

THE ACTIVIST



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HILLSIDE FIGHT – OUR FIGHT

The Campaign to Save Hillside has started with a bang.

KiwiRail’s plan to slash 40 jobs is being resisted by the membership and they’ve got the public on board.

Last week a mass meeting of the branch unanimously voted to fight the job cuts. We’ve taken the campaign to the public and have mobilised a broad coalition of politicians, business people and environmentalists.

A packed public meeting in Dunedin on Wednesday voted to support our campaign and we’re planning a march and rally. A petition to Parliament is underway and the word is spreading.

We’re asking all members to organise around this – hold meetings and pass resolutions of support, join our Facebook group ‘Save Hillside Workshops’, sign the petition, e-mail the Minister.

Remember, this fight is our fight!

LIBI WED

Our Lyttelton Branch Secretary and South Island Regional Office support Libi Carr got hitched or to use railway parlance was “coupled” last weekend in Queenstown to EPMU Organiser Ron Angel. Yes, Libi is now the RMTU’s only Angel.

WE wish Libi and Ron a healthy, happy and long future together!

GOVT MUST MAKE SAFETY CHANGES TO MINING INDUSTRY Now

New Zealand should move to improve mine safety by reinstating check inspectors and a fully funded mine inspectorate, West Coast based Green Party MP Kevin Hague said today.

Prime Minister John Key has promised that there will be changes to mining regulations, but no specific time frame has been set for when these changes will occur.

“The Government should not wait for the Royal Commission on Pike River before improving the safety of those working underground,” said Mr Hague.

“The safety of those working in the mining industry was severely compromised by the National Government’s reforms in the 1990s.

“In 1992 the position of check inspector – a worker with the authority to clear a mine if they considered it dangerous – was disestablished through legislative changes.

“This situation was further exacerbated by the dismantling, in 1998, of the mines inspectorate.

“After Pike River, it is time the Minister of Labour Kate Wilkinson to revisit the glaring deficiencies in New Zealand’s health and safety record with regard to underground mining.

“Ms Wilkinson should re-read the 2008 Department of Labour Discussion Paper



NZ WORK FOR NZ WORKERS

where union and worker submissions point out the importance of reinstating check inspectors.

"At present this Government is sitting on its hands hoping another mining tragedy doesn't occur.

"Instead, the Government should take urgent action to prevent a further tragedy," said Mr Hague.

KIWI RAIL VEHICLE ALLOWANCE

Clause 33.2 of the KiwiRail MECA agreement deals with Vehicle Allowances. It states that employees will be reimbursed at the IRD recommended recovery rate and then specifies the rates. It does not specifically deal with the situation where IRD increase the rate. IRD have increased the rate to 0.74cents in May of this year. KiwiRail has agreed to increase the allowance payment in-line with the IRD rate increase.

NMC RAIL (3) POSITIONS – POSTAL BALLOT

Ballot papers have been issued out of National Office this week and **MUST** be returned by **5pm Friday 15th July 2011**.



Please ensure that you vote as instructed on the ballot paper to ensure that your vote counts and above all –

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!

C3 – MOUNT – UPDATE

The C3 negotiations are glacial in movement, despite C3 wanting to have the negotiations completed by the Collectives expiry date of 30th June.

We have had the initial meeting with Bernard McIlhone from the Partnership Resource Centre acting as facilitator. To date we have agreed to negotiate all the business unit claims

first, and then to come back to the common claims i.e. claims that affect everyone and any business unit claims that we were unable to resolve first time around. Since then we have had discussions on the Steelyard, Logs and Cranes, leaving Mechanics, Base and Sulphur Point to do.

There has been no date set down for further discussions.

C3 D&A

There has been a flurry of activity by C3, to put random testing back on the table. This will affect both the RMTU and MUNZ members. The company has stated a desire to meet during the week of 4 July!

So on the one hand the collective negotiations are stalling, but random testing has to be dealt with as a priority and under urgency!! Seems a strange way to operate?

The view of the membership is that the collective negotiations are the priority. We shall see....

GOVERNMENT GOES OFF THE RAILS WITH 'GREEN COLLAR' JOB CUTS

Greenpeace announced today that it supports the Keep Kiwis Working and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) campaigns to save 41 workers at the Hillside rail plant in Dunedin from losing their jobs.

"The jobs being made redundant at Hillside are a great example of 'green collar' jobs – a sector that New Zealand should be expanding, not sending offshore, if we want sustainable employment and economic prosperity," says Greenpeace NZ's Michael Tritt.

"The world is turning increasingly to public transport as an important part of the solution to rising oil prices and climate change. The kind of jobs and skills they want to cut at Hillside are going to be in growing demand in the 21st



century.

"It's another major step in the wrong direction under Transport Minister Steven Joyce's watch. Having recently refused to fund Auckland's central rail tunnel the Government's failure to intervene to save the Hillside workshop cuts will only lock this country into an even greater dependence on oil, along with all the negative downstream social, economic and environmental costs.

"Again the Government is showing a blatant unwillingness to support those local industries that could be a part of a multi-billion dollar clean economic transformation, while it is falling over itself to subsidise high-risk exploration for fossil fuels and build unnecessary new motorways.

MECHANICAL RESTRUCTURE – HUTT AND PSG

It is hard to comprehend the proposal from the KR Mechanical leadership to downsize or do away with the Professional Services Group, (PSG).

This great team of professional engineers is essential to KiwiRail and the NZ Rail industry. When positive news of future growth in rail is being touted, it beggars belief that management would propose downsizing.

It is fair to say that many believe this latest proposal is just a dusted off version of what has been proposed before and failed – we are looking for the same outcome.

Part of the proposal sees the functions move to Auckland. WHY? We all thought that this silly upheaval of member's lives was behind us. One of the great benefits of the digital age is that we are supposed to be able to do anything from anywhere aren't we? Even Quinn works between Auckland and Wellington.

Hutt Railways workshops are also currently being reviewed and it is likely that a

proposal for job losses will be tabled in the coming weeks. Our Hutt members have put together a team to work hard to save jobs at Hutt and to save the workshops for future generations. Please give full support to our members at Hutt and PSG?

You and all your friends/family join the Facebook page NOW

MASS MEETING CONDEMNS KIWIRAIL JOB CULL; CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN HILLSIDE AND RAIL ENGINEERING

Over 400 people turned out last night support KiwiRail workers threatened by redundancy in South Dunedin.

The meeting, called by the 'Keep Kiwis Working Campaign' and the RMTU, condemned the KiwiRail's plans to cut 70 jobs at Hillside and in Lower Hutt and called the Government to step in.

"The community support was overwhelming, people know that this just isn't a fight for 40 jobs at Hillside, they know it's a fight for the families, small businesses and the community in this town and elsewhere," said RMTU Organiser John Kerr.

Speakers included David Cull, Mayor of Dunedin; MPs Clare Curran and Metiria Turei; and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the

Council of Trade Unions, and Greenpeace.

"What is clear is that the politicians, business, the unions and environmentalists all agree on one thing: the plan to slash jobs is bad for Dunedin and bad for New Zealand and the Government needs to step in," John Kerr said.

The meeting unanimously voted in support of a resolution calling on KiwiRail and the Government to abandon its plans and to support Hillside and Railway Engineering.

"We need the Government to listen and that means stepping up the campaign. We're



**JOBS,
JUSTICE,
CLIMATE**

looking at our industrial options and how to build more public support. We'll be putting on a march and a rally and the workers will be getting out there to mobilise support in the community," John Kerr said.



Full Text of Resolution:

This meeting calls upon the NZ government to:

- *Direct KiwiRail to abandon its plans to slash jobs at its Hillside and Woburn engineering plants*
- *To invest in the future of Hillside, Woburn and Rail Engineering in New Zealand with a view to securing and creating high skill, high wage jobs that help build and expand a sustainable rail network*
- *To legislate for a government procurement policy that ensures all SOEs and other government owned and controlled entities take into account the interests of the wider NZ economy and society in the purchase of goods and services.*

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY?

To ensure members who fall within the coverage of balloted positions get the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidate please let National Office know your new mailing address or update your details online www.rmtunion.org.nz

CENTREPORT COMBINED UNIONS CA – UPDATE

Terms of settlement for the combined unions Collective Agreement negotiations are being finalised with the ratification meeting planned for next week, details to follow.

KIWI RAIL MID TERM WAGE INCREASE

Following the release of the recent Consumer Price Index (CPI) numbers the Union and KiwiRail have agreed that the mid term wages and allowances increase

payable under the MECA shall be 2.6%. The increase will be paid to members in the first pay following 1 July 2011.

OSANLOO FREE AT LAST

The ITF is delighted to announce that imprisoned trade unionist Mansour Osanloo was freed from jail in Iran almost four years since his arrest and imprisonment, which set off a storm of international protest.

His release is conditional on his 'good behaviour' and the payment of a bond.

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) has led demands for Mansour Osanloo's release. ITF general secretary David Cockroft commented: "This is a great day for Mansour and his family – and for his fellow Vahed union members and those of us in the trade union movement who are honoured to call him a friend. It's doubly welcome given the deterioration in his health during his time behind bars.

"He is free because trade unionists worldwide demanded justice."

He continued: "That bail has been set falls short of the full pardon we all wanted, and which the Iranian government promised, but for now we can just take a moment to savour his richly deserved return to his family."



"But – and sadly even on a day as good as this one there has to be a but – there are other innocents in jail in Iran for the same 'crime' of wanting to join a trade union. They include Mansour's colleagues, Reza Shahabi and

Ebrahim Madadi. For all of them, and us, the fight is not over. As much as we welcome the Iranian government's move and its finally listening to reason, we know we must renew our insistence that those other prisoners are set free and the threat of re-arrest lifted from Mansour, and then commit the ITF, our member unions and friends in the trade union and human rights movements to campaigning on their behalf."

Mansour Osanloo was a bus driver and is the president and one of the founding members of the Vahed Syndicate, a free trade union representing Tehran's bus workers. From its beginnings in 2005 the ITF-affiliated union

was subjected to heavy repression, including repeated attacks and arrests. Mansour Osanloo was heavily targeted. As well as being beaten up and having his tongue slit he was imprisoned in 2005 and 2006. Then in 2007, just one month after visiting the London head office of the ITF and meeting trade unionists in Brussels, he was arrested. Three months later he was sentenced to five years imprisonment on charges of 'acting against national security' and 'propaganda against the state'; in 2010 another year was added to his sentence. In reality his only offence was to help found a genuinely democratic trade union.

For more details, including a film, press releases and history, please see www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/freeosanloo.cfm

KIWI RAIL DRUG & ALCOHOL WORKING PARTY

The meeting scheduled to occur in Christchurch last week was cancelled owing to volcanic ash and earthquake issues. A further meeting is not scheduled at this stage.

CONFERENCE 2011 REMITS

A reminder that Remits for conference 2011 close on 31 July 2011 but late remits are frequently accepted and conference delegates also have an opportunity to table "notices of motion" at conference to be debated on the floor as well.

It is essential that early advice is given and received for remits which seek to achieve major change within the Union or the way it conducts itself as the delegates need to be able to obtain a mandate on how to vote at conference.

All remits to conference MUST have been passed by a majority vote at a duly constituted Union branch meeting.

NEW RMTU SITE – C3 WELLINGTON REGION

We all say Welcome to the 16 new RMTU members working for C3 at the Wellington Port, Masterton and Seaview sites. The RMTU has initiated for bargaining for a Collective Agreement for these new members and are awaiting a response from C3 to arrange a date and times.

GOVERNMENT STEPS UP NATIONAL STANDARDS BULLYING

The government is stepping up its bullying of schools as it tries to force them to comply with National Standards, says the education sector union NZEI Te Riu Roa.

Many schools have received a letter from the Ministry of Education invoking legislation demanding that school charters be lodged by 5pm on July 1. The charters must contain achievement targets based on National Standards.

It's the first time the government has invoked provisions of the Education Act to set a legal deadline for receiving charters. Previously schools have been able to submit their charters anytime before the end of the school year.

Hundreds of schools have made a decision to stick with their normal practice of setting their student achievement targets against robust and trusted assessment data, rather than on untested and unreliable National Standards.

NZEI President Ian Leckie says "most of these schools have tried to work with the Standards but have come to the conclusion that they do not give a consistent or accurate picture of a child's progress or achievement. They also know that sorting children into "above, at below and well below" standard will do nothing to identify those children in need of extra help."

"The issue of underachievement is a complex one and schools don't want to implement a one-size fits all approach which won't work," he says.



It is also increasingly clear that the Ministry of Education's 50 new Student Achievement Practitioners, who were supposed to improve support for schools to lift student literacy and numeracy, are nothing more than National Standards "enforcers" – going around specific schools putting pressure on principals and boards to comply.

"The fact so many schools are not setting their achievement targets against National Standards should come as no surprise. They should not be bullied into pursuing unsound educational policy which they have no confidence in," says Mr Leckie.

He adds "it is disappointing to see the government's obsession with National Standards undermining good strategic practice and planning by schools, healthy relationships with the Ministry of Education and what actually works to boost student achievement."

NZ BUS – WELLINGTON

Our RMTU members based at the Kilbirnie Depot are facing a proposed restructure to disestablish their roles but last year NZ Bus agreed to a working party to review roles, training and SOP's. NZ bus wanted to ignore the contractually agreed requirement for the working party and proceed with the restructure. The union and NZ Bus went to mediation and then the Employment Relations Authority.

The ERA determined among other matters that the working party had to go ahead. Last Friday the working party was formed and met but at the same time NZ Bus's lawyers in Auckland lodged an appeal of the ERA determination (in Auckland for a Wellington case?). There was no mention of this at the working party – clearly not good faith. The dispute continues.

WELCOME AMMUNITION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER PAY DISCRIMINATION

The education sector union NZEI Te Riuroa is welcoming proposed changes to the Equal Pay Act,

saying it will give thousands of low paid women some welcome ammunition in the fight for pay and employment equity.

The Green Party MP Catherine Delahunty has released a Member's Bill to amend the Equal Pay Act. It will ensure women have access to information about pay rates in their workplace to test if there is gender-based discrimination.

NZEI says gender pay discrimination affects thousands of low paid education workers.

"It's something school support staff know only too well," says NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter.

An independent job evaluation report showed that when compared with male dominated jobs of corrections officers and cleaners, school support staff such as teacher aides and administrators were paid as much as \$8 an hour less.

Other pay and employment equity investigations in education have also shown areas where women employees are not being treated fairly or are being discriminated against in terms of pay, career advancement and the value of their work.

Paul Goulter says "unfortunately the government continues to systematically ignore the evidence and has shut down all moves aimed at closing the gender pay gap."

"It is good to see someone moving forward on the issue. Giving women access to gender pay details in their workplaces will make it hard for the government and employers to ignore the fact that the gender pay gap is alive and well and that thousands of women are being denied the pay and opportunities they deserve."

MATANGI – UPDATE

Following issues with transformers associated with the auxiliary power units (APU's) the operational fleet of Matangi trains were withdrawn from service this week to ascertain what the problems are.

Extensive tests immediately took place and 4 x 2 car sets have returned to service. While it was good to



24/06/11



of RMTU members Only!

see immediate action on this safety issue, the dialogue with the RMTU was poor and even though a request was made to senior passenger management to not leave attempting to sort out the issue to the last minute, it was. Inadequate information for onboard staff including the LE on what to do if the fault comes up in the field ended up happening when the train was due out!

COMMUNICATION KEY

A successful day of delegates training in the Marlborough Branch brought together delegates from Freight, CT, Interisland and the port.

During the second group exercise a live issue was raised and became the focus for the rest of the day.

The top deck link span is under maintenance and the covers that protect the lower span have been removed, therefore rail movements could be covered in cattle movements.

However it soon became obvious to the branch that this was not the only hazard and that the Freight guys were not only the ones at risk.

It became clear to all that had we not "met" as a Branch to discuss a yard sector issues that each sector could have dealt with the issue independently without an appreciation of the other's needs.

The moral of this story is that when you're in the crap use the communication network, meet and get the branch involved as others might be under the same fan.

BITS AND BOBS

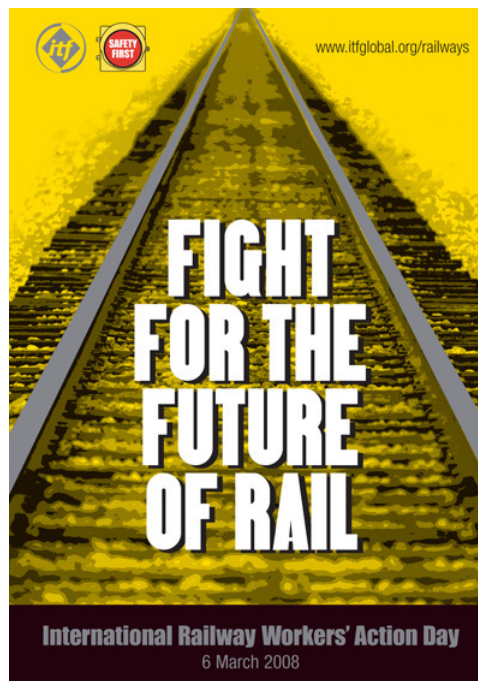
- News today that China has applied tariffs several times onto NZ dairy imports, but that John Key has refused to apply tariffs onto Chinese bids to

manufacture railway rolling stock for New Zealand in order to protect NZ industry. This is economically outrageous and again demonstrates National's total lack of patriotism for New Zealand. *(from the Hillside Campaign Facebook page)*

- Todd Valster will be acting General Secretary 23 June to 9 July 2011. Wayne Butson is attending the RMT Conference in the UK and taking some leave.

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

- Maintain situational awareness at all times;
- Ensure all are aware of the work to be performed;
- Make safety your first priority;
- Make sure you will go home safe and sound at the end of your shift;
- Make sure your workmate will go home safe and sound at the end of their shift;
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted.



Do not make assumptions

**“WE’RE STRONGER
TOGETHER”!**

