

# THE ACTIVIST



**Published Regularly - ISSN 1178-7392 (Print & Online)**

**14 August 2013**

## **CANADA SET TO BAN SINGLE MANNING**

Transport Canada is to ban one person train crewing in response to the derailment and explosion of an oil train at Lac-Mégantic, Quebec on July 6 which killed at least 47 people. Transport Canada also stated that trains with dangerous goods would not be permitted to be left unattended on main lines. It will also be mandatory for trains left for more than one hour or more to have all handbrakes to be applied.

The Transportation Safety Board has also given rail operators 5 days to ensure nobody can enter locomotive cabs of unattended locomotives without authorisation.

## **PORT OF TAURANGA TO GRAB HALF OF PRIME PORT TIMARU**

Port of Tauranga's agreement to buy a half stake in PrimePort Timaru in a \$21.6 million deal that it says is aimed at strengthening Tauranga as a 'hub' for coastal shipping demonstrates the madness of a free for all in the ports sector said RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson

The agreement is subject to public consultation because PrimePort is 71.4 percent owned by Timaru District Council through a holding company. The consultation process will start on Aug. 17 and is expected to take a month.

Under the proposal Port of Tauranga would buy a 50 percent stake in PrimePort (excluding its investment properties), and lease PrimePort's container terminal for up to 35 years, and create a new subsidiary, 'Timaru Container Terminal',

to operate the terminal, the company said.

Port of Tauranga chief executive Mark Cairns has said. "we see opportunities to grow PrimePort Timaru as a marshalling point for South Island cargo."

'In the dog eat dog world of competitive ports it may be that the plan is for Timaru could win back cargo lost primarily to Port of Lyttelton, including production from Fonterra's Clondeboye plant,' said Butson.

'That cargo was lost a year ago when global shipping lines Maersk and Hamburg Sud failed to renew their contract with Prime Port, resulting in all of our members being made redundant and a small number being re-employed to service what remained of the port's operations,' he said.

'The not so merry go round of unplanned free market capitalism means that while our members in Timaru will be breathing a sigh of relief that this announcement offers them some hope of secure employment in the short to medium term, our members at the Port of Lyttelton will be glancing over their shoulders,' he said.

'Instead of a situation that pits New Zealand city councils, ratepayers and workers against one another, and plays into the hands of foreign owned multinational shipping companies, we need a national port strategy that allows us to rationalise our ports and coastal shipping for the benefit of all Kiwis,' he said.

## **US HOPING TO FOLLOW**

The Transportation Division of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation International Association (SMART) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET/IBT) have jointly announced that legislation requiring at least two crew members on all freight trains in the U.S. has been filed in Congress.

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

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called on the House to take up the bill at its earliest opportunity. "The American people are justifiably concerned that the single-person crewing practice used on MM&A and some other short line railroads places the public safety at risk," Pierce said. "We urge Chairman Schuster and the T&I Committee to hold hearings on this issue after the recess."

SMART Transportation Division President Mike Futhey said, "This is a responsible piece of legislation that recognizes the correlations between the consist of crews and public safety."

## 5000 MORE KIWIS JOIN THE DOLE QUEUE

A further 5000 Kiwis are out of work in the past three months, showing the Government has no plan to create jobs, Labour's Employment Spokesman Grant Robertson says.

"After nearly five years in office, National's legacy is growing unemployment with more than 150,000 New Zealanders still desperately looking for work," he says.

"It's time for National to get past the excuses of the Global Financial Crisis and the earthquakes. New Zealanders should be seeing some hopes for jobs, instead people are fearing losing their job more than ever."

The latest Household Labour Force Survey released today shows unemployment has risen to 6.4 per cent, from 6.2 per cent in March.

"It makes for depressing reading and comes hard on the heels of hundreds of job losses at New Zealand Post and Telecom," Grant Robertson says.

"These are real people with families and with mortgages to pay. They are looking to the Government for practical ideas, but the Government is taking a 'hands off' approach to job creation."

National promised in 2011 it would create 170,000 jobs by 2015. However, according to these figures the Government has only

created 17,000 since June 2012, Grant Robertson says.

"That is woefully short. National has broken its promise. For all its bluff and bluster, New Zealanders are rightly asking where are the jobs? The Government has no strategy to get businesses creating opportunities for Kiwis."

Labour estimates without the Christchurch rebuild, unemployment would be as high as 6.7 per cent, he says.

"At a time when there is clearly a huge amount of work in Christchurch, these figures should be significantly better.

"Labour is focussed on revitalising our manufacturing and exporting industries. A Labour government will also work with regions to develop sustainable jobs, and support research and development. That will create opportunities and employment throughout the country."

## KIWI RAIL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL REPS - 2013/2015 TERM

The KiwiRail Industrial Councils have governing terms of reference signed by the Union and KiwiRail. They are intended to be the escalation step for industrial issues which arise during the course of the employment relationship on a day to day basis which have not or cannot be resolved at a local branch level or have national significance. Nominations were called for RMTU Representatives on the following Councils:

KiwiRail Passenger Industrial Council, and

Interislander Industrial Council, and

KiwiRail Mechanical Industrial Council.

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.

### **The Results for the KIWI RAIL PASSENGER INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL**

RMTU Union Organiser: Wayne Butson

EMU Depot: Howard Phillips (NMC)



Locomotive Engineer: Michael Nicholson  
(elected unopposed)

Train Manager (Urban): Harvey Paterson  
(elected unopposed)

Yard Operations: Pinerete Nohotima  
(elected unopposed)

#### Scale 1: **Ballot Required**

Train Manager (Long Distance) : VACANT –  
NOMINATIONS ARE RECALLED

There were two nominations received for the Scale 1 Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between **Giovanni Giambianco and David Sharma**.

#### ***The Results for the INTERISLANDER INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL***

RMTU Union Organiser: Todd Valster

Scale 1 (Inside North): Chris Hanna  
(elected unopposed)

Scale 1 (Inside South): Tania Haraki  
(elected unopposed)

Ferry Operations (Outside North): John  
Finch (elected unopposed)

Ferry Operations (Outside South): **Ballot  
Required**

There were two nominations received for the Ferry Operations (Outside South) Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between **Max Edwards and Vernon Steele**.

#### ***The Results for the KIWIRAIL MECHANICAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL***

RMTU Union Organiser: Stuart Johnstone

Auckland Maintenance: Rudy Brens  
(elected unopposed)

Hut Workshops: Paul Morrison (elected  
unopposed)

South Island Depots: Guy Miller (elected  
unopposed)

North Island Depots Rep 1 & 2: **Ballot  
Required**

There were three nominations received for the two North Island Depots Representative positions and in accordance with Rule 42.4, a postal Ballot using the 'Preferential Voting' system will be conducted between **Steve Brown, Chris De Ven & Shane McNae**.

The two candidates who receive the most votes will be elected to the two North Island Depots Representative positions. Ballots will be issued from National Office - week commencing 19 August 2013. Please ensure you advise National Office if you have changed addresses since the last RMTU mail-out. Call RMTU 04-4992066 or alternatively update your details online [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz) or email [jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz)

A hearty congratulations to those RMTU Delegates who have been elected. For those participating in the ballot process, good luck and may the best delegate be selected by you.

Nominations for the KiwiRail Freight Industrial Council and KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council positions close 23 August 2013 at 5pm and are advertised elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **DEAL KEEPS SMELTER FOR LESS THAN FOUR YEARS**

National has cut a short term deal with Rio Tinto that gifts the multinational \$30 million of taxpayers' money so the Government can get the Meridian asset sale monkey off its back, says Labour's SOEs spokesperson Clayton Cosgrove.

"This is a short term deal that is huge win for Rio Tinto. National is so desperate to get Meridian sold off that it has given Rio Tinto a \$30 million bonus to sweeten the deal and all the company has to do is keep the smelter open for three and a half years.

"Rio Tinto has also managed to halve its notice period. It will now be able to walk away with 15 months' notice, instead of three years currently.

"The Minister of Finance himself has conceded this is not a long term solution. It's designed to get Meridian off the block.

"By 1 January 2017 we will be back where we started. Rio Tinto will yet again have the



right to walk away and will be in a position to hold the Government, taxpayers and the people of Southland to ransom once more.

"The people of Southland will breathe a sigh of relief but that sigh will only last until 1 January 2017. The Government has acted incompetently for months by refusing to intervene, then going over the top of the board for a weekend of negotiation, and then walking away.

"\$30 million of taxpayers' money should get the taxpayer far more security than three and a half years. Yet again this Government has been walked all over by a multinational.

"The Government must be open and transparent about this deal. It cannot leave New Zealanders and any potential investors in the dark," says Clayton Cosgrove.

## 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!**

## CTU WELCOMES H&S CHANGES

The CTU welcomes moves today to strengthen our health and safety system.

Helen Kelly, CTU President said "the announcements today acknowledge that our health and safety system is in need of an overhaul, and we welcome the direction taken by the Government with these proposed changes."

"Moves to strengthen worker participation at the workplace are particularly positive and will help keep Kiwi workers safer at work. The inclusion of a general duty to involve and consult with workers on health and safety matters, and strengthen the role of H&S representatives will give workers a voice in how health and safety is handled in their workplace".

"However the contrast of these changes with the decision by Government to guarantee business representation only on the Board of the new health and safety agency is now stark."

"We strongly support the additional commitment to training of H&S representatives. We need to lift both the quality and volume of training, and build on the knowledge of those who have already trained. They are often lost to the system when they change jobs. Recognising that time and resources are required for the role of trained H&S representatives is timely and this will increase their effectiveness in the workplace."

Helen Kelly said "basing these changes on the Australian law is sensible, especially given that the Australian injury statistics at work are so much better than ours and that the Australians have recently undertaken a thorough review of their system and it will be useful to build on that and to align our system with theirs wherever possible."

"Currently there is a huge gap around lack of supporting Regulation, Approved Codes of Practice (ACoPs) and guidance. This is one of the major weaknesses of our current model and the Government announcements today should make a significant contribution to filling this gap. The commitment for additional resources for this and the other initiatives is very welcome."



"The Government's response today is, in general loyal to the recommendations of both the Pike River Inquiry and its Taskforce recommendations and that is exactly as it should be. However to choke on the strong consensus recommendation from the Taskforce (that included business and government representation) that tripartism is an essential element that should be evident throughout the system, and to not have worker representation on the Board is both short-sighted and a badly missed opportunity which is unfair to the working people of this country"

## **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS KIWI RAIL FREIGHT INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL (KIC)**

Nominations are called for positions on the Kiwirail Industrial Council. Current Representatives are:

C T Site – Len Miller

Locomotive Northern - Barry Simpkins (NMC)

Locomotive Central - Wally Wallbutton

Locomotive Southern – Michael Williams (NMC)

Terminals Northern - Dean Ngatai

Terminals Central – Michael Vowels (Temp secondment)

Terminals Southern - Doug Blakie

Union Organiser - Todd Valster

Union policy as determined by 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 for the duration of their term. As a result Barry Simpkins will fill the Locomotive Northern and Mike Williams the Locomotive Southern position(s) on the council and so no nominations are being called for these positions.

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

### **C T Site**

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a designated CT Site anywhere within NZ

then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

### **Locomotive Central**

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd as a Locomotive Engineer in the Central Freight Region then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

### **Terminals Southern**

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Terminals Site in the Southern Freight Region then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

### **Terminals Central**

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Terminals Site in the Central Freight Region then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

### **Terminals Northern**

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Terminals Site in the Northern Freight Region 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](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz) or from the Union website [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz)**

**Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs Friday 23 August 2013. In the event of more than 1 nomination being received for any one position then a postal ballot will be conducted.**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY REP TRAINING FOR HSAT MEMBERS**

KiwiRail Health and Safety Reps who are part of the Health and Safety Action Teams (HSATs) are currently being re-registered to attend the CTU approved H&S Rep training course. The RMTU is registering Reps to attend the 2-day paid courses in their local area after recent feedback from the HSAT groups showed many H&S reps are overdue to attend either stage 1, 2, or 3 H&S Rep training. KiwiRail is currently



reviewing and updating the terms of reference for the HSATs in consultation with the RMTU.

## **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS KIWI RAIL NETWORKS INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL!**

Nominations are called for positions on the Current Representatives are:

Infrastructure Mechanical - Jerry Hohepa

Infrastructure Sigs, Comms, Traction - Phil Kearns

Infrastructure Track Supervisors (including Gangers) - Hopa Bell

Infrastructure Bridges & Structures - Lou Watene

Operations Scale 1 - Kevin Jones

Operations Train Control Geoff Young

Trackworker - Eddie Dargaville

Union Organiser John Kerr

There are no NMC members who qualify for any KNIC positions. We now call for nominations for the following positions from members who fall within the categories of representation;

### **Infrastructure – Mechanical Group**

If you are employed within the track machine groups and mobile mechanised gangs, plant fitter specialised area of KiwiRail Networks then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

### **Infrastructure – Signals, Comms, Traction**

If you are employed within the Signals, Communications, Traction specialised areas of KiwiRail Networks then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

### **Infrastructure Track Supervisor (incl Ganger)**

If you hold a position of Leading Hand, ganger or foreperson in any area of KiwiRail Networks operation then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

### **Infrastructure – Bridges and Structures**

If you are employed within the Bridge gangs or structures specialised area of KiwiRail Networks then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

### **Operations – Scale 1**

If you are paid under payscale 1 of the MECA and employed within the clerical, administration, codes and standards and technical areas of KiwiRail Networks then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

### **Operations – Train Controller**

If you are employed within the Train Control specialised area of KiwiRail Networks then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

### **Infrastructure Track Worker position**

If you are employed by KiwiRail Network (ONTRACK) as a track worker/maintainer (other than leading) anywhere within NZ 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](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz) or the Union website [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz)**

**Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs Friday 23 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 KIWI RAIL PASSENGER INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL!**

Nominations are re-called for the following position on the KiwiRail Passenger Industrial Council.

### **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.

**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](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz)**

**Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs 4 September 2013. In the event of more than 1 nomination being received for this position a postal ballot will be conducted.**

## **NATHAN GUY FACING THE WRATH OF KIWIFISHERS**

Nathan Guy is facing the wrath of thousands of Kiwis after bungling his Snapper quota consultation, Labour's Fisheries spokesperson David Cunliffe said today

"By proposing drastic cuts to the recreational snapper bag limit from nine fish to three in the Bay of Plenty and north east coast this inexperienced minister is facing a huge public backlash.

"The uproar from average fishing New Zealanders has been deafening. There were 400 people at a meeting in Whakatane, 350 in Thames, and similar numbers in Tauranga and Kaikohe. That's on top of thousands of angry emailed submissions.

"Nathan Guy has made it worse by not being straight up with the public from the beginning. On 15 June he said all options were on the table – including cuts to commercial quotas. But just a month later the consultation document came out with only options to cut the recreational bag limit.

"Kiwis can't stand double talk. They know it is their right to catch a feed of fish for their families. Nathan Guy thinks that right only belongs to fishing companies.

"The MPI discussion document makes it clear[1] that once the recreational take has been reduced, it will enshrine

'proportionality' between recreational and commercial quotas, so that commercial interests benefit from the majority of future catch increases.

"This is not Nathan Guy's first call for big business ahead of the rights of every New Zealand family. Similar disasters have occurred with southern paua, East Coast crayfish and Marlborough Sounds blue cod.

"Nathan Guy is facing a backlash from New Zealanders. He needs to act in the interests of Kiwis not companies," said David Cunliffe.

## **ARE YOU A TRAINED H&S REP?**

The RMTU is currently updating its membership database to identify trained H&S delegates. We are able to identify all members who have been trained through the NZCTU training programme however we are not able to identify any member who has been trained by another training provider. For example EMA employer sponsored training courses.

We request that any member who has been trained as a workplace H&S rep please email your Name, Date of training, Training provider, training type ie. Stage1 or Stage 2 etc, employer and workplace. Send your email to [kfletcher@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:kfletcher@rmtunion.org.nz)

## **KIWI RAIL/TRANSDEV LE CHANGEOVER.**

A tripartite meeting is to be held in Auckland with KR, Transdev and RMTU reps on Tuesday August 6th to discuss options for the smooth transition of 66 KiwiRail LE's to the employ of Transdev. The current Driver Hire Agreement for KR is coming to an end. Gen Sec Wayne Butson and Northern Organiser Stuart Johnstone will be joined by Auckland Branch reps at the meeting. This meeting has been some time coming; updates will be made as soon as they are available.

## **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.

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](http://www.workrights.org.nz)

### **A REMINDER - SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – STATE SCHOOLS**

☞ Term 3 Holidays – 27 Sept to 14 October 2013

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

### **WANT DELEGATE TRAINING?**

Delegate training courses are being planned for Auckland. Finalisation of the names will follow the election process for

the Branch at the AGM. A suitable venue is now being sourced. This will be a great opportunity for experienced and newer delegates to interact and learn from each other. If you are a delegate or are keen to attend make sure you talk to your Branch Exec and Organiser Stu Johnstone.

If you live elsewhere in NZ and want training please register your interest by contacting [jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz) at National Office so we can enter you into the training database.

### **OTAGO UNEMPLOYED NUMBER HITS 22 YEAR HIGH**

Otago now has the largest number of unemployed people since 1991 yet Steven Joyce is living in a dreamland by claiming he's 'very positive' about Dunedin's future, Labour's Economic Development spokesperson David Clark says.

"On 7 August it was revealed that the number of unemployed in Otago to 7,800. That's the highest number since 1991 – the Ruth Richardson years.

It comes off the back of hundreds of recent job losses in Otago. National is creating a two-speed economy where the regions are struggling.

"Everyone in Otago knows the economy is facing serious difficulties. Business leaders, local MPs, unions and the Mayor are all deeply concerned about the future of Otago and Dunedin.

"But Steven Joyce is blissfully, or wilfully, ignorant. He even said: 'I'm very positive about the city's prospects & growth'. I'd hate to see what would have to happen before his concern is triggered.

"With that sort of attitude it's no wonder Dunedin Mayor Dave Cull is looking to lead a Dunedin delegation to explain the problems facing the country directly to Steven Joyce.

"Steven Joyce should get out of his Beehive office and get to Otago. Then he can say how positive he is to the hundreds of people who have lost jobs in recent months, including 112 people at Hillside, 73 people of NZ Post, 85 people at Invermay, 460 people at Presbyterian Support Otago, 10 people at



PGG Wrightson, and 192 people at Summit Wool Spinners.

"Then he can make a visit to the 64 employees at Bradken who have had their hours reduced to 4 days a week because the Government's procurement policy has failed," says David Clark.

## **BILL ENGLISH DIDN'T ASK RIO FOR A JOBS GUARANTEE**

Bill English never even bothered to ask Rio Tinto for a jobs guarantee and as the ink was drying on the \$30 million cheque Rio was proposing to cut 30 jobs, showing this Government has been walked over yet again, says Labour's SOEs spokesperson Clayton Cosgrove.

"On Tuesday when the deal was done Rio Tinto proposed to cut 30 jobs. So much for job security. This proves Government ministers are amateurs.

"Bill English claims this is all about protecting jobs. That's a crock. There is no requirement for Rio Tinto to keep the jobs secure until 2017. That's what \$30 million of taxpayers' money should get you.

"Bill English didn't even have the smarts to ask for a jobs guarantee from Rio Tinto. How can you claim to want to protect jobs and not even raise the prospect of a jobs guarantee before handing over \$30 million? He's been totally walked over and proved yet again that he does not know how to negotiate a decent deal for the taxpayer.

"This was a \$30 million blank cheque.

"Today it emerges that Rio Tinto may halve the smelter workforce from 800 to 400.

"The Government scrambled to get this deal done for one objective and one objective only – to put Meridian on the block. They tried to dress it up as protecting jobs and offering security for Southland. That spin has now been busted by Bill English's own incompetence.

"Bill English's ineptness continues – we know there is a high likelihood the smelter may close otherwise why would Rio Tinto negotiate a deal that halves their notice period?

"That being the case, the Government hasn't even put together a package for a transitional plan to work with the people of Southland on regional economic development and prepare for a possible smelter closure.

"The people of Southland will be very concerned. We know one worker has already said he's heading to Australia. You can bet he will be followed by others," says Clayton Cosgrove.

## **INVERMAY SUMMIT SHOULD BE WAKE-UP CALL ON REGIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS**

The Public Service Association says today's Invermay summit in Dunedin should serve as a wake-up call on the importance and value of keeping good public sector jobs in the regions.

The PSA, which represents staff at AgResearch, is taking part in today's summit which is being held in response to AgResearch's decision to shift 85 jobs from Invermay to campuses in either Lincoln or Palmerston North.

Dunedin and the Otago region have seen a steady retrenchment of public sector jobs with government funding cuts forcing departments to restructure, rationalise and centralise services in a bid to save money.

In the past 18 months, about 123 public sector jobs have gone from the Otago region, not to mention large scale job losses at New Zealand Post and Kiwirail's Hillside workshops.

PSA National Secretary Richard Wagstaff says "now on top of all that we have the AgResearch proposal which will take good jobs and skilled people out of the region at a time of high unemployment. Many staff won't want to move but they will be left with little choice if they want to continue in what are specialised agricultural science roles."

"Part of Dunedin's reputation is also built on having a strong education and research community which needs to be maintained."

"The Dunedin community is clearly saying enough is enough."

"We hope this summit shows that the stripping out of public sector jobs in the regions through public service cutbacks and centralisation does nothing to promote regional growth and development," Richard Wagstaff says.

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES MUST EXTEND TO CHARTER SCHOOLS**

If the Government is genuinely committed to doing everything possible to ensure children are safe it will make sure charter schools' teachers face the same rigorous checks that those in state schools do, says Labour's Education Spokesperson Chris Hipkins.

"Paula Bennett has argued that we need to do everything possible to ensure children are in safe hands. I agree, and that's why I'm concerned the government aren't requiring charter school teachers to meet rigorous teacher registration requirements.

"There are few people who spend more time with our children than our teachers. That is why it is critical the Minister is upfront about what security checks will be in place for all teachers, including those in charter schools.

"We already know that teachers in charter schools do not need to be qualified, and that sponsors of charter schools will have a great deal of influence over staffing without requirements to be transparent about their decision making.

"Parents deserve assurances that all schools will uphold stringent safety standards and protocols.

"There are too many question marks around the set-up of charter schools. Just last year the Minister was advised that; '[the] potential for a negative impact on students' education from teachers who do not meet the minimum standards for the profession is high'.

"The Government must ensure there is adequate oversight in place for these children. It must assure New Zealanders the process that charter school teachers go through is as robust as that planned for

other state sector employees," Chris Hipkins said.

### **BITS AND BOB'S**

☞ Korea has abandoned plans announced recently to privatise the KTX high speed lines.

☞ French National Railways (SNCF) says that a detached switch fishplate is the likely cause of the intercity train on July 12.

☞ Australia proposes A\$30billion investment in Rail.

## **Let's Be Safe Out There**