

# THE ACTIVIST



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## **UNION ORGANISER/RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

The RMTU is an effective, modern trade union representing the interests of land transport and maritime workers.

The RMTU is seeking a motivated and energetic person to join the Union's National Office Team. The vacancy is a full time permanent position working out of the Union's National Office in Wellington.

The position reports to the General Secretary and the successful candidate will be a person who is skilled at research, organised and can work without daily supervision. The work is primarily within the rail and port sectors. The position requires the successful applicant to undertake out of town travel, work outside normal business hours and may require absence from home overnight. Most of the Unions members are shiftworkers.

The role of an Organiser/Research Assistant is to assist with:-

- research and report writing;
- negotiating collective agreements;
- direct representation of and organising of members in respect of workplace issues including health and safety matters;
- implementing and reviewing organising plans, supporting and training union activists
- recruitment of new members.

Applicants must have a good knowledge of Employment related legislation. Knowledge of the rail or ports sectors would be of advantage. A competitive salary will be paid to the successful applicant. While previous experience is preferred, if you have a commitment to

social and economic justice, building the union movement, have strategic ability, strong communication (written and verbal) skills, are energetic and willing to work flexible hours, please apply in writing and including a CV to:

Wayne Butson  
General Secretary  
Rail & Maritime Transport Union  
P O Box 1103  
Wellington 6140

Or Email to: [wbutson@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:wbutson@rmtunion.org.nz)

For further information on the RMTU visit our website [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz)

Applications close Wednesday 25 February 2009.

## **LOW WAGED WORKERS STILL TRYING TO KEEP HEADS ABOVE WATER**

The Minimum Pay rise to \$12.50 is simply not enough for Kiwis on low incomes, says the Green Party.

Green Party Employment Spokesperson Sue Bradford says it merely makes up for what has been lost in buying power for our lowest income workers since last year's minimum wage increase.

"However, it is better than nothing and we welcome the fact National has seen fit not to follow the recommendations of Business NZ and others to simply freeze the minimum wage," Ms Bradford said.

"A greater increase would have been a much more effective response to the recession - the more money in the pockets of the lowest income workers, the more is spent on goods and services locally - keeping other workers in jobs and helping businesses to survive.

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

"This increase will be of marginal assistance – an extra \$20 before tax for someone working 40 hours a week on the minimum wage. When you look at it like this, you can see how little it will buy, especially with prices for some key products – like petrol – rising again.

"The Greens continue to support a far more substantial increase. We want an automatic annual adjustment to the minimum wage, ensuring it equates to no less than 66 percent of the average wage.

"We also believe the pitiful trainee rate and remnant youth rate (first 200 hrs on the job for 16 and 17-year-old workers) from \$9.60 per hour to \$10 an hour – should be raised to the same as the adult minimum."

## TURNING THE TABLE AT WHANGAREI - ANON

As an old fitter welder (B) I have certain nostalgia for riveted structures, you don't see them often these days as most were turned into scrap years ago. The proposed "new" Whangarei turntable should have joined

the rest of the riveted pieces of engineering history years ago. But no. The Northern Regional manager for KiwiRail Ivan Johnston has saved this engineering antique, and intends to preserve it for posterity in the yard in Whangarei. In keeping with this "heritage rail" philosophy, Ivan expects the Whangarei staff to turn the riveted monstrosity by hand.

Unsurprisingly the Whangarei locomotive engineers (LE's) disagree with this return to the 1940's approach. The LE's seem to think that in the 21st century the least Ivan can do is put a motor on it!

Unreasonable some purists will say. To make matters worse some are even questioning whether Ivan is actually doing this for the sake of preserving NZ rail history. The LE's are claiming that the real reason that the riveted monstrosity is not fitted with a motor is simple as the fact (well known we might add) that Ivan has

extremely deep pockets, and equally short arms.

We can't help but wonder if it would be cheaper to fit a motor (even an air operated one like wellington) or pay earnings related compensation to the LE's whilst they are off back nursing their back injuries? The Whangarei depot is not renowned for its low average age.

The matter has now been escalated to the KiwiRail Industrial Council. Watch this space for developments.

## RULE 905

All rail operations members are reminded of the importance of strictly adhering to track protection rule 905. There is no acceptable working situation (including on and off tracking) for infrastructure workers to be within the 500metre buffer zone. If you are moving into the buffer zone to remove the

boards etc then additional protection (blocking or Track warrant) must be obtained and used.

Boards must be erected in locations where locomotive engineers etc will have clear and unobstructed view lines.

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***The current economic crisis was not created by workers - But they are paying for it.***

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## DEATH WITHOUT WARNING

On December 5th the Chief Coroner, Judge MacLean, visited Skylight to launch Death Without Warning - an innovative new handbook for those impacted by a sudden death, and for those working alongside them. Made possible with the support of ACC and FDANZ, this is an updated version of Skylight's 2003 same titled resource, but brings together up dated practical information, insights into grief and trauma, a colourful and easy to navigate layout, and comments and quotes from many New Zealanders who've 'been there'. Available for \$9, we are hoping it will increasingly get into the hands of those who need it most, right across the country. See [http://www.skylight.org.nz/skylight-shop/resources-for-sale/bereavement/death-without-warning---2nd-edition-\(1\).aspx](http://www.skylight.org.nz/skylight-shop/resources-for-sale/bereavement/death-without-warning---2nd-edition-(1).aspx)

## CALL FOR INFORMATION - PUBLIC HOLIDAY ROSTERING KR LE'S

The union office are receiving numerous complaints of alleged manipulation of shifts by KR on public holidays which results in LE's missing out on alternative (lieu) days and time and ½. We are keen to learn how wide spread this practice may be so we are calling for information on shifts changes by KR to avoid LE's working hours (or even minutes) on a Public Holiday. To clearly identify the alleged manipulation we need – your mini and master rosters for the period and how you were notified – asked or told. This can be faxed or scanned and e-mailed to the RMTU Wellington office at 04 4710896 or [tvalster@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:tvalster@rmtunion.org.nz) Please send the info through ASAP.

## TIME TO CHARGE FULL STEAM AHEAD WITH ELECTRIFICATION

The Green Party says now is the time to charge full steam ahead with electrifying Auckland's rail network.

Although the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) has suffered losses due to the global economic crisis, Chairman Mike Lee was adamant in today's New Zealand Herald that the ARC was past the point of no return regarding rail electrification, and integrating Auckland's public transport ticketing system.

Green Party Co-Leader Jeanette Fitzsimons says Mr Lee is to be congratulated for his steadfast desire to finally move Auckland into the 21st Century with his commitment to clean green transport options.

"It is time to pull out all the stops to create an improved public transport system in Auckland. The current economic crisis is an opportunity for central and local Government to work together to help create better transport solutions for Auckland."

Ms Fitzsimons is also pleased that Finance Minister Bill English hinted in the New Zealand Herald that the Government would back councils hit hard by the global recession.

"Keeping Auckland on the move is vital to New Zealand's economy and to our recovery from the recession. Motorways can't do it. Moving drivers out of their cars and into modern electric trains will help both the economy and the Government's commitment to meeting its Kyoto obligations."

New National MP Nikki Kaye said in her maiden speech that the environment was the greatest gift we have as a nation. The Greens applaud this sentiment from the new Auckland Central MP and hope some of her colleagues will see that the way out of the current recession is to move beyond a 20th century mindset of more motorways and into the 21st century, Ms Fitzsimons says.

"A good first step in assisting local Government, preserving the environment, and keeping Auckland moving into the future would be to stop the SH20 Waterview project and divert the money into extra funding for the electric rail network."

## PROJECT RESET

Ontrack has launched a retraining program for all level "c" staff. The aim is to refresh track staff in the rules and regulations relating to working WITHIN the rail corridor.

This project has been initiated due to the number of operating incidents and conditional stop overruns that have occurred. The RMTU has been urging Ontrack and KiwiRail to convene a cross company meeting to discuss how this issue should be dealt with in both the long and short term.

Although the training being provided through project reset will be valuable, it will take 12 months to run out and does not address all the questions that these incidents have raised.

It is the RMTU view that immediate interim measures need to be put into place now, to ensure the immediate safety of workers in the rail corridor, while a permanent long term solution is worked out.

Obviously this project must include both track workers and locomotive engineers, and to this end a cross discipline meeting is being scheduled to discuss how the issue should be dealt with and investigate what immediate interventions can be auctioned to enhance the safety of members.



## ATTENTION UGL MEMBERS IF YOU HOLD ADVANCED TRADE CERTIFICATE

RMTU have been advised from United Group Rail (UGL) that all those holding advanced trade certificate **SHOULD** be on Mechanical Engineer level 5 of the Collective Agreement. National Office is aware of two members who were paid levels 3 and 4 holding advanced trade certificate that have now advanced to level 5 following RMTU intervention because of their advanced trade certification. They have been back paid from the time UGL took over the Alstom contract.

Needless to say a healthy sum of back pay was awarded to these members. If you hold advanced trade certificate and can provide evidence of your qualification and are NOT being paid level 5 currently you should contact your local Organiser or National Office immediately to get your level 5 pay rate and back pay.

## WALK THE LINE – SHOWS SUPPORT

The National led Government has announced a \$481m infrastructure investment program to boost the economy. \$142.5m is targeted to transport but only one mode of transport is mentioned – Roads. Rail is notable for its absence. We believe that the Government does this at its peril. They need to read the signs of public opinion. ONTRACK's recent hosting of a 'walk the line' open day on the Johnsonville commuter Line on 4 February had around 2000 people brave the heavy rain to walk the reconstructed railway between Crofton Downs station and the Wadestown loop. This was a major project and involved a protracted line closure.

The RMTU congratulations ONTRACK for thinking of and organising the event. Rail now has more supporters than before the day and we may need them under this Government. We will be reporting more on this in *The Transport Worker* magazine.

## NO CELEBRATION WITH MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The increase to the minimum wage announced today by the Government will be welcomed by workers on the minimum wage but will not relieve the difficulties these workers face making ends meet, Helen Kelly said today.

'It is the smallest increase to the minimum wage we have seen for many years and for the lowest paid workers in the country, it will mean no improvement in living standards this year,' she said.

By limiting the increase the Government has also lost an opportunity to provide a stimulus to the economy Helen Kelly added. 'People on the minimum wage spend all their income. Any increase is effectively a boost to economic activity at a time when things are slowing down. More spending power saves jobs.'

There is also no link between increases in the minimum wage and job losses, Helen Kelly said. 'Workers across the economy are losing employment, not because wages are too high but because of reckless conduct by financial institutions. We do not believe an increase in the minimum wage has an adverse effect on the industries that employ the largest group of minimum wage workers such as supermarkets, fast food and aged care industries. As we have seen in the last nine years, we have had very low unemployment and regular increases to the minimum wage.'

Helen Kelly said that New Zealand's highest paid workers will get big tax cuts in April whereas minimum wage workers only get modest cuts. 'At a time of increasing economic uncertainty, increasing the income gap between the highest and lowest paid workers will not give a sense that the pain of this recession is going to be shared. Coupled with cuts in work rights for many of these workers, the increase will be welcomed but there will be little celebration.'

Helen Kelly said that the Government has also committed to closing the gap on Australian wages. 'Their minimum wage equates to around \$NZ18 so we have a long way to go.'



## TEMPERATURES START TO RISE IN BRITOMART

Poor design and not enough room for an expanding workforce are raising temperatures in Britomart railway station in Auckland.

Both signalpersons and Veolia staff have demanded that working conditions be improved. The simple fact is that the building is poorly designed, it was not intended for the number of staff employed there.

Serious problems with the air conditioning have produced stifling heat for Veolia P9 staff and rapid fluctuations in temperature for workers in the signal box. Currently stop gap measures are being used while ARTA is given time to fix the fundamental problems.

**If ARTA cannot or will not fix them then RMTU and its members will fix them.**

## GREENS AND NATIONAL MOVE TO FREEZE MP PAY

The Greens and National have reached agreement on a resolution to hold MPs' pay at current levels while the New Zealand economy struggles.

"It's important that Members of Parliament show moral leadership in tough economic times and we are pleased to have reached agreement with the National Party on a resolution," said Green Party Co-Leader, Jeanette Fitzsimons.

"It's a common sense step that adds a lot more impact to the Prime Minister's letter last month to the Higher Salaries Commission."

"Both John Key and I are open to passing a similar resolution next year if the economic situation has not improved."

The Greens have amended their resolution after discussions with the National Party and concerns over the undetermined length of the recession. Ms Fitzsimons will now seek the support of other parties to pass the revised resolution in the House today.

The revised text of the motion will read: "The members of this House, recognise that in the current economic situation government revenue is reduced, many New Zealanders are losing their jobs or overtime, and more government spending is required to invest in job creation and income support; and request the Remuneration Authority to refrain from raising MPs' salaries during the 2009 review; and commit to revisiting this issue in 2010."

## NGARUAWAHIA BRIDGE

**PRESS RELEASE:** The Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) says that action must be taken to prevent a serious rail incident in the Waikato.

The Union was responding to an incident on Tuesday 3 February where children on the Ngaruawahia railway bridge pelted the engineer of a freight train with stones and bottles.

The engineer had stopped the train to speak to the young people who were on the rail bridge and required medical attention after the incident.

RMTU National Secretary Wayne Butson says that the situation is extremely bad.

"Workers should not have to put up with this type of behaviour, especially when they are acting to protect the public."

He says that immediate measures must be taken on the bridge and any other trouble spots to stop people from gaining access and endangering their own lives and those of others through stupid behaviour.

A regular patrol of the area may be necessary until the situation improves, he says.

Mr Butson says if a serious injury or fatality occurred, it could have a devastating effect on any workers involved, and the actions were also endangering workers.

He added his concerns to those of KiwiRail, who say that children have been playing dangerous games on the bridge which has been a well-known problem area in the past.

## AND MORE....

Exec members of the Waikato Rail Branch, key figures in the local Maori Community, Central and Local Govt Politicians, Police and KiwiRail Managers have all linked up to develop a community response to the recent incident which saw an RMTU member Loco Engineer injured by local youth when he stopped his train to ensure their safety. The meeting is to occur at the Waikato District Council office on Jesmond Street Ngaruawahia on 25 February. A multi agency approach will be needed to deal with the problem as bridge patrols are clearly not the answer.

A hearty well done to the Waikato Branch!

## TRANSPORT UNIONS SAY SOLE FOCUS ON ROAD BUILDING IN INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGE THE WRONG FOCUS FOR NEW ZEALAND

JOINT MUNZ RMTU PRESS RELEASE: New Zealand's two leading transport unions say that pouring public money only into roading and ignoring other transport infrastructure is a mistake. The Maritime Union of New Zealand, representing seafarers and waterfront workers, and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, representing rail and port workers, are concerned that economic stimulus plans focus transport investment exclusively on roading.

The transport unions say that while the Government is correct in investing in infrastructure as a stimulus for the economy, its sole focus on investing in roads is wrong.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson says that Government announcements on infrastructure investment since the election have been focussed on roading and this is a major concern for all New Zealanders. He says in a time when we need to lower our reliance on fossil fuel powered vehicles and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, leaving out urgent rail and ports infrastructure investment is a mistake.

"We need to get goods and passengers out of gas guzzling, congestion creating road transport, and use high quality, low impact transport options like rail and coastal shipping."

Mr Butson says rail was privatised by the last National Government and it appears that this ideological anti-rail approach is still around.

"Around the world, Government is investing in upgrading their rail industry, and we are noticing we are losing our skilled New Zealand workers overseas as rail operators expand their operations to meet the demand of growing business opportunities."

He says the previous Government gave strong support to rail, retaining vital skills in New Zealand, but the negative message now was that rail was not part of the picture for the new Government.

"The Rudd Government in Australia has shown strong support for rail in its economic rejuvenation package, and that is an example we should be following." Mr Butson says that yet more roading projects created more problems down the track, as it was obvious the world was facing an energy crisis and an environmental crisis.

"The Government seems to be stuck in a George W. Bush type reality, where peak oil and climate change don't exist."

Maritime Union General Secretary Trevor Hanson says as an island nation and a maritime nation, New Zealand should be developing a coastal fleet for domestic shipping, but had struggled for any recognition from Government.

"The cash for roading is the opposite of what the Government should be investing in. The vast majority of goods in and out of New Zealand are carried by shipping, but coastal shipping seems to be ignored."

"We lack an integrated plan in New Zealand around ports and shipping, which is remarkable given that we are dependent on our ports for trade. Changes in ports will probably lead to hub ports and feeder ports that require shipping links, but where is the New Zealand owned shipping to service these new developments?"

He says shipping was the most environmentally friendly transport mode and would reduce dependence on fossil fuels.



"The SeaChange strategy announced in 2007 showed how coastal shipping will be an increasingly important part of New Zealand's transport system."

SeaChange identified a goal of moving 30 per cent of domestic freight by coastal shipping by 2040. Mr Hanson says overseas flag of convenience shipping enjoyed unfair advantages over New Zealand shipping under current maritime transport legislation.

## **TWO STEPS FORWARD FOR NATIONAL, ONE BACK**

The Green Party has welcomed two planks in the Government's infrastructure package but says National has broken a recent promise on public transport.

"Spending money on building new schools and ICT infrastructure is definitely something the Green Party supports. But the extra money on construction must be matched by hiring new teachers," said Green Party Co-Leader Jeanette Fitzsimons today. "The Government needs to match its commitment to bricks and mortar with human capital."

Human services are the most labour-intensive areas of the economy, Ms Fitzsimons said, and supporting them would better balance the package that is otherwise heavy on the road and construction industries.

News that the Government will upgrade and renovate state houses was also welcomed by the Green Party but the commitment to build only 69 new homes was met with disappointment. "We want to see more honesty in politics and today National admitted that they have misled the public about plans for state house insulation. The Government admits that the programme is already underway—\$53 million over five years for energy efficiency upgrades was a Green Party initiative in the 2008 Budget," said Ms Fitzsimons.

"What the Government should now add is a major programme of insulation for low-and-middle income private homes—an investment that is more job rich than any other initiative announced in this package."

Meanwhile, National's plan to accelerate the building of new state highways without a single additional dollar spent on green alternatives breaks an earlier promise from John Key that any infrastructure spending would include public transport.

"Money spent on new roads generates less employment than money spent on fixing old roads or, even better still, money spent on increasing public transport services."

The package does not deliver on the Prime Minister's statement last year that his plan would "take into account...the need for public transport."

"Investing in more roads, rather than better public transport services, will increase our oil dependence, increase our carbon emissions, and ultimately employ fewer people over the recession."

## **CTU WELCOMES INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING**

The CTU has welcomed the announcement of \$483.7 million of infrastructure spending which is being 'fast-tracked'.

Peter Conway, CTU Secretary, said that it is important that New Zealand takes advantage now of our relatively low public debt in order to invest in infrastructure.

'The investment in schools and housing are exactly what is needed at this time' he said.

Peter Conway added that this package will not be enough on its own. For instance, the energy retrofit of housing should go beyond the state housing sector, and the CTU would also like to see investment in people – our human infrastructure – and the environment – our natural capital.

## **ITF CONDEMNS CONTINUING CRACKDOWN ON IRAN'S INDEPENDENT WORKERS' MOVEMENT**

The ITF is backing a campaign by a fellow global union federation to clear five union leaders in Iran who were arrested for standing up for workers' rights. A verdict is due to be delivered next week.

The trade unionists, representing thousands of sugar cane workers at the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Plantation and Industry Company in Shush were summoned to appear before the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Defzul on 20 December last year. The leaders of the Union of Workers of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Plantation - Ali Nejati, Feridoun Nikoufard, Mohammed Heydari Mehr, Ghorban Alipour, Jalil Ahmadi - were arrested and charged in connection with actions taken by workers in 2007 over unpaid wages and in defence of basic workplace rights. The court verdict is expected to be delivered on 17 February.

The union is a member of the global union federation, the International Union of Food (IUF), and the International Trade Union Confederation, both of which are lobbying for a "not guilty" verdict. The ITF is supporting the campaign and backing the emergence of an independent workers' movement in Iran, of which the ITF-affiliated Tehran Bus Workers' Union is a part; the leaders of the union, Mansour Osanloo and Ebrahim Madadi, remain in detention.

ITF Inland Transport Section Secretary, Mac Urata, commented: "The ITF is fully behind the IUF and the sugar cane plantation trade unionists. These arrests clearly show that an independent workers' movement is growing in Iran, which is why the authorities are taking measures to crackdown on trade unionists. Our colleagues from the Tehran Bus Union are not an isolated case."

## POT vs NZL

All of you who are news savvy will be aware that there have been heated exchanges of words between Port Tauranga and NZL Stevedores. NZL states that it has a contractual right to develop its own container stevedoring business on Sulphur Point and Port Tauranga does not agree. As a result stevedoring at Sulphur Point has been removed from NZL and has been put out to tender. C3 has applied and so we watch this space with interest.

## CHEAP PETROL DAYS NUMBERED

The 12 members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) pumped an average 28.97 million barrels per day (b/d) of crude oil in January, according to a Platts survey of OPEC, oil industry officials and analysts just released. This is a decline of 930,000 b/d from the December level of 29.9 million b/d. Excluding Iraq, production from the 11 members bound by output agreements fell by 970,000 b/d to 26.54 million b/d from the December estimate of 27.51 million b/d, the survey showed. This leaves the OPEC-11 some 1.695 million b/d above its 24.845 million b/d target, agreed to at OPEC's December 17 meeting in Oran, Algeria, and which came into effect at the beginning of January. "OPEC has managed to slash nearly a million barrels a day of production over the past month," said Platts global director of oil John Kingston. "It still needs to cut a further 1.7 million barrels per day to reach its target. The question now is whether ministers meeting in Vienna in just a month's time will be willing to give the current agreement time to work or whether there will be calls for new cuts." OPEC's biggest producer, Saudi Arabia, accounted for the biggest single cut, reducing its production by 340,000 b/d to 8.03 million b/d in January from 8.37 million b/d in December. Iran cut output by 140,000 b/d to average 3.7 million b/d, while Kuwaiti output fell by 130,000 b/d to 2.33 million b/d. Other countries cut by smaller volumes ranging from 10,000 b/d in the case of Ecuador to 80,000 b/d in the case of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Iraqi supply rose by 40,000 b/d to average 2.43 million b/d, driven by higher exports.

OPEC is next scheduled to meet on March 15 in Vienna.

## ADTCS ESSENTIAL TO AUSTRALIA

"The implementation of a single Australian Digital Train Control System (ADTCS) is imperative if we are to increase rail's capacity, productivity and safety," Bryan Nye, CEO of the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) said. Currently, there are 22 train control radio networks in Australia. This means that on average, an Australian



freight train is fitted with up to eight (8) different radio systems.

Further, a train driver needs to interpret different signalling systems and deal with a multitude of train control systems and procedures to travel between states.

"This situation is clearly absurd, and reflects the chronic under-investment from governments in rail. It clearly impacts on the capacity and productivity of all rail operations, and acts in detriment of Australia's economy, society and environment." said Mr Nye.

With the rapid increase in rail use, the nation desperately needs a single Australian Digital Train Control System to underpin urban and regional passenger services as well as inter-capital and regional freight operations.

The ADTCS would ensure each train driver has only one digital screen and one radio microphone. This will set the pillars on which rail builds its future.

This kind of world class technology is already in operation in Europe and China and is being adopted in the US, India and South East Asia. Australia must adopt the ADTCS now.

"We call for Commonwealth and State governments to work together with our industry to bring Australian rail back into the 21st century." concluded Mr Nye.

### **BITS & BOBS**

- It is with deep regret that we advise of the passing of Locomotive Engineer and Union delegate Kevin Bain who passed away on 31 January after a short fight with cancer. Kevin was diagnosed in November 2008. Our sincere sympathy goes out to the friends, colleagues and family of Kevin.
- CTU Runanga Hui being held 16, 17 and 18 March 2009 at Orongomai Marae, Railway Avenue, Upper Hutt. The delegates elected at Conference will attend for RMTU. Any other member may attend if they wish at their own cost.
- The CTU Out @ Work kamp is being held 14 and 15 May 2009 at Raumati

which is just north of Wellington on the Kapiti Coast. RMTU will be represented by delegates at this Biennial conference.

- 3 delegate training seminars are being planned for the Waikato region in late Feb and March 09 on RMTU stage 1 and 2. A stage 2 course will be run in Tauranga in March. If you're in this area and wish to be added to the training then contact the Regional organiser Phil Spanswick.
- The Union is currently in talks with Quality Marshalling in the Mount as the company has announced a restructuring plan which may result in redundancies.
- Mount Maunganui Cosi Club CA is about to expire and we are currently working with members to develop the claims document for the bargaining round.
- Orica Chemicals CA negotiations have resumed after the Christmas break.
- The Victorian Government has confirmed plans to establish a major intermodal terminal at Donnybrook, 50 km north of Melbourne, on 80 ha of land.
- New KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn has agreed to meet with the RMTU National Management Committee when it gathers for its first quarterly meeting for 2009.
- Loco members of the KiwiRail Industrial Council have been in China this week as part of a joint RMTU KR team on a study tour looking at locomotives.
- Delegates report that discussions are progressing well with the design and signoff of the Matangi units. The Matangi units are the new electric multiple units to be built by Rotem for the Wellington Suburban network.

**LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE & REMEMBER.....**

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

