

# AFFCO Newsletter, 3 September 2012

Shed officials from all the AFFCO plants met in Auckland on 3 September to discuss organisation at the AFFCO plants. It was agreed that we should do a regular newsletter to members across the plants to ensure all union members are kept up to date with developments.

## Delegate Training

The EPMU kindly facilitated a two day delegate training course for 22 delegates from Wairoa and Napier. It was a good two days and delegates mapped a recruitment programme to assist building union membership when the plant starts back to work. We are hoping to organise training at other plants during the shut down.

## CTU/Iwi hui

A major hui is being held on 18 September in Tauranga by the CTU to build relationships with Iwi. Two representatives from each AFFCO plant will attend (and more from Rangiuru). The hui is not just a chance for the wider union movement to discuss on ongoing relationship with Iwi about workers in Aotearoa, but it will include a chance for union members from AFFCO to acknowledge and thank the Iwi that supported us so wonderfully during the industrial dispute. A special presentation will be made during the hui from the union to Iwi leaders.

## Recruitment

It is really important that the union continues to recruit new members – please keep talking to those workers in your workplace who are not in the union. If you are keen to be a union recruiter, please contact your shed official and training can be organised!

## Review of the union

As you know the union has commissioned a review. If you have any feedback to improve the union please feel free to participate in the review by contacting:  
**Carol Beaumont on [carol.beaumont@actrix.co.nz](mailto:carol.beaumont@actrix.co.nz) or call or text her on 0274450869** by Monday 17th September.

## Seniority

There have been lots of questions about the operation of the seniority clause. The clause is very clear and the union is adamant that it will be enforced if any breaches arise. We have written to the company expressing concern about the performance management system they are implementing which has workers fearing that factors like legitimate absences will be counted against them for seniority. We have had a response back from the company which includes a meeting this week to discuss these issues. It is the unions view that:

- Seniority is primarily based on start date.
- Non union members are on the seniority list – they cannot take a case if they believe their seniority has been breached but the company can (and will in our view) offer them seniority.
- Employment record may impact seniority but only for issues that have been raised formally and are on the record as warning (and warnings must be fairly given). Even then, using the employment record instead of start date for a layoff or start-up could only be done if it was fair to do so.
- Skills will count but again are not conclusive – the company would have to show that it was reasonable that someone with high seniority was replaced by someone with less based on skill.
- Competency is not a competition between workers. A worker is competent unless they have warnings suggesting they are not.

The company has put it in writing that where poor performance will impact on seniority – workers will be advised and given the opportunity to improve.

The agreement says that the company will provide a seniority list at the start and end of season. The union is ensuring this happens and members will be able to see these lists.

If you have any problems with seniority please contact your shed official.