



MARITIME ALERT

Ports of Auckland dispute update 10 May 2013

The negotiations between POAL and MUNZ for a new collective agreement have now been taking place for 18 months. For MUNZ the most significant issue standing in the way of a settlement is the company's insistence on implementing the roster agreed to by Port Pro despite advice from safety experts that they are unsafe and that the workplace management culture is antithetical to developing consultative workplace safety practices with the union.

MUNZ offers of flexibility on the rosters consistently rejected by POAL.

The Port Company are not interested in settling the outstanding issue of the rosters unless they get exactly what is in place for the Port Pro contract. MUNZ members have consistently argued that maintaining fairness and predictability in the rosters and preserving some time with their families are their primary concerns. At the same time the rosters need to meet the health and safety test. MUNZ have offered to go to mediation to agree to an interim roster while the Fatigue Risk Management Program (FRMP) process is conducted but the company too has rejected this. Throughout the negotiations MUNZ have presented a number of roster variations that allow very flexible work rosters but the company has rejected each of them. MUNZ position remains that they cannot settle the contract while the issue of the rosters is unresolved.



Safety expert considers POAL rosters unsafe.

In her sworn affidavit to the employment court Dr Suzanne Callaghan, who has PhD's in both medicine and psychology. She is a widely recognised workplace safety expert who has given evidence at the Pike River enquiry. It is her assessment that the roster proposed by POAL are unsafe and that the POAL workplace is characterized by acrimony and distrust and very high risk. She is critical of POAL management's approach to safety and states that "I have been surprised at the lack of understanding of fatigue evidenced by POAL management, who tend to be dismissive of health and safety concerns in my experience" Further she argues in her affidavit that the recommendation of the facilitator are of concern to her.

"I do not consider the Authority recommendations to be safe to implement in these circumstances. The broad principles of shift scheduling and the production of rosters, should be part of a FRMP and should not be put in place before this work is done"

She argues that instead of the proposed POAL roster that a FRMP should be undertaken as "the only way that these (and other workers) can be sure that the health and safety risks they face from fatigue have been controlled by all practicable steps."

Garry Parsloe
National President