

TIRED AT WORK? NEED A HOLIDAY? THINK AGAIN...



The Government wants to make your 4th week of annual leave tradable – that is, allow you to ‘sell’ it back to your employer.

But you shouldn't be surprised. National and ACT voted *against* the introduction of the 4th week's holiday when they were in opposition – which shows that they really didn't want you to have four weeks holiday in the first place. Making the 4th week tradable could be just the first step in taking away your right to four weeks altogether.

Why you shouldn't trade away your 4th week of leave

- A recent survey¹ showed that New Zealanders still take less time off than most other workers around the world – a third of surveyed workers said they'd like to take more time off but couldn't because of work demands.
- The Government says that employers wouldn't be able to pressure workers into trading their 4th week – but workers are *already* under pressure not to take the holidays they are due, so what do you think will really happen if your 4th week becomes tradable?
- There are many ways in which an employer can put you under pressure to sell. Already some workers who insist on taking their rightful holiday allowance can be made to feel as though they are letting their employer down.
- The Government knows that when times are tough many workers will be forced to sell their fourth week of leave, and then they will be able to claim that nobody wanted the time off after all. This is cynical politics and will hurt workers already struggling in a recession.
- Remember, it took 30 years to progress from three to four weeks minimum annual leave, and now within 6 months of taking office, the Government wants to knock you back to three. Do we really need to go through the arguments again why people need decent time off to be with their families or just have a break?²
- Is this the thin end of the wedge? In the 1990s and before 4 weeks leave was the minimum, National wanted to make the *third* week tradable. You can see where this is heading. How long before *all* your holiday entitlements become tradable?

Do you get fair pay for your time off?

The Government also wants to review how ‘relevant daily pay’ when you are on holiday is calculated. You can bet that the Government will argue that workers should only be paid minimum base rates when they are on leave, rather than the current law that ensures you get paid what you really earn when shift allowances, overtime and bonuses are taken into account.

What can you do?

Don't be fooled into thinking this is just a bit of generous ‘flexibility’ by the Government. It could be the first step in taking away your right to decent holiday time and pay. Unions won't stand for this and will oppose any moves to reduce the minimum holiday allowance.

Join the campaign – leave a message of support, or let us know your own experiences of trying to take a decent break.

¹ Expedia survey 15 April 2009 – reported at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10566779

² See the Families Commission report ‘Finding Time’ about the effects of long working hours on family life: <http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/node/1712>



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