

# THE ACTIVIST



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## **KR MECA 2020 WAGE ROUND UPDATE AND A CORRECTION**

Covid (and especially the Auckland level changes) has impacted on the planning for the report back roadshows. The Upper North Island (Taumaranui and points above in the North Island) meetings will be delayed to Week Commencing 15 March. The South Island and Lower North Island meetings will occur next week (8 to 12 March with Napier being 16 March).

At the time that the Terms of Settlement were sent out we believed that it contained all of the factual material for the information of members. Regrettably Payscale 8 did not contain all of the relevant rates of pay. The rates for Payscale 8 are;

<b>Payscale 8 - Designation</b>		<b>Agreed pay rates between payscale group</b>
Terminal Team Leader	47180	\$32.00
Processing Officer (Southdown only)		\$28.90
Terminal Operator 4 (TO4)		\$28.90
Container Terminal Trainer		\$28.05
Terminal Operator 3 (TO3)		\$27.00
Container Terminal Operator 2 / Gate Officer 2 (CTO2 / GO2)		\$25.80
Terminal Operator 2 (TO2)		\$25.00
Container Terminal Operator 1 / Gate Officer 1 (CTO1 / GO1)		\$24.29
Terminal Operator 1		\$23.55
Trainee		\$22.10

Members are advised that if they have destroyed or misplaced their ballot paper and now wish to reject the proposed settlement because of the new information pertaining to payscale 8 then they should contact Chelsea at the Union's national office on 04 4992066 and request a new ballot

paper be issued to them. There is plenty of time remaining before the ratification closes.

We urge members to attend the meetings and listen to the explanation of the proposed settlement before deciding how they will vote in the ratification.

We look forward to seeing our KiwiRail members at a meeting during the next two weeks. South Island and Lower North island next week and Upper North Island in week commencing 15 March.

## **LYTTELTON PORT BRANCH MEETING DISCUSSES FATIGUE AND REPORT ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

Our Lyttelton Port Branch opted to go ahead with one of its regular membership meetings this week under COVID19 alert level 2. This necessitated a restriction on attendance of 100 and physical distancing measures to be applied. It was also recommended that attendees wear masks.

Most of the meeting was taken up discussing the joint unions - management Fatigue Management Working Group. Despite an increase in the flow of information from this group this year, and articles in the last two issues of the Activist, it appears a few myths still have some currency. To be clear, rosters and

hours of work for specific work areas are not being discussed at this stage. What is being discussed are overall fatigue guidelines. There is a lively debate amongst those round the table - the four unions and LPC management - about the science and how this will determine overall fatigue guidelines.

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

If and when conversations occur around potential changes to hours of work clauses in our collective agreement then representatives from specific work areas will be involved and any proposed changes have to be voted on by the membership. In other words, there can be no changes without the agreement of the membership.

The other main item of discussion was the Maria Dew Report on bullying and harassment. The full report, with only material identifying individuals redacted, has been released to the Branch Executive. It is clear that management is committed to implementing the recommendations in the report and the Branch will work through this as it unfolds.

## RMTU KIWIRAIL NETWORKS INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL UPDATE

The RMTU-KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council (KNIC) met over two days last week, Thursday 25 & Friday 26 February. The Thursday afternoon was spent in a joint session with the Mechanical Industrial Council.

During this we discussed Clause 29 of our collective agreement, which focusses on contracting out. What was clear was that there has been considerable progress on raising awareness and educating management around their obligations under this clause which commits KiwiRail to using their own people to do core work where possible. By the end of last week 392 managers had done a short online course the RMTU had jointly developed with KiwiRail late last year explaining the employer's obligations. We reckon there are about another 60 or so to get through this.

Not contracting work out requires KiwiRail to have sufficient staff to be able to do core work so workforce planning is a hot topic. KiwiRail have appointed a Workforce Planner to have oversight of this and he attended the meetings. There is also an item on this

subject in the terms of settlement for the new proposed collective agreement. Specifically this will involve 're-igniting' an HPHE project with the KNIC that was done a couple of years ago that focussed on the following question: 'How can we influence the factors which will enable us to recruit and retain our people and provide opportunities for their development, to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, working in the right place at the right time?'

Your representatives will be making this project a priority this year as it is one of our best weapons in the fight to end contracting out.



We discussed apprenticeships and it was illuminating to contrast the work RSAS have done in this area where they seem to be enjoying the fruits of planning undertaken some years ago. There is not a direct comparison as there is no such thing as a specific trade for track workers, although aspects of the work – welding, carpentry and electrical – do have

trades qualifications. This informed a discussion on day 2 when we spoke with Learning and Development on developing track related qualifications.

The redevelopment of Hillside and the integration of the Dunedin Infrastructure Depot on the site was another agenda item. This project is the subject of a presentation to RSAS and Infrastructure members in Dunedin on 17th March.

Shifting to the second day of talks the first item that was agreed was to amend the KNIC terms of reference to enable the election of an RMTU Women's Representative on the Industrial Council. This aligns with both the RMTU and KiwiRail's objectives to encourage and reflect diversity in the workforce.

As mentioned above the reestablishment of the HPHE Working Group on Workforce Planning was canvassed and this will be a priority this year.

RMTU Representatives then received an update on and had input into a proposal to change track warrant training for our members to make this more comprehensive and appropriate for the work they do.

KiwiRail's Learning and Development people also discussed the establishment of a Qualification Working Group with RMTU representation and Boaz Lovelock and Sorenson volunteered for this.

The Regional Managers present provided a business update. Key items of information for us was the issuing of Authorities to Recruit for 24 vacancies in the Lower North Island – mainly shifting people from fixed term agreements to permanent roles. As has been publicised in The Activist there have been a number of these fixed term roles that are being made permanent on the South Island. Some of these positions have been filled by Provincial growth Fund Drainage and Culvert workers. Auckland remains a challenge with the remediation project there consuming a great deal of labour.

Moving onto the final agenda items the proposed MECA ratification meeting schedule was discussed. Hopefully we will be able to go ahead as planned next week. Lastly we discussed the remaining work on the Pay Scale 2 Review. We still have to cover the Track Machine Group, including Non Destructive Testing (the latter group of members have been more vocal of late in arguing their work needs looking at); some of the Signal and Communications jobs, Plant Fitters and Stores. All this work must be complete by 30 June.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY REP TRAINING - HOW TO REGISTER FOR A COURSE

Following the Union AGM's, new Health and Safety Reps who've recently been elected to Health and Safety Committees are required to register for H&S Rep training. H&S Reps attend 2-days paid training per year paid for by the employer.

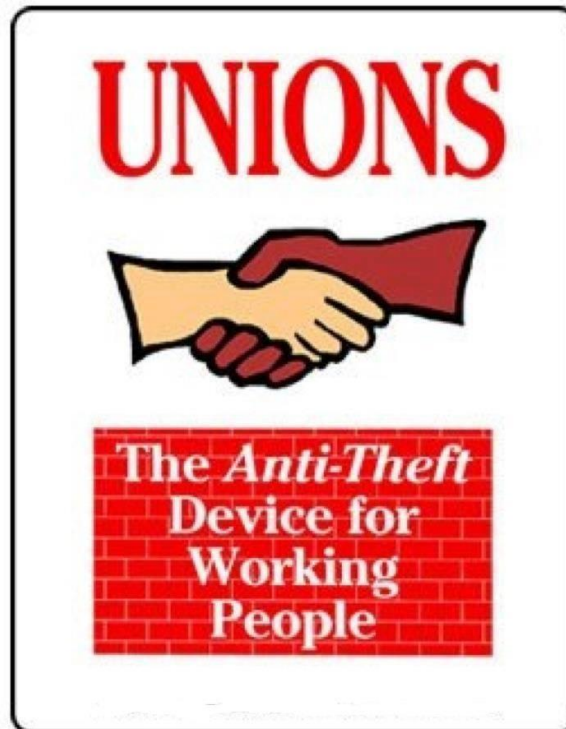
To register on a course, go to [www.worksafereps.co.nz](http://www.worksafereps.co.nz)

## OTAGO RAIL BRANCH MEETS WITH EXTINCTION REBELLION REPRESENTATIVES

Officials from the Otago Rail Branch met with representatives from environmental lobby group Extinction Rebellion in Dunedin last week. Activist readers will remember this was the group that occupied the rail corridor in January mounting protests against the transport of coal from Southland to be burned at Fonterra's Claddeboye plant near Timaru. The transport of coal by KiwiRail to this plant is nothing new, but the reprieve of the Ohai to Invercargill Branch last year and the associated publicity prompted the protests.

Branch officials raised concerns expressed by members regarding safety and the impact of the protest action on rail workers. During discussions it emerged that Extinction Rebellion had met with both the Police and KiwiRail management and had undertook to cease protests of this nature pending an opportunity to meet with rail workers. As this does not appear to have been followed up by management the Branch has written to KiwiRail requesting that this be done.

Extinction Rebellion are enthusiastic advocates for rail and the shift of more freight



off our roads onto the tracks. They are also strong advocates for a 'just transition' for people employed in fossil fuel industries as those industries are run down over time. Some of our members express concerns about the methods the protestors use to make their point and others do not agree with their views on climate or the policies of all major parties in relation to it for that matter. The fact remains however, that there is still common ground between us in that both the RMTU and Extinction Rebellion, as well as other environmental groups like Greenpeace, want to grow rail. It really is a question of agreeing to differ where we disagree and working together on the areas where we are aligned.

#### Westfield Blues

Currently, there are a number of issues at Westfield that we are attempting to resolve. These include:

- The Service teams rostering issue. This is an attempt by management to force our Servicing team off their 12-hour rosters. After 2 sets of mediation, we were unable to come to a resolution and we have therefore filed in the Employment Relations Authority. We await a date from the Authority as there is considerable back up on cases due to Covid.
- Allowances. Some members are not being paid their allowances, tea and coffee and laundry, in particular. Please check your Collective Agreement for what you are able to claim. There are a lot of goodies in there that can help boost your wage packet but you may not be claiming. If you have a query, speak to your delegate, they should be able to sort it out. If it becomes an issue or a dispute over payment and interpretation, get your delegate to escalate it to your organizer. We have struggled long and hard to gain and keep

these allowances, make sure you claim them.

- Essential workers. There seems to be some level of confusion over the terms "essential worker" and "essential work". The rule of thumb is, at level 3, work is only essential if you are needed to make the business run. The example we had recently was of a driver, returning to work, being asked to come into work, despite not being necessary for the operation of the train. He was being told he had to come to work and share the cab, in clear contradiction of government advice. Fortunately, common sense and some intervention prevailed.

### LYTTLETON PORT UNIONS MEET WITH BOARD



Three of the four unions at LPC met with the Board on 24th February. The fact this invitation was even issued is significant if we look back to 2018 when the RMTU was locked in a bitter and acrimonious dispute with LPC with multiple strikes and lockouts, including a protest when our members leafletted the neighbourhoods of the Board members.

Since then there has been a largely new Board put in place and a change of senior management. The meeting was an opportunity for the parties to share information about our priorities and was both constructive and positive. It's no surprise that the Board wants the port to be profitable but it was interesting to hear from them directly about the importance they place on diversity in the workforce.

For our part we were able to emphasise our priorities of achieving excellent health and safety, the best possible wages and conditions of employment, security of employment and decent superannuation.

We emphasised our view that sustainable real wage growth is only possible with increases in productivity and our awareness that security of employment means that some jobs will change as investment in technology occurs or as we shift to a carbon neutral economy. The RMTU's focus during the management of such change on a just transition for our members was made very clear.

All in all a positive meeting and the plan is to meet regularly in a similar fashion.

## SAFEGUARD ANNUAL SAFETY SURVEY

It's that time of year where Safeguard seeks respondents to our annual State of the Nation survey – it will be the sixth time we have run it. The survey closes 22 March.

Safeguard magazine's annual State of the Nation survey is designed to be taken by people based in New Zealand and who belong to one of these groups:

- Health and safety practitioners (including occupational health nurses)
- Health & safety reps
- Business owners/senior executives

All questions are multi-choice except for one optional question at the end. The survey takes less than two minutes to complete and is anonymous. The results of the survey – which looks at trends in perceptions of health & safety over time – will be published in the March/April edition of Safeguard magazine.

You also have the option to ask for the survey results to be emailed to you.

If you fall into one of the three categories above then please do the survey [here](#).

## OUTSOURCING @ RSAS

There was a challenge identified in Networks in getting approval for permanent new staff when local managers have significant discretion to contract out. However, decisions to employ new staff are now being devolved to Operational General Managers. This includes offering full time positions to existing fixed term staff. This will improve recruitment turnaround and should help ease workloads. In an encouraging sign. The e-learning module on proper operation of

Clause 29 has been delivered to 376 of the 440 managers set down to go through it. Noted that CPAD staff have received HPHE training and are also versed in correct application of Clause 29. There remain hiccups in the system and delegates need to be aware when this is happening. The key issue is advanced planning of work to help with deployment of workforce and reduce the need to contract work out. It was noted that RSAS has Clause 29 as a standing agenda item in the Mechanical Council. Management are also reviewing existing outsourced work to see if it can be done in-house. It was clear that HR needs to support new people come

into these management positions to complete the e-learning module around clause 29. Meanwhile, we are heading towards a clear and agreed RSAS process to manage contracting out – bringing it back to MCC for further discussion. It was also agreed that failing to invest in updated equipment, or a lack of planning, is no excuse for outsourcing.

## SONASAFE

Working around Mobile Plant (self-propelled vehicles, excluding locomotives) is one of



KiwiRail's top ten critical risks. Daily we have thousands of situations where workers are on the ground performing their duties safely.

However, incidents and accidents happen. And when they do it does not end well for the person on the ground.

KiwiRail and RMTU, through the Critical Risk Networks and Industrial Councils, have been working together using High Performance High Engagement methods to develop solutions to reduce and minimize the risk of working on the ground with Mobile Plant.

Last week KiwiRail finalized a contract with a New Zealand based company to provide a Proximity Based Warning System to improve safety.

SonaSafe is an engineering control which detects when a person wearing a SonaSafe Personal Detection Unit (PDU) enters exclusion or unsafe zones around Mobile Plant.

In this first stage of the roll out all Hi-Rail Excavators and Container Terminal lifting machines will be fitted with this technology and the personnel working on the ground with them will be protected by a PDU.

Future mobile plant which may be fitted with this solution are:

- Excavators
- Forklifts

- Earthmoving/construction machines
- Hi-Rail motor vehicles

The excellent engagement from the frontline has meant that the solution is fit for purpose and will significantly improve the control effectiveness of working with mobile plant

The units are currently being manufactured and the roll out onto the Mobile Plant should start mid-2021.

## BITS & BOBS

- Port Otago achieves a half year profit of \$18.3m for the six months ended Dec 31 2020.
- Dredging got underway at Port Taranaki on 22 February 2021. The Dutch Dredging owned Albatross is doing the work.
- To date it is reported to us that as at Wednesday night 73% of all border workers have received the vaccination.
- Read Transport Worker Magazine to meet KiwiRail's first woman track ganger, Emma Marsh. Welcome to the rail and RMTU whanau Emma.

**Remember – be Safe at all times!**

