

THE ACTIVIST



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LEVEL 4 - NEW ZEALAND IS CURRENTLY AT COVID ALERT LEVEL 4.

Your Union staff and delegates continue to work from home on your behalf to ensure that all members are treated lawfully and fairly during these unusual and uncertain times we find ourselves in.

The industrial staff are all working from home with laptops and mobile phones and it is very much business as usual. Debby and Chelsea are also at home and have laptops and so membership applications, data, accounts etc continue to be processed.

UNITED TOGETHER : WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL 2020

Our Union will observe Workers Memorial Day a little differently this year. Due to Covid 19 we are not able to gather for Workers' Memorial Day events like we normally would. Physical distancing is still vital to stamp out the spread of the disease.

Instead, RMTU members are encouraged to light a candle at midday on the 28th of April to remember the workers who've suffered a work related injury, illness or death.

The international theme for this Workers' Memorial Day is 'Coronavirus'

Union members internationally will be joining each other in solidarity to light a candle on the 28th April to acknowledge the critical work of the front line essential workers, and mourn the deaths of workers who have died from workplace exposure to Covid 19 including health care workers.

Our Union is united to fight for the highest standards of health and safety protection for RMTU members. An injury to one is an injury to all.

We encourage you to join with our local and international union brothers and sisters online to light a candle at midday on the 28th April and post a photo on the RMTU social media pages.

COVID 19 TRANSITION TO ALERT LEVEL 3

On Monday the Government will announce the decision on whether it is safe for NZ to start the transition out of a level 4 lockdown to a slightly less stringent level 3 alert level. PM Jacinda Ardern has described level 3 as 'a waiting room' that will continue to have large restrictions on work, gatherings, education and travel.

The main elements of level 3 alert are;

People must stay within their immediate household bubble, but can expand their bubble a little bit to reconnect with close family / whanau.

Exercise- Activities should be local, safe (e.g. no mountain biking) and which do not involve interacting with other people, or equipment touched by other people.

Education- Schools will open for children up to year 10. However, attendance is voluntary and children who are able to should remain home and learn via distance.

Workplaces will start to open. However high safety measures must be in place, including physical distancing between workers, use of PPE where required and maintaining high hygiene standards. Workers who are able to work from home should continue to do so at level 3.

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

Travel is still restricted to your local area, e.g. for going to work or school, shopping, or getting exercise.

Public transport will be available to travel to work or school with a 2 metre distance between people.

Gatherings of up to 10 people can gather for funerals and Tangihanga and Wedding ceremonies.

People at higher risk of severe illness (older people, or those with underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to stay home where possible, and take additional precautions when leaving home, like avoiding supermarkets, or touching any surfaces.

For more information go to <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

CHANGES TO THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT WHILE THE EPIDEMIC NOTICE IS IN PLACE

The government has decided that some rules for collective bargaining will be temporarily modified in the Employment Relations Act while the current Epidemic Notice is in place.

These changes extend timeframes involved in collective bargaining that would otherwise apply, and allow unions to notify an alternative ratification process if the previous ratification process is now impracticable (e.g. in person meetings).

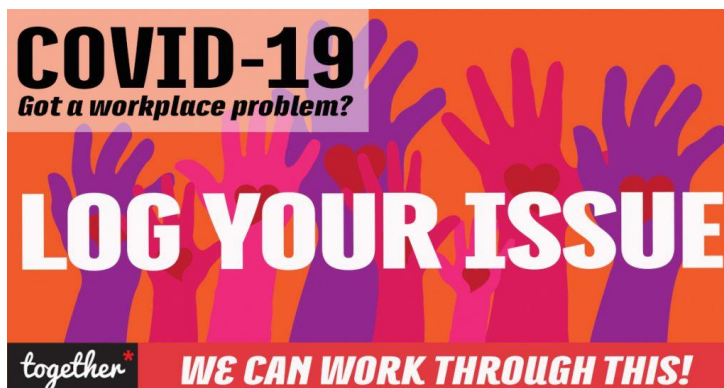
The changes have been made by Order in Council under the Epidemic Preparedness Act and come into force on Thursday 16 April.

The Act has been temporarily changed to:

- modify the maximum time frames for an employer to notify their employees who are in work and covered by collective bargaining that has been initiated, to

exclude the duration of the Epidemic Notice (modifying section 43).

- modify the maximum time frames for an employer to seek consolidation of notices to initiate collective bargaining (40 days), and for unions to respond to an attempted consolidation (30 days), to exclude the duration of the Epidemic Notice (modifying section 50).
- where collective agreements would have otherwise expired, but are still in force for 12 months after expiry, modify the 12-month period to exclude any period covered by the Epidemic Notice if the 12-month period would otherwise end while the Epidemic Notice is in force or up to three months after it expires or is revoked (modifying section 53).
- allow the union to notify the other intended party or parties to a collective agreement of a new ratification procedure to ratify the collective agreement (e.g., online balloting, videoconferencing or teleconferencing) if a union has committed at the outset of collective bargaining to a ratification procedure that is no longer practicable (e.g. in-person ratification meetings) (modifying section 51).



RMTU ONLINE

With the unions physical offices closed and union staff working remotely there are plenty of opportunities for members, delegates and Organisers to meet online. This also applies for branch, sectors and Industrial councils' reps to keep in contact and for meetings with the employers. The union office staff have been using Zoom successfully, KiwiRail use Microsoft Teams but even Messenger will work ok for online meetings. Both Zoom and Microsoft Teams just need a download, a meeting scheduled and then email invitations to join. For Zoom go to - <https://zoom.us/download> and Microsoft Teams - <https://products.office.com/en-nz/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>

If you need help to set up then contact one of the team, we are becoming experts - http://www.rmtunion.org.nz/contact/contact_details_national_office.php or http://www.rmtunion.org.nz/contact/contact_details_branch_offices.php

KIWI RAIL ANNUAL LEAVE CALL

KiwiRail has written to all staff requesting that staff members agree to take 5 days annual leave during May and June to assist the company with its efforts to remain financially viable during the Covid Crisis. The letter states...

"our agreement to use 5 days of annual leave. We are seeking your agreement that you will use 5 days of annual leave to be taken over the months of May and June. Assuming your agreement to do this, your manager will work with and your colleagues to plan how this will be scheduled across the team during this period."

If we all play our part, we can together help to ease some of the financial pressure that our business is facing and help us come through the current disruption in a stronger position.

Should we be unable to reach agreement on a plan to take the 5 days of annual leave within the above timeframe, we may need to provide you with lawful notice as per the provisions of Section 19 of the Holidays Act and your employment agreement which permits KiwiRail to book annual leave when agreement is unable to be reached.

Please click this link to agree to take 5 days annual leave between 2 May – 30 June."

The letter does mark a major departure by the company from earlier notices etc in that it did not state that Consultation on the proposal had occurred with its Union partners. The RMTU confirms that KiwiRail did consult with the RMTU in the formulation of the letter and that the RMTU does concur with the letters content and tenor.

There is no doubt that we are all in this Covid crisis together and that KiwiRail has, in general, behaved as a principled employer should. They have not leaped to do the minimum necessary, rather, they have endeavoured to maintain members full terms and conditions of employment and

income during this period of lockdown. This is to be commended and with this letter it is now time for us, as workers, to respond in kind. The letter and the request comply with NZ Employment Law and with the requirements of the MECA. The RMTU does not see the request for members to volunteer to take 5 days leave during May and/or June as an unreasonable request.

IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

Stats NZ has released data which records impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown on the March 2020 quarter CPI and March 2020 FPI. It summarises the impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown on the methodology used for the March 2020 quarter consumers price index (CPI) and the monthly food price index (FPI). They focus on the prices of international airfares and accommodation, fruit and vegetables, and fuel. The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the regular operations for the March 2020 quarter CPI (to be published on 20 April) is relatively minimal. Approximately 1.4 percent of all prices were collected using alternative methods, and 1.4 percent of prices were imputed, that is, they substituted the missing prices with other values.

[Read the overview, and an outline of the assumptions and methods they used in compiling the CPI for the March 2020 quarter.](#)

CLEANING SURFACES AGAINST COVID 19

Droplets containing the Covid 19 virus are too large to stay in the air for long, so they quickly settle on surrounding surfaces. The virus has been found 'live' on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for up to three days

Surfaces or objects that are frequently touched by others should be cleaned before and after a person touches them – clean it first (e.g. handles, levers, steering wheels in pool vehicles, door knobs, shared desks and phones).

Cleaning products

- Use a disinfectant that is antiviral.
- Surfaces need 10 seconds of soaking with the disinfectant for it to work.



- For phones, radios and other more delicate surfaces, soak a disposable towel or cloth and wipe the surfaces thoroughly.
- Use clean cloths or disposable towels to wipe surfaces.

The most effective antiviral sanitisers are:

- Products containing Hypochlorite
- Activated Hydrogen Peroxide
- Standard Bleach
- Products containing an alcohol i.e. ethanol or isopropyl
- Methylated spirits can also be used

Hand sanitiser should contain at least 60% isopropyl alcohol to be effective.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE KR MIC

Upon the close of nominations two members had been nominated for the position and so a ballot is required. We have considered undertaking an electronic email vote given the relatively small number of women members eligible to cast a vote in this election however as we do not hold current email addresses for all women members in this area we are unable to do so. If you are a female member and employed in the KiwiRail RSAS business then please send a current email address to Chelsea at office@rmtunion.org.nz

If we are unable to obtain all email addresses then the ballot will be conducted by post after the Union is able to return to the National office. We thank the women members for their interest in the position and regret the delay in conducting the ballot.

COUNTDOWN SUPERMARKET MANAGING DIRECTOR 'DOESN'T SEE PORT WORKERS AS ESSENTIAL'

Lyttelton Port Management did the right thing this week and approached the managing director of Countdown Supermarkets to see if the chain would give port workers priority during shopping hours. Well done for asking the question LPC!

The answer however was, as LPC CEO Roger Gray put it, 'deeply disappointing' – the Countdown boss doesn't see port workers as essential and won't be granting priority shopping rights to LPC workers.

Given that port workers are responsible for getting much of what Countdown sells to the public to the stores this beggars belief and has led to much comment from our members at Lyttelton.

This is what one of our members said:

'The general population have no idea where their goods actually come from, but we know and honestly when someone says bloody wharfies holding the country to ransom or some such shit we can hold our heads up and remind them of who got them through the hard times, not the management working from home, but everyone physically involved in transport and logistics from the cargo handlers, the tugs, the mechanical side that kept the plant working, the pilots who ensured the vessels arrived alongside safely, everyone who ensured the port kept working to supply the truck drivers with the goods they supplied to the stores and hospitals.

Everyone in that chain that got the necessary items to maintain our society and preserve life into the hands of the public should be allowed to hold their heads high, right through to those working on the front lines of that system, those in the supermarkets who have suffered abuse from that same public, it would be nice if everyone of us when we go and buy these goods would say thank you to those staff because we are all in this together, doing what needs to be done.'

ONLINE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING AVAILABLE

Due to the inability to run face to face training during lockdown, Worksafe Reps are offering two of their training courses online for H&S Reps and Managers

Online Stage 1 (initial) Health and Safety Rep training

This online course equips HSRs with the skills to promote a safer and healthier place of work and also covers Unit Standard 29315. Successful completion of the unit standard (via the assessed quiz and fillable



PIN) allows an HSR to exercise their powers to issue provisional improvement notices (PINs) and direct unsafe work to cease.

Team Leader/Manager /Supervisor H&S training

The aim of this course is to provide Team Leaders, Managers and Supervisors with skills knowledge and competency that will assist them to provide health and safety leadership and compliance with the Health and safety at Work legislation. This is a non-assessed online training course.

For more information go to <https://worksafereps.co.nz/health-and-safety-courses-online/> or ring 0800 336 966

THE TIME FOR PORTS REFORM IS NOW

New Zealand has some clear advantages when it comes to fighting COVID19 and these have shaped our government's strategy.

We are almost unique in that we are a remote island nation with a developed economy, good infrastructure and a small and relatively dispersed population. Compare us to countries with multiple (and porous) land borders and high population densities and it's easy to see why closing the border is both possible and enforceable. Only Iceland comes close in terms of similar physical and human geographical advantages.

Coupled with the fact we have relatively few intensive care beds per capita (just over 5/100000 compared to 30/100000 in Germany) and skilled medical professionals to staff them, it's easy to see why the strategy of elimination has been adopted. If we can eradicate COVID19 in New Zealand (and at the time of writing we seem to be on track to doing that) then it's a question of waiting for a vaccine and building up our intensive care and testing facilities as a backstop before we re-open the borders.

Fortress New Zealand still has to trade however, whether the drawbridge is up or when it eventually comes down. Trade generates the wealth that maintains our prosperity and means we can afford decent

infrastructure and medical care, amongst other things.

Our ports are therefore a key part of both our medium and long term economic strategy coming out of the COVID19 crisis. It is through our ports that the bulk of the wealth generated by New Zealand's exports will pass for the foreseeable future now that tourism has been crippled as a way of earning us money. Dairy, meat and forestry products have always been important and are once again set to be the big earners in the medium to long term.

Our port industry is geared to the policy settings of the neo-liberal age ushered in by Rogernomics and continued by successive governments ever since. Eleven blue water ports in a country our size, all of which are to a greater or lesser extent owned by local or regional councils, competing with one another in a deregulated free for all has never made sense and certainly doesn't anymore. Shipping companies can play off ports against one another to no-one's advantage but their own. Competition creates an environment where there are more losers than winners as ports over capitalise in an attempt to win business off one another. Returns are low and insecure.

COVID19 demonstrated the fallacy of running our nation's ports as separate competing businesses and not as the critical infrastructure and economic lifeline they really are. For example, we have had one port on the South Island risking cross infection of staff by hiring casual labour because it 'cost too much' to pay permanent staff to remain in intact work bubbles meaning they couldn't work across shifts. The commercial approach prioritised saving a couple of hundred thousand dollars and in doing so risked the continued operation of the port.

The COVID 19 crisis shows port reform, introducing an integrated national ports strategy, is both necessary and urgent. The development of a limited number of bluewater ports, acting as hubs for coastal shipping to serve our regions, together with world class rail links, is both economically and environmentally sensible. It would require a centralised and planned approach: just like the strategy to beat COVID19.



This strategy would also enable huge efficiencies to be realised without the social upheaval that often accompanies such change. Automation could be accelerated but with a nationally planned and implemented just transition for workers that provided education, training and employment that would boost our skill base and distribute wealth in our regional communities. This would require a centralised approach to workforce planning, with nationally determined pay and conditions, integrated into skills development.

COVID19 has shown us that what was deemed politically impossible a few weeks ago can be done. Government can support and generate economic activity; it can reset the economy so it serves the needs of working people and their families; it can act decisively and in an unprecedented way to keep us safe and secure. National strategies in health, education, housing, technology and transport – including ports – are critical to the future security and prosperity of Aotearoa.

Let us not squander this opportunity through lack of vision or political courage.

NORTHERN REGION

NORTH TUGZ

The Covid-9 crisis has created a number of unforeseen situations and the area of industrial relations is front and center of many these. The situation at North Tugz is a case in point. The current Collective Agreement expired on 1 July 2019. We began bargaining and the key issue for the members was the introduction of a roster. The practice of allocating work meant that, outside of annual leave, workers had to be available for work 24/7, making planning everyday life very difficult. A roster would guarantee set hours of work and people could find a decent work life/balance.

Unfortunately, the Company and the RMTU differed over what the interpretation of the term "guaranteed hours of work". There is an esoteric legal argument regarding the differences. This is in front of the Employment Relations Authority at the

moment. The outcome of this argument will have a far-reaching impact on Industrial relations in New Zealand. For the Company, workers are only employed when there is work available. This makes it difficult to introduce a roster of any kind. It also brings an "availability allowance" into the equation. Suffice to say, these are now being sorted out through our lawyer, Ben Thompson, and it continues to be a slow process, like many legal issues are. However, we cannot get back to the bargaining table until a decision has been made.

The current crisis means that sitting down at negotiations may not be possible in the foreseeable future. However, the government has made some changes to the ERA in regards to the bargaining process. In particular section 53 of the act which will mean, for any Collective Agreement that has expired and is still in force for the 12 months after expiry, there will be an extension to the period of the Collective Agreement for the length of time covered by the Epidemic Notice, or up to 3 months after the Epidemic Notice has been revoked, if the CA would expire during this period.

What this means for our North Tugz members is that instead of no longer having a Collective Agreement in place on July 1st 2020, we will have a much longer period to conclude bargaining.

BOP REGION

C3 PAY DURING COVID-19.

We remain in dispute over the definition of "usual pay pre Covid-19" as stated by MBIE, however C3 insist that GWE's should be paid if they are not at work 80% of their guaranteed hours which is less than "usual pay pre Covid -19" as GWE's consistently work more hours than their guarantee. We have asked MBIE to advise whether our view or C3's is correct.

VALE - CHRIS PITMAN.

Chris Pitman a longstanding member of the RMTU passed away yesterday after a lengthy battle with cancer. Chris worked for C3 in the at the C3 workshop at the Mount as a diesel mechanic. Chris was old school at work and



ensured everyone worked the Chris way" however he was always helpful and took a keen interest in helping the apprentices. Our condolences to Sue and the family.

KIWI RAIL NEW START

An interesting problem came to light yesterday where a new worker was supposed to start work on the 31st March, in the Bay of Plenty, the worker had signed the appropriate forms but come the 31st no work or advice from KiwiRail! Now KiwiRail want to vary his start date to the end of the lockdown which means he will have had no work no pay for up to 4 weeks if he agrees to the variation. Hopefully we will come to a sensible resolution with KiwiRail as soon as possible.

RETIREMENT GARY HINGA.

After 38 years and 6 months service with KiwiRail, Gary has decided to take early retirement. Gary has worked in all facets of I and A and his last position prior to retiring was as a protector. All the best for your retirement Gary from your RMTU Brothers and sisters.

CENTRAL REGION

PORT NELSON BRANCH UPDATE

The Nelson Branch has been busy supporting its members through the lock down period. We have members across two employers and two ports which can make this quite challenging, dealing with a variety of issues and different management styles.

The branch secretary Anne Wells and President Allan Addison-Saipe have spent many months developing up to date phone and email lists and systems to contact the employees over a number of months. These systems have proved instrumental maintaining lines of communication to the vast majority of members, they have been kept informed through regular update emails, daily for the first couple of weeks of lock down. The updates were delivered in a way to cut through the mass of information that people were being flooded with and give

them the information that was relevant to them and do it in plain English.

It was found initially that things were changing rapidly both from Government and employer, Branch Exec worked hard to support and advocate for members who were slipping through the cracks and tried to make sure that everyone had enough to get by. As with most of our members throughout the country Port Nelson workers are considered essential workers, so for most they have work. However, for many especially in stevedoring they have seen a decrease in their income in some cases up to 50%.

In the meantime, things tick along as Port Nelson members wait to see what will happen next, it would appear that Level 3 won't change much for us except that maybe some of the industries we support will come back on line and we can get the members back to work and earning a decent living.

KIA KAHA to all essential workers, keep yourselves and your loved ones safe. Please remember work starts and finishes at home so make sure you are organised for your shift and you have a thorough decontamination plan for your return to home.

SOUTHERN REGION

ISOLATED MEMBERSHIP GROUPS FIND VALUE OF ON-LINE INFORMATION

Any veteran trade unionist will tell you the easiest worksite to organise is a ship – everyone is concentrated in one place. After that it's a factory or mine that works one shift. It then gets progressively harder as people work across shifts and in different worksites.

A mobile workforce, such as flight crews or railway workers, can be difficult to organise because they are geographically dispersed and often working across large geographical areas – even on different continents in the case of flight crews.

In the nineteenth century railway workers relied on the telegraph to communicate – the lines often ran along railway tracks. Then the telephone and the radio gradually superseded Morse code. By the late twentieth century we had fax machines and as computers became



more widely used e-mail. The 21st century has seen almost everyone acquire a smart phone and social media apps have given us a range of methods to stay in touch.

In the last ten years more and more of our members have started using e-mail and social media. It's a great way to keep up to speed and especially so in our more dispersed and isolated branches. Last weekend KiwiRail's request that staff consider taking some annual leave as part of the response to COVID19 and the impact it's had on business prompted questions from many RMTU members. Thanks to RMTU National Office publishing an issue of our Activist newsletter on-line and via e-mail many of the questions asked by members were answered.

Two of our delegates in our most isolated areas, Paddy Lindsay who is based Oamaru but works as a lube operator up and down the South Island, and Kevin Gubb, a track inspector on the West Coast, were able to access the Activist on their portable devices and advise members. There will be dozens more who did the same thing.

Remember too, that any member with a device and an internet connection can access information via the RMTU website and, if we have your e-mail address, we can send you regular updates. Many RMTU Branches also operate mass text messaging systems. The key point is don't wait until the crisis to set up the system!

Find out if your Branch has a Facebook page and/or a text messaging system and if not, ask your Branch Officials to work with RMTU National Office to get these set up. It makes it easier for us to stay in touch and that makes it easier to organise and being organised makes workers stronger and safer. Don't put yourself in the situation where you don't know what's going on.

MEMBERS AT LYTTELTON PORT DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF UNITY

Our members in the plant maintenance depot at Lyttelton Port showed that unity is critical to staying safe when they successfully resisted management's attempt

to break their 'intact work bubble' by introducing a new staff member.

The usual procedure when a new staff member begins is that he or she is introduced to the operation by working across several shift groups to assist with orientation and induction. In normal times this makes very good sense as it's the most efficient way to learn the breadth of the work our members do. In times when we are supposed to be minimising the size of our 'bubble' however, it is a needless risk to people's health and the operation of the port. We've had the same issue in the Container Terminal but with a divided workforce management have simply ignored the concerns of many of our members.

The plant maintenance depot is 100% RMTU though and the members were unified in saying that any needless introduction of new people into their intact work bubbles posed an imminent risk of serious harm and would be immediately Red Carded. Management very reasonably accepted this and the plan to introduce the new worker was amended.

That we are still having arguments about this beggars belief however. The RMTU is committed to maintaining the safe operation of our port in this national crisis, and all management's rhetoric about partnership counts for nought if we are loggerheads over such a fundamental issue. The port is owned by our community and is a lifeline for the people of Canterbury – management need to keep that front and center of their mind as we work through the COVID19 crisis and beyond.

WORKERS MEMORIAL AT GREYMOUTH RAIL DEPOT ON HOLD

Our indefatigable West Coast Rail branch has had to bow to the inevitable and put on hold plans for the inauguration of a memorial stone at the Greymouth KiwiRail Depot. RMTU Branch Secretary Ron Nijssen had been working with Loco Engineer and RMTU member Don Hibbs and other members to source a pounamu stone to act as the focal point for the memorial and everything was on track for an inauguration ceremony on Workers' Memorial Day on 28th April. KiwiRail management were very supportive, both at



the local and regional level, but COVID19 has scuppered our plans for this year.

The planning is not wasted however and the Branch will pursue our goal with renewed vigour for next year's Workers' Memorial Day.

UNIVERSAL BASIC SERVICES IN THE POST COVID19 WORLD? IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE!

Members will be aware that the idea of paying everyone a Universal Basic Income (UBI) has gained increased attention in recent weeks. The idea has been around for a while and its time may have come. Essentially it means everyone gets a minimum basic income paid by the state, regardless of their means. It is funded through a reform of our tax system and taxing the wealth that is increasingly being concentrated in the hands of the very rich.

In a world where accelerating automation means fewer jobs and risks further increasing inequality this is a way of providing options for shorter working weeks and/or different ways of working altogether. Many people would be able to afford to do important work that is not paid for example – raising their own kids, looking after family members, providing community based services etc – that they are currently forced to work long hours or do multiple jobs to pay for or simply cannot do for themselves.

It has been trialled in a limited way in places as diverse as Canada, Finland and India. The trials indicate people actually do more, and are more productive in a sustainable way, because they have the security of a basic income. They can afford to take the risk of starting up micro-businesses or home school their children for example.

Another slant on the UBI idea is that of Universal Basic Services (UBS). This is the notion that certain services are a fundamental human right: food, healthcare, education, transport and housing are the most commonly cited. It flows from this that utilities like power, water and broadband should be either free at the point of consumption or so cheap as to be universally affordable. This will mean a big shift from a market driven economy to one based on

need rather than the ability to pay. Sound far fetched? Well, even before COVID19 some countries were already moving in this direction. Free healthcare and education are nothing new – although it has been eroded after a generation of market driven policies – and some countries are moving to free public transport. Luxembourg introduced this very thing earlier this year.

It's no accident that many of these services are provided by the people who in the current crisis have been recognised as essential workers. Supermarket staff, transport workers, and carers all create the wealth we rely on and they deserve a better share of it. Higher wages through nationally bargained terms and conditions are part of the solution; universal basic services as part of the social wage are another.

Since the COVID19 crisis broke New Zealand has housed the homeless. What couldn't be done a few weeks ago can be done now. Schools are rapidly working on shifting teaching on-line, this will increase the pressure for universal access to devices and free broadband for all. These are just two of many examples of how the crisis has prompted creativity.

With the long term crises of inequality driven by market economies and technology and that of climate change there are positive trends that are being accelerated by the economic fallout of the COVID19 crisis. It's time we all started to think differently as what we had before wasn't sustainable for the next generation and those to follow.



As unionists we owe it to ourselves, our families and our community to be part of the debate.

NEWS

TAURANGA'S NEW CRANE IN POSITION

The Port's ninth ship-to-shore gantry crane arrived in parts from Ireland in mid-February on a special purpose delivery ship. It was assembled on site and moved several hundred metres onto the berth in a 48-hour operation successfully completed on Thursday April 16. Further testing will be undertaken now that the new crane is in position and it is expected to start work next week, just 10 weeks since it arrived. The new crane will be able to load and unload container ships up to 49 metres or 19 containers wide, compared with the 18 container reach of the Port's other large cranes. RMTU members have maintained market-leading crane productivity rates throughout the lockdown at Sulphur Point. Last week they achieved a net crane rate of 35.8 moves per hour, compared with the last reported national average of 29.1. Well done brothers and sisters!

FERRIES PLAY KEY ROLE IN MOVING HUNDREDS OF ESSENTIAL WORKERS

The Interislander ferries continue to play a crucial role in New Zealand's response to COVID-19, moving hundreds of essential workers between the North and South Islands in the past fortnight, KiwiRail Group Chief Executive Greg Miller says.

Around 650 essential transport, medical and export industry workers have travelled on the Interislander since 30 March. Many of

the essential workers travelling are truck drivers moving freight between the two islands, along with doctors, nurses and other medical staff, some relocating to take up short-term positions in hospitals, and primary industry workers.

"Our ferries are helping make sure that as a nation we can manage the COVID-19 pandemic, that New Zealanders can get food and other essential goods and that medical staff can get to where they are needed," Mr Miller says.

"We're also supporting our primary industries by moving seafood harvesters and fruit pickers between the islands. Ensuring our primary exporters can continue to get the staff they need on our ferries and their goods to ports around the country on KiwiRail's trains is vital for keeping New Zealand's economy going in these unprecedented times and will help the economic recovery in the weeks and months ahead.

"COVID-19 has highlighted how the Interislander ferries are a vital transport link between the islands and we are committed to playing our part during, and as we emerge from, the pandemic."

Today (Thursday) 45 fruit pickers from Thornhill, a horticulture and viticulture labour supply business, are sailing on the Kaiarahi ferry from Wellington to Picton. The experienced pickers have been working in the Hawke's Bay harvesting squash destined for overseas markets. Thornhill Managing Director Richard Bibby says the group of pickers are making their seasonal trip to prune grapes for the winter in Marlborough.

During the COVID-19 Alert Level 4 the Aratere is sailing with freight-only service and no passengers. The Kaiarahi and Kaitaki are available to carry commercial vehicles, drivers and passengers who meet the requirements for essential travel.

Stay home if you're sick

