

THE Transport Worker

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FOCUS ON HILLSIDE



A spread of photos showing the many sides of Hillside Work-shops.

Pages 14 to 16

PORT PICS



Top of the South Island ports feature in a photo line-up.

Pages 18 & 19

SPECTACULAR RAIL FIRE



Hot bogies set a freight car alight on the NIMT.

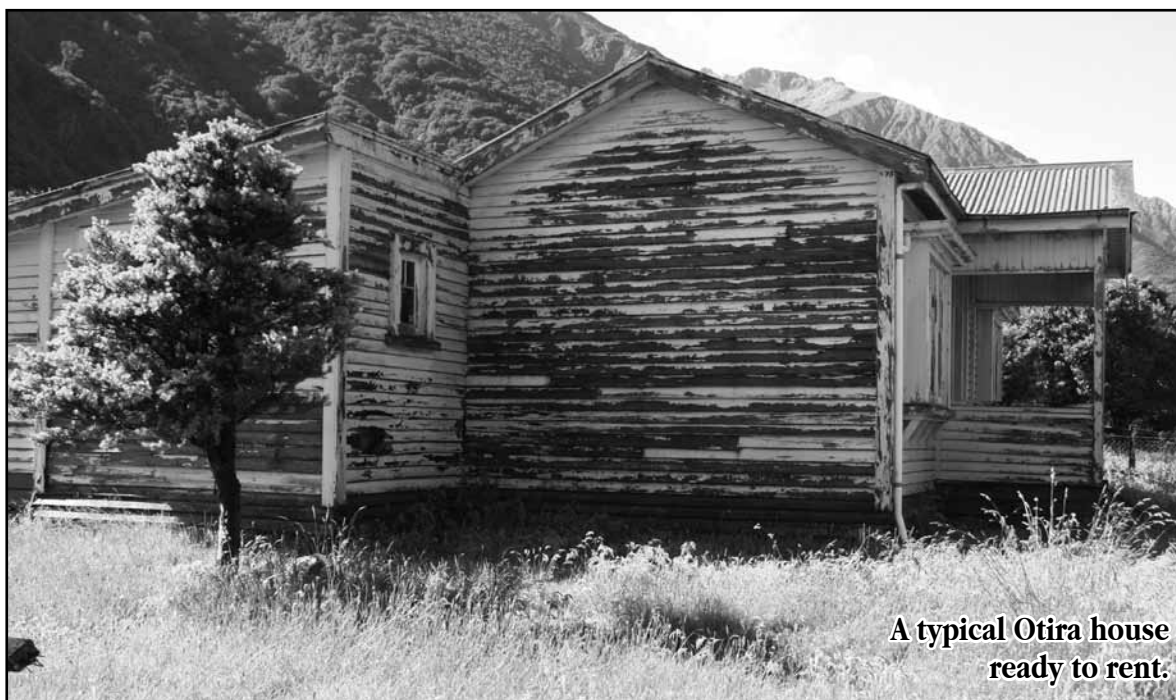
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Living conditions 2009

Railworkers forced into substandard housing



A typical Otira house ready to rent.

THERE'S not much choice of accommodation in Otira – you can choose poor, pitiful or dire. And it's nearly all owned by Hennah Holdings Ltd who appear to have little interest in looking after their investment.

Of the approximately 20 houses still standing, rail workers who live there say most would not pass the government's recent threshold for rental stock and are certainly worse than those which housing minister Phil Heatley saw recently when he visited Porirua.

Of the four KiwiRail workers based there, two are forced to live in what they call substandard housing owned by Hennah Holdings. Another recently moved to a privately owned house across the track and the last took his family to Rotomanu about 40 minutes downhill, both driven out of the Otira township, they say, by the state of its accommodation.

RMTU West Coast branch secretary, Paul Fokett, says: "I can't understand why NZ Rail at the time sold everything. They could have kept four houses for their workers."

Workers in the town say the same.

One, who wished to remain anonymous, said he is often asked what it was like before the town was sold. He replied that it was "great. The houses were the same stock but they were maintained by NZ Rail."

Unlike today, he says, where Hennah Holdings appear to be happy to watch them deteriorate "slapping on a sheet of iron over rotten boards" or leaving leaks "to sort themselves out".

He said one worker complained about his leaking house for nearly a year and watched while it was fixed, but only once he had moved out.

Unfortunately, it is preferable that KiwiRail's workers live there to provide a viable service to assist the coal trains from Otira to Arthur's Pass. All the alternatives involve long drives on dangerous roads – especially in winter – and considerable 'down' time.

The depth of the problem came to light recently when a new worker to the area tried to find accommo-

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RMTU – NZ's Largest Specialist Transport Union

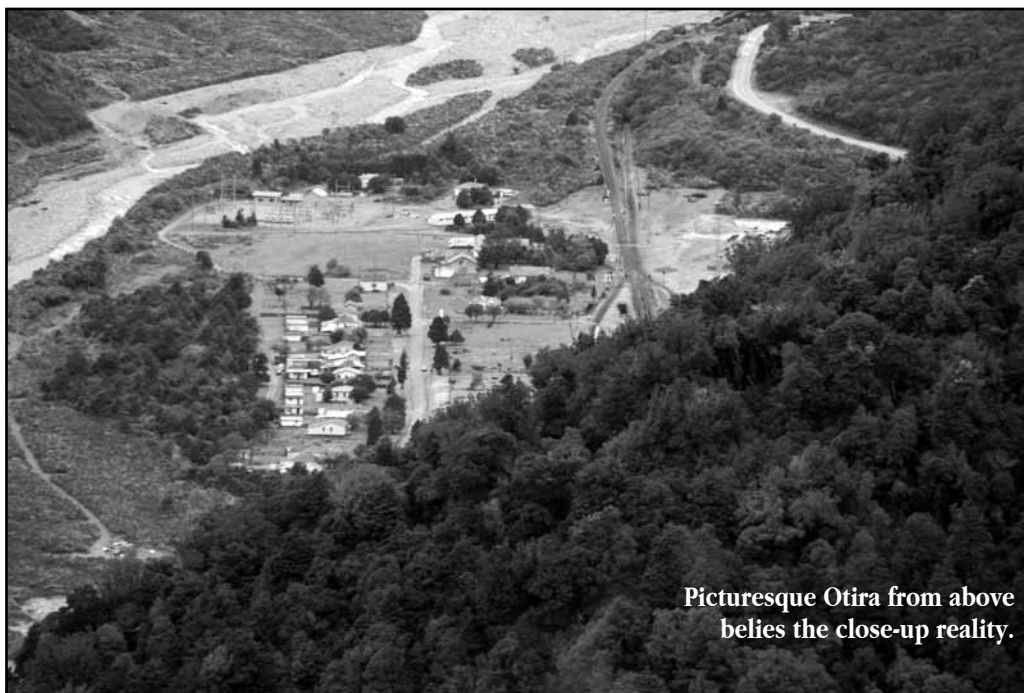
Housing

dation. He had five houses to choose from and the best of the bunch had no electric hot water, no stove, was littered with rubbish and had a leaking roof.

"The only way he could get hot water for a bath after work was to light a chip heater," said Paul.

None of the houses are insulated and unless the worker has a family living there keeping the fires going all day, it's as cold inside as out. Adding to the misery, at this time of year the sun sets on the town around 2:30pm leaving a frigid and icy welcome when they return from a day's work.

Otira is seven kilometres north of Arthur's Pass on the western approach. It was originally a stop on the Cobb & Co stagecoach to the West Coast and consists principally of old railways housing, much of it constructed in Hamilton and shipped south to be reassembled on



Picturesque Otira from above belies the close-up reality.

site. Close to the town are the Otira Tunnel and the Otira Viaduct – two key elements of concern and care for the workers.

Rail workers depart daily from Otira Station to bank trains up to Arthur's Pass. Locomotives are stationed at Otira where they also can refuel. The rail office and station buildings are not owned by Hennah Holdings.

In fact, says Paul, KiwiRail still own land in Otira and could site some suitable housing there for its workers.

"In my opinion these houses are well below what the Housing Corporation of NZ are allowed to rent out to their clients," he said.

In its heyday Otira was home to about 600 railway workers and their families until all the railway housing was sold to a private company in 1989. The Hennah family (under the name of Hennah Holdings Ltd) took over in 1998 when they moved there from Auckland. They describe themselves as a family business supplying "authentic workers' cottages" to mainly travellers with "open fires for cosy winter nights".

Local anecdotal – and

photographic – evidence would suggest that very few of the houses have reached this standard.

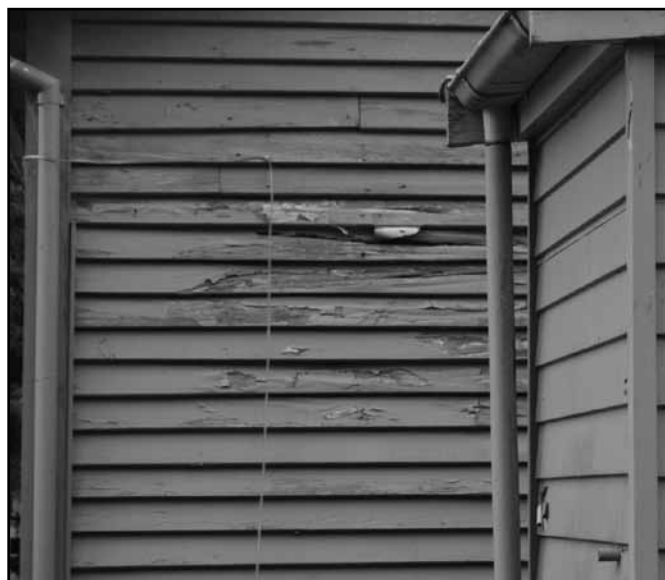
Paul estimates it would cost KiwiRail about \$500,000 to supply four houses for its workers.

While those who live there choose to do so, it is evidently in KiwiRail's favour, says Paul, that they do.

"It's a good job but the place is rubbish," said one worker. 🌐

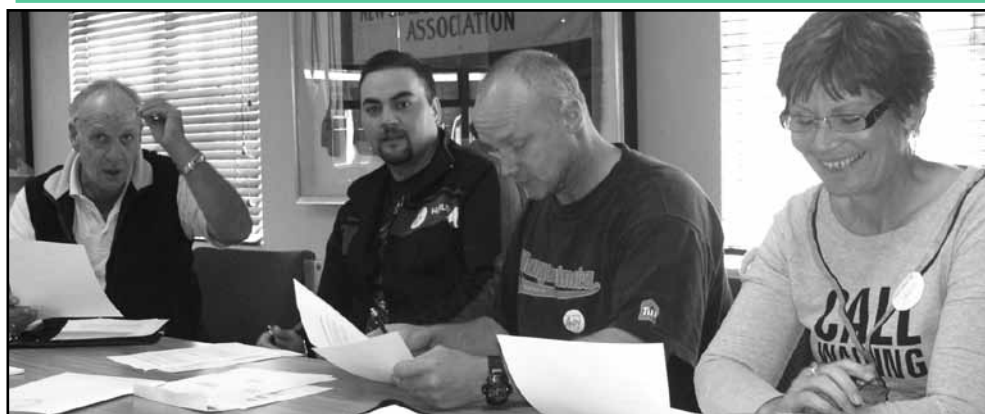


Rotten weatherboards and lack of maintenance are evident all around.



Examples of a bathroom and kitchen.





(l to r) Paul Foskett (Greymouth), Telai Safesi (Wellington), Andrew Kelly (Lyttelton) and Jackie Poole (Christchurch).



CTU Training Centre director Bronwyn Maxwell sends round the begging bowl.



(l to r) Shane MacNae (Mount Maunganui) and Garesb Sukba (Wellington CT).

Telai Sefesi from Wellington.



(l to r) Ken Jenkins (Palmerston North), Jerry Hobepa (Auckland), Garesb

Les Ingram Hillside branch secretary.



Sukba (Wellington), Reg Hunter and John Marsh (Waikato) working on a group exercise.



(l to r) Randolph Sladen and Charlotte Marsh (Auckland Rail).



Robin (Biggles) Maindonald Taranaki Port.



Grant Herbert Marlborough Port.



Tania Haraki (Picton Interisland Line). Rob Stone (Taranaki Rail).



(l to r) Ken Jenkins (Palmerston North) and Jackie Poole (Christchurch).

Intense training for delegates

DURING March this year special training was given to selected port and rail delegates from throughout New Zealand in Wellington.

The training was delivered by the CTU's training centre director Bronwyn Maxwell assisted by the RMTU's own Todd Valster.

In part the training was provided to help the delegates understand that their problems were not isolated or necessarily unique but were, in fact, common throughout the industries.

The process covered such areas as:


- Disciplinary procedures and personal rights
- Mapping as a tactic to encourage member participation
- Updating information on legislation
- Empowering members
- Networking
- Communication
- Clarification of roles

The interaction they had with other union delegates and learning about their issues, they said, gave them confidence to get active and communicate to union and non-union members alike and gave them encouragement to organise regular meetings and outings.

For many this was a pretty steep learning curve but the organisers were well pleased with the results and the enthusiasm they all had for the tasks to come.

As one participant said: "This workshop has assisted me in bettering my skills and understanding," he said. "It's scary how much I didn't know."

Another said: "The best part of the workshop for me was finding ways of getting members more active and passionate about being RMTU and educating them on their rights and more meaningful meetings."

One of the key messages they left the seminar with was to promote the importance of the RMTU. 

ECONOMICS figured high on our agendas recently. Delegates to the Ports Forum were given an in depth appraisal of the current economic times by CTU secretary Peter Conway and two Port Company CEOs while members within KiwiRail Freight were given a financial briefing of the effects of the recession on the rail business. Those of us who heard both 'stories' very quickly came to the realisation that the fortunes of ports and rail are inextricably aligned. What impacts one affects the other. On the one hand this clearly demonstrates the strategic and tactical advantage of an integrated transport supply chain union like the RMTU whilst on the other it shows the value of having information flows at all stages of the supply chain to allow us to see the big picture more clearly. We all know that information and knowledge are of immense value.

The affect of the current economic situation on imports and internal freight forwarder markets show they are suffering while exports are booming, especially in forestry, dairy, steel and other commodities. As Auckland is the largest import port it is apparent why they are the first major port to be announcing job losses and I sympathise with our MUNZ brothers and sisters caught up in it. The fortunes of Auckland Port have been of interest since they picked up the bulk of the Maersk work and the other shipping lines back-filled the other ports. In dealing with the recession and downturn most other ports have cut back on hours and are exhausting all other avenues for reducing spending. This means we have not seen an overall trend towards mass layoffs – so far. Whether this remains the situation will depend on how far off a recovery is.

Volumes down

Rail though, is approximately 10% down on freight volumes and therefore, revenue. While train and ferry cancellations have occurred some services have to be maintained, possibly where they would otherwise be cut owing to the fact that no alternative is available for cartage. To



Wayne Butson, general secretary.

cancel them would be to lose the contract. Rail is a high, fixed-cost business and even though trains are cancelled it will not be easy for the company to reduce its spend. What is also becoming clear is that whilst there is good deal of money around for rail capital projects, cash to support the operation itself is not so plentiful. Let us not forget that during the public wrestling match between the crown and Toll in the run up to the crown repurchase, there was no argument over the fact that rail in its current form in NZ is economically unsustainable without some form of Government support – either by subsidy or direct cash injection. There was disagreement over the amount needed but not the fact that it was needed.

Funding slashed

Since the election we have seen the Minister for (Road) Transport Stephen Joyce hand out money to roading projects, cease funding to the Seachange strategy and slash public transport funding. The Government has also launched a line-by-line review of rail which will see each line's future put in the balance. It's worth noting that if this had been done 15 or 20 years ago the three current busiest lines in NZ would have, in all probability, been closed. They include the South Island coal route, the lower North Island milk route and the East Coast Main Trunk. Such a review is

needless and a senseless waste of time in my view as this country simply cannot afford to rip up one more rail line. Anyone who thinks that gas-guzzling long distance trucks carrying 80% of all NZ land freight is a sustainable transport option are in cuckoo land.

We simply have to develop our rail and coastal shipping options if we are going to meet our global emission reduction targets and also move future transport goods. The freight task in NZ is predicted to double within 20 years. The future is not in building yet more motorways whilst at the same time ripping up railway lines and starving the survival of those which remain by not adequately funding them. Now is not the time to be slashing sustainable transport spending so as to deliver more tax cuts or any other initiatives to aid the rich.

The Budget brings ...

Funding for infrastructure in this year's Budget included \$1.45 billion per year (up from \$900 million) until 2013/14 when it will rise to \$1.65 billion. This covers spending in areas including (over four years) Health, particularly in Auckland, Broadband, continued support of the KAREN tertiary education and research network, 69 new state houses, \$142.4 million for roading and **\$90 million operating subsidy for KiwiRail**. Other items already announced include \$258 million for metro rail and rolling stock in Wellington and a loan facility for KiwiRail of \$140 million (including \$75 million for new locomotives).

Who did you vote for?

Did voters (especially rail and port worker voters) throw out the baby with the bath water when they either voted for parties of the right or failed to vote at all in the last election?



Health benefits

Dear Editor,

For a number of years I have been covered for medical insurance with a Sovereign Tranz-Rail Absolute Health Policy. This coverage originated as the NZR Staff Welfare Trust Extended Health Plan.

When I took the policy I was somewhat sceptical as to its benefit given the facilities available in our public health sector.

However in recent years due to unexpected family events I have twice made significant claims for services under the policy.

The response from Sovereign has been excellent with the necessary approvals being virtually immediate and very simple and straight-forward to obtain.

Whilst I remain a staunch advocate of our very good public health system I can thoroughly recommend this Plan as an additional and sometimes necessary backup for health services.

I would also highly recommend the services of David Ballett from Group Health in Wellington who has been extremely helpful as an advisor under the policy.

Brian Armstrong
Christchurch

Resignations & retirements

Dear Editor,

It is with some sadness that I must tender my resignation from the RMTU. I am leaving KiwiRail after a career of 28 years to go to work in the big brown land of Western Australia. I would like to take this opportunity

to thank the Union and delegates – present and past – for all they have done for the members and myself over the years. The job would never have been so good without their tireless efforts. Remember everyone, UNITY IS STRENGTH!

Alan Atkinson
RCO Middleton

Dear Editor,

As I retired from the Railways on April 3 after nearly 46 years of service, I wish to tender my resignation from the Union.

While, I have not been a very active member over the past few years, and thankfully, have never required assistance from the Union during my 45 years of membership, I have appreciated all that the Union has achieved for me, and other Railway employees, during that period.

The future of the Railways is certainly looking 'mixed' now that it has become a Political Football again, so the need for the old EFCA slogan, "Tell the Boys (and now, also the Girls) to pull together" is really relevant.

To all those persons that I have worked with, and known, during my railway career, I thank you for your friendship and assistance, and I wish you all, and the Union, all the best for the future.

Alan Brabender QSM
Palmerston North

Dear Editor,

Please accept this letter of resignation from the RMTU due to the fact that I have succumbed to the temptation of retirement after 53 years in the Railway industry.

Although I have witnessed many changes in the industry, I have had an enjoyable career as a locomotive engineer due to the

Late news

Death: Greg Harvey

The RMTU is greatly saddened by the sudden death of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union national secretary Greg Harvey after a long battle with cancer. Our sincere condolences go out to Liz, his wife. Greg attended the national conference last year and has been a staunch comrade to the RMTU over the years. His strong leadership during the difficult Toll/Pacific national negotiations for the RTBU a few years ago will be his legacy to the Union.

fact of the great comradeship amongst my fellow workmates, and that of knowing of the security that the RMTU gives, being there to look after our best interests.

I wish the Union and my workmates well in the future and thank them for many great memories.

Gary Martin
Geymouth

Dear Editor,

Due to the current recession I have found myself being made redundant so find myself resigning from the Union. I have been very grateful to have been a longstanding member of this Union and have seen many changes from the days of when it was the RTA. One thing that hasn't changed during this time is the wonderful people who make up this Union who are always available for support and encouragement whenever called upon. I wish to thank everyone who I have ever had contact with for your support and at the very least, your friendship. All the best for the future,

Steve Weir
Gough Forklifts
Dunedin

Dear Editor,

As I am retiring on the 29 May 2009 after nearly 48 years, it is with some regret that I tender my resignation from the RMTU. I would like to thank the Union for their support when I needed it, and wish them well for the future.

Noel Marshall



Hospital visit

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson passing on the Union's regards and best wishes to Sassa Wharekura, a Westfield shunter, who was seriously injured in a shunting accident. He was in fine spirits when visited.

PORTS FORUM - FIRST TIMERS



Brett Smith

Entertaining, great bunch of guys to sit down with and work through issues in other ports that directly or indirectly affect us. Good bearing presentations from Port CEOs on recession and its possible effects, especially on smaller ports.



Terry Butcher

Very interesting didn't know what to expect especially but found out about other ports and members. Very keen to see this MUNZ issue getting sorted.



Barry Cantwell

Excellent, very informative especially Helen Kelly (CTU) on getting the message of being union out there to other Kiwis.



Libbi Carr

Great meeting with delegates from other ports and hearing the issues and overall view.



Alan Wilson

Very informative, not boring at all. I have learnt a lot about how ports are run nationwide.



Adam Sincok

Eye opener all good but recession presentation was difficult to listen to. A lot to take in and great meeting other ports delegates and learning more about the RMTU.



Tim Loach

Very interesting and informative. The ability to network with other port delegates will be crucial going forward. Knowledge of the differences between us and other ports has put our port in context.



George Laird

Interesting, informative and great seeing the passion of the delegates that attend on their industry and RMTU. Looking forward to visiting the ports and meeting more members.



Pat Pikari

Very interesting and great meeting other port delegates. Helen Kelly was great. All presentations were eye openers including the CEO's.

PORTS FORUM



(l to r) Phil Spanswick RMTU organiser, Daniel Manu chair Taranaki Port branch, Scott Golding Marlborough Port branch, Roy Hislop Timaru Port branch.



Helen Kelly president NZCTU.



(l to r) Aubrey Wilkinson RMTU National vice president, Ruth Blakeley president Port Chalmers branch and NMC, Helen Kelly and Jim Kelly RMTU national president.



(l to r) Bill Houston Lyttelton branch chair, Adam Sincok Lyttelton branch, Tom Loach Nelson Port branch.



*Peter Conway
secretary
NZCTU.*

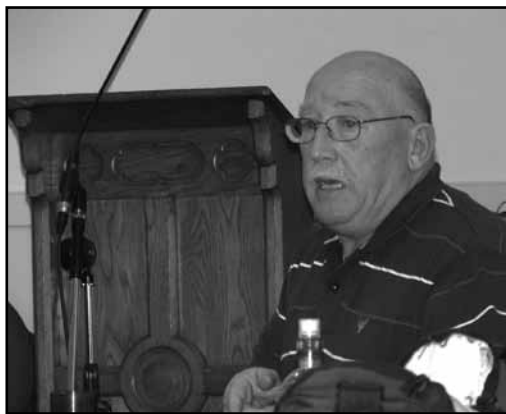


(l to r) Roy Hislop Timaru Port branch, Barry Cantwell Timaru Port branch, Brett Smith Hawkes Bay Port branch, Ian Haussman Greymouth Port branch, Dave Marden secretary Hawkes Bay Port branch and Mike Tasker vice chair Lyttelton branch.

PORTS FORUM



(l to r) Alan Wilson Port Chalmers branch, Libbi Carr branch secretary Lyttelton branch, Michael Morgan Port Chalmers branch, Brian Cronin RMTU organiser.



Jim Kelly RMTU National president.



Garry Parsloe MUNZ national vice president and Russell Mayn MUNZ assistant general secretary.



Mark Cairns, Port Tauranga CEO speaking bluntly as always.



Aubrey Wilkinson RMTU national vice president.

Phil Spanswick RMTU organiser.



Brian Cronin RMTU organiser.



Todd Valster RMTU Organiser presents current issues at Port Nelson.

Matangi mock-up completed



Representatives from GWRC, KR's PSG, TranzMetro, TDI, Rotem and the RMTU stand proudly in front of the Matangi mock-up at Hutt Workshops after the official signing of the NZ mock-up completion certificate.

APRIL 16, 2009 saw a major milestone in the design process for the new Matangi Multiple Units – the formal signing of the NZ mock-up completion certificate by representatives from the Greater Wellington Regional Council, Tranz Metro, the RMTU and Rotem. As previously reported, the consultation for RMTU reps, both operationally and mechanically, with the GWRC, KiwiRail's Professional Services Group, TDI and Rotem

has been excellent and the completion certificate formalises all that hard work. The next stages are the critical design review and viewing of the Matangi MU's construction for our team in Korea later this year.

Work is also well underway to enhance the infrastructure in the Wellington electrified area for the trains. About 16 new substations are being built for these more powerful trains and major projects including: an additional

main line between Kaiwharawhara and Wellington; and the extension of double lines and electrification to Waikanae on the Main Trunk line, are well underway. There is, and will be, a lot of disruption to the travelling public until all these projects are completed but the wait will be worth it. It appears that Wellington will continue to have the best suburban rail passenger system in NZ for some time to come.



KIC 3 & 4

THERE have been two KiwiRail RMTU Industrial Council (KIC) meetings this year – KIC 3 in Takapuna (March 4 & 5), minutes for which are on the KR intranet and available in hard copy in every depot and

terminal. If you are KR operating staff and do not have access to the minutes then contact your manager or RMTU KIC rep. KIC 4 was held on May 20 & 21 – the minutes are expected in the next two weeks.

Dean Ngatai KIC terminals rep (northern) modelling the new cold weather jacket for terminal staff.



A proposed cap featuring built in sets of torches that can be charged using solar power during the day ready for the night shift.



A symbolic reminder for a Dunedin-based LE who died in a train collision.

Honouring the dead – committing to the living

THE first Workers Memorial Day was observed in Canada in 1989 and every year, an ever-growing number of people in hundreds of communities throughout the world recognise the day as a day to remember workers who have lost their lives through occupational injury or disease.

Following pressure from the RMTU and other like-minded transport unions the International Transport Workers Federation now marks this day as their international day of action. This year the ITF campaign is saying no to violence in the workplace.

According to recent estimates by the International Labour Office (ILO), the number of job-related accidents and illnesses, which annually claim more than two million lives, appears to be rising because of rapid industrialisation in some developing countries. A staggering 5,000 workers a day are killed at work around the world.

In New Zealand work-related injuries kill



Rhonda Sincock plants a tree with Lyttelton branch chair Mike Tasker in memory of her late husband and RMTU member Marty Sincock.

at least 100 people a year – men and women who went to work and never came home.

Additionally, many workers return home from work carrying hidden time bombs of occupational diseases. According to the NZIP Secretariat, work-related disease kill between



Christchurch

700 and 1,000 workers a year. Most of these deaths are due to occupational cancer, heart and respiratory diseases.

ACC statistics show that between 2002 and 2007, new work-related claims requiring

Continued on the next page



Taumaranui members who attended a memorial day barbeque organised by the King Country branch.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

weekly compensation rose from 26,703 to 27,817 – roughly the population of Timaru.

It is estimated that a third of all work-related fatal injuries happen on the road with machinery, water transport, falling objects and falls accounting for most of the rest. The highest number of fatal injuries occur in the construction, manufacturing and agriculture/fishing/forestry industries.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee estimates the full economic and social costs of occupational diseases and injuries here totals \$20.9 billion a year – and only 2% of the total costs are “compensated” by ACC and the Ministry of Social Development. This leaves 98% of the costs to be borne by the families and communities of the victims.

RMTU members all work in dangerous industries including areas where asbestos use – and abuse – is and was high. We have had many of our members bravely battle the cancer of mesothelioma before eventually dying a despicable and pain ridden death. In the last couple of years we have successfully battled to get them lump-sum payments from ACC and entitlements for post traumatic stress disorders.

The current Government has signalled that both of these gains will be under attack. We have also successfully campaigned to get employers to provide death and disability lump-sum payments in our Collective Agreements and many families have been thankful of this payment.

WMD is when we honour the dead and commit to fighting for the living. 🌐

Wellington



RMTU members and others came together at midday for brief presentations from Peter Conway (NZCTU) and the Honourable Ruth Dyson. The importance of health and safety in our workplaces was stressed, along with the real need to protect ACC in the future.

Port of Napier

It was a fine warm day at Napier, at 10 am Tuesday April 28. We assembled at the southern end of the Port just outside the gates on the council reserve where the remembrance trees stand. Our thanks to industrial chaplain Neville Stevenson for his time and for convening the proceedings. There was a gathering of around 50 people made up of several unions – RMTU, MUNZ and SFWU – Port company management, including Garth Cowie CEO, HBSS and family members of the two stevedores who lost their lives at work and to whom we were being specifically commemorating. Speakers were Alan Burke (MUNZ), Guy Stone (Port Company), Russell Fairbrother (lawyer), Mavis Watson (union advocate) and Dave Norman (HBSS). After the service we proceeded to the Apperley Memorial Wall just inside the port's south gate where two plaques were unveiled by the family members for:

Brian Martin – lost March 1995.

Ian Stothart – lost January 2005.

Both worked for HBSS and were MUNZ members. Dave Norman, retired manager of HBSS gave eulogies to both.

It is with appreciation that I thank all who attended and spoke on this special day of remembering of those we have either lost, or who have been injured as a result of a workplace accident and are unable to return to work. 🌐



Port workers gather at the gates to unveil the plaques and (above) the two new plaques for Brian Martin and Ian Stothart.



Continued over the page

Dunedin

General secretary Wayne Butson (below) attended and spoke at the Dunedin service where a roll of Otago workers killed at work was read out. The roll call was shared by national president Jim Kelly (right) and Hillside secretary Les Ingram.



NEWS

Workers for Kiwi Made

WITH the world in financial turmoil, it is a good reminder that the things we make and sell are real and are not part of the billions of dollars flying around the globe looking for a profitable return.

Unfortunately, over the last few years making things or manufacturing have almost become dirty words. We are told that it doesn't matter where things are made as long as companies make the most money possible. So we see New Zealand losing manufacturing jobs to low wage countries because they tell us this is the most efficient and profitable way to do business. However, the financial crash shows how short term this thinking is.

At the beginning of the last parliament in 2005, the Green Party made a deal with Labour to run a campaign to promote NZ manufacturing and to persuade Kiwis to think about NZ made when making their buying decisions. This programme is called Buy Kiwi Made.

As part of this programme, the National Distribution Union successfully applied to the Ministry of Economic Development to run a Buy Kiwi Made campaign for workers. This

campaign is called Workers for Kiwi Made.

Workers for Kiwi Made will be run in three parts.

Make it Here is the campaign for manufacturing workers in the NDU, EPMU and other manufacturing unions. It provides leaflets and other promotional material for manufacturing workers and their unions to campaign in their communities around the value of manufacturing in providing jobs and for the overall economic development of the country.

Just Sales is the second campaign and is aimed at NDU retail workers. Retail workers will be asked to promote Kiwi Made in their shops and also ask their bosses to be involved in a joint company/union Buy Kiwi Made campaign.

Good Buys is aimed at all union members. As well as being workers we are also consumers. Every week we spend hundreds of dollars buying food, clothes and other goods for our day to day lives. Good Buys will promote Kiwi Made goods to union members and encourage union members to make sure that their bosses also considers buying Kiwi Made.

Become a Kiwi Made Union.

Although the final Workers for Kiwi Made programme is a cut down version of the original proposal, it is still important – and in our members' interests – that we get the Buy Kiwi Made message out.

Even a small change in the buying habits of union members and their employers will save jobs. We urge you to play a role in this campaign.

Workers for Kiwi Made has its own website at:

www.workersforkiwimade.org.nz

• If you want to know more about the Buy Kiwi Made campaign visit its website on:

www.buykiwimade.govt.nz

Associated with the Buy Kiwi made campaign is the Buy NZ campaign which was started by the Manufacturers Association and the Council of Trade Unions in 1991. You can visit its website on:

www.buynz.org.nz and its NZ Made shop

at: www.getnzmade.net or;

Contact Robert Reid, at the NDU:

robert.reid@ndu.org.nz or;

Phone: (04) 803 1198.



Rule 905 Working Party – Update

THE Rule 905 Working Party is made up of KR Networks management and reps (infrastructure and train control) from KR Freight, RMTU National Office and KR H&S management. This working party aims to provide a forum for robust discussion about Rule 905 to address safety concerns raised about this protection arrangement from both an infrastructure and LE perspective, and from those discussions, make recommendations for improvements. There have been three meetings this year.

Proposed improvements so far include:

- CSB diagram updated which clearly identifies the buffer zone and the authority requirements prior to using a buffer zone;
- Work area limit signs which provide a physically defined worksite limit for infrastructure workers;
- Enhanced requirements for protection in double line and loops;
- A review of all kilometre (and 1/2k) pegs;
- A review of call sign lettering and similar radio calls signs to avoid miscommunications;
- The reinstating of call catcher to monitor compliance in TWC areas;
- A proposed use of fixed signals for protection;
- Reviewing the issuing of bulletins for track staff and a proposal for In Effects Sum-

Jerry Hobepa holds a new sign that will define the limits of the worksite for track workers.



maries & Information bulletins to be signed for by LEs;

- Reviewing whether bulletins could be issued later to allow for more planning of protection and preparation work;
- A mini rule book for infrastructure staff to be placed in vehicles; and
- Project Reset – a significant roll out of training for infrastructure staff. Now 90% complete.

Other proposed options include:

- Static Train Stops (STS) which could be

used in conjunction with the majority of the passenger rolling stock in Wellington electrified area. A prototype is being designed and will be trialled in Wellington in the near future. If successful the STS would provide a physical method of preventing a train from breaches a track work site; and

- Electronic detonators currently being designed locally by KRN. A trial is also planned for the near future.

The next 905 Working Party meeting will be after the electronic detonator and STS have been trialled.

Members of the working party believe the forum has been productive and real safety enhancements will be recommended.

A prototype electronic detonator designed by Ray Vincent that will provide warnings to LE's and track workers on site.



Sign-offs



The Veolia Transport Auckland branch passenger operator delegates (l to r) Isadore Gomes, Mitch Manning and Paul Turner happy with the outcome of another meeting with the bosses.

(l to r) Arthur Bruce Veolia Transport NZ country manager, Wayne Butson and KiwiRail's William Peet all caught signing off the RMTU-Veolia KiwiRail MECA in early 2009.





John Valk (apprentice) and Koni Tavite.



Fabricator
Rebecca
Newton.

HILL



Kane Smith and Ron Mooyman with yoke mould.



Stuart Johnstone,
fab shop delegate
and Dave Kearns,
foundry delegate/
assistant
secretary.



Paul McKenzie maintenance electrician.



Apprentice
fabricator
Lisa
McKinlay.



Steve Alexander on hardsand mixer.



Mark Ruthven.



Brian Williment.

Cha
cas

Kelvin Milne
patternmaking.



SIDE FOCUS



Bruno Rawson.

MPs visit Hillside



Infrastructure Minister Bill English (centre) with (left) Hillside production manager Lyn Harris and Rail and Maritime Transport Union branch secretary Les Ingram.

PHOTOGRAPH: Otago Daily Times

Infrastructure Minister Bill English and the Leader of the Opposition Phil Goff recently visited Hillside Engineering – a first for Mr English despite being the MP for nearby Clutha and Southland since 1990.

According to the *Otago Daily Times* his was the first visit to the workshop of a National MP in 27 years – no competition for Labour whose MPs were regular visitors to the plant.

Mr English told the *ODT* that Hillside “is an important part of KiwiRail and I want to get to understand the operations”. Earlier that month he had announced the Government would spend nearly \$50 million through KiwiRail on building new carriages for the Tranz Scenic passenger routes with most of that work going to the Hillside workshop beginning in January 2010. He added that he was impressed with the input of staff, the union and management.



Charles Nevard shotblasting
stings.



Ryan Ogle.

HILLSIDE FOCUS



Colin Double maintenance electrician.



Allan Cooper maintenance fitter.

Mike Ferry maintenance electrician.



Stephen Barton.



Freddie Eriepa and Ngama Ngatae checking out the sideframe mould.

John Gamble (the oldest apprentice) at work in the pattern shop.



Ken Lethaby fab night delegate, Gary Stephenson, Jeremy Hall.



Norm Gates

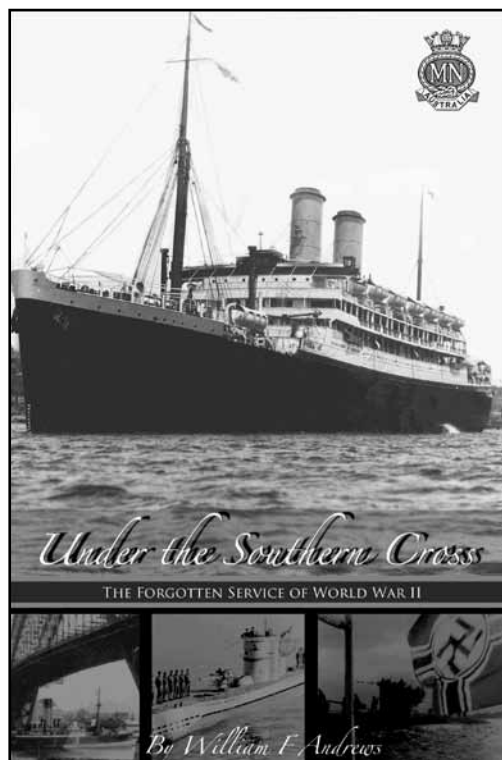


Ryan Ogle, fabricator.



Maurice Langley, level 2 mechanical engineer.

Naval history



WRITTEN on behalf of the Australian and New-Zealand Merchant Navies of WWII, *Under the Southern Cross* by William Andrews, (pictured bottom left) is a bid to support making September 3 Merchant Navy Day in Australia and New Zealand – the same as Great Britain and Canada. The Australian Government, led by the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, has already proclaimed

the day as Merchant Navy Day.

Last year on September 3, 63 years after the war, the proclamation was presented to the Governor General of Australia to sign.

The story is based on the experience of the author and his fellow seamen. 🌐

LAURIE JONES

LAURIE JONES joined the Lyttelton Harbour Board as a boilermaker in 1962. He stayed there until 1988 before moving to the Lyttelton Port Company until 1991. In that time he was the local union president of the Harbour Workers Union for 17 years and also served on the national executive for eight years. He was then elected national president, a position he held for six years. Laurie was instrumental in setting up health insurers UniMed and also the New Zealand Harbour Superannuation Scheme. Laurie was made a life member of the RMTU for his services.



Life member Laurie Jones.

Laurie was born on March 24, 1933 and passed away on September 12, 2008 after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Mary and children Kimbla, John, Christine, Sharon and Laurina. 🌐

AIL of New Zealand

AIL has been serving Rail and Maritime Transport Union members since 1995 with a *No Cost \$1000 Accidental Death Cover* provided automatically through your membership.

In addition to this, **AIL** now offers all members an additional *\$5000 Accident Death Benefit* for a premium of just \$1 for the first year, renewable every year

thereafter for just \$2.50 per year. There are no medical questions to answer and this is only available because you are a union member!

AIL also offers full family benefits plans on a Union-Only basis including supplementary Life Insurance, Accident Injury Benefits (Hospital/A & E/doctor treatment), and Cancer Protection.

To take advantage of this service please fill in a yellow **AIL** reply card. MEMBERS MUST SEND BACK A NEW CARD TO GET THESE BENEFITS. Or contact **AIL** directly on freephone

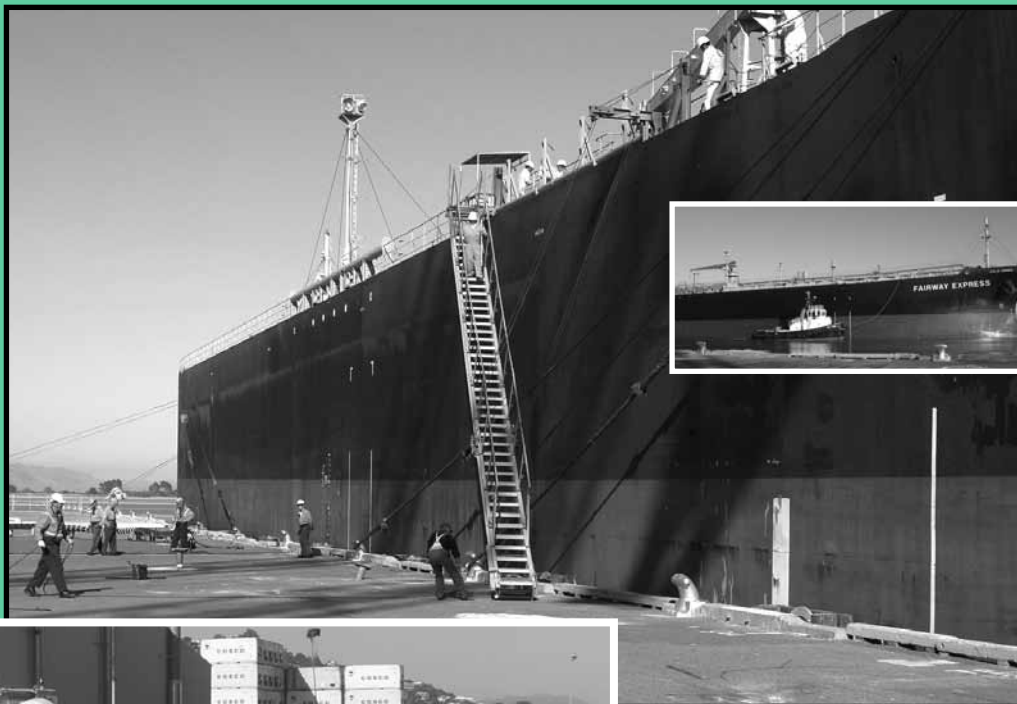
0800 127 887

Port Nelson



*Bruce Barnes -
R & D
driver and
delegate.*

*Plenty of muscle required to get
the gangway out from the ship
— (l to r) Colin Coulter, Colin
Lowe, Neville Clark and
Mark Jennison.*



*Noel Turner at the control of
the new lathe in the Port Nelson
workshop.*



Stephen Cole — Gatekeeper/Security.



Hayden Grainger - Gate operator/orders.

ROUND THE BRANCHES



(Above) Nick Brinsley at the controls of a mobile harbour crane.

(Left) Tina Rajino - workshop administrator.

Port Marlborough



Murray (Duff) Burgess (above) at the controls of the mobile wharf crane whilst repairing a Picton Ferry berth after a mishap while



Grant Herbert, at the business end of the same repair job, hoping that he manages to keep his feet dry!

Symbol of Tasman ties



Jinny Irvine Hutt Ontrack manager, Phil Hankinson, Mike Smith Hutt manager and Wayne Butson. (Above, inset) Neil Scott from Hastings (father of Masterton LE Bruce Scott) – the only remaining member of the 6th Field Ambulance Brigade which served in Italy and North Africa during WW II.

AT the ANZAC Day remembrance ceremony beside the historic flagpole at Petone Railway Station the general manager (passenger) of KiwiRail, Ross Hayward, spoke movingly of his memories growing up in the 1950s where “just about everyone we knew had been involved in the war in one way or another”.

For him Anzac Day gatherings were “not an event, but rather a living remembrance with most attending having served and returned”.

He wondered how, as time passes, communities could keep the memory alive. He pointed to the way it was being done at Petone as a fine example of how to answer that question.

“This is what we are doing today for our family, the rail family, to keep the memory strong, alive and close to us.”

He said the service at this particular flagpole had special significance to the rail industry as 37 railway men died at Gallipoli and the flagpole became a special symbol of “mateship, loyalty and courage”.

“Looking after your mates, a sense of loyalty, fairplay – these principles run strongly through the railway family,” he said. “It is important to continue a respected railway tradition here . . . to keep those memories and principles alive.”



Wellington branch secretary Howard Phillips lays the RMTU wreath on behalf of members.

“Almost half the entire railway workforce served in World War One – more than 7,000 men. Four hundred and forty four of those men died in the war. We pay tribute to them in a roll of honour which greets visitors entering our offices at Wellington Railway Station. Every day for the last 28 years those names have greeted me as I walk to my office.

A memorial service at Petone has been held in tandem with one in Hornsby, Sydney since 1916. The 1916 ceremony was the first



The plaques on either side of the Petone flag pole.



for ANZAC Day to be attended by a prime minister and MPs and organised by the then general manager of Railways, E H Hiley. The Kauri and Jarrah flagpole was built at the then Petone railway workshops with trimmings made at Hornsby. The Rail Heritage Trust of New Zealand restored it in recent years and made application to the Historic Places Trust this year to register its significance and seek help for its preservation. 🌐

ZEAL solidarity

LAST month flight attendants working on Air NZ flights to Australia (except Perth) and the Pacific took four days of industrial action to seek equity with other similarly employed workers at Air New Zealand.

Although they work on Air NZ flights, wear Air NZ uniforms and deal with Air NZ passengers their legal employer is a wholly owned Air NZ subsidiary, Zeal 320 Ltd which was set up when Air NZ started Freedom Air as a budget airline flying the Tasman. Flight crew working in the budget airline were all employed on massively inferior terms and conditions compared to other Air NZ staff doing the same work.

At the beginning of last year, Air NZ canned Freedom Air as a brand and returned solely to full service flights across the Tasman and around the Pacific. Some Freedom Air staff were put on terms and conditions consistent with standard Air NZ terms. But the flight attendants were left on their inferior terms, around 30% below what other flight attendants doing the same work get paid.

The difference now between a Zeal flight attendant and one from Air NZ is literally thousands of dollars a year. Plus, Zeal crew do not get overtime nor loadings based on sectors they fly. They get a reimbursing allowance to cover out-of-pocket expenses and have a unilaterally imposed performance pay scheme under which the maximum reward is either \$8,000 or \$10,000, depending on the grade they're on. Last year, the crew were paid less than half the possible maximum performance pay.



Wellington branch secretary Howard Phillips gives a solidarity message to the Zeal workers' rally.

The Zeal flight attendants would like pay parity with other Air NZ flight attendants.

In the course of negotiations they have moderated their demands and while they no longer seek parity, they are seeking a fairer deal than the one they've got at the moment.

But Air NZ isn't budging.

This is a very basic argument about justice and fairness in wages, said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson, adding that the RMTU fully supports their claim.

The RMTU's support was part of a combined union statement from the New Zealand transport unions affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). He said: "The actions of



Continued on the next page

RMTU at the Christchurch rally.

DON'T PRIVATISE ACC

THE NATIONAL/ACT GOVERNMENT'S ATTACK IS NO ACCIDENT

The National/ACT Government has invented a "crisis" around ACC so they can open it up to private insurance companies, just as they did in 1999.

If this happened, you would probably have to pay higher insurance premiums. It would also likely be harder and take longer for you to get compensation if you had an accident.

Don't be fooled by National/ACT's public relations spin about ACC. Experts have been queuing up to challenge their arguments.

"All this talk of liabilities being blown out is complete nonsense. It's ill-founded and smacks of scare-mongering... on paper the losses have ballooned when in reality there's nothing wrong with it."

Jonathan Eriksen, MD, Eriksen & Associates, actuaries

There is no costs "blow-out" and no "crisis"

TURN OVER TO FIND OUT WHY

FAIRNESS
at WORK
unions we're about fairness



Is ACC insolvent?

No - ACC has revenue of about \$4 billion a year and expenditure of less than \$3bn. National is twisting the definition of insolvency for effect. ACC's \$10bn reserves will increase over time as it moves to full-funding of all future claims from funding only those due in the current year.

Are ACC costs "out of control"?

No - claims costs have grown through coverage of more conditions, higher medical costs, and NZ's higher accident rates. But work account admin costs are only 19.7% of services compared to Australia's 25.2% average.

Is ACC poorly governed and managed?

An extensive review last year by independent accountants confirmed that ACC is internationally regarded as a well run scheme, is achieving best practice and is one of the most cost-effective injury compensation schemes in the world.

Has ACC suffered major investment losses?

ACC's own fund managers have bettered almost every other fund manager, public or private, over the past year. In the 7 months to January 2009, they returned 2.73%, when most funds were much less or even negative.

Why has Ross Wilson been sacked as ACC Board Chair?

Most likely it is because the Government doesn't want a former union leader as Chair, and because of his known opposition to ACC privatisation.

What will opening up the ACC work account to private insurance companies mean?

Unlike publicly-owned ACC, private insurance companies need to make profit, which will make ACC more expensive to run, or will increase levies. Private insurers will also try to minimise pay-outs, so it may be harder for you to claim if you have an accident.

**This government will try to privatise ACC sooner or later.
Make sure it doesn't happen.
Not now, not next year, not ever.**

DON'T PRIVATISE ACC!

Go to www.fairness.org.nz
and register your support

CTU
NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS
Te Kauae Kaimahi

Fire to be investigated


LAND Transport New Zealand notified TAIC on 7 May 2009 of a derailment that occurred near Hunterville on the NIMT at about 0430 hours.

It was reported that express freight train # 211 was travelling from Auckland to Wellington when the trailing bogie on wagon ZH554 derailed. The derailment was picked up by a dragging equipment detector and the train brought to a stop. About 2 hours later the derailed wagon caught fire. The local fire service was able to prevent it spreading to other wagons, but damage to the derailed wagon and its cargo was extensive. Initial information was that the derailment was related to a collapsed side frame on the trailing bogie.

Zeal solidarity [cont]

Air New Zealand management are generating a backlash from workers. This dispute is about the fair and just treatment of workers. Air New Zealand is a high profile company that depends on maintaining a high quality public image – and that public image is being wrecked by their approach to their workers."

The Zeal workers sought the assistance of the ITF which in turn offered these suggestions:

- Industrial solidarity action from affiliated unions.
- Send a statement of solidarity and support to the ZEAL workers.
- Give some financial support for the members in their action. The ITF has already done so.
- Make the dispute more public in your place of work and where you go to relax. 

Wellington Ferry Terminal crossing needs improvement

AT a recent meeting of Wellington Ferry Terminal members, it was made clear by members that band-aid fixes were inadequate and that issues with the link span crossing must be resolved. Two recent collision incidents added weight to the need for an upgrade. The crossing has many conflicting entrances for a variety of traffic including trucks, cars, motorbikes, cycles, pedestrians and TRAINS. Tinkering with cones and a bit of fencing is only minimising the management of the risk. Purpose-built rail crossing arms, bells and lights are required. Crossing arms that extend over the crossing would be a good start. This



Ferry Terminal members along with Tania Haraki (visiting from Picton) and George Laird stand in front of the busy level crossing that needs improvement. (Inset) The current sign!

link span is also used by tourists – often for the first time. This makes it particularly important that the demarcation between trains and the travelling public is clear, functional and the best it can be.

May Day – locally and internationally

OVER 120 years ago the American Federation of Labour, at its St Louis convention, called for May 1, 1890 to be the day for nationwide protests in support of the eight hour day. The call to arms spread with Britain and Germany choosing May 4 with 100,000 attending a rally in Hyde Park. In France 138 towns stopped, workers in industrial towns in Italy walked as did 340,000 in Belgium. In Poland workers were terrorised by the police while 100,000 and 120,000 marched in Barcelona and Stockholm respectively and 100,000 workers marched down streets lined



May Day Wellington.

with soldiers and cannons in Vienna.

Today 66 countries have a statutory holiday on May 1 while other countries hold Labour Day holidays, including New Zealand.

However May 1 is the day New Zealand unionists come together to celebrate solidarity. This is a time for union people to socialise and build relationships, introduce rank and file members to the wider union community and to remember those who have suffered or have lost their lives fighting for worker rights.

May Day parade Thailand.



This year in Wellington over 300 unionist, Labour MPs and friends packed the Grand Century restaurant. A great night was had by all. It was fantastic to see so many young activists spend time getting to know the RMTU on its 14th birthday.

Entertainment was provided by the Tasmanian Workers Choir who finished on a rousing rendition of Solidarity that brought the RMTU table to its feet. It was a good reminder of the power of song to spread a message, or mark a historical mile. We discussed how great it would be if the RMTU had its own modern anthem.

On a sober note the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and our ex general secretary Ross Wilson launched UnionAID (see page 28) – the only New Zealand overseas aid agency that places workers' rights at the centre of its work.

Finally a big thank you to Unions Wellington and our host George Collins (EPMU) for a fine night of remembrance. 🇳🇿

WEST COAST BRANCH

THE branch would like to extend a very warm welcome to David (DB) Wilson who has transferred from Tranz Metro Wellington to Otira to take up a position of banker driver. May your stay be all you expect it to be. I have been told you already look at home in the cab of the DX locos. Must be a good change from the cabs of the old Johnsonville units!

KiwiRail has advertised for another banker driver at Otira but what they have omitted to say is the standard of housing in Otira. The houses are old railway houses sold off by the then railways corporation in the early 1990's. They are now owned by one owner who has barely spent any money on them. They are well below any NZ standard set for housing.

These houses were built between 1918 and 1919 and the best of them were removed from Otira after a public sale in the mid 1990s.

One driver has rented the only house available at this time. The house does not have a stove for cooking or electric hot water and the only way to heat the water is to light the fire. Also there is no lawn or gardens and at first view one would think it's not fit for a pig to live in.

Another driver lives in a house that has no insulation whatsoever and more than almost anywhere in the country, insulation is needed in every house at Otira because of

its very mean winters. The fire places are the size of a shoe box and aren't helped by the amount of rain that runs down the chimney. The house is always damp and cold.

Other drivers have rented houses far from Otira just to provide a reasonable standard of housing for their families. This has caused another issue as they have to travel many kilometres to work and spend astronomical amounts of money on fuel.

It's the year 2009

not 1909. These houses are well below

the standards allowed by Housing NZ, or for anyone else to rent for that matter. The subject of housing at Otira has been a long-standing issue but nothing has been done. Well enough is enough!

It's about time KiwiRail management stood up and were made accountable as it is their responsibility to ensure staff and their families have decent warm houses to live in.

We have heard management say before on this issue that they care. We know talking is easy! Is it not about time management put their hand in their pocket and provide housing that is up to standard?



One of the 'stunning' houses available for Otira rail workers.



(l to r) Brian Stack & Gary Martin

On a positive note, well done ONTRACK for all the work that is being done on the track and bridges at present, and also that the tamper/regulator have been hard at work on the Coast for a number of months now.

Coal orders have been up and down for much of this year resulting in many cancelled trains. LE Mike Kilsby spent the greater part of January working out of the Invercargill depot and others were able to take leave at short notice due to the down turn.

At present Pike River Coal is not producing coal for export and the Spring Creek mine has been very quiet. It will be interesting to see what the rest of the year brings to the Coast.

After 53 years of loyal service to the rail industry, as a labourer and fireman at Ross (Westcoast) and then moving to Greymouth to become a locomotive engineer, Gary Martin has succumbed to the temptation of retirement. Gary's last train was 829-826, a shunt service to Reefton to

lift gold-bearing ore and coal. He was accompanied on this journey by his wife Gail, who took the photograph of Gary with local identity Brian Stack. Well done Gary. We wish you and Gail many great years of retirement and that the fish keep biting. Thank you, for being a great workmate and proud supporter of our local branch. 🇳🇿

PORT NAPIER BRANCH

TO cut to the chase: We certainly hope that for all who have recently been hung out to dry in terms of lay-offs within Government departments and who voted for a Tory government, are now ruling the day. Despite what Key and Co says to try and bluff Joe Public, the axe is out. The attacks and injustices set down by our own union leaders over ACC, tax cuts for the wealthy and selling off of the 4th week's leave. The 'unfinished business' programme is well and truly entrenched in this govern-

ment, to erode what has been achieved in the last 10 years.

At Conference last year at Porirua Police College I recall standing in the doorway of the TV room and watching one of the political debates between Clarke and Key. My attention was drawn to the fact most of the cadets and trained staff were obviously pro the Key argument (probably because they wear blue) and somewhat cynical toward the Labour perspective. Since the election it will be interesting to see how their view-

points stand knowing that the state sector have been advised of an intended 0% pay increase and the cut backs that will continue in this area.

Unfortunately the media persuasion tends to the 'right' enabling the blue brigade to spread their propaganda.

On the local front: With the changes in senior management, the CFO – Gary Smith (who was a trustee on the Harbour Workers Super Fund) – has resigned along with two other managers and a ship planner who retired. All since Christmas. It will no doubt

Continued on the next page

HILLSIDE BRANCH

Greetings from Hillside

It's been a busy few months. In early March branch secretary Les Ingram attended a two day Advanced Delegates Course, in Wellington with 20 delegates from throughout the RMTU.

"I found the content extremely relevant and learned many new skills during the two days," said Les. "I learnt about combating member apathy, skills to motivate members, and gained a deeper appreciation of a delegate's role within a workplace, especially a senior role such as secretary or chair.

"Socialising during breaks and on Tuesday evening was an important part of uniting delegates from totally different areas of the RMTU. I learnt that we all face apparently different problems, that when evaluated, are of a quite similar nature. I feel fortunate to be part of such a strong, united, focused union."

On April 16 Kiwirail Board chairman Jim Bolger, welcomed Infrastructure Minister Bill English and Labour Party leader Phil Goff to Hillside. In the morning Bill toured the workshops, reportedly the first National

cabinet minister to visit Hillside in 27 years. In an interview he said he was impressed with the changes Hillside had accomplished during the previous ten years and with the input of staff, the RMTU and management in implementing new ideas and being prepared to back themselves in competing for work.

In the afternoon Goff, accompanied by Dunedin South MP Clare Curran, toured the workshops. Phil was also extremely impressed by the work being undertaken at Hillside. His father had worked for NZR.

RMTU national president Jim Kelly and Les Ingram escorted the guests on their visit.

On Anzac Day Jim and Les escorted the Union's Otago chairperson Glenda Alexander when she laid a wreath during Dunedin's Dawn Service on behalf of the CTU held at Hillside's main entrance. Hillside suffered 23 killed during the World War I, and 25 in WWII. Thirty-two past and present employees and their families attended the service.

International Workers Memorial Day was marked by a minute's silence. Jim and Les attended the Memorial Service where among

the guest speakers was RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. His speech reminded us that no one should go to work and die, and that we are all responsible to ensure we and our work-mates go home safe and uninjured.

Balloons were released as the names of those killed in the Otago-Southland area were read out and a white cross was placed around the memorial stone as Jim and Les read the names. Sadly six more names were added this year.

Les reported: "This year the loss of life was more personal for me because one of those to lose their life was my refuse collector, Andrew Sime. I met his mother and brother after the service and saw the pain and grief firsthand, and never want that to happen to one of us."

Thirty-two of Andrew's fellow refuse workers were present. Their manager said that he hadn't known of Workers Memorial Day until they had lost a friend and workmate.

Following the service Wayne visited Hillside, was welcomed by site manager Kevin Kearney and toured the workshops meeting many of the members at their jobs. 🇳🇿

PORT NAPIER BRANCH [cont]

make for interesting times ahead with only the CFO replaced – with someone from Treasury!

Along with the even tighter times to come and new management team to negotiate with, I guess for all members who are up for contract talks over the next 24 months or so the focus will be on conditions, job security and retention. Hopefully, employers will not use the recession for their own means and mutual dialogue gets us all through the harder times.

Many senior managers throughout companies are paid performance bonuses which has to be a concern when profits and bonuses may be put before people as they analyse contracts to put their interpretation on them and manipulate to achieve personal goals. In essence this will ultimately affect those at the coal face, as they are often the easiest target.

In summary brothers and sisters, stay hard, stay vigilant, stay together, and stay safe. 🇳🇿

PORT TAURANGA BRANCH

The luck of the draw

MOUNT MAUNGANUI C3 member, Murray (Muf) Flay was facing life on a \$160-a-week sickness benefit until he scratched and won \$100,000 on a lottery ticket.

Murray, 57, who is employed at Mount General Cargo, had just signed off from the Port of Tauranga after being told he would need open-heart surgery.

In preparation for stretch of 'hard times' he had cancelled his cable TV subscription and then went to buy some milk. He decided to also buy

three Instant Kiwi tickets to cheer himself up.

He told the Bay of Plenty Times that he went home to scratch the tickets. "I couldn't quite believe it when I saw I had won".

"I was really down about the news of my health and this win has made me believe there is someone watching over me," he told them.

He said he would give some of the money to his children, invest some and clear a few debts.

"It's absolutely bloody marvellous. 🇳🇿



OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

UNITED we are no more, well at least insofar as United Group Rail is concerned. They are now known as Kiwi Rail Mechanical Services Ltd. However, it has not as yet been a complete reabsorption under the Kiwi Rail umbrella, they are still trading as a standalone entity. The changeover was not totally without casualty as there were some key people who exited taking with them considerable years of knowledge and experience.

Kiwi Rail Mechanical Services Ltd is finally sporting new vehicles after years of putting up with substandard vans and utes and living off promises of new vehicles while listening to endless reasons why it wasn't happening.

The economic squeeze has been felt with-

in our branch. Gough's Materials Handling has matched its workload with its staffing levels and we have lost a member.

The times are also toughening for Toll Tranz link as well and they are finding that they have to be even more competitive with pricing to retain existing customers.

KiwiRail is responding to freight volumes by cutting trains in an attempt to stem expenditure but in the Edinburgh of the South it appears on the prima-facie evidence that it may in fact create an extra job. There is much banter currently about the Fonterra site at the old Fisher and Paykel plant on the Taieri with planning and posturing as to who is going to do the work and with what locomotives. After some long and somewhat

protracted debate that was at times quite robust, and after meaningful consultation, we have given our qualified consent to the use of contractors to shunt the gold train at Palmerston.

We had the pleasure and privilege of listening to the general secretary deliver a sobering speech at our Workers Memorial service at the Market Reserve on April 28. The weather was a typical Dunedin day as we basked in the sunshine.

One of our locomotive engineers had a serious motor vehicle accident recently whilst travelling to work. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Two of our younger members' wives have suffered some ill health and we wish them a speedy recovery and offer our support and best wishes. 🌍

CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH

KIWI RAIL are still in business. The state of the track and bridges on the Midland line are the best that they have been for a very long time, it is a shame that we have no trains to run over them. This is because we have got two tampers working it over. When we do get to run a few coal trains they always run very late. I would not like to see a full supplement of trains, as it would be a bit messy on the timetables – and staff would get home late! The coal business is going well with Pike River, Spring Creek and the other mines hauling the coal out of the ground.

There are new bridges being built on the Midland and West Coast Lines. Additionally there is new signalling going in on the Midland Line. This will improve the running of trains and reduce running times which results in a very good service to our customers. The new concrete sleeper factory in Middleton is still pumping new sleepers out at a steady pace even though the latest NZTA safety audit raised concerns at its operation. Overtime is being worked on a regular basis. The North line is still in good condition, and we still have a few trains running over it.

The South line is ok, but from Timaru south it is a very bad state of affairs with the track being very rough in places. There have been a couple of south trains cancelled, and

this led to some very big trains, with usually only one loco on the head. It was like that 35 years ago, so we have not really achieved much. We seem to be speeding along at about 50kph which adds a lot on to the running time.

Every train seems to shunt at Ashburton on the way home, and this is a big delay as the trains are pretty long and the yard is set in the middle of the town with road crossings at both ends. It involves a lot of manoeuvring showing it is easier to do a straight off and on.

Valuable staff continue to be seconded to Auckland to assist with DART and other upgrades. The present signalling in Auckland must be in total shambles. We are always seeing on the news irate passengers being held up because of another signalling failure. This could be why the Blues are having a shit of a season, their fans can't get to the game.

When are we going to take back the Crane and Forklift Depot? This large purpose-built facility would be of more use to ONTRACK than what it is being used for at present. With ONTRACK's growing fleet of vehicles and plant, plus lack of practical space, this facility would be of greater benefit. Let's use our buildings for our business.

Wage rounds are on the agenda once again. KiwiRail Network/ONTRACK MECA

will be negotiated once again when it expires at the end of June. Several issues are being thrashed out including hours of work, ie: working at night and having a dedicated team working through the unsociable hours to help provide 24/7 coverage. Also, wage progressions and an assessment of the wage rates of all of our workers as to how they compare with outside industries and a fatigue management plan for heavy trade drivers. Recently an article in a police magazine showed how a truck driver had worked 155 hours before having a crash and wiping out a family when he fell asleep at the wheel. He lived but was fined very highly, as was his employer.

Annual leave accumulation is once again spiralling. Rail staff that are not taking their annual leave are accidents waiting to happen. Why should our Union negotiators fight for more leave when we have staff refusing to take it thinking they are going to get a payout? Take the leave now or your manager will make you.

Our esteemed secretary Murray Dunlop, has returned from China having viewed the new loco fleet and has good news. The very old carriages that run up to Picton and the West Coast are going to be replaced with NZ\$40m of brand spanking new top of the line passenger carriages. Much of this work to be undertaken by our comrades in

Continued on the next page

TAIERI GORGE RAIL BRANCH

THE letter (TTW March 2009) from Taieri Gorge Railway (TGR) engineering manager Peter McCallum raised a few hackles around here and caused considerable discussion. Here's some of the discussion, item by item:

- **Lack of risk analysis:** Can the TGR provide proof of any risk analysis undertaken for these vehicles to operate on the former Otago Central Railway on which they were banned from operating?

- **Heat exhaustion in non air conditioned cars:** The 56 foot cars were not used on the Otago Central Railway due to the lack of suitable ventilation on hot days. This has been borne out in a number of publications and, more importantly, in an operating instruction in the working timetable prohibiting the use of these cars in the Otago Central Railway, and also due to tunnel and geological clearances. The TGR has failed to recognise that the area it operates through is one of the hottest in New Zealand with summer temperatures rising frequently above 35 degrees Celsius.

- **Air Conditioning failure:** TGR claims that any failure of the air conditioning system will be overcome by employing the same methods for the past 21 years on the existing air conditioned cars. However, the air conditioned cars built by the Otago Excursion Train Trust have open platforms with end doors which allows free flowing air during any air conditioning failure. To allow the free flow of air through the 56 foot cars would require the side doors to be opened thus presenting a massive safety risk. It is

understood that TGR does not plan to air-condition all of the 56 foot car fleet at this time, and even if they did, when the air conditioning fails passengers will suffer. The only ventilation then being the 'pop top' openings spread thinly throughout the car – a very poor substitute for a fully opening window.

- **Lack of maintenance:** No form of preventative maintenance programme appears to exist at TGR. This is because the vast majority of funding allocated to the workshop is channelled into the refurbishment of the "used" rolling stock. TGR management appear to have no comprehension of the vast sums of money spent on refurbishment.

Tracker hammering

- **Speed restrictions:** TGR claims there will be fewer speed restrictions with the wooden cars. Currently, there are already more restrictions through several tunnels and the increased weight of the 56 foot cars has slowed running times to the extent that at least one scenic photo stop has had to be deleted. Additionally, the track is taking an extra hammering as the balance of these cars and the rebogied Ag van have not been correctly set up due to lack of local knowledge.

- **Lack of viewing platforms:** TGR claims that one in every two 56 foot cars will have viewing platforms with one currently in service and two more to follow shortly. In fact none have viewing platforms. The reason? Major surgery would be required to accomplish this and we doubt there is anyone in New Zealand who is bold enough to put up their hand to design and accept

the consequential risk by weakening the existing wooden-framed body by hacking away at the ends. Interestingly, the existing steel-framed cars have an ISO rating which is still valid today. The 56 foot cars have no validation whatsoever.

- **Passenger requirements:** Passenger surveys, carried out by TGR's marketing section, consistently record positive comments about their access to open platforms to either absorb the "fantastic scenery that the train passes through" or "just let the wind blow through your hair". The denial of this experience will be detrimental to their enjoyment of one of the best train journeys in the world.

- **Existing car underframes:** A great deal has been made about the fact that the existing wooden car fleet underframes have passed their "use by date". TGR has acknowledged that no tests, such as crack testing, have ever been undertaken on these frames, aside from the transom areas where the bogie centre castings are attached and where some faults were found and rectified. So how can these statements claiming the underframes are "dangerous", be justified? In fact very few, if any, of the existing wooden-bodied cars are on their original underframes having been swapped in the early days of the OETT by volunteers with basic facilities. It would be interesting to carry out metallurgical tests on the frames of the 56 foot cars to be refurbished.

The entire situation can be likened to that of the arguments surrounding the new Awatea Street Stadium in Dunedin where some say that what we had was fine, it just wanted upgrading. 🏏

CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH [cont]

Hillside workshops. It's about time we brought back The Southerner. Perhaps some of the old diesel multiple units from Auckland Metro could be used?

As for the Swine Flu and that West Coast track gang that asked me why is it attacking managers only, I will have to give you your answer next time.

Once again our 'Mighty Crusaders' have shown what they are made of. They have climbed back and are now looking good for a semi-final spot. This is a team that knows how to win and do it well. (ed: Still waiting for Winnie's comeback are we?) 🏏

PALMERSTON NORTH BRANCH

Congratulations to LE Andrew Allen and Bianca who have a new daughter, Krista, born on March 13, 2009 – a sister for Jaxon.

TranzRail shares waiting

THE Securities commission has been trying to contact people eligible for a payout from the Tranzrail share debacle. There are hundreds of people and hundreds of thousands of shares. If you think you might be one of the people they are looking for, go to the website below and check out the listings.
www.seccom.govt.nz/tranz-rail-share-refund.shtml

Workers in New Zealand helping workers overseas

MAY DAY 2009 sees the launch of a new international aid organisation, Unions AID, with the CTU calling on all union members to consider making a donation.

Unions AID is the only New Zealand overseas aid agency that places workers' rights at the centre of its work.

We all know the benefits of our union work. Unions Aid will help vulnerable workers in developing countries in our region to get a fairer deal.

Its success is dependent upon financial support from union members in New Zealand for your fellow workers in poorer countries in our region.

Unions have a long tradition of international solidarity.

Providing funds for education and training work is a modern way of expressing that solidarity.

As well as helping workers improve their wages and conditions this work also limits the employer advantage of exploiting workers and competing unfairly in a globalised world.

Union Aid, with donations by New Zealand union members, has already established successful programmes with local union partners.

Dalit workers - India

The Tamil Nadu Labour Union in South India organises dalit (untouchable) men and women, who are employed in poorly paid jobs such as scavengers, sweepers, quarry workers, and graveyard workers. Traditionally these groups have not been organised and they are highly vulnerable to exploitation. Your support helps provide them with training and education on labour and human rights and gender equality. Hundreds of local leaders have been trained and union membership has built to more than 30,000. Collective action has achieved respect for workers as well as



Ex-RMTU general secretary Ross Wilson visited a Burmese union meeting on the Thai/Burma border and spoke to their leaders encouraging them to keep together.

tangible benefits.

Burmese Migrant Workers - Thailand

This CTU project supports the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB) to provide training and support for Burmese migrant workers in Mae Sot on the Burma-Thailand border. The FTUB was formed by Burmese workers, who with their families, have fled the military regime in Burma by crossing the border into Thailand. Learning about local labour rights and how to organise gives the workers a chance to move beyond poverty and become self-reliant in their dealings with local employers.

Other Projects

The Unions AID 2010 Strategic Plan aims to work with other agencies (such as the Australian Council of Trade Unions Aid Agency - APHEDA) and local partners to develop other

projects in our Asia – Pacific

Planning has already begun on options which include:

A training programme for women leaders of Burmese migrant workers on the Thai border.

A work skills training programme for Agent Orange disabled youth in Vietnam.

Occupational safety and health training in Vietnam and Lao.

A Joint Pacific programme with the ACTU and SPOCTU (South Pacific Council of Trade Unions).

A capacity building project for workers in an export processing zone in Sri Lanka.

Trade union development and capacity building in Timor-Leste.

How much will help?

In developing countries your donation goes a long way.

Every dollar donated will help workers lift their families out of poverty through training and education projects.

The more you give the more we can do.

Please make a donation by cash or cheque to Unions AID, P O Box 6645 Wellington or make a \$30 phone donation (added to your phone bill) by ringing 0900 862 43.

You can also sign up to our Kiwi Solidarity Donor programme and make a regular monthly donation. The CTU asked all unions and unions locally to sign up Kiwi Solidarity Donors as a May Day activity.

All Kiwi Solidarity Donors signed up during the first 3 months from 1 May 2009 will be recorded for history as Foundation Donors.

www.unionaid.org.nz