

Post's first pay offer low — \$500 for one year then 1%

During this month's pay negotiations Post has made the same low wage offer to both the PWUA and the EPMU - a \$500 lump sum from 1 July this year and a 1% pay increase from 1 July 2014.

Redback issues March and May 2013 have details of the PWUA claims. A summary of Post's claims appeared in the May issue.

Post had begun the negotiations describing in some detail the challenges of declining mail volumes including the problem of electronic substitution of physical mail. The high incidence of lost time injuries is also of concern to the company.

The PWUA expressed concern that Post employees are seeing their incomes slip even further behind the cost of living since the last CEA which

provided no pay increase in the first year and only 2% in the second year.

The PWUA explained to Post that the removal of allowances would take some employees below the Living Wage calculated by the Service and Food Workers Union as \$18.40 an hour.

Post justified its low pay increases in the 2011 - 2013 CEA by saying it needed the money for future investment. The PWUA is yet to see any evidence of investments enabled by the low pay increases for Post's employees.

The current negotiations have adjourned until next month while both sides consider their positions on the various claims still on the table.

In the meantime Post has agreed to increase the postie "buddy" training allowance from \$11 to \$21 for the first week of training.

Mail Centre staff would take a big hit

The PWUA is particularly concerned about the impact that Post's claims would have on staff in the Mail Centres.

The proposed reduction of night rate from a 37% loading to around 17% is only one of the clawbacks Post wants from its mail sorting staff.

Post also wants to stop paying the 30 minute paid break for those who work more than five hours a day in processing. (10 minute breaks would continue to be paid breaks).

If the company is successful in its claim, mail sorters will be told that if

they want to maintain their current base weekly pay they will have to work an extra 30 minutes each day.

Fulltime Mail Room staff working four days a week would see their 9.5 hour shifts extended to 10 hours to maintain their incomes. One of the attractions for Mail Room staff to move from five-day shifts to four had been the current paid break structure.

The Customer Service Centre workers also receive a half hour paid meal break which the company may next want to remove in future negotiations.

PWUA opposes different pay rates 'grandparented'

Under 'grandparenting' workers doing the same job find themselves on different pay rates.

Grandparenting comes about when an employer seeks to reduce, remove or "claw back" a particular pay rate or allowance, but only for new employees.

The proposed removal of the 37% night rate in the mail centres is such a claw back.

If Post allows the night rate to continue only for existing employees, this entitlement is 'grandparented' in that new employees will get only about 17% for night rate (\$2.81 an hour) - only the grandparents (or existing staff) would

get the full 37%.

New employees will quickly discover that their rates of pay are lower because union members did not unite to protect previously hard fought-for conditions.

It may have been previous generations of workers who fought for and won most of the conditions in the current CEA. However the PWUA believes it is the duty of all union officials and union members to do everything possible to keep the conditions for the next generation of workers - which may well include their own children.

Saving weekly pay: PWUA proposals in CEA negotiations

Keeping weekly pays is one of the most strongly backed PWUA claims in the current negotiations for a new Collective Employment Agreement.

During the negotiations last week the PWUA put up some proposals to Post which could allow weekly pays to continue.

The manager of Post's paysite had explained the reasons Post wanted to change to two weekly pays:

- Not enough paysite system downtime for maintenance.
- Not enough time to explain to team leaders how to correct their pay inputting errors.
- Not enough time to ensure pays were correct.
- The additional time pressures in weeks with a public holiday.

The pay office currently has a manager, 20 payroll coordinators and two ancillary staff all working at Post House in Wellington.

Having listened carefully to the difficulties faced by the paysite the PWUA made six proposals designed to keep weekly pay in place including:

- Delaying pay by one day - Thursday night pay instead of Wednesday night.
- That extra staff be assigned to the pay office.
- Changing the Administration section of the CEA to provide for any pay site employees who may want to work on a Saturday (and perhaps prefer a weekday off).
- Paying weekly pay as now, but paying all variables or 'top-ups' one week later.

Post is giving consideration to the PWUA proposals before the next negotiations session next month.

Union members have said a "buy-out" cash payment to allow Post to bring in two weekly pay would not help those who need to budget on weekly pays or who prefer to do so.

Post acknowledged there may be cost savings, however this was not given among the reasons the company wanted to change to fortnightly pays.

The PWUA believes weekly pay can be kept especially if the two unions cooperate and support each other on the claim to maintain weekly pay.

The UK has problems with its own "DX Mail" competitors

British posties plan to protect Royal Mail from "unfair" competition

Just like New Zealand Post is facing unfair competition from private mail operators like DX, Britain's Royal Mail has the same problem with private mail operators like TNT and UK Mail.

The British postal workers' union says private companies are able to do what they like with little concern for how it affects overall postal services.

But British posties have a plan to protect Royal Mail.

The Communication Workers Union in the UK is currently balloting its 112,000 members employed by Royal Mail about whether to boycott letters which have been processed by a private mail company.

The ballot which coincides with the CWU's pay negotiations seeks a "yes" vote to four questions including two about the privatisation of Royal Mail:

- Do you oppose the privatisation of Royal Mail?
- Do you support the boycotting of competitor's mail?

The ballot result will be announced on 19 June.

In New Zealand the Postal Services Act 1998 allows companies like DX to "cherry pick" the most profitable cross town and CBD mail while passing the

unprofitable mail to NZ Post to deliver.

At the time the law was passed Jim Bolger was Prime Minister. Jim Bolger was later to become chairperson of NZ Post - from 2001 to 2010.

Under its international treaties to maintain a Universal Service Obligation and the Deed of Understanding NZ Post is required to carry mail throughout the country at a standard rate - currently 70 cents for a standard letter.

Private mail companies have no such responsibilities to provide a universal mail service at a uniform price.

In 2005 only 5.2% of Britain's mail was processed by private mail operators. By last year Royal Mail had lost 44% to private companies like TNT and UK Mail although most of that mail is still delivered by Royal Mail posties.

NZ Post is currently losing between 5% to 6% of its mail which is being "cherry picked" by DX Mail.

NZ Post senior management have expressed the same concerns as the PWUA about the private mail competitors.

The PWUA has sent a message of support to the CWU in its efforts to protect Royal Mail from the unfair competition of private mail operators.

Post employees organising for protection

NZ Post is required under the State Owned Enterprises Act to operate like a private company and to make a profit.

The Employment Relations Act provides for the organising of workers into trade unions and for the promotion of collective bargaining.

The rules of the PWUA provide for the union to act to promote and protect the interests of its members.

The bargaining strength of employees in negotiations with an employer is

significantly improved the higher the rate of union membership.

The PWUA recognises that Redback is widely read not only by its own members and by members of the EPMU but also by employees who are not union members.

Non union members are invited to fill out the form below and thus play their part in protecting their own pay rates, allowances and other conditions of employment.

Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa

(Northern)

(pwa.union@ihug.co.nz)

Office: (09) 832 7982

Organiser: 021 798 244

Freephone: 0800 224 611

(Southern)

(pwu@tradeshall.org.nz)

Wellington: (04) 385 8264

Freephone: 0800 469 798

Central North Island: (06) 952 3738

Nelson: 0800 469 798

Canterbury: (03) 942 8370

Otago: (03) 455 4823

Southland: (03) 455 4823

Meeting to progress Relevant Daily Pay

The PWUA will be meeting with Post on 7 June to discuss progress on the back pay owed to employees for Relevant Daily Pay (RDP).

RDP is that amount which must be paid to employees for public holidays, sick leave, bereavement leave and lieu days.

The PWUA has won a significant court case in which PWUA members are owed money following Post's incorrect application of the Holidays Act which was rewritten in 2003.

The PWUA is pleased that EPMU members are also entitled to the backpay resulting from the PWUA court case and invited the EPMU to work with the PWUA on back pay issues. The EPMU will be attending the 7 June meeting.

Feedback on Redback

Union members (or non-PWUA members) who wish to comment on Redback can email (in confidence) to: pwu@tradeshall.org.nz

REDBACK is published by the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa | PO Box 6287, Marion Square, Wellington

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:

\$4.95 per week when I am employed for 30 or more hours per week, or

\$2.50 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.