

Union ACTIVE

MWU
MEAT WORKERS UNION
WORKMATES. WHANAU. COMMUNITY.

Update : January 2018

Happy New Year to all MWU members and whanau. 2018 will be a big year for us, with major employment law changes ahead, big bargaining and the chance to influence the industry through a combined union campaign. **Because of our union, we win, we get stuff done.**

Hastings Progressive Meat Works has paid the second instalment of around \$1 million dollars in backpay owed to approximately 150 MWU members as part of a settlement around incorrectly paid smoko breaks.

This comes after MWU successfully challenged the incorrect calculation of smokos for meat workers employed by Lean Meats in Oamaru with an Employment Court decision that determined that smoko breaks should be paid at the same rate as their usual pay rate, not the base rate.

MWU Shed Secretary at Progressive, Sarah Wereta-Kelly praised owner Craig Hickson's role in fronting the team and negotiating in good faith to settle.

"Craig has worked with us right through everything, so that's helped a lot. Workers were delighted to have the second payment just before Xmas" she said.

Progressive Meats is to be congratulated for stepping up to what is owed, says Eric Mischefski, union organiser.

"But there's no doubt this payment is because MWU members were organised and determined. Once again, "because of my union" is a powerful reminder about why everyone should be a union member."



Takapau :: L - R Brendon Illsey E Tu Delegate, Heather Tutaki MWU, Wayne Pere MWU, Laurel Reid E Tu, Lorraine Pere MWU.

MWU members at Gelita NZ Ltd, a Christchurch processing plant had a difficult start to 2018. A fire started in the 100 year old business shortly before midnight in early January and severely damaged parts of the production facility.

Fortunately, the company has insurance cover that provides for the payment of wages in situations like these and the union is confident the plant still has a future.

"While MWU has a good redundancy clause in our collective agreement, it's far more important to keep the jobs" Canterbury Branch President John Reid says. "The company have been very good with information and we will keep talking with them as the decisions about repairs and rebuilding are made."

In the meantime, workers are receiving the weekly minimum pay provided for in their Collective Employment Agreement (CEA), despite not being required to be on site or standby if needed.

John Reid says that this shows the need to have CEA's that cover all possibilities.

"In working life, you never know what's going to happen, so it pays to have binding agreements that look after workers no matter what unusual events occur. That's why an MWU negotiated CEA is so important".

Silver Fern Farms Takapau : "It's all about solidarity"

When E Tu Engineers went on strike for three days at SFF Takapau early in the New Year, MWU members supported them, giving a koha from MWU shed funds. "It's all about solidarity" says Heather Tutaki, MWU Shed Secretary at Takapau. "The engineers are our workmates and fellow union members. They are trying to get a fair agreement and decent pay. In the end, we are all union together."

**MINIMUM
WAGE**



Minimum wage or Living Wage?

Minimum wage

New Zealand has a minimum wage set by regulation through the Minimum Wage Act. The adult minimum wage will rise to \$16.50 from 1 April, while the starting out rates will increase to \$13.20 an hour. The government will abolish starting out rates in 2018 and intends to increase the minimum wage to \$20 by 2021. Every employer must pay at least the minimum hourly wage and it is against the law not to. It's become increasingly important with around 164,000 workers predicted to benefit from the increase this year.

Living Wage

Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand brings together community/secular, union and faith-based groups to campaign for a Living Wage, which is the hourly wage a worker needs to pay for the necessities of life and participate in the community.

It reflects the basic expenses of workers and their families such as food, transportation, housing and childcare, and is calculated independently each year by the New Zealand Family Centre Social Policy Unit.

The Living Wage rate is voluntary, with Councils and increasing numbers of employers becoming accredited. In 2017 it was calculated to be \$20.20 per hour, \$4.45 more than the then minimum wage set by the Government.

MWU is a Living Wage employer. **No meat companies** are accredited, but all are required to pay at least the minimum hourly wage. Time to step up?

Industry Latest :

100 additional staff engaged to work the night shift has made **Alliance Levin** Horowhenua's largest employer.

Alliance is also building a new Venison processing plant at Lorneville, Invercargill.

AFFCO was fined \$70,000 and must pay \$10,000 to the victim of a second workplace accident involving serious injuries from a **meat hook spreader**.

ANZCO Itoham Yonekyu Holdings Inc has been given the go ahead to become a 100% owner of ANZCO Foods. Itoham Yonekyu has signalled that it will not be making any significant changes which is good news for MWU members.

Kai toi ora – Food Made Fair

MWU has joined with other food unions, such as FIRST Union, the Dairy Workers Union, E Tu and Unite in a campaign this year aimed at highlighting the role food workers play in New Zealand.

The campaign, named Kai toi ora or Food Made Fair will be launched around March. Keep an eye on the website : www.kaitoiora.nz



www.nzmwu.org.nz
www.jobsthatcount.org.nz

