

SEPTEMBER 2015

THE *Transport Worker*

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

**300 WORKERS
HAVE DIED
SINCE PIKE
RIVER**

**... but new legislation
won't provide solution**



5 **SIMULATOR**

A new crane simulator gives operators a birds eye view of Napier.

14 **H&S REFORM BILL**

MP Iain Lees-Galloway and Kay Faulkner stand among one of the nationwide demonstrations about workers killed on the job.

28 **BACKWARD STEP**

Dirty diesel being delivered to KiwiRail to protest their future planning.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: 300 crosses laid out as part of a nation wide protest to highlight deaths at work and the government's weak approach to dangerous businesses. More on pages 14 and 15.

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

The AGM season

AGM time which means that I get to go out and about to as many branch meetings as I can to report on the activities of the Union over the last 12 months and to express my deep and heartfelt appreciation of efforts of the voluntary rank and file branch officials and delegates in our great little Union. It is excellent that we have highly motivated and competent staff around the country but the real bread and butter work that most affects our members every day of their working lives is largely done by rank and file branch officers and delegates. Without them we would not be anywhere near as well organised or effective in terms of projecting power and influence on the job.

This year I will be talking a lot about the Lyttelton Port dispute of last Christmas and the lessons from it. There is no doubt that this Union is being targeted in a classic union-busting attack by a number of employers— including LPC. Additionally, a comrade union actively assisted the employer in attacking us which took this dispute into a league of its own, in my view. To reinforce the lessons from this dispute the RMTU has commissioned a short documentary (approx 20 minutes) to be shown at the later AGMs and future training seminars and conferences.

At LPC we initiated bargaining at the inland port depot at Woolston and it is essential that we achieve a signed and settled collective so that we are positioned for growth. This will include the new Rolleston inland port being set up to directly compete with the Port of Tauranga's inland port terminal.

Which is a good segue to another topic which winds me up: the massive investment of ratepayer money by public-owned ports into a constant war to become one of the two gateway or hub ports for the 'big ships'. Pretty much all the ports on the eastern seaboard are locked into a spending battle to build inland ports, dredge channels, buy new cranes and straddles and reclaim more land for logs and boxes. And all in the name of becoming the chosen hub port for big ships. This is ratepayer money and increases debt at a time when ratepayers are being dealt over inflated rate increases and old people live in fear of growing power bills.

Yes, I am straying into being dramatic but it is nonetheless true.

How much cheaper would your rates bills be if these very profitable ports paid back higher dividends to their owners instead of spending it on an infrastructure gamble to attract Maersk and other shipping lines?

Within the industry it is thought that there will be no more than two deep water big ship hubs in New Zealand in the long term. The rest will be feeder ports. It is a disgrace that there is no national ports strategy.

You know that something is not quite right when increasing numbers of right

wing neo-liberals write opinion pieces in newspapers castigating the John Key-led Government for its lack of central planning around railways, ports and other forms of infrastructure outside those bloody 'Roads of significance to National' (RONs) and its funder the Road Transport Forum.

Another topic I dwell on will be KiwiRail. In an opinion piece written for the *Dominion Post* in Wellington the KiwiRail CEO stated: *"Currently there is not enough demand, and therefore revenue, for KiwiRail alone to cover the cost of maintaining New Zealand's 4,000 km of track. It includes more than 1,500 bridges and 150 tunnels and there has been under-investment in the past. Our infrastructural costs largely explain the extra support needed from taxpayers every year."*

This is true and as I have often said this is at the root core of KiwiRail's operating difficulties. The infrastructure should be operated and maintained out of the Land Transport Fund. However, this Government won't have a bar of it (see Julie Anne Genter article on page 17).

So long as the operating company must cover the full cost of the infrastructure rather than a fair track user charge KiwiRail is doomed to a future of begging at the door of whichever Government is in possession of the treasury benches.

He also said: "We are looking at our labour costs".

I believe that it is no coincidence that the GM HR is an ex union official, the current ER manager is an ex Labour Cabinet Minister and the newly appointed IR manager is a very recent defector from the EPMU ranks.

We also know that there is a growing employer aggression toward unions and their members following further attacks to the union organisation and strike provisions within the Employment Relations Act 2000 – which have shifted the balance of power more toward employers.

We also are seeing the anti-worker/union faction within National flexing its strength with the backbencher rebellion against the H&S Reform Bill post Pike River and the massive watering down of the worker representative provisions and the exemption of the most high risk areas of our economy which accounted for almost half of the 300 worker deaths since Pike River.

It is my belief that KiwiRail's current push for a high productivity/high engagement relationship is a smokescreen for an attack on many of the terms and conditions that our members have come the renewal talks next year.

We are seeing many classic union busting techniques being employed within KiwiRail with their major focus on 'leadership' training of frontline team leaders and supervisors, the massive increase in publications and communications to staff and their growing resistance to giving your Union organisation recognition for wins in the workplace. And finally, deliberately bypassing normal union channels and agreed frameworks and dealing directly with individual members and not the branch structures.

Anyway, enough on management, let's focus on what we are going to do about it.

We must prepare, as we have done in the past, if we are to prevail. Our success will hinge on the unity and strength of will of members coupled with our level of organisation in branches and our preparedness for action and/or activity.

A training seminar is coming to a venue near you and we all need to begin to focus and prepare as in the words of Aesop:

United we stand – Divided we fall! 🌐

Grateful for RMTU help

Dear Editor

I thought I'd better send through a very big 'thank you' to yourself, John Kerr and the RMTU for organising Kristen Thompson of Hazel Armstrong Law to represent me in the ACC review we have just successfully completed.

This letter is on my behalf, Helen my partner and my family.

If it had not been for the RMTU instigating this action I would have been left up the proverbial creek! Kristen comprehensively showed Fair Way how ACC's decision to refuse further help following the accident I'd had at work was completely wrong, resulting in that decision being quashed.

I should now get the medical help I need to make a full and meaningful recovery.

Please pass on our appreciation to anybody involved and feel free to let others know how and why this action came about.

Brett Hartley

Mechanic LPC

Retiring

Dear Editor,

As I have now retired from Toll Networks, Timaru, I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU. Thank you for your support over the years. I wish you all the best for the future.

Graeme Hay

12083

Dear Editor,

As I am retiring on 31 July 2015 please accept this note as my resignation from the RMTU.

I have been fortunate in not having any problems requiring union assistance in the 46 years of my working life.

Geoff Slack

Thanks to Hutt Workshops

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to say a well-earned thank you to the staff at the Hutt Workshops.

Since becoming the central regions KIC representative, I have had a lot of dealings with the staff at the plant and I feel that much of their hard work goes by unnoticed.

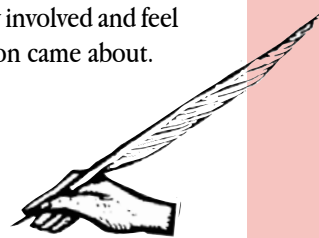
I must say that what I have found is a group of dedicated, hard working staff who over the last 18 months in particular, have done an outstanding job in removing the asbestos from our DL fleet. It has been done professionally and to a very high standard.

Also I must commend them on the extremely high standard of workmanship with our loco fleet rebuilds and in particular the fitting of the trial air conditioning unit.

As a locomotive engineer, your work is much appreciated

Les S Perrin

Central KIC representative.



Huge turn out for TPPA protest



(l to r) Brent Yaxley, Graham Ealam, Kerry Yaxley, Laurie Collins and Heiner Benecke.

THE national day of action against the TPPA – "TPPA: Walk Away!" – on Saturday 15 August was again very successful with actions in 21 centres around the country plus actions earlier in the week in some centres and high union involvement. Protests grow in size each time with 20-25,000 people taking part in the latest. This has led to increasingly personalised attacks on protesters by the Government.

The round of negotiations in Hawaii in late July failed to conclude the TPPA despite the US government having gained fast-track authority in the US Congress.

Dairy is an irritant and a sensitive social issue rather than a central economic issue for the major players and some, including Japan, are accusing New Zealand of holding up the negotiations because of its insistence on increased dairy access.

It is clear any increase will be small.

None of the larger countries have anything to gain from giving in to New Zealand (except perhaps avoiding the embarrassment of New Zealand leaving the talks) and much to lose from their domestic constituencies.



Keir and his father Wil McDonald.

Meanwhile with dairy prices at record lows and the US dairy industry becoming a major exporting power, whatever is won is likely to have low value and a short life (like our main dairy exports!).

The bigger sticking points include the automobile trade, where Japan and the US were involved in a hard-fought backroom deal which reduced the requirement for content from other TPPA countries and leaving Canada and Mexico out in the cold.

That will be very difficult to resolve.

Many intellectual property issues, including those related to medicines, are still unresolved.

The US is still trying to get some kind of agreement on currency manipulation to satisfy Congress, against almost unanimous opposition from other countries, and is still introducing new material to the table.

It is unlikely ministers will meet again until they have a way through the most difficult issues.

With such negotiations it is foolish to predict, but it is highly likely resumption will be delayed until well after the US presidential election and may well not revive at that point.

So our opposition is on the edge of success but we should not underestimate the political stakes involved.

The CTU TPPA Watch list continues to send out information, including a regular newsletter from the It's Our Future group. Anyone wishing to join or wanting further information about the above items should contact Bill Rosenberg (billr@nzctu.org.nz).

Crane simulator for Napier

A new purpose-built simulator has been built in Napier for crane driving instruction.

Dave Marden discusses how it came to be and the wider issues surrounding its establishment – and especially how they might affect RMTU members.

BY the time this edition hits the press Napier Port will have its own crane simulator up and running. Over the previous five years, the Napier Port Company (NPC) has engaged with Gottwald/Terex crane manufacturers to assist in the primary training of crane operators at Antwerp, Belgium.

Sending two trainee crane operators across the world for a three week basic crane training module is very expensive – around \$25,000 each.

NPC chose to look at purchasing their own simulator and here we are with the finished item offering a selection of programmes and screen images specific to Napier Port.

The surroundings within the simulator screen are local and eerily accurate. The programmes offered include: Gottwald/Terex crane operation; ships gear; and hatch men duties.

Ports of Auckland have also purchased a simulator from the same provider, which we believe is focussed on straddle training and gantry cranes.

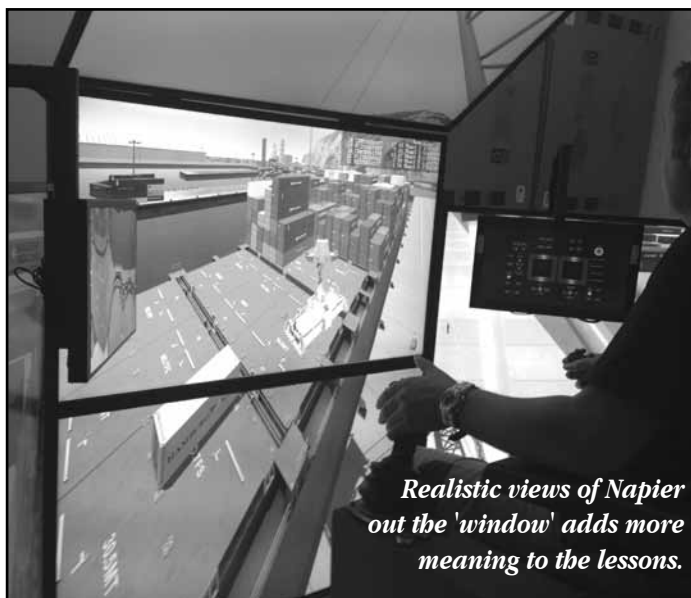
NPC crane operators (all RMTU members) assisted CM Labs in the design and build of the simulator to make it as real as possible and provided technical advice in the Gottwald crane operation and Napier port outlay.

When in use, it is so precise that it reacts even to releasing a grounded container and shows how the crane responds.

At this time, NPC is the only port in New Zealand to have Gottwald Mobile Harbour Cranes but we understand that North Port will be assembling their recently purchased Gottwald MHC as they expand into increased container volumes.

There are suggestions that NPC may assist North Port in its requirements for crane training.

There will be plenty of concerns from a



Realistic views of Napier out the 'window' adds more meaning to the lessons.

union perspective on how these simulators may affect or impact our work. These tools can be viewed as union-busting devices!

We have taken this very seriously at Napier and are currently engaging with NPC over how we keep control on our own work and connections to simulator training.

We are engaging with NPC to build a document with the RMTU that safe guards our work, the trainer and training practises and the remuneration we get – and ensure to disassociate ourselves from any training of yellow unions.

It is essential to have input and control and to have involvement in how such tools will be utilised. This simulator has work programmes that RMTU members at Napier Port do not perform and we must be vigilant in how we provide and maintain a connection with the simulator training by our members. It is possible we may have an approved trainer in any particular field within the simulator's programme where we can offer training, even if it is outside the scope of our own work, thus giving us the ability to monitor who is being trained and in which field. Or we have the power to walk away if there are any doubts around who is being trained.

Ultimately, if it wasn't Napier (or Auckland) the purchase of such equipment

would have been taken up some other business associated with ports, shipping, bulk cargo or container handling company and for the industry in general and workers in particular, the implications of such a move go well outside that of just the maritime industry.


As New Zealand ports strive for a larger market share, accompanied with the ongoing arguments around a lack of port rationalisation, the competitive edge is essential for growth and this requires improved safer handling. Port orientated simulators are, and will be, part of this future strategy.

It will be important for any company investing in such an expensive piece of machinery (\$650,000 approximately) to get a return on their financial outlay. This is where lines may be drawn and the potential for debate from a union stand point. There will be arguments about who will use the device and who will do the training or be trained. However, a simulator is what it is, a simulator only, and by no means does it give a trainee the right to go out and do the real thing without proper on-the-job training.

Completing a simulator course is not a sign off and, by the same measure, this also applies to those who will do the training!

In its purest form, a simulator is a device to test, train and aid in the improvement of ones skills. The positives around health and safety are boundless for reasons that need no explanation.

At the end of the day, these types of apparatuses are being used globally in many formats with many unions already involved. It is important that we are there from the get go and play our part.

To be involved in this new technological augmentation is a bonus. As RMTU members it essential to have input and participation in how such tools will be employed, after all, we are the users, not management. 

Chinese workers exploited

THE RMTU has filed proceedings with the Employment Relations Authority to determine whether or not the Chinese workers brought in to New Zealand to remove asbestos from KiwiRail locomotives were covered by New Zealand employment law. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise which investigated the issue for eight months, reported that the 27 workers were paid as little as \$3 an hour – or possibly a day – but could not make a determination because the Chinese companies refused to provide pay details.

"After the government refused to seek a clear answer on the status of the Chinese engineers, it has been left to the union to clarify the law," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "We are also seeking clarification on whether KiwiRail has breached our collective employment agreement with them."

The Labour Party is urging the government to close the legal loophole that allowed the Chinese companies to avoid New Zealand's employment laws.

Butson said the Union, together with Hutt Workshops management, took pity on the workers and provided meals for them. "They were damned near starving as didn't have enough money to live on. It was a shameful situation that should not be allowed to happen again." 🌐

EMU door handles



NEW self-locking door handles are being fitted to all cab-saloon doors on the Auckland EMUs with a completion date of the end of Sept 2015. RMTU delegates raised their concern with Transdev management many months ago and requested self-locking handles be installed.

Transdev management and Auckland Transport were unfortunately not prepared to change these handles until one of our LE members had the very unpleasant experience of passengers entering the cab while she was driving. Several passengers became agitated that they had missed their stop and in an attempt to get someone's attention burst into the cab after the train had left the platform. 🌐



SAD payout

Wayne Butson presents a hefty medical retirement cheque from the LE SAD Fund to ex Tranz Metro Wellington LE Andy Gilbert.



ARE YOU A MEMBER?

NZ Harbours Superannuation Scheme



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



The Scheme has an external administrator and contributions are invested with five fund managers.

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

www.harbourssuper.org.nz



Peter Conway – CTU leader

By RMTU life member Ross Wilson

PETER CONWAY, CTU economist and Secretary, died on 9th June after a serious depressive illness. Peter had been a committed activist and unionist all his adult life and we can now see that his over-developed sense of duty and pride in maintaining the highest standards, had accumulated into a weight of responsibility that no human being could sustain.

Peter's activism began in his teenage years with the Vietnam war protest movement when he studied for a BCA at Victoria University. Peter got his first union job as Assistant Secretary of the Canterbury West Coast and Nelson Marlborough Clothing Workers Union. Working with the old Glaswegian Secretary, Hugh McCrorie, and organising clothing workers (mainly women) made a big impression on him. Peter was active in the Trades Council and threw himself into union and political activity including the organisation of the Marxist Political Economy Conference in Christchurch in 1981, and the Springbok Tour protests the same year.

Arriving in the UK in 1984 to the Miners Strike Peter was delighted when he landed a job at the Hounslow Trade Union Support Centre and he was soon heavily involved in organising support for the miners and their families. He never forgot the grim conditions, picket lines, families without food, and the role of women.

Peter got a job in Auckland in 1986 with the Distribution Workers Federation, a national servicing centre for what would later become the Northern Distribution Union. Peter's strong sense of duty, his sharp analytical mind, conscientiousness and compassion, all qualities we know so well, shone brightly way back then.

Some of Peter's best union work was as NDU Retail Secretary under the Employ-

ment Contracts Act in the 1990s. Working strategically in a very difficult industrial and political environment he led an organising and bargaining strategy for retail workers which resulted in a traditionally weak sector retaining a level of union organisation and consolidated bargaining. This continues as a tribute to Peter more than 20 years on.

Peter's other two passions were his music (he was an amazing mandolin player) and his family; his partner Liz and children Maddy, Sean and Rosa. In 1996 he took over the 'home front' from Liz for the next three years. This was very unusual in the 1990s. And he certainly brought change to the previously all women Balmoral Play Group where discussion moved swiftly from childrearing to politics.

In 1999, the year of the election of the Clark Labour Government. I had just been elected Council of Trade Unions President and couldn't believe my luck when Peter agreed to come and work for the CTU as Economist and Director of Policy. He had just completed a Masters degree in economics. I worked with Peter for the next eight years and, as we all know, he did an exceptionally good job. He enjoyed being a labour economist and his credibility and reputation grew as he engaged with the Government bureaucracy, and political and business leaders. Always well researched his style was reason rather than rhetoric. He used to say to me that he was 'soft on people



but hard on issues' and it was an effective strategy. He also firmly established himself as a labour economist and the Winston Churchill Fellowship to the US in 2006 furthered his academic interest in productivity and building high value high skill jobs and industries. His excellent work in this area is an important legacy.

He was deeply interested in trade negotiations and enjoyed the highly confidential discussions he had with MFAT trade negotiators. He was able to extend this interest as a Board member of NZ Trade and Enterprise for several years.

He was elected CTU Secretary in 2008. He was a little

reluctant, mainly because he was enjoying the economist role, but he dutifully took up the leadership role and did a marvellous job in a difficult economic and political environment.

And from his own union experience he understood the need for solidarity with workers in disputes and worked tirelessly to support them.

He also got involved in international development work and was a foundation Trustee of our own international development agency UnionAID and a Board member of Oxfam New Zealand. The UnionAID Trustees have decided to honour Peter and his work with an annual public lecture on international development, economic and union issues, and we hope to have the first Peter Conway Memorial Lecture later this year. Peter was truly a man of the people.



Ian [Dad] Simpson

31 March 1939 – 3 July 2015

IAN SIMPSON, a retired Tranz Metro train manager, died recently. Ian had an extensive railway career and was a much loved character with a talkative wit who will be sorely missed by many a workmate and colleague alike. The Union extends its sincere sympathies to the family for their great loss.



Fatigue and shift work

SHIFT work is a fact of life when working in 24 hour operations such as rail and ports.

Worker fatigue is a by-product of shift work and the impairments associated with fatigue can be equal or greater than alcohol impairment. Fatigue contributes to poor decision making, difficulty in concentrating, reduced vigilance and slower reaction time – a potentially disastrous combination when operating heavy machinery.

Circadian rhythms

Our circadian body clock drives our daily cycle for when we want to sleep and be awake.

The Department of Labour guideline for managing shift work to minimise workplace fatigue says: "The average amount of sleep needed for health and alertness is between 7-9 hours a night."

The RMTU was appalled to learn that port company C3 recommends workers need only five hours sleep per 24 hour period in their draft fatigue management policy.

Our in-built circadian rhythm means that we are programmed to sleep from 11pm-7am and 4am is known as the circadian low where the body is most sleepy and least functional. Core body temperature drops and fatigue-related errors are most likely.

LPC branch secretary and cargo handler Heiner Benecke agrees fatigue is an issue for



shift workers. He said: "There's that horrible time in the morning around 4am where you can be fighting tiredness. A couple of good naps during the breaks helps fight fatigue."

Heiner says to do shift work you have to have self-discipline and be able to get to sleep easily. If you're on a rolling 8 shift (8 hours on, 8 hours off) there isn't any time for other activities or family commitments. "You just sleep, eat and get back to work."

Shift workers required to go from 3rd to 2nd shift understandably suffer from fatigue. Being required to sleep in the early half of the day is totally at odds with our circadian rhythm to be awake at this time.

Recovery from fatigue

Recovery from lack of sleep is not hour for hour. The average person needs two nights of good, unrestricted sleep to recover from sleep deprivation.

Regular breaks within shifts are important as the risk of injury is increased by not taking breaks before fatigue sets in. Evidence shows there is twice the risk of injury 90 minutes after a person takes their

last break compared with immediately after a break.

The risk of harm increases more or less exponentially and in the 12th hour of work it is twice what it was during the first eight hours.

How to manage fatigue

Legislation requires employers to manage the risk of fatigue because it can cause harm.

The employer must adopt a systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and controlling the risk of fatigue. Strategies for reducing fatigue include providing adequate sleep opportunities between shifts, placing limits on continuous work, providing predictable rosters, fair distribution of weekends off (work life balance), and having plan for covering absences, and fatigue management education.

Data gathering for identifying fatigue is important including staff surveys, encouraging reporting of fatigue, incident investigation and analysing sick leave. 🌐



OBITUARY

Jim Hawkins

14-7-1950 – 29-5-2015

JIM commenced his working life for the then Otago Harbour Board in 1980 as an electrician. In 1984 he transferred to the 'Kala' as a coxswain and progressed to launchman where he remained until a couple of months before his death.

Jim was very skilled driver of the pilot

boat and always carried out his duties with utmost care and expertise. He was always aware that the transfer of pilots to and from the vessels was a job that needed done carefully and safely. He did this job well, that was testament to the way the pilots spoke of Jim.

A great love of sailing and golf kept Jimmy busy in his spare time – his golf handicap was pretty impressive I believe.

Unfortunately, in early 2014, Jim was diagnosed with cancer and after extensive treatment, he was recovering well and looking forward to returning to Port

Otago and getting back on the water.

Unfortunately that was not to be.

Jim retired under duress in late February but his health deteriorated rapidly and the world lost a true gentleman on May 29.

Jim is greatly missed by the love of his life, his wife Robyn, and his daughter Katy, sons Aaron, Richard, Andrew and Chris and his grandchildren.

His presence is missed by all at Port Otago.

You fought a very courageous fight Jimmy – rest in peace, mate. 🌐

Using rail corridors efficiently

There is significant capacity along our rail corridors to take higher traffic loads and offer the potential to relieve housing pressure in Auckland and road congestion. **Michael Nicholson** argues the case.

It was great news and a pleasant surprise when KiwiRail announced that they would continue to run the Palmerston North to Wellington Capital Connection (CC) for a further three years.

However, this is a temporary solution which does not address the burning issue of funding for passenger trains which cross regional boundaries, nor does it provide any mechanism for the expansion of this corridor or the development of new ones.

Public pressure was clearly going on central government and NZTA and it would appear highly likely that the Minister told KiwiRail to continue to operate this train for a bit longer – thereby taking the heat off all concerned.

At present the NZTA is focused on road-based solutions. Although they assist in funding urban passenger rail services wholly within a region they do not assist in any way with those which cross regional boundaries.

In order to develop inter-regional rail corridors the NZTA needs a mandate from government to aid willing councils, in much the same way that they currently fund urban rail services wholly within a region.

Corridors ripe for developing

Auckland to Hamilton

This passenger corridor has the most potential out of any in New Zealand. Auckland is faced with some commanding issues: rapidly growing population, out of control road congestion and a housing crisis. Many Aucklanders are moving to the regions to escape the unaffordable cost of housing. A passenger rail corridor to Hamilton would extend their reach of available

housing and make the area between Hamilton and Auckland a part of the Auckland commuter catchment belt.

It would also provide an attractive alternative to long distance road commuting and assist in reducing growth in road traffic congestion.

Auckland has a large and rapidly growing population with a heavy reliance on road based transport. Diversifying the transport infrastructure will help free up road congestion and respond to the needs of a growing regional population.

Much of what is required to develop this route is already in place:

- The route is mostly double-tracked.
- Papakura station is arranged for ease of passenger transfer between trains.
- Stations are currently sited at Hamilton/Frankton and the disused Hamilton Central underground station exists, although will need a makeover.
- Opportunity exists for a station at Claudelands on the eastern side of the river.
- Rolling-stock is available and could be deployed immediately.

To be successful there would need to be a range of departure options. Initially it would be logical to extent current Pukekohe trains and run diesel shuttles from Hamilton to Papakura with timed connections into Auckland. Ideally the line would



Activists pushing the case to open an Auckland-Hamilton connection and (below) the underground Hamilton Central railway station (almost) ready and waiting



eventually be electrified from Papakura to Hamilton for fast electric trains linking Auckland's CBD and International Airport with the Hamilton's CBD - and everywhere in between.

Wellington to Palmerston North

This well-established train service has been running since 1991 and is well used considering the limited choice of departures times. The service currently has a three year bi-council operating agreement between Greater Wellington and Horizons Regional Councils but no funding from

Delegate training in Auckland



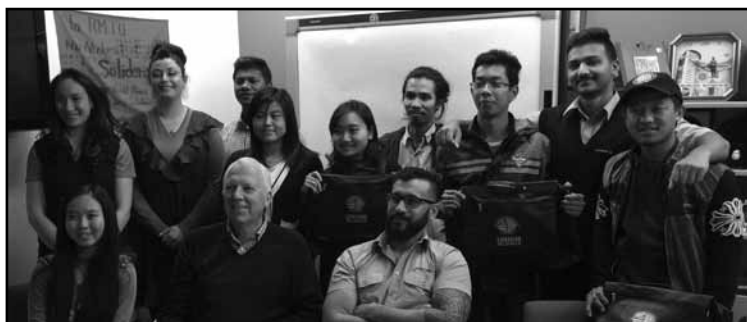
(above) Northern organiser Stuart Johnstone teaching the delegates.

(l to r)(partial) Paul Stirling, Alofa Eti, Rudi Brens, Owen Christopher, Darran Roles, Sam Pabiva, John Haurua, Charlotte Marsh and Mitch Manning hard at work on one of the many interactive exercises during the training.



DELEGATE training was held in Auckland from June 29 to July 2. These sessions are always appreciated as delegates get to know each other better, share ideas and discuss

ways to address concerns for the membership. An excellent lunch was organised by the Auckland branch vice chair Chris Leigh and as we all know: happy stomachs equal happy delegates. 🌐



UnionAID visitors

LABOUR rights in action was the theme of the RMTU's presentation to UnionAID's group of seven young community leaders from Myanmar when they visited last month. RMTU members Ka'isa Beech, Mervyn Johnson and Campbell Leggett ran the session which was part of their six-month UnionAID programme. 🌐

◀ NZTA.

There is potential to develop this limited service into an attractive, comprehensive corridor by adding additional departures and combining with operations, rolling stock and staff from the Wairarapa corridor. In effect operating the two corridors as one combined system.

A report by the Ministry of Transport in February and released after an Official Information Act request by Iain Lees-Galloway revealed that the cost of running the CC was in fact one third of that which was being reported by KiwiRail.

An increase in the choice of departures would no doubt result in an increase of travellers. Furthermore, operational integration with the Wairarapa corridor would no doubt improve efficiencies and it would be fair to assume that the one third operational subsidy (spread over two councils and the NZTA) would subsequently reduce even further.

Rolling stock

Millions of dollars worth of rail asset in the form of around 104 carriages will soon be in storage at the Taumarunui rail yards pending sale to an international buyer, most likely South African.

These carriages were stripped and re-built between 2004 and 2010 at the now closed Hillside Railway Workshops and were used as push-pull trainsets on the Auckland suburban system prior to electrification. These carriages have a good amount of active life left in them and could be put to good use by cascading them onto regional routes rather than selling off-shore.

For Palmerston North to Wellington and Masterton to Wellington a dedicated fleet of shared diesel railcars would be ideal for a regional system approach to these two corridors. Redundant Wairarapa carriages could be added to the long distance fleet as charter cars and build up the size of trains during peak season.

In order to develop inter-regional rail corridors there needs to be Government leadership and NZTA needs their mandate to aid willing councils. The two corridors discussed here have the potential to drive regional development through enhanced regional connectivity, lower growth in road traffic congestion and enhanced transport reliability. Additionally the housing crisis in Auckland could be relieved by extending the reach of available housing towards Hamilton.

The Auckland to Hamilton rail passenger corridor has the most potential of any in New Zealand and could be initiated relatively quickly using carriages currently in storage and by extending the Pukekohe timetable to Hamilton.

Once a funding and development mechanism in place for inter-regional passenger rail any council could identify desirable routes, depending on their differing priorities, and make their case to NZTA. 🌐

DL shows its strength

TWO facts were verified in a collision between a truck and DL loco last month at a Te Puke dairy factory: road vehicles rarely win when hit by a loco and the DL loco is robust, strong and safe – especially for the driver. Meanwhile, the truck driver was most fortunate to emerge unscathed.

It would have been an entirely different matter had there been someone else in the cab with loco driver LE Ross Burrows who said: "The last bar across the top of the trailer speared off in the collision and went straight through the front windscreen of the cab, nicked the wet wipes container and ended jutting through the rear window. So bloody lucky there was not a second person present in the off side seat."

The Bay of Plenty newspaper, *Sunlive*, described the trailer as "nothing but twisted metal".

The collision occurred at around 5pm on July 20, when the truck and trailer, filled with grain, reversed out of the factory and directly over the main line. Normally, truck drivers make a sharp turn upon exiting the factory to avoid the line but the new truck driver was apparently unaware of the danger.

Train 354, loaded with logs, had no chance of stopping and, until it hit the trailer, the truck driver didn't even know calamity was approaching.

Ross said he was quite impressed by how little damage was sustained by the DL cab considering they were rattling along at around 65kph.

"Whatever glass is used in the cab is good as I was pretty much covered in it afterwards and it was just a fine powder," he said. "I just brushed it off with no shards."

His main grievance was the time it took management to provide some assistance.

"It was 90 minutes to two hours before any rail personnel showed up apart from a bridge ganger who responded after hearing my radio call to train control."

The accident has been referred to Work-safe New Zealand.

One worker, on observing the damage, said: "I'd hate to be sitting in one of those with a T-bone collision dead centre on the DL".



RMT AGM 2015

By John Kerr

I was privileged to attend the AGM in Newcastle of our brother union in Britain, the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, or RMT as its universally known there, in June.

I last went to this event in 2013 and met their late general secretary Bob Crow, a giant of a man in every sense of the word, and a committed toiler for workers' rights everywhere, not just in the rail and maritime sectors.

Bob died suddenly last year, a shattering blow to his family and his union. His legacy has been an RMT that, 18 months later, has not only recovered from the loss of Bob, but is stronger and more militant than ever. After the Tory election victory in May, the political left in Britain went into a state of shock – not the RMT.

Outgoing president Peter Pinckney got stuck in during his opening address calling the bunch of old Etonians around the cabinet table 'haters of the working class' and 'worse than Thatcher'. His was not a speech lamenting the Tory victory however, rather it was a call to arms, putting the RMT in the vanguard of the struggle to defend workers' rights against the ruling class. The theme continued with general secretary Mick Cash reminding delegates of the strength of the RMT built on the solid foundation of work done by Crow and others who had created a union of organised, educated workers who were prepared, in the words of the RMT's

slogan, to "fight, campaign and win!".

One of the impressions that will remain with me from Newcastle was the commitment and dedication of the delegates. The AGM is the RMT's parliament and a union of more than 80,000 members has a lot of business to get through. The delegates take their job seriously and for me, being a native of England, it was a pleasure to hear the passion with which they did it – all in a wide range of regional accents.

Of course talk is cheap, but before the AGM the RMT's London Underground workers had given a unequivocal signal to the Tory Government and Mayor of London, and turned out in huge numbers to back their negotiation team in a dispute with London Transport. The fight isn't over pay, rather it's over conditions and work life balance.

And how gratifying that these workers were prepared to fight to defend what so many have lost – time with their families and proper recognition for working anti-social hours. Before the AGM they had voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action if necessary and, as I took some leave with family after the conference, the first of a series of 24 stoppages brought the underground, and London, to a halt.

At the time of writing the dispute is still going on, and in the words of Mick Cash, RMT members are "rock solid". After the first 24 hour strike, London Transport put out a public statement condemning the

unions and the RMT in particular, for 'not responding' to their 'generous' offer. The RMT replied by tweet, using the handle RMTLondoncalling "we did respond, we shut down the tube". Says it all really.


The other feature of this dispute has been the support of the public. The bosses have trotted out tables showing how a tube driver gets paid more than a nurse or a junior doctor or a cop in London, but the RMT have come back with a simple argument: "our members get paid more than those people because they are organised into a union that is prepared to fight. We think all workers should be better paid and looked after, including our doctors and nurses. The RMT is into levelling up, not getting into a race to the bottom."

This has connected with the general public who, despite the inconvenience of tube strikes, are sympathetic to the workers.

The lessons I took from this AGM was that whilst workers are under attack, there is no alternative to being organised and being prepared to have a scrap of you want to retain and improve your pay and conditions.

Another lesson was that whilst the RMT are 'old school' in many ways, they have embraced new technology in organising and have used it well.

If your branch is thinking of setting up a FaceBook group, or a real time text communications system get moving!

It will only make you better equipped for the fight. 


Women's Conference

AN RMTU delegation of attended the Biennial NZCTU Women Conference "Inspiring Union Women". The conference reported on all current campaigns including the equal pay case, the living wage campaign, a better working life for home support workers, the meat workers campaigning and zero hours contracts. Guest speaker Will Stacke industrial campaigns officer, Victorian Trades Hall Council spoke about the Australian campaign for equal pay – whatever it

takes. Will delivered a very informative and humorous speech. Their campaign was full of demonstrations and disruptions to workplaces and did what every Australian union does: numerous tee-shirts throughout the action. Their campaign was heard and they got positive results. As usual the awesome Helen Kelly spoke with passion and conviction about how to win and never give up. Helen's speech was received with chants of "Kelly for prime minster" – a great idea I think. The speech is on the CTU website

and I really recommend that you listen to it. Bloody awesome. A number of workshops were held on the afternoon of day two followed by the normal remit session. Remits will be distributed once they are written up. The RMTU delegation left inspired to continue the struggle for all workers.

Awesome feedback from Pare-Ana Bysterveld:

*These past two days saw the gathering of the
Most beautifully, strong, interesting,* 

Gov't destroying KiwiSaver

By Grant Robertson

RECENTLY I met a family who, like a lot of New Zealanders, has found it hard to put money aside as they grapple with their day to day living costs and the bills that keep on coming.

They told me about how important the \$1000 KiwiSaver kickstart had been to their eldest daughter.

They wanted to start her off with good savings habits and the kickstart meant that despite their tight circumstances, they could build a nest egg for her.

They told me about how excited she has been to see the money grow over the last few years, and that she looks forward to the day that statements arrive like it is Christmas!

But their latest addition, a daughter, born a couple of months ago, won't get that experience because in one of the most short-sighted decisions of this very short-term thinking National Government the KiwiSaver \$1000 kickstart for new sign-ups was axed in the Budget.

Great institution

KiwiSaver is one of the most important long-term institutions we have in this country, and a great legacy from the 5th Labour Government. It is vital for bolster-



ing our national savings and investments, and safeguarding the well-being of future generations in their retirement.

A stronger savings pool strengthens our economy by keeping money in New Zealand where it can be invested into productive Kiwi businesses, instead of that money going overseas.

Sadly National has made cut after cut after cut – seven in seven years. The biggest blow came when National cut the kickstart as soon as the Budget was delivered. No warning for anyone.

Since then 2,500 fewer 0 – 17 year

olds have signed up, when for years those numbers were steadily increasing.

New KiwiSaver sign-ups in July were 45 per cent below the monthly average. That should worry all of us.

John Key wrong

Unfortunately it doesn't worry the Prime Minister at all. He even deliberately misrepresented the advice from IRD about axing the kickstart.

John Key said it "will not make a blind bit of difference to the number of people who join KiwiSaver".

In fact IRD said the cut would lead to "lower numbers of KiwiSaver members among the self-employed and children". In all there could be 500,000 fewer sign-ups.

And soon after the cut ANZ – the largest KiwiSaver provider – reported a 50 per cent fall in customers.

Now a new generation is being denied the chance to create good savings habits, particularly those from backgrounds who will struggle to put much aside in normal circumstances.

After years of gradually weakening KiwiSaver, National is now causing real damage to the savings culture that Kiwisaver had begun to foster. They should hang their heads in shame. 🌐

encouraging

Caring, women within Aotearoa's unions.
Through their words I learnt that we are "ONE".

We stand together no matter what,
We fight for health, wellbeing, equal rights,
equal pay
And RESPECT.

We are women within the union, we are one.
How proud I am to be among these inspiring
WAHINES. 🌐



Our Team

The RMTU delegation: (l to r) Jenny Griffin, Ruth Blakeley, Donna Campbell, Jane Sherer, Julia Harrison, Ani Te Namu, Toni Blair and Pare-Ana Bysterveld.

1000s support b



Andy Kelly and Heiner Benecke

THOUSANDS of workers across New Zealand have been outraged by the watering down of the promised new health and safety legislation. The CTU has led a nation-wide campaign to send a message to Government that New Zealand needs better health and safety laws. Vigils have been held with 300 white crosses representing the number of people killed at work since the

Pike River disaster where 29 people were killed. They represent the Government's broken promise to strengthen the health and safety legislation.

Following the Pike River tragedy the Government established the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety in 2012. The Taskforce comprehensively reviewed New Zealand's health and safety system and concluded by calling for the establishment of a new independent regulator and a new health and safety law based on Australia's successful model of its Work Health and Safety Act.

The Government agreed to implement the Taskforce recommendations and in late 2013 Worksafe NZ was created and shortly afterwards the first draft of the Health and Safety Reform Bill was introduced to Parliament.

The first draft was a good law and closely resembled the Australian legislation. However, once it got into the hands of politicians it

was changed –for the worse. In July this year the Bill returned from the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee, which recommended watering down the new legislation – particularly in the area of worker participation.

The changes were driven by special interests in industries with bad health and safety records.

The change to the Bill of most concern is the lack of ability for workers in small business (less than 20 people) to elect and train health and safety representatives. Currently all workplaces have the ability to elect H&S reps.

Under the Governments watered down version workers in small workplaces will not be required to elect H&S reps. This means 300,000 working New Zealanders won't have the right to elect their own H&S reps to help keep their workplaces safe.

Ironically, smaller workplaces are less safe than larger ones. Workers in small businesses are 35% more likely to have accidents, according to the Department of Labour. Many of the men who died in



Andy Kelly speaking at the rally with emphasis.

better H&S laws



Deborah McMillan and her daughter Skylar. Her husband Shane McMillan was killed in a forestry accident in 2009.



the Pike River tragedy worked for small businesses.

Many mainstream businesses expressed their support for the original Bill. Kiwi Rail's general manager of Zero Harm, Bob Stacy, supports the Australian-based legislation and thinks it's a step backwards to water down a law that obviously works well. He said larger employers will be reluctant to contract out to small business if they aren't confident of the health and safety systems they have in place. They won't want to take on the risk.

Under the new law H&S representatives will have the power to stop dangerous work, issue improvement notices, accompany WorkSafe NZ investigators and get answers from employers when issues are raised.

These are important powers and a step up from the current H&S rep powers.

Aggressive employer Talley's are against having H&S reps or committees. They described the election of H&S reps as "an unwarranted intrusion into company matters and relationships".

The RMTU is currently negotiating employee participation agreements with employers to safeguard its right to continue electing H&S reps and participate in H&S decision making where ever the new regime takes us.

Despite a nationwide campaign to fight back against watering down the H&S legislation, the Government chose to ignore the Pike River families and others deeply affected by senseless deaths of loved ones

killed at work.

The Bill, with support from Peter Dunne, ACT and the Maori Party, passed its third and final reading in Parliament.

"The Government had a chance to make history here," said CTU General Counsel, Jeff Sissons. "Instead, they have added another chapter to a saga of missed opportunities and unnecessary death, pain and suffering for workers. New Zealand workers deserve better."

Labour and the Greens have announced that they will change the legislation when they are in power within their first 100 days of office.

The new legislation will come into effect in April 2016. 🌐



Collecting signatures for an open letter to Peter Dunne asking him to not support National's changes and [right] the Pike River disaster which triggered the legislation.





UnionAID winners

MICHAEL NAYLOR of UnionAID hands over the three prizes won by RMTU Auckland branch members in the UnionAID raffle to Stuart Johnstone. The raffle was sponsored by First Credit Union and proceeds go to UnionAID's overseas development projects. Members of the RMTU Auckland branch won the prizes after their branch generously bought a ticket for every member. The money raised in the raffle will go to UnionAID's overseas development projects. 🌐

DXB 5425 – first to get air con

HOT summers and cold winters can make the loco cab a pretty poor place to work without some creature comforts, with air conditioning being one of them. In the past, when installing or retrofitting locos the issue of installing air-con units in loco cabs had been raised and has always ended up in the too-hard basket.

Finally a newer technology became available and two years ago KiwiRail agreed to trial the Cab Cool air conditioning unit on two DXs.

While there was agreement and approved funding this trial wasn't given the priority it warranted and process to begin



dragged on.

The KIC LE reps continued to push this issue in a long and persistent battle and finally we have a breakthrough with the first

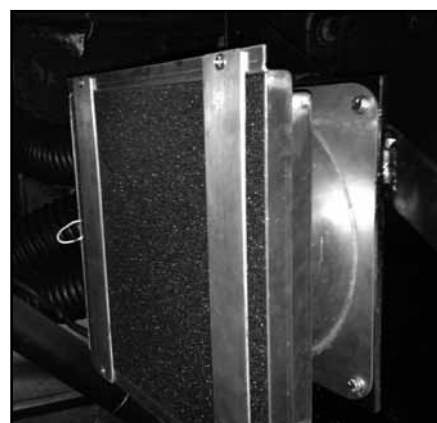
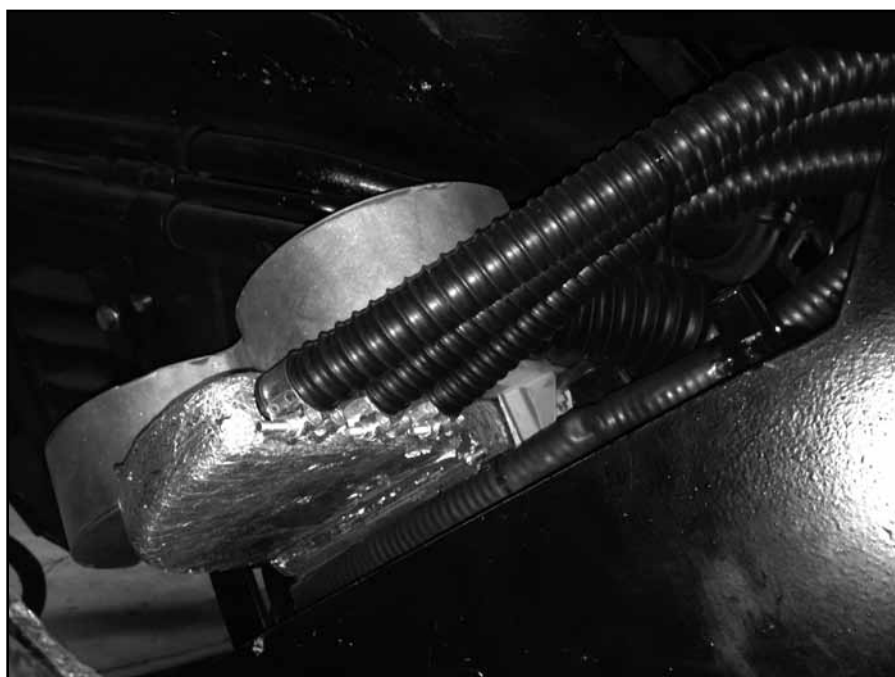
DXB to have a custom install of the Cab Cool air conditioning unit in DXB 5425.

The Hutt Workshop team have done an excellent job installing the unit and, of course, fully overhauling the locomotive which is based in the South Island.

The KIC team are very keen to hear from LEs who operate #5425 and have used the air-con unit, though we will have to wait a few months to get some decent weather to see how it really performs.

Feedback during the trial will be essential if more DXs are to have air-con units fitted.

Well done to the LE reps who persisted with this issue and well done to the team at Hutt Workshops for the custom install. 🌐



National taking us backwards

THE Government laid out its plan to spend \$10.5 billion dollars on transport over the next three years in the 2015-18 National Land Transport Plan. Guess what percentage of the 10.5 billion will be spent on new rail infrastructure? Only 1.5%.

This is because the Government has decided that the Land Transport Fund cannot be used to fund rail infrastructure, despite it being an integral part of the land transport network.

Most countries are investing heavily in rail because it's the most cost-effective way to make the roads work better: in cities it gives people more efficient transport choices, which frees up the roads for people who need to drive. Around the country, it gives businesses a cheaper way to move their goods to market, and means fewer heavy trucks on the roads.

When it comes to rail freight, the Government is actively taking us backwards. KiwiRail is being forced to consider downgrading its electric train fleet to diesel, because the Government says they have no money for rail. Yet National is spending ten times more on one motorway with a poor business case than they are putting into our whole national rail network each year.

On Wednesday 1 July, New



By Julie Anne Genter
Greens MP

Zealanders who want sensible policy and a clean, green approach to transport investment marched backwards all across the country to protest the National Government's backwards approach to rail.

We know that it makes more sense to invest in preserving and extending our fleet of electric freight trains, for our economy and the climate.

This December, in Paris, the world is gathering together to determine how to reduce carbon pollution and limit the effects of climate change. How embarrassing would it be for New Zealand to show up having just de-electrified its rail freight network?

No other country in the world is replacing electric trains with carbon polluting. Every dollar we spend on infrastructure now needs to go towards transitioning to a carbon-free future.

In Parliament I asked the Transport Minister – who is also the Associate Minister for Climate Change Issues – whether he would intervene and allow rail projects to contest for some of the \$10.5 billion Land Transport Fund to ensure that KiwiRail doesn't downgrade its electric trains to diesel.

He said no.

It's frustrating to present win-win solutions to Government only to have them shot down.

Rather than stick to ideology, the Green Party would use the Land Transport Fund to pay for the transport projects that are best for people, the economy and the climate. 🌱



ACC bullying tactics overturned

IN an unprecedented move, ACC has agreed to fund tinnitus treatment for Luke Gibb-Kimber, an engineer at KiwiRail in Tauranga.

In September last year, Luke was involved in a car accident at work when the vehicle he was travelling in was T-boned by another car. His airbag deployed and struck him on the left side of his head, causing hearing loss and tinnitus.

ACC was set to decline all help for Luke.

However, the RMTU funded ACC lawyers, Hazel Armstrong Law, and audiologists, HearingLife, to help Luke out.

Together, a legal and medical approach was taken and ACC was left with little option



Kristen Thompson (HA Law), a happy Luke Gibb-Kimber and Mike Severn (NZAS).

but to fund the treatment Luke needed. Luke has now been fitted with a hearing

aid that will reduce or mask his tinnitus, while also improving his hearing loss. 🌱

Art or grafitti?



THERE'S a fine line between art and graffiti but in Auckland many believe that the perpetrators are overstepping the mark with their blitzes on KiwiRail – and other private – property.

Some argue that encouraging officially sanctioned graffiti on public buildings and places merely encourages the illegitimate and illegal spraying on efforts where they are not appreciated and definitely not wanted.

Finding a balance, educating the 'artists' and protecting private property are problems yet to be successfully tackled.

Adding to the confusion, some Christchurch artist recently completed their officially commissioned works

and then popped into the city to randomly tag private buildings. The message clearly wasn't getting through to them.

Others target specific locations, such as rail yards. One irate Auckland rail worker said, after seeing the damage wrought on some KiwiRail carriages: "These pricks are clearly watching the depot. The window of opportunity is slim between contractors and staff coming and going."

He said they are evidently well planned raids and they come equipped with specialist fence cutting tools.

If your depot has found some success combatting this plague please share those ideas in your magazine.



Wellington branch BBQs



Members of the Wellington branch executive hold regular BBQ cook ups at different worksites within the branch to raise the profile of the Union amongst members. Pictured are members tucking in!



(r) Deina Pitman, train manager, Tranz Metro.

Tim Spence - Life Member



A small dinner was hosted by the general secretary to formally hand over the life membership awarded by Biennial Conference to Tim Spence. A great night was had by all!



A T-shirt which caught the editor's eye!

SAD Fund worth joining

THE Locomotive Engineers Sickness, Accident and Death Benefit Fund's June quarter performance resulted in a surplus of \$276,540 representing a gross positive return of 4.03% and 14.57% for the year to date. If you are an LE and you're not part of this Fund you are really missing out.

The scheme was especially created for LEs at the time medical standards were introduced to provide compensation for any members who lost their driver's certification on medical grounds. Since then it has provided financial surety for hundreds of LEs and their families.

Qualifying LEs must be a 'standard life risk' to be admitted into the Fund.

The scheme, which is heavily subsidised by KiwiRail, Transdev and Taieri Gorge, is very beneficial to its members. Since 2013 it has considerably reduced contributions for its Post-2004 members and has increased the base benefit payments. This has caused an increase in interest, and membership, is excellent news for all involved.

You are urged to join this Fund. Please contact the secretary for more information julia@rmtunion.org.nz or 04-4992066. 🌐

Nest Home Loans and RMTU are providing your financial solutions

Since the launch of Nest's partnership with RMTU, we've fielded an overwhelming response from members. This is great for members and great for RMTU as Nest is committed to supporting RMTU with \$200 donated for every member who gets a Nest mortgage.

Can I use KiwiSaver to buy a home?

The answer is ABSOLUTELY YES.

You may not need any savings apart from your Kiwisaver. Call Jeff now to see if you can also receive the \$10,000 to \$20,000 Housing NZ grant towards your deposit.

If you aren't already in Kiwisaver the provider we use at Nest Home Loans ranked #1 for our growth fund this year (www.interest.co.nz), and ranked #1 for the best service (www.sorted.org.nz). Call the team at Nest now and receive free advice on how to use KiwiSaver to get you into your first home.

Text "RMTU" to 8808 and an adviser will call you back.



Contact Jeff Kerwin Nest's dedicated RMTU liaison
0800 337 426 | 07 211 4537 | 027 667 2941
jeff@nesthomeloans.co.nz | www.nesthomeloans.co.nz

PORT NAPIER


WE are probably at our quietest at this time of the year. Under the current budgeted forecasts Napier Port is a little behind the pre-advised targets, more specifically in cargo volumes of logs, break-bulk products and dairy container volumes, as a consequence of the down turn and flow through, or lack of it, via Fonterra. Paradoxically, of recent times with the swing away from break-bulk vessels to containerisation for pulp and timber, the good news is we picked up nine new permanent positions from the casual pool (all RMTU members) to assist in the

growth in break-bulk cartage and container packing within the cargo sections at the port. Interestingly, to counter this, the apple crop was its highest ever with a record turnover of containers, 18,523 TEU equivalents to date.

The NPC has also purchased a highly developed simulator to assist in Gottwald/Terex crane training which offers training packages for operating ships gear and hatch man duties (see page 5 for more on simulator).

Coupled with this is where our senior crane operators will be utilised to assist in the training on the simulator and in that light we are currently in negotiation with the NPC over the mobile harbour crane

agreement. It is appropriate that we engage with the Company and form some form of accord so we have a foothold in the way this device can be used. This, in essence, will be based around the value of the trainers, who the trainers are and who will be trained. In the nearer future it is understood that the primary function will be for NPC staff who are RMTU members. We have left the door open in terms of maintaining ongoing discussions as we enter into this new technology and demonstrate the value we can provide in ensuring our unionised expertise is paramount in the utilisation of the simulator.

It will be a case of 'watch this space' as we enter into this new phase of training for port sectors. 

HAWKES BAY RAIL

WELL spring is nearly on its way. Although there has been the odd cold snap throughout the country.

Napier has had its RMTU AGM with a very good turnout from Danniverke and Napier I&A.

The lack of numbers from Napier freight was noticed.

Looking forward to a meeting with

Napier Port to discuss some common issues to talk safety, build a stronger alliance and about unity and solidarity.

Training is to be followed up on CTU H&S for all elected reps.

Training has been going as well with the track and structures team with staff getting their OJTs signed off and recognised.


However, in some areas staff will be waiting quite some time for courses to become available so that they can progress.

Track gangs have been busy doing EM80

work, turnouts at the port and sorting mud spots.

The structures gang has been busy doing storm damage work MNPL and PNGL rail walls and culverts and also adzing sleepers for other areas.

Signals are busy with compliance code work.

Which takes us to the Napier/Gisborne railway line which KiwiRail has put out to tenders. Engineers have been assessing it over the last couple of weeks. It will be interesting to see what happens next. 

HUTT WORKSHOPS

AS we hopefully farewell a tumultuous winter we must reflect upon the year to date. The re-review of the workshop site continues with a small team having a closer look at operating costs, productivity, quality and future capital requirements. I recall a 'blue skies' exercise with the on-site senior staff back in 2011 however, the output from that was never made known. I expect it was folded into the former CEO's review exercise (Project 2045?) and the review of KiwiRail back in November 2012.

Since the last notes, the branch executive team met with management in June and

discussed progress of the review. It was confirmed that it is a lot bigger than first envisaged (oh really?) and that a reasonable re-

port – of which they could be confidently happy with – may be available in early August. This meeting wasn't simply because we actively maintain a watching brief over activity that could affect our members, it was due to our concern over the quality of the 'mandate' document that appeared to have been hastily written by a 3rd form pupil on detention who wasn't a high flyer in the English class. That simple quality issue led us to feel that only bad news could come from any activity by senior people who can't write a straightforward guiding document. Even those of us with an ESOL

background were able to pick up on that. Watch this space my fellow readers.

June also saw both the branch committee and the HSAT attend the (modified) two-day safety leadership seminars that have been previously held for management and other supervisory staff. It was a breath of fresh air to attend a well-supported seminar with top-flight tutor (oops, facilitator), Andy Smith. I say 'well-supported' as CEO Peter Reidy is truly driving the desire to lift KiwiRail's H&S and management leadership cultures and indeed the communications message overall. Andy took screeds and screeds of notes, complaints, recommendations, desires and quotes and forwarded them to the top. This action updated senior management with the thoughts and concerns from us 'leaders' on the front-

line and in turn, resulted in some senior management concerns being fed back to the frontline managers in quick-smart time. So quick in fact that this was being openly acknowledged by the frontline managers before we booked-on the following working day! Now that is good communication in action, and this scribe challenges all managers to aspire to that standard! That in itself was a well-received response as there has always been the feeling that senior management was completely out-of-touch with what was really happening in the engine room of the company – ie: there was some measure of 'filtering' and 'sanitising' being applied in the middle of the communications path. That's one of the many reasons why we should all thank our lucky stars that we make-up a powerful and well-resourced Union. We need to retain the ability to communicate when internal company processes fail abysmally. We also appear to have prompted the senior management team to admit that they have overlooked us (again) and they quickly initiated a site meeting with one intermediate and two senior managers to acknowledge their errors and oversights, and to update us with where the business was currently at. During the meeting, a financial update hot off the CFO's calculator arrived to indicate that we fell way short of the (overly ambitious) \$20M savings target this past year, although I must acknowledge that some of the failure was due in part to some business-impacting changes made by a few major customers.

July saw the Union take the Company to mediation over a number of issues including the employment parameters for the Dalian Loco employees here remediating the issues with the DL class locomotives and various wagons. More specific detail on this contentious issue may be contained in a coinciding publication of *The Activist* (or perhaps elsewhere in this issue of the TW).

Earlier comment about internal processes have been prompted by recent activities which revealed (again) that HR and other administrators are either not properly resourced, or they only work 35 hour weeks! As some issues are still under 'deliberation', we're not at liberty to elaborate on specific cases however, it would be fair to say in general terms, that the 'team' at Stanley Street need to lift their game in the area of internal-customer service. Perhaps Mr. Reidy might like to produce a wallet card

and posters of our new Company Values and issue these to everybody. That just might fix the problem where attitudinal deficiencies are the norm. That includes people having difficulty getting things done and keeping on top of their respective workloads, and their managers not engaging enough to identify the fact.

Earlier this year, there was mention of our new electronic gate system and its woes. Just for your amusement we must report that it continued to be a cause for concern. It became a formal topic of our HSAT meeting. This damn gate, which apparently is not resistant to the affects of inclement weather, recently tried to eat one of our member's cars with him in it! Appreciable damage was inflicted with the Company picking-up the repair tab. For the safety-conscious reader, you will glad to hear that this incident became a pre-shift briefing topic. What would also be interesting to know is what the incident investigation report revealed. I'm sure one was produced but it has been kept under wraps to avoid any embarrassment and to protect the guilty. It is truly a system that keeps on giving - headaches! Additionally, staff are more concerned about the bloody gate than the shunt line/test track and Gracefield branch line beside it – so much so that the shunt/test train team have been handed a remote control unit that overrides the gate control system to allow the locos to pass a forcibly closed gate and avoid any train vs car/pedestrian incidents! Consistent with this, the night elves were engaged to paint some road markings to assist with safe vehicle and pedestrian movements via this automated access point.

On the nightmare improvement front, our asbestos problems are under reasonably good control by our Asbestos Management Project (AMP) team. They now meet and report less frequently which in itself must save a few dollars. Frequent air monitoring continues and the results substantially remain well within the standards. Whilst we cannot take this stuff lightly, we are actively managing it and keeping our outputs under control. An amusing outcome is that with the ground technically contaminated, we had to 'release' our lawn mowing contractor as cutting grass is now subject to a mountain of safety-conscious obligations. The topic of the EFs remains live with the Auckland and Wellington protest rallies raising the profile and plight of these wonderful, yet

neglected, locomotives. We all await the report(s) outlining the various options for the future of this fleet. The right answer can only be to spend a few bucks on them to bring them back into favour. If Government and the Board are serious about sustainability, then the EFs must be saved.

The Gen II DL locos continue to be slowly pushed through the site to have their issues remediated. Due to motive power requirements we believe that the trickle will continue and the projected end-date will be closely monitored. At the time of writing we were also getting reports from the field indicating that 4-5 of the (total) DL fleet were out of action due to serious failures.


Our new traverser (aka transfer table for the international reader) has been commissioned and is working well. The old one was kept in reserve, however, it is now scheduled for removal.

After many years of talk, Plants 4 & 5 are finally scheduled for demolition. The contractor has been engaged and the safety fences erected. How long it will take is not yet confirmed but it'll take a while as the asbestos contamination will probably dictate more of a dismantling than outright violent demolition.

We continue to work around the contractors as they bring our main building (Plant 1) up to the required earthquake standard. The staff have been extremely accommodating with this huge interruption which has required the Hutt team to work in some measure of close-confinement for many months as well as the obvious impact upon productivity – in some instances double-handling – a fact I hope the review team has taken into account when compiling their report and recommendations.

By the time you read these notes our AGM would've come and gone. The election process beforehand garnered a couple of multiple contenders for existing positions so a ballot or two would've taken place, just to keep things interesting and honest. Hot on the heels of the branch elections, nominations will be called for the reinvigorated HSAT positions.

Our branch returning officer is keen to conduct all elections around the same time to make good use of his time and that of his scrutineers. Our Christmas edition should contain the outcomes!

Until next time: Work safe – Be safe. 

WELLINGTON RAIL

AS we patiently await spring's warm unpredictable embrace here in Wellington we continue to brace for the unpredictable onslaught of the right wing political agenda that continues to envelop this nation in an air of despair. National must now know that they face a considerable hurdle to achieve a further term in office, as voters can see the true nature of their political beast with draconian industrial law reforms and the watering down of health and safety legislation being forcefully introduced with such gusto that it will surely harden the hearts of the common working man and woman.

This branch thanks those members who attended the "Don't ditch our electric trains" protest rally held at the steps of Parliament last month. With your voice and support it is hoped that common sense will prevail.

A recently completed Tranz Metro risk assessment has been completed re on-board train staff moving between carriage sets whilst the service is in motion. Concerned local delegates took the op-

portunity to discuss this issue at length with the membership during site specific meetings. Staff subsequently took the position that if it was unsafe for one group (passenger operators) to traverse between the carriages then it was unsafe for all. The company and the HASAT representatives completed the risk assessment, stating the above, and are waiting for a response from KiwiRail's zero harm executive management team.

Recent rule changes on how signals are called and the exclusion of training for train managers has seen a significant change in what they are now able to do. Primarily they are no longer able to call signals and therefore pilot services. Naturally this poses considerable concern among affected train managers as it is a cheap attempt to deskill the job.

We now have seven of the 34 new Māngi II multiple units in Wellington with two of these now commissioned by Nigel Price and our branch chair Harvey Paterson for service on the Johnsonville Line. While there is not a lot of visual difference between Mark I and II, the auto couplers

are a significant change for which training throughout Metro and freight is ongoing. Of interest was the recent cold snap which highlighted a frequently encountered winter issue: the inability to obtain power from the frozen overhead lines during the early morning hours.

The branch is pleased to acknowledge that the regular consultative forums in passenger are now up and running. These are sector based with a main industrial council covering all of passenger within Wellington for escalated or unresolved matters. So that has to be a positive.

Continuing on that positive note the branch is pleased to announce that as part of an ongoing branch initiative, the last of the scheduled site barbecues was successfully held in Tranz Metro last month. These were initiated as a meet and greet opportunity for members to catch up with their elected branch executive team in a less formal social atmosphere.

Of course our most important event on the branch calendar was our annual general meeting Monday 24 August.

The branch wish to acknowledge a rather lengthy list of career achievements and recent losses:



\$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!



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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.

- Bill Veale completed his illustrious career with KiwiRail on August 14, after an astonishing 63 years of service. Bill is a much loved and respected colleague and friend to many and was given a grateful retirement send-off from KiwiRail and the RMTU alike.
- A big congratulations to both Eteuati Simi for reaching 43 years service and Paul Barnett for reaching his 30 year milestone working out of Wellington's I&E track depot.
- Andy Gilbert LE: medical retirement from Tranz Metro. A self confessed 'foamer' (train spotter!).
- Ian Simpson, a retired Tranz Metro train manager. After an extensive railway career, he passed away recently. Ian was a much loved character with a talkative wit who will be sorely missed by many a workmate and colleague alike. We extend our sincere sympathies to the family for their great loss.
- Condolences to Graeme Whittle and whanau for the loss of his father who



Bill Veale listens to KiwiRail's transformation manager speak on behalf of the company in recognition of Bill's 63 years of total railway service.

- died peacefully in his sleep at the grand old age of 90.
- Also of note is the old Hutt Road I&E depot building which has reached its 40th anniversary as an integral component of the now rebranded KiwiRail network services depot.
- Farewell and thank you to John Rafferty for his 43 years service, working from within the training fraternity for some

decades. John has worked tirelessly around the country training new rail operators, remote control operators and locomotive engineers. He has also served his colleagues for many years as a delegate. His knowledge and experience will be sorely missed as he was made redundant last month. Stay safe and, if necessary, Just Say NO! 🇳🇿

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

MARLBOROUGH RAIL

Chris McMahon Farewell - Chris Hengst (LE Middleton) along with Murray Dunlop (Ret LE Middleton) celebrate with Chris McMahon (LE Picton) on the occasion of his retirement having served 41 years within the locomotive branch. KiwiRail provided a great send off for Chris at The Local Bar in Picton where his many friends and work-mates shared memories of the time spent working in the locomotive cab. 🇳🇿



WEST COAST RAIL

THE big news at the time of writing is the proposal to make eight loco engineers redundant and one rail operator because of the reduction in production of coal by Solid Energy. Events may well have overtaken us by the time you are reading this, but suffice to say the present isn't that great and the future is looking pretty bleak too.

We've been working hard with our fellow delegates over the hill in Christchurch to look at ways of mitigating the impact. In particular we've pressed KiwiRail to put out a national call for volunteers who would take redundancy should it be offered. We're confident that we can re-arrange the allocation of work and rosters to further soften the blow and still maintain a cost effective

and efficient service.

The underlying economic reasons for the collapse in the coal price is beyond our control and that of our government – the boost in Saudi oil production has driven down petrol prices and had a knock on affect on the coal price. It isn't something that New Zealand is in a position to influence. Where our government and so called business leaders are negligent is in their abject failure to foresee the drop in prices and put in place any viable contingency plan. Frankly, minimum wage jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector don't cut it Mr Joyce and Mr Key. And while we appreciate the concerns of our friends in the Green movement around the environmental impact of extractive industries like logging and mining we'd want to know how we pay our mortgages without those industries.

In the meantime we have families in turmoil as the financial rug has been pulled from under them. Kids wondering if they will still be at the same school in a few weeks, Mums not sure if the home they've made is the one they are going to living in in a few months. To put not too fine a point on it, this sucks.

Congratulations to John Bannerman on being made a field production supervisor and thank you for all the sterling work you have done for the membership during your tenure as a delegate and industrial council representative. We may not always express it directly John but we do appreciate your hard work and forthright advocacy on our behalf.

Thanks also to all our brothers and sisters who have sent messages of support. It does help. 🇳🇿

LYTTELTON PORT

IT'S been a busy three months. The Area Operational Forum (AOF) nominations are complete and elections, where needed, are in progress. These were our compromise to get a measure of industrial democracy in the workplace when LPC rejected an industrial council during the last bargaining round. The first AOF in the maintenance workshop is well underway meeting fortnightly to address key issues around rosters and trade rates as well as day-to-day operational issues. There is good participation on the part of our members and lively debate of issues on the workshop floor. This level of engagement is new at LPC.

On 28 August we mark the anniversary of Brad Fletcher's death. Having pleaded guilty to failing in its responsibilities to Brad around health and safety LPC was finally sentenced on 6 August. A fine of \$68,000 plus \$75,000 reparation to the family shows that the current level of fines is inadequate. What is a

worker's life worth? It's certainly more than this – about one tenth of our CEO's pay for the last financial year.

On 3 August we supported CTU protest action against watering down the H&S reform bill. This was attended by a dozen RMTU stalwarts. A vigil was held around 291 white crosses, one for every worker killed on the job since the Pike River tragedy. Andy Kelly spoke and was extensively quoted

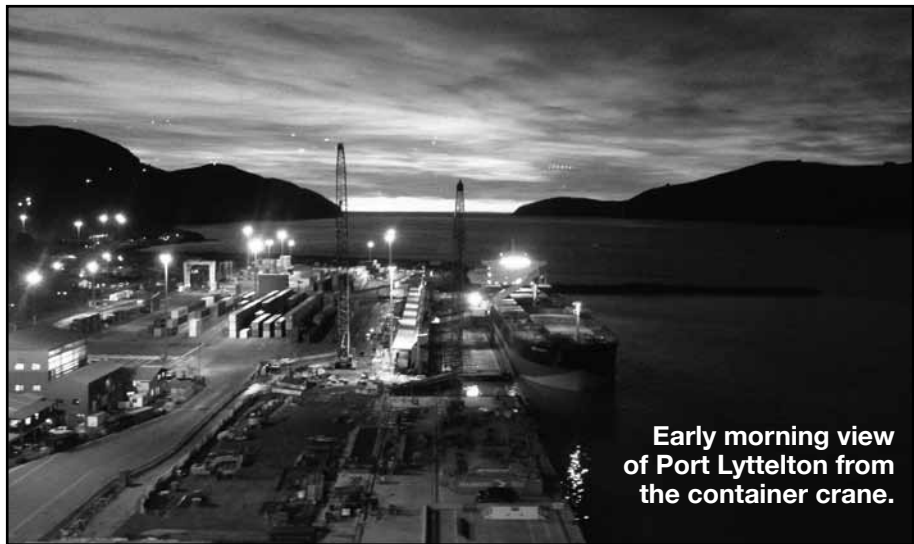


in The Press. The accompanying photo featured five of our members. We then marched to National MP Nicky Wagner's Office and she came out to talk to us and acknowledged our concerns but repeated her party line that they "think they have got the balance right"!

Polly attended the CTU women's conference and came back fizzing with enthusiasm. Watch out now!

The Company is in the midst of a restructure proposal in the container terminal and is looking at disestablishing foremen positions and wants to introduce new rosters and work organisation for the logistics officers.

We've pointed out that the desired improvements in productivity may well be realised by implementing suggestions that will come from the frontline workers through the new area operational forum and wholesale and expensive restructuring is premature.



Early morning view of Port Lyttelton from the container crane.

Three of our delegates attended a five day CTU skills of organising course taught by organiser John Kerr. It was great to meet organisers and delegates from other unions to get their ideas and hear their experiences.

We've also watched the Meatworkers' Union dispute with AFFCO Talleys very

closely and have learned some lessons from it. The key one is around the need to be organised and prepared for a scrap.

Finally, our brothers at the Inland Port at Woolston have started to re-negotiate their collective agreement. Watch this space! 🌐

CANTERBURY RAIL

THE debacle at Solid Energy is something we're watching with trepidation on this side of the hill. Our loco engineers are wondering what the impact will be on the work coming over the Midland Line, and our Tranz Scenic members are similarly concerned. Not to mention the servicing and maintenance guys who keep the rolling stock in good shape. At Midas Place track and signals members are also looking west nervously.

Overriding all of this is our sympathy for members on the Coast who are bearing the initial impact of the reduction in coal production. All of this illustrates the utter bankruptcy of a Government that has no plan for regional development and has effectively consigned our oldest state owned enterprise to the rubbish bin without any measures to ameliorate the effects on people and communities. It's not just us in KiwiRail that face the impact of reduced work – our brothers and sisters at Lyttelton Port are in the same situation, as well as all

those who work over on the Coast in businesses and



(l to r) Peter Middleton, Bobbie Boulton (work experience) and Tom McGill.

schools and hospitals.

Back in Christchurch the rebuild seems to be stalling. The most tangible evidence of 'progress' is the number of road cones – it seems some of these are put out to amuse and challenge us on our drive to and from work as roads are often closed or lanes coned off without any sign that work is actually being done.

Our members in Tranz Scenic are still dealing with the fallout of the last 'restructure' that was implemented by managers now departed (halleluia!). We're hopeful by the time you read this we'll have resolved the outstanding issues.

In Operations we got some good news – apparently Middleton Yard is second in the league table management keep of 'key performance indicators', things like on time performance, derailments, lost time injuries and so forth. This must be good news as our South Island organiser got a call from a very senior manager about it. To his credit, the boss in question acknowledged the good work our delegates do in promoting safety and spoke of the improvement in relations at Middleton. And indeed, relations have improved, we still have our differences but when we look how things were three years ago we've made good progress. Thanks to delegates Alan Robertson, Ian Stewart, Mike Williams and H&S reps Lyndsay Gough, Craig Te Amo and everyone else who supports our unions work at Middleton.

Over in Midas Place we're lamenting the loss of Phil Kearns as an industrial council rep and delegate.

Phil has been promoted, recognition that he richly deserves, but now he's on an IEA, although still a member of the RMTU. Phil has been a great leader in our Union over the years and we're confident he will

continue in the same vein now he's ascending the management ladder. Thanks Phil for all the great work you've done – it's greatly appreciated by the lads and lasses in I&AM. Wayne Ramsay has also retired as manager. Wayne was also a loyal RMTU member and, as far as managers go, not a bad one – that's

as good as it gets Wayne, may you have a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Speaking of retirements, Stan Taylor left the wagon repair depot in Addington in August after more than 40 years service. Stan was another RMTU stalwart always ready to make a contribution at meetings

and not afraid of speaking his mind. Stan is 'railway' through and through, one of the old school and part of our family. Don't be a stranger Stan, we're looking forward to hearing what you're up to now you're a gentleman of leisure. Stay safe and roll on the warmer weather! 🌍

PORT TIMARU

WE'VE had a fair bit of activity here in Timaru since the last edition. Our members directly employed by Prime Port have successfully re-negotiated and ratified their collective agreement, securing real wage growth and an improvement in terms and conditions that delivers a guaranteed weekend off at least once per month as well as a contribution towards a cellphone of our choice should we elect not to take the company issued phone. Small gains maybe, but when we're living under a Government that is hostile towards organised labour and with militant employers engaging in union bust-

ing these are not to be sniffed at. A big thank you to Roy Hislop and Murray Cadegan for stepping up and representing the members at the talks.

Our members in the wholly owned subsidiary of Port of Tauranga, Quality Marshalling, are progressing their negotiations and at the time of writing it looks like we may have something approaching a deal. There are still a couple of sticking points but both sides are working hard at getting through these.

The collapse in commodity prices is a concern, particularly for those in the dairy and log industries, as much of our work comes from those sectors. Once again it seems, ordinary workers may be expected

to bear the brunt of the economic mismanagement of John Key's government and New Zealand business.

We are also angry at the way our fellow workers on the West Coast, particularly in the mining industry and in KiwiRail, are being treated.

The reduction in coal prices is not the fault of anyone here in New Zealand, but better planning on Solid Energy's part could have mitigated its impact and it seems the government has no plan at all for the regions.

There has been some turnover of staff and we're sad to have lost Aymee Geeves who has moved on to better things. We do have a number of new members so a warm welcome to Josh and Nails. And stay safe out there! 🌍

PORT CHALMERS

GREETINGS from a very cool Dunedin. It's been a very cold winter down south with lots of adverse conditions for us to drive to work in with temperatures ranging from 12 degrees, right down to minus eight so we are really looking forward to the first day of spring which is just around the corner!

Most people know about the straddle accident which occurred at Port Otago on 1 July. One of our newish diesel electric 4-high straddles toppled over on the wharf while working the Madina.

It was a horrific time for all staff but particularly for those working the vessel.

We have had regular updates about the driver and it's fabulous to hear that he is going to make a full recovery. A very lucky man! At this stage investigators from Worksafe NZ and Port Otago Ltd independently are ongoing with an update to be posted if and when cause is found.

It was a great credit to everybody how this traumatic event was handled, but bigger thanks has to go to Merv Scoles, the shift

manager, who crawled in with the driver until emergency services arrived. Well done Merv you were brilliant.

A big thanks to POL management for looking after their staff really well, putting EAP in place immediately, shutting down the port, releasing staff to go home to their families and communicating so well about everything that was happening - plus daily updates on AK's condition.

The 24 hour dredging has begun and it all seems to be running smoothly. There were a few hiccups with contractors which have been sorted. Another issue of concern are the number of contractors we are seeing at plant services. This has to stop and we want them replaced with permanent positions. It has been noted and actions are underway to get this resolved as quickly as possible.



Martin McConaghie.

It was with great sadness that recently retired Jim Hawkins passed away in July.

Ross Goodall from plant services has been off work for approximately six weeks and we look forward to seeing him back soon.

John Lydiate's wife Barbara had a nasty accident resulting from a fall breaking her shoulder and toes. We wish her a speedy recovery and it will be great to have John back, we have missed his daily jokes! 🌍

OTAGO RAIL

SINCE the last issue the freight yard has had its fair share of illness of one sort or another. To Paul Milne and Kelvin Tippit who have both had surgery, all the best from the branch for your recoveries. Also best wishes to Gary Wilson and especially his wife who is very unwell. It's with a great sadness that we note the passing of Tony Fricker's partner in the most tragic of circumstances.

Life at rail in the Dunedin area is still much the same as it has always been. We are at the end of another down time for Fonterra and are gearing up for a busy season with milk powder starting up in a week or two. I can only guess that you will have all noted the posted pay out for the milk powder and will be wondering how this will impact on rail and our jobs.

To our brothers on the West Coast we send our sympathies. With all the decisions you all have to make because of the coal down turn, life cannot be easy. Hopefully, there will be enough volunteers around the country to free up spaces for those that really want to stay within rail.

If you are one of those that is nearing retirement please consider pestering your manager for redundancy. This could work out to be a very good option.

The Dunedin yard is looking very good at the moment. Underfoot conditions are probably the best we have seen for a long time and hopefully will stay that way, thanks

to our hard working I&AM members.

The new yard ute looks like it may take some looking after.

These new vehicles don't seem to be as robust as the old models.

We are also awaiting the outcome of a restructure in terminal management, with the pending appointment of a terminal operations manager for Dunedin and Invercargill and an overseeing manager for the Dunedin/Southland area. We can only hope that the interview process is robust.

The freight yard has some more RCOs being trained. To Cory and Hanlon good luck with the training process and keep safe out there.

We also have Russell learning the yard team leader's role. Consensus from the troops is that a good choice has been made.

I see that our industrial officer, John Kerr, has just done another round of visits. These are always informative and welcomed by the troops. Keep up the good work John.

Our esteemed secretary and his wife had the pleasure of attending a small dinner, with the national secretary and the past national president, to honour and celebrate the life membership to our union, of Brother Timothy Spence. This scribe has been told that Tim is looking well and is enjoying semi-retirement.

Our loco team leader was invited to give a talk to a group of retired members at an afternoon tea the other day. He gave them a very well received update on the fuel saving DAS system and changes to the way

we operate our trains since most of them retired. There was also talk of having a combined dinner for retired and existing staff for a catch up. This type of event is a great chance to remember how it was. Hopefully they can get something organised.

Finally, the RMTU played it's part in protesting against the National Government's dilution of the health and safety reforms with a photo of one of our members featuring in the Otago Daily Times and a very effective planting of crosses in Queen's Gardens. 🇳🇿



SOUTHLAND RAIL

YES, it has been a bit cold down here but we're tough and we like it. What we don't like is the debacle in Fonterra and the dairy industry in general given the fall in the milk price. Sooner or later we're all going to end up paying for this and we hope that middle New Zealand apportions the blame where it's due when that time comes: to John Key and the National-led government. Where's the 'rock star' economy now John?

To matters local. Our operations depot manager is due to retire later this year and we're starting to think he should move the date forward and give us all a break. One of our senior members has been on the receiving end of what can, if we're being charitable, only be described as a lapse of judgement. If we were being forthright we'd say it's a failure to discharge his duties as a manager and grant workers due process.

We're sad to report the death of Mick Carran after a courageous battle with cancer. Mick only retired recently and he'll be

missed. Our sympathies to his family.

We also have a newly qualified LE who may not be able to continue driving due to a medical condition. We know National Office has been advocating strongly on his behalf and we hope by the time you read this he has secured another role in the company. He is a great worker and workmate and has our support.

Other than that we're just trying to keep our heads down, do our jobs and get home in one piece – unlike the 291 New Zealand workers who have been killed on the job since Pike River blew up. Shame on this government for watering down the health and safety reforms. 🇳🇿



On July 1 the RMTU joined a Greens protest at Parliament to send a clear message to Government and KiwiRail to not "Ditch Our Electric Trains". Faced with the need to upgrade the North Island main trunk locomotive fleet, KiwiRail announced that it was seriously reviewing an option of mothballing the existing 25,000 volt-AC infrastructure between Palmerston North and Hamilton and replacing the existing electric EF-class 30 locomotive fleet with diesel locomotives.

Led by Green Party MP, Julie Anne Genter, the protest hosted a number of passionate speeches including our very own voice of reason, Todd Valster. It was heartening to see concerned citizens as part of a diverse contingent of MPs, union representatives and workers who all clearly understood the consequences of such folly.

This backward and short sighted proposal was tabled by KiwiRail as a very real and viable option for solving KiwiRail's immediate needs, as opposed to a continued regime of general maintenance of the existing infrastructure and ongoing investment into enlarging the current electric locomotive pool.

To engage interest protesters carrying

banners and a variety of props including oil drums, trolleys and a gift tag, walked backwards as a mark of shame and an indication of the proposal's direction and the government's shameful disinterest in environmental concerns.

The procession and props were received by one of KiwiRail's liaison officers who had nothing to say about the proposal or the protest! That not one credible member of the KiwiRail senior management team could step forward to engage, appease or at least acknowledge their efforts was appalling and viewed with a strong level of disbelief.

Rarely does such a large and important industry such as KiwiRail have the opportunity to lead by example. 🌱



Green Party MP, Julie Anne Genter watches on as RMTU organiser Todd Valster speaks to the rally.



Difficult to discern in a still picture is that the procession walked backwards from the Cenotaph to the railway station signifying the backward step being proposed by KiwiRail.