

THE ACTIVIST



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14TH RMTU CONFERENCE

Wayne Butson says the Union's conference was a great success. "We had a large number of first time delegates and observers and they all remarked that it had been a great experience for them" he said.

"A number of key speakers had very important messages to tell our people about and were then asked very thoughtful and probing questions arising from the presentations" said Wayne.

The Union wishes to especially recognize the presentations by Dr Michael Cullen, Port Tauranga's Mark Cairns and KiwiRail's William Peet as they traversed topics that struck particular chords with members.

The overseas guests from the RTBU, MUA and TWU from Australia and our comrade from ASLEF in the UK laid a base for a stimulating debate on International affairs and engagement by the RMTU. Conference endorsed the continuation of International engagement by the RMTU in the ITF and the ICLS. Officials were instructed to pursue a strengthened alliance with our Transport Union Federation comrades in Australia.

A full report will be published in the December issue of the Transport Worker.

CTU TUBE

Click here for a link to the CTU's first of three YouTube clips on the election:
<http://nz.youtube.com/watch?v=PR70ACrFaE4>



The CTU has prepared a wide range of serious resources such as graphs, analysis, policy documents, the election kit, info-hub and the like. But as this is election is in part turning out to be the 'YouTube election', we wanted to be part of that, and these clips are intended to be a humorous contribution from us to the campaign!

We hope you like them! Do send them out far and wide so your members can enjoy them.

NOTICE OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION BALLOT

RESULTS – KIWIRAIL/VEOLIA TRANSPORT

The result of the recent ballot requesting members to authorise and empower the negotiating team to be able to initiate notice of industrial action is as shown below.

TOTAL BALLOT PAPERS ISSUED:	1594
TOTAL BALLOT PAPERS RETURNED:	795
BALLOTS CAST FOR:	733
BALLOTS CAST AGAINST:	6
PAPERS INVALID:	2
TOTALS	795

"I declare the ballot carried".

Therefore the negotiating team is authorised to give notice of Industrial action on behalf of members employed under the KiwiRail Limited / Veolia Transport Limited Multi Employer Collective Agreement (MECA) during the 2008 MECA negotiations.

Veolia Transport is still in negotiations and so the mandate may be utilised.

KiwiRail is about to have a provisional settlement sent out for ratification and in the

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

event of the ratification being rejected then the mandate may be utilised.

HENRY FAGAIAVA

NATIONAL RETURNING OFFICER

OZ CEO SALARIES CRITICISED

Transport & Logistics Newsletter reports that despite the slowing economic downturn and companies' grim outlook, senior executives' paycheques are getting fatter, latest research shows. Releasing the report on the CEO salaries in the top 100 ASX-listed companies, the Australian Council of Super Investors (ACSI) has called for reforms to remuneration structures to ensure transparency and accountability.

The report said over the period from 2001 to 2007, the median fixed remuneration of chief executives almost doubled, or 11.9 per cent per annum compound, even after factoring in the slight decrease in 2007. Over the same period, average adult weekly earnings moderately increased by 32.3 per cent in total.

For 69 CEOs included in the survey, average total pay was \$5.53 million last year, soaring from \$4.56 million in 2006.



Among the chief executives grilled over their questionable big paycheques was **Asciano CEO Mark Rowsthorn**, who pocketed a \$1.3 million cash incentive last financial year, despite the company posting a staggering loss of \$182 million.

Toll Holding CEO Paul Little's salary was relatively stable between 2001 and 2006, growing from above \$1.5 million to just below \$5 million. However, the report pointed out his pay soared to over \$13 million, or by 182.6 per cent, in 2007, after the board of Toll Holdings brought forward three years' worth of option grants that had been contingent on future performance.

KIWI RAIL – VEOLIA MECA – VEOLIA UPDATE

The parties are scheduled to meet on 6 November 2008 in Auckland. A few "issues" remain between the parties.

KIWI RAIL – VEOLIA MECA – KIWI RAIL UPDATE – JOINT NOTICE

The finalising of the terms of Settlement, the memorandum of Understanding and the wording for the Collective Agreement are taking the parties longer than anticipated. A meeting to finalise the wording is scheduled for 30 October 2008. It is necessary for all documentation to be finalised prior to undertaking the report back meetings in order to comply with an Employment Court decision precedent with the ADHB and PSA. Having all the material finalised also assists in being able to fully answer any member question which may arise and also to ensure consistency of approach by the report back teams nationwide.

The parties are making arrangements for a nationwide tour of report back meetings with 4 joint (RMTU – KiwiRail) teams commencing 10 November 2008. The ratification postal ballot will be run concurrently. The ratification will be a recommended settlement by the negotiating team. An itinerary will be released shortly.

This year's negotiating team was the largest ever and ensured that all sectors of membership was represented and had a voice at the table.

CONTACT DIRECTORS' FEES SHOW SYSTEM BROKEN

Contact Energy's plans to double its directors' fees is an outrageous move given the rates they pay their workers and their recent increase in power prices, says the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

The call follows the electricity company's announcement that the pool for its directors' fees will increase by 95% to \$1.5m. By comparison the last increase Contact's EPMU-unionised call centre workers received was 3%. EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says the massive hike in directors' fees shows the huge disparity between the way

executives and workers are treated. "We know of at least one Contact director who is receiving a thousand dollars a day in salary even before this increase, while our members in call centres don't even receive that much in a week.

"This situation is symptomatic of the current climate in which senior executives are paid well out of proportion to the workers that actually keep their companies running. "Contact hasn't even done that well under these directors' stewardship but they are still rewarded handsomely. Given Contact's intense performance management of our call centre members that seems a bit rich.

"The system is clearly broken and in need of reform. Perhaps the time has come to require Contact to put elected worker and community representatives on its board to ensure the company is governed by people with a sense of reality."



UNION DENSITY

When the VUW Employment Agreements Update came out this year there was no table this time specifically on collective bargaining density. We therefore asked for an update. Dr Stephen Blumenfeld and Dr Paul O'Neil supplied a table and we have modified it to fit here:

Year (Mar)	(Public %)	Union Density (Private %)
1990	97	48
1995	59	21
2000	69	21
2005	61	9
2006	68	9
2007	61	9
2008	59	10

NATIONAL WILL PUT NEW TEACHERS ON FIRE-AT-WILL TRIAL

Labour's spokesman on labour relations and Hutt South MP Trevor Mallard today called on National Party leader John Key to confirm that new teachers and support staff in small schools and early childhood

education centres would be able to be sacked at will in their first three months on the job under National party policy.

Trevor Mallard's comments follow major contradictions by National's education spokesperson Anne Tolley and their industrial relations spokeswoman Kate Wilkinson in recent election debates. (Go to

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir2anqvJ-Dc>)

"I will also be asking National's Hutt South candidate Paul Quinn to explain the policy when we appear at the NZEI Hutt Valley branch candidate's forum tonight," Trevor Mallard said.

"The 90-day rule is not supposed to apply to teachers because they are there is concern for teaching being involved in that and I understand that," Anne Tolley told one forum.

"I don't know what Mrs Tolley said. I'm saying what our policy is and our policy says that workplaces which employ less than 20 people, we are wanting to implement a trial period," Kate Wilkinson told another forum.

"National MPs are following John Key's lead - they say different things depending on who the audience is, in order to please whoever happens to be listening. This is shifty behaviour on the part of a party that thinks it can govern. And it shows that National cannot be trusted," Trevor Mallard said.

"Being able to get rid of young and new teachers who are fresh on the job during a three month trial period is a ludicrous situation in a time of significant teacher shortages. It is a total turnoff for enthusiastic graduates keen to get their first teaching position; it's a turnoff for teachers wanting to move to a new school - and its bad news for our kids.

"Under National's Fire at Will policy, workers in small workplaces can be sacked during a three month trial period - without any workplace protections. It's a particularly savage policy for low income and vulnerable workers and gives people absolutely no job security. Why won't John Key tell the truth and tell teachers and schools and early childhood education centres what will

happen to them and their children under his ruthless policy," Trevor Mallard said.

REPORT OF PUBLIC ADVISORY GROUP ON RESTRUCTURING AND REDUNDANCY

Last week the Government released the report of the Public Advisory Group on Restructuring and Redundancy and a Cabinet paper.

The Public Advisory Group's report and associated cabinet paper is available at <http://www.ers.govt.nz/relationships/r-r-report.html>

The Minister said that "the government's preference is for some sort of statutory minimum, subject to consultation via a discussion document process next year. The current law offers no statutory entitlements to employees for notice or compensation in the event of redundancy, unless these were provided in their employment agreement. This means that employees who are made redundant who do not have these protections negotiated into their employment agreements do not have the best protections and support they could have."

The Department of Labour will prepare a discussion document, expected to be released for public consultation next April. The discussion document would include options for introducing a statutory minimum for redundancy notice and compensation, extending the Security in Change initiative and possible mandatory notification arrangements.

It was significant that there was unanimous support for the recommendation:

"That the government should consider the introduction of a statutory requirement for redundancy compensation and other entitlements incorporating the following features:

- notice of redundancy termination to the affected worker
- compensation based on length of service

- a maximum level of statutory compensation, and
- provision of redundancy support and other active labour market mechanisms to affected workers and organisations."

KIWI RAIL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL (KIC) REPS ELECTED

Nominations for the newly created national representative positions of a Tranz Scenic and a CT Site Rep closed 1700hrs, 17 October 2008. The RMTU National Returning Officer received one nomination for each position so those nominated are declared elected unopposed.

Congratulations to both Garesh (Gary) Shukha – CT and Brian Armstrong – Tranz Scenic for being successfully elected onto the KIC.

The next meeting of the KIC is 29th & 30th October, Woburn Training Centre, Wellington.

ANNUAL CPI UP 5.1% AND FOOD PRICES RISE BY 10.8%

Statistics NZ updated quarterly (3 Month) CPI and monthly food prices today. The Consumers Price Index (CPI) increased 5.1 percent for the year to the September 2008 quarter. The CPI rose 1.5 percent in the September 2008 quarter. Food prices rose by 10.8% comparing the month of September 2008 with September last year (note this is different

from the quarterly comparisons in the overall CPI.

The transport group made the most significant contribution to the annual increase, rising 11.3 percent. Higher prices for petrol (up 29.3 percent) accounted for just over a quarter of the 5.1 percent increase in the CPI. If petrol prices had remained unchanged from the September 2007 quarter to the September 2008 quarter, the CPI would have risen 3.7 percent.

The other significant annual increases came from the food group (up 9.5 percent) - in particular grocery food (up 12.0 percent);



and the housing and household utilities group (up 4.7 percent) - driven by purchase of new housing (up 4.6 percent) and electricity (up 6.9 percent).

Note also that the CPI basket of goods and services has been updated and reweighted to ensure that it continues to reflect household spending patterns. Goods added to the basket as part of the review include heat pumps and cut flowers. High-tech products that have been added include in-car satellite navigation units, free-to-air digital television receivers, and digital music downloads. Services added to the new basket include lawn mowing, house cleaning and auction services, with the latter reflecting the growing popularity of online trading. Goods removed from the basket include solid fuel burners, cathode ray tube television sets, video cassette tapes, photographic film and writing paper.

Statistics New Zealand advised prior to this release today that they estimate that of every \$100 spent by households on goods and services covered by the CPI, \$22.75 is spent on housing and household utilities, compared with \$20.02 in 2006. This reflects increased spending on renting and on purchasing new housing, and higher electricity prices. Food accounts for \$17.83 of every \$100 spent, compared with \$17.38 in 2006. The increase reflects an increase of 11.3 percent in food prices over the past two years. Other groups have shown declines in relative importance, including transport (down from \$17.24 to \$16.18 of every \$100 spent), with lower spending on cars contributing to the fall. However, the relative importance of petrol has increased to \$5.47 of every \$100 spent.

For the year to September 2008, food prices rose 10.8 percent. This annual increase is the highest since April 1990 when food prices increased 11.4 percent, which incorporates the GST increase from 10.0 to 12.5 percent in the July 1989 month.

All five subgroups recorded upward contributions to the annual increase, with the most significant contribution coming from the grocery food subgroup (up 12.8 percent). Within this subgroup, higher prices were recorded for cheddar cheese

(up 61.6 percent), bread (up 16.5 percent), and fresh milk (up 12.6 percent).

The remaining four subgroups recorded the following upward contributions: fruit and vegetables (up 17.9 percent), meat, poultry and fish (up 8.8 percent), restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food (up 6.3 percent), and non-alcoholic beverages (up 6.9 percent).

VEOLIA TRANSPORT WINS CONTRACT

The NordWestBahn subsidiary of Veolia Transport has been selected to manage the future Regio-S-Bahn services in Bremen and Niedersachsen from December 2010.

Niedersachsen transport authority LNVG confirmed Veolia as the winner after Deutsche Bahn withdrew an appeal against conditions in the call for tenders. Veolia said it is the first time a private operator has won a contract covering the whole of an electrified S-Bahn in Germany.

The 11-year concession agreement covers the operation of 4.7 million train-km a year on a four-line network totalling 270 km. Veolia expects to generate total revenue of €500m.

New air-conditioned vehicles with low floors, wheelchairs spaces and accessible toilets will be brought into use for the launch of regular interval S-Bahn services in 2010. Trains will have onboard security staff after 21.00, and CCTV will be fitted.

The contract follows agreements reached this year covering regional services in Niers-Rhein-Emscher and Leipzig. '2008 marks a new stage in our expansion in rail in Germany,' said Cyrille du Peloux, CEO of Veolia Transport. 'This expertise will be of great strategic importance once the European market for passenger rail transportation is deregulated in 2010.'

PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF NUMBERS

A table is available that shows exactly what the staff numbers were in the public service and wider state sector between 1990 and



2007. What the table shows for instance is that:

- In 1990 there were 52,194 in the public service (4.5 percent of overall employment in NZ).
- By 1999 this had fallen to 30,702 in the public service or 2.2 percent of employment.
- By 2007 this had risen to 44,335 or 2.6 percent of employees in NZ.
- Between 1990 and 2007 the NZ population grew by 705,000.
- In the overall state sector (this does not include local government) the numbers of jobs went from 283,745 in 1990 (24.2 percent of overall employment in NZ) to 245,201 in 1999 (17.4 percent of overall employment in NZ) and 282,486 in 2007 (16.3 percent of overall employment in NZ).

Also the SSC confirms that 41 percent of public service staff are employed in Wellington. The other 59 percent are employed either in other regions in NZ or overseas.

BLACKBALL 2008 – A COMMEMORATION OF THE 1908 MINERS' STRIKE

23MIN DVD FOR SALE \$15

Everyone who attended the Easter celebrations at Blackball came away inspired. It is not often that a political event is so massively supported and so diversely represented by a local community. Blackball is still a very special place. It continues to be an icon for working-class history, mythology and ongoing organising in this country. By recording the weekend's activities I hope to contribute to the amazing effort by the Blackball '08 Commemoration Committee to keep a very important fragment of our past alive.

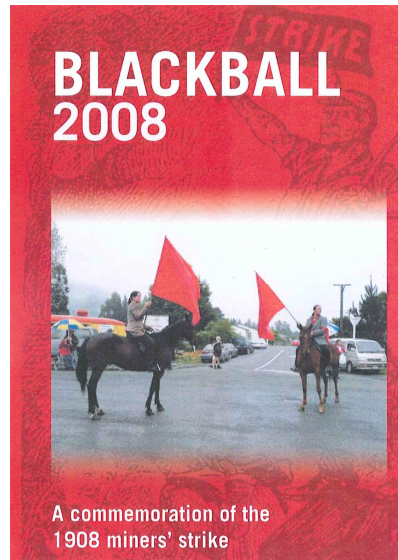
You can order copies of Blackball 2008 by email: communitymedia@paradise.net.nz

Or by post to;

Rod Prosser
Vanguard Films
PO Box 3563

Wellington. I'll post you the DVD along with an invoice for \$15 (per copy), which includes GST and postage.

Payments can be made by cheque to Community Media Trust or by transfer to Kiwibank: Community Media Trust, 389000 0334984 01



MAORI PARTY'S 'NO DOLE' WILL INCREASE POVERTY, SOCIAL RISKS

Maori Party Co-Leader Tariana Turia's suggestion yesterday that the dole should be scrapped is dangerous in the extreme, and especially for Maori who tend to be disproportionately unemployed, the Green Party says.

"The Greens are right behind the Maori Party's call for full-wage job creation schemes, but abolishing the dole altogether means a return to the days when unemployed workers and their families were dependent on charities, local Government or family for handouts," Social Development Spokesperson Sue Bradford says.

"Whichever combination of political parties forms the next Government in this country, unemployment is going to rise," Ms Bradford says.

"Until we reach the happy day when we have a Government committed to creating jobs for all unemployed people, there will always be those for whom the unemployment benefit is the only means of survival.

"If this meagre support is removed, we will see family breakdown, child poverty, crime, begging and homelessness at levels way beyond anything we can conceive of at present.

"Since Labour came to power at the peak of the Great Depression of the 1930s, there has been cross party consensus that a welfare safety net is the best way of helping individuals and families through hard times.

"If the dole is taken away, a huge hole will be ripped in that safety net."

The Green Party's key policies in this area include:

- Government should work to achieve full employment even at times of recession, with the goal of getting as many people into real jobs at real wages as possible.
- No forced work for the dole.
- The provision of welfare benefits at levels people can actually live on for all unemployed people, as well as for sole parents, the sick and the injured.
- Strong support for community and hapu and iwi based initiatives which create work in local communities, including in rural and provincial areas, doing socially and environmentally useful work.

"Unemployed workers need the security of knowing that they can feed, house and clothe themselves and their families when they are between jobs. Any deliberate breaking of the political consensus on this takes our country down a dangerous and slippery path."

AGED CARE EMPLOYERS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO STEP UP

"The Government's announcement of additional money for improving wages in the aged care sector will test the rhetoric of employers who claim wages need to rise, but who ran a legal challenge against the Government last time they made efforts to allow that to happen," Council of Trade Unions president Helen Kelly said today.

The Government yesterday announced an extra \$5 million, in addition to new money already provided this year, with a request to employers that this be passed on directly to the workforce.

"We would expect employers in the sector to welcome the extra money and immediately agree to the pass on," Helen Kelly said.

"The Government's announcement of both new money for staff training and the implementation of minimum staffing levels is also very welcome. This is the longer term solution for improving quality in the

sector, by securing a stable and appropriately trained workforce."

"The immediate possibility to increase wages as a result of the new funding is essential, but the longer term vision of a trained workforce with requirements for minimum staffing levels will mean aged care provision in this country has a real chance of becoming the quality service people want to work in, and older people want to live in."

Helen Kelly called on employers to act responsibly to this new opportunity, and said families and workers would be closely scrutinising their response given how poorly they behaved last time.

IT'S ALL IN A NAME

Derivatives have become a 'dirty word' producing trillions of dollars of toxic debt. One such derivative is a credit default swap. Globally, it is estimated that there are around \$100 trillion (US\$62 trillion) worth of credit default swaps.

A credit default swap is defined as a swap contract in which a buyer makes a series of payments to a seller and, in exchange, receives the right to a payoff if a credit instrument goes into default or on the occurrence of a specified credit event, for example bankruptcy or restructuring. The associated instrument does not need to be associated with the buyer or the seller of this contract.

Former staff member of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Michael Greenberger says "A credit default swap is a contract between two people, one of whom is giving insurance to the other that he will be paid in the event that a financial institution, or a financial instrument, fails. It is an insurance contract, but they've been very careful not to call it that because if it were insurance, it would be regulated. So they use a magic substitute word called a 'swap,' which by virtue of federal law is deregulated."

A credit default swap allows the transfer of third party credit risk from one party to the other. A lender faces credit risk from a third party, and the counterparty in the credit default swap agrees to insure this risk in exchange for regular periodic payments (essentially an insurance premium). If the



third party defaults, the party providing insurance will have to purchase from the insured party the defaulted asset. In turn, the insurer pays the insured the remaining interest on the debt, as well as the principal.

This content can be found on the following page:

http://www.investorwords.com/5876/credit_default_swap.html

This is a casino economy financial product designed to avoid deregulation and is worth more than 620 times annual New Zealand GDP!

FIRST VOTES IN 2008 GENERAL ELECTION CAST WEDNESDAY 22 Nov

The first votes in the 2008 General Election will be cast from tomorrow (Wednesday 22 October) by voters who can't get to a polling place in their electorate on Election Day. Advance voting opens at 9am on Wednesday 22 October and closes at 6pm on Friday 7 November.

"Advance voting makes voting easier for people who may be on holiday, working or can't get to a polling place in their electorate on Election Day for some reason," says Robert Peden, Chief Electoral Officer. More than 250 advance voting places will be available for people to go to vote.

There will also be special arrangements in some electorates including:

- establishing voting facilities for people on the Chatham Islands and sending ballot papers by fishing boat to Pitt Island visits to communities along an 80km stretch of the Whanganui River workers on oil rigs off the Taranaki Coast voting before they head off for their fortnightly shift offshore three vans visiting small communities in the West Coast electorate and issuing votes in places such as the Otira tearooms and a resident's home in the Waitaha Valley

electoral officials visiting communities in parts of the Kaikoura electorate in a mobile voting campervan and also sending ballot papers by boat to Stephens Island

- Teams of staff will also visit hospitals and resthomes to ensure people who can't get to a polling place have the opportunity to vote.

In 2005 197,938 or 8.59 percent of votes were advance votes, this compares to 132,609 or 6.45 percent in 2002.

Most advance voting places will either be fully accessible or accessible with assistance for people in wheelchairs or with limited mobility.

Details of advance voting places, including their accessibility ratings, are available from the elections website www.elections.org.nz, by calling 0800 36 76 56 or from local Returning Officers.

OECD REPORT SHOWS NZ ON RIGHT TRACK BUT MORE TO DO

A major report from the OECD called Growing Unequal shows the importance of Governments taking a range of measures head-on to reduce inequality and poverty, says the Council of Trade Unions.

Peter Conway, CTU Economist, says that the OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría has emphasised that education, boosting family income of those in work, and direct measures to tackle poverty are the best policies.

"Gurría also said that increasing employment is the best way to reduce poverty. But there is no guarantee that more jobs and higher employment do reduce poverty. The rising incidence of non-standard employment has widened the earnings distribution and contributed to the increase in poverty."

"The Report also highlights how sensible investments in child care, parenting support and in promoting flexible employment can provide vital support for mothers who choose remain in paid work."



Peter Conway said this shows that the Government is on the right track but must keep going with policies that can lift incomes, promote employment, and direct resources to those in most need.

"This is yet another Report which shows that the Nordic countries have a good policy mix. Overall, the gap between the rich and poor has widened. On average the income of the richest 10 % of citizens is almost nine times higher than that of the poorest. However, in the Nordic countries, in Denmark, Sweden and Finland the gap is much smaller (5-6 times) compared with USA at 16 times."

The Report also says that it is a "myth" that inequality encourages people to try to do better.

"At a time of financial crisis due in large part to the excesses of those on very high incomes at the expense of the poor, this report is a timely reminder of a sensible policy mix to promote economic growth and fair distribution of income at the same time, as well as the huge importance of tackling poverty".

"New Zealand has made a good start in recent years with a higher minimum wage, paid parental leave, more flexibility in working hours, support for early childhood education and family tax credits. But the momentum must continue in these difficult economic times – particularly through support for decent jobs."

"The Report shows that there was a significant increase in income inequality in NZ from mid-1980s to mid-1990s and that from the mid-1980s to mid-2000s there has been a significant increase in income poverty – measured as below the threshold of half of median income."

"This shows that the policies of the late 1980s and 1990s were a disaster for low income families. We do not want a repeat of policies such as reducing workers employment law rights, freezing the minimum wage, cutting benefits, and user pays for public services".



GREENS LAUNCH WELLINGTON TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Green Party announced their Transport Strategy for Wellington today, which is designed to eliminate congestion in Wellington, make public transport affordable, and reduce our carbon emissions and our reliance on fossil fuels.

"Wellington desperately needs more trains, more buses, and better public transport. The Green Party has laid out an affordable plan for this to happen," Wellington Transport Spokesperson Sue Kedgley says.

"We will double central Government funding available for public transport infrastructure so that ratepayers and public transport users aren't unfairly burdened with the costs of expanding services. Currently, the Government spends only 20 cents on public transport for every \$1 it spends on roads.

"This is the time to be investing in sustaining infrastructure. We will complete our rail network, which currently ends on the outskirts of Wellington's CBD, and build a light rail network from Johnsonville and the Hutt through to the airport. It will run on clean, renewable electric power and cost less than half the amount of Transmission Gully.

"We will make Wellington more people-friendly and liveable by promoting safer walkways and cycling and funding the Great Harbourway, a walking and cycling trail stretching right the way around our harbour. We will complete our regional cycle network.

"Trains and buses at peak hour are currently crammed full, while off peak services are relatively empty. The Green Party will introduce \$1 off peak fares to encourage people to travel during off peak hours," Ms Kedgley says.

LETTING PRIVATE INSURANCE LOOSE ON ACC IS NONSENSE - CTU

"Letting the private insurance industry loose on workplace accident cover is utter nonsense, a point further highlighted by the recent problems in global financial markets,"

said Council of Trade Unions president Helen Kelly, in welcoming Labour's commitment today for a fully public ACC scheme.

"Last month the US government bailed out insurance giant AIG. The National Party wants our accident compensation and rehabilitation managed by firms just like these ones."

"When National last promoted so-called choice in accident compensation one of the providers, a subsidiary of HIH Insurance which had up to 40 percent of workplace cover, went bust with losses of around \$1 billion. Fortunately by the time of their collapse the government had renationalised the scheme."

"National's ACC policy is one that nobody wants. Just last week the Northern Employers and Manufacturers Association were saying that business don't want ACC privatised. They join other business groups and medical and legal professionals in opposing National's plan to ruin our world class ACC scheme," Helen Kelly said.

Labour, the Greens, the Maori Party and the Progressives have all committed to retaining a public ACC scheme, but National is pushing on with plans to privatise it. John Key said in July it was "almost certainly likely" that National would privatise the ACC work account.

BITS AND BOBS

- The Prime Minister Helen Clark travelled out to Paraparaumu on the 1000hrs train today to visit Southward's car museum. She visited Hutt Shops later that afternoon and addressed the members.

Let's Be Safe Out There & Remember.....

**"WE'RE
STRONGER
TOGETHER"!**

