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Media Statement

Ports of Auckland disappointed at strike notice

For immediate release

Ports of Auckland has received a strike notice from the Maritime Union of New Zealand – Local 13 (MUNZ), with which it is currently bargaining over a Collective Agreement.

Chief Executive Tony Gibson says the move by the union is highly disappointing.

“Regrettably, we can’t recall a single bargaining round in the last 15 years where MUNZ hasn’t taken some kind of industrial action.

“This year, by offering to work collaboratively with the union and staff, we attempted to break the cycle and avoid a repeat of the historic disruptive pattern. We have acted in good faith and have been focused on achieving a fair and appropriate settlement. It is hugely disappointing that MUNZ seem determined to go down this path.”

Ports of Auckland’s most recent offer to the union involved rolling over the expired CEA with no changes to terms and conditions, a \$200 signing payment to recognise backpay and a 2.5% increase to hourly rates, in line with CPI changes.

“In recent months we have seen a willingness across the organisation to work together to achieve further improvements. We respect and care for our workforce and recognise that significant productivity gains have already been achieved.”

Mr Gibson says POAL will be attending mediation with the Department of Labour and is hopeful of finding a solution to the dispute.

The proposed strike will affect the Fergusson and Bledisloe container terminals and associated road and rail services at the Waitemata seaport for two 24 hour periods:

1. From 10.30 pm on Thursday 1 December 2011 until 10.30 pm on Friday 2 December 2011;
2. From 10.30 pm on Sunday 4 December 2011 until 10.30 pm on Monday 5 December 2011.

Ports of Auckland’s multi-cargo wharves, cruise business, vehicle import trade, marine services, Onehunga seaport and Wiri Inland Port are not affected by the proposed strike. The proposed action involves 327 employees out of a total of 580.

Mr Gibson says at least four ships may be forced to divert to other ports or miss Auckland from their shipping schedule entirely.

Ports of Auckland estimates the revenue impact of the strike as around \$1.6m. “The immediate and long term impact to the Auckland region will also be very significant,” says Mr Gibson.

“The run-up to Christmas is a particularly busy time for us. This strike action will be hugely disruptive and costly, and will have a very negative effect on local exporters, importers and ultimately consumers.”

POAL has been in formal negotiations with MUNZ since 5 August 2011 with informal discussions underway for most of the year. The Collective Agreement (CA) with MUNZ expired on 30 September 2011.

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