

JUNE 2013

THE *Transport Worker*

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



Workers Memorial Day
Your union in action



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Stu Marsh from Lyttelton shows what can be done with determination.

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Ben Thompson plays at the WMD service at Hutt Workshops which was also the venue for Hazel Armstrong to launch her book on deaths in rail.

COVER PHOTO

RMTU members gather at Te Rapa to remember friends and colleagues on Workers' Memorial Day, April 28. Stories and photos pages 16 to 21.

The Transport Worker is published by the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, P O Box 1103, Wellington, Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Design and production by Mike Regan.

Printed by Thames Publications Ltd, P O Box 11-025, Wellington.

WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ

ISBN 1173-6488



Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

RMTU adamantly opposes ERA changes

FEEDBACK from members on the March issue of the magazine was huge, and we thank you for the overwhelmingly positive feedback. A very large number of you agree that KiwiRail is coming under immense Government and Board pressure to be profitable which is leading to bizarre cut backs in maintenance staffing, contracting out by stealth, public verbal attacks on workers' remuneration in Interislander Group (IG) and the list goes on. It was interesting that the day after the GM of IG attacked workers' wages and the need to cut cost the Company announced it was going to spend more than \$4m on upgrading the Kaitaki – a boat they don't even own!

Additionally, there was strong member comment on the Kaimai Tunnel issues exposed in the March issue with other occurrences and H&S concerns coming to light. All these sorts of events MUST be reported to us and preferably to the employer as well, ASAP.

This issue is another bumper at 32 pages and each of those pages is jam-packed with topical stories, reports and information. Members' responses to ANZAC and Workers' Memorial Day was heartening with full reports included herein.

Ominous changes mooted for ERA

Also covered in this issue is this Government's desperate attempt to curry favour with the employer elite by reverting to type and proposing major changes to the legislation affecting workers' employment. Not only is it attacking current collective bargaining rights and mechanisms but it is even going so far as to make the right to take a tea break marginal. Under the current law employers are obliged to provide a paid 10-minute break for every four hours worked plus a 30-minute meal break if you work more than four hours. This Government wants to remove these entitlements and replace them with a general obligation for employers to "provide reasonable opportunities for rest, refreshment, and attending to personal matters" appropriate for the duration of the work period. When these breaks are to be taken is, unless workers agree otherwise, purely at your employer's reasonable discretion. These changes will affect vulnerable workers, such as young people, in the restaurant, hotel, retail and food industries in particular. Removing these protections is a step backwards for workers, for healthy workplaces and for New Zealand. The changes to the Employment Relations Act were tabled a few weeks ago.

In my view, the proposed changes are a repeat of the failed neo-liberal policies of Governments of a bygone age who believed the only way to economic prosperity

◀ and the economic 'Promised Land' was on the backs of an enslaved and tightly shackled labour supply.

Another proposal allows employers to hire new workers at lower rates of pay and worse conditions and removes the rights of a new worker to be paid "no less favourably" than the collective agreement for their first 30 days. This current law safeguard is in place to protect new workers and give them a chance to find out about their rights and responsibilities. Removing this protection makes new workers more vulnerable. Removing the 30 day provision with the stated aim of 'enabling employers to offer less than the collective' has only one purpose: To reduce the pay and conditions of new workers first, and then existing workers as any collective agreement is steadily undermined.

Rail workers will be gutted to learn that one of the proposed changes is to give employers the right to "opt" out of multi employer collective agreements. This is a form of employment agreement which has served this Union and its rail members very well over the years. The MECAs have, for all intents and purposes, reinstated an award system for rail. Giving employers the ability to just opt out means that our members have lost considerable leverage and bargaining power.


It is becoming clearer every day that there is no light at the end of the tunnel for workers under John Key's leadership and ragtag assembly of taxpayer bludgers marching to the National Party tune. If we are to see NZ rise up out of the economic doldrums and raise prosperity then we need a change of who warm their bums on the treasury benches.

CTU's proposed changes

The ERA does need change. But that change must be to promote collective bargaining and to grow unionism. It must provide a framework of fairness to enable us to fight the ever-growing wage inequality in this country.

Some of the changes being promoted by the NZCTU to the ERA are;

- Genuinely promote collective bargaining and extend its benefits to a much greater number of workers;
- Improve reasonable union access to worksites;
- Narrow the range of reasons justifying a dismissal;
- Restore reinstatement as the primary remedy for a worker unjustifiably dismissed;
- Provide reasonable rights for employment to workers in precarious forms of employment, such as labour hire, casual employment and contracting;
- See film industry workers again have the same set of rights as all other workers; and
- Be part of a legal framework that would include improvements in paid parental leave, and recognise the right to equal pay including a mechanism to determine work of equal value.

In closing, I commend all members to read Hazel Armstrong's book *Your life for the job*. It chronicles the history of NZ Rail from 1974 to 2000. This time period covers my employment period with NZ Rail, Tranz Rail etc. It is familiar and brings back many memories, memories that we must all never forget. As Sara Shepard said "Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it". I promise you, we shall remember. 

Jack Neha remembered

Dear Editor,

I was sitting yesterday thinking about the service and how it impacts on everyone, not just me and my family. It is coming up 19 years since Jack was killed and I can not thank the RMTU enough for all that his friends, workmates and just people like you and Hazel that still keep the importance of his life alive. Please pass on my words to everyone and anyone that continues to work in keeping people safe and able to return to their families.

Donna Neha.

Accident resilience

Dear Editor,

I waited with baited breath for the TV1 programme on level crossing accidents and I was very disappointed in the content.

Charlie Pou came across as a cowboy and Laurie Knipe and Ken Collins as wanting forgiveness for something that was not their fault but they have both made it personal to themselves.

Every LE that goes to work puts their life at risk due to the many variables they can encounter on the journey. I personally have had four level crossing accidents— one fatal, two non fatal injuries and one non injury — and I have run over somebody. I do not wear these fatalities and incidents as a badge of honour but as an LE I have been forced to endure them unwillingly because of the stupidity of other individuals.

I would have hoped to see the programme mention that though your family do not physically ride with you at work, they travel the journey with you every day and there is an impact on them.

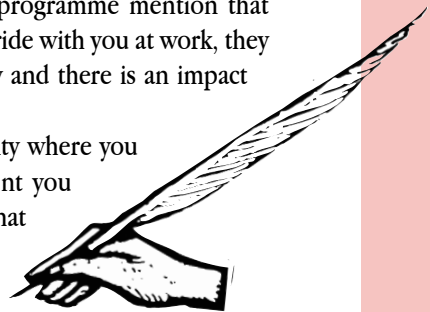
If you drive a train over the locality where you have been involved in a fatal accident you always look at the place and recall what happened. It never goes away. You keep it in a space in the back of your mind.

I do not (or should that be 'try not') to take my job home but the wife will probably notice a difference for a while after an incident and the children will probably hear about it at school. So how do they feel knowing this fact and that you never told them?

I believe I was extremely lucky to have had really good LE and LA colleagues right through my service up until ATC which was a terrific grounding for me as an LE.

I have had more personal tragedy than anything on this railway so I have a lot different attitude to rail fatalities which I guess softens the impact of a level crossing accident on me.

After 37 years in loco and being involved in all sorts of incidents on trains experience just kicks in and you do what you are trained for. A world famous LE in NZ made a very valued statement one day in the shed and I have never forgotten it. He said: "You take the risk you take the rap." That sums it all up in my view. Name withheld by request.



Energymiser heads up

Dear Editor,

I am a locomotive engineer based in the Palmerston North depot. I have been in the rail industry for nearly nine years and over five of those years have been in the capacity of an LE. I enjoy my job and I have a healthy interest for the environment I work in and view it as being more of a lifestyle than a job. In my opinion I would find it fair to say that most LEs would agree with this.

Recently I had one of our team leaders come for a ride with me to do a safety observation. After a little while we were looped to cross an approaching train and while stopped in the loop the team leader asked: "Were you stretch braking back there in that dip?"

I am aware that stretch braking is frowned upon by some, but that is in relation to their driving style and I do not need to point out that it is a part of our train handling code and is very practical when employed in the right situations. I know the team leader fairly well and I felt comfortable with him so I said "yes" and gave him my reasons for driving the way I did.

He then asked: "What will you do when energymiser comes into being? You won't be able to drive the way that you do, you will have to change."

I found this very interesting and my response, as told to him, is written here.

Energymiser is not something that I am looking forward to. I have had a great deal of exposure to this new driver aid and I fully understand the way it operates and the benefits for the company. I also understand that KiwiRail is trying to improve the whole system on a limited budget and I am aware that penny pinching and cutbacks are being applied to every sector of the railway.

What I am not happy about is that energymiser will be brought in as a compliance programme and I will be forced to comply with it. I will be forced to change the very way I drive. What I understand to be proper and professional train handling will be thrown out the window. I will be reduced to a mere person sitting in a seat following the prompts on a computer screen so that the company will save a hundred or so litres of diesel on a run to Wellington.

At the same time I witness daily massive wastes of money that beggars belief. Being booked on to work trains that are

not required is a prime example. Two of us were booked on for a ballast train one day. We headed to Otaki in a light engine and uplifted a rake of loaded YJs. I rang the ganger in charge and he said no ballast was required that day so we headed back to Palmy with the light engine and booked off with ten hours pay each. What a joke. Just the other day I ran a light loco to Whareroa for a car when another freight service left just three hours before I did. There are many more examples of such wasted time, effort and money including:

- Carting rakes of empty decks north and then south;
- A brand new loop being extended a couple of bogie lengths to fit in a milk train.
- Yard derailments due to track faults.
- Extra running time due to temporary speed restrictions; and
- Yards with track machinery rusting away.

So the company will no doubt expect me to change and adapt to save a few dollars of fuel. There is nothing in this for me, and if energymiser comes in as compliance I will none-the-less have to adapt. Energymiser fails to provide for any train handling whatsoever, so I will keep stretch braking in places where I deem it is required, keep serial braking instead of bunching and stretching the train on moderately length grades and stretch brake into loops so kids don't interfere with couplings.

However if it comes in as compliance optional I will happily choose against accepting it and I will continue to have the freedom to do as I see fit and to keep the operation of my trains as efficient as safely allowable.

We need to stand together on this one and we all need to be aware that energymiser is the single biggest change drivers will ever witness – and it is not a change for the better for LEs.

Adam O'Sullivan
Locomotive engineer.

WMD

Dear Editor,

It was good to attend the Workers Memorial Day services at Palmerston North as I go to them each year. I do so as my brother was taken from us on his day of work, and also to show respect to the work mates that we lost in and around Palmerston North. I was

very disappointed that there were no other RMTU members at the memorial service that I could see. Do we have RMTU members in Palmerston North other than myself? With thanks,
Ashley Ratahi.

Retirements

Dear Editor,

It is to be my pleasure soon to retire. I will be retiring on 26 April 2013 having reached the age of 65 years. I say thank you, also for the Union and rest of members of the RMTU.

Richard Taopua
Wagon Depot
Wellington.

Dear Editor,

I write this letter with much gratitude and appreciation for the work and guidance the Union has given me throughout my career with the rail service. I would like to formally thank the organisation for its mentorship, support, learning and development it has given me whilst as a member and as a Union delegate and representative over the past umpteen years.

As I transition from the workforce into retirement I reflect on my career and to those that have assisted me in my work and personal life. I very much consider the Union to be one of my poutokomanawai during my service with the railways. I write this letter to say thank you very much for all the opportunities and experience I have had as a representative of a bloody great organisation! I wish you well and the team as well as you continue to work for those who work for our communities.

William J Tamaki
(47 years membership)

Dear Editor,

As I have retired from KiwiRail from April 26, 2013 I regretfully tender my resignation from the Rail and Maritime Transport Union at the completion of 48 years 8 months service.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you, the president, vice president, the executive committee and all the staff at the RMTU head office and wish you and all the members all the best for the future.

Yours in unity
Ray Loper.

Stop, talk, evaluate, proceed

STU MARSH started his petition after cargo handlers raised H&S concerns about alterations to the current long cab straddles. The alterations shift the position of the cab further back between the legs of the straddle making them appear shorter. They have been labelled 'short cabs' for this reason.

Members at Lyttelton Port Company (LPC) were angry at not being properly consulted. They did not believe the Company had stuck to its own safety slogan. In just over three days Stu quickly gathered more than 100 signatures to the petition from fellow handlers and the container terminal managers were advised that the petition was on its way to their door.

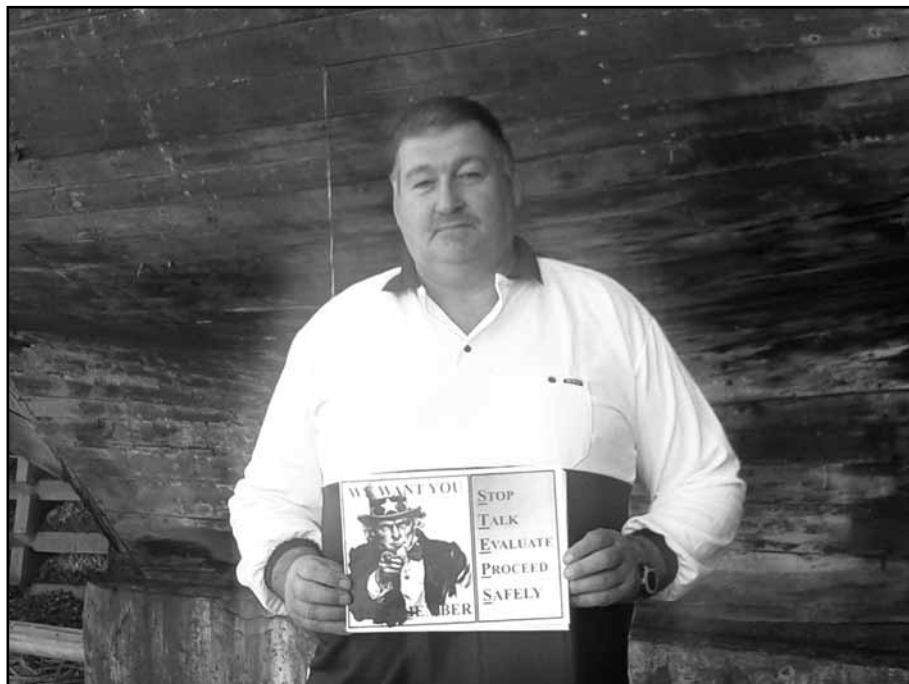
The petition called for LPC to stop alterations of straddles from long cab to short cab and begin a proper consultation process with the workers who drive them. It called for the reinstatement of a straddle committee with representatives authorised and elected by union members to represent their views in the consultation process.

The result?

One straddle that is in the middle of being altered to short cab is being finished off but no more will be done at this stage. Not only has a straddle committee been set up (which Stu is on) but a yard and crane committee has been set up too.

Stu's petition happily coincided with Joe Smedley, one of the container terminal managers, being appointed to project manage redevelopment of the terminal.

The speed with which notices went out from Joe's office calling for worker representatives to straddle, crane and yard groups



Stu Marsh, RMTU delegate and cargo handler at Lyttelton Port Company, holds the petition he organised calling for LPC to stop alterations to the long cab straddles and begin a proper consultation process with the workers.

was impressive.

Workers decided in their various work groups who would be the union representatives from their work groups.

The first meeting has been held and Stu's next project is ensuring that minutes are taken at each meeting and distributed amongst the members.

We congratulate Stu on great delegate action and talking to members and:

- identifying an issue;
- assessing if the issue is widely held and deeply felt on the job;
- assessing what the majority of people would be prepared to do;
- tailoring the action to the membership;

- refusing to be knocked back by the few naysayers.

We look forward to keeping you up to date on Stu's work.

Finally the RMTU branch secretary in Lyttelton apologises unreservedly for inaccurately reporting in *The Activist*, issue 6, that the cabs on the short cab straddles were smaller.

The cabs are exactly the same size. It is the positioning of the cab that has changed. Long cab, short cab – otherwise known as standard cab. Many thanks to Owen Jones, his colleagues in maintenance, and Stu Marsh for pointing this out to the branch secretary. 🌐

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I am retiring from KiwiRail on April 4 after 41 and a half years service on the footplate with the various companies and corporations which have owned us over the years.

I worked in the South Island all of that time and was stationed in Dunedin, Cromwell, and Timaru and enjoyed them all for

the majority of the time that I was there.

I will take this opportunity to wish the RTMU all the best for the coming years, but I still think the locomotive branch has gone backwards since the demise of the LEA regarding wages and conditions etc.

This job used to be a career job but now it is just a job with the majority of management not knowing what is going on. It's a

pity that we were not owned by Fonterra or managed by Mainfreight, then we would make some money for New Zealand.

Well its time to sign off now so cheers to one and all for now.

Alistair M Grant
LE,
Dunedin.

ERA changes will undermine wages and conditions

MEMBERS of this Union who foolishly favoured National in the last election, will be regretting their foolhardy ticks in the light of National's latest moves to undermine their own working conditions and pay.

Last month the Government introduced a new Bill (The Employment Relations Act Amendment Bill) which CTU president Helen Kelly called "a direct attack on the wages and conditions of those who go to work every day in this country".

The proposed changes, she said will "make it easier for employers to cut pay and conditions, increase inequality and make it harder for working families to get by".

A race to the bottom

RMTU general secretary, Wayne Butson, says the message is clear to rail and port workers. "If employers are able to opt out of multi employer collective agreements, a race to the bottom on wages is acceptable."

The rail MECA (Multi Employment Collective Agreements) covers over 3,000 workers who have fought hard and long to achieve the agreement.

"The government is sending a clear signal that they are happy for employers to try and opt out of industry standards."

He says it is hard to understand the National government's motivation in promoting a law change that will drive down wages as well as driving even more New Zealand workers to Australia – and beyond.

The proposed changes attack collective bargaining – the way in which unions negotiate with employers. Collective bargaining results in better working conditions and better wage increases.

The current ERA (Employment Relations Act) supports collective bargaining, but the proposed changes will do the opposite.

The CTU highlights three of the worst proposals:

It will allow employers to end negotiation when they like

Currently the law requires that employ-

ers conclude a process of collective bargaining unless there is "a genuine reason, based on reasonable grounds, not to". In the recent Ports of Auckland dispute this is what stopped the company's plan to sack all its workers during bargaining.

This change will let employers say they have had enough of bargaining at any point and there will be nothing workers can do. Equally, employers will be able to threaten to give workers' jobs to someone else while they are bargaining to force them to agree.

Removes protection for new workers

Currently a new worker in a workplace with a collective employment agreement is automatically employed on the basis of that collective agreement for their first 30 days of employment. It protects them from being offered inferior terms and conditions to everyone else.

This change will force a new worker to choose straight away, making them vulnerable to pressure from the employer to accept a worse offer. Over time this will undermine the terms and conditions of all workers. The Cabinet paper recommending these changes, signed by the Minister of Labour, says they "will enable employers to offer individual terms and conditions that are less than those in the collective agreement".

Make collective bargaining more difficult

One change will allow employers to opt out of multi-employer bargaining (where one collective agreement covers lots of different employers). Another adds lots of extra rules about going on strike. There is also a change to allow employers to deduct pay for a partial strike.

All these changes will discourage workers from getting involved in collective bar-



gaining and from being part of the union.

Butson says that union collective agreements have produced better pay rises than the national average year after year, as Victoria University research has demonstrated.

"All the government is doing with these changes is putting more barriers in the way of workers whose only sin is to have joined together

to improve their pay and conditions and to lift New Zealand's living standards," he said. "What happened to National's bright future?"

Kelly says: "The Government is hiding the real effect by using pretty words like flexibility and choice, but this Bill even removes the tea break. No one will be fooled that this is anything but a license to exploit working people. This law will breach our international obligations and the CTU will be taking a complaint to the International Labour Organisation about it. The Bill also puts some of our trade agreements at risk."

She added that working life was already hard enough for many Kiwis with many families struggling to keep up with the cost of living.

"This Bill will hurt these families more than it helps, and will take us nearly back to what applied under the despised Employment Contracts Act."

The CTU will be campaigning against these changes, and pushing for employment laws which encourage collective bargaining as the way to higher wages and productive and safe workplaces. 🇳🇿

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Join the CTU on Facebook - Fairness at work.

Talk to your union and colleagues about these changes.

Find out more at the CTU website www.union.org.nz/whycoutourpay

Auckland electrification

THE RMTU Auckland EMU working group has been actively involved in all aspects of the Auckland electrification project. The group, consisting of Isaac Broome (Veolia LE rep), Chris Harman (KiwiRail LE rep), Ray Gosai (train manager rep), Elliott Coupe (mechanical rep), Bernie Henare (Auckland branch chairman) and Bill Sweeney (NMC general rep) attended a number of meetings with Auckland Transport, Veolia and Spanish train builder Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF), since its formation in June 2011.

In this time they worked on the design of the new EMUs and the new Wiri depot, new signalling, as well as ETP and ATP train protection systems.

Through general good relationships with all connected parties they have had been able to achieve good outcomes for members including consultation and input

from members with various mock ups and getting feedback from members.

The new depot at Wiri for the EMUs is nearing completion, with handover to Veolia expected in June. Auckland Transport will own the depot and the EMUs, with Veolia operating the depot and trains on their behalf.

CAF will be responsible for carrying out their maintenance at Wiri as part of the 12 year contract. The depot will also house a training centre with two simulators. LE training is due to begin in August.

Other new EMU stabling depots around the Auckland network will be located at Henderson, The Strand and Papakura.


The Auckland suburban rail network will be electrified with EMUs operating on all lines between Swanson and Papakura. Diesel shuttle services using ADL DMUs will be used to serve the non-electrified areas.

The most exciting part of the project

will soon come to fruition with the delivery of the first EMU to Auckland, due in September.

Prior to this some of the RMTU working group will be joining Veolia and AT management at the CAF factory in Spain in June to inspect the first train currently on the production line to ensure that everything is present and correct.

CAF is based in Beasain in Northern Spain and has a long history and a good reputation for building quality rail products dating back to 1917.

The working group hopes RMTU members and Aucklanders will be pleased with their new trains which will come into service in the second quarter of 2014 bringing Auckland's public transport system into the 21st century with fast new comfortable trains which are clean, quiet and environmentally friendly – and much more user-friendly for staff. 



I & E gangs from different regions, joined together during April in Whangarei for a couple of structures projects.



ARE YOU A MEMBER?

NZ Harbours Superannuation and KiwiSaver Schemes



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

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



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

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

www.harbourssuper.org.nz



Murder by political stealth

The death of the Capital Connection

By Michael Nicholson

NEWs that KiwiRail (KR) has declared a two year reprieve for the Capital Connection (CC) is quite good, although it does not in any way suggest there is a future for this service beyond those two years if National wins the next election.

Both Horizons and Wellington Regional Councils commissioned a report and subsequently agreed to jointly fund two thirds of a tripartite package to keep the train running provided that the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) contributed a third share. This arrangement would have been a great result and an exciting example of inter-regional partnership – the first of its kind in New Zealand.

Unsurprisingly road-centric NZTA refused to contribute. The matter was then referred to the Minister of Transport, Hon. Gerry Brownlee where it lay silent for about two months. On March 29 KR made a surprise announcement that the CC would continue to run for two years and an attempt be made to have the service running profitably within that two year period – this without assistance from regional councils, NZTA or central Government.

Dr Hume, KR passenger manager, said: "In order for KiwiRail to break even by 2015, daily patronage needs to have increased by 61 passengers in each direction and the average ticket prices need to be 40 per cent higher."



This appears to be a sensitively arranged, politically directed and managed exit from the CC service.

Why didn't KR accept the joint regional councils' funding offer?

Labour's transport spokesperson Iain Lees-Galloway has successfully gathered strong public support regarding the retention of the CC train service which has made a positive point of difference between Labour and National.

The only possible explanation for KR's change of heart is through a political directive from the Minister. If National wins the next election the Capital Connection will

cease to operate very soon after.

Ideally the future for this route would involve the expansion of services and integration with the Masterton - Wellington rail corridor – a rail service from Palmerston North via Masterton to Wellington.

We all have a very clear choice regarding the Capital Connection service at this next election:

- Vote National and the train will stop soon after.
- Vote Labour/Greens and the service will continue with opportunities for improvement. 🇳🇿



Midland line 'ATC'* train operations review

(Clockwise from left) Murray Marshall KiwiRail (partially out of shot), John Bannerman RMTU West Coast branch secretary, Ian Walker RMTU Christchurch Rail branch secretary, Todd Moyles KiwiRail, Mike Williams Christchurch LE delegate, KIC representative, Murray Young KiwiRail, Alastair Cumming KiwiRail, Chris Stoop KiwiRail, Jed O'Donoghue KiwiRail, Mike Morgan RMTU Otira LE delegate, (back to camera) Fred Miles RMTU West Coast LE delegate and H&S representative.

* ATC - Single person manning

Successful rununga hui

Kia ora koutou katoa

From March 25 to 27, 2013 Te runanga o nga kaimahi Maori (aka NZCTU runanga) held its biennial hui at Te Hokowhitu marae in Whakatane.

The marae was established in 1923 and has connections to Maori soldiers who served in World War I. It has a proud history, the tangata whenua/ringawera certainly demonstrated their manaakitanga in the way they fed and hosted our roopu.

Around 14 unions were represented including the RMTU which was represented by national president Aubrey Wilkinson and Runanga reps Ray Brown, John Marsh and Sam Kahui. Komiti Pasifica rep Emma Teau of the First Union also attended.

Jo Kerr, an indigenous woman from Australia, and active member within the ACTU was one of our guest speakers and an active participant. We have similar struggles faced by indigenous peoples in the Asian Pacific region, and although we may find ourselves at different points along the continuum we can all learn from each other about different approaches taken and their relevance.

Globalisation, increasing influence and dominance of multi-nationals are things we share in common. Growing populations, climate change, weather extremes, increased demands on finite natural resources, water rights, and more.

We held a number of workshops which included taking stock of where we are now, recent successes and areas in which more can be achieved. This was examined at union level, industry level and across the union movement.

One of the significant successes of last year was the way in which a number of iwi leaders worked with union leaders to assist in resolving the AFFCO dispute. This has provided an opportunity for the NZCTU through the runanga to explore areas of common interest to positively affect the lives and experiences of working people.

In May this year, the CTU runanga is meeting in Gisborne with iwi leaders from



Ngati Porou where these themes will be explored.

Whilst the war has not yet been won, and the challenges for our MUNZ brothers and sisters at the Ports of Auckland continue, we believe we can celebrate the way in which the union movement, within NZ and internationally, can be mobilised to support these workers

during a time of great need. The fact that they are back at work and the conversation continues is a partial victory, particularly when contrasted against the port management's original proposals.

Representative from the left of the political spectrum addressed the hui including: Sue Bradford (Mana), the late Parekura Horomia and Rino Tirikatene (Labour), Te Ururoa Flaval (Maori) and Denise Roach (Green).

Three messages we took away were:

- The Maori option is out now, and has only a few more months to run. It will be another five years before you can choose which roll you would like to appear on. If all persons whom could choose the Maori roll option did so, there would be about 13 Maori electorates. Traditionally, Maori electorate voters do so in a left leaning manner and with 13 Maori seats, the Maori vote could easily alter the existing balance of power.
- Maori, Pacific and young people are believed to be a large part of potential voters who did not vote in the last election. If more of them voted for a Labour/Green led government we should be able to roll this Government in the next election.
- Political parties are now developing their policies, evaluating potential partners, trying to define points of cooperation and points of difference. If you have a wish list, or something you feel strongly about, now is a good time to make representation and/or get involved.

The hui was also addressed by iwi leader, Maanu Paul of the New Zealand

Maori Council (NZMC) who gave us a background of the organisation, its establishment, purpose and mahi which included representing Maori interests in fishing and gaining recognition of that interest by government.

CTU secretary Peter Conway reported on the work of the CTU, the runanga and affiliates over the past 12 months and outlined some of the big issues we are likely to face including:

- A continued focus on health and safety, particularly in forestry and other high risk industries;
- Proposed changes to the Employment Relations Act;
- Preparation for the 2014 election;
- Looking at Government procurement policy; and
- Supporting the Living Wage Campaign.

Long-time activist, health and safety campaigner and former timber worker Joe Harawira, updated participants on the ongoing struggles of SWAP (Sawmill Workers Against Poison). Joe and others identified that sawmill workers were suffering ill health from PCP and other toxins used daily at mills. Little to no personal protection was issued and hazards associated with its use were not communicated. Many former sawmill workers have died. The true impacts of these toxins on our communities are only now starting to be understood.

Since the hui we have seen the passing of former Minister of Maori Affairs and Labour MP Parekura Horomia. Our thoughts and aroha go out to his whanau, hapu, iwi, and friends. His tireless schedule has come to light for many of us since his passing.

Kua hinga atu ra te totara baimata mai i te wao nui a tane.

No reira e te rangatira, e Parekura, takoto mai ra, okioki mai ra, e moe... Katii! Nei ra matou e mihi nei, e aue nei, e tangi nei mou. 🇳🇿



Brian George Weatherall

14/1/1947-25/3/2013

THE Otago branch notes with great sadness the untimely passing of Brian Weatherall as the result of an accident whilst gathering firewood on March 25, 2013.



Brian started work as an apprentice fitter at the Hillside Workshops in January 1963 during what would have been the end of the steam era. After completing his apprenticeship he moved to the loco sheds where he remained save for a period at the crane depot until he left in 2002 as a victim of outsourcing.

Brian was one of the most skilled and expert mechanical fitters in the depot and provided a great wealth of knowledge and experience to all who had the pleasure of working with him. There will be countless apprentices that benefited from his expertise, tutelage and fatherly advice.

Brian was one of the more enthusiastic workers when it came to designing and building machinery and tools for his home use during the golden years of rail. It would not be appropriate to try and list them all, suffice to say he always had a project on the go to fill up his lunchtime.

There was not a more respected or friendly person with a wicked sense of humour to have graced the depot and his happy disposition as well as his affable nature never failed to leave their mark on those whom he worked with.

It is a tragedy that Brian's life ended so soon as he was just starting to get ready for the next phase of his life in retirement.

We extend our heart-felt sympathies to Margaret, Angela, Roger and families and take comfort in the fact that the world is a better place for his having been here. 🌐

John Kenneth Maguren

11/9/1947-1/5/2013

MANY knew John by his nick name 'Strangler'. He was a well-known employee, union representative, sportsman and friend who passed away at home with his family on May 1, 2013.



John joined the rail industry in October 1971 and spent most of his 42 working years in the Wellington freight yards where he progressed through the

ranks to senior shunter and eventually site supervisor. His interest in the union movement led him into positions within the NUR and RMTU and he was very well respected from both sides of the table.

He was a character in his own right and there are many stories surrounding his sporting and working careers. He will be deeply missed by his many workmates and friends. Our hearts go out to his family. 🌐

Register for H&S training

THE recent RMTU survey on the Health and Safety Action teams suggests many reps have not received H&S rep training to level 3. If you are an H&S rep you are entitled to attend the two-day training course each year up to stage 3.

To register please go to

www.worksafereps.co.nz

For registration you will need the company's ACC number and ACC industry code. Your local manager will have this information. If you need help call the RMTU national office.

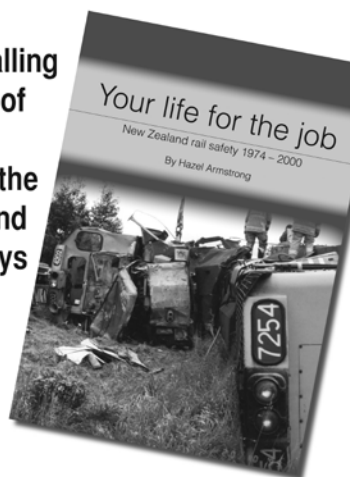
By doing stage one H&S rep training you have the option of completing NZQA Unit Standard 20198 – Identify the roles and responsibilities of the health and safety representative in the workplace. To gain the unit standard (worth 8 credits) you need to let the CTU know you are interested in doing the assessment. There is cost of \$115 and reps who completed stage one can apply for the unit standard retrospectively by doing the assessment. 🌐

Your life for the job

NZ Rail Safety 1974-2000

by Hazel Armstrong

This important book concludes that the appalling rate of death and injury of New Zealand railway workers in the 1990s is the story of de-regulation and privatisation. NZ Railways and Tranz Rail cut staff and reduced spending. Railway workers paid the cost with their lives.



**BUY YOUR COPY TODAY FROM
RMTU, PO BOX 1103, WELLINGTON**

\$15

Power to the union

DUNEDIN RCO Russell Storey is a committed RMTU delegate. When the RMTU mounted its campaign to save Hillside, Russell was one of the most active of our Dunedin members, encouraging his fellow workers, friends and relatives to get in behind the RMTU's efforts.

Russell's hobby is music, and when we held our Save Hillside rally in the Octagon in 2011 he made up a playlist of music to get the crowd in the mood. Across the disc he wrote 'Power to the Union!'. He was also very pleased to have got two bands and artists to play.

Russell is an RMTU delegate who is keen to learn and it's been great to have him along on RMTU courses over the last few years. He is willing to pitch in and share ideas and is always very supportive of his



Graduate Russell Storey.

brother and sister delegates.

So it wasn't too much of a surprise to

South Island organiser John Kerr when he received a message via Facebook (he understands the usefulness of social media in organising) asking about the ratification procedures for collective agreements.

He explained the reasons behind the question: he had nearly finished an NZQA level 2 course in employment relations developed by WelTech and the CTU and it was one of the questions in his last paper!

Russell had signed up for this course entirely on his own initiative and is now our first graduate.

We're immensely proud of you brother. You are a great example of the high calibre of delegates and officials we have in our union.

In Russell's words – 'Power to the Union!' 🇳🇿

Skills of organising course

THE latest CTU Skills of Organising course at Trades Hall on Great North Road, Auckland attracted RMTU participants Chris Leigh (Veolia LE and Auckland branch vice chair) and Steve Rangi (Kiwirail national fleet co-ordinator and site delegate). The course was facilitated by Sue Plowman and covered a number of essential skills, models and frameworks for recruiting and organising members.



CTU trainer Sue Plowman (left) with a group of re-invigorated union members now clued up on the skills of organising.

"In today's industrial environment, the skills taught on this course are invaluable to anyone working to recruit and organise members and really make a difference," says Chris.

The course participants included 12 members across eight unions, bringing a diverse range of insights and experience

into the mix.

"With the skills that we are picking up on this course and the things we are learning from the different unions, we can only get stronger," said Steve.

Sue was pleased to have Chris and Steve on the course.

"It was really good to have another two RMTU delegates on the Skills of Organising course. It is great that organising frameworks and techniques are being used to involve RMTU members in their union and solve their issues," she said. 🇳🇿

RMTU training focus

DELEGATE training has been high on the RMTU agenda this year with courses in Auckland, Wellington and Tauranga in addition to South Island training over the past two years from which a number of delegates have gone on to do advanced CTU courses like Skills of Organising. Russell Story's initiative is indicative of the enthusiasm engendered (see story page 11).

In Wellington and Tauranga the RMTU ran a stage one course and also put on a stage two course for more experienced delegates.

These courses have had a facelift in the last couple of years. While the aims and objectives are still the same, they now equip delegates and active members with the skills and knowledge to be confident and assertive in their roles.

One of the RMTU's strengths is the high calibre of its delegates and officials. For someone new to this role it can be a little intimidating among some of our veterans but experienced delegates are invited so they can pass on their knowledge and skills. Evidence shows that people on a course learn far more from such participants than from the 'educator'.

Members are taught to employ an 'organising approach' in dealing with workplace issues by having a mental 'drop

down menu' that immediately asks 'how can I organise around this?' and 'how can I involve members in fixing this so I build our strength in the workplace?'

For new delegates that means accepting you don't have to do everything for members. The iron law of organising is: Never do for members what they can do for themselves.

The courses look at the delegate's job and stresses its critical nuts and bolts like maintaining the RMTU's profile, keeping notice boards up to date, making sure The Activist is distributed and encouraging members to think for themselves.

Time is also spent on how to handle discipline and disputes, health and safety and what makes the difference in wage bargaining.

The learning doesn't stop there. Most of the vitally important union education takes place on the job when delegates, officials or organisers talk with members on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

For many of us, union education is a second chance to acquire some of the skills and knowledge we might have missed at school.

A big thank you to all our delegates and active members who have attended training this year. Your enthusiasm and passion is what helps make the RMTU strong. 🌐

Wellington



Union appreciation



Invercargil delegate Mark Burton was presented with an appreciation award for his work to get a fair deal for temporary workers. He is pictured here with Invercargil branch chair Gavin Mortimer.

Life member



General secretary Wayne Butson presents past-RMTU president, Jim Kelly, with his life membership certificate and badge at Robbie Burns, South Dunedin in mid-March. Thank you Jim, for your years of devoted service to the Union and its members.

Bay of Plenty



Delegate training experiences

In March, 13 RMTU delegates attended training at Woburn. Training included the role of the delegate, organising around issues, health and safety and skills and how to represent members through a disciplinary situation and disputes.

Women delegates

Jen Sinclair (below)



Train manager, Wairarapa
Why did you decide to become a delegate?

The knowledge union delegates have, particularly about what's happened in rail in the past, is really important. I want to make sure that knowledge is passed along to new delegates so when people retire it's not lost.

What did you gain from the training?

Masterton is an isolated work environment. I felt good camaraderie at the training and am now more aware and pro-active. The training has also given me more confidence to stand up for safety.

Nona Ngatuere (right)

Store-person, Woburn I&E

Tasks include arranging inwards and outwards goods, driving the forklift, arranging freight

Why did you decide to become a delegate?

I was nominated because I was good

at identifying issues before they blew up. I started as an H&S rep and I could see the need for delegates to support the H&S reps. It's also good for the company for there to be a union delegate to negotiate with management locally and at other departments. From the delegate training I've learnt where I can help out more and where I can go for more information and I enjoyed meeting the other delegates. 🌐



Sacrifice and remembrance

ANZAC Day 2013

Extract from KiwiRail newsletter

THERE is a particularly strong link between the railways and the campaigns of the two world wars. Railways and railwaymen played a vital part in both conflicts and especially in the First World War. Almost half of the New Zealand's railwaymen served overseas during World War One – a total of 5,000 out of a railway workforce of 14,000. 447 were killed.

At the outbreak of World War Two the British Government asked New Zealand to provide skilled railway staff to keep the trains running. These railwaymen were initially destined for service in France but were soon transferred to Egypt. Known as the 16th Railway Operating Group, they went on to do valuable service in the Western Desert operating and extending existing railway lines. Although most railways were jobs classified as 'reserved occupations' more than 26 percent of the workforce volunteered.

The significance of their role is marked by railway war memorials erected throughout the country. In 1925, it was also acknowledged in the naming of the steam locomotive *Passchendaele*.

The first battle of Passchendaele on 12 October marks the darkest day in New Zealand's military history with 2,735 casualties – 846 of whom were killed in action.

The *Passchendaele* was built in October 1915 at the Addington Railway Workshops in Christchurch. It was the only steam locomotive officially named by the New Zealand Railways in the 20th century. The first of the famed class of AB Pacifics, it had steamed more than 2.4 million kilometres by the time it was withdrawn from service in 1967.

The *Passchendaele* is currently undergoing restoration at Steam Incorporated Paekakariki and is expected to be fully operational in time for the 150th anniversary of New Zealand Railways providing a powerful historic link with the glories of New Zealand Railways' steam age. It will also serve as an enduring reminder of the sacrifices made during the battle of Passchendaele almost a century ago.

Today we still stand to pay tribute to our fellow railwaymen who made the ultimate sacrifice in both world wars. 🇳🇿



(r) Hutt mayor Ray Wallace, speaks at Petone.



(l to r) David Walsh, Mike Mellor and Wayne Butson at the east wing of the Wellington Railway Station.



(above) The Petone flagpole and (l) some of the growing numbers of people attending the Petone service.





On stage for the finale at the Regent on Broadway, Palmerston North.

Mel Te Pou reports

As a first timer at this May Day concert, we arrived in Palmerston North full of trepidation, anxious as to whether a night at the pub would've been more fun. All I can say is "What an awesomely fabulous night!"

Newcomers to the May Day stage were RMTU Wellington branch's own band The Crew – Owen, Ka'isa, Anthony, Adam and fill-in young master Beech. You guys rock.

Other performers were the NZCTU's Peter Conway, Ross Teppert and Spanners in the Works, Shades of Green, The Brazen Hussies, Luc, three dance troupes and special guest Moana Maniapoto with Cadzow Cosser and the extremely talented Paddy Free.

So, as next year is the 20th concert, the Wellington rail branch is challenging all other central region RMTU branches and other unions to come forth and perform or, better yet, out-cheer the Wellington supporters led by yours truly.

On the whole, the night went off well. Serious topics were raised and talked about, great entertainment was on offer and we all heard a fabulous speech from John Maynard on state

owned assets sales which can be summed up in one word: BULLSHIT.

Yours truly is looking forward to May Day celebrations next year.

Dion Martin reports

Levin's Kate Martin School of Dance won the May Day Cup in front of a 500 plus, enthusiastic and at times rowdy audience. The 16 young dancers performed three topical and relevant contemporary dance pieces: fluid, powerful and with great timing. Singer/songwriter, and New Zealand Art Laureate, Moana Maniapoto, rocked the Regent in the second half, with a wonderful intimate set of songs that paid tribute to those who fought and continue to fight for workers rights.

In between music and dance, were well thought out presentations about various campaigns, visually projected onto the giant screen from James Sleep, Green MP Denise Roche and John Maynard (Ohariu Peoples Power) who created great audience participation and much humour as they repeatedly joined in his chorus of "bullshit", to the sale of state assets and the TPPA. All in all, not a bad night out for union members, their families and communities for \$5 per ticket. 🌐



RMTU Wellington Rail band 'The Crew' in their RMTU T-shirts with some Wellington-based supporters.

Fundraiser for UnionAID



Andy Kelly, his partner Amy and Libi Carr at the Christchurch May Day dinner held at the EPMU buildings. Andy is holding the recipe for the vegetarian lasagne he really enjoyed and one of the set of red wine glasses he and Amy bought at the after dinner auction. The Transport Worker is waiting details on how much money was raised for UnionAID.

Unions have a long tradition of international solidarity.

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

Sign up to UnionAID today

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

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



Remembering our colleagues

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY is dedicated to the memory of those who have died, suffered injury or contracted illnesses as a consequence of doing their job. It was first observed in 1989 in Canada and on April 28 each year since hundreds of communities and worksites around the world honour those who have died or been injured at work.

The RMTU conducted, or were part of, services throughout the country involving many of its members who attended to remember the deaths and injuries of colleagues.

At Hutt Workshops speakers included MP Chris Hipkins, CTU secretary Peter Conway, KiwiRail mechanical group manager Clive Cooper-Smith, RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson, and lawyer and author Hazel Armstrong. CTU president Helen Kelly, Labour MP Darian Fenton and Green MP Denise Roche spoke in Auckland where the focus of the service was on the terrible death toll among forestry workers and in Christchurch Labour MP Megan Woods was a key speaker. At other ceremonies friends and colleagues of those who had been killed or injured spoke and gave special poignance to the day.

The Hutt service was given added significance by the relocation of Jack Neha's memorial to within the site's small but meaningful memorial park. Jack's widow was there and wrote to the Transport Worker describing how she felt (see Letters page 3).

Also at the Hutt ceremony Hazel Armstrong launched her new book 'Your life for the job – a study of the failures in safety practice that occurred on the railways between 1974 and 2000'.

"This is essential reading for all workers, not just our RMTU members," said Butson. "This book is an object lesson showing what can happen when greed overcomes welfare, when irresponsible bosses don't heed their workers and when work deaths are ignored. Get your copy now." (advert page 10)

Cooper-Smith stressed that although there had been significant improvements in safety practices since KiwiRail took over, there was no room for complacency: while Butson spoke of the human cost of workplace deaths and the need for collective action.

"Since 1994 we have had 27 RMTU rail and port members killed at work. Each of these deaths has taken a husband, father, uncle, brother and friend and we also feel the grief and pain families are left to endure.

"Management and managers alone cannot make our workplaces safe nor can unions and workers. We can only do it working together."



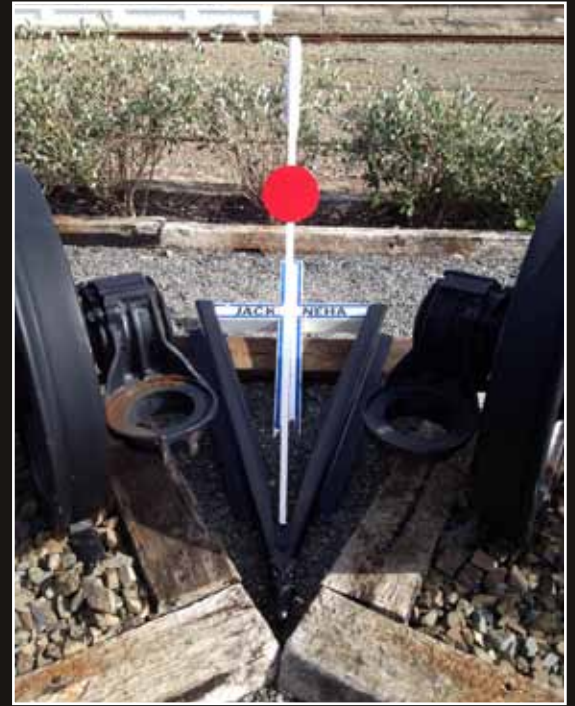
TE RAPA



PALMERSTON NORTH



Jack Neha's memorial was moved from Gracefield to be closer to his colleagues at Hutt Workshops on ground specially dedicated to remembering fallen colleagues.



Christchurch MPs at the service



CHRISTCHURCH



Maritime Club, Auckland

IN 1962 Bob Dylan asked the question

"How many deaths will it take till he knows that too many people have died?"

Families of forestry workers killed on the job echoed those sentiments as they shared their tragic stories with an audience stunned by the lack of regulation and an industry which accepts deaths as part of a dangerous job.



There was a high level of frustration that incidents causing death were not investigated extensively nor in a timely manner.

The impact these deaths have on families should not be underestimated, some still have family members working in the industry, hoping that they will not be next.

Grant Williams from MUNZ did an outstanding job as the MC in what developed into a very emotional and heart wrenching experience.

A co-worker of one of the fallen foresters told of increased pressures to cut more trees each day – in the same amount of time – and of a lack of genuine training.

There was a call from the families to regulate this industry on many levels, none more sensible than asking for a limit to the locations trees can be planted. At the moment any gradient anywhere is acceptable.

Helen Kelly, CTU president said there are only nine main forest owners across New Zealand but over 300 contracting companies clearing the forests. The owners sit back while workers are killed taking little or no responsibility for how these subcontracting firms operate.

Labour MP Darian Fenton and Green MP Denise Roche both called for an inquiry into how this industry operates and the need to protect New Zealand workers.

Anyone working in a unionised and regulated industry must realise how fortunate they are. Deaths at work are not acceptable, no matter what the industry.

The service closed with the singing of the Bob Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind*. 🌐

Christchurch

AN excellent turnout from the RMTU on a sunny Sunday morning. It was great to see so many members and past members come along to remember our fallen comrades and to reaffirm our commitment to fight for the living.

We had representation from across KiwiRail and from Lyttelton Port as well as some old Union friends. It was also good to see the local Labour MPs and local council members. Megan Woods, Labour MP for Wigram, gave a particularly good speech, affirming Labour's commitment to stronger health and safety laws. The CTU was there in strength, represented by the NZNU, PSA, EPMU SFWU and southern local govern-

ment officers.

One of the speakers summed it up: "These people didn't die in a so-called noble cause, fighting for our freedom overseas, they died doing what any worker is doing – trying to put a roof over the heads of their families and food on their table and nobody should have to give their life doing that."

Working in the most dangerous of industries the RMTU can be proud of the way it has fought for its members' health and safety. It was reassuring to see the commitment to go on doing so burns as strongly as ever amongst our members, our delegates and our friends in the union movement and the wider community. 🌐

Hutt Workshops



Ben Thompson from Hazel Armstrong Law sings a tribute to fallen workers.



Kaumatua Bill Herbert blessing the Jack Neba memorial.



Some of the day's speakers.



Hutt Workshop secretary Terry Duffy, MC for the ceremony.

Wayne Butson, RMTU

(Excerpts)

THERE is no denying that decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in improvement in basic working conditions.

However, the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths remains far too high.

While we in NZ are the first in the world to meet, mourn and reflect, services will be repeated many times around the globe. By attending today's service you are part of a global movement for improved workplace health and safety. We remember all those who have been killed, diseased or disabled on the workplace battlefield.

The RMTU and I are very proud to have been of assistance to Hazel Armstrong as she chronicled the safety history of rail from 1974 to 2000. It is important that we all remember the toxic cocktail of rapacious profit-driven greed, poor regula-

tion, ineffective oversight and enforcement that ran through rail during this time. As we say on Anzac Day 'lest we forget - we shall remember'. These sentiments equally apply to Workers' Memorial Day and Hazel's book will assist us to do so.

can never be compensated for. For every workplace death there are truly dozens who are left to suffer.

It's about whanau and friends, not rules and regulations.

This is a day when we all must make a commitment to change our attitudes and behaviours toward safety.


We must all swear to protect and look after our brother and sister worker. We must all learn to find it acceptable to be challenged if we are involved in an unsafe act.

Since 1995 we have listened to speeches and quietly mourned the loss of our brothers, sisters and comrades. This year is to be different. This year we are going to get active on health and safety. It is time to stop the silence about unsafe practices and to clench our

collective fists and shout our disapproval and disgust.

Safety First!

Safety First!

Safety First! 



Peter Conway (CTU), Chris Hipkins (MP), Wayne Butson (RMTU) and Clive Cooper-Smith (KiwiRail).

Since 1994 we have had 27 RMTU rail and port members killed at work – a staggering number for a small Union.

We must focus on the fact that each of these deaths is such a waste and a loss that



\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



AMERICAN INCOME LIFE
insurance company

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

Port Napier

AN estimated 60 plus people gathered just outside of the Napier Port southern gates amongst the remembrance trees. Several unions were represented including SFWU, PSA, MUNZ, RMTU and a strong turn out from the port company management.



Proceedings were led by our local industrial chaplain Neville Stevenson. Our thanks to him for his deliberations, sermon and prayers.

There were also acknowledgements by Dave Marden on behalf of Ted Frickleton – firstly to his son Corben, who we lost on April 27 2005 and to Rep Taana who we lost on March 29 2006.

Several people then moved down to the Apperly Memorial Wall just inside the port's southern gates, where plaques of remembrance reside for those who have lost their lives as a consequence of a work place incident on the Napier Port waterfront.

Dunedin

WMD in Dunedin was very successful given that it was a Sunday, the weather was at its usual glorious warmth and the crowd enjoyed some passionate and poignant speeches and pleas from two of our local MPs (Michael Woodhouse sent an apology).

We as a Union were well represented, indeed we boasted at least one Life Member and a past member who came along.

All those who have lost their lives in the pursuit of their employment in recent years had their names read out and a cross bearing their name was inserted in the ground as a graphic and lasting reminder of the price that too many have paid and unfortunately continue to pay.



'Your life for the job: New Zealand rail safety 1974 - 2000' by Hazel Armstrong



THE book documents the spate of fatalities that led up to the 2000 Tranz Rail ministerial inquiry. It concludes that the appalling rate of death and injury on New Zealand's railways during this period was caused by de-regulation and privatisation and shows what happens when regulators are ineffective and are captured by the employer and where Parliament and the government are prepared to compromise worker health and safety for some other end game, and directors and managers turn a blind eye to hazards.

Buy your copy now.

\$15 from RMTU, PO Box 1103, Wellington.



South Island organiser John Kerr with visiting JRU representative Mitsuo Hagino in Christchurch recently.



Evan Lewis - the RMTU's man in Bluff.

Creekfest

By Mel Te Pou

CREEKFEST 2013 nearly didn't happen. As with Auckland's Polyfest, the promoters were more concerned with profit than participation. So what started out years ago as a community day is now clearly seen as a major money maker. Big ups to the Porirua Whanau Centre for coughing up the extra money required to make the Porirua Creekfest happen.

Komiti Pasefika delegates from SFWU, PPTA, PSA and RMTU all rocked on up to the festival.

What an awesome day: Music ranged from Savage and Fiji to country rock with dueling guitars.



(l-r) Julia Harrison (RMTU), Vitoria Faletolu-Ape, Natalie Faitala, Eileen Brown (CTU) and Mel Te Pou (RMTU).

A focus for the unions was the promotion of the 'Living wage' campaign.

A huge congratulations to First Union for getting The Warehouse Group to accept the concept of a living wage into their collective agreement.

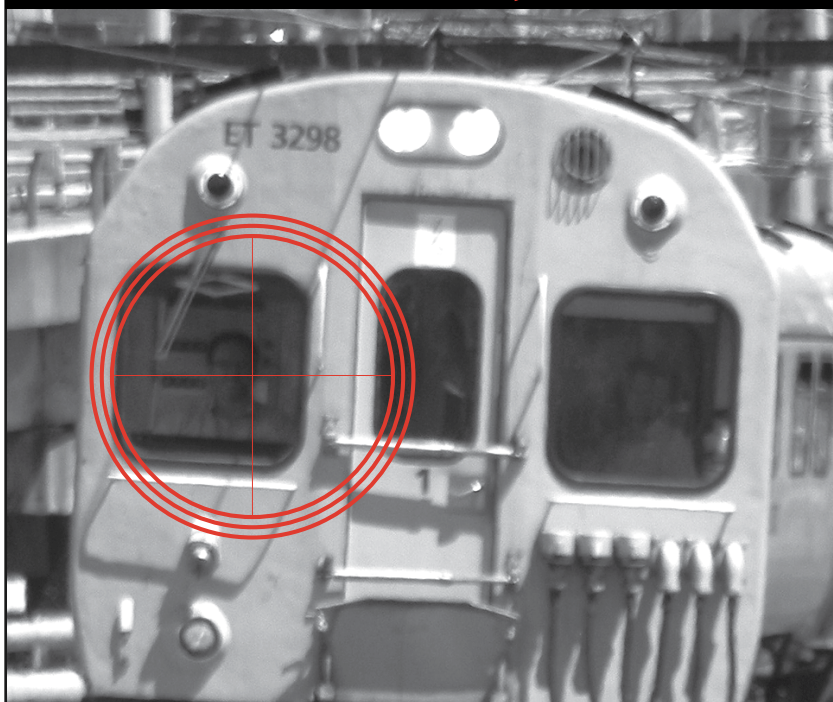
Tu fa'atasi (Stand as one) 🌐

Going strong



Some years back The Transport Worker erred in referring to Bill File (retired general secretary of the EF & CA) in the past tense. Every year since he has popped into the office to confirm he is still upright and defying the prophets of doom! See you next year Bill.

Sickness, accident & death



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

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

retire did not receive anything.

You could be next to miss out!

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

Contact:

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

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

Automation **NOT** automatic

PORT automation was at the centre of a critical conference in Sydney in April following an ongoing dispute at Brisbane Port.

The RMTU was represented by the current North Island National Management Committee member Dave Marden (Port Napier) and Kelven Martin and John Carmine from the Bay of Plenty port branch.

The conference was billed as a “most important conference for dockers in Asia-Pacific” and was triggered by the events surrounding the Brisbane dispute and the growing need for international unity and solidarity around disputes within the ports sector.

David Marden reports: “The essence of the conference was to unite and give port workers an insight to the consequences of automation in ports. There are several key factors that transpired as global shipping companies and port operators use automation as a union-busting tool.

“There is no doubt that when automation is introduced, no matter what the industry, the first to lose their jobs are those at the coal face. In order to plan around these events this Union needs to be pro-active in how it addresses the issues within the port sectors we operate if automation becomes part of the business.

“To this end, the ITF has drafted nine motion points as fundamental provisions where, and if, automation may be part of port growth. Providing a campaign strategy that can be implemented not just from a local port perspective but engaging globally through solidarity within the union movement.”

A full report from the meeting will be given to the forthcoming Ports Forum attendees this month (June).

The conference attracted 160 representatives from 11 maritime unions in 10 countries and, apart from probing the future of port automation and examining how trade unions should best be involved,

workers who had experienced automated machinery were able to describe their experiences.

The ITF believes that dockers, with their manual and technological skills, are an essential part of the mix in the automation debate.

ITF president and dockers’ section chair Paddy Crumlin said: “We are united in the view that automation will not be imposed



– it will come through negotiation.”

He added that dockers are “skilled, professional workers” who view automation with anticipation and as an opportunity for new skills training.

He warned companies to avoid using the imposition of automation to try and destroy unions.

“Dockers’ unions have a long and consistent history of supporting one another,” he said. “Worldwide solidarity is the norm for ITF port unions. This will be the case for struggles involving automation.”

Vice president mainland of the US International Longshore and Warehouse Union and ITF dockers’ section second vice chair Ray Familathe said: “Waterfront employers have often said that if they can’t beat us, then they’ll try to shrink us down to a more manageable size. They’re hoping that their new 21st century technologies on the docks will eliminate jobs and reduce union power. Our goal is to protect permanent employment for all registered dockworkers throughout the world, whether it’s in traditional cargo-handling terminals or fully automated container terminals.”

ICLS protest



Todd Valster (l) and Wayne Butson from head office hold up the ICLS flag.

ON 28 February an RMTU delegation went to the Korean Embassy in Wellington. We were not permitted to see the ambassador and a succession of officials and bureaucrats came and dealt with us. They attempted to prevent us from taking photographs and from handing over a letter of protest. Eventually an official came out and agreed to receive the protest letter on the proviso that he would not be photographed. We agreed to this request. We faxed additional letters of protest to Korean Government, Daegu Metropolitan Subway and Daegu city administration.

RETIREMENTS

The RMTU wishes the following recently retired members the very best of health for their future in retirement. It is always a happy/sad occasion to see colleagues leave but we also recognise their long contribution to this great Union and to rail and they well deserve what they’ve worked for.

Ray Loper

Dennis Sawyer

Mark Scotson

Bill Tamaki.

Dying in our forests

FORESTRY workers are still being killed at work and it appears this government isn't interested. The Fairness at Work campaign organisers took a petition to the minister but he has rejected our calls for an inquiry. However, thanks to MPs Darien Fenton and Denise Roche, this petition has been tabled in Parliament and will now be discussed at a select committee. We're hoping the committee will take up the issue and end these needless deaths.

The petition is still open and we will continue to let the Minister and the industry know that too many people are being hurt and killed in our forests and we need to do something about it now.

Petition forms can be found at:
www.whatkilledkencallow.org.nz

The Health and Safety Taskforce report released recently found that workers need a voice in their workplace. It said that the weakening of unions was one of the contributing factors to our current state of health and safety at work. The Government is currently changing the law which will result in ever more dangers in the workplace rather than doing something to put right our dreadful workplace health and safety record.

During Workers' Memorial Day services huge numbers of people attended services throughout the country, together with families of forestry workers killed at work. It was an inspiring, sobering and overwhelming day for all involved. 🌳

A pain in the back

A recently released report on low back and neck pain among locomotive engineers as a result of whole body vibration has found indications that show these to be true. The study, funded by Tranz-Rail New Zealand Ltd, was supported by the Locomotive Engineers Council and the RMTU and led by David McBride.

The finding showed a moderate but significant excess of musculoskeletal complaints and morbidity among LEs with lower back pain seeming to have a significant impact on discomfort at work and time off work. Neck pain was deemed less important in both respects. The discomfort experienced, they say, could also be present among other groups of transport workers doing safety critical jobs.

"Identification of vibration as a hazard poses few problems," states the report. "Measurement has become much easier now that portable data logging instruments are available." It went on to say though, that the wide choice of assessment methods gave conflicting guidance. Vibration direction, especially where shock vibration occurs, may be important and there is no correct way to combine measurements."

It felt that the combination "may well



be unique, particularly with rail vehicles, which have the peculiar combination of vertical and lateral vibration".

The study compared its results to the European Union Directive and found they exceeded their limits

concluding that it seemed plausible that the combination of motion, particularly the shock vibration involved in locomotive work, is contributing to an excess of neck pain and may contribute to lower back pain.

It suggests guidelines be made available to drivers and incidents of these ailments should continue to be recorded. To reduce risk rail operators must improve maintenance, seating and cab design and all drivers should be trained in the effects of vibration. Additionally, the duration and intensity of the exposure should be limited, and adequate rest breaks assured.

In the final analysis the report states that the end-point is problematic because both complaints are not simple disorders. A commonly reported index, it says, is pain that occurs more than three times a year, lasts for longer than one week, and interferes with normal tasks such as putting socks on. 🌳

The full report may be viewed at:
<http://bit.ly/10qMfGX>

AROUND THE BRANCHES

PAREKURA HOROMIA was a staunch unionist and upon entering politics remained a steadfast supporter of the trade union movement. He was still helping us right to the end with arrangements for the CTU Runanga hui in Gisborne. His passing has given rise to a greater need for us to realise the work he was doing on behalf of his people – mahi that he did with a passion, mahi that he died doing.

We from Waikato join with Te Runanga, Justin Dick and the CTU in mourning the loss of a true champion of union and Maori. Parekura, along with the late Peter Tapine were instrumental in setting the foundations for the Maori network within

WAIKATO RAIL BRANCH

rail. He attended our 20 year celebration in Wellington where we had a night of amusement and hilarity with Parekura and Greg Miller in the middle of all the drama and role plays.

No reira e te rangatira e Parekura moe mai, moe mai, moe mai.

We also celebrated Workers' Memorial Day which was a huge success and could not have happened without the help and support of Paul Jenson who conducted the service and Te Kupenga Mahi who catered the day. Special thanks to Wayne and Ngaperera, Allana, Chase, Jeff Littlejohn

(jnr) and Jeff (snr). Fantastic to see Jeff at our meeting and amongst his mates. Chase showed how (not) to carve pork with a knife which Crocodile Dundee would be proud of, while Barry caught every photo opportunity and Bernie, Phil and Ken took turns filling in the agenda. Our new loco trainee, Tina Flack, was our photographer and did a wonderful job. Everybody ate far too much but totally enjoyed it.

We also have a few issues coming up including manning levels across the board and the new servicing bay which sounds inadequate. Zero input from the union. ▶

WAIKATO RAIL BRANCH [cont]

Bernie Snook has taken up the task of trying to tidy up the problems in the Kaimai Tunnel on behalf of the Union as a member of the Tunnel committee with the full support of our branch.

Sandy Matakahe is still having problems trying to deal with the rosters and temps in the CT site. Phil Spanswick is to arrange a


meeting with Cameron McNee to see if we can sort this.

We note that Barry Simpkins, and Ray Brown were recently looking a sorry sight with both feeling a little under the weather with a Sunday morning headache.

Ken Collins is leading the minders team with our current trainees Glen Booth,

Keven Mabbott, Tina Flack, Brenda Lamb, Jeremy Jeffries, Chris Toombs and Reece Read. They are all doing very well.

Mark Leathart and Shawn McKee are both noisy as usual but their presence is always appreciated.

Richard Norton has settled in well but every now and then we hear a little Aussie twang. He should come right. 


BAY OF PLENTY RAIL BRANCH

WE are currently without a treasurer as Kevin Webber moved to the West Island. Any takers for that role would be appreciated. William Lani-

gan is the RMTU rep on the Kaimai Tunnel Review Committee.

We also have an issue with the weight distribution over the front axles of the

Kiwirail trucks which could lead to prosecutions if the trucks are stopped by the police.

We have finally resolved the H&S factors in the Mainfreight yard at the Mount. RMTU members have now been given clear guidelines on how to handle possible incidents. 

BAY OF PLENTY PORT BRANCH

ALL the fuss and drama over the purchase of C3 by Asciano seems to have died down and its business as usual. The C3 negotiations are slowly heading to a conclusion, give or take a baby or two!

The branch has put together a monthly membership draw where the winning number is randomly selected and the prize is \$100. To date there have been six winners.

Sadly we lost Arthur Harrison in April due to a heart attack. Arthur had worked on the Tauranga wharves for most of his life, primarily with NZL. His loss is a big blow to his workmates in stevedoring as he was a quiet but efficient supervisor who led by

example. He will be sorely missed.

Delegates from both the rail and port branches attended delegate training on May 6 and 7 at the Union rooms run by John Kerr. They enjoyed the content of the courses.


Our two members at the Mt Maunganui Cosmopolitan Club have been made redundant, however the Club is refusing to pay them their redundancy compensation, so the matter is off to mediation to see if we can get what is rightfully theirs.

Ian Oakley, our branch treasurer, has finally been successful in gaining a permanent crane driving position at Sulphur Point. Congratulations Ian.

The Port of Tauranga has withdrawn their injunction against the RMTU, which harks back to the MUNZ picket at Sulphur Point on March 3, 2012.

Goodman Fielder has sold the Champion Flour Mill to Nisshin Seifun Group Inc, a large Japanese flour milling company that has mills in Canada and the USA. We have an agreement to continue with the current collective agreement. The mill is now called Champion Flour Milling Limited.

We had a good turnout for WMD with members from networks, mechanical, C3, and Orica in attendance. The ceremony was followed by a BBQ at the Union rooms.

We are in the process of finalising the Port of Tauranga collective. The delay has been over a dispute on representation. 

HAWKES BAY PORT BRANCH

CONGRATULATIONS to Aubrey Wilkinson upon his unchallenged return to the presidency of our Union.


Napier Port is again in the middle of its annual peak period (silly season). To this point we have already exceeded last year's container exchanges. The good side is there has been an increase in heavy plant operators, introduction of shifts for vessel exchanges, and five more permanent members signed up for the return of WPI (pulp/timber product) after leaving us 18 or so years ago when we lost them to Wellington Port. A new shed is also under construction

to accommodate the product and associated cargos the Swires vessels may bring.

The down side is that Wellington are having to cope with the loss of the trade at Napier's gain. Either way, it comes at a cost to workers somewhere in a port-competitive environment. There is no strategy toward ports rationalising this market or to share shipping with government interfering in industry (in reference to the one sided pro-government Productivity Commission report). It is a dog-eat-dog world. I guess that when all the port CEOs have their forums, and after discussion of how they can undermine the union movement not

just across the NZ waterfront but nationally and globally, they walk away working out how to take business from each and engage in clandestine talks with yellow unions – all within the same breath.

On this very point, with the commencement of WPI, the RMTU at Napier Port have had constructive talks with the company to receive, carry, store, supervise and marshal the operation, and, if shore cranes are required for these Swires/ISL ships, MUNZ hatch men will be utilised.

There is still some work to do in this area. The hard yards are in terms of yet another yellow union getting into Napier, even though we know they work and 

are cross-hired in other ports. However we have secured our historical work. Napier Port does not employ stevedores; it hires them for container vessels only.

The fight continues under this govern-

HAWKES BAY PORT BRANCH [cont]

ment. The blue brigade is running feral with excitement to kick us while the going is good. Their heads are so far in the clouds

they don't even want to look down. It will not last, and lest we forget, here's to November 2014. 🌐

DAVE MURDOCH is the new branch chair and we are setting up a training day for our delegates in both the

HAWKES BAY RAIL BRANCH

rail and port branches. Apart from that all is quiet in the Hawkes Bay. 🌐

THE off season has arrived in the Taranaki. Once again a great effort by all with what was a testy milk season with a few incidents more than we would have liked. Whareroa are increasing in numbers with more rail operators being employed. The Company are in the process of introducing remote control operators into the yard. The introduction of RCOs at Whareroa has been a long time in the coming. The Union for the last few years, have been asking for the introduction of RCOs in particular on the shunt to make the operation safer. The Company in their wisdom, had no issues either but with the shortage of remote packs and time to train RCOs the introduction has taken a lot longer than was hoped. Rumours are that the output at Whareroa will nearly double, this in turn creates other problems:

1) The size of the Whareroa yard is woefully inadequate;

2) The Marton/New Plymouth line is pretty well saturated with what we have now; and

3) Palmerston North yard is a very busy place at the best of times. Can they take double the amount of tonnage?

If you ask a few of the wise heads in the Taranaki all fingers get pointed at the 143 km long Stratford-Okahakura branch line

which the company closed due to maintenance concerns and the lack of tonnage for the line being able to pay its way.

The new crossing loop at Manutahi has been well used after it's reintroduction in 2011 caused its fair share of problems with lack of size and having hand points which made the whole loop a white elephant until it was lengthened and Taranaki CTC was added. Ruatangata, between Marton and Wanganui, is in the process of being out-fitted for CTC and so hopefully the bottle neck should be eased a little.

A committee in 2012 was set up to highlight any operational irregularities between Whareroa, Stratford and New Plymouth. The committee had some robust debates and has come up with some recommendations for the company. So far the recommendations have been painfully slow to take effect.

The track boys have been kept busy with concrete sleeper lays between Stratford and New Plymouth. A few work trains have also been working dropping off rail and dumping ballast. All that is needed now is the tamper to try and cull some of the restrictions which have been in effect for some considerable time.

The DXB's days in the Taranaki may be



The lads about to start a ballast drop between Whareroa and Patea.

numbered with DL training due to commence in July.

Welcome back to Brian Baldwin who has been on light duties for close to 12 months due to an operating incident with a transition head being removed from a DC locomotive. Graeme Archer is transferring from Palmerston North to Whareroa, so hopefully this should ease gaps in the roster next milk season. 🌐

PALMERSTON NORTH RAIL BRANCH

IN Palmy much has been happening that is really quite alarming. Our brothers and sisters in Palmy working for Toll Holdings put up with some appalling conditions. I was taken aback when I paid a visit to their lunchroom – or should I say brick s**t house. The brick block has no light bulbs, a microwave from Noah's ark, a fridge with more rust than our DC locomotives and a heater that is as useful as a candle in the arctic. How the hell can these billionaire businessmen expect their workers to take

a break and relax in facilities that resemble a gulag canteen?

Standardisation is upon us and Palmy is to be the pilot. This is a scheme to standardise facilities and procedures across the Company. The idea, in principle, has merit but the implementation is terrible. The operations building has been torn to bits and the game in the depot is to find the team leader – he gets moved as they knock down walls. We are to be "more like Mainfreight".

Why can't we be more like KiwiRail? We have a proud railway heritage why do we have to be more like a trucking company?

Our servicing guys are still getting gassed in the ill-thought out state-of-the-art servicing shed. The extraction fans are about the same power as a cheap vacuum cleaner and the guys are inhaling dangerous diesel fumes. The company has at least partially recognised this having been pushed by the RMTU. We have decided not to start ▶

PALMERSTON NORTH RAIL BRANCH [cont]

◀ or idle locos in the shed, but the guys get pressure put on them to get the locos out on time. This is the busiest depot in the country.

I&E have been sliced and diced like the rest of the country and the boys hear the echo of deferred maintenance coming back again. The PNGL is over 40% heat restricted when in season and nearly 80% of the NIMT from Palmy to Marton is restricted. Peruvian sleepers are rotting on our bridges and the Feilding population is getting fed up with trains going from one end of their town to the other at 25 to 40kph (they have five level crossings to get held up at with up to three at a time for one train). Our track is getting worse, how is this turning NZ Rail around?

EnergyMiser is coming and reports back from LEs are mostly negative about the wider impacts it will have on their job (see Letters page 4). Distraction and dumbing down the job seems to be the call. Also of concern for our LE brethren are the preservation railway groups pushing to man their own locomotives and operate their own trains on our network.

Bullying by management also seems to



Some of the Palmerston North branch members who attended their branch meeting on Mother's Day along with Mani Raumati (RMTU facilitator) and Todd Valster (RMTU organiser).

be becoming evident in our yard. This is quite sad to hear. Brothers and sisters are reminded to band together and look after each other. Don't let this happen!

On a positive note, we had Iain Lees-Galloway (Palmerston North Labour MP and transport spokesperson) visit our latest branch meeting informing us about Labour's plans for the future of rail. Let's get this straight, the only future for rail is under LABOUR! The branch meeting went well with representatives from nearly all

sectors present. This is the importance of branch meetings for the bigger depots – we all need to know what's happening to be united and make progress. Sector meetings of course are necessary for the sectors and they are happening frequently.

It's time, as Norm Kirk said, for us to shine as a branch and a Union, to stand up and get involved, to stand by our brothers and sisters and to make our mark and create a brighter future for the railways of New Zealand. 🇳🇿

WELLINGTON RAIL BRANCH

SADLY it has been another trying period for the branch as we acknowledge the passing of a fellow mate and highly respected union advocate John Maguren [aka Strangler]. His loss has left a great void in the local RMTU ranks. To Kahu and the Maguren whanau we offer our sincere sympathies and to John we say 'Kia kaha'.

On the same sad note the branch acknowledges the recent death of a very special local identity, Virginia Gavin. Virginia was a unique and likable individual whose life story was one of woe. Her name will probably escape most who knew her, as she was better known throughout the Wellington rail fraternity as Robyn; Red-set Robby, Bobby and a few other affectionate names. She was undoubtedly the most loyal rail commuter known to Wellington and probably the country. Her funeral arrangements are yet to be announced but a great many rail enthusiasts, staff and others will

be there to farewell her.

It is with some bemusement and consternation that we farewell the loss of Tranz Metro's operations manager, Hilary Kendall. To her credit the members organised an impromptu farewell where the absence of the senior local management team was noted. Hilary appreciated the genuine gratitude shown to her for her efforts fostering a working relationship with the RMTU. We acknowledge her efforts and wish her all the very best with her future endeavours.

On a more positive note we have seen a significant increase of new employees into the Tranz Metro fold with a large influx of customer communication officers, part time passenger operators, train managers and train examiners. We welcome you all into the fold.

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

After a lifetime career in the rail industry we farewell Ray Loper with fond memories and wish him and the whanau all the very best. Ray begins this juncture in life with a well-earned month long holiday in Canada and Alaska. We wish him a safe and enjoyable journey. Thanks Ray for the times shared as a fellow workmate and for your voluntary efforts as an RMTU-LE delegate.

For those of you who have had the pleasure to know and work with Fred Hammer we are happy to inform that he is doing very well after his near death experience and is fit and well and enjoying life to the full with the technological wizardry of a new pacemaker. We wish you all the best mate!

We also acknowledge the retirement of one of Wellington's longest serving train managers, Ereke Lapana. Your cheerful, happy go lucky smile and approach to life will be long remembered among your fellow work mates and colleagues. All the very best brother. 🇳🇿

HUTT WORKSHOPS BRANCH

THE year continues with fluctuating workloads and unfilled vacancies. The latter is a real problem despite the unemployment statistics! Mechanical engineers and electronics technicians are in short supply while temporary staff are happy with their temping arrangements on those little projects that require some short termers to fill the gaps. If you're looking for a job at the 'Shops' we are in need of some good M/Es to bolster the full time staffing complement. If you like working in a cavernous environment that's hot in summer, cool in winter and dirty all year round, have we got a job for you!

By the time you read these notes we hope that Glen Dale, our newly appointed operations manager (ex Hillside), has taken up his position here and revitalised our drive towards lean(er) production. Little appears known about him but management have been chanting 'change' so we are eager to see if he fits the bill.

In past notes mention has been made of structural upgrades of the major buildings on site. Thus far, no firm dates have been forthcoming from the 'body corporate' however, engineering people from BECA Consulting recently visited and compared records with what they can see and photograph. Of course we have to let things take their course but what's the bet they

commence during winter.

Around mid-April we had our first paid union meeting of the year to update members on events. Our opening speaker was Chris Ball from the NZR Staff Welfare Society who gave us an overview of the society, its income streams and benefits to members. We took the opportunity to again survey the membership to gauge our effectiveness and to solicit comments for areas of improvement. Suffice to say we continued to perform well in the member's eyes although, like the company, we appear to have some perceived communications issues. This is a genuine problem that won't be fixed overnight. We have around 164 members spread across some seven buildings encompassing 13 noticeboards. There are six main channels for communication with members which, in theory, should cover most.

The last week of April was a very busy yet sombre one as we commemorated Anzac Day at Petone Railway Station with a good turnout. Our M/E manager gave a speech along with the obligatory wreath layings. The following Sunday was Workers' Memorial Day along with the rededication of a (relocated) memorial to shunter Jack Neha who was killed on the job at Gracefield in 1995. We felt it was more fitting to locate

this memorial closer to a functioning railway site and did so with the approval of Jack's whanau. Many thanks must go to Manu Barclay, Nona Ngateure, Sam Kahui and National Office staff (and others) for their respective efforts in making this happen within a very tight timeframe. Additionally, Hazel Armstrong launched her book 'Your life for the job' which recounted the on-the-job fatalities and railway safety (or lack of it) over a 25 year period preceding the 2000 Ministerial Enquiry. I highly recommend readers get a copy of this book (see page 10) and read it. It is a frightening eye-opener on so many levels and for this scribe, it was a stark reminder of the faces and fatal horror stories of some fellow workmates we lost so many years ago, and of the trials and tribulations we endure at business and political levels as we strive to make our workplaces better, and safer, for us all.

We recently had a quick lunch-time meeting to fill the recently vacated position of apprentice delegate. Congratulations to Anthony Martin who will hold the fort (at least) until our AGM in August. Speaking of which, it's not that far away!

Regarding company policies, many have recently fallen due for review, so if you regularly refer to some and/or have printed copies at hand, it would be worthwhile



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 **SOVEREIGN**

HUTT WORKSHOPS BRANCH [cont]

◀ checking so that you remain current. A recent enquiry to the company about how a particular policy is complied with/implemented must have become quite an embarrassment as it was referred so far up the command chain that we have lost sight of it. Even more embarrassing, because the enquiry was directed at those parties specifically mentioned in the bloody thing! Perhaps it's time for document authors to be named so such questions can be responded to in a more timely manner.

We are informed the company sent a FAQ document to National Office for comment on the implementation of random D&A testing following last years MECA ratification. However, nothing appears to

have come of this yet except the recent removal of the D&A guidelines document from the company intranet. Until the recent spate of bad weather (May), I didn't mind the concept of random testing however, I don't know if one's aim into the cup would be straight with the stiff cold southerly battering the Drug Bus in the visitors car park! It might have to be relocated.

The infamous poly cups have been targeted for removal from regular use as we've been unable to stop them ending up as litter blowing around the site or stuffed into spaces for someone else to clean up. A purchasing deal has been done to replace them with good sized drinking mugs, so here's hoping we have a winner here.

Another niggles smouldering in the undergrowth is that of cigarettes and the evidence of their consumption. We have asked users to address their own housekeeping issues and to consider ways of keeping butts under control. Consideration is being given to the possibility of one specially designated area to assist with containment of the contaminants (the ciggies not the smokers).

Stop Press: As I was about to sign-off I just caught wind of a rumour that two of the company's training officers are leaving. It's too early to say what the impact will be but I'll hazard a guess that it may bugger up the timely advancement of some of our people. I will keep you posted.

Watch out for your mates and let's all work safer, together. 🇳🇿

WEST COAST RAIL BRANCH

AFTER the dramas of the summer we'd like to be able to say it's all quiet on the western front but, alas, it's not.

The big news over here is the colossal stuff up that is Solid Energy. This has had flow on effects throughout the economy and, whilst we're a resilient lot, there is a limit to how much small communities like ours can take in such a short space of time. The fact that we have a do-nothing Government that seems to think the only way to tackle rising unemployment is to attack workers, doesn't help.

Our Union was prominent at the Blackball May Day celebrations which was a good day for a good cause. The irony is that the Green Party, who don't have too many friends amongst those of us who depend on mining and transporting coal for our livelihood, is often more prominent than Labour in supporting workers' rights and railways and they were out in strength at Blackball. This is just one of those paradoxes that goes with politics. As someone said: Unions would be happy to leave politics alone if politicians would leave workers alone. Sadly, the National Government just won't do that, and signalling its lack of support for Solid Energy and other SOEs isn't helping good, honest, working people here on the Coast and elsewhere.

The lads are flat out trying to keep the track up to scratch, a job that hasn't been

made any easier by KiwiRail's job cuts last year. One example is the story we're hearing about unfinished EM80-identified problems and speed restrictions on the Reefton Bank. Freight are under pressure to get the coal moved on time and the increasing number of speed restrictions are not helping. But we can't say we didn't warn management. John Bannerman has been to Wellington a couple of times to meet with management as part of an RMTU team in a working party that is trying to keep management honest. The battle the bosses face is that there is so much ill-feeling around what happened with the redundancies that



(above) Doug Blakie and Ian Haussmann at Greymouth Port.

the level of trust at the front line has been severely damaged.

Finally, it was good to see KIC representative and NMC member Doug Blakie visit us last month. It's always good to see and hear from our elected officials. 🇳🇿

(left) Peter Harmon, based in Middleton, driving the TranzAlpine at Arthur's Pass.

(l) Doug Blakie, (second on left) and the lads at Otira Depot

Lyttelton Port

WE'VE been steadily busy doing the everyday bread and butter jobs but nothing sensational to report, and we like that from time to time.

The summer is disappearing fast and winter making itself felt. It's a bit of a shock after the long months of sunshine and high temperatures.

Lyttelton Railway Station, where the Lyttelton branch has its offices, has been the subject of some attention from KiwiRail. We have had their inspectors checking out the earthquake damage to the drains. One only needs to ask the shunters about the state of the drains. The road directly alongside the railway tracks, which the shunters have to cross to get to the station, was resurfaced late last year, but a dumping of rain and a few logging trucks in the last week has produced potholes, pools of water and mutterings from the inspector: "Might be a bit munted under there." The drain repairers are due to start in the next couple of weeks so in addition to the road works that set up camp on Lyttelton's main road last month, we'll have drain works happening right around the railway station. RMTU members may need to chopper into the office to visit.

Stay safe everyone, take care of yourselves, your workmates and your families.

Inland Port

Our members went to the Employment Court for three days (February 25 -27) with Geoff Davenport from McBride, Davenport and James as our very able legal counsel. We were there following Lyttelton Port Company's (LPC) appeal of our win at the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) that RMTU members are entitled to be covered by the substantially better terms and conditions of the main collective agreement. RMTU members from both of LPC's sites attended and gave evidence at the hearing.



Three of our newly recruited members at the Inland Port. (1 to r) Jason Foster, container surveyor, Sacha Mathewson, container wash and Simon Gillard, container surveyor.

LYTTELTON PORT BRANCH



Lyttelton's latest RMTU recruit in security, Stuart Ship.

It is no small task for anyone to turn up in a courtroom and give evidence and particularly where workers are giving evidence that their employer is not treating them and their fellow workers fairly. Or, as the ERA found, in the manner that members at the Inland Port are legally required to be treated and are entitled to be part of the collective.

The waiting time for a judgement in Christchurch is currently around 18 months, so in the meantime organising work continues at the Inland Port/City Depot.

Tim Lawton, our delegate, is registered to attend the Skills of Organising Course later this year (June and July) – a two part course that aims to develop the skills of experienced delegates. Andy Kelly vice president of the Lyttelton Port branch is attending too.

John Healy has put his hand up to attend the Ports Forum on June 11 and 12 in Wellington. Congratulations and thanks to John for stepping up and sharing the Union work with Tim.

Welcome to Stuart Ship who started with LPC Security about two weeks ago and is one of our newest members. Stu has a lovely British accent so we're confident John Kerr will be asking

which football team he supports.

His appointment as a permanent security officer is a welcome one for the security team who have been operating short staffed for some time. It's great to see them coming back to full staffing.

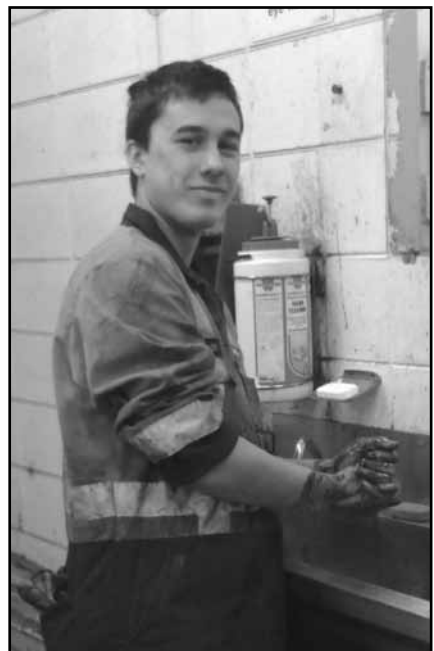
LPC recently employed a casual security officer, Euan McLennan who has also joined the RMTU. Welcome Euan. 🇳🇿



After signing the anti-asset sales petition Daniel Knight, apprentice mechanic, demonstrated planking in the vehicle workshop. Full supervision and safety precautions were taken.

Apprentice fitter and turner Caleb Soper demonstrates the fine art of washing straddle grease off your hands before signing the petition.

Welcome to the RMTU, glad to have you with us.



CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH

APPARENTLY the third winter after a major disaster is when the mental and physical strain begins to have the greatest impact on its victims. Here in Canterbury there is ample evidence this is true. Our members and their families are going into this winter in a city that is still devastated, although there are signs of progress. Sadly, it will get harder before it gets easier. Aside from the well publicised difficulties many face dealing with EQC and insurance companies, just getting around our city is increasingly challenging as the roads are being ripped up to repair our sewage and water supply systems.

Here at KiwiRail our members are getting on with keeping the network operating despite what seems like the best efforts of management to run it down. A case in point is the so called 'seasonalisation' of TranzScenic's Coastal Pacific service to Picton. At a time when hotels are starting to open up again and on the back of increased passenger numbers over the summer the company, in its wisdom, has announced this service will not operate over the winter months. This is supposed to be a temporary measure, but we all know there's nothing more

permanent then temporary. We're fighting hard to avoid compulsory redundancies and are hopeful that we will succeed.


In Networks the effects of last year's brutal jobs cull is still being felt. Anyone with eyes in their head can see they went too deep and have compromised our ability to maintain the network. The company has been forced to advertise positions as there simply aren't enough staff to do essential work. Another effect of this is that we're fighting a constant battle to stop contractors doing the work of our members. It's cold comfort that we warned management this would happen if they persisted in their harebrained, so called 'cost reduction programme'. Networks delegates have been in the front line of this fight and a special thanks goes to Phil Kearns for the work he does on members' behalf.

The travails of Solid Energy is another matter we watch with great interest, particularly those of us who work in freight and particularly members operating the Midland Line. The growth in work for Fonterra is good news though. Now we just need Jim Quinn to do something to recruit and retain the skilled staff KiwiRail needs if the growth

in freight is to be sustainable.

Delegates have been working hard on a range of issues at grass roots level, ranging from health and safety on the Midland Line with Barry Drummond's retirement and promoting the trial of air conditioning units in locos, to making sure our new 'temporary' fuelling facility is as good as it can be in difficult circumstances. This is the kind of work that often goes unheralded, and yet it usually leads to better results for members as, in a workforce as unionised as ours, managers ignore our very capable delegates at their peril.

We had a great turnout at Workers' Memorial Day and thanks to the company for their support in bringing the barriers down at the crossing near the memorial.

Finally, our brothers and sisters at Toll TranzLink continue to fight the company's attempt to employ former Northern Southland Transport employees on inferior terms and conditions to the RMTU collective agreement. With the changes to employment law by this anti-worker National Government we can expect more of this kind of thing from the bosses. The only response is to stay strong, stick together and support fellow union members whether they are in our industry or elsewhere. 

TIMARU RAIL BRANCH


HELLO from the colder climates of Timaru. Tonnage and the current workload are about to be sharply increased in our area with all Fonterra tonnage being handled at Timaru and Washdyke, while Temuka yard is being re-laid and sealed. This will take about 12 weeks and will give the Timaru terminal staff a lot

more work to do. All Washdyke work will be handled in town.

We hope that the work progresses well and the weather has a helping hand. This will make the local I&E staff happy. Keep up the good work guys.

Our CT staff have also been busy with total lifts of 1745 containers. It would be

great to see the same money spent at Temuka which is being spent at Timaru in the near future. "I just saw a pig fly by.". Our local manager and his team have been interviewing people wanting to join the Kiwirail/RMTU team. They got down to the final four guys and we will welcome the newbie with open arms after he/she has been to Woburn.

Be strong and safe. 


TIMARU PORT BRANCH

HERE at the Port of Timaru our greatest achievement is that we're still here! The cessation of the Maersk and Hamburg Sud services was a body blow last year and it has not been offset by Mediterranean Shipping Lines coming to Prime Port.

Last year we staged a very successful protest at the failure of the Prime Minister and the National Government to do

anything about the dog-eat-dog state of our industry which hands all the power to overseas shipping companies at the expense of ports owned by Kiwi ratepayers. The amount of publicity generated was enormous and it seems it has had an impact as the Government has now, belatedly, said it will look at bringing the shipping companies under the Commerce Act. This would stop them using their combined economic

strength against locally owned ports when it comes to negotiating contracts. Too late to stop the drama we had last year but evidence that well organised workers can bring pressure to bear to change things.

Aside from this we're maintaining our organising approach, holding regular meetings, sending delegates to the Ports Forum, and making sure our members are up to speed via *The Activist* and other RMTU publications. 

THE slash and burn in the networks area is still having an adverse effect on morale as we are still seeing staff leaving because they are disillusioned with the current regime.

The locomotive area is slowing down a little now with the cancelling of the 927/924 jobs for the end of the dairy season. (At the time of writing) the fuelling system is still not operational nor has there been any consultation regarding the who, when and for how much.

The Hillside Workshops Sunset Gang

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

is still steadily reducing in numbers with an expected complete closure at the end of June 2013.

The heavy lift group based at Hillside is busy with a loco lift virtually every second day and, combined with the odd loco crash, rust repair and wagon work, they seem to be set for a busy future. Although it would appear that some factions of KiwiRail do not understand that the workshops have closed and still expect to be able to get the same level of service from seven mechani-

cal engineers that they enjoyed from the whole suite of trades and facilities prior to the closure.

KiwiRail is about to conduct another staff survey and it provides an ideal opportunity to let the company know exactly how you feel. So even if you don't feel particularly enamoured with the company, please fill it out to and let them know. Don't forget to tell them you are underpaid!

Until next time. 🌐



(l) Marty Duncan and Rebecca Hauck (r) Joe Carson and Judy Trevathan.

HERE in Southland we're not letting events pass us by. Specifically, Workers' Memorial Day is something we recognise will only receive the recognition it deserves if we make it ours. Together with our brothers and sisters in the local CTU we had a very positive and successful meeting with Mayor Tim Shadbolt. We were after council support for a workers' memorial. Tim was very keen to help with finding us a place to have our memorial and possibly funding for it. He even suggested a bronze statue. He is getting in contact with parks and reserves and will come back to us with possible locations.

Our Networks delegate, Mark Burton, was on the receiving end of a very pleasant surprise from RMTU national office when he was awarded a certificate of appreciation for the work he did earlier in the year organising contractor's staff and making sure KiwiRail honoured its commitment to make sure these members were paid the

SOUTHLAND RAIL BRANCH

same rates as the KiwiRail MECA. Some of our members don't understand the value of this. It's simple, if KiwiRail can get cheap labour to do our work then ultimately this threatens our job security! Think about it. Those contractors are fellow workers and we want them on the same terms and conditions as us, otherwise the boss has every incentive to use cheap labour and to argue our pay should be lower.

The fuelling issue is ticking along. The branch is being very co-operative and we hope that management will have memories as long as ours if what goes around doesn't come around. Then there could well be an issue to address.

Safety is always a priority and the latest hot topic is lighting at Dongwha and Edendale. Train 925D stops at Edendale early every morning and members detach up to 40 wagons. These are all mixed up

- Dongwha tanks, Dongwha ZKs, Alliance wagons, southern tanneries wagons, Alliance bone wagons, and Fontana cheese wagons – which are block marshalled and go to separate sidings, There is no room to move after 925 departs as Edendale is a no-marshalling yard so we can't cut them off and leave them. All we can do is couple up and drive north and first stop is Dongwha which isn't properly lit. The only option we can see is to have lights installed there.

The continuing saga of the future of Tiwai Point hangs over us. If the smelter goes then it will have a huge impact on the local economy, particularly our members at Southport. Of course, if we had a government that had a strategy for industry and was committed to full employment then we'd cope. Instead National, who, despite all the evidence, think the voodoo economics of the free market will save us all. 🌐

WELLINGTON PORT BRANCH



(above) Murray Sidaway, Wellington Port branch secretary and cargo handler at the controls of a wharf crane.

(top right) Iain MacGregor in the Port Security Centre.

(below) Kevin Jackson, operations coordinator and our longest serving RMTU member (52+ years) at this port



IN April we bid farewell to Winstones Pulp Industries from Wellington to Port of Napier. The loss of the pulp marshalling operation will have a huge impact on our members' earnings potential especially our P24s. It is hoped that management will find another customer to fill the void. The departure of WPI also heralded the closing down of The Loading Company (TLC), the stevedoring operation of WPI. TLC was a subsidiary of Independent Stevedoring Ltd (ISL) of Tauranga. A handful of these men have been deployed to Napier and are now employed by C3 to assist with the stevedoring of the Swire vessels.

April has also seen the start of a new dedicated rail service between Palmerston North and Wellington. It is hoped that this service will increase much needed container volume through the port and grow the business. Early signs are very promising.

At the time of writing we are alongside MUNZ and the EPMU in negotiations for our collective agreement. As always its a struggle to loosen the bosses' purse strings but we will reach an agreement somewhere. It is hoped that agreement is reach by the time this magazine goes to print.

In January this year we had the tragic death at work of our MUNZ brother Mark Samoa. His untimely passing had a huge impact on the workforce here. Mark's

death serves as a reminder to us all on the waterfront that we do indeed, work in a highly dangerous industry. The safety of yourself and your fellow workmates is paramount. Mark is survived by his partner Sarah and children Gemma, Maleko and Cale. 🌐

