

WELCOME TO OUR SOUTHERN NEWSLETTER

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU !

MEMBERSHIP IS GOOD INSURANCE!

WORKrural.co.nz is independent and aims to be **the go to website for rural workers**; comments from WORKrural: Initially we have pulled all the rural jobs onto one website to make it easier to search for your next job. As we grow we aim to provide rural workers with essential advice and support and their own contact network. Also to encourage employers to improve their information sharing thereby attracting the best staff. We have lots of innovative ideas but to do all this we need the support of rural employers and workers by using **workrural.co.nz**.

'having been both an employer and a landlord in the urban setting I have been rather amazed at the very unique way that rural employment and rural service accommodation is managed' says the owner of Workrural. 'We often hear that farmers have difficulty attracting and retaining good staff. 'Actually I'm not surprised!'

There is often a reluctance to impart much information about a job-the location let alone the details are often shrouded in mystery with a one or two sentence advert. Wouldn't you like to know the standard of accommodation, heating, hours and days off, a ballpark regarding remuneration, other benefits, etc?

Service Accommodation is covered by the RTA (Residential Tenancies Act) but most employers wrongly use the employment agreement to cover the accommodation agreement. The obligations of the employer under the RTA cannot be contracted out of in the employment agreement.

Workrural. Co.nz covers all types of rural work-farming, fishing, forestry aquaculture, construction and more; although the dairy sector is the largest employer group. The dairy sector continues to expand and if they want to encourage workers to up sticks and move house an family to the country they need to be more forthcoming and more agreeable to job seekers. There are some great employers out there—Workrural wants to make them easier to find. We want to hear from you about your experiences and your needs. enquires@workrural.co.nz

'The Workrural team has impressed me with its dedication and hard work in establishing this website. Their commitment to making rural job vacancies more accessible to job seekers and with greater job detail is an excellent initiative'. Owen Johnstone

Awunz has represented rural workers over many years and still does. It is costly to cover rural workers, given the travel and time involved and that is why we must investigate all options for rural workers to have cost effective representation. Workrural has agreed to have the Awunz logo on its webpage so that rural workers can easily become members and can contact us with any issues or problems.

ACC

I was recently contacted by an Awunz member employed at South Pacific Meats (SPM), he wouldn't let go of his Awunz membership and join the meat workers union. He told me that he had been injured at work (carpal tunnel). The story that followed and his treatment by SPM is appalling. He is a family man with young children and had never worked in the meat industry before. He's a big strong bloke so he was made a trainee wool puller. Hard physical work and as any experienced slaughter man will tell you it takes a reasonable period of time for a

trainee to be conditioned into the job, you shoulders, arms and wrists take all the pressure of the job. He went to the plant medical centre; he was not advised he could have the onset of carpal tunnel. His wrists were wrapped in a bandage and he was told to go back to work. His condition worsened as he struggled to keep up in a peer pressure situation because of absenteeism. The pain and stiffness in his wrists continued to worsen and he was struggling to use his hands and hold his knife, as they weakened. His supervisor said 'rub some voltaren on your wrists she'll be right , everyone goes through the same process'. The bloke's wrists finally cried enough and he was put off work. He claimed ACC cover through the SPM employer partnership program.

He was off work injured with no income for his family. After many weeks waiting for the employer to grant ACC cover, which included extending the time to make a decision by 28 days he was declined cover; the employer said he hadn't worked on the job long enough to get carpal tunnel. As part of my initial investigation I discovered that another worker doing the same job as this bloke but for 12 days had been granted cover, without the need for any specialist report, go figure? Our bloke was told by SPM, when declining his claim, that he had to pay any medical costs accrued to date.

My investigation uncovered a range of problems in how this bloke was treated, not to mention, breach of duty of care, breach of good faith, unjustified disadvantage and 'constructive' dismissal claim because he had no alternative but resign from his job. My initial focus is asking how SPM could make its decision to decline his ACC claim when it had no specialist medical report to rely on? Who made the decision to decline his claim and on what medical evidence?

I will keep you up to date as legal proceedings move forward. With all the issues in the press about SPM safety record it will be interesting!

workrural.co.nz
rural job search ... made easy!



Rural job vacancies can now be accessed through a single independent website

The recently launched **workrural** website is the first to pull rural vacancy advertisements from New Zealand employment websites onto one search engine.

Job seekers are able to search for jobs by text or map providing instant information about location and the job description.

We aim to make it easier for job seekers to access information, find good jobs and make the right employment choices.

New initiatives are being developed

Do you need-contract advice? help with your CV? information on proven good employers? a job seekers page? contact with other rural workers?

Would you like more information in vacancy adverts about -accommodation? heating? remuneration? rosters?

Tell us at **workrural** what you need: enquiries@workrural.co.nz

'SUPPORT ORGANIZATION' FOR WORKING PEOPLE FOR 129 YEARS**My Job**

I work in excess of 60 hours each week, including weekends and evenings and my office is at the back of my garage at home. 30% of my work is administration work covering all aspects of my job including mediation and Authority hearings. I receive on average 10 emails a day and most need urgent attention.

I'm provided with the tools needed for my job and a car for travelling throughout my area of responsibility; Balclutha, Crowell, Alexandra, Queenstown, Milford, Te-Anau, and Invercargill; I have no fixed hours of work, you can't have in this job, so I take time off when I can according to the demands of the job. **You can't please people all the time.**

The following situation is true:

Worker A & B, both union members get nabbed by the boss for spending time at several addresses when there are no tasks or work at those addresses? the GPS is all seeing. When asked why they were at those addresses on a regular basis, the workers gave no explanation.

I explained to worker B the matter required a reasonable explanation or else the boss was entitled to treat his silence as a serious breach of trust and confidence. Eventually worker B explained to me and the delegate that worker A was taking time out for a hooter. To cut a long story short the union managed to save both jobs with certain conditions and these weren't onerous. Worker A went through work provided rehab and kept his job. Later worker B tells a completely different story to his workmates making out that the union had acted badly. I received a letter from one of those co-workers blasting me, the delegate and the union for not properly representing worker B, and what is the union coming too!

I rang the letter writer and explained what actually happened, needless to say when he heard the facts he was embarrassed and on his way to deal with the lying worker!! After having explained the facts of what happened the letter writer said he wanted to join the union because we had done a good job in difficult circumstances.

'we get what you get so why join the union'

To workers on individual agreements who adopt this position and who feed off the back of union members by accepting terms and conditions gained by union members, please think about how your attitude is undermining the ability of the union and its members to be able to secure improved terms and conditions and wages. If your terms and conditions and wages are directly linked to what union members can bargain with 45% of the potential membership on the job imagining what could be achieved if we had 80% or 100% membership. The fact is the **'we get what you get, so why join the union'** attitude makes no logical sense because it undermines the ability of union members to secure improved terms and conditions and

wages.

Employer's use this self imposed division to lower the bargaining outcome for all employees; if union members are bargaining in a weakened state then they can only bargain inferior outcomes, which don't fully meet expectation or need. If that's the case then non union members are costing not only themselves but all other employees, including union members. When non union members say *'we get what you get, so why join the union'*, they need to think about the fact if they were in the union what they could get could be greater than what they're getting from a divided collective bargaining process. If after collective bargaining the employer offers non union members better terms and conditions through individual bargaining non union members have to ask why?

Is the reason for this designed to ensure non union members stay out of the union, what's the reason?

And if its true that your workmate is a union member, is a good worker, is as productive as you and carries his/her fair share of the workload, why is he/she being paid less?

Kiwi workers march off to work after the budget working longer hours for wages that don't match the cost of living for an average family. Kiwi workers are spending less time with their families and now both parents are having to work to afford in many cases the basics of life, kids are left to fend for themselves (eldest child) has greater responsibility for the care and wellbeing of siblings after school or the family pays for child care. The recent budget gave very little to the average working family and now more than ever workers will have to rely on collective bargaining with their employer to meet the increased living costs arising from the budget.

Bill English said it will take until 2025 for Kiwi wages to match Aussie wages. If during this period more Kiwi workers move to Aussie chasing better wages, this labour gap will have to be filled by immigrant workers, and the experience of immigrant workers being treated badly is real. The potential exits for Kiwi wages terms and conditions to be driven lower not higher, through no fault of the immigrant worker but because of dodgy employers. Bill's calculations means wages have to increase by 4.8% each year for 15 years to close the wage gap with Aussie, is this likely to happen without strong union membership? I doubt it.

5 STAR HOTEL FOR PAMPERED PETS**LORNEWOOD BOARDING KENNELS AND CATTERY**

- 5 minutes from Invercargill
- Std & K.C. Vac. required
- Heated facilities
- Individual sleeping & 10m runs
- All inspections welcome



Monday to Friday
9.30-11.30am, 4.30-6pm
Saturday 9.30-11.30am
Sunday 4.30-6pm
or by appointment



Paul and Evelyn Soalo
PH. 03 235 8563
FAX. 03 235 8568



"Henderson, you're already doing the jobs of three people...how can you possibly have time to join a union."



"Find me a clause in the Union contract I haven't violated yet".

**AWUNZ WEBSITE IS AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS AND POTENTIAL MEMBERS
GO TO WWW.AWUNZ.CO.NZ, AND FOR ALL HEALTH INSURANCE PRODUCTS THAT IS
AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS GO TO WWW.TMFNZ.CO.NZ.**