

THE ACTIVIST



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BUY NZ MADE – LETS USE HUTT AND HILLSIDE WORKSHOPS CAMPAIGN

The RMTU, NZCTU and the Dunedin City Council (DCC) have commissioned a study on the economic benefits to NZ Inc of having new rail rolling stock built at the rail workshops (Hillside and Hutt) in collaboration with other local suppliers rather than the work going overseas. The Study is being undertaken by BERL and is funded 50/50 by the RMTU and the DCC.

We are also doing posters to promote the work of the workshops and to show the public what we achieve. Most people do not realize the skill and passion that it takes to operate a railway where the most modern locomotive is 30 plus years old.



**MADE from
NEW ZEALAND**

UNCORRECTED TRANSCRIPT FROM PARLIAMENT

The following occurred during question time in the House.

Question 7. Dr JACKIE BLUE (National) to the Minister of Transport: What progress has been made on the procurement of electric trains for Auckland's commuter rail network?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister of Transport): I am pleased to confirm that KiwiRail has begun the tender process to procure approximately 114 electric trains for Auckland. This is a \$500 million investment, signed off by Cabinet in November, to upgrade Auckland's commuter rail system. It will provide a

modern, world-class rail system that commuters will want to use. KiwiRail has issued an industry-engagement document, and a preferred supplier will be identified by the end of the year. The first electric trains will be delivered in 2013.

Dr Jackie Blue: How does this fit into the overall upgrade of Auckland's commuter rail network?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: Very well. The purchase of a new fleet of electric rolling stock is the final piece in the overall \$1.6 billion project to greatly improve the capacity and reliability of Auckland's rail network. The \$600 million upgrade is progressing well. In addition, the \$500 million electrification of the rail network infrastructure is also progressing well.

The necessary new signalling is already being installed on parts of the network, and the first masts should begin

appearing later this year.

Hon Darren Hughes (Labour): What steps will the Government be taking to ensure that all or a substantial number of these units are built or assembled here in New Zealand, either at the Hillside railway workshops in Dunedin or at Woburn in the Hutt Valley?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: This will be a competitive tender process, and, of course, KiwiRail will have the opportunity to bid for that process. The most important thing, however, is getting the right value for money for taxpayers in developing the trains and ensuring that we can obtain the trains within the \$500 million budget that has been set.

UGL – RMTU CA

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

KiwiRail have confirmed in writing to the Union the following;

"that the current Collective Employment Agreement can be "rolled over" until 30 June 2010 and that there will be backdating of any settlement to 1 April 2010'.

The Union has accepted the rollover of the UGL CA in the context of an overall settlement to the KiwiRail MECA.

UNIONAID FUNDRAISER

We would like to draw your attention to an exciting UnionAID film fundraiser taking place in Wellington on Monday 26th April and Auckland on 3 May.

The documentary is called Breaking the Silence: Burma's Resistance and the wellington screening will be its New Zealand Premier. UnionAID is a registered charity that helps vulnerable workers in the Asia-Pacific region to realize their rights and get a fairer deal. One of UnionAID's key projects works with Burmese migrant workers on the Thai border. If you would like to purchase tickets please:

Make an electronic transfer to account: **01-0533-0208365-00** Under Particulars please indicate 'Burma Film' and under Reference please write your full name so that you can be identified. Please also send an email to unionaid@nzctu.org.nz detailing how many tickets you would like and where you would like those tickets sent. Tickets will be sent when your payment has been received.

Or;

Write a cheque payable to UnionAID and post along with your contact details and

postal address to: UnionAID, PO Box 6689, Marion Square, Wellington, 6141

Please consider friends and whanau that may also be interested in this event. Get in quick to avoid disappointment.

WIN A DELUXE COFFEE MACHINE - UNION MEMBERS ONLY

Union Plus (in association with Sovereign) is giving you the chance to win a Deluxe Coffee Machine valued at over \$2,000. There are also 25 coffee packs to be won. There is one condition - you must be a current Union member to enter.

Text the word CUP109 and your Name & RMTU to 382.

You will receive an auto-responder message to confirm your entry and that 'an adviser will be in touch'. Don't worry, the only contact you will have is from the Union Plus Member Benefits team to ask if you wish to opt-in to receive their monthly member benefits updates.

The competition ends on June 30th.
www.unionplus.co.nz

DOL RELEASES CODE ON INFANT FEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE

The Department of Labour has released a Code of Employment Practice on Infant Feeding in the

Workplace.

The Code results from legislation passed in 2008 that requires employers, where reasonable and practicable, to provide facilities and breaks for employees who want to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace.

New Zealand Premiere of

Breaking the Silence: Burma's Resistance

\$25 per ticket

A new Canadian documentary filmed secretly inside Burma showcases the country's little known networks of resistance movements. It sheds light on the enormous risks taken by ordinary Burmese, and their long struggle to remove the country's brutal military dictatorship. Directed by Pierre Mignault 75 minutes

Join us for free drinks at a social hour before the screening
contact unionaid@nzctu.org.nz for tickets



Wellington
Monday 26 April, 8pm
at Paramount Cinema
Courtenay Pl

Auckland
Monday 3 May, 8.30pm
at Academy Cinema
44 Lorne St

All proceeds to UnionAID, the international development agency of the NZ Council of Trade Unions.
Registered charity C.C.40251 www.unionaid.org.nz



The Department's Head of Workplace Practices Lesley Haines says Parliament wanted to give mothers who wished to return to the workforce after giving birth the opportunity to do so. But many were put off by the lack of facilities to breastfeed their babies.

"Employers are keen to retain the services of some of their most valued employees. They indicated they would value guidance in devising suitable arrangements," says Ms Haines.

"The Code gives employers guidance on the factors to consider when negotiating a breastfeeding arrangement with an employee. It gives practical advice on facilities, length and timing of breaks, health and safety, and resources and space for employees who wish to breastfeed."

The code was developed by the Department of Labour in consultation with Business New Zealand, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, women's community and health groups and the Ministry of Health.

The Code can be found at <http://ers.govt.nz/parentalleave/infantfeeding/code/> Supporting information and resources are available at <http://ers.govt.nz/parentalleave/infantfeeding.html>

UPDATE ON LOCO RADIO PROJECT

There have been some recent developments regarding this project. This note is a brief update on the status. Please pass it on to our KR Network Communications staff.

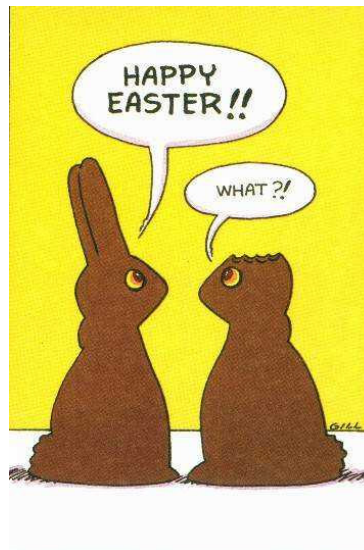
The Tait 8260 has been selected as the replacement loco radio. It has been challenging getting to this point, but now we will be able to proceed with the replacement of old loco radios and with the roll out of the radio network upgrade, and achieve the long awaited reliability and quality benefits.

A number of practical issues remain to be sorted out including the ones listed below.

This will happen over time and will be led by the Loco Radio Project Manager.

Status

- The Tait 8260 has been selected as the replacement loco radio. Technical approval from KR Network for this radio is being worked through now.
- The first Tait radio loco fit is planned for DFT7010 which is due out of Woburn late April.
- A KR Network Comms tech will be involved with the first fit to advise on faulting and maintainability issues so that suitable specs for the fit can be established.
- Once this fit has been completed and suitable documentation and training has taken place, a trial period will run to debug the new radio, and then in due course a roll out of Tait radios will start.
- The fit will be done by loco fitters, and code checks by Comms Technicians.
- The Salor radios will remain in service, with sensible numbers of spare units kept on hand for faulting and maintenance. The balance of the main line fleet will have Tait radios fitted.
- Installation of Tait radios into shunt locos will be considered later.



Project management

- Theo Klok of KR Freight will lead the Tait roll out project and will liaise with Network S&TAP Managers and with Network S&T Engineering on issues affecting Network.
- Trevor Pollock of KR Network will be the key Network technical contact.
- Practical Issues still to sort
- Training of Network Comms technicians to support the Tait radios to be arranged
- Suitable quantities of spare parts i.e. handsets, control heads and the actual radio's will be made available

- Profile software and to read/program the radio's and interface cable to laptop will be made available

IRAQI WORKERS STANDING UP FOR THEIR RIGHTS

Seven years after the fall of Saddam, Iraqi workers are long due their fundamental rights at work.

Iraqi workers have recently launched a campaign to finally give them their fundamental rights at work, and free and independent trade unions. To build on this momentum, international support is needed to press the new government to put in place a fair and just labour law.

Nearly seven years have passed since the fall of the Saddam's regime, yet many of its laws continue to apply, making it impossible for Iraqi trade unions to organise and bargain on behalf of their members. Workers in the public sector can't join unions, the Government has frozen trade union assets, and key parts of Government have attempted to take over trade unions. These laws are undermining the immense contribution democratic and independent trade unions can make to Iraq's fledgling democracy.

While several versions of a new labour code have been drafted, political opposition and a gridlocked Parliament has seen them only gather dust.

In response workers and unions from across the country – from Basra to Iraqi Kurdistan – have come together to demand the government put in place a fair and just labour law. In the face of often tremendous personal risk, the campaign is also a pioneering effort in bridging religious, political, ethnic and geographic divides.

Since its launch in November last year the campaign has achieved significant early success. Some 85 members of Parliament have signed the campaign appeal, along with the then President of Iraq, Jalal

Talabani, the Oil Minister and many community organisations, businesses and other political leaders. The key parliamentary drafting committee has consulted with the campaign's coordinating group, the National Labour Campaign Committee NLCC, and MPs are petitioning for the legislation to be debated in Parliament.

But in an alarming and recent reminder as to why fair and just labour laws are needed, a government committee entrusted with overseeing trade union elections is attempted replace the legitimate leadership of the Iraqi Teacher's Union (ITU) with its own stooges. This is in clear violation of national court rulings, many parts of government, the Iraqi constitution and the ILO Convention on Freedom of Association.

With a new government currently being formed, the Iraqi trade unions want to raise the profile of the campaign, to make it a top legislative priority – and that's where international solidarity is critical. As key campaigner Hashmeya Muhsin from the Electricity Workers Union in Basra recently said in an interview with the International Trade Union Confederation:

"international solidarity matters in such a campaign". We need it to, "...pressure the Iraqi

government to legislate a new, fair and just labour law". The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has formally endorsed the campaign.

To show your support, sign the International Call for a Fair and Just Labour Law.

A PLEA FROM LOCO LAND – AN ANONYMOUS LOCO ENGINEER WRITES

Until this "optimisation" rostering concept was foisted upon us the lot of the Loco man (and his partner) was relatively content and happy. The work was done, ample time off was incorporated into rosters for us to recuperate from the early starts and night shifts. We had a life outside the 'job' and



could plan ahead knowing that the master roster was not going to be altered to a great degree over time. Operating incidents were generally low but more importantly, when the occasions arose the Guy's were prepared to go that extra distance to make 'things' work.

Now we are confronted with a tired and sullen workforce who have collectively realised that they have been had. There is no joy in going to work any longer and one is surrounded by negatives and unending negativity.

Already we have had many resignations. Why are these highly experienced and once loyal Drivers going? It's not all about the money as most love living in New Zealand. We have been pushed to the limits of our endurance with this optimisation process. We argued right from the start (and could see what was coming) that this would bite the Company in the bum and cause misery.

Well, the chickens have come home to roost! We don't want (or need) to be pandered too, we are an aging workforce, working on old and decrepit rough riding equipment that is knocking the living daylights out of us. Together with no quality family time or indeed time to recuperate between shifts we are beginning to actually hate the work we undertake. Greener pastures have never looked greener!

BRITISH AIRWAYS STRIKE

Workers belonging to the ITF affiliate UNITE, which represents more than 95% of BA's cabin crew, have been on strike since 20-22

March as part of an ongoing dispute with British Airways over management cuts that BA crew believe are unfair and will damage the airline.



**JOBS,
JUSTICE,
CLIMATE**

SOLID INCREASE IN GDP GOOD – BUT LACK OF INVESTMENT MEANS CONTINUED CONCERNS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

The 0.8 percent increase in GDP for the three months to December 2009 is the first solid increase since contraction of the economy ceased in the June quarter. It follows increases of 0.2 percent and 0.3 percent in the June and September quarters. Growth has been across the economy, the main exceptions being in construction which contracted by 0.6 percent in the quarter, and personal, health, and community services, which fell 1.1 percent. Construction has contracted in every quarter except one since December 2007.

However investment continues to fall. It contracted by 0.9 percent in the quarter, and 12.2 percent for the year. Although this was largely due to falls in investment in intangible assets (software and exploration), it does not bode well for future employment growth.

The strong rise in manufacturing output (4.5 percent for the quarter) is very welcome, but follows seven quarters (almost two years) of contraction. Manufacturing has not had two consecutive quarters of growth since September 2005, and its output in December was 17 percent below the level in that quarter. It will be a considerable time before manufacturing returns even to that peak, adding to employment concerns.

"Our concerns that high unemployment will continue for at least the next two to three years remain," said CTU Economist and Policy Director Bill Rosenberg. "If the economy is growing, and corporate profits are increasing as indicated by yesterday's balance of payments report, the Government should have sufficient revenue to support the unemployed and to continue to support activity in the economy. We do not want to see jobless growth."

BANK BORROWING AND PROFIT REPATRIATION DRIVING CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT

After 15 months of improvements in the current account deficit, income paid to overseas investors is returning the deficit to its previous form, said Bill Rosenberg, CTU Economist and Policy Director today. The current account is the difference between what New Zealand as a nation pays and receives from abroad.

"The country appears to be leaving this recession in the same state it came in, with exports faltering, imports rising again, and banks still borrowing heavily abroad to finance mortgages and other lending. It does not bode well," said Rosenberg.

The current account deficit for the three months ended December 2009 worsened from \$1.6 billion to \$3.6 billion – when adjusted for seasonal effects, the largest quarterly fall ever recorded. The fall was due mainly to a large increase in profits and interest paid to overseas investors, leading to a deficit of \$3.4 billion on investment income. However in addition, in seasonally adjusted terms exports fell by \$255 million while imports rose \$150 million and other contributors to the overall current account deficit also worsened.

Although New Zealand's net liabilities to the rest of the world improved during the quarter, banks are still borrowing heavily from overseas and borrowing short term. Bank debt drove a \$6.5 billion flow of foreign investment into New Zealand. It was "mainly in short term money market

instruments" according to Statistics New Zealand. Outward investment of \$5.4 billion was itself in large part also from the banks. Liabilities due within 12 months have begun to rise again – 44 percent of financial liabilities are now due within that period, compared to 41 percent in September 2009. The banks' short term overseas borrowing led to Reserve Bank concerns during the financial crisis.

CLARITY IS TO BE ADMIRERD

Currently all of us living in Wellington are daily bombarded by text messages from Tranz Metro advising of delays on one or all of the three lines due either to mechanical failures of some form or weather issues. The text messages in our view mostly exacerbate the anger of commuters as they all too frequently add to the confusion or highlight the escalation of the delays.

For example it is not unknown to receive up to 5 or more SMS messages one after another which state that the trains are 10 minutes late on a line, 15 minutes late on a line, 20 minutes late on all lines and so on. Confusion reigns. For this reason when we received the attached pic recently we found the clarity and the sincerity of the Aussies refreshing to say the least.

In closing it is worth noting and congratulating our members on the wonderful job they do day in and day out to keep Metro operating and in dealing with angry commuters.



BENEFICIARY BEAT-UP NO CURE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Why isn't the Government doing more to create jobs for the unemployed instead of sending Paula Bennett out to slash benefits and demonise beneficiaries, asks CTU President Helen Kelly today.

"Unemployment has rocketed since this government came to power," said Kelly. "People have not chosen to go on the dole, the recession has put them there. It is outrageous for the Social Development Minister to act as though every claimant is a feckless bludger when her government is doing next to nothing to create jobs which the vast majority of the unemployed would gladly take up."

"Where is the investment in more infrastructure projects, skills training to equip the unemployed for new opportunities, further assistance for redundant workers? Kicking people off the dole when there are no decent jobs to go to will not put money back into the economy. It will only drive some people further down a spiral of poverty and helplessness."

"This is action of intolerable arrogance, waving a big stick at people who are largely powerless to change their situation. It is a shameful attack on the thousands of people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Many of these people are workers who have never been unemployed before and never wanted to be."

"As well as being completely lacking in any compassion this policy is flawed from an economic perspective. Let's see more effort to put these people back into meaningful work which will generate spending in the economy and save more businesses from going to the wall. There is a long way to go yet out of this recession and this spiteful policy will do nothing to speed us out of it."

"With unemployment still not at its peak and forecast to remain high for years, this is the wrong time to be cutting government spending, the wrong time to be forcing more people into the already crowded job queues, the wrong time to be punishing people for being unable to find a non-existent job."



NATIONAL SHOWS LACK OF COMMITMENT TO RAIL AND JOBS, AGAIN

The National Government's lack of commitment to investing in rail and jobs in the Kiwi rail industry were highlighted in Parliament again today, Labour's transport spokesperson Darren Hughes said.

"When asked in Parliament to ensure that the Auckland electrified train units will be built in New Zealand, Transport Minister Steven Joyce would not give any guarantees," Darren Hughes said.

"At a time of when unemployment is at a sixteen year high with 168,000 Kiwis out of work, National is refusing to take decisions that support jobs in our economy.

"The last Labour Government highlighted the ability of Woburn (Hutt Valley) and Hillside (Dunedin) to build or assemble rail units as a critical part of our economic stimulus plan if we were re-elected.

"It seems National is not prepared to make a similar assurance to the local industry to support jobs and stimulate the local economies."

Darren Hughes said that the Prime Minister's much hyped Jobs Summit highlighted government

procurement as an area that should be pursued.

"But it turns out it was just a talkfest as Phil Goff said it would be and John Key promised it wouldn't be.

"John Key has shown little commitment to jobs and Steven Joyce has shown little commitment to rail.

"The decision on Auckland rail comes after 15 months delay. Labour had already started the procurement process and National's delay has simply wasted Auckland's time and cost taxpayers more money."

ANZAC DAY PETONE CEREMONY

The Petone Community Board extend an invitation to all members to attend the Flag

Ceremony at the ANZAC Memorial Flagstaff, Petone Railway Station, at 7am on ANZAC Day, Sunday 25 April 2010.

The RMTU will, as is our usual custom, lay a wreath which recognises and honours the railway men and women who laid down their lives during the wars.

PLANS FOR HAMILTON UNDERGROUND STATION TO BE REVEALED

A petition calling for a commuter rail link between Hamilton and Auckland will be presented to the Government this coming Monday, at the Hamilton Railway Station.

Sustainable transport group The Campaign for Better Transport has collected over 10,000 signatures in a little over four months, with the majority of signatures coming from the Waikato towns of Hamilton, Ngaruawahia and Huntly.

Campaign manager Jon Reeves says the petition has been an overwhelming success.

"It's probably the biggest ever petition presented on a local issue. The support we have had from the people and businesses of Waikato has been truly incredible. Most people do not believe we have to resort to a petition simply to get a rail service between New Zealand's fourth largest city and Auckland.

"We will be asking Waikato political representatives to represent the views of their constituents."

The "Waikato Trains Now!" petition will be presented to local Labour MP Sue Moroney, with Hamilton City and Environment Waikato councillors also expected to attend, along with central Government MPs.

A survey conducted by the Hamilton City Council found that over 80% ratepayers were willing to contribute to get a three times daily Waikato rail service off the ground. However, the idea is being resisted by Environment Waikato and Hamilton National party MPs David Bennett and Tim MacIndoe.

The final number of Waikato Trains Now! petition signatures will be announced at the presentation, but it is expected to easily eclipse the 10,328 signatures collected by the Campaign for Better Transport in 2008 for an Auckland Airport rail service.

"The Government plans to spend over \$2 billion on roads in the Waikato, so in comparison the cost of a frequent commuter rail service is just peanuts. We believe a commuter rail service will be a far more cost effective solution and, unlike the 10 or 12 year wait for the Waikato Expressway, the train services could start this year and provide immediate relief to traffic congestion for daily commuters."

The Campaign for Better Transport is also pushing for Hamilton's central underground railway station to be reopened. The station is located beneath The Warehouse on Victoria St, within 300 metres from Fonterra offices, Hamilton City Council and a number of other businesses in the CBD. It was last used in the early 1990's, and Mr Reeves says it has largely been forgotten about.

"This petition presentation is just the start of this campaign and we expect to see some positive action from the Government, NZTA and Environment Waikato as a result of it," concludes Mr Reeves.

BITS AND BOBS

- Almost a third of Sydney's train drivers have been temporarily suspended or stood down in the past five years for running red lights, taking drugs, drinking - and one for selling a train manual on EBay. Railcorp has more than 1500 drivers and 487 of them have been suspended or stood down, Railcorp has admitted.

Let's Be Safe Out There & Remember.....

"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER!"

