



and you



E tū turns ten

Looking back at a decade of action and towards a promising future.

Women's Day of Action

Keeping the pressure on for pay equity

Spotlight on electrical workers

E tū members who keep the lights on for everyone

JD Rawiri

Meet the new Convenor of Te Rūnanga o E tū

National President nominations

Elections for the E tū National President positions will be held at the Union's Biennial Conference in July 2026. E tū has two National Presidents in acknowledgement of our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Nominations are called for both these positions:

- **National President (Māori)**
- **National President (non-Māori)**

Any person who has been a financial member of E tū for 12 months continuously is eligible to put in a nomination for a National President position, which must be signed by a mover and seconder, both of whom must be financial members.

Please send all nominations to the Returning Officer, Christopher Gordon, at christopher.gordon@etu.nz by 4pm, Friday 27 March 2026.

E tū Support

Call 0800 1 UNION (0800 186 466)

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This magazine is published by E tū and distributed by post and email to union members.

This magazine is printed by union members at Pivotal Print.

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Conference remits

All representative bodies of E tū have the right to put forward remits to be considered by our Conference in July 2026.

Remits are due by 4pm, Thursday 14 May 2026, to be sent to conference@etu.nz.



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The new Convenor of Te Rūnanga o E tū



Gearing up for 2026

By Rachel Mackintosh, E tū National Secretary

Kia ora koutou E tū members.

As we reach the end of the year, some of us will be looking forward to a break and others will be working through the summer period, providing vital services to keep our communities functioning.

Whatever you are looking forward to, this is a time to reflect on our year.

With huge pressures on communities this year, from the continuing high cost of living, to major layoffs of workers by major companies, to disputes with high-profile companies like Resene and Air New Zealand, to attacks on workers' health and safety protections and individual rights to justice, to Government actions that are designed to divide us: rich and poor, tāngata whenua and tauwi, women and men, contractors and employees, we have had a lot to face.

We can be proud of how we stood together across the union this year, as we celebrate our tenth anniversary as the larger, stronger union of E tū. We can reflect on these 10 years while also carrying forward the legacy of all the different sectors and occupations that have been woven together since the first thread was laid down in 1863, when engineers met at the Aurora Tavern in Auckland to form the first union of our long history.

In 2025 we stood together with our allies in the union movement and in our communities. We rallied across the country on May Day to show our commitment to decent work and decent lives. We rallied again on 20 September to stand up for Pay Equity.

Through our commitment and strength, we have won many victories.

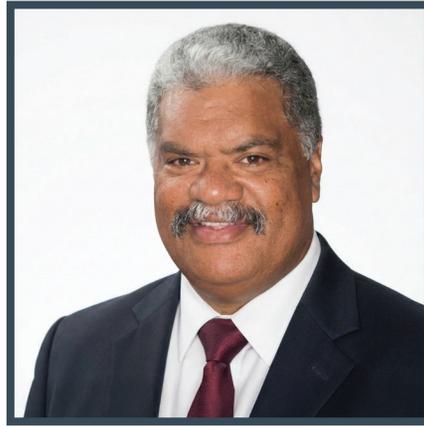
When union members invite other workers to join us, it is a victory, because we have strength in numbers. And we can celebrate the fact that our union has grown this year. Every time we settle a collective agreement it is a victory, as union members in collective agreements have better wages and conditions than workers on their own.

We have won more public victories too: Uber drivers have won the right to be employees in law, rather than contractors, so they get the basic rights of sick leave, annual leave and minimum wage. We have won a commitment from the Labour Party to return the \$12.8 billion in Pay Equity, funding taken away by the current Government, so workers' skill and responsibility can be recognised in their pay. We worked with our allies in the Living Wage Movement to keep a guaranteed Living Wage for cleaners, security guards and caterers when the government threatened to remove that guarantee or workers delivering those services through the core public service.

Our purpose is to empower working people and our communities for a better life. We are doing that, and all of us can be proud.

I wish you a year-end that is filled with solidarity and love and the chance to take a moment reflect on all that you value and contribute as a member of E tū.

Kia kaha tātou.



METUA NO'ORA AUGUSTINO SAMUELA

28 May 1967 – 3 November 2025

It is with deep sadness that we farewell our long-serving E tū organiser, Metua No'ora Augustino Samuela, who passed away peacefully at home on 3 November.

No'ora gave more than 30 years of dedicated service to our union, beginning as a hospital orderly and delegate before becoming an organiser. Born in Kimiangatau, Mauke, he was a proud Cook Islands leader, a devoted husband to Denise, father to Kane and Michael, and grandfather to Keenan.

No'ora's commitment to Pasifika workers and our Komiti Pasifika was unwavering. He was also a much-loved figure in his local rugby league community, both as a player and a coach.

The whole E tū whānau sends our aroha and condolences to the Samuela family.

Moe mai rā, No'ora.

■ Support holiday hours

We are open between **Christmas and New Year** from **9am to 2pm**. We are back to normal hours (**8am to 5.30pm**) from **5 January**.

Important notice

The old SFWU number is expiring.
Please use **0800 1 UNION (0800 186 466)** for all calls.



Our decade of action

October this year marked a decade since E tū was launched. Across workplaces and communities, members have been celebrating the strength we have built together and the rich history that brought us here. Our tenth anniversary is a moment to look back with pride and look forward with confidence.

E tū was founded in 2015 when the Service and Food Workers Union, the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union, and FARSA came together with a clear purpose. Each union had deep roots and a strong record of standing up for workers. Bringing them into one organisation created the scale and stability needed for long-term organising, stronger workplace leadership, and national campaigns that could shift the agenda for all working people.

The concept for the “New Union” was simple. Combine the best of each union’s traditions, put member leadership at the centre, build workplace structures that last, and grow our organising capacity so that our members can win in their industries and win across Aotearoa. It was never a merger for convenience – it was a deliberate step to build something new. Our name reflects that purpose: E tū means ‘stand up’. We stand up together for decent wages, fair conditions, and a better country for the many, not the few.

In the ten years since, E tū members have shown what collective strength can achieve. Our pay equity victory for care and support workers lifted wages for an entire workforce and changed the national conversation. The Living Wage campaign helped transform thousands of low paid jobs, especially for cleaners and security guards and growing across councils, hospitals, and schools. Our industrial work across sectors has secured better pay and safer conditions, even in the face of constant pressure on wages and rights. During Covid, members carried the country and our union fought hard to protect jobs, incomes, and public services. We have continued to win political commitments that support working people, with pay equity, safety, and fair employment laws at the centre.

We have also become a modern union with strong digital systems and the ability to connect thousands of members quickly and clearly. Our democracy has grown, with more delegates taking leadership in their workplaces and more members stepping forward to organise for change.

Ten years on, our founding vision still guides us. We will keep organising for better lives, keep campaigning for justice, and keep building a union where every member can stand tall. We are E tū proud.



Muriel Tunoho
E tū President

One of the things I've always been proud of is our name: E tū. It's simple, powerful, and uniquely ours – the first union in Aotearoa to have an indigenous name only. It means "stand up". When we chose that name, we knew it wasn't just about standing up for workplace rights. It was about standing up for our communities, for fairness, for justice, and for a better Aotearoa.



E tū represents a bigger idea: that working people don't just need strong unions, they need solidarity. And in the last 10 years, we've shown what that looks like. We've taken action. We've built power. We've kept going – even when things got tough.

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, E tū must continue to be brave in fighting for a society in which the rich pay their fair share, workers' rights are strengthened and Te Tiriti o Waitangi is embraced and normalised.



Gadiel Asiata
E tū President

Ten years ago, a vision was born. A union rooted in unity and strength. We're now celebrating a decade of progress and resilience.



Our union has given voice to the unheard, empowered workers to stand up for themselves and create opportunities for workers to lead and succeed. We've seen incredible growth, more leaders emerging, more voices heard and stronger connections. I'm proud of how far we've come.

Our union isn't just about work. It's about family, culture and future generations. As we look to the future, we remain committed to our values, strengthening our union, empowering our members and building a legacy of resilience and unity.

Highlights from our decade

Across the last decade, E tū members have taken action, celebrated wins, and stood together in thousands of moments that tell the story of our union. These photos capture just a few highlights from our first ten years, showing the strength, pride, and solidarity that continue to shape who we are today.



■ We launched **E tū** on **6 October 2015**, at the Wharewaka Function Centre in Wellington. The mood was electric – workers from across our industries were joined by allies and community leaders to start our union with energy and purpose.



■ **Kristine Bartlett** celebrates the landmark **2017 pay equity victory** that lifted wages for tens of thousands of care and support workers. Her courage helped spark one of the most significant gains for working women in Aotearoa's history. With the current Government stripping away our pay equity rights, the victory is an important reminder of what we can achieve when we stand strong.



■ E tū has celebrated many **Living Wage victories**. A key milestone was winning the Living Wage for parliamentary cleaners, celebrated here in **the Labour caucus room in 2017**. We went on to win the Living Wage across all public service contractors, many councils, and winning the Living Wage in bargaining across the private sector.

■ While we have moved on from the height of **the Covid pandemic**, we will never forget the vital role E tū members played in keeping the country going. As essential workers through lockdowns, as health workers on the frontline of keeping our communities safe, and as advocates pushing for strong public health measures and fair protections at work, our members stood up when Aotearoa needed them most.



■ **Our strong political activism and connections** have meant E tū members have had huge influence across politics, right up to the House of Parliament. It's a two-way street – we campaign for political parties that put workers at the forefront, and we hold them to their commitments when they are in power.



■ None of this would be possible without our strong, diverse, member-led internal democracy. It was clear at **our first E tū Conference in 2016** that our staunch membership was perfectly positioned to take us forward. From our National Executive, Industry Councils, and committees, to the delegate structures in every workplace, our democratic foundations are what give our union strength and direction.





Members unite at our Biennial Membership Meetings

This year's Biennial Membership Meetings brought members together in towns and cities across Aotearoa. Over September, E tū members gathered to talk about the issues we face and how we organise for better jobs and better lives.

The discussions were grounded in the realities members are facing. Rising living costs, pressure on wages, and changes in employment standards were front and centre. We went through our plan to fight back against this anti-worker Government,

and in every region there was a clear sense of determination and a commitment to fighting for change.

Across the country, the message was the same. We are stronger when we meet, stronger when we plan together, and strongest when we take collective action. The Biennial Membership Meetings showed once again that E tū is a member-led union with the energy and unity to meet the challenges ahead.



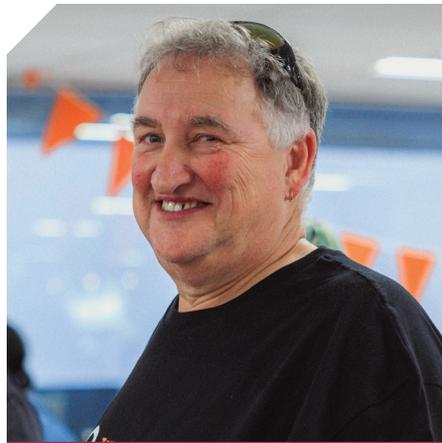


■ The BMMs also provide an important part of E tū’s internal democracy. Members elected their Regional Representatives and Vice-Presidents, with voting taking place across the southern meetings for the Southern Regional Representative role. Other positions were elected unopposed.

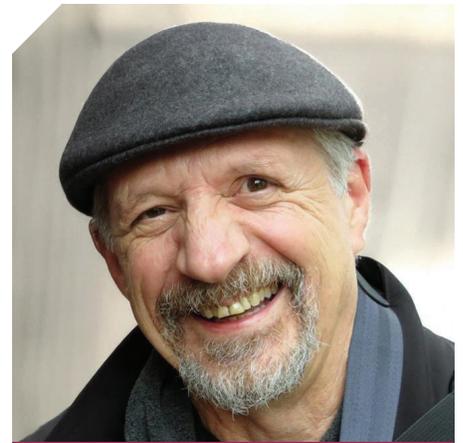
■ Your representatives for the next term are:



North Island Vice-President
Mischelle Moriarty



South Island Vice-President
Don Pryde



Northern Regional Representative
Jason Fell



Central Regional Representative
Nia Bartley



Southern Regional Representative
Nikki Twine

■ These leaders join the E tū National Executive, ensuring the direction of our union reflects the voices and experiences of members from every community and industry we represent.

Transforming Care: Standing firm for pay equity

In May, the Government made a sudden move to scrap the pay equity process. This decision removed the key mechanism designed to address gender-based pay discrimination and brought 33 active pay equity claims to an abrupt halt across a wide range of women-dominated industries. It was a major setback for workers who had been relying on that process to achieve fair pay for work that has been undervalued for generations.

For E tū care and support workers, who won their historic pay equity settlement in 2017, it was a massive blow, with our initial settlement already expired. They were depending on the next stage of the process to secure updated pay rates and properly recognise the complexity of their work.

Because the legislation was pushed through under urgency, workers had no chance to be heard by a parliamentary select committee. In response, a group of former women MPs established the People's Select Committee, supported by the wider union movement. The committee created a public forum to replace the democratic process that had been denied. E tū members took part from across Aotearoa, talking about their work, the realities of the care sector, and the consequences of stripping away the only meaningful tool for achieving pay equity.

E tū also played a leading role in the nationwide Women's Day of Action. These events brought together workers, whānau, and communities to send a clear message that pay equity must be restored. From small workplace gatherings to large public rallies, members made their voices heard. They highlighted the essential nature of care work and the continued fight for fair pay.

Home support worker and Convenor of the Community Support Services Industry Council, Tamara Baddeley, helped lead her local Women's Day of Action event in Napier.

"The Women's Day of Action was positive and empowering – but it's a damn shame we still have to fight for what we deserve," Tamara says.

"Whoever gets into Government next year needs to reinstate the pay equity claims as soon as possible, and sign them off as soon as possible, to start giving the women of New Zealand what we have fought so hard for."

That work has already had an impact. At the Women's Day of Action, Labour committed to restoring the pay equity process if elected. It is a significant step, won through collective action and determined organising.

The campaign continues. E tū members will keep building momentum, keep telling the truth about what was taken away, and keep fighting to transform care and achieve real pay equity for all women in Aotearoa – taking that message right up to the 2026 general election and beyond.



Living Wage saved for the core public service!



E tū cleaners Liam Shaw and Mele Peaua are presented with Recognition Awards by E tū President Muriel Tunoho, for their work in the procurement campaign

There's been a huge win for thousands of the lowest-paid workers in Aotearoa, after months of campaigning by E tū members and the Living Wage Movement. The Government has backed down from its plan to remove the Living Wage requirement from the Government Procurement Rules – a proposal that would have pushed cleaners, security guards, and catering workers back to poverty wages.

The procurement rule has been life-changing for workers who keep our government buildings running every day. Most are employed by private contractors, not directly by government agencies, meaning they have always been vulnerable to low wages due to the 'race to the bottom' when businesses compete to provide these services. The Living Wage requirement closes that loophole, making sure contractors can't win government business by paying the bare minimum.

The attempt to scrap this rule came as part of a wider programme of cost-cutting across the public sector, but it quickly ran into serious opposition. Earlier in the year, a poll commissioned by E tū showed overwhelming public support for keeping the Living Wage in place – with voters from every major party opposing its removal.

At the same time, workers made their voices heard, coordinating hundreds of submissions, lobbying MPs, and sharing their stories with media across the country. Many spoke about how the Living Wage

meant being able to pay rent without panic, afford decent kai, or reduce their long hours enough to spend time with whānau.

The pressure worked. The Government has now confirmed that the Living Wage rule will remain, protecting thousands of families from a wage cut and ensuring the public sector continues to lead the way on decent, fair procurement.

For the workers at the centre of the campaign, this is a win built through community strength and determined organising. Cleaner and E tū delegate Liam Shaw says the victory is proof of what can be achieved when people stand together:

"We won the fight for the Living Wage as a community, and as a community we can continue to hold firm in our beliefs and keep the Government accountable. The Living Wage is a huge step forward in changing how workers are treated nationwide, and an invaluable resource for lifting us all up to live in better conditions.

"The Living Wage is the difference between having meals or not, affording a place to live or not, keeping in better health, travelling to and from home, and so much more. Keeping the Living Wage in place stops the Government from forcing us backwards. I'm incredibly proud of this movement – let's keep up the mahi!"

Workers back strong local leadership in 2025 elections

This year’s local elections were another important opportunity for E tū members to help shape the future of their communities. Councils make choices about the things that affect us every day, including housing, transport, water services, libraries, and local facilities. When workers’ voices are represented around those tables, the whole community benefits.

Once again, E tū members stepped up. Across the motu, members volunteered on campaigns, talked with neighbours, and backed candidates who support decent jobs, strong public services, and councils committed to progressing or maintaining Living Wage accreditation.

There were some major wins for our movement. In Wellington, former EPMU National Secretary Andrew Little was elected mayor with a decisive result, running on a platform of fairness, better services, and community leadership. In Te Awa Kairangi Hutt City, long-time E tū member, broadcaster, and community advocate Ken Laban became Aotearoa’s first Pasefika mayor. This is an historic achievement and a proud moment for many across the wider region.

Members were active in many other areas too, from supporting returning councillors with strong worker values to helping new candidates take their first steps into public life. These efforts show the difference our union can make when members organise together, both in workplaces and in civic life.

Local elections matter for our jobs and for our whānau. When councils value public services, ensure fair employment practices, and plan for thriving communities, working people feel the benefits. The results this year demonstrate once again that workers can shape the direction of their cities and towns when we get involved.



New Hutt City Mayor Ken Laban’s first appearance after his election win was supporting E tū members on the Resene picket line



Nia Bartley
Central Region Representative

*“Fa’amalo le tauivi ma finau malosi”
“Well done for the perseverance and the strong contention”*

It was an honour to be invited to the launch of E tū union member Fauono Ken Laban’s mayoralty campaign in August this year. A successful campaign which saw him elected in October as the new Mayor of Te Awakairangi Lower Hutt, and Aotearoa’s first tagata Pasifika mayor (Samoa; Tuvalu).

As a fellow tagata Pasifika unionist from working class roots, I, together with many others, am proud of this momentous achievement. He will lead the most diverse and inclusive council ever in this region.

The benefits and experience will extend beyond Lower Hutt and the greater Wellington region, which is second only to Auckland in having the largest tagata Pasifika population, as he works to advance all and not just a few.

Fauono Ken supports fellow E tū union members at Resene fighting for a Living Wage. His older sister, Luamanuvao Dame Winifred (Winnie) Laban, was the first Pacific Island MP when she entered parliament in 1999.

Both Fauono Ken and Luamanuvao Dame Winnie, from Wainuiomata, will continue their lifelong commitment to serving our communities and be an inspiration to us all.





Members at Pike memorial

On Friday 19th November 2010, at 3:34 pm,
the Pike River coal mine exploded
with thirty one men underground.
Two men walked out and twenty nine were lost.
This memorial is dedicated to those twenty nine men

Conrad ATKINS 43	Greyhound
Michael A'HEW 25	St Andrews, Scotland
Simon COLLIER 35	Greyhound
Alan GASKIN 59	Remuera
Zen BREU (Verhoeven) 21	Greyhound
Christopher Clive DOGGAN 31	Blunnie
Joseph DOMINI 17	Christchurch
John HALE 45	Hokitika
Dan IRWIN 36	Remuera
David (Dale) HOGGART 53	Greyhound
Richard (Robin) HOLLING 41	Blackball
Andrew (Ihuaka) HURREN 52	Hokitika
Noel JONNER 47	Limpopo, South Africa
William (Wally) JOYNSON 49	Warrborough, QLD, AU
TONY KITCHIN 31	Greyhound
Samuel (Sam) MCKIE 36	Remuera
Francis (Marty) 41	Christchurch
Michael (Mona) 23	Remuera
Michael (Mona) 31	Greyhound
Kane NEPPER 55	Remuera
Peter O'NEILL 55	Greyhound
Wilson (Wai) OSBORNE 54	Remuera
Brennon PALMER 27	Greyhound
Raymond (Ray) POCKROUSE 21	Sydney NSW, AU
Peter (Pete) RODGER 40	Purth, Scotland
Blair SETH 28	Greyhound
Joshua (Joey) UFFER 27	
Robin VALLI 62	

15 years since the Pike River disaster

This November marked 15 years since the Pike River disaster, when 29 men were killed and their families were left with heartbreak that continues today. It remains one of the darkest chapters in Aotearoa's industrial history and a reminder of why strong health and safety protections matter.

Mark Anderson, Paul Johnstone, and Lester Udy from the E tū Engineering, Infrastructure, and Extractives Industry Council travelled to the Coast for the anniversary, joined by E tū staff and former staff who have supported Pike River families from the earliest days. They first stopped at the memorial at the bottom of the road to the mine. Mark says the impact of being there was immediate.

"We were all hit by the emotion of the place. Our visit was coincidentally at the exact same time of day as the accident."

They then attended the community memorial in Blackball, where family members and speakers highlighted the lasting legacy of the Pike 29.

"We heard again that we cannot let this tragedy be forgotten. The legacy of the 29 is the Health and Safety at Work Act, and that legislation is written in their blood," Mark says.

"Do not take the teeth out of our legislation or our inspectorate. We demand accountability."

Their words carry extra weight as the current government signals plans to weaken parts of the health and safety framework. For the Pike River families, and for the wider union movement, this is a deeply disappointing step backwards.

E tū stands with the Pike River families, honouring the memory of the 29 and continuing the fight for strong laws and safe workplaces for all.



Name tags of the 'Pike 29'

Another round of attacks on workers



The E tū delegation at the Labour Party Conference with a piece of artwork kindly donated by MP Camilla Belich

Since our last issue, the Government has pushed ahead even harder to take rights away from workers. The pace and scale of these latest moves show just how determined the National-led Government is to weaken workplace protections and tip the balance of power further towards employers.

One of the biggest developments is the return of the Employment Relations Act Amendment Bill to Parliament for its second reading. Despite strong opposition from unions, legal experts, and community groups, the Bill has come back even worse than before. It strips away key rights that workers have relied on for decades, including the right to a fair bargaining process, meaningful protection from discrimination, and a pathway to resolve disputes when employers refuse to act in good faith. The Council of Trade Unions has described it as the worst attack on workers in decades.

Alongside this Bill, the Government has confirmed plans to roll back sick leave entitlements. Instead of supporting people to stay home when they are unwell, the proposal would reduce sick leave entitlements for part-time workers and increase pressure on staff to turn up sick. We know exactly what this means for real workplaces. Infection spreads faster, injuries worsen, and the most vulnerable workers pay the highest price.

There are also clear signs that Ministers want to intervene directly in the ability of public sector workers to take industrial action. Reports from mid-year indicate the Government is considering new limits on when and how workers in the public service can strike, including frontline staff in health, education, and emergency services. Interference of this kind has no place in a modern democracy – the right to strike is a fundamental right. It is already carefully regulated under New Zealand law, and any move to weaken it would make it harder for workers to stand up for safe staffing, fair pay, and quality public services.

In response, E tū members have shown exactly what solidarity looks like. When public sector unions organised their recent “mega strike”, E tū members across our industries turned out to support them. That support sent a strong message: workers will not be divided. An attack on one sector is an attack on all of us.

The political work continues in many forms. As an affiliate of the Labour Party, E tū plays an active role in shaping policy and ensuring workers’ voices are heard. A delegation attended the Labour Party Conference this year, where members took part in policy workshops and debated the changes needed to build a fairer Aotearoa. E tū Youth Convenor Rangi Chase says the experience left them feeling energised.

"I really enjoyed the conference. It was inspiring to see just how many other people recognise the need to get rid of this government! Working with other delegates and getting stuck into policies was probably the highlight for me because we need real changes that help people.

"Our next job is to make sure everyone we know is enrolled to vote and will show up in 2026 to get rid of this lot."

E tū will keep challenging every attempt to undermine workers' rights. These laws can change, and governments can change, but our strength comes from standing together.



Rangi Chase

■ Check your enrolment to vote

The National-led Government are planning to make it harder to vote next year, by removing the opportunity to enrol to vote or update your enrolment while voting is open.

- *If you are a first-time voter, you must enrol to vote more than two weeks before the election.*
- *If you have changed your address, you must update your details more than two weeks before the election, otherwise your vote will not count.*

Enrol to vote, or check your enrolment details today, by visiting www.vote.nz/enrol





Industry Spotlight: electricity distribution

Keeping the lights on in Aotearoa is highly skilled work carried out by thousands of lines workers across the country. These workers build and maintain the electricity distribution networks that bring power from the national grid to our homes, businesses, and essential services. Their work includes maintaining poles and wires, responding to outages, upgrading ageing infrastructure, and restoring supply after storms and natural disasters. It is complex, often hazardous work that calls for real expertise and teamwork. As Aotearoa moves toward a low-carbon future, demand for electrical trades is expected to grow even further, with new investment in generation, storage, and distribution requiring more skilled workers than ever before.

E tū members work at Transfield, Northpower, Downer EDI Engineering, Tenix, the New Zealand Transport Agency, Contact Energy, Omexom, and many other employers large and small. Electricity distribution is delivered through a mix of ownership models. Many networks are owned by consumer trusts, while others are council controlled or privately owned companies. Across all these models, lines workers play the same vital role in keeping communities powered and safe.

E tū has a long history in this industry and our strong organising presence means excellent union density on worksites. That strength has delivered very good pay and conditions over many decades, with solid collective agreements that reflect the skill and responsibility required in the job. Members are deeply proud of the work they do, and the standards they have helped to set for the wider industry.

An E tū delegation attended the Global Power Trade Union Congress in Auckland, which brought together unions from across the world to share experiences and plan for the future of the power industry. Delegates discussed the growing international demand for electricians and lines workers as countries transition to greener energy systems. Other unions also showcased highly organised approaches to training, health and safety, and political advocacy. Their work underlined the importance of strong networks and “earn while you learn” apprenticeship pathways, as well as tackling barriers such as high housing costs that affect workers everywhere.

Health and safety was a major theme, including concerns about asbestos and silica in imported components used in wind farms. Delegates also heard a sobering account of how power privatisation in 2014 contributed to major industry closures a decade later. Our representatives returned with a renewed focus on building union strength, lifting apprenticeship recruitment, and promoting the benefits of union-negotiated protections such as insurance cover. E tū will continue to work with international partners, because the issues workers face, and the companies we deal with, are shared not just nationally but across the globe.



Ray Pilley

*Lines electrician,
E tū Communications Industry Council member*

I'm an electrician for Delta on the Aurora network, doing planned maintenance and new installation work. Aurora owns the network in Dunedin and part of Central Otago, and Delta also has contracts in Tasman and electricians around the country doing revenue meter replacements. It's varied work and we've got a great group of people. If you want overtime

there's usually plenty, and we're one of the few companies that still has double time in the agreement. There's also good money to be made doing out-of-town work, with really decent allowances. That's thanks to having a strong union.

"The challenges are keeping a steady workflow from the asset owner, because it can go flat out, then go quiet, then flat out again. The other big one is the shortage of skilled tradespeople. The industry needs to be growing more apprentices. Our company even had to bring in linesmen from the Philippines because we just couldn't get enough people here. It's great to have them, and they've all signed up to the union, but it's expensive to bring them over. There's a lot of poaching between companies, with sign-on incentives and people moving back and forth.

"It's a great opportunity for young New Zealanders, and we need to be promoting that in schools. At the recent Global Power Trades Union Congress, it was also clear we need more women in the industry. The workload ahead is huge and we won't meet it unless we broaden who's coming through."

Bargaining snapshot

Across the lines industry, bargaining continues at pace as members work to protect strong conditions and lift standards further. Recent rounds show clear expectations on pay, employer contributions to KiwiSaver, and important protections such as life cover and income protection insurance.

At **Ventia Electricity**, members are now considering an offer of 3.9 percent followed by 3.4 percent. Ventia has also confirmed it will move ahead of new KiwiSaver requirements by matching employee contributions up to 4.5 percent from next year. This follows the lead of smaller companies such as Counties Energy, which introduced a 4 percent employer contribution earlier in the year.

Bargaining at **Downer Electricity** is underway and we are waiting for a formal offer. A key goal for members is securing E tū - only life

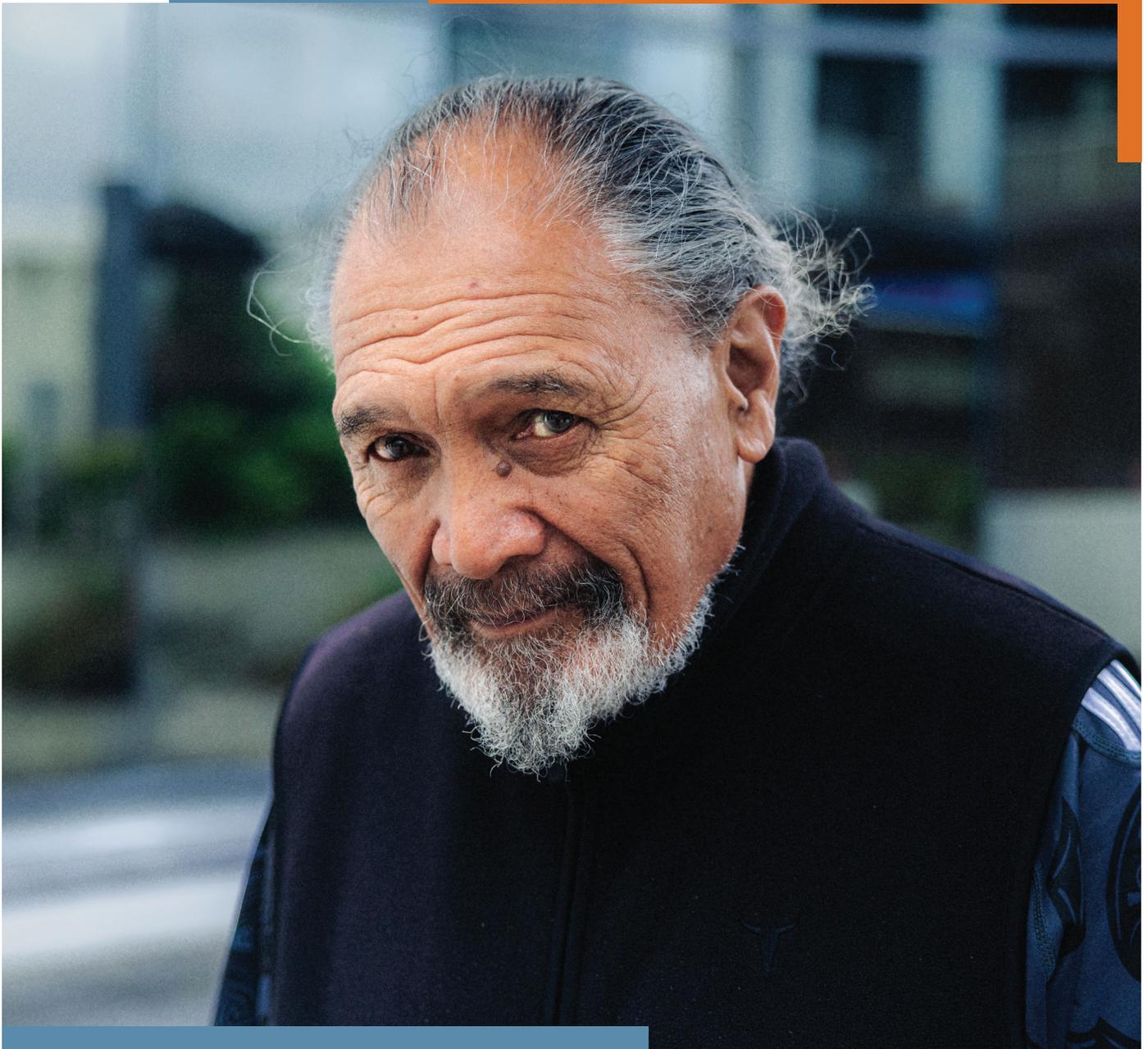
cover and income protection insurance. If achieved, Downer, Ventia, and Northpower would all have these protections in place.

At **Omexom**, bargaining has just begun for the agreement expiring on 31 December. Membership in Wellington has increased, with former Northpower members shifting across when the Wellington contract changed hands. They are determined to lift Omexom's conditions to match the standard they previously enjoyed.

At **Northpower**, the collective agreement runs until 31 May 2026. The focus for now is on building strength at worksites, recruiting new delegates, and making sure members have strong representation ahead of the next bargaining round.

Q&A

Introducing the new convenor of Te Rūnanga o E tū, JD Rawiri. JD has a long and deep union history, stretching from his teenage years through to 25 years at New Zealand Post. Unionism runs through his family for five generations, and he has seen first-hand the big changes in Aotearoa's union movement – from shifting to a member-led model, to merging into E tū, to embedding Te Tiriti in the workplace. He sat down with us to talk about his journey, the role of the Rūnanga, and what partnership looks like in practice.



JD RAWIRI

Can you start by telling us about your work history and how you first got involved in unionism?

I've been at New Zealand Post for the last 25 years. That's where I really learned how union work operates day to day. I'm involved in health and safety, negotiations, and disciplinary matters. It was a very solid grounding for being a delegate. You could really get your teeth into it.

My union background actually goes right back to my teens. I became a delegate when I was 17, more or less because I turned up at the wrong place at the right time. From then on, I stayed involved.

Unionism runs in my family. My grandfather, my father, aunties, uncles, cousins – we all came from Ōnehunga, which was a strong working-class and Labour area. It wasn't unusual to be union. It was just how our family lived. Now with my granddaughter in the union, that's five generations.

What were some of the big changes you saw in the union over those years?

When Andrew Little came in as National Secretary of EPMU, he changed the way the union operated. We moved away from the old regional organising councils and into a more member-friendly model, with forums and proper industrial structures. That opened things up and members got more understanding of how the union worked.

Later, when our union came together with the Service and Food Workers, that was another big shift. In my area, some people were unhappy about joining together. They were very entrenched in the old way. They thought we would lose our identity. I understood where they were coming from, but I also felt that moving forward as one union was the right thing. We are still working through that today, but it has settled.

You've also spent a lot of time on the Rūnanga. Why is that important to you?

The Rūnanga gave us a place to understand how Te Tiriti fits in the union. When I first became involved, I found it very welcoming. It wasn't about

the Rūnanga being "the boss". It was about helping guide us through something new.

There were Treaty changes happening in the union movement at the same time, and we needed to get our heads around how that partnership works. I saw a risk of some Māori voices getting a little sidelined in the wider organisation. That is why I wanted to be involved – to make sure we had a say.

I've taken on leadership roles, and I've stepped back from them. That's because I wanted younger people to see that they shouldn't be afraid to stand. If you believe in what you're saying, and people can see that, they will support you. That is something I am very strong on.

You've helped bring in a new kaumātua/kaihautu (leader and guide). Can you tell us about him?

Our kaumātua is Hauāuru Rawiri. He has a lot of experience. He was one of the Treaty negotiators for our iwi, Ngāti Pāoa.

What stands out about him is the way he works. He is a kaihautu – someone who can get up there and explain "this is how you do it". He is calm, truthful, and not argumentative. He can explain things in a Māori way and give advice based on experience. People go to him. I think he is the right person for that job.

What does a real Tiriti relationship look like inside the union?

It means understanding that we are partners. We both have mana. It cannot be one side telling the other what to do. We are walking together, not owning each other.

Sometimes that means explaining tikanga, even small things, so people can understand why. It also means having proper processes, but allowing flexibility.

We don't have to agree on everything. We should be able to agree to disagree. The important thing is that we stay at the table, talk it through, and come to a consensus. That is what a partnership looks like.

E tū in action



Resene workers have gone out on strike three times, calling for a fair pay offer that reaches at least the Living Wage. They say the company can easily afford to do better and should show its workers real value this Christmas. The campaign has been supported hugely by the Living Wage Movement and local community activists.

Rā Whakamana brought unions and iwi together to stand in unity, reaffirming our shared commitment to te Tiriti and collective power. It was a powerful reminder that when working people and mana whenua stand side by side, we are stronger and better placed to protect our communities and our futures.





Members and community allies came together with Te Ohu Tāmaki for the first table talk of the Decent Work in Health and Care listening campaign. The kōrero focused on sharing lived experiences of a health and care system under strain, and building relationships and a shared vision for the system our communities deserve.



Stuff journalists and media workers took strike action to defend their jobs, their conditions, and the future of quality journalism in Aotearoa. The action sent a clear message that a strong, independent media is essential for democracy and worth standing up for.

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