

# THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

## DEC 2019

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

# Supporting climate action



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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**

## A year of success under Coalition govt

**W**HAT a great year it has been to be an RMTU member and a worker in the New Zealand transport supply chain. The coalition Government continues to show a passion for Rail with an announcement on 30 October 2019 that Hillside Workshops will be reopened as part of a \$60m spend up for the Dunedin region. This announcement conferred victory on our campaign to see Hillside reopen and once again become an engineering centre of excellence for rail manufacturing and maintenance in the South Island.

In my view the previous National-led Government hated rail freight transport and especially Hillside Workshops.

The Nats will no doubt wax lyrical that during their governing of New Zealand they poured in \$1.5 billion. However, it is important to understand that the vast share of that went into Auckland and Wellington public transport while freight was left to wither on the vine.

Hillside, at the time of its closure, had successfully completed the construction of the AK passenger cars, 33 coal wagons and major overhauls of the Dx and Dc South Island fleet and was poised to construct the first batch of the almost 4,000 flat deck container wagons that KiwiRail stated it needed. All of that came to a halt when the Key-led National Government barred Hillside from tendering for the work and then awarded a contract to China for 300 flat deck wagons. This was the death blow.

When Jim Quinn and his shame-faced group of managers took the redundancy sword to our members in Hillside in December 2012 we swore to never give up fighting to have the workshop reopen. Our Union leaders took the 'Save Our Hillside' campaign to the floor of the Labour Party conference the following year and demanded that the reopening of the workshop became Party policy. Together with local MPs, including Dunedin South's Clare Curran, we succeeded in this and so the scene was set.

## Strikes and settlements

It would be fair to say that our relationship with the Transdevs of New Zealand



has been a troubled one. We have had strike action in Auckland and Wellington and commuter disruption has occurred with ironically strong public support – and it has not always been about money.

The rail transport operation contracts are very different between Auckland (Cost plus) and Wellington (fixed price) and so the employer's ability to pay is different.

Auckland was first and eventually settled for 3%, plus 3%, plus 3% for a three year deal and parity became the mantra for Wellington.

Eventually this was achieved and also some additional elements which saw Wairarapa train managers compensated additionally for some work practice changes and the passenger operators move during the three year term to be ahead of the living wage.

These were good outcomes which saw both metro operations settle into three years of employment terms and conditions stability and no wages related disruption to commuters. We have also seen good settlements with other employers and especially the multi union agreement in Port Chalmers. Strike ballots have been run with Port Tauranga and Sulphur Point C3 members and one being contemplated with Port Napier as I write this. In my view the scene is set for a major rail employment agreement with KiwiRail next year as now many of the wages in KiwiRail are the lowest paid in the industry especially with locomotive engineers.

## 25 years strong


Next year is our Union's 25 year anniversary and we have commissioned a book which will chronicle the lead up to the formation of the RMTU and also its first 25 years of operation growth and development. There is a lot to report on and so the book is a challenge for the author. I am looking forward to reading the early drafts especially given the list of life members to be interviewed.

This year was also election year for the Union and it was heartening to see so many putting their hands up for office and so many positions going to highly contested ballots. This shows that our Union is in good heart and we have active and passionate delegates. In this issue you will see the National Management Committee for the next two years and the new KiwiRail industrial councils which are all underway representing members at the coal face.

It has been a very busy, rewarding and at time challenging year and so I for one am looking forward to the break. A big thank you to our Union staff!

On behalf of the Union president, NMC members and staff, I hope and trust that you and yours will all see out the Christmas/New Year holiday period safe and sound. We are all told that the home and our work are dangerous places but I reckon that New Zealand roads over the holiday season are as bad so, please make sure you stay safe at all times.

Wishing each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a happy and joyous 2020. Be RMTU and I know that 2020 will be a prosperous year for you all!

Na mihi nui. 

## Grateful thanks

Dear Editor,

I have now had my surgery. I am told all went well but the surgeon did manage to break a couple of screws. However, he got there in the end.

It's going to be a slow recovery but I am doing my exercises and will be following the negotiated return to work plan.

I've been in limbo for so long it's great to have a clear direction and goal.

I just wanted to thank Hazel, Wayne and Todd for their support and professional guidance which has been invaluable and kept my morale up while I was going through the ACC process.

I would especially like to thank the members of the RMTU without whose support none of this would have been possible.

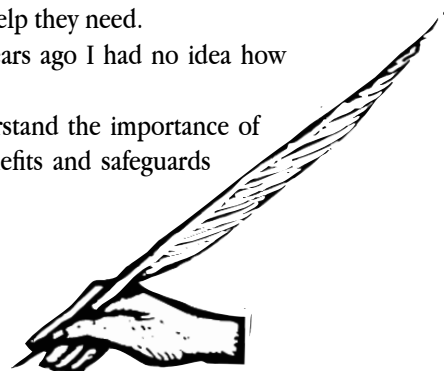
Your membership and commitment to our Union is essential in helping members get the justice and help they need.

When I joined the union seven years ago I had no idea how much I would need its help.

I don't think newbies really understand the importance of being an RMTU member and the benefits and safeguards that are available to every member.

So thanks again RMTU.

Jen Sinclair



## Hillside rejuvenation

Dear Editor,

The announcement last month of a \$20m spend to rejuvenate and expand operations at South Dunedin's Hillside Workshops is great news for our community and music to the ears of those who campaigned for, and supported, its retention.

Why was it closed?

It is important to remember that in the lead up to Hillside's closure as a manufacturing workshop in 2012, we had a National led government that was ideologically opposed to a public rail network.

When he was minister of finance in that government, Bill English told an audience that rail in NZ would soon be "a relic of the past" and MP Gerry Brownlee described KiwiRail as "a dead duck".

These were the people with the purse-strings and along with John Key, Joyce, Michael Woodhouse and others, the government considered any investment in rail as a bail-out rather than being good for our social, economic, environment and transport infrastructure.

Ironic considering how some of their personal fortunes were made from subsidies and exploitation which created zero economic value.

During the campaign to save Hillside from closure I attended regular meetings as an RMTU delegate to find ways of keeping the workshops going as part of a regional engineering hub.

Other groups attending were KiwiRail, Dunedin City Council, Otago Chamber of Commerce, local engineering businesses and local MPs including South Dunedin Labour MP Clare Curran and National list MP Michael Woodhouse. This was a very collaborative effort from groups who represent different interests.

A huge thank you must go to Clare Curran for her unceasing support and no doubt constant reminders to colleagues in Parlia-

ment to keep the issue front of mind.

In contrast, it was galling to hear recent comments in the media by Woodhouse, questioning why any money should be spent on an enterprise that had failed.

Hillside wasn't failing. The workforce there was producing high quality rolling stock at a marginally higher cost than what could be imported. Imagine what could have been achieved with investment in plant and machinery at that time.

As we said at the time, the decision makers knew the price of everything but the value of nothing. Everything outside the purchase price of a flat deck wagon, ie: social, employment and training, environmental, local economy benefits, even actual whole-of-life costs of the wagons, was utterly ignored.

It was a surreal feeling at the end of 2012, and one I will never forget, to walk into the Hillside fabrication shop and see that huge area laid bare, silent, no workmates in sight, and all the plant and equipment gas axed off at ground level and deliberately gotten rid of in a fire sale.

So I welcome last week's news whole heartedly.

It is a tribute to those involved in the campaign, all our supporters and the public of Dunedin and especially the Labour led government and Clare Curran in particular.

As investment in rail is coming on stream, there will be a need for new rolling stock beyond current contracts. Let us remember that when Hillside Workshops all but closed its doors in 2012, it was as a manufacturing workshop not just a repair facility. It must return as such. We owe it to our children, ourselves, and all those who came before.

Ka whawhai tonu matou, ake ake ake!

Dave Kearns

## Resignation

Dear Editor,

I have resigned from Transdev Auckland in order to take up a new role with WorkSafe New Zealand. My last day of employment with Transdev was September 22, 2019.

It was with extreme reluctance that I had to also resign from the RMTU on the same day.

It has been a privilege to be part of a great organisation that fights for workers' rights and social justice.

I am truly humbled to have been given the opportunity to contribute in a small way.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Kindest regards,  
Andrew Ward.

# Solidarity on

## RMTU and MUNZ members, with support from around the region, demonstrate the power of unity

**T**HE Port Otago branch of the RMTU is unique in many ways. It has a proud history and has been very active in the affairs of our Union, sending strong delegations to national conference, ports fora and, more recently, to our women's conference. Over the years, the branch has also lent the national Union its redoubtable president, Ruth Blakely, as a member of the National Management Committee as both South Island ports and national women's representative.

When it came to pay talks however, the branch has been largely self-sufficient. Port Chalmers is one of the few ports where the RMTU and MUNZ have successfully maintained a multi-union collective agreement and this, together with a strong MUNZ local, has meant our branch has needed little assistance from RMTU national office in successive pay rounds.

That's not to say the branch didn't take heed of the lessons learned elsewhere. The vital importance of instant communications with members was something we learned in disputes with Lyttelton Port and Transdev Auckland. The Port Chalmers branch invested in the technology and set up a mass text system as well as a branch Facebook page. In addition it always participated in the education and training offered by national office. Little did we know just how useful that preparation was to be.

From the beginning of this year our branch decided to tackle what has been increasingly acknowledged as a critical risk on the waterfront – fatigue. We've heard the speakers at conferences and attended the courses. So when our members unanimously endorsed a motion to call upon the employer to address fatigue we were equipped with the skills and knowledge to make our point.

Unfortunately management did not share our enthusiasm for adopting a non-confrontational cooperative approach. The Company has a relatively new management team and they seemed to be wedded to a strange idea of worker participation when it came to health and safety: a port wide body, misnamed a runanga, and set up by management with no terms of reference or charter seemed to be their idea of how to deal with health and safety. Our pleas to discuss fatigue before it became an issue in collective bargaining fell on deaf ears.

Fast forward to May this year.

The RMTU and MUNZ initiated bargaining and we had a clear idea about what we wanted to achieve: real wage growth; no claw backs; and a cooperative risk management approach towards fatigue. Sounds simple.

Management turned up with over 170 claims. To be fair, some of these were long overdue tidy ups and the elimination of redundant and duplicate clauses, but buried away in the pile were some significant clawbacks. Moreover, there was a very blunt proposal around hours of work that was presented as managing fatigue without any preliminary discussion or definition of the problem we were trying to solve.

What resulted was a very frustrating few weeks, and 14 meetings where all we discussed was management's agenda.

In late July, after the RMTU Ports Forum and the opportunity to review our approach, we resolved to try and take back control of the agenda. Management's attack on terms and conditions had united the membership of both unions and with that in mind we proposed a percentage increase with a one year rollover and a joint commitment to tackle fatigue in the term of

# the waterfront

the agreement. Once again this fell on deaf ears – but at least we were discussing what mattered to us.

By mid-August it was clear the talks were going nowhere and that we'd either have to fold or fight to get a good deal. It was clear the breakdown in discussions was as much about the lack of respect with which workers were being treated as material conditions. Having bashed our collective heads against the proverbial wall for months the time had come to take action.

By now the port was winding up for peak IMEX volumes and the onset of the cruise ship season. This, allied with the fact that management had run down staffing levels so much they were dependant on members to do overtime to run the port, meant we had a point where we could apply pressure. A ballot for an indefinite overtime ban was passed overwhelmingly and on September 7 all overtime ceased.

We were able to make a good case in the court of public opinion about the reasons for our action – fatigue was the issue and what better way to tackle that than with an overtime ban? We enjoyed some good media coverage because we got our story out to reporters. Moreover, the RMTU Otago Rail branch organised a couple of excellent demonstrations outside the mediation service when we attended for talks and this bolstered the morale of port workers and generated yet more media coverage. Unions Otago, and particularly the Tramways Union, also stepped in and demonstrated their support.

It was still heavy going. We made progress on hours of work and fatigue but still hadn't secured an above inflation pay offer when Port Otago's Board handed us a gift by announcing a 20% pay increase for the

CEO. This allowed us to shift the focus of our public comments onto the issue of pay and specifically how unfair it is for a nine to five office worker in a warm, dry and safe office to be paid an exorbitant salary above \$600,000 when port workers are on the job around the clock in all weathers doing work that is inherently dangerous.

As time passed, it was clear that management were under pressure. Shipping lines were redirecting freight and the cruise ship season edged ever closer.

Members of both unions remained united and resolute, their morale boosted by positive media comments and plenty of communication from the executives of the MUNZ local and the RMTU branch.

We held repeated report back meetings and let management's position speak for itself – this simply generated more anger.

On one occasion members spontaneously gathered outside the port

offices to send a very loud message to the bosses.

By the beginning of October, as the overtime ban was due to enter its second





month, the RMTU-MUNZ bargaining team received an offer that delivered a three year deal with pay increases backdated to expiry that worked out to 9.27% over the term of the agreement.

In addition we'd secured agreement on the port adopting a fatigue management policy and working with the unions on the issue.

In the interim, hours of work were to remain unchanged.

There were other benefits – even higher wage increases for inland port members for example – and on balance the team thought this was an offer worth recommending.

Once again the membership remained united and chose to take what was on the table.

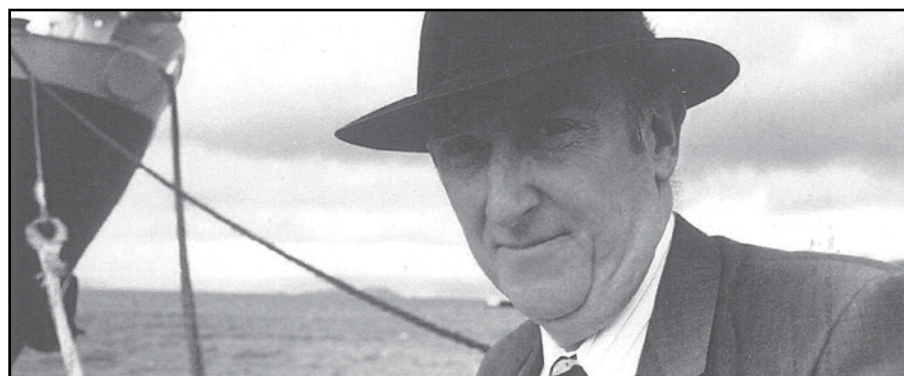
The deal was ratified by an overwhelming margin.

This dispute represents the type of textbook win that determined and organised workers can achieve if they are united and resolute.

It demonstrates what unity can do on our waterfront.

It isn't easy by any means. It takes a clear plan, good communications, knowing when to apply pressure and when to be pragmatic.

Above all, it takes trust amongst members and faith in officials and a willingness to make a stand at the right time. 🌐



**Dave Morgan**

**29/5/1940 - 5/11/2019**

**F**ORMER Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ) national president, Dave Morgan, passed away on November 4 with family and loved ones by his side.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson said: "The Union forest is silent in our mourning for the loss of Dave, one of the last remaining mighty union totaras of his generation.

"Dave was always straight and true for the working class and especially seafarers and seagoing crew. He was an inspirational figure for aspiring union leaders of my generation and a constant reminder as to where unionism lies in one's moral compass."

The president of the ITF, Paddy Crumlin, said: "Dave was a leader of extraordinary tenacity who, having grown

up through the movement, was a committed trade unionist, internationalist and a fervent supporter of global solidarity.

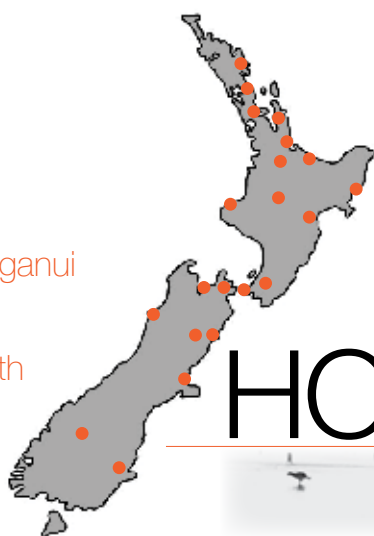
"He was a true seafarer dedicated to his profession, a progressive international trade union leader, a strident and consistent advocate and activist for social justice and peace, and a person of family, including for those that needed one.

"For the ITF, he played an integral role in Asia Pacific, with a vision about how the region should participate and shape the global picture."

Condolences go out to Dave's wife Maggie, his immediate family, friends, and to our MUNZ brothers and sisters.

His extraordinary commitment to his members should be recognised and celebrated. 🌐

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.

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**Website:** nzwelfare.co.nz

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



# Climate change strike

What do we want? System change! When do we want it? NOW!

**T**HE leading scientific forum for climate analysis, tells us that planet earth is currently warming in a historically unprecedented manner. Global temperatures have risen by 0.85 degrees Celsius between 1880 and 2012 and snow and ice have drastically diminished. While there are multiple complex drivers, these changes can be mainly attributed to excessive levels of human-induced greenhouse gas emission, particularly burning fossil fuels and the destruction of forests. Greenhouse gases collect in the atmosphere and, like a blanket, warm the surface of the earth. They are now at their highest levels in history.

On September 27, RMTU members participated in climate strike action held across the country. Many/most RMTU members strongly believe that electrifying our rail network and replacing diesel/petrol buses with electric would help minimise our carbon emissions.

We've seen the impact of climate change with droughts, cyclones and floods becoming more frequent, seasons less predictable,

failing crops and devastating bush fires.

A goal is no good without a plan to get there. We want to see laws which would require governments to set legally-binding five-year emissions budgets.

RMTU Auckland delegates also voted in favour of a low carbon emission policy at this year's Auckland Northland Regional Labour party conference 2019 on June 22 in Auckland.

Number of policies which were supported by RMTU delegates towards climate change actions were:

- That Labour in government seeks to limit the harmful consequences of waste plastic in our environment by:

"financial incentives for set-up and sustaining of NZ-based industry focused on recycling plastic waste, limiting the production and importation of plastic consumables that are surplus to population needs and increase quantities of waste plastics in the environment.

- Compulsory solar panels for all new Housing NZ and Kiwi Build properties.

- That the Labour

led government bases its policy on location of major ports on the following principles:

- ◆ That ports should be located where the cost and carbon footprint of moving their cargoes is minimised.
- ◆ That some overcapacity may be needed to cover the risks of damage to ports from earthquakes and climate change.
- ◆ That coastal shipping should be encouraged.

It will take everyone to secure a better future and avert the worst of the climate crisis. What happens next is up to us. No matter where you live, there's a way to take action. 🌍



## MECA signed

**M**ESSRS Kim, Ladd and Butson happily signing the terms of settlement for the Transdev Wellington, Hyundai-Rotem company and the RMTU MECA renewal.

Another great deal - hard fought and won!

# Hillside lives again: "We never gave up"

**W**ORKERS in Dunedin and around New Zealand are celebrating news of the government's almost \$20 million investment into the Hillside engineering workshop, rescuing the site from years of unnecessary and artificially imposed decline.

KiwiRail's decision in 2011 to import rail wagons from China rather than build them in South Dunedin dealt a devastating blow to the working class neighbourhood, with 90 jobs lost as the workshop fell comparatively quiet for years on end.

"Not only was it morally repugnant to treat loyal and skilled staff that way, it was economically absurd to a point verging on criminal sabotage," says RMTU general

secretary, Wayne Butson. "Rail is the future of sustainable transport, both economically efficient and environmentally friendly, and our railways are the backbone of this country. What kind of government allows KiwiRail's taxpayer money to be spent on economic self-harm?"

RMTU members and supporters protested the decision across the country, with pickets, street marches and a petition signed by thousands of New Zealanders.

Persistent lobbying by the union, transport advocates and community groups kept the campaign for green transport and Kiwi jobs alive and politically relevant as the years went by.

The RMTU says support from the

Coalition government for rail transport and domestic industry is bringing hope to regional New Zealand and putting the country's economy back on track.

"We fought tooth and nail to defend Hillside jobs, and we promised to never give up the fight. There are no words that could adequately describe how happy I am to know the jobs are finally coming back and those workshops will thrive once again," says Butson.

"Hillside is a place where fathers worked alongside their sons for over a 100 years, building the best rolling stock in the world right here in New Zealand. We never gave up hope it would be that again. Sanity is restored." 🇳🇿

## H2A begins to take shape

**K**IWIRAIL are currently consulting over the design of the Hamilton to Auckland (H2A) train.

Running capability is a particular focus. This feature provides for locomotive engineer (LE) control of propulsion to clear tunnels and bridges in an emergency situation, ability for LEs to override if the passenger emergency brake (PEB) is activated and improved communication within the carriages and from the carriages to the locomotives.

Also a much improved information system for the LE on the status of safety critical features in the carriages like air bag pressures and the activation of the PEB.

Train running capability also focuses on having the most suitable locomotives for passenger services and making sure these locos are least likely to catch alight!

The H2A design can later be used to upgrade train running capability of all diesel-hauled passenger services. Many will say it's about time but it is pleasing to see train running capability is finally happening after many years of debate and lack of action. 🇳🇿



*As part of the consultation, LE reps Bill Sweeney and Brendon Smith visited Hutt Workshops to mainly discuss the potential safety features for the cab and took the opportunity to look at the refurbishing of the passenger carriages.*



# A people-centred future

*A summary of CTU president Richard Wagstaff's opening address at the CTU biennial conference*

**T**HIS conference is about us getting our fair share of what we've built - decent wages and salaries, decent benefits and strong public services.

None of these things will be achieved without a strong labour movement and an industrial environment which allows working people to freely organise collectively, without fear, negotiating from a position that commands respect, and where they can speak with confidence and security.

We, the unions, are the only independent voice of working people.

Too many workers in Aotearoa can't effectively do that right now because too many working people have no union and no bargaining power.

Is it any wonder we've become a low wage economy, with 'poor productivity'?

One of the biggest barriers to fixing this is the complete lack of an industry wide approach to negotiating wages. Unlike just about every other OECD country, we're stuck in the dark ages with just individual or enterprise bargaining, without any industry coordination.

Fair Pay Agreements (FPA) are a way of stopping the race to the bottom. They will



raise the bar on working conditions for specific industries and improve training and industry coordination that can't be undermined by cowboy employers.

While we think the Working Group did a great job identifying the problems and coming up with practical and workable proposals our response, called a 'Framework for Fairness', will make sure Fair Pay Agreements are really fair. They include:

- Enabling working people to improve their terms and conditions of employment and their skills in a coordinated industry or sector.
- Negotiating FPAs through their union.
- FPAs covering every person working in a sector or industry, including contractors.
- Conditions beyond pay rates such as hours of work, training, leave, career progression and life after work.
- Making available swift and comprehensive independent arbitration to resolve

disputes.

- Reaching final agreements not subject to further hurdles or tinkering.

Now it is our Government's turn to put these principles urgently into law.

Getting a fair share also includes the terrible imbalance between ethnicities.

We want a fair share of life too!

When we work for a wage or salary, we are not exchanging our humanity for financial compensation nor surrendering our dignity and our mana. Dignity at work means being treated with respect, being listened to and being in control. It means industrial democracy as well as economic democracy.

Done well, a workplace is somewhere where people derive a powerful sense of satisfaction, self-esteem and meaning. It's where we reach our potential. Good work is actually a great source of wellness.

Ultimately unions are an essential element of any functioning democracy.

We are political organisations, not just industrial, and we have to counter the powerful voices of the few who have more than their fair share of not just money and resources – but political influence. Unless working people are able to organise in unions, there won't be any balance to our democracy. ▶

## 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.



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Download a copy of the  
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**[www.portsretirement.org.nz](http://www.portsretirement.org.nz)**

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

◀ And it's not just the New Right – but now it's also the Alt Right. Looking abroad to older democracies than ours, I realise just how wrong I was and how right wing populism and its extremist fringes can lie just beneath the surface and how precious freedom of expression and association is.

What's become clear since our last conference is that getting our fair share will take more than two years after nine years of the previous Government who trashed union rights and trashed public services.

As hungry as we are for fundamental change, for correcting the injustice we see, we have to be strategic, we have to be tactical and we have to be smart. Most of all, we need to remember that the workers United will never be defeated.

Our mission can only be achieved by growing our presence, acting collectively and in unity. 🌐

# The importance of

**Bill Rosenberg**

**NZCTU Economist and Policy Director**

**R**MTU members may take for granted the collective agreements they negotiate with their employers through their union. But they are fortunate. New Zealand has very low levels of collective bargaining, and New Zealand is an outlier in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a club of high income countries, as the accompanying graph shows.

The graph (opposite) shows collective bargaining coverage in light grey. That is the proportion of employees (wage and salary earners) who benefit from being covered by some form of collective agreement. It also shows union density in black – the proportion of employees who are union members.

Most of the OECD – Europe – has much stronger collective bargaining coverage than New Zealand and the other Anglo (extreme neoliberal) countries, particularly the US. Even the UK, Canada and Australia have much stronger coverage than New Zealand, at least on paper

(though recent changes in Australia are greatly weakening collective bargaining coverage and its effectiveness).

We are particularly unusual in having lower collective bargaining coverage than union density (one of only four in the OECD). Although there is push back against labour rights in Western Europe from the 'troika' of the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund, collective bargaining has nonetheless emerged from the Global Financial Crisis at worst only slightly weakened in most places (Greece, Portugal and Ireland, plus some East European countries are notable exceptions). In some cases such as Germany, despite push-back from some employers, it showed its strength in the crisis. Strong collective bargaining is therefore associated with some of the strongest economies and highest living standards in the world.

For example the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, have strong economies producing high value goods and services, and rate among the best in the world ▶

## \$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



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# collective bargaining

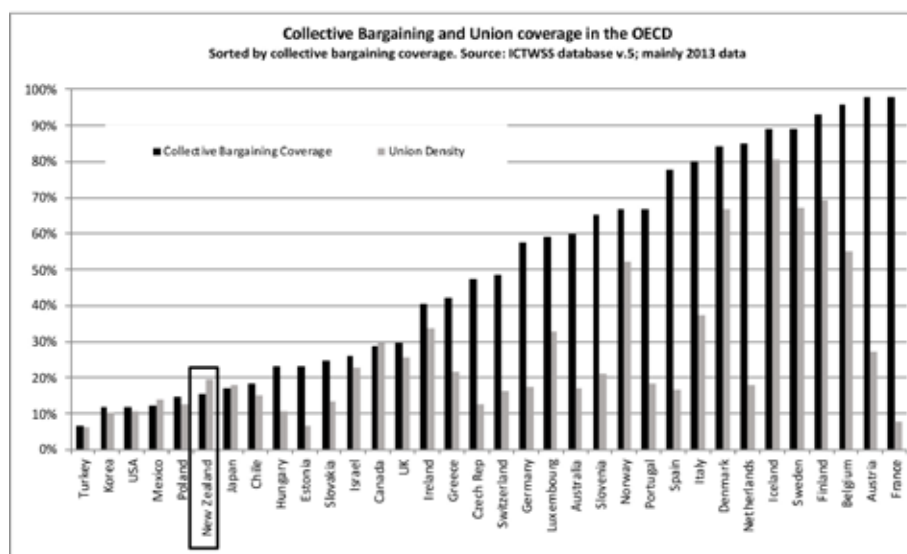
for quality of life and living standards. They have union densities between 52 and 67 percent, and collective bargaining coverage, including widespread sector bargaining, between 67 percent and 89 percent.

Many of the OECD countries have large collective bargaining coverage because the benefits of agreements made in collective bargaining are then 'extended' to whole industries, usually by government action. This is called extension, and is a little similar to the Modern Award system in Australia which covers whole sectors, but this is not based on the results of collective bargaining. The Fair Pay Agreements (FPA) which our Government is working on and which New Zealand unions are strongly in favour of, is another approach to covering whole sectors, based on another form of collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining and extension are important in ensuring working people get a fair share of the income they generate through their work. Collective bargaining is therefore very important in reducing inequality. Their share has been falling in New Zealand since the 1980s. Collective bargaining except at firm level was almost destroyed by the Employment Contracts Act 1991, and even enterprise bargaining is increasingly rare in the private sector. The Employment Relations Act 2000 made some improvements and the wage and salary share of income rose in the mid-2000s but is now falling again.

The OECD, a club of high income countries, which until recently was opposed to collective bargaining and constantly recommended weakening rights such as protections against dismissal, *is now supporting collective bargaining*. It supports it in a form similar to what is being suggested with FPAs: coordinated sector agreements which provide a floor for core wages and conditions, combined with further negotiation at firm level. It says this leads to beneficial effects in reducing inequality and fairer conditions at work, good productivity performance and good employment growth.

Collective bargaining also forms a stronger basis for trust in the workplace. It can encourage employees to take risks in



innovation, find efficiencies and point out improvements. This is because it provides at least some assurance of security and of sharing future productivity benefits. The alternative (neoliberal) model of trust, which is popular in the UK, is based on little more than a hope that employees can trust their employers' word, with no means to enforce it in the short or long term. It can come and go as managers and the company's circumstances change.

No two European countries have exactly the same systems for collective bargaining, and it can't be judged solely on its formal and legal form.

Its shape and effectiveness depends crucially on 'cultural' issues which are often unwritten including the country's history of labour and political relationships, the attitudes and organisation of employers, public opinion, attitudes as to what fairness looks like, tripartite institutions, and the degree to which strategic (long term) thinking is part of the national habit, particularly among employers.

One outcome is clear: high levels of collective bargaining do not exist unless there is sector bargaining, and that requires the support of the state in the form of good legislation and supportive institutions. That is why it is so important that effective FPAs are established if we want a fairer distribution of income and a fairer society.

While supportive legislation is also important for building the membership of unions, our union movement's effectiveness is very important too. This includes coor-

dination of bargaining, credibility in taking industrial action, membership engagement, engagement with the employer, maintaining public support, and working for better employment laws.

European unions and politicians appeal for public support based on the justice and fairness resulting from coordinated wage setting through collective bargaining. Both workers and many employers see value in protection against 'wage dumping'. A fair wage setting system also helps give workers some assurance that they will receive a share of the value of an economy under constant change due to such factors as globalisation, technology and climate change.

Wage growth is good for economic growth by creating domestic demand for goods and services, and building a stronger middle class. This is a 'public good' argument – that higher collective bargaining coverage is better for everyone and deserves state support in law and in other ways.

Well-designed employment law is vital. FPAs will be a critical step.

But for effective and sustainable change to New Zealand's poorly functioning wage setting system, we must look beyond changes to the law and take a long term view in building our capability to act strategically and building the public support required for change.

That includes finding allies in the public and amongst employers and changing the short term and narrow views that drive current debate. 🇳🇿

**R**MTU rules require all branches to hold AGMs by October each year. Their purpose is to elect office holders and delegates, review the previous 12 months, approve the branch accounts and, in some cases, set the branch fee. The Union's general secretary tries to attend as many as possible to thank officers, delegates and members for their activity, remind them they are part of a national organisation and appraise them of the varying campaigns, strategies and struggles undertaken on their behalf. On these two pages are some photos and commentary of the AGMs.

### PORT OF TAURANGA



*(l to r) POT branch chair Kelven Martin presents Simon Naylor with a voucher to thank him for stepping up as an RMTU delegate for the security members at the Port of Tauranga/RMTU collective agreement negotiations.*



*Kelven presenting Brian Henry with a \$100 voucher for helping with the recruitment of new RMTU members in the C3 straddle department.*

### WEST COAST



*West Coast branch members and delegates show their appreciation for the GS's visit!*



*Winners of the lucky \$100 voucher draw (l to r) Ryan Gordon, Freeman Andrews and Tautara Obia.*



*Winners of the lucky \$100 voucher draw (l to r) Charlie Gear, Kurt Griffin and Rata Sidwell.*

### HUTT WORKSHOPS

*(r) Branch secretary Myles Carter was re-elected unopposed yet again. How do you improve on such excellence we all ask?*





## HUTT WORKSHOPS



## TIMARU RAIL

*Hutt members engaged in the reports from branch officers.*



*Timaru Rail members listen in rapture to our re-elected national president Aubrey Wilkinson.*



*One of the very great pleasurable opportunities in attending AGMs is to be able to recognise the loyalty of members of long-standing. Here Aubrey and Wayne present Ivan Martin with his Certificate of Loyalty.*

# Our right to flush

**B**EING forced to endure the discomfort of 'hanging on' when there's no toilet to use at work is a widespread, but rarely discussed, issue which affects many RTBU members who do not have ready access to nearby toilets.

Port workers, rail network and infrastructure workers, loco engineers, on-board passengers, staff and yard workers have responded to the ITF's 'Our Right to flush' campaign which highlights the appalling lack of sanitation facilities for transport workers internationally.

Shamefully even in New Zealand, and despite legislative requirement to provide adequate toilets, many rail workers do not have a decent level of access to basic facilities.

The reasons for the lack of amenities are largely down to a lack of planning. Old infrastructure was designed to include male toilets and wash facilities but hasn't caught up to accommodate the increasing number

of women and gender-diverse people entering the industry.

Organising a portable toilet for working remotely occurs sometimes but not always. The passenger network lacks toilets at key work areas such as the Waikanae stabling yard.

Finding a bush to pee behind, digging a hole or taking a plastic bag with you has been the long held way of dealing with comfort stops whilst working remotely.


Such is the inconvenience and embarrassment, there have been reports by women members of deliberately dehydrating themselves to avoid the need for a toilet stop whilst working remotely. The effects of dehydration are a serious health and safety issue that can drastically impair a person's ability to function safely.

Do an audit of your work environment to identify where toilets are needed. Ask your H&S rep to make a recommendation to your manager to provide additional toilets

under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Talk to the Union about the issue so your workmates and Union staff can support you. Worksafe can be contacted to enforce the regulations.

The Health and Safety at Work Act General Risk and Workplace Management Regulations 2016 requires adequate facilities including;

- toilets
- drinking water
- hand-washing facilities
- eating and break facilities, and
- a place for unwell workers to rest if it is unreasonable for them to leave the workplace.

Facilities must be sufficient to meet the needs of your workforce and take into account size, location and nature of your workplace, number and composition of your workers and nature of the work being carried out and workplace hazards. 

## Two workplace responses:

### Greymouth

**T**HE lack of toilet facilities was highlighted in a letter to KiwiRail CEO Greg Miller recently when West Coast branch chair, Ron Nijssen made an appeal on behalf of the women in his workforce.

He pointed out that for years the West Coast workforce was only men and toilet and shower facilities were not an issue.

However, in the last six months KiwiRail have employed two females who are required to share the men's toilets and shower facilities.

"As you can imagine," he told the CEO, "this makes them very uncomfortable."


Nijssen raised the issue locally with his production manager who "wholeheartedly agreed that something needed to be done".

He, in turn, contacted the service resources contractor and was told they would supply a "sanitary bin".

At which stage Nijssen responded saying KiwiRail had missed the point. "What we required was a revamp of our existing block."

That elicited the response there was not enough money in the budget and KiwiRail would look into it after the new year.

"As is so often stated KiwiRail's greatest asset is its staff," said Nijssen, "but when their basic needs are put on the back burner through monetary restraints surely that undermines the values and fair and just culture KiwiRail are espousing?"

*#If he receives and shares a reply this magazine will print it.* 

### Dunedin

**I** was most concerned to read in the last issue some members are having to take medication to deliberately dehydrate themselves to avoid needing to use toilet facilities that are not available.

This is a dangerous thing to do, and I speak from experience, after requiring two recent operations for urinary tract complications. My urologist advised that my problems resulted from dehydration at work over the past 14 years in Dunedin. This is a common condition among bus, truck and train drivers.

I have worked as a locomotive assistant and locomotive engineer for 46 years, starting in Westfield in 1973 and moving to Taieri Gorge Railway (Dunedin Railways) in 2005. While working in Auckland I did not have a problem as we always had access to toilet facilities at Auckland, Westfield, Papakura, Te Rapa, and at stations on change over on the North Auckland Line.

It is a different story at Dunedin Railways where the railway station now only has a fraction of the toilet facilities for staff that it was built with in 1906. There are two male urinals and one toilet, two women's toilets and one access toilet for a staff of over 60 employees, although not all work at the railway station.

There are two long drop toilets at Pukerangi where most trains terminate, and most carriages have toilets, but there is insufficient time after running the locos around and coupling back onto the train to use the toilet without causing a train delay, which is a definite no-no! It is far worse on cruise ship days when we have some 300 plus passengers all looking for a toilet in the 20 minutes that the train is



# New fatigue research

**S**LEEP and fatigue expert Prof Philippa Gander and her team at Massey University's Sleep/Wake Research Centre have recently published the results of New Zealand's first comprehensive study of the effects of shift work on nurses in the *International Journal of Nursing studies*. The survey, in which 3,133 nurses participated, aimed to identify how nurses' work patterns contributed to negative fatigue outcomes such as excessive sleepiness, chronic sleep disorders, fatigue related clinical errors and feeling drowsy whilst driving a car.

The average shift length for the majority of the nurses surveyed was between eight and nine hours with a smaller proportion of cardiac and intensive care nurses who work on average 12-13 hour shifts. The average number of night's sleep between 11pm and 7am per week was 3.5 nights.

The findings:

- 64% said they had felt sleepy at the wheel of a car in the last 12 months (this was more common amongst older workers), and
- 30.8% recalled making a fatigue-related error in the last six months.

The survey results showed that nurses experienced a higher level of chronic sleep problems and more than twice the level of excessive sleepiness than the general population of NZ adults (33.7% vs 14.9% for adults aged between 30 and 60 years old).



Overall the results showed that the risk increased with more night shifts and decreased with more nights sleep between 11pm and 7am and when nurses had enough sleep to feel fully rested.

## Conclusions

- A more comprehensive and adaptable approach is needed for managing fatigue.
- Fatigue management needs to be data driven and risk focussed.
- Rosters should provide a minimum of two consecutive night's sleep between 11pm and 7am per week to recover from shift work. 🌐

## Training course

A new one-day training course called **Preventing and Managing Fatigue** is being offered by WorkSafe Reps for roster delegates, health and safety reps and managers to learn how to manage the hazard of workplace fatigue and prevent injury and ill health caused by fatigue.

Course dates:

21st Feb and 22nd April  
Wellington.

For more information go to  
[worksafereps.co.nz](http://worksafereps.co.nz)

in Pukerangi. Last March I had to queue for 20 minutes at one of the long drop toilets as there were also long queues in each of the carriages. It was a hot day and passengers were not impressed.

One passenger was interviewing people in the queue on his smart phone, asking them what they thought about having to queue for so long due to the lack of toilet facilities. Most of the replies I could not print here, but one related to the motto of Dunedin Railways supposedly being world class train trip. The passenger's comment: 'World class train trip my ass – in Europe this wouldn't even make third class!'

Later I spoke to the CEO of Dunedin

Railways about this matter and he told me to go and see my manager. I went to the operations manager and suggested that we should provide at least another six toilets at Pukerangi, even if they are just 'port-a-loos' for the next cruise ship season. His reply was that it won't be happening as it is not in his budget. I said that it is not a good look for the company with passengers having to queue up for so long desperately waiting to use a toilet. His reply: 'Tough, they will just have to keep their legs crossed until a toilet is available on the train!'

It is not uncommon for train toilets to fail in service and we often have carriages with toilet out of order. Earlier this year

we were running trains of two carriages with only one toilet available for up to 40 passengers and train crew.

Last week I received an unpleasant e-mail from the operations manager criticising me for using the toilet at Dunedin Railway Station prior to departure of my cruise ship train to Port Otago. The train couldn't go anywhere as there was a KiwiRail freight train in the block section heading south to Dunedin. We need to take whatever opportunity we can to use a toilet when ever we can as it is near impossible to access toilet facilities en route as described. 🌐

Kevin Phillips  
LE, Dunedin Railways.

## New reps on the KiwiRail (Freight) Industrial Council . .

**F**OLLOWING the recent elections, we have three new reps on the KiwiRail (Freight) Industrial Council (KIC). The last meeting, KIC 44, in early November provided an opportunity for the outgoing reps to hand over to the new reps. Thanks to Marty, Deano and John for their participation on KIC and beyond. There are also changes to the managers on KIC. We look forward to this forum being more effective in 2020 and outstanding issues either resolved or are KICKED to touch!

The four new members – Rebecca Hauck (Southern Terminals rep), Howard Phillips (LE Central rep), Antoon Whiu (CT rep) and Josh Goodwin (UNI terminals rep) – join the rest of the KIC reps Brendon Smith (LE Northern rep), Logan Rusling (LNI terminals rep) and Jed O'Donoghue (LE Southern rep). 🇳🇿



*Rebecca Hauck,  
South Island  
terminals' rep.*



*Josh  
Goodwin  
UNI  
terminal  
rep.*



*Antoon Whiu,  
CT rep.*



*Howard  
Phillips  
Central LE  
rep.*

## .. and the new National Management Committee



*The National Management Committee (2019 - 2021) comprises: (l to r) Dave Marden (North Island ports), Howard Phillips (Wellington Rail), Jed O'Donoghue (South Island rail), Aubrey Wilkinson (national president), Wayne Butson (general secretary), Rebecca Hauck (Womens' rep), Shane MacNae (North Island rail), Jas Giri (Auckland rail) and Andy Kelly (South Island ports).*



# Govt plans for rail and sea

Phyl Twyford, Minister of Transport

**A**FTER years of neglect, our Government is getting rail back on track. Unlike our predecessor, we don't see rail as an asset to run into the ground. We have an expansive vision for rail as the backbone of a sustainable 21st century transport network.

We recognise the huge value rail brings New Zealand by boosting growth in our regions, reducing carbon emissions, getting more heavy trucks off our roads and giving people real transport options in our cities.

The previous government took a hands-off approach and left rail in a state of managed decline. Nowhere was this more evident than in its short-term decision to get rid of electric locos on the main truck line and replace them with diesel electric locos.

With the world facing an urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it made no sense. That's why last year our Government stepped in to keep electric trains on track.

The \$1 billion for rail in this year's Budget is just the beginning of our revitalisation of rail.

We will shortly be releasing our Rail Plan which will outline the Government's strategic vision and give a 10 year programme of indicative investments and benefits.

It will ensure rail is fully incorporated into national and regional transport planning.

## 'Level playing field'

Until now, rail has been left out in the cold, cut off from the funding, planning and decision-making in the National Land Transport Programme. We've fully integrated it alongside roads, motorways and all other transport investments. That means for any transport task, rail is now considered alongside all other transport modes so the most efficient and sustainable option is chosen.

Our Government wants to move more



**The previous government took a hands-off approach and left rail in a state of managed decline.**

people and more freight by rail and grow the network where it makes sense.

## Investing

So we are investing in the infrastructure, the rolling stock, the hardware and the people that will make this system work as it should.

This includes:

- \$375 million for KiwiRail to invest in new wagons and locomotives;
- \$331 million for track and infrastructure upgrades; and
- \$35 million to begin the process of replacing the current ferries, which are a crucial transport connection between the North and South Island but are nearing the end of their lives.

This funding package also includes \$300 million from the Government's Provincial Growth Fund allocated for investment in regional rail initiatives. We've invested \$196 million in the Wellington regional rail network. Without this investment, the line had been expected to deteriorate with more

and more disruptions to services.

We've re-opened the Napier-Wairoa line. This will be crucial for the local forestry sector as forestry harvests around Wairoa are predicted to quadruple in the coming years.

Next year we will start up a passenger service between Hamilton and Auckland, giving the growing number of people commuting between the two cities real choice.

We are also giving Dunedin's Hillside workshop a \$20 million upgrade of its two main rail workshops. KiwiRail expects this will create 40 new jobs.

At the heart of our transport policy is our desire to move freight in a more sustainable and efficient way around the country.

We've not only made big advances on reviving rail, we're now turning our attention to how we can grow coastal shipping's share of moving freight.

We are considering a range of options including investment in infrastructure so coastal shipping can compete more effectively with rail and road, and workforce development. We are also looking at its resilience benefits. A draft report by EY found that the blue highway adds \$206.5 million of value a year to our economy.

## Safety priority

Safety is our top transport priority; our Government wants workers to be able to come home every day without incident. For that reason, we have asked Maritime NZ to convene a Port Industry Health and Safety Plan. It is being led by independent chair Martin Byrne, who has 30 years of experience in the sector. His leadership group is working to complete the plan next April and I'm sure many of you are adding your voice through the Operational Group.

Our Government is backing rail and coastal shipping. And I'd like to thank you for your support of the work we are doing. 🌐

# Waipahi - a lesson for all time

**T**HE 20th anniversary of the Waipahi train disaster, which took the life of LE Graham White, was recognised in October with a ceremony at the memorial site. A special passenger train provided by Dunedin Railways and hauled by KiwiRail locomotives, took 150 friends, colleagues and relatives to the site where a blessing was placed by local kaumatua, speeches made and songs and a haka performed.

It was noted that as good as it was to catch up with colleagues it was sobering to reflect that Graham should not have lost his life. The collision should never have happened. Graham White had no reason to believe it was a day different from any other.

It was October 20, 1999, and the Dunedin-based train driver had just pulled his southbound train 919 into Waipahi Station.

As first to arrive it was his responsibility to change the points so that northbound train 938 could pass on a parallel section of track.

Unfortunately, the trains arrived at Waipahi Station almost simultaneously and, at 7.02 am, just as Graham was about to get out, train 938 entered the station and collided head-on with train 919, killing White and seriously injuring the driver of train 938.

## Privately owned and neglected

From 1993 to 2008 New Zealand's railways was privately owned. The private owners believed the marketplace would somehow create safe working conditions. During that time the following rail workers were killed on the job: Graham White, Sean Smith, Jack





Neha, Peter Silbury, Murray Shaw, Tim Steffert, Rudolph Wairau, Billy Trouland, Ambrose Manaia, Neil Faithful, Neville Bell, Robert Burt and Jim Jacobs.

In June 2000 the Labour Minister of Labour, Margaret Wilson, announced a Ministerial Inquiry into these deaths.

It was poignant to be reminded by workplace health and safety advocate and lawyer Hazel Armstrong of the appalling legislation that the government had put in place at the time which removed safety protection in order to make the company more attractive for potential buyers.

"The events that led to Graham White's death started in a back room at Parliament in 1992 as NZ Rail was prepared for sale to a private operator," she told the gathering.

*"As part of the deal to make rail more attractive for sale, bureaucrats, politicians and their private sector advisors cut rail workers out of the Health and Safety in Employment Act - an Act that gave more protection to workers."*

## Bad, ineffective law

"This left rail workers with a bad law and an entirely ineffective Government agency: the LTSA (Land Transport Safety Authority).

"The culture of the day was 'leave it to the market', deprive workers of their collective voice, set no regulations and embrace industry. That culture led to a decline in ethics and professional standards. That was what led to Graham's death. These are the root causes."



## From Waipahi – in memory of Graham White ...

The view out the cab window constantly moving and the motion of the train shaking the sketch book. One of my favourite painters, Willem De Kooning used to refer to himself as a 'slipping glimpser' ... and that's what these are - slipping glimpses. I suppose I had in mind that, sadly, this was a view of the last journey that Graham White took.

- Bob Kerr

◀ RTMU general secretary Wayne Butson, who had only just started his GS job when Graham was killed, was also most adamant as to where blame lay:

"Whether at Waipahi or Pike River, workers should not have to die before safety is taken seriously," he told the assembled crowd. "At the time these five deaths

occurred rail workers were not covered by the Health and Safety workplace law. In fact rail workers were specifically exempted and instead of safety being 'all practicable steps to ensure safety' our rail safety law stated that 'safety was at reasonable cost'."

He added that these workers died as a result of a fundamentally flawed health and safety system.

## Avoidable deaths

The Ministerial Inquiry gave voice to those affected and the terrible cost of these "needless and avoidable" deaths and resulted in the new Railways Act and the restoration of their cover under H&S law.

"A very sobering fact is that 32 railway workers were killed in the 20 years before the inquiry with 16 deaths occurring in the

seven years of rail privatisation," he said.

Armstrong describes the toxic situation at that time as providing bad law, poor administration, poor ethics and lack of professionalism. The outcome was that workers copped the fallout.

The Pike River tragedy was another outcome of that policy despite coming 11 years after Graham died, she said.

"This tragedy showed the country what happens when that toxic combination comes together."

That tragedy led to the 2015 Health and Safety at Work Act, which she describes as "good law" and to Worksafe "a better administration".

## Special transport safety authority

However, she said, rail workers were still lumbered with an ineffective regulator, NZTA, and a safety regulator, Worksafe, who didn't want them. So the campaign for safety for rail workers continues.

"It's our view that NZTA is not a safe place for rail workers. Worksafe doesn't want you so we are turning our minds to getting support for a stand-alone transport safety regulator with our own director of transport safety bringing together rail, road, maritime and aviation safety.

"The best way for us to remember Graham White and the other rail workers who have died at work, is to support the RTMU in its safety campaign.

"We have an advantage as we have a strong union and the single employer has improved its ethics and professional standards." 🇳🇿



*Describing the background and setting the tone, (above) Hazel Armstrong and (r) Wayne Butson.*



## 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 - Opua for rail tourism.



**Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.**

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







*Otago Te Kupenga Mahi kapa haka group.*



*RMTU delegates and leaders*





## Showing global solidarity



**O**NCE again we see RMTU members standing in solidarity with workers with workplace problems.

In this case we have New Zealand workers supporting their Transdev colleagues in Washington, USA.

The ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union) in the USA, is one of the unions representing public transport workers at Transdev. Bus operators employed at WMATA's (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) Cinder Bed Road bus depot (garage), the first bus depot privatised in Washington

DC's Metro system in more than 40 years, have been fighting for a fair contract since last year.

The employer, Transdev, has been doing everything it can to stall negotiations, keep wages low, and resist ensuring workers have a defined benefit pension like the rest of their Metrobus coworkers.

They wear the same uniforms and drive the same vehicles. What separates them is simply who signs their pay cheques.

Workers are fed up and have now been on strike since October 24.

Workers are demanding an end to company stalling at the bargaining table, to intimidation and surveillance, and to WMATA's privatisation scheme that creates a two-tier workforce with lower wages and almost non-existent benefits. 🇺🇸



## Fork hoist fire

*CLEARLY there was no fire suppression on this fork hoist at the Wellington CT site. All fork hoists operated by RMTU members must have effective safety features, like fire suppression, not just the mainline locomotives and bi-rail vehicles. This is a wake up call for us all.*



# WIMDOI 2019

## Women In Male Dominated Occupations and Industries

By Rebecca Hauck

**W**OW! What a fantastic three days. All the speakers, the courageous women who shared their stories and the amazing organising committee of just eight women were absolutely incredible.

For myself, Rata Sidwell (Bay of Plenty Port), Louise Francis (Wellington Rail) and Ann Wells (Nelson Port), we all walked away feeling empowered and loved from the new sisters we met from Australia. The knowledge, networking and experience will be life changing. The sisterhood is real!

There were so many topics we touched on, from women in leadership, superannuation and issues women face around retirement in Australia to assertive vs aggression, gender violence and domestic and family violence. Other topics covered were indigenous people and finding work, climate change, kids in schools striking, behavioural theorists, chairing meetings, public speaking and women tradies to name a few.

Did you know that abortion was still in the Crimes Act in New South Wales up until



*Team RMTU: (l to r) Rebecca Hauck, Rata Sidwell, Ann Wells and Louise Francis*

this year? It has been in the Crimes Act for 119 years. In the 1970s 50 women took an advert out in the local newspaper and said we have had an abortion – Arrest us – to provoke the police.

With the help of social media today, 56 women have recently signed a statement sent to parliament which a quarter of a million people have seen, shared and added their names. Facebook became huge in decriminalising abortion. Abortion is not a crime in New South Wales anymore! Some really powerful stuff from our sisters across the ditch.

But the fight isn't over yet. Women and

men are still fighting to get domestic violence leave approved. This leave is crucial to those who face domestic and family violence and more so for the children. We as a union need to support our brothers and sisters across the ditch and help them get this Bill approved. How you ask? 16 days of activism from November 25 to December 10. Support the 'We won't wait' campaign. Wear your white ribbons in support of stopping domestic and family violence. Flood social media with support and solidarity to our brothers and sisters. Spread the word, make some noise to the Australian Government to let them know how important this is. We are so lucky here in New Zealand to have this leave already approved. Stand up and speak out for those that cannot. Support each other. Be kind to one another.

The kindness, generosity, and love that was present at WIMDOI 2019 created life long friendships, sisterhood and a sense of belonging. Thank you to all the sisters especially to the organising committee who made WIMDOI happen yet again. 🌐

# NSW loco division conference

**A**T the end of August I had the privilege to attend the annual conference of the RTBU NSW loco division. There I met a great group of welcoming and friendly hard working railway people.

What I learnt from attending is that all railway workers here and around the world are all fighting the same or similar common

problems.

Attempted claw backs of long-fought for conditions, limiting of meaningful pay increases, government interference and reduction in staffing numbers are all too familiar.

It was great to see the camaraderie between all the attendees from around the world. We all learnt some new techniques

for dealing with anti union sentiment.

I'd like to thank the organisers for the invitation and the RTBU NSW loco division for including me in the team to attend. I wish the RTBU NSW loco division all the best with their future battles. 🌐

- Simon Bell, LE, Paekakariki depot



*RTBU, JRU, ASLEF and RMTU pledge solidarity.*

## RMTU WOMEN

The RMTU fully supports equal opportunities for women and men

### Holly Egger

**RMTU Canterbury rail branch women's representative**

**How long have you been working at KiwiRail and been a member of the RMTU?**

I've been with KiwiRail for eight months. I'm a signals technician. Before that I was working as an electrician.

**What does your current job involve?**

We look after signal assets on the network. That includes barriers and lights at level crossings and points and signals out on the track. I tell my friends who don't work in rail that we look after the traffic lights for the trains and the things that are there to stop trains hitting cars and people. So I have a pretty important job. I'm in a team that covers a radius about two hours' travelling time outside of Christchurch.

**And what's your role in the RMTU?**

At the August AGM I was formally elected as the branch women's rep. Before that I got to attend the RMTU Women's Forum in Wellington in July. I did delegate training in September so I now have a clear idea of my role. Essentially it is to raise the profile of women members and to promote their interests.

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



I don't find it particularly challenging. I've worked in so-called male industries all my working life so it's kind of normal for me. I occasionally get teased because I like glitter and the colour pink but I don't care!

**What would you say to a bunch of young women school leavers about working in an industry that's male dominated?**

I'd say that we women can do anything

the blokes can do and we can do it better! I'd also tell them that sometimes the boys say 'don't do that, we'll do it for you' not because they are being negative but because they are trying to protect me. That's the time to gently point out I can do the work because I'm capable. It's really important to me that I have the opportunity to be productive. I get the same pay and conditions and I'm capable of doing the same job. 🌍

## Passchendaele in Picton - tourism success

**T**HIS vintage Ab waits patiently for the Marlborough Flyer to make its annual return for the cruise ship season. The cruise train has been very successful and was an operation of the first Heritage Collective Agreement negotiated by the RMTU.

This year we have added a further employer to the agreement and this has now become a MECA. We have also added a 'subsequent employer' provision so other keen groups can be added to this agreement and we also widened the coverage of the document to encompass more occupations.

A win-win for all.





# Te Kupenga Mahi hui

**O**N 11, 12 and 13 October 2019, Te Kupenga Mahi (the Maori network for KiwiRail and Toll) met at Te Tii Marae in Waitangi. Te Kupenga Mahi (TKM) was celebrating the 30th anniversary of its founding in 1989.

The hui remembered its founders and paid tribute to Parekura Horomia for sowing the seed for its formation, way back in 1984 when he was involved in the PSA and he spoke about networking for Maori in Government departments. KiwiRail and its predecessor NZR, was state owned in 1984.

We were also treated to a photo montage and saw a young Wayne Butson alongside Parekura announcing a charter in Parliament binding on NZR at the time.

During its 30 year history, the driving impetus for TKM has shifted between Toll and KiwiRail. This hui was sponsored by Toll and was attended by CEO John Adams and several Toll staff, however, the majority of people at the hui were from KiwiRail. The next hui will be sponsored by KiwiRail.

Ray Brown is now fully employed to lead TKM as a pourahi, working out of Te Rapa.

TKM has delegates from around the



*Charlotte Marsh and Aubrey Wilkinson*



*(l to r) Ria Apiata, Allana Ranui, Ricky Haitana and Darren Williams.*



*(l to r) Jon Adams Toll MD, Ray Brown and Hazel Armstrong.*

country and who are supporting excellent activities in their area such as te reo classes, waiata Wednesdays, blessings and meetings with iwi.

Several of the participants at the hui are part of, or are graduates of, Toi Toi (KiwiRail's leadership programme).

Steve Thomas (Thomo) gave a presentation on the proposed KiwiRail prison

programme (second steppers) working out of Ngawha Prison in the North. Maryann Street gave a presentation on HPHE.

We were well catered for by the tangata whenua of the marae, and we were privileged to hear the history of Nga Puhi.

TKM considered its priorities for the future, and is planning its next hui for 2020. 🌐

## Stand Up meeting

**O**N November 15 Campbell Leggett, Te Manu Daly and Jacquelyne McCorkindale were invited to attend the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU) Youth Stand Up committee meeting representing fellow RMTU unionists under 35

Stand Up is the NZCTU representative structure for workers under 35 and con-

sists of members representing affiliated unions. Stand Up is all about promoting issues and activities relevant to the young working people of New Zealand.

This time around the committee spent the majority of the time looking at, and discussing, the newly proposed Fair Pay Agreement (FPA), followed by a consultation with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

We looked at some of the big problems

with the proposal that desperately needed to be changed for the FPA to work, not just for young union members but for everyone in the work force.

Overall, it was a thoroughly productive committee meeting.

Jacquelyne said: "Personally, it made me feel especially lucky to be a part of the RMTU and have such a great bargaining team to fight for us and make our collective agreement as fair as can be." 🌐


# UnionAID - your charity

**T**HIS year, May Day marked a special milestone, the 10th anniversary of UnionAID, the New Zealand union movement's international development charity.

After a group of passionate volunteers witnessed unions in India and Burma struggling for justice, better wages and decent conditions for working people, UnionAID was born as a means of providing them with solidarity and support. Since then this solidarity has helped change thousands of lives.

One of its first projects was the formation of unions for manual scavengers (street cleaners) and overhead tank operators in the southern Indian city of Madurai. They successfully bargained to have their work formally recognised and to be employed by the city council giving them a regular income and access to social services for the first time in their lives.

Last year the unions took legal action and won back pay for 440 members worth between \$NZ165 and \$724 per person, making a big difference in their lives. That these unions have continued to achieve wins over 10 years shows that a small amount of money, directed to the right people, can make long term change in lifting working people out of poverty.

The RMTU has proudly supported UnionAID's raffles, quizzes and other fundraisers over the past 10 years. This year a donation of \$1,500 was made to help support more working men and women overseas over the next ten years. To learn more about UnionAID's work and make a personal donation visit [unionaid.org.nz](http://unionaid.org.nz). 



*Ponpandi a member of the Manual Scavenger's union in Madurai, India.*

## Delegate training



*A fundamental necessity for an effective union is to have active, well trained delegates. The RMTU is committed to these ideals.*





# Government workshop - Dunedin

**T**HE Dunedin CTU Government Forum was held on September 5 and saw the Prime Minister, together with key Labour and Green ministers, as well as local MPs meet with union representatives from the region.

The RMTU was represented by Otago Rail branch chair Murry George, secretary Dave Kearns and delegate and Networks Industrial Council member Gareth Bachop as well as Port Otago branch delegate Merv Read. South Island organiser John Kerr also attended.

The key point we took out of the forum was how successful the RMTU has been at progressing our issues with this government, both nationally and locally. Increased investment in rail seems to be the one item on which all three coalition parties agree and it was clear our industry and members have materially benefited from this government.


This is especially so when we listened

to the issues raised by fellow unionists (education and health).

What was also clear is that many private sector unionists are disadvantaged by the current industrial relations system, especially in hard-to-organise sectors like hospitality, fast food, and retail. The need to extend the reach of collective bargaining through Fair Pay Agreements is self-evident. Without some mechanism for enabling workers in these sectors to collectively bargain, more and more of them will be trapped in poverty wages and dependent on government-set minimum standards. Employers are getting away with paying the minimum wage and the taxpayer is subsidising low pay through Working for Families tax credits. Extending the right to strike is another way of tackling the problem, something that the Greens were sympathetic to – much to the surprise and delight of our Otago Rail branch secretary.

One issue that was very close to home

was the debacle that the so-called Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) creates in the bus industry, with local authorities compelled to put services out to tender resulting in competing bus companies engaging in a race to the bottom on wages and conditions. This is very much the case in Dunedin, as in other cities. PTOM must go!

On one level it's easy to be cynical about events such as this, writing them off as mere tokenism. Our representatives prefer to see them as a real opportunity – Labour and the Greens may not be perfect but they do appear to be the only parties in parliament that are taking the changing nature of work seriously. There did appear to be a genuine willingness to listen to rank and file members and delegates and whilst we should not be satisfied with that, it does represent an improvement on the previous National led government which completely ignored workers' voices. 

## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### NORTHLAND RAIL

**B**IG things are happening in the winterless North. We have established a local consultation council at KiwiRail that will make sure that workers in the North are kept better informed and that management knows what the issues are for RMTU members and that they need to be fixed. The local Northland engagement council (LNEC) is a group consisting of union organisers, delegates and various members of management. We are meeting on a monthly basis to begin with, and there have been a number of frank, but constructive, exchanges between management and members on a variety of concerns. It would be fair to say that management has agreed this was something that needed to happen although there has been the odd hiccup as we cement this as a regular event on our calendars. Three meetings so far, including the inaugural meeting to establish protocols.

The big news for KiwiRail in Northland was the announcement by the coalition gov-

ernment of \$95 million to develop the Northland rail line from Helensville to Whangarei. This is clearly a massive opportunity for KR and will provide jobs for Northland. The aim is to improve the neglected track, tunnels and bridges and to significantly decrease journey times. This will encourage customers to choose KR as the preferred mode of transport with the added plus of taking hundreds of trucks off the roads. If the current mooted expansions in Northport and Marsden point occur this will really give rail a boost in the North.

There was a big event for this in Helensville to celebrate the announcement and then a very slow trip for a short way along the track with the media, ministers, various KiwiRail senior management and guests with the RMTU being represented by organiser Rudd Hughes, NMC member Jas Giri and tireless RMTU delegate, campaigner and rail activist Albie Barr. Albie's work promoting Northland rail was crucial to getting this off the ground.

A further upside of this is a joint initiative between KiwiRail and the government, supported by the RMTU, to bring a small number of prisoners into the rail workforce to give them a real shot at integrating back into the community.

Also big news for our members at North Tugz with the proposal to move Auckland's port to Northport at Marsden Point at an estimated costing \$10 billion, under the preferred option of a Government-backed working party.


Along with this would be additional rail-tracking worth \$1.6 billion, a freight hub in northwest Auckland, and a major expansion of Northport. This would clearly mean huge growth for Northland, an area that has suffered years of neglect. It would also be good news for our members at North Tugz, creating more jobs and providing a more secure working environment.

The RMTU is currently in bargaining with North Tugz and we have hit a sticking point over rosters. Currently the members there work in what is essentially a zero hours contract. The main issue for our

members this year was to get a working roster that wouldn't see them on call 24/7, 365 days a year. We have already had one mediation with the company and our

delegates have worked incredibly hard to come up with a roster that works for our members and the company. We are about to head back to the negotiating table to

work something out that both parties can agree to.

Wishing all Union members a great Christmas and a prosperous 2020! 

## AUCKLAND RAIL

**A**T Transdev Auckland (TDAK) there are a number of major pieces of work underway. The Union continues to participate in the High Performance, High Engagement (HPHE) process with the company over driver door operations. There are at least four more meetings scheduled before Christmas as we work through differing perspectives.

Also at TDAK, a variation ballot is currently underway to bring in a phased retirement process. The RMTU entered into this process because of member requests. The variation sent out to members require them to be employed for at least eight years before they can access phased retirement. They can then go on to a link that is 50% of their normal full-time hours. Links will have to be shared by alternating the week each employee works on a shared link. They can do this for up to five years and then they retire. The Union believes this was the best way to maintain the integrity of the shifts

and full-time work for the majority of employees while giving those who are coming to the end of their careers an opportunity to work a little longer. We await the members' decision.

The Union has also been involved in a dispute with the company regarding the meaning of stand-by in regard to hours worked. This has been to mediation where we have been sent back to our respective corners to get legal advice and which will lead to a further mediation, hopefully before Christmas. The ROM rewrite that is part of the settlement will take place after this is settled.


At KiwiRail there is an HPHE process regarding changes to rosters in RSAS (Rolling Stock Assets & Services). We met a number of times and the members put forward an option which is currently being considered by the company.

A restructuring is currently occurring in the customer logistics side of KiwiRail in Stanley Street. Although there are no job

losses, the changes to hours will hit some people in the pocket and we are working to make that impact as small as possible.

There has been a major review of the track in the Auckland Metro network by NZTA (New Zealand Transport Authority). At the moment we are waiting for the outcome of that review but it could have some short-term impact on the delivery of passenger services in Auckland. Watch this space.

The issues that emerged from the last MECA bargaining are also currently being dealt with using the HPHE process. We have met several times now and are waiting on information from Ernst & Young before we can go any further. We are booked for a meeting on November 14 and if we have the information we seek, we should make some good progress before Christmas.

Wishing all of our brothers and sisters around New Zealand a happy, healthy and safe Christmas and we will all reap the benefits of unity and collective bargaining in 2020. 

## NAPIER PORT

**B**EFORE summarising the RMTU Napier Port branch activities over the last period, the primary thought and acknowledgement in mind is the loss of union legend Dave Morgan (see page 6). Dave was a remarkable man, altruistic in his service to unionism and mankind. It was a privilege to have met him several years back, which transpired at our Union's national conference when another of our own union stalwarts moved to retirement, Jim Kelly. A humbling experience.

Like other ports at this time, the local branch membership of the main collective agreement is in negotiation with NPC. It

would be fair to indicate that we are on the cusp of industrial action. We have had several meetings with the Port company and had a day in mediation. We are now organising around stop work meetings for report back sessions and commencement of the secret ballot process for those members who fall under this agreement.

As previously reported in the last six editions of The Transport Worker, the 45% sell down of Napier Port has come with its outcomes – some up, some down. However, both the board chair and the Hawkes Bay Regional Council chair were advised around some of our requests made over the duration of the share sale. As a result, favouritism

in terms of shares and ultimately financial gains was applied only to a handful of senior managers and the CEO. This certainly put the cat amongst the pigeons. We are all, at the end of the day, moving parts that make the port move and grow.

Specific payments or shares offered to a handful has resulted in a backlash from our membership.

It is, in essence, not the fact that they have these incentives, it is more about why these incentives were not passed on to everyone!

These managers/CEOs are port employees just like the rest of us and surely well remunerated in terms of their respective salaries and what is required of them in the



positions they hold. There was no equity applied to the balance of staff!

On the negotiation front, initially we started off with too many remits. Now the company is exposed to the share market and we have a handful of senior managers

and the CEO who stand to gain thousands of shares independently for personal gain. It is an ideal time for the local branch to go hard to champion the contest between the haves and have nots.

To the wider RMTU whanau, for those

working through, or taking the festive break, stay safe, the best of seasonal greetings to you all.

To quote Spock: "Live long and prosper."

Kia ora. 🌐

## HAWKES BAY RAIL

**G**REETINGS brothers and sisters. Hasn't the year flown by? It's scary to think we are nearly into 2020.

The Hawke's Bay structures teams have been busy, with protecting scaffolders and re-sleeping bridges.

On the Wairarapa line, the NIMT are replacing hardwood running beams on the Matohora Viaduct as well as strengthening running beams on the Ormondville Viaduct.

Napier track have already had two heat buckle alerts this year and we aren't into summer.

The effect of this is that trains have to stop until the line is made safe. The Napier/Wairoa line is coming along, meanwhile En-

geo (a firm of geotechnical engineers) have finished the risk assessment on all slopes.

Preparation work has started on the new log yard and depot to be in Wairoa. Only a couple of sites are left to resleeper. Extensive work has also been completed on culverts and drainage sites. All in all things track and structures in our region are looking good.

The Dannevirke track members have been busy with assisting the Palmerston North heavy gang with re-sleeping north of Dannevirke and with a level crossing up grade at Stanley Street. There have been a couple of changes in Napier and we have to especially recognise Barry Rattray retiring. We put on a nice lunch and a farewell send

off on Barry's last day at work.

The Napier branch would like to wish Luke O'Connell all the best as the new structures inspector.

The signals team are getting a new member in the New Year as part of succession planning.

It would be good to see if it follows through into the other networks teams with consideration to ageing staff members, or where we are low on manning levels.

Reminder, remits need to be handed in to your branch delegates so they can be voted on at our National Conference in October 2020.

Until next time, be safe, stay safe and above all else have a great Christmas and New Year. 🌐

## HUTT WORKSHOPS

**G**REETINGS from the Hutt Workshops where we begin where we left off last time. Our vacant site manager position has been filled by Peter Venn. Peter is one of our former production managers and is well suited to the job that he has been acting-in for the last few months. Congratulations to Peter.

The Hamilton to Auckland (H2A) passenger carriage project continues and has an initial milestone due around December 18 when some are due to be out-shopped. We have engaged a small team of external

contractors to assist us in the fitting out of the interiors and

we hope there will be sufficient transfer of skills to enable us to continue unaided in the New Year.

Our AGM was held in late September and we had a small reshuffle of the committee with Greg, Aussie and Isimeli joining the team, and a return of Mohinesh and Nona.

It was great to see an injection of some government money into our sister workshops at Hillside. Hopefully that will pave the way for growth, over time, back into a fully functioning workshop for the South Island. We too have had some money

allocated for seismic strengthening and the relocation of our main inventory store into Plant Two. This work is tentatively scheduled for completion around December, 2020. Included in this is the continued replacement of wall cladding as the novelty of 'rustic charm' is wearing thin – literally. The tender for a new wheel-set operation is out and we hope to announce the successful bidder early in the New Year.

Overall it has been a year of growth in work and staff with our full-time membership swelling to around 173, made up of permanent and fixed-term employees.

To everyone, have a safe and merry Christmas, and roll-on 2020! 🌐

## NELSON PORT

**A**S 2019 draws to a close we see big changes afoot in Nelson with contractors now on site starting

demolition of Main Wharf North. This will be a huge project with widespread impact on the whole Port for more than a year.

This \$23 million project will mean, for the first time in decades, the entire expanse of Main Wharf will be usable.

It will also be constructed to a level which will mean it will be usable quickly

◀ following a major seismic event in Nelson ensuring the port will be able to exercise its obligations in any relief effort that may follow.

By the time this goes to print we will also have ordered a new mobile harbour crane. We are still waiting to hear which model will make the cut.

There has been limited opportunity for operators, supervisors and workshop to give input to the project yet it would appear that cost is the immediate driving force.

However, it is important to note that the current 20-year-old LHM 400's currently in service are well past their use by date. Any Google search of cranes of this era show that they are strictly third world, while our workshop stoically works to keep them going it can not be long before the safety of those using them becomes a concern.

We are about to finish a negotiating year and to enter a non-negotiating year. We had an OK outcome to negotiations this year, which was unfortunately overshadowed shortly after signing by PNL reporting record profits.

It does seem that there is still thinking at the top level that workers need to suck in their belts to help fund decades of lack of investment in infrastructure, a problem that affects many parts of New Zealand.

Food for thought for the next round of negotiations as we see a plateau in exports as Donald Trump plays out his trade war with China.

Nelson also needs to address issues with both Brunt and Kingsford Quays as well as further crane purchases in the near future.

As we look to next year we see more

issues arising around availability.

With many workers being on call 24/7 and not knowing when they are next working this is becoming a burning issue. There are now more favourable laws surrounding this issue and more importantly case law is building.

Recent rulings showing the Judiciary are sympathetic to our cause or, more importantly, are interpreting current law as favouring the worker.

In short workers' personal time has a value and if employers wish to encroach upon that time they need to pay.

Additionally, workers need to have time that is ring-fenced as their own that they can have for themselves and their families.

This addresses the many issues of health, mental and physical. 🌐

## CANTERBURY RAIL

**G**REETINGS from Canterbury. Our branch has been watching events down south with great interest. Well done to our members in Dunedin Rail on achieving a wage deal that gets everyone on the living wage – there should be no room for poverty wages in the rail industry. Good on you for supporting one another on this. The news about Hillside being 'revitalised' as a repair and maintenance facility with a \$20 million cash injection from the Provincial Growth Fund is also great to hear. It seems to be the one thing the parties in our Coalition Government agree to is that they like rail. Naturally we're asking when we will get a new loco depot here in the Garden City? The projected growth of rail and the acquisition of new rolling stock must surely push this up the agenda?

On the subject of maintenance and repair, and as reported in the last issue of TTW, our RSAS members are shifting to a new roster that is causing some challenges. We understand the growth of KiwiRail will require a move to a more 24/7 type operation in this area. The difficulty is that this is one area of the company that has a very high proportion of long serving members, many of whom are due to retire in the next few years, and the adjustment for them, and

perhaps more importantly, their families, is a big one. If we are going to address the twin

problems of maintaining sustainable staffing levels and providing round the clock service we need to deal with this systematically, not in a piecemeal fashion.

Over at the railway station in Addington our Scenic Journeys members are enjoying their newly refurbished premises. It certainly makes for a great start to the passengers' experience to check in and board in such well-appointed surroundings. The call centre has moved back into the station after being temporarily located at Ensors Road and appears to be operating smoothly dealing with passenger enquiries despite the disruptions caused by nature to trains. The return of the Coastal Pacific for the summer season is also positive news. Not all our members enjoy the overnight stay away from home but the more experienced remember that it is not that long ago that the whole long distance passenger service operating out of Christchurch was under threat of closure in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake.

Our yard staff at Middleton Operations are gearing up for the busiest time of year and it is good to see that sanity appears to have prevailed around how we secure wagons. The issue is being dealt with in a

more co-operative way now that we have RMTU National Office involved and KiwiRail enlisted the support of a facilitator from HP2, the outfit that has assisted with HPHE initiatives. There are still some matters to be worked through but the key point is that a dialogue has been established with front-line workers and their representatives.

Our network services members based at Midas Place are scratching their heads at the reorganisation of office and administrative services. From the perspective of an ordinary track worker out working in all weathers it seems there is no difficulty in employing office based staff, but when it comes to taking on people to do the work at the sharp end it is a different story. Perhaps our perspective is affected by the concentration of office staff who service different parts of KiwiRail at Midas Place but questions are still being asked.

The RMTU ran delegate training at the end of September in Christchurch, allowing a fresh group of delegates, active members and H&S reps to spend the day learning about our union and how to organise in their workplace. These sessions are always useful as they bring members from different parts of rail together with people from operations, the service centre, Scenic Journeys and RSAS (Rolling Stock Assets & Services) all attending this session alongside our comrades from Lyttelton Port. ▶



Over at the CT site our members are very busy and are keeping a close eye on the pay progression exercise that is being undertaken as a consequence of last years MECA settlement.

Our delegates are doing a good job keeping members informed – just one of the myriad of ways in which good workplace reps are a vital part of the work we do.

Of course, it's not just KiwiRail staff that

make up the membership of our branch. Our Toll members have been working hard in difficult circumstances.

Apparently the operation there is going through a pretty lean time and management are trying to strip costs out of the business. That's code for all sorts of pressure being put on people.

At times like this it's important that we should not cut corners at the expense of

safety. People before profit is not an empty slogan.

Finally, as we head into the festive season and our busiest time of year pause for thought and think about safety.

The commemoration of the train disaster at Waipahi 20 years ago is a sobering reminder of why we need to remain vigilant at all times and look after one another. 🌐

## LYTTELTON PORT

**A**s we count down the final days of Peter Davies' tenure as CEO of Lyttelton Port Company, the LPC Board have announced the appointment of the new CEO, Roger Gray, on an eye-popping salary package of \$839,400 plus a \$30,000 allowance to move from Auckland to Christchurch. This

is an obscene amount of money in any worker's language and it is particularly galling given that LPC is a very small employer on a global scale, employing only 500 people. Salary package aside however, the RMTU is looking forward to the possibility that Gray will bring a sorely needed fresh attitude and approach to industrial relations at the port. The caretaker management have

certainly given us considerable hope that this is the case.

The news that the container terminal manager has resigned, effective December 20, 2019 was welcomed. Morale and productivity there left much to be desired and we can only hope that his replacement will make the required changes. Already we are seeing early signs of a much more sensible and moderate approach to incident investigations and disciplinary processes, and we

# 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!**

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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**

are optimistic that this trend will continue.

Fatigue management seems to be the elephant in the room at the moment, and it is with dismay that we report that next to no progress has been made to address this issue. A quick fix has seen an arbitrary maximum number of consecutive and rolling eight shifts imposed without meaningful consultation, which belies the scale of change required. Although the RMTU has consistently called for full implementation of an agreed fatigue management plan, the reality is that we are not likely to see significant movement in this area until the new CEO arrives early next year.

Finally, but by no means least, and

subject to ratification, the Inland Ports bargaining has been concluded with agreement being reached after just three meetings.

With an interest-based problem-solving approach being used to excellent effect, the three year deal will result in, among other things, a 9.27% increase in wages and allowances, while also providing access to the LPC superannuation scheme, and achieved a combined collective agreement for the City Depot and Midland Port sites.

The notable element, apart from the outstanding result that the RMTU bargaining team have achieved on members' behalf, was that this particular style of bargaining

requires a high degree of trust from both parties.

Given the dire industrial relationship between the RMTU and LPC over the past two years, this was a significant leap of faith for the RMTU.

That faith has proven to be well founded and is the strongest signal to date that industrial relations are improving.

As we head into festive season and, more importantly, summer, we wish all our brothers and sisters around the country best wishes for a safe and prosperous end to 2019 and through unity and solidarity we know that we will have a great 2020! 🇳🇿

## WEST COAST RAIL

**A**T the time of writing our members on the West Coast are grappling with a serious landslide at Omoto which has knocked out the rail route into Greymouth and it is especially difficult for our coal customers and their loading sites and to our major non-coal customer Westland Dairy. This slip is a big one and at the time of writing is still slumping and moving. It is going to be a difficult engineering job to bring the rail and road back to a safe operating condition. As we go to press we have no projected date for reopening, but all possible means are being investigated in getting this issue resolved.

Because the slip has cut off Westland Dairy they are having to truck their produce; a major logistics headache for them, and a big loss of revenue for KiwiRail. In addition the Tranz Alpine is only running to Arthurs pass and many passengers are not electing to continue the journey via bus to Greymouth. This means local businesses are missing out on the revenue these tourists bring and this is having a noticeable effect around Greymouth.

In other news the Greymouth yard rosters have joined the QRS rostering system and local control is now done from a call centre in Takapuna. To be fair the rollout has gone reasonably well, and so far it seems to be working at a functional level.

In operations KiwiRail is flat out recruiting staff to get numbers back to workable

levels and we understand we are getting our first female trainee locomotive engineer

in February. This is great news. We're sure she'll enjoy the lifestyle and camaraderie over here on the Coast. One of our long serving locomotive engineers, Bob Broadhurst, has now retired. Bob always took an interest in union matters and health and safety, and as our managers will attest was not afraid of standing on toes if he felt the need to press his case on an issue. All the best for a well-deserved long and happy retirement Bob – enjoy yourself, you can really get away shooting now (we hear your alarm clock is the first thing in your cross hairs...).

Over in network services the boys and girls are suffering from a reduced staff mus-

ter due to illness and ACC matters which is impacting on our ability to do core work. That's not stopping us from doing our best, but talking with the members in Christchurch there is a bit of a theme emerging regarding staffing levels. With the growth of KiwiRail we have to have a long term plan to ensure we have people on the ground where we need them.

Finally, great to hear the news about Hillside and the allocation of money from the Provincial Growth Fund. The previous government wrote off the regions so it's good to see our current political masters putting some cash where the rhetoric is. There's plenty of scope for growth over here on the Coast so we hope we'll be in the news for all the right reasons next time. 🇳🇿



The Omoto slip



## TIMARU RAIL

**W**E'VE had a couple of growing issues of late. The first is a result of what seems to be poor management at Fonterra. Readers will be aware that the outgoing CEO went off with a big golden handshake despite leaving a multi-million dollar hole in the balance sheet. New Zealand First went public with criticism of Fonterra's management style a few weeks ago and now the effect is being felt at the frontline. For us that means the imminent loss of our two shuttles between Temuka Container Transfer Terminal and Primeport in Timaru as Fonterra is opting to use road instead of rail in what appears to be a short term cost cutting exercise. Temuka Transport, Specialized Containers Ltd and KiwiRail are all frustrated by this decision as are our members.

We're hearing that procurement of new rolling stock for the South Island shunt loco and loco fleet is moving ahead. This is certainly not before time – the shunts are, to coin a phrase, absolutely bugged and across the rail corridor our locos are failing badly. We feel for our brothers and sisters in mechanical and servicing depots who try to fix and maintain such dilapidated kit. Whilst it's not easy, KiwiRail has had years to plan and order new mainline and shunt locos. The lack of certainty around funding under the previous government was a real handicap. The current regime, with its three coalition partners committed to rail, is a once in a generation opportunity to get some decent gear – let's not mess this up!

On that positive note we applaud the Government's decision to pump \$20m of

investment into Hillside. Let's not forget that this is not a hand out, it's investment in a vital piece of infrastructure that will generate growth and will benefit all. This makes economic, social and environmental sense.

On a sad note Michael Ferris was killed in a motorcycle accident sometime during the night of November 4/5. Our sincere and heartfelt sympathy to his whanau. He was a solid RMTU delegate and a passionate railwayman.

Finally, local lad Dan Ackroyd is doing his RCO training and making good progress we hear. Keep it up Dan, we need young blood now the financial future of the railway looks more certain.

As we head into another glorious South Canterbury summer we wish all our brothers and sisters around the country the very best for a safe and prosperous end to 2019 and the same for 2020! 🇳🇿

## TIMARU PORT

**W**E'VE had a pretty quiet time here at Timaru Port these past few months, although we are gearing up for the busy season as these notes are being written.

Our branch watched the dispute between the RMTU and MUNZ and Port Otago with interest. The shipping companies were quick to react when the negotiations collapsed and the overtime ban kicked in at Port Chalmers. We became noticeably busier for a while as did KiwiRail who were moving freight in our direction. We did ponder about the industrial strength we would be

able to wield if labour on the New Zealand waterfront was as well organised as it is in rail. *Imagine one union with one national agreement for all our ports? No race to the bottom on wages and conditions between competing ports and the shipping companies would lose the ability to play off one port against another.*

The other aspect of the dispute that interested us was the backward attitude of Port Otago management towards involving workers in the management of fatigue. Our initiative on fatigue management that we have undertaken with Quality Marshalling may not be perfect – both members and

management would acknowledge that – but the key point is that we're working together on it. We're gathering and sharing data and both parties are trying to square the circle of running a 24/7 operation with the vagaries of shipping and managing fatigue. Compared to some other ports there seems to be an acceptance here that workers have a contribution to make in managing risk – and not an outdated autocratic mode of management that we see elsewhere.

As we head into the summer we wish all our fellow members around the country the very best for a safe and prosperous end to 2019 and the same for the new year. 🇳🇿

## OTAGO RAIL

**W**e've had a very busy time here in Otago Rail this past three months on the industrial, political and safety fronts.

Begin with the industrial, our members in Dunedin Railways secured a ground breaking wage deal that saw all of those paid below the living wage rate of \$21.15/hour moved to that rate. This meant some people

achieved an increase of 18%. What was challenging in reaching this agreement was the fact the company made a loss last year and is projected to make a loss in the current financial year. Management did recognise however, that pay rates are such that a freeze was not an option and so signaled their willingness to pay up to 2% for a one year agreement. *Our better paid members said they were agreeable to*

*initially taking no increase in order to look after the lower paid but wanted the deal extending to two years with a 2% increase in year two.* By deferring their pay rise these members enabled management to give the a pay jolt to lower paid RMTU members. That meant that some people went from \$17.70 to \$21.15/hour in one hit. Great result and great solidarity!

Our other major activity on the industrial front has been in support of our

comrades at Port Chalmers where the RMTU branch and the local MUNZ branch have been in dispute with Port Otago Ltd. It's been really good to see the unity and solidarity of the two unions on the waterfront and our branch was proud to have a presence at demonstrations outside the mediation service backing up the RMTU-MUNZ negotiation team. Members from KiwiRail and Dunedin Railways found themselves on the front page of the business section of the local paper in a picture that spoke a thousand words. It was very pleasing to hear that our union and MUNZ secured a good deal in bargaining – proof that unity gets results.

Our branch officials have been active on the political front, with chair Murry George and secretary Dave Kearns accompanying Gareth Bachop to the Unions Otago CTU Government forum to meet the Prime Minister and members of the Labour and Green parties. Really interesting stuff. For example, we were very pleased to hear that the Greens are in favour of extending the right to strike. Another point of interest was the impact of the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) on Dunedin bus

drivers. In short this outsourcing model drives down wages and encourages employers to attack terms and conditions. It didn't take our officials long to join the dots and see the connections between this and the behaviour of Transdev in Wellington and Auckland in recent years.

Health and Safety was at the forefront of our minds on October 20 when the branch, together with our RMTU Southland comrades and KiwiRail, organised a commemoration to mark the 20th anniversary of the Waipahi train disaster which took the life of LE Graham White. A special passenger train was provided by Dunedin Railways, hauled by KiwiRail locomotives, to take 150 friends, colleagues and relatives of Graham to the commemoration. The ceremony and speeches were very moving, together with a haka led by RMTU and KiwiRail members. A special thank you to Paul Henry and Brian McKay for your work in making the day so special and all the other people who made a contribution to such a smooth running event. While the day was a wonderful opportunity for old friends and colleagues to catch up and reminisce, no one lost sight of the fact that this was a very sad occasion

and one to strengthen our resolve to fight for a safe railway: as the slogan says: Mourn the dead and fight for the living.

As your scribe sat down to write these notes news arrived of the Coalition government's \$20 million injection from the Provisional Growth Fund to revitalise Hillside Workshops. This is tremendous for the RMTU, KiwiRail and the city of Dunedin. The campaign we waged to stop the running down and closure of Hillside in 2011-12 may not have been successful in stopping the almost complete shutdown of the operation but the fact is that it is KiwiRail's only heavy lift facility in the South Island. Our persistence in advocating for its re-opening finally yielded a result. Hillside has a proud history and our branch will continue to advocate for the growth of the workshops and the reestablishment of a manufacturing operation as well as repair and maintenance. For now though, we will celebrate this win and we are proud of all our members and allies who worked so tirelessly to get us this far.

Solidarity from Otago and stay safe over the summer! 

## PORT CHALMERS

**A**S RMTU members will be aware from *The Activist* and news reports the major focus for our branch over the past three months has been securing a renewed collective agreement with Port Otago. We are one of the few ports where we remain in a multi-union collective agreement with MUNZ and the stand out factor in our negotiations was the solidarity between our branch and the MUNZ local.

The story of the dispute that flared up between the unions and Port Otago is told elsewhere in this edition, but what your scribe would like to do is thank all the officials, delegates and active members who stepped up and demonstrated our union values of unity and solidarity. The attendance at union meetings was excellent, people participated in debate in a comradely fashion and our more mature members were impressed with the manner those with

less experience stuck together and got involved.

In early October we sent a few key delegates along to RMTU training in Dunedin, just as the dispute was coming to a head, and it was great to meet with the local rail branch delegates and active members and discuss the events that were unfolding. The support of the Otago rail branch of the RMTU was outstanding – thank you brothers and sisters. Your protests outside the Mediation Service premises filled our negotiation team with resolve.

Our RMTU national women's representative, Rebecca Hauck, and Otago rail branch secretary Dave Kearns deserve special mention for their efforts as do the members from Dunedin Railways who found time to express their solidarity after securing a good wage deal themselves. We'd also like to thank Unions Otago for their support, in particular their indefatigable secretary Malcolm Deans, and a special

mention must also go to the Tramways Union who were very visible in backing us.


We had a presence at the Unions Otago CTU Government Forum in September and thanks to one of our veteran delegates Merv Read for taking the time to represent us. The coalition is a strange beast – it appears the only thing the three parties agree on is that rail is a good thing! That's great for the RMTU but we felt for our sisters and brothers in the health and education sectors and those workers in industries that need Fair Pay Agreements to stop the race to the bottom. Three parties with different priorities makes for a difficult course to navigate.

On October 20 branch secretary Alan Richardson attended a very moving ceremony to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Waipahi disaster that took the life of one of our members. Many of our port workers have worked in rail, or have friends or relatives who do, and the day was a fitting reminder of the need to be ever vigilant and fight of the living while we mourn our dead.



We're heading into our busy season now and with a settled collective agreement, plenty of cruise ships, and increased cargo coming across the wharves everyone

has more than enough to do. That means tackling the issue of fatigue, which was a key focus of our negotiations and is going to be even more of a priority.

In the meantime, we wish all our RMTU whanau all the very best for the summer and festive season. Be safe and well and take the time to enjoy the fruits of your labour. 

## SOUTHLAND RAIL

**W**E had our AGM in August after the previous issue of The Transport Worker went to press and a reshuffle of branch officials saw Stacy Chandler being elected the new secretary. Thanks Stacy for stepping up – the branch secretary's job is a vital one and we appreciate you taking on the task.

A huge thank you to our outgoing secretary Danny Kent, who was instrumental in putting the branch on the map with his tireless work around health and safety. Who will ever forget the video of the 'dancing coffee cup' that highlighted the condition of some of our locos and eventually led to

Danny and the branch winning a Safeguard National Health and

Safety Award. Danny did plenty of other good work as well – it just didn't get the publicity of that particular initiative. He remains our LE delegate and continues to do good work on behalf of members with his combination of resolve and pragmatism that has achieved consistently good results.

Our branch remains active in ensuring the rolling stock we work with is up to standard.

Together with the Otago rail branch we've been diligent in logging faults and on one occasion banning a loco that was not fit for purpose. The fact is that it is the squeaky wheel that gets oiled, both


figuratively and metaphorically, so don't accept sub-standard kit – your life may depend on it.

On the question of new gear, Adam Williams, KiwiRail's general manager for rolling stock and asset services – the new fangled name for mechanical – visited us and went for a ride out to Bluff. He's in the business of buying new locos and shunt engines and seemed receptive to what front line workers down here had to say. Thanks for taking the time to come and see us Adam – we've high expectations of your work and hope you'll spend the money our collation government is investing wisely.

The big event of the last couple of months was the 20th anniversary commemoration of the Waipahi train disaster.

In many ways this was the RMTU's Pike River, in that it threw much of what was wrong with the health and safety systems in our (at the time) privatised railway into sharp relief. (see report page 18-21) On Sunday October 20, 2019 a van load of past and present colleagues drove to Waipahi from Invercargill meeting the passenger special that ran from Dunedin as we gathered to mark the anniversary of the collision that claimed the life of LE Graham White.

Sadly this was not the only fatality rail workers endured at that time and it has been a long road back to where we are today. Your scribe encourages everyone that hasn't read Hazel's book 'Your Life for the Job' to get a copy of it (it's available from RMTU National Office), and reflect on the next time you make a mandatory call approaching some distant station in the wee small hours, or you stop a movement because your mate hasn't been heard on the radio beyond the 10 second requirement. These rules are put in place because people have paid for them with their lives.

On that sober note, we wish everyone the very best for the summer and a safe and happy festive season. 

### Rail & Maritime Transport Union Inc Statement of Financial Position As At 30/06/2019

CURRENT ASSETS	Note	2019	2018
Current Bank Accounts	5	401,995	450,952
Accounts Receivable	3	87,471	91,155
Interest Accrued	4	42,220	63,670
Investments	7	2,119,300	3,496,142
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>2,650,986</b>	<b>4,101,918</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Fixed Assets	6	136,438	113,288
Investments	7	2,797,826	988,788
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>		<b>2,934,264</b>	<b>1,102,076</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>5,585,251</b>	<b>5,203,995</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts Payable	8	138,411	94,869
GST Payable		23,773	34,442
Konemu Provision		6,452	6,452
Income Tax Payable		(11,407)	(8,880)
Provision for Leave		114,889	86,348
Veteran's Reunion Fund		6,850	6,850
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>278,969</b>	<b>220,081</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Non Current Liabilities		-	-
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>\$ 5,306,282</b>	<b>\$ 4,983,914</b>
Represented by:			
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		<b>\$ 5,306,282</b>	<b>\$ 4,983,914</b>

A copy of the full financial statements is available upon request to the Union's national office.



# BRANCH ROUNDUP



*(above) Hard working KiwiRail track gang on the West Coast.*



*Thumbs up from Dunedin Railways delegate Julian Evans and member Paul Jeffrey after negotiations. Paul got a 21% pay rise to take him to the living wage.*

*(r) Lyttelton Port branch member Heiner Benecke supports striking lab technicians in Christchurch.*



*(below) RMTU Woolston City Depot members ratify the new inland ports collective agreement with LPC and get a 9.27% pay rise.*



*(r) Dave Wilson is congratulated on his retirement by RSAS delegate Luke James at Middleton Yard.*

