

# THE ACTIVIST



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**24 April 2009**



## **REMEMBER WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL**

RMTU members are asked to once again stop work (wherever you are) at midday on the 28 April to remember workers here and

internationally who have been killed and seriously injured in work accidents.

The RMTU will be joining millions of workers around the world who are also commemorating this day. The key themes of this year are;

- Address the causes of occupational and environmental cancers at the workplace, and;
- Demand safety and health standards and enforcement, and;
- Build on Global Union campaign activities on banning asbestos and HIV/AIDS
- Say NO to Violence in the workplace

Some RMTU Branches will be conducting commemorative meetings at the memorials unveiled in previous years. We have been advised of;

- Christchurch's Workers Memorial Day is 28 April at Science Alive Reserve from 11.30 -12.30
- Hutt Workshops on 28 April starting 1200hrs at the memorial garden. Helen Kelly (CTU), Ross Wilson (KiwiRail and ACC Boards) will be speaking.
- Dunedin 28 April. Wayne Butson will address the assembled.

Please advise National Office if you are holding a ceremony in your area. If you wish to invite a National Office speaker then do so now.

We must continue to remind ourselves that we lose real workmates and working men and women in these accidents and not let them become simply statistics!

**Mount Maunganui:** Saturday 2 May 2009 Rata Street Port Gates – Memorial Rock start 1145hrs.

**Taumaranui:** Inaugural BBQ and minutes silence at new Ontrack Depot garden 1400hrs 28 April

**Otago:** Market reserve cnr Princes St and Manor Place 1145hrs 28 April.

**Canterbury:** Garden adjacent to Science Alive Moorhouse Ave 1100hrs 28 April

**Hawkes Bay:** Napier Port memorial site 28 April 1200hrs

**Nelson:** Gathering at remembrance site in the port 1200hrs 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Taranaki:** Gathering at remembrance site in the port 1200hrs 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Hutt Workshops:** Assembly at the memorial garden in the shops start at 1145hrs with BBQ to follow.

## **ANZAC DAY WELLINGTON RAIL MEMORIAL**

The usual ceremony will be held at the Railway memorial site Petone railway Station 25 April 2009 at the Petone Railway Station.

## **FLOGGING OFF STATE ASSETS DOES NOTHING TO HELP NZ'S FOREIGN DEBT PROBLEM**

PRESS RELEASE CAFCA: Don't take our word for it. Sir Roger Douglas is nothing if not

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

brutally honest and he said, in a book praising the 1980s' and 90s' State forest sales: "I am not sure we were right to use the argument that we should privatise to quit debt. We knew it was a poor argument but we probably felt it was the easiest to use politically" ("Out Of The Woods"; Reg Birchfield and Ian Grant; 1993). So the reason for flogging off State assets was and is ideological, not economic. The latter is just a smokescreen for PR reasons.

Bill English is softening up public opinion for bad news in the Budget and spokespeople for business are calling for the sale of State assets "to help with reducing our foreign debt". But the facts speak for themselves.

In 1984, when Rogernomics started, NZ's total private and public foreign debt was \$16 billion. By December 2008, it was \$248 billion, the vast majority of that held by the corporate sector, not the Government, and totaling 137% of GDP. So, despite all those numerous State asset sales, the foreign debt has just kept on soaring.

Rather than slashing, selling and privatising (those 1980s and 90s' policies that failed so spectacularly in NZ and around the world), the Government needs to be following the lead of the major capitalist countries, and asserting control and ownership of those very sectors whose greed and stupidity got us all into this mess. In America, Britain and Europe, for example, the State has taken both control and outright nationalisation of some banks and financial institutions in return for bailing them out with taxpayers' money. These are the leading countries of the very same OECD that is telling us to do just the opposite – very much a case of do as I say, not as I do.

To give just one example, NZ taxpayers are now the guarantors of the deposits of the banks, finance companies, etc. Yet we get no say in their running, let alone ownership. The Australian-owned banks go on their merry way piling up profits as if the crash has never happened, while at the same time turning off credit for their NZ customers. It's time for the Government to

remind the foreign banks of that old saying most favoured by money men: "He who pays the piper calls the tune", and to translate that into action.

## TOLL NETWORK TRAVEL PRIVILEGES

Our Toll Networks (Toll Tranz Link) members are experiencing difficulties in obtaining privilege travel fares from their boss. It appears that some TN managers are demanding payment of the full fare before the travel is booked and then our Union member must await the reimbursement of the monies. This is not what has been agreed between the parties and is a barrier for many of our members to use the travel privs. We contacted TN HR and the national HR manager responded as follows;

*"I confirm that the following options are given to employees on the collective for claiming travel benefits:*

1. *Purchase the ticket and claim back the benefit through the expense claim process (turnaround 1 week), or;*

2. *Complete the Travel Benefit Request form which is available from HR and was sent through to all branches*

*last year in July/August (will be available on the intranet when the IT split with KiwiRail is completed.). Travel will be booked and available dates confirmed with employee. For a discounted ticket the branch will be notified of the cost and the employee will then be required to pay this discounted rate before the ticket is issued.*

*If your members are in doubt or are being told otherwise then I suggest they get in touch with the HR Administrator (Khurs) and she will sort it out for them."*

The forms are also available from the Union offices or your branch secretary.

## OECD PRESCRIPTION IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION

Source: CAFCA

The old witch doctors of the OECD have issued another one of their repeat



prescriptions for New Zealand and once again it's based on that discredited old maxim – the operation was a success but the patient died. This slash and burn approach to economics is as useless as the (literal) slash and burn agriculture which wreaks terrible destruction on the land. The OECD's approach owes everything to a failed and outdated ideology and takes no notice whatsoever of the vastly changed world that has been thrust upon all of us by the unregulated imposition of those very same policies.

It recommends (among many other things) the removal of foreign investment controls – or what few are left of them, and the Government has already declared its eagerness to oblige, by way of its current review of, and proposed further liberalisation of, the Overseas Investment Act.

We need to dispel some of the pernicious myths peddled by these cultists about foreign "investment" as the One True Path to the Promised Land.

- It doesn't bring in "much needed money". Quite the opposite, it sucks money out of the country. In the decade 1997-2006 transnational corporations made \$50 billion profits in NZ. Only 32% of that was reinvested here; meaning that 2/3 of that enormous sum left the country. That is itself is a major cause of NZ's Current Account Deficit (the Balance of Payments) being so high.
- It doesn't provide "much needed jobs". Foreign companies only employ 19% of the NZ workforce, despite owning a disproportionately large chunk of the economy. 81% work for NZ employers. And those very same foreign companies significantly add to the unemployment total, having made tens of thousands of NZ workers jobless in the decades in which we've had a "liberalised" foreign investment regime.
- It does nothing to improve NZ's foreign debt problem. This is one area highlighted by the OECD report and it is

nonsense. In 1984, when Rogernomics started, NZ's total private and public foreign debt was \$16 billion. By December 2008, it was \$248 billion, the vast majority of that held by the corporate sector, not the Government, and totaling 137% of GDP. So, despite all those numerous State asset sales, the foreign debt has just kept on soaring.

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To give just one example, NZ taxpayers are now the guarantors of the deposits of the banks, finance companies, etc. Yet we get no say in their running, let alone ownership. The Australian-owned banks go on their merry way piling up profits as if the crash has never happened, while at the same time turning off credit for their NZ customers. It's time for the Government to remind the foreign banks of that old saying most favoured by money men: "He who pays the piper calls the tune", and to translate that into action.

### **ITF SURVEY ON WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE FOR WOMEN TRANSPORT WORKERS IN ROAD AND RAIL**

The ITF Railway and Road Transport Workers' Sections, with the support of the ITF Women's Department, are seeking to build awareness of the issues facing women workers in transport. In 2005, a meeting of

International Action Day - 28 April 2009

**UNIONS SAY  
NO TO VIOLENCE  
JOIN YOUR UNION!**

road transport women requested a survey be conducted on health and safety issues that women confront at work. A survey was conducted and a booklet, 'Women on the road to a safe and healthy working environment' was produced.

In 2008, the first ITF Worldwide Women Railway Workers' Meeting was held. One of the issues that was discussed at the meeting was violence and sexual harassment in the workplace and the Section was requested to seek information from workers and their unions on this issue.

The next "International Action Day" for the railway workers will be held on 28 April 2009. The main theme for this event will focus on violence in public transport. Unions who represent bus and taxi workers have also been invited to participate in this campaign, where relevant and appropriate. The Action Day on 28 April is part of ongoing activity being organised by the ITF Inland Transport Sections on violence in public transport. Campaign posters have been distributed to all affiliates. A booklet has been produced for union activists and educators to identify the issues relating to violence and possible solutions, and a leaflet has also been prepared for distribution to workers to raise awareness about violence at work.

The ITF needs more information on transport workers' experiences of workplace violence, as well as best practice cases in dealing with the issue, including for example, what are the exact dangers that workers face; what solutions have been developed; and how unions have established agreements with employers. This information will deepen our understanding of the problem and help to continue to build a strong campaign and strategy.

Women road transport and railway workers are encouraged to participate in the Sections' ongoing activities on work-related violence. Women transport workers are facing the same problems as their male colleagues in the workplace with regards violence at work but are also subject to

additional risks. Unfortunately some of these risks come from within the workforce and need specific targeting by unions. Sexual harassment is a serious problem and can take many forms.

**A survey form can be obtained from the Union website or the ITF website.**

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – RMTU NATIONAL PRESIDENT

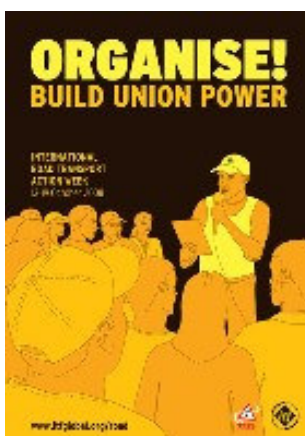
In accordance with Rule 24 of the Rules & Standing Orders of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union nominations are hereby called for the position of National President.

Nominations must be in writing and contain the signed consent of the candidate.

Nominations shall be proposed and seconded by financial members (Rule 1).

Nominations must be received at the Union's national Office by the Returning Officer no later than **8am on Wednesday 29 April 2009.**

- Nominations are open to all financial members of the Union
- The term of the office is for 2 years (Rule 24.2)
- This is an honorary position and NOT full time
- Duties are as contained in Rule 27 of the Union's Rules & Standing Orders.
- All nominee's (the person being nominated) MUST be financial members of the Union at the time of nomination – Rule 24.5
- The nominators and seconders must all be current financial members of the Union
- Nomination forms are available for download from the Union website or by contacting National Office on 04-499-2066.
- The incumbent advises that he shall be seeking re-election.
- Should a ballot of members be required (if there are more than 1 nomination after the date of nominations closure)





then it will be conducted under 42. This will be a full postal ballot of all financial members of the Union.

- The Returning Officer for the election shall be the General Secretary.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS KIWI RAIL NETWORKS (FORMERLY ONTRACK) INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL!

The Union calls for nominations for the following positions from members who fall within the categories of representation;

### Infrastructure – Ganger/Foreperson

- If you hold a position of ganger (foreperson) in any area of KiwiRail Networks operation then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

### Operations – Signallers

- If you are employed as a Signaller within KiwiRail Networks then you are eligible for nomination to this position.

**Nomination forms are available from the Union's Website [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz) or National Office by calling 04 4992066, fax 04 4710896 or by email to [jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz)**

Nominations must be moved and seconded by current financial Union members who are employed within the same area for which the nominee is being nominated for and an acceptance of nomination signed by the nominee.

**Correctly completed Nominations must be received in the Unions National Office by 1700hrs 8 May 2009.**

## PORTS FORUM

An interesting and challenging programme is in store for delegates attending the 2009 National Ports Forum in Wellington on 5 & 6

May 2009. The Forum will continue some of the themes of previous forums;

- Organising mapping for growth and power
- unity of the RMTU members on the waterfront,
- bargaining and core term discussions,
- health and safety matters of particular concern to waterfront workers,
- ACC past/present & future,
- effects on New Zealand Ports caused by the recession
- the demise of the Seachange Strategy will be outlined
- Discussion on the ITF and MUA approaches to the recession
- Discussion and report on the Port Tauranga "Port of Convenience" issue

Port branches are urged to ensure they are well represented at the Forum, an opportunity to keep abreast of the latest developments affecting port workers, network with comrades at other ports and make the most of an industry specific conference which is just for port workers.

Port branches MUST advise the National Office who their delegates will be, as soon as possible so that all arrangements can be made.

Registration forms are available from your branch secretary or contact Julia at National Office on 04-4992066 or [julia@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:julia@rmtunion.org.nz).

Once bookings are made any subsequent alterations which incur

additional cost (air travel particularly) will be invoiced to branches.

## TRANSPORT WORKER ISSUE 2 - 2009

The deadline for all branch notes, letters to the editor or other contributions (including photos) is 8 May 2009.

Contributions from Branches who have been absent to date would be particularly



welcome as would individual letters from members on topics they feel strongly about.

Remember it is YOUR magazine.

## CONFERENCE 2009 REMITS

A reminder that Remits for conference close on 31 July 2009 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/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.

## KIWI RAIL NETWORK H&S WORKER PARTICIPATION ELECTIONS

Review of the current safety system has revealed that KiwiRail Network Health and Safety Worker Participation System are due to be reviewed around April 2009. The company suggest that we delay this review until July 2009 for the following reasons;

- The RMTU is presently in the process of carrying out other representative elections, and secondly;
- They are giving consideration to reconfiguring our safety action teams so that they can be more effective. In respect of this we need to give this some more thought before consulting with the RMTU. Accordingly it seems pointless holding the re-election if there is a possibility of us agreeing some changes.

The company wishes to hear from us as to whether we are agreeable to such a delay.

We do not see any major difficulties with a delay as all current reps are elected to their role and therefore have a mandate from the membership at large.

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY IN NZ RAIL SYSTEM

The final report has been published. The RMTU was consulted as a stakeholder by the consultants compiling the report. The report can be viewed at

<http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/research/reports/370.pdf>

## FINALISTS DECIDED IN ANNUAL SAFETY AWARDS

The finalists in the NZ Workplace Health and Safety Awards for 2009 have been decided from among the more than 130 entries received. The winners in each of the 10 competitive categories, and a supreme winner, will be announced at a gala dinner at SKYCITY Convention Centre in Auckland on 6 May. The awards are organised by Safeguard magazine and proudly supported by the Department of Labour. The awards dinner is

timed to coincide with the Safeguard National Health and Safety Conference. Safeguard managing editor Peter Bateman says "Health and safety people are the unsung heroes of the New Zealand workplace and thoroughly deserve one

night of celebration each year." Too often, he says, health and safety issues feature in the media only after a workplace fatality. The awards are an opportunity to celebrate the good news about health and safety, and to share knowledge about initiatives that have worked well. The category finalists, in alphabetic order within category, are:

### Air New Zealand best initiative to address a safety hazard

- Humes Pipelines, Auckland
- KiwiRail Tranz Metro, (Mechanical Depot) Wellington
- Paper Reclaim, Auckland

### Department of Labour best initiative to



**address a health hazard**

- Air New Zealand, Christchurch
- Royal New Zealand Air Force, Whenuapai
- Total Bridge Services, Auckland

**OfficeMax best initiative to improve employee wellness**

- Air New Zealand, Auckland
- Manukau City Council, Auckland
- Metrowater, Auckland

**NZ Safety best initiative to encourage engagement in health & safety**

- Department of Labour, Auckland
- KiwiRail Corporate, Auckland
- Otago District Health Board, Dunedin

**SICK best design or technology initiative**

- NZ Steel, Glenbrook
- Site Safe New Zealand, Wellington
- Transfield Services, Whangarei

**Impac best health and safety initiative by a small business**

- Manmac Ltd, Rotorua
- PJ & MJ Olsen Ltd, Tokoroa
- Troake, Silverdale

**Transfield Services best significant health and safety initiative by a large organisation**

- Foodstuffs (Auckland)
- Northern Gateway Alliance, Auckland
- WPI, Tangiwai

**ACC best leadership of an industry sector or region**

- Leighton Contractors, Huntly
- NZ Forest Owners Association, Wellington
- Otago District Health Board, Dunedin
- Super Air, Hamilton

**Safeguard health and safety practitioner of the year**

- Keith Johnson, Leighton Contractors, Huntly
- Mark Taylor, Fletcher Construction, Tauranga
- Paul Reyneke, Foodstuffs (Auckland)

**Ross Wilson – NZCTU most influential employee**

- Andy Holyer, Clearlite, Auckland
- Kaye Young, The Warehouse, Auckland
- Michelle Scarf, Otago District Health Board

The judging panel of five included representatives from the Department of Labour, ACC, the NZ Council of Trade Unions, Safeguard, and the winner of the health and safety practitioner from last year.

**BANKS BIG PROFITS MEAN THEY CAN BE DOING MORE FOR ECONOMY**

Finance sector union Finsec says that New Zealand banks are still making excellent profits and can and should be doing more to help the local economy. Finsec says the banks are avoiding participation in economic recovery initiatives or making commitments to keep local staff in work.

Finsec was responding to the annual KPMG banking survey which showed the banks

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Register for training on our website at:  
[www.worksafereps.org.nz](http://www.worksafereps.org.nz)

For more information contact us at:  
[healthandsafety@nzctu.org.nz](mailto:healthandsafety@nzctu.org.nz)

Phone: 04 385 1334

increased their underlying profits by 5.1 per cent in the past year.

"It is remarkable these profit levels occurred at a time when the economy was souring. That shows the banks are well positioned and well insulated to be doing more to help out the overall economy," said Finsec Campaigns Director Andrew Campbell.

In recent weeks the banks have scrambled to avoid participation in a 12 month mortgage holiday scheme like that negotiated between their parent companies and the Australian government. They have also wriggled out of the shared equity scheme agreed to by bank CEOs at the Jobs Summit.

"The banks can afford to be doing more for the local economy. It is scandalous that the government is not requiring them to help out people who lose their jobs or provide firms access to funding – especially while they are receiving tax payer support that is underwriting their business and supporting their profits," said Campbell.

"An analysis of the Australian owned banks' profits in recent years shows they are making a significant dividend return to their shareholders. If the banks are allowed to operate as business as usual then the New Zealand taxpayer will be simply underwriting the return of profits to rich shareholders," said Campbell.

"It is time for the government to require more from the banks. They can afford it. This can include a 12 month mortgage

holiday for those that lose their jobs, the shared equity fund for businesses that are cash strapped and ensuring bank staff stay in work and get a fair wage rise," said Campbell.

## **BITS & BOBS**

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**LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE &  
REMEMBER.....**

**"WE'RE STRONGER  
TOGETHER"!**

