bought new locomotives from China, but now has an opportunity to put matters right,



one of its former long-serving senior engineers says. It was "baffling" KiwiRail had ordered the type of locomotives it did, Randall Prestidge, who worked for KiwiRail for more than 34 years and headed the fleet performance team until he took voluntary redundancy last year, said yesterday. "These locomotives [are] very similar to DX locomotive technology of the 1970s," Mr Prestidge said.

"The amount of train weight they can pull is the same. The traction motors which do the work are identical.

"Once we get the bugs out of the new locomotives they will be as good as the ones which are nearly due for replacement."

KiwiRail ordered 40 locomotives at a cost of \$150 million. The first 20 arrived in the country last year and have been plagued by major faults.

A repair programme is under way and KiwiRail has put production of the second batch on hold until design and manufacture difficulties are remedied. Repairs and brakes adjustments have also been needed on 535 Chinese-built freight wagons imported last year. Mr Prestidge, now a Wellington-based rail engineering consultant, said KiwiRail was stuck with the 20 locomotives, whose problems were "bad but curable". However, he said KiwiRail should make sure it did not buy the same technology again.

"They are thinking old and small and not thinking into the new century."

He said he had tried to discuss his views with KiwiRail but "no-one wanted to listen" and he had decided to go public. "I didn't want to be disloyal to KiwiRail. I didn't want to bag them in public. I wanted to help.

"I'm saying they . . . must change their ways. But I know in my heart they are not going to."

An 11-page report outlining his views was "written more in sorrow than anger", he said. He supplied KiwiRail with a copy yesterday. Mr Prestidge said KiwiRail should be buying heavier-axled locomotives capable of pulling longer trains and heavier loads. Locomotives should also have AC traction technology and electronic braking systems,

neither of which the Chinese locomotives had. When the Chinese locomotives were ordered in 2009, there was a significant price gap between the old DC traction technology and AC technology. However, the price difference now was "almost nothing", he said. Installing electronic braking on new locomotives and wagons would shave 10% of train journey times, Mr Prestidge said.

At present, New Zealand's rolling stock used a compressed air braking system which had not significantly changed since it was designed in the 1870s. Electronic braking used a computer cable to send a braking signal to all wagons at the same time. While a "nightmare" to retrofit, the electronic system was used extensively by other railway companies on new locomotives and wagons, he said. "Electronic braking is so responsive it is like driving a racing car".

"The system cuts down on the chances of a train bunching up and derailing when the brakes are applied and means trains can go faster into corners. It also saves fuel and transit time.

"But because the price tag is a wee bit higher they [KiwiRail] haven't considered it."

Mr Prestidge said keeping up with new technology and design changes was the key to running a financially sustainable railway system. "Developments are opening up those possibilities - much heavier axle loads, slightly higher transit speeds, much longer trains, all sorts of automation. "None of that is on the radar for KiwiRail. They are relentlessly stuck in the 1970s and 1980s model of railway."

A KiwiRail spokeswoman said yesterday the company was always open to exploring new technology for New Zealand rolling stock as long as it did not affect its tight budgets and need for timely delivery.

"The [Chinese] DL locomotives were designed specifically for the unique nature of New Zealand rail (narrow gauge, tight tunnels, tight curves) by a team of highly experienced and skilled rail professionals.



"Modifications have been needed and these have been made to the second generation DL in China".

"A prototype is currently being tested and has travelled over 25,000km without any major issues arising".

"If we are satisfied with the performance, an order for the second tranche of 20 will be approved for delivery in 2013."

KiwiRail had seen a three-fold improvement in the performance of the first DLs in the past three months, she said. All 20 were on the tracks and had already notched up 2 million kilometres, while the wagons had run a total of 26 million kilometres.

- allison.rudd@odt.co.nz

NO CHANGE TO TURNAROUND PLAN

The Government will not change KiwiRail's turnaround plan despite there being little likelihood the company can meet the financial target set for it.

The turnaround plan, announced in 2010, aims to fund all costs from customer revenue within a decade.

In Parliament last week, State Owned Enterprises Minister Tony Ryall admitted it was unlikely that KiwiRail would be able to find the \$3.85 billion from its own balance sheet as required by the plan.

At the time it was reported that he said the business had been affected by the Christchurch earthquakes, the Pike River disaster and economic downturn.

Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee is also reported to have said that there is no need to change the plan and KiwiRail has to keep driving hard at the targets until it hits them.

Labour says the Government is being completely unreasonable and it should revise the turnaround plan so it is more realistic.

The RMTU believes that the Turnaround Plan is fundamentally flawed in that it is tasked with making the railway self-sustainable without Government support – something that 15 years of privatization proved was not

achievable given the uneven playing field between transport modes. It is now made worse by the fact that the industry is midway through a major rebuilding phase to undo the neglect of those 15 years during which the railway was in private hands. The definition of insanity is to do the same thing twice and expect a different outcome!

STATS SHOW SHOCKING TRUTH OF GROWING INEQUALITY IN NZ

The latest Strategic Pay survey results are shocking evidence of growing inequality in New Zealand, the union representing New Zealand's lowest paid workers said today.

The average base salary for chief executives rose nearly 10% last year to \$315,000. The average chief executive increase alone was more than a worker on the minimum wage received in the entire year.

"These stats show yet again that belt-tightening is only a reality for some," said Service and Food Workers Union National Secretary Ryall.

"For the hard-working New Zealanders slogging their guts out caring and cleaning, wages are too low to put food on the

table and pay basic household bills, let alone have a decent quality of life."

John Ryall said the double standard around pay rates where chief executives were getting richer and richer and ordinary working families are getting poorer and poorer was completely unacceptable.

"Increasingly New Zealanders are uniting around a call for a more equitable society, where all workers receive a living wage. Until the very lowest pay rates are increased, the equity gap will grow and with it, poverty in New Zealand," he said.

The Service and Food Workers Union, along with over 70 community and faith-based organisations and other unions, is planning a Wellington launch of Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand in Wellington next week.

"It's time to end poverty pay rates for good, and the new living wage movement is growing in momentum daily," he said.



GOVT'S PRIORITIES FOR KIWIRAIL SHORT-SIGHTED

The National Government's pressure on KiwiRail to become a stand-alone profit centre is short-sighted and will mean New Zealand loses the wider economic benefits of a well-maintained, publicly-owned rail network, the Green Party said today.

Responding to comments by KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn on Q & A this morning, Green Party transport spokesperson Julie Anne Genter said that the National Government has chosen to erode passenger rail services in an effort to get the rail freight business unit profitable enough to sell.

"It's obvious that the Key-Banks Government wants to get KiwiRail into a position to privatise; why else would they have such a narrow focus on profit margins," asked Ms Genter.

"Our transport networks are full of cross-subsidies. The National Government is wasting billions of dollars on a few big motorway projects that would never be able to pay their own way as standalone commercial projects. But it won't invest in getting our rail network back up to scratch.

"New Zealand businesses benefit from rail. Exporters benefit from rail. Road users benefit from rail.

"The country could also be using the revitalisation of rail to create valuable green jobs.

"Most countries are now investing substantially in their rail networks because of the obvious economic benefits, especially as oil prices are expected to double in the next decade.

"Last year the Green Party prepared an alternative transport budget to the Government's, one that will save \$3.5 billion overall but still include an additional \$1 billion investment into KiwiRail.

"Not only can we afford to invest in rail, we can't afford not to.

"We need smart, green transport investment now so all New Zealanders can benefit from a resilient transport network in the future."

MP'S BACK THEIR CLEANERS' PAY CLAIM

Parliamentary cleaners now have the backing of those who benefit most from their hard work — the MPs whose offices they clean between midnight and 6am.

Winston Peters, Labour's caucus and the Greens have all made a commitment to back the cleaners' claim to increase their hourly rate from \$13.85 an hour to a minimum of \$15. This follows meetings between the cleaners, who are members of the Service and Food Workers Union and MPs.

"Most of the cleaners have been on \$13.50 an hour until this week when their pay has increased to \$13.85," said SFWU advocate Jill Ovens.

"The Prime Minister's cleaner has been cleaning the Beehive for nearly 20 years and is still on less than \$15. The MPs agree that is not enough to live on."

Jill Ovens said that the cleaners explained to MPs that they have a clause in their collective agreement stating that their employer, Spotless, will increase their pay rates if the client agrees to fund the increase.

"The client in this case is Parliamentary Services," she said. "The MPs have agreed to approach Parliamentary Services to support the cleaners' claim and offered whatever support is required to achieve the pay rise."

Jill Ovens said SFWU was approaching other political parties and asking them to stand up for their cleaners as well.

"It's very hard work, which happens at dead of night and it can be invisible," she said. "And Parliament can of course be a dirty place."

DRUG TESTING BENEFICIARIES ATTEMPT TO BLAME THE UNEMPLOYED FOR SITUATION

Following an OIA request, CTU has received information from the Ministry of Social Development today that the government has received no advice, briefings, papers or reports in the last twelve months about complaints from employers about

beneficiaries failing drug tests and is unable to locate the much vaunted complaints from employers about beneficiaries failing drug tests.

CTU President Helen Kelly says "the government has based its latest round of beneficiary bashing on nothing more than anecdotal evidence at best and after announcing it will be cutting the benefits of people who fail or refuse to take a drug test as the solution to unemployment is unable to back up its claim that it has received advice from employers that this is an issue. The government hasn't received any advice from the Ministry of Social Development relating to complaints from employers. This legislation is based on anecdotal evidence and prejudice against people out of work."

"Bill English has said that young people cannot be employed because they can't pass a drug test, but the Ministry of Social Development has not backed this up with evidence. This is another example of this government perpetuating the narrative that people who are not in work are lazy, and somehow to blame for the lack of job opportunities. At a time it should be investing in training, jobs such as rail, supporting manufacturing, it is dog whistling about drugs without any evidence."

Helen Kelly says "we know that work is good for people, and people in work are much healthier and less likely to take drugs. This kind of policy is not going to help get people into work, its punitive and focusing on the wrong thing."

"Often these kinds of policies are far more expensive to implement than they are useful. Rather than focusing on a costly policy to address a problem they have no evidence exists, the government should be focusing on job creation and skills development. Investing in our people who are out of work to get them ready for work, and investing in our economy to create jobs will be more productive for all of us than drug testing beneficiaries. "

LATEST LCI OUT

In the June 2012 quarter, salary and wage rates (including overtime) rose 0.4 percent. In the year to the June 2012 quarter:

- Salary and wage rates (including overtime) increased 2.0 percent.
- Overtime wage rates increased 2.3 percent.
- Private sector salary and ordinary time wage rates increased 2.1 percent.

BITS AND BOB'S

- Successful Delegate training courses have now been completed in Wellington and Canterbury. If you're a delegate and haven't received training then get stuck into your regional Organiser to receive it!!

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!

