

## Despair at NZ Post's sinking standards of customer service for mail

The PWUA is receiving an increasing number of reports from members expressing their concerns over the apparent sinking standards of customer service for mail that is being demonstrated by NZ Post management.

PWUA representatives have raised members' concerns with senior NZ Post management on many occasions over the last two years and even earlier, but little has been seen to happen in response from the company.

The Union is very concerned that as customers and the public lose faith in the integrity and reliability of NZ Post's mail service, they stop using it. Any failure by the company to meet its legal obligations to the Government and the people of New Zealand accelerates the rate of mail decline and jeopardises the jobs of postal workers.

Reports to the Union from members include:

- Delivery Agents (DAs) being instructed to deliver Courier Post items and not to deliver mail. On some occasions whole rounds of mail (up to 1,000 or more items) are left behind and not delivered while DAs deliver Courier Post items only.
- On other occasions DAs are assigned many more courier and mail items than they can deliver within their rostered hours. They are instructed to ensure that all courier items are delivered and to bring back mail that they cannot deliver. Sometimes the undelivered mail is delivered the following day. At other times the mail remains undelivered for up to a week.
- On days when there aren't enough DAs at work to deliver all the mail, DAs are asked to quickly rummage through the mail and pick out the items which they think are important to deliver so that they can

deliver them and leave the other mail items in the office for delivery on another day. DAs are concerned that they are not able to judge the importance of the contents from the outside of a package.

- Long-serving NZ Post employees report that in the past they were proud to say they worked for NZ Post because the company was held in high regard by the public. However many now say they are reluctant to tell anyone who they work for because they are embarrassed by the barrage of complaints they get about mail service failures that people have experienced in recent times.

The PWUA will continue its efforts to maintain and improve mail service standards, press NZ Post to meet its obligations to the people of New Zealand, and preserve members' jobs.

### "Does the Government know that we are being paid to deliver courier items and told to leave the mail behind?"

This is the question that is being asked by some DAs.

In last year's budget the Government allocated \$130 million over three years for NZ Post to use, if needed, to subsidise the cost of meeting its mail service obligations under the Deed of Understanding.

However NZ Post has on occasions been using its mail service employees (DAs) to deliver Courier Post items and leave the mail behind.

DAs have said they are happy to deliver courier items to fill their rostered hours, but only provided they have enough time to also deliver all of their mail. The PWUA believes that these delivery failures breach the Deed of Understanding with the Government.

- The Deed is a legal document setting out NZ Post's obligations to the Government and people of New Zealand. The Deed requires that mail must be delivered to 99.88% of all delivery points in New Zealand at least three times per week, and that those deliveries cannot occur on consecutive days.

- NZ Post's mail service standard (which is set by the company itself) is to deliver 90% of mail items within three days. However there are many occasions when this standard is clearly not being met in a branch.
- No one informs the public or the customers when these delivery failures occur. This has led to people losing faith in the integrity and reliability of NZ Post's mail service, which in turn has led to people not using NZ Post's mail business.
- The company's "test letter" success rates mask the fact that large amounts of other mail is not being delivered on time. NZ Post uses test letters to measure its own mail service performance. The test letters are scanned when they are posted and scanned again when they are delivered. However the test letters are streamed in the BCS mail which DAs are instructed to ensure is delivered each day, even when they are bringing back hundreds or thousands of other undelivered mail items.

### PWUA wants COVID job for NZ Post employees as essential workers

The PWUA wants to have NZ Post's essential workers considered by the Government for priority over non essential workers for a COVID job.

The Union understands that although Managed Isolation Quarantine (MIQ) essential border workers are among the first to be vaccinated, it is not clear what order of priority for vaccinations is to be offered to other essential workers like postal workers.

The PWUA's case to have NZ Post employees needing some priority for vaccinations has been raised by the Union with a number of Government Ministers - the Minister of Health, the Minister of State Owned Enterprises and the Minister for COVID-19 Response, Hon Chris Hipkins.

Mr Hipkins' Parliamentary Office has advised the Union that it will be the Ministry of Health that will be responding to the Union's request.

## Paid travelling time and back pay for many DAs

A "Notice to PWUA member Delivery Agents" has been circulated providing details on travelling time.

Following discussions over a period of several months an agreement has been reached between the PWUA and NZ Post over how clause C29 of the Collective Agreement applies to DAs.

It is agreed that payment for travelling time between home and work will apply to DAs:

- If the DA is contacted when they are not at work, either via an individual or group communication (phone, text, email, etc) with an offer of additional work, and
- the contact is made on the same day that the work is offered, and
- the offer is to either work on a non-rostered day, to return to work, or to start work early.

Clause C30 says "Travelling time is

*estimated on the most efficient means of public transport between home and work".* Members may refer to public transport websites (such as at.govt.nz in Auckland) for estimated public transport travelling times.

PWUA members who believe they met the above criteria for travelling time payment in the past (dating back to when they first became DAs) should raise this with their manager.

Agreement should be sought on the number of instances and total travelling time payable. Since it is unlikely that there will be direct evidence of how additional work arrangements were made in the past it will be important that good faith is exercised by both parties in an effort to reach a fair outcome.

If agreement cannot be reached then the Union should be contacted for assistance.

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## Shoulder discomfort and pain - PWUA understands workers' reluctance to put in HS1s

Many NZ Post employees have become reluctant to file HS1 reports for minor strains and sprains and near misses. The union has reports of employees who either feel they are blamed for minor events or that nothing happens after they file their HS1.

Informal reports to the union seem to identify a potential for a growing incidence of shoulder injuries.

Patterns of injuries may not become apparent without a history of HS1s.

Driving a Paxster requires continual movement of the arms and shoulders because of the nature of delivery from the footpath. The Paxsters, designed with input of both Norway Post and the Norwegian Postal Workers Union, were driven on the road in Norway and not the footpath.

The posties in Norway delivered mail

by parking their Paxsters and walking in loops while the parcels were delivered by electric vans.

The amount of steering of the Paxsters in Norway is very much reduced by driving only on the road with the result that any similar stress on the shoulders of the Norwegian posties would be significantly reduced.

In the Mail Centres problems can arise for the "sweepers" clearing mail from the four levels of shelves of the Bar Code Sorting Machines (BCS).

Taller workers have to bend low to clear the lowest of the four sets of shelves. Shorter workers have to reach high to clear the top row of shelves. This can lead to shoulder discomfort and pain.

The particular tasks associated with the new large flat sorting machines may also be the source of shoulder

## CA back pay for Holidays Act payments

NZ Post employees who received Holidays Act payments between 24 May and 26 September last year did not receive back pay on those payments when the company paid their Collective Agreement back pay in September.

The PWUA has raised with the company what it believes may be a breach of the Holidays Act and/or the Collective Agreement regarding short payments to these employees.

Following a number of legally-based discussions between the PWUA and NZ Post, the PWUA is hopeful that the matter will soon be resolved without the need for it to go to Court.

discomfort and pain.

The Union wants to get a better understanding of the risks to shoulders posed by driving Paxsters and carrying out various tasks in the Mail Centres.

The Union will be talking with NZ Post about circulating a questionnaire seeking information about any emerging pattern of shoulder discomfort and pain.

REDBACK is published by the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa ♦ Trades Hall, 126 Vivian St, Wellington 6011 ♦ [pwu@tradeshall.org.nz](mailto:pwu@tradeshall.org.nz)



**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.