

Collective Agreement negotiations delayed

## Momentum gathering for PWUA campaign for the Living Wage

In early February NZ Post, the PWUA and E tū signed a Memorandum of Understanding delaying negotiations for the Collective Agreements by three months.

It is hoped that the peak of the Omicron outbreak will have passed by June to allow in-person meetings to occur, but if restrictions are still in place then meetings will need to be by on-line video conference.

This could apply to the negotiations between the unions and the company, and also the meetings among PWUA officials, delegates and members.

A decision on the form that the negotiations and meetings will take will be made on 10 May.

In the meantime the PWUA's campaign for a Living Wage at NZ Post is gathering momentum and

enjoying wide support.

With inflation currently officially running at 6%, which is probably effectively 10% or more for low paid NZ Post workers who spend most of their income on inflated basic essentials, significant pay rises will be needed to allow employees to afford to remain working at NZ Post.

A shortage of workers across the country means that employers are needing to significantly increase pay rates to retain and attract workers, and NZ Post is no different.

The PWUA believes that, as a State Owned Enterprise and a prominent NZ company, NZ Post needs to take a leadership role in lifting all of its essential workforce out of poverty and start paying them all a decent Living Wage.

### Union members' access to union representatives

In early February, two days after an agreement was signed to delay negotiations, NZ Post informed the unions that their organisers and officials would be denied access to worksites for an indefinite period as part of the company's Covid response.

#### In-person union access

This would mean that union members would have no access to in-person union assistance in the workplace, and the union would be severely restricted in its ability to organise and prepare for the up-coming Collective Agreement negotiations.

The PWUA and E tū challenged the company's policy, pointing out its inconsistent approach in allowing a wide range of visitors to enter its worksites and discriminating only against union visitors.

#### Unlawful policy?

The PWUA also stated that the policy may constitute an unlawful attempt to undermine collective bargaining.

After much debate the company withdrew its policy and a "Protocol for union access to worksites during Covid Red settings" was agreed.

At the suggestion of the PWUA, union visitors will produce a negative RAT result before entering the worksites, provide proof of vaccination status, and follow workplace Covid safety protocols including mask wearing.

#### Collective Agreement

This protocol should enable the PWUA to continue its essential task of preparing for Collective Agreement negotiations.

Any workers who may have safety concerns about meeting with a union visitor in their workplace are, of course, free to decline to meet.

### NZ Post Team Brief on safe mail allocation

The PWUA supports the Team Brief issued by NZ Post on 17 February on safe mail allocation.

Following the fatal Paxster crash in the Wellington suburb of Tawa on 30 December the PWUA received messages of concern from posties in other parts of the country about safety while driving Paxsters.

Posties had reported skipping breaks and taking risks every day as they tried to deliver too much mail being allocated to them for delivery.

The PWUA and NZ Post entered into a series of constructive discussions about how best to ensure safe work systems.

The outcome was the company supporting the PWUA's view that the safest method of work was for posties to have the final say in the amount of mail they could safely deliver.

Some points from the NZ Post Team Brief:

*The following points are important to ensuring an outcome where DAs are*

*taking out workloads that can be safely delivered:*

- *Workloads should be allocated at the start of the day by leaders on the basis of providing sufficient work to fill the paid rostered hours for the day (not more)*
- *Where there is insufficient resource for the workload (due to turn over, unplanned absences, Covid impacts etc) this will result in mail not taken out (rather than a situation where DAs take it all out and see what they can get through)*
- *Equally and ultimately, the best judge of what can be safely done on the day ... rests with the person actually performing the work ... that is the DA.*

The union invites members to report to the union any on-going problems of work allocation which the union can take back for further discussion with the company as necessary.

## Possibility of Paxster fatality in 2017 report to NZ Post

A "30-50% certainty of occurrence" of a Paxster fatality on public roads or footpaths was identified in two Job Safety Analysis documents prepared by NZ Post in 2017.

In an email to NZ Post on 1 December 2017 the PWUA sent a long list of questions to the company expressing the union's concerns about the content of the Job Safety Analysis documents and in particular the risk of a fatality.

The very first question the PWUA raised with the company was is the "30-50% certainty of occurrence of a fatality within the next two financial years" acceptable to NZ Post?"

In part, the company's answer was "What's important is that we regularly remind our people of this risk and ensure they are trained to operate as safely as possible."

A year earlier in March 2016 the company had a report about the safe operating of Paxsters - "Ergonomic Assessment of Postal Delivery using

the New Paxster Delivery Vehicle (Mackie Research and Consulting):

- "New posties, or even experienced ones may be prone to errors (slips, lapses, mistakes or violations) related to high mental workload, fatigue, distress, distraction, complacency, knowledge gaps or poorly designed environments/tasks.
- "From my observations the posties appeared to have plenty of time to complete their jobs and the system did not seem overly stressed which is very positive in managing errors."

It had become clear to the PWUA that because of too much mail being allocated, Paxsters were not able to be operated "as safely as possible".

Following discussions between the PWUA and NZ Post posties are now able to self select their own mail volume to have "plenty of time" to operate their Paxsters more safely.

## PWUA requests audit of SWAGs

The PWUA became aware that many NZ Post worksites have not been having regular Safety and Wellbeing Action Group (SWAG) meetings.

SWAG Health and Safety Representatives have told the union they believe that because of the lack of staff numbers they do not get released for meetings. Some of the reps have also said that they are no longer provided with the time to action and record health and safety issues.

The PWUA has asked NZ Post to conduct an audit of workplace SWAG groups - including do they have elected representatives and regular meetings.

## Annual leave cannot be just deducted for Covid

Annual leave cannot be deducted for any Covid-related absence from work unless the employee asks for it.

Sick leave can only be deducted if the employee, or a dependent they care for, is sick.

If an employee is not sick but awaiting a Covid test result or is required to self isolate then they should receive Special Paid Leave from the company.

Sick employees who have exhausted their paid sick leave entitlement, but are still required to isolate away from work because of Covid, should also receive Special Paid Leave for the remainder of their absence.

## Honouring the memory of Sam Kelman

The PWUA is determined to ensure that there will be a good outcome for all posties from the results of the investigation into the death of North City (Porirua) postie Sam Kelman in a Paxster crash on 30 December.

This pledge, in honour of Sam's memory, was made by the PWUA National President speaking at Sam's funeral service.

As well as the specific event of the crash on the day, the WorkSafe investigation is expected to cover a wide range of other factors which may have contributed to the crash.

These factors could include training, familiarity with the round, staff shortages, allocation of mail volumes, pressure to get mail delivered, and the suitability of the mode for the terrain.

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of Aotearoa

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POSTAL WORKERS UNION OF AOTEAROA (NORTHERN)

6A Western Springs Road, Kingsland, Auckland, 1021

I hereby appoint the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa incorporated to be my authorised representative under Sections 18 and 236 of the Employment Relations Act 2000. For the purpose of this authority any duly appointed representative of the PWUA is empowered to act on my behalf in any matters related to or arising out of the negotiation and application of any Employment Agreement or any other matter relating to my employment at my request. This authority shall continue in force until revoked by myself, giving two weeks notice.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Signed ..... Date...../...../..... Appointment No.....

Employer ..... Site.....

Department..... Position.....

Home Address.....

Suburb..... City..... Post code.....

Phone..... Email.....

### Deduction Authority for Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa (Northern)

I authorise my employer to deduct:

\$5.95 per week when I am employed for 30 or more hours per week, or

\$2.95 per week when I am on-call, or employed for less than 30 hours per week from my pay and credit the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa Northern District.

Please stop any other deductions from my pay to any other union.