

NEW ZEALAND MERCHANT SERVICE GUILD IUOW Inc

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NEWSLETTER

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Collective Agreements

Negotiations have concluded for Lyttelton tugs and pilots; Port of Tauranga pilots, tugs, launch and Customer Service Centre; Westgate pilots, tugs and launch; Otago pilots; Port of Napier tugs/launch; Pacifica Shipping; and Ports of Auckland Harbour Control. Bargaining is underway for Real Journeys; Stewart Island Experience; Port Nelson pilots; Timaru Pilots; TLNZ/C3 Tauranga (Stevedore Foremen); Centreport tugs/launch; Westport Harbourmasters; Golden Bay; Leonhardt and Blumberg; NZ Dredging Ltd; and Buller Port Services for the *Kawatiri* dredger;

In current bargaining the variable impact of the economic situation on employers has been evident with a wide range of wage offers. Some employers (a small minority) have offered zero increases, some (notably Real Journeys) have offered what amounts to a wage cut, but the majority have not offered below 3%.

Coastal Shipping

New Zealand workforce

Recently the Guild wrote to the Minister of Immigration objecting to our members being denied job opportunities in favour of applicants who require a work permit. We provided details of specific instances. The Minister has replied that, because "deck officer" is a highly skilled occupation, applications from shipowners to appoint migrants on work permits are not subject to labour market testing by the immigration service. The Minister also declined to comment on our individual members' situation. With the demise of the previous government's *Sea Change* initiative and no further advancement of the Workforce Development objectives arising from that, there are now no controls in place over the wholesale importation of temporary migrant labour in merchant shipping, and the industry is as wide open now as the fishing industry was in the late 1980s.

Liquigas

Liquigas recently applied to the Ministry of Transport for permission for 9 foreign ships to carry and deliver LPG around the coast of New Zealand. The maritime unions requested the CTU to convene a meeting with the MOT and with Liquigas in an effort to promote the protection of these potential job opportunities for New Zealanders. The Ministry did not accept that the nationality of the crew of the vessels carrying this coastal cargo (and, by implication, lost job opportunities) was a valid reason for it to decline the application. The unions' meeting with Liquigas was informative but inconclusive, and a further meeting with a major client of Liquigas, Contact Energy, will now be sought. This issue will be an ongoing campaign, and CTU President, Helen Kelly, will continue to provide support and co-ordination on the issue for the maritime unions.

Shipping companies

Real Journeys

Legal action brought in the Employment Relations Authority against the company's plans to make redundant two permanent Guild members and effectively replace them with non-Guild seasonal workers, resulted in a decision delivered this week in favour of the company. As a consequence, our two members have now been issued with notice of redundancy, even though the dramatic drop in passenger numbers expected by the company earlier in the year does not appear to have materialised. Options for appealing the decision are under consideration. In the meantime the Guild is in bargaining with the company for the renewal of its collective agreement, and our claim for decent redundancy

protections and procedures has been rejected outright by this 'caring, family' company. Prior to the economic crisis, redundancy protections in this operation were not a priority for members in negotiations, however, in light of recent events, the issue has assumed major significance. Members regard the redundancy claim as top priority, and in the absence of any offer from the employer on this issue, industrial action is a distinct possibility.

Attendance at General Meetings

Attendance is improving but still too low at Auckland and Wellington general meetings. It would be much appreciated if senior members could 'mentor' their junior colleagues into establishing the 'Guild meeting habit'.

and finally.....Meeting venues and dates

Auckland: meetings are held on the first Friday of every month (except January or public holidays), and are held in the Aviation & Marine Engineers premises on the first floor Administrator House, 44 Anzac Avenue, commencing at 0930 hours on the following dates:

Friday 6 November and final meeting for the year Friday 4 December 2009.

Wellington: meetings are held on the second Friday of every month (except January or public holidays) at the Guild premises on the 6th floor, 94 Dixon Street, Wellington commencing at 0930 hours on the following dates:

Friday 9 October, Friday 13 November, with the final meeting for the year on 11 December 2009.