

Unite security news

#1 – August 2009

Kia ora everyone,

Welcome to this first Unite Union newsletter about New Zealand's security industry. We hope it will be the first in a regular series from the union.

We hope it will be widely read and encourage YOU to join and be an active part of a union which aims to work for significant improvements in pay and conditions of work for security officers.

All of us know that security work is very important but is poorly paid with often long and unsociable hours of work.

Please read and enjoy this newsletter and pass it on to your colleagues.

Warm regards,

Barry Sutherland, Security Organiser

CEA Negotiations

Little on offer from security bosses

First Security:

Prison Escort and Court Security Guards (PECS) – Negotiations are well underway with the guards meeting and rejecting the company offer. Guards are now considering their options. Currently we are waiting to find out if First Security has been awarded the on-going contract with the Corrections Department. We expect the company to know by the end of August. (The current contract First Security has with Corrections for Auckland/Northland expires on 31 January 2010)

Guard Services - We have initiated bargaining and the guards are meeting in three centres to discuss claims for this national contract negotiations. Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland are the centres involved. (Note: Last year a short strike by First Security patrol guards in Auckland secured the first collective agreement Unite Union has with the company. As far as we know it was the first strike in security in more than 15 years)

Armourguard:

Guards - Negotiations are well underway and guards have met and rejected the 0% pay offer for guards. Our members are angry with the shabby way they are being treated by the company. Despite these guards being employed on minimal rates of pay and struggling to make ends meet the company has been unmoved.

Despatch - Negotiations are concluded and most members will receive an increase through the contract. A ratification meeting has been organised.

Cash Handling - Members have met to discuss a company offer and a ratification meeting has been organised.

ADT Monitoring Centre:

Negotiations are underway with members rejecting the company offer and voting for action to gain wider support for their claim. The company wants to claw back payment for breaks across the shifts and its pay

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offer would see most members standing still this year.

ICON Security:

We have initiated bargaining and members are shortly to meet to discuss claims.

Unitec:

The polytech wants to move the staff on to rotating rosters over seven days despite the current 40-hours over five days and separate weekend roster working well for members and providing the flexibility to cover all shifts. Negotiations have reached an impasse.

Signature Monitoring Centre:

We have initiated bargaining for the first collective employment agreement at this new site. Claims have been sent to the company and we are waiting for dates to be set for negotiations.

We'd like a MECA please...

We'd like to get a MECA. No it's not a hamburger. MECA stands for Multi-Employer Collective Agreement. It means bringing all guards from the major companies into one single collective agreement. This would stop companies from using low guard wages to undercut each other when they go for contracts. It would mean it's easier to lift wages across the board rather than company by company.

In a recent negotiation one of the big companies told Unite they couldn't increase their pay offer because their major competitor would undercut them. We need to stop this. Why should guards suffer just because companies won't co-operate together?

More on this in future issues of *Unite Security News*.

Winners and losers

Recent changes have seen Icon Security get the Auckland City Noise Contract over Armourguard. The home detention monitoring in Auckland has been taken by newcomers Group 4 from Chubb. (Late last year Chubb sold its guard divisions contracts to First Security Guard Services)

Who owns who?

The biggest players in New Zealand security are all owned overseas. First Security is part of the Danish-based ISS group, ADT and Armourguard are part of US-based Tyco International. Most smaller companies like ICON are locally owned. We'll have more details about these big multinationals and the dangers they pose in the next issue of the newsletter.

Security of hours

One of the union objectives is to get hours of work stabilised for guards. Things are OK when there is plenty of work around but in a downturn the bills keep coming in and frequently staff find their hours of work cut and they sometimes struggle to keep their families fed. We aim to get a stable minimum of 40 hours work (ie permanent employment) for guards in all our contracts. So far we have this for permanent guards at ICON but the bigger players are reluctant to give their guards this security. Why can a small company like ICON do this but the big boys can't?

Racism at work

We recently had a case of racism in a company where evidence emerged of discrimination against guards on racial grounds by management staff. It's very important that when issues like this arise guards stick together and look out for each other. There is an old saying in unions that "**an injury to one is an injury to all**" and it's a valuable saying to remember. If you see racism from your fellow workers or management then speak out or contact the union if this is difficult.

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Dear union members, community activists, workplace delegates and campaign supporters,



As you will be aware the Unite Union launched the \$15 an hour **Campaign for a Living Wage** on June 11 2009.

The campaign aims to get an immediate rise in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and then to have it set at two-thirds of the average wage. The first part of the campaign is to collect over 300,000 signatures within the next 12 months on our Citizens Initiated Referendum Petition.

Currently 450,000 New Zealanders live on less than \$15 an hour and more than 100,000 live on minimum wage. That's not enough to live in. It's no wonder that the 30% of New Zealanders on the lowest incomes

in 2004 were worse off in real dollars than they were 20 years ago. Meanwhile corporate profits increased 11% a year from 2000-2004 and the wealthiest 10% of the population are 21% better off than they were 20 years ago.

Between 2006 and 2007 we ran a campaign that changed the face of low-paid work in New Zealand - SuperSizeMyPay.Com. We pressured the Government into raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour and into getting rid of youth rates for most of the workforce. We also built a movement around worker's rights among young people and students for the first time in our generation.



This time round we want to get rid of poverty wages completely and to build a movement of young people committed to getting living wages for New Zealand lowest paid but hardest working workers. It's no wonder youth are flocking across the ditch when the Australian minimum wage is NZ\$17.50, \$5 more than it is here. This contributes to one in five New Zealand children being raised in poverty - a higher rate than in all but three of the world's 26 rich nations.

To win this campaign and build the movement we need your help. Nobody can do everything but everybody can do something...

Here are three easy things we need people to start doing today.

1. Get your friends, family and workmates to sign the attached petition form and send it back. If every union member in the country got 10 signatures than we'd get 3.5 million signatures!
2. Go to the Unite website, www.unite.org.nz and join the facebook group or become a campaign volunteer to get our email updates.
3. Once you've posted back your first 10 signatures get more petition forms from your union organiser or union office and step up to co-ordinate the campaign on your site, in your school or community.

This isn't just about a petition; it's about fairness & respect for every underpaid worker in New Zealand.

It's about building a movement against poverty wages and for social justice so if you've got some feedback, a good idea or want to get more involved then drop us a line.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matt McCarten'.

Matt McCarten
General Secretary



INVESTIGATIONS & DISCIPLINARIES

Sometimes it is not clear when you are being asked in “for a chat” or an “investigation meeting” or a “disciplinary meeting” and if you need representation. If it is just for a chat (ie over being late a few times recently) then you should probably take a support person but you shouldn't need formal representation. If you are told that the meeting is an investigation into some alleged misconduct at your company then you need to take care. If it is a genuine investigation into something that the company needs more information about (ie someone dealing drugs on the premises) then we should cooperate. But we should always take a support person/witness or union delegate. The meeting ceases to be just an investigation as soon as there is a specific allegation against a worker. When that happens the company should put the allegation in writing, explain the possible consequences, and your right to have representation and a support person at any meeting. We then have the right to see all the evidence the company wants to use against us. We also have the right to investigate the alleged misconduct ourselves and interview people if needed. A disciplinary meeting is still part of an investigation because the company should not have pre-judged the outcome. They must come with open minds and be ready to consider all explanations and carry out further investigation if needed.

WHY JOIN THE UNITE UNION SECURITY TEAM

Dear friends,

Thank you for considering joining the Unite Union. Unite is a registered Trade Union and is able to act for you in a legal capacity on any employment matter.

Unite have negotiated a number of Collective Employment Agreements in various areas of the Security industry – from guards, monitoring and cash handling. These agreements cover cover your basic pay and conditions.

Hundreds of security workers have already joined Unite. Our fee is only \$2 a week until we get a Collective Employment Agreement for you. Once we have a CEA the fee is a minimum of \$2 or 1% of your wage to a maximum of \$5 a week. Your employer will deduct your fee from your pay each week.

All members receive FREE accidental death funeral benefit cover of \$1500 which can be increased to \$10,000 for just \$2 in the first year and \$5 a year after that. Your spouse and children are covered for \$500 each. Unite members can also access FREE computer courses and a discount card.

JOIN UNITE BY FILLING IN THE FORM BELOW

- I wish to join Unite Incorporated
- I authorise Unite Incorporated to be my Union representative under the Employment Relations Act 2000 or its successor
- I authorise my Employer to deduct my fees from my wage/salary and send to Unite Incorporated

First Name.....Surname.....

Address.....D.O.B.....

Home Ph.....Mobile.....

Email.....

Company..... Department or Section

Emp No.....Signature.....Date.....

Put this form in an envelope and send to Freepost Unite, P O Box 7175, Wellesley St, Auckland, 1141. Or fax to (09) 846 9509. For more information email john@unite.org.nz or phone (09) 845 2132

