



February 2023, Vol. 14 No. 1

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Dear Member,

NEW ZEALAND LABOUR NEWS

Workers Thank Jacinda Ardern For Her Service

In a surprise announcement, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern declared 18 January that she would be stepping down from office, bringing to an end a historic administration that championed the cause of labour.

"Working people want to express their thanks to outgoing Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern for her service and the improvements to wages and conditions her government delivered," said **New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU)** President Richard Wagstaff.

"Jacinda Ardern's government has delivered record employment, record wage rises, and improvements to the lives of working people including 26 weeks paid parental leave, 10 days paid sick leave, increasing the minimum wage by over 30 per cent, the Matariki public holiday, Fair Pay Agreements, and much more.

"Perhaps her greatest legacy will be her leadership during COVID, which saved the lives of innumerable New Zealanders while also protecting the economy and workers' jobs.

"Achieving so much for working New Zealanders in just five and a half years, especially in the context of a global pandemic, is a record that Ardern can be proud of. It is a legacy that her successor must build upon and protect."

"Thank you, Jacinda, for your service to Aotearoa New Zealand," concluded Wagstaff.

Maritime Union: Ardern "One Of New Zealand's Great Prime Ministers."

The Maritime Union offered its thanks to Jacinda Ardern for her service to New Zealand, on her announcement she will be resigning as Prime Minister.

Maritime Union of New Zealand National Secretary Craig Harrison said Ardern has led the country through unprecedented times, showing strong and empathetic leadership when faced with events like the Christchurch mosque shooting and the COVID pandemic.



Jacinda Ardern is stepping down as Prime Minister. "We give all that we can for as long as we can. And then it's time. And for me, it's time." (*The Cut*)



Ardern and former Minister for Workplace Relations Iain Lees-Galloway, with MUNZ's Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ)

"Jacinda Ardern will be remembered as one of New Zealand's great Prime Ministers."

Harrison said major progress has been made in the maritime transport industry under Ardern's leadership. Her legacy as Prime Minister includes the resurgence of coastal shipping, improving health and safety standards, and Fair Pay Agreements (FPA) which will improve the lives of the most vulnerable workers.

The Maritime Union is currently organising for an FPA in the ports industry.

"More progress for the maritime industry has been made with this Government than in decades and this should be given more prominence," said Harrison.

He added that it is an unfortunate reality that the Prime Minister and others have had to contend with a degenerating quality of public debate and personal attacks. "We really acknowledge how the Prime Minister has continued to serve the people of New Zealand in this environment at a personal cost to herself and her family."

PSA Welcomes New Leadership

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is succeeded by New Labour Party Leader and Prime Minister Chris Hipkins and new Deputy Prime Minister Carmel Sepuloni.



Chris Hipkins was sworn in 25 January as NZ's new Prime Minister (Newshub)

The **Public Service Association** Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi congratulates **Chris Hipkins** on his confirmation as the new Labour Party Leader and presumptive Prime Minister.

"The PSA has worked closely with him as Minister for the Public Service and as the COVID-19 Response Minister. He has been a strong and steady Minister at a time of crisis when difficult decisions have had to be made.

"Chris Hipkins has shown a deep commitment to building effective community and public services and has shown respect for the critical role that those working in the public service play in creating a prosperous and fair New Zealand.

"Understanding and valuing the vital contribution of community and public service workers is fundamental to the future of all New Zealanders. The PSA wishes Chis Hipkins all the best as he takes on his new roles as Labour Leader and Prime Minister," said National Secretary Kerry Davies.



Deputy Prime Minister Carmel Sepuloni is the first person of Pacific Islander descent to hold the role (CTV)

PSA And PSA Pasefika Network congratulated **Carmel Sepuloni**, saying, "O le ala i le pule o le tautua - The pathway to leadership is through service."

Malo lava le taumafai, malo lava le tauivi, malo lava le finau.

It is awesome to see one of our Pacific sisters/daughters be selected to one of the highest leadership positions in central government.

On behalf of the Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi and the PSA Pasefika Network we wish our new Deputy Prime Minister Carmel Sepuloni well in her new appointment and we look forward to working alongside her.

Fakamonu atu he fatongia fo'ou oku ke hu kiai. Malo ae ngaue lelei moe ngaue malohi.

The PSA Pasefika Network works to encourage the involvement of Pacific Island peoples in union activities and decisions.

Stuff Journalists Win Pay Rise

Team effort and unprecedented strike action turned things around for members at one of the country's largest media organisations, putting them off to a good start for the new year.

Last year, *Stuff* journalists, in Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, and elsewhere, took to the streets for several hours, fighting for a decent pay rise in the face of wages that have stayed stagnant for years.

As a result, from 2023, members will see a 6.8 per cent pay increase and the reintroduction of a stepped pay scale. The lowest paid members will also now start on \$55,000 – an enormous achievement, which means a boost of around \$7000 to an entry-level starting salary.



(E tū)

E tū Union Delegate Tom Hunt said strikes are rare for members in the journalism industry, who haven't done one for at least more than a decade. But when it became obvious that negotiations had come to a stalemate, members wanted to go in strong right away.

"People were really just struggling so hard financially that they really wanted to take action. After just a two-hour strike, the team got back around the table and "got things sorted pretty fast."

Hunt said top management was surprised that their workers were living so close to the poverty line: "People don't want extra money to go to the pub – it's about the cost of living."



Now, the higher start rate combined with the annual pay scale increases means members coming into the profession at *Stuff* will see their pay progress as they gain more experience.

It's Time To Invest In Teachers

Secondary teachers are under pressure and they need your help. If we invest in our teachers, they'll be able to invest in our rangatahi, which is an investment for all of Aotearoa.

Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) Te Wehengarua has launched a new website to promote its "invest in teachers" campaign. Learn more about how you can help ensure their message about the value of teaching, and the outcomes we seek on behalf of teachers, are top of mind throughout the year.

Now's the time to let Aotearoa New Zealand know how much we value our secondary teachers.

Go to: [Invest In Teachers](#)

Renters United

With so many working people renting due to high housing costs, Renters United is dedicated to making sure Kiwi's rights as tenants are protected.

That includes those who have suffered flooding damage in Auckland / Tamaki Mākaaurau. Please pass on their valuable resources for advice on dealing with landlords, damages, staying safe and cleanup.

Go to: [Renters United Resources](#)



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS

Union Calls for Action to Tackle Transit Violence

Canada, Toronto. As reported by CBS News.

The union that represents 35,000 transit workers in Canada is calling for a national task force involving all levels of government to tackle violence against workers and riders on public transit systems across the

country.

John Di Nino, National President of the **Amalgamated Transit Union** (ATU) Canada, said in an interview with CBC Toronto...that transit violence is "way out of control" and a task force would ask hard questions about what is happening and determine which actions to take to protect workers and riders.



(file)

"We need all levels of government to come together with our municipalities, with the transit agencies, and with quite frankly, with the largest transit union, the ATU, and sit down and come up with constructive ways on how we can mitigate the risk to our workers and to our riders, provide the best possible protections we can and look at all the elements to reduce the effects of violence," Di Nino said.

Di Nino pointed to rising violence on transit systems in Halifax, Saskatoon and Vancouver as well as a "strong uptick in Alberta," in addition to several attacks that have made national headlines on Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) vehicles, as well as at its bus stops and in its subway stations.

Strategies to tackle transit violence could include Criminal Code reforms, interventions, greater visibility of police officers on transit systems, greater deterrence, funding for mental health supports in the community, and worker training in de-escalation techniques, he said.

A woman in her 20s was stabbed multiple times on a Toronto streetcar...in January. "Look, we understand some of these things are unavoidable. All of the best protections aren't going to stop assaults and violence, or stop those with mental health issues. But we need to put our best foot forward here," Di Nino said.

"We can't just sit after every crisis, after every incident, and say we need to do better. We need to stop talking and we need to start acting on developing those programs and policies that are best going to protect everyone who is at stake."

He said the task force would ask such questions as: What are the key issues? What do the attacks look like? How many are happening daily? How many are going unreported? How do transit agencies rebuild safe systems after the pandemic? "We need to react and we need to react quickly," said Di Nino.

On Tuesday, a woman in her 20s was stabbed several times on a TTC streetcar. On Monday, two TTC workers were assaulted on a bus in Scarborough. On Saturday, a TTC operator, a 24-year-old woman, was shot by a BB gun while waiting to begin her shift in Scarborough. The woman in the streetcar stabbing suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries. The two TTC workers suffered non-life-threatening injuries and were treated at the scene.

Alexandra Stoeckle, the bus driver shot with the BB gun, told CBC Toronto...she was leaning against a bus shelter and looking down at her phone when she was hit several times at Markham Road and Progress Avenue.

"I felt something just start hitting me in the chest and it kind of felt like raindrops or pebbles. I thought maybe a car was kicking it up as it was going by. It is a very busy intersection. I looked up, and before I fully looked up and saw what was happening, I was just hit right in the forehead," she said.

After the incident, Stoeckle wrote a letter to Toronto Mayor John Tory and TTC CEO Rick Leary. Stoeckle said Leary agreed to sit down with her to talk about TTC worker safety. Stoeckle said she wants staff to be able to wear their own clothes while in public, for driver changeovers to happen only at stations, and more security on routes and at stations.

TTC chair Jon Burnside, who represents Ward 16, Don Valley East on Toronto city council, said he is interested in getting Tory, Leary and ATU Local 113, which represents about 12,000 TTC workers, to the table to talk about solutions.

"People are getting hurt," Burnside said on Tuesday. "Let's not preclude any idea. We need to be very open-minded about how we approach that and let's not stifle the debate before it begins."

Union Membership Grows By 273,000 Despite Illegal Corporate Union-Busting

United States, Washington, DC. As reported by the AFL-CIO.

The **AFL-CIO** reported the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) annual report shows that union membership grew by 273,000 in 2022 even as giant corporations such as Amazon and Starbucks ratcheted up illegal efforts to intimidate, harass and fire workers who are forming unions. The growth in union members was spurred in large part by workers of colour.



(flickr)

While the report indicates a slight drop in union density from 2021 to 2022, the data don't capture the surge in worker organising across every sector, from teaching assistants to baristas to museum workers, construction workers, video game developers and many more. With the resurgence of union organising and unprecedented federal investment in job creation, the labour movement is poised to grow significantly in the coming years.

"In 2022, we saw working people rising up despite often illegal opposition from companies that would rather pay union-busting firms millions than give workers a seat at the table," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "The momentum of the moment we are in is clear. Organising victories are happening in every industry, public and private, and every sector of our economy all across the country. The wave of organising will continue to gather steam in 2023 and beyond despite broken labour laws that rig the system against workers."

These statistics highlight the need for the Protecting the Right to Organise (PRO) Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which will hold union-busting companies and organisations accountable and give workers the negotiating power they deserve. The AFL-CIO calls on Congress to urgently enact legislation that will ensure that anyone who wants to join a union on the job can do so.

A report released by the National Labor Relations Board in October of last year found that in fiscal year 2022, union election petitions increased by 53 per cent from the previous year. According to a 2022 Gallup poll, union approval is at its highest level in nearly 60 years, with 71 per cent of Americans supporting labour unions, and studies show that 70 per cent of hourly workers say they would join a union if given the opportunity.

New Rules on Collective Bargaining

Europe, Ireland. As reported by The Irish Times.

The new EU directive on collective bargaining could transform the union landscape, says Owen Reidy, General Secretary, and is the 'most progressive' move by Europe on workers' rights in decades.

Owen Reidy was appointed late last year to succeed Patricia King as general secretary of the Ictu. Proposed changes to the rules of engagement between employers and trade unions could give more workers meaningful representation in their workplaces, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Ictu) general secretary Owen Reidy says.

Reidy...describes the Minimum Wage Directive and its promotion of the increased collective bargaining coverage clause as "probably the most progressive thing from a workers' rights point of view that's come out of the European Union in the last two decades".

In addition, the anticipated implementation of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) High-Level Working Group on Collective Bargaining is set to require companies to engage with unions in "good faith."

Combined, the two measures could mark a major turning point for unions that have been battling hard for quite some time to maintain membership numbers even as the nation's workforce expanded dramatically.



Owen Reidy, General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (*Nick Bradshaw*)

"There's a lot in the directive," Reidy says. "In a nutshell, it will oblige the government to seek to promote collective bargaining between unions and employers, negotiating on pay both locally and at sectoral level. Collective bargaining coverage in Ireland is about 34 per cent, that's including public service. Union density (membership levels) among all workers is about 27 or 28 per cent.

"So there are some people who aren't in unions but get the benefit of an agreement. But the commission is basically saying we need to see collective bargaining coverage around 80 per cent which would be doubling it in Ireland."

This, he suggests, is partly down to European leaders reacting to the rise of the sort of populism that yielded Brexit and far-right election successes in a number of countries.

"The current commission is led by Ursula von der Leyen who is from the centre right but it has made it clear that work must pay because they want the centre to hold. We, as part of the European Trade Union movement, said 'well, the best way for work to pay is through collective bargaining, not necessarily through minimum wages; it's through facilitating unions and employers to negotiate'."

The LEEF High Level Group, which included union leaders, academics, senior figures from the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (Ibec) and the construction industry and Government officials, delivered a report in October that sets out the grounds on which collective bargaining can be reformed in Ireland.

Included in the report was a provision that firms be obliged to engage in "good faith" with unions. If the employers fail to do so, even where unions are representing relatively small numbers of their workers, they can ultimately end up before the courts.

One senior Siptu official says that would "save the union movement" as many private sector employers who currently decline to engage could be obliged to. That would potentially make union membership far more appealing in sectors like the traditional powerhouse of manufacturing where it is now running at 13 per cent according to a report by the Geary Institute at UCD. In hospitality, with its many low-paid jobs, it was found to be close to half that.

In his previous role as minister for enterprise, Leo Varadkar suggested the provisions could become law this year, although the department's briefing document for his successor, Simon Coveney, suggests 2024 may be more likely.

Reidy credits the new Taoiseach with some progressive legislation while at the department but says there may be "forces" there who are less than enthusiastic about any substantial changes to the labour relations landscape.

Given the stakes, he suggests, the unions may have to fight their corner although he believes there is an understanding on the employers' side that many of the proposed changes can help to provide long-term stability.

"I do think, you know, in the 21st century, it makes sense to kind of share power, it makes sense to operate collectively across Europe in a multilateral world, and it makes sense to try and improve workers voice in the labour market," he says before suggesting Ibec's Danny McCoy may largely agree.

While LEEF's work to date has been important, he says, "we would like, like Ibec, a much deeper, more meaningful involvement".

Reidy understands, he says, the lingering discomfort in some quarters with aspects of partnership but argues that Government, by improving things like public transport, delivering better healthcare and providing increased support in areas like childcare, can help maintain or improve living standards without

workers having to rely entirely on wage increases. This, he believes, is a large part of the pay off for companies who, he contends, must pay for the bulk of the additional public expenditure envisaged through increased taxes.

Beyond that he insists the Ictu and its affiliates are in a decent position to build off the back of the changes with issues like pay and remote working providing a strong basis for connecting with members new and old.

"The legislation isn't going to organise any workers," he says, "but I do think with a fair wind it'll facilitate and create the capacity for unions to up their game when it comes to organising more workers."

Not everything in that UCD report, Union Voice in Ireland, would provide encouragement but Reidy refers more than once to a finding that 66 per cent of young workers in non-union environments say they would like to join a union.

"It's exciting," he says, at the prospect of all that young union blood. It must be. It will certainly have been a while coming.

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