

UNION EXPRESS

Official Newspaper of FIRST Union

July 2013



NO MORE PAK'N SLAVES : PAGE 11



N.Z BREACHES LABOUR CONVENTIONS : PAGE 5



ROCKGAS TAKES FIGHT TO JAMI-LEE : PAGE 5



GOOD NEWS: Workers at Kmart distribution centre now receive a living wage

Living wage offers hope

The principled decision by both Hamilton City Council and the Wellington City Council to become living wage employers offers a beacon of hope to struggling low wage workers throughout the country.

Some private sector employers with whom FIRST Union has collective agreements have also accepted they need to pay their workers better after looking at material put together by Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand campaign brings together community, faith-based organisations and unions around a common goal of achieving a living wage as a necessary step in reducing inequality and poverty in our society.

FIRST Union General Secretary Robert Reid said the hourly rate of \$18.40 that the campaign has established as the minimum pay rate a worker needs to survive and

participate in society has set a new benchmark for the union when making wage claims.

"Some years ago we set \$15 an hour as the least we wanted for all our members," he said. "We estimate at least 80 per cent of our members presently either start on that rate, or are able to automatically progress to it within six months. We have set our sights on the living wage now. We are telling employers this is what they need to pay to give their workers a reasonable standard of living."

The Warehouse, which employs 7000 workers, has announced plans to lift wages for staff who achieve certain levels of skills based training and stay with the company at least three years to between \$18.50 an hour and \$20 an hour.

"We took account of the analysis done by the Living Wage campaign which FIRST Union took part

in, regarding the level of career pay rates required to reasonably support a household," Warehouse CEO Mark Powell said.

Details of how the company's new pay scale will work will be negotiated at bargaining with FIRST Union in July.

Workers at the Kmart Distribution Centre have also just achieved the living wage rate at collective bargaining with their employer.

FIRST Union delegate Joshua Doolan said he was surprised when his employer agreed to meet the living wage claim without too much argument.

"We didn't really expect to get it but I think they knew our pay was just too low and the time had come to do something about it," he said.

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UNION EXPRESS

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Submissions

We actively encourage membership participation in your newspaper, the Express. You may fax, email or dictate a story for the Express. We are here to help.

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Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily represent the views of the FIRST Union.

FIRST Union

The FIRST Union is a democratic organisation run by working people for working people. We organise for a better future and for respect for ourselves and our families through building power on the job, in our industries and our community.

FIRST
Union
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New deal at Frucor



CONSIDERING THE DEAL: Frucor workers at the ratification meeting

Union members at Frucor have ratified a new three year collective agreement that gives pay increases of 2.5 per cent for the first year and 3 per cent a year for the following two years.

FIRST Union has 158 members at Frucor which produces fruit juices, energy drinks, water, sports waters, soft drinks and milk drinks whose brands are household names in both New Zealand and Australia.

The new agreement also improves a number of conditions including giving extra-long service leave, double time for overtime worked on a Sunday and a commitment to try to

schedule shut downs to coincide with school holidays.

Although three year agreements are not common in the union, the delegates said they have worked well at Frucor in the past.

"It's swings and roundabouts," said delegate Numia Roa. "We have to wait three years to make any changes but we usually manage to get a bit more for the longer deal and that makes up for it"

Westpac workers make a stand



MAKING A STAND: Lower Hutt Westpac members want to be treated fairly

When customer banking consultants (CBC) at Westpac Lower Hutt were threatened with dismissal for not reaching sales targets they decided to draw a line in the sand.

Wellington based FIRST Union finance sector organiser Joe Kelly said the stressed bank workers contacted him because the pressure they were being put under was intolerable.

"When you work as a CBC you have set targets for lending. You need to sell a certain amount of credit card debt, or of home loans or personal loans etc. The targets are set nationally and there is no variation for the size of the branch, the local economy or time lost because of annual leave."

Joe said none of the workers were meeting their unrealistic targets and the bank started putting some of them on formal performance plans and issuing them with written employment warnings while others were simply getting warnings without being put on a performance plan.

The workers called a stop work meeting where they shared stories of what was happening, how they felt about it and discussed what they could do to improve things.

December. She was awarded a platinum award from the bank and was sent to Queenstown to honour her performance. In February she was told she could lose her job," Joe said.

The workers asked the union to take the matter up at the highest possible level with the bank and the FIRST General Secretary has done so.

Although the bank denies using disciplinary processes to improve performance, union members at the branch are no longer being subjected to threats of dismissal for not meeting targets.

Joe said there is a clear message to union members working in banks if they think they are being put under unreasonable pressure.

"Organise your workplace with the support of the union and make it clear you won't stand for it"

Briefs

Foodstuffs DC settlement

A new Foodstuffs Auckland Distribution Centre agreement has been reached. The two year deal includes a pay increase of 2.5 per cent for the first year and 3 per cent for the second year, which will move the minimum rate to \$18.36. It has also improved union access provisions agreed a new monthly union meeting with management, an increase in the laundry allowance to \$100 p.a. (previously \$40) and restrictions on the use of temporary labour.

Deal at New Zealand Couriers

The collective agreement at New Zealand Couriers has been settled for a two year term with a 3 per cent increase the first year and 2.8 per cent for the second. The new agreement also has an increased night shift allowance to \$16 per shift, an increase in the breaks/refreshment allowance and provision for payment of half the night shift allowance to workers whose shift normally finishes after 9 pm and who continue to work after that time.

Improvement for casuals at Kmart

Concerns over the high use of casual workers at Kmart have been addressed at collective bargaining through the introduction of a new role – that of a permanent part time flexi worker who has no fixed hours but is guaranteed no less than two five hour shifts per week. This new category of employee must not be used to reduce the number of permanent part time or full time positions or hours. The employer is required to review the hours worked by part time workers over the past 12 months. Where they have worked more than their contracted hours they must be offered additional contracted hours before part time flexi workers may be employed.

Home based call centre workers

Another Australian-based contact centre business is establishing itself in New Zealand. The firm – Unity4 – says it will employ workers largely from home, using technology hosted in the 'cloud' (over the internet). About 30 staff are already employed and working from their homes in Bluff, Invercargill and Wanaka. The move follows ANZ's announcement that it will move 70 call centre jobs from Melbourne to Wellington, and further announcements in the Dominion Post newspaper last week that Australian firm CallActive is looking to set up shop in Wellington, possibly creating up to 2000 new jobs over the next few years.

Offer from CTD Nesdale

Foodstuff's company CTD Nesdale has put an offer for settlement of their collective agreement. The offer includes a pay increase of 5.5 per cent over 2 years, a \$4 increase to the meal allowance and restrictions on the employment of temporary workers.

Joining up pays off at Cardinal Logistics



UNION SITE: Cardinal Logistics delegate George Shedlock

Joining FIRST Union has paid off for the more than 50 workers who have signed up at Cardinal Logistics in Mangere over the last few months.

Union delegate George Shedlock started with the New Zealand owned third party distribution company in September last year and has been on the permanent staff since December. George joined the union in February this year.

"There were very few union members at the time but there were a bunch of things I wasn't happy with. I had been with other companies where conditions were better than at this one so I wanted to see some changes," he said. "Once we decided to change things everybody pretty much started signing up for the union."

A new collective agreement that makes some big improvements has now been negotiated.

FIRST Union organiser Jared Abbott said the new agreement gives a pay increase of 2.8 per cent for all workers but the big improvements come in the way the pay scale will now operate.

"Previously it was pretty much at the boss's discretion how you went through the scale," he said. "We now have it so within three months of starting a new worker goes to \$16.44 an hour and within 6 months the employer must provide them with NZQA Level Two training in warehouse distribution. When they have completed the training their pay goes up to \$17.62 an hour. They must then be given Level Three training which will take their pay rate to \$18.50 an hour."

Rockgas workers take the fight to Jami-Lee



ON STRIKE: Rockgas workers picket the office of National MP Jami-Lee Ross

Striking Rockgas workers picketed National Party MP Jami-Lee Ross's office on June 25 to protest against his strike breaking private members bill.

The bill would allow employers to take on extra staff to carry out the duties of workers on strike.

The Rockgas workers mounted the picket to highlight the fact that the law is already too weak, and employers easily get around it.

Rockgas is owned by Contact Energy and claims to be a market leader, with a nearly 50 per cent market share, but it pays some of the lowest wages for the type of work its drivers do.

At the time of picketing Jamie-Lee Ross's office the Rockgas

workers were already in their fourth week on strike – at least partly because the company was able to bring in other workers to do their jobs.

FIRST Union Rockgas delegate Andrew Chapple said the workers all had families and were struggling to pay their bills. He said he found it difficult to understand why the company is taking such a hard line.

"The reasons they give for not paying better do not make sense. I think it is simply because they have the power not to, so that is what they would rather do. When we went on strike they simply brought in drivers from other parts of the country and hired temps to do our jobs," he said.

Budget service under threat



TOUGH CHOICES: Mangere Budgeting Services Trust CEO Daryl Evans

A critical service to low income families in South Auckland is looking at having to make staff redundant because of financial pressure.

Although it is only funded to work with 306 families a year, the Mangere Budget Services Trust actually assisted 2254 struggling families with budgeting advice, food parcels, financial literacy classes and other services last year.

Trust CEO Daryl Evans said its services are facing unprecedented demand because of welfare reforms which force families needing extra support from Work and Income to seek budgeting advice before they qualify for emergency payments.

But the money to deliver the service is not following the demand for it and the Trust has had to inform five of its staff members they are likely to be made redundant at the end of June if things do not change.

These staff reductions would mean probably only 200 - 300 families a year could be helped.

"We will have to reduce hours and have long wait times," Daryl said.

"If you are facing losing your home or car, your kids are not at school because you have no money or you urgently have to have money for a bond or to pay the power bill, you need to get access to budgeting assistance within 24 hours, not wait for days or even weeks."

Daryl said he will not give up without a fight. "I will do whatever it takes to find the money because the people of Mangere, and of South Auckland, are going to be the big losers if we have to make the cuts."

FIRST Union provides financial support to the Mangere Budget Services Trust as part of its strategic campaign against poverty and inequality.

To find out more about the Mangere Budget Services Trust or to make a donation go to <http://www.mangerebudgeting.org.nz/> or phone 09 275 2266

UNEMIG fights for migrant rights



MIGRANT FIGHT BACK: Exploited migrant workers meet in Christchurch

Immigration Minister Michael Woodhouse has announced that the government is drafting new measures to crack down on employers who exploit migrant labour.

The changes include harsher penalties for employers who take advantage of migrant work. They could face lengthy prison sentences, hefty fines and in some cases deportation.

The new policies will also mean that in some cases a migrant worker raising a complaint will be allowed to remain in New Zealand while the claim is investigated. UNIMEG (The Union Network of Migrants) coordinator Dennis Maga said stronger penalties against bad employers were a good start, but more attention was also required at the point of accreditation.

"Employers getting Approval in Principle to recruit workers from overseas are not being effectively

monitored to ensure they meet their obligations," he said. "Enforcement is also short of the mark, and a commitment to increase the number of labour inspectors and conduct random checks in areas where exploitation of migrants is likely to happen or has been reported by the community is needed. I am also concerned that proposed employment law changes before Parliament will increase the exploitation of all workers, including migrants, and undermine the benefits from changes to the immigration laws."

Dennis said UNIMEG has once again had to step in to remove a migrant from a situation where they were being exploited by their employer.

Dennis said that in this latest case the woman concerned was contracted to work 30 hours a week but was being expected to work for 65 and she was not being

migrant builders who were employed by a subcontractor in the construction industry in Christchurch.

He was not paying them correctly or giving them the leave they were entitled to.

UNEMIG met with them and then connected them with the EPMU, the union covering the industry, which is now representing them in their dealings with their employer.

If you are a member of FIRST Union, membership of UNEMIG is free. You simply fill in the application form which is available from your organiser or through ringing 0800 863 477. If you are not a member of FIRST or employed in an industry covered by us you can join as an associate member for \$2.35 a week.

National Briefs

McDonald's workers strike

Workers at McDonald's have undertaken a nationwide series of strikes over pay rates and working hours. The company has offered the 1500 Unite Union members it employs a 25 cents an hour pay rise at a time when they reported an annual profit of \$32 million. Workers want parity with staff at KFC who receive a \$1 pay rise on the minimum wage after six months on the job, compared with the 25 cents they currently get from McDonald's. Workers also want more secure working hours from the company which refuses to guarantee them 40 hours a week. The strike actions coincide with strikes at McDonald's in a number of countries over its treatment of workers.

Ministry responsible for Novopay debacle

A ministerial inquiry into the faulty Novopay pay system has revealed deep problems in the Ministry of Education led to the debacle which has caused massive disruption to teachers' pay and sucked up more than \$10 million of education funding. NZEI Te Riu Roa President Judith Nowotarski said the Ministry was shown to be sick, over confident and had poor systems of governance and accountability. Government Ministers need to take responsibility for it. Although the Government has promised to fix the problems with the system by June the union has little faith this will happen because they are still getting calls from members whose pay is not being processed correctly.

Parliamentary inquiry into manufacturing

A parliamentary inquiry into manufacturing carried out by the Labour, Green, New Zealand First and Mana parties has reported back. The report has three major recommendations. The first is that the Government adopt macroeconomic settings that are supportive of manufacturing and exporting, including reforms to monetary policy, a refocusing of investment into the productive economy and lowering structural costs. The second is that New Zealand businesses be encouraged to innovate through research and development tax credits and a stronger emphasis on development. The third is that the Government adopt a national procurement policy that favours Kiwi-made and ensures that New Zealand manufacturers enjoy the same advantages as their international competitors.

Balloted Bill possibly a bridge too far

The Employers And Manufacturers Association has described the private members bill that would allow employers to take on temporary workers to replace people going on strike as possibly a bridge too far. "At first flush employers could think the Bill a good idea without taking into account unintended consequences," said Kim Campbell, EMA's chief executive. "While its principles are worth exploring it could prove very divisive. Right now we are focused on getting the current round of minor employment law changes bedded in. "New Zealand communities place a high value on fairness and the Bill could have consequences that would be considered unfair." Kim Campbell said we have had 10 - 15 years of harmonious workplace relations and employers don't want to jeopardise that or see the law changed every time there is a change of Government.

New Zealand breaches labour conventions



HOLDING THEM TO ACCOUNT: Helen Kelly has told the ILO about our anti-worker Government

CTU President Helen Kelly told the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on June 13 that the New Zealand Government can no longer pretend to be the 'good guy' of international forums.

Helen highlighted growing inequality in New Zealand and the fact that new employment laws will make this worse. "The government likes to portray an image of New Zealand that it can no longer sustain. It promotes an image of an egalitarian society where everyone gets a fair go, of a liberal social agenda with strong social dialogue, and of a modern international outlook which respects and actively supports the international institutions and in particular the United Nations. This is how our government is pitching New Zealand to the UN as part of seeking a position on the UN Security Council. But, sadly, it is no longer a reality," she said.

Helen said the government's employment law changes which will allow employers to opt out of multi-employer collective agreement bargaining are a breach of Conventions C87 Freedom of Association and C98 Collective Bargaining.

She said the Bill weakens collective bargaining, will exclude new employees from collective coverage, and will further reduce pay and conditions for New Zealand workers.

"New Zealand has a proud history of being a good international citizen with a once respected reputation of complying with international conventions which we signed. By effectively picking and choosing which of our international obligations we will comply with, our government is undermining that history and reputation," she said.

Labour Minister Simon Bridges has refused to meet with ILO officials to seek advice on the compliance of the proposed legislation with ILO conventions.

Equal pay challenge

A landmark legal case affecting thousands of low paid women workers is before the Employment Court.

The case is being taken by the Service and Food Workers Union Nga Ringa Tota, supported by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and the New Zealand Nurses Organisation and focuses on long term caregiver Kristine Bartlett and whether her pay rate of \$14.32 an hour is consistent with the Equal Pay Act.

Kristine's employer, Terranova Homes and Care Ltd says Kristine and the other 10 caregivers working in its residential care homes do receive equal pay because they get paid the same as their six male caregiver colleagues.

The Union's argument is the Equal Pay Act is designed not just to bring equal pay between male and female pay rates for the same work in the same workplace but has a broader application.

"It is this broader application that must apply for female intensive occupations such as caregiving as the few male caregivers and their pay rates are largely bound up by the gender segmentation that exists in this sector. In other words



EQUAL PAY WANTED: Protest at the Beehive

they are treated as 'honorary females,'" said SFWU National Secretary John Ryall.

John Ryall said the outcome of the case could affect not only thousands of caregivers in aged care, but other occupational groups where the pay is low simply because the work was predominantly done by women.

International Briefs

10 million children work as domestic servants

The International Labour Organisation has released a report which says 10.5 million children worldwide, mostly girls, are working as domestic servants. The report says the children are vulnerable to physical, psychological and sexual violence and abusive working conditions, they are often isolated from their families, hidden from the public eye, and become dependent on their employers. Child domestic work is not recognised as a form of child labour in many countries because of the blurred relationship with the employing family the report says.

FIRST at ITF conference

FIRST Union Transport and Logistics Secretary Karl Andersen represented the union at the International Transport Workers Federation regional conference in Hong Kong from 11 – 17 May. The 258 delegates from 24 countries who attended resolved to escalate organising over the next four years across the industrial sectors in strategic hubs, corridors, key transportation companies and the supply chains of global retailers. Karl spoke at the urban transport meeting commenting on how in NZ we have no public ownership of bus services yet the public fund huge profits for private bus operators.

The most dangerous place for unionists

Guatemala is the most dangerous place in the world for trade unionists according to the International Trade Union Confederation. More than 50 unionists, most of them public sector workers, have been murdered in the last three years alone. There have also been numerous cases of torture, kidnappings, raids and death threats which have created a culture of fear and violence in the country.

Greek Unions strike over closures

Greece's two largest unions went on strike after the conservative coalition government closed the public broadcasting service, Hellenic Broadcasting Corp. as part of their austerity measures. Thousands of protesters gathered outside the headquarters of the company as journalists defied an order to close it down and continued to broadcast.

Horrific building collapse in Bangladesh



UNSAFE: The collapsed Rama Plaza in Bangladesh

On 24 April 2013, an eight story building, Rama Plaza, collapsed in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh.

At the last official count 1127 people were left dead as a result of the collapse.

Around 5000 people worked in the building, which housed a bank, several shops and a number of garment factories which manufactured apparel for leading international clothing brands.

The upper floors of Rama Plaza were built without a permit and the building was designed for shops, not factories.

The day before the collapse, inspectors had discovered cracks in the building and had requested evacuation and closure. The shops and bank on the lower floors immediately closed but garment workers were forced to return the following day when their supervisors declared the building was safe.

Managers at one of the factories threatened to withhold a month's pay from workers if they did not return to the factory.

Two days after the collapse garment workers across the industrial areas of Dhaka, Chittagong and Gazipur rioted and leftist political parties demanded the arrest and trial of those responsible for the collapse. Two days later the owner of the Plaza was arrested by security forces.

On 1 May, International Workers' Day, thousands of workers paraded through Dhaka demanding safer working conditions.

The government has since closed a number of garment plants

for failing to reach stricter new safety standards, but unions and NGOs are continuing to seek further action.

IndustriAll Global Union, a federation of textile and garment workers unions, and UNI Global Union, the international federation of skills and services unions, have secured a legally binding agreement, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, with more than 40 leading international clothing and retail companies covering more than 2000 factories.

The Accord is both about safety and about creating labour law reform to make it possible for workers to join a union.

FIRST Union is a member of both IndustriALL and UNI and has called on local companies sourcing garments from Bangladesh to sign up to the Accord.

Kmart does U turn on Bangladesh safety

When FIRST Union General Secretary Robert Reid publicly called on Kmart to join the global accord on safety for Bangladesh garment workers, the company declined.

Robert condemned their lack of action, describing retailers who are not part of the solution on improving safety for Bangladesh as being part of the problem.

Kmart has since changed its mind and decided to now support the global accord – a decision which is welcomed by FIRST Union.

"An accord on safety will not bring back the lives of the 1127 workers who died in the factory collapse but it is an important step in making conditions better," Robert said

CWS launches appeal for Bangladesh factory collapse survivors



DOING A WORLD
OF GOOD SINCE 1945

The Bangladesh union that supports workers involved in the factory that collapsed killing 1100 and making many more jobless has asked New Zealanders for help.

They have made their request through Christian World Service, reflecting the long connection between the union and CWS.

There had been at least 22 other factories closed and workers from these places are also in need of compensation and support.

Donations to the Bangladesh Workers Appeal can be made: on line at www.cws.org.nz/donate, sent to PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140 or by calling 0800 74 73 72.

Taking the Union to the people



GOING OUT TO THE PEOPLE: Hui at Te Hokuwhitu marae, Whakatane

When the CTU Runanga held its quarterly meeting in Gisborne in May this year it was all over the local news.

"I met people on the street who had heard the unions were in town and why we were there," said CTU Vice President Maori Syd Keepa. "That has got to be good for getting our message out among our people."

Holding the meeting in Gisborne was part of move by the Runanga to build stronger relationships with iwi and local communities by taking some of its meetings out into the provinces instead of always holding them in Wellington.

The Runanga is the representative body for Maori workers whose unions are affiliated to the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi.

The move to meeting in the provinces began in March with a hui at Te Hokuwhitu a Tu marae near Whakatane.

The Whakatane hui was attended by Maori representatives of 16 unions, Maori Council President Manu Paul and locals.

It discussed how iwi and unions can work closely together on issues such as the Living Wage campaign, housing and unemployment.

A panel of representatives and MPs from the Mana, Maori, Labour and Green parties were asked to give their positions on these topics and were questioned by delegates.

The Gisborne meeting was attended by a number of local community organisations and talked about better

processes for unions working with communities over deaths in the forests, as well as other issues over which community and unions share concerns.

The Gisborne hui also provided an opportunity for CTU discussions with local iwi leaders.

"I was able to meet with the chairperson of Ngati Porou and we talked about the relationship we would like to have with them over the Living Wage, housing and employment and about holding a community day on forestry later this year. He was very supportive and wants us to talk to his board about these things," Syd said.



FIRST Union and Together have combined to provide a collective voice and organisational base for forestry workers.

FIRST is the union for the wood sector and Together is a registered union established by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions to provide advice and support for workers who don't have a union.

FIRST Union Wood Sector Secretary Ra Daniels said FIRST Forestry Together is a way of bringing forestry workers together to address major problems in the industry.

"The concept is to provide links with workers' families and communities to give good union advice and increase knowledge and awareness of the many issues around health and safety and working conditions in the industry," he said.

FIRST Forestry Together is planning to hold community meetings that will bring forestry workers and their families together in at least four areas over the next few months.

FIRST Forestry Together will concentrate on campaigning around three issues for a start. It wants an inquiry into accidents in the forestry industry because it believes the industry is dangerous in the way it is designed.

It wants forest owners to agree to standard terms and conditions for all forestry workers, including decent wages and hours of work, days off, wet weather compensation and overtime.

It also wants workers to have access to their union to seek advice and work collectively without fear.

"I knew that they were forcing me out"



There is something very wrong in our banking sector say bank workers and union staff spoken to by The Union Express.

One Wellington bank worker spoken to had been at her bank for 28 years before deciding to quit.

"Working at the branch was like being a cat on a hot tin roof. I knew that they were forcing me out," she said. "Lunch and tea breaks were being monitored. The pressure was on to meet targets. If I made any small mistake, I knew I'd be in for it at the Friday afternoon meeting with the manager."

After three years of being on a 'PIP' - a performance improvement plan - the stress became unbearable and she decided to resign.

"It really was pretty cruel way of ending. I never thought I'd finish up quite like that."

Another bank worker from Gisborne ran into a wall of silence from her bank when she wanted support to take discretionary unpaid maternity leave.

She acknowledged she wasn't eligible to access the 12 month parental leave provisions in law because she didn't work enough hours, but still wanted to return if she could.

"I said I would love unpaid leave for a year, but whatever you can manage would be great - but I heard nothing back," the worker said.

After a month of no response she then applied for flexible working hours. She was still waiting for a formal response when she got a final pay advice in the mail.

"When we requested mediation with the bank they flat out refused. They wouldn't even speak to me," she said.

FIRST Union Legal Services Coordinator Oliver Christeller said a typical case the union deals with involves a worker who has thoroughly enjoyed their work with a bank, but whose relationship with the bank has soured towards the end because of unbearable pressure of some sort.

"In recent years we've seen banks change from being customer focused to retail sales focused," he said.

"Branch managers have targets based on the sales of debt products by their staff. Regional managers have targets based on these branch managers and Area managers are on targets based on their regions.

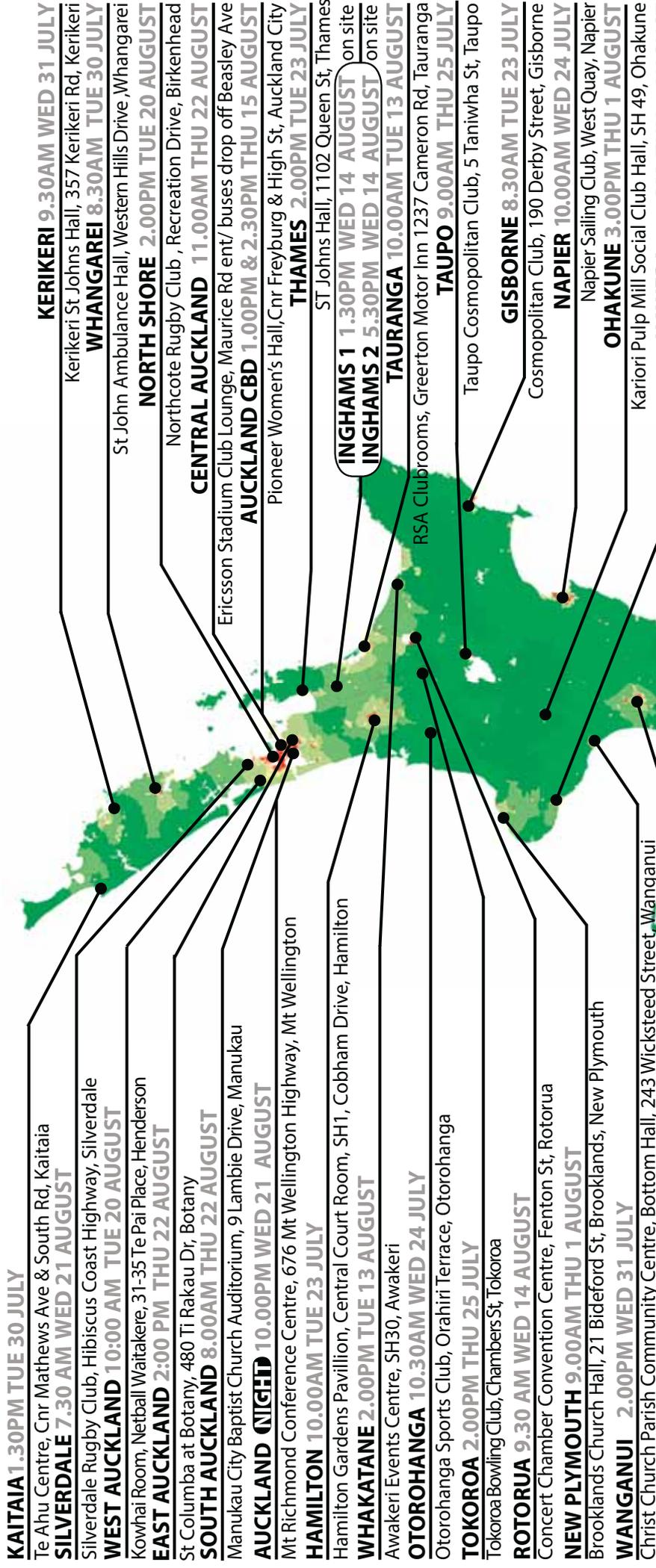
"It's the classic case of the pressure coming down the chain - if my part of the business isn't making targets, I'll start kicking the next level down."

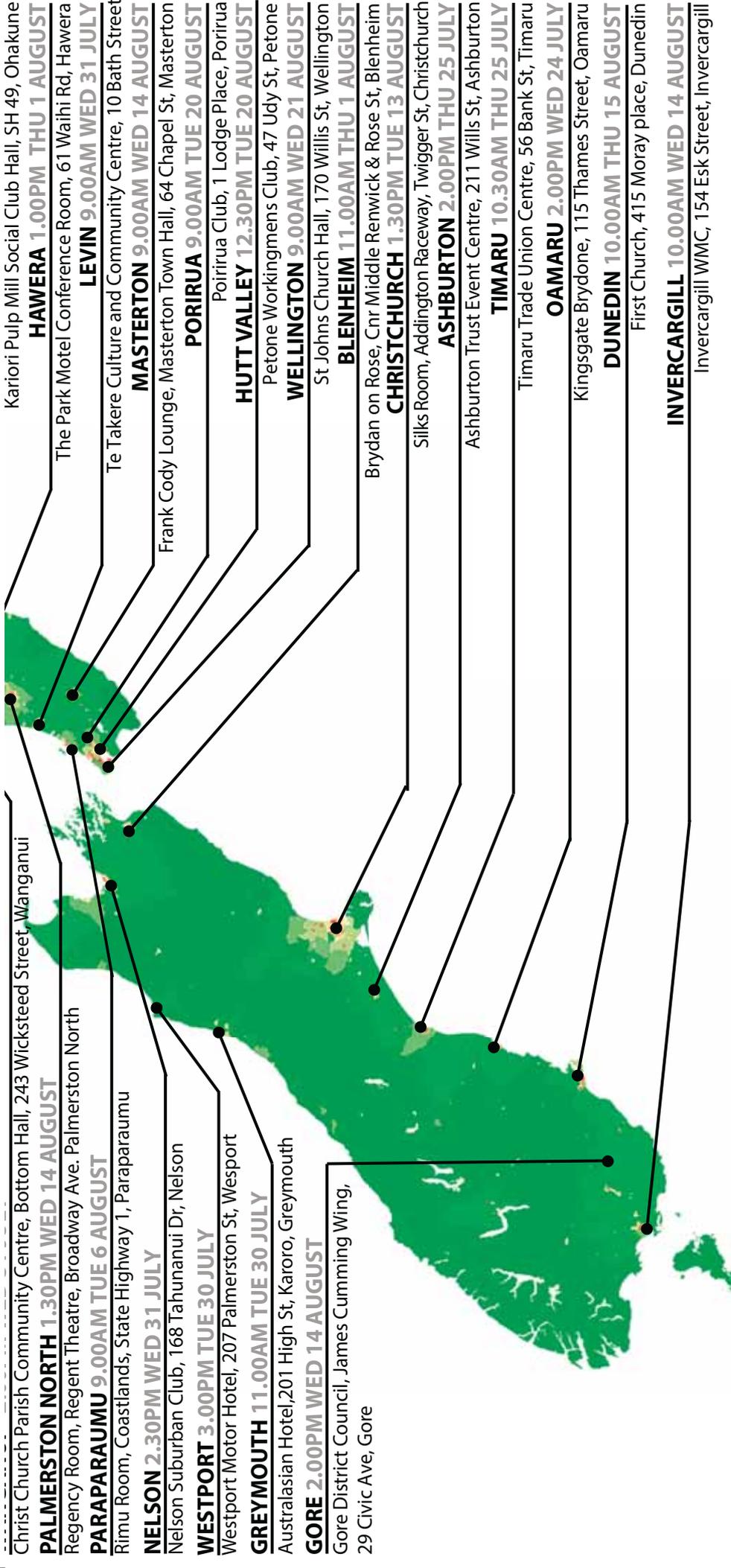
FIRST Union General Secretary Robert Reid said the union is currently preparing a concerted response to the pressure faced from bank workers across the union's finance sector membership.

FIRST PAID STOP UNION

WORK MEETINGS

July 23 - August 2013





All union members are invited to take two hours off work to hear about the union's national work over the last year and our plan for the next

- Under the Employment Relations Act, you have the right to attend up to two paid union meetings per year, each of up to two hours.
- You are entitled to your normal pay if attending meetings during work time (up to the 2 hour limit), provided your attendance is registered and you return to work as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Your employer can make arrangements for some people to be kept at work to enable operations to continue. The law provides that these arrangements should be made between the employer and the union. Such arrangements should not be made between an employer and individual employees.
- Any employer who fails to allow workers to attend union meetings can be ordered to pay a penalty.
- The two union meetings per year do not include discussions relating to collective bargaining. These discussions are covered by separate sections in the Act.
- School Students–You must get written permission from your parents which should be given to your teacher/Principal and you will be excused from school for the duration of the meeting.
- You are not entitled to be paid for attending a meeting outside work time.

Unionism a tradition at refinery

By Bill Bradford

If you look to your left when you are travelling north over the Auckland harbour bridge you can't miss the cluster of large pink buildings that dominate a headland on the upper harbour.

This is the Chelsea Sugar Refinery which was constructed in 1882-83 after the government offered money to any company that would set up a sugar refinery.

Set in park-like surroundings, the refinery is immaculately maintained with historic buildings and unique technology preserved as examples of industrial buildings and plant of their era.

In 2008 part of the original estate, including lakes, regenerating forest, wetlands and open spaces, was sold to the Heritage Park Trust and will be kept forever as parkland.

There is more to the history of the refinery than the land and buildings though.

Wherever workers toil to make profits for factory owners there is a history of struggle for decent wages and conditions. Unions are always at the heart of that struggle and so it was at Chelsea.

By the turn of the century the plant employed nearly 250 people. The work was demanding and industrial relations were strained. In the 1920s there were a series of disputes including an extended strike.

Over a period of time unions built up better wages and conditions and eventually had good collective agreements in place.

Deregulation and the introduction of new technology, including robots that do what was once the labour intensive job of stacking pallets, have led to a lot of changes in more recent times.

FIRST Union delegate Jansen Thomas has worked at the refinery for 24 years and has been a delegate for about 18 of them.

"I remember when I started here there were strong demarcation lines," he said. "Everybody did their own jobs and you did not do other people's jobs. Then in the late 80s they deregulated the industry and we had to become more versatile to survive."



100 PER CENT UNION: Jansen Thomas on the Chelsea Refinery wharf

Following deregulation the tradespeople were given the option of redundancy or becoming contractors, leaving the Sugar Workers Union (now part of FIRST Union) as the only union on site.

Jansen and other workers vowed they would keep all the sugar workers in the union, and keep the pay and conditions for which an earlier generation of workers had fought so hard.

"When new workers start here we go and see them and sign them up," he said. "It was 100 per cent membership when I started and we have kept it that way. We could see other workplaces giving away conditions at that time and decided we were not going to do that."

Their determination has paid off.

Conditions such as shift allowances, penal rates of time and a half for the first three hours of overtime and double time after that, a car allowance when overtime is worked, meal allowances and even the provision of three pairs of socks and three towels a year have been kept in the collective agreement.

Few things remain constant in modern workplaces, but this August when negotiations begin to renew the collective agreement at the refinery the union team will continue the long tradition of sitting down at the bargaining table knowing that every worker on site is a union member.

In the 1960s poet James K Baxter worked at the refinery for a short period. This is how he describes conditions in his poem *The Ballad of Stonegut Sugar Works*:

*And though along those slippery floors
A man might break a leg
And the foul stink of Diesel fumes
Flows through the packing shed
And men in clouds of char dust move
Like the animated dead.*

Baxter noted the strong sense of solidarity among the workers:

*To work beside your fellow men
Is good in the worst place
To call a man your brother
And look him in the face
And sweat and wash the sweat away
And joke at the worlds disgrace.*

After being sacked he had this to say about his bosses:

*The men who sweep the floor are men
(My story here must end)
But the clerk and the slavedriver
Will never have a friend;
To shovel shit and eat it
Are different in the end.*

Waihi Oratorio



UNION HISTORY: The fight for a fair go

A play from Kiwi Possum Productions Motueka
Held at Imagine Theatre, Sat 1 June
Reviewed by Nelson-based Organiser Rachel Boyack

The *Waihi Oratorio*, written and directed by Blackball resident Paul Maunder, depicts the events of one of New Zealand's most significant workers' strikes, the *Waihi Miners' Strike* of 1912.

The *Oratorio* is a short play set with music, song, sound effect and audience interaction, which challenges the watcher to put themselves in the shoes of the miners. The *Waihi Miners' Strike* is significant to us as workers, as it was the first major industrial strike in New Zealand, resulting in the death of unionist Fred Evans.

The Trade Union movement in New Zealand can trace its history back to the strike and the unity that came following it. The strike is a stark reminder of the struggle

between Labour and Capital, and the major power imbalance we have if we fail to organise.

I have had the privilege of watching this play twice now, and a number of components stand out for me: the haunting use of sound effects, the desperation of the workers, the fantastic vocals of young actor Freya Johnson, and the opportunity to sing familiar socialist songs in a context of remembrance.

As the play progresses you are almost tricked into thinking you have been transported into another time and place altogether.

I am reminded that the response of the workers in *Waihi* was to organise and unionise, and that if we wish to make change we must do this collectively and as part of a community.

Change can happen. We are stronger together.

No more Pak'nSlaves

FIRST Union members in several Pak'nSave stores have had to stand firm to improve on nil pay offers and fight off determined efforts to reduce their conditions of employment.

New owners at the Manukau and Alderman Drive stores attempted to strip union members of conditions they held in their previous collective agreements and refused to offer a pay increase.

The Royal Oak Pak'nSave also refused to offer an across the board pay increase to union members.

All three of the stores put in claims for 90 day probationary clauses that would allow them to fire new employees without cause and both Royal Oak and Alderman Drive decided to try to bring in youth rates.

Foodstuffs organiser Bill Bradford said workers at the stores felt as if they were under attack, not only by their individual stores, but by the whole Foodstuffs group.

"The stores say they are all independent but they purchase goods and services as a group, brand themselves as a group and certainly appeared to be going after their workers as a group. Our only option was to respond by highlighting the actions of Foodstuffs as a group," he said. FIRST Union and Auckland Action Against Poverty (AAP) decided to protest against the poverty wages Foodstuffs stores pay across much of the country and the discrimination against young workers that the Foodstuffs stores were supporting.

On Mayday, 1 May, shoppers at the Royal Oak Pak'nSave were greeted by a giant banner saying 'Pak'n Slaves: pay rise – not youth rates' and protesters leafleted customers in the car park, in the mall and in the store itself.

At Manukau the union put up a huge blow up rat, blocked the car park entrance, turning customers away, and leafleted in the store and in the car park.



UNITED ACTION: FIRST Union and AAP fought youth rates together

All clawbacks and youth rates claims were quickly dropped by the stores and collective agreements that include pay increases have since been settled in each of them.

Bill Bradford said a lack of consistency in how different Pak'nSave stores deal with the union is causing unnecessary and expensive problems that are likely to continue in one form or another unless something changes.

"Nobody wins when we end up in these battles. There is a better way than fighting our way up and down the country with each individual store owner. We are not asking the stores to give up their independence but we would like them to work together a bit more in their dealings with us so we can establish some bottom lines with them that we can all work with," he said.

Packaging products goes Union



SOLIDARITY: Sticking together pays off at Packaging Products

Finding out one of their popular workmates had been laid off led workers at Lower Hutt company Packaging Products to join the union.

FIRST Union delegate Mike Martin said workers had traditionally viewed the company as a pretty good employer but they had become increasingly unhappy as things changed.

Many of the staff had been with the company for a long time but were no longer getting pay increases and their concerns over various issues were not being addressed.

When a long serving receptionist was laid off the workers decided things needed to change.

"Everyone was upset. It pushed us over the edge," said Mike.

"I was approached by someone to contact the union because I can be outspoken. Some of the staff were a bit hesitant and fearful about joining the union but when we did meet and talk about things it brought us together."

The workers now have their first collective agreement which includes a pay increase and provisions for long service leave, redundancy, birthday leave, and cements in union rights.

"We can now look forward to bargaining for a pay increase each year. The union was also able to intervene and negotiate a redundancy package for the worker who was laid off," said Mike.

"Joining the union has also meant we were able to deal with small issues like heating and lockers that we had previously raised but made no progress on."

New employment laws

FIRST Union legal coordinator Oliver Christeller talks about employment law changes and how they may affect members.

Express: What do you think are the most significant changes for our members?

OC: The significant changes seem largely to impact collective bargaining and unions. For example, the removal of the duty to conclude a collective agreement would mean that an employer could ask the Authority to declare bargaining over. In situations such as the Ports of Auckland where it appeared that the employer wanted to get rid of the collective agreement this could lead to 'surface' bargaining, where an employer does not really intend to conclude the collective. In some circumstances this may lead to more significant disputes as unions fight harder sooner as they feel that the clock is ticking. I think it will create more significant industrial disputes and does not help employers or unions create strong productive relationships.

Express: What about changes to the strike laws?

OC: Strike action is not simply walking out the gate. Most strike action is not this at all. It can involve a group of workers acting together in refusing to do particular tasks, reducing their speed, or any breach of their employment agreement. As of May this year we have been required to hold secret ballots for all strikes. The new laws will mean that we will have to give notice of strike action including what the strike action will be and a host of other details. It also means that when we take partial strike action and stay at work our employers can deduct money from our pay. Of significant concern is a private member's bill that was just drawn that will completely remove any restriction on using strike breakers. The cumulative effect of these changes will mean that our right to strike is significantly weakened.

Express: Are there any other significant aspects of the changes?

OC: The duty to have new employees covered by the union agreement is being removed. Previously employers were obliged to offer new workers the terms



WORKERS RIGHTS ARE UNDER ATTACK: FIRST Union legal coordinator Oliver Christeller's job is to defend members' legal rights

and conditions of collective agreements for the first 30 days of employment. This meant that workers were protected by a union agreement at the outset of their employment. This duty is being removed and creates vulnerabilities for new workers. I am also concerned that employers will set up inconsistencies in order to de-unionise their sites. In fact we have already seen this occur at one major corporate which simply neglected to follow the 30 day rule even though it was in place. Luckily in this case we were able to take action based on the current law.

Express: Where do all these changes leave our union?

OC: While the changes are not helpful it is important to remember that we still have significant rights and legal protections as union members. These include protection from discrimination, rights to attend union meetings and access to our organisers. Our union is a strong union because we have members and delegates who are passionate and care about their fellow workers. Our strength always comes from them no matter what the law is.

Back in the house



Proud FIRST Union member Carol Beaumont has recently returned to Parliament. Carol was a former NDU Organiser and Retail Secretary. She then became Secretary of the council of Trade Unions. During her time out of Parliament last year, Carol threw herself back into trade union work assisting the Maritime Union and Meat Workers Union with their major disputes.

Back in Parliament, Carol has picked up her campaign against loan sharks as well as working on consumer issues generally and being responsible for workplace learning and industry training. She remains based in the Maungakiekie electorate. Carol intends to actively campaign against the attacks on workers through the ERA changes and to campaign for pay equity for women.

You can contact Carol on carol.beaumont@parliament.govt.nz or (09) 6241594 or (027) 2757374. The other FIRST Union member in Parliament is Palmerston North MP and Labour's transport spokesperson, Iain Lees-Galloway.

Speaking out on poverty



New Zealand has come under fire for the high levels of child poverty in our country, in Amnesty International's Annual Report 2013.

"The mention of up to 270,000 children living in poverty in this global report is a stain on New Zealand's human rights record," said Grant Bayldon, Executive Director of Amnesty International in New Zealand. Retail worker and FIRST Union member Antonia Lili featured in a One News' story on the Amnesty's report.

"I'm on more than the minimum wage, but it still doesn't put the food on the table. It's still hard - it's still a struggle every day."

"When my pay comes through - it's the bills, and I probably have 50-odd dollars left for the food," she said

Union stalwart retires

FIRST Union Operations Manager Jennifer Francis has retired after many years of faithful work for the union.

Running a large and effective union requires good administrative systems to back up the visible industrial and political work.

FIRST Union and its predecessor unions have been very fortunate to have had Jennifer Francis at the heart of their operations since 1985 when she first took a job with the Northern Butchers & Grocers Union.

One of the biggest highlights of her time with the union was at the time of the formation of the Northern Distribution Union.

"The leadership and foresight of the union secretaries, the executives and memberships of the time must be acknowledged," she said. "It was a marriage of conservatives and militants but different approaches were put aside in the interests of building a stronger and more influential collective."

Jennifer is thankful that the union's officers at the time, Bill Andersen and Mike Jackson, realised the fundamental importance of having efficient administration and valued the work done by administration staff - something not done by every union back then.

Jennifer said the era of the Employment Contracts Act was a debilitating time for union leadership and members, with most unions having to make difficult decisions around selling assets, cutting staff numbers and amalgamating to survive as their membership numbers fell.

However in recent years the union has moved forward.

"The election of Laila Harre as National Secretary of the NDU in 2005 kickstarted a process of change and modernisation that is being continued by the present leadership," she said.

Jennifer will not be sitting idly in her retirement. She is Secretary/Trustee of the Northern Driver's Charitable Trust, has joined Grey Power and is involved in a project to have a biography of past NDU President Bill Andersen written.

She said she has other pastimes she wants to spend time on too.



JENNIFER FRANCIS: Stepping down

"I am a gardener and I want to become an efficient food producer on my suburban plot," she said. "I also want to take some time to think and continue my political education and I always tell my friends I am going to learn to draw."

MONDAY MATHS



Would you like to improve your maths? Come along to our small friendly maths group:

Time: Mondays from 5.30 to 7pm

Location: First Union National Office, 120 Church St, Onehunga

Cost: Free for First Union members!

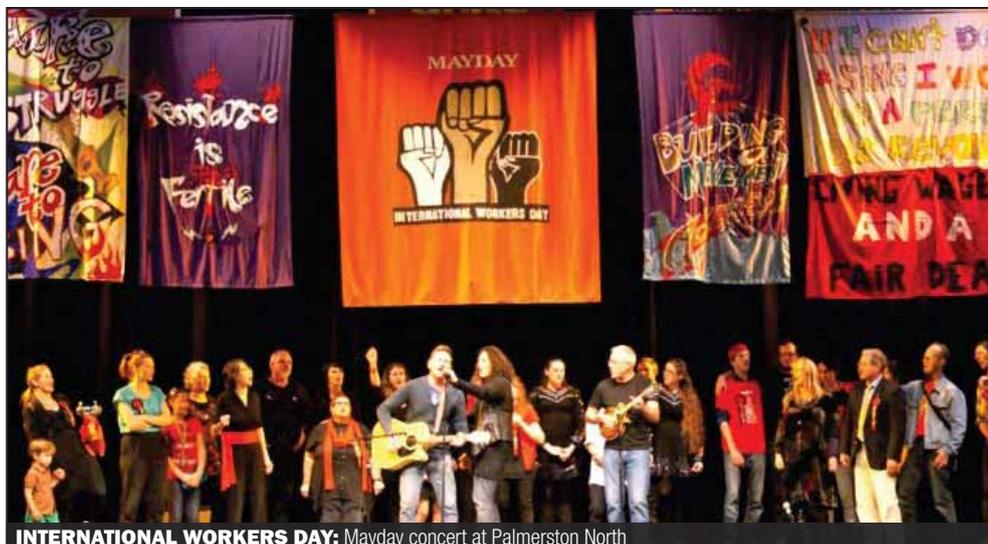
Covering all basic maths: place value, addition subtraction, 'in the head' calculations, fractions, percentages and more!

One to one sessions are also available.

This is a 10 week course beginning July 15.

Contact Kieran on 021 9555 28 or email kieran.talbot@firstunion.org.nz to book your place.

Magnificent Mayday concert



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY: Mayday concert at Palmerston North

FIRST Union organiser Dion Martin has been part of organising the Palmerston North Mayday Concert since 1995.

He said this year's event was a huge success and provided a great night out for union members, their families and the community.

Dion reports that an enthusiastic audience of more than 500 attended the concert which was held in Palmerston North on Saturday May 4.

The concert included a range of music and dance performances including contemporary dance pieces, a rock band, traditional union songs performed by various artists, a session with singer/songwriter Moana Maniapoto and the 19th appearance in a row at the event by the Brazen Hussies.

Between the music and dance, presentations were made on various union, political and environmental campaigns that unions are involved in.

From the General Secretary: Changes to FIRST Union structure



A postal ballot of Biennial Conference members in June voted overwhelmingly to change the rules of FIRST Union to reduce the size of the National Executive and the Management Committee of the union.

The rule changes will mean the National Executive is reduced in size from 32 to 21 members, and the Management Committee from 10 to 7.

These changes complete the amalgamation process between the NDU and Finsec which called for a reduction in the size of the National Executive after a settling in period following the amalgamation.

Under the new structure the union will have two divisions:

- Retail, Finance and Commerce (which includes the Retail and Finance sectors)
- Transport, Logistics and Manufacturing (which includes the Transport and Logistics (T&L), Textile and Wood sectors)

The five sectors of FIRST Union will continue to exist and elect members to the National Executive, but instead of five sector secretaries, FIRST Union will have two divisional secretaries.

The positions of regional secretaries and the general secretary continue as at present.

The new rules provide a formula for how many executive positions each sector is entitled to based on the membership numbers of each sector.

Up to 3,000 members have one NX seat, 3,001 to 6,000 have two seats and 6,001 and over have three seats.

On current membership numbers, the Textile and Wood sectors, with around 1,500 members each, are each entitled to one seat each.

The Finance sector with almost 4,000 members is entitled to two seats.

The Transport and Logistics sector with around 8,000 members, and the Retail sector with around 12,000 members, are each entitled to three seats.

A food manufacturing sub-sector which has been created within T&L will join butchery and meat from the Retail sector and baking from the Textile and Baking sector together with sugar, ingredient, beverage, fish and chicken processing and other food manufacture that are already in T&L.

This issue of the Union Express opens nominations for the election of all National Executive positions, including those of the General, Divisional and Regional Secretaries.

The term for the secretaries is 4 years, and the term for all other positions is 2 years.

Previous rule changes provided for the establishment of sector and sub-sector councils which will be formed and developed as the National Executive size is reduced.

Other rule changes passed by the National Conference postal ballot were the addition of a clause on secret ballots for strikes as required by a recent amendment to the Employment Relations Act, and a number of minor administrative and tidy-up changes.

Vox Pop: Question: What do you think of the direction of the government following the budget?



Nicholas Jackson
- The Warehouse Mt Roskill

I think they are making the rich richer and the poor are stepping a lot lower. The worst thing they are doing is selling off assets.



Maureen Morunga - Countdown Lynmall

Don't like the government. I have never liked National I have been brought up Labour and always will be. I particularly don't like them selling assets.



Jamie Wong - Countdown Logistics

There is a lot of things bad. People are getting laid off but politicians are getting pay rises.



Lasitani Misinale - Countdown Logistics

It's bad because they are not looking at us as people, they see us as profit just like business.



Shaun Ley - Countdown DC Wiri

What John Key is doing to us is looking after the rich and not the ones down below



Jennie Ormsby - KMart Henderson

I have concerns in relation to the state houses as in the budget and how they want to put all these new things in place around Housing NZ properties. They have gone away from the whole focus of what Housing NZ was there for.

V8 WOMAN

When Christina Chase was about 10 years old her older brother got her started on a pastime that was to become a lifelong passion.

“He was into old Ford Zephyrs and rebuilt a lot of them,” she said. “He would come home and say I am going to rip this apart or do so and so, and ask me to give him a hand.”

Right through her teenage years Christina worked with her brother in the garage, and then later carried on doing the same with her partner who was into doing up motorbikes.

“He was doing up bikes but he had no patience with doing wiring. I discovered I was good at it so I started doing all the wiring which eventually led to him giving me my first bike of my own to rebuild. I stripped the whole thing down, put it back together and repainted it. We did that on a regular basis and I built up knowledge about bikes.”

Although she has worked on a lot of different bikes and cars Christina prefers big old V8s.

“My favourite project was a Bel Air Chev even though it wasn't mine. It is my ultimate aim to have one of my own.”

Christina works at the Foodstuffs warehouse in Palmerston North and is a FIRST Union delegate.

It is not a high paying job and she cannot afford to buy all the vehicles and parts she wants, so she frequently picks up her vehicles and parts through trading.



WORK IN PROGRESS: Christina with her latest project

“I often get things by talking to people. Someone will tell me about something lying around out the back of a farm and I will go along and have a look. I might have an engine someone wants while they have some parts I need so we will do an exchange, or they might want my skills so I will spray paint a car as a swap for some parts,” she said.

Sometimes it is difficult to get male car enthusiasts to take her seriously because she is a female.

“I will be at a car show and talking to people and they will go ‘Oh yeah! Whatever!’ and it is not until I show them pictures of bits and pieces I have done, or taken them around to the garage to see what I am doing that they go ‘OK, you are for real’ and start taking me seriously,” Christina said.

This stereotyping cost her dearly when she got divorced.

“My partner and I had a lot of equipment but I lost it all because the court awarded all the tools to him. The judge said it was his hobby and because he is the man he can have everything in the garage. I didn't think that was very good and I said it was my hobby too. I said I am a spray painter and the spray painting plant belongs to me but she said it's too late because she had already awarded it to him.”

Despite these setbacks Christina now has a well-equipped workshop with a full set of tools, welding equipment and industrial spray painting gear.

And in it sits her dream motor - a big Chevy 350 that holds out the promise of many happy hours spent on returning it to perfection.

CARTOON



SMO|KO|DU SUDOKU (DIFFICULT)

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7			4			9
2		6	5	3		
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			6	9		
4	9					3

Each row contains the number 1 to 9, each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9 and each set of 3 x 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

solution at:
<http://www.sudokutoday.com/difficult-sudoku-puzzle-i176-answers.html>

GIFT VOUCHER CAPTION COMPETITION



Send your photo captions to: email bill.bradford@first.org.nz or post to Private Bag 92904, Auckland. The winner receives two gift vouchers.

LAST ISSUES WINNING CAPTION COMPETITION



“These boots are made for walking”

The caption competition winner is: **Louise Barnes**

who works at **Countdown St Lukes.**

IT'S ELECTION TIME IN OUR UNION

The Union is calling for nominations for Officers of the Union and National Executive Sector representatives.

Officers (Two year term)

President
Vice President

Officers (Four year term – full time positions)

General Secretary
Retail, Finance and Commerce Division Secretary
Transport, Logistics and Manufacturing Division Secretary
Central Region Secretary
Southern Region Secretary

Sector Representatives for National Executive (Two year term):

Transport & Logistics – 1 Northern, 1 Central, 1 Southern

Retail – 1 Northern, 1 Central, 1 Southern

Finance – 1 Northern, 1 Central and Southern combined

Wood – 1 Nationally

Textile/Clothing – 1 Nationally

For nomination forms please contact the Returning Officer, Lynn O'Callaghan on 0800 863 477
email lynn.ocallaghan@firstunion.org.nz or your organiser.

Nomination forms should be addressed to:

**The Returning Officer, FIRST Union,
Private Bag 92904, Onehunga, Auckland 1643
or faxed to 09 622 8353.**

**Nominations close at 12 noon Thursday 8 August
2013**

**(no late nominations will be accepted)
REMITTS FOR SUBMISSION TO REGIONAL DELEGATES
CONFERENCES**

If you have any remits on union policy for forwarding to your respective Regional Delegates Conference being held in October this year, these must be submitted in writing and addressed to:

**The General Secretary, FIRST Union, Private Bag
92904, Onehunga, Auckland 1643 or faxed to 09
622 8353 and be received no later than 12 noon
Friday 9 August.**

FIRST UNION

Putting
Workers
First

An amalgamation of the NDU and Finsec

Member Support Centre - your first port of call

The Member Support Centre is your first port of call whenever you need assistance and advice from your union.

Nick Mayne and Chris Lennon (pictured) are able to answer enquiries regarding your workplace issues and your collective agreements.

They work closely with your site's union organisers, to ensure that you receive accurate and up to date information.



Call today on **0800 TO FIRST**
(0800 863 477)

In Auckland? Call 09 622 8355 if possible. | Want to email us? contact@firstunion.org.nz

Change of address?



It is important for us to know your address so we can keep you in touch with your union's activities. Please let us know if you change your address. Simply phone our membership support on 0800 863 477.