

THE TRANSPORT WORKER

MAR 2024

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



KiwiRail's newest tradespeople



8&9 COUNCIL REPORTS



Both the MCC and KNIC report back from recent meetings revealing full workloads

14 A MIRACLE



After falling 11 metres Myles Dyeming made an awesome recovery from near crippling injuries. So pleased to see his recovery.

16 ACC TAKEN TO TASK

After repeated rejections for a workplace injury Graeme Whittle together with RMTU lawyers has beaten the barstards!



COVER PHOTOGRAPH: A line up of new tradespeople recently graduated at Hutt Workshops. See story opposite.

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Todd Valster
General secretary
RMTU

The pendulum swings

WELCOME to the first edition of *The Transport Worker* 2024.

Many of us were devastated when the new Coalition Government announced, just prior to Christmas, they would refuse further funding for the Wellington and Picton ferries, the terminals and all related infrastructure. The current Picton Terminal is a large temporary tent. The Wellington arrivals terminal is also a tent. Significant terminal infrastructure upgrades were happening in both Wellington and Picton in preparation for the new larger ferries. This is now all on hold.

The announcement the new rail ferries would not be funded caught many by surprise – including KiwiRail.

The negative outcomes from both these decisions will last decades.

The cost to break contracts for the infrastructure upgrades with contractors and the ferry manufacturers is huge – probably in the hundreds of millions! Some say it may be up to \$1b for what? Fresh air? We will be left with terminals which should be condemned and three ageing ferries – very near the end of their economic lives.

In addition to the financial costs, New Zealand's reputation will be damaged by the cancellation of the ferry building contacts at such a late stage.

Since the return of Peter Reidy as CEO of KiwiRail, he has been telling us his plan is to 'connect, build and grow'.

Is the inter-island rail link doomed?

Without rail-enabled ferries the rail connection between the South and North Islands would be gone in the near future. Funding uncertainty would make building difficult and growth will be stunted.

KiwiRail engaged a management consultancy firm – McKinsey. We met with their representatives and made it very clear, we would not support any reduction in health and safety at KiwiRail.

KiwiRail cannot build and grow doing the same as it has done for the last two decades. I am informed KiwiRail is the largest users of rental cars in New Zealand. These rental cars make no money at all but increase risks to KiwiRail workers.

We told McKinsey, a train plan which eliminated or drastically reduced the use of rental cars is urgently needed.

The new Coalition Government has also recently sent out their draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport.

There are concerning numbers for future rail funding and a change from how rail is funded. A table in the GPS shows the lower range of funding goes from \$360m in 2025/26 down to \$20m in 2026/27.

More funding may be available but it will be back to cap in hand approach.

The draft GPS can be found at:

<https://shorturl.at/hkGHL>

TRAC – a rail advocacy collective – recently visited the RMTU Wellington office. TRAC has been provided information they sought from Waka Kotahi under the Official Information Act in regards to the NZTA annual revenue from road users.

For the 2022-23 period – the latest figures available – the report indicated all vehicles under 3.5 tonnes paid \$1.892 billion while vehicles over 3.5 tonnes paid just \$785 million.

That means heavy vehicles paid about 28% of road maintenance costs leaving motorists to pay the remaining 72%!

We know heavier and longer road transports are the main reason our roads are in such a poor state. Meanwhile motorists are called upon to subsidise those very transports.

We need successive Governments to accept it is not 'road versus rail' we need the whole thought-out package of road, rail and coastal shipping. These three modes need to work together to improve transport in New Zealand and to provide resilience when individual modes are disrupted.

Finally, train controllers assembled recently (see page 3) at a very pleasant event attended celebrating 50 years of service. John Maurice and Matthew Manhire's family member and past and present colleagues joined in congratulating them both. Thank you. 🌐

Top apprentices



Some of the graduates with their family and friends at the presentation ceremony

NZ Rail and NZ Post used to provide tradespeople for their industries and also for other industries in New Zealand and beyond. Many of us will have relatives and colleagues who trained at the various Railway workshops. While for many decades there were very few apprentices in Rail, that trend has changed and Hutt Workshops has been supporting an apprentice programme.

On the front cover are (l to r) Leonardo Di Fulvio, Chris Pawson, Ken McLay (sponsor manager), Carey Stoneham, Tyrus Irvine, Bevan Warwick (apprentice Liaison), Gabriel Stewart and Rosie Bass-Holland (one was absent that day).

These are recently graduated apprentices and now, tradespeople.

A lunch with presentations was held at the Workshops in late February. The new tradespeople's family and friends were invited and after the lunch were taken on a tour through the Workshop. Each new tradesperson was grateful for the support they received from Ken Bevan and each other. Well Done! 🌐

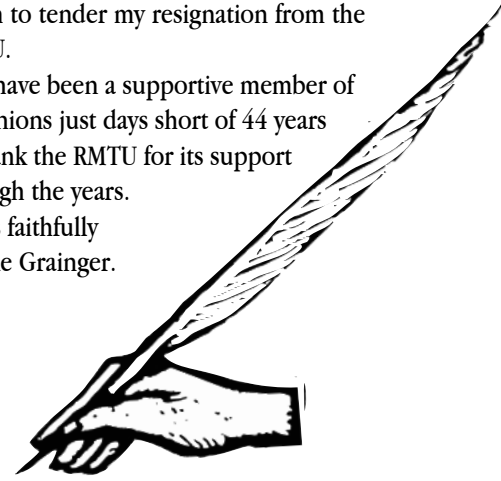
Retirement

Dear Editor,

As I have accepted medical retirement from KiwiRail, effective from the 29/02/24, I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU.

I have been a supportive member of rail unions just days short of 44 years. I thank the RMTU for its support through the years.

Yours faithfully
Neville Grainger.



Ticket revoked

Dear Editor,

As you are aware my LE certification has been revoked on medical grounds. Today February 23 2024 is my last day of service with Transdev Wellington.

Please accept my resignation from the RMTU after almost 13 years of driving passenger trains on the Wellington Metro network.

The time since I started as an LE in June 2011 seems to have flown, with many changes including fleet modernisation and improvements to infrastructure which remain ongoing.

Among the things I will miss is the camaraderie and support for one another that exists in the TDW workplace. Not so much for the early morning shift starts or late night shift finishes.

My thanks also for the help, support and guidance the RMTU has provided in dealing with my recent medical issue which has resulted in loss of my LE certification. I have no issues with the manner in which the matter has been dealt with.

I believe the region's passenger rail network has a bright future.

I have for the most part enjoyed being part of this essential service and wish those who will serve into the future all the best.

Warren Tatham
Johnsonville.

Two life members of the RMTU recently received awards for their services to the rail unions and to services to their fellow workers - a rare enough occurrence to merit mention in this magazine. Edgar Spark is now a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit while Ross Wilson received a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Staunch advocate for rail workers' rights

EDGAR SPARK (PICTURED) has the longest serving record of attachment to the Rail and Maritime Transport Union. He joined rail in Auckland in 1959 and still proudly extols the Union's virtues 65 years later from his home in Paekakariki, north of Wellington.

He received the New Zealand Order of Merit for "services to railway unions" though he sees it more for the work he has done among railway workers to improve their 'lot'. He can still frequently be found popping into the RMTU head office and at Union functions often with his wife, Noline, who he met on the job at 19.

Edgar was a member of the Railway Officers' Institute and was its general secretary in 1991 when he fronted the move to combine the-then three railway unions into one - the Combined Union of Railway Employees - and four years later in 1995 helped with the merger to the Maritime Workers Union to form the current Rail and Maritime Transport Union.

He told *The Transport Worker* that he didn't see the honour as a personal recognition but "one which honoured the work of all the railway workers I served with. After all, it is by their grace and solidarity I gained the positions I did."

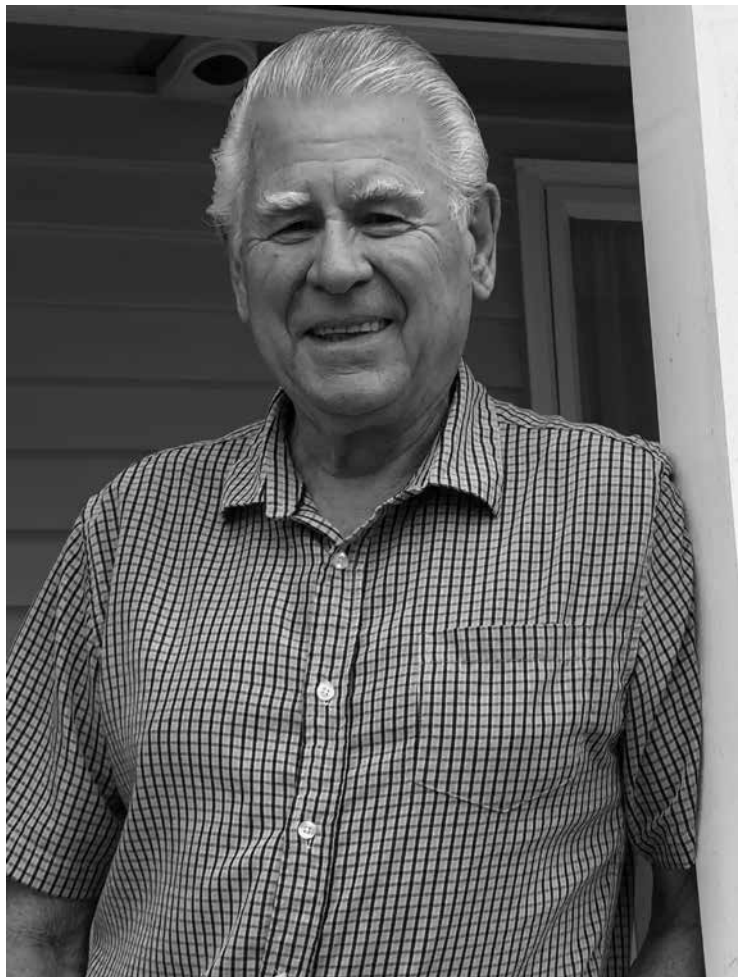
However, he added, it was "good to be recognised for some of the things that I've been associated with".

For more than 60 years he has been a staunch advocate for improving the rights and conditions of railway workers and has continued that work into retirement with positions on boards and organisations which pursued the health and wellbeing of rail workers. .

Two among them were the New Zealand Railways Appeals Board and as general secretary of the Railway Officers Institute.

Key to his success was his focus on helping people in difficulty and applying the Union's weight to seek justice and fairness.

"Whatever the difficulty may be," he told *The Post*, "the individual ended up having a full life because the Union helped. Those are the things that give you the best buzz and hey, it's not very often you see a union person in the honours list." 🌐



**"Hey, it's not very often
you see a union person
in the honours list."**

Passionate about work safety

DESPITE his anti-monarchy leanings ex RMTU general secretary Ross Wilson sees his recent New Year Honour as a win for the unions.

He believes this is recognition of the struggles workers have endured to gain healthy, safe and secure work and a recognition of the work of unions, rather than himself an individual.

He told The Post he felt a little "awkward" getting it because the 40 years of his working life has been immersed in the the work of the trade union movement.

"So I'm kind of a bit inseparable from the work of unions."

The award, Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, recognises his services to the trade union movement and workplace safety - roles Ross has been intimately involved with his entire working life.

Ross was the Rail and Maritime Transport Union's first general secretary taking the reins when the Combined Union of Railway Employees merged with the Maritime Workers Union to become the RMTU in 1995.

He nurtured the Union through those early years until becoming president of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions in 1999.



During and since those two roles he has been at the fore front in seeking to mitigate and improve the conditions for railway workers and workers in other industries.

He recalls some very distressing casualty figures while representing the National Union of Railway Workers one of his clients at a law practice in Wellington "with shunters losing limbs and lives" – almost a daily occurrence he says. It was this seemingly never ending death and injury toll which spurred him to try and get to the bottom of

it by working more closely with the union.

Since his leadership the death and injury toll has steadily decreased starting from his leadership through to today - two GS's later.

From the 1970s, he led union campaigns for an improved ACC, and was ACC deputy chair from 1986 to 1991 and chair from 2007 to 2009.

He was also the founding chair of Unions Aotearoa International Development Trust (UnionAID), and served as chief technical adviser for the International Labour Organisation in Myanmar in 2012/2013.

As deputy chair and chair of WorkSafe NZ, he played a key role in bringing together government, business, union and iwi to support new legislation and regulatory frameworks to improve workers' safety and health.

"I feel very passionate about health and safety, accident entitlements for injured workers and collective bargaining rights for workers to improve their pay and conditions," he told The Post.

"Those values I hold very dear, and at times it's been a struggle for everybody, so an individual is unlikely to achieve much." 🌐

PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

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The plan has an external administrator and contributions are invested with four fund managers.



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Retirement
Plan**

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Product Disclosure Statement from our website:
www.portsretirement.org.nz

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

International Women's Day




KIA ORA brothers and sisters, and a big thank you to all that have supported the women's fundraisers for International Women's Day and WIMDOI Conference (Women In Male Dominated Occupations and Industries Conference).

RMTU and MUNZ women have paired up this year for International Women's Day and will be in Christchurch at the NZ Railway Flats the weekend of March 8. It's really good to see two big unions coming together all in the name of WOMEN!!

WIMDOI will be in Cairns Australia this year from May 6 to 9. We look forward to seeing our Australian sisters again and for some of us meeting them for the first time. This conference is a great opportunity to meet like minded women and gain knowledge and skills to use back in our workplaces and become part of a global network of working women in male dominated occupations and industries.

Take care and stay safe.

I kotahitanga – In unity. 



\$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.**

To have an AIL representative deliver your certificate of coverage and explain additional insurance coverage available:

Reply online: ailnz.co.nz/request





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).



iPhone users – open the camera and point it at the code. Android users please download QR & Barcode Scanner from the Play Store

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Workers' Memorial Day - Apr 28

APRIL 28 is International Workers' Memorial Day. On WMD we 'remember the dead and fight for the living'. This message has never been more critical, especially in light of the recent slashing of millions of dollars of budget and staff from Worksafe NZ.

It's important to remember WorkSafe's genesis came in the wake of 29 workers being killed at work in the Pike River tragedy. The subsequent taskforce inquiry identified a weak regulator (the old Department of Labour), weak health and safety law (the old health and safety legislation), and a lack of workers voice in health and safety as main contributors to NZ's woeful health and safety performance. The progress of the last 10 years since the inception of the new Health and Safety at Work Act, and the introduction of WorkSafe is under threat by the coalition Government. The Act/Nation/NZ First coalition agreement promises to "Reform health and safety law and regulations". In the hands of this Government the implications are chilling, and may spell a



watering down of the legislation, particularly with respect to the rights of workers and their H&S reps.

Our industry needs strong regulators to set and enforce standards. At KiwiRail, a worker is injured every 53 hours on average. This is an improvement from last year, where a worker was injured every 30 hours on average.

In ports, there have been 18 deaths of workers from 2012- 2022.

The most common causes of deaths in ports are falls from heights and being crushed by or between vehicles or other machinery, or cargo. Port workers in NZ are injured twice or three times as often compared to the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

WorkSafe reports that Maori workers on


average are seriously injured at a rate of 55% higher than non-Maori across all industries and sectors nationally. This is partly due to high numbers of Maori worker in high-risk occupations such as forestry, construction, manufacturing, transport and agriculture.

Union delegates and health and safety reps lead the challenge for safer and healthier

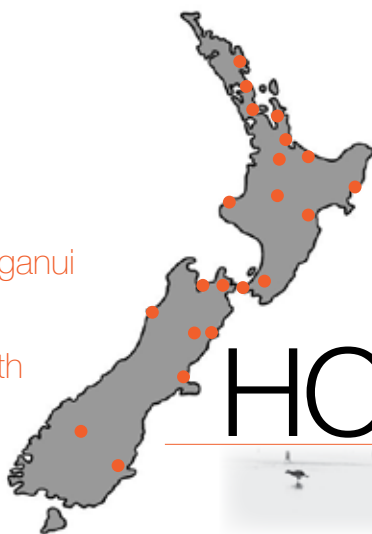
workplaces. The international evidence says that unionised workplaces are 30% safer than non-unionised workplaces. This is in part due to workers having confidence they'll be protected if they raise issues.

In October this year the RMTU and KiwiRail will hold elections for over a 100 H&S reps across the country to join the health and safety action teams in their area.

Workers' Memorial Day events will be occurring around the motu on April 28, please advise the RMTU national office about your branch's plans to recognise the event.

More information about the H&S Rep elections will be available on the RMTU website shortly. 

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



HOLIDAYS



All current RMTU members are eligible to join after paying a Welfare Trust membership fee. Contact us to find out how.

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Your Welfare Trust has a fantastic range of reasonably-priced holiday homes throughout New Zealand exclusively for members. Take a look at our locations.



MCC at Hutt Workshops

THE mechanical council met on Feb 28 & 29 at the Hutt Workshops for two full days of meetings which saw a number of issues discussed.

The Union's concerns were around

the breakdown in LCCs around the country and the way they were affecting the function of the mechanical council. We also highlighted the lack of effectiveness of HSATs at the moment around the

country. HSAT's are a necessary step for worker participation in health and safety in the work place.

There were some concerns around new work-at-height platforms being used before they were completed. It was confirmed we should not work on any platforms which has not been completely signed off.

Day one was completed with a visit to the new Seaview stores facility – a big improvement on the old store at Hutt.

Day two kicked off with a tour of the facilities at Hutt with a focus on safety and critical risks. With just a few minor issues Hutt was found to pass the test.

Chief operations officer Siva Sivapakkiam then gave the team a company update which was not all doom and gloom. However, KiwiRail certainly faces some challenges as we deal with a new government and tough economic conditions. 🌐



Delegates on a walk around Plant 1.



Siva Sivapakkiam presents the state of the business to attendees.



The MCC hard at work!



KNIC reports back.....

WE in the KNIC have been working away on several projects. The National Train Control Centre (NTCC) ROM is nearly finalised and ready to be put to the RMTU membership for ratification. We hope to have this distributed and the results back before the next KNIC in May 2024.

Both parties worked together last year to define one of the trade certifications in the MECA and who was applicable and how they could receive it. This was tidied up in the national bargaining in 2023.

We have listened to our members and are now making an effort to define what a trade certificate is and how it relates to the job descriptions in pay scale 2.

We had a white boarding session (see picture) in the last KNIC and will build

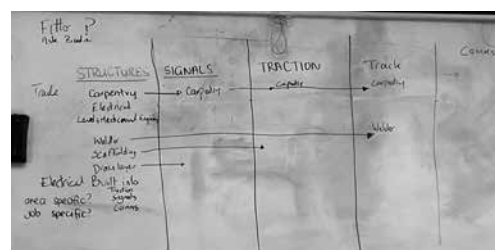
off of this draft to look at what (if any) other certifications could be recognised in these positions.

On our KNIC agenda we had three working parties prior to bargaining - working on pay relative, NDT pay and progression and OJT allowances.

Out of bargaining we were tasked with four more working parties as part of the terms of settlement.

These include reviewing the traction and systems controllers (CPP), reviewing the environment allowance, reviewing the methodology for payment of standby shifts, reviewing the Thermit welding skill and finally the applicability of this skill to the track CPP.

We also have three working parties using the HPHE model of engagement to



collectively look at how we can open up more track access windows so our teams can have good access to the network, best utilise that track access and our planning to utilise track machines.

The third HPHE project will look at establishing updated standards and creating documents that the signals relay repair centre staff, the signals and telecommunications technical committee and signals engineers can all work from. 🚂



Matthew Manhire and John Maurice - 50 years apiece!

50 years in rail

WE gathered at the Wallaceville Train Control Centre to celebrate John Maurice and Matthew Manhire's 50 year anniversaries working at Rail. Both John and Matthew told those who attended of their different journeys in before becoming train controllers. It was a pleasant event attended by John and Matthew's family member and past and present colleagues. 🚂

A PRIVATISATION

THE Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) has significantly impacted New Zealand's public transport system, including the rail sector. While PTOM aimed to enhance efficiency and service quality, its effects on workers and the overall industry have been a topic of intense debate.

Several critical issues

PTOM represents the latest iteration in a series of moves toward privatising public transport. It serves as a framework between government, councils, and private operators.

However, from the union standpoint, PTOM has raised several critical issues:

- * Private contracting of essential services to companies like NZ Bus, Go Bus, and Ritchies has resulted in stagnating wages for bus drivers. PTOM was initially designed to create an efficient operating environment for urban bus and ferry services. However, its application to rail has been more complex. The competitive bidding process often leads operators to prioritise cost-cutting measures, affecting workers' pay and conditions.

- * Rail workers, including train drivers, maintenance staff, and station personnel, have faced challenges under PTOM. Private contracting of rail services has often led to

stagnating wages and precarious employment conditions. The competitive bidding process prioritises cost-cutting, affecting workers' pay and job security. Negotiations between rail operators and unions have become contentious. Companies seeking contracts frequently propose wage cuts and reduced working conditions. Strikes, service disruptions, and delays have become common, impacting passengers and freight transport. Since PTOM's implementation, clashes in negotiations have become commonplace. Companies, vying for council contracts, frequently opt for wage cuts and reduced working conditions. This approach results in industrial action, cancellations, and service disruptions.

- * Many of these companies prioritise profits being returned to the shareholder – most commonly offshore companies. This raises the question that if the profits were not being syphoned off in this fashion what would be possible if this money had stayed in the country and been put back into public transport? Massive savings for the commuters?

Climate change goals and fairness

Our perspective extends beyond immediate labour concerns. PTOM must align with broader societal goals, including

climate change mitigation and fairness for transport workers. Despite these challenges, rail remains one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transport.

- * Climate change goals: The Climate Commission emphasises the need to more than double the mode share of public transport. Auckland aims to nearly triple its share. However, achieving these targets requires a robust public transport system. PTOM's focus on cost-cutting may hinder the transition to zero-emission buses and trains, essential for environmental sustainability.

- * Low carbon emissions: Rail emits significantly fewer direct carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions compared to road and air transport. In 2022, global direct CO₂ emissions from rail totalled 94.6 million metric tons, accounting for just 1% of global transportation emissions. Rail's expansion can contribute to overall emission reductions.

- * Electrification and efficiency: Electric rail, which accounts for over 85% of passenger rail activity and 55% of freight movements, does not emit direct CO₂. Urban rail networks, such as metros and light rail, have even lower emissions due to electricity-powered trains, lower friction losses, and high occupancy rates. Electric trains can further New Zealand's carbon zero goal by tapping into renewable energy.

Fair treatment of workers: Ensuring



ON EXPERIMENT

fair wages, reasonable working hours, and job security is essential. PTOM's current structure does not adequately address these concerns. The union advocates for a system that prioritises both passengers and workers, recognising their interdependence.

The call for nationalisation

In light of PTOM's limitations, we propose an alternative: Nationalisation of public transport services.

Here's why:

- * Cut out the middle man. Returning services to public ownership eliminates the profit-driven middle man. Direct public ownership allows for better coordination, streamlined decision-making, and a focus on service quality rather than cost reduction. With millions being syphoned out of public transport and sent overseas the question needs to be asked: 'what would the consumer be charged if the middle man was not clipping the ticket?'

- * Investment in zero-emission solutions: Nationalisation enables strategic investment in zero-emission solutions. The transition to greener technology aligns with climate goals and benefits both passengers and drivers.

- * Job security and fair conditions: Public ownership ensures stable employment

conditions for all. Fair wages, reasonable hours, and job stability contribute to a motivated workforce and reliable services. Nationalisation of rail services could provide better conditions and prioritise workers' well-being.

The call for strategic investment

We need strategic investment in rail to address existing challenges such as:

- * Electrification and modernisation: Investing in electrification is crucial. Electric rail reduces emissions and improves efficiency. Modernising rolling stock, upgrading tracks, and enhancing signalling systems are essential steps. Much of this work is already underway.

Rail expansion and climate goals: Aggressive rail expansion aligns with climate goals. The International Energy Agency (IEA) suggests that expanding rail networks can help achieve emission reductions. Rail's efficiency and low emissions make it a valuable asset in the transition to a sustainable transport system.

Conclusion

This perspective underscores the need for a holistic approach to public transport. While PTOM aimed to improve efficiency, it

must also prioritise workers' well-being and environmental sustainability. Nationalisation offers a path toward a more equitable and resilient public transport system.

While addressing labour issues, we must recognise rail's environmental advantage and the need to be able move citizens around this country efficiently and cleanly. Strategic investment, fair treatment of workers, and a commitment to sustainability will shape the future of rail transport in New Zealand. 🌱

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- Our World in Data - CO2 emissions from transport Now



Empowering transport workers

By Jas Giri (pictured)

IN the ever-evolving landscape of global climate action, the UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai stands as a pivotal moment, and the Union plays a crucial role in shaping the dialogue surrounding the future of transport workers. As we approach this significant event, understanding the importance of unions and young workers' participation and the potential outcomes for transport workers was paramount.

The RMTU's involvement in COY18 and COP28 was symbolic; it is a proactive step towards ensuring the voices of transport workers are heard on the international stage. Transport is a cornerstone of economies worldwide, and the challenges faced by workers in this sector are both unique and significant. From rail to maritime, RMTU members are at the forefront of transportation, making their participation in COP28 an opportunity to advocate for sustainable, worker-centric policies.

Four key outcomes for transport workers to shape a sustainable future

1. Green transition and job creation

COP28 discussions will inevitably address the global shift towards sustainable practices, including the transportation sector.

The RMTU's/ITF/ITUC engagement can influence policies that prioritise a green transition while concurrently ensuring the creation of quality, green jobs for transport workers.

2. Worker rights and a just transition

Transport workers face potential dis-



ruptions in their industries due to climate policies.

The RMTU's active participation can help shape policies to safeguard worker rights, promote fair transitions, and offer support for reskilling and upskilling programmes

3. Global collaboration for worker welfare

International forums like COP28 provide a platform for fostering collaboration.

The RMTU's involvement allows for the exchange of ideas, best practices, and strategies with other unions and organisations worldwide, fostering a collective effort towards enhancing the welfare of transport workers.

4. Inclusion of worker perspectives in policy formulation

RMTU's participation ensures the experiences and concerns of transport

workers are considered when formulating climate policies. By actively engaging in discussions, the Union can contribute valuable insights that balance sustainability goals with the well-being of those on the front lines.

Young workers and the Union's presence at COP28 represents not only the New Zealand transport workers but also a broader commitment to international solidarity. Transport challenges are universal, and collaborative efforts on the global stage are essential to address shared concerns. By participating in COP28, the RMTU joins hands with other unions, organisations,

and governments to create a sustainable and equitable future for transport workers worldwide.

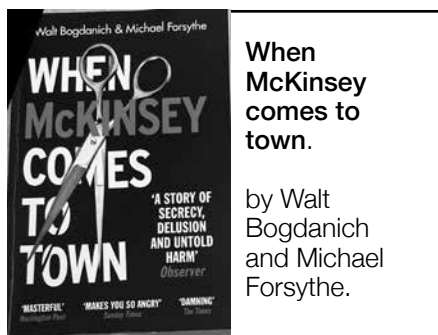
As the global community converges at COP28, the RMTU contribution at global stage, ensuring that the future of transportation aligns with sustainability goals while prioritising the well-being and livelihoods of the workers who power this vital sector.

The outcomes from COP28 have the potential to reshape transportation policies globally, with transport workers at the forefront of this transformative journey.

The RMTU's participation marks a commitment to a sustainable and just future for transport workers worldwide, ushering in an era where the industry's evolution is considerate of both the planet and its indispensable workforce. 🌍

• Jas is an ITF young worker and was the RMTU representative at COP28.

A warning shot for workers



When McKinsey comes to town.

by Walt Bogdanich and Michael Forsythe.

PROBABLY the first thing you are asking yourself is why does the *Transport Worker* have a book review? The reason is McKinsey IS actually coming to town and has been engaged by KiwiRail to look at efficiencies for the company.

McKinsey and Company is a management consultancy for many of the biggest corporations and government around the world. They have been central to many of the world's biggest scandals and yet very

few people have heard of them.

So when the *Transport Worker* heard McKinsey were coming to town it decided to find out who they are.

These are some reasons to be wary:

1. This is a company that moves in the shadows. They do not declare who they work for, claiming confidentiality and privilege. When things go wrong, they claim they only advise while charging billions.

2. They have a long history of advising governments many with poor records in human and worker rights which they help support while eroding worker and human rights while driving up profits

3. While offering ways to save money they often advised on reducing expenditure on maintenance, training and repairs resulting in harm to workers and the public.

This company has a poor track record in rail with examples from the UK and

South Africa.

Corruption and ill-gained profit follows them everywhere it seems and the unions lose.

Where ever McKinsey goes working conditions get worse, wages drop and workers are laid off.

Yes, they are here too. In NZ they have done work for government, Mercury Energy and Air NZ.

This book was written by two investigative journalists from the *New York Times* and is well worth the read. I have merely scratched the surface of the problems their consultants have created with very little consequence.

Don't take my word for it read the book for yourself. 

RRP \$30

- By Allan Addison-Saipe

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.

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Miraculous recovery

A lot of luck on road to recovery after 11 metre fall

KIWIRAIL telecommunications technician Myles Dyeming is feeling lucky to be alive after falling almost 11 metres from a telecommunications mast in the lower North Island.

Myles who's 60 years old and father of two daughters has worked for KiwiRail for 34 years, working out of Palmerston North depot.

The fall happened in October last year whilst Myles was fitting a new cable near the top of the mast. He doesn't remember the fall, but recalls waking up 10 days later in the intensive care unit of Wellington Hospital with vascular, spinal and heart injuries.

After hearing the news, Myles' sister Gail knew her brother would need months of support. She immediately left her job on the West Coast and flew to Wellington to help him. This included dealing with Work Aon (KiwiRail's ACC provider) who they describe as 'unhelpful' when they didn't respond to their calls or provide useful information regarding their ACC entitlements until a month after the accident.

Another challenge was transitioning from hospital care to home care. After a month in hospital, Myles was eager to be discharged and recover at home.

Gail, with the help of the hospital social worker, negotiated with Work Aon to provide home care workers and a hospital bed to help with Myles's back brace every two days. The back brace was needed to stabilise Myles's vertebrae whilst he healed.

Five people were needed to safely change the pads on the brace. Work Aon provided two care workers and Gail, friends and family provided the rest.

Gail described it as a huge logistical challenge. People travelled distance to help.

She's glad she was able to help her brother.



Myles Dyeming and his sister Gail Dyeming.


"Despite the circumstances it was great spending time with him and his daughters," she said. "It has made us stronger."

Myles credits his recovery to his pre injury fitness and the support he's had from family and friends but also the rapid emergency response by his workmates on the day, and the incredible cardiologist who treated him.

He said KiwiRail had provided fan-

tastic support including accommodation for family to stay in that was close to the hospital and a family liaison person who helped them in the aftermath of the accident.

Three months after the accident Myles is expected to make a full recovery and has started a gradual return to work on restricted hours and medically appropriate tasks.

"I've had a lot of luck" he said. 

55 years in rail!

A snap decision aged 16 led Darryl Hart into a 55 year career in the railways. Whilst wandering through Wellington Railway Station he spotted a rail recruitment poster and paused just long enough to attract the attention of Dan Shanahan, the chief station master, who spotted him loitering and asked if he was looking for a career in rail.

"To which I replied I think I am. So he told me get along home speak to your parents and come back and see me."

After a quick chat with the school's careers advisor and his parents that night he was back in front of Shanahan the next day ready to sign on.

"My dad worked for rail so I was already in that space."

In those days it was New Zealand Government Railways and he says it was the lure of steam engines that really caught his attention.

Sadly, he was too young to start down that path and was quickly aimed towards more mundane work until he could be reconsidered when he became 17.

Trouble was he wasn't alone and come 17 he was told the sector was over staffed and to return with his application in 1972 - four years hence.

Standing still wasn't his plan so he applied for and joined the permanent staff starting in the traffic division where he was placed aboard the Wellington passenger units clipping tickets – his first real job aboard a train.

The goods yard followed – as a "number taker" (now known as 'train build') – and by age 19 he was considered to be, in order of rank, the next senior man, through a quirk of the then-currant pay grades sys-



tem. This enabled him to claim a significant lift in pay.

In 1973 he married and was offered what was described to him by an associate, as an excellent opportunity in Woodville – at that time a much livelier station than it appears today.

However the reality was a lot less appealing than what had lured him in and he quickly high-tailed it back to Wellington joining the car yard for training.

He says a "few crashes later they transferred me back to the goods yard" where he was made senior shunter and a while later, a guard - again on the suburban units.

It was as a guard he was involved - though not responsible for - two memorable accidents.

The first one saw "the unit pass through a red light and crash into the rear of a goods

train from Paekakariki - just at the beginning of the Wellington yard – while in the second he was riding in the guard's van at the rear. The driver left the yard so quickly that by the time the guard's van reached the points it was travelling too fast to negotiate the turn. The van derailed and rolled over".

In 1989 he was one of the youngest people to be appointed to a foreman's position.

He ended his career as a team leader in the Wellington freight yard.

"I spent almost all my time in Rail in Wellington apart from the ten months I worked at Woodville."

In his time Daryl worked for five railway companies and along the way collected and kept an enviable bevy of railways mementos – all of which were destroyed in a devastating fire at his home just

over two years ago.

"There was a fault in the water bed plug which eventually ignited and smouldered quietly. I got a call at work from my daughter to inform me the house was alight. Apparently the smouldering switch had spread throughout the morning without flames, just smoke, until the fireman opened the front door and the whole lot took off. he said.

"The fireman said you would have thought with a mattress full of water over the fire it would have self extinguished!"

After almost a lifetime in one industry all his memories were gone in a flash - family albums, news clippings, letters, everything including his treasured clothing all sporting one of five rail company logos. Irreplaceable! 🚂

ACC offers cold shoulder to rail worker rejected and beaten

TRANSDEV Wellington locomotive engineer Graeme Whittle (pictured) injured his left shoulder closing a train cab door.

An LE for 22 years and 41 years in the rail industry as a train examiner. Graeme drives the Matangi EMU services from his depot in Paekakariki.

In May of 2019 while driving a service to Johnsonville and changing ends at Johnsonville he went to close the cab door while seated and felt his left shoulder strain.

"When I got back to Wellington, I completed an injury form and reported the incident to my team leader," he told the Transport Worker. "My shoulder still felt sore after a few weeks so I was sent to the RMO who lodged an ACC claim with physio recommended."

In July 2019 he had an X-ray and ultrasound scan of his shoulder and referred to an orthopaedic surgeon for treatment – a fluoroscopic injection into the shoulder.

Reoccurrence

"I had three of these injections between September 2019 and May 2020," he said. "In December 2021 while applying a hand-brake on a rake of carriages I again felt pain in my shoulder and reported to my team leader as well as filling out an injury form."

Once again, the RMO referred him to the orthopaedic surgeon who requested a further steroid injection which ACC declined to fund.

With ACC declining further treatment Graeme contacted the RMTU for help. The Union's lawyer lodged an application to review of this decision in May 2022. In August 2022 an MRI scan on Graeme's left shoulder showed:

- Early osteoarthritis glenohumeral joint.
- Near circumferential glenoid labral tear with small posterosuperior para labral cyst.
- Small subacromial bursal effusion.

With the results of the MRI scan the



Graeme Whittle.

orthopaedic surgeon requested funding from ACC for surgery. It was declined in December 2022.

An application to review this decision was lodged 1 February 2023 by the RMTU lawyer and a report from the occupational specialist was obtained for causation of Graeme's shoulder injuries for the independent review.

The review was held via a zoom meeting between ACC, the RMTU lawyer, Graeme and the reviewer in July 2023.

In August 2023 the outcome of the

independent review was that ACC is liable to fund surgery to treat the injuries caused by closing the train cab door in May 2019.

Graeme had his shoulder surgery in November 2023 and is recovering well.

He would like to point out the importance of reporting any work place injuries to your supervisor and filling out an injury form, because even if at the time you may think it's just a sprain or a strain it could be more serious. He thanks the RMTU and it's lawyers for all their help with getting his surgery done. 🇳🇿

TARANAKI PORT

Looking forward to delegate training across the group

THIS is a new job for me and some big shoes to fill and still trying to get my head around being in this spot.


I've started off focusing on getting our branch communication increased to our membership and some processes worked through as we all know how tricky it can be across differing shift patterns.

We pretty much have a whole new delegate team and are looking forward to getting some delegate training across the

group so we can ensure we're doing the best we can but will run on passion, openness and enthusiasm for now!

We're already one session down into our collective negotiations. We've found some changes in management since our last round a year ago, along with some HPHE training. For a fair few of us, we have seen positive changes in the way we've come together this session which is really encouraging. Hopefully we will get through the process a lot quicker than the four months

it took last year.

At the end of this month, we will also have our second ever joint consultative meeting between delegates and management. This will provide an open forum to chat, clear the air and work through general issues. We have a long way to go to build back lost trust from the last round and to feel confident with open communication. However, it seems we're on the right path. One step at a time. 

NAPIER RAIL

Cyclone damaged rail slowly being repaired

A glorious summer in the Hawkes Bay as we roll into 2024. All our teams are back on board for 2024 and we are getting close to one year on from Cyclone Gabrielle, from which the Port Napier/Gisborne Line (PNGL) has had to overcome a lot of disruptions and heartaches which have become a not so distant memory as we continue working towards a resilient PNGL.

The 'make-safe' works continue to be completed with crews currently working in the Esk Valley to remove rail and sleepers which are still silt jammed and obstructing sections of land and corridor.

A continuation from 2023, the Ormondville Viaduct is taking on some much required remedial works to the running


beams to make crossing safer. The structures teams are waiting on the bridge draft plans to improve the wooden trestles, which will hopefully remove the speed reduction which has been in place for decades. Well done the Napier structures crews currently working away from home in the rain, hail, wind and sun – a common day on the viaduct.

A good turnout from members for the first branch AGM in January which highlighted some wide felt concerns among the teams which we all hope will be addressed in due course.

The end of 2023 and start of 2024 brought up some milestones for some of our branch members who deserve to be congratulated;

- Barry Hebberley celebrated his 50 year service milestone on December 10. Barry joined railways in 1973 as a junior porter under New Zealand government railways. From there he worked his way to the current position of Napier team leader. Barry has fond memories of working shifts in the Napier signals box at the tender age of 18 and would enjoy doing that work again if the opportunity presented itself.

- Stan Smith and William Rutgers have become LEs after completing all the required training and hours despite the setbacks of 2023.

- Blair Parkinson progressed to RCO which will be a welcomed skill within the shunting team. 

HUTT WORKSHOPS

Upgrade continuing apace and looking good!

GREETINGS from the Hutt Workshops and Happy New Year to all. Hopefully everybody has had a well-earned break since Christmas.

By now everybody should be in some form of 'cost-containment mode' whilst we navigate our way through a flattened economy with some difficult trading and income challenges. We at Hutt have tightened-up on our finances and transferred staff around the operation – even more to ensure we are focussing our talents (and

costs) more effectively.

On the upgrade front, the plastic covers and scaffolding had begun to be removed from yet another remediated wall of one of our plants to bring things up to code but also to tart-up the amenities across two 'plants. These initiatives not only look good for passing members of the public as they cross a nearby road overbridge, but also lift the accommodation standards for the staff.

It was interesting to read the CEO's email of January 16 indicating "a high-level

full potential assessment review..." to be taking place over Jan-Mar. This is of course nothing new and such reviews are carried out every few years (for a multitude of reasons). Outputs from such reviews are always interesting as they give some insight as to what information is collected by a company and how well (or not) it is used and reported. A last-minute rumour is that the assessing consultants are going to swing-by our site and interview some people. We will await the results and analysis accordingly.

◀ We are to host the Mechanical Council at the end of February and it always great to have a powerhouse of company-wide management and union representatives on-site. Such visits often involve a walk-around, and given the company's re-focus on safety, it is expected that a site safety inspection will be carried out to gain a new perspective through fresh eyes. It will also be an independent test to see how well our safety culture change is coming along by gauging the increase in professional and practical interaction between frontline staff and visiting leaders.

Our December notes referred to pending above/below rail management appointments. Now that that has occurred, we hope the bedding-in can begin.

We are awaiting confirmation of the changes within the Zero Harm business unit and announcement of how it is all going to work – some of the outputs from that sit across the workstream initiatives and I hope they will gel together seamlessly. That said, I hope the previously mentioned assessment consultants concur with our recent changes given that we were led to believe we were changing for good reason (where have we heard that before?).

As is often the case, the March notes are compiled just as the year is getting underway (mid-February) so these notes will be shorter than we would like however there will be more in June.

Several meetings have been deferred across the company so much anticipated updates will be later than hoped. It is to be noted we have had little in the way of weekly CEO updates however we do know there is a lot happening behind the scenes so we will have to remain patient and accept some communications will be later rather than sooner.

Finally, we have included a couple of pics detailing a couple of events: One was a contractor-related incident where a section of a cut-up Class 30 (aka EF) got tipped off a fork truck and hit the deck – the fork truck went up then came crashing down blowing a tyre or two with the force!

The other is an upward looking pic of the new mechanical inventory facility at Seaview. The palletised and loose assets are now stored in a far safer and environmentally friendly facility that also has oodles of space for the future.

The relocation of stock took place during our Christmas closedown period and is a testament to good planning and communication to the many little workgroups which volunteered to work-through to make this happen.

Well done team.

Until next time, take care everybody and work safely. 🌐



Inventory reaches new heights

Know your weight before you lift!



WELLINGTON RAIL

Forced leave over summer a bitter pill to swallow

I hope everyone has had a restful holiday period whether you have been lucky enough to have time off or have worked through – thank you for keeping everything moving!

Unhappiness over forced use of annual leave at Christmas has been prevalent amongst TDW staff. Frustration over the uncertainty as management flip-flopped over offering training or not and finally issuing of letters forcing staff to use their leave - if they had any available.

A somewhat bitter pill for some staff to swallow after their earlier applications for leave were declined and they had already made other plans.

News of a new electronic system for clocking on and off and managing leave and rosters appears to be coming to fruition with

the install of some hardware in the staff amenities. It remains to be seen if this will add an extra layer of complexity or not. Delegates are meeting to consult with management. This is very much an ongoing piece of work. Get in touch with your delegates if you have questions or concerns.

Plimmerton station has opened the new platform with the completion of the PACE project for a select number of services to use.

No alterations to the timetable as yet.

Platforms 8 and 9 at Wellington Station have had the switch lock removed and rail restored to original height so the full length can be used by the Matangi units once again, thus removing the previous tripping hazard, as well as numerous other changes over the holiday block of line.

Staffing shortages still plague Metro land with services reduced or cancelled on an ongoing basis. I feel sorry for the front line staff who bear the brunt of the passengers' frustrations. When will it end?

A reminder that TDW and HR members are going to be bargaining for renewal of their collective agreement later on in the year. Now is the time to be thinking about preparing those remits and submit them when they are called for. 🇳🇿



NELSON PORT

Bargaining chip not as sweet as expected

HELLO from sunny Nelson and happy New Year to everyone. As it is with us all, Christmas and New Year's holidays have been and gone, with very little holidaying being done for most of us on the ground in port, 'knocking the bastards off' (ships that is!) one at a time!!

We finished our collective bargaining just before Xmas, signing up for a one year deal only, with the second year deal on the table – it was certainly not sweet enough to entice our members to sign up for. Most areas have settled down well into the new agreement with the exception of stevedoring who are still going through the roster trial and coming up against the wall in regards to the agreed bargaining that

everyone would be paid to their highest skill level. This seems to be a lot more complicated than we had imagined it would be, and it seems that while most people are, some are still being refused the recognition for the skills they have. It has been frustrating times waiting to get everyone together again to move on with some resolution, to the agreed bargaining to be compliant.

Just over a year ago we had a terrible safety incident at Port Nelson where a stevedore fell overboard after a ship's rail gave way on the Maersk Nansha. It has been a year of Maritime NZ assessing the case and it is now evident that Port Nelson will be charged over the incident under Section 49 and 36(a) The courts will determine

the quantum of the fine to be applied to the Port. This could take up to six months.

On a lighter note, our Quaypack division specialising in loading/unloading containers and storage of product, mainly mdf, timber, wine and bottles, across three sheds totalling over 25,000sqm are certainly being kept on their toes with huge volumes of wine. Now with another new customer on board we require even more storage so are looking at adding more racking which could provide additional space for another 1000 pallets. This won't be easy with sheds already full but the team always seems to manage to find ways to make it work. Now that's unity at its finest! 🇳🇿

MARLBOROUGH PORT

Mourning the loss of iRex to port's future

HOT days have been had with water restrictions in certain places but beautiful blue skies are always

welcome here in sunny Marlborough.

As most of you know IREX has come to a halt with the government deciding they do

not want to continue to finance this major exercise a lot of us and our customers were excited about. However, the Top South

Media (Feb 8) published:

"For Interislander it is business as usual. We were always planning to run the current fleet until 2026."

Safety and reliability continues to be a huge focus for the team and we're proud to say that during December, one of our busiest months, Interislander delivered 100 per cent reliability with 94 per cent on time performance. For January we continued to provide a reliable service, closing the month at 99 per cent reliability and 93 per cent on-time performance."

They also published some Q&A to and from KiwiRail:

Staff are still working on site to wind up work in Picton. How many staff are working in Picton and how long do you envisage they will be there?

There are currently 35-40 contractors working in Waitohi Picton on wind down activities and associated works, including environmental compliance, health and safety, and marine mammal observing. As these activities are completed, the number of staff on the ground will reduce accordingly.

By its very nature, the temporary terminal was never meant to be a permanent fixture, what work needs to be done to bring it up to standards expected by KiwiRail to ensure passenger and staff safety and comfort?

This is a very comfortable and safe, fully functioning terminal building. It is modern, spacious and warm, with good seating and facilities. Thought went into creating areas where people can sit together or wait quietly on their own before boarding the

ferry. Our staff are the same professional, customer-focused people who are always happy to help.

Work is ongoing to strengthening the Waitohi Culvert, why is that so important?

As part of the wind-down KiwiRail is committed to making sure all sites are left safe and tidy and completing work that is already underway, which includes the Waitohi Awa Culvert.

This work was part of the original terminal design to both strengthen and increase flow capacity within the culvert, making it resilient and able to withstand future weather events.

The town centre is looking messy with diversions and unfinished builds. Are KiwiRail confident Picton can be restored to a standard befitting a port that brings in overseas tourist and Kiwi travellers?

We are ensuring that everything is left tidy and safe, and has no negative environmental impact.

We are working in partnership with Marlborough District Council and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi on next steps for the transport network around the Port. KiwiRail understands how important it is to get more certainty about the Dublin Street overbridge and is looking at this as a priority.

Is there any decision on what will happen to the old terminal?

Specific details of the wind-down arrangements are being worked through with our partners and asset owners. No final decisions have been made on the old terminal building."

Summer season

Our peak at the Interislander is starting to wind down with numbers ebbing as everyone gets back into the swing of things and children and teenagers are back at school, much to the delight of a few parents. With that comes a few of our summer staff who are heading to university or to jobs that they have managed to secure whilst working with us. A big thank you to the pool of staff we were able to secure over the summer, it has been nothing but amazing. Without your help we wouldn't have achieved the level of customer service we did – maybe we would have but it wouldn't have had that personal especially over the festive season.

There's still a level of high spirit and a lot of laughing here in Picton Terminal. It's a wonderful feeling when everyone is on the same page. You quite often hear the staff singing out loud along with the piped music around the terminal. It must be the beautiful weather!

On that tuneful note: "Be strong, stay strong and remember, we're stronger together." 🌐



CANTERBURY RAIL

New HR training manual reveals hidden surprises

CANTERBURY rail finished 2023 with the sad loss of two of our members – Peter O'Connor from the CT site and Tony Nickless a track ganger from Cheviot. Both members will not get to enjoy any retirement which is the real sad part for any working person. We wish to send our condolences to their families at this sad time.

On the last days of 2023 the branch found out our departed HR had written a new HR training manual on how to handle

staff and conflicts.

There was a mad dash in the new year with South Island members rushing to find if they had been given a chapter in the new manual.

The Union organisation gets numerous mentions on how they had saved life members' jobs.

These are people the said person would have sacked on the spot without any right to reply.

But also mentioned were the general

secretary, our organiser and delegate who were bullies and would not allow the HR's version of justice to be handed out.

The book on the whole is a complete lot of twaddle and not worth paying for but if you are interested there are plenty of free copies out there to read.

The new year since has started quietly and safe as this is being written and let's hope this continues throughout the year.

Keep safe and look after your mates. 🌐

TIMARU RAIL

Disappointing number of trucks avoiding rail

TONNAGES seem down for this peak time of year for us in Timaru, although volume south of late has been quite good while movements north have been very patchy to say the least.

Tonnage to Timaru Port is very low as well, after the bump a couple of months ago.

It's always a concern to hear major customers sending large quantities via trucks when we have the capacity to move it ourselves.

Let's hope this trend changes as service supply undoubtedly increases as the new locos come on stream.

On new locos there still hasn't been communicated a clear pathway forward for replacing the DSG shunt fleet. It would be nice to know what's in the pipeline to replace/refit these crucial assets.

On that, thanks to RikMacdonald from mechanical Dunedin for his excellent work on servicing and maintaining our G weekly. Touch wood, we haven't had any major issues for a while which makes a huge difference.

Earthquake remediation

Our gangers and networks have been booted out of their building due to earthquake risks and are having to work out of portacoms – a real upheaval for them which they handled very well.

A new building to house all of us is on the cards but it won't happen overnight. If and when it does we hope our input will be listened to and the new facilities will be

fit for purpose and future proofed. Some of the early ideas seem too small with a bad layout – but it's early days.

On the positive side the new Fairton container terminal (CT) site is close to opening which will move far more tonnage than the existing Ashburton CT site.

It's just a shame only one switchlock will be operational for the first couple of months of operation making for more complicated and time consuming shunting.

However, I know signals are doing all they can to sort the issue as soon as possible, thanks team. Also thanks to Xaviera Johansen our local RO/minder who is on the HSAT team, for his hard work and great input around the Fairton setup.

Beloved manager departs

Sadly ending his rail experience (for now) is our beloved manager Foxy (Bernard Fox), he received an opportunity too good to turn down so we wish him all the best and say hope you like the smell of fish mate. Foxy worked his way up from the bottom and had real empathy and understanding for us workers.

We can only hope the next person will possess similar qualities.

As the oldies (I use that term in an endearing way) make way for a younger cohort we congratulate Reon Drummond-Chiles and Kaine Sparham – former trainee LEs – who were signed off at the end of last year and are doing an excellent job.

Baxter Harris was recently signed off as

our latest RO, good stuff mate and Caitlin Bartley was appointed as a yard minder, taking on that crucial role and a bit of pressure off Gav Curragh. Jeramiah Lawry is close to being signed off as an RO, and it's a warm rail welcome to Ben Jones who started near the end of last year and Bryn Chambers who upon printing will have started his rail journey.

Well, finally we go from those beginning to a man getting closer to the end of his rail career (but he's not leaving yet!) Bryan McNally.

In January this year Bryan celebrated 50 years in rail, an incredible achievement for many reasons not the least the changes this industry has gone through in that time period.

As a team leader Bryan has a calming influence, is well respected and dare I say even loved. For myself being a relatively new team leader Bryan's wealth of knowledge and seen-it-all-done-it-all experience has been great to lean on plus he was always willing to help and was an excellent IT man.

To me he is like the father of Timaru rail who does his best to look after all of his kids.

Thanks from all of us Bryan for your awesome work as an employee and a person.

Please please stick around as long as you want!

That's all from the Timaru branch, enjoy the rest of your summer as winter is just around the corner. 🌍

TIMARU PORT

Welcome boost to local branch Union membership

SEASON greetings we hope everyone had an enjoyable end of year and managed to take a relaxing break from the busy year we have been through.

Farewell to Debby Green. She was a fantastic person who was always helpful with any situation. A numerous amount of times she had been contacted for office support and other logistical issues and it

was always a pleasure. Best wishes to her and her future - she will be dearly missed!

Also leaving our membership was long time member Mark Reardon. He was involved with this branch for 27 years and was presented with a certificate of appreciation in commemoration. Staying through thick and thin it is members like him which keep ours – and all unions – going and provides proof that union


membership and job security go hand in hand. He politely declined to go into too much detail about his experiences over the years. Cheers Mark, we hope you are enjoying your retirement.

With the amalgamation of the ASU and the RMTU we have gained 20 members to our branch from the local log handling company NFA. This has boosted our membership to around 50 members spread

across three companies. It's a promising opportunity to have the camaraderie and input at these meetings. We are yet to have a combined function to give everyone a chance to meet each other but we have so far formed an executive committee to share information and stay connected.

In the last few months we have had to mediate for a couple of members in company disputes. In both instances the outcome saw the members return to work. It is never an easy time for people going through employment issues, though the stress can be lessened with good support and communication. Another solid reason that union membership is important in our industry and current working environment.

Hearing of the MUNZ strike in the port at Bluff, a letter was sent on behalf of our branch in solidarity. Although we are separate organisations the work we do is the same and occasionally we have some interaction. We live in a small nation with a small group of port workers who no doubt will have some involvement with each other at some point. It was extremely positive the strike was averted by progressive negotiating and we are happy for them.

Thanks for reading. As always look out for each other. 

Open letter to MUNZ Bluff branch

To all affected members,

It is with sorrow that we learn of your upcoming strike action against your employer.

Being the final action to deny acceptance of unsuitable negotiations it is not an easy situation to come into.

We have been through our own issued action in recent years and support any other workforces taking similar action.

Do not give up. Keeping in mind the effort and dedication that all of you undoubtedly provided during the recent years of Covid.

It is downright disrespectful for the company to treat your members poorly now the horizon is clear.

No longer is it acceptable to agree to minimum pay rate increases in the hopes one day things will get better.

They will not.

We all need real world pay increases to live, provide for our families and

enjoy time spent outside of work.

We do not exist only to provide labour.

Matching increases to CPI or other inflationary rates, is a low standard which gives no tribute to the sacrifices we all make daily to keep our industry running.

It will take serious action and dedication from your members to change this and we encourage you to share your stories to any person or group you interact with.

Change will happen rapidly when built on a good foundation of support.

We hope that your company realises the absolute value of your commitment and makes a decent move towards providing you all with the respect that you deserve.

Keep us posted if there is any way we can assist you during this time.

In solidarity

Timaru Port RMTU

WEST COAST RAIL

Bouncing back from weather issue-related problems

GREETINGS from the Sunny West Coast, only a mere three meters of rain to be had for 2023! However, the West Coast has bounced back from weather issues which closed the line through the Buller Gorge last year and has pumped out the coal over the Xmas/New Year to try and catch up for lost time.

New TARPS have been put in place for the Gorge in regards to heavy rain alarms and checks but no real plan for how it will be implemented in real time other than the usual 'let's call out the ganger' which doesn't take into account them having a life outside of normal working hours. This will have to be addressed.

On top of this uncertainty we have had loco failures affecting services on both sides of the main divide. Recently the loading yard at Ngakawau has shown signs of age

and will need attention in the near future if we wish to keep loading coal as we are now.

On the upside, a brand new toilet has arrived at Sergeants Hill after many years of talk so we look forward to the promised one at Stillwater to replace the porta-loo that has been in situ for many years.

Our track workers have been getting on with scheduled work and Paul Thompson has moved to the dark side and taken the job of field production manager for the West Coast.


It will help having someone in the job who has a solid background in rail.

A fix is on the horizon for the signal fault between Jackson's and Rotomanu that has been in effect for almost two years and will be welcome relief. This has exposed the lack of foresight in regards to the signalling system on the Midland Line and one would

expect more of the same if the finger cannot be pulled on the much talked about enhanced signalling project.

In operations we have a lot of new shunting faces in the Coast depots and trainee LEs beginning the long process to get qualified.

It remains to be seen what will happen first, retirements or newly minted LEs. My money is more gaps in the roster and maybe we might break even, but only for a short time. Rostering of trains without wiggle room for late running remains a problem, particularly up the Buller and the amount of car running makes many wonder what is the point?

As always our members keep on keeping on and my message for the new year is the same as always: "if you think it is not right or safe, just say NO". 

OTAGO RAIL

Revitalised Dunedin Railways programme ready for latest cruise ships

KIA ORA from the deep south! Dunedin City and the economy is booming with the cruise ship season amongst us. Dunedin Railways is very popular at the moment with the tourists and summer holidays. The themed trains are doing really well, and getting a lot of attention from locals and overseas visitors. The Seaside, the Inlander, the quiz train, and the Victorian. Great to see Dunedin Railways coming back to life.

Team Global Express is keeping quite busy post Christmas and new year holidays, as well as the container terminal site with extra wagons being loaded out to go to and from Port Otago.

Hillside Engineering Workshops is getting closer for the doors to open on the assembly shop and main office buildings with the amenities. Our RMTU Union delegates are keeping their finger on the pulse with networks buildings getting under way. It is extremely important these buildings are fit for purpose as it's our members who are going to be working there. Keep up the good work team!

The rail yard is looking good and the traverser is pretty impressive. Talks of getting a shunt loco to ride the rails is in the pipeline.

Freight operations is still suffering from staff shortages. There are a lot of new locomotive engineer trainees as well as rail operator trainees which is really good to see, although it is an additional challenge to all of our staff working extra hours and training the new staff. And at the height of the high season as well. It is just a timely reminder for us all when there is a lot going on around you that if the work is not safe, do not do it! Keeping ourselves safe at work,

so we all can get home safely to our whanau and loved ones is priceless.

Take care and stay safe out there comrades. I kotahitanga – In unity 🇳🇿



Dunedin's new traverser



Otago Rail joined a protest in The Octagon supporting a peaceful resolution to the Gaza conflict.



Staff at the wiring workshop (Hutt workshops) with their H&S rep Lawson Rangitawa-Candy (4th from the left) and HSAT chair Kasia Kurene (far right) and branch secretary Myles Carter.

Gas fumes trigger a **RED** card at Hutt Shops

THE smell of gas from roof heaters at the KiwiRail signals wiring workshop at the Hutt Workshops site was giving staff headaches to the point they escalated the issue to the health and safety rep¹ Lawson Rangitawa-Candy. Lawson, in his role as rep, red carded the heaters – meaning they couldn't be used until they'd been checked and cleared by a registered gas fitter. He duly informed management about the issue.

A gas fitter was brought in by KiwiRail's service provider BGIS to inspect the gas pipes and fittings. They identified a number of issues;

1. The combustion fans were incorrectly fitted facing downwards, which was against the manufacturer's specification and likely contributing to the smell of gas.
2. The gas jets needed to be replaced. They were incorrectly using natural gas nozzles rather than LPG sized jets.
3. The LPG bottle station outside the



warehouse wasn't delivering enough pressure to supply the heaters, so new regulators needed to be installed.

4. Two liquid traps were installed to catch liquid within the gas.

5. Emergency shut off valves were installed.

BGIS said the heaters haven't been serviced for a very long time and were potentially not functioning safely and correctly. They needed to replace the following parts;

- All the burner's gas valve springs to allow LPG setting of burner pressure.

- Each burner's ignition/ ionisation electrodes and gaskets.
- Burner jets with LPG gas sized jets.
- Burner gaskets and combustion fan gaskets.
- Burner control as that was also found to be faulty.

Following the repairs, warehouse staff are relieved they'll be able to use the heaters again this winter, but have requested KiwiRail do follow up

fume (gas combustion) monitoring to check the air is clear of gas fume.

Lawson's pleased with the outcome, but concerned about how the original installation of the gas heating system was able to be signed off with so many underlying faults.

And why had the gas heaters not been serviced regularly?

The RMTU recommends KiwiRail review their use of gas heating to check compliance with manufacturer's specifications and maintenance requirements. 