

July 2020, Vol. 11 No. 6

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Dear

NEW ZEALAND LABOUR NEWS

SAFER SICK LEAVE

At no time in history have Kiwis been more cognisant of the importance of keeping our citizens and working families safe, healthy and secure.

While we are fortunate, thanks to the leadership of PM Jacinda Ardern, to be one of the world's leaders in our handling of the COVID-19 crisis, we still have much more work to do at home.

The experience of COVID-19 has taught us that our safety depends on making sure that those who are sick stay home, but we need to extend income protections to the sick to allow them to safely do so.

Accordingly, the **New Zealand Council of Trade Union (NZCTU)** has undertaken a campaign to increase paid sick leave.

"To the **Honorable Grant Robertson**, Minister of Finance:

For the future we need to give working people the confidence to stay home straight away when we are unwell, not to be forced to visit GPs unnecessarily, and to care for ourselves and our families. The New Zealand Government created extra paid special leave for working people affected by COVID-19. It has made a huge difference. To ensure Aotearoa continues to have better sick leave rules now and in the future, (we) need to...



Sign The Petition! ([CLICK](#))

1. Extend the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme for the next year, make it easy to access, and cover anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, including those who are waiting to be referred to testing or getting results.
2. Increase legal minimum paid sick leave from 5 to 10 days over the next year - with support from the government to help small businesses make the change.

3. Make sick leave available if people need to care for their dependents like their children and their parents.
4. Remove the 6-month stand down to access sick leave when you start a new job.
5. Get rid of the previous National Government's law change that can require a doctor's certificate after just one day of sick leave.



(Andy Jackson/Stuff)

Together: [Sign The Petition!](#)

CHALLENGING ST. JOHN'S

On 23 June, St. John Ambulance announced they may be making up to 100 redundancies. Their executive leadership team is freezing their pay increases this year - we don't know what they get paid. Other leadership teams (such as Air NZ & Auckland Council) have taken a 20% pay cut to prevent job losses.

Do you think St John executive leadership team should take a 20% pay cut to prevent job losses of St John staff? [Join the discussion!](#)

E Tu, REBUILDING BETTER

In May, E tu union launched its "Rebuild Better" campaign to share their experiences, concerns and priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and, most importantly, to learn from this historic crisis to improve upon protections of jobs, wages, health and safety, and other working conditions.

As we move through the COVID-19 crisis, the work of E tu members continues, and now with a specific agenda for rebuilding a better New Zealand economy post-COVID.

The basic premises of the campaign are:

- Workers standing together to secure good wages and end inequality
- Pushing for permanent employment for our people, rather than precarious labour-hire arrangements.
- Workers need more training and development opportunities
- The development and promotion of local supply chains
- Sustainable and climate friendly production

Learn More: [Rebuild Better](#)



(E)

The NZ Tramways and Public Passenger Transport Employees Union

said many bus drivers were left out-of-pocket during the coronavirus lockdown.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) provided an extra \$110 million to councils to ensure they could continue to pay the full contract price to their public service operators during the crisis.

According to NZ Tramways Union Secretary Kevin O'Sullivan, however, Tranzurban and NZ Bus in Wellington have not met the requirements of that funding -- paying drivers for 80 hours a fortnight, leaving those that regularly worked more than 40 hours a week short.

In its public memo on the funding, NZTA said public transport workers "should receive 100 per cent of their wages irrespective of whether they are working or self-isolating."

O'Sullivan has lodged a complaint with NZTA and Transport Minister Phil Twyford on behalf of the estimated 75 per cent of the 500 bus drivers in



(First Union)

the Wellington regionworkers who were left

OTAGO AGREES TO LIVING WAGE

In a win for regional bus drivers, Orbus employees will receive a living wage under the Otago Regional Council's (ORC) newest annual plan. The "hard-won result" for the **Tramways Union and First Union**, follows two years of negotiation that has resulted in a living wage for all Orbus drivers in its 2020-21 annual plan.

The decision could see drivers' pay increase to the living wage, \$22.10 per hour.

First Union Southern Regional Secretary Paul Watson said it should be a "wake-up call" for other regional councils. He said the living wage should be the minimum standard required by all councils, for all workers, adding that negotiating consistent terms and conditions for bus drivers across the country was the next step to ensure the industry could retain, train and deploy bus drivers.

KEEP DUNEDIN RAIL ROLLING

In May we reported that the Dunedin Railways Limited (DRL) Board of Directors had recommended closing the popular Taieri Gorge Railway, citing falling revenues due to the COVID19 pandemic.

DRL is 100 per cent owned by Dunedin City Holdings Limited, the business arm of the Dunedin City Council, which on April 6th, voted 14-1 to mothball the railway at a meeting behind closed doors.

The **Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU)**, which represents workers at DRL, opposed the move, and put forward a proposal to reinvigorate the company, with hopes of saving the iconic tourist attraction and over 50 jobs.

Earlier this month, RMTU released a statement saying, "We are concerned the bad decisions by the DRL Board and CEO are placing this line in jeopardy." RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said the Board and senior management of DRL had actively worked against preserving this asset and should be replaced.

"It is staggering to see that despite the support for some form of Dunedin Rail operations by the Dunedin City Council, local MPs and candidates, and the general public, that a handful of individuals through negligence or arrogance or ignorance have been able to effectively ignore the clearly signalled wishes of their owners."

The RMTU was calling on Transport Minister Phil Twyford and Associate Transport Minister Genter to intervene. "Provincial Growth Fund Minister Jones should pay particular attention to this issue with his Infrastructure and Regional Development portfolios."

Join the [Keep Dunedin Rail Rolling](#) Facebook group.

NZ FIREFIGHTERS - PROTECTING NAPIER

Last week, **New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union (NZPFU)** representatives and a specialist engineer met with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) representatives to push for investigations into the structure and safety of the Napier Fire Station.

At least since 2019 FENZ has known that the Napier Station's seismic



The Taieri Gorge Railway
([RoamingDownUnder.com](#))



(NZPFU)

rating and life-safety risk is dire, with a dismal seismic rating of 15 per cent, which is 25 times the risk to life safety than a new building on that site. The New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering recommends that an emergency response facility should either have a NBS rating of 67 per cent - or be re-designated.

The NZPFU then commissioned a specialist engineering consultancy to review the documentation and advise the NZPFU on the implications of FENZ's reports and the necessary investigations yet to be

There is also remedial work scheduled for the Hastings Fire Station, including some work driven by seismic concerns. Last week Hawkes Bay firefighters were told they would get Hastings or Napier Station upgrades but not both.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Union Workers Shut Down West Coast Ports in Support of Juneteenth

Canada Press: Union says work stoppage honours commemoration of the liberation of slaves in the U.S.

Ports along the West Coast of Canada and the U.S. were quiet as workers with the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)** stopped operations to support racial equality and social justice.

A statement from the union says the eight-hour action honours Juneteenth, the celebration of the liberation of slaves in the United States in 1865 that is commemorated on June 19.

The union has 60,000 members who work in ports in Alaska, British Columbia, south to California and in Hawaii. A statement posted by the **Canadian union**, which is autonomous from its U.S. counterpart, says the organizations have "a proud history of defending the rights and dignity of people."



The work stoppage affected B.C. operations within the Port of Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Stewart and Chemainus (Darryl Dyck/Canadian Press)

The **Canadian Labour Congress** is calling on the federal government to increase financial supports and targeted employment strategies for persons with disabilities as a key aspect of Canada's economic recovery plan.

Persons with disabilities - especially those living at the intersections of multiple marginalized identities - face high unemployment rates and high levels of poverty and need additional support during the COVID-19 crisis and after.

"The current health crisis has intensified the discrimination and stigma workers with disabilities were already facing," said Larry Rousseau, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress. "Hard-won workplace accommodations are at risk when the office becomes virtual, and workers with disabilities are at a greater risk of being laid off or having their jobs furloughed."



The Canadian Labour Congress marked **National AccessAbility Week**, May 31 to June 6, 2020, to shine a light on the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, and those whose experiences are amplified by multiple marginalized identities, including being a woman, Indigenous, racialized and 2SLGBTQI, et al.

targeted support for persons with disabilities

Canada's unions have joined with disability rights organizations in the **Include Me** coalition, calling for a number of priorities to protect the health and safety and provide care and support to persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal government has yet to announce specific targeted income supports for persons with disabilities to navigate their unique financial impact of this crisis.

Unemployment rates are between 35 per cent for people with 'mild' disabilities and 74 per cent for people with 'severe' disabilities. High levels of poverty and unemployment mean more reliance on affordable housing, income and health care supports - programs whose funding and availability vary greatly across the country.

"We are working together to ensure that Canada's response to this crisis leaves no one behind," said Rousseau.

Canada's Unions Mark Injured Workers Day by Calling on Governments to Improve Working Conditions

On **Injured Workers Day**, in the midst of COVID-19, Canada's unions are calling on all levels of government to do more to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths, and to strengthen the workers' compensation system.

The current pandemic presents a monumental challenge in the fight to prevent workplace injury, illness and death. As Canadian jurisdictions begin to open up sectors of their economy, it is critical that working people have the protections they need to be able to do their jobs safely and to get home to their loved ones at the end of each day.

The first priority is to prevent worker exposures, illness and deaths from COVID-19. However, workers also need to know that their workers' compensation system will provide adequate benefits and supports if they become ill as a result of their work.

This requires broadening coverage to include all workers - including those in workplaces currently exempt from mandatory compensation coverage, as well as precarious and gig economy workers.

Governments should also implement presumptive compensation coverage for COVID-19 related illness, so that workers are not denied access to supports, waiting for their claims to be accepted.

So far, only the province of British Columbia has moved towards implementing presumptive compensation coverage for some frontline workers, recognizing that streamlining the process for accessing supports will result in better health outcomes and safer return-to-work for workers at higher risk

BIW's Largest Union Strikes After Rejecting Proposed Contract

Press Herald, Maine, US: The Bath shipyard's largest union pickets over subcontracting,

More than 100 members of Bath Iron Works' largest union picketed outside the shipyard this morning.

The strike comes after Local S6 of the **Machinists Union**, which represents 4,300 of the company's 6,700 employees, recently rejected a three-year contract.

At issue are proposals involving the hiring of subcontractors and changes to seniority at a time when shipyard production has fallen six months behind schedule.





*Machinists Union members in Maine
(Derek Davis/Press Herald)*

Chris Weirs, Local S6 president, said Sunday that voting members were simply standing up for good jobs for the Maine economy. "We are proud to build the best ships in the world and we want to keep it that way. We are fighting for good jobs for the Maine economy. We want jobs at the shipyard to be high quality jobs that members can earn a decent living in over a long career."

Of union members who cast ballots, an overwhelming 87 per cent voted to strike. This is the first strike since 2000, which lasted 55 days.

Workers Terrified as Meatpacking Plant Reopens

Longspport, Indiana, US - Infection rates are still rising at many plants, prompting lawmakers and unions to call for more enforcement.

The number of meatpacking workers dying from the coronavirus is still rising, and employees across the country are scared to come to work. The latest Agriculture Department figures show that U.S. meat production is returning to nearly last year's capacity, accomplishing the White House's goal of keeping the food supply steady during the pandemic.

But while slaughter lines may be up and running, lawmakers, employees and labor leaders say the federal government is failing to protect workers' safety, and they warn that death tolls will continue to rise unless the federal government expands its safety authority over the operations of the country's meatpackers.

At least 44 meatpacking workers have died from the virus and more than 3,000 have tested positive, according to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. About 30 plants have closed in the past two months, impacting more than 45,000 workers.

A spokesperson for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the agency responsible for worker safety, told POLITICO that it has received more than 4,400 Covid-19-related safety complaints, but has issued only a single citation related to the pandemic.

Major meat companies like Tyson and JBS continue to say that they are looking after their employees with safety measures like installing plexiglass barriers and hand sanitizing stations. But those actions don't completely mitigate the reality of these operations as workers, most of them low-income immigrants or refugees, risk their lives or face losing their jobs.



(Darron Cummings/AP)

Dennis Medbourn, an employee at a Tyson hog processing plant in Logansport, Indiana, tested positive for the coronavirus at the end of April, one of about 890 cases at the plant which totaled 40 per cent of the workforce.

Tyson shut down the plant for two weeks for deep cleaning, but reopened in early May after President Donald Trump issued an executive order using the Defense Production Act to tell companies with shuttered plants to reopen them.

Four big companies are responsible for 85 per cent of the U.S. market for the slaughter and packaging of beef.

Data compiled this month by the Food & Environment Reporting Network shows that rural counties with meatpacking plants had Covid-19 infection rates that are five times higher on average than the rest of rural America.

Workers' Rights Seen Crumbling as Coronavirus Threatens Further Setbacks

Labour rights are being eroded worldwide as more countries deny workers the ability to strike, unionise and negotiate better terms, a global trade union said on Thursday, warning that the coronavirus pandemic could lead to further setbacks.



Violations of labour rights have hit a seven-year high as a rising number of governments have prevented workers from forming unions or collectively bargaining, the Global Rights Index by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) revealed.

About 2.5 billion people - more than 60 per cent of the world's workforce - are informal workers, leaving them particularly at risk of being underpaid, overworked and abused, the ITUC said.

Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt and Honduras were rated as the worst countries, according to the annual index, which ranked 144 nations on the degree of respect for workers' rights.

"We are already seeing some countries take things further, and under the cover of measures to tackle the coronavirus pandemic they are advancing their anti-workers' rights agenda," Burrow added. "This has got to stop, and be reversed."

Activists and academics have warned of a rollback of labour rights in global supply chains, with workers forced to accept worse conditions with fewer jobs available and factory bosses accused of using coronavirus staff culls to fire union members.

"Unscrupulous governments and business are using the pandemic to break workers' organisations, and intimidate their representatives," Phil Bloomer, head of the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The index found at least four in five nations had violated the right to strike and collectively bargain in 2019, while workers had limited or no access to justice in 72 per cent of countries. Labourers experienced violence in 51 nations, the ITUC said.

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