

THE ACTIVIST



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RELIEF GENERAL SECRETARY

Members are advised that John Kerr will be acting General Secretary from 9 to 13 May as Wayne Butson will be out of the country during this time. John will continue to work out of the SI regional Office whilst relieving in the role.

TOLL NETWORKS BARGAINING 2016 - KICK OFF, CALL FOR REMITS

Our collective agreement with Toll Networks expires 30 June, and under New Zealand law we can initiate bargaining for its renewal 60 days prior to expiry. Accordingly the RMTU initiated bargaining on 1 May.

Members will have an opportunity to discuss claims, or 'remits' for bargaining, in meetings we will hold, or are encouraged to communicate them to National Office via your delegate. Remember, for a claim to have any chance of success it has to be deeply and widely felt. Deeply felt means that members understand the claim and are prepared to support it if talks break down. Widely felt means that a majority of members back the claim. So, if there is an issue you want addressed, do your homework and get members at your depot to back it and contact your regional organiser and get the contact details of other delegates around the country so you can work on getting those depots on board.

We already have dates pencilled in for talks with Toll and they are 22-23 June, so will need to have our log of claims prepared for



then. Look out for notice of a meeting at your depot before then. And remember – we're stronger together!

DUNEDIN RAILWAYS DISPUTE RESOLVED

Cool heads finally prevailed at Dunedin Railways and the company withdrew disciplinary proceedings against our member who had raised a health and safety concern.

Readers will remember that in the last issue of The Activist the RMTU's Otago Rail Branch had mobilised in response to what we saw as a campaign of persecution and intimidation against our member. The catalyst for this was our member's genuine concern at the apparent failure to correctly log radio traffic in relation to a track occupancy issue in the Taieri Gorge.

After a picket at Dunedin's iconic railway station, supported by Unions Otago, generated considerable publicity and some determined advocacy on behalf of our member by the RMTU, Dunedin

Railways withdrew the warning it issued.

We welcome this move as our union has had an excellent relationship with Dunedin Railways until this incident, as we said in the last issue of 'The Activist' we'd successfully re-negotiated collective agreements year in year out in a co-operative manner and personal grievances and disputes had been non-existent.

As our General Secretary put it: 'time to build the bridge and resume operations at full speed'. In that spirit the RMTU met the Chair of the Board and the CEO of Dunedin Railways last week for a very productive and cordial meeting.

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

KIWI RAIL MECA RENEWAL 2016

The KiwiRail Holdings, KiwiRail Ltd and RMTU Multi Employer Collective Agreement expires 30 June 2016. KiwiRail has approached the RMTU and have suggested a "dates and rates rollover" for the Collective Agreement. The RMTU has indicated its willingness to consider such an approach. If such a "dates and rates rollover" was to occur then this would mean that there would be no claims from either party and that all current terms and conditions of employment would remain unchanged except for wages and the term of the "new" CA.

The parties have tentatively agreed to meet on 24 May 2016 in Wellington. The RMTU will be represented by all paid organizing staff and rank and file members of the Industrial Councils (KIC, KNIC, Interisland, Passenger and Mechanical). KiwiRail will be lead by the CEO Peter Reidy and other senior managers of the business.

It is anticipated that the Industrial Councils will caucus and decide whether this is the path that the Union wishes to follow this year or to reject the offer and continue with a regular bargaining approach. We would appreciate members discussing this proposition with Council Reps so they come to Wellington equipped to represent and speak on behalf of members and their expectation.

CA RATIFIED – TRANSDEV AUCKLAND

A series of paid meetings were held in Auckland on 29 April to ratify a recommended settlement package for the renewal of the CA through to 30 June 2017. The CA expired 1 July 2015 and the negotiations have been difficult with one settlement offer rejected by members. The package accepted included a 2.8% yr 1 and 2.5% yr 2 for a 24 month deal. Other key factors in the package were

- Faster pay progression Train Managers
- Longer rest periods for LE's
- Extra paid leave for LE's

- Increased OJT allowance
- Control room paid breaks
- New pay grade level for ticket inspectors
- OBS allowance and increase to pay grades 2 and 3

The meetings saw the CA package ratified by a whopping 95.03% of members.

Thanks to the negotiating team for their tenacity and perseverance and to the members for ratifying a hard won deal.

TRACK BALLAST STEEPLING – SAFETY ALERT

KiwiRail have changed the ballast profile, termed ballast steeping, to provide more support for the track in the hope of reducing the need for heat restrictions. Arguably this ballast change has not worked however ballast steeping has created a new hazard for Loco Engineer's (LE) that need to walk the train in areas with steeping. With steeping there is nowhere for the LE to walk as all the ballast is now under the train.

This hazard has been raised to KiwiRail for the last 18 months with no satisfactory resolution to date and no mitigations put in at all. The KiwiRail Industrial Council LE Reps have been discussing this issue and believe that an interim safety measure needs to be put in place until this hazard issue is resolved.

The interim measure proposed by the RMTU is as follows – "In areas with Ballast Steeping, LE's are strongly urged and advised to consider their own safety before the commercial needs of KiwiRail and to not leave the cab to walk the train unless a second person is provided to that location and is accompanying them so as to be able to contact emergency services and provide assistance should the need arise"

IXOM COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

After two and a half days of negotiating a potential deal is on the table, however the compensation claim for the drivers being forced to move from 5x2 rosters to 4x4 rosters is proving too difficult to resolve. It has been agreed to move into urgent



mediation to see if this matter can be resolved. The mediation date is set down for the 9th May, in Tauranga.

NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW

The Health and Safety at Work Act came into force on Monday 4 April. The new law means that more Kiwis will come home safely from work.

We remember the disaster at Pike River in 2010. It was the event that told us that our health and safety laws needed immediate attention. We remember the 29 men who were killed at work, their families, and the continuing battle for justice and accountability for their preventable deaths.

CTU President Richard Wagstaff says "There has been some real progress since 2010 with the creation of WorkSafe and now the new law. Working people will be safer now that company officers have greater responsibility for ensuring health and safety is taken seriously.

Wagstaff remains concerned that people working in small businesses, of less than 20 people, have weaker protections with their inability to elect a workplace health and safety representative. "Workplaces aren't safer because they are smaller. Our recent analysis of ACC injury data by firm size shows that people who work in smaller workplaces are more likely to be injured at work not less.

"All working people should be covered by this new law regardless of the size of the business they work for. We will continue to advocate for improvements to health and safety law.

NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY REP TRAINING

The CTU's Worksafe Reps programme has a new course for Health and Safety Reps to get up to speed with the new Health and Safety at Work Act. The course called

'initial' training is for existing H&S Reps to learn their role under the new legislation which includes the ability to issue PIN notices and direct people to stop unsafe work. H&S Reps are eligible for 2 days training per year to do the course and the course carries a NZQA unit standard. You can register at www.worksafereps.org.nz. Or call 0800 336 966

KIWI RAIL HEALTH AND SAFETY REP IN-HOUSE TRAINING

The new H&S Rep training will be offered to KiwiRail H&S Reps and HSAT members from June 2016. The courses will be held around the country with KiwiRail staff only and will be facilitated by the CTU's Worksafe Reps trainers. The course will give participants the opportunity to get stuck into rail specific H&S issues and share information across business units. The course carries the unit standard 29314 "describe the role and functions of the Health and Safety rep in NZ. Reps will learn their role under the new law including the ability to issue PIN notices and direct people to stop unsafe work. Supervisor and managers will also receive the training to

learn how the organisation can support the Reps role. Registrations for the course are being organised by KiwiRail so you don't need to register independently.

OTAGO RAIL AND PORT BRANCHES' JOINT MEETING EMPHASISES COMBINED STRENGTH

The Otago Rail and Port Branches of the RMTU held a joint membership meeting on 20 April at the Dunedin Stadium. This is the first time in recent years that we have organised such an affair but it was deemed important in the light of a couple of developments in the region.

Firstly, we have two women members employed at Port Chalmers for whom the RMTU is embroiled in litigation. One of these is a senior Branch official. To date we have



Safety matters

been dealing with these matters through legal counsel and it was felt the time had come to make the wider membership aware of the situation and to begin to mobilise our industrial strength in their support. Secondly, we have recently had a dispute with Dunedin Railways (see articles in the last issue and this issue of The Activist) that was successfully resolved by using the organising approach and again it was felt this warranted discussion by the wider membership.

As the one union that has a presence across the supply chain: from rail, to freight forwarding, to the waterfront we have repeatedly reminded members that this gives us strength. In some regions, Northland and Canterbury being notable amongst these, we have managed to mobilise port and rail members to support one another and to build solidarity between branches. We also did this in Otago during the campaign to save Hillside. This trend has to continue and to spread nationwide. Too often we allow ourselves to focus on the very real restrictions, largely legal, on our power and overlook the enormous strength we have if we organise our wider membership.

Our General Secretary and National President attended the Otago meeting, as did our former National President and past Otago Rail Branch Secretary, the latter two both being life members of the RMTU. The message was clear – branches have to work together to maximise our strength. We must think beyond the port and depot gates if we are to successfully fight, campaign and win!

WEST COAST COLLISION ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING INCIDENTS

When two of our members experienced an incident at Westland Milk in Hokitika in early March they made a decision not to report it because they genuinely believed they were not obliged to as no-one was hurt and, as far as they could tell, there was no damage to rolling stock or other property.

As it happened they were wrong. What they thought was a “hard catch on” was, in fact,

a collision at 14 km/h at impact and the wagon that was hit was damaged. This only came to light a day or so later and this prompted a thorough investigation that demonstrated a couple of rules breaches around communications and speed.

The LE concerned admitted he’d lapsed by not applying the brakes when there was no radio communication for more than 10 seconds and the RO was genuinely at a loss when he was confronted by log data that showed he’d failed to transmit for 82 seconds prior to the collision. He has a reputation for being a “good talker” when piloting movements and being very conscientious in reporting incidents, so he was mortified to see the radio log and Tranzlog data. There was certainly no intention to mislead or deceive when they decided not to report – they genuinely, but wrongly, thought there was no need to.

It’s no fun being suspended while an investigation takes place. All the time you’re wondering if you’ll have a job at the end of it. All this angst could have been avoided if they had practised the maxim of “when in doubt, report it”. If you have a near miss, report it. If you have an incident and think there is no damage, report it. It goes without saying you report it if someone is hurt or something is damaged. If we don’t report these things we’re at risk of not identifying the systems, equipment and environmental risks that contribute to incidents. Remember, we all make mistakes but we’re setting ourselves up for a future tragedy if we don’t report, and learn from, incidents. The RMTU will always back you if you are up front and report an incident. The fact is that no worker in the Southern Region in KiwiRail has been dismissed when they were honest and up front in reporting an incident.

We’ll publish an in-depth article on this incident and the lessons we can all learn from it in the next issue of The Transport Worker.

WGTN TRANZ METRO OPERATIONS FROM KIWI RAIL TO TRANSDEV WGTN

In the early hours of the morning on 3 July 2016 all RMTU members who have accepted offers of employment with Transdev



Wellington Limited and Hyundai Rotem Company limited will change employer. All terms and conditions of employment within the Collective Agreement have been carried across and the ratification of a package made up of a 2% wage and allowance movement for a 12 month term will commence.

3 July will also be the end of KiwiRail's involvement in the actual operation and management of the staff in the Wellington Electric suburban trains. One chapter of history for the operation begins and another closes however what will be enduring is the Union and unity of the workers. This unity will be essential if we are to retain all of our conditions into the future with Transdev Wgtn.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Wayne Butson and Northern core Rail National Management Committee (NMC) member Barry Simpkins will be attending The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen (ASLEF) delegates' conference in Aviemore Scotland 9 - 11 May. The RMTU and one of its predecessor Unions, the EFCA and latterly the LEA, have had a longstanding relationship with ASLEF which saw the ASLEF Gen Sec and an executive member attend the last RMTU biennial conference in Wellington.

ARATAKI 2 REMOTE CONTROL UPDATE

Few would disagree that the initial introduction of the next generation remote control equipment, Arataki 2 (A2) was unsuccessful. Two terminals banned the shunt locomotive fitted with A2 so it was back to the drawing board. KiwiRail and the RMTU put together a representative team made up of terminal reps, managers with previous shunting experience, trainers/training manager, the Locomotive Allocator, Engineers, Project managers, Industrial Relations Partner and RMTU National Office staff.

This team has worked hard to make sure the next attempt to introduce the locomotives fitted with A2 is successful, being that these locomotives are fit for purpose, reliable and terminal and

mechanical staff are fully trained and prepared to use these locomotives.

While there are some differences between Arataki 1 (A1) and the newer equipment, it has been revealed that some of the operational uses are unintended and not part of the initial design. These unintended features need to be covered in future training or engineered out so there is consistency between A1 and A2.

KiwiRail are now ready to introduce the A2 locomotives into service. The plan is to send the A2 locomotives to the Bay of Plenty region but prior to them going into service, full training will be provided and KiwiRail and the RMTU reps will present to members in both Kinleith and the Mount. These presentation meetings will occur on Thursday 12 May (Kinleith) and Friday 13 May (Mount). KiwiRail Terminal and Mechanical members in the BOP are encouraged to attend one of these presentation meetings.

C3 TAURANGA COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

The RMTU negotiators are of the view that these negotiations have reached an impasse, which means the parties head off to Mediation. However C3 are of the view that the negotiations are not at an impasse and have put a number of resolutions on the table, which may resolve some of our claims. However the big issue of the wage offer will most probably bring the negotiations to an impasse, based on the low CPI rate.

PORT TARANAKI CA AND BUSINESS REVIEW

The RMTU / Port Taranaki (PTL) Collective Agreement is currently being renewed. PTL are also undertaking a significant business review which has the potential to alter terms and conditions of employment for many of our Port Taranaki members and the loss of jobs. While the RMTU is attempting to like the bargaining with the review, that is proving to be difficult with the new management at this port. The next meeting with PTL is Tuesday 10th May.



PROPOSAL TO DISCHARGE TOXIC GAS AT TAURANGA PORT DECLINED

The discharge of the gas methyl bromide into the air at the Port of Tauranga was in relation to the pre-shipment fumigation of export logs.

The application, made by Envirofume Limited to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, was declined by an Independent Commissioner on the grounds that methyl bromide was known, or suspected, to cause significant adverse effects on human health. The gas is odourless, colourless and heavier than air and is classified as "acutely toxic - fatal" and could cause cancer, genetic mutations and neurological disorders. The commissioner, Rob van Voorthuysen, said there was no certainty that the proposed discharge of the gas would meet the mandatory tolerable exposure levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The significant and potentially fatal effects on human health are not avoided and any such adverse effects, should they occur, cannot be remedied or mitigated," he said.

Mr van Voorthuysen said the positive effects of the application were not supported by qualified evidence. The proposal said fumigation was a necessary quarantine requirement for some of the countries that import New Zealand logs.

The positive effects of discharging the gas, as set out in the proposal, included increased competition in the provision of fumigation services at the port, which would in turn result in increased innovation. Another positive effect was broader economic benefits for New Zealand by way of price differentials that reduced costs to the exporters.

REQUEST FOR ALL BRANCH AGM's

The Union Women's steering committee requests that all Union branches pledge to;

- Get more involved in the women's network.

- Attend your AGM and take an RMTU sister with me.
- As per union rules, ensure a woman is on the local executive.
- Ask your organiser to participate in delegate training.
- Join the RMTU Women's facebook.

Together we will make a difference. For more information please contact your RMTU Steering Committee.

Ruth Blakeley - NMC Women's Representative. (027) 460-0504

Jenny Griffin - Wellington (027) 490-5255

Lisa Davidson - Palmerston North (021) 210-7197

Allana Ranui - Kawerau (021) 103-7663

Rachel Barrett - Auckland (027) 487-1436

Pare-Ana Bysterveld - Christchurch (027) 045-50736

Rebecca Hauck - Dunedin (021) 256-6486

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY – 28 APRIL

There is no denying that decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in improvements in basic working conditions today. The international theme for Workers' Memorial Day 2016 is "Strong Laws – Strong Enforcement – Strong Unions". You could say that these are the three pillars of improved workplace safety.

There were good turnouts for Workers Memorial Day in Hamilton [only RMTU] with Paul Jensen conducting the service and Harvey Stoneham spoke on behalf of KiwiRail, followed by the traditional big Waikato lunch as supplied by John Marsh.

In attendance at the Mt Maunganui Service which was organised by the Unions Tauranga, were RMTU President Aubrey Wilkinson and General Secretary Wayne Butson. There were a number of speakers from the Labour Party, Munz and local speakers, with Ben Thompson providing the entertainment.

Hutt Workshops hosted another very large gathering with guest speakers including



Richard Wagstaff CTU, Hazel Armstrong, Trevor Mallard MP and Peter Reidy.

We shall remember.

CENTREPORT SECURITY/MARINE/REEFER ROLE CHANGES

CentrePort has proposed significant changes to the combined Security, Marine Supervision and Reefer Monitoring roles. These roles were combined in 2003 but this structure has never been fully successful and the CPL proposal is to separate the security roles from the Marine and Reefer roles. The combined unions, MUNZ, RMTU and Etu have been in discussions for the last 6 months and the proposed changes are now at a stage for a ratification meeting with a recommendation from the unions for member acceptance.

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 – All national Union elected positions are up for election this year and so there may be votes conducted by mail. If we have the incorrect address info you will not get a vote as you will never receive a voting paper. Update now!

C3 MARSDEN POINT COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

We seem to have resolved much of the Collective Agreement, however the big issue of the pay increase and back pay will be the big decider. The members have voted to take industrial action if the pay offer is unsatisfactory. The date for the next set of negotiations are the 16th and 17th of May, in Whangarei.

JAPAN OPENS HOKKAIDO SHINKANSEN

HIGH-speed services began operating through the 53.8km Seikan tunnel between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido on March 26, with the launch of commercial services on the Hokkaido Shinkansen from Shin-Aomori to Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto.

The Yen 550.8bn (\$US 4.84bn) project was approved by the Japanese government as long ago as 1973, but work was suspended in September 1982 due to the poor state of the economy and Japanese National Railways' mounting debts.

The 148.8km line runs 23% on viaducts, 4% on bridges, and 65% in tunnels. In addition to the Seikan Tunnel, which opened in 1988, the new railway includes the 8.1km Oshima - Tobetsu, 6.2km Tsugaru - Oda, and 5.9km Tsugaru tunnels. The maximum line speed is 260km/h with trains operating at up to 140km/h in tunnels.

The 10-car 320km/h sets are 253m-long and accommodate up to 731 seated passengers, including 18 in Gran Class and 55 in Green Car.

The fastest Hayabusa services complete the 862.5km trip between Tokyo and Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto in 4h 2min. Hayabusa takes 2h 59min to cover the 713.3km between Tokyo and Shin-Aomori, where there is a two-minute stop to change drivers. The remaining 148.8km to Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto is covered in 1h 1min, with trains running at a maximum of 140km/h on 82km of the route.



FOREIGN TRUSTS AND ANTI MONEY LAUNDERING

Anyone who has recently made an investment with a bank or finance company or taken out a mortgage, will realise that a number of questions have to be answered about your financial affairs and various pieces of identification are required. We are wondering if the, so called, foreign trusts that are domiciled here, have to provide similar information. If they do not, they could be used for money laundering purposes. There may be two rules operating- stringent ones for local residents and more relaxed ones for foreigners. We hope this is not the case.

RMTU KIWIRAIL NETWORKS INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL MEETING 13 APRIL.

Our industrial Council met with KRG management in Christchurch. A welcome piece of information was the fact that injuries are continuing to track downwards. Both the RMTU and management are united on the need to ensure this trend continues. We are particularly concerned about unlikely but 'high consequence' risks – these tend to be rare events that people are consequently complacent about. Remember, your union will back you to the hilt if you raise a legitimate health and safety concern.

In addition we received is a report back on the HRV Tunnel Fire Safety Project which is progressing with the retro fitting of fire protection equipment and installation of the same gear on new vehicles.

A call for agenda items prior to the meeting very quickly resulted in a number of issues being raised by members:

- Proposed use of contractors to replace PDS on level crossings: This has been headed off thanks to determined advocacy and the support of the Christchurch membership.
- Use of DC Signals to undertake protection in Auckland: the Auckland Rail Branch is already on to this and there was an acknowledgement that it is 'not a good look' from management.

- Failure to provide a promised updated SOP for inserting sleepers with a digger, and a lack of clarity around the ban on the use of petrol engines in tunnels was discussed and management have provided answers that were covered in the distribute minutes.

And various Zero harm and HSE managers have promised to provide this since March 2015.

Remember this is your Industrial Council, please ensure that any items that have not been resolved locally are escalated to the Council via your delegate and/or Industrial Council Representative.

BUILDING CONSENTS RISING BUT TOO SLOWLY

Nationally the number of building consents being issued, for new dwellings, was 28,000 to the end of the March 2016 year. The last time this figure was matched was in 2004, before the global financial crisis. Only four years ago the national figure was around 15,000. The issue is that the level is still not high enough. Residential construction is a big employer, but a number of developers are saying it is getting harder to find skilled trades people. It must be emphasised that one of the most effective ways to stabilise house prices is simply to build more.

BRITAINS TRAIN FLEET PROJECTED TO DOUBLE BY 2045

Britain's Rolling Stock Strategy Steering Group, which combines rolling stock leasing companies and the Rail Delivery Group, says the national train fleet could double in size by 2045 to meet increasing passenger demand.

The fleet, which currently consists of 12,968 passenger coaches, is forecast to grow by between 51 and 99% during the next 30 years. The proportion of EMU cars is expected to rise from 70% to over 90% by 2034. Around half of the vehicles are projected to be built in Britain. The influx of new vehicles will reduce the average age of the national fleet from 21 to 16 years. There will also be an increase in the number of new diesel and bi-mode vehicles being purchased.



PORT MARLBOROUGH SECURITY VARIATION

Port Marlborough have introduced permanent part time roles in Security for work that was mainly done by casual staff in the past. While permanent roles are preferred to casual roles, the issue of who gets preference of additional work has become an issue. The RMTU have proposed a neutral option which is currently under consideration by PMNZ. Hopefully a pragmatic solution can be agreed in the near future.

MORE MORTGAGE RESTRICTIONS HAVE TO COME

Unfortunately this is likely to be the case. The Government's attempt to free up more land around Auckland has been slow in coming and to date has not been very successful. Attempts to grant quicker approvals for land subdivision and building consents, by the Auckland City Council, have failed to materialise. Residential property in Auckland, as in other cities, (such as Wellington, and provincial areas like Hamilton and Tauranga), appears to be a one way bet. They will continue to rise for sometime yet. We do see more mortgage restrictions coming, but they must not penalise first home buyers, as this very group must be able to purchase a residential property to live in.

LABOUR'S FUTURE OF WORK CONFERENCE KICKS OFF THE DEBATE ABOUT AUTOMATION AND UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

The Labour Party hosted this just before Easter and it received some coverage in the mainstream media, largely around the idea of a "Universal Basic Income" or UBI. The RMTU was one of the sponsors and our National Vice President Howard Phillips attended along with Auckland Organiser Stu Johnstone and South Island Organiser John Kerr.

Keynote speakers included President Clinton's former Secretary of Labour Robert Reich, British academic Guy Standing –

author of two books on the "precariat", the causalised workforce of modern capitalism – and Swedish engineer Goran Roos.

Labour has started the debate in mainstream New Zealand politics on what many overseas have been writing about and discussing for some time now – the huge changes that economic crisis and technological innovation will bring, not just to the world of work but arguably to our whole social order.

The headlines have been dominated by the idea of the universal basic income, a measure deemed necessary because the next wave of automation threatens to destroy more than 40% of existing jobs. See <http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/robots-will-make-your-coffee-labour-conference-hears-b-186713> and http://m.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11609094

Labour produced a document called "10 Big Ideas" at the conference which covered some fairly well trodden ground: there was a passing nod to supporting collective bargaining, 'digital equality' i.e. making sure every kid has access to a computer etc. We're not talking about a radical restructuring of the economy here – it seems Labour is content to let that happen by itself whilst seeking to blunt the sharper edges of what is coming.

We'll be exploring the debate the Future of Work project has initiated in more depth in next issue of The Transport Worker, as it's an important one for us as workers and the world our children and grandchildren will grow up in.

MORE RATE CUTS COMING

Earlier this week the Australian Reserve Bank cut the overnight bank rate from 2.00% to 1.75%. A week earlier our Reserve Bank did not cut its rates. As a result our currency has firmed rather strongly to 92 cents against the Australian and up to 70 cents against the US. This is hurting exporters. When our Reserve Bank reviews the OCR in June, we believe that it has no choice but to cut and possibly again in August. Mortgage rates have bottomed, and there is unlikely to be much more downward pressure, but those with bank deposits will see further minor declines in interest rates



on offer.

BITS AND BOBS

- KiwiRail has proposed a change for mount mechanical. The consultation for this proposal has finished much to the surprise of the members who attended the last consultative meeting on the 8th April, so as a result we have filed for a grievance based on the members being financially disadvantaged by KiwiRails actions, as such were are meeting KiwiRail on Thursday the 5th May to see if the grievance can be resolved.
- There have been a number of retirements in the Bay of Plenty. Jim Souness from Mt Mechanical, Peter Harris, Dennis Wells and Les tasker from Mt Freight all retired on Friday 29th May. All the best for Jim. Peter,

Dennis and Les for the future and many thanks for your contributions to KiwiRail and the RMTU.

- Te Rapa has had quite a challenge with management in getting investigation details from another part of KiwiRail [ONE KIWIRAIL!] however with the help of ER Manager Maryan Street the investigation notes are on the way, and we hope they will prove our point and will ensure a just and fair outcome for one of our Te Rapa members.

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

SAFETY FIRST!

PUBLIC MEETING LOGGING TRUCK ROLLOVERS

**OTAIKA VALLEY HALL
TUESDAY 10TH MAY
7 PM**


