

JUNE 2010

THE **Transport Worker**

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



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create jobs and
save money – p4**

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ALLIANCE CHARTER SIGNED

Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ) and Wayne Butson sign the historic union alliance charter.

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WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Those who died at work are remembered around the country.

COVER PHOTO

Peter Conway, Jim Kelly and Wayne Butson launch the NZ work for NZ Workers campaign.



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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

LAST year, before the March Issue, I pondering what 2010 may bring for us. I thought the action lines would be the KiwiRail-Veolia MECA challenge of bringing the five collective agreements together and whichever port it would be that would be on the wrong end of a 'rates/charges' move from Maersk and Fonterra. However, these two issues have dropped to number two in the list of significant challenges we face this year. I will not be winning Lotto anytime soon nor will I be the recipient of major taxation cuts from the Dipton sheep farmer's budget. I suppose I'll just have to confine my rebellious tendencies to feeling jealous of the rich in defiance of John Key's admonishment to not do so. Apparently we need those \$500k plus earners—they're good for us all, even if they pay no tax. Honest John tells us all that if the top tax rates are cut the rich will pay more. Methinks there is an Irish ancestry element there somewhere in his lineage.

Best of best

The KiwiRail-Veolia MECA is chugging along and we are making very good progress on reaching a final set of agreed words for the common clause provisions. Even the numerous working parties are beavering away and are in danger of reaching joint recommendations for change and improvement to the lot of members in the affected areas. Bringing the wages scales together poses some challenges as there has been an element of 'drift' over time and we have, in some cases, multiple rates for the same designation or level within scale 1. Nobody is going backward in rate and so there is a cost to the employer in using our 'best of best' approach and there will be debate over how this cost is factored into any wage increase obtained. The fact is that NZ currently has record unemployment and yet in rail we have a recruitment/retention problem in key skill areas. This will need to be considered by Kiwirail and Veolia in the context of any overall settlement.

'Lucky' selection

As you all know, I was one of the chosen few 'lucky' enough to be invited to attend the Prime Minister's Job Summit as the RMTU is held in high esteem and it was felt that we had something to add. At the time I reported that I didn't think a national cycleway was necessarily going to get us out of the economic

New look magazine

Welcome to your more colourful and up-to-date Transport Worker. Your magazine was in need of a makeover and we decided that some full colour pages should feature as part of the new design. You now have a much more attractive magazine which is still an excellent read. We hope you agree and also appreciate the new look. We look forward to your comments and suggestions.

doldrums but in my naivety I reported that the government was sincere in its promises to promote job retention and growth and to keep Kiwis working. Boy, did I get that wrong. A golden opportunity arises where KiwiRail has \$500m to spend on new trains for Auckland. Why not spend as much of it as we can in NZ, we ask? The RMTU joined forces with the NZ CTU and other very unlikely allies including the Otago Chamber of Commerce, the Dunedin City Council and others and we commission BERL to do a study on the economic benefits to NZ of doing the work. I admit that we felt it must be good for NZ but we were unsure. So we were delighted when BERL came back with an even more compelling economic argument to support our case than we anticipated. It is important to understand that the strength in the NZ Work for NZ Workers case are matters of concern to government and NOT KiwiRail. It is not appropriate for KiwiRail's board to factor in the wider economic benefit to NZ of building the trains here; rather they must do what is best for the shareholder, which is the Government and NZ Inc – a benefit of 770 to 1270 jobs. It is for Government to act in the national interest. That's why the swift rejection of the report by Government was so bewildering as was unequivocal vehemence of Minister Joyce in his rejection. It's clear that the Job Summit and the Government's statements of the time were window dressing and a sham to dupe nerds into thinking they cared about the average working Kiwi.

People power is the only way of challenging such levels of ignorance and arrogance and that is why we are determined to continue to fill the petition forms to present to Joyce – the names and signatures of thousands of angry Kiwis disgusted that their friends and family members will not see those estimated 1270 jobs.

It is little wonder that the emigration figures to Australia are on the rise again and the gap between the rich and the poor in NZ is ever widening.

May 20 and its taxation lolly scramble, coupled with an increase in GST, benefit attacks, cuts in public services, ACC dismantling and more of the same old, same old National party failed policies will definitely NOT bridge the gap between here and there. 

Retirements

Dear Editor,
I wish to tender my resignation as from May 7, 2010 after retiring on that date.

When I joined rail over 35 years ago I made history as being the oldest at that time to be allowed to join what was then the EF&CA at 30 years of age. I have never regretted that choice and I am still very grateful to Les Boswell whose effort as president of the union allowed that to happen.

The friendships and camaraderie over the years has been special but typical of the rail fraternity and I always was very proud to be one of a small group of rail employees that drove locomotives and worked with others on the rail to allow that to happen. At this time of the year one felt like a paid tourist with the autumn colours being so picturesque. I will miss my workmates but not those early starts or all those night shifts.

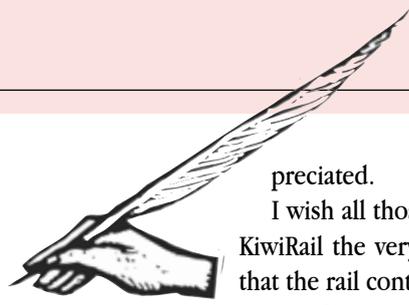
I pay tribute to all those on-board staff and others who went out of their way to make my last day on the job such a day to remember when I took my family and close friends on the Overlander between Hamilton and National Park and return.

My grandchildren were guests on the train and like the rest of our party were treated like royalty. Something they will all remember for the rest of their lives. Thanks Elaine and Jim and all the others on board staff that I have worked with over the years. You were always great to work with.

Three or so years ago I was lucky enough to have my wife allow me to buy a motorcycle so hopefully I can stay in touch with some of my fellow rail riders from both islands whom I have ridden with since getting back on two wheels. You have done me proud with some great rides together: rail rallies, War birds over Wanaka, Otaki pub and the list goes on. All magic times together.

To my fellow workmates all round the country that I have changed over with or spent time with both on and off the job, from the bottom of my heart I say 'thanks'. It has been a privilege to work with you all.

To our Union executive: thanks for your efforts on our behalf. It has been ap-



preciated.
I wish all those working with KiwiRail the very best and trust that the rail continues to get the support from Government that it so desperately needs. It has been a political football for too long. It must be better utilised and politically supported to survive. I am not sure that this will happen. I hope I am wrong.

Keep those wheels turning and on track.

Peter Kelk
Te Rapa.

Dear Editor,
Having just retired from the job after having put in 50 years, I would like to thank you and the Union for all of the work done on our (drivers) behalf over the years. It was all very much appreciated. I am sure that you and everyone else involved in the Union will carry on the good work helping all of the present and future young drivers coming into the job.

Don Karsten
Invercargill.

ACTU conference

Dear Editor,
I attended the ACTU Organising Conference in Sydney in April. This conference exceeded my expectations by challenging me to adopt new thinking about identifying allies with similar ideals and desires. As unionists we need to campaign in our communities as much as our workplaces.

The power we have as a collective is transferable to wider community issues. For example; affordable public transport to and from our workplace isn't a workplace issue but can have an undesirable effect on our members' income. By campaigning with the community to give affordable public transport there is a win-win solution.

I would like to thank the RMTU for the opportunity to attend the Conference, and urge them to send as many as is sustainable in the future. I would challenge our members to improve their lives by exerting their influence in all areas of their lives.

Les Ingram
Hillside.



Building trains in NZ a winner for everyone

THE battle to keep the Hutt and Hillside workshops open, viable, productive and profitable will continue says RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson despite KiwiRail CEO's Jim Quinn latest pronouncement banning Hillside from contesting the contract to build Auckland's new rolling stock.

Last month the RMTU launched a nationwide campaign from its head office seeking more than 40,000 signatures on a petition to Government aiming to reverse this decision and keep the work in New Zealand. The campaign is supported by Dunedin and Hutt Valley businesses and their chambers of commerce.

The calls for bids is for the construction of up to \$500m of rolling stock for Auckland commuter rail and the Union and its partners want to see the bulk of that work handled at Hillside and Hutt, preferably with KiwiRail taking the leading role.

"This is a no-brainer," says Butson, who adds that building the rolling stock in New Zealand benefits everyone. "Not just the workers, but the taxpayers too."

The campaign group has amassed a body of evidence which shows that the two workshops are immediately capable of doing the work and, indeed, have a track record of doing so.

A significant aspect of their evidence can be found in the specially commissioned report from economic consultancy group Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL) titled: Business case for building rolling stock in New Zealand.

In it they outline a number of key benefits to New Zealand if the bulk of the work stays onshore including:

- creating up to 1300 new jobs;

"It seems that Quinn and Joyce are the only two people in New Zealand who think that the Hutt and Hillside workshops can't build the trains"

- Wayne Butson

- boosting New Zealand's gross domestic product by up to \$250m dollars;

- increasing the Crown's revenue by up to \$70m; and

- benefiting New Zealand's trade balance by about \$122m.

However, Minister of Transport Stephen Joyce quickly dismissed the Report's conclusion saying it compared apples with oranges with pears during an interview with Morning Report on Radio New Zealand National the same day. He said he was disappointed with the BERL case and that the report was "once over lightly".

He had little faith in the KiwiRail workforce at Hutt and Hillside saying suggestions made about "costs per unit of the trains and the comparisons they have made internationally compare apples and oranges and quite possibly pears" adding that the Report didn't provide details of the comparisons that were being made.

He was unsympathetic that New Zealand could compete successfully for such a contract saying, in effect, that New Zealand should stick to what it does best - like sticking with grass-based industries.

However, he praised the working capabilities of both workshops and saw a

continuing role for them in maintaining and refurbishing the new units.

He said "you need to pick your battles" and in this case considered New Zealand companies couldn't compete.

KiwiRail chief executive Jim Quinn also poured cold water on the proposal and expressed an equal if not more damning indictment of his workforce, by saying it was unlikely they would make a bid as they are unlikely to be competitive internationally and that they simply would not be able to gear up to supply them on time.

Butson slammed both comments saying these did nothing to give New Zealand workers confidence in their bosses.

"We are not running a political campaign here," he said. "We believe it will succeed and when it does it can only reflect positively on the owners which is 100 per cent the New Zealand Government."

A late announcement from KiwiRail says the 13 electric locomotives in the original bundle have now been removed leaving the EMUs only.

In response, Butson said: "This means we will have a real go at getting the locos built here even if we are unsuccessful with the EMUs. Small batch runs of stuff are very expensive and so we will be very competitive."

Dunedin Chamber of Commerce CEO John Christie told Morning Report that if New Zealand could compete successfully on this contract it could then begin to bid for some of the billions of dollars worth of contracts overseas. Meanwhile, he says

CTU support

In recent release from the CTU, secretary Peter Conway said the CTU was pleased to note that the Expression of Interest document for the Auckland Electric Multiple Units includes strong wording to support participation by local industry including the existing rail workshops.

"The main thing now is to ensure that these commitments on paper translate into actual jobs and local industry participation in part of this major tender."

Conway congratulated the RMTU for their strong advocacy for New Zealand content and acknowledged the support of local government, business leaders and members of Parliament.



GS Wayne Butson illustrates to the media at the campaign launch that we do have the design capacity within KiwiRail for the Auckland EMUs.

getting this work would be a welcome economic boost and “go way beyond the boundaries of the workshops”.

“We do have the skills and expertise in New Zealand,” Butson told Morning Report. “I’m sick of New Zealand money going out of New Zealand. It’s about time New Zealand dollars were spent in New Zealand.”

While he admits that some \$8m might need to be spent to bring both workshops up to speed he wasn’t as concerned about the tight deadlines as Quinn.

“Information we have gathered indicates that most of the likely bidders for this contract from overseas would have difficulty meeting that deadline and we believe it will be pushed out and completion phased in over a longer period of time.

This would suit the workshops here in their current state, but with the added cash injection would make them very competitive.”

He, and the BERL report, also point out the added advantages of the work being completed here.

“If you just look at the cash price we will struggle,” he said. “However, if you look at the peripheral benefits we win hands down. There’s more tax being paid, fewer people becoming beneficiaries, healthier productive workers, happier families and the money stay here.”

Joyce and Quinn argue that New Zealand workshops cannot do the whole job and will, in effect, become assemblers of parts brought in from overseas.

“Not true,” says Butson. “First of all most overseas manufacturers do exactly

that themselves importing at least the traction engines which are made in a specialist plant. We want as much local production as we can get. We recognise that there are components that we cannot build in New Zealand, like the motors, but we can produce almost all of the components in New Zealand.”

RMTU president Jim Kelly said it is already being done. “We are currently building brand new rolling stock for the TranzScenic route and all 17 units will roll out on time at the end of this year.”

“It is time to show trust and confidence in New Zealand workers who, I’m convinced, will show they can produce best world-practice product right here,” said Butson. He adds that there are about 550-600 skilled heavy engineers in rail, almost all of them at the Hillside and Hutt workshops.

“The fact is that unless we can get these types of programmes we will not be able to hold on to them,” he said. “They’ll add to the flow of New Zealand workers heading for Australia where they are also in the midst of a major rebuild of their rolling stock.”

And where, he added, the Government provides substantial subsidies for those industries.

“Why is it that New Zealand is alone flying the hands-off flag?” he said.

“New Zealand companies can do this work,” said CTU secretary Peter Conway, “and we are seeking to show Government and KiwiRail bosses that they should not dismiss bidding for the contract at the get-go.”

“It seems that Quinn and Joyce are the only two people in New Zealand who think that the Hutt and Hillside workshops can’t build the trains,” says Butson. 🇳🇿



KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn talks to Hutt Branch members about the Auckland electric multiple units.

National's rail pledge full of fish hooks



By Darren Hughes

Labour transport spokesperson.

THIS month the Government pledged \$250 million dollars from this year's Budget to "turnaround" the performance of KiwiRail. It's an amount of money not to be sniffed at but it is worthy of more scrutiny when you look at New Zealand's wider transport context.

All up, John Key and Transport Minister Steve Joyce have promised KiwiRail \$750 million to transform the performance of the country's rail network over the next decade. Any further money will have to come out of the business itself.

When you consider National has already committed \$11b to building seven "Roads of National Significance", it's plain to see just how committed National is to rail. Its reluctant commitment to KiwiRail is a sign they would prefer to see more heavy freight on our roads than on rail.

RMTU members are well aware that the National Freight Demands Study in 2008 predicted a 75 percent growth in total freight movement by 2031. So you are all also aware that rail needs to be a major player in meeting the extra demand and volumes.

One could view National's failure to address as short-sightedness, or a lack of understanding of the need for New Zealand to have a balanced transport system.

But those who understand National's real views around public ownership of the

rail network realise there is a long term vision. National's hollow support of KiwiRail, and the caveats around, point to a Government that is reluctant to invest in KiwiRail's long term future.

We saw that also in the Government's knockback of the joint proposal by the RMTU, and the Dunedin City Council to build the rolling stock for Auckland's electrification project.

The report showed there is a strong business and economic case for building the rolling stock needed for the electrification project right here in New Zealand, by Kiwi workers.

It would create as many as 1300 new jobs over the duration of the building project. It found building the trains in New Zealand is competitive on both cost and quality. It would increase our GDP by \$250 million and generate tax revenue of around \$80 million.

Instead the Government plans to spend \$500 million dollars on the project. And now that KiwiRail has said it won't tender for the job, Steven Joyce is going to write a cheque and send most of that money overseas.

If a Government was committed to the rail network and it's workers, is this kind of thing you would expect?

Can the RMTU workers do the job? You know the answer to that.

At the launch of the report your general secretary Wayne Butson made the point that he'd attended last year's Jobs Summit.

Wayne spoke of John Key and ministers

talking up the need to Keep New Zealanders working.

Wayne got on with the task of putting that into action.

The RMTU came up with a plan to create jobs in Wellington and Dunedin only to be knocked back almost instantly by Steven Joyce.

Labour Leader Phil Goff wrote an interesting piece in the Otago Daily Times earlier this month.

Phil spoke of a trip he made last year to Dunedin's Hillside Rail Workshop on the same day Deputy Prime Minister Bill English visited.

Bill told the ODT the Hillside workshops "had been through 10 years of change, and were now going out and competing successfully with overseas suppliers".

He added: "That represents real opportunities for Hillside in Dunedin."

I repeat Phil's final sentiment in the ODT: "Isn't it interesting how the Government has now changed its tune."

National's pledge to put \$750 million into KiwiRail is awash with fish hooks. It could see passenger fares being hiked, regional lines being closed or mothballed and see an imbalance in New Zealand transport mix which will see more heavy trucks on our motorways.

Skyrocketing freight volumes will cause a major problem on our roads over the next twenty years. Rail must be part of the solution. If only we had a Government that fundamentally understood and supported a strong rail industry. 🇳🇿

Manawatu Gorge test train

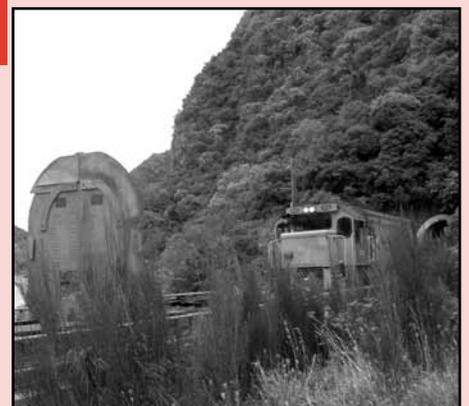
RECENTLY Phil Wagener was part of a mechanical test train fitted with a mock profile of the Silver Fern testing accessibility through tunnels in the Manawatu Gorge.

He said this involved pushing slowly through the tunnels and stopping every 10 metres to take measurements.

"This was necessary because the last

time the Fern went through it struck signal ducting and became jammed in a tunnel" he said.

With an excursions to Gisborne planned for Easter it was important these tests take place. "Happy to say that the tests were successful and the Silver Fern is now cleared to travel through the tunnels in the Manawatu Gorge."



Hectic and productive Ports Forum

ONCE again there was a very good turnout for Ports Forum 2010 which was held on the May 4 & 5. The opening address by NZCTU president Helen Kelly was on the challenges we face and the efforts to organise the unorganised. Of interest was family membership and the combined union membership data base.

It was interesting to find a number of ports with similar issues and concerns but little linking them.

Hazel Armstrong from the ACC Futures Coalition gave a powerful presentation on the work the coalition is undertaking and the threats to the ACC scheme. For a majority of New Zealanders they won't know how good the scheme actually is until it is gone.

Once again Roy Cowley was available to answer questions on the Harbours Super Plan.

A presentation was given by George Laird and Tina McIvor on the symptoms and health effects of methyl bromide poisoning and information about the methyl bromide coalition campaign to stop the use of this dangerous fumigant.

Todd Valster spoke on opportunities for port branch communications; so throw away that old fax machine it's time to twitter, Skype and blog. Well maybe not just yet but texting did stand out.

Todd was then joined by Libi Carr and Jim Kelly who shared their experiences at the Australian ACTU Organising Conference.

The day was wrapped up with Todd running a session on the need to future proof our collectives and what we should be pushing for

in our next round of negotiations.

Day two saw Chris Ball reporting on Group C membership of the NZ Railway Trust. Needless to say members are encouraged to use the network's affordable holiday homes.

Comrades from MUNZ attended as part of the presentation of the Alliance Charter (see page 8) and to hear a presentation on port industry training.

General secretaries Wayne Butson and Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ) gave an outline of the Charter and what it means for members: "The parties will work to develop an organising strategy for ports and the NZ waterfront which will see mutual growth of union membership and enhance the power, reputation and influence of the unions".

This was followed by a session facilitated by Don Farr involving Tranzqual representatives to discuss port industry training. Delegates were then given an opportunity to share their ideas and concerns.

Mark Davis and Helen McAra spoke of the work of the ITF and the history of the Flags of Convenience and Ports of Convenience campaigns and what members in New Zealand can do to support these campaigns. A very informative and interesting session, please ask your Forum representatives about this presentation.

This year's conference delegates were given an exercise to undertake before attending Forum and Aubrey Wilkinson took us through the results of their work. Needless to say there were a number of surprises and it identified that there is work to be done. 🌐



Helen McAra - MSG.



Chris Ball - Welfare.



Don Farr - CTU.



Daniel Manu - Port Taranaki.



Mark Davis - ITF.



Helen Kelly & Tina McIvor - CTU. (l) Roy Cowley - HSP.



Aubrey Wilkinson BOP Port and Joe Fleetwood MUNZ.

Forum newbies



Jeremy Diskin Port Nelson - Very informative, good to catch up with faces from conference 09 and networking between ports will be a good thing.



Ruby Bowen - Really interesting. So much was covered and there are positive changes imminent. It was an eye opener to see how passionate others were about their ports but it would be good to see more women reps. Thanks for the opportunity to attend.



Scott Hollis Johns (Observer ISL) - Very informative finding out the facts for myself and will be researching what's good for our members.



Shaun Wilson Tauranga - Excellent workshops that provided much to take back. The main point that kept reappearing was the need for a consolidated approach to H&S in many areas of the wharf. This will provide a baseline on which to improve.

Transport unions strategic alliance

THE RMTU and MUNZ (Maritime Union of New Zealand) – two of New Zealand’s main transport unions – have formed a strategic alliance focussed on the New Zealand waterfront following the signing of an Alliance Charter in Wellington in early April.

The key goal of the Charter is to grow unionism and collectivity amongst port and waterfront workers through joint action and initiatives.

“We have worked hard to gain this agreement for a number of years,” says RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. “Now that we have this agreement we can look forward to a much more united waterfront.”

The Charter is based around communication, information sharing, joint campaigning, a political strategy and a national organising strategy.

Both unions are affiliates of the NZCTU, the International Transport Workers Federation and the Trans Tasman



(l to r) Phil Adams, Garry Parsloe and Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ), Jim Kelly, Wayne Butson and Aubrey Wilkinson (RMTU) and Ray Fife (MUNZ).

Transport Union Alliance. Maritime Union general secretary Joe Fleetwood says the Charter is focussed on getting all port and waterfront workers in New Zealand into genuine unions and building terms and conditions on the waterfront.

Meanwhile Wayne Butson says that joint projects between the two unions

have already been discussed which “will enhance the power and influence of organised labour on the New Zealand waterfront”.

“This strategic alliance will have a major impact on the transport and logistics sector within New Zealand and internationally,” he says. 🌐

1951 - The waterside lockout

IN 1951, New Zealand temporarily became a police state. Civil liberties were curtailed, freedom of speech denied and the Government used force against its own citizens. 1951 is a



documentary telling the story of the infamous lockout of waterside workers and the nationwide strike which followed.

The waterfront dispute was the biggest industrial confrontation in New Zealand’s history. It lasted 151 days and at its peak 22,000 waterside workers (wharfies) and other unionists were off the job (out of the country’s population of just under two million). The confrontation was the culmination of decades of unrest on the wharves.

The film won best documentary and John Bates was named best director of a documentary, at the 2002 New Zealand Television Award. Bates said: “We got to it just in time. Many of the key figures who were interviewed passed away shortly afterwards.”

The documentary screened on TV One. The six-part series is now available online from NZonscreen at:

<http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/1951-2001>

Nats favour trucks over rail

NATIONAL'S decision to allow heavier trucks on our roads severely undercuts rail and its ability to compete says RMTU general secretary, Wayne Butson after the decision was announced by Transport Minister Steven Joyce in March.

"There's little doubt that National have succumbed to pressure from trucking and road transport lobby groups," he said. "It's as clear a case of cronyism that I've seen recently and while the trucking companies make millions taxpayers will lose even more through higher road maintenance costs, more accidents, increased admissions to hospitals and, most disastrous for rail workers, more and more freight moving away from rail and on to road. It's a lose-lose scenario for rail and its work force."

Fewer trucks - yeah, right

Meanwhile the government promises their will be fewer trucks on our roads and driving conditions will be safer.

"Nonsense," says Wayne. "The inequality between road and rail has never been so stark with roads receiving generous subsidies and rail asked to show a profit. Give us a level playing field and you would very quickly see improved road safety."

Last July the RMTU argued in a submission to the New Zealand Transport Agency that the Government's contention that allowing heavier trucks on our roads would reduce the fleet size and ease congestion was severely flawed.

"We said that these pie-in-the-sky prophecies failed to take into account the price differences for freight forwarders who would quickly determine that road was the better deal and take their freight from rail and coastal shipping," he said. "They also fail to quantify the increased damage to roads that heavier trucks will cause."

The Labour opposition is equally critical with its spokesperson Darren Hughes saying that the Government's decision will put the safety of Kiwi motorists at risk.

"Transport Minister Steven Joyce's obsession with diverting more heavy traffic on



Watch out! Here they come!

to regional roads and motorways along with moves to slash funding for road policing and maintenance will do nothing to keep roads safe," he said

Green Party Transport spokesperson Gareth Hughes (no relation) agrees: "Bigger trucks will have a devastating impact on our roads. The increase is equivalent to adding three elephants to each truck, then multiply this by hundreds of thousand of journeys each year. Increased Road User Charges (RUC) imposed on truck operators will cover the cost of their damage to state highways but they will not cover the damage done to local roads. Ratepayers will be picking up half the bill instead."

He said 88 percent of the road network is made up of local roads with 13,846 local bridges many of which, he says, could also require

The maths:

Rail supporter Kevin Sharp from the Waikato has made a few calculations.

- A 53 tonne, 8 axle truck compared to a 44 tonne truck on eight axles potentially creates a 210% cost increase through reduction in road pavement and substructure lifecycles, according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) which has conducted widely recognised studies of impacts of axle loads of heavy vehicles on pavement and strata testing.

- Ministry of Transport and several other studies indicate taxpayers and ratepayers currently pay around 44% of attributable heavy truck costs.

- 53 tonne trucks will pay about 8% more RUCs per tonne than a 44 tonne truck but costs will rise by about 195% which means tax and ratepayers will now indirectly pay 77.37% of the costs of operating those heavy trucks, up from 44%.

The facts:

- Trucks will be permitted to carry loads of up to 53 tonnes on specified routes.
- Some types of trucks, including logging rigs and vehicle carriers, will be allowed to extend to 22m "as of right" instead of by permits.
- Some buses will be allowed to be 13.5m long - up from 12.6m now.
- Farm machinery will be allowed on roads at all hours, as long as it occupies no more than one lane.

strengthening.

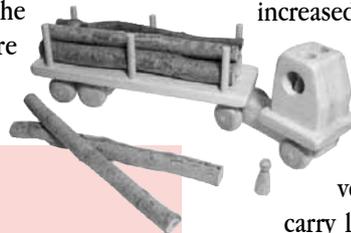
In its editorial the *New Zealand Herald* said the biggest winners from the change will be the trucking companies and their profitability adding that "it would be more reasonable if, as the previous Government proposed, users of the permit system funded the additional road maintenance through extra operating costs".

They also took Joyce to task on his contention that bigger trucks would help improve road safety, reduce congestion, operating costs and emissions. His statement they said "is a highly contrary one to critics of the move, who foresee only an increased threat to safety. They are apt to point out that trucks are involved in 16 per cent of all road fatalities despite comprising only 4 per cent of the vehicle fleet. Allowing trucks to carry loads of up to 53 tonnes can only, they say, make matters worse."

They don't see it ending there: "If roads are so much more efficient as a mover of freight than rail or coastal shipping, there will surely be ever-increasing pressure for increases in the load limit. Otherwise, the number of trucks on the road will have to rise. This, in turn, raises questions about the damage to the country's roads caused by heavier trucks."

Finally they ask: "If heavier trucks are a necessary evil for economic growth, every effort should be made to ameliorate their impact on the public."

"I sincerely hope that no RMTU members voted for National in the last election and thus helped undermine their own jobs," said Wayne. 🇳🇿



Power in the collective

ACTU Conference in Sydney delivers strong messages to unionists

Power Up – the 5th ACTU Organising Conference
27-29 April 2010
Sydney Convention Centre

SINCE the 1st ACTU Organising Conference in 2001, the RMTU has sent a team of delegates and staff across the ditch to attend and participate. This year national president, Jim Kelly; Hillside branch secretary, Les Ingram; NMC rail North Island rep, Bernie Snook; Lyttelton branch secretary, Libi Carr; and organiser, Todd Valster attended.

The challenge for this conference was to build on the success of the last decade to build capacity and grow – to win industry campaigns, activate our base and engage the broader community to build strength. The conference provided a forum for organisers, campaigners, educators and leaders to share ideas and learn from each other.

Power Up consisted of a number of plenary speeches, panels and workshops. It was opened with a ceremony by the traditional people of the Sydney area, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, with amazing song, music and dance. After the opening speeches, the RMTU team spilt up to cover as many of the 40 workshops as possible.

Some highlights from the workshops included:

- Organising beyond pay and conditions – which featured two unions informing the workshop on issues that have been organised around beyond pay and conditions, in these examples – climate change with ways of sharing the gains through reduced energy use and a long term campaign to recognise the importance of the local film industry.

- Inside campaigning – focused on two case studies, one from the Australian Workers Union with their struggle and success of organising a key chicken factory and the LHMU with the successful Australasian ‘Clean Start’ campaign which featured extensive analysis of the cleaning industry, the stakeholders and priorities for this organising campaign. The in depth analysis of the cleaning industry entailed mapping out every commercial building in Australasia, the ownership and cleaning contractors of these buildings,



(L to R) Team RMTU: Todd Valster, Bernie Snook, Les Ingram, Libi Carr and Jim Kelly.

which then identified the priority for the unions resources – two truly inspiring campaigns.

- Getting more bang for your buck – gave examples of viral campaigning to enable every community in Australia to be reached with minimal input from paid union staff or delegates. The use of actual workers and their families to protest against attack on their work was very successful. Members affected put up photos of themselves with simple messages on the unions’ website. Street theatre and the use of satire are also very effective campaigning tools.

- Building sustainable membership and activism – focused on the need for unions to maintain activism after a campaign or collective agreement round.

Other highlights included presentations from Michael Crosby, Helen Kelly and Lyndy McIntyre.

The RMTU is planning to use resources from the conference at this year’s RMTU National Conference in October, where our team will present and run workshops.

All of the RMTU team that attended came back fired up, inspired and grateful for the opportunity to attend.

More information on Power Up can be found on the ACTU website:

www.actu.org.au/Events/OrganisingConference2010.aspx

Rail action day



Petitioning NZ to save our SOL

FOR this year's ITF Railway Workers Day of Action, RMTU members in Wellington and Stratford took to the streets to gain petition signatures for the "Save Our SOL" campaign aiming to keep the Stratford to Okahukura line which is under threat of closure or mothballing due to the cost of repairs following a series of derailments and underutilisation. The petition asks the Government to "instruct KiwiRail to repair and maintain the

Stratford/Okahukura Line to a fit-for-purpose standard; furthermore we ask that KiwiRail is instructed to gainfully utilise this asset."

The highlights of our Day of Action were the participation of our fellow railway workers and the willingness of the public to sign the petition.

At the Kiwirail Board meeting on 28 May it was decided to mothball the SOL for two years from that date. Shame!

LAST Easter weekend, Grant Hinton from the national passenger marketing office, was assistant train manager on the Silver Fern to Gisborne. During the course of this trip the train stopped opposite the memorial to the victims of the Kopuawhara flood on February 18, 1938, just north of the Kopuawhara Viaduct.

"The memorial site is very overgrown," he writes adding that only the top portion was visible.

With the future of the line under discussion and the 75th anniversary of this event just under three years away, he suggests "perhaps now would be the time to start raising awareness of the sacrifices made in the construction of this and other lines".

"Ultimately perhaps, a memorial service at the site on February 21, 2013 would be appropriate," he said.

Following some research Grant offers the following history:

By late 1937 work on the Wairoa/Gisborne section of the railway was firmly focused on the difficult section between Kopuawhara and Gisborne. To house the

Remembering lives lost at Kopuawhara



work force, construction camps had been established. One of these, Number Four, was up the valley from the viaduct.

Tunnel tailings

The path to be followed by the railway required it to pass through four short tunnels before leaving the valley through the 2.9km long Tikiwhata Tunnel. Excavations from one of the small tunnels was dumped over the side of the valley, a common practice in those days.

Before the tragedy occurred in the early hours of February 19, 1938, steady rain fell in the area saturating the loosely dumped soil which then slumped into the stream blocking its flow. As the rain continued

the stream built up behind the blockage until about 3 am when a torrential cloudburst collapsed the loose rubble sending a five metre wall of water down the valley.

At Camp Number 4, the sleeping workforce had no warning and by 3.30am water was flowing through the site and rising rapidly. The first worker to realise what was happening raised the alarm by ringing on the cookhouse gong, and running from hut to hut banging on doors. His body was later found five kilometres downstream.

Many in the camp tried to escape by climbing onto the roofs of their huts, only to be taken by the current when the huts collapsed. Eleven men climbed onto a truck in attempt to escape but the current tossed the truck over and they were swept away. In all, 21 lives were lost – 20 men and one woman.

In 1942 a memorial obelisk was erected on the site. Today, the only access to the site is by rail or tramping up the valley.

Grant says we should not forget that many of the New Zealand's railway lines came at a human cost. "It will be tragic enough if their sacrifice is in vain, but it will be worse still if it is forgotten completely."

Workplace and motor vehicle injuries: which is which?



Lawyer Ben Thompson looks at the vexing question of motor vehicle accidents and ACC

RECENTLY, we have received queries from some members regarding accidents which are linked to both the workplace and to a motor vehicle. These members have asked whether such injuries are categorised by ACC as workplace injuries or motor vehicle injuries?

The answer, unfortunately, is not straightforward.

We need to consider the relationship between three sections of the Accident Compensation Act – sections 28, 29 and 35.

Section 28 – Workplace Injuries

This section describes what constitutes a workplace injury. Put briefly, an injury is a workplace injury when it occurs in any of the following circumstances:

- While the person is at any place for the purposes of his/her employment – sec 28(1)(a).
- While the person is on a break at work – sec 28(1)(b).
- While the person is travelling to or from work, at the start or end of the day, so long as the transport being used is provided by the employer and is provided for the purpose of transporting workers and is driven by the employer, or by another worker at the direction of the employer – sec 28(1)(c)
- While the person is travelling between work and another place, for the purpose of getting treatment for another workplace injury – sec 28(1)(d).

Travelling to or from work

To be counted as a workplace injury,

the vehicle being used to travel to or from work must not only have been provided by the employer, but the wording of the law suggests that the vehicle must actually be driven by the employer, or by another worker (ie - not the one that gets injured).

Therefore, it would be fair to say that the majority of injuries sustained whilst travelling to work in the morning, or away from work at night, do not come within the definition of a workplace injury as most of us who drive to work do so in our own cars. Clearly, if we have an accident, this is not counted as a workplace injury.

Travelling during the work day

A lot of workers in the rail industry

travel by motor vehicle to various places over the course of a working day in order to carry out their jobs. If such a worker is injured whilst doing so, such an injury would clearly fall within the definition of a workplace injury, as it occurred whilst the worker was in a place 'for the purposes of his/her employment'.

However, we also need to think about whether such injuries fit the description of a 'motor vehicle injury'.

Section 35 – Motor Vehicle Injuries

This section sets out what constitutes a 'motor vehicle injury'.

- Injuries suffered because of the movement of a motor vehicle.
 - Injuries suffered because of a stationary vehicle being hit by another vehicle.
- These categories are fairly straightforward, and self-explanatory. Additionally, section 35(2) sets out what does not constitute a motor vehicle injury. Those being:
- Injuries suffered whilst loading/unloading/repairing/servicing a vehicle.
 - Injuries suffered whilst using a vehicle



for a purpose other than a means of conveyance.

So if, for example, a worker suffered an injury whilst driving a straddle on the wharf, this would not constitute of motor vehicle injury, because the vehicle was not being used as 'a means of conveyance'.

What happens if an injury fits both descriptions?

When comparing sections 28 and 35, it is obvious that there will be some injuries which fulfil both the definitions of a workplace injury, and a motor vehicle injury. For the sake of this article, we will call these 'crossover injuries'.

Perhaps the clearest example of a crossover injury is where a worker suffers an injury whilst travelling to a different work site, during the course of the working day. This is both a workplace injury (having occurred whilst the worker was at a place for the purposes of his/her employment – sec 28(1)(a)), and a motor vehicle injury (having been caused by the movement of a motor vehicle – sec 35(1)(a)).

So, in such cases, how does ACC decide whether to allocate a crossover injury as either a workplace, or motor vehicle injury?

The answer lies in section 29 of the Act which applies to all crossover injuries and determines how they are to be allocated to one category or the other.

Section 29(1) states that a crossover injury will be categorised as a workplace injury (and not a motor vehicle injury), only if:

- the injury occurred in the circumstances described in section 28(1)(c) (travel to/from work as described above), or
- the injury occurred in the circumstances described in section 28(1)(d) (travel to/from work in order to obtain treatment for another workplace injury).

As we've seen, it will be quite rare for an injury which occurred whilst a worker is travelling to/from work at the start or finish of the day to be classified as a workplace injury.

However, in the uncommon case where that does occur (ie; where the employer is driving the employee to work in a vehicle specifically used for employee transport), section 29(1) confirms that the injury will be categorised as a workplace injury, even though it might also satisfy the definition of a motor vehicle injury.

Section 29(2) states that a crossover

injury will be categorised as a motor vehicle injury (and not a workplace injury), if:

- the injury occurred in the circumstances described in section 28(1)(a) (whilst the worker is in any place for the purposes of his/her employment), or
- the injury occurred in the circumstances described in section 28(1)(b) (whilst the worker is on a break).

Most crossover injuries will be caught by section 29(2), and will therefore be categorised as motor vehicle injuries. Section 29(2) is much broader than section 29(1), and will cover a much wider range of crossover injuries.

Certainly, in the case of a worker being injured whilst travelling to a different work-site during the course of the working day, this injury will not be a workplace injury – it will be a motor vehicle injury.

Crossover injuries and first week of earnings-related compensation

Concerns have been raised among workers that the classification of a crossover injury as being a motor vehicle might result in an injured worker missing out on their first week of earnings-related compensation (which is normally only paid by ACC in cases of workplace injury).

However, section 29 also states that if a person suffers a crossover injury, then ACC will pay the first week of compensation regardless of whether the crossover injury is ultimately categorised as a workplace or motor vehicle injury.

Call outs

We have received a specific query regarding call-outs.

In the case of call outs, the worker's shift begins from the time of the phone call. So, when they are driving to the depot, they are already 'at work' (rather than travelling 'to work').

What happens when an injury takes place on the way to the depot?

This is another example of a crossover injury. Because the injury happened whilst the worker was at a place for the purposes of his/her employment, it fits the definition of workplace injury. However, because it occurred due to the movement of a vehicle, it is also a motor vehicle injury.

This brings section 29 into play and spe-

cifically section 29(2). Because the injury occurred whilst the worker was in a place for the purposes of his/her employment, section 29(2) applies, and the injury will be categorised as a motor vehicle accident.

Summary

Unfortunately, the interface between workplace and motor vehicle injuries is a confusing area of law. By way of summary, the following points can be made:

The legislation governing ACC separately defines what constitutes a workplace injury, and what constitutes a motor vehicle injury.

Interestingly, an injury which occurs whilst travelling to work at the start of the day, or home again at the end of the day, will only fit the description of a workplace injury in a very limited set of circumstances. In the majority of cases, such injuries will be categorised as motor vehicle injuries.

■ However, there will be some injuries which fit both definitions of workplace injury and motor vehicle injury. A common example of such a 'crossover' injury would be where a worker is hurt whilst travelling between work sites, during the working day.

■ In the case of crossover injuries, a decision must be made regarding whether the injury is characterised as either a motor vehicle or workplace injury. This decision is made with reference to the framework contained in section 29 of the Act.

■ Under section 29, most crossover injuries will be categorised as motor vehicle injuries, rather than workplace injuries.

■ Section 29 also provides that, regardless of whether a crossover injury is categorised as a workplace or motor vehicle injury, the hurt worker will still be paid their first week of earnings-related compensation by ACC.

It is quite clear that this regime seeks to limit the amount of injuries that are classified as workplace injuries.

Instead, the regime is designed to categorise a larger amount of injuries as motor vehicle injuries.

The consequence of this approach is that the cost of the injury will be paid for out of the motor vehicle account (which is funded via car registration and petrol taxes), rather than the work account (which is funded by employers). 

WORKERS' M

Trains stopped for Memorial Day

TRAINS stopped at 12 noon for one minute on April 28 to remember those who died at work.

"Members of our union work in dangerous industries," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "This is a day we remember them. Since 1994 we have had 27 RMTU rail and port members killed at work. RMTU members attended memorial events throughout New Zealand to keep those 27 workers in their thoughts."

He added that New Zealand also has far too many level crossing accidents and trespasser events, often ending in death or serious injury.

"Although the workplace fatality record has improved since a ministerial inquiry in 2000, all workplace deaths are preventable," he said. "As well as drawing attention to the human cost of workplace fatalities, accidents and disease, today we call for strong legislative protection for workers to prevent these. Recent signals that the ACC work account will be handed over to insurance firms is just one area where our members have deep concern at the government's approach to health and safety."

He said that workers have the right to go to work and come home unharmed.

"Honour the dead, fight for the living' remains the banner with which we mark Workers Memorial Day," he said. "and we pledge to protect and look after our fellow worker." 🌐

Port of Napier

A gathering of 30 to 35 people attended this year's Workers' Memorial Day with representatives from the RMTU, MUNZ, SFW and PONL management.

Thanks to Neville Stevenson our industrial chaplain and Alan Burke (MUNZ) whom led the service.

Waikato



Waikato members following memorial

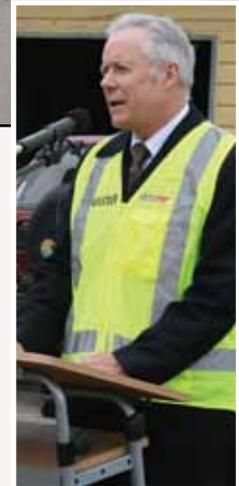
Hutt



Hazel Armstrong and Paul Quinn MP.



Ainsley Mei.



Peter Conway – CTU.



Elena Troun (manager) of Mallan

MEMORIAL DAY

Mount Maunganui

RMTU members participate in the Mount Maunganui public rally protesting the use of methyl bromide at Port Tauranga. Centre: Green Party MP Sue Kedgley.



Branch members pose for the unveiling.



Call to ban methyl bromide

A newly formed group, the Coalition Against the use of Methyl Bromide (CAUMB), held a series of protests during April and May to oppose the use of the toxic gas at New Zealand ports including in Picton, Tauranga and Wellington. The campaign coincided in some areas with the annual Workers' Memorial Day commemorations.

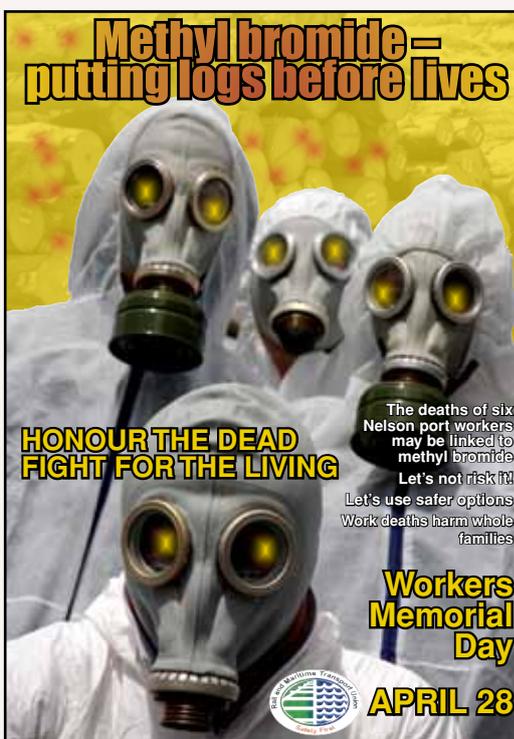
Green MP Sue Kedgley who spoke for the coalition at a number of the rallies said she met one port worker at Tauranga who told her that for years his job on the wharf had been to drive cars which had just been fumigated with methyl bromide. "No one had told him that methyl bromide is extremely toxic and was a neurological poison. Nor had anyone advised him to wear protective gear."

She said this highlighted the "slack and primitive way" it was being used in New Zealand ports, and how it put the health and safety of workers at risk.

Another wharf-worker told Kedgley that there was so much pressure to fumigate logs quickly, they often could not leave them for the required 24 hours after fumigation before moving them. Sometimes, he said, they were moved as little as 10 or 20 minutes afterwards.

"Tauranga residents need to pressure the Port, and the Regional Council," said Kedgley. "They should also pressure the Port to use alternatives."

The Port of Tauranga is the biggest user of methyl bromide in New Zealand.



At Picton the catchcry was "Ban the gas". Concerned workers and residents carried placards as they marched through Picton. They wanted to speak with the port's chief executive Ian McNabb, but he refused telling the Marlborough Express later that he had nothing to say.

CAUMB is made up of representatives from Soil and Health New Zealand Association, the Green Party, the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ), the Council of Trade Unions, the Safe Food Campaign, the Guardians of the Sounds, the Pesticide Action Network, Maritime Union New Zealand and Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay.

MUNZ and RMTU general secretaries Joe Fleetwood and Wayne Butson both called for methyl bromide to be banned.

"No-one really knows what damage this gas has done and is doing," said Fleetwood. "If it's really safe, let's get the port executives down here and subject them to it. Ban this gas, ban it now."

He added that the deaths of six port workers in Nelson from motor neuron disease has led to an ongoing debate about possible links.

He says that further research is being carried out and there was cause for concern.

"It seems once again that profit has taken priority over the safety of workers, communities and environment." 

Controversial

IN July 2008, the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) decided there were grounds for the reassessment of the use of the fumigant methyl bromide in New Zealand.

In November 2009, after more than 12 months researching and evaluating information from New Zealand and overseas, staff at ERMA completed their preliminary recommendations.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson agrees adding that he is very concerned about the health, welfare and safety of his Union members and "all their families. We cannot see why companies insist on using it when there are viable and safer alternatives".

(l to r) Phil Bosworth, Rhys Lowe and Sonia Ryrie.



at (KiwiRail) and Trevor MP.

ACC under attack – latest changes

Despite evidence to the contrary, the Government continues the cry that ACC is losing money – and thus justify their cuts and cut-backs

ON 2 March 2010, the Accident Compensation Amendment Act 2010 ('the Amendment Act') was passed.

The Amendment Act contains a number of changes to the ACC scheme, which have been brought in by the National government.

Several of these changes are designed to be 'cost containment measures'. Essentially, these particular changes take the form of cuts to cover and entitlement for injured people, and will come into force on 1 July 2010.

These changes – which have the potential to affect all New Zealand workers – are summarised below.

6% threshold for hearing loss claims

ACC covers hearing loss that is caused by exposure to noise in the workplace.

The Amendment Act puts in place a threshold for the coverage of noise-induced hearing loss. As from 1 July, cover will only be available for claimants who have a noise-induced hearing loss of 6% or more.

The National government have defended this threshold by stating that the 'minor' nature of a hearing loss of less than 6% does not justify ACC coverage. However, the New Zealand Audiological Society has explained that people with a hearing loss of less than 6% can experience a significant reduction in the sharpness and precision

with which they can hear sound, and will often lose their ability to hear soft high-frequency sounds, which are typically at the beginnings and ends of words. This affects a person's ability to understand speech, particularly in the presence of background noise, and possibly constitutes a significant disability.

Another consequence of the '6% threshold' is that workers who are denied cover will be able to sue their employers for their hearing loss.

Independence

From 1 July, injured people who are receiving weekly compensation will be deemed to be 'vocationally independent' (and therefore lose their entitlement to weekly compensation) if they are assessed as being able to work in certain jobs for a mere 30 hours per week – down from the current standard of 35 hours per week.

It should be borne in mind that ACC does not have to actually test whether an injured person can work 30 hours per week – it is enough if an assessor gives an opinion that the injured person is able to do so.

Currently, when an assessor is nominating possible job options, they have to take into account how much the injured person was earning prior to his or her injury. From 1 July, assessor will have no such obligation. So, for example, it will be possible for an injured locomotive engineer to lose his/her entitlement to weekly compensation on the

basis that an assessor thinks he/she is able to work 30 hours per week as a filing clerk.

Work-related gradual process claims

The Amendment Act contains changes to the test for cover work-related gradual process claims, which are specifically designed to reduce the number of workers receiving cover.

From 1 July, in addition to proving that his or her gradual process injury was caused in the workplace, a worker will also have to show:

- that the particular workplace task or environment that caused the injury, did not exist to any material extent outside work; and

- that the work put him or her at 'a significantly greater risk' of suffering the particular injury.

So, for example, consider a track worker who develops carpal tunnel syndrome after years of exposure to vibration at work. Even though this worker can prove that the workplace vibration caused the condition, she/he still might miss out on ACC cover on the basis that some overseas studies suggest that there is a relatively high incidence of carpal tunnel syndrome in society generally.

Abatement of weekly compensation

If an injured person is being paid weekly compensation by ACC, their payments will be abated down if they receive any other earnings whilst they are injured.

Currently, any leave payments made to a worker on termination of his or her employment is not treated as 'earnings' for the purposes of abatement of weekly compensation. Therefore, if injured workers have their employment terminated due to incapacity, any holiday pay they receive does not result in a reduction of weekly compensation payments.

However, the Amendment Act reverses

The National government is effectively seeking to shift more of the cost of injury onto the injured individual, and as such they should be a cause of concern for all New Zealander workers.

this position by classing leave payments made on termination of employment as 'earnings', for the purposes of abatement. So, in the above example, the injured workers would have their weekly compensation abated down by the holiday pay they receive – notwithstanding that they may have 'earned' that holiday pay prior to suffering injury.

Non-permanent workers

The Amendment Act changes the method by which weekly compensation is calculated for seasonal/temporary workers.

The level of an injured worker's weekly compensation payments depends on how much they were earning immediately prior to suffering their injury. Under the current law, in relation to all employees who are injured, ACC must calculate their pre-injury earnings by taking all the money earned in the 52 week period to the injury, and then dividing that amount by the number of weeks it actually took the employee to earn it.

Take, for example, a worker who earned \$50,000 in the 52 week period prior to injury. However, she/he only actually worked 40 of those 52 weeks. The pre-injury earnings therefore are calculated by dividing \$50,000 by 40 weeks (\$1,250 weekly).

However, from 1 July, the picture will be different for 'non-permanent' workers. If the ACC decides that a worker is not in 'permanent employment' at the time of injury, then the amount of money earned during the 52 week prior to the injury will always be divided by 52 – regardless of how many weeks it took the worker to earn the money.

So, to revisit the above example: ACC decides that the worker who had earned \$50,000 was actually a non-permanent employee when she/he was injured. Instead of dividing the pre-injury earnings by 40, they will instead be divided by 52, which gives a weekly amount of \$962. Therefore, just by changing the method of calculation, the employee's weekly compensation payments will decrease by \$288 per week.

Wilfully self-inflicted injuries/suicides

Currently, cover and entitlements are

available for all wilfully self-inflicted injuries and suicides. However, from 1 July, all such claimants will be automatically disentitled.

The exception to this rule will be if the self-harm was due to a mental injury, so long as that mental injury is itself covered by ACC.

The problem with this is that very few instances of mental injury are coverable. The bulk of mental illnesses – those not connected to a physical injury – will not be covered. Therefore, if a person with schizophrenia harms him/herself as a result of illness, he/she will receive no assistance from ACC.

Weekly compensation for 'potential earners'

A 'potential earner' is somebody who suffered his or her injury either before 18 years of age, or when he/she was engaged in full time study that started prior to turning 18, and continued until after the person turned 18.

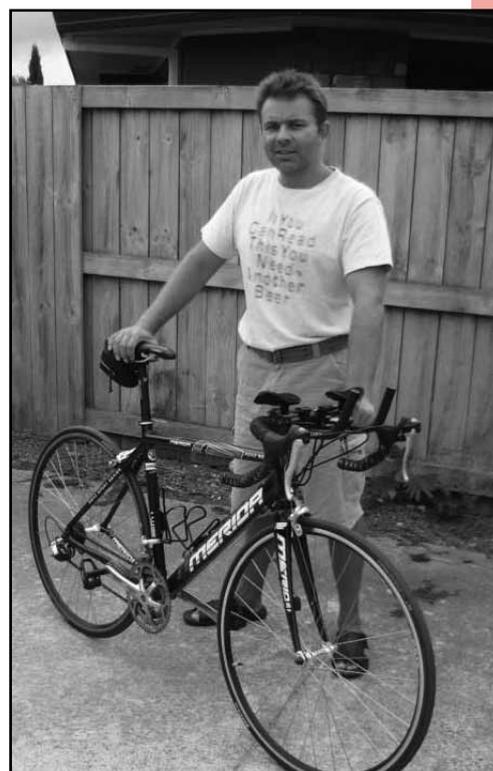
If a person was a potential earner immediately before incapacity, is 18 or older, is not engaged in full time study, and does not have more than minimal weekly earnings, then that person becomes entitled to weekly compensation after being incapacitated for six months.

Currently, the level of pre-injury earnings for potential is deemed (in most cases) to be 125% of the minimum wage. However, from 1 July, this amount will decrease to 100% of the minimum wage. Since weekly compensation is paid at a rate of 80% of pre-injury earnings, this means that an incapacitated potential earner will be paid 80% of the minimum wage.

Conclusion

With these changes, the National government is effectively seeking to shift more of the cost of injury onto the injured individual, and as such they should be a cause of concern for all New Zealander workers.

Whilst National have sought to justify these cuts by saying the ACC scheme has become too expensive, an independent review undertaken by Pricewaterhouse Coopers in 2008 confirmed that the scheme delivers excellent value for money, when compared with other schemes internationally. 🌐



Triathlete shows grit

Dave Stephenson is an employee at Orica Chemnet for the last two years and a keen triathlete. He was questioned about this for the Transport Worker.

TW. Why did you pick triathlon?

DS. I have never done it before. It helps keep fit, for other sports. As a youngster I used to cycle a lot, and that helped my decision to take up triathalons.

TW. How do you get on with the other disciplines, swimming and running?

DS. I do my best in the swimming and running, and I am improving in both disciplines.

TW. How much time do you spend training each week?

DS. About six hours a week alternating between the three disciplines.

TW. Does your family think you are mad?

DS. Yes but they are very supportive and are my support team, and the children are doing triathalons now.

TW. What are your best times?

DS. This year's Port of Tauranga half ironman with swimming 44mins 41 secs, biking 2hrs 49mins 48secs and running 2hrs 56secs. A total of 5hrs 45mins 1sec.

TW. How long will you continue.

DS. Until my body says otherwise.

Huge support for Hamilton-Auckland passenger service



Jon Reeves with MP Sue Moroney with the petition destined for Parliament.

THE petition from 11,500 people in and around Hamilton calling on the Government to establish a passenger train service between Hamilton and Auckland was tabled in Parliament last month - the largest railway petition New Zealand has seen for decades.

The petition entitled "Waikato Trains NOW!" was presented to Hamilton Labour List MP Sue Moroney by Jon Reeves, the campaign manager, in front of an audience of over 60 members of the public.

Reeves said: "The presentation of this well-received petition is just the start of our 'Waikato Trains NOW!' campaign. If we do not see any positive results from both

Environment Waikato and the Government soon we have other plans to help them realise what the people and businesses of Hamilton and the Waikato want. We certainly have strong public support for the trains and it is time both the regional council and the Government jump on board.

Moroney, called on Hamilton's two National MPs to join her in advocating for a service supported by so many Hamiltonians.

"The job of local MPs is to advocate for improved services for the people they represent," says Sue. "It is not good enough for the two National MPs to be neutral, at best, about this issue. Their Government

will only move if there is strong advocacy from their own local MPs.

"In particular, David Bennett needs to reverse his publicly-stated opposition to a passenger train service between Hamilton and Auckland, before the petition comes before the select committee he chairs," said Sue.

The campaign calls for three return services from Hamilton to Auckland (Britomart Station) via Newmarket. The trains would connect with Auckland Airport shuttle buses at Papatoetoe which would also be the transfer point for Middlemore Hospital. The services would use ex-Silver Fern railcars which would be refurbished to high standards with a catering/buffet service, air-conditioning and WiFi for business commuters. The trains would depart Hamilton at approximately 6:30am, midday and 5pm with the evening service departing Auckland at approximately 5:20pm. Traveling time would be between 1 hour 50 minutes to 2 hours. The abandoned Hamilton Central underground station would be re-opened.

Mulroney was surprised at how popular the petition was: "I accompanied the CBT to shopping centres and market stalls to gather signatures on the petition and I would say 90% of those who had access to it, signed it," she said. "People can't believe that we don't have a commuter train between the fourth-largest and the largest city in New Zealand. They are only 120 kilometres apart. We own the tracks, we own the trains, the public supports it and carriages are available right now - it's a no-brainer."



Farewell Jimmy Oliver

ON Friday April 26 Jimmy Oliver (pictured second from right) spent his last day on the job in the cab of a steam loco - just where he started 50 years ago. He started in Palmerston North helping the put-and-take crews light up 40 or so locos on a Sunday afternoon and early Monday morning. He mainly served his time in Marton, Westfield, Taihape and Hamilton. Jim was always ready to pass on his knowledge, latterly teaching about steam locomotives. He will be missed around the depot and we wish him a very long and happy retirement.



NZ Harbours Superannuation Plan

AT its last meeting held in Wellington on the 25 February 2010 the Plan said farewell to Peter Clemens as a Trustee. He was appointed in May 2002 after having been an Alternate Trustee since 1999.



Dion Young from Port Tauranga a worker rep trustee of the HSP.



Hal Upton from Port Lyttelton a worker rep trustee of the HSP.



Peter Clemens receives a gift of appreciation from David Stevens chair of the Harbours Super Plan for his years of valuable contribution as a trustee on behalf of members..

Newly appointed replacement trustee of the plan Wayne Butson.

ANZAC DAY



AN ever growing number of RMTU members gathered with other members of the public at the Petone Station flagpole to honour the railwaymen (they were all men) who served and died in the world wars. Each year the numbers attending this ceremony have grown which reflects the upward trend nationally of those attending ANZAC Day services. The flagpole is truly ANZAC as it is half native New Zealand timber and half Aus-



tralian Jarrab. A similar pole was erected at Hornsby Station in NSW but sadly that flagpole no longer stands. Central Rail rep on the Union's National Management Committee Howard Phillips is pictured as he prepares to lay the Union's national wreath. Another wreath was laid on behalf of the Hutt Branch. Inset is the flagpole base with the wreaths laid.

The future of NZ rail

IN ten years KiwiRail will be a sustainable business according to Minister for Rail Stephen Joyce who was the keynote speaker at the NZ Rail 2010 conference in Wellington in April.

However, he said, rail would not be favoured above coastal shipping and road.

“The reality is we need to have all three transport modes working to complement each other, and have their level of usage determined by their relative costs and convenience, and therefore suitability for the myriad of different types of freight carried on them,” he told the conference.

Freight-forwarders, he said, need clear choices and each must be competitive and “priced at a level that reflects their costs”.

For rail, he said, this means an operation which is efficient, commercially

viable and an asset to the taxpayer.

To achieve this he said some “hard-nosed realism” was required and it was now decision time.

The Turnaround

His government’s “Turnaround Plan” would see KiwiRail become a sustainable freight-based business within ten years able to fund ongoing costs and capital expenditure.

“A challenging goal,” he admitted.

He thought overall conditions within rail had significantly affected the public view of the operation and it had “lost relevance as a time-dependant freight option” with its share of total freight declining in a period when the freight task was rising.

He also spoke about the government’s continued commitment to pump in funding and the company’s responsibility to fine tune pricing to give freight-forwarders a real choice.

He also had words for management and staff asking both to improve productivity.

Finally he cast considerable doubt on the future prospects of smaller, under-utilised lines saying: “So we need to ask

ourselves where that money is better spent - maintaining unused branch lines or developing the main lines that our economy needs to grow.”

He added that campaigners for some of these lines shouldn’t “die in a ditch for a line that’s only carrying fresh air”.

He concluded very positively saying: “With a sense of realism and pragmatism and work together we can make this work and see rail make a significant contribution to our economic growth story.”

Other speakers at the Conference included new KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn who talked about developing New Zealand rail into a world-class system. He outlined many projects which were underway and highlighted others that were being planned including continued upgrades of networks, new stations, a new ballast cleaner and the Matangi development.

He said a national network is the “only sustainable model” supporting Joyce’s comments about under-utilised lines, and

Budget boost for rail - with strings attached

THE government giveth with one hand and threatened to take away with the other in its pre-budget announcement about rail.

In it, it has committed to investing \$250 million to support the KiwiRail Turnaround Plan – but firmly threatens the future of a number of branch or under-utilised lines.

The much-touted \$4.6 billion Turnaround Plan is designed to see the rail freight business become sustainable within a decade by getting it to a point where it funds its costs solely from customer revenue.

The Budget 2010 appropriation is the first round of government support of a total package of \$750 million over the next three years.

The Minister of Transport, Stephen Joyce, says that freight being moved on New Zealand’s transport network will double by 2040 and all transport modes need to become more efficient to meet this demand.

On the down side some four smaller lines are under notice to perform or they will be closed down, including SOL, north Wairarapa and Gisborne.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson says \$750m is much-needed investment but is only a tiny part of the expected total required.

“Nevertheless, it’s encouraging to hear (Prime Minister John) Key say that the Government is committed to improving and retaining the rail network,” he said. “So, no privatisation envisaged at this stage perhaps.”

The government’s Turnaround Plan has nine elements:

- A connected network which means that any line closures cannot block the trunk line network linkage
- Looking for growth in volumes and traffic opportunities
- Investment in infrastructure including many aging bridges
- Creating greater ferry capacity by building a rail deck on the Kaitaki and cutting the Aratere in half to extend its rail capacity
- Wagons and locos to be upgraded
- Improving productivity
- Improving and extending passing loops.
- Have Metro rails cover their true cost.

The CTU also welcomed the positive aspects of the Government’s announcement but adding that the allocated money was only a fraction of what is needed.

CTU secretary Peter Conway said: “The signal of government commitment to improve and retain the network is positive.”



Transport Minister
Stephen Joyce

"It appears National's 'Turnaround' planning means chain-sawing the rail industry off at the knees."

growing revenue and improving productivity.

Distressing for workers

"It is distressing for rail workers to find themselves with an owner hell bent on writing limitless cheques for roads and at the same time having to be dragged kicking and squealing to invest in rail," said, RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "Railway workers have stuck with the business through the systematic spiralling down of its assets during the privatisation years up to today where we have a nationalised rail system restored.

"Given the impending mothballing and/or closure of lines and a Minister and CEO baldly stating they have a lack of faith in rail workers' ability to build quality EMU rolling stock for Auckland, it is little wonder that an ever-increasing number of our skilled workers are looking to opportunities across the Tasman where a Labor Government recognises the value of a rejuvenated rail as a sustainable transport option.

"It appears National's 'Turnaround' planning means chain-sawing the rail industry off at the knees. The strength of rail has always been its network and just like a tree if you remove the limbs, the trunk it will soon die." 🌳

reinforcing the argument that freight was the company's core business.

Critical routes

The critical routes to focus on, he said, were those between Auckland and Tauranga; Auckland urban network; Auckland to Christchurch; Waikato/BoP forestry lines; Oringi to Whareroa; Wellington urban network; Nakawau to Lyttelton; and Edendale to Port Chalmers, Timaru and Lyttelton.

He said the focus, among other things, "must be" on improving reliability and transit times together with

Did you know

RECENTLY, your executive pulled up figures from the Union database to look at membership through age brackets. It brought up some interesting results.

Total Members	Age Band	Male	
		Female	Female
1.97%	Unknown DOB	1.39%	0.58%
0.69%	Up to 19	0.60%	0.09%
3.74%	20 - 24	3.25%	0.49%
5.37%	25 - 29	4.69%	0.69%
6.95%	30 - 34	5.88%	1.06%
9.20%	35 - 39	7.85%	1.35%
11.39%	40 - 44	9.98%	1.42%
17.50%	45 - 49	15.68%	1.81%
16.28%	50 - 54	15.22%	1.06%
13.12%	55 - 59	12.34%	0.77%
9.84%	60 - 64	9.40%	0.44%
3.96%	65 & Over	3.80%	0.15%
100.00%		90.09%	9.91%



Rail action day

Thailand rail unions targeted passengers and the general public through a culture ceremony at the State Railway headquarters followed by a demonstration to Bangkok's main train station.



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TARANAKI RAIL BRANCH

SIGNS have gone up on the wall at Stratford saying that staff with excess annual leave should be looking at taking it or they may be booked off at the company's discretion. That can only mean one thing: the off-season has arrived. A sigh of relief I suppose you could say, but really the off-season is the calm before the storm. The next milk season is looming and we will have major problems with lack of locomotive engineers at Stratford, Whareroa and Palmerston North.

The Stratford to Okahukura line at this time is undecided whether it will be reopened or mothballed. The company in their wisdom thought that operations' staff would fall over themselves to transfer down to Whareroa, which is the hub of operations in the Taranaki. Operations' staff had other ideas and not one person has volunteered to transfer apart from a rail operator at Stratford who has been accepted in locomotive training to be based at Whareroa. Once again, lack of planning for the future from the company. Who is going to cop it?

Yep, the staff.

Since the last newsletter from Taranaki there have been a number of staff departing from Palmerston North for various driving jobs in Australia. Talking to a few of the departed it's not all about the money, rostering seems to be a big part of it with the appealing part working two weeks on and having two weeks off. While I'm not saying that the company should be looking at that option, they should be looking at our current rosters. In the Taranaki the milk season means long night shifts for locomotive engineers and this looming milk season is looking to be a shocker. Coupled with the Marton–New Plymouth line not being up to standard for the number of trains running in the section with the lack of a signalling system and the expected shortage of drivers, this coming season could be an absolute dog. A couplings meeting has been organised in June between roster delegates at Palmerston North, Whareroa and Stratford so hopefully cool heads can try and come up with a roster that works for the company

as well as staff.

Lance Nelson has departed for Queensland and seems to be enjoying driving trains in the West Island. Local shunting guru Nev Potroz has knocked up 40 years on the job, well done Nev. With a locomotive engineer on maternity leave, another on light duties and one LE transferring to Wellington Metro, the stocks in the Naki are fairly thin.

Adrian Jenkins has been accepted in locomotive training so I suppose that's a start but with a retirement next year, and another three to four in the next few years, things in the Naki will always be light on their feet unless the company plans for the future. A number of rail operators are willing to make the step up to LE so the staff are there to be picked it's just up to the company now. Jim Henderson and Mike Baker both rail operators at Whareroa have also been accepted in locomotive training to be based at Palmerston North. So AJ, Jim, and B2 good luck for the future guys.

Jim Quinn has yet to make his decision on the Stratford–Okahukura line. There was a recently a derailment on the MNPL

Continued on the next page

\$1,500 AD&D

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

Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year. Please complete and return the enclosed reply card to have an AIL representative deliver your AD&D Benefit and explain the additional \$10,000 option. This is very important to you and your family.



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WAIKATO RAIL BRANCH

THE branch has been, and are, involved in a number of disputes such as the terminal L/E issue, Morrinsville staffing, CT manning levels and use of contractors at KR Network,

Geoff Carr's dismissal is now in the hands of the Union's lawyers and so the matter will be pursued legally until a judgement is received or an agreement reached.

Executive members attended the handover of the petition for a regular service



(l to r) Some of the branch leadership Alby Barr, Barry Simpkins and John Marsh.

between Hamilton and 'Jaffaland' to local members of Parliament. We will monitor progress of the petition.

The branch conducted an excellent

International Workers' Memorial Day on April 28 at Te Rapa and are to be commended for the construction and layout of the new memorial site, with plaque, unveiled by the general secretary on the day.

The branch ran a successful delegates training seminar in Te Rapa on the April 7.

NAPIER PORT BRANCH

IT has been a very busy period at Napier Port. My understanding is we are up in container volumes by around 7% on last year and, like most ports, logs are in "lift off" mode. This was achieved with fewer staff causing, at times and to the expense of pulp vessels, a shortfall in both permanent and casual RMTU members to man them. The gap is being filled by HBSS (MUNZ).

The labour shortage was obvious to us well prior to the season, through attrition, promotion, etc. However, the bosses played the usual "more with less" game.

It is a plus that the company leaders continue to find business and push to increase the ports profits but somewhere along the way they failed to actually see the lack of infrastructure that was needed to accommodate increased work – primarily, space, machinery and trained staff. We do not train staff during the season within the operational area for many reasons, but mainly H&S. As a consequence there will be nationwide job advertisements for drivers around mid May, which is also positive, though in some respects the horse has already bolted in terms of 2010's seasonal demands. I expect by the time this is published all the positions will have been appointed or be well into the interview process.

The concerns arising from this are for those who work within the Port gates who are already seeking changes to their career paths or are wanting to move to other



Port branch members attend a report back meeting for the collective agreement.

parts of the port also want to take advantage of the opportunities that come as a result of training.

Without a doubt, the company will look for new people externally who already possess the credentials/skills, either in full or in part, which in essence is a leg up for the applicant and a cost saving for the company in terms of training. At the end of the day the company have the ability to choose but rest assured there will be a voice for those on the inside if they ignore their own! Let's see if the nepotism or cronyism factor is kept at bay as we saw in Timaru at the time of redundancies to our members.

Spare a thought for brothers and sisters at Prime Port, there is still uncertainty in their future.

There was an issue of Port of Timaru

workers being sent to work at Port Napier, however this did not eventuate as the Napier members were not prepared to let it happen. This was not having a go at the Timaru members, but rather at the lack of consultation from Port Napier management.

The negotiations for the Gottwald Collective Agreement will commence in the second week of June.

Ports Forum, May 4&5

A busy two days in Wellington and the proverbial load of home work including communication, mapping and organising our port industry – essential stuff for the growth and maintenance of our alliance with MUNZ. As was quoted, let's stop fighting over the scraps and unionise where it's needed.

line which isolated the Taranaki. While the impact of this derailment was not significant and the local gangers had the line opened up fairly quickly, this must be a warning to the company. Tokomaru in the

TARANAKI RAIL BRANCH [cont]

Manawatu recently had a derailment where the line was closed. The company still have the option of rerouting trains around the Wairarapa. Not sure whether they used this

option, but currently the Taranaki has no escape option. The company are taking a huge risk in mothballing the SOL if that's their intended option.

CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH

GOOD ol' John Key. Wasn't there a song called 'No John No john No John, NO; My boy John can do no wrong'? Yeah right. Very appropriate for what he has done this week: Number one don't give the Tuhoes and then make snide innuendoes that they are cannibals. Look forward to how the spin doctors go on these.

Ten billion bucks to be spent on roads in the next few years and increase their capacity. What a really good policy for road safety. Not. There are trucks tipping over as they cannot get round roundabouts now and running off roads and into people and property. Trucks cause traffic to slow, impatient drivers take risks and passing lanes are few and far between. And when you do finally get to one the truck accelerates way over his 90km/h restriction to make your passing manoeuvre more risky. Of course let's not forget that in the vast majority of cases we have a railway running beside the road with no trains running on it.

What about the MECA? Good or bad? It has been very well received around the country. A very difficult and complex document to put together. Placing all the good things into one document has to be worthwhile. It has to make good sense for the company and our colleagues.

ONTRACK (ooops sorry Network) delegates have been busy. With the Flexible Worker and the Career Progressions

working parties coming to the end of their tasks. This has been a lot of work. Flexible workers are mainly in Wellington

Graffiti attack



Early one morning (3.30am) in May Nigel Booth entered work to be greeted by the smell of paint. He disarmed the alarm and heard a perimeter beam trigger soon afterwards. He believes it was the tagger leaving the depot through a hole he cut in the fence. Nigel reports that paint was so soft (fresh) it only took 20 minutes to clean off. If the tagger had ventured one car deeper into the yard he would have triggered the alarm. These people know our security and are exposing its weaknesses. This guy was possibly caught on camera in the car park before he disabled the camera sensor by painting it sometime between 2:30 and 3:30am.

and Auckland track, signals, traction and communications, but it may enter out into the 'suburbs' in time. This all depends on a manager wanting staff to work night shifts on a fulltime basis for some particular projects. As for the Career Progressions talks we have some really good news here. Track gangers are finally being recognised for their long-standing experience and knowledge to keep trains running on rails. So, as we look forward to the feedback on the outside market rates for the rest of the groups, we will be watching our fellow workers' faces light up and saying "I'm glad I stayed with rail".

At a recent monthly branch meeting that word 'ROSTERS' once again reared its ugly head. It has come about by locomotive engineer shortages when the number of trains operating have remained the same. The upshot is that drivers are not receiving weekends off for many weeks running to facilitate the number of trains that must

run. This is not satisfactory and must be acted on immediately on the grounds of health and safety. What about the drivers' families? Where is the family unit heading to when the main breadwinner is dragging

and pushing trains to the limit around the country? And doing the same to him/herself. The ingredients are rapidly being placed into that bowl of disaster if we continue with these practices. What is required is big time advertising for driver trainees. With the flaming Aussies on our doorsteps advertising for drivers here and in Palmerston North and Wellington Railway stations offering something like \$4,800 a 76-hour fortnight what does this tell you Steven Joyce?

Why is the Midland Line not making a profit? I could not believe my ears when I heard this statement. Was it caused by certain TranzRail bosses doing deals with Solid Energy? And is it now coming back to bite them on the arse? Or is it some other reason like Solid Energy saying we will pay for the wagons if you can cart our high price coal for free? Make no mistake we are carting a lot of coal these days and it's not letting up. Hell, are we really carting it for free?

HAWKES BAY RAIL BRANCH

WE still have a number of disputes happening such as non-provision of company cellphones, stand downs after accidents, unloading of fertiliser at Gisborne, differing views on the

taking of sick leave and numerous health and safety issues. All issues that could and should be resolved if there was a willingness

by the local management to meaningfully consult and engage with the branch officers and delegates.

BAY OF PLENTY PORT BRANCH

THE Port of Tauranga ISL dispute relating to the Port's intention to use ISL workers as straddle drivers at Sulphur Point (pictured right), is moving towards a negotiated resolution which will be put to the membership at a stop work meeting in June. The Port of Tauranga negotiations kick off on May 21.



Some of the BOP members who attended the ISL dispute meeting.

The Mount Cossi Collective is moving along at a slow pace, and the Quality Marshalling negotiations are heading to a conclusion.

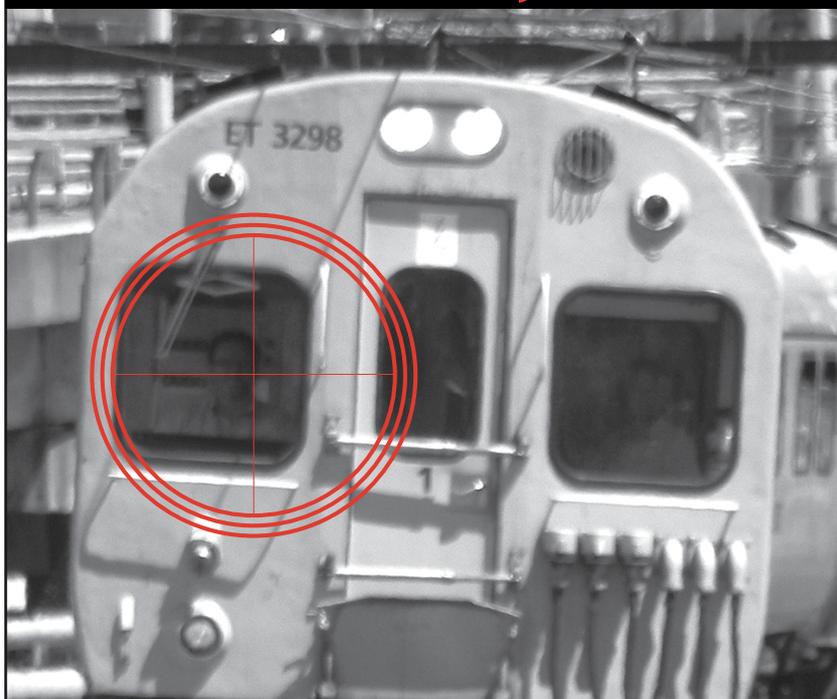
The Orica D&A policy has been settled, and we are starting negotiations to renew the collective agreement. The Champion Flour Mill negotiations are due to start

shortly.

A number of the branch executives visited the Asian Lily at the request of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and supporting the Maritime Union

to check out the seafarers bargaining agreement on April 22 and, yes, the Asian Lily had a bonafide bargaining agreement. Port Tauranga has reacted badly to the ship inspection by going after our members and the CEO, Mark Cairns, issued a less-than-flattering bulletin to anyone willing to read it. In it, he lashed out at the ITF, RMTU, MUNZ and the CTU and highlighted the fact that CTU-affiliated unions are a "mere" 23% of the registered unions in NZ. The workers covered by the CTU affiliated 23% however far exceed those covered by the "yellow unions" making up the other 77% of registered unions under NZ law.

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TIMARU BRANCH

HI from sunny Timaru, it's been a while since the last news from our branch. Things have been very busy in our area with large load outs from Fonterra, in particular and also Primeport, and customers at Washdyke. Everybody has put in large efforts for KiwiRail.

There is a new gatehouse being developed in part of our freight centre and this will ease the pressure on our three CT site staff, and also truck drivers etc won't have to walk far with documentation.

Our branch is deeply troubled by KiwiRail's attitude towards the 'NZ Work for NZ Workers' campaign. We support the RMTU in putting pressure on the Government and KiwiRail to utilise the shops in Lower Hutt and Hillside to build EMUs and

other rolling stock! It's great to see Dunedin getting behind such a cause to generate work and jobs for the region along with a healthy monetary value return.

Timaru rail staff are fast becoming annoyed with delays in the state of the yards despite very good work from the Oamaru ganger and his contractor – great work guys! They are now off down south and won't be back till late in the year.

Maybe ONTRACK's Dunedin management can keep the yard work going with better utilisation of local staff and thus complete the grooming of the yard to the agreed standard of ballast to rail level and ground conditions all nice and flat, watch this space! As in most yards, shunt loco failures are common and the mechanical

staff are working hard to keep the crap locos operating. In Timaru we have no servicing staff, so you would expect good working shunt locos to be sent to us. Yes, you say, well reality it's NO! We get the crap. Then to add insult to injury our manager has to pay huge repair bills and travel cost to get the repairers to the loco. Maybe KiwiRail will look at building new shunt locos to replace our old fleet, but then again do we really want Chinese locos as they appear to be Jim Quinn's love of the hour.

Staff have been proactive in booking leave and taking time off away from the job. Some guys have been overseas and are getting back into the swing of things again.

The branch is waiting for developments with the wage round and the new MECA. Not long now until the expiry so here's to a very positive result.

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY, this year saw a reasonable turnout at the Memorial Gardens in Dunedin, with a wide range of industry represented. After the service there were several moving eulogies to past workers given. The branch was well represented given that it was a working day.

That southern derailment, where some 16km of track was damaged and services suspended for six days, saw an excellent response from our Network brothers, who had some trying times in sourcing replacement material. They rose to the occasion restoring the track to a standard better than first envisaged. The hard work is yet to come with a concrete sleeper programme that will bring track speeds back to normal, and leave a rail corridor that reflects a 21st century railway.

KiwiRail Network (formerly ONTRACK) has recently had a round of joint union management road shows promoting changes of working hours and advancement and progression. Generally well received we can only but wait to see what the dollar figures are for the trades other than track. That was used as the example.

Also at that meeting the words 'fair' and 'equitable' were frequently used. It can only be hoped that they do exist within management's vocabulary and they actually know the concept or meaning of the words not just the spelling or sound of them, as one of

that put it nicely. Alluding to the fact that we were starving for exports and income thus lowering our living standards when a foreign country offered us plates of rice, once we got used to it they said now they would take the cake.

Here in the south we have Chinese and Russian conglomerates building milk



New DLs being built in China.

our trade groups is currently experiencing differences in applications relating to work practises within the three regions.

It is a disappointment to see at the time of writing that our Hillside compatriots have lost out on the chance to build further units for Auckland. This was going to be an uphill battle anyway as how can we compete with someone who runs on five grains of rice per day? The letters to the editor in the ODT recently had some correspondence

powder plants and forestry units, with all the product going to their respective homelands. Yes, how long before they have the cake, too? With destocking and conversion to dairy units your beef burger may yet originate from Chile.

A quick look at our own industry shows we nearly have a Chinese railway. Soon to arrive are Chinese locomotives and in some areas we already run on Chinese sleepers.

HILLSIDE WORKSHOPS BRANCH

IT has been rather hectic down here with the sudden media attention focused around the RMTU campaign to secure the Auckland EMUs built in KiwiRail workshops. We are not complaining. It really spreads the message, although if you're not experienced at giving interviews its nerve-racking. There has been very positive support as a result in the wider Dunedin community, supportive letters to the editor and the petition is attracting signatures. The wider New Zealand public seem to have a much better grasp of the benefit of stimulating and up-skilling the economy. Jim Quinn's decision that KiwiRail would not submit a bid as a lead tenderer has led to a refocus on the primary goal: NZ work for NZ workers.

As reported in the previous Transport Worker the lobby group continues to meet weekly. The focus of this group continues

to be enhancing employment opportunities in the NZ economy. Jim Quinn informed this group that the opportunity to work with offshore EMU constructors to add a NZ component to this project has refocused their effort.

On a brighter note, the new-build Ak class carriage, TranzScenic, has reached the exterior cladding stage, while alongside is the huge frame being built to enable certification testing. Congratulations to the fabrication and design staff involved. The first shell is taking shape and it is looking really good. A mockup of one third of a carriage displays the interior fittings.

ES sleeper wagons are being converted from flat deck wagons for ONTRACK use.

An area of floor in the assembly shop and two pits have been re-leveled, pits

deepened and a new concrete floor added, providing a safer area to sit locomotives during bogie or traction motor replacement.

The branch extends its deepest condolences to Joy Legg and family on the sudden passing of our colleague Trevor, on Saturday 24 April. Trevor commenced work at Hillside in 1992, working in the machine shop until his untimely passing. He was always a popular team member and mentor. Trevor enjoyed working on his Ford Cortinas with his sons. The Leggs were great supporters of the SPCA, raising funds as well as rescuing several dogs, which became much-loved family members. Trevor is greatly missed by his many friends and colleagues, at Hillside and in the wider community.

PORT CHALMERS BRANCH

VOLUMES through the Port have been good over the past months however dairy inwards tonnages are slowing down as the export season comes to an end. Milk volumes being received at Fonterra's Edendale plant are dropping by half every week and production is slowing down. It is planned to send all product stored at Edendale to Port Otago and Fonterra's Mosgiel store by the end of June, leaving the Edendale store completely empty for the start of next season.

Upgrade

The straddle garage upgrade is progressing well with the roof now on. Wall cladding is continuing with 25% of the work completed. The programme for building completion is the end of June.

With our collective employment agreement due to expire early July it is timely that the first step has finally been taken to commence negotiations. A new approach is being taken by the company with a professional negotiator hired to oversee and advise throughout the process. As well, Port Otago have appointed a new general manager human resources. Should be an interesting time, we only hope the negotiations and mediation sessions don't stretch to the months it took to get a settlement two years ago.

On the security front Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) continue to keep our people on their toes by conducting an audit of our security on 11 May. Their head security

man tried to infiltrate through the rail gate by walking alongside the train as it was entering. The MNZ person was observed by various employees and was soon apprehended. As it was in the middle of the afternoon I guess it was inevitable he would be caught but serves as a reminder that the security of the port has to be taken seriously and even at the lowest MARSEC level 1 all staff must be vigilant at all times.

With the end of our financial year in sight (30 June) our container total for the year looks as if it will be similar to last year at approximately 218,000 teus. This will be a far better result than what was anticipated about last September and led to 28 redundancies.

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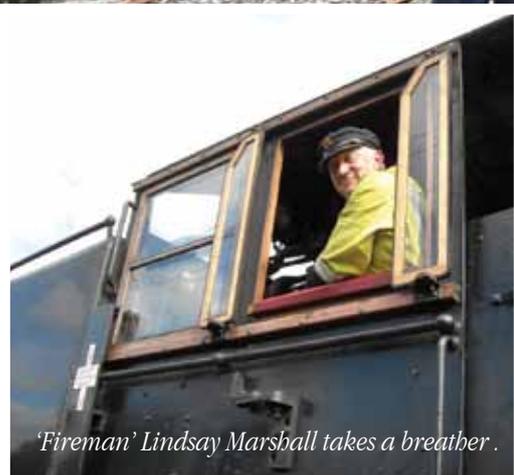
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Steaming around the West Coast

*'The Crew': (L to R)
Train manager
Brian Armstrong,
Chch-based LEs
Mark Scotson and
Lindsay Marshall
and 'pilot' Mike
Kilsby
Greymouth LE.*



'Fireman' Lindsay Marshall takes a breather.



Mark Scotson blows the whistle whilst opening the throttle.

A series of special steam train journeys took place on the West Coast in April when the Feilding District Steam Museum, owners of Wab 794, ran their engine from Greymouth to Reefton and Greymouth to Westport and Ngakawau.

The train arrived on the West Coast on Friday April 16 hauled by steam loco Ab 663 as Wab 794 was having mechanical problems and was towed over from Christchurch behind a diesel loco the day after.

The two return trips from Greymouth were made the following day making this the first passenger train to run on the Hokitika industrial branch line for a number of years.

On the Sunday X06 departed Greymouth for a run to Reefton behind WAB 794 returning "over the hill" to Tawhai and back to Reefton to give locals a ride as this was the first passenger train to run on the Stillwater/Ngakawau branch for over 20 years. The Reefton Station platform was full of people as the train arrived.

Monday saw the Wab again depart Greymouth, this time for Westport then a run up to Ngakawau before returning to Westport for the night. It made the same trip the following day.

The steam loco was crewed by Christchurch locomotive engineers Mark Scotson and Lindsay Marshall with West Coast pilots, LEs Jeff Gage and Mike Kilsby, being provided for the Hokitika and Stillwater/Ngakawau lines.

On the Wednesday the Wab 794 and Ab 663 double headed the train from Greymouth back to Christchurch.



West Coast branch stalwart and loco engineer George Whyte proving that he can still raise steam on the old girl.



- Mike Kilsby.