

DECEMBER 2015

THE *Transport Worker*

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



**Presentation
for long
service**



5 CONGRATULATIONS



Andre Evans one of a number of members recognised in this issue.

12 KOREAN CONFERENCE



RMTU leaders at the ICLS forum.

16 SOLID SUPPORT



The RMTU has a reputation for supporting other unions in their struggles. Here we are at the Christchurch Bunnings' picket.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: (l to r) Toll Wellington workers Hugh Reid, RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher, Maligi 'Ma' Tiotio, Nigel Patel and Tama Downs pictured at a presentation for Nigel's loyal membership with the RMTU. Also page 5.

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Prepare for 2016!

Welcome to the final issue of the Union's magazine for 2015. We are fast approaching the conclusion of what has been a very full on year for many elements of our Union membership. As a result it has been a challenging time for our paid staff and our priceless elected rank and file national office holders, industrial council reps, branch officers and delegates. In 2008 I said in this magazine that there is a famous saying, going back over 3000 years: "Every time history repeats itself, the price goes up." I think we have seen some of that within the rail industry with the election of National-led Governments. You all will be able to think of at least one such event and there are more to come sadly, until an alternative is found to John Key in the minds of more voters.

In this issue I have asked all our paid staff to supply a reflection piece on this year and I know you will find them an interesting read. I truly enjoy working with such a team of committed unionists and the passion that they bring to the table on your behalf day in and day out. We are very blessed to have such great experienced and skilled staff in their fields.

So many challenges have come at us during 2015 and yet we remain proud, strong and undaunted by the struggle. It is these things which make our Union strong. We can deal with most issues if they are logic-based but sometimes we are confronted by issues which make no sense and appear to be ideology gone mad.

One such example is the current KiwiRail strategy of withdrawing the class 30 electric locomotives. The brief logic is that they are old and unreliable, take too much time to change over to diesel at Te Rapa and Palmerston North, and don't fit the 'simplification' model of operation – amongst other things. The RMTU has a great team of rank and file members supporting a fight to keep the class 30 operating and we have been strongly supported by the Greens and Labour. The Greens and RMTU have staged protest stunts to gain profile on the issue. Presently the class 30 MDF is higher than the new Chinese DL locos, they are better to work on, can go at full speed and are a full 20 minutes quicker on the route in average speed – and also put fuel back into the tank (so to speak) when going downhill.

Following meetings with the RMTU team, KiwiRail agreed to commission a review of the business case using Worley Parsons and we are awaiting the output. The RMTU has been hampered in this matter by the consistent denying of information requests from the RMTU on commercial grounds. This has meant that when we have discussed matters with the reviewer the conversation has been difficult as we are not equipped to talk at the level he is requiring with detail. KiwiRail is a prolific user of the black redacting pen in official information requests.

Another contentious matter for us is what is characterised as the future of Hutt Workshops. The workshop is facing many challenges. To name a few;

- Footprint too big now for use
- Asbestos in building and soil
- Earthquake strengthening
- Age of equipment
- Cost of operation

The company has been undertaking a review for more than eight months and at a recent meeting with them they agreed to go back to the start of the process and use this review as a pilot study for the introduction of High Performance High Engagement (HPHE) which is an initiative that the CEO supports. Two consultants are to facilitate the project and following a first up meeting of the core team there is a positive feel about the project by all parties. The initial HPHE process training courses get underway in December and are a major commitment by both sides given the time of year and the pressures on us all at such a time. I have high hopes for a positive outcome but time will tell.

Next year will be the 100 year anniversary for the Petone Station ANZAC Day memorial service. Major planning is going into the service with KiwiRail partnering with the RSA, Hutt City Council, FRONZ, Rail Historical Society and RMTU. We are working with our Australian comrades in the RTBU to get their participation. Government and Australian High Commission officials will be in attendance. More details will emerge in early 2016 but if you wish to attend please start your planning now. Anzac Day 2016 at Petone will show and mark respect for railway workers who served and died in the service of their country. This is the only dedicated rail memorial to serving soldiers in the First World War to my knowledge.

Recent events with falling milk prices and the painful demise of Solid Energy have left many of our members (rail and port) battered and bruised and others no longer as members. We are seeing the slash and hack of the sword throughout KiwiRail as they leave no stone unturned in their mission to cut costs. Recently we saw IT functions outsourced to Spark and, I am sad to say, that in my view there is more to come as KiwiRail fights the 'uneven' playing field between transport modes. For me it is ironic to see the recent converts to the uneven playing field argument calling for the below rail operation to be funded out of the Land Transport Fund. This has been the RMTU's position since day one of privatisation. Renationalising the whole train set in 2008 structurally locked us all back into the model. KiwiRail makes a very healthy operating profit and yet when the rail highway costs are placed into the ledger it all goes pear-shaped.

I wonder whether Mainfreight, Toll, Peter Baker Transport and others would look as good if they had to bear the cost of the destruction of our national roading network by the bigger longer heavier trucks – the H factor! So back to my opening quotation.

It appears to me we are back firmly into the Tranz Rail cost cutting and what is core business etc type discussions. I know that it would be much easier if we were just able to change the question come Election Day and get a supportive Government who sees rail and coastal shipping as the future rather than the current shower who see it as a problem and dance to the tune of the party political donors like the Road Transport Forum.

Wishing you and yours a most happy Christmas and a joyous and relaxing New Year. Enjoy the break (if you're having one versus working to keep the wheels and bows of industry turning) and have fun so that we can all put our noses to the grind stone in 2016 to continue to fight for a better working life for our people. 🌐

Retirements

Dear Editor,

My name is John Smith. I am a signals maintainer Palmerston North, KiwiRail Ltd.

On November 16 I am retiring.

Please accept my resignation from the RMTU.

Thanks for the journey and good luck with all your challenges in the future.

John Smith

41 years membership.

Well lads,

It looks like my career with the rail transport industry has come to an early end due to medical reasons.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the RMTU for all its guidance and assistance over my 38 year career with rail – all based at Taumarunui.

I tender my resignation from the RMTU as from Friday October 16, 2015 - membership number 49652, this being my final day with KiwiRail.

As my wife Brenda and myself open a new chapter in our lives we wish the RMTU and its members all the best in the future.

Once again a big thank you for looking after myself and my family's welfare over those 38 years.

Cheers

Mike Moffatt.

Dear Editor,

I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU as from 18 September 2015.

Thanks for the support you and fellow RMTU members have given over the years - just short of 34 years.

I'm shifting to Australia to work part time with my two sons in a place called Cobar, which is between Dubbo and Broken Hill in NSW.

So the RMTU flag will no longer be raised at South Port as I was the last full time RMTU member.

Good luck to you all.

Evan Lewis.

Dear Editor,

I will be leaving KiwiRail on 7 Jan 2016 and in doing so will tender my resignation from the RMTU effective from that date.

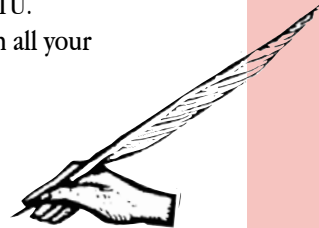
After 42 years of continuous union membership from the good old NUR days through the changes to the RMTU I have had some ups and downs but we have always got through in the end. Some battle won and some lost.

I take this opportunity to thank you and the Union team for the help given to me during my career.

I wish you and all members the very best going forward.

Doug Boulton

South Island track machine manager.





The RMTU team at the conference (l-r) Aubrey Wilkinson, Wayne Butson, Manu Barclay, Ka'isa Beech, Howard Phillips, Karen Fletcher and Mike Williams.

The NZCTU Conference

THE New Zealand Council of Trade Unions conference was held on October 15 –16 in Wellington and I was lucky to be part of the RMTU delegation alongside Wayne Butson, Aubrey Wilkinson, Mike Williams, Karen Fletcher, Manu Barclay and Howard Phillips.

The conference opened with a tribute to Peter Conway, the previous CTU secretary who passed away earlier this year. It was amazing to see how many people he had affected during his life and especially because Peter had always been a great support person to me. This conference was also where Helen Kelly was standing down as CTU president which was also very emotional. Massive thanks to Helen for all the work she has done during her time as president and for being a loud voice for workers across New Zealand! Congratulations to Richard Wagstaff and Sam Huggard who were elected president and secretary.

Over the two days the conference covered remits, elections of officers, workshops and panel sessions ranging from current union campaigns to getting young people more involved.

One of the highlights for me was the panel session around issues in the media. Andrea Vance discussed how there had

been an "undeniable power-shift" which prevented journalists from reporting the stories the public wanted to hear. She talked about how journalists were now expected to do more work with less funding and how, in the past, a journalist used to only work on two stories a week which gave them time to do research and conduct interviews. Now we were expected to write five to six stories per day. She challenged the delegates that if they wanted to see stories we cared about, we had to let journalists know what was going on. This related strongly to Nicky Hager's contribution which emphasised how unions are "the single strongest public network" because they aren't restricted about what they say unlike scientists and public servants because unions are made up by, and held accountable to, their members – every day working people. He stressed that unions have the power to give a voice on behalf of those people and that this voice needed to be heard more publicly.

The other session I enjoyed was led by StandUp, the youth sector of the CTU. The workshop opened with some thought-provoking questions like: Where would you currently rate your union on a scale of one to 10 when considering youth involvement?

What do you think needs to happen to

bring the score closer to a 10?

What are you going to do in the next week to improve this score?

What are you going to do in the next month to improve this score?

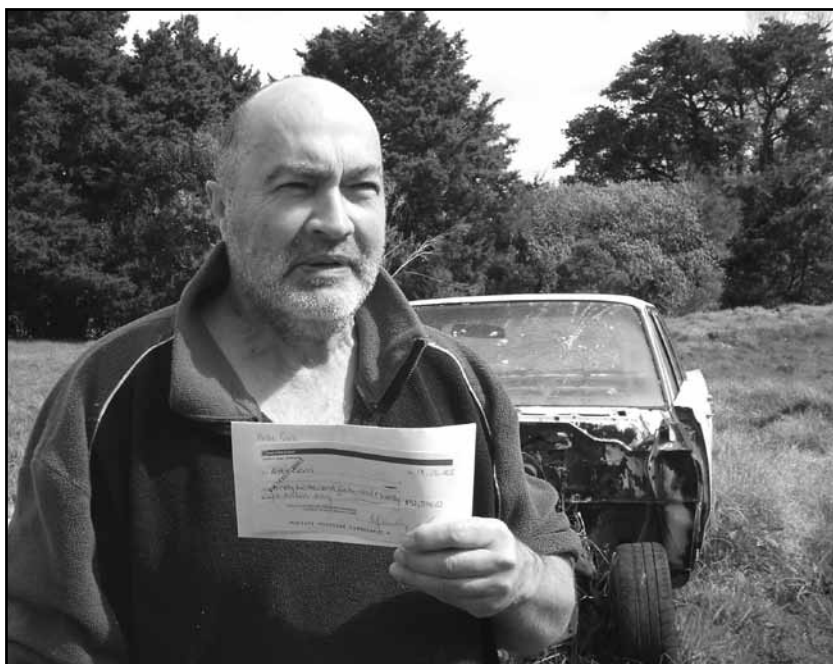
I think these are valuable questions all RMTU branches could be asking themselves – and actioning.

I have been very lucky to have had support from the RMTU head office and the Wellington branch who have supported me in a youth delegate role. It has been awesome to see more young people putting their hands up to be delegates!

The RMTU's H&S organiser, Karen Fletcher, gave an excellent presentation about the H&S workshop on the RMTU's "Just Say NO" campaign which included a detailing of the factors leading up to its inception – and its use during the Lyttelton dispute and other instances in rail.

Overall, I really enjoyed the conference because it was a great opportunity to meet people from other unions and to learn more about the issues and activities they are focussing on. I strongly encourage all members to look out for union events in their area and to get involved! 🌐

- Kai'sa Beech, delegate Wellington rail branch.



Long serving Whangarei LE Andre Evans holds his loss of driving certificate cheque from the SAD fund following his medical retirement.

Well done!

CONGRATULATIONS to all the folk featured on this page for achieving significant milestones of service.

The RMTU is a close-knit caring union which recognises and treasures the selfless service of many of its exceptional members.

"Many of these people have suffered through depressing times in rail and have also been there to share the pleasures and successes," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "They have had a roller coaster ride in rail and it's a mark of their fortitude that they have lasted so long. Well done!" 🇳🇿



Mani Raumati congratulates Stephanos "Steve" Kappotos after 40 years in his role of Passenger Operator at TranzMetro.



National vice president Howard Phillips congratulates Jenny Griffin on reaching her 20th year at Tranz Metro.



Gavin Mortimer, Invercargill LE, receives a certificate of appreciation for 40+ years of loyal union membership from general secretary Wayne Butson.



Naginbhai Patel humbly received his certificate for 40 years loyal membership of the RMTU.

Union inspiration

RMTU organisers reflect on what it is about the Union that inspires and motivates them

Organising down south: A worthwhile challenge



John Kerr

I've worked for the RMTU since March 2011. I started just after the big Christchurch earthquake in February and became the South Island organiser, a position that had been vacant since the tragic death of Brian Cronin the previous October. What struck me immediately about the RMTU is the calibre of our elected officials and delegates as well as the wealth of experience there was amongst the membership. I've been a member of eight unions and the RMTU is the third union I've worked for, so I feel well qualified to make comparisons. At first I thought we were lucky. However, I quickly revised this opinion when I realised that this Union has excellent delegates and officials because of the time and effort it

puts into developing and training them. This deliberate support, coupled with the strong backing of the wider membership, make our delegates and officials such high value.

I saw this very quickly a few weeks after taking up the job, when what became a defining campaign for us started at Hillside. I'd barely had time to get my feet under the desk when I was involved in a fight that came to symbolise the fate of thousands of manufacturing workers and their families under the National Government. Without the expertise, experience and selfless efforts of the Hillside delegates I would have been completely lost. When I look back at that struggle and the impact we made I count myself privileged to have known those members and their officials and to have had the honour of representing them.

Another thing our union does well is the quality and quantity of information we get out to the membership and the public. There are many unions that are several times larger than ours that we put

to shame with the number of publications we produce. For a relatively small union we make a lot of noise.

I think that one of the reasons for this is that we're not bureaucratic – by necessity all the paid staff have to turn their hand to jobs that in larger unions would be done by specialists. So I get to draft media releases, plan and teach education courses, write pieces like this, negotiate collective agreements, as well as do the day to day organising that's required to keep our members strong.

One thing that makes the daily organising work easier is the wider perspective this union takes. Whether that's around health and safety – something we do very well compared to other unions – or our strong international focus, it's easier to deal with what's in front of you when you know it's part of a wider pattern. I've been very fortunate to have travelled widely overseas on behalf of the RMTU and CTU and I hope that experience has made me a better organiser.

In truth, most of that day to day organising work is done by our delegates. If I'm doing my job properly those delegates feel confident and supported and able to handle most workplace issues themselves. The



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members understand that they, and not me, are our union and are capable of enforcing their rights with minimal help. This takes an effort – sometimes it's easier to simply do it for the members but that's a dangerous path to take because I'm responsible for about a thousand of them across an island as big as England.

What do I enjoy the most about this job? I like planning, writing and teaching courses for activists and delegates. This year I've had the pleasure of teaching senior delegates and organisers from other unions alongside our own. That's been one of most enjoyable things I've done in my time working for unions. Being in a room with people who come from different industries, facing the same struggles our members face, and who have a resilience and strength of purpose that inspires us is very humbling.

I also enjoy the challenge of being part of a campaign, whether it's fighting to save jobs or to try to win a good deal in collective bargaining.

The recent dispute with Lyttelton Port was a case in point.

What's gratifying about that kind of work is seeing people develop and grow in confidence through the experience of sticking together and fighting. Anyone who has seen our film 'The Red Card' will hopefully understand what I mean by that.

Most of all though, I enjoy the varied nature of my work. Organising can be physically, intellectually and psychologically challenging. I spend a great deal of time travelling which can make it difficult to get enough sleep and exercise; it's hard on occasion to keep one's emotions in check when confronted by the frankly appalling way working people are treated in this country; and, although I like teaching, drafting articles like this and negotiating agreements, it can be difficult.

On balance though, it's worth it.

The RMTU is unique in my experience. Our demographic is largely that of middle aged men but we're outward looking and whilst we remain unreconstructed in some respects, we are quick learners. We understand the value of manoeuvre and not just muscle and we've demonstrated, time and time again, we can successfully adapt.

In recent months we've reached out to other unions, supporting UNITE! and FIRST in their disputes with McDonalds and Bunnings respectively. Our presence at pickets and protests is always appreciated and I'm sure will be returned in kind if we ever need it. 🌐

Standing up for health and safety

I'm entering my fifth year as the RMTU's health and safety organiser – it feels more like five minutes, possibly because the time is small fry compared to the level of experience and long service of the other RMTU staff and most of the members.



Karen Fletcher

Previously I spent seven years with the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions

where I worked with affiliated unions around health and safety. In that role I learned the RMTU is the NZ union movement's poster child for union leadership in health and safety. I jumped at the chance to work with them in the health and safety organiser role.

When I look back at the last couple of years our members have been thrown some challenging H&S curve balls including the DL asbestos debacle and asbestos cladding issue at Hutt mechanical shops. We named last year the year of the fibre and focussed this year's Worker's Memorial Day poster on putting pressure on the government to ban the importation of asbestos. Australia banned asbestos imports back in 2003!

Our Union promotes a cooperative and collaborative approach to health and safety whereby workers through their representatives can genuinely participate in the management of health and safety issues.

Our participation goes beyond consultation.

When I say 'our union' I am referring of course to the elected representatives of the members; the delegates, H&S reps and industrial council reps who should always be directly involved in the joint decision making.

The management of the DL asbestos issue was an excellent example of the Union and KiwiRail working together to find a solution that met both the needs of the business without compromising workers health and safety.

This year the RMTU and KiwiRail renewed the Joint Employee Participation Agreement which affirms the commitment to elected health and safety representatives and their role in the health and safety action teams (HSAT). A HSAT reinvigoration project is also underway including a new communication portal for reps to access and share information.

EPAs have been renewed with Transdev and Port Nelson with others near to sign off.

The KiwiRail 'Just Fair Culture' programme has come to fruition this year with the tireless input from the joint working group. The JFC programme has the potential to improve the way H&S incidents are responded to by management with an emphasis on finding the contributing system failures that led to a poor decision being made. Training on Just Fair Culture will be rolled out in 2016.

Other highlights of this year include the RMTU Red Card campaign and its application in the LPC dispute earlier this year. The relationship between the union and LPC has improved in recent times with implementation of an across port health and safety committee structure. The Union and LPC are working towards signing an employee participation agreement and agreeing to a process around how the port assesses risk. The Red Card campaign has been rolled out across the union and has been acknowledged by other unions as an effective campaign to remind workers of their right (and responsibility) to refuse unsafe work.

Rail tunnels have once again been under the spotlight this year with two fires in both Rimutaka and Otira tunnels resulting in Worksafe NZ improvement notices. The 2013 Otira fume incident is being heard by the court in December 2015. Reps at the regional tunnel focus groups continue to work with KiwiRail to address the issues in the tunnels.

To conclude, I hope you and your loved ones enjoy a well-earned Christmas break and I look forward to working with you in 2016. Have a safe and happy Christmas. 🌐

Transition from delegate to organiser



Stu Johnstone

I first became a member of the RMTU when I was employed by KiwiRail at the Hillside workshops in August 2008. I had moved to New Zealand in May 2004 and found work at a small family engineering firm in Dunedin where the employees concept of collectivism was that everybody else must agree with 'me' – a move that obviously pleased the boss.

If I was going to work in a strong unionised environment again a move to a workplace covered by the RMTU was the only option in Dunedin.

I became a delegate straight away to fill the vacant position in the fabrication shop and it was here I formed friendships with the other delegates including Les Ingram, Dave Kearns, Steve Wilson, Grant Donaldson and Jim Kelly.

This group of delegates worked very closely together. Monthly meetings were held and we had regular contact as issues arose.

We also held positions on the HSAT team and demonstrated a consistent approach for representing our members.

As delegates we had the freedom to plan our way forward, to be strategic in making a difference knowing that John Kerr and Wayne Butson were only a phone call away for support and advice and, of course, the occasional 'what were you thinking?'.

Clearly the RMTU is different to other unions I had been a member of largely due to the nature of the rail industry where the workers are more committed to the industry than the bosses – and our branch structure.

Delegate training courses were held which included delegates from other sections of rail together with local port and Taieri Gorge railway delegates.

Information was more readily available and if elected there was the opportunity

to be on an industrial council or to attend Conference.

Little did we know what was ahead but this close working relationship served us well during the redundancies of 2011 and then the closure of Hillside in 2012.

One of the keys to the campaign we mounted to make this a national issue was the willingness of so many of our members to be active, to pass information around the workplace either written or oral, to do leaflets drops in letter boxes while walking down the street.

Our members turned up with family and friends to support our public meetings and rallies.

During this time, realising that I was going to need to look for another job, now was the time to move from being involved part time as a delegate to being fully involved as an organiser. No matter where I worked my desire to see people treated fairly was too strong I had to stand up for my mates.

Becoming an organiser for the RMTU in Auckland is the opportunity I was hoping to find.

It has allowed me to continue my involvement with rail in New Zealand, to stand up for workers and develop the political activism that started in Dunedin. There is so much knowledge within our membership.

So many of you have seen the changes and have been involved with our Union, holding keys roles as delegates and branch officials, and this has helped me settle into the role.

Your support and encouragement continues to be invaluable.

My focus is to organise for our members, not service needs, with the aim of developing strong delegate groups like I experienced in Dunedin.

We can do this together by building unity within our organisation and maintaining our aims.

I look forward to many years of enjoying working closely with our delegates and moving around talking to you – our members. 🌐

The satisfaction and joy of solidarity



Todd Valster

I joined one of the unions that became part of the RMTU back in March 1984.

From then I worked in rail until March 2002 when I started working full time as a RMTU organiser. I currently still hold this role.

Prior to working for the RMTU, I was an active delegate in the Wellington rail branch from May 1995.

Over the last 31 years I believe I have been privileged to work with great people within the RMTU family including my colleagues at the office and many delegates and active members. These great people have made working for the RMTU a pleasure.

I would be remiss to not acknowledge the many friends of the RMTU that have also been very supportive of our Union and more specifically myself – thank you.

The RMTU is a successful little union. We do not limit our focus to just pay rates but rather focus on all matters regarding our member's employment – and beyond. Most of the workplaces our members work in are safety critical so safe workplaces are a major focus that we are constantly vigilant about.

We should all be proud of the improvements made regarding safety at work, but we must also understand that those improvements have not happened by chance. They have been achieved through strong leadership and strong member participation in health and safety. We must maintain this focus.

The RMTU is concerned about all aspects of its members' employment including hours of work, rostering, medical standards, injury management, return to work, industry training, consultation on changes, new plant and equipment, superannuation,

sickness and death benefits and infrastructure.

We also provide a strong voice for maintaining and, hopefully, improving the transport industries where our members are employed.

We also think it's important to build effective relationships with employers and, for the most part, this has been achieved through the setting up of consultative and industrial forums which meet regularly and not just on demand.

I have been part of the KiwiRail Industrial (Operations) Council (KIC) for most of the last 15 years. While there has been some constructive criticism of this forum, the KIC is important. It enables a high level of dialogue between elected RMTU reps and KiwiRail management. Without these formally agreed forums, members could be a lot worse off with ad hoc consultation and divisions between branches and sites.

The RMTU supports participation beyond union/employer consultative councils and committees, where that participation is deemed appropriate.

I am currently on a trans-Tasman working group reviewing and updating the Australian Standard for Oral Fluids testing. One of the aims of this review is to have an Australian/NZ Oral Fluids testing standard.

Having this new standard in place will benefit RMTU members and other NZ working people. The NZCTU nominated me to participate on this review.

While we do look at the bigger picture, we also support each and every member, regardless of their employment status, to make sure they are treated fairly at work when issues arise.

Next year will be yet another challenging one. For members employed by KiwiRail it is clear that cost reduction will be constant as the company attempts to minimise any Government support provided to KiwiRail or eliminate the need for Government support at all.

This KiwiRail aim could have a very negative effect on RMTU members so we must stick together, weather the storm and strongly send the message that our industry is essential to New Zealand.

We will not stand back and watch it fail with closures and downsizing. For port members we need to work through any rationalisation of NZ ports so that we come out with the best outcomes possible for our people.

My best days at work are when members are solid and support each other to get great outcomes. Let's make that happen together in 2016 as we have in the past. 🌐

Arahura's last undignified stand

THE old Cook Strait ferry, Arahura, is now beached and waiting dismantle on a south Gujarat beach in India near the Alang ship yards - the final resting place of thousands of unwanted ships.

The ship yards are world famous for their ability to strip a boat to its component parts - by hand.

The 32 year old Arahura left Wellington in October and was pulled onto the beach at low tide last month.

According to a report on stuff.co.nz an Interislander spokesman said the future use of the ship would be a decision for the new owners.

The photo above suggests that decision had been made.

A ship tracking website pinpointed the Arahura on an arm of water between the western Indian states of Gujarat and Maharashtra before this photo was taken.

At the yards equipment, such as radars, engines and more are taken off and sold, while the steel from the hull is removed for scrap.

Shipping expert Peter Dawson, of Dawson & Associates, told *The Dominion Post* he believed a ship as old as the Arahura would definitely be sold for parts because the cost of maintaining the ship would be too costly.

He expected scrap metal from the 13,600-tonne ship to fetch more than \$2.1 million on the open market.

The Arahura made its last passenger journey across the Cook Strait in July after clocking up almost 13 million kilometres.

"It's a sad end to our quiet achiever," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson who added that many union members had fond memories of the ship. "In fact it's a bloody shameful fate for a Government-owned vessel to end up on a beach being cut up in total disregard of environmental needs. Surely we should expect better of an SOE?" 🌐



The Arahura beached in Gujarat, India.



As she was - the Arahura proudly crossing the Cook Strait.

Labour's 99th conference

By Dave Marden
(North Island ports NMC rep)

THIS year the Labour Party conference was held in Palmerston North from November 6 to 8.

RMTU representatives and/or delegates were, Wayne Butson, Aubrey Wilkinson, Howard Phillips, Mike Williams, Ka'isa Beech, retired organiser and union stalwart, Eddie Dickson and the scribe of this article.

Without doubt, the passion and drive in Eddie's socialistic beliefs are very much alive. His attention to detail, his knowledge of Union and Labour Party politics, is priceless and inspirational! Personally, it was great having him there and sharing in his camaraderie.

Day 1: All sectors of the Party were separated into the various groups with the RMTU as part of the Affiliates which were sent to the PSA-shared Union building five minutes from the Centre to do our part on policy proposals. Wayne and Howard provided submissions around the directorship of rail and the session took up most of the morning before we moved to Policy workshops back at the centre.

Policy sessions were divided into five categories: health and society; infrastructure and environment; skills and wages; law and order; and jobs and growth. RMTU reps ensured they covered each section. Eddie and I went to the skills and wages session. Without going into the complexities and writing screeds of policy stuff, the essence of each session was to go through the policy platform process in the five fields and make amendments to either change, agree or disagree with each proposal presented – with much debate in some.

This carried us through to the late afternoon with a break before all 501 delegates assembled for what was, in the main, a powhiri from the local mayor and MPs Iain Lees-Galloway and Andrew Little, for the official opening.

Day 2: Most of the day was speeches including from: the newly elected president Nigel Howarth and the general secretary, followed by challenging sessions from



RMTU's delegation at the Labour Party conference with Labour leader Andrew Little.

various external speakers, the essence of which was based around future planning and future proofing. One presentation that stood out was from Shamubeel Eaqub whom wrote the book *Generation Rent*. Currently some 51% of Kiwis rent. In Auckland it is 57%. Frightening statistics. With the average Auckland house price at around \$900,000 and the average Auckland wage at \$58,000, we all know, it's virtually impossible for prospective home owners to get into a property. Richard Wagstaff the new CTU president also spoke.

Over the duration of Saturday's deliberations, time was set aside for a tribute to the late Peter Conway. Peter's wife was presented with flowers by Little and a video of Peter was shown depicting his legendary union career. Notable, was the music accompanying the video was written and played by Peter. An emotional phase of the Conference.

The day's end was wrapped up with elections for the Labour Party.


Day 3: Started with election results followed by the NZLP annual report then a session on constitutional changes. Sir Geoffrey Palmer headed a unit of constitutional experts to make changes and recommendations with the aim of simplifying the document and removing duplications

and contradiction. The support for the panel's recommendations for the changes was unanimous. This was the first time the constitution had been updated in nearly 100 years.

Next was policy proposals and amendments followed by a presentation by Kelvin Davis on the plight of the NZ detainees at Christmas Island off Western Australia's coast.

After lunch Andrew Little gave his Leader's speech. A very moving and inspirational delivery focussing on employment, child poverty and, for us RMTU types, good news in terms of the electrification in Auckland. He also made reference to the closure of Hillside workshops in Dunedin as a consequence of off-shore purchasing, which will not happen under a Labour Government. In essence, keeping it Kiwi. A heartening idiom.

In summary, a very positive vibe came out of this Conference. The unity displayed by all members of the Caucus and the Party faithful was both encouraging and uplifting and is laying a strong foundation toward the elections of 2017.

It is up to us to maintain the momentum, be pro-active and assist in any way we can to help put a Labour Government in power at the next election. 

Are you a doer or a moaner?



By Eddie Dickson
(Life Member - retired)

If you want a safe and secure workplace with good conditions you have to organise. The RMTU is an organising union and, together with other Labour affiliated unions, is making a tangible difference for members. The RMTU is affiliated to the Labour Party.

The union affiliates welcomed E tu[#] – the recently merged Engineers Printing and Manufacturing Union and the Service and Food Workers Union – to an affiliates meeting for the first time. (All power to the workers). The affiliates immediately got down to business with a focus on their industrial and political priorities. History has proven that without political power to add to our industrial strength we are trying to do it into the wind. The affiliates elected their officers for the next year and planned their political activity.

The Conference was organised along the lines of a well-oiled RMTU Conference. Down to business, no bullshit or pontificating and there to represent the aspirations of the rank and file. All politicians say they want to represent all New Zealanders but our emphasis is to weigh the political processes towards the needs of ordinary

people rather than those doing well from wealth accumulation and/or tax dodging. The affiliates want a better future for all with fairness and justice based on proper paid employment. That was also part of the message to the Labour Party from Richard Wagstaff the new Council of Trade Unions president.

The cleanout of bullshit from the core principals within Labour Party policy will result in greater clarity and focus for both the election campaign and our demands for appropriate legislation. As Andrew Little said, we have to focus on our core value issues: jobs, housing, health and education. This Conference did not finalise the campaign issues but set in place formal structures to confront the future.

We all know our old jobs have changed and many have disappeared. A Government has to understand what the workplaces of the future will probably look like and what political action will be required to enhance employment prospects through education and skill training. As unions, we need to understand the trends to make sure appropriate employment law protects workers. We all know how communication has changed. A Labour Party group under Grant Robertson is currently sifting through the many views and projections. You could use that fancy mobile computer of yours to have a look at the challenges [<http://www.futureofwork.nz/>] while reflecting that the

rapid development of this technology has parallels with other technologies in every workplace to a greater or lesser extent. Even if you personally do not feel threatened, you need to keep up for the sake of the next generations – they are the ones from whom you will want support to pay your super and hospital bills.

Little has started his election campaign with a focus to increase work opportunities – jobs, jobs and jobs. For RMTU he mentioned improved public transport with double tracking in Canterbury and the Auckland city rail link and possibilities for rebirth at Hillside. A Labour Government focus on regional development will help all our members. Richer regions mean increased port cargo, more job opportunities and better social services. It's pretty basic but currently not being done.

As your workplace discussions review the TV or newspaper reports on Labour policy and performance just reflect that the press we have favour the current structure, as do the banks and large corporates and most of our bosses. It's not war but it is the exercise of democratic rights.

The RMTU delegation argued for your future and that of your family.

The Labour Party is clearly committed to improving your circumstances. Will you be a doer or a moaner? 🇳🇿

[#] E tu means stand tall.



Skills of organising

Bay of Plenty CTU Skills of Organising Course facilitated by RMTU organiser John Kerr and attended by NZEI, TEU, Meat Workers Union, UNITE officials and RMTU delegates William Lanigan, Shane McNae, Kerry Koller-Graves, John Goodall, Darryl Hoare, Paul Hansen and Joe Clendon.



RMTU delegates join conference attendees in support of the families seeking answers to the tragic death of their children on a local ferry - 'Sewol' - which sunk in 2014 with loss of nearly 300 lives - most of them students. (inset - Signing the banner.)

Seoul Forum Report

By Wayne Butson

THE International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) 10th International Forum was held 8-9 September at the Sejong Hotel in Seoul Korea. The ICLS is made up of 12 unions in nine countries of the Asia Pacific regions.

The affiliates are the workers of public transport, railways and maritime from Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Mongolia, Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

The RMTU delegates were Howard Phillips (National vice president), Sam Kahui (Wellington rail branch) and myself (RMTU general secretary and ICLS steering committee member). Sam was in the area on a personal holiday and chose to join up for the Forum and this was appreciated.

The theme for the forum was 'The future of labour solidarity'.

A particular focus was on the 10 year anniversary of the formation of ICLS and 70 years after World War Two.

We were given a city tour the day before the Forum where we visited, amongst other sites, KTX Goyang rolling stock depot and a protest site for families related to the Sewol ferry tragedy. Those affected are still seek-



Howard and Wayne pay their respects.

ing the truth behind the disaster. The ferry sank on 16 April 2014 carrying 476 people of whom 304 died (mostly secondary school students from Danwon High School). To read more go to

<http://bit.ly/1PDcaum>

The visit to the Sewol protest site included a meeting with family members.

A welcome dinner was hosted by the Korean ICLS affiliates that evening and as part of the dinner it is customary for the host country to provide a cultural presentation. In this case a silent pantomime performed by two people was staged. The performance began with a woman entering

the darkened room carrying a small box of sticks with ribbons tied to them. She moved slowly toward the stage and when she arrived lay down the tree and sat sadly staring at it. The lights darkened again and an Asian caricature masked man entered to sea sounds hauling a fishing net. When he arrived at centre stage he began to pull it in. The net had many shoes caught in it. When he untangled each shoe sound erupted from the sound system of humans screaming, helicopter rotor sounds, boat sirens and at the same time search lights swept across the stage. I found the performance very moving following the events of the day and many of the Forum members were weeping openly.





A transverser bed



**Within the
KTX
complex.**



President of the Mongolian rail union with Howard.



Japanese honesty



One image from the presentation shows a bronze memorial in the background honouring those women taken into prostitution and one of those women speaking.

A presentation from Japanese delegates took the NZ contingent by surprise for its graphic and honest content.

"I have never seen images like these before and certainly not presented by Japanese themselves," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson.

"The images focussed on aspects of the Burma railway, the deaths of POWs, the forced prostitution im-

posed on some Korean and Chinese women and the after-effects of the atomic bomb attacks."

He said it was a sobering presentation despite it being in Japanese.

If readers would like to view the presentation please contact Wayne. Be warned it's a large power point presentation – 2.5 GB – and has eight movies embedded within.

The discussion and presentations on the 10 year history painted a picture of the comradeship and solidarity developed within the ICLS whanau as being effective in empowering affiliates and their members in their work. We from the RMTU gave a presentation on this topic and were members of the panel discussion.

The introduction movie for the 70 years since WW2 was a compelling view together with the commentary provided by the ICLS general secretary Bro Yamada. It was the first time many of us had seen the war through Japanese eyes as most coverage seen is from a western perspective.

An image accompanies this report. Stimulating debate was had on the matter and I acted as moderator.

During the forum we learnt that the hotel in which the Forum was being held was behaving in an anti-union manner and so a protest was staged out front by forum participants and hotel workers. A protest message was handed to a management representative from the hotel.

The forum was very successful in growing the unity and solidarity of affiliates and we all look forward to the next action or event of the ICLS. 🌐

A look at some of our members around the country doing what they do best: working, learning, discussing and supporting.



Michelle Appleton collects the coffee while Lindsay Cameron and Stu Hutchinson make the changeover at Arthur's Pass.



Peter Buckley preparing to weld at the Hillside heavy lift facility.



(l to r) Ben Peterson UNITE organiser, Heiner Benecke Lyttelton port branch secretary, Luke Lockton, Simon Gillard, Stu Marsh all RMTU LPC delegates, Andy Kelly Lyttelton port branch president at the branch AGM and (below) Anthony Hoffman practising picket line duty while waiting for the port shunt at the RMTU office in Lyttelton.



Work place notice board

This issue's exemplary notice board is at Westfield freight depot.



West Coast stalwart John Bannerman has been pictured in this magazine in many strange situations - but never behind a desk!



Dave Kearns front and centre at an anti-TPPA protest.



Tranz Alpine staff Kevin Graham and Gary Kelly in Christchurch.

KiwiRail industrial council contact list

KR Freight Industrial Council

C T Site Antoon Whiu (029) 770-5594
 Locomotive Central Les Perrin (027) 435-7664
 Locomotive Northern Barry Simpkins (021) 175-8177
 Locomotive Southern Mike Williams (027) 259-2421
 Terminals Central Rick Barnes (021) 995-793
 Terminals Northern Dean Ngatai (027) 430-2958
 Terminals Southern Marty Duncan (027) 976-0725
 Union Organiser Todd Valster (027) 445-4691

InterIslander Industrial Council

Ferry Operations (Outside) North John Finch (027) 778-7287
 Ferry Operations (Outside) South Vern Steele (027) 445-9122
 Scale 1 North Chris Hanna (027) 237-2273
 Scale 1 South Tania Haraki (027) 339-0881
 Union Organiser Todd Valster (027) 445-4691

KR Mechanical Industrial Council

Auckland Metro Maintenance John Evans (027) 334-5576
 Electric Suburban Wellington Danny Singh (027) 244-4549
 Hutt Workshops Rep Phil Bosworth (027) 202-0900
 Infrastructure Mechanical Logan Kahui (027) 363-3117
 South Island Depots Guy Miller (021) 146-5654
 TXM Rep Craig Davidson (027) 303-9216
 Union Organiser Stuart Johnstone (027) 246-4961

KR Networks Industrial Council

Infrastructure Bridges/Structures Lou Watene (027) 451-1362
 Infrastructure Mechanical Jerry Hohepa (027) 243-8203
 Infrastructure Sigs, Comms, Traction Ian Walker (021) 888-902
 Infrastructure Track Supervisors Hopa Bell (027) 496-0781
 Infrastructure Track Supervisors John Bannerman (027) 241-0560
 Operations Scale 1 Kevin Jones (027) 205-7671
 Operations Train Control Carey Sullivan (027) 235-3795
 Track Worker Brad Claridge (027) 498-2569
 Union Organiser John Kerr (027) 246-4941

KR Passenger Industrial Council

EMU Depot Rep Keith Whittaker (022) 099-3314
 Loco Engineers Michael Nicholson (021) 989-000
 Scale 1 Dave Sharma (027) 349-8555
 Scale 1 Donna Campbell (021) 160-5886
 Train Manager (Urban) Harvey Paterson (021) 022-09019
 Yard Operations Glenn Hughes (027) 776-3349
 Union Organiser Wayne Butson (027) 4962461



Supporting fellow unionists

FIRST Union have been in a major dispute with Bunnings which remains unresolved as the Transport Worker goes to press. FIRST is in collective bargaining with Bunnings who, as the employer, are claiming to be able to force short term changes to rostered hours. In other words, staff may be required to extend or change shifts – not by agreement, but by employer demand – at very short notice.

We're all familiar with the bosses' so-called reasoning for this sort of thing – how they cannot possibly run their business without this kind of 'flexibility'. Of course there is no evidence to support this argument. Bunnings is a successful, profitable business and giving managers the ability to chop and change the hours of staff will have a hugely negative effect on working people



Some of our members join the Christchurch Bunnings' picket in solidarity.

and their families. As someone once said, 'flexibility in employment is like flexibility in the Kama Sutra, it's just more elaborate ways of getting shafted!'

There have been a couple of short

strikes, largely for publicity purposes as one of Bunnings' key vulnerabilities is their 'brand'. There has been good media coverage of the dispute, particularly when some activists and union officials entered a

WHERE ARE YOU?

Problems may be looming and we'll need to contact you quickly. Please check we have your correct address and contact details.

<http://bit.ly/exmEyL> or 04-499-2066

Bunnings store in Auckland and chained themselves to shop fittings in front of TV cameras.

Nothing as dramatic has happened in Christchurch, where the coverage has been largely through social media, with a few items in the local papers and on the radio.

The RMTU has been out on the picket line with FIRST members, alongside supporters from NZNO, E Tu, and the PSA. The workers taking action are always glad of our support and often comment on our struggle with Lyttelton Port earlier this year.

We should never underestimate the impact of our support for these workers and their families, as we know from our own battles, it means a great deal when you're in a fight and you find out that you had friends that you never knew you had.

As this is written Bunnings have taken out a full page advertisement in newspapers putting their side of the story. This is akin to them saying 'please stop' and shows that they are hurting.

We remain hopeful that the dispute can be resolved and if not, look forward to backing our brothers and sisters in FIRST union in their continued fight. 🌐

HUTT WORKSHOP

THE Just and Fair Culture project appears to be a work in progress with nothing published, although Activist No. 8 provided us with an indication of a pilot training programme. It would appear that some issues were identified which have caused some measure of a rethink!

We were all gutted to hear of the Solid Energy announcements and the affect it will have on the West Coasters. Once again, the frontline workers get shafted and the surrounding community suffers in the fallout.

Our CEO hit the headlines in early August with an opinion piece discussing the cost of KiwiRail versus its value. It was a brilliantly simple and well-balanced commentary that put a good case forward. Hopefully with the recent appointments of Maryan Street and Joanne Black, our communications and lobbying of Government will garner a truer acceptance of KiwiRail as an integral part of New Zealand's transport infrastructure.

Our AGM in late August saw life mem-

ber Phil Bosworth return to the ranks as chair with new delegates Mohinesh Sologar and Nathan

Hemi. Paul Morrison became our new MIC rep. Our 'reinvigorated' HSAT committee includes former branch chair Kasia Kurene.

Several members attended the Employment Relations Authority hearing on August 27 and were very pleased with the knowledgeable and professionally impressive Union lawyer Geoff Davenport who presented the Union's case concerning the employment of DL loco staff. However, the Authority determined that the issues at hand will be heard in that forum rather than transferred to another court; the battle continues.

The long-awaited update (and seriously overdue) of the Hutt Review was revealed on October 29 with an admission by management that they had proceeded down a badly directed path that led to nowhere helpful. A 'reset' of the management mindset was required and that from now on, it would definitely be good to actively involve staff and their representatives. As a result the High Performance High Engagement

Nest Home Loans and RMTU are providing your financial solutions

Since the launch of Nest's partnership with RMTU, we've fielded an overwhelming response from members. This is great for members and great for RMTU as Nest is committed to supporting RMTU with \$200 donated for every member who gets a Nest mortgage.

Can I use KiwiSaver to buy a home?

The answer is **ABSOLUTELY YES.**

You may not need any savings apart from your Kiwisaver. Call Jeff now to see if you can also receive the \$10,000 to \$20,000 Housing NZ grant towards your deposit.

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

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



Contact Jeff Kerwin Nest's dedicated RMTU liaison
0800 337 426 | 07 211 4537 | 027 667 2941
jeff@nesthomeloans.co.nz | www.nesthomeloans.co.nz

◀ (HPHE) model was initiated with a couple of contracted facilitators with a meeting in mid-November to discuss an overview of the process and the likely path forward. Industrial relations principal advisor Strachan Crang was appointed chair and promptly called a site-meeting where management admitted its errors. This was a hugely significant signal that management is now beginning to transform to a more cooperative way of making things better.

On the Zero Harm front, our operations manager put out a reference to the Pike River Tragedy whilst KiwiRail was awaiting its fate as a result of its part in the Raurimu incident which resulted in a Downer em-

ployee suffering permanent life altering injuries. It was a reminder of the serious consequences when we fail to take safety seriously. Locally, we continue to enjoy a very good safety culture and some excellent safety records. Another H&S issue is the underfoot conditions around our sleeper storage area.

Things got so bad that staff said 'no way' to operating forklifts on such ground so a crane was engaged to perform the tasks. Well done those members for putting safety first.

The CEO's roadshow came to town in August as a continuation of the regular updates. The required target of saving \$20-30M

was hard to comprehend as there didn't seem to be too much detail in the strategy.

The long-awaited re-issue of the updated MECA finally reached our benches in early November – just in time for members to swot up on its contents over Christmas.

Armistice Day (11/11/15) was commemorated with all staff attending a service to pay homage to those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Great War. The weather held off with its promised lashings of rain until the ceremony was complete.

We wish you all a safe and merry Christmas and another well-deserved holiday break. Pa atawhai. 🌐

NAPIER PORT

AS another year comes to an end, we wish our members and their whanau, all the best for 2016. May this festive season bring some good R&R – that is, if you are one of the fortunate ones to get time off! If you are having to work be safe, think safe and may you and yours

all the branches or in any form of official capacity. Special thanks to the paid staff of our Union and the delegates who drive our Union, keep it focused at branch level, the grass roots people and dealing with the day-to-day political and individual issues –

have a goody!

As we look back over the last 12 months, thanks to those in our Union who serve inside and outside of

all the work that goes in behind the scenes that many may not see.

In being part of this activity one gets an appreciation for the effort they all put in to ensure our position is steadfast and true. They share a commitment to the wellbeing and welfare of our brothers and sisters and frequently go beyond what is expected, particularly in terms of their own time. So, as we wind down, or up, toward the year's end, I humbly thank you for all that you do. ▶



\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



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Protecting Working Families

freephone 0800 894 121
mario@aillnz.co.nz

AMERICAN INCOME LIFE
insurance company

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

◀ The new crane simulator is now being trialled. I experienced it first hand and it is very real. While operating, I clipped a container on the vessel deck while coming off the ship with an empty spreader at 40 feet. The reaction through the boom was very real. Even those next to me in the room felt it! The whole room looks like a crane cab and the experience is quite inspiring and something to behold. For a first timer and a non-crane operator I loaded 2 x 40 boxes, below and on the far side which took about 10 minutes. Definitely worthwhile. This is a tool that without a doubt will bring value

to any port operation. Training of potential crane drivers for Napier Port is well and truly under way.

It is about that time locally when cargo levels will start to lift and vessel frequencies increase. The commissioning of the two new cranes is expected to be around late November.

These will operate at higher speeds than any previous models, however, at the end of the day, the working of vessels will be dictated by the safe speed in which boxes can be removed, or taken to the ship side! In Napier, that is by top hamper type heavy

plant.

From the political end the Union has a couple of irons in the fire, including efforts around the EPA and another required mediation. Progress is being made and hopefully, we will have results before Christmas.

Our C3 members continue their battle towards a collective agreement. The current talks are based around a national document. However, the concern locally is how some of the older (better) provisions in a few of the IEAs will flow through, or be resolved, in reaching a new CA.

Te tino katoa, minaaki whaipanga. 🌐

WELLINGTON RAIL

KIA ORA from the big capital. With our Labour Weekend fast becoming a distant memory, we can now look forward to the pre-Christmas onslaught and the inevitable posting of hastily created Christmas rosters. It's that

time of year where you need to get those leave applications in early. Good luck!

On a celebratory note, we start with a big congratulation to two of our most humble non-assuming members Naginbhai Patel (Nigel) of the Wellington Toll depot and Tranz Metro's Stravos

Kapatos (Steven) on reaching their 40th year as loyal members of the RMTU.

We also note the recent departure of branch manager of Wellington's Toll depot, John Maxwell which augurs interesting times ahead for Toll as they seek to expand their current operations by building a new depot. We look forward to a positive and constructive relationship with their new ▶

Sickness, accident & death



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

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

You could be next to miss out!

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

Contact:

Julia Harrison, PO Box 813,
Wellington

Telephone: (04) 499-2066

Fax: (04) 471-0896

Email: julia@rmtunion.org.nz

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

management team.

It is with sorrow that the branch acknowledges the recent retirement of Allan Wakely at the age of 68. Allan is a long term stalwart of the freight sector who had an unmatched passion for both the job and his fellow workers. Allan was one of those likeable rogues who could also be relied upon to appear for duty at short notice – rain, hail or snow – as long as there was a buck to be made and a chin wag to be had with a beer in hand at the end of the day. It would be

fair to say that rail and all that it entails was his life. A man of simple needs you could say. As we farewell him we take this opportunity to thank Allan for his many years of loyal service. Thank you Allan, we wish you a long and happy retirement.

On another positive note we look forward to the completion of the freight yard renovations. It must be said that the recent upgrades to the shunter's lodge and locomotive facilities has been long overdue and the subsequent creation of a new joint

facility is a much welcome improvement. Not a moment too soon some would say! As always the IMP machinery is working overtime in Wellington with the greatly appreciated assistance of volunteer delegates. Remember, no delegate – no IMP!

Once again the branch welcomes the continuing increase of new employees within the various sectors.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy festive season. Until next issue, stay safe! 🇳🇿

CANTERBURY RAIL

THE effects of the earthquakes continue to plague us. This time it is asbestos which, as the rebuild takes off, needs to be monitored continuously with vigilance. Waltham and Addington depots have been the subject of concern in recent weeks. However, it's not always our buildings, but often those close by which are being demolished or having work done on them which cause us problems. Management have been good at keeping us informed but the key message is that members should speak with their delegate if they have any concerns. Asbestos is no laughing matter.

There have been a few rumblings at TranzScenic journeys of late. A manager was stood down and at the time of writing an investigation is taking place involving extensive interviews. The members in TranzScenic are grateful for the support they received from the rest of the branch and, hopefully, by the time you read this the matter will have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Out on the line, the Otira Tunnel has yet again been in our thoughts. A loco caught

fire in September, prompting NZTA and Worksafe to become involved.

A number of improvement notices have been issued. The delegates on both sides of the hill have been doing good work, Mike Williams has been very busy and we're hopeful we can get things resolved quickly.

It gives us no pleasure to have to pull the 'Red Card' but management understand that we will do it and that national office will back us if we feel what we're being asked to do is unsafe. At the time of writing the debate has shifted to what PPE we use in the shape of self rescuers or CABA (Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus) – oxygen tanks to you and I. Watch this space.

Finally, the TXMs and mechanical membership are facing some disruption with the prospect of new rosters.

Whilst the boss has the right to amend hours of work there has to be consultation and its important

that the members get involved in that. We do the work and we know what it takes to keep the rolling stock in good shape and ready to go out on time so we shouldn't be shy about letting the boss know.

We now have a closed branch Facebook group so if you're online and you're a member of our branch then contact John Kerr, Ian Walker or Graham Ealam who are the administrators.

Best wishes for Christmas and the summer season and stay safe. 🇳🇿



Branch officials meeting in case there are doubters out there.



Alfie and Coleen Wilson at the Christchurch Model Railway show with South Island organiser John Kerr.

LYTTELTON PORT

THE stand out piece of news in our branch has been the successful conclusion of collective bargaining for the inland port (aka, city depot), at Woolston. Readers will remember that one of the compromises we reached at the end of the dispute with LPC last summer was that city depot got its own collective agreement, separate from the waterfront agreement, but with a one year term back-dated to October 2014. Since the dispute both the branch and the employer have been working hard to repair the relationship. The result is that when the one year agreement expired we got a good three year deal that delivered an average 17% wage increase. This goes a long way to rebalancing the differences between city depot and the waterfront wage rates. A big thank you to delegates Simon Gillard and Darryl Haines for their work in getting this deal across the line.

Continuing the theme of inland ports, LPC's new facility at Rolleston looks like it could be coming on stream soon. LPC has already asked for 'expressions of interest' from current staff who may be considering working out there. The use of inland ports to store and distribute cargo is a growing trend in the industry and one that the RMTU is well placed to organise in given our presence across the length of the supply chain. Our members rail the boxes in and out of the inland ports so now we have to ensure we organise the workers marshalling the cargo.

Another feature of the settlement was a push for some form of industrial democracy. We now have area operational

forums up and running in the maintenance workshop, the container terminal,

and city depot. At the time of writing we need to get these established in security, civil maintenance and marine. The idea behind these bodies is that it gives us an opportunity to discuss issues with management outside of negotiations or when we're having a dispute. We fought hard for this and we should put the effort in to making it work. After all, it's part of having a mature, healthy relationship with our employer. There's no point in just moaning if we're not going to have a go at fixing stuff.

Our container terminal is undergoing a restructure. The planners, or logistics officers as they are known in LPC, have been affected, although not to a great extent. The focus has been more on the foremen, the majority of whom are MUNZ members. The upshot is that LPC is intending to disestablish seven out of 22 roles but create eleven supervisor positions. This is causing great controversy and we're watching events with interest.

We continue to have a good programme of delegate training. The most recent session was in October. These sessions are vital if we are to organise our membership and engage with management.



*Lyttelton inland port delegate
Simon Gillard.*

Another outcome of the bargaining which concluded in February was a push to review trades rates in the workshop and that's finally happening. LPC have engaged the same consultant that KiwiRail have used in the past, something we're happy about although we're reserving judgment until we see the results of the review!

Finally, on the all important health and safety front, it appears we have concluded an employee participation agreement with LPC at last! Well done to our H&S reps and a big thank you to our lawyer Hazel Armstrong and RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher.

Best wishes for the festive season and be safe. 🌐



Lyttelton Port branch executive meeting.

WEST COAST RAIL

HERE on the Coast we're still recovering from the impact of the restructure that saw a number of our locomotive engineers and rail operators in Westport have their jobs disestablished and have to move for work elsewhere. The debacle at Solid Energy is not of our doing, and whilst on the one hand we accept that

the financial difficulties the company ran into were not entirely self-inflicted, it does gall us to read about management cock ups that exacerbated the crisis. In our view, the incompetent handling by the KiwiRail managers involved in the West Coast restructure have still not improved the coal train performance to Solid Energy with almost daily train cancellations. It must be really heart warming to

the KiwiRail CEO that he has such a team of managers and all the lost revenue they have created with all the cancelled coal trains.

The crisis hasn't gone away either. It seems the Government, led by a former foreign exchange dealer, has no compassion for a whole region that is facing potential economic ruin. When will Mr Key and Mr Joyce learn that replacing highly skilled, well paid jobs, in extractive industries with minimum wage roles in tourism isn't going to fix our problems?

◀ The Otira Tunnel continues to give us grief. A fire on a loco in September was handled in exemplary fashion by our loco engineers but raised all sorts of questions about fire suppression, facilities for dealing with fires at Arthurs Pass, warning systems and so on. Together with their delegates, our members co-operated with Worksafe and NZTA in a very thorough investigation which has resulted in improvement notices being issued and us having a long hard look

at self-rescue equipment and compressed air tanks.

Thanks to delegates and members for the professional way in which they approached the whole affair.

We had a very successful and well attended branch AGM recently. Well done to our branch officers for putting on a few drinks and thank you to everyone who turned up. One notable absence was John Bannerman who has been promoted to a

managerial position.

John was an outstanding delegate and will be sorely missed. We know he's still a loyal RMTU member and appreciate the sterling work he has done for our members over the years.

Best wishes to our fellow members around the country for a happy festive season. 🌐

PORT TIMARU

BY the time you read this we should have concluded and ratified our collective agreement for members who work for Quality Marshalling. At the time of writing we just have a few minor items to tidy up on the terms of settlement and what is a brand new collective agreement. Thanks to Naylor Young and Josh Meyer for the work they've put in to date.

Our other collective agreement on

the port, for members directly employed by Prime Port Ltd, was negotiated earlier this year, thanks to some good work by our delegates Roy Hislop and Murray Cadigan.

So, after years of upheaval we're looking forward to a period of stability with plenty of work here in Timaru. We're mindful that our port has been lucky in the free for all that is the ports industry in this country and, more specifically, the South Island. With the absence of a national port strategy the

industry is restructuring itself and that has meant, and will mean, a great deal of pain as the dog-eat-dog nature of competition creates more losers than winners.

That said, our branch has survived and we have capable representatives and good collective agreements in place that we can build on. The only way to maximise our bargaining strength and to stay safe at work is by sticking together, as our brothers and sisters at Lyttelton have demonstrated in the past year.

Best wishes for Christmas and have a safe and prosperous new year. 🌐

PORT CHALMERS

WE'VE had a busy time of it at Port Otago of late, and not all for the best reasons. As this is written we have management conducting an investigation into our container services department that has given the branch much cause for concern. Suffice to say national office and legal counsel is involved and the

This is against a background of an increasingly busy port but one in an industry that is undergoing great change. We're the only port on the South Island that has started to take steps to accommodate the next generation of larger ships, with the programme to dredge the harbour gathering pace. There is little doubt our country

membership of both the RMTU and MUNZ have been expressing their misgivings via a petition.

needs a national ports' strategy and not the current anarchy that threatens to result in few winners and many losers. The local paper ran a very good piece on this recently and it's clear that what's happening is easily as significant as the restructure that took place in the 1980s.

With Christmas approaching we would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy new year. Let's plan for a fantastic 2016 as we continue to work towards a safer and happy workplace. All the best from the Port Chalmers branch. 🌐

OTAGO RAIL

AS the busy season cranks up our branch remains in good spirits. We had a successful AGM that was attended by the general secretary who gave us his usual lucid analysis of the state of our Union as well as the industries our members work in.

Some of us also got to watch the film the RMTU has made of the recent dispute with

Lyttelton Port. Very enlightening and a few lessons therein for our KiwiRail members as we look forward to re-negotiating our collective agreement next year.

We also have two new delegates on the track side of the business – Robert Teraki and Doug Tamatea junior – the latter demonstrating that KiwiRail is not only a family business but the Union is family too! A big thank you to Doug Tamatea senior for the

work he's done over the years representing our members and congratulations to him on his promotion to production supervisor. We know you'll always be RMTU and we value your contribution.

The recent South Island tour of the loco 'Passchendaele' received a fair bit of coverage in the local media. It certainly looked very picturesque at Oamaru and Dunedin railway stations.

Local LE Mike Kilsby was at the helm as well as Christchurch LE Alfie Wilson. The loco also had an excursion up the Taieri ▶

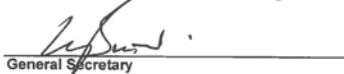


The Three Wise Men of Dunedin Yard...

**Rail & Maritime Transport Union Inc
Statement of Financial Position
As At 30/06/2015**

CURRENT ASSETS	Note	2015	2014
Current Bank Accounts	5	461,467	339,899
Accounts Receivable	3	39,203	34,872
Interest Accrued	4	59,693	49,842
Tax Refund Due	2	1,045	1,595
Total Current Assets		561,408	426,208
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Fixed Assets	6	131,525	151,217
Investments	7	3,826,519	3,669,344
Total Non Current Assets		3,958,044	3,820,561
Total Assets		4,519,452	4,246,769
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	8	134,663	93,356
GST Payable		19,230	22,519
Konemu Provision		6,452	6,452
Income Tax Payable		-	-
Provision for Leave		73,246	54,282
Veteran's Reunion Fund		6,850	6,850
Total Current Liabilities		240,441	183,460
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Non Current Liabilities		-	-
Total Non Current Liabilities		-	-
NET ASSETS		\$ 4,279,010	\$ 4,063,309
MEMBERS' FUNDS		\$ 4,279,010	\$ 4,063,309

Signed on behalf of the National Management Committee


General Secretary

16 SEP 2015
Date


National President

16 SEP 2015
Date



Gorge which garnered a lot of public interest.

We have a new manager looking after both Dunedin and Invercargill operation depots. There's something of a changing of the guard going on here in the South and it will be interesting to see how this plays out. In recent years there has been a not-wholly-successful trend in appointing managers from outside of rail instead of from within. We're not against the fresh ideas that new blood can bring, we are, however, mindful of the risk of losing that institutional knowledge and experience at a senior level. Rail isn't just another industry that carpet-baggers can come in to and run properly. Safety aspects alone make it unique and we should be mindful of that.

Congratulations to Marty Duncan on his successful re-election to the industrial council. He will have his work cut out next year if what we're hearing about the wage round is anything to go by.

We wish all our fellow members all the best for the summer and Christmas and hope you get some well deserved leave.



SOUTHLAND

It's getting busier as the days get longer in the deep south. Fonterra has done some work at Edendale which means rail benefits at the expense of trucks. This is boosting our income and is a big step towards us boosting our financial performance.

Over at Southport long standing member Evan Smith is about to retire after too many years to count at the port. The word is Evan is going over the ditch to spend time with his family in Australia. We wish you all the best for the future brother.

In other news, our local operations manager is rumoured to be retiring early in the new year. This will be a big change for both him and the branch. We're unsure who will be most relieved! Seriously though, all the very best Bob, we wish you a happy and peaceful retirement.

To all of you who don't have the privilege of living down here we wish you all the best for the summer and the new year.





(above) Makalivi Kulupa loading pallets into rail wagon.



TOLL Auckland



Brian Walters (delegate) and Asiasiga Alofa pause for a photo on a busy Friday afternoon.



Sione Poasa manoeuvres skilfully through the freight with wagons being on both sides of the depot.



Busby Ioapo (standing and in small photo left) acknowledges there is plenty to be done.