

# The Northern News

CONFIDENTIAL INTERNAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN AMALGAMATED WORKERS UNION

# GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION & WORKERS

Many Workers believe that Unions should not be politically involved; so we should look at how political decisions have affected workers and their families. Below are some examples;

LEGISLATION:	PARTY SUPPORT THAT PASSED IT:
GST Increase	National & Maori Party
Tax Cuts that favoured the Rich	National & Maori Party
Emissions Trading Scheme (that increased Petrol & Power prices)	National & Maori Party
Increase in Tobacco Tax	National & Maori Party
90-day Sack at Will Law	National & Maori Party
Restriction on Union Access	National & Maori Party
Privatisation of Prisons	National & Maori Party
The Hobbit Law for Warner Films	National & Maori Party

This list is only indicative of the harm that the National, Act, Maori Party Coalition Government has inflicted on Workers, their families and Beneficiaries. However none of these laws are good for Workers, their families or Maori.

## HOW ARE THINGS GOING with YOUR UNION?



We are doing very well. The increase in the Koha is really appreciated by members and their families who suffer bereavement. The payments are currently \$6,000 (member), \$3,000 (Spouse/Partner/Child up to 16 years of age).

The decision to hold fees and absorb the GST increase was in our view a 'member-friendly' decision and at this stage appears to have no adverse effect on the Union income.

Our manning levels are healthy. Currently we have one Organiser in Whangarei, one in Rotorua, three in Auckland and myself as the Secretary; also based in

Auckland. If things progress as well as expected we hope to be looking at appointing a further Organiser in Hamilton, later in the year.

## Staff Change

With the departure of Todd Douglas, it is fortunate that we have been able to replace him very quickly. The new Organiser is **Blake Monkley**. Blake is well known to us as he worked along with us when employed at the Engineers Union. He has a great amount of experience and knowledge. We welcome Blake aboard. Blake will predominantly undertake the jobs Todd used to look after. *He will be round to see you soon!*

# UNION MEMBERSHIP

Each year Unions such as ours are required to complete a Union Membership Return for the Department of Labour. These returns are then summarised and show the increase/decrease in Union membership compared to previous years.

The 2010 Union Membership return shows that Union membership nationally declined by 2.1% , compared to the 2009 year when it increased by 3.9%. This shows that Union's membership is declining. We request Delegates to identify non-members on-site so we can talk to them. 100% membership on the job makes the job strong and gives you a strong voice when it comes to distributing the Company's profits.

## Report from AWUNZ Organisers

Dealings with Employers have generally been harder this year so far. Some of them have tried to make life difficult by putting elements of the new 'Anti-Worker' laws like the 90-day "Sack at Will" law, as Employer's claims for negotiations. Many of them are offering below inflation pay rises. For these reasons, it has taken longer to settle Collective Agreements.



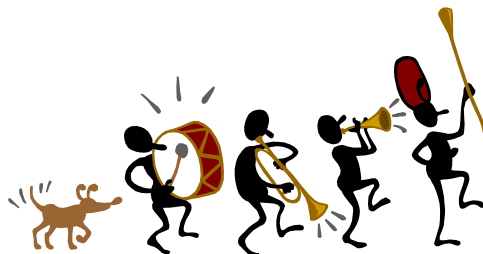
My first few weeks for the Northern AWUNZ have been spent meeting as many Delegates and members of the sites that I cover. I'm actually impressed with the resourcefulness of the Union/Membership and the coverage that it attracts.

We have had some breakthroughs though. After eight months of negotiations, the Union has achieved a brand new Collective Agreement with a major horticulture firm north of Auckland. The members there went on strike for three days and faced down the threat of a lockout from the Employer, but we are now another step forward towards organising the notoriously low-waged and insecure horticulture industry.

For our members working for the new Auckland Council; there are both opportunities and areas of concern ahead as the new Council takes shape. The major problems staff, are currently facing are around payroll. We have raised these matters at the highest level and are looking forward to working with the Council to resolve future issues as quickly as possible.

In order to maximise our bargaining strength, our goal remains 100% Unionisation on every site. So speak to your workmates who are not yet Union members about how we need to stick together now, more than ever.

*Michael Kyriazopoulos*  
**ORGANISER**



May/June is traditionally busy periods for Unions; as lots of Agreements expire around the next three months. I've initiated bargaining for Carter Holt Harvey (Paper Bags), City Parks, City Care, Watercare, Manukau Memorial Gardens, Contech and will be initiating Bargaining with Mangere Cemetery in early June. I will be holding Stop-Work meetings to arrange claims as the next step in the process to starting Negotiations.

At City Parks, the Delegates and I have already suggested regular monthly consultative meetings with Management to discuss Union issues. We will be setting up the framework at the very first meeting. I've found that this sort of approach works well with resolving issues on sites where we can't all see each other because of different work locations etc.

I look forward to working with you all to achieve the Union membership's objectives.

*Blake Monkley*  
**ORGANISER**

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