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NZ business Progressive Enterprises claims rejected offer was fair September 13, 2006

Individual letters detailing Progressive Enterprises' latest pay offer have started arriving at locked-out supermarket worker's homes; in a move which bypasses their unions.

The 500 distribution workers yesterday rejected the company's base 3 and a half percent pay increase, claiming it doesn't cover inflation.

The company has couriered letters directly to the nearly 600 affected workers, saying it wants them to be fully informed.

"We believe our offers of a wage increase are fair, reasonable, sustainable, and consistent with the retail industry where pay increases are in the 3 to 4 per cent range," Mr Hamnett said.

"We wanted to make sure that after [the offer] went to the union, it went our employees."

Strikers are now into their third week without pay in three cities, stocks in many supermarkets are running low. Unions are annoyed no progress has been made to secure a national collective agreement.

The National Distribution Union says Progressive's latest offer fails to meet the pay parity workers from different sites are seeking.

But the company's spokesperson, Marty Hamnett, says the offer is fair and reasonable, and he's waiting to hear what individual workers think of the offer, rather than the unions.

The dispute involves 500 workers in Auckland, Christchurch and Palmerston North who went on strike on August 25 in a dispute over a single collective agreement and a pay rise. They were subsequently locked out on August 28.

USA beats NZ in the Wheelchair Rugby Championships 2006 September 16, 2006

The United States of America have beaten the New Zealand Wheel Blacks to win the 2006 Wheelchair Rugby Championships, the fourth championship ever held.

The final score was 34-30 at Christchurch, New Zealand's Westpac Stadium. The Americans had led by one point following the first quarter, 9-8, and went into half time with the US leading 16-15, but the lead spaced further apart going into the final quarter, 25-23.

US and New Zealand, the Athens 2004 paralympic champions, had played each other previously in the tournament with US coming out winner 42-34.

Grant Sharman, New Zealand Wheel

Blacks coach, said: "The Wheel Blacks did not quite have their 'A game' in the final today and the Americans played extremely well."

US played a near-faultless game of wheelchair rugby, which won them the match.

The defending champions, Canada, finished third place overall by defeating Great Britain 23-19.

The final standings were:

1. USA
2. New Zealand
3. Canada
4. Great Britain
5. Japan
6. Australia
7. Germany
8. Belgium
9. Sweden
10. Netherlands
11. Switzerland
12. Denmark

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543 Howard Street, 5th Floor

San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

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