

The unions' claim for company recognition for essential workers

In March the unions asked NZ Post for a payment of 10% on top of their wages in recognition of the contribution of those employees actively maintaining the postal service during a crisis.

The unions also wanted the company to recognise the extra risk of infection faced by union members and their families while they were working outside their family bubble.

The company has been making a number of leave payments to its employees affected by the COVID-19 virus and the subsequent lockdown. Some of these payments are more wide ranging than other employers are paying and are in addition to any legal requirements.

For example special paid leave at 100% for those with health conditions and classified as vulnerable; those with vulnerable people at home or child care responsibilities; and five days' extra discretionary sick pay.

Following an initial discussion with NZ Post where the company talked about the financial

pressures of declining mail volumes the PWUA and E tū together made modifications to their claims during a series of email exchanges. The unions' latest amended claim was made on Thursday last week:

For every employee who worked through COVID-19 Alert Level 4 to the end of Alert Level 3:

- One calendar week's leave
- Special paid leave to replace any sick leave taken during the lockdown.

NZ Post has agreed with the unions that no one should be disadvantaged by the circumstances of COVID-19 and will reinstate any sick leave taken during the period of the lockdown.

The unions will be following up with the company on its response to the unions' seeking recognition for the contributions and risks faced by its frontline employees now that the company says *"we will be acknowledging people when the time is right."*

New Collective Agreement awaits ratification meetings

Ratification meetings to report to union members about the Collective Agreement negotiations cannot be held before the unions agree to the Terms of Settlement.

After five days of negotiations in Auckland in March no further bargaining meetings were possible because the number of New Zealanders infected with the COVID-19 virus was increasing.

To move toward each union finally settling an agreed Terms of Settlement, the company and the unions held a series of video conferences in March and April.

Although only a few matters remain without agreement, the ratification meetings have to also wait until the Government's COVID-19 Alert

Level drops to Level 2.

At the end of the negotiations in March both the E tū and PWUA negotiating teams decided that they would not be recommending the company's final offer to the union members at the ratification meetings.

PWUA members will be able to vote on whether or not to accept the company's offer at ratification meetings which will be held by the Union in the coming months.

The PWUA is currently considering what is the best and safest way to hold the ratification meetings including whether it is possible to hold some meetings by video conferences at the worksites.

Missing out on 4 months backpay? Join the Union!

It is the union members paying their fees every week that makes possible regular pay increases and protections and improvements to working conditions that can never be achieved by a worker acting alone.

NZ Post employees who join one of the two unions at NZ Post will not miss out on any backpay and will also strengthen the negotiating position of the unions, and share with their colleagues the costs and benefits of union membership.

Join the PWUA now by going to the union's website, www.pwua.org.nz, click on the Join Us link, and submit the form.