

JUNE 2014

THE *Transport Worker*

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



**RMTU at
Mayday
celebrations**

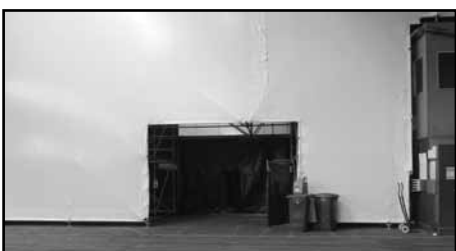


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Libi Carr reports on the conference and workshop she attended in Delhi earlier this year.

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Hutt Workshops gets all wrapped up in preparation for removing asbestos linings from locos.

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The steam loco named to honour the dead from WWII is refurbished and launched.

COVER PHOTO

RMTU members stand proud at the annual Palmerston North Mayday celebration where their band Derailed won top prize. See story page 13.

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

New CEO's agenda takes us back to the bad old days

EVER since Jim Quinn was unsuccessful in having his employment agreement renewed by the KiwiRail board there has been widespread speculation amongst industry players and commentators alike as to the reason why.

Most of you would have read my view in this column in the March issue and you would have either agreed or disagreed with my assessment of Quinn's failing or successes. However, it was my opinion and like belly buttons we all have one. What I did not cover is one of the theories that has been most heard about Quinn's exit and that is that he was seen as being too soft on the union's. And that statement was usually followed by: 'The unions ran the company'. I wish!

I completely reject this theory now and every other occasion it has been said in my hearing. I know that the unions do not run KiwiRail nor is it true that Quinn was soft on unions. I had many robust debates on more issues than I care to remember with Quinn and I know he also had moments with the other unions in KiwiRail.

Another rumour around the place is that Peter Reidy has been brought in to deal to the unions and to stop them running the company.

I have, until recently, rejected this theory too and on most occasions laughed it off.

Recent events however, are causing me to reconsider this viewpoint.

Since his arrival communication between the KiwiRail CEO and this Union have reduced, RMTU representation has been removed from the health and safety executive and the national tunnels council, the Union H&S organiser can't get her emails answered by management and to cap it all off the RMTU was removed from the key leadership meetings between KiwiRail and the NZTA rail safety system auditors.

Following months of planning the Union was advised at 2.30pm on the Friday before the Monday commencement of the meeting that it would no longer be required to attend. Worryingly, but not surprisingly, the regulator NZTA said nothing and merely reissued a revised timetable.

We complained loudly and went public stating that such a move was out of kilter with the H&S philosophy coming out of the Ministerial Inquiry into the H&S of Tranz Rail workers in 1999-2000 and the Pike River taskforce findings. It is also out of step, in our view, with the intent of the H&S Reform Bill before parliament now.

Reidy said in reply: 'The senior management audit meetings with NZTA is our opportunity to engage on a one-on-one basis with the NZTA to signal that KiwiRail is recalibrating the way we think about senior leaders leading safety. Those leaders need to accept clear personal responsibility for safety and for them to present as such in the NZTA audit session is important. As CEO I believe that the involvement of the

◀ RMTU, simply as an observer at these sessions, is therefore inappropriate.'

And our current zero harm performance was poor when benchmarked across the top 50 organisations in Australia (including Fulton Hogan, Downer, Fletcher Building and Fonterra in New Zealand). I believe that the previous initiatives by the RMTU and KiwiRail had fallen short of leading safety from a systems design and behavioural approach at the front line level. The senior leadership team have accepted the challenge of lifting the game and this will require

an increase in our level of active engagement with our front line employees, more in-depth analysis of critical investigations for incidents, recalibrating safety conversations across our organisation, reporting on high potential incidents and lost time incidents at the monthly Board meeting. I am expecting a more discipline and focus on safety and this will lead to a more formal approach rather than the previous somewhat ad hoc practices.'

So what does this mean I hear you ask?

In my view it foreshadows that Reidy (and by implication the new zero harm GM Stacy) blames the 'apparent' H&S failings within KiwiRail and the behavioural approach at the front line level on the RMTU.

Brothers and sisters we have a new type of management in town where consultation, engagement, discussion and consensus has no place.

Reidy is to be the sole arbiter of what is and is not appropriate for the RMTU to be involved with within KiwiRail.

Well let me tell you, this should send shivers down your spine as I remember a time when past management thought and acted in this way and it was a very 'interesting' time to be in the rail industry. The timing is also interesting given our proximity to the MECA wage round.

Are he and the KiwiRail Board spoiling for a fight? More importantly, are we ready for the fight?

Well, I know that I am – ready, willing, experienced and able. So who is with me? 🇳🇿



Retirements

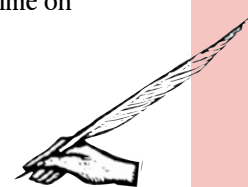
Dear Editor,

As I will be retiring from KiwiRail on the 25 April after 42 years I will also tender my resignation from the RMTU effective on the same date. In doing so I would like to thank our Union for all its support, particularly with my dispute with ACC.

To all members I have trained and worked with over all those years here's hoping you get as much enjoyment from your time on rail as I have.

Regards

Malcolm Stone.



Dear Editor,

I bring to your attention that I am retiring as a locomotive engineer for Kiwi Rail. My last working day being April 30, 2014 and I therefore cancel my membership to the Union.

Yours Sincerely

Robin Lindsay Young
66549.

Dear Editor,

I hereby table my resignation from the Rail and Maritime Transport Union as I have retired.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Union for its support over the 15 years I have been a member.

Kind regards

Kevin O'Docherty.

Resignation

Dear Editor,

Regretfully I resign my position as branch secretary of RMTU Nelson.

All the best for the future.

Regards

Peter Davies.

Wider costs of overseas build

THE wider costs of overseas-built locomotives must be revealed to the New Zealand people, said the Rail and Maritime Transport Union.

"We have seen 40 DL locomotives come out of service, causing disruption for KiwiRail's freight customers and incurring considerable expense for our rail SOE," Rail & Maritime Transport Union general secretary Wayne Butson said.

KiwiRail and the RMTU recently reported that the first of KiwiRail's Chinese built DL locomotives have returned to service.

They were withdrawn when it was discovered they contained asbestos.

Butson said if KiwiRail's locomotives had been built locally, the problem of asbestos never would have happened. "It's important we don't gloss over the full impact of National's decision to abandon our local rail manufacturing workforce and industry and opt for the cheapest possible price for these locomotives, the Auckland EMUs and the flat top wagons, all of which could have had varying levels of assembly or manufacture here in New Zealand."

He warned that value is not just in the initial purchase price. Long-term costs involving repairs and maintenance work also must be considered in procurement decisions.

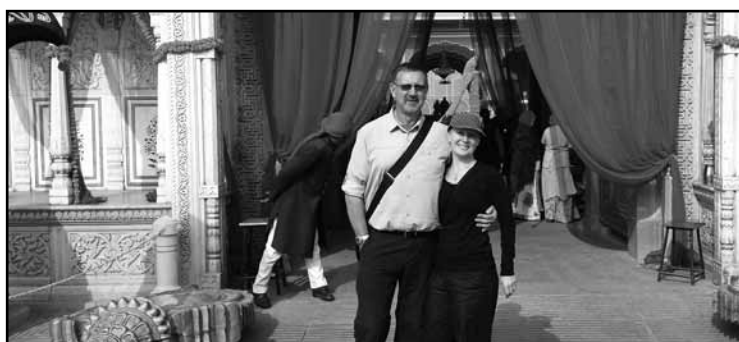
"KiwiRail will inevitably have whole-of-life cost blowouts if it continues to take a short term procurement approach solely focused on the cheapest products available," he said. 🇳🇿

- Labour Letter

Like birds, we fly best with two wings



Young actors in a powerful street play protesting violence against women, performed after the rally.



Ronny and Libi, Jaipur, Northern India.

An introduction to India

WHILE travelling through Rajasthan I discovered how invisible women can be as all questions, discussion and decisions at every hotel and shop (including women's clothing shops) were addressed to my 1.9 metre tall husband. Only when I stepped away from his shadow did I become visible again.

Very few women work outside the home in India. Restaurants, hotels, marketplaces, ancient forts and castles and the few malls we ventured into – all staffed by men.

I was reeling after one day. I had never experienced anything like this. Add the sights, smells, colours, constant sound, unfamiliar food, language and more people per square metre than a British footy final and Ronny and I weren't sure we'd make it through the vacation.

However, we loved our nine days travelling through Delhi, Sikandra, Agra, Jaipur, Mandawa, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. It gave me a deeper understanding of the experiences women at the Conference talked about and I had glimpsed some of what they were referring to. 🌐

IN January Libi Carr attended two conferences in Delhi: the two-day ITF Women's Conference 'Women Transport Workers Fighting Back' and a three-day training workshop 'Stopping Violence against Women'.

She said it was noticeable that the RMTU was the only NZ union with a women's representative at the conference.

The acting general secretary of the ITF Stephen Cotton, told the conference: "Women are 51 per cent of the world's population. If they don't participate in the workforce and in their unions we have a problem. Include women's work in all of the thinking of the ITF. Women and youth must be enshrined in what we do and in our thinking."

The conference brought together the work of the ITF since the 2010 Women's Conference and discussed how it would contribute to the 43rd ITF Congress in July 2014. One objective would link the work of women around the world to fight for change through their unions.

Women spoke about the work they are doing to increase women's participation at all levels in their unions and the challenges they face – many of which are common to working people around the world regardless of gender but are more likely to be experienced by women.

Some of the issues arising were:

- Working long hours to make ends meet negatively impacting on the ability to spend time at home with the family;
- Low pay, reflecting that the work is considered of little value;
- Contracting out of work;
- Working alone;
- Unsafe working conditions; and
- Feeling powerless to change things that are wrong in their

workplace and industry.

Women from India, Britain, Latin America, South Africa, Bulgaria and Doha were panel speakers and presenters and made articulate and passionate contributions.

"Every experience is connected," said Libi. "Violence, poverty, low wages, precarious work, societal status, lack of education and access to education, lack of access to proper medical care, poor health outcomes, women having full control and choice in reproduction, societal attitudes and expectations – there was nothing that did not connect with something else."

She adds: "When every experience is connected where does the RMTU stand in this picture and where do we want to be?"

Prior to leaving her instruction from the National Management Committee was to write a strategy paper mapping out a path which would see more women members as active delegates and with a meaningful voice.

"My responsibility was to identify what women need to do to fully participate in their unions and how we, in the RMTU can



MUA sisters, Karen Wheatland and Mary Prout.



Pacific Island sisters, Luise Madigibuli, Fiji, Christine Tenu, PNG and Nancy Manga PNG.



Estonian sister Kaia Vask, general secretary of Estonian Seamen's Independent Union.

achieve this," said Libi. "We have already identified that RMTU women are not fully participating and we want to do something about that."

The key, says Libi is that women will participate when space is created for them. The RMTU recognises that women can, and want to, play a larger role in its operation. Currently it has around 400 women members.

The RMTU recognises the need to create space for participation. It does it already in specific rail and port positions on the NMC, in creating space to work with Te Kupenga Mahi and in representation around NZ from local branches.

A summary of Libi's action plan and recommendations are set out in the box.

An endorsement form of the recommendations and action plan will be sent to each branch to sign and return at this year's RMTU Conference where they will be ratified. 🌐

■ If you have any questions about the ITF conference or anything raised in this article please contact RMTU Lyttelton branch secretary Libi Carr who will be very happy to discuss them:
Ph: 03 328 8604. Mob: 027 446 8779
Email: rmtul@xtra.co.nz

Actions and recommendations: a summary

STRUCTURAL changes to create space for women's representation at all levels of the RMTU will be included in remits at the biennial RMTU conference programme in October including:

- Opportunities to discuss and debate the structural change.
- Women's representative on the NMC to come into effect following the next round of NMC Elections in October 2015.
- Following the Conference we recommend all branches create the space for a women's officer to be filled by December 2014.
- Women's officer can be a shared role.
- All women's officers to receive delegate training level 1 with specific focus on issues that matter to women.
- Recommended that the RMTU create a women's mentor/liaison as a contact for women members.
- Survey members on issues which matter to women and men separately and act on the results with education sessions this year particularly with delegates likely to attend Conference and to include a briefing on the outcomes from the ITF Women's Conference.

A women's forum to be held in early 2015 and prior to NMC elections including women's officers, RMTU women delegates and the RMTU women's advocate(s). 🌐

Stopping violence against women

During the three day training course in Delhi called Stopping Violence against Women Libi Carr joined ITF trainers and union reps from Britain, Canada, Bulgaria and Australia along with local groups. The workshop covered:

- Breaking the silence and speaking out against violence;
- The culture of violence in our societies;
- Why men commit violence;
- Work being done to educate men and women about the impact of violence;
- Organising union member's around violence based issues;
- Creating space for women to participate at all levels of their union; and
- Create space for men to talk about violence against women and what they can do to stop it.

Some of the 300 ITF Women's Conference participants rallied through Delhi Railway Station raising awareness under the banner 'Stop violence against women'.

"Gender expectations are not useful to either of us. They are what divides us, not what unite us." said Refilwe Setladi, head of the gender department, South African Transport and Allied Workers Union, who attended the workshop. 🌐

Otira conditions made safer

IT'S unusual and a little bit daring but this article starts with a 'good news' story.

In February, while DXC 5293 was travelling through the Otira Tunnel towing a line of coal wagons a high pressure fuel line broke, spraying fuel onto the piping hot exhaust side of the turbo charger. Immediately, the recently installed fire suppression system kicked in. It detected the fire, shut down the loco and fired the suppressant canisters thus putting out the fire and stopping any further damage immediately. The LE did nothing apart from watch in awe. The result was minimal damage to the loco, a light repair and a barely discernible delay.

Of course there's a 'but' - a big one - and an even bigger back story.

This didn't happen through spontaneous action or the good grace or caring attitude of KiwiRail.

Problems with the Otira Tunnel have been noted for about as long as the tunnel has existed. It's a bugger of a bit of rail with its steep alpine climb through a fetid interior where geography, geology and meteorology combine to test the best equipment, resources and manpower. But it's not beyond getting right – and safe.

In 2012 the RMTU and KiwiRail combined to review the safety for workers in the tunnel and travellers through it. Among the many hazards revealed, the biggest was fire, and among the recommendations in its 31-page report was one to speed up a programme to instal fire detection and shutdown systems into the DX and DFB locos – especially for passenger services.

In this regard, nothing happened until around the middle of last year when Worksafe New Zealand took it upon themselves to inspect the tunnel and assess its risks – and yes, especially in regard to passenger safety.

The Chief inspector of their hazards unit, Tony Forster, led a small team accompanied by staff from KiwiRail, NZTA and NZFRS.

The RMTU requested a copy of his report through the Official Information Act. That's right - the RMTU only found out about the inspection and the report incidentally and after the fact and were NOT privy to any part of the process. The report,



The Chubb STAT.X control panel on the cab rear wall of DXC5477.

which outlines a damning list of faults and life-threatening possibilities – some of which required immediate attention – made sobering reading.

"This report was simply horrifying," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "The six page report was an unremitting list of potential catastrophes. They called the risk gap between what should be in place and what existed, significant. Not only would a serious event endanger the lives of passengers through fire but in mid winter they would be likely to freeze to death."

In relation to fire risk on the locos the report had this to say to Kiwirail:

"Inadequate safety oversight has been exercised by KiwiRail who (until now) have been content to rely upon 'risk' improbability of a fire emergency occurring rather than identify key (principal) hazards, risk-rank

nel had fire suppressant systems in place.


KiwiRail responded by decreeing that it would immediately bus passengers between Arthur's Pass and Otira but couched their statement in a cloud of obfuscation about KiwiRail 'constantly monitoring safety', that a fire risk was low and so on. No mention at all that they had been severely admonished by Worksafe NZ nor that Worksafe NZ had all-but threatened to close the tunnel if immediate action was not taken.

The key to an effective fire suppressant was that it work automatically and thoroughly. Through experimentation and experience the current third generation system is now installed in all DX locos using the Otira Tunnel. As illustrated by the story which opened this article.

Additionally, the High Hazards Unit is currently evaluating KiwiRail's procedures for freight services and will soon be inspecting the Rimutaka and Kaimai tunnels.

RMTU health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher said: "Thank goodness it was a freight train and that the equipment worked."

Meanwhile, KiwiRail has produced its own detailed list of actions to be taken to make the Otira Tunnel safer including clearing out coal debris, contaminants, coal wagon covers and a lighted walkway – to be completed by December 2015.

"We're delighted with the emphasis and action taken on safety in the Otira Tunnel and KiwiRail's plan to continue improvement," said Butson. "However, we would also like to see KiwiRail instal fire suppressant system in all its locos. There are hundreds of tunnels throughout New Zealand and they all present similar potential hazards." 



One of the STAT.X fire suppression canisters mounted in place. This one is on one of the Tranz Alpine AKV vans.

and take a more proactive approach to hazard elimination, isolation and mitigation."

They were also concerned about flammable material beside the track such as coal which had dropped from passing trains and the carbon-laden walls.

They further noted that not one of the rail track maintenance locos used in the tun-

Following last year's serious incident a formal safety review was set up to determine what went wrong and what needed to be done to ensure worker safety.

Safety in the Kaimai Tunnel

THE review of the Kaimai Tunnel Safe Working Procedures Project (KTSWPP) is complete and the group met for the final time in April to review the recommendations.

The KTSWPP was set up by the RMTU and KiwiRail following a safety incident involving contractors working in the tunnel in August 2012.

The review made 23 recommendations including the need to rejuvenate the Kaimai Tunnel focus group – one of three regional tunnel focus groups designed to work jointly to improve tunnel safety. The others are Rimutaka and the Southern Tunnels focus groups.



Some of the members of the working group. From left: Shane McNae (train examiner maintenance), Karen Fletcher (RMTU H&S organiser), Bernie Snook (LE), Hazel Armstrong (lawyer representing RMTU), William Lanigan (track maintainer). Sitting: Patrick Maney (H&S adviser), Jeanine Benson (senior projects manager), Mason Erueti (track ganger).

Surprises found in the tunnel

During the review both arsenic and asbestos were unexpectedly found in the tunnel.

Consequently all track maintenance work ceased until the hazards were removed.

Restricted tunnel access prevented occupational hygienists Air Matters from carrying out monitoring of track work as part of the review.

Review recommendations included:

- Environmental monitoring to be undertaken for fumes, asbestos, dust, heat, noise and other toxic substances;

- Monitoring equipment to be issued to all LEs and regular track workers that has the function to download data;

- The Kaimai Tunnel focus group reconvene and that contractors are invited to attend;

- A tunnels governance structure is created at Kiwirail;

- Improved tunnel gas awareness training is developed;

- Powered lighting is introduced and all petrol or diesel driven plant to be replaced using alternative sources;

- Health monitoring procedures be implemented for post incident events;

- More reliable communication introduced into the tunnel including operational trackside telephones; and


- Emergency planning and national

co-ordination with Mines Rescue;

- An audit of contractors' safety procedures be undertaken to check conformity with KRG's safety procedures.

\$5 million to upgrade the tunnel

KRG has allocated \$5 million to upgrade the tunnel in the 2014/15 financial year. Improvements will include the installation of fibre optic cabling to enable more reliable communications and the installation of permanent lighting.

The recommendations of the review will be picked up and progressed by the re-established Kaimai Tunnel focus group, which is likely resume in May 2014. 

Asbestos fears allayed

AFTER repeated assurances from KiwiRail (KR) that the DL locomotives, during the design phase, did not and would not contain asbestos, it is fair to say we believed them.

When last year concerns were raised after asbestos was found in the Chinese built locomotives in Australia, we again sought reassurance from KR that our DLs were asbestos-free. Again CEO Quinn assured us and we believed him.

When asbestos was actually found during scoping of the rust warranty work in February this year, the Chinese manufacturer could no longer deny the presence of asbestos. Instead, they blamed the asbestos in the DLs on a sub-contractor – the same excuse it gave the Australians.

KR and the RMTU clearly had a major issue as the asbestos containing material (ACM) was found on the roof panels and doors in the engine bay, on the ceiling and walls of the electrical cabinets and all wall and ceiling framing within both cabs at each end of the locomotives. The asbestos, containing a sound deadening compound, was described by testing experts as a 'witches brew'.

KR was given a choice by the RMTU – either voluntarily lay up the locomotives or we would ban their operation and use. They chose the honourable path and all 40 generation one and two DLs were parked up and quarantined until a satisfactory solution could be found.

The KR freight and mechanical industrial councils met in Lower Hutt on 6 March to discuss the issue where it was agreed that KR and the RMTU would work together to identify the scope and magnitude of the issue.

A further meeting was agreed in Auckland for March 18 and 19 comprising an RMTU team of mechanical and locomotive engineer representatives from every North Island depot with union staff.

A typical asbestos-laden Chinese-built DL loco.



Loco and mechanical reps from all North Island depots united in the safety challenge.



(l to r) Paul Morrison (Hutt branch chair), Dave Bellett, Bob Hill (WorkSafe), Dean Shute (Clear Air Ltd), Karen Fletcher and Paul Joyce (RMTU).

about the health implications and job security considering the cuts to train services and the potential loss of customers to other transport modes.

It was a very difficult situation.

The outcome from the very stressful and, at times, tense two day meeting was an agreement by all parties to work with Worksafe and industry and product experts to see if there was a way of ensuring safety and yet enable locomotives to be returned to operation.

Also accepted in the discussions was the fact that the generation one DLs would not be suitable to return to any operational service until they were made asbestos free and, therefore, the operating window for any DL returned to service would be confined to the Golden Triangle (Auckland, Te Rapa, Mount Maunganui and Kawerau).

A key outcome was agreement that any worker would have the right, without question, to refuse work on any DL returned to

The meeting had presentations from asbestos experts and senior KR management and, to their credit, they spoke freely and frankly of their own and peer concerns. The RMTU reps were concerned

Photographs of the Hutt Workshops asbestos fit-out can be seen with their branch notes on page 27.

service if they believed that to do so was unsafe. A smaller team, comprising reps from the Golden Triangle depots became the working group for all future discussions and meetings.

For the generation two locos, a range of mitigations were put in place to gradually return them to service which included removing and replacing doors that contained the 'witches brew', isolating and locking the electrical cabinet that was accessible from the cabs, relocating the main knife switch and a high regime of asbestos testing.

Also introduced was a card system that is visible before entering the cab with green meaning the loco can be driven, orange for trail loco only and red meaning quarantined.

Drivers are prohibited from accessing the engine room and mechanical members are provided appropriate PPE and an allowance to wear it. Nobody is permitted to enter the cab wearing the asbestos PPE and if this does occur the locomotive will be immediately quarantined.

The DL asbestos issue is going to be with us for quite some time. Members must be vigilant and strictly follow all safety protocols.

The full asbestos removal work will be done at the Hutt Railway workshops where the locomotives will be disassembled in a red zone' containment area by imported Chinese workers. The panels and asbestos will be removed by a registered NZ asbestos removal contractor (Clean Air Services) and the locomotives reassembled by the Chinese workers.

A considerable amount of work has been done by the local RMTU branch and H&S reps on the work arrangements and facilities in and out of the red and orange zones. When the generation one locomotives are cleaned and certified as being asbestos free then the generation two locomotives will go through the same process.

The RMTU thanks all the delegates who worked on this issue. 🌐

Bob Crow, 1961 – 2014

It is with great sadness that the RMTU marks the passing of RMT general secretary Bob Crow, who died suddenly on 11 March 2014, aged 52. Bob was born in Shadwell, East London, England. After leaving school at 16, he joined London Transport in the tree clearing gang and became a local rep for the National Union of Railwaymen rising to become national officer for the track workers within the Union. After the merger, which formed the RMT, Bob was elected to represent London Underground members and became assistant



general secretary. In 2002 he became the general secretary. Bob is survived by his partner Nicky, a son and three daughters.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson said: "The news of Bob's sudden death came as a shock but not as a real surprise. On a number of occasions we discussed the stress and strain of the job and the frequent travel. From the first time I met him I was in awe of his boundless energy and passion for the struggle of work-

ing class 'battlers' as he called them. He was always up for a debate and many the time that I have seen his simple and direct rhetoric prevail for its clarity. I have lost a friend and workers throughout the world have lost a champion without peer. I know he won't be resting in peace, as he will be stirring, inciting trouble and organising."

After visiting the RMTU conference in 2009 he said it was like having a "syringe full of enthusiasm in my blood stream. The RMTU is tremendously similar to Britain's RMT. It is so good we can learn from each other's practical experiences and build on the great support that we can give each other and other workers throughout the world". 🌐



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



H&S at Lyttelton Port

In the last three months, with June Hoddle CTU Trainer, we have completed four rounds of level one H&S training at Lyttelton Port. There are now over 30 freshly trained reps across the Port and Inland Port.

We acknowledge the commitment LPC has made in picking up the tab for the training, for ensuring members of the RMTU and MUNZ are released to attend the training and the initiative taken by LPC to send managers to the level one training.

Round five of level one training was scheduled for May 14 and 15.

Given that H&S and LPC have recently been in the news for all the wrong reasons the Lyttelton branch is relieved to be able to share some good news about them.

A newly trained H&S rep had occasion during the recent flooding to put his training to the test. Due to Sumner Road shift-

ing through the earthquakes runoff now comes straight down the hillside under the coal conveyor belt and into the vehicle workshop. The water then blocks the sewage with the resulting raw sewage floating ankle to knee deep outside the workshop where maintenance work.

Our RMTU H&S rep having discovered raw sewage in the floodwater after having to wade through the stuff, marched up to the manager's office who reeled back in his chair asking what the stink was. He was advised in no uncertain terms what it was and that nobody would be going near that area until it had been cleaned and cleared for work.

The manager, to his credit, sprang into action and arranged for the cleaning to be done once the floodwaters had been pumped away.

Whilst this action may seem obvious, maintenance staff have tolerated and worked around the flooding and raw sewage since the earthquakes – that's heading into four years of working in shit.

The H&S training provided the rep with the knowledge and confidence to deal with the problem.

Education does make a difference.

The recent appointment of previous RMTU delegate and executive member, Paul Dennis, to the role of H&S manager has wholehearted support. He is someone members know and have confidence in. Paul has come from the shop floor and knows what the issues are.

We look forward to reporting further on H&S improvements at Lyttelton Port. In the meantime stay safe in your workplaces and take care of each other. 🇳🇿



Labour MPs Megan Woods and Darien Fenton visit RMTU Christchurch. Photograph (from back l to r) Dave Kearns (former Hillside delegate), partially obscured is unknown; Mike Williams (LE rep and RMTU national management committee member), Ian Walker (RMTU branch secretary), and Graham Ealam (RMTU branch chair) and Megan Woods in the foreground.

Combined reunion

Palmerston North and LEA retired staff are to have a combined reunion on Saturday and Sunday August 9 and 10, 2014 at the Palmerston North Cosmopolitan Club, Linton Street.

Programme:

Saturday: 11am: Registration begins \$5 per head
11.30 am to 1.30 pm: Lunch (please indicate if attending)
Afternoon tea (free)
5.30 pm to 7.30 pm: Dinner (\$15/\$17 per head approximately).
Buffet meal.
7.30-11.30 pm: Music by Hatrack a six-piece band from Kapiti.

Sunday:

11.30 am -1.30 pm: Lunch (\$12-\$15 per head)
Then farewells until whenever.

Accommodation:

Within walking distance of venue.
Kingsgate Hotel, 110 Fitzherbert Ave, Palmerston North.
Rooms from \$80-\$140 per night.
millenniumhotels.co.nz
caitlyn.moore@millenniumhotels.co.nz
Phone 06 356-8059.

Reunion contact:

Eric Cairncross
junericc@xtra.co.nz
Mobile: 027-653-0933,
Home: 06-355-8038
Work: 021-823-817

Safety in your own hands

**IF THE JOB'S NOT SAFE, JUST SAY NO.
THE RMTU WILL BACK YOUR DECISION.**

THE RMTU has launched the 'Just say NO' campaign in response to the KiwiRail Otira fume incident last November. The incident showed that workers were not confident to speak up about their safety concerns and felt pressured to get the job done, ultimately putting productivity ahead of safety. Eleven posters featuring well-known and influential RMTU members from ports and rail have been distributed to the branches. The purpose of the campaign is to reinforce the RMTU's support for members who say no to unsafe work conditions.

Under the the Health and Safety in Employment Act (HSE Act) the employer is required to take 'all practicable steps' to ensure a healthy and safe workplace.

Additionally, the Act places a duty on employees to take all practicable steps to ensure their own safety, and that of their workmates.

One tool which the law provides is the right to refuse unsafe work (Section 28A).

Workers can and should refuse work if they believe it is likely to cause serious harm.

Serious harm includes:

- Permanent loss of bodily function, or severe temporary loss of bodily function;
- Safety in the Kaimai Tunnel;
- Amputation;
- Loss of consciousness;
- Any harm causing hospitalisation for 48 hours or more; and
- Mental and physical injury.

Workers do not need to prove there is a risk of serious harm but must hold a genuine and reasonable belief that the work is likely to cause serious harm. In situations where the work is inherently dangerous the risk of serious harm must have materially increased. For instance, Section 28A should be invoked when the risk of harm has increased beyond what is being actively controlled – for example a piece of equipment fails during a job.

Process to take for refusing unsafe work:

- Stand back, take five, stop the job;
- Raise your concerns with the person in charge and seek advice from the health and

safety rep or delegate; and

■ If, after discussing your concerns, the issue is still not resolved contact the RMTU and WorkSafe.

While a solution is being sought you can be asked to do other duties within the scope of your employment agreement.

Asbestos issues

Workers were reminded of their rights under Section 28A during the recent DL asbestos issue. The RMTU and KRG agreed to a process whereby if workers felt uncomfortable with the asbestos management controls they could 'opt out' of working with the DLs and carry out alternative duties instead. The worker would not be required to work with the DLs until they were personally satisfied that their concerns had been appropriately met.

Contacting WorkSafe


WorkSafe is New Zealand's workplace health and safety regulator. For general health and safety enquires or to make a complaint about an unsafe health and safety situation call WorkSafe on 0800 030 040.

Safety message

The chief inspector (extractives) of WorkSafe's HHU, Tony Forster, strongly supports the RMTU's safety message. He says: "If you're not satisfied with the safety situation, step back and tell your employer your concern. If you're still not happy contact the regulator."

Tony has even gone so far as to offer tunnel workers his mobile phone number and encourages workers to call direct to discuss safety issues in the tunnels.

His number is 027-702-3897.

Workers do not live and die by the clock. Safety comes first. 



(above) Tony Forster and (r) some of the posters.



Hidden costs of bigger trucks

DESPITE wide-held public opinion and common sense firmly against increasing truck sizes on roads, the New Zealand Transport Agency recently released a self-congratulatory pat on its own back for doing just that.

It would seem the designers of this mad scheme must spend more time riding in planes than queuing behind the behemoths blocking our highways. Or maybe they're blinkered by the bucks being made by their mates in private business who demand payment for their National Party donations. Those paragons of virtue are creaming a living from tax payer funds which supply the roads, repair the potholes, strengthen the bridges and increase parking lots to accommodate their trucks.

Meanwhile, as the NZTA's short-sighted policies encourage ever more freight to our roads rail, our most cost-effective and least-invasive means of carrying goods, is marginalised and hamstrung.

The Gisborne/Napier line is a fine example of supporting private businesses over public amenities. The line was mothballed because it was deemed too expensive to repair after a severe weather event. Instead, the NZTA will no doubt find sufficient funds to upgrade the roads, straighten corners and strengthen bridges to accommodate the bigger trucks needed to ferry the freight which could, but for a little cash, be carried by rail. Sound economics, cockeyed thinking or just plain old National party cronyism – you pick.

The puffed up publicity boasts of 50MAX (up to 50 tonnes) trucks 'becoming a familiar sight on our roads'. Since nine-axle vehicles were allowed free reign in 2013 more than 500 of them have received their 'stamp of approval' with many more in the pipeline.

The trend began with high productivity motor vehicles (HPMV) about ten years ago but they were restricted to certain routes where the roads and bridges could handle them causing incidentally, many bottlenecks at narrow bridges.

So the NZTA found a new way to overcome this problem - add an extra axle and divide the weight over nine instead of eight which meant smaller bridges wouldn't have

to bear the full weight of the truck thus opening up more roads AND they could be heavier – another six tonnes.

Their trucking mates were ecstatic.

Somehow the NZTA reasons that the main beneficiaries are local communities.

How pleased are we?

The Southland District Council for one, were hesitant to give the scheme its full approval. Its services and assets group manager Ian Marshall told the Southland Times the council passed the changes before it was "imposed" on it.

However, he added, the potential damage the trucks could cause was unknown and no-one knew how much money would be needed to maintain the roads with such large vehicles on it.

It could be in the millions of dollars, he said.

At present, NZTA pays for 53 per cent of roading cost, while tax payers cough up the rest.

Figures obtained from a study conducted by the UK independent Transport Research Laboratory shows that as mega trucks are let loose on roads there is a downward spiral effect on rail freight.

The study also shows that additional expensive road works are forced on communities through:

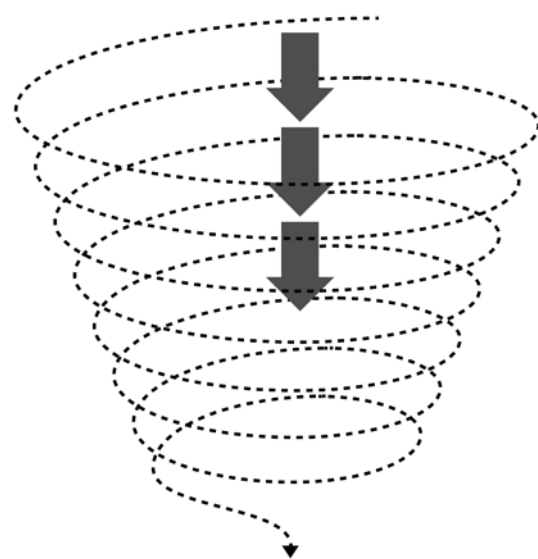
- Improving safety requirements for tunnels;
- Widening roundabouts and access lanes;
- Upgrading level crossings;
- Enlarging parking areas; and
- Restructuring freight terminals.

They also conclude that these trucks will lead to:

- Greater accident risks as overtaking and clearing road junctions and railway crossings will take longer;
- A bigger impact on the severity of accidents;
- Higher risks for vulnerable road users;

- An increased risk of driver failure; and
- An increase in the number of accident casualties.


Once again we are fobbed off with skewed facts and figures and obfuscation. The true costs of increased road transport



The downward spiral effect of megatrucks on rail freight

- Reduction of production costs for road transport industry;
- Traffic losses for rail freight;
- Lower utilisation of production resources;
- Lower utilisation of infrastructure capacity;
- Increase in production costs and deterioration of the service provision;
- Deterioration of rail's position in intermodal competition; and
- Transport reallocation, combined with job losses and closure of rail freight access points and sidings.

weights are ignored but include impacts to climate change, air pollution, accident costs, congestion and noise along with smaller but not insignificant issues such as ecosystem loss, soil and water pollution and biodiversity loss.

All costs that will be born by the tax payer and eventually our children. 

ICLS 19th steering meeting

WORLDWIDE actions since the last meeting included the solidarity of members in supporting the strike in Korea, cyclone affected workers in Philippines, the SRUT struggle in Thailand, the JRU issue in Japan and NSW Aurezon lock out.

Specifically the various countries attending reported:

Korea: The KRWU strike and the trade union oppression tactics in Korea saw fines levied against unions of NZ\$17.5m, three KRWU officers imprisoned and 292 Korail workers dismissed. Significantly, the Korean prime minister was given a hostile reception on his visit to Sweden by rail unions. Meanwhile KRWU funds have been frozen while the dispute is before the courts.

Japan: The Abe administration continues with its eradication of Japan's pacifist past with aggressive territorial disputes with Korea and China. Meanwhile welfare recipients now number 2,170,000 with the wages gap growing. GST increased from 5% to 8% on 1 April and in October will

increase again to 10%. Earthquake reconstruction continues though JR East has not begun reconstruction yet. Fukushima continues to release radioactive material each day and the fresh water used to cool the plant poses an ever-growing threat to the health and the environment. Rail unions are under the gun with two JHRU workers dismissed and mass layoffs plus one member arrested and jailed for 20 days. He has subsequently returned to work.

Australia: The Aurizon coal dispute, strike and lockout has been very aggressive but members have been staunch. Fair Work Australia intervened and directed the



Robert Hayden, Pan Hong Ling, Satoru Yamada general secretary, Park Hee Suck, Wayne Butson, Edgar Bilayon chair, Kim Sngbyuu, and Mung Mung O.

parties to mediation where they came to agreement after two days.

Thailand: The cases against SRUT 13, comprising six from Hat Yai and seven from Bangkok continues, though mediation has enabled the Hat Yai 6 to be reinstated with no punishment - though fines to the union remain outstanding. The union has decided to defer the Bangkok 7 issue until the Hat Yai six matter is to be settled. 🌐

Derailed wins the day

DERAILED, a five-piece rock band made up of proud members of the RMTU from Wellington and Palmerston North took home the MayDay Cup this year at the 20th Mayday Concert held in the Manawatu.

The judges said they couldn't go past the raw talent of these young ones, who had a very visual presentation on the big screen behind them of the main issues at stake for workers in the coming general election.

The band was made up of Antony Radley on drums (trainee LE in Palmerston North), Owen Robinson on bass (LE for Tranz Metro), Kaisa Beech on guitar (passenger operations), Vaughan Colgan on keyboard (passenger operations) and Adam Harrison on vocals (train manager).

A huge thanks to RMTU members Mel Te Pou and Rochelle Ducommun who went with the band in support.

There were many other excellent performances: The Devil's Own (a three piece band from Tasmania), the Brazen Hussies, Luc Arnault, the Michelle Robinson Dance Studio, the Kate Martin School of Dance, the Wellington Community Choir and the Manawatu Community Choir.

During the performance by the Brazen Hussies, union representatives, community organisers and political parties were invited on stage with their banners and placards to

join in the song. RMTU delegate Mel Te Pou proudly waved the RMTU flag.

At the end of the concert all the performers gathered on stage and sung Bob Marley's One Love together with the audience.

This was an awesome event and we are definitely looking forward to next year. Huge thanks to Dion Martin and Unions Manawatu for putting on an amazing concert.

If you're interested in getting involved and representing the RMTU at the Mayday Concert next year keep an eye out for more information on how to get involved. 🌐



A better New Zealand with Labour

THIS is a great country full of great people. We work hard and we look after each other. That's why I'm in politics - because I believe in who we are and in the fundamental idea that each and every one of us deserves a fair go and a fair share.

But increasingly, we've seen that potential held back by a government that is working for a select few at the expense of everyone else.

Favours to the wealthy

A Government too concerned with paying favours to their wealthy donors to focus on the needs of New Zealanders. Too busy with Cabinet Clubs and cronyism to deal with the problems families are facing.

Like the fact there are 147,000 unemployed New Zealanders today. That's too many families denied an income and the dignity of work.

Or the fact home ownership among young people in their 30s has plummeted to just 43%. That's a denial of the basic Kiwi dream of a place to call your own. It condemns families to a lifetime of renting and insecurity.

Or the fact that for most families, wages aren't keeping up with the rising cost of living. Workers on a median wage in Northland, for example, are \$37 a week worse off since National took office.

As I meet people around New Zealand I see power bills lying unopened on the kitchen table, I hear people talk in disbelief about the rising costs at the supermarket.

People are feeling squeezed. I've met workers who have told me they hadn't had a pay rise since the last time Labour was in power. This government has no answers – for them it's politics as usual.

My promise to you is that Labour will put people first. We will make life better for all New Zealanders by focusing on policies that support you at home, at work and with your family.

We'll do this by upgrading our economy to create skilled, well paid jobs. Our mon-



Work Family Home

Those are our priorities.
And they are everyday
New Zealanders' priorities.
To get involved in the
campaign to change the
Government this year, visit
action.labour.org.nz

etary policy upgrade will lower interest rates, mortgages, and rents and help New Zealand's exporters and the people they employ. Our manufacturing and forestry economic upgrades will create thousands of skilled, well paid jobs in our regions – the places that need them most.

Lift wages, protect rights

And we will lift wages and protect the rights of workers to organise through their unions, because that's one of the main ways we make sure everyone gets a fair share.

We're doing this because to build strong communities you need a strong economy.


You also need decent, affordable homes. Labour will build 100,000 new affordable homes over ten years, introduce a capital gains tax – excluding the family home – to stabilise the housing market and restrict offshore speculators from driving up house prices.

We'll also introduce a Healthy Homes Guarantee to ensure all Kiwis have a warm, dry home – because that's what every Kiwi kid deserves.

Our kids also deserve the best start in life, which is why I announced our Best Start package earlier this year which includes 26 weeks' paid parental leave, a \$60 a week child allowance and an extension of free ECE to 25 hours a week.

Work. Family. Home. Those are our priorities. And they are everyday New Zealanders' priorities.

New Zealanders deserve a nation in which everyone has a good secure job, in which owning a home isn't a dream, in which we can raise our children, grow old with them, and know that they will have all the opportunities they need to flourish and succeed.

I believe that to do this we need to work alongside each other. The current government doesn't share that vision. This year we need to change the government, and we will do it together. 

Labour's transport vision

BUILDING a modern transport system is one of the most important things we can do to secure a prosperous future for New Zealand.

In this increasingly interconnected world, our transport networks underpin not only how our economy grows, how our businesses develop, but also how ordinary Kiwis live their lives.

Labour is committed to a 21st century transport system that is multi modal, safe, future proofed, environmentally sound and people focused.

We want our transport system to be a foundation for better jobs, higher wages, and a higher quality of living. Our vision for New Zealand's transport system is about putting people first.

That means making some big changes from the way things are done now.

The current Government has had a pretty simple approach to transport issues: whenever there is a problem, the answer is a new road.

But this over-reliance on so called Roads of National Significance is leading our transport network down a blind alley. It means we are locked into spending billions of dollars on project that shut out other, more affordable and efficient, transport alternatives, such as rail.

Instead of pouring good money after bad on these big projects, we could be expanding passenger rail in our cities, or investing in multi model freight options, with expanded rail and coastal shipping, that would diversify our freight options and help create jobs.

It's easy to see the opportunities that rail could bring in the disregarded rural areas of New Zealand. The 'Wall of Wood' in Northland and Gisborne means that these towns are now facing pressure on under-funded roads and a lack of investment in rail opportunities. That's holding back regional development and that's costing us jobs. We can do so much better.

And with the Government choosing to import rail carriages from China instead of build them here at home we've seen the closure of Hillside, and we have seen more good manufacturing jobs lost as businesses that supported the workshop suffer downstream.



Phyl Twyford
Spokesperson for transport


It was a matter of cost cutting but it has been a false economy – we have paid with jobs, with business closures, and with the disgraceful threat to workers health and safety from asbestos that wasn't meant to be there in the first place!

Labour will insure that it invests in rail and that the infrastructure we need will be produced in New Zealand where it can create jobs. Wherever government is responsible for procurement, we will ensure it operates equitably with respect to access for Kiwi firms and help keep high skilled jobs in New Zealand.

Not only would a more modern and effective transport system boost growth in our regions, it will do the same for our cities as well.

Our major cities are becoming more urbanised with compact living, and we need smart and active transport that keeps up with this changing lifestyle. As our cities change, it's important we have a transport system that isn't dependent only on roads.

Quality public transport is not only critical to our cities and schools, but it can make a big difference to peoples' lives and their health. It aids in transport demand management, which plays a crucial role in reducing congestion and emissions.

Labour will invest significantly in a modern, wi-fi connected, people friendly, affordable and efficient public transport system that works for our cities. This includes rail and light rail options, as well as cycling, walking and bus lanes. 


Thirty years since Trades Hall bombing



Ernie Abbott's photo on the Palmerston North workers' memorial.

MARCH 27 marked the 30th anniversary of the Trades Hall bombing in Wellington which killed president of the Wellington Caretakers and Cleaners Union Ernie Abbott. No one has ever been charged with Ernie's murder.

"The bombing of the Hall was a direct attack on democracy in New Zealand aimed at destabilising the union movement and the values it promotes," said CTU president Helen Kelly. "It occurred in a climate promoted by the Government of the day where unions and their members were portrayed in negative terms and personal attacks on union leaders was a normal affair. It is uncertain that any lessons were learned regarding the danger of this kind of unprincipled rhetoric and while the nature of attacks on workers rights to organise may have changed, the underlying theme of reducing rights for workers in New Zealand has continued a pace."

"Ernie was an ordinary man who believed that we all should have the right to a safe work place with decent pay and conditions. He paid the ultimate price for those beliefs." Kelly said. "We honour the thousands of everyday heroes who stand up for justice and equality. Ernie was one of these heroes and that's why we'll always remember him." 

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBERING those who failed to return from work was once again observed on April 28 in concert with workers around the world. RMTU members in Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, Port Napier, Hutt Shops, Palmerston North and Hamilton met at local memorials to place wreaths and mark the losses of their fellow workers.

In Wellington members joined a major rally arranged by the CTU to highlight the statistics – 51 workers have died in workplaces in the last year. An appalling record by any standards of decency. One of New Zealand's worst work site was particularly highlighted – our forests where unprecedented numbers of skilled workers have been killed in recent years.

One marcher, Evelyn Richter, told the *Dominion Post*: "Fifty-one a year - that's almost one a week. It's dreadful I'm very angry with the Government. [Labour Minister] Simon Bridges wasn't there . . . Quite frankly, I don't think they give a damn."

Council of Trade Unions president Helen Kelly told *The Dominion Post* that emotions were running high at the march.

"Those families today were feeling angry . . . By the time they were marching on Parliament, they were really marching on the Government to make changes in this industry. There was a sense of determination and anger about what they've been through."

Families called for the forestry industry in particular to be more closely regulated to prevent further deaths.

In Invercargill a new memorial stone was unveiled outside the Council chambers in front of a group of around 50 people. The new memorial was the end result of a project initiated by the CTU and was unveiled by RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson representing the NZCTU while Unions Southland convenor Anna Huffstutler told the *Southland Times* that the site would be a special place for families and workers to remember those who never came home from work.

"We will also remember those disabled, or debilitated by workplace illnesses," she said and the "unacceptable toll".

She added that everyone needed to work together for better workplace conditions with the aim of achieving zero workplace deaths.

WMD was first observed in 1989 in Canada and now on April 28 each year hundreds of communities and worksites around the world honour those who have died or been injured at work.

"Every worker on every job has a responsibility to look out for their own safety and that of those around them," said Butson. "Workers

Memorial Day is an annual time where we re-commit to fighting for the best possible safety standards at work. Members of our Union work in a dangerous industry.

"They want to know that their workmates are free to return home safe and well at the end of their day."

He said workplace accidents are preventable and that each death is not only preventable but a waste and a loss that "can never be truly compensated for".

In Palmerston North the memorial was held at a new site at KiwiRail's yards on Tremaine Avenue where Unions Manawatu have combined with the RMTU to establish the memorial. Wreaths were laid and union delegates spoke along with Palmerston North MP Iain Lees-Galloway. Among those remembered were LEs Eric Pickering, Peter Nottle and Ronald Higgison killed in separate accidents in the 1990s.

Butson, in his speech at Invercargill also reflected on the situation around the world where the ILO and WHO estimate that the number of job-related accidents and illnesses annually claim more than two million lives.

"It appears to be rising because of rapid industrialisation in some developing countries. If you work it out this means that a staggering 5,000 workers a day are killed at work around the world," he said.

He added that while 51 workers died last year at work the hidden time bomb is occupational disease.

"According to the NZ Injury Prevention Secretariat, work-related disease kills between 700 and 1,000 workers each year. Most of these deaths are due to occupational cancer, heart and respiratory diseases."

He fully supports initiatives taken by Government to introduce harsher penalties for employers who put their workers' lives at risk.

"It is important that we all remember today the toxic cocktail of rapacious profit-driven greed, poor regulation, ineffective oversight and enforcement that has run through NZ workplaces for years."

At Napier Port around 60 people turned out on a clear blue day from a variety of unions including the RMTU, SFWU, EPMU, MUNZ and a CTU representative Thomas O'Neill.

Industrial chaplain, Neville Stevenson led the proceedings with contributions from all unions. Napier Port management rep, Stewart Nash (Labour's next MP for Napier we trust!) and ex HBSS boss Dave Norman gave inspirational speeches. 🇳🇿



WELLINGTON

In Wellington a mock coffin was drummed on the grounds as workers mourned the deaths of those killed in the work place last year.





med onto Parliament
aths of the 51 people



OTAGO

In Dunedin the ceremony at their WMD memorial was preceded by suitable tune from the bagpipes while symbolic crosses were planted around the memorial.



The families of killed RMTU rail workers Stu Edgerton, Rudolf [Lucky] Wairau and Tom Taane.

SOUTHLAND



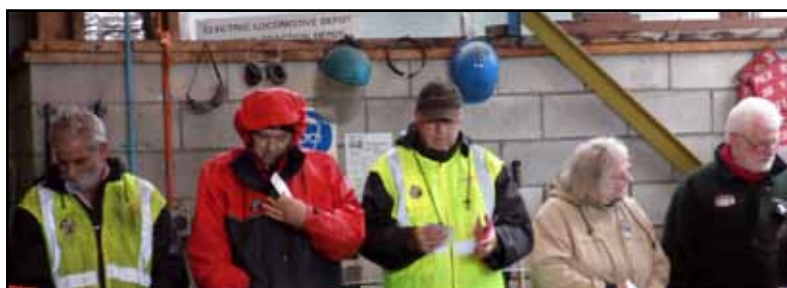
In Invercargill a memorial for WMD was unveiled in the presence of those most affected by the sudden deaths of local workers – their families.

(l) Lucky Wairau's daughter, 19 when her father died, speaks in memory of him and says how much this memorial will mean to her and her family.



PALMERSTON NORTH

Awful weather drove those attending the ceremony in Palmerston North inside. A new plaque was unveiled together with the new RMTU flag.



Are we giving away all that we value with proposed TPPA?

As a country we are in danger of giving away our sovereign right to cheaper medicines and many other things beside.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) currently being negotiated in secret between New Zealand, the US and nine other countries, appears risk-laden and unfairly weighted to serve the interests of powerful lobby groups in the United States. And much of it is not about trade.

The Council of Trade Unions has been investigating what's at stake for New Zealand if we sign up to the TPPA, and what risks we need to avoid.

Higher medicine costs

Big US pharmaceutical companies don't like the way Pharmac bargains down the price for medicines and will seek to get rid of it through the TPPA. Fears have been heightened by trade minister Tim Groser telling an American publication that he was 'willing to be flexible' about our system for drug-pricing.

"I am confident we can find ways that advance US interests without causing projectile political vomiting in New Zealand," he said.

Privatisation

The CTU says the TPPA is likely to try to force us into a more competi-

itive system of providing public services such as health, education and ACC. The US also wants all our state-owned enterprises to be run on a purely commercial basis without regard to other goals we may have around the environment and social good.

Employment rights

We have already been burned from the power of big US corporations to undermine employment rights. Our government cravenly agreed to a demand from Warner Brothers to take away internationally-recognised employment rights from workers on film sets. This could be taste of things to come unless employment rights are

protected in the TPPA.


No support for local business

A powerful way to support the economy is to use the government's buying power to favour local products. But some existing trade agreements already require the contracts to be offered to firms in other countries on the same basis as New Zealand firms. The TPPA could extend that to the point where it becomes unlawful to favour our own products.

Loss of land

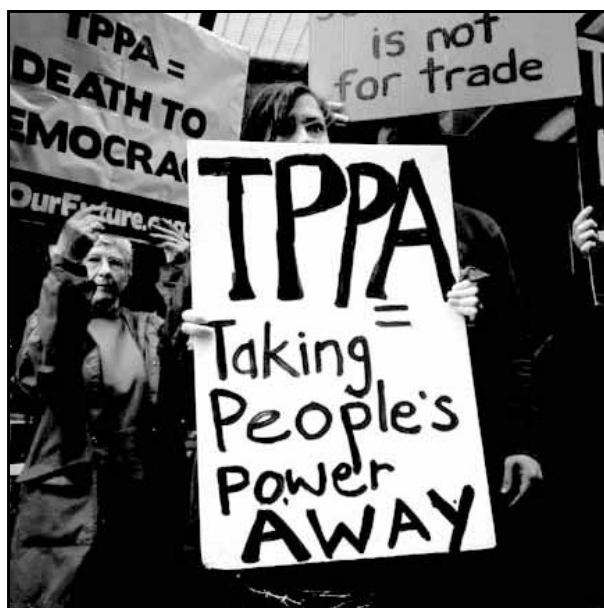
Many people are worried about large overseas interests buying up land without adding any significant benefits for us. The US will seek to remove the few controls that exist.

Loss of sovereignty

The over-riding concern is the threat posed by the TPPA to our sovereignty and the right to make rules in the interests of New Zealanders. It's a concern not limited to New Zealand but shared by unions and other agencies in many of the countries being drawn into the agreement. 

For more information:

union.org.nz/tppa



Unions have a long tradition of international solidarity.

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Our unequal society

THERE was a time in New Zealand when shop-floor workers were joined by their bosses for Friday evening drinks at the local pub and people still talk whistfully of those times with a degree of pride and wonderment. It was an age when New Zealand society was more egalitarian and a narrow wage gap.

Oh, how the times have changed.

Today, if you can get a job as a late teen, the chances of attaining the wealth of your bosses is nigh on impossible.

In fact journalist Max Rashbrooke proves it beyond doubt with statistics showing from New Zealand and around the world in an electronic textual introduction to his book: *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis*.

His paper is a clarion cry to wake up and take a closer look at what is happening to our society. It's essential and depressing reading.

He starts the book with a bird's-eye view of a couple of adjacent suburbs in Porirua – the newly-formed Aotea Block on the hill crest and in the valley below Cannons Creek. The former comprises houses selling for \$800,000 to \$1m while the latter are nearly all old, semi-dilapidated state housing – mostly rented. Although side-by-side the powers planning the new sub-division decided that there should be no link between the two as it would be too expensive and of little strategic value. An eloquent example of the gap between rich and poor.

Since the mid-1980s New Zealand's poor have grown hugely while the rich have feasted. The top 1 per cent now owns three times as much wealth as the poorest 50 per cent, the average household in the top 10 per cent has eight times the income of one in the bottom 10 per cent and the top 1 per

cent adults own 16 per cent of the country's wealth while the bottom half TOGETHER have just 5 per cent.

Some figures show the gap has widened faster in New Zealand than nearly every other developed country.

Our once homogenous egalitarian society has changed dramatically and Rashbrooke's text takes it apart unflinchingly.

Governments of every hue have contributed to this growing gap though under the current one it has accelerated the process with huge tax cuts and favours to the rich, higher taxes and swinging penalties on the poor and a fiendish focus on

union activity.

The gap says Rashbrooke, affects all aspects of society though with particular emphasis on Maori and Pacific Islanders, women, those on welfare and anyone living in Wellington, Auckland or Taranaki.

A section of the paper focusses on income and dispels the fallacy that people can't budget. There is little evidence that poor people are any worse at budgeting than the rich. The only thing that saves the rich are their ample reserves.

He cites figures from the United States that show that a son born to a father in the poorest fifth of the population has only an eight per cent chance of moving into the richest fifth by adulthood. He suggests that New Zealand statistics wouldn't differ greatly.

Other chapters focus on the right to a fair income, how the famed 'trickle-down' mantra is nonsense, inequality and dysfunctional societies, health and income gaps, breaking down social cohesion, and more.


Like income, net wealth (cash and assets) is unequally distributed. Together all New Zealand's adults own around \$470 billion. The top 1 per cent own 16 per cent

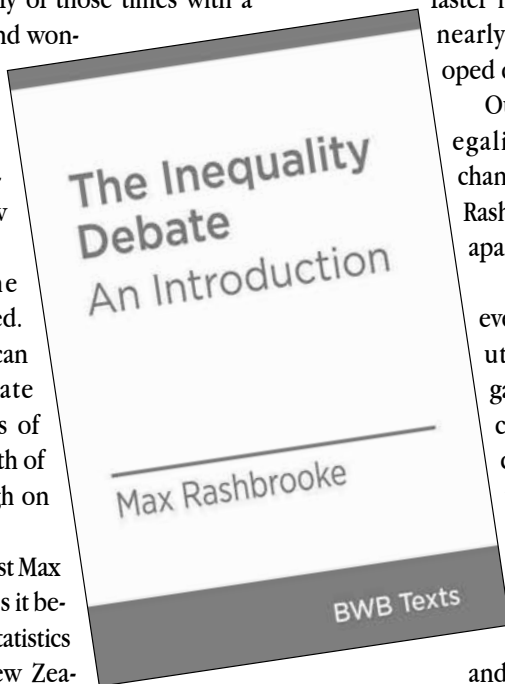
of that. In other words 29,000 adults own \$77 billion – that's \$2.6 million per adult. No one in the poorest fifth owns more than \$6,000 – a difference of over \$2.5m per person!

Statistics show clearly that the lot of the lowest paid in New Zealand has barely risen since 1984 with middle incomes rising only slightly better. The big winners are undoubtedly the top ten percent.

The decisions governments make are crucial and Rashbrooke says the greatest effect on disparity recently was this National government's decision to cut taxes to the top ten per cent.

He says they have the levers to lessen the gap and it's up to them to lead.

It's also in the hands of voters who need to read such texts to make informed decisions. 



The Inequality Debate: An introduction written by Max Rashbrooke is a BWB (Bridget Williams Books) text introduction to *Inequality: A New Zealand crisis* edited by Max Rashbrooke.

Pricing:

The book: *Inequality: A New Zealand crisis* \$39.99

The text: *The Inequality Debate: An introduction*. Print: \$14.99 E-book: \$4.99

bwb.co.nz

ANZAC Day Petone

WELLINGTON, 0700, 25 April 2014: Morning breaks into a solemn grey day with a wisp of fine weather hanging in the air. A day of national significance where officials, military and public stand side-by-side in sombre tribute for the 99th ANZAC day commemorations.

I stood with my partner in hand and thought to myself how lucky I was that my children have not had to witness or endure the hell, pain and suffering of war.

As the speeches began, my mind wandered back to a time when we were an aspiring young nation, where the horse and cart still prevailed on our urban dirt roads. I imagined the milk cart making its way through the streets, the butcher's cart trundling down Jackson Street with a load of carcasses and the cacophony of noise coming from the Petone railway workshops. Despite an eight-hour day, freedom of speech and the right to vote we remained fixed to the breast of a class driven society.

1914: Enter the Great War and cries of 'For King and country' and our youth followed. Parents bid tearful farewells as these young men and a few women embarked on an epic journey to an unknown destiny.

They went to a war of hellish, unimaginable proportions, fuelled by nationalist



fervour and fed with youthful exuberance. There could only ever be one outcome.

Such a terrible loss of the finest we had to offer and unimaginable heartache while the wounded, maimed and living dead filled the convalescent wards and homes and makeshift hospitals. Such pain, anguish and memories.

Through time and remembrance, we may hope to assuage and heal the hurt and honour the sacrifices and bravery.

The ceremony at Petone covered the history and effects through addresses, poem, and readings followed by the laying of wreaths. 🌐



CAPTION COMPETITION

Entries close 28 AUGUST 2014.

Winner will be contacted and name and entry published in the SEPTEMBER 2014 issue of *The Transport Worker*.

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

Last issue's winner



The winning entry came from: Eric Cairncross, locomotive engineer, Palmerston North.

"We have to stop meeting like this, union bros and sisters are starting to suspect!"

WIN \$100 prize

Make up an appropriate (or even inappropriate) caption for this photo and win a cash prize of \$100.



WELLINGTON PORT BRANCH

CENTREPORT has become a temporary storage facility for Meridian Energy's wind turbines to be erected at Mill Creek, northwest of Wellington. The first components arrived from China on board the Da Dan and were stevedored by our colleagues at C3. A second shipment of blades and nacelles arrived in April. These massive structures are transported most nights of the week. It is envisaged that they will all be gone by June 2014 opening up more area in the terminal for containers.

Fatigue study

Centreport are currently running a fatigue management survey with selected groups in the port. A four week diary covering sleep/wake/shifts is currently being filled out amongst most of the lads. It is hoped that a full realisation of the unsociable/unhealthy hours worked by many port employees is seen and a workable outcome can be achieved to address this problem.

Health & safety

Recently a number of guys completed H&S delegate training. The ongoing effect has enabled the guys to have input into the safety aspects of our industry and come up with some brilliant ideas to help keep us all safe in our profession. Kudos to the guys who have volunteered their time and kudos to the company for strongly supporting this.

This is election year and as workers around the ports and rail know, our current government is hell bent on destroying your hard-earned rights. To tip the balance of power back to where it should be, only a Labour-led government will do. Use your vote wisely and let's get rid of these Tories. 🇬🇧

Vale



Brent Packer 3-3-1943 to 28-4-2014

Brent (Packey) Packer began his career on the wharf with the then Wellington Harbour Board in August 1965 as a hydraulic crane driver. The advent of containerisation saw him become one of Wellington's top container crane drivers, and later on to be a trainer in this role. A staunch union man, Packey was never afraid to voice his opinion. He was delegate for the crane drivers and held positions on the executive a number of times. Later in his career he hung up his gloves and became a foreman. Due to illness, Packey retired in 2008. A real genuine guy and he will be sadly missed.

Farewells

WARREN STODDART, Wellington Port branch secretary and crane driver/cargo handler at CentrePort recently retired after 38 years at the port and the last eight years in the role of branch secretary. Warren was known for tirelessly supporting his colleagues when they were in grief and was a strong advocate at the negotiations table for workers' rights and to improve the conditions for the cargo members.

Warren's recent retirement drinks was the ideal time to line up the past, very past and present Wellington Port branch secretaries. We all wish Warren a long, healthy and happy retirement.



(l to r above) Warren Stoddart, life member and past branch secretary, John Murfitt and the newly elected branch secretary Moa Tavai.


Wayne Butson presents departing KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn with a certificate of appreciation for "not being too daft too often".



NORTHLAND RAIL BRANCH

THE branch welcomed 14 new members in the last few months. There is a renewed interest in standing up

together for what is right and to get a fair deal for all from the boss. It is great to see Pete Murphy prepared to take on the role

of delegate at C3. Our members at North Tugz will be meeting in the coming weeks to consider claims for the renewing of their collective agreement. 


BAY OF PLENTY RAIL BRANCH

WHILE it is great to have an influx of trainee LEs on the way to Tauranga, it is an insult to those LEs that live in Tauranga but work elsewhere who are being blocked in their attempts to transfer to Tauranga. We anticipate a dispute in the near future over this issue.

Hugh Foster, who was involved in a

car smash on the Southern Motorway last year, will not be returning to work as he has been classified as medically unfit to return. Hugh has worked for Kiwirail for 37 years starting in Gisborne, then Auckland and now in Tauranga. We wish Hugh all the best for the future.

The issue of erecting scaffolding has

been raised as an H&S issue, both at a local and national level. The reason it has been raised is that KiwiRail seems to have different rules around erecting scaffolding which do not seem to comply with the scaffolding industry's own practice. 

BAY OF PLENTY PORT BRANCH


THE hot issue so far this year has been the demise and resurrection of the Port of Tauranga-owned log marshall company, Quality Marshalling [QM]. QM lost a large chunk of its core log business last year when they lost their contract. However, early this year QM were successful in gaining the rail siding exchange contract at Sulphur Point, which

had previously been contracted to C3.

The importance of the change of contract was the denting of the job security of the C3 union members at the rail siding exchange, which shows that while company's vie for each other's work there is no regard by them to the job security of the workers involved.

The negotiations for the Port of Tauranga

have kicked off with parties having met once to exchange claims. We are claiming a 5% wage increase for a one year term.

At the same time there have been discussions with the Port, to put together a drug and alcohol policy. A combined union meeting will be held this month to continue working through the policy. 



\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



www.aillife.com
Protecting Working Families

freephone 0800 894 121
mario@aillnz.co.nz

AMERICAN INCOME LIFE
insurance company

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

THE Xmas Day dispute is still to be resolved where the manager came in on Xmas Day and altering the ARSH jobs, thus keeping the men at work longer than usual, while he went home for his Xmas lunch! Talk about good will. It has now been agreed that the ARSH duties are to be renegotiated with the branch executive but the issue of 'warnings' for our Xmas Day workers are still too be resolved.

The other dispute arising out of Xmas

WAIKATO RAIL BRANCH

Day was the decision by management to force LE trainees not to work over the public holidays when their minders are rostered on. Thus the trainees are out of pocket!

The relations between the Te Rapa management and the RMTU is at an all-time low. They do not understand what good faith means and have obviously not read the

Charter of General Relationship Principles between RMTU and KiwiRail [NZRC]. If they had they might be able to resolve issues better. Time will tell.

To try and resolve these issues the branch has asked for a meeting with Aaron Temperton the regional manager for KiwiRail. 🌐

TARANAKI PORT BRANCH

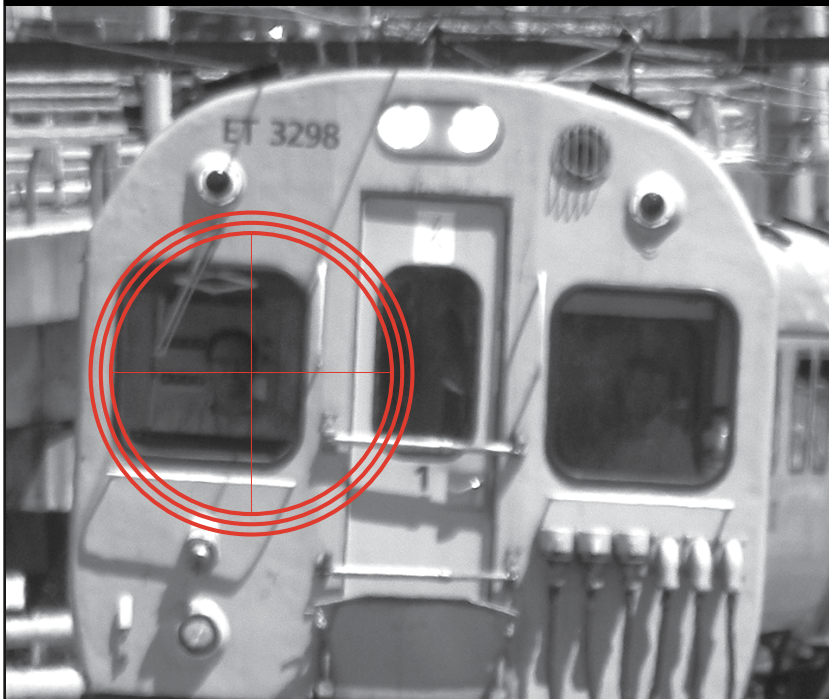
of movements.

The train radio system that was overhauled a couple of years ago and came with promises of new age stuff hasn't really given us much of an improvement at all. In fact, in some areas, namely Patea, it's become worse. Members using the system, whether LEs or I&E staff, shouldn't have to accept second rate gear when it comes to radio communication. My advice is that if the system is not operating correctly report

it immediately to 155, log the faults and then demand that trains be double crewed. Grabbing the cell phone does not fix the problem; it only hides it as well as being in total breach of the rules. A loco engineer in Southland was recently hauled over the coals for taking a track warrant over the cell phone.

Cattle underpasses in the Taranaki can spring up overnight and a lot of them are completely unmarked and present huge

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

TARANAKI PORT BRANCH [cont]

dangers to staff if they have to walk the track at night. We have taken this to KiwiRail as a nation-wide issue and asked that these underpasses be fenced off.

Whareroa update: Huge changes here with extra sidings going into accommodate the bigger volumes of tonnage. The very good news here is that our very own I&E guys are installing these sidings – all 600 metres of rail. Contractors not wanted here.

There have been two appointments to RCOs, (Remote Control Operators), at Whareroa in slightly controversial circumstances. Let's hope with better communication from the company that the same mis-


takes won't be made again. There are to be seven RCO trained at Whareroa which gives the operations guys better advancement for staying in the yard. Rumours abound that another two locomotive trainees will be advertised for Whareroa.

Stratford lads have been keeping pretty busy with increased tonnages on the Kapuni branch with urea. The future of the Kapuni branch has, for the last few years, hung on a knife's edge. Balance, who have a huge urea plant, are due to double its size and output and are quite keen on using rail. So, just maybe we have a future out there.

New Plymouth has been keeping busy

with good tonnage coming in and out of the yard. An expansion of the LPG siding is due to be started to accommodate more wagons.

I&E have been busy with a heap of concrete sleepers going in as well as the start of the improvements at Whareroa. It is great to see that these guys have been rewarded for all their hard work and commitment, even though they often run short of staff. One thing they aren't happy about is call outs and the expectation to attend after hours call outs.

That's it – be united, be strong and above all else be RMTU! 

HAWKE'S BAY PORT BRANCH

ANOTHER Hawke's Bay difficult season is starting to show signs of slowing down for the 2014 harvest period. We struggled at times to cope with container volumes through the gate and with storage and the generators needed to be hired far surpassed the numbers required last year in order to capture the reefer container spike.

The concerns of regional business, in particular orchardists, made the front page of the local rag on more than one occasion, with comments on the Port's performance, its inability to cope and the financial implications to their businesses.


In order to get by at times of pressure the staff made a huge effort in my view, a lot of good will was given toward making it run as best we could in very trying circumstances, shortage of space, a new inventory system, that at times tested even the most serene of employees and a lack of

man power.

As a consequence, hiring through the season continued. We have gained several new members, both casual and permanent and the re-introduction of 24 over sevens – not the best answer for people looking for something a little more generous in terms of permanent employment but it's a start and is a definite improvement on a casual position. The hours are guaranteed but we've 'been there and done that'.

The down side is having to train staff in the middle of a busy strenuous period. Not ideal but I concede, in the situation we were in, necessary. No doubt, as we head into our next contractual agreement, which expires the end of September, we can put some remits in and around this issue. We should be pro-active in all these things and have them sorted prior to the HB season. Lean management certainly exposed itself in this case and was found wanting!

Our remit process will get underway fairly soon and coming off the back of two years of CPI(08% and 1.4% respectively) has understandably been met with criticism by our membership, as the Company has posted record profits and incentive pay outs that have decreased due to tighter targeted goals. The dilemma we face is that the business continues to grow, as well as profit and our senior leaders are rewarded accordingly. Yet within that growth the chance for risk in terms of the coal face operation – people, machinery, space, infrastructure in general – is met with not only a policy of shifting the goal posts but a narrowing them also in terms of an incentive scheme. The constraints around the incentive scheme have not expanded with increased risk to all the above mentioned, more a tightening of the rules which provides no accord for an equitable outcome when all have made huge efforts.

This, in essence, will have an impact at our time of negotiation. 

HAWKE'S BAY RAIL BRANCH

GREETINGS brothers and sisters. Well Easter has been and gone. The structures team worked over Easter on NIMT Bridge 30 helping Wellington structures do a 100 percent re-sleeper of the bridge.

The track team has been busy dock and drifting the track in our area. This is a form of refurbishing.

Some staff members from Dannevirke

and Napier have done a tools of trade course and the feedback has been very positive.


Great to see the number of remits put forward from branches for the impending renewal of the KiwiRail multi employer collective agreement (MECA).

We have been holding regular union meetings for I&E this year which are held prior to the HSAT meetings. The biggest

issue is the lack of an onsite manager/supervisor and admin since the restructuring, which means that the union members are having to do a number of admin duties at the expense of their core work.

What was the reason for the restructuring?

The HSAT meetings for freight are starting to work better under the new format as outlined in the employee participation agreement.

Until next time. Stay safe - be safe. 

I am pleased to report that this branch set itself a frenetic pace from the beginning of this year and we are all pleased to see the results. We have been far more active in communications and "feeling" the mood of our members and dealing with them than the company has. We have also been promoting the RMTU within our community and a number of our members are getting involved and spreading the word of unity and solidarity amongst our friends and locals.

We had a very successful branch meeting at the end of March to discuss remits for this years KiwiRail collective agreement and am pleased to report another strong attendance of just over 70 people. There was robust, healthy debate finished off with a lunch provided by the branch and a great chance to meet each other.

On March 27 a contingent of six RMTU brothers attended the Ernie Abbott memorial held in Memorial Park, Palmerston North. One brought his son. It is important our children grow up learning about this nation's working history and the sacrifices made. I commend him for bringing the young fella along and it serves as a reminder that union business does not always have to be about us but it includes our families too.

This year we joined with Unions Manawatu and held a joint Workers' Memorial Day service. In the late 90s the Palmerston North branch constructed a memorial to our fallen comrades at the entrance to the operations terminal in addition to the memorial stone in Memorial Park. We have never had joint services so this year marks the first of many to come we hope. It was a huge gathering with over 60 people from various unions and KR management. Of course a very strong showing from our Union members. We were touched to meet a husband and wife and to hear their story about the loss of their son in a tragic truck collision. These people had no union affiliations and were thankful they had a day to join with others to remember him. We were also interviewed for two articles in the Manawatu Standard. The service was opened by Te Kupenga Mahi local rep Bob Ngataierua followed by speeches from Tim Kerwin (RMTU), John Sheenen (PSA and

PALMERSTON NORTH BRANCH

convenor of Unions Manawatu), followed by a touching speech from Mark Richards of the Catholic Diocese. We played Ben Thompson's song Your life for the job which he wrote for the RMTU and launched at last

ning strong. I have always liked the saying: If we don't know where we've come from then we won't know where we're going to. A huge thanks to those who came out the Sunday prior to clean up the site and erect



year's service at Hutt Shops – a beautiful and deep tribute to the fallen workers, thank you Ben. (This is available for listening on the RMTU website – Ed). This was followed by the unveiling and raising of the new RMTU flag up our new RMTU commemorative flag pole. The flag pole was unveiled with an accompanying plaque which reads: This Workers Memorial Remembrance Flagpole was erected on 28-04-14 by the Palmerston North branch in honour of our fallen workplace comrades. All this was funded by the branch.

Workers' Memorial Day is certainly an important day and I am always proud to see such strong RMTU support. We must remember those fallen and the bad times to ensure our newer members keep them run-

the flagpole.

One significance issue is the KiwiRail/RMTU-sponsored independent inquiry into allegations that a bully and harassment culture exists within the Palmerston North freight terminal. The investigator is former Wellington Employment Relations Authority member Denis Asher whose thoroughness



PALMERSTON NORTH BRANCH [cont]

and independence is beyond reproach. The investigation was initiated following the receipt of many written complaints of bullying and harassment within the terminal. We are pleased to see that the strong voice of the majority has been heard and we now await management's swift action to restore harmony to the workplace. It must also be said that all the delegates should be proud that the brothers and sisters felt comfortable taking their issues to you despite the fear of reprisal action. It is egg on the Company's face that they were unable to go to management with their concerns. I hope lessons can be learned here and thank God we have a strong independent Union.

The Palmerston North HSAT teams deserve a lot of credit for major changes we have seen to our work environments. We have several teams of dedicated HSAT reps working very hard behind the scenes on complaints. They do a thankless job. One of their main gripes is the lack of written information into unsafe environments or hazards. Please remember to fill in the appropriate hazard forms and submit them. Don't forget to tell your team leader or manager as well – especially if the hazard is significant. We also note the arrival of the new RMTU health and safety posters. They are excellent and a positive reinforcement that the RMTU will back you. If you believe that anything your being asked to do is unsafe –JUST SAY NO!


The car and wagon team is working through some issues and we hope to have

them ironed out in due course. They have never really been made aware that they are entitled to more uniform items other than the overalls. As a result they all filled in uniform request slips and should be supplied soon. An end to wearing their own clothes underneath their overalls. There are more issues and pending solutions in the pipeline so watch this space.

The I&E depot recently had their presentation for the implementation of terminal standardisation (TSP). Since the abortion of the application of TSP into the Palmerston North freight terminal building which was heralded all over the Company newsletters as a great change with positive outcomes, in reality the branch was never consulted by the implementing manager and the LEs and RCOs are getting a further extension to their book on rooms and numerous other changes we are told. Mani Raumati (RMTU branch facilitator) has been in frequent contact with the Palmy branch (as we we're the guinea pigs) and worked hard with the company to actually get our needs across and make the whole process workable. Well done and sincere thanks Mani!

We are seeing a lot of newer and younger members and I am pleased to say that most of them are coming along to meetings and learning all about the RMTU. It is important for delegates to meet and greet our new members and help them through their job. Using that brilliant example earlier where the membership came to the delegates instead of management about

bullying. This goes to show the trust and confidence our fellow brothers and sisters have in the leadership of the branch delegates and executive. A lot of these young 18 to 20 year olds on, have grown up with a National Government in power and will only hear about them. It is not until they join the unions that they learn the value of unionism and solidarity and about the crooks in power looking after their rich mates. Remember, the brightest future for rail is under a Labour-led government, not the current bunch of road-supporting lunatics.

Until next time, be safe. Unity and solidarity will always win. United we stand, divided we fall. 



HUTT WORKSHOPS BRANCH

HERE we go again, plunging into an unstable wintery season with a variable workload. And just when you thought we had addressed all our (site) asbestos issues, we learned that 19 of the generation 1 DL locomotives will be coming here for a great deal of remedial work. Planning for the work is well down the track (pun intended) with the Company's loosely-detailed plan recently submitted to WorkSafe NZ. A sub-contractor is already in full swing erecting what will be a self-contained negative air pressure environment in Plant 2 termed 'The Red Zone' which will be closed-off to all rubber-neckers and

nosey parkers! Within the tent there will be additional enclosures for the various activities associated with removing the asbestos containing material including cleaning/decontaminating components as well as a multistage decontamination shower for the workers. In order to reduce risk, we are informed the operation will be under the control of asbestos removal specialists to whom the Chinese warranty workers and KiwiRail staff will report to and take direction from. This should ensure safe working procedures are applied consistently. That's the draft plan! By the time you read this, I believe the final plan would've been

accepted and signed-off, and remediation work begun.

Shock horror, Shane Jones has left the Labour Party for a cushy role elsewhere in foreign affairs. This may well spell the end of the Labour Party's chances of winning this year's election outright so we had better hope that either the lazy members of the constituency get out of bed on Election Day and do their civic duty, or failing that, Winnie gets in to hold a choker-chain on National. If you are a staunch Labour supporter, you had better ensure everyone you know is registered to vote and actually gets out to do their bit on September 20.

Our ANZAC day commemoration was again held at Petone Railway Station where we have a symbolic memorial flagstaff. The service is co-ordinated by the Petone Community Board and each year the attendance numbers increase. This year's KiwiRail speaker was Rick van Barneveld from I&E, with the Union represented by national and local officials and past and present staff.

International Worker's Memorial Day was conducted at our own memorial garden at the workshops. members enjoyed speeches from site manager Karl Bouterrey, HSAT chairman Bill O'Connor and our branch chairman Paul Morrison. The ceremony was completed with the laying of our wreath by Karl and Bill.

Word has it that the formal training for our H&S representatives is in the throes of finally being arranged. We look forward to this along with some much-promised 'reinvigoration' although little to date has been forthcoming.

Following the March edition of the branch notes, new CEO, Peter Reidy, visited the site and spent a good 10-20 minutes with the branch committee at our weekly Wednesday meeting. He was well received and we enjoyed a friendly and open discussion. It's now a matter of history that soon after formally taking up his appointment, he appointed fellow former workmate Dr Bob Stacy to the position of GM-zero harm. We were also meant to have had a site visit from him however I imagine the DL asbestos issue and the (union) reported threat of an ACC downgrade appears to have scuttled that. It will be interesting to see how the company delineates between the safety and people and zero harm branches of the company.

Another fly in the organisational ointment is the rudder issue on the Aratere. As a result of the continuing problems with the ship, our structural re-strengthening project, along with other allied projects (such as the Plant 1 ablutions block), have suffered timeline setbacks. Whilst we understand that problems do occur from time to time, we have been promised attention for some years now so we are becoming somewhat cynical about the planning competencies of certain senior managers/administrators in Stanley Street. You could accuse me of harsh comment but if a high-level overview of priorities was regularly published, we'd all be kept in the picture and therefore be

HUTT WORKSHOPS BRANCH [cont]



Red zone for safe removal of asbestos

better informed about what is (or is not) happening in the company.

This brings us to the emotive discussion of communication. This occasion is the 'heads-up' one would expect when significant documents are up for renewal/re-issue. Late last year Code M2000 was re-issued without warning and as a result some errors contained in the last issue were repeated in this issue – so much for quality! Another document for re-issue is some sections of the Rail Operating Code. Once again we've found out by default that a re-issue is imminent and users have been denied the opportunity to point out errors or omissions in the current document. I believe that it is incumbent upon authors to canvas users for comment and/or input to ensure a high quality document. I hear some of you saying that there is this channel or that channel for notifying such errors, however as these channels do not guarantee feedback or even acknowledgement of your submissions (the MBS process is included in this), many people have become disillusioned by this lack of response. This is not limited to this branch. The many visiting (technical) staff we receive throughout the year echo these sentiments. Whilst we are generally upbeat about the direction



the company is going, it remains the 'little things' that gnaw away and continue to be a background niggles. Another administrative oversight with some company documents is the lack of an identified author which denies the casual reader the opportunity to seek clarification of any anomalies. Even the proposed new and improved company motor vehicle policy only goes so far to indicate what section of the safety and people group is the author (although top marks to them for actively consulting with

HUTT WORKSHOPS BRANCH [cont]

◀ the Union about the proposed document). Are the aforementioned symptomatic of an administratively dysfunctional organisation? One needs only to look at page 9 of the last issue of *The Transport Worker* (re the ACC Partnership Programme) and you will see indicative evidence of administrative failure. I would like to think that this year will bring positive change in the area of HSE and all that it encompasses. However, by the time you read this, we'll be half way through the year and I doubt any significant (and workable) blueprint for change will have been forthcoming.

The April issue of the Company's weekly newsletter (*The Express*, issue 238) made mention of an increased H&S (zero harm) focus being a key topic of the leaders forum. The initial visible output from that is the drive to improve our housekeeping, review incident data, conduct zero harm assess-

ments for all major sites and ensure we're undertaking safety conversations. There was also in reference to collaboration across the business. Now I know that age can sap the memory cells a little, but I'm damn sure that we were meant to have been doing all this for the last few years under the previous CEO and his management team in accordance with some flawed management style. I hope the new captain at the helm steers us on a truer course!

Change brings me to the next topic and a general warning to managers/supervisory staff and technical people who are directly involved with changes that will or may reasonably affect the jobs and/or wellbeing of staff. When our CEOs and senior managers sign MECAs/relationship charters or other similar documents from time to time, you, as the movers and shakers of the company are obligated to discharge the documented

obligations on behalf of the company, as are the rank and file staff who are required to comply with staff-specific obligations. I raise this topic as everywhere you look, you can find examples of where those in charge have failed to properly consult on issues of contracting out, communication and health and safety. As businesses strive to get more traction on the economic road, it is imperative that we work together to achieve that end. The last *Transport Worker* contains many examples of failures and the conflicts that they bring. It is time to lift our game, after all, we are all in the same boat.

The General Election is this year and we need a rail and shipping-friendly government in power. Ensure YOU are enrolled to vote and your teenage children, whanau, etc. With apologies to no-one - kia kaha. 🇳🇿

LYTTELTON PORT BRANCH

LOGISTICS officers at Lyttelton went head to head with the Port Company in May and won a deal delivering a 5.78% increase into their pay packets by January 2015 with a two year term backdated to expiry of the agreement.

This small group of 11 staff are responsible for planning all loading and unloading of ships from the Port, all yard moves and container placement in the container terminal.

They work in groups of three on a 24/7 roster.

After negotiating with LPC since December 2013 and not making any progress they voted unanimously to begin limited industrial action on May 2, 2014.

The action comprised a total withdrawal of labour from 2300 - 0700 and to take all their entitled breaks.

Two sets of mediation were unsuccessful however when the RMTU and LPC returned to mediation on May 7 both parties worked constructively with the assistance of the mediator and were able to reach a deal.

RMTU South Island organiser John Kerr said: "The wage deal struck yesterday . . . comes in two stages – 2.85% backdated to January this year and another 2.85% from 19 January 2014. That means the members will be \$50 a week better off straight away,



The vehicle workshop (inset) which was completely under water during the flood and where the runoff from the hillside comes under the coal conveyor belt and pours into the vehicle workshop yard.

with a bit of back pay as well, and by early next year their weekly wage will be \$100 higher."

He added: "The members voted over-

whelmingly to accept the deal and they are now going to sit down in a working group with management and discuss productivity-

related matters like staffing, succession planning, training, job content and so forth. I think both management and ourselves can claim a win from yesterday's bargaining. We get a wage increase, they avert a strike and we both get to talk about issues that concern us about how the port works."

Thank you to all the RMTU branches

THE focus at this time of year is on two forthcoming wage rounds: The KiwiRail MECA which will affect most of our members and the very important Toll Networks Agreement covering a good chunk of the membership down in the shed off Matipo St.

We are keeping a close eye on unfolding events at Lyttelton Port where, at the time of writing, the logistics officers are embroiled in a dispute over wages. We hope this is not a sign of things to come at the Port when the big port-wide collective agreement is up for re-negotiation later in the year. If it is, our fellow members at LPC can be assured of the support of their brothers and sisters in the Canterbury rail branch.

The TranzScenic went through what has become its annual re-structure as the Christchurch-Picton passenger service was suspended for the winter. This time KiwiRail bit the bullet and accepted four voluntary redundancies from the on board staff. Good luck to those of you who took the cheque – you never know you might be back staffing commuter trains if the growing pressure for these in Canterbury comes to anything.

On that note, the re-build is gathering pace but for many of us it's most obvious

WE successfully concluded negotiations for a collective agreement at the beginning of April. The agreement was one that we could live with, delivering an immediate 3% wage increase for an 18 month term, and re-instating a 'time bank' arrangement for those of us who regularly work in excess of our guaranteed minimum hours in order to allow us more paid time off.

Whilst we didn't achieve everything we wanted in these talks, the fact that Prime Port remains in a state of uncertainty given the partial buy out by Port of Tauranga, and the implications that may have for our jobs,


LYTTELTON PORT BRANCH [cont]

who sent messages of support and solidarity. Knowing we had the support of members in port and rail mattered.

The next collective agreement is the combined unions collective at LPC covering some 400 union members from RMTU and MUNZ and is up for negotiation in July

this year.

In any collective agreement negotiation settlement improved terms and conditions for working people do not fall from the sky. They are hard won and too frequently, hard kept.

In unity is our strength. 

CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH


manifestation is the chaos on the roads with road-works multiplying across the city and gridlock a feature of everyday life. The fact there is now surplus rolling stock in Auckland makes the solution of commuter trains down here seem all the more attractive. Unfortunately, the dinosaurs that run this Government don't seem to have any vision when it comes to public transport.

Asbestos has also been in the news here, although not in locos. Addington Wagon depot was found to have problems to which management reacted very quickly. The issue seems to be with an the overseas landlord. Is there a moral to this story? Like don't sell the family silver?

Labour MPs Megan Woods and Darien Fenton came to see us in March and spent an hour meeting a good number of members at Middleton Yard. It was refreshing to meet a couple of politicians who listened as well as talked. Their take on the election was interesting. They quite rightly pointed out that the mainstream media were reporting the polls as if we still had the old first past the post system instead of MMP. Once you look at the numbers that the Labour-Greens are polling and factor in potential coalition

partners it's going to be a very close election. So let's get out and vote and get rid of this anti worker National Government. Megan Woods is keen to hear from volunteers to help with her campaign. Putting up billboards is our thing, so we should have a few who will help.

We've had a couple of new delegates come on board in recent weeks. Bernie Jones in the service centre off Matipo St and Bruce McDonald at Toll. Thanks for putting your hands up, it's people like you who are the muscle and sinew of our union. Now we just need to get that organiser of ours to provide some training!

Lastly, we see national office has launched a 'Just Say No!' campaign in relation to health and safety and unsafe work. We applaud this and you can be sure that here in Canterbury we'll be taking this very seriously. The fact is that we all want to get the job done and keep the trains running and sometimes we need to step back and take a breath and remind ourselves that nobody can be disciplined for doing things safely. Taking short cuts isn't on, and nobody will thank us if there is an incident as a result. 

TIMARU PORT BRANCH

meant we voted to accept what was on the table. One thing we did manage to fend off was a demand from management that we could be cross hired to ISO. Fortunately they took that off the table pretty quickly.

Management here says that they can only guarantee security of employment until June. So by the time you are reading this we may be involved in yet another re-structure. If we are it will be our third in four years!

The irony is that throughout this there has been, and will be, a port in Timaru and

a need for skilled workers like ourselves to operate it. Our CEO is fond of reminding everyone but ourselves, that we have the most 'flexible' working conditions in the industry. It seems his preference however is merely to act as a landlord and clip the ticket whilst contractors do the work on site.

Two things flow from this: the loyalty and commitment of the workforce is diluted and health and safety is often one of the first casualties of this contracting out model. We've been keeping a close eye on events

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◀ in Lyttelton, where two deaths and a serious injury late last year, has rammed home this uncomfortable point.

The other point that affects us is the somewhat chaotic change in the industry

that the Lyttelton-Tauranga rivalry seems to be creating, with separate inland ports being planned for Rolleston. We're all waiting to see the impact that will have on Prime Port and the others.

WEST COAST BRANCH

ONCE again we have borne the brunt of some terrible weather on the Coast, and yet the trains have kept running due to the dedication and commitment of our members.

We also remain buffeted by the winds of global economic change, in particular the coal price, which has created a great deal of uncertainty around the future of the Bathurst project on the Denniston plateau and also the viability of Solid Energy. As we write Solid energy is having – or has had – a meeting with staff and the EPMU. We may soon know a little more as to the running of trains and just maybe squash some rumours (or add more).

Health and safety remains an area where we are constantly having to refocus. The cuts to I&E staff 18 months ago are still having a huge impact given that we are short of experienced staff and there is often a gap between management's rhetoric and the pressure that is exerted to get the job done. The inexperience of staff and lack of training is now starting to really bite. There is a lack

of interest in overtime as a consequence. We all learned from the near miss we had in the Otira tunnel before Christmas. It would just be good if the Company and Worksafe were a bit more transparent around those improvement notices.

The Otira Tunnel safety review has been continuing, with some thought being put into making the tunnel safer. The Company has been making some progress and is now coming to a few of us for ideas around matters like respirators, the tools required to fix rail, sleepers, electrical radios and signalling equipment plus looking to long-term solutions (which is a real bonus).

The key message though, is if you are in doubt about your own or a fellow members' safety – stop bloody working! It has been good seeing some of the guys saying NO to what is considered unsafe practice and they still have a job – bloody brilliant!

On a positive note Westland Milk appears to be doing well and should provide us with plenty of work for the foreseeable future. We continue to fight the menace

In the meantime we soldier on, doing the hard work during anti-social hours in weather that is often abominable, along with our brothers and sisters across the country in our industry. 🌐

of Peruvian sleepers. Thankfully we have enough experienced track and structures inspectors left to keep an eye on that little problem.

National office sent our South Island organiser John Kerr and national health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher over to run a delegates' course for a day in March. We had a small but select gathering of new and experienced delegates and we even invited management over for lunch. It was a good day, giving us the time to share experiences and learn from one another in a relaxed environment. Great to see George Whyte come along as well to receive his 51 years 'Certificate of Appreciation' from our Union. Big thanks to Karen for making an epic journey from Wellington, driving over the Alps and still having the energy and enthusiasm to teach a great module on health and safety.

We're keeping a close eye on the wage round. Remember, we are the Union – our negotiation team is only as strong as the support they get from us, the membership. 🌐

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

THE branch notes with great sadness the passing of Taieri Gorge workshop employee Steve Elliot who lost his battle with cancer. Steve was highly regarded by his workmates and will be sadly missed.

The Taieri Gorge/cruise ship season has come to an end for another year and although there were the usual cancellations it was none-the-less viewed as a success. The winter timetable is now in force with one train per day.

The last Transport Worker was so popular that all the copies delivered by our secretary to the operations lunchroom were snaffled up and more had to be delivered to the depot. Great to see it is such a widely read publication.

We have had a few grumblings from the business unit's staff of late.

Bull hooks and the seeming lack of progress in fixing the need to use them so frequently on a daily basis. Many are looking at the cost of the TSP project and wondering if the money spent on this would have been better used on more alliance couplers for the wagon fleet.

But the new look office is starting to look good.

Whenever we get a new team member it takes a little bit of time to settle in and get on with being a productive member of the group. Normal I hear you say. Yes it is.

The same for the management team, for those of you who have been here a long time, you will have seen a lot of upper and

middle managers come and go with their different styles of trying to get things done. One of the staff from the shunting yard was heard to mutter the other day that he had never met a regional manager with so much ability to suck the enthusiasm out of the staff. May have been an unkind comment, but does reflect the feeling around the depot at the moment. Big brother is watching – from every one with access to the intranet to looking down on the trains and network vehicles and noticing the small indiscretions we all make from time to time.

Be careful out there.

We are starting to see the long-awaited CTC being installed south of Dunedin to help cope with congestion and delays. It's rumoured that CTC may help KiwiRail increase its traffic on this line as well. A win win all round. ▶

Two of our members have had the pleasure of adding to their families in the last few months. Cory Walters and Marty Carroll congratulations to you both and your wives from the entire branch. In Marty's case it is believed to be a first in more ways than one. His partner is also member of the RMTU as is Belinda's father who is one very proud grandad of a baby girl.

Workers Memorial Day saw a much smaller turn out at the Market Reserve, but the weather will have played a large part

HELLO again from the deep south. It has been a busy last few weeks as everyone was frantically trying to cram in all the required exports into the short weeks around Easter and ANZAC weekends. But as usual the workers were able to make it happen and the jobs were completed and customers were happy.

On another note we had one of our members retire recently and we would like

THE culmination of over a year's hard work led to the unveiling of a commemoration stone outside Invercargill City Council on Workers' Memorial Day. The RMTU Southland branch was one of the prime movers in making this happen together with our brothers and sisters in other CTU-affiliated unions. It was great to see general secretary Wayne Butson represent the CTU on this occasion and to have a place where we can reflect on and remember our fellow workers who did not return home from their jobs.

The unveiling ceremony was a very sombre affair, with both Wayne and deputy Mayor Darren Ludlow making special points on how we are all responsible for safe working conditions. The attendance by retired workmates, past railway employees and family members of loved ones lost at work was very much appreciated. A special thanks to the Edgerton, Tanne and Wairau families for their participation. When Lyn Wairau recounted her thoughts when her Dad didn't come home from work 30 years ago it added quite a bit of emotion and meaning to WMD. A special thanks to this lady. It is intended to have a plaque from railway employees in place at the memorial for next year's commemoration.


In other news we've been active in the

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH [cont]

in that. Nice to see a good write up in the next day's ODT.

Oh, and from the loco engineers who are pleased with the change in the roster centre phone system. One was heard to say that he left the phone on speaker while he went off and cooked tea. Thirty-five minutes later tea is cooked but still no joy on the phone. May need a rethink.

We note with some interest that our health and safety advisor has resigned to pursue other opportunities. It is hoped that his replacement will not arrive in the same spectacular fashion that caused so much upset in the I&E area.


Remember it is an election year and we can all play a part in re-electing a Labour Government. 

PORT CHALMERS BRANCH

to wish Gary Donaldson all the best with his future endeavours. Gary is another long serving worker for Port Chalmers having clocked up 43 years of service! Port Otago can be proud to have had his services for such a long period of time.

As far as the Port goes we have had the half yearly report for 2013/2014.

Container volumes were down 4% to 80,400 TEUs but this was offset by an increase in logs to 400,000 tonnes. Vessel arrivals was up by four to 233 so things are looking good as far as the company goes.

With impending negotiations, hopefully this will have a positive flow on affect :). 

SOUTHLAND BRANCH

local Labour Party's candidate selection process, which saw Lesley Soper fend off a challenge for the candidacy from Michael Gibson. Whatever your views on the merits of the respective candidates, this process was one which underlined the RMTU's role as a union affiliated to the party and our members' rights to be involved in the democratic selection of those who want to represent. It's easy to moan about what's happening and do nothing – much better to make the effort and attend a meeting or two and cast a vote.

It is with amusement that we note the bi-annual re-certs for all staff has now become a yearly requirement at the whim of our local manager under the heading of the 'high and low season' work requirements for all staff. It appears we don't have bi-annual low seasons - this would make a good claim for a wage increase in the upcoming wage round now that all staff are being re-examined every year.


Radio reception problems are starting to become a concern at Wairio no matter how many times this is reported on the 155 fault line. It seems strange how the company can ignore this and at the same time insist that we do NOT take warrants by cell phone. This is a problem for everyone – not just the

LEs. Do something else wrong and formal processes are promptly commenced. The problem is that a clear message of double standards is being transmitted.

The flash butt welder, along with the tamper group, have made good progress on the Bluff branch and the quick re-tamp of the bad places on the Ohai line have made a big difference to the track. Well done to all concerned.

The seating on the DSG locos leaves a lot to be said so a branch approach to this problem may have to be the next step if continual bookings in the 54d book don't get anything changed.

The big improvement to the entrance driveway at our depot is marvellous albeit long overdue - which gives meaning to the saying 'these things take time'.

We're looking forward to seeing the progress of the MECA negotiations in Wellington. Here in the deep south we know that our bargaining team needs plenty of support from the rank and file of the membership from Bluff to the far north if we're to get a good deal. We can supply the support from Bluff. We're depending on our brothers and sisters elsewhere in the country to be as solid as we are down here. 

Passchendaele rides again



ANZAC Day also saw the dedication of the refurbished steam loco AB608 named Passchendaele after the service men and woman who served at the infamous battle in the place of the same name in Belgium.

This was a rather unique dedication held at a rather unique station. Paekakariki Station was once a bustling depot in the age of steam being a crucial hub to ensure reliable mainline operations as well as an important connection for a seaside community.

Restored as a working station and museum, this little gem not only retains its original signal box but has the fortune of having a railway enthusiast's dream of an original working rail yard, water tower, locomotive workshop facilities and a number of large freight handling sheds which are currently owned and operated by Steam Incorporated – a rail enthusiasts' group.



Paekakariki is a working time capsule and ideal venue for an occasion of such importance.

Congratulations must go out to all who have played a part in not only saving this little gem, but to those who realised the historical significance that this engine held.

AB608 is New Zealand's only locomotive ever to receive an official name in remembrance of sacrifices of our men and woman who served overseas.

The formalities of the day were well organised and began with the piping in of a north bound arrival of the AB608 Passchendaele.

After a brief photo opportunity, proceedings moved on with a number of guest speakers including Peter Norman (president, Steam Incorporated), Rich Van Barneveld (GM infrastructure and engineering, KiwiRail), colonel Nick Gillard MNZM (commander 1 (NZ) Brigade) and Graeme Carter (president, NZ Railway and Locomotive Society) who did an admiral job in commemoration of the battle of Passchendaele.

Having served as an Army military attaché in charge of the overall identification and recovery of NZ servicemen and woman on the western front, Gillard gave a vivid account of the battlefield challenges, topography, and unfolding events at Passchendaele.

This was very poignant moment. Although glowing praise was afforded to the hours of toil and dedication into restoring AB608 the ceremony was tastefully executed with a level of excitement befitting of ANZAC Day! 🇳🇿