

THE ACTIVIST



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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, JOYOUS AND SAFE 2024!

The end of 2023 is upon us and so it is important that we all remember that at this time of year there are Xmas Parties and other work functions. Whilst it is important that we all begin to relax and get into the Christmas Spirit and enjoy the company of workmates, colleagues etc it is essential that we don't let the good times become nightmares with unintended outcomes.

Please remember that as the year comes to an end it is essential that we are mindful of some of the issues that we all tend to face when it comes to work functions, social media and no alcohol or drugs in the workplace. When you are at a work function you remain connected to the workplace and so the policies of the employer will apply.

Work functions are great times to relax and interact with colleagues but do not take the opportunity to tell your boss, supervisor or colleague just what it is you think of them!

In social media the line between our private lives and work can often become

blurred. The Union all too often has to represent members who are called to "meetings" to answer allegations of misconduct arising from social media posts. There is no such thing as closed groups or confidentiality in social media. Do not put anything in a social media post that you would not pin on a noticeboard at work. All employers have social media policies and many contain provisions that state that any breaches may lead to disciplinary action which may include termination.

The same policy principle applies to Drugs and Alcohol. These policies exist to provide for your safety, your workmates safety and of course the safety of the public. As humans our bodies all operate and behave differently and so when it comes to processing alcohol there is no hard and fast rule of the time

between the throttle and the bottle as it were. It is essential that you self-assess your fitness for work following a bit of a bash on the booze or the pipe etc. Remember also that D&A testing is post incident, reasonable cause and random and so you have no control over whether

On behalf of the
Union's President,
National Management
Committee and Staff
we wish all members
and their families a
happy and joyous
Christmas. We also
wish you a healthy,
safe and prosperous
2024.

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

you are subjected to a test let alone a police roadside check en-route to or from work.

Our best advice is that you don't take the risk and call in sick if you think your unfit for duty.

Finally, if you are called into a meeting to discuss any of the above then do not go in alone – **ALWAYS TAKE IN A DELEGATE OR A WITNESS TO ANY MEETING WITH THE BOSS**. There is no such thing as a quick informal chat in our experience in these circumstances.

Be safe, be smart and above all else be proud to be RMTU!

UNION OFFICE CLOSURES

The Union's National Office (Wellington) will be closed from 1600hrs 20 December 2023 until 0830hrs 8 January 2024.

The Auckland office is closed from 23 December 2023 to 14 January 2024.

The Bay of Plenty is closed from 23 December 2023 to 14 January 2023

The Christchurch Office is open throughout the holiday period excluding public holidays.

The **Emergency** "on call" roster for Union Industrial matters for delegates during the closedown period is –

Todd Valster – 23 - 26 December 2023 inclusive and December 30 & 31 2023, then January 1 & 2 2024, on 0274454691.

Andy Woolhouse
December 28 & 29 2023,
January 4 & 5 2024,
0272464941.

FAIR PAY AGREEMENTS –

Unfortunately Gone by Christmas is the word from the new government. Whilst

this does not directly affect many of members this sets a precedent as to how the new government will approach industrial relations over the next 3 years.

FPA's would have affected those who are paid the least in the work force and would have been the difference between the working poor and workers being able to achieve a reasonable standard of living. FPA's were about setting a floor not affecting the ceiling.

It is worth noting that many of the economies we compete and trade with all have this type of floor set in place. They are all more productive than NZ and have stronger economies.

90 DAY TRIALS- ATTACKS ON THE WORKING CLASS

Another attack on workers' rights will be the reintroduction of 90 day trials in the ERA, this will allow an employer to terminate inside 90 days with no reason.

Other attacks on the working people of NZ is the repealing of the Smoke Free Act dooming future generations to addiction and poverty.

Massive tax cuts for landlords and making it easier for landlords to evict tenants.

All things that squeeze the lowest paid workers in our economy and intend to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

IREX AXED

Only days into the new government the government declared that they would not pay for the iRex project. This is a government intent on undoing everything the previous government has



done without taking time to look closely at what this means to the country.

Limiting the future resilience of our link between our two major islands is irresponsible and negligent. The ability to move our citizens, their vehicles and freight on what is essentially state highway 1 is basic right in an island nation.

The ageing InterIslander fleet is basically at end of life, the shore side infrastructure is also ageing and has suffered from a lack of investment over decades. Frankly it is an embarrassment to this country to continue with such shabby infrastructure.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to lift our failing infrastructure and to ensure a safe and reliable link between our major island.

The RMTU will continue to oppose this decision and work to overturn it as it is difficult to find a single NZer who supports this decision.

STEVEDORING- APPROVED CODE OF PRACTICE WORK BEGINS

Following the inquiry into the shameful levels of worker injuries and fatalities in the ports sector, the Ports Leadership Group (which includes the RMTU, waterfront unions, ports employers and regulators), has been involved in development of a national standard for health and safety in the ports. Working groups met four times earlier in the year with excellent worker input from RMTU delegates. This has resulted in a draft

ACOP being distributed by MNZ late in the year which has gone to all parties for consultation. We just now await the final document and hope that the new minister will sign off on this excellent project.

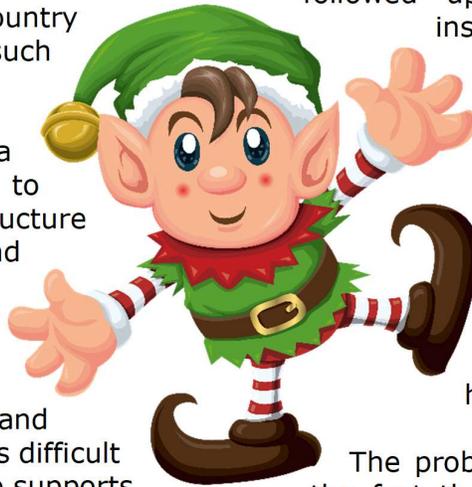
TRANSDEV WELLINGTON

December saw quite a debate in our lunch room at the Wellington Train station, the subject was forced leave over Xmas. The issue came to a head at the end of November with locomotive engineers being ambushed on the platform on the way to or from their trains. This was followed up by a letter days later instructing individuals that any leave they had owing would be forced to be taken between December 27 and January 7. According to the company this was consultation. Consultation is when both parties enter into a conversation about possible outcomes and gain consensus, nothing like that here.

The problem was particularly around the fact that not only those with high leave balances were required to take leave but those with low leave balances as well. Essentially those who had managed their leave balances during the year were penalised. Many were upset as they had leave turned down during the year some even for the Xmas period and were then required to take leave.

It was later pointed out to TDW that certain things are voluntary and need not be done by the workers. Those things being overtime, training and working on public holidays. This resulted in a change of approach from the company allowing those with low leave balances to come into work if they choose and take other duties.

Important to know your rights:



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- Your employer may require you to take leave if it is over 12 months old, this is by mutual agreement however if agreement cannot be reached then the employer may require an employee to take the leave at 14 days' notice.
- An employer may not unreasonably withhold leave.
- An annual close down must be exactly that a period of time the business closes every year
- Your leave is 12 months old on the date of your anniversary

INJURIES STILL HIGH AT KIWIRAIL, SAFE WORK AT HEIGHT BECOMES A FOCUS

This year has been a shocking year for KiwiRail employees falling from height. Two workers have fallen from height earlier in the year.

At the end of October a telecommunications technician fell an estimated 10 metres from a mast. In all these situations the workers were injured in some cases seriously, but this highlights the fact that we cannot continue to live on luck.

As a result there is an enterprise wide focus on working at height. Any work at height over 1.5 metres needs to have controls in place to mitigate the risk.

This has highlighted that KR do not have a consistent standard across the business of how working at height mitigated.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



DELEGATE TRAINING CENTRAL REGION

The central region finished with delegate training in both Marlborough and Nelson in early December with plans for delegate training in Taranaki early in the New Year. It is important that our delegates are all trained

and competent. It is great for our delegates to all get on the same page and find they are part of something bigger. If you need training make sure you contact your branch secretary so they can arrange training for you.

PORT TARANAKI

Early next year RMTU will kick off the year in bargaining with PTL, after ratifying a controversial one-year deal last year the members look forward to a constructive wage round that addresses the burning issues in this port. An interesting Port whose main source of income is the Petro/chemical industry. No doubt will be

PORT NELSON RATIFIES AGREEMENT

Another one-year deal done at Port Nelson as the RMTU and PNL continue to work on a roster for stevedores. Featuring a new structure for how stevedores are paid including a pay progression plan. We continue to engage in an HPHE process to institute the new roster which continues on a trial into next year as a few tweaks are needed to reduce idle time and deal with the low cargo volumes at the moment.

looking forward to a government that is looking to reignite fossil fuel exploration.

ASSET SALES THWARTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE 'REPUBLIC OF CHRISTCHURCH'

Last week Christchurch council voted on whether to progress down the path of selling some of the city's infrastructure / or strategic assets. The board (made up mainly of chartered accountants) which oversees the city's strategic asset portfolio was advising council to proceed with more active and aggressive management, through removing the public companies from the strategic asset register, and enabling the board to seek options to partially sell the port, the airport, power distribution networks, fibre broadband networks and more. The vote to green light the sell off was very close but a couple of swing votes on council seemed to be influenced by speeches made by campaigners against asset sales and the very vocal and concerned and full public gallery. The vote was 8-7, against proceeding with the 'sell off' business case and so another attempt at undemocratic strategic asset sales has been thwarted by unions and organisations working together for the greater good. Unfortunately the ongoing battle to fight privatisation still exists throughout the country, especially in Christchurch. This must be a key priority for all voters in future local body elections to hold candidates and subsequently councillors to account with regards to asset sales.



TOITŪ TE MAURI

This is the safety culture reset programme that has been initiated from the DSS safety culture survey earlier in the year.

This has resulted in four work streams with collaboration between management and the unions to improve our safety culture. We are still currently harming a worker about every 40 hours

Workstream 1 is called shifting safety mind-sets and has been mainly involved in getting as many frontline workers through mirror walks before the end of the year. Over 3000 workers have gone through the mirror walks, which are designed to reflect back to us through own views and values around health and safety.

Workstream 2 is called developing care and protect skills which has concentrated on developing a safety leadership course for the top 160 managers. This course will be focussed on safety leadership rather than safety management. This course will be rolled out early next year.

Workstream 3 is called drive rapid risk reductions at the front line. Reduce risk of incidents through containing high consequence risks, targeted interventions at highest risk business units. This has been looking at critical risks and mitigating risk.

Workstream 4 Is called establishing safety support structures. Developing system for driving line management ownership and accountability for performance outcomes.

The work continues next year so let's **stay safe out there.**

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