

Cyclone Gabrielle much more damaging than predicted

PWUA calls for a review of NZ Post's response to weather events

Feedback from PWUA members on NZ Post's response to the disruptions caused by Cyclone Gabrielle has been mixed with some positive and a number of negative reports.

Many delivery members appreciated the company's decision to cancel deliveries on days that were clearly going to be extremely hazardous for posties, not only at work but also travelling to and from work.

Delivery members appreciated that they were paid for their rostered hours on those days they didn't work.

Some delivery members were later confused by contradictory information from the company, with about half of Auckland's posties being told to stay

at home until a decision was made by management at 8.00am, and the other half being told to travel to work before a management decision was made about whether it was safe to be at work.

The confusion was heightened because the management provided the Union with different information from what posties had been told, so nobody was sure what the company's real intentions were.

The PWUA considers that a review of the storm event is needed so that planning can occur for future events to ensure equal treatment of staff, clear safety priorities, consistent and clear communications, and fair outcomes.

PWUA welcomes workshop on safe Paxster operation

The PWUA will have two representatives at a company workshop in Auckland on the "critical risk" of Mid Range Vehicles - the Paxsters and the three wheel Kyburz (currently used only in New Plymouth).

The workshop, originally set down for 13 February, has been postponed following Cyclone Gabrielle.

The Union has long been concerned about the pattern of OOS (Occupational Overuse Syndrome) injuries like wrists, necks and shoulders for Paxster drivers who have to almost continuously be steering a vehicle without power steering.

In Norway where the Paxsters were designed and manufactured they are used by posties only on the roads and not on and off footpaths.

The PWUA had raised the company's

health and safety obligations under clause O11 in the Collective Agreement:

"Any issues that may arise in which the operation of the Paxster appears to give rise to OOS or other injuries will be assessed and managed in accordance with risk management processes."

Last year, following up on the issues raised by the PWUA, the company put together a *Paxster Related Ergonomic Injury Analysis* document which identified 78 events which the company assessed as having ergonomic type issues in the three years from July 2019 to July 2022.

The Union has also been very concerned about the instability of Paxsters on uneven terrain and wants the company's reports on Paxsters tipping on four occasions since June 2022.

Operations employees at the mail and parcels centres reported being less impressed with the company's decisions and communications. Reports from members include:

- Some team members had to work while others were paid to stay at home.
- While Border Agency staff were being sent home NZ Post staff were told that if they left work before the end of their shift, to get home before the worst of the weather came, then they would have their annual leave deducted.
- One NZ Post leader left the Mail Centre early and on the way out wished the workers "good luck".
- At least one worker was stranded because by the end of their shift it was impossible to travel home.
- Some Team Leaders don't provide staff with their mobile phone number so cannot be contacted.
- Messages were inconsistent and did not account for individual circumstances.

NZ Post put out the message to all staff *"Safety and Wellbeing Always. This is a point that cannot be overstated."*

The PWUA repeated NZ Post's advice to Operations members that they should only go to work if they could do so safely.

But many Operations employees are saying that the company's decision to continue "business as usual" jeopardised their safety, and that the impact of the cyclone on their personal situations was often not taken into account.

What does Employment Court's Uber case mean for NZ Post contract couriers?

Following a case in the Employment Court in June the Court has determined that Uber had such a high degree of control over the Uber drivers that the drivers were not in fact independent contractors. That the real nature of the relationship was one of employer and employee.

In determining that the Uber drivers were in fact employees the Employment

Court considered a number of factors:

- Looking beyond the actual wording of the contract between Uber and the four Uber drivers who took the case.
- How the relationship between Uber and the drivers operated in practice.
- The amount of control that Uber had over the drivers.
- The impact of the Uber business model on the Uber drivers.

The PWUA has been in discussion with contract couriers who have joined the PWUA about the nature of their relationship with NZ Post.

The PWUA believes that by applying the same tests to Courier Post's hundreds of contract couriers the result would be the same.

Uber has appealed the Court's decision so the matter is not yet finally decided.

PWUA new information leaflet lists many of the union's achievements for members

The PWUA has a new information leaflet to assist delegates and members to encourage their colleagues to join the Union.

The leaflet lists important achievements by the Union including significant wins in the Employment Court:

- Increased payments for public holidays, lieu days, sick leave and bereavement leave.
- The right to refuse overtime (which prevented NZ Post being able to force up to 14 hours work on a single day). This Employment Court decision

won by the PWUA now applies to all workers in New Zealand.

- The success in winning the Living Wage after a two year campaign by the PWUA.
- Menstrual Leave for NZ Post employees from 2022.
- A successful case taken by the PWUA to the Privacy Commission prevents NZ Post from recording voice conversations.

The leaflet will be distributed by organisers and delegates and they will also be available from the Union's offices.

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Many complaints about the new uniform

A polar fleece with a short zip at the neck is given by posties as one example of how NZ Post hasn't carried improvements from one set of uniform to a new uniform set. Posties in Paxsters have to take off their helmets to put the new polar fleece on and then take their helmet off again to take the polar fleece off.

With a previous uniform posties had requested that the company supply full length zips on polar fleeces so that it could be worn partially or fully zipped up or worn completely unzipped to account for different comfort levels out on delivery.

NZ Post agreed and polar fleeces became available with a full length zip with its added ease of putting on and taking off.

Some posties' frustrations about the polar fleece's short zip extend to other items of uniform:

- Shorts: Only one option of leg length - longer, tapered and restricted air flow, slippery on seats on hot days
- Tops: Too long for many posties, less breathability and restricted by two horizontal silver stripes, thick dark colour collars attracting the heat from

the sun and accumulating sweat

- Trousers: No stretch, long and needing the cost of being taken up
 - Puffer jacket: Not as warm as expected
 - Rain coat: Lack of split causes the back of the coat to catch on the seat.
- Some posties report that they are generally happy with the uniform.

The PWUA encourages posties to fill out the new uniform feedback form (with both positive and negative comments) when it comes out next month.

\$50 food vouchers

In December the PWUA provided every member who had been a member since 12 August with a \$50 Countdown food voucher.

A vital part of the distribution was the network of elected workplace union delegates who made sure that members got their vouchers and also collected and returned the necessary documentation to the union office.

The PWUA expects to provide more vouchers to members this year.

National level "Clearing house" for issues resumes

A short fortnightly meeting between the NZ Post management and both unions serves as a clearing house for assigning or diverting issues raised by the unions to their appropriate management or particular management/union forums. The monthly meeting of the General Managers and Unions is one such forum.

The management also brings issues to the table.

Now called the Fortnightly Operational Working Group the "clearing house" evolved from the regular 8.00am video conference meetings between the management and unions which began during the Covid lockdowns.

Issues most recently raised at these fortnightly meetings included:

- Correct recording of mail carryover
- Replacement of bike helmets
- Opening the NZ Post Super-annuation Plan for new staff
- Tern bike safety
- Paxster trailing arm issues
- Skin check programme

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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.