

DECEMBER 2014

THE *Transport Worker*

The journal of the RMTU –
NZ's largest specialist transport union

**Conference hits
all high notes**



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The work Tim Spence has done for the RMTU and his colleagues was recognised at Conference by making him a life member of the Union.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

The RMTU's biennial conference attendees gather for a commemorative photograph.

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EDITORIAL



Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Your union needs YOU!

THE RMTU is a highly democratic organisation and prides itself on being so. We are a rank and file governed Union with myself being the only paid employee on the Union's National Management Committee (NMC). The NMC is responsible for the governance of the Union, ensuring it abides by its rules and supervising the actions of the general secretary – me. Most of the industrial activity undertaken by the Union on behalf of members is initiated and conducted by our branches.

With the exception of the Lyttelton Port branch secretary, all of the branch officers of the RMTU throughout NZ are rank and file workers.

The action(s) of the branch officers is decided on by either the branch executive, sector or membership meetings. The paid organisers of the RMTU are there to support, organise and train the officers and delegates of the branches.

In almost all cases, paid staff undertake wages' bargaining or collective agreement negotiations on behalf of members – with input and oversight from branch officers and delegates.

In practice this means that almost all of the Union's work is determined and undertaken by you – the membership. Within KiwiRail almost all of the Union's industrial work is undertaken in industrial or sector councils. Those councils comprise rank and file elected delegates with each council having a designated union organiser.

When a workplace issue arises and escalates enough to come to my attention the first thing I ask: "Is this important to the members and do they feel strongly about it?" If it isn't then there is no way that we will generate the passion required among members to rise up and demand whatever it is that is mooted. If it is important to members then clearly it will be important to the Union. Your worry is the Union's worry and your struggle is the Union's struggle.

The price of all this is participation. Members need to step up to the plate and to seek leadership roles within the Union. Additionally all of this participation and activity costs money. In some cases this cost is shared by the employer through the employer-based industrial councils, but in others it is entirely at the Union's cost – in dollars, energy and effort.

One such situation where we are striking barriers to getting the employer to meaningfully engage is the current H&S project we are operating in Port of Lyttelton (LPC).

Your Union is using a H&S expert, Hazel Armstrong, our in-house H&S organiser, Karen Fletcher, plus other resources extensively to try and engage with LPC to get constructive engagement around their woefully inadequate and unsatisfactory H&S system and culture at the port.

Our members and delegates have seen company managers abuse and accuse

workers as being lazy and trying to avoid work when they have invoked their rights and refused to operate demonstrably unsafe, safety-critical pieces of equipment.

In my view this is outrageous and until it changes other workers at the port will continue to be exposed to risk of serious harm or injury. The Union is upskilling delegates and H&S reps to grow their awareness of H&S and risk matrixes and energising and trying to empower them.

Our 'Just Say NO!' posters say it all! LPC says it is keen to begin a constructive engagement process to develop a better and more meaningful relationship with the RMTU, but we cannot get past the entry barrier unilaterally imposed by LPC.

LPC say they want to meet with two reps from each Union to commence the project and has said 'no' to Worksafe participation.

We say we have to have our H&S reps at the meeting – and participating – so as to get meaningful ownership, buy in and participation amongst our members.

This is the RMTU way. We don't send paid officials to meetings alone, have them do the business and then tell members the way it is going to be. Our members, delegates and officers take ownership and personal responsibility of issues and problems and, with support and advice from paid staff, decide and determine how the RMTU will move ahead on any issue. Some who are wedded to old outdated command and control structures and processes just don't seem to get it.


So that's the example out of the way. The price of democracy is participation.

To continue to have democracy we need a constant supply of members ready to put their hands up for delegate and leadership positions. Next year is election year for the key leadership, governance and industrial roles within the RMTU. The president, general secretary, NMC and all of the KiwiRail industrial council positions are up for election. The order they are stated above will be the order of the call for nominations. It will begin 1 March with the president and we will send out circulars at the time outlining each election process.

It is essential that we have candidates for all the positions equally as much as those candidates have the support of members.

We need a strong and effective RMTU for the next term of office as we have the challenges posed by a third term National government which has changed labour laws to the detriment of organised labour and with KiwiRail slashing and burning \$20m from their balance sheet under the leadership of Peter Reidy.

We need you now, more than ever, to stand up to be counted and to give total loyalty and support to your leaders as we look down the barrel of the gun over the next two years.

On behalf of the president, NMC members and staff, I hope and trust that you and yours get through the Christmas/New Year holiday period unscathed. And if you are working over the Christmas/New Year period be sure you are around to share a happy, healthy and hopefully prosperous 2015. Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to each and everyone of you! 

14 October 2014

To the Lyttelton Port Company

Due to the poor quality of forklifts as well as, what I would consider, dangerous and hazardous driving terrain, I have come to the conclusion that LPC, as a company, has no desire to amend any of these issues in the foreseeable future.

Given the scale and cost involved as well, for me, this would be too little too late. Also the expectation at times to sit around when machinery is out of action is indescribably boring and as a work ethic I find undermining.

The amount of dust in the yard is inescapable and being jolted around over large pot holes is giving me ongoing neck and back discomfort.

Therefore, I am resigning giving the expected two weeks' notice as outlined in the contract and will finish on October 28.

I have found all staff fantastic but due to equipment and layout and other underlining factors I cannot find myself considering this position to be in any way for the long term.

Thank you for the opportunity but I intend to seek employment elsewhere.
Sincerely,
(Name withheld).

Resignations

Dear Editor,

I started in rail on 28 May 1961 at the age of 16 as a junior labourer. In February 1962 I sat my boiler's ticket and became a loco trainee. In 53 years with New Zealand railways I have been given the opportunity to work in Greymouth, Dunedin, back to Greymouth, then Springfield and Christchurch before finally transferring to Wellington in 1969 where I have been ever since.

I have met a lot of great people and made a lot of really good friends in my time and it is with the deepest of regret that I have to medically retire from my career.

I'd like to thank Wayne and the team for their leadership, support and friendship over the many years, and the work our Union does to keep improving our conditions and, most importantly, safety.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Phil Gibbs

LE Wellington.



Dear Editor

I wish to tender my resignation from the Union as I retired from KiwiRail on the 3 November 2014 after 41 years.

I wish to thank you and previous general secretaries for their work in the NUR and RMTU and what they did for us.

Derek Thomson

Train manager

Masterton.

[ED: Good luck as the caretaker at the Orewa flats.]

Dear Editor,

The time has come for me to retire from the Port of Tauranga, so I am sending you my resignation from a great Union for its workers.

Before I go I would like to pay tribute to a few of the people who made it easier for the security people at POT.

Firstly to Wayne Butson for his help in allowing the Union to use Geoff Davenport, the Union lawyer, who has done a magnificent job representing the Union over the past four years. Also to Phil Spanwick our Union organiser a great thanks to him, and also to Craig Malpas who, through his delicate handling of all the intricate lawyer problems over the past two years, cannot be forgotten. And finally to Kel Martin and Graham Harvey for all their hard work in gaining a great settlement for our Union members over the last few years.

I hope the Union goes from strength to strength with the new members coming on board.

Yours sincerely

Roger McIntyre.

Whither Labour now?

DOES the New Zealand Labour Party have a future? After the worst election result since 1928, it is questionable whether the Party's continued existence is assured in the second decade of the 21st century.

Around the smoko rooms of the port and railway yards our members are identifying the same reasons for Labour's poor electoral showing as they are in the common rooms of the university political science departments and the offices of the Beehive. Essentially these boil down to the failure of David Cunliffe's leadership; divisions in the caucus; a hostile media; distractions with so called 'dirty politics'; a failure to explain policy properly; unpopular policies like retirement at 67; John Key's popularity; not campaigning with likely coalition partners or supporters; an inability to mobilise the one third of enrolled electors who did not bother to vote; and loss of direction and forgetting the interests of its core supporters.

Many of these reasons are overlapping or inter-connected, the criticisms of Cunliffe's leadership style are often conflated with Key's popularity and the easy ride he gets in the mainstream media. There is a degree of truth in all of them, but the analysis is arguably incomplete. It will be interesting to see if the review the Party has commissioned into its loss, to be led by former British MP and now Kiwi academic Bryan Gould, will go deeper.

Political parties in New Zealand have disappeared before, most notably the Liberal Party, which formed the government in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and introduced many of the landmark reforms that led to New Zealand being hailed as the 'social laboratory of the world'. Yes, the party that gave women the vote; introduced old age pensions and passed the industrial relations legislation that established the arbitration system that was to last almost a hundred years, had disappeared by the end of the first world war.

Some of that was because of the old first past the post electoral system (FPP). Under FPP, parties have to reach a high critical mass before they get seats in Parliament while few, if any, 10% parties survive under this system. Similarly, when a party's



South Island RMTU organiser John Kerr, focusses on Labour's future, comparing its dilemma with left leaning parties overseas.

support drops below a certain point they simply disappear in electoral terms, rather than stuttering along as a minor party. Additionally, the Liberals were around when the party system was in its infancy and lacked the resilient structure of the later party machines that were National and Labour.

So, it's unlikely that Labour will disappear entirely. It may be however, that the party is condemned to becoming a minority party that never again leads or forms a government.

The reasons for this have little to do with those outlined above, but are rather a reflection of global trends afflicting parties like Labour across the developed world.

Social Democracy, or 'Labourism', was a response to the excesses of capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th century. As the twin convulsions of the First World War and the Great Depression led to communist revolutions and the rise of fascism in Russia and Europe respectively, the social democratic parties like Labour sought to strike a deal between organised labour (ie the unions) and capital. The aim was not to overthrow capitalism and embark on the building of socialism, or the creation of a '1000 year Reich', rather it was to blunt the sharper edges of the system and create 'capitalism with a human face'.

By 1945 the western democracies and the Soviet Union had prevailed in the war against fascism, and the price for the capitalists, at least in the west, was that an alliance of the unions and the socially progressive urban middle classes struck a deal that led to what many of our members' parents grew up with: full (male) employment, secure jobs, good wages, a welfare safety net, and socially provided health care and education. This alliance of organised labour and the enlightened urban middle classes led to the formation of Labour and Social Democratic governments in Europe and Australasia and the legacy of Roosevelt's 'New Deal' in the USA. The post war consensus was such that until the 1980s even conservative governments did not fundamentally change these policy settings until the neo-liberal onslaught of Reagan, Thatcher, and, in New Zealand, Roger Douglas and the 4th Labour Government.

Just how far the NZ Labour party had lurched to the right in the 1980s was demonstrated by it being the party that started dismantling the post war consensus, abandoning full employment and embarking on wholesale privatisation. Some commentators have argued it was only a Labour government that could do this in New Zealand. If National had tried it under Muldoon the backlash from the unions and the left would have been overwhelming. Under Lange's premiership however, the left was largely quiescent.

It wasn't until 1991 that National had the opportunity to take on organised labour and when they did they went further than both Reagan and Thatcher. The union movement has never recovered from the Employment Contracts Act and the failure to fight it, now union membership and the reach of collective bargaining in New Zealand is one of the lowest in the OECD.

Many of the old unionised jobs have gone, particularly in manufacturing, to be replaced by non-unionised, precarious, low paid employment in the so called 'service industries'.

The importance of this from the perspective of Labour's defeat in the 2014 election is that one of the pillars of 'Labourist' ideology was broken – all across

Something rotten below

KIWI RAIL'S plans to replace rotten Peruvian sleepers has been slow coming and will take ages to fix, says South Island organiser John Kerr.

"It just shows what a cock up the whole procurement programme was from the start," he said. "They bought cheap, failed to check the quality of the product and put lives at risk as trains and people rode and walked on sleepers that are not fit for purpose."

KiwiRail bought 160,000 Peruvian sleepers and have used them throughout the country. Most worrying he says are those used on bridges, sharp bends and turn-outs.

At one stage, the problem became so hazardous that KiwiRail was forced to issue an alert warning staff not to walk on sleepers on its 1,656 bridges and viaducts.

That alert also told staff not to step on sleepers marked with paint as it was likely they were damaged. Earlier that same

month a Veolia train driver was injured when a rotten Peruvian sleeper gave way on an Auckland rail bridge.

Ironically, at about the same time, the Company laid off 158 workers from its infrastructure and engineering department as part of a plan to defer network maintenance and save \$200 million.

Labour's transport spokesperson, Phil Twyford compared KiwiRail's management to a slapstick comedy.

Kerr added that KiwiRail have lately moved quickly to identify the breadth of the problem and to pinpoint the worst spots. In the interests of safety, he said, the RMTU has relented and allowed contractors in to, replace rotting sleepers on the large bridges, which will require specialist equipment.

"However, RMTU members will be doing most of the work elsewhere in the network," he said. He expects it could take up to ten years to rid New Zealand of the



160,000 rotting Peruvian sleepers.

"One of the problems is that we don't know how quickly these sleepers are deteriorating," he said. "We are going to have to remain vigilant in our oversight of them if we are to stay on top of the problem and avoid any accidents. Turnouts, bridges and bends present the highest risk and the most urgent of these are scheduled for urgent replacement.

"Our priority is that the network is safe to travel on." 

the western world the defeat of the unions robbed social democratic parties of much of their organisational strength. For a time in the early years of this century the subsequent stagnation of real wages was offset by debt-fuelled consumption and asset price inflation – think about how personal debt and house prices increased exponentially in the late 90s and early 2000s.

By 2008-9 the game was up. After the failure of Lehman Brothers the house of cards that was the world financial system came within a whisker of collapse. Since then it's been on life support, sustained by transfusions of printed money and increasing public debt. Bailing out the banks had to be paid for with a fresh round of public spending cuts and privatisations – the so called austerity policies that put thousands on the streets in a great arc from Lisbon to Istanbul. Here in New Zealand we were insulated from the worst effects of the crisis and the subsequent social and political unrest because our Australian-owned banks were better regulated, commodity prices were buoyant and the Christchurch rebuild provided an economic stimulus.

In New Zealand, providing you're in work and can pay your bills, it's easy to

think there isn't much wrong until you flick onto Al Jazeera or BBC World: Syria and Iraq are in civil war; Chinese growth is stalling; globalisation's death knell was sounded by sanctions against Russia as the Ukrainian crisis unfolded; the Eurozone is lurching into recession again as Germany's exports are hit by the contraction of the Chinese and Russian markets; the Scots have come very close to dissolving the United Kingdom; extreme right wing parties – fascists – are on the march in France, Spain, Portugal and Greece; and in Britain a racist nationalist party- UKIP- is set to upset the electoral appellation.

Nowhere during the Arab Spring, the European and North American street protests and occupations of 2010-11, or in the fresh round of strikes and unrest that is unfolding now, have social democratic and labourist politicians demonstrated that they have a clue what to do about this.


Everywhere, social democratic and labourist politicians are enduring electoral difficulties in the absence of a coherent response to the new environment.

The New Zealand Labour Party's woes then are much more deep-seated than many superficial analyses will have you believe.

The fact the party endured what was arguably its worst defeat ever in September (last time it polled that low, in 1928, it had never been in government and was gaining momentum – ie the tide was rising,) in benign economic circumstances compared to the rest of the developed world, does not auger well for when the steam runs out of the economy, as it surely will.

Some commentators on the left are beginning to argue for a fresh approach, drawing on the experiments around community participation in social organisation by the Greater London Council during the Thatcher years and the Brazilian Workers' Party in Porto Alegre in the 1990s. Much of the Greek left wing party Syriza's success is based on this approach. It remains to be seen if this is enough to stop the extreme right in Greece.

Equally, it remains to be seen whether the bureaucratic politicians of the New Zealand Labour party and its activists can reinvent themselves and the party before it's too late and it becomes a 10% party of permanent opposition.

One lesson history teaches us is that faith and sentimentality won't protect political parties from oblivion. 

Discriminatory actions by KR

Alarm was recently raised during a seminar on the Government Superannuation Scheme (GSF) when it was revealed that the take home pay for some workers was being reduced unfairly.

In the 1990s railways adopted a total remuneration (TR) approach when negotiating some individual employment agreements (IEA). Included within this framework was the employer's GSF contribution. In every other case this contribution remained outside of wages.

The Employer Superannuation Contribution Tax was also deducted by the employer from within the worker's TR and sent to Inland Revenue. A nice tax avoidance system for employers. To this day some GSF members harbour a great bitterness about how they were backed into a corner to protect their 30 years of membership of the GSF. They felt they had no option but to sign as railways refused to negotiate on this issue. It has been said that inclusion of the amount of the employer's contribution within the employees section of total remuneration is purely an employment issue. In the RMTU's view it is not.

The 'contracting out' of responsibility does not obviate the need for employment provisions to comply with the overarching legal and taxation requirements placed on

employers. An example being ACC levies.

When the Minister of Finance promulgated substantial increases to the employers' contribution, railways reduced workers' take home pay. The fact that the Rail and Maritime Transport Union shamed railways into absorbing the last two increases will only temporarily lessen the impact.

While most workers in railways are paid by collective employment agreement (CEA), and individual employment agreement (IEA) fewer are paid by a total remuneration (TR) salary packages.

Workers not covered by a TR can earn \$70,000 or more and have the employer's contribution calculated on their ordinary time wage. Positions with similar responsibilities are paid the same base salary and there is no variation to the base salary as the result of changes to the rate levied on employers for GSF contributions. In these cases the GSF contributions are treated as a cost similar to ACC, etc. and not as remuneration.

Those on TR salaries are paid the same total remuneration, but the employer's contributions to the GSF is included as part of that amount. This means that these members of the GSF are paid less and their cash remuneration varies. Additionally, they are required to pay the GSF employer's levy

out of their own pocket.

Workers not on TR within railways notice no change as the result of changes to the GSF employer levy whether they are GSF members or not. However 40 GSF members who suffer under this regime, do and are clearly subject to discriminatory treatment in their employment agreement.

Some within railways have joined KiwiSaver and asked their employers to pay the 3% employer subsidy required under that scheme. In railways, those not currently having their employer pay a superannuation scheme subsidy, are eligible for the Kiwisaver subsidy – except for the 40 people on TR. Once again they are clearly discriminated against when compared to their peers.

If CEA, IEA and TR workers are on \$70,000, those on TR get \$60,500. Retirement annuities assessed on those rates will mean TR workers will receive 13.8% less than the others for the rest of their lives!

Equity and a good conscience should not allow discriminatory treatment of those who made a lifetime commitment to the GSF 30 years or more ago. The GSF component should be removed from the cash area of TR packages immediately. If you are on an IEA you will be better off joining a collective agreement. Talk to your Union now! 🇳🇿



ARE YOU A MEMBER?

NZ Harbours Superannuation and KiwiSaver Schemes



The NZ Harbours Superannuation Scheme is open to all port workers.

The NZ Harbours KiwiSaver Scheme is open to port workers, Rail & Maritime Transport Union members and their families.



The Schemes have an external administrator and contributions are invested by four top-rated fund managers.

Download a copy of an Investment Statement and Application Form at:

www.harbourssuper.org.nz



ICLS Manila labour forum



Edgar Bilayon BMP PNR, Wayne Butson and the GM of Philippine railways.



Craig Allen RTBU Queensland, Vic Moore, RTBU Victoria and Aubrey Wilkinson.

THE 10th forum of the International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) was held in Manila, Philippines on 19 and 20 October 2014. The RTBU has been a member of ICLS since 2004 and so this forum marked a 10 year anniversary of membership for the original founding unions.

The ICLS comprises 17 railway unions, a seafarers union, two general transport unions and several NGO political groups. The countries from which the groupings come from are Japan, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand and Myanmar (Burma).

RTBU general secretary Wayne Butson was the moderator or chair for the two-day forum.

The Forum had 116 participants representing 26 organisations from nine countries. It opened with a dramatic cultural display and welcoming speeches from ICLS president Edgar Bilayon, senator Cynthia A. Villar and congressman Carlo V. Lopez. Then general secretary Satoru Yamada delivered an activity report on what ICLS and its affiliates had undertaken and accomplished during the last year accompanied by a slideshow.

The main work of the Forum was divided into work sessions where selected participants spoke followed by working panels to field questions and answers.

The sessions were:

- The challenges and struggles at the workplace (Korea, Thailand, Australia and Myanmar).
- Organising young and women workers (All).
- Challenges at the workplace on safety issue (NZ, Japan, and Philippines).
- Building a sustainable society and protecting the environment (Philippines and Taiwan).

Outcomes included the JRU and RMTU reporting on the holding of a women's forum next year to develop women activists in their unions. A key feature of these meetings is to develop awareness of each other's struggles, compare solutions and to explore and discuss the similarities in the issues confronting workers throughout the Asia Pacific region.

Many of the unions can provide support and assistance by acting to moderate the behaviours of local countries operating in other countries.

An illustration of this type of support and solidarity is when Toll came to NZ and Australian transport unions (TWU, RTBU and MUA) quickly moved to support the RMTU.

The forum was very successful and now it is up to the affiliates to implement the many resolutions carried during the meeting. Mabuhay! 🇵🇭



HAVE WE GOT YOUR NUMBER?

Providing us with your up-to-date contact details allows us to send you targetted and timely information, particularly in times of dispute or unrest.

Check we have by:

- talking to your branch secretary who has a comprehensive list of members;
- going to the Union website and updating your details – <http://bit.ly/exmEyL>
- phoning 04-499-2066;
- faxing 04-471-0896 ;

Make sure we have your e-mail address to save on postage.

Claiming global justice

FROM global crisis to global justice: Transport workers fighting back.

This was the theme for the 43rd Congress of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) held in Sofia the capital city of Bulgaria. The congress had the following key statistics:

- 1,719 participants.
- 3,986,844 transport workers represented.
- 372 unions from 114 countries.
- 408 women attending.
- 272 youth attending.
- 13 languages interpreted.
- 28 fringe events.

The RMTU was represented at by president Aubrey Wilkinson and general secretary and ITF Asia Pacific Rail Section chair, Wayne Butson. The Congress opened at 1500hrs 10 August and closed 16 August 2014. It was hosted by the FTTUB which is very ably lead by president Ekaterina Yordanova.

The measure for how any event is rated for importance is in who is on the speakers list and that was impressive. It included;

- The prime minister of Bulgaria.
- Director general of the International Labour Organisation, Guy Ryder.
- General secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Sharan Burrow.

■ The mayor of Sofia.

ITF president and Maritime Union of Australia national secretary, Paddy Crumlin, gave the opening address and he certainly set the tone for the coming days. Congress was not about just talking but it was also about analysing what we were confronting and to develop global strategies in sector groups to better protect the interest of ITF affiliate members from the ever-growing negative effects of global capitalism.

This Congress was the first 'paperless' congress with all documents available online at the ITF website.

For us the Congress was a reminder of the huge gap in transport union leadership left by the passing of Brother Bob Crow of the RMT UK who was a good friend of the RMTU. We certainly missed his impassioned and wise interventions on debate topics.

That is not to say that there was any lack of speakers nor contributors to topics raised. The RMTU delegation took to the



(l to r) Steve Cotton, ITF GS, Paddy Crumlin, president ITF, Aubrey Wilkinson, Wayne Butson and Tony Sheldons, national secretary TWU Australia.

speaker's podium on a number of occasions during the section and fringe meetings. The fringe meetings covered a huge range of topics and struggles from Cuba and more debate about the bizarre ongoing 50-year blockade of this country by the USA, the Korean railway workers strike, JR7, apartheid and celebrations of the life of Nelson Mandela and the Palestine Action Support Group to name a few.

The Congress saw the election of Steven Cotton as general secretary and the re-election of Paddy Crumlin as president. This is a great leadership team for the next four years and we all must now look toward the struggle as that continues for transport unions across the world. 🌐



Timaru rail branch chair, Doug Blakie and Christchurch LE Dave Kearns in Timaru.



NMC rep Mike Williams congratulates LE Gordon Godfrey of Christchurch for his 50 years in rail.

Good start for pilot scheme

RELATIONS between the RMTU and senior KiwiRail management in Infrastructure and Engineering (I&E) have been difficult in recent years, as readers of The Transport Worker will be well aware. It is therefore something of a pleasure to report on a project we have both been involved with in recent weeks that has been positive and looks like realising benefits for the company and RMTU members.

During the MECA negotiations KiwiRail discussed their desire to start a number of projects aimed at increasing productivity in I&E. One was a 'Fit for Business' pilot scheme involving three Auckland track gangs which ran to late February. Essentially it involved working closely with members at gang level to get as many ideas about how we could do the job better and more easily whilst keeping it safe. This sounds such an obvious thing to do that one wonders why it hasn't been tried before. Of course the answer is, it has, and it's never really worked.

The difference this time is that management seemed to be listening rather than telling. For example, they've taken the RMTU's advice that standing in front of workers spouting management jargon and showing power point slides doesn't work. Instead, we advised they meet with gangs on the job, using trusted and respected people like ganger and RMTU delegate Phil Barnard as coaches to prompt discussion and to listen to the ideas the workers have. All of the coaches are KiwiRail employees and RMTU members.

It's still early days but only a couple of

weeks in and the members had generated 44 ideas about how to make the job easier, quicker, less expensive and safer. Of course not all of these ideas will work or be adopted, but some of them will, and the important thing is that once workers are listened to there is no limit to the creativity they share. At the time of writing, only a fortnight after the project started, KiwiRail have already adopted two ideas: using compressors in yards and providing drainage and running water in one of the portacabins in the south part of Westfield yard. As we've said it's early days and these are small steps, but this is positive stuff nonetheless. Sometimes we get hung up on terms like productivity, a better way to think of this is simplifying while staying safe.

This kind of thing involves a degree of industrial democracy. That is, management recognising that they don't have all the answers and being prepared to admit it. It also means our members fronting up and taking responsibility for improving the way they work – something that the RMTU has maintained it was always prepared to do.

Better produc-



Auckland projects gang.

tivity is a good thing because it makes our case for safe workplaces, secure jobs and better pay and conditions stronger. It's only in workplaces where these exist that workers will demonstrate the commitment for sustained and sustainable productivity gains.

Let's make sure this project is successful and teaches management the value of working with us and not against us. 🇳🇿

(below) Auckland night gang.



MECA report back



Wayne Butson addresses one of the KiwiRail MECA report back meetings in Wellington. The ratification ballot is currently running.

Are our ports death traps?



Hazel Armstrong and Karen Fletcher meeting with Lyttelton Port Company RMTU members, H&S reps and delegates to give a better understanding of local safety systems – or lack thereof.

WHILE New Zealand port companies' profits soar the number of serious injuries and fatalities on the waterfront are also rising alarmingly.

Recently the RMTU made an Official Information Act request to WorkSafeNZ for the number of serious harm incidents and fatalities in New Zealand ports.

The result was shocking and subsequent exposure of these facts has since prompted the media to focus its attention on our ports and their health and safety record.

In 2013/14 there were three deaths at Lyttelton Port plus 24 serious harm accidents since 2011.

Port of Tauranga, New Zealand's busiest

port, has seen the most accidents, with 26.

The report defines serious harm incidents to include, eye injuries, burns, loss of consciousness, lacerations, amputations head injuries and noise-induced hearing loss.

The Worksafe statistics however, do not tell the whole story of safety on the waterfront as we are led to believe that Maritime New Zealand holds exclusive information on workplace fatalities and serious harm incidents aboard ships – a significant factor in this discussion.

Labour party leader Andrew Little said on Radio NZ National's Morning Report programme (30 October) that he thinks the

H&S Reform Bill may help to improve health and safety in the port sector but warned of a "rear-guard employer campaign" to water down that part of the legislation where port companies are required to take responsibility for all people working on the port.

"They evidently don't want to limit their responsibilities," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "The ports are getting more dangerous and the RMTU will be aiming to secure solid health and safety agreements with employers which will also provide for effective worker engagement in the process of deciding what is potentially harmful or not. We will be reinforcing our policy of: If it's not safe, Say NO!" 🇳🇿

Draw the line

Question: Who draws the line between a health and safety risk that is acceptable, and one that is not?

Answer: The person who can be harmed by the risk, must help draw the line.

Unfortunately, some employers draw the line without any worker input, and then tell the workers what is acceptable or unacceptable risk. Both the current health and safety legislation and the Health and Safety Reform Bill require employers to provide workers with the chance to participate in identifying and assessing the health and safety risks they face at work.

AS/NZ Standards for Risk Management 4360 recommends that workers are consulted at each step of the risk assessment process. Workers have an important role to play in this process says RMTU H&S

HEALTH & SAFETY ROUNDUP

organiser Karen Fletcher. "Only the people doing the job can provide the level of detail needed about the risks they face. That's why workers should always be part of the risk assessment process."

RMTU members were recently involved in identifying and assessing risk associated with working in the Rimutaka Tunnel. This was a very useful exercise which identified issues that would have unlikely been picked up without their input.

Four steps to safety

- If it doesn't feel right, step back.
- What is the hazard or risk?

- If you continue could you or someone else be seriously harmed?
- If the answer is YES then STOP, inform your manager, H&S rep and/or your RMTU delegate.

H&S issues

The employer, worker(s) and H&S reps are required to work in 'good faith' to resolve issues. This could include meeting to discuss workers' concern, reviewing how the risk is being controlled and making the necessary changes to reduce the level of risk to an acceptable level.

Your manager may ask you to do reasonable alternative tasks while the problem is being addressed.

However, don't go back until you're satisfied the risks are being adequately controlled. 🇳🇿

Land, shelter and work

By Ka'isa Beech, passenger operator, TranzMetro, Wellington.

WITH the support of the RMTU and CTU, I was able to participate in the World Meeting of Popular Movements (October 27-29) in Rome organised by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

The meeting focussed on land, shelter and work, chosen because all people have the right to land, shelter and work.

The meeting brought together 150 delegates from a range of social movements such as the Landless People's Movement from Brazil, the National Slum Dwellers Association from India, the Waste Pickers Association from South Africa and more. I attended on behalf of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and as a youth delegate of the RMTU as well as being a member of the Catholic Justice, Peace and Development Commission.

The first day focused on reviewing the issues, the second was led by Pope Francis who talked about the issues in relation to Catholic Social Teaching and the third fo-

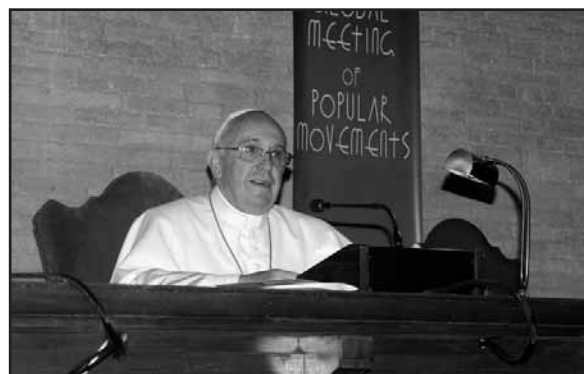
cussed on ways to co-ordinate social movements.

Over the three days there was a range of workshops, speeches from invited panelists and lots of time for discussion and networking.

I particularly enjoyed the workshop led by Xaro Castello, the president of the World Movement of Christian Workers from Spain who spoke about the dignity of work and how it had changed and the dignity was missing. This made me consider the Aotearoa Living Wage Campaign which would enable workers to live with dignity.

Another highlight was when Pope Francis joined us. He talked about how love for the poor was at the heart of the gospel but how he found when he spoke out about issues of land, housing and employment he was called a communist!

He also talked about how the lack of labour rights experienced by workers was



the result of an economic system that was putting money ahead of people, and workers were often treated as disposable. I really felt that his speech was genuine and that he really understood the issues.

I found it really cool that although we all came from different backgrounds, we all shared so much in common. I left the conference with a deeper understanding of the importance of members being active in their union, and how this contributes to the bigger picture.

I feel very proud to be a part of this union! 🇳🇵

Port Nelson CA

NEGOTIATIONS to renew the RMTU/Port Nelson collective agreement were finalised in July and the report back and ratification meeting held in August.

The outcome included a three year term (GWIs 2.5% + 2.5% + 2.5%), further recognition of skills with new rates for crane and heavy plant operators, decent increases in the night allowance and working parties set up for PPE and shift change arrangements.



Members were not only focussed on pay increases but sought improvements in conditions which were mostly achieved.

Port Nelson members voted in favour of the settlement (pictured). 🇳🇵



FOLLOWING complaints raised and escalated to the KiwiRail freight industrial council (KIC) over the difficulties experienced coupling flat deck wagons fitted with new alliance couplers to the UK/PK existing fleet, KiwiRail arranged for the Southern Terminals rep, Martyn Duncan (pictured right) and Central Terminal rep, Rick Barnes to visit Christchurch to assess the latest alliance couplers with a range of wagons. These assessments were positive and showed there was improvement. Update from the latest KIC meeting in November is that KiwiRail expect to have 85% of the wagon fleet fitted with alliance couplers in the next 12 - 18 months. This will reduce the hazard caused by the current excessive use of transition heads. 🇳🇵

Boon for bosses and another hit on New Zealand workers

IN its latest act of treachery to New Zealand workers the government is about to sign a World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement which could stop future governments giving an advantage to local suppliers to help economic development. Only a brief, powerless Select Committee process – which cannot change the commitments the Government has already made – is needed before it comes into force.

The WTO Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) states that under the agreement member countries aren't allowed to discriminate against businesses from another country in their government procurement processes, and must follow rules around competition and openness.

There are 42 countries in the GPA including the US, Canada, Korea, Japan and the 27 European Union countries. Others like Russia, the Ukraine and China are intending to join it.

The GPA covers the purchase of a broad range of goods and services that government agencies buy from the private sector, including construction.

Any likelihood of Hillside being resurrected or any other similar local engineering company getting a look in to future government contracts, is now dead in the water.

Economic Development Minister Steven Joyce says it won't make much difference because the government already follows basic WTO procurement rules.

The hundreds of New Zealand workers made redundant or affected by the Hillside closure can certainly attest to the truth of that statement as they continue their hunt for meaningful work. Signing up to this agreement means future Governments will find it very hard to change the rules.

The CTU's economist Bill Rosenberg, says it could also prevent governments requiring suppliers to meet conditions such as paying a living wage, or developing health and safety initiatives above the minimum legal requirements.

"These outcomes would add up to a hit on small New Zealand firms, not-for-profit service providers, and the ability of



Hillside workers became the sorry fallout of Government overseas procurement policies – losing their jobs and then the Workshop.

New Zealand workers to improve their pay and conditions," he said. "It makes it even more difficult for future governments to help local firms grow to the size needed to become successful exporters or compete with imports."

Rosenberg is wary and suspicious of the agreement, especially where not-for-profit organisations are pitted against those for-profit.

He says "there are no exemptions to allow local suppliers and not-for-profit suppliers such as Plunket and the Salvation Army to be given preference over potential multinational suppliers," and asks: "Will these rules allow the Government to limit its controversial tendering out of the provision of social housing to local not-for-profit providers?"

He says that we now know which government agencies are affected by these rules. For example KiwiRail is covered, preventing it favouring local manufacture or maintenance of its equipment should a future government decide it wants KiwiRail to do so.

Joyce says the total value of worldwide procurement covered by the GPA was estimated at US\$1.6 trillion (NZ\$2 trillion) in 2008 - 2.64 per cent of the world's gross

domestic product.


"We already follow the rules, but just don't get the benefit for our New Zealand exporters," Mr Joyce said. "Joining up to the GPA will improve access and reduce costs for exporters."

"But in practice it will be very hard for New Zealand suppliers to get serious consideration for large parts of those contracts," says Rosenberg.

"Even more importantly, only a small number of New Zealand firms have the ability to compete successfully for these contracts, while many will now miss out on New Zealand government contracts in competition with overseas suppliers. In the longer run, the loss of our ability to use government purchasing policy to help New Zealand suppliers grow, and to up the quality of government suppliers will be much greater than any gains.

"The government has also given away its right to boycott the goods and services of GPA countries with appalling human rights records, as we did against South Africa when it was under racist apartheid."

The deal was announced by Joyce and Trade Minister Tim Groser last month.

Yet another bonus for the bosses and a knife in the back of workers. 

A safer workplace

RMTU biennial conference focusses on NZ's health and safety record

THE inaugural biennial RMTU national delegates' conference was a very busy and successful affair, if attendee comments were anything to go by. It was the inaugural event because this was the first time the RMTU had held it since moving from an annual to a two yearly cycle in 2012. One of the results of this shift is that there is more to get through as two years' worth of business had stacked up since conference last convened. The good news is that we successfully got through the packed programme and a little bit more besides.

Highlights vary depending on the individual. For first time attendees a common reaction is that they got an insight into just how busy and complex the work of our Union is. Many of them found this inspirational. To hear from overseas union comrades such as from the RMT and ASLEF from Britain, RTBU and TWU from Australia and the JRJ from Japan was a revelation for many delegates. When you're quite rightly pre-occupied with the hassles of maintaining workers' rights in your port or rail depot it's refreshing to hear from someone who has successfully fought similar battles many miles away in another country. Many of our port delegates found the presentation by Rob Pirc (TWU New South Wales) inspiring as he described the struggle to organise on the waterfront in Botany Bay. Derrick Marr of the RMT provided light relief with his good humoured input to the panel discussion, demonstrating that union work doesn't have to be taken too seriously all of the time.

Veteran conference goers would have noticed that the theme of this edition was very much in the forefront of visitors' minds when they addressed us.

Fighting for Safer Workplaces was, as RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson reminded us, a particularly urgent battle given the appalling health and safety record in New Zealand's ports and one that we were constantly engaged in, in the rail industry. This theme was reinforced by an excellent session led by our very able national health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher who asked the pertinent question: Is there a health and safety crisis in New Zealand? The answer: an unequivocal 'yes'. Our national workplace health and safety record is a disgrace, and it's down to us as workers to fight for the right to go home safe and well at the end of our shift because, sadly, no-one is going to simply give us that without a struggle.

A succession of port bosses gave us their view of the world. The revelation for many attendees was the views of Lyttelton Port CEO Peter Davie, who seemed to think that the media got it wrong for condemning him taking home \$1.2 million dollars while three workers were killed at his port in the preceding 10 months. The port sector is a mess from the perspective of safety and we're reaping the harvest of a generation of contracting out and the subsequent loss of control at the front line where our members are putting their bodies on the line.

This prompted some very good conversations around the 'Just Say No' campaign that the RMTU has



Helen Kelly, CTU.



Mark Davis, ITF



Mick Peri, TWU.



Peter Davie, CEO LPC.



Sam Huggard, CTU.



Mick Whelan, ASLEF.



Terry Scott, CEO Transdev.



Sam Simonetis, RTBU.



Derrick Marr, RMTU.

been running. These discussions didn't just happen on the floor of conference, but continued during the breaks and over a beer or two in the evening. One of the benefits of the conference is that it brings people together for three days and a lot of information is exchanged outside of the formal conference sessions.

One remit that didn't generate any controversy supported better representation of our women members by running a Women's Forum in early 2015 and creating a women's representative position on the RMTU national management committee. It was gratifying to see this initiative backed so emphatically. Over 10.4% of our members are women and they are concentrated in key areas such as passenger rail in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. They face particular challenges in a union that is sometimes perceived as being 'blokey' so it's great news that the RMTU is backing them so all can benefit from the unity and strength this will bring.

Most of our members don't do jobs where they are at a desk all day being talked at and any conference that doesn't recognise this isn't going to be a success. We had a number of sessions which had people moving around and working in groups on matters like recruitment, union busting and how to fight it, and, intriguingly, making your branch relevant in the 21st century. The last session certainly got our brains into gear – let's see if it has any flow on when people get back on the job.

Of course, conference is the supreme policy and decision making body of our Union, so there is necessarily plenty of attention to matters like the budget and appointees to the various boards and trusts the Union ap-



Andrew Norton,
KiwiRail.



Peter Reidy,
KiwiRail.



Sara Lunam, Port
Tauranga.



Annette King, Labour.



Keith McMabon, RTBU.



Mitsubishi Hagiwara,
JRU.



Dave Calfe, ASLEF.



Garth Cowie, CEO
Port of Napier.



Chris Ball
NZ Welfare.



Dave Mathie
RTBU.



Mizue Taoka, JRU.



Geoff Davenport.

points representatives to. We are also one of the six New Zealand unions directly affiliated to the Labour Party and given that a leadership contest had just kicked off a few items had to be shifted to accommodate the four candidates seeking leadership. All four gave good addresses, particularly as this was their first 'hustings' meeting of the contest, and they were given a grilling by delegates. In the end Andrew Little came out ahead by a narrow margin over Grant Robertson. By the time this gets published we'll know if delegates' choice was the same as the wider party membership.

Conference isn't just about the individual programme items though. It's a coming together of the representatives of the wider RMTU family – delegates, officers, staff, friends and supporters, from New Zealand and across the globe. We even invite a few people who some of us might consider enemies! For newbies and veterans alike it's a chance to tell stories, hear new ideas, share frustrations, celebrate successes, forge and renew friendships and to refresh ourselves for what is sometimes a hard, but is always a worthwhile struggle. As one delegate put it: 'I've had my batteries recharged'. 🌐

The four aspirants for Labour's leadership put their cases



Dave Parker.



Grant Robertson.



Andrew Little.



Nania Mahuta.

President's report

Iwelcome you all to our first biennial conference – the 19th national conference of our Union.

For those who are new to it I will point out that this is the highest decision making body of our Union. At this conference we will determine the direction that we will take for the next two years and, as always, I encourage active participation from you all.

I extend a warm welcome to our international guests and look forward to your participation and input as well. For those guests staying on afterwards I wish you an enjoyable time visiting New Zealand.

Tough times ahead

For us workers in New Zealand however, our stay will be extremely harsh in the coming months and years. There will be attacks on any voice that workers currently have. There will also be attacks on our wages and conditions. Wages and conditions negotiated by us, and by our predecessors.

Collective bargaining, MECAS, holidays, smoko breaks to name a few, will come under the hammer.

National, with a clear majority in parliament any law changes can now go through with little, or no opposition.

The power of employment law can now be easily shifted to benefit the wishes and desires of the employer. A shift in power which I believe will not benefit our members or our businesses. In the three careers I have had during my working life, it has become clear that for any business to reach its full potential, the requirement needed is a strong workforce – and a strong employer. Weaken either of these or shift that balance of power to either party, then that business will never reach its full potential.

It is our responsibility to care for and maintain the well being of our members. One of the roles of our delegates is to maintain that balance of power. Training our delegates, our health and safety reps, our organisers, and our leaders will go a long way to achieving that balance.

However, we must not stop there. We must bring our branches together to help each other, and to learn from each other, so that we can achieve the goals that our



By Aubrey Wilkinson.

members set.

I have recently seen a rail branch struggling with an issue that a port branch in the same town managed to resolve. By bringing branches together and meeting more regularly we can only better represent our members. The more people we have in the room to discuss the issues, the better the outcomes will be.

Strategise together

So during this conference I urge you to speak with each other. We didn't amalgamate so that rail and port could work exclusively within their own industries. I do hope you see this as a strategic opportunity, and act on it.

We recognise the important work that our law firms do for our members. To Hazel Armstrong Law and also McBride Davenport and James. From us all we thank you for your outstanding efforts over the last two years. We not only treasure our relationship, but we also appreciate the fine results that you all deliver.

To our general secretary Wayne Butson; the guidance and support you have provided to me and everyone within our Union has been outstanding. It has certainly made my job easier and I, along with our members, certainly appreciate the time,

effort and knowledge you have shared with us all. Thank you Wayne and may that long continue.

To the NMC I extend my sincere gratitude for the work you have all done as the Union's governing body since the last conference. Your combined governance has kept us in good stead and I am proud to be working alongside you all and look forward to the future with the unified stance that we have all enjoyed. I will now put in writing my support for the proposal to have a NMC women's rep by 2015 and hope our branches adopt the same stance.

I must also mention Leonie Stieller and Julia Harrison who run our national office. We collectively express our sincere gratitude for the work and support you have both provided. I know first hand that the men and women of our Union often speak highly about you both and may that long continue.


To our organisers, Phil Spanswick, Karen Fletcher, Libi Carr, Mani Raumati, John Kerr, Todd Valster and Stu Johnstone – I appreciate how challenging things can be and am always amazed at how you find the time and energy to complete the difficult tasks that crop up. Thank you all for the outstanding work.

To the men and women within our industrial councils and port forums – The difficult issues you all wrestle with to constantly improve the lives of our members and the future of our businesses does not go unnoticed. I thank you all for your time and efforts.

Life blood

To our reps and delegates throughout the RMTU who volunteer their time and energy to represent our members – I recognise and thank you. I consider you all to be the life blood of our Union.

Finally, to our Union members, I thank you all for the support and help you provide not only to the staff and representatives, but also to each other around the country. Standing up and supporting each other truly is an inspirational thing for us all to witness and may that never end.

We truly are stronger together. 

CONFERENCE



Simon Gillard Lyttelton port observer:

All good. I can relate to, and am inspired by, the TWU reps and how they organise Botany ports and groups. Also hearing about how other CEOs relate to other unions compared to ours.



Graham Ealam, Christchurch rail delegate:

This is very empowering whether you're an official or not. It certainly lifts perspectives to the wider struggles our Union and workers are confronting. It's good to hear about the common issues port and rail workers deal with and the variety of speakers and the opportunity to ask questions.



Corey Saxton, Dunedin rail delegate:

I've only been a delegate a couple of weeks, so I'm learning lots. The venue was really good and I enjoying listening to the guest speakers. For someone who is used to being outside and working on my feet there was a lot of sitting down! The venue and catering were first class.



Gavin Mortimore, Southland rail delegate:

After 43 years on the job this has really re-charged my batteries and inspired me. I'm enjoying the positive vibe and the unity amongst our delegates. Some great ideas about getting young people involved in our union.



Ali Mohammad Auckland rail observer:

I am taking back my experience with the other delegates to educate our other members, to help them understand the rules and regulations of the RMTU including the procedures for notices of motion.



Charles Johnson Auckland rail observer & CTU O@W rep:

Conference has been very informative and intense. There was a lot to take in, in a short space of time. I really enjoyed mixing with the other delegates.

Every year we welcome members attending Conference for the first time. We put our faith in them, see them as future leaders and look forward to their active participation in grass-roots Union activity. Thanks for coming!



Paul Stirling Auckland rail delegate:

There were too many corporate speakers. I would like to have heard more from the international union speakers and more interaction with our own delegates.



Rachel Barrett Auckland rail observer:

Hearing the speakers and talking to the other delegates gave me a far greater appreciation of wider issues that affect RMTU members.



Kerry Koller-Graves Bay of Plenty Port observer:

I got a lot out of conference. How well we do it as H&S/company reps, how the Union runs, the impressive camaraderie, how important the political side is, where policies can take us and what the media does.



Graeme Irvine Otago rail observer:

The highlight for this 41 year Union member was simply attending this great conference and seeing how the RMTU is run and also to support the recommendation to make Tim Spence a life member.



Matthew Dougherty Port Chalmers observer:

Enjoyed the good presentations, especially the international guests and other RMTU delegates.



FIRST TIMERS



Mike Williams NMC South Island rail rep:
Fantastic! Being with like-minded individuals, sharing the same passion, vision and energy. Great networking with our international guests. Great opportunity to hear and question Labour party aspirants. Commonality with issues nationally and globally.



Ka'isa Beech Wellington rail observer and CTU youth rep:
Good! Cool hearing issues from other branches and how they deal with them. Enjoyed the workshops and meeting new friends.



Phil Taana Hawkes Bay port observer:
Conference was an eye opener. One of the CEO's comments on H&S was a poor approach. There was a great push for H&S at conference and some CEOs are listening.



Vaughan O'Shannessey King Country rail delegate:
Highlights were getting a better understanding of policies and how the Union ticks. Meeting a lot of new people and putting names to faces. I'll be back!



Gaylene Kereru Hawkes Bay port observer:
Good learning point for me, teaching me how to become a good delegate ready to stand up for our members.



Tina Flack Waikato rail observer:
Quite informative getting to see the passion from other RMTU delegates and observers. Good to meet other women reps.



Myke Te Moni Bay of Plenty port observer:
Heaps of learning from H&S, rail, TKM in July. Information I can take back to the branch. Appreciated learning from these experiences and other rail workers.



Leighton Hunt Taranaki rail delegate:
Great Conference. Good networking highlights and listening to speakers and workshops.



Moa Tavai Wellington port delegate:
Amazed with the international visitors and hearing their issue and the global issues and the camaraderie that RMTU has internationally.



Jason Newman Wellington port observer:
Good to know we are all having similar issues. Really found the meaning of a national Union.



Myles Carter Hutt Workshops delegate:
For robust representation I rely on the RMTU.



Paul Hansen Bay of Plenty port observer:
Great conference especially the overseas contributions and it was great getting to know other port workers.



UnionAID recruits

UNIONS and workers have a long tradition of international solidarity and UnionAID (Unions Aotearoa International Development Trust) is your New Zealand charity.

Becoming a Kiwi Solidarity member is a modern way of expressing that solidarity.

During the RMTU biennial conference UnionAID's executive officer, Michael Naylor, spoke about the charity's work and added three new supporters to the programme.

The RMTU has played a significant role in UnionAID's work. It has helped provide essential transport for a school for Burmese refugee children on the Thai/Myanmar border in the small town of Mai Sot, it has supported the growing Myanmar Rail trade union and has visited them as expression of that support.

After 50 years of suppression of fundamental labour rights in Burma, and under pressure from the International Labour Organisation, the Myanmar government has legislated two new laws which came into effect in March 2012. They introduce freedom of association rights, including the right to organise, to bargain collectively, and to take strike action. More than 750 new unions have been registered.

However, most of their leaders are very young and have little knowledge about how to organise effectively. The RMTU is assisting UnionAID to help the Myanmar Railways union leaders to recruit and organise as many of the 20,000 employees as possible.

You can help with this work by making a small but monthly contribution. 

For more information about signing up contact your Union rep or

organiser or contact UnionAID direct on: tel 04 385 1334 (ext 810)
P O Box 6689, Marion Square, Wellington
admin@unionaid.org.nz



(l) UnionAID CE Michael Naylor signs up Bill Sweeney together with (l) Dave Marden and Howard Phillips.



(l to r) NSW branch VP Charles McKay, NSW president George Clarke, NSW asst state secretary Michael Aird and Todd Valster presenting a gift from the RMTU for Wayne Forno (a bottle of single malt).

TWU conference


I was privileged to attend the TWU NSW delegates conference (28/29 August) at the Rosehill Racecourse in Sydney. Over 600 delegates and officials attended the conference which was truly inspiring. The TWU are a strong, well resourced union that is growing in membership in spite of (or maybe because of) attacks on unions and working people by the anti-worker Abbott government. They have a 20 year plan to restore union density to 70%, levels where bargaining not begging are a sure thing.

The TWU know what is at risk with their current Government, which includes abolishing the Road Safety Tribunal, an independent body which assesses safety rates and conditions for transport workers, and legislation that permits organising owner drivers. Also they propose new labour legislation targeting the hard fought against 'Work Choices' under another name. Another broken promise by the Abbott government. The TWU say that regardless of which Government is in power, they will take their trucks to Canberra and fight for fairness and safety for transport workers.

This conference had a wide range of speakers and politicians. An economist with a different approach and well worth looking up on Google, was Richard Denniss from the Australian Institute who gave a refreshing presentation challenging anyone to find 'the economy', not just the 'crap' being reported by bosses and bias media.

Some highlights for me were the delegate awards, industry workshops and industry panels made up of delegates and organisers.

A longstanding friend of the RMTU, NSW state secretary, Wayne Forno announced his retirement at this conference. Wayne has been the secretary for five years and was a staunch and successful advocate for transport workers for 21 years. We wish Wayne a long happy and healthy retirement.

Thanks to the TWU for continuing to support the RMTU and inviting us to attend this great gathering. 

Unionist served members well

STALWART RMTU-member, Tim Spence was made a life member[#] at the Union's biennial conference in October in recognition of his 41 years membership and his representation for his colleagues in so many ways.

Tim started his rail journey in Christchurch by becoming an apprentice boilermaker at 16 in the Addington Workshops following the advice from a school mate.

In those days, to encourage apprentices to join the union, they were given free membership – something Tim took up and has never wavered from it since.

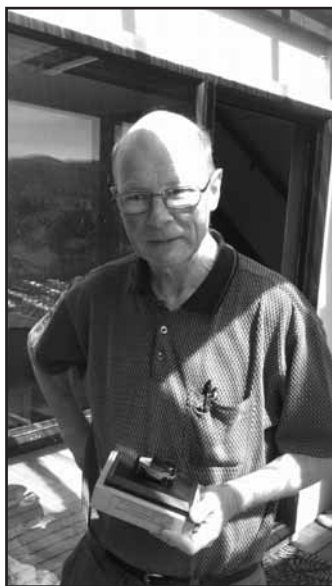
He picked up a job in the Dunedin yards and quickly progressed to becoming a fitter/welder, then onto loco maintenance and finally as a team leader some 14 years ago.

All the while he was an active Union member and was eventually rewarded by being voted secretary of the branch in 1995 – and 19 years later he is finally relinquishing the role.

"I guess they couldn't fault my work as secretary and at the same time I wasn't an unwilling volunteer," he said.

He was co-opted on to the National Management Committee in 2005 and remained there for four years.

"At the time the company was outsourcing a lot of its work and the Union needed a delegate to represent the outsources mechanical side of the industry and I was happy to put my hand up – with a bit of a



Tim Spence

push from Paul Corliss."

Ex-RMTU organiser Paul Corliss says he worked alongside Tim for over a decade and that a genuinely nicer and more principled chap would be hard to meet.

"He had a skill in representing members that made him a stand-out in terms of voluntary officials. His quiet, restrained personality and 'hayseed image' meant he was often underestimated

by members and the bosses. This was often to the benefit of members but not so often an advantage for the bosses."

Paul enjoyed his dry humour, cutting intelligence and ability to assess a situation rapidly and decide on an advocacy position with equal speed.

He spoke with awe about Tim's ability to drive his old car through all conditions. "It was an ancient beast with bales of hay in the front seat, chooks with their heads out the window and a horse-hair armchair in place of a driver's seat."

"RMTU members got a great deal from him in terms of a proud Union legacy and positive outcomes for their lives and livelihoods."

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson recalls an incident where coal dust was building up in the electrical cabinets of locos through the Otira Tunnel and was proving to be very difficult to deal with.

"The stuff was a nightmare," he said. "The members wanted a discomfort allowance to be paid for blowing out the cabinets."

The bosses denied the allowance but promised to engineer a solution. They tried but nothing would stop the coal dust getting in. At the next wage round talks, the coal dust claim was on the table but again the boss demurred saying: "Well we're now going to suck the coal dust and not blow it."

Then a voice called out cutting through the tension: "So let me get this right, you are now going to scour the world for a vacuum cleaner that is going to have more suck than a Bangkok whore?" When the boss and everyone else stopped laughing he conceded that was most unlikely and agreed to pay the allowance.

"Yet another example of Tim's ability to succinctly summarise an argument. A great man to have on your side of the table," said Wayne.

It wasn't always that easy to figure things out. He recalls, with some sadness, in his role of the union supporter at disciplinary meetings the frequent failures.

"I recall a time when it seemed that every disciplinary meeting I attended ended with the employee being dismissed. At the time I couldn't help feeling that each dismissal was partially my fault. In hindsight, maybe most of those people deserved what they got. However, my work in the Union has given me a greater understanding of how well served RMTU members are. We don't realise how well we are represented."

Conference also conferred life membership on Phil Bosworth. The March 2015 issue will carry his story.

Unions have a long tradition of international solidarity.

Becoming a Kiwi Solidarity member is a modern way of expressing that solidarity and helping vulnerable workers in developing countries in our region get a fairer deal.

Sign up to UnionAID today

UnionAID is the only New Zealand overseas aid agency that places workers' rights at the centre of its work.

tel: 04 385 1334 (ext 810), fax: 04 385 6051, write: P O Box 6689, Marion Square, Wellington, email: unionaid@nzctu.org.nz
Or phone 0900 UNAID (0900 862 43) to automatically donate \$30.



A boxer in our midst

THE RMTU-sponsored boxer and Union member, Charles Bidois, was involved in what the New Zealand Herald described as an "an explosive first round" when Bidois confronted 'Rumbling' Cory Rikihana in the heavy-weight division of the Phil's Place Clash of the Corporates at the QE2 Memorial Hall last month in Tauranga.

Charles 'The Pirirakau Taniwha' Bidois was reported to have had an excellent first two rounds exchanging heavy leather and winning both, only to run out of steam in the third when the referee stopped the bout in favour of Rikihana. 🇳🇿



Fisherman Bill

HOLIDAYS are always great, but occasionally something happens that propels them into amazing. Deep sea fishing in Rarotonga did that for me. My partner Angela and I went deep sea fishing with Marlin Queen Charters and with six of us on board it was a lottery as to who was 'up' when, and if, a fish struck. No one had caught anything that day so we were not hopeful. About an hour and a half in a shout went up, 'Strike!' It was my turn and I was 'up'. With excitement surging and adrenalin pumping I strapped myself in and took over the rod. I let the fish run, surprised at the sheer size and power of the creature on the other end of the thin line that separated us. As it tired I started reeling it in, awed by its tremendous strength and will to live. It is a real battle of man versus nature. It finally broke the surface about 30 m from the boat and we could see it was a Mai Mai. The rest was hard labour reeling it in and landing it. It weighed in at 16.5kg. On the same trip another person caught a 17kg Wahoo. The fish were shared among all the boats as ours was the only successful boat that day. Of course the real pleasure was in the eating raw, marinated and barbecued with the obligatory lagers to accompany it. It's a must if you're in Raro. 🇳🇿

Winners



Geoff Davenport and Ben Thompson at the awards night.

ON 6 November 2014 Hazel Armstrong Law attended the New Zealand Law Awards, along with Wayne Butson and Stu Johnstone from the RMTU and Geoff Davenport of McBride Davenport James. Hazel Armstrong Law was a finalist in the boutique firm of the year category and, McBride Davenport James a finalist in the employment firm of the year category while Ben Thompson was the 2014 Young Private Practice Lawyer of the year.

"It was a fantastic night and I was humbled to receive such a prestigious award. Moreover, I was lucky to be able to share the moment with friends from the RMTU. I have no doubt that my success on the night was due in large part to the opportunities I have been given during my relationship with the Union" said Ben.

"Both we at Hazel Armstrong Law and our colleagues at McBride Davenport James are proud to work with RMTU members, and look forward to many more years of success." 🇳🇿



Purple boots & a beanie

MICHAEL HENRY, Susan Hoby, Michael Caley and Dave Watson in Dunedin.

Suzanne was visiting the lads down south from the service centre in Christchurch where she works hard at organising freight trains.

The Dunedin depot is notable for the sartorial elegance of our members – many sport RMTU beanies – and Suzanne set a new standard with her purple safety boots! 🇳🇿



WINNER!

Election slogan competition winner TranzMetro train manager, Wellington, Sue Leonard receiving her prize of \$100 from general secretary Wayne Butson.

CAPTION COMPETITION

Entries close 28 FEBRUARY 2015.

Winner will be contacted and name and entry published in the MARCH 2015 issue of *The Transport Worker*.

Entries can be sent to admin@rmtunion.org.nz

Last issue's winner



Thanks mum for organising lunch at the RMTU weekly meeting yet again.

Kain Woodham
Structures
(Christchurch)

WIN \$100 prize

Make up an appropriate (or even inappropriate) caption for this photo of RMTU Lyttelton Port branch secretary Libi Carr at this year's Conference and win a cash prize of \$100.



From strength to strength



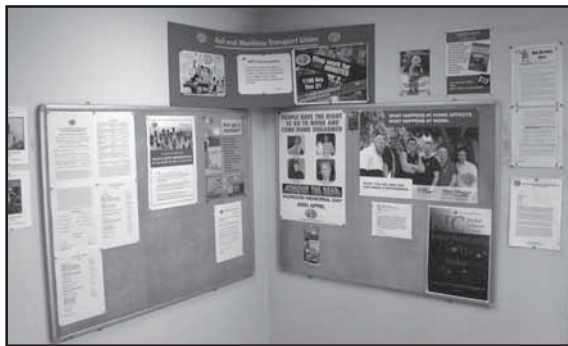
After a well-attended AGM, Palmerston North members posed for a solidarity shot – stronger together!

THE Palmerston North branch has been going from strength to strength under the leadership of Branch secretary, Tim Kerwin.

Member participation at sector and

branch meetings has soared, minutes and inter branch communications have vastly improved, issues are being resolved and this has put the branch in good stead for the future.

Tim has transferred to the Waikato branch, a new team has been elected and we all hope members will get behind this team and the momentum will continue.



Some of your outstanding notice boards. Appealing, readable and such an excellent way of communicating. Well done!

(r) Interisland terminal amenities block.

(l) Wellington LE depot.



\$1,500 AD&D

All members of RMTU are now covered by a \$1,500 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit, including \$500 spouse coverage and a further \$500 coverage on dependent children.

Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year. Please contact an AIL representative to deliver your AD&D Benefit and explain the additional insurance coverage available.

If you have not filled out a response card, call our freephone for more information NOW!



www.aillife.com
Protecting Working Families

freephone 0800 894 121
mario@aillnz.co.nz

AMERICAN INCOME LIFE
insurance company

Please note: To qualify for the \$10,000 of additional ADB coverage, an AIL representative must visit you, obtain an enrollment form and collect premium for the first year. You may renew annually thereafter for \$5.

TARANAKI RAIL

GREETING from the land of oil, milk and cow shit.

The milk season is into full operation and Fonterra are on track for record milk levels into Whareroa, so let's see if that also means milk coming into Whareroa via rail.

The new siding at Whareroa has just been commissioned and like most things new will require a few tweaks and adjustments before the lads are happy. With the new siding it will require fewer shunts and so operationally that will change things around but with the hustle and bustle of Whareroa the place will always be busy. A victory of some sorts, the Whareroa milk hutt is to be upgraded with a new building which will give operations staff a place to clean up and somewhere to have their smoko when based at the siding. This fight has been going on for some consider-

able time and it's testament to the staff down there that they stuck to their guns without the planned industrial action.

The new RCO Starky has gained his wings and is now flying solo with the remote pack. Hopefully in the short term there will be more added to the team at Whareroa. Welcome back to LE Rone Mariner who transferred back from Palmerston North.

The Kapuni line, which in its day was a busy industrial line servicing LPG, CNG, urea and lactose products in the space of a few short years it has gone from three shunts a day to nothing. The line is effectively in mothball status. The newly expanded urea plant is trucking its product through to Tauranga to a large store there. All the LPG products come out of the newly installed siding at New Plymouth. With

the closure of the Stratford to Okahakura line in October 2009 the once busy yard at Stratford has also gone quiet after the effective mothballing of the line to Kapuni.

Eltham, from the 'strange-but-true' files have recently upgraded the off yard lighting. Staff came up from Palmerston North and the cost of the upgrades amounted to \$16,000. The yard at night never looked better. Barely a month later Fonterra, in their wisdom, decided to expand some of the buildings. Down comes \$16,000 worth of lighting and the suspension of night shunting. Outstanding work, but we shouldn't be surprised considering what happened to the freight shed in the past.

New Plymouth have been a bit light on freight but with the axing of coastal shipping services into New Plymouth Port this has meant more tonnage on the trains in the last few weeks.

We all wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. 🌐

Sickness, accident & death



The New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Sickness, Accident and Death Benefit Fund

In the last 10 years 230 locomotive engineers had to retire due to medical reasons. They received a total payout of \$4,737,097 from the above Fund. LEs who didn't belong to the Fund and who were forced to retire did not receive anything.

You could be next to miss out!

For as little as \$219 a year your future – or those of your next of kin – could be better assured.

Contact:

Julia Harrison, PO Box 813,
Wellington
Telephone: (04) 499-2066
Fax: (04) 471-0896
Email: julia@rmtunion.org.nz

**Attention LEs
Join this Fund now for
your own peace of mind**

AS I write the National Party-led government has just passed the new employment laws which destroy the way that collective bargaining is done and the right to industrial meal breaks to name just a few. They also want to attack provisions under the Holidays Act. This is the first piece of legislation to come into the House under this new government. The removal of basic workers rights and the watering down of ACC to name but a few things is unjustified and immoral. It was definitely a sad week and one who has worked for rail under the Employment Contracts Act we as union members need to fight for our rights in the work place. No doubt the law will be tested over the next three years as it was back in the 1990s. With the collective spirit of our members this union will fight for fairness and justice for all not just the selected few.

On a brighter note congratulations must go to Kristine Bartlett and the Service and Food Workers Union winning the pay

WAIKATO RAIL

equity case. Kristine fought for her right for pay parity. It has been a long time coming. The hourly rate at \$14.46 is not a living wage and the fact that government funding is not going to workers in the aged care sector. Let's hope other sectors, such as cleaners and nurses where females are the main stay of this workforce, benefit from this landmark decision.

In Te Rapa we have seen the operations building getting a new paint job on the inside. There have been 14 new locomotive trainees coming through with most of them in on-the-job training or going through the school. By the end of next year there will be a small surplus of locomotive engineers but there is the odd retirement to come in the near future.

Tonnage has increased due to the dairy season and the milk flush starting to take effect. The local shunts and the yard shunts have been busy. There has also been a new freight complex being built

north of Te Rapa. Mainfreight will have this big freight centre opening up in the first quarter of next year. Kiwi Rail has already put points and a siding into this complex so the prospect of a lot of business coming out of there looks good. Also Fonterra are expanding their business at Litchfield. This will bring more freight out of that siding plus another new business in Tokoroa will see more freight for KiwiRail.

Tainui have also got resource consent to build their inland port at Ruakura. This will be a few years off but the potential to add to KiwiRail business is big.

We have seen massive investment put into the infrastructure with new bridges and track but sadly more and more of this work has been contracted out.

It now getting time when the festive season will be here and hopefully all members and friends will have a bit of time off. To all RMTU staff and those who represent the Union at branch level around the country thank you for looking after the members. And to everyone out there, a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. Here is hoping that 2015 is not too rough. 🌐

YUUP, another three years of industrial terrorism from a government that seven out ten people able to vote, did not vote for! Once again Labour failed to spark and as a consequence apathy played a major role in our political outcome! The next leader of the Labour Party has a huge task in light of Labour's declining popularity since around 2005. At least in Napier, Stuart Nash, an ex-RMTU member, returned to Parliament with a majority of about 6,000 – bucking the trend! Let's hope he is the spark to create change for 2017. The heart ache which defies logic, is how many electoral votes were cast for Labour while the party votes went to National!

On the local front, we are almost at ratification point for the main collective agreement with a few minor issues to tidy up. For us, this was pretty much a record – only four days to complete. A big thanks to the local team and Phil Spanswick our regional organiser for their efforts. Hopefully we can ratify sometime in early No-

NAPIER PORT

vember once the rats and mice are sorted. As with any negotiation process, there will always be some that receive the benefits and some that miss out. That is the nature of the beast. But everyone will

walk away with a pay increase. It is still too early to indicate what we achieved locally in this negotiation.

With a busy 2014 coming to a close it would be prudent to mention the days of ISL stevedoring at Napier are numbered. It is around 18 months since they arrived. By the time this is in print, ISL's association with Winstone Pulp International, the Pulp and Timber producers in the Central North Island, will cease. This is a consequence of container rates becoming cheaper than break bulk cargo vessel rates. The understanding is that all the pulp and the majority of WPI's sawn timber will be packed into containers. Napier Port's packing/warehousing arm (Port Pack) will be covering an all RMTU member operation and the possibility of an increase in casual

and permanent membership, as the port company accommodates this growth. It will also have a negative impact in the amount of work ISO has in terms of these types of products.

Our C3 brothers and sister continue the fight to forge a collective agreement. C3's management, in particular the HR component, seem to be stalling. One would guess they are waiting for the new industrial legislation to be passed, for obvious reasons, that will be used to undermine unions by taking away more 'good faith' provisions.

At the end of the day we must give our C3 Napier members any support we can.

Conference this year was one to remember. I'd like to give credit to both Aubrey and Howard for running our great event. Plenty of food for thought in relation to the Labour Party leadership and the direction they/we need to take to rebuild.

Insights from Port CEOs, including ours (Napier), with reports from Tauranga and Lyttleton also, the latter leaving with a lot to be desired from his employees and the RMTU!

Peter Reidy spoke on his vision for

KiwiRail.

Concerning and somewhat perplexing however, is the Government's transport policy of pouring billions of dollars into roads, thus creating an unfair platform financially for rail. The impact is on freight lines that don't meet a profitable threshold.

At the end of the day, a successful Conference with plenty of participation and workshops. Another key point is the pending Women's representative to come out of the proposed Women's forum in 2015 to a position on the NMC.

In closing, all the best of wishes to you

and yours, be safe and enjoy the festive period if you are able or are one of the lucky ones to get time off! And may 2015 be full of positive promise.

Noho haumarū, harikoa, me noho nahanaha. Stay safe, be happy, and stay well. 🌐

WHEN we look back over the last 11 months or so, it's difficult to believe just how much we've packed into the year.

Since the pre-election edition of The Transport Worker we've experienced the CEO's roadshow entitled 'Our Next Move'. This wasn't your ordinary roadshow with the expected rah-rah from the executive; it was an overview of a more formal review of our recent past history with a confirmation that in order to grow we have to, in some instances, get back-to-basics. One of the short videos included candid interviews with frontline staff who showed that after all the restructuring, all the new initiatives and all the rhetoric (and despite the best of intentions), we still suffer from the same few failings – namely communication and follow-up. Now this is where it gets interesting. The CEO (Peter Reidy), rather than speaking from a lectern, preferred having face-to-face conversations with staff at the

HUTT WORKSHOPS

coalface. He has taken on-board repetitive concerns and initiated a plan (or two) to address them.

He has arranged

for frontline supervisors to undergo some form of refresher training. He indicated also that middle management aren't coping as expected (or as required) and are going to be squeezed from above and below. All this high performance engagement will dovetail into the 'Fit-4-Business' and 'Project 2045' programmes. Coupled with this will be a drive to enhance our safety performance. So the next couple of years are shaping-up to be a period of fundamental change. A problem I foresee with all this will be increased zero harm administration which will bog us down. We appear to have administrators who do not take the opportunity to look at the bigger picture before producing yet another compliance document and issue it without any apparent opportunity for comment. I hope these faceless authors

have a rethink and start 2015 with a more open approach consistent with our new corporate values introduced to us at the roadshows.

The building's asbestos problems continue to be controlled by a small team of staff, consultants and contractors with regular weekly updates. This nuisance will linger into the New Year however it's a challenge that we've come to grips with and are accommodating as best we can in our daily routines.

Sadly since the last issue we lost two well respected supervisory staff in close succession; Neil MacLeod, after a long battle with cancer, and Alec Turnbull, after a sudden heart attack. The site was closed on both occasions as a mark of respect. Both these friendly faces are sadly missed.

Another incident that gave us cause for reflection was a weekend job involving a contractor. An apparent electric shock was misreported to external agencies as an electrocution which of course triggered a turnout of high powered authorities expecting a fatality. Even now details remain



Please cut on the dotted line

RMTU ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP

THE Ernest William File Scholarship was established in 1978 by members of the Locomotive Engineers Association as a tribute to Ernest William File, the retiring general secretary of the Association. The Scholarship was continued and expanded by the Combined Union of Railway Employees and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union has continued to support it on the same basis.

The scholarship is open to male or female applicants in two groups:

♦ those who are the children of a locomotive engineer; and

♦ those who have a parent who is a member of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union at the time of application.

Three years

The scholarship is tenable for a maximum period of three years at any university or tertiary institution in New Zealand, by a scholar undertaking full time study for his or her first degree or qualification. The value of the scholarship is \$1500 a third of which shall be applied in each of the three years during which the scholarship is tenable.

Written applications may be made on

the application form on the following page and should include details of your most recent scholastic achievements, career intentions, the names and addresses of two referees.

Please send to the address below before 31 January 2015.

**The General Secretary
Rail & Maritime Transport Union
PO Box 1103
WELLINGTON**

somewhat scant although to be fair, our workload has diverted our attentions to matters more urgent than a follow-up accident report. However, in that vein, there has been an attack upon our overtime hours based on another weekend incident whose associated incident investigation report was not available in the early stages. In fact at the time of submitting these notes a requested copy of the report was still to be supplied and gross errors in the ensuing consultation document have not been rectified in order to permit the staff to comment on a complete document.

When you examine the statistics on the Electoral Commission's website and consider the reported distractions in the run-up to the election, the outcome became a foregone conclusion. However, we live and work in an adaptable industry and we have a well-resourced union representing

and maintaining our working conditions and best interests. The next two to three years will be fun-filled I'm sure!

By now all but one of the Gen I DL locos would have been returned to service. The last one (which suffered a fire) was scheduled for restorative work to an as-yet unknown timeframe. The Gen II programme is loosely scheduled to commence in March and be done and dusted (no pun intended) well before the 2015 high season.

As a result of the staff engagement survey earlier this year, a local mini survey was conducted to drill down into problem areas alluded to in the main survey. Responses are still being worked through but I'm sure we'll get some follow-up action underway before years' end.

The management restructuring announced recently is yet to hit home however the loss of three senior managers was

not unexpected; two were spending money like the proverbial drunken sailor and the third made promises that often went un-honoured. The next level of management have every reason to be feeling wary with the CEO indicating wide sweeping changes and a cull of middle management. It has been a long time coming.

And so it's now Christmas. I'm sure the MECA ratification process passed without incident and the new collective agreement has been signed-off and the much deserved back pay implemented. To our national office support team, thank you for your efforts this year (yes Todd that includes you!). To those having a break enjoy it, you deserve it. For the rest working through, take it easy and be safe, your families rely on you. A merry Christmas to all. 🌐

KIA ORA, the lads in Wellington would like to wish all of our colleagues in the ports and rail a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Our combined collective agreement was ratified unanimously at a meeting of members on November 13. A three year deal was struck with percentage increases each year over the term. A terrific gain was an increase to the night rate allowance which brings it up to a suitable amount

WELLINGTON PORT

in the final year. This is a far cry from not so long ago when the employer, at the mere mention of the word allowance, would

erupt into fits of anguish and dismay! Maybe a sense of what ungodly hours and conditions all port workers face has made them see the light. Another plus was the removal of a letter of memorandum of understanding which was made under the

last collective. Essentially that letter had the potential for the cargo handling area to work four hour shifts for any new work. This had not sat well for this group and was fortunately never utilised during the last term. Another plus will be a workforce review to hopefully sort out fairer allocation of work and days off. The Port security centre have sorted their meal breaks as this has been an ongoing bug bear for a few years now, we shall wait and see. Engineering saw a sector increase and a clarification of wording details from the last collective. All in all a very satisfactory outcome for

ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Surname of applicant: First names:

Contact postal address for academic year:

Age (yy:mm): Date of birth:

University/institute at which enrolled:

Degree/qualification(s) for which enrolled:

Student ID if known:

Which year is this of your undergraduate study? (eg first, second etc.):

References (use separate sheets if necessary):

Latest academic results (sixth or seventh form and certified copy of Bursary results) – attach copies:

Parents name & signature:

Loco running Non loco running: Parents please indicate

Applicant's signature:

Date of application:

the 2014 CEA and thanks must go to our negotiating team.

A recent accident in Wellington where a straddle impacted onto an empty rail wagon and tipped it over brought home how easily a tragedy could occur in any port around the country. Fortunately the driver received only minor injuries and will be returning to the workplace in the near future. Remember safety is paramount in our industry. If it is

not safe to do a job, stop and inform your supervisor. Never take risks.

Volume through the port is on an up and in turn, increasing numbers of workers in the cargo section are needed. Recently four of our P24s moved to 40hr contracts and thus the employment of more P24s to replace them. Hopefully in the coming months we will see more P24s move to 40 hour contracts.

During the year the company purchased the remaining 50% share of Transport Systems Limited, the empties depot on the port in Wellington. This has seen a few of our cargo handlers seconded over there to give them a hand. A fine job was done by the lads to help them along as they had a shortage of drivers. Most of the lads are back with us now but we still help out as and when required. 🇳🇿

WE trust and hope you had a safe and enjoyable Labour Weekend. Just what the doctor ordered prior to the

Christmas onslaught with its inevitable flurry of hastily created rosters. And true to form, the TranzMetro LE roster is put to the sword with an outright rejection. It appears that this is the time when all agreed rostering principles and guide lines are thrown out the window in pursuit of cost reduction. Never mind the excessive leave accumulated as a result of endless goodwill of previous months or Christmases past. She's a tough road to hoe to meet the ever changing variables of such an undertaking. No doubt this glitch will be met with a last minute reprieve and interim patch up to wing our way through another Christmas season.

A big congratulation to one of our leading delegates, Gary Innes, on reaching his 60th birthday last week, along with congratulations to Todd Valster upon reaching his 50th. The branch also acknowledges the recent retirement of one of our most senior TranzMetro locomotive engineers Phil Gibbs, whom we forward a very special farewell for many memories and years of comradeship. To Phil and the whanau we wish you all the very best in your golden years of retirement.

On a more sorrowful note the branch

WELLINGTON RAIL

lost two of its more humble members who passed away recently. Michael John O'Conner who retired in 2012 was a long

term Wellington LE and roster co-ordinator. He will always be remembered as very likeable, non assuming gentlemen, who, when required to call out a fellow driver on short notice, always did so with a genuine air of apology for outright inconvenience. He will always be remembered as a true gentleman.

Phillip Kevin McNeill was also a long term rail employee who was a key functionary within the Wellington based payroll office who could be relied upon for his unique and intimate knowledge of past and present collective agreement. His loss will be hard felt within such a small tightly knit work environment. He will be missed by his fellow workers. Tragically Phil's life was cut short at the relatively youthful age of 51. To the families and friends of Mike and Phillip we pass on our sincere heartfelt sympathies for your great loss.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to advise of the recent departure of Dr Debbie Humes as she looks to reinvent herself in some other meaningful role outside of rail and on a lesser note of glee, we can advise of the up-coming departure of the Wellington InterIsland Terminal manager Peter Birse whose role has been disestablished along with his Picton counterpart. The two posi-

tions are combined into one. Eerily, we have noticed what appears to be the beginnings of an ongoing culling within the ranks of the big brick house. Interesting times are afoot!

On a positive note the recent demolition of the old asbestos-riddled multiple unit maintenance facility and subsequent creation of a new south yard with a new staff car park has been met with positive feedback from the troops. Not a moment too soon some would say!

The branch is also pleased to acknowledge the recent upgrade of the Upper Hutt I&E depot which has greatly enhanced our RMTU presence within what was once a forgotten depot. We would also emphasise that this achievement and previous gains made within the sectors of both Wellington and Palmerston North I&E depots were obtained through a process of real and meaningful consultation between the parties concerned. This is a leaf that Kiwi Rail freight should take from the book in preparation for their standardisation upgrades. Are you listening Palmerston North!

As always the IMP machinery is working overtime in Wellington with the greatly appreciated assistance of volunteer delegates. Remember, no delegate - no IMP!

Again, we report an increase in new employees into the TranzMetro fold. As always, this branch welcomes them one and all.

Lastly we offer a big homecoming welcome to our brother Nepia Takuiria-Mita as he returns after a lengthy period in limbo. Kia kaha brother! 🇳🇿

CANTERBURY RAIL

BRANCH chair Graham Ealam attended National Conference for first time in October. Graham has been a delegate and active member for many years so

it was long overdue that he got the chance to be there. The time was well spent and he said it was stimulating and informative.

Back in Christchurch we've had a few rumblings amongst the TranzScenic train

◀ attendants – a bit if a hangover from the restructure a year ago. This was promptly resolved thanks to the intervention of KiwiRail's employment relations manager when the attendants stopped training new staff. Once everyone sat around a table and thrashed it out the issue was soon resolved.

On health and safety matters one of our train examiners had a very near miss (detailed in *The Express*). KiwiRail handled this really well. Our member wasn't wilfully negligent, he just made a mistake. It was however, a mistake that could have cost him his life. By being open and honest we were able to identify what he did wrong and also look at systemic issues that had contributed to the circumstances in which a mistake could have such potentially serious

consequences.

The rebuild is now well underway in the city and we hear that money has been allocated to build a new mechanical services facility here. This is good news as our members in this part of KiwiRail have been working miracles in very difficult circumstances for far too long.

Ongoing training

By the time you read this we'll have run another delegate training course for active members and new delegates. We really can't have too much of this stuff – our delegates need all the support we can give them and it's good that National Office is doing its bit in training them up.

Another event that will have come to pass between writing these notes and publication will be the ratification roadshows for the MECA settlement. Hopefully, and without tempting fate, all the feedback we've had to date has been positive.

As we go to press there seems to be increasing interest and support for the idea of a professional and managerial collective agreement to cover people who are presently excluded from the MECA. Here in Christchurch we've heard nothing but support for this idea amongst those who could be potentially covered. Shades of the days of the Railway Officer Institute.

Be safe and if the job isn't safe just say no! 🇳🇿

THINGS are happening at Port of Lyttelton and the chances are that by the time you read this further events will have overtaken these branch notes.

LYTTELTON PORT

On August 28 workers across the Port were stunned when Brad Fletcher, the local president of MUNZ, 43, was killed at work. Brad was a man with a big heart and a big stature. His funeral was attended by many, many workers from the Port and the venue, with a seating capacity for over 800, was standing room only. Brad leaves a wife and three sons whom he adored. Brad's death is one of three fatalities on the job in a 12 month period at the Port of Lyttelton and is likely to be one of 100 workplace deaths that will occur in New Zealand this year according to the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment website.

As a result of Brad's death Work Safe NZ have become a regular visitor to the Port with three investigations currently underway as a result of the three fatalities.

Work Safe have advised LPC that as a unionised workplace LPC must get alongside the workers and engage constructively on H&S to effect permanent and lasting change so that every worker can go home safely every day.

There is a lot of work now happening in this area. The RMTU and MUNZ are working with LPC on a process called Constructive

Engagement. The intention of this is to set out how the parties can work together. The RMTU does this successfully with Kiwi Rail and has done for many years.

We also have the benefit of expert advice from Hazel Armstrong of Hazel Armstrong Law, and RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher, working alongside RMTU delegates and RMTU H&S reps all identifying what we can do to constructively engage with LPC.

On November 7 the Christchurch City Council takes over the ownership of the Port of Lyttelton through its trading arm, Christchurch City Holdings Limited. We're unsure whether this will be a good thing or whether it may be a case of 'be careful what you wish for'. The positive side is that as a publicly-owned entity we expect that the councillors will listen to our very real concerns around health and safety and the quality of management at the Port. Our fear however, is that given the Council's difficult financial position, the right wingers at the town hall will push to have the Port hocked off. We're depending on Lianne Dalziel to listen when we say that we don't want our assets, and this asset in particular, to be sold off. There will be a fight and a very public campaign if matters come to that.

Currently RMTU members are involved in negotiations for the renewal of the Collec-

tive Agreement with LPC. For the first time in 22 years the RMTU are negotiating our own agreement and MUNZ are negotiating theirs. This came about when MUNZ initiated the renewal of collective bargaining independently which gave LPC the ability to break the joint collective and require RMTU and MUNZ to negotiate two separate agreements.

The RMTU have met with LPC twice to date (September 19 and 30) and are yet to exchange claims as LPC have not been in a position to do so at each meeting. At the time of writing we're about to sit down for the third time to attempt to progress bargaining.

What hasn't helped is CEO Peter Davie's recent \$200,000 bonus, which equates to an 18% pay increase. This has raised member expectations about what a reasonable pay increase would look like for the workers who actually create the wealth LPC generates.

We look forward to updating you as negotiations progress.

Following consultation and agreement with the RMTU and MUNZ LPC have just introduced random testing into their drug and alcohol policy. Random testing will be a saliva and breathalyser test carried out by the NZDDA who currently carry out pre-employment, reasonable cause and post incident testing at LPC.

If the saliva or breathalyser returns a positive result it will be followed up with a urine test to determine a confirmatory test. ▶

◀ The focus of the D&A policy is rehabilitation. If any employee tests positive (through random, post incident or reasonable cause) they will go on to the rehabilitation programme.

Every employee of LPC is in the mix for random testing including all of the managers. All LPC employee numbers (not names) are fed into a computer program which then generates the random numbers for testing. NZDDA monitors the computer program independent of LPC.

Over a period of two years LPC anticipates that every employee will be tested at

least once. Some people will be tested more than once but that is the nature of random testing.

The RMTU is running Level 1 delegate training on November 20 for new port and rail delegates. This will be our final round of formal delegate education for 2014 before we start thinking about the Christmas season.

On a personal note from the branch secretary (Libi Carr) it is with deep regret and much soul searching that I have tendered my resignation. My last day as secretary will be December 31. I have been with the

RMTU in this position for six years and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the best little union in New Zealand.

I look forward to keeping in touch with many of you and hearing how the RMTU continues to lead from the front in the fight for health and safety in New Zealand's workplaces, supporting our international comrades, lobbying government and, most of all, how you, the members, the blood and sinew of the RMTU, remain at the forefront of the struggle.

Kia kaha and arohanui. 🌐

HERE in Timaru we're adjusting to the expansion of our local port's trade and the impact this is having on freight traffic patterns. One key feature of a busier port is that there is the potential for confusion in terms of access and trespassing on the rail corridor so we're glad our RMTU South Island organiser raised the issue of KiwiRail attending Prime Port's health and safety forum.

TIMARU RAIL

Another way in which port changes have affected our work is that the proposed CT site changes are on hold. Pretty ironic given the anxiety that

generated earlier this year.

Our I&E members continue to do sterling work keeping the rail in good condition, and over in the Toll shed all manner of goodies are distributed across our bit of the South Island.

We sometimes wonder if the general public ever question how all the goods they use get to and from their destinations.

As this goes to press we should have heard from our negotiators just what the MECA settlement involves.

Thanks for all the hard work guys, here's hoping we have a bit of back pay to look forward to for Christmas.

To everyone in the RMTU family, all the best for the holiday season and stay safe. 🌐

ONCE again we can celebrate another edition of the Transport Worker with the continued existence of our branch. The changes at the Port are beginning

to bed in with a few of our members being employed directly by Prime Port and the remainder working for Quality Marshalling and Timaru Container Terminals Ltd.

Prime Port seems to be adopting the Port of Tauranga model where it sees itself as merely a landlord whilst a plethora of competing entities do the actual work on the waterfront. As we all know, the one key area this causes difficulties in is health and safety as it leads to potential communication

TIMARU PORT

problems and confusion.

As we go to press a port worker for C3 at Timaru has just been injured, only a few hours after the RMTU released statistics about deaths and injuries on the

waterfront and Hazel Armstrong was interviewed on Radio New Zealand challenging the idea that ports could abdicate responsibility by operating as 'mere landlords'.

Coordinating H&S

One positive measure has been the creation of a port wide users forum to co-ordinate health and safety. We can't help thinking this wouldn't be necessary in this

form if Prime Port directly employed everyone marshalling, stevedoring and doing maintenance at the port. That doesn't mean we won't be doing our best to make it work and to mitigate the damage that the port's business model could potentially do.

In other news Naylor Young attended the national conference and not only learned heaps but made some valuable contributions to workshops and debates. When you've been on the rollercoaster we've been riding here in Timaru you do learn the odd thing or two and it's good to have the opportunity to pass that on to our brothers and sisters in the wider union.

Meanwhile, we wish you all the best for the rest of the year – stay safe and stay union! 🌐

WEST COAST RAIL

PAUL FOSKETT has finally got the transfer he's been hanging out for. As you read this Paul will be living the good life on the Riviera of the South Island in sunny Picton. We wish him all the very best for this new chapter in his life and a big thank you for all

the work he did on behalf of the members of the Greymouth branch both as chair and delegate. As is the way of things someone put up their hand to be chair when Paul moved on: Ian Coates. Thank you brother, we appreciate you stepping forward to help run our branch.

By the time you read this the MECA ratification process will have run its course and we'll all know if we've got a little bonus by way of back pay in our Christmas stockings or not. One good point in the settlement is the extension of the isolation allowance to all staff at Otira, not just LEs. Well done our negotiation team.

It's good to have Leon Piggot back with us and in a permanent role this time. Leon is a valued workmate and a huge asset to our Union. RMTU national health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher says his input and

expertise around tunnel safety is invaluable. Great to have you back brother, we know it took a while but the RMTU wasn't giving up on you!

On the boil

There are a number of initiatives on the boil in I&E – we'll see how these progress. John Bannerman has been spending far more time away from the Coast than he'd wish as he's on a working party looking at hours of work and another examining track occupancy irregularities. It's good that John is on these groups as he brings the perspective of the frontline worker to the table.

He's also aware of the politics involved in working through the issues – a fact some of our managers (not all) are unaware of.

Westport has lost a valued employee in Wayne Smith, one of our rail operators,

unfortunately due to ill health.

Everyone who worked with Wayne appreciated his thorough approach to the job and he will be missed around the Westport rail operation. One of Westport's LEs, Stu Watson, has transferred to Otira so we wish him well in his new high altitude outpost. The Westport branch has held its AGM which has seen the present branch chairman, secretary and delegate re-elected for another term.

Our LEs have been working through several issues related to rosters. Not an easy task when we're trying to coordinate Greymouth and Westport depots and all the attendant uncertainty that surrounds coal production on the West Coast.

To all our RMTU brothers and sisters, stay safe and healthy in the run up to Christmas. 🌐

PORT CHALMERS is gearing up for the busy season with container moves slowly on the rise. We are also well under way with the cruise boat season, which is great for the city

as a whole. We know our fellow members at Taieri Gorge Railway are doing sterling work entertaining the cruise ship passengers. The harbour looks wonderful at this time

PORT CHALMERS

of year – what better way to see it than from the train after arriving by ship?

We were fortunate to be able

to send three people to the recent RMTU AGM and had good reports back from them, so a big thanks to all involved in putting it all together. The strong focus on the ports

industry was appreciated as has the efforts that the RMTU has made in the campaign for better health and safety on the waterfront. Speaking of the latter, we were pleased to support our comrades at Lyttelton and have the opportunity to question their CEO over health and safety at their port.

And now that Christmas is only a blink away, we would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and hope that we all have a safe holiday season. 🌐

SINCE the last notes we have lost our long standing branch secretary, Tim Spence. Tim had been our secretary since about 1994, something of a record, and he will be missed. He has chosen to spend more time with his family and do more things without us at rail. We wish him all the best, but we know where he lives and will continue to harass, oops, stay in contact. There was talk of him doing some contract work for the branch but the talks stalled on the money issue. Tim always was a formidable negotiator.

We are left wondering what we are doing wrong. We seem to be unable to keep health and safety advisors. They come on board and then leave. Maybe the job is too big?

OTAGO RAIL

And our new operations manager has gone off to fix Palmerston North. Good luck with that. No word yet if the position he has vacated will

be filled, but given the debacle with the last selection process, we will have to see if it can be done better this time. Don't hold your breath.

Busy season

The busy season is upon us and our loco fleet could be doing better. One even ran out of fuel the other day, not to mention the three DCs sent north after breaking down.

We are looking forward to the wage round updates, they look promising.

So, who of you out there didn't vote Labour? You may live to regret that. The next few years will be interesting for us folk who work for wages. Hopefully the first labour law changes are the last, even with the rest of the world looking in, and commenting on how these changes take us on a journey back to the dark ages.

Loco on the move

One of our loco trainees is heading for Invercargill at Christmas. Invercargill is gaining a really top bloke who is over half way through his training. Good luck Mario and the loco team look forward to changing over with you.

Graeme Smart has just visited the depot, ▶

waving his broom of compliance over the team. All seems normal, which is a good result all round. Please expect to be asked to do your job properly. There are too many people looking over the fence, not to mention the extra work your branch officials have to do if you're found to be lacking.

TSP and the changes that came with it are still bedding in with work orders slow to come out of the machine and which are often wrong. Surely this would be simple to get right?

The team in the yard are loving having to call in every move they make and then try

to explain that south freight is in Dunedin not South Auckland.

Anyway to all those who are able to take a break with their family over the Christmas/New Year, enjoy your well-earned rest.

To those working through, be careful out there. 🌐

WE start by acknowledging the invaluable work Tim Spence has done over many years both as a union representative and as a mechanical engineer keeping our engines on the rails and working. Tim will be very much missed as he heads into retirement. Tim, we all greatly appreciate the work you've done and your commitment to your workmates and the

SOUTHLAND RAIL

railway. Go well Brother, we wish you all the very best.

We note with deep sadness the

passing of our past branch secretary Terry Strange on 29 October 2014 at the young age of 60 years. Terry was a hard working

stalwart of the branch during his years with rail and we pass on our condolences to his friends and family.

In other news Rata Shearer starts remote control training in the next few weeks. Good luck Rata, we're sure you'll make the most of this opportunity.

Our members are getting busier than ever with, for example, the Nightcaps coal train now taking 20 wagons. That's 40 containers being loaded six days per week for Clandyboyne near Temuka. Fonterra at Edendale is going full pelt, another operation keeping us in gainful employment

Our infrastructure and engineering members are doing some excellent work out in the yard on maintenance and repairs – a big thanks to you.

Gavin Mortimore attended national conference on behalf of the branch and came back enthused and with his batteries recharged. Gavin said it was good to meet fellow delegates from around New Zealand and to hear from our brothers and sisters form overseas.

Many of us are disappointed at the election result and the demise of the Labour Party. In recent years there has been a drift away from Labour, even amongst those of us who in the past would have been core supporters. In our part of the country we saw two unheard of and inexperienced National candidates take seats, much to our collective disgust.

Members are saying that Labour has forgotten about working people like ourselves. There appears to be no mention of social democracy anymore – just an acceptance of unbridled capitalism without any discussion of an alternative. Let's hope the new leader undertakes some fundamental reform.

An appeal to all branch members to update your contact details with both national office and your branch officials.

To all our RMTU brothers and sisters, be safe and look after one another. 🌐

Rail & Maritime Transport Union Inc Statement of Financial Position As At 30 June 2014



	Note	2014	2013
		\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Bank Accounts	5	339,899	372,007
Accounts Receivable	3	34,872	39,687
Interest Accrued	4	49,842	39,880
Tax Refund Due	2	1,595	-
Total Current Assets		426,208	451,574
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Fixed Assets	6	151,217	144,078
Investments	7	3,669,344	3,274,897
Total Non Current Assets		3,820,561	3,418,975
Total Assets		\$ 4,246,769	\$ 3,870,549
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	8	93,356	102,646
GST Payable		22,519	22,796
Konemu Provision		6,452	6,452
Provision for Leave		54,282	53,532
LE Reunion Trust Fund		6,850	6,350
Taxation Payable	2	-	721
Total Current Liabilities		183,460	192,497
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Finance Leases		-	-
Total Non Current Liabilities		-	-
NET ASSETS		\$ 4,063,310	\$ 3,678,052

Represented by:

MEMBERS' FUNDS

10 \$ 4,063,310 \$ 3,678,052

Signed on behalf of the National Management Committee

General Secretary

Date

National President

Date

The accompanying notes form part of, and are to be read in conjunction with these financial statements.

LABOUR visits Hutt Workshops



JUST prior to the 2014 General Election, a flash mob from the Labour party descended on the Hutt Workshops including the then Labour leader David Cunliffe, local MPs Annette King, Trevor Mallard and Chris Hipkins, Ohariu candidate Ginny Andersen, David Parker and Wellington City Councillor Paul Eagle. As you would expect they were impressed with the output from Hutt and understood the importance of this last major railway workshops. Thanks to KiwiRail's Karl Bouterey and the local RMTU Hutt branch executive members Paul Morrison and Myles Carter for facilitating this tour. 🇳🇿

