Legacy of neglect
What does the election result mean for workers?

The 2011 general election was a bad result for New Zealand workers. The return of a National Government means that asset sales, free trade deals, and attacks on workers’ rights to organize are all on the table. The gap between rich and poor is likely to widen.

On preliminary results, National has 60 seats. They are supported by one ACT MP (John Banks), one United Future MP (Peter Dunne) and three Maori Party MPs. National gained 47.99% of the vote – that’s almost one half of the total votes. Labour received 27.13% of the vote. This was the worst result in 85 years. They will have 34 seats. Phil Goff has resigned as leader and a leadership contest is currently taking place.

Around 220,000 special votes are still being counted, and may influence the final result. It is unlikely these will mean any major changes to the formation of the new Government.

While some are claiming a massive victory to National, there are a number of other factors that make this an unusual election and which complicate matters for the incoming Government.

The overall left-leaning opposition vote was still reasonable – it was just split between more parties. For example, the Green Party received their largest share of votes ever (10.62%) which means 13 MPs. While the Greens have traditionally been on the left on issues like workers’ rights, and have a good transport and shipping policy, they have signalled they are prepared to work more with National in future.

This is a concern for the union movement. The Maori Party has continued to support National in Government with three MPs. The Maori Party vote dropped after members unhappy with their direction split away into the Mana Party, led by Hone Harawira, campaigning on a more left wing platform.

Mana gained just 1% of the party vote, less than expected, and only returned Hone Harawira, who won the far north Maori electorate of Te Tai Tonga. Other high profile Mana candidates such as John Minto and Sue Bradford did not gain many votes in general electorates, with most Mana votes coming from Maori electorates. What this means for the future of the Mana Party is uncertain.

The Alliance Party, the only other left wing party standing a list, received a very low number of votes nationwide. The other interesting result was the resurgence of NZ First under the leadership of the veteran Winston Peters. NZ First are not a pro-worker party, but they are opposed to asset sales and free trade deals, which could make life uncomfortable for National. They got 6.81% of the vote and eight MPs.

A new right wing party, the Conservatives, picked up 2.76% of the votes but no MPs. One other major factor in the election was around a million New Zealanders did not vote. Only 68 per cent of eligible voters cast a vote which is the lowest turnout in an election for 120 years.

220,000 people (almost a quarter of a million people who were eligible to vote) did not even enrol. It’s probable that many of these people were young people and working people who for whatever reason felt their vote did not matter, or who did not feel motivated to support anything on offer.

Another interesting factor was that policies such as “no asset sales”, which the left wing parties campaigned on, were policies that most New Zealanders say they agree with when polled. However many of the same New Zealanders voted for the National party, that supports asset sales.

There could be a number of reasons for this. Maybe people don’t see it as an important issue. Maybe they vote for a politician they find likable, rather than a policy.

The concern is that we are seeing a breakdown of the long standing pattern for working class people to support parties that advocate for the working class. Some countries still see a strong pro-worker, left wing awareness amongst working class people, with social democratic, socialist, communist and other radical parties receiving substantial support.

However in New Zealand many working class people identify with politicians who represent the employing class. This has been a trend in many English-speaking countries in recent decades.

After several decades in which New Zealand politics have swung hard to the right, against the interests of the working class, there is a danger that a generation has been programmed with the self-interested attitudes of the capitalist market.

The challenge for the unions and the working class movement is not to sink into depression and apathy, but to analyze what has happened and form a positive strategy in response.

The key part of this strategy will be to rebuild an awareness of the class interests amongst workers, and to re-engage working people, especially the young, into the political system.

This means education and continually raising the issues. This might seem like a big ask when unions are struggling simply to maintain membership and hold the line on wages and conditions. But it is the only long term approach that can turn things around.

On the other side, we are seeing a new mood of resistance amongst working people locally and globally. We are seeing workers taking action to advance or defend their conditions at work, most recently the meat workers in Rangitikei and our own members at Ports of Auckland.

The international “Occupy” movement has emerged to promote the interests of the “99%” against the “1%”.

Over the next three years, we will see the continued instability of the global economy, and a fluid and rapidly changing situation. Unions will become an increasingly important line of defence for working people, and a platform on which to work together for a secure and peaceful future for workers around the world.
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‘The Maritimes’ is published quarterly by the Maritime Union of New Zealand.

ISSN 1176-3418

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Deadline for all Port reports, submissions, photos and letters: 1 February 2012 for next edition

Cover photo: The Rena, stricken on the Astrolabe Reef offshore from the Port of Tauranga
Photo by MUNZ member Bones Westrupp.

For more on-line photos, see www.flickr.com/maritimeunion

Thanks to all our photographers including Bones Westrupp, Harry Holland, Dave Phillips, Grahame McLaren, Bill Connelly, Ruka Ranere, Alan Windsor and others

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The Maritimes
Edition 36, Summer 2011/2012

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The Maritimes
Edition 36, Summer 2011/2012

Editorial

Double standards are everywhere

By Victor Billot

One feature of modern life that you can’t miss are double standards. Double standards are everywhere. We live in a capitalist society where money is God. We are encouraged to get as much of it as possible and spend as much of it as possible. Wealth is celebrated and even worshipped. We are told to look up to the super rich as role models and moral paragons. The sky is the limit. However, when workers seek to defend or advance their wages and conditions, it all changes. We’re told we’re “greedy” or “unrealistic” – and that the country, or the company, “can’t afford it.” At the same time, we are told that we have to pay top dollar for our CEOs and managers to get the best people for the job. Once again, workers are told we have to accept less money, longer hours and “flexible” working conditions (another word that seems to change its meaning depending on who is talking.) It’s the same when companies relocate overseas to exploit cheap labour in authoritarian dictatorships so they can make more profit for wealthy shareholders. Then it’s “our fault” they moved. Our wages are too high and we asked they pay some tax for roads and schools. But when we as workers (and taxpayers and producers) fight for better wages and conditions, then it all changes. Greed is good for business. But asking for your wage to reflect your productivity and the cost of living is bad. Confused? Another example. A successful young rugby player with an alcohol problem gets involved in some bad behaviour when on holiday in the Pacific Islands. The people around him and the media are sympathetic. The guy has big pressures on him and he needs help. That’s a liberal, understanding approach, and probably the right way to deal with the situation. At the same time, the National Party announces plans to cut benefits for those who fail or refuse to take drug tests when they apply for jobs. No concerns as to whether these people may have addictions or problems, or the effect of such a move on their dependents or personal wellbeing. So, the celebrities get the support and the sympathy. Those at the bottom of the heap get another kick when they are down. Overseas another well known TV “personality” suggests on live television that public sector workers on strike should be taken outside and shot in front of their families. He gets away with it because this is a “joke.” I wonder what would happen if one of the striking workers had suggested taking bosses or politicians outside and shooting them in front of their families. They would probably be jailed. Not so funny. What is funny is what you can get away with when you are rich and powerful. There is another word for double standards. Hypocrisy. There seems to be a bit of it going around at the moment.

On a separate topic, a personal thank you to those who have offered comments (of all stripes). It was my privilege to stand for the third time in the 2011 general election for the Alliance Party in the Dunedin North electorate. I did not receive a vast number of votes, but I offer my thanks to the Maritime Union nationally and the Port Chalmers Dunedin branch for their support. I made an effort to represent the concerns of maritime and other workers in the political arena.
A challenging road ahead for workers

The Maritime Union has been explaining through the media how this situation reflects the poor state of our industry. We report in more detail later in this magazine.

Fishing industry

MUNZ has appeared before the Government inquiry into the use of foreign charter vessels (FCVs) in the New Zealand fishing industry. Having been through reports, submissions and other bureaucratic processes in the past, we are under no illusion that any substantial result will drop out of the sky from this latest round of hand wringing. However the rotten conditions and activities that have been going on in the industry have now gained international attention. The Government is embarrassed and the “clean, green” public relations spin we sell to the world is starting to look a bit sick.

The fishing industry has been shown to be divided between those elements favouring a New Zealand operated industry, and those who have become hooked on the exploitation of cheap overseas labour and vessels as their preferred business model. The greed has been exposed and the Seafood Industry Council did itself no favours by coming out and saying they wanted “more cheap labour” in the industry.

No social responsibility, no commitment to New Zealand, just a desire to suck as much cash out as possible and leave someone else to clean up the mess.

Union business

I have been able to visit a number of branches in recent months, to assist with various situations including negotiations, disputes and drug and alcohol policy issues. It is good to meet members and find out what is happening around our branches and worksites.

Good progress is being made in a number of areas we have been working on. These include an update of the Union Rules, the development of a union training plan, and worksites.

We report in more detail later in this magazine.

I wish all members and their families a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

By Joe Fleetwood
General Secretary

General election and referendum

The general election on Saturday 26 November was a poor result for the Left and has led to a dangerous situation where a National Government is likely to ramp up its programme around asset sales, free trade and anti working class policies.

The major concerns regarding the election were the low vote for Labour and other left parties and the low turnout which contributed to this.

Around a million eligible New Zealanders did not vote or did not even enrol to vote. It is likely the majority of these were young and working class people.

This situation is one that has to be faced and some serious work put in to reverse this trend.

Two smaller parties, the Greens and New Zealand First, both obtained good results. In both cases there may be areas we can work on with these parties, as they are both opposed to asset sales and free trade.

It is likely the majority of these were young and working class people.

Many of our members and branches were active in local campaigns on the ground and in other ways, such as writing letters to the editor, calling talkback or simply talking to their workmates, friends, families and neighbours about the importance of a worker-friendly Government.

There are no easy answers but the best approach is persistence and organization, as well as giving thought to what type of society and economy we as workers want to live in. Thank you if you voted.

Auckland dispute

At the time of writing we are facing a serious industrial dispute in the Ports of Auckland. The management are pursuing an aggressive anti union strategy undermining union jobs and conditions through individual employment agreements and contracting out.

A report is printed later in this magazine.

Rena

The eyes of the nation have been on the unfolding Rena disaster on the Astrolabe reef close to the Port of Tauranga. This incident has created international concern as well as considerable damage to the local environment.

Most oil has been recovered off the vessel, which at the time of writing is still holding together. This is a case of good luck more than anything else and the grounding of the Rena has raised many issues about the regulation and safety of Flag of Convenience shipping on the New Zealand coast.

General Secretary Joe Fleetwood at the Mining and Maritime Conference, Durban, South Africa, October 2011

General Secretary's Report

By Joe Fleetwood
General Secretary
The MUNZ national executive met on 2 and 3 November 2011 at Waterside House in Wellington.

The meeting immediately went to international guest speaker Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia and International President of the ITF (International Transport Workers Federation.)

Paddy reported on the ITF work around the globe, and progress on the new Australian shipping policy which the MUA has contributed to.

Paddy also stated the MUA national council had positively discussed the concept of forming one union between MUNZ and the MUA.

He concluded with a discussion about ways forward in creating an international maritime union in the South Pacific region.

The national executive received reports from Finance Committee and the Returning Officer, including recent elections.

There was a presentation on progress with the Union strategic plan and sector reports from the four national officials.

Sector reports were introduced in May 2011 and form the basis of an organizing plan for the Union.

The four sector reports presented were offshore oil and gas/coastal ferries, Coastal shipping, Bulk and general stevedoring, and Terminals.

Branch reports were also received.

The MUNZ rules are going through a complete overhaul to update the original 2002 rules. A progress update was given including responses from branches to proposed changes.

A full final draft will be supplied prior to the May 2012 National Executive meeting for branches to inspect, this will then be endorsed at national executive and a final version including any final amendments and corrections will be adopted by the 2012 Triennial Conference.

MUNZ is also working on developing a national training programme and an initial proposal was received by the meeting.

There was a discussion on the status of the Union drug and alcohol policy and how individual ports were managing this.

There were special reports, international reports, an ITF report, and a veterans report.

The final session for the meeting was from Ashley Goss the AON Hewitt account manager gave a report on both the WISF and SRF funds.

The Triennial Conference for the union will be held at the end of 2012.
Mr Parsloe says there are several substantial issues around terms and conditions which are behind the dispute, which had been concealed by Ports of Auckland management.

“If management were serious about solving the dispute, they’d be addressing the issues instead of grandstanding in the media.”

One major point of contention was ongoing attempts by management to contract out the jobs of port workers, he says.

During the second year of the agreement (2010), the Port Company attempted to contract out ITF affiliated Dockers employment in the lash, straddle driving and container crane operations.

In August and September of 2010 the Port Company issued redundancy notices to MUNZ members working in the shuttle operation. Shuttles are trailer units that move containers between Fergusson and Bledisloe container terminals. It should be noted that the shuttle operation is carried out within the confines of the port area, wharf to wharf.

PORTS OF AUCKLAND DISPUTE

Maritime Union of New Zealand National President Garry Parsloe says management have failed to successfully negotiate with their employees and had no one to blame but themselves for the situation at the Ports of Auckland.

Strike action by MUNZ Local 13 to protect Union conditions has been followed by lockout notices from management. “After ongoing inflammatory claims and public attacks on the integrity of his employees, Ports of Auckland Limited CEO Tony Gibson can boast of one accomplishment only – alienating his workforce,” says Mr Parsloe.

Mr Parsloe says that port workers being locked out by POAL management would be losing pay, but Local 13 MUNZ members understood the long term importance of maintaining terms and conditions at the Port.

The three-year Collective Agreement between the Maritime Union of New Zealand Local 13 and the Ports of Auckland Limited (POAL) expired on 30 September 2011.

POAL contracted out the shuttle operation to a Company called Conlinxx which is a subsidiary joint venture between the POAL and NZL of which the Port Company owns 90% of the shares. Port Company employees also act as directors on the Conlinxx Board of Directors.

The Conlinxx operation is predominantly a non-union operation which includes a high proportion of owner drivers.

In talks to renew the Collective Agreement the Port Company has definitively stated that the contracted shuttle operation will remain despite the Union claim for this work to be returned to union members.

As the Collective Agreement had expired the Union was in a position to take industrial action to support its claim for the return of the shuttle work.
At a stopwork meeting, rank and file membership unanimously instructed the Local 13 Officials to issue the Port Company with a two day strike notice to support their claim.

The Port Company responded by issuing a Lockout notice for two days in retaliation. The second main area of the dispute was bad faith by the management who were offering higher hourly rates to workers on Individual Employment Agreements.

Local 13 is challenging the company on Good Faith bargaining, as the offer of a higher hourly rate undermines the Collective Agreement and the bargaining process.

“In recent weeks the Port Company has made much ado about their Company values, so the Union fails to see how an employer who offers a monetary incentive to leave the Union at the expense of a retirement plan can masquerade as a caring employer,” says Mr Parsloe.

The cashing up of superannuation entitlements along with other conditions is a sinister attempt to influence workers and establish vulnerable dependent employees in the workplace, says Mr Parsloe.

He says the efforts were a transparent attempt to deunionize the workforce, with the intention of eventually tearing down hard won terms and conditions of employment.

He says at the end of the day the majority of workers in the Ports of Auckland chose to be members of the Maritime Union.

“Every time Mr Gibson opens his mouth and abuses the Union, he is abusing his workforce, the same workforce that delivered high productivity in a round the clock industrial environment at the Ports of Auckland.

“This CEO claims to respect his workforce but has been busy attacking their integrity in the news media. He says he is concerned about the effect of stoppages on customers before Christmas, then proceeds to lock out the workforce for two days.”

“He says he wants a resolution but continues to engage in bad faith actions.”

In short, what the Union wants is simply to maintain hard won terms and conditions, and a unionized workforce.

The agenda of the POAL management continues to be one of radical undermining of terms and conditions through clearly anti-union measures such as contracting out and offering preferential treatment to some employees.

The Ports of Auckland management lock out of workers commenced 12.01am Saturday 3 December and concluded 10.30 pm on Sunday 4 December 2011.

The first strike period was from 10.30 pm on Thursday 1 December 2011 until 10.30 pm on Friday 2 December 2011, then from 10.30 pm on Sunday 4 December 2011 until 10.30 pm on Monday 5 December 2011.

At the time of writing, the second strike is for the period commencing 10.30 pm on Thursday 8 December 2011 until 10.30 pm Saturday 10 December 2011.

Ports of Auckland’s second lockout is for the 48 hours immediately following and will extend the stoppage until 10.30 pm Monday 12 December 2011.
By Garry Parsloe
National President, MUNZ
Convener New Zealand ITF Affiliates

On 21–23 September 2011 I attended the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Committee meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The first day was set aside to hold a China Seminar. The 41st ITF congress held in Durban in 2006 had passed a resolution on formulating a strategy on engaging the trade unions of the transport sector in China. The ITF executive board in its last meeting held on 14–15 April 2011 decided to send a high level mission to China, led by ITF President Paddy Crumlin, for a meeting with the leadership of the ACFTU (Chinese union confederation) and other sectional unions from the transport industry. 

For a long time the ITF had been in regular contact with the Chinese Seaman’s Union which also represents road and port transport workers. Many ITF affiliates especially from the Asia/Pacific regions like Japan, Singapore, Korea and Taiwan have bilateral relations with the Chinese Seaman’s Union. In order to develop the ITF’s China strategy, the ITF executive board in its last meeting held on 14–15 April 2011 decided to send a high level mission to China, led by ITF President Paddy Crumlin, for a meeting with the leadership of the ACFTU (Chinese union confederation) and other sectional unions from the transport industry.

Without fully ratifying core labour standards (including freedom of association, strike and collective bargaining) and protecting basic human rights, the future of the Chinese workers is a major worry. The ITF delegation to China must demand that the Chinese Government fully ratify ILO convention 87 and 98, to uphold core labour standards and release all labour activists in prison. On day two, 22 September 2011, the Asia/Pacific regional committee meeting opened with the Sri Lankan National Anthem. One of the opening speakers was ITF President Paddy Crumlin, who spoke about change in the Asia/Pacific region, especially the attacks on the trade union movement in the region. Paddy concluded by stating that the ITF will fight hard to protect workers and their Unions in the Asia/Pacific. The next speaker after Paddy was ITF General Secretary David Cockcroft. David spoke about building trade in the region and that the ITF would stand alongside workers in the region to build and secure conditions of employment.

After the opening speakers there was a report under the heading “Economic and Employment Scenario in the Asia/Pacific.” The next presentation was from Pauline Lim, from the ITF APRC Regional Women’s Committee (MASEU) Executive Council, under the heading “The General Trend of Malaysia Civil Aviation Industry”. This was an interesting report that went into all the tricks that management got into so as to damage workers’ wages and conditions, including the setting up of fake unions and connecting them with management plans to annihilate the strong unions in the industry.

The idea is to cap the salary for cabin crews in Malaysia and to fix a standard practice of working terms and conditions for all cabin crews based in Malaysia. MASEU and another two unions in Malaysian Airlines will continue to fight against the union busters in the aviation industry. In the afternoon there were Women and Youth reports with delegates getting involved in both of the presentations. On the last day, Friday 23 October 2011 we had the Country reports. Most of the reports were focussed around the difficulties in organising, especially with bad legislation in place and employers actively working against unions. The Country report from Fiji dealt with all the problems regarding human and trade union rights in Fiji. There was a resolution carried that condemns the ongoing attacks on the human rights of Fijian workers, their families and trade unionists by the military regime of Fiji.

In the afternoon of the last day the meeting discussed Planning / Preparing for the 8th Asia Pacific Conference 2013 and the 43rd ITF Congress 2014. The last item discussed was “Relations with Other Organisations”. Once again we had a positive and productive Asia/Pacific regional committee meeting.
Maritime Union of Australia National Council
Sydney 24–28 October 2011

by Garry Parsloe
National President

In late October 2011 I attended the Maritime Union of Australia National Council Meeting held in Sydney, Australia, along with Wellington Branch Secretary Mike Clark.

On day one, 24 October 2011, the National Council meeting was opened by Paddy Crumlin dealing with the nominations for Executive Council. All nominated candidates were carried unopposed.

The first report was headed “The global and the national economic and political outlook”. This report was delivered by Paddy Crumlin, who reported on international shipping issues, the ITF involvement in the International and the labour supply in the Asia Pacific region.

After morning smoko on day one we had a women’s report from National Women’s Officer Mich-Elle Myers. Mich-Elle expanded on a large range of issues within the Maritime Union of Australia.

The first Branch report was delivered by Northern NSW Branch Secretary Glen Williams. Glen spoke on developments in the Branch and on the need to get the membership more involved in Branch matters.

After lunch on day one there was a union election 2011 Returning Officers’ report which contained a full account of the ballot.

After the Returning Officers’ report we returned to the Branch reports. The Tasmanian Branch report was delivered by the Secretary Jason Campbell, who spoke on casualisation, branch membership and potential growth in the Tasmanian region.

The next Branch report was from the Northern Territory Branch. The presentation was delivered by the Honorary Branch Secretary Andy Burford. Andy spoke on growth both in membership and work coverage in the branch, organising, Tug and Barge operations, stevedoring in the terminals and agreement negotiations.

The Victorian Branch report was next and was presented by Victorian Branch Secretary Kevin Bracken, who expanded on some of the problems in the Victorian Branch with non-union workers trying to work on the Victorian Docks. There is growth of membership in the Branch and a real need to protect Dockers’ work in the Branch.

Deputy National Secretary Mick Doleman gave a report from the Mining and Maritime 2011 Conference that was held in Durban, South Africa.

Mick reported on all the good work the Mining and Maritime group is doing with solidarity support to Unions and workers that are being attacked in the Maritime and Mining Industry.

The last agenda item on day one was headed “Developments with Maritime Security and MISC Cards”. This presentation was delivered by National ITF coordinator Dean Summers who talked of security issues within the Maritime Industry.

Day two Tuesday 24 November 2011 opened under the heading “The Unions’ International Strategy”. Both Mike Clark and I gave presentations in this session. We spoke on the need to remove the National Government in New Zealand, the struggle to return the export of kiwifruit to MUNZ in Tauranga, the struggle to get a Collective Agreement with the Ports of Auckland, the Rena disaster in Tauranga and the Oil and Gas Alliance, along with other issues.

After morning smoko Assistant National Secretary Ian Bray gave a presentation under the heading of “Organising and Campaigning”. Ian stated that every Branch has had growth in membership.

There was a long discussion around the importance of training.

After lunch there was a presentation from Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith on “Adopting Better Organising Methodology and Strengthening Union Power”. Warren spoke on MUA crewed ships and the distribution of petroleum.

The next presentation was the Veterans report and it was delivered by MUA Veterans’ Secretary Fred Krausert. Fred gave a full report on all the issues that the Veterans in Australia are involved in. In the later part of the afternoon we had the Branch reports from the Queensland Branch and the Sydney Branch.

Day three 26 October 2011 opened with the South Australian Branch report, followed by the Southern NSW Branch.

The next session was headed “National Shipping Reform/Maximising the Union Opportunities”. Paddy Crumlin gave an in-depth report on the growth of shipping in Australia on the theme of “Stronger Shipping for a Stronger Economy”.

After morning smoko we had a session headed “Building Alliances and Federations”.

The CFMEU spoke on coal mining and other issues that the CFMEU are involved in.

National Secretary of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Tony Sheldon spoke on the supply chain and how important it is to put a strategy around the chain to build strength.

The RBTU gave a presentation on Rail and Bus issues and on the distribution of freight.

The Amalgamated Workers Union talked about manufacturing distribution and other issues that the AWU is confronting.

After lunch we had a METL report. This report covered workforce development, skills and training. There was a report on Integrated Ratings Courses and their certification.

At the end of the day we had a presentation from Paul Karras on workers’ rehabilitation and counselling services.

Day four Thursday 27 November 2011 opened with a presentation from Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Greg Combet MP on “The Government’s Reform Agenda for the Remainder of the Term – Jobs and Industry Policy”.

Greg expanded on Shipping Reform, Carbon Tax, Climate Change and Job Security in the Maritime Industry. This was an interesting session and it was great to hear from a Labor MP all about the work that Labor is doing and if re-elected will continue to do to promote a sustainable Australian Shipping Policy.

In the afternoon we had the 2010/2011 Financial Auditor’s report and a West Australian Branch report that was delivered by Branch Secretary Chris Cain. Chris spoke on Branch memberships, shipping reform, support for the Labour Party, level of Branch Officials and job coverage.

On the last day, Friday 28 November 2011 Council discussed attendance at National Council and Conferences before summing up a positive and productive Council meeting that had a high level of debate and an agreed platform to go forward.
The Mining and Maritime Initiative was born in September 2002. The first conference was held in Newcastle, Australia in 2002. Since that first conference the Mining and Maritime Initiative have held three other equally successful conferences: Long Beach, USA (2005), Sydney, Australia (2008) and in 2011 in Durban, South Africa.

The main aim of the Mining and Maritime Initiative is to promote the concept of strong militant unions acting in global solidarity to meet the challenges of the greedy multinational corporations and their right wing political puppets. Major unions from across the globe were represented in Durban including Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), Australian Workers Union (AWU), International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), United Steel Workers (USW), the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union of Australia (CFMEU) and “Los Mineros” – the National Union of Mine and Metal Workers of Mexico. Major South African unions represented were the Chemical, Energy Paper Printing and Allied Workers union (CEPWWAWU), South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and even the Ghana Mine Workers Union (GMWU) were present.

Day One
On day one of the conference we were all welcomed by Deputy President SATAWU Robert Mashego who then invited anyone to stand and sing the anthem for the working class “The Internationale”. Joe Deakin from the MUA delegation did the honours, and did a mighty fine job too. After this we headed into a session time which covered various topics from local reports, overviews of the Mining and Maritime Initiative, support for the Mining and Maritime sectors, reports on the maritime industry and challenging multinationals and repressive regimes. In this session MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood presented a report along with the AWU vice president. There were ten sessions on day one and it would be fair to say not a lot of positive stories, other than the fact there are groups of working class people worldwide prepared to make a stand against the greedy multinationals.

Day Two
Day two was more positive with only four sessions for the day pencilled in – Regional reports, the way forward for the Mining and Maritime Initiative, Building labour rights in the Mining and Maritime sectors, and a breakout session on Mining and Maritime targets and work plans. During day two MUNZ National President Garry Parsloe printed off and circulated a report on our on going dispute with Ports of Auckland and at the end of the day after the International closing remarks. The Durban declaration was endorsed by the conference members and the following declaration included these fine words:

The Fourth International Mining and Maritime Union conference 4-7 October 2011, Durban, South Africa “unequivocally supports the Maritime Union of New Zealand in their struggle against the introduction of contract labour onto the Auckland Waterfront and further supports MUNZ in their struggle to remove existing contract shuttle drivers and replace with ITF affiliated Dockers.”

The 12 strong contingent from MUNZ were sent to conference to learn, gather support and further our ties with our international brothers and sisters.

I felt this conference was a very worthwhile exercise and the MUNZ contingent were professional in achieving our objectives from this conference. Proud to be in a struggle based union.
The Maritime Union is backing locked out meat workers at the CMP plant in Marton with financial support and a solidarity delegation. Maritime Union of New Zealand General Secretary Joe Fleetwood was on the picket line with a delegation of Maritime Union members on 17 November, and says the Union is committed to ongoing support. “This is a multinational bully using its power to rip out conditions from hard working New Zealanders in a small community. It’s unacceptable and they are not going to get away with it.” Mr Fleetwood says he was impressed with the morale and strength of the locked out workers, and the number of other unions represented on the picket line in support. “First thing this morning we had 15 maritime workers from Wellington come up to join the picket.” Mr Fleetwood says the Maritime Union has made a substantial donation to the locked out workers. “This is about providing food and paying the bills for these working families. These workers have put themselves on the line and we are not going to let them down.”

“We know that with an anti-worker National Government this is what happens. The producers of wealth, the backbone of our nation, are up against it from global multinationals who want to suck money out of our country for their global owners.” Mr Fleetwood says the dispute had gone international and the Maritime Union was updating other maritime and transport unions in its global network on the dispute. CMP, a subsidiary of global multinational ANZCO Foods, has locked out 111 workers at its plant in Marton, in order to force them to sign off on pay cuts of between 20 – 30% and unacceptable changes to terms and conditions. Donations can be made to the workers’ disputes fund at Kiwibank: Account Name: Disputes Fund Account Number: 38-9007-0894028-08
The Maritime Union of New Zealand says secure jobs, improved wages and conditions, national sovereignty, and maritime and transport policy are areas of concern for the Union following the general election.

Maritime Union of New Zealand General Secretary Joe Fleetwood says there is an immediate need for an effective, efficient and environmentally friendly transport and logistics chain.

He says that the potential privatization and overseas buy up of New Zealand ports is a major threat to New Zealand remaining in control of its supply chain. The National Government had no plan for coastal shipping, and the stranding of the Rena and problems with Foreign Charter Vessels (FCVs) in the fishing industry were examples of how deregulation and falling standards were reducing New Zealand to the status of a developing nation.

“The National Government has focussed its entire transport strategy on putting more trucks on the road, when we need to be moving in the opposite direction of rail and coastal shipping to provide low impact, environmentally aware transport for the future.”

Mr Fleetwood says that worker’s wages and conditions were under enormous pressure, and unemployment was wrecking the lives of many.

“The reality is that most workers in jobs are working longer, harder and for relatively less, and at the same time we see tens of thousands excluded from work and then attacked for being beneficiaries.”

The working class in New Zealand today are underpaid and over-worked, with high unemployment, casualization and a shrinking share of the economic pie. Casualization of jobs was creating massive problems in working class communities and was being ignored by the Government.

The third concern of the Union was how New Zealand’s sovereignty was being undermined.

New Zealanders must have the right to make our own economic and political choices, says Mr Fleetwood.

“This right is undermined by free trade deals such as the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, and John Key’s proposed asset sales that will remove our ability to determine our collective future.”

New Zealanders were in serious danger of becoming tenants in their own country if the right wing asset sales and privatization agenda was allowed to continue.

The ITF is taking action to protect the health and safety of port workers and seafarers as concern continues over potentially dangerous reefer containers.

Some 900 refrigerated units were withdrawn by shipping line Maersk last month after three fatalities were linked to maintenance work carried out on containers in Vietnam.

Although as yet unconfirmed, it’s thought that some reefers may have been topped up with contaminated gas causing them to be potentially explosive under certain conditions.

ITF affiliates across dockers, seafarers and road and rail sections, have been informed of the potential risk attached to these units and are being advised to follow up with their local health and safety authorities.

ITF dockers’ section secretary Frank Leys said: “We are pleased to see that big shipping lines like Maersk have reacted quickly to this situation and we would join our US affiliate, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, in urging any companies or organisations who haven’t already taken steps to alleviate this risk, to follow suit now.”

Seafarers’ section secretary Jon Whitlow added: “We are extremely concerned for the welfare of those workers on ships who may be unaware that a defective container is being carried on board.

“Whilst of course the explosion of a container ashore is a tragic event, we think that a similar explosion on board a vessel could have potentially catastrophic effects on workers, ships and the environment.”

Additionally, inland transport section secretary Mac Urata commented: “This is not just an issue for seafarers and dockers; workers right across the supply chain are potentially at risk. We are looking now for a swift and thorough investigation into how these tragedies came about and information on what happens next to ensure workers' safety.”
Free trade deal a threat to our future as a ‘self governing democracy’

By Bryan Gould

In the final weeks of the election campaign, the question of whether or not to sell some of our key assets remained, for many voters, a defining issue. Yet, while that question continues to be hotly debated, a related issue of equal if not greater importance is sliding by under the radar. That asset sales should raise real concerns is hardly surprising in a country that has already sold a higher proportion of its economy into overseas ownership than any other developed country. It raises fears, not just about the loss of control over our economic future, but about our powers of democratic self-government as well.

Yet, while those issues rise to the top of the election agenda, in Hawaii in November 2011 Bill English gave consent in our name to the broad principles of a new multilateral agreement which will pose an even greater threat to our continued existence as a genuinely self-governing democracy.

He did so without ever consulting us. Not only that – we will not be allowed to know what is in the agreement, and even the record of the negotiations themselves will be kept secret, it seems, for up to four years. Parliament will not be allowed a say until the deal is done. There will be no scrutiny by a select committee. The government – in the persons of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and the Trade Minister - will make these secret decisions for us.

Yet we already know that the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement is certain to raise issues of the greatest importance. We already know that the government is so convinced that “free trade” is a good thing that it will be prepared to sign away almost anything for the chance to sell to our trading partners the products that – in a food-hungry world – they want to buy anyway.

We know that our government will roll over at the mere sight of a dollar bill. Who can forget the unseemly haste with which we gave away huge tax advantages and changed our labour laws at the behest of Warner Brothers? Hardly the action of a government or a country with any self-respect.

Little wonder that there is a real concern that the American pharmaceutical industry will insist that the role of Pharmac – the government agency that has used its buying power to keep down the price of prescription medicines and has accordingly saved New Zealanders hundreds of millions of dollars – will have to be reduced so that the drug companies can extract much greater profits from us.

On this, as on other similar issues, Ministers give us general assurances – and by the time we discover what those mean, it will be too late.

It is now clear, however, there is an even more insidious and threatening danger at the heart of this secret agreement. One clause that the Americans will insist on (as they have done with other similar agreements) is a provision that would allow foreign private corporations to sue our government (including all future governments) if they saw any sign that the terms of the secret agreement might not be adhered to.

The legal action would be brought, not in our own courts, or even in a properly recognised international court, but in special tribunals set up specifically for the purpose. It would be necessary to establish these courts especially because they would be dealing with very unusual cases – cases where privately owned companies could sue a sovereign country to enforce treaty provisions to which those companies were not even parties.

Let us be in no doubt what that would mean. It would mean that an American corporation would have far more extensive rights against our government than any New Zealand company would ever have. It would mean that a future government, perhaps elected to change policy in an area like environmental protection or health and safety, could be prevented from doing so by a foreign corporation suing that government in a special tribunal.

It would mean, in other words, that concessions made in secret by today’s government could never be claimed back. We, as a country, would be locked into a marketplace controlled by foreign corporations.

This is not mere speculation. American and European companies investing and trading overseas have regularly enforced these rights arising from similar treaty provisions. Ironically, the history of this kind of provision has begun to attract attention because it has come back to bite those who created it. The Germans, some decades ago, began to insert such provisions in treaties with third-world countries, so that the interests of German investors in those countries could be protected. Such was the power of German investment, and the weakness of the recipient countries, that no one took much notice.

Now, however, with the crisis in the eurozone and the growing investment of formerly third-world countries in Europe, the boot is on the other foot – and European countries are suddenly crying foul at the prospect of being sued by private companies from China or Korea.

Before New Zealand gets embroiled in similar proceedings, could we at least get a clear answer to a simple question? Does the TPPA, to which Bill English agreed, contain a similar provision?

Bryan Gould, a well-known economic commentator and author, former Vice-Chancellor of Waikato University and senior British Labour MP, and Patron of the New Zealand Not For Sale Campaign, a network of groups formed to fight the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).
Ultimate responsibility for Rena disaster lies with Government

The Maritime Union says that the responsibility for the Rena disaster lies with Government and authorities as much as with individual crew members. Maritime Union of New Zealand General Secretary Joe Fleetwood says charges against the master of the Rena should not deflect attention away from the greater responsibility for the disaster. He says the New Zealand Government and authorities have created a situation where substandard flag of convenience shipping has been encouraged and enabled.

“1990s legislation from the then National Government created the so-called ‘open coast’ policy and this has meant that unacceptable practices have become the norm in New Zealand waters – it’s a case of out of sight and out of mind.”

Mr Fleetwood says a Maritime New Zealand “inspection” of the Rena in Bluff on 28 September 2011 apparently consisted of the inspector asking the Master whether previous problems had been fixed. “This is the same Master that the authorities are now trying to pin the blame on a couple of weeks later after the disaster.”

“But at the time of the inspection they obviously were prepared to take the Master at his word that everything was hunky dory on his ship, despite the fact it had been hauled up in China and Australia for multiple problems.”

Mr Fleetwood says if this is the standard approach of Maritime New Zealand to dealing with obviously problematic vessels, the only surprise in the grounding of the Rena is that it hadn’t happened earlier.

He says the Union is very concerned about the welfare of crew members and wanted access to them to provide independent support.

“Can you imagine the stress of these seafarers, many with dependent families, who have spent nearly a week onboard a stricken vessel in mortal fear of their lives, and some only being taken off by helicopter after a Mayday call when the ship appeared to be in imminent catastrophe.”

He says it is now becoming a regular theme that systemic policy and regulation failures are resulting in serious harm to workers, the community and the environment.

“It is about time that the elected leaders started coping it when things go wrong rather than putting a smother over it and trying to shift the blame.”

He says the Union was repeating its call for all Maritime New Zealand reports on the Rena to be made public as soon as possible.

“If the authorities have managed to arrest the captain in such a fast manner, they can start to make public their own processes for full transparency and accountability to the New Zealand public.”

Mr Fleetwood says the Union has been arguing for stronger regulation of shipping for years in New Zealand waters, but Governments have not wanted to hear the message.

He says the Union has had longstanding concerns that Maritime New Zealand regulations and inspections of flag of convenience vessels were superficial, limited and not strict enough. The Union has compiled a short list of some of the flag of convenience shipping issues that it has been involved in over the last few years (see end of media release).

Mr Fleetwood says comment by Transport Minister Steven Joyce that the Maritime Union’s views were “political” were accurate.

“Mr Joyce is right. The issue is political. It is political because the John Key led National Government have been happy to have flag of convenience ships running on the New Zealand coast as a result of their political decisions.”

“In this case their political decision to promote and allow flag of convenience shipping on the New Zealand coast has had real life consequences, which have proved far beyond the political ability and the practical ability of the Government to deal with.”

“If we allowed trucks on New Zealand roads that were licensed in Liberia or some other semi-functioning failed state, and driven by unregulated overseas drivers, there would be an outcry. Yet that is what we allow on the New Zealand coast and now we are paying the price.”

Mr Fleetwood says in addition to its campaigning against Flag of Convenience shipping it had lobbied the Government last year with a plan to provide a fast response vessel for offshore oil spills. The Union approached the Minister of Energy and Resources, Hon Gerry Brownlee, as well as the Minister of Transport Hon Steven Joyce and Minister of Environment Hon Nick Smith, in July 2010 to support the introduction of a ready response vessel for the maritime sector to cope with oil spills and similar events. This ready response vessel would have been aimed at the offshore oil and gas industry but could easily have been used to quickly respond to oil leaks in the current Rena disaster.

The Union was told to send their information into a Ministry of Economic Development review, which it did.

“Unacceptable practices have become the norm in New Zealand waters – it’s a case of out of sight and out of mind”
Government ignored calls for oil response vessel

A TV3 News investigation has found that the Government was repeatedly warned New Zealand wasn’t prepared enough for an oil spill. The MV Rena ran aground two months ago but before that documents which have been obtained under the Official Information Act show the Government had been considering whether the country needs a specialist oil response vessel. “The documents show from training, through to equipment, through to a response plan, we were woefully underprepared,” says Green Party MP Gareth Hughes.

The paper trail began last year, when Nelson marine support company Unimar wrote to the Government, saying; “we feel there is a fundamental need for New Zealand to have a strategy and appropriate equipment on call for 24 hours, 365 days a year in the event of any surface oil spill”. The company’s chief executive pleaded his case on four other occasions. The plea was supported by the Maritime Union, which still feels just as strongly today.

“We need an emergency response vessel, there’s so much gas and oil exploration happening in this country,” says the union’s Joe Fleetwood.

Two months after Unimar’s repeated pleas, the Government advised the oil pollution advisory committee had decided against funding a dedicated emergency response vessel based in New Zealand. Unimar sent one last letter in February, requesting the Government change its mind. But the Government stuck to its guns saying in the event of an emergency it would identify those vessels operating on the New Zealand coast that have the appropriate equipment and seek their assistance.

The Awanui is such a vessel, but took four-and-a-half days before it started pumping fuel off the Rena. “One of the big problems with the people up there on the East Coast, [is that they see] four and a half days nothing happened, no vessel, if you had a vessel out there, but if you had had a vessel out there it would have put them at rest and actually be doing its job,” says Mr Fleetwood. But some in the marine industry disagree. “An offshore oil response vessel [trying] to pick up oil that close inshore, in the swell and the wave conditions that were available at the time, would have made very little difference,” says marine expert John Riding.

Transport Minister Steven Joyce agrees, believing the Government could have done nothing differently. “There’s nothing we could have had on hand that would have made a difference to the outcome of the Rena, because the amount of oil that escaped from the Rena was actually determined by the way the ship hit the reef on that very first day,” he says. The documents also reveal the Government got a proposal in August from Port Taranaki to fund a national offshore rapid response facility, which would have involved an emergency response tug. But they have withheld all information about it.

Workers under threat from slack regulation

The Maritime Union is warning that New Zealand workers are under threat due to lack of regulation and enforcement of standards in industry. Maritime Union General Secretary Joe Fleetwood says a lax attitude and a view that workers are expendable appears to be present in industry and Government.

Mr Fleetwood says the reality is that New Zealanders and overseas workers were being harmed in the workplace due to slack regulation. He says there are three clear examples that should be making people ask questions.

“As the inquiry for the Pike River disaster goes on, we are seeing a picture of lack of regulation and lack of responsibility in key areas. Why are we not demanding accountability at the top level?”

“The Prime Minister has said the bodies of the workers would be recovered but this had not happened.”

“The Prime Minister has stated that New Zealand mining regulations are inferior to Australia. What has he done about it, and what is he intending to do about it?”

Mr Fleetwood says the deaths of workers in the maritime industry included two as yet unexplained sinkings of overseas fishing vessels working out of New Zealand ports, the Oyang 70 and the No 1 Insung.

“Once again, the poor standards that are permitted in this industry are likely to have been a contributing factor.”

The recent grounding of the Rena should have been a further wake up call about the decline of standards in the maritime industry, but even this dramatic event had failed to cause lasting concern.

“The European Union is currently deciding whether it will even permit Filipino trained seafarers in their waters. This is not even an issue in New Zealand. Why not? Are we happy just to wait for the next incident?”

He says Maritime Union members work in the offshore oil and gas industry and would insist on high standards, but there was no confidence in the Government’s attitude.

Mr Fleetwood says the reality is workers have to take the lead and make the workplace safe.

“In the current environment, profit comes first for many employers and that has a big impact. Unless we have strong unions on the job to defend health and safety, and legislation that is backed with some teeth, then we will see more and more preventable deaths and injuries.”
A legacy of neglect

By Joe Fleetwood
General Secretary

The grounding of the Rena has created a storm of outrage and concern. The disaster has been widely reported around the world. It continues to unfold as the vessel slowly disintegrates on the Astrolabe Reef.

Many New Zealanders are confused as to who is responsible. They are confused as to how such an event could have happened. They are confused, concerned and angry about the outcomes and the response of the Government and authorities.

The issue of responsibility is important. As important as the salvage efforts are, people have a right to know why we are in this mess in the first place.

Government and authorities have been keen to show they are focussed on fixing the problem. However, the time to fix the problem was before it happened. Now at best we are getting a very rough and costly patch up job.

One issue that has suddenly gained the media spotlight is flag of convenience (FOC) shipping. Many people are shocked when they have grasped how this system operates on the New Zealand coast.

The Rena is flagged in Liberia, like thousands of other FOC vessels. Liberia, a small, war torn and impoverished nation in West Africa, makes a huge chunk of its foreign earnings from their flag of convenience registry.

In many of these flag of convenience states, there are few laws and regulations, let alone any enforcement of them. Maritime workers in New Zealand ports have seen many substandard flag of convenience ships over the years, and many serious incidents on these vessels. This is deregulation operating in a globalized free market economy, with no oversight, no responsibility and no morality.

In 2004 as part of a national campaign the Maritime Union stated “Flag of Convenience ships are notorious for their exploitation of crews and safety risks. They endanger our environment and port security, and are a threat to the future of the New Zealand maritime industry.”

The Maritime Union has called for the repeal of Section 198 of the Maritime Transport Act, and the introduction of the cabotage system where New Zealand ships were given priority to carry cargo between New Zealand ports.

Since the previous National Government introduced the so-called “open coast” policy in the 1990s, flag of convenience vessels have come to dominate New Zealand coastal shipping.

New Zealand shipping, operating under New Zealand standards, paying New Zealand taxes and employing New Zealand crews, has been decimated. There are beneficiaries from this situation. It is cheap way of doing things. But as we all know, doing things on the cheap has a funny way of ending up being more expensive in the long run.
At the same time as we are witnessing the Rena disaster, the Government is holding an inquiry into the bad practices aboard foreign charter vessels in the New Zealand fishing industry. These issues are all related. They come back to a failure to control the worst aspects of the global maritime industry from having established themselves here. The series of events leading up to the Rena grounding is unclear. However the Maritime Union is determined that blame should not be conveniently pinned on one or two ship’s officers. There needs to be an inquiry into the systemic problems in the maritime industry. Were the crew massively incompetent? If so, why could they be in control of a vessel like this on the New Zealand coast? Were the crew fatigued after working round the clock to fit in with the schedules of the charterers MSC? If so, should the company be held responsible, along with the authorities who permitted this situation? Was the vessel faulty? Were its navigational standards sufficient? It had been picked up for numerous issues both in mainland China and Australia prior to its arrival in New Zealand. Was a full inspection by Maritime New Zealand made of the vessel, given these numerous documented failings? If not, why not? Other troubling matters have been raised including the suggestion by a maritime expert that the grounding must have been deliberate. The incidents on flag of convenience vessels, including foreign charter vessels operating in the New Zealand fishing industry, make for a long and grim list. Sinkings, drownings, asphyxiations, severe injuries, physical attacks, underpayment, pollution and overfishing, abuse and exploitation are all documented throughout the maritime industry. For years the problem has been out of sight and out of mind. There were no votes to be gained from impoverished foreign crews. Complacent politicians have come and gone, and the profits kept flowing to the shipping corporations. Now we are all reaping a bitter harvest from those irresponsible decisions. The only good thing that can come of Rena is that New Zealanders now understand the serious dangers of Flag of Convenience vessels trading on the New Zealand coast.

ITF contacts crew

By Grahame MacLaren
The Rena ran aground on Astrolabe Reef off Tauranga on 5 October, spilling fuel oil and containers into the pristine environment. The Rena is a Liberian flagged, Greek owned Flag of Convenience vessel covered by an ITF TCC agreement with Greek union, the Pan-Hellenic Seamen’s Federation. The crew consisted of 23 Filipinos. With concerns for the crew’s safety I contacted the charterers MSC who were reluctant to give us any information other than the crew were all safe and well. I did eventually manage to obtain the Captain’s cell phone number, but despite many attempts I was never able to get through. Once all the crew were removed from the vessel I again contacted MSC asking for the location of the crew. The information was refused with MSC stating that as there was a court case in progress they were legally bound to keep all information regarding their whereabouts confidential. I received information from the Deacon at the Tauranga Seafarers’ Centre who told me that the crew were often at the MSC office during the week. I contacted Maritime Union Tauranga Branch Secretary Selwyn Russell who along with ITF contact Richard Rankin visited the MSC office and were able to arrange a meeting with the remaining crew.

At this stage there were only 6 of them left in the country and 4 of those were to fly out the next morning. During the meeting the crew said they had been well looked after, and at no time did they feel threatened as a backlash of the grounding, as was widely reported in the media. I asked the men by speaker phone if their wages had been paid; they told us that their allotments had gone through to their families but that they were unsure about the rest of their wages. With this in mind I contacted the Manila based manning agents responsible for paying the men’s wages. They assured me that all was above board and as per the agreement all wages owing would be paid up to the day of men’s arrival back in the Philippines. I told the manning agents that the crew had been given our phone numbers with instructions to contact us ASAP if there were any problems with wages, and if that was the case we would do whatever was in our power to rectify the situation. He again assured me there would be no problems. Selwyn and Richard report that the men were very grateful for our efforts and that New Zealanders in general had been very kind to them. The Captain and Second Mate remain in the country for the court case.

“The only good thing that can come of Rena is that New Zealanders now understand the serious dangers of Flag of Convenience vessels trading on the New Zealand coast”
Local 13

by Russell Mayn

The current industrial dispute at Ports of Auckland is covered elsewhere in this edition of the Maritimes. Progress is being made elsewhere, including:

Local 13 Collective Agreements ratified and signed off
- C3 Tauranga.
- Ballance Fertilizers.
- Van Oord (Pelican Dredge)
- Sea Crew (Cement Tug and Barge)
- PB Sea Tow (Awanuia)
- Winstone’s Aggregates
- Wallace Investments

Ratified and awaiting signing off
- Fullers Marine
- ASCO Stevedoring
- Sanford’s Electrical
- Comvita

Finalised and awaiting Ratification
- Golden Bay
- Holcim Cement

Negotiating
- UCL
- Sea Tow International
- Kaipara Towboats
- Silver Fern Shipping
- Pacifica Shipping

Waiting Negotiation, bargaining initiated:
- First Security
- Discovery 360
- C3 Auckland

As you can see we have a number of Collective Agreements under negotiation, some are close to ratification whilst others are still at the early stages of talks. Two new Collectives are waiting for negotiations to commence, and we are having trouble just getting these companies to the table let alone reaching an agreement.

The average settlement is ranging between 3–4% and when you take into account extra terms and conditions we believe that we are settling our agreement well above the average in the workplace.

The real challenge is to match inflation and whilst we have managed this in some of the settlements, this is proving to be difficult in some areas where companies are under pressure to renew contracts. It would be accurate to say that the Stevedoring Sector is proving to be a greater challenge than the Marine Sector.

Legal cases
Currently Local 13 have a number of legal cases running, most of these are with the Ports of Auckland who have an aggressive strategy to dismiss and leave it up to the Union to fight for re-instatement. Whilst this is nothing new it is disappointing as we experienced a period where both parties stayed away from using the legal process and settled grievances out of the court room.

Local Elections
Elections for the Dockers on the Local 13 Executive took place in November, this also includes the Vice Presidents position.

Growth and Solidarity
The amalgamation of Whangarei with Local 13 has been a real success to date and the Whangarei Branch of Local 13 attends all monthly executive meetings. It is pleasing to report that we are now starting to experience growth in the Whangarei Branch for the first time in a number of years. Regular visits from the officials to the Port of Whangarei have assisted the membership. Congratulations to Ben Hathaway and John Farrow for the work that they have accomplished in the port.

Organising
Local 13 have been focusing on growing the membership and bringing everyone working in our industry into the union. If we are to survive and grow there is no other option.

Political
With the General Election we worked closely with the Labour Party and the CTU in the campaign to elect a Labour led Government. The membership has responded in a very positive manner and in the majority of the electorates we have members working on the ground to support candidates. This has varied from walking the streets delivering pamphlets to erecting political hoardings.

The amalgamation between the Auckland Seafarers and Dockers is now approaching year three and in 2012 elections will take place at large for all positions in the Local. The challenge is make sure that all sectors within Local 13 are catered for. This sounds easier than it may prove in practice but the key here is to adopt a principled approach that protects everyone’s interests and takes into account the different demographics that exist. As we are all unionists and demand fair and reasonable treatment from our employers the result must be that we pass this test with flying colours and cement in stone the spirit that has been in place to date.
On the campaign trail 2011: Labour candidate Jerome Mika, MUNZ National President Garry Parsloe, Labour MP Phil Twyford, and MUNZ National Vice President Carl Findlay

Maritime Union of New Zealand Local 13 picket the Ports of Auckland, December 2011
**Lyttelton**

*by Les Wells*

**Agreements**

Lyttelton is going through a busy period at the moment with men coming into Port from both C3 Limited and LSS. Pacifica seems to be handling more cargo.

In the last few weeks we have settled Lyttelton Port Company agreement, this is for a 3 year term.

We have also settled the Pacifica agreement with the men getting 3% wage increase plus 3% on all allowances.

We have initiated bargaining on C3.

LSS contract has expired so it is just a matter of time before we sit down to talk.

**Earthquake**

Since the February earthquake we have not been able to use our office.

The frustrating part is we are not able to do repairs to the building as we are still in the white zone and until things change and the shakes stop happening it may be 2021 if we are lucky.

All jokes aside when you look around Lyttelton it is very depressing to see what has been destroyed.

I read in the paper the other day that LPC could have the biggest insurance claim in the Southern Hemisphere.

This indicates the damage done to the Port itself.

The Company’s October newsletter stated that the Coal loader had been able to move for the first time since February. It did not go a long way but it is a major achievement just to get it going again.

The Sumner Road is still closed. I believe that the major concern is with unstable land above the road, and there was also talk it may never open again.

I could write page after page about the earthquake and the damage but I would rather close on a more positive note on the strength and solidarity of our members.

They have conducted themselves through the last few months, and they have all worked under adverse conditions both at work and home.

It seems that every company has a member or sometimes more who have lost their house or suffered serious damage. These members still turn up to do their work day after day.

In closing, Lyttelton would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

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**A thank you from New Zealand outdoor bowls rep Angela Boyd**

**MUNZ Nelson Branch members campaign against asset sales, November 2011**

Dear Mr Fleetwood,

I am writing to thank you and your executive very much for your sponsorship which enabled me to travel to Malaysia to play outdoor bowls for New Zealand.

Overall the New Zealand team got bronze in the triples and players qualified for other events. We are happy with our overall performance.

We had to adjust very quickly to the different conditions as the green was running slower than in New Zealand.

In the singles event I was in a group of six. Only the top three qualified for the main event. I finished second top qualifier which was one of my main goals.

However I was beaten by a top world ranked player. I was very happy with my performance.

In the pairs event we nearly qualified for the main event but lost to India in the last round.

Please find enclosed a photo I took while I was at the event. Once again many thanks for your generosity.

Regards

Angela Boyd

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Angela Boyd, daughter of Napier Branch MUNZ member Doug Boyd, competed for New Zealand in outdoor bowls in Malaysia, 2011.
Napier

By Bill Connelly

Around and about

Last quarter I mentioned that we were about to welcome the first tourist vessel to arrive in the port. It seems that this is a growing business with seventy four vessels due over the spring and summer months, with some 112,000 passengers and 48,000 crew members. The Port of Napier has won the “Spirit of Napier” award for proactive development and promotion of cruise ship visits, enhancing Napier’s profile and contributing significantly to the tourism trade. A pity that the economy and exports have not followed suit, otherwise we would see our ranks grow considerably and unemployment rates drop.

C3: Formerly Toll Logistics New Zealand Limited

Negotiations for a new Collective Agreement are in place until June 2013. This was a bit of a long winded exercise, but one that has been completed to the satisfaction of both parties. All increases have been back paid to our members until 1 January this year.

Hawke’s Bay Stevedoring Services Limited

We have been through a restructuring process, which has seen three of our permanent workers take a voluntary severance package. Ricky Cavanagh left on 11 September and Nathan Owen left a week later. Matthew Hardgrave left on 14 August 2011. The Branch would like to take this opportunity to wish all three the best in their future endeavours. The Branch would also like to thank the General Secretary for his input and guidance during the restructuring process.

Kelcold Limited

This agreement has now been settled after a long period of negotiations. A new Collective Agreement is in place until August 2013.

Angela Boyd

This young lady is a daughter of one of our long standing members Doug Boyd. She has just competed in an outdoor bowls team in Malaysia as a New Zealand representative. The New Zealand team achieved a bronze medal in the triples and Angela finished second top qualifier in the singles, which was one of her main goals, however she was beaten by a top ranked world player, so she was more that happy with her performance.

Angela has written to both the General Secretary and the Branch thanking them for their sponsorship, which enabled her to compete in such a prestigious tournament.

World Cup

Well we won the cup, so now the “All Blacks” and “New Zealand” flags are now off my car, but have been replaced with “Labour” flags. If we don’t win this one, all workers will be in for a tough three years, encouraging your mates and family members to get out and vote Labour will certainly help. We are the Champions of the World!

AGM and Christmas Function

We held our Annual General meeting on 11 November 2011. The General Secretary was booked to attend, but at the last minute had to cancel due to a minor health problem. Stuart Nash, our local list Member of Parliament addressed the meeting and made it clear that another three years of this government could see the demise of the Union movement as we know it. The membership were appreciative of Stuart’s comments and our President, Bruce Winkley presented him with a cheque for $1,000.00 from the Branch to assist with his campaign funds for the seat of Napier. After the meeting a Christmas function was held in the Napier Cosmopolitan Club, which was the second one for the year as we had also had a get together in August this year to make up for the one we missed last year due to shipping commitments.

As this is the last issue of the Maritimes for the year, the Napier Branch would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families all the best for the festive season and a prosperous 2012.

Gisborne

By Dein Ferris

The Branch has concluded negotiations for our collective contract, in which we received a moderate increase for both the permanent members and our casuals. With no other changes the contract has been rolled over for two years. We have been transferring to Wellington to load the Nisso Iwai vessels and have taken the two Wellington members back to Gisborne to assist. These transfers have been a bonus as far as we are concerned, providing members with an increase in their income and cutting down idle time. We are now looking forward to a successful squash season. The Port is still flat out in the log trade. ISO handles this product. The logyards are slowly being sealed. This is supposedly to help alleviate the dust problem, however, I have heard that all logs going to China have to be fumigated within the next couple of years, hence the hard surface. Methyl Bromide will undoubtedly be used.

The Branch has had one permanent resign, we now have 12 permanents. All have successfully completed the company’s deck and hazardous goods courses.
Wellington

by Mike Clark (Secretary) and John Whiting (Assistant Secretary)

General Election

With the National Elections over for the next three years we can expect more attacks on workers’ rights and modification of the Employment Relations Act to further hinder harmony in the workplace. It was unfortunate low numbers of eligible voters turned out on Election Day and it confirms the harsh reality that working class wage and salary earners in New Zealand aren’t particularly interested in their futures. It appears this is evident from the Election results with a total of 3,053,705 people registered to vote and only 2.2 million actually voting. This turnout of 73.19% was the lowest since 1887. The results were National 60 seats and Labour 34, Greens 13, NZ First 8, Maori Party 2, ACT, Mana, United Future all 1 seat each, a total of 121.

Oil and gas

We are experiencing an increase in work in the oil and gas exploration in New Zealand and Australia. This is providing short term employment opportunities for our members but as in the past it will only probably last until the end of summer. Hopefully, we can then rely on our Australian comrades to have more work available.

Local collectives

On of the local scene two collectives have been resolved one with Strait Shipping Terminal staff and one with SGS who work on the wharves bunkering and discharging and loading tankers, the latter has been a long and drawn out affair but a satisfactory outcome achieved.

Aratere

Kiwirail seemed to have overcome the technical issues that have plagued the Aratere since its arrival back from its refit in Singapore. This has resulted in many frustrations for the crews, management and the travelling public. The logistics in a project of this size were always going to be a challenge but hopefully these are now behind us and the crews can get on and do what they do best and that is move cargo and passengers safely and efficiently across the Strait.

Monte Stella

Strait Shipping leased the Monte Stella to Interislander for the duration of the Aratere’s absence. The Monte Stella has now been sold to overseas buyers and if it is due to leave New Zealand shortly.

CentrePort Drug and Alcohol Policy

CentrePort implemented random drug and alcohol testing from 1 November 2011. The random drug test will be done by saliva sampling and will apply to all Company personnel including apparently the board of directors. The selection for testing will be via a personal number system implemented by testing provider, O.K. Health. We have been unsuccessful in amending the testing regimes for post accident incident tests and obvious impairment tests. These will remain as per current policy, i.e. urine testing. What has not helped us during the ongoing discussions about random testing has been the fact that four positive post-accident drug tests over 11 months has hardened up the Company’s stance on the whole matter. We believe that it is critical that our members employed by CentrePort give serious thought as to how their choices about recreational drug use can impact on their employment and income security.

Strait Shipping - Picton Terminal Collective Agreement

We commenced negotiations in Picton for this group of our members who work in key roles at Strait Shipping dealing with the travelling public and working demanding hours necessitated by the Cook Strait ferry schedules. These negotiations have now been successfully concluded.

SGS Collective Agreement

This group of members are recent arrivals with us, having transferred across from the National Distribution Union by agreement. Their work roles are key ones connected with a multiplicity of products discharging from tankers at several berths around Wellington harbour and also work associated with bunkering ships including the Cook Strait ferries. These negotiations have now been successfully concluded as well.

Disciplinary Processes

The use of structured disciplinary processes on our members is increasing at a rapid rate. In fact, the larger employers appear to be creating ever larger teams of HR people to deal, in large part, with disciplinary hearings.
This projection of employer power is taking up an ever increasing amount of our time and resources. Our members will need to give serious consideration that continuing to follow indefensible practices will make avoiding severe disciplinary outcomes harder and harder to achieve.

Wellington Port Coldstores
This agreement has been renewed for a one year term with satisfactory wage increases. This operation, now owned jointly by Port Company, CentrePort, and local meat processors, Taylor Preston appears to be operating on a steady state basis.

Christmas Wishes
On behalf of the Wellington Executive we would like to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We hope you all have a safe and relaxing holiday season.
First and foremost, I would like to thank the Wellington Branch Executive, and the September 2011 Wellington Branch Stop Work meeting for allowing me to attend the Mining and Maritime International Conference held in Durban, South Africa. Also a special thanks to Mike Clark and Joe Fleetwood for their support and guidance throughout the conference. I met a lot of great people from all over the world, and I was totally fascinated and intrigued to hear some of their stories, some good, and some not so good. But the common thread was all unions at this conference consistently shared the same issues, and that is the constant battles, and lobbying their respective governments and employers on a day to day basis to fight for the rights of their fellow members and workers. The night I arrived at the hotel I switched on the TV, and the first thing I saw was news headlines reporting thousands of mine, construction and energy workers were the next day going to down tools to observe a day of mourning. They were to present a memorandum to the representatives of the Chamber of Mines, the Department of Labour, the Department of Mineral Resources, the South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC) and ESKOM over the increasing number of fatalities in their respective industries. So it was apt that I watched this item on the eve of the Mining and Maritime Conference.

Day One – Tuesday 4 October

The first day included the registration of delegates, and a chance to meet people from near and afar. This was a great opportunity to spread a few yarns, get to know a little about our comrades, their way of life, and their struggles. It was also an opportunity for us to convey information about our country,
the Pike River mining disaster: the families of the 29 persons perished in conference delegates to form support for presentation a resolution was put to the This was very informative. After the presentation. Assistant National Secretary River and the need for international concern. The keynote speaker was Deputy General Secretary Manfred Warda was one of many keynote speakers at the conference. Both leaders gave the assurance of the ICEM’s support for the initiative’s solidarity campaigns and programmes. There was a wide range of topics which included an overview on the mining and maritime industry worldwide, case studies of Grupo Mexico, the Rio Tinto Boron Dispute and the Trans Tasman Oil and Gas Alliance. MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood and National Vice President of the Australian Workers’ Union (AWU) Scott McDine gave a presentation on the Trans Tasman Oil and Gas Alliance, which was followed by a discussion and debate from the conference delegation. One of the highlights of the conference concerned the Mining Disaster at Pike River and the need for international support. Assistant National Secretary of the EPMU, Ged O’Connell, gave this presentation. This was very informative. After the presentation a resolution was put to the conference delegates to form support for the families of the 29 persons perished in the Pike River mining disaster:

That the Conference of Mining & Maritime Unions, First - extended their sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of the 29 miners whose bodies remain entombed in the Pike River Colliery in New Zealand following the disaster on 19 November 2010. Second – that the conference offered their full support to the understandable demands of the families of the deceased miners that a satisfactory plan be developed to recover the bodies of those miners.

Third – that this meeting declared that a failure by either the current administrators or the Government of New Zealand to ensure the recovery of the bodies from the mine will mean the unions present at this conference will initiate a global campaign aimed at forcing such a recovery. International trade unions have confirmed their full support for the need to recover the bodies of the 29 men who died at Pike River coal mine last November. The Maritime and Mining Conference unanimously passed a resolution on Pike River which included a pledge to launch a global campaign to force a recovery should this not be forthcoming by the mine’s receivers or, if sold to the new owners. All conference delegates were steadfast that there had to be a workable recovery plan in place if the mine was to be sold. International unions were saying the recovery must be an absolute priority and they want to see this being actively pursued as part of on-going operations, now and in the future should new owners take over Pike River.

Finally, the EPMU said it would send a copy of the conference resolution to Pike River Coal’s receivers, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Day Three – Thursday 6 October
The day included workshops where Trade Unions from various parts of the world broke off into regions to deal with issues specifically to their areas. Our group consisted of MUA, MUNZ, and EPMU. The theme topic was Oil and Gas in the Pacific region. Mick Doleman was our chairman, with Anne Gray as our spokesperson for a brief presentation. ICEM Mining Officer Glen Mpufane gave a presentation on the state of the current global extractive resources industries, which was well received by the conference delegates. The Chairperson of the Initiative, Mick Doleman, recognized the presentation as an invaluable resource for the Mining and Maritime.

The conference closed at 1315 hours. In closing, the trip to Durban was a fantastic experience, and one I will never forget. Once again, thank you to the Wellington Branch for allowing me to attend this conference.
Two Bosuns retire in one month
by Tony Mowbray
#1154 Kaitaki

After 50 years membership firstly the Federated Seaman’s Union of New Zealand, then the New Zealand Seamen’s Union, the New Zealand Seafarers’ Union and finally the Maritime Union of New Zealand, Alex MacDonald is finally calling it a day.
Alex attended the Prince of Wales Sea School and from there joined his first ship, the Orient Lines “Orion” in June 1957. He came out to New Zealand in 1961. In all he has had a total of 54 ½ years continuous sea service – over half a century.
At the time of his retirement Alex was the Bosun of the Kaitaki “A” gang, being on the delivery run to her subsequent service on Cook Strait since August 2005. From all of us onboard, Alex we wish you all the best for your retirement.
On the same note, on the same ship and from the same gang, the Night Bosun Dennis Ivil also retired two cycles beforehand.
Dennis started as a Vindi boy and joined Interislander on the fast ferries in 2000, calling it a day on the Kaitaki in November 2011. All the best to you also Dennis.

Whangarei
By Ben Hathaway

The port is very busy with logs but not worked by union members. Union wise we have been very active with Kiwifruit, Triboard and Fertilizer.
We seem to have an over abundance of stevedoring companies all vying for diminishing breakbulk cargo and using non union labour which is a major concern.
We are ever optimistic due to the continuing development of the port.

Timaru
By Tony Townshend

Southern Cross Stevedores have been working fish boats and fertilizer in Timaru, and have been working in Lyttelton and Port Chalmers on logs. ISO have been regularly working over the last few months on log ships which is a concern as always.

Maritime Union of New Zealand national executive and observers, Waterside House, Wellington, 2 November 2011
New Plymouth

By Tansley Ratapu

During this term, there has been much activity happening around our port in New Plymouth.

Our branch elections/AGM was held in November and the re-elected officers are: President: Mark Larkin, Vice President: Tansley Ratapu, Secretary: Terry Whitehead, Executive member: Graham Roberts.

Containers
29 July 2011 was the last entry for a Maersk ship in Port Taranaki. All arrows pointed towards Fonterra’s outlet in Whareoaa south of Hawera, where two thirds of its product is now railed to Ports of Auckland and Tauranga. Partly thanks to the National Government’s rail subsidy, this has resulted in the loss of a considerable amount of local trade, who now find alternative methods of transporting their goods.

In 2005 Westgate (Port Taranaki) invested in crane and container handling facilities, and output increased sharply to 51,000 units.

In 2009 Fonterra dumped Port Taranaki as part of the export hub for South East Asia, and numbers reduced to 38,000 that year. The forecast for this financial year is to be fewer than 15,000 containers.

MSC ships are the only shipping line running a direct Trans-Tasman service out of Port Taranaki, with only three container vessels making the call to our port.

They are the Spirit of Resolution, the MSC Merkur Sky and Conti Harmony. A letter to the editor of our local newspaper by our Company production manager Shane Parker was published, focusing on the effects of this decision on the wider community and the profitability of the local council, given the fact that rate payers own Port Taranaki.

Bulk cargo
It appears the loss of container trade is now being balanced with an increase in logging and bulk cargos.

Bulk dry imports (animal feeds) have increased 30%, in comparison with a estimated 70% decrease in container volumes.

Logging and bulk cargos are expected to have gains in the coming forecast for the end of this financial year 2011.

Heavy lifts and project cargos for rigs and power station movements have been irregular.

Mid November saw the loading of a 650 tonne accommodation module bound for Australia’s Bass Strait. This is the heaviest load ever transported on New Plymouth and Taranaki roads.

The highlight for New Plymouth Stevedoring Services during this term has been the securing of the Raynor Log Contract which we submitted for along with ISO.

NPSS was more competitive than ISO and succeeded in gaining the contract, a proud achievement for the company.

Health and Safety
Health and safety appointments have been given to two of our New Plymouth Branch Members, our current branch secretary Terry Whitehead and permanent worker Manu Hobson.

While on the subject of Health and Safety all permanent members of our New Plymouth Branch completed the NZQA Stevedoring course in October.

This covers forklift training, deck and crane assessments, but the certification is valid only in New Zealand.

Oil and Gas industry
As you may have read in last month’s Shipping Gazette, the drill ship Noble Discover had been in port for repairs, due to severe weather conditions off the Taranaki coast back in May.

It sailed for dry docking in Brisbane, but is due back in port on 20 December, when it will resume drilling on Ruru 1 Well of the Maui Gas Field.

The well had to be abandoned in May so no tenders were needed for this trip, but December excursions will hopefully change that, with a positive outcome.

Watch this space.

Programmed Total Marine Services (formerly Wendell’s) and local company ETL Offshore Services continue to have steady operations on tender boats, with both having contracts and both utilizing Port Taranaki services.

The addition of another permanent and possible two day contractor, as well as increased casual numbers has become a necessity with the increase of bulk dry goods.

The Oil and Gas industry in Taranaki has again exceeded port expectations.

Oil and gas industry related exports had grown from 1.8 million tonnes in 2006 to more then 3 million tonnes in 2010, with the industry seeing a surge in offshore servicing work.

The Tui oil field operated by company AWE has concluded that a reduction in supply means the field would become uneconomic for production from 2019-2020.

AWE continued to survey North Taranaki waters in search of potential wells and gas fields. The gas leak off White Cliffs has been resolved.

Interport transfers
Interport work has been quiet this term, however a trip to Bluff in August proved to be a profitable one. Us Taranakians enjoy working in Bluff, but taking home the Ranfurly Shield off Southland was a bonus, cheers Bluffys.

Merchant Navy Day
On 2 September I attended the Merchant Navy Day held at the New Plymouth District Council Chambers.

This event was well supported by local dignitaries, Naval Officers, the Mayor, Past Labour MP Harry Duynhoven, councillors and local party candidates.

Of note was the speech given by Senior Merchant Navy Association member Bob Gibson who spoke of the battle of the Atlantic Ocean and how during the World War periods 38,000 Merchant Navy Seamen lost their lives and perished.

I also introduced myself to local Labour Party candidate Andrew Little at council chambers. He offered his services and availability to our MUNZ organization.

Free trade
My “red card” to the Rt Hon John Key dated 19 July 2011 regarding the free trade Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, was referred to the Minister of Trade, National MP Hon Tim Groser, who sent me a letter in regard to the TPP negotiations.

Their view on it is NO CHANGE. He stipulates that with any other trade agreement, the final TPP deal will go through the full Parliamentary treaty examination process before it is ratified by New Zealand.

Other branch activities
All company books and current finances are up to date, and currently undergoing audits, due to a change in accountants from Warwick Williams to Jason Evans. Medical and health schemes are running smoothly and our old timers are being looked after.

www.munz.org.nz
Restructuring

Recently the terminal has undergone restructuring which saw around 16 people leave or retire and fortunately there were no forced redundancies. As usual, the cargo handlers are the people targeted when the company is not going well, and our union has asked that the company have a look at other areas such as management. These are the people who are trusted to get the work and to continually go to the people who are providing an excellent service on the job is causing our members to question the company’s “oiling the cogs” campaign. It has a strong effect on team work as during restructuring it seems only one part of the team is affected by it – the cargo handlers. Then management wonder why we will not take to “oiling the cogs”. Of the 16 some have moved to other work and some have decided to retire and these people will leave a large hole to fill as their experience cannot be replaced overnight. John Pearce, Dick Markham, Rodger Paul, Russel Smith, and Ian Quarrell have over 150 years in the industry and have served our union well. All have special skills that the company will sorely miss and through their time on the waterfront all have seen many changes over the years. As they go into a well deserved retirement they will go safe in the knowledge that they leave the union in good shape and our union thanks them very much for their contribution.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Random testing will take place in Port Otago from 9 January 2012 and it will be urine testing. The company had wished to start in November 2011 but our branch sought an extension as we were not happy about urine testing but have now decided that our branch need to play a part in making the terminal a safe place to work in and believe by agreeing to this it will make our workplace safer.

Harbour Cold

We are currently working with our legal people to try and put together a collective agreement for the lads who work at Harbour Cold and hopefully this will be put in place early next year. Hamish Bannister is doing a fine job as delegate for those members there.

Veterans

Recently we had a meeting of the retired members to form an executive and this was well attended. The meeting was very positive and the calibre of those present with their wealth of experience will see the veterans becoming an integral part of our union. Judging by the members joining it will be great for our union as although retired they still feel they want to contribute and we are very grateful for this. Speaking of retired members, we wish retired member Trevor Crammond all the best as Trevor recovers from a recent illness.

Xmas social

The annual Xmas social was held at the Chisholm Park Golf Club on 26 November and was a good night. Our Xmas kids’ party will be held on 10 December at the Harbour Rugby club which should be a good day for all the kids of our members. The annual retired members and union shout will be held in the WIC bureau on Friday 9 December at 1600. This is a great opportunity for retired and current members to meet and have a drink together.

Finally as we move into another year we note we have lost a lot of experience through members retiring. Their skills will be missed but also their union ethics which have been gained over the many years they were members as our union. We need to look to the past for guidance as the past is why we are seen as probably the most successful united union in the country. We do not take a backwards step and we are always prepared to fight for whatever we believe in, and we should never lose that ability as most other unions look to us as the strength in the New Zealand union movement.
**Tauranga Mount Maunganui**

**By Salwyn Russell**

**C3**
This agreement was a stop start affair and was ratified on 11 May 2011. The union is negotiating a random alcohol and drug testing system based on saliva. This is an ongoing discussion.

**Wilson Parking**
These guys got 5.3% and are happy with that, but they are worried that the Council may intend to automate the system and we could lose some jobs in the future there.

**Ballance**
Finally signed off but some issues with back pay to be resolved.

**Te Manu Tora**
This is a Maori Hauora outfit that have a current wage freeze on there. However they offered 1% to all members, but they recognise the receptionist who will get an instant $1 per hour increase, and they have also stated they will allocate a company car to the relieving assistant.

**NZL**
The NZL group have done an out of court settlement and will not be returning to wharf operations. The company was taking the company’s portion of the Kiwisaver contribution out of the rate, without agreement. This is being followed up.

**Rena**
Following the Rena disaster we have been quite busy trying to push our views to the front. We have had many media interviews and I have been to some of the Marae meetings too. The people out there are outraged at the pathetic response, and we can all feel extremely lucky that the weather is holding. The Filipino crew on the Pencaldo who are bringing the containers ashore are chartered to ISS Mackay Limited, and the containers will be placed at the NZL yard. At both of these places we have nearly full membership.

**Kiwifruit**
It looks like our national president has got a commitment to address the issue of ITF affiliated unions doing the kiwifruit work. With the expected downturn in the industry and more PSA plant disease being seen on all vines, it is not looking too good in this area.

**Waterfront Reunion**
This was a great day, but we ask people who say they are going to turn up to do so, as there was a shortfall in confirmed attendance. However it was good to see all the old wharfies.

**Merchant Navy Day**
Although it was a sunny day it was blowing a gale, but quite a lot of people were there. It was with warm rememberance for those merchant seamen who suffered that terrible time for the living today. Joe Briggs and Jimmy Rosser should be commended for their contribution in making it a great day.

**Regionalization**
The branch executive all endorse this and look forward to working more closely under the umbrella of regionalization and with the continued assistance from Local 13.

**AGM**
Our AGM and elections will be held in December.

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**Bluff**

**by Harry Holland**

Kia ora from the Bluff. The log trade has recently declined slightly. This has had a slight effect on the shipping, and some of our men think this is a good time to do the lawns.

Southland Stevedoring is at present interviewing men for new positions with the company. It is hoped they’ll take on between 4 or 6 new members which is long overdue. The men will start on a 24 over 7 until full time positions become available.

Also SouthPort (our port company) has just taken on three more men for warehousing duties.

Seven of our members went to the CTU meeting held in Invercargill which was chaired by Helen Kelly. Speakers were Leslie Soper from the Labour Party and a Green Party speaker. It was an interesting night.

Both agreements (South Port and Southland Stevedores) ran out in November this year so it looks like a interesting time ahead for the delegates coming up. It was very disappointing to hear the news of the Rena running aground up near Tauranga. On behalf of the executive, we wish you and all your families a great Christmas and a very happy and safe New Year.
UNION HISTORY

Seamen in frontline of battle against apartheid

By Hector Thorpe
MUNZ 3111

Reading the article ‘The Tour 30 years on’ in the last copy of the Maritimes reminded me of an unsigned Seamen’s Journal article published in 1995 called ‘Wrongs are righted, workers are slighted.’ As Dave Morgan was National President at the time, I assumed the article was written by him.

It contained a brief summary of the facts pertaining to the union’s struggle against apartheid in South Africa, including actions faced by him, challenges faced by earlier officials and a snubbing of trade unions at the New Zealand state luncheon for Nelson Mandela.

I kept the article as a personal record of our union’s anti apartheid struggle. I had also found the circumstance surrounding the manning of the Oil Tanker Athelviscount intriguing, as I had sailed on her in 1977. However, I was unaware of the dilemma faced when she had been picked up at Durban in 1965.

Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was in Auckland in 1995 to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. Mandela personified the long, hard struggle against apartheid and eventual victory, and he was attracting more interest at the time than the Queen.

But of the two hundred and seventy people invited to attend the State luncheon for Mandela nobody was there to represent a trade union.

Although we were not a dedicated anti apartheid organization our union had struggled against apartheid dating a long time before groups like HART and CARE came onto the scene in the 1960’s to make their massive contribution.

It took a long time for this message to sink in, as the NZRFU continued to dance to the apartheid tune for another forty years.

Sharpeville killings

In 1960 when the South African police opened fire on peaceful demonstrators at Sharpeville, killing sixty seven and wounding two hundred, it caused worldwide revulsion resulting in South Africa leaving the Commonwealth.

For years afterwards, we regularly marked Sharpeville Day with 24-hour stoppages. Many unions passed resolutions, however only the seamen were willing to do in a day’s pay to show our solidarity with their class comrades in South Africa.

Why did seamen embrace this cause so passionately? The answer is simple: they were internationalists. Many had experienced apartheid at first hand in South Africa. But mainly as a group of New Zealand workers they were directly touched by apartheid in their industry in New Zealand.

Coastal Tanker dilemma

In the mid 1960’s coastal tankers were introduced to New Zealand. One of the first dedicated Kiwi-manned coastal tankers was the Athelviscount, which was to be taken over at Durban. Through the normal system of engagement at that time, two Maori and one Pacific Islander were in line to join her.

However, the South African authorities refused to issue visas for these seamen of the “wrong” colour, and to its eternal shame our union at the time went along with this.
What they did was send the two Maori and one Pacific Islander to Port Abadan, Iran. An all-white union crew went to South Africa to man the Athelviscount, then took her to the Persian Gulf, picking up their crew mates while loading cargo and returning to New Zealand.

To their eternal credit the union decided this should never happen again: and it never did.

Growing political consciousness of how the colour bar was being used to divide workers worldwide was reflected in later policies.

The Seamen’s Union was second to none in the fight against apartheid internationally.

South African Congress of Trade Unions

In 1972 our union co-sponsored a visit to New Zealand by John Gaetsewe, secretary of the illegal South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), then living in exile in London.

That year our executive recommended that instead of having a Sharpville Day stoppage, we should donate a day’s pay to SACTU. This was agreed to by members, of whom we had two thousand two hundred at the time. Our union was able to record proudly that there was not a single defaulter.

Later, in an even more brilliant move the union affiliated to SACTU in exile and thus through the capitation made a continuing financial commitment. A future visitor from SACTU, Zola Zembe was to compliment the union for the political alignment and declaration of support for South African workers this affiliation declared.

No Maori No Tour

From 1960 on the No Maori No Tour campaign gained momentum. Trade unionists were among its prominent leaders. They were able to introduce strong class content into what could otherwise have been a liberal human rights effort.

Seamen were in the forefront in many battles. They regularly walked off ships and joined in local protest against visiting Springbok teams, as did our colleagues in Australian ports in 1973.

1981

During the National government’s endorsed Springbok Tour of 1981 New Zealand became an armed camp with barbed wire around playing fields and police in riot gear. Seamen were out in big numbers in every centre, along with other unionists. Seafarers took strike action in every main centre on the day of each test.

In Wellington about two hundred seamen assembled at the Overseas Passenger Terminal and marched in body to the Queen Victoria statue on Cambridge Terrace to join the main march of at least three thousand. The original thirty protesters of 1949 had multiplied by at least one hundredfold.

A lot of middle-class people at that time thought it was smart to go out of their way to get themselves arrested. It was something to boast about, and they were in jobs where their absence for a day or two wouldn’t be noticed.

Workers took a different, class-oriented view. They knew what it was to lose pay, and to have a court conviction against them.

Even more to the point, they knew quite well that you can’t do much organizing or effective battling from inside a jail cell.

ITF

Our people were among the hardest fighters in the anti apartheid cause. When do they get the medal for that? The answer is that they never will. And they never expected one. They did it because they knew what they were doing was right.

And so did all our members when they did in a day’s pay to protest the atrocity of Sharpeville. Seamen (or Seafarers since 1989) have continued to support the rebuilding of South Africa on non-racist lines, by direct aid to the trade unions and by helping with administration through the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) South Africa Fund.

They didn’t care a damn

A few short years ago, the very people who laid out the red carpet for Nelson Mandela and sat down to eat with him would have told you straight to your face that they didn’t care a damn if he spent the rest of his life in the slammer.

Did you ever hear of a politician or a newspaper here that can match the effort that our union made in the past or what it is doing today?

The newspapers now write about human rights in South Africa, the United States and elsewhere as if they invented them. Where did they stand, all those good folk invited to the State luncheon and dinner, when the real battles were being fought?
NO SELF LOADING BY CREWS

Dockworkers’ work is done by dockworkers . . .
Seafarers’ work is done by seafarers . . .
IT’S THAT SIMPLE.