

THE ACTIVIST



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LEVEL 4 - NEW ZEALAND IS CURRENTLY AT COVID ALERT LEVEL 4. NZ TRANSITIONS TO LEVEL 3 AT 2359 HRS 27 APRIL.

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.

ANZAC DAY – DIFFERENT BUT REMEMBERED

The RSA and New Zealand Defence Force have called on New Zealanders to remember our service men and women, at 6am on Saturday 25 April, by standing at your letterbox, front door, in your lounge rooms, balconies, or driveways to take a moment to remember our fallen – while staying within our bubbles.

More information can be found at <https://www.standatdawn.com>

UNITED TOGETHER : WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL 2020

Workers' Memorial Day coincides with the first day of NZ's transition to level 3 Covid 19 emergency response. As more people return to work this is a poignant reminder that Workers' Memorial Day is about remembering those who have lost

their lives due to poor workplace safety systems, and continue our fight for the highest standards of health and safety protection. It is also a reminder that everyone is under stress, the personal effects of which are a hazard in itself. Looking out for each other, showing kindness and always working safely has never been more important.

We will observe Workers' Memorial Day a little differently this year. Physical distancing is still vital to stamp out the spread of the disease so we won't be able to gather for events like

we normally would.

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



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

Our message is all workplace accidents are preventable, we work safely, we are kind and we will look after each other.

COVID-19: LEAVE SUBSIDY CHANGES - NEEDS TO GO FURTHER

The Council of Trade Unions welcomes the government's announcement to extend the leave subsidy as part of the package to support working people through the consequences of the COVID-19 virus. However, the CTU believes more can be done to support working people.

CTU President, Richard Wagstaff is pleased that the 'at-risk' subsidy has been provided. "This is certainly a positive. Working people who are 'at-risk' of serious harm, whether it's because of their age, a compromised immune system, or any other health condition, should be supported by the government to stay home and stay safe. It is appropriate and fair that this has been provided."

"But a problem remains with a system that relies on employers to do the right thing and apply for the subsidy in the first place. Unfortunately, in relation to other subsidies, the last few weeks have exposed that some employers would prefer to simply make employees redundant, than pass on, let alone top up government subsidies aimed at supporting working Kiwis. There remains a problem when some employers would rather

make people redundant than apply for the subsidy."

"At the core of our concern is that people's life and work outcomes depend on both the goodwill of the employer and the employer's ability to navigate a reasonably complex new system of Government support. The Government needs to make in clear in their advice to business that businesses should pick up available wage subsidies for 'at-risk' people much stronger. 'At-risk' people need to have their rights to support guaranteed, rather than depend on their employer to do the right thing," Wagstaff said.

WORKSAFE NZ ADVICE FOR PHYSICAL DISTANCING UNDER LEVEL 3

Worksafe NZ has updated their guidance on physical distancing under a level 3 alert level. They say in an uncontrolled environment such as public transport a distance of 2 metres physical distance between the public is required.

Worksafe say in the workplace physical distancing can be reduced below 2 metres providing sufficient safety mitigations are in place. They give the examples of engineering controls such as screens or personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves.

Employers must adhere to their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to take all reasonably practicable steps such



as disinfecting surfaces and make sure workers don't come to work sick.

For more Worksafe guidance go their website <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/transitioning-from-alert-level-4/>

MARITIME NZ TEMPORARY EXEMPTIONS

Due to Covid 19 Maritime NZ are granting temporary exemptions on annual examinations on lifting appliances on foreign ships in NZ waters. The exemption is for examinations that were due between 11 March 2020 and 30 June 2020.

The vessel's lifting appliances and loose gear must be safe for use and will be subject to the normal testing procedures conducted by NZ stevedores or their representatives. If vessels meet all the conditions listed on the Maritime NZ website they can be given a three month extension from the expiry date of the annual examination or test certificate.

Full details of the exemptions and their conditions are at <https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/commercial/ships/default.asp>

KIWI RAIL HEALTH AND SAFETY UNDER LEVEL 3

To support a safe return to work under level 3, KRG with input from the Union has developed a Site-Specific COVID-19 Plan before work can commence under on KiwiRail sites. This will be communicated to members at the safety stop meetings starting Tuesday 28th April.

The check-sheet includes verification that the Covid 19 protocols are in place and well communicated. Union Delegate and H&S Reps should be involved in verifying that the

plan is working in practice and identifying ways that safety can be enhanced to protect staff from potential exposure to Covid 19.

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

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.

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

KIWI RAIL (FREIGHT) INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL UPDATE

The KIC meeting planned for 28th and 29th April has been postponed due to travel restrictions, a video conference with the KIC reps and management will be organised in the next few weeks.

NORTHERN REGION

TRANSDEV AUCKLAND

Although the RMTU has put aside its differences with TDAK to deal with the ongoing Covid-19 Crisis, we are still not engaging with the Company regarding the HP2 process around Driver Door Operation as well as the ROM rewrite. The reason for this has been an issue of trust and confidence. The new COO Gary Iddon is attempting to be more cooperative and transparent but there are some outstanding issues that need to be resolved.

A prime example of why we lack trust in the

Company occurred regarding a memo sent out. There is a real problem with this memo. In particular the part that says:

“You should take sick leave if:

- You have tested positive for COVID-19, and you are still suffering the symptoms, and/or



you are still within a recommended isolation period”

This contradicts an earlier memo sent to employees on the App on March 17th at 1.58pm that stated:

“Special Leave (80 hours) at your base rate, pro-rated for part-timers) will be provided to people that have been diagnosed with Covid-19, or that have been directed to isolate themselves (by a doctor) following exposure to a person that has a positive diagnosis of Covid-19”

We had previously issued bouquet’s for TDAK around their handling of the crisis but this about face, over something that was promised to employees, is extremely disappointing as it reneges on a promise made to TDAK employees in the earlier memo. This is what we are dealing with.

BOP REGION

C3

We have resolved one of the issues which is that of paying those employees who are at home because they are either vulnerable workers or there is no work for them. If their income is less than the wages subsidy they will receive the difference between the subsidy and their income.

We still have not resolved the question of the definition of “usual pay pre COVID-19” however we are awaiting advice from MBIE on the issue.

The good news is the return of logs to the wharves under level three, how work will proceed in a safe manner will be resolved this week.

There has been a lively debate on whether workers can move from one work bubble to another, which is an issue at Sulphur Point,

the matter has been resolved that there will be no changing from one bubble to another.

The new C3 Collective Agreement has been ratified and the Terms of settlement have been signed off. C3 are currently updating the new Collective and hopefully it will be signed off after the Lockdown has ended.

A big thanks to the RMTU negotiating team for working thru a very tough set of negotiations and a big thank you to the RMTU members who fully supported the negotiation team through the negotiations and thanks for your patience.

SOUTHERN REGION

PORT OTAGO’S COVID19 CASE: A PORT WORKER SPEAKS.

Port Otago had a confirmed COVID19 case in the Marine Department a couple of weeks ago. Because the department was working in an ‘intact work bubble’ there has been no detected spread of the virus amongst the workmates of the man who contracted COVID19. Port Otago recently published his story in their staff newsletter. It is sobering reading and a reminder to us all just how serious this situation is and why we should practice good hygiene, physical distancing and maintain the integrity of our bubble.

We quote the story here:

M is 52 years old, very fit, has no health issues and lives with his wife and their 17-year old daughter.

When did you first become aware that you may be infected?

I got a text from my wife within 5 minutes of talking to my supervisor – saying that people we knew had tested positive after a wedding we attended (the Bluff wedding). I’d just

Stay home if you’re sick



walked out of the office building and knew the right thing to do was not to go back in.

What was your reaction?

I phoned my manager immediately. My wife was already feeling unwell, but I still felt fine. When I got home, we rang Healthline and were tested at 9am the next day. My wife and I were both positive, but our daughter came back negative.

How did things play out?

By Sunday, I had symptoms, then fevers Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. My temperature was 39.7° (normal is 37°), so I was cooking. I had hallucinations one night. I came a bit right, but still had tiredness and fatigue. Then I got a bit of an annoying cough. A Healthline nurse was calling every second day and she suggested calling my doctor. We did a video call and the doctor thought it was bronchitis – a common consequence of Covid – and she prescribed me an inhaler.

I'm still off work now, with the cough. Our daughter was re-tested two days later, after developing symptoms and was positive. That was actually a relief for all of us, as it had been stressful for her trying to stay separate. I was concerned for my wife and daughter, because I considered myself the fittest and healthiest – but it hit me the hardest. It's true what they say – that the virus doesn't discriminate. It affects everyone differently. Within our family, none of us had the same set of symptoms.

DUNEDIN RAILWAYS SET TO GO INTO 'MOTHBALL' AND SACK OVER 50 STAFF

The RMTU represents almost all operational staff on the Taieri Gorge railway and we are urging the Dunedin City Council not to rush

into decisions about the future of this iconic tourist attraction.

51 staff are likely to lose their job under a mothball plan announced by Dunedin Railways Limited Chairman Kevin Winders.

RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson says the announcement is not a surprise, but is disappointing.

"The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is unprecedented, and there have to be changes to operations. However, those changes should reflect a broad, long-term view about the value of this iconic attraction."

Innovative thinking was required around passenger/commuter rail operations using current staff and rolling stock, he says.

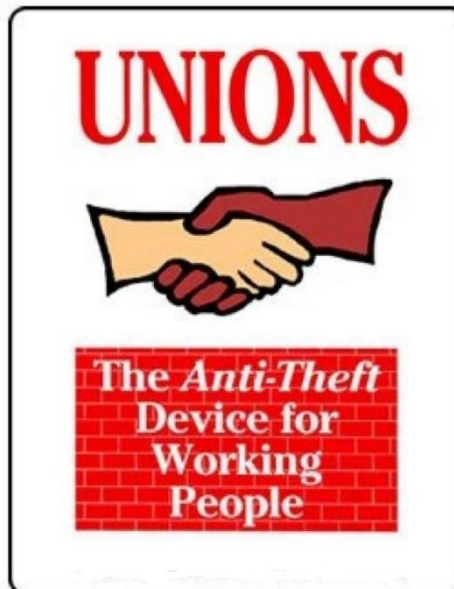
The Labour-led Coalition Government was moving fast on investment in infrastructure to offset the downturn, and the Green Party had just made an excellent case for new rail services for major centres in New Zealand.

"A forward looking council in Dunedin must work with the

Government to explore any and all opportunities to prevent long term economic damage to the Otago region." The cost of restarting rail operations, especially finding skilled staff, would be considerable, says Mr Butson. The longer mothballing went on, the greater danger the iconic brand would lose its profile, and company assets would inevitably degrade.

In the future, domestic tourism may increase and international visitors would return to some degree, he says. The Taieri Gorge Railway was linked to the Central Otago Rail Trail and was a major attraction for the Otago region, and could not be viewed simply as a standalone business.

Dunedin Railways is now under the full ownership of Dunedin City Holdings Ltd, the business arm of the Dunedin City Council. The RMTU will be mounting a campaign to try and



preserve as many jobs as possible and to save this piece of track and the rolling stock.

LYTTELTON PORT MANAGEMENT KEEN TO DEVELOP HIGH PERFORMANCE HIGH ENGAGEMENT

There is never a dull moment at LPC. Recently the RMTU have crossed swords with management over the preservation of intact work bubbles in the Container Terminal and the Mechanical Workshop with mixed results.

In the Container Terminal there are still concerns about the use of casual labour and some staff working across shifts. Our advocacy around this is often undermined by the fact that there are two unions in that area and we don't always adopt a united approach. The benefits for rank and file workers of one union on the waterfront are never as clearly demonstrated as at times like this.

In the workshop there is one union, the RMTU. We have a number of very high calibre delegates and our Branch President and South Island National Management Committee Representative also works there. Consequently, we were able to ensure the intact work bubble was maintained in that area despite a move by management to introduce another worker into it. The story about the worker at Port Otago who contracted COVID19 was front and centre of our members' minds when we discussed this with management. Fortunately, management saw sense and we reached agreement and kept our work bubbles intact.

Despite these differences of opinion both the RMTU and management have expressed our desire for a strategic relationship and a willingness to try the High Performance High Engagement approach that both parties have experience of elsewhere. The new LPC CEO is ex-Air New Zealand and has worked in an HPHE environment there. The RMTU has had success with HPHE at KiwiRail and has experience of this approach with Transdev in Auckland. Discussions indicate our experiences and expectations are

different but we agree with the principles behind an HPHE approach.

It will be an interesting and challenging project but if we are successful there are potential rewards for both parties in increased productivity, better profitability, more job security and improved wages and terms and conditions. One urgent piece of work we need to get done is adopting and implementing a fatigue management system at the port.

The port sector may look very different in the post COVID19 and the RMTU sees HPHE as one tool for increasing workers' opportunities.

START OF THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

Greetings to all our members who are celebrating the month of Ramadan. This year, it will be a very different experience for Muslims around the world as we all adapt to changing circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ramadan activities will be restricted to the home in many countries while we continue to live apart during lockdown.

Ramadan is a time for unity and solidarity, for strengthening family and community ties, and for helping people in need. The coronavirus crisis has reminded us all of the importance of family and friends, and we have seen numerous examples of people supporting neighbours as well as strangers. Transport workers have been praised for working tirelessly for the community in often challenging circumstances, as they move essential goods and help key workers to get to work. In order to keep us going they are risking their own health and sadly, in some cases, even their lives.

Ramadan is a timely reminder of the role of transport workers. Together we will help each other through this crisis in order to jointly emerge on the other side.

One again, we wish you and your families and colleagues a Happy Ramadan.

BE SAFE, BE HEALTHY AND BE KIND!

