

# NEWS LETTER

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## REHABILITATION and OVERTIME

### WORK INJURY?

**The Union is having several instances where the employer is challenging whether or not an injury occurred in the workplace.**

**Workers need to ensure that they report ANY INCIDENT, no matter how trivial it may seem as this greatly enhances your chances of having fewer problems gaining cover and entitlements.**

**REPORT! REPORT! REPORT!**

The Union has had several enquiries concerning rehabilitation and overtime.

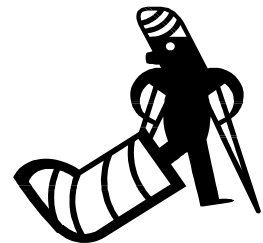
If an injured worker has been able to return to work for “alternative” or “light” duties then they need to discuss with their doctor whether or not that also means they can perform those duties on an overtime basis as well. If the doctor puts “normal hours” and the worker normally works on a Saturday, then the employer can expect the worker to do that overtime. However, if the doctor decides that overtime work is not going to assist with the safe return to work for that worker, then they need to outline what hours can be worked.

Some employers already acknowledge that working overtime

does not always assist with rehabilitation and appreciate that an injured body needs more time to recover from a days work, in the instances where this is not the case, and bearing in mind that long hours are not always conducive to good rehabilitation, workers must

ensure this issue is addressed by them with their doctor and/or treatment provider.

All this AND overtime?



## SAFETY OF ALTERNATE/LIGHT DUTIES—Yes or no?

Recently the Union has also been asked about the safety aspects of injured workers performing certain alternate/light duties.

We recommend that if an injured worker has been medically identified by their treatment provider/doctor as being capable of performing alternate/

light duties, the employer should supply a duty list to the injured worker’s treatment provider for him/her to assess which duties they can safely undertake.

The injured worker should ensure they only perform those tasks agreed to by their Doctor.

WORK DEATH TOLL SO FAR IN 2006/07

(SOURCE—Safeguard Magazine)

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## General Secretary—Dave Eastlake

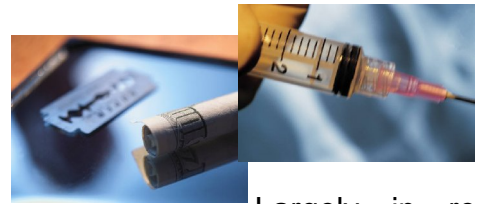
2006 has shot by very quickly at the National Office. The early part of the year was taken up with negotiations of the major Collective Employment Agreements. Having Alliance, AFFCO and PPCS agreements all expired at the same time certainly put some pressure on the Union's resources.

With the first full year of one Union of Meatworkers now behind us, we can reflect on how it has been. The new executive make up has worked up to expectations even though we lost a meeting due to weather conditions in Christchurch with fog (or is it smog?) keeping the airport closed, the 54 delegate Conference's have included useful debate on a range of issues and ideas, and it has been pleasing to see delegates working so well together with the trade of information benefiting all members.



During October, along with Graham Cooke and Bill Watt, I attended an International Union of Food workers Conference for three days. Held in Bali and with 14 countries from around the South Pacific basin represented it was a real eye-opener to hear of some of the conditions other workers put up with. One of the major concerns has to be the amount of casualisation, part time and outsourced work that is going on in this region, while the trend of Labour hire Companies is relatively new to our country and particularly to our industry it has a major influence elsewhere and the more we can learn to combat this anti-worker form of employment the better.

With new season stock figures now available we can expect a seasonal kill much the same as last season. Some commentators predict a small increase in lambing numbers, but already we are seeing an increase in adult sheep kill numbers, surprisingly the adverse spring weather is having no effect on the pre-Christmas kill and it is pleasing to see all members in work before Christmas.



Largely in response to being under pressure to consult with employers over drug and alcohol policies, the Union has been working towards setting it's own policy in relation to Drugs and Alcohol in the work place. The Union will be able to refer to this policy when constructing responses to those presented by employers, with a view to reaching an acceptable outcome to all parties concerned. For the record, the Union does not condone the misuse of alcohol and/or non-prescription drugs in the workplace!

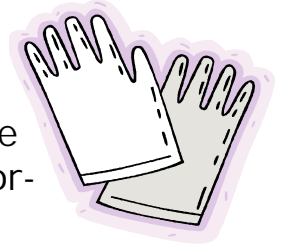
Finally I wish all members and their families a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous New year.

**DAVE EASTLAKE,  
GENERAL SECRETARY**

## Meat Industry Health & Safety Forum

The New Zealand Meat Industry Health & Safety Forum meets quarterly. Forum members are from the Union, employers, Department of Labour (Workplace), ACC and Meat Industry Association.

This year they have met on numerous issues such as Cut Resistant Gloves, knife sharpening projects, musculoskeletal disorders, and codes of practice.



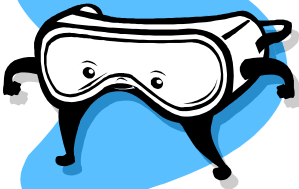
The Forum is in the early stages of planning and releasing a generic health and safety video/DVD for use within the industry at any site, along with working on a document containing health and safety guidelines for the New Zealand Meat Industry (modeled on a similar document from Australia).

In the past, the Forum has also organised health and safety workshops. Beginning in Wellington, these have been run in Taupo and Dunedin in most recent years. The workshops cover issues such as accident investigation, safety representatives, safe systems of work in various companies (who does what and how they do it), back injury and rehabilitation issues.

A variety of speakers have been utilised to cover a wide range of health and safety topics at these workshops.

The intent of the Forum is to co-operatively seek a reduction in injuries to workers in the New Zealand Meat Industry and a reduction in the associated costs to both the employees and the industry employers while maintaining health and safety as a priority.

Members can access minutes from these meetings via the ACC website [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz) and following the instructions to the safer Industries sites and going to the Meat Industry Health and Safety Forum link.



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WHAT THE...?

OOPS!

In the last issue we incorrectly stated that the artist of these paintings used to work at Fortex in Ashburton...the artist, Jane McLeod, did of course work at the old Fortex plant in Silverstream, Dunedin.

## Bits 'n' Pieces



### HSNO

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NEW ORGANISMS ACT (HSNO)  
AFFECTS YOU!

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The number of people with noise-induced hearing loss has doubled in the past 2 to 3 years, a research project has found. The study also found that current workplace interventions were having no discernable impact on the rising toll of hearing loss, and recommended focusing on noise abatement.



PPCS Ltd was fined \$5000 under s6 and ordered to pay \$12,000 in reparations to an employee who lost parts of two fingers in a meat crushing machine. The injured man was cleaning the machine and reached his fingers through an opening in a metal plate, into the path of a crushing hammer. The machine had been fitted with a time-delayed lock to prevent the hatch cover being removed until seven seconds after the stop button had been pushed, however the auger and hammers took up to 15 seconds to stop moving. (Waipukurau DC, Nov 7)

### Elected health & safety reps



PLEASE ENSURE that if you are having to issue a hazard notice for any reason that you send a copy of the notice to the Health & Safety Co-ordinator in the Union's national office as soon as possible, either prior to or as soon as has been issued to the employer. Notices can be copied to Amanda Stephens via fax (03) 379-7763 or posted to her at P.O. Box 13-048, Christchurch.