

THE

MARCH 2017

TRANSPORT WORKER

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

**KiwiRail
commits to
increased
pollution
- dumps
electrification**





5 RED CARD ACTION



The Dongwha yard in the far south was cleaned up very quickly when the 'JUST SAY NO' card was played by workers.

8 BRIDGES BURNT



Bush fires closed the Midland Line where bridge repairs may take many months to complete.

13 MEETING TIME!



Southdown Toll workers.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Keeping electrification alive! Bill Lawrence and Ashil Krishna on the ladders Kere Meta and Stephen O'Donnell on ropes on the NIMT traction line mechanics at the Porewa Loop (see page 14 and 15).

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Electric Vs Diesel

WELCOME to the first issue of our premier Union publication for 2017. I am sure that you will join me in saying that our mag is a bloody good read. Our mag is jam-packed with live issues and reports because we are a campaigning and fighting Union which works in areas with aggressive employers.

Some would have us believe that it is all peace and harmony and that we are all skipping down the yellow brick road together – but we know that would be spin.

No matter what the process is, you are nonetheless dealing with issues that affect the daily working lives of members, their families and in many cases communities. Our job is important, necessary and essential to the maintenance and constant improvement of terms and conditions of employment.

We, as a Union, and actually as a nation, are grappling with KiwiRail's decision to abandon the use of electric locomotives on the North Island Main Trunk and continuing to rollout greater use of the Chinese manufactured 'dog and lemon' DL locomotives.

In our very clear view the facts do not support such a move and whilst I don't have the space in this column to list them all any 'Google' search will provide sufficient strings for one to get fully abreast of the situation with an hour's reading.

Short term views dominate

This is a national argument: How often does New Zealand take a short term, narrow cost, view when considering infrastructure issues?

Sadly, the answer is: all too bloody often and this is one such example.

In my opinion KiwiRail cites two main reasons for ditching the electrics:

- That they cost time to change locos at the ends of the electrified section; and
- They are getting too unreliable.

Take the first point. This is a specious argument. Trials showed that it took a maximum of 10 minutes at Palmerston North and Te Rapa to change the locos. This time is necessary anyway, for a crew change over. The electric locomotives are 20 minutes faster point to point on the electrified section than diesel electric due to their higher balance, power and speed which negates the time of change over.

Additionally KiwiRail has introduced road bridging in Wellington and Picton for the rail ferries for ferry freight transfer and this has extended the ferry turnaround time from one hour to three hours.

A 20 minute loco change is not material to the debate!



◀ KiwiRail has also talked about the additional training and knowledge cost for an additional locomotive class for loco engineers and anyone in the know, bins this allegation as an 'alternative fact'.

There is no such cost as loco conversions are a once in a life time event and of very limited duration.

What about reliability? The current electric locomotives have essentially been 'maintained'. They have not been overhauled since their arrival in 1988/89.

NO other locomotive in New Zealand in operation today has been so unloved over so much time.

And yet, the most recent figures for mean distance between failure (MDF) or 'kilometres between breakdown' statistics that I have for February 2017 are;

- DC (1st arrived 1955) – 78,971km
- DFB (1st arrived 1979) – 15,192km
- DFT (1st arrived 1979) – 19,254km
- DX (1st arrived 1972) – 49,005km
- DL gen 1 (arrived 2010) – 27,778km
- DL gen 2 (arrived 2013) – 125,463km
- DL gen 2.2 (arrived 2015) – 62,598km
- Electric EF (arrived 1988) – 67,996km.

Using an evidence-based approach it is clear that KiwiRail's assertion of unreliability as a determinant to EF locomotive withdrawal is a falsehood and yet another 'alternative fact'.

The true cost to New Zealanders

A true cost of KiwiRail's decision to ditch the electrics will be the full cost to New Zealand.

You all know that burning diesel instead of renewable electricity will be a further slide in our carbon footprint and it will cost jobs in communities in the central North Island.

Another kick in the guts for heartland New Zealand under this National led Government.

The only way for these sorts of decisions to end is for the tenure of this Government to end. So, September 23, 2017 is a big day for us all. Transport workers have a lot at stake this year and so the challenge for us all is to ensure that voters, their families and communities know the real facts and not just the alternative facts.

Be safe and unite for power. 

Resignations

Dear Editor,

As I have recently retired from work it is now time to resign from the Union.

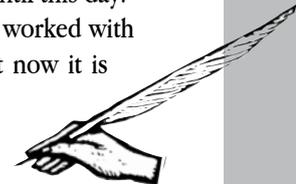
I first started work at LPC in 1992 on the steam dredge Peraki which was a seasonal job.

In 2000 the Company decided they didn't need a dredge any more so it was sold to the Philippines.

In 2003 after a few years of casual work I obtained a full time job which lasted until this day.

I've been lucky to have met and worked with some great guys over the years but now it is time to go.

Peter Hodgson.



Dear Editor

I wish to advise you that after 51 years I am retiring from KiwiRail on the 3/2/2017 and therefore can you please accept my resignation from the Union.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the conditions and pay scales that you have fought for on behalf of myself and all the other members.

My best wishes to you all for the future and keep up the good fight.

Neville Duggan.

Dear Editor,

I have been in the New Zealand shipping industry for 58 years – 50 of those years have been with unions which have changed names over the years, the other eight were with the NZ Shipping Company.

It is time for me to retire and that will happen on January 20, 2017. I have been employed by the Napier Harbour Board, Hawkes Bay Harbour Board, Port of Napier, and, at present, Napier Port, for 50 and a half years.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all Union representatives for their excellent work and the fine Union we have developed over the years. I have had a fabulous working life with ships and the import and export business, and have made a lot of good friends along the way.

Thank you, farewell and keep up the good work.

Henry (Harry) Maginess Hogg.

Dear Editor,

It is with deep regret that I wish to tender my resignation after 46 years due to medical reasons.

I wish you and all members the very best for the future.

Phill Nimmo

Ganger, Springfield.

Dear Editor,

Just a note to say that I have decided to take early retirement and finished at the end of January from my position as loco maintainer level 5 at the Wellington EMU depot.

After 48 years of working for various railways in UK, Zimbabwe and New Zealand, I have finally had enough.

I have gone from steam to diesel and lastly, electric units. While I enjoyed working on all forms of motive power, I find the new Matangis are not to my liking and working on them is extremely boring being laptops with reams of paperwork!

With new owners taking over the running of the place and some inappropriate promotions and decisions being taken, it is time to go.

Thanks for all the help over the 20 years I have been a member. I think the railway in general is in for more tough times and you can only tackle obstacles as a united front.

Andy Crespin
11329.



Vale

Graeme Hart
2/6/1949 to 16/1/2017

AT our Union's National Conference in 2016 one of the motions submitted by the Napier Port branch was to confer honorary life membership to Graeme Hart [Harty].

On 16 January 2017, after nearly 43 years of service to the port industry and Union members, we suddenly and unexpectedly lost our Harty. Graeme started with the Napier Harbour Board on 5/8/1974 in the trades section, as a "lecky", becoming electrician foreman in 1992 and of recent, promoted to crane services manager.

Harty remained a staunch Union member throughout and still held the office of vice chair of our port branch to which he was elected to hold in 1987/88.

He gave plenty to our cause, was heavily involved throughout the ports reform process during the late 1980s and early 90s where the new port companies were being formed and the old harbour boards were being disestablished.

He helped scribe pretty much the trades section of our collective agreement and he had been part of every collective bargaining team for nearly 20 years as part of the branch executive. He was an immense asset at the table and when he "roared" we all knew it and you better bloody listen!

In his passing we acknowledge the spade work, dedication, commitment and endurance he gave. He was a valued advisor, a springboard for opinion, wizened through experience, a mentor, approachable and ultimately a friend.

These few lines do not give justice to a lifetime of tireless struggle on behalf of his workmates.

Harty was the embodiment of a tried and tested Union man.

It was a blessing that Conference unanimously voted for Graeme to receive his Honorary Life Membership prior to his planned retirement in 2017. He knew how much he was treasured by us all and was humbled but chuffed by the recognition he truly deserved. 🇺🇰



- D Marden, branch secretary, Napier Port.

Celebration

AT a recently held celebration colleagues were pleased to show their support for two local stalwarts:

Phil Nimmo (r), who has just retired after 46 years in rail. He followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who both worked at Springfield. His grandfather actually helped construct the Midland Line.

Paul Jones (l), a ganger from Kaikoura, who is eternally grateful that his colleagues helped save him and his job from the chop.

Both were honoured by a spit roast lunch attended by old railway colleagues and some of Paul's old time original gangers from his first year in rail. 🇺🇰



RMTU supports junior doctors



(above) Loco engineer Scott Eastwick joined the picket line in solidarity with junior doctors complaining of their terrible rosters and resultant fatigue. Rail shift workers are very familiar with this scenario.

(below) Two junior doctors.



Keep your **RED CARD** handy

THE Dongwha siding and whole body vibration examples (on the next two pages) show that when direct action is taken by members, such as issuing an RMTU red card, can speed up the time it takes for the employer to adequately address a H&S risk. We know from experience that without direct action health and safety issues can languish for months, or even years, unless pressure is brought to bear. It is the employer's responsibility for providing a safe system of work which includes managing risks to an agreed and acceptable level.

Sometimes, health and safety can seem bureaucratic, particularly with regards to the length of time it takes to get issues addressed. Our role, as RMTU members, is to cut through the bureaucracy and escalate issues when there is serious risk of harm to workers' health and safety.

When should you issue a red card or take direct action?

It's important that you always assess the risk when it first comes to your attention.

For example, could restricted line of site cause a serious injury? When the answer is 'yes' the red card can be used and the manager and union notified immediately. If the answer is no, and there is a low risk of harm, other methods of escalating the issue can be used, such as referring it to the health and safety rep to follow up on.

The H&S rep may write a recommendation under the Health and Safety at Work Act or if there is a breach of legislation, issue a provisional improvement notice (PIN) notice. Only trained H&S reps can legally issue a PIN notice and it serves as a pre-cursor to a Worksafe regulatory notice. A H&S rep can issue a PIN in support of a red card where members believe a risk is not being managed correctly. It is vital that H&S reps and delegates work together to push for H&S issues to be dealt with. 🌐

PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

The Plan has an external administrator and contributions are invested with five fund managers.



Download a copy of the Investment Statement and Application Form at:
www.portsretirement.org.nz

The RMTU's Red Card campaign showed its worth and that united, concerted action with local and national support will bring safety-assured results.

RED

Hazardous yard conditions

THE Dongwha Ltd plant at Mataura near Gore became the focus of a dispute between the RMTU and local KiwiRail management before Christmas. It was only through solidarity and action that the matter was successfully resolved by our members in the Southland branch.

Concerns about underfoot conditions in the Dongwha siding had been expressed by members working the site for many weeks.

There were problems that made it particularly dangerous at night, but also during daylight hours. A stream of communications, both verbal and written, between members and management in the weeks leading up to a mass meeting of the Southland branch on December 19 discussed a number of problems including:

- vegetation growth that interfered with line of sight;
- defective boxing around a points lever; and
- uneven ballast.

Further issues were identified which required customers to engage with contractors to fix.

The frustration our members were experiencing was that they were being fobbed off by bosses blaming one another and the customer. KiwiRail operations management was blaming infrastructure and asset management and everyone was assuring us the customer had either done what was required or was about to.

Part of the problem appeared to be that because this was not a KiwiRail-owned site everyone was passing the buck.

In the meantime members were working a site that was unsafe and were concerned that if there was an incident not only might one of them get hurt, they may also get the blame.

Another difficulty was our members were unclear about their right to refuse unsafe work. They knew of the RMTU's Red Card campaign but when it came to putting

the right to refuse unsafe work into practise they weren't entirely sure what they could and couldn't do.

On November 28 our South Island organiser, John Kerr, was on one of his routine visits to Invercargill.

"I'd planned on spending a couple of hours seeing the members in operations and infrastructure and asset management," he said, "I eventually got away after five hours. The lads were angry about a heap of issues and while they wanted me to raise these on their behalf they also said they would do something to back themselves."

The complaints were raised with management in an e-mail which was duly ignored.

"At the same time we'd called a two hour stop work meeting for December 19," said Kerr. "The failure of management to respond to our e-mail wasn't entirely unexpected. Past experience has taught us that once members are educated and informed about their rights, and are prepared to take action, then that is far more likely to get a result than any number of phone calls or e-mails."

The stop work meeting was well attended and delegates and active members from the Otago rail branch, Marty Duncan, Dave Kearns and Mike Kilsby, together with Christchurch-based KIC representative and NMC member Mike Williams, came along to support our Southland brothers.

The meeting watched the RMTU film *The Red Card*, which documents how our members at Lyttelton port successfully pulled the Red Card to refuse unsafe work, and fought off the employer's attempt to get a court injunction to make them go back to work.

A lively discussion followed, by the end of which members felt much better informed and confident about their rights.

A motion was put to the meeting to immediately ban the Dongwha siding on health and safety grounds.

This was passed unanimously.

Management were informed straight away and in a matter of hours were calling the RMTU.

Once management were confronted with the solidarity of the branch membership, backed up by the full weight of RMTU national office, things happened very quickly.

"We were driving back to Dunedin when the call from management came in," said Dunedin delegate Dave Kearns. "Sometimes direct action is a useful way to get a response."

In fewer than 24 hours KiwiRail management had confirmed that Dongwha management hadn't done what they had been saying they'd done, namely cut the vegetation to secure line of sight. This was described by one KiwiRail manager as an "own goal", and Dongwha immediately set about cutting back the undergrowth.

The issue around the points was sorted and South Roads was contracted by the customer to fix the other issues.

The RMTU branch chair Gavin Mortimore, together with Edendale based members, health and safety representatives and KiwiRail and Dongwha management had inspected the site and the ban was lifted subject to South Roads doing the required work by January 27.

Gavin Mortimore takes up the story: "We went to the site the morning after the stop-work meeting. The ban had had an immediate effect. At last things were being fixed."

Sure enough, by the end of January the work had been done. The site is now safe to work and the problem has been resolved.

The lessons are clear:

- It is only through education and being informed about our rights that we can be in a position to enforce them;
- It is only through organisation and solidarity that we can take action to ensure something is done;

CARD



The Donguha Ltd plant yard at Mataura near Gore before (above) the action and (below) afterwards.



Safe seating in old locos

AS mentioned in the branch notes the Southland LEs were the spearhead for an attack on the operation of unsafe locos in the south of the South Island, supported by members over on the coast and in Dunedin and Christchurch. Whole Body Vibration (WBV) is a serious matter and by the time they sat in an all up branch meeting last December members were sick of being fobbed off with locos that were unfit for service. They Red Carded four locos – DFT 7295, DC4755, DC4876 and DC4847 – as lead units until remedial action was undertaken to the branch executive's satisfaction. This was immediately backed by RMTU national office and other South Island branches.

Quick reaction

Management reacted very quickly, as it was now them that had the problem, not our members.

A meeting in Christchurch between loco delegates from around the South Island and senior freight and mechanical management, including the regional operations manager and the general manager for Rolling Stock Assets was very productive.

The heavy-lift maintenance facility at Hillside is now full of locos and approval to take on extra staff to undertake the remedial work has been granted.

There was good dialogue around the logging of faults to ensure better communication.

The presence of our Mechanical Council representative Luke James assisted in this regard. Loco delegates Gavin Mortimore, David Kearns, Mike Kilsby, Bob Broadhurst, Mike Morgan and Mike Williams brought a wealth of experience to the table and an agreed

programme of tests and remedial work was set up.

This illustrates two fundamental points:

- Sometimes workers have to collectively take action to get a re-action; and
- We then have to get the right people to follow up and make sure the objective we're trying to achieve is not lost sight of in subsequent discussions.

All the RMTU representatives are trained and experienced. They understand the need to focus on solving the problem and not getting distracted on side issues. They know how to ensure solutions are documented and deadlines recorded so everyone remains accountable. And they realise the importance of good communications, both in co-ordinating action and in reporting back to the wider membership.

They also get the importance of keeping one's perspective and a sense of humour.

"We had a loco come in with 'faulty seat' logged. That was all the information we had, so we thoroughly tested said seat for eight hours, duly recorded having done so and returned it to service 'no fault found'," said Luke James.

It was a light hearted way of making a serious point – the more detailed the information his members get, the better able they are to fix the problem.

It's been very gratifying to see our members work together across the different parts of KiwiRail to sort this issue out.

We are always stronger when rank and file members get involved in fixing problems, rather than depending on national and branch officials.

Well done to all. 🌐

- It is only because we are prepared to take action that the boss will listen; and
- If we're prepared to take action on genuine health and safety grounds the RMTU will back its members to the hilt.

If we keep putting up with unsafe conditions then nothing will change until someone gets hurt, and when that happens it's more than likely that the workers will get the blame for putting up with unsafe conditions!

So, if you've read this far and you're not sure about you're right to refuse unsafe work then pick up the phone to your RMTU delegate, H&S rep or organiser and ask.

It's a question that could save your life or the life of a workmate. 🌐

Fires close Midland line

WAITANGI weekend saw Mother Nature deal another blow to rail on the South Island with a 300 hectare scrub fire closing the Midland Line for up to six weeks.

Four bridges have been damaged, at least one which will need to be replaced, in an area where access is very limited. Over the years, the prevailing policy has been to save money on maintenance or access tracks including the removal of dead vegetation, something that KiwiRail may well be now regretting. That said, the part of the Midland Line that is most damaged is in a very remote area indeed and water could only be supplied for fire-fighting through the efforts of helicopter-borne buckets.

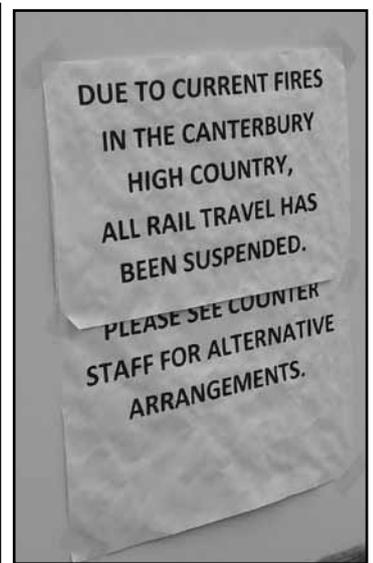
KiwiRail is getting very experienced at reacting to crises of this nature, coming as it does on the back of the Kaikoura earthquake that took out 100km plus of the Main North Line.

RMTU members in TranzScenic and freight have been the hardest hit. All TranzAlpine services have been suspended and all staff in Middleton and on the West Coast are being encouraged to take leave as coal trains are also not operating.

Fortunately supplies of building materials are readily available and our networks members are working hard to restore the bridges. They are confident that the structures will be as good as they day they were built. The wisdom of keeping an inventory of sleepers and other materials for this eventuality has been well demonstrated.

TranzScenic services members are keen to use the Hillside-built rolling stock for excursions to events such as the Waipara Wine and Food festival and to resurrect passenger services to Dunedin and points south.

Something of this nature needs to be done as the TranzAlpine was enjoying a bumper season and KiwiRail faces the prospect of refunding \$20,000 fares. 🌐



Warren Makaua

WARREN is a current delegate and has been an RMTU delegate for the past 10 years but his history as a delegate and involvement with the RMTU and other unions goes back several decades. Warren is a fork hoist operator (CTO) at KiwiRail's Southdown site in Auckland. He began work there in 1981.

He described the site back then as "an old tip, quarry-like with no tar seal". He also has clear memories of asbestos being dumped around the site back in the day and even the holding of an off-road racing event. Back then he was a delegate with the Storemen and Packers Union.

After NZR took over the site in 1984, there was a dispute over the condition of the yard; it was not safe for the work being carried out.

"As a result of action from our members the condition of the yard began to improve; each area was approved and signed off by the delegates as it was completed."

Warren really values the role the Union has played to improve safety and reflects that "it is pure luck that all have survived some very serious incidents on site". Even smaller things, like air conditioners in cabs, is now of course essential – but the machines were not always to the standard they are now.

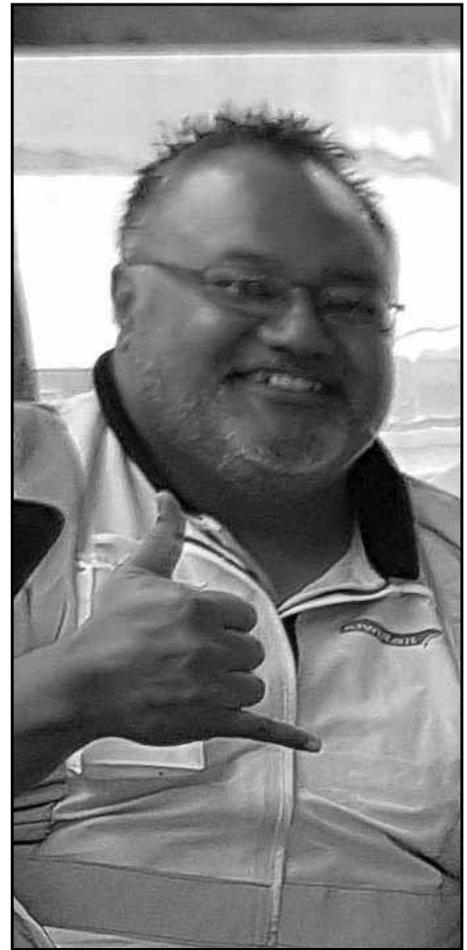
He is really not sure how they got by for so many years without this. Warren maintains that no-one is above health and safety. He spoke up when a former CEO and his entourage were visiting the site with no hi-vis.

Warren really values his family but like many of RMTU delegates he gives up his time to helping out other members. He hates seeing the wool pulled over their eyes, which happens too often. A real drive for Warren is the people he works with; they are more than work mates but rather an extended family.

He says that "workmates are family and you look after them like brothers, sisters, your mum or dad". This is evidenced each time I visit the site, with playful banter and constant jovial interaction. For Warren they are all here to make a living and to make sure they all return home safe at the end of each day. After he retires he may not remember the job but he will remember the people.

Outside of work Warren is involved with rugby administration as a life member of the Mt Wellington Rugby Club where he has served on their committee for over 25 years. He is in his second year of being on the Council of Delegates at Auckland Rugby and coaches at One Tree College. He volunteers at many events when time permits, including the Commonwealth Games and the 2011 Rugby World Cup. This fan of the Blues, All Blacks, the Warriors and the Oakland Raiders loves his sport and kindly laughed off suggestions from a colleague that the Chiefs should be added to the list of teams he supports.

Warren spoke of an appreciation towards the RMTU for the way pay and conditions have improved over the years and remembers the day when Wayne Butson first visited the site as RMTU general secretary to meet all the members. His work as a delegate continues and the next big improvement he would like to see on site being meal and changing room facilities upgraded. 🌐



Warren does the heavy lifting for KiwiRail and the RMTU on behalf of members at Southdown.



Your Union works for YOU!

MUCH of what the RMTU does is not very visible to its members - but some of it is right out there and mobilises members' enthusiasm and support from outside the Union.

Collective bargaining is a case in point which involves claims meetings followed by verbal and written report-backs, sometimes industrial action and, finally, ratification meetings.

Delegates and paid and elected officials have a raised profile throughout the process, attendance at Union meetings go up and the talk around the smoko room is often very much about the progress of bargaining or the lack thereof.

Fighting redundancies is another example. The RMTU's fight to save Hillside Workshops mobilised the whole union and put us firmly in the public eye.

The recent junior doctors' dispute is no exception. The doctors are fighting for health and safety and they are doing it by going on strike.

Anyone who thinks young people don't know about unions and collective action needs to spend an hour or two on the picket line with these workers. They are intelligent (well they would be wouldn't they?), young, predominately female and militant about what matters. And they are highly visible.

Much of your Union's other work is often invisible to members and the public, but it is no less important.

Representing members who are in trouble can be like that. Delegates and officials often find themselves in rooms with the boss and, for a whole host of very good reasons, very few people know what's going on.

In many cases the outcome is private and confidential and we can't crow about any success we may have had. The same is true when we're dealing with medical retirements and related issues.

Sometimes we will mobilise members if one of their workmates is being treated unfairly. We should not underestimate the power of such activity in assisting our

advocacy. Much of this goes on behind closed doors.

Public campaigns are often complemented by lobbying politicians. Some of this is done out in the open, especially when we are dealing with a government that isn't worker friendly – think of the media releases and protests that we engage in. A great deal of lobbying however, is done away from the glare of publicity.

One very important field that unions engage in is the development of legislation.



The 19th century German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck famously commented that laws are like sausages – it's better to see them not being made. That might be true to a point. The legislative process can be excruciatingly complex and not too pleasant to behold with the first, second and final readings of bills and select committee submissions being bewildering and unfamiliar to many of us.

Whilst it is self-evident that laws do make a difference to our everyday lives however, how many of us can be bothered to get involved in trying to influence the process of how they are made? That's where the single biggest democratic movement in our country comes in – the union movement.

Our Union, together with MUNZ and the Merchant Services Guild, has recently been working on submissions to a bill before Parliament called the Maritime Transport Amendment Bill.

Very few of our members will know this (until they read this piece) and yet we're spending a fair chunk of their money on a lawyer to make sure we get it right. Why? Well, read on.

The substance of the proposed reforms is to introduce two systems of drug and alcohol testing, one that must be implemented by 'operators' (ie employers) and one administered by the director of Maritime New Zealand.

Both testing regimes must include random drug and alcohol testing.

The catalyst for these amendments was the tragic 2012 ballooning accident in Carterton in which 11 people lost their lives.

That incident led to the release of the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) Report at the end of 2013, which led to the Ministry of Transport's 'Clear Heads' consultation document in 2015. This was intended to develop strategies to prevent people operating a commercial or recreational aircraft, boat or train if they are impaired by alcohol or drugs.

The unions' view of this part of the Bill is that it is a knee-jerk reaction based on perception, hysteria and misinformation and ought to be abandoned in its entirety.

We already have a Health and Safety at Work Act and we already work with employers on drug and alcohol testing.

Our Union is concerned that these amendments, by focusing exclusively on only one cause of impairment, ignores the wider issues and the multitude of other causes of impairment.

The proposed amendments create a distorted and misleading picture of the real causes of workplace impairment such as hours of work, stress, fatigue and work patterns.

Any strategy to address impairment in the workplace should – and must – include all forms of impairment. This is a view shared by our brothers and sisters in MUNZ and The Guild.

It's ironic that we find ourselves making submissions in a small room in Parliament while our comrades in the junior doctors' union are out on strike fighting for safe rostering.

This is the same fight, being fought by different unions using different tactics.

Of course the stereotype of the blue collar unions is that we are the more militant, whilst the white collar professionals are less so. Some people may be surprised then that we are playing the roles that we are.

There is a lot more to our submissions and members can read them on the Parliamentary website when the select committee releases them.

The point is that when you ask yourself what is the union doing for me, and where

are my fees going, the answer is we're fighting on a number of fronts.

As well as bargaining for the best possible wages, terms and conditions, health and safety, job security, a decent retirement, representing members in trouble with the boss or having difficulty with ACC, as well as campaigning for a national ports strategy or stopping the scrapping of electric locos or demanding the rebuild of the Main North Line, we are also spending your money on

scrutinising the writing of laws and trying to make them as worker friendly as possible.

This only happens because our members support one another, turning up to meetings, backing their delegates and officials, signing petitions, standing on picket lines, and by paying their dues, giving us, your elected leaders, the financial wherewithal to engage lawyers and other experts.

It's good work and no one will do it for working people other than the unions.

UNITY IN ACTION



(top left) Graham Lawn on the job.

(above) Luke Lockton (LPC), Duncan Browne (KiwiRail) and Lyttelton branch secretary, Heiner Benecke (LPC), meet at Arthur's Pass.

(left) HQ staff Leonie, Karen and Julia.

(below) Canterbury rail branch loco engineers meet in Middleton to discuss the impact of the earthquake on the Main North Line.





New Zealand ITF Affiliates Planning Meeting 2017

(l to r) Joe Fleetwood MUNZ, Wayne Butson RMTU, Alastair Reith MUNZ, Robert Reid First Union, Shannon O'Keefe ITF Sydney, Paul Tollich ETU, Louisa Jones First Union and Alan Windsor MUNZ.



Roger Smith caught working at the Waltham depot.



South Island LEs discussing poor cab conditions. (l to r) Dave Kearns (Dunedin), Brian McKay (Dunedin), Mike Kilsby (Dunedin), Mike Williams (Christchurch), Gavin Mortimore (Invercargill) and Bob Broadhurst (West Coast).



Southdown Toll workers (l to r) Back: Nash Ali (team leader), Warren Makaua, Tony Togi, Tony Keresoma, Ricky Taupulega, Iaopo Taulapini, Daniel Wiribana. Front: Rabul and Ronald Naidu.



Dunedin Toll Networks delegate, Tony Kilner.



Paul Swainson and Dennis Mulholland are awarded Union loyalty certificates upon their retirement by South Island NMC rep Mike Williams.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Branch notes continue on page 16

BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

KIWIRAIL have appointed Simon Prevett as the manager for Mt Maunganui, Kinleith, Kawerau and Murupara to replace Reuben Araroa who left the role before Christmas.

We still have a number of disputes with KiwiRail which we are working through,

such as the issue of contractors working in the Kaimai Tunnel, rosters at Mt Maunganui and Sulphur Point and stopping logs in Kawerau, Kinleith and Murupara.

There is debate about Kiwirail wanting to mandatory D&A test our members before they work in the Kaimai Tunnel because

contractors test their workers before they work there. However, our members quite rightly refused on the basis that they are covered by the KiwiRail D&A policy not the contractor's policy. This is an issue which will need to be resolved at the national level.

The members at Kawerau are working towards having a Workers Memorial Day ceremony on April 28 and all our members in the Bay are invited to attend. 🇳🇿

Dirty

KiwiRail's backwards step

KiwiRail CEO Peter Reidy is fuming. His op-ed in the Dominion Post (January 20, 2017) 'Emissions saving real prize in switch to diesel locos', is emitting enough hot air to lift temperatures from Lambton Quay in Wellington Central to Jackson Street in Petone.

Reidy, the CEO responsible for the decision to ditch electric locomotives on the North Island Main Trunk Line (NIMT), argues the switch to outdated diesel locomotives is in the national interest.

The argument goes something like this: diesel-powered locomotives offer customers an incentive to abandon road transport for rail transport and, as more freight moves from road to rail, the country lowers its emissions.

It's a neat argument, but much is left unsaid:

- The current electric fleet saves 8 million litres in fuel each year and the price of upkeep is only \$1.13 per k; and
- The new Chinese-made diesel locomotives will guzzle the gas the electric fleet saves and the likely cost of upkeep will be \$2.27 per km.

Diesel-locomotives are heavier, hence the higher cost of upkeep. And then there's the risk the diesel locomotives will arrive contaminated with asbestos, just like the 40 diesel locomotives KiwiRail purchased from the China National Rail company in 2014.

On what level does KiwiRail's decision make sense?

World trend in opposite direction

The world is moving away from fossil fuels. Faced with the choice between safeguarding the planet and making a quick buck most governments and sensible businesses are opting to safeguard the planet. We've only got one, after all.

At this point you would expect leadership from the current government. Surely the Minister for Climate Change will send out a directive to all State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) instructing their CEOs to implement decisions consistent with New Zealand's climate obligations?

If such a directive did go out, it never reached Transport Minister Simon Bridges who, while purchasing an electric vehicle for himself, presided over the switch from electric to diesel locomotives at the SOE he supervises. I can almost smell the hypocrisy.

Electrifying the main trunk line must happen – hopefully sooner rather than later. When KiwiRail, or New Zealand Railways as it then was, first went about electrifying parts of the NIMT it spent \$250 million and the rest of the world quickly followed. In the Netherlands all rail lines operate electric locomotives.

Finishing the job today would cost approximately \$1 billion. That sounds like a large headline figure, but think about it this way: The 27 km Transmission Gully road north



diesels

ep endangers our children



of Wellington will cost \$850 million and save commuters up to 10 minutes in travel time. Spending just a little bit more on the NIMT will provide an unbroken, all-weather, environmentally-friendly route all the way from Wellington to Auckland.

Big business the only winners

The only winners from KiwiRail's decision to return to dirty diesel are fuel importers, carbon traders and agents for the Chinese locomotive manufacturer.

The public loses. The planet loses. In fact, our children and grandchildren will be the ones picking up the tab for the ongoing environmental degradation.

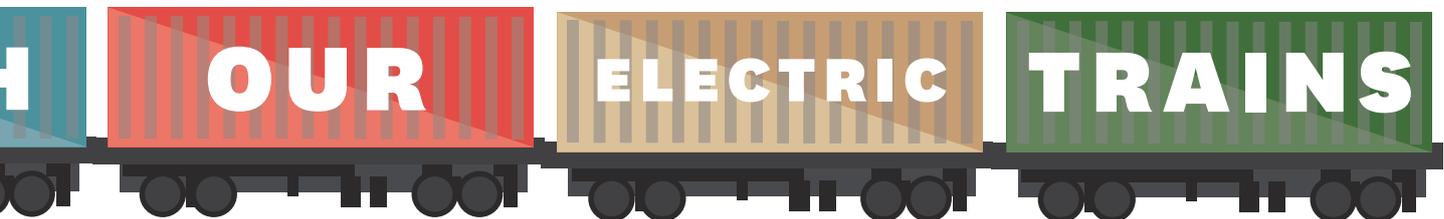
The message from the rail workers I speak to day in and day out is clear: politicians and the government must stop thinking in three year cycles. This government could lead the way and call in opposition transport spokespeople to nut out a lasting solution that will put rail on an equal development footing with roading.

This government boasts of the steps it's taking to protect the environment, but those steps are almost meaningless in the face of the enormous problems facing us.

KiwiRail's decision to return to outdated, dirty diesel takes us backwards. We could again lead the world, if only our decision-makers had the courage to put the planet ahead of a quick buck. 🌍



A sight that will soon disappear on the NIMT.



BAY OF PLENTY PORT

THE C3 collective agreement was finally settled late last year and all of the appropriate back pay has been paid except for three of our members. We are in the process of resolving the back pay issues for them.



National president Aubrey Wilkinson presents Roger Penney with a loyalty certificate for 35 years at Port of Tauranga.

The introduction of International Stevedoring Limited [ISL] to the shore side cranes is causing some difficulties and we are currently in mediation trying to resolve this dispute.

The wearing of lifejackets by the POTL linesmen has taken an interesting turn, in that the lifejackets have been tested in water and have been found not to be of good standing! Does that mean the lifejackets should not be worn until the appropriate lifejackets are supplied?

The POTL collective agreement negotiations are up this month and we expect, after the disputes of last year which have strained the relationship between the RMTU and POTL to breaking point, will be tough. We are expecting a battle royal over the next couple of months. 🇳🇿

BOP KAWARAU RAIL

KIA ORA RMTU whanau. The picture accompanying these notes show the Kawerau staff in hui with our regional organiser Phil Spanswick. We have a number of issues locally which need to be

resolved. The stopping dispute has still not been resolved, with staff and management unable to come to an agreement. Staff shortages are becoming more of a problem as another member has recently been deemed unfit for duties leaving the yard staff with two vacant positions as RCOs.

Management are now playing catch up trying to fill these positions with qualified staff and asking staff to cover in the mean time. We are also experiencing issues with the ASL shift not being used correctly by management.

That's it from the southern Bay of Plenty. Keep safe and happy all. 🇳🇿



TARANAKI RAIL

WE hope everybody has started 2017 in good spirits. The Naki has seen its shortest milk season in history with the flow-on affects of the low milk prices. However, product moving

from the Whareroa site to port is still in full swing. New Plymouth has just had a new customer (Centreport) move into the CT site. Hopefully we will see an increase of tonnage out of there shortly. Health and safety are going from strength to strength with improvements to

access to the Whareroa yard, carpark and lighting around the offices.

To our brothers and sisters in the lower North Island and South Island who were affected by the recent earthquakes and fires, our thoughts are with you and please look out for one another and keep safe out there. 🌍

NAPIER RAIL

NETWORKS members have an employment relationship problem with KiwiRail in regards to the Pandora shift to Ahuriri.

Members have agreed to a number of changes, such as the covered storage area, the current freight building becoming a meeting/conference facility and the 'KFC' building becoming the network team

leaders administration block.

However, there is not an agreement on the reduction in the workshop size. There was an original agreement made with KiwiRail representatives back in June, which was for three workshops, for bridges [128 m²], track [64m²] and signals [96m²] – a total area of 288m².

For financial reasons KiwiRail is attempting to reduce the agreed foot print by not giving track a workshop.

The other issue is the removal of the adzing plant from Napier. The plant services the whole of KiwiRail's timber adzing needs to a high quality and, more importantly, the Hawkes Bay region where approximately 70% of the bridges are timber, and on to Palmerston North.

There has been discussions with KiwiRail, but no resolution as yet. It would seem the end result could be mediation. 🌍

NAPIER PORT

WOW, what a summer here in Hawke's Bay. We've been in drought for some time now however due to political reasons drought has not been officially declared. We've had so many windy, cloudless days in the mid-30s meanwhile the rest of the country seems to have all but missed out on the season. In the surrounding hills the temperatures have approached 40°C a number of times, making sleeping for shift work very challenging.

Inundated with extra containers

Since the Kaikoura earthquake Napier Port has been inundated with extra containers which we're simply not set up for. Seasonal exports are bowling on in. The number of tired faces around seems exceptionally high for this time of year.

Prior to the quake it was proudly announced that we would not be hiring any new staff. Unfortunately this has left us

well undermanned and labour allocation issues are driving many of us to distraction. Thankfully there has been a rapid influx of staff in the last few weeks, with the recruitment team run off their feet.

70 hours work a week

Property Brokers have adverts on the radio here about the Hawke's Bay lifestyle and the high quality of life in New Zealand which make me feel like I'm missing something. We've got drivers pulling 70 hour weeks. I can't marry those two ideas up.

In France it's illegal to work more than 35 hours in a week, wine is cheap and the cheese is fantastic. Good luck finding any workers with the time for wine and cheese around here!

This peak season could already be described as long and hard with no withdrawal. Our staff are getting dragged in off RDOs, called back from leave and ordered on for extra hours far too often and as I write this February hasn't even gotten her

feet under the desk. Normally the frayed edges start showing in April.

The port company has put some systems in place to mitigate sudden influxes of containers through the gate at peak times however those of us that remember the hellish season of 2014 (my eye still twitches just thinking about it), are seeing similarities already.

Smashing records hard on workers

We are getting smashed with more rail volume than we've had in years. Great for the company but hard for the workers.

Stress and fatigue are real issues. We all have friends and family that also suffer when we do. Don't be silent if you're feeling the strain. Your health and wellbeing is important, in fact paramount, and if you're not fit for work you are putting your colleagues, and at the end of the day, their whanau at risk too. We all have the right to go home and actually we should all make the time for some wine and cheese while the sun is shining. 🌍

HUTT WORKSHOP

THE year is well underway with production in full swing and the HPHE-savvy process improvement teams focussing on their respective inputs to the business plan which outlines our requirements for financial investment over the short to medium term. That said, several small presentations were made to the (corporate-level) HPHE governance team in mid-December outlining our recent progress, gains and short-medium term requirements. Whilst there were a couple of hiccups in the process, the immediate outcome later that week was the allocation of some petty cash in the order of \$700,000 to get us moving forward whilst some loose ends were tied-off and a full-sized and robust business case was finished-off and polished up and made ready for Board-level presentation (and hopeful sign-off).

The end-of-year Christmas do was well attended despite the very unseasonal Wellington weather of wind and rain.

Zero Harm (Z/H) is once again in the spot-light with an as yet un-publicised outcome of a restructuring despite (or because of) Huw Bridges' departure late last year. We note that a document entitled Zero Harm Explained (dated 4/3/16) came out around 19/12/16. It's an interesting document that provides an overview of Z/H better than what has been forthcoming over the last couple of years! Whilst we all subscribe to the concept of Z/H and all that it encompasses, the strategies for achieving it have been fraught with challenges that have carried over into the New Year. We are looking forward to how the new (yet to be appointed) Z/H boss grapples with this arm of the company. The seat is currently being kept warm by former KiwiRail professional engineer Phil McQueen.

With a new year upon us some have been asking about predictions – something that the scribe team has grappled with in the absence of a working crystal ball. We predict the following (in no particular order):

- KiwiRail will continue a slow but steady increase in growth of its freight market share (currently 16%);
- Z/H will not find its feet until year's end (at the earliest);

- right-sizing of the number of managers across the company will continue this year;

- D&A testing will become fully embedded within the company culture;
- Some tearaways will have their record-

after this year's General Election (but Winston will fix that!).

The results of the last company-wide staff survey were poor; only 1600 responses – really? Why such a poor return rate? Why has the senior management team not put more effort into getting a superior return rate? It's not rocket science to gather teams



Six bays cleared in Plant Three awaiting installation of services prior to relocation of existing functions from the other half of the building (out of camera shot). (below) The same area from the opposite end. (opposite) A former storeroom cleared to make way for office space.



keeping reviewed (it's already happening so that's not really a true prediction);

- Communications within the company will improve at a slow but steady rate;
- Our staff survey net promoter score (NPS) will plateau and flat-line for the next two consecutive surveys;
- The better way of utilising the industrial councils will yield benefits right across the spectrum;
- One GGM will retire before the end of the year; and
- We'll end up with a hung Parliament

in a quiet environment and ask them to take their time and do justice to a few questions within a confidential survey. Even the Biropilots should be directed to start a particular day by taking the time to fill in the forms received electronically!

The new board chair appointed last year has yet to visit us and we've not heard his thoughts on KiwiRail and its current direction. We know he was doing the rounds around Christmas so its expected he'll visit us in due course.

The regular review of our 10 year plan

slipped slightly due to the November earthquake. The plan is subject to six-monthly review to allow us to maintain a handle on present and future workload and the associated resourcing and planning issues. At the time of writing, some measure of peer or management review in Auckland was underway with a report-back time frame of late February 2017.

Another management review should be how they deal with injuries. The team here read the December TTW section on H&S with some amusement. It's a very straight forward process once someone has received the initial medical treatment and got the necessary paperwork in order – this can be the worst part of the process because hospital and GP type clinicians generally only take care of the immediate injuries and will give you a chit for as much time off as you like, whereas the RMOs have (or should have) a reasonable insight to the railway environment and be able to make a more thorough needs assessment and provide you with a meaningful report and fully qualified recommendation. We would hasten to acknowledge that some GPs do conduct a thorough check including ringing the employee's manager to confirm the nature of the environment that the employee normally works in and what alternative duties may be available. Our experiences include getting the occasional detailed



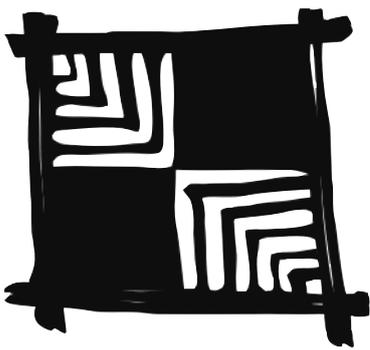
medical certificate that clearly states limitations and timeframes for injured employees which in turn provides the necessary guidelines and protections for all parties. Here at Hutt we have a very good return to work (RTW) culture with rehab' or RTW plans discussed, agreed to, recorded and put into effect to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. We have experienced a myriad of injuries requiring a range of avenues to achieve the successful RTW of staff so we feel it's not rocket science, and the company documentation to assist with the process is reasonably okay.

Another set of 'mechanical projects' to look forward to this year is the three targeted areas of 'Service Examinations', (the) 'Workforce Plan', and the 'Facilities

Strategy'. A brief overview of these projects was co-produced and notified to all and sundry by Roy Sullivan (KR) and Stu Johnstone (RMTU). We look forward to regular updates on these projects as they will be far-reaching and probably 'game-changing' in providing fit-for-purpose rolling stock to our customer(s).

On a final note, Phil Bosworth, our branch chair and MCC delegate (and Life Member) will be retiring around April after a long and 'colourful' service to rail and the Union. The next TTW will have a few pictures no doubt (note to self – will need the wide angle lens for the camera because he is a rotund chap!).

Until next time, take care and be safe.



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WELLINGTON PORT

AS has been reported in the press, the November 14 Kaikoura earthquake has had devastating effects to our port in Wellington. Substantial amounts of liquefaction covered the majority of the container terminal, empties depot and the log yard. Damage to wharf piling under the container wharf coupled with subsidence in the terminal yard has impacted on container operations. Major works are underway and it is hoped the cranes will be back in action by June this year. Kudos to those who knuckled down and got stuck in to restore operations in such difficult times. On a brighter note, limited container operations have resumed with the use of geared ships calling in to Wellington. As of writing, a weekly service has begun with the assistance of C3 crane drivers and signalmen. It is hoped that our crane drivers will get some training and eventually we will do the entire operation.

There have been assurances from the company that no one will lose their job as a result of the earthquake and this has reassured our members. Some diversification in job roles has seen the majority of our P24s and a few P40s take on port security roles whilst the cruise season is in full swing. With the downturn in work an ideal opportunity has arisen to increase training to further develop the skills set of our P24s. Full company support has been given to assist our cargo handlers, who do not already hold it, to attain an NZQA certificate in cargo handling. Arranged through MITO, the majority of the



WHERE ARE YOU?

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<http://bit.ly/exmEyL> or 04-499-2066



training and assessing will be done in house with our own trainers and assessors.

We have just received sad news that one of our colleagues, Teihi (Tee) Whaanga from the container repair section, has passed away as a result of an accident in January. Details are sketchy and an investigation is underway by CentrePort and Worksafe NZ. The branch executive wish to extend our sincerest condolences to Teihi's whanau and friends.

Ending these notes in such a sombre way sends us a timely reminder of how dangerous an industry we work in. Never second guess anything. Safety first – and if in doubt, stop. We owe it to our families, our workmates and ourselves that we all go home after a hard day's yacker. 🌐



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OTIRA RAIL

Neil Davies and Fred Miles caught changing over at Otira.

CANTERBURY RAIL

LITTLE did we know that almost immediately after writing the Branch Notes for the last issue of the Transport Worker we would be affected by yet another natural disaster in our region. As readers will know, the Main North Line was hit by the Kaikoura earthquake and a

150 km stretch of track was rendered unusable. This line, from Christchurch to Picton, took 75 years to build before it was finally opened in December 1945, and we all, understandably, feared the worst – that an anti-rail National Government would use this as an excuse to close the line permanently. Thanks to some prompt action by the RMTU and the Green Party

a campaign was launched to save the line and we're convinced this played a big part in securing a commitment from the Beehive to re-open the line.

Our Christchurch networks members were frustrated that they were not immediately allowed to get stuck in and start work on the assessment of damage and to begin repairs – a feeling that was compounded by the local manager's failure to front up in person to the gangs and explain the plan. As

\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



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things developed, more senior management did take the trouble to outline the thinking behind their approach and both track workers and LEs, who know the route, were used to help assess the damage metre by metre. As time passed there was talk of resurrecting a passenger rail service south, possibly to Dunedin, given that the Coastal route was no longer open to Scenic Journeys. That hasn't happened, mores the pity, but our Christchurch-based passenger staff are working hard coping with high demand on the Tranz Alpine.

One consequence of the quake was that KiwiRail looked at LE staffing and offered voluntary redundancy to a number of them. At the time of writing two of our longer serving members, Paul Swainson and Denis Mulholland, have just finished their long and distinguished careers. Four more are due to leave in the weeks to come and a further two are in the queue. While we aren't in favour of job losses, we are also mindful that KiwiRail recruited and trained LEs a few years ago anticipating older staff



Award winners Canterbury – (l to r): Bernie Jones, Tony Wornall, Ian Walker, Luke James and Polly Bysjerveld all received RMTU certificates of appreciation. In the background are the branch chairs Andy Kelly (Lyttelton) and Graham Ealam (Canterbury rail).

would retire who, in the event, didn't. It appears that the carrot of severance pay has led some of those to make the leap, and we wish them the best of luck and a long and healthy retirement.

Our members in the long suffering service centre and at the container transfer terminal were also required to respond to

the fact the MNL was out of commission and did so brilliantly. It wasn't just KiwiRail that was hit by the earthquake, Toll had to reconfigure its operation as well and once again our members there met the challenge.

At the end of last year we held our now traditional joint meeting with the Lyttelton Port branch. This event had added interest

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.

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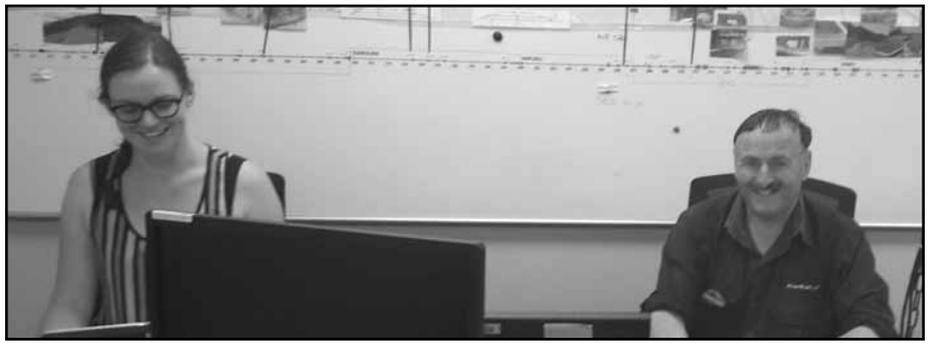
**Attention LEs
Join this Fund now for
your own peace of mind**

◀ as we were briefed on the dispute that MUNZ is having with LPC and the possibility of strike action and pickets. It was good to get a clear brief on our rights as that dispute is still going on at the time of writing this. There was also an opportunity to recognise the work of RMTU officials Ian Walker, Bernie Jones and Luke James over the year – all three have worked tirelessly for their fellow members and given much of this happens behind the scenes, it was good to thank them publicly.

As the New Year dawned the work of the branch didn't stop. Southland and Otago members had red carded a number of locos and KIC rep Mike Williams and MIC rep Luke James were involved in sorting out the fallout from this – testimony to the fact that the one organisation that has a true 'one KiwiRail' approach is the RMTU. We've made some progress and will have to keep our eyes firmly on the prize to ensure the momentum that has started is not lost.

Our yard members are also dealing with the same sort of roster woes that our fellow members in Southland and the West Coast are battling. The branch has counter-proposed, after a very well attended meeting threw out the boss's initial plan. We hope that by the time you're reading this that the matter has been resolved.

One piece of good news we got regarding the re-build of the MNL which has



LE Alfie Wilson and Wendy Whitley (Aurecon) planning the MNL rebuild.

begun to take shape, was that a number of new track workers will be employed north of Christchurch. Whilst it's the obvious thing to do, we weren't taking it as a given and the branch advocated strongly that

the re-build was an opportunity to build strength in depth in our staffing given that a large number of networks people are approaching retirement.

Stay safe and support your union! 🇳🇿



A well attended stop work at Middleton Yard run by delegates Allan Robertson (left) and Ian Stewart (right). Subject is rosters - the curse of Santa.

LYTTELTON PORT

LET'S start on a positive note. At the end of last year we had a very successful joint meeting with the Canterbury rail branch. The turn-out was unprecedented and the sense of solidarity was inspiring. We recognised delegates and active members who have made a real contribution to the life of our branches in the last year. Tony Wornall and Polly By-sterveld both received well deserved tokens of the branches' appreciation. Thanks once again Tony and Polly. People like you are the life blood of our Union.

At the time of writing our brothers and sisters in MUNZ are embroiled in an industrial struggle with LPC. The genesis of the conflict goes back to the break-up

of the multi-union collective agreement after MUNZ initiated bargaining separately from the RMTU in 2014, thereby

handing the employer the opportunity to divide labour on the waterfront. Management myopically seized their chance and, having acted in haste, are doubtless repenting at leisure. From our perspective it appears both parties lack a strategy and have no real idea how to resolve the mess they have got themselves into. The crux of the matter seems to be the eternal problem of 'flexibility' around shift start times in light of the 'vagaries of shipping'. Now, given that close on half the workforce in the container terminal are members of the RMTU, even if MUNZ sell out and management gets everything they want, it will be impossible to implement it without our agreement. In the meantime, MUNZ have been out

the gate and predictably the full weight of the capitalist state has come down on the side of the employer. We've been ordered to cross picket lines on pain of being held in contempt of court, and although our members have expressed their solidarity by refusing to do the work of striking workers, we're very clear about what we'd rather be doing, or more accurately, not doing.

By the time you read this, unless the dispute has been resolved, MUNZ members will be on individual employment agreements and management will be stuck with the same shift start and finish times that have existed for years. The solution for workers is very clear – one union on the waterfront!

In other news, we've had a member hauled into a so called disciplinary process despite belonging to a self-managing team and having this enshrined in his collective agreement. Good on his workmates for ▶

making a stand and signing a petition in his support.

Over in marine, our favourite manager appears up to be up to his old tricks again and trying to appoint workers on shonky fixed term agreements and making up pay rates that aren't in the collective agreement.

One casualty of the dispute with MUNZ seems to be the trade's rates review. It's a fact that when management and labour are stuck in a fight it becomes all-consuming and that means the routine, and good work, that we can do gets put down the priority list.

Let's hope that this year ends on a better note that it has begun. We're in negotiations for both the major waterfront agreement and the logistics officers in the next 12 months and there has to be a better way of doing business than what we're witnessing between MUNZ and LPC right now. 🌐



Lyttelton branch secretary Heiner Benecke and chair Andy Kelly hand a cheque to Pike River families representative Anna Osborne for \$1000.

WEST COAST RAIL

HELLO from the land of the never ending rain. It has been an in-different summer to date with Mother Nature causing a lot of issues for our network services people with some major line outages. But as usual they have got on with the job and done sterling work getting the system running and trains going again.

The Greymouth rail operators have had to deal with nasty rostering issues and a direct result of this was no RDOs tack ons etc have been worked since that roster was commenced. In addition members have individually elected to observe stat days on the day they fall as they would prefer to have time away from the job and have some quality family time as the roster is that crappy.

So what happened here? The KRM and the operations manager who are certified in rail operators' duties are getting a trashing picking up jobs to cover all the many short falls due to over tight rostering. We just wonder if our senior managers are aware of what is going on here? We did try to point out all the short comings of this type of rostering and it seems to have fallen on deaf ears so from our perspective it's a case of reaping what you sow.

We are told we are 'One KiwiRail' and

need to 'move forward' with all the hype management wants us to embrace.

From where we're sitting on rosters and staffing levels we are not moving forward in fact we are in reverse.

All this change may look good on a manager's spreadsheet but in the real world and on the front line this clearly is not the case.

The Greymouth rail operators now have a new roster posted and it looks a little better – like the bosses have listened to some of our concerns and acted on them. So in this case that's a bit of positive progress.

Like other areas we have a health and safety meeting once a month but in this area meetings have been held with no loco engineer and rail operator representatives present, and this not the first time this has occurred. This must not happen. The meeting should have been canned until all parties could attend as there are issues that need addressing and following up. The company must be getting close to breaching the rules and the local branch will be making sure that the representatives are present for future meetings.

On the job front here we have had a bit of bad news. Things were looking up for coal exports out of Reefton, but once the current 60,000 tonnes has been shipped

that will be it as coal prices have dropped away. This may change in time.

Westland Dairy Co-operative, a major customer, has stopped sending bulk milk from Hokitika to Rolleston, instead electing to send it by road. In addition, increasing amounts of finished product is coming off rail and going via road. When we are down at the factory the trucks are lined up one after the other and the train is going out light. We've also heard of a restructure at the factory with management speaking of redundancies.

Something is wrong here. There are rumours of what's going on but at the time of writing no one really knows the truth. It is not a good thing to have more trucks on the road and we cannot work out how it can be cheaper to truck than rail product to Canterbury which will only mean a reduction in services and the knock on effect that brings. Time will tell how this will end up.

Stop Press: Just as we finished these notes we learned that the Midland Line is likely to be closed for at least six weeks after a scrub fire severely damaged the Broken River viaduct and other bridges. After the Kaikoura earthquake and the slips near Atkins and Otira over the holiday period we're left asking ourselves what could possibly happen next? 🌐

TIMARU RAIL

HERE in Timaru Rail we have watched and heard about the recent action in Otago and Southland with great interest. As Dunedin LEs travel up to Timaru we've heard all about the red carding of locos and the Dongwha siding. This has certainly got us thinking about our right to refuse unsafe work.

We have major issues with yard conditions in Timaru. A recent inspection by a Dunedin-based engineer found huge problems over the whole yard including track faults, loose or missing screws, a faulty track gauge, points boxing and so forth. This got us thinking – points boxing was also a problem at Dongwha. He made some pretty brutal comments about lack

of basic maintenance so we're going to have a word with National Office and see what we can do about it. By the next issue we hope to report progress.

The old problem of clapped-out shunt locos is alive and well here. We seem to hit snags on a weekly basis. DSGs are hauling over 1000 tonnes on the main lines and frankly aren't up to the job. KiwiRail needs to replace this kit urgently. We know there is a plan to do so and we appreciate the work our fellow members in mechanical put in to keep the engines working. We just wished we lived in a country where the government invested in infrastructure.

On the industrial front our branch is waiting to see what happens when talks are held regarding pay scale. It would be good to see progression and service increments

after the model of the LE pay scale. One of our issues is that communications from the industrial council that is working on this could be improved. Members are generally very patient if they are kept informed, and we're not averse to trying new ways of keeping up with the news. Maybe the days of pages and pages of detailed minutes are numbered?

Apart from these gripes we are trying to stay positive and think of our fellow members who have been hit by the effects of the Kaikoura earthquake and its impact on the MNL. We did hope that The Southerner would be re-introduced into service but that rumour appears to be dying a natural death. What a pity – with all the housing development south of Christchurch and in Ashburton surely there is an argument for passenger rail on the MSL?

Until next time, stay safe. 

TIMARU PORT

WE'VE had a busy summer in Timaru, although there hasn't been a notable increase in container traffic as a result of either the Kaikoura earthquake and/or the MUNZ dispute with Lyttelton port management.

A supplementary Maersk service kicked off on February 10 – Friday night (so bang goes the weekend) but we're told this isn't related to either of the above events.

Here in Timaru RMTU members have collective agreements with two employers, Quality Marshalling and Prime Port Timaru itself. Readers will remember that the ambition of the former CEO of Prime Port was simply to be a landlord and to just provide a minimum of services and maintenance directly so they could clip the ticket as

cargo moved through the port. The stevedoring and marshalling was contracted out. This chimed with Port of Tauranga's approach when they bought a half share in our port.

Relations with the various management teams have generally been good over the last few years and whilst we hope that continues there are a couple of issues on the horizon.

First and foremost are the implications of the finding that the police had not been applying the Holidays Act correctly which readers may remember made the news a while ago. The ports have all been highlighted as being at risk of non-compliance by the Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. One of the beefs our members have with Quality Marshalling is the lack of informa-

tion on our payslips – this is a bit of a red flag and so the branch is working with RMTU National Office to address the question and see whether we've been paid correctly according to the Holidays Act.

The second matter on our agenda for the year is collective bargaining for our members directly employed by Prime Port. We hope the dispute between Lyttelton Port and MUNZ is a local affair and not a sign of increased militancy amongst port bosses across the country. At a time when there finally seems to be some sense being talked about coastal shipping it would be a bit of an own goal to provoke a scrap with your employees. Bargaining went pretty smoothly last time however, and we are hopeful this will be the case later in the year. Watch this space.

In the meantime, greetings to our brothers and sisters on the waterfront and on the railway and stay safe! 

OTAGO RAIL

CHRISTMAS and New Year have come and gone and some of you will have had a well-earned break, and returned expecting that a whole new KiwiRail will have been born in your absence. Well, no surprises there then.

Rail seems to have coped as well as it always does for the holiday season, and muddled through.

The freight team have had a big push, from above, to have the year planned out for their leave. Still not easy with their rosters 'over staffed', that's the local joke by the way. Something isn't right with the system,

too much overtime, along with not being able to get time off when needed, seems to be the major gripe.

The branch has had a couple of delegations meet with KiwiRail management. The first with our local boss to clear the air on expectations around communication and what was seen as poor behaviour from our manager. By all accounts it was a good meeting and the outcome being the forming of

◀ a local industrial council.

The second meeting was held in Christchurch with mechanical and freight to get on top of some of the issues around the locomotive fleet and the very poor operating state of mainly the DCs. Sounds as though there was some good outcomes from this as well, although this company has always been good at promises.

Late trains from south seem to be the norm at the moment. We hear that the management team have been focusing on the problem but have failed to find a real cause. Some on the ground (you know- the people that actually do the work) think that the time-table for the trains is too tight for the work that they do and suggest they stretch the time-table and allow more time.

But talking to some of the team who have been here a while, years and years and years in fact, late trains have always been an issue for rail. Here's hoping they can fix it.

It has been noted that with the weather being as unsettled as it has been, high winds have brought down a lot of trees over the track. Some work has been done on the Timaru to Oamaru section to address tall trees close to the track. Here's hoping that the work continues further south as the team doesn't like running into big trees, it hurts the locomotives.

Over the tracks at our iconic railway



Otago rail branch secretary Brian McKay (r) presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Dunedin railways delegate Lyall Kelpie.

station there have recently been three incidents of a serious nature:

- Shunting incident on the south dock where carriages were inadvertently moved while staff were alighting;
- Power cord not attached correctly and became a hazard; and
- Not following correct shunting procedures.

Safety is paramount: we want to go home each day without injury. We all have a responsibility to act safely and to follow our procedures especially where the con-

sequences may cause injury or damage. All incidents appear to have been errors of judgement by staff to some degree. We know that a system that depends on individuals not making mistakes will not work. That's why we have to support one another – if we see someone not following safe procedures stop and have a word; and if we see something that is potentially dangerous or think of a way how we might improve our procedures talk to your manager, health and safety representative or Union delegate. 🇳🇿

SOUTHLAND RAIL

WE'VE had a torrid time of it in the deep south over the last few months. Readers will remember the story of the dancing coffee cup from the last issue of The Transport Worker and our concerns with whole body vibration (WBV) when operating some of the aged rolling stock we have down here. Then there were woes relating to the rosters for our RCOs and ROs, the state of the Dongwha siding, as well as niggles over matters like the installation of security cameras without consultation and the difficulty obtaining safety glasses. All these issues came to a head just before Christmas when we held a mass meeting of our branch which was attended by delegates from Otago and

the Freight Industrial Council.

One of the results was an immediate ban on locos DFT 7295,

DC4755, DC4876 and DC4847 as lead units until remedial action was undertaken to the branch executive's satisfaction. The Dongwha siding was also banned (see story on pages 5-7). There was also the passing of a motion of no confidence in our Dunedin-based manager.

This prompted some pretty swift action on the part of senior management. There was a meeting convened in Christchurch between loco delegates from around the South Island and senior freight and mechanical management. That has led to some progress and we're keeping a close eye on this to ensure the momentum is maintained. The Dongwha siding got sorted. KiwiRail's national employment relations manager

flew down to Dunedin to meet with representatives of the Otago and Southland branches to discuss the other issues. All good stuff. It's just a pity that we had to take direct action in order to get management to do anything.

There's still a fair bit to be tidied up. We read about the roster debacle on the West Coast with interest and we hear that our brothers and sisters in the yard at Middleton are locking horns with the boss over their rosters. The problem hasn't gone away down here either. At the time of writing the prescription safety glasses issue remains unresolved.

On a positive note we have a number of active members who have been invited to RMTU delegate training in Christchurch. It's always good to have key people know their rights and how to enforce them – that's a lesson we've learned down here over the summer. 🇳🇿

Pike River support



Twenty nine crosses on the lawn in front of Solid Energy, Christchurch - one for each miner killed in the Pike River mine. Sonya Rockhouse (right), who lost her son in the tragic accident, speaks to assembled supporters including RMTU members. She and Anna Osborne (holding the sign: I want my husband back) started the picket at Pike River in early January. Beside her is Lynda Boyd, NZNO.

SEVERAL RMTU members got themselves out to the headquarters of Solid Energy in Christchurch to show their support to the Pike River families, and to let the government know that the issues are not going away, and that the families deserve justice, accountability and closure. Christchurch people showed great support and were able to show friends and family of the 29 miners that they were not alone in trying to get the government to act on their earlier promises and at least check the 'drift' for clues of the cause and the remains of their loved ones. 🌐



John Key September 2011

"First thing is, I'm here to give you absolute assurance we're committed to getting the boys out . . . when people try to tell you we're not, they're playing with your emotions.

"You are the number one group that want to get those men out and, quite frankly, I'm number two, because I want to get them out."



A Pike River supporter, long-time member and Lyttelton linesman - John Beardsley has had the 'Stand With Pike' placards fixed to his sidecar as a reminder to others.