

**As bargaining has been progressing the union has been busy making sure that workers' rights are protected in these uncertain times.**

**☎** At TNS 70 workers woke up on Saturday to find that their pay hadn't gone through and all their automatic payments had bounced. The company promised the pay would be in on Monday, but after realising it wasn't. A group of workers and Omar from the union, went and saw the managers.

The managers wouldn't offer anything to tide people over until the pay came in the next day until the workers threatened to protest out the front of TNS head office in Parnell. The Australian manager then quickly agreed to give everyone \$50 cash.

**☎** One company used to have big problems with internal workplace culture, but after the union threatened to go public on the issue, the company agreed to retrain all its team leaders and supervisors on how to treat workers with respect.

**☎** One worker being made redundant at a call centre wasn't going to get a payout because she had been visiting her sick mother overseas earlier in the year. After the union told the company to stop clowning around, she got paid out nearly \$1000.

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Australia's well unionised research workers look set to get 3.25% pay rises in 2009 and 2010. So in two years time they'll be getting AUS\$23 or more than NZ\$27 an hour. There is power in a union!

**Calling  
for  
Change**



For more information and assistance with work issues contact us.

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**Campaign  
Update #4  
18/11/08**

## **Union Negotiations Continue...**

Negotiations for collective agreements across the research industry are continuing despite call centre bosses finding it hard even to make it to the meetings.

Unite will be meeting all companies individually over the next few weeks to discuss pay and conditions.

Some employers have already offered up substantial improvements in terms and conditions especially around shift security but others lag behind.

We expect that if we cannot reach agreements on pay and conditions after the negotiation sessions coming up then we will begin to start various types



**It's often hard to get the bosses to negotiate as they are so often away on holiday...**

of protest and strike action until union members get a decent payrise and secure conditions.

### **Dates for Negotiations**

Colmar Brunton - 4 & 5 Dec  
Synovate - 3 Dec  
Marketpulse - 20 Nov  
Phoenix - 28 Nov  
Reid - 28 Nov  
Digipoll - 12 Dec  
UMR & OCIS set next week

**better pay, better conditions, healthier workplaces**

# Putting Health on Hold

In September and October 2008 Unite Union surveyed 57 workers (both union members and non-members) in seven different market and social research call centres in Auckland and Hamilton.

The surveys were undertaken with the intention of providing the union, employees and employers with information about the major health and safety issues in research companies and to provide recommendations on improving health and safety. **Union reps and management will be meeting to discuss the surveys findings over the next couple of weeks, independent of bargaining.**

## Health and Safety Training

Nearly all respondents had received no training or information on how to prevent and manage Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI).

It is concerning that although respondents from four companies reported hand, arm or finger pain, a very small minority reported knowledge of how to manage and prevent RSI. Unite recommends that all new employees are provided with information and diagrams on how to prevent RSI and that Supervisors should be asked to remind and encourage employees to do their exercises.

## Equipment

Commonly reported call centre injuries include back and neck strain and eye and ear strain. The following recommendations on improving call centre equipment aim to improve reduce the risk of injury that call centre employment poses. *Unite recommends that:*

- Anti-glare screens be available for all monitors
- All employees have comfortable chairs with adjustable backs that raise and lower properly.
- All head-sets are not broken, are clean, and all employees have access to their own portable ear-muffs.
- Auto diallers are available for those employees suffering from RSI.
- Wrist pads should be available in all call centres.
- Anti-bacterial wipes should be available at all times.

- Computer monitors should be regularly upgraded.
- All employers take responsibility to ensure that their equipment is kept clean and is not broken and that employees know who to contact to replace broken or unclean equipment.

## Work Environment – Physical

A clean, spacious and healthy call centre environment is vitally important to the health and safety of employees. It is concerning that a large number of employees reported unclean kitchens or bathrooms. These pose a significant health hazard in the confined and crowded environment of a call centre and we urge all employers to ensure that these two places are kept clean.

## Work Environment – Social

It is good to note that very few workers reported feeling unsafe at work. Those that did were mostly at SurveyTalk where people who fail to reach target won't get shifts the week after. Others reported a manager or supervisor who acted in a bullying manner.

19% of workers have experienced voice loss

19% have had their hearing or ears affected

**Join the Dots**

51% get headaches from work

28% of workers get eye strain

40% of workers reported some form of work related pain

35% feel stressed, hopeless or depressed from work

