



AMALGAMATED WORKERS UNION SOUTHERN NZ INC

OWEN JOHNSTONE AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2009

Email: awunz.ingill@xtra.co.nz

WELCOME TO OUR SOUTHERN NEWSLETTER



WE ARE HERE FOR YOU !
MERRY XMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

MEMBERSHIP IS GOOD INSURANCE!



OF INTEREST

CONTACT HOURS

Mon to Friday 8am to 5pm and 7pm till 9m evenings; mobile or land-line. Contact outside these hours urgent or pre-planned—emails are welcome anytime

Owen: 029 477 6026

Employment Law re-search employment law through the Department of Labour web site (Employment Relations) and look for Fact Sheets.

- **Emails using modern media to enhance services to members. If you have an email address send Owen an email confirming your email address.**
- **Sign up on line thank you to new members singing up online through our Awunz web page, real simple and no hassle!**

"Awunz has been looking after Kiwi workers for 129 years' That's impressive!

WAGE FREEZES FAIR?

The continuing global recession which started in the US (*greed by the few who controlled both investment and regulatory levers*) and the NZ economy suffered as did all global economies. Employers took protective measures to safeguard against reduced cash flow in an environment where business was falling away and banks weren't lending. Employers at the financial margins and limited alternative 'non bank' capital either restructured (shed workers) or, for example, implemented a wage freeze arguing that *'its better to have a wage coming in than no job'*.

The irony for workers though is when employers actively raise capital for plant and infrastructure investment; *'to better position the business in the market'* as they pick through the carcasses of failed or failing businesses. Employers say this keeps workers in jobs, which they wouldn't otherwise have. This capital spending, during a wage freeze, is seen by workers as a slap in the face as they struggle under the weight of increased living costs. Workers with families to feed and bills to pay see it far different and believe that a wage freeze in the workplace is only fair if all other parts of economic activity (costs) are frozen; *Bill's wages are frozen while around him food prices keep going up, power, Dr's bills, rent, mortgage, almost everything!*

Bill and his families standard of living takes a nose dive, debts rise, borrowings grow (*debt cycle*) the health and welfare of the family worsens, relationships fragment; the birthplace of despair and a feeling of hopelessness pervades.

Parents struggle to survive, both work long hours to make ends meet; they have less time with their children, which in turn creates family relationship problems; families become less cohesive and in time so does society.

Workers must bargain bigger wage rises during good times, build some reserves; collective bargaining 'all in' is best.

BARGAINING 2009

This year has been a tough one in terms of bargaining wage increases; the average increase gained was 2%. Several companies implemented wage freeze periods ranging from 6 months to 12 months with a review process.

The economic outlook for 2010 is not predictable as realignment of the global and local economy takes place. In NZ we have to adjust to the full impact of our own Governments economic decision making.

2010 we will see more workers turning to unions to help them make up lost ground on wages and terms and conditions through collective bargaining. We know this to be true because in the later part of 2009 union membership surged as more workers came to realise separated bargaining in the workplace between union and non union workers is NUTS! When what the union guys get we get and because they're the smaller group we're all bargaining from a weak position duh!

United together in collective bargaining is the obvious answer if workers want to do better!

Awunz has been working to implement a collective bargaining model which delivers better terms and conditions for 'the group' while enabling individual bargaining based on personal productivity and performance. Employees having locked in the collective wage increase have a second opportunity to 'do better' when they can 'make a case' that their productivity and performance was 'above the average benchmark' established by collective bargaining. For this model to work it must be seen as an *'incentivised motivation process'* those who do better **will** be recognised and rewarded above the average.

Collective bargaining alone cannot meet the specific needs or personal abilities of everyone, nor can individual bargaining; but combining both can! We are asking more working people to support this co-joined bargaining model.

LEGAL ACTION

Personal grievances, disputes and wage arrears claims are constant throughout the year and we normally have several cases going through the various legal stages. In addition we have ACC reviews and referring people onto our community networks for help with non work related matters.

We are currently dealing with a grievance claim involving 2 senior workers laid off as part of a business restructuring process which was procedurally flawed. The employer used a points system to evaluate each employee, the lowest scores lost their job. The problem was the employer never consulted with the workers so they didn't know what attributes were being measured and they never had opportunity to participate in a meaningful assessment process.

An independent contractor rang me for help saying he had done work for someone but hadn't been paid. His was alone and under resourced, the more powerful corporate was happy to drag it out; we stepped in to help as he had a family to feed and bills to pay; We got his money, why? because the corporate knew the game was up when Awunz stepped in, we were big enough to kick ARSE!

Over the Christmas New Year period people often reflect on their contribution to a better society, all Awunz members stand tall and proud that your \$260 annual Awunz fee has helped us all to have a better society; if it hadn't been for your contribution and fellowship many workers and their families, including the above example, would have been far worse off! The guy above, even though he is an independent contractor, not an employee, is paying an Awunz fee because we were prepared to help him and his family. Be proud to say to the person next to you, I'm an Awunz member and **I feel good because....**

SIGN UP! on our web site

**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.**



EMAIL: AWUNZ.INGILL@XTRA.CO.NZ

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'SUPPORT ORGANIZATION' FOR WORKING PEOPLE
FOR 129 YEARS

Members in Invercargill, Balclutha, Alexandra, Cromwell, Queenstown, TeAnau,
Winton, Stewart Island - and all points in between



IF YOU
HAVE A
PROBLEM AT
WORK RING
OR EMAIL
US!

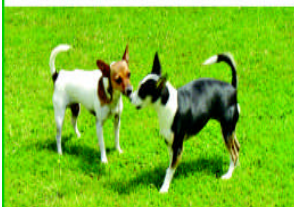
WE HELP PEOPLE BY
LISTENING AND
TALKING ABOUT
THE PROBLEM

IF FURTHER HELP IS
NEEDED WE ASK
THAT YOU JOIN
AWUNZ

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

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU !

MEMBERSHIP IS GOOD INSURANCE!

PERSONAL OBJECTIVE 2010

I have long advocated for a group medical and health insurance scheme based on collective employer participation.

The continued troubles in the public health system, our aging population and the need to have all the skills and experience we have in our economy available for use forms part of my thinking on this but so does cost.

If we were able to have employers join together as 'participating employers' and for them to make a payment of \$5 for each employee per week (single adult) cost, family members paid for by the worker, we would have our community health and medical group scheme, imagine the potential!

Participating employer group's can get pre-existing cover (existing medical conditions are covered) for all employees in the scheme. As the group grows its able to influence cover and cost.

The powerful thing about this initiative is that an employer with one employee can join as can an employer with 300.

This initiative really helps aging workers, with a medical condition, (*pre existing conditions cover*) A worker in a single company group medical scheme had a \$15,000 operation and it cost him \$600, so the potential is there to grow a participating employer group scheme.

Raise Your VOICE !

Another 2010 initiative is to develop and implement a workplace climate culture survey questionnaire under the OHS legislation so that workers can give effect to the STRESS provisions of the Act. Too many workers are under stress at work; this bi annual survey is work-place specific and anonymous and done by postal return envelope. This way factual data is provided to the employer as to the REAL climate and culture in the workplace and changes, where necessary must be made to isolate, reduce or remove the hazard!

OUT AND ABOUT 2009

I've been getting used to having to cover a far bigger territory; however, its been a challenge worth taking. I reviewed the way I managed my workload and at my IR system tools, such as website, Utube channel, on line signup facility, Skype etc, and included a lap top and printer in my tool box.

As I meet people in the areas I cover, I get a real sense for their communities and their workplace climate and culture.

Queenstown, for example, is full on 100%, tourism all the way; flexibility and 'on demand' its doing the business! In this full on 'at all cost' environment worker rights and levels of stress and anxiety are often seen as expendable issues.

Because a worker asks a question about wages or conditions of work; or raises health and safety matters in a staff meeting, or questions a decision of management, or employment practices, they are often 'marked' as 'trouble'. This conditioning leads to fear of speaking out and as a result the employer is all powerful!

There is an underground of serious discontent among workers in Queenstown but this doesn't surface because of the FEAR of retribution, especially among immigrant workers.

My challenge to Queenstown workers is 'help me build a community of support for workers' using the resources, skills and experience of Awunz. These are the steps:

1. **Join Awunz on line**
2. **We write to all Queenstown Members**
3. **We hold meetings**
4. **We agree on service**

It's started already! have new members in Qtown; If you work fulltime 40 + hours its \$5 per wk, if you work less hours the cost is reduced and the fee includes life insurance cover up to \$10,000.

SIGN UP ON LINE, be part of something different!



TMF (Trauma, Medical, Financial)

Paul and the team at TMF continue to do a good job for members who are wanting to defend against tough times and others going through tough times.

TMF is a vital part of the services which Awunz has available for members, and when you consider my earlier comments about establishing a 'participating employer' group health and medical insurance policy in our community, you can see the extended 'market value' of workers and employers acting together as consumers.

The Awunz -TMF relationship is well placed to help guide this type of initiative on behalf of members; where we are unable to fully bargain increased wage rates and better terms and conditions, then employers can hardly deny their involvement in the 'participating employer' group health and medical scheme, its low cost to employers' compared to the potential for significant cost increases of not having skilled and experienced labour, locally, available and willing to work.

Holiday period like most I'm feeling the burden of a very demanding year, and I'm looking forward to the break. I'm full of enthusiasm though for what can be achieved for members in 2010. To all members and their family members who have been unwell, we wish you a speedy recovery and our thoughts are with members and their family and friends for loved ones who passed away in 2009.

Reflection apart from doing bloke things over Christmas/New Year I use the time to reflect. This year I will reflect on my belief that more working people will join Awunz in 2010 to help build better communities of support around and on behalf of working people, and that those communities will be better for this. All the very best over the holiday period and please BE SAFE!

**Owen and the Awunz Executive
SIGN UP! on our web site
Google Awunz Southern**

Cheers Owen