

THE TRANSPORT WORKER

MAR 2023

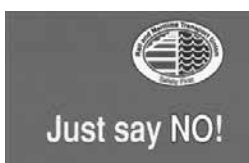
The journal of the RMTU
– NZ's largest specialist
transport union

Ormondville Viaduct gets some TLC



4 LAW SHAKE UP

The case is made for a serious look at rail regulations and safety.

7 JUST SAY NO!

Two recent cases of showing the RED card proves it works and must be used in dangerous situations.

24 AIMING HIGH

Te Haina Kupa has her sights set on the controls of one the mammoth Leibherr cranes at Nelson Port.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: The Ormondville Viaduct getting a well-deserved make-over by the team from Napier prior to Cyclone Gabrielle testing its resilience. See page 18

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Todd Valster
Acting general secretary
RMTU

2023 - a busy year of elections

WELCOME to the first issue for 2023 of our great magazine.

The first branch notes to come in for this magazine were from the Hawkes Bay Rail Branch along with some excellent pictures of track and bridge repairs being done in the region. You can read these notes and see the pride these workers have in getting this work done on page 18 and the cover.

Sadly, not long after receiving the photos, we saw the devastation in the region wrought by Cyclone Gabrielle. Our hearts go out to all those who suffered loss in the region and beyond.

Branches are wishing to donate so we will be asking the Hawkes Bay Port and Rail branches to set up a committee to allocate funds to those members in need in the region.

When the cyclone hit, KiwiRail were quick to make contact and let the Union know they had located every employee in the region. Generators were set up at the depot for showers, BBQs and more fridges brought on site. They even gave workers \$250 cash because money cards were not working. KiwiRail said staff would be paid as per roster, there would not be job losses and the lines will be rebuilt.

At that time, I had a call from one of our past members. She described how she was stranded without power along with many of her neighbours. She asked if KiwiRail could provide some generators. My advice was to get Civil Defence to contact KiwiRail. I made sure KiwiRail were aware of this request and six generators were provided to Civil Defence by KiwiRail.

Dave Kearns, our South Island organiser, is returning to his former role as a locomotive engineer. His last day as an organiser is March 10. In his place we have employed a new South Island organiser, Andy Woolhouse. Andy will start in March and be based in Christchurch.

Meanwhile, interviews for our reception/administration assistant are being conducted as this magazine goes to press.

While I cannot discuss the current general secretary ballot, due to go out as I write, it will be followed by a call for nominations for the RMTU national president and by the elections for the National Management Committee, KiwiRail Industrial Council and Women's Council.

And then, to top it off, the General Election will take place in October.

HPHE reset at KiwiRail

Last October, RMTU staff and KiwiRail NMC members along with the KiwiRail executives, did the HPHE training over two days in Auckland. At the end of this March, all the Industrial Council members and management will do the HPHE training over two days in Wellington. This is a significant U-turn by KiwiRail to get HPHE back up running after it fell into to neglect under the last chief executive.

HPHE does provide workers with input into decision making and while KiwiRail will be looking for efficiencies, the agreed HPHE charter signed by the parties, KiwiRail and RMTU, clearly states there will be no forced redundancies as a result of any HPHE project.

Health & Safety – seeing RED

In this magazine we have workers in two companies – Port Marlborough and TransDev Wellington – who have stood their

ground on health and safety by issuing the 'Red Card'. While the safety issues were different, the approach by workers insisting on safety is the same.

Ports health and safety

The new guidelines for managing the risks associated with fatigue at ports have been released. More information can be found on page 11.

The new central region organiser, Allan Addison-Saipe, recently visited the Hutt Railway Workshops. It is great to see such significant investment in these workshops coming together.

There are two RMTU women profiles included in this magazine.

We learnt today that, sadly, RTMU Life Member, Ian Wilkie, passed away in the weekend. Those who knew Ian would never forget he was fearless in speaking his mind. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Lastly, well done to all of the branches which provided branch notes – 15 in this issue!

Stay safe out there! 🌍



Adios Alejandra

Our reception/administration assistant, Alejandra Garcia, has moved on to brighter and better things and has taken on a new role at NZTA. We thank Alejandra for all the hard work she has put in at RMTU and wish her all the best in her new role. 🌍

(r to l) Alejandra and Debby Green (RMTU administration officer) smiling but deep down hoping we find Alejandra's replacement as soon as possible.

LETTERS

Encouraging participation

Dear Editor,

The time has come for me to stand down as the Picton locomotive delegate, which will take effect from 11/2/23.

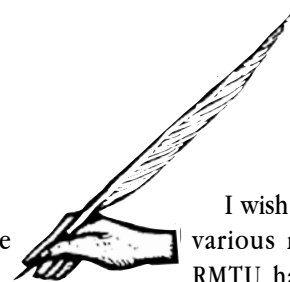
I have tried over the last month to encourage someone else to take up the role by emailing all concerned and issuing ballot forms etc. However, I'm sorry to say no one has shown they are prepared to take on the responsibility even though I offered to help

them initially.

So time has come for me to draw a line in the sand and stand down.

The role of delegate here and on the West Coast has been challenging at times but also very rewarding.

The support from local delegates in Picton have enabled me to continue to this point. I cannot speak highly enough of both Justine and Tania.



I wish you all well in your various roles and may the RMTU have success in the various challenges which lay ahead.

Thank you all for looking after the best interests for myself and my fellow workmates.

Paul Foskett
Loco engineer.
Picton.

Rail regulatory shake

THERE is urgent need to reform the health and safety regulations in rail.

Since the early 2000s, rail workers' health and safety has been covered

by both the Railways Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act. Both NZTA/Waka Kotahi and Worksafe NZ have dual authorities to manage safety in rail.



The RMTU is deeply concerned about risk in the rail system and does not think Waka Kotahi has the ability to regulate those risks, nor does the outdated Railways Act provide them with the tools to do so.

The Union understands moves are afoot for both Maritime NZ and Waka Kotahi to be designated responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act. The exact scope of the roles between Worksafe and these regulators has not yet been agreed. The Union thinks this is a move in the right direction to avoid duplication and confusion.

However, ultimately it is now time for change and to bring rail safety under one act – the Health and Safety at Work Act – and to have only one regulator with operational experience on each mode of transport: rail, maritime, aviation and road. The current system duplicates effort and encourages agencies to work in silos.

The RMTU needs to be at the table when these decisions are being made.

Conflict of interest

Waka Kotahi has conflicting roles by

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Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

up urgently needed

having both a rail investment function as well as a safety regulation function. A classic example of the conflict was experienced in Auckland when Waka Kotahi as the regulator stepped in to enforce safety standards, yet the deterioration in the network was caused in part by the inadequate funding over decades of the network by Waka Kotahi.

The RMTU has repeatedly expressed the view that the rail regulator must be independent of funding decisions and be focussed on issuing and enforcing rail standards.

The Deloitte review of Auckland Metro rail issues said the safety regulator lacked the maturity and resources to clarify its role.

Their key findings were:

- Maintenance standards did not keep pace with the requirements of a modern metro system, raising questions over how the standards were governed and assured. Waka Kotahi had raised concerns regarding KiwiRail's adherence to these codes and standards.
- The safety regulator was passive and lacked the maturity and the resourcing to clarify its role and work proactively. An independent review of the rail regulator in 2013 found it was perceived as too soft and too passive. It noted the regulator had limited ability to conduct safety critical lead indicator incident analysis to

identify emerging issues. In 2018 it was identified it still could not achieve the intended safety outcome for a regulator.

- There is an absence of effective industry governance arrangements to raise and resolve system concerns.

The second conflict of interest is that Waka Kotahi agrees to rail safety cases yet KiwiRail sets the standards and codes for maintenance and inspection. Waka Kotahi acknowledges the safety case is at such a high level that it is almost impossible to enforce.

Thus the rail operator is setting its own standards and codes rather than the regulator.

The co-regulatory model does not provide sufficient independent challenge and assurance to ensure the safety system is effective, and whether or not the codes and standard are appropriate.

Issue with the rail regulatory framework

Recently the rail industry and Waka Kotahi acknowledged the current regulatory framework is not fit for purpose. Industry has called for stronger rail governance which includes the development of New Zealand national rail safety standards

updating the Railway Act 2005, and forming a rail industry representative body to improve the approach to health and safety risk management across rail.

The regulatory failures within rail include:

- The licences for rail operators are enduring. There is no requirement for operators to resubmit their safety cases at regular intervals to ensure compliance with current best practice. This means there is less incentive to constantly improve.
- The legislative tools given to Waka Kotahi are more limited than those given to WorkSafe which makes Waka Kotahi less effective.
- The investigative powers of WorkSafe are stronger and WorkSafe is a more experienced prosecutor.
- The Railways Act does not give a solid foundation for NZTA to conduct unannounced inspections or to undertake preliminary or formal investigations because powers of entry only apply within assessment (audit) processes.
- The NZTA understands the co-regulatory approach to mean it should not regulate under the Railways Act. There are no rail-related regulations, and there are no ministerial rules of any kind. It relies on rail participants to formulate the rules.
- Health and welfare carry duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act, but not under the Railways Act.

Very importantly - the Health and Safety at Work Act requires worker engagement and the right to elect H&S reps who have powers to stop unsafe work and issue PIN notices.

The Railways Act has very limited requirement to engage with workers and their union(s).

A major concern for the union is if Waka Kotahi does gain the designation from Worksafe it has little experience in engaging with worker representatives and will struggle to acknowledge the role of the union(s). 🇳🇿



Seeing RED

It is great to see that even though our red card was introduced in December 2014 and used for the first time just two weeks later, it is still an effective tool for health and safety.

It was designed for use at times where risk is imminent and

immediate. It is effective and throws the spotlight on an issue – hopefully fixing it.

Many of our employers have grown to like it because it works and protects everyone.

Our members are still using it. Twice in the last couple of months.

Port Marlborough

Port Marlborough had an issue on Friday January 27, 2023 when a union delegate delayed the arrival of the cruise ship Azamara Quest. At 181 metres long she was going to be tied up at Waitohi Wharf West, opposite to the Strait NZ vessels.

In the early 1990s Port Marlborough management made people redundant, and in some cases certain departments were reduced to single figure manning levels.

One of those departments included workers who attended to ships' lines, ferries, logs, salt, cruise ships and coastal freighters.

KiwiRail took over the ferry lines and the rest were given to the workshop crew which numbered about 11 to 12 people (please remember this number).

Come the 2019 cruise ship season and Picton was expected to receive 50 ships with an expectation of 80 the following season. COVID hit and Port Marlborough lost about 4-5 ships as a result of the season ending early.



The pre COVID cruise ships were being attended by the workshops staff plus some ring ins from other departments – the latter having little to no training. The workshops staff were frustrated pre COVID and the arrival of COVID was actually a blessing to most of them.

During this time the workshop staff were still attending log ships.

While letting a log ship go on 18/10/2021 one of the linesmen got his lower leg caught in a tail and was seriously injured. An ambulance was called and an investigation completed.

The worker no longer works for us (he was doing an apprenticeship). After leaving hospital he had treatment at home

and locally.

Part way through his rehabilitation he decided not to continue with his apprenticeship.

Following on from this incident we held several collective meetings to implement SOPs. In May 2022 the Union delegate asked for some immediate action to be taken including:

- extra bollards,
- line sequencing,
- clear sight of line from one end of the wharf to the other (ie – no cranes, work huts, piles of bark etc), and
- working near tensioned lines.

While we were working through this process, vessels were still arriving and SOPs were not followed. Nor was sequencing and tension and frustrations were mounting.

When word our borders were reopening the workshop team asked the Union to go to management to ask for more linesmen. This was done after the cruise ship season started which was expected to be 50 ships – and the training began.

With the return this summer season of cruise ships to our shores Port Marlborough



A cruise boat tied up to Waitobi Wharf West in Picton.

at Picton in Queen Charlotte Sound needed to expand its lines crew to cope with an expected 55 cruise ship visits in addition to its usual business of log boats and fishing trawlers.

In January 2023 a cruise ship was coming into port and needed to be tied up. The lines plan (plan to tie up the ship) was changed by the vessel without consultation with the port workers.

Our members were really concerned about the change but were told to "just do it".

Linesman had had a gut full. They had a meeting on January 26 with their delegates and phoned Allan Addison-Saipe, their local organiser. At their wits they didn't know what else to do.

Talk of a PIN or a safety recommendation seemed to be not immediate enough as there was real concern something bad was about to happen.

This was Red Card time.

Allan checked with Karen Fletcher as to whether it was appropriate and how it should be done.

It was confirmed to our delegate and the line handlers that this was a Red Card situation and they should immediately notify the company they were to play the red card.

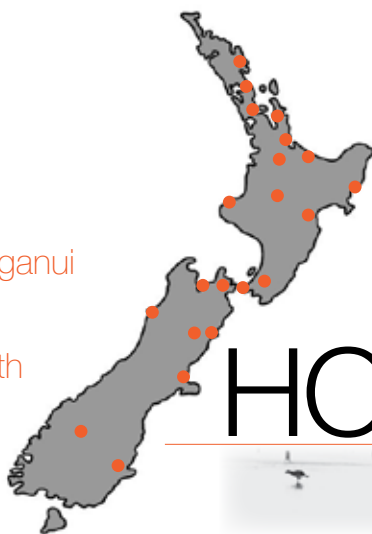
The line handlers were refusing to tie up vessels until the issue of changing plans was sorted.

Our delegate phoned Port Marlborough CE, Rhys Welbourn of the decision.

Rhys was at our delegate's house to discuss the issue with him and immediately after called a meeting with his managers.

The CE believing actions had been taken

- Auckland
- Christchurch
- Dunedin
- Gisborne
- Greytown
- Hanmer
- Kaikoura
- Mount Maunganui
- Napier
- Nelson
- New Plymouth
- Ohope
- Orewa
- Paihia
- Picton
- Queenstown
- Rotorua
- Taupo
- Wellington
- Westport
- Whitianga



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and was not pleased to hear they had not. He instructed his managers not to change the lines plans and to get work done which should have been done months ago around the location of bollards.

The line handlers met the next morning to discuss the outcomes, thus holding up the berthing of a cruise ship for half an hour while our members decided whether the company's actions were sufficient to make the job safe.

Grant Herbert (Herb) said what they did felt like "the most radical thing".

There are additional issues around lack of bollards and trainees need radio licences to be signed off. Plenty to be done but we have the delegates for the job.

Transdev sees RED

The red card has been used at Transdev too in recent times. A notorious switch lock on platform nine at Wellington station



Platform 9 switch lock and points at Wellington Railway Station.



WHERE ARE YOU?

When problems arise we may need to contact you in a hurry.

Please check we have your correct address and contact details.

<http://bit.ly/exmEyl>

or

04-499-2066

which could be used for switching the loco from one end of the train to the other was red carded by the yard RCOs and ROs after many back, shoulder and arm injuries.

The problem being long standing where the ground has moved under the

track between platforms nine and ten. The switch lock operates two sets of points and requires more than 100kg of pressure to move it.

Despite there being long term plans to remediate the uneven track on the platform

and a programme to replace manual switch locks with motorised ones, nothing has been done.

Our delegates red carded the operation.

Now the procedure is to detach the loco.

A shunter then takes the train away, the loco goes down to the turn table, the train is returned and the loco returns and reattaches.

A much longer process that needs to be done six times a day, but one which removes our members from harm.

Transdev needs to follow its own policies and close the carriage doors and advise passengers on the train to remain seated as there can be a bit of a bump when the loco connects. This was highlighted in the Waka Kotahi Rail Safety Assessment Report.

But great work again from delegates and members using the red card to keep our workers safe.

Please remember the RED CARD is for risk which is high and immediate:

- If it doesn't feel right, step back.
- What is the hazard or risk?
- If you continue, could you or someone else be seriously harmed?
- If the answer is yes, then STOP, inform your manager, H&S rep and/or your RMTU delegate.
- Or call the RMTU on 04-499-2066

Remember the RMTU will back you up.

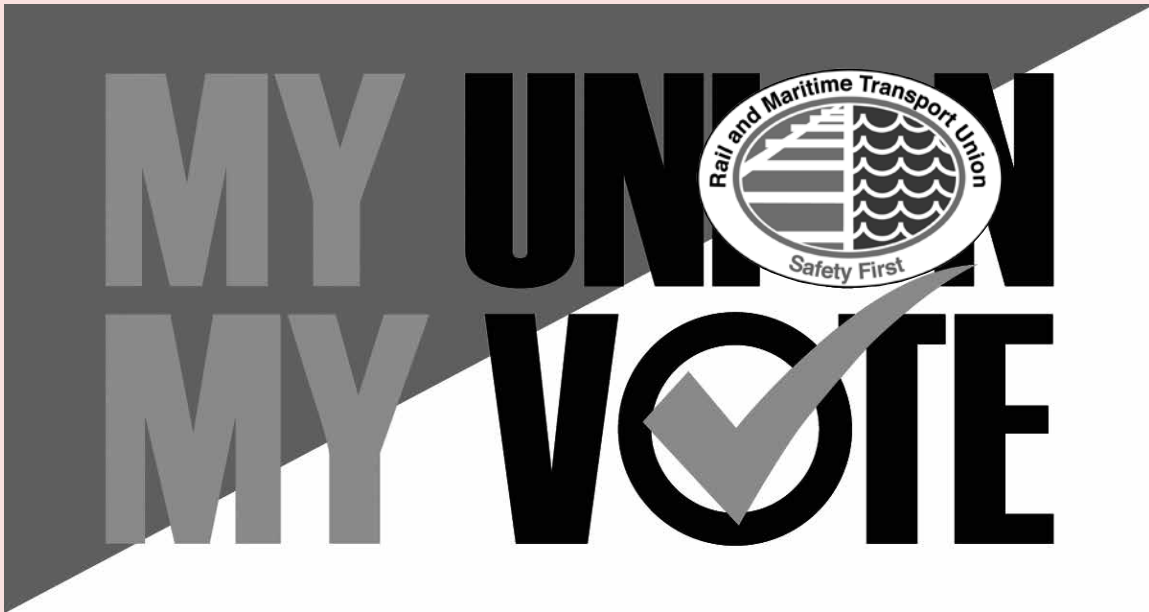
You need to stay there and work with the company to fix the problem. 🌐

DFC for the Wairarapa/Wellington line.



Transdev shows solidarity for Korean Metro workers.

Make your vote count!



IT'S 2023 – election year for the RMTU's national leadership positions. Up first is the ballot for the election of general secretary for a four year term. At the time of writing, ballot papers have been mailed to the home addresses of all our Union members.

Our great Union is a democratic organisation which gives us our strength. We are at our best and most effective when mem-

bers are engaged and who participate in our democratic process.

Your vote counts. It will make a real difference. So please check your letterbox today – VOTE and send in your completed ballot paper in the reply-paid envelope provided to National Office. It's your Union. Have your say and MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT! 🇳🇿

\$10,000 ADB

All members of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union are now covered by a \$1,500 *Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit*, including \$500 spouse coverage and a further \$500 coverage on dependent children. This is an automatic membership benefit of belonging to the Rail and Maritime Transport Union. **Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year.**

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Reply by email: **Email your name, address and contact number to pr@ailnz.co.nz**

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 for \$5. A.M. Best, one of the oldest and most respected insurance ratings companies, has rated American Income Life as A (Excellent) for overall Financial Strength (as of 7/20).



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Building a Fatigue Risk Management System

Good Practice Guidelines for the ports industry



NOVEMBER 2022

Fatigue guidelines launched

SAFETY on ports has taken an important step forward with the newly published guidelines for managing the risks associated with fatigue.

The guidance was developed by the ports industry leadership group which includes the RMTU.

The guidelines focus on understanding what fatigue is, the science behind it and how to implement a fatigue risk management system.

Worker engagement is at the heart of the guidance with the emphasis on workers and their representatives having genuine opportunities to identify the causes of fatigue and work with management to decide on how to reduce them.

The guideline includes 16 appendices, including examples of good work allocation practices (rostering), and templates – such as fatigue reporting – which can be adapted and used.

The guidelines can be found on the Maritime NZ website or by contacting the RMTU National Office.

A copy will be sent to you. 🌐

Popular prankster departs

THE presence, comedic banter, stories of 'back in Nam' and old school tricks of the trade will be sorely missed as we celebrate and wish Alan Ireland a great retirement.

Alan grew up in Picton and started working for the railways on March 7, 1977. When he left Picton to come to Dunedin in 1989 he was what they called then a senior shunter involved in the introduction of remote control shunting and ASP radios. He was one of the original RCOs (remote control operators) in Dunedin. I can remember him telling stories of slip shunting, shunting with lanterns in the dark, waving them back and forth and wearing all

black heavy wool trench coats in the yard. No hi-vis, no reflectors on your clothes back then. How times have changed.

In his days of working in Picton and Dunedin, it was expected of railway men to go to the pub during working hours while waiting for a train to show up to shunt. Alan was well known for his wife Vicki bringing his tea to the terminus pub in Picton at night when he was on shift. The pub is still there today and Alan still makes an annual pilgrimage to it for a well received catch up with old mates and hefty contribution to the establishment.

Anyone who has worked with Alan over the years knows how jumpy he is, and how easily he can get a fright. Some stories have been shared in the smoko room about how his workmates used to use this to their advantage to get a great laugh. Once some of his workmates took out the bottom floor out of his locker so it could fit a person in it. When Alan came to work and opened his locker the hidden person would jump out.

Alan used to walk to work and back most days and again his workmates would scheme up a plan. One of them dressed up in a scary mask, trench coat and had a big laminated wooden knife He hid between a container stack and jumped out at Alan on his way through the railway yard on his way to work.

The pranks and antics over the years were endless, and they were mostly good fun.

Congratulations, Alan on your 46 years of service in the railways and your loyalty to the RMTU for 45 years. Your knowledge and storytelling will be missed. Enjoy your well deserved retirement, the time with your wife Vickie and with daughter Katie and whanau. If you get bored there is always seasonal work around Christmas time.

Don't be a stranger, you know where we are. Good luck and best wishes. 🌐



Alan Ireland

HPHE alive and well

By Allan Addison-Saipe

WITH the reinvigoration of the KiwiRail HPHE programme at the forefront of my mind I embarked upon a visit to the Hutt Workshops. I had heard for years how this part of the KiwiRail business had embraced HPHE and used it to drive changes in safety and efficiency. I was about to see it first hand and talk to our delegates.

After signing in, meeting the manager Rob Gordon, doing a site induction and getting my bump cap and safety glasses it was off to the weekly branch executive meeting. While it was a business-as-usual meeting I got to see the delegates in action. It was really well run with all the delegates getting to report on their areas and allowed to bring up concerns and report back on past agenda items.

I was impressed to hear of 'night school', – a study group run two nights per week to assist the apprentices with their written portion of their qualifications. But the best part was getting the apprentices to work together to solve problems individuals were having with specific questions.

So, a good meeting with robust discussion and support and advice for the less experienced delegates from the senior members of the exec.

Vice chair Slade Pilcher then took me for a look around the site. I got to meet members and managers with a real passion for what they do and have a close up look at their work.

HPHE has had a real effect on the way work is done with each department having boards in their operational centres tracking the progress of jobs, hazards, near misses and incidents and ideas for improvement.

The work being done is impressive with reconditioning giant diesel engines and full tear downs and rebuilds of locomotives, plus refits of carriages and rolling stock and complete rebuilds of electric engines.

Cool little trolleys contain every component needed to rebuild the electric motors with everything laid out and easy to find with little chance of missing a small component.

The new jewel in the crown though is the new wheel shop where KR is just commissioning \$33m worth of new equipment to check and recondition axles and wheels. In a room as clean as an operating theatre sits the gleaming new plant which can be operated without people getting in harm's way. All by-products of the process are whisked away with out human interference. Rather than reduce the number of jobs it has actually created three extra positions.

Now KR can produce reconditioned wheel sets at about 20% of the cost of purchasing new. Not only does it safe-guard jobs and increase efficiency it is the ultimate recycling story.

With hundreds of wheel sets awaiting refurbishment Hutt Workshops wheel shop is going to be busy for years to come.

Hutt workshops are also looking to up their intake of apprentices over the next few years to double the number of apprentices



now on site. Their philosophy is to not only increase the number of skilled workers at KiwiRail but also the number of skilled workers in the country. It is refreshing to speak with people with such passion for what they do and such an holistic approach. It is great to see people looking to the future when considering decision making.

One of last things Slade said to me is , "we are like a family here and we look after each other".

The last thing I noticed as I left the site was the RMTU flag flying alongside the KiwiRail flag, something I hadn't noticed on the way in as I was concentrating hard on crossing six sets of tracks. It seemed symbolic of a good relationship which is reaping benefits.

HPHE continues to be rerolled out throughout KiwiRail with a hui planned late in March to train all the industrial councils and to get HPHE working everywhere in KiwiRail.

RMTU has even taken the model and started to introduce it to the ports as a way of getting meaningful engagement for the workers and making the workers part of the solution.

Who would have thought? 🌐

at Hutt Workshops



(above) The new \$33m wheel shop.



(above) Loco refurbishment, Plant 1.



Flying the flag over Hutt Workshops.



Shunting at Hutt Workshop with a ESV.

RMTU WOMEN

Ann Wells

Hi from sunny Nelson.

Let me start by saying that the opportunity to serve as the South Island ports rep on the Woman's Council last term was an eye opening experience to the gender challenges around New Zealand – and worldwide.

I have always, in my Port Nelson branch, been dedicated to promoting gender equality. I am always fiercely loyal and a passionate campaigner for championing women in our port environments.

I have just finished a video for the port's campaign for recruitment which is incredibly important for us women to promote and make sure it is seen – and shows our work in the wider community. I believe my strong work ethic and firm moral compass, with a no frills approach, is one which will promote women in what are normally male dominated workplaces.

I started as a stevedore at Port Nelson about 11 years ago, while running a small business in the Nelson Marina as a boat detailer.

My main position now is operating heavy machinery in container operations.

About half of my time at Port Nelson has been dedicated to the union movement. Within the role of Nelson branch secretary and woman's delegate, I have developed a clear sense of purpose for what it is to be involved in the union. I have worked tirelessly to build and maintain a solid membership.

One must have an organised and balanced approach to issues faced, especially when being part of the bargaining and negotiation team, and with the major legal challenges around the Holidays Act and its application happening here in our Port.

I am not afraid to stand up and speak out for what is right. Often that is called being outspoken, but I am steadfast in my beliefs, especially when it comes to holding the employer accountable and to attaining better pay and conditions for all of our members.

I am RMTU and will defend and promote RMTU in any way that I can.

SOLIDARITY and UNITY and strength in numbers. Let's show the world what we can do when we collaborate and promote together the advancement of our cause! 🌐



The RMTU fully supports equal opportunities for women and men

Gemma Thomas

Kia ora!

Ko Gemma Thomas ahau.

I am the women's representative for BOP Ports 2023.

Eighteen months ago I started my career with the Port of Tauranga and joined the RMTU.

In the short time working with the Port I have had the opportunity to progress my career and skill set in various positions within the security division including gatehouse security officer, shuttle driver and CCTV

operations and am looking forward to furthering my career opportunities and building relationships along the way.

Previous to working at the Port I'd spent five years working in the Australian mining industry in various roles from administrative right through to operating heavy earthmoving machinery and maintaining stationary plant. This is well known to be a male dominated industry but I found it easy to be able to work as an equal with the other employees within this field and be a proactive part of a productive workforce.

I spent a lot of my time speaking with women within the industry, attending seminars and meetings with groups of professional people wanting to promote the future for women in a heavy industrial environment. I am looking forward to continuing to promote and support women within the port industry with the support of the RMTU.

Even though I'm very passionate about supporting women in industry I am still very professional, friendly and approachable and here to support both my brothers and sisters of the RMTU equally. Please feel free to talk with me about your queries or problems at any time and I'll try help you to the best of my abilities.

Now that we have touched on all the official business, outside of work I love to enjoy everything our beautiful country offers from fishing, camping and hunting to riding my motor cycle and cold beers at the pub and laughs with mates.

I am really looking forward to being your women's representative for the Bay of Plenty Port and delegate and on the RMTU executive team for 2023. 🌐



Groundbreaking win for 'vibration white foot'

LOCO ENGINEER Paul Henry was initially declined ACC cover for an injury to his feet caused by vibration in the loco cab.

However, with RMTU support from lawyer Hazel Armstrong and testimonies from other South Island LEs also affected by foot vibration, the Union has made a compelling case to KiwiRail that vibration from the floor of the cab has caused injury.

KiwiRail's injury management provider Work Aon initially declined the claim but has been instructed by KiwiRail to accept Paul's claim.

Paul first noticed symptoms of numbness and pins and needles type pain in his feet and legs. He was diagnosed with an injury, colloquially described as 'vibration white foot'.

Symptoms include pain, swelling, numbness and a 'pins and needles' like tingling in the feet or legs. Symptoms can last for a few hours or up to a week but appear to go away after the LE has rested.

Vibration is a known risk to rail locomotive engineers and injuries can affect the lower back, neck and shoulder, legs and feet often causing pain.

LEs surveyed

Late last year the RMTU surveyed LEs in the lower South Island to find out how widespread the problem is. All of the LEs who responded said they are exposed to vibration in the cab of the loco and two thirds said they had numbness and tingling in their feet or legs.

In 2018 an Invercargill LE, red carded (refused to operate) the DC locos due to excessive vibration. The boycott sparked an urgent inspection of the DCs which uncovered a myriad of issues relating to the inspection and maintenance systems, as well as issues with track quality.

A joint Union and KiwiRail working group developed a guideline for the company to manage the risk of whole-body vibration which included vibration testing



of locos using a vibration dosimeter.

The 2018 inspection focused on vibration through the seat of the cab which affects the neck and lower back.

LEs who responded to the 2021 survey have now identified that the floor of the cab is a source of vibration exposure and should be measured.

The DFTs require the driver to sit higher in the cab and the foot sits on the foot rest which is bolted to the chassis, so the vibration comes right through.

The two stroke engines used in the DFTs and DCs seem to generate a lot more vibration. The LEs think the vibration is from the auxiliary generator.

The LEs say notch 6 and 7 generates


more vibration.

KiwiRail said vibration testing has been added to their exposure monitoring schedule.

Good news

The good news is that the South Island will get locos in the very near future which will reduce, if not eliminate, the risk of any potential vibration injuries.

The RMTU encourages LEs to report faults in the 54D book and specify where the vibration is occurring and what part of their body it affects.

If you would like to complete the survey please contact Karen Fletcher, RMTU H&S organiser at the RMTU National Office. 

AUCKLAND RAIL

Discussions to engender more participation from members

WITH business slowly returning to normal following the Covid disruption of the past couple of years, the Auckland branch held its branch meeting on Sunday November 6, 2022, with a small, but enthusiastic, turnout.

The position of vice chair had been vacant since the resignation of Scott Robertson.

There were two nominees and an election was held with Mike MacLaughlan duly elected to the role.

The chairman, Sean Robertson, gave a brief verbal summary of events at the recent National Conference.

General business was then dealt with, beginning with the single nomination received for each of two vacant AOR delegate positions.

Augustine Vincent and Ray Doherty were declared elected unopposed to the positions of LE roster delegate at The Strand and station team leader delegate, respectively.

There was animated discussion on the topic of succession planning and general agreement that the issue needed to be addressed.

A brief update was given on the several mediations in which the Union was currently involved insofar as was legally permissible to say.

There was also discussion about establishing the role of roster delegate at CT and about the issue of CCTV and the use of cameras at CT locations.

In the light of the poor attendance at the recent AGM, the issue of problems with

release for some members was discussed, as was the possibility of an online option, Zoom or similar. It was generally agreed more research into this would be needed, including into potential privacy, voting and security implications.

Auckland continues to be an area of growth for the Union and numbers continue to increase, particularly in KiwiRail, where there are a number of new members as they look to bring their electrical track maintenance of the Auckland Metro network in house.

The recent weather issues have created problems for the upgrades for both Northland and Auckland but it was pleasing to see KR focussing on the safety of workers rather than rigidly adhering to a timetable. 🇳🇿

Sickness, accident and 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:

Debby Green, PO Box 813,
Wellington
Telephone: (04) 499-2066
Fax: (04) 471-0896
debby.green@rmtunion.org.nz

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

KING COUNTRY RAIL

Frustrations off-set by encouraging leaps forward

ALL go in the King Country. This quarter has seen some leaps forward in the right directions as well as some frustrations and setbacks.

The recently finished traction linesman training facility will provide a uniformly high level of training for the future of our electrified network. The traction teams from Hamilton, Taumarunui, Taihape and Palmerston North had a great time and upskilled trainees in building the facility to boot. Ka mau te wehi!

Along with this comes the long overdue refurbishment of the amenities in the Taihape networks depot.

At the branch AGM held in Taumarunui (the first in 10 years), one of the members commented they had been trying to get some movement happening on the facil-

ities which were dilapidated and just not up to today's standard with only a men's toilet and a sink. Its pleasing to hear the refurbishments to the kitchen and toilets are nearing completion.

Still more positive news sees recent recruitment bolstering numbers and working to provide future stability in the infrastructure teams. We're starting to look like we are headed for a future where we can deliver and maintain our sections to a reliable and high standard.

And now on to the superheroes of the team who can always be counted on when the proverbial hits the fan.

This backwards summer weather gave the whole network a battering and we were no exception although other areas certainly got hit worse.

We had two slips around Kopaki with southbound train 217 ploughing into one resulting in a scene which could have easily been another very sad outcome (see photo of the DL covered in mud). Track crews and contractors were on the scenes of both slips and had the line ready to run trains with typical legendary efficiency.

We still have plenty of ways we can make improvements such as trying to address inconsistencies when claiming allowances and ongoing unresolved roster negotiations.

Finally, on behalf of the branch I'd like to say farewell to Barry Goodwin who started in rail in 1976 and has served 41 years over two terms. All the best and we wish you well in your retirement Baz! 🇳🇿



(1) A close call for the crew of train 217 near Kopaki when they encountered a mud slide.

(below) Setting up overhead wires ready for the new EF locos.



NAPIER RAIL

Track gang numbers bolstered for the first time in years

KIA ORA from sunny Hawkes Bay. On behalf of all the network teams in Hawkes Bay we would like to congratulate Will Te Amo on his new position as field production manager based in Napier. Will arrived and started in early December 2022 and there has been positive changes since with a successful block-of-line (BOL) over the Christmas/New Year break. It's good to have Will back in Napier. Previously he was running a production team

in Wellington.

Also returning from Wellington is Huata Puhara who is welcomed back to the Napier team.

BOL consisting of relay of sidings 17 and 18 in the Napier yard plus a full dig out from subgrade up. The pre works were done by Fulton Hogan (drainage) of 896 metres of 50 kg rail and 650 hardwood sleepers all installed with new fastenings plus 800 m³ Gap40 and 1800 m³ of ballast.

Turnout 13 has also been fully refurbished with a 1-in-7 1/2 90lb turnout with new composite sleeper, bedplates and fastenings with national points installed. A brand new 50kg 1-in-7 1/2 turnout 14 was installed as well.

It's also very positive for Napier/Wairoa track gangs for the first time in many years, to have establishment levels of four staff for each team.

On the structures side Harpreet Khalsa



(above) The crew at the Ormondville Viaduct take a breather.

(l) Sidings 17 and 18.

(below) Turnout 13.



has a new position working for Napier signals with an apprenticeship starting in mid January. Harpreet has been in the structures group for the last two years.

Structures engineers have got three bridges at the design stage for make over

including the Ormondville Viaduct, bridge 104, on the Wairarapa Line, bridge 156 on the Palmerston North/Gisborne Line and bridge 236 at Kotemaori. It will be good to see work completed on these bridges.

On the freight side, welcome to Karl

Turner our newest loco trainee. He will be welcome as we are short staffed by one rail operator and three RCOs at this stage. This may balloon out if one or two relief team leaders don't get the next loco trainees.

Take care and stay safe out there. 🌐

NAPIER PORT

Port focussing on sniffing out drug and alcohol use

DOGS are sniffing their way around all parts of Napier Port, sectional in terms of people, including smoko rooms, offices, car parks, stevedores, workshops, plant and basically any port user sites. Pretty much everywhere a dog can put its nose in is coming under scrutiny in the search for drugs and alcohol.

The Napier Port Company (NPC) is taking a stronger, more stringent, approach towards drugs and alcohol in the port and its off-site depots.

Unfortunately, this has occurred as a consequence of residual methamphetamine being located in various areas throughout the port.

Sure, we all have our own concerns over working alongside workmates who could potentially be 'under the influence' however, this scribe is not about passing judgement on those who mix work with illicit drugs or alcohol, which at the end of the day we accept is a no, no, but more so to put some perspective on the side which seeks a more considerate approach. In essence, what can we do to provide some form of assistance or support when our work or team mates fall off the bus.

There was a time before 'P', a wee while ago, when marijuana was the go-to drug. Up until 1985 I used it! It was popular and, no doubt, still is. With dope nonetheless, there

is the potential to come clean, keep one's job and get professional guidance, because there is a recognised rehabilitation process within the local D&A policy.

Unfortunately, with meth, because of the body's ability to remove it from the system quickly, detection via drug tests is either going to become one or the other of two outcomes.

First, if positive (none negative) failed – because the company will not afford daily drug tests for meth or similar type drug use. At this juncture, without a rehab policy, the job is gone. As a delegate, I have represented members whom I could not save because of this drug in particular. Yet, in terms of support or rehab, the NPC offer a provisional number of external professional counselling sessions, which they pay for over and above EAP, if required. This support is only as good as those who choose to take up the offer. It is available even though employment has ceased.

Second, the other outcome, if one is clean via the test for drugs or alcohol, then it's back to work. If you are a user it would be a good time to consider those you work with, your whanau and those who depend on you. Do not put them, or yourself in harm's way or risk. Harm, in this context has many meanings.

In usurping this forum of the TW mag-

azine to voice a similar message prior, in asking our comrades to offer support to anyone who needs it, we know we all have good members amongst us who will go the extra mile and who care about what happens to their sisters and brothers from the social, financial and psychological aspects of drug and alcohol abuse – including the other drivers behind addiction.

Even if those caring individuals who put their hands up to help and may struggle in terms of professional guidance for themselves for their co-workers, friends and/or family members, there are support mechanisms available in many forms including EAP, social services, CAB, work colleagues and others.

Privacy concerns are also taken into account as is confidentiality and trust.

It is in the aftermath of unwanted outcomes when these anxieties come into play and which should act as a catalyst to offering help towards possible recovery. Providing, of course, such help is wanted.

As this is being scribed, Cyclone Gabrielle is making its way south.

By the time this magazine goes to press I trust we will have come out the other side safe and are a heck of a lot drier.

I sure hope autumn will provide some form of weather normality! 🌐

PALMERSTON NORTH RAIL

EFs welcomed and most LEs signed off

HELLO and happy New Year from the sunny Manawatu. As always, we have been head down arse up and living life to the full.

The foretold peak season never really happened unfortunately, with Covid

striking once again. Otherwise, the usual issues still plague us, such as poor rosters and understaffing in the yard, loco and servicing issues due to natural attrition, sickness and ACC.

But such is life.

Over the last year we have said farewell to some of our most senior and experienced staff members including the legend that is Mike Lewis (aka Luey), local OCM David Palamountain, LEs Simon Stichbury and Grant Winton – the latter doing as we

◀ all thought he would and just disappearing into the swamp, never to be seen again. Well played GI. Though to be fair, those who attended the local Xmas party managed to catch up with the illusive GI and enjoy a beer or two with him.

The branch wishes them all well in their retirement!

On the EF front, of the two electrics which have come out of the Hutt shops, 30163 has been signed off with almost all Palmerston North LEs and most of Te-Rapa have been put through the conversion programme. It was due to be put out to work

until it developed a fault and is now under repair back in PN where the electric depot staff are working tirelessly to get it and its sister, 30226, out earning money for the company. 30226 is due out on Valentine's day, but this scribe thinks maybe not. Time will tell.

With the DL fleet having its own issues, we are starting to see the return of the odd DC, so the sooner the EFs are up and running the better.

In August at the local AGM we said our farewells to Wayne Butson and thanked him for his long and tireless service. Again a few

quiet beers were enjoyed in his presence. I hear he is now enjoying long days in the sun fishing and hunting and what not, as well as sending many photos to head office, skiting about his catches! Enjoy your retirement Wayne!

Last week we had a visit from Allan Addison-Saipe. It was a pleasure to meet Allan, who will make a great addition to the RMTU head office team.

I'm sure there's more which needs saying, but as the deadline looms, I cannot think of what it is!

Nga mihi 🇳🇵

HUTT WORKSHOPS

Work space in the workshop with jobs lining up

GREETINGS from the Hutt Workshops and a happy New Year to all. We hope you have made a safe start to the year after a much-needed break. There is much work to be done across the company so everybody should have more than enough work to keep them busy for the year!

We commence these notes with an acknowledgment to the outgoing Prime Minister and the much hoped-for continued support for rail in New Zealand from the incoming Chris Hipkins. Whilst we as a Union (and also the company at large) must work alongside whomsoever is sitting on the Treasury benches, this challenge is made a little easier when you are dealing with a Government which supports the working class as a whole and understands

its struggles in striving to get ahead. Additionally, the massive investment in underfunded infrastructure is welcome and we are glad to be able to be resourced to do our bit in that regard.

Hopefully, by now the severe stormy weather which hit the Auckland region and its neighbouring areas has abated and the long-term clean-up is well underway. The damage of course was extensive and many businesses including KiwiRail had to curtail some of its operations to ensure staff were not put in harm's way. Whilst writing these notes, tropical cyclone Gabrielle had been redefined and was hitting Northland and the Coromandel. For the non-believers – those who do not think the world is suffering climate change – what more proof do they need?

Here at the Hutt we continue to round-off several training sessions ranging from the company initiatives through to regulatory and self-imposed compliance. One thing about the latter is the annual frequency of some competencies. Some rumblings have indicated we perhaps need to review the parameters with a view to extending the competency periods. This would allow us to organise recertifications without fanfare and allow them to become more akin to calm acts of business-as-usual (BAU) rather than a blind panic in response to the coloured traffic light reporting system used further up the food chain which seems to invoke some measure of grief and upset. Other seminars about to commence include the Differences as Opportunities sessions.



Capital Connection carriage refurbishment at Hutt Shops.

Our programme this year includes hosting the MCC (mechanical consultative committee) here at Hutt and Wellington probably being the venue for the HPHE 2.0 reset, to name but a few.

On the safety side, we eagerly await the results and feedback presentation from dss+ who have been contracted by KiwiRail to survey and report on our safety culture, and present a roadmap to best industry practice(s). This is unlike anything we have had before (that we can recall) so it will be with great interest to see what the big picture result is and the 'where to from here' recommendations.

There was a recent injury 'up north'

where a member of staff was carrying out a risky task in a dangerous manner and subsequently had an MTI (medical treatment injury – EVT2233636) which resulted in a SHE alert being issued. For some reason our safety messages are not getting through to staff and the otherwise avoidable injuries are not getting a look-in.

We recently acknowledged three of our apprentices coming out of their time and we congratulate Ben Bouchet, Phil Lewis and Connery McGarvey-Teohaere for their tenacious application to the tasks required within a busy working environment.

Our HSAT chair (Kasia Kurene) has been busy with revamping the induction process

for our newbies. This is a big project within itself aiming to improve both the quality and quantity of the induction content, especially where we recruit from overseas and have to address language and cultural hurdles which need to be navigated to ensure a smooth introduction into a busy railway environment.

Site upgrades continue with Plant 1 receiving some more attention. Mechanical Inventory's proposed new facility not far from here appears to require additional remediation to make it both safe and fit-for-purpose, thus delaying the shift of some functions into the new site.

Take care and stay safe out there. 🌍

WELLINGTON RAIL

All not well in the Metro space. Are TDW planning to bail out?

THE holiday season has been busy with block-of-lines and the new signalling for bi-directional running between Porirua and Plimmerton which has now been implemented and seems to be running well while construction of the new cycleway between Ngauranga and Petone has started.

I hope members have been able to relax and enjoy the warmer weather where they can.

Snapper ticketing has been rolled out to all metro lines and the members in the retail team have either moved onto other roles within the company or have said farewell to TransDev Wellington (TDW).

The new Transdev/Hyundai-Rotem MECA has been ratified by members. A good result from the bargaining team though not without its challenges. TDW/

HR members will be eagerly anticipating moving forward with the new agreement. As part of this a new consultation method will also be set up changing the current local consultative council/joint consultative council arrangements.

However all is not well in the Wellington Metro space as the 'trainstrophe' continues. A number of staff have been asking whether TDW are going to abandon the rail contract. There does not seem to be a compelling case to indicate otherwise.

Services are routinely cancelled and replaced by bus under the guise of 'staff absence'.

The reality is that on many of those occasions the staff are present, willing and able to run services.

It is more a case of 'management absence'. Feedback from customers is

that they are fed up and only the Greater Wellington Regional Council is buying the company line.

RMTU delegates now have to be available each pay day to collate the many wrong and/or under pays – and the occasional over payments. There seems to be scant regard to the MECA, the Holidays Act or the Wages Protection Act. Surely payroll is just bread and butter to a medium sized business?

Recruitment of staff in all areas seems to be a random, half-hearted affair. As the downward spiral of the once proud Wellington suburban rail system continues, it is hard to believe a multinational with international operating experience would allow the sorry state of affairs to continue. A reasonable conclusion is that we are in a managed exit strategy.

Where to from here? 🌍

MARLBOROUGH PORT

Red Card revealed followed by immediate reaction

NEVER a dull moment in the top of the south with the recent use of the red card when line handlers in Picton decided enough was enough and red carded the operation. There was an excellent response from CE Rhys Welbourne who saw immediate action taken to make changes. (see story page 6) While there is

still some work to be done steps are being taken to ensure the safety of line handlers.

February sees the retirement of Paul Foskett our loco delegate from Picton with over 20 years service with the RMTU. Thanks for all your work Paul and we hope you enjoy your retirement.

iRex continues to see changes in Picton

as the temporary terminal goes up in the long-term parking area. The old terminal will soon start to come down.

The RMTU will be around the table with Port Marlborough later in the year as we try to combat the cost of living and attain better work conditions for our members. 🌍

NELSON PORT

New scribe praises past writers and looks to future

THIS is a first for me as the newly appointed branch president! I am still trying to get my bearings and figure things out since taking over the reigns from Allan (the new regional organiser), who along with Ann as the branch secretary

have done such an amazing job building a nice strong branch with great membership.

Our focus this year will be in retaining our members, especially in the wake of a visit from MUNZ early this year. We will also be focussing on proving our new executive

team is up to the task of bringing better pay and conditions for all of our members in the lead up to another round of negotiations late this year.

In solidarity and unity! 🌐

CANTERBURY RAIL

Lot of young people taking up training - and hopefully will join rail

THE start of the year has been quiet in the Canterbury branch with most of the track gangs taking time off over the holiday period. But over in Middleton, mechanical and operation worked right through.

There are a lot a fresh young faces in the Canterbury region. Some are doing the Future You trainee track course and come from all over New Zealand. However, lots are working in Christchurch and are choosing a career in rail.

The madness of disciplinary which we heard a whole bunch about before the new year seems to have died down.

On March 1 we will be having branch meetings to discuss the new year and everything which will happen. 🌐

WEST COAST RAIL

Mining, the climate and jobs - a burning issue on the Coast

IT has been a busy start to the year for the West Coast with firstly tidying up some of last year's incidents with investigative and outcome meetings. Fortunately all had positive outcomes.

However, it is clear long Covid and brain fog may well be a real issue in the future so I urge all members to be wary and stay vigilant.

A long term signal fault has seen suspended signals on the Midland Line for many months now and rail repairs at Otira have seen all sorts of disruptions and delays to train running on an almost daily basis.

The track side have been kept busy with a massive formation upgrade between Hinau and Mai Mai as well many other work

sites up and down the Coast.

The Tranzalpine has returned to its daily schedule with solid numbers in both directions which has put added pressure on locomotive availability with train cancellations becoming a common problem.

Brian Foley and Dodie Joseph participated in the loco brake block trial at Tawhai. We are still waiting for the official findings, however, it appears some more work may need to be done in this area as the holding power was not exactly convincing.

The coal programme has been steady even with the talk of no new mines from government, which is a direct threat to rail workers not only on the West Coast but Canterbury and down South and any other

depot which moves any mined mineral. If mining was to fall over hundreds of our members throughout New Zealand would be directly affected.

I urge every member and head office to think carefully about the reality over ideology and the promotion and retention of work for its members.

An honest and frank discussion on this subject is clearly needed to be had, sooner rather than later. 🌐

TIMARU RAIL

Yard issues causing inconvenience to workers and public

RUNNING late seems to be the new normal. With the newly reduced services and train schedules fully bedded, trains are regularly running an hour plus late, and at times over two hours late. Couple this with train lengths consist-

ently maxed out this creates some real angst in the yard in terms of marshalling and shunting. With the long lengths there have been times in Temuka when one of the major roads has been blocked while they attach and a CT takes place.

As of writing this week there was a small fire in our only DSG, meaning a DSC had to be used in manual. The irony being this 'backup' shunt had some issues which needed to be resolved before it was operational thus causing further delays. Many thanks



to loco services for sorting these problems out. Of course it's not ideal especially as they normally come out of Dunedin which is over two hours away.

Timaru could be considered peculiar in many ways but rail-wise we're pretty unique in having to use mule vehicles for shunting which makes the dust even worse. For most of last year HASAT was told there was pretty well nothing which could be done about the dust other than using protective equipment but it now looks like that view may have changed. A solution is being worked through and will be in place soon. Watch this space.

In some more positive news at the end

of last year RCO Grant Gooding celebrated 40 years in rail and earlier this year team leader James Turnbull was recognised for his 10 years in the industry. Both are great operators in their specific fields and are two quality characters. We also welcome a new member to the team, Caitlin Bartley, a trainee RO who started recently and is under the excellent tutelage of serial minder Gavin Curragh. On asking around it seems Timaru has never had a female working in the yard so a bit of history there – and about time too.


With the departure of our former manager a secondment to fill the gap has been taken up by team leader Bernard Fox. He has previously been a caretaker manager and

one who is well respected by the team. He has worked his way up within the industry and has hands-on knowledge. I'm not alone in hoping Foxy will be made the permanent manager as he is firm but fair with real empathy for the workers.

This year looks tough economically with the cost of living continuing to rise along with interest rates.

It's a great time to look at your spending and talk to specialists if need be. Don't forget if things are a bit tough EAP services are there to help.

Sometimes just talking can help. All the best until next time.

Kia kaha. 

TIMARU PORT

Contract extends port operations for a further six years

A PART from the weather in the north hopefully everyone has had a good start to the year.

Things are moving here in Timaru. A contract has been signed allowing the operations at Timaru container terminal to continue for a further six years until 2030. This is a positive sign for the workers and also the wider region, proving that the


coastal vessels are a benefit to stable shipping services locally.

Our branch had a dinner outing and all non attending members were given gift cards so as not to feel excluded. This was received well by the membership and we are planning regular outings to boost morale.

We have been notified by management that our proposal to move towards saliva

testing for impermanence testing has been approved as the preferred method. This is a step forward and far less time consuming than existing urine sample testing.

Aside from that we are looking forward to seeing progress with the FPA agreements and hearing what ramifications it will have on our industry as a whole.

Thanks for reading. Stay safe 

OTAGO RAIL

Call for discussion promoting paid, call-out rosters

GREETINGS from the Otago Rail branch of the mighty RMTU. By now the Christmas holidays are a distant and pleasant memory. Once again a trusty bunch of members have taken control of the wheel of the good ship KiwiRail and worked through the vacation so that their comrades could enjoy Christmas with their families. A huge thanks from those of us who had time off. From the employer nothing. It's probably well past time for a financial reward for those who make this sacrifice.

This brings back into focus the need for a paid call-out roster for all who participate in such rosters. At the moment it is catch as catch can, but it is well known the brief for the help desk is to keep ringing until you get someone to attend the call-out. (No fault

on their part they are only doing what they are instructed to do).

There is a certain amount of overt pressure to attend by anyone who happens to answer whether they are on call or not.


This impacts especially in the summer for our track members who have to do heat runs rather than be with their families, preferably at the beach, especially if they are the only driver in the family. That is one example but this scribe knows of members who miss birthdays, school events, and other important milestones due to being 'called out'.

If nobody attended these faults I am sure there would be a quick change of heart by KiwiRail management and money would be suddenly available. However, the next argument would be the rate of payment.

At the time of writing there seems to be plenty of money in the KiwiRail coffers. By the time this edition of the world famous *Transport Worker* is on the smoko table there will probably be a change.

The employer may much to say about the upcoming wage round with their usual cries of poverty, no money and cannot afford it.

And still the large corporate contractors will have their snouts in the trough rather than our members who are carrying out all of the core rail duties.

There is a perception that we sold ourselves short during the last wage round, and if you are in that camp, attend your branch meetings and make sure you are heard. That is how your Union works – YOU MAKE IT WORK! 

Seizing the opportunity



One of Port Nelson's Liebherr cranes at work and (inset) Te Haina Kupa - training to drive one.

THE HAINA KUPA is 25 years old and made the move to Port Nelson one year ago as a supervisor to extend the experiences and skills she had accumulated over the years.

At the very beginning she learnt being a woman in industry was praised and encouraged.

"There is not much gender diversity in our ports," she said. "I wouldn't have been able to become ISO's first female digger driver in Napier if it weren't for that fact. In my experience, my accomplishments were my teammate's accomplishments. The camaraderie and the culture have everything to do with why a lot of men and women, young people out of school and much older adults continue to work in such a broad industry."

Te Haina's words show wisdom beyond her years and show she is a great acquisition for Port Nelson.

She is currently training to be the first woman driver of a Liebherr mobile harbour crane operator (LHM) in Port Nelson. These mobile harbour cranes are involved in cargo exchange on container vessels.

Port Nelson runs three generations of cranes – two of them are LHM 400s which are over 20 years old and have been the port's workhorses for a long time. The other two are an LHM 550, just over ten years old, and a LHM 600 which is about 18 months old. Port Nelson also features a state-of-the-art LHM simulator to help train crane operators.

When asked why she wanted to become a mobile harbour crane operator she said:

"When I was introduced to such a huge and scary machinery, I didn't want to at first. But I received encouragement from many people who saw I could do it. It changed my attitude into something positive. I wouldn't have thought previously that I could be training to be a mobile harbour crane operator. My time at the port has always given me endless possibilities. Time goes by quickly when you're consistently up skilling and having fun. The number of lifetime friends I've made, the number of skills I hold, the experiences I've had has made the difference in my life. I don't think I will be changing careers any time soon." 🇳🇿