

THE ACTIVIST



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

March 2025

Message from Gen Sec

The RMTU election season has started with Aubrey Wilkinson being elected as our National President unopposed, well done Aubrey.

And now the call for the National Management Committee Reps has gone out. Depending on whether we need to run NMC ballots will determine when the call goes out for the KiwiRail / RMTU Industrial Council reps.

All going to plan, any balloting will be electronic so make sure we have your correct contact details (see link to update your contact details below). In 2024 and now this year there have been some very serious safety incidents in both Rail and on the Ports. It is very important members know and use their right to representation when being interviewed by the employer. AND if interviewed by a Regulator such as Maritime NZ, Waka Kotahi or Worksafe you have the right to not incriminate yourself (your legal right to silence). We need to make sure we are safe out there, look after yourselves and your colleagues.

Be safe out there, in unity

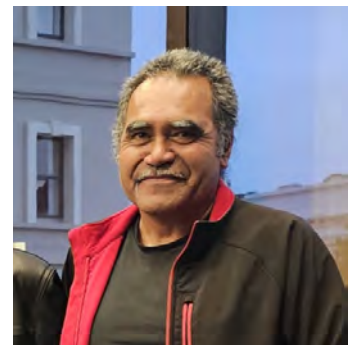
Todd Valster
RMTU General Secretary



RMTU National President-Nomination results

Nominations for the position of Union National President closed at 1700hrs on Friday 14th February 2025.

At the close of nominations for National President, there was two nominations received. The second nomination has been withdrawn, the remaining nomination is in favour of Mr. Aubrey Wilkinson. Aubrey Wilkinson is therefore declared elected unopposed. **Congratulations to Aubrey on his successful return to this key Union position.** The term of office is 2 years (Rule 24.2) and the duties are as contained in Rule 27 of the Union's Rules and Standing Orders.



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.

We are currently discussing this with the RMTU Bargaining teams, who are the current Industrial Council Reps. The RMTU Advocate is the General Secretary. Please advise of any Branch meetings which KR MECA members attend to discuss this option.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NMC) – 2025/2027 TERM OF OFFICE.

In accordance with Rule 24.6 of the Rules & Standing Orders of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union “the Union” calls for nominations from current financial members for the following position(s) on the Union’s National Management Committee:

- **North Island Ports Representative** (A financial member of a North Island Port Branch of the Union). For the information of members, it is advised that the incumbent will be seeking re-election.
- **South Island Ports Representative** (A financial member of a South Island Port Branch of the Union). For the information of members, it is advised that the incumbent will not be seeking re-election.
- **Auckland Rail Representative** (A financial member of the Auckland Rail Branch). There is currently no incumbent.
- **North Island Rail Representative** A financial member of either the Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King Country, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Palmerston North Rail Branches. (ALL remaining NI Rail branches excepting Auckland, Wellington and Hutt Branches). For the information of members, it is advised that the incumbent will be seeking re-election.
- **Wellington Rail Representative** (A financial member of either the Wellington or Hutt Rail Branches. For the information of members, it is advised that the incumbent will be seeking re-election.
- **South Island Rail Representative** (A financial member of either the Marlborough, West Coast, Canterbury, Timaru, Otago or Southland Rail Branches. All South Island Rail Branches). For the information of members, it is advised that the incumbent will be seeking re-election.
- **Women’s Representative** (A financial Woman member of any Branch of the Union). For the information of members, it is advised that the incumbent will be seeking re-election.
- **Te Kupenga Mahi** nominated representative is selected by Te Kupenga Mahi. TKM has advised that the representative to this position is Sam Kahui who is a current financial member of the Union.

Nominations shall be in writing on the official NMC Nomination form and contain the signed consent of the candidate, and be proposed and seconded by financial members (Rule 1) of the Union from the correct branch and industry designation. Nomination Forms are available on the Union Website www.rmtunion.org.nz under Hot topics or from the Union’s National Office by calling 04-499-2066 or reception@rmtunion.org.nz or your local Branch Secretary.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NMC) continued from previous page

Correctly completed nomination forms must be received by the duly appointed Acting National Returning Officer at the National Office of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, PO Box 1103 Wellington 6140 no later than **1700hrs 21st March 2025**. Nominations can be faxed fax 04-471-0896 or emailed to reception@rmtunion.org.nz. An acknowledgement of receipt will be issued. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt then please contact the Union to confirm our receipt of nomination by the due date.

The term of office is 2 years (Rule 24.2) and the duties are as contained in Rule 18 of the Union's Rules and Standing Orders.

For the information of members – KiwiRail employed NMC members will be appointed to an applicable KiwiRail Industrial Council upon election to NMC (e.g. A Mechanical Engineer will be placed onto the Mechanical Council filling one position on that Council. The women rep will be placed into the Women rep position on a KiwiRail Council commensurate with her occupation and skill set).

For the information of members – All incumbent NMC Representatives have indicated that they will be seeking re-election apart from the South Island Ports Representative Andrew Kelly, who is stepping down after serving on the NMC since 2013.

For the information of members – Members and Branch Returning Officers are advised that in the event that there is more than one nomination for any position, an electronic ballot shall be run out of the National Office by the Acting National Returning Officer. Nominees must have their photo and a short promotional bio statement of up to 250 words to the National Office no later than 1700hrs 21st March 2025. Electronic receipt of this information is preferred and the photo in jpeg format of at least 1mb file size. Please ensure you get a receipt of acknowledgement when you provide the material. Should a candidate not provide the photo and bio by this time and date the ballot papers will be printed minus the candidate's information.

All members are urged to advise National Office if you have changed your mailing address recently. If we can't get a ballot paper to you because we do not have the correct mailing address then we cannot get you a voting form. Call RMTU 04-4992066 or alternatively update your details online www.rmtunion.org.nz or email reception@rmtunion.org.nz.

**CANDIDATES ARE REMINDED THAT NOMINATIONS FOR NMC CLOSE 1700hrs
21st March 2025.**



Our ferries, our future campaign– new director appointments for Ferry Holdings Limited

Minister for Rail Winston Peters has announced director appointments for Ferry Holdings Limited charged with negotiating ferry procurement contracts for two new inter-island ferries.

Mr Peters says Ferry Holdings Limited will be responsible for negotiating long-term port agreements on either side of the Cook Strait and ensuring the seamless and integrated delivery of cost-effective replacement Interislander ferries. The Minister office said “The new Chair is Chris Mackenzie, Deputy Chair Heather Simpson, and Director Greg Lowe. Chris Mackenzie led the negotiations to buy back New Zealand’s rail assets in the late 2000s and was also Independent Chair of the Horizontal Infrastructure Governance Group involved in the Christchurch Rebuild. Heather Simpson, a former Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister. Greg Lowe is the former global Chief Executive of Beca, and a qualified marine engineer with previous shipbuilding experience.

“The new board will manage the contractual negotiations with shipyards, ports, and any other party required to deliver safe, reliable and resilient Interislander services into the future. “The board will undertake the procurement process for new ferries and report back to Ministers for final decisions and similarly engage in the landside development planning and funding agreements with ports with decisions taken by Ministers.

[Sign the petition for publicly owned rail enabled ferries by clicking HERE.](#)



Interislander staff give CPR in medical emergency

Interislander staff came to the aid of an elderly passenger who suffered a medical event after disembarking the Aratere in Picton. Aratere crew members were alerted that the passenger had shortness of breath as the ferry arrived in Picton. Staff performed CPR until paramedics arrived, however, tragically the passenger was unable to be revived and passed away. The RMTU wants to express support for the people who responded to the passenger. The union acknowledges this was a traumatic event and encourages those affected to take up the opportunity of EAP support through Kiwirail’s provider Tellus. In addition see the Kiwirail policy called ‘Preventing and responding to potentially traumatic events policy’, for information about the support available.



RMTU Digital Update:

Electronic voting is now here, and you may have already experienced one or two votes using Vero Voting. The opportunities and advantages of this way of voting are endless. And the cost is looking to be significantly less than what it would be for a postal ballot only system, as well as the reduction of workload and pressure for our amazing admin team. There will be other votes using both Vero Voting, and 'BigPulse'. See the Transport Worker for more detail about our digital project.

For electronic voting to work well, the RMTU needs a current email address for you. Please update your details with us and encourage members to do the same.

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.**" This theme acknowledges workers who are injured often struggle to access timely medical treatment such as surgery or MRI scans and are sometimes put off work for extended periods of time while they wait. Workers whose ACC claim is dealt with by a third party administrator such as Work Aon face additional challenges accessing their ACC entitlement. Unfortunately the union is seeing more cases of workers being denied their ACC entitlement by third party administrators. Our Union supports injured people to get their legal and contractual entitlements. Including challenging declined claims for injury treatment. Workers Memorial Day Events will be occurring around the motu on 28 April. Please advise the RMTU National office about your Branches planned Workers Memorial Day event.

New staff in RMTU head office

In January we farewelled RMTU Administrator Matt Tait who left to pursue international travel. In February we welcomed Anske Scheepers to our admin team. Welcome Anske! We're looking forward to working with you.



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



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

Auckland branch update:

The RMTU has initiated bargaining with Auckland One Rail, by the time this goes out we should have had the Bargaining Process Agreement signed, and be having meetings. We have met once with the majority of the bargaining team to discuss claims. KiwiRail bargaining is coming up, Todd will be visiting the branch meetings in March to discuss the process and plan for KiwiRail. There will be an election for a new Auckland Branch Secretary, following the previous Branch Secretary's resignation. Exciting news on that front is that it will be voted on electronically, as we have had confirmation from the National Returning Officer that there will be a resolution to allow this, and going forward all the Branch, NMC and Industrial councils will be done by electronic voting.

Auckland Branch meeting

16 March - 1100 to 1300
Onehunga Community House
83 Selwyn Street, Onehunga

**International Womens' Day
Saturday 8th March 2025.**

The Womens' RMTU and MUNZ women's committee have jointly fundraised and organised the annual International Women's day event in New Plymouth on March 7-9th March. Lawyer and good friend to the RMTU Hazel Armstrong is the guest speaker. Other union sisters attending include Public Service Association (PSA), Fire Fighters Union and Dairy Workers Union. Photo to the right is RMTU Womens' Representative Rebecca Hauck holding the International Womens' day flag.

Auckland One Rail update

Auckland One Rail (AOR) is meeting with CAF NZ members regarding the upcoming merger in October 2025. This is a challenging and uncertain time for our CAF members. To keep everyone informed, AOR is updating existing CAF members on recent developments and conducting face-to-face catch-ups to address any questions they may have about the changes.

For QUBE (Marsden Point), we held our first comprehensive meeting with members on January 31. It was the first opportunity in a long time to connect with all our members, and there were many questions about the situation, along with a chance for everyone to get to know each other. While we encountered some difficulties with the manager, our dedicated delegate stood firm and provided effective pushback.

There is much work to be done in improving communication with our members, but I can see the strength and eagerness of our members to learn about the RMTU and what we can offer.



Ship crew rescued from toxic fish waste fumes at Lyttelton Port.

The Press Newspaper reported on 21 February that Two crew members were rescued after being knocked unconscious by toxic fumes from fish waste on a vessel docked at Lyttelton Port.

The “chemical incident” resulted in four people – three in serious conditions and one in a moderate condition – being taken to Christchurch Hospital.

The two crew members were removing a lid off the ship’s ballast tank and were overcome by hydrogen sulphide gas contained in there.

Supporting Dunedin rail

The RMTU has asked Dunedin city council to support the union’s request to have a permanent workshop at the Cumberland St depot for Passenger service Dunedin Railways. Kiwirail, who owns the depot, moved their loco and wagon work to the refurbished Hillside depot. KiwiRail plans to lease the Cumberland St depot out after earthquake prone buildings are demolished. The RMTU says the Cumberland St depot is strategically important for getting the passenger services back in place and hopes the Dunedin City Council agrees.



Serious harm incident-Qube Ports

On February 21 an RMTU member at Qube Ports in Mt Maunganui was seriously injured. Maritime NZ is investigating the incident. The union will talk with members about what happened and work with members and the port company to ensure the systemic health and safety issues are addressed so this does not happen again. Our hearts go out to the injured worker and his whanau during this traumatic time and wish him a rapid recovery.

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, the venue to be confirmed. 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. Registration forms will be sent to all branch secretaries in March and 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.



Port of Tauranga Bargaining update

We have initiated with the Company and called for remits that close this Friday. We are trialling to collate these electronically but have also made the old hardcopy forms available for those that like to fill them out by hand. We have only received 3 so far so we are expecting a small influx this week. The members have an outline of the meetings set out over the next couple of months.

Port Taranaki

A busy start for the year in New Plymouth sees their restructure. Sadly, we will be farewelling Destine Hull and Robin (Biggles) Maindonald who have taken redundancy after many years of great service to the union, we wish them all the best for their future as Destine will be pursuing her sculpture and Biggles will be enjoying a well-earned retirement.

Napier Port

Negotiations are some what stalled at the beginning of the year and there is real need to get them going again. A trying end to the year for this region has been offset by an early start to the fruit season and good predictions for a busy season. We look forward to securing a great deal for our members in Napier.

Napier Rail

A very trying end to last year saw redundancies in our Napier Freight Depot. But a little bit of good news sees a new daily log train from Tangiwai to Napier. This doubles the number of trains using the Hawkes Bay line, a welcome increase to rail volume on this line.

Marlborough Port

A challenging period for our most picturesque port as a quieter than usual summer season was offset by plenty of opportunity to do tug assists for the ferries. The Ferry project continues to be to the forefront as we wait for government to make an announcement as our ports will need to finance and build the land side infrastructure themselves.

Nelson Port

Nelson will this week be looking to ratify their latest collective agreement; this will hopefully conclude a long and arduous bargaining period. This will significantly be the unions first significant electronic vote, the Activistic will keep you updated on this significant progress into the 21st century.

Wellington Rail

A busy block of line this Xmas saw the new signaling project in Wellington complete without much turmoil. In addition, the Remutaka tunnel rerailing project was completed after a 45-day block of line, without incident. These significant upgrades proceeded without incidence.

Another significant block of line over the easter break will see more improvements to the Wellington network.

Wellington Port

Cargo continues to tick over through Centreport, with logs and containers steady. A busy cruise boat season did have a little hiccup when Wellington turned on a terrible patch of weather over the New Year period which made the region a difficult place to visit.



QUBE Collective Bargaining -UPDATE

We have met with the Company for a 4th time in Wellington. We have agreed in principle on a final deal.

Big ticket items include: A 33 month deal with an increase of 8.5% over the 3 years. Some overtime will increase to time and a half. Some Marshallers will get a Higher Duties allowance similar to those of the Stevedores. General tidy up of the CEA.

We are working on a draft document and finalising some of the smaller details but feel we are close to recommending a deal to be ratified by our membership.

KiwiRail contractors- Union Kiwirail who should sign off contractors competency?

In the February edition of the Activist we said we'd give an update to the question of **"who has the authority to sign off contractors' competency?" at Kiwirail.**

Kiwirail told the union that KR has Operational safety advisors who provide the contractors full and final sign off, meaning workers do not need to do it.

Background to the question

A member of the KiwiRail Track Protection Team was unsure what to do when asked by a contractor working onsite to sign off the contractor's on the job training (OJT) for operating a HiRail. The contractor's request highlighted a gap in KiwiRail policy about who has the authority to sign off contractors' competency. The topic was raised by the union at the Networks Industrial Council.

Safeguard Magazine State of the Nation survey-Calling all H&S Reps

Safeguard magazine is running its annual State of the Nation survey and invites Health and Safety Reps to take part! The idea is to take the pulse of how we are doing in health & safety as a nation. The survey is anonymous and all but one of the questions are multi-choice, so it takes only a minute or two. The results will be in the next safeguard magazine so the Union will report back to you in this newsletter once the results are out.

Please do the survey by clicking [HERE](#)
The survey closes on 14 March.

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

Stay safe out there.

