

THE

JUNE 2019

TRANSPORT WORKER

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



CAF
caves
in



11 SUBVERSIVE MESSAGE



RMTU women take a message of unionism and equality to an expo focussed on beauty products. Brilliant!

16 MEMORIAL DAY



Ross Wilson with Ioasa Iuni at the service in the Wellington rail yards. Ioasa lost a leg in an accident not very far from this spot.

22 WAKE UP CALL



Flowers outside the mosque in Timaru remind us that we need to face up to some uncomfortable truths.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: On the picket outside the Britomart Station in Auckland demanding better pay from an uncompromising employer. Pages 4 - 6.

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Changes in the pipeline under a steady leadership

WELCOME to the second issue of our epic Transport Worker magazine for 2019 which is, yet again, 32 pages of Union activity and power.

Thank you for giving me another four year term as your general secretary. Holding this position is a privilege and an honour that I take seriously. Each day I strive to do justice to your faith in me. To have the opportunity to be at the helm of our Union next year, when we celebrate our first 25 years as the RMTU, will be a matter of immense personal pleasure.

I also wish to express my pleasure that Aubrey Wilkinson has been returned as your national president. Aubrey is an excellent president. His steady presence at a governance level is one of the reasons that we are a stable and strong force within the workplaces that you call home. Our Union is universally held in high regard and that is no accident, it occurs because we have a passionate, capable and committed leadership backed by highly skilled and talented staff who coach, counsel and mentor a stellar network of workplace activists and delegates from one end of Aotearoa to the other.

All of us, as well as the rest of New Zealand, are awaiting budget day as this will be New Zealand's first wellbeing budget and should include very real funding to assist in the 'wellbeing' and upgrade of our national rail system. I am part of a working group which is undertaking a review of rail for the Minister of Transport. The work of the group is to look at the structure and form of rail and to propose a secure funding mechanism so as to turn around the many years of 'managed decline' of our national rail asset. We quite simply have to have a sustainable rail system if this country is to move forward and grow.

The first report of the Upper North Island Freight Study showed that our most successful ports are only in that position because they have robust and functioning rail linkages in and out of them to a national rail network. Those ports have had

value added to their balance sheets at the expense of the New Zealand taxpayer who has provided the infrastructure to ensure their profitability at little or no return to the crown.

The Northland Business Case is another report which clearly provides evidence to justify investment so as to provide regional jobs and growth to Northland – a region which has been starved from having a fair share of New Zealand's rockstar economy at huge social cost and which, again, the taxpayer is left to bear. I urge all members to read both of these studies as they give you an insight into the scope and magnitude of what has to change for progress.

As you will all be aware we had an industrial stouch with CAF the Spanish (Basque actually) train manufacturer and maintainer for the Auckland suburban EMUs (see story page 4). The unionisation of the operation based at Wiri, has been an ongoing project for many years. CAF was awarded the contract in 2011 and it took us until 2016 to obtain a collective employment agreement with the company. The members voted unanimously for industrial action in support of their claims for the renewal of the agreement and so the Union gave notice of partial strike action in that members would only do scheduled checks. CAF responded by immediately suspending the workers under sec 87 of the Employment Relations Act. This meant that the workers could not attend work, would receive no income and, unlike if they were locked out, not approach the state for any benefit support. Workers in this situation can often seek and obtain casual work elsewhere when they have needed skills however a significant number of the members were on work visas which prohibited them from working for anyone else. That meant the State becomes part of the starvation and oppression process against these workers and a supporter of the employer forcing them to resume full work. This is wrong in my opinion and the visa scheme for accredited employers should be modified to enable them to work for any accredited employer within the visa scheme. This is an area that other unions have been campaigning on for a while and so the RMTU is a late convert to the party so to speak. Altering the scheme must be a priority of this Government within the remaining term.

As I write this we have issued the nominations call for our National Management Committee and I want to formally record my thanks and appreciation of two longstanding members not seeking re-election this year. Bill Sweeney and Ruth Blakeley have both been committed and effective leaders of our Union for many years and I especially appreciate Bill's leadership in Auckland and Ruth's commitment to RMTU women. I wish them every success in their future endeavours and look forward to a great team being elected to provide strong, effective and principled governance to the Union over the next two years.

Be safe, be united and above all else be RMTU! 🌐

Unfortunate departure

THE Johnston whanau leave for Australia. Stu was our branch chair at Hillside when it was closed and then became our Auckland-based organiser. His wife, Claudine, is suffering with cancer and needs a specific drug to assist her. Sadly Pharmac does not subsidise it but the Australians do. So, as Stu is an Australian, they have decided to move there. We wish the family a successful move and success with the drug treatment. It is a tragedy when a family has to move to obtain medical treatment but



unfortunately we are hearing of more and more cases of this occurring in our 'free' health system.

Praise from beyond

Dear Editor

As a fellow unionist but from another union I am always pleased to see the Transport Worker come through our internal mail as it is, as claimed in the March editorial, "a bloody good read".

I would like to add to one item however (Workers Memorial Day) where work related diseases were mentioned. Exposure to asbestos will have been the case for many readers of the magazine (especially us older folk) and I encourage every RMTU member who might have been exposed to get him or her self on the Asbestos Register.

This is easy. Go to:

<https://bit.ly/2JpkC3W>

In the past, two thirds of people who died as a result of asbestos cancer (mesothelioma) went undiagnosed and missed out on their ACC and asbestosis payment.

Register now, just in case, but hoping you wont need it!

Regards

Anonymous.

Retirements

Dear Editor,

As I have now retired from KiwiRail after three bites at the cherry, I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU.

Wishing the Union all the best for the future.

David Candy

Traction

Taihape.

Dear Editor,

I am retiring from my employment as track inspector, Kaikoura, on Sunday, May 12, 2019 having reached 65 years young in March.

I am resigning from RMTU at the same time with same effective date.

Thank you for your services over the past 39 years.

Kind regards

Dave Sparrow.

Thank you

Dear Editor

With Phil's passing I just wanted to write and say a big thanks to the Union for its

outstanding support of Phil and his wife Anna at a very difficult time.

To me it showed a side of union membership which doesn't often make the news – the pastoral care and fraternity advantages of being in a union.

Also the Union's contacts and organisational ability was, in my view, pivotal in quickly releasing Phil so he received the payment of his medical retirement.

This greatly reduced family stress so they could concentrate on supporting Phil in his final months.

It was good to see RMTU and KiwiRail workmates at Phil's funeral and the family proudly showed his RMTU loyalty certificate and KiwiRail's 20 year long service certificate on the memorial table.

It was very special to have John Kerr speak at the funeral and Phil's workmates, Dale and Bill said you really expressed their feelings about Phil.

The Steyn Family.

Delegate training praised

Dear Editor,

The RMTU delegate training at Woburn on May 2 was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by the Napier contingent (as well as other attendees too, I'm sure). Jared, Chris and I had a lot to think about and discuss during the long, leisurely journey home.

We had so much to mull over that an extra refreshment stop was required just to nut out a couple of issues we'd been dissecting.

In all seriousness, these training days are invaluable. Getting together with other delegates to work out consistent approaches at different work sites is hugely beneficial to all our members.

It's great that we can have confidence in what we're doing, and know that we're all on the same page with the full backing of our Union. Networking should never ever be underestimated, and it's immeasurable the little gems of wisdom one can pick

up along the way.

A couple of travel tips we can pass on: The Greytown Hotel is a fine establishment with welcoming hosts, reasonable prices, great food and a cosy fireplace, and on the naughty list we have Lower Hutt on a Wednesday night! Fun and merriment was [eventually] accomplished in the Roadhouse Bar and Grill playing Jingo (musical bingo) but we would never have discovered the place without accosting multiple locals on the street.

Thanks heaps to Teacher Todd, Red Kard Karen, Charming Chelsea, and John-in-the-cheap-seats for schooling us, keeping us all on track and to the Union for housing us. Luck of the Irish to you all!

Regards,
Roz Muir

Toilet campaign

Dear Editor

I'm a rail worker based in the South Island.

Boy was I pleased when I saw the story re toilets and females in the *Transport Worker* magazine.

This is an issue I have regularly raised only to get a sympathetic nod from males but no changes.

I don't object to squatting behind a bush when there is actually one around!

However, we are often in huge open spaces with zero privacy and obviously squatting somewhere is not practical nor hygienic.

Also, we are not supposed to leave our site during the work day so even if there is a public toilet down the road leaving to go to it can be difficult.

I am terribly dehydrated all the time as I just do not drink anything during the day to try to reduce the number of toilet stops needed.

This sucks as I used to drink plenty of water a day and in winter, when it's cold, I like a hot coffee or soup to warm up, plus it is not good for my health.

Thanks

(author wishes to remain anonymous)

CAF

SPANISH-owned Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF) is an enormous multi-national company whose trains run on tracks throughout the world – and who hire cheap labour to maintain them. They make millions and take enormous profits.

Last month 26 unionised, underpaid and restricted migrant workers took them on – and won!

When RMTU-led pay talks broke down in early



May so did the tone of the discussion.

The Union was left no alternative but to inform CAF that a partial strike would begin on May 11 for 30 days. Two days later CAF responded by immediately suspending those maintenance workers leaving just three non-unionised workers on the premises.

Almost immediately the trains showed more and more problems and it was obvious CAF were finding it increasingly difficult to maintain them, said Auckland organiser Rudd Hughes.

"There were several pantograph fires and the management and strikebreakers were under the pump."

An effective picket line, the threat of further action, overwhelming support from fellow unionists and a well-crafted series of stories in the media soon had CAF bosses changing their tune.

Hughes said the Union was seeking a pay increase of 13 per cent over two years to put them close to what KiwiRail maintenance workers are

[illegible]

◀ countries to try and improve their conditions and wages.

"This is an extremely successful company and its profits should be shared more equally with the workers who helped create those profits," he said.

In fact CAF made a profit of 20% last year and its international senior management said they can afford to pay fair wages – they just don't want to.

"In the final analysis," said Hughes, "this problem sheets back to Auckland Transport (AT) who employed CAF through a tender process to maintain the trains. They showed support for CAF and refused to come out in support of striking workers. The tendering process that gives companies like CAF lucrative tenders is finally under review from the Labour-led coalition and hopefully this will change the current practice of always going for the cheapest option – an option which drives wages down."

Butson agrees and adds: "Auckland Transport should be looking after the people that actually make the network run – not the profiteering multi-nationals exploiting cheap labour and sucking our country dry." 🌐

Union solidarity

Union members from around the country expressed their support for the CAF workers who were dismissed and their case for a fair deal.



PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

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



Ports Retirement Plan

Download a copy of the Product Disclosure Statement from our website:
www.portsretirement.org.nz

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

Decent jobs for AK transport workers

AUCKLAND transport unions (MUNZ, RMTU and FIRST Union) met in March and April to consider a campaign around ensuring that decent work and just transitions for transport workers are front and centre in Auckland Council's climate plan.

Auckland Council is right now writing an ambitious plan to reduce the city's impact on the climate including energy use and transport. There is a window of opportunity right now to make sure workers are part of that planning.

Our ultimate target is Auckland Transport, which is directly responsible for so many of the problems which transport workers in Auckland face through competitive tendering.


The proposed campaign has three stages:

- Now, ensuring Auckland's climate action plan, being written March to May, has references to a just transition and commitments on good jobs for Auckland transport workers. And then, when released

for public consultation in July onwards, organising around this to ensure these commitments are retained in the document.

- Elections: calling on candidates for governing bodies and local boards to commit to good jobs for transport workers and, if elected, to ensure Auckland Transport follows through.

- Post elections and before 2021, using the only clear, enforceable lever, the statement of intent between Auckland Transport and Auckland Council, to ensure there are enforceable commitments on jobs. This will be negotiated in 2020 ahead of the next statement of intent 2021-2014.

All actions will be building towards this new statement of intent to ensure it has commitment to dialogue with unions for transport workers and commitments around tendering documents not being used to undermine the good jobs that Aucklanders want, and have committed to. 

Fair pay


FAIR pay agreements (FPA) are coming to a workplace near you! They are a way of deciding the fair way to do business and will set a minimum bar for a whole industry.

Working people and employers will still be able to bargain collectively, and everyone will have a choice whether to join their union. People will also be able to negotiate individually. It will mainly mean there will be a new, better minimum standard that employers can't undercut – just like the minimum wage or minimum leave entitlements we already have, but with specific rules for different industries.

Kiwis are working longer and longer hours, but pay isn't keeping up with the profit their work creates. That's not fair. Part of the problem is that some businesses compete to screw wages down to the lowest possible level, to make it harder for good operators to stay in business.

When we create a level playing field, nobody can undercut by paying unacceptable wages or forcing unfair conditions of work. FPAs will reign in the cowboys and encourage good employers, quality and innovation. They will set the rules for what's acceptable and stop the race to the bottom.

FPAs will be initiated and led by working people in unions – and agreed upon through negotiation with business representatives.

By raising the bar for employment conditions, good small firms don't have to trade off attracting the best people to work for them with decent wages and being profitable. 

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

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Kaikoura
Mount Maunganui
Napier
Nelson
New Plymouth
Ohope
Orewa
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Picton
Queenstown
Rotorua
Taupo
Wellington
Westport
Whitianga



HOLIDAYS & HEALTH



The Trust takes the worry out of your family's basic medical costs. For a modest weekly fee, 80% of the costs of basic medical expenses are covered including: GPs, some medical specialists, prescriptions, bereavement benefit, welfare sick pay, birth, ambulance, hearing aids, and much more. Members may also apply to join an extended health insurance programme at advantageous prices.

All RMTU members are eligible to join. Contact us to find out how.

Phone: 0800-806-444

E-mail: info@nzwelfare.co.nz

Website: nzwelfare.co.nz

Facebook: facebook.com/nzwelfare

Spotlight on fatigue

WHAT do the Challenger space rocket disaster, the Three Mile Island nuclear melt down and the Exxon Valdez oil spill have in common?

Apart from the dire consequences to human life and the environment, human error caused by fatigue was also to blame.

A lack of adequate sleep, being awake for too long and working during the body's circadian low time (3-5 am) are all factors that cause fatigue.

Fatigue is a physiological state of impairment that can be so debilitating it renders a person unable to work safely – as opposed to being unwilling to work safely.

One of the scary thing about fatigue is the effects are cumulative: it builds up over time so the more fatigued you are the greater the level of impairment.

RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher says: "Fatigue can cause people to go on 'automatic pilot' which is a problem when it comes to responding to unexpected risks and situations. Fatigue affects people's reaction times and the ability to assess risk accurately and filter out distractions."

She added that studies show that people are unable to detect their own level of impairment once they are already fatigued.

A workers' issue


In New Zealand workplace fatigue is being treated as a workers' issue to manage.

"The idea of 'if you can't handle the hours then you're not cut out for the job' have been the norm," she said. "However attitudes are changing and employers are beginning to understand that under the

health and safety legislation and recent fatigue prosecutions by Worksafe NZ, they need to be more proactive in addressing fatigue risk."

An example of a proactive approach has been the work done by KiwiRail and the RMTU to develop a fatigue risk management system for its workers.

The group undertaking this task are working on a fatigue management standard, new rostering tools and fatigue leave processes as well as a fatigue education programme including fatigue training for HSATs through the Worksafe NZ reps programme.

A joint RMTU/KRG fatigue safety action group will monitor fatigue related data, such as hours of work, and make recommendations for improvement. 

Training course on fatigue

WORKSAFE reps are excited to pilot their newest course titled 'Preventing and managing fatigue'. The one-day course is for workers, health and safety representatives, team leaders and managers who want to understand how to prevent and manage the risk of harm caused by workplace fatigue.

This course explores:

- The causes of fatigue and its impact on workplace health and safety;
- Sleep science including the relationship between fatigue and sleep and the implications for shift work;
- Understanding the legislative duty to manage the hazard of fatigue;

- Taking a risk management approach to managing fatigue; and
- Tools and templates for introducing – or improving – a fatigue risk management system.

If you'd like to find out more contact a WorksafeReps at: www.worksafereps.co.nz

Worksafe
reps

Silica dust and lung disease


LIKE asbestos but only worse, are the words used to describe workers' suffering from silicosis after inhaling dust from engineered stone.

Dr Graeme Edwards, who was speaking at the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, said that findings from the health assessment of 400 workers in Australia have shown that people who have high rates of exposure to engineered dust are at high risk of developing an accelerated form of silicosis (lung disease) causing severe fibrosis of the lungs with the only avail-



able treatment being a lung transplant. He stressed this is worse than asbestos because of the rapid onset of the disease. People as young as 23 are suffering from the disease after relatively short term exposure.

Worksafe NZ has issued an alert to highlight the significant health risks caused by exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS). The risk is particularly high for workers in engineered stone benchtop manufacturing, finishing and installation industries.

RSC is also found in concrete, bricks, rocks, stone, sand and clay. This alert highlights the importance of identifying the hazards workers are exposed to, including dust, and ensuring that exposure is eliminated or minimised using personal protective equipment. 

RMTU WOMEN

Elizabeth (Liz) Figiel

Why did you become an active member of the RMTU?

I joined the RMTU in the beginning of my employment which was March 10, 2008 and am glad to be an active member because of the advantages I am entitled to as a RMTU member.

What has been a memorable experience in your role on the Transdev bargaining team?

Have never been part of anything regarding union matters but when asked by Bill Sweeney if I was interested in participating in the bargaining team I jumped to the opportunity. I wanted to learn how – or at least be part of – something important within the union. To understand more what everyday life is for RMTU officials or executives and what they go through in regards to bargaining etc.

I am happy that I did partake in the bargaining team. It was tough and long but the outcome of it was all worthwhile in my opinion.

Job title

Train manager for 10 years and have been with Transdev for 11 years.

What does your job entail?

As a train manager we ensure the health and safety of those travelling by trains, try to maintain the running times, assist or help in any way with our LEs in any case of delays and incidents and as well as delivering and providing customer services to our train commuters.

Why did you decide to work for Transdev Auckland?

Well, to be honest, when I moved from Samoa to New Zealand in 2006 I had to stay at home to look after our youngest child. But once she went to primary school I went looking for employment. Transdev (Veolia) was one of the two places I applied to and they came back to me quicker than the other company.

What's the best part of your job?

Meeting people from different cultures and countries, knowing I play a big part in

getting someone to where they want to go and, of course, working among good hard working colleagues.

What's something that bugs you about your job?

Compared to jobs back in my home country, there is nothing much that bothers me in my current job role.

What piece of advice would you give your 21 year old self?

Move to New Zealand now! Haha! 🇳🇿



Transdev settlement achieved

GS Wayne Butson and Transdev Auckland (TDA) managing director Michel Ladrak sign the proposed terms of settlement for the renewal of the TDA/RMTU collective agreement.

All parties were relieved that a positive outcome was achieved as strike action was looming.

There is no doubt the threat of strike

action helped get a meaningful offer from the employer to the table.

The proposed settlement, with a headline increase of 3 + 3 + 3% for a three year deal, was subsequently ratified by members and the CA expires 30/9/21.

Our thanks to the Union negotiating team and to the members for their solid unity and support. 🇳🇿



RAIL - TAKING STRESS OFF NORTHLAND ROADS

It's time to reconnect Northland's extensive railway network enabling industry to use the safest way to move freight and increase high value rail tourism.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union Fully Supports re-opening lines to Dargaville and Otiria. Reconnecting rail to Kawakawa - Opuia for rail tourism.



Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.

- Logs • Woodchips
- Dairy • Bulkloads • Tourism
- Large Consignment freight



Employment law changes

DURING the last election we encouraged you to vote Labour for a fairer, kinder society – for a society that didn't just favour the rich. Last month they delivered one key part of that programme – with the support of their coalition partners – when the Employment Relations Act 2018 came into force.

In it a number of key changes were made which improved fairness in the workplace and delivered decent work conditions and fairer wages.

The new Act gives more protections for employees, especially vulnerable workers, and strengthens collective bargaining and union rights in the workplace. Many of the changes are familiar to employers, as they roll the law back to how it was as recently as 2015.

Many reverse the heavily employer-favoured legislation of the previous government. Some of those changes are:

Rest and meal breaks

Employees must be given set rest and meal breaks based on the number of

hours worked, to help them work safely and productively. Employers must pay for minimum rest breaks but don't have to pay for minimum meal breaks. Some exemptions may apply and while both parties are encouraged to discuss solutions, the law can impose a decision if required.

Trial periods

90-day trial periods are restricted to businesses with 19 or fewer employees, to restore protections from unjustified dismissal for most employees when they start a new job.

Businesses with 20 or more employees can continue to use probationary periods to assess an employee's skills against the role's responsibilities. A probationary period lays out a fair process for managing performance issues and ending employment if the issues aren't resolved.

Unfair dismissal

If requested, reinstatement must be the first course of action considered by the Employment Relations Authority for em-

ployees who found to be unfairly dismissed.

Vulnerable employees

Employees in vulnerable industries such as cleaning and catering services will be able to transfer their current contract terms and conditions, regardless of the size of their employer.

Collective bargaining and collective agreements

Parties must conclude collective bargaining, unless there are genuine reasons based on reasonable grounds not to. This ensures that parties genuinely attempt to reach an agreement.

Parties will not have to settle a multi-employer collective agreement (MECA) if their reason for not wanting to settle is based on reasonable grounds. For example, if there are significant differences between two employers – such as one operating in an area where costs and wages are higher – it could be reasonable for an employer to negotiate a single-employer collective agreement instead.

\$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).

Multi-employer collective agreement

Employers can no longer opt out of such bargaining.

Collective bargaining

Where a collective agreement is already in force and before it expires, unions can initiate bargaining 20 days ahead of employers.

30-day rule

New employees must be employed under terms consistent with the collective agreement for the first 30 days.

Pay deductions for partial strikes

Employers can no longer deduct pay in response to partial strikes but can still suspend employees without pay or a lockout.

Rights to enter workplaces

Union representatives can now enter workplaces without consent, provided the employees are covered under, or are bargaining towards, a collective agreement. However, they must be respectful of normal operating hours, follow health, safety and security procedures, seek prior consent where no collective agreement ex-

ists and may assist a non-union employee with matters relating to health and safety if requested.

Pay rates

Pay rates must include an indication of how they may increase over the agreement's term.

Union registration form

Employers must provide new employees (if wanted) a form to be returned to their applicable union(s). They must also give them time to talk to union reps before indicating whether they intend to join a union or remain on the individual employment agreement. Employers must also pass on information about the role and function of unions.

Union delegates

Employers must allow for reasonable paid time for union delegates to carry out their union activities though an employer will be able to deny the request under certain circumstances.

Discrimination for union membership

Employees have more protections against discrimination on the basis of their

union membership status.

The above changes come at the same time as the minimum wage was raised by \$1.20 to \$17.70 an hour from the current \$16.50 – a move expected to improve the lives of over 200,000 New Zealanders.

Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety Iain Lees-Galloway said at the time that "lifting the incomes of Kiwi workers will contribute to improved living standards and reduce poverty".

He added that more was to come as the Government had committed to increasing the minimum wage to \$20 by 2021.

"These are just some of the reasons we implored you to vote Labour at the last election," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "If you want to see this work continue, your Labour vote at the next election is vital." 🇳🇿

More information:

- Intention to join a union
<https://bit.ly/2DVCP4U>
- Guidance for employers
<https://bit.ly/2WxdWnh>
- Employment Relations Act
<https://bit.ly/2Lu4xMd>

Affirming women at work

ON April 6 & 7 RMTU members Ruth Blakeley, Rebecca Hauck and myself, participated at the Women's Lifestyle Expo in Dunedin.

Exhibitors included an array of different vendors selling all sorts of items like clothing, jewellery, cosmetics, candles, travel, food, massage oils, hair products, lollies, soap and much more.

Our booth was unique as we had set up a table along with KiwiRail and Port Otago to encourage and inform women about the jobs available to them in a male dominated industry and why they should consider working within these industries.

We also spoke about the good wages and how the blokes are actually very supportive of women working alongside them.



It was a great turnout for both days and I was excited to hand out pamphlets to women who visited our booth and excitedly talk about the amazing job opportunities both these employers have to offer women.

I feel that our positive message was well received by the women attendees and we may have found some future employees and

RMTU members.

We also had with us attending the booth, KiwiRail South Island operations manager, Jeanine Benson, Tracy O'Neill from KiwiRail human resources, KiwiRail operations manager, Trevor Buckley-Beman, KiwiRail apprentice mechanical engineer, Brooke Loper and KiwiRail track worker Emma Little.

For me it was a real treat to visit Dunedin (as I have never been there before) and visit my fellow members' workplaces and I couldn't have asked for better weather, with clear sunny skies.

I look forward to representing RMTU women at next year's expo.

- Chelsea Cardy

New pathways to power: the second CTU organising conference

By John Kerr, South Island organiser

THE Council of Trade Unions held its second organising conference over three days in early April. The idea behind these gatherings came from a group of union officials a few years ago and the first conference was held in 2016.

This was not a policy making gathering, but rather an opportunity to hear and share ideas with comrades and colleagues who work for the union movement, either as professional staff or as elected lay officials.

The RMTU sent four of us along: myself from the South Island; Auckland organiser Rudd Hughes; Wellington based organiser Todd Valster and Bay of Plenty port delegate Stephan Simpson.

Overall the conference was of limited but useful value. There was a mix of plenary sessions where all 200 or so attendees were gathered together for a series of smaller workshops on specific topics. The RMTU presented a workshop on High Performance High Engagement with the sub-title 'what's in it for us?'. The workshops I attended, and my colleagues expressed the same view, were very good indeed. The workshop Todd Valster and I presented received very positive feedback, albeit this was informally expressed. There were several ideas for useful follow up work, particularly around building organising capacity with our active members and delegates.

The workshops I attended, and my colleagues expressed the same view, were very good indeed. The workshop Todd Valster and I presented received very positive feedback, albeit this was informally expressed. There were several ideas for useful follow up work, particularly around building organising capacity with our active members and delegates.

General overview

The Conference was pitched at organis-



(top) Three of our organisers at the conference: John Kerr, Rudd Hughes and Todd Valster.

(middle) Felicity Sowerbutts from Victoria Trades Hall in Melbourne.

(bottom) Lindy McIntyre, the Living Wage campaign organiser and inspiration.

ers and followed a familiar format. There was an address by the CTU president, several keynote speakers from NZ and overseas, and a couple of panel discussions. These sessions covered familiar ground – campaigning, digital organising, working with Maori and Pasifika and, a late inclusion after the Christchurch terrorist attack, an address on anti-racism.

Plenary and keynote speakers

The best by far was delivered by Felicity Sowerbutts from Victoria Trades Hall who gave an inspiring address on political

campaigning describing how the Victorian union movement has not just mobilised members to work on political campaigns but built organisational infrastructure as well. This was upbeat, inclusive and crucially described how capacity had been created. It wasn't just about mobilising members to make phone calls or knock on doors it was about identifying and training unionists who would grow into long term active members and leaders and giving them the support and space to be those people.

Another very good session was on building community alliances in organising presented by Lyndy McIntyre, who has been a driving force in the Living Wage Movement. Again, upbeat, creative and inspiring and directly relevant to RMTU members' campaigns, particularly around safety.

Workshops

I attended workshops on community organising focussing on the Living Wage campaign; building capacity through organising on the ground; and an NZEI-run session on thinking globally but organising locally.

These were all very good.

The first two reinforced work we have done in the community around safe staffing on trains and has given me inspiration for work with Dunedin Railways this year.

The building capacity session was run by Jane Clarke from the ACTU and Jim Meyer of FIRST, formerly of the ACTU and (I think) the International Labour Organisation. This focused on targeted activist and delegate development. It asked critical questions that were very relevant as we continue to review delegate and activist



The RMTU team at the conference.

CTU/government forum

GLOWING reports emerged after the initial CTU/government forum held in Hamilton on late February.

The forum, the first of a series, was designed for New Zealand unions to interface with government and, on this occasion, with prime minister Jacinda Ardern and ministers Ian Lees-Galloway, Chris Hipkins and Shane Jones. Several workshops were run covering topics such as health, education, housing, regional development and infrastructure.

One participant said it was "great to hear Jacinda speak of the government's plans regarding KiwiBuild and fair pay agreements with rail getting an honourable mention also".



The author gets up close to our PM.

Several questions were put to Shane Jones regarding the Auckland Airport rail

link, the operating structure of any new regional passenger services, the development or reopening of branch lines and the future of Hillside Workshops. The questioners received an assurance that KiwiRail was a high priority for government investment.

During question time it was heart-breaking to hear of compatriots in the DHB contracting sector, education and city bus operators speak of their struggle to achieve a living wage – or even to get enough staff to be able to do their jobs with a modicum of professionalism and safety. These unions have a long way to go in their efforts, and every bit of support counts. 🌐

- Eric Hayward

training and education in our union: 1) What learning culture and practice would we like in in our union? 2) What barriers exist to achieving that? 3) What would it take to bring about a shift?

The emphasis was on a 70/20/10 model of delegate and member development (70% on the job experience; 20% coaching; 10% formal courses) linked to specific targets.

I signed up for the NZEI workshop in the hope I would learn some practical applications of using an internationalist approach on the ground here in New

Zealand. I didn't quite get that but got something equally valuable. The identified threat was global – a bunch of so called education reforms that were being pushed by neo-liberals globally and the session was a narrative about how the teacher unions in NZ had, largely successfully, resisted these. I did learn about a very good and useful tool that we could use to teach campaign planning and preparation – a cooperative educational game we could use in activist training. Worth the price of admission for that alone.

Todd and I presented our workshop on HPHE which seemed to be well received. There was good attendance from both private and state sector unions – two MUNZ delegates from the Interislander were present – and the message, that we were

agnostic about HPHE and, in our view, it was only tenable in very particular circumstances was almost uniformly accepted. One comment from an NZNO organiser who had worked on an HPHE type approach in one DHB and shared our qualified optimism was striking: "We had a change of CEO and the employer's approach changed overnight. HPHE was out and months, if not years, of work was immediately undone."

This may be an exaggeration but I had the feeling it wasn't much of one.

Conclusion

The conference provided an all-too-rare opportunity to get together with comrades from across our movement to share ideas in a convivial and collegial manner. Well done and thank you to everyone involved. 🌐



2nd Asean conference

THE Railwaymen's Union of Malaysia (RUM) organised a Railway Workers Union meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 27 to 30 March 2019. The meeting comprises leaders from railway unions from Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson was invited as Asia Pacific International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) railway section chair and Satoru Yamada as general secretary of the International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) as the Asean unions are considering joining the international railway union family.

Each Union reported on the development of railways in their country and it is very apparent that there is huge investment being made in the railway infrastructure and fleets in a number of counties.

Thailand, for example, is build-

ing 12 new railway lines in Bangkok and double tracking and electrifying a staggering number of freight lines nationwide.

During the meeting a visit was arranged to a crèche operated by RUM for member families and the feeling of community this generates within the Union was impressive and is food for thought for other unions attending.

This meeting was Butson's first encoun-



ter with the rail unions from Vietnam and Cambodia and he looks forward to fostering this relationship and having them join the ICLS and ITF in the future. Solidarity forever! 🌐



Major changes in Bangkok

THE Bangkok pilot project is the first part of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) priority programme entitled 'Our Public Transport' (OPT). The pilot project concept was sanctioned by the ITF urban transport committee at its meeting in Brussels in May 2015 and Bangkok was chosen in January 2016 as the target with a start beginning in June 2016.

Bangkok was chosen as it is becoming increasingly important as a hub for transport in the region and there are strong existing unions in place to leverage from.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson attended a project update meeting in February this year.

It is clear that pleasing progress is being achieved with new unions being included in the scope. One such union is the Mass Rapid Transit Authority Union (MRTA) and he later met with MRTA



management who provided a briefing update on the whole infrastructure project for the 12 new metro lines. 🌐

Prison protest

Whilst in Bangkok for the above OPT meeting the international delegates visited Bangkok Prison where good friend, State Railway Union stalwart and Yellow Shirt leader Khun Somsak Kosaisook is imprisoned for an eight-month term as a result of the occupation of Bangkok airport and the storming of the Government Buildings by Yellow Shirt protesters. No cameras were permitted inside the prison, so posing outside are (l to r) Oystein Aslaksen (Norway Loco Drivers), Wayne Butson and Satoru Yamada (Japan Railway Union). 🌐



Stuff gets done at youth conference

RECENTLY, I was given the opportunity to attend the CTU Stand Up biennial conference – Building power together: Organising with allies and getting stuff done. It was a youth conference held at the Muriwai Surf Club in Auckland.

Myself and my fellow RMTU delegates were representing the youth sector of CTU-affiliated unions. The aim and vision for this conference is to build power, work with the CTU to make sure the voices of young people are heard in strategy and campaigns, build relationships with activist groups, NGOs and others working on similar issues and form collaborative Stand Up views to Parliament on laws that impact young people.

One of the key components of this conference was to put forward the internal and CTU remits. Unions were given opportunity to submit their remits which could potentially result into guide lines and policy for the future. Several remits were discussed and voted on.

CTU secretary Sam Huggard, and Dylan Goldsworthy from the Young Workers Centre, Melbourne, Australia shared their views and experiences of organising and the importance of youth in union movements



(l to r) Campbell Leggett, Brock Pascoe, Jas Giri, Leighton Mosese and Jack Jamieson.

– and how to build power with your allies.

The RMTU was given an opportunity to share their experiences and learnings from organising campaigns and dealing with industrial issues.

I strongly believe, Stand Up is the voice of young unionists in the wider union movement and collectively we strive to ensure that the interests of young workers are represented at every level of union democracy – and in the wider community. It also gives opportunity to raise awareness

of young workers' issues, provide spaces for young workers to express themselves as unionists, ensure that young workers have power in union democracies and educate young workers about unions and working rights.

I would like to thank the RMTU for this opportunity and look forward to sharing my learnings with my fellow union members.

Kia kaha

Jas Giri

Branch secretary, Auckland. 🌐

Just Fair culture workshop - Tauranga



RMTU delegates, H&S reps and KiwiRail managers enjoy the jointly facilitated Just Fair Culture course in Tauranga. Further training is planned in Auckland (26/27 June), Christchurch (10/11 July) and Wellington (7/8 August). For information on how to enrol contact: kfletcher@rmtunion.org.nz

A commitment to safety

ACCORDING to ILO estimates, the number of job-related accidents and illnesses has reached more than two million said RMTU general secretary, Wayne Butson at the unveiling of a new memorial site in the Wellington railway yards, close to the Interisland ferry terminal.

"On this day I especially remember that, since 1994 we have had 28 RMTU rail and port members killed at work," he said. "A staggering number for such a small Union. Then from 2008 to 2016 there were no deaths until we sadly lost Paul Darroch at Toll Networks in Auckland."

He especially remembered his workmate, Jack Neha, 35, and a father of three.

"Jack was an LE with 17 years experience and was callously turned into a shunter. He died when he was run over by wagons at Gracefield. Shortly after, TranzRail was fined a measly \$15,000."

He also noted that in November 1998 his friend Ioasa Iuni lost a leg in a shunting accident when a corroded bolt gave way and poor welding failed on a handrail.

"And my heart aches for Ambrose Manaia who will always be 43 to me and a father of four who died near this spot when caught between a truck deck and the

headstock of a locomotive in March 2000. Ambrose died during the Ministerial Inquiry into health and safety practices of Tranz Rail."

Each of these deaths he told attendees "is a waste and a loss that can never be adequately compensated for. For every workplace death there are dozens who are left to suffer".

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

He concluded with a plea for workers and management to work tirelessly to make work places safe.

"Our Union is well known for its focus on safe and healthy workplaces. It is about taking care of the people you work with – not about rules and regulations. Management, managers and regulators cannot make our workplaces safe alone.

"We can only do it by us all working together."

Other speakers and guests at the memorial included the board chair of Worksafe NZ Ross Wilson, KiwiRail manager Anthony Mills, members of Te Kupenga Mahi and Ioasa Iuni. 🌐



Napier Port

AN assembly of around 120 people gathered out to the branch Worksafe NZ for a commemoration. Present were our own members and local rail, port and vessel representatives – ETU, MSG and NZP. A vessel working ceased for the day.

The NPC board were also represented.

Several people, including the branch manager, spoke.

A reporter for Hawkes Bay Today spoke about how he lost his son in a workplace accident. He referenced the effects of non-union workplaces where workers do not have a voice. He cited a lack of health and safety focus with smaller contractors v

Focus on carcinogens

THE particular focus of this year's WMD was on zero cancer and how to eliminate or minimise exposure to carcinogens in the workplace.

According to Worksafe NZ, work-related disease kills between 800 and 1,000 workers each year. Most due to occupational cancer and/or heart and respiratory diseases.

Worksafe NZ have a target of reducing work place death and injuries in New Zealand by 25 percent in their first seven years. To date Worksafe NZ has mounted more prosecutions since its inception than its predecessor MBIE initiated during its entire reign of health and safety oversight.

"It is important that we all remember the toxic cocktail of rapacious profit driven greed, poor regulation, ineffective oversight and enforcement that ran through New Zealand workplaces for far too many years," said Butson, "and which led to the creation of Worksafe NZ."

Timaru



RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson speaks to the assembly at the Timaru memorial.



Wellington





(1) Speakers preparing for the memorial service in Christchurch.

(below) Napier Port members gather to remember colleagues and workers who were killed or injured on the job.

(bottom) Wellington workers gather at the memorial in the rail yards.



or take heed of their workers. Workers who have a sound, safe knowledge and no one to give it to or share it with are ignored by bosses!

The local branch secretary made reference to the Pohutukawa planted 14 odd years ago in remembrance of Corben Frickleton as a symbol of why we are there each year – for all those we have lost or who have become incapacitated as a consequence of a work place incident.

The Apperly wall, which sits at the southern end of the port, also serves as a reminder to us all of those lost at Napier Port over the decades – each recorded on brass plaques.

It is apparent, with each passing year, awareness of WMD is growing, as indicated by this record turn out. 🌐

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Ohakune side trip

THIS year two RMTU members from Ohakune – Gregg Newell (L/H signals operations upper North Island) and Lisa Davidson couldn't get back to their base at Palmerston North for WMD. So they figured they'd find a memorial and do their own commemoration.

They found the memorial (above) erected to remember the six workers who died at the Ohakune Railway Ballast Quarry on May 15, 1916 following an explosion. Two others were injured.

From news reports, it is understood that the explosion happened in a tunnel at the quarry. Practice at the time saw tunnels driven into the face of quarries and explosives set at its end. The resulting explosion could bring down 750 to 1000 tonnes of material.

On this occasion eight men were in the tunnel setting the explosive when something terrible went awry and the cliff face collapsed on them. The explosion blasted the two survivors from the entrance.

Material from the quarry was used in the building of the Ohakune to Raetihi line.

This grand monument stands near the site.

The six men who died were:

Geoffrey Mellsop, 28; Horace Larking, 21; Arthur Davies, 35; Pat McGarry, 33; Jackson Torrens, 54; and William McCord, 38. 🌐

ANZAC - an important part of the KiwiRail story

ANZAC DAY is an important part of the New Zealand story, and an important part of the KiwiRail story.

Anyone visiting KiwiRail HQ in Wellington Railway Station will pass a roll of honour in the foyer recording the names of those who died in the First World War. Its length underlines the price that railway men paid.

In 1914 railways employed around 20,000 full-time and casual workers – more than any other organisation in New Zealand. By the time the war ended in 1918 more than 7,500 had enlisted. Almost 5,000 of the 14,000 permanent employees served overseas.

At least 450 of those who served in that horrific war lost their lives.

No other single employer in New Zealand lost so many.

The story did not change in the Second World War. By its end 8,200 railways employees served in the country's armed forces – 386 never returned.

Those deaths in those wars are more than statistics. They were all personal tragedies which gaps that could not be filled.

This year marks the 100th Anzac Day since the guns fell silent in September 1918 and 80 years since Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939 and the start the next world war.

On ANZAC Day we honour all who served and remember those who gave their lives. 🇳🇿

Lest we forget

EVEN the capital's infamous winds held back as the haunting notes of the bugle floated above Petone Railway Station on Anzac Day morning.

KiwiRail staff had gathered at dawn to pay their respects to the thousands of railway workers who had served overseas – and to the hundreds who never came home.

Wreaths were laid at the base of the station's commemorative flag-pole – the only one in the country to specifically honour railway workers' wartime sacrifice. 🇳🇿

Hillside

Hillside workers are led to their memorial site by a pipe band where they were addressed by local author and journalist Ron Polenski.





Wellington Railway foyer ceremony

THOSE attending the ANZAC ceremony in the Wellington Railway Station foyer reflected on the number of railway employees who enlisted - many of those served overseas and some with specialist rail-operating units in Belgium and Samoa.

Less than 30 years later, thousands more served in World War Two.

The Government of the day declared Railways an 'essential occupation' in order to help fill the shortage of staff.

The group also reflected on the many who returned carrying a burden for the rest of their lives.

Across the country, a number of war memorials recognise the contribution of our railway colleagues, including the steam locomotive Passchendaele and a commemorative flagpole in Petone. 🇳🇿

(pictured) RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson and David Gordon (GM Assets KiwiRail) in front of the memorial plaque at Wellington Railway Station.



Petone

On Anzac Day a service is organised by the Petone Community Board at the only Railway flagpole memorial site in the country at 0730hrs. The flagpole is constructed half and half of New Zealand and Australian wood and is the only one left following the destruction of its sister flagpole in NSW.



A little known 'battle'

INTERISLANDER crews follow the traditions of the Merchant Navy whose major war commemoration is Merchant Navy Day, September 3. Never-the-less it is worth noting that April also marks the anniversary of a little known World War 2 battle involving New Zealand merchant seamen.

At the height of the war, tens of thousands of American servicemen were stationed in New Zealand and relationships between them and the locals were not always cordial.

On 3 April 1943, a mass brawl between hundreds of soldiers and civilians – including American sailors and New Zealand seamen – broke out in Wellington. The incident is thought to have begun after white American soldiers from the USA's southern states insulted a group of Maori. The 'Battle of Manners St' was the worst clash between Kiwis and Americans during the war. Although the fighting lasted for hours, it was hushed up at the time; a brawl between Allies was not good publicity.

Other fights often involved romantic liaisons between American troops and local women (about 1500 Kiwi women married Americans during the war).

To many New Zealand men, especially those serving overseas, these American 'bedroom commandos' caused widespread resentment. 🇳🇿

Napier Port for sale - Part 4

TO put you in the picture to date, and it ain't pretty, the cost of the new six berths started out over a year or two ago at around \$100 million, within the last 12 months the costs have moved gradually upward. The cost is now around \$187m. Where will this be at the time the wharf is commissioned?

This obviously is of concern to the local membership. In all honesty our initial concerns were focussed on the port not being sold – reaching out to the Hawkes Bay Regional Council, Joe and Jane Public and politicians (with no success) to look at other forms of investment rather than selling.

What the local branch can pat themselves on the back for, is rolling the HBRC's initial option of a 50 year lease. After much lobbying the RMTU were able to convince them that this would not just affect the Port and its users but Hawkes Bay as a whole.

Outsiders taking control would have been detrimental to the region not just from a business perspective but also the breakdown in the social and economic



value the Port brings to the region.

Our focus now needs to move to preservation – a consequence of a sell down – and potentially, the external interferences that may bring. At the Port of Tauranga for example, 45% publicly owned, consider the difficulties our Union faces where three operators are engaged to operate the cranes. Understand, this is about unionising, but it certainly exposes the difficulties in terms

of multiple users.

At Napier Port we stand fast on our demarcation in the present environment.

With our employment agreement up for negotiation later this year, it will be judicious for us to focus on our power clauses, especially around terms and conditions, ensuring we are protecting our future in the best way possible. It will be new terrain! 🇳🇵

Notice board praise



Whangarei rail branch notice board was worthy of the editor's praise. Well done. Keeping your colleagues informed is essential.

Showing solidarity & loyalty

OVER the last few months RMTU members have not received support for better conditions and pay they have also shown support for union colleagues struggling to gain traction. By doing so, they give moral support to those on the picket – real or otherwise – and boost spirits when bosses aim

to kill enthusiasm. There's no doubt that shows of strength help maintain the pressure on the bosses.

Here are two occasions when RMTU members showed their spirit! 🌐



KiwiRail trainee supervisors on their first line management course take time out to express loyalty to RMTU.



FIRST union St John's delegate Dean Brown and organiser David Bristow being supported by RMTU Lyttelton Port branch members. Dean, as well as leading his members in their fight for fair pay, was the first paramedic at the Al Noor Mosque on the day of the terrorist atrocity.

Fond farewells



(l) Graham Quinnell receiving his 50 years of service/membership honours from KiwiRail and the RMTU. (r) RMTU Life Member Edgar Spark who spoke on behalf of the Union and Andrew Norton the KR GM (people and culture). Graham retired soon thereafter with his last day of service being Friday 31 May. We wish Graham a long and healthy retirement in his caravan.



Terror attack - a wake up call

Dave Kearns, RMTU, Dunedin

I think it is important for union members to discuss and question some assumptions following the March 15 mosque attacks. In our roles for advocating for workers' rights we fight for justice and human rights as well – essentially the same thing. To do that we sometimes have to face up to uncomfortable facts.

Public statements such as "This is not us" and "That quiet Friday afternoon has become our darkest of days" which came out following the shootings give the impression that this was a lone-wolf attack carried out by an outsider whose views are not shared within our communities.

I disagree.

Brenton Tarrant's worldview is an extreme version of the widespread culture of racism embedded in our political institutions, media, armed forces and judiciary.

Our Prime Minister has responded with love and inclusion, and shown good leadership but she also presides over a party and government riddled with racist views and actions.

New Zealand's political establishment, including those presently in power, has long blamed foreigners in order to deflect people's anger at growing inequality, poverty and homelessness.

For example, Winston Peters in 2005 said: "New Zealand is losing tens of thousands of Kiwis and replacing them with people from an entirely different cultural background."

This statement could have come straight from Tarrant's manifesto and Peters has

never resiled from it.

Phil Twyford in 2015 claimed (wrongly) that 40% of Auckland property sales are to Chinese foreign property buyers, leading to a call to ban property sales to people with

passing the time of day in quite a friendly fashion. Their leader ran for council in Christchurch in 2014.

Paul Buchanan, a former policy analyst and intelligence consultant for US government security agencies, said the failure of

intelligence agencies to detect Tarrant reflects a politically based decision to concentrate resources on monitoring the small number of Islamic extremists in New Zealand.

"They decided to go the whole hog, putting 80-85% of resources into detecting jihadists. The rest was devoted to Marxists, environmentalists, animal rights activists, union advocates. That left no resources for right wing, white supremacist groups."

The media have their part to play as well. Research released this year shows that terror attacks carried out by Muslims get 357% more media coverage than other terror attacks, backing up the idiotic claim that not all



(above) Napier Port closed to allow all staff to remember and reflect at various locations throughout the Port.



(1) The next target? The mosque in Asburton a few days after the March 15 attack. The terrorist was believed to be heading this way when he was apprehended.

Chinese sounding names.

It doesn't make much difference to the poor whether they are being ripped off by a rich Chinese parasite or a rich white Kiwi one, and there are plenty of those. Perhaps we should deal with all speculators instead.

Andrew Little in 2017 said: "Migrants are clogging up the roads, filling the houses and taking jobs. It's time for a breather."

The focus of police and spy agencies has been on left wing activists such as John Minto and Nicky Hager, and on Muslim communities while ignoring white supremacist groups.

While on a counter march against the hateful right wing resistance rallies held in Christchurch in 2013 and 2014, I observed police chatting with those members and

Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists are muslims which we hear sometimes in the pub or the workplace.

Despite Jacinda Ardern immediately labelling the March shootings a terrorist attack, media in other countries such as Canada and the UK did not use that term. Terrorist is a label that jumps quickly into headlines when the perpetrator is Muslim, but is handled with caution or tossed out entirely when the perpetrator is white.

Regarding the claim that this was our darkest day, Muslim leaders at the Hamilton Mosque the weekend following the attacks reminded us that large scale attacks on peaceful worshippers are not new here. In 1864 Crown troops set fire to a whare karakia in Rangiaowhia during morning prayers,

◀ incinerating non-combatants, including tamariki and kaumatua. There is an account of an eight year old boy who ran out of the burning whare, with his arms flailing in the air, and he was shot dead.

Perhaps better known is the Crown invasion of the Taranaki settlement of Parihaka in 1881, where the Maori occupants were promoting peace, praying and doing the poi. The Crown was taking that land

come hell or high water, and in doing so murdered and destroyed many lives.

Anwar Ghani, a spokesman for the Federation of Islamic Organisations, says: "There are dotted lines between Friday's massacre, hostility to Muslims among a segment of the NZ population and the global rise of extreme right wing movements."

He said verbal abuse, hate emails, hate phone calls and assaults are among the hate

crimes experienced daily in New Zealand.

I would hate to think of my loved ones or anybody I know being treated like that based on their beliefs, ethnicity, or just who they are. So, I think as Union members who fight for fairness we have a responsibility to promote inclusion and to challenge racist and prejudiced views whenever and wherever we encounter them. 🌐

Delegate training – Wellington



Twenty delegates attended training at the Woburn Training Centre on May 2. Initially training was arranged for delegates in the lower North Island but due to the high number available another training day is being arranged at Palmerston North. A stand out from this training day was the range of delegates from: Napier and Wellington ports, TransDev, Wellington, KiwiRail networks, mechanical and the Interislander. Positive feedback was received from the delegates (see letter to editor page 4).

AROUND THE BRANCHES

AUCKLAND RAIL

AFTER more than seven months of negotiations there is a new collective agreement between the RMTU and Transdev Auckland. The Union believes this is an excellent deal for members. The big ticket items for members are that this will be a three year agreement that provides some surety about their jobs. The pay increase is 3% on each year or CPI – whichever is the greatest. There is also an increase on sick leave from 6.5 to 10 days per annum. Locomotive engineers will now receive payment for stand-bys.

The negotiations were protracted and it was not until the members overwhelmingly agreed to take industrial action that the company moved from an intransigent position that was far from the reasonable claims our members had put forward, to a

position that the bargaining team felt it could go back to the members and recommend the proposed settlement.

CAF bargaining

Members at CAF have taken the unprecedented step of taking industrial action. The company are refusing to pay a fair wage to workers who are paid \$7,000 a year less than KiwiRail workers who are doing similar work. (see story page 4) Our members are only asking for what is fair but the Company's offer is a long way short from where it needs to be. There are other outstanding issues on the table that include coverage and increases in sick leave and bereavement leave.

The action is a partial strike that will see no repairs done on the rolling stock for the Auckland Metro service. This could result in cancellations and may be disruptive for

commuters.

CAF have employed mainly immigrant workers in Auckland whose jobs are tied to their visas. This is a tactic the company has apparently used in many countries and it enables them to pay lower wages. This means they have an unfair competitive advantage when it comes to the tendering process. Auckland Transport have shown time and again that they have no interest in the welfare of the workers employed by the companies that are successful in the tendering process. They only want to pay bottom dollar. Our members have said "Enough" and will be fighting for a fairer deal.


HP2 at TDAK

The HP2 process at Transdev Auckland has reached a crucial point. The Union will be taking a ratification ballot to proceed with trials for driver door operations (DDO) before the ballot is sent out. This is distinct

from driver only operations (DOO) as the train managers will remain on the trains. The purpose of these trials will be to see if DDO is both safer and more efficient than the current process. If it doesn't meet either

of these criteria it will mean that TDAK and AT will have to go back to the drawing board to find ways to improve dwell times. A series of meeting will be held to report to the members and answer questions.

Memorial Day

The branch commemorated Memorial Day on Sunday April 28 at the KiwiRail site at Otahuhu which was attended by members and branch executive. 


WAIKATO RAIL

THE local Waikato/BOP industrial council will be meeting on 20 May in Te Rapa, starting at 10am, with

the following proposed agenda items:

- ASL links in Kawerau;
- team leader rates in Mission Bush and Kinleith;
- problems with roster control;
- an update on the refuelling bay dispute

at Te Rapa;

- the coal train and manning levels; the CTO gradings at the Hamilton CT site;
- problem solving at the CT site; and
- local HPHE reports. 


BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

WE have discovered inconsistencies in investigating derailments between freight, who do very complete investigations and faithfully follow the Just and Fair Culture Policy, and

mechanical where there is very little investigating and an apparent disregard for the Just and Fair Policy. We thought that it was ONE KIWIRAIL!

We believe mechanical have been rostering-off employees on public holidays to reduce their wage bill, which we believe is

unlawful. Shane McNae, mechanical union delegate and BOP rail chair, has taken up this issue with KiwiRail and we await with interest the outcome.

We are looking at the HPHE terminal project at Murupara and are currently working through the terms of reference for this review. 

NAPIER PORT

NAPIER PORT is currently owned by the people of Hawkes Bay and is essentially managed by the Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC).

The ownership of the Port was 'managed' through a smoke and mirror setup of a holding company, purportedly for 'tax purposes'.

Many of the membership at large will be acutely aware of the impending partial sale of Napier Port. The consultation process has been viewed by many as deceptive and far from transparent, with numerous failures by the HBRC to clearly inform its citizens in a timely and effective manner of the real reasons for the sell down of their most valuable and highest earning asset.

The reasons forwarded by the HBRC have never been consistent, and this only added to fuel to the fire. The conspiracy theories on Facebook pages lit up like a JFK investigation naming Elvis as the second shooter. These theories extended from

the bizarre to the extreme including a new berth for Chinese aircraft carriers and more cruise ships to steal our water.

The one consistent factor has been the need for Napier Port to construct a new berth. I feel the reasons and justifications for a new berth were never clearly conveyed to the people of the Hawkes Bay.

After an exhaustive and extensive consenting process consent was finally granted three years after it began. The final 164 page consent had over 100 conditions and nine management (requirements?) attached to it.

While this process lurched and groaned through a myriad of legislative demands, the cost of the new berth grew at a faster rate than Major Brown's Auckland railway tunnel project.

* November 2016 -	\$80 million
* July 2017 -	\$100 m
* April 2018 -	\$125 m
* June 2018 -	\$142 m
* April 2019 -	\$170-\$190 m

This bloated and sluggish bureaucratic


process has delayed the project and could cost the good people of Hawkes Bay a fair chunk of money.

On a positive note Napier Port are actively engaging in fatigue risk management (FRS).

This process is operations-led and intends to draw on the knowledge of people at the coal face who experience fatigue. They can share the insights and lead us all to understand how others experience fatigue.

The great aspect is that there is a high membership participation in the FRS working group and it is strongly supported by the management and at board level.

We look forward to this process developing into a realistic and live set of protocols to further enhance safety in our workplace.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge Phil Spanswick for his assistance over IEA member and ship planner Rachel Mackey. The outcome was redundancy following a bit of a battle with NPC. I doubt if clause 15 would have got it to this level. 

HUTT WORKSHOPS

AS our regular scribe is on leave, it behoves me as the branch secretary to pen a few words, so here goes.

April saw us receive a formal update of the recently confirmed work-plan for the next three years. The order book is chock-a-block full and will require some careful planning and management to get us through the work and deliver on the timeframes negotiated.

To this end, we need to continue with our recruitment plans in the form of getting around 34 full-time tradesmen mechanical engineers now and a significant number of fixed term staff to help with the project work.

On top of this we must continue with our apprentice intake programme. All three initiatives will enable us to meet the company's objectives and to go some way towards closing the skills gap in the industry as a whole.

Sadly however, at the end of the meeting, our long serving site manager Karl Bouterey announced that due to a recent medical event (serious health scare), he was stepping down from the role and moving aside for someone else to take us forward into the next chapter of Hutt's evolution. Karl has been a key salesman and motivator to get Hutt into the position of being regarded as the one-stop-shop for

all hands-on engineering matters be it rolling stock or specialist road vehicles, and other special projects. Over his 7-8 year tenure he has relentlessly pursued that goal and has, by and large, achieved that. He of course did not achieve that in isolation – many joint initiatives were required and these were carried out with enhanced co-operation utilising the tools and principles of HPHE and this must continue to be fully ensconced into the operation until it achieves the stated goal of becoming business-as-usual. We wish Karl well in getting his health back and thank him for his sterling service.

Production manager Peter Venn will be filling in until a replacement is recruited.

Another long-awaited announcement was the CEO's appointment of former board chairman Greg Miller. Apparently his appointment is effective immediately so we expect to see some communications from him outlining his vision for the next few years. We certainly expect him to build on former CEO Peter Reidy's efforts and initiatives, and to consolidate the gains we have enjoyed over the last four plus years. Acting CEO Todd Moyle reverts back to his COO position but is also confirmed as the deputy CEO.

Our GM Adam Williams recently sat in on a pay and progression report-back session from the workforce development subgroup. Adam gave us an update on things including his recent efforts in trying to get

some money for a new wheel-set operation. Some days later we got the message that the KiwiRail board has (finally) allowed us to go to tender to get a turnkey operation which is another piece of good (investment) news, not only for us but for the company. Continued investment in the company and its people is delivering results and we must keep this going in order to get us to where we need to be.

The staff survey that was deferred until May has now kicked-off so it is expected we'll all know the interim results by the time these notes are published. Of interest will be the changes and trends – a good indicator of the success (or not) of the many improvement initiatives since 2018. The next big indicator after that will be the annual report that will show how the business has fared overall, especially in increasing its share of the domestic and international freight markets.

We recently had a delegation of H&S reps from CentrePort visit. They were keen to see our H&S practices in action and share experiences and difficulties.

Earlier this year some of our teams had achieved 17 years LTI-free which is another significant H&S milestone for Hutt Workshops.

By the time you read these notes we should have the results of the vote for the position of national president. This is but one of several votes/ballots scheduled for this year so make sure your votes count.

Until next time, take care out there. 🌐

NELSON PORT

IT is shaping up to be a busy year for the Nelson branch. We have negotiations coming up for our CEA. The agreement is due to expire on June 23, so we will be kicking off on May 13. With members now spread across the port it is important for us to be able to get something for everyone. Our major focus this year will be on recognition of skills and experience and a special focus on those who languish at the bottom of the food chain with a view to dragging

them up to a higher level. We also seek to create more fairness across the Port to get everyone on an even playing field.

We welcomed 40 new members from the C3 Nelson branch. These new members have joined the branch with a view to negotiating a collective agreement for their work place. They face several issues not the least of which is a hostile employer and bullying management. There are several issues around health and safety including fatigue management and breaks.


C3 have come to Nelson and taken a large share of the log business and have been able to do so by coming in with a low price. They have done this on the back of low wages and a mainly casualised work force. We need to protect our own conditions by helping those who drag the standard down. Another example of multinational corporates exploiting local workers in order to send their profits overseas. We anticipate a tough battle ahead.

Port Nelson faces the task of training a new CEO as Martin Byrne leaves us after 15 years at the helm. We have always had a

◀ good relationship with our CEO and hope that this will continue. There is always some trepidation around such changes.

The Port continues to be busy as the region recovers from a tough few months of droughts and fires. Exports now appear

to be flying out from the port, something that will only be aided by a cut in the OCR. Logs, wine and fruit continue to lead the way, while timber products, fish and meat make up most of the rest. As always with seasonality, a few months ago we didn't

have enough to keep us all busy, now we struggle to have enough people to get the job done. Not the worst problem to have. 

WEST COAST RAIL

We have been busy with weather bombs of late. These have created some big washouts and over the weekend of April 6-8 a block of line closures on the Midland Line gave us the opportunity to replace Bridge 38, upgrade a road crossing and replace beams and sleepers on bridge 58. The track guys have been flat out most weekends doing rail and ballast discharges and replacing broken rails in the Otira Tunnel.

As readers may be aware NZTA have put a compliance order on KiwiRail to do with working around hi-rail plant and machinery after a raft of near misses and injuries. It is great to see management coming together with the RMTU, HSAT members and ground staff to work on a solution. A two day forum was held on April 15 and 16 in Christchurch and some really good ideas were put forward. The second part was in Wellington on May 1 and 2. The guts of it is every worksite with hi-rail movements will have a controller who will be in both visual and radio communication with the digger operator to ensure no one can enter the danger zone of these machines. Doubtless, by the time you read, this more information will have been rolled out.

This is of particular importance to us here on the Coast as it was one of our members, Paul Thomson, who suffered the loss of his lower leg in an incident involving a hi-rail digger.

On a positive note we've welcomed Paul back to work where he is now doing valuable work bolstering our support team in the office and out in the field. We know that Paul is continuing to put a lot of hard work into his recovery and we are very pleased to see the progress he is making. He has also signed up for delegate training which is another positive move on his part.

The change of regime in the Beehive in late 2017 and subsequent events has

prompted one of our longer serving members to share some of his views with your scribe. As a grass roots RTMU member with close to 40 years-service in various operational roles in rail he has experienced changes of ownership from the government to the likes of Wisconsin Rail and Toll and then back to the government with all attempting to stamp their mark according to their mandate, or the political flavour of whoever occupied the Treasury benches at any particular time.

Like many of our veteran members, when he started New Zealand rail employed close to 23,000 people and he can remember Richard Prebble campaigning that he would 'Save Rail'. This is what our member said: 'In reality this 'saving of rail' resulted in mass redundancies, closure of workshops and a massive downscaling of services to the point that KiwiRail now employs fewer than 5,000 workers. Retrenchment was the thinking in those days, so apprenticeships and general trades training fell out of favour, to the point we are at today with critical shortages of tradesmen. Not enough young people are coming through as old hands retire. The railways were a very good trainer for the trades, but due to retrenchment or contracting out this was largely consigned to history.

Over nine years of a National-led government the rail system was treated as a political football, with successive ministers and boards of directors leaving us wondering who the decision makers worked for, or what political interference occurred in major decision making. Now we have a rail friendly government in place, change is afoot, and it's good to see Hillside Workshops slowly being reactivated due to an increasing workload. It should not have been decommissioned in the first place but at last we seem to be turning things around.

Some of those decisions under National, like buying DL locos, have left us

with a legacy of continuing issues, as we've found out the hard way. Thankfully the Labour-led government stepped in and axed the plan to withdraw electric traction on the North Island main trunk. Electric railways are the future, and the thought of mothballing a working existing system in today's energy conscious environment just beggars belief. Another strange idea was the proposed opting out of rail capable ships on the Cook Strait. Surely giving the Arahura the required attention to keep her going until the new replacement ships were built would have been cheaper than the ongoing costs relating to container transfer systems at Picton and Wellington? Too late now, but if we had the current government back then the system might look a bit different. Thankfully sanity has prevailed and we've committed to replacing our ferries with rail capable ships.

A few years ago the company decided on a turnaround plan, part of which was to increase productivity. This was obtained, by employing a productivity manager who eventually worked his way around the network getting more productivity out of existing resources – notably in rostering. To give the devil his due some of the changes looked, on a superficial level, to be warranted, but unfortunately, as chopping and tightening went on and staff were not replaced we all paid the price.

Management was approached numerous times but our protests were largely ignored, and it got to the point the company could not at times run trains due to staff shortages. Train services were cancelled or side tracked until staff became available. This is the result when you run staff levels down and do not carry a bit of surplus in a rostering system to cover unplanned situations as they occur. Our managers need to be accountable. In spite of warnings from staff that staffing levels were too low, all rosters had to be approved by the productivity manager and the managers at

local level just let the shrinkage continue, as it made their budgets look good. These managers need to look back and learn. So here we are with severe staff shortages in some areas and long lead times to get new people up to competency. This issue will be around for a while yet. In the meantime the turnaround plan was quietly shelved,

the productivity manager is gone, and the company is scrambling to undo all the damage.

Finally, this ANZAC Day and Workers' Memorial Day are sombre reminders of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice not just at war but at work.

Of course here on the Coast we are

acutely aware of this with the commendable efforts to effect a re-entry into Pike River Mine, the scene of what can happen when worker participation in health and safety gets side lined.

So please brothers and sisters – stay safe and if you see anything unsafe SPEAK OUT! 🗣️

CANTERBURY RAIL

AS the last issue of *The Transport Worker* hit the streets we experienced the terrible events of March 15 when dozens of our fellow citizens were murdered by a white supremacist terrorist at Friday prayers in two Christchurch mosques. Thankfully none of our members were directly affected but all of us were indirectly impacted, to one degree or another. We are a diverse bunch, the stereotype of Christchurch being a monocultural city is simply not true. Any gathering of KiwiRail

and Toll members is one where members of different ethnicities and religions join together as part of the family that is the RMTU. Our Union, and the union movement in general, both in New Zealand and internationally, has a proud history of fighting racism and fascism in all its forms and so we stand united in condemning the so called 'Alt-Right' and their loathsome, hate filled ideology.

This determination to resist attempts to divide workers who are united in common cause was forcefully expressed on Workers' Memorial Day when the RMTU stood

alongside our fellow workers in Unions Canterbury to hear from the Imam of the Al-Noor Mosque speak as part of the annual ceremony held in Sydenham. As always this was a moving occasion, made all the more poignant by Iman Gamal Fouda and other secular and religious speakers, including local MPs and councillors. Thank you to KiwiRail and our signals members for once again helping to make the ceremony a success and thank you to the nurses' union for providing refreshments. It was wonderful to see such a good turnout from our members, both from port and rail branches.

It's been a busy autumn which has seen

Sickness, accident and death



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

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

You could be next to miss out!

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

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

some members retire and new folk come on board. We farewelled Roger Harris, who started at Addington Workshops as an apprentice and ended his career as a mechanical engineer at Waltham. We wish Roger all the very best for a long and happy retirement – although he was adamant he was not going to put his feet up entirely. Ralph Williams, another of our mechanical engineers, also retired and was given a good send off by the lads and lasses. Dave Sparrow, track inspector in Kaikoura, is also leaving us for a well-deserved rest after decades on the job (and a lot of work in the dark apparently).

On a very sad note we lost Phil Steyne, from the container repair depot, to a brain tumour in April. Phil was taken from us far too young, only in his mid-fifties, and the suddenness of his death deeply shocked all of us. There was a good turn out from both his workmates and managers at his funeral. One point the branch wishes to strongly emphasise is the way in which KiwiRail management alleviated some of the anxiety Phil and his wife were experiencing in Phil's final weeks by processing his medical retire-

ment with speed. Everyone, from Adam Williams to Alan Hill, Douglas Medlycott and Hilary Sinclair-Hyde, were thoughtful and compassionate and made what needed to happen, happen speedily. We're quick to jump on the bosses when they screw up so it's only right and proper we express our gratitude when they get it right.

Over in freight we have a number of new faces, including some who have shifted from Wellington and Auckland to drive trains down here. As the nights get longer and the weather colder the job does get tougher for the shift workers, so spare a thought for the shunters out there in all weathers and around the clock.

By the time you read this the RMTU will have run yet another delegate and active members' training day – great that we are educating not just elected delegates but many younger members who want to know what the RMTU is all about. This is part of our succession planning to keep our union strong. Thanks to Rose Pettigrew and Graham Lawn for making the training room available at Middleton.

On the question of delegate develop-

ment our South Island Mechanical Industrial Council representative, Luke James, attended and, by all accounts, enthusiastically participated in a five day course on 'Skills of Organising' held by the Council of Trades Unions in March and April. The course was divided into a three day and a two day block and attendees were required to do a presentation on the work they had done on behalf of their union and its members between blocks. We've heard nothing bad about Luke's presentation which, given he was on a course with a bunch of union officials including teachers and nurses means he's either a reformed man or bribed his fellow students to keep quiet.

Looking back over the past few months it's been both the worst and best of times in our branch. Our city has suffered a huge trauma and we've said goodbye to some long serving members. We have come through this together and new young members have joined the RMTU family. To our fellow members around the country, thank you for your messages of support. Everyone, stay safe and let's look forward to spring – it's not that far away! 🌱

LYTTELTON PORT

THE RMTU read with interest LPC's CEO Peter Davie's announcement of his intention to retire at the end of this year. As members will be aware, relations between management and the RMTU have been poor for some time and your Union has heard loud and clear the membership's views about the way they were treated during and in the aftermath, of the prolonged and bitter dispute last year.

In recent months we have had a change of branch secretary, a couple of legal cases on the go relating to what we believe are unjustified dismissals, both Maritime New Zealand and Worksafe stepping in to audit LPC and an issue in marine relating to a proposal to operate the new tug as a two-crew operation. We also have a major health and safety issue to address around fatigue. It's true to say that the logistics officers' collective agreement was settled and ratified recently but that took far too long.

The fact is we've continued to be in conflict with management on a number of fronts despite the 'resolution' of the dispute in 2018 and the settlement of the main waterfront collective agreement.

The branch has reached out to the new board chair, Margaret Devlin, and lobbied local and national politicians, voicing our concerns at the toxic nature of the relationship between the RMTU and LPC.

Of late, we have had a number of positive discussions with senior managers. The challenge is that with a lack of trust between the parties it is extremely difficult to build the kind of productive relationship that we have with some of the other employers we deal with.

Our South Island organiser, John Kerr, met with Davie last month and we've agreed to try and improve matters between us. Kerr has, to this point, been treated as the devil incarnate by senior management and barely allowed to show his face at the port.

However, now he has been welcomed back with open arms and is currently struggling to stay afloat amongst the sea of coffee invitations from senior LPC management. The wooing has been relentless and the pheromones palpable.


Senior branch officials will meet with the board chair and will also meet senior management to set the rules of engagement for regular meetings of the parties.

There was a commitment in the terms of settlement that ended the dispute last year to do some joint work on realising the unharnessed potential of the plant maintenance department and we've agreed to work on a joint presentation to make to members with a view to trying to kick this off.

It is very early days and we all understand that trust is essential if we are to make progress, but that is a slow growing plant that will only flourish over time. As discussed above, there are a number of outstanding issues, the handling of which may or may not assist in building that trust.

The departure of the current CEO at the end of the year is an opportunity and a challenge for both LPC and the CEO. There

is the potential for Davie to secure a positive legacy for his successor. Equally, there is the risk matters will deteriorate. What

happens next is up to both ourselves and management – we either fix this together or not at all. 

TIMARU RAIL

WE'VE had a busy time of late here in Timaru. Firstly, and on a very positive note, we met together with our comrades from the local RMTU Port branch on Workers' Memorial Day for the inaugural Timaru ceremony to mark this most important occasion. Our branch secretary Doug Blakie, along with deputy mayor Richard Lyon and RMTU general secretary all spoke very well at the site of our new memorial stone across the road from the port administration offices. Our branch, together with the port branch, the council and our employers worked well together to ensure the stone and the engraved plaque were in place for the big day. Well done everyone, it was great to see we generated some very positive media coverage and we are sure this event will grow in years to come. Thanks to Steve Pye for his support

on behalf of KiwiRail management.

Our operations members have moved into a new abode across the road in what was formerly exclusively the networks depot. Not a big move in terms of distance but it does mean members from these two parts of KiwiRail see more of one another which is no bad thing.

We watched the reaction of our brothers and sisters in the Christchurch yard to what appeared to us, and them, a bit of a knee jerk response by management to the runaway wagon in the North Island.

This has increased manual handling and the potential for related injuries, exponentially. We totally support our members' stance in Middleton.


Before issuing such edicts management should really speak with, and listen to, the frontline workers on the job. Our understanding is this view is also shared by our

fellow members in Otago and Southland.

We've welcomed some new members from elsewhere in New Zealand in the past few months. The local council is promoting Timaru as an affordable and pleasant place to live and it appears that some RMTU members who have been working for Transdev have heard that message loud and clear. The combination of affordable housing, the absence of congestion and good schools and public amenities make Timaru a great town to raise a family and enjoy a healthy work-life balance as many of our long serving members here know well.

Finally, it looks like the promised increase in funding, including the Provincial Growth Fund, is starting to flow into rail at long last.

It's particularly heartening to see the expansion taking place at Hillside after all the heartache of the last ten years or so.

Until next time, wrap up warm over the winter months and stay safe. 

TIMARU PORT

ANOTHER busy few months here in Timaru with the branch being very active on a number of fronts. Like all of us we were shocked and saddened by the awful terror attack that left so many innocent dead and wounded up the road in Christchurch. At the time of his arrest the terrorist was reportedly heading south for the mosque in Ashburton to repeat his appalling acts of hatred. We stand with our brothers and sisters in Christchurch in condemning this dreadful incident and, as working people and proud union members, remember that the right of politics has only one message – that of division and hatred.

On a more positive note our members in Quality Marshalling have been working for over six months on a ground-breaking joint fatigue management project. This has proved very successful in gathering


data around shift patterns and fatigue and enabled management and the RMTU to assess the risks and monitor these.

It has led to tweaks in labour allocation and staffing and, although it's early days, looks like productivity has improved as well. A classic example of how workers and managers, working cooperatively, can achieve results that benefit everyone.

We've also been working with our comrades in the Timaru rail branch and the employers we both have relationships with, together with the city council, on a project that saw its realisation on 28 April, International Workers' Memorial Day. This was the commissioning and placing of a memorial stone across the road from the port administrative offices in preparation for the inaugural ceremony marking this important day in the union calendar. The deputy mayor of Timaru, Richard Lyon,

gave a very good speech, which was followed by words from the Rail branch chair Doug Blakie and RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. RMTU members stood alongside managers from Prime Port, Quality Marshalling, KiwiRail and Toll, all of whom had supported the project in one way or the other.

The local newspaper sent a couple of journalists and did a very positive story in the following day's edition. All in all a good piece of work that has brought together union members, managers and the local community. We are sure this event will grow in years to come.

As we go to press the latest news is that the two branches in Timaru are going to hold a 'sports afternoon'. The proposal to have cross country running and sea swimming as events was narrowly voted down and we've settled for darts and pool. The only problem now is how we handicap the branch president! 

OTAGO RAIL

FIRSTLY, we've been working hard to ensure our track workers have a voice, not just here but across the South Island, with KNIC rep Gareth Bachop putting in some long days on behalf of members. The KNIC send out regular updates to delegates via e-mail and it's good to see the amount of vital work being done that may otherwise go unheralded.

It was good to hear that Graham Irvine had a successful kidney replacement at Christchurch hospital. Our South Island organiser, John Kerr, met Graham and his sister by chance as they were taking the air post-op and was pleasantly surprised at how well Graham looked after such a major procedure. We wish him all the very best for a speedy recovery and many years of good health.

Also from one of our long serving members, we received this from Doug Tamatea: "On Anzac Day, 16 RMTU from network services and operations attended a kapa haka wananga at Te Whanau Arohanui Marae at Waitati. This was led by our kaiako (teacher) Harlem Uiti-Collins. The group is called Te Ara Tiira - Otepoti (Steel Pathway – Dunedin) and is named after the carving that adorns the wall of the network services building. For many of our men this was the first time being involved with any tikanga Maori. The group was formed so our guys could acknowledge and show respect to any members celebrating a milestone or other significant events. Through the group our members are coming closer together and taking the 'One KiwiRail' kaupapa to the next level.

E kore te tangata e pakari te tai marino – one must step out of one's comfort zone to enhance ones skills, knowledge and capabilities."

Great stuff comrades! We can't do enough of this work to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the shared culture that underpins our RMTU whanau in KiwiRail.

Less positive has been the debacle we're witnessing in our health sector with yet another dispute, this time involving the junior doctors. It is doubly significant for our region as the health minister is the MP for Dunedin North. Our branch has been supporting the Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) on the picket line as have other unionists in Dunedin and to be blunt we are extremely disappointed at the lack of backing from the CTU. We know the RMTU, MUNZ and the Nurses' union have all made their voices heard expressing solidarity with the RDA and applaud this.

Over at Dunedin Railways the season is winding up and our members are looking ahead to re-negotiating their collective agreement later this year. This part of our branch is rejuvenated thanks in part to some very astute succession planning by the long serving former delegate, the indefatigable Lyall Kelpie. Given all the work that has been done around the Living Wage movement it's time to have a big push on this front at Dunedin Railways.

Over at KiwiRail the LEs are increasingly fed up about the hours they are putting



Graham Irvine, four days after receiving one of his wife's kidneys.

in bailing out management who are full of good intentions but still bear the responsibility for what is a very poor roster. At this stage it's just grumbling but unless something is done very quickly we fear that there will be either a serious fatigue related incident or the members will take matters into their own hands. Everyone in this branch is acutely aware that this is the 20th anniversary of the Waipahi disaster and we all know that we cannot take short cuts when it comes to safety.

This was underlined on Workers' Memorial Day when we had a well-attended ceremony at the memorial in Dunedin. One of our speakers was Dunedin South MP Clare Curran

who said all the right words. Thanks Clare, it would have been good if your colleague David Clark had turned up to listen to you given that the doctor's strike is over fatigue and safe rostering.

To finish on a positive note, our delegate at Hillside, Peter Buckley, is busier than a bee with a pot of honey signing up new members. This is because Hillside is slowly but surely growing and taking on more and more work. As well as the heavy lift locomotive and wagon maintenance the lads and lasses are banging out some very high quality log wagons. These are a sight to behold and testimony to the tradition of craft and skill nurtured over the years by our members. It's great to see some very enthusiastic young people being taken on by KiwiRail to do this work.

We're sure the next few months will be as busy as those that have just gone, with a new CEO at KiwiRail and bargaining kicking off at our neighbouring Port Otago branch, but we remain ready for anything. Until next time, stay safe and stay RMTU! 🚂

PORT CHALMERS

THIS branch was delighted to welcome our brother Shawn Hurring back in April. Shawn is a valued member and one who has had a tough time

of late but. The Branch, RMTU National Office staff, our national president and Port Otago management have been working on a programme which has led to him returning to work. A great result for everyone.

On a less positive note we remain disappointed at management's refusal to engage with us on the issue of fatigue. The e-mail trail tells a sorry tale. Avoidance of reasonable questions, obfuscation and denial and a passive/aggressive approach to offers of help and assistance do nothing

◀ to promote the kind of productive employment relationship our Union wishes to have with employers. One only has to look at the good work our brothers and sisters have done, and are doing, in KiwiRail and at Quality Marshalling in Timaru to see that there are real gains to be made here – both in terms of increased safety and in boosted productivity. The issue isn't going away and a strategy of avoidance will not work. This will become a matter for bargaining if we don't sort it out beforehand.

We had a branch meeting in March at which we progressed preparations for bargaining and discussed remits and claims. By the time you read this the branch will have initiated bargaining for the renewal of our collective agreement and the process of developing a log of claims to take to the table will be well advanced. We may even have opened formal negotiations. The membership have been clear that going into this year's bargaining they will countenance no reduction in our terms and conditions and are looking to achieve real wage growth over the length of the agreement.

Matt Dougherty attended the CTU

course 'Skills of Organising' in March and April. This is a five day course run in three and two day blocks with a six week period in between. Participants do a presentation to their peers in the second block on work they have done on behalf of their union and its members in the intervening six weeks. Given that all the other course participants, with the exception of an official from the Professional Firefighters' Union, were full time paid officials for their unions, Matt, together with the three other RMTU members, was in a minority. By all accounts he acquitted himself well, demonstrating a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to the challenges of the course. Well done Matt, we look forward to drawing on your freshly honed skills and knowledge as we go into bargaining this year.

Our branch planned an s26 stop-work meeting to enable us to attend Workers' Memorial Day in town alongside comrades from Unions Otago and the RMTU Otago rail branch. Alas the vagaries of shipping meant the scheduled ship for that day was notable for its absence and we had to cancel the stop-work meeting as very few people

were actually working! A good few people from the branch nevertheless turned out for a very moving ceremony on this most important of days.

The branch wishes one of our long serving members, Norm Pulham, all the very best for a well-deserved and long and happy retirement. More and more of our members are approaching this milestone which heralds a big change for them personally as well as the future of our branch. One of the great things about the RMTU supported Harbour Superannuation Plan is that members can put by a good nest egg for their retirement.

Lastly, as the previous issue of the Transport Worker was published we, together with all our brothers and sisters, were shocked and appalled at the atrocity committed by the fascist, racist, terrorist in Christchurch on March 15. For us in this part of the world it was doubly disturbing that the alleged perpetrator was someone who had embedded himself on our community. As unionists, we condemn the ideology of division and hatred that this individual and those of his ilk seek to spread in our communities. 🇳🇿

SOUTHLAND RAIL

ANOTHER busy time here over the past few months in the beautiful deep south. Lots of movement in staff and training, the likes of which has not been seen around these parts for decades.

Firstly, welcome to new rail operator Sosia Pule who transferred from Toll. Great to have you on board brother. Also Mike Batt who transferred down from Dunedin and is benefiting from even more affordable housing (the average house price is under \$300,000), the world's southernmost FIA-certified motor racing track and council subsidised further education for his wife – not to mention the best rail depot in the country. Mike, all that extra cash you've pocketed from the affordable housing can now be burnt up on the 800m main straight at Teretonga in your hot Mazda. Lap record is 0.51.206 set by Greg Murphy. Unbelievable it was in a Holden.

We're still looking for more staff so whether you're a petrol head or not, why

not consider moving south?

Rail operators Daniel Weatherall and Jason

Stevens will have begun their remote control operator training and Daniel Burton is now fully qualified as an RCO. Good luck to the former and congratulations to the latter. RCO Bruce Briggs has been medically retired after 38 plus years. Bruce spent a lot of his early years in the port of Bluff, survived all the restructuring and transferred to Invercargill. We wish him all the best.

On retirements, your scribe recently spoke to a retired LE's wife who has suggested on numerous occasions that he look for further employment. Knowing this gentleman was always one to count the pennies, one can only assume that the request was made, not out of dire financial need, but for 'other' reasons! Ahem.

A fair bit has been done to upgrade our local infrastructure. A traffic management plan has been introduced into the yard, no more hooning. The car park has been

brought into order with designated parking areas and traffic flow. The CT sight has received a well overdue upgrade with new seal and drainage. There has also been an increase in staffing there with the appointment of an office assistant who will also help out in operations and the day to day running of the depot. This will mean we'll get more office space too and the operations building is about to get a new roof, new kitchen and flooring. Looks like all that talk about the current government being pro-rail isn't just talk.

The end of the high season is fast approaching which will be welcomed by all. This will be a good opportunity for everyone to catch their breath as we've all been under pressure with the lack of staffing – a legacy of previous management and nine years of a National Government that hated rail. The next high season will hopefully see us in a much better position.

Right O, off to prepare for duck shooting.

Till next time, stay safe! 🇳🇿



John McDonald at work at Dunedin Railways.



(above) Jed O'Donoghue with Dunedin members.



(r) Luke James and Roger Harris at Roger's farewell BBQ.



Ralph Williams (centre) with Luke James (left) and Graham Ealam (right) at Ralph's retirement BBQ.

BRANCH VISITS

Les McIntyre of Canterbury rail wonders who stole his desk.



New to Rail and to the RMTU (l) Brooke Loper and Chris Harkness on the job at Hillside.



Ben Bishop working hard at Hillside.

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