

NEWS LETTER

Workplace Health & Safety Review—have your say, this is your opportunity to be involved

WORK INJURY?

The Union is aware of several instances where the employer is challenging whether or not an injury occurred in the workplace.

Workers need to ensure that they report ANY INCIDENT, no matter how trivial it may seem as this greatly enhances your chances of having fewer problems gaining cover and entitlements.

**REPORT! REPORT!
REPORT!**

**WORK DEATH
TOLL for the year
1 July 2011 -
June 2012
(SOURCE—Safeguard
Magazine)**

Message to all NZMWU Members and Delegates,

I am on a workers reference group that is advising the Taskforce charged with the Government's review of NZ's Workplace Health and Safety System.

Minister Kate Wilkinson says "New Zealand's workplace death and injury rates are not improving and are poor in comparison to countries like Australia and the United Kingdom, the Government is aiming for a 25 per cent reduction in workplace deaths and serious injuries by 2020"

The employees reference group will advise the Taskforce about the reasons for why NZ has such a poor record of work related death and serious injury.

This is an opportunity to provide direct feedback to the Taskforce on the issues you think contribute to workplace health and safety problems.

Please reflect on your own workplace and that of your family and friends and consider the following question,

What makes workplaces safe and healthy ?

Your feedback will be part of the Union presentation to the reference group, however there will also be an opportunity for public feedback to the Taskforce.

Please send your feedback urgently to the Union's national health & safety officer Amanda Stephens, P.O. Box 13-048, Christchurch; or by fax (03) 379-7763, or by email on amanda.nzmwu@clear.net.nz.





Got problems at work with ACC, and you're a Union member—see your plant/on site secretary first and as soon as possible. If they can't help you, they can access the CTU Injury Advocacy Service on 0800 486 466 for expert advice and assistance.



General Secretary—*Graham Cooke*

Currently the NZ Meat Workers Union is undergoing a review. A petition has been circulated to members, seeking your input and views on how we can improve the way the National Office, Branch Office's, Sub-branch office's handle industrial disputes and our capacity to organise current and future meat workers. If you have not seen the petition, contact your Sub-branch/Branch officials. Carol Beaumont employed by the CTU/NZMWU is visiting many meat plants obtaining views from Officials and members. Meat workers are "***Under Attack***" as we chant at pickets and worker rally's throughout NZ. Currently, the meat industry/Government are driving substantial change, such as relaxing Government meat inspection services, weakening the existing smoko breaks law, weakening the Employment Relations Act 2000 to make it more difficult for unions to collective bargain, introduction of new technology, new starter legislation 90 day rule is extended and industry pushing for more overseas workers.

AFFCO/South Pacific Meats/Talley's decided some years back not to work with its employees that were members of the Meat Union. After a particularly nasty lockout orchestrated by Affco a settlement was agreed with the assistance by Maori IWI leaders. Andrew Talley representing Affco made a speech "*....they wished to work together with the Union and had little intention of cutting existing earnings and mannings....*" supported by the Chief Executive Officer Hamish Simson. Unfortunately we are continuing to receive calls from Affco workers that little has improved since the agreement was signed on 1st May. Further, the Otago Southland branch negotiating at SPM Awarua and the Canterbury branch negotiating at SPM Malvern have found little joy dealing with this employer, with barriers still evident. Next week we have a meeting of all Affco officials to discuss the current CEA and the existing relationship.

Stronger Industrial Laws will be needed to reign in the excesses of these extreme employers, a change of Government can only deliver that change.

The season: The lamb kill in the North Island is up 0.2% (16,171) and the South Island is down -2.5% (246,969) interestingly the weight of lambs slaughtered has continued the trend of increasing from 18.08kg to 18.52Kg.

The beef kill in the North Island is down -12.4% (201,106) and the South Island is up 3.8% (20,551). Calf kill in the NI is up 1.4% (8,772) and the SI is up 14.8% (32,229).

Meat & Wool NZ has distributed information that the 2012 - 2013 season shows strong signs of improvement compared to the previous season. They expect the lamb and beef kill to increase.



Acclaim Otago (Inc)

Acclaim Otago (Inc) is a support group for injured people and their families. They have been an incorporated society since May 2003. They have become concerned that there is very little independent data available to accurately describe an injured person's experience with ACC.

They are also concerned that people may be being exited from ACC without first receiving meaningful rehabilitation.

ACC has recently said that rehabilitation always comes first' but we have no simple way of finding out if this is correct or not.

Acclaim Otago's survey aims to find out some of what happens to people who are clients of ACC. If you would like to assist Acclaim to identify systemic issues and gather REAL data then you can find the survey at:-

www.acclaimotago.org

Click on the left hand side of their home page. All responses are anonymous unless you choose to leave your name and details at the end of the survey.

Reduce inequality: lift wages

CTU is alarmed at a report from the Ministry of Social Development that shows inequality in New Zealand is at its highest level ever. The report also shows that the average income has fallen for the first time since its low point in the early 1990's.

CTU President, Helen Kelly says "the report shows the shocking truth that we are seeing real poverty, and real examples of working poor. Two out of five poor children come from families where at least one adult is in full time work, or is self employed."

"This government is presiding over record inequality, rather than addressing the problem, its only making things worse with unfair tax changes and unfair employment law changes."

"Average incomes have dropped for the first time since the early 1990's, yet this government is moving ahead with law changes that they themselves acknowledge will cut wages further."

"Workers have seen their after tax wages drop dramatically, at the same time that we've seen our richest individuals wealth increase sharply."

"Tax changes implemented by this government have only exasperated inequality by giving our most wealthy tax cuts, while ignoring everyday working people. We need the government to rebalance the tax system to make it fair rather than contributing to the problem," says Helen Kelly.



NEW ZEALAND MEATWORKERS UNION

NATIONAL OFFICE,
TEMPORARILY AT 55 BELFAST ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH

Website:
Nzmeatworkersunion
.co.nz



Bits 'n' Pieces/Odds 'n' Sods

Affco New Zealand Limited (Affco) has been fined \$56,250 after one of its employees fell nearly seven metres in Affco's Horotiu premises. Affco was also ordered to pay reparation of \$8,000 as a result of the accident on 26 March 2011.

The Hamilton District Court heard that in March last year an employee sustained significant injuries – multiple compound fractures of the left leg and fractured toes of both feet – as a result of falling almost seven metres into a carton well area while working.

A risk of falling had previously been identified in 2005 when the premises had undergone significant refurbishment. However, the preventative measures taken, including installing a gate at the top of the well-shaft and providing employees with a fall arrest harness, were not sufficient to prevent the fall on 26 March. Affco was charged (under Section 6 of the HSE Act) with failing (as an employer) to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of an employee while at work.

“While Affco had taken some steps to mitigate the risk of falling by installing the gate and fall arrest safety harness, the fact is that these measures were neither managed well nor were they adequate at any time,” says MBIE Labour Group's General Manager Northern, John Howard. “No employee goes to work to be injured. The onus is on the employer to ensure employees are not exposed to harm and potential injury – and in this case the injuries

were significant. Today's decision sends a clear message to Affco that it needs to both understand the responsibility it holds to its employees and deliver on it,” Mr Howard says.

P H van den BRINK Ltd was fined \$36,000 under s6 and ordered to pay \$4000 in reparation after an employee caught his finger in the unguarded nip point of a conveyor's chain and sprocket drive while trying to clear material caught in the conveyor. He lost the tip of one finger. (*Manukau DC, 2 May*)

SPM Awarua—the Union brought a successful private prosecution under the HSE legislation against SPM Awarua in relation to a worker who had the tip of his thumb amputated while operating a saw. The company (owned by the Talley family as part of their AFFCO conglomerate) has appealed the decision.

RETIRED UNIONISTS MOVEMENT— if you know of anyone who may be interested in joining this rapidly expanding group, contact Pat Bolster on patb@nzctu.org.nz

