

Volume 2016  
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# THE ACTIVIST

## NZ Scary National Debt

You can now see it in real time by clicking or typing in the following link. The numbers are very scary for a country of 4.6million. As I type this we owe NZ\$23,579 per person!

<http://www.nationaldebtclocks.org/debtclock/newzealand>

## Membership Database Updates

The RMTU membership database is an important tool in contacting Union Members or ensuring members are kept up to date with the latest information. We are concerned at the number of “unknown” or “return to sender” envelopes returned to National Office as part of this year’s officer elections. We remind members that if you wish to exercise their rights and participate in the decision making aspects of the Union they should ensure they inform National Office of any change of address or contact details as soon as possible. This includes any change of designation or employer.

Branch Secretaries hold “update of membership forms” that you can post or fax in or alternatively for immediate action members are reminded to utilise the update of membership details link on our website [www.rmtunion.org.nz](http://www.rmtunion.org.nz).

For example – All national Union elected positions are up for election next year and so there may be votes conducted by mail. If we have the incorrect address info you will not get a vote as you will never receive a voting paper.

Update now!

## Relief GS

Wayne Butson will be out of the country next week attending the ICLS meeting in Thailand accompanied by Mike Williams and Ka’isa Beech. During his absence Todd Valster will be acting General Secretary.

## RMTU Biennial Conference

### Organising For Strength and Unity!

The supreme governing body of the Union will be meeting at the Porirua Police College 1-3 November 2016. Conference sees representatives from the Union branches and sector interest groups all come together to overview the Unions activity over the last 2 years and to set the budgets and direction of the Union for the following 2 years.

The Union rules and policy are changed by remits to Conference and this year there are remits calling for;

- The awarding of Life Membership to Mike Tasker from Lyttelton Port Branch,
- The Union to change its banking service provider to a NZ owned and operated bank,
- The Union to discuss whether or not to disaffiliate from the NZ Labour Party,
- To increase branch capitation by \$1.00 per member,
- To increase membership fee by \$0.10c,
- To change the NMC structure.

Conference first day keynote address will be given by Andrew Little leader of the NZ Labour Party political wing. Several international Unions will be sending representatives to speak at the Conference with some travelling long distances like ASLEF and RMT from the UK.

Confence this year has an altered format with the morning of Day 1 being a Women’s workshop followed by seperate Rail and Port workshops running concurrently focussing on their specific issues.

## Strife on the West Coast

Cross the Great Divide at Arthur’s Pass and everyone you meet knows the price of a tonne of coal. Recently the price has recovered to just over US\$44 per metric tonne, still down from just over US\$48 per metric tonne in May this year and well below the peak of US\$70 per metric tonne in early 2014. Of course, the reason for the interest is the fate of the state owned mining company, Solid Energy, which directly and indirectly provides so much employment over on the West Coast.

This includes many of our members, who like coal miners are highly skilled and relatively well paid in comparison to many workers who are in low paid, precarious employment in the Coast’s other big employer, the tourism industry. Many people on the Coast are concerned at the fate of Solid Energy and rumours abound about whether or not it is mining profitably or if there are interested buyers.

KiwiRail is a vital link in the supply line of coal to Lyttelton port where more of our members load the coal onto ships bound for China and elsewhere. You couldn’t find a better example of the vulnerability of the New Zealand economy to changes in global commodity prices and the potential impact on RMTU members and their families.

## **C3 Tauranga Collective Agreement.**

We are currently working thru the ratification of this agreement.

## **Port of Tauranga.**

With the arrival of two new cranes the Port has decided to look at introducing another contractor onto the scene to compete with C3 and their own crane driver. So they have put out a Request for Proposal for Services [RFP]. The crane drivers are pretty pissed off with the RVP, as it is an attack on their wagers and conditions, their skills, their high productivity rates and a dimming of their careers as crane drivers. The BOP Port branch has decided to tackle the Port's intentions head on.

## **C3 Marsden Point.**

We have initiated bargaining for a Multi-Employer Collective Agreement [MECA] with Owens Cargo Company Ltd, TLNZ and Allied Personnel Ltd in Marsden Point, these companies are all under the C3 banner.

## **Champion Flour.**

There will be a ratification meeting on Friday 14th on the recommended mediated settlement for the Champion Flour Mill Collective Agreement.

## **BOP Rostering Dispute - KiwiRail**

There has been some discussion on resolving the Mount Yard rostering dispute, and we are awaiting KiwiRail's response which will be put to the members at a membership meeting.

There has been some discussion on resolving the Kawerau Yard rostering and other matters dispute and there will be a report back meeting on Thursday 27th at 1230 to vote on the proposed resolution.

We are still waiting for the meeting with KiwiRail to resolve the Just and Fair Culture issues in Te Rapa!

A couple of months ago KiwiRail management on the South Island must have been under pressure as they looked to slash jobs under the cloak of what CEO Peter Reidy calls 'simplifying the business'. This is being touted as a 'strategy', although to us it looks more like a slogan and a pretty dumb one at that – the fact is that rail, just like aviation and healthcare, is a complicated affair involving highly skilled workers, expensive machinery and complex infrastructure.

The practical upshot of this has been that a rail operator in Reefton has been given notice that his job is 'disestablished' and the shunters in Greymouth are faced with the prospect of working a very tight six man roster with some ugly shifts, one starting at 0230 and finishing 11 ½ hours later.

Our members on the Coast have lived with demoralising uncertainty for months now. We've seen jobs cut in Westport and everyone, both in Operations and Networks Services, has faced the reality of not being able to plan for their family's future.

Management are very big on 'values' and paying lip service in Company publications to 'staff engagement' and morale. Out on the ground it's a different story - people have had enough and the reaction has started. There is a marked reluctance amongst the membership to do what they've always done and which they now feel has been taken for granted. You know what we mean: working on your RDO, coming in for an extra work period, working that public holiday instead of having a day with your family. It seems that the bosses are starting to understand that the elastic can only be stretched so far.

## **Strike Vote at Dunedin Railways**



Members who work for Dunedin Railways (formerly known as Taieri Gorge Railway) unanimously voted for industrial action last Friday after pay talks reached an impasse.

We are claiming 4% in year one and 2% in year two for a two year term and Dunedin Railways is offering 2% plus 2%.

The Employer is offering some increases to individual members over and above this, largely to offset the risk of skilled staff leaving, as rates of pay are so far behind the going rate.

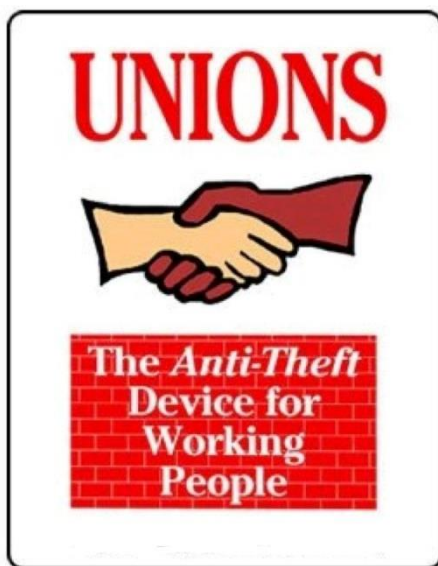
That said, one third of our members are being paid below the living wage (19.80/hr) and when times were lean for the Company, in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquake and the subsequent downturn in East Coast tourism, we agreed to no more than CPI increases and in one year the better paid members agreed to forgo any increase at all.

It's time for a catch up. Dunedin Railways is profitable and our members want their share.

At the time of writing the Board is meeting to discuss the bargaining and we are hopeful that the Company will take a pragmatic approach and meet our reasonable claims. Industrial action would have a big impact on Dunedin Railways, next month there are 19 very lucrative cruise ship

## Loss Of Person Overboard – Report Out

The Final report into the loss of a person overboard from the containership Madinah near the entrance to Lyttelton Harbour is now available on the home page of our website [www.taic.org.nz](http://www.taic.org.nz). The Commission findings contain important messages for marine managers and crew. The report file number is MO 2015-202. Clearly we are keen that the lessons learned are given wide circulation so tragic accidents of this kind are not repeated.



excursions scheduled. The loss of just one of these would, by our calculations, be more the cost of our pay claim for twelve months. And that's not to mention the impact industrial action has on relations between people in the workplace.

Our delegates are Lyall Kelpie and Alan Radley. Please send an e-mail of support.

[adradley78@gmail.com](mailto:adradley78@gmail.com)

[l.rkelpie@xtra.co.nz](mailto:l.rkelpie@xtra.co.nz).

## Rule 126

Kiwirail MIC reps along with other shop floor members and Kiwirail management have formed a working party where Rule 126 is currently being reviewed to consider moving to a lockout system to avoid Loco's being able to be moved while maintenance tasks are being undertaken in the depots. 5 options were presented at our last meeting with a top 2 decided upon as the most suitable.

Before making a final recommendation the group is doing further investigation as to what systems are used in other railway operations both in NZ and Australia.

## Different Coupling

A Coupling Trial with passengers on-board was conducted on Wednesday 12 Oct for the Auckland EMUs. The trial was conducted at The Strand depot and included a representative from the Blind Society, Disability Support group CCS, RMTU delegates along with Transdev management. 4 couplings were completed as part of the trial, 3 with us on board at 1kph, 2kph and 3kph and the 4<sup>th</sup> with us witnessing from the platform. The RMTU will submit a report and make some recommendations back to the wider working party.

## Locos not fit for Purpose – Just Say No!

There have been several instances in recent months where LE's in the deep south have needed to get loco's taken out of service for excessive vibration or rough riding. In these cases the loco's have been driven by up to three other LE's before the forth LE's has made a stand. Clearly this is unacceptable. If the loco is not fit for purpose then we need the first LE or all of the LE's to make a stand, use the red card! Excessive vibration is certainly not a safe working environment and can cause LE's harm, it can also further wreck the loco. There have been many DFT's that have broken their engine mounts due to excessive vibration. If a DC is rough riding, it may have a broken spring or defective boogies. Again this puts LE's at risk and can also wreck the track.

We also need to make sure the accountability for these issues are directed at management both mechanical and operational instead of slugging off other RMTU members who are doing the best they can under difficult conditions due management neglect to address staff shortages and a failure to recruit skilled staff in a timely manner.