

# THE ACTIVIST



**Published Regularly - ISSN 1178-7392 (Print & Online) 28 August 2013**

## **THREE NOMINATIONS FOR LABOUR LEADER**

By the due time of 10pm on Monday 26th August 2013 three valid nominations had been received for the position of Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, in the order received:

- Shane Jones
- Grant Robertson
- David Cunliffe.

The process will proceed to a ballot, which will be distributed to the three selections of the Electoral College – Party members, Caucus and affiliates – on Thursday and Friday of this week. Husting meetings begin on Saturday 31st August, with a series of 12 over 11 days.

Details of the Meetings have been emailed to all RMTU delegates for whom we hold email addresses for.

## **AFFILIATE VOTE FOR LABOUR LEADER**

Brothers and Sisters history is being made. At no time in the past has the democratic process been used to elect the political leader for the Labour Party. Until now it has always occurred behind closed doors with only MP's voting. Party members now have a voice in choosing who will lead the political wing of the party.

The RMTU is affiliated to the NZ Labour Party. This means the RMTU will have a say in who the leader is to be. The agreed process for the RMTU to exercise its votes is that a ballot is done involving all of the delegates to the most recent Delegates Conference. Our last was October 2012. The delegate attendee's and therefore the voters are;

- BATES, Donald, Dunedin
- BLAKELEY, Ruth, Dunedin
- BLAKIE, Doug, Timaru
- BROWN, Ray, Hamilton
- BUTSON, Wayne, Lower Hutt
- BYAS, Brian, Port Chalmers
- CARMINE, John, Te Puke
- DENNIS, Paul, Lyttelton
- DISKIN, Jeremy, Nelson
- FALWASSER, Edward, Whangarei
- GIBSON, Joseph, Napier
- HARAKI, Tania, Picton
- HERBERT, Grant, Picton
- INNES, Gary, Lower Hutt
- KEARNS, David, Dunedin
- MAINDONALD, Robin, Stratford
- MARDEN, Dave, Napier
- McNAE, Shane, Mount Maunganui
- MILLWARD, John, Feilding
- MORRISON, Paul, Lower Hutt
- PHILLIPS, Howard, Upper Hutt
- ROBERTSON, Henry, Christchurch
- SMITH, Brett, Napier
- STODDARD, Warren, Wellington
- THORNTON, Ian, Stratford
- WILKINSON, Aubrey, Te Puke



These delegates attended as branch representatives and so it is expected that they will seek branch advice before casting their vote.

## **KR INDUSTRIAL COUNCILS**

The KiwiRail Industrial Councils have governing terms of reference signed by the Union and KiwiRail. They are intended to be the escalation centre 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 or branch level or have national significance.

Nominations were called for RMTU Representatives on the following Councils:

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

- **KiwiRail Freight Industrial Council**, and
- **KiwiRail I&E (Networks) 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.

## KIWIRAIL FREIGHT INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL

The Union Organiser for the KiwiRail Passenger Industrial Council is Todd Valster. Due to their election to the NMC, Barry Simpkins will fill the Locomotive Northern and Mike Williams the Locomotive Southern position(s) all other positions on the council were open for nominations.

The following is the result of the nominations call for the KiwiRail Freight Industrial Council:

**Locomotive Northern** - Barry Simpkins (NMC)

**Locomotive Southern** - Michael Williams (NMC)

**Terminals Northern** - Dean Ngatai (Elected Unopposed)

**Locomotive Central** - (Ballot Required) 4 nominations

**C T Site** - (Ballot Required) 2 nominations

**Terminals Central** - (Ballot Required) 2 nominations

**Terminals Southern** - (Ballot Required) 2 nominations

Four nominations received for the North Island Central Locomotive Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42.4, a postal Ballot using the 'Preferential Voting' system will be conducted between Ben Goodin, John Millward, Leslie Perrin & Telai Sefesi.

Two nominations received for the Terminals Central Representative position and in

accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between Michael Vowles & Rick Barnes.

Two nominations received for the CT Site Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between Antoon Whiu & Joseph Harding.

Two nominations received for the Terminals Southern Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between Doug Blakie & Marty Duncan.

Ballot papers will be issued from National Office during the week commencing Monday 2nd September 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).

## KIWIRAIL I&E (NETWORKS) INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL

The Union Organiser for the KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council is John Kerr. There are no KiwiRail I&E (Networks) Representatives on the NMC and therefore all positions on the council were open for nominations. The following is the outcome of the nominations call

for the KiwiRail I&E "Networks" Industrial Council:

**Infrastructure Mechanical** - Jerry Hohepa (Elected Unopposed)

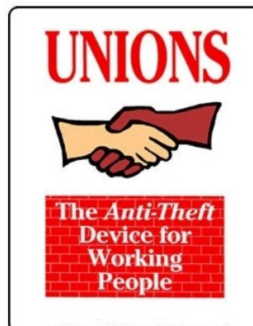
**Infrastructure Sigs, Comms, Traction** - Phil Kearns (Elected Unopposed)

**Infrastructure Track Supervisors** - (Ballot Required) 2 nominations received

**Infrastructure Bridges & Structures** - Lou Watene (Elected Unopposed)

**Operations Scale 1** - Kevin Jones (Elected Unopposed)

**Operations Train Control** - Geoff Young (Elected Unopposed)



**Infrastructure Trackworker** – (Ballot Required) 2 nominations received

Two nominations received for the Infrastructure Track Supervisors Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between John Bannerman & Hopa Bell.

Two nominations received for the Infrastructure Trackworker Representative position and in accordance with Rule 42, a postal Ballot using the 'First Past the Post' system will be conducted between Eddie Dargaville & William Lanigan.

## SUMMARY

Ballots will be issued from National Office during the week commencing Monday 2nd September 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 unopposed. For those participating in the ballot process, good luck and may the best delegate be elected by their peers.

Signed:  
Howard Phillips, **NATIONAL RETURNING OFFICER**

## ERA PROTEST RALLY'S

**Auckland** - As this issue goes out a Rally will be being held at the Vodafone event centre Manukau. This is a very important rally and we hope for a good attendance of members. Many of you fought hard for these conditions, we all need to stand together and in one loud voice keep what we have.

**Christchurch** - Rally Thursday 29 August Wigram Air Force Museum

This is a paid stop work meeting for all RMTU Christchurch based KiwiRail and Toll Networks (Tranz Link) members. If this is a time when you are rostered on your get paid to attend. You can knock off at 1000 and must be back at work by 1200. The rally commences at 1030 at Wigram Air Force Museum, 45 Harvard Avenue Wigram. . If you're not rostered on you don't get paid but we want you there anyway.

It is important that you attend to hear about National's attack on our work rights and our ability to collectively bargain. If these law changes go through it could affect you and your workmates during next year's wage round.

Engineers, printers, school teachers, nurses, caregivers, cleaners, drivers, bank workers, wharfies, and postal workers will be there. Let's make sure there is a good turnout from the RMTU!

The RMTU will be presenting its oral submission on Monday 2 September 2013 to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee.



## DL LOCOMOTIVES

Members are becoming frustrated that KiwiRail are failing to take urgent steps to ensure that brake valve equipment is correctly set up for multiple unit use. The Union has requested better in cab information (stickers, flipcharts etc) as an immediate remedy to improve this dangerous situation. RMTU concerns arise from a number of incidents where members have been placed in significant risk of serious harm or injury through the brake equipment not operating correctly. The company has always stated that if all the safety checks are done then any incorrect set-up of the brake equipment will be exposed. However recent incidents raise serious questions around this as the workers concerned are adamant that all the pre-departure checks were done and yet when the train was en-route the brake equipment failed to operate as designed.

An illustration of the concern is one recent communique received from a Union branch;

"I have been approached by several members from the \*\*\*\*\* Depot voicing their concern over the brake set up on the D.L. loco's and the lack of information and importance from Kiwi rail to rectify the obvious problem. A couple of our members have even stated they no longer trust their workmates to correctly set the Loco up so insist on double checking before they are prepared to move.

I know of three very similar incidents with incorrect brake set up but I am sure there would be more, They have the ability to be catastrophic.

Our Manager has told us there is going to be follow up training with single pipe set up and revisit previous training in respect of the three pipe set up, I also have spoken to Theo Klock and he told me he was working on some system to disable the loco through tranz log if there is an incorrect brake set up, but nothing in writing.

There are differing opinions on the removal of the handles but major cost seems to be the hurdle there, and also from the meeting over the Mission bush incident there were recommendations made that have not been followed through with like - The mu2a valve altered to function the same as other Loco's, better signage etc, and none have been implemented to date.

The question is what can we do about it from our level, whatever we do I think it would need to be a collective approach and one that is in our members best interest. It has been suggested to ban the D.L Loco's completely, or ban them from running in multiple."

The RMTU has placed KR on notice that unless urgent steps are taken to install improved in cab signage in all DL cabs for correct brake valve setup then the Union may advise members to refuse to operate multiple DL locomotives on H&S grounds.

Watch this space.

## KIWI RAIL (FREIGHT) INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL UPDATE

KIC Meeting 19 was held in Wellington on the 21st & 22nd August. The first half day

was spent with the other KR Industrial Councils and management where a presentation was given and discussion took place on proposed Life Saving Rules, Fair and Just Culture and ICAM Investigation methods.

At the KIC meeting the first issue discussed was the lack of minutes being distributed and that Chairing of the meetings needed to be shared. KR has committed to provide sufficient resources to get the minutes done in a timely fashion, get the minutes distributed and upload them onto the intranet for members and management to access.

There are over 70 separate issues on the KIC books and progress on these issues will be reported in the minutes.

Some highlights are -

- Locomotives in Multiple and appropriate Brake Tests - a safety message will be sent to all depots in the next week that will outline the need for members to take extra care in making sure locomotives in multiple are correctly set up and for the appropriate brake test to take place. There have been several serious incidents in recent times, one with a serious outcome and the others with potential for serious outcomes.
- Update on retrofitting alliance couplers to reduce transition head usage and injuries. The injury prevention DVD will also be redone
- KR Freights Critical rules progress for each operational group
- Steam Training and Heritage Operations
- Energy Miser Driver Advisory System
- CT Pay and Progression

The next KIC meeting will be in Auckland late November.

## GUY BREACHES CABINET RULES ON SNAPPER

Nathan Guy needs to learn the meaning of 'controversial' and fast - the word is crucial to his future as a minister, Labour fisheries spokesperson David Cunliffe said today.

"Yesterday Nathan Guy said 'I don't think the proposals are too controversial' regarding changes to the Snapper 1 fishing



take. That is an astonishing statement and it's getting him into hot water with his Cabinet colleagues.

"If a discussion document or policy is controversial and not taken to Cabinet then it's a breach of Cabinet rule 5.12. Nathan Guy is the only person in Cabinet or the country who doesn't seem to think snapper is controversial.

"The Prime Minister himself says the snapper proposals are a bigger issue than the GCSB Bill, which is one of the most controversial pieces of legislation in recent times.

"The Government has been hit with a firestorm of protest: over 30,000 emails; thousands of people are attending meetings to protest; and full page ads are being taken out in newspapers.

"Mr Guy's senior Cabinet colleagues are publically lambasting the proposals. Backbenchers are running for cover. He is being hung out to dry.

"If that's not 'too controversial' for Mr Guy, what is? Nathan Guy needs to brush up on his vocabulary and find out what controversial means.

"The Cabinet Manual says any 'significant policy matter' (Rule 5.12 (a)) or 'controversial matter' (Rule 5.12 (b)) must go before Cabinet. Rule 5.12 (f) also requires that this applies to discussion documents as well as to final decisions.

"Mr Guy didn't do that and that's why the likes of Judith Collins are making the astonishing move of criticising proposals from another minister.

"Nathan Guy has clearly breached the Cabinet Manual. That has grave consequences for the potential validity of the consultation and for his future. He is struggling as a minister, in fact he's a fish out water," says David Cunliffe.

## 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!**

## 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)

## TAIERI GORGE RAIL

## NEGOTIATIONS REACH IMPASSE

We've been in negotiations with New Zealand's second largest railway company



for a few weeks now and matters have stalled as we can't agree on two fundamental issues: Pay and hours of work.

All but our lowest paid members agreed to a wage freeze last year because the company was suffering the effects of the Christchurch earthquake and the Great Recession on tourist numbers. This year members' expectations are higher than the company is prepared to pay. We're also fighting a proposal to change the hours of work of our members in the workshop.

The company has agreed to attend mediation with the RMTU and we're hopeful that we can resolve matters there.

## AIR NZ PROPOSES TO CUT 180 ENGINEERING JOBS

Air New Zealand has told staff it intends to close its wide body aircraft heavy maintenance facility in Auckland by July 2014 at a cost of 180 aircraft engineering jobs.

The proposed closure is the result of the loss of third party engineering work, the retirement of Air New Zealand's own 767 fleet and the airline's inability to attract replacement work due to the high New Zealand dollar.

The news follows recent job losses at the Christchurch Engine Centre, Safe Air and Air New Zealand Technical Operations.

EPMU assistant director of organising Strachan Crang says the union will work with the airline to try to keep jobs in New Zealand.

"The confirmation of job losses is devastating for our members and we will be doing everything we can to protect jobs.

"This announcement comes as Air New Zealand is proposing to outsource the upgrade of its Boeing 777-200 fleet. The EPMU wants this work done in New Zealand and we are committed to working with the airline to keep our members employed."

Mr Crang says action is needed on the high New Zealand dollar if aircraft maintenance is going to have a future in this country.

"Our members are an engaged workforce who respond well to change and work hard to remain productive. Over the past three years they've delivered productivity gains in the double figures but this has all been eaten away by the high value of the New Zealand dollar.

"New Zealand has world-class aircraft engineers but unless we see action on the high dollar this highly-skilled, well-paid industry will continue to decline."

The EPMU will now enter a 58 day consultation process with Air New Zealand and will have the opportunity to analyse the business case and put up an alternative proposal.



## KIWI RAIL/TRANSDEV LE CHANGEOVER.

Information packs were sent out last week to all Kiwirail Loco Engineers in Auckland, seeking expressions of interest regarding the transfer of 66 LE's to the employ of Transdev. So far there have been mixed responses but it has been valuable to get an understanding of what each of you is thinking.

Be sure though to get your response in, the more information we get back, the better chance we have of

addressing your concerns or answering further questions.

The issue is how to successfully transition 66 Drivers from KiwiRail to Transdev whilst meeting the same or more favourable test in the CA.

The information has also been provided to Transdev drivers to make sure everyone is kept informed of each step as we move through this process.

## 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.

## MFAT CUTS COME HOME TO ROOST

News that the government is now looking to boost the number of trade specialists in Asia proves just how short-sighted last year's major restructuring at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was, according to the Public Service Association.

The Prime Minister has come out and said that MFAT's capacity may have to be increased in some critical Asian markets following recent food safety issues.

Last year MFAT lost about 80 jobs including frontline foreign policy officers as the result of government budget cuts and a very difficult restructuring process.

"It was always hard to see how getting rid of capable and experienced staff was going to be in New Zealand's interests in terms of its global and trading relationships. The government was warned about that but chose not to listen," says PSA National Secretary Brenda Pilott.

"The Prime Minister seems to think he can just snap his fingers and restore some of the lost capacity, but it's not always easy to replace valuable skills and experience and could see MFAT spending even more money on external contractors."

"It's what happens when you shed experienced people without thinking of the longer term implications. It's not a very smart or professional way to be running

New Zealand's foreign affairs and trade," she says.

John Key also said he has no regrets about the restructuring and job losses at MFAT.

"I would think that many MFAT staff who were either made redundant or have been left very disaffected by the restructuring process, would find that very hard to hear," Brenda Pilott says.

## AUSSIE HIGH-SPEED RAIL COMMITMENT

The Labour Government has announced that it will preserve the 1,748 kilometre corridor along which the track will be laid and establish a new authority to oversee the delivery of the project. The government, if re-elected, promises to adopt all the recommendations in the final report from the High-Speed Rail Advisory Group. The proposed east coast network, which would ultimately service two-thirds of the Australian population, would be built in stages. The first section would link Sydney to Melbourne via the Southern Highlands, Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Albury Wodonga and Shepparton and be completed by 2035. The next stage would connect Sydney to Brisbane via the CentralCoast and Newcastle. The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has strongly supported and welcomed the release of the High-Speed Rail Advisory Group Report 'On Track: Implementing High-Speed Rail in Australia'. "The jury has made its decision," Mr Nye said. "Australia needs a high-speed rail network and we need to act now. "As our cities continue to expand, so too does the pressure on our existing transport systems. Sixty per cent of Australia's total population lives in a capital city and one third of them are in either Sydney or Melbourne," Mr Nye continued. "As a result, we have one of the busiest air corridors in the world, with Melbourne to Sydney ranked as third busiest air corridor globally in March this year. A high-speed rail network connecting our overpopulated cities will ease congestion and travel times and encourage growth and economic development in our regional centres, allowing people to live in the country and work in the city".

## UNEMPLOYMENT STUCK AT CRISIS LEVELS UNDER NATIONAL

Unemployment rates remain at levels seen throughout the Global Financial Crisis, showing there is no brighter future under National, Labour's Employment spokesperson Grant Robertson says.

"Unemployment is still stuck where it was during the Global Financial Crisis at an average of 6.4 per cent. Long after John Key called the recession over, there is no sign of a brighter future on the job front for many New Zealanders.

"In Parliament, John Key seemed to think it was a joke that 153,000 Kiwis are out of work. For people who are struggling to pay their rent and feed their families, they need a government who takes unemployment seriously.

The 'hands-off' approach by the Government has failed to create the 170,000 jobs it promised during the 2011 election, Grant Robertson says.

"In Otago the number of unemployed has reached a 20-year high and Manawatu is suffering its second highest number of unemployed in two decades. That is no laughing matter.

"National has broken its promise. On top of that, those Kiwis lucky enough to have jobs are faced with the lowest average annual wage growth in 13 years."

National has no practical ideas to grow jobs, Grant Robertson says.

"Disaster recovery and housing bubbles are not sustainable job creation strategies.

"Labour's policies put job creation at the centre of the economy. We will revitalise our manufacturing and exporting industries, and help industry create more well-paid jobs. A Labour government will also invest in research and development, and work with regions to develop sustainable jobs," Grant Robertson says.

## KIWI RAIL DRUG TEST RESULTS

1 July 2012—30 June 2013

	Tests undertaken	Positive test result
Corporate	43	0
Freight	63	2
Infrastructure & Engineering	15	0
InterIslander	4	0
Passenger	4	0

This table represents drug and alcohol testing for post incident, reasonable cause and the introduction of random testing

Source-KiwiRail HSE Executive Council Meeting- 28 August 2013

## OUT OF TOUCH: RED ZONE BATTLE HASN'T 'BEEN FUN'

John Key's claim that the drawn-out legal battle for Red Zone property owners has 'been fun' is offensive and he should apologise, says Labour's Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Spokesperson Ruth Dyson.

"John Key's reaction to the court decision that requires Earthquake Minister Gerry Brownlee to reconsider his unfair half-RV offer to Red Zone property owners has offended a lot of Cantabrians.

"Today he said: 'One option is the Government says 'thanks very much. It's been a lot of fun. If you don't

want to take the offer, that's where it's at.'

"How on earth can he possibly call a drawn-out legal battle for people who are losing tens of thousands of dollars due to a massive earthquake 'fun'?

"That is out of touch. That is arrogant.

"Instead of accepting the ruling the Government is looking to appeal. Presumably that's because Mr Key is having so much fun. It won't be fun for the Red Zone owners.

"The 50 per cent offer the Government made to owners of insured commercial premises and owners of bare sections in the residential Red Zone was found to flout the law and leave property owners out of pocket.





"John Key claims that he is helping these owners because they don't have insurance. But it's bare land or commercial land - it couldn't be insured in the first place. If an owner had started building they would get a 100 per cent RV Government offer. The difference is unfair and the legal arguments about it are not fun at all.

"John Key needs to do two things immediately. First, apologise to the Red Zone land owners. Second, stop the appeal," Ruth Dyson said.

## TWU AND TOLL TALKS BREAK DOWN

Workers at transport company Toll have voted convincingly in support of protected industrial action, according to the Transport Workers Union (TWU). The result, announced by the Australian Electoral Commission, means that workers at Toll will be in a position to take protected industrial action, up to and including 72-hour work stoppages.

TWU national secretary Tony Sheldon said 85% of votes cast supported taking protected action, "sending a clear signal that Toll workers are willing to stand up for their rights at work and will not agree to a second rate deal that threatens their ability to provide for themselves and their families in years to come.

"Since April, TWU members have been in there negotiating with management for an agreement that recognises that it's the blood, sweat and tears of the workers that make Toll the Aussie success story it is.

"Just last week, the company announced a record profit of \$282 million for the last financial year. The company's shareholder dividend has grown year after year. TWU members are seeking a fair agreement that recognises their role in the continued success of Toll and ensures that their job security, conditions and safety standards won't be undermined."

Truck driver Steve Newton from Sydney, is part of the member-led negotiation team trying to achieve a fair agreement.

"We voted for protected action because we want management to know that if it comes to it, we're willing to do what it takes to

make sure that our jobs, conditions and safety standards cannot be outsourced," said Steve.

Mr Sheldon said: "Following on from this decision, our member led-negotiation team will now meet to decide on the appropriate scope and size of industrial action in the event the deadlock is not broken.

## KIWI RAIL INJURY RATE

There has been a decrease in injuries from the year ending June 2012 compared to June 2013

Back and knee/leg injuries are the more serious injuries where lifting accounts for 54% of back injuries followed by general and operational movement. Common causes of knee and leg injuries are slips, hits (by an object) and cuts.

Harm to shoulders and arms were due to lifting, slips, falls and operational movement.

	Year to date June 2013	Year to date June 2012
Company	391	442
Corporate	2	3
Freight	143	177
Infrastructure & Engineering	107	117
InterIslander	82	80
Passenger	57	65

Source-KiwiRail HSE Executive Council Meeting- 28 August 2013

## MRP FLOAT SHOWS 4.4M KIWIS LOSE \$140M

The float of Mighty River Power has cost the 4.4 million New Zealanders who couldn't afford to buy the shares a total of \$140 million, says Labour's SOEs spokesperson Clayton Cosgrove.

"New Zealanders who couldn't afford to buy shares in Mighty River have lost out again. First they lost \$1.7 billion in the sale. Over the next two years \$140 million in dividends will be paid out to private investors - that's money that should have gone to the taxpayer.

"The \$140 million in dividends could have been spent on schools and hospitals, instead it's lining the pockets of private investors. Much of it will head overseas.



"Meanwhile the \$1.7 billion the Government raised from the sale is being spent on the likes of the Mighty River bonus shares scheme, the closed caption TV for Parliament and security and risk management for the Prime Minister's department. So much for John Key's promises that it would be used for new infrastructure.

"Even those who bought shares lose out on the price. The share price has gone down by 31c. Phillip Anderson of Devon Funds Management today said the Government set the price too high, warning 'that's going to hinder the price for Meridian'.

"The best the Government can come up with to counter that is a 'buy now, pay later' sweetener to try to convince Kiwis to buy into Meridian. It won't work.

"The number of Kiwis interested in buying SOE shares has halved since the Mighty River float. Taxpayers are sick of losing out in the Government's great sell-off," says Clayton Cosgrove.

## **AIR NZ PUSHES FOR HARSHER EMPLOYMENT LAWS**

It is disappointing our national carrier Air New Zealand is pushing the Government to go even further with its labour law reforms, including adopting controversial strike breaker provisions, Labour's Industrial Relations spokesperson Darien Fenton says.

"Air New Zealand is proposing the no strike, no rights, no-bargaining period be extended from three months to six months so workers will have no protection or rights during this period. They also want the Government to adopt the strike breaker provisions proposed in National MP Jami-Lee Ross' members' bill."

"The airline's position has been outlined in its submission to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee. Other submissions demonstrate employers

in this country view employment relationships as a cost to be minimised through the use of harsh employment laws.

"Workers are right to be worried," Darien Fenton says.

"A large rally in Auckland today against the Government's attack on workers' rights, and another in Christchurch tomorrow, shows the level of growing concern.

"It's a sad commentary on New Zealand when iconic companies like Air New Zealand and the Government still believe that the only way to grow their business is by reducing pay and conditions for workers.

"It is particularly disappointing when Air New Zealand has a high level of union membership who worked constructively with the airline over many years through its ups and downs."

"Labour's policies will create secure, quality work with decent wages, backed by an employment framework that protects the rights and interests of hard working Kiwis," Darien Fenton says.

## **Transition heads update**

KiwiRail data shows there have been 87 injuries in the last 3 years from using transition heads. The majority of the injuries are back strains, followed by crushed fingers shoulder and arm strains. Tripping over and dropping transition heads were other sources of injury.

## **Background to the hazard**

The rate of manual handling of transition heads increased significantly with the introduction of the new rolling stock in late 2011. Due to the incompatibility of the new and the old stock a transition head weighing between 27-31kg is required to couple the wagons together.

The RMTU first raised the issue of injuries relating to bull hooks in June 2012. Shortly after the union commissioned Rheumatologist Dr Richard Wigley to review the manual handling practices at the



Wellington shunt yard. Dr Wigley's recommendations were,

1. Eliminate the risk of harm by replacing the old couplings with alliance auto couplers as soon as possible to eliminate the transition heads. Accelerating the process would reduce the risk of injury
2. Refresh the training manual handling DVD to include advice on minimising back twisting and reaching.
3. Strap the remote pack (control panels higher up to allow the transition head to be held closer to the waist.

The RMTU wrote to KiwiRail in December 2012 urging the company to accelerate the retrofitting process and upgrade the manual handling training.

In June 2013 KiwiRail commissioned Dr Clara Budd -Vitality Works to review the transition head process at Westfield. Dr Budd's recommendations reinforced the need for effective manual handling training but noted that lifting techniques vary between people and it so difficult to recommend a single lifting technique to a diverse workforce. The DVD training resource for manual handling training will be upgraded to reflect both Dr Wigleys and Dr Budd's recommendations.

### Eliminating the hazard

To date a total of 378 wagons have had auto couplers installed since November 2010. There are a further 276 wagon to be retrofitted by the end of 2013. They are predominantly the UKK and ULA class of wagon. There are 2000 (approximately) CFT wagons to convert still this will be done over 2 financial years.

### KiwiRail Industrial Council

At the KIC 19 meeting in August 2013, KIC reps agreed to investigate the feasibility of having a 'bully hook hanger' placed in strategic parts of the yards. Storing the transition heads at waist high will reduce the need for lifting from the ground. Reps will report back to KIC on this idea by the November KIC meeting.

## Bits and Bob's

- ☞ The first of Auckland's new CAF built EMUs arrived Monday 26th August, covered in protective plastic they were transported to the Wiri depot.
- ☞ The RMTU will be presenting its oral submission on Monday 2 September 2013 to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee.
- ☞ A new Generator is to be installed at a Buller Gorge crossing station – Tairoroa. LE's have been hand winding the points at this location after the tiny hydro station generator on a nearby stream was destroyed by floods and the diesel generator couldn't handle the constant running to keep the batteries charged.
- ☞ We are receiving complaints from LE's in Auckland about how bright the LED signal lights are. It appears the lights are dazzling when trains are stopping in front of the signals which is occurring because many stations have signals at the ends of station platforms.
- ☞ Organiser Todd Valster is attending the NSW TWU delegates conference and waving the RMTU flag. Should be an interesting Conference given the state of Australian politics and the imminent general election.