

THE ACTIVIST



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SAFETY FIRST

As you all know the Union has been less than complimentary at what we saw as a drive within Kiwirail for on-time performance. We have contended that this drive for customer service and on-time performance is a return to the commercial needs of the business overriding safety, as we saw in the late 90's. It appears that the Union's concerns have not gone unheard as the KiwiRail Freight National Operations Manager Aaron Temperton has issued a letter to all rail operations staff within Freight which states;

"...I would like to address with you was a perspective that from time to time procedures or rules need to get breached to get trains in or out of terminals on-time and that timekeeping is the absolute priority.

Please allow me to dispel that perception here and now. Timekeeping is vitally important but never at the expense of safety. If you feel you are being asked to compromise on safety or compliance, or observe safety being compromised to promote timekeeping then I request of you to stop, take stock and proceed in accordance with the appropriate procedures. I will take late trains every time as against our people getting hurt.

If you genuinely feel that you are being pressured by peers, Team Leaders, Operations Managers or KiwiRail Managers to take shortcuts then ring me (021-325797) and I will act upon your concerns."



The RMTU commends Aaron Temperton for this bold move and strongly endorses the message to members/staff. **Safety First we say – you owe it to your families!**

WORKERS UNDER ATTACK

ERA Rallies – there's strength in numbers – are being arranged to enable YOU to have your displeasure heard by Government at their attack on workers' rights by amending the Employment Relations Act to transfer bargaining power to the employers.

The CTU is coordinating a campaign to raise awareness and opposition to these changes, and to emphasize the need for fairer alternative policies.

The EPMU contribution to the campaign is to sponsor and arrange membership rallies in the main cities that other unions can organise around and attend.

The RMTU contribution to the campaign is to get RMTU members to attend the rallies in good numbers so as to demonstrate to our

fellow unions that we are prepared to join together and oppose these regressive changes to the Act.

Hopefully the rallies will also generate media interest and help spread the message about these unfair and unnecessary employment law changes.

The ERA Campaign Rallies arranged;

Wellington – Tuesday 20 August, midday at the Petone Rec.

Auckland – Wednesday 28 August, 1pm at the Vodafone Pacific Events Centre in Manukau.

This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

Christchurch – Thursday 29 August,
10.30am at the Wigram Air Force Museum.

Regional rally coordinators are:

Auckland – Robert Boswell
robert.boswell@epmu.org.nz

Wellington – Paul Tolich
paul.tolich@epmu.org.nz

Christchurch – Phil Knight
phil.knight@epmu.org.nz

The CTU ERA Campaign website –
www.workrights.org.nz

MAKE A SUBMISSION

The RMTU website homepage has a submission form for you to complete which will have your voice heard on the proposed amendment to the Employment Relations Act. Go to

<http://www.rmtunion.org.nz/s-ubmission-employment-relations-amendment-bill.php>

or visit the RMTU website to find the form.

Help us to Stop Bad Law!

MOBIE – MOBILISES FOR IMPROVED SAFETY

From 1 July, the health and safety inspectorate of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment will be using a new service delivery model. We will have a greater focus on proactive and preventative work with workplaces, will be more visible in workplaces, and will target the highest risk areas.

There will now be three separate and specialised teams of Health and Safety Inspectors - Response, Investigations and Assessment.

Most inspectors will be in our Assessment Team and will carry out planned assessments of workplaces, focusing on our priority areas. In future all Workplace Health and Safety notifications should be sent to our Response Team, which will triage these to ensure a consistent and appropriate level of response. Investigations will be undertaken by a specialist team of investigation inspectors, separate from the assessment inspectors.

These changes will allow us to have a bigger impact, improve the consistency of our assessments and investigations, and help us to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in the workplace.

You need to know that Your responsibilities for notifying workplace health and safety matters do not change, but from 1 July these should be sent to our central Response Team. You can do this by calling 0800 20 90 20,

going to www.business.govt.nz/healthandsafety, or emailing healthsafety.notification@dol.govt.nz

If you contact an inspector directly they will either record information and pass it on the response team or refer you on the response team.

In some circumstances, the response team will request that you undertake a duty holder review and report this to the

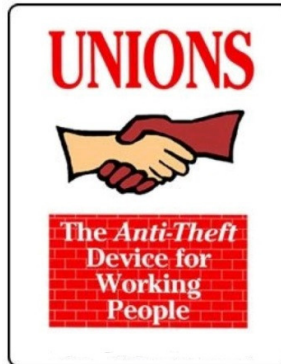
Group. These are an analysis of what happened and why, and what the workplace has elected to do to prevent a recurrence. The reviews will be assessed by the inspectorate to ensure they are satisfactory. There will be guidance for duty-holders on completing a review, including forms and templates, on our website.

FUMIGANT RISK FOR IMPORTED SHIPPING CONTAINERS

The RMTU obtained under the Official Information Act a report done by NZ Custom's service in 2012 on the types and exposure levels of chemicals present in imported shipping containers.

The study was done in Port of Tauranga and found 89.7% of air samples collected from imported containers had fumigants present. Over 18% of samples were found to be above safe reporting levels, some concentrations were found to be in excess of 100 times above the safe reporting level. Out of 519 containers only 2 containers had correct fumigant signage on the outside of the container.

The risk of exposure for workers is during the devanning process. The RMTU is



following up with NZ Customs Service currently.

2ND PERSON (LOCO) TRAINING

Rumors abound within KiwiRail Freight that FRONZ members are to be trained in 2nd person duties on trains. The Union has approached KiwiRail Freight and the Training Manager Colin Vickery has emphatically denied that any training of FRONZ members is occurring. Vickery's exact words were "I have not been approached about FRONZ people". HR Manager Chris Hancock also stated in an email "We are not training FRONZ people".

However the rumors continue and it appears that I&E have been the Division to undertake the training. It is reported to us that 6 FRONZ members were trained by an ex Wgtn LE I&E trainer and that they did a road based familiarization run from Plimmerton to Fielding. There is a smell in the air about all of this and it is rotten.

A meeting is being arranged for next month which will see the three parties in the same room. It will be interesting. **Meanwhile it is time for all RMTU member Loco operating staff to pull together and to standby for a call for unity and solidarity around this issue.**

No road knowledge trips for these 6 or any others are to occur in any location within NZ until further notice!

Operating trains on the KiwiRail network is our work and no others!



URINE DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING EMBARRASSING FOR WORKERS

The RMTU is waiting for KiwiRail to respond to the RMTU's concerns regarding the process for urine drug and alcohol testing. Male and female worker have said the process for collecting urine samples for

detection of drugs and alcohol is embarrassing. Issues include the lack of privacy using the NZDDA van for the urine collection, and discomfort when the collector is of the opposite gender to the person giving the urine sample.

Saliva testing is starting to gain popularity across other safety critical industries as a screening tool for impairment to drugs. Saliva testing is less intrusive and has less risk of tampering, it detects the use of drugs in the last 6-10 hours so is a good measure of impairment. The saliva testing standard is approved in Australia but not in NZ yet.



A REMINDER - SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – STATE SCHOOLS

☞ Terms 2 Holidays – 12 to 29 July 2013

☞ Term 3 Holidays – 27 Sept to 14 October 2013

☞ Term 4 Holidays – Commence no later than 20 December 2013.

ASBESTOS AT THE WELLINGTON EMU DEPOT

The RMTU requested KiwiRail conduct asbestos monitoring at the Wellington EMU depot after the huge storm damaged the depot's asbestos roof.

Asbestos dust (chrysotile) was found in swabs taken from the floor and surface areas in the south end of the workshop.

KiwiRail and the RMTU are working together to address the issue which includes an immediate clean out of the workshop and instructions given to staff on how to minimise contact and spread of asbestos dust. A programme of air monitoring will be carried out to assess the risk.

“HARLEM SHAKE” HEALTH & SAFETY RISK?

The Employment Relations Authority recently granted interim reinstatement to two employees who were summarily dismissed after performing their own version of the

"Harlem Shake" on the factory floor at Fonterra's Takanini Plant.

In *Taufua v Fonterra* [2013] Auckland NZERA 230, the company argued that its staff had breached health and safety policies and that warranted the action it took. The Authority, after viewing video footage of the employee's antics, noted that the applicable collective agreement indicated that "horse-play even resulting in physical contact, may not justify dismissal in circumstances where management over-reacted". The matter has yet to go to a full hearing.

It is rare that video footage of matters giving rise to a dismissal is presented to the Authority or Court. Parties need to weigh up objectively what might be the impact of such footage on a Judge in the cold light of day. The interim decision in *Taufua* reminds employers of the need to carefully consider the level of response to employee wrongdoing. Unwise action may not necessarily be unsafe to the extent that summary dismissal is appropriate. Each case will turn on its facts.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS KIWIRAIL PASSENGER INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL!

Nominations are called for positions on the KiwiRail Passenger Industrial Council.

Current Representatives are:

Scale 1 - Vacant

Loco Engineers – Mike Nicholson

Train Manager (Long Distance) - Brian Armstrong

On Board (Urban) - Harvey Paterson and Gary Innes

Yard Operations – Glen Hughes

Union Organiser - Wayne Butson

Union policy as determined by Annual Conference requires that any member of the Union's National Management Committee (NMC) who is eligible for nomination to a position on an Industrial council shall be deemed to have been elected to that position.

One NMC Representative is eligible at the call for nominations. A new addition to the PIC is a Mechanical Rep representing the EMU depot. **National Vice President Howard Phillips is a Mechanical Engineer based within the EMU Depot and so he will fill the Mechanical Position in accordance with current Union policy.**

We now call for the following positions from members who fall within the categories of representation;

Loco Engineer

If you are a Locomotive Engineer employed by KiwiRail Ltd in Passenger Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

On Board Services (Long Distance)

If you are employed in an on-board services capacity (Long Distance) by KiwiRail Ltd in Passenger Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

On Board Services (Urban)

If you are employed in an on-board services capacity by KiwiRail Ltd in Passenger Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Yard Operations

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a Terminal Operations capacity in Passenger Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Scale 1

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a capacity which is paid under payscale 1 in Passenger Group then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Nominations must be moved and seconded by current financial Union members who are employed within the same area for which the nominee is being nominated for and an acceptance of nomination signed by the nominee. Forms are available from the National Office – jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz

Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs 9 August 2013. In the event of more than 1 nomination being



received for any one position then a postal ballot will be conducted.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS INTERISLANDER INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL!

Nominations are called for positions on the Interislander Industrial Council.

Current Representatives are:

Ferry Operations (Outside) North - John Finch

Ferry Operations (Outside) South - Newton Popplewell

Scale 1 (inside) North - Chris Hanna

Scale 1 (Inside) South - Tania Haraki

Union Organiser - Todd Valster

Union policy as determined by Annual Conference requires that any member of the Union's National Management Committee (NMC) who is eligible for nomination to a position on an Industrial council shall be deemed to have been elected to that position.

There are no NMC Representatives eligible and so we now call for nominations for all Council positions from members who fall within the categories of representation;

Ferry Operations North

If you are employed by Interislander in Ferry Operations (Outside) in the North Island then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Ferry Operations (outside) South

If you are employed by Interislander in Ferry Operations (outside) in the South Island then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Scale 1 (Inside) North

If you are employed by Interislander in an occupation which works predominantly inside within the North Island then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Scale 1 (Inside) South

If you are employed by Interislander in an occupation which works predominantly inside within the South Island then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Nominations must be moved and seconded by current financial Union members who are employed within the same area for which the nominee is being nominated for and an acceptance of nomination signed by the nominee. Forms are available from the National Office - jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz

Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs 9 August 2013. In the event of more than 1 nomination being received for any one position then a postal ballot will be conducted.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS KIWIRAIL MECHANICAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL!

Nominations are called for positions on the KiwiRail Mechanical Industrial Council.

Current Representatives are:

Auckland Maintenance - Rudi Brens

North Island Depots x 2 - Steve Brown and Shane McNae

Hutt Workshops - Kasia Kurene

EMU Depot - Howard Phillips

South Island Depots - Guy Miller

Union Organiser - Stu Johnstone

Union policy as determined by Annual Conference requires that any member of the Union's National Management Committee (NMC) who is eligible for nomination to a position on an Industrial council shall be deemed to have been elected to that position.

As a result Howard Phillips will fill the Electric Suburban Wellington position on the council and no nominations will be called for this position.

We now call for nominations for the following positions from members who fall within the categories of representation;



Auckland Maintenance

If you are a Mechanical Engineer or other trade employed by KiwiRail Ltd in the AMM business in Auckland then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Hutt Workshops

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd within Hutt Workshops then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

North Island Depots (2 positions)

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a North Island Loco or wagon mechanical depot then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

South Island Depots

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd in a South Island Loco, wagon or Waltham Passenger depot then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Nominations must be moved and seconded by current financial Union members who are employed within the same area for which the nominee is being nominated for and an acceptance of nomination signed by the nominee. Forms are available from the National Office – jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz

Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs 9 August 2013. In the event of more than 1 nomination being received for any one position then a postal ballot will be conducted.

KR DEPOT FUMES

The HSE report recommends KiwiRail take a more analytical approach to managing fumes in the workplace. This includes contracting an occupational hygienist to review the ventilation and monitoring systems across the depots. Here's a summary of the KiwiRail report;

Westfield

At Metro Maintenance 50% of exhaust fans were not operational and levels of fumes were uncomfortable. This issue was raised by the



Danger
Harmful fumes

HSAT with the recommended corrective action for the fans to be repaired. The report says gas monitoring has occurred once and (on that particular shift) was found to be within exposure standard limits. There has been feedback that suggests (without monitoring) that there has been past incidents where the gas level/TWA would have been exceeded.

Te Rapa

12 extraction fans (5 recently replaced), no monitoring devices

Mount Maunganui

2 extraction fans- no monitoring devices

Palmerston north Servicing shed

After fume issues were raised, personal monitors have been issued to detect Carbon monoxide and Nitrogen dioxide levels

Palmerston North Fitters shed

No extractor fans despite large diesel powered track machines running at full revs. No mention in the report regarding monitoring devices.

Wellington Mechanical Depot

A combination of electric extraction fans, wind driven extraction fans, apex fans and air driven vents across the 3 workshops.

Napier and Picton

no issue identified

Waltham Passenger depot

Concerns regarding fume have been raised from the shunt shed team. There is a fan installed but it does not appear to be in the best position for efficiency. No electronic air monitoring devices used in the workshops

Christchurch (Middleton)

This new facility has been built to meet the standard new building regulations. This includes forced air ventilation for pits, CO2 and O2 monitoring systems and a capable locomotive exhaust extraction system

Dunedin

There are no issues in the loco servicing workshop. However, there may be an issue with the diesel powered

heating

RMTU Recommendation

Recommend the issue of ventilation and monitoring should be escalated to the Industrial Mechanical council. We endorse the report's recommendations to have an occupational hygienist review the current ventilation/monitoring systems across the depots. In addition it would be worth hearing from all the mechanical depots on what PPE you have been provided to minimise the risk of fumes and dust.

Why is air ventilation (fume extraction) and air monitoring important?

Exhaust from diesel has been added to the World Health Organisations list of most carcinogenic substances, emissions from diesel include carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide which are highly toxic.

Gases produced from welding can cause significant health problems including respiratory problems, irritation to eyes, nose and throat, skin irritations and increased and risk of cancer. These kinds of emissions can have serious health implications for workers so we need to ensure that the ventilation systems are up to scratch. For more information the Canadian Centre for Occ health and safety has useful information. http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/welding/fumes.html

Monitoring the air where the worker is working by using personal monitoring equipment or well-placed permanent monitors will provide information on how effective the ventilation system is. Monitoring provides the worker with information on their level of exposure, this information is critical for determining how long they can be in the environment safely what other controls need to be put in place (such as PPE) to manage the hazard.

FORESTRY WORKERS NEED A MINISTER WHO CARES

The Minister of Labour, Simon Bridges, seems willfully determined to ignore serious safety issues within forestry, says

Labour's Health and Safety spokesperson Darien Fenton.

"There is mounting public concern around work practices in what is one of the most dangerous industries in New Zealand.

"Mr Bridges' insistence that a weak code of practice – which notes forestry is an industry 'with significant risks and has suffered a large number of fatalities and work-related injuries over the years' - is sufficient to stop those deaths and injury is nonsense.

"He told the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee that Rotorua forestry workers he had met recently supported the code and that it just needed a chance to bed in.

"It turns out that wasn't the case. Mr Bridges was, in fact, told by those employees that the conditions they worked in were extremely dangerous. They worked in the dark, and they worked long hours and without sufficient support.

"The approved Code of Practice is deficient. It was developed without worker input, and includes

only a passing mention of employee participation in health and safety.

"This is despite both the Pike River Mine Royal Commission and the Taskforce on Health and Safety stressing the importance of worker involvement.

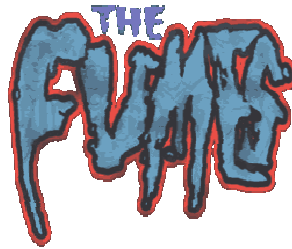
"The only reference to fatigue is that workers should have a sleep - there are no maximum hours or breaks between shifts and the Code only requires seat belts to be worn in work vehicles 'when fitted'.

"I don't understand why the Minister thinks this is acceptable and why he continues to deny the growing calls for an independent inquiry.

"By not caring lives continue to be at risk."

NORTHERN CORE RAIL NMC POSITION – BALLOT RE-RUN

This ballot for the Northern Core Rail position on the Union's peak body the National Management Committee (NMC) has had to be re-run as the previous ballot of 3



candidates (Hopa Bell, Bernie Snook and Barry Simpkins) ended up with a dead heat on the second count. The ballot was a preferential vote as there were three candidates.

The dead heat followed the distribution of the lowest polling candidates' second preferences votes to the remaining 2 candidates after the first count. The lowest previous polling candidate has been removed from the re-run ballot on the decision of the National Returning Officer and the candidate concerned has agreed to this action.

Ballot papers have been dispatched from National Office to members eligible to vote within this ballot group. We urge all members who receive a ballot paper to vote. The low voter return rate has been very disappointing. These ballots are expensive and very labour intensive to conduct and it is distressing to see these sums of money apparently wasted through members electing to not vote and consigning the papers and envelopes to the rubbish bin.

TRANSPORT WORKER ISSUE 3

The deadline for contributions to Issue 3 is 12 August 2013. Get your letters to the editor, stories and branch notes to Wayne Butson by this date.

WIRI DEPOT OPENING

Friday July 5 marked the official opening of the new \$100M Wiri Depot. Speakers including Mayor Len Brown, Lester Levy from AT, Inaki Mendizabal (CAF) and Martin Kearney (Veolia/Transdev), all acknowledged the importance of the RMTU to this project.

Members from both KiwiRail and Transdev attended. The creation of "real" jobs was the focus of Len Brown's message. He earlier made comment about the outstanding colour of the ribbon while he was cutting it, it was of course red.

RAIL LINK IN 2020? SOE SALE CASH GONE BY 2017

The money raised by asset sales is due to be spent by 2017 – making a mockery of John Key's claim that the City Rail Link will be paid for from SOE sale proceeds, says Labour's Finance spokesperson David Parker.

"Bill English said in 2011 that the proceeds from assets sales – dubbed the Future Investment Fund – would finish by 2017[1].

"Yet last week John Key claimed that SOE sales would be used to fund the Auckland City Rail Link, which won't start until 2020. The second harbour crossing, which isn't due to be built until 2030, is even further out.

"This is just wishful thinking. Assets sales have raised only \$1.7 billion so far, from the sale of Mighty River Power. But since that was floated investors have lost ten per cent of the share value. That means they are likely to get less than the \$3.1 billion budgeted from the Meridian sale.

"National has promised asset sales cash for every project they dream up in an attempt to justify the sell-off. They drag it out every time.

"The money is funding the Rail Link, the harbour crossing, Kiwirail, new schools and hospitals, irrigation for multi-million dollar farms, capitalising KiwiBank and rebuilding Christchurch. All the while it's supposed to pay down debt.

"Bill English thinks asset sales can pay for 'almost all of those things'. Tell him he's dreaming.

"Spending the proceeds of assets sales several times over is National's take on printing money," says David Parker.

FONTERRA BACKS RAIL

The Te Rapa Fonterra drystore distribution centre is to be expanded at a cost of \$27m. The storage capacity will double to 600,000 tonnes



KEY NEEDS TO PUT ON HIS HARD HAT AND GET AUCKLAND RAIL MOVING

Auckland Council's agreement to negotiate with Precinct Properties to build a section of the City Rail Link four years before the project's start date, shows Auckland businesses are champing at the bit to get started, says Labour's Auckland Issues spokesperson Phil Twyford.

"National's refusal to start the City Rail Link before 2020 is holding Auckland back and denying it the growth, prosperity and jobs the City needs.

"Businesses don't want to wait until 2020 to reap the rewards of this important project. They know the development opportunities the rail link will bring will revitalise local businesses, nearby housing developments, and grow a range of economic opportunities.

"Plans to do nothing until 2020 don't impress anyone. In fact, by National's completion date Transport Minister, Gerry Brownlee will be riding the City Rail Link on his Super Gold Card and John Key will be just a year away from doing the same.

"Labour would get the link underway by 2015, meaning it would be moving Aucklanders around the central city by 2020.

"At that stage John Key would just be putting on his hard hat. He needs to get with the programme," Phil Twyford said.

WELFARE CHANGES UNFAIR AND UNPRINCIPLED

The CTU is very concerned about the substantial changes to the benefit system which come into effect next Monday. Eileen Brown, CTU Policy Analyst says "these changes pose significant risk to people and to communities."

Eileen Brown says "we know that when there are jobs available, the number of people on unemployment benefit falls. The evidence of that is clear in the massive drop in numbers of people on benefits between 1999 and 2008. Renaming the benefit categories will not produce more jobs or improve outcomes. All it does is re-label people who are out of work for legitimate reasons".

Eileen Brown says "the CTU supports the investment approach with more specific assistance for people to match them with a decent job. But the punitive measures being introduced alongside this are unfair and unprincipled."

The new legislation introduces sanctions for people who don't accept a job that is deemed to be suitable; brings in pre-employment drug testing requirements; introduces work testing for sole parents who have young children; and ties benefit receipt for solo parents to social obligations including attendance for young children over 3 at ECE and older children at school.

"These are coercive and punitive approaches. They stigmatise people who are already having a tough time," says Eileen Brown.

"It will mean for example, that a sole parent with two young children could lose half their benefit if the State-imposed social obligations are not met. How can this benefit those children?"

"This pressure will force people into low paid poor quality work which they have no choice but to accept. Some will go off a benefit but won't be in work either."

"The CTU advocates for decent jobs with a living wage for workers seeking work and re-entering the workforce combined with support to gain access to education and skills development. We urge the Government to direct their focus and energy on job creation and more support for those out of work rather than attack beneficiaries," concludes Brown.



SAY NO TO SOCIAL WELFARE CUTS

JOHN KEY HIKES KIWIS' POWER BILLS BY \$370

John Key's desire to suck dividends out of the national grid operator Transpower means Kiwi households have had hundreds of dollars added to their power bills, says Labour Leader David Shearer.

"John Key is forcing Transpower to pay the Government dividends instead of investing it in upgrading the lines.

"In the last two years, Transpower has paid over \$600 million dollars in dividends, and it will pay out another \$151 million this year. Over five years it is forecast that Transpower will end up paying over \$1.1 billion in dividends.

"Who ends up paying? Household consumers and businesses, through higher lines charges on their power bills. By 2015 that adds up to a bill of \$370 to every household to pay for National's dividends.

"Kiwis should not have to pay for dividends when that money should be used to upgrade the network. When Labour was in office we waived the requirement for dividends, so Transpower could get on with the job of upgrading our national grid.

"It's already difficult enough for hard-working Kiwis to get by. Too many get scared every time they open the power bill. John Key is so out of touch he thinks the price for we pay for power is fair.

"I don't. Power bills are out control – the hundreds of thousands of Genesis customers who got a price hike last week will agree. Prices need to come down. Our NZ Power policy will save Kiwis hundreds of dollars a year in power bills and restrict future price rises," says David Shearer.

ASSET SALES PETITION RESUBMITTED WITH OVER FIFTY ONE THOUSAND ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES

The Keep Our Assets coalition will resubmit the citizens' initiated referendum petition to stop asset sales with an additional fifty one thousand signatures today.

The coalition has had two months to collect 16,000 valid signatures after the initial count was deemed just short of the 308,000 valid signatures required. More than 445,000 signatures have now been collected in total to force a referendum.

"New Zealanders want the National Government's unpopular asset sales programme stopped," said Keep Our Assets spokesperson and official petitioner Roy Reid.

"The public's resolve to stop the asset sales programme has not waned. If anything it has grown stronger, as shown by the large number of extra signatures collected in just eight weeks.

"People really got behind the last push to get the petition over the line to force a referendum on this issue because they see we can stop further asset sales.

"New Zealanders have seen that only a small number of Kiwis bought Mighty River Power shares and that the price slumped following the float and don't want that repeated with our other assets.

"The Government should shelve the Meridian float until the outcome of the referendum is known.

"The asset sales programme is both unpopular and unsuccessful. It is time to stop it and give New Zealanders their say on the matter through a referendum," said Mr Reid.

The petition will take up to two months to count. The additional xyz signatures will be added to the original signatures submitted for a new sample to be drawn.

BITS AND BOB'S

- General Secretary Wayne Butson is taking a break from 8 to 30 July. Organiser Todd Valster will be acting up during this time.
- SI Organiser John Kerr resumes duty 29 July after a break.

LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE

