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Dear Member,

NEW ZEALAND LABOUR NEWS

Unions Assail Business Award for Ports of Auckland Board Chair

New Zealand's largest maritime and transport unions have condemned a business excellence award given to the Board of Ports of Auckland (POAL) Limited Chair Liz Coutts.

The **Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ)** and **Rail and Maritime Transport Union of New Zealand (RMTU)**, representing thousands of workers, have called on Coutts to return the award in the wake of work safety violations that caused the death of two employees.

On 3 December, the chair of the Board of Ports of Auckland Limited, Liz Coutts, was presented with a Deloitte Top 200 award for Chairperson of the Year in recognition of business excellence and leadership.



(MUNZ)

The following day, 4 December, her company Ports of Auckland Limited was sentenced for their role in the death of a 23-year-old employee in 2018 and fined over half a million dollars. Auckland District Court Judge Evangelos Thomas also awarded \$130,000 in reparations to the family of Laboom Dyer, who died in 2018 at the Ports of Auckland after the Straddle Carrier he was operating tipped over during the night shift.

Earlier this year, POAL admitted being guilty of failing to comply with a duty that exposes an individual to risk of death or serious injury or serious illness under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Judge Thomas said the Worksafe investigation found POAL had failed to train its staff, and in monitoring and enforcing safety plans, and noted "there was a systemic failure to install and maintain a culture of safety and compliance."

On 30 August this year, 31-year-old Palaamo Kalati, a father of seven, died in an incident on a ship at the Fergusson Container Terminal. That death resulted in the Mayor of Auckland Phil Goff announcing an inquiry into health and safety at the port due to his concern about the safety record of the council-owned company.

Maritime Union of New Zealand National Secretary Craig Harrison says it is incomprehensible in the circumstances that such an award should be given, or accepted, and is an insult to the families of the fallen workers.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union Wayne Butson says the message given by the Award is a shocking one.

"Those at the top of businesses where workers die or are harmed should not be getting prizes at the same time they are being sentenced for exposing those workers to harm."

Both Unions are calling for stronger enforcement of health and safety laws, including the prosecution of individual managers and Board chairs who fail in their duty of care towards their workers.

Benedict Ferguson Elected New PSA President

Benedict Ferguson has been elected president of the **Public Service Association (PSA)**, the country's largest democratic union.



(PSA)

Ferguson, who has worked for Auckland Council for more than 18 years, has been a full time PSA delegate for the last five years and, in 2008, he became the youngest person ever elected to the PSA Executive Board. He is the only full-time local government union delegate in New Zealand.

"I have spent my whole life fighting for the union movement. My values are grounded in the belief that everyone deserves dignity and respect, that there is mana in work, and that we should be involved in decisions about our working life," said Ferguson.

"Since I first accepted a leadership role on the PSA board, our membership numbers have grown from 50,000 to 77,000. I want to see our numbers grow to 100,000...I want to build a stronger union that uses our collective voice to speak truth to power. Fair pay agreements must become the norm, and equal pay claims must be settled."

Ferguson replaces popular outgoing President Janet Quigley, who served for four years.



(RNZ/Simon Rogers)

St John's Strike Averted

Ambulance officer strikes due to take place across the country at the end of November were averted after a pay agreement was reached between the ambulance service and **First Union**, which represents many of St John's ambulance drivers and workers.

Prior to the agreement, which will see the full implementation of the independent pay review commissioned by St John, hundreds of staff were prepared to walk off the job for 24 hours over failed pay negotiations.

"This is a fair offer that will see a number of staff receive significant pay adjustments to reflect their skills while ensuring that everyone benefits," First Union's Transport, Logistics and Manufacturing Secretary, Jared Abbott said.

"The settlement is the first step in rebuilding the relationship between the parties and will allow staff to refocus on their key priority of providing a safe and effective ambulance service."

A St John spokesperson said: "This is an historic and significant pay correction for our people."

Unions support Climate Emergency Declaration

The **New Zealand Council of Trade Unions** (NZCTU) announced, on 2nd December, their support of Prime Minister's Announcement of a climate change emergency, saying it signaled a more urgent move to a Just Transition for people working in carbon-based industries.

NZCTU President Richard Wagstaff said, "Through the Covid-19 response, this Government has already shown what is possible in the face of an emergency - from the magnitude and speed of the Government response, to the level of support available to working people, and proactive transition to a sustainable and fair rebuild. The climate crisis, which threatens all life and livelihoods on earth deserves to be addressed with an equal level of urgency and magnitude of response."

Wagstaff continued, "Unions in New Zealand have long been advocating for a Just Transition for working people in affected industries, so they can proactively be skill-matched to new, green jobs as part of the Covid-19 rebuild and a sustainable future of work.

We support proactive Government investment in industry transformation, linked to better employment standards so everyone can benefit from New Zealand's move to a low-carbon economy."

His comments followed the announcement by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern that New Zealand was joining more than 30 countries in taking the symbolic step of declaring a climate emergency. Ardern said the declaration was an acknowledgment of the burden the next generation faces.



*Ardern declares climate emergency
(Mark Mitchell/New Zealand Herald)*

NZEI Teachers' Union Plead for Inclusion in Coal Phase Out

The **New Zealand Educational Institute** (NZEI), the nation's largest education trade union, is appealing to the Government to extend its newly-announced fossil fuels phase-out to the education sector.



(NZEITeRiuRoa)

The move to ban coal boilers in Government buildings comes as part of the government's December 2nd declaration of a climate emergency.

At this stage, some schools have been supported in their transition away from boilers, although nearly 200 schools nationwide are still reliant on burning coal.

On 1st December, the Government announced a plan to phase out coal boilers across most of the state sector by 2025 - but this didn't include schools. Nearly 200 schools nationwide are still reliant on burning coal, which is damaging our climate and harmful to our children's health.

NZEI Union President Liam Rutherford said, "Schools were notably absent from the Government's firm plans on coal...if the Government wants to show its commitment to battling climate change, the country's schools need the support to make the changes necessary."

Union Network of Migrants Calls Out Exploitation of Migrant Workers, Hail New Agreement

The national lockdown and border closings due to the coronavirus pandemic has left orchardists without the usual influx of migrant workers, forcing them to turn to Kiwis to fill the jobs.

The industry, however, which has long exploited migrant workers with under legal minimum wage pay, abuse, discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace, offers little appeal.

"I do not see why any Kiwi would want to work there [fruit picking] when they would get paid more working in a unionized retail store." Said Mandeep Bela, a former fruit picker who was victimized by orchardists and now works for the **Union Network of Migrants (UNEMIG)**.

UNEMIG, a network of migrant workers within **FIRST Union**, aims to protect the rights and welfare of migrant workers in New Zealand.

In the response to the circumstances, however, the New Zealand government has announced a border exception for 2000 migrant workers from the Pacific Islands to enter under the Recognised Seasonal Employers scheme in the new year.

Most significantly, Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi and Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor announced in late November that the 2000 people from the Pacific being brought to New Zealand to pick seasonal fruit will be paid no less than the living wage of \$22.10 per hour.

"This decision sets an important precedent for employers who complain of labour shortages. Employers, regardless of industry, must do their bit to raise wages and conditions to attract people to work," said **Council of Trade Unions** President Richard Wagstaff. "We would like to see all employers in horticulture, not just those in the RSE (Recognised Seasonal Employer) scheme, step up and pay the living wage to everyone they employ."



UNEMIG: [Learn More \(Click\)](#)



(E tū)

Bagel Workers Get Organised

Workers at Best Ugly Bagels, which employs around 90 staff across six outlets in Auckland and Wellington, have joined E tū union and have asked their employer to negotiate a collective agreement.

The popular shop, which is owned by celebrity chef Al Brown, provides bagels to cafes and restaurants across the country.

"My friends and I really like working at Best Ugly Bagels - it's a good working environment," said worker and delegate Thomas Carlyle said, but by joining the union, "we could work with senior management to make it an even better place to work."

"Just like any industry, hospitality workers organising collectively in their union will help them to secure their basic rights, and give them a platform to win the things that will really improve their work conditions, such as the Living Wage and Fair Pay Agreements," said E tū organiser Mat Danaher. "We're looking forward to building a constructive relationship with Best Ugly Bagels and helping them to become leaders as responsible employers in the hospitality space."

District Health Board Administration, Clerical Workers Reach Pay Equity Milestone

An historic agreement has been reached between the **Public Service Association (PSA)** and the country's 20 District Health Boards in the bargaining for Clerical and Administration Pay Equity, meaning that thousands of DHB workers working in the admin and clerical sectors will get pay increases.

It marks the first step in putting right the long-standing undervaluation of an essential DHB workforce. According to PSA National Co-Secretary Kerry Davies, "There are currently more than 1500 unique job titles with a very wide range of pay rates across 20 DHBs. When we're finished, we'll have consistent national pay rates, and a job banding structure with rates that address the undervaluation of this workforce."

Women's Minister Jan Tinetti, who said the milestone will benefit people who have been underpaid due to sex-based discrimination, added, "Achieving pay equity and putting more money in the hands of the lowest-paid workers has a significant positive impact on their lives, and is likely to have flow-on benefits to their whanau and the wider community."

After report back meetings conclude, PSA members will vote on whether to accept the offer as a variation to their collective employment agreements.



(PSA)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS

United Food and Commercial Workers Announce A New Hazard Pay Agreement With Shop Rite United States. The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), which represents 1.3 million food and retail workers, announced a new agreement with ShopRite on hazard pay for nearly 50,000 union grocery workers in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. The deal recognises the ongoing risks ShopRite workers have faced as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, and provides retroactive hazard pay ahead of the holiday season that covers all hours worked between 26 July 26th and 22 August.



(UFCW)

UFCW confirmed this week that there have been at least 109 grocery worker deaths and over 48,000 grocery workers infected or exposed since the pandemic began. Today's deal was reached by ShopRite workers across the Northeast who are members of UFCW Local Unions (One, 152, 342, 360, 371, 464A, 1262, 1500) and RWDSU Local 338.

UFCW International President Marc Perrone released the following statement: "Grocery workers have been on the frontlines since this pandemic began and continue to put themselves in harm's way to help

families put food on this Thanksgiving. This new UFCW agreement is a powerful victory for ShopRite grocery workers across New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.

"UFCW local unions worked with ShopRite to provide temporary hazard pay at the start of the pandemic and when that pay raise expired, these courageous grocery workers came together again to reach a new agreement with ShopRite on hazard pay as this crisis continues.

"Today, UFCW grocery workers are sending a clear message to supermarket chains across the country that this pandemic is far from over, and every CEO must do the right thing by providing the hazard pay that these brave essential workers have earned and deserve as the threat from COVID-19 continues."

Canada's Unions say Fiscal Update's Emphasis on Investments will Spare Canadians Further Economic Hardship and Spur Recovery

Canada. Canada's unions say the federal government's fiscal update will help the nation's workers weather current health and economic hardships through the pandemic.

The government's fiscal update extends critical income support and economic measures to help Canadians and businesses. While the commitments on key priorities remain modest and reflect past promises, the government has signaled it will make further investments as the recovery begins to take shape.

"Canada's workers and their families are staring down a harsh,

frightening winter of economic uncertainty in the midst of a health crisis that shows no sign of letting up," said Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).

"They have received assurances that their government will help them make ends meet and safeguard their health and well-being. However, it's clear that many essential investments will be required around critical priorities like child care, pharmacare and towards key industries to ensure a rapid recovery."



(Flickr)

The federal government made numerous commitments towards workers and their families, including:

- * The promise of improved working conditions and measures to support retention and recruitment of care economy workers and early childhood educators
- * Creation of new national standards for long-term care and a \$1 billion fund to improve the quality of care
- * Green economy investments, including support for home energy efficiency retrofits and the goal of planting 2 billion trees
- * Limited sector-specific support for the hospitality and aviation sectors
- * Measures to tax the multinational digital giants and improve tax compliance
- * The creation of a Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care
- * The announcement of a task force on modernizing the Employment Equity Act
- * Canada's unions join other experts and stakeholders in emphasizing that the priority must remain on returning Canada to full employment rather than on reducing debt

"Harsh cuts in the past have put Canadians more at risk today. We need only to look at the state of long-term care, the erosion of public health capacity and an insufficient Employment Insurance program," said Yussuff. "This is why we have been calling on governments to disaster-proof the country to help us withstand future crises while we recover from this one."



**Building and Wood
Workers' International**

European Women Workers Join 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Europe. BWI's European Regional Women's Committee joined the 16 day global campaign for the elimination of violence against women by holding a forum on gender-based violence. Women participants from Europe, Central Asia, Israel and Turkey shared their respective unions' campaign plans at the national and workplace levels.

BWI's Central and Eastern European affiliates reported that they will launch a social media campaign where women workers from different countries will take turns in running their unions' digital platforms to share educational materials, initiate online discussions and post campaign videos.

BWI European Regional Women's Committee Chair Rita Schiavi praised the women trade unionists' initiative to find ways to hold campaigns and take action on gender-based violence amidst the limitations and challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's really great to see the persistence and innovation of BWI's women trade unionists in the region despite the pandemic. By maximising social media and using different communication technologies and platforms, I am confident that their voices will be heard," Schiavi said.

250 Million Workers and Farmers Hold a One-Day Strike in India

India. Despite repression, a joint general strike by workers and farmers shut down India. More than 250 million workers took part in the 26 and 27 November strike.

Indian trade unions condemned the arrests of workers' and farmers' leaders across the country as they demonstrated together in one of the biggest ever nationwide general strikes. Union leaders issued a clarion call to the government to repeal anti-worker labour codes and anti-farmer farm laws as a massive mobilisation of industrial and agricultural workers and farmers across the country disrupted normal life across the country, in rural and urban areas.

All over the country, both public and private sector employees participated in the strike. The united front of more than 250 farmers organisations, the All India Kisan Sangharsh Co-ordination Committee (AIKSCC), extended support to the trade union strike and the unions extended their support to the farmers' "Chalo Delhi" (Go to Delhi) mobilisation.

Farmers are protesting against recent anti-farmer laws which would withdraw the government's minimum support price for farm products, with serious implications for farmers' income and livelihoods.



(FirstPost)

Trade union leaders expressed concerns that, using COVID-19 as an excuse, the government has unleashed widescale repression. Police used violent means to attempt to stop hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers who (were) on their way to Delhi to demonstrate peacefully in the capital city on 26 and 27 November.

The demands of the workers and farmers included:

- * The withdrawal of all "anti-farmer laws and anti-worker labour codes"
- * The payment of 7,500 rupees in the accounts of each non-tax paying family
- * Monthly supply of 10 kg of food to needy families
- * The expansion of the MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005) to include 200 work days each year, higher wages, and the Act's extension to urban industries
- * Stop the "privatisation of the public sector, including the financial sector, and stop corporatisation of government-run manufacturing and service entities like railways, ordnance factories, ports, etc."
- * The withdrawal of the "draconian forced premature retirement of government and PSU (public sector) employees"
- * Pensions for all, the scrapping of the National Pension System and the reimposition of the earlier pension plan with amendments

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