

SEPTEMBER 2010

THE Transport Worker

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



Workers' rights under threat

8 **MATANGI ARRIVES**

The Matangi design team inspect the finished product.

14 **BARGAINING**

Dressed for battle, Auckland branch secretary and Veolia LE Randolph Sladen, (l) wears his lucky Japanese headband to ensure victory.

24 **YELLOWCAKE**

Barrels full of radioactive Yellowcake have been given clearance to pass through our ports.

COVER PHOTO

Hillside workers march through Dunedin in a bid to convince Government to keep work in New Zealand.



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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

AS I write this I am in Mexico City attending the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) 42nd World Congress. The Congress brings together delegates and advisors from ITF affiliated trade unions from around the world. I am here with our national vice president Aubrey Wilkinson together with other New Zealand delegates and advisors from MUNZ, MSG and EPMU. This the largest Congress ever held with 630 delegates and 566 advisors from 278 unions from 109 countries. The Congress has eight section conferences including: civil aviation, dockers, fisheries, inland navigation, rail transport, road transport, seafarers and tourism services. There has also been a major climate change conference as well as a transport women's conference. Having Aubrey attend has enabled RMTU to be represented at all of the section meetings to which we are affiliated including: rail, road, seafarers, urban transport and dockers. As a first time attendee Aubrey has his own report in this issue (page 10) and we will both report to the RMTU annual conference. Maritime Union of Australia national secretary Paddy Crumlin is seeking the ITF presidency and we are all very busy lobbying to ensure we get a president from Asia Pacific. This will bring our region into the spotlight more and also give a greater ITF focus to our difficulties on the NZ waterfront from yellow unions and other issues with the multi-national companies we deal with. It is fair to say that the RMTU is an active and recognised member of the ITF.

Hearing the pain first hand

Considerable contributions to the Congress have been about the global economic crisis and its very negative effects on working class men and women throughout the world. When you hear first hand the pain and suffering that some workers have suffered as their country's economy collapses, it is truly humbling. All of the suffering is attributable to the parasites of modern society – the speculators and junk financial instrument creators and the absence of government regulation to 'control' the greedy fat cats. At the time I thought that the collapse-come-crisis would clearly demonstrate to all workers of the world that neo-liberal economic theory, coupled with light-handed regulation, was flawed and with citizens of all countries calling for protection to ensure a recurrence can never occur governments would move quickly to regulate and control unfettered greed. It is truly bizarre that, with the exception of the US, severe restrictions and legislative interventions have not appeared. By and large, the regulatory framework that permitted the crisis to occur in the first place remain intact throughout the world. A tribute to the lobbying power of the banks, finance houses and greedy speculators.

What we have seen, of course, are governments pouring trillions of tax dollars, mostly taken from the low and middle classes, to bail out money markets and speculators like Goldman Sachs and their ilk. These bailouts have destroyed the balance sheets of many countries and badly damaged others. The response of most governments to their burgeoning debts have been to raise taxes and implement austerity measures. The NZ experience will see GST lifted, calls for wage freezes

and/or cuts, attacks on beneficiaries, attacks on labour and holiday laws, cut backs in public services, reduced government department budgets and staff cuts and calls for privatisations to give one off cash gains to government. Yes, you're correct, it is the worker who will yet again bear the full costs of the spend and the cuts.


Fat cat bonuses and more

In Europe we have seen the 'sovereign debt' crisis played out in graphic detail. This is where the speculators and the ratings agencies played with the national debts of countries such as Greece and Spain and whether or not their loans will be 'rolled over'. The output of this 'risk assessing' saw interest rate hikes for the rollover which will worsen the situation of working people in those countries and fatten the bonuses of the fat cats. We have also seen the money speculators demanding economic restructuring of those countries – which is code speak for attacks on government spending and for selling state assets (privatisation and public private partnerships) all of which enables multi-national companies to come in and exploit working men and women and attack unions. The pathway from employment to slavery begins in this manner. Once committed to this course, the loans are then renewed! Smiley John and his motley crew in NZ are no different. He has just announced the possibilities of partial share floats, privatisations, outsourcing of core functions of government, public private partnerships, beneficiary attacks and so on.

Meanwhile we see the re-emergence of obscene bonuses in the finance and investment sectors.

It is clear that the financial crisis has not seen a new world order emerge. The same unfettered greedy financiers and market speculators persist with a conspicuous absence of regulatory control. The significant exception is Barrack Obama's administration which is attempting to hold executives accountable and change the regulatory controls for money markets. Sadly, big business is manipulating the media and Obama's popularity is declining in the polls.

Brothers and sisters you can be sure of one thing: We workers and taxpayers are going to pay and pay again in all facets of our daily working lives to rebuild NZ's balance sheets. What is equally clear to me is that smiley John, our multi-millionaire finance market speculator cum prime minister has more to gain from the maintenance of unfettered money markets. What we need is quality public services and just and fair labour laws and for all of NZ to pay its fair share towards getting our finances in order – NOT to have beneficiaries, the ill and infirm, the injured, public servants and working and middle classes pay all the cost. Compare your tax cut to Jim Quinn's or Mark Cairns or any other highly paid manager and assess for yourself where the greater burden lies.

**Workers of the world united
shall never be defeated!** 

JRU member wins seat in Parliament

Dear Editor
Japan's Upper House election was held yesterday and the result of the vote released. Though the Democratic Party of Japan, Japan's ruling party, lost many seats



and couldn't remain the dominant party in the Diet, our candidate Kaoru Tashiro won a seat. Backed by domestic and in-



ternational friends, we have waged a successful campaign so far. He will work hard in the Diet in order to ensure workers' rights.

Thank you very much for your attention and support.

With regards,

Mizue Taoka

JRU International Office

Common sense to care for carers

MORE than 420,000 New Zealanders provide support for an ill, disabled, or frail elderly family member or friend.

According to Census 2006, 88% of carers are of workforce age (15 to 65). National nonprofit, Carers NZ, estimates that one in seven Kiwi workers have caring responsibilities. It believes the true number of carers in New Zealand is 750,000+, based on global demographics.

A study undertaken by Auckland University last year found that of 300 carers interviewed, only eight have been able to remain in paid employment.

Carers NZ, the NZ CTU, Business NZ, Accelerating Aotearoa, and others help workers and their employers better understand how caring can affect someone's ability to stay in paid work. Government agencies have also been invited to participate as an outcome of the 2008 NZ Carers' Strategy Action Plan.

Through their Work Life Care! initiative, the organisations can pro-

vide workers and workplaces with advice, and free quarterly Family Care magazines. A digital edition of Family Care, which has a special Work Life Care! information section in every issue, is available for free use on staff intranets.

Carers NZ says carers often feel they need to give up their jobs following a family emergency, or they may become burned out by their dual role as workers and carers.

"With our partners we want to ensure that caring workers receive help early, before there is an emergency . . . and that their employers are aware of common issues, and could perhaps offer flexible work options for staff who might otherwise leave their jobs."

It says family carers are New Zealand's biggest health workforce and are an unpaid union of Kiwis who require the focused support of government, and employers.

■ To learn more phone Carers NZ, 0800 777 797 or email sara@carers.net.nz

Workers targeted by National government's proposed plans

THERE is no doubt what's hidden behind Prime Minister John Key's Cheshire cat-like smile. Since his speech at the National Party conference in July, it is crystal clear that workers are in line for the usual National body blows, says RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson.

In a direct challenge to unions and their members, Key closed his address by outlining sweeping changes to labour laws including making the 90-day trial scheme more stringent by expanding it to all businesses from those hiring 20 or fewer employees, clamping down on sick entitlement, making the regulations apply to all new workers and slanting the personal grievance regime in favour of employers.

No evidence

Key claimed the 90-day law was working saying he had no evidence of any complaints to the contrary nor of any significant protest from the Labour Party.

"My view is in practice this is working," he said. "The people I meet in the street, what they say to me is, 'I don't care about the probationary period, I care about the fact I don't have a job'."



RMTU president Jim Kelly holds up his end in opposing the changes to the ERA and Holidays Act proposed by 'Smiley' John and his cronies.

The changes mean employers will no longer necessarily lose cases over "pedantic" slip ups in their processes as long as the

process overall was fair and reasonable and gave the worker a fair chance. The Employment Relations Authority will also be able to kick out "vexatious and frivolous" claims early on and will be moved to a more judicial process, allowing cross examination of witnesses.

Contentious

Most contentious are the changes made to providing proof of sickness/absence. Rather than having to wait for three consecutive days off work, employers would pay for suspected malingerers to visit a doctor after only one day.

Key said Department of Labour assessment of the scheme thus far showed 40 per cent of bosses who used it said they would not have otherwise taken on the worker and about half the bosses surveyed had viewed dismissals as undesirable.

Hillside's Grant Donaldson (l) and Les Ingram add their voices of condemnation to National's attack on the working class.



Meanwhile, NZCTU president, Helen Kelly, has quickly retaliated with the union movement's own concerns and demands which will likely make this issue a key election pivot.

Opposing changes

She says the NZCTU and its affiliate unions will oppose almost all the changes announced by Key.

Specifically she says, the union movement takes exception to:

- the 90 day employment scheme as being unfair to workers;
- the right of employers to 'communicate' directly with workers during collective bargaining;
- union access needing employer consent – although this 'cannot be unreasonably withheld';
- the reduced focus on procedural fairness in personal grievance cases. The Government will 'ensure that an employer's processes are not the subject of pedantic scrutiny';
- the Employment Court having less ability to question the reason for dismissal as the test is changed from what a reasonable employer 'would' do, to 'could' do;
- removing reinstatement as the primary remedy in dismissal cases;
- the Employment Relations Authority being able to 'filter out vexatious or frivolous claims at an early stage';
- changes in how payment is made for workers whose hours of work and pay are irregular; and
- the way employers will be able to ask for proof of sickness or injury for less than three days though they will have to cover any reasonable costs in doing so.

Need for vigilance

"This amounts to an accumulation of attacks on worker rights," she said. "We have been campaigning on many of these issues for a significant period – but it is clear we now need to step up our activities."

The Government has proposed a broad sweep of changes to labour laws, says Wayne Butson, including allowing workers to cash in one week's annual leave for extra money and allowing bosses to call a worker's bluff if they suspect they are pulling a sickie.

"We must be vigilant to ensure our rights and conditions do not deteriorate. We must stand firm." 🌀

Bosses' charter opens door to unfair dismissals

By HELEN KELLY, NZCTU president



SOME people might wonder what the fuss is over the 90-day law since trial periods are not unknown in some employment contracts. The problem is not the trial period but the removal of all appeal rights along with it.

Fair dismissal is acceptable but this change legislates for unfair dismissal. Trial periods are about the fair appraisal of someone's ability to do a job. You set targets and monitor progress, and sometimes in the end you arrive at an honest and open assessment, visible to both parties, that someone is not up to it.

Dismissing them because they are not good enough for the job after having a fair chance is not what unions have a problem with.

What we do have a problem with is that the 90-day law allows employers to sack new workers for anything, or even nothing at all. If a new employee pointed out a health and safety risk, the employer could sack them a few days later without giving any justification.

Or the employer's nephew needs a job, so the newest worker gets sacked to make space. Those are self-evidently unfair dismissals and, no matter how much evidence there was, the employee would be powerless to defend their character and employment record.

Here are some real examples that came to us after the 90-day law was introduced. In one case a bar owner formed a new company, forced an employee to sign a new contract containing a 90-day clause and sacked them shortly afterwards in order to appoint an acquaintance to the vacated post. A similar case was of a shop worker sacked for no reason by new owners when the retail business changed hands.

We also learned of a woman taken on by a call centre. Her hearing impairment (of which the employer was aware at the time of hiring) required special equipment but, instead of providing it, they changed their minds and simply fired her under the 90-day law.

While discriminating because of her disability was unlawful, proving that when no reason need be given and no processes followed makes a personal grievance impossible.

In another example, a new worker in a communications company turned up for work to find the office being renovated. Unable to provide alternative facilities, the company simply fired the worker.

These cases have nothing to do with the inability of the worker to do their job and everything to do with employers exploiting the ability to dispense with workers without bearing responsibility for treating them in what is self-evidently an unfair and indefensible manner.

The 90-day law, therefore, is a charter for unfair dismissal and a Trojan horse for an attack on basic democratic workplace rights. Excluding the right to appeal against obviously unfair sacking goes far beyond the law's spurious justification of increasing employment (which it doesn't do either).

By making new workers completely vulnerable to summary dismissal it applies unacceptable pressure on a worker's freedom to choose to join a union, to report malpractice, or to draw attention to safety concerns.



Can prospective employees opt out?

In the view of the Prime Minister, no-one needs to sign up to a trial period. They can “opt out”. Despite attempts to distance the current government from the thinking underpinning the Employment Contracts Act 1991, this is neo-liberal ideology at its purest. Employers and employees, in this theoretical world, are seen to possess equal bargaining power. A Government report shows that in the real world employers surveyed generally made a take it or leave it offer which included non-negotiable trial periods and that the employees surveyed generally were unaware of their ability even to attempt to negotiate on the issue. However, how realistic is it to expect job applicants to bargain over such issues when hundreds of people are queueing for so few vacant positions?

Does the law increase job opportunities?

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour have argued that the current limited trial period law has increased job opportunities. However, Department of Labour research on which this claim is based shows nothing of the sort. The report says: “it cannot be stated categorically that trial periods had created extra job opportunities”. The much-trumpeted 40% of employers surveyed who claimed that they were unlikely to have hired a particular recruit without a trial period tells us nothing about how that conclusion was reached nor whether that job would have been there in the absence of trial periods.

Will extending trial periods help marginalised groups?

Again, the Prime Minister and Minister of Labour have both asserted that the extension of trial periods will assist

Did you know?

marginalised groups such as lone parents and migrants. Suddenly the Government is concerned for the poorest in society when they were completely ignored when ACC entitlements were axed, GST raised and Work and Income Service benefits halved for parents who fail new work tests. Furthermore, beneficiaries’ children have been identified as the most likely group to face continuing serious hardship in respect to these inequalities.

Are employers being fair?

In fact, employers behaved just as the Government expected following their message that marginalised groups are a risky prospect without trial periods. A recent Labour Department Report found “very few” employers had used trial periods to employ marginalised workers.

Can we fairly compare the law to other countries?

Three years ago, the present Minister of Labour Kate Wilkinson decried any comparisons with UK legislation for flexible working arrangements, saying. “The current set of labour market and economic and social conditions in New Zealand does not present a close enough match to any [other] countries for that country’s solutions to be the obvious choice”. She added that it was “dangerous simply to compare our situation with the United Kingdom situation and say this is the law for us”. Three years on that danger only arises when the comparison with the UK favours employees rather than employers.


What’s true, what’s not?

The Prime Minister has claimed that unions are “hyping up” the 90 day trial period and that workers currently on trial periods cannot be dismissed without reasons being given. This is completely false. The trial period provisions expressly remove the usual

obligation to provide reasons for dismissal and the relevant official background papers state that the trial period proposals were “explicitly developed on the basis that there would be no requirement for employers to give reasons”. Meanwhile, Labour Minister Wilkinson’s original assurance that trial periods were covered by good faith provisions requiring notification of proposed dismissal are, once again, false. This aspect of good faith is expressly excluded from trial periods.

What about assistance for those caught in the middle?

Work and Income Service requires that clients who are receiving the unemployment benefit and are referred to trial period of employment either take up the trial or face loss of benefit. If a worker’s trial period is terminated after moving to trial employment, he or she faces a social security stand-down. Despite original promises by the National Party in opposition, when trial periods were introduced under urgency in December 2008 no change was made to the provisions for waiver of the one or two-week stand-down before receiving a benefit. Even worse, if a Work and Income case manager believes that a trial period employee has been dismissed for misconduct, or left work voluntarily, that employee ultimately faces a 13 week disqualification period without the option of first testing the validity of the dismissal (and the consequent stand down) through an unjustifiable dismissal claim, a right which exists for all other dismissed employees.

The Beneficiary Advisory Service says that, “once again, we are back to the brutal politics of the 1990s in which the marginalised are squeezed between precarious working conditions and an increasingly mean-spirited and punitive social security system”. 

Campaign's fairness focus

A new Fairness at Work campaign was launched recently by the CTU focussing on the rights workers have lost since the National government regained power.

The CTU has produced 20,000 fliers for the campaign which are being distributed by affiliate unions.

Headed 'We didn't ask for. . .' the campaign highlights:

- The 90 Day Fire-at-Will Law removing everyone's right to appeal against unfair dismissal;
- the gutting of ACC including cutting back pay-outs and forcing workers back to work before they are better;
- axing union access to workplaces without management agreement thus allowing employers to decide when members can see their unions at work;
- allowing annual leave to be sold off;
- allowing employers to query every sick day and giving employers

the right to demand medical certificates for even one day off sick;

■ rolling back the right to regular breaks such as lunch time and tea breaks which will now have to be negotiated again;

■ a rise in GST thus taking away any possible advantages that may have been gained through tax cuts;

■ hiking charges for early childhood education thus adding to household bills;

■ cuts in health services especially for the elderly;

■ cuts in funding for night classes and adult education; and

■ further cuts to the public services in such essential areas as border security, conservation, science and research and many more.

"The National Party promised change," said CTU president Helen Kelly, "but change should be for the better. They have attacked workers' rights from the start and it's serious. Workers must demand fairness at work. Our rights are under attack" 🇳🇿

Sinister attack on union access to workplaces

HELEN KELLY
NZCTU president

THE CTU did not welcome this government in 2008 but undertook to work with it and Business New Zealand to try and ensure the best possible outcome for workers and for the New Zealand economy.

The initial signs were not all bad. John Key was gushing in his enthusiasm for the CTU's positive input to the Jobs Summit in March 2009. Despite the disappointment of the forcing through of the 90 day fire-at-will law for small employers the Prime Minister also made a public undertaking on several occasions that wholesale change to employment law was "off the agenda" and "not a driving priority" for his government. He also privately assured the CTU that if that situation were to change he would consult us first.

Those promises and public statements have proven to be worthless. We already knew that grievance procedures and holidays were under scrutiny, but the move on union access was the most sinister blow. It came completely out of the blue. Aside from the Prime Minister's personal word that this was not an issue there were absolutely no calls for it from any quarter. It was not on anyone's radar. Business NZ saw no problem with the current practice. Even the more extreme business lobbyists,

who seldom miss an opportunity to assert the righteousness of employers and the evil of trade unionism, never once raised union access as an issue in their PR pronouncements.

So where did this anti-democratic move come from? Exactly what role have union officials

routinely visiting workplaces to meet with members played in New Zealand's economic difficulties over the last two years?

The answer probably lies in the seemingly unrelated issues of the Environment Trading Scheme (ETS), Maori treaty settlements, and the Government's failed plans to excavate the most treasured parts of our conservation land in search of an El Dorado of minerals to boost our economy, Australian-style. Faced with a gathering of the party faithful, unhappy about the costs of ETS compliance, restless over perceived generosity to Maori on foreshore and seabed ownership, and dismayed at the collapse of the miracle mining plan, what better way to save face than to assault the vile socialist menace of trade unions?



Phil Spanswick, William Lanigan, Paige Lanigan, Vicki Te Amo, Faith Lemalie and Nick Ereputa at the Fairness at Work rally in Auckland.

Even more simplistic – and worrying – is that John Key's attacks on unions and employment rights actually comprise the sum total of National's economic policy: weaken worker negotiating power to depress wages and thus boost profits and productivity by reducing labour

costs. It is an attempted repeat of the trick they pulled in the 1990s when the Employment Contracts Act pulled the rug from New Zealand workers to create the illusion of productivity gains while beginning the long trend of the growing income gap with Australia.

It is a damning judgement on their abject economic policy failure that they should try this a second time.

The rallies held on the 21 and 22 August are only the beginning of the campaign to rid New Zealand of these unfair and backward policies. Even if Parliament passes this legislation we must do everything in our power to let the Government know that we will not tolerate their betrayal of working people.

Matangi arrives

WE are pleased to see the first Matangi units arrive after a number of years of input from RMTU delegates. For us it is satisfying to see the completed result. This is an important moment for the Wellington region, it marks the beginning of a fast and efficient rail service fit for the 21st century.

However, this occasion is tinged with disappointment in that there was not enough foresight or willpower to have these units built in New Zealand and it looks like there still is not.

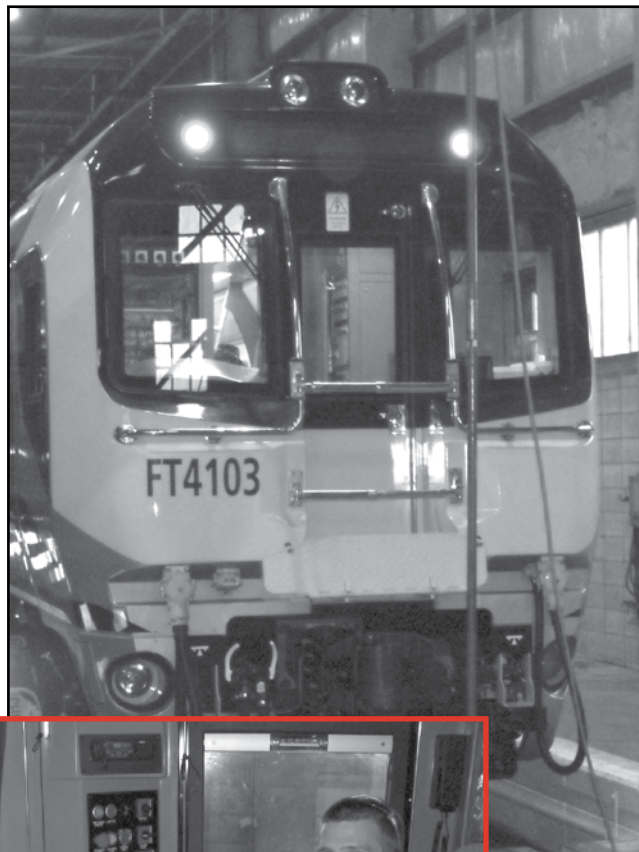
We must also be aware that there are numerous people in influential positions waiting for this project to fail. We have worked hard to disappoint them and are very confident that it will perform extremely well.

"It is the first time in many people's careers that any major investment in rail has taken place," pointed out Hayden Smith, pictured giving the thumbs up to the driver's compartment.

"You can see where our input has gone; a huge amount of work has gone into ensuring the best working conditions for the drivers. Harvey Patterson and Trevor James have ensured a good working environment for themselves and a nice traveling experience for the public. There has been a lot of thought and effort gone into ensuring the front of the unit is just what the TXO's needed, right down to the couplings thanks to the work of Hayden Harwood," said Howard Philips Wellington branch secretary (at the time) and mechanical rep.

Howard then went on to give full credit to the Matangi engineering team for taking the guys' views on board (mechanical). For instance, he says, access to components throughout is "fantastic, you can see the thought in the design, and the gear looks really great".

Full credit to the work and effort that Howard has put into the project and a big 'thank you' to the delegates who worked tirelessly on the project and to their co-workers who provided feedback, support and understanding whilst they were called off to those numerous meetings. A terrific team effort. 🇳🇿



Hayden Smith at the helm.



(r) The tunnel design enhancing passenger safety.

(l) The RMTU 'Project Best Design' team consider the results of their five years' work.



MUA terminal conference

Melbourne, June 1-3, 2010

MARK ALLEN, Michelle Middleditch and Ruth Blakeley attended the MUA Terminals Conference in Melbourne.

The main theme of the conference was about making the ports safer places to work. Due to a recent spate of fatalities in Australia there is a huge campaign running to regulate the waterfront in Australia with a National Stevedoring Safety Code of Practice.

MUA members want the right to proper training and qualifications to ensure safety and skills improve.

Mick Doleman led a question and answer panel with international guests. Much of the discussion was about the current attacks on New Zealand workers by the National Government. Ruth Blakeley (RMTU) and Carl Findley (MUNZ) gave an overview about attacks on workers' rights and emphasised that it is critical to work closer together and to forge alliances to stamp out non-union and yellow unions on the waterfront. With local and international solidarity this will happen.

Mick is keen to re establish the Trans-Tasman women's committee to meet on a regular basis and improve life for women workers in the maritime industry. We would like to see more women involved in the RMTU both in ports and rail.



Mark Allen flanked by Michelle Middleditch and Ruth Blakeley.

The conference, like always, was very enlightening and yet more contacts were made. On a social note we all enjoyed a relaxed dinner together at the end of the second day of conference.

We thank the Melbourne branch of the MUA for their hospitality and look forward to working together in the future.

Mark said: "What I took away from the conference is that unionism is very much alive and well." He added that he was impressed by how quickly they work together to come up with solutions.

"You realize that working together can only be a good thing."

Report by Michelle Middleditch



Local Elections 2010

**YOUR VOTE
YOUR COMMUNITY**

Right now hundreds of thousands of people won't be able to vote in the upcoming local elections.

They may have turned 18, moved house and not told us or not enrolled yet. None of these people will be sent their local elections voting papers in the mail.

ELECTIONS

Electoral Enrolment Centre
PO Box 190
Wellington 6140

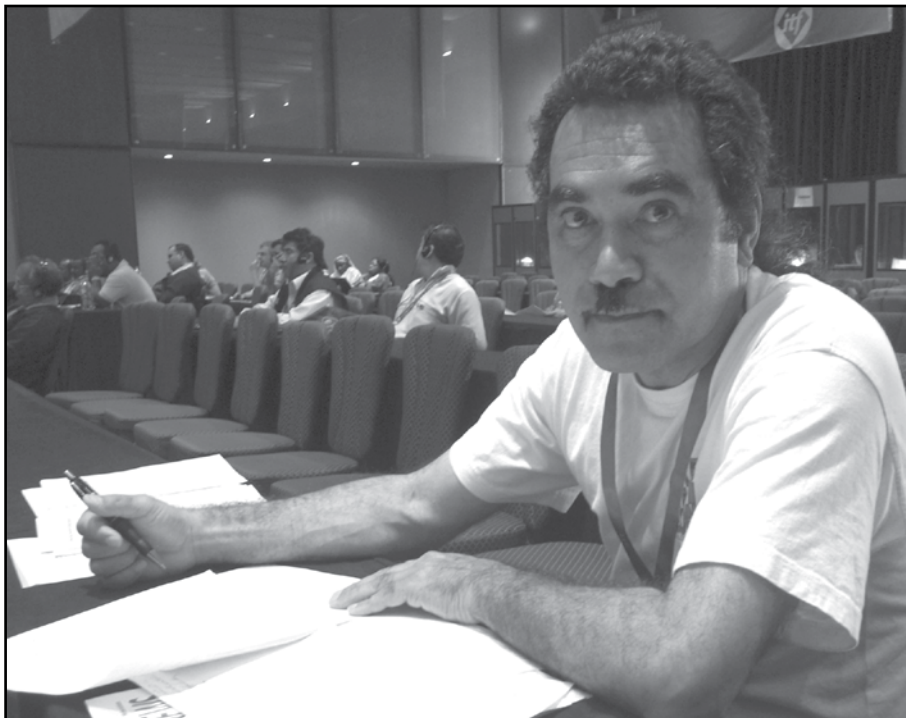
Confessions of a congress virgin

Aubrey Wilkinson
National vice president

I have been astounded by the number of affiliates (delegates and observers) present at the ITF Congress and the very strong shared feelings of comradeship, solidarity and mutual respect. This is uniform across the regions and the sections of the ITF. Having the opportunity to meet, speak and get to know so many of the world's trade union leaders has been both rewarding and inspiring.

The issues of globalisation, liberalisation, global finance, precarious work and climate change – all of which affect us in the RMTU – have been debated rigorously. Affiliates are unanimous that if there is to be any changes to these issues, it will only come about by united, active and strong pressure from working men and women around the world. In short, it is time to stand up and fight back.

I have attended the following conferences and section meetings: young transport workers; climate change, seafarers, dockers and a joint seafarers/dockers meeting. The young transport workers conference was well attended with delegates very passionate and well organised. In my view, the ITF affiliates have a considerable depth of young union talent who will be well equipped to confront future struggles. I will be asking young RMTU members (under



Aubrey Wilkinson studying some papers at the Congress and (below) with other New Zealand ITF delegates at the 42nd Congress (l to r) Marion Lesslie (MUNZ), Sarah Dench (MSG), Wayne Butson, Garry Parsloe (MUNZ), Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ) and Aubrey. Absent was MUNZ official Mike Clark owing to ill health.

35 yrs) to get active within our union. The RMTU has strongly supported this section and the constitution changes saw an executive position on each section designated to a youth member.

The seafarer's global meeting was exceptional. A huge effort continues with input to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for seafarers while negotiations continue with shipping companies globally and the flags of convenience (FOC) campaign builds momentum – especially in this year, the year of the seafarer.

The dockers section meeting educated me on the antics of the global multi nationals like PSA, DPW, APM and HPH forming global network terminals (GNT) among transport corridors of the world. These terminals are formed to compete with other ports and to exploit low wage, non-union labour to increase profits. This is sometimes done with the collusion and co-operation of governments such as in Costa Rica. These attacks are happening daily and we in the

dockers section (stevedoring port workers) will be meeting regularly to update, strategise and to initiate co-ordinated global action. Port privatisation is an issue that we in the RMTU ignore at our peril. Every port which has been privatised this decade, and there have been many, has seen our brother and sister unionists suffer job losses, wage cuts, loss of conditions and the introduction of unsafe practices. Privatisation is happening within the Asia Pacific region now. Currently two ports and the state railway company in Queensland are being privatised. In talking to the affected Australian affiliates it is clear they hold little hope of preventing them. It appears there is no shortage of stupid governments unwilling to heed the many international examples of privatisation failures within the rail industry. To the contrary, I suggest that we union members heed our own experiences and support our brothers and sisters in Australia in their struggle while pledging to do everything we can to prevent NZ going





Congress delegates at work with Wayne Butson (inset) - who is NOT a congress virgin - addressing the assembly.

down the same path again.

The joint dockers and seafarers meeting concentrated on the ITF's Flag of Convenience and Port of Convenience campaigns as well as the work plan for the next four years (until the next Congress) for the sections. If the work plan is to be successful it will require the full input and support of all affiliates and their members.

The RMTU is well known internationally for its power and influence and organising ability. Our general secretary, Wayne Butson, was elected as a teller and scrutiniser for the congress, reconfirmed as chair of the Asia Pacific Railway Section (which has approx 2.5 million rail workers within the region) and spoke on a number of occasions on various issues during the full plenary sessions and section meetings. The RMTU holds its own on the world stage.

The RMTU contributes meaningfully to the ITF and its contribution and participation is noted and respected.

Climate change produced strong and vigorous debate specifically in regards to job protection versus actively campaigning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the negative effects of climate change. During the seminar on climate change a presentation stated that 48% of greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to road transport. Every affiliate felt hard-pushed to come to a decision but unanimity was achieved – a credit to all. Climate change was a particular concern of our Pacific Island brothers and sisters who said that while those of us who live in the developed world may not wish to lose jobs, they didn't want to lose their countries just so we maintain jobs. Many islands are in

Some global union facts

■ The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) was founded in 2006 through the merger of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour.

■ The international trade union movement now has elected its first ever woman leader: Sharan Burrow as general secretary in Vancouver, Canada in June this year. Sharan was previously president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

■ 101 – the number of trade unionists murdered around the world in 2009 according to the latest survey of trade union rights by ITUC. [Columbia 48, Guatemala 16, Honduras 12, Mexico and Bangladesh 6 each, Brazil 4, Dominican Republic and Philippines 3 each, India, Iraq and Nigeria 1 each.

■ ITUC brings together 312 trade union centres in 155 countries, together representing 176,000,000 trade union members.

■ 240,000 – workers killed every year in Latin America in accidents according to the Trade Union Confederation of the America's (TUAC). This does NOT include those who die from occupational diseases or illnesses. The TUAC calculates that a Latin American worker is killed every two minutes of the working day!

■ The ITF is one of 10 global union federations, uniting unions from the industrial sector or professions. Together they form global unions alongside the ITUC and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD. Only the International Metalworkers Federation, founded in 1893, is older than the ITF, which was founded in 1896.

grave danger of disappearing altogether as sea levels rise. They asked for our help now!

I have been inspired by my first-time participation and have a greater appreciation of the vast disparity of working conditions for men and women globally and of the danger some union activists constantly work under. I thank the RMTU (you) for giving me the chance to experience this.

We are STRONGER TOGETHER. 



One of the almost daily demonstrations outside the Congress.

4 questions every union should be asking about climate change

1. Why should we be getting involved?

Climate change is too important to leave to governments and employers. The ITF and its trade union allies have to be involved in proposing and developing solutions to the climate crisis.

Large corporations and political leaders have failed to protect the livelihoods of workers and communities, and they have failed to even begin to seriously deal with rising emissions. And if, or when, they change course, they will need all the help they can get from unions to deal with this immense challenge.

The crisis is a massive opportunity for trade unions to partner with each other social movements to bring to create a different world— a world that ends once and for all the common oppression suffered by people and the environment.

The political and social solutions that need to be applied to address the causes and effects of climate change can also be used to tackle mass poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, insecurity, poor health and other social inequalities suffered by a large portion of humanity.

For almost 30 years multinational corporations and political leaders have embraced policies and practices that have led to accelerated levels of emissions in all sectors, including transport. Cheap transport is the blood that runs through the veins of the liberalised global economy. It has been achieved in part by removing government regulations on transport, by lowering the pay and conditions of transport workers, and by subsidising fuel costs.

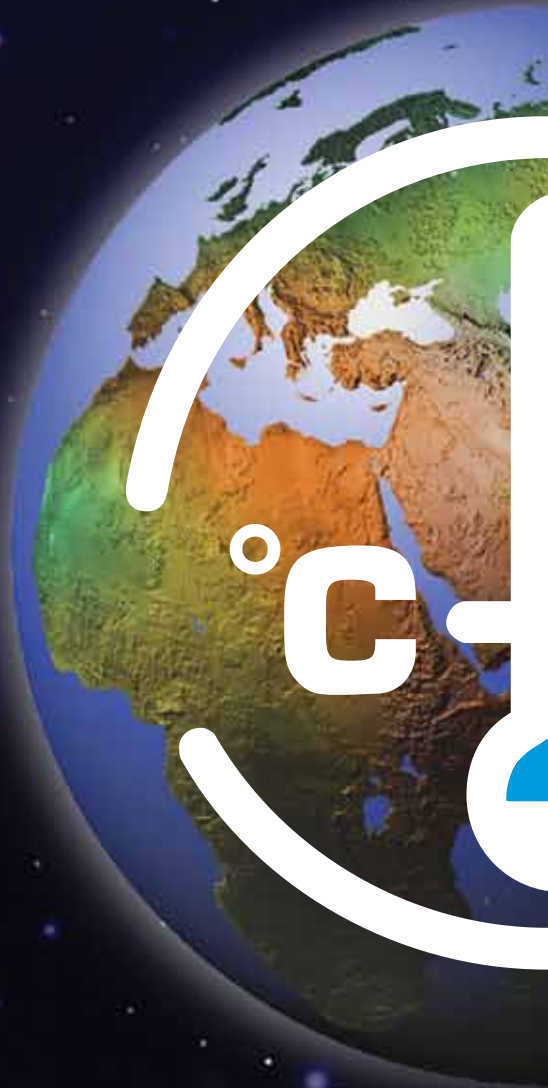
The environmental and social price of cheap transportation is then paid by workers and communities in the form of lower wages, precarious work, long hours, poor health, as well as noise, pollution, and now climate change. It's time for unions to act.

2. What is the problem with emissions from transport?

Transport unions cannot ignore emissions which have increased by 120 per cent over the past 30 years, and are gradually increasing in all regions of the world. As governments start to act on climate change, the transport industry will be targeted even further. We have to be ready and informed.

Globally, the transportation sector accounts for over a quarter of total world energy use and 14 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions. This is even higher in the wealthiest parts of the world: 26 per cent in the United States and nearly 19 per cent in the European Union.

Transport is also the fastest growing consumer of energy in developing countries. Road transport currently accounts for 74 per cent of all emissions from transport, with freight growing at a faster rate than passenger transport. While aviation and shipping make up a much smaller percentage of overall emissions, their emissions are also rising.





3. Should we be getting involved in the debate on carbon trading?

Carbon trading is one of main ways governments are trying to tackle the climate change crisis. It is a complex and controversial solution.

In very simple terms, businesses are given a carbon allowance. They have to purchase extra allowance if they pollute more. Companies that pollute less can sell on their allowance, providing an incentive to produce less carbon – in theory.

As trade unions, we can recognise the problems in putting our faith in the market to solve the problem of climate change. A growing number of activists share the view that emissions trading amounts to the privatisation of the atmosphere. Others emphasise that, in theory, the cap on emissions could be set low enough to achieve emissions reductions, and 100 per cent of pollution permits could be auctioned and the revenues used by governments to invest in renewable sources of power, energy conservation and public transportation systems.

The ITF encourages a critical but constructive approach to emissions trading, but at the same time recognises that it has yet to produce results and there are few signs that this will change.

4. What can we do to encourage green jobs?

There is potential for unions to get involved in the development of green jobs. Currently investment in green technology is insufficient. Private sector research and development in these technologies is falling as is public research and development which is down 50 per cent between 1980-2004.

The lack of investment in transportation is particularly striking. For example in Latin America over the last two decades, total investment in transport has halved. As a portion of GDP, investment in transport in Latin America is at one-third of its mid-eighties level.

Unions can play a role in influencing policy at the national level for more investment in transport. This is easier for some transport sectors than others. Public transport is an obvious area of growth. Many urban transport trade unions are already engaged in the fight for quality public transport, which has a clear link to also reducing emissions. But other sectors – perhaps aviation, trucking, fuel refining and distribution – are likely to see job losses.

ITF affiliates in “job loss” parts of the present transportation system may understandably feel that they are being asked to shoulder the burden of climate protection. Meanwhile ITF affiliates in “job gain” subsectors can look forward to a more secure future. Set against the background of today’s deregulated transport systems, such fears are not without justification.

But strategic government interventions, especially ones shaped and designed by unions in the industry, could overcome many of the problems associated with anticipated job losses.

The kind of modal shifts that are needed will take decades to fully accomplish, and natural turnover in the different sectors will mean that involuntary job losses could quite easily be avoided.

A transport workers’ job directory, administered jointly by municipal authorities and unions, could provide incentives, for example, to truck drivers moving over to drive buses as public transport is scaled up. Manufacturing facilities that presently make passenger cars could be converted to produce buses. These are just some examples of the enhanced role that unions could play as the transport industry makes a shift. We are encouraging our affiliates to act sooner rather than later.

This article is based on a discussion document, produced by the ITF Climate Change Working Group in collaboration with the Global Labour Institute, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, New York. It is reprinted with permission of the ITF.

Veolia collective still in negotiation

OVER six months ago Veolia Transport was invited to join the consolidation of collective agreements exercise that was being undertaken by KiwiRail and the RMTU. They were also invited to join the partnership process.

They refused. At the beginning of this year, at the invitation of the RMTU, Veolia Transport attended a meeting where the bargaining parameters of the upcoming negotiations were agreed. The agreement was that the negotiations would be focused tightly around the delivery of services for the Rugby World Cup, in return the RMTU undertook to limit the number of general claims put forward.

The RMTU came to the table with around 12 claims, as opposed to the 120 at the previous year's negotiations.

Veolia has tabled claims that have nothing to do with the World Cup and have attempted clawback practices that they know are objectionable, such as split shifting and driver-only running.

The RMTU negotiators have had enough. Report back meetings are being held as we publish with a recommendation to reject the company's offer. 🇳🇿



(l to r) RMTU negotiators Bill Sweeney, Francis Lopez, Randolph Sladen, Wayne Butson, Mitch Manning and Joanne Wickham (absent: James Williams, Scott Wilson, Todd Valster)

NZ LE Fund

THE Locomotive Engineers Sickness, Accident and Death Benefit Fund is a scheme created for locomotive engineers at the time medical standards were introduced to expressly provide suitable compensation for any who lose their driver's certification on medical grounds. The scheme has provided financial surety for hundreds of LEs since its inception.

The fund has two independent, three RMTU-appointed and two KiwiRail appointed trustees. The current trustees are Roy Cowley (chair), Terry Nowland (independent), Wayne Butson (ex LE), Murray Dunlop (LE), Wally Wallbutton (LE) – all RMTU, and David Walsh and Nicola Brown (KiwiRail). To be admitted into the Fund a qualifying LE must be a “standard life risk” and no member is permitted to remain in the Fund beyond age 65. As the scheme is heavily subsidised by KiwiRail and



Recently medically retired Wellington Metro LE Wayne Green accepts his payout cheque from general secretary Wayne Butson.

Veolia the benefits and cost to members is very beneficial. All RMTU LE members are urged to join. We wish Wayne and Dick all the best for their future endeavors. 🇳🇿



Upon attaining the august age of 65 Richard “Dick” Davies accepts a cheque which refunds all the contributions (premium by any other name) Dick has paid into the Fund.

Curran bill favours locally made

IN a bid to force government to focus on locally-owned businesses rather than look overseas for cheaper options, Labour MP Clare Curran has put forward her Kiwi Jobs Bill as a Member's Bill under the title Buy Kiwi Made Act 2010.



She says it seeks to bring New Zealand in line with current practices in Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania – all of which operate policies to maximise opportunities for local businesses – especially when government is doing the buying.

Curran seeks to create a Commission of Enquiry to consider the logistics of doing the same in New Zealand.

Her Bill has three main functions:

- To ascertain, record, and compare the merits of, any policies that are operated in Australia and in other comparable jurisdictions, to maximise opportunities for competitive local businesses that seek to participate in government procurement;
- To determine whether such a policy may be operated by the New Zealand Government without breaching any international obligations to which the New Zealand Government is, or is contemplating becoming, a party; and
- To draft such a policy if the previous two functions are met.

At the time of writing, her bill had not been chosen in the ballot. 🌐

Asia Pacific Regional ITF Conference



(l to r) Helen McAra (MSG), Garry Parsloe, Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ), Aubrey Wilkinson (RMTU) and ITF Asia Pacific regional assistant secretary Mark Davis.

THE International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Asia Pacific regional conference met in Manila Philippines in May 2010. The meeting brings together delegates from all countries within the Asia Pacific region – the largest geographical region within the ITF. The RMTU was represented by national vice president Aubrey Wilkinson (Port of Tauranga). ITF Asia Pacific regional chair Hanifi Rustandi (Indonesia) led the proceedings, with Alex Gallacher (TWU-Australia) as vice chair and Richard Barnes (AMOU-Australia) vice chair Asia Pacific seafarers section.

"A highlight of the meeting was the

report from Indian dockworkers on their victory over GTI/Maersk," said Aubrey.

Dockworkers in the port of Mumbai had been subjected to bashings and intimidation for their union activity. After a concerted ITF campaign, Maersk and their contractor came to an agreement with the union. The dockworkers thanked delegates at the conference for their solidarity.

A key point of the meeting was the endorsement of MUA national secretary by delegates as a candidate for the ITF presidency to be decided at the 42nd Congress in Mexico City. 🌐

Paddy Crumlin elected new ITF president

PADDY CRUMLIN (national secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia) was elected the new ITF president on the last day of the 42nd Congress in Mexico City. Paddy is the 22nd person to take on the post. Following his election he said: "I'm excited to be able to take on this new role and play my part in moving the



work of the ITF, its hundreds of affiliated unions and their millions of members forward through the implementation of a comprehensive organising programme focused on trade union regeneration and revitalisation." Paddy is well known to RMTU members and we look forward to our region being in sharper focus within the ITF as a result of his election. 🌐

Colin Kemp

21/9/1959-23/6/2010

THE Canterbury branch were saddened to hear of the death of locomotive engineer Colin Kemp at Christchurch ICU on June 23 aged 50. Colin suffered a heart attack at home on Saturday June 19 and never regained consciousness.

Colin was a keen union man and was involved with various things including the Single Man Remote Working Party in the late 1990s. He was also roster delegate and had a keen interest in anything to do with rail. He was a very passionate minder driver and put a lot of his own time and effort into his trainees.

Colin will always be remembered in the depots that he worked over his 33 years on the job including Springfield, Invercargil, Kaikoura, Palmerston North and Middleton where he worked when he died.



He always had a story to tell and loved passing on his knowledge to those who would listen. Colin loved the social side of the job and was on the 2000 Reunion Committee in Palmerston North



where he was based at the time, and also the 100 Year Reunion in Christchurch. He loved catching up with past and present work mates and exchanging the stories that go with the job. This was very dear to his heart

To Colin's wife, Trudy, and his loving family, we extend our condolences. He was a true friend and work mate who will be sadly missed. 🌐

Bevan Chalmers

Joyce visits Hutt workshops

ON Friday 11 June Transport Minister Steven Joyce visited Hutt railway workshops for the first time. Minister Joyce was accompanied by branch chair Kasia Kurene and general secretary Wayne Butson. It was good to hear Minister Joyce's thoughts on the quality and performance of the membership and of Hutt workshops. He was asked about work being done here and the possibility of building locos here and he quickly passed that question over to KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn who, as we all know, is not in favour of New Zealanders doing New Zealand work. As it says in the KiwiRail staff newsletter,



(l to r) Hutt Branch chair Kasia Kurene, KR CEO Jim Quinn, Minister Joyce, Acting Shops manager Rob "Flash" Gordon and National MP Paul Quinn and (below) with Jim Quinn and Phil Bosworth.

he likes the quality and workmanship of the Chinese.

However, in our view any ministerial visit has to be good for the shops and for

the MPs to be exposed to the passion the guys on the shop floor have for their work and to see what it is like to get grease under your finger nails. 🌐

Nat Pollock retires

NAT POLLOCK, Wellington's longest-serving bus inspector, recently retired after 52 years having arrived from Belfast in 1958.

He told The Wellingtonian he would never forget the first time he offered to do overtime on a Saturday.

"I thought it was very strange because no-one had applied," he said. He soon found out why. The All Blacks had just played the British Lions at Athletic Park, and when the game ended, the crowds swarmed out and filled the tram.

"It was packed chocker ... I had a little punch bag [for tickets]," he said, "but I couldn't get my arms free!"

He managed to claim one four-pence fare that day.

Over the course of his working life he has been an area inspector, a ticket inspector, worked in the dispatch box and had a stint as a courier. He told the paper that he had enjoyed the work and had a "marvellous" time.



(l to r) John Murfitt, Nat, Frank Spetznar and Leonie Stieller take a break from celebrating to pose for the camera.

Nat was given a travel voucher as a farewell gift and he's thinking of using it to visit a brother and sister in Belfast and another sister and brother in Canada. 🌐

Toll Tranz Link CA – Difficult times

The negotiating teams (l to r) for Toll Christina Desbonnets, Murray Gardner and Greg Millar. For RMTU Todd Valster, Jacqui Poole and Jack Hingaia.



IT was an early morning start for one of the CA claims meetings at the Toll Tranz link Southdown Depot, pictured are members that attended. The TTL CA expired 30 June 2010 and following two days of negotiations a provisional settlement was reached. It is fair to say that TTL are experiencing challenging times and the settlement reflects this – 12 month term, 1.7% general increase and 13% on the transport allowance. Postal ballots have been sent out to all members covered by this CA.



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MARLBOROUGH RAIL BRANCH

THE Marlborough branch has been very busy within the rail, port, and Interislander groups and with Port Marlborough negotiations (which are well under way), restructuring within the Interislander and a number of derailments and equipment breakdowns within the rail yards and the CT site.

The Interislander members farewelled their long serving terminal manager Tony Bascand and wished him well in his retirement. They also welcomed Alistair Savage

into the role and hoped to build a similar relationship with him.

Over in the Spring Creek CT site the troops are looking forward to receiving their new Heister, being able to drive in "automatic" mode again and not having their yard covered in oil or that dodgy park/break system – it will be a pleasant and productive change. Now they just have to get the yard levelled and pot holes filled in and we'd be away laughing.



Spring Creek rail yard is still waiting to be levelled – no wonder the mast is cracking

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

LIKE the rest of the company we have been Kiwised. All buildings and vehicles now sport the gold and red fern and the new name. For this scribe it's the eighth name change in a long and illustrious career. But along with the name change has also come a change in direction, there seems to be more bureaucracy within KiwiRail than ONTRACK.

We have recently had a large chunk of hillside removed at Sawyers Bay by blasting

and the removal of rock by excavator. Unfortunately, on a couple of occasions, the rocks did not cooperate and went ONTRACK, resulting in broken rail as well as being an effective door. It then had to be drilled and blasted to gain access to track.

Yes it's all true: all roads lead to Fonterra, but that is about to change with major works being carried out at Edendale and Taieri as Fonterra establishes its new warehousing facility on the former Fisher &

Paykel site adjacent to the Taieri industrial branch. This will lead to most, if not all, traffic between Edendale and Clandyboyne plants going by rail to the new storage facility and then out via Port Chalmers.

Recently the Port had its No1 crane demolished which necessitated the use of a large crawler crane. Nice to see that the bulk of it went by rail from Auckland to Dunedin and return. Mention of Auckland, we are seeing the last of the SAs produced at Hillside transiting through the yard and heading their way.

\$1,500 AD&D

All members 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 complete and return the enclosed reply card to have an AIL representative deliver your AD&D Benefit and explain the additional \$10,000 option. This is very important to you and your family.



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AUCKLAND RAIL BRANCH



Another excellent AGM turnout for Auckland (above) while rail branch chair Bernie Henare (l) addresses the members with his branch report on the year's activities.

AROUND 250 members attended the Auckland branch AGM on 5 August at the Mt Richmond bowling club. After the normal business, the meeting was addressed by Fergus Gammie, the CEO of

the Auckland Regional Transport Authority, who outlined what had been occurring in the Auckland passenger network. In attendance with Gammie were Mark Lambert general manager customer services for ARTA, Mike Williams, one of the directors and Mike Lee the chairman of the Auckland Regional Council. A brisk discussion

was held with them especially from RMTU members employed by Veolia Transport on how they feel they are being treated and the problems with the way the passenger network is currently run. The branch has subsequently offered to establish regular face-to-face meetings with ARTA to ensure that any filtering of issues is avoided.

Indian cremation workers helped by UnionAID

By Helen Wilson

UNION identity cards have stopped police harassment of some Indian cremation workers, according to Allahasami, the Cremation Workers' Union president and thanks, in part, to the support of UnionAID.

Since joining the Tamil Nadu Labour Union (TNLU) these illiterate workers asked for a union membership card. They now carry these ID cards, which they designed themselves, at all times as a safeguard against police intimidation and harassment.

At a field meeting with UnionAid executive chair Ross Wilson late last year, a crowd of at least 50 workers, sheltering from the rain under a spreading banyan tree, waved their ID cards with obvious pride. For them, the card is not only proof of union membership



An Indian cremation worker proudly shows his card.

but a concrete symbol of their new status as human beings.

In a country where the majority of Dalit and Tribal workers suffer gross exploitation and discrimination, cremation workers are considered the most oppressed of all. Born into the job, they languish at the bottom of a caste system

which imposes a rigid occupational hierarchy on all Hindus. Because they deal with dead bodies, they are considered dirty and untouchable. Traditionally they had to beat drums to warn higher caste people of their approach because even their shadows were thought to contaminate anyone they touched.

In spite of their critical importance to the community, cremation workers are often not paid for their labour or the fuel to burn the bodies. Instead, they had to go from house to

house to beg for food and materials.

The lives of these workers have changed dramatically. Those in authority now listen to their demands and treat them with dignity. They are no longer beaten or harassed and are now paid a small monthly wage by the village council. They can afford to send their children to school and, like parents everywhere, they hope that education will give their children the choices and opportunities that they have never had.



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HILLSIDE BRANCH

ON June 8 the branch held a stop work meeting to support the New Zealand Work for New Zealand Workers Campaign. We bussed into Dunedin and marched along the main street to the Octagon. The support from the public and unions was greatly appreciated despite it being a stormy, cold wet day. The level of support made the effort worth while. We especially appreciated the effort from our MUNZ brothers. During the campaign a dedicated group collected signatures around Dunedin, including at the All Blacks v Wales Rugby Test and the local Farmers Market. Congratulations to those members who made that effort, it was disappointing that many didn't. The movement against mining in conservation areas proves that public pressure can sway this Government. There seems to be little commitment from the Government, or KiwiRail management, to build rolling stock in New Zealand, de-

spite evidence to the contrary of its benefits. Hillside and Hutt Workshops have a proud history of manufacturing rolling stock and training high quality staff, but the agenda seems to favour importing. Even the Government's agenda to move wages towards Australian standards seems to be backwards to make us competitive with the Chinese. There are real fears that employee numbers will be affected by these policies.

National's vision

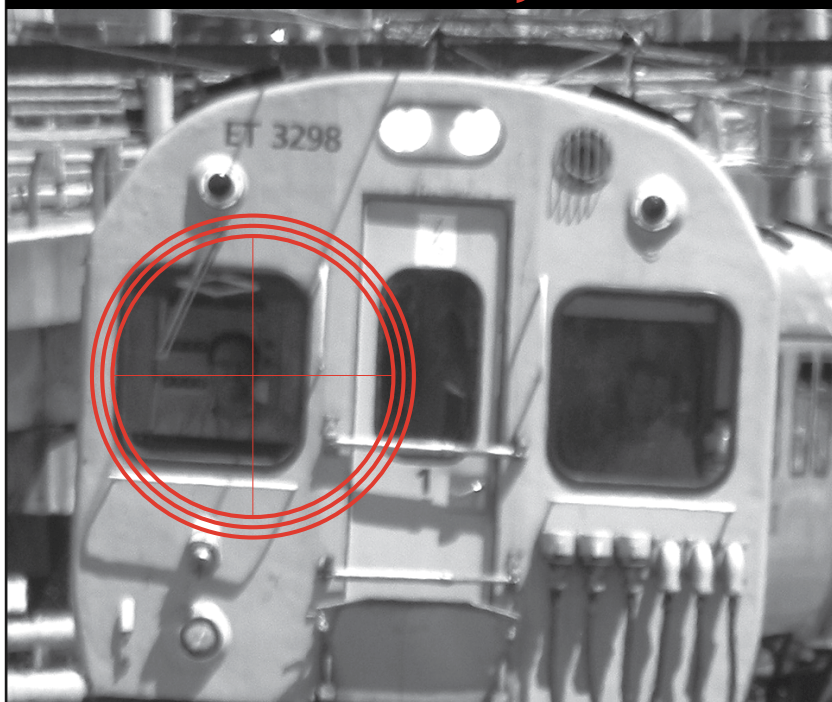
National's attacks on workers and union rights is another example of their vision for the future and MUST be resisted by all RMTU members. Don't sit at home and allow someone else to protect your rights. The RMTU has strong collective agreements but these law changes will have a downward pressure on our conditions. We must also think of others, maybe partners, children or friends, who are not as fortunate, and

may face unfair dismissal or any of their other draconian proposals. We urge all members to rally against these law changes and send the Government the message "we are stronger together".

Obituary

Recently Gary Hansen passed away. Described as Mister St John, Gary served for more than 50 years, including at the Hillside Workshop's clinic from 1962. He was heavily involved with the Hillside Railway Ambulance Division, and spent countless hours attending sporting and community events as a first aider. He was formally recognised as firstly a member (1983) then as an officer of the Order of St John (1993). He was also recognised by the community with the Caltex Un-Sung Hero and Westpac Sporting Person of the year awards for 1996 and the highest Rotary award for a non-member. The branch extends its condolences to Gary's family, friends and to St John.

Sickness, accident & death



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

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

You could be next to miss out!

For as little as \$403 a year your future – or those of your next of kin – could be better assured.

Contact:

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

KIA ORA and greetings from the lads in Wellington. The winter chills are well and truly upon us and it is hopeful that spring will be early.

Cost Cutting

As previously reported, management have been seeking ways to reduce costs as a result of the recent recession. Talks began in April 2009 when substantial lists of proposals were tabled by management, none of which were palatable to the combined union's executive team. We were confronted with the choice of whether to walk out and let management deal with it or climb on board and seek a result together. The latter became the obvious choice.

The cargo operations section, being the largest group of workers, were the first on the list to settle. A meeting was held in August 2010 where a motion was put to the section on the proposed changes and was passed by a majority. The extension from 2 hour to 2.5 hour drives on straddles in the terminal became the debate of the day and it was a bitter pill to swallow for some members. However, it was a compromise we had to eventually concede. Other changes will be extending coverage of the shed foreman's roles and the possibility of reducing the R&D operating hours, all of which will ultimately hit us in the pockets in one way or another. On the plus side, there has been an increase to the employer's contribution of the super scheme from 7% to 8% for all permanent cargo workers and foremen. Another 'biggie' was the exit packages for 5-6 of our senior members wishing to retire from the industry. Over the next 12 months this will see a progression for our PPT24 hour men moving onto 40 hrs and in turn our casual labourers progress to PPT24hr on a one-for-one basis. Also upon ratification, an extra three men from the current casual pool will move into PPT24 hr positions.

Discussions with management concerning the other departments will no doubt ensue in the following months. We shall keep you posted.

Ports of Auckland

Throughout the year the services of some of our straddle drivers were requested to help out in Auckland. A joint team of RMTU and MUNZ drivers eagerly volunteered to go, and by all accounts were made most welcome by the lads in Auckland. Thanks guys and Pat P, don't leave your bag lying around in hotel foyers!



WELLINGTON PORT BRANCH



Matangi units

Photos on this page show the arrival of the first two new Matangi units on July 31 on board the roll-on, roll-off (RORO) vessel 'MV Isolde'. The transference from the trailers onto the rail lines within the port went without a hitch. A further 94 units are expected over the rest of the year. I am sure our brothers over in the Wellington Rail yards are keen to get these units up and running.

Wellington Port Branch stalwart Kevin Jackson recently celebrated with work-mates, friends, family and management



his 50 years of service with the Wellington Port Company. Well done Kevin and we wish you a few more years yet. In the background is life member John Murfitt who is one to never miss out on a piece of cake.

HAWKES BAY PORT BRANCH

KIA ORA brothers and sisters – I guess the unsavoury taste in our mouths currently is the continuous attacks by this Tory government on industrial law, health and education, holidays, ACC, and more. The list goes on with the continuation of the working person propping up the wealthy even more. There is no doubt that business leaders are working hard in Key's ear to continue their "unfinished business" against you and I!

As I write this column – and as unionists it is paramount – we all must make an effort to show and state our objections to policies which undermine our rights, wages and a decent standard of living. It must be obvious

that the cost of the ETS and rises in GST will not be off-set by a 'Claytons' tax cut. In my view we will be worse off, taking into mind the opening sentence, we will be expected to pay more for services as privatisation increases. The impact on the lower paid will have massive, negative ramifications.

However, on the upside, the Port of Napier has finished interviewing for a few heavy plant operators and at this stage, while the numbers have not been finalised, it is a positive move. Associated with this was an internal promotion also.

It was a busy season with containers/logs putting a big part toward the profit margin, which, to date is just above forecast.

Recently we invoked the 'Alliance Charter' between the RMTU and MUNZ. This was a consequence of the Pan Pac pulp/timber marshalling and stevedoring contract being put up for tender. The work is currently done by us and HBSS respectively. The concern is that the contract does not go to any yellow associated union, (There is another term we could use here!). It is still a wait-and-see process but it is hoped a positive solution will be found between Pan Pac, PONL, MUNZ (hbss) and its members in other local waterfront companies and the RMTU.

Lastly, by the time this goes to print, the crane driver CA will be settled.

Thanks Phil for your efforts.

WELLINGTON RAIL BRANCH



Telai (centre) at his first course – delivered unassisted.

Update from KiwiRail's Woburn training centre

David Murdock was appointed to the Training Unit four years ago as a training consultant to provide training for all yard operating activities. As part of David's progression plan it was decided that he would

train to become a driver and transfer to Palmerston North. David has now started his OJT in his new role. With his transfer to Palmerston North this left an opportunity for a new training consultant who would be based at Wellington. It is very difficult to find experienced staff who wish to pass on their operating experiences and knowledge.

John Sargent approached Telai Sefesi

who was keen to up-skill and he joined us and commenced his training at Woburn Training Centre April 2010. He has been trained by David to deliver all yard operating courses.

We are very proud of Telai and to have him as part of our team. He has proven to be an excellent communicator and a gifted trainer.

BAY OF PLENTY PORT BRANCH

An open letter to John Key

Dear John,
We're looking at Australian job opportunities John because we're tired of waiting for you to address that wage gap – and even if you did manage to do it by 2025 (about when many of us are due to retire anyhow) we would have already missed out on about a quarter of a million dollars.

So we thought we'd take the opportunity to thank you for the gains your Government has given us:

A tax cut – yes thanks John for that tax cut! We know we haven't got it yet because governments like to bring them in months after they announce them, but we are already making plans for that extra \$8. Being supposedly middle-class and wealthy (tell that to our banks!) We guess we'll blow it all on luxury items. Cheese perhaps? Yes John cheese is a luxury item these days. We know the GST increase will suck up most of the tax cut, but let us dream John, that we will actually be better off. Some of us would like to spend it on travel but it would take a year of saving it to get as far away as Auckland! And who the hell wants to go there? Never mind, we'll ponder what to do with that tax cut and we're sure it will bring many happy moments imagining how our lives will change.

A much improved ACC system – yes, this one is a marvel John. Not only do we get to pay more for ACC in the many

and varied ways you can suck ACC levies out of us, we will actually get less for our contributions. Don't worry about our strained and aching bones John, we'll just trot along to work with no physio or treatment and be a hazard to our fellow workers. Hang on a minute – perhaps that's what we could save the \$8 for – medical treatment! Oh, and thanks for the hearing aids some of us managed to get after years working in dangerous jobs. Thank goodness they got them before that one disappeared! It's all in the timing as you know.

Hmmmm – the prospect of selling our annual leave. This one is right up there Einstein! We can sell it, you can tax it and then we can have less time relaxing from the rigours of contributing to the country's productivity! We pity the poor bastards who will be either forced to sell it by some dodgy employer or by the fact they aren't paid enough to make ends meet. She's a sad day when you need to sell your holidays to maybe afford one.

Speaking of leave, John, the idea that when we're sick we will drag ourselves out of our sick bed is fairly distasteful. Here's a newsflash for you John – the run down health system doesn't actually have many doctors able to see you on the same day, so the only option may be a half day wait at A & E! Gee, not sure how they'll be feeling after that. And it's an especially good idea if we are taking sick leave for

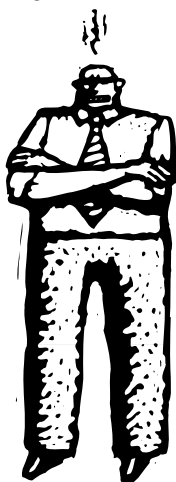
children. Yup, no worries dragging them out of their sick beds.

And John, thanks for your swift and necessary action curtailing MP's expenses and/or rorts. There's nothing the great unwashed like to see more than ministers claiming double our wage to live in their own homes. We would love to take our partners swanning around the world but guess what John – that doesn't happen in the real world.

We're going to have to stop here, John. Our scribe's wrist is beginning to cramp and she will need physio, which we can't get any more.

Suffice to say that in Australia, while we are working for a salary 30% more than here, in favourable conditions, paying less tax and with a more relaxed lifestyle in more affordable accommodation, we will occasionally think of you. We figure you won't be kicked out next election because the NZ public are a gullible lot. But we're fairly confident you won't get more than two terms. Maybe we'll all come back when you and your nasty little employer-driven policies have finally been revealed for what they are. In the meantime we would have received around \$90,000 each more.

We know crossing the Tasman isn't possible for many, or even enjoyable for all, but hey, John we're competent professionals with a wide range of specialised skills – just the sort of people to kick start an economy! Just the sort of people, in fact, you are trying to entice back to NZ. Something quite bizarre in that, eh John? Regards,
Bay of Plenty Port Branch



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Dodgy tasting cake for our port workers

THE trans-shipment of Yellowcake – a radioactive uranium oxide concentrate – through three New Zealand ports was approved in March this year by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA).

Yellowcake, while classified as a hazardous radioactive substance, has a relatively low level of radioactivity. Mined in Australia, Energy Resources of Australia Ltd applied to be allowed to routinely tranship the concentrate from Adelaide through the ports of Nelson, Napier and Tauranga en route to Philadelphia, USA.

The application was received on March 15 and approved two weeks later. During that period the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS),



the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS), the Department of Labour Workplace Group (DoL), Maritime New Zealand (MNZ), the

active Material (2009 Edition) published by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

ERMA also required that the containers containing the substance must remain aboard the ship while in a New Zealand port and must remain sealed unless responding to an emergency.

Approval was given until Dec 31, 2014. 🌐



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the National Radiation Laboratory (NRL) of the Ministry of Health, and the Ports of Nelson, Napier and Tauranga were informed of the application.

Responses were received from the three ports and ERMA says all their concerns and suggestions were addressed and incorporated into the final approval document.

Each consignment would comprise one or more 20ft shipping container(s) each containing 48, 205 litre steel drums of yellowcake. Shipments would arrive fortnightly. The approval sets a series of conditions such as; how and where the containers should be stowed on the ship and what needs to be done in the event of a spill.

All the conditions meet the requirements of the Hazardous Substances Code of Practice published by the Port of Tauranga, the International Maritime Organisation Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code) and the Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radio-



NZ's Nuclear Free history threatened

URANIUM, a radioactive material, should never pass through New Zealand's nuclear free seas let alone come into port, said Green Party MP and Oceans spokesperson Gareth Hughes (pictured).



"I am deeply concerned with the decision to routinely ship uranium ore concentrate through New Zealand ports en route to the United States," he said adding that the Environmental Risk Management Authority's approval of this "undermined New Zealand's proud nuclear free history and the

blood sweat and tears of activists in the 80s who fought to entrench our nuclear free status on the world stage."

The New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987 bans nuclear weapons and nuclear powered ships from New Zealand waters.

"To allow the raw minerals needed for nuclear generation seems to contravene the principles of this act," he said. "The Green Party is investigating legislation to update the act so that the principles are upheld with a ban on uranium shipping through New Zealand."

Earlier Hughes had questioned Environment minister Nick Smith in the House and said he was "astounded" with the reply.

"He revealed that since the 1970s radioactive uranium ore concentrate has been passing through New Zealand waters and ports without successive Government's even being aware of the practice until March this year."

Smith tried to downplay the risks by saying that a New Zealander would have to eat yellowcake to be adversely affected.

Hughes admits that the risks of transshipping yellowcake through our ports "aren't massive". "But the principle is that nuclear free New Zealand should not be part of the nuclear supply chain," he said.