

THE ACTIVIST



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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, JOYOUS AND SAFE 2012!

It has been a busy year. For all of our members who are having a break over the Christmas and New Year, we hope you have a restful time off, and for those members who have to work – take care and above all think safe and be safe.

UNION OFFICE CLOSURE

The Union's National and regional offices will close at 1300hrs on 23 December 2011 and reopen on 12 January 2012 @ 0830hrs.

The **Emergency** "on call" roster for Union Industrial matters during the closedown period is;

- Wayne Butson
24 – 27
December 2011 inclusive on
0274962461
- Phil Spanswick 28 to 31 December
2011 inclusive 027 2188126
- Scott Wilson 1 to 4 January 2012
inclusive 0272464961
- Todd Valster 5 to 8 January 2012
inclusive 0274454691
- John Kerr 9 - 11 January 09
inclusive 0272464941

On behalf of the Union's President, National Management Committee and Staff we wish all members and their families a happy and joyous Christmas. We also wish you a healthy, safe and prosperous (the only way with collective bargaining) 2012.

HELP ANZCO LOCKED OUT WORKERS

As you are aware, over 100 workers have been locked out since 19 October. ANZCO, a multinational, locked them out because they wouldn't accept 20% pay cuts. The workers offered to sacrifice 10% of their pay but ANZCO refuses to budge and wants to starve the workers into accepting the full cuts.

This is wrong, and especially at this time of the year. We need to step up the fundraising efforts to support these families, and give the kids of the locked out workers a Christmas.

Please spread the 0900 number - **0900 LOCKOUT** to get more information and to make a \$5 donation.

The RMTU is nationally supporting 6 families of locked out workers. Most branches w

PORTS OF AUCKLAND

We have seen Lockout and Strike notices traded at Ports of Auckland as MUNZ Local 13 and the Port company battle their way to a renewal of the Collective Agreement.

The dispute centres on Port of Auckland inducing workers to leave the Union by offering higher rates of pay in Individual Employment Agreements. Although there are currently 7 workers on IEA's within the areas of the ports operations covered by the Collective Agreement the Union rightly see this form of employer initiative an attack on core Union conditions.

The RMTU has not received a request for solidarity support from MUNZ to date.

UNIONAID RAFFLE RESULT

The UnionAID raffle was drawn on Monday 5 December under Police supervision and the winners and ticket numbers are:

First prizes

- Colin Moore 20971
- Bev Thomson 18489

Second prize

- Dayna Kosega 14516

Third Prize

- Al Morrison 16467

Thank you to all members who purchased tickets and supported this wonderful initiative which will see almost \$15,000.00 used for aid projects in south East Asia.



KIWI RAIL TIMESHEET DEADLINE FOR CHRISTMAS PERIOD

KiwiRail members who complete a fortnightly timesheet are reminded to complete their Timesheet for Fortnight Commencing 11th December 2011 early.

Managers/Administrators MUST have the approved timesheets in payroll no later than 9am on Wednesday 21st December 2011.

For those outside the Wellington area, timesheets MUST be despatched by close of business Tuesday 20th December 2011 in order to meet the KR deadline.

Payday is the 29th December 2011.

Any supplementary timesheets received by KR after this date will not be able to be

processed until payday 26th January 2012. Make sure your Mangers DO THEIR JOB!

PRIME PORT DELEGATE TRAINING SCHEDULED

Our Timaru Port delegates are fronting up for a day's delegate training on 20 December. This is all part of the organising plan for Prime Port members that we agreed on in June.

Organising and educating workers is what we do and whilst some of this takes place on formal courses like this one most union education is done by delegates and active members on the job, at smoko or during informal one on one chats with members.

South Island Port and Rail members are encouraged to contact Organiser John Kerr if they are interested in getting some training. We have several new delegates in Christchurch who we'll be looking to train in the New Year but don't wait for a course to come up – John is very happy to sit down with you to run through any union related matters that you want education and training on.

IF YOU HAVE AN A&D PROBLEM ASK FOR HELP!!

The RMTU is concerned that members are testing positive for alcohol and/or drugs post incident or reasonable cause within our industries. Our advice is if you think you might have a problem with alcohol or drugs then ask for help. Help is available through Employee Assistance Programmes or by contacting the Union.

Members in the rail industry can enter into voluntary rehabilitation, which is not disciplinary, but rather aimed at helping people sort out their problem with A&D. Some Port employers operate similar systems.

For further details contact your Union delegate or organiser.

GEORGE RESIGNS

RMTU Organiser George Laird has resigned his role with us. The resignation is effective on 16 December 2011. George has been on a steep learning curve since he joined us on 20 April 2009 and has developed many strong relationships with members and delegates. We thank George for the time he has spent with us and we wish him every success in his future endeavours.

WELCOME KAREN

Karen Fletcher will join the RMTU National Office team on 30 January 2012 in the role of part-time H&S Organiser. Karen brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the RMTU in the H&S area. Karen currently works at the NZCTU as a H&S Organiser. The Union has recognised that a current area of concern is H&S within KiwiRail and so a dedicated resource in this specialist field within the Union staffing is much needed. We look forward to Karen's arrival and us improving our game in the H&S area.

RMTU VICTORY FOR A GOOD CAUSE

The RMTU Lyttelton Port Branch helped raise \$500 for locked out ANZCO/CMP workers at a quiz hosted by NZNO on 11 December.

Our team of Bryan Byas, Andy Kelly, Andy Swanney, John Kerr and David Beck not only had a good time but won the 1st prize on the night thanks to their encyclopaedic knowledge of every northern hemisphere summer Olympiad and the literal translation of 'Copenhagen', amongst other things...

Thanks to NZNO for hosting a great night – it's been a hard year in Canterbury and a few laughs were just what we needed.

RMTU – KR D&A WORKING PARTY UPDATE

RMTU and KiwiRail have been discussing the proposed introduction of a random D & A testing regime.

The reasons for this are:

- There appears to have been something of a change in attitude towards random testing in recent years and many members see it as a way of ensuring they are not working alongside people who are impaired.
- KiwiRail are keen to introduce random D & A testing in order to comply with the requirements of customers e.g. mining companies, when KiwiRail staff are working on customers' sites.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult for our union to resist random testing when the current testing regime (pre-employment, post incident and just cause) is revealing numbers of members who test positive. Both the public and the wider membership are not sympathetic to a union that they perceive as protecting drug and alcohol users.

The working party have prepared a proposed amendment to the KiwiRail that provides for the introduction of random D & A testing.

A comprehensive education programme will be undertaken by joint teams in the New Year. The amendment to the MECA will be incorporated into the MECA negotiations and will be voted on in conjunction with the wageround ratification. If the ratification goes through then after introduction of random testing there will be an amnesty period so drug and alcohol users can come forward without fear of punitive action.

NO CHINA MADE FOR TASMANIA LOCOS

A significant milestone in the revitalisation of Tasmanian rail has been reached with the awarding of a major \$60 million contract to Downer Rail, in partnership with Progress Rail USA, for the supply of seventeen new locomotives to replace TasRail's ageing motive power fleet. Bottom of Form

The contract between Downer and TasRail is for the design, build and delivery 17 new PR22L-type locomotives, modified to suit the Tasmanian rail network. The first of the new narrow-gauge locomotives are expected to start arriving by mid 2013, with completion of the order within 18 months.



TasRail Chief Executive Officer Damien White said "Securing a contemporary and standardised locomotive fleet will substantially improve the safety, reliability, efficiency and capacity of rail freight services in Tasmania."

These will be the first new locomotives built for the Tasmanian rail network since 1973. The existing locomotive fleet is considered to be well beyond its useful operating life, representing a significant and escalating cost burden on the TasRail. Although some units have been rebuilt or upgraded, the fleet today consists largely of locomotives purchased second-hand from Queensland Rail over the last 25 years.

The awarding of the contract to Downer Rail and its partner Progress Rail comes at the end of an extensive and comprehensive commercial tender process that had attracted worldwide interest. Mr White revealed that TasRail was able to achieve a very competitive price in the current market, but that price was not the only consideration.

"Our very experienced project team developed a model for assessing tender bids on a whole of life cost analysis that considered a range of factors including (but not limited to) maintenance costs, reliability, fuel costs and efficiencies, emission performance, proven record and longevity of design, warranty and service support were also assessed", he said.

The total value of the locomotive project is in excess of A\$60 million.

KR MECA WAGEROUND REMIT CALL

The KiwiRail MECA expires 30 June 2012. The renewal of the MECA will see both the Union and the employer table claims. The RMTU claims come from members who are covered by the MECA and have to have been raised and voted on and carried at a bona fide meeting of the branch.

The RMTU negotiation team shall comprise all members of the KiwiRail Industrial

Council's with the lead negotiator being Wayne Butson the General Secretary.

The remits will be prioritised by the negotiation team. Regular updates will be disseminated to members.

All remits for the KiwiRail Wageround must be submitted to National Office by Monday 13 February 2012. No late remits will be accepted.

RMTU MEMBERSHIP DATABASE UPDATES

The RMTU membership database is an important tool in contacting Union Members or ensuring members are kept up to date with the latest information. We are concerned at the number of "unknown" or "return to sender" envelopes returned to National Office and remind members that if they wish to exercise their rights and participate in the decision making aspects of the Union they should ensure they inform National Office of any change of address or contact details as soon as possible. This includes any change of designation or employer.

Branch Secretaries hold update of membership forms that you can post or fax in or alternatively for immediate action members are reminded to utilise the update of membership details link on our website www.rmtunion.org.nz.

For example - The rail industry MECA expires in 2012 and so there will be ratification votes conducted by mail. If we have the incorrect address, employer info you will not get a vote as you will never receive a voting paper.

Update now!

KR MECHANICAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL

This met at the end of November. The minutes have just been finished and Organiser John Kerr has forwarded these to Council members Howard Phillips, Steve Brown, Paul Riddell, Laurie Hall and Stu Johnston.



If you want a copy of the minutes e-mail John on jkerr@rmtunion.org.nz.

The meeting was constructive and for many of our members the hot topic will be working towards implementing a new pay progression framework for Mechanical. The next meeting is set down for the end of February.

If you have items you want to raised do this through your local consultative committees first and then contact the MIC members.

MMP WINS

MMP supporters like us have had a resounding victory in the referendum. Nationally there was 57.8% to retain MMP versus 42.2% for change. In Palmerston North we did better than average and got 61.1% versus only 38.9%. The informal count on Question 1 (do want to "keep" or "retain" was 2.77% which shows the publicity saying that people didn't know what to do with the referendum is hog wash. We know 1,267,955 people said yes to MMP.

Can you imagine, if the result was the other way, young Jordan Williams from the anti-MMP group saying "oh dear we only got 58% of the voters supporting change, that's not enough and we should keep MMP". Yeah right!

We should celebrate a significant victory, a milestone in New Zealand's constitutional development. Thank you for your support.

VEOLIA CA WAGEROUND REMIT CALL

The Veolia CA expires 30 June 2012. The renewal of the CA will see both the Union and the employer table claims. The RMTU claims come from members who are covered by the CA and MUST have been raised, voted on and carried by a clear majority of members at a bona fide meeting of the Auckland Rail Branch.

The remits will be prioritised by the negotiation team. Regular updates will be disseminated to members.

All remits for the Veolia Wageround must be submitted to National Office

by Monday 13 February 2012. No late remits will be accepted.

KIWI RAIL RECONSIDERS PSYCH TESTING

Emotions have erupted around the issue of Psych testing of internal candidates for locomotive engineer training. One candidate, who is a full time employee who retains a current loco engineer operating certification and undertakes the operation of mainline trains to meet the business needs of KiwiRail, was recently rejected following his psych test. He promptly stated that "if he wasn't good enough to be considered for a full time role then he wasn't going to drive trains in a part time capacity". This exacerbated the existing shortage. KiwiRail ordered a review of the process and say that they were "overzealous" in applying the "off the street" psych tests to internal candidates. They will be writing to applicants and ask if they wish to pursue their application through the rest of the stages for selection.

Sometimes the more things change the more they stay the same..... at least in our view.

A DECENT JOB – RIGHT OR PRIVILEGE

The Council of Trade Unions is asking employer organisations if they support decent jobs in New Zealand.

Peter Conway, CTU Secretary, said today, "there seems to be a mentality that if someone has a decent job, then it is a privilege that must be withdrawn."

"Despite a commitment to decent work by employers, alongside government and unions in the International Labour Organisation, it looks like the very concept of decent work is being abandoned in this country."

"For instance, there has been a conspiracy of silence by employer organisations in New Zealand over the 7 week lockout of meatworkers in Rangitikei. Those workers will accept a pay cut, but just not the massive one the employer is demanding. Yet not one employer group has called on the company to be more reasonable."



Peter Conway said it is little wonder nearly 50,000 people left New Zealand permanently for Australia last year.

"Employer groups keep pushing for labour law changes to weaken bargaining rights".

"It seems the approach of these employer organisations is that their role is to hunt down every decent job in New Zealand and get rid of it in the name of competitiveness".

Peter Conway said that unions stand unequivocally for decent jobs – where people are treated with respect, where there is training, reasonable pay and conditions and engagement with workers on productivity issues.

"We need a new employer organisation in New Zealand that will promote decent jobs."

OECD REPORT SUGGESTS STEEPER INCOME TAXES ON HIGH INCOMES TO REDUCE INEQUALITY

A new report from the OECD lists New Zealand as among the countries with the fastest rising inequality since the mid 1980s. "The report confirms what the CTU and many others in New Zealand have been saying: that inequality has grown to disturbing proportions in New Zealand," says Bill Rosenberg, CTU Economist.

"The report says higher inequality has been driven by the rise in part time and low paid work, the falling level of welfare benefits, and cuts in top tax rates for high earners. It states that 'There is nothing inevitable about high and growing inequalities', pointing out that many successful countries have maintained lower levels of inequality," says Rosenberg.

The OECD "underlines the need for governments to review their tax systems to ensure that wealthier individuals contribute their fair share of the tax burden. This can be achieved by raising marginal tax rates on the rich but also improving tax compliance, eliminating tax deductions, and

reassessing the role of taxes in all forms of property and wealth".

"Unfortunately the government is going in exactly the wrong direction on these matters," Rosenberg says.

"While improving educational opportunities are important we also need to reverse tax cuts for the high paid and make more use of asset taxes such as a capital gains tax. We also need to strengthen our system of wage bargaining to give lower income employees a fairer deal."

"The OECD says that we don't just need new jobs, but ones that 'enable people to avoid and escape poverty'. It says that 'job quality has become a concern for a growing number of workers'. Once again, the government is going in the wrong direction in its employment law changes."

The report shows that in New Zealand between the mid-80s and late 2000s, the richest ten percent of households increased their incomes after inflation at over twice the rate of the bottom ten percent – 2.5 percent per year compared with 1.1 percent. It also shows that the tax system reduces inequality much less in

New Zealand than in other countries.

KIWRAIL MECA OVERNIGHT EXPENSE ALLOWANCES DEADLINE

The last pay run this year is Thursday 15th December. These must be received in payroll by 10am on Thursday 15th December. The next overnight expense allowance run is on 12 January 2012.

COURT REJECTS PATRICK APPEAL AGAINST DISCRIMINATION VERDICT

From Lloyd's List - A Victorian Court has rejected an appeal by Patrick Stevedoring against its \$180,000 fine and conviction for workplace health and safety

The judgement in the Victorian Supreme Court was handed down last week.



It followed an earlier case in the Victorian Magistrates Court last January, where the company was convicted of discriminating against a worker under Section 76 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

WorkSafe's prosecution related to several incidents in 2007 during which a stevedore, also a health and safety representative, received warning letters, was stood down and threatened with dismissal after raising concerns about a means of lifting loads of steel.

Patrick Stevedoring pleaded not guilty to the three charges and appealed the original verdict of magistrate Rosemary Carlin made in January.

In handing down sentence at the time, Magistrate Carlin said "serious instances of discriminating behaviour" had occurred.

PRIVATISING WELFARE NOT THE ANSWER

National and ACT's moves to corporatise welfare will cost New Zealand more money for worse outcomes, the Green Party said today.

"The agreement between National and ACT openly seeks to privatise the welfare system and punish those who are most vulnerable," Green Party Co-leader Metiria Turei said.

"National and ACT want to contract Work and Income services to third parties who seek to make a profit.

"Profiting in the welfare system does not mean a more effective system; it means a more expensive system because companies will be extracting profit for the same services provided by public agencies.

"Simply moving welfare services to private companies does not address the fact that many families do not have enough money to live on.

Mrs Turei said that children will be the hardest hit by privatisation of welfare and moves to manage the income of people who do not meet new punitive standards.

"The policy of managing the incomes of beneficiaries is an extraordinary intrusion by the state into ability of individual

families to make their own choices," Mrs Turei said.

"Private companies which manage family income will not prioritise the needs of children over their own interests.

"By making Working for Families work for those who need it the most we can ensure that when people go on benefits they can provide for their children. By lifting the minimum wage, we make work more viable for families.

"Privatising welfare has been shown to be ineffective. We have seen this in the Northern Territory of Australia where income management is targeted discrimination.

"The UK has tried similar reforms, which have seen private companies boom while inequality and poverty have grown," Mrs Turei said

NATIONAL/ACT DEAL ADDS UNNECESSARY COSTS TO ACC

Yesterday's confidence and supply agreement announced by the ACT and National parties will just add an unnecessary layer of costs and increase levies in the work account of ACC, according to the ACC Futures Coalition.

"The government's consultation on the privatization of the work account of ACC has been on the basis that ACC would remain in the market", said Hazel Armstrong, convenor of the ACC Futures Coalition. "But now that the election is over the National/ACT deal states that:

National acknowledges ACT's concern about the participation of private insurers and the fairness of the competitive process if ACC remains a competitor for Work Account business, and agrees to implement policy to manage and minimise this risk.

"We have already pointed out that private insurers have to earn a margin to generate a return on capital after having paid tax" said Ms. Armstrong. "Officials estimate this margin to be around 25 percent over the rate ACC charges because as a Crown entity ACC does not have to pay tax or dividends".

"There are only two options for the government to enable them to meet this

policy obligation to ACT: either they remove ACC from the market like they did in the 1990s or they turn ACC into a state-owned enterprise with the obligation to pay tax and return a dividend to the government. As the sole shareholder of the SOE they can then set the level of return they expect so high as to render ACC uncompetitive."

"Firstly this will add a whole layer of cost to what is one of the most administratively efficient accident compensation schemes in the world", said Ms. Armstrong. "Secondly the policy makes clear that the main reason for the change is to be fair to private insurers, not the needs of injured workers or the levies paid by employers."

"This is a neat trick that enables National to pose as the voice of moderation while they are campaigning, then after the election create the impression that they have had their hands forced by the more extremist ACT. The policy that National took to the electorate said it would ensure that ACC remains a sustainable 24/7 accident insurance scheme and it would save levy payers money. Their agreement with ACT does not commit the Government to keeping levies low, nor does it mean that ACC will be able to be sustainable and allow it to focus on better rehabilitation rates," said Ms. Armstrong.

MEATWORKERS URGE ANZCO/CMP TO ENTER FACILITATION

The New Zealand meat workers Union filed for facilitation services from the Employment Relations Authority on Friday, and urges ANZCO/CMP to come to the table and work with facilitators to resolve this dispute.

Dave Eastlake, National Secretary of the New Zealand Meat Workers Union said "this is an ongoing, and increasingly bitter dispute. 111 workers have been locked out for over 6 weeks by ANZCO in an attempt to starve them into taking massive pay cuts and reductions in conditions. This is unacceptable and we urge ANZCO to enter

into facilitation to find a solution to get these workers back to work."

Facilitation is provided by the Employment Relations Authority to assist parties to resolve their differences. Facilitation can be sought by either or both parties to a dispute where there has been a serious and sustained breach of good faith that has undermined the collective bargaining, where the bargaining has been unduly protracted and extensive efforts to resolve the parties' differences have failed and/or there has been a protracted or acrimonious strike or lockout action.

Waitrose, an up-market British supermarket and the sixth largest chain in the country, and one of ANZCO's major customers has urged ANZCO to return to negotiations.

The RMTU is sponsoring 6 families as well as supporting the pickets and rallies. Thank you members for your ongoing support!

RTBU REPORTS...

The RTBU's Enterprise Agreement (EA) campaign against their biggest national employer, Pacific National has kicked off with an early win. Despite opposition from management, RTBU negotiators have reached agreement with the company for common expiry dates across all Intermodel, NSW Coal, NSW Bulk and intrastate business groups.

The RTBU has over 2,000 members in all mainland states in Pacific National. In December we commence negotiations in earnest on our log of claims and negotiations will become more frequent and more intense as we get closer to the nominal expiry date which is June 30th 2012.

PORT BOTANY CONTAINER TRADE DEFIES EXPECTATIONS

Container trade through Port Botany reached almost 178,650 TEU in October 2011.

Sydney Ports chief executive officer Grant Gilfillan said that the trade result - down by 0.8 pc on the October result last year - was better than expected, given the issues faced



at Port Botany through the month of October. "Equipment failure and crane rail maintenance, with continued industrial relations issues at Patrick stevedores, have resulted in ships omitting Sydney and the port becoming congested at the quayside," Mr Gilfillan said. Patrick advised customers in mid October that a reduction in contracted pro forma volume would be imposed. This resulted in no empty export containers being moved from Patrick for one week, as well as the cessation of transshipment cargo for a period.

Despite this, full containerised exports reached almost 37,390 TEU in October 2011, up 0.9 per cent on the same period last year. Full containerised imports for October 2011 reached 92,620 TEU, 2.9 per cent higher than October 2010.

KIWI RAIL LEAVE SELL OUT

KiwiRail has given the Union a proposal for consultation which would see workers given the right to cash up all of their outstanding and Alt (Lieu) leave in a lump sum. The proposal is in direct contravention of the MECA provisions which allow for leave to be sold 1 day for each days leave taken. Wholesale cashing up of leave would have a catastrophic effect on staffing and safety. In all areas of KiwiRail staff are employed on a ratio basis to provide leave (annual, Sick and other) relief for the company. If workers sell their leave then jobs are in jeopardy. At a time of a slow (if not dead recessionary) economy we must generate employment so as to fight the disgraceful current level of unemployment. Workers need adequate rest and relaxation to be safe at work. This is undeniable and so if leave is sold and leave is not taken then workers become a hazard within their own workplace.

The Union has sought legal advice and the advice received is that what the company proposes is unlawful and The RMTU will vigorously oppose the selling of leave.

BUSINESS NZ AND CTU CALL FOR RESPECT OF LABOUR STANDARDS IN FIJI

Business NZ and the NZ Council of Trade Unions have combined in a joint statement

calling on the government of Fiji to respect their international obligations on labour standards.

Both organisations are calling on the government of Fiji to take immediate steps to restore workplace rights, allow freedom of association and comply with recommendations of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and its tripartite Committee on Freedom of Association.

Business NZ and the CTU are increasingly concerned about the deterioration in labour standards in Fiji including the arbitrary detention, arrest and harassment of senior trade union figures in Fiji for exercising civil and labour rights which are recognised internationally.

"The CTU has raised our serious concerns about the severe restrictions on work rights and the arrest and detention of union leaders. And the ILO has repeatedly called on the regime to bring its law into line with Fiji's international obligations," said Helen Kelly, CTU President. "It is now time for the government of Fiji to show that it will respect human rights at work".

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has recommended that the Fiji government accept a direct contacts mission to inquire into and press the case for application of basic international law embodied in Conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO. The Committee also stated that the Essential National Industries (Employment) Decree, which entered into force on 9 September 2011, gives rise to a number of violations of Conventions 87 and 98 and the principles on freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Phil O'Reilly, CEO of Business NZ said "We urge the government of Fiji to accept the ILO mission with an open mind and to use the opportunity constructively to assist Fiji to move quickly back into compliance with international labour standards."

ITALY UNVEILS NEW BULLET TRAINS

Passengers boarding the new bullet trains ready to whiz across Italy early next year might be forgiven for thinking of Ferrari cars



at the sight of the low nose, the deep-red livery and the sleek interiors. The train interiors, styled by celebrated design house Italdesign Giugiaro, will offer three different classes of travel, with passengers offered the option to connect to tunnel-proof wireless Internet, watch TV or have meals served at their seat by staff trained in hospitality services. A fleet of 25 trains will link Turin in the north with Salerno in southern Italy, via Milan, Rome and Naples, as well as Venice with Rome, at a speed of 300 kilometres per hour - the maximum allowed speed on the Italian rail network. The train is capable of reaching 360 kilometres per hour.

OTIRA TUNNEL REVIEW

The RMTU and KiwiRail have almost agreed Terms of Reference for a full review of the operation of trains through the Otira Tunnel situated on the Midland Line. The RMTU members of the core review team will be Hazel Armstrong, Karen Fletcher (after she commences with the RMTU), Mike Williams, and Brian Armstrong. Other key membership areas will be interviewed by the team for their input (track, Sigs, Comm's etc).

It is hoped the review will get underway in late January/early February 2012.

BITS AND BOBS

New Zealand is the least corrupt country in the world, according to Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index released November 30. NZ is followed by Denmark and Finland. Transparency International warned in its report that protests around the world clearly show citizens feel their leaders and public institutions are neither transparent nor accountable enough. "Whether in a Europe hit by a debt crisis, or an Arab world starting a new political era, leaders must heed the demands for better government," said Transparency International chair Huguette Labelle. The group scores 183 countries and territories based on data from 17 surveys that look at factors such as enforcement of anti-corruption laws,

access to information and conflicts of interest.

- ☞ Commencing Tuesday 20 December 2011 the RMTU is in the Auckland Employment Authority battling Veolia over its interpretation of the additional paid sick leave clause of the VTAK CA. In a surprise move KiwiRail has sworn an affidavit in support of the Veolia position. This does not in our view auger well for the future of additional paid sick leave in KiwiRail and members may need to consider how hard they will wish to defend the provision come wageround time.
- ☞ NRSS3 and NRSS4 are currently under discussion with KiwiRail as both are being reviewed.
- ☞ We await receipt of KiwiRail's review of its H&S structures. Currently there are 43 workers employed as being in "safety" roles with KiwiRail. Why are the stats so bad?

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER AND ABOVE ALL ELSE – HAVE A MERRY, SAFE AND JOYOUS FESTIVE SEASON!

