

# THE ACTIVIST



Published regularly – ISSN 1178-7392 (Print & Online)

**April 2025**

## Message from the Gen Sec

We are already in the second quarter of 2025 and there is plenty to inform our members on what is occurring around NZ within the RMTU and beyond.

We have “Fight Back Together” information on the next National Day of protest – May 1, see details on page 3.

Information on our theme for Workers Memorial Day – April 28th, see page 5.

There are updates from most of our branches and updates from our KR Industrial Councils, plenty on.

Be safe out there, in unity

Todd Valster

RMTU General Secretary



## Kiwirail wage Round 2025

KiwiRail are proposing a “dates and rates” approach to renewing the KR/RMTU MECA, rather than a full-blown remit/claims process both ways.

“Dates” means the term of the MECA and “rates” are the general increases. All of the Industrial Council Rep (our RMTU Bargaining Team) and many Branches have been briefed on the reasons behind this approach. Bargaining with commence in May.

## Nomination results for the RMTU National Management Committee

At the close of nominations (Friday 21st March 2025 at 1700hrs) there were five NMC positions that received only one nomination and therefore those five nominees are declared elected unopposed.

Congratulations to:

1. South Island Rail Rep – Ian Walker – nominated by Les McIntyre and John Mehlhopt
2. North Island Ports Rep – Ratahi Ellis – nominated by Asher Symonds and Xavier Gordon.
3. South Island Ports Rep – Pierce Smith – nominated by Evan Lousley and Michael Mumm.
4. Women’s Rep – Rebecca Hauck – nominated by Gemma Thomas and Donna Dodds.
5. Wellington Rail Rep – Howard Phillips – nominated by Jonathan Fabros and Vitale Aleni.

More than one nomination was received for the positions of;

Auckland Rail Rep –

Leighton Mosese – nominated by Mike McLaughlan and Michael Williams.

Jordan Mana – nominated by Leilani Torine and Sebastian Orr.

## Nomination results for the RMTU National Management Committee continued

North Island Rail Rep



Josh Goodwin – nominated by Simon McShane and Andrew Neville

Logan Rusling – nominated by Reid Calvert and Gavin White.

– Shane McNae – nominated by Justin Johnson and Lance Crawford

– Matt Bennie – nomination by William Laison and Semi Vuatalevu.

An electronic and postal ballot of members within the voting constituency for each representative position will be conducted. The Preferential Voting System is used by the Union in any ballot with more than two (2) candidates. This will be the voting method for the North Island Rail Representative position as there are four nominees for this position. The other positions will be voting “first past the post” ballot.

It is anticipated that Electronic and Postal Ballots will be issued from the National Office to the home address, email or mobile number of those financial members in the Auckland Rail and North Island Rail regions (less Auckland Rail, Wellington Rail, Hutt Branch) eligible to vote on or before “**date to be confirmed**” and must be received in the envelope provided or via electronic vote at National Office no later “**date to be confirmed**”

If you have not updated your address, email address or mobile number to the RMTU National Office since changing your place of residence, email or mobile number then please update your details on the Union website or email to [reception@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:reception@rmtunion.org.nz) or call 04-4992066 to talk to a member of staff to ensure you receive your electronic vote or voting paper.

Congratulations to Ian, Ratahi, Howard and Rebecca on your successful re-election and Pierce Smith on your election and may the best person win in the ballot process to all the aspiring nominees.



## **Fight Back Together Maranga Ake**

**May Day is a time to commemorate both the struggles and gains made by workers and the labour movement. Based on the success of our nationwide hui on the 23rd of October, we are again hosting hui across the country on May Day to fight back against the Government's ongoing attacks on workers' rights.**

When working people unite and fight back against anti-worker policies, we create change and transform society for the better.

When we fight back together, we win. Last year, we hosted 12 events across the motu. This year, we will make a bigger impact.

### **Venues:**

#### **Whāngarei**

Tarewa Park  
12-1pm

#### **Auckland**

Manukau Plaza  
12-1pm

#### **Hamilton**

Hamilton Lake Rose Garden  
12.30-1.30pm

#### **New Plymouth**

Huatoki Plaza  
12-1pm

#### **Mt Maunganui**

Hopukioire (Mt Drury) Reserve  
12-1pm

#### **Rotorua**

Ranolf & Arawa St roundabout  
12-1pm

#### **Palmerston North**

TBC  
12.30-1.30pm

#### **Wellington**

Frank Kitts Park  
12-1pm

#### **Nelson**

1903 Square - Red Square  
12.30-1.30pm

#### **Christchurch**

Addington Raceway  
12-1pm

#### **Dunedin**

Octagon  
12.30-1.30pm

#### **Invercargill**

Workingmens Club  
12-1pm

Why does this matter?

This is the most anti-worker government that we've seen in decades, attacking our rights day after day and trying to divide us. But we won't let them get away with it. We must fight back.

- The coalition government has shown they are in the pockets of the rich, putting corporate interests over the interests of working people.
- Through standing together and mobilising, we can demonstrate our power and ensure that this one-term government loses its legitimacy.
- When our backs are against a wall, we fight back. And when we fight, we win.

Attacks on working people come on top of the relentless and ongoing attacks on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori rights. The coalition is trying to divide us and are sowing the seeds of division.

Don't let the buggers get you down! Join us across the motu on May Day to take a stand against the coalition.



### RMTU Digital Update:

Online voting: We have now trialed the Vero Voting system. It was used for the Auckland Branch Secretary role, there was a good turnout, however we have discovered that company email addresses are unreliable, and it is unlikely anyone with a company email especially KiwiRail will NOT receive the voting link as it gets filtered out before even reaching the inbox/Junk. If you have a personal email account, please update your RMTU contact details so we send you important voting information.

### South Island Update

Lower South Island Local Industrial Council or LSI LIC has its first meeting on 27 March, South Island Protectors LIC will also have its first meeting on 31 March. These are important forums where members can raise issues at local level for either resolution locally or forward the issues up the Industry Councils. Updates from these meeting will follow.

Marlborough Port – Members will meet on the 2nd of April to have claims meeting as we get ready to negotiate a new contract in this port. With willingness on both sides to strike a deal before the expiry of the document an early start is welcomed. This unique port with its quite different revenue streams and relatively small work force is bucking economic trends and doing very well so the Activist looks forward to a positive outcome for the Membership

Nelson Port – members have recently ratified their Collective Agreement with an historic electronic vote, another protracted negotiation is finally settled with a record number of participants embracing the new voting system. With a two-year deal locked in the negotiating team are looking forward to taking a breath. However, the work is never done completely as they throw their efforts into consultative forums and the hard work it takes to keep looking after the membership.

### Interislander – Campaign Win GREAT NEWS!

On Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March, the Minister of Rail, Winston Peters, announced the procurement of “rail enabled” ferries. Since the announcement cancelling the Irex project in late 2022 and early 2023, we have been campaigning for Publicly owned and operated Rail Ferries. but we have been in limbo over any future ferry decisions. While there are still many concerns, for today we can celebrate the win! Thanks to the International Transport Workers Federation for their support. Also thanks to MUNZ and the Campaign team for leading this campaign – Stronger Together!



**OUR FERRIES**  
OUR FUTURE



## RMTU Ports Forum and Womens' forum

The RMTU Women's Forum is on the **29th July** and the RMTU National Ports Forum is scheduled for **30th and 31st July 2025**. The location for both forums is in Wellington. **An invitation form to register Delegates and Observers has been sent to all Branch Secretaries.** The National Union will bear the cost associated for one Branch Delegate attending the Women's Forum, and one Port Branch Delegate member attending the Ports Forum. The cost of Observers is the responsibility of the Branch or the Individual. The RMTU National Office will forward to each formally nominated sanctioned delegate/observer by email, forum papers, a copy of their travel arrangements, and conference venue and accommodation details. Completed Registration forms for the Women's Delegate and Ports Delegates are required from Branches by **30 April 2025**. Leave requirements for Delegates requires notice to the Employer so please treat this matter as priority so we can ensure your Delegate is released to attend, and manage flight arrangements.

## Workers Memorial Day 28 April 2025

28 April is International Workers Memorial Day. On Workers' Memorial Day, we "remember the dead and fight for the living". The theme for this year is "**Look after Injured Workers – Support Their Future.**"

We chose this theme because of the important role our union has to look after people who have been affected by injury or ill health. The RMTU can help injured workers by giving advice and, if needed, representation to help them access their ACC entitlements, including legal support.

Delegates and H&S Reps can support injured workers by staying in touch with them whilst their off work and helping to identify appropriate alternative duties.

**If you know a member who's off work due to injury or illness, invite them in for your Workers Memorial Day event.**

## Ports- Approved Code of Practice (ACOP)

The ACOP covers all activities to do with the loading and unloading of cargo on ports. It sets out what Maritime NZ's expectations are for minimum standards of safety on the port. The RMTU is contributing financially along with MUNZ and the Ports and stevedoring companies to develop and roll out education resources for Port workers, H&S reps, managers to understand and use the ACOP to improve safety and health in the ports. To read the ACOP click the [link](#).



### South Island Branches

Timaru Rail Branch - Terminal mapping has been carried with changes to working detailed in a consultation document.

West Coast Branch, - a good turnout for the branch meeting last week with good conversations around local issues and upcoming MECA bargaining.

Canterbury Rail Branch meeting also discussed MECA bargaining, some feedback from Ops that the new shift patterns are causing fatigue and family issues for some. Scenic Journeys we are still working through a proposal for change.

With the new DM Locos coming on line hopefully we will be able to avoid delays on the Tranz Alpine as happened this morning when the single DF failed at Springfield, Perhaps in the interim we need 2 Locos to pull this train?

LPC - we are still encountering ongoing change proposals, the latest is a move to remove the Foreman's role, we are aligned with MUNZ to challenge this, have attended Mediation and Authority hearing is booked. Port Otago Changes to the pad has meant a change in the way rail interfaces with Port until building work is completed. Some incidents have occurred during this new way of operating with learnings for all. Invercargill Terminal mapping has occurred, we awaiting feedback from customers then a consultation document should be tabled.

Unfortunately, a Train verses Pedestrian incident occurred recently resulting a fatality.

The members at branch immediately gave great wrap around support to our LE involved. A great show of strength and empathy, well done all.

### Auckland Update - Northern

AOR bargaining, by the time this goes out, the team will have presented the offer that was given to the AOR members at a report back meeting. This will then need to be voted on. KiwiRail there seems to be many and varied issues, but a common theme seems to be that managers are behaving badly, and creating a multitude of issues for our members. This is echoed in other branches that we cover.

The KIC council met in February and the Safer Shunting committee end of March. As always those teams are working hard to hold KiwiRail to account and to get better outcomes for everyone. Todd attended the branch meeting via Teams and spoke with the members there. There was some disappointment at not being able to put in remits, however Todd was able to explain the current situation with KiwiRail and bargaining well, and it was understood.

That situation is that the economy is flat, KiwiRail above rail is struggling, below rail has some funding but that is targeted at certain projects, and KiwiRail has an inability to grow. Leading to the better option being a rates and dates deal. If it was to be full bargaining we would go with a list of claims and the company would also come with a full list.



Northland Rail - We had our branch meeting in Northland Rail, KiwiRail was kind enough to feed our members prior to our branch meeting. Todd briefed us on the update on the Kiwirail collective bargaining that is coming up. Always great being here, love the turn out of the Northland branch meeting.



### Waikato Update

In the Waikato branch there was a branch meeting and Todd attended by teams, he spoke with the KiwiRail members about the KiwiRail bargaining same message was for Auckland members. Have to say that there is some great turnout and participation at the branch meetings in Waikato as there was a large crowd, and the pizza was demolished rapidly. For our members in the track space there seems to be funding for maintenance and BAU items, but any more intense works seems to be a hard ask for funding. Questions were asked about the situation with the depots KiwiRail were wanting to close. There should be

some information meetings coming up where KiwiRail will explain that situation, as it has been sitting for some time, and it is giving people anxiety and concern. As Organisers we need to get down and do some training and give more support to our delegates to continue the strong support and turnout that the branch have.

### Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) Investigations

Here are a list of current Rail Inquiries reaching their conclusion in the next few months -

RO-2023-105 derailment Purewa Tunnel, Auckland - late April

RO-2023-106 Transalpine parting Arthurs Pass - early May

RO-2024-102 safe working nr miss Hornby - early May

### DM Loco update

The DM Locos are being tested in the South Island, The reports are that on the West Coast, recently, the Locos performed very well, Structures testing went well no issues with clearance at Tunnels, Platforms or Loading areas. Stopping distance trials went well. The AC traction motors are proving to work very well, Tonnage up to 2100t single DM achieved! Wheel slippage could be a thing of the past? The Locos are now being tested in the Otira Tunnel.



### Central Region

Taranaki Port – Talks continue around a variation to the Taranaki Port CEA as restructure continues. Economics challenges and reductions in the oil and gas industry continues to present challenges for our only West Coast Port. This port is looking to cross skill some of its workers, which works when a workplace is quiet but is difficult to deliver when things get busy.

Napier Port – Negotiations continue as this drags out into a fifth month; the Activist is confident that the Union will have something to take back to the membership by mid-April. Napier Port is well into its busy season and the membership are wanting to see some urgent results from what has been a protracted negotiation.

Napier Rail – Post restructure Napier Rail is struggling with reduced numbers on the roster. Whilst it has been a positive outcome to get an extra train on the Hawkes Bay line it has applied added pressure to roster that has been cut to the bone. There is no longer any cover for leave and our yard staff are working long hours.

Come on Kiwirail lets address this issue and get an extra person on the yard roster so we can make our DIFOT and deliver freight on time to the Napier Port. The Napier Rail branch had a well-attended branch meeting on the 17th of March, which saw the election of new officials to replace those who went in the last restructure.

Palmerston North Rail – Another branch to have felt the axe last year are also struggling to keep up with the pressures of manning a roster that has been cut to the bone. Once again the good will of the membership saved many young LE trainees from the dreaded R word and that continued goodwill keeps trains running in this region. Servicing have adopted their trial roster after a 3-month trial period, more from lack of a better option than the fact that it is a great roster. Change fatigue is becoming a big factor in situations like this whereby the members just wish to stop uncertainty and have some stability in their working life.





### **KiwiRail Networks Industrial Council (KNIC) Update**

The KNIC have been working hard to resolve some longstanding issues and some newly arisen issues as well. Over the past 3 months we have ratified 2 variations to the MECA.

The first variation was the creation of an NDT Operator scale. With the business looking to increase their NDT testing, we needed to create a tier system for growth within that team.

The second variation was to roll the Environmental Allowance into the positions that qualified to receive it and remove it from the MECA. This was very ambiguous so we have agreed to this and removed it.

We have a third variation that is ready for Todd and Peter's signatures. This is to clarify Trade Certifications.

And the other working party we have is to review the Traction and Systems Controller Room that is currently based in Wellington. KiwiRail would like to create another team in Auckland. We are working through what this looks like.

The biggest workstream we have at the moment is the OJT On-Job-Training Allowance. The working group has agreed in principle to create a whole new system for trainees who need direct supervision by a competent and qualified trainer. We have passed this business case on to KiwiRail to approve before we put in the hard mahi and work through all the practices that we would need to implement this.

We have had a couple of serious safety incidents occur in the Infrastructure world and get an update of all the HiPo incidences quarterly. We need to remain vigilant and actively involved so our members go home safe and sound to their whanau.

### **Bay of Plenty Port Branch**

We have lots going on within the Bay of Plenty Port Branch.

The biggest piece of work is our discussions in regards to Section 67 Availability Provisions with port companies. Companies that are reliant on shipping will always struggle with complying with the ERA. To be paid the Allowance is ok but this must be paid on top of some guaranteed hours. That means the workers have the right to come into work on a set day and time and complete their work.

We have a few Collectives that we need to finalise. Once these are done we should see the back half of the year fairly free for regular site visits.

There is a common theme where Companies are terminating employees contracts due to medical incapacity. It feels like HR are not waiting for or are ignoring medical professionals advice and terminating regardless. We are seeing a lot of grievances requested because of this.

We had one serious incident, where one of our members legs were crushed by a bulky grab. This is still under investigation by both the Company and the Regulator, MNZ Maritime New Zealand. But we are happy to say that he is in really good spirits and recovering well at home.



**Incident investigation: Right to representation/Right to silence**

The RMTU reminds members of their natural justice right to union representation when being interviewed about an incident, even a 'fact finding meeting'. If you are interviewed by WorkSafe NZ, Waka Kotahi or Maritime NZ you have the right to silence. This is especially important if you're "interviewed under caution" . It's important members reach out to their Delegate or Organiser for advice.

**Maritime New Zealand**

The RMTU was recently invited to MNZ to participate in a round table discussion on emergency response and the role of MNZ. It was an interesting discussion that featured other stake holders in an emergency response with some discussion around such events as cyclone Gabrielle and the Kaikoura earthquake. In addition, there was discussion around environmental impacts to do with maritime events.

The RMTU recently made a joint approach to MNZ with MUNZ around the proposal by our stevedoring companies to remove hatchmen from log vessels. This is seen by the RMU and MUNZ as a safety issue with the hatchmen playing a vital role in the operation. MNZ is treating this as an incident and is investigating. Hatchmen play a vital role, are required by maritime law, it would be unthinkable for container operations to go ahead with out a hatchman, it is illogical that the necessity of a hatchman be determined by cargo type.



**You can update your contact details by scanning the QR code below**



You can update you contact details by [clicking here](#)

**Stay safe out there.**

