

# THE ACTIVIST



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## ANOTHER DEATH IN PORT LYTTELTON

The RMTU has just learned of the death of a MUNZ member at the Port of Lyttelton. The name has not been released at this time. The RMTU extends its sincere sympathy to the whanau, workmates and friends of our fallen brother in Lyttelton. There is obviously a systemic problem in this port in regard to health and safety management.

## ELECTION 2014

The RMTU website has been updated to include a page devoted to the election. It has links and info of interest to members seeking to learn which party has the best policies for Rail and Maritime workers in NZ

<http://www.rmtunion.org.nz/events/Election2014/Election2014.php>

## LYTTELTON PORT FAILS TO CONSOLIDATE BARGAINING

On Friday 22 August LPC contacted the RMTU to say they would not request a consolidation of bargaining under s50 of the Employment Relations Act 2000.

On 9 July MUNZ initiated bargaining with LPC. They did not withdraw that initiation of bargaining as agreed by the RMTU and

MUNZ at our meeting with CTU President Helen Kelly on 11 July, leaving the RMTU no choice but to initiate bargaining on 28 July, 24 hours before the deadline after which the employer could cross initiate.

Separate initiations have been the usual practice at LPC, in fact 'that's how it's always been done'. Initiating separately does however hand the initiative to the employer, who, if it does not request consolidation of bargaining (to which the unions have to agree or withdraw their respective initiations), can choose to bargain separately with the unions.

That's what has happened and this is always a risk when initiating separately. Of course it

is the preference of the RMTU to bargain together, hence our commitment to a joint initiation at the 11 July meeting with the CTU and MUNZ.

In the past two weeks we requested the assistance of the CTU to progress bargaining jointly but MUNZ advised us they did not see any need to involve the CTU.

New Zealand Government Overseas Debt 1993 to 2012

Source: New Zealand Reserve Bank



## ANOTHER TAURANGA WHARF DEATH

We have heard that an ISO employee died as a result of an accident within the gates of Port Tauranga. Details are scarce at this stage which, in our experience, is typical for ISO. Our experience is that details of accidents and injuries involving workers within ISO are withheld for as long as possible. To illustrate this point it is of note

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

that in the local media it is reported that the police were unaware of the accident or death. That being the case were Worksafe NZ advised of the accident and death? It is common gossip on the Tauranga wharf that ISO do not have trained H&S representatives nor do they have a H&S committee(s).

It will be interesting to observe how Worksafe NZ handle this latest tragedy?

## DAS PUT ON HOLD BY LE REPS

For the last 12 – 18 months KR have been working on a Driver Advisory System (DAS) or what was called 'energymiser' in the past. There have been many concerns raised about this proposed system but due to KR's determination to have the system up and running, the potential fuel savings, an offer for LE's to share in some of the fuel savings, the LE Reps have rightly or wrongly worked hard to date to make the DAS fit for purpose.

Recent events have caused the LE Reps to reconsider further support for the DAS. Firstly a presentation to RMTU Reps from the new CEO, Peter Reidy, which included presenting on KR's target of "Zero Harm" and a trip by the LE Reps to look at Rail Operations in Australia as part of a Signals Passed at Danger (SPAD) reduction programme, has given the LE Reps cause for concern and triggered a reconsideration of ongoing support for DAS in its current form.

Prior to the last KiwiRail (Freight) Industrial Council, the KIC LE Rep – Central, Les Perrin, wrote to management and RMTU Reps stating that he could not support DAS due to his belief that DAS would increase the risk of SPAD's due to the risk of distraction. KiwiRail responded stating the DAS screen would, in time, present no more risk of distraction than the speedo. KR also provided the risk assessment jointly done on the DAS in April 2014. Rather than calm concerns, the DAS risk assessment clearly showed the residual risk of distraction leading to a SPAD was 'high' from the initial risk of distraction being 'very high', the same applied for the risk of speeding and the risk of speeding over a temporary speed restriction – all still categorised at 'high' risk. All the KIC LE Reps believe that is unacceptable to introduce new high risks for Locomotive Engineers with this DAS project.

KR has been advised that aside from route validation, RMTU members will not participate in the DAS project, until the risks are appropriately managed or mitigated. The lack of participation includes training and train the trainer training on the DAS system.

## VACANCY – RESIDENT CUSTODIAN, PAIHIA

The position of Resident Custodian at the NZ Railways Staff Welfare Trust's Paihia complex will shortly become vacant – Doug and Doreen Lehmann have decided on a very well earned retirement. The Trust is extremely grateful to them for their many years of service. Many members have appreciated their friendly and professional service and we all wish them well for a long and healthy retirement.

The Custodian is the Trust's representative at Paihia and liaises with members staying at the complex. The appointee will be expected to manage and maintain the facility - this includes several longer term tenancies. A list of responsibilities is available on request from the Trusts Wellington Office or by emailing [Chris.Ball@kiwirail.co.nz](mailto:Chris.Ball@kiwirail.co.nz)

The Custodian is required to live on site and a three-bedroom unit is available to the appointee. Applicants should provide a curriculum vitae and covering letter to the Trust's Wellington Office or to the email above by Friday, 3 October 2014.

## TRANSDEV LE'S SAY YES

The integration of KiwiRail LE's into Transdev's operation in Auckland on the "same or more favourable" terms and conditions of employment highlighted the differences between Transdevs and KiwiRail's terms and conditions of employment for Locomotive Engineers.

In an extremely pragmatic and welcome move Transdev Auckland decided to move quickly to remove this irritant to workplace harmony within its ranks. They proposed everyone move to the more attractive KiwiRail pay scale and Rail Operating Manual (ROM). A variation ballot was conducted by the RMTU after the specific deal was ironed out. The result was that the LE members in



Transdev voted by an overwhelming 98.8% to accept the variation. We await word as to when the implementation date will be for the payment of the monies.

## AGM'S

Branch Annual General Meetings are occurring throughout the country in accordance with Union rules. The National President and General Secretary have attended as many as possible so as to fully report on the activities of the Union and to be accountable to members. Make sure you attend your AGM if it has not been held to date!

## CHRISTCHURCH MEMBERS - LOOK AFTER YOURSELF!

More than three and a half years on after the big earthquakes there are several worrying trends emerging within the Christchurch population. Increased rates of depression and other mental illness and alcohol and drug related problems have been identified.

These are all symptoms of a community that has been stressed – 15,000 aftershocks over more than a year are unprecedented and have put enormous strain on the community. Add to this the uncertainty around housing, jobs and the sheer frustration of moving around a city that is being dug up and it's not surprising people are losing their cool.

Make sure you look after yourself and one another. One thing you can take advantage of is the Employment Assistance Programme KiwiRail, LPC and Toll provide – even if counselling isn't your thing give it a go if you're feeling stressed. It costs you nothing and might just provide a few pointers that could help you, your family and your workmates.

Even if you're not feeling stressed out it does no harm to get a mental health check-up through EAP – after all, most of our members have regular medical check-ups to monitor their physical health- why wouldn't you do it for your mental and emotional wellbeing?

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## LABOURS IR POLICY

The Labour Party's Industrial Relations policy package recently announced will give New Zealand workers "a real choice" in the upcoming elections, said Council of Trade Unions President Helen Kelly.

"These policies are what workers have been calling for - we are delighted that the Labour Party has listened to working New Zealanders." Kelly said.

Among other points, the package includes an increase in the minimum wage, 26 paid parental leave days, abolition of the 90-day fire-at-will law and expanded collective bargaining rights. Labour also committed to ensure all core public service workers are paid at least the living wage.

"The total package will finally allow workers like forestry and farm workers to have a mechanism to get a fair wage in these highly profitable industries," Kelly said. Other unions joined in applauding Labour's work and wage policy.

## KIWI RAIL FIT FOR BUSINESS?

F4B is what KiwiRail are calling this project. The RMTU knows very little about this project however we are told its objectives are;



1. Improve Efficiency
  2. Lift productivity
  3. Reduce waste
  4. Focus on the "vital" few
  5. Deliver with urgency
- \$200m from Government a Hand Up, not a Hand Out!
  - Need to find \$20m reduction per annum each year for the next two years

We are sure you will hear more on this into the future but we are unsure as to how \$20m is to be cut from the business without affecting safety and operations. After all, we are still paying the price for the 144 trackworkers laid off last year. Is the vital few the 6 major customers KiwiRail has and if so then the adverts on TV are a complete waste of money as the big 6 already know the worth of rail and so why tout for further business when your only going to concentrate on the existing big six customers.

The F4B project is about to commence with managers visiting Hutt Workshops and Mechanical Depots nationwide.



## RMTU WOMEN'S FORUM 2015

The RMTU is currently planning for an inaugural

Women's Forum in Wellington early 2014. Up to 30 paid places are available for RMTU women to attend. The Forum will be one full day and two half days either side.

Final dates of March or April are soon to be confirmed.

The purpose of the Forum is to bring together active and keen RMTU women to begin empowering women to take a greater leadership role within the RMTU at all levels.

The Forum will:

1. Nominate a Women's Candidate for NMC Elections due to be held in 2015.
2. Prior to candidate endorsement the role of the Women's Rep will be presented to

the Forum who will discuss, amend if required and agree on the role of the NMC Women's Rep for submission to and final approval by the NMC.

3. Preferably the Forum will agree on nominating and endorsing one candidate, however democratic process must be allowed and there may be more than one candidate nominated out of the Forum.
4. A Women's RMTU Communication network will be developed at Forum – an agreed group of women who will begin the process of being and creating a support and communication network for RMTU active women – e.g. the Women's Branch Representatives, NMC rep, women delegates, branches that don't have women – how to support these groups.

Amongst the anticipated lively debate and decision making will be speakers, education sessions, and an evening meal on the first night and lots of strong union women to get to know and build networks with.

If you are interested or know any RMTU women who would be keen then register your interest by emailing Julia Harrison, Administration Assistant [jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz) and Libi Carr RMTU Lyttelton Branch Secretary [rmtul@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rmtul@xtra.co.nz).

## CUNLIFFE CONFIDENT

With less than one month until Election Day, Labour Leader David Cunliffe declared that Labour is "within striking range" of an upset election victory. He said Labour is within 3 per cent or 4 per cent of forming a coalition government.

"I'm entirely confident we can do this," he said while campaigning in South Auckland. "Nobody said it was easy but it's doable." He said key areas that could help raise standards of living are Labour's new youth employment policy and a plan to lift the minimum wage by \$2 per hour. Cunliffe also pledged the new Labour Government will keep rural and residential land "in Kiwi hands." New Zealand houses should be for New Zealand families, he said. According to the recently announced land policy, Labour will also restrict sales of residential homes to



any non-residents unless they intend to move here which will help "keep the Kiwi home ownership dream alive, especially for young New Zealanders currently locked out of the housing market," party officials said.

## DIRTY POLITICS

Author Nicky Hagers book has created a firestorm of media attention around the dirty tactics of Whaleblog's Cameron Slater, his cronies and the links to the National party.

RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson says "that the book is a very disturbing and yet compelling read. Many of the references to the actions of Justice Minister Judith Collins lead to a judgement of "conduct unbecoming" and a woman who you would talk to only with your back against a wall. I urge all members to read the book so as to make up their own minds as to these shadowy figures in the book."

Also mentioned in the book is the Ports of Auckland dispute is a claim that the Port Company engaged with the right wing attack blogger Cameron Slater and his cronies to smear Union members during the dispute. The RMTU supports a MUNZ demand for Auckland City to initiate an independent audit into the actions of Ports of Auckland during the dispute and possible misuse of ratepayer funds.

## LONGER HEAVIER TRUCKS

High productivity (50 Tonne) trucks they are called and most members of rural communities around NZ will say they are destroying our roads and bridges if asked. This month has seen the NZTA increase the designated road network these trucks may travel on to 1632 kilometres. NZTA say that the strategy underpinning these trucks is to move more freight with fewer trucks.

## ECONOMISTS' WARNINGS SHOW NEED FOR ECONOMIC UPGRADE

Warnings from senior economists back up Labour's concerns our economy is too reliant on the Canterbury rebuild and Auckland's housing market, which is a combination that could see the economy end up 'on the rocks', Labour Leader David Cunliffe says.

"Labour has been clear with New Zealanders that National's overreliance on dairy and disaster is not a real recovery and is in fact hurting other sectors and limiting export growth.

"New Zealand needs a diverse and vibrant economy, not one that relies on rebuilding Christchurch, the price of milk in China and puts money in the hands of Auckland property speculators.

"The recent dramatic falls in dairy and wood prices shows the failings of National's policy and the resulting halving in growth. New Zealanders are missing out on the recovery with less than half getting a pay rise last

year.

"Export figures out today showed a monthly drop of 7.5 per cent, led by the fall in dairy and raw log exports.

"This is why New Zealand needs Labour's Economic Upgrade that focusses on investment, innovation and industry to diversify our economy, boost exports and create better jobs with higher wages.

"We will increase investment through universal KiwiSaver and use a capital gains tax – excluding the family home – to direct it to productive businesses and jobs.

"We will boost innovation through research and development tax credits and tax incentives to encourage investment in new technology.

"We will support crucial industries through upgrade plans for sectors such as forestry, manufacturing and ICT.



"That's the only way we can ensure long-term growth and a better economy for all New Zealand.

"It's not just Labour and senior economists who are concerned about our economy's future. New Zealanders are increasingly worried that this is as good as it gets," David Cunliffe said.

## INTERISLANDER / RMTU JOINT COMMUNICATION - DSD WAGE SURVEY

The purpose of this communication is to provide staff / members with an overview and update of the Terminals Wage Survey to date.

**Background:** The DSD wage survey was a result of the 2012 Collective Negotiations between KiwiRail and the RMTU. The process began back in April 2013. To date both Interislander and / or the RMTU have:

- Agreed the position descriptions to be used for the purposes of the market survey.
- Visited both Terminals and met with staff / members to discuss the wage survey process.
- Agreed the list of comparative companies that DSD would approach as part of the wage survey
- Provided Interislander actual payroll data to DSD

DSD has gone to the market and collected market information from the agreed comparative companies.

All of these steps were discussed and agreed in the Interislander and RMTU Industrial Council Meetings up to this point.

The purpose of the meeting on the 19th August 2014 was for DSD to present back to the Industrial Council a draft report of the market information.

From the market information we are able to tell staff / members that in terms of base salary Interislander is paying within the market range of 95% to 105% of the market median for base rates for each of

the different role. As an overall comparison of all roles, Interislander pays at 98% of the market for base rates. This is considered competitive.

There was a lot of discussion regarding Total Remuneration (Penal Rates, Overtime, Allowances, Advanced Capacity, all types of leave etc). As a result of this communication DSD are going back to work on providing additional information to address some questions asked. Once we have all of the information we will make it available to staff / members.

**Next Steps:** DSD will continue to analyse the data and provide additional information as requested. This additional information will be presented to the Industrial Council at the next meeting (if available) which is scheduled for the 11th September.

As part of this meeting we will agree on a communication plan so that we can present the results back to staff / members at both terminals.

Both Interislander and the RMTU are committed to a high level of communication throughout this process including site meetings at both terminals in the near future.

Ross Allen Commercial Freight Manager & Todd Valster RMTU Organiser

## NATIONAL GETS FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE FACTS

In their desperation to make it look as though they are doing something about the housing crisis, National is playing fast and loose, says Labour's housing spokesperson Phil Twyford.

Claim # 1 – This new package will help about 90,000 first home buyers over five years.

Reality – 50,000 were projected to use the scheme before, they will only benefit if they buy a new home and only 5% of new homes built today are in the affordable range. The new announcements will help only an additional 40,000 people over 5 years.

Claim # 2 – National's policy says they will insulate another 46,000 homes on top of the 250,000 already insulated.



Reality - The 250,000 includes 12,000 already insulated under the new subsidy programme. They are double counting over 12,000 houses. The 250,000 estimate was made in April. By now there are probably only another 30,000 to be insulated.

Claim # 3- National says it will consent 39,000 new homes over three years in Auckland.

Reality - There is only just over two more years of the accord to go. In the first six months they have only consented 3416. At this rate they will only consent 20,496 over three years.

Claim # 4 - National contrast their consent targets of 9000 consents in Auckland to the average of the four years prior - 3600.

Reality - The 9000 figure is for consented sections and dwellings. The 3,600 is for only new dwellings. Their first year target is actually less than what the market produced the year before which was 9,975.

Claim # 5 - National says they have trialled a WOF on every state house.

Reality - National's trial is actually only 500 houses around 0.7% of the stock.

"This week National announced a policy that has been panned by the experts, advised against by Treasury and rejected as a failure in Australia.

"They are panicking on housing and are now resorting to misrepresenting the facts."

## **ADDINGTON WAGON DEPOT REOPENS**

The membership is back at work at Addington Wagon Depot after the landlord of an adjoining property finally got it cleaned up and had asbestos removed. Back in June our members were dispersed to Waltham and Middleton Yard as cross contamination was identified from the neighbouring property. This is not unusual in Christchurch as the rebuild continues apace - many members are having remedial work done to their homes and asbestos has been discovered, necessitating a clean-up.

Monitoring is continuing, and members are encouraged to contact their organiser or National Office if they have any concerns.

## **LE PROGRESSION METRO**

In a bizarre move Passenger Group unilaterally imposed a restriction on LE pay and progression if an LE received a verbal or written warning during the course of employment. If subsequent warnings occurred then the hold on progression could be enduring. The RMTU initiated a dispute with KiwiRail and the result is that the LE's have been restored to their normal progression and paid interest of 5% on the monies lost.

There is a real issue presently with the management style within Passenger Group in the Union's view.

## **WESTFIELD DEPOT**

Monitoring of the Air extraction system in the Westfield servicing depot has been conducted with results showing low levels of exposure to harmful fumes and diesel particulates. From those results KiwiRail has a clearer understanding that an upgrade of the existing system is required not a complete redesign. The plans being considered are Non-working fans will be replaced, the hood inside the shed to run the full length with wings added, door close mechanisms installed and a possible beam triggered sensor that will automatically turn the fans on and off as units enter and leave the building.

## **BILL ENGLISH WAS RIGHT THE FIRST TIME ON TAX CUTS**

Bill English was right the first time when he stifled John Key's dangle of vague tax cut promises, Labour's Finance spokesperson David Parker says.

"Bill English said before the PREFU that tax cuts weren't affordable and John Key seemed to accept that, albeit reluctantly.

"Now the PREFU has shown a downturn in growth and tax revenues. The forecast budget surplus under National is forecast to be \$500 million a year lower. Tax cuts on the Government's own figures are even less affordable.

"It's hard to escape the view that this latest dance is because of the fallout from the stain on John Key's reputation, caused by



the involvement of his office and Judith Collins with Whale Oil. Mr Key is now trying to resurrect his campaign using vague promises of unspecified future tax cuts.

"Bill English has been forced to dangle a carrot of a tax cut which he is plainly uncomfortable with. Last night in the Queenstown debate he would not indicate when or how much, but again ruled out significant tax cuts.

"Labour collects more revenue from a capital gains tax (excluding the family home), and an increase in income tax on incomes over \$150,000. Labour has also shown how we cut our cloth in light of the decrease in outlook shown by the PREFU.

"National now needs to show how and when it will fund its promises, which are less transparent.

"National must be upfront and open with New Zealanders, just as Labour has been with its spending and revenue plans," David Parker says.

## **COLLINS TOO COMPROMISED TO REMAIN JUSTICE MINISTER**

Bizarre claims by Judith Collins this morning that she had been cleared of inappropriate behaviour by the Privacy Commissioner demonstrates she is too compromised to remain Justice Minister, Labour MP Grant Robertson says.

"Judith Collins has not been cleared. In fact Privacy Commissioner John Edwards hasn't investigated her admission she leaked details of a public servant to Cameron Slater.

"The Justice Minister's hasty backtrack when proved wrong doesn't remove the fact she should never have said it.

"It shows how desperate Judith Collins is to clear herself in the eyes of the public that she simply plucked a completely inaccurate statement about an independent watchdog out of the air.

"Now she has admitted she was wrong, will she also admit she was wrong to leak personal details of public servant Simon Pleasants, which led to death threats against him and his family on Cameron Slater's hateful Whale Oil blog?

"The Prime Minister must now step in. His Justice Minister is out of control. If you can't trust the Minister of Justice, who can you trust?

"It is clear Judith Collins is no longer capable of remaining minister," Grant Robertson says.

## **TRANSPARENCY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS OUR DIRTY POLITICS**

A new report by Transparency International has called for "serious and urgent action" to protect government integrity and highlights the dirty politics played by National, Labour's State Services spokesperson Maryan Street says.

"This latest report highlighted concerns about appointments to boards and high level public sector positions, a decline in the quality of public service advice, transparency around lobbying of MPs and Ministers and government independence from business interests.

"One example was the Prime Minister's involvement in direct negotiation with Sky City over the convention centre in exchange for changes to gambling rules. The Office of the Auditor-General found a lack of due process led to a perception of favouritism. Transparency International also said National's decision-making process failed to meet 'established principles of fiscal transparency'.

"The report also stressed the need for the Government to reassure the public it is using its powers in the public interest, especially with respect to appointments. New Zealanders deserve better than John Key phoning his old school friend when the Government Communications and Security Bureau was looking for a new boss.

"Unfortunately, the report's first two recommendations rely on the Justice Ministry to lead a comprehensive National Anti-Corruption Strategy and develop an ambitious Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership.

"It would be perverse for that to be overseen by Judith Collins, whose integrity is under question after becoming repeatedly embroiled in scandals involving favourable treatment of her friends and family.



"The Justice Minister's use of her Ministerial position to advantage her husband's company Oravida stands as an example of everything we need to guard against. Her release of the private details of a public servant to a destructive blogger make her unfit to oversee a plan for open government. She clearly misunderstands the term. New Zealand would be a laughing stock if she was in charge.

"There is much work to be done to clean up our systems and maintain our reputation internationally. However, John Key and Judith Collins are not the people to do that," Maryan Street says.

## **MUNZ CONTINUES TO PRESS PORTS OF AUCKLAND OVER DIRTY POLITICS ACTIVITIES**

Maritime Union National President Garry Parsloe says Ports of Auckland management is trying to get off the hook from its involvement with extreme right wing bloggers during the Ports of Auckland dispute.

Information revealed in Nicky Hager's new book "Dirty Politics" shows that the POAL management were acting in close concert with "attack" bloggers and their associates in an anti-union campaign.

Mr Parsloe says CEO Tony Gibson and the Board must reveal what relationships and dealings it had with right wing attack bloggers, whether paid or unpaid.

He says it was obvious there was a network encompassing right wing bloggers and their political associates, and senior figures at the Ports, as outlined in the book.

"It seems that an inner circle, many with no connection to the Port, were in the know about an agenda that the owners of the port, the people of Auckland, were kept in the dark about."

Mr Parsloe says Auckland City must ask the POAL Board and Management was its focus on concluding negotiations – or was it engaged in an ideological crusade against its workforce?

He repeated his query as to the price tag for external consultancy and public relations

services supplied to POAL during the dispute.

He says a statement by a POAL spokesperson that he was "pretty confident" money paid to outside advisers at the time of the dispute did not go to a blogger was a cavalier response, given the seriousness of the situation.

"Auckland City must demand a yes or no answer from the CEO, not weasel words."

"The owners of the port must demand a categorical assurance from the Board and management that payments were not being funnelled to bloggers or similar agents through outside contractors retained by the Port."

"This question must be answered by the CEO and the Chair of the Board, on the public record."

There was no transparency or accountability as to how ratepayers money had been spent by the Ports of Auckland pursuing an agenda against their own workforce, says Mr Parsloe.

## **BIZARRE!!!!**

Bolivia became the first country in the world to legalize child labour after Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera signed a new law July 17 which dropped the legal age of workers from 14 to 10. The law stipulates children are allowed to work as long as the child has permission from parents and is enrolled in school. Human rights and anti-child labour groups decried the law saying it goes against international standards.

"Bolivia's move is out of step with the rest of the world," said Jo Becker of Human Rights Watch. "Child labour may be seen as a short-term solution to economic hardship, but is actually a cause of poverty." Child workers are common in most parts of Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and South America, although outlawed in most countries. They are responsible for making iPhones, garments and even work in mines for minerals used in electronic batteries.

## **INJURIES THROUGH THE ROOF**

The explosive growth of labour-hire companies set up in post-quake



Christchurch is hurting workers, charged New Zealand's unions. CTU's said injuries in labour hire were "through the roof," and it was becoming a disproportionate contributor to construction injuries while the Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union warned firms were taking "a considerable margin" from workers' pay checks.

As the Christchurch rebuild accelerates, the number of labour-hire businesses has expanded rapidly, with at least 17 opening in the past three years. Labour-hire companies charge margins and fees to place workers with businesses. But unions warn the practice usually means lower pay for workers, especially migrants. EPMU Construction director of organising Alan Clarence estimated that migrant workers were paid up to \$5 less than if they were employed directly. Kelly said workers under labour hire contracts were far more vulnerable to substandard working conditions than regular employees and had less access to training, experience or avenues for expressing concerns.

### BITS AND BOBS

- Port of Auckland reported a 90% increase in net profit after tax. Container throughput increased by 18% to 968,741 TEU's.
- Port of Auckland, Port of Napier and Icepak are to open in a joint venture an inland port in Palmerston North.
- Christchurch City Holdings is moving to acquire all of the remaining shares held by other parties so as to delist the Port Company from the sharemarket.
- The Auckland Branch AGM was held Tuesday, we have a new branch secretary, a women's rep for the first time and a number of first time and returning delegates. Andrew Little (Labour) and Julie Anne Genter (Greens) were the guest speakers highlighting why a change of government is essential; to protect us from proposed ERA changes and to a government that will invest in rail especially the Central Rail Loop.
- The Auckland Metro maintenance and servicing team (AMMS) will get further

briefings from Kiwirail on Thursday Aug 28 about timeframes around the fleet transition, there are still many members wishing to stay with the Rail family, the RMTU will continue to be part of this process and support our members in what is quite an uncertain time for many.

- Our Members at C3 Marsden Point have avoided the need for any redundancies due to the downturn in log volumes. Retraining to become digger operators working inside the ships which includes travelling around to different Ports (suitcase stevedoring) was seen as a viable alternative.
- The exact nature of the fault in the electrification system in Auckland is unclear but it did postpone the introduction of EMU services to Manukau. Hopefully Transdev will be in a position to give an update shortly to avoid any impact on the Timetable change now due in November.
- POTL negotiations are at a delicate stage with the possibility of talks in September, either that or notice of industrial action will be served
- We are currently putting together claims for the Port of Napier Collective Agreement negotiations, with the intention of negotiating in September.
- The RMTU is backgrounding an allegation of managerial bullying in another central North Island regional location. If you have been subjected to managerial bullying.

**We're Stronger Together!**

