

JUNE 2015

THE *Transport Worker*

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

**STANDING
STRONG
AGAINST
ZERO HOUR
CONTRACTS**



9 WMD



Fist pumping support for safer work places from workers and bosses.

8 RUNUNGA HUI, WAIROA



12 PETONE'S HISTORIC SITE



ANZAC Day beside the historic flagpole at Petone Railway Station.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: RMTU members Ka'isa Beech, Justin Prout and Howard Phillips joined a Wellington protest showing RMTU solidarity and contempt for zero hours employment agreements. More on page 16.

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

The nonsense of a level playing field

As winter rolls in around the country bringing with it a chill to the land another wind is growing in force in the realm of KiwiRail. This wind is an all-too-familiar one as it has been generated by successive management teams and goes by the euphemistic title of 'the wind of change'. What never changes though, is that this blow is usually as a result of someone deciding that if we only try harder to cut costs New Zealand can have a totally self-sustaining railway system.

What a load of bollocks I say and isn't the definition of insanity 'trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome'?

Let me be very clear, it is my very strong view that the current structure and framework of rail in New Zealand can never be self sustaining. KiwiRail will never be able to generate sufficient revenue to maintain and develop infrastructure and its assets whilst it is in direct competition with a subsidised road transport industry and also undermined by foreign-flagged blue water vessels carrying domestic cargo around our coasts in contravention to – and in a deliberate flouting of – New Zealand law.

An example of this (un)level playing field is when a natural storm event occurs and rail bridges are damaged and/or tracks are washed away. KiwiRail must pay the full cost of remediating the damage. If the same thing happened on our roads the taxpayer, through the New Zealand Transport Agency, rushes in to restore the highway system.

Yes, I hear you say, the trucks pay a road user charge, but if anyone truly believes that those charges pay the full cost of the trucking industry's use of our national highway system at all times, then I am yet to meet them.

Until this playing field is levelled and made mode neutral, then rail in this country is always going to struggle to survive.

Anyway, back to the winds of change. A meeting is being held on June 3 in Wellington to be attended by all of KiwiRail's senior leadership and the four unions associated with its business. We are told that at this meeting KiwiRail's CEO and his team will lay out their post budget plan for rail.

We know that in January 2015 KiwiRail had an employee head count of 4,298 and by April that had fallen to 4,002 - a drop of 296 of your brothers and sisters.

We know that Solid Energy and Fonterra tonnage volumes are reducing across the network.

◀ We know that morale is falling around the country as people begin to once again anguish over job security.

What we don't know is whether on June 3 we will get full disclosure of the immediate challenges for KiwiRail and a true expression of willingness from management to partner with the unions on solutions or innovations to boost productivity and efficiency on the network nor whether we will keep the hard fought-for terms and conditions of employment intact.

Will we see a recipe disclosed which means that history is destined to repeat itself or will June 3 begin a new chapter in rail history of collaboration and partnership between management and organised labour? We believe this is the central core in building a strong foundation for a profitable KiwiRail and which will clear the decks to have a discussion with Government on the long term structure and form of rail in New Zealand. We shall see. . . .

The RMTU has zero tolerance to zero hours! These contracts have no legal definition. In general, an employer may engage an employee without any reciprocal guarantee of work, and therefore no guarantee of any payment. However, in most cases the employee agrees to be available to work when required. It is that lack of mutuality of obligation that unions and members find objectionable. The one-sided nature of this arrangement is in contrast to casual employment agreements, a feature of New Zealand employment law for decades, which are a series of separate employment engagements with no obligation on the employer to offer work, nor on the employee to accept it. Zero hour contracts usually requires the employee to be ready, willing and available to work when work is offered. Sometimes exclusivity clauses prevent employees working for others. It's the equivalent of being on call all the time without being paid. A former McDonalds' employee, Stephanie Phillips, recently spoke about a culture of fear around calling in sick because it may lead directly to her hours being cut. The result is competition between staff and a culture of favouritism, neither of which is healthy to any employment relationship. When questioned, KiwiRail admitted to having four employees in Tranz Metro Wellington on these type of arrangements. They are now on standard terms and conditions. 🇳🇿

New grips for standing passengers



John Key finally approves plans to make train travel for standing passengers on commuter trains a more fun experience.

CAPTION COMPETITION

There is no **Caption Competition** winner announced in this issue as there were no entries received. The cash prize will be put to another use!

Life member

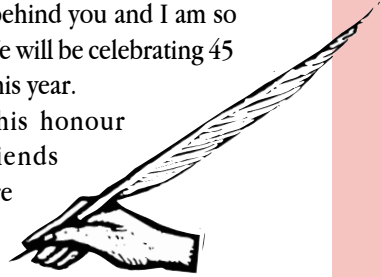
Dear Editor,

First, sorry for the delay in sending this, I have been on leave and other issues have been going on (and I'm not getting any younger).

On behalf of Eileen and myself we want to thank the Union for awarding life membership to me. We see this as a great honour and recognition of work done for my fellow comrades. As you know this can only be done with a fantastic partner behind you and I am so lucky to have Eileen as mine. We will be celebrating 45 years of marriage in October this year.

To be able to receive this honour amongst my family and friends also made the night even more memorable and for once I am quite without words, so please pass on our thanks to the NMC and I look forward to having a few wines with you in the near future.

Phil Bosworth.



Resignations

Dear Editor,

As I retired from KiwiRail on 07/04/15 I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU.

I joined the NUR in 1975 and continued to be a paid up member and supporter of subsequent unions since. Thanks for any support and assistance received over the last 40 years.

Although I believe the rank and file to be the backbone of the Union, I would urge all members to continue to support the officials who have the strength of character to represent everyone during negotiations and disputes and encourage any new employees to join your Union.

Best wishes to all RMTU members for your future. May you all reach your retirement in good health.

Finally, I remember and give thanks to those staunch union men and women who have gone before us. We are reaping the benefits of some hard yards done in the past.

Peter Bredesen, 46862

RCO Napier.

Dear Editor,

After 40 years I have decided to hang up my boots, put the pens and paper away and retire. I would like to thank all members of this Union – past and present – for the help and support they have shown to me over those years. Date effective 31st March 2015.

Stuart Marshall

Port Services Officer

Northport.

Wage gap with Aust unchanged

Bill Rosenberg, CTU economist

REMEMBER back in the 2008 election when the National Party set itself a target of wage parity with Australia by 2025? Two years ago Bill English was talking about the wage gap as an advantage which would attract businesses to New Zealand. With Australia now not doing as well economically as it was (not helped by an austerity-minded, politically inept Government), this would have been the most likely time for the New Zealand Government to claim the wage gap is closing.

Net migration to Australia has greatly reduced since 2008. The difference between the number of people leaving and returning has fallen from around 3,000 a month in mid-2013 to just a few hundred a month now. But is that because the wage gap has closed or because jobs are getting harder to find in Australia?

It seems it is much more about employment. The wage gap is not closing, in fact it is still rising (though more slowly). If we are willing to put aside concerns about the quality of the jobs here, employment is rising more quickly on this side of the Tasman at 3.5% in the year to December 2014 compared to 1.3% in Australia in the year to February. While the unemployment rate at 5.7% of the labour force is much too high for an economy that is now growing almost as fast as under Bill English's predecessors when unemployment went as low as 3.5%, it is now lower than Australia's 6.3%. This breaks the longest recorded spell in recent history of Australia having lower unemployment than New Zealand.

On the other hand, various measures of the hourly wage, adjusted for its purchasing power on either side of the Tasman, show a similar pattern: the gap fell between about 2005 and 2008 and then began to rise again. It has re-opened to be as bad as it ever was.

For the average hourly wage (including overtime), the wage gap was around 10% during the 1990s, rose to 22% in 2005, then fell to 11% in 2008. As can be seen in Figure 2, by mid-2013 it was back to 22% and was still at 21% at the end of 2014. So, in short, the gap has re-opened to be as bad as it ever was, trending upwards. In

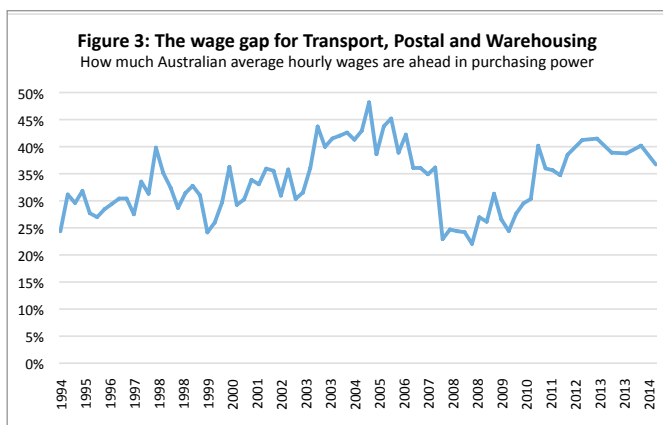
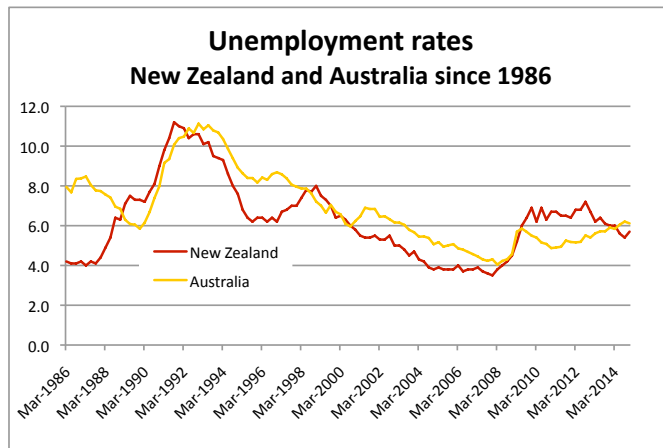
December 2014 the average hourly wage in New Zealand, including overtime, was NZ\$28.79 while the Australian equivalent was A\$34.20 (worth NZ\$34.80 in purchasing power).

Looking at the transport, postal and warehousing industry, where most RTBU members work, the pattern over the years looks similar, but the gap is bigger (see Figure 3). However there seems to be a recent modest trend towards closing the gap. Even so, the gap at December 2014 was 37%. The average wage in the industry (including overtime) was NZ\$27.16 in New Zealand compared to A\$36.49 in Australia (worth NZ\$37.13 in purchasing power).


That doesn't take into account 'benefits' in addition to wages such as the 9.5% contribution that Australian employers are required to make to virtually all of their employees' superannuation. In New Zealand only some workers get KiwiSaver contributions from their employer, with a minimum rate of 3%.

A measure of the average hourly wage including employer superannuation contributions, medical insurance premiums, ACC levies (and their Australian counterparts) and similar payments by employers to the benefit of their employees shows a pattern similar to the average hourly wage but with a much bigger gap (figure 4). It rose more or less steadily through the 1990s to a 45% peak in 2005. It fell to 34% in the year ending March 2009 and then began to rise again. By the year to March 2014 the gap was 42%.

So far we have measured purchasing power from a worker's viewpoint – the



prices of goods and services a household buys. From an employer's viewpoint (which is the viewpoint Bill English took) things look somewhat different. For Australian businesses thinking about setting up shop in New Zealand, the gap hasn't increased to the same degree as for workers since 2009 because on average, the difference between the prices they receive for their products and their non-wage costs has risen faster in Australia. For Australian businesses operating mainly in their home market thinking about using New Zealand to offshore parts of their operations such as call centres, things looked very rosy when the New Zealand dollar was relatively weak, but it is now less attractive.

So it seems that since 2008, the gap has got significantly worse for wage and salary earners, reversing gains made from the mid-2000s, but it hasn't done much to encourage Australian employers to move to New Zealand other than perhaps for some offshoring of call centres serving their home market. Even for them, the high exchange rate will make it look less attractive. 

Christchurch asset sale plan

CHURSTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL is proposing to adopt a ten year plan that will give them carte blanche to sell off all the city's assets. These include Lyttelton Port.

Our union is vehemently opposed to asset sales.

In our experience, the privatisation of publicly-owned assets that are operated as businesses leads to a deterioration of health and safety standards and increased risk of serious harm and death. All of our members who lived through the debacle that was the privatisation of rail will know precisely what we are taking about. Hazel Armstrong's book 'Your Life for the Job' catalogues the sad history of workplace deaths and injuries which resulted.

Lyttelton Port has an unhappy recent history of deaths and serious harm injuries on the waterfront and at its inland port. A sell off won't help.

This is literally a matter of life and death for our members. We know the most private of ports – Tauranga – has a deplorable health and safety record and that's why we had a strong presence from our union at

the Christchurch City Council submission hearings. Thank you to all our members who took the time to front up.

We are opposed to the asset sales on other grounds:

They are unnecessary. So called 'anchor projects' can be shelved or delayed. It is not necessary to sell assets to pay for these projects. Christchurch doesn't need a convention centre, it needs drains and roads fixing and social housing for our most vulnerable citizens.

The sales do not make economic sense. To forego the dividends these assets return by selling them off is short sighted and will lead to rates increases. Christchurch has historically enjoyed lower rates than other major centres because of the returns from the investment the Council has made in its assets.

This proposed sell off is ideologically driven. The deputy chair of the City Finance Committee, Raf Manji, is on the record as saying that he favours the sale of assets not because it is economically necessary but because it is 'the right thing to do'. That doesn't surprise us because he is an ex-

London investment banker and we all know how trusted they are after the 2008 financial meltdown. Plainly it is not the 'right thing' to do; rather this is an initiative that is being driven through to privatise the profits of the Council owned assets.

There is an alternative – common sense – plan put forward by People's Choice councillors which should be embraced by the City Council. This does not require the sale of assets. To argue that local government is somehow apolitical, as Raf Manji, implied in the Christchurch Press on 20 April in response to the launch of the Common Sense Plan, suggests he is either being duplicitous or he is ignorant of the nature of politics.

This issue

- involves hundreds of millions of rate-payers' dollars;
- will affect the lives of thousands of people living and working in Christchurch for years to come; and
- if that isn't a political issue then we don't know what is.

Our union will fight to oppose the privatisation of our port. 🌐

Discrimination against Chinese workers

TEMPORARY Chinese workers fixing KiwiRail's trains are "probably not" covered by New Zealand law, said Workplace Relations Minister Michael Woodhouse. But he added the issue may have to be tested in court and the government had no plans to seek a definitive

answer. The workers are employed by a Chinese company to disassemble KiwiRail locos to remove asbestos from them at the Hutt Workshops. Woodhouse said an investigation cleared the company of mistreating the workers, but that both the employees and employer had blocked its attempts to

gain wage records to determine if minimum wage laws were violated. RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson charged that the government had done a "shoddy" investigation of allegations of exploitation and that the Union will undertake a test case if the government doesn't. 🌐



PHOTOGRAPH: Darin Campbell

Environmental terrorism

On 22 April the Greens and the RMTU mounted a vocal and colourful protest outside the KiwiRail head office in Parnell Auckland because they are considering mothballing of the electrification on the NIMT in favour of an all diesel operation which the Union has characterised as environmental terrorism. Send a letter to KiwiRail and the Government condemning this move and urging them to retain the clean, green renewable option of electric train operation by going to <http://action.greens.org.nz/kiwirail-save-our-electric-trains>. 🌐


Tauranga training

THE Bay of Plenty port and rail branches combined for a two day delegate training session in May with GS Wayne Butson and organisers Phil Spanswick, Stu Johnstone and John Kerr in a programme tailored to the needs of delegates working in a rapidly changing industrial environment.

The challenges of organising in a hostile political climate and applying basic strategic principles to achieve success were covered. The need to focus on clearly defined and understood goals was underlined. Delegates were updated on new bargaining rules enacted by National and designed to weaken collective agreement

negotiations.

The meeting also focused on using modern technology to communicate, using the recent dispute in Port of Lyttelton to illustrate the value of social media and text messaging in real time.


Delegates participated with enthusiasm and have already set up a closed branch Facebook group page. Further training is planned for mid June. 



H&S champion vs rep

THE term 'health and safety champion' is creeping into popular management speak replacing the empowered 'health and safety rep' with a role that has no legal power.

The term 'champion' does not imply the person is a representative with the mandate of their workmates to represent their H&S interests. Nor does it hold any status under the Health and Safety legislation with regard to safety rep functions and protections.

Only elected trained health and safety reps are mandated with functions prescribed in the Act and the accompanying powers such as issuing a PIN notice and providing advice regarding unsafe work. If we don't continue using the term 'Health and Safety Rep' we run the risk of losing it, along with the powers and protections that come with it. 

OBITUARY


Paul Simon Heighton

10/1/1939 – 9/5/2015



THE New Zealand railway community said goodbye to one of its most prominent sons, Paul Heighton, who was born to be an engine man. As early as four years old he used to disappear to watch the trains go past before being searched for by a friendly constable and returned to his parents.

He joining NZR in 1956 as a cleaner (or trainee fireman) lighting up, maintaining and cleaning steam locomotives and he later became a fireman and a driver but an eye problem saw him taken off the rail and into training where he taught many locomotive assistants. He wanted all new loco staff to have the same passion and high standards as he had. But it was the footplate he loved most and it was to there he returned when he retired in 1996.

Paul was also a passionate union man and fierce in his quest for facts. His retirement meant he could spend more time with his beloved rail heritage. He was a founding member of the Railway Enthusiasts Society in Onehunga and was a creator of the Glenbrook Vintage Railway in 1970. He will be missed by us all. 

- Tim Kerwin



ARE YOU A MEMBER?

NZ Harbours Superannuation Scheme



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



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

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

www.harbourssuper.org.nz



Employee participation agreements

NEW health and safety legislation is on its way. The Health and Safety Reform Bill is currently before Parliament and is expected to become law later this year.

The new law requires PCBU (employers) to have effective worker participation practices and engage with workers around health and safety.

However, the Bill is not specific about what kind of participation is required and provides the PCBU with 'flexibility' about whether to have H&S reps (HSR) or health and safety committees (HSC) or other arrangements such as informal arrangements.

Fortunately the Bill enables workers and their unions to specifically request HSRs and HSCs so, in anticipation of the law change, the RMTU has written to employers seeking to renew their commitment to reps, their training and their inclusion on HSCs through an employee participation agreement (EPA).

Once HSRs and HSCs are agreed, the Bill sets out how they will work, such as their functions and powers, and the PCBU's obligations to provide support.

HSRs will have increased powers under the new law including the ability to issue provisional improvement notices (PIN),

accompany Worksafe NZ inspectors and direct workers to stop unsafe work. They also have increased protections against discrimination.

This Bill's 'flexibility' around whether or not to have HSRs with increased powers is not surprising considering the current political environment and the other attacks on workers' rights such as removal of tea breaks and barriers to collective bargaining. Fortunately, good employers understand the benefits of trained and empowered health and safety reps and value the huge contribution they make to workers' lives.



ICLS's Tokyo meeting



The 21st International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) steering committee meeting was held in Tokyo 19 April 2015. The Committee set the theme of "The future is labour solidarity!" and finalised the agenda for the ICLS Forum to be held in Seoul Korea 8-9 September 2015. (l to r) Aung Thu Ya [Myanmar], Butson [NZ], Kosaisook and Tungworachet [Thailand], Bilayon [Philippines], Yamada [Japan], Park [Korea] and Hayden [Australia].



Successful out@work Conference

THIS year's out@work conference was held in Hamilton and was opened by guest speaker David Kukutai Jones who spoke about Maori spiritual healing, listening to his dreams and placing them in a cultural and spiritual context. Sam Huggard, NZCTU secretary held a session titled Tough times - organise and campaign. He cited such examples as:

- Campaign for HIV Aids;
- Campaign against gambling; and
- Campaign for MMP.

He elaborated on the tools to use for organising, pointing out that we should not expect to be popular.

Afternoon workshops covered: a living wage; Rainbow inclusive workplaces; young and united and Unearned Advantage; and heterosexual privilege.

Speakers during the conference included: Mathijs Lucassen talking about YOUTH 2000; Lynda Johnson on Pride and Protest; MP Louisa Wall; Kevin Hague; and Maddy Drew who spoke on Campaigning to Win.

A panel discussion on the topic Out and Proud/Being who I am was facilitated by Julie Douglas with panellists Sharn Riggs (ETU), Skylar Jacob Artemis (SFWU), Matthew Fitzsimons (SEA), Annie Newman (SFWU) and Rachel Mackintosh (EPMU).

Over all it was an extremely busy and fruitful conference and wonderful to catch up with other gay RMTU delegates.



ILO support for NZ

SOUTH ISLAND organiser John Kerr represented the CTU at an ILO seminar in Phnom Penh in May where union bargaining strategies and wage fixing mechanisms in Asia and the Pacific was discussed. It was largely funded by the All China Federation of Trade Unions.

Wages in China have risen in the last few years and the Chinese are shifting from an export-led development model to one that is more focused on building consumer demand in their home market. To do that wages have to rise and the risk is that manufacturers will be undercut by exploited

cheap labour elsewhere in the region. Unlike our own Government, which is content to leave this to the so-called 'free market', the Chinese are keen to boost workers' bargaining power elsewhere in the region.

One of the highlights was the support for young Kiwi workers fighting zero hours contracts with a message of solidarity to UNITE's young workers on the picket lines. When you're in a fight it's great to find you have friends you never knew you had.

UNITE have thanked the delegates for their message, pointing out that such moral support is invaluable.



Maori issues discussed at hui

THE RMTU was represented at the CTU Runanga Biennial Hui in Wairoa on March 18 by national president Aubrey Wilkinson and Port of Napier women's representative Gayleann Kereru who reported that she learnt a lot about the runanga and was overwhelmed by its passion and scale of its workload.

All 50 participants, along with guests, delivered their pepeha and union backgrounds.

MWU president Mike Nahu talked frankly of the negotiations between the Meat Workers Union and Talleys and explained the position to date. Sadly the prospects look bleak for all concerned.

Also attending were representatives from the following unions: RMTU, TEU, NZEI, MUNZ, FIRST, PSA, TUIA, PPTA, SFWU, NZNO, EPMU, MWU and the NZCTU.

Day two began with a visit to Taniwharau Marae to tautoko whanau for the kaumatua who recently passed away.

Workshops began with iwi relationships led by Hemi Houkamo (TEU) who took us through the structures of both unions and iwi showing their similarities including how they tune their aims and philosophies for their respective people or members. It was obvious to everyone that we should be working more closely with each other,



perhaps under a loose agreement or MOU of some form.

We had an uplifting workshop run by Laures Park (NZEI) on unions celebrating successes – which is something we do not do very well.

Discussion of privatisation put attendees through a roller coaster of opinion but in the end everyone certainly had a clear understating of what privatisation was about, its pros and cons, and possible solutions.

NZCTU secretary Sam Huggard talked about the proposed pay rise campaign and everyone made suggestions to add weight and influence to the campaign.

The Wairoa Meat Workers delegation talked about the Talley meat workers' dispute. It is clear that the workers here are hurting and will continue to suffer. We were impressed with the collective resolve of those who continue to hang in there.

On day three we were given a pres-

entation by the NZNO on the disparity of government healthcare funding between public and Maori healthcare providers. We concluded that public funding to Maori healthcare providers is in violation of the United Nations Indigenous Rights Treaty. Given that this government has gained a seat on the executive board of the UN, this a slap in the face to all the indigenous people of New Zealand. We need to be more visible on the international stage regarding this so watch this space.

Cultural competency was also an issue discussed especially in regards to the public health sector where it as deemed to barely exist and that within ACC it was even worse. There is an urgent need for a gigantic makeover. The hui believed this initiative is not being taken seriously, yet it has been proven to reduce the costs of treatment and rehabilitation.

The final agenda item was regarding Ture Whakawhanaungatanga (Relationship Agreements Between Runanga and the NZCTU). It was obvious that the wording of our agreement will need tweaking.

Finally, the runanga is extremely busy, active and in good heart, and, as is usually the case, our struggles continue.

Kia ora koutou. 🌿

Boosting H&S actions teams



Hazel Armstrong, Tana Umaga and Joanne Carr
(RMTU Tranz Scenic)

IN April a two-day summit was jointly convened by KiwiRail and the RMTU to bring together representatives of the HASAT (H&S actions teams). The purpose of the event was to discuss how HASAT can best support the zero harm goals of Union and Company.

KRG Zero Harm manager, Aaron Temperton said: "The levels of engagement, passion and desire to elevate the HASAT to a new level were outstanding and we now have a clear mandate to set about making some changes."

"Our joint commitment to invest in the HASAT is a very positive step," says Karen Fletcher RMTU H&S organiser.

The workshop yielded 15 action

points including:

- IT improvements for sharing information between HSAT;
- Renewing the Employee Participation Agreements; and
- Transition training for H&S reps to comply with the health and safety legislation.

The Company and the RMTU have initiated work streams based on the action points.

It is intended to share these initiatives with all of the HSAT over the next couple of months and undertake national road shows to roll-out the concepts to those HSAT members that didn't attend. 🌿

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Shout for safety

General secretary Wayne Butson spoke for the entire RMTU family at Hutt Workshops on Workers' Memorial Day. Extracts from his speech are reprinted here.

THERE is no denying that decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in improvements in basic working conditions today. The theme for Workers' Memorial Day 2015 is "removing exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace". The theme includes an opportunity for unions globally to highlight chemical-related hazards and asbestos as well as the Ebola virus and other potentially hazardous biological exposures.

By attending (a WMD commemoration) you are part of a global movement for improving workplace health and safety. As we remember those who have been killed, diseased or disabled on the workplace battlefield it is fitting we should have in our hearts and minds the tragedy in Nepal as many of those killed or seriously injured would have been at work when the earthquake struck.

Many workers leave for work and return home carrying hidden time bombs of occupational diseases. 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.

The RMTU is focussing this year on a call for the NZ Government to ban the importation of asbestos in all its forms into NZ. The Government should take urgent steps to implement mandatory licensing and training for those working with asbestos. Lung



cancer should be registered and recorded in more detail to enable accurate linkages between exposure to asbestos and lung cancer. The National Asbestos Registers should be reinvigorated and improved by making their use compulsory.

I along with many others, look forward to the Government's introduction into Parliament of the Health and Safety Reform Bill which aims to cut workplace death and injuries in NZ by 25 per cent in the next seven years. The Bill introduces harsher penalties for employers who put workers' lives at risk and already Worksafe NZ has mounted more prosecutions since its inception than MOBIE initiated during its last few years of H&S oversight. It is important that we all remember the toxic cocktail of rapacious, profit-driven greed, poor regulation, ineffective oversight and enforcement that has ran through NZ workplaces for years. Pike River and the forestry industry

are examples, in my view, of this approach.

I especially remember that since 1994 we have had 27 RMTU rail and port members killed at work – a staggering number as we are a small Union of just over 4,600 members. We have had no deaths on the job since 2008.

Nevertheless, we **MUST** focus on the fact that every death has taken a husband, father, mother, uncle, aunt, child, friend and remember the grief and pain families are left to endure. Each of these deaths is a waste and a loss that can never be adequately compensated for. For every workplace death there are truly dozens who are left to suffer.

I will never get used to meeting with and assisting workmates, partners, children and parents of Union members killed at work. These experiences have left me with a passionate drive and determination to tirelessly battle for safer workplaces.

Workers who have shared a workplace fatality often for the first time truly understand that safety is about taking care of the people you work with. It's about mate taking care of mate.

Management, manager and regulators alone cannot make our workplaces safe! Neither can unions, workers and regulators. We can only do it by everyone involved working actively together. This is what is meant by meaningful tripartite participation and leadership of safety.

We must all swear to protect and look after our brother and sister worker. We

must all learn to find it acceptable to be challenged if we do an unsafe act. It is time to stop the silence and voice our disapproval and disgust at needless workplace deaths.

Wayne ended his speech with a clarion call to 'shout for safety' by getting everyone present to clench a fist, stand and repeat three times: Safety First 🇳🇿



Bay of Plenty ↓



Hutt Workshops ↓



Hutt Workshops' staff remembered all those who had died on the job and pledged support to fight for safer working conditions for the living! Guest speakers this year included the Rt Hon Winston Peters, Trevor Mallard MP, Wayne Butson general secretary, and Karl Bouterrey site manager. Due to the unusually inclement weather, we transferred our service to the site meeting room and symbolically laid our wreaths at the front of the meeting hall. Of real interest was the active participation of all attendees when Wayne rounded off and accentuated his speech with our safety first 'war cry' complete with us all standing and punching the air with clenched fists. Even the management took part in this simple act of collective solidarity. Upon that rousing conclusion, we retreated for a well catered sausage sizzle. 🇳🇿

Napier





Palmerston North ↓

Palmerston North memorial day was fine and we kept it local with an invitation to the departed members' families we were able to contact in time.

Many thanks to all the people involved who made the day possible with the memorial day service programme, food and the garden looked awesome. The day went well and was a credit to everyone involved.

It's great to see the large attendance from RMTU members and management and encouraging to see the unity between them over staff safety because memorial day is all about health and safety. But in particular it's about members and the families of the departed because on April 28 these are the most important people.

Being a rail brother is to be part of a family. I really didn't fully understand that when I started – I didn't even notice this memorial because I was wrapped up in my

own self.

That was who I was before, now I feel like a part of something bigger – the rail family and on the 28th we remember the fallen members in rail and their families – the members who did go home after their shift.

The dads who didn't come to swimming day or that school play, the wives that couldn't talk to their husbands about the bad day they had or the kids who are asked "where's your dad?"

Solidarity is not just standing on a picket line. It means when one of us hurts we all hurt and when one of dies we all feel that loss.

To see the attendance on the 28th made me feel proud to be a part of the RMTU rail family and to see so many new faces paying their respects to those brothers and sisters no longer with us. 🇳🇿

Waikato ↓



Palmerston North



Petone's historic ANZAC flagpole

By Gerald Davidson.

ON the first ANZAC Day in 1916 an Australian ensign was unfurled in Petone at a unique ceremony.

A suggestion was made in November 1915 by railwaymen at Hornsby, NSW, that there be an exchange of flags with a New Zealand railway depot to signify the comradeship and unity of purpose of Australian and New Zealand railwaymen at Gallipoli.

Railways general manager, Ernest Haviland Hiley, delegated the task to staff at the old Petone Workshops, who decided to make the New Zealand flag themselves to give it greater sentimental value.

A specially built flagpole, the ANZAC Memorial Flagstaff, was erected by NZ Railways on land at the south of the station building and was made of Australian hardwood and NZ kauri to further symbolise unity.

By mutual arrangement the exchanged flags were unfurled simultaneously in both countries.

At a well attended Petone event the Commonwealth of Australia flag was unfurled by Prime Minister W F Massey while the New Zealand flag was unfurled by Sir Joseph Ward, the deputy PM. The crowd is understood to have numbered 8,000. The estimated population of Petone on April 1, 1916 was 7,107.

At Hornsby the New Zealand flag was unfurled on a similarly specially built flagstaff, which replaced the station flagpole, by Adeline Strickland, the daughter of the NSW Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland. The Hornsby pole was of a similar size to that at Petone, and was constructed of Australian hardwood and Oregon pine. Several thousand were in attendance.

The Petone Ceremony was the first ANZAC Day observance in New Zealand attended by the Prime Minister and his cabinet. Similar ceremonies were held in 1917, 1918 and 1919. ANZAC services were held on the spot between 1953 and 1973, in 1995, and from 2005.

At Hornsby on ANZAC Day 1917 the Petone crafted flag was flown for the second time and an American flag on the yard arm and the Hornsby Roll of Honour was unveiled. That Roll of Honour contained the names of 65 railway workers – two of whom were killed in action. In 2004 the nearly 20 metre high

ceremonial Petone pole was taken down for restoration. The pole is the first World War One memorial in this form.

It is understood that the Hornsby Station flagstaff was demolished in 1959. The original Australian ensign is now held at the Waiouru Army Museum. The whereabouts of the Petone flag sent to Australia is unknown.


A report of the Hornsby event can be found in the Cumberland Argus and Fruit Growers Advocate, Saturday 29 April 1916, with the headline Hands across the sea: New Zealand to Hornsby. There are no known pictures of the ceremony at Hornsby, though the local newspaper did publish a photograph of the Petone flag flying on the Hornsby pole and it did report the event was to be filmed.

The Petone Flagstaff now has a Category One classification from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

The most prominent member of the Petone Railway Workshops Roll of Honour was Major Norman Hastings, DSO, Chevalier Legion of Honour, was a popular foreman fitter and a veteran of the South African campaign. He died at sea on or about August 12, 1915 of wounds sustained on August 9, 1915 at Chunik Bair. His death was officially reported on April 26, 1916, but it was known he was missing, believed dead. Hastings enlisted with the rank of Captain. On the day he was wounded in action Hastings had been first promoted to the rank of Vice-Captain and then to Major.

It appears that the strong support at Petone for the combined New Zealand-Australia observance was very much related to the death of Norman Hastings and was, in part at least, a memorial to him.

The pole is the last structure in Petone with an association to the old Petone Railway Workshops now that the old paint shop on the other side of the railway has been demolished.

That building was left in place in 1929. This was contrary to the Government's instructions to have the site cleared. The building was eventually incorporated into the former car assembly plant of Todd Motor Industries Ltd. 



**ANZAC
DAY**

Remony

ial Flagstaff
y Station
2015, 7a.m.



pril 1916.)



As part of the Anzac remembrance the RMTU and KiwiRail placed a wreath in the West Foyer of Wellington Railway Station at the Roll of Honour board. The Roll of Honour lists all the railway staff killed in World War One whilst serving.

Inaugural Women's Forum

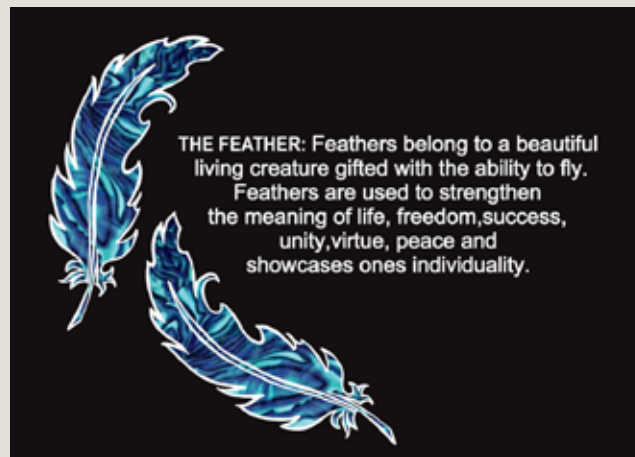


Growing Women's Strength Through Unity

MEETING in March, Ruth Blakeley, Tania Hauraki, Mel Te Pou, Ka'sia Beech, Gaye Kereru, Karen Fletcher and Julia Harrison were tasked to create the programme and logo significance.

Delegates from the far north to the far south arrived in Wellington excited, a little apprehensive but ready for a full-on two days. The Inaugural RMTU Women's Forum was held in Wellington 21/22 April 2015 and opened with inspirational messages of solidarity from Helen Clark, Louisa Wall MP and Carol Beaumont MP and BTB secretary Port of Antwerp, Belgium Monique Verbeek. International guest Krista Grace joined us from Maritime Union of Australia. Attendees enjoyed her story and borrowed some of her ideas for the newly established RMTU women's Facebook page (which you are all welcome to join).

General secretary Wayne Butson outlined expectations of the newly created NMC woman's role which prompted discussion on getting/staying active, setting goals, organising around issues, building networks and encouraging participation. The women were left with a very clear un-



derstanding of governance versus representation and we look forward to a very active women's network. Congratulations to Ruth Blakeley who was unanimously endorsed as the Forum candidate to represent RMTU women on the NMC.

H&S organiser Karen Fletcher ran a session on New Zealand's H&S crisis and identifying specific women's issues. Other workshops focused on bullying, paid parental leave and sexual harassment. Robust debate resulted in an impromptu session led by Rob Haultain setting out del-

egate responsibilities in relation to members, the union and employer obligations and responsibilities.

Women's Refuge's Debbie Robinson sadly reported one in three people experience domestic violence, explained identifying signs, getting people to safe places, and suggested what could be done in workplaces.

KiwiRail's Jo Nelson and Graeme Boomer spoke about attracting more women to the industry and decreasing the gender pay gap. Viv

Bull from Napier Port expressed concerns women weren't applying for port jobs which she attributed partly to unfriendly port working hours however work to promote being family friendly continues with open days and community gatherings.

Superintendent national manager Police Professional Conduct Anna Jackson (ONZM) spoke of her family and career, progressing through the ranks, CIB detective training and workplace bullying. Anna believes society has changed for the better and things that used to be tolerated no

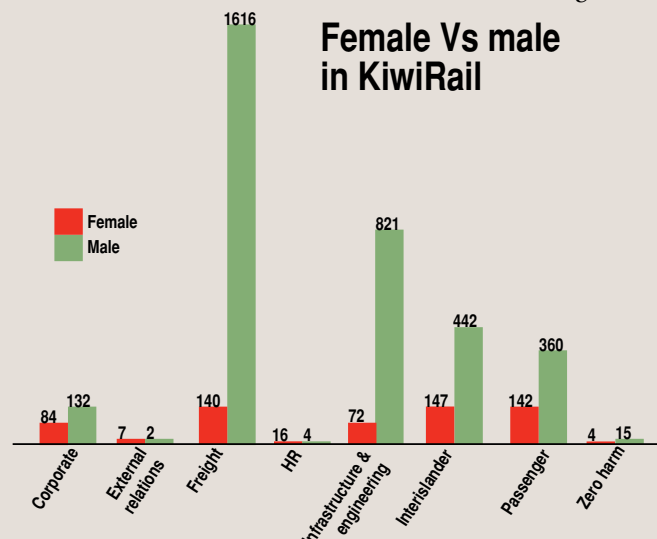
longer are. Anna said it's really important to challenge behaviours which are not acceptable.

A very emotional Waiata greeted Helen Kelly as she arrived to close the Forum. Her address focused on the importance of painting a new picture of what unions do and how they work.

Special thanks to



Mel Te Pou with Police superintendent Anna Jackson.



Kim Williams for teaching us such a meaningful waiata and throughout the two days leading us in prayer and song.

A Women suffragettes quiz and songs from Renee Maurice (winner 2013 New Zealand's Got Talent) ensured the dinner at Dockside Restaurant was a fantastic night. Special thanks to Graeme Boomer, KiwiRail Ltd, for the incredibly generous dinner sponsorship, and Rob Haultain for being an amazing quiz mistress.

Special thanks to the sponsors: RMTU, KRL, RMTU Napier Port and Port Chalmers

branches, Tony Gare Icon Logistics Dunedin, Geoff Plunkett, Port Otago Ltd, Port Marlborough, Bob Smillie, Port Otago and Kalmar Australia.

But mostly heartfelt thanks to the delegates that came and participated fully over the two days. We hope you went away realising your worth to the RMTU as a branch member, an active delegate, and a valued member, as well as knowing that although we are spread out throughout the country, we are not alone.

THE RMTU WOMEN ROCK! 



(l to r) Jo Nelson and Graeme Boomer (KiwiRail) and Viv Bull (Port of Napier).

Comments from attendees



Allana Ranui, Bay of Plenty Rail - Being well-informed and looking forward to sharing.



Giselle Shewan, Marlborough Rail - Enjoyed meeting all the girls that work in the same environment I do.



Lindy Burns, Marlborough Port - Listening to the guest speakers and enjoyed the dinner.



Rob Haultain, The best part was the quality of the delegates inspiring and encouraging.



Ani Te Namu, Auckland Rail - Having fun, enjoying the comradeship, sharing experiences.



Jackie Ranfield, Bay of Plenty Rail - First time here. Awesome meeting everyone and finding out what the union is all about.



Lisa Davidson, Palmerston North Rail - Had an awesome time! Thank you for the opportunity and already looking forward to meeting up again. Loved the whole thing and being united.



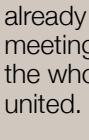
Ruth Blakeley, Port Chalmers - I think we are on our way to something fabulous and I look forward to catching up again.



Aorangi Black, South Port - Meeting all the women and teamship.



Jacqui Natana, Auckland Rail - Getting together with the ladies who have the same interest.



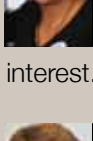
Michelle Middleditch, Talking to the ladies from Christchurch face-to-face instead of on the phone. Fantastic time at the Forum, looking forward to our next one.



Tania Hauraki, Marlborough Rail - It was an honour and privilege to be with like-minded women.



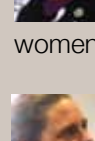
Bernie Jones, Christchurch Rail - Who is out there, that there are other ladies, contacts and knowing there are other operators.



Jane Sherer, Port Chalmers - Getting out and meeting other women from different jobs.



Pare-Ana Bysterveld, Lyttelton Port - Meeting everybody. Getting to know the rail side of the RMTU and the different types of jobs.



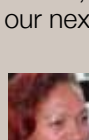
Tina Flack, Waikato Rail - The talk from Anna Jackson and the relaxed environment encouraged people to speak their mind.



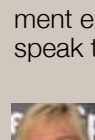
Christine Fisihoi, Wellington Rail - Solidarity, and the warmth from everyone and ease.



Jenna Cameron, Christchurch Rail - Good meeting new people.



Jenny Griffin, Wellington Rail - Fabulous to be in the same room with like-minded women sharing experiences



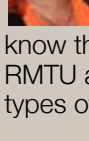
Toni Blair, Port Taranaki - Enjoyed meeting other women and have the same concept of why we are here. It's about time women made a stand!



Collette McCann, Christchurch Rail - Meeting everyone with a common purpose.



Krista Grace, MUA - Women form a critical voice and influence the culture of a workplace.



Rebecca Hauck, Otago Rail - Fantastic two days. Making the network connections. Hoping to see everyone again! Awesome bunch of women. So glad I went.



Gaye Kereru, Napier Port - We came together as one.



BAN asbestos petition

THE RMTU strongly supports the CTU-led petition to ban the importation of asbestos into New Zealand.

"Asbestos is the biggest workplace killer in New Zealand. It kills at least 170 workers annually, more than twice as many workers as accidental deaths at work. The number of people dying from asbestos related diseases (lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis) is increas-

ing and Government projections are that it will peak at 300 – higher than the road toll," said CTU secretary, Sam Huggard.

He added that New Zealand was out of step with other developed countries saying "we are still importing asbestos containing products. Australia prohibited the import of all asbestos containing products in 2003.

Similar bans in the United Kingdom date to the late 1990s".



Anti-zero hours picket



RMTU joined unions around the country to protest against zero hour contracts (see GS comment page 2).

AROUND THE BRANCHES

NORTHLAND RAIL

IT saddens this branch to report the mothballing of Dargaville Line insensitively announced during a visit by the CEO Peter Reidy and some of his executive team. Senior members see these bottom feeders come and go, racking in millions during their term of deconstructing and meddling in our railway. **Look back to the last CEO and you find jobs slashed, workshops gutted, rubbish trains and wagons bought, an unreliable lemon of a stretched ferry, rotten Peruvian sleepers to name a few. Quinn should have been flogged, not paid millions.**

So now we have a new penny-pinching CEO who subjects us to suffer monthly ego-tistical videos like a reincarnated Steve Jobs.

Time will tell what this bloke's legacy will be, but let us hope it won't be like his predecessors. However,

going by the lack of genuine consultation over the latest phase 3 document, we are getting a grim sign of what may lie further down the track.

In this document it mentions zero harm and increased productivity in the same line. An oxymoron surely?. We know what happens when whips crack to increase productivity. We are the ones who suffer. Don't be that person. Work safe and make some loud noise if the job isn't safe: Just say NO!

The port membership is increasing with many from C3 joining up.

Branch chair Alby Barr, who works closely with the opposition political parties, was a guest at Winston Peters' Buy(sic)

Election celebration. Peters has committed to rail in Northland, and anyone trying to close the NAL will be met with the full force of King North and his army of rail fans – ourselves included.

Barr takes over the role of Unions Northland coordinator, since the recent retirement of the MUNZ Auckland president. He has been kept busy with the Zero Hour McDonalds campaign locally, and is gearing up the local union activists to rally for the meat workers who are heading for a scrap with those scumbag employers – Talley's.

Finally a huge congrats to our general secretary Wayne Butson for being re elected unopposed. When you look around the union leadership ranks you can see how lucky we are to have the very best. This is no disrespect to other leaders, it is just a fact that cream rises to the top.

Keep warm this winter.

AUCKLAND RAIL

GREETINGS from the city where house prices are climbing so quickly that by the time you return from a day at work, your house has earned more than you have.

There are plans to expand Auckland's port. If it goes ahead it will see more freight using the main trunk and will strengthen the importance of the shunt services. Work is going ahead on the track expansions into Westfield yard which will increase the potential both there and at Southdown.

Continuous track maintenance is keeping the mainline speed restrictions at an all-time low in the metro region.

Nice to have the powerful DL locos back. The freight trains powered by the older locos were gruelling to operate as staff and machine often strained beyond maximum load. Well done to all involved.

Growth also in local passenger journeys. Unfortunately, due to the relaxed ticketing systems this has led to an increase in delinquents on the trains and around platforms. Riots closing Britomart Station, late last year. A difficult problem to solve,

but urgently needs a solution.

The EMU fleet is about to take up the running of all services between Papakura in the south and Swanson in the north. As the majority of diesel services are phased out the Wiri depot is set to become their main hub. This will create a large surplus of the magnificent staff who have toiled to keep the ageing diesels running, prepared and repaired – always with time constraints, on a shoe string budget, 24/7 and in all weathers. Unsung heroes to which the travelling public of Auckland owe many thanks.

One last hero: Sadly Paul Heighton passed away this month aged 76. (See obituary page 6) 🌐

BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

WITH the arrival of the new manager in Kowarau, there have been a number of changes and it is taking the members a while to get to

grips with the new managerial style, especially after Doug Smith's long tenure.

The branch sends its condolences to the family of Paul Heighton, retired locomotive engineer, Westfield who passed away on Saturday. He was a dedicated railway man

and a stalwart of the Glenbrook Vintage Railway. He was a staff instructor for some time up in Westfield, and was a respected and valued workmate. He had a 38 year battle with cancer, which he fought valiantly. Rest in Peace Paul, you will make a welcome addition to the great railway in the sky. 🌐

BAY OF PLENTY PORT

WE are heading to mediation to resolve the outstanding Drug and Alcohol Policy issues, hopefully we can resolve matters in that

arena.

In May we held a successful two day delegates' seminar to discuss the new bargaining rules that this lovely National government have introduced to make things more difficult for collective agreement bargaining.

A large number of issues have come to the surface of late which will be discussed at the regular delegates' meeting.

We say farewell to Mark Andrew who has worked for the last 11 years as a straddle driver as he decided to resign from his employment with C3. 🌐

WAIKATO RAIL

APRIL 25 marked 100 years since our armed forces went to fight in World War One. The impact on towns around the country who suffered the loss of courageous men and women who never returned had a huge impact on small town New Zealand. There was a huge attendance by members of the public to the services in Hamilton.

The branch commemorated Workers Memorial Day remembering those killed at work with a service at the memorial site at TeRapa yard. (See page 11)

No word yet on the EF electric locomo-

tives. The LEs like working on these locos and would like to see them refurbished. They are overdue for a major overhaul.

In April the last of the DL locomotives arrived from China. The eight locomotives are now in the process of being commissioned. That brings their number to 48.

Congratulations to Wayne Butson on retaining the post of general secretary. Your commitment and experience to this job is second to none and one that should make one and all proud to be union. You also have an awesome team around you.

Next we see the election for the National Management Committee and I hear that there has been a lot of interest in nominations for the northern region rail

rep. It goes to show that the Union reps are keen to uphold the conditions that we have.

There have been some rumbling within management as a consequence of the management restructuring, so we will see if there will be an improved structure.

The Kaimai Tunnel is a work in progress with staff being allocated to this project. Meanwhile the Tunnel group are having problems getting underway as no one seems to know who the sponsoring manager is?

Lastly we have been advised that Dick Purvis, ex locomotive supervisor at Te Rapa, has passed away in Tauranga at the age of 92. Dick was locomotive supervisor in Te Rapa in the early 1980s. Before that he was based at Palmerston North. To his family we offer our sincere condolences. 🌐

NAPIER PORT

Strike of 2007 and today's implications

DURING the strike of 2007, RMTU and MUNZ were under siege from the Napier Port Company's (NPC) offer of container stevedoring services to ISO.

MUNZ set up a picket and the RMTU membership did not cross it until it was forced to by an injunction from the Employment Court three or four days later. Most of us know the outcome.

ISO did not get the container stevedoring contract.

At that time it was important to look at other potential operations within the port gates that could be prone, or exposed to, this type of port company strategy and set up safe guard strategies to deal with it.

As a consequence, two or three years later the PanPac receive and marshalling contract came up for grabs. It was then held by the NPC. RMTU and MUNZ intervened

under their alliance and dialogue took place with NPC management.

We were unable to retain the work and so MUNZ C3 picked up the work. It was essential that we maintain unionised labour for receiving, marshalling and stevedoring of pulp and timber from PanPac.

Regional organiser Phil Spanswick arranged a meeting between branch delegates and C3 CEO Dean Camplin at the RMTU Conference in Wellington. Guarantees were made to ensure all labour used to handle PanPac products would be unionised. This happened.

In March 2015, when the contract came up again for renewal, history repeated itself with ISO winning both the stevedoring, marshalling and receiving contract for PanPac.

In short C3 were unable to retain it. We suspect cheaper non-unionised labour ticked their boxes.

In our opinion the contract process was conducted by stealth. Over the last couple of years ISO's bid has gained a foothold into the PanPac Mill operations at Whirinaki and were successful in the logging aspects of

PanPac's business.

An ex-manager of PanPac is now working for ISO.

We believe it is no coincidence that ISO won the contract.

We know that port companies engage consultant strategists to help them work their way around unions to maximise profits and to get a fully flexible, disempowered and compliant workforce to dance at their beck and call in the name of business.

Employers also have a current government willing to sell off workers' rights under the Employment Relations Act and to undermine the ability of unions to organise and to utilise their collective strength.

We all remember the so called Productivity Commission report on waterfront work which was no more than government sponsored terrorism against organised labour.

The dynamics of the waterfront is a constant. It is important that we continue to help new workers understand what trade unionism is about.

Sure, we can all sit round and throw the old proverbial at each other but the answer is to combat employer attacks by unionising against the competition model promoted by



\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



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

port companies.

If we are to grow and maintain our terms and work conditions then UNION is the only way forward – as difficult as it may seem in today's political climate.

The truth is that numbers and unionised density speaks volumes. We must connect where and when we can with non-unionised labour on the waterfront and continue to try and get all workers into the fold.

Meanwhile, Napier Port anticipates becoming busier. The apple crop has not hit home yet and there must be a shit load of harvested fruit to come out of cool storage.

We have initiated bargaining for the crane collective which expires on June 30 and are dealing with a number of issues around the interpretation of the collective agreement, which may head to mediation.

We have also a lesser throughput via rail

from Fonterra and understand this is due to ship capacity but like most things in the port business, where one door closes, five open to keep us honest.

For those reps in the Union's port sector, we look forward to seeing you at the Ports Forum in June.

Hopefully there will be plenty of input and some good sessions. 🌐

PALMERSTON NORTH RAIL

So far this year has been full of new faces, new structures and as always in Palmy, trials and tribulations. That's not to say that we haven't had some good wins. We had a successful round of delegate training with a great new bunch of enthusiastic workers taking on open and newly created roles throughout the branch.

Memorial day was a success. The flags were up just in time and the memorial is looking great thanks to the diligent work of our members. Each sector can be credited with holding their own at the negotiation table and at the same time coming together in unity to organise, seek advice and back other members when needed.

Most RMTU work is unpaid, unrec-

ognised and often criticised because it's impossible to please all of the people all of the time.

We feel there has been a lack of resolution offered by KiwiRail prior to the thorough investigation into the incident with the 544 DL's incorrect brake set up. It appears the only recommendation being implemented is the radio test servicing brake set up card. For now, or for ever? We have continued to ask these very pertinent questions since the Mission Bush incident.

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

The most important thing to remember is that we need to keep what we have, for the brothers and sisters that fought to get them and for all the brothers and sisters still to come.

This is a great branch full of good loyal people but every now and again we end up with a situation where we have brother against brother where there is no positive outcome and we need to find a better way of resolving these issues.

Solidarity and unity is the only way forward and in-house disputes only allow outsiders an opportunity to capitalise whether it be contractors or other non-union members.

RMTU members will be the ones who lose collective bargaining power harming our interests as a whole.

We are better than this. We need to put petty disputes aside and move forward with real unity.

So often we ask what we are getting out of this and what's in it for me? Wrong attitude. Let's look at the bigger picture and get some bigger wins on bigger issues, but we need everyone behind it and sometimes there will be compromises required.

Remember our chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Without unity, solidarity and support between fellow union members we can achieve little.

In unity: Stronger together! 

HUTT WORKSHOPS

WE are all waiting the management report on how well we performed in attempting to make \$20m in savings this last year. Some of that would've been spent on the redundancies and the subsequent appointment of a few newbies 'up north'. The difference will be padded by the number crunchers.

There was a fair bit of media coverage about KiwiRail's review of the electric locomotive fleet operating between Palmerston North and Hamilton, with many questions in the House plus the drive to eliminate Zero Hours-based employment contracts, an MBIE report of the investigation into the employment conditions of foreign workers providing warranty work/repairs at three sites, a seminar in Auckland to discuss reinvigorating the HSAT teams, an asbestos-related petition to Parliament, and more.

The second generation DL locos began arriving in April and are being drip fed due to mixed engine failures. The projected completion date is around mid-late October subject to releasing the locos in a timely manner. Once again the project is being ably managed on site by Blake Marshall and a small team.

The last edition included a small piece on the security gate. Whilst the teething problems have been addressed, plans are now afoot to allow shunt operators to control the gate when shunt operations are being carried out. Once the gate is opened, some drivers think they can ignore all signage and proceed with little regard for trains operating as the signage indicates!

In April a long overdue business update from our mechanical maintenance manager

(MMM) was well received although there was a moment's brain fade when an unsavoury management comment was made which was met with a request from the floor to apologise. This was unreservedly offered.

There is a site-wide review been undertaken by a small team reporting to the MMM. We have enquired about the specific terms of reference but have not yet received a response. The review (we were initially told) would take approximately two months and look at every aspect of the operation so that management better understands the big picture. We could draw a colourful picture in 24 hours and save a bit of time and effort.

Staff are still being loaned out and I'm sure everybody is happy that they are playing a part in working towards a One KiwiRail culture. We still get comments about the company's management and wonder if the perceived 'silos' have been truly broken down or if recent changes are another half-hearted attempt to do so.

Incident investigation appears to be a hot topic within the realms of our Zero Harm group and we are not left out of the mix. It would appear that across the company we still have isolated pockets of inconsistency when it comes to reporting and investigating. Now here's a problem: try looking for the absolute rules/policies and guidelines for reporting and investigating and you will discover a plethora of fragmented documentation that this branch has commented upon in times past. I fail to see how we can achieve the required culture change and achievement of safety goals whilst our guiding documentation remains a cluster-f***. Whilst I acknowledge that safety is all about prevention rather than policy, documented guidelines provide

useful reference on many occasions. We continue to wait for the publication of a high quality and fully integrated guideline from the Stanley Street boffins.

Three teams have recently celebrated a 13 year LTI-free milestone; proof that proper planning and a strict adherence to a safety first doctrine produces the desired outcomes. Well done to all.

The structural strengthening programme continues with the contractors roughly half way along the length of the main (Plant 1) building. All is going well and it should be near finished by Christmas. We are all looking forward to its completion as we have many plans to put into effect to improve output and quality —, an elusive objective these last 18 months given the constraints forced upon us.

Anzac Day was well patronised this year at the Petone Railway Station Memorial Flagstaff with an ever increasing crowd including CEO Peter Reidy as a guest speaker. Hot on the heels of Anzac Day was Worker's Memorial Day (see report page 10).

Our next big event will probably be the AGM and the biennial HSAT elections — that'll keep our branch returning officer busy for a week or so! These notes were completed on Thursday May 14, a day when Wellington region took a battering from the weather.

The three main buildings took on a bit of flood water, drains spewed liquid rather than consumed it and guttering overflowed everywhere. Site management made the right safety-focused call and closed the site sending everyone home — or for those living outside the Hutt Valley, on to a challenging journey with widespread flooding, transport network closures and sporadic downpours!

We box on. Kia kaha 

WELLINGTON RAIL

AS these notes are compiled we are in a state of recovery from a heavy, though expected, sudden deluge of heavy rain. All Wellington rail services were cancelled with no alternative bus arrangements available. So, as you can expect, it was a long night for many.

On the whole though, most Wellingtonians coped pretty well. This has been an especially timely reminder for KiwiRail to put some real emphasis on inspecting waterways, culverts and the like. It will be interesting to see if any areas of concern are identified and whether there is anybody left to undertake the inspections, let alone any remedial repairs.

Sadly, after all the downsizing and ongoing restructuring within I&E, we have serious concerns. Global warming is upon us and we ignore the warning signs at our peril.

Meanwhile we don't need more Chinese-made asbestos-filled, dirty diesel locomotives. We have a perfectly operational electrified system capable of moving extraordinary amounts of tonnage which has been deliberately shackled by this government's policies to underfund any hope of a clean, viable future for KiwiRail, thereby ensuring a slow painful death of yet another core strategically important New Zealand asset.

Wellington railway station is always a busy place. It has been especially so over recent weeks. In KiwiRail passenger there has been a major changing of the guard. Group GM, Deb Hume has moved on and been replaced by David Shepperd; Tranz Metro GM Scott Brookes has returned to the UK and been replaced by former EMU depot manager, Rob Gordon; and HR manager, Tory Clark has departed.

The most noticeable affect of these changes has been of more consultation and communication with staff – a very promising start.

Along with the daily ebb and flow of commuters, rumours abound of more redundancies but bucking the trend is Tranz Metro with a steady trickle of new faces. We have a locomotive engineer school of four including a former freight LE and an EMU depot team leader and a passenger operator school of nine and another of six

at press time.

Welcome aboard and thank you for choosing Tranz Metro.

Wellington Regional Council has announced the preferred tenderers for the Wellington suburban operating contract. They are the Keolis/EDI Downer partnership, Serco and Transdev. All Metro staff are likely to be working for one of these companies from July 2016.

In connection with the operating bids, a large number of strangers from the various bidders can be spotted around the network doing homework for the tender.

After much muted concern it appears that the appropriate heads are now sitting up to address issues with the transitional braking system of Tranz Metro's Matangi fleet. We look forward to a new improved braking system.

Train managers and loco engineers have been through an automatic coupler and transition head course. All Matangi units are to be retro fitted with them at the same time as the next batch of EMUs are introduced. This is expected to begin in coming weeks.



Automatic couplers for Matangi units

Branch secretary Telai Sefesi has been busy tripping around the country in his staff training role. It has been good to have him at home base for a week or two.

Tranz Metro LCC (Local Consultative Committee) meetings appear to be occurring on a regular basis and remain a positive tool for addressing local problems.

The next RMTU sponsored BBQ is to be held in the Tranz Metro area.

After years of talk, work has started on replacing the tired old Upper Hutt railway station. As there is asbestos in the old structure, demolition will be slow. Staff amenities have been relocated to portacoms during the expected eight month construction period. The south end platform upgrades

have already been completed.

Wellington depot has long been a source of inspiration for some other depots as regards it being a 'happy band of brothers'. We are still a band of brothers but the happiness quotient has slipped somewhat. I have never known so many LEs looking for greener pastures at one time. We have lost a lot of long service personal over the last five years due to retirement and transfers. Neither is a bad thing but management should open their eyes to the current discontent if they hope to retain solid staff.

Adam Ford has transferred to Wellington Metro. He wrote to his workmates on leaving: "I have decided to leave the team in Wellington freight because of the shift work and rosters we are expected to work, which are so badly constructed and unhealthy and detrimental to our own wellbeing, and leave no room for our own personal lives outside of work."

Well said Adam and we all wish you well in your tram driving duties.

The shift rotations have always been onerous but there was always enough 'fatty' recovery shifts to maintain some sort of work/life balance. That balance has slumped. The fat has been trimmed to a ridiculous extent and there are no long weekends to recover in. It's getting harder and harder to get 'odd' days off to do the things we shift workers need to do

Larry Lavin has taken the reigns as our RMTU sector rep with solid backup from Jim Featherston and, I hear, Dave Aiono as roster reps. It will be a battle to get back to some sensible rostering practices but a battle worth fighting if we are to continue to be sane.

Take note, if the trimming knife has not already begun its evil intent then it's not far off. Resist as much and as long as you can and try to retain a life.

Lastly we would like to forward our best wishes to Allan Wakely as he recovers from a rather nasty injury he acquired at the Wainawa rail siding in Wairarapa. Allan caught his hand between the brake lever arm and latch as he was securing it which cost him the partial loss of a finger. Sounds bloody painful, plus he endured a half hour wait for medical assistance. Allan is currently recovering for what is hoped to be a return to normal duties.

Stay safe, stay sane. 🌐

CANTERBURY RAIL

THIS is the fourth winter since the big February earthquakes and still our city is a mess. To cap it all the Council are considering flogging off assets to pay for a 'cost sharing agreement' on so-called anchor projects that none of us were consulted about.

Closer to home a mechanical productiv-



(l to r) Stephen Casey, KiwiRail RCO, and Mike Ross, Toll Freight operator, at the Ashburton freight centre.

ity project very nearly came unstuck after KiwiRail refused to apply the special sick leave provisions in our collective agreement in a fair and just manner. The member concerned had the support of his brothers and a petition to prove it. It remains to be seen whether there is sufficient discontent

ending restructures in I&A management provide the illusion of progress and give the bosses an excuse when they are carpeted by a finance minister who wants them to explain how we can't trade ourselves out of a hole caused by buying asbestos-riddled locomotives, ferries that keep breaking down and a coal price that, to borrow our CEO's phrase, is 'in the toilet'.

The latest debacle is called 'Phase 3'. A meeting was held to explain to staff what was happening. We're none the wiser. It was palpably obvious the managers concerned demonstrated a lack of knowledge about what they were presenting.

Letters that had been sent to staff had said one thing

whilst the information being shared in the meeting seemed to be saying another. We were left confused and a few of our more cynical members are saying this was deliberate.

It is with sadness that we record the passing of veteran LE 'Gordy' Godfrey. It

to lead to a lack of co-operation with the project.

The never

was only in the last edition of The Transport Worker that a picture of Gordy receiving his 50 year Certificate was published.

On a more cheerful note, our branch chair Graham Ealam and secretary Ian Walker spent three days in May attending a CTU 'Skills of Organising' course aimed at experienced delegates and new full time organisers. RMTU South Island organiser John Kerr was the educator and there were attendees from Lyttelton, the firefighters union, UNITE, nursing, primary teaching, engineering and the Service Workers'



Christchurch LE Jed O'Donoghue poses for a pic at Arthurs Pass.

Union. A very illuminating three days, one lesson of which was the great work young workers are doing in organising in fast food. Who says kids today don't know about unions? 🇳🇵

Annual Hui 2015

Te Kupenga Mahi
TWO DECADES OF NETWORKING
Rua te kākano, kia puawai tātou - Sow the seeds of unity, so we may blossom together

Te Kupenga Mahi invites RMTU Members to our Hui A Tau 2015.



Date Friday 3 July – Sunday 5 July 2015
Venue Hukanui Marae, 825 Gordonton Road, Hamilton
Time Friday, 1400hrs
Saturday, 0900hrs
Welcome (Powhiri)
Powhiri for day guests

Book your leave NOW

For more Information about Te Kupenga Mahi or the Hui A Tau, email tkm@kiwirail.co.nz or phone/text Sam on 021 242 6055

TOLL

KiwiRail

WEST COAST RAIL

THE news from Solid Energy has overshadowed everything else in the last few weeks. Hopefully, Solid Energy problems won't see a KiwiRail reaction against coal train staff.


I&E are full with concrete sleeper relays in the Buller Gorge which is seeing many restrictions but once finished it will certainly see a big improvement. Tiroroa, a crossing station in the Buller Gorge, is starting to become an issue with constant power failures requiring isolation of motor points despite the money thrown at this place in the past. Hopefully this can

be rectified in the near future

Solid Energy's management is committed to resurrecting the company but unfortunately a lot of pain is going to be felt before they will turn the Company to profit. The former CEO Don Elder must be extremely proud of his tenure: paid \$1.7 million for what? Jobs and families thrown on the scrap heap and the Government could not care less.

With all the news and speculation about the coal route we note with irony that a new set of points have been installed at Ngakawau. These points have concrete sleepers which we believe is a

first on the West Coast. The crew which installed the points have made an excellent job and it is a credit to all involved. Testimony to what it means to be a railway worker in some of the most difficult railway country in the world.

Our Westport supervisor Malcolm Campbell has retired after 51 years service with KiwiRail. Malcolm did a wonderful job and deserves a lot of credit which he did not always get as the Solid Energy coal programme meant coal trains operated under very challenging circumstances. His presence and experience will be sadly missed by all who worked with him. From all of us in Westport, thanks Malcolm and enjoy a long and happy retirement. 

LYTTELTON PORT

THE RMTU here has been busy since the settlement of our collective agreement in February and its subsequent unanimous ratification.

Our first priority, as always, has been health and safety. Thanks to some hard work by Sally Williams, LPC's new industrial relations manager, and our branch officials, the relationship between union and Company has improved considerably. We've been ably assisted by national H&S organiser Karen Fletcher with expert advice from Hazel Armstrong. There's still a long way to go, especially in improving communications but we've made good progress, particularly in the field of risk assessment. We're hopeful that by the next edition of the TTW we'll have a signed employee participation agreement that cements worker engagement in health and safety.

As this piece is being written our branch, together with national office, is working with Orly Productions Ltd to shoot a film about the recent dispute with LPC over our collective agreement. This will be used for

training purposes and as a resource we can show members and other unions so the lessons of what hap-

pened are not forgotten.

The RMTU ran a delegate training workshop on 17 April in Christchurch for port and rail activists and delegates. Thanks to Polly, Daryl, Glenn, Ollie and Evan for your enthusiasm and participation. Our branch is in good hands with the calibre of trained representatives we have coming through.


On 20 April our branch secretary Heiner Benecke attended a CTU seminar about the changes to employment laws. It was attended by over 50 union officials from Canterbury and beyond and was led by union lawyers Jeff Sissons and Greg Lloyd and facilitated by South Island organiser John Kerr. The law changes are all hostile to unions and underline the need for us to adapt our game if we are to continue to win for workers. That means staying smart and using smart manoeuvres as well as muscle if we are going to take on the bosses.

Our branch was the biggest union presence supporting UNITE at their picket

at Linwood McDonalds when the workers there took strike action against zero hour contracts. It was wonderful to see our members and their families standing alongside the UNITE members as they left the shop and stopped work. A big thank you to everyone who turned out on a cold night – your solidarity will never be forgotten by our brothers and sisters in UNITE.

As we got into May the pressure hasn't let up. Christchurch City Council's plan to sell assets meant we once again had to mobilise our members to attend the oral submissions on 11 May as John Kerr spoke on our behalf (see article page 5). The presence of so many workers demonstrated the resistance the Council can expect to encounter if they try to privatise our port.

Finally, branch officials Heiner Benecke, Luke Lockton, and Simon Gillard attended the first three days of an intensive CTU course (Skills of Organising) with organisers and delegates from other unions. This course will continue over two days in June. Once again, John Kerr helped the CTU by facilitating the workshop.

So all in all, a very busy time in our branch! 

PORT CHALMERS

IT has been a busy few months down south formalising the crews and rosters for 24 hour dredging to deepen the harbour. This work will take two years or more

and has created six full time jobs. It also puts us in the category of a deep water port, hopefully attracting

more business and bigger vessels.

We are also involved in a working party on safe rostering and sleep wellness. POL

has engaged Dr Phillippa Gander and Dr Lora Wu to work with us to hopefully develop some practices around predictable shifts and good patterns of sleep hygiene. Apparently for every night shift you work, it is recommended that you have two full nights in bed. We all know that's not always possible!

Unfortunately over the past couple of months we have seen bullying rear its ugly head. We are not sure what benefits the bullies are getting but the branch will absolutely not tolerate this behaviour. A timely reminder that unions are about solidarity and standing together in good and bad times. You never know when you might need your workmates or a favour. United we stand - divided you will fall!

We welcome back Jane Sherer who

has been off work with a broken thumb. Jane broke her thumb at work in a rather unfortunate incident and has had about a month off. It's great to see your smiling face back on deck.

We farewelled two long serving RMTU members, Jim Hawkins who drove the pilot boat and Malcolm Arthur who was a ship planner. Jim has been a member of the union for 38 years and plans to go on a big trip overseas in the next few months. We

wish Jim and Robyn all the best. Malcolm has been in the union for over 40 years and plans to return to 'Blighty' for a few months to see his mum and family.

He may even consider updating the vintage! If you need a hand Mal you no where to come! We wish Malcolm and Claire all the best. Most of all guys don't be strangers we hope to see you round from time to time.

Be safe out there. Kia kaha. 🌐

MARLBOROUGH PORT

AFTER 30 years of working at Port Marlborough and the Harbour Board before that, Francis Parker, has decided to retire. At her send off in late March, Francis spoke about the benefits of working for an employer for this long

and that these benefits have now given her choices in her retirement. Francis was the welfare officer for the branch for many years, a role that clearly shows empathy and caring. We wish Francis a long, healthy and happy retirement – thanks Francis. 🌐

*Francis Parker and
Terry Beech 61 years
of union membership
between them!*



SOUTHLAND RAIL

WE farewelled two long-standing union members and railway men in the last few weeks: Phil Jones and Mick Carran have retired after long and distinguished careers with KiwiRail and its many past incarnations. It was good to see the function that the Company put on in their honour was so well attended.

It will be good to catch up with Phil in his new role as caretaker of the Queenstown Welfare Trust Flats. We expect he

will wear his RMTU tie at all times when he is working in his official capacity.

The changing season means colder weather and much longer nights down here, and this can increase hazards – particularly when working in the dark.

The lack of consistency in applying the Company's drug and alcohol policy is still a talking point. When is an incident an incident?

We understand that managers will often resort to a default option of testing everyone and everything within sight for the

most minor of incidents if they are under pressure, but inconsistency certainly gets tongues wagging.

Rumours about a bit of paint being scraped off a ute in one part of the country leading to a member being stood down and subjected to a test while elsewhere someone can have an altercation with a concrete stump while driving and lose the sump and not be tested only leads to a sense of disparity.

The rumour that our freight depot manager isn't an ogre after all is alarming. Grown men are in shock. We've worked with him for years and this is a revelation that has left many of us reeling. 🌐

NELSON PORT

THE Nelson Toll depot moved last year to a new location near the airport. Pictured are LFO James Lewis and team leader/delegate Leon Thomson on a typical sunny Nelson day outside their new depot. 🌐

