

December 2018

Employment Law changes passed

The Employment Relations Amendment Bill has finally passed into law and will mean positive change for meat workers union members. Some provisions like access become law immediately. Others come into force on 6th May. Thank you to MWU members who made submissions and helped campaign for these changes, including those who spoke out publicly about why the changes were needed.

Changes that affect Meat Workers Union Members

No 90 day trial periods

These should not be in your collective agreements, unless your workplace has fewer than 20 workers. 90 day trials are otherwise outlawed.

Meals and rest breaks

Meals and rest breaks are restored to a **minimum** of one 10-minute paid rest break and one 30-minute meal break during a work period of 4 - 6 hours and two 10-minute paid rest breaks and one 30-minute meal break during a work period of between 6 - 8 hours.

Delegates time off

The law changes guarantees delegates, who have been elected by their union reasonable paid time off to carry out union duties.

Access for union officials

Union organisers now have access without having to seek consent to sites where there are union members or where collective bargaining has commenced. In non union sites union officials will have to seek consent to enter from the employer, but that cannot be unreasonably withheld.

30 day rule for new workers where there is a Collective Agreement

The new law requires that all new workers are part of the union collective for the first 30 days. During that time, the employer has to provide information about the union and names may be sent to the union with the new worker's consent.

Collective bargaining and strikes

The law reverts to the requirement to conclude in single employer collective bargaining. The restrictions on partial strikes are repealed.

Next steps for MWU members

There are other provisions such as requiring wages to be included in collective agreements, reinstatement as the primary remedy for unfair dismissals and ensuring workers, such as cleaners who are contracted out are not disadvantaged. MWU is developing standard clauses to comply with the new law. If you have any questions or want more information, please contact graham@nzmwu.org.nz or Darien.fenton@gmail.com or talk with your local organiser.

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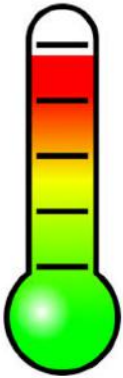
AFFCO appeal dismissed

The Court of Appeal has dismissed AFFCO Talley's appeal against payment under the Wages Protection Act for Wairoa workers who were unlawfully locked out three years ago. It's been a long haul for Wairoa workers, with multiple court cases, MWU shed officials, Pete Amato and Therese Turipa spoke out in the media, calling on AFFCO to settle this, Wairoa AFFCO has generations of Maori whanau affected, all of whom have contributed to making the AFFCO Wairoa plant. They need to move on and the damage done start to be repaired.



AFFCO members - still here - still organising

AFFCO MWU members have faced unlawful lockouts, attempts to impose individual agreements, numerous court actions, right up to the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court and efforts by the company to "persuade" those who join the union they have made the wrong decision. However, MWU membership in AFFCO has not decreased overall and in some sheds, it is growing. MWU will be initiating bargaining on 4th January 2019 for the next collective agreement. and with government law changes, we are hoping for a better round this time.



Mind the heat over summer

As workplaces heat up over the summer, unions, including the Meat Workers Union are asking for the law to stipulate what constitutes "comfort" in the workplace. New Zealand Council of Trade Unions health and safety policy analyst John Crocker says workers should complain about the temperature if they are uncomfortable, and they shouldn't wait until they are too cold, too hot, or unwell. A WorkSafe spokeswoman said employers have a legal obligation to identify risks in the workplace and mitigate them. That includes heat. Meat Workers members should notify their union organisers or shed officials asap if heat is an issue and find out about their rights under Health and Safety laws.

Immigration and meat worker shortages

The shortage of meat workers continues to be an issue, with more companies than ever seeking to bring in overseas workers. NZMWU is not opposed to immigrant workers, but insists that companies must do more to employ local workers; including looking at the barriers to employment. At minimum overseas workers must be employed on the Union collective agreement so they are not being exploited and used to undercut hard won wages and conditions. MWU is calling on the industry and the government to get around the table to talk about how we stem this issue.

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Happy Holiday Season to all MWU branch officials, plant officials, delegates and members and your whanau. Thanks for everything you do. From the MWU National Office Team, Graham, Darien, Yvonne & Sherryl.