



We're working for you!

# The NEWSLETTER

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## ACC and YOU—what you need to know

- New posters have been sent round to worksites for the Union notice boards.
- The most important thing to know is to GET HELP EARLY!
- See your Union delegate or sub-branch secretary as soon as possible after an injury. It is important that documents are filled in correctly. If your employer is an ACC accredited employer this means they will manage your injury, entitlements and rehabilitation issues for all work injuries, otherwise ACC will administer the claim.
- If you get a decision letter concerning your claim, **you only have 3 months from the date of that letter to apply for an application to review that decision.** The Union will complete the necessary documents for you, but you must contact your on-site representative as soon as possible. We may need you to visit a different specialist for another medical opinion and as this can take time, early intervention is vital.
- **Report all injuries and near-misses straight away. If you don't you may experience delays in getting your entitlements.**



### KNIFE SHARPENING TRAINING

PPCS has offered to open up its' knife sharpening programme to other meat companies. PPCS has developed and implemented a training programme to demonstrate to workers how to effectively sharpen their knives. Over a 12 month period the programme has contributed to a 51% drop in injury numbers and a 49% drop in gradual process injury claims. **If you think employer may be interested in participating in this initiative have them contact their Meat Industry Association representative or the MIA can be contacted on 04-473-6465.**

# From the General Secretary

The new Aotearoa Branch of our Union became a reality on 1st October, after a 94% in favour vote of the former Meat Union Aotearoa members'.

The first "one union" Conference was held at the Latimer Lodge, Christchurch on 1st and 2nd of November; with fifty plus delegates and twenty five observers the "full house" sign was well and truly up!

Delegates were assigned seating around the table drawn from the hat so it was a great chance to meet the new faces of the extra delegates. CAROL BEAUMONT, CTU SECRETARY was the guest speaker and passed on the congratulations and best wishes from the CTU affiliated unions. The occasion was further marked by a couple of drinks at the end of the day while everyone watched the Melbourne Cup.

The business of the meeting was handled in good spirits and all bids well for the Union to work in the interests of members in the future.

More recently, Graham Cooke and myself met with the CEO and Legal Adviser of the Meat Industry Association (the employers' union); this is the first meeting with the MIA for many years, we presented a prepared visual presentation highlighting the problems facing meat workers i.e. *length of season, speeds of work, increasing carcass weights, rigors of shift work, and insufficient wages and conditions.*

The presentation was well received and discussed and will, I am sure, lead to further meaningful dialogue with the MIA that hopefully will benefit members.

The Election—Labour struggled back into control of the Treasury benches by a slender margin. Thanks to everyone who supported the re-election of a worker friendly government. Our Union probably put more effort into this election than we have done previously. We were conscious of the fact that there has been legislative changes that have significantly benefited our members (i.e. the Stand Down changes, Holidays Act and changes to the Employment Relations Act) all of which were under threat if Brash, Hide and Co had won power. We should be looking ahead to the next election already if we wish to keep our deserved gains intact!

Over the next few months we will be re-negotiating agreements with AFFCO, Alliance, PPCS, and Taylor Preston as well as planning further improvements in service to members. The first meeting of the newly configured Executive is to take place in early December by which time we hope the season will be under way and members back at work.

All predictions from the farming sector point to there being increased numbers of stock available for the 2005/06 season.

- Dave

WORK DEATH TOLL FOR  
2004/05 = 46

Work death toll so far for  
2005/06  
(i.e. since 1 July 2005)

7

*The running total has been aligned with OSH's business year – 30 June to 1 July.  
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SICK LEAVE TEST CASE FOR ALLIANCE

The Union has taken a case against Alliance Group Ltd for the way it pays sick and bereavement leave to workers.

The Union argued that a seasonal lay off was a temporary suspension of a continuing employment relationship. It should not deprive employees of their entitlement to statutory benefits.

Alliance contended seasonal workers did not have a continuous employment relationship with the company during the off season.

The Court's decision has been reserved.



## Life member dies

It is with sadness that the Pukeuri sub branch of the Union reports the death of Ted Te Maiharoa, at 4pm on Monday 26 September 2005. Ted completed 50 years of service within the meat industry late last year and was also made a life member of the union at that time. The Union offers its sympathies to Ted's work mates, family and friends.

### WE WIN!

AFFCO has been ordered by the Employment relations Authority to stop using a worker incentive scheme to fund smoko breaks. This decision means the employer must stop deducting the payments from an incentive pool set up in the lamb cut department at the Wanganui Imlay Plant.

The New Zealand Meatworkers Union brought the case to the Authority, arguing that all other workers at the plant had their smoko breaks paid for by the employer and there was no reason for those working in the lamb cuts to be treated any differently.

For the Authority, member Denis Asher also said there was no evidence that the Union had ever agreed to allow smoko's to be paid from the incentive pool, or that such a proposal was ever put to it or the affected employees. The workers' consent was an essential requirement before the arrangement could be considered legally valid.



Picture from a series of paintings by Jane McLeod. ("Tony, smoko")

Mr Asher ordered AFFCO to immediately stop using the incentive pool in this way and ordered the parties to discuss compensation to the affected employees.

*Nb- In typical fashion, AFFCO have appealed this case and the Court hearing is set to be heard in Wanganui Wednesday 23 November 2005.*

## MEETING DATES : 2005

### EXECUTIVE MEETING

6 December 05

21 February 2006

### CONFERENCE

15-16 March 2006



**"We often give our enemies the means for our own destruction."**

**- AESOP**

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We're on the web!  
Nzmeatworkersunion.co.nz



Comments, articles and/or photographs are welcome from members.

Please contact Amanda at the address on the left if you wish to contribute to this newsletter.

The Newsletter is published on an "as required" basis through out the year.

The Union reserves the right to edit submissions.



National Office personnel:-  
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ACC Solicitor: *Karina Tifaga (Thursday/*



## Odds 'n Ends

### The Kate Sheppard Memorial Award Trust

was set up to establish an annual award which would provide an opportunity for a woman holding a New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency to develop her potential by undertaking a special project or post graduate study of value to the wider NZ community

The 2006 Award value is \$5,000 and applications close on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. The successful recipient will be announced on NZ Women's Suffrage Day (19 September 2006).

Applications can be downloaded from <http://www.geocities.com/katesheppardaward/> or will be sent out once a stamped addressed envelope has been received by the Kate Sheppard Memorial Award Trust, PO Box 29-516, Fendalton, Christchurch.

If people want more information I am quite happy for them to contact me.

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