

## PWUA proposes changes to Post's "declining mail volumes" plan

In response to Post's proposal for "rebalancing" postie resourcing, the PWUA pointed out problems to the company around round sizing, health and safety and also annual leave rights for employees.

The company says the global economic crisis has had a serious impact on mail volumes and that mail volumes were down nearly 10% on average by the end of the last financial year.

Post has responded to the loss of volume by issuing a statement to delivery branches calling for the following measures:

- Rostering of cut-ups.
- Reducing annual leave balances by rostering more annual leave for lower volume weeks.
- Non-replacement of staff who leave and relocating posties to branches which are short of staff from those branches in close proximity that have 'too many' staff.
- Offering part-time work either on a temporary or permanent basis to full time Posties who may want reduced hours.

The company also said it would try and identify new products and services to increase the amount of work available for posties (see report overleaf on a "parcel dimensions" trial).

The company consulted with the PWUA prior to issuing its statement, as required by the collective agreement.

The Union pointed out that while mail volumes had declined on average, some rounds could still be overloaded either as a result of incorrect round sizing, recent growth in the number of delivery points, or simply as a result of large differences between rounds in the amount of mail received.

The company responded that Delivery Systems teams would help build cut-up plans taking into account any variations in current rounds.

The PWUA is insisting that cut-up plans must be realistic. The size of a rostered cut-up plus the current average mail volume for a round should not exceed the contracted hours of 37.40.

Post needs to provide posties with Round Sizing Summary Sheets that are up-to-date. Posties have a right to see the Round Sizing Summary Sheets to gauge if the cut-up plans are reasonable.

Any problems about the size of cut-ups and access to round sizing information should be advised to the union.

The PWUA has already received reports of cut-ups being rostered, and going ahead even when the mail volume was above rostered hours.

Following the PWUA pointing out to the company the potential health and safety impact the company included a sentence in its final memo:

*"Please note, these actions need to be taken to address the shortfall between workload and rostered hours paid. We still need to manage our employees wellbeing, and as such on days where workload already matches or exceeds rostered hours, cut-ups should not be performed."*

The PWUA will be closely monitoring the effects of the loss of on-calls.

On the issue of using annual leave to 'improve resourcing' the PWUA told the company that some managers were unaware of the difference between annual leave *accrual* and annual leave *entitlement* (see separate story overleaf: "Know your CEA"). The company's statement was changed to acknowledge employee's annual leave rights.

PWUA members are encouraged to contact their union office if the non-replacement of staff is causing an unfair burden falling on posties.

The Collective Employment Agreement requires that cut-ups

*"will not be used on an on-going basis as an alternative to filling, on a timely basis, a vacant position or recasting delivery rounds".*

## 40 degrees C in Christchurch — PWUA puts heat on local management

Temperatures soared to 40 degrees C in Christchurch and surrounding districts in January. Radio announcements were made advising residents to stay inside. Road workers were kept off the roads.

However for some Christchurch posties there was no advice from delivery management about working in such extreme weather conditions.

The PWUA took up the failure to regard excessive heat as a hazard with the management of the Orchard Road branch. Senior Post delivery management's pre-Christmas advice about heat had not been advised to the posties. Some of the posties were disgusted that no-one from manage-

ment had even bothered to come to them the next day to ask if they were OK.

One postie had become so distressed by the heat that he had taken off his top, but forgot to put his hi-viz jacket back on. He was issued with a final written warning.

The PWUA is taking a case against this unjustified warning - failure to comply with Post's safety instructions is *minor* misconduct and cannot automatically attract a *final* written warning.

However the PWUA believes it is the Orchard Rd management who were guilty of misconduct - the failure to identify a very obvious hazard and to act to protect its employees was a breach of the Health and Safety in Employment Act.

The PWUA recognises that the local Christchurch management has now given advice to posties about the summer heat hazard.

Wellington posties have an arrangement with local management about processes to follow in deciding whether or not to deliver mail in adverse weather - in the case of Wellington, not surprisingly, at times of severe gales.

The PWUA can advise union members in other areas of the country how to negotiate appropriate agreements to meet local weather extremes.

However the final decision about the safety of delivering mail still rests with the individual posties themselves.

## Know your CEA

### Annual leave

Annual leave is accrued every week that is worked. *Accrued* annual leave becomes an annual leave entitlement on every anniversary of the employee's service.

Employees cannot be required to take *accrued* annual leave under any circumstances. Accrued annual leave can only be taken where both the employer and employee agree.

Annual leave entitlement is required to be taken in the year between the employee's anniversary dates.

Annual leave entitlement can only be carried over past the employee's anniversary date with the approval of their manager. This approval should be obtained in writing.

Every employee has the right to two uninterrupted weeks of annual leave each year. This is the employee's choice. Employees who haven't had a full two weeks off in a year cannot be required to shorten a leave application of two weeks, or to lengthen a leave application so that it is two weeks.

The company can require an employee to take annual leave entitlement only if the employees

- have been given 21 days notice, and
- have had the timing for taking the leave discussed with them, and
- have been unable to reach an agreement with their manager as to when leave should be taken.

Managers are not allowed to unreasonably withhold consent to approving employees taking annual leave entitlement. Approval once obtained cannot be reversed.

A wall calendar in the work area displaying annual leave works well in some branches to ensure a more open process for leave applications.

### Surprise parcel trial

Post gave only two days notice to the PWUA of a trial in Auckland for increased parcel dimensions for postie delivery

On average the proposal could increase the number of parcels delivered on each round in Auckland by one or two parcels each day. However the increases could impact very unevenly across the rounds.

Given the late notice from the company posties need to be aware of the issues the union has now raised with the company concerning the trial:

- Overflow bag and carrying weights must be strictly adhered to with weighing scales at each branch.
- If more overflow bags are required and if this results in more doubling back to an overflow depot it needs to be quickly factored into round sizing and rostered cut-up plans.
- New overflow depots need to be arranged urgently when required.
- Undeliverable parcels may impede the delivery of mail requiring that the parcels be left at overflow depots to be picked up by drivers.
- The additional volume of parcels should be regarded as an opportunity to improve round sizes and reduce cut-ups.

By sticking to the rules on weights the additional volume could reduce the round size. The company must respond rapidly to round size changes where increased parcel numbers dictate such a change.

Ignoring the weight limits and carrying the extra in one overweight load is unsafe and may result in incorrect and longer round sizes and later finishing times.

The PWUA will remain involved in monitoring the parcel dimension trial.

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### Union access to Mail Centres going to ERA

The PWUA has filed an amended case against Post in the Employment Relations Authority against Post's illegal obstruction of union access to the Wellington Mail Centre. The original filing has been amended following a hostile verbal attack by a management representative on union organisers.

The company is also acting illegally in its obstruction of the lawful activities of union representatives in the new Auckland Mail Centre at Highbrook.

The PWUA will continue to challenge Post's attempts to undermine the rights of its employees to have access to union organisers, and restrictions on the distribution of written material from the union.

There has been a steady increase in PWUA membership on both sites.

### Relevant Daily Pay delay

The Relevant Daily Pay case in the Employment Relations Authority has been delayed until 13 March due to a bereavement in a management family.

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

\$4.16 per week when I am employed for 30 or more hours per week, or

\$2.08 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.