

THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

**SEP
2021**

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

Phosphate
carrier
meets wall
of protest

OCEANMASTER

MONROVIA

11 41340



RMTU
STRONGER TOGETHER



6 CLIMATE AND UNIONS

There's a critical role for unions in tackling climate chaos and disaster.

14 WOMEN IN RAIL

It's no illusion - more women are working in rail than ever before according to research from Transdev.

32 RMTU FORUMS

RMTU women's rep Rebecca Hauck surrounded by two MUNZ reps meeting at a successful forum in Wellington.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Napier Port workers protesting the arrival of more blood phosphate to New Zealand. (l to r) Dave Marden, Tu Heather, John Scott, Warren Nicholas, Jared Parnell and Phil Taana. See page 12.

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

Design and production by Mike Regan.

Printed by Pivotal+Thames Publications Ltd, P O Box 11–025, Wellington.

WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ

ISBN 1173–6488



**Wayne Butson,
General secretary
RMTU**

Lockdown logic testing patience

LOCKDOWN level 4 version 2 has been quite different for a number of our members when compared to version 1. The vast majority of the employers we deal with saw this lockdown level 4 as business as usual, which caused a lot of anguish and stress for members, and to Union staff as we dealt with all the inquiries.

"My work was not essential last lockdown and so why is it now?" was my main question. The Union issued guidance to members based on the Government's guidance and this time under the heading Transport and Supply Chain it stated essential now included maintenance. Contrast this with the fact that we are now fighting a more virulent strain of Covid19 and, ergo, the questions and bemusement of members rolled in.

As I write this we remain in level 4 but there is hope that with the exception of Auckland and Northland the rest of NZ will change to level 3. [Indeed this happened.] The symbolism of this should not be lost on us Kiwis as yet again we have fought the virus and won. Sadly, our neighbours across the Tasman with their inferior Federal leadership are paying the price.

As each day passes we get closer to the deadline on the maritime border of the Government's health order which is characterised as 'no job no job' for any of our members who are on or near ships. Whilst I have simplified the order it is nonetheless open to very broad definition and port and stevedore employers are in many cases taking as broad a view as possible and hiding behind the border order.

We have repeatedly requested Government for clarification of the order. For example, line crews, are they on or near a ship. In our view they aren't but some port employers are saying they are.

Vaccinations continue at pace and we are beginning to get down to the hard core of those who will not take the jab. We will endeavour to seek alternative duties for these members but I do fear that many will either leave the industry or will be forced out. In my view this is only the beginning as we have more corona virus versions manifesting themselves into harbingers of pandemics. Lockdown and a guilty diet of watching too many Hollywood pandemic movies which are being churned out currently may be responsible for the doom and gloom outlook!

We have also just learned that the Auckland rail contract has been won by Auckland One Rail an entity comprised of ComfortDelGro and UGL Rail. The metro rail franchise is fully unionised and have proven their unity and solidarity when

needed since the inception of the franchise in 2004 which is why Auckland Transport specified in the contract documentation that any new operator MUST take on all staff on their same or more favourable terms and conditions of employment.

No doubt we will find out in the coming weeks and months why the bid winner made no effort to meet with us during the bid process spanning more than two years. However, be assured we will establish a relationship with them based upon mutual respect and perhaps, once earned, mutual trust.

KiwiRail bargaining continues and it also is very different to past years. The Union rank and file delegates are very focussed on achieving a large remuneration increase paid at a universal flat rate whilst the company has returned to seeking clawbacks of hard won conditions. For example, how can you be undertaking a major piece of work on managing fatigue risk for loco engineers and table a claim to seek increased productivity from the same group saying, you simply cannot reduce the availability hours of work for loco engineers as a fatigue management tool and not diminish productivity, utilisation or availability.

Clearly in the rail land alternative universe there is some form of reverse logic at play.

The last High Performance High Engagement governance group meeting was in February of this year and during it both parties agreed that there was no point in meeting again as HPHE was not supported by the chief executive and the KiwiRail board.

I cannot remember when a KiwiRail CEO last attended a meeting of the HPHE governance group. In my view HPHE is dead in KiwiRail (except for Hutt Shops where it is so embedded in the culture of both management and staff that it will prevail despite who is in charge of the trainset) and Just Fair Culture is on life support in ICU.

For me this wage round has a similar feel to those of the 1990s. Members need to prepare for the use of industrial force in this negotiation – in good faith of course.

As we move into the final quarter of 2021 please be safe, be kind and be united as we are truly Stronger Together! 🌐

Passenger rail upgrades

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article regarding long distance passenger rail (TTW June 2021).

That rail passenger services should be separated from regional councils and KiwiRail and should instead be vested in a separate state-owned entity, is what many rail people have been saying recently, and what I have been saying for many years.

The Government needs to reform the entire rail industry putting all rail passenger services in a new state-owned entity along with transferring the infrastructure from KiwiRail to the existing rail land holding SOE NZ Railways Corporation, which should be run as an essential infrastructure statutory corporation or agency, like the NZTA. This would leave KiwiRail to focus on doing what it does best and operate as a commercial SOE rail/freight operator, paying track access fees along with any other operator on a fully open network.

Further, this would ensure the current limited number of lines and passenger services remain running or can be expanded without hinderance by regional boundaries.

The RMTU needs to organise a meeting with the Minister of Transport and urge him to make it happen for the survival of our industry and our members' jobs.

With regards to some other initiatives outlined in the article:

- instead of transferring the current Northern Explorer set to the South Island, I would recommend it be used to run a new daily return service between Auckland and Opuia once the upgrade of the North Auckland Line is completed. This will obviously require the reinstatement of the short missing section of track between Otiria and Kawakawa and NZRC to takeover responsibility of the Bay of Islands Vintage Railway's track between Kawakawa and Opuia.
- A new daily return Southerner between Christchurch and Dunedin
- Also in Dunedin, a suburban service between Port Chalmers and Mosgiel and the Tairei Gorge line should also be transferred to NZRC to become part of the national network.

- Tranz Alpine service could be extended to Hokitika.
- With the Pahiatua Railcar Society now owning the three Silver Fern railcars, perhaps they could be utilised to run a new daily commuter service to Wellington and a middle of the day service to Napier.
- New commuter rail services between Christchurch, Rangiora and Rolleston; Dunedin to Port Chalmers and Mosgiel; between Hamilton Huntly and Cambridge; and a midday service from Wellington to Whanganui.

Other rail dreams could include an Auckland/Wellington multi-purpose train carrying passengers and vehicles; charter fleets for both islands; and daily Mount Maunganui-Auckland services;

The current trial Te Huia service between Hamilton and Auckland needs urgent attention by running express from Papakura to Otahuhu where it will meet a large new interchange station with better connections and up its Saturday service by running to Newmarket.

Finally, there needs to be a standardised smart card ticketing system which can be used across all forms of public transport nationwide.

Regards,

Isaac Broome.

(This letter was condensed)

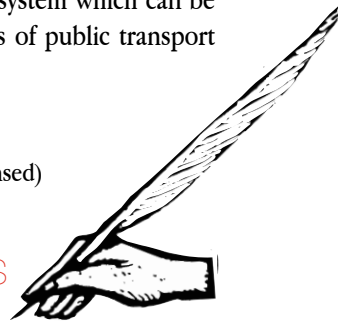
Retirements

Dear Editor,

After 43 years service to the Union I have decided to retire and resign from the RMTU.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work and represent many members from different parts of the country whether they be rail or port workers.

I started getting more involved with Union affairs back in the days of the Locomotive Engineers Association then with amalgamation of the rail unions – the Rail Trades Association and the Railway Officers Institute. The union became known as The Combined Union Of Railway Employees. Sadly at this stage the NUR didn't join us. However, it was only a matter of time before the NUR joined with CURE and the Harbour Workers Union to form the RMTU.



◀ This strengthened our unity during a time when workers rights were being removed by the then coalition government of National and NZ First, who also partially dismantled ACC, which meant fair compensation was hard to achieve. The RMTU management committee and head office, headed by Ross Wilson and Jim Kelly, protested with placards against changes to ACC. We protested outside the offices of the Employers Federation in the middle of rush hour traffic. We had a great response from the public as they went home from work. The ACC act has subsequently gone through a process of amendment and is in better shape now.

I was elected on to the inaugural Management Committee of the RMTU. It was a pleasure working and debating issues with the men and woman on this committee. Sadly some of these members have passed on but I learnt a lot from them.

In its first week CURE initiated strike action against the draconian Employment Contracts Act, which Tranz Rail went to the High Court to stop. They failed and the strike went ahead. We were the first union to do this. Since the strike there has been many more battles but this one was by far the biggest.

During my time on the executive Tranz Rail were exempted from the Health and Safety Act and, sadly, as a result lives were lost with no accountability.

I was at a meeting with Wayne Butson in Wellington of the Track Warrant Steering Committee, following the Waipahi tragedy, when word came through that a union member and workmate had been killed in at work accident in Christchurch. The meeting was immediately adjourned and afterwards we spoke to a staff instructor in the foyer. When we informed him of what had happened he went a ghostly white. We stayed with him. He knew the person. Having seen this a few times in my career and what impact it can have on people underlines how safety in the workplace must be a priority. The incoming Labour Government set up a ministerial inquiry to investigate Tranz Rail Health and Safety Procedures. This forced Tranz Rail to change the way they handled health and safety issues.

I represented loco engineers on the loco industrial council under Tranz Rail Toll and Kiwi Rail. These forums are a great way to ensure that safety and operational

issues can be resolved.

I was also involved with the steering committee to look at issues involving the operation of track warrants as a result of the Waipahi tragedy. It sorted out some of the faults and failings.

The changes that were made to the rule-book using ASR made it more manageable and easier to understand thanks to the work of our committee of Bernie Henare, Arnold Anderson, Chris Taurua and myself

The Sleep Management Programme set up by Professor Phillipa Gander was done because of an increasing number of train roll overs directly related to lack of sleep and fatigue. It is my belief that a lot more must be done on this issue. Section three of the ROM is in need of on going changes especially in places such as Te Rapa, Palmerston North and Christchurch.

Another project I was involved in was the universal cabs which involved the modernisation of the DFT locomotive. Sadly only two of these locomotives were built.

Then Murray Dunlop, Wally Wallbutton and I were involved in designing the cab layout on the DLs. The three of us became known as Team BMW. We went to China to design the cab with a cab mock up. Then helped in the introduction of these locos into the network. The last loco that I drove, DL 9204 was the prototype or the first loco that CNR produced.

My last project was with the National Tunnels Committee formed as a result of several noncompliance notices issued to KiwiRail by Work Safe New Zealand. It included a review of safe working procedures in the Kaimai Tunnel in 2014 brought about by incidences over a short period of time. Rules and regulations were drawn up to ensure all work was done in a safe manner.

When I was on the Union Management Committee I was involved in quite a few wage round negotiations including one that involved the outsourcing of parts of the business by Tranz Rail. In order to protect the conditions of members who would be affected by such changes, the Union negotiated that these members would retain their conditions.

The outsourcing of sectors within rail was a big failure in my opinion. I remember being in the boardroom of the Union office when the highly confidential outsourcing documents arrived for the Union to peruse. I refused to look at any of these documents.

I did not like the way that the splitting up of the company was going. This was a particularly tough time.

The second wage negotiation of note was realigning the wage rates and reducing the number of wage codes to make sure members who were doing the same job got the same rates.

I would like to thank the industrial officers and the management committee for their expertise and time. This Union is in good hands.

The only thing of concern to me is local branch representation. There needs to be an injection of new committee members to branches.. There should be monthly branch meetings. It is the only way members can have their say and get interested in branch affairs.

Finally I would like to thank Wayne Butson, Todd Valster, Phil Spanswick, Karen Fletcher and the late Scott Wilson and Brian Cronin whose advice was a great help in times of adversity.

I wish the union all the very best for the future.

Bernie Snook
Locomotive engineer
Te Rapa.

Dear Editor,

As I have now retired medically and I wish to formally resign my membership of the RMTU.

I started working for New Zealand Government Railways on Monday, May 10, 1976 and retired from KiwiRail on Thursday, June 10, 2021 with exactly 45 years and one calendar month of service with the various incarnations of the national rail system.

During that time I have been a member of the Locomotive Engineers' Association (LEA), the Combined Union of Railway Employees (CURE), and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU). And as you will know, during the first 23 years of my career, I held a number of branch, regional and national positions in all three generations of our great trade union.

I wish to formally thank yourself and all officers of the Union, and the membership in general, for supporting me throughout those four-and-a-half decades and being such a great bunch of workmates. We have had some great times together and have won many employment victories. I feel really proud of the organisation and

Pre-lockdown chaos north of Wgtn



FOR many Wellington commuters lockdown started early when severe lashing of rain caused a hill to slide over SH1 between Paekakariki and Pukerua Bay causing utter chaos at peak morning rush hour and forcing many to return home. It also derailed a train unit on the line above the road.

Later that day the Government announced a nationwide lockdown.

Meanwhile, we heard KiwiRail crews were up to their knees in mud preparing to lift the derailed passenger train back on to

its tracks.

The carriages were successfully lifted back on to the rail line that night after two crews worked 12-hour shifts around the clock battling difficult weather conditions including rain, hail and mud up to their knees.

Two cranes were brought in to do the heavy lifting and overhead power lines were temporarily moved to allow space for their operation.

Well done, to all concerned! 🇳🇿

◀ its predecessors for everything which has been achieved.

Please accept my best wishes to yourself and the other officers of the RMTU and here's hoping you continue to achieve results for the workers you represent. It has mostly been a really enjoyable 45+ years working with a great bunch of people at Napier, Gisborne and Masterton.

R Bruce Scott

Retired locomotive engineer
Masterton.

Dear Editor,

After 47 years with rail and as a member of the RMTU I have decided to call time and close that chapter of my life.

In saying that I have been privileged to have been a member of the NUR, LEA, CURE, and the RMTU over my whole railway career. I know there are many people who have been leaders within our Union but for me, Todd and Wayne have been my go-to contacts.

Personally, the Union hasn't just ensured that my wages and conditions have

always been protected but Wayne and Todd have provided advice, support, and have been my advocate when required. For that, I will be forever grateful.

Stronger together.

Kind regards

Robin Simmons.

Conference gratitude

Dear Editor,

I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the NZCTU Women's Conference held in Wellington.

Not only did I get to spend some time with three amazing RMTU delegates, Tangiwai, Nicola and Jeanette, but also to meet and connect with other delegates from unions around New Zealand.

Attending a workshop on how to better represent members was a highlight for me as I am a new delegate and the information was invaluable.

All the keynote speakers had something to contribute and get the brain thinking

about how we can be better sisters to each other across the union movement.

It was a great learning experience
Margaret Trestain.

Dear Editor,

It was a privilege to attend the NZCTU women's conference and represent RMTU. It gave me many new learning opportunities to further develop my knowledge and the processes in our Union and as a delegate.

The conference gave me the opportunity to build relationships and make new connections with like minded sisters and also connect with sisters who work within Interislander and are delegates of other unions.

One of the highlights for me was the remit session which, if implemented by government, will benefit all working employees of New Zealand. For example the increase to Kiwisaver on a yearly basis till we reach a 9.5% and the removal of GST for fruit, vegetables and diary products.

Nicola Gapper.

Picton

Critical union role combating climate change



As *The Transport Worker* went to press the president of the vital UN climate talks urged drastic action to curb carbon emissions after scientists warned there was only a small chance of escaping the worst ravages of climate breakdown.

The 26th annual Conference of the Parties (aka COP26) of signatories to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a treaty that came into force in 1994, is set down for later this year in Glasgow.

As preparations were underway the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report that was eight years in the making, marshalling the work of hundreds of scientific experts and peer-review studies. This set out the starkest warning yet on the widespread and "unprecedented" changes to the climate that are "unequivocally" the result of human actions.

Extreme weather events resulting from these changes are already being seen around the world and are worsening, in the

form of rising temperatures, more frequent and fiercer storms, heatwaves, droughts, floods and sea level rises.

Temperatures rising

Global temperatures are likely to increase 1.5C above pre-industrial levels in the next two decades, the threshold set as the ambition of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, and only sharp and immediate cuts in greenhouse gases this decade could stabilise the climate system according to the IPCC report.

PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

The plan has an external administrator and contributions are invested with four fund managers.



Ports Retirement Plan

Download a copy of the Product Disclosure Statement from our website:
www.portsretirement.org.nz

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

'The fight against climate change is illusory without public ownership and democratic control of resources and energy'

- International trade union statement.

◀ Alok Sharma, the British minister who will preside over the Cop26 UN climate summit in Glasgow this November, said countries must act.

"If ever there was going to be a wake-up call to the world when it comes to climate change, this report is it. But the future is not yet written. The very worst of climate change is still avoidable," he said.

The Paris climate agreement ambition of limiting warming to 1.5C, and staving off the worst impacts of climate breakdown, was "still achievable, but retreating and retreating fast", he said.

"What we really need now is for all major emitters to play their part, and the G20 are going to be absolutely key to our 1.5C future," he added.

G20 governments, comprising the world's biggest economies and including developed and developing countries, are responsible for about 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and about 85% of GDP.

Three countries still to submit plans

Sharma did not single out particular governments, but those yet to put forward plans for emissions cuts before Cop26 include China, India and Brazil.

For Sharma's call to be heeded a huge change in how we organise the global economy would have to happen, and happen quickly.

Unions are making their voices heard in the discussion about decarbonising the global economy. In July the RMTU participated in an international trade union



forum on ecological and social transitions coordinated by the French union, the CGT, involving 130 organisations across all continents. Due to COVID19 travel restrictions this was done via video-conference.

The key point about this forum was that it focused on the social aspect of the transition to a decarbonised economy. At its conclusion a statement was published saying, amongst other things: 'the role, impact, weight and cynicism of multinational companies in the face of the ecological and social emergency, often in connivance with governments, are fundamental obstacles to the implementation of a serious transition. The fight against climate change is illusory without public ownership and democratic control of resources and energy'.

The RMTU participated in the transport sub-forum together with other transport unions. The re-nationalisation of rail in New Zealand was of great interest to our brothers and sisters in Europe, Asia, Africa and North and South America, many of whom are fighting off continued attempts to privatise transport networks by liberal-authoritarian and neo-fascist

governments. This demonstrates that the fight for democracy and the struggle for social and environmental progress are intrinsically linked.

Unions need to be at the front of debate

As the forum concluded: 'work is at the centre of the equation of ecological and social transition. A real transition must guarantee to those who lose their jobs today that they will be able to find one tomorrow of equal or higher quality.'

It is not only climate change that will affect work, the accelerating pace of technological change, notably automation, will have a huge impact on the type and number of jobs available over the next few decades.

Here in New Zealand, unions have to be at the forefront of the debate about such change, either through involvement in initiatives like Labour's Future of Work project, or contributing to the discussion around coastal shipping and a national port strategy, or promoting the shift of freight transport from road to rail. 🇳🇿

New fatigue guidelines

WORK SAFE NZ has put the employer (also known as PCBU or person conducting business undertaking) on notice that they need to manage the risk of fatigue from shift work. Worksafe's new guidance called "Managing the risks of shift work-Guidance for PCBUs" is now available on the Worksafe website.

The guidance requires PCBUs to work with workers and their representatives to have "a robust fatigue risk management system".

This includes identifying who is at risk of fatigue, strategies for reducing the risk – such as good rostering processes – and a system to monitor whether the controls are effective.

Worker engagement key

The effects of fatigue from sleep debt are likened to the effects of drugs and alcohol. People who are fatigued may not even be aware of how impaired they are.

The risk of making a fatigue-related error increases with the build up of sleep debt.

The guidance also discusses the long term health effects from shift work, such as an increased chance of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Apply smart rostering and shift work design

The guidance stresses "there is no perfect schedule" but there are rostering principles that are underpinned by science that will help reduce the build up of cumulative sleep debt and fatigue.

Key points

- Forward rotating shifts rather than backwards rotating shifts are better for reducing fatigue.
- Most adults need between 7-9 hours sleep per 24 hours, so breaks between shifts need to be long enough to allow time for sleep, commuting and domestic activities.
- When switching from day to night shifts – or vice versa – rosters should provide a minimum of two nights full unrestricted sleep.
- Avoid shifts which are over 12 hours long



and limit 12 hour shifts to two or three consecutive nights.

- Rotate staff through different work stations to help reduce fatigue.
- Provide suitable and safe facilities for workers to take a nap, particularly before travelling home after a long shift.

In 2018 the RMTU National Conference endorsed an RMTU fatigue risk management policy which included a commitment

to negotiate hours of work provisions to provide for adequate sleep opportunity and two nights consecutive sleep following the last night shift. 🌍

Please contact your RMTU health and safety organiser, Karen Fletcher, if you have any queries, doubts or concerns: kfletcher@rmtunion.org.nz

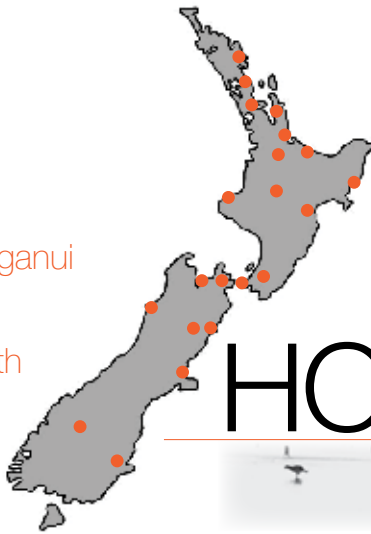
Find the guide at:
worksafe.govt.nz/assets/dmsassets/WKS-Shift-Work-GPG.pdf

Wellington electric depot



RMTU delegates and managers representing Hyundai Rotem and Transdev, have successfully concluded the consultation and implementation of the electric shunt vehicle at the depot.

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



HOLIDAYS



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

Phone: 0800-806-444

E-mail: info@nzrwelfare.co.nz

Website: nzrwelfare.co.nz

Facebook: facebook.com/nzrwelfare

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



Ashburton hero



Bruce Baxter (above) helping passengers board his 'bus' and (r) the slump in the middle of the bridge.



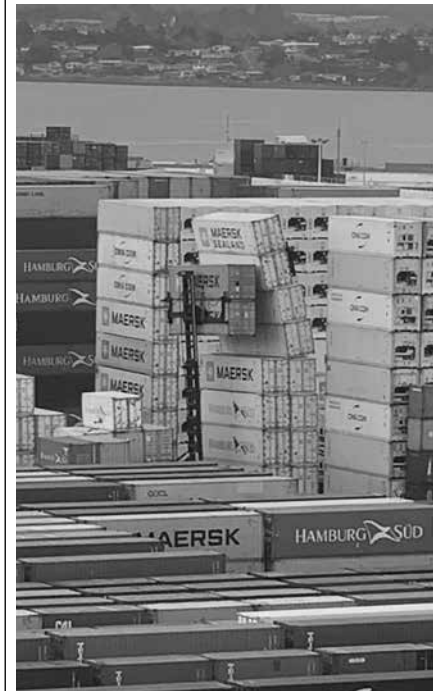
L OCALS had nothing but praise and gratitude for Bruce Baxter who established a new rail passenger service transporting locals across the Ashburton River to Tinwald using his hi-rail truck.

Bruce saw a gap in the transport market during the extraordinary flooding in early June which caused the road bridge to slump and be closed to traffic. However the rail bridge was fine.

"He did an amazing job," said one grateful local.

Apparently he paid for all the fuel himself – what a champion! 🌐

Dodgy stacking



Despite the obvious risk, Neither WorkSafe or Maritime NZ has published minimum standards for safe container stacking. This example from Port Tauranga.

\$10,000 ADB

All members of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union are now covered by a \$1,500 *Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefit*, including \$500 spouse coverage and a further \$500 coverage on dependent children. This is an automatic membership benefit of belonging to the Rail and Maritime Transport Union. **Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year.**

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

Reply online: ailnz.co.nz/request

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

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

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



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



RMTU WOMEN

The RMTU fully supports equal opportunities for women and men

Jeanette Aspin

Stevedore, Port Nelson

What does your job involve?

As a stevedore the job involves working in a team to unload and load vessels. At Port Nelson these are usually container vessels or log boats. There are a variety of roles that a stevedore can be asked to perform on a given shift - wharf hand, deck hand, driving a mafi truck, driving a forklift, hatching, working in the yard, driving a crane. Your role will depend on what you have been trained to do.

How long have you been a member of the Union and what is your role?

I have been a member of the RMTU for two and a half years. Recently I was given the opportunity as a Union member to be an observer during the collective negotiations. This was a fascinating insight into what goes on between the RMTU executive team and the management team at Port Nelson to reach an agreement for employees in the union.

I was also fortunate to attend the NZ Council of Trade Union Women's Conference. This year's CTU conference was a fantastic opportunity to learn and be



inspired from the experienced speakers, network with other delegates from the RMTU and a range of over 18 unions from around New Zealand.

One part of the conference that left a lasting impression on me, was the youth panel session. The three women on the panel were each asked three rounds of questions - their answers showed they held strong beliefs and were passionate

about their various causes. They all spoke confidently and clearly, it was inspiring. If we can grow our unions with young confident committed women like this, we are in good hands.

What do you think about working in a male dominated industry?

I enjoy working in a male dominated industry, as they are generally a supportive, fun and easy going group to work with. There are a few male stevedores that don't believe women should be on the wharf, luckily they are the minority. I find if you do the job well, don't expect any special treatment and can have a laugh, they are very accepting.

What would you say to women school leavers who were thinking about a career in the ports?

I would say to women school leavers to give it a go. There are plenty of opportunities within the port that offer training in a range of skills and interests. I would love to see more women driving some of the heavy machinery, piloting boats, and operating the cranes. Although I would warn them, it's not great for their social life, as you have to do shift work, which can take a bit of getting used to. 🌐

Study grants for your children

If your teenager is planning to go to university next year they should consider applying for the Ernest William File Scholarship, a scholarship specifically designed for the sons and daughters of financial members of the RMTU.

The scholarship will put \$2000 towards their first year of study.

Established in 1978 by members of the New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Association as a tribute to Ernest William File, the retiring general secretary of the Association at the time, the scholarship was adopted and expanded by the Rail and Maritime Transport Union and extended to all members.

The scholarship assists first year study-



ing for a degree at a New Zealand university.

Eligibility is simple: Applicants must be

the son or daughter of an RMTU member and they must be enrolled (or planning to be) in their first year of full time study for an undergraduate degree at a New Zealand university.

Disappointingly, last year the scholarship was not awarded for lack of applications.

There are two scholarships – one for an LE's child and one for others – up for awarding and you are encouraged to urge your offspring to apply.

<https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/scholarships/ernest-william-file-scholarship>

Applications are open for four months (1 Dec - 1 April) 🌐



RMTU members confront the captain of the Ocean Master about the cargo of stolen phosphate being carried to New Zealand.

Phosphate carrier confronted

AS this story is being written the long running war in Afghanistan has ended with the Taliban in control of Kabul while in Syria and the Yemen, disease and economic uncertainty is prolonging disastrous conflicts.

Western Sahara is another place in the region which has experienced chronic conflict but the fact that New Zealand is a key player there sets it apart for us through our use of phosphate mined there by the occupying Moroccans.

Since the late seventies, when Spain exited its colony in Western Sahara, the country has been under Moroccan occupation. The indigenous Polisario Front fought a guerrilla war until 1991 until it agreed to a cease fire on the promise of a UN-brokered referendum to decide the country's future. That referendum never happened.

The desert is rich in minerals - including phosphates – and Moroccan occupation has resulted in these being plundered and hundreds of thousands of native Sahrawi people becoming refugees in camps in neighbouring Algeria.

The Moroccans depend upon the revenue from the stolen phosphate. The Moroccan government owns 95% of the OCP group, a company with access to 70% of the world's supply. Phosphate is used as fertiliser, and the rock phosphate produced in Morocco and Western Sahara is considered ideal for manufacturing "super-phosphate" which New Zealand importers

Ravensdown and Agri-Balance say is best suited to the soil here.

In 2016 a European court ruled that Western Sahara should not be considered a part of Morocco for the purpose of regulating trade. A year later, 50,000 tons of phosphate rock bound for New Zealand were impounded in South Africa

<<https://reut.rs/3AWfDyu>> ,

drawing further attention to the practice, and adding to international legal precedent.

Despite this, New Zealand companies, in particular Ballance Agri-Nutrients and Ravensdown, continue to import Western Saharan phosphate in huge quantities.

Indeed, New Zealand is the only remaining substantial buyer for the product.

In October 2019 the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU) unanimously passed a resolution condemning the trade and calling on our government to intervene against it.

As a port union and an affiliate to the CTU the RMTU is bound by the resolution. We are also in the front line of the struggle against this illegal trade.

Under international law our members would be within their rights to refuse to berth or work ships carrying blood phosphate. However, under New Zealand's draconian anti-strike laws we would arguably be open to prosecution.

The irony of this is not lost on our members in the ports, many of whom are Maori

and living with the legacy of colonisation themselves.

Our Union has registered protests against the importation of blood phosphate on several occasions over the past two years, delivering letters to the masters of ships docking in Tauranga, Napier, Lyttelton and Otago to generate publicity and highlight the CTU resolution.

In March the New Zealand High Court refused a Polisario application for a judicial review of the NZ Super Fund's investments in farms using blood phosphate but conceded that "ultimately, a reputational risk to wider New Zealand interests remains".

In August this year our members once again registered their protest in both Napier and Lyttelton delivering a letter of protest to the captain of a Ravensdown chartered vessel 'Ocean Master'.

As a small remote nation in the South Pacific there is little we can do to affect the struggles in many of the places that we hear about, such as Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan. New Zealand does however, have an opportunity to play a role in the struggle of the Sahwari people against the occupation and plundering of their land.

The RMTU will continue to play its part, and in doing so will highlight the severity of New Zealand's anti-strike laws because we are certain that if our members could refuse to work ships importing blood phosphate – and be free from the fear of prosecution – this trade would very quickly stop. 🌐

Gordon Keith Wilson

7th June 1929 - 6th August 2021

GORDON started at New Zealand Railways, Invercargil, as a clerical cadet on August 13, 1945, two days before VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) and had many different roles.

He also worked at various railway stations across Southland including Makarewa, Wairio, Milton and Concord (Dunedin) before transferring to Wellington in 1967 to undertake his new role as district transport licensing officer for NZR with a district covering Wellington to Gisborne to New Plymouth requiring considerable travel usually Monday to Friday three weeks out of six.



Alongside working on the railways in his younger days he was also a sports reporter for local games in the Southland area and also played rugby.

He was very successful and was head hunted to succeed Harry Drury as general secretary of the NZROI - having been union councilor for Southland and Otago starting at 19 and later on for Wellington.

He was general secretary of the salaried division of the union from 1977 to his retirement in November 1987.

He regularly reported to Parliamentary select committees and has a Hansard published in the official report of the debate in the House Of Representatives.

Media interviews, advocacy, editing *The Advocate* (a monthly magazine for members) were among his duties.

He was also a sought after mediator and public speaker and a member of the PSA (Public Service Association) and CSU (Combined State Unions).

His court work with transport licensing gave him invaluable expertise on NZR boards of inquiry including one on a locomotive derailing between Paekakariki and Pukerua Bay which killed the driver and was left hanging precariously over Centennial Highway and another involving a multi train collision in Wellington caused by signal failure which killed two civilians

Gordon was asked by the Minister of New Zealand Railways to stay on for two extra years past his 40 years' service thus retiring age 58 after 42 years.

RMTU wishes his family sincere condolences. 🌐



(l to r) Mrs Wright, Grant Wright, Luke James, Ian Walker at Grant's retirement function.



Luke James (left) congratulates Bob Glass on reaching retirement.



Lyttelton Port city depot RMTU stalwart Russell Ringdahl on his retirement.

Increasing number of women working in rail

METLINK'S rail operator Transdev Wellington recently published an article describing the growing diversity within its team, with women staff numbers now soaring higher than the Australasian average in the rail industry – a phenomenon reflected within the RMTU where women membership has increased from 9.8% in 2011 to 12% today.

Transdev reported a steady increase according to an internal annual survey showing the spread of staff shifted from 69% men and 31% women in 2016, to 65% men and 35% women in 2020.

Metlink operations manager, Melissa Anderson says these results are well above the wider Australasian rail industry rate which sits at 27% women, according to the latest Australasian Railway Association (ARA) Gender Diversity Report 2019.

A career opportunity

"It's really affirming to see that more women of all ages are seeking roles and jobs in an industry previously dominated by men," she said. "What this means for young people across ages and genders is that it's a very possible career opportunity to work in public transport, and they can play a valuable part in driving climate action. Jobs in rail support a more sustainable region, because we're contributing to getting people out of cars and into more carbon-friendly forms of transport."

RMTU's women's spokesperson, Rebecca Hauck said: "Since I started as an



(top left & clockwise) Four women working in rail: Rosie Fai sales agent; Emma Black, operation manager; Lisa Faaifo, locomotive engineer and Anita Panchal, service coordinator.

apprentice at Hillside Workshops I've seen a growing number of women join KiwiRail across the board in all its varied work. And subsequently women have taken ever-increasing roles within the Union making their voice heard throughout the industry and beyond."

Positive outlook

RMTU general secretary affirms Rebecca's view and adds: "The growing voice of women within the Union has made a vast difference to our outlook and the way we approach work relations – and all for the better. The RMTU was once an almost entirely male-dominated industry but that is definitely not true today."

Transdev Wellington general manager of people and culture, Emma MacRae, says the number of women working at Transdev Wellington is currently rising by 1% per

year, and this number is expected to grow.

"In 2020, we saw the number of women locomotive engineers rise to an all-time high of 11%, up from 7.8% in 2019, and across roles women team leaders increased from 33% to 38%."

The increasing number of women recruits is supported by a high retention rate.

"We are so proud of the diverse gender, age, and culture spread across all our staff. At Transdev Wellington we support and celebrate a space where people feel safe, valued and respected regardless of age, gender identity, sexual orientation or cultural background," says Emma.

"Diversity is supported not only by our recruitment initiatives but also by our wider Transdev whf Ānau,

with many of the new women recruits saying how well supported they are by their colleagues and team leaders. We are also fortunate to have the incredible support from the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, who advocate for women in rail across our whole industry."

In addition, the survey captured that almost half of the Transdev Wellington workforce identifies as an ethnic group other than European, with the next biggest group being Maori or Pacific Islander at 19.5, 7.8% identify as Indian and 1.7% as other Asian.

"Having this diversity is so important for us as a team and to delivering a service that is balanced and inclusive," adds Emma. 🌍

- Based on story by Georgie Johnson, Greater Wellington, with content supplied by Transdev.

C3 news

RMTU C3 bargaining

(left) RMTU C3 bargaining team (l to r) Dasha van Silfhout, Richard Marero, Tali Misilus, Rangi Gear and Chuck Atkins.



THE RMTU C3 On Board Labour members entered into bargaining with C3 at the beginning of July. Led by a great advocate in the South Island organiser John Kerr, our delegates put forward claims around reviewing hours and the pay scale plus a few more.

Our biggest win was having the ability to consolidate the On Board Labour collective and the main collective back together.

We believe this agreement is one members will endorse and ratification will take place as soon as we return to Level 1. 🌐



Vaccination information

C3 and RMTU held jointly agreed information sessions for our On Board Labour team at Sulphur Point. The RMTU arranged for two Bay of Plenty District Health Board nurses to visit the team twice during work time to inform and answer questions.

At the time, Port of Tauranga had low vaccination statistics. These sessions allowed members to make informed decisions around vaccinations. 🌐



Prior to bargaining beginning, C3 and Port Tauranga delegates joined for a training seminar to sharpen their skills and prepare for the discussions ahead. 🌐



RAIL - TAKING STRESS OFF NORTHLAND ROADS

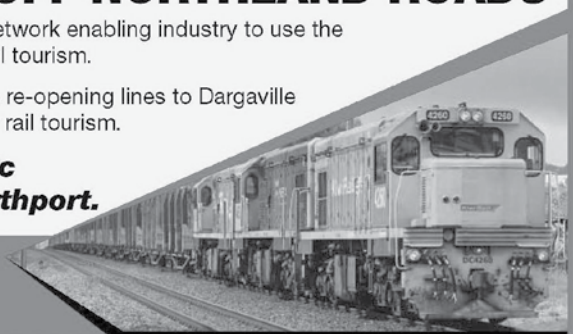
It's time to reconnect Northland's extensive railway network enabling industry to use the safest way to move freight and increase high value rail tourism.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union Fully Supports re-opening lines to Dargaville and Otiria. Reconnecting rail to Kawakawa - Opuia for rail tourism.



Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.

- Logs • Woodchips
- Dairy • Bulkloads • Tourism
- Large Consignment freight



Ports Forum 2021

THE theme of this year's Ports Forum was 'Evolution or Extinction' which seemed apt given the global crisis of the COVID19 pandemic and the impact this has had on our supply chains. But also in the context of the twin crises prompted by climate system breakdown and the next wave of automation – both of which pose challenges for the port sector with transport in the forefront of the carbon emission control debate and many jobs at risk of being automated out of existence.

Guest speakers

We had very good guest speakers from a wide range of backgrounds prompting plenty of discussion and debate in the formal sessions but during breaks.

Council of Trades Unions secretary Melissa Ansell-Bridges gave an overview of Fair Pay Agreements which was also part of the focus for Minister of Workplace Relations, Michael Wood. If implemented as intended, Fair Pay Agreements would have far reaching potential and, given the amount of non-unionised labour on the waterfront, something also highlighted by newly elected MUNZ national secretary Craig Harrison. It may well be that such an agreement could set minimum terms and conditions across our sector.

The need for an industry-wide approach was the focus of the presentation of our South Island organiser who also ran a session entitled 'A Tale of Two Sectors'. This illustrated just how fractured the ports industry is compared to rail where the overwhelming majority of our members are covered by just three collective agreements and more than half our Union's total membership is covered by the KiwiRail agreement. In comparison the RMTU port membership, which itself totals just a third of the number of rail, has 20 collective agreements with 13 employers. Some employers, for example Lyttelton Port, have multiple collective agreements covering a mere handful of members. Enterprise bargaining of this nature has allowed employers to divide and conquer port workers for decades. An industry wide agreement, setting minimum standards would go a

long way to offsetting this.

Minister Wood, Craig Harrison and general secretary Wayne Butson also discussed coastal shipping. The impact of COVID19 and the need to adapt our transport sector in the face of climate system breakdown means New Zealand-flagged coastal shipping is well and truly on the political agenda. It provides opportunities and challenges for our members in ports and rail. If New Zealand were to adopt a coherent national ports strategy incorporating coastal shipping then some of our ports would cease to be 'blue water' operations servicing international shipping companies. Other ports would act as hubs for imports and exports and be integrated into a coastal shipping while the rail system serving these and smaller ports would act as feeders. If such an approach were to be adopted then the degree of change would be on a par with that of the so called ports reforms in the late 1980s.

International focus

As is traditional, the Forum turned its eyes overseas for a very lively session on international campaigns.

Michael Naylor, from UnionAID gave a stimulating briefing on the situation in Myanmar where unions are in the forefront of the struggle for democracy in the face of a brutal military takeover. The RMTU has a strong relationship with the Myanmar railway union so this was a topic very dear to our hearts.

We also heard from well known activist Josie Butler who gave a presentation on the blood phosphate campaign which the RMTU has been very involved in over the past couple of years. The impact of Moroccan occupation, and the stripping of Western Sahara of its natural wealth is an outrage and several of our branches have registered protests against the import of this plundered cargo by New Zealand fertiliser companies.

Finally we saw an inspiring video from our comrades in the CGT, a French union. It focussed on the channel port of Dieppe. Despite the restrictions on travel created by COVID we are still managing to foster



*CTU
secretary
Melissa
Ansell-
Bridges.*



*Mikael
Aldridge
Maritime NZ*



*RMTU SI
organiser
John Kerr*



*Minister
of Workplace
Relations
and
Transport
Michael
Wood*

*Uni
CEC
Mic
Nay*





Craig Harrison, national secretary, MUNZ

international solidarity. Closer to home our good friend Hazel Armstrong presented a briefing on the recent and very sobering CHASANZ report on health and safety at Ports of Auckland. This prompted much discussion and some speculation as to what kind of reports would be written if the same exercise were to be carried out at other ports. The question was posed as to whether the port sector is overdue for the kind of scrutiny that the Ministerial Inquiry effected in rail more than 20 years ago.

Automation critical

A brief session on automation concluded day one. This is not the first time automation has been covered, either at the Ports Forum or at our National Conference, and on this occasion the emphasis was on the idea of a 'just transition' for those workers whose jobs will be destroyed by automation. The discussion focused on a couple of examples where our Union has been successful in promoting initiatives that have led to long term benefits for members. The first was the establishment of the ports' superannuation scheme in the mid eighties and the second was the promotion of rail in New Zealand, including campaigns to renationalise the railway, build rolling stock here in Aotearoa, and the support of political parties that are pro-rail and pro-rail investment. Delegates were left to think about how we could harness our collective power to meet the challenges posed by automation.

The evening featured a forum dinner which gave delegates a valuable chance to catch up with peers and mull over the topics of the day.

Day two began with the address by MUNZ secretary Craig Harrison with an in-depth analysis of the Northtugz dispute from both an industrial and legal perspective. This was a significant win for our members at Northport and demonstrated the value of an integrated strategy as well as having a united membership and head of

office support. A session on the value of a pattern bargaining approach picked up on one possible antidote to the fractured nature of organisation in the ports sector. This was also emphasised by a stock take of fatigue management in the various ports and with the employers we deal with. One bright note was the progress made at Lyttleton Port. From being a low performer in terms of engagement with workers a few years ago LPC has made immense strides. There is still much work to be done on this issue around the country however.

Also featured was a discussion led by guests from the Ministry of Health who were invited to speak about the vaccination programme for port workers. To say this issue has provoked passionate debate is something of an understatement. Everyone in the room was aware that it was only a matter of time before a mandatory vaccination order was published by the Ministry and this duly happened a couple of weeks later. It was interesting to hear the various viewpoints on this. The uptake of vaccinations has been uneven to say the least amongst port workers and it was a valuable opportunity to hear why this might be.

Challenges ahead

At the conclusion of the Forum delegates departed better informed and, hopefully, inspired to tackle some of the issues facing organised labour in our ports.

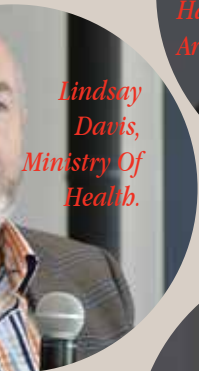
Time will tell whether our port branches are up for the challenge of adaptation and evolution in a rapidly changing environment. One thing remains certain, no-one else will do it for us. It's up to us to answer the questions posed by COVID19, automation, a national ports strategy, pattern bargaining and fatigue management to name but a few of the issues facing our members. 🌐



*onAID
) bael
lor*



Union lawyer Hazel Armstrong



Lindsay Davis, Ministry Of Health.



Blood phosphate campaigner Josie Butler



Dr Api Talemaitoga vaccinations advisor to MOH



Holly Fuller, C3 marshalling, Bay of Plenty and women's rep, RMTU president Aubrey Wilkenson and Phil Taana (Port Napier).



Wellington delegates and organisers at Woburn at the conclusion of another successful delegate training day.



Jim Kelly with his award for services to the trade union movement surrounded (l-r) his wife Liz Kelly, Rebecca Hauck (NMC), Jim's daughter, Lisa, and Dave Kearns (NMC). In the citation Jim was recognised for his work as a community leaders in the 2012 and 2016 campaign to save the Hillside Workshops in South Dunedin where he joined with local engineering businesses and the Otago Chamber of Commerce to negotiate with KiwiRail. He was national president of the RMTU from 1990 to 2011.



*Hillside reopened - another Labour promise kept.
The Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern celebrates with RMTU members at the plant.*



Union solidarity

Union delegate Luke James supporting the nurses strike in Christchurch.

A key component for all unions is to support other unions with their workplace struggles and campaigns. The RMTU prides itself on its inter-union solidarity and support



Women's forum first timers



1 Anastasia Tevaga-Lemala, Wellington Rail - *Blessed to have the opportunity to work with such strong women.*

2 Dasha Van Silfhout, regional organiser, Tauranga - *Honoured to be surrounded by strong women.*

3 Jeanette Aspin, Nelson Port - *It's been a pleasure to be part of this empowering day.*

4 Analisa (Lisa) Fatialofa, Wellington Rail - *Great for networking and got some great advice from other women delegates.*

5 Lynda McGill, Auckland Rail - *Well behaved women rarely make history.*

6 Maggie Robins, Southland Rail - *I'm new to the RMTU and learned so much about the Union itself and its structure and met some amazing women.*

7 Nicola Gapper, Marlborough Interislander - *A privilege to be collaborating with like-minded women.* 🇳🇿



* See story back page.

NZCTU Biennial Women's Conference

This year's CTU conference was a fantastic opportunity to learn and be inspired from experienced speakers, network with other delegates from the RMTU and a range of over 18 unions from around New Zealand.

One part of the conference which left a lasting impression on me, was the youth panel session. The three women on the panel were each asked three rounds of questions and their answers showed they held strong beliefs and were passionate about their various causes. They all spoke confidently and clearly, it was inspiring.

If we can grow our unions with young, confident, committed women like these we are in good hands.



The catering also deserves a special mention, it was delicious. We all rolled out at the end of the conference fat and happy.

A special mention to Karen Heine from the NZCTU for her part in organising a well put together, educational and inspiring conference.

Thank you to the RMTU for the opportunity to attend this conference, I got a lot out of it. 🇳🇿

Jeanette Aspin.
RMTU Port Nelson delegate.



Lyttelton Port branch secretary Heiner Benecke with MUNZ local executive member Mike Searle (aka 'Roadkill') at one of the union-management HPHE sessions.



Evan Lewis, Southland, receives his Certificate of Appreciation from Paul Corliss a life member of the RMTU.



New Zealand Government

Unite against COVID-19



Southland support for Myanmar



Southland rail branch pledge solidarity with our Myanmar comrades in their fight to retain democracy.



Garland Road level crossing check performed by Nick Meader.



Ron Nijssen and Greymouth members.



Wally Averill tending the vege garden at Ensors Road service centre.



WHERE ARE YOU?

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

Please check we have your correct address and contact details.

<http://bit.ly/exmEyl>

or

04-499-2066

NAPIER PORT

New six-berth facility ahead of schedule but applying pressure on space

AS reported in the last edition of *The Transport Worker*, the frenzy around domestic and international shipping continues. The fluctuations of container drop offs around our ports has no consistency. The seasonal impact we have experienced at Napier, particularly for empty 40-foot reefer boxes, has tested the region in terms of the seasonal requirements for the apple industry in particular. It has been a hand-to-mouth process in terms of the whole supply chain and the ability to get hold of enough reefer containers to maintain apple grower expectations.

In retrospect, the fall out and consequences of Covid 19, the labour shortages throughout the harvest period also had a reduced outcome for the Hawke's Bay regional economy. Tons of apples were left on trees. However, the overall apple crop is roughly the same as last year's in terms of exports.

The new six berth facility is apparently ahead of schedule at this stage, with an already established massive chunk of the port

been utilised for the construction process. This in itself has certainly put pressure on our logistics planners and plant operators. Space is at a premium. We are currently facing a constant in terms of juggling the container operational area.

Logs too are requiring more space.

With the footprint being approximately 30% less, and the ongoing need to shift product/containers multiple times, it is challenging the most patient of our members. The compressed environment causes frustration at times.

That being said, even when the new wharf construction reaches completion, the working area will not increase in its current format. Subsequently there is a major review about how Napier Port will physically operate. Big changes are afoot. It will be an interesting transition. We trust the manning requirements will be well met based on the review tabled. It has been a struggle this season but the company approach is do more with the same!

Complete eight hour shifts are being

abandoned for vessel exchanges, to concentrate on sorting the container pad out before the vessel starts, or even during the course of a vessel working. In essence, dropping a shift midway through an exchange to focus on the yard area. Where three cranes were the normal for vessel loading, two continuous (rolling smokos) is now the go. Affording time to sort the yard out and ensure there is labour availability for yard moves by transferring resources. For many, it has been taxing.

The Mobile Harbour Crane Collective Agreement is up for ratification, then following close behind we will be engaging for negotiations with the NPC over the general/main CEA.

This is a first where both agreements will be negotiated in the same year. Going forward, it may be an opportunity and alignment which will give collective strength to all members in the local branch.

Indications are profits are up so here's to healthy pay increases to the workers, not just the share holders! 🇳🇿



NAPIER RAIL

Traffic on the Wairoa-Napier line steadily ticking upward

HELLO from the Art Deco capital – otherwise known as the seaside resort of Napier. It has been a while since we popped up on the radar so here we go.

We are now under a new manager, Jennie Humm.

Things over the last year have been ticking along well before, during and after Covid. Tonnage dropped a little during lock down but quickly bounced back. The Wairoa weekend log trains are ticking along nicely with regular Monday to Friday

services due to commence on October 3. This is coupled with Napier Port securing the Kariori pulp train for another 10 years, which has meant job security and the opportunity for new employment in both the rail and track here.

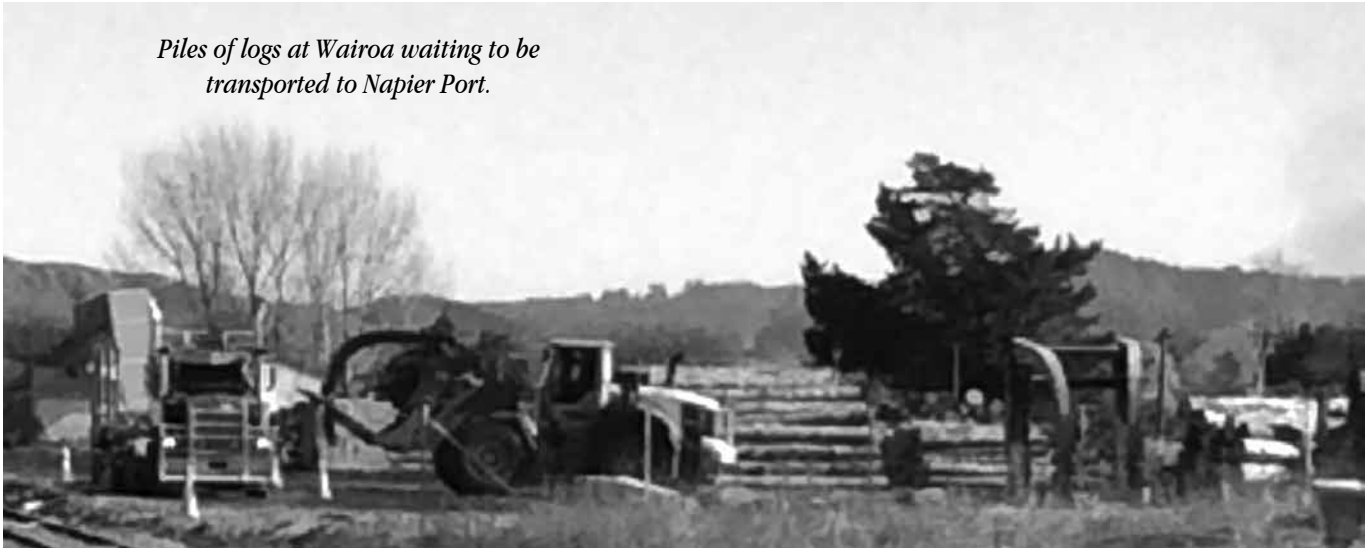
On the topic of new employees, we welcome Dylan Marsh in as a fresh loco engineer out of training, Neil Huntley has moved to learning and development and we have just received loco engineer Martin Glover from Westfield due to one of our LEs taking early retirement in December. Our

LE ranks see-sawing back and forth.

On the ground we have William Rutgers and Stan Smith heading into locomotive training and arriving in to the yard are rail operators Jason Finch and Makire Pohe ex Westfield and Whangarei and, last but not least, Blair Parkinson ex Pukekohe track gang. They have all taken up some of the recently vacated spots with a few more recruits needed in the near future.

On the freight side of our branch, KiwiRail are planning to increase the services to Wairoa to a train a day in October

Piles of logs at Wairoa waiting to be transported to Napier Port.



◀ for the increasing demand for logs. (See above photo).

The Future You program has seen four of the six staff retain full time jobs within networks and creating another team in the track gang.

The structures team would like to welcome new team member Dylan Williams. It's

great that new staff are being employed and bolstering our network services numbers.

The signals team has been busy working on installing hand harvest units and are involved in apprenticeship training throughout NZ.

August has come along pretty quickly. Rail branches will be having their AGMs, and

more importantly discussions on the what's down the track, so to speak.

With the 10 year rail plan and RNIP new ferries, terminals, rolling stock and a new central rail hub to be designed and built in Palmerston, there should be a lot more jobs to come.

As always be safe and think safety. 🌐

Sickness, accident and death



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

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

You could be next to miss out!

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

Contact:

Debby Green, PO Box 813,
Wellington
Telephone: (04) 499-2066
Fax: (04) 471-0896
debby.green@rmtunion.org.nz

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

HUTT WORKSHOPS

Apprentices applying in large numbers for increasing spaces

THESSE notes were written after the initial get together of the KiwiRail and RMTU MECA negotiating teams in early August. The joint statement detailing the initial outcomes had not been published but as you read these notes that statement should have been disseminated and the scene set for the current wage round. Hutt was represented by MCC women's delegate, HSAT chair, and former branch chair Kasia Kurene, and current branch secretary and conference delegate Myles Carter. It is timely to note that both were also successful in their nominations for MCC representatives in August.

Vacant positions for mechanical engineers, particularly those with certified welding or fitting skills, are still being recruited, as a review of our forward work plan puts us at about 50 staff short of the necessary compliment. Running parallel to this is the recent interview of 19 prospective apprentices competing for two positions! Such was the calibre of the interviewees that representations were made up the command chain for an approval to recruit/appoint an additional three taking the number nearer to our desired six monthly intake of around five to six. We all know how important it is to feed new blood into the bottom of the workforce and train them up to fill the enormous skills deficit. This was tested recently when five internal candidates applied for one team leader position. The result was to split the workload and appoint two team leaders. On the various interview panels, we have had acting branch chair Manu Barclay or acting vice chair Slade Pilcher ensuring procedural fairness to bring a shop floor perspective to the process. This has begun to address and indeed turn around, some issues with new people who have come to KiwiRail with baggage that is not consistent with company values. Some of the issues are cultural differences that generally end up becoming SHE (safety, health & environment)-type issues and are a source of angst for delegates and managers who have to tread their way through the myriad of issues that our open-slathered approach to diversity and inclusion has brought to our front door. A common theme that emerges is a cultural indifference to safety. There

Hutt Workshop's botanic garden



appears to be a problem with KiwiRail's recruitment process and its lack of robustness, perhaps fueled by shortages of skilled staff across many industries.

Staff turnover continues to be a problem with a small (but still regrettable) handful of qualified staff departing for jobs elsewhere. The reasons being over (mis)use of resources, and pay. Both of these issues are

being addressed in other forums however, the process is painfully slow and many have simply 'had a gutsful' and run out of patience and tolerance.

Readers will recall the dreadful contractor-related event we had in March – a report fed back to us recently acknowledges KiwiRail's process for complying with section 34 of HSWA 2015 and, unexpectedly, indicated that the injured party made a decision not to comply with his employer's requirement to wear safety harnesses. Again safety processes, especially in high potential [for serious injury] situations cannot be over-stated. Robust and time-tested policies, rules, procedures, etc, are there for good reason including the saving of lives. The RMTU actively promotes safety first and we will defend that position without question. Additionally, we fully support management's decisions to remove from our worksites those contractors who flout health and safety laws and put us all at risk.

Management changes since the last notes include our former site leader, Peter Venn, who stepped-down for health reasons. Peter was instrumental in challenging us to challenge ourselves in all that we do. The vacancy was subsequently filled by Rob Gordon who was a former production manager at Hutt over a decade ago who has chalked up much rail experience since then and returned to the Hutt whanau. We have welcomed him back accordingly. Another departure after only a short stint was employee relations manager Mark Lennox who has apparently returned to the world of DHBs.

We're not aware of his replacement as yet but it will mean we'll have another 'newbie' to train-up in due course. Not long after that our EGM-RSAS Adam Williams departed for a return to Downer-Australia. Adam was a down-to-earth senior manager who was very engaging with the staff. He will be missed for his good humour and humanistic attitudes towards culture change as well as open expression of his strategic vision and thinking. Stepping up into Adam's former role is Stuart Harrison who has been one of Adam's right-hand men so we expect a seamless continuity of RSAS direction and progress. Another sad departure was our

shared services support person Marian Escott; After 17+ years of providing sterling support to our managers and staff in all matters administrative, Marian has moved-on. In her place we welcome Tracy Dolden who has been traversing a very steep learning curve but is getting stuff done with a smile and cheery outlook.

We are aiming to hold our AGM in September along with the HSAT elections. Our branch returning officer Geoff Hudson has been doing some sterling work to ensure the anomalies of the HSAT rules and guidelines are addressed and determinations confirmed.

This, of course, is core to maintaining the integrity of any election and the democratic process. At the time of writing the MCC (mechanical consultative committee) is scheduled to be held at Hutt in the last week of August.

We are eager to hear the report-backs from the various working parties under the MCC umbrella however with the departure of HR's Mark Lennox, there may be an impact on progress. It is of course important to maintain one's focus and keep the ball rolling towards the objective of making things better for all concerned.

The external market studies have begun to filter back so it will be interesting to view the results and initiate adjustments to ensure KiwiRail honours its own targets of being a 'market-median' payer.

It is timely to acknowledge the capital upgrades that are going on around us up and down the country. These are being touted as a once in a lifetime investment opportunity and let's hope each project is delivered in full. At Hutt we have upgraded the south wall of Plant 2, there is additional seismic strengthening for Plant 3, and when we can arrange for new contractors, Plant 1's south wall will be remediated. The new inventory store is under consideration and we hope that will move to become a formal project shortly.

The store persons and their support teams have been working in a cold, leaky and near-dangerous building for some time and they truly deserve to have a modern facility which will make it a pleasure to come to work and function in a bright and friendly environment. The only living life form thriving is the hardy plant life which loves the atrocious conditions (see attached photos).

Training and support continue to be

an issue on site however in recent months some staff have been fortunate to have been put on supervisory courses and just recently the site leader had an informal chat with his 24+ team leaders to discuss their concerns and identify skills gaps. We look forward to this being added to the 'flow' associated with the apprentices – it is necessary to keep the wheel of training going so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past (although in all fairness it's previous Government policy that negatively impacted training in the first place).

As the final editing of this contribution was underway, the country was taken into another Covid-19 Level 4 lockdown (Tue August 17). This time around damn near all of our team were required to come to work to keep us ahead of the game and provide the widgets and technical support that we specialise in. This is (was) expected to become a dynamic situation so whatever work-related changes came your way, we hope everybody played their part both safely and professionally.

This is the 'new norm' for the next 2-3 years at least – we must all adapt and tackle the future together. Until next time – stay safe out there. 🌐



WELLINGTON METRO

Feeling the pinch

SPEAKING frankly, Transdev's majority shareholders – the French central bank – are experiencing a Covid-caused funding short-fall. Money is tight and it almost feels as though the 450 or so TDW and Rotem staff are propping up the 65 million French shareholders.

It's all about the money!

With inflation clouds gathering and an increasingly tight labour market, it begins to set the scene for an interesting scenario for next years MECA negotiations, as no doubt the KR ones will be too.

Recently there were a number of long service awards. Tom Standen received his 50 year one at a special morning tea. Tom has come through the old 'Traffic' grades starting as a porter and progressing to shunter, guard and locomotive engineer.

Mike Don qualified for his 40 year award also having come through the yard to become a guard and train manager.

A number of staff qualified for service and other awards at the monthly staff briefing and morning tea. It is unfortunate that many of the recipients are not aware they are eligible for a presentation and are usually not advised, or if necessary, shifts not covered so they can attend. It does make the award ceremony a little less meaningful.

Matariki was celebrated in the staff area, fittingly with a hangi meal. It was very well received and a welcome celebration to our calendar. Thanks to all those who helped make the day such a success.

One of Metro's characters has retired after 46 years driving. Ivan Wooley will be most remembered for his unusual culinary 'delights' sending smells wafting through the amenities. One of the more unusual being air dried kakapo – fresh from the cowcatcher!

We wish Ivan well in his retirement.

Uniforms continue to be a source of

much discussion within TDW. Although delegates have been in discussion with management, the plot has thickened. The Wellington Regional Council, who contracts TDW, dictates the uniform and suppliers. They in turn have locked in contracts with those suppliers.

There is not going to be a quick solution to our concerns unless these can be shown to be health and safety issues. That might prove to be the case.

It is great to see that a number of newer delegates having taken advantage of RMTU training courses and are stepping up to take a more active part in the running of the branch. One of these has been roster reps attending a rostering tool (Hastus) briefing.

Reps will be working with the company when a new Christmas and master roster is introduced. We look forward to seeing fatigue management improvements. As with all rosters, the proof is in the pudding!

Deciding what a good roster is can be as controversial as deciding a good uniform! All fodder for our reps to navigate and digest!

We have farewelled one of our most

senior and prominent delegates. Glenn Hughes with his vast wealth of rail industry and union rep experience will be greatly missed. His contribution to the branch has been invaluable. We wish him well back

with KR.

Finally, we wish a warm welcome to the new faces who have joined our ranks in recent months. Don't be shy, say hi or giddy, the locals aren't known to bite! 🌐

WEST COAST RAIL

Great turnout to unveiling of new memorial.

HERE on the Coast many of our members are scratching their heads at the news of New Zealand importing relatively low grade coal to keep Huntly generating power. The lack of noise about this from the environmental lobby when the export of a smaller tonnage of high grade coking coal from the Coast generates so much angst is beyond us.

We understand the lack of rainfall in the South Island over the last few years has depleted our hydro-lakes and that Huntly is generating 20% of our power. So it's imported, dirty coal keeping the lights on and the heat pumps running in the houses of Auckland MPs who are most vocal about West Coast coal mining.

In network services the boys and girls have had their hands full dealing with the impact of recent flooding. There was a particularly outstanding effort by the Westport track team who replaced 600 metres of washed out formation in under a week. Also our Greymouth structures culvert gang replaced the washed out old timber ballast guard and abutment on Bridge 112 SNL with new a concrete ballast guard and wing walls. In addition to this they cleared debris from several other bridges and a washout on Bridge 23 SNL. The Greymouth track gangs were also busy on the SNL, repairing slips and blocked drains and meanwhile the renewals gangs from both Christchurch and

Greymouth have been busy re-sleepering and re-railing the Hokitika line during the milk factory's shutdown. The Greymouth Bridge gang re-sleepered Bridge 10 on the same line. Not to forget our signals and communications teams who have been run off their feet in what has been a very busy period. This all highlights the need for more staff, on which note a very warm welcome to our new bridge inspector Stuart Ripley.

Over in operations we have a problem with the log load out facility in the Greymouth yard. This has flooding issues, along with severe mud and debris, to the point the water is up to the axles of the wagons and in the operating areas mud and rubbish comes over members' boots. KiwiRail has a robust wagon securing regime which we all follow, but it is a bit difficult when the hand brakes are under the mud and the chocks have floated out from the wheels.

Some members won't operate in these conditions and this can generate conflict with the customer who appears to have different priorities around health and safety. KiwiRail has had a few attempts to clean up the place, but it only lasts a few weeks and then we are back to square one.

Eighty kilometres up from Greymouth we have a siding at Reefton, which is used for export coal. This siding and yard infrastructure is track warranted and a nightmare to operate in and unfortunately has seen

a number of operating incidents over its history since the interlocking was removed many years ago.

A while ago a coal train departed the siding and dragged a derailed wagon a considerable distance causing considerable damage.

As the damage was done in an area where it is technically a private siding the owner was not keen on the repair bill. There was bit of an argument on who paid what, so the end result was half a siding meaning a 30 wagon coal train had to be split and loaded in two parts. This means a considerable number of movements though four sets of points, up to eight movements over a state highway and having to lock in clear to allow other services to run though Reefton.

This is a very messy way to operate and it increases the risk of an incident. Over the years this siding has provided KiwiRail big revenue streams as there have been large amounts of coal railed out, and from all accounts there is more to come.

Like all members we are looking at the MECA negotiations with great interest. We see that KiwiRail wants to talk about LE productivity again.

Given we are among the most productive LEs on the planet we're not sure what there is to talk about but we remain committed to fulfilling our good faith obligations and hope KiwiRail is too. 🌐

CANTERBURY RAIL

Scenic Journeys Premier Class paused for required upgrade

OUR largest South Island rail branch has had a busy time since the last edition of *The Transport Worker*.

Two of our long serving members retired after long and distinguished careers. Bob Glass had a well-attended function at the newly refurbished Middleton RSAS

lunchroom. The esteem in which Bob was held was reflected in the number of people who came along from across the various business units of KiwiRail. What a great example to our younger members who are starting out in, hopefully, careers just as long and productive. Grant Wright is an-

other RSAS member who decided to retire recently and the regard in which he is held by his workmates was also demonstrated by the number who turned up to have a beer with him at the end of his last day. Well done lads, we wish you all the best for a long, happy and healthy retirement. ▶

◀ One of our train examiners, Norman Martin, reached the milestone of 40 years service recently. A great achievement. We hope the next 40 years are good ones too.

Our Scenic Journeys' members have had a torrid time of it of late. The brand is iconic in KiwiRail and is very much the public face of the railway. Yes, we're largely a freight business, but the long distance passenger trains are where the public has the most direct experience of what KiwiRail has to offer. COVID19 put the business model under immense strain, given it was configured around an overseas tourist market. One innovation that was tried post-lockdown was the introduction of the so-called Premier Class which was supposed to provide silver service. The lack of suitable rolling stock for food preparation meant an improvised solution was attempted using old wagons which proved to be unfit for purpose. Exposure to high temperatures and potentially toxic emissions soon led to health and safety concerns being raised by members. The result was the Premier Class has been scrapped until refurbished rolling stock can be completed. Four of

our members, all ex-airline flight crew, had their fixed term employment agreements terminated. The RMTU went into bat and ensured all redundancy entitlements were honoured and the air monitoring report was made available. A very stressful time for all concerned.

At the time of writing the KiwiRail MECA talks have finally kicked off. The resolution from this branch for a single claim calling for a 30% pay increase to reflect the sacrifices and hard work we have done as essential workers gained some traction across the country.

The idea of all rail workers united behind one claim appears to have had some appeal so it will be interesting to see how the talks play out.

By the time you read this you may well know. There's no question about it, essential workers like us are showing signs of militancy this year. As your scribe writes nurses covered by the DHB MECA have rejected the government's pay offer and are scheduled to strike. Our brothers and sisters in the retail sector are also gearing up for a campaign. If nothing else COVID has

demonstrated just which workers keep people looked after and the shelves stocked.

Our networks members are looking forward to more staff after we were presented with management's plan to boost numbers. This was supposed to be a jointly developed workforce planning project but we're not moaning too loudly as anyone who has been around for a few years remembers the angst of the slash and burn years of so-called 'managed decline'. One thing we're looking forward to is larger gangs which should enable more training and development. Sustainable productivity improvements are often realised through investment in skills development and this is also a pathway to improved pay.

Which brings us to the long delayed pay scale reviews for network services and mechanical members. The raw data comparing KiwiRail with the 'market' has just been released and the RMTU is now processing this. One potential problem is that management may try and conflate this exercise with the wage round. Given these reviews are well overdue this would be very unwise. 🌐

LYTTELTON PORT

All four unions behind HPHE initiative - despite some scepticism

HERE at Lyttelton Port we continue to have a busy time. At the time of writing we have just had a very good full branch meeting at which we discussed the 'High Performance High Engagement' (HPHE) initiative that all four unions at LPC have committed to trying with management.

To say there is a degree of scepticism about this amongst our more militant members is no exaggeration and we hear that the more conservative managers at the port are similarly concerned.

Some members see this as getting in bed with the bosses and apparently some managers see it as the unions taking over.

That the more extreme views in both unions and management are sceptical appears to be a good recommendation for giving HPHE a go.

As was discussed at our meeting, we have nothing to lose but a little time and effort and when we think about the state of industrial relations only a few years ago that

seems a small price to pay for something that might deliver real gains for workers.

One of these gains was demonstrated when we were confronted with an old fashioned change proposal to restructure civil maintenance and to de-unionise a key role by taking it outside the coverage of our collective agreement. This is in sharp contrast to the HPHE approach which involves Interest Based Problem Solving being applied in exactly situations such as this.

After some good grass roots organisation, including a unanimous resolution passed by members of both unions condemning management's approach, and lobbying by our branch officials, there was a reset.

There was no doubt that change was needed (the manager had 40 direct reports for example), but an interest based approach hadn't been adopted.

To management's credit they listened and the win from our perspective was that the foreman job that was to be disestab-

lished has been retained.

Fatigue management is another area that we have been working on together with our fellow unions and management. Full engagement takes time and effort, particularly when dealing with a complex issue like this.

One positive development is that a very good education programme on sleep science and sleep hygiene is being rolled out and people seem to be finding it very useful.

The parties have reached an agreed fatigue standard and a set of general fatigue guidelines which will now form the basis of discussions in the operational areas such as the Terminal, Marine Services, Civil Maintenance, Workshop, etc. The key point is that if any of these talks on how to deal with the issue of fatigue lead to potential changes to our collective agreements such changes have to be negotiated and ratified by the wider membership.

As your scribe writes this New Zealand has managed to maintain our COVID free



Well attended July Lyttelton Port branch meeting.

◀ status (excepting MIQ cases) and long may this continue (oops! - ed). A big part of this is ensuring the borders remain secure. The waterfront is an area that the government has belatedly mandated on, requiring border workers to be vaccinated.

At Lyttelton we have a very high rate of compliance in comparison to other ports and our CEO has been clear that the company will work with anyone who is not vaccinated (as readers will know, there are many reasons why this might be

the case) and that their employment is not under threat.

For those who continue to choose not to be vaccinated, redeployment options will have to be considered on a case by case basis. We are also aware that there is at least one case in front of the Employment Relations Authority that is dealing with the issue of mandatory vaccines.

Finally, by the time The Transport Worker goes to press we will have held our annual general meeting and will have a

newly elected branch executive and cohort of delegates. Our AGMs are always well attended and this time ours is scheduled for the day before a strike that has been notified by the nurses' union covered by the DHB MECA. If this strike goes ahead it will have the support of our branch. Port workers are essential workers just like health workers and we remember the support we had from the nurses during our dispute in 2018.

Until next time, be careful and stay safe and well. 🌐

TIMARU RAIL

Recent flooding caused considerable damage to infrastructure

STARTING with some positive stuff, congratulations to Mike Barnett and Dan Charteris both of whom are nearing qualification as a rail operator and a remote control operator respectively at our depot. Well done guys and wishing you both long careers in rail. You've certainly joined at a good time – many of our veterans comment that they haven't seen the level of investment in our industry that we are currently experiencing in all their time on the railway. One would probably have to go back to the 1930s to see a comparable amount of money being pumped into the rolling stock and infrastructure and none of them were around back then.

With the recent flooding etc our track

staff have been working very hard and long hours to rebuild track and bridges with massive loss of ballast and coastal washout. This unplanned work requires a huge effort and it is testimony to the skill and dedication of our members that we were fully operational in such a short time. Our yard members also welcome and appreciate the work that has gone into the reopening of the runaround road and points replacement at Pareora freezing works.

Welcome back to work to Jim Bartlett after several weeks away with knee surgery. He is on light duties and slowly reaching full fitness. Few of us get through our careers without an injury or health issue that requires us to make use of accumulated

sick leave and/or the injury management provisions in our collective agreement. And of course, as we get older there is the much appreciated safety net of the medical retirement clauses. It is a source of peace of mind to know these hard fought for conditions are our entitlements. Many workers do not have these benefits. Just one more advantage of us sticking together in our Union.

As in other areas, we await the outcomes of our current wage talks between KiwiRail and RMTU. At the time of writing we see our representatives have met for the first round of negotiations. It will be interesting to see how things play out after the unusual and exceptional wage round last year. 🌐

TIMARU PORT

Busy terminal sees major reconfiguration of facilities

WARM greetings from the port of Timaru. We've been busy of late. In fact we've just been told we shifted 96,000 containers in the last financial year, which represents a huge effort for a relatively small port.

The increases in volumes have triggered changes to our terminal configuration. There's been a fair bit of construction and rearranging of the terminal for the forthcoming peak season, starting with the relocation of the Quality Marshalling facilities to join up with the gatehouse, resulting in a much more team-like feel. Reconstruction of the wharf, reconstruction of the quarantine yard, and installation of new reefer points are all works in progress. This investment augurs well for security of employment in the near to medium term, a far cry from how it was a decade ago with multiple redundancies an all too regular event.

That said, September is set to be extremely quiet, as the OC1 service pulls out of Timaru for an undisclosed period.

Perfect time for our members to get some well-deserved leave in during what is often a great time of year down here as we shift into spring.

On the collective bargaining front readers of *The Activist* will be aware we initiated bargaining for a MECA with the two employers at the port with whom the RMTU has extant collective agreements: Quality Marshalling and Prime Port. This wasn't part of a grand strategy, rather it was an opportunity presented by both employers agreeing to short (one year) terms during negotiations last year and lining up the dates that allowed us to propose a MECA. This seems to have caused some delay in getting to the table and, at the time of writing, members are professing some impatience.

Hopefully by the time you are reading this we will have made meaningful progress.

The news that the government has sanctioned mandatory COVID vaccinations for border facing port workers has prompted some controversy and debate

amongst our membership. As your scribe writes, meetings have been scheduled with Ministry of Health officials to discuss the implications of the order. National Office's declared position of supporting mandatory vaccination while stating that those who will not, or cannot, be vaccinated will be given support and representation has also triggered some interesting conversations in the lunch rooms and on social media. Like everyone else our members are also awaiting the results of the inevitable court cases that will arise out of this situation.

The issue was just one topic that was canvassed at the recent RMTU Ports Forum, a well run event that is of real value to smaller branches like ours as it enables us to receive and share information and participate in the wider work our Union does in the sector. This year there was a very full programme, testimony to the importance of our industry and the work we do in the context of the global pandemic.

Until next time, stay safe and healthy.



OTAGO RAIL

Inter-depot rosters being discussed to counter demands on staff

ANOTHER busy period in our branch with our branch secretary Dave Kearns being elected to the RMTU National Management Committee (NMC) and, by virtue of this, on to the Industrial Council. Congratulations to Dave and thanks and well done to Jed for his contribution to NMC over the years. With the election of Rebecca Hauck unopposed as NMC women's rep, this means our branch has two members on our Union's management committee.

Our operations' members are enjoying a relatively quiet period but the publication of the LE rosters for the forthcoming summer season has prompted the idea of a joint union-management 'couplings' meeting with Timaru and Invercargill Depots to try and generate some perspective around the demands the depots are operating under. In the yard the members are slogging

Still, we suppose having a robust ego is a pre-requisite for being a CEO.

through the colder weather and are waiting on spring and longer days and warmer weather.

At Hillside the concept plan has been finally approved and there is evidence of progress in the revitalisation plan as work spaces are being cleared. We continue to have plenty of work and staff are still being taken on. We were intrigued to hear our CEO take the credit for this in his presentation at our MECA wage talks. No mention of the persistence of the RMTU in fighting against the closure of Hillside and lobbying for its re-opening as part of Labour Party policy, nor of the government's

commitment to the place. Still, we suppose having a robust ego is a pre-requisite for being a CEO.

In networks there have been an increase in staff in the track gangs which is excellent to see. At the time of writing the roster is not yet complete as some of the positions are still to be advertised. By the time this edition of the mighty Transport Worker is printed these jobs should be filled and if the quality of workers we have employed lately is anything to go by, things are looking good for our track staff. Also the local culvert gang, created with government funding, has completed its tour of duty. The huge bonus that came with the completion of this contract is that almost all of the workers are now permanent employees, and good lads they are as well. This has enabled KiwiRail to create a second, much needed, bridge gang in the Otago region.

◀ We also understand another signals staff member will be employed in the near future for Dunedin signals. The local welding gang, created to take on the many welds, switch and frog repairs in the area, is also looking to increase by one staff member. This will bring the number of the welding crew up to three in total.

Seems to be a time of plenty, long may it last.

There has been a huge amount of work done in the local area involving all disciplines of the networks teams with many projects on the go at once as well as keeping up with scheduled maintenance. It is probably the time to remind each other about the effects of stress and fatigue. Getting the job done properly, safely, and on time should never be changed to getting the job done at any cost. With the new funding scheme being bought into play it may be important to remember this.

Never let it be said that our branch does not take campaigns seriously. The RMTU Right to Flush campaign, itself picking up on the International Transport Workers' Federation campaign of the same name has resulted in trackside toilets that will be being trialled at Waipahi, Clinton, and Milton for

all staff to use. A great example of persistence paying off.

Over in Dunedin Railways we understand National Office has initiated bargaining to maintain the RMTU collective agreement as the trial of a limited service aimed at domestic tourists continues. A number of part time and causal positions were advertised recently and this bodes well, especially given the bleak prospects for the company after the debacle of the mothballing during the autumn 2020 lockdown.

Our branch AGM is set down for mid-August and as well as the usual business of electing officials and delegates we have a guest speaker from the Myanmar community addressing us on the struggle for democracy in that country. The RMTU has a strong link with the Myanmar railway



Boaz Lovelock presents an RMTU Appreciation Certificate to Gareth Bachop for his work on the networks council on behalf of his Otago and national peers.

unions so it will be good to hear about the situation there, although we fear the prospects for democracy are not good given the impact of the coup and COVID19.

On a final and sombre note, a well-known rail identity, Doug Boulton, recently passed away. Doug was a surface-man, ganger, manager, and trainer within his long career on rail. He was like many long serving railway workers, putting in more than he got out. Our thoughts and prayers are with Doug's family at this sad time. 🌐

SOUTHLAND RAIL

Bright prospects augurs well for southern growth

GREETINGS from sunny Southland. We are developing new staff all the time down here, evidence that rail is in a period of growth after a generation of being on life support. Our recently recruited RCOs – Daniel Ward and Rhys Smolenski – have received their final tick of approval and are fully qualified to operate in the field. Well done lads and great work from all those involved in OJT minding. With the number of new staff and the training and development required this represents a real effort on behalf of the trainers and those being trained. When we talk about building capacity this is the reality – enabling people to work safely and productively around the clock in all weathers (that said it's always warm and sunny down here).

On this theme there has been plenty of training going on in operations. This

does create pressure on our roster but it's a question of a little short term pain for long term gain as, that phrase once again, it builds capacity.

Talk of new locos for the South Island is another positive topic of lunchroom discussion. Let's hope we learn from some of the mistakes made in the procurement of the DL class,

We have our branch annual general meeting set down for mid-August and will be thanking Stacy Chandler for his time at the helm as branch secretary. Stacy navigated our branch through some challenging times, not least of which was the uncertainty around the Ohai to Invercargill branch line, commonly referred to as the Wairio Branch. Thanks to Michael Batt for volunteering to step up into this position. By the time you read this we hope to have our branch secretary elected along with other officials

and delegates, as well as health and safety representatives.

Congratulations to Brian Peterson on achieving 40 years service. Like many of our veterans, Brian has seen the industry go through the toughest of times. Hopefully the next 40 years will be a little easier.

Over in network services we have new members who were initially recruited via an agency taken on as permanent staff and directly employed by KiwiRail. Great to have you on board and part of the RMTU whanau. This does illustrate a fundamental challenge for KiwiRail as it grows in an ever tightening labour market however. Sometimes KiwiRail is simply not quick enough in recruiting staff (and of course the pay rates need to be looked at – but MECA talks are underway at last).

As we go into the spring, stay safe, well and above all united! 🌐



RMTU Women's Forum

THE RMTU Women's Forum on June 24, 2021 was a great success even though we had a few COVID obstacles. It's so amazing to have more and more mana wahine join the union movement. Strong unions need women!

The day consisted of a lot of networking with the new women and reconnecting with one another since COVID. We had a few speakers throughout the day including Karen Fletcher who did a fun and educational session on menopause. I think we all learned about menopause a bit more. The age range of women in the room were able to share their experiences, while younger women cringed at what they had to look forward to.

Melissa Ansell-Bridges spoke about the Fair Pay Agreement and how important it was for unions play a part in knowing what they are and why we need them. Using social media is a great way to spread the word to our members.

Tania Te Whenua spoke passionately and emotionally about the Mana Wahine Inquiry of Maori women who are disadvantaged culturally, economically, socially and spiritually due to crown/government policies and laws. The gender pay gap for wahine Maori is twice as high as that of pakeha wahine. The top of the food chain if you will, is pakeha men, pakeha women, Maori men, Maori women, Pacifica and Asian.

There is also a lack of education for mana wahine for employment after high school. In some employment wahine Maori do the same job as pakeha men and get paid less. The pay gap is real and still exists. If you empower wahine Maori, you empower an entire family.



RMTU NMC womens rep Rebecca Hauck with MUNZ reps Fiona Mansell (l) and Annette McCauley (r) demonstrating both unions working closer together.

We had two incredible special guests, Fiona Mansell from MUNZ (Maritime Union New Zealand) and NMC women's rep and Annette McCauley MUNZ Lyttleton branch women's rep. MUNZ is a strong union fighting the same fights as RMTU. We as both strong unions which need to work together for the greater good of their members and for the young people who will be entering into the workforce so they may have a safe and fair place to work and build their careers.

Staying connected to your union, sister unions, whanau and community in a time where everything is going virtual is so important in life.

Mental well-being is key to a healthy life and face-to-face connections are priceless.

On behalf of RMTU women we were blessed to have Fiona and Annette at our forum.

This is just the start to an amazing relationship.

Kia ora. 🌐

(See also page 20 for comments from first time attendees.)