

THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

SEPTEMBER 2016

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



Honouring fallen workers



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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Paying respects at Strongman Mine Disaster Memorial are Ian Walker, Luke James and Mike Williams. See page 9 for other South Island roundup photos.

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Disappointing suburban rail changeover

THERE are some things we take for granted in the RMTU and one is that we mostly deal with employers who want to have a meaningful relationship with the union of choice of its workers so they play the employment game by the rules and pretty fairly. That is not to say that there aren't occasions when we have to blow the whistle and call a penalty or ask for a manager to be sent from the field of play but, by and large, things go according to plan.

It has therefore been a disappointing, but not wholly unexpected, reawakening to the trickery of some employers for us since 3 July 2016.

This is when Transdev Wellington and their sub contractor partner Hyundai Rotem (THR) were handed the keys to the Wellington suburban trainset. Despite working with them for more than three months in the run up to the handover and laboriously working through the mechanics of achieving the "same or more favourable" (S or MF) terms and conditions of employment for our members, it was truly amazing to behold how quickly they set about trying to change what was just agreed.

Change that is, in a wholly unlawful, unilateral manner with no consideration to the mutually agreed requirements of the MECA or the S or MF terms and conditions of employment around meaningful consultation or items requiring mutual agreement.

We have, of course, cried foul and the employer eventually apologised and/or withdrew their proposal, but such behaviour is disappointing nonetheless.

Be vigilant

Members have been warned that the price of maintaining terms and conditions which they had previously fought for is vigilance and immediate enforcement and this is working but this is no way to build a meaningful and lasting relationship in my view.

What is equally disappointing is that the vast majority of managers, supervisors and team leaders were all in similar roles with KiwiRail and they KNOW that such unilateral behaviour is not on and yet went along with what the new senior managers were pushing.

The MECA was recently ratified by members and so we have our terms and conditions (those we fight to retain during the term of the document) locked away until

◀ expiry in July 2017 and we have time to educate, train and prepare for the next negotiations.

We achieved our goal of ensuring an orderly transfer with as little stress for members as possible but we all have to remember that this uncertainty is what the National-led government wanted.

In 2011, Cabinet approved the introduction of a new framework for the provision of urban rail, bus and ferry services, known as the Public Transport Operating Model. The model was implemented through a combination of operational and legislative changes.

The legislative components of the model were established in the Land Transport Management Amendment Act 2013 which came into force on 13 June 2013.

The model is supposed to achieve the government's goal for public transport which is to grow patronage with less reliance on subsidies. The Government stated that the model was developed with two overarching objectives:

- to grow the commerciality of public transport services and create incentives for services to become fully commercial; and
- to grow confidence that services are priced efficiently and there is access to public transport markets for competitors.

They say that the model is a planning, procurement and business development framework. A key feature of it is an emphasis on regional councils and operators taking a partnering approach to the planning and delivery of public transport services in regions. This will be achieved through mechanisms such as collaborative business planning, joint investments, and financial incentives. This approach recognises that both parties have a stake in it and are reliant on each other for delivering affordable public transport services that people want to use.

Regional elections in the spotlight


The Ministry of Transport led the development of the model in collaboration with the NZ Transport Agency, Auckland Transport, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Environment Canterbury, the Bus and Coach Association and operator representatives.

What happens with our rail members in Wellington and Auckland will hinge upon the approach of the respective regional councils. As this issue of the Transport Worker goes to print we are in the process of local body elections and those elected will play a lead role in the approach that will be taken to deliver "a fully commercial service". That is to say a service without subsidy and given that labour costs are a significant component of the service provision in public transport it is essential that union members are active participants in the local body elections.

Find out which candidates favour public transport and are not interested in slashing wages and conditions – by-products of the lowest tender outcome of the PTOM model.

The price of maintaining what we have now will be not just union membership it will also be activism and a willingness to stand up for what you are entitled to – and are worth.

The process begins with assessing the candidates, offering to help those which are supportive of organised labour, voting and getting active within your Union!

We are stronger together – but we are stronger still if we are all active Union members. 

Retirements

Dear Editor,

I wish to resign as a union member after nine years 11 months.

I would like to thank the Union for their support and help and I would also like to thank Carey Sullivan for the support and hard work he put in to obtain my medical retirement.

Peter Horne.



Dear Editor

I started in the railways on 24/1/1967 as an apprentice fitter when unions were the RTA plus the NUR and was also the year of a strike for margins of skill for the RTA.

The 49 years and just over five months have passed really quickly for me up to my retirement on Friday 1/7/2016.

It has been like a great train journey that has now come to an end.

My career high was a trip to Hungary for the Ganz Mavag passenger trains.

The career low was a bad experience on an IEA with a happy return to the CEA!

I have met and worked with a lot of great people during my career, of all races and ages, and I wish those remaining all the best and to keep the wheels turning.

Finally, with my retirement I must resign from the RMTU and so to our Union leaders, present and past, and its members, in simple terms: Thank you all.

Ray Kai

#65406.

Dear Editor

This letter is to formally let you know that after 36 years working for New Zealand Railway in some form or another, I am leaving the company and the RMTU.

Most of my time here I have been happy working alongside a great team of people whom I could have a good laugh with, as well as get the job done.

This is a great industry to work in (cliché now, but true) and going forward even though Metro have a new company name, it all comes down to what each individual chooses to make of every day on the job with their fellow work mates. This will either make it a success story or not.

I wish all the team success and happiness in the future.

Brent Goodman.

Dear Editor,

I have asked David Marden to tender my resignation as of today Monday 1 August 2016, to be final as of Friday 12 August 2016, as per the collective agreement which asks for two weeks' notice.

It is with respect that I thank you for the terms and conditions I leave under, it is appreciated. It has been a 46 year career at the port but I have chosen today to head into retirement.

Jock McLeod

Port of Napier Ltd.

Port should be publicly owned

By Gren Christie

THERE is a chance Napier Port could slip from the control and ownership of the Hawke's Bay people and I firmly believe this is an issue we should care about.

The port needs to be 100 per cent in public ownership for the following reasons:

1. The dividend helps keep Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) rates low. If profits were diverted to private shareholders the HBRC would need to make up the shortfall through rate increase, a reduction of services or pile more debt onto the port.

2. The port is a genuine win/win situation. It makes money on exports – and imports. When the dollar is down exports go up and when the dollar is up imports rise. Trade risks are spread and, either way, it is a very profitable enterprise to own.

3. Hawke's Bay's port is a strategic asset and the farm gate for its population. It is too important not to be in total public ownership. Whoever owns it controls what goes over the wharf and at what price.

4. Private shareholders will demand more profit. This will be achieved by increasing cargo handling charges, more casualisation of the workforce, more split shifts and reduced full-time staffing. More and more workers would be living off the end of their mobile phones hoping for work or, worse, they would be replaced by "suitcase stevedores".

The risk of losing control and ownership of the port is very real as it is viewed



as a very juicy chunk of infrastructure for private investors.

Within the Hawke's Bay Regional Investment Company Ltd (HBRIC) voices have spoken for a sell-down of port shares. The HBRIC is the council controlled organisation which manages some of the HBRC's larger infrastructure investments, including the port.

There are no doubt similar, unspoken, thoughts for a sell down among the ranks of the sitting – and prospective – regional councillors who have closely aligned themselves with HBRIC.

One way to arm twist the public is to load the port with debt and then offer up the choice of ever-increasing rate rises or flogging off our last piece of family silver.

Debt is mounting. In 2007 it was \$11.5m. In 2016, \$84m. Much of that has gone into infrastructure and some maintenance. A new wharf is expected to add \$50m plus to that debt.

However, the dividend to HBRIC still rolls in as an alternative to paying down this debt.

This may be economically sustainable but when HBRIC uses the port to underwrite such projects the Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme (RWSS), things could go sideways.

1. Most large dams have an average 96 per cent cost overrun. Since the first RWSS cost estimates the price has almost doubled. HBRIC says it has this covered

with a fixed cost contract. It is unlikely that there isn't some wriggle room for a contractor to cover extra costs due to unforeseen circumstances.

2. If the dam's predicted profitability fails to materialise that would mean ongoing and increased debt.

3. If profit is based on pollution of our water, it will only take a change in Parliament to have effective environmental protections enforced nationally. This will be driven by the ever-mounting frustration and anger at the current abuse of our waterways. The Tukituki River already has nitrates too high to prevent algae blooms which have led to dog deaths.

4. Two major investors have already walked away from this project. That indicates high risk. I imagine the shark cruising the economic waters is only there because our port backs this new deal

If the RWSS is to be foisted upon us, \$80m is enough of public money invested and we should carry no more liabilities.

We run the risk of the dam becoming an albatross around the neck of the port.

Regional Council elections are upon us and those standing need to let us know where they stand on this issue. 🇳🇿

- Gren Christie was a worker and union rep for 20 years at the Port of Lyttelton and more recently on the RWSS stakeholders' group representing a non-government environmental organisation.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

It is with some sadness that I must tender my resignation from the RMTU. I am officially retiring from the railways on August 26, 2016 after 44 years of service. Thank you and the many officials for your help in the past years especially when I was incapacitated for 13 months. I wish you and the Union a bright future and every success. GO UNION - STRENGTH AND UNITY. Pat James.

Violence against women in public transport

Report from Sheralee Van Beek who attended the ITF Conference on violence against women in public transport in Bali in May 2016.

AS I did not receive any pre-conference papers, I went in blind as a lot of the other attendees did. I thought we would learn skills on how to deal with violence in public transport and I could bring this information back to share with both men and women working at Transdev. However, the conference was more about strengthening union responses to violence against women who work in public transport.

The women's advocate programme goal is to:

- Assist individual women experiencing violence and/or harassment by listening and connecting them to resources and support in the community;
- Promote women's equality at home, in the community and at work; and
- Create safer workplaces and communities for women.

The programme also provides practical assistance to individual women by:

- An empathic and understanding response to women who experience violence;
- Provide referrals for women who are dealing with issues of violence, abuse or harassment at home or in the workplace;
- Support them through the process of seeking help;
- Intervene with management to arrange time off or other accommodations without the fear of being disciplined; and
- Respects confidentiality and a woman's

right to make her own decisions.


Some workplace warning signs that a worker is distracted:

- Disruptive phone calls or visits from the partner;
- Obvious injuries such as bruises, black eyes, broken bones and hearing loss, often attributed to falls, being clumsy or accidents;
- Hiding injuries using clothing inappropriate for the season (long sleeves and turtle neck, sunglasses indoors) and changes in makeup or concealer;
- Absenteeism or lateness;
- Being the victim of vandalism or threats;
- Job performance problems including poor concentration, errors, slowness, difficulty making decisions and inconsistent work quality;
- Requests for special accommodations such as leaving work early and change of schedule;
- Unusual behaviour including anxiety, emotional outbursts, tears, apprehension, withdrawal or social avoidance, excessive tiredness or depression; and
- Lack of access to money.

Offenders can also be found in the workplace:

- 80% of respondents said their job performance was negatively affected by domestic violence by not paying attention to what he/she was doing because of relationship issues, preoccupied by thoughts about his/her partner, such as a previous fight they had, angry or upset about his/her partner and waiting for his/her partner to call; and
- 19% of respondents said they had caused or almost caused an accident at work.

Finally, we learnt workers can benefit from workplace policies that offer support and protection. Unions can negotiate support and protections through collective bargaining and can lobby for legislation which provides support and protection.

I thank the Union for the opportunity to attend this conference. 

Workers' voices

Responses from women questioned at the conference:

"... confiding in co-workers helped to alleviate the stress of being attacked while going to the car, unending phone calls and the extreme fatigue – both physically and mentally."

"Domestic violence caused unease between me and my co-workers because I had to miss work or sometimes cried. Also, some people felt helpless; they would have like to intercede, but did not dare for fear of endangering me or themselves."

"We bring to work everything that happens at home. We can't compartmentalise or mentally separate these different aspects of our lives. While it may not technically be the responsibility of the employer or union to provide shelter or assistance for employees they could provide resources for victims of violence."

"I think creating the ability to empathise in the union and in any work environment is more important than people realise."



Asset sales and Christchurch mayoralty

KEEPING Christchurch City Council ownership of the Lyttelton Port Company (LPC) is at the heart of John Minto's mayoral campaign. Minto is a candidate for KOA (Keep Our Assets Canterbury) for this year's local body elections.

KOA has been fighting council proposals to sell city assets to raise \$600 million over three years to help pay for the earthquake rebuild.

KOA claimed a victory in early August when the Council announced it would not sell its works department, City Care, after a protracted campaign of picketing and protests by KOA supporters which targeted the "sellout" councillors, led by the current mayor, Lianne Dalziel, who directed the proposal to sell City Care as the first asset to go on the block.

"Our worry is that we have just a 10 week reprieve," says Minto. "As soon as the election is over the asset sales process will be put back on track unless Christchurch elects a mayor and council which will stop

the selloff in its tracks."

LPC is one of the plum assets the corporate sector would love to get its hands on and as we've seen in Tauranga, privately owned ports maximise profit for shareholders at the expense of workers' safety, workers' wages and conditions of employment.

Minto says the council's projected budget deficit would be removed by rescheduling the building of "anchor" projects, making savings from existing budgets and pressuring the government to pay "whatever it takes" – to borrow John Key's own phrase – to get Christchurch up and running again.

As the history books tell us, we don't have to sell off assets to pay for the rebuild. The 1931 Napier earthquake rebuild was paid in full by the government which wrote off the city's rebuild loans in 1938.

As well as stopping asset sales the Minto for Mayor campaign is promising a shift from a corporate-centred city to a people-centred city with policies such as:

- Free and frequent public transport (as far out as Rangiora, Darfield and Rolleston) to be funded from the money saved by rescheduling the big roading projects;
- The living wage paid as a minimum for all council work (funded by managing down the salaries of senior council executives);
- Swimmable rivers across Canterbury;
- 1000 new council homes for rent and rent-to-buy over the next three years; and
- End the corporate stranglehold on the rebuild with stiff rate increases on undeveloped land in the CBD. 🌐

NOTE: Voting papers are mailed out from 16 September and must be returned in time to be counted for Saturday October 8. If you are not enrolled or not sure if you are then go to elections.org.nz or phone 0800 36 76 56. Your vote counts.



ARE YOU A MEMBER?

NZ Harbours Superannuation Scheme



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



The Scheme has an external administrator and contributions are invested with five fund managers.

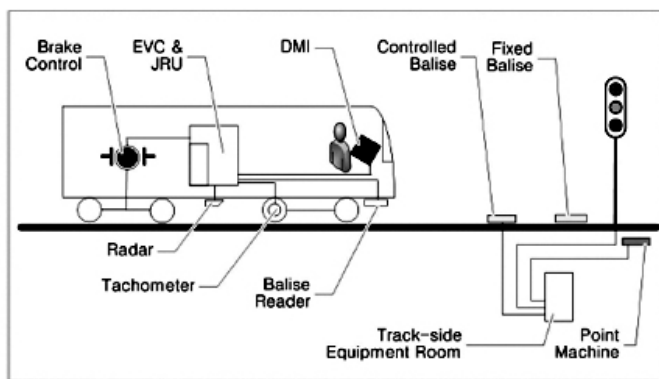
Download a copy of an Investment Statement and Application Form at:

www.harbourssuper.org.nz



New tech for EMUs

This explanation of how the European Train Control System being used in Auckland's metro units works has been written by LE Grant Dowie who is quality training advisor for Transdev.



THE European Train Control System (ETCS) is an in-cab signalling, control and train protection system fitted to the Auckland metro (AM) electric multiple units (EMU). They became fully operational on 29 April 2014.

The system operates at Level 1 permitting it to be superimposed on the existing signalling system thus leaving the current fixed signalling system in place for non-fitted vehicles.

Balise (data transponders) transmit signal aspect information from the central train control system to the ETCS equipment on the train as a movement authority together with route information (gradients, turnout, line and curve speeds) at all main line signals and when approaching platforms.

Continuous monitoring

The on-board system continuously monitors and calculates the train's position, maximum allowed speed and any future signal aspects and speed restrictions and displays this information to the driver, where it is overlaid onto the speedo.

Because movement authority data is

only received by the train when a balise (signal) is passed, the updates of movement authority is intermittent, and accordingly there are procedures and options available to allow the trains to pass signals at 'stop'.

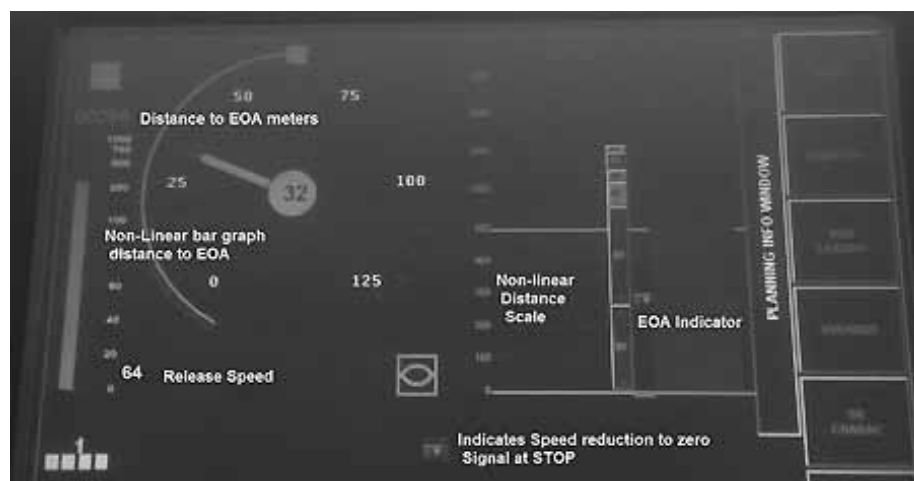
All 'proceed' signal aspects are automatically processed by ETCS including low speed and R-light signals however, these two signals require driver acknowledgement.

The actual levels of train protection is dependent upon the system operating mode however, ETCS basically provides:

- In-cab signalling including advanced notice of signal aspects, line and curve speed changes and the distance to run to such events;
- Warns and then enforces speed reductions when approaching signals at 'stop';
- Applies the emergency brake after passing a signal at 'stop'; and
- Warns and then ensures the train speed complies with all track, turnout and train type maximum speeds.

The ETCS system requires ground-based components including fixed and controlled balises connected to the system while on-train components which include:

- Balise reader;
- Speed and distance measuring systems, doppler radars (speed) and tachometers (speed and distance);
- Driver machine interface (DMI) in each drivers cab (speedo);
- Computer and recording systems (EVC and JRU); and
- Connection to the train service and emergency brake control systems.



Another glorious day for Auckland commuters.



- Controlled balise data is updated automatically to reflect its associated signal aspect. This information is then transmitted to the train when it next passes over the balise associated with the signal.

Fixed balise data, as its name suggests, is fixed and includes information on track gradient which affects train braking performance, line and curve speeds, platform side and platform length data as part of the correct side door enable system which warns drivers if they attempt to release or open doors on the incorrect side or off platforms.

If the driver allows the train to operate outside the ETCS approved speed/braking envelope, ETCS will first warn the driver by displaying colour and audible warnings. If the driver's response is not appropriate it applies either the train's service brake to slow it down, or the emergency brake to stop the train.

ETCS driver's cab display

The driver's ETCS HMI is the central and main EMU cab display and it provides braking and speed warnings overlaid on the speedo.

In addition to the visual indications, audible warnings are provided when the train operates on the outer limits of the ETCS-protected envelope, and if the driver's actions (eg braking efforts requested) do not follow ETCS requirements. ETCS will then initially apply full service braking to reduce the train's speed to five kph below the authorised speed, or apply the emergency brake to stop the train.

If ETCS applies the emergency brake it can only be released once the train has come to a stop and the driver has confirmed with train control that a SPAD has not occurred.

The driving of an ETCS equipped train is different, and at times it will appear that ETCS is slowing down the train unnecessarily. However, on virtually all occasions ETCS is just ensuring that the train actually obeys the current rules exactly. For example, on leaving a curve drivers may inadvertently begin accelerating before the trailing end of the train is actually clear of the restriction. ETCS enforces this to the metre. Likewise, when line speed reductions occur drivers may allow the train to gradually slow down while ETCS requires that the train slow down before the actual restriction to ensure that it is actually applied with.

ETCS requires a different driving style – not better or worse, just different – however, the safety improvements ETCS provides easily outweigh the minor loss of a driver's driving freedoms. 🌐

ETCS operating modes



Staff responsible: Enters this when the ETCS has been initialised and 'Start of Mission' has been acknowledged. The driver is responsible for movement authority.



Full supervision: Provides full driver supervision and speed monitoring and automatically activates once the first balise is passed.



Shunting: Allows for shunting operations within the depot and stabling areas but must be selected by the driver first. If selected on the main line ETCS will trip the train at every main line signal.



On sight: Allows low speed signals and restricted departure signals to be passed but must be acknowledged by driver within five seconds.



Trip: When end of movement authority is passed (normally at signal 'stop'). The train is stopped by the automatic application of the emergency brake.



Post trip: Enables the recovery of a trip event. Permission required from train control to enter post trip mode. ETCS operates in staff responsible mode until next balise is passed.



Override: A procedure which allows a signal at 'stop' to be passed without a trip event occurring. It requires authority from train control first. ETCS operates in staff responsible mode until next balise is passed.





Peter Wallis Otira signals technician.



Peter McCaw, Flash Gordon Holt and Mike Williams at Flash's retirement.



The RMTU's finest, Alfie Wilson in Otira.



Christchurch servicing members.



Mike Williams & Ian Walker convince the trackies to ratify the MECA.



KiwiRail employment relations manager, Maryan Street meets West Coast track members during MECA ratification.



Keep Our Assets spokesperson Steve Wright speaks to Christchurch rail members.



Members at branch meeting at Port Otago.

Mick Connelly, Labour pioneer and rail worker

THIS year the Labour Party celebrates its 100th birthday. Peter Franks, the co-author with Jim McAloon of the party's centennial history, writes about Mick Connelly, a railway worker and union activist, who was one of the men and women who founded the New Zealand Labour Party.

When the Labour Party celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1966, Mick Connelly was the last living member to have been elected to national office at the party's foundation. A railway worker from 1911 to 1936, he became a Labour representative on the Legislative Council (the upper house of Parliament) and the Dunedin City Council.

The New Zealand Labour Party was formed at a conference in Wellington in July 1916. A Wellington-based advisory committee was appointed to support the party's national executive. Connelly, the Thorndon branch secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS) and the union's delegate to the Wellington Labour Representation Committee, was one of the advisory committee's members. In 1918 he was transferred to Greymouth and was elected to the ASRS's national executive in 1921.

Railway's management punished him for his activism by transferring him to the isolated town of Omakau in Central Otago. In 1923 Connelly was elected national president of the ASRS. The conservative Reform government cut the wages of public servants. In 1924 a national ballot of ASRS members voted three to one to strike.

The other railway unions – the Engine-Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners Association and the Railway Officers Institute – opposed the strike. The government took a hard line against the ASRS and, after a week, the national executive called the strike off.

The Reform government punished the ASRS for the strike by increasing hours of

work from 44 to 48 a week and cutting overtime payments. The ASRS was forced to disaffiliate from the national trade union federation and the government gave official recognition to the Railway Tradesmen's Association, a breakaway union.

Connelly was the fall guy for the strike and was heavily defeated by a conservative opponent when he stood for national president in 1925. Bloodied but unbowed, he stood as Labour candidate for the Otago seat of Chalmers in the general election that year. It was a safe Tory seat.

He was denied leave without pay during the election campaign because the law prohibited public servants from standing for Parliament without first resigning from their jobs.

Faced with the choice of losing his job (and Railways house) or compromising his Labour principles, Connelly resigned from his job. He lost the election and was refused reinstatement as a guard. He was given a job as a casual labourer at Dunedin railway station at the equivalent of \$116 a week less on which to support his wife and four children.

Under pressure from Labour MPs,

the Reform government amended the Railways Act to allow for the permanent reappointment of those who had resigned to become candidates at the 1925 election (i.e. Connelly).

It took 16 months for Connelly to be reinstated to his former position and grade. There was a lengthy correspondence between him and management. A feature of this was the disparaging way in which Connelly was addressed, often in the third person, as 'Casual Connelly'.

After Labour's sweeping victory in 1935, Mick Connelly was appointed to the Legislative Council, the upper house of Parliament. Because he was still a Railways employee, the law meant he couldn't take up his seat. One of Labour's first acts of Parliament was the Michael Connelly Appointment Validation Act 1936. "Casual Connelly" was now the Hon. Michael Connelly MLC. Labour then passed the Political Disabilities Removal Act which allowed public servants to stand for Parliament without having to resign their jobs and gave trade unions the right to use their funds for political purposes. 🌐

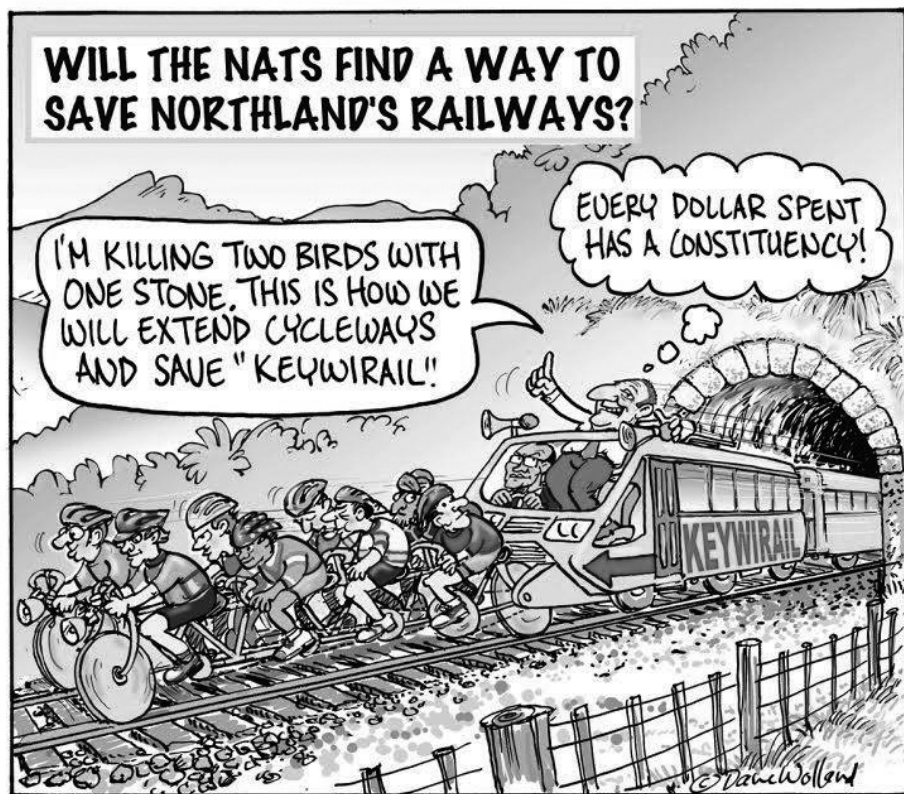
- Kindly contributed by Peter Franks





Northern regional organiser Stu Johnstone, Paul Summerville and Ben Thompson (Hazel Armstrong Law) heading for coffee after a successful mediation with Transdev Auckland.

Save Northland rail



THE Northland region is set to lose all rail services including freight trains to Auckland unless a new line is built to Northport at Marsden Point, says the Grow Northland Rail campaign - masterminded by RMTU member and our Northland rail branches chairman, Alby Barr.

Through his vast network of contacts he has rallied pro rail citizens in Northland to champion the North's railway.

As reported in the last issue more than 500 people attended a protest meeting where some solid speeches and opinions by local MPs and guests were heard, including from RMTU GS Wayne Butson.

He received the biggest cheer of the evening when he said: "I don't know why anyone in this town votes National."

Save Our Rail Northland said connecting the line to the forestry port would cost \$250 million – a pittance compared to what the government spend on roads. 🌐

North Tugz

RMTU members working at North Tugz have accepted a one year rollover of all existing terms and conditions with a 1%

increase to all rates and allowances for the renewal of their Collective Agreement. There has been no growth in shipping numbers at NorthPort which has increased pressures to control and reduce costs. 🌐



Teaching unionism

RMTU delegates and staff recently spent an afternoon with eight young community leaders from Myanmar discussing what labour rights mean and how to put them in to action. The student were here on the UnionAID-run Myanmar Young Leaders Programme. They were keen to learn how union members in New Zealand can actively stand up for decent work and important issues like equal pay.

Action for improved labour rights is sorely needed in Myanmar. Up until 2012 unions were banned by the military dictatorship and forced labour has been a major issue. With this recent history in mind, much of the discussion focussed on freedom of association as a universal human right and how this can be enforced.

Many thanks to RMTU delegates Ka'isa Beech, Campbell Leggett, Mervin Johnson and staff member Julia Harrison for giving their time to join the young leaders for this important programme. 🌐

Myanmar young leader Khin Zarchi proudly wearing her RMTU cap.

Transdev eventually gets it right

THIS cautionary tale was submitted for publication from an Auckland locomotive engineer supervisor working for Transdev. His experience is a warning to anyone who becomes ill on the job.

"I booked on at 4am and while bringing my train in from Papakura, I began to feel unwell. I arrived in Britomart at 07.15am and went to see my team leaders telling them I thought I should go to hospital.

The team leaders agreed I was not looking very good, and immediately phoned for an ambulance. They suspected I may have been having an angina or worse, a heart attack.

The ambulance took me to Auckland Public Hospital where I was admitted for observation for 36 hours.

I was diagnosed with a severe angina attack and not a heart attack.

I returned to work one day after I was discharged.

Some days later I received a bill from St John for \$78 for the cost of the ambulance trip to hospital.

Then, when I received my next payslip, I discovered I had been docked four hours pay for the time I was off work and in hospital.

I asked the train control manager why I had been docked four hours pay.

The Company's response was:

"We docked you four hours pay because you did not complete more than four hours of your shift. So we only paid you for the hours you were at work."

I also asked them pay the St John's Ambulance invoice but the Company refused to do so."

The fact is that our brother was fully covered in the Transdev agreement – whether he was at work or not. His pay is assured as are all expenses including the ambulance fee.

We are pleased to report that Transdev have reversed their decision and made all relevant payments. 🌐

CA at Caf

RMTU members working for Caf at the Wiri electric depot in Auckland now have a collective agreement. Bargaining commenced with the RMTU having five members in Sept 2015 and at each subsequent meeting our membership steadily grew, placing the bargaining team in a much stronger position. The coverage clause covers maintenance technicians, facilities and stores. The term is for three years with a 1.9% GWI each year.

Even though one of our members on the bargaining team resigned from Caf before bargaining was concluded, he remained active in supporting those members who were still there as he really understood the value and importance of workers being covered by a CA.

Thank you to those first group of members who were prepared to join the RMTU and for your continued recruitment as there is now over 80% density. Stu Johnstone (Northern region organiser) and John Kerr (South Island organiser) worked well together to achieve this great result of the first CA with Caf. 🌐

The power of a PIN

TRAINED health and safety reps have the ability to issue a provisional improvement notice (PIN) if there is a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 or underpinning regulations. A PIN is a powerful tool for reps to use because it compels the PCBU (employer) to address an H&S issue which is otherwise not being managed.

When an H&S rep issues a PIN the employer must either confirm the PIN (follow its recommendation) or bring in Worksafe NZ to review it.

If the employer does nothing (neither confirms the PIN nor brings in Worksafe NZ to review it) they are in breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act and can be fined up to \$250,000. 🌐

An open letter to KiwiRail, chief executive, Peter Reidy

Dear Peter,
Congratulations to KiwiRail on the Deloitte energy efficiency award. It is always pleasing to see affirmative news regarding rail casting KiwiRail as an SOE in a positive light.

Saving four million litres of fuel and 10,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year is an impressive achievement.

However, after reading KiwiRail's in-house publication, *The Express*, the irony of the situation vis-a-vis the Class 30s becomes apparent.

KiwiRail is celebrating winning an award for saving four million litres of diesel per year while the Class 30 (EF) electric locomotives have saved at least double that figure every year for the last 30 years.

Do you need to substitute electricity for diesel? Especially considering that electricity is largely a renewable resource?

Every year KiwiRail saves close to eight million litres of diesel by using the electrified section of the North Island Main Trunk (NIMT). How come this does this not generate a front page article in *The Express*?

Another article in *The Express* is headed: Taking an electric car for a silent spin. It starts by declaring KiwiRail's "commitment to sustainability" and how electric cars might help be part of that strategy.

The article identifies some of the virtues of electric cars including acceleration, quietness and the ability to have regenerative braking.

These are ALL virtues of the Class 30 locomotive when compared to the diesel locomotive fleet. The class 30 applies these advantages on a much grander scale when compared to the BMW i3. In fact one Class 30 is equal to 23 BMW i3s in power rating and a fleet of 17 Class 30s would equal 400 BMW i3s.

How can electric cars be considered a "commitment to sustainability" when no commitment to electric locomotives has been made? The proposal to replace the Class 30s electric locomotives with diesels appears very hypocritical!

From information received by the union through discussions with KiwiRail and others we know that upgrading 17 Class 30s would cost around \$10m while buying eight DLs would cost around \$35m. But for that \$10m spent on the Class 30s you would get three times more power.

We also know that the EFs are cheaper to maintain than the DLs, they use a cheaper energy source and incur practically no



time penalty compared to running straight through with a diesel.

We know that the Australian consultants, Advisian, implied that the DLs were unlikely to meet their reliability target of 80,000 km MDBF "without substantial financial commitment".

They stated that the 50,000 km MDBF figure of the EF is conservative and should be easily attainable.

If the Class 30 was to meet the target MDBF they would have a service reliability of 99.2% – far higher than the 90% requirement given in the statement of corporate intent.

We also know that the proposed Class 30 control system upgrade dates back to 2012. KiwiRail had pricing from Brush and a total project duration of three years to complete the 17 upgrades.

How come this project has taken so long to action?

Based on this, the upgrade should have been completed last year.

Around the world governments on both sides of the political spectrum are pouring money into electrifying their rail systems to combat climate change and to detach their economies from volatile fuel prices.

You don't need to go far to see this.

Look out of your office window and see the \$500m dollar investment in the Auckland metropolitan network made by a National government, and the dividends that has returned in the growth of passenger rides and the reliability versus the old diesel trains.

Why did Auckland choose to electrify? The answer is obvious to us: it is because electric is faster, cleaner and lower cost.

Why would KiwiRail go against the collective wisdom of Auckland, Wellington and the rest of the world?

KiwiRail's proposed shift to diesel operation on the NIMT cannot be justified on economic, operational or technical grounds. If they decide not to invest in the Class 30 fleet and instead buy more dirty diesels, the damage to the KiwiRail brand will be enormous.

The RMTU is committed to showing the value of rail.

The Union has not fought for so many years to see KiwiRail created to then see it do dumb things under state ownership.

There is huge political interest in use of electric locomotives on the NIMT and we fear that if the DL solution is chosen, KiwiRail will suffer catastrophic damage to both its credibility, brand and to the wide support it has from the NZ public.


Kind regards
Wayne Butson
RMTU general secretary.

New training for H&S reps

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FIVE health and safety reps at KiwiRail have completed the new CTU's Worksafe reps programme. They have also all completed the NZQA assessment associated with the course. Awesome work!

The course has had great reviews. Delegate Luke James who attended the Christchurch course described it as: "Thorough and eye opening." He said "it was empowering to know that reps have the legal right to stop work that could cause serious harm."

The new training is a must for all H&S reps because only those who have been trained under the new Health and Safety at Work Act can carry out the legal function of the H&S rep's role including issuing provisional improvement notices (PIN) and directing people to stop unsafe work.

To register to go to a health and safety rep training course go to the Worksafe reps website: www.worksafereps.co.nz 



Are LTI figures at KiwiRail being fudged?

ISSUES have been raised by members at KiwiRail regarding how people are being treated following an injury, particularly in relation to their return to work rehabilitation programme. There are reports of injured people being brought back to work to "sit in the lunchroom" instead of doing meaningful and medically appropriate return to work duties. One member reported an injured person being brought back to work on the same day as their injury for 'a cup of tea' to avoid the lost time injury (LTI) statistics from being affected.

The RMTU wants to know whether these are isolated incidents or is this the tip of the iceberg of poor return to work management and 'fudging' the LTI figures.

Please give your feedback by visiting the anonymous survey on the RMTU website.


Returning injured people to work safely

The RMTU actively supports the early return to work for injured workers as part of a mutually agreed workplace rehabilitation plan. This should include the provision of safe, meaningful and medically appropriate alternative duties. The Union and KiwiRail have an agreement known as the RMTU/KiwiRail Health Injury Wellness Management Programme (HIWMP).

The agreement describes the rehabilitation and return to work process including the roles of the managers, union representative, case manager

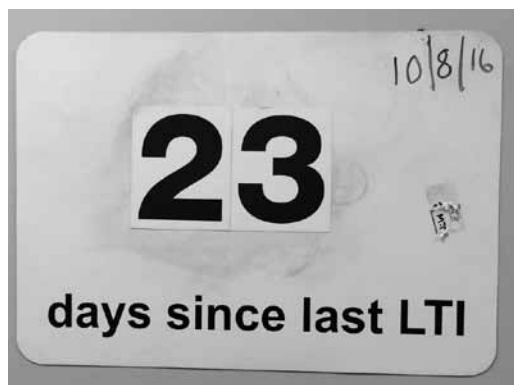
and injured person.

This long standing agreement is based on the concept that workers who remain connected to the workplace have far superior rehabilitation than workers who don't. Evidence shows that the longer people are off work the less likely they are to return to their job.

The programme's objective is to help workers return to work by having a jointly agreed rehabilitation plan developed and agreed to with the input of the manager, case manager, injured worker and union representative. Where an injured person returns to work less than 100% fit for duty it may be necessary for them to return on a supernumerary basis. This means that if 10 people are normally required to do the task, the injured person will make up the 11th person. 

To find a copy of the RMTU/KiwiRail HIWMP go to:

rmtunion.org.nz/publications



Plenty on for Council delegates

AT the time of writing, the KIC team are due to meet in Palmerston North. It will be a one day meeting due to a clash with the ROM Review – Fatigue Management Workshop the following day, also in Palmerston North.

Minutes for the last KIC meeting in May were distributed not long after the May meeting and meeting summaries go out immediately after each KIC meeting. The KIC meeting in May was held in Picton just prior to the full road bridging operation coming into force when the Aratere went off for survey and work.

It is fair to say that the current workload for the KIC RMTU reps is high with plenty on. All of the reps are involved in Zero Harm initiatives. The LE reps are involved in the ROM review project, the excessive hours (bust) review, the SPAD reduction project, tunnel focus groups and the post traumatic incident support project.

The terminal reps are involved in the underfoot conditions project, the Aratere two introduction, Alliance couplers on shunt locomotive project and alternative brake test for Catron remotes project.

Our national CT rep is involved in CT training and medical standards for CT



One of the heavy lift new forklifts for the road bridging operation in Picton.

operators. On top of this are the normal and mechanical issues that relate to the issues to work through within KIC including members covered by KIC. 🇳🇿

No rail to airport

A decision from the NZTA and Auckland Transport to exclude heavy rail from the discussion on transport to Auckland airport has left many in disbelief. Councillor Mike Lee of the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) and the RMTU have both been vocal in their disapproval. Councillor Lee took out radio advertisements and the RMTU ran a quarter page advert in the *New Zealand Herald*.

A fast modern rail corridor linking the Airport with the rest of the city is essential for Auckland to be considered a world class city, they said.

The scrapping of the heavy rail connection is a U-turn by the NZTA, which last year said it was “extremely committed to providing a rail link connecting the airport and the city”.

A public meeting on Tuesday 30 August will have given many others a platform to be heard and the opportunity to join with the CBT, RMTU and Councillor Lee to send a clear message that a rail link is the only sensible option. 🇳🇿

SUPPORT AIRPORT TRAINS

Let's make Auckland a world-class city
With a train link to the Airport

The City Rail Link is an important part of Auckland's future, but just stopping there means we're getting off the train one stop early. We need to connect every part of the city.

Auckland's future relies on a world-class train link to the Airport. Let's make it happen.

www.rmtunion.org.nz



(above) Comrades from the RTBU and below
Shayne Kummerfeld (RTBU) and John Kerr
(RMTU).



Light fires - d

Sage advice to union organisers from

THE Council of Trade Unions held its inaugural Organising Conference over three days in August bringing together over 300 officials from New Zealand and Australian unions for workshops and keynote addresses, as well as an opportunity to build networks and links.

The RMTU was represented by Lyttelton Port branch secretary Heiner Benecke, South Island organiser John Kerr, National Health and Safety organiser Karen Fletcher and Northern Regional organiser Stu Johnstone. We put on a couple of workshops, one on health and safety and another on strategy.

Our health and safety work-

shop featured campaigns such as the Red Card, and was aimed at getting officials in other unions to understand how organising around health and safety builds members' power in the workplace as well as making it a safer place.

The participation of our Australian brothers from the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) was valuable as it reinforced our message that health and safety is a great way of organising and one that gets public and community support.

The session on strategy was in tune with the theme of the conference. We used an analysis of our dispute with Lyttelton Port in 2014-15 as the basis to apply a number of theoretical concepts that could assist officials in their day-to-day organising. Again, the participation of our Australian brothers was valuable in drawing out ideas. It





Don't put them out

CTU conference

wasn't too academic and the key quote was 'everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth'.

The keynote speakers were a diverse bunch and included a Harvard academic, a self-confessed British policy wonk, one of the Maritime Union of Australia's younger activists as well as a range of local speakers from both public and private sectors in New Zealand.

The flavour of what was said can be gathered from the following quotations:

"The strongest predictor of whether or not a working person sees their union as relevant is whether or not they know their delegate." - David Coats, WorkMatters (UK).

"Sometimes we organise against the employer. Sometimes we work in partnership. But we only work in partnership if

it's on the basis of OUR purpose, OUR mission – not if we get dragged into theirs." - Elaine Bernard.

"No great movement grows by putting out fires; we grow by lighting fires." - Elaine Bernard.

"Youth never come to meetings to read last month's minutes. That's boring. Our youth movement is based on action." - Danny Cain branch secretary MUA.

Danny Cain on the need for youth groups to self-fund protest actions: "If you are going to dress up as the Queen you're gonna need some pearls and shit."

"Who controls the lawyers? Unions should. When lawyers control the unions, that's bad." - Lawyer Peter Cranny.

"412% membership growth in ten years happened by design. We use strategic, militant, rank and file bargaining

and campaigning. Our strategy isn't giving new members free movie tickets."

- Danny Cain

All in all a great conference and one that inspired and affirmed the RMTU attendees.



RMTU health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher presenting to the conference. and (below) with Heiner Benecke.

A hard-working health cover for hard-working people

THERE are many benefits to being a member of the New Zealand Railways Staff Welfare Trust, but one you may not be aware of is that we have our comprehensive Extended Health Plan available exclusively to Group A members and their immediate families.

Through our optional Extended Health Plan, we are very proud to have helped many hundreds of members and their families claim back millions of dollars in often unexpected, urgent, private hospitalisation and diagnostic medical expenses. We have pre-approved treatment in many cases, so that they could just go ahead and get the treatment they need.

We are very proud that our underwriting partner is nib nz limited, New Zealand's second largest health insurer. And with claims administered by Gallagher Bassett, one of the world's largest claims administrators, our members can rest assured that they are in good hands and can expect a swift and importantly, confidential claims processing service.

So what is the Extended Health Plan?

The Extended Health Plan is a voluntary extension that our Group A members can subscribe to by way of easy fortnightly wage contributions to get private health cover for the more serious medical expenses that the Trust's day-to-day cover may not be able to provide for. Cover such as, major diagnostic tests, surgical or medical private hospitalisation including cancer treatment, ACC top-up, a wellness benefit and much more. Did we mention cover in Australia? Yes that too.

It allows you the option to get health care where and when you need it, without worrying about the costs.

The Extended Health Plan has been tailored to suit the needs of our members, working alongside and enhancing the day-to-day cover that Group A members already receive. Importantly for you (and your family), it includes a variety of usable benefits making it one of the most comprehensive and cost-effective healthcare options around.

With simple fortnightly payroll deductions you can also choose from a range of excess levels, enabling you to reduce the premium you pay. In addition, you may even be able to claim your excess costs back against the available benefits within your day-to-day cover. Now we think that's smart.

Do I need the Extended Health Plan?

Having private health cover means you will have access to treatment when you need it. Relying on public hospital waiting lists could mean a prolonged period in pain or discomfort, maybe the inability to continue working? What about a possible

loss of income and the family stress that could create? These are all questions that need to be asked.

Without good quality health cover you are at the mercy of the public system in many cases. With the Extended Health Plan, you are the one in control.

Here's what our Trust members can expect:

- Greater choice: Choose when, where, how and who treats you, in consultation with your GP;
- Financial support: We provide up to 100% cover for even the most serious of conditions;
- Quicker treatment: No hanging around in the public health system;
- Speedier recovery: Getting treated faster means you should be back to work sooner;
- More certainty: Get cover now and you're sorted for any eligible health issues that might happen later; and
- Let us pay your bill: In many cases we can pay the bill direct to your provider.

An exclusive offer for our Group A members

After significant consultation with our underwriter nib nz limited, if you join the Extended Health Plan before 30 September 2016 we will ensure:

- You are covered for eligible pre-existing health conditions after 3 years and some pre-existing conditions after just 12 months. Some general exclusions apply;
- Pre-existing conditions that will be covered after 3 years include cardiovascular conditions, cancer, hip or knee conditions and back conditions; and
- Reconstructive or reparative procedures related to previous surgery will also be covered after three years

This is a valuable benefit to have as it means you'll be covered for any eligible conditions you had before the insurance policy began.

This is a fantastic offer for members and is only available for a limited time. With our Extended Health Plan, you and your family are covered for even the most serious of conditions. Don't put it off.

Oh, did we mention that your policy is fully portable on retirement?

- To find out more about this great offer, get in touch with our Trust adviser David Ballet on 0800 625 676.
- Terms and Conditions apply. A full explanation of the benefits, exclusions and general terms are contained in the policy documents.

Rail weld review

THE RMTU has been approached by KiwiRail to be part of a working party to review the rail weld operations currently undertaken in Auckland. KiwiRail Properties has identified this site as being very valuable with its position next to the mainline.

The site is situated in a very quickly developing industrial area in Otahuhu where freight forwarders Toll, Main Stream and CODA have moved to and where Metrobox have recently expanded their container storage area.

A meeting was held on 1 August to begin reviewing the current operation for what is involved from the time the rails come off the ship, are moved to the Otahuhu site, to being welded into 75m lengths and stored on site before being railed to their location for use.

The value of the land appears to be the determining factor versus the cost of either relocating the existing equipment to a new site or hiring in more mobile equip-

ment from Australia which could see rail welding operations in the both the North and South Island. The potential of no rail ferry is also a consideration for determining where rail welding work will need to be carried out.

The RMTU has been aware for some time that this was on the cards and are looking to KiwiRail for quality information and decision making as it looks for secure futures for its members. 🇳🇿

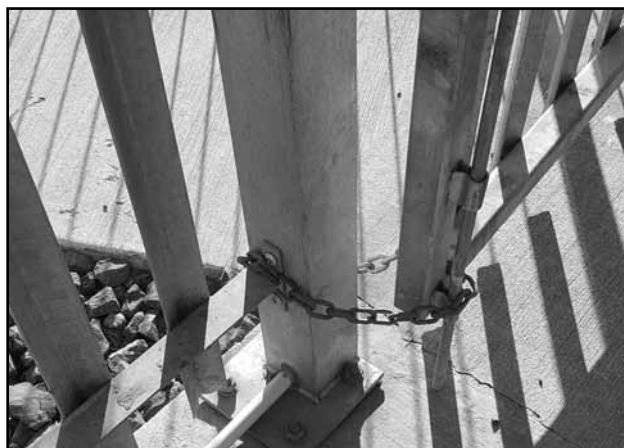
(above) The buffing machine and (right) Kyung 'Joe' Cho grinding the rail after welding.



Emergency exit chained shut

AN emergency exit gate at the Strand Depot, Auckland was found chained and padlocked shut. When RMTU delegate Stuart Gratton first raised this with Transdev management he was very quickly told it was an Auckland Transport issue as they own the facility. After further enquiries from Stuart it was back to Transdev and he was soon given the assurance that the gate would be reinstated to a safe working condition, which it was. This is a good example of effective swift action from an RMTU delegate.

Well done. 🇳🇿



NELSON PORT



Two PNL cranes working the container ship ANL Elinga.

Late winter at Port Nelson

NELSON PORT BRANCH had their AGM on the 16th August. The meeting was well attended, new delegates and branch committee members were elected and all positions filled. Port Nelson members have been focusing on recruiting RMTU members which has been very successful. Well done!

Following the AGM, it was general business time and disappointingly many of the issues that we thought would be resolved by working parties during the term of the current CA are not resolved.

The three main issues or themes are labour ordering, PPE and training. Following the AGM we meet with Port Nelson for the regular consultative meeting and again tabled these issues. The regular consultative meetings between the RMTU and Port Nelson have been in place for over a decade, the CEO and senior management attend these consultative meetings so it is a good opportunity to get one version of the truth and escalate issues that have stagnant progress. 🇳🇿



Long serving RMTU branch president, Peter Hoff, at the controls of the Harbourmaster vessel, Punawai while patrolling the Nelson Harbour.

NORTHLAND RAIL

AS you read this the forgotten world of maintenance teams on the NAL are experiencing a brand new environment with the recent arrival of new, state-of-the-art, tunnel-ready and fire hardened HRV trucks for the track and structures teams. New things are few and far between north of the Auckland Harbour Bridge, whether it be plant, machinery, trucks or even materials, such as recycled hand-me-downs which have been the norm in the past. These welcome additions to the fleet have already proven themselves to be an asset to the health and safety of our workers by reducing noise, fumes, overloading and extremely slow highway speeds. An immediate productivity lift has also resulted. Could this be a new trend for spending on the NAL, or merely a cynical ploy to appease those with rail careers to lose who are making plenty of noise in a defiant stand for Northland rail?

Speaking of health and safety, a number of us have been attending the H&S rep training courses and learning about the upgraded legislation. It's all pretty detailed with changes to wording, processes and other stuff but, in a nutshell, safety is everybody's responsibility. It's not just one person's job to ensure the safety of our workmates we must all work to the rules we are given and if we feel that these are insufficient or that our safety is compromised then we not only have the right, but also the obligation to stop work immediately and reassess the risks.

While the recent announcement that the NZTA would now provide all funding for the operation and maintenance of SH15, meaning it now manages 877km of road in Northland, we have encouraged residents along this route to attend upcoming NZTA consultation meetings, so they can have their say on speed limits, passing lanes and intersections etc.

Northland councils were still responsible for about 5,800km of local roads, and with the high volume of trucks travelling

throughout the region, that is a significant amount of maintenance which ratepayers have to

cough up and fund.

As a province we should be looking at building road-rail hubs similar to what is happening elsewhere. Also noted is the Northland road toll which has sadly already surpassed last years total with still four months to run. Many are truck related, highlighting who comes off second best. Grim statistics identify that the victims are frequently other road users – something which angers people in the region.

Many of those road users would be very envious of the newly opened Waingawa road-rail hub in the Wairarapa. That photo op of Transport Minister Simon Bridges

should be congratulated for their forward thinking for linking the port company and local businesses to make it happen.

We need that same approach in Northland. There certainly appears to be support from the business sector, with a rail freight mapping excise currently involving KiwiRail. Here is hoping we can get something happening up in Otoriria, which is ideally situated for a similar road-rail hub.

It is ironic that as these notes are being written the last log train will be departing Otoriria soon, a bitter pill to swallow for, not just ourselves, but for Northlanders in general.

With the local body elections looming those standing to represent us need to think of the future. That future must include an integrated transport strategy using all modes. An upgrade of the NAL with a rail



bearing his cheesy smile with Piper in the Kiwi Rail Express got under our skin especially as we recall how he chickened out of fronting the April rail forum we hosted. Instead, he flicked a hospital pass to the hapless local MP Shane Reti. We can guarantee he will join the list of MPs including Key and Joyce, to get (NOT) a warm Northland reception if and when he slinks into town.

The Waingawa hub outside Masterton will transfer more than 700 tonnes of logs a day from road to rail, instead of grinding their way over the Rimutaka pass and clogging the Hutt motorway.

That equates to 16,000 truck and trailer trips per year with the volume set to double in two years.

The regional councillors down there

link to NorthPort should be foremost in any thinking, rather than sticking to the same old 'roads only' ideology.

The Grow Northland Rail team will be putting the old boys network in Northland Council to the sword for their treasonous lack of vision for rail up here, having been approached by a strong local ticket seeking a mutually agreeable campaign arrangement. So no doubt there will be some very nervous incumbent councillors come polling day.

Our advice: fresh thinking is always healthy in a democracy, especially where rail is concerned, so vote wisely and campaign to get pro rail people into elected positions. 🇳🇿

WAIKATO RAIL

BY the time you read this we will have completed our AGM and elected the team to take us through the next year. We acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our delegates who work tirelessly to represent us. It's largely a thankless job but very satisfying knowing that being an active part of our great union makes a positive difference. So a huge thank you to outgoing delegates and a warm welcome to the new and re-elected.

Branch officers have been dealing with a number of issues especially the push by management to force LEs back to work after undergoing a medical. In the past LEs were rostered off for the day. This matter is being taken up with the Waikato Local Industrial Council (WLIC) which has held its first meeting. The WLIC has been set up to work through local issues prior to them being raised at the KiwiRail Industrial Council (KIC). Tim Kerwin has worked tirelessly to set this committee up despite Te Rapa management's best efforts to stall them.

Relationships at Te Rapa freight reached boiling point towards the end of August with a lack of meaningful consultation and discussion with delegates. This nearly boiled over into roster rejections however, it pleases me to report that through our actions and words that we have been heard. Peter Reidy said recently "the Union has been the only constant". To solve the issues the local management team has pledged to create a relationship charter between them and the local branch. This will see monthly meetings with the branch chair and the KRM to try and solve ongoing issues involving rosters and fatigue/busts etc. These meetings are in addition to quarterly local industrial council meetings. We see this as a brilliant example of HPHE at a local level and hope it serves as an example for all other terminals and business groups.

LEs have issues around CSP board placing. On two occasions in one week, the RMTU red carded the worksite and shut it down due to safety reasons. There is a real concern around board placements close to (sometimes 300m) controlled signals. LEs feel they should be at the signal, thus providing an extra level of protection in accordance with rule 905. They feel this is the

safest possible option.

The two recent investigations for Rob Wilson and Wayne Menehira are the subject of a review under the Just and Fair Culture Policy (JFC), which is to be conducted with Paul Ashton and the various individuals involved. All investigations are being conducted in a fair and transparent manner consistent with the JFC policy.

Much work is going on behind the scenes with our HSAT teams over the very poor working conditions of the 137/138 shunts. During the winter months, the lime sidings are submerged and the shunter has had to dig through large pools of water and mud to free up the points. The lighting in these sidings is shocking too. However, this is one example of where our HSAT team have jumped all over this and will sort it out. This serves as a timely reminder to everyone to fill out hazard forms and notify your supervisor straight away. If they are not reported then they cannot be fixed and if they are not fixed then one of your workmates may be injured or worse.

The question of late departures from Westfield of the Tranz Scenic trains is causing great difficulties for the Te Rapa LEs. No one at Westfield is prepared to sort it out and the expectation is that the Te Rapa LEs will try and sort it themselves. Someone from Westfield needs to get it sorted.

The question of promotions within Te Rapa is a hot topic with good, highly motivated employees missing out on promotion for no reason or rationale at all. There are discussion about taking out a personal grievance on the basis of discrimination against the Te Rapa managers.

At I&E, after much debate, we finally managed to conduct an investigation under the JFC policy, with a good outcome. However, there are a number of issues that need to be resolved:

- The use of contractors in the Waikato, King Country, Bay of Plenty and Hawkes Bay has arisen again and has now been raised with I & E management.

- There has been a disagreement on the use of labour in the Kamai Tunnel. Our view of the pecking order is as follows; Tauranga then Putaruru then Kawerau then Hamilton and ONLY then could contract labour be

used by agreement.

We are supposed to have a vehicle – with MV utilisation agreement – with KiwiRail, however I&E management refuse to negotiate for some reason.

The use of GPS has been introduced to replace E Road. However, the agreement with I&E is that GPS cannot be used for disciplinary purposes.

At the reformed H&S committee, it was agreed that the H&S reps are not 'actively participating in incident investigations and re-enactments' as outlined in the KiwiRail/RMTU employee participation agreement. The reason for this is that management do not want to pay H&S reps to be involved, which makes a mockery of the H&S reps' role.

A call out roster for the Hamilton area has appeared and members are discussing this issue and getting together the hours so that a wage claim can be lodged.

In Taumaranui, KiwiRail tried to medically retire one of our members even though he had a return to work clearance from his doctor. The Union member is currently being evaluated by a specialist as to his ability to return to work.

We have seen a lot of new staff join the company on the shunt and servicing. We wish them well. Two of our shunters have progressed to become LEs – congratulations. Two other positions were filled by new staff off the street. The branch feels that all the LE candidates could have been taken from the yard and our commiserations are with the shunters who were unsuccessful. We believe in cadetships where staff progress through the company thus creating opportunities for everyone.

We also farewelled two of our long serving LEs; Ken Collins and Lance Thompson. Both were medically retired after over 80 years combined service. We wish them all the best and hope they get the much needed rest after years of shift work.

On a more sombre note, August 7 marks the 25th anniversary since the terrible tragedy that took the life of Te Rapa LE Graeme Orange at Raurimu. Graeme was traveling south to Raurimu when his train struck a huge washout/landslide at just over 50kph. It is estimated it took three seconds for the train to come to a stop. The loss of Graeme is still felt deeply by his family and within his

◀ railway family at Te Rapa where he was a much respected colleague and friend. Peter Sanders shared memories of happier times

while Hillman Humphries has placed six printed NZR badges on lengths of timber by Graeme's memorial site at Raurimu in

everlasting remembrance.

Moe mai te rangatira i nga ringa ringa a to tatou atua. 🇳🇿

HUTT WORKSHOP

THE year is now nearly complete with a batch of eight apprentices joining us in June to bolster our numbers and inject some new blood into the organisation.

Our HPHE initiatives are in full swing now that we've teased some confirmed direction out of Stanley Street, and in association with our new GGM, we've produced a forward-looking 10 year work plan – an alleged first for this site, if not the asset management body (since the good old government department days). Additional to the HPHE initiative, senior KiwiRail management have indicated their desire to roll it out somewhat further afield which has been an objective for some time. At this point we hasten to add, that HPHE (or continuous

improvement by any other name) is not rocket science, it's simply a more open and transparent form of consultation, collaboration and communication. It is intended to result in benefits for all however, it does take time to work closely alongside a greater group of people and produce high quality outputs. By default it requires a culture change which cannot happen overnight! There was a meeting in mid-August to begin firming things up with the RMTU in this regard and I would hope that National Office staff have reported on this within this edition of The Transport Worker.

A four day intensive session was planned to take an holistic look at bogie overhauls and consider a number of improvements with the necessary investment. The

December notes should contain a wrap-up of this initiative.

Quite by chance a review of management turnover has indicated that only one member of the entire management team and its primary support staff are left within KiwiRail and the last person should have departed by the time you receive this periodical. Things continue to change for the better!

Our AGM was scheduled for August 30 complete with a small turnover of one or two representatives including the hotly contested vice-chairman's position.

Site upgrades continue and it has been an interesting exercise controlling multiple contractors – a problem area for the Company given that we seem to fall short (again) of reclaiming the tertiary status within the ACC Accredited Employer Programme. Even ▶

**YOU WORK HARD.
GET HEALTH COVER THAT
WORKS EVEN HARDER.**

A special limited time deal for all NZRSWT Group A members

The NZR Staff Welfare Trust has a hard-working healthcare deal for members wanting to add on to their day to day benefits.

The Extended Health Plan is a private hospital cover including cover for major diagnostics.

Join before 30 September 2016 to have eligible pre-existing conditions* covered after just 3 years (and some pre-existing conditions covered after just 12 months). PLUS the same benefits apply when you add your family to your policy. T&C's apply.

Call the Trust adviser

David Ballett

Phone 0800 625 676

*A pre-existing condition is a diagnosed condition, an injury or symptoms that you are aware of before taking out a policy. Some pre-existing conditions will never be covered. Your adviser can provide further information on what is covered.

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◀ on-site we had an instance where a contractor failed to obey the rules and was told to close-off the job and get off the site! H&S is something we must continue to push-on with. The full report on a serious welding incident in Christchurch earlier this year has apparently been released and is rumoured to present a significant challenge to the Company to overcome all the contributing

factors. Again we hope there is authoritative comment from National Office elsewhere in this periodical.

The MECA report-back meeting was well attended and hotly debated with Todd Valster and Strachan Crang presenting. The outcome of course was another win-win for all parties, so well done to the Union's negotiating team.

Finally on the safety front, we have achieved another significant milestone with the attainment of 12 months LTI (lost time injury) free. This was celebrated with a BBQ acknowledging the efforts of all involved. This truly goes to show what can be achieved when everybody pulls together in the same direction.

Until next, take care and work safe. 🌐

BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

THIS branch is in dispute over the 12 hour for Sulphur Point and the proposed 12 roster for the Mount. Darryl Hoare the branch president, put forward to our inaugural LIC meeting, two ways to resolve this dispute:

- That we come to a local agreement on how to introduce rosters using the draft ROM section 9 as the basis.

- The roster dispute committee to meet to refocus on the roster.

Both were rejected by management.

So a meeting of shunters will be called

to decide on what action to take. It has been agreed that the rate of pay for stopping is to be clarified as there seems to be different rates for stopping in Kinleith, Kawerau and Murupara.

Rule 909 is not being used by contractors when working on Port of Tauranga [POT] railway lines and there have been a number of close calls. Shane McNae and William Lanigan are working with the POT and KiwiRail freight to resolve this issue.

The C3 negotiations have reached the point where both parties are presenting final packages for settlement. Needless to

say there is a difference between the two parties. We have applied for mediation which is set down for the Friday August 26.

The Champion Flour Mill negotiations are heading for a scrap over the wage increase and moving the 53rd week back into the annual leave entitlement. Members, by way of a secret ballot, have authorised the negotiating team to serve notice of industrial action to improve Champion's offer.

Ben Thompson, from Hazel Armstrong Law, is working through our submissions for the Employment Court for the lifejacket policy dispute with POT. We anticipate being in court on November 22, 23 and 24. 🌐

WHERE ARE YOU?

Problems may be looming and we'll need to contact you quickly. Please check we have your correct address and contact details.
<http://bit.ly/exmEyL> or 04-499-2066

NAPIER PORT

THERE are many simple pleasures in life. For many of us it is fishing. According to Sparc, fishing is the second most popular sport and recreational activity for adult men and, amazingly, the ninth most popular sport and activity for adult women with an amazing 646,000 participants.

One of the few enjoyable things about doing a graveyard shift is listening to the occasional banter during ship side operations. Club rugby has a strong following in the Hawke's Bay and 'discussions' on this subject are often, never ending (and enter-

taining), but my personal favourite is the discussions on fishing.

The banter as to who caught what and when is priceless, but most importantly for me, is the where! This information is gold to the left handed fishermen amongst us.

The Golden State Warriors are the NBA champions of 2015 and lost in an epic final series in 2016. The Warriors have a true MVP in Stephen Curry. This guy's immense talent is seen by some as the sole reason for the team's success, yet their motto is 'Strength in numbers'. In this case you would think this is just a slogan to sell more NBA merchandise. Not so. It is a philosophy the

whole team believes in and the results speak for themselves. No one is above the team.

For the first 25 years of my working life I never joined a union and I never really worked closely in a union-orientated work environment. I never really understood what it was all about. For me work was all about the individual and individual employment contracts.

It wasn't until a few years into working in the port industry that I, and a few of my peers, joined the RMTU. This was after a dispute over our employment conditions, where we felt we were hard done by and had nowhere to turn.

We joined after a stressful period for all and a settlement was subsequently negoti-



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If you aren't already in Kiwisaver the provider we use at Nest Home Loans ranked #1 for our growth fund this year (www.interest.co.nz), and ranked #1 for the best service (www.sorted.org.nz). Call the team at Nest now and receive free advice on how to use KiwiSaver to get you into your first home.

Text "RMTU" to 8808 and an adviser will call you back.



Contact Jeff Kerwin Nest's dedicated RMTU liaison
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jeff@nesthomeloans.co.nz | www.nesthomeloans.co.nz

ated. A few years down the track we joined the collective. It was only then did I start to understand what unionism is all about.

I have heard the phrase 'Strength in numbers' many times within the port. It embodies what being a member of a union is all about. Like the Golden State Warriors, no one is above the team. Every one of us is capable of being relied upon for support or aid.

We are all aware of the new health and safety legislation and with it has come a new health and safety system. 'Strength in numbers' now has an even greater meaning.

The new legislation has meant new compliance and reporting regimes are being introduced. With these new systems, new attitudes have been born and new lessons have been learnt.

In Napier a really cool tool, recently implemented, is the ability for anyone to report an incident on a dedicated RT channel, which immediately triggers the investigative and reporting processes.

However, an important lesson has quickly been learnt in Napier, when a hazardous situation occurred. An incident was reported ahead of any warning that a work mate was in imminent danger.



The lesson we all learnt from this, is that at all times, your immediate safety and the safety of your work colleagues, always takes priority over any reporting regime that maybe in place. This event highlights that it is even more important that every member looks out for themselves and their fellow work mates.

I believe the simple lesson is that if at all times we keep ourselves and our work mates safe, then the work site reporting process will be for an incident and not an accident.

With combined vigilance, we ensure that through 'Strength in numbers' we all get home safely and in one piece.

Earlier this month news came through from management, that despite immense competition from other ports we retained a large account. The feedback from this process was that a key feature in Napier Port's success was the ongoing hard work of the teams involved in the processing of this product, from the night crew unloading the rail to the truck drivers and fork lift drivers. In fact a port wide effort and the attention to detail.

This success would never have been achieved by one person alone. The team's attitude and ongoing hard work was achieved by 'Strength in numbers'. 🇳🇿

\$1,500 AD&D

All members of RMTU are now covered by a \$1,500 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit, including \$500 spouse coverage and a further \$500 coverage on dependent children. This is an automatic membership benefit of belonging to the RMTU.

Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year. Please reply on line at ailnz.co.nz/request to have an AIL representative deliver your certificate of coverage and explain the additional insurance coverage available. This is very important to you and your family.

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



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LYTTELTON PORT

BY the time you read this our members covered by the major waterfront agreement with LPC – Cargo Handlers, Marine, Plant and Civil Maintenance, Port Services, Security – will be enjoying the fruits of our successful bargaining with a 2.5% pay increase – the third in two years – and more than six times the current rate of inflation. Let's remind ourselves this did not happen by accident – it was because we stood together and backed ourselves.

And let's also not forget the immense progress we've made in rebuilding the relationship with management since then. Yes, we still have our differences – and we'll continue to do so – but we've also made big strides in improving health and safety with an employee participation agreement, working H&S committees, area operational

forums and better communication. We know there is room for improvement and so does management, but at least we're talking to one another. The RMTU is a 21st century union and we know that big changes are coming in the years ahead, not least those driven by technology, and we're up for the challenge.

And all this good work is getting results for our members. The Trades Rates Review may be stuttering along but it is happening. There is a new and much improved recruitment and selection process being used in the cargo terminal and our members who are in the part-time relieving pool (PRP) cargo handlers successfully organised and agreed to staffing that gives them a better shake of the stick.

Instead of LPC simply employing eight additional PRPs, as they were initially proposing, the company is now also offering eight full time cargo handler positions to current employees.

Over in civil maintenance our advocacy has not gone unheeded and the department is being expanded with the company proposing to recruit three more skilled general hands. The sinking lid policy of recent years appears to be a thing of the past. On the whole, LPC's change proposal for this department is largely viewed positively by our members.

The only point of disagreement at the time of writing is around exact number of FTE roles to be included.

We are also in the process of negotiating two variations to the Lyttelton Port CEA:

1. In port services we have successfully negotiated to include the role of general hand in the CEA with all the benefits that brings. This brings to an end the unsatisfactory practice of employees on fixed-term IEAs and working for employment agencies.

2. In the workshop the lengthy review process of the trades assistant (TA) role has resulted in a proposed new service person role with expanded duties and an increased rate of pay. Although the rate of pay is not



Sickness, accident & death



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

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Attention LEs
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your own peace of mind

◀ quite what we had hoped for, we think it is important to have this new role included in the CEA. It is a significant improvement for the TAs and when we are in bargaining again next year we will be going in to bat for them once again.

Over at City Depot our indefatigable delegates and members continue to do good work and grow the RMTU, again a result of hard bargaining last year. The opening of Midland Port at Rolleston demonstrates how important it is for us to organise across the whole supply chain.

Looking beyond the port gate, the Christchurch City Council and mayoral elections are underway, and in John Minto we have a candidate who has come out unequivocally against the sale of assets which, as readers will know, includes LPC. The Keep Our Assets organisation has successfully made privatisation and the sell-off of council owned businesses a local election issue. Let's hope the people get the message. It's our job to ensure it's transmitted loud and clear.

Back in June our branch secretary had the privilege of visiting Dunedin and attending a meeting of the Port Chalmers branch



RMTU members John Smith (left) and Diccon Hughes with Polly Bysterveld presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to John. Thank you John for your tireless efforts to fellow members and the Union.

as well as undertaking training alongside Otago port and rail delegates. It was a great opportunity to build solidarity across the branches. The Port Otago branch has taken up a couple of the Lyttelton Port branch's initiatives with enthusiasm and we understand the membership there is reading texts and Facebook avidly.

Looking even further afield our branch president has the honour and privilege of representing the RMTU at an International Transport Federation gathering in Montreal, focusing on new ways of organising in the industry. Great stuff, and we're sure he'll come back enthused and re-invigorated. 🇺🇸

CANTERBURY RAIL

GREETINGS from Christchurch. No longer a demolition zone, our city is now unequivocally a construction site. It's progress – rumour has it that the Lyttelton Railway Station, the yet-to-be demolished home of the RMTU's South Island office, is being rebuilt in the form of a portacabin.

The big news is that our KiwiRail MECA and Toll collective agreement have both been ratified.

We should not lose sight of the significance of this as all those terms and conditions did not fall out of the sky, we have them because we're part of a Union that fights for them.

The Just and Fair Culture initiative (TTW 2/2016) has run into a few difficulties and not just in the form of unintelligible pieces in KiwiRail's 'Southern Express' by one of our regional managers. We have two personal grievances lodged from our branch

which have been scheduled for mediation since the policy was rolled out – which is a big departure from past practice. Something isn't working as intended.

GPS units in trucks is causing some controversy. When this was introduced it was sold to us on the very sound grounds that it was a health and safety initiative. It now appears that that undertaking only lasts as long as the manager who gave it. It seems management can now use it as they please to try and discipline workers for doing what they may or may not have been doing for years – with management's full knowledge or tacit understanding.

The Otira Tunnel continues to be top of the agenda when it comes to health and safety and some sterling work is being done by delegates and H&S representatives. A big thank you to Ian Dixon for his determined advocacy on the Oxybox and CABER issue. Ian really is untiring in his efforts on members' behalf and was justly recognised as a

finalist in the National Health and Safety Awards. Thanks Ian, the branch appreciates your efforts and is proud of you.

As readers of The Activist will know we've been having what is euphemistically known as a "restructure" at the Christchurch Service Centre where our stow planners and customer service representatives have been thrown into turmoil because somebody had the not-so-bright idea to reshuffle the pack in order to give the illusion of progress. After a full branch meeting and a first class counter-proposal we managed to save one of the eight jobs under threat. The anger and loss of good will the amateurish proposal from management created will not disappear for some time, if ever.

There's brighter news over in Scenic Journeys where, from being the problem child of the business a few years ago in the wake of the post earthquake downturn in East Coast tourism, the TranzAlpine and Coastal Pacific services are now the jewel in KiwiRail's crown. One practical and welcome result has been the in-sourcing (yes, you read that correctly) of work into the

contact centre so passengers can book with a KiwiRail member of staff and not someone working for a contractor who clips the ticket. Well done KiwiRail bosses!

Another piece of good news is the speed with which the management got moving in mechanical services when we made our discontent heard about the shortage of staff. So, big thanks to the regional and local mechanical bosses and the South Island HR advisor for putting their collective foot

on the gas and employing much needed skilled staff.

To continue on a positive note, LPC's new inland port is now up and running and so are the trains taking containers in and out. We're looking forward to welcoming the staff who work there for LPC into the RMTU family and our rail members will be spreading the good word.

Finally, we've had a couple of retirements of long serving members. Dave

Meredith from Scenic Journeys bids us farewell and over in operations Gordon 'Flash' Holt said goodbye in his own inimitable way. One of this writer's favourite memories of Flash is the story about the boss who said "I'm being serious" to which the reply was "so am I, make me a cup of tea". He wasn't just called Flash because he was Gordon. We hope to see you both around. You can leave the job but you'll never leave the family. 🌐

WEST COAST RAIL

WE feel somewhat like our brothers and sisters in the Timaru Port branch these days – the most newsworthy item about the Buller and Greymouth branches are that we're still here, given the battering our region has had from the winds of neo-liberal economics in recent years. It's evident that the current government has no plan to preserve or develop a high wage economy over here, or anywhere in New Zealand for that matter. At least our houses are affordable, although even that is a sick joke if you need to sell one and buy elsewhere in the country.

Things are not entirely bleak however. The much heralded imminent demise of Solid Energy has not happened and from what we hear the company is trading prof-

itably if one ignores the small matter of the debt racked up by the previous CEO

and Board. We also hear that KiwiRail is running coal trains at a profit if one ignores the capital cost of keeping the coal route maintained and safe. You couldn't have a better argument for rejigging the accounting that loads cost onto KiwiRail while the trucking companies are effectively subsidised.

KiwiRail are investing in rolling stock and undertaking a project to upgrade the coal wagons, always a good sign.

And thanks to the RMTU's determined advocacy it looks like our members who work in the Otira Tunnel will get better breathing and self-rescue equipment shortly. There is also a project to look at running the TranzAlpine with a different train configuration and we're heavily

involved in that.

More good news was that our local manager and Greymouth depot supervisor escaped the axe in a restructure. The proposal to manage the West Coast from Christchurch was barmy and regardless of your view of management in general it's much better we have a local boss on hand than one over the hill in Christchurch.

Another re-structure is on the cards as this is written and our rail operator in Reefton is in the cross hairs. The issue of emergency cover in the Buller Gorge is going to be the tricky part of this particular exercise.

And finally, both the KiwiRail MECA and Toll collective agreement were ratified. So that means another two years with all our terms and conditions locked in – a good thing if there ever was one. Stay safe and roll on spring! 🌐

TIMARU RAIL

THE big issue down here in Timaru has been a so-called restructure that got rid of our local KiwiRail manager and two out of our three office staff, the latter being some of our few women members. It appears that word came down from on high to regional managers to be seen to be doing something to strip cost out of the business and some accepted the challenge with more enthusiasm than others. The reality of this sort of thing is that the real cost is hardly ever considered – and that's the loss of goodwill and productivity contingent on that goodwill.

So we now have a situation where our health and safety rep-

resentatives, with the exception of the branch president, have all resigned as they've had a guts full and we have no functioning HSAT team. That can't be good for business. We have a container operation and terminal that whilst it is not leaderless, has to look for that leadership 160 km up the road. To say we're not happy is an understatement. What was humbling was the amount of support and good wishes expressed by the RMTU women's network and the wider membership in the branch.

What makes this sort of change harder to stomach is that the work is there – we've

seen volumes increase in the last couple of years so why wield the axe now?

On a more positive note we did send a very senior delegate to participate in some delegate training in Dunedin along with our local port representatives. This was both a refresher and an opportunity to pass on experience to our brothers and sisters in the Otago port and rail branches and was both useful and enjoyable.

And finally, let's not forget that both the KiwiRail MECA and the Toll deals were ratified and both those agreements secured above inflation wage increases with no loss of terms and conditions. So it's not all bad. 🌐

PORT TIMARU

ONCE again our proudest achievement is our little branch is not only still here but we're growing in strength and expertise.


Since the Quality Marshalling and Prime Port agreements were settled last year we've had a productive time of it working away getting the cargo across the wharf, and

we've done it safely. Prime Port is employing more regular staff to do lines and so forth, another sign that our port is in good shape.

Back in June we sent four of our officials on a very successful day's training in Dunedin where there was the opportunity to meet and work alongside delegates and active members from our local Timaru

Rail branch and the Otago port and rail branches. This was excellent as it built solidarity as well as giving us the chance to learn new skills and knowledge.

On a sadder note our branch president suffered a family bereavement a few weeks ago that was a great shock. Our thoughts are with you and your family Naylor.

To all our brothers and sisters, work safely and stand tall. 

PORT CHALMERS

WE'VE had a busy three months at Port Otago and much of it has been positive. Since the joint Otago rail and port branch meeting in April there has been a flurry of activity.

We thank Chris Lydiate for all the great work he did as branch secretary. Chris has a young family and has decided to take a break from being a union official for a while. Chris, your quiet but assertive manner is an example to us all and we're sure you'll be back on the executive one day soon. A big thank you to Jane Sherer for stepping into the breach in the meantime. Cometh the hour, cometh the woman!

Our delegates attended an RMTU training day in Dunedin together with members from KiwiRail, Toll and Dunedin Railways. This was very useful in reminding us of the value of an organising and industrial approach and encouraging our members to be confident in handling issues themselves with the support of the wider union.

The Lyttelton Port branch secretary visited and attended our branch meeting the following day and explained how his branch have established a real time communications system based on mass texting. We have implemented this and it is starting to prove very useful. Of course its real value will become apparent when we need to mobilise our members for action, either in support of the wider RMTU or Otago union membership, or on our own account.


We have also set up a closed branch Facebook page which is being used by some of our members. The key to these different systems of communication is that we have to use whatever members' preferred methods are – whether it's text, social media, or good old fashioned newsletters.

Our National health and safety officer visited and also attended a branch meeting. Karen Fletcher gave a very helpful update on the new H&S legislation and the role of H&S representatives under the new Act. This was well received. We are fortunate

to be part of a national union that puts our safety at the top of its priorities and to have the expertise of professionals like Karen to draw upon.

We are also the best dressed branch in the RMTU as we've spent a bit of our funds on union apparel and now our members have RMTU beanies and baseball caps and our officials have shirts. This has been a good way of fostering our RMTU identity.

One of our younger members, Allan Jaquiere, has been selected by the National Management Committee to attend an International Transport Federation (ITF) conference in Montreal specifically aimed at building strength amongst younger workers. What a great opportunity! We're sure the experience will prove inspirational and will result in an enthused activist returning to our shores with heaps of new ideas.

So, all in all, a good three months. There are many things we have to do as our industry and members face more than enough challenges but we're confident the branch is growing in our ability to meet these. Kia kaha and be safe! 

OTAGO RAIL

IT is noted by the Dunedin branch that Neil Campbell has retired. Neil has had many roles within rail during his career from engineering through to various management positions. Some of which saw him and the branch on opposite sides of the desk and through some difficult times for

the industry. Most we were able to get through with our tempers in check.

The branch and KiwiRail will miss Neil and his intimate knowledge of all things rail and wishes him and his family all the best for whatever retirement has to offer.

It is also noted that Peter Tutty is retiring. The place will not be the same without

Peter and his famous quote: "The place is f.....d shag." The branch wishes Peter well in his retirement.

Hugh Butler has seen a stint in hospital and is now home, hopefully on the mend.

Rebecca Hauck has returned from a trip to her home country to check up on the Donald Trump campaign. She reports that it's going ok at the moment.

One of our team leaders is on light

duties at the moment - here's hoping for a speedy recovery Warren.

The medical reviews have taken their toll of the category one people, with several off for stress tests to check the heart function – all based on the body mass index. No fails as this is written. Please remember that if you are put down for further tests, then you are on light duties until the tests are complete and you are cleared for normal duties. You don't have to use your sick leave.

The main line is seeing a lot of activity of late, with the ballast cleaner doing various sections to the south of Dunedin. The Caversham Tunnel will have now had all the track sets replaced and tamped for normal running. This has meant regular work trains to replenish the ballast – a good use of our time during the down season for the dairy industry.

The branch has its AGM looming, please make sure you can get along and have your say. Remember the branch is not run for you, it is run by you.

Many of the branch delegates and

KiwiRail managers attended the Just and Fair Culture seminar recently and by all accounts it was well liked. It provides clear guide lines for all investigation and disciplinary processes. The branch looks forward to seeing it work properly.

Our brothers and sisters at Dunedin Railways (aka Taieri Gorge Railway) have been living in interesting times.

Following an improvement notice issued by WorkSafe requiring that they undertake health monitoring with regards to exposure to noise, dust and fumes to members working in the depot and on track maintenance, management reacted excessively.

They appointed a private occupational health and safety service to carry out full medical assessments equivalent to NRSS Categories One and Two – a double up of normal medicals our members undergo by the Company doctor.


The full medical assessment was seen as unnecessary by members and advice was given to only undertake the health monitoring as required by the improvement notice.

Management finally saw sense and eventually agreed with our point of view.

As reported in the July Activist, collective employment agreement negotiations are occurring about now. The RMTU has kept its wage claims to a modest level over the last year or so to assist Dunedin Railways get over some lean years and to preserve jobs.

But tourism in our neck of the woods is recovering including an expected marked increase in the cruise ship excursion market and we wish to have some of that in our pay packets.

RMTU Dunedin held a well attended AGM in July. Well attended as membership has ballooned an amazing 35% because of the increased profile of the RMTU during our activity over the past year, culminating in the recent high profile picket of the Dunedin Railway Station which featured in the June edition.

RMTU Dunedin railways now have a healthy 80% coverage in all areas of the workforce with our new members now enjoying the protection that a strong and well-resourced union provides. 

SOUTHLAND

In a July issue of the Southern Express our Southern regional operations rep wrote a piece based on a just culture and how we must pay attention to safety. I agree with this concept but this also raises the question on how to deal with the hazards left by others that affect our day to day work practices. Going on from what he said about how full and open disclosure should be encouraged and not feared, the following needs some very urgent attention.

As we all know the low season provides the opportunity for track work to be carried out in places where needed without unduly holding up trains. This opportunity was taken on the MSL between Dunedin and Invercargill and well done to those who carried out this work. There is an issue however, as the conditions that have been left behind for the freight operating staff to work in can only be described as a hazard. To be specific the length of main line between Wahola and Waipahi at various meterages leaves a lot to be said about safety. A lot of

formation work and drainage and sleeper replacement as well as ballast cleaning has


been done and at the time of writing is still going on but it appears that the planners have not considered where people will walk if we put a train on the track. Open ditches and drains full of water on both sides of the track, steep ballast and heavy track side vegetation, mounds or ballast slippery clay and discarded rail are all a problem.

Between Clinton and Balclutha there are three dragging gear detectors at various locations and when they are activated the LE is required to go and check the train, and - you guessed it - at all of these locations formation work has been carried out and hazards have been left. Also in this section a new bridge was built but no walk way was put in place on this 70 metre bridge. Do the people who plan this work ever go and have a look at what is left behind and consider the health and safety ramifications?

In this section, MSL trains run mostly during the hours of darkness and are generally anywhere between 500 and 900 metres

long. When something happens and the LE refuses to get out of the cab, who gets the call to render assistance? Our fear is that if we hold up trains because of this a witch hunt will occur by management.

The conditions our RCOs and shunters work in at Bluff when they have to place wagons to the Southport cool store are also difficult. This area is used to store export logs beside the track and can only be described as a muck heap with mud and water from trucks all over the place along with the logs being stacked up higher than the concrete bolsters that hold them in place and meant to stop them rolling off the heap.

On a positive note the KiwiRail MECA and Toll agreements have been ratified which has to be good news. We know that plenty of workers in New Zealand aren't getting pay increases – four out of ten according to the CTU – so we're glad we're part of a union that fights for a fair deal. A few of our people attended a joint RMTU-KiwiRail Just and Fair Culture seminar in Dunedin in July which was, by all accounts, well presented. And spring is just round the corner! 

High performance high engagement – too right!



The finished product – fully overhauled DFT locomotive bogies at Hutt workshops.

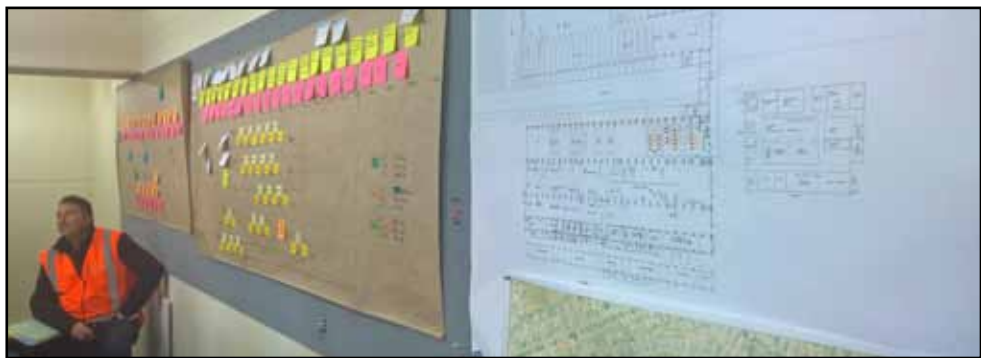
THE KiwiRail/RMTU High Performance High Engagement (HPHE) project at Hutt Workshops is gaining momentum. While there is the whole site HPHE project, the current focus is on the processes around auxiliary components, specifically bogies, wheelsets and traction motor overhauls the Auxiliary Components Project (ACP).

As with all HPHE projects, the first thing to do is agree on the rules of engagement set by the team. Training is provided and from there it is down to the hard work mapping the current way work is done with virtual stream mapping and spaghetti diagrams. Once the mapping is done then these diagrams can be studied to identify where waste exists.

Wastes includes:

- Motion of people and parts that can be eliminated or reduced with a better layout;
- Waiting and delays that can be reduced with better planning and scheduling;
- Unnecessary transportation of parts;
- Unnecessary storage and over-processing;
- Defects;
- Over-production; and
- Inventory issues – too much of what you do not need and not enough of what you do need.

From there we work out how planning, scheduling and the arrangement of the worksite can improve productivity and safety. This thorough process also identi-



The walls are covered with the mapping done to date. These have been created by the workers and management. The maps show the depth of understanding and experience of our members.

fies skills required, succession planning and new equipment and plant. With these processes in place solid business cases can be put together for future investment in people and plant.

Some of the members of the ACP team have visited rail workshops in Melbourne to see sites which had been through these processes with successful outcomes that improved safety and productivity. These site

visits took the theory to date into practical applications.

Roy Sullivan, the new GGM mechanical has extensive experience on similar projects. Roy has arranged for three consultants to support the ACP team. The consultants arrived in NZ on August 28 and are on site at Hutt working with the ACP team. They will be in NZ for 4-6 weeks and back again if required. 🌐



Members of the ACP team meeting in the newly refurbished rooms at Hutt. KiwiRail have cleaned out some old rooms and stores, painted them and added lighting, carpet tiles and a kitchen enabling HPHE teams to meet on site.