

THE ACTIVIST



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ANNUAL LEAVE ROUNDING – KR

The Union has filed proceedings in the Employment Authority challenging the lawfulness of the rounding formula employed by KiwiRail for Annual Leave deduction when workers take a days annual leave and they are on a shift that exceeds 8 hours. The RMTU alleges by way of example that in a 4 week period, a worker in say, Westfield, who works 12 hour shifts on the current roster can have as many as 16 shifts of work in a 4 week period. Yet, by applying a 1.5 divisor for each shift away, that worker only receives 13.33 days off. In an extraordinary development KR deny, in their Statement in Reply, that there is any agreement that 4 weeks of Annual Leave entitlement is 20 days. There is much more to come on this matter and it is also salient to remember that this matter has a longer liability tail for KR than the statutory norm for financial matters of 7 years. We will be directed to mediation by the Authority but we are not confident of it being resolved in that forum.

WESTFIELD MECHANICAL

There's a morale crisis in Westfield Mechanical. Following the failure of management to listen to the members request for 12-hour shifts from the mechanical team, even walking away from an HPHE project to avoid the mechanical team's request, the Company has now

looked to attack the hours of the servicing team.

The guys in servicing have worked it so that their lives work around their 12-hour shifts. The Company is seeking to force them off their preferred shift, a shift the Company instigated. We have taken KiwiRail to mediation and are now looking to get a favourable ruling from the Employment Authority. It seems that KiwiRail wants to make life as hard as possible for those who kept the country running during the Covid lockdowns.



Along with the failure to consult around signals it appears KiwiRail have an attitude towards its employees that is at odds with the "One KiwiRail" rhetoric they love to spout.

CONTRACTING OUT REARS ITS HEAD AGAIN IN KIWIRAIL

Three days before the Easter break the RMTU was contacted by KiwiRail management saying they wanted to engage contractors to do some signals work in Auckland starting on Good Friday. There was no documentation supporting this, nor had the manager responsible done the e-learning module on his obligations under Clauses 13 & 29 of the RMTU-KiwiRail Collective Agreement, despite being in his job for four months.

Once again this was a case of a failure to meet agreed obligations by management around an issue that generates a great deal of angst amongst our members. The lack of workforce planning over the years has created a

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

situation where key people are not in post and this is then presented as a 'crisis' that requires the engagement of contractors to do our members' core work. Behaviour like this destroys trust and confidence between the parties and can very quickly undermine goodwill that has taken years to build up.

Some very heated discussions followed resulting in the work being put on hold while KiwiRail went back to the drawing board to see what it needed to do to meet its obligations. Our local organiser and delegates are following up as are the RMTU KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council representatives. At the time of writing we have just received a consultation document that contains information we should have been given access to when the proposal was first floated. Members and officials are currently digesting this.

There are both legal and industrial options available to us, especially given the current MECA expires at the end of June, so it remains to be seen how management intend to restore a trust relationship.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NMC) – 2021/2023 TERM OF OFFICE.

In accordance with Rule 24.6 of the Rules & Standing Orders of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union "the Union" calls for nominations from current financial members for the following position(s) on the Unions National Management Committee:

The Union is calling for nominations for the National Management Committee as follows:

- North Island Ports Representative (A financial member of a North Island Port Branch of the Union).
- South Island Ports Representative (A financial member of a South Island Port Branch of the Union).
- Auckland Rail Representative (A financial member of the Auckland Rail Branch).
- North Island Rail Representative A financial member of either the Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King

Country, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Palmerston North Rail Branches. (ALL remaining NI Rail branches excepting Auckland, Wellington and Hutt Branches).

- Wellington Rail Representative (A financial member of either the Wellington or Hutt Rail Branches).
- South Island Rail Representative (A financial member of either the Marlborough, West Coast, Canterbury, Timaru, Otago or Southland Rail Branches. All South Island Rail Branches).
- Women's Representative (A financial Woman member of any Branch of the Union).

At Conference 2020 a new NMC position was resolved to include a Te Kupenga Mahi nominated representative who would be s/elected by Te Kupenga Mahi. TKM has advised that the inaugural representative to this position is Ray Brown the TKM Pou Arahi to KiwiRail and a current financial member of the Union. Congratulations Ray and we look forward to you joining us at the June NMC meeting.

Nominations shall be in writing on the official NMC Nomination form and contain the signed consent of the candidate, and be proposed and seconded by financial members (Rule 1) of the Union from the correct branch and industry designation. Nomination Forms are available on the Union Website www.rmtunion.org.nz or from the Union's National Office by calling 04-499-2066, fax 04-471-0896 or admin@rmtunion.org.nz or your local Branch Secretary.

Correctly completed nomination forms must be received by the duly appointed National Returning Officer at the National Office of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, PO Box 1103 Wellington 6140 no later than 1700 hrs 21 May 2021. Nominations can be faxed fax 04-471-0896 or emailed to office@rmtunion.org.nz or admin@rmtunion.org.nz.

An acknowledgement of receipt will be issued. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt then please contact the Union to confirm our receipt of nomination by the due date.



The term of office is 2 years (Rule 24.2) and the duties are as contained in Rule 18 of the Union's Rules and Standing Orders.

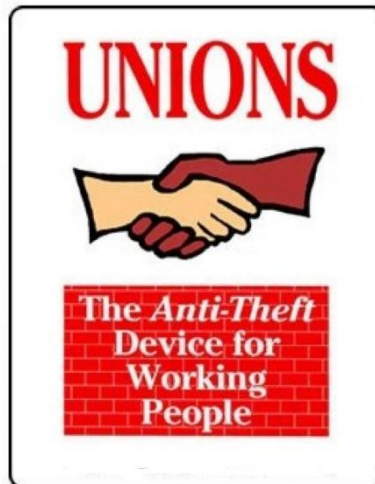
For the information of members – KiwiRail employed NMC members will be appointed to an applicable KiwiRail Industrial Council upon election to NMC (eg. A Mechanical Engineer will be placed onto the Mechanical Council filling one position on that Council. The women rep will be placed into the Women rep position on a KiwiRail Council commensurate with her occupation and skill set).

For the information of members - All incumbent NMC Representatives have indicated that they will be seeking re-election.

For the information of members - Members and Branch Returning Officers are advised that in the event that there is more than one nomination for any position, a postal ballot shall be run out of the National Office by the National Returning Officer.

Nominees must have their photo and a short promotional bio statement of up to 250 words to the National Office no later than **1700 hrs 26 May 2021**. Electronic receipt of this information is preferred and the photo in jpeg format of at least 1mb file size. Please ensure you get a receipt of acknowledgement when you provide the material. Should a candidate not provide the photo and bio by this time and date the ballot papers will be printed minus the candidate's information.

All members are urged to advise National Office if you have changed your mailing address recently. If we can't get a ballot paper to you because we do not have the correct mailing address then we cannot get you a voting form. Call RMTU 04-4992066 or alternatively update your details online www.rmtunion.org.nz or email admin@rmtunion.org.nz or office@rmtunion.org.nz



CANDIDATES ARE REMINDED THAT NOMINATIONS FOR NMC CLOSE 1700 hrs on 21 May 2021.

KR MECA WAGE ROUND REMIT CALL

The KiwiRail MECA expires 30 June 2021.

The Union will lodge with KiwiRail an Initiation of Bargaining notice in the first week of May.

The renewal of the MECA will see both the Union and the employer arrive at the table with "claims".

The RMTU claims come from members who are covered by the MECA and all remits are required to **have been moved and seconded by current financial members of the Union, who fall within the coverage of the MECA, and have been voted on with the remit being carried by majority vote of members at a bona fide and properly constituted meeting of an RMTU branch.**

The RMTU negotiation team composition will be determined by, and will operate under, the oversight of the members of the wider wage round negotiation team which is made up of all the rank and file elected members of the KiwiRail Industrial Council's.

Members are reminded that only those claims which are widely and deeply felt by members should be submitted and if members believe that the primary focus of this negotiation should be on a real and meaningful across the board general wage increase then submitting a plethora of sectoral claims will be self-defeating to that objective.

The remits will be prioritised by the wage round negotiation team. Regular updates

will be disseminated to members once bargaining commences.

All remits for the KiwiRail Wage round must be submitted by branches to the Unions National Office by 0800hrs Monday 17 May 2021. No late remits will be accepted after closing date.

TRAIN CONTROLLERS PROGRESSION REVIEW.

A workgroup has been formed to review the TC's progression through the MECA pay scale 3 levels. With the introduction of the Auckland desks, Train Controllers progression through the levels has varied with some able to progress in shorter periods than others even though they started on the same day. There are clear fairness and equity issues to be addressed. This workgroup met April 8th to develop an issue statement – "How do we have a progression system that is fair and equitable for all Train Controllers by recognising the role differences in the areas, rewarding for skill attainment and rewarding for experience"

This workgroup met again April 16th and made some solid progress. A meeting with Train Controllers is being planned to outline what is being proposed to improve progression.

PORT OF TAURANGA BARGAINING

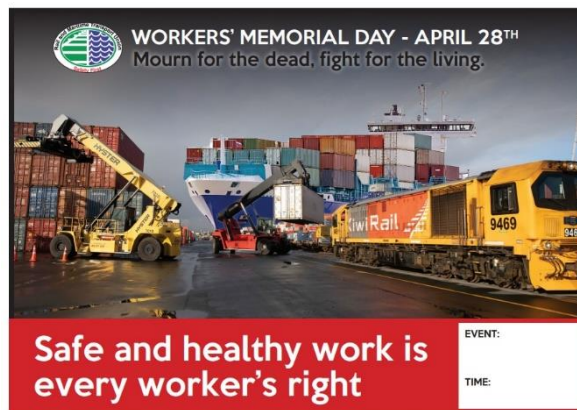
With the last Port of Tauranga negotiations leaving a sour taste in our teams mouth, It was agreed that we needed to provide additional staff support for this negotiation. Rudd Hughes

After the delegate training, the Port of Tauranga negotiation team stayed behind and collated the claims they felt were deeply and widely felt with the main claim focusing

on the current system in which their 'At-Risk Payment' is calculated and paid out.

Initially we planned negotiating days back to back to gain momentum and in a record breaking two days we believe we have a good packaged deal that we are willing to take back to the members to endorse ratification. A few issues were moved to the monthly Consultative Committee Meeting and in turn moved into working parties.

We are working on a final draft copy of the Collective and again, there may need to be a rewrite by way of variation, with lots of sections moving to the front of the document. This highlights the level of parity that we received during bargaining across all departments.



WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

28 April is International Workers Memorial Day each year.

On Workers' Memorial Day, we "remember the dead and fight for the living". The RMTU was the first union in NZ to

commemorate the day by organising events to remember those workers who are killed or injured through their work but at the same time pledge to continue the fight to make sure that such tragedies are not repeated.

The international theme this year is "Safe and healthy work is every worker's right". Worksafe NZ estimates that 30,000 people develop serious but non-fatal work-related ill-health each year from work.

Please show your solidarity and support for the workers and their families who've been cruelly affected by a workplace death, injury or ill-health.

Events will be occurring around the motu on 28 April.

Please advise the RMTU National office about your Branches planned Workers Memorial Day event. Advice received so far;

Greymouth - Greymouth will be the focus of Workers' Memorial Day this year as the RMTU

West Coast Branch is inaugurating a new memorial at the KiwiRail Depot at 0930. The RMTU General Secretary will be in attendance as will at least one member of the KiwiRail Board. Te Kupenga Mahi will be present for the formalities. The Branch is very pleased to be able to hold this event given it has been delayed by a year due to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic.

Christchurch - Lyttleton Port and Canterbury Rail are holding s26 stopwork meetings from 1130 to 1330. The usual gathering will be held at the Memorial Garden, off Gasson St in Sydenham at noon. Unions Canterbury are supporting the event.

Timaru - Timaru Port Rail Branches are holding stopwork meeting from 1145 to 1345 and a ceremony will be held at the memorial stone opposite Prime Port, followed by refreshments at the port.

Dunedin - The Otago Rail Branch will be holding a stopwork meeting and ceremony supported by Unions Otago at Market Reserve, corner of Princes Street and Manor Place, from 1145.

PORT TARANAKI CA NEGOTIATIONS

The second day of negotiations took place on the 20th April. Port Taranaki is looking ahead at the transition of the port and is seeking to have the workforce being able to do as many roles as possible. In the early days as a lot of work was done out of the workshops before other departments were put in place, the current suggested approach appears to be going back to those days. The next day of negotiations is set for May 5th.

TOLL SETTLEMENT

We finally have a settlement with Toll. This has been a difficult bargaining given Covid and the Company in difficult financial straits and it has gone on for an extended period of time but we finally have an offer of settlement from the Company. The offer is nil for the first year and 2% on paid and printed rates and some allowances from 1 July 2021. Ratification meeting are almost

completed and a postal ballot is on its way out for members to decide whether or not they will accept the offer.

BRANCH FACEBOOK GROUPS

Branches are reporting that they are receiving requests for joining the groups that appear to be dodgy and many are clearly from overseas. Branches are reminded that the RMTU Facebook group pages are ONLY for current financial members of the Union. Regular audits of membership must be undertaken by the admins for the groups and up to date membership lists are available by request from the Branch Secretary to assist with the checking and purging of membership. No non member of the RMTU is permitted to be a member of any RMTU branded group.



TRAINING IN THE BAY

The RMTU held another successful training workshop in the Mount last month over two days. The main topic of discussion was bargaining at the table and the importance of organizing during negotiations. In attendance were 20 delegates who we think will be leading representatives at their collectives' negotiations this year. Our SI Organiser John Kerr facilitated the training with local organiser Dasha and Wayne Butson

Our membership has benefited from this with all delegates going away and recruiting non-unionized employees. Current members also benefited from this training with representatives organizing regular department meetings to discuss any issues.

We have more courses planned in the near future for the initial delegate training course.

START OF THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

Best wishes to all our members and their families who are celebrating the month of Ramadan. Like last year, observing Ramadan will be a different and unusual experience for Muslims around the world. Here in NZ we are

privileged to not deal with lockdowns and other restrictions that other countries are dealing with and so in many countries, Ramadan festivities will be confined to the home.

Ramadan is a time for unity and solidarity, for renewing ties between family and community, and to offer assistance to those in the greatest need. Transport supply chain workers have worked tirelessly throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and have enabled the movement of essential goods and the passage of essential workers, while risking their health and safety and sadly in some countries, their lives.

We wish you, your families and your colleagues a Happy Ramadan.

UNVEILING OF GREYMOUTH RAIL DEPOT WORKERS' MEMORIAL

Thanks to some very good work by our West Coast Rail Branch, in particular our Branch Secretary Ron Nijssen and LE Delegate Donald Hibbs, the Greymouth KiwiRail Depot will have a splendid Workers' Memorial stone and plaque which will be unveiled at a ceremony on 28th April this year.

The original idea was to have the memorial in place for Workers' Memorial Day last year, but the COVID lockdown put paid to those well laid plans.

KiwiRail have been very helpful in providing a site and assisting with the acquisition of materials and are hosting the ceremony which commences at 0930. The RMTU General Secretary will be in attendance as will our South Island Organiser.

This unveiling is the sixth Workers' Memorial to be established in the South Island. The others are in Christchurch, Timaru, Dunedin, Waipahi and Invercargill. Other sites are on the North Island in Wellington Rail Yard, Hutt Shops, Palmerston North, Napier Port, Kawarau, Oio, Hamilton and Port of Tauranga. The RMTU has been instrumental in the establishment of all these memorials.

PORTS AND WOMEN'S FORUM

The National Ports Forum is scheduled for 22-23 June 2021 and will be followed by the

Women's Forum on 24 June 2021 to be held at The Brentwood Hotel in Kilbirnie.

The National Union will bear the cost associated for one Branch Delegate attending the Women's Forum, and one Port Branch Delegate member attending the Ports Forum. The cost of Observers is the responsibility of the Branch or the Individual.

Registration forms have been sent to all branch secretaries and National Office will forward to each formally nominated sanctioned delegate/observer by email, forum papers, a copy of their travel arrangements, and conference venue and accommodation details.

Completed Registration forms for the Women's Delegate and Ports Delegates are required from Branches by Friday 30th April 2021. Leave requirements for Delegates requires notice to the Employer so please treat this matter as urgent to ensure your Delegate is released to attend.

DDO AT TRANSDEV AUCKLAND

In February we resumed the HP2 process with TDAK to deal with the "challenging issue" that came out of the fractious bargaining in 2018. As agreed by the members, the current process we are exploring is Driver Door Operations. There are a number of areas we are looking at these include: Cab Layout, Platform Risk Assessments, Ergonomic and Workload Assessment, Role Definition and finally, the team will be focussing on developing the plan to trial the DDO process once the two test trains are modified and the above work is completed.

This trial will be comprehensive (out of service and in-service, and across the entire network). The team is focussed on ensuring that we develop an operational model that is as safe or safer than the current model; and meets the needs of employees, the RMTU, TDAK/AT, and the travelling public.

As always, we reiterate that there will be no forced redundancies whatever system we end up with.



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

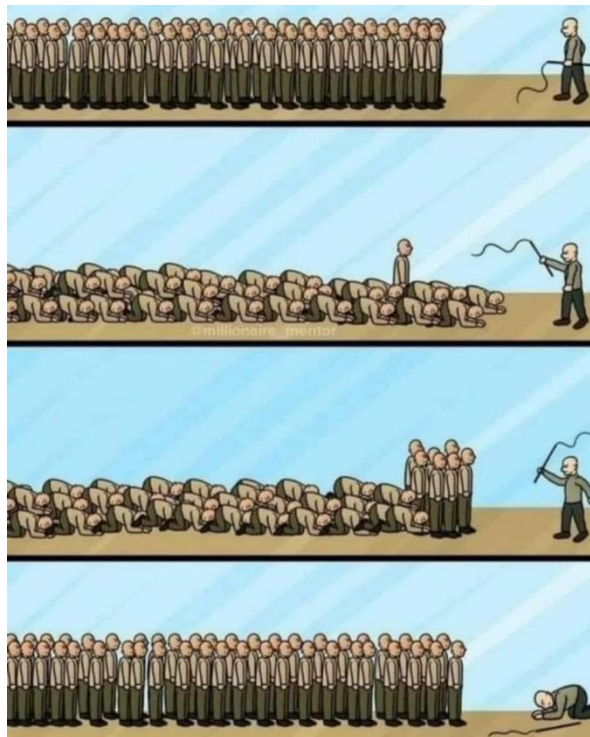
Following the Union AGM's, new Health and Safety Reps who've recently been elected to Health and Safety Committees are required to register for H&S Rep training. H&S Reps attend 2-days paid training per year paid for by the employer.

To register on a course, go to www.worksafereps.co.nz

KIWI RAIL NETWORKS PAY SCALE 2 REVIEW PROGRESSING

Readers of the Activist will recall that this exercise, which was delayed by the impact of COVID19, is set to be complete by expiry of the current RMTU- KiwiRail collective agreement i.e. 30 June.

It is a complex exercise as Pay Scale 2 around ninety four roles in Network Services and the process requires the RMTU and KiwiRail to check, and update if necessary, all the job and person descriptions, together with the career development plans for each role. Once this is done, the documents are sent to an independent third party assessor, in this case Ernst Young, who undertakes a comparison with like roles in the labour market. Last time this exercise was completed was in 2011 and it concluded that KiwiRail had lagged behind the going rate of pay in a number of roles and consequently pay increases resulted. There is no guarantee that the current exercise will deliver the same results but it may do. KiwiRail has agreed that no rates will be reduced as a consequence of the exercise.



The RMTU and KiwiRail still have to review Signals Line Mechanics, Telecommunications Technicians, the Track Machine Group (including NDT Operators), Plant Fitters/Fitter Operators and Stores. We are working through one group per week and aim to have all the documentation complete for despatch to Ernst Young by 28th May. If members have any questions regarding this process please contact our South Island Organiser John Kerr, who is responsible for the KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council (KNIC), or your KNIC representative.

ROSTERING PARAMETERS - TERMINAL OPERATIONS WORKERS (ROM SECTION 9)

At our KIC meeting on 4 March we undertook a 'page turn' of the draft ROM Section 9 that was developed in 2019. As a result of these discussions, we agreed to update the 2019

draft and label it as a final draft. This draft is to be used for final input from terminal members.

The final feedback needs to be provided by the end of April as we will review it at the KIC meeting being held on 10 and 11 May. At this meeting we are planning to sign off on the ROM Section 9 review which will then be subject to ratification by Terminal members. If any Terminal members have not had the opportunity to review this draft ROM S9 then contact your KIC Terminal Rep - Josh Goodwin, Logan Rusling, Rebecca Hauck or Organiser, Todd Valster.

NORTHLAND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT COUNCIL (NLEC)

We formed the NLEC in 2019 to deal with issues that affected KiwiRail members in the North. These meetings are for raising RMTU member's concerns before they get sent to the Industrial Councils and engaging with the

Union on upcoming work, changes that may be occurring in the workplace and any health and safety issues and incidents. Unfortunately, these meetings are not fulfilling their original aims and are failing to follow the original memorandum of understanding that was part of its formation. While some managers are consulting and engaging in a manner the RMTU would expect in a respectful partnership, others are not.

As a result we are currently seeking a mediation with the Company to resolve this problem.

TDW ROM ONBOARD STAFF

Delegates report that the Onboard Staff Rail Operating Manual is finalized and ready for ratification by Transdev Wellington members who are affected by its creation. Over the next few weeks the local branch will agree the variation voting method and it will be put to members. Our sincere thanks to the delegate team ably lead by Mark Pickering.

HELEN KELLY: HER LIFE

Helen Kelly was an energetic, controversial and courageous champion of workers' rights, battling against some of the country's toughest adversaries, from Talley's to Ports of Auckland. Helen died in 2016 at the age of 52. Helen was the daughter of Pat and Cath Kelly, long-time communists who in the 1970s switched their political loyalties to the Labour Party. Her father, Cleaners Union secretary Pat Kelly, in the 1970s mentored many young activists in the union movement. Her mother Cath Kelly was a Labour Party stalwart who became a tireless supporter of the people of Vietnam: both she and Pat fiercely opposed the Vietnam War. In her role as CTU president, Helen Kelly believed all workers, whether in a union or not, deserved to be given a fair go. Her battles with famous people were the stuff of headlines. She took on Peter Jackson, the nation's icon, when he opposed demands from Actors' Equity for an agreement over pay and conditions for workers on The Hobbit. She was accused in parliament of doing 'irreparable damage' to the union movement and by employers of exploiting

the bereaved families of dead workers when she exposed dangerous work practices in forestry companies. While many New Zealanders saw her as a hero, to others she was 'that woman', a bloody pain in the neck. After being diagnosed with cancer in February 2015, Kelly fought for the legalisation of medicinal cannabis and jostled on social media with the associate minister of health, Peter Dunne, using the hashtag #apersoncoulddieawaiting.

Rebecca Macfie, whose previous book Tragedy at Pike River Mine won three major awards, weaves the story of Kelly's life with the history of a defining period in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand, when old values were replaced by the individualism of neo-liberalism, and the wellbeing and livelihood of workers faced unremitting stress. Through it all, Helen Kelly stood as an electrifying figure.

Helen Kelly: Her Life by Rebecca Macfie, published by Awa Press.

Release date: May 15, 2021, RRP: \$50

JOINT STATEMENT UPDATING UNION MEMBERS AND STAFF OF TRANSDEV WELLINGTON AND HYUNDAI ROTEM COMPANY LTD

The RMTU, Transdev Wellington and Hyundai Rotem have collaborated and developed a Travel Privileges & Benefits Guide to provide clearer guidance of the travel privilege benefits available to staff covered by the Multi Employer Collective Agreement (MECA).

The Travel Privileges & Benefits Guide details what discounted and free travel privilege benefits are available to Members, Nominated Persons and Dependents as well as the application process. Please note, this guide is to be read in conjunction with the travel privileges clauses in the MECA (2019-2022).

There are a couple of key things to note regarding the travel privilege benefits and the application process, these are:

- Discounted or free access to the lounge is now available when travelling on a Cook Strait Ferry crossing
- The Travel Privileges & Promotional Code Application form has been revised and



can be used by both Transdev Wellington and Hyundai Rotem

The Travel Privileges & Benefits guide and revised application form will be available on the My Transdev App/Intranet and printed copies will be available at Depot/Stations.

A special thanks to Mike Nicholson, Tom Barrett and Natasha Hill for all the work put into developing this guide.

DUNEDIN COUNCIL DEFERS DECISION ON DUNEDIN RAILWAYS

Readers will recall that Dunedin Council, which owns Dunedin Railways, who operate train services on the mainline and through the iconic Taieri Gorge, voted to put the rolling stock and Taieri Gorge track into 'mothballs' last year when COVID19 resulted in the loss of overseas tourist custom. Despite a hard fought RMTU campaign against the decision and calls for commuter rail trials that gained the support of the public all but a handful of our members who worked for Dunedin Railways were made redundant.

We never gave up however, and our Keep Dunedin Rail Rolling campaign backed an initiative to run summer excursion trains called 'trains not planes' that was aimed at domestic tourists. This proved an enormous success with many services being booked out. On 13 April the Council met to discuss the fate of Dunedin Railways. Four options were put to Council and it appears the least favoured is to wind up the service and sell off the assets.

The other options — negotiating with a partner about the sale or lease of the railways, having the city maintain ownership of the trains but running them on KiwiRail's national network of tracks only, or retaining city ownership and running a service that also includes using the Taieri Gorge line — were canvassed and Council voted to defer their decision pending further information.

This is no bad thing. The RMTU, through our Otago Branch Secretary Dave Kearns, made the point very forcefully that Council should avoid closing off opportunities when rail will only grow in the future. His remark that 'Dunedin without the railway is like Rome without the Colosseum', was widely reported. Unions Otago also backed the RMTU, with First Union organiser Sonja Mitchell arguing now is not the time major decisions about selling assets and getting rid of a low-carbon form of transport.

Dunedin Council's investment arm Dunedin City Holdings Limited had produced a report for Council with a strong economic focus, but councillors indicated they wanted to take environmental and social considerations into account when deciding the future of the railway.

In the meantime the RMTU will continue to fight hard to Keep Dunedin Rail Rolling!



MAY DAY CONCERT AT THE SPACE ACADEMY IN CHRISTCHURCH

A group of committed activists have arranged this event for Saturday, May 1, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Space Academy, 371

St Asaph Street, Christchurch. This will be a celebration of May Day, International Workers Day, and will feature local performers Adam McGrath of The Eastern and Petit Poisson with others to be announced.

More about the event can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/510961289901357>

RMTU members at Lyttleton Port will remember Adam and The Eastern's support during the 2018 dispute and may want to come along and celebrate International Workers Day. The organisers are working on free pizza and cheap drinks for early arrivals.

KIWI RAIL NETWORKS INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL TO MEET ON 5TH MAY

The KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council (KNIC) is set down for 5th May. A key agenda item will be the Workforce Planning and the

review of gang sizes, coverage and skills that were part of the terms of settlement of the current MECA.

The KNIC has been a relatively successful Industrial Council in recent years in that we have built up trust between the parties and managed to cooperate on resolving issues between us. This marked a big improvement in the relationship from the dark days of the 2013 so called 'cost reduction' exercise that saw the workforce slashed and a drive by the then manager responsible to contract out work.

Our fear is that recent developments have largely destroyed that trust. The failure of key managers to front up to RMTU representatives and recent repeated breaches of Clause 29 around contracting out has put us backwards and there is little point pretending otherwise.

There are a couple of very deeply and widely felt issues amongst the membership that were not resolved at the last bargaining round i.e. call out and stand by and on the job training payments that threaten to become bones of contention given the deterioration in trust.

The irony is that given the recent capital investment in rail and the assurances that KiwiRail has around funding one of the fundamental causes of conflict between the RMTU and management should have been alleviated. Time will tell if this is actually the case.

RAIL WORKERS CALL TO HALT TRADE DEAL WITH MYANMAR

The union representing New Zealand rail workers has spoken up against the deaths of rail workers under the Myanmar military dictatorship.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson says there have been reports of 15 railway workers, mostly union members, being shot at the railway compound at Myitnge near Mandalay, Myanmar, on 14 April 2021.

"The military dictatorship are waging a vicious war against unarmed civilians and workers, and New Zealand needs to do all it

can to bring international pressure on them."

Mr Butson says the RMTU is backing calls by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions to halt the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement that includes Myanmar.

He says the Labour Government must place human rights before trade deals, and act accordingly.

Over 700 civilians have been killed in Myanmar since 1 February when the military overthrew the democratically elected Government.

Myanmar rail workers have been involved in strikes as part of a civil disobedience campaign against the military dictatorship, says Mr Butson.

"The military dictatorship is illegitimate and is responsible for mass killings. The RMTU supports the Myanmar pro-democracy movement which includes our fellow rail workers," says Mr Butson.

Editorial note: The Rail and Maritime Transport Union is an affiliate of the Labour Party.

GREEN LIGHT FOR 10 MINUTE E-BUS TO AUCKLAND AIRPORT

Transport Minister Michael Wood today marked the completion of upgrades to State Highway 20B which will give Aucklanders quick electric bus trips to and from the airport.

The State Highway 20B Early Improvements project has added new lanes in each direction between Pukaki Creek Bridge and SH20 for buses and vehicles carrying three or more people. A shared path has also been built to give Aucklanders more options for getting to the airport, work, schools and the shops.

Michael Wood said any Aucklanders with access to the rail network will now have a quick and convenient trip to the airport.

"Thanks to the SH20B upgrades, the travel time between Puhinui Station and the airport on the Airport Link electric bus will only be around 10 minutes. Work to upgrade Puhinui Station to an efficient, modern and user-friendly rail and bus interchange is expected to finish in June.



"Vehicles carrying three or more people will also be able to use the bus/T3 lanes, which will encourage people to carpool and ease congestion.

"The airport is one of the largest employment hubs in Auckland with more than 900 businesses around it – these upgrades will make it easier for thousands of Aucklanders to get to and from work. It'll also help Kiwis and visitors avoid pre-flight congestion as air travel picks up.

"The quick bus service the project enables is the first step to connecting up South and East Auckland with good public transport. The route will eventually become part of a rapid transit route connecting to Manukau and Botany with a dedicated busway or possibly light rail.

"Electric buses are going to be exclusively used on this route and we'll be working with councils to fully decarbonise their public transport bus fleets by 2035," says Michael Wood.

SH20B is one of two main routes to Auckland International Airport with more than 30,000 vehicles per day. The total project cost is \$72 million.

CTU SUPPORTS BOLD HEALTH REFORMS

The Council of Trade Unions is broadly supportive of the bold reforms to our health sector as announced today.

"What will be imperative is the inclusion of working peoples voices and perspectives though this period of upheaval and change," CTU President Richard Wagstaff said.

"We all deserve a health system which is fair and equitable; that regardless of where in

the country you live you can get the health care you need. These reforms have this as their goal and we fully support the improvements needed to achieve this outcome."

"A dedicated Māori health authority is long overdue. There is much work to be done to improve the health of Māori specifically."

"What the impact might be on regions is of some concern. We strongly encourage the reforms to utilise the 'Just Transition' framework - if and when the nature of some work needs to change, then working people must be supported to move into new roles. This includes training and support. We expect that those working in our nations hospitals and health sector will be fully consulted, and their insights and knowledge welcomed."

"We can have the health system that we need and deserve. This is bold leadership and is to be commended," Wagstaff said.

PRICES FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING RISE IN MARCH 2021 QUARTER

Higher prices for transport and housing led to a 0.8 percent lift in the consumers price index in the March 2021 quarter, Stats NZ said today.


Prices for getting around rose in the March quarter. Transport prices rose 3.9 percent, the biggest quarterly rise in over a decade. Petrol prices rose 7.2 percent, the biggest quarterly rise since June 2015. Despite this, petrol prices are 3.8 percent lower than they were a year ago.

Remember – be Safe at all times!

RAIL - TAKING STRESS OFF NORTHLAND ROADS

It's time to reconnect Northland's extensive railway network enabling industry to use the safest way to move freight and increase high value rail tourism.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union fully supports re-opening lines to Dargaville and Otiria, reconnecting rail to Kawakawa and Opuia for rail tourism.



Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.

- Logs • Woodchips
- Dairy • Bulkloads • Tourism
- Large Consignment Freight

