

JAMES A. WILLIAMS, JR President International Union of Painters and Allied Trades; Chairman, AIL Labour Advisory Board
STEVE GREER Chief Executive Officer, American Income Life Division; President, AIL Labour Advisory Board
LORI PELLETIER Division Vice President, Public Relations, American Income Life Division; Executive Director, AIL Labour Advisory Board
SUSAN FULDAUER Division Vice President, Public Relations, American Income Life Division; Secretary, AIL Labour Advisory Board
STEVE FRIEDLANDER State General Distributor, American Income Life Insurance Company

[Sign Up for AIL's New Zealand Labour News](#)



Dear Member,

NEW ZEALAND LABOUR NEWS



(Gisborn Herald)

NZNO National Bus Tour Highlights Health Budget Needs
New Zealand Nurses Organisation Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa (NZNO) hit the road 10-20 June, visiting towns and cities throughout the country in a Ratio Justice Bus Tour to raise awareness of the health crisis facing Aotearoa New Zealand.

The tour started in Nelson (South) and Whāngarei (North) and ended in Queenstown and Gisborne.

NZNO President Anne Daniels says the organisation was calling on the Government to increase health funding and implement culturally appropriate nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios in all healthcare settings.

"We can't solve the understaffing crisis unless the Coalition Government puts more money into health. However, in Budget 2024 the bulk of health funding that was announced was committed to meeting cost pressure funding. This means there is limited funding for new initiatives in health and nothing concrete announced for nurses, midwives and health care assistants."

More nurses are desperately needed and having culturally appropriate ratios is the best way to ensure the most efficient health service for all New Zealanders, she said.

"Most states in Australia as well as Ireland and Wales, and California in the US and British Columbia in Canada, now have fixed nurse-to-patient ratios to improve the quality of health care. Many developing countries are also implementing the system.

"Since being introduced in Australia nearly 10 years ago they've resulted in fewer readmissions and shorter hospital stays, resulting in better patient outcomes and tens of millions being saved in the health budget."

PSA Calls For Meeting With Minister Over Extraordinary Strain On Mental Health Workforce

The **PSA** has called for a meeting with Mental Health Minister Matt Doocey to address workforce issues identified in a major five-year mental health and addiction monitoring report released today.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission's report - Kua Tīmata Te Haerenga|The Journey Has Begun - identified several serious workforce trends between July 2018 and June 2023.

"People working in specialist mental health services and addiction services face extraordinary strain with serious implications for themselves, their communities, and the tāngata whaiora they serve," says Kerry Davies, National Secretary of the Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi.



"We strongly support the Commission's lead recommendation that Te Whatu Ora develop a workforce plan specifically for mental health and addictions workforces, and a distinct action plan to meet the needs of whānau Māori. Mental health nurses, drug and alcohol clinicians, allied health workers, support workers, assistants, and people across the system desperately want to be part of the solution. They deserve to be heard by the Minister," said Davies.

Vacancy rates across adult specialist services were shown to more than double in four years from 5.5% in 2018 to 11.1% in 2022. "What's in this report is of no surprise to our members - whether they're an Earlier Mental Health Response Nurse providing care over the phone to an increased number of people with complex need, or a crisis worker trying to keep services in Te Tai Tokerau operating."



(Duoya/NZ)

Auckland Bus Drivers To Get Protective Screens

Auckland Transport (AT) is installing screen dividers between passengers and drivers on buses after reports drivers have been "verbally berated, screamed at, spat at, racially abused, and in some instances sexually harassed" daily."

AT data from earlier this year showed assaults on drivers had more than doubled over the previous two years. **First Union** spokesperson Hayley Courtney said many drivers go to work fearing for their lives, from 24 assaults in 2022 to 51 in 2023 -- when a bus driver was stabbed in the ribs by a passenger.

Auckland Transport group manager of public transport operations Rachel Cara said barriers will be on 80 per cent of AT's fleet within the next two years. Drivers deserved to feel safe in their place of work, she said, and they were committed to rolling out the barriers as quickly as possible.

But Courtney said drivers were frustrated with the lack of urgency from AT and Auckland Council to put protective measures in place. As well as screens in drivers' cabins, she said the number of security officers at bus and train stations and onboard dangerous routes needed to be increased. It is a nationwide issue, not just in Auckland.

Drivers often felt pressured to step in, which could further escalate dangerous situations. "We tell them to not engage. These drivers are not trained in self-defence - they are employed as bus drivers to transport the public, they are not employed as police officers."

AT spokesperson Rachel Cara said they were looking to recruit additional officers to support drivers.

Sick Leave And Holidays Act Changes Will Cost Workers Billions In Lost Wages

Unite Union says proposed changes to sick leave and annual leave will cost workers billions in wages.

"We know very well the difference between an annual leave accrual system and the current law looks like because most payroll systems were recently, wrongfully, running accrual systems. The difference is billions of dollars. Te Whata Ora alone owes over \$2.1 billion to its employees" said Unite Assistant National Secretary Gerard Hehir.




(Unite)

These changes will see a transfer of billions of dollars of wages from workers to employers. The types of workers primarily affected: women, young workers, Māori and Pasifika and the low-paid will lose and employers will gain, massively.

The 'complexity' often complained about is largely to ensure workers get paid the same while on holiday as they would if they were working. Anyone who increases their hours of work over a year will get screwed under an accrual system. If someone is working 20 hours in January and is able to increase that to 40 hours in June, they currently will get 40 hours leave per week the next January. Under an accrual system they will only have 30 hours per week for leave - 25 per cent less. They would lose at least a week's pay overall.

Other workers who will lose are those with higher hourly pay rates from overtime, penal rates, shift allowances and commissions. These were almost always not included by employers who ran an accrual system, they tended to pay just the base hourly rate for leave, and that had a major impact on many workers.

With sick leave the impact will be on those who need it the most and can least afford losing it. 58 per cent of women in paid work do less than 40 hours a week, so will lose out. They are still, overwhelmingly, the workers who use sick leave to look after children and other dependents when they are sick.

 Over 60% of part-time workers are in just four sectors: retail, hospitality, education and health. These are also the workers who will, inevitably be forced to work when sick when their reduced sick leave runs out. That is not good for anyone.

The complexity of the current annual leave system is because many workers don't do 9-5 normal office hours and so extra steps have to be taken to make sure they get paid the same as they would as if they were working - which is how it should be. In reality almost all pay systems have now been adjusted to be compliant to the current law - the only remaining complexity is historical, and these proposals won't change that at all.

Those on regular hours and salaries (which includes most high-paid employees) will not be affected while those working variable and outside normal office hours (which includes most low-paid workers) will lose out. A familiar story this year so far.

Proposed Holidays Act Changes Undermine Workers' Entitlements

The **New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU)** Te Kauae Kaimahi is calling on the Government to not reduce worker entitlements in their review of the Holidays Act.

"We are concerned that the proposed changes undermine the agreed position reached by unions and business under the last government," said Acting NZCTU President Rachel Mackintosh.

"Under the guise of 'simplicity', the Minister seems intent on reducing hard-won entitlements that have been put in place for working people.

"Worker entitlements in the Holidays Act must be protected through this review. There appear to be no plans to engage with workers or their unions, despite them being the people who are directly impacted by this.

"We reject the idea that part-time workers should have their sick leave entitlement pro-rated. Viruses and other illnesses have no regard for hours of work.

"The proposed changes are irresponsible, and will disproportionately impact on Māori, Pasifika, women and other vulnerable workers, who are more likely to be in part-time and insecure work.



"These changes will force more people to go into work sick, and that represents a step backwards. Ultimately, it would be worse for businesses, families and communities and our stretched health system.

"Everyone deserves good work – and that means workers should have enough leave available to look after their health and wellbeing and live a meaningful and fulfilling life," said Mackintosh.

Excluding Teachers From Curriculum Processes Is Risky

It is becoming clear that the recent revelation, via Radio New Zealand, that there was a secret group re-writing the English curriculum, is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the deliberate exclusion of teachers from critical curriculum changes and processes, says Chris Abercrombie, **Post Primary Teachers' Association** Te Wehengarua (PPTA) President.

"The last two scheduled meetings of the Curriculum Voices group - a group of key stakeholder representatives for guidance and feedback on changes to the national curriculum – have been canceled with no reason given. The Professional Advisory Group to the Minister on NCEA, a representative group of extremely experienced teachers and principals, has been disbanded with new members to be selected by the Minister.

"We also understand that the Ministerial Advisory Group, set up by the Minister late last year to advise her on Mathematics and English curriculum learning areas, literacy and the draft Common Practice Model, has completed its work. However, there has been no consultation on the group's report and it hasn't been released publicly."

Abercrombie said subject associations are not being consulted on what is happening or planned. "When they have expressed concerns to the Minister, they are not even being acknowledged, let alone given a response.



(PPTA)

"I was deeply disappointed and concerned that the first time the president of the NZ Association of Teachers of English learned there was a group rewriting the English curriculum was when she was contacted by the media. For a Minister who claims to have great admiration and respect for teachers, choosing not to consult with the head of English subject specialist teachers about such a critical development, speaks volumes.

"We have checked with other subject associations to see if they have been contacted about their curriculum rewrites and they have not – notably Mathematics, another subject that was under the scope of the Ministerial Advisory Group.

"Secondary teachers are passionate about their subjects, how they teach those subjects, and emerging effective practice in their fields. We are extremely concerned that if the Minister shuts teachers out of the change process, she risks being misled by people who hold views about education that are very much on the fringe and not representative of national or international effective practice.

"Not releasing the report of her Ministerial Advisory Group risks the Minister being misled about current teaching practices in secondary schools and the strength of the evidence for what is being put in front of her. We call on the Minister to have the courage of her convictions and publicly release the report."

NZEI Stands For Public Education

New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) is committed to the continual improvement of our public education system in Aotearoa, which includes opposition to charter schools.

In May 2024 the National-led Government announced the reintroduction of charter schools, with the intention for schools to open from early 2025. And in June legislation to re-establish charter schools had its first debate in Parliament. These schools, as proposed in the bill, would undermine some of the core principles that have underpinned our public schooling system for decades.

The legislation would allow for tamariki to be taught by unqualified, unregistered teachers without professional accountability. The bill allows for funding for charter schools to be pocketed for profit by private interests instead of being spent on education. And charter schools will not be required to give effect to Te Tiriti as our public schools are.

Unlike the last time the charter school experiment was rolled out, this model will not be limited to new schools. The legislation allows for public schools to shift to the charter school model. The Minister has said that schools could be forced to do this.



(NZEI)

In England, this approach has quickly led to half of all schools becoming charter schools. Your teacher colleagues there have shared their experiences of waste, declining standards, scandal and disenfranchisement as a result.

The proposed legislation means teachers, support staff and principals employed in a school that is shifted to the charter model, a new entity and new employer, will not have the option of choosing redundancy. They must accept the change or resign without compensation.



(NZEI)

Better Spending: NZEI Te Riu Roa members recently met to discuss the \$153 million that is being invested over four years, covering up to 15 new charter schools and 35 State school conversions.

This is the equivalent cost of employing: 700 teacher aides full-time at step 4 or 360 psychologists working in schools, full-time, step F8 – more than doubling the current Ministry of Education workforce (current FTE = 220) or 350 Speech Language Therapists, full-time, average salary – doubling the current workforce (current FTE = 334) or a combination of these.

Our teachers, principals and whānau are calling out for such support – but the Government has instead chosen to divert this funding into publicly funded private schools or charter schools, which could be run for profit by private companies and run without community connection.

The choice comes down to – do we want a successful public education system, or do we want to open the door to a reduction in educational standards to enable private profit?

Sign the Open Letter: [All Tamariki Deserve Qualified Teachers](#)

Migrant Workers Brought In By Labour Hire Companies Face Job Losses

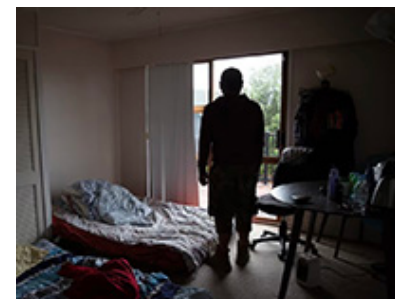
More than a thousand workers recruited by labour hire companies from overseas are now facing redundancies, the union for migrant workers says.

Workers recruited from the Philippines have been urged to accept leave with no pay until the job market improves. Companies that brought workers into New Zealand, and are now in the process of discussing redundancies, include Extrastaff, Adecco and AIS Global.

First Union General Secretary Dennis Maga said those now facing joblessness numbered "more than a thousand" and many distraught workers had contacted the union.

"Labour hire companies have been aggressively and unscrupulously recruiting workers from overseas since 2020 without understanding the local job market," Maga claims.

"These workers from the Philippines came prepared to stay for five years and are at a loss how to explain this to their families back home."



(Sylvia Winray/NZ Herald)

They told us New Zealand was rebuilding after Covid and there was plenty of work in construction, but it was all a lie," said one worker. As he had not been allocated any work, he was considered "yet to be employed" and therefore had not received any pay from the company, he said.

A spokesman for Extrastaff said the economic climate in New Zealand was challenging and demand for workers in construction has declined. "The slowdown has been very quick, taking many in the sector by surprise," he said...Our commercial clients ... they don't think there will be any significant change in how much labour they need in the short or medium term."

He said the company was engaging with staff on a change proposal, some of whom are Filipino workers here on temporary work visas. "Under the proposal, Extrastaff has offered to pay for their return home, and to pay them a small monthly allowance. We have also undertaken to bring them back here should conditions in the construction sector improve, and demand for workers increase," he said. The spokesman said final decisions have yet to be made.



(Sylvia Winray/NZ Herald)

"We have engaged with First Union and the Filipino Labour Attache throughout the process."

In a letter to employees, Adecco country manager Ashley Alcock said "current workflows have been insufficient to sustain our carpenter, welder, steel fixer and builder labourer workforce with full-time work." He said the company was supporting those impacted and was considering voluntary redundancies before a possible business-wide structural change.

Mike Milligan, Director of AIS Global said one of its business units had been impacted by the construction industry downturn. Staff had been urged to use up their annual leave entitlement, and when then is exhausted to then sign a furlough - or no pay leave - agreement.

Immigration and employment law specialist Maricel Weischede said the wave of redundancies affecting migrant workers highlighted a critical need for government intervention. A six-month open work visa should be granted to migrants affected to allow them to secure new employment and continue to support themselves.

"Such a policy would not only offer immediate relief to the workers but also provide employers with the necessary time to work on their accreditation and obtain approval for job checks," said Weischede. "This approach would create a more humane and practical solution, avoiding the abrupt disruption of lives when workers are forced to leave the country on short notice."

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS

Unions Ally With Government, Civil Society on Heat Stress

Nigeria. As reported by the Solidarity Center

The **Nigeria Labor Congress** (NLC) and **Trade Union Congress** (TUC) with civil society and government launched a campaign in Abuja last month to address the impact of worsening heat on Nigeria's working people.

Built on research commissioned by the Solidarity Center, the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) in May launched a heat stress campaign with other civil society groups and government in Abuja to address the impact of worsening heat on Nigeria's working people—especially those who earn their living outdoors, such as on construction sites or in agricultural or oil fields.

"The campaign is key to promoting environmental justice, occupational health and safety, and a safe working environment for Nigerian workers and Nigerians in general," said NLC Senior Assistant General Secretary Eustace James.

A lethal heat wave that overwhelmed hospitals and mortuaries in some parts of West Africa last month is a warning of similar events to come with increasing frequency, predicts international climate scientist network World Weather Attribution (WWA).

The "Stop the Heat Stress" climate justice campaign features data collection through sector-union surveys as well as street rallies and visits to state legislators and administrators to raise awareness of the impact of climate change on worker health and safety.



(Juliano Otoro/Solidarity Center)

A key preliminary finding of the unions' climate impact research is the worrying impact of heat stress on workers' mental health. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures at work reduces productivity and increases the risk of injury, disease and death, reports the International Labor Organization (ILO), which is recommending employer and government mitigation measures. Indeed, an intense heatwave in April likely killed "hundreds or thousands of people" across West Africa. And the summer of 2023 recorded some of the highest temperatures on record for the entire planet, having significant consequences for human life, including in the world of work, warned the ILO.

To ensure that climate-related legislation and policies prioritize worker health and safety and their economic survival, the union campaign is partnering with Nigeria's Environment and Labor Ministries, governmental bodies involved in environmental efforts, including Nigeria's National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), and environmental civil society organizations.

The Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC), one of the country's two labor federations, continues to call for the immediate inclusion of workers and their unions in the governing structures of the NCCC—in part to protect those working in the agricultural sector, where almost half of all job losses are expected to occur. New climate policies—whether designed to mitigate or respond to worsening impacts—will inevitably impact working people. To ensure that these policies protect and build resilience for workers and their communities, unions must be meaningfully included in their development.

"The grim reality that 81.4 percent of Nigerian workers lack insurance against potential job losses brings to the fore our demand for social protection to protect vulnerable workers," said the NLC's Uche Ekwe, representing NLC General Secretary Emma Ugboaja.

The NLC and TUC are umbrella unions that together represent millions of workers in Africa's most populous nation. Nigeria's poverty rate was estimated to have reached almost 40 percent in 2023, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians living below the poverty line, the world's second-largest poor population after India.

"

Domestic Workers Win As President Signs New Law

Ukraine. As reported by the Solidarity Center

Soon after organizing to advocate for formal recognition as workers and protections at work, domestic workers in Ukraine won a significant victory when President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a new law on May 22 regulating domestic work and affording new protections to domestic workers.

Significantly, the law recognizes and defines domestic work and domestic workers, and affords them all labor rights and guarantees, including normal working hours, overtime compensation, daily and weekly rest periods, and paid annual leave. It guarantees domestic workers' right to a safe and healthy work environment and makes employers responsible for ensuring safe working conditions. The law also establishes an employment contract as the primary means of formalizing the working relationship and sets a minimum age for domestic workers.

Last year, the first survey to evaluate the working conditions of Ukraine's domestic workers found that



(Union of Home Staff)

lacking contracts and formal recognition left most respondents vulnerable to low pay, wage theft, confusion about employment status, exclusion from the country's pension system and minimal capacity to exercise their right to freedom of association. Most reported working without formal terms and conditions of employment.

"This is an important development for Ukraine's human rights protection and Euro-integration efforts," said Tristan Masat, Solidarity Center Ukraine country program director. "Domestic and care workers are among the most isolated and vulnerable groups in the economy, and with so many

Ukrainians working in-household jobs in the EU, it's valuable to see the government take a strong and progressive position on the rights of these workers in Ukraine."

While the new law allows domestic workers and employers to codify the terms of employment in a contract and protects domestic workers under Ukraine's labor laws, much work remains to enforce the law and secure better protections for domestic workers.

Tetiana Lauhina, founder of the **Union of Home Staff**, said the law has been a long time coming. "We have been waiting for this law since 2015. It's a strong step in the right direction. Next, we'd like to see the International Labor Organization's Convention 189 on domestic workers ratified by Ukraine. Its ratification and implementation is a major goal for the Union of Home Staff."

Garment Workers Struggle Against Union Busting

Philippines. As reported by the Solidarity Center

Garment workers in Cebu province's economic processing zones face an uphill battle in their fight for better working conditions as their factories push back using anti-union tactics, including the firing of union leaders.

Globalwear Manufacturing, Inc., terminated Alan Esponga, Association of Globalwear Employees' Union PIGLAS (AGSEU-PIGLAS) president, citing excessive absences. Esponga says he was denied leave during a personal emergency to create an excuse to dismiss him.



(Solidarity Center)

AGSEU-PIGLAS and its sister union, **Globalwear Employees' Union PIGLAS** (GEU-PIGLAS), represent over 2,000 workers manufacturing for brands like Nike and Under Armour. During two certification elections, management also used unfair tactics to try to sway the vote against the union, including offering financial incentives to vote against the union and threatening factory closure if the unions won.

The overt attempts to undermine union organizing and bargaining create fear among the workforce., Victorio Evaribto, union president at Vertex1 Apparel Phils., Inc., another Under Armour supplier, says, "Our young workforce, many of whom support families back home, fear losing their jobs if they join the union."

Evaribto says the company's human resources department has discouraged new employees from joining a union, warning them against exercising their right to freedom of association.

However, union leaders remain hopeful in the thick of challenges and persistent in inviting co-workers to orientations on the benefits of unionization.

"We want to dispel the myth that unions are bad or illegal," said Lucil, president of a budding union at another garment factory in Cebu, emphasizing the goal of creating a more balanced relationship between management and workers.

"Understanding our rights empowers us to fight for them," added Erlinda Bardenas, GEU-PIGLAS president. "Together, through our union, we can achieve this."

Samoa Ratifies Two Important ILO Conventions

Geneva. As reported by ILO News



(ILO)

On 31 May 2024, the Government of Samoa deposited the instruments of ratification for the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) with the Director-General of the **International Labour Organization**, Mr. Gilbert F. Houngho.

At the ratification ceremony held at the ILO headquarters, M. Leota Laki Lamositele Sio, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour of Samoa, stated: "This milestone is evidence of Samoa's commitment and continuous efforts to align our labour system with ILO standards, to improve our efforts in ensuring our workers' rights are well protected as well as our employers' efforts to sustain the economic growth, so that no one is left behind."

Mr Houngho welcomed "these two important ratifications, which demonstrate Samoa's ongoing commitment to social justice and the ILO normative system. The ratification of Convention No. 187 is an engagement to ensure a safe and healthy working environment, the newest fundamental principle and right at work. Further, by ratifying Convention No. 190, Samoa is reaffirming its commitment to creating a world of work free from violence and harassment, based on dignity, equality and respect for all. The ILO looks forward to continuing to accompany Samoa in this work."

The ILO has been supporting Samoa in strengthening its occupational safety and health system, and Convention No. 187 is the ninth fundamental Convention ratified by Samoa. The Convention calls for active steps towards achieving progressively a safe and healthy working environment.

Further, Convention No. 190 affirms the fundamental right of individuals to a workplace free from violence and harassment. It is the first international labour standard to address violence and harassment in the world of work comprehensively. Together with Recommendation No. 206, it establishes a framework for action, fostering a future of work grounded in dignity and respect.

GreenShield Canada Workers Go On Strike

Canada. As reported by Unifor

The over 600 members of **Unifor** who work at GreenShield Canada's Windsor and Toronto offices went on strike just after midnight on March 1.

"It is extremely disappointing that a deal could not be reached," said Unifor National President Lana Payne. "Our bargaining committee worked hard to get there, but it takes two to tango. We expect the employer to come to the bargaining table with the goal of actually getting an agreement that our members can support."



(Unifor)

Members from Unifor Locals 240 in Windsor and 673 in Toronto hit the picket line after the company refused to offer a fair wage increase and to address the key issue of job security and contracting out.

The locals say the strike will affect plan members, as there was already a staff shortage.

"The main concerns are job security and contracting out language. Our bargaining committee worked hard to get to an agreement, but the employer simply would not provide assurances that our members' work would not be taken away," says Unifor Local 240 President Jodi Nesbitt.

Over the past three years, the company has eroded the locals' bargaining unit work, provided no growth or commitment to our members, and has outsourced bargaining unit work.

"It's very disappointing," said Unifor Local 673 President Maryellen McIlmoyle. "GreenShield purchased a lot of entities over the years, and we just want to ensure job security isn't being outsourced. This is the first time in 65 years in GreenShield's existence there has been a strike."

The affected members are adjudicators, call centre representatives, work in accounting, client administration and provide IT services.

There are over 580 union members in Windsor and 24 union members at Local 673 in Toronto.

The union and the company have been negotiating a new collective agreement since Jan. 15. The last contract expired on Feb. 29, 2024.

Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector, representing 315,000 workers in every major area of the economy. The union advocates for all working people and their rights, fights for equality and social justice in Canada and abroad and strives to create progressive change for a better future.

[Learn about ALL's union policy](#)

[Sign Up for ALL's New Zealand Labour News](#)

American Income Life Insurance Company · 1701 K Street, N.W., Suite 300 · Washington, D.C. 20006 ·
(202) 833-2030