CLEW'D IN

Newsletter of the Centre for Labour, Employment and Work (CLEW)

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NOTICES

Seminar – Achieving Pay Equity - Principles to Practice

Friday April 21, 9am-1pm, Lecture Theatre 2, Rutherford House, Victoria University of Wellington.

Cost: \$130

Programme and registrations

Employment Agreements Update 2017 – Seminar Roadshow.

Dunedin – Wed 26 July Christchurch – Thur 27 July Hamilton – Wed 2 August Auckland – Thur 3 August Wellington – Wed 9 Aug.

All sessions: 9am-12.30pm

Full registration \$465+gst; Earlybird (by June 10) \$420+gst.

Course details and Registrations

VUW Professional and Executive Development Courses

Conflict and Resolution - 30 May, 9am-4.30pm

Strategic Negotiation – 16 and 17 May, 9am-4.30pm

Contact: profdev@vuw.ac.nz

TIME FOR MANDATORY GENDER EQUALITY REPORTING IN NEW ZEALAND?

Amanda Reilly and William Townsend*

New Zealand women are paid 12% less than men on an hourly basis and, far from improving, the gap is widening (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Dr Jackie Blue, the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission (HRC), has called for mandatory gender equality reporting as one intervention that might narrow the gap (Human Rights Commission, 2016). New Zealand is lagging behind both Australia and the United Kingdom in its failure to implement such gender reporting.

Current New Zealand reporting

Existing mandatory gender equality reporting in New Zealand is minimal. Companies listed on the New Zealand Exchange Main Board are required to provide a gender breakdown for the Directors and Officers in their annual reports (NZX, n.d.). Apart from this, New Zealand private sector employers are not subject to any gender reporting requirements at all.

More is required in the state sector. Crown entities and other state organisations are required by the Crown Entities Act 2004 to be 'good employers'. If subject to this obligation, organisations must operate a personnel policy that complies with the principle of being a good employer and report in their annual reports on the extent of their

compliance. While these reporting requirements are not onerous, the Human Rights Commission's 2015 review of the Crown Entities annual reports found that 26 of 93 Crown Entities achieved a lower compliance rating than the previous years. In 2014, when the HRC investigated EEO in the New Zealand public service they found only scant reporting of good employer programmes and EEO despite the fact that reporting is a statutory requirement (Human Rights Commission, 2014).

Australia requirements

By contrast, Australia has much more extensive reporting requirements and has had since 1986.

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In 1986 all private sector employees with 100 or more employees were required to develop and report on an 8 step affirmative action programme (Smith & Hayes, 2016). Various other developments followed but it is key to note that this first step was already a step

further than New Zealand has, to date, attempted. Most recently, the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth) represented a significant shift from process focussed reporting to an outcome based framework. This legislation requires organisations that are employers that have 100 or more employees to report annually on certain gender equality indicators (GEIs):

- GEI 1: Gender composition of workforce
- GEI 2: Gender composition of governing bodies of employer
- GEI 3: Equal remuneration between women and men
- GEI 4: Availability of flexible arrangements for employees with family/caring responsibilities
- GEI 5: Consultation with employees on gender equality issues
- GEI 6: Any other matters specified by the Minister in a legislative instrument

The respective Minister must set minimum standards in legislative instruments and section 19D(2) of the Act allows the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) to name employers that fail to comply with the act in a report to the Minister.

From the 2015-16 reporting period onwards there were also a number of changes to the reporting requirements (WGEA, 2016), the most important being:

Reporting on number of appointments made by gender and manager/non-manager

- Reporting on number of promotions by gender, employment status and manager/non manager
- Reporting on number of employees who ceased employment during parental leave, by gender and manager/non-manager.

It is thus apparent that a much wider array of organisations are required to report in Australia than in New Zealand. They are also required to report on a wider and more specific array of gender equality indicators.

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UK gender reporting regulations

The UK is about to introduce limited gender reporting with regulations set to commence in April 2017. From 6 April 2017 all employers in Great Britain with more than 250 staff will be required by law to publish the following four types of figures annually on their own website and on a government website (Government Equalities Office, 2017):

- Gender pay gap (mean and median averages)
- Gender bonus gap (mean and median averages)
- Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses
- Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure

Conclusion

While gender equality reporting will not instantly close the gender pay gap, better reporting could contribute to its closing in a number of ways. Smith outlines how reporting requirements can potentially improve organisational compliance through processes of legislative translation, rule

illustration and dissemination of best practice (2014). Reporting will allow good employers the opportunity to showcase their successes and where results fall short of expectation to find solutions.

Reporting will allow good employers the opportunity to showcase their successes and where results fall short of expectation to find solutions.

Improved gender equality reporting could also play a role in resolving pay equity claims. Following the decision in *Terranova v Service and Food Workers Union and Bartlett*, the government established the Joint Working Group to recommend universally applicable pay equity principles for consideration by the government. The working group has now reported government has largely accepted the recommendations which set out a process and principles which requires

the parties to bargain in good faith to resolve claims (State Services Commission, 2016). The Joint Working Group (2016, p.3) noted that both employers and unions agreed that parties bargaining on pay equity matters should have "ready access to adequate information and resources to assist them in their deliberations" and suggested that "government giver further consideration to its role in supporting pay equity information". Improved, publically available gender equality reporting can only enhance the process of claim resolution.

New Zealand was the first country in the world to grant women the vote in 1893. It is unclear why in 2017 less transparency should be expected of New Zealand employers than of employers in Australia and the UK. It is time for mandatory gender equality reporting.

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RESEARCH UPDATE: DO UNION ACTIVISTS NEED TO KEEP THEIR HEADS BELOW THE PARAPET?¹

Carol Jess, Sue Ryall and Clara Cantal

"I don't discuss the union with my line manager. If you stick your head above the parapet your career is over." This comment from a fellow union member in the UK is a common perception, particularly strongly held by active trade unionists. Indeed, research carried out by *Personnel Today* and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2007 substantiated how widespread this perception was. They surveyed 583 Human Resource (HR) professionals and

(In UK research) 92% of the union reps believed their careers had been damaged by their union involvement. Further, 36% of the HR professionals agreed that union reps careers may be harmed.

524 union reps (union delegates), and discovered that 92% of the union reps believed their careers had been damaged by their union involvement. Further, 36% of the HR professionals agreed that union reps careers may be harmed.²

Similar questions were put to members of the Public Services Association (PSA) in New Zealand in a survey of union members carried out in 2016 in partnership with CLEW3. In that research,

¹ All analysis for this article is sourced from Plimmer, G., Cantal, C. (2016). *Differences in variables included in the 2016 survey according to the level of participation in the PSA*. Wellington: Centre for Labour, Employment and Work, Victoria University of Wellington. Internal report.

² http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/being-a-union-rep-can-seriously-damage-your-career-prospects/ (accessed on 3 April 2017)

³ Pimmer, G. and Cantal, C. (2016) *Workplace Dynamics in New Zealand Public Services*. Centre for Labour, Employment and Work, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington NZ

four category of membership, reflecting different levels of involvement, were identified – inactive, active member, workplace delegate member, or 'Other' such as PSA network, national delegates, or runanga member).

The data from the PSA Survey suggests that while active members and workplace delegates believed that they were disadvantaged for promotion and career advancement that this is not what appears to happen in practice. Inactive PSA members surveyed reported a lower number of promotions and career advances over the previous ten years than either the active or workplace delegate members and yet the latter two were more likely to believe that they had been overlooked for promotion in their current workplace. Also, inactive PSA members were more likely to be a team leader/middle-manager or senior-level manager.

Much of this may be related to the length of service of the members surveyed. Inactive members were more likely to have worked in their current—rganization for a period up to five years, possibly providing less opportunity for promotion. Active members, workplace delegates and 'other' members were more likely to have worked eleven years or more in their—rganization possibly giving them more opportunities both to perceive that they were overlooked for promotion but also to have been promoted.

These results would suggest that while union members in the PSA agree with their UK counterparts in their perception of their career being harmed by union involvement, in reality the more active and involved union members appear more likely to be promoted than their inactive colleagues. These results would suggest that while union members in the PSA agree with their UK counterparts in their perception of their career being harmed by union involvement, in reality the more active and involved union members appear more likely to be promoted than their inactive colleagues.

Workplace relations

Further discussions about the impact of active union members in the workplace involve questions of worker productivity and workplace engagement. While workplace delegates are more likely to report lower job satisfaction than active and inactive members, it appears that the inactive members have significantly lower public service motivation, while more active members, particularly workplace delegate members and employees with other type of membership (such as PSA network, national delegate or runanga member), are significantly more motivated by being in the public service than the other types of members. Additionally, it would appear that inactive members are significantly less resilient than their active colleagues. Active members, workplace delegate members and other members are more likely to report working more than their

contracted hours. This could also be interpreted as evidence of both public service motivation and workplace engagement by active union members.

The good news for union members, is that, for the public services, union activity does not appear to restrict promotion despite their perceptions that it does, but those involved in union activity are less likely to be at a team leader/senior-level manager position. This is possibly due to a perceived conflict between their union roles and their position in the workplace. This research is just a small insight into how different levels of union participation may affect both members' perceptions of their workplace relations and their experience of the workplace. This would be a rich area for additional qualitative research to further clarify how member participation in the union affects their experience of work.

LEGAL UPDATE: ENFORCEMENT OF A FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT - NEW ZEALAND BASING LIMITED V BROWN [2016] NZCA 525

Review by Peter Kiely, Partner, and Hannah King, Solicitor, Kiely Thompson Caisley

The report on the Employment Court decision in this case was included in Employment Agreements: Bargaining Trends and Employment Law Update 2014/2015 (pg 133)

This case concerns enforcement of a foreign employment agreement. The Court of Appeal overturned the Employment Court judgment and found that the proper law of the employment contracts was Hong Kong law and the contracts were not affected by New Zealand's employment legislation.

New Zealand Basing Limited ("NZBL"), a subsidiary of the Hong Kong airline, Cathay Pacific, appealed against a decision of the Employment Court in favour of two of its employees, Captains Brown and Sycamore (the "pilots").

The pilots are employed as senior captains and are generally rostered for flights between Auckland and Hong Kong. Both are employed pursuant to contracts of employment, which materially include the following provisions

This employment contract is governed by and shall be construed in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong and the parties hereto shall submit to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Hong Kong.

...

These Conditions of Service ... will in all cases and in all respects be interpreted in accordance with the law ... of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The contracts also state that the normal retirement age is 55 years of age.

Employment Court decision

The Employment Court declared that the age discrimination provisions of the Employment Relations Act 2000 (ERA) applied to the pilots' employment with NZBL and that it would be discriminatory for NZBL to require the pilots to retire on the grounds of age as defined in the Human Rights Act 1993 ("HRA").

The Court of Appeal

NZBL was granted leave to appeal on two questions:

- (a) If the ERA applies, does it override the parties' agreement that the law of Hong Kong applies to their contract to employment?
- (b) If the ERA does not apply, would the application of the law of Hong Kong to the contract of employment be contrary to public policy?

The Employment Relations Act 2000

The Court first considered the question of the application of the ERA, in particular section 238, which states:

238 No contracting out

The provisions of this Act have effect despite any provision to the contrary in any contract or agreement.

Referring to private international law principles, the Court noted that, unless a recognised exception applies, the proper law of the contract is the law chosen by the parties, provided that choice is bona fide and legal.

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In the Employment Court, Judge Corkill found that the ERA overrode the parties' choice of Hong Kong law. However, the Court of Appeal disagreed.

Judge Corkill's reasoning was largely based on the decision of the House of Lords in *Lawson v Serco Ltd*, *Botham v Ministry of Defence*, *Crofts v Veta Ltd*⁴ ("*Crofts*"), which upheld the claims of London-based Cathay Pacific pilots, that the UK Employment Relations Act and a right not to be unfairly dismissed applied to their contract.

The Court of Appeal held that *Crofts* was distinguishable because it had been decided against a very different statutory context. In particular, the Court of Appeal noted that the UK Act was an example of 'overriding legislation which governs the employment relationship notwithstanding

⁴ Lawson v Serco Ltd, Botham v Ministry of Defence, Crofts v Veta Ltd [2006] UKHL 3, [2006] 1 All ER 823.

that the law of another country would otherwise apply'5. The court found error in Judge Corkill's decision that section 238 of the ERA could be characterised as being of a similar nature.

The Court of Appeal noted further that it cannot have been Parliament's intention that section 238 would apply to override settled rules of private international law. It stated that:

Section 238 does not of itself justify the wholesale replacement of carefully drafted transnational bargains with New Zealand's employment regime, even if a court considers the domestic protections more advanced or attractive than those under the foreign law of contract. There is nothing in the ERA's language to suggest that its provisions were intended to apply irrespective of the parties' choice of law.⁶

It referred to the "decisive significance"⁷ of the choice of law clause in the pilots' employment contracts and held that the Hong Kong law was the proper law of the contracts.

The public policy exception

Having determined that the ERA did not apply to the pilots' employment agreements, the Court turned to consider the question of whether the enforcement of the law of Hong Kong would offend New Zealand public policy.

The exercise of a court's discretion to refuse recognition of an agreed choice of law in the contract means condemning the foreign law which would otherwise apply. The Court emphasised that, although party autonomy is not absolute, the threshold in relation to this discretion is high.

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fact that a clause of a foreign contract might be contrary public policy in New Zealand would not necessarily make its *enforcement in New Zealand* contrary to public policy. Further, differences in themselves would not constitute sufficient reason for a court to decline to apply foreign law.

The test was:

... whether recognition of a foreign law which does not protect against age discrimination would shock the conscience of a reasonable New Zealander, be contrary to a New Zealander's view of basic morality or violate an essential principle of justice or moral interests.8

⁵ At [54].

⁶ At [57].

⁷ At [58].

⁸ At [67].

It held that the pilots' case fell "well short" of satisfying those tests.

The Court held that the right under the ERA and the HRA to be free from age discrimination is not absolute. Rather, it is a flexible concept linked to a number of fiscal, social and cultural factors, and could not be elevated to the level of a fundamental human right able to trump transnational contracting.

The Court further stated that the pilots' contracts must be viewed in their entirety, and that the numerous protections available to the pilots (including favourable tax rates, personal accident insurance, statutory holidays and a sickness allowance under Hong Kong law) could not be divorced from the analysis. The Court would not accept a "selective notion" of public policy and held that this was not a case in which the public policy exception could be applied to defeat the private bargaining of the parties to the contracts.

The appeal was allowed.

Leave to appeal

The Supreme Court has granted the pilots leave to appeal on the question of whether the Court of Appeal was correct to conclude that age discrimination provisions of the ERA do not apply to the employment agreements between the applicants and the respondent.¹¹

Employment Agreements Update 2015/2016 available for purchase

If you are heading into bargaining in the next few months make sure you have checked out our publication *Employment Agreements: Bargaining Trends and Employment Law Update 2015/2016*. The book is seen as the essential reference for employment relations experts and the only source of information on current provisions in employment agreements. It includes information wages/ salaries, term of agreements, all forms of leave, work hours and penal/overtime rates, redundancy, superannuation/ kiwisaver, union provisions and much more. The 2016/2017 Update will be available in late July when our Employment Agreement Trends and Employment Law Update seminar roadshow gets underway.

⁹ At [83].

¹⁰ At [77].

¹¹ Brown v New Zealand Basing Ltd [2017] NZSC 12.

DUE DILIGENCE: A PANACEA FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK GOVERNANCE?

This article is abridged from an article co-authored by Chris Peace, Vicky Mabin and Carolyn Cordery of Victoria University in Wellington Business School, to be published in **Policy & Practice in Health and Safety**.

Background

The failure of boards and individual directors to engage with and accept accountability for work health and safety (WH&S) has frequently been commented on as a contributory cause of high injury and fatality rates.

The Pike River disaster in 2010 led to the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (NZ HSWA), including 'due diligence' in board-level oversight and direction of workplace health and safety.

Duty of Officers in the NZ HSWA

Section 44 of the NZ HSWA requires 'officers' such as directors and chief executives to use due diligence to ensure that a 'person having control of a business or undertaking' (PCBU) complies with its health and safety obligations. Here, a 'person' can be a natural person or an entity such as a company. Section 44 sets the requirements in the context of what is reasonable, with some of the language being very close to section 137 of the Companies Act 1993.

This blanket duty for due diligence for any 'officer' is new to New Zealand safety legislation and requires a PCBU to exercise due diligence to ensure compliance with their duties under the Act. ' This blanket duty for due diligence for any 'officer' is new to New Zealand safety legislation and requires a PCBU to exercise due diligence to ensure compliance with their duties under the Act. 'Officer'

is defined in section 18 to include a director of a company, partner in a partnership, director or equivalent in a body corporate, and any other person able to 'exercise significant influence' (including a CEO) over the management of the PCBU.

The term 'director' is aligned with section 126 of the Companies Act ('a person occupying the position of director of the company by whatever name called') and section 44(2) NZ HSWA is almost identical to the requirements of section 137 of the Companies Act.

But what does this legal obligation mean in practice?

Options for compliance with section 44(4)

In New Zealand, small- or medium-sized businesses (those employing up to 20 people) account for 97% of all businesses, while 90% of businesses employ five or fewer people. While this means many owner/directors will need to improve their governance skills to comply with section 44, they

should already have some familiarity with their WH&S risks, even if not fully competent to manage those risks.

Some options for compliance are summarised in Table 1 below.

However, directors should not simply be passive recipients of information and should seek out information and use it to challenge and guide management. While Table 1 provides a range of boardroom-based due diligence options that may be 'reasonable steps' under section 44(4), many are relatively passive although they do enable active questioning.

In larger businesses a due diligence system may not achieve an improvement in WH&S unless it is integrated with a safety management system (SMS). The chances of effective safety management will be further improved if the SMS also forms part of the overall risk management framework and organisational management system. Positive changes will only be realised if officers receive training, information and support to enable their leadership.

Conclusion

This article and the longer published version explore some of the options for compliance and will contribute to debate about measures to improve standards of governance of WH&S-related risks in New Zealand and other jurisdictions. The increased responsibility on directors for 'due diligence' in complying with their health and safety obligations aims to greatly improve the health and safety environment for those for whom they are responsible.

Table 1. Commonly mentioned options for compliance with section 44(4), NZ HSWA	Section 44(4) a-f NZ HSWA for which the option aids compliance					
Option	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Training and education of officers in relevant legislation (the Act, regulations, etc)	Х					
Attendance of officers at conferences and seminars covering matters relevant to the PCBU	Х					
Maintenance of officer training records, either by the officer, or by the PCBU, or both	Х					
Reporting on significant WH&S-related achievements of workers	Х					
Regular reports on PCBU operations, activities, hazards and risks	Х	Х				
Reports and presentations from major contractors to the PCBU	Х	Х				
Consideration of other PCBUs in the supply chain and their safety management system		Х			Х	
Detailed reports on risk assessments of "major risks"	Х	Х	Х		Х	Х
Officer tours of sites	Х	Х	Х	Х		
Progress with the health and safety plan and related topics			Х			
Reports from managers on progress with their health and safety objectives			Х			
Business cases show resources for health and safety and how they will be maintained			Х			
New significant hazards reported for the reporting period with commentary on each			Х			
Data on worker training, first aid courses (new and refresher), etc for the month			Х			
Indicators, with a strong emphasis on leading and then lagging indicators				Х		
Trends and patterns in: • serious harm incidents for the period with commentary on each • number of injured workers on a gradual, return-to-work (RTW) plan following work incidents • number of injured workers a gradual, RTW plan following non-work incidents • number of RTW plans completed, with workers back at work full time • sickness absence costs and statistics • employee assistance programme data • significant event reports • costs of incidents or events • customer feedback reports or complaints				X		
Current ACC experience rating				Х		
Total ACC claims affecting PCBU rating				Х		
Serious harm incidents for the period with commentary on each				Х		
Analysis of current status compared with where we should be					Х	
Review of policies and reports on activities					Х	
Reasons for non-compliance with NZ HSWA					Х	
Changes in legislation and implications for the organisation					Х	
ACC workplace safety management practices status ¹² and corrective actions, current experience rating, total claims affecting our rating						Х
Other audits relevant to WH&S						Х
Corrective actions from audits, management reports, etc that have been completed						Х

CLEW – WHO ARE WE?

The Centre for Labour, Employment and Work (CLEW) is situated in the School of Management at Victoria University of Wellington. Our research and public education programme are centred on three pillars of research:

Organisational dynamics and performance - What happens in organisations matters. From strategies, business processes, management practices, worker experiences to knowledge sharing, collaboration, innovation, productivity, engagement and trust – these all impact how individuals and organisations perform.

Contact person: Dr Geoff Plimmer Tel: 04 463 5700 Email geoff.plimmer@vuw.ac.nz Employment rights and institutions - What is the role of trade unions and of collective bargaining in New Zealand's contemporary economy and society? Is the current system of employment rights and the institutions and processes for enforcement of those rights in New Zealand still relevant? Is it efficient, and does it contribute to overall productivity growth?

Contact person: Dr Stephen Blumenfeld Tel: 04 463 5706 Email: stephen.blumenfeld@vuw.ac.nz Changing nature of work and the workforce - Rapid and increasing change in the external environment of organisations has fundamentally changed the world of work. Factors shaping how we organise and participate in work include rapid technological development, intensifying environmental and resource pressures, globalised markets, mobile workforces and changing demographics.

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¹² ACC rewards employers if the workplace safety management practices meet specified audit levels