

Building a more constructive relationship:

“Engagement Charter” for NZ Post and the unions

During the negotiations for the 2017 - 2020 Collective Employment Agreement in March this year the PWUA, E tū and NZ Post agreed to develop an “engagement” process. The two unions and the company have already attended three days of meetings together.

The PWUA sees the Engagement Charter as a process to take up a wide range of issues and also to try to resolve those issues which may otherwise result in legal disputes.

The PWUA currently has three disputes with NZ Post which have been filed in the Employment Relations Authority. (See adjacent box.)

As a result of discussions together NZ Post and the unions have agreed to develop an “Engagement Charter” with a number of objectives:

- Making New Zealand Post a great place to work and to be a Union

member

- Maintain job security in a changing workplace
- Ensure the wellbeing and safety of all employees
- Ensure New Zealand Post is a sustainable and viable company.

The PWUA also wants to see NZ Post remain as a State Owned Enterprise and comply with the SOE Act:

“...an organisation which exhibits a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which it operates and by endeavouring to accommodate or encourage these when able to do so.”

The PWUA will continue to be vigorous in its advocating and representing of the rights of the members of the PWUA.

The next meeting of the Engagement group is expected to be in February.

Manawatu Mail Centre consultation on safety boots and personal listening devices

An agreement about the use of personal listening devices has been reached between the unions and the management at the Manawatu Mail Centre.

For safety reasons the company had wanted to ban personal listening devices while Mail Centre staff were sitting at sorting cases.

However an arrangement acceptable to both the company and the unions has been reached. Headphones are not to be worn in the Mail Room, but ear buds can be worn by staff sitting

at sorting cases provided they are not worn by staff as they move around the Mail Room.

Both unions have agreed with NZ Post’s proposal that safety boots must be worn throughout the Mail Centre.

Delegates of both unions now attend monthly meetings with management at the Manawatu Mail Centre to discuss issues as they arise and also for updates from the management.

Local organisers also attend as requested or required.

PWUA members challenge shift changes at Datam

PWUA members at the NZ Post subsidiary mail house company Datam stood together to challenge a company proposal to change their shift structure working hours.

Following feedback from the staff and the PWUA the company acknowledged the staff’s concerns that it impacted unnecessarily on

one of the shifts and withdrew the proposal.

However in a revised proposal the company required five staff to work an extra 2.5 hours a week longer than anyone else for the same wages.

The PWUA has asked the company to revise this part of its new proposal.

The PWUA’s Employment Relations Authority cases:

1. Design of safe rosters

Of the three cases filed by the PWUA with the ERA one has already been heard this month in Auckland.

The PWUA case is based on a clause in the Delivery Agent Pay Model section of the Collective Employment Agreement requiring that “rosters will be designed ... to minimise the potential for employee harm”.

The PWUA case is that NZ Post did not establish and mitigate fatigue factors before designing its rosters but instead wants only to “minimise potential harm” on rosters it had already developed. The company has not sufficiently evaluated a range of other possible rosters, including a fixed day roster to provide for working the same days every week.

A decision is expected from the Authority before the end of January.

2. Overtime pay and rostered hours

The PWUA case before the ERA is that NZ Post is wrong by not paying Delivery Agents overtime for any day that they work beyond their rostered 9:25 hours. Instead the company only pays overtime once more than 37:40 hours is worked in any week.

The Collective Employment Agreement requires the company to set out the days of work and the actual start and finish times for each day.

The PWUA case is that DAs are entitled to be paid for all rostered hours each day, including when there is not have enough mail for delivery and the DA finishes work earlier than the rostered hours for that day.

3. No “Availability” clause

The PWUA case is that Delivery Agents are not required to do any overtime because the Collective Employment Agreement does not contain an “availability” provision.

Since April 2016 a new section of the Employment Relations Act, 67E, entitles employees to refuse to work overtime beyond their guaranteed hours if they are not receiving compensation for being “available” for overtime. (See also Redback September 2017.)

Increasing costs of keeping Paxster fleet on the road concerns PWUA

The PWUA is becoming increasingly concerned about the costs of running, maintaining and modifying the Paxsters.

Modifications planned or already completed include:

- LED lighting front and rear
- Reversing cameras
- Audible indicators
- Smaller brake levers
- Changed steering assembly
- Nonslip floor coating
- Replacements of shock absorbers for the entire fleet
- Deactivating the "winter mode" braking
- Automatic braking lights
- Adjustable seat backs
- Replacement of the original helmets

Following a recent collision when a motor vehicle collided with a Paxster throwing the Paxster driver onto the road the company is now testing seat belts.

NZ Post will also be paying significant amounts of money for the regular callouts to the contracted maintenance company, Crown for everything from flat

tyres, breakdowns, collisions and Paxsters suddenly "stopping dead".

Steering, transmission and engines may also not last the 10 year life span that NZ Post expected of the Paxsters.

The Union discovered that the Paxsters are not being used for the purpose for which they were designed and used in Norway - driving only on the road and not the footpath, used as a mobile depot, and not carrying any parcels or packets weighing more than 2kgs.

In August 2015, three months before a recommendation was made by senior management to the NZ Post Board to purchase 555 Paxsters, the PWUA had advised NZ Post that there was not enough data to support the purchase of Paxsters for their intended use in New Zealand.

The PWUA is concerned that the pressure on employees to perform increasing amounts of work may be partly due to the increasing costs of keeping the Paxster fleet on the road - and the footpath.

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DX Mail and PWUA begin negotiations for a CEA

Negotiations began earlier this month for the first Collective Employment Agreement for DX Mail posties.

The PWUA wants the CEA to also cover other sectors of DX Mail including existing union members who work for DX Mail as mail sorters and also in the mail rooms of Government Departments and large corporates.

Negotiations will continue in March next year. Meantime the union and company will be reviewing and gathering more information to support their claims.

Quick action on the Paxster suspensions

A fault in the shock absorbers of a number of the Paxster electric delivery vehicles led NZ Post to temporarily withdraw the current fleet of almost 400 Paxsters from service.

Once a suitable modification to prevent a recurrence of the shock absorber failure was installed and tested the Paxsters were all back on the road within a week or so.

While the Paxsters were off the road many of the Delivery Agents enjoyed being back on their bicycles - and especially since many were finishing their deliveries more than an hour earlier.

Not all Delivery S84 strike notices lifted

Excessive working hours in six Integrated Delivery branches led to four branches in Auckland and two in Christchurch putting in place Health and Safety strike notices. It is legal for employees to refuse unsafe work under Section 84 of the Employment Relations Act.

With a process now in place for DAs to cease delivery for health and safety reasons the Auckland branches have voted to lift the Section 84 strike notices.

However the strike notices will remain in place in Christchurch's St Asaph and Orchard Rd until the effected DAs are satisfied that the management bullying to work excessive hours ceases.

Some DAs have been instructed by text messages from their team leaders to continue working until 8.00pm if necessary to complete their delivery - a 12.5 hour working day.

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POSTAL WORKERS UNION OF AOTEAROA (NORTHERN)

PO Box 95211 Swanson Auckland 0653

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

Phone

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.