

CEA expires 31 March - inter-union cooperation needed for good outcome

Union preparing members' claims for new Collective Employment Agreement

A pay claim for an equal wage increase for all Post employees, improvements in sick leave and public holiday entitlements and protection of members' access to their union officials on the job are among claims for a new Collective Employment Agreement sent by members to the PWUA union offices.

The current CEA covers the 33 months from 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2011 and provided for four pay

increases during its term.

Also expected to be on the table at the negotiations are the results of the Delivery Working Group's trials on the Postie Pay Model. The PWUA and EPMU have been working together with Post on the Postie Pay Model process and trials.

The PWUA is concerned that the company may want to make the PPM compulsory. Many members are opposed to a compulsory PPM which

would see the losses of overtime and the meal allowance currently provided by the CEA.

The PWUA believes that the PWUA and EPMU must continue to work together to ensure that any PPM is not rushed, does not contain flaws which disadvantage union members, and is well understood by delivery workers.

The PWUA needs any late CEA claims in the union offices by 31 January.

Summary of main PWUA claims received so far for new CEA

- **Wages:** \$1.00 per hour wage rise for one year, for all grades and steps (Percentage wage increases always widen the margin between the highest and lowest paid workers. A wage increase measured in a dollar and cent amount - for example a one dollar an hour increase for every union member - means each employee gets the same pay increase.)
- **Sick leave:** Increased to 10 days per year for six-day workers and night-shift workers, and eight days for five day workers.
- **Saturday delivery volumes:** A proposal to reduce the delivery load on Saturdays, preferably by eliminating Saturday deliveries, alternatively by investigating ways of prioritising and reducing the volume of mail required to be delivered on Saturdays.
- **Public Holidays:** Where Waitangi Day or Anzac Day falls on a non-working day then the employee would be entitled to a paid holiday in lieu. For instance in 2011 Anzac Day falls on Easter Monday and Waitangi Day falls on a Sunday. Most employees currently lose two public holidays.
- **"Long Weekend" Saturdays:** Paid days off on the Saturdays of Easter, Queen's Birthday, Labour, and Anniversary weekends. (Prior to 1996 posties did not work on Easter, Queen's Birthday or Labour weekends.)
- **Postie Pay Model:** Any ratification of the PPM model to be by majority vote of posties only. Postie branches be allowed to opt in voluntarily over the term of the CEA.
- **Vehicle User Agreement:** To be included in the CEA so that any changes can only be by negotiation and agreement with the union. In some recent cases different VUA's were placed before posties with a demand that they sign them. This is in breach of the consultation process in clause A22 of the CEA.
- **Attending Mediation:** Guaranteed payment for employees and delegates for whom it is necessary to attend mediation under clause J8 of the CEA.
- **Union access:** The PWUA wants to ensure that its rights to continue its union business at workplaces are protected. In the meantime the PWUA acknowledges that Post may well have no intention to use last year's amendment to the Employment Relations Act (ERA) to obstruct union organisers visiting workplaces and talking with employees. The new law makes union organisers' access to workplaces more complicated and open to abuse by employers. (See box on the back page).
- **90 day probationary period:** Another amendment to the ERA gives employers the right to insist on a "fire at will" clause for new workers in all workplaces in New Zealand. The PWUA wants the company to agree not to use the new 90 day probationary period but to continue to provide all employees with the personal grievance protections of Section J of the CEA. (See also box on back page).
- **New employment law:** Any further Government changes to employment law to have no effect on PWUA members unless and until ratified by union members under the CEA clauses "Changing the Agreement", B6 to B9.
- **Variations to the CEA:** Currently 66% of affected employees are required to vote in favour before there can be a change in the CEA. This can leave a dissatisfied majority - 65% may have voted in favour, but the CEA cannot be changed. The union's claim is that for a variation to be ratified, only a simple majority of more than 50% of the affected employees is required.
- **Laundering allowance:** Replacing the drycleaning allowance (CEA clause L41) with a laundering allowance for all employees required to wear a uniform.

NZCTU coordinating CEA claims to protect workers

Last year the National Party led Government passed a series of amendments to the Employment Relations Act which adversely affect workers and their unions. These included:

- Extension of the 90-day probationary "fire at will" provision from small workplaces to all workplaces.
- Restriction on the right of union organisers' access to workers on the job - unions can be required to seek and await written approval for visits to talk to their members on the job.

Last year PWUA members joined nation-wide protests organised by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions in its "Fairness at Work" campaign against the new laws. Further com-

bined union rallies and marches are planned for 1 April in the on-going campaign.

The PWUA is one of more than 40 unions affiliated to the NZCTU which represents over 350,000 workers.

The PWUA claims for the CEA negotiations are designed:

- To protect workers from being sacked without reason by ensuring that all new employees at Post are covered by the same personal grievance provisions of the CEA as existing employees.
- To ensure the continuation of the existing provisions and agreements with Post for union access to workplaces.

PWUA feedback on Post's alcohol and drugs policy

Post has begun consultation with the PWUA about the company's intention to introduce an "Alcohol and Other Drugs policy".

Any current employee applying for an internal transfer or another job in Post could become subjected to a urine test. Post could also subject employees to a compulsory test if the company believes that there is no reasonable explanation for an incident occurring.

An employee who disputes that the company has "reasonable cause" to demand a test could be suspended or even dismissed.

The union has given initial feedback to the company:

- **Reasonable cause testing, and a refusal to test being serious misconduct:** This has been abused by other employers and can be a potential means of intimidation of employees.
- **Urine drug testing:** For marijuana

a urine test will detect drug use for up to 6 weeks after use. The use of urine tests for marijuana by employers is having the effect of pushing those citizens who want to use drugs other than alcohol towards more dangerous drugs like P which clear very rapidly from the body after use.

- **Medical information:** Workers should not be required to notify employers of medication which has no relevance to their work.
- **Alternative testing arrangements:** Some employees/potential employees may want to have drug testing performed by a medical practitioner of their own choosing.

The PWUA appreciates that following the strong protests by the PWUA in the past, Post has not attempted to again bring drug dogs into mail centres to sniff workers as they sit at their work stations.

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Redback stands by cut-ups flow chart

The November issue of Redback carried a flow chart for posties to follow in cases of confusion about whether or not on-going cut-ups could be required by the company.

The flow chart was produced to reflect and comply with the decision of the Employment Relations Authority case of Christchurch's St Asaph posties refusing a cut-up last year.

In some team briefs Post management asked posties not to refer to the flow chart. The PWUA stands by the flow chart as an accurate and responsible approach for members and the union to take to ensure that the requirements of the CEA with regard to cut-ups are complied with by the company as well as by union members.

The PWUA encourages posties to use the flow chart, and contact their union office in accordance with the flow chart, or with any other concerns about cut-ups.

REDBACK is published by the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa | PO Box 6287, Marion Square, Wellington



POSTAL WORKERS UNION OF AOTEAROA (NORTHERN)

14 Ahiriri Ave, Avondale, Auckland 0600

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

Branch

Home Address

..... Home Phone

Deduction Authority for Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa (Northern)

I authorise my employer to deduct:

\$4.50 per week when I am employed for 30 or more hours per week, or

\$2.25 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.