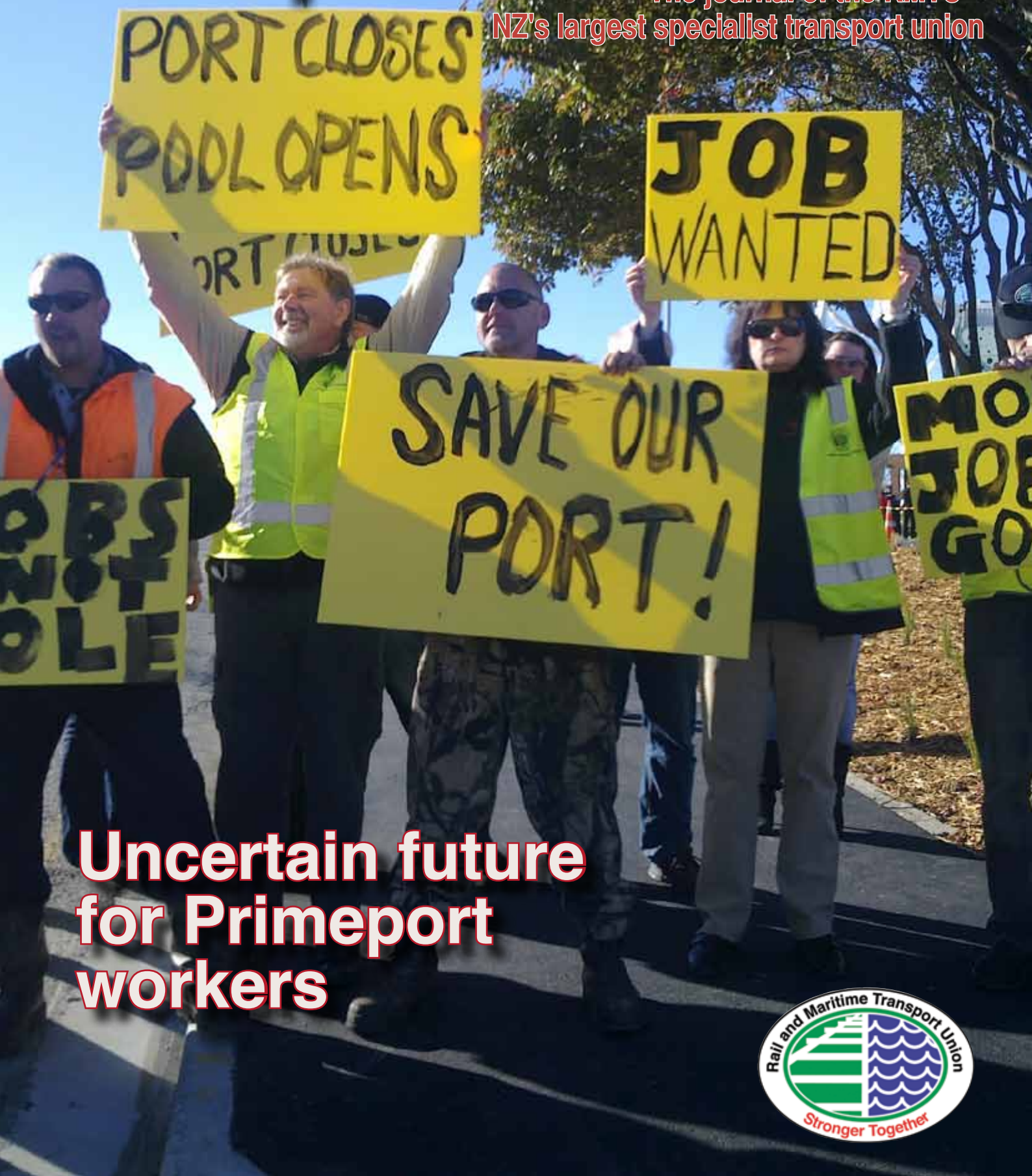


# THE *Transport Worker*

SEPTEMBER 2012

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



**Uncertain future  
for Primeport  
workers**



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More overseas-built problems for KiwiRail.

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A recent Primeport Timaru demonstration protesting massive job cuts after two shipping companies decided to cease using the port.

The Transport Worker is published by the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, P O Box 1103, Wellington, Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Design and production by Mike Regan.

Printed by Thames Publications Ltd, P O Box 11-025, Wellington.

[WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ)

ISBN 1173-6488



**Wayne Butson**  
General secretary  
RMTU

## Disheartening prospects for rail workers' future

**K**IWIRAIL'S much vaunted Turnaround Plan (TAP) is flawed in concept and ideology. It is doubly doomed given Tony Ryall's admission in Parliament that the \$3.85 million required to implement the plan is unlikely to materialise. Additionally it will be doomed to fail, in my view, as the NZ public wake up to the fact that at its core it is about removing KiwiRail as a link in NZ Inc national transport logistic supply chain and instead converting it into a taxpayer provided logistics supply chain for Fonterra, Solid Energy and a few other chosen freight carriers.

The TAP is all about KiwiRail becoming "a financially sustainable rail freight business by 2020. By implication it is to be profitable and self-sustaining.

This is crazy on so many levels and simply won't happen whilst rail is in direct competition with a subsidised road transport industry which nobody believes for a second pays its fair share of the costs, let alone maintaining our nation's highways. This significant cost edge was made worse under this Government by the fact that they bowed to powerful lobbying from, ex-National party politician turned trucking lobbyist, Ken Shirley of the Road Transport Forum. We now have longer and heavier trucks on the nation's highways and byways. Has anyone seen the promised signage that was to tell us which roads these behemoths were permitted to travel on? I live in Lower Hutt and I see the damage these longer trucks do when they turn corners at intersections not designed for them. Road user charges pay for city street repair right? Wrong!

### Lessons not learnt

The 15 years of privatisation should have taught us that even the best brains of the private sector can't make this unlevel playing field work whilst we have rail paying for the provision of its own highway and in its current configuration. I have never heard any commentator or analyst state that Australia's Toll Holdings was anything but run by astute business brains – and they couldn't make it work. The simple truth is that there will always be a need for the crown to provide capital to maintain rail corridors the same as it does for roads. By comparison look at airports. If their sole income source was aeroplane landings and take-offs they would not be self-sustaining businesses. They all need some form of additional funding either by



regional or local body councils or by gaining income turning their airport into shopping malls and more and by adding value to being a travel gateway. By the same token ports do not survive on berthage charges alone from blue water ships making port calls. So why is it that this Government has a differing expectation and ideology for rail? The answer is simple: the Nats hate it!

## Small print not blueprint

Back to the much vaunted TAP which, when launched to great fanfare, was supposed, as I understood it, to be the blueprint for returning the rail network to a respected link in the NZ transport logistic supply chain. Yes, I now admit to not seriously looking under the label at the detail and small print. I missed that we were now going to a line-by-line pricing model. This means each line must generate sufficient revenue to justify its existence. This is something that the business minds of Toll rejected. They kept reiterating the value of having a network. This was because any pricing done now excluded the opportunity cost and income from future traffic on those lines. I have spoken to KiwiRail CEO Quinn many times and on several occasions I have heard him question the wisdom of the person or persons who:

- Ripped up the double track between Dunedin and Mosgiel; and
- Ripped up the double track between Rolleston and Middleton.

These are just two examples and there are others. The irony of these conversations is that Quinn is doing the same. We currently have the Stratford/Okahukura line, the Gracefield Line, the Taneatua Line and Rotorua Line all mothballed and we have the sword of Damocles hanging over Whangarei to Dargaville, Napier to Gisborne and the north Wairarapa lines. I cannot help but wonder what opportunities in the future will be lost for rail to be part of a transport solution out of these areas?

I have also begun to look more closely at KiwiRail's mantra of a 'backbone of integrated transport networks'. I now see its hidden meaning as the limbs, ribs and abdomen are lobbed off and only the backbone remains. The backbone being whatever is needed to serve Fonterra, Maersk, Solid Energy, and a few chosen freight forwarders. However even this backbone is riddled with cancer. The money is drying up as indicated by the sacking of 181 track workers, the sale of Hillside and Tranz Scenic, the selling off of the metro ownership of assets to Councils and making the operations fully contestable. The questions loom:

- Just what is the core business of KiwiRail?
- Is it freight transport, a vehicle asset maintainer, an iron bridge shipper or is it all of the above?

## Writing on the wall

We will see in time but already the writing is on the wall in my view. We know KiwiRail is softening up people by highlighting the expense of replacing rail ferries. It points out that our ferries are nonstandard and so this makes them more expensive whereas ships

like the current Kaitaki are much cheaper as they can be leased and this is cheaper in the long term. The problem is that Kaitaki has no rail capacity. We know KiwiRail is looking at alternative ways of loading freight on ferries. Does this open up competition opportunity for KiwiRail freight to play the Interislander off against Strait Shipping? And so we will have "market forces" at play within KiwiRail and if it works do we really think it will stop there and we won't have multiple operators on the rails as well?

Who knows where we are headed but to my mind it looks very much like history repeating itself and the sad fact is that I don't think we have quite the same astute business brains at the top as we have had previously. These guys seem hell bent on repeating history.

Whilst on market forces I must mention the latest victim of successive Government opposition to having a national ports strategy to deal with the unequal bargaining power Maersk and Fonterra (and others) bring to the table when talking to our ports. Over many years we have all been part of a race to the bottom, unless you are in Tauranga or Auckland. The first thing to point out is that all NZ ports are unionised, including Tauranga. The second thing is that all NZ ports are majority owned by regional and local body councils. The facilities and equipment are owned by ratepayers and therefore are a fundamental part of our national wealth.


## Primeport Timaru

As a result WE should decide what happens to our assets and how they can be best utilised in the best interests of the nation. That folks is called a strategy and it appears the politicians just don't get it. The latest casualty in this rampant waterfront fiscal war are RMTU Primeport Timaru members. The faceless figures in a European boardroom have decided that Maersk and Hamburg SUD are to no longer make ship calls at Timaru. There are no other lines clambering to fill the space. As a result more than 50 of our fine rank and file members are to be made redundant. In many cases, the second time in three years. About 13 of them will be offered new employment at lower terms and conditions. This follows shipping decisions in New Plymouth and Wellington and we will see further cases in the future.

The RMTU's point is that this is about families and NZ money. It is too important a decision to be left to the dead hand of the market. We should decide which ports are to be blue water gateways into and out of NZ and we should decide what investments are made around that.

All we're seeing presently is money spent in investments in asset and infrastructure and once in place they can be made valueless in an instant by a boardroom decision a world away.

This is wrong and I am filled with sorrow at the pain, anguish and suffering that this lack of fundamental Government leadership is heaping upon our brother and sister New Zealanders.

Be safe and above all else be RMTU! 

**SIGN THE  
PETITION  
AND  
HELP**

**KEEP  
OUR  
ASSETS**

[keepourassets.org.nz](http://keepourassets.org.nz)

# Botched building

## Dud Chinese wagons and DLs rolling in with multiple problems

**L**ABOUR and Dunedin South MP Clare Curran castigated the National government's policy of outsourcing at the expense of New Zealand jobs when it was revealed that the brakes of the 500 Chinese-built wagons had to be replaced before they could be used last year.

Initial tests found that when the wagons were fully loaded to 72 tonnes, they did not stop within the required 650 metres.

KiwiRail told *Morning Report* that the brake blocks had to be replaced with a marginally higher-friction version.

Ms Curran said the sub-standard brakes were an example of why the wagons should have been made at KiwiRail's Hillside workshops in Dunedin where around 40 workers lost their jobs last year when KiwiRail opted to switch the workshop from building rail units to maintaining foreign-built rolling stock – all of which KiwiRail were built overseas.

A firm opponent of outsourcing, Curran said the Government's insistence that its KiwiRail turnaround plan won't be affected by its disastrous Chinese locomotive and

rail wagon procurement programme is laughable given the extent of their faults.

"They were so keen to buy cheap locos and wagons that they didn't consider what would happen if they were duds. Now the whole country is paying the price and Kiwi

"What was in the contracts that the Chinese manufacturers couldn't read, or couldn't comply with – or more likely, did they simply not care?" he asked.

The main losers in the bungle he writes are the Hillside workers who were ruled out from bidding for the work in the beginning.

"Given the costs of us cancelling, what's to stop the Chinese from continuing to do shoddy work for KiwiRail?" he writes. "Nothing. The political relationship between New Zealand and China is of such importance that no bureaucrat would want to complain too loudly. For the Chinese, the costs involved with the wagon upgrade are just an add-on to a contract they can use to secure other work elsewhere in the world – since New

Zealand was mug enough to be the first developed world transport system to sign up to Chinese-built major rail equipment.

In February RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson warned that the "whole-of-life cost" for these wagons would "blow out" and the same would be true for all the other "short sighted decisions made by KiwiRail and this Government so long as they focus on the cheapest products available".

"Value is not just money nor is it just the purchase price," he said. "It is also about ongoing repairs and maintenance work."

He says KiwiRail's decision to contract construction of rolling stock overseas and at the same time making skilled workers redundant was "utterly nonsensical" and adds that any Government with an ounce of care for New Zealand workers and the country's future would have stopped them.

"If government procurement settings do not support local industry, then we simply won't keep good manufacturing jobs in New Zealand," he said. "The skills drain to Australia has reached crisis levels and if allowed to continue, we won't be able to train the next generation."



Published with permission of Garrick Tremain

workers are without jobs".

She went on to say that perhaps one of the worst things this government has done is to "demonstrate its disregard for Kiwi jobs, Kiwi skills and Kiwi industry".

"A country that deliberately destroys manufacturing capability is not a smart country," she said.

The wagons have been in New Zealand for less than a year and have been plagued with problems.

"KiwiRail pretends it's no big deal and the government says it's an operational issue and nothing to do with them," she said. "They have backed KiwiRail all the way in its outsourcing decisions. At some point they will become accountable."

She described the fiasco as "false economy" and a "harebrained decision to buy cut price substandard wagons". Meanwhile, columnist and freelance journalist, Gordon Campbell in *Scoop* also castigated the government and KiwiRail for their bungling.

(1) Defective wagons being repaired at Hillside Workshops.



## ACC solution

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to say thanks for the Union's support with my ACC dispute. As soon as ACC saw the case that Andrea had prepared they accepted my claim.

I suppose it makes sense for them to avoid going to a resolutions hearing if it's an obvious black and white case that they will certainly lose!

Huge thanks

Daniel Dodgson.



## Resignation

Dear Editor,

I wish to tender my resignation as a member of the RMTU as I have taken redundancy after the closure of the Papakura signal panel and railway station building.

I wish all RMTU members well for the future.

Tom Davis

Signal box controller

Veolia.

## Media concern misplaced

Dear Editor,

Concern has been expressed in the media at the current high level of youth unemployment in New Zealand.

This is hardly surprising when organisations such as KiwiRail continue to recruit personal from overseas and externally despite there being an abundance of capable applicants within the organisation that could move up the ranks providing entry level opportunities for young New Zealanders. Short sighted HR policy sees a glass ceiling exist for experienced and capable staff, particularly younger ones, who become demoralised and disengaged.

Brian Armstrong.

## Disappearing crumple zone

Dear Editor

There are a number of matters concerning the design and construction of the DL class locomotive. As a former locomotive engineer and presently a locomotive servicing person the safe working conditions – or perhaps the lack of safe working conditions – of these locomotives bothers me. It is to do with the cab arrangements.

It seems to me that the crumple zone is deficient. With this in mind a colleague and I dropped a plumb line down the front of the cab nose and measured back to the headstock. The distance was 320mm. When we measured the gap in the cab at its narrowest, between the front console and the island console, the gap was 315mm. Where has the crumple zone gone? Where is the escape route for the LE in the event of a

looming collision? How may he or she vacate the driver's position quickly and safely?

The question arises: were any collision tests done with this type of cab design? By the lack of any specifications and assurances, I suspect not. Why were these questions not raised by the RMTU representatives when they were in China at the workshop? Why did the Land Transport Safety Authority not ask these questions regardless of cab design? Do they have the knowledge and expertise to ask these questions?

I suggest they need to be asked.

Another question: why the need for a double cabbled locomotive?

I understand the concept was to avoid the need for more than one locomotive on the log trains on the Murupara branch line, however, with the current move to increase the size of the trains on that line, one and sometimes two, DC class locomotives in addition to the DL locomotive are being used. This has made the single unit idea redundant. Surely managers organising the trains and the power must have been aware of this? Don't they talk to one another?

In conclusion, I am thankful that I am out on the road handling trains. I think the DL cabs are dangerous in the absence, to my knowledge, of any safety engineering assurances. The company needs to be asked the hard questions, which, in my view, is for the RMTU executive to decide.

Yours faithfully

Anonymous (name supplied).

## Mechanical Council

**T**HE KiwiRail Mechanical Industrial Council (MIC) met at KiwiRail's Westfield Maintenance Depot during June of this year and agenda items included the long-awaited completion of the mechanical pay progression, pay relativity study, DL loco and IAB wagon updates, Christchurch redevelopment briefing, Hutt Workshops workload, Hillside Workshops future briefing, health and safety within mechanical and the RMTU relationship charter. 🇳🇿

*(l to r) Kasia Kurene Hutt Workshops, Stu Johnstone Hillside Workshops, Howard Phillips electric suburban Wellington, Laurie Hall South Island depots, and Steve Brown North Island depots.*





# Saving the capital's connection

**H**ERE we are once again, faced with the demise of yet another essential component of the KiwiRail commuter rail service!

With annual operational costs of \$435,000 KiwiRail announced that it can no longer finance the continued operation of the Wellington to Palmerston North Capital Connection service.

Although this announcement has been some time in the making, it spurred a strong outcry from the RMTU, environmental lobbyists, concerned members of the public, commuters, local government representatives and electorate MPs.

With such a high level of protest to ensure the retention of the service that a campaign for the necessary funding shortfall was required.

A joint Labour party and multi regional council-led initiative, a protest convoy was organised for Saturday July 14. Commencing in Palmerston North, the convoy travelled south following the Manawatu main trunk line, culminating with an open forum campaign meeting at the Waikanae Community Hall. Despite persistent and unrelenting rain, the 50-vehicle strong contingent of hearty and resolute followers, banners in hand, arrived safely at Waikanae.

Following a well earned luncheon, barbecue and a hot cup of tea, Ian Lees-Galloway (MP for Palmerston North) opened proceedings with an overview of events, citing a recent joint undertaking from the Horizon and Wellington Regional Councils to fund 50% of the operational cost shortfall.



Mike Nicholson (above) and Graeme Whittle (r) – both locomotive engineers.

However, this funding would be reliant upon the NZ Land Transport Authority (NZTA) picking up the shortfall. In this regard, Ian stressed the need for a concerted multi-pronged lobbying campaign to local electorate MPs and Land Transport Minister, Gerry Brownlee, as he has the ability to direct the necessary funding required.

Nigel Wilson of the Greater Wellington Regional Council spoke for the retention of the service and the boost it provided to local and provincial economies. Other widely felt aspects of concern were

the environmental impact of replacing it with busses, increased road congestion and the negative safety implications. Ironically, the Government is pouring billions of dollars into urgent road maintenance and route upgrades – and, of course, roads of national significance. Affected commuters felt that the closure of the Capital Connection was a short-sighted view by KiwiRail as high growth is expected in the Horowhenua and Manawatu regions over the next few years.

RMTU Wellington Rail branch executive Mike Nicholson said “KiwiRail shouldn’t be contemplating cutbacks but should be expanding services further as per the Wairarapa concept. There is a renewed global emphasis on sustainable, viable growth of



Palmerston North Labour MP Ian Lees-Galloway.

the rail industry which we need to be a part of. Building bigger more costly roads is not the answer.”


Nicely said!

The one conspicuous absence was that of Nathan Guy (National Party MP for Otaki) – although not all together unexpected, it was viewed with some consternation.

Since compiling this article a high powered delegation of local government chairs, mayors and chief executives met with Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee. Although the meeting was said to have ended on a positive note, no commitment had been received for funding.

Although the National-led coalition government gave a solemn undertaking that KiwiRail will not be open to privatisation, its CEO Jim Quinn has just announced that plans were well advanced for selling off the TransScenic business group – which includes the Capital Connection.

The sooner we wake up to the arrogance of this John Key-led government the better.

A special thanks to Graeme Whittle for alerting the RMTU Wellington Rail branch to the protest meeting. We will keep readers updated. 



## SAD departure

*Sadly, long serving Palmerston North LE Ken DeCleene has motor neuron disease and has had to leave KiwiRail on medical grounds.*

*(l to r) Ken's partner Neryl, Ken and Wally Wallbutton. Wally visited Ken and gave him his SAD fund loss-of-certificate benefit payment.*



## Mismanagement at NZ Bus

**F**OR most of us, it was hard to comprehend why NZ Bus saw the need to radically restructure its operations division in Wellington. Our flexible group of members at Kilbirnie could handle change but disestablishing their positions was another matter. The RMTU battled for over 12 months on this restructure which resulted in the best deal we could achieve even though delegate Bert Katene and controller Kara Grennell opted for redundancy. A wealth of knowledge left the business when they left and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Employers have the right to manage (or mismanage) but it is very disappointing when a very expensive restructure results in long



*(l to r) Bert Katene, Todd Valster and Kara Grennell at the farewell Bert and Kara put on.*

term employees leaving: the operation went backwards with a huge number of missed bus trips, driver pay issues, and more. We were told the restructure would improve the operation – YEAH RIGHT!

## The Red Rooster retires

**L**ONG serving Canterbury branch LE and unionist, Murray Dunlop, is being treated for a serious illness but still manages a smile at his farewell from KR for his friends and colleagues in early June. As the longest serving KiwiRail Industrial Council member we will certainly miss his passionate lectures and humour. Get well Murray, there's plenty more Guinness to drink and rides to be had.

*(l to r) Gail and Murray Dunlop.*



## Retirement savings made easy

**A Kiwisaver scheme for ALL RMTU members**

RAIL workers can now piggy-back aboard the benefits port workers have enjoyed with the NZ Harbours Superannuation Plan by opening a KiwiSaver account with them or transferring to it from the one they have.

The Plan is sponsored by the Rail & Maritime Transport Union and administered

by Melville Jessup Weaver. Contributions are invested between four fund managers:-

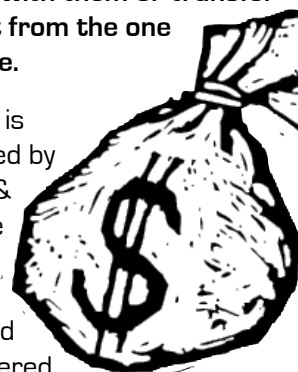
- AMP Capital;
- TOWER;
- Tyndall NZ; and
- Onepath

All top-rated managers.

The NZ Harbours KiwiSaver Scheme operates in similar fashion to all others; you get the most out of it if you and your employer make regular contributions at a minimum rate of 2% of your taxable earnings.

Download a copy of the investment statement and application form at:

**[www.harbourssuper.org.nz](http://www.harbourssuper.org.nz)**







## Delegate training

Thirty Wellington Rail & Hutt branch delegates and members participated in a delegate training workshop over three days at the Woburn Training Centre in late June. Great participation and good feedback was received from participants. Pictured (above) are the delegates trained on day 2 and (inset) one of the teams working on an exercise on the skills, attributes and duties of a delegate.



## War memorial at Hutt Workshops

**L**ATE last year KiwiRail unveiled a memorial to railway men who died in World War I outside the Hutt Workshops. The memorial features a train wheel and a plaque, replicas of those from a 1925 Ab-



class locomotive named Passchendaale after the war's deadliest battle for Kiwis. More than 7,500 railway workers served in World War I, more than half the entire workforce. Of those, 444 were killed.

### Where the %##\*# are you?

- Did you get that important notice from the Union last month? Last year? Any time? If you haven't had any mail from RMTU head office then you had better tell us where you've moved to. Check your address by:
- talking to your branch chair who has a list of local members and their details;
- going to the Union website and updating your details – <http://bit.ly/exmEyL>
- phoning 04-499-2066;
- faxing 04-471-0896 ;
- giving us your e-mail to save on postage.

YOUR WEBSITE  
[WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ)

## Snow plough

KiwiRail attempting to plough a route through to Christchurch June 7 from Arthur's Pass made for some spectacular images. Watch the video at:

<http://bit.ly/LxcbNT>



## RMTU at Congress

**T**HE RMTU and its general secretary Wayne Butson figured prominently at the latest International Transport Federation (ITF) meeting of the Railway Workers Section Steering Committee in May this year. The first item concerned the Congress theme document 'From global crisis to global justice – transport workers fighting back' for the next Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria in 2014. First discussed in April 2012 it was broadly supported by delegates. Butson, among others, supported the following points:

- Rail liberalisation is a global phenomenon and therefore the unions need a global response.
- A global fight back is necessary and urgent.
- Unions need to discuss alternative models.
- An emphasis on trade union transport policies is needed with consideration on what we want to achieve, what our vision is and what it is that will unite us.
- Need to determine how unions can make the link between development of sustainable transport and climate change and attacks on labour rights and the global economic crisis.
- What can be learnt from the Arab Spring or Occupy Wall Street movement, in particular the wide use of new communication modes such as social media networks in order to facilitate grass-roots activism and the participation of young workers.

The second item where the RMTU featured strongly was Butson's report on successfully organising unorganised workers in the rail sector of New Zealand. Butson said the RMTU followed the supply-chain after the transport industries were deregulated in New Zealand and recruited new categories of workers.

The meeting agreed to publish Butson's report as an example of best practice and circulate it to affiliates. The Secretariat will also collect examples of successful organising campaigns in the rail unions for publication. An Organising Projects Group will be established. 🇳🇿



# Government's true colours

**P**REPARE for battle, says RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson, who warns that the Government has organised workers it the cross hairs of its sights again.

"A recent cabinet paper discusses undermining the bargaining process and allowing punitive punishments for strike action," he said.

The paper, titled Employment Relation Amendment Bill 2012: Paper one - Collective bargaining and flexible working arrangements, is the first of three to be presented by Minister of Labour, Kate Wilkinson and was presented on May 3, 2012.

The executive summary says it all, quoted Butson.

- good faith will no longer require parties to conclude a collective agreement
- repeal the 30-day rule for new employees who are NOT union members
- allow employers to opt out of multi-employer collective agreements (MECA)
- allow proportionate pay deductions in response to partial strikes (docking wages for go-slows, work to rule, over-time bans, etc)
- changes to the timeframes for collective bargaining
- changing flexible working arrangements to extending the right to employees to request them, removing the six-month period of employment before an employee may request them and removing the limit on the number of requests

an employee may make over a 12-month period.

"This is clearly the first salvo in this Government's arsenal to undermine unionised work forces," says Butson. "While smiling John does his good cop routine all his henchmen and women are beaver away to destroy a system of worker protection that unions and enlightened governments have spent years building."

He added that small sites with fewer numbers of organised workers will be the first to suffer as they are "cherry picked by mean and heartless employers intent on excessive profits".

Meanwhile, in a report released by the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a direct warning to the New Zealand government that it needs to reconsider the employment changes it has signalled.

CTU president Helen Kelly, says they are concerned that new workers will not offered collective coverage and, possibly, employed on inferior employment conditions undermining employment rights.

"This high ranking UN Committee made a specific recommendation that an independent evaluation should be carried out of changes to industrial relations and collective bargaining to ensure that changes



CTU president Helen Kelly.


do not negatively affect women's employment and trade unions rights."

She adds: "Changes to welfare laws forcing solo mums into the workforce with threats of benefit cuts make these law changes doubly unfair. At least these women should have some protections when starting a new job."

The changes the Government has signalled will weaken collective bargaining and make it more difficult to conclude, thus further reducing pay and conditions for workers – and especially low paid women workers.

"The Government has an opportunity here: is it going to continue on a path of trampling on rights and making work even harder than it is now for these workers or is it going to listen to the advice and concerns of these international experts?" said Kelly.

She concluded that with these issues being taken so seriously at an international UN level shows their importance and the risk to New Zealand's reputation.

"John Key's government is showing its true roots," says Butson, "where the only people worth considering are employers, share holders and the rich and influential. We must make sure they don't last beyond the next election." 

## Wellington Railway Station celebrates 75th

**T**HE Wellington Railway Station marked its 75th birthday with cake, music and a blast from the past with four familiar commuter trains from its past - a steam train, an English Electric, a Ganz Mavag and the new Matangi.

Opened in 1937, the station was then the country's largest building and one of its first seismic-proofed structures. It is now New Zealand's busiest railway station, with more than 40,000 people passing through on a weekday.

Steam train driver Phil Wagener, 63,

served lunch of bacon and eggs from a steam train shovel – a common practice in the old days, he told the Dominion-Post.


He has been involved with trains for 46 years and is an ardent supporter of rail. "Rail is on such a rise at the moment. It's wonderful to see the station actually recognised."

Early morning passengers didn't miss out either. They were greeted with music and a morning tea of cake and muffins.

The building was designed by W. Gray Young from Wellington architectural firm

Gray Young, Morton & Young and built by Fletcher Building on reclaimed land. The Doric columns on the southern main entrance and its vaulted ceilings give it a majestic feeling.

The platforms were designed to accommodate up to 12 carriages.

Railway reforms in the 1980s left much of the building disused, but new tenants including Victoria University and a supermarket have given the station a new vibrance. 

# TAP under intense pressure

**N**ATIONAL'S Turn Around Plan for rail has come under pressure in recent weeks, says Labour's transport spokesperson Phil Twyford (pictured right).

KiwiRail has been in the spotlight with a string of bad news stories raising the question of whether National is setting KiwiRail up to fail.

The board and management are clearly feeling the pressure going by the fact they took Radio New Zealand to the High Court to stop it reporting on a leaked document detailing the plan to save \$200 million by deferring network maintenance over three years.

## Clamour

In the clamour that followed the story received massive media coverage and saw CEO Jim Quinn reported saying the words 'decline', 'deteriorate' and 'asset risk failure' – all emotive words that don't have the usual meaning when used in an internal KiwiRail report.

Alarm bells began to ring back in July with the news the organisation was looking to lay off up to 220 workers and defer network maintenance in a bid to save \$200 million. How on earth does it make sense to defer network maintenance when improving the network is exactly what is needed if rail is to compete with long haul trucking?

I ask State Owned Enterprises Minister Tony Ryall in the House whether KiwiRail would meet its financial targets under the Turn Around Plan. The Government is



fond of reciting its generosity in investing \$750 million into KiwiRail, but seldom mentions that under the Plan KiwiRail is supposed to find \$3.75 billion from its own balance sheet. Ryall, for the first time, admitted that KiwiRail would not meet the targets.

## Unrealistic targets

The unrealistic targets are producing a desperate search for savings – and a series of decisions that have the public scratching their heads.


As well as the serious cuts to network maintenance which paint a picture of KiwiRail deliberately being run down, we've seen a series of poor procurement decisions, including the poorly-performing Chinese-sourced DL locos and wagons and

then the revelation that 7,000 Peruvian sleepers were rotting from the inside and needed to be replaced.

Add to this the announced moves to sell TranzScenic and the Hillside Workshops, the impending closure of the Gisborne-Wairoa line, and the threat to the Capital Connection commuter service between Palmerston North and Wellington, and you get the feeling rail is in retreat.

## Rail vital

Labour believes rail is a vital part of the country's transport future. The 5th Labour Government bought rail back because we need it to deliver an efficient low-carbon option for shifting freight around the country, and efficient urban public transport in Auckland and Wellington. But rebuilding the organisation after its privatisation and two decades of under-investment will take careful support and investment.

The Government needs to recognise the Turn Around Plan is unrealistic and is setting KiwiRail up to fail. Instead of pouring billions of dollars into motorway projects many of which are low value, the Government should consider a more sensible investment plan for KiwiRail. Let's build up this vital national asset, not run it into the ground. 

phil.twyford@parliament.govt.nz



## Labour firmly in union court

*"Labour wants to make it clear that we will not only raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour but we stand for a living wage. The UN Declaration of Human Rights gives prominence to freedom of association – the right of workers to join unions and the right of unions to better negotiate their share through collective bargaining. We, together with unions, will ensure workers get their fair share."*

- David Parker from a speech to over 200 people at a Labour meeting for the Central Hub last month.  
For his full speech: <http://bit.ly/NZdJ5g>



# Safety concerns with transition heads

**T**HE manual handling of transition heads (25kg) are causing serious safety concerns for shunt workers.

The introduction of the IAB/IAC wagons into the fleet has increased the requirement to lift transition heads where the risk of harm is compounded by wearing the remote packs strapped to the body.

The remote packs combined with the weight of the bull hook prevents workers from using a safe lifting technique. The hazards associated with the lifting were identified by an occupational health nurse in a recent task review. Hazards include excessive flexion when bending and lifting and asymmetrical loading to the body when lifting and manoeuvring the bull hook into place.

## 17 changes a shift

Workers at Middleton shunt yard perform on average 17 changes of transition heads per shift and are worried that the frequent lifting will increase when the milk season starts at the end of August.

Health and safety rep and 2012 winner of the Safeguard Health and Safety Awards, Peter McCaw, has issued a hazard notice to KiwiRail recommending the company manage the hazard by "marshalling CFT wagons into consists until the rest of the wagons are converted to alliance couplers".

KiwiRail responded by agreeing to "tighten up on their deployment to try and minimise instances of unduly mixed rakes".

The company intends to review 951 and 952 consist performance every week and then monthly at the HSAT forum, and intend to rollout a Safe Working Procedure (SWP) including a DVD on safe lifting techniques. The RMTU is annoyed that the development of the SWP is being done without worker representation and considers the DVD is a minimisation control only.

The Union recommends that the company comply with their obligations under the HSE Act and eliminate the risk of harm by reducing and, ultimately, removing the need to lift bull hooks.

There is some movement by KiwiRail to




*Alan Rolton, Middleton yard, with a 25kg bullhook.*

move towards introducing auto couplers with an increase in investment into auto coupler exchange programmes to \$2.5 million for the 2012/13 year.

## 30 couplers a week

Hillside are producing auto couplers at a rate of 30 couplers per week. No timeframe has been given by the company for when this work will be completed.

The RMTU strongly urges shunt workers to put their own safety ahead of production and report any discomfort of pain and injury relating to lifting of bull hooks. The RMTU will continue to monitor the issue closely. 

# Hazardous manning levels

**T**HE RMTU recently surveyed TranzMetro on-board staff to gauge workers' concerns regarding on-board safety and manning levels.

Only 10% of respondents agreed that current on-board staffing levels were consistently adequate to ensure the safety of staff and passengers.


The top safety concerns listed include:

- Managing passenger numbers during events or peak travel periods;
- Dealing with aggressive or intoxicated people; and
- Inability for on-board staff to ensure passenger safety including helping elderly and people with children board and alight the train.

Other concerns include a lack of visibility for the right of way procedure to be performed safely on curved platforms and the risk of injury relating to manual handling of wheel chair access, bikes and prams.

Responding to medical emergencies and a lack of security on late night trains were also listed as serious concerns by on-board staff.

Most survey participants agreed there should be a minimum rostered staffing level to help ensure the safety of both the public and passengers.

The RMTU has presented a recommendation to TranzMetro to have a minimum on-board staffing ratio and are awaiting a response. 



*Sign seen in Otira recently. At last report the vacancy was still unfilled.*

## Observing progress on DSGs

**D**URING the last KiwiRail (Freight) Industrial Council meeting in June, two of the KIC reps and new southern regional manager Murray Young toured the Hutt Workshops to see progress in the flesh on the DSG locomotive overhaul and

to look at other projects.

The team returned to the meeting praising the work and pleased to be able to see the progress and provide valuable input – the benefits of having a Rail Council.



*The team looking over one of the projects at Hutt – the reworked JPL wagons that are being fitted with portals and sliding curtain sides.*



*(l to r) KR Freight regional manager Murray Young, Hutt branch sec (and tour guide) Terry Duffy, CT rep Lennie Millar and Northern Terminals rep (Hoodie) Dean Ngatai.*

## 25 years of the JRU

**T**HE RMTU national vice president, Howard Phillips, and general secretary, Wayne Butson, were honoured to represent RMTU members on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Japan Confederation of Railway Workers Unions (JRU) in Tokyo on June 5 - 6. The conference was a celebration of the history of the JRU and it was very impressive to see the passion and dedication of the many rank and file members present.

The president of the International Transport Workers Federation, Paddy Crumlin, together with delegates from other unions across the globe also attended.

The JRU is a long-time friend and supporter of the RMTU (and its predecessor unions) and of railway workers across the globe for the protection of their rights.

Topics discussed included: rebuilding member's lives and the union movement; establishing an action agenda to deal with the current nuclear crisis and to launch further counter attacks against the oppression of the JRU; and to defend basic



labour rights in Japan.

The Japanese people have been shaken greatly by the radiation leaks at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant and unions across Japan are uniting against the restart of nuclear power plants.

The RMTU's delegates heard of the terrible toll from the earthquake and the resulting tsunami on people and communities. The devastation to the East Japan Railway system was immense. More than 15,000 people have been confirmed dead and 11,000 missing with another 130,000

residents continuing to live in makeshift shelters. The JRU has devoted a huge amount of energy to providing support for quake-stricken members, their families and the communities within which they live.

Wayne was honoured to be invited to join a select group of guests to address the conference. His speech was very well received.

The election of officers was conducted and the RMTU congratulated president Masaharu Takei and general secretary Katsuya Chiba on their election. 🌐



# City Depot gets organised

**I**N March 2011 the RMTU was approached by one of its members who worked at City Depot, the inland port arm of Lyttelton Port Company (LPC). Tim Lawton had an individual employment issue that needed to be resolved urgently and he called on the services of RMTU paid officials based in Lyttelton, branch secretary Libi Carr and South Island organiser John Kerr, to help solve them.

Whilst they were able to give Tim prompt advice, represent him and successfully resolve the issue, it was clear that such problems would continue to arise if the site was not organised.

At the time, Tim was the sole RMTU member at City Depot.

"City Depot was owned by NZ Express until it was bought by the Port company," he said. "At that stage it dealt mainly with empty containers. Now it fills and unloads containers and shuttles them to the port via rail or road."

Workers were now doing similar work to members in Lyttelton but at City Depot the conditions of employment were significantly poorer.

The public, employers and many union members often make the mistake of seeing unions solely as a form of legal insurance that workers can use if they get into a dispute with the boss. That's sometimes the case. The union's primary role is to organise and educate workers and to promote their industrial, economic and political interests.

In the case of City Depot that meant recruiting the majority of the workforce, building a delegate and active membership structure, and educating and training members so they were equipped to resolve any deeply and widely felt issues at work.

This was particularly important as City Depot is a crucial part of LPC's operation. According to the Company's own publicity 'City Depot is located ... just five minutes from Lyttelton, through the tunnel [and] provides expanded container services, reducing port congestion and attracting cargo to a centralised location.' Furthermore, 'it is a large container park which is among one of the most substantial and sophisticated off-wharf operations in New



Zealand... offering full flexibility with road and rail interchange.'

## Unionised port

The port complex at Lyttelton is fully unionised, with shared coverage between the RMTU and MUNZ. City Depot epitomises the reason why the RMTU has a strong commitment to organising workers along the whole of the supply chain. Simply put, City Depot is a strategic point in that chain. The industrial strength of the workers at LPC would be compromised if City Depot workers were not organised as part of the broader unionised workforce.

That is one reason why, when the RMTU looked at the coverage clause of the RMTU/MUNZ-LPC collective agreement, it was pleased to see that the City Depot workers fell under its coverage. That is one reason why they have fought and won a case in the Employment Relations Authority when LPC denied this. That is the reason why they are now fighting LPC's appeal in the Employment Court against that decision.

"We thought the decision was logical," said Tim. "In fact everybody thought so including the court, except the port company itself."

Another reason why the RMTU is fighting so hard at City Depot is that the workers there have organised themselves, largely under Tim's leadership. Tim, from the day

he knocked on the union office door in March last year, took up the challenge to fix the issues at City Depot by recruiting and organising his fellow workers.


"We now have nine members with a couple more looking at joining," he said.

## Fair and just

It's a matter of fairness and justice. Why should workers who do fundamentally the same work be paid and treated differently because they happen to be located 'just five minutes from Lyttelton'?

So, whilst it's the legal arguments that often get the headlines, it's been Tim and his workmates who have organised to resolve issues on the ground such as health and safety and in doing so have worked on building a relationship with management based on mutual respect.

Naturally, they're unhappy that LPC insists, despite its own publicity, that City Depot is somehow so separate from the wider operation of the Company that the workers there don't fall under the coverage of the RMTU/MUNZ collective agreement.

However, the RMTU is fighting this in court although the real battle is at the worksite where RMTU members demand due respect and slog away at the day to day matters that only an organised workforce can successfully address. 



# Around the

GENERAL SECRETARY Wayne Butson and South Island organiser John Kerr made a trip over to the West Coast in late June to meet and listen to members and to raise our Union's profile.

The Midland line over to the West Coast is a vital lifeline for New Zealand's coal exports and is the jewel in the crown for TranzScenic – that line remains operational because of the dedication and hard work of our members. Every KiwiRail RMTU member that runs trains and maintains the network on that line is a vital cog in our export economy.

We were lucky enough to meet track workers at Otira and in Westport, LEs at Cass and in Westport, shunters and I & E members

in Greymouth. I spoke with John Kerr, who is a consistent guy, with a lot of experience in the industry. He is a very professional person and a very good leader. He is a very good person to have in the network. He is a very good person to have in the network. He is a very good person to have in the network.



*Christchurch LE Ian Dixon*



*Caught relieving in Greymouth is Christchurch-based plant fitter Shane Blick.*



*EM80 crew Dave Green and Matt Hullet.*



*KiwiRail  
W*



# e Coast

reymouth. When we got to Westport we  
ke with the track metrics team where  
Kerr in particular learnt more about rail  
struction in 20 minutes talking with these  
than he had in the 18 months he's been  
the RMTU.

What this trip brought home to us was the  
nity of KiwiRail's so called 'cost reduc-  
programme which is seeking to slash  
works jobs on the Coast and around the  
ntry.

We have to fight hard on the West Coast –  
elsewhere – to protect our members and  
public's health and safety – and to stop  
menace of contracting out. 🌐



*ail employees working on a track.  
ill this be a thing of the past come  
restructuring?*

## Prime Port Timaru

**T**HE decision by foreign shipping lines Hamburg Sud and Maersk to pull out of the container business in Timaru means that most members' jobs at the port will be lost.

This is a direct result of the lack of a national ports' strategy. Port Timaru, like the overwhelming majority of ports in New Zealand, is owned by local government. The local authorities invest in their ports in an attempt to attract business and to compete with one another while the shipping companies, who aren't covered by the Commerce Act, play them off against one another.

The result is a boom and bust cycle that hurts our members, the ratepayers in the community and businesses who are trying to get goods across the wharf.

John Key and his government isn't interested in an integrated and planned approach to getting export goods to market and New Zealand workers and businesses are paying the price.

Maersk and Hamburg Sud made their announcement a month ago and a couple of weeks later Key was in town to open our new ratepayer-funded swimming pool. We went along to let him know how we felt and to ask him to listen to our views about being thrown on the scrap heap. True to form, Smiling John stuck to the fluffy photo opportunity and wouldn't talk with us.

At the time of writing we have learnt exactly what management are proposing, and it stinks. They want to 'disestablish' all our jobs and are saying that the few people who will be left after the end of September will be offered roles on 'substantially similar' terms and conditions.

So now we know that the company is using this opportunity to attack the terms and conditions of the few workers who will be left.

While we're all feeling pretty angry we're not going to take this lying down. It seems we are being managed by mediocrities who say 'going forward' a lot while actually going backwards. 🌐



# A disaster waiting to happen

**L**ET'S be clear – this is NOT an “accident” waiting to happen because when we have tracks like these pictured here and a management hell bent on slashing the jobs of 181 people whose role it is to inspect and maintain the network it's no accident when people get hurt – it's willful negligence and recklessness by the bosses.

It's a simple fact that track standard on main lines and within yards will decline. We know what happened last time track standard declined in yards – shunters were killed.

Neil Faithful was killed in April 2000. A wagon left the tracks (they spread underneath) and fell on him at Woolston Railway yards. That day was meant to be his day off but staff numbers were short so he went to work to do his bosses a favour.

The Transport Accident Investigation Commission's report agreed with a court finding that TranzRail knew about the problem but had failed to repair the faulty track. It found that the track spread had allowed a wagon wheel to drop inside while some sleepers were broken and rail fastenings ineffective.

Robert [Scruff] Burt died in May 2000 when he fell and was caught under a rake of wagons while shunting at the Middleton freight depot in Christchurch. Robert was the fifth worker to die at TranzRail in 12 months.

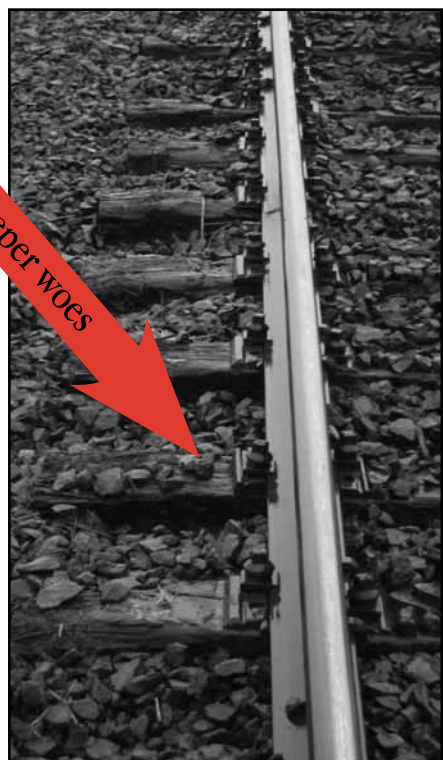
A number of factors had created an environment where rail, an inherently dangerous industry, was rundown.

Capital expenditure was extremely low, there were greater demands on fewer workers and there was inadequate regulation of health and safety. Any of this sound familiar?

This rundown led to the death of five workers in a year.

Jim Quinn and his management team can spout spin and platitudes all they like about the so-called cost reduction programme. The reality is that they are playing Russian roulette with our members' and the public's lives.

On 28 June 2000 the Minister of Labour, Margaret Wilson, announced the formation of a ministerial inquiry into TranzRail's health and safety following consistent RMTU pressure. The inquiry led to a number of improvements in rail safety.



We don't want to be put in the position where the irresponsibility of the bean counters leads to more of our people getting hurt.

We will not allow this happen again.

In the last two years not one RMTU member has been killed at work – we want to keep it that way and we'll do whatever it takes to make sure. 🇳🇿





# The final journey

**H**AVING bid farewell to the English Electric operational services on the Johnsonville line earlier this year, it was only a matter of time before the final service to Melling came about ending a grand career for an aged fleet.

In a manner befitting of such an occasion, local RMTU delegates once again got together and arranged a special commemorative send off with a gathering of past and present employees. A special thanks to Mel Tepou, Jenny Griffin and Michelle Thompson for their efforts in procuring a suitable venue and all the other necessities required for such an undertaking including a fine selection of cakes, sandwiches and savouries – a scene reminiscent of the old railway cafeteria days.

The event commenced with a warm welcome from Mani Raumati including of a bit of mandatory reminiscing.

The main event was the 2.17pm departure of the last operational English Electric multiple unit service to Melling. As expected this drew out the hardest of rail enthusiasts, none more so than "Robin" or "Robbie" who has had a strong emotional attachment and a lifetime's connection with the old EEs. She travelled the service daily and is well known among the Wellington rail fraternity who will miss her loyalty and friendship. Sadly Robin is currently undertaking treatment for advanced cancer and we wish her well in that battle.

Also included on that last trip were a few MPs and special guests including some



retired RMTU members.

The guard's whistle signalled and the old unit was given right of way out of the station. Meanwhile, on board old stories were swapped and embellished.

The journey itself was smooth and uneventful and on arrival, Melling Station momentarily took on the appearance of a rush hour melee as the rail enthusiasts, media and members of the public jostled for the ultimate photo position. With reluctance everyone rejoined the service for the trip home.

It would be fair to say that upon arrival into Wellington the mood aboard was a little less celebratory as passengers said farewell to old mates and a lifetime of memories. 🇳🇿



*Mel Te Pou, Michelle Thomas and Jenny Griffin.*



*Ricky Hills retired and Raewyn Hills Davey.*



*(l to r) Peter Elsey retired, Putu [Roger] Manukau and Chris Sutton retired.*


# Employee participation agreements - why they're important

**T**HE RMTU is currently negotiating employee participation agreements with KiwiRail, Veolia Transport and Port Nelson. Evidence shows that workplaces where employee participation is encouraged and valued have better outcomes for both safety and productivity. Employee representation through trained health and safety reps helps create a safer and healthier workplace because the people doing the

work are in the best position to identify the issues and discuss solutions for how work could be managed better.

EPAs are the overarching agreement between the employer and the employees and their union, which describe the process for how workers can get involved with safety. The agreements include the number of H&S reps and their role which includes representing workers' health and safety

concerns and meeting with the employer to manage issues through health and safety committees.

The RMTU includes an escalation process in all its EPAs so there is a process for difficult H&S issues to be dealt with rather than stagnate at a committee level. The health and safety in the employment act requires all workplaces with over 30 people to have an EPA that is reviewed regularly. 



## Hinds derailment

**K**IWIRAIL is investigating the cause of a locomotive derailment at Hinds last month.

The engine, which was not pulling wagons, went off the tracks in Delamaine Street in Hinds, south of Ashburton, just before 8am.

The train driver was not injured.

A KiwiRail spokeswoman said: "Derailments can be caused by a culmination of factors. We will conduct an investigation to determine what factors were involved in that incident. That can take some time. What's important here is that the driver wasn't injured


in any way."

The driver was stood down for a medical check.

"He hasn't been stood down for anything other than his own welfare," she said.

She was not aware that the incident would be investigated by any other authority.

The track was quickly cleared and services resumed.

Hinds fire chief Dave Kingsbury said excessive speed may have been an issue in the derailment. 


## From Rail Safety Update

NZ Transport Agency

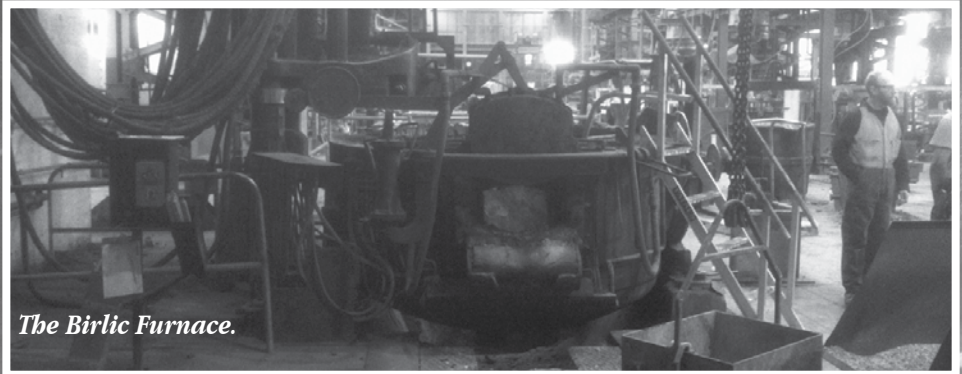
### Fumes/ exhaust danger

A reminder to all organisations to take care before starting any equipment or locomotives that emit fumes in enclosed spaces such as loco sheds. Adequate ventilation should always be ensured before start up. Dangerous fumes and gases can be undetectable and do severe damage that may not be apparent until it is too late. This warning follows several incidents on overseas railways that have resulted in serious consequences for employees and/or volunteers.

### Drug and alcohol policy

It is pleasing to see a number of licence holders reviewing safety cases, especially in relation to drug and alcohol, or fitness for duty, aspects. However, we remind you that a change to the safety case must be supported by documents and procedures at the safety system and procedure levels. If you want to introduce random drug and alcohol testing it is not enough to simply say you will do this. Such a position needs to be supported by procedures that fully describe how the random testing will be determined; what the chain of custody procedures are; how you have agreed this with employees or volunteers; your management procedures for positive test results; who is going to manage the testing regime and the necessary relationship with medical professionals, and so on. 





*The Birlic Furnace.*

## Hillside

**T**HE sale process is proceeding at Hillside and we expect to get news on whether there is a buyer as we go to press. Whatever the result, if a buyer emerges or not, the RMTU is clear about one thing – it would be insane for Hillside to close.

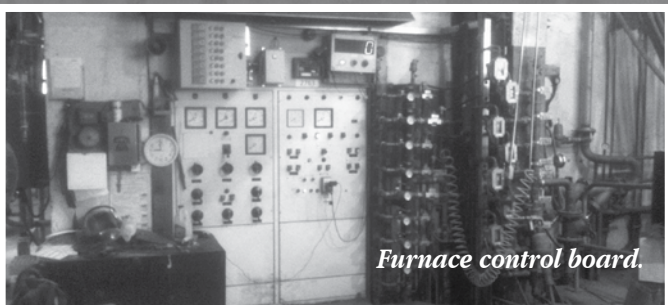
Regardless of the wider argument about fighting to keep Kiwi manufacturing industry working, and the downstream economic and social benefits for all New Zealand families, there is another simple and even more compelling reason

why Hillside must not close: after the Christchurch earthquake there aren't any other heavy lift and maintenance facilities on the South Island.

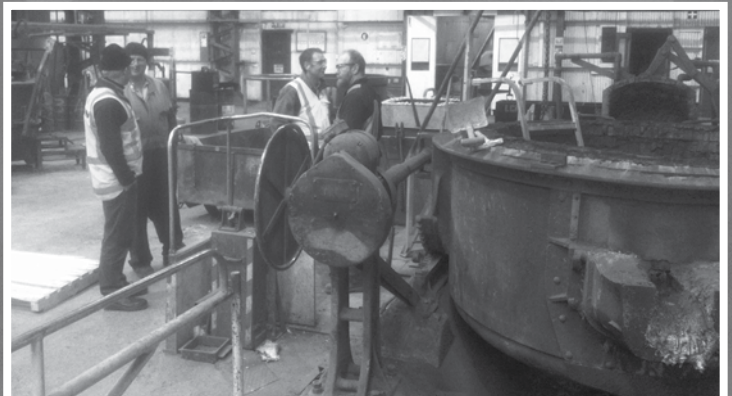
We're doing everything we can to get this message across with the help and support of our political allies and we know that some senior managers are listening – we just hope that the CEO, his board and the Minister is listening and will do the right thing. If they don't and try to close Hillside, there is going to be one hell of a fight.



*Sorting the scrap ready for melting.*



*Furnace control board.*





## OTAGO ROUNDUP



*Jim Kelly now working at Dunedin depot.*



*Working on a DSG motor in the Dunedin depot is Mark Dakin a level 4 mechanical engineer.*



*(l to r) Aaron McAuliffe, Laurie Hall, Gavin Curragh and Ian Rutherford from Timaru rail.*



## Life in a refugee camp

**D**URING the UnionAID Study Tour to the Thailand/Burma border region earlier this year the group attempted to enter the Mae La Refugee Camp but were turned back. Instead, one of the resident refugees came to the group and spoke about his life and expectations for the future. His story made a strong impact on those who heard it.

One of the group, Annabel Snow, said the visit was “nerve-racking, incredibly sad and emotional”.

“It was a glimpse into the life of an educated normal citizen forced to live in a camp, unable to leave and unable to return home.”

Although the thatched huts of the camp looked like a traditional village from a distance, it was very over crowded with more than 40,000 residents living within a four square kilometre area in poverty-like conditions. Any rain turns the pathways into slippery quagmires and the flimsy leaf covered roofs provide little shelter. In dry weather the tinder dry structures are an ever-present fire danger.



With as much secrecy as the group could manage the man from the camp, who was not authorised to speak to outside groups, spoke to them in their van. He had fled from Mon state five years previously and has lived only in this camp. He proudly showed a photograph of his three daughters who lived in the camp with him. At his home, where he was a pastor, the Burmese Government had built a gas pipeline through the village and forced its residents to dig the pipeline and guard the railways.

He has no desire to return to Burma and nor does he trust the regime. He would rather join his sisters in the USA.

“When he spoke about his family his eyes welled up with tears and it was really hard to not cry ourselves,” said Annabel.

A guard, watching from a distance although he appeared to be reading a newspaper, came out of the gate for a closer look, but did not approach the group.

Nevertheless, it was a nerve-racking experience as the group were desperately not wanting to cause him any trouble on his return to the camp.

After bidding him goodbye and thanking him the group watched anxiously as he re-entered the camp safely.

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## Greymouth protest

RMTU stalwart and frequent branch note scribe, John Bannerman (l) was at the front of a demonstration in Greymouth last month protesting against asset sales. About 30 people are reported being in the march carrying signs and balloons and chanting slogans decrying the "senseless sales". John, who has been in rail long enough to know from hard experience what being "sold off" means says it's "not a good feeling. We've got something to keep. There's too much money already going offshore".



## Wellington AGM



Some of the excellent turnout of members to the AGM keen to hear the latest Union news and updates on current wage talks with KiwiRail.



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# Toll Networks ratification

**T**HE recent Toll Networks CA ratification meetings were a good opportunity to fully inform members on negotiations and also to take some photos.



*(l to r) Graeme Abernethy, Robert Boniface, Linten Roach and Roseanne Jeffs.*



*Nelson (l to r) John Griffin, Leon Thomson (delegate), Nicki Clarke, Josiah Henare and James Watson.*



*Palmerston North – (l to r) Darrell Blayney, Matthew Rolls, Ray Penny and Dean Irie.*



*New Plymouth – (l to r) Gary Ngaia, Marlene Tooke and Gary Priest.*



## \$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



# The new Hillside-built YL and EP wagons

**A**N often overlooked part of the railway fleet are the 17 classes of service wagons for a total count of around 273 vehicles. KiwiRail has made substantial additions to this fleet with 40 new YJ class bottom dump ballast wagons, 24 ES class sleeper wagons and new equipment like the ballast cleaner ETM567 and its associated YK class spoil wagons.

Soon there will be two new sets of vehicles – initially as prototypes, then as production wagons. The YL class side dump wagons to replace the 50 and 60 year old YD class side dump wagons and a new purpose-built EP class plough van, also to replace aged equipment – both to be made at Hillside Workshop.

They will all be ‘dressed’ in the same Limerick Green livery as the YJ and ES wagons and others.

The YL class will carry bulk construction and maintenance materials and worksite spoil and will be capable of dumping its load to the side.

The current YD class were bought in the 1940s and 1950s and are showing their age. Of the original 70 wagons just 30 are now operational.

A number of options were considered to replace or upgrade the current stock but all proved more expensive than in-house development, and none could provide all the desired features. It was decided to design, build and assemble the two-bin per wagon option at Hillside, with the fabrication of the bins contracted out to P & W Engineering in Mosgiel. A prototype (YL 114) has already been completed and is undergoing testing on the main line.

For the technically-minded the wagon consists of two permanent tipping bins and



associated tipping gear, on an underframe adapted from a standard IAC wagon underframe design. Using a modern underframe, bogies, and brake equipment means that the wagon can run at 80kph (as opposed to the current 50kph), loaded or empty.

The tipping will be controlled by Cat-tron remote control equipment, using the YJ ballast wagon hand-held controllers. Each bin is designed to tip either side of the wagon with only one bin tipping at a time. 17 wagons will be built.

The prototype cost \$280,000, however, production wagons are expected to be cheaper.

The EP class plough vans are designed to spread ballast discharged from a YJ wagon, ready for tamping. The task can be done without specialist vehicles but this can cause the ballast train to derail and requires workers to put themselves in awkward positions to place the sleeper. A van is much safer. The plough blades also reach deeper below the rail head (though still above the fasteners), giving a better distribution of ballast (and so faster and more efficient tamping).

Like the YDs, the existing fleet is old and in need of replacement. They have crude cabins built on old guard's van underframes, with no equipment beyond bench seating and a manually operated plough. They only weigh 15t, so they have a very low axle load and are prone to derailment.

The new vans will be capable of higher speeds.

Again, a variety of alternatives were considered to upgrade the existing fleet.

The new van looks like a smaller version of a Tranz Scenic observation car, with an open platform at one end, an enclosed saloon at the other, together with a smaller open platform, and with a large open space through the deck in centre. This open section above the plough is to enable the operation of plough to be readily seen and monitored from platforms at either end, or from trackside.

The saloon seats eight riders with the outside open deck capable of carrying a further eight people. The vans are only 12m long – possibly the shortest wagon on the system – and are estimated to cost \$3.96m for seven, or \$566,000 each. 🌐



## HUTT WORKSHOP BRANCH

**W**E have recently had our capital projects plan confirmed and notified; this financial year will see us process around 19 locomotives and 40 wagons with an option to complete an extended wagon project. The loco programme ranges from de-rusting and painting through to overhauls and re-builds, with the wagon programme being the conversion of broken ZHs into flash ZHCs. At the time of writing, both programmes are well underway with a green light to recruit up to six apprentices and employ a small number of temporary staff to cover peaks and troughs. Additionally, we are intending to shift existing staff around to match skill sets to the workload in whichever plant staff are required.

We've put the Ganz-Mavag wish list to the side as the owner (the regional council) was still considering its options. It looks like they've opted to stand-down half of the fleet and rat the equipment to support the

remainder given the ongoing commissioning of the new Korean-made Matangi units.

We are still waiting for the south wall of Plant 1 to be re-clad – but we don't have to worry about the winter because we've had a mild one thus far of course! Structural repairs to the crane columns are nearly complete which should bolster our productive output. At one stage we had concerns about some lifts being carried out however a review of the H&S risk assessment process appears to have addressed that to the general satisfaction of all concerned.

On the property front, we believe that Plants 4 and 5 may be demolished in the foreseeable future. They have served us well but have also past their best-before dates and perhaps it is time to consign them to history.

We are now gearing up for our AGM in late August. Unfortunately there is little movement in the make up of both the

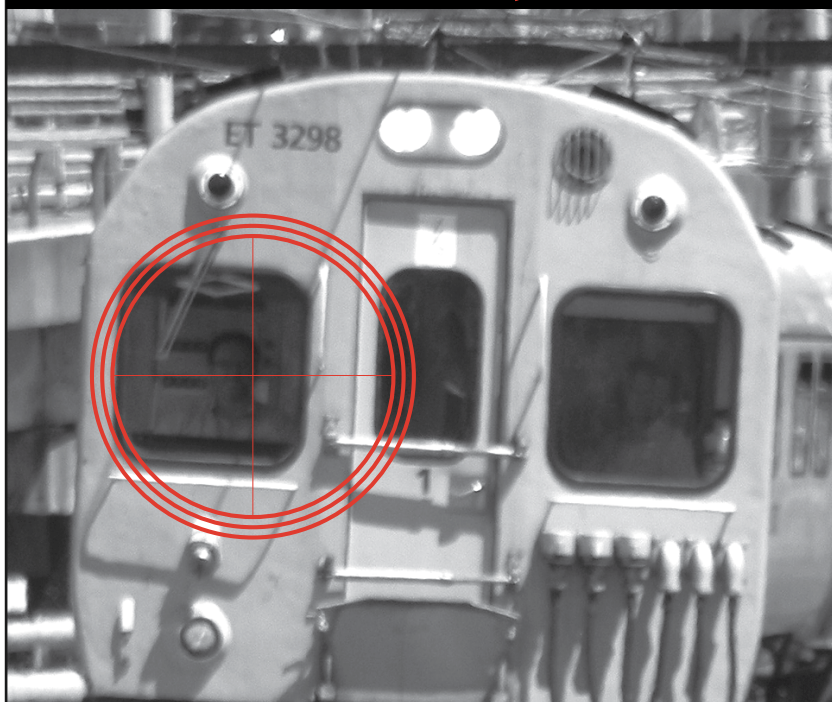
branch committee and the H&S committee. Of concern is the lack of new faces putting their hands up for these voluntary jobs. Whilst I acknowledge that at times they may be seen as thankless and time-consuming, a great deal of satisfaction is felt when a job is done well for the benefit of all concerned. Both committees have a common purpose – to look out for our workmates.

## Sharing similar visions

Late June saw our remaining committee members attend a somewhat belated local delegates training course, but it was good to catch up with Todd and Mani and meet some of our Wellington branch counterparts. As is often the case, we find we all share the same visions and frustrations with the job but we are driven by the desire to achieve common-sense answers to everyday problems and issues – as they arise, sometime, with a repetitive monotony.

Around the same time, we had a branch meeting where the prominent subject appeared to be asset sales. In a nutshell; we

# Sickness, accident & death



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

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

retire did not receive anything.

**You could be next to miss out!**

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

### Contact:

Julia Harrison, PO Box 813, Wellington  
 Telephone: (04) 499-2066  
 Fax: (04) 471-0896  
 Email: [julia@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:julia@rmtunion.org.nz)

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



need to continue to stand up against the government's proposals and make our voices heard. If you haven't signed the petition yet, get your name on it. If you are a member of a club or other organisation, see your delegate or branch secretary and get a couple of copies of the petition and get their names and signatures on them. It cannot be stressed enough the folly of selling what little jewels we have left. Act now!

Have you been watching and listening to the media in recent months? KiwiRail and its problems are popular topics. The DL locos, the sale of Hillside, the rotten sleepers, the overly ambitious TAP and the downsizing of infrastructure staff have been well debated. The small doco' on TVNZ 7 in May was interesting and informative, and the general secretary put our case extremely well. The TVNZ Q&A interview with CEO

## HUTT WORKSHOP BRANCH [cont]

Jim Quinn was a bit of a let down (given the build up) but Quinn represented the company in a calm and professional manner. Have you seen the transcripts of question time in Parliament where opposition parties have queried the government? This should be on your notice boards. Some are quite entertaining but the bottom line is not. The company has got a hard road to hoe and we all have a vested interest in the outcome. We have got to get our affairs in order but how do we best achieve that when even the minister for SOEs has referred to us as a "financial basket case"? We have also seen the interim Staff Engagement Survey results and communication again features as a major problem area. In the previous issue of this periodical I suggested that

those in charge could (should) consult with those a little closer to the coal-face as we know and understand the workings of our railway when it comes to bringing about positive change. I re-issue that challenge to the CEO, senior management and the new middle managers. Go on, I dare you!

A repeat call to members: Have you changed your contact details over the last year or so? If so, grab your membership card and please contact your delegate to fill out a form to update those details or get on the internet and do it yourself on the RMTU's website.

Remember, we are stronger together.



Your website  
[WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ)

**W**HAT a fantastic idea to make 181 staff redundant. Why didn't the company ask for them when we were trying to repair the track and bridges after the earthquakes? Oh, you needed us to fix the track and bridges, to run trains which in turn makes money which then keeps you in your job and helps you keep a very nice lifestyle. Who the hell is getting shafted here? There were NO OFFICE STAFF fixing track and bridges after the earthquakes. There were no other staff out there from KiwiRail doing the hard yards – ask any bridgee or trackee who was there. What a bloody disgrace – getting stabbed in the back from a very uncaring management structure. And to think that our local managers had a hand here shafting fellow workers. Shame on you for your Judas behaviour. With the company demanding 180-220 staff this year and 130 by the end


## CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH

of July 2013 and still trying to stay code compliant it's a bloody joke.

So how did we get into this predicament? We bought unreliable locomotives and wagons from China and thousands of rotting sleepers from Peru which are also a bio-security risk. It appears they have to now be tested by MAF which may end up with KiwiRail going through the criminal courts for placing New Zealand's forest products exports at risk.

We also rented property to a individual who loaded it up with demolition material and then was deported owing KiwiRail millions of dollars and is now going to cost KiwiRail millions to cleanup. We hired a computer crowd which who said their system can keep a good record of work to do and work completed which has so far cost \$22 million. Is this the same crowd which

had a hand in the police ICIS programme which ended up costing \$60-80 million? Nah, we wouldn't be dumb enough to get involved with this, would we? Now, who put their moniker on the document where we cart coal from the West to the East Coast for no profit? Seven trains a day leaving the West Coast for no profit.

To the guys in overalls who are carrying the load – keep it up guys. Sooner or later we might just see a light at the end of the tunnel. What we must not lose sight of is that the work we are doing will not be done by contractors – our Union demands it. The damning truth which has cost jobs has not been the fault of the working man but rather by the group of managers who have made the most monumental stuff ups ever seen in our rail transport system. 

## LYTTELTON PORT BRANCH

**I**T'S all about mud. Submissions to Council, our comrades at LPC City Depot and what is Gerry Brownlee going to do next.

We hope that by the time these notes are published we will have seen some fine weather and the back of what feels like ceaseless rain, hillsides falling into the road and footpaths and roads opening up beneath us. If anyone had driven past the railway station last Friday they would have seen this scribe, an upside down mop

in hand, clearing out a drain. Water was streaming down the hill over the top of the very blocked drain and climbing rapidly up the steps of the station. Fortunately the small flood subsided on removal of flax and other debris but further inspection revealed a drain on the far side of the car park completely blocked with silt. A sucker

truck is required for that job.

Our KiwiRail comrades who use the station for smoko breaks are thoroughly fed up with slogging from their locos through ankle-deep mud, churned up to slush path from log trucks, and finally into the station,

Continued on the next page ►

## LYTTELTON PORT BRANCH [continued]

◀ mud clinging to their trousers and boots. Blimmen uncomfortable and it appears that both LPC and KiwiRail are avoiding coughing up to fix the problem. We need a plan Baldrick!

Recently RMTU members and long time Lyttelton locals happened to be in the Top Club having a quiet beer and were pounced upon by a group of angry women – Lyttelton locals themselves. The women were in the process of slogging matters out with Christchurch City Councillors on a proposed bylaw for the location and signage of brothels.

With the Christchurch CBD still cordoned off, which is where most of Christchurch's brothels were located according to Council regulations, these businesses are having some difficulty operating. The CCC proposes rezoning areas where brothels can operate. The women commandeered our members for a bit more local backup and took them into the submissions meeting.

What on earth has this got to do with Lyttelton and the RMTU? Well the CCC rezoning has suggested that the operational area for brothels is effectively the Lyttelton CBD and township whilst at the same time the CCC stated their reason for proposed rezoning is because the Christchurch CBD is unable to be worked in due to the significant damage.

What? Has anyone in the CCC had a look at what's left of the Lyttelton CBD?

Many RMTU members who work at the port also live in, and near, Lyttelton. People comment that any business conducted (and in a port town this particular business is conducted – of that have no doubt) is

done so discreetly, has been for years, and 'rezoning' the location of brothel/sexual services into the Lyttelton CBD is not the best answer. The best solution is to leave the matter alone. We don't know what our future landscape and cityscape will look like nor where our industrial, residential and business areas will eventually end up. This bit ain't broke and it don't need fixing – but plenty else does!

### Fight for justice

Our comrades through the tunnel at LPC's City Depot continue their fight for justice.

Having won their case in the Employment Relations Authority that, as employees of the Lyttelton Port Company they are entitled to be part of the main collective agreement and on the same terms and conditions as their union brothers and sisters, the fight goes on with LPC appealing the decision. Watch this space. We send our solidarity and combined strength to fellow members at City Depot. All they are asking for is to be treated the same as their colleagues. They've won the argument once, we hope to win the argument again.

Where to next for Gerry Brownlee? Well the rumour mill suggests he has been having conversations with CCC regarding sales of Christchurch assets to fund the rebuild of Christchurch. We are all well aware of the Tory government's open agenda of asset sales and their ideological view that selling state and local assets into private hands is the miracle answer to creating an economic powerhouse.

What doesn't make sense to Cantabrians is the prospect of selling off local

assets that are returning a good dividend to the CCC and therefore the people of Christchurch in order to get a bit cash up front. Anybody who has ever done any kind of renovations or a full build knows that, inevitably, the project goes over budget and, over time, and you need to be able to keep the money coming in to cover this.

We have visions of a partially rebuilt city, no income stream and a Tory government long gone. That last part is actually ok.

Finally on behalf of all the RMTU members at the Port of Lyttelton and City Depot we send our absolute solidarity and support to our brothers and sisters at the Port of Timaru. We condemn the actions of Maersk who are once again playing the market to suit themselves and we utterly condemn this National government for sitting back and allowing even more workers to lose their livelihoods whilst pretending they are creating jobs.

We note the National-led government has given up the pretence of closing the wage gap with Australia. It's about time they came clean and confessed they have no idea how to create jobs for NZers and that their only strategy is to sell it all ensuring that they and their mates clip the profit ticket a couple of times on the way around.

We need a comprehensive, long term plan for integrated transport in NZ and ports are an integral part of such a plan. Allowing overseas shipping companies to dictate how NZ operates its ports is a crock.

But let's at least finish on a bright note. Right now, it's stopped raining!

Kia kaha all. Look after yourselves, your families and your workmates. Go home safe at the end of each working day/afternoon/night/graveyard shift. 🌧️

## OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

**W**HEN approached to contribute to this issue I said these will be my last as a member of the Infrastructure and Engineering (I&E) group as my position as a communications technician has gone. For this last contribution I have decided to focus upon THEM Vs US under four headings.

### Management

When I joined management structure

was a wonder to behold. Every division had its own hierarchy and every position was filled by career railway people. We all knew what 'railway' meant. Not only could we spell it, but we knew every aspect of it.

Then came the first round of rationalisations where structures became refined and in some cases were joined or disposed of. Fancy new names were introduced, along with fancy new management. So called experts were imported who could spell

'railway' but couldn't understand it. Assets were disposed of, often with no consultation. Then we had the great fire sale that led to further rape and pillage. Meanwhile, the apparent sole purpose of the management which remained seemed to be to shadow the now privately owned sectors running the railway. Then we were reunited but useless wallies who enjoyed the protection of NZRC were still there. Never mind that there were no positions for them, the system was leaner and meaner.

Now we have a management system ▶



where the upper levels seem to be reorganised at the whim of the CEO. Being a railwayman is no longer a career. Knowledge of rail not needed. All we need are experts.

As the recent round of consultations at I&E have proven management are a team of trained seals who have been indoctrinated. By flapping their flippers in unison, they have reduced staffing levels by 170 or 220. Their mantra: 'We have to live within our budget'. They have cut staffing and promised no contracting out. Yet, if we look at positions vacant on major contractors' web sites they seem to be looking for an awful lot of railway staff. Management's reaction is that they don't know where they got their information from as we don't need them. Methinks management speaks with a forked tongue.

The only thing we can do is to ensure the present government do not have another term.

## Transport industry

Having been in the industry for nearly 42 years I have seen railway go from full protection to the current open market model. A writer to the *Otago Daily Times* renamed KiwiRail as KiwiFail – as that is the only outcome possible.

Government investment in rail is some \$250 million. Meanwhile, a 224 page report on the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) website shows that for the year 2011/2012 they had a surplus of \$3,326 million but only spent \$121,000 (yes thousand) on rail. Both Government and the NZTA are both charged with the responsibility of maintaining rights of way, with their attendant support systems of tunnels, bridges and road beds. However, both are reducing their investment in rail. Furthermore the rail user (KiwiRail) has to pay its way, while the road user (Joe X Transport Co.) only has to pay when he uses it. The playing field is not level and *KiwiFail* seems an apt name. The only way open to redemption would be the return of Ontrack as a government department under a minister alongside NZTA.

## Rights of way

At present we have a reasonable rail system, albeit with some closed branches that may or may not be used again. However,

they at least are 'land banked' for future use so long as the infrastructure remains intact. Recently the Gisborne branch line suffered a major washout which will cost millions to repair. KiwiRail has done nothing since there is a way around it called road. How-

this happen again. To sustain credibility for those remaining it must stand staunch and one for one, and everyone is equal.

It is a great shame that recent recruits held high hopes of a career future and opportunity to progress. They are now left



Otago Rail AGM.

ever NZTA also have similar problems with erosion in the Manawatu Gorge which has been closed for major periods. But is NZTA doing nothing? Not likely. They are throwing millions of dollars at it despite there being another way around it – a bit longer, but it is a road.

## The Union

When I joined the job it was unions - plural. Each represented a different faction of the then railway structure. Like Governments each union vied for members. But with a dwindling pool of railway employees, they needed to amalgamate. Past differences were forgiven and the RMTU came into being. But why the 'them versus us' in the first place? After all, we all worked under the same terms and conditions didn't we? To those who worked for NZRC or TOLL it came as a surprise that work had been outsourced to Transfield, United and Alstom. That they had been ejected from the Railway Superannuation Scheme, their contributions capped and sold into the Private sector despite legislation stating we could transfer once. But TranzRail was not a government department. So when we all sailed off into our different companies we were already one step removed and becoming two steps. But some of our Union brotherhood did not apparently make that leap and retained their position within the superfund.

The Union, with its dwindling rail membership, must not let decisions like

with the prospect of being made redundant. Instead of the goose laying golden eggs it will shit on their shoulders. These men and women are being treated as pawns in a chess game – a game which will ultimately have no winner.

Those who are left in the networks area will have to be extremely vigilant to make sure that those who have gone are not replaced by contractors. We have never before needed to be so united. We will need to support each other and guard our jobs with unparalleled passion.

Our membership is also not immune from a downturn in tourism. Our brothers and sisters at Taieri Gorge have settled their wage round with the most modest of increases. On a more positive note they are readying themselves for a cruise ship season that will have more than 100 ships visiting. At Labour Weekend this year there will be a steam extravaganza with trips north and south concluding with a run to Invercargill which is already attracting huge interest.

It has been a privilege to have worked with a fine lot of brother and sister, RAILWAYMEN. I wish you well in the coming 50 years. To those I may have offended, so be it. If you have served more than 10 years consider yourself a veteran. It would appear that uninterrupted service is now a thing of the past.

**John Sinclair, communications technician, Dunedin.**



## TARANAKI RAIL BRANCH

**W**E are gearing up for another milk season. The last one was busy and I'm sure this one will be no different. The loop to solve all problems has been closed again for re-stretching. Manutahi Loop was forced upon us in the middle of last milk season and was going to help solve the bottleneck of trains between Patea and Whareroa in the evenings. In its current state the loop certainly can't be regarded as a success. Whilst staff were trained to operate it only two trains, one test train and the track recording car, ever made contact with the loop. The loop was a tight squeeze, with two metres clearance at the back for a fully laden milk train of 16 OMs. So the decision was made to take the loop out to 550 metres from 260 metres. At present, discussions are taking place with management so, unlike last time, the locals who will be using it will be consulted before the crews start building the extension.

The lads at Whareroa are gearing up as well. Congratulations to Carl Marriner who has come up through the ranks from a rail operator to a locomotive engineer. Just like the previous years there will be challenges with the milk siding and Fonterra's equipment.

There have been a few meetings to try and sort out some operating inconsistencies. While some things haven't gone down well I think progress is being made.

Mind you it could be worse. We are a DL-free zone out here and praise the lord for that. The downside is that we are still puddling around with many of the trusty old DCs that the DLs were supposed to replace, with many of them not having the money spent on them, so most of the dynamic brakes don't work properly, if at all. At least the Chapman seat issue is finally being dealt with. The IAB wagons have their issues with braking and the guys are getting used to that. The big problem in the Naki appears to be the transition heads, or at times, the lack of. One LE is off with light duties because of an incident with the removal of the 25 kilo transition head off a locomotive. Once again the people on the ground are paying for the choices of railway management into not converting the fleet to automatic couplers. Staff in the Naki, where it does rain from time to time, have complained about the Chinese-made rain jackets, which appears not to stop a lot of the rain, especially in the arm department.

The choice to lay off track staff has been greeted by a bit of worry and trepidation. Having speed restrictions still in place are nearly two years old. One wonders how these will ever get fixed if there are going to be fewer I and E staff to deal with them. The network was allowed to run down to make profits for certain greedy individuals. At lot of investment and hard work has gone into building it up, is it going to fall down again? Do we have to go back to the days of frequent train derails which closed the Stratford to Okahakura line? 🇳🇿



*The Stratford/Okahakura Line had numerous derailments in the 18 months before it closed due to lack of maintenance. Can NZ tolerate seeing more Class 2 LPG wagons on their side.*

