

THE ACTIVIST



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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, JOYOUS AND SAFE 2014!

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 1700hrs on 20 December 2013 and the Auckland Regional Office reopens on 3 January 2014 @ 0830hrs.

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

- Wayne Butson 21 - 24 December 2013 inclusive on 0274962461
- Todd Valster 25 to 29 December 2014 inclusive 0274454691
- Phil Spanswick 30 to 2 January 2014 inclusive 027 2188126
- John Kerr 3 - 5 January 2014 inclusive 0272464941
- Stu Johnstone 6 January to 12 January 2014 inclusive 0272464961

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) 2014.

HILLSIDE NOT FORGOTTEN

This Friday, 20 December, marks a year since Hillside Workshops were effectively closed. There is still a KiwiRail heavy lift maintenance facility operating on the site and the foundry is being operated by another Company, although the latter doesn't appear to be doing much, if any, rail related work.

Hillside survived two world wars and the Great Depression, but it could not survive the National Government's failure to support New Zealand manufacturing. Fewer than 200 jobs were lost at Hillside, but the downstream impact on Dunedin has been

much greater as sub-contractors and servicing businesses have suffered as a result of the closure. As well as this, because of the campaign the RMTU led against the closure, those job losses at Hillside have come to stand for the thousands of manufacturing jobs that have been lost under the Key Government.

To make sure that Hillside is not forgotten the RMTU is holding a rally at the gates of Hillside next Friday, 20 December at 12.30. Former Hillside workers are most welcome. We expect to have good support from the public and local politicians.

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

Our former National President Jim Kelly will be in attendance as will former Hillside RMTU Branch Chair and current Auckland Organiser Stu Johnstone.

Dunedin RMTU members are strongly encouraged to come along.

HOW MANY MORE FORESTRY WORKERS NEED TO DIE MR BRIDGES?

CTU renews demands for immediate interim regulation in forestry after reports that a 20 year old man was struck by a falling tree and killed this morning in a forestry block near Levin.

Helen Kelly, CTU President says "how many more have to die before the Government starts taking this seriously enough to act and properly regulate to keep our forestry workers safe at work?"

"The industry has failed to act and the Government has relied on its inadequate ACOPs for too long. This industry needs immediate interim regulation of its employment and safety practices to put a stop to the carnage."

"Today's fatality makes ten deaths in our forests this year alone. That's ten families who are dealing with the loss of a loved one and communities who are sharing that hurt."

KIWI RAIL IN-HOUSE HEALTH AND SAFETY REP TRAINING

The RMTU is working with KiwiRail to deliver six stage one CTU Health and Safety Rep courses for KiwiRail H&S Reps in the first half of 2014.

The stage one CTU course is currently being tailored to be KiwiRail specific so Reps doing the exercises on the course will be able to apply the KRG health and safety processes directly to their workplace H&S issues.

Stage 1 H&S Rep training courses will be held in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington and Christchurch.

The course is NZQA certified and Reps have the option of completing unit standard 20198 - Identify the roles and responsibilities of the health and safety representative in the workplace whilst they're doing the training.

UNIONAID RAFFLE RESULT

The UnionAID raffle was drawn on Friday 13 December 2013 under Police supervision and the winners and ticket numbers are:

First prizes

- Brenda Pilott Ticket No. 22292

Second prize

- Clare Curran Ticket No. 19077

Third Prize

- Jeff Sissons Ticket No. 22302

Fourth Prize

- Helen Wilson Ticket No. 21236

Thank you to all members who purchased tickets and supported this wonderful initiative which will see the money raised used for aid projects in south East Asia.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGINEERING ROADSHOWS

The joint KiwiRail-RMTU roadshows concluded on 11 December. The meetings were well attended as KiwiRail outlined its thinking around productivity in I & E. The RMTU also had an opportunity to meet with members after KiwiRail concluded its part of the roadshow. We heard several messages loud and clear from our membership: firstly, there is no appetite to agree to a dilution to the hours of work provisions in the MECA – the vote taken on a resolution on this was unanimous; secondly, members want KiwiRail to abide by its obligations around use of contractors, again this was a unanimous vote. Members were also clear that the concept of 'doing work when there are no trains around' was not working in practice, particularly on the Midland Line and the West Coast. There are also problems in the Golden Triangle.

We are looking to discuss these matters further at the next Industrial Council in February. Now we have a clear mandate from our members we are looking forward to seeing what KiwiRail puts on the table at this meeting. What is clear is that our members don't want their rights under hours of work clauses in the MECA reduced.

SAFETY NIGHTMARE UNFOLDING ON NEW ZEALAND RAIL TRACKS

Safety concerns that are emerging about rotting Peruvian sleepers on the country's rail tracks have come as no surprise to rail workers, with a decline in track condition due to budget cuts being foreshadowed by KiwiRail itself in an internal document last year.

KiwiRail has this week agreed that use of equipment currently being used to inspect sleepers (wooden cross ties) be suspended after union members raised concerns about its accuracy, and the RMTU is calling for any inspections done by contractors to be re-inspected in house. There are an estimated 160,000 Peruvian sleepers installed within the national rail network.

This action follows an inspection of a section of track in the Buller Gorge late last week by a KiwiRail track Inspector that highlighted severe damage to a significant number of sleepers on a track curve. The Inspector placed an immediate 10kmh speed restriction on the section of track.

"We have very experienced Track and Structures Inspectors who are telling us the equipment that they were issued with by KiwiRail to do these inspections doesn't work," RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said.

"We think that any Peruvian sleepers that have been inspected by contractors using the issued equipment need to be re-inspected by KiwiRail experienced track inspection staff. We have real concerns that

train crews and passengers may be exposed to increased travel risk danger whilst travelling on the network."

"The situation we are faced with on this issue was entirely predictable."

"Last year KiwiRail laid off over 150 skilled track workers and we said at the time that there are thousands of suspect Peruvian sleepers out there that may be rotten. The cutbacks to the Infrastructure and Engineering Division were a terrible lack of judgement, at a time when KiwiRail knew the challenges before them."

"KiwiRail's own 2013-2015 Business Plan, initially leaked and then released, said the "asset will decline, disruption will grow, asset failure risk will grow" as a result of its cut backs."

"KiwiRail's prophesy on the decline of the track condition is coming true."

"Our concern is that undertrained and underqualified contractors are undertaking inspections of key infrastructure items like sleepers on track bed bridges and curves without the necessary level of skill

and experience needed to ensure accurate decay diagnosis."

The so-called KiwiRail Turnaround Plan is truly taking rail in this country backward, not forward, Wayne Butson said.

"The 2012 cuts to Infrastructure and Engineering went far too deep. It was an immediate knee jerk accounting exercise to save \$200 million, and was completely divorced from the reality of the needs of the industry to provide a fit for purpose rail infrastructure network."

"It gives us no pleasure to have to highlight this serious issue today," Wayne Butson said.

SCHMIDT HAMMER USE

After sustained pressure from RMTU Structures Inspectors, management have agreed to 'discontinue' use of the Schmidt



Hammer to measure the degree of rot in Peruvian sleepers.

The Schmidt Hammer was at best duplicating the results obtained by experienced inspectors who, using the tried and tested Mk 1 Eyeball to conduct a visual test, and by doing a bar test, were able to determine the extent of the rot as well as, if not more, accurately than the hammer. We're confident that the information obtained by RMTU members on bridges is accurate.

Our concern is now focused on the integrity of the information obtained to date from contractors who have been doing the testing elsewhere on the network. KiwiRail say that the system is 'working well' and that critical sleepers are being 'flagged' for further inspection by experienced in-house staff. One of our most experienced track inspectors found out just how well this system was working last week when he was asked to examine some sleepers in the Buller Gorge after they'd been identified as 'rooted' by a contractor. He immediately slapped a 10 km/h speed restriction on the track.

Watch this space.

WORK SAFE NEW ZEALAND OPERATING

On the 16th of December WorkSafe New Zealand a stand-alone Crown agent with its own governance board has begun operating.

The creation of a new health and safety regulatory agency was a key recommendation of both the Royal Commission on the Pike River Coal Mine Tragedy and the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety.

The new agency has a strong mandate to significantly reduce the death and injury toll in our workplaces and its functions include,

- providing guidance and information on workplace health and safety
- setting standards and developing codes of practice

- monitoring and enforcing compliance health and safety legislation
- promoting education and training on workplace health and safety matters
- fostering a co-operative relationship between duty holders and the people they owe duties to (and their representatives) on workplace health and safety matters
- collecting, analyzing and publishing statistics relating to workplace health and safety

MECHANICAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL - UPDATE

It was agreed at our November meeting that Bib overalls will be provided to those working in depots along with appropriate shirts. This will take effect as you require replacement overalls. A number of fans are still not working in the Auckland Metro servicing shed, this was originally identified during an air quality study in depots earlier in 2013, an update on all the affected areas from this report has been asked for.

Members working for Transdev in Auckland have been consulting with the company over a series of proposed changes. This includes restructuring the roster team into planning roles and daily activities roles, a proposal to cut back the number of uniform items that can be dry cleaned each year, a new uniform and introducing observations for the Station Services Teams. Delegates have been doing a great job with the change to how they are now meeting fortnightly with management to address the concerns of their membership. Important issues ahead include the Training requirements and sign off of the new EMU.

Minder Drivers will now be paid the same OJT rate as their Kiwirail counterparts who will be joining Transdev on January 5th. This increase in allowance was identified through the "same or more favourable" process for the transfer. It is hoped that the difference in hourly rates will be smoothly addressed early 2014.

RMTU PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARD SETTING

The RMTU is participating in the development of the new Health and Safety Reform Bill and is represented on the new Crown Agency 'Worksafe's' working groups to determine the regulations that underpin the legislation. The first tranche of regulation being worked on include,

- worker representation
- major hazard facilities
- hazardous substances
- general concepts and asbestos

The new Health and Safety Reform Bill is due to go out for public consultation early next year and is modelled on the Australian Model law which includes stronger powers for elected Health and Safety Reps to address safety issues.

LIFESAVING RULES AND JUST AND FAIR CULTURE WORKING PARTY.

This joint RMTU-KiwiRail working party has been meeting regularly since the joint industrial councils meeting earlier this year. Progress has been made with the assistance of our brother union the RMT in Britain, who have successfully worked through a similar project in Network Rail.

Consultation will be occurring in the New Year through Industrial Councils and HSATs. None of the proposed lifesaving rules will be new, rather they will be a small number of existing rules that will be selected because of their relevance and importance. From the RMTU's perspective, the work on a Just and Fair Culture has important implications for how KiwiRail will investigate incidents and deal with breaches of rules. Done properly, it will ensure accountability at all levels in the organisation: worker, supervisory and managerial. The RMTU is optimistic that this project has the potential for members to be treated more fairly.

PRIME PORT TIMARU BARGAINING

The RMTU is looking to meet with Prime Port on 17 December to exchange claims. We are currently discussing the Bargaining Process Arrangement with the Company's advocate.

Discussions between Prime Port and the Port of Tauranga regarding staffing of the port are continuing and the negotiations are obviously being undertaken against this background. Watch this space.

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.

BRITS TO SELL OFF EUROSTAR

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow Had the following to say on plans announced by the British Government to sell off the public stake in Eurostar. (NOTE: This is what the Key Government is doing here in NZ).

"It is typical of this right wing government that they are prepared to flog off the valuable public stake in Eurostar just as this expanding and important service is moving into a new period of growth. This has parallels with the planned sell off of the publicly owned East Coast and proves that the Tory led administration will do anything to dump popular, publicly owned rail services.

You can bet that the French government will hold onto their stake in Eurostar and may even now bid for a total takeover using the



profits to invest in their own transport services while we flog off the last of the family silver.

RMT will fight these plans and any threat to our Eurostar member's jobs and conditions."

KR MECA WAGEROUND REMIT CALL

The KiwiRail MECA expires 30 June 2014. The renewal of the MECA will see both the Union and the employer arrive at the table with "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 composition is yet to be determined but will operate under the oversight of the 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 once bargaining commences.

All remits for the KiwiRail Wageround must be submitted to National Office by Monday 31 March 2014. No late remits will be accepted.

FORESTRY BOSSES OFF THE HOOK AFTER CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER DUMPED

The Government's decision to dump a proposal to introduce an offence of corporate manslaughter will let negligent forestry bosses off the hook and do nothing to stop needless tragedies in the sector, Labour Leader David Cunliffe says.

"New legislation was recommended by the Government's own health and safety taskforce in an attempt to curb our high workplace fatality rate.

"A corporate manslaughter law would enable corporations to be held accountable for their worst failures including deaths of forestry workers because of unsafe practices. It could also be used against

those responsible for badly constructed buildings.

"This is another example of the Government looking after the big end of town and ignoring hardworking Kiwis.

"The Government is caving into big business rather than sending a strong message to the boardroom that there will be serious consequences for putting profits over the lives of their workforce.

"The business sector has never been comfortable with the idea of criminalising their worst failures.

"John Key yesterday said no further work would be done on progressing corporate manslaughter because 'it had not been terribly successful in Britain'.

"However, Britain already had one of the best health and safety records in the world when it was introduced five years ago so it is hardly surprising the law has been little tested there. A law has been in place a lot longer in Canada where there have been a number of successful prosecutions.

"New Zealand performs poorly for workplace health and safety compared to other OECD countries.

"The forestry industry is killing nearly one worker a month and the Government must do everything possible to stop this," David Cunliffe says.

NORTHLAND RMTU BRANCH

Currently we have a Northland Rail Branch and a Northland Port sub branch in the far north of NZ. The Northland Rail Branch has proposed an Amalgamation with the Northland Port Branch. It is hoped that this would bring a stronger presence to the region and build unity within the membership. The response from Port members has been positive so far, so the branches will look to get a formal resolution for the RMTU NMC to consider at its March 2014 meeting.

TRANZ METRO LE PROGRESSION ISSUES – CALL FOR INFORMATION

The RMTU office is receiving many complaints from TMW LE's who have received a letter from TMW stating they will

not progress through to the next pay level due to having a current warning in place. These letters have been sent to LE's that were due for Special 1 and also LE's that are in their first 5 years post certification. These LE's had not been informed they would be held back when being disciplined, being held back was not part of any discipline outcomes.

The RMTU office is requesting that any member that has received one of these letters to contact Todd Valster at the Wellington Office a.s.a.p. so we can prepare for a dispute.

OTIRA TUNNEL WORKERS GASED

On 6 November 2013 workers in the Otira Tunnel were involved in 3 serious safety incidents during rail recovery work inside the tunnel. The incident prompted the Ministry of Business, Innovation, Employment's (MBIE) High Hazard Unit to issue 11 Improvement notices and 3 Prohibition notices for KiwiRail to take action on.

The Specialist Health & Safety Inspector for the High Hazards Unit identified a long list of safety improvements for KiwiRail to implement, including the requirement for workers to be more involved with identifying the hazards they face whilst doing the job, task analysis and the development of how hazards are controlled.

The incident showed workers felt 'under pressure from above' to get the job done and put work demand ahead of safety.

The right to challenge unsafe work is fundamental and the RMTU will stand by you and support you to stop the job when safety is compromised.

The RMTU will be surveying members on their willingness to stop work on safety grounds during the current KiwiRail I&E Roadshow.

CANTERBURY RAIL AND LYTTELTON PORT COMPANY BRANCHES TO HOLD PAID STOPWORK MEETING

Following on the successful joint meeting we held last December, the RMTU has called a meeting of both Christchurch branches again this year. This is to be held at the Woolston Working Men's Club on Friday 13 July at 3.00 p.m. RMTU members employed by KiwiRail, Toll Tranzlink and Lyttelton port Company are invited and are entitled to be paid if this is a time during which you would be normally working. General Secretary Wayne Butson will attend and the main item on the agenda will be collective bargaining. Our collective agreements with LPC, KiwiRail and Toll all expire next year and we want to have the opportunity to discuss the implications of this. The meeting will give you the chance to spend some time working and discussing with your fellow workers about what is going to be important for us in 2014.

This isn't going to be a meeting where you just listen to a succession of speakers, we want you to spend some time in groups discussing your ideas and having an input. We'll also be recognising the contributions made by our active members and delegates over the year. So make the effort to come along and finish the year on a positive note!

TRANSDEV DUMPS DRY CLEANING

Our members at Transdev have recently had their Dry Cleaning entitlement reduced. Great pride is taken by our members desire to look professional and they feel this change impacts on their appearance and will add more personal cost. Delegates will hold discussions with Transdev management to find a swift resolution. This cost reduction move has gone too far in the eyes of our Transdev Brothers and Sisters.

KIWI RAIL/RMTU (FREIGHT) INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL - UPDATE

The last KIC meeting was held on the 27th - 28th November in Auckland. The minutes



have been compiled and will be distributed before Christmas.

In addition to the last KIC meeting, a separate meeting was held on December 3 to discuss all issues in relation to Locomotive Radios, entertainment radios and radio infrastructure. The minutes from this meeting and updates will be added to the KIC 20 minutes. The radio meeting was attended by the KIC LE reps – Barry Simpkins, Les Perrin and Mike Williams, TC Rep – Geoff Young, RMTU Organiser Todd Valster. Others that attended included Craig McSkimming, Aaron Temperton, Theo Klok, Soren Low, Phil Young, Trevor Pollock, Trevor Burke and Carl Mills.

PALMERSTON NORTH RAILWAY GOLF CLUB ANNUAL TOURNAMENT

**Sunday 2 February 2014 – 9.30am-
1pm Tee Start**

ENTRY FORM - Entry forms can be requested from Ross Adams (details below).

CLOSING DATE - Remittance together with entry form may be sent to: Ross Adams, 14 Centennial Drive, Palmerston North or to: Ross Adams, C/- Operations Terminal, Palmerston North Phone: 0800 801 070 ext 66761 or Home: (06) 356 1633

LATE ENTRIES - Taken on the day

ENTRY FEE - Men's and Ladies \$20.00.

LE ROSTERS – ROM S3

Several years ago issues were raised about the At Risk Shifts matrix in the Rail Operating Manual Section 3 (ROM S3) and mix of At Risk A & B shifts being treated differently for "Master Roster Construction" versus "Day of Operations" since the 2005 update of the Freight ROM S3.

The RMTU LE Reps on the KiwiRail Industrial Council (KIC) insisted that the requirements for mandatory time following a series of A & B shifts is the same in both scenarios. A compromise was reached whereby LE Rosters would trial the safer threshold, Master Roster Construction, in both scenarios and provide feedback to KIC if the trial severely disrupted rosters and

the running of trains. No feedback was received so we rightly believed there were no issues.

From time to time the Roster Centre would slip back to the "Day of Operations" arrangement but when the issue was raised with delegates and the union office we would repeat the understanding and agreement reached at KIC and the Roster Centre would correct the rostering to the Master Roster Construction threshold – that was up until last week when KR refused.

During a conference call with the Soren Low, National Freight Manager Aaron Temperton, Waikato Rail Branch Secretary John Marsh and Todd Valster last Friday, we were surprised to find out that what was agreed at KIC in regards to the mix of A&B's/Master Roster Construction threshold was not well understood in the Roster Centre or by Soren.

Immediately after the call, Soren Low put out the following to the rosters team –

"Team,

Aaron Temperton is currently reviewing the use of the "Day of Operations" column in the ROM3 At Risk Matrix with the RMTU.

Effective immediately, can you please note the following:

- *Covering shifts using the Day of Operations provisions is only to be used as an absolute last resort*
- *Should you encounter a situation where you need to use this, please e-mail me with the basic details (who / what / when) and the impact if this was not done*
- *Please also note that the use of this may mean that some LE's feel unable to complete some shifts due to fatigue, if this occurs can you please also drop me the basic details in an e-mail*

Over the next few weeks we will be doing more work around the circumstances under which we have applied this to better understand the business impact of removing the Day of Operations provisions. This is likely to involve a national review of several fortnights to identify the where / when / impact.



I am also interested in your general feedback around any thoughts that you have about removing the Day of Operations column from the matrix.

The intent is to get to a position reasonably quickly where we can clarify this situation once and for all.

Let me know if you have any questions or queries regarding this."

This issue shows that persistence pays off, the delegates who relentlessly raised this issue are to be praised for doing so. We commend Waikato Secretary John Marsh for the final push!

GOVERNMENT MUST FOCUS ON GROWING SOCIAL DEFICIT

"The Government must move away from a narrow focus on fiscal deficit reduction to the social deficits that have not been addressed", says CTU Economist Bill Rosenberg.

"The Budget Policy Statement released today shows little change in direction, and does not provide any light for struggling families this Christmas. The Government needs to step up and change its focus to the large and growing social deficit and support those who need it most."

Rosenberg says "inequality is high and will grow if the benefits of a growing economy are not shared. It shows itself in high levels of child poverty. Wage and salary earners will lose out if the Government pushes through its employment legislation."

"The forecast growth in the economy is largely driven by a relatively limited number of sources: commodity prices, house building and construction and other activity in the Christchurch rebuild. How will that 'trickle down' into more and better jobs and rising wages and salaries? It needs to be much more than a trickle after years of little wage growth."

"Forecast wage growth after inflation (real wage growth) is slower than forecast productivity increases so wage and salary earners will get a falling share of the income available in the economy.

"Unemployment is forecast to fall only slowly, expected by Treasury to be still at

5.8% in March next year, and above 5% in 2017 - 130,000 people or 5.2%. Employment growth will only slowly reduce the gap that opened up over the last 4 years between employment growth and the increase in the working age population. New Zealand is doing much worse on unemployment than its GDP growth relative to other OECD countries."

Health and education budgets need more to keep up with rising costs, needs and population, but look like they will grow only slowly.

"Looking to the future, the forecasts for GDP growth are short-lived. Within two to three years the forecasts say economic growth will be back to below the economy's capacity and similar to low historic levels. Despite it talk, the Government has done nothing to change this but rely on international commodity prices, the rebuild and special deals to businesses big enough to twist its arm. It is not a future that promises well-paid, secure jobs and fairer sharing of the income the economy generates.

"Reducing the deficit is not a plan to fix the problems in society or the economy. What is the Government going to do about these much more important issues?" Rosenberg asks.

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 as part of this year's officer elections. We remind members that if you 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 30 June 2014 and so there may be strike and/or 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!

HIGH PRODUCTIVITY STARTS AT THE TOP

A report showing labour productivity levels in New Zealand are a third lower than in Australia highlights a need for better top level management, Labour's spokesperson on Labour Issues Andrew Little says.

The Productivity Commission's report looked at 24 comparable industries and found that in most Australia generated more value for each worker because they had better plant and equipment, including computer technology, and were more highly skilled than their New Zealand counterparts. One exception was New Zealand's food processing sector.

"None of this is a surprise and the reality is our employment laws encourage low value management conduct rather than higher value conduct, such as investment in better technology and upskilling our workforce.

"We have continued to concentrate our economic effort in lower value activities.

"One exception noted by the report is in the processing end of the dairy sector which can be explained by the fact that Fonterra has invested in state-of-the-art processing technology and operates it under a modern management regime that gets the best out of its workforce who see the benefits in above-average incomes.

"That example aside, after 20 years of one of the most deregulated labour markets in the world and when management has had almost complete control of workforce issues in this country productivity is worse now than it was in the '70s.

"The future lies in both better investment and better personnel management, yet our employment laws incentivise New Zealand managers and business owners to do the opposite.

"The response, on average, by New Zealand managers to laws that have given management virtually an absolute power to manage is to contract out, casualise, de-skill and generally disaggregate the workforce with greater use of labour hire agencies, all the while reducing the quality of output and driving down wages.

"Labour is committed to workplace laws that encourage investment and high quality labour utilisation, including investment in constant upskilling, as the way to lift productivity and incomes for workers."

Bits and Bobs

- More than 90% of respondents to a recent *Safeguard* survey are concerned about the H&S implications of cannabis and other recreational drugs.
- The 21000 tonne Stena Allegra has been leased for at least 6 months by KiwiRail.
- The Aratere has been approved by MSA and KR's insurers to do one return trip a day to Picton in freight only mode. It will travel the long way up around The Brothers and into Queen Charlotte sound.

"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"!

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

