

# THE ACTIVIST



Published regularly – ISSN 1178-7392 (Print & Online) **17 December 2024**

On behalf of the Union's President, General Secretary National Management Committee and Staff, we wish all members and their families a happy and joyful Christmas. We also wish you a healthy, safe and prosperous 2025.



## Union Office holiday hours

The Union's National Office (Wellington) will be closed from 1600hrs 20 December 2024 until 0830hrs 6 January 2025.

The Emergency "on call" roster for Union Industrial matters for Delegates during the closedown period is –  
Todd Valster – 0274454691 on 25,26 December & 1st, 2nd January 2025  
Sean Robertson- 0272952077 on 23rd, 24th December 27th – 31st December 2024, 3-5th January 2025

## KiwiRail RSAS restructuring- no formal proposal received by the union

The RMTU has still not received any formal proposal from KiwiRail to restructure Rolling Stock Asset services (RSAS). KiwiRail managers have prematurely met with RSAS staff to tell them about their restructuring plans but have not formally provided their proposal to the Union to consider, as they are required to provide under the MECA. Consultation cannot begin until we've received the proposal. Once the Union's received KiwiRail's restructuring proposal we'll reach out to the depots and affected members to organise the Unions response. For RSAS members there is no formal restructuring process on the table.

## KiwiRail Voluntary redundancy

Following KiwiRail's call for voluntary redundancy, over 220 people applied. This does not include people on individual agreements. Less than 60 were accepted, that's over 70% were not endorsed by the company. We reaffirm this was lazy restructuring by KiwiRail and has led to a lot of disappointment. Redundant situations are when positions are surplus. It appears that some people made redundant were not in surplus positions.



### RMTU digital transformation

We would like to thank the 420 members who recently filled out the RMTU communications survey. The responses to the survey were excellent, and very well thought out. Congratulations to our 3 draw winners, we hope you enjoy the prize. Your feedback will help guide the next steps of our digital upgrades.

The RMTU website and database will be upgraded in the new year. This will be quite a large project and will be done in stages. This year we looked into online voting. The move to online voting was approved by Delegates at the RMTU conference in October. The National Management committee of the Union has approved the trial of 2 different online voting systems to find the best one for our union. Look out for some future votes coming that way in the new year! The 2 systems we're trialing are Vero Voting, and Big Pulse.

To make online voting a success, **please update your personal email and contact details using the QR code and link** in the next column. We look forward to getting your feedback on those voting systems when we do the trials.



**Scan the QR code to update your membership contact details please, or click on the link below**

[Update your membership details by clicking here](#)



### Wellington Rail

Rail is looking forward to a fair amount of block of line over Xmas as scheduled maintenance takes place especially retracking the Rimutaka tunnel, with a lot of bus replacement operating. At Transdev post a successful industrial action we are starting work on a new master roster which will fully implement the ROM for which we have waited five years. Ferries continue to be a hot topic with a lot of speculation around whether there will be restructures in our terminals next year. Whilst this has been signalled nothing has been heard to date.

### KiwiRail Mechanical

This year KiwiRail presented via road show a proposed restructure for the maintenance and servicing depots mainly in the North Island but with some influence in the South Island. The premise was that we will do less work on our assets to make them more reliable. The proposal was to close many depots at the cost of 60 plus jobs. To date no formal proposal has been presented to the RMTU so the process does seem to be on hold at present. There are considerable problems for our members with this proposal.

What is alarming is the proposal to change rosters in our depots in such a way that cuts penal rates to the extent that our members have a considerable cut in wages and the loss of a weeks leave through dropping out of qualifying as a shift worker. The Union believes it is cynical to post a roster that reduces the percentage of time our workers spend as shift workers to 38.7% so their leave entitlement can be attacked. This is being brought into the Palmerston North depot soon to be rolled out around the country. The union predicts people will consider their options and vote with their feet..

### Hawkes Bay Rail

Not good news for rail in the Hawkes Bay, the WPI mill closure had significant effect on the Napier Freight Depot, resulted in two cancelled trains. KiwiRail was unable to secure a log train for the region and the demise of the Wairoa line and Cyclone Gabriel meant only one train a day for Napier. This has resulted in the loss of 11 positions at the freight depot with many choosing to take redundancy. The mood was sombre around this news and our heart goes out to our HB Rail members. Napier Port has however purchased all the excess capacity on the one remaining service into Napier to secure the long-term continuation of this service.



### Hawkes Bay Port

RMTU and Napier Port Ltd (NPL) are currently bargaining for a new CEA, negotiations are going well, multi skilling seems to be a fairly common theme in our ports at the moment. Difficult to maintain workers competencies when they do multiple tasks and always an issue when things are quiet and out the window when it is busy. After recording a healthy financial report we look forward to a positive outcome for our members. It has been a tough couple of years for the Hawkes Bay, after a cyclone and economic downturn, there was also considerable fall out due to the pulp mill closures in the central North Island. Things are bouncing back in this area of the country, the Union hopes that as the wounds heal that this region bounces back and continues to be a great place to work and live.

### QUBE - BARGAINING UPDATE

We have met with the Company on Thursday 21st November for a 2nd bargaining meeting in Mount Maunganui.

We are exploring a different Salary Model as opposed to the 1,820 Annualised Hours model (the 1820 model) which came through as the biggest issue from our membership. This means they work 1820 hours before getting paid overtime.

What is proposed by the company is a PAY-AS-YOU-GO model.

The pay as you go model is a variable salary model where you have the ability to earn above the guarantee in the fortnight you earn them.

We are still working through concerns of this model and crunching the numbers.

Other things on offer are:

- Pay increase above current CPI.
- An increase overtime to time and a half.
- Higher duties allowance for interdepartmental job sharing

NOTHING IS AGREED UNTIL EVERYTHING IS AGREED and there are a few things that Qube want to claw back in return for the above.

We intend to have another meeting this week. Again, we are still in the early stages, we will keep you all updated as we progress.

Thank you to our bargaining team: Clinton Gotty, Dennis Rhodes, Kim Sutherland, Maria Kahui, Mauria Briggs and Thomasina Brown.



### Marlborough

Ferries continue to be the hot topic in Marlborough and rebuilding the land side infrastructure is a huge question.

The freight depot has moved to a new building beside the temporary terminal, with a new workshop attached. This is all we have to show for a billion dollars spent on iRex, truly the most expensive depot ever. Let's hope that the mechanical plan to close maintenance in Picton does not go ahead and not make the new depot a monument to dysfunction.

### Nelson Port

Bargaining continues on into the New Year for Nelson as we seek a new collective. Negotiations have been going well and we hope to have something positive for the members in the new year. As ever employers love CPI when it is low as they hated it when it was high. The delegates in Nelson are concentrating on the cost of living as being a benchmark for a general wage rise. As we all know rates, insurance and rent are driving domestic inflation, where the cost of new cars, fridges and flat screen TVs are not on workers radar as we struggle to maintain our standard of living.

### Wellington Port

We recently farewelled Murray Sidaway a long-time delegate at Centreport (forty-two years). In an emotional send off the port was closed to respect Murray. He leaves a massive hole at Centreport, and we now seek to rebuild the branch and support our grieving members.

## The fight continues for rail enabled ferries

Following the disastrous decision made late last year by the coalition Government to cancel the new purpose-built rail enabled II ferries (by text message), we have waited 12 months for the Government to announce that they are going to make “an announcement” in March 2025.

The newly appointed Minister of Railways Winston Peters has put everything on the table. The RMTU is backing the ITF/MUNZ campaign for rail enabled ferries called ‘our ferries our future’. Please sign the petition in the link below.

<https://www.munz.org.nz/2024/09/26/our-ferries-our-future/>

Opposition parties, Labour, and the Greens, other unions, the NZ Council of Trade Unions, interest groups such as the Future is Rail and transport operators have challenged the Government on their rash decision making and urged them to see the sense of rail enabled ferries.

Mainfreight Managing Director Don Braid told the Herald that he estimated the loss of rail services would result in Mainfreight alone adding more than 5700 more truck journeys per year. This would conflict with the current Minister of Transport’s obsession with potholes. Each truck does the damage to the road equivalent **10000 cars.**



Without rail enabled ferries the competitiveness of rail vs trucking will suffer because of the extra 90 minutes per sailing needed to move freight to and from rail onto the ferry via truck then back on to rail again. Without rail enabled ferries capacity the rail network will be split between the North and South Island. The Governments poor decision-making flies in the face of the recent EY report- ‘Benefits of rail’ published in August this year which identified the benefit of rail is \$3.3 billion per year from reduced congestion, less pollution, less trucks on the road. They estimate the existence of rail services contributed \$3.3 billion to NZ per year, 1 billion in GDP benefits as well as \$2.3 billion of economic impacts.



**From the Auckland Organisers  
Shirley and Sean**

As the year comes to a close, we want to express our gratitude to all our members in Auckland who have supported us through thick and thin. 2024 has been a challenging year, with two organizers starting, which led many of our wonderful delegates to endure lots of questions.

We would like to specifically thank our fantastic CAF, TGE, KiwiRail, and AOR delegates for their support. A special shout-out goes to the CAF and AOR delegates for their leadership during the industrial action. It was a daunting situation, but you all demonstrated great strength and leadership! Looking ahead to 2025, we are gearing up for AOR bargaining and will hit the ground running!

While many of us are spending quality time with our families during the Christmas season, we want to acknowledge those members who are still working. We wish you all to stay safe.

Thank you, Auckland team.

**‘Kaituna’- KiwiRail’s Hillside  
Mechanical workshops**

KiwiRail’s Hillside Mechanical Workshops has been gifted the name ‘Kaituna’ by Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou. The newly refurbished mechanical depot was officially opened earlier this year. The cultural significance of Kaituna in the Ōtākou area is deeply tied to its role in sustaining the lives and practices of Māori, particularly Ngāi Tahu and other iwi who have historically occupied the region. Kaituna, translates to "food of the eel," emphasizes its historical role as a site for gathering tuna (eels) and other freshwater resources. Tuna were not just a staple food but also central to Māori traditions, with their harvest embedded in cycles of life and customary practices. Mahinga kai is a cornerstone of Ngāi Tahu identity and wellbeing, representing both physical sustenance and spiritual connection to the whenua (land) and wai (water).

*We will miss you*

**Farewell and happy retirement to long standing Delegates  
Dunedin(Dee)  
Wetere from Team  
Global Express  
(TGE)  
and Grant  
Donaldson leaving  
KiwiRail**



## **Former Port of Auckland Ltd boss found guilty under Health and Safety legislation**

Tony Gibson, the former CEO of the Auckland Port was found guilty of health and safety breaches following the tragic death of Pala'amo Kalati who was killed after being crushed by a falling container while loading containers onto a ship at the port in 2020.

The verdict is a warning to the people in charge of large business (officers). They are liable for significant personal liability if they fail in their legal duty to protect workers against unsafe working conditions.

**CONVICTED**

The decision is the first guilty verdict for an 'officer' of a large company who was not personally involved in an accident. Maritime New Zealand, the agency that regulates health and safety in the ports, has welcomed the guilty verdict, referencing the Pike River Mine tragedy and the need to hold those who control large companies to account when it comes to the health and safety of their workers.

### **Injury management**

The RMTU wants to speak with members who've been injured at work in the last 18 months who've had their claim managed by Work Aon or Well NZ under the Accredited employer programme. The Union is talking to members about their injury management experience including how they were treated by the case manager and access to ACC entitlements including rehabilitation and return to work. The interviews are anonymous, the information will be used to push for abolition of the Accredited Employer Programme. If you'd like to find out more, please contact RMTU H&S Organiser Karen Fletcher at [kfletcher@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:kfletcher@rmtunion.org.nz)

## **Union welcomes Approved Code of Practice – Ports.**

Following the inquiry into the tragic deaths and serious injuries of workers on the waterfront, Maritime NZ led the ports sector including unions, ports and stevedoring companies to develop a national standard for health and safety in the ports. The new Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for loading and unloading cargo at ports and on ships has now come into force. The ACOP clarifies the minimum standard of how serious risks need to be managed in the ports. If a business can show what they have done is equivalent to or better than the requirements in the ACOP, then they are likely to be meeting the test of what is reasonably practicable under the health and safety legislation.

The Approved Code of Practice is on the Maritime NZ website along with the Port industry guidance called 'Building a Fatigue Risk Management System Good Practice Guidelines for the ports industry'. [www.maritimenz.govt.nz](http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz)

## **KiwiRail moves to oral fluids rather than urine for random drug testing**

KiwiRail has made the positive step towards less invasive drug and alcohol testing by introducing saliva testing (oral fluid testing) rather than urine testing for random drug testing. The change applies to random testing only. The current drug testing procedure using urine testing will remain for pre-employment, reasonable cause, and post incident drug testing. The change came into effect on 9 December 2024. The Union was consulted and supported the change.

**The work continues  
next year  
so let's stay  
safe out there!**

