

# THE Transport Worker

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## WOMEN'S PROFILE

Locomotive engineer Raquel Doreen has her dream job

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## EYE'S UP!

Coming to a track near you – 45-wagon coal trains!

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**A**S transport giant Toll expands across the region, unions are working together to boost their bargaining power. The campaign for a fair pay deal at rail freight company Pacific National took an arduous 18 months of talks, pickets and strikes.

Most RTBU members involved had never taken industrial action before. Standing alongside them were colleagues from across the transport industry, with members of the Maritime Union of Australia and the Transport Workers Union attending picket lines in solidarity.

"The support from those two unions was very impressive and greatly appreciated by our members," says RTBU national secretary Robert Hayden.

The transport industry is changing rapidly and unions are becoming aware that their futures are closely linked, says Hayden.

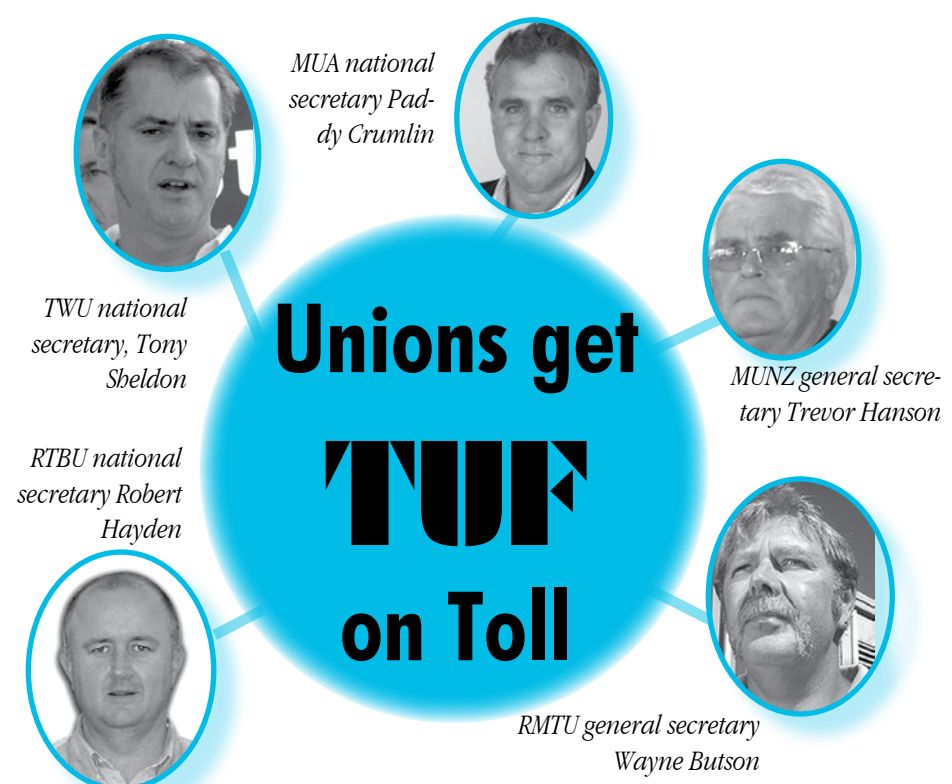
In line with a global trend, Australia's freight routes are now controlled by fewer, larger companies who operate across transport modes in a volatile market of takeovers and mergers.

## TUF banner

To boost bargaining power, the RTBU, TWU and MUA have entered into cooperation under the banner of the Transport Unions Federation (TUF).

"TUF is a way of working closer together on campaigns, delegate training and enterprise agreements," says Hayden. "Companies now have seamless modes of transport. We have to move on from past divisions and develop ways to work together on issues that affect us all."

For its first project, TUF has set its sights on better understanding Australia's biggest private



transport player, Toll Holdings.

Together, the three unions have around 7,000 members in Toll.

Each union has committed money to a mapping project carried out by Newcastle University to better understand Toll's position in the complex Australian freight industry.

"It's about knowing our market," says Hayden. "We want to know where they're strong, where they're weak, how they deal with the different unions, which managers are reasonable and unreasonable, who their customers are, what affects the share price. We don't want to use this information to hit them over the head, but we want to negotiate from a position of strength."

RTBU delegate Jose Calle, a customer service representative for Toll-owned Pacific National at the Melbourne terminal, says unions need to get smarter.

Calle was involved in recent enterprise agreement negotiations. He says the rate of change in the transport industry - such as Toll's takeover this year of its Pacific National joint venture partner Patrick Corporation - means unions need to stay on the front foot.

"We have to get smarter, because the laws and the business change so quickly. Since Toll's taken over Patrick we have new management, with a different view on dealing with the union," says Calle.

Continued over the page

# Getting TUF on Toll

From the front page

As Toll's business thrives and expands into overseas markets, TUF too will build overseas links.

The TUF unions are active members of the International Transport Workers Federation and recently participated with unions from the United States and the Pacific at a Mining and Maritime conference in Los Angeles.

TUF is also strengthening ties with New Zealand's two key transport unions, the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) and the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ), which have significant memberships in Toll-owned companies.

Cross-Tasman solidarity is increasingly important, says Wayne Butson, RMTU general secretary.

While Toll has operated in New Zealand's ports for some time, it expanded into rail in 2003 and is a major road transport player.

"When Toll came into the railways the company was initially very adversarial, making statements like 'we won't co-manage with the union'," says Butson.

A 2005 joint conference bringing together Australian and New Zealand transport unions with members employed by Toll changed all that.

## Changed attitude

Butson recalls Toll representatives attended the Auckland meeting, their voices shaking when they took questions from the lively crowd.

During the next round of wage negotiations, there was "absolutely no doubt" Toll's attitude had changed, he said.

"There was a genuine desire on part of Toll to do a deal and not have us on. They knew if they did have us on, the solidarity of Australian unions was a given, they weren't just taking on the RMTU."

The MUA is responding to the rise in monopolisation and globalisation in the corporate world by strengthening its links with other unions in Australia and overseas, says Warren Smith, assistant secretary of the Sydney branch.

"We want to send the message that if they can globalise, we can also globalise and build networks of solidarity," he says.

Smith is looking forward to sharing ideas with TUF colleagues on dealing with Toll in the wake of its takeover of Patrick Corporation, affecting hundreds of waterside workers in Sydney alone.

# Opportunity knocks

THE rise of integrated transport giants like Toll presents unions with new challenges and opportunities, says a report prepared for TUF by Newcastle Uni's Employment Studies Centre.

Concentration of ownership in the industry can lead to intense competition between key players, the tendency to subcontract to smaller companies and downward pressure on costs and working conditions.

But there are positives for workers too. Longer, more complex supply lines and the growth of 'just-in-time' delivery systems can give their unions greater industrial power, according to the Freight Unions Mapping Project (FUMP) report.

When customers rely on a product with no backlog of stock, a delay at any stage of the delivery process has an immediate affect on their operations - an incentive for the logistics provider to maintain good relations with unions.

The trend towards fewer and larger warehousing and distribution centres also provides key groups of workers with greater strategic power.

With the freight logistics industry set to double in size by 2020, unions need to be proactive in recruiting new members, building community links and co-operating with each other, the report says.

"Toll are going to give greater consideration to their approach to each of our respective unions if they know that we are backing one another up," Smith says.

Beyond that, he sees transport unions working together in many areas including marginal seats campaigning, media strategies, demonstrations and industrial actions.

Source: RTBU

# Paying the freight

FROM humble beginnings as a Newcastle cartage company in 1888, Toll Holdings has grown into Australia's largest freight transport and logistics company.

It owns ports, warehouses, road fleets, ships, rail rolling stock and air freight capacity.

Last year it generated revenue of over \$8 billion and operated at more than 670 sites in 17 countries across Asia and the Pacific. Toll employs more than 30,000 people.

In addition to its core businesses, Toll is involved in a number of joint ventures including Tenix Toll; which provides logistics support to

the Australian Defence Force; Toll Owens, which does marshalling and stevedoring at 12 New Zealand ports; and Sembawang Kimtrans, a Singapore-based logistics and marine transport company.

This year Toll paid more than \$6 billion to seize control of rival, Patrick Corporation, giving it full ownership of Pacific National and majority ownership of airline Virgin Blue.

Mapping the complex and fluid relationships between Toll Holdings, its joint venture partners, customers and competitors will be a key activity for TUF as unions look to develop innovative and effective industrial campaigns.



# RMTU + MUNZ

## Why amalgamate?



A new amalgamated union would reflect the changing industrial environment, the general secretaries of the RMTU and MUNZ have said in a joint statement.

Wayne Butson and Trevor Hanson have outlined a number of advantages to a new collective structure, as they explained the motivation behind continued progress towards amalgamation.

"The transport industry is a globalised industry dominated by transnational operators," they said. "The new union would cover an important and strategic area of the transport industry, providing a unified voice."

"The amalgamation would mean one union inside the port gates, meaning a strong collective organisation on the waterfront. It would link workers in the entire transport chain from shipping, to ports, to rail and land transport. This would strengthen the bargaining position and industrial power of workers in the maritime, rail and land transport industries - the so-called logistics chain."

A numerically larger union would have greater critical mass and boost the services available to members. Both unions shared a rank and file based, activist approach with strong working class values and principles, as well as a strong history and culture. These positive values would be combined in the new union. In practice the two unions already shared a good working relationship.

## Challenges

The two secretaries did not downplay the difficulties still to be faced in achieving amalgamation.

"There are always issues and challenges that arise during, and following, an amalgamation process," they said. "Both RMTU and MUNZ have gone through previous amalgamations which have been successfully managed and have resulted in two strong high profile unions. The current amalgamation process has been progressing for



*The RMTU and MUNZ amalgamation teams looking happy and united. Centre of picture are the facilitators Paddy Crumlin and Paul Goulter.*

some time, and negotiations have been very thorough, to ensure any transition period is as smooth as possible."

Support from the membership of both unions was fundamental to success, they said.

Negotiating teams, comprising the national leadership of both unions, were in the final stages of preparing a proposal they could recommend. This would be presented to the rank and file members who would have the final say on amalgamation in a national vote.

No final decision had been made on the name of the new union. The inaugural conference will finalise the name, but it will reflect the culture and industry of the new union and quickly establish itself as a strong visible "brand" in the industrial scene.

## Transition period

Details of the management structure of the new union are being finalised, but present proposals provide for a transition period of four years. A dual structure of general secretaries will provide consistency to the land transport and maritime sectors and

time to bed in the organisational changes. This will be followed by further integration into a unitary structure.

"It is clear that the new organisation will remain as a rank and file-driven union, with full and correct representation for all members in different parts of the industry."

Trevor noted the need for change on the waterfront was very clear. He said employers are now seeking consolidation and port rationalisation, forced on them by the pressures of the global markets and international shippers.

For the past 16 years both unions had been the targets of these market forces. In many instances employers signed new shipping contracts under pressure and then came straight back to the unions and demanded cuts. The so-called "productivity gains" put workers under stress and also led to casualisation, where workers were employed as and when required on the end of cellphones.

Wayne noted that in terms of land transport it will essentially be 'business as usual' with branch and representational structures unchanged together with central collection of union fees etc.



**B**Y now the rest and recuperation that those of us who had leave over the Christmas New year period is just starting to wear off and the usual stresses and strains associated with work have returned in full. I know they have for me. The dynamics of the workplace never rest for long and so 2007 will hold some of the same and definitely some new challenges. This issue of *The Transport Worker* highlights a few.

Rail is taking on a few issues with the trialing of 45 wagon coal trains being a major challenge by NZ standards as it is a battle of tonnage versus terrain – especially when one takes into account the parlous state of the national locomotive fleet with the most powerful of the diesel electric fleet (the Dx class) being more than 30 years young!

At some stage Toll are going to have to stump up with the long-promised new locos rather than the excuses for why they will not purchase them. Battling the Crown for what Toll sees as being a fair and open access charge for the track is wearing thin for us all when the vast majority of the loco fleet are not good workplaces in 2007.

Toll purchased Tranz Rail and signed a deal with the Crown with its eyes open. In other words they knew what they were getting into. Yes, the inequity of the funding arrangement for road versus rail is plain for all to see but it was in place when they brought the train set.

### Steam drivers

The provision of steam-qualified train drivers by Toll for charter trains is getting desperate in some locations and so we all must look at a way of ensuring that these trains continue to operate in a safe way with competent and skilled operators at the controls. There are four stakeholders (Toll, ONTRACK, RMTU and FRONZ) in this debate and we must all work together to find a sensible solution to present to the regulator LTNZ. Unity and Solidarity is in this issue in many guises.

You will also find a story on the state of the amalgamation with MUNZ and a report from our reps who attended the ICLS meeting in Tokyo. There is also a report on the creation of the world's largest union confederation with the formation of ITUC, plus the formation of TUF (Transport Union Federation)



*Wayne Butson, general secretary*

and its expansion into a strong trans-Tasman transport Union alliance. Our Annual Conference in October of last year was also titled a "Unity and Solidarity" conference. Why then is 'Unity and Solidarity' so important to the RMTU and why are we so active in striving to achieve and enhance it?

### Unity = strength

Unity is at the core of our ability to project power and influence into a workplace. Since we have formed into one Union within the rail sector we have been able to achieve much better gains through single-minded and focused purpose. To undo all of the losses of the ECA-era in a few short years has been of major benefit to members. It is this knowledge of what can be achieved which has driven our goal and pursuit of getting one union within the port company gates. Whilst we have strong solidarity within the wharf gates we do not have unity. We achieve a great deal with MUNZ and RMTU working separately so it is fair to speculate that we could do much better together. Ironically, we are now seeing port company employers openly discussing them getting greater unity with one another. We hear talk of Lyttelton and Port Chalmers trying to get closer and we have the well-publicised merger talks of Auckland and Tauranga.

It is clear that in order to battle this growing consolidation of capital in the form

of global multinationals unions must do the same. The RMTU's international linkages are becoming more and more important if we are to actively promote and improve the working conditions of our members. The RMTU is active globally, regionally and locally in unity and solidarity.

On a global level we are an affiliate of ITUC through our affiliation of the NZCTU. We are also a member of the worlds largest transport union group - the ITF. We participate in a number of sectors of the ITF and we participate in the 4-yearly ITF World Congress. On a regional basis we participate in the ITF Asia Pacific sector meetings of Dockers, Rail and Road (I am currently a vice chair of the AP Railway section). We are a steering committee member of ICLS and a founding member of TUF and hosted the inaugural conference. We joined with the TWU of Oz in a NZ road transport project in stage 1 and 2. We are developing and enhancing strong links with Australian transport unions.

Locally we are active within the CTU at a national and local affiliates councils level. We take part in solidarity actions with other NZ unions. But we do need to get better at this. The Progressives dispute clearly demonstrated that it is getting harder and harder for unions, on their own, to win major disputes with big employers. We have a number of these we deal with and so an ability to hook into other unions for support is essential.

Obviously unless we support them in their hour of need we cannot expect them to support us if and when the need arises.

### Raffle winner

Congratulations to Marty Duncan a shunt delegate from the Otago Rail branch who won a return trip for two to South Africa in a raffle conducted by APHEDA. The raffle was initiated following a trip by MUA activists who were attending the ITF world congress in Durban to Aids orphanages and under privileged schools in the republic. For those who participated in this study tour it was a life-changing experience and I have a DVD that was produced which anyone is welcome view. Contact me to get one.

The MUA have been filling 2 40ft containers with gear for sending to South Africa and

*Continued on the next page*

*The Transport Worker March 2007*

# Murfitt life membership

Long time Union stalwart and activist John Murfitt (r) is seen here receiving his life membership badge and certificate from National President Jim Kelly. John received his award on 7 December 2006 which ironically was on the anniversary of his joining the RMTU (the Harbour Workers Union) on 7 December 1977.

John recently placed great strain on his relationship with his wife Cath when he disappeared to the "Cass Bash" for 3 days after telling her he was going to a Union meeting. Good one John!



## Double the fun!

Debs and Geoff Davenport are delighted to let us all know that Hamish Peter and Sarah Frances Anne arrived safe and well on 11 January 2007. This gives the Davenports four under three years of age and makes us all wonder how he finds the time to be our Union's hired gun lawyer of choice. Time for blanks we hear Debs say!



Continued from previous page

Marty and his partner will be participating in the presentation and distribution of the contents. Marty is a very lucky man as I only brought back to NZ two books of tickets. Well done Marty and I know that you will be richer for the experience and poorer for the tag-on trips you are no doubt planning.

As I write this nominations are called for the general secretary position and I will be putting myself forward for re-election. I believe that I have done a good job but there is more to be done. I want to be there to participate in the completion of the amal-

gamation with MUNZ and to bed it in so that the new union provides a sound base upon which to develop a wider transport union within NZ.

It is very pleasing to hear that our national president Jim Kelly is making an excellent recovery from his heart surgery and will soon be returning to Hillside Shops. Jim has been an excellent president of this Union (and the RTA and CURE before that) and so it will be good to see him return to full fitness and attend the NMC meeting in March.

Read and enjoy this issue of the magazine but, above all else, be proud to be RMTU!

# Help sought for outstanding "Konemu" settlement

**I**N 2000 the Union found itself locked in litigation with the Northland Port Corporation with the Union claiming an unlawful lockout had occurred and the company claiming an unlawful strike. Essentially our members in the mechanical ship repair division of the company were refusing to cross a picket line at the port company.

The cases went through mediation, the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Court and the Court of Appeal before the parties reached a settlement.

On 11 June 2001 the union signed a "Record of Settlement" with Northland Port Corporation which has become known as the "Konemu Settlement". Northland Port Corporation paid over a sum of money to the Union which was to be dispersed among the 31 member claimants to the dispute.

To date we have been able to make contact with, and pay out to, 22 members but we are still holding an amount of money for the following ex-members of the Union who worked at Northport Engineering Ltd:-

Bailey, Ray  
Clyman, Bob  
Davis, Heta  
Hauraki, Huri  
Lautaimi, Pon  
Marin, Joe  
Mitchell, Gary  
Ryan, Peter  
Silveria, John

If you know the current whereabouts of any of the above, would you please ask them to get in touch with the Union. They would need to provide proof of identity to enable a payment to be made to them.

## WOMEN AT WORK

## Raquel Doreen



A lifetime ambition to “drive trains” came true for Raquel Doreen when she qualified as the first woman locomotive engineer in the South Island.

Raquel grew up beside the tracks in the North Island and must have railways in her blood, because her father Gordon Doreen was a shunter in Fielding in the 1960s.

She has a degree in environmental studies and geography and worked for the Ruapehu District Council, but sitting in front of a computer, wrestling with district plans and interpreting the Local Government Act was not the career she was looking for.

After moving to Christchurch with partner Gary Tocker she applied to become a trainee locomotive engineer and to her surprise, was quickly accepted. Another surprise, when she began her six month stint in the yard at Middleton, was finding she was working in a man’s world.

“I thought there would be more women,” she said. “But a lot of the guys were really supportive

from the start and that has made a hell of a difference.”

Since being certified last year, Raquel was found the job lives up to her expectations.

“I really like it. Time on the job goes really fast.”

She enjoys the independence of working unsupervised. “You do your paper work, jump in the train and go.”

The job has its challenges, such as bringing home a heavy coal train when the Midland line is greasy.

The worst part of the job, she says, is getting out of bed for the early morning starts.

And because she is sitting down all day, she says she is “packing on the weight”, hence a New Year resolution to take up running. She will also be keeping her mind active with postgraduate studies in accounting and finance.

Raquel is not actively involved with the RMTU, but is happy to pay her fees and knows the union is there if she needs it.

“We are the Union. People forget that,” she says.

## Improving relations

RMTU and MUNZ members at Toll/Owens in the Bay of Plenty have entered into a project to improve the relationship with their employer.

The project is being facilitated by a unit within the Department of Labour called the Partnership Resource Centre (PRC) and is using independent consultants with extensive knowledge and experience of industrial relations and organisational development. Some of them have a background in unions.

Last year, delegates and members from both unions became frustrated with their relationship with the company. They were getting nowhere trying to deal with problems and when they heard about the success the PRC had achieved with some other companies and unions, decided to give it a go.

Once all of the parties had committed to the process, the parties – with the assistance of the PRC – looked at what goals and issues they wanted to address. A steering committee was elected, comprising Kelvin Rush and Brent Thompson for the RMTU, Phil Spanswick and Selwyn Russell for MUNZ and Sean Bolt and Mike Etheridge on behalf of the company. Bernard McIlhorne, a former union official, is the facilitator for the PRC.

### CEO buy-in

“Having buy-in from Sean Bolt, the CEO, was obviously critical,” said RMTU organiser Kelvin Rush, “and his wish to get a better working relationship with the unions. Also, bringing the two companies together is important to making Toll/Owens’s viable in the very competitive Port of Tauranga, which the unions have a stake in.”

The unions and the company are focusing on bringing together the two cultures of Tolls and Owens. A range of ideas have been tentatively discussed including;

- ◆ looking at the mutual benefits of merging the two current collective agreements;
- ◆ developing a heads of agreement between the parties that would involve an agreed process for solving problems as they arose;
- ◆ agreed career paths;
- ◆ a “no surprise” relationship; and
- ◆ a commitment to job security.

An important first step in the project has been the development and distribution by the steering committee of a survey to find out how the staff and managers felt about their relationships. A summary of these findings will be reported back to union members.

“We are in the early stages of the project, but we intend to keep things on track and hope there will be real gains for our members and the employer,” says Kelvin.





*RMTU Ports Forum delegates receive a briefing and refreshments at Centreport before being given a tour of the port*

## Annual Ports Forum

Wide range of topics covered

**A** strong focus on education and industry direction were the themes of the November RMTU Ports Forum.

Guest speakers included the chief executives of the ports of Nelson and Tauranga, who talked about where their ports might be headed and representatives of Maritime New Zealand outlined new initiatives to improve safety on the waterfront.

Solicitor Geoff Davenport ran a session for delegates on how to handle a disciplinary situation in the workplace and RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson explained the finer points of negotiating a collective agreement.

Forum delegates also attended an information briefing at Centreport before being taken on a guided tour.

Tauranga CEO Mark Cairns talked about the pressures on the port industry that led to the proposal for merger between Auckland and Tauranga. He said a number of ports were spending huge sums speculatively and as rationalisation occurred, some could go under. The aim of the merger was

to create a world class port. Nevertheless, the combined operation would still be smaller than either of the ports of Melbourne or Sydney.

The CEO of Port Nelson, Martin Byrne outlined the Nelson Port operation. He predicted a strong future there given issues such as the lack of rail and the high value reefer cargo exported. "Our place going forward is clearly, to some extent, in the 'feeder port' category given our physical port limitations and relatively low container volumes," he said.

CTU president Ross Wilson opened the Forum with a plea for unity, saying union amalgamations were not easy to achieve but were worth the struggle. Progress towards amalgamation in the port sector might be frustrating, he said, but was in the best interests of workers. Later in the day, Wayne Butson and MUNZ's Joe Fleetwood outlined progress towards an amalgamation of their two unions to date and explained a proposed structure.

Geoff Davenport's guidelines to dele-

*CTU President Ross Wilson opens the Forum with a plea for unity and Vanessa*

*Markwell CPL HR & Change manager welcoming delegates to Centreport.*



gates handling a disciplinary situation, included ensuring the process was not rushed and that all the information and evidence was available. He provided a checklist to help ensure a fair process was followed.

For Maritime NZ, Sharon Forsyth, manager of Safety Policy and Kenny Crawford, manager of the Safety Audit Team outlined plans to improve safety on the waterfront. They proposed a partnership between employers, employees, unions and Maritime NZ, to develop agreed safe working practices, develop mentors in each port, ensure training and focus on clear, agreed methods of working.

The results of a survey on casuals and part timers at each port was presented. There was a significant difference in levels of casualisation from port to port. Potential solutions were discussed.

Industrial organiser Todd Valster led a session on drug and alcohol policies. He said an agreed policy was desirable in workplaces to determine the circumstances in which testing occurred, what procedures were followed and to ensure the focus of any positive test was on rehabilitation.



*Delegates at the Forum (l to r) Scott Golding (Marlborough), Norm Eyre, Bill Houston, James Blatchford and Jason James (Lyttelton).*

# ITF secretary visits NZ

On Friday December 29, 2006, the Marlborough Branch of the RMTU were privileged to have David Cockcroft from the International Transport Workers Federation visit their shores.

David is the general secretary of the ITF and has held this role for the last 12 years.

The RMTU is, of course, affiliated to the ITF as part of its global solidarity networks.

David was in New Zealand with his family on holiday.

The RMTU used this opportunity for David and his family to meet with the rank and file and enjoy a dinner with them to strengthen ties internationally.

And in true RMTU style we did not disappoint.

David and his family were treated to a great evening which was held at the local Waikawa Boating Club.

A barbeque was organised with local seafood delicacies on the menu such as crayfish – which were greatly appreciated by David and his family.

In attendance were local rank and file members of the Marlborough Branch and of course the Cockcroft family.

Des Ashton, Port Marlborough CEO also attended and shared a few aviation stories with David as both have aviation backgrounds.

David thanked our members for their great hospitality and the RMTU for organising the dinner and said he appreciated the close ties that we have with the ITF.

A special thank you to our local branch members who organised the event, for Dave and his family and, in particular, Terry Beech, Murray Burgess and Grant Herbert.

Great work guys!



(above) Port Marlborough CEO Des Ashton and general secretary ITF David Cockcroft toast strengthening international ties and (below) (l to r) Grant Herbert, Terry Beech, David Cockcroft, Mrs Cockcroft, Murray Burgess & Buna Riwaka



## Revised D&A Policy

SINCE the agreed D&A policy was introduced in March 2004 there have been some minor changes to deal with situations that were not envisaged when the policy was initially developed. The policy may also evolve when better testing methods become available.

The changes include :

- The use of dipsticks to screen samples. Dipsticks indicate whether the sample is positive or negative (for the five main illegal drugs) at levels outlined in the Australian/New Zealand standard. The benefit of dipsticks is that they provide a result almost immediately as opposed to several days if the sample was sent to ESR for screening which normally takes several days. All samples are still sent to ESR to survey the integrity of the dipsticks over a period;

- Clauses have been added to the policy to deal with emergency situations involving serious injury where a test cannot immediately be undertaken following an incident. In this situation the worker would be tested as the soonest practicable time and certainly before a return to work; and

- Returning to work on non-safety critical roles pending test results.

The union has recently received an updated draft of the D&A policy, which includes those changes. Once the draft has been reviewed and agreed, Toll will make the revised policy available via the intranet and management.

If members have any issues with the D&A policy and/or how it is interpreted and/or applied, then they need to make contact with their union delegate or Todd Valster at the RMTU Wellington Office.



## 2008 100 year reunion for locomotive engineers

Initial expressions of interest are being called for from all branches to host the Locomotive Engineers 100 year Reunion in 2008.

Branches that apply need to be aware that this will be a significant event with high interest from past and present LEs – locally and internationally. The Union is holding a fund of \$25,000 to assist in its organisation. Expressions of interest should include a basic business plan including costings of the event, venue, accommodation, transport, function scheduling, sightseeing, cost per head etc.

The union is looking for formal proposals by the end of May 2007.

The NMC will consider these proposals.



# Confronting the work afterlife



**F**OR some people retirement is an exciting opportunity to travel, pursue leisure activities and hobbies, spend more time with family and friends. Others see it as the “scrap heap”, the prospect of loneliness, boredom and feeling useless.

Retirement used to be compulsory. Most companies, employment agreements and superannuation plans set an age limit for retirement, or fixed a maximum length of service. Employees knew from the time they started work that they would have to retire at a certain time, and they had little choice but to plan for it.

Nowadays, retirement is voluntary. Discrimination on the grounds of age is unlawful under the Human Rights Act 1993. This means an employer can no longer require a staff member to leave simply because they have reached some arbitrary retirement age. The only exception is where a particular retirement age was specified in writing in an employment agreement in April 1992 and has subsequently been confirmed or varied.

The problem for employers is they may have aging employees whose health or faculties are fading, or who are struggling with a physically demanding job, but for a variety of reasons are reluctant to retire. Employers are not entitled to put undue pressure on the employee. They also risk a backlash from other staff and the union if they are seen to be heartlessly pushing an elderly employee out the door, perhaps after many years of loyal service.

Attitudes of an older worker's colleagues can range from sympathy and support (“I’ll be old myself one day”. “He’s done his bit around here and we don’t mind helping him out”) to hostility (“Why should we have to carry him”. “He’s got his pension. Why is he keeping a young person out of a job?”)

Some older workers simply can’t face the idea of an abrupt change from full time work

to retirement, which after all, is just another word for unemployment. Their job provides not only income, but social contacts with fellow workers and a “reason to get up in the morning”. It gives their life structure and meaning, and fills their day with purpose. So they just keep turning up for work.

Among rail and port workers there is a particular problem, because many are shift workers. Their lives revolve around a roster that makes it difficult to maintain social contacts, play team sports, or take part in many leisure activities. Their main circle of friends is at work and their ability to develop interests and activities outside of work is limited.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust, nearly half of New Zealand workers surveyed say they would like a gradual transition into retirement.

## Lyttelton Port

One company that has begun to take up the challenge of its aging workforce is the Lyttelton Port Company. So far, two employees from the company’s maintenance department have been able to scale down to working three days a week, as a move towards retirement.

The first was the electrical foreman, Jack Moody, who made an agreement in June 2004, in consultation with the union, to give up his foreman’s responsibilities and cut down to three-day weeks. In effect it was a one-year, fixed term contract, giving the

company the assurance that the arrangement would not drag on, and giving Jack a definite date to plan towards. It also ensured Jack’s

27 years of experience and knowledge of the port would be passed on during his wind-down.

Next to take the plunge was boilermaker Fred Given, who made a similar 12 month agreement in late 2005. In the end, he stayed an extra couple of months to help cover for the holiday period and finally left this February at the age of 65. Fred was grateful for the chance to avoid an abrupt finish to his working life.

“I think the company was generous in allowing me to do it,” he says. “It just eases you into retirement.”

“I was sick of the shift work, coming to work at 2 o’clock on Saturdays, or 10 o’clock at night”.

Did the reduced hours suit him? “How could you not like three dayshifts a week, and a four day weekend?”

There was a drop in income, but withdrawing his superannuation savings and investing them helped make up the difference. Fred also had to get used to spending more time at home. This was particularly important for his wife, who had been used to having the house to herself for most of the time. Mind you, golf, fishing and projects in his home workshop mean he will not be under foot too much. Fred is also thinking of taking up bowls again, something he gave up on years ago because shiftwork meant he was always letting down the team.

## Fred Given prepares for retirement



... “it just eases you into retirement.”

## Loyalty card given to Union for safekeeping

A precious relic of New Zealand trade union history has been given to the RMTU for safe keeping.

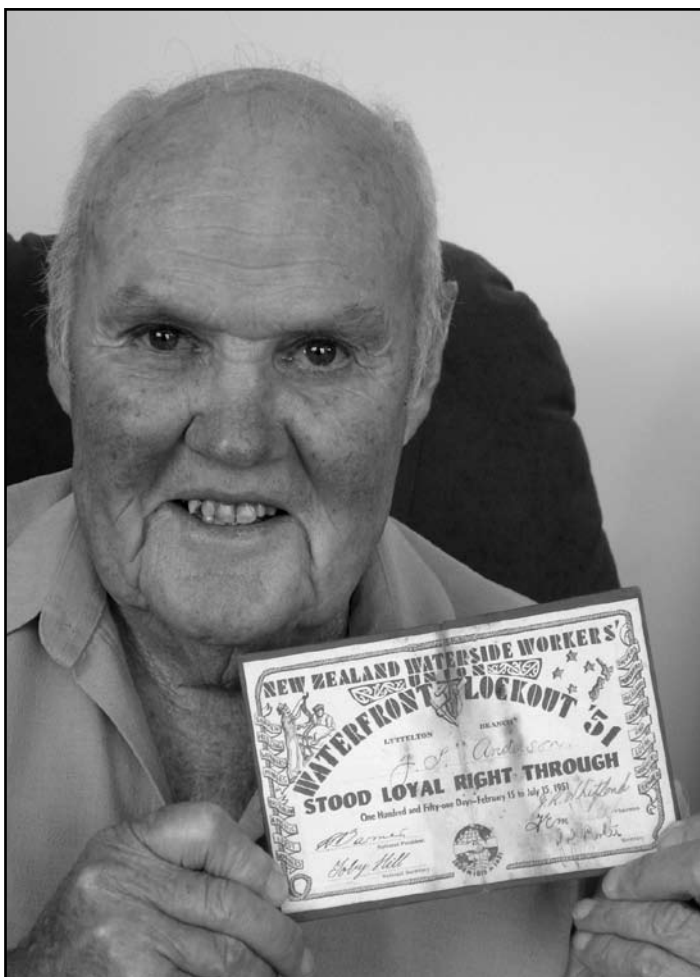
Jim Anderson, a union member for many years before his retirement in 1991, has given us his Loyalty Card, a memento of the 1951 waterfront dispute.

Jim, who was working on the wharves at Lyttelton when the dispute flared, stayed loyal to the trade union cause for the 151 days it lasted. The loyalty cards were issued to those who stayed the distance and bear the words: "Stood Loyal Right Through". They were signed by some of the strike leaders and have been the proudest possession of some of New Zealand's leading trade union figures.

Jim worked in the railways for 26 years, until his retirement in 1991. His service included nine years as a shunter in Christchurch and stints as a guard in Christchurch and Wellington. While he was a shunter he was badly injured in the Waltham yard, when there was a collision and he was thrown off a wagon he was riding.

At the time of the 1951 confrontation Jim was a member of the Watersiders Union. He had gone to school in Lyttelton, then joined the navy at 15. He saw war service on HMS Achilles and then stayed at sea, working on Union Company coasters. When he got married he wanted to stay ashore and found work on the waterfront.

"Working on the wharves wasn't as easy as people make out. It could be pretty hard yakka," he recalls. He started work in August 1950, but the following February, with his wife expecting their first child, the union was locked out for refusing to lift an overtime ban. The conflict quickly escalated, with



*1951 waterfront striker Jim Anderson with the Loyalty Card he has treasured since the confrontation*

other unions going out in support. At that time the trade union movement was divided, with the majority of unions in the Federation of Labour, but a smaller grouping of more militant unions, including the watersiders, in the Trade Union Congress.

The employers were backed by the National Government of the day. As the dispute continued, the Government declared a state of emergency and passed regulations that deregistered the watersiders union and seized its assets. They made it illegal for anyone to help the strikers or their families, imposed censorship to prevent the unions from telling their side of the story and sent the armed forces on to the wharves to work

the ships. The unionists struggled to survive.

The employers stuck together and no-one would give them work.

"We used to chop wood and dig spuds for some of the farmers and they'd give us a sack of spuds."

There were food banks, which were "highly illegal. The emergency regulations were tough."

Jim and his wife were fortunate to be able to live with his mother, who earned enough to support the three of them.

The union members had daily meetings in Lyttelton. It was a tedious routine, but on two or three occasions, the union's national president Jock Barnes, an inspirational speaker, attended the meetings.

As things got worse, a few of the strikers gave up the struggle. "About 10 scabbed in Lyttelton. They were never spoken to again. It must have been terrible," he said.

Eventually, the strikers voted to go back to work.

"We had servicemen on the wharves keeping the ships moving and we couldn't do anything about

it. We were fighting a losing battle."

The National Strike Committee approved an end to the dispute on July 10.

Initially the port employers refused to let him back on the wharf. Jim got his first rail job, coupling wagons, then went back to the waterfront but couldn't settle and moved from job to job. He finally returned to rail in 1964 and stayed until his retirement in 1991.

Now 78 and living in Christchurch's North Brighton, Jim has been active in the RSA, plays golf and bowls when his old shunting injuries allow, and has six grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

# Dick Wright Bar BQ

## Dick (Pokohinu) Wright

It is with deep regret that we have lost another one of our fellow comrades. Dick Wright from the Hutt Workshops branch sadly passed away late last year.

Dick started at Hutt Workshops in 1969 straight from College, then did an apprenticeship in boilermaking working in Plant 2 at Hutt Shops. His apprenticeship took longer than most due to family excursions taking priority, but nevertheless he completed what could be argued, as one of the hardest occupations there was at the time.

He was an awesome rugby player playing for Hutt Workshops rugby team (prop forward) which had great battles throughout the years with other depots/sites. This was during the yesteryears of NZ Rail.

He inherited the nickname 'concrete' from the Wainuiomata Rugby Club where he spent many years propping/playing for the team.

Dick was a gentle giant and a man of few



*Hutt Workshops executive and members host the Wright family and remember their workmate.*

words, but had a huge presence and mana about him which was respected from the younger 'boys' at Hutt.

This is noted by stories regaled by those who knew him. He supported and advised many people throughout his life at the workshop and with his whanau and friends.

Dick was a big advocate for the Hutt Social Club until its demise. He would bring his family along to help boost funds and numbers for the club and was always active and willing to support it whenever

he could.

Outside of work, he was part of a band, playing bass guitar and on many occasions organised the Hutt Workshops band for the social club. Sessions and practices were held in the social club hall on weekends.

Dick was never a man to shy away from passing on his experience as a boilermaker and we are sure that a lot of trade's assistants who worked with Dick would agree.

Dick's family visited the Hutt Shops to meet with guys that he had worked with over the years and the Hutt Branch in true whanau style welcomed them with a sausage sizzle. A donation was collected and passed onto Dick's whanau who were overwhelmed and appreciative with the number of people's lives that Dick had touched and impacted on.

You will be sorely missed Dick by us and your whanau and know that you will always be remembered as one of the good ones! Rest in Peace Brother!



*Dick Wright's family (centre) enjoying a whanau style Hutt Shops BBQ with branch members.*

# New International Trade Union Confederation

THE International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) was officially formed in Vienna following the dissolution congresses of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL).

The new body will represent some 16.6 million workers through 309 affiliated organisations from 156 countries and territories. Members will comprise the affiliated



organisations of the ICFTU and WCL, along with eight other national trade union organisations that will, for the first time, affiliate to a global body.

It is anticipated that the creation of ITUC will inspire new hope in the face of

the huge challenges posed by globalisation. The international trade union movement is adapting to remain a key player in an economic climate that is creating more losers than winners. Offshoring, abuse of workers rights and increasing poverty are all examples of the negative impact of the imbalances of economic globalisation.

The RMTU is a member of ITUC through its affiliations to the NZCTU and the ITF.

- Source: itfglobal.org



# Around the branches



*RMTU industrial officer Henry Fagaiava and Halls Spring Creek member Michelle Lake*



*Port Nelson Branch members at a recent branch meeting*



*RMTU admin assistant Julia catches up with her dad Ron Harrison at Hutt Shops*



*Toll Rail Picton team leader Utuku Thompson*

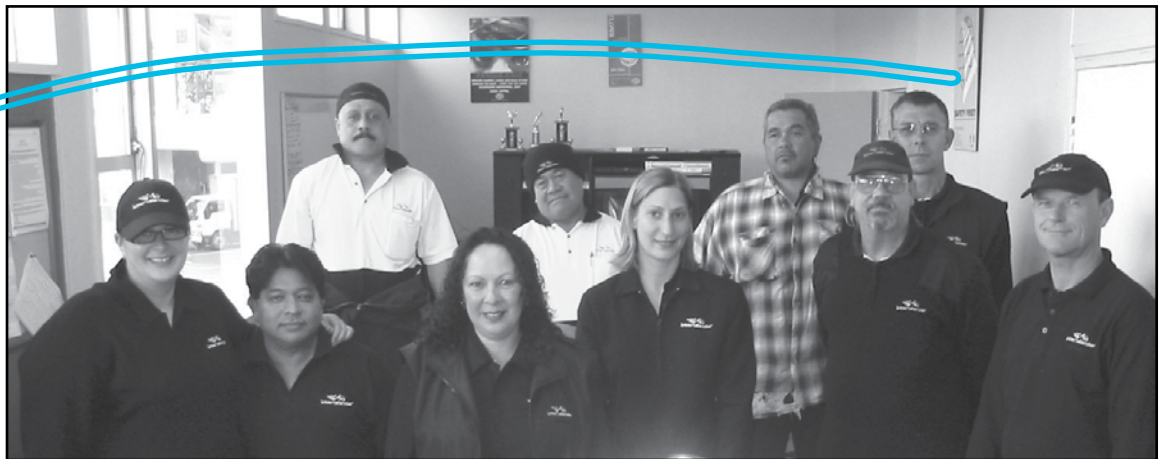


*Neil Boot, recently retired Marlborough Rail TXO*

*Toll Tranzlink Nelson members Wendy Bennett and Leon Thomson*







*A group of RMTU Wellington Interisland members*

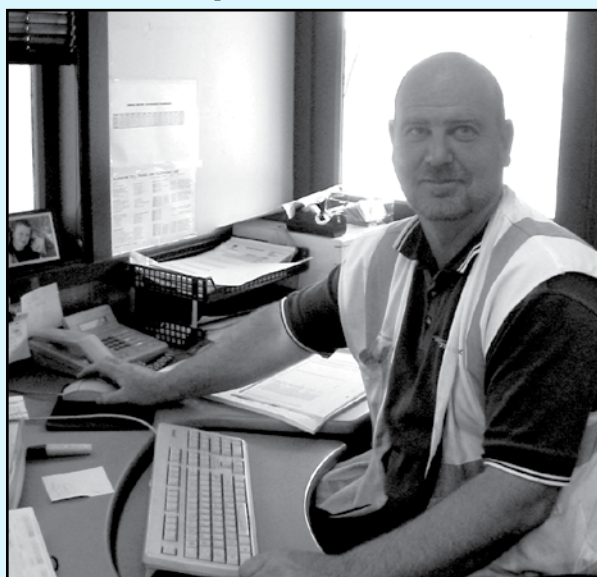
## Toll Tranzlink Spring Creek..



*New member Christopher O'Connor*



*Lyall Burrows*



*Lee Thorp*



*Pie Wilson*



The RMTU  
– a pictorial  
spread of who  
we are and  
what we do

## Bibliography of trade union literature a valuable resource

A new annotated bibliography of New Zealand trade union literature will be a must-have reference book for the shelves of many private as well as public library collections.

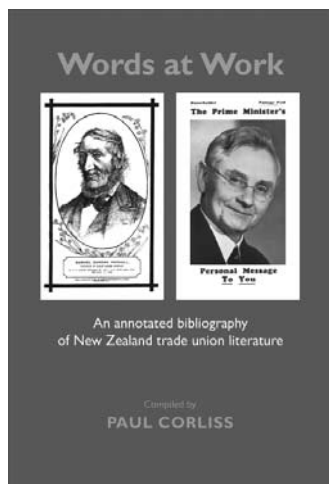
Words at Work, compiled by Paul Corliss and published by Canterbury University Press, includes human resources, labour studies and social history.

It is more complete and up to date than Bert Roth's (1970, reprinted 1977) bibliography, and much of the material does not appear in Austin Bagnall's New Zealand National Bibliography.

Other than trade unions themselves, political and union activists, social historians, students and book researchers will find Words at Work a valuable resource.

Even a cursory glance at the wealth of literature, covering 130 years, recorded in the book reveals a broad range of diverse activity across many occupational groupings, the indefatigable nature of worker organisation and action, and the striving for progress in areas of life beyond the industrial.

Paul Corliss was, until recently, the South Island industrial officer with the Rail and Maritime Transport Union. He has been active in trade unions from when he worked at Westfield freezing works in the late 1960s and then as a railway shunter in the mid-1970s. He has held positions in the National Union of Railwaymen, the Canterbury District Federation of Labour and Council of Trade Unions, the Harbour Workers Union and the RMTU, of which he is a life member.



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# Roll them wagons!



*(above) On the move, trialing 45 wagon coal trains on the South Island coal route and (left) the cab view looking back on 900m of coal train - fingers crossed for no bust hoses!*

**I**S it a bird, is it plane, is it a 45-wagon 3600t coal train?

In December last year, Toll NZ contacted the Union to enter discussions on trialing 45 wagon coal trains on the South Island coal route. Like most organisations, the Union was winding down for Christmas but Toll was putting a priority on starting the trials as soon as possible and to take into account opportunities available during mine close-down periods. A meeting was hastily arranged with LE reps from each depot – Middleton, Otira, Westport, Greymouth and National Office Reps – to meet with Toll Rail management.

Initial skepticism was, of course, expected with some comparing the idea to a past manager's notion of double decking trains, however Toll Rail was serious about wanting to trial the 45s.

These trains will be the heaviest trains on our network – a new category – super heavy unit trains.

There are many issues with the current consists of 30 wagons (and the introduction of the 30s) which gave a basis to commence discussions. Also the Midland line review, specifically arrival signals, is still to be undertaken.

The company has been clearly informed that the 45s are not just a matter of whether the locomotives can haul the loads up the grades and through the tunnel. All aspects of the operation need to be taken into account – for example: are trains of this size through this difficult terrain suited to single manning on the terms that apply? Are emergency procedures up to scratch? Also radios and cab facilities? Will there be adequate

train handling training with the 45s? Not an exhaustive list.

At a meeting at the Woburn Training Centre just before Christmas, a realistic time frame and procedures were agreed upon in order to undertake trials including confirmation from ONTRACK that the route was suitable to handle these super heavy trains. The LE reps were to be involved in all trials, the simulator was set up for 45s and these reps were run through the simulator prior to the trials.

The initial trials were with an empty 45 wagon train, and then another set of trials took place in January with a fully loaded 45 on all the relevant routes aside for the Otira tunnel.

Toll Rail will also carry out an investigation on improving the train timekeeping of the current operation to further reduce instances of LE's maximum hours being exceeded.

Further trials are planned in February.

A big thanks to all of our reps – Murray Dunlop, John Valvoi, Paul Foscett, Jed O'Donoghue and Mike Morgan – for their efforts in participation in the meetings and trials. Well done guys!



*Branch chairman Daniel Manu and branch secretary Rob Wilson*



*Another stunning Taranaki sunset over the port and (below) the mobile container cranes take a break*

## Port Taranaki



*Dredging the harbour to attract bigger ships to the port*



*Some of the members who attended a meeting where RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson gave an address*





# Heritage train operation - the future

**H**ERITAGE train excursions can provide positive rail experiences for rail fans, the travelling public and tourists to our NZ Rail industry and our short rail history. The many heritage operators around NZ do a fantastic job of restoring old NZ rail equipment and rolling stock in the hope that our great rail history is not forgotten.

A big issue for us all is adequate and suitably qualified crews.

Toll Rail contacted the Union in late January requesting a meeting to discuss the current, and future, crewing of heritage trains.

Currently these trains operate on the rail corridor and have been crewed by suitably qualified Toll Rail locomotive engineers and firemen. The pool of these qualified LEs and firemen is ever decreasing with little to no coverage on some lines. Some recent heritage excursions have had to be cancelled due



*Loco engineer Fred Hamer, one of the last certifying assessors in Toll Rail*

to the lack of qualified Toll crews. Clearly something needs to be done.

The Union requested information in regards to current numbers of qualified Toll Rail crews, where they are based, information on discussions with FRONZ and the recent excursions that have been cancelled. Most of this information has been provided by Toll.

The future discussions will not just be between the Union and Toll but will, of course, include the owners of the trains and FRONZ.

Toll Rail has indicated that, long term, they see the heritage operators being self sufficient for driving crews.

The Union is aware that many current practitioners (LE RMTU members) are keen to be trained and qualified in steam operation. It is our belief that the safest operation of these heritage trains on the mainline would be if they are crewed by the current

professional drivers, who have an excellent knowledge of the tracks they are driving over, the rules and procedures that pertain to those tracks and rail operations.

If there is a willingness to work to mutually agreeable solutions on the manning of heritage trains in the short, medium and long-term futures, then the future looks bright for heritage operations in NZ.

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and Cancer Protection.

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**0800 127 887**



# Solidarity in Japan with jailed workers

## ICLS Tokyo Report November 2006

Ruth Blakeley (South Island Ports NMC rep) and Wally Wallbutton (Central Region Rail NMC rep) joined 25 people from nine countries at the 2nd International Council, 4th International Steering Committee of the International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) which the RMTU is affiliated to the ICLS.

The ICLS is a solidarity organisation of the vast majority of rail unions in countries that are geographically vertically above NZ and below Japan (eg Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong etc).

On Saturday 18 November they attended a meeting in the JRU office and after introductions received a full briefing on the long and bitter struggle of the JRU7 ([www.jru7.net](http://www.jru7.net)).

In this day and age in a supposedly democratic country, their treatment is totally unacceptable. The state invents charges to suppress workers' rights of the JRU7 (a group of seven train drivers). The Government claims that a leftist extremist group, which had 43 members was running the JREU. In 2002, seven members from the Urawa electric train depot were arrested and detained for 344 days before their first trial in 2003. Subsequently, 54 trials later and 6 trial judges, they are still waiting. The JRU7 haven't committed a crime and yet they aren't allowed to drive trains. They have been under huge psychological pressure. We can't begin to measure or understand, but they have the support of their fellow unionists, which is evident during all the trials.

In the afternoon they attended an Anti Oppression Rally at Toda-City Civic Hall with the JRU7. Guest speakers gave their personal experiences at the hands of the Japanese legal system.

After this Ruth and Wally were treated to a traditional Japanese drum performance by children aged six upward and were then introduced to the rally and brother Som-sak Kosaisook (vice president of ICLS and president of the Thailand Railway Workers Union) who gave an address about solidarity



*Delegates at the 2nd International Council 4th International Steering Committee meeting in Japan at the JRU office.*

that was greeted with raucous applause. The rally finished with a stirring song written in support of the JRU7 sung by a massed choir of youth from the East Japan Railway Workers Union (JREU).

In the evening Ruth and Wally were treated to a traditional meal where you sit on cushions on the floor and on Sunday were taken on a peace tour of Tokyo.

On Monday the 4th ICLS steering Committee met then, followed by the 2nd ICLS council meeting at the JREU office at Shinjuku. The ICLS has a charter of principles which has nine member countries where trade unions fight for solidarity even though there are differences in politics, religion and beliefs. The common goal is that they work within railways, transport and public sector in the Asian/Pacific region and are not subjected to government suppression or the threat to their own livelihood where members have been imprisoned without trial or reason. Or even worse, lose their lives struggling to get "a fair day's pay for a fair days work".

At the ICLS dinner members had to sing a song for their supper – literally and the NZ delegates presented the Union flag with sincere words of support for the JRU7 at the end of the evening which were warmly appreciated.

On Tuesday they visited the ILO office. and met with representatives of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and in the afternoon met with two opposition groups in the Diet (Japan's Parliament).

At these meetings all members said that what was happening to the JRU7 wasn't fair and in more liberal democracies would not be tolerated.

The RMTU have lent its support to their



*Teaching good scrum technique is NMC North Island Rail rep Wally Wallbutton (centre) with JR7 members Shuichi Saito (l) and Satoru Yamada (r).*

*(below) South Island Port rep Ruth Blakeley with Akira Matsuzaki (l) and Osamu Yomono (r)*



cause. This was clearly evident when they met with the Ministry, the new Komeito Party and the Democratic Party of Japan. Ruth and Wally believe that their presence and words of support for the JU7 and the lack of justice and fairness in the treatment of the seven was taken on board and they will help fight for the release of the seven and a return of 'not guilty'.

Ruth and Wally thank the JRU for hosting the Conference and the help and assistance that was forthcoming while they were in Japan.

Solidarity Forever!



*Uncertainty as to who will be working at 7am tomorrow and who won't. Grave faces as members ponder who is getting the chop.*

*Upoko Ngatoko's face says it all!*



## How to ruin Christmas Hutt style

**O**N the Second day of the RMTU Conference in October 2006 Hutt Branch officials were requested by United Group Limited (UGL) to attend a meeting at the Hutt Workshops. The officials thought the meeting would be to discuss the use of temps and contractors on site. Instead they received written advice of a proposal for 52 redundancies.

Shattered, they returned to Conference and reported back to the assembled delegates. Conference immediately pledged solidarity and instructed Head Office to apply its resources to assisting the Hutt Shops branch.

### RMTU concerns

A tripartite meeting was requested to bring Toll, UGL and the RMTU together to discuss the situation. The RMTU was concerned that;

- We are approaching Christmas and yet again our members are faced with an uncertain future;

- The rail industry would lose skilled workers;

- Hillside workshops had a full order book but a shortage of skilled workers;

- Toll was playing games with UGL and the RMTU by turning off work to Hutt;

- The shortage of locomotives

during the "high" season was meaning that loco's were being kept in service rather than being cycled through Hutt for maintenance; and

- Our Hutt members were being used as pawns in a wider struggle between Toll, UGL and the whole track access charge issue.

### Frank debate

The meeting saw all three parties being very frank with good debate. The meeting set guidelines for work to be put into Hutt by Toll and also possible "other" work being expedited like Dh cab upgrade, Dc loco refurbishment for the additional Sa trains for Auckland and others. It was felt by all that

this should significantly reduce the need for redundancies – or even end the matter. Toll have kept their word and placed additional work into Hutt but UGL are still of a view that there is up to 25 surplus staff. The affect on worker morale and the deterioration in the relationship between the RMTU and UGL has been extreme and is manifesting into other issues. This is certainly a negative aspect of the outsourcing of business units of the rail industry by Tranz Rail as there is now the scope for members to become pawns in commercial struggles between industry participants. It is up to the Union to ensure that all participants in the industry share the pain. Meanwhile Hutt waits for the outcome.



*The workshop manager informing the troops of the upcoming redundancies.*

## BRANCH NOTES

### PALMERSTON NORTH BRANCH

*Riki Morris, leading traction electrician Palmerston North keeping an eye on the 25kv network in the traction control room (aka "the hole"). The control room duties are normally shared by a team of linesman on a rotating roster, with the change from a wall panel showing the status of the 25kv network to LCD screens, it is taking a lot of getting used to. Ergonomic assessments are due to be undertaken.*



### TARANAKI BRANCH

*A sunny day in New Plymouth, Toll Rail team leaders taking a break during a recent training day (l to r) Glenn Hughes branch chairman, Rod McGhie, Ritchie Ransfield, Murray Cotter, Terry Potroz, Joe McKay and Toll Rail Central H&S manager Steve (Rabbit) Hunter (and proud new Dad).*

### WELLINGTON BRANCH

*Every year Vic "Santa" Hodgson volunteers to spread a bit of good will to Metro Wellington customers with his 'ho ho ho's' and lollies for all kiddies – big and small. Pictured are Santa Vic and Metro LE Christine Sharma.*



## LETTERS



### EWF thanks

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for the support in receiving this scholarship as every cent is greatly appreciated and goes toward funding my education. I had a successful year in my first year at Canterbury University and managed to gain good enough results that get me through a competitive first year into my second year of engineering.

Once again sorry for the delay and thank you very much for your support.

Regards,

Josh Kempton

### Retirement

Dear Sir

As I am retiring from Toll Rail I would like to resign from the Union and wish union officials and members all the best for the future.

Noel Boote, TXO  
Picton



## BRANCH NOTES

**G**REETINGS comrades for the start of 07 and we trust that you are all back at work safely. Like most ports we

from its container services for vessels. Since the amalgamation of what was Omniport (which was part of McKay shipping) and Hawke's Bay stevedoring services, the company has struggled. The staff have been

given notice of layoffs based on their terms and conditions not being suitable to perform the contract. On speaking with some of the MUNZ members, the counter-offer put up by the employer and the conditions set out are

something from the mid 1900s to put it mildly. Good on the local MUNZ guys for hanging on to what they have fought for and are their contractual rights. Already too many conditions have been eroded as consequences of the port reform and employers who have regimented concepts that casualisation and inexperience will suffice, while at the same time flying the health and safety banner, it would seem that there is a contradiction in this methodology.

Health and Safety is built on the foundations of experience and common sense – hopefully the latter will prevail for a better outcome for these people.

At the end of the day we must wonder what political games are being played with people's livelihoods. Employers will no doubt use any clandestine agendas to sway and undermine workers.

We must remain vigilant in our thoughts as to how some employers operate in order to get what they want, by creating uncertainty.

### NAPIER PORT BRANCH

are all gearing up for yet another busy season. With the port of Napier picking up the Maersk 4100 hundred series or D class again we expect some large volumes of containers will cross the wharf in greater numbers than previous seasons. Time will tell.

To help accomplish this the port company has invested in two new omega machines 54E type. As per usual the investment has been put into the plant which in essence is all good but the need for improved contracts would also be a good investment, especially for those staff on the coal-face on lesser type contracts (eg 24 over 7s), as it seems this is a constant management mind set that this is all they need. We are all no doubt aware of the limitations these types of CAs bring to the waterfront industry and the ramifications of such ideals.

At the beginning of January, the local stevedoring company, Hawke's Bay Stevedoring who service the Port of Napier's cargo operations, gave 90 days notice with the intent to withdraw

### Tribute to Richard Mildren

11/7/61 to 28/12/06

**W**E lost a good work mate and ex-RMTU member over the Christmas period.

Richard Mildren passed peacefully away on December 28.



He was a respected worker at the port, a friend to many of us and a fighter for the underdog, depicting the caring nature of this man.

Richard started his earlier days in various operations throughout the port. However owing to his experience as a tug master for the ports of Auckland he transferred over to the marine department to do what he enjoyed most. He later transferred to the Guild, being a tug operator.

Our sincerest sympathies and thoughts go to his wife Debbie, sons Jesse and Ben, daughter Lee and brother Paul, also to his extended family.

You are missed, particularly that quick wit.  
Arohanui, sleep well Richard.

### WELLINGTON PORT BRANCH

Wellington MUNZ and RMTU port branches got together for a leer up before Christmas. MUNZ have organised this event for many years, making the effort to encourage past members to come along. In 2006 RMTU members were invited and a good night was had by all. (l to r) John Whiting, Dave Winton, Murray Sidaway, Ron Farrell, Tony Law, Warren Stoddard, George Ward & John Murfitt



## BRANCH NOTES

**H**APPY New Year. The happiest of all would be the Palmerston North-based tamper crew who worked 27.5 hours in one shift. You are our heroes. You have sent out the message loud and clear that you can work these ridiculous

### CANTERBURY BRANCH

shifts and still remain alive and still work for ONTRACK. The dedication and commitment for the company is unquestionable. To really make the issue more unbelievable you were all supported by the local managers - wow! What is the outfit coming to? What does a good and fair employer mean? Many of us are wondering.

45 total coal trains may soon be rattling down the Midland line. Recent trials and reports are telling us it may be a runner. There is still the odd glitch in the set-up but with our members' expertise I am sure they will be ironed out. Pike River coal will benefit the Coast and it would be good if it can go by rail. We all believe that Greymouth Port will not be ready for the first shipments of coal from Pike River. An extensive bridge rebuilding programme is being undertaken by ONTRACK engineers. This not only makes for a safer rail link to Lyttelton but a more efficient and reliable transport chain to move Solid Energy's and Pike River's large quantity of coal. India, China and Japan are taking most of the coal. However, West Coast weather can be a headache if you are trying to get coal barges over a treacherous and dangerous bar. (ed. Even the bridge gang Stabicraft would struggle.)

On April 1 ONTRACK's union members will receive a 5% pay rise. Additionally, if you have been on the job for seven years or more you will get a 5th week's holiday. It doesn't look too bad does it? Especially when the CPI is at 2.6%.

When you consider that the New Zealand and Australian dollars are very

close to each other and our wages are lagging 30% behind the Australian rates then there are some questions to be asked about our rates on a relativity basis. New Zealand's unemployment is the lowest in decades, but to get employers to pay higher rates is hard. It appears that high rates of pay are only achievable in the corporate offices of ONTRACK. How about letting them trickle down a bit to some of your underpaid employees? If there is no movement then the staff will do it industrially when the CA comes up for renegotiation. It was pointed out recently to one of our members that you can earn \$18 per hour just for holding a stop/go board at a local roadwork's company.

Now that we have been presenting ONTRACK with some brickbats, our Union also gives bouquets. The local bridge gang have been given a 4.3 metre aluminium stabicraft dingy. Although the craft will be berthed at Greymouth it can be easily acquired for working on and around our bridges in Christchurch. It will assist bridge gangs and bridge inspectors and assist bridge gangs to clear debris around the bridge piers and erecting scaffolding. No, it will not be used extensively during the whitebait season. The line gang have been given a new small excavator for



*Buzz Terrey tries out the new 4.3 metre stabi-craft. Some say it will play a significant part in monitoring whitebait flows!*

putting in poles. These new tools (toys) are appreciated. Well done ONTRACK.

Job sharing has been talked about at our local branch meeting. Loco drivers nearing the end of their careers are looking at this. This is ok if it is done by our rules and is done fairly. It could also be looked upon to be a way of recruiting more trainees and have experienced drivers train them to make sure we have the expertise up front – especially as trains are growing larger and larger. The new ballast wagons have been a show piece, but some little snot has already tagged them. These wagons have been long overdue and will make the track workers job safer and more efficient. Training on them is underway and feedback so far has been all positive.

We also report that the Cass Bash at Xmas was another resounding success. The local ganger, mayor and Cass train control, Barry Drummond says that all behaved themselves. Keep the letters rolling in to branch secretary Murray Dunlop who is acting as mail repository for correspondence to The Scribe, me.

Go the CRUSADERS.

**C**ARGO handlers at Lyttelton are seizing an opportunity to improve their skills and to have them recognised. The first 15 to complete the National Certificate in Stevedoring and Ports Industry (Cargo

### LYTTELTON BRANCH

Handling) have received their certificates and another 15 will soon be starting. Interest in achieving a nationally recognised qualification has been keen, in spite of warnings that there is some hard work required. There is a

sizeable waiting list of cargo handlers wanting to go back to the classroom to do the course run through the NZ Road Transport and Logistics Industry Training Organisation. The first group took five months to complete 20 NZ Qualifications Authority unit stand-

ards (60 credits) comprising a mixture of written theory and practical tests. The training sessions were fitted in around ship days. All the training and assessments were done



*Wayne Reeves and Mick Duggan toast a well-earned retirement from the Lyttelton Port.*



### WEST COAST BRANCH



**P**ICTURED is the track on which our locomotive engineers are expected to operate heavy coal trains on the South Island coal route. Tracks in this condition are widespread with the many wooden sleepers broken and with only concrete sleepers holding the track together. Track Inspectors report that the concrete sleepers are now showing signs of stress as they are taking all the load. As trains get bigger they are knocking the stuffing out of this track. The ballast cleaner – or the “Gropher Machine” as it is known – has been on the West Coast and did some work over the Xmas/New Year break, but with 45 wagon trains on this sort of track we think it is a recipe for disaster. Time will tell.

*(L) The track viewed from the cab and (inset) a closer look.*

in-house. Two of the trainers, George Findlay and John Rush, designed the course within the ITO requirements, organised the written material and assessed both practical and written work.

Three RMTU old timers have left the port company already this year. Electrician Wayne

### LYTTELTON BRANCH [cont]

Reeves, port services leading hand Mick Duggan and boilermaker Fred Given have all had their farewell shouts and departed. Wayne, who has been 25 years with the company, is heading off on a “working holiday” with his wife to the United Kingdom and Europe. Wayne’s farewell was combined with that of Mick, who started at the port as a carpenter more than 20 years ago, then became a skilled general hand and more recently, port services leading hand. Instead of chasing demurrages he will be chasing golf balls and the occasional trout. Fred has given long and loyal service to the Union as a delegate during his 27 years’ service at the port. He was officially farewelled by the company more than a year ago when he stepped

down to a part-time role, but finally left for good this month.

A new operations manager, Jay Goodenbour, has settled in quietly, but no-one is expecting things to stay quiet for long. Jay has a reputation as a hard-liner, having previously cheerlead moves to bring non-union logging stevedores to South Island ports when he was CEO of Carter Holt Harvey.

From the time he started he has popped up around the port, at any hour of the day or

night, just watching. They’re calling him the Prince of Darkness. However he has earned some kudos by shaking up the health and safety systems, holding staff meetings and pledging a reduction in injuries on the job. We’re too focussed on eliminating and minimising hazards, he says, and not thinking enough about working in ways that take into account the hazards that can’t be removed. Let’s hope it helps. There are too many accidents around here.

*Sonny Kemp, Daniel Knight and Mike Herbert, three of the first 15 to complete National Certificate in Cargo Handling at Lyttelton.*



# YJ - bigger, faster and safer

**T**HE first of ONTRACK's new ballast wagons have entered service and feedback from the first users has been positive. Classified "YJ", the 40 bogie wagons are built to a maximum laden weight of 80 tonnes but they will usually run at 72 tonnes (18 tonne axle load) or less for lightweight lines. The new wagons will replace all 173 of the existing four wheeled ballast wagon fleet. In normal operations one YJ will carry the load of three and a half YC's and will be able to run on scheduled express freight services.

The big differences for the team on the ground will be the discharge doors. Each wagon has remote-controlled doors supplied by Gemco of Western Australia. Using the remote the operator will be able to stand with a clear line of sight to the discharge area. The doors are hydraulic with the pump powered by loco main reservoir or brake pipe air (although BP is slower). The doors can be opened as much or as little as the operator requires, and can close against the flow of ballast, giving fine discharge control. Two sets of hand operated valves are fitted, one on each side of the wagon, as back-up to the remote control system. All the air, electrical and hydraulic equipment is mounted at one end of the wagon leaving the other end



platform free for gang tools and equipment. The wagons can discharge outside the rails or between them.

Work by the joint ONTRACK/Toll Safe Ride Working Party enhanced the detailed design of the safe riding positions for ONTRACK and Toll staff. Even with all the equipment fitted there will be a safe space at both ends of each wagon for staff piloting a rake of wagons. Mounting the handbrake on the side means that shunters' steps are not required on the headstock. UGR and Infrastructure Focus Group representatives were involved in early introduction and training sessions with the prototype wagon when Gemco visited NZ in July.

The last wagon is due out of the workshops in April 07 and New Zealand production means that the wagons will be available for service as soon as they roll off the production line.

(Adapted from articles provided by ONTRACK)



*(above) Without the protective grates over the controls and (below) with grates to prevent vandalism, A1 manual side valve access panel*

