

THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

JUN 2022

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



Workers' Memorial Day



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When a series of mistakes almost turned to tragedy aboard the Nord Yilan log carrier.

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TR56 gets a fitting farewell from a range of nostalgic rail enthusiasts with a specially prepared cake.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Taken at the commemoration for Workers' Memorial Day in Napier a father wears a t-shirt to remember the son he lost at work. See pages 14-17

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**Wayne Butson,
General secretary
RMTU**

Vexed negotiations

HALFWAY through the year already. Time flies when you're having fun they say, so I must be ecstatic at present. The bargaining treadmill is well underway with a number of collective agreements currently being negotiated for members with various employers.

The financial legacy of Covid and the escalating cost of living within our economy are posing challenges for obtaining outcomes which are widely supported by members.

It is clear employers understand the challenges but they are faced with 'sustainable affordability' and some of this has to factor into our thinking. There is absolutely no benefit to us in getting good bargaining outcomes if the employer looks to then shed staff in order to reduce costs.

Rail in particular, has developed a very complex bargaining framework.

We have an ever-increasing clarion-call for external and internal market relativity for hourly rates but, in our quest for ever creative ways of delivering increases to members, we are altering structures of pay scales and progression arrangements.

So, where we may have taken 21 years to fully ascend a service and skill-based pay scale we may alter it now to 16 years followed by increases without altered printed rates.

This then becomes a 'relativity' claim with other employers – and so the ratchet clicks as they say.

One thing is certain though, the RMTU delivers very good bargaining outcomes for its members from top to bottom of the wages tree.

Our staff and elected reps on the bargaining teams are fearless and ferocious in their focus on delivering real and meaningful wage increases for Union members!

Another area of strong focus is port H&S. We have all seen the terrible death and injury on the waterfront in recent times and our heartfelt aroha and sympathy goes out to our comrades and colleagues who toil daily on that workplace battlefield.

The RMTU and MUNZ are funding a major study of port H&S and have employed Hazel Armstrong, of Armstrong Thompson Law, in conjunction with Maritime New Zealand to produce the report.

In rail all of us who were around at the time know what a game changer the Ministerial Inquiry into the H&S of Tranz Rail workers was when Margaret Wilson ordered it.

We now have a golden opportunity to repeat this success with a close look at New Zealand's ports following the strong public support of the Minister of Workplace Relations and Safety Michael Wood.

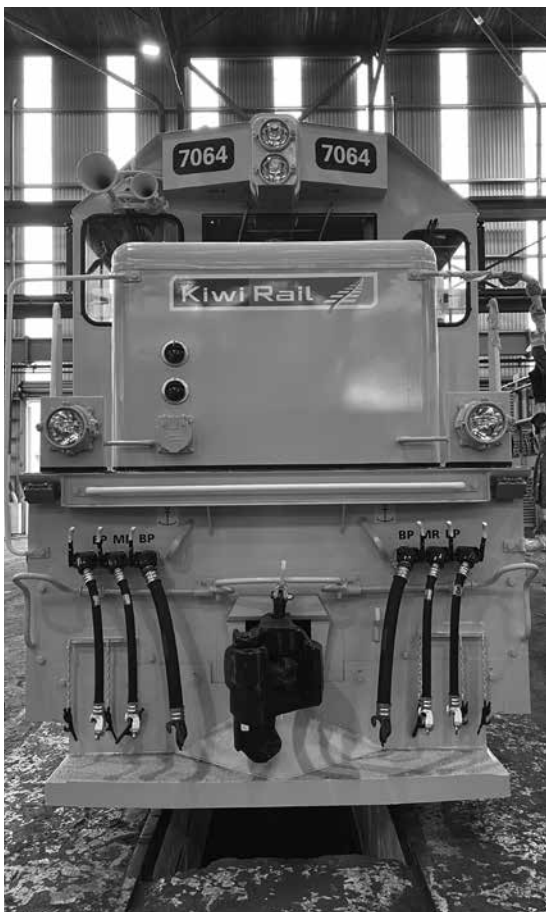
For some time I have spoken to many and varied groups about the waterfront being the wild west of H&S. The reality is that there are no rules or regulations and very limited guidance materials for key conditions and factors in ports. This includes ground conditions, container stacking heights, stacking methods, the width of lanes between container stacks, hours of work, fatigue guidelines and so the list goes on. This cannot continue and we must make changes if the carnage, pain, agony and

◀ suffering is to stop. I commend Minister Wood and also the way in which Maritime NZ has responded to this directive. There is a more in depth story in this issue of the magazine on this topic which I urge you to read in full (see pages 10 to 13).

We are in full scale preparation for our 2022 Biennial Conference which will be held at the Brentwood Hotel in Kilbirnie, Wellington from 18 to 20 October. This is the forum where the Union's priorities and goals are set for the next two year period and is the only time where we bring representatives from every branch of the Union together for a single Union purpose.

As you read this I shall have given three months notice of my intention to retire from the National Management Committee as required in my employment agreement. The September issue of this Magazine will be the last that I will be responsible for. I particularly enjoy leading the creation of each issue as it is the masthead publication of our Union and reflects our morale and its membership, especially through the Branch Notes section. So, as I get to the end of this contribution I find myself reflecting on my 23 years as general secretary of the mighty RMTU and I have to say we have all come a very long way. 🇳🇿

Refurbished beacon



*Not the view you would want on a level crossing!
Another fine product from Hutt Shops.*

Member Vs ACC

Dear Editor,
In April 2015 and August 2019 I suffered a couple of workplace injuries to my neck and shoulder resulting in being medically retired from the rail in 2021 due to not being able to return to my pre-injury role as a train manager at Paekakariki.

ACC decided they would no longer cover my injury in June 2020 saying it was degenerative.

Without the help of the RMTU and its members I would not have been in a position to fight ACC to overturn their decision.

After a long drawn out process I am ecstatic to announce we were successful in gaining coverage for my injury.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to you all for your continued support.

Once again thank you.
Allison Taranchokov
Train manager, Paekakariki.

Retirements & resignations

Dear Editor,
I am resigning from the RMTU as of 14 April 2022 as I will be retiring after 47 years in the rail industry. Thanks for all the good work the union has done for the rail workers and for the years ahead.

Kia Kaha.
Keith Bennett
Signals maintainer, Tauranga.

Dear Editor,
After 27 years employment with KiwiRail, all on the Interislander (or its myriad other names) on operational restructure at terminal level.

I recently decided to move away from the business and pursue a new career elsewhere.

I would like to thank RMTU

members and Wayne, Todd, and the rest of the HQ team who have assisted me in various ways.

Although I moved through the ranks and held management roles, the relationship between myself and the Union – both at local and national office level – has always been one of mutual respect and based on truth and trust.

The assistance provided to me recently has been outstanding and I would leave with a word of advice for all members – support your Union as they will be there for you when you need them.

Stronger together.
B J Hildyard
Picton.

Dear Editor,
I regret to inform you of my resignation from the Rail and Maritime Transport Union following my departure from Transdev Wellington after four and a half years loyal service.

The decision to resign wasn't easy, however, I feel the time is right to move forward to other dreams and aspirations.

To my Union brothers and sisters, remain vigilant, remain strong, remain one entity and most of all, continue fighting the good fight.

It has been a pleasure working within such a strong Union and I wish everyone at national headquarters all the very best for their futures and I'd like to wish the same to everyone within the RMTU.

Nga mihi.
Andrew (AJ) Palmer,
Passenger operator,
Transdev Wellington.





Sam Kabui Todd Valster and Myles Carter at Petone ANZAC Flagstaff

ANZAC Day

THIS year the Hutt City Council in conjunction with the Petone Community Board cancelled the public event at the Petone ANZAC Memorial Flagpole for railway workers. However, the RMTU will always remember those who fell in both world wars and on workplace battlefields. The Petone service is always most poignant as it is the only official railway memorial site in New Zealand and the flagpole is half NZ and half Australian native woods. Originally there were two memorial sites, one in Sydney and one in Petone. Sadly the Australian pole was lost during a major infrastructure upgrade and the site was demolished rather than moved to a safer place



(r) Hutt Workshops branch secretary Myles Carter lays a wreath at the flagstaff.

Rail's bright future with Labour's 2022 Budget



ONCE again the Labour government has shown its commitment to rail by allocating \$312.3 million from its 2022 Budget to the industry thereby cementing improvements already made and making great inroads into its future proofing.

"This is a shot in the arm for the industry," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson, "and a morale booster for our members who have stuck with rail through some pretty dire times. Since the late 1980s they have endured some really hard tough decisions and insecure work conditions. They have watched its best assets sold to fill the pockets of greedy new owners, suffered National's disdain for rail and hoped and prayed the small inroads of the Helen Clark government would eventually bear fruit. Well now it has and we're stoked."

And the Union is not alone. KiwiRail management is also excited.

KiwiRail acting chief executive David Gordon in a press statement said their network investment programme would now see greater and quicker improvements to infrastructure across the country.

"Previous Budgets funded the first three years of the programme and Budget 2022 builds on this by funding the fourth year (2024/25). It gives us a solid level of funding certainty, which means we can better plan

our work, manage costs and ensure we have the staff to carry it out," he said.

Gordon listed what the money would buy:

- Renew outdated rolling stock up to 29 new light-duty locomotives, specialist wagons and components;
- Complete the company's asset replacement and facility upgrade programme which has already received \$1.6 billion;
- Procure assets and undertake a range of rail projects including 57 low-emissions locomotives for use in the South Island due to begin arriving in early 2024;
- more zero-emission shunt locomotives;
- 1,300 freight wagons;
- Tackle seismic strengthening across the country and update maintenance facilities.
- Continue rebuilding Dunedin's Hillside Workshops, where 1500 more wagons will begin to be assembled late next year with the creation of new skilled jobs;
- Making sure the newly upgraded tracks are maintained effectively.

The upshot of these purchases he says will be an efficient rail system capable of offering better freight services to Kiwi businesses with 70% fewer emissions per tonne carried compared with heavy road transport.

Apart from all the hardware putting a

gleam in Gordon's eyes, Butson is focussed on what it brings to the work force.

"This is simply wonderful," he says. "And every rail worker - unionised or not - can now look forward to secure futures, better conditions and a growing work force. Plus they'll be using safer, environmentally friendly equipment. For the workers, management, and the citizens of New Zealand it's a win-win-win situation."

In addition to the \$312m allocated directly to rail in the Budget a further \$349m was given to cover the replacement of locomotives and freight wagons and a further sum to progress Auckland's light rail plans.

"Taken together with his previous Budgets, Grant Robinson latest is from the same song book - but with much more emphasis," said Butson. "If there are any workers in rail who don't look at this and then vote's for a party other than Labour (or possibly Green?) in the next election are effectively shooting themselves in the foot. If Labour is not a key part of the next government it is quite possible - probably likely - a National-led government will cut, slice, dice and dispose of the many gains attained in six years of Labour-led governance - just like they did previously. National's focus on land transport is fatally flawed and blinkered and belongs in the dark ages. Wake up everyone and smell the roses!" 🌹

One budgetary quibble

With all this Budget spend focussed on rail you would think even the most cynical rail buff would be ecstatic – but not so.

The gaping hole for these enthusiasts is long distance passenger services.

Their Save-Our-Trains petition earlier this year called for same-day, inter-regional services between Wellington and Auckland.

Paul Callister, a member of Save Our Trains and senior associate at Victoria University's Institute for Governance and Policy, said people with limited transport options had been left behind because of the lack of investment in passenger rail.

He wants KiwiRail and Waka Kotahi to prioritise inter-city commuter services over luxury tourism experiences.

The RMTU agrees and has even helped fund their campaign.

"If I had to quibble at all about the 2022 Budget it would be my disappointment that no money was earmarked for long distance and regional passenger rail," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. Independent rail consultant Michael van Drogenbroek is confident the current limited services between Palmerston North and Wellington and Hamilton and Auckland will survive and eventually grow.

He says pressure on the housing market will make rail an ideal way to link cities to affordable housing in the regions.

"With priorities changing with climate change and access to affordable housing becoming more and more important, I think

regional rail will expand in New Zealand."

In a business plan to Waka Kotahi, regional council chairs from Wellington and Horizons, Daran Ponter and Rachel Keedwell, proposed the introduction of a fleet of hybrid electric trains for the Palmerston North/Wellington service with batteries to carry them over the non-electrified portions of the track.

The latest Budget was "like the lights being turned off" and especially disappointing for commuters. "But we're not giving up."

Supported by Manawatu-Wanganui's seven mayors, as well as the eight mayors of the Wellington region, the business case recommends a \$762 million dollar investment in a fleet of 22 four-car, tri-mode trains, and associated infrastructure.

Despite the high cost, the business case estimated for every dollar spent the project would yield \$1.83, trains would quadruple peak-time services between Palmerston North and Wellington and double them on the Wairarapa line. Various mayors along the track route expressed their disappointment calling it a blind spot in the Budget and claiming it would hold back livelihoods.

Butson says: "I live in hope passenger services will soon catch up with freight."



Unfair discounts

Meanwhile, according to a story in *Newsroom*, the Government is refusing to continue to discount rail track user charges despite extending cuts to road user charges.

KiwiRail is concerned they will lose those freight customers who switch to save money.

"This is crazy stuff," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "On the one hand rail receives grand grants to ensure its longevity and with the other is undermined by unfair discounts. All we ask for is a level playing field."

KiwiRail commercial general manager Alan Piper said consumers would have benefited if the Government had agreed to continue the discount.

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

Budget 22 – securing our nation's future

■ Minister of Workplace Relations, Transport and Safety – **Rt Hon Michael Wood**

THIS year's Budget occurred at a time of uncertainty and change. At the heart of the Government's economic recovery plan is people. We know when we invest in New Zealanders, they have greater opportunities to prosper, provide for their families, and contribute to our nation's success. As a Government we are committed to putting New Zealanders at the heart of what we do.

New transport initiatives funded by the budget will also play a key role in building our economy and combatting climate change.

Having a driver licence is a key requirement for up to 70% of jobs, yet a big portion of our community can't access training or tests due to the costs and other barriers. This disproportionately disadvantages Maori, Pacific peoples, sole parents and rural communities. That's why we are investing in helping 64,000 people to get driver licenses. This investment will provide targeted support for people to progress through the driver licensing system by providing high-quality lessons and greater access to testing.

We are continuing to support the restoration of the national rail network, to improve resilience and to support freight rail and metropolitan rail growth. A \$349 million investment includes buying 29 new main-line locomotives and 140 wagons to help us move more freight by rail, reducing emissions and congestion.

Make no mistake, there has been no government in recent history that has been a stronger backer of rail than this one. Since 2017 we have invested \$8.6 billion to build a resilient and reliable network after decades of neglect and decline. Much of this is the bread and butter needed for a safe and effective network – relaying track, new

culverts and bridges, upgraded turnouts and the like.

Our work to re-open the Napier-Wairoa line is now seeing large volumes of logs shifted on to rail, while new freight hubs at Bunnythorpe and Ashburton will accelerate the shift. Work on the new mechanical



depot at Waltham is underway, as is the upgrade of Hillside which will allow us to assemble more than 1500 new wagons right here with Kiwi labour.

This year we will be taking the next steps forward with our ambitious plan to extend rail to Northport, which will unlock the potential of rail in the North, while work on both the third main line and Papakura to Pukekohe electrification will continue. We're also continuing to work with Greater Wellington Council on their proposal for extending electrified commuter services to

Levin. We weren't able to fund it this year, but I am positive about the idea and we'll continue to work through the details.

We are also focused on the nation's supply chain. Through COVID we saw how major international disruptions to supply chains can disrupt Kiwi businesses, limit the availability of key goods and increase the price of everyday goods and services. As an island nation, our ports will continue to play a pivotal role in this supply chain, with the majority of goods entering and exiting through the northern ports. The future of the upper North Island ports is a major strategic consideration for the freight sector, so we are funding a feasibility study on the Manukau Harbour option to help us to confirm which locations for port location can proceed for further consideration.

In addition, we building off the work done to date by NorthPort and are committing to a feasibility of a possible dry dock to support our national maritime needs. As I write this we are also about to make major announcements around greater support for coastal shipping.

Earlier this year Waka Kotahi asked for proposals to access a \$30 million fund to support a sustainable domestic coastal shipping sector, and decisions have now been made on which projects we will support. These investments will make a big difference and are another step towards an integrated, low carbon freight network.

There's a lot more in the Budget that will benefit people across New Zealand and if you'd like to know more, I'd encourage you to check out:

labour.org.nz/budget2022

I know that our Government's actions will make a real difference for Kiwis, now and in years to come. 🌐

Towards a fairer society

OVER the last 30 years the money made in New Zealand each year has increased hugely but that national income has not been shared fairly. Wages and salaries have fallen while profits have gone up.

A big part of that is employers competing by lowering wages and leaving vast numbers of Kiwis on wages which are too low.

And when one bad employer in a sector finds a way to keep wages down, there's real commercial pressure on good employers to follow.

Fair Pay Agreements (FPAs) will fix that. They are coming into law soon and will mean that good employers and unions can negotiate fair minimum rates for entire sectors of the work force.

FPAs are a way of deciding what is a fair way to do business. They will include pay, hours, leave and other terms and conditions and will set a minimum level for an entire sector.

That means nobody in a sector can be paid less than the FPA rate.

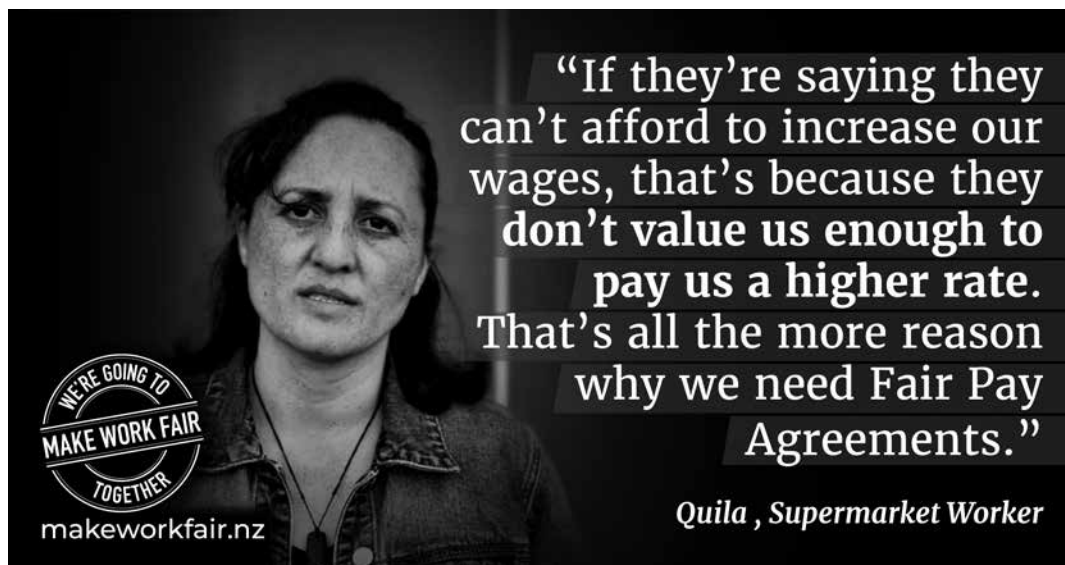
It's like the minimum wage, but for a specific sector and negotiated by unions and employers in that sector on behalf of all people who work in the sector whether they are union members or not.

Other countries, including Australia, have some kind of 'sector bargaining' where working people, represented by their unions, set minimum industry standards negotiated with employers.

Nothing will change for collective bargaining between smaller groups of working people and employers – there will just be a new minimum floor that employers can't undercut.

Sometimes, if employers and unions can't come to an agreement, an arbitrator will be appointed to decide what's fair.

In the last 30 years the income we make as a country has grown a lot, but the share of that income going to working people has



shrunk by up to \$11,000 per person.

It's not fair that working people get less of the profit they helped make while the cost of living keeps going up. Part of the problem is that a small number of bad employers compete with other businesses by driving down wages. This makes it hard for good employers to stay in business.

Across whole sectors the rate people are getting paid is effectively being determined by these few bad employers and that's wrong. 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 employers to compete on quality and innovation. They will set the rules for what's acceptable practice and stop the race to the bottom.

We've seen young people leaving regional communities because the only available work is low wage with long hours.

FPAs will help raise those wages and improve working conditions. They will make living in and supporting your hometown more viable for young people and their families.

A collective agreement is negotiated between union members and employers. You have to be a union member to be employed on one and the more of you there are in the union the better the deal you will get. An FPA will cover everyone in a particular industry or occupation, whether they are in a union or not.

It's not fair that working people get less of the profit they helped make while the cost of living keeps going up.

Under collective agreements working people have a legally protected right to take industrial action, including going on strike, while the agreement is being negotiated. Employers have the right to stop them working with a lockout. By law, strikes and lockouts will not be a part of negotiating FPAs.

Employees covered by an FPA can and should still join a union and bargain for collective agreements too because FPAs just create a base rate – not a top rate.

The Government will be bringing the legislation for FPAs into law early next year and they will start to be negotiated shortly after that.

This law will indicate a process to follow to negotiate the agreement. There will be minimum thresholds groups of working people and unions or employers will have to meet to start negotiations.

If an FPA is initiated, an agreement will be reached – employer/s can't refuse to negotiate one. 🌐

You can take action through this website
www.makeworkfair.nz

Income insurance

Earlier this year proposals were announced for the introduction of income insurance (sometimes called social unemployment insurance) to be designed to provide workers with a soft landing in the event they lose their job. This article answers some of the questions around the proposed legislation which is supported by the RMTU.

THE government has been working with the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions/Te Kauae Kaimahi (NZCTU) and Business New Zealand on a plan for a new social unemployment insurance.

The working name of the scheme is the New Zealand Income Insurance Scheme (NZIIS), the aim of which is to give New Zealanders a buffer when they lose their jobs. This will help them, their communities, and particularly their whanau in times of economic downturn.

Common worldwide

This sort of scheme is common around the world and New Zealand is almost alone in not having one.

The outline proposed is that it will work pretty much like the current ACC scheme. Working people and their employers will share the cost of a premium. If people lose their jobs their employer will provide them with four weeks paid notice and the scheme will pay them 80% of their income for up to six months or until they find new employment.

NZIIS will help anyone who loses their job where it is not their fault.

The greatest benefits will be to people who have limited financial resilience. Recent polling by the NZCTU shows that is likely to be around two thirds of New Zealanders. Losing their job would mean many of these New Zealanders and their families would fall below the poverty line and struggle to make it back out.

For a lot of families, costs like housing, transport, and energy just can't be reduced fast enough to avoid significant financial hardship.

Statistically speaking the demographics most likely to suffer job loss, and therefore be protected by this scheme, are those on low incomes, Maori, and

young people.

Similar to ACC the scheme will cover for lost income when your job is lost. In fact NZIIS will ensure many people avoid the welfare system when they are made redundant or get too ill to work.

Benefits are a critical safety net and NZIIS is a way of stopping people falling in the first place.

Why not raise benefits?

Some have asked why not just raise benefits?

However, the CTU wants benefits to rise also and to have NZIIS in place as they serve two different purposes. In other nations this type of scheme sits alongside a strong welfare system. Those countries with good social insurance systems (Germany, Holland, Denmark) also have great welfare states. Those without or with poor systems (US, UK, Australia, NZ) have terrible welfare states. The same should happen in Aotearoa.

The NZIIS has been described as a tax by some people but generally the NZCTU considers tax as money that goes into the crown accounts. In this case it goes into a specific publicly owned insurance fund tagged for a very specific purpose.

It's called a 'levy' and it's more like an insurance premium – just like ACC.

Of course workers could take out private insurance


cover but it is extremely expensive and the vast majority of people couldn't afford it - and many would simply not qualify because they are in risky or insecure employment.

There are people concerned that the wealthy will get more out of it but the CTU believes wealthy people are much less likely to be made redundant and they will pay significant amounts into the system. Lower income workers are more likely to be made redundant.

Others are concerned it will harmfully affect the economy but again the CTU believes it will have an opposite affect. It believes that when an economic shock hits, like the Global Financial Crisis or the COVID Pandemic, the sudden loss of jobs won't create a sudden loss of spending. Economic evidence suggests that social insurance will likely reduce the length of recessions, and will mean fewer people out of work.

Still some key changes

There are still a few key aspects of the scheme needing to be changed or improved including:

- Extending the coverage to 12 months for people who are retraining, and making sure the training opportunities are provided;
- Making sure migrant workers are covered;
- Ensuring that the governance for the scheme includes working people;
- Keeping it public. This should be run by the public for the public, not by business for profit;
- Including a proper complaints scheme such as a commissioner who can make sure people get a fair go from the scheme.
- Making the coverage as wide as possible. Just like ACC you should be protected by this scheme whether you are an employee, a contractor, or self-employed. 



Near disaster luckily averted

Multiple safety investigations are underway by Maritime NZ, Worksafe NZ and the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) following the deaths at the Ports of Auckland on April 19 when **Atiroa Tuaiti** was killed after falling from a container and less than a week later at Lyttelton Port **Donald Grant** died whilst working in the deck of a ship loading coal. This is story is about **six** other port workers who very nearly joined them and has prompted further investigations. (see Review page 11)

A decision by the Napier District Court to dismiss the case against ISO Ltd has been termed "disgusting" and "its worse decision ever" by leaders in New Zealand's maritime unions – all of whom are up in arms and combining their strength to have the decision appealed or overturned.

The case follows an incident on the night of April 30 2018 when a gang of six stevedores at Napier Port nearly died due to lack of health and safety procedures.

ISO Ltd faced a fine of up to \$1.5 million for the serious near miss incident but Judge Rea decision released on May 5, 2022, made the surprising decision to dismiss the case.

The near miss

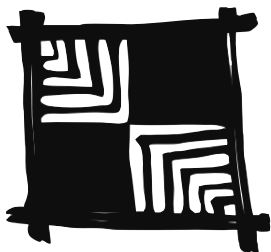
The story, an almost comedic farce, would have been amusing had it not been so close to a tragic disaster.

The gang were scheduled to load



more cut timber into the hold of the Panamanian-flagged bulk ship, the *Nord Yilan*, which had already taken on logs on board at Gisborne.

The job first requires a digger to be lowered into the hold followed by its driver. The rest of the gang were largely outside helping to stack and lower the logs. ▶



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On this day the hatch had not been opened until about 15 minutes prior to work beginning. (see sidebar story *Ventilation* page 12)

The first person in to it was digger driver Iakopo Sagote who quickly started to lose consciousness. Knowing there was a radio in the digger's cab he struggled to get there but passed out immediately after managing to start it up. The resulting exhaust together with his non-response, alerted the gang outside that something was amiss.

Sagote was not carrying any device to raise alarm but used his jacket to cover his mouth and nose in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the gas.

Unconscious

He was unconscious for 20 minutes before he was rescued and suffered long term effects from the carbon monoxide exposure.

It is a well established fact that logs in ships' holds exude toxic gasses and need to be well ventilated prior to work starting – at least 30 minutes.

Outside the crane driver noticed the smoke and advised the forman, James Oliver, who ran forward and leaned into the hold to see what was going on. He couldn't spot Sagote so he climbed in and also lost consciousness.

Third and fourth workers were lowered in to the hold in a paint cage but also were overcome by the fumes but they successfully pulled out one of the previous stevedores who was on top of the digger.



Review of health and safety in the ports

THE RMTU and MUNZ have commissioned a joint review of the ports which involves interviews with workers from across the ports. A strong theme from the interviews will be the need for national port standards to cover the following;

- Yard conditions/ yard surfaces.
- Ship inspections prior to work being undertaken – eg walkways, hatches, exclusion zones, handrails.
- Fatigue relating to shift work.
- Exclusion zones on the ship and around the crane and working under suspended loads.

- Roadways. Narrow and tight roadways, lack of visibility on corners.
- Wharf edge protection.
- Competency of workers is not standardised, there is no national framework through NZQA.
- Reefer storage, the risk of workers coming into contact with other port traffic when plugging/unplugging the reefers due to lack of space.
- Container stacking practices, height and configuration.
- Vessel access-gangway, gradient, responding to tidal movements, use of gangway nets. 🌐

In their final successful attempt they managed to hook the crane onto the digger and pulled it out together with the collapsed workers.

Once rescued, the workers were taken

to hospital and discharged that night.

Later Sagote said he was thinking of his family and children and feared he would die.

Sagote and Oliver spent a night in hospi- ▶



Ventilating the hold

LOGS are subject to decomposition over time, producing various gases including carbon monoxide. Oxygen depletion occurs at the same time as the build up of the toxic gases.

For that reason it is essential before work commences in the hatch, that the cover is opened to allow gasses to escape – known as 'cracking'.


The ship's crew generally open the hold but this was an informal arrangement and there is no system in place for ensuring communication between the ship's crew and the land based workers about when the hold was opened. On the day of the incident the hatches were not opened by the crew and the stevedore went into the hold before it had been ventilated.

The ISO's standard operating procedure (SOP) said there needs to be "a reasonable time period between



opening of the hatch before workers enter the hold – a minimum of 30 minutes." It says to always check whether enclosed areas have been ventilated before entering. In this case the check was done by the worker "smelling and looking". The SOP also says "if you feel affected by fume, move to fresh air". The stevedore said he was aware of the SOP but didn't know why the 30 minute rule was important.

In one disastrous incident only eight years earlier, two crew members had died within five minutes of entering the hold of a ship containing logs at

Marsden Point. They had "lost useful consciousness owing to the combined effects of an oxygen depleted atmosphere and the likely presence of toxic gases, both consequences of the organic decomposition of logs in the closed cargo hold," concluded the Transport Accident Investigation Commission in its investigation into the deaths of the two seamen, who were Myanmar and Korean nationals. "The dangers of the organic decomposition of logs and other organic cargoes in enclosed spaces are well known in the international maritime community." 

\$10,000 ADB

All members of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union 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 Rail and Maritime Transport Union. **Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year.**

To have an AIL representative deliver your certificate of coverage and explain additional insurance coverage available:

Reply online: ailnz.co.nz/request

Reply by email: **Email your name, address and contact number to pr@ailnz.co.nz**

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 for \$5. A.M. Best, one of the oldest and most respected insurance ratings companies, has rated American Income Life as A (Excellent) for overall Financial Strength (as of 7/20).



iPhone users – open the camera and point it at the code. Android users please download QR & Barcode Scanner from the Play Store

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tal, the rest were discharged that same day.

ISO was charged by Maritime New Zealand for failing to comply with its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act and for exposing the workers to the risk of death or serious injury. (see sidebar **Section 48** page 13)

Failed duty of care

"It is blatantly clear ISO Ltd failed to discharge its responsibility to care for the health and safety of its workers," said RMTU, general secretary, Wayne Butson. "Save for luck and good fortune there was no lasting damage but it very nearly was an appalling tragedy. It's such a pity that the Court saw it so differently.

"Despite the Judge admitting it was only a matter of luck that one or more fatalities did not occur he never-the-less dismissed the case against the company, imposing no fine for this staggering near miss."

While MNZ argued it was "reasonably practicable" for ISO to have adequate systems to ensure ships' holds were properly ventilated and that atmospheric monitoring equipment be supplied, Judge Rhea said those propositions were "driven with the benefit of hindsight".

And he added that because the hold's atmosphere wasn't tested at the time the workers lost consciousness, any attribution as to cause was "only speculation".

Section 48 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

Offence of failing to comply with duty that exposes individual to risk of death or serious injury or serious illness

1 A person commits an offence against this section if:

- (a) the person has a duty under subpart 2 or 3; and
- (b) the person fails to comply with that duty; and
- (c) that failure exposes any individual to a risk of death or serious injury or serious illness.

2 A person who commits an offence against subsection (1) is liable on conviction:

- (a) for an individual who is not a PCBU or an officer of a PCBU, to a fine not exceeding \$150,000;
- (b) for an individual who is a PCBU or an officer of a PCBU, to a fine not exceeding \$300,000;
- (c) for any other person, to a fine not exceeding \$1.5 million.


"Taking into account other incidents at wharves around New Zealand, including the recent deaths of two wharf workers, we are delighted that Minister of Transport and Workplace Safety Michael Wood, has directed the Transport Accident Investigation Commission to investigate," said Butson. "We think every port in New Zealand needs to be investigated to improve safety."

There was no doubt a number of safety system failures including no gas or oxygen monitoring equipment to measure whether the atmosphere in the hold was safe to enter

nor measure oxygen and gas levels.

There was a safety briefing at the start of the shift but the briefing did not cover the risk of gas exposure.

Additionally the workers had not received any hold training covering ventilation, gas monitoring, becoming trapped and procedures to respond when workers are affected by fumes.

The RMTU and other CTU-affiliated unions are lobbying intensively for MaritimeNZ to appeal the Napier Court decision 

Blood phosphate




Another blood phosphate laden boat arrives at Port Lyttelton to another protest letter from the Union. This protest letter is being issued to the shipping agent by RMTU branch secretary Heiner Beneke.

EW File Scholarship 2022

THE recipients of this year's scholarship were Nikita Grapper (left) and Una Strickland (right). Both were extremely grateful to the RMTU for funding this scholarship.

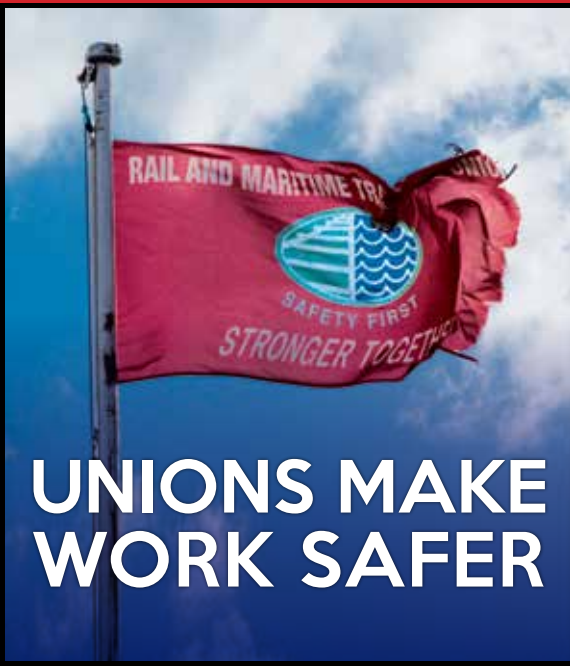
Una said: "Thanks so much for awarding me this scholarship, it means a lot."

Nikita said: "I accept this with an immense amount of appreciation as this will provide great support towards my studies going forward." 





WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL
Mourn for the dead, fight for the living.



'Unions make work safer' was the tagline for Workers' Memorial Day poster.

It is well known internationally as the union... The most recent evidence comes from a 202... study of the construction industry there of 1... Canadians which found that unionised work... safer than non-union companies.

Workers' Me

GREYMOUTH



LYTTELTON



HUTT S

A call for change

In her speech to the Memorial gathering in Lyttelton, RMTU H&S organiser, Karen Fletcher, focussed first on the two terrible port tragedies which had occurred just a few days earlier in Lyttelton and Auckland resulting in the deaths of two port workers.

Continued on page 16 ▶

for this year's
safety effect.
21 Canadian
.7 million
places are 31%

Collectively, workers can speak up about health and safety risks with support from their union and put the spotlight on unsafe work such as fatigue due to poor rosters.

Workplaces which have elected and trained health and safety reps and delegates have the opportunity to engage and influence its management. Another word for worker engagement is workplace democracy. Get involved!

Memorial Day - 2022

TIMARU



SHOPS



NAPIER



ANOTHER successful WMD at Napier, supported by several unions including NZEI, ETU, MUNZ and RMTU. Other attendees included MPs Anna Lorke and Stuart Nash, Napier Port chair and Board members who spoke along with other senior managers including Doug Laing, from the Hawkes

Continued on page 17 ►

UNIONS CANTERBURY



Letters of solidarity

UNIONS CANTERBURY recently wrote two letters – one to the Union members at Lyttelton Port Company and the other to management of the same port company. Both expressed the same sincere condolences following the recent death of a comrade port worker while at work and at the same time commemorating workers who died on the job at Workers' Memorial Day.

Unions Canterbury extended its full support and solidarity with those affected by this terrible loss, including family, friends, and colleagues.


"Today, 28 April, marks Workers' Memorial Day. Each year, union members, officials, and families come together at Sydenham Memorial Garden to pay respect to those who have been killed or injured at work," the letters stated. "One of the fundamental objectives of unionism is to ensure that workers return home safely from work each day. This year was especially poignant."

They added they appreciated that port-based union members and management held a private ceremony at LPC to mark this year's Workers Memorial Day while across

town, they stood in solidarity and reflected on the tragic loss they endured.

"This letter serves to bridge today's two memorial services and acts as a pledge of support across our union movement."

In the letter to management they added:

"With safety at work front of mind, we are heartened by Minister Michael Wood's announcement of independent investigations and the direction of the Port's leadership group. We will follow these developments closely and support those tasked with such important work." 

LYTTELTON continued

◀ She conveyed condolences from the RMTU national office and membership to the whanau and loved ones and of the men.

"And acknowledge the burden of devastating loss felt by the staff, our brothers and sisters from across the unions and especially MUNZ," she said. "Today is all the more poignant and the WMD message to mourn for the dead and fight for the living has never felt more personal."

She added that the workplace injury rates in among the stevedoring community and New Zealand workforces in general was getting worse not better.

In a survey among attendees at eight RMTU H&S training courses she asked what

the number one risk was on the waterfront.

"The answers came down to fatigue, casualisation, lack of staffing and an emphasis on productivity before safety," she said. "We learned there is difference in standards and safe work practices between the different ports plus systems like emergency preparedness were lacking."


She reiterated the stance of all the waterfront unions in their call for national, consistent standards in health and safety in ports which are enforced by the regulators.

"We want an investigation into the factors that have caused so many deaths and injuries in the stevedoring industry," she said. "The review must involve industry,

government and unions."

To that end the government announced they will be reviewing the safety systems of 13 port companies over the following two weeks with each review looking at;

- Working at height;
- Working under suspended loads;
- Stacking, handling and risk of falling cargo and objects; and
- Person Vs machine.

"It is shocking that it has taken two more deaths in just two weeks to finally put the spotlight on health and safety in the port sector. We must ensure that what happens next will bring the step change that is needed." 

NAPIER continued



◀ Bay Today (the local newspaper) who lost his son in a work-related incident and conveyed a few telling words.

About 150 (plus) people attended including port workers, whanau and friends. This was enabled with the help of the RMTU's local branch requesting a full 'stop work' to management in recognition of WMD. Only essential services were kept going.

We assembled at the southern end of the port behind the Seamen's Mission, not too far from a special place that reminds us all of those lost - the Apperley Wall which holds the plaques of Napier Port's fallen workers. It sits just inside the Port's southern entrance adjacent to the security office. This wall memorialises port

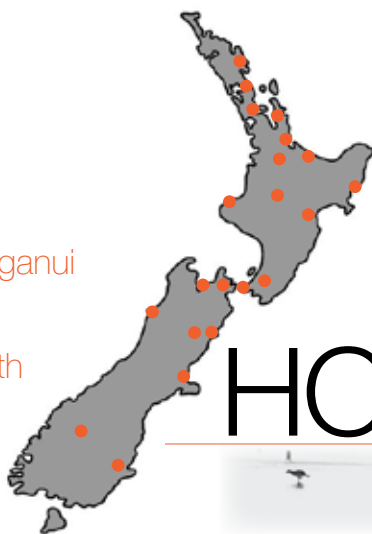
workers who have lost their lives in the service of their employers on the waterfront.

We also have a pohutakawa tree planted on Napier City Council grounds which shares the boundary with the Port, where the WMD services are held. This tree was planted in memory of Corben Frickeleton whom we lost in 2005 in a mooring incident.

Proceedings were run by our industrial chaplain, Marty Rochford.

We were blessed with the weather for the day we hold dear in our remembrance to those injured and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. 🇳🇿

Auckland
Christchurch
Dunedin
Gisborne
Greytown
Hanmer
Kaikoura
Mount Maunganui
Napier
Nelson
New Plymouth
Ohope
Orewa
Paihia
Picton
Queenstown
Rotorua
Taupo
Wellington
Westport
Whitianga



HOLIDAYS



All current RMTU members are eligible to join after paying a Welfare Trust membership fee. Contact us to find out how.

Phone: 0800-806-444

Website: nzwelfare.co.nz

E-mail: info@nzwelfare.co.nz

Facebook: facebook.com/nzwelfare

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



Ferries, EVs and blankets

CONCERNS about storing electric vehicles within the confined spaces aboard our ferries and the known tendency for their lithium batteries to self-combust has elicited the following answers from the Interislander executive general manager Walter Rushbrook.

Immediate concern

WHEN the existing Interislander ferries were built they were designed with control and recovery measures fit for the expected cargoes of the day and the hazards they presented (internal combustion engines and dangerous goods). The arrival of alternatively powered vehicles presents a different hazard. Unfortunately the danger that hazard can pose has been seen multiple times on other overseas vessels.

As we see ourselves as an extension of the SH1 we needed to provide safe transit option for electric vehicles (EVs) and other battery hybrids which are becoming more commonplace

Thus far the interislander has not had any EV fires. The Company's policy and risk control changes acknowledges the new hazards.

The question is raised about the appeal about using car blankets as an easy and quick solution to bring the temperatures down and to contain and minimise its spread.

Rushbrooke said: "Current fire service guidance estimates that you need at least 30,000 litres of water to contain or extinguish an EV car fire, and Tesla's own emergency response guide advises to use between 11,356-30,283 litres of water, applied directly to the battery, to fully extinguish and cool it down."

The amount of water required means this method is not an option on a car deck of a ferry, so they looked at alternatives.

The solution they found was fire blankets which are deployed over the burning vehicle so the fire can be contained or extinguished. The car fire blanket keeps smoke, toxic fumes and flames underneath the



Demonstration fire blanket being used to cover a car



blanket away from the ship's crew, isolates the car fire and stops it from spreading to other vehicles. Tests have shown the blanket reduces the fire temperature by 700°C in a matter of seconds by smothering the fire.

The fire blanket is highly effective for all cars and control is gained minutes due to lack of oxygen. Toxic gases and smoke are stifled immediately.

When EV batteries are on fire they do not need oxygen to burn so the fire blanket is used to contain the fire until the ship reaches port.

"The same immediate result," he said. "The blankets are a recovery tool and are part of our firefighting arsenal. Each vessel and Terminal will have two blankets which can be deployed when, and if, a fire is de-

tected. Under normal conditions EVs will park on the deck just as existing internal combustion engine vehicles do."

He added that applying a blanket to a burning car would not incur extra cost.

Meanwhile the Company, says Rushbrook, is actively monitoring the risks new transport technology presents.

"We will do what is needed to mitigate those hazards while continuing to provide safe passage across Cook Strait."

However the Company's carriage policy has changed to include:

- No carriage of significantly damaged EVs.
- No charging of EVs onboard.
- No carriage of home-built or modified EVs.



Supporting workers worldwide



Payroll giving is the easy way for union members to donate to UnionAID. Your donation will support working people in Asia and the Pacific in their fight for decent work and dignity.

"The RMTU was a foundation supporter of this initiative and has been instrumental in helping to re-establish the rail unions in the country," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "It saddens me desperately to see the generals back in charge in Myanmar destroying all that fine work. We must continue to support UnionAID not just there but in all their areas of operation for workers' rights."

UnionAID supports partners in neighbouring countries to build unions, provide skills training and take collective action to improve their lives.

Together we can help empower working people in Asia and the Pacific to achieve a life free from poverty.


Simply complete the authority form (below) and hand it to your payroll office. UnionAID is a registered charity so one-third of your donation will come back to you as a tax credit. If you donate \$15 only \$10 will actually come off your payslip.

Your tax refund will be credited back to you immediately without need for receipts or filing any rebate claims.

By organising as unions UnionAID helps provide working people with the collective power to negotiate decent wages and conditions to improve their livelihoods.

It also helps provide skills training, increases job opportunities and earning potential. UnionAID's projects support women, migrants and minorities to gain new vocational skills so they can get decent work and safely support themselves and their families

It also helps establishing local co-operatives which enables small scale farmers, street vendors, cleaners and other groups of working people to collectively make and sell their products, thus improving their incomes and sustainability.

UnionAID is your charitable organisation and treasures your assistance. 

To make a **payroll donation** to **UnionAID** fill in this form and give it to your payroll office:

Name: _____ Donation per payday \$ _____

I agree to make a donation to UnionAID to be deducted from my pay and paid to the Unions Aotearoa International Development Trust (UnionAID) with effect from the next pay day.

Signed: _____

Please forward my contact details to UnionAID so I can be informed about their project work and UnionAID events.



UnionAID
Better Work, Better World

YOUR DETAILS: Email: _____ Phone number: _____

Address: _____

Union: _____

100 meet to discuss rail safety

AROUND 100 KiwiRail health and safety action team (HSAT) chairs, sponsor managers, Zero Harm and union representatives met for two days in Wellington in early May to discuss health and safety at KiwiRail.

Both KiwiRail and Union leaders expressed concern for the high number of workplace injuries. Union leaders said KiwiRail's injury rate was far too high and out of step with other transport companies and comparable industries.

Total recordable injury frequency rate (TRIFR) records the statistics relating the number of lost time injuries, medical treatment and restricted work injuries (including staff on alternative duties at work due to injury).

The most common types of injuries are sprains, strains, related to lifting and manual handling and stepping on and/or off vehicles.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson said: "Strains injuries are serious and affect workers quality of life. They can take months to heal. For example a rotator cuff tear can require surgery and can give that injured person chronic (long term) pain."

The current KiwiRail TRIFR rate is 35 – an increase from last year. KiwiRail has a strategic goal to reduce the TRIFR rate to four by 2030.

The Union is concerned that an unintended consequence of driving the TRIFR number down may result in under-reporting by putting pressure on staff.

The RMTU is concerned it will drive reporting underground or falsely attribute work injuries to non-work causes such as an injury occurring while playing rugby.


The HSAT meeting proposed the following challenges:

- Being rostered on to HSAT tasks is still the number one barrier for HSATs and short staffing is the main reason; and
- What to do when faced with the decision to have an HSAT meeting or get the train out on time? Productivity pressures often mean the latter is done;
- HSAT involvement in incident investigation needs to improve. The Union was disappointed to learn that incident investigation reports are still not being shared with HSATs, despite there being a requirement to do so.
- The incident investigation process

should involve HSAT reps. The question was raised of how an organisation can learn from incidents if they are not involving the HSAT which can help identify right corrective actions and make sure those actions are on the HSAT agenda?

Also at the meeting ergonomist Sue Alexander discussed the Middleton handbrake issue first raised by the Middleton HSAT in 2019. There were 36 incidents and injuries relating to the application of handbrakes between 2014-2019. HSAT reps were so frustrated by the rate of injury they issued a provisional improvement notice (PIN) to address it.

The ergonomic assessment found the "oomph" (ergonomist lingo) required to apply and release the brakes was causing injury. Sue's recommendations sparked an upgrade of the brake units so less force was required to apply and release them.

Her presentation highlighted the importance of the Middleton HSAT's dogged persistence to force the company to address a clear risk to health and safety. All credit to them. 

MECA working parties begin

ONE of the key outcomes from the KR MECA bargaining round was an agreement by KiwiRail to look at the removal of pay scale 1 which is the clerical/administration range of rates. This scale has been manipulated and misused for years as a way of hiding individual rates of pay of 'chosen' ones and also has proven to be a mechanism for the suppression of women's pay.

It has been agreed the project is huge in scope and so will need to be dealt with in bite-sized chunks. The first target by mutual agreement will be for Interislander workers paid under payscale 1. This will involve all of the customer services, commercial vehicles, administration, production kitchen to name a few. A number of

meeting have occurred with an independent HPHE facilitator, Alex Twigg, and we are making good progress with both parties approaching the issue in a positive way. Two of the delegates on the project team had this to say:


Todd Lymburn: I am very optimistic that the work we are doing here will have a good result for our members working on the Interislander, and that it will pave a way forward for similar work to be started in other areas of KiwiRail.

We are working towards a transparent pay scale which rewards people for the job they are doing, not who they are, and can show clear progression steps to help them move up through the scale.

Nicola Gapper: We are successfully

working together to provide clear job titles and position descriptions, so we have transparency within our pay scale structure.

This will benefit our members by clearly defining all roles within the terminals and their career pathway. We are creating clear, transparent, and robust processes to define career progression criteria so our members can feel supported with training and be rewarded with remuneration.

We are also creating a structure which clearly defines cross skilling within our terminals and the remuneration the member will receive. I am hopeful we can address the internal and external relativities so all members can be rewarded fairly for their contribution. 

Pregnancy and work

RMTU women have informed the Union that finding information about pregnancy and health and safety is not straightforward. Women want to know how to work safely and stay healthy whilst pregnant, how to access maternity appropriate uniforms, gain access to information about parental leave and returning to work after having the baby including information about breast feeding breaks and flexible work.

Women members say there is a general lack of company information available to them regarding pregnancy at work. Pregnant workers say they're in a 'catch 22' situation because it's often too early in their pregnancy to let their managers and/or workmates know they're pregnant but at the same time they want to be sure the physical nature of their work,



such as lifting heavy loads or stepping on and off locos, isn't posing a risk to themselves and the baby.

"Extreme nausea and fatigue are fairly standard side effects of pregnancy," says RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher. "If

you couple that with physical tasks such as lifting heavy loads, working in tunnels, climbing off and on a high rail vehicle, shift work and other physically strenuous work, there's a risk of harm. Women need to be able to speak up (at least privately) to their employer to make sure their health and safety is prioritised, whilst respecting their privacy."

Each pregnancy is different, and so the plan for managing the risks associated with tasks should be worked out on a case-by-case basis, she added.

KiwiRail told the RMTU that once they're notified of the pregnancy they will arrange an occupational therapist to assess the woman's work tasks and develop a plan for safe work. Women are encouraged to ask for support from a Union delegate, H&S rep or personal support person. 🌐

Toilet growth

AFTER two years campaigning we have another depot – Ohakune – with new women's toilet – as the photos testify. Thanks to John McGonigle for pushing this issue with programmed and service resources over those last two years. Now we await the upgrade of the Taihape toilets. 🌐



Maryan Street retires



EMPLOYEE relations manager Maryan Street recently retired from KiwiRail.

We don't usually remark on senior managers leaving the company however the role of the ER manager is a key union interface and during her time with KiwiRail Maryan has been good to work with and has championed the Just Fair Culture training and HPHE – a step change in the relations between KiwiRail and the RMTU.

All of this work was significantly undermined during Greg Miller's time at the helm, in our opinion, and her work must have become a challenge.

We wish her well in her future endeavours and, who knows, our paths may become aligned again at some future time. 🌐

BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

Staff shortages an ongoing concern

KIA ORA from the sunny Bay of Plenty. It has been a tough start to the year for our region. Unfortunately, we have had to say goodbye to more colleagues and loved ones. We have lost some truly great people and this loss will be widely and deeply felt for a long time to come. To everyone whose lives have been touched by those we have lost over the last few months, all our love and thoughts are with you. Kia kaha, we are here to support you all.

If you or someone you know has ever

thought about joining KiwiRail in the Bay of Plenty, then the time is now to put your name forward.

We have been working very hard here for numerous months to help make up for the shortfall in staff numbers. However, this is starting to take its toll.

We are in desperate need of more staff before we get burnt out. So come join us in paradise!

We have had a handful of experienced, seasoned professional locomotive engineers decide to park up their engines

and retire after copious years of service at KiwiRail. To them we say thank you for your service, your legacy, and your time to the company and your colleagues. In you we have friends for life. We trust you will have a fantastic retirement and will stop in to see us every now and again.

Just remember, life is like a camera. Focus on what's important. Capture the good times. And if things don't work out, just take another shot.

Until next time. Nga mihi me te aroha nui. 🌐

WAIKATO RAIL

Fond farewell to three Waikato stalwarts seeking retirement

WORK, work and more work, seems to be the theme in the Waikato. Rail operations are extremely under staffed and we are battling poor rosters and Covid to try and keep trains running in the golden triangle.

In networks the level of pressure to complete work is at unprecedented levels – especially for capital projects – while still keeping maintenance compliance up to code, is massive. Members need to remember to "say no," to more shifts and overtime if they feel fatigued.

The railways are said to have a community and culture like no other and the Waikato is no different. Cobbled together from every background, many grew up on

the tracks, became spouses and parents and the men and women we are today riding and maintaining the rails moving passengers and freight.

We share experiences and challenges that no one outside of the brother/sisterhood can understand. None more so than three of our locomotive engineer brothers who are leaving us to start their new adventure of retirement:

■ Phil Dearlove, Te Rapa's number 1 driver started 18 Jan 1971 – an incredible 51 years of achievement. Phil has held many positions over his tenure, always had a kind word and good advice to share and can sleep almost anywhere.

■ Peter Sanders started 30 May 1977

(44 years) and is one of Te Rapa's great characters.

■ Leo Rust started 20 Jan 1975 (47 years) and has held many roles during his tenure, from teaching the newbies to being a DAS implementation specialist, much to the rest of the teams horror because nobody can/could say no to Leo. Everything is always done with a smile and his stories are legendary.

They are all true railway men and will be sorely missed. Our brothers, go well and strong, we wish you only the best. You are family and family is never forgotten.

That's it from the mighty Waikato until next time. Stay safe and be well everyone!



WHERE ARE YOU?

When problems arise we may need to contact you in a hurry.

Please check we have your correct address and contact details.

<http://bit.ly/exmEyl>

or

04-499-2066

NAPIER PORT

Container ships queuing up for a place in a tight port

THE queue of container vessels at Napier Port continues. There has been no relief in the arrival of these types of ships and coupled with the impact of Covid omicron, we have pretty much been down to two shore cranes continuously rather than the normal three. At one point we had six container vessels and two breakbulk vessels waiting in the bay to get in. Something not seen at this port that I can remember.

We are also struggling with the number of empty boxes being dumped and the requirement to get them out to the NP container depot storage facility. Besides using our own trucks, the Port company has, at times, engaged external trucking companies to do the job.

The RMTU, at branch level, ensures these outside companies pay their staff no less than our casual rate.

We know many of these drivers benefit from this practice. For our members who load and unload the external trucks, they, too, receive an extra hour's pay per shift. This is to discourage NPC from utilising outsiders. These provisions create an added cost which, of course, they do not want.

Hawkes Bay is, as usual, in the middle of the harvest period so the demand for reefer boxes is critical for the apple growers. Coupled with the irregular shipping

patterns, the port is heavily taxed for reefer plug points for refrigerated boxes. This has required hiring external portable container generators to cope with the overflow – and added to that space is now at a premium. Four high stacking of reefers is becoming the norm outside of the already existing

seen for 20 odd years. Here's hoping our bosses acknowledge the current struggles many working Kiwis are facing with inflation rates accelerating daily.

We will be signing off on our CEA within the next few days with long awaited back-pays to follow.



reefer towers and all is adding more work to our reefer care team.

No doubt this trend will stay with us in terms of shipping activities nationally and globally, with several world events in play, from the spread of covid (and any new strains that come along) to the war in the Ukraine and the financial and political manoeuvring in play. Adding to all this, global economies are affected by inflation and consumer demand.

Our domestic CPI reached highs not

I would like to use this forum to acknowledge the patience of our members who fall under the general collective agreement. It has been a complex and testing process; and may I say, highly likely to be this scribe's last. However, it has come with some excellent gains. Also, a shout out to all delegates and Dasha, our organiser and those who invested their time toward the new ship side team roster, a great effort. I kotahitanga. 🇳🇿

NAPIER RAIL

Famous Ormandville Viaduct getting a facelift

SINCE the March issue, the Hawkes Bay rail branch has welcomed new staff members. Jacob has joined the track team in Dannevirke, Tawhiri and Rah-josh have joined the track teams in Napier and Ross has joined the structures team in Napier. Welcome guys!

It is great to see new members joining us and the morale and feel of the workplace has already changed in the last month with the increased staffing/manning levels.

By all accounts there are still another three vacancies to be filled with future recruitments – so watch this space.

Our track teams have been busy with block on lines on weekends and over Easter in Wellington.

Replacing sleepers south of Napier and preparing for re-railing projects coming up in the next few weeks.

The structures teams have been working on the famous Ormondville Viaduct with on-going general maintenance work. We have been doing rail walls with wash-outs and flood damage near Hawera and also a large culvert installation south of Hastings over three to four weekends for Waka Kotahi.

The signals team has been busy doing code maintenance and compliance work.

On the freight side there has been a steady flow of logs coming out of Wairoa to the Port of Napier. Freight are advertising for trainee loco engineers and we will be saying goodbye to Jeff Van Zoomeren soon as he has given notice of his retirement.

As a closing note, it's good to hear that we have Peter Reidy back as our CEO for KiwiRail.

Till next time, be safe. Think safety in your workplace. 🇳🇿

HUTT WORKSHOPS

June rollout expected for first refurbished electric loco

WE begin these notes with confirmation that site upgrades continue, ranging from dishwasher and microwave oven replacements in the canteens through to structural strengthening and asbestos removal on the south wall of Plant 1. Additional to that, a 45T 'portal lathe' has been received as part of the long-awaited Wheel-Shop upgrade.

These are all welcome additions to the site as part of the investment in our ageing equipment and enhancement of our operational capability.

Thanks must go to the people who planned and executed all this work, and the staff who had to put up with the reduced number of plant access points for transporting equipment and inventory along with alterations to safety plans due to temporary closures of escape routes in the event of any emergencies.

At the time of writing a production manager vacancy was being interviewed for from a small pool of internal candidates. By the time you read these notes the successful candidate should have been announced.

We also opened up the next intake

of apprentices. These vacancies will be hotly contested by a good-sized group of prospects. It is worth noting that in the words of one of our production managers, such people are on a form of probationary trial every day – their habits, mannerisms and application to work tasks are being duly noted and are actively considered when someone puts their hat in the ring for due

consideration.

It is also envisaged that the many vacant team leader positions will be advertised after this, thus filling the slots which have been acted in for several months. It is to be noted that a comment in the last branch notes about vacancies caused a measure of upset in some circles and we offer our unreserved apologies for that.



Site leader Rob Gordon addressing the staff on WMD.



Hutt's WMD gathering.

With the easing of Covid restrictions, we look forward to resuming site meetings once more with our branch numbers idling at around 200 members. We need to get back to face-to-face communications and have a BBQ (or two) between now and Christmas!

The news of former CEO Peter Reidy making a return appears to have been well-received. Peter was a champion of managed change within the context of business transformation with a focus on simplifying, standardising and investing (Refer his email of 1 May 2015), commencing with a very ambitious leadership training.

We look forward to Peter re-visiting around the network to re-engage with the staff and get back up to speed with both changes and progress during his time with Fletchers.

Industrial Council work affecting us all continues, however, the Covid restrictions on face-to-face meetings did have a significant impact and we welcome a return to getting around the



HSAT deputy chair Bernie Hunt addressing the staff.

table to progress the issues we all have before us.

For RSAS, this is being carried out via the MCC and AIC.

The recent ANZAC and International Workers' Memorial Day resulted in wreaths being laid to remember both those who made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our freedom of democracy and to mourn those who lost their lives at work.

Workers' Memorial Day was especially poignant this year as our port's cousins had to deal with two workplace fatalities in as many weeks. Until work place safety is taken seriously, these sad occurrences will

continue.

We in both Rail and the RMTU have been through this prior to the 2000 Ministerial enquiry and other initiatives with other employers.

We have strived to foster closer working relationships complete with formal commitments to improve worker safety. After all, when something goes belly-up in the work force, it's the frontline workers' lives and well-being on the line. Remember, if it's not safe, don't do it. Your union will back you!

Until next time, take care and stay safe out there. 🌐



On June 8 the first almost completely refurbishment electric locomotive will roll out the door at Hutt Workshops. The Minister of Transport Hon Michael Wood is invited to the occasion and will recall saving our electric locos was a key campaign for the RMTU under National who planned to scrap them and remove the overhead lines. Under Labour the plan was changed, the lines were left in situ and live and gave breath to the argument to keep and upgrade the locos as an interim measure. Marvellous!

WELLINGTON RAIL

Passenger numbers increase in response to Labour's half-price fares

PLENTY happening in Welly where Omicron continues to affect staff. The threat of new strains arriving is also cause for concern and indicates Covid is going to be around for a long time yet. The way pay and sick leave has been made to either close contacts or those affected by TransDev Wellington (TDW) has been a lively topic of discussion and has kept delegates busy trying to ensure there is consistency.

We reported in the last edition that

amongst the out flow of staff were a number of managers. This time we can report there are a number of new managers amongst the new faces.

Passenger operator numbers have continued to fall and some new staff are not finishing training before they're resigning to take up better paid and full-time positions. It is a case of "we told you so" when TDW stopped the advancement to full-time for passenger operations. Keeping services running and plugging gaps in rosters has

been a challenge resulting in high levels of overtime being worked by many staff. That has raised again the way fatigue is managed and unsurprisingly, TDW wishes to re-negotiate the RoM – our operating rules. The branch response has been – let's get it working as agreed before we change it.

As the employment situation returns to a more historic 'Wellington normal' to many people, the unattractiveness of shift-work, with comparatively poor pay has meant that a number of rail-related roles struggle to

attract applicants. The rail industry has for a long-time had an ageing work force. One figure mentioned recently has Wellington Metro having 70 out of 116 EMU locomotive engineers aged 50 or over.

Meanwhile, passenger numbers are starting to return to pre-Covid levels. Kick-started by the Labour government's halving of fares, at least in the short term, to encourage people to travel by public transport and also to help fight inflation. It is good to see public transport getting promoted for all of our futures.

The new Transmission Gully highway has made the comparative slowness of rail services from Kapiti a poor second choice except on price, comfort, convenience and hopefully customer service.

It is sobering to hear that new signalling and on-going work as part of the Wellington rail network upgrade is going to be a regular event until at least 2025. Good news in itself!

The major fly in the ointment for passengers and staff are bus replacements. A normal part of our doing business you would think. Not so. Each week it seems

there is a new plan which often differs from the last one and, on occasions, is different for TDW staff than the bus companies. Confused? So is everyone else. Of late half hourly train services on the Kapiti line – the line with the greatest growth – have been replaced by hourly buses, with no express services. Often there have been "no show" buses as well.

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and TDW need to do better if we are to make public transport a viable alternative to private cars. Our front-line staff bear the brunt of customers frustration far too often. It hard for them to attempt to justify repeated cock ups! We think punters deserve better and our jobs depend on it.

Great news - GWRC people have been talking to our branch people about uniforms. The unsuitability and shortcomings of the current issue was discussed with delegates representing different roles. It was not surprising to learn that Metlink bus drivers have similar concerns. We hope that in the near future there will be different styles and types of uniform available for staff to view and comment on. This is a major break-

through, long overdue and very welcome.

Bargaining is about to commence for our TDW and Hyundai-Rotem members. There has been a good response to the survey of members and the branch exec committee has been busy finalising the claims to put forward to the bargaining team.

Branch delegates have been working with TDW management and GWRC on the introduction of Snapper cards for the whole Wellington Metro network. So far, they have been introduced on the Johnsonville train line. Snapper cards are available on buses in the Wellington region. It has been a useful exercise with the aim of safeguarding on-board jobs and sales staff jobs and up-skilling for the future. There has been guarantees of no redundancies and it provides security for our members. There is much work to be done but so far, the signs are good for the future. It was always going to be likely that electronic ticketing would be introduced and by being part of the process we are hopeful of a good outcome.

Finally, to our new members: welcome to the rail family, don't be shy, say "Hi". 🌐

NELSON PORT

Skills and staffing shortages adding to stress and fatigue

NELSON continues to be in a state of flux as we head towards the middle of the year. We are facing a skills crisis as stevedoring faces a huge exodus of skilled workers resulting in shift under manning and increased strain on those who remain. Whilst vaccine mandates have seen many leave the Port, by far the biggest factor has been the effect of the work on workers' lives. The lack of a roster, never knowing when you are working or, more importantly, when you are not working all takes its toll on mental and physical health.

Fatigue continues to be a problem. With fewer skills in the workplace this only increases the pressure. The fatigue risk management system (FRMS) still relies on guidelines with only one rule still, in place. The management of fatigue from PNL seems to continually bounce from one person to another as we also chew through people in the office. Being such a complex issue, it invariably takes a new person months to

come to terms with the issues across multiple departments. Usually, the role is tacked on to an already busy schedule.

Worker engagement has also been an issue with a wide feeling that decisions are made prior to any engagement, so that any consultation is a tick the box exercise.

Shipping is sporadic in the container cargo area, with ships jumping around all over the place. Often ships swap around so cargo in the yard is all out of order. Volumes seem pretty good for the time of year, although there has been a shortage of reefer boxes for the apple and kiwifruit exports. Logs continue to be steady although the majority of logs in Nelson are being handled by C3 with PNL Stevedoring finally managing to lose their last logs contract. ISO continues to eat into the Picton volume so that PNL Stevedoring has become a labour hire company for C3. Unfortunately, it would seem to be more profitable to hire out labour and underman their own vessels.

C3 has responded to the tight labour market and skills shortage by significantly increasing its rates of pay to retain and recruit. So, a big thumbs up to the effect that unionising C3 has had for those workers.

A big thank you to all those who contributed to Kyle Tehana's Givealittle page. We raised a whopping \$10k to help Kyle. Not only did this help pay his bills but it also gave him heart that there are people out there who care. The Union community is strong and tight, and we look after our own. Kyle is now heavily into chemotherapy, so doing it tough but wanting to spend as many days as possible with his whanau.

RMTU will be back into negotiations at the end of this year having only done a 16 month deal last time. The cost of living will most likely be the most pressing issue for the workers, with increased pressures in the workplace also needing to be addressed.

Kia kaha to all. 🌐

WEST COAST RAIL

Weekly loco failures affecting coal operations

HI from the jewel of the south. The west coast has been feeling the effects of Covid with crews across the board having multiple absences which has had an impact on the coal programme as well as the coal route repairs. The other issue which has come to the fore has been the weekly locomotive failures which have also impacted the coal route and work trains. On the positive side the demand for

export coal has meant planning has begun to run extra coal trains but this will be a challenge with rostering and the aforementioned locomotive reliability.

With the retirement of Chris Stoop a new operations manager, Rob Armstrong, has been appointed to the West Coast. He has been out meeting some of the operations team and showing his face around the place. He has had a trial by fire with a run

of operating incidents over the past month but has so far been positive in his approach to handling these.

The West Coast rail branch was saddened to hear of the tragic passing of a worker at Lyttleton Port on Anzac Day and this incident brought home the theme and solemnity of a well attended Workers' Memorial Day at the Greymouth depot. 🇳🇿

TIMARU RAIL

Four new workers welcomed to permanent staff

WE welcome four new members to our RMTU branch. Reon Drummond-Chiles, Kaine Sparham and Xaviera Johanson who are training for yard rail operations and loco work and we also welcome to our CT site, Shayne 'Smiley' Smith who isn't a stranger as he worked at McCains for years and knows our team members well. All the best for your years to come in rail.

Currently the RCOs are in training for Arataki remotes and so the roster is looking very messy trying to cover with tack ons etc. The shunt loco problem has been a major issue and thankfully KiwiRail has a refurbished DSG in Hillside which will give

Timaru some reliability for the near future and fewer three-person crewing with as with our old shunt loco fleet.

Good news on the maintenance in our yards with a lot of work being done by our infrastructure comrades. Be assured guys our shunting members really appreciate your efforts.

We had a great turnout in Timaru for Workers Memorial Day. Good numbers of port and rail members attended and three senior port officials as well. With the sad and untimely deaths of two port workers in the last three weeks it's obviously causing concerns at a senior level at Primeport Timaru.

On a personal level, we celebrate the retirement of Jim Sheridan after 46 years in Oamaru. Jim has been a great rail operator and staunch member of our Union all his railway life. He will be missed at work, but his passion for his beautiful Harley Davidson and his motorbike friends from our depot will see many fun rides and bike rallies in the future. All the very best Jim!

With the departure of John Kerr in the South Island, we look forward to seeing our RMTU general secretary visiting our branch in the near future, while a replacement for John is found.

Stay safe and well team! 🇳🇿

TIMARU PORT

Welcoming changes to make workplace safer

CURRENTLY at Timaru Port we are focusing on safety of all workers. It saddened us to learn of the two port deaths in the past month. We welcome any change which would ensure no workers will be hurt on the job and to ensure this does not happen again. Our president at-

tended a two day zoom meeting last month in the interest of health and safety with other port branches and we are expecting visits from both Maritime NZ and Worksafe in the next week.

We had a good turnout for our Workers Memorial Day event together with the Tima-

ru Rail branch for a small service followed by a few savouries. The port executives also arrived which was a good sign for our Port team atmosphere. Everyone is in the same boat and any deadly event is guaranteed to affect us all.

Stay safe comrades. 🇳🇿

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO KEEP DUNEDIN RAIL MOVING

The Dunedin City Council needs to use innovative thinking to keep Dunedin Railways rolling, including the iconic tourist attraction of the Taieri Gorge Railway. No to mothballing

Sign the petition at: facebook.com/dunedinrail

A fitting farewell for TR56

KIWI RAIL'S oldest working diesel locomotive retires and is replaced by a battery powered alternative. There are two types of electric shunt now as the Hutt Shops model had to be shortened as a standard battery shunt vehicle would not fit on their traverser with a Dx locomotive – so the vehicle was shortened and the batteries and air tanks stacked vertically. An audience gathered at Hutt Workshops in Lower Hutt, to farewell the 85-year-old small shunt engine, known as TR56, and to introduce its replacement; a fully electric, zero-emissions shunt.

The new electric locomotive was funded through the Government's \$1.6 billion investment to replace KiwiRail's ageing locomotives, wagons and upgrades to its mechanical facilities.

Transport Minister Michael Wood and Climate Change Minister James Shaw were at the ceremony, along with Hutt South Labour MP Ginny Anderson.

Acting chief executive David Gordon said TR56 would be gifted to the Rail Heritage Trust, to be used by Silver Stream Railway in Upper Hutt to pull passenger carriages.

The workers attending the ceremony were delighted when Minister Wood said his government's investment of more than \$8 billion in rail since Labour came into office was "because we believe in the future of rail. This was a sector that built New Zealand in the years that have gone by, but it had been left in a parlous state – run down and asset-stripped over successive decades". 🇳🇿



Howard Phillips cuts the cake while (below) nostalgics workers watch.



(l) The cake and words from (r-top) Maryan Street and (below) Minister Wood and Dave Gordon acting CEO.



New and old shunts on the workshop traverser.