

# THE *TRANSPORT WORKER*

MARCH 2019

The journal of the RMTU – NZ's largest specialist transport union



## Coffee break - Arthur's Pass



## 4 TOILET TROUBLES



The ITF is fielding complaints about toilet facilities world wide and the RMTU is asked to survey its members.

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Once again RMTU branches around the country step up to support other unions in their struggles..

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Napier Port branch notes continues with the battle to save the port from private ownership.

**COVER PHOTOGRAPH:** Happy RMTU members and TranzAlpine train crew Carolyn Baker and Michaela Moorehead take a coffee break at Arthur's Pass. Page 5.

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**Wayne Butson**  
General secretary  
RMTU

## Looking forward to positive and productive 2019

**W**ELCOME to the first issue of our premier Union publication for 2019. I am sure that you will join me in saying that our mag is a bloody good read and I think this is attributable to the fact that we run a good balance of the voice of the Union and the voice of the worker.

The branch notes are a must read for most of us as it is an enlightening barometer which signals the temperature of our membership. That is the reason why we strive to get as many branches as possible to contribute to each issue as we can. If your branch is not a regular contributor then please put up your hand and tell us about your branch and its activities, issues and personalities.

Our magazine is jam-packed with the live issues and reports that are our current campaigns and fighting targets as we deal with a wide range of employers and employer approaches to organised labour. Some would have you believe that it is all peace, harmony and lightly skipping down the yellow brick road together.

Yeah right!

Union matters are important matters as we are dealing with issues on a daily basis, that affect the daily working lives of members, their families and in many cases communities. Our work, struggles and battles are important, necessary and essential to the maintenance and constant improvement of terms and conditions of employment at the coalface and to maintaining and developing public assets that others will have either run into the ground or sold off to the highest bidder.

## Much gained in 2018

I believe 2018 was a very successful year for us and RMTU members. We gained a lot and we are committed to continuing chasing success into 2019. We have a number of difficult industrial situations across New Zealand. The two flash points currently

are Transdev Auckland and Lyttelton Port Company. With regards the latter, we have a large number of litigation issues underway as we will not permit our workplace leaders to be unfairly targeted by an unscrupulous employer.

This year is election year for the Union.

In April we will call for nominations for the national president – a two-year position – and in May we will be calling for nominations for the four year term of general secretary. In June we will call for nominations for the National Management Committee.

All of the dates are, of course, subject to any ballots being required which would add a month's delay to give time to conduct the ballots to identify the successful candidate and to enable us to move to the next position(s).

## In the midst of a growth wave

The rail industry is on the cusp of a growth wave. The Coalition Government are strongly supportive of rail and we already have announcements of significant investments in the future of rail in New Zealand.

The decision to go ahead with two rail-capable ferries brings solidity to the work future of members in Wellington and Picton and to the seagoing crews.

We also have the upgrade of 15 Dx class locomotives to Dxe for the South Island fleet, which is in a poor state. The recent heatwaves through the summer have highlighted the poor working conditions of the crews with no air conditioning whereas a significant proportion of the North Island locomotives are already air conditioned.


We also have a review being undertaken to assess the viability of reopening the Stratford/Okahukura line for Fonterra and log traffic and, of course, the development of the North Auckland line to Marsden Point.

These are exciting times for us all.

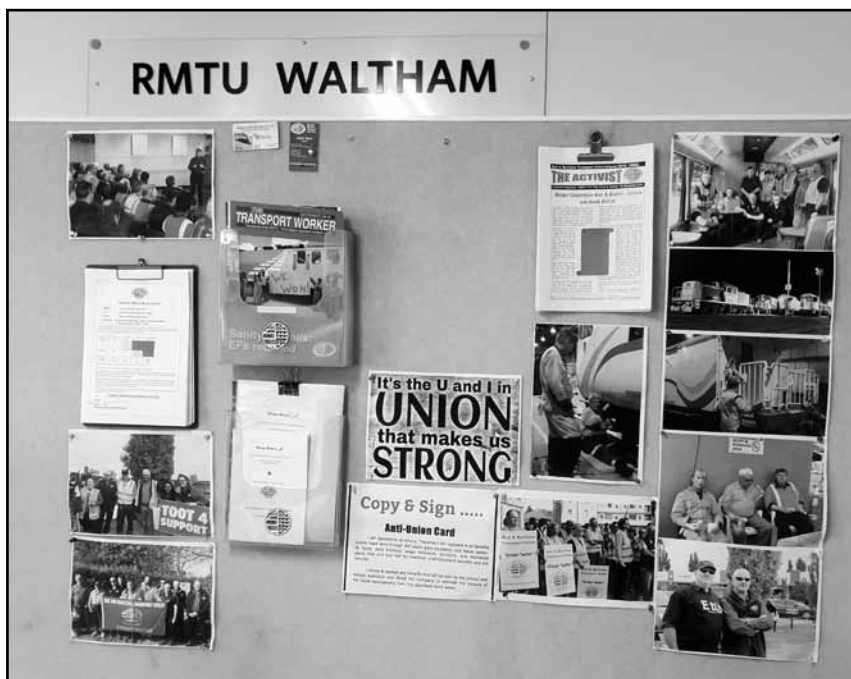
Like Minister Jones says, this year is all about the provinces and so we look forward to a focus being put on the South Island locomotive fleet and/or their replacement.

Should we be in the same state of locomotive disrepair and driver shortage come summer 2019/20 then I fear that there may be disruption to train operations across the country.

Because you are members of a strong, democratic and well organised Union you can be assured that, with your continued unity and strong support, the RMTU will be a powerful force within your workplace and we will make 2019 another year we can be proud of.

Kia kaha brothers and sisters. 

## Notice board of note: Waltham Depot



## Retirements

Dear Editor,

As I have now retired from KiwiRail after 49 years in the rail industry I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU. I have been fortunate in not having any problems requiring union assistance over all those years.

Barry Kitson

Te Rapa

Dear Editor,

It is with great regret that I must leave this wonderful organisation.

Thank you all for your help and support in 2017 and 2018 and my family and I wish RMTU and the men and women of Napier Port all the best for the remainder of 2019.

I hope one day to return to work and then back to RMTU.

Graham Williams.

Dear Editor

It is with some sadness that I'm resigning from the RMTU as of January 13, 2019 which will also be my last day at Port Nelson Ltd.

I have enjoyed my time as a member and delegate and learned so much in my time when I was involved in negotiations.

I wish all the members and delegates all the best for the future and in the battles to come. Stand together and stay strong. All the best guys.

John Lines.

Dear Editor,

All up I did 47 years. I spent three years mainly in Westfield and relieving in Whangerei and Otiria before resigning and heading back home to the South Island and rejoining there.

It would be fair to say that I have been ideologically opposed to most things in your world but I would have to concede that you and your predecessors have done a pretty good job in maintaining conditions and protecting the workers, to the point where our conditions would be the envy of a lot of other workers in this country. The last few years of the values and just and fair culture within KiwiRail

# Flushing furore & toilet issues

**A**MONG the many things we take for granted in a normal workplace is the right to use the toilet when needed.

In some countries workers may have their pay docked for such outrageous behaviour. In others, workers are denying themselves liquids while working to avoid such disruptive breaks in routine.

In rail, RMTU women members report a lack of access to decent toilet and wash facilities when working away from the depot. Port-a-loos are sometimes provided when working remotely.

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) - of which the RMTU is a staunch member - is making an issue of these destructive practices and unhealthy conditions and has made November 19, 2019 World Toilet Day.

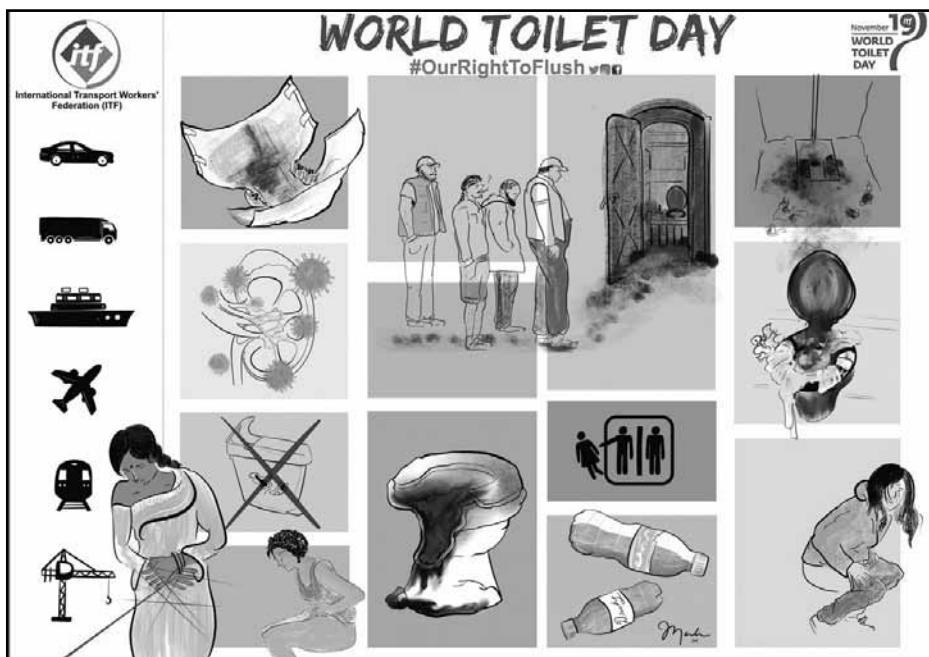
## Right to flush

The issue was first raised at the 44th ITF Congress in Singapore under the banner 'Our right to flush' organised by ITF women.

It quickly became apparent that this was a truly global issue deeply felt by women and men in the transport industry.

The health and safety impacts for workers without safe access to toilets is well documented, but many transport industry decision makers choose to perpetrate this violence against their workers through their inaction to deliver this fundamental human right.

When nature calls a shamefully high number of transport workers find themselves with nowhere to go, filthy facilities or are forced to pay to use facilities. Often there are insufficient toilet breaks and



many women are left vulnerable to sexual violence en route. Who would believe that simply taking a toilet break could incur serious health risks?

Some workers have resorted to wearing nappies to work to avoid such problems and hassles.

## Impact on women

The ITF is also aware of the significant additional impacts for women workers. A lack of women's toilets and sanitary provisions is one of the most significant factors keeping women out of decent transport jobs, they say.


This year the ITF wants to spotlight the problem with international union action and by encouraging positive employer solutions.

To this end the ITF is developing a charter for safe access to decent toilets for

workers, including women and informal workers. The aim is to launch the charter on World Toilet Day.

The RMTU is helping by gathering information from its members about conditions in New Zealand. While it does not expect to find such appalling conditions as found in some countries, it is aware that less-than-satisfactory conditions do exist.

Specifically the ITF is interested to hear from anyone having problems accessing adequate toilet facilities and any campaigns mounted to improve conditions and the results thereof.

If you can help please contact the RMTU health and safety organiser, Karen Fletcher, who is collating all responses. All submissions to the ITF will be anonymised. 

**# Karen Fletcher:**  
**karen.fletcher@rmtunion.org.nz**

## LETTERS

has seen some of the worst behaviour I have ever seen from managers which is incredible really in this day and age.

We have also been well served in the south by our last three Union organisers Paul Corliss, Brian Cronin and John Kerr. Again not my politics but I do recognise their commitment and service.

Ian Rutherford  
Timaru

Dera Editor,  
Just a quick note to say thank you for all  
your efforts on my behalf regarding my  
decision to take early retirement.

I have now officially retired.

It has been a good outcome in the end.

I would also like to tender my resignation from the RMTU after 43 years. I believe unions are a vital necessity in this day and age.

Wishing the Union all the best for the future.

Graeme Ross.

# Combined meeting



*Delegates and officials from NZNO, PSA, FIRST and NZEI out front at the Canterbury Rail and Lyttelton Port branch joint meeting - real union solidarity!*



## Handing over

*Retired South Island rail representative on our Union's National Management Committee Mike Williams hands over to newly elected Jed O'Donoghue at the meeting. Mike gave an inspiring speech that left us all enthused about the great work our union does on many fronts. No pressure Jed...*

*Taking a break at Arthur's Pass are (l to r) Harry Ness (LE trainee), Martin Goodman (banker LE) and Warren Clinch (minder LE).*





(above) Middleton Depot's new servicing person Patrick Connelly.

(left) Ben Dempsey came through from servicing and did an adult apprenticeship with us and has just come out of his time hence the picture.

# PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN

## ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

The plan has an external administrator and contributions are invested with four fund managers.



**Ports Retirement Plan**

Download a copy of the Product Disclosure Statement from our website:  
**[www.portsretirement.org.nz](http://www.portsretirement.org.nz)**

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

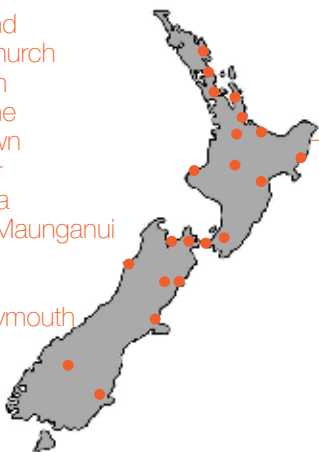
# Union determination



*The RMTU Port Otago branch executive with general secretary Wayne Butson and South Island organiser John Kerr resolve "there will be no reduction in members' terms and conditions in this year's bargaining round". A resolution that was later put to a full membership meeting of the branch where it was passed unanimously. STANDING STRONG!*

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## HOLIDAYS & HEALTH



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**Facebook:** [facebook.com/nzwelfare](https://facebook.com/nzwelfare)

# Workers' Memorial Day 2019

**W**ORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY has always been the day to *Remember the dead: fight for the living.* The RMTU commemorates the day by organising events to remember all those killed through work and at the same time pledge to continue to fight to ensure that such tragedies are not repeated.

The international theme for 2019 is 'Dangerous substances – get them out of the workplace'.

Worksafe NZ estimates that 15 people die from work-related diseases each week. In fact, a worker is ten times more likely to die from a work-related disease than from a workplace accident.

Around 30,000 people develop serious, but non-fatal, work-related ill-health each year.

These deaths and serious ill-health are not inevitable and are preventable in the vast majority of cases.

Is your work making you sick? If you are not sure, raise it with your Union delegate to put on the H&S committee agenda.

Your employer is required to monitor your potential exposure to hazards such as noise, diesel fumes, chemicals, dust, UV, stress, fatigue, asbestos, fumigants, manual handling and ergonomics.

The results of this monitoring should be given to you.

Contact the RMTU National Office for more information.

This year also marks the 20 year anniversary of the Waipahi rail collision which tragically took the life of locomotive engineer Graham White and seriously injured LE David McKie. There will be a commemorative event held at the Waipahi Memorial on April 28.

Please show your solidarity and support for workers and their families who have been cruelly affected by a workplace death

or injury.

Events will be occurring around the country on April 28. 🌐



(1) Graham White died in an horrific accident at Waipahi on October 20, 1999.



## MORE determined!



Port Otago branch members with South Island Rail NMC rep Jed O'Donoghue and branch president and NMC womens' rep Ruth Blakeley pledging no clawbacks in this years bargaining round.

## RMTU WOMEN

### Annelies Griemink

Union role & why did you become active in the Union?

I am the Union delegate for inside staff at the Wellington Ferry Terminal. Becoming a more active member has provided me with the great opportunity to develop my interpersonal skills and to express my passion for equality and safety in the workplace.

What has been a memorable experience in your role as a delegate?

Getting to participate in the MECA road show. It enabled me to meet fellow members and managers across KiwiRail, which helped broaden my knowledge across our business units.

Job title

Customer Service Representative

What does your job entail?

Checking in and boarding freight, vehicle

and foot passengers for the Interislander line.

Why did you decide to work for Interislander?

I joined the Interislander while studying at university, but stayed with the company as I enjoyed the variety of work and the ability to progress within the company.

What's the best part of your job?

Working together with a diverse group of people and meeting people from all over the world.

What's something that bugs you about your job?

Entitled or rude customers.

What piece of advice would you give

your 21 year old self ?

All progress takes place outside the comfort zone. 🌐



## Inter-union support



South Island RMTU organiser John Kerr joined South Fuels FIRST Union members on the picket line during their successful strike action last year. These workers won the fight for penal rates in their collective agreement.

## RAIL - TAKING STRESS OFF NORTHLAND ROADS

It's time to reconnect Northland's extensive railway network enabling industry to use the safest way to move freight and increase high value rail tourism.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union Fully Supports re-opening lines to Dargaville and Otiria. Reconnecting rail to Kawakawa - Opuia for rail tourism.



**Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.**

- Logs • Woodchips
- Dairy • Bulkloads • Tourism
- Large Consignment freight



## NORTHLAND RAIL

**T**HE heavy weights of rail from Government and KiwiRail gathered at Oakleigh, near Whangarei, for the last of eight geotechnical drill probes on the proposed 20km Marsden Point rail spur.

Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters and Regional Development Minister Shane Jones both delivered excellent speeches to RMTU members and dignitaries present.

Peters spoke of the neglect of the North Auckland Line (NAL) under the previous National regime, and how his government was in great haste to build the rail spur to Northport and upgrade the NAL.

Jones, in the absence of any sort of acknowledgement of the RMTU by the KiwiRail mouth piece and acting chief executive Todd Moyle, thanked rail workers for battling on keeping the under resourced line going, and Northland rail branch chair Barr for his tireless cam-



*Albert Barr (NMC), Shane Jones and Winston Peters - parliamentary "heavyweights" visit the far north.*

### \$1,500 AD&D

All members of RMTU are now covered by a \$1,500 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit, including \$500 spouse coverage and a further \$500 coverage on dependent children. This is an automatic membership benefit of belonging to the RMTU.

Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year. Please reply on line at [ailnz.co.nz/request](http://ailnz.co.nz/request) to have an AIL representative deliver your certificate of coverage and explain the additional insurance coverage available. This is very important to you and your family.

Please note: To qualify for the \$10,000 of additional ADB coverage, an AIL representative must visit you, obtain an enrollment form and collect premium for the first year. You may renew annually thereafter for \$5.



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A.M. Best, one of the oldest and most respected insurance ratings companies, has rated American Income Life as A+ (Superior) for overall Financial Strength (as of 6/15).



*KiwiRail board chair Greg Miller and acting CEO Todd Moyle (5 and 6 from right) take Winston Peters and Shane Jones on a tour of KiwiRail operations in the north.*

campaign work. Jones, in his usual combative style, threatened the main shareholders of Northport. He told Port of Auckland and Port of Tauranga that they will meet the 'sharp end of his mere' if they interfere with the kaupapa mandated by the Government.

KiwiRail chairman Greg Miller said: "What we are seeing now through the Provincial Growth Fund is a renewal of regional rail and an acceptance of the wider benefits rail brings to regions such as taking trucks off the road, reducing road maintenance

costs, improving road safety and producing fewer carbon emissions."

Newly elected North Island Rail NMC position member and Northland rail branch chair Albie Barr, who has been providing input to the business case, spoke to Newshub about the benefits. Aside from the widely known environmental advantages of rail, other key points are;

1) Building the Marsden Point spur and upgrading of the NAL, plus maintaining the line, will provide long term job

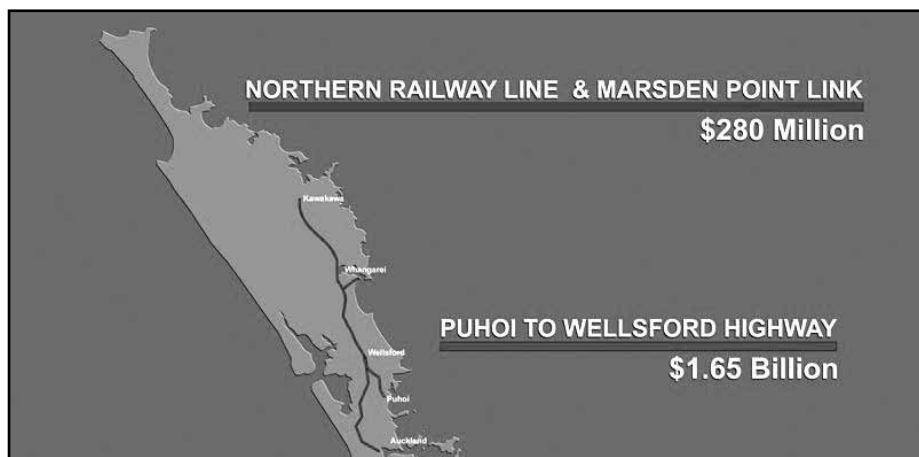
opportunities and help grow Northland's infrastructure skills which are in short supply. This can feed on into Auckland which is especially lacking skilled infrastructure workers.

2) Providing transport options for industries to move their freight to market, particularly for future manufacturing and, as a whole, adding value to what Northland produces.

3) Rail tourism; There are huge opportunities here to develop high end scenic travel to and from Auckland enabling people to enjoy Northland's cultural, artistic and recreation experiences. Combined with the expected 2021 arrival of cruise ships to Northport, passengers will be able to travel by rail to visit the Hunderwasser and Maori cultural museum in Whangarei. And in the future linking up by rail to the proposed Opuia Ferry Terminal.

4) The port spur and NAL upgrade will provide complementary benefits to Auckland by getting freight off the roads and on to rail. Throughout the Auckland region traffic congestion is diabolical. Rail will ease the pressure, increasing productivity to New Zealand's largest city and help keep the traffic flowing. Unfortunately the KiwiRail public relations exercise at Oakleigh wasn't well executed. To some it looked a bit of a sideshow on the 6pm news but it gave enough of an indication that the Peters and Jones' promises will be kept.

Continued on page 14



## NAPIER PORT

# Napier Port - still NOT for sale

**O**UR regional plight continues in terms of Napier Port being up for sale. In the two previous issues of The Transport Worker we (RMTU Napier Port branch members) have consistently maintained our message: Napier Port **NOT** for sale!

There are two main offenders who have contributed to the predicament we are

Flagstaff, an Australian company involved with acquisitions and carve-ups including Melbourne and Darwin Ports. Darwin Port was eventually leased to the Chinese for 99 years. It is certain that Flagstaff will profit off the backs of the Hawkes Bay rate payers from something they already own outright.

Flagstaff will have its teeth deep in the throat of Napier Port. This is the under-

council focus was on the Ruataniwha dam scheme which disappeared after the last HBRC elections, which also inspired much debate as the Port was to be used as the financial back stop!

The second perpetrator in this fiasco is our local MP, Stuart Nash. His main banner during the last election was: 'Napier Port not for sale'. Since then, with his entry into



in and both have stayed silent or hidden behind the Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC).

First is the Napier Port board, none of whom have been present at any meetings or provided any information around the sale, nor have they given any direction to their staff. In this scribe's view, they have been totally deceptive to this membership and other staff.

They have obviously been on this journey for some time having engaged one board member three or so years ago to carry the sale option forward. He has since resigned due to a conflict of interest (go figure!). He was Stephen Bradford, an ex CEO of Port Melbourne, now a key consultant with

handed nature of the Napier Port board and the HBRC.

They say they have been consulting for two years over the potential sale. Bull shit!

We only got notice of this at the latter end of 2018. Prior to that, the regional

government, he has not helped in our campaign in any way. The last words he spoke to us were at Workers' Memorial Day, when he said: "I am on your side".

Today we wonder which side he is really on. This Union helped put him where he is





**Stuart Nash, MP said: "Napier Port not for sale . . . I am on your side".**

**Today we wonder which side he is really on. This Union helped put him where he is today and he has turned his back on us. We live, learn and will not forget come 2020.**

today and he has turned his back on us. We live, learn and will not forget come 2020.

The HBRC met on February 13 for the next debate on the Port's sale, setting up of a new company called 'Holdco' which will require its own board. In essence, this entity will look after the shares and will fall under the HBRC like the Napier Port Company board. Two other companies have recently been engaged by HBRC, both with multiple names to their businesses a mile long - one of them, American - (their names elude me) who will oversee the vagaries through both the Port's books and the crap that goes on to get to the point of the initial public offering, the share split – to the sale there-of! This comes with a hear-say price of around \$11 million.

We organised an RMTU presence at this meeting to apply some disruption. Even though it was a work day we had around 40 members turn up along with some public support and ready members to turn up for shift changes. With a megaphone in hand, and plenty of Union signage, the outcome was an invitation by the HBRC chair to come in and address council about our concerns. We duly filled the council chambers and delivered our message.

The following is pretty much what was delivered to the HBRC.

We are entering a time of uncertainty. The council wishes to raise around a \$180 million (plus), for a 45% sell down, half

of which will go to the HBRC coffers, the other to pay the Port's debt of nearly \$90 million.

## **Fiscally irresponsible**

How this much debt was accumulated, in the scribe's view, is an indication of some fiscal irresponsibility over the last 12 years or so. With Council requiring maximum dividends they have forced the Port Company to maintain a debt. This has been engineered by both Council and the Board, gearing up debt while maintaining a dividend to show the port is still a sound investment. It is a fool's ploy to sell an already owned asset. Ultimately outsider's pockets will be lined without a care for the ratepayers or port employees.

The Port will still need to borrow \$142 million for the new wharf leading up to 2022. I guess this will happen off an inflated share price. The HBRC, through this period, have also indicated they wish to maintain a dividend from the Port. If the country or the shipping industry falls on hard times during this period of massive debt, in an already competitive industry, the workers will ultimately pay the price.

Council may have the majority of the investment at 55% but after the share split, they will not have 55% of the control.

External influences will manifest their wishes on the Port as we move into a more competitive environment within the

Port gates, as experienced in other ports. Undercutting, employers specialising in a race to the bottom, attacks on wages and conditions and poorer H&S are just a few of the consequences we may have to endure when privatisation lands upon us, just like our rail brothers and sisters experienced through the 1980s, 90s and early 2000s. Ironically this is what has already taken place at Melbourne Port in terms of ongoing industrial disputes since Flagstaff sliced it up.

These companies get fat off the backs of others – leeches!

The HBRC and the NPC board are only thinking of the present, they are not thinking about the mid to long term effects of semi-privatisation. There are many unanswered questions, not just from the Union but the public too.

These types of underhanded sales or carve-ups of publicly owned companies are a copy of the National government strategy we saw with the electricity power suppliers.

We all need to be mindful, this may just be the very catalyst other councils are waiting and watching for – to unload their strategic assets!

We will continue this fight, no matter who we piss-off. We have a few cards left to play – hopefully without breaking the law!

Napier Port is **NOT** for Sale.

Kia kaha. 🌐

◀ No genuine consultation, on top of a general lack of communication saw half the branch invited well in advance. Others were none the wiser that the event

was happening, with the rest only finding out on the day. Hardly the 'one KiwiRail way' is it? Rightly those members feeling disrespected were thrusting their taiahas

the responsible bosses' way. The branch executive is working with management to ensure this and other issues are addressed. Watch this space! 🌐

## NAPIER RAIL

**W**ELL, we are into March with the days and evenings still very warm in the Bay.

Structures and track teams from Napier worked a 12 day block of line in Wellington from December 26 to January 7 with a large re-railing job. It was completed together with extensive work on bridges 4, 7, and

8 on the NIMT –all jobs achieving excellent results.

In the Bay there has been great progress on repairing the slip north of Raupanga which occurred in September last year. Work trains have been discharging ballast south of Raupanga.

A new communications tower on the Wairoa line is well underway at Kotemaori at the top of Lookout Road. Concrete foundations have been poured for the tower

and a portacom.

The Napier structures team have been busy machining hardwood sleepers for Bridge 67 on the NIMT which is due for a 100% re-sleeper.

The signals teams have been busy doing code work and new installation of barrier arms and lights at Port of Napier.

Meanwhile a new car park and road set out has been completed at Ahuriri freight and network depot.

Until next time - stay safe. 🌐

## HUTT WORKSHOPS

**A**FTER a well-earned two week closedown at Hutt Workshops, the team are back on deck with our (usual) heavy workload.

We eagerly await specific updates on the plan for the DL component change out and the EF overhaul programmes. Both have significant implications for KiwiRail and it's important we get these right given that the ball has been dropped for one of them and we've been sitting on our hands for the other. All this makes a bit of a rod for our backs as a company, however, it is what it is and now we must rise to the occasion and get on and do the business. An HPHE-based group has been formed to formulate the EF refurbishment programme and we believe they have commenced their series of scheduled meetings to get this underway.

Todd Moyle continues to do a sterling job in the acting CEO's role and we hope that he is a prime contender for permanent appointment to the position. Unlike other internal candidates from times past, Todd shows great promise in being able to maintain Peter Reidy's cultural change momentum from the last four years. That said the CEO's position is a semi-politically appointed so no doubt we'll have to await the bedding-in of the new KiwiRail board chair and deputy (Messrs Miller and Corban respectively).

Mid-January saw notification of CFO Kate Jorgensen's

pending departure from the railway family. Like the CEO's position, it will be interesting to see if replacements are appointed from within or not. This of course raises the question of how well (or not) we carry out our succession planning in KiwiRail although senior executives are often brought in from 'outside' to follow an agenda of someone else's making, despite the changes and progress with KiwiRail's vision, direction and culture. Outsiders don't necessarily follow a pattern of steady-as-she-goes (or 'consistency') in the 'new world' which prevents us from achieving a complete bedding-in of change initiatives across the entire company. However, we would be foolish to ignore the old adage that 'change is the only constant'.

Our recently confirmed workload has indicated that we need around 30 additional staff for the foreseeable future –that just may cover the number of 'departures' Hutt has seen over the last 1-2 years or so. Additionally, we need to get some 'fat' into the system to ensure that absenteeism in any form and for any reason doesn't have a significant impact on day-to-day operations – a problem that apparently exists across the company.

Locally we have seen the departure of Don Abercrombie at Christmas from the

networks inventory as a result of company restructuring and the associated changes in the line of reporting for others.

The Rolling Stock Asset Services (RSAS) reshuffle continues with rumours of one or two managers not being successful in keeping their equivalent positions or redeploying to others, but until the dust settles we can only hope that the right people are subsequently appointed.

The Code of Conduct appears to be a problem for some people. In recent times we've had a number of members receive formal warnings for behaving in a manner contrary to this commonsensical document. Whilst the individual cases have been properly dealt with in accordance with the Just and Fair Culture Policy (and its supporting documents) it is somewhat frustrating that some people feel they can do what they want, when they want within a team environment. Sooner or later they will be called to account either directly or via a bit of 'karma'.

We will be interviewing prospective apprentices in February so here's hoping we get a bunch that are as good as the intakes we've enjoyed over the last couple of years or so.

It was also pleasing to see that the Administration Industrial Council (AIC) has been re-formed to tackle cross-company issues that were identified and confirmed at the last MECA re-negotiation (2018). ▶

◀ The team will be looking at NZCE/ NZDE updating, the (MECAs) health and safety matrix, OJT allowance 'harmonisation', determination of an RDO, and (we believe) looking at Pay-Scale 1 and how the incumbents within it are treated across the company.

An article in the media late last year identified New Zealand's top 20 most attractive employers. We didn't make the list however there are various initiatives underway within the company that may well make us a contender in the future including the Zero Harm initiatives to make us No. 1 when it comes to health and safety (unlike the Ministry for Children who appear to have a culture of workplace bullying that is being investigated by WorkSafeNZ. The media interview with the CEO gave the viewer little confidence in the management of this relatively new government department).

As an aside, one common theme of the 'attractive' companies is that they have a high union density

which goes a long way to ensuring workplace harmony for all in a large organisation! (Take note everyone!) At the upper levels, the workshops are fortunate to have branch chairman Mat Cordell-Bain seated on the Mechanical Industrial Council (MIC) and the (corporate-level) KiwiRail HPHE steering group, and branch secretary Myles Carter on the Administration Industrial Council. Additionally, these guys plus site manager Karl Bouterie are part of sub-committees of the MIC so our representation is well assured.

All in all it's going to be yet another busy year on a number of fronts so let's take a deep breath and get on with growing the company. Keep working safely and look after your mates. 🌐

*Anthony Hartfield  
receiving his loyalty  
certificate from branch  
secretary Myles Carter.*



## NELSON PORT

**T**HE Nelson branch has started 2019 with our first stop work meeting with a view to preparations for re-negotiating our CEA this year - due to expire in June. As we now have membership port wide, we have challenges in attempting to please all. With many varied roles, rosters and duties it will be challenging to get a deal for everyone.

We have recently had new members sign up from the workshop, which for many years was the beating heart of the Union in Nelson. Membership had fallen into decline in this area and we are now seeing a resurgence, with some much-needed work in progress to bring our CEA up to meet the needs of the time. Thanks to the great work by Ian Harvey who has brought the workshop back into the fold.

We face interesting times in Nelson. As I write this, we are still fighting a forest

fire. Many residents and, indeed, our members had to be evacuated from the Wakefield area and the fallout from this event will be felt for some time yet. All forest harvest has halted and our largest mill closed. The land is parched, and we desperately need rain to alleviate water shortages. The drought is not only affecting forestry but horticulture and viticulture across the top of the South Island. This will affect our exports and, of course, cargo flow through the port. We will have to wait and see how this unfolds. Not to mention the 2,500 hectares of mature forest that is burnt out. I am sure that the region will bounce back, but it has been fantastic the way in which our community has pulled together in adversity.

Other interesting news revolves around container traffic with Nelson going from five regular visits per week to three. Maersk, and at this stage CMA-CGM, have pulled out and it seems unlikely that Maersk will

come back. This has placed stress upon the Pacifica service which is struggling to cope with the extra traffic. It would appear that Maersk customers are going to MSC as the exchanges on this service are going through the roof. It does seem to make it a bit easier on cargo handlers to have a life with fewer visits to the port.

Wine continues to be a strong part of the container business with both import of empty bottles and export of finished product going through the port. Quayconnect continues to be busy while Quay Pack may face some quiet times as the production of sawn timber products and MDF fall away without any raw product to fuel their production.

We face struggles with our worker participation in health and safety but continue to pressure PNL to honour our worker participation agreement and to collaborate and cooperate with both Unon and workers.

We look forward to a positive and fruitful 2019. 🌐

## LYTTELTON PORT

**O**UR branch is proof of the resilience and strength of the RMTU. As detailed in previous issues of *The Transport Worker*, we've been in conflict with LPC management for what seems like a very long time. Despite this, our members' resolve has never weakened and the branch is better organised than ever.

The most recent development was the unjustified dismissal of one of our container terminal delegates, Brian Gilkison, in mid-February. Readers (TTW4-2018) would have been aware that this was in the offing as it was part of a lengthy so-called disciplinary procedure. The branch was prepared however, and at a meeting (December 12) voted that, in the event of Brian getting the sack, the branch secretary would stand down and Brian would take his place. We must therefore acknowledge the sterling work done by Heiner Benecke over the last four years as branch secretary. Heiner took on the job in the middle of the 2014-15 bargaining round and industrial dispute and was literally thrown in the deep end. He was branch secretary through a very challenging time yet not only did he fulfil all the duties required of him he implemented some key initiatives that have brought our branch into the 21st century. Foremost amongst these was the outstandingly successful mass text system – a simple but effective method of enabling real time communication with almost every member. He was also instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of the branch Facebook page, another key means of communicating with members and officials. Heiner handled a huge number of individual and collective issues on behalf of members and for the bulk of his time did this whilst working as a part time cargo handler – a first for the Lyttelton Port branch. Thank you Heiner for the enormous contribution you made – your sociable and affable nature is your greatest strength and made you many, many friends amongst your RMTU whanau and the wider union movement. The Branch now welcomes Brian Gilkison into the role of secretary knowing he will be a capable and determined advocate for our members. Naturally the RMTU is mounting a fight at the unjustified dismissal of Brian through

the legal process.

This very big exception aside, the attempt by management to bully and intimidate our members into submission seems to have eased somewhat since the Christmas break. There are nothing like the number of so-called 'investigations' and disciplinarys, particularly in the container terminal, since the holiday season ended. This may

while workers were in the snap-back zone. Members will understand the horrific potential danger of incidents like this. The RMTU commissioned Hazel Armstrong Law to undertake a review of the actions of the regulators (Maritime NZ and Worksafe NZ) and she authored a report which was duly furnished to Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) and WorkSafe. MNZ have since re-opened their investigation into the incident and we



*Branch chair and SI ports NMC Andy Kelly hands a Certificate of Achievement to Bruce Baldwin.*

be a temporary lull, or perhaps management have finally worked out that morale will not be improved by continued metaphorical floggings! By their own admission productivity nose-dived and the health and safety committee in the container terminal is 'dysfunctional'. Sadly the High Performance High Engagement (HPHE) project in the mechanical maintenance workshop was stillborn with the chief executive deciding not to pursue it, which was of great disappointment to RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. This is madness when we frequently read of the enormous gains that can, and have been, achieved by the RMTU and KiwiRail at Hutt Workshops and elsewhere. Same union – different employer.

The RMTU has been working hard to improve the safety of our members at LPC. Last year there was a serious incident involving the berthing of a vessel, the APL Kota, during which a number of lines snapped

discovered that LPC had not even notified Worksafe about it! This by an employer that self-righteously tells members that health and safety is its priority in the avalanche of correspondence around so-called investigations that they have systematically been hauled into. Our branch executive met with representatives of MNZ and WorkSafe and we are pleased to report that these agencies have committed to undertaking a joint audit of Lyttelton Port under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015.

In our view the situation will only improve when a long overdue clean out of senior management is done at Lyttelton Port. The record speaks for itself in our view: a series of damaging industrial disputes that have affected the bottom line; low productivity; poor morale; a dysfunctional health and safety committee; litigation over unjustified dismissals; and now a high level audit of the Port's health and

◀ safety by the regulators. The new chair of the Lyttelton Port board must surely begin to act soon.

To move onto more positive matters we had a very enjoyable joint meeting with the Canterbury Rail branch at the end of last year followed by some Christmas cheer at the Heathcote Valley Inn. We recognised the work of our active delegates and members. Bruce Baldwin and Stu Marsh were the recipients of certificates for the work they do, in particular the outstanding media interviews they gave at the height of the strike in March last year. We also recognised Mike Shrimpton and Julian Stewart who have been outstanding in supporting the work of the branch. We had guest speakers from

the nurses' union (NZNO), the primary teachers' union (NZEI), the PSA and FIRST Union – all of whom have supported us as we have supported them in their struggles for fair pay and decent working conditions over the previous 12 months.

The negotiations for the logistics officers' collective agreement have still not been concluded despite a very positive mediation before Christmas. That said we are hopeful these talks will have resulted in settlement by the time you read this.

Discussions at City Depot around recognition of the members who train forklift drivers have been continuing and we are also hopeful these have yielded a good result by the time we go to press.

We see that our Union is starting 2019 as it ended 2018 and at the time of writing RMTU members in Auckland are being balloted on industrial action against Transdev Auckland. We want our brothers and sisters north of the Bombay Hills to know that here in Lyttelton we are right behind you and fully support your fight. We are aware that there will be no improvement in the industrial relationship between Transdev Auckland and the RMTU until there is a clean out of management similar to what happened in Wellington following that protracted and bitter dispute.

Until next time stay united and proud to be RMTU! 🇳🇿

## CANTERBURY RAIL

**S**TARTING with the good stuff, we had a very upbeat joint meeting with the local port branch in December with guest speakers from the teachers', nurses' and public servants' unions together with our friends from FIRST. As is now traditional, we recognised the contribution of key people to the work our branch does including Mike Williams, former South Island rail representative and a member of the National Management Committee. Jed O'Donoghue, the newly elected representative in Mike's place was there to take the baton and he had the pleasant job of recognising Trevor Ressells for his 50 years of service in rail and his membership of our Union before he retired last year. What a wonderful example to the new people starting their careers in our industry.

Continuing on a positive note, the fresh investment in rail now the coalition government has settled firmly into the Treasury benches is most welcome. At last we are starting to deal with the demographic time bomb. Our South Island organiser had the pleasure of welcoming a couple of fellow Poms into network services – Kevin Roach and Peter Wilkie are making themselves at home in the de-stress gang. With Brexit looming we predict a queue of British rail workers wanting to ply their trade here – and elsewhere. We also welcome Chris Boshoff and Alan Lewis to our Union family.

At the other end of the scale Les McIntyre our communications leading hand and colleague of branch secretary Ian Walker, recently clocked up 40 years of service, as did signals technician Ian Gottermeyer. Tamper fitter Steve Russell topped that with 50 years of service – and he can still pedal 100 km (+) on his bike!

The Coastal Pacific is well and truly back in business. A Japanese film crew came aboard and the lads (and lass) in servicing made sure the loco, driven by Alfie Wilson, was gleaming. Wouldn't it be great if they could all look like that all the time? The Scenic Journeys' crew do a wonderful job looking after the tourists and are great ambassadors for our country. Thanks to Annette Telfer, Duncan Brown and Giovanni Giamblanco for the work they do on behalf of the RMTU advocating for our members on this service and on the Tranz Alpine. We should also mention RMTU stalwarts Steve Stringer and Dion McNatty who were instrumental in getting fire crews out to a very inaccessible part of the Midland Line during a recent fire near Staircase Viaduct. Steve drove the train with his customary aplomb and Dion was on-board looking after the fire fighters – even manning the coffee machine so they got some well-deserved fluid as they went about their vital work.

Christchurch hosted the operations and networks industrial council meetings in February. The first day was a joint meet-

ing and there is talk of expanding this to bring in our rolling stock and asset services (mechanical to you and me) so we have a super council. The councils will then divide to discuss specific occupational issues on day two. This sounds a good formula as there is now so much going on with HPHE and the expansion of rail that we need to break down the new silos (we used to have networks, mechanical and freight but following the COO restructure we now have the three silos but they are Northern, Central and Southern) at long last. Our Union has always been the glue that has held the disparate parts of KiwiRail together since the re-nationalisation of the industry so it's good that we're taking this step.

Our South Island organiser has a new office at Ensors Road which also houses KiwiRail's learning and development department as well as the South Island service centre. If you're in the area drop in and say hello – you may catch him there lounging with his feet up on the desk in the 'ivory tower' – however, in reality he's often out and about around the South Island.

All in all it's a good time to be in the rail industry. Things are by no means perfect and we still cross swords with the bosses now and then, but when we look at the debacle management are making of Transdev in Auckland and the continuing conflict at Lyttelton Port it puts it all into perspective.

Til next time its hooroo from us. 🇳🇿

## WEST COAST RAIL

**W**E would like to welcome Scotty Jeffries and Rhys Goodman, who have escaped from Palmerston North and settled here in the mainland at the Greymouth operation's depot. They are enjoying the lovely weather, lower housing costs, wonderful natural beauty, lack of congestion and general all round goodness of being on the South Island. We hear there are a few LEs in Auckland who are having a scrap with Transdev—we wish you well comrades but have you thought about emigrating to the South Island?

In all seriousness, the addition of these two members to our depot is very welcome as the rosters here been running on empty for too long due to a former senior manager thinking he could run a railway in this manner, together with a so-called expert who slashed and burned and called it "optimisation". This type of thinking has proved to be a dismal failure here and other places around the network, and we would hope our senior leaders have learned a lesson on how not to run rostering systems and staffing levels. We know our brothers and sisters in the Otago rail branch are also living with the result of this idiocy—we feel your pain.

Management has had another shuffle in their seemingly endless churn, and hope the new lot are a bit more proactive in keeping staff levels at a sensible levels, unlike the last lot who let staffing levels slide to a point where we could not, at times, staff train services.

The locomotive engineers have some changes coming into effect shortly that change the conditions of their current ROM.

These changes will make their conditions a little bit more user friendly and they should be congratulated for getting effective change. There are many of us anticipating similar changes for other operational staff such as ROs, TXOs, and CT operators who have shift patterns similar to locomotive engineers. We understand the ROM is being reviewed to help protect us all against fatigue and the other pitfalls of working on 24 hour rosters. Great stuff and let's hope it happens soon! The fact is that in rail the only regulation around our hours of work is driven by our Union—not by legislation—but by our collective strength. To bring this back home we had an incident logged of a shunter working at night at different shunt locations dozing off while driving back to the yard. No harm was done and it was great to see he realised

what the issue was and reported it but it makes you stop and think.

The lads over in network services may not do shifts like the operations staff but they earn their keep. With lots of fine hot weather the track guys are being kept busy doing long hours on heat runs and with the hot muggy nights fatigue is a risk. After a hard day's graft we all need a good nights sleep and for some of us that's been elusive of late.

Also we have three new track workers in the RMTU family: Welcome to Te, Dean and Eddie who all fitting in well. Lastly a sad farewell to Kenny Moore ex track worker/ganger/inspector/production manager with 44 years in rail and our union and a great mentor to all. Ken and his wife is leaving The Coast at the end of February to "semi retire" to their new home in Rolleston best wishes from all of us mate. 🇳🇿



*RMTU Track members enjoying the sunshine in Greymouth.*

## TIMARU RAIL

**I**N late January we received the sad news that Barry Joyce of the Oamaru track gang died suddenly from a heart attack after a short illness. Barry was one of those characters that only seem to exist in our industry. A man who loved to weld. For many years he led a nomadic lifestyle

living in caravans and working around the lower South Island.

In recent years he settled in Oamaru and bought a house but, obviously, domesticity did not curb his wanderlust and he loved cars, particularly Fords, such that he still had four of them at the time of his death. Our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

Before Christmas we had a salutary reminder of the need to be vigilant when the issues we have had over many years with the fleet of CF fertiliser wagons came to a head when one of our Christchurch fitters was injured while trying to fix jammed doors. With both our HSAT team members and Balance Fertiliser staff concerned that these old CF wagons were no longer fit for purpose our branch 'red carded' the wagons

and worksite. As luck would have it our RMTU national health and safety organiser, Karen Fletcher, was travelling through Timaru that very afternoon and together with our South Island organiser visited the

scene. KiwiRail agreed to no longer use the CFs and will instead bring up fertiliser in HLC type containers, handled through our Timaru CT site.

Thank you to RMTU head office for their

help and support through this process. The member concerned was hospitalised with an injured hand but has made a full recovery.

Another vote of thanks to our brothers



*The CF wagon with the ambulance drawn alongside at the time of the accident.*

## Sickness, accident and death



### The New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Sickness, Accident and Death Benefit Fund

In the last 10 years 230 locomotive engineers had to retire due to medical reasons. They received a total payout of \$4,737,097 from the above Fund. LEs who didn't belong to the Fund and who were forced to retire did not receive anything.

**You could be next to miss out!**

**For as little as \$219 a year your future – or those of your next of kin – could be better assured.**

#### Contact:

Debby Green, PO Box 813,  
Wellington  
Telephone: (04) 499-2066  
Fax: (04) 471-0896  
debby.green@rmtunion.org.nz

**Attention LEs**  
**Join this Fund now for**  
**your own peace of mind**

in network services for their continued work in our yards and the new sets of track. They are now a common site in the yard. Thanks Bob and your extended staff and team. Your work is greatly appreciated by your fellow members who benefit from

your labour as we go about our daily tasks.

By the time you read this our brothers and sisters in Transdev in Auckland will have completed their ballot on strike action and may well have begun their campaign. Solidarity from South Canterbury and

remember you Transdev LEs – houses and living costs are a lot cheaper in South Canterbury and the wages are the same.

Stay safe from your brothers and sisters in the Timaru rail branch. 🇳🇿

## TIMARU PORT

**P**ICKING up on the branch notes from the December 2018 issue, we've continued to work on our risk management approach to fatigue in Quality Marshalling and the monthly meetings of the fatigue risk management group are collating some valuable information and enabling the RMTU and management to monitor shift patterns and assess the risk of fatigue.

One item that provoked a very fruitful discussion was the contrast between different work tasks and what effect this has on our fatigue. We do some work that can be pretty hectic, marshalling containers with all the attendant risks of working under pressure at all times of the day or night in all weathers. This is very busy and you really have to have

your wits about you. At the other end of the

scale when we work on the Holcim cement ship it's a long shift that can be very tedious. We have to be there and we have to be alert but the tedium brings another kind of pressure altogether.

We've also had some good discussions about not cutting corners if our staffing level is reduced by unplanned absence and the need for comfortable amenities and napping facilities. This is all part of a good dialogue between workers and managers and is a direct result of our negotiations last year.

Together with Prime Port we're looking ahead to Workers Memorial Day and Prime Port have secured a piece of land across from the port administration offices for a memorial. The local RMTU rail branch,

Quality Marshalling and Prime Port are working with us to make this a reality by April 28 this year. A very worthy cause and one which we are pleased to be leading on.

On a sad note we lost one of our long standing members Tony Hope, who died after a battle with cancer earlier this year. Our thoughts are with his family at this very difficult time. His friends and fellow members meant the branch had a good presence at his funeral.

Finally, we see that our brothers and sisters in Transdev in Auckland are once again balloting on industrial action. We also note that Port Otago RMTU members are in negotiations this year. Stick together comrades—our experience is that this is the only way to win.

Kia kaha from South Canterbury! 🇳🇿

## PORT CHALMERS

**W**E ended 2018 on a positive note with a Christmas Party for the kids and families at the Edgar Centre in Dunedin – a great venue with plenty of indoor space for sports to keep the young and young at heart entertained. Some of us then had a break over the holiday period and as we headed into 2019 we organised a delegate training day on January 24 for our branch executive. Our national president Aubrey Wilkinson, general secretary Wayne Butson and South Island organiser John Kerr all attended. This was a good opportunity for our branch officials to get some refresher training and for us to look ahead to 2019. Top of our agenda is the renewal of our RMTU-MUNZ collective agreement with Port Otago which expires on July 7. This means we will be able to initiate bargaining in early May.

We watched as events unfolded in Lyttelton and Timaru last year and, obviously,

we are wondering which way will things go for our branch this year?

Management at Lyttelton seemed bent on attacking terms and conditions and the result was a prolonged and acrimonious dispute with industrial action that had an enormous impact on the port and the Canterbury economy. By contrast, management at Timaru adopted an enlightened and cooperative approach to bargaining that has yielded some good results for both our members and the port. Lyttelton management, by its own admission, is concerned at low productivity whilst in Timaru the contrast could not be more stark.

One lesson we took from the above two examples is that there is no substitute for being prepared for bargaining. Consequently we have developed a plan heading towards this year's negotiations. The first step was to meet with our members on February 12 and outline the approach the executive wished to take—a disciplined and

professional position on remits focusing on deeply and widely felt issues. In other words, a remit will only stand a chance of making it onto the log of claims if a large proportion of the membership are prepared to fight to win it as a claim. Secondly, we are resolved that there will be no loss of terms and conditions in the forthcoming bargaining round. A resolution to this effect was unanimously supported by the membership.

In coming weeks the other aspects of the plan will be rolled out. We remain hopeful that our employer will adopt an enlightened and cooperative approach to negotiations and our branch would certainly welcome that. If not, we will be prepared for the worst.

Another lesson we learned from last year was that in mature employment relationship the parties discuss issues that need resolving before negotiations commence. At last year's National Conference the RMTU endorsed a campaign to get employers to adopt a risk management approach to


fatigue. Accordingly the branch voted on, and supported, a resolution to this effect. We have opened the dialogue with Port Otago on this very important matter and are hopeful we can make progress prior to commencing bargaining in May.

On other matters, two of our veteran members reached milestones in recent weeks: Gavin McLanachan and Norm

Pulham have both clocked up decades of service at the port – 50 and 48 years respectively. So between them that's almost a century of experience. Well done lads! What a great example of loyalty and service. We're sure they are looking forward to the next 100 years.

We are also looking forward to the return of Shawn Hurring. It was great to see

him at our membership meeting looking fit and well and ready to return to being with us at the port.

This year promises to be eventful but rewarding one for the branch. We see that the Auckland Rail branch have also got off to a flying start with a ballot for industrial action in Transdev. Stick together comrades, we're right behind you here in the south! 

## OTAGO RAIL

**T**HERE have been a few things of note in Otago that have happened since the last edition of the world famous Transport Worker. Beginning with the positive stuff, we have employed some really good people to fill the gaps where we desperately needed boots on the ground. Although more are needed this is an excellent start. There have been also some employed on fixed term agreements who are fitting into the gangs that they have been assigned to so well that hopefully, when their term expires, they will then be employed by KiwiRail permanently. It would be wise after spending time training them to then invite them to join the family on a permanent basis. A win for them and a win for KiwiRail. The new employees and the temps have taken a little pressure off the people at the coal face, and this has a knock on effect meaning people have begun to relax a little. This has proved to allow people to once again enjoy and take pride in what they do. The change in the smoko room is amazing. It's a good place to be.

With the good comes the not so good. Unfortunately, just before Christmas, we lost an experienced worker who failed a D&A test. The person involved was in the rehabilitation programme due to an earlier failed test so by the rules we play by, we got the best deal we could. However, he is no longer with us. There has been another call for the less invasive swab testing to be introduced as at the moment urine testing does not test for impairment. A breath test will check if you have consumed alcohol and are likely to be unfit for work. A swab test will check if you have consumed drugs just before work and are likely to be unfit for work. While not condoning the use of


marijuana, it often attracts more stigma for occasional indulgence than the consumption of what is a bigger problem in New Zealand, that of alcohol. You can drink your fill on almost every day of the week, arrive at work at 0730 and pass the current screening test –and still be hungover and not be much good until around midday. You can consume marijuana three weeks before a screening test while on holiday or even the night before work and not be impaired in any way and yet under the current rules you are in danger of losing your job. With possible changes to the law concerning the use of marijuana should we not be moving towards a fairer regime of testing? This would ensure we keep people who are good, responsible workers. Another problem with the current testing regime is the invasive way the samples are taken. Most people feel uncomfortable having to urinate in front of strangers, be it behind a flimsy curtain, or if you are suspect, with somebody watching over your shoulder. It's time for a change.

Sadly we had to say goodbye to Barry Joyce (BJ) from Oamaru who died on January 26 this year. Barry irritated a few managers past and present by doing it his way. He knew what he wanted and by God he went and got it. He was a real character and will be greatly missed by his colleagues and friends. RIP BJ.

Over at Hillside the news is good. The place is really starting to hum (see separate notes for Hillside). There is a really positive atmosphere in the place as we are growing and doing the great work that we always said we could do throughout the campaign to save Hillside in 2011-12. The adoption of HPHE principles has also had a positive impact. This is a real good news story for

the RMTU, for KiwiRail and for Dunedin. Our branch secretary and a Hillside delegate recently met South Dunedin Labour MP Clare Curran to press Labour to honour its manifesto commitment to re-open Hillside. We almost believe this may just happen through gradual expansion anyway and one day we'll be up to the 120 employees we were at when the place was shut. The day we reach that number we'll have a real party!

Dunedin Railways is very busy as the tourist season reaches its peak. There is plenty of work with excursions for cruise ship passengers as well as our normal iconic rail journeys up the Taieri Gorge. The gleaming Silver Fern railcar is a wonderful site as it pulls into Dunedin's beautiful railway station –a testimony to the loving care and skill lavished upon it by our highly skilled craftsmen in the workshop. Our members are in negotiations for a renewal of their collective agreement this year and have been watching the living wage campaign with great interest. It should be a great year for Dunedin Railways and the loyal band of RMTU members who keep it running.

The picture is not as rosy in Dunedin KiwiRail operations. The loco engineer roster in particular is very poor and is causing a great deal of discontent. KiwiRail management have acknowledged this and have started to put some mitigation in place but, as we all know, it takes time to recruit and train LEs and whilst there is light at the end of the metaphorical tunnel, that doesn't make it any easier when you're eyes are hanging out because of the roster. The problem will only be fixed by increasing staffing. Dunedin is a great place to live and housing is cheap in comparison to Auckland and we hear our brothers and sisters in Transdev up there are having a bit of grief. 

◀ Why not come and work down south? Another issue for LEs with the hot summer weather is the lack of air conditioning in the cabs. It really is intolerable in the 21st century that we face the dilemma of either overheating or, if we open the windows, being eaten alive by insects. It's no laughing matter dealing with speed restrictions due to heat, sitting broiling in the cab and being stung by wasps. The RCOs and rail operators are also dealing with the frustrations of the limited capacity of our network. Some days it's a race with our fellow members at Dunedin Railways to get the shunt out to Port Chalmers before their tourist ship excursion – whoever loses faces a long wait.

Our branch has had some encouraging discussions with local councillor Jim O'Malley who is a vocal supporter of commuter rail for our city. Jim has both vision and a good understanding of the practical challenges involved. He's been talking with KiwiRail management, Dunedin Railways and the RMTU and is a switched on advocate for rail and for Dunedin. We'll be



*Dunedin Railways delegate Andy Howie moving a heavy load.*

keeping our eye on this particular ball and lending our weight to the campaign.

Finally, we've been active supporting other unions in their struggles for decent wages and terms and conditions. Most recently our branch secretary was accompanied by the South Island NMC representative and our South Island organiser at the junior doctors' picket line outside Dunedin

hospital. These workers have similar rostering and fatigue issues as us and as two relatively small unions it is important that we support one another. We also note that our comrades at Port Chalmers are in bargaining this year and our branch is looking forward to building organisation and solidarity with our brothers and sisters there as 2019 unfolds. 🌐

## HILLSIDE WORKSHOPS

**W**HAT a difference a few months have made to Hillside Depot. Since Christmas we have recruited five new mechanical engineers and two apprentices.

Two of the mechanical engineers were former Hillside employees who were let go when Hillside closed in 2012. Both are pleased to be back albeit for six month fixed term contracts. All have been employed

to work on the PKL log wagon project in various aspects of the manufacturing process that will deliver 102 PKLs by early July. These new additions have taken the site's staff from eight to 20 including support.

The first six containers of the new log cradles have arrived courtesy of the Hutt inventory team. This has meant the site is getting a new lease of life with the old grit booth being used for stripping and the old machine shop being utilised for welding

and assembly. This has meant business as usual for the rest of the shop and Dunedin Depot is busy with shunt scheduled maintenance wagon and loco checks, loco bogie swaps and traction motor changes along with heavy repairs to both wagons and locos.

Additionally, the tail end of asbestos stripping on remaining shunts are being worked through whilst offering services to Invercargill depot on a regular basis. So there is plenty on.

Prior to Christmas Luke James and the MCC in conjunction with RSAS manage-



ment got the level five training agreement finalised with staff from both Dunedin and Hillside depots signing up for the course.

A good outcome that will benefit all sides.

Until next time, be safe. 🇳🇿



*Phillip Lewis - level 4 mechanic at Hillside.*



*Jed O'Donoghue with Stephen Milne.*

## SOUTHLAND RAIL

**A**S this goes to print our two new ROs will be certified and out operating, helping to ease the load on the current staff who have been under the pump a bit of late with retirements and promotions taking effect. Well done Wiremu and Rae. Invercargill is currently seeking to fill three new RO positions. Jump on the website if you're interested or ring the Invercargill operations manager. The weather is always lovely here and housing is relatively inexpensive.

We have one RCO at present undergoing LE training and another RCO going away mid-year which will see the LE roster improved with a spare LE working on the yard roster who will relieve the LEs when required. Another great initiative from the boss making sure there is plenty of back up, should we need it. We no longer require the services of Lawrie Knipe, who, though retired, thankfully came back as required to help out. Had that not happened, services would have undoubtedly been cancelled. That should allow Lawrie to finally retire and spend more time on the golf course and improve his handicap, that is, if he can still see his balls (pun intended).

Chris and Dion were the successful ap-

plicants to the recently appointed team leader roles. One vacancy became available when Neil Summerscales left the company while the other is a new TL role based out of Invercargill. The responsibility for Edendale, our satellite station which looks after Fonterra, the southern hemispheres largest dairy factory, the Dakin MDF plant at Maitaia, the Alliance Group freezing works and Southland Tanneries, will be rostered through the team leaders. Edendale is a very busy little depot that is big on production. This highlights what is a recent trend since the recent departure from the 'Santerisation' madness, and is seeing a return to the previous days of what is essentially a station master role – for those who can remember it.

Another example of coming full circle is the reintroduction of cab cleaning to Invercargill. This is the result of yet more superb work by the LE delegate who has been chasing this for a number of years. Well done, again to the operation's manager who acted quickly when enough had become enough and the heat went on. The plan is to have a contractor come in and clean six locos per day, three days per week which will have a major impact on the working conditions for our southern LEs. This has been sadly neglected for a very long time.

On a less positive note we have a case of South Island neglect and under investment, a sore point that is starting to fester and may well become the next big thing!

One winning team is a myth in our view, and as someone recently pointed out, the cascading of locos out of the North Island into the South is just a fancy way of saying shit rolls downhill, borne out by the poor quality of locos coming our way.

I see the DCs have had the N 7-8 ban reintroduced. You'd think somebody would finally wake up and declare that these old dinosaurs are now a liability and should no longer be running around on the main line. It's only going to take one major trackside fire to help make the minds up of the people who should have had the courage to make this decision a long time ago.

We're pleased to announce we got through December incident free, and are looking forward to that trend continuing.

Milk production is well on the downward trajectory after the pre-Christmas flush of 12 million litres per day.

The Burt Monroe weekend is on with lots of bikes around and the oyster season is just weeks away. Life is good down here. Some of you LEs scrapping with Transdev in Auckland might consider a shift?

Cheerio from the deep south. 🇳🇿



*Stu Marsh - LPC delegate.*

**A**CTIVE Canterbury Union members recognised for their loyalty and commitment.



*Outgoing Lyttelton branch secretary, Heiner Benecke and South Island ports NMC rep Andy Kelly*

## Outstanding workers



*Malcolm Ross (Toll Christchurch) and Canterbury rail chair Graham Ealam*



*Graham Ealam and Trevor Ressler.*



*Kevin Bradley.*



*Mike Shrimpton.*



*Julian Stewart (LPC) who attends every picket that is held in the Canterbury region if he is able.*



*Wayne Martin.*