



The latest union update from the Meat Workers Union

May 2015

Delegate education a hit.

Over the past couple of months around 400 delegates representing thousands of MWU members from Invercargill to Northland have attended union education courses. Our union has been assisted by the NZCTU and the EPMU the feedback is very positive.

It doesn't stop at one day's education. There will be more, but the delegate's role is to educate members and build organisation on the job.

There is a high level of commitment and potential among MWU delegates, but we always need more.

Maybe you could put your hand up to be a delegate next time there's an election and help build a stronger union.

Did you know that...

If we put all the experience of MWU delegates together, there would be 1000s of years of experience in the meat industry. The experience of MWU members altogether would amount to 50,000 years.

So before consultants and so-called experts comment on our industry, a good place to start would be talking with MWU members.



Delegates problem solving in Balclutha.

When a teabreak's not a teabreak

Tea breaks made the news when the National Government's anti-worker laws changed on 6th March. Tea breaks can now be substituted with "compensatory measures" and no teabreak given.

But the latest Employment Authority (ERA) decision between NZMWU and Lean Meats shows just how complicated that can be.

Lean Meats reckoned workers had already been paid for tea breaks, because they had been "specifically incorporated" into the hourly rate. The ERA found there was insufficient evidence to prove the amount owed had been included in hourly pay. It ruled in the MWU's favour and ordered Lean Meats to pay for their workers' meal breaks and overtime.



MWU wants to know what's going on with tea breaks in your worksite. Ask your delegate for a copy of the survey.

Left : Delegates at Gore training

Bertie and the MP

When MWU member Bertie Ratu posted a message to her local MP on Facebook asking for support, she got a threatening and bullying letter from her employer AFFCO Talley.

Bertie told her story on TV3's Campbell Live and got a lot of support from people around New Zealand.

"It's been wonderful to hear from so many people," says Bertie. "Every NZ Citizen has the right to ask for support from their MP."



Jobs that Count is the Meat Workers Union campaign to highlight the issues for New Zealand's meat workers and win better, more secure jobs.

Changes in the industry mean workers are having to work harder, yet jobs are becoming less secure. Union agreements and pay increases are harder to get and NZ meat workers are paying the price with increasing casualisation, zero hours contracts and fewer employment rights.

Since MWU launched the campaign in December :

- 1500 people on Jobs that Count Facebook.
- Total reach over 12,000 people
- 2000 signed up to Jobs that Count website
- 100 volunteers ready to help
- 3000 signed petition to support Talley workers.
- Our stories more in the media and in the community.

You can help by signing up your workmates, friends and whanau.

FB : <https://www.facebook.com/jobsthatcount?ref=hl>
 Web : www.jobsthatcount.org.nz
 Petition : http://www.jobsthatcount.org.nz/tell_talley_s

But be careful on Facebook

After Bertie made headlines when she asked her local MP for support on Facebook, many members have asked about the rules. Workers do need to be careful so :

- Don't slag your company publicly - Bertie didn't.
- If you have something to say, say it on a closed Facebook site, and even then, be cautious.
- There's nothing wrong with supporting other workers or causes. We still have free speech in New Zealand.

Below : Labour leader Andrew Little, with MPs Grant Robertson and Sue Moroney on a recent visit to meet with Horotiu workers.

