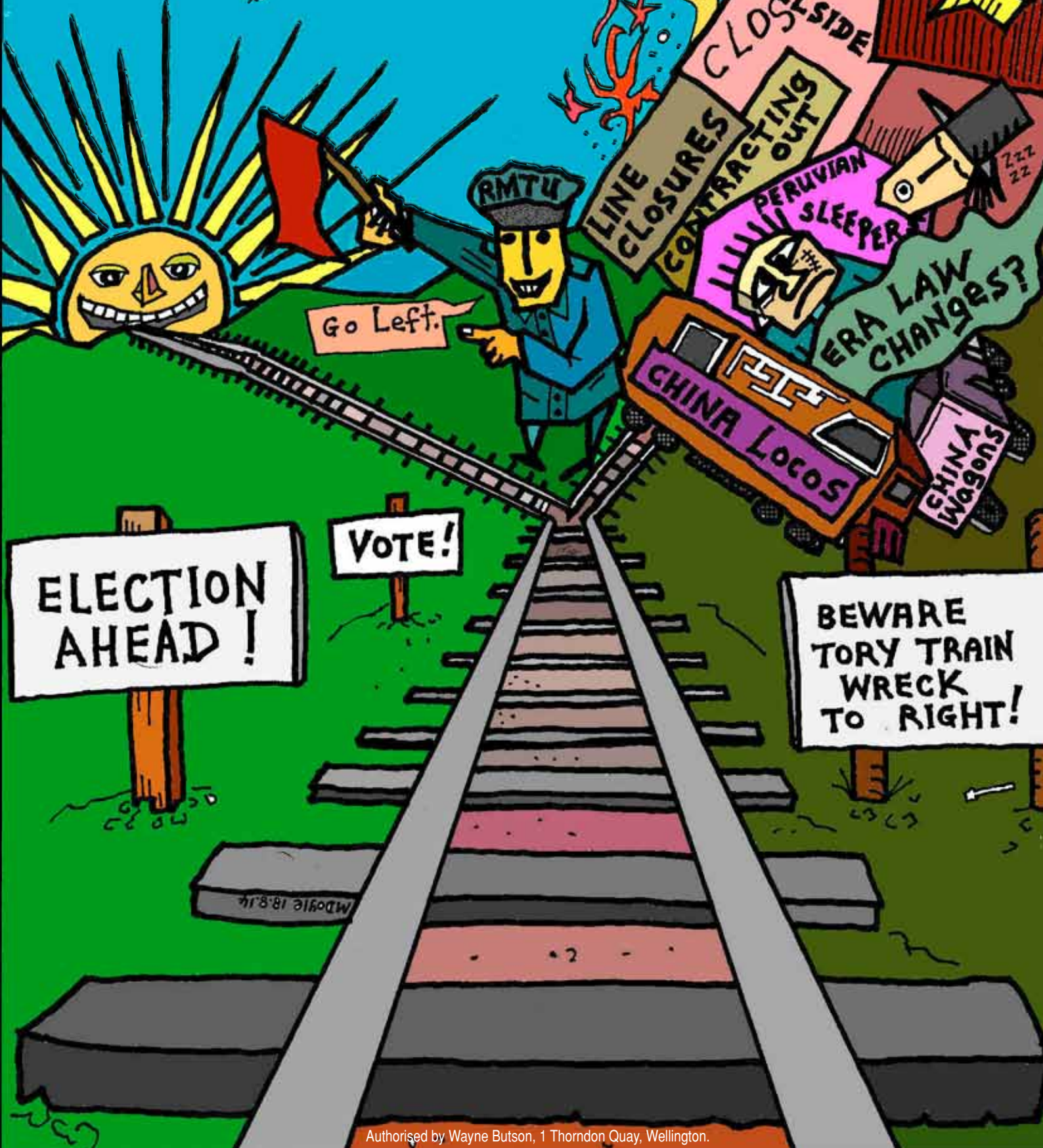


SEPTEMBER 2014

# THE *Transport Worker*

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





## 5 ASBESTOS FEARS



DL locos enter Hutt Workshop's 'red zone' to rid them of this witches' brew from China.

## 7 HOPELESS WAGONS



Chinese-built wagons roll in for repair with more problems.

## 24 MAORI CARVING UNVEILED



The first of three carvings was unveiled at Wellington Railway Station as part of the TKM hui celebrating it 25 years.

## COVER CARTOONS

The Election cartoons were created by Martin Doyle and Trace Hodgson to focus attention on the importance of voting.

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**Wayne Butson**  
General secretary  
RMTU

## Critical choices face NZ workers at 2014 election

**P**EOPLE have laid down their lives to give the rest of us the right to vote and to choose who will rule us. They have defended democracy with their lives. General elections are important and this one, in my opinion, is especially important. There is a lot of damaging legislation sitting on the sidelines which the National Party wants to enact – much of it aimed at workers and unions.

We have just completed a second round of meetings for the Union's largest collective agreement, the KiwiRail MECA. This covers upwards of 2,800 of the membership. During this round of talks the elephant in the room is the forthcoming general election. We spent some time discussing amongst RMTU reps the permutations and implications of various election result outcomes and the impact on the wider membership.

The first that sprung to mind was the Employment Relations Act changes which have been on hold since John Banks resigned from parliament. The Nats have stated that the changes will be enacted within the first 100 days of their term if they are returned to Government.

These changes are shockers and will savage the RMTU rail members. We have seen collective bargaining undermined consistently by this Government during their time in government. We have seen the 30 day rule, the 90 day trial period, union access rights slashed and, the biggest move of all, the change from "would" to "could" for how the employment authorities judge justification for dismissals and other employer acts.

My own family have been on the receiving end of unscrupulous employers using the 90-day rule and to see first-hand the dreadful effects of a person being discarded without even the courtesy of an explanation, let alone the right to challenge the dismissal, is a disgrace to a developed society. I am sure there are many of you who can say the same thing in regards to this 90 day trial period bullshit.

A major issue for us in prospect are changes in the ability for employers to say 'no' to a multi-employer collective agreement (MECA) and the union(s) being powerless to do anything about it. Currently we can strike to get a MECA and this is lost under the amendment together with the employer being granted the ability to just say 'no' without giving a reason. There is no question that MECAs deliver more power to workers for the simple reason that it binds a greater number of workers together and therefore amplifies workers ability to stop the business of the employer.

Other detrimental, but no less important changes to the act, are covered elsewhere in this issue and so I won't go into them in greater detail.

The negotiations are ongoing and so, as usual, we will deal with whatever is thrown at us by governments or employers. We are a struggle-based Union and so we are both experienced and, if necessary, up for the challenge posed. But it would be better if we didn't have to.

Vote to make a change is the catch cry.


The current John Key-led Government is not governing in the best interest of working men and women. They are governing for the interest of business and capital.

The growing inequality gap is a major concern to me and as I grow older the more ashamed I am becoming at the legacy my generation is going to leave behind.

A future of National-led governments will not in any way dampen the growing inequality.

The parties committed to working in the best interest of working people are Labour, Greens and Internet Mana in my view.

The parties with the best transport policies, again in my view, are Labour, Greens and NZ First, but you will be able to judge for yourself when you read the answers to questions we posed them in this magazine's centre pages.

Your vote cast for any of these parties will be our best chance to have a return to a caring and sharing society which will have the interest of workers at the forefront of their thinking. Read what your peers are saying in this magazine, talk to everyone and anyone you know. Make sure they 'vote for a change' in 2014 and make sure they Get Out and Vote! 

## Tour de France watch out!



*NZ's transport union climbing to new heights in the Pyrenees. New Zealand Staff Welfare Trust manager Chris Ball takes a rest break at the summit of Col d'Aspin proudly wearing his RMTU T-shirt.*

## Appreciation

Dear Editor,

It is with great appreciation that I received your very kind words and gifts. They were unexpected but very much appreciated, thank you. I have been a proud member of this Union for 40 years and have had somewhat rocky times but the Union has been there to support me during those times. I must be by now running out of credit for all the help I have gotten over the years.

Yours sincerely,  
David McDonald.

## Resignations

Dear Editor,

I wish to tender my resignation from the Union as I will be retiring on June 6, 2014 after 49 years and 11 days.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank yourself and the previous general secretary for the work put in on behalf of the members.

I would also like to wish the Union all the best for the future.

Thank you.  
Yours faithfully  
Peter M Roberts  
LE Whangarei.

Dear Editor,

I wish to advise that I have been medically retired, and to thank the Union and its hard working staff for their achievements, especially for the help that I have received over the last 47 years.

From 1967 to 1986 I was an NUR member and as a guard in Napier, would have been finished up in October 86. So without the negotiation between the NZR and LEA I would have been forced to take redundancy. However, those negotiations created the opportunity for me to join the locomotive division in Nov 1986 as a train operator with the opportunity to obtain both LE 2nd grade and 1st grade certificates.

Over the next two years as

a 2nd grader I managed to side step redundancy by taking a roll back to servicing assistant and by transferring to the Mt Maunganui depot. I went back driving after 18 months and with the help of the Union, was given the opportunity to sit my first grade certificate in 1993. I enjoyed my 15 years as an LE in Mt Maunganui and living out at Papamoa Beach.

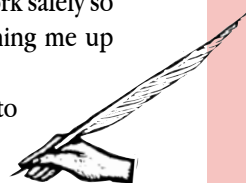
In 2003 I needed a break away from areas where I had been involved in fatalities, so headed to Taranaki on a two year contract. I should have sought RMTU advice on my contract as it took over nine years to eventually be in control and in a position to move back to Papamoa Beach and take up a job in the Kawerau depot.

However, I had a health issue and could no longer work safely so it was decided to finishing me up on June 7, 2014.

So a big thank you to the RMTU.

Keep up the good work.

Regards  
Maurie Bridge.



Dear Editor,

I wish to advise that I am retiring effective 30/06/2014 and therefore need to resign from the RMTU as of that date.

I have enjoyed being a member of the Hutt branch of the RMTU since 12/01/1998 and wish the continued representation of the Union in the Work Shops all the best for the future.

Peter Mason (pictured).

Dear Editor,

Letting you know that I am retiring on the 11 July 2014. I have only been with Tranz Metro a short while as a train manager. I started as a carpenter/joiner in 1964; left in 1988 and came back in 2009 as a passenger operator and then as a train manager.

I was then with the RTA union in NZR days before joining the RMTU. I have enjoyed my last few years with work mates at the Upper Hutt Depot.

Thank you for the support of the Union over the last few years.

Kind regards

Russell Lepper

Upper Hutt train manager.

## Appreciation

Dear Editor

I appreciate that in this forum it is neither my place nor is it sought for me to provide endorsements on positions adopted by the branches, never the less I hope that you and your readers will indulge me and allow me to do just this. I would like to offer my support and appreciation for the position recently outlined by the Canterbury Rail Branch (Issue 2 - June 2014) which stated:

Lastly, we see national office has launched a 'Just Say No!' campaign in relation to health and safety and unsafe work. We applaud this and you can be sure that here in Canterbury we'll be taking this very seriously. The fact is that we all want to get the job done and keep the trains running and sometimes we need to step back and take a breath and remind ourselves that nobody can be disciplined for doing things safely. Taking short cuts isn't on, and nobody will thank us if there is an incident as a result.

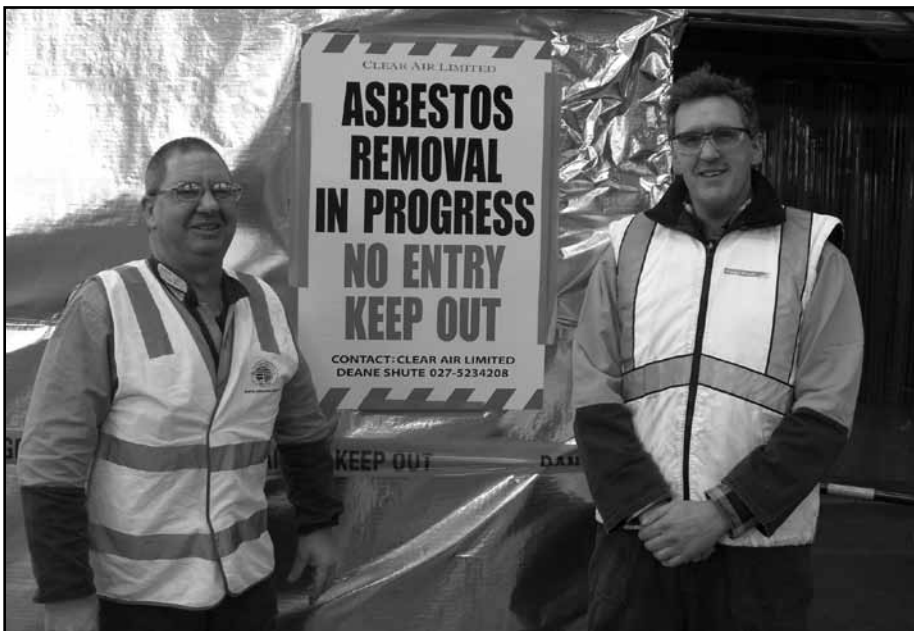
I would like to commend the branch for the position that they have taken in this matter and encourage the other branches to adopt similar stances.

None of us want our colleagues and friends to be hurt and it is up to all of us to do our collective parts to prevent this. Thanks and best regards  
Aaron Temperton  
GM Operations,  
KiwiRail freight.

# Reps in the red zone


**T**HE newly de-contaminated KiwiRail Gen 1 DL locos are slowly re-entering service after a lengthy project carried out at Hutt Shops to remove asbestos contaminated material (ACM).

RMTU Hutt Shops branch chair, Paul Morrison and Hutt Shops H&S rep Paul Joyce have worked 'many hours' on maintaining, improving and monitoring the asbestos containment and decontamination zone, known as the 'red zone'. The Gen1 DL locos are being stripped of the ACM in a large, purpose-built containment zone made out of plastic sheeting. The zone is controlled by a negative air pressure system designed to trap any airborne ACM from escaping into the atmosphere. Early on in the project RMTU reps noticed the readings of the negative air pressure system were fluctuating into positive air



pressure and did not reflect the standards set out in the Work Safe Asbestos management guidelines. The RMTU sought additional technical advice from WorkSafe's occupational hygienist Phillippa Gibson who agreed the negative air pressure needed improvement. WorkSafe issued two improvement notices, one to KiwiRail and one to the asbestos removal company Clear Air Ltd. The notices have since been complied with and lifted by WorkSafe.

Paul Joyce completed his in-house stage one H&S rep training in May and has written and implemented a daily inspection check sheet for the red zone which includes looking for gaps in the containment seals, which he fixes. He also checks the negative air pressure system to ensure its working effectively and liaises with Clear Air Ltd. Despite the daily challenges for all the staff involved in the project and their steep learning curve, Paul said he's loving the challenge.

Paul Morrison said he acknowledges the work of the RMTU Hutt branch which he says 'have been very proactive in ensuring the safety and success of this project'. He noted that branch members advocated on behalf of the Chinese workers who have been contracted to strip and reassemble the locos for asbestos decontamination. Concerns have been raised regarding the welfare of these workers particularly in regard to their wages and living conditions. 





# White asbestos more harmful than previously thought

**U**NTIL recently it was widely considered that white asbestos was less hazardous than its blue and brown varieties. Canterbury medical officer of health Alistair Humphrey recently said in a Radio NZ interview that it is well known the risk of lung cancer for smokers increased when they were exposed to white asbestos because of the way the chemicals interacted.

But he said chrysotile's true effect was not understood because most people who worked with asbestos smoked as well. "Previously we had thought chrysotile was the least harmful of the three forms of asbestos. White asbestos interacts with cigarette smoke and causes lung cancer. Its effect was previously masked by the fact that most people working with asbestos smoked as well. As people have stopped smoking, the rate of decline of lung cancer has not been as great as people had thought it would be. In other words, chrysotile asbestos is not quite as benign as some of the older guidelines suggest, Dr Humphrey said.

White asbestos, [chrysotile] is the most common form of asbestos used in the last few decades and, he says, people's perception of white asbestos should change.

Australian professor and asbestos expert, Bill Musk, said research carried out by him and other specialists examined the relationship between exposure and disease.

White asbestos (or chrysotile) was commonly used in building products such as super six roofing and thermal, electrical and acoustic insulation between the 1940s and 1980s. Earlier this year it was found to have been used as an acoustic insulation material in KiwiRail's Chinese made DL locos.

**Lung cancer risks for smokers increases if they are exposed to white asbestos.**



(r) The 'witches brew' cleaned from the panels and (above) Wellington LE Brent Bevan masked and ready for anything.

He said that so far they have been unable to identify a level of exposure below which there is no risk of developing asbestos-related diseases, particularly malignant mesothelioma. In other words there is no known safe level of exposure to white asbestos.

## Changing regulations

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recently said there are about 300 premature deaths each year in NZ from asbestos exposure.

The NZ Regulations for work involving asbestos are currently under review. It is likely the new regulations will better reflect the Australian standards and will include a reduction in the exposure limits and more prescriptive controls over managing asbestos. The new regulations are scheduled to be in place by April 2015.

## Banning asbestos

Since 2013 Australia has banned all asbestos-containing material being imported into the country. The Australian Government introduced prohibitions on all imports, exports and new uses of asbestos and asbestos-containing products.

The RMTU supports the CTU campaign to ban the importation of asbestos from NZ and create a plan to eradicate existing asbestos from the built environment. To support the CTU campaign go to [www.nzctu.org.nz](http://www.nzctu.org.nz)



# NMC supports port brothers

In a remarkable about turn, Prime Port members are watching the dust settle on the debacle that was the re-structure that never happened. After embarking on a process to give all RMTU members the sack and make them redundant, outsourcing most of its work to two wholly owned subsidiaries of Port of Tauranga: (Quality Marshalling (QM) and Timaru Container Terminals Ltd) Prime Port scrapped its plans and CEO Jeremy Boyes quit his job.

Since the U-turn, QM has been aggressively recruiting, in Timaru and elsewhere and some of our members have taken up the opportunity. We're looking at having a collective agreement for them.

Obviously there is a need for more workers in Timaru with the projected growth in volume as a result of the Port of Tauranga-Maersk-Kotahe deal, and QM is looking to employ them. This is another headache for Lyttelton Port which pays lower wages at their inland port in Woolston and faces losing workers to Timaru.

So, watch this space, because there are interesting times ahead. 🌐



*Whilst in Timaru national president Aubrey Wilkinson, rail I&E members Brad Eason, John Searle, Vic Paea, and NMC SI port rep Andy Kelly visited the rail branch.*

## Small hut, big problems

**W**HAREROA staff have been complaining about the state of the Fonterra milk hut they use during the milk season. It has no running water, no air conditioning, is barely

big enough to accommodate them and is now full of holes. Last season rats found their way, liked what they found and stayed – even the dead ones lodged in the walls now emitting a powerful odour. Complaints to Fonterra resulted



*Some interior photos of the inadequate accommodation.*

in holes being punched through the walls to locate the rotting vermin. KiwiRail say it's not their property so they can't/won't do anything while it seems beyond New Zealand's biggest company to solve. Workers forced to use these salubrious quarters have given the company a deadline: come October 6 and the beginning of the season, they will take industrial action until the hut is improved to a satisfactory standard.



## ARE YOU A MEMBER?

### NZ Harbours Superannuation and KiwiSaver Schemes



The NZ Harbours Superannuation Scheme is open to all port workers.

The NZ Harbours KiwiSaver Scheme is open to port workers, Rail & Maritime Transport Union members and their families.



The Schemes have an external administrator and contributions are invested by four top-rated fund managers.

Download a copy of an Investment Statement and Application Form at:

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





# Shoddy work & exploitation claims

**W**ORK on 500 faulty Chinese-built rail wagons began in Picton's repair yard last month. The work is allegedly being done at no cost to KiwiRail as they are still under warranty, so CNR Corporation, the Chinese company which built them, are rightfully picking up the tab.

The *Marlborough Times* wrote that CNR sent 12 staff to Picton to carry out the repair work and, alongside a team of translators, will work under the supervision of KiwiRail's mechanical team. They are repairing two a day currently but plan to raise that rate to three or four a day.



*Leaning gently against a Chinese-built wagon in Picton are (l to r) Delegate Chris McMahon, team leader David Muir and mechanical engineer Peter Dodd.*

The wagons have only been in NZ since 2011.

KiwiRail is using the repair work programme to also upgrade brake components on the wagons, to allow them to carry heavier loads – up to 64 tonnes from 56 tonnes.

"The wagons were problematic since they first arrived," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "The original problems were around shoddy welding rendering them unsafe and dangerous."

Unfortunately, the government and KiwiRail leadership chose the quick and cheap option to get them built offshore instead of utilising Kiwi skills and expertise at Hillside Workshop which they left to rot and disappear."

According to a story by Gordon Campbell there are also serious problems relating to 'flat' wheels brought on by a braking system not working efficiently. A similar problem was encountered in early wagons built at Hillside but they solved it and it hasn't reoccurred on those wagons. He also hints at a third problem but couldn't get any details.

In an editorial *The Otago Daily Times* strongly disagreed with decisions to send construction work overseas for a price of \$49 million rather than having the work done at Hillside and Lower Hutt. They wrote: "It is certainly relevant to query the overall costs - both short and long term. After all, the contract was originally awarded because of cost savings, with KiwiRail and the Government saying New Zealand-built wagons would be anything from 25% to 40% more expensive than their outsourced equivalents."

It further asks if the "attraction of cheaper wages and materials come at the cost of jobs, businesses, skill losses, increased welfare payments and regional economic prosperity?"

And finally they said that if KiwiRail continues to hide the costs of repairing the wagons (and the new DLs) "New Zealanders, including those in the once-proud manufacturing sector, and those in Dunedin who lost skilled jobs with Hillside, will continue to ask questions about whether the tradeoff has been worth it".

## Chinese workers underpaid

**C**HINESE workers assisting with the removal of asbestos from DL locos at KiwiRail's Hutt Railway

Workshops are allegedly being paid well below the minimum wage.

The RMTU has joined the call for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MOBIE) to investigate these allegations which first came from Hutt

South Labour MP Trevor Mallard who claims they are being paid as little as \$3 per hour.

"This is the latest chapter in the sorry tale of procuring rolling stock from overseas," said RMTU acting general secretary Todd Valster.

He added that the procurement process was "badly botched" and disadvantaging NZ manufacturing.

"Not to mention the string of problems associated with these products."

The locos were found to be riddled with asbestos and were taken out of service while remedial work is done to make them safe. The Chinese workers were flown in to do the work.

Valster says that further rumours suggest they are being paid US\$40 per day.

"If either of these are true this is rank exploitation and should not be happening in New Zealand," he said.

He said he believes the Chinese workers in Picton doing remedial work on flat bed wagons are also underpaid.

In the final analysis, he said, New Zealanders are paying the price for Government failure to support quality-built New Zealand-made rolling stock.



*Chinese engineers check overheating problems on the DL.*



*KiwiRail CEO Peter Reidy addresses the RMTU negotiations team.*

## Progress in collective agreement

**T**HE RMTU and KiwiRail advise that since the Union's bargaining notice was received by KiwiRail on 6 May 2014, KiwiRail and the RMTU have met on two occasions. During the first meeting in May Stephen O'Keefe from Finance and Corporate gave the RMTU wider negotiation group an overview of the current financial state of KiwiRail. A robust question and answer session followed. The RMTU wider negotiation group comprises all union nominated members of the five joint KiwiRail-RMTU Industrial Councils (freight, Interislander, mechanical, passenger and I&E). The RMTU presented its claims for the renewal of the collective agreement and following questions and answers to clarify and explain the claim. Meanwhile, KiwiRail

requested time to give full and meaningful analysis and consideration to the claims before the parties met again.

On 2 July 2014 the parties negotiated, agreed and then signed the Bargaining Process Agreement (BPA) as required by the Employment Relations Act 2000. During the second meeting KiwiRail tabled the costing of the RMTU claims and their claims or 'issues' for discussion during this negotiation. The parties then attempted to get closer through further discussion on their respective claims.

CEO Peter Reidy and members of his senior leadership team spoke followed by further question and answer.



*The reps hard at work prioritising the claim.*

Each party has agreed to summarise their respective positions in writing and provide it to the other. No further meetings are scheduled at this stage but it is important to note that the tone of the negotiations have been both productive and cordial. 🇳🇿

## Showing solidarity with other unionists



**S**TRIKING First Union members were joined on the picket lines by members from the RMTU, EPMU and Unite. These union brothers are tanker drivers employed by Toll and took this action to resolve their collective agreement.

Tactically this was well organised and very successful; it was

well supported by passing motorists with many driving away without purchasing fuel.

Solidarity between the unions is a great experience with a far greater appreciation from those on strike, who achieved a good settlement.



# RMTU's H&S training

**I**N-HOUSE health and safety rep training has been carried out at the Woburn Training Centre in Lower Hutt and Westfield in Auckland. RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher facilitated the two two-day stage 1 courses using the NZ Council of Trade Unions, WorkSafe reps introductory training programme.


The stage one course aims to give H&S reps the skills to carry out their rep role, including knowledge of the legislation, the process for managing hazards and working in good faith with the employer to resolve issues. Participants who have completed stage one can choose to apply for the Unit standard 20198: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the health and safety representative in the workplace.

Leigh Bush from the Westfield container terminal site said the training was delivered with a KiwiRail spin. "We were able to discuss everything in relation to our industry

and be with our fellow KR workers from different fields", she said.

Anton Moses, Wellington KiwiRail track maintainer said the course "was a real eye opener" and he understands his role (as an H&S rep) a lot better following the training. Anton said: "after stage one training I wanted to know more" and he has recently completed

stage two and is also completing the unit standard 20198 qualification.

The RMTU will continue to work with local KiwiRail business units at their in-house rep training with a minimum of 12 participants per course. In remaining areas reps who require stage one training are encouraged to register their interest on the NZCTU's WorkSafe website: 

[www.worksafereps.org.nz](http://www.worksafereps.org.nz)



## Delegate training seminars – Wellington



*Four one day, stage 1 delegate training seminars were run in the Wellington RMTU office in July. There was a great range of delegates from many different sites and sectors. Feedback on the training was positive and we look forward to these delegates putting their training into action.*

## Donations



*Sarah Helm, general manager of the Green Party receives a \$10K cheque from the RTBU.*



*Labour Party president Moira Coatesworth receives a \$20K cheque from the RTBU.*

## Labour Party Congress

"I really enjoyed attending the Labour Party Congress," said Ka'isa Beech. "It was good to learn about the campaign, hear from both old and new candidates and to learn more about Labour's policies."

One of the highlights of the event was a very powerful speech by Helen Kelly who said: "This election could not come soon enough!"

She described how the Government only responded to issues of health and safety in the forestry industry after the pressure of a long campaign from the union movement. Her



*(l to r) Andy Kelly, Howard Phillips, Mel Te Pou, Ka'isa Beech and Julia Harrison at the Labour Party Congress.*

speech helped to illustrate the ongoing relevance and need for unions, how the National Party is undermining the role of unions and health and safety in the workplace, and how this election could not come soon enough! 🇳🇿



## Fond farewell for proud Union member

**D**AVE MCDONALD, security officer at LPC, celebrated 40 years of union membership on July 8. The Lyttelton branch gifted the very practical Dave petrol and supermarket vouchers.

In response Dave wrote: "It is with great appreciation that I received the very kind words and gifts from the RTBU. They were

unexpected but very much appreciated thank you. I have been a proud member of this union for 40 years and have had somewhat rocky times but the Union has been there to support me during those times. I must be, by now, running out of credit for all the help I have gotten over the years." [Ed: not yet Dave - but getting close!] 🇳🇿



# A worker who didn't come home

**A**LLAN [POM] HENDRY, a Liverpooldian, was a career railwayman who worked as a shunter and guard mainly on the West Coast, Ross, Otira, Greymouth and Hokitika before the big move to Christchurch.

Pom literally ended his days on the job.

When working as yard foreman on the midnight shift he was checking wagons on a just-berthed train in the Middle Yard. Unbeknown to him, as he walked the ballast in the dark alongside the rake, the front of the train had been cut off and was being pushed back up Weighbridge Road. Pom was walking on the Weighbridge Road as he checked for the numbers. He neither saw nor heard the wagons coming – or the ambulance's too-late siren. This was on November 25, 1987 and his daughter, Carolyn Hendry, was 12 years old.

Carolyn and her sister (Anna Taylor) met Paul Corliss and a few of their father's old railway mates at the annual Workers' Memorial Day commemorations held at the Reserve behind the old station (which is now demolished, post-earthquake).

As the crowd of around 40 people huddled under their umbrellas in the pouring rain, she listened to stories of others workers who had been killed at work – other



(above) Alan [Pom] & Helen Hendry (r) (l to r) Paul Corliss, Ian Wilkie, Carolyn Hendry, Ian Stewart and Bob Ewing at the Heathcote Valley Inn, May 2014.



fathers, brothers and sons who had not come home. At first she didn't understand why much of the talk was about legislation, the need for change and the political will to pursue it. She certainly understood the 'Honour the dead' part, and soon she started to understand the 'Fight for the living' aspect too.

To understand that the tragic deaths of such as Pom were not to be in vain, and while workers and bosses could make a big difference to health and safety, there will always need to be over-arching legislative support that provides the boundaries and enforces regulations which say human life is more important than profit or short-term efficiencies. If a job wasn't able to be carried out safely then it wasn't worth doing at all.

Her father's death has affected her life ever since that tragic day. The trauma lives with her, to the point where many of her childhood memories of her dad are locked

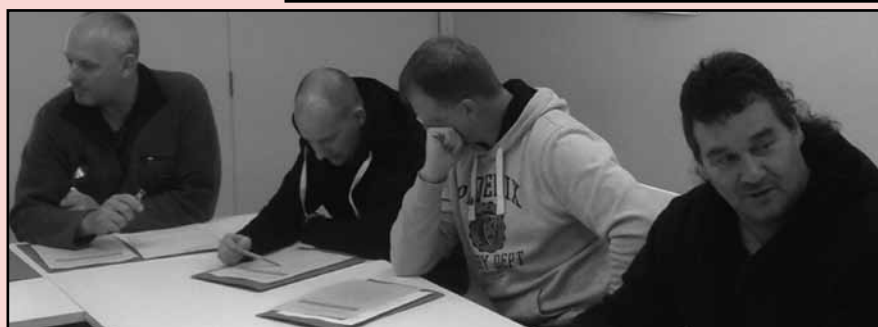
or spirited away. This was her motivation for a recent meeting at the Heathcote Valley Inn. Carolyn had arranged to meet with Ian Wilkie (an RMTU life member and previously a shunter and guard – now retired), Bob Ewing (a railway union delegate, shunter, guard and passenger train manager – now retired), Ian Stewart (a current RCO and team leader of well over 30 years and an RMTU delegate) and Paul Corliss (an RMTU life member and previously a shunter). Among the laughter and sadness of tall stories told and the explanations of the dangers of railway work, some of the gaps began to be filled.

Nearly three decades have passed since Pom failed to come home from work – and the price is still being paid. The sadness doesn't fade and the RMTU's Safety First lessons are still being taught. Every Workers' Memorial Day the same refrain is stated: Honour the dead; Fight for the living. 🇳🇿

– Paul Corliss

## Limited vision

'Line of sight' and 'at or near the head of the movement' were hot topics at Middleton Yard when members demanded clarification of their obligations in a high traffic environment with geographical factors that limited range of vision. A combined RMTU-Kiwirail group came up with the required solution – increased manning where necessary and a local operating instruction to clarify members' obligations. Thanks to Ian Stewart, Alan Robertson and John Reizinger for representing the RMTU membership. 🇳🇿



## Road and rail meeting



ITF road and rail section steering committee met in June 2014 at Unite's Conference and Training Centre, Esber Place, Surrey.

## Casual workers and the importance of being vigilant

**I**NCREASINGLY, employers around the country are using 'casual' workers. This includes in the ports. Over time, if the workers' hours increase, as a matter of law, they can morph from casual to permanent part time. This can be very important in terms of a worker's rights to receive actual paid holidays (rather than an 8% pay-as-you-go payment) and to receive other benefits such as alternative holidays for working on a public holiday. Because of the work of a very committed group of RMTU members at the Port of Tauranga, led by Craig Malpas, we have been able to secure a clause in the collective agreement which provides far greater protection for workers who morph from casual to permanent part time. Be vigilant – if you think you are in this situation, and are no longer genuinely casual, contact the Union. 🇳🇿



The Malpas team – (l to r) Lawyer Geoff Davenport, Phil Spanswick, Craig Malpas, Barry Huxtible, Kelvin Martin, Wayne Butson and Peter Cooper.

## Give a lei and have your say!

**T**HE NZ CTU Komiti Pasifika 'Lei your local' campaign was created to promote and increase Pasifika participation in the 2014 General Election. The campaign challenged members to meet any local MP and give them the Pasifika equivalent of a handshake with the hope that this would provide an opportunity to meet and educate MPs and candidates.

They have created a Facebook page to encourage citizens to create a worker friendly government who will put the welfare of its people first over profits. Manuia le aso!

Check out their website:  
<http://on.fb.me/1APpjXO>



## Speak up – stop bullying

**A**FTER donning a pink wig or poncho on the waterfront and having your photo taken, any other collective action is a piece of cake.

On Friday 23 May workers across Lyttelton Port took a stand and said, "No more" for International Pink Shirt Day focussing attention on bullying.

For many workers across many industries workplace bullying is an everyday event – and not just in the workplace. Bullying happens at school, at home, on the street, in aged care homes and more and takes many different forms. Nowhere, ever, is bullying ok.

MUNZ and RMTU stand together in opposing bullying.

H&S reps John Healy and Simon Gillard at the Inland Port were among those taking a stand on Pink Shirt Day – a day also supported by the ITF (International Transport Workers Federation) who encourage union workers around the world to build stronger, better societies and aim to leave a positive legacy for our children.

Even a small action makes a difference, as Edmund Burke said: All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.

If he wrote that quote today he may have said: All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men and good women do nothing.

Like a bird we fly best with two wings. Together. 🇳🇿



# ELECTIONS '14

## Time bomb under CAs

**Changes to the Employment Relations Act (ERA) planned for earlier this year, will be back on National's agenda if they are re-elected.**

**T**HE National Government will bring back its plans to change employment law if they are returned to power. Those changes will result in lower wages. The Government and its wealthy cronies think that is a good thing.

Low wages have already pushed thousands of Kiwis to Australia and if this bill is passed it will now push many workers into poverty. National's 'cheap labour' option is the wrong way to go.

The CTU believes government needs a completely new direction.

The proposed changes attack collective bargaining because the government and its rich company cronies know very well that collectivised workers gain better pay deals than those without. Incidentally, those improvements also help to raise the bar for non-union workers too. National's answer is to undermine that very process.

The original ERA says it supports collective bargaining. New Zealand agreed to

international conventions promoting collective bargaining. But National's proposed changes to the Act do the opposite.

The three worst proposals in its intended changes are:

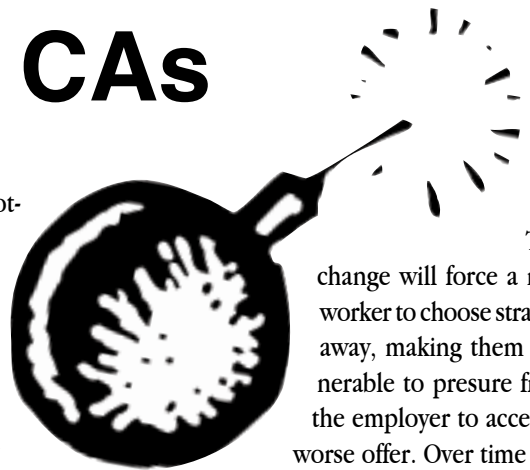
- **It allow employers to end negotiation when they like.**

Currently the law requires that employers conclude a process of collective bargaining unless there is 'genuine reason, based on reasonable grounds, not to'. In the recent Ports of Auckland dispute this is what stopped the company's plan to sack all its workers during bargaining.

This change will let employers say they have had enough of bargaining at any point and there will be nothing workers can do. Equally employers will be able threaten to give workers' jobs to someone else while they are bargaining to force them to agree.

- **It removes protection for new workers.**

Currently a new worker in a workplace with a collective employment agreement is automatically employed on the basis of that collective agreement for their first 30 days of employment. It protects them from being offered inferior terms and conditions to everyone else.



This change will force a new worker to choose straight away, making them vulnerable to pressure from the employer to accept a worse offer. Over time this will undermine everybody's

terms and conditions. In fact, the Cabinet paper recommending these changes, signed by the Minister of Labour, says they "will enable employers to offer individual terms and conditions that are less than those in the collective agreement".

- **It makes collective bargaining more difficult.**

One change will allow employers to opt out of multi-employer bargaining (where one collective agreement covers lots of different employers – like the Nurses MECA covering all District Health Boards). Another adds lots of extra rules about going on strike. There is also a change to allow employers to make pay deductions for a partial strike, when you are still working but refuse to do any part of your normal work.

All these changes will discourage workers from getting involved in collective bargaining and from being part of a union. 🇳🇿

WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD 1,000,000 VOTES MAKE?

LET'S GET  OUT AND



GENERAL ELECTION 3 SEPTEMBER - 20 SEPTEMBER

Authorised by: Helen Kelly, NZCTU, Level 7, 178 Willis St, Wellington

Authorised by Wayne Butson, 1 Thorndon Quay, Wellington.

# Whine, whimper or fight back

I am thoroughly brassed off by the one-sided attitude of our media. Everywhere I go people tell me that what they hear on the media is that National will get enough votes to govern on their own so what's the point of them going out to vote? I tell them that the media is deliberately bending our minds. They know they are influential and they like National.

Think of all the cock-ups that National have made in recent months. Think about all their pompous, self-important pronouncements and their lack of care or attention to poor New Zealanders. How much of that is explored in depth in our media? I can tell you – hardly at all. Rather, they would focus on every detail of Labour's hiccups and blow them out of proportion. Key goes on holiday for ten days and it barely gets a mention. David Cunliffe takes a well-earned three day break and they are all over him like a rash.

As RMTU members we are pissed off that Hillside Workshops



**Aubrey Wilkinson**  
RMTU president

got dumped, we are angry that a lot of our work is being contracted out and/or being sent offshore, we are sick and tired of the increasing rate of redundancies and we are thoroughly frustrated at the constant attacks on our wages and conditions.

And we can't see things getting any better under this National government.

I am especially close to the Labour Party and can state categorically that it is mobilising. That it is in our communities, in our organisations and among our workers. The polls are misleading and if we can get everyone to vote we'll prove it. There is no doubt that if all Labour-friendly people actually voted, Labour would govern and lead us to a brighter future.

I urge you, my fellow Union colleagues and workers not to become complacent. Don't leave it to others to decide your country's fate. It is now that we must get moving and rouse enthusiasm among all Labour-leaning people: your families, your relations and your friends. We must decide our own fate and not leave it to those currently in power who have made rules that tilt the balance in favour of their rich friends.

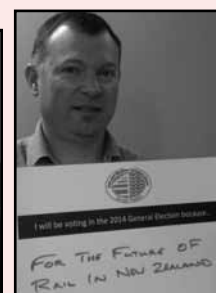
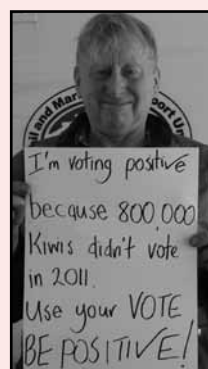
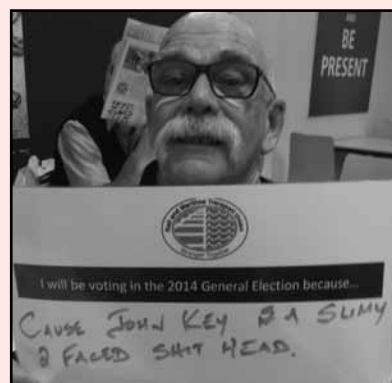
We can whine, whimper or fight back.

All workers should be voting Labour. The missing part is the actual voting. Let's do it, and pass on the message: GET OUT AND VOTE. 🇳🇿

# What's on your mind?

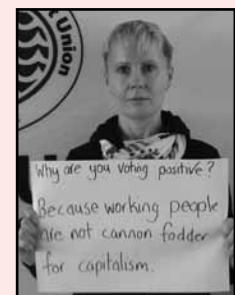
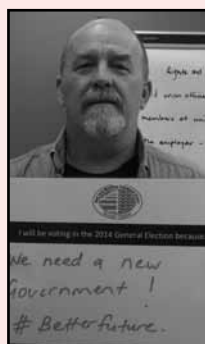
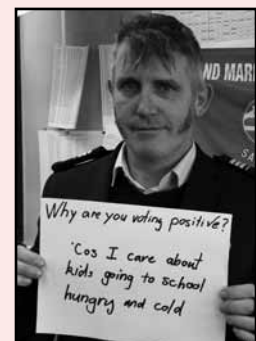
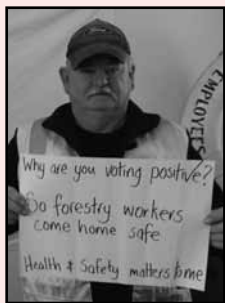
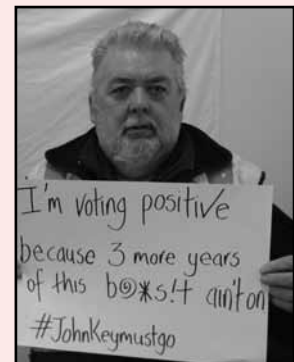
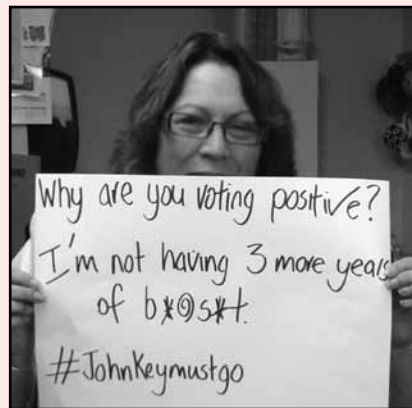
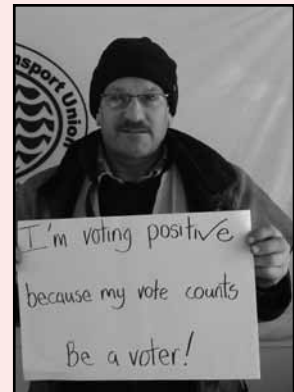
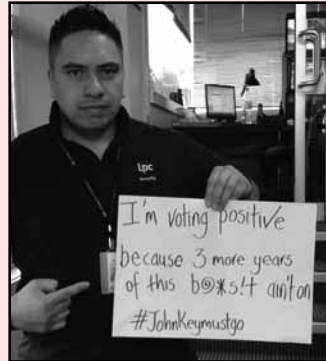
RMTU members were invited to describe what they would be thinking about when they voted in the 2014 General Election. Thanks to everyone who participated. It's awesome to see everyone is thinking hard about the real issues.

The prize of \$100 goes to **SUE LEONARD** whose photo and thoughts are in the red box.





# THINKING ABOUT THE ELECTION



# Labour's work & wages policies

**L**ABOUR recently released its work and wages policies ahead of the general election. It is prefaced by these six promises:

- Increase the minimum wage by \$2 an hour in its first year;
- Set a target of returning the minimum wage to two-thirds of the average wage by the end of its second term;
- Ensure all core public service workers are paid at least the Living Wage;
- Make the Crown a leader in good employment practices and ensure that government bodies only contract with businesses that are good employers;
- Hold a Commission of Inquiry into wages and collective bargaining, and implement its findings to ensure workers get a fair deal; and
- Review health and safety laws and ensure Worksafe New Zealand is adequately resourced.

They also place high emphasis on giving workers a voice saying they are committed to good jobs, decent work conditions and fair wages driven by a high-performing economy. To get there they commit to workers having a voice in their workplaces and industries through collective bargaining and their own, independent trade unions.

"Labour believes that workers need a strong platform of basic standards, including a decent minimum wage, the right to negotiate collectively, health and safety protections, a Living Wage, as well as adequate holidays, rest breaks and redundancy provisions," the policy states.

In the last issue of *The Transport Worker* (page 19) we reviewed Max Rashbrooke's introduction to the Inequality Debate and the analysis which showed how wide – and ever widening – the gap is between rich and poor in New Zealand. Labour has focussed on the same debate highlighting how wage rates last year on average barely keeping pace with the cost of living and that 46% of wage and salary earners receiving no pay increase, the significant reduction in the proportion of economic output going towards wages, the decline in the minimum wage from around two-thirds of the average wage to just 40% by 1999, declining home ownership, the number of wage and salary

earners now reliant on Working for Families to supplement their income (20%) and the 260,000 children, many with working parents, now living below the poverty line.

Inequality, it says, will only be addressed successfully if wealth creation in New Zealand is accompanied by a significantly greater (and fairer) share of that wealth accruing to wage-earners.

## Undermining bargaining

Research shows that roughly 500,000 workers out of a total workforce of 2.5 million have access to collective bargaining. Since 2008, the National government has progressively undermined the effectiveness of unions and collective bargaining as well as removing protections for workers starting a new job.

To lessen the disparity and bring better rewards to workers Labour's programme shifts from low-value raw commodity exports into higher productivity, higher-value production that creates high-skill, high-wage work. This will need more emphasis on education, training and upskilling – vital they say, if they are to lift national income and maintain and improve the standard of living.

On the way they will make changes to the wage-setting system to ensure a fairer distribution and roll back of the growing inequality.

It says the employee voice is vital for high performance success and trade unions are the most effective conduit for that voice. The ability of unions to offer an alternative narrative in a society dominated by a market narrative is a vital element of social democracy and Labour believes that strong, effective unions are important for democracy, economic success and fairer returns to work.

Labour outlined its two-phase plan which comprises a series of goals for its first 100 days and wage-setting/collective bargaining reform designed to delete the negatives of a National's last five years. It will then address structural concerns.


Some of the things Labour will tackle in its first 100 days include:

- Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and then to \$16.25 in early 2015;
- Introduce 26 weeks paid parental leave;
- Set a course to raise the minimum wage to two-thirds of the average wage by the end of its second term;
- Restore workers' right to contest dismissals during the first 90 days of employment by abolishing the current law;
- Scrap youth rates;
- Restore reinstatement as the primary remedy when an employee has been unjustifiably dismissed;
- Restore union access rights;
- Maintain the presumption that a collective agreement will be concluded once bargaining is initiated;
- Ensure fair procedures for multi-employer bargaining;

They will also make progress on providing better protection for workers employed under triangular employment relationships, equalising pay for labour doing the same or comparable work, strengthen the "undue influence" provisions of the Employment Relations Act, increase protection against discrimination on the basis of trade union membership and provide new workers with better access to information about unions.

Labour also plans to reform wage-setting and collective bargaining through a Commission of Inquiry which will consider:

- The recommendations of the 2008 Ministerial Advisory Group report on redundancy and restructuring, with a view to increasing redundancy protection for workers affected by restructuring;
- Measures to ensure that workers employed in precarious forms of employment are given similar rights to those in more traditional forms of employment; and
- Legal rights for dependent contractors, including minimum wage protection, the right to organise and collectively bargain and an effective and cheap disputes resolution procedure.

Reform, revision, change and/or focus will also be applied to the Productivity Commission, health and safety, pay equity and the living wage. 

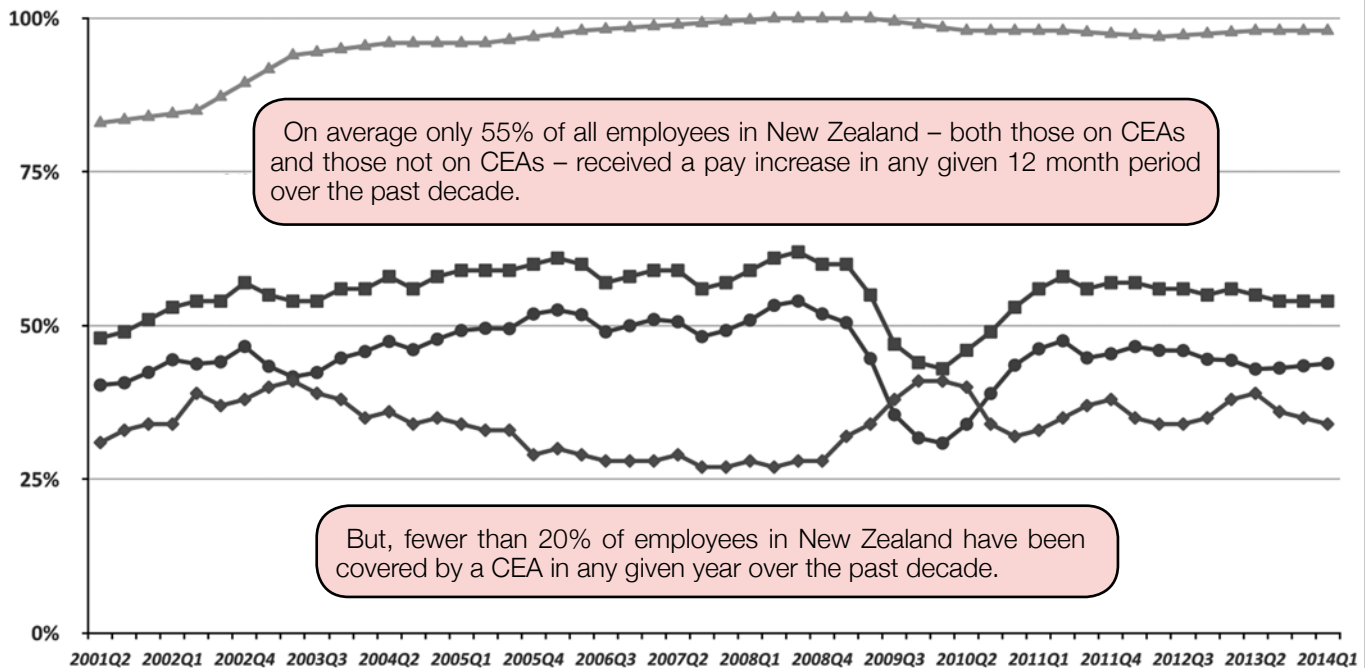
To read the full statement go to:  
[RMTUnion.org.nz/election2014](http://RMTUnion.org.nz/election2014)



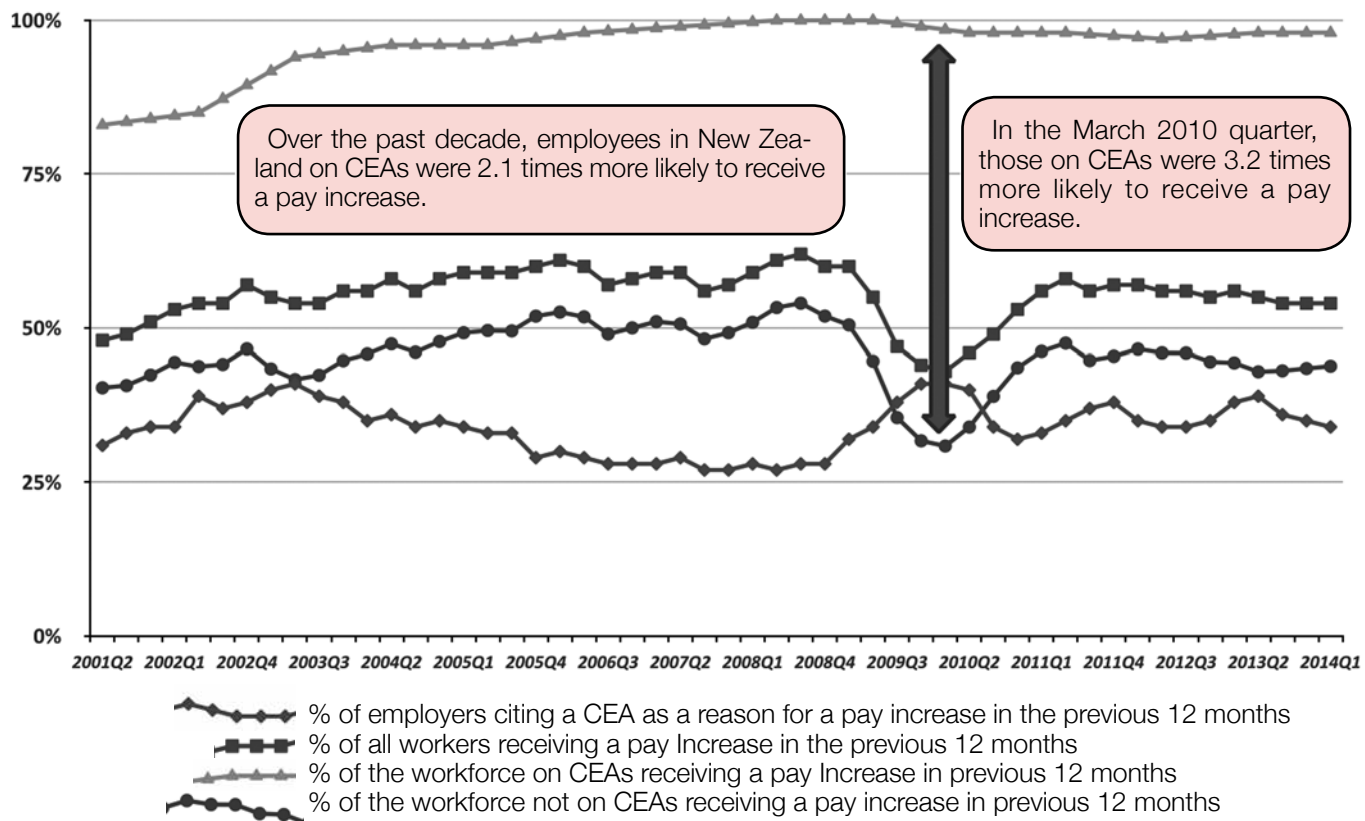
# Reasons and distribution of pay increases, quarterly:

These two slides were used in an employment trends and bargaining seminar recently. They clearly show how collective agreements are so effective for workers and, conversely, why the National government has set its sights on destroying the practice within its first 100 days if returned to government.

## 2001-2013



## 2013-2014



Space precluded printing lengthy answers. The complete text of answers are available at: [rmtunion.org.nz](http://rmtunion.org.nz). Click 'ELECTIONS' button.

# Your Union put 11 questions to five major parties about rail and ports

**Increasing levels of casual work on the waterfront means workers live at the end of a telephone. Does your party have a policy to improve their lot?**

**1**

**Increasing volumes of containers are coming through our ports. Does the government plan to raise investment in rail to accommodate these increased volumes?**

**2**

**Will your party amend the Holidays Act to reflect entitlements for shift workers and if so how?**

**3**

**Will your party support growth of the sector, and if so, how?**

## LABOUR

Labour is committed to better protection for workers and will reform wage-setting and collective bargaining, following a Commission of Inquiry which will include ensuring workers employed in precarious forms of employment are given similar rights including minimum wage protection, the right to organise and bargain and an effective and cheap disputes resolution procedure.

Labour believes a more inter-modal approach to handling future freight growth is needed and will ensure investments are made to achieve the most efficient and sustainable solutions. Will revisit Kiwirail's Turn Around Plan and make it a more realistic and also implement the 'Sea Change' strategy it launched in 2008 to revitalise and transform coastal shipping.

All workers need a strong platform of basic standards, including, a decent minimum wage, the right to negotiate collectively, health and safety protections, a Living Wage, as well as adequate holidays, rest breaks, and redundancy provisions. We will look at the broad issue of employee wages and entitlements through our Commission of Inquiry.

Will first 100 days of the year which involve negative economic growth and structural changes with a Co



## GREEN PARTY

Will improve employment rights and protections for casual, seasonal, fixed term, and temporary workers, and ensure previous service with the same employer is recognised when workers are re-employed. Greens support the retention of legislative provisions giving contracted workers the right to transfer to the new employer on existing terms and conditions for at least 6 months. There also needs to be legislative protection for fixed term workers.

Committed to substantial investment in rail and has earmarked over \$10b for public transport and rail infrastructure from 2015-2025. It will increase rail passenger services, make rail and road access costs fair and equitable, develop 'land port' facilities, support electrification, fund the Auckland City Rail Link, encourage heavy goods are carried by rail, and ensure local suppliers are preferred for production and maintenance of rail hardware.

Support providing when a worker is rostered off for a day that a holiday entitlement is provided on a subsequent day, would add an additional statutory holiday and make Easter Sunday a statutory holiday.

Supports a multi-party approach to provide independent of a dispute the ability and legisla and conc the ability lectively b those who



## NEW ZEALAND FIRST

Change laws to allow individuals to be employed on a permanent 'casual' basis. Train New Zealanders in areas of skill shortages. Ensure that hiring New Zealanders is a priority. Abolish the 'starting out wage' for young people. Review and amend employment laws to ensure that casualization employment practices are fair and just.

Will ensure that no railway lines and strategic infrastructure will be privatised instead will focus on passenger services between the main centres, with connecting coach services to outlying areas. More affordable and with NZ built carriages where possible. Will develop a programme of railways of national importance beginning with NAL, then extending electrification followed by upgraded Cook Strait ferries and new and improved regional lines.

No specific policy on this.

No specific



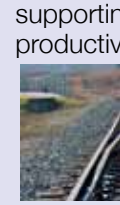
## NATIONAL

Our proposed changes to the Employment Relations Act are aimed at improving fairness, flexibility and choice in the labour market. We will progress legislation amending the employment relations regime including extended flexible working arrangements, improved collective bargaining, and a clearer and more balanced Part 6A. National's focus is on creating more and higher paying jobs for New Zealanders.

The National-led government has invested \$1.042 billion in the KiwiRail Turnaround Plan (K RTP), with the expectation that it will move KR towards full financial self-sufficiency. We expect KR to make commercial decisions on the long-term investment requirements of the network. Consideration of any further investment requests will be made within that context.








The changes National made in 2010 increased flexibility in the Holidays Act. The legislation had long proved difficult for employers to interpret and our changes provided more certainty and reduced compliance costs.

Union me workers. promote flexibility a market, w jobs, incre age innov supporting productiv





## Read what they have to say before you vote.

<p><i>Does your party encourage the growth of strong unions and, if so, how?</i></p> <p><b>4</b></p>	<p><i>Is your party committed to full employment?</i></p> <p><b>5</b></p>	<p><i>Is your party committed to a universal basic wage?</i></p> <p><b>6</b></p>	<p><i>Why should Rail and Maritime Transport Union members vote for your party?</i></p> <p><b>7</b></p>
<p>undertake an initial 'hunting' programme of action, involves rolling back the changes of the last five years and then will address more issues, commencing a Commission of Inquiry.</p> 	<p>Labour has pledged to lower the unemployment rate to 4% by the end of our first term, and keep pushing it lower in our second term.</p> 	<p>Labour supports a Living Wage and will take the lead by ensuring it is applied for all core public servants. As funding permits, it will be extended to help move the wages of the lowest paid, commencing with core public service contracting. Labour will also address pay inequities in publicly-funded aged care and disability care workplaces and for non-teaching staff in state and integrated schools.</p>	<p>New Zealand should be the fairest, most decent society in the world where people are put first and everyone gets a fair go. Right now that's not the way things are going. We believe we can do better. Our vision is to regain our sense of community and get better jobs and higher wages from a high-value economy while building a fair and just society where everyone can thrive.</p>
<p>initiatives that encourage collective bargaining, measures to support independent and de-unionised contractors with access to dispute resolution process, support to bargain collectively, support for minimum pay conditions, and strengthen the role of unions to prevent collectively bargained conditions to be applied to those who are not union members.</p>	<p>Committed to full employment and providing more state assistance for skills' training and apprenticeships, and job search support. Also will help new migrants by providing bridging courses for those with professional backgrounds and will recognise the contribution of volunteering and unpaid work to society and the economy, including the work of parents and caregivers.</p>	<p>Supports public debate on a Universal Basic Income and government funding for detailed studies of its impacts.</p> 	<p>The Green party's transport policy recognises the importance of maritime freight services to New Zealand's economy. A vote for the Greens is a safe vote for new ideas, stable leadership and effective Government which is also has a smarter economy, cleaner environment and fairer society.</p> 
<p>economic policy on this.</p> 	<p>Employment of New Zealanders wishing to work is our first priority. Our vision is of a nation made up of well educated, determined, healthy, and innovative people, with an expanding business programme geared around exports, regional development, job growth and harnessing the natural attributes of the country. We will give priority for jobs to New Zealand workers by a tight immigration policy.</p>	<p>See question 1</p> 	<p>Committed to the expansion of our merchant fleet and will provide a favourable fiscal regime for coastal shipping provided the companies are New Zealand resident, register their vessels here, employ New Zealanders, and commit to officer training. Will establish favourable fiscal regimes for Australasian/Pacific shipping and for international routes, provided they meet the same conditions as above.</p>
<p>Union membership is a choice for all. National will continue to support measures that increase productivity and fairness in the labour market which in turn helps create jobs, raise wages and encourage innovation, and is critical for building a stronger and more resilient economy.</p> 	<p>National wants as many people in employment as possible and to grow the economy which will provide more jobs and higher wages. Last year 84,000 more jobs were added to the economy and our unemployment rate continues to be lower than most OECD countries. Our Business Growth Agenda results so far are reflected in strong growth, increasing employment, and real wages rising faster than the cost of living.</p>	<p>Yes, the minimum wage – which represents a careful balance between protecting low-paid workers, the capacity for businesses to pay a bit more, and ensuring jobs are not lost. It is very generous compared to other developed countries – 50% of the average hourly rate – the highest ratio in the OECD. If employers can pay more, we encourage them to do so. However, to mandate the so-called "living wage" would see jobs lost and businesses go under.</p>	<p>National is committed to sustained growth which will support more jobs, higher wages, opportunities for families and will pay for public services. We will build on the hard work done by every household and business over the past five years. Our country is in good shape. We've made significant progress to deliver more jobs and higher incomes. Our challenge is to muster the capital, the people and the skills to lift the aspirations and prospects of every New Zealander.</p>

	<p><i>What will the government do about the Napier/ Gisborne rail line?</i></p> <p><b>8</b></p>	<p><i>What will the government do to ensure that KiwiRail supports local procurement for future wagons and locomotives</i></p> <p><b>9</b></p>	<p><i>What will the government do to reinvigorate long distance rail passenger trains?</i></p> <p><b>10</b></p>	<p><i>What can be done to bind companies to specific ports?</i></p> <p><b>11</b></p>
<b>LABOUR</b>	<p>Will invest at least \$200 million over four years into a fund that will drive cornerstone growth projects in our regions. Will reopen the Napier- Gisborne line because it could be crucial for the efficient processing of East Coast timber and providing a sustainable future to the East Coast.</p>	<p>KiwiRail's decision to source new rolling stock from overseas cost jobs, led to the closure of Hillside, and worsened our current account deficit. Labour will use its Regional Development Fund to re-open and upgrade parts of Hillside as a South Island hub for heavy engineering and short-run boutique manufacturing. Labour will ensure government bodies buy Kiwi-made whenever it makes sense creating around 2,000 jobs.</p>	<p>Labour bought back the railway system and established KiwiRail providing a real opportunity to build a sustainable nationwide transport network which has been squandered by the National government. Labour will recapture the momentum to ensure rail plays its full part in building a more sustainable New Zealand. We will also investigate Hamilton-Auckland commuter rail and invest in Wellington's public transport, including the Capital Connection</p>	<p>We believe any attempt at port reform must have the involvement of the port owners, the shipping companies, the exporters and the unions to ensure health and safety, environmental sustainability and water quality as well as economic efficiency. As such, Labour will bring together all stakeholders to explore and advance a new model of national co-ordination, to develop a strategic approach to ports and to maximise the effective operations of ports.</p>
<b>GREEN</b>	<p>The Napier-Gisborne rail line is a vital piece of infrastructure and must be reopened and research supports this position. Unfortunately, this evidence has been ignored because it is ideologically set against rail. At the same time billions of dollars are spent on uneconomic motorways. Rail is a smart long-term investment.</p>	<p>Local procurement policies will greatly assist New Zealand businesses and the Green Party will implement smart new procurement policies and standards that will ensure New Zealand businesses get a fair chance at bidding for major new contracts. A preference for New Zealand firms is good for the economy and good for creating jobs and for the wider economic benefits to the economy.</p>	<p>Committed to substantial investment in rail network subject to a comprehensive economic evaluation, including benefits of energy efficiency and reduced emissions and congestion. A strong, viable rail system will be important in reducing carbon emissions and coping with the transport needs of industry. Will also increase commuter and long-distance rail passenger services</p>	<p>New Zealand needs a domestic shipping industry and the Green Party will investigate restoring coastal shipping lanes and encouraging NZ registered, owned and crewed ships. It will also investigate a concessionary tonnage or container tax and/or a container tax as a means of developing the coastal shipping industry and the move under CER to consider trips between Australian and New Zealand ports as a single market.</p>
<b>NZ FIRST</b>	<p>Absolutely committed to full restoration of the line immediately.</p>	<p>Committed to optimising NZ-built rolling stock and would seek to re-establish the Hillside Workshops in Dunedin. Also see answer to question 1.</p>	<p>Refer to answer to question 2.</p>	<p>Would adopt a NZ transport strategy to ensure that an integrated transport system is met. This would require a rationalisation of the functions of NZ ports. Also see answer to question 7.</p>
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<p>The Napier to Gisborne rail line has been mothballed because the service would run at an annual loss of between \$5-8 million per year at current levels of demand. National expects KiwiRail to consider investment there if a revenue generating opportunity presented itself.</p>	<p>See question 2. Placing additional requirements on local procurement would be inconsistent with this, by risking increases in costs.</p>	<p>KiwiRail makes commercial decisions on the operation of long distance passenger trains and government's interference in these decisions would be inconsistent with the operation of KiwiRail as a commercial entity.</p>	<p>The decision of which ports a shipping line will service is a commercial decision made between the shipping lines and ports. Shipping lines would only go where there is sufficient cargo to enable them make a return, and it would be counterproductive for government to attempt to require shipping lines to service uneconomic ports.</p>



# One crisis away from disaster

**T**HE 'Rich List' was published on 1 August and the National Business Review tells us that New Zealand's wealthiest have got richer to the tune of \$3.3 billion in the past year, up from \$47.9 to \$51.2 billion. The threshold for getting on the list is having personal wealth of \$50 million. Our Prime Minister, John Key, is worth \$55 million.

What was absent from any of the articles in the mainstream papers about the Rich List was any analysis of the impact of this on ordinary people.

So how does this wealth increase compare with the net worth of the rest of us? That's surprisingly hard to find out.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the club of the world's 34 richest countries, says that measures of wealth should include financial and non-financial assets such as land and dwellings but that "such information is currently available for only a small number of OECD countries".

The OECD Better Life Index [<http://bit.ly/1zThMHg>] lists average net wealth in New Zealand at US\$7,480.

Whatever the accuracy of these figures, there is little doubt we live in a deeply unequal society when it comes to both income and wealth.

Two rich listers, Kevin Hickman (\$350m) and John Ryder (\$70m) are the founders of Ryman Health Care, an outfit that, amongst other things, runs homes for the elderly and infirm. Ryman pays the people who work in aged care around \$16 - 17/hour. This year its underlying profit increased by 18% to \$118m. This sector is notorious for paying low wages and Ryman's wage rates put them amongst the better payers.

You can draw your own conclusions from the figures, as you will doubtless draw your own conclusions from the evidence you see around you every day of the increasing inequality and poverty in our country.

One phenomena of the last two decades has been the increase in the 'working poor'. Poverty is no longer the preserve of the unemployed, the sick and the elderly, we have increasing numbers of working poor in New Zealand; people who are often work-

ing more than one job to try and make ends meet and who are dependent on benefits like Working for Families' tax credits to pay the food and power bills.

One myth is that the poor, whether working or not, are responsible for their own plight. According to this theory, they are feckless, lazy spendthrifts who spend what little they have recklessly on gambling, booze and fags and do nothing to better themselves. This conveniently ignores the fact that poverty in New Zealand was very rare before the abandonment of the policy of full employment, the demolition of workers' rights, and the erosion of free education and health care by successive governments in the 80s and 90s. It's fascinating the way we use mental gymnastics to explain poverty like it's a force of nature – something that's regrettable but inevitable. Take the term 'child poverty' – well worth ringing our hands over – but the very phrase demonstrates a poverty of thinking. There aren't too many poor children in Fendalton and Khandallah.

Most of us depend on wages for our income and those of us who are lucky enough to own any assets, usually the family home, depend on those wages to pay for them. Real wages in New Zealand, as in much of the OECD, have stagnated since the 1980s. Across the OECD, household debt has increased and asset price inflation - which increases our wealth on paper if we own our home - has slowed down since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and the subsequent long recession since 2008-9. New Zealand has managed to avoid the worst of the GFC and its aftermath, but more by good luck than good management.

And of course, since the Employment Contracts Act of 1991, and the consequent reduction in union power, the reason for the stagnation in our wages has been the reduction in collective bargaining for most wage earners. Fewer than 20% of New Zealand workers are covered by a collective agreement and, even allowing for the fact that the boss passes on the benefits of union-won terms and conditions to freeloaders, employers have the upper hand when it comes to setting wages in this country.

Wages have to be an issue this election. For too long unions have been trying to hold the line and defend hard-won terms and conditions. It's time that workers were able to roll back the power of the bosses.


The increase in casualisation and precarious employment is creating a new class of employees – the so-called precariate – that is growing and has little or no stake in the economic well-being of our society.

One author, Guy Standing, has gone so far as to call them the 'new dangerous class' in that they have nothing to lose if society collapses. It used to be that the working class, or proletariat, was considered dangerous but the post war deal with capital - full employment, universal welfare and a place at the table for unions - put paid to that. Since that deal was torn up by Reagan, Thatcher and, in New Zealand, Douglas, the core working class of predominantly male, unionised manual workers has shrunk.

The challenge is to collectivise the precariate into a progressive movement in the same way the unions collectivised workers in the late 19th and early 20th century. If that doesn't happen, the Rich Listers are on very dangerous ground indeed, though most of them are too daft to realise it.

Where society has come close to collapse since 2009, in Spain, Portugal, Greece and North Africa, the people on the streets have been made up of three groups – the unions, the working poor, and educated but precariously employed youth. There are overlaps between the groups but what has united them has been the economic crisis that they've had to pay for through austerity policies whilst the rich have got wealthier. The danger is that the appeal of far right fascists like Greece's Golden Dawn usurp the progressive agenda.

New Zealand is only one crisis away from that scenario. With most of our eggs in the commodity export basket – predominantly dairy and logs – all it takes is for the commodity prices to tank, or an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and this country would once again be the social laboratory of the world.

This time it might not be in a positive way. 

# Interpreting 'official' statistics

If you're in Government statistics nearly always support your policies. But for those at the bottom of the heap, whether they read them or not, they know how poorly they are treated and how their plight is ignored.

Two recent reports to which the Government will crow about are about household incomes and wages and employment. But the true face of these reports is another matter.

CTU economist Bill Rosenberg says: "The effects on families of the global financial crisis, lack of adjustment of the accommodation supplement and high housing costs show up in the latest Household Incomes Report. The report shows the impact of the recession was felt hardest on the 60 percent lowest income households but recovery for them has been no faster than for others. These lowest income households have had no increase in their take-home incomes after the rising cost of living (CPI) is taken into account between 2008 and 2012, while those with higher incomes saw a 5 per cent gain. This takes no account of the fact that GST hits low income families harder, and that the cost of living for low income families has risen



faster than for those on higher incomes."

Meanwhile CTU president Helen Kelly commenting on the wages and employment statistics says: "They show how the Government has failed workers over its two terms. Unemployment has at last fallen below 6% but at 5.6% and 137,000 people, it is still far higher than the 3.5% in December 2007."

She adds that since National came to power unemployment has been higher than that of Australia for five out of their six years and the number of part time workers wanting more hours has risen from 87,500 to 98,200 over the year. She further castigates the government for its 90-day fire-at-will trials which has done "nothing for young people but has stripped them of basic rights, making them even more vulnerable to exploitation".

Rosenberg points out that housing is taking a deep toll with prices rising and incomes rising much more slowly. "In 2013 almost all of the people receiving the Accommodation Supplement to help with rents were in housing stress, and almost half were spending more than half of their take-home incomes on rent," he said.

Both say that people surviving on benefits are falling further and further behind with their real net incomes falling between 2007 and 2014.

"The average wage, whose rise fell behind inflation in the last quarter, is only 1.4% higher than it was five years ago in June 2009 after taking account of price rises, and middle-income earners are falling behind even the average wage," said Kelly.

"We need a new Government that gives priority to higher wages. That needs a strong rise in the minimum wage and a commitment to real improvements in how wages are negotiated. This Government only promises to strip away further work rights, meaning stagnating wages, increasing inequality, and struggling families. It's time to change the Government." Kelly said. 🌐

## CAPTION COMPETITION

Entries close 28 NOVEMBER 2014.

Winner will be contacted and name and entry published in the DECEMBER 2014 issue of *The Transport Worker*.

Entries can be sent to [admin@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:admin@rmtunion.org.nz)

### Last issue's winner



**"Is that asbestos or milk powder?"**

The winner:  
Anon, Wellington

**WIN \$100 prize**

Make up an appropriate (or even inappropriate) caption for this flattering photo of RMTU South Island organiser John Kerr and win a cash prize of \$100.





# Have a BBQ, it's good for you

**T**HE RMTU brought the food, the EPMU supplied the BBQ and two cooks, and RMTU members from the Lyttelton Port Company (LPC), together with non-union workers at the Inland Port shared a slap up meal with plenty for all – even the nightshift had a good dinner in the fridge waiting for when they came off the job. Some was even taken through the hill to the port side of operations.

Why? Why not? RMTU members at the Inland Port have stood solid for over two years as Union members even though they are yet to share the far better terms and conditions of the collective agreement which their fellow members at the port receive.

LPC has consistently refused to include Inland Port workers in the agreement.

Why would an employer deliberately keep part of its workforce on lower condi-

tions? Why indeed?

An employer may choose to keep wages and other terms and conditions low where they can. When the employer's business is expanding, as LPC's is (they recently bought 60 hectares of land at Rolleston to develop another inland port), the more workers you have on lesser terms and conditions the better your chances of eventually knocking over the higher terms and conditions, thereby lowering the wage bill for your whole operation.


Having two inland ports gives the employer options in an industrial dispute. If there are workers who are not part of the same collective agreement they can be forced to work while other workers are taking industrial action putting a big dent in any industrial action hurting the employer.

The employer can use an inland port

to go around a wharf based port – as we saw in the Ports of Auckland (POA) dispute. POA trucked containers to Hamilton Metro Port where the workers had to work the containers, put them on rail and send them to Tauranga to be shipped.

Workers are not a cost, they are an investment. The only thing most of us have to trade is our labour for wages. The only way we get the best deal for this trade off is by being organised and collective.

RMTU members on both sides of the Port Hills understand the importance of being collective and of standing together to protect us now and into the future.

An army marches on its stomach and as this army gets ready to march into collective bargaining, shared kai is a good way to start. 

# Helping refugee children

**L**AST month the RMTU received the grateful thanks for its contributions from the leaders of a small school on the Thailand-Myanmar border town of Mae Sot catering for children of Myanmar refugees seeking employment at Thai factories located there.

For the last two years the RMTU has provided support for Parami Learning Centre through UnionAID. Its funding has helped them employ extra teachers and provide safe transport to and from school. The funding meant many more


children could stay on at the school and helped extend their classes to encompass years 9 and 10 besides helping improve the school's curriculum and performance.

To give members some idea of the work the school has achieved with UnionAID (including RMTU) assistance here are some facts from the school's latest report for the 2013-2014 academic year:

- the school now has a total of 567 students and 30 teachers;
- it offers primary and secondary education as well as nursery classes;

- in 2013 the school offered grade 10 with six students;

- 70 students live at the school fulltime;
- teachers receive 5,000 baht/month (\$185) but want an increase to 7,000 baht;
- the RMTU contributed the 250,000 baht (\$9200) last year for transportation;

The school continues to grow and school buildings are needed to accommodate that growth. The RMTU is keen to assist but will do so with UnionAID advice and guidance. They are our local experts. 

## Unions have a long tradition of international solidarity.

Becoming a Kiwi Solidarity member is a modern way of expressing that solidarity and helping vulnerable workers in developing countries in our region get a fairer deal.

### Sign up to UnionAID today

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

tel: 04 385 1334 (ext 810), fax: 04 385 6051, write: P O Box 6689, Marion Square, Wellington, email: [unionaid@nzctu.org.nz](mailto:unionaid@nzctu.org.nz)  
Or phone 0900 UNAID (0900 862 43) to automatically donate \$30.



# TKM hui at Upper Hutt

By Sam Kahui

**T**HE KUPENGA MAHI (TKM) held its four-day Hui A Tau celebrating its 25th anniversary at Orongomai marae in Upper Hutt in June.

TKM is the rail industry Maori network formed at Wellington Tranz Metro in 1989. Its membership is drawn from past and present employees of KiwiRail, Toll NZ, their predecessor companies and the families of those employees.

Thursday evening began after dinner with a whakawhanaungatanga – where we connect by listening to each other's pepeha. Where we come from, our mountain, river, waka, iwi, hapu and marae.

On the Saturday morning we unveiled the first of three carvings commissioned by KiwiRail to celebrate the contribution of rail and railway workers over 150 years.

Following the unveiling, hui attendees visited train control, Tranz Metro EMU service depot; or the Memorial Garden at Hutt Workshops to view the refurbished Jack Neha memorial. Following which some went on to Taita Lawn Cemetery to visit the grave of TKM member Putu Paraone Roger Manukau who passed away last year.

The hui reconvened that afternoon to receive our manuhiri (visitors) and were treated to presentations by Liz Mellish of the Wellington Tenth Trust and Rebecca Beals of KiwiRail who gave an overview of the resource management processes and their obligations. RMTU national president Aubrey Wilkinson and a number of RMTU port members also joined us.

Saturday we welcomed KiwiRail CEO Peter Reidy, GM I & E Rick Van Barneveld, Rob Gordon, Robin Scott, Leonie Blucher, Michele Burton and Caroline Haley now with Air New Zealand, and others.

Robin Scott, project manager KiwiRail I & E, spoke about a recent project involving the replacement of a number of bridges over the Waikato River – a river of significance to local iwi where many of their warriors met their demise during the bloody battle of Rangiriri. TKM members Ray Brown and John Marsh were thanked for their assistance in building relationships with Waikato. Due to their development he said, communications with Waikato iwi

have strengthened and KiwiRail are now working with them on a number of initiatives.

Andrew Baker, cultural development manager for Air New Zealand, spoke of how Maori culture is becoming a valued part of their internal culture including the unique stories Maori tell about New Zealand. All of this has its place, he said, in strengthening the Air New Zealand experience and brand.

Charles Ropitini, New Zealand Post, spoke of a number of initiatives embarked on to celebrate the place of Maori in New Zealand. He said these initiatives are likely to better their ability to attract Maori business and make them better employers. He



extended KiwiRail an invitation to join them in their commemorations for World War I, also known as WW100.

Angeline Lambert spoke about the functions and structure of the New Zealand Defence Forces Cultural Groups which includes elements from across the services. Angeline is a member of Te Awhiorangi the Royal New Zealand Air Force MCG.

The final presenter was RMTU delegate Mel Te Pou who spoke about the NZCTU Komiti Pasifika.

The anniversary dinner included guests Dr Murray King, a senior manager in rail when TKM was established and now the chair of the Rail Heritage Trust of New Zealand; Sandra Greig, widow of Tranz Metro LE Norm Greig. Sandra is a longstanding member on the Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Hutt Valley DHB; Vyletta Arago-Kemp, arguably the mother of TKM. Vyletta is the former wife of Peter Tapine who was a significant force in the formative years of TKM and its first MLO.

Peter Reidy shared a summary of his first nearly 100 days since joining KiwiRail and a draft version of a set of company values which were being developed. TKM was invited to contribute to the development of these values.

The final day included a constitutional review, the election of officers, and confirmation of new and experienced hands.

There was just time for some group photos before those needing to make lengthy trips home, left.

The Wellington roopu who organised the hui thanks everyone whom gave their time and participated. 🌐

## Mel Te Pou was a participant and she makes these observations:

- What an awesome four days of celebrating 25 years Te Kupenga Mahi in rail.
- All sectors were represented – Metro, freight, track, port, Interisland and Toll plus three generations of whanau from Taranaki.
- Amazing guest speakers from KiwiBank, Air NZ and KiwiRail CEO Peter Reidy who enthralled participants.
- Suffice to say Maoridom is definitely alive and vibrant with protocols in place to ensure that rights and rituals are adhered to, liaisons strengthened and the passions for all things Maori are valued and celebrated. The carving is a tribute to this.
- A moving tribute to the memory of the late Peter Tapine brought a tear to ones eyes. Memories recounted were abundant with warmth, aroha and much laughter.
- To his mum Tania Haraki he said: "This is just like family" – I couldn't have said it better myself.



# Hazel Armstrong's award

**I**N May this year more than 500 people gathered at Auckland's Skycity Convention Centre to celebrate the finalists and winners of the 2014 New Zealand Workplace Health & Safety Awards.

The champagne flowed as the RMTU helped celebrate with Hazel Armstrong with whom the Union has worked closely for 30 years. Hazel won the prestigious Safeguard Lifetime Achievement Award for her tenacious advocacy for workers' health and safety and improved access to the ACC.

Hazel, who is currently supporting the RMTU with its submission on the new health and safety and work legislation, started out as a health and safety advocate within the union movement. She has been instrumental in developing the WorkSafe reps and health and safety rep training material which the CTU supplies. Over 50,000 H&S reps have received the training to date.

She has been a member of the board of ACC and, since then has been spokesperson for the ACC Futures Coalition, a lobby



group which aims to keep ACC legislation in line with the original principles laid down by the late Sir Owen Woodhouse.

In 2000 she was involved in submissions to the ministerial enquiry into TranzRail, and more recently chaired a working party reviewing the safe working procedures in the Otira tunnel.


She has written two small but hard hitting books, one on the ACC scheme called 'Blood on the coal' and a second on railway safety called 'Your Life for the job'.

In 2013 she authored a submission to the United Nations alleging ACC was discriminating against hearing loss claimants by introducing a 6% threshold of hearing loss required before a claim can succeed.

This year she has been appointed as one of three members of the independent enquiry into forest safety which will make practical recommendation to improve health and safety of forestry workers.

Hazel runs a practice specialising in health, safety and ACC matters and frequently represents RMTU members with their ACC claims.

The RMTU gratefully acknowledges the passion and commitment Hazel brings to supporting its members and workers in New Zealand as a whole.

The RMTU also celebrated the nomination of Paul Dennis from Lyttelton Port Company for the category of 'Most Influential Employee'. Paul was nominated for his role as H&S rep and delegate at the port. 

## AROUND THE BRANCHES

**T**HE branch is gearing up for the September 20 general election and we will certainly be encouraging members to vote. Regardless of what the polls might show in the media, your vote does count, so please, come election day, get out there and cast your vote. Take your friends, relatives, neighbours and vote for the parties that best support your jobs in the rail and ports industries.

Our AGM will be held on August 26, (time and venue to be confirmed). We


### AUCKLAND RAIL

have Andrew Little from the Labour Party attending and maybe one or two other guests.

With the AGM in mind, the executive would like to thank all the delegates for their work over the past year. There have been many challenges but there have been many good wins as well, which we don't often recognise or celebrate enough. Also, thanks to those who will stand again and for those who may stand as delegates for

the first time this year.

From around our member's companies:


- Kiwirail members are looking forward to progress for the MECA negotiations and what KiwiRail puts on the table;
- Toll members voted to accept a new two year deal for their collective with a 4.2% increase over two years – 2% in the first year and 2.2% for the second; and
- Transdev members continue to face many changes as the fleet transition gains pace with EMUs running on the Manukau line by the time you are reading this. 

### WAIKATO RAIL

**T**HE dispute over ARSH duties on Xmas Day is continuing, with two members still unhappy with their treatment. Our next step could be

mediation. However one outcome of the dispute is the need for the branch and KiwiRail to review ARSH duties and

we now have an agreement to renegotiate such duties.

The long running car parking dispute hasn't been parked up yet, and the branch secretary is waiting for more information from KiwiRail. 

**D**OUG SMITH will retire from his position as branch manager on August 29 after 51 years of service. Doug started on December 18, 1963 as a cadet in Tauranga, based at the depot where the current I&E building is situated. He moved up the ranks by passing his internal exams, and

## BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

mature and two years later back to Rotorua. After the Edgecumbe earthquake Doug was transferred to Kawerau where he con-

was transferred to Rotorua in 1968. This was followed by a transfer to the Tamaki freight depot in Pan-

tinues to be the branch manager.

From day one Doug has been a union member starting off with the Railways Officers Institute and ending with the RMTU.

We wish Doug all the best in his retirement.

The scaffolding issue has gone to the KNIC where it is being worked through and hopefully a positive result will prevail. 🌐

# VOTE FOR A CHANGE

**Q**UALITY MARSHALLING's arrival has been minimised to a certain extent with the majority of C3 members moving over to QM.

The POTL negotiations have come to an end as we have had little to no response to our claims, especially our late claims.

## BAY OF PLENTY PORT

There had been a series of consultation meetings with POTL over introducing a drug and alcohol policy, however at a combined meeting with the Aviation and Marine Engineers Association, Guild and the RMTU the policy was rejected.

The negotiations for the champion col-

lective agreement are progressing slowly.

It is now the third time in my experience on the Tauranga wharf that we have had a downturn in the log industry which has resulted in redundancies. It shows how vulnerable workers are in this industry, from the forests through to transport, marshalling, stevedoring and, of course, the shipping both here and countries such as China, India, Japan and Korea, who import the stuff. 🌐



## \$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.

If you have not filled out a response card, call our freephone for more information NOW!



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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.



**T**HE milk season is just about upon us. It looks like it may be a DL free milk season with the removal of the asbestos taking longer than first thought.

There are a couple of areas here where radio reception hasn't been up to standard. However, to be fair, the company did respond fairly quickly. Te Roti junction between Whareroa and Stratford on the Marton New Plymouth Line was double manned because it didn't meet ATC standards. Repairs were carried out; Les Perrin central region KIC rep came up for radio testing and gave it the thumbs up. Patea is ongoing progress. Yes, the radio transmission has improved but, there has been no radio coverage mapping in this area – or any area – since the radio system was up graded.

How long is too long without a toilet stop being provided? This has long been an issue up here. There are no toilet facilities between Wanganui and Whareroa. Waver-

## TARANAKI RAIL

ley station, now empty, has been talked about as a site but the contentious issue here is the level crossing just south of the station. With more female LEs on the job the issue takes on a higher priority. As one LE from Palmerston north said: "A bear don't shit in the woods and neither will I."

Whareroa staff for years have put up with pretty shitty conditions. The lads have been complaining about the state of the Fonterra milk hut, which has no running water, no air con and isn't big enough to swing a cat. Last season rodents infested inside its walls, died and created one hell of a stink. Complaints to Fonterra resulted in numerous holes being smashed in the walls looking for the dead rotting vermin. Unbelievable situation for New Zealand's largest company who pride themselves on cleanliness. How they could let a situation

like this occur let alone continue defies logic. KiwiRail basically washed their hands of the whole situation saying it was not their property. Well the lads have bitten back. Come October 6, 2014, if there is not a dramatic improvement there will be industrial action taken until the situation is fixed to a satisfactory standard. The situation at Whareroa is not all bad news. Those new sidings will hopefully take the heat off the congestion in the yard.

Kevin Stark is off to Woburn for RCO training.

Stratford is rumoured to be the site of a new Taranaki CT site – good news for Stratford.

The yard lighting at Eltham has come under scrutiny and will be up graded to a decent standard for train shunting in the very early hours. The upgrade will take about a week to complete.

The Taranaki toll depot at the Smart Road yard has a new manager and supervisor. The transition hasn't gone smoothly. There have been accusations of bullying and

# 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**

◀ mistreatment of the staff there. Two long time staff members have resigned. Well, for a depot which you never heard boo from it has certainly blown up lately. The RMTU met with management and discussed the issues and time will tell if things can be put back on the straight and level.

Important designs for us all coming up as a nation: Do we want to continue on the

rocky road we've had for the last few years? We are very lucky we live in a democratic country but we need to encourage the non-voters – the people who supposedly don't give a dam but are quick to react when things don't go their way – to get out and vote. The National Government haven't been shy on their plans for workers' rights who will take one hell of a hit – back to the

bad old days of the 90s. 

**T**HE old issue of the branch manager interfering in the taking of sick leave has raised its head again. It looks like bullying behaviour as the branch manager is not as far as we know a medical practitioner. 

## HAWKE'S BAY RAIL

VOTE  
FOR  
A  
CHANGE

**T**HIS anti-socialistic type of dictatorship must come to an end – and September 20 is the day to do it. We must not lose sight of what the last six years has taken away from us, not just the for unions and the working people, but those who live below the bread line and struggle with minimum wages, sub-standard work conditions and in poverty.

The public has short memory and we have a tendency to forget the most brutal aspects of this government's policies that have impacted, in particular, on those at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder.

We must be clear about what is to come. As with the asset sales: many Kiwis did not approve of them including some National supporters. None-the-less it came to pass. Greed rules and National and its cronies line their own pockets at the economy's expense.

The pending industrial legislation – delayed only because John Banks went to court – will have a real adverse affect for the union movement. This is 'unfinished business' for the National Party and it runs deep within their ethos to surgically remove what is left of the 'good faith' provisions and ham-string long-established union rights.

In terms of asset sales, we have heard that Napier Port will be the possible benefactor from the \$80 million shortfall the Hawkes Bay Regional Council requires to help make the Ruataniwha Dam scheme vi-

## NAPIER PORT

able. Sure enough the whole scheme has come with its controversy, not just from a fiscal perspective but also environmental and the health

of our rivers and wild life.

It must also be noted that the HBRC have indicated there will be no increase in rates to cover the costs of the dam.

The part I find perplexing is if there is to be a share sell down of the Port to meet the cash shortfall how does this fit with Port chairman, Jim Scotland's comments a couple of months back about the Port's debt increasing as a consequence of expansion, development, growth and infrastructure demands. It was indicated, there is the potential to sell down part of the Port to accommodate this progression. In essence, share the debt!

So, it looks like the Port Company may end up carrying substantial debt on two counts. If it is to pick up part of the tab for the dam scheme that burden may restrict ongoing development of the Port itself which paradoxically may impact on the returns to the Hawkes Bay Regional Council.

In addition, if there is a sell down, say of 49%, which could put 49% of the profit into the private sector and 51% to the HBRC, ultimately there may be a negative outcome on rates! Somewhere along the way, all this will come with a cost, which eventually will fall on the rate payer.

The question must be asked of both the directors of the Port and regional councillors how this will work. It would be foolhardy to think they have not discussed such matters. Or are we just being baffled by bullshit as the movers and shakers of the region collude and conspire to enhance the size of their wallets.

We have already witnessed a massive pay increase of \$83,000 to the man running the Ruataniwha project.

Are the regional rate payers ready to sell the crown jewel of their assets?

Inside the gates, we thank Phil Spanwick for his efforts with Napier C3 members currently under pressure due to the fall in log tonnage, which has ultimately affected work hours. For the present, jobs have been maintained by way of restricting the number of hours worked by individuals, to compensate in the man hour reductions posed by C3 management. We are still in early days for our members at C3 Napier, in the development of a collective agreement. Hang in there people, this is a process and even harder in difficult times.

The main agreement is due to expire on September 30 so I guess the 60 day notice period will tabled on August 1. Remits are at this time in the making.

Let us all use our democratic right to vote and encourage those that are able to do so. Let's not forget the abysmal track we are currently on and vote for a more socialistically based programme.

Make a positive change. 



**M**AJOR events in Palmerston North lately bare the fruits of unity and should serve as a reminder of the power of solidarity. Together

## PALMERSTON NORTH RAIL

we have made a difference, although we are not out of the woods the road to recovery has started. The branch should be proud of itself for such a fine display of selfless solidarity.

The milk season is upon us again, with both the yard and loco rosters having been posted – and rejected – by the sectors. Our roster delegates have been working extremely hard to clean up the mess created by staff shortages. Whilst loco is nearly at full capacity and shouldn't have too many problems, the yard is seriously short of staff. This is as a result of staff scrambling to leave the 'sinking ship' (the yard) – going to loco, servicing or, sadly, just leaving because of the poor state the yard is in. We have formed a steering committee to sort out the issues and to turn around the negative attitudes and bullying issues we have had and reset the culture. I have heard a lot of positive feedback from the steering committee members about the objectives in achieving this. It is really positive to see that the issues have been recognised by the company and that something is being done. We all live and hope the company will not drop the ball on us again.

The new 1a and b roads in Palmerston North have turned into a nightmare. Engineers have taken it upon themselves to deviate from the agreed plan and are now left with two completely unfit roads entering the milks season. These two roads were created for extra space and to alleviate the congestion in Palmy. This is yet another stuff up in communication. Even the contractors say it's "a cheap and shitty job". The branch and HSAT are working with management to resolve the issues. A classic example of engineers not acknowledging the knowledge the operators have of what they need – a university qualification makes them know better . . .

Congratulations to all our newly certified shunters and locomotive engineers. We have had many new shunters join the ranks and we welcome you into our branch family.

Congratulations to Dylan Elmers on

then went to servicing. He will be well looked after by our engineers and we wish him all the best for his new journey in rail.

Car and wagon has been fighting for months for KiwiRail uniforms to wear under there overalls instead of having to use their own clothing. They have grind spark holes in their overalls, have to work on wet surfaces etc and yet they have to buy their own clothes to wear and damage under their overalls. The C&W delegate and MIC representative have been pushing this agenda for months now and still they are met with no response. Well we say it's about time those arrogant suits come out of their offices and do some grinding in the mud, shit and grease and see how long they like getting their clothes dirty. Is it really that much to ask for? We look forward to all our other C&W, servicing and mechanical brothers jumping on board with us making this happen.

Servicing continue to be under increased stress as the milk season looms. The prospect is of more trains and more locomotives but as yet no recognition of this at all by the company. We would like to see the addition of a servicing and C&W reps on the MIC. With servicing becoming larger we feel it is time they had representa-

becoming our latest mechanical engineer apprentice. Dylan started as a shunter

tion on the council.

On another note, Frank Tavita, TXM from C&W has recently retired. With over 40 years' service in rail Frank has left a huge hole and wealth of knowledge in C&W. His presence and experience will be greatly missed by the team. He has certainly earned a well-deserved retirement and we wish



*A show of solidarity – LEs and shunters unite for a common cause.  
(below) Our youngest activists – Cameron Persson and Chris Carran.*



him all the best in closing the book on his rail chapter and opening a new one with his retirement. All the best Frank from us all in the branch.

The electric depot brothers continue to be magicians and keep our fleet of tired electrics going to grind up and down the trunk. These locomotives have never had a proper rebuild and are in desperate need of it. The company don't seem to see this as viable at the moment. I'm sure everyone in the electric depot would love to see their locos fitted out properly and not with

cheap Chinese crap that blows up every five minutes.

The branch celebrated the "pink t-shirt day" on Friday 23 May. The day is about saying no to bullying and helped create environments where victims can feel comfortable coming forward and talking about it. It was quite funny to see that one of the managers in the terminal was running around wildly with the pictures we had taken on the day saying that it was a slur against him. A guilty conscience?

We are relieved to see progress in sorting out the steam locomotive crewing issues. This does not just affect the 'foamer LEs' among us, it affects us all. These groups want to become qualified 'second persons' in a matter of days – a job that

takes shunters a long time to graduate to after learning all the vital knowledge necessary. They seem to hold us and our skills in contempt by their reluctance to form a working relationship with us. They need to realise there are 4000 of us! One of our veteran steam drivers has just been reported by a volunteer who wouldn't know shit from clay. This is a dangerous situation and needs to be watched. The legitimacy of the complaint is not credible. Black boxes have been pulled but with no RMTU presence (as required) and with no verification we will not accept the complaint. Hopefully by the time you read this the groups will have agreed to using trained staff to man these machines or they will be sitting in there sheds rusting to the rails. Let's hope

they see sense!

Our branch AGM is coming up. Members, please keep an eye out for posters and details. This is your opportunity to stand as a branch representatives.

Also of particular note is September 20th – Elections. Please remember: the future of Rail is under a Labour led government. National will not expand rail, they have no interest in rail and they would probably want to sell it. I ask that all our 4,000+ members vote left – vote for our future, vote for a Labour-led government which will ensure our survival and future prosperity. 🇬🇧

**VOTE FOR  
A CHANGE**

**W**INTER has definitely got us in its grips as we enter the closing stages of the business financial year. This has

been a period of intense activity as projects are rounded off before the bean counters begin sweating as time for the annual report looms.

The DL ACM removal project got underway only a week to ten days behind the original schedule, which was a credit to all involved given the monumental size of the project. (see photos in the last issue) So far two locos have progressed out of the red zone and into the next stages of reassembly, painting, testing and re-commissioning back into service. Final details are being determined to ensure that locos which leave the site are truly fit-for-purpose and, above all else, safe for operating and servicing.

Back in early June, the infamous 'Dr. Bob' (Bob Stacy – GM Zero Harm) made an unannounced visit and inspection. Photos were taken and comments made in support of his drive to raise safety level awareness and lift the level of housekeeping. A formal follow-up report was promised in order to confirm management's commitment to improving the safety culture across the business. We are yet to receive any form of follow-up report – but I'm sure it is coming!

In recognition of safety achievements to date, three of our teams received

## HUTT WORKSHOPS

a lunch and \$100 prezzie cards to acknowledge 12 years lost time injury free. Whilst a small group of the recipients were

office-based, the bulk were from the shop floor so it is indeed a tremendous achievement. Whilst it would be fair to say that a few incidents damn near skittled the record, a pro-active and co-operative effort has produced these fantastic results.

Mid June saw the debriefing of April's leaders forum by our site manager. It was interesting to note that safety and good housekeeping is the CEO's mantra and we are keen to see just how much further we have to go to achieve the new standard. However, we continue to do more with less as we strive to earn our right to grow and remain fit for business. An additional driver of change will be the effort to regain our 'tertiary' status under ACC's Accredited Employer Programme (we were downgraded as mentioned in the last edition of The Transport Worker). There was a recent KiwiRail ordinary safety assessment conducted nationwide so we will eagerly await the formal results of that to gauge whether we're back in the hunt, or not.

Hot on the heels of the safety assessment was an internal audit where that process appeared to be nothing more than an opportunity for jobsworths to visit various sites and initiate remedial actions that

defy common sense. Such acts of madness must be costly to carry out so why on earth are we subjected to this during a difficult period when we are told to tighten our belts? Such actions do little to encourage staff and serve only to perceive audits in a somewhat negative light. Auditors need to build constructive relationships. Failure to do this will undermine the corporate drive towards a one KiwiRail culture.

As you read these notes the KiwiRail MECA renegotiations would've begun and with a bit of luck we may have received a joint update from both parties from which we may have got some idea of how things are progressing. I recall the generic names ('issues') that management indicated would cover their claims, namely productivity, flexibility and efficiency. We are watching with interest.

The test run has taken place of DL locomotive 9187 via the Rimutaka Tunnel to Featherston and back to put it through its operational paces and provide us with performance data as a result of the ACM removal process. The swab and filter test process revealed a presence of asbestos contaminants which dictated the need to re-clean and re-test. This was a bit of a setback. It is fair to say that a s\*\*t load of effort has been put in by both the Union and KiwiRail to get us this far. Site manager Karl Bouterey said the project has been bigger than Ben Hur – a phrase which truly describes its size. The efforts of senior projects manager, Blake Marshall, need to be acknowledged. ▶



He works at the administrative sharp end and is getting a little more grey-haired as time goes on. This DL project has really put everybody to the test in unfamiliar territory and requires multi-party co-operation (KiwiRail, private contractor, temping agencies, equipment and consumables vendors, foreign contractor, WorkSafe NZ, and of course, the RMTU), new safety processes, multi-cultural inter-operability and in-depth problem resolution on the fly – and all against a very very tight business timeframe. This asbestos-related issue has caused the company considerable harm and hardship and we hope that we can pull it back from the brink and deliver most of the locos back into service before the busy season. We also acknowledge the efforts of servicing staff who continue to maintain the existing


locomotive fleet. Well done everybody, your efforts are appreciated.

I'm hoping that the staff engagement survey results have been published. The CEO promised that by the end July they would be known and communicated. Peter Reidy recently appointed Andrew Norton to the position of GM of HR. Andrew came up through the ranks of the union movement so it will be interesting to see how he revitalises the current HR structure as well as exerting his influence on the MECA re-negotiations.

We recently had our quarterly LCC (local consultative committee) meeting with management. In this instance the RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson attended and shared his knowledge, wisdom and experience with us all. The airing of problems

and sharing of thoughts was, as always, a beneficial experience.

We are planning to hold our branch AGM a little later this year so that guests from National Office can attend and drive-home the election message.

Finally, in accordance with past electoral messages of this branch, this is the final 'heads-up': Election 2014 is at hand. Do you want change or are you happy with what you've got economically? YOU, your family, your friends and your neighbours have the power to influence NZ's direction for the next three years. For pity's sake, get out and vote responsibly on September 20! A failure to act may constitute an *actus reus* (Latin for 'guilty act') that could result in an anti-rail/anti-shipping government remaining in power by default. In unity. 

## WELLINGTON RAIL

A stop work meeting was held in Tranz Metro to discuss Mātangi braking issues and the release of the TIAC report into the incident at Melling where a service failed to stop and hit the stop block. A large amount of information was discussed and the feeling of the LE members was that the dynamic brake feature needs to be able to be isolated by the LE by a switch fitting. It is clear that the members now have a lot more

information but it remains with the Company to use this to resolve the issues with braking reliability and train handling.


Time will tell.

More Delegates have been put through the Union's stage 1 delegate training course and it's good to see the wide selection from all the groups attending.

John Fahey retired after giving 51 years of service to the Company, Russell Lepper

retired after 45 years, Barry Cummings, Frank Aleni and Peter Tawera each celebrated 40 years of service, Gus Tiumalu and Ken Tawharu celebrated 20 years and there were also a number of 10 and five year celebrants.

Peter Horne relinquished control of the Taita signal box to Wellington Train Control and has taken up an appointment in Wellington at A Box.

Timely reminder to all that the AGM for the branch is booked in for August 27, 2014. Posters are coming out and all delegates should now have received notification. 

## WEST COAST RAIL

OUR new CEO showed his face in June and we think he liked much of what he saw, if the remarks in The Express are anything to go by. He was impressed by the commitment and professionalism of our members. Now he just needs to sort out the people who purport to be running the company.

The woes of Solid Energy are something we're all feeling here over on the Coast. It seems like it's just one hammer blow after another. It was good to hear in col-


lective bargaining that Peter Reidy believes coal and logs will come back in the next few years – we just need to weather

the storm. At least there has been no knee jerk job cuts in KiwiRail as a response to the reduction in coal production.

We've had a couple of medical retirements we've been working through. It really brings home to us the value of this clause in our collective agreement – something that our predecessors fought for and that

we often only appreciate when we need it.

We also lost a valuable staff member through a foolish mistake by a corporate recruitment advisor – something that led to a bit of a revolt amongst the membership. RMTU national office is assisting our guy and we're hopeful that the matter will be resolved appropriately.

Election posters are starting to appear so don't forget to exercise your right to vote. This government is no friend of working people like ourselves so think hard before casting your ballot and make sure you tick the box for a party that you think will help workers and promote rail. 

**A**T long last the rebuild is starting to show signs of actually rebuilding stuff.

There are even a few bars opening in the CBD. Traffic congestion is still bad but is beginning to abate as roadworks peak.

All this activity means the job market is very tight. There are no shortages of work of any kind. We even heard a rumour that our former branch chair, Buzz Terry, has found a job as a project manager – proof there is life after rail!

The big disappointment is that Environment Canterbury, the regional authority we used to elect before the National Government rode roughshod and appointed commissioners instead who have quashed plans for a commuter rail service from Rangiora into the city. With the ex-Auckland rolling stock and a bit of imagination we could have freed up the traffic congestion on the northern road corridor but that would have required vision and foresight – two commodities sorely lacking in the people running the country.

Let's all get out and vote and change the government.

Back on the front line, we had a revolt at Middleton Yard over the application of the line of sight rule while shunting, which has accelerated a much needed review. Once again, it took the rank and file to make a stand before the heat went on and something was done.

Two lessons from this:

■ The RMTU isn't just blowing hot air when

## CANTERBURY RAIL

■ The yard is so short staffed that the minor increase in overtime required to operate three man gangs was unsustainable within a week.

We had a good delegate education ses-

it says that if 'the job's not safe, just say no, your union will back you'; and

can go badly wrong. Delegates also learned about representing members and how to organise around issues.

The key point was that delegates are not there to do everything for members but rather to help them and give them confidence to act.

Asbestos has also been in our minds with a bit of drama at the Addington wagon depot when cross contamination was discovered from the building next door. Management have been pretty good on this but the landlord they're dealing with has been anything but. With a bit of pressure from the lads on the shop floor we're getting things sorted. Once again, thank you to Karen Fletcher for coming down and getting involved.

The Tranz Scenic office staff have been doing some work on their pay scale looked at as every worker on scale one has the right to do. Hopefully by the time you read this something positive will have come of it.

Although we're in the fourth year of a world that changed forever after the earthquakes, the disaster is still very much a continuing event for many us with things like housing problems not going away.

Remember, you don't have to be cracking up to become part of the Employee Assistance Programme – it can be a really good way of helping you and your family to offload some of the pressure we're all living with here.

Be safe and look after one another. 



*Graham Ealam, mechanical engineer, Waltham.*

sion in June, with new and experienced delegates attending a day's course in Opawa. Karen Fletcher, national health and safety organiser, led an excellent seminar using the Titanic as an example of how things

**A** fourth crane is taking shape on the Lyttelton wharf and due to come into action within the next two weeks. The tutors and crane drivers will be first up to learn the ropes on it before it is fully operational.

Also due to join the fleet within a couple of weeks are four new straddles taking the total number of straddles to 26.

## LYTTELTON PORT

Over the last week Kathy Meads (CFO), Simon Munt (marketing manager) and Paul Monk (operations manager) have held

meetings for LPC staff briefing them on what the recent Kotahi/Maersk/Port Of Tauranga announcement may mean for LPC.

Clearly productivity improvements will be high on LPC's agenda and the RMTU welcomes the op-

portunity to engage constructively around real productivity gains in the workplace, business and industry.

We are already meeting with LPC in a consultative group following settlement of the logistics officers collective agreement in May this year. Worker participation in any working party seeking to increase productivity is essential to success.

Highly experienced LOs, John Smith and Joe Satherley are representing their colleagues on the working party.

Productivity means investment in

people, training, technology, processes and systems in ways that will lead to growth.

Investment in productivity ought to create a direct correlation to any job being manageable, fully resourced, having the right skill set and returning a profit not just to the business but to the workers as well.

From the two meetings we have had to date there are a number of opportunities that will make the LO's jobs easier and increase productivity for the business.

When we negotiate and agree with an employer on genuine productivity improvements that benefit the business and the workers we have taken one step further



*Congratulations to Paul Dennis (second from right) for coming second equal in the Ross Wilson/NZCTU New Zealand Workplace H&S Awards in Auckland. Here he is with (l to r) Bill Sweeney, Andy Kelly and Mark Morgan.*

towards high performance workplaces that are enjoyable to be in.

The September 20 General Election is fast approaching and RMTU members at LPC are thinking about what matters to them, their families and communities be-

fore they get out and vote. Remember the polls are open from September 3 to 20 so you can vote earlier if required. Just find a polling booth and do your thing.

Take care – safety first always. 🇳🇿

**C**HANGE is in the air with Port of Tauranga purchasing a 50% stake in Primeport. Since their involvement, changes have been rapid with new fencing, road access and possibly a new rail line into the port. With the deal involving new company Kotare-Mearsk, shipping a huge amount of Fonterra product through Primeport. We are waiting for final plans as to what our involvement at KiwiRail will entail – roving shunts with rakes to and from Temuka?

Our CT site has been turned on its head

## TIMARU RAIL

by proposed changes to all staff. Kiwirail management wants new job descriptions drawn up by someone from HR who is possibly on 'speed' – a total overkill and causing an unsettling three months of talks with KiwiRail management. RMTU involvement has helped settle a very unhappy CT site and KiwiRail may be backing off a little. Why management would target small teams of happy workers doing a very good job and who, with their own hard work and dedication, have a very good relationship with all trucking companies and run a very

smooth operation is beyond this RMTU branch. Rest assured the KiwiRail freight team is in total solidarity with our CT brothers and sisters.

The branch AGM is planned for late August and with our bi-annual conference in October it will be a busy meeting. Conference remits will be discussed and passed.

Political talk is starting to raise its head again in the build up to the election in September with some interesting thoughts around. We in the Rangitata voting area have a very good Labour candidate in Steve Gibson but he has an uphill battle to knock off Jo Goodhew the current National MP.

Get out and vote. 🇳🇿

**I**F you believe everything you read in the papers we are on the cusp of ten years of prosperity. Of course, given that we've all been made redundant twice in the past four years, and have just headed off a so-called restructure that

## TIMARU PORT

threatened many of us with the axe once again, we're not holding our collective breath.

The resignation of our CEO was greeted with relief by the membership. Certainly no love lost there. As this is written we await the appointment of the new boss. We hope the board will appoint someone who

sees the value of the staff as a rock of stability in the shifting sands of the port industry.

Quality Marshalling (QM) and Timaru Container Terminal Ltd (TCM), the two wholly owned subsidiaries of Port of Tauranga, (the new 49% shareholder of Prime Port Timaru) that are going to look for much of the work here are recruiting like mad. QM has told us they're not opposed



◀ to a collective agreement so we're hopeful we can have one in place pretty soon.

The talk is very bullish about the volume of trade that we'll be handling – there is even speculation that we'll exceed the 80,000 TEUs – our previous record. To do that we'll need to recruit and retrain skilled staff. If we were running the Port of Lyttelton we'd be looking over our shoulders: paying poor wages to their cargo handlers in the

inland port at Woolston could bite them where it hurts if workers opt to move south for secure jobs and better wages in a town where housing is much cheaper.

Once again our biggest achievement is still being here. We want to express our thanks to the wider union for the support we received during our travails earlier this year, especially our national president Aubrey Wilkinson and national management

committee's South Island ports representative Andy Kelly. The lads appreciated you coming down and expressing your solidarity. Also the support of national office and our general secretary Wayne Butson, not forgetting the exemplary work done by the Union's lawyer Geoff Davenport. We know that our brothers and sisters in the RMTU might need our support one day and we'll be glad, and proud, to give it. 🚂

**S**TARTING with some good news, the Port has just taken receipt of the new tug 'Taiaroa'. This is a good example of

investing in much needed plant. We're all looking forward to seeing her ploughing the waves in the harbour.

Obviously there is a little uncertainty in the air with the announcement from Fonterra and Kotahi signing a 10 year deal with Maersk for their product and using Timaru and Tauranga to shift it all. As this is

## PORT CHALMERS

written all eyes are on the August 1 when the deal is supposed to kick off. Recent coverage in the local media has focussed on Port Otago's geographic advantage and the trade

that comes our way from the hinterland of Otago and Southland. The facts are though, that no one is sure of the impact on Port Otago. Early indications are that we won't be as badly affected as Lyttelton but until it plays out it is still a wait and see game.

At the time of writing we have draft terms of settlement for a collective agree-

ment that will hopefully be ratified by the time you are reading this. Funny how the 2.85% plus 2.85% deal that the Lyttelton logistics officers agreed to has now become the standard. Well done guys, by digging in you have set a standard that has helped deliver a CPI plus wage offer around the country.

Finally, we have one of our members leaving to work with St Johns as an ambulance officer. David Milne, all the best for the future and we're sorry to see you go. Port Otago has lost a great employee and St Johns and our community have gained a real asset. 🚒

**T**HE Taieri Gorge Railway train staff are enjoying the quiet season giving them a chance to take leave. Their wage negotiations are starting on the August 12, 2014 and although there is an air of commercial realism surrounding the expectations there is

## OTAGO RAIL

none-the-less a real and genuine expectation that there will be a financial recognition of the contribution and dedication of the staff that make the Railway the success

it is. Taieri Gorge has another locomotive engineer in training and we welcome Mike

Lynch to the tourism industry.

Meanwhile the mechanical staff do not enjoy the "off" season as this is the time of year when they can access equipment and vehicles to give them some more TLC before they are press-ganged back into service for another arduous season.

The No2 tunnel on the OCB has had some long overdue maintenance carried out and although the working conditions were far from ideal it was still managed on time and incident free.

The long suffering staff at KiwiRail are, at the time of writing, still patiently waiting for our collective agreement to be renegotiated to a conclusion.

There was a call from Winston Peters for an enquiry into the management of KiwiRail and, to be fair, it is small wonder when considering how much of an absolute debacle the recent investments made by them have become. While the propeller which fell off the ferry was certainly unexpected but to discover that when you put the propellers back on the ship does not have same speed you really would have to question who gave



that piece of wisdom. Then there are the Chinese-built locomotives contaminated with asbestos which shows some less than ideal quality control on the manufacturing processes. It is now rumoured that there is a cracking issues with the underframes. One has to wonder if you would suffer the same problems with GM or GE products. Even if all the remedial work is paid for by the Chinese it would be surprising if they compensated for the loss of revenue and the added costs of keeping some of the other vintage locos in service. The wagons purchased from the Chinese have also failed to be the expected jewel in the crown of KiwiRail. They too are being reworked for an undisclosed cost which can only lead one to imagine that there is a cost to the



tax payer of this country. There is absolutely no question that these



wagons could have and should have been built in New Zealand but that opportunity has passed and we are now forced to live

with its legacy.

The election is looming and every RMTU member is encouraged to exercise their vote and for those who choose not to then you deserve everything that you get and more.

Until next time. 🇳🇿

## SOUTHLAND RAIL

**W**E are in the middle of our low season and everyone is enjoying the down time to catch our breath in preparation for the fast approaching high season. There's bit of concern for farmers with the drop in milk powder prices from a high of over \$8/kilo to \$6. It wouldn't be a great prospect facing a 25% pay cut, but then they all voted National anyway so we're not that sympathetic.

Possibly of even greater concern to us poor fellows down here is the passing of another oyster season, the only comfort being that it coincides with the start of the white bait season.

Danny Kent, our current branch secretary attended delegate training in Canter-

bury in June. Danny says he enjoyed the training and getting together with delegates and activists from Dunedin and Canterbury.

The 26 km Bluff line has been left unfinished due to the flash butt welders' contract not being extended. This is a shame as there is only another 5-6 kilometres to go to complete it. We're now hearing that I&E are looking at extending the contract in order to get the work done – let's hope so.

Southport are now requiring three shunts a day for the next season and it doesn't look like we are getting a change in the yard operating roster to accommodate this. Looks like one pull/place in the morning and two pull/places in afternoon (time

permitting of course). Book off is 18.00 back at the depot.

The yard staff are reminded to be vigilant with handbrakes. A recent incident saw a rail operator severely reprimanded for not applying a handbrake and the wagon rolled through a set of points.

Applications are being called for a relief RCO to be trained. We also believe an opening will arise for an LE trainee if a local LE transfers. Welcome to Daniel Burton who has just started as a rail operator.

Finally, the CT site is under pressure with one of our members on sick leave and some issues around staffing. Nothing out of the ordinary but we have to keep reminding ourselves that we have choices about things like whether we do overtime, and both the bosses and ourselves have to live with the consequences.

Stay safe brothers and sisters! 🇳🇿



