

JUNE 2016

THE *Transport Worker*

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

**ANZAC Day
- Petone**



6 FIRE OUTCOME



Following a fire to the HRV in a Wellington tunnel a new vehicle is commissioned.

13 TASKER RECOGNISED



Kevin Tasker joined rail in 1960 and left recently after 56 years continuous service. We done Kevin and enjoy your retirement.

16 WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY



Green MP Julie-Anne Genter joined the Palmerston North team as they remembered lost colleagues.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: The refurbished steam locomotive name 'Passchedaele' in respect of rail workers who were killed during World War One, steams into Petone Station early on ANZAC Day morning. See pages 14 & 15. PHOTOGRAPH: Mark Coote.

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.

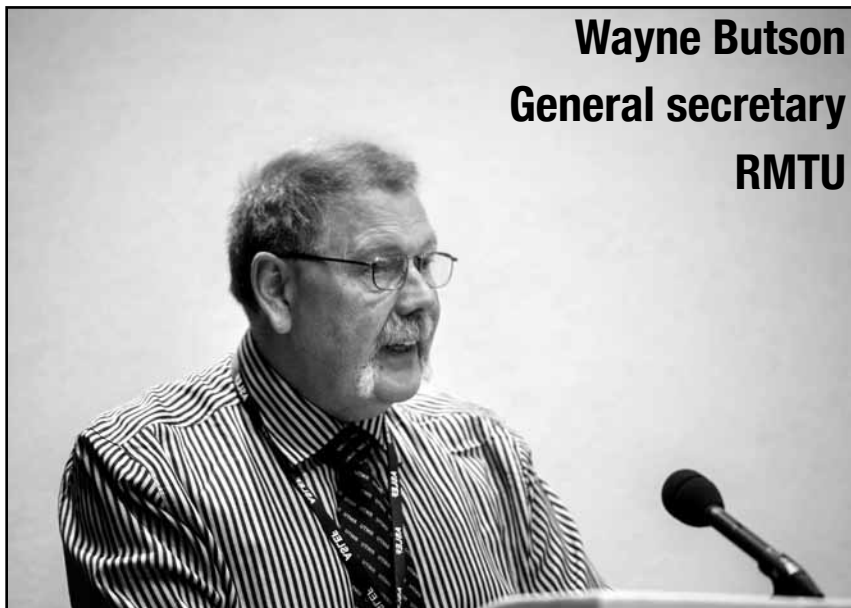
WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ

ISBN 1173-6488

Wayne Butson

General secretary

RMTU



Prepare for 2016!

WOW, half way through the year and where has it gone?

In this issue there are two letters to the editor which have similarities in that they criticise the Union for publishing written contributions when they are critical of other members in their employment roles. I stand by the decision to publish (although we do undertake a bit of editing to remove libellous or defamatory content if need be) because you would be extremely naive to think that your Union is anything other than a broad church. It is a fact of life that we have members who do not agree with what or how other members (including in some cases managers, supervisors or team leaders) are doing in – or obtaining from – the Union.

To attempt to mask this would be silly, in my view, as it is only when it is out in the open and we engage in discussion and debate that we can truly either resolve the matter or, at the very least, educate each other on the viewpoints and understand why people feel the way they do.

It is a fact that there is tension in the relationship between locomotive engineers and the freight roster centre workers on occasions.

Some of this tension is directly attributable to differing interpretations of what is or isn't permitted by the rostering rules as expressed in Section 3 of the Rail Operating Manual (ROM).

The letter we received from the Stanley Street roster centre reps is one such case in point.

The job of a roster co-ordinator in Stanley Street is not an easy one and neither is that of a loco engineer based in Te Rapa where shift busts are all too frequent.

Hence we have differing viewpoints on where, and with whom, the fault in the situation lies. It appears there are a set of rules for master rosters and a different set of rules for day-to-day operations. And this is undesirable.

The Union is aware that there are differing interpretations of facets of the ROM sec 3 and that this needs to be sorted. That is why there is a working party currently working on a review. This has been renewed as part of the proposed settlement of the KiwiRail MECA to 2018.

Fatigue is a major component of this and the working party will be looking at KiwiRail's use and adherence to FADE.

Anyway I slightly digress in that I should be specifically talking about the letters.

As a result of the letter I met with the Union reps and the letter's author in Auckland and with our Auckland region organiser, Stu Johnston. It was a very productive meeting in that it quickly became clear that the roster co-ordinators are trying to

please members and managers at the same time – which is always a difficult space to be in.

They agreed that the interpretations of the ROM are not helping and we discussed the review process.

It seems strange to me now that there was no representation from the roster co-ordinators on the ROM review and so it was agreed that the Union would seek to add an additional participant to the review from the roster centre.

A good outcome for all and the addition of the roster coordinators participation should add value for all parties.

The other letter, from Timaru, is equally blunt and forthright in its opinion of how the Union should stifle and sanitise free speech.

Bob Woodcock is a life member of the Union and has earned that fact through many years as senior leader and activist of the Railways Officers Institute (ROI a predecessor Union of the RMTU). It is also widely acknowledged that there were many issues over the years between Bob and loco engineers and to deny it would be to lie. Again, I stand by my decision to print the text in the branch notes as I equally stand by my decision to print the Timaru letter of condemnation. By doing so, we give members the opportunity to discuss matters and to make up their own minds.

That's what grown-ups do and this is a grown-up Union.

As you read this we will have settled the Transdev Auckland CA and provisionally settled, subject to ratification, the KiwiRail MECA for a further two years.

In the circumstances, I believe that the KiwiRail settlement is fair and provides a very real wage increase above the level of inflation to all members falling within the coverage of the MECA.

We will also be in the Wellington Employment Relations Authority on 14, 15 and 16 June for the substantive hearing on the Chinese Worker exploitation case. This is where we are alleging that the DL loco workers from China, in New Zealand to remove asbestos from the locos and other issues to do with the DL (Dog and Lemon) class locomotives, should be covered by the Minimum Wage and Holidays Acts amongst other statutes.




**Employment
Relations
Authority**

**Mezzanine floor,
50 Customhouse Quay
Wellington
June 14,15, 16**

I urge any and all members interested in sitting in on this hearing to attend in Wellington. There are some very interesting facts which will be aired publicly for the first time during the evidence disclosure at the hearing.

In my view, this matter is a disgraceful chapter in KiwiRail's history and is certainly not in keeping with their New Zealand Inc responsibilities.

I wish you all an enjoyable read of yet another great issue of your Union journal and above all else please continue to care and protect each other at work. 

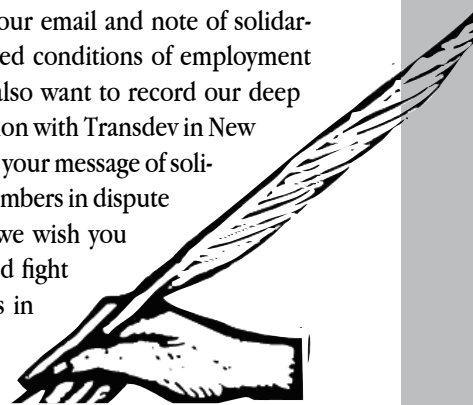


Solidarity support from Ireland

Dear Editor,

We thank you very much for your email and note of solidarity in our dispute over improved conditions of employment with Transdev in Ireland. We also want to record our deep appreciation for your intervention with Transdev in New Zealand. We will certainly bring your message of solidarity to the attention of our members in dispute with Transdev in Ireland and we wish you every success in your continued fight on behalf of transport workers in New Zealand.

Owen Reidy
Divisional organiser
SIPTU.



10 seconds from s##t creek

Dear Editor

Four weeks off.

I can't say they were blissful, as we were coping with my wife's cancers but it gives me a fantastic opportunity to thank Allan Wight and Chris Cawthorne. Nothing was too much trouble regarding time-off over the last 10 months. The Wellington depot guys were as solid as the preverbal rock. Thank you all.

Anyway, back to the creek and lost paddles.

I was looking forward to returning to work, different stresses but ones I know pretty well and can cope with. Damn it, I was 15 minutes EARLY so I could ease my way through the locomotive checks.

A nice shiny DFB awaited me. It has got the grunt to make that timetable manageable with eight cars through to Masterton.

I'm sure you guys and girls have a similar spread of RT users in your patch, some talk almost non-stop, some are more reticent. My pilot/TXO is a capable chap but not known for his overuse of the microphone so when he called me back toward him and then not hearing him for 40 secs I wasn't too phased. I could see him back there on the ground and felt confident we were achieving our aims.

A slight bump.

That's all I felt. I thought I had 'found' a bad joint. Then a DSG came into view from my blind side.

"Shit Shit Shit" It was actually stronger language than that but . . .

My day went rapidly downhill from that point on.

Reports, D&A tests, the worst is the self recriminations.

I have considered a few 'slogans' that might be appropriate; Don't be a fool, mind that 10 second rule" springs to mind.

But none of us are fools. We are all professionals in our different arenas of the job. No one comes to work with the mindset of screwing up.

It happened so easily and was so damned preventable.

Prior to this incident I had it in my mind that the 10 second rule was for when I couldn't see whoever was piloting the

◀ movement.

It was a damned harsh lesson but I know better now (sighs).

None of us need this, we just don't have the capacity to carry canoe paddles along with the rest of our kit.

Please please please be careful out there.

Brent Bevan.

Wellington freight depot.

DAS false economy

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to a letter in the last Transport Worker from an LE regarding DAS.

With the introduction of DAS, LEs are required to use idle instead of notch 1 (N1), when coasting over undulating country – the total opposite of what was taught to us years ago. Leaving the loco in N1 gives better control of slack and reduces the amount of slack action. These days trains travelling over undulating country in idle are like one big piano accordion.

This new requirement is based on computer modelling and testing the parameters of safe operation. We now have a rash of broken pins and train partings with resulting train delays happening at least once a week or more and any fuel savings are negated.

The negligible amount of fuel saved between idle and N1 is wasted. Even if there was a single train parting in 12 months – let alone the number of train partings the company is experiencing at present. Additionally you have to note the time taken and/or the location where the parting occurs.

For example, recently 222/11 parted with no spare pin or bull hook resulting in a 352 minute (nearly six hours!) delay to 222 and a 62 minute delay to train 216.

Given the proposed quantity of fuel saved since the introduction of DAS, then there also needs to be a look at the cost, lost time and disruption occurring on the network and correlate that to the fuel savings. This would give a truer indication of the savings so far. And if these partings are directly caused by the use of idle then there needs to be a change back to N1 as the partings due to broken pins will be affecting the Company's bottom line and creating additional costs which it can ill afford.

P T Stringer
66252.

A low blow

Dear Editor

I, and a lot of others, are far from impressed with the scribe's trashing of Bob Woodcock in the branch notes (TTW March 2016). The fact that the heroic correspondent waited until Bob was finished before stabbing him in the back says more about him than it does about Mr Woodcock.

I am constantly amused by the Union banging on about fair play and good faith when it doesn't seem to be able to abide by its own standards.

I can well imagine the righteous howls of indignation if the company farewelled a Union official in the same manner.

Ian Rutherford
Team leader
Timaru.

Unfair criticism of roster coordinators

Dear Editor

After reading the latest edition of *The Transport Worker* and in particular page 16 and the Waikato Rail notes:

"Our LEs continue to bust, become fatigued and be abused by these new ideas and interpretations by a couple of roosters within the roster centre."

I am a member of the RMTU and I am also employed in the roster centre as a duty roster coordinator. I certainly am not a "rooster".

I am disgusted and think it is absolutely appalling that a so called RMTU 'Brother or Sister' can launch such an unsubstantiated, misguided tirade on a personal level at fellow members of the RMTU – and furthermore that this article was allowed by the RMTU to be published.

Am I correct in my newly developed perception that we RMTU members in head office are looked upon and treated differently to our other RMTU members in the field?

I always thought we were supposed to be unified: One KiwiRail. Yet comments such as those allowed to be published for all to read will do nothing more than drive a wedge between RMTU members employed

by KiwiRail.

Working toward a One KiwiRail requires us all to work together cohesively to ensure the success of KiwiRail and the continued employment of RMTU members – which in turn secures the survival of the RMTU. Everybody wins.

If the author of this article bothered to take the time to come and sit with we roster staff he/she would see our role is an extremely challenging one and highly pressured. We seldom (by choice) take breaks so as we can closely monitor services on all lines, at all times to provide continued vision of all late running services and reduce LE bust. When LEs do bust we communicate with all stakeholders to ensure the LE gets home to their families in the safest way possible.

There has been a positive increased focus in bust awareness and bust management and communication in more recent times so I fail to understand how these comments can be taken seriously.

Yes we adjust LE rosters. We have to adjust LE rostered jobs to assist with the running of the business thus servicing our customer needs, none of which is carried out outside the parameters set out within the ROM.

I was a proud member of the RMTU and a RMTU delegate. I represented the RMTU as a delegate with the highest level of professionalism.
Clarke Walker.

[We considered not publishing but decided the topic needed discussion - which indeed occurred when the editor was in Auckland recently. An outcome of that discussion can be found in the Editorial. (page 2) - Editor]

Retirements

Dear Editor,

I wish to inform the RMTU of my impending resignation as from 8 April 2016 due to retirement.

Sincere thanks for your support over the years and best wishes for the future.

Pru Bardell

LE, Palmerston North.

Dear Editor

I started with New Zealand Railways on 13 February 1967 at the age of 17. During ▶

Thanks to BoP port branch

Dear RMTU,

Over the school holidays I was fortunate enough to embark on a 10 day voyage aboard the tall ship Spirit of New Zealand as a trainee.

I had a blast.

We sailed and visited many places such as Dispute Cove and Kawau Bay on Kawau Island. From there we headed to Great Barrier Island where we visited Port Fitzroy, Blind Bay, Whangaparapara, Port Abercrombie and Smokehouse Bay. After Great Barrier, we sailed to the Coromandel harbour for a night before tacking our way to Waiheke Island and then slowly heading back to Princess Wharf in Auckland.

Over the course of the 10 days we learnt how to navigate, sail, tack, how to tie all sorts of knots as well as complete a 15km hike to a natural hot spring in Whangaparapara. We cleaned a beach at Blind Bay, had a bonfire at Smokehouse Bay and many other exciting things. The highlights for me were making new friends and climbing to the "Royal" which is the top of the mast.

Going on the Spirit of New Zealand was an amazing experience that I will never forget. The crew and other trainees were amazing, not to mention the food which was so good. I learnt so much in many different areas. The trip wasn't just about learning to sail, it was also learning about others and most importantly myself. I highly recommend it to anyone and everyone.

Thank you to the Bay of Plenty branch of the RMTU for sponsoring me on this extraordinary experience. It would have been very difficult for my parents to manage this without your support.

Kind regards

Hannah Rhodes-Carlin.



service to the company I Lindsay Cameron membership no 66148, tender my resignation from the RMTU effective from 8 of April 2016.

I extend my best wishes to the future of the RMTU and my fellow workers.
Lindsay Cameron.

Dear Editor,

I am writing to inform the RMTU that I have resigned from KiwiRail. My last day being April 1st.

I would like to thank the Union for the support they have given me in my brief time at KiwiRail and I would have no hesitations to re-join if I came back to the rail industry.
Scott McIntyre
No 70697.

Dear Editor

Having accepted the enhanced retirement package my final day was Friday 8 April so I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU.

There have been some huge changes over the years and I am sure there are many challenges yet to be faced.

I have had a really enjoyable 48 years and have had the privilege of working with some great people.

All the best to everyone for the future.
Ray Gutschlag.

Dear Editor

I wish to inform you that as my retirement is 8 April 2016 I would like to resign from the RMTU as of that date and wish you all well and thank you for all who helped me in any way.

I have had a tremendous time working for rail for 49 years and seven months and met so many great people during this time.

In my time the organisation changed its name from New Zealand Government Railway, to New Zealand Railway Corporation, then New Zealand Rail Ltd, followed by Tranz Rail, Toll Rail and last of all KiwiRail. So, a few changes over the years.

Again to you all out there, all the best for your future.

Eric Cairncross,
LE, Palmerston North, 48641.

Dear Editor,

Having accepted the early retirement incentive package with just over 41 years

Dear Editor

As I achieve the milestone of 50 years and 10 days service, I feel it is time to hang up the blueys and retire.

So as all old men do at this stage in their life I reflect on the past 50 years and the enjoyable time I have had in reaching this point.

During this time the wages and conditions that I have enjoyed have been achieved by the Union that I have belonged to – the RMTU and its predecessors (the EF&CA and the LEA).

If there is one message I would pass on to the newer members it is not only to join the RMTU but become an active member, for it has been rightly said that if you all pull together then great things can be achieved.

Reluctantly therefore I would like to resign from the RMTU feeling fully satisfied that its future is in safe hands.

Phil Wagener (teapot)
Palmerston North.

my career I worked in Palmerston North for two years before transferring to Woodville for eight years. In Woodville I sat and passed my second grade LE driver's ticket. I then transferred to Wellington to gain driving experience. During the four years in Wellington I gained my first grade drivers' ticket. I then transferred back to Palmerston North in 1981.

I have been offered a lump sum from KiwiRail so I have decided to retire after 49 years and seven weeks.

I have met a lot of great people and made a lot of really great friends.

I would like to thank Wayne and the team at HQ for their leadership, support and friendship over the years and the work the Union has done to improve our working conditions and overall safety.

I wish you all the best for the future.
R Ngataierua
LE Palmerston North.

Tunnel safety and hi-rail fire protection

WITH the safety focus still on working in tunnels, progress has been made to reduce the harm of hi-rail vehicles (HRV) catching fire.

The hi-rail fire hardening project began following the January 2015 incident where three KiwiRail workers were forced to flee their HRV which was ablaze in tunnel Tawa 1 near Wellington. The workers were working aboard a hydraulically operated elevated work platform and were alerted to the fire after they heard a loud bang and saw flames rising from behind the trunk's cab.

Fortunately the three escaped unharmed however the sobering incident put the spotlight on KiwiRail to do something about fire protection of hi-rail vehicles. Worksafe issued the company an improvement notice to fit automatic fire suppression on the vehicles.

The eventual agreed solution was to retrofit a manual fire suppression unit to HRVs and implement fire hardening solutions such as installing electrical circuit protection, shielding against leaks near thermal or electrical hazards and additional e-stops that shut down the vehicle and isolate the electrical system. Additionally, fire extin-



Karen Fletcher, Todd Valster, Scott Sargent and Andrew Hunt were part of the hi-rail fire hardening project in front of the modified and approved unit.

guishers have been fitted around the vehicle. Other controls include fire response training for workers, procedures and equipment to ensure positive ventilation, work planning and emergency procedures are being developed. All new HRVs will be fitted with automatic fire suppression units. Contractors will also be required to meet

the new standards of fire protection.

Working with the Union

RMTU reps were involved in risk assessments, concept presentations, vehicle design reviews and industrial council briefings. Delegates gave feedback on the practi-



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quality and usability of the fire suppression equipment, including the recommendation to move the 'kill switch' from the front of the fire suppression unit to the side to avoid it being unintentionally activated in the event of a collision or being hit by debris whilst the hi-rail was in use.

KiwiRail breathing protection in tunnels

Kiwi Rail's proposal for new respiratory protection for both freight and I&A people working in tunnels was presented to RMTU freight and I&A delegates over two separate workshops in April.

The current gas masks and filters are not fit for purpose in a fire situation where there is a low oxygen environment. In an emergency evacuation situation workers will have access to self contained self rescuers (SCSR) which provide an oxygen supply for up to an hour.

Walk out trials showed workers could walk up to 2280 metres with the SCSRs quite comfortably. In longer tunnels, over 2280 metres, workers will be provided with compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA). Those tunnels include Rimutaka, Kaimai, Otira, Tawa 2 and Lyttelton tunnels. The installation of CABA refill stations are required at intervals throughout the tunnels for evacuees to refill their cylinders as they exit. The due date for the implementation of the CABA system is June 2017.

Next steps include CABA trials, risk assessment, location of CABA in cabs and HRVs and consultation with the industrial councils. 🌐

Dunedin picket gets quick results



THE RMTU found itself embroiled in a short sharp dispute in March with Dunedin Railways, as Taieri Gorge Railways is now known.

We had a member who ran foul of a couple of managers and found herself being investigated for alleged misconduct after she filed an incident report and passed this on to her RMTU health and safety representative. The incident report concerned a perceived irregularity in logging radio traffic during a track occupancy incident in the Gorge.

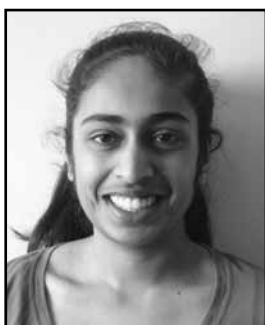
What made the whole affair even more bizarre was that the RMTU has enjoyed first class relations with Dunedin Railways for years – personal grievances and disputes have been non-existent and we have negotiated successive collective agreements with little or no difficulty.

The Otago rail branch quickly mobilised

and mounted a publicity picket in support of our member. This was supported by Unions Otago, including the PSA, Dairy Workers' Union, Unite, Etu, NZEI, MUNZ and NZNO. Political allies including the Alliance and International Socialists were also present. There was coverage in the Otago Daily Times, on TV3, Dunedin Television, Radio New Zealand and commercial radio. After all it's not every day there is a protest outside Dunedin's iconic railway station. Management quickly understood this was a very sensitive issue and sensibly dropped disciplinary proceedings.

Since then we've been back around the table to rebuild what has been a very productive relationship with a great little railway.

Thank you to all members who supported the action and to our comrades in other unions and amongst the public. 🌐



Ernest William File

The EWF scholars for 2016 are
(l) Adrina Venayagam and Sinny Wei. We wish them every success in their studies.



Christchurch meeting



(l to r) Ian Stewart, Jo Carr, Alistair Cumming, Mike Williams and Ian Walker.

Just Fair Culture Training

TRAINING for implementing a Just Fair Culture at KiwiRail was rolled out across the country in March and April. The first round of training was delivered to 200 RMTU delegates, health and safety reps and managers. The objective of the programme is to improve the safety culture by having a consistent process that investigates (and addresses) how unsafe systems lead to unsafe work practices.

The Just Fair Culture Safety and Response Guide gives delegates and managers a process for addressing a safety incident.

The investigators start from the incident and work backwards to identify the system contributors which led to the incident.

Unsafe systems include lack of training, inadequate work planning, faulty or missing equipment, competing work priorities etc.

Once the system failures are identified they must be dealt with using risk management.

"Automatically blaming the worker for a safety incident is not acceptable under a Just Fair Culture," says RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher. "The systemic safety issues have to be looked at first."

The second part of the Just Fair Culture guide focuses on the behaviour of the person/people involved. The flow chart guides management on how to respond to a person's unsafe behaviour. The response guide ranges from supporting and coaching the worker (where there was human error and systemic failings); through to disciplinary action if a person's actions were wilfully reckless.



Auckland meeting

The programme applies to all workers in KiwiRail with the aim of driving better safety accountability at all levels of the organisation, from the ballast to the boardroom.

More training will be scheduled for later in the year. 🌐



Waikato meeting

Lesson well learnt - a salutary tale of an unreported 'knock'

DURING what should have been a routine movement at Westland Milk in Hokitika in early March two of our members experienced what they variously described as a 'hard hook on' or 'hard knock on'.

It was early in the morning and the rain was teeming down, rail operator and RMTU branch president Ian Coates had a quick look at the rolling stock involved and, given that nothing appeared amiss, thought that was the end of the matter.

This was far from the case. A month later Ian and his LE that day, Paddy Wakefield, were fighting for their jobs.

There was damage to the rolling stock and it wasn't a 'hard knock on', or routine coupling – it was a collision. By not reporting it Ian and Paddy were staring down the barrel of dismissal.

"I didn't think it was too much out of the ordinary," said Ian. "I was stood on the loco at the head of the movement, there was a bit of a jolt, and my glasses came off my nose. Paddy and I found my glasses and had a good look at the wagon and couldn't see anything wrong, so we assumed that we didn't have to report it and carried on and finished our shift."

A couple of days later their manager asked Ian and Paddy to provide statements as the wagon was damaged and there was photographic evidence to prove it.

"We were flabbergasted," said Paddy. "I've been an LE for 37 years. I'm a minder driver and I take safety seriously. There is no way I'd knowingly let a damaged piece of rolling stock out on the network. That morning we got it wrong. We should have reported what happened. We didn't mean to pull the wool over anyone's eyes, we just didn't fully appreciate what happened."

By the time KiwiRail's Zero Harm Investigator sat down with Ian and Paddy and their RMTU delegates Bob Broadhurst and Mike Morgan, as well as branch secretary Fred Miles, there was more information to hand.

The speed of the loco at the time of impact was 14 km/h and there had been no radio communication between Ian and

Paddy for 82 seconds.

"That shook me," said Ian. "I take pride in being a good talker, so I immediately challenged the evidence, after all, we have had problems with radios in wet weather. Zero Harm had all the records there though. There was plenty of radio traffic after the collision, so the radios weren't malfunctioning."

It was clear that both Paddy and Ian had lost track of time and breached what can be a lifesaving rule – the ten second maximum radio silence.

"In addition we were going too fast," said Paddy. "it was explained how these wagons are designed to withstand an impact of up to 7.5 km/h, we were doing twice that speed."

RMTU organiser John Kerr witnessed both the interviews: "Both the lads were genuinely shocked by what the Tranzlog and the radio communications record showed them. There was no way they took a decision to cover something up that morning. As far as they were concerned no one was hurt, there was no damage, it was a routine, if hard, coupling. Boy, did they get that wrong!"

RMTU Southern Rail NMC representative Mike Williams and Christchurch based LE takes up the story: "The regional manager became involved at that point. Quite rightly he wanted to know what happened that day. That's serious because he has the delegation to dismiss and we've had people leave KiwiRail in the recent past for failing to report safety critical incidents. Both Paddy and Ian were faced with the prospect of losing their livelihoods with all the attendant upset and drama."

Ian and Paddy were suspended pending the completion of the investigation which because of the seriousness of the incident and KiwiRail's obligations to provide and maintain a safe work environment included a re-enactment. All this added to the stress they were under. Meanwhile the RMTU was arguing that they had genuinely, but wrongly, thought there was no requirement to report the incident.

Paddy describes what he was going

through: "I was facing the end of my career in rail in New Zealand and having to emigrate with my family to look for work overseas. Believe me, you don't want to go there. You stop sleeping. It puts enormous pressure on family life and all over a shunting incident!"


The branch rallied in support of Paddy and Ian and the bush telegraph was humming over the hill in Christchurch as well.

"We'd just applied the finishing touches to the Just and Fair Culture policy and training with KiwiRail," said John Kerr, "so we were keen to apply the principles therein, namely that people shouldn't get pilloried for genuine mistakes. If you deliberately cover something up, and are therefore misleading and deceitful, you're toast. We didn't see that this was the case here and we argued that strongly."

KR management reached the decision that on the day staff mistakenly believed their actions to be justified, that it wasn't their intention to cause unjustifiable harm, but they made an at risk choice as opposed to a reckless choice. As a result, Kiwirail management considered what would the consequences have been if they had reported the incident immediately. This then determined the company's response for the outcome decision.

KiwiRail also accepted that neither Ian nor Paddy had set out to conceal rules breaches or a collision.

They both received final written warnings but kept their jobs.

They are both clear about one thing, and want all members to take it to heart: "If you have the slightest doubt over reporting an incident then play safe – just report it. No one has been sacked in recent years for putting up their hand and reporting stuff. If we don't report incidents the risk is damaged equipment, rolling stock or track goes unnoticed and a tragedy happens down the line," says Paddy. Ian adds: "The RMTU were fighting tooth and nail for me and Paddy, we had to get past the fact we'd not told anyone what happened that morning, and all that could have been avoided if we'd simply reported it." 

Is Labour on to something?

The 'Future of Work' conference and stuff to worry about

AS reported in *The Activist* the Labour Party convened a conference just before Easter on this topic. As an affiliate union, the RMTU was one of the sponsors and our national vice president Howard Phillips attended along with Auckland organiser Stu Johnstone and South Island organiser John Kerr.

Whilst the media focused on the idea of a universal basic income, the premise behind the Conference was the challenge posed by the accelerating technological revolution and the impact this is having, and will have, on the world of work. The big question that wasn't explicitly posed was whether the current economic system will be able to survive the changes that are already happening.

Keynote speakers included president Clinton's former secretary of labour Robert Reich, British academic Guy Standing – author of two books on the "precariat", the casualised workforce of modern capitalism – and Swedish engineer Goran Roos.

Standing was the speaker who focused on the social and political impact of technological and economic change. His most arresting phrase was simply this: 'the pitchforks are coming'. Growing inequality and a more precariously employed workforce has already seen more extreme politics enter the mainstream, and there's more to come. The terms 'fascism' and 'socialism' are now part of the discourse in the US presidential race; Marine Le Pen and the extreme right wing Front Nationale are poised to make an impact in French politics; the far right is in positions of power in Austria and Poland; the left in Portugal, Spain and Greece has entered government with varying degrees of success. In Britain, Labour has a genuine social democratic leader for the first time in a generation and the European Union is bracing itself for a potential crisis in the wake of the British referendum on 'Brexit'.

One of the reasons for this lurch to the extremes is the broken economic model of applied neo-liberalism and its attendant crises combined with technological change that threatens to destroy up to half of all current jobs in the next couple of decades.



John Kerr and Labour leader Andrew Little.

This isn't make believe. Driverless cars (and trains, straddles and trucks) are possible now. There is software with artificial intelligence that can read legal documents, rendering legal executives redundant, in use already. Goran Roos described how the next wave of automation will hollow out a huge number of white collar middle class jobs. The barristers and neuro-surgeons will still be in demand, as will the cleaners and road workers. It's the teachers, pilots, drivers, administrative and retail workers that will go.

More power to the rich

All the evidence thus far is that the resulting growth in inequality will have a proportional negative impact on democratic participation. In plain English, fewer people voting, less support for mainstream parties and more power concentrated in the hands of the rich global elites.

In New Zealand, and especially in the industries the RMTU organises in, we are very vulnerable to this. One brake on the change will be that the small scale of our economy may not make the introduction of the new technology economic – for a while. This is true of some of our ports for example.

Another factor is the chronic lack of investment in rail – we're still driving 40 year old locos so perhaps we shouldn't over worry about state of the art driverless trains and signless track just yet. It is coming though. Perhaps not quite in the working life of our members in their 50s, but certainly in the working lives of the next generation.

Labour has to be credited with starting the debate in mainstream New Zealand politics on this issue but sadly it doesn't appear to be gaining much attention. The failure of the mainstream media and the shockingly poor state of the journalism in this country is only part of the reason for this. The Greens get it, although their focus is understandably, and quite logically, on climate change. But, aside from them, no other major party is interested. There will be individuals in National who understand the import of what is happening. Rich New Zealanders rub shoulders with the global elites who have been warned about the potential upheavals at gatherings like Davos, but the majority of National and NZ First voters are in that very group that stands to be hit hardest by the great 'hollowing out' of the middle – and their representatives don't want to know.

So what has Labour come up with?

There were ten so called 'big ideas' floated at the conference. Some of these focused on supporting research and development in business; making technology more accessible ('digital equality'); increasing worker participation in decision making ('High Performance High Engagement' gets a mention); and others on the transition from relatively secure employment to one in which work will be even more precarious. There is discussion of the Danish 'flexicurity' model – where benefits are relatively generous in order to foster economic security while re-training and further education throughout one's working life. This overlaps with the notion of the universal basic income – the idea that all people are paid a 'social wage', regardless of their employment status, that is enough to provide the basics to live on.

Listening to all this it was hard not to feel disappointed at the lack of boldness in the ideas being discussed. Robert Reich arguably described the challenge we faced in the most vivid terms – and he was only mildly exaggerating – when he said: "very soon, I will have in the palm of my hand an 'I Everything', that will be able to produce, to order, anything I want from a steak cooked medium rare to a driverless car, the problem will be that very few of us will be able to afford these things because we won't have jobs". To hear it put in such terms and then read about grants for 'business clusters' does leave one a bit cold.

Faced with such a challenge one is reminded of the slogans of the revolutionaries of 1968: 'Be reasonable – demand the impossible' and 'All power to the imagination'. We are arguably facing a one in 500 year event akin, and perhaps greater in impact, to the introduction of the printing press. For the sake of our members under 30, and ours and their children, we need a political movement that is prepared to be that bold. 🌐

Further reading:

Labour's Future of Work Commission:
<http://www.futureofwork.nz/>
 Goran Roos' submission:
<http://bit.ly/251qYb1>
 Guy Standing's presentation:
<http://bit.ly/25cS2b1>
 More from Standing here:
<http://bit.ly/1UCeWCv>

Highlands unity



(l to r) Barry Simpkins (RMTU), Dave Calfe (ASLEF), Wayne Butson (RMTU), Mick Whelan (ASLEF), Bob Hayden and Keith McMahon (RTBU).

I was privileged and honoured to be invited to attend the ASLEF (The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Fireman's Union) conference with general secretary Wayne Butson. This year's conference was held in the Highlands of Scotland in the small town of Aviemore – chosen not just because of its beauty, but also ASLEF have a policy of sharing conference venues around the UK so as to support struggling communities and local economies with much needed cash injections.

ASLEF was formed in 1880 and it has been organising and supporting its members ever since. It has over 18,500 members from depots all over the United Kingdom and has coverage for its members with 33 companies.

We attended the conference over a three day period and were lucky enough to witness a tradition of ceremony and debate over a wide range of topics from rule changes to industrial relation conditions and political topics such as whether the UK should remain in or exit the European Union. A true craft union in action.

It was good to see unionism and democracy in its purist form with delegates engaged in truly passionate debate.

We listened to guest speakers such as Andy McDonald, the shadow minister of

rail, the Australian contingent of NSW Rail, Bus and Tramway Union secretary Bob Hayden and H&S delegate Keith McMahon. All in all it was an enjoyable experience attending such a conference. Issues that affect locomotive engineers are the same the world over including contract conditions, job security and safety concerns.

Freight drivers seem to be falling on hard times in the UK with the down turn in coal and steel production affecting job security just as it is in our part of the world. It seems to be a worldwide trend and of real concern to the working man/woman in associated industries.

Wayne made us proud as always with a fantastic speech. Our visit to the conference was rounded off with the presentation of a gift to our hosts of a manaia (a spiritual guardian/guide). This gift symbolised a spiritual connection between the RMTU and ASLEF and was received by Mick Whelan the general secretary on behalf of ASLEF.

This was a fantastic opportunity to meet fellow drivers and unionists from other parts of the world and well worth the effort of enduring a 24 hour flight and nine hours on a train one way. 🌐

- Barry Simpkins, NMC core rail rep northern.

We must get smarter - globally

WE had the privilege of representing our Union at the Maritime Union of Australia's quadrennial conference (29/2/2016 - 4/3/2016). Attending were Howard Phillips (RMTU vice president), Andy Kelly (South Island ports rep) and myself, David Marden (NMC North Island rep).

The programme was full-on with a large international presence including RMT (UK), ILWU, ILU, MUNZ and two dockers from Cuba – a bit of an international breakthrough. Several railway unions were also represented including from India (AIRF) and the RTBU – some 35 plus representative groups. There were also a large number of youth members who provided some great entertainment. The important part though is that the union movement has a strong future.

Without doubt, the main theme for the conference was solidarity. It is the global message for all unions. A highlight, during the conference was the announcement that the MUA and the CFMEU (Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union) were merging. MUA with around 14,000 members and CFMEU with around 84,000. The Textile Workers Union were also in talks to combine.

The power these mergers will bring to their membership will be formidable. The announcement provoked a strong response in the Australian media. History shows that the MUA and CFMEU have always had a strong relationship especially at the time of the Patricks Dispute of 1998.

All this providing some angst to the Turnbull Liberal Government which is trying to undermine Australian unions by way of a commission of inquiry. Spinning all kinds of b/s, being invasive and bugging (phones) good union people, threats of imprisonment are also part of this attack.

What also was apparent is the ability of the Australian Liberal Government to turn its back on its own working people. From a maritime perspective, the loss of coastal shipping and their Australian crews to foreign vessels which has seen the decimation of coastal shipping. This is our sovereignty under threat: Our right to work our own



National vice president, Howard Phillips addresses the MUA conference with Paddy Crumlin.

ships within our coastal waters with unionised people. It is indicative of how the global corporate world is putting their antisocial, greedy fingers to the backs of self-serving Tory politicians of the same mind, massaging them for bad laws that work against their own citizens. Bad laws need to be broken.

The Jones Act (USA), deals with cabotage. This Act protects coastal waters, sea-bound freight around the USA, enabling American maritime workers to be protected by law. This concept should be embraced wherever a country has the abilities to maintain its own coastal shipping.

A couple of examples of how Australian sea farers have lost their jobs on vessels: The Portland, an ore vessel, where the crew were removed forcibly early in the morning by 30 odd security guards and left sitting on the wharf as the ship pulled away with foreign crews. Similarly the OCL Melbourne, where police were deployed to remove the crew.


Over the course of the conference we also learnt how the MUA has assisted exposing Chevron for tax evasion to the tune of over \$A200,000,000. This is a global problem with links to NZ. We now see global corporates and multinationals manipulating copious amounts of tax dollars via endless false accounting trails. In simple terms, fraud and greed.

High on the agenda too is for unions to make gains into the Australian Labour

Party. Get back to the roots of Labour philosophies. Put people into Government that stick to labour values, even promoting union members who are politically motivated to stand. In essence, redeveloping the Party and what 'Labour' means and stands for.

Accounts were also delivered on the attacks on the MUA from many of the terminal operators, most of which operate globally. Disputes with Patricks, Hutchinsons, Qube (ISO owners) DP World, Chevron, to name a few. To date there have been positive outcomes. Hutchinsons texted over 100 of its employees at around 3am to tell them they were no longer required. There has been a turnaround by Hutchinsons since, with most staff being re-instated. Part of the MUA's strategy targeted Vodaphone as it is half owned by Hutchinsons. This had a huge impact on the outcome.

In summary, this was an opportunity, a learning exercise, engaging in a union conference that had global participation. There can be no isolation in our struggle with corporate greed and deception. Unions must work together globally to combat today's reality of increasing divisions between the have and have-nots in a world where rules and laws are created to enable the wealthy. We must communicate, be smart, active and maintain our vigilance on the global front line.

United we stand. In solidarity we shall prevail, it can be nothing less! 

Kevin Tasker – 53 years in rail

KEVIN TASKER started out in rail as a locomotive trainee in March 1960 and spent his whole working life out of the Napier locomotive depot driving between Palmerston North and Gisborne.

He fired steam locomotives until the transition to diesel in 1967 and was five years driving shunts on the "C" roster followed by 10 years on the

the last three years before finally retiring for good.

He has had a wonderful career working with some great characters and mates down through the years.

In the words of Bob Dylan: "Take care of your memories, you cannot relive them." But Kevin did, he never thought that he would drive a KA up through Ormondville again or take a WAB through to Gisborne.



Kim Santer, Kevin, Wayne Kempton and Dave Murdoch.

"B" roster and finally up onto the "A" roster in 1987.

After sitting the steam examination under the Marine Department in 1998, he was really happy to be back on steam locomotives again. Kevin officially retired in 2008 but was asked to come back and drive the steam specials as all the old steam drivers had long since retired.

Because of the shortage of staff in the Napier area at the time, he was asked to come back on the roster for one day a fortnight which he did for

when the Employment Contracts Act came in, in 1991 ripping away workers' rights which bred disillusionment and cynicism instead of creating a sense of unity and loyalty.

Although progress and the corporate politics of change had altered the course of the job, he never regretted a day of it, working by the philosophy that every trip is an adventure.

His first time firing was as a 17-year-old was on AB 832 and his last run home to Napier (72) was on DL9515 – the end of a great career. 🚂

Delegate awards Christchurch



Darryl Haines and Aubrey Wilkinson.



Ian Dixon and Aubrey Wilkinson.



Heiner Benecke and John Kerr.

HPHE in action at Hutt Workshops



Back row: Strachan Crang, Josh Davies, Glen Dale, Kasia Kurene, Alan Ujka, Allan Cameron, Geoff Ham, Kyle Hand, Garrett Cunningham, Steve Davidson.

Middle row: Clive Cooper-Smith, Steve Rich, Karl Bouterey, Gerard Mulbolland (partly hidden), Warren Mueller, Ajeswar Prasad, Matt Cordell-Bain, Terry Duffy, Fungayi Gwete, Phil Bosworth, Peter Venn, Peter Peteru, Les Hill, Ray Hagenaaars, Jago Collier, Chris Theelen, Alastair Horsfield.

Front row: Mike Thomas, Radu Borsaru, Paul Drummond, Myles Carter, Amit Acharya, Kurt Millikin, Andrew Shipp, Jason Kinsey.

Absent: Grant Cunningham

ANZAC Day Ceremony – Petone

(From a speech by Alex Claassens, secretary NSW, Rail Tram and Bus Union.)

IT'S an honour to be here for this historic commemoration. The story of the flagpoles at Petone and Hornsby in New South Wales and the exchange of flags between the Australian and New Zealand rail workers is a touching and powerful reminder of the comradeship between our two countries, and of the comradeship between rail workers across the world.

Today, 100 years on, it's hard for us to

comprehend the horror of World War One and how life was turned upside down.

Although half a world away, its impact on Australia and New Zealand was profound.

The trip from the railways in Australia and New Zealand, to the front line of battlefields in Europe and the Middle East, was taken by thousands of people – mostly young men – with their lives still in front of them.

People like railway clerks George Downes and Arthur Cook and Sydney Central Station porter Henry Lowe all signed up in Sydney in September 1914.

These three men served at Gallipoli and other battlefields and were among the lucky ones who returned home.

They brought back stories and pictures of the reality of war and now the images they took form an important part of our historical record in the Australian National Archives.

Rail workers key people

Railway workers were also integral to the war effort at home, moving vast numbers of troops and enormous quantities of supplies.





The Passchendaele commemorative steam locomotive pulls into Petone Station stopping beside its land-based plaque brought especially to the station for the ceremony. (below and left) Crowds gathered in the early morning to watch the flag fly, hear the mournful pipes and bugle and listen to tributes to the fallen. Pictured is Alex Claassens from Australia.



Of course, many railway workers were not as lucky as Downes, Cook and Lowe.

Here in Petone, for example, ten fine men from the railway workshops went to war and didn't come back.

So it is that days like today give us a chance to come together and reflect on the lives lost and the sacrifices of so many.

To think about the bravery of the people who left to join the war and the courage of those left behind to carry without their loved ones.

On ANZAC Day we gather in across

Australia and New Zealand to remember and to pay homage and our respect.

But these days are also a chance for us to appreciate what we have today.

The wonderful communities that our forefathers built for us and the values they instilled in us.

In the union movement we carry those values of fairness, opportunity, compassion and unity. They guide and inspire us.

Those railway workers who fought in WWI from Hornsby and Petone also lived and breathed those values.

We have a duty to live our lives with the same sense of duty and commitment to justice.

Over the past 100 years the bonds between our two countries have grown tighter and we enjoy our friendly rivalries on the sporting field, almost as much as Australians enjoy drinking a glass of New Zealand wine.

But on ANZAC Day we reflect on a wonderful, enduring friendship forged in blood.

While ANZAC Day is a somber occasion, it is also a beautiful celebration of solidarity. 🌐

Workers' Memorial

Hamilton



Hutt Workshops



Christchurch



Dunedin



Day

Bay of Plenty



Palmerston North



Workers' Memorial Day is always an important day in the rail which for some carries sad memories. This year Rupert Yalden and his daughter Sheryl Cruden (pictured above) joined members at the Palmerston North commemoration. Rupert lost his son Bruce Yalden 35 years ago in a rail incident in New Plymouth. Their presence was appreciated by everyone.

Napier



(Excerpts from general secretary Wayne Butson's speech on Workers' Memorial Day at the Bay of Plenty commemoration.)

"This service is a memorial to the workers who have fallen on the workplace struggle field both in New Zealand and throughout the world. . . International Workers' Memorial Day is becoming of ever greater significance to communities everywhere.

"There is no denying that decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in improvements in basic working conditions. "The international theme for Workers' Memorial Day 2016 is Strong laws, strong enforcement, strong unions. You could say that these are the three pillars for improved workplace safety.

"Every year more people are killed globally at work than in wars. Most don't die of mystery ailments or in tragic accidents. Instead they die because an employer decided their safety just wasn't an important priority.

"By attending today you are part of a global movement for improving workplace H&S. We remember those who have been killed, diseased or disabled on the workplace battlefield and it is fitting that we should especially have within our hearts and minds the memory of the Pike 29 and of others who died needless deaths in the forestry and other high hazard industries.

"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 and many other unions have called for the New Zealand Government to ban the importation of asbestos in all its forms. The Government needs to end the needless importation of this silent and toxic killer. Lung cancer should be registered and recorded in more detail to enable accurate linkage between exposure to asbestos and lung cancer. The National Asbestos Registers should be reinvigorated and improved including by making their use compulsory.

"I along with many others welcome into law the Health and Safety at Work Act 2016 which is aimed at cutting workplace death and injuries by 25 percent in the next seven years. The Act introduces harsher penalties for employers who put workers' lives at risk and 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 run through workplaces for too many years.

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

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

"Management, managers and regulators alone cannot and will not make our workplaces safe! Unions, workers and regulators alone cannot and will not make our workplaces safe! We can only do it by working actively together. 🌐

**Strong
laws,
strong
enforcement,
strong
UNIONS!**

Help these railway twins to hear

MY name is Allan McLiskey, RMTU member 3300140, working for Toll Invercargill.

My wife, Maggie, and I have twin boys – Thomas and Ryan – who were born profoundly deaf. At the age of three they received their first cochlear implant in one ear paid for by the Ministry of Health.

The implant is a surgically implanted electronic device which bypasses the normal hearing process. A microphone and some electronics reside outside the skin which transmits a signal to an array of electrodes placed in the cochlea.

It was not until they received the first implant that they learnt to listen and talk.

In early March this year we paid for Thomas and Ryan to be assessed and they have been approved for a second cochlear implant enabling them to hear in both ears. Unfortunately a second implant is not funded by the Ministry of Health.

The price of a cochlear implant system and operation is \$45,150 each and no one will proceed with the operation until we have the funds to pay.

We know the cost is very high, but the benefits of a second implant to the two boys well and truly outweighs their cost.

The implants will do wonders with their education and self-esteem.

We are looking to raise around \$100,000 to cover the cost of



the operations and allied costs such as transport and upgrades.

You will be aware that a rail salary doesn't leave a lot to spare – and certainly not of this magnitude. Which is why we are appealing to you to maybe contribute a little towards our children's future.

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

The McLiskey's have created a give-a-little page where you can make a donation at:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/ears-4-mcliskey-twins>

(or <http://bit.ly/1h3MrfK>)

Red card used again


TRANSDEV drivers have used the RMTU Just Say NO red card and said NO to coupling (double berthing) EMUs with passengers aboard the train.

Transdev tried to push through the changes without Union consultation and were met with a resounding NO from LEs who are concerned about the risk of harm to passengers.

LEs are worried that passengers will slip and fall during the coupling (controlled collision). In Wellington, TranzMetro services do not couple with passengers on board multiple units for safety reasons.

RMTU delegates met with Transdev to try and resolve the issue as well as work out a process for better consultation with the Union. Transdev agreed to start the consultation process again, including a new risk assessment and trial.

RMTU delegates will meet with Age Concern and disability groups to discuss the issue of passenger safety and to invite them to be part of any trials of the new coupling process. The LEs are not willing to introduce the process if the public are going to be hurt saying it is not worth the gains made to timetabling.

In addition, Transdev and the RMTU have agreed the current risk management standard NRSS4 is not up to scratch and doesn't reflect the new Health and Safety at Work Act so will be working together to update the risk management tool. 



Loco engineers Stewart Gratton and Mike McLaughlan

PTSD – Be trauma aware

ERIC (GOLDIE) OLSON began working in rail in 1974. In 1980 he was awarded his locomotive engineer's ticket and drove locos for well over a decade before he was involved in his first level crossing accident in 1992, resulting in the deaths of two adults and two children.

Following this Goldie started experiencing symptoms such as nightmares and flashbacks. He received no treatment and was back at work after the mandatory three-day stand-down period.

In January 1995 Goldie was involved in a second level crossing accident resulting in the death of the car driver. Again, despite renewed symptoms, Goldie went back to work after three days. Again, no treatment was given to him. His symptoms persisted but he did not talk to anyone about these; he was 'old school' and felt that 'blokes just get on with it'.

In August 2003 Goldie experienced a resurgence in symptoms after he saw children 'playing chicken' in front of his oncoming train. This happened on three or four occasions before he sought help under the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Goldie was referred to a psychologist, but unfortunately did not find the sessions helpful. He was not offered any form of treatment targeted at Goldie's symptoms and did not provide any diagnosis. Feeling lost, he decided he needed some time away to recover. He and his family went abroad for some six months, returning in 2004 when he resumed his role as an LE.

In the summer of 2005 he was involved in a third fatal level crossing accident which brought the symptoms right back to the surface. He sought assistance once more via EAP, and this time was referred to a counsellor. Again though, Goldie derived no benefit from the sessions. Whilst the counsellor was a 'lovely lady', he felt she was 'out of her depth' and her input was limited to common sentiments such as 'it wasn't your fault'. Goldie felt there was nothing to be gained from these sessions and had no option but to simply try and move on.

Over the years Goldie's symptoms waxed and waned, but never disappeared entirely. If he heard about any accidents,

the scenes from the first accident would replay in his mind. He could almost see it, and even hear the sound of the LE's brakes and the impact. Sometimes he would experience panic attacks: difficulty breathing, uncontrollable crying, shaking and heart palpitations.

Goldie would try to deal with his symptoms in different ways. Sometimes he would hit himself across the face to try and 'snap out of it'. Other times he would open the window of his train and stick his head out, to get fresh air. When this didn't help, he could not do anything other than stop the train and wait for the attack to pass.

Goldie's wife recalls that he was irritable and intolerant of sudden noise or change, for many years. Living with him could be hard with his wife and kids never really knowing what would trigger an angry outburst. Some days they felt like they had to walk on egg shells.

When he was off work, Goldie would sometimes turn to alcohol and drink himself 'into oblivion'. He often had nightmares, and would avoid sleep by sitting up and playing computer games. Overall, he tried not to think about the accidents but, deep down, blamed himself for the fatalities.

Things came to a head in March 2015. Whilst driving through an urban area he saw a group of children running onto the tracks. Two of the children had to drag a third away to prevent him being hit by the train.

This led to a severe breakdown more serious than anything in the past. He was unable to continue driving trains; for a month he could not even travel as a passenger in a car. He went through a phase during which he became totally withdrawn; he did not communicate with anyone, did not make eye contact and was only able to follow very simple instructions such as 'sit up' or 'hold this cup of tea'. He experienced new physical symptoms including tension headaches, neck/chest stiffness and concentration problems.

In June 2015 Goldie's GP finally offered a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This was the first time that he had been given any sort of diagnosis. A claim was lodged with KiwiRail to have this

condition covered under the ACC Act, on the basis that the PTSD was work-related – ie having its origins in the 1992 accident.

To assess the claim, KiwiRail sent Goldie for a review with a psychiatrist. In his report (Aug 2015) the psychiatrist explained:

- Goldie fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for PTSD.
- His exposure to workplace trauma is consistent with the diagnosis of PTSD.
- There is no other factor in Goldie's history that would explain the onset of his condition.


The psychiatrist concluded that the initial accident in 1992 caused the PTSD, whilst the other traumatic incidents would have perpetuated that condition.

Despite the psychiatrist's clearly supportive report, KiwiRail chose to decline his claim for cover. Goldie, with the support of the RTMU and Hazel Armstrong Law, successfully challenged this decision. Now that his PTSD is covered Goldie is able to access the ongoing financial and rehabilitative support he needs. This is made all the more important by the fact that Goldie was medically retired from KiwiRail in Nov 2015.

Goldie has since undergone several sessions with a new psychologist focused specifically on understanding and dealing with his PTSD. Thankfully, they have seen his condition improve significantly. He says that he is now able to enjoy life again – at least, most of the time.

Goldie's story is an important one for all LEs as they are exposed daily to the risk of extremely traumatic accidents; unfortunately, level-crossing fatalities continue to be commonplace among the news headlines.

If Goldie's PTSD had been diagnosed and treated earlier there is every chance his symptoms may not have persisted and he may even still be driving trains.

The RMTU urges any members having difficulties after a traumatic incidents to seek help as soon as possible. Seeing your GP and/or seeking assistance through EAP is a good start. However, if this doesn't lead to improvement be sure to let either the company or the Union know. Effective, timely treatment can be crucial in avoiding long-term symptoms. 

NORTHLAND RAIL

OUR freight members complain about the ever-shrinking Whangarei loco branch which is still battling on thanks to the long-term-loan of one of the boys from Westfield. Things are looking grim in the North with the company hell bent on streamlining [aka minimising] their operations north of Auckland, despite potential untapped tonnage from both new and existing customers. The plan to cut two return services in half (or more specifically replace half of each service with a rental car, leaving only one train up and one train down) will greatly reduce our ability to deal with seasonal peaks and other fluctuations in as well as castrate any potential future growth on the line. Combined with the likely closure, err, make that cessation, of services on the Kauri-Otiria section of the NAL (we're told the line will most definitely be remaining open despite there being no trains running on it) and it's easy to see why people feel that the end is nigh.

winter is upon us and if you ever needed reminding of the thinning of the herd (restructures) that we have endured in recent times, now is the season that it is highlighted the most.

Colds and flu affect our minimal front-line workforce as we take time off to take care of sick kids, spouses or ourselves.

Anyone who is part of these highly productive two-man gangs knows the strain this places on those trying to carry out their jobs in the safest manner. So we need to keep reminding each other that if the job doesn't feel safe, don't do it.

The Grow Northland Rail campaign is the mastermind of our Northland rail branch chairman Alby Barr. Through his vast network of contacts he rallied pro-rail citizens in Northland and set up this vehicle to champion our railway. Strong support for rail in Northland was evident when a huge turnout of just shy of 500 people turned up on a Monday night in early April.

Me a n - while our infrastructure members report that

Some solid speeches and opinions by MPs and guests were shared. Our own general secretary Wayne Butson held centre court as one of three panelists critiquing the rhetoric. As usual at such forums Wayne was well received, getting the biggest cheer of the evening when he said: "I don't know why anyone in this town votes National."

The only gripe Barr had of this highly successful forum, was he was pictured in the local newspaper wearing a suit and shaking hands with a local Tory toff. Alby was heard saying "Who the f@#* are you? and hurry up and get the photo you want ya ponce. I have a show to MC."

The campaign is really building momentum. The public support for rail up here is a political football and is causing the National-led Government nightmares, especially with Winston Peters circling like a vulture ready to pick off the hapless local National MP Shane Reti, who was, as expected terrible at the forum. (See story and pics page 28.)

Yet again, I read that another logging truck has rolled in Northland, the sixth in six weeks. Judging by the statistics, it seems only a matter of time before someone gets



WHERE ARE YOU?

Problems may be looming and we'll need to contact you quickly. Please check we have your correct address and contact details.

<http://bit.ly/exmEyL> or 04-499-2066

killed. Where was the forward thinking all those years ago when they knew the forest timber was coming and would have to get to port. Short sighted thinking by road crazy councillors on the regional transport committee has created this perfect storm, which sees people travelling Northland roads feeling terrorised by the convoys of monster logging trucks. If these halfwits hadn't been suffering 'road mad' tunnel vision we would have in place the rail link to NorthPort, and a mixed mode of rail and road transport to get logs to the shipping freighters.

Grim truck-related crash stats recently shows no signs of dropping. In 2014, trucks were involved in 23% of road fatalities in New Zealand, a total of 67 lives. Of those, only 13 were truck occupants, 54 were other road users. In that year there were also 772 injuries.

Not only are people suffering, so are the roads. Road damage caused by heavy trucks, based on US research, amounts to 9,600 car equivalents. In 2009, according to



Steven Joyce, \$400 million was required for road repairs because of damage caused by heavy trucks. That figure would presently be around \$640 million. Road user charges from heavy trucks do not go anywhere near to covering this. If they were made to pull their weight and pay for the damage, we'd probably see rail freight being far more competitive than it is at present, and as a result, fewer trucks on the roads.

Already, the closure of Port Whangarei, with its direct rail link, has meant that

700,000 tonnes of rail freight per year is now carried by road, resulting in an additional one hundred truck journeys on the road every day for the last ten years. The proposed mothballing of the Otiria to Kauri section of the NAL will put an extra strain on the roading network by the axing log train and adding an estimated 300 log truck trips per week. It may well be that what is now called "a phenomenal spike in road crashes" will become a permanent reality. 🌐

Nest Home Loans and RMTU are providing your financial solutions

Since the launch of Nest's partnership with RMTU, we've fielded an overwhelming response from members. This is great for members and great for RMTU as Nest is committed to supporting RMTU with \$200 donated for every member who gets a Nest mortgage.

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HUTT WORKSHOPS

WE once again find ourselves at the halfway point of what is another busy year. Our order book is full for the next two years in fact with even more business on the horizon as our HPHE governance group engages with senior management as they wrestle with both planned and preferred upgrades and improvements to the Hutt facility. Our main building, Plant 1, is awaiting the final two walls to be re-clad and strengthened later in the year.

Events of note since March have been



well attended despite the stiff Wellington breeze on both days. Another 'event' of note was the departure of GM mechanical Clive Cooper-Smith. Clive was, amongst other things, a co-sponsor of the HPHE project and will be missed. Principal HR business partner Paul (I've been everywhere man) Ashton has filled-in in the interim, with Strachan Crang continuing in his facilitator role.

With Clive's departure came a little bit of a management restructure within the executive team with new GGM rolling stock and asset services Roy Sullivan joining us from over the ditch (but hailing from the Mother Country depending how deep you

ANZAC Day and Worker's Memorial Day. (See pages 14 to 17).

Both services were

want to dig into his past). Roy has been to Hutt more than once in recent times and he appears to be very switched-on to the 'mechanical side' of running a railway. We look forward to a more pragmatic approach to service delivery under his stewardship.

At the time of writing, the (KiwiRail) staff survey had just been released for staff to submit their thoughts and comments and I hope all exercised their right to do so!

As you read these notes the May meeting of the MECA negotiating team will have taken place and the outcome(s) fed back to the membership. You may recall *The Activist* #2 detailed the meeting in response to KiwiRail wanting a 'dates and rates roll-over' of the current MECA.

The 'shops' have finally got into the swing of growth-mode with several apprentices recently coming out of their 'time' and



\$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. This is an automatic membership benefit of belonging to the RMTU.

Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year. Please reply on line at ailnz.co.nz/request to have an AIL representative deliver your certificate of coverage and explain the additional insurance coverage available. This is very important to you and your family.

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.



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A.M. Best, one of the oldest and most respected insurance ratings companies, has rated American Income Life as A+ (Superior) for overall Financial Strength (as of 6/15).

becoming mechanical engineers. Another intake of newbies commences in June and several advertised vacancies to fill a void, due to several retirements, have been filled. Additionally, we're still screaming out for heavy fabricators so if you know anyone who is made of the right metal (no pun intended), send them our way!

One of the many outputs from the

HPHE activity has been the identification of initial improvement projects (IIP). They are, as the term implies, improvements that we should be able to progress within our existing budget to make real gains without significant capital investment.

On the safety front, we have achieved another significant milestone with some of our workgroups achieving 14 years LTI

(lost time injury) free. Rumour has it that approaches have been made to senior management to acknowledge this achievement in a more significant manner than in times past so it'll probably be delayed as the corporate people re-write the Service Awards and Recognition Policy to cater for these achievements!

Until next, take care and work safe. 🌐

WELLINGTON RAIL

IN February we held the RMTU transition workshop for members affected by the transition from KiwiRail to Transdev/Hyundai Rotem. This was followed by a stop work meeting in April with three meetings held throughout the day for members to ask questions. It's also important to acknowledge the amazing work from the delegates who have been working extra hard over the past few months to address members' questions and concerns sur-

rounding this process.

In March the branch held a BBQ for the freight depot which was followed by a meeting with a high turnout. In May we held a BBQ for the EMU depot. It was good to catch up with the members in these work sites.

Two days of stage one delegates training was held last month with awesome feedback from the newly trained delegates. The RMTU also now has Campbell Leggett from the Wellington branch on the national

StandUp Youth Union committee. Another one of our delegates, Christine Fisiiohi has also been attending the CTU Women's Council meetings as the RMTU representative. It's great to get the RMTU voice out to a wider union network.

The branch has also been making an effort to have a higher RMTU presence at related events like protests supporting other unions, and social events like Creekfest which has been noticed by other groups and unions. It's good to let other groups know they have our support. 🌐

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.

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

WEST COAST RAIL

THE big events over this side of the hill have been a series of incidents which led to the end of the career of one of our managers and almost cost several of our members their jobs.

One of these is covered in more detail in a separate article (see page 9). For those of who haven't read it, please do so. We had people from the Coast in Christchurch in April attending a joint RMTU-KiwiRail Just and Fair Culture seminar. This approach is a welcome change as it focuses on systemic issues as well as individual behaviour and should, if applied correctly, contribute to us all being safer at work. We have to ensure management are held accountable in applying this and we also have to ensure we are upfront about reporting incidents and damage ourselves, no matter how minor or trivial.

Of course, the big unanswered question over here is that of the future of the Midland Line and the coal route in light of Solid Energy's precarious position. Perhaps by the time you read this we will know more. The uncertainty is excruciating and stymies members' ability to plan for the

future and those of their families. Given the good work our brothers and sisters are doing in Northland to highlight the value of rail to the vitality of New Zealand's regions, perhaps the politicians will realise that the future of our work over here also needs to be assured. We live in hope.

The new Health and Safety at Work Act came into force in early April, a much watered down version of what is needed, and was greeted with a muted reaction on the Coast. The memories of Pike River are still very strong, and will be for years to come. The fact that this National-led Government squandered money on John Keys' flag referendum vanity project while the families of the victims of Pike River go short is nothing short of obscene.

In the meantime, we await developments in the wage rounds in both Toll and KiwiRail. Stay safe and stay strong. 🇳🇿



Simon Price and Donald Hibbs.

CANTERBURY RAIL

AT the time of writing the national media is full of news about the turkey voting for Christmas: in other words, how KiwiRail's board told the Government that the "highest value commercial option" was to shut down the network with the exception of the Wellington and Auckland metro services. It seems that for once the Board played a pretty astute hand of poker and called the National Government's (and their trucking company backers) bluff, because what followed was an acknowledgement that rail will always require some degree of state support. What's more, we now have funding guaranteed for two years instead of one – allowing a slightly more long term view to be taken by management.

The consequences of short term thinking are coming home to roost with a vengeance in Canterbury. A large cohort of our members are at, or will reach, retirement

age in the next 12-18 months. Particularly hard hit is the mechanical side of the business. Last week one of our delegates visited Addington wagon depot where there were two people in the office and two downstairs working on wagons. A retirement and a lost-time injury in the week had reduced an already depleted workforce to that level. We often berate management but this isn't necessarily their fault. It's symptomatic of years of privatisation, asset stripping and the failure to build a political consensus around the future of a vital piece of infrastructure like the national rail network. Perhaps the politicians have finally woken up or are they simply reacting to New Zealand First's populist button pushing?

Waltham depot is being treated for asbestos contamination and the members based there are looking forward to getting back to a sanitised workplace. The disruption caused by the earthquakes seems never ending.

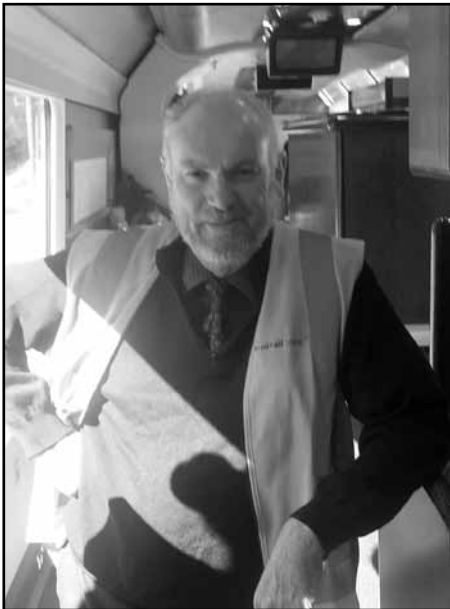
In other news, we're pleased to say that in networks, management has taken an enlightened approach to the issue of contracting out and has kept core work in-house on a number of occasions, most significantly in relation to the replacement of Peruvian sleepers at level crossings. Given the job losses we've endured over the last few years this is the most sensitive of issues for our track members and the one that's guaranteed to get blood pressure levels sky high if we hear of core work being outsourced.

We had a Just and Fair Culture seminar in April, put on by both the RMTU and KiwiRail management. Whilst we were scratching our heads at the presence of some managers who, to our knowledge, are not involved in the investigation of incidents or disciplinary proceedings, and the absence of others who are, the two days were very worthwhile for us as delegates and branch officials.

Regarding investigations, one of the things we really have to work on is maintaining the Just and Fair Culture approach. ▶

It's KiwiRail policy now so the bad old days of 'find a worker and nail him (or her)' after an incident should be a thing of the past. That's only going to happen if we make it happen. For our part it means reporting incidents and being honest, and then delegates holding managers to account and ensuring they follow due process and look at systemic issues as well as behaviour.

Good news from the Freight membership as we hear that Ian Dixon, one of our LEs, has reached the finals of the National Health and Safety Awards in the most influential Employee category for the sterling work he did on fire safety on locos operating in the Otira tunnel. Well done Ian, it's recognition you deserve.



*Train manager Scenic Journeys,
Duncan Brown.*

Scenic Journeys, or whatever they are called these days, seem to have had a good summer season. At long last the accommodation availability in Christchurch seems to have improved which is meaning East Coast tourism is picking up. Our members in that part of the business deserve medals for keeping the quality of service up in very difficult circumstances over the past few years.

Other unsung heroes are our members in the service centre. They don't get much by way of recognition but are there day in day out doing their job and dealing with very demanding customers and all the challenges that the operations membership are also faced with by way of shortages of wagons and locos. Any thought of centralising the service centres in one location needs to be quashed outright. We know what a natural disaster can do down here and why would anyone put all their eggs in one basket?

One sad statistic that needs to be mentioned is the number of suicides by train that have occurred since the beginning of the year. It's a tragedy that people lose all hope and take this way out, and tragic that our members and the emergency services, as well as the families, are left dealing with the consequences. We applaud KiwiRail's initiative to broaden its post incident trauma policy beyond drivers to other staff but question why it took ten days to get one driver counselling after he hit a person in Christchurch last month.

Finally, kia kaha to our members in Toll who, like the KiwiRail membership, are in



Charlotte Miles and Donald Hibbs.

negotiations for the renewal of their collective agreement. We know our strength is in our unity, so all power to you brothers and sisters. 🇳🇿



*Andrew Petrie, an apprentice at
Middleton mechanical.*

LYTTTELTON PORT

STARTING with the good news, our container terminal health and safety representative, Laurie Collins, was nominated by the RMTU for a National Safeguard Award in the 'Most Influential Employee' category.

This was in recognition of him pulling the Red Card during the overtime ban in December 2014 when there was insufficient maintenance cover to ensure a ship could be safely worked.

By the time you read this we will know if Laurie won the award as the presentations are being held in Auckland at the end of May. Whatever happens, congratulations

on making the finals Laurie, it is no more than you deserve.

Continuing the H&S theme, the RMTU and LPC have signed an Employee Participation Agreement and we are going full speed ahead to re-elect H&S representatives in all areas of the port and inland ports. Given the importance of worker participation in this area we are very keen to have the most committed and best trained people in these roles.

The benefits of engaging with the employer are starting to bear fruit in the various consultative bodies we have established. The Area Operational Forum in the maintenance department is working

through a full review of pay rates alongside LPC and Ernst Young's Susan Doughty – some of our rail delegates will remember her from KiwiRail pay talks.

We are hopeful this will provide evidence to justify improvements in pay and conditions in this department.

Members are less happy over in the marine department. A petition expressing no confidence in the manager has been presented to LPC and a complaint alleging unprofessional conduct has been laid by one of our members. At the time of writing, this department is a powder keg and it is set to blow.

Looking beyond the Lyttelton tunnel, the Company's inland port at Rolleston is

◀ due to come on stream in June and we will be working hard to organise the workforce there. We see this as one of the areas where our excellent relationship with the Canterbury rail branch will assist, as a rail line will be going straight into this inland port.

Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel has confirmed she will be standing for another term and whilst a recent insurance settlement appears to have placed further asset sales on hold for now, there is no doubt that this will be a local election issue. Readers will remember that the RMTU made a very

hard hitting submission to the Council on the question of asset sales and the possible hocking off of our port. Should the spectre of privatisation rear its head again be assured this branch will mobilise for a full-blooded community-based campaign.

Looking even further afield, our branch president and South Island ports National Management Committee representative, Andy Kelly, was part of an RMTU delegation to the MUA conference in Australia in February. Andy thoroughly enjoyed the conference and came back inspired by the

MUA's organising approach, particularly their commitment to reaching out to the wider community to apply leverage. Hopefully, we won't need to use such tactics to keep our port public but if we do we know we can.

Finally, and closer to home this time, we are looking for new office premises in Lyttelton. Not an easy task given the impact of the earthquakes on commercial property in the town. Still we have a few leads and are hopeful something will be finalised soon.

Stay safe and stay strong! 🌐

PORT CHALMERS

THE last few months have been a trying period for us. We have lost a brother who passed away suddenly at home, after he had called in sick.

Martin McConnachie is and will be greatly missed. He was always outspoken and would love to share his opinions with us all. Our thoughts still go out to his family and loved ones who have been left behind. We are also mindful of two of our

MUNZ brothers who passed away suddenly, Ken Lewis and Andy

Booten.

We recently held a joint meeting between the rail and port branches which was a good success as it is a good reminder to us that we are not just going it alone in our individual branches but that we are bigger and stronger when we reach out and support each other in our fight for the working people of our union.

We have also been showing our support

to the wider unions in Otago as the fight for proper food in our hospitals continues. Some of our members were at the rally to lend support to the cause.

Workers Memorial Day was held on April 28 and we were able to attend the memorial in Dunedin at the Market Reserve where we remember those who have died at work. Life member Jim Kelly was there and gave a great speech encouraging us all to continue to fight for better health and safety at work to protect our living while we remember those who have passed away. 🌐



Wayne Butson speaks to the combined meeting of members of the Otago port and rail branches.

OTAGO RAIL

WE note that Rebecca has seen fit to try a return to work after some time off to allow her ankle to heal after a roller derby accident. I for one had no idea that this sport could be so rough.

Our yard ute has returned from that place that repairs damaged panels. Quite

soft these new trucks! The road that it travels on through the yard is about to get some much needed attention to remove the potholes, some of which you need 4wd the climb out of.

The LEs have seen fit to ban the DFBs from single manned duties to allow the company time to fix the location of the track warrant boards. For whatever reason,

they were installed towards the ceiling of the cab and are well out of line of sight for the LE. The company had been informed of this oversight and have been a bit tardy in rectifying the problem. Shame that they have to resort to a ban in order to achieve a result.

The low season is upon us in the south and the milk trains are parked up. This should allow those that like an autumn/winter break to have some time off as the

rosters shrink.

The Caversham Tunnel track and drainage work is well under way with the I&A lads doing night shifts to try and get better train-free time.

Speaking of tunnels, good work has been achieved on the risk assessment for the Mihiwaka Tunnel for train stuck freight and passenger. Work is still on going for the best practice for the removal of the train.

Over at Dunedin railways, as TGR is now known, we had a bit of a scrap back in March which necessitated mobilising the branch and Unions Otago. This was covered extensively in *The Activist*. Thankfully it was all sorted quite quickly once the Company understood just how sensitive the RMTU is on matters of health and safety. The lesson we can all take from this is that it's far better to address issues industrially than through litigation. Done well, the former is generally quicker and builds solidarity and self confidence amongst the membership – and is cheap. The latter usually takes much longer, is eye watering expensive, and happens in rooms with very few people present

so doesn't involve rank and file members. We're now working hard to rebuild what has been a very good relationship with a very good little railway company, and, in fairness, so is management.

Just a reminder to all the team of the Otago branch, this is your forum and if you would like to see anything added here please contact the branch secretary and he will pass it on to the branch scribe. 🇳🇿



SOUTHLAND

THE main topic of discussion around here of late has been a couple of DFB locos out of the North Island. They arrived with the illuminated track warrant (TW) board located as close to the ceiling as is possible. This may not seem much of an issue with the North Island LEs, where automatic signalling abounds, but down here where the track warrant is the predominant form of track occupancy, it is imperative that it is in full view and not out of the line of sight of the LE.

We have been told that this scenario has already been a contributing factor in a SPAD which was our primary concern in raising the issue.

As usual, the company has dragged its heels over this issue. Many entries have been logged in the repair book, the usual fob off and 'supervisor advised' recorded. This issue has also been raised on the H&S boards, only to be told that it's not an H&S issue and the correct course of action is the repair book.

It has to be said that there is a bit of sympathy for management for not being too eager to act because, as is the case, it was one of our own colleagues who signed off on it.

I've been informed that it was an oversight by the person concerned, but this just highlights the need to be vigilant and we need to communicate a whole lot better.

The back ground to the TW clip boards and the 'anti fatigue devices' (ie the entertainment radios) being installed in locomotive cabs was in response to the Waipahi tragedy where the lives of two families were irrevocably changed forever. Otago and Southland LEs are reminded of the incident every day by the memorial located there to Graeme as we pass through. 'Lest we forget'.

So, all DFBs have been banned from lead loco duties until fixed.

I know that this has got a few knickers twisted, but, quite frankly, we need to be twisting more knickers, more often, and a whole lot harder.

Banning is a blunt instrument, but it has proven to be the only thing that actually gets results.

The following is a quote from the SI LE KIC rep:

"To continue to operate these locomotives with a known H&S concern that has already contributed to a SPAD, would be a dereliction of our responsibilities under the H&S at work legislation potentially exposing us all to serious penalties under the act in the event of a serious incident."

Well said Mike.

RCOs that operate on the main line on DSG shunt locos without so much as a hair clip, let alone an illuminated TW clip board, take note.

The LEs have shown you the way forward to get that issue resolved. Talk to your union officials, formulate a plan, give notice and a time frame, and then, stick together and be united.

Damn, the oysters have been good this year. I don't know how the rest of you blokes up north can pay \$25 a dozen for them. 🇳🇿



Latest logging truck accident prompts huge call to action

AFTER yet another logging truck rollover in Northland last month - the fifth in four weeks - a large number of residents contacted Grow Northland Rail (GNR) seeking to hold a public meeting about axing log trains from the region.

Spokesperson Alby Barr said: "The communities of Otaika Valley and surrounding areas are sick and tired of logging truck

accidents and other related issues. We have heard of angry residents with young children wanting to block the Otaika Valley Road in a protest. We ask these people to hold off on this sort of knee jerk reaction."

Instead he invited them to a public meeting last month where some 500 people attended.

Grow Northland Rail directors Alby Barr and Jack Craw want rail to be utilised more in Northland's future and launched the campaign in mid-March.

Since then about 300 people have joined the organisation. Their concerns about the deterioration of Northland roads, the potential they see in Northport and the growth instead of deterioration of rail, are factors which guide their campaign.

The organisation want to see commitment to this ideal from all four major political parties.

Barr told stuff.co.nz that the construction of the rail link out to North-

port is "something many analysts believe will stimulate real economic development for Northland and grow our economy".

Barr added: "We are campaigning in the local body elections and running our own GNR ticket, such is the popularity of our campaign in Northland. It will most certainly also be an election with the likes of Winston Peters and his party having the rail link to NorthPort and the upgrade of the NAL in their policy. We would expect both Labour and the Greens to come out with the similar policies.

"Rail is so popular up here given the volume of trucks on our roads is higher than any other region.

The spate of truck crashes has really brought support in from across all political parties.

Even a group of National executive committee members in Northland are lobbying their own party to fund rail up here, too little effect thus far. However it is solid to know the issue crosses party lines."

