

# ALWU NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AOTEAROA LEGAL WORKERS' UNION

## PROGRESS REPORT

What has ALWU been doing since our last newsletter?

### PRIORITIES SURVEY

Thanks to our members who took part in our priorities survey this month. Our results showed that our members are more interested in overtime pay and time off in lieu than salary increases, and that collective bargaining, fair pay agreements, and mental health issues are all key priorities. You also suggested other priorities for us to focus on, such as bullying, delegate resources, gently pressuring the Law Society, and best practice policies.

While ALWU views negotiating an agreement as a medium term goal, we are working on a strategy that will put us in a strong bargaining position. In the interim we are looking at what we can achieve through our existing connections with employers and senior professionals to make progress in this space. We've also released a delegate pack to guide delegates on organising in the workplace, and have begun planning campaigns across your key priority areas. We look forward to announcing these in the coming months.



Strategy hui: Post-its are key to collective action

## OUR MISSION

Transforming legal workplaces through advocacy and action

### STRATEGY HUI

ALWU's executive is spread across Aotearoa, so our meetings tend to be regional or involve complex stacks of cellphones and many reception issues. But we managed to get into one room for the first time at the start of October, and had an all-weekend planning hui to set our vision and goals for the year, as well as longer-term strategy. This included consideration of our members' priorities and key audiences we need to reach out to, including students, South Island workers and support staff.

You can read our vision statement above, which aims to capture in a single sentence the answer to the perennial question: "So what is it that ALWU is trying to do?".



AOTEAROA LEGAL WORKERS' UNION

# THE BIG PICTURE: BROADER ENGAGEMENT

What else has ALWU been doing this month?

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

ALWU has continued to roll out information sessions this month, from Auckland to Nelson. Get in touch if you'd like us to come along to speak at your work - as well as being informative, each session normalises the idea of a union in a legal workplace for both employers and employees, and our members have reported feeling more comfortable discussing ALWU at work following an information session.

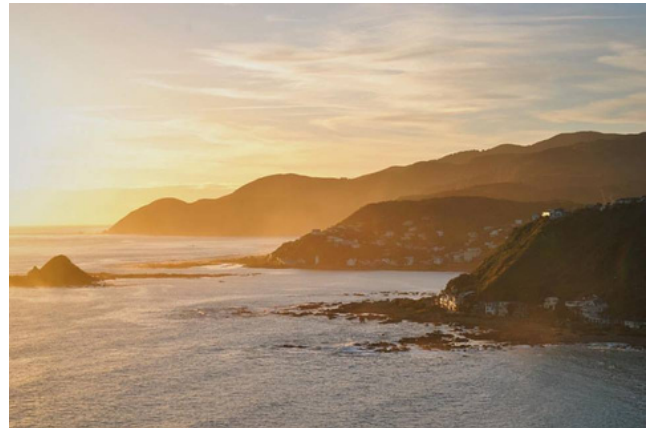
## MEETING WITH THE NZ BAR ASSOCIATION

One of ALWU's priorities is to make contact and build relationships with other groups and stakeholders in the legal world. ALWU recently met with representatives from the NZ Bar Association and the association was very supportive of what ALWU is doing. ALWU is relevant to employed barristers and "pupils" for the support we can provide them and to employer-barristers in advising on best practice and common issues. We will keep the lines of communication open between ALWU and the NZBA.

## BEST PRACTICE MINIMUM WAGE POLICY

Policies have their pros and cons, but a policy provides employees with a powerful source of evidence for compliance if things go wrong. That's why ALWU advocates for (and has drafted) a minimum wage policy in workplaces where there is a risk of breaches occurring. While employers are legally required to both pay minimum wage and to keep accurate time records of all hours actually worked by employees, it's practically useful for employees to know how their employer is monitoring hours and how a minimum wage top up might be paid if required.

We've been consulting on our draft minimum wage policy with senior employment lawyers and the Labour Inspectorate, and will test it with key employers in the coming weeks.



## MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

ALWU represents all workers in legal workplaces - not just lawyers. Accordingly, ALWU met with the Union coordinator from the Ministry of Justice this month to discuss time recording and minimum wage requirements for Judges' Clerks. We also took the opportunity to discuss issues relating to workload and how to improve structures for complaints at the Court.

If you're working in the public sector, remember the Public Service Association (PSA) is also there to help. You can even belong to both unions at once!

## NEED SUPPORT?

As ALWU grows in size, a range of workers at legal workplaces have started to get in touch with us about individual employment issues. We are committed to helping workers at an individual level as well as through collective action. We can provide confidential support and if needed we can connect members to senior lawyers who can offer expert employment advice, support and advocacy on our behalf.

Contact us at [contact@alwu.org.nz](mailto:contact@alwu.org.nz).

ALWU ▼

AOTEAROA LEGAL WORKERS' UNION

# OTHER HAPPENINGS

Looking ahead to future involvement

## UPCOMING REVIEW OF THE NZ LAW SOCIETY

....

More...

## EXCITING CHANGES OVER THE DITCH

ALWU isn't the only one talking about clock in-clock out time recording. The Fair Work Commission in Australia has recently announced it will be updating its legal services award to include a requirement to record work start times and finish times and any unpaid breaks (e.g. lunch). ALWU is glad to see that there are similar changes happening in our neighbouring jurisdiction.

The award also sets out minimum payment for workers, annual leave entitlements and penalty rates. The award covers graduate lawyers and paralegals.

If fair pay agreements are introduced in NZ, ALWU would look to achieve a similar outcome for lawyers here. Until then, ALWU will continue to negotiate with firms and ask them to meet best practice standards.



## ALWU GETS AN HONOURABLE MENTION

At the Ethel Benjamin Address in Dunedin from Una Jagose QC...

...

## MEME CORNER

Some comic solidarity to provide relief from the strain of collective action. Submit to us at [contact@alwu.org.nz](mailto:contact@alwu.org.nz).

