

THE

SEPTEMBER 2018

TRANSPORT WORKER

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



Getting Wairoa back on track



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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Wairoa line track gang replace a rotten beam on the last major hurdle to getting the line back in action.
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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Plenty of positives

As we approach our 21st annual and third Biennial Delegates Conference I find myself reflecting on what we have achieved on behalf of members in the last two years and I am impressed at our successes. However, and can't help but feel a bit despondent on the lack of success with the NIMT electrics – but we will keep fighting

A stand out success for me is that I have just signed on behalf of the RMTU a settlement of what we came to know as the Chinese workers case. This was a case we initiated more than four years ago which claimed a breach of clause 29 of the KiwiRail MECA as well as other related breaches of statute and Good Faith. This was a fight that we had to take if any mechanical workers were to have a job future working for KiwiRail.

Between 'warranty' and 'rectification' it appeared to us that the work of repairing the locomotives would always be somebody else's job.

The settlement, at its core, sees the confirmation that all warranty and rectification work on the Gen 1, 2 and 2.2s has been handed back to KiwiRail at the date of signing the agreement. It states that following a period of 24 months the Gen 2.3s will return to KiwiRail.

In short we now have certainty instead of uncertainty. It also puts in place a requirement on KiwiRail that for future purchases they will – where practicable – provide for all warranty work to be undertaken by KiwiRail employees with full knowledge transfer.

Another major success was the landmark wages deal we accomplished as part of the KiwiRail MECA. The fact that this even got over the line with our 42 member wider bargaining team is a tribute to the strong collective values and social awareness of inequality that this group of key RMTU leaders work to.

Of even greater satisfaction was the overwhelming endorsement of the flat rate increase by the members who are covered by the KiwiRail MECA. This will be a lasting memory for me and a source of great satisfaction at having been a small part of this achievement.

Equally pleasing was our successful completion of collective bargaining industrial campaigns with Transdev Wellington, Hyundai Rotem Ltd, Transdev Auckland and Lyttelton Port Company. In all of these disputes we came out the other side with highly engaged members, stronger unity, greater awareness amongst members, new Union leaders and good bargaining outcomes.

Lyttelton is settled for three years but both Transdev Wellington and Auckland will

be repeated this year. What will be different with the two Transdev operations is that they are aware that we can deliver targeted and effective industrial leverage in pursuit of our legitimate claims – including any attempt to unilaterally implement Driver Only Operation should TDA be foolish enough to try.

I was deeply disappointed and saddened to note in the release of the much vaunted \$16.9b National Land Transport package by Transport Minister Phil Twyford the complete omission of the retention of the electric locomotives on the NIMT and lack of any funding to upgrade or improve KiwiRail's core national freight network.

My analysis of the funding for KiwiRail leads me to conclude that at the end of the three year period the core national rail network funding will have tapered back to slightly less than what the last National-led Government provided.

It appears to me that the only rail items being funded are the French operated Auckland and Wellington metro rail systems (minus the Labour-promised Christchurch suburban rail) and a third track between Westfield and Wiri. This is not the level of support for the national rail system that I expected under this Government.

By omitting the \$11.01m (or \$3.67m pa) that we sought over three years to refurbish the class 30 locomotives this Government has consigned the operation of NZ's only operating electric freight line to the scrap heap. All for the sake of it needing a mere 0.0649% of the total NLTS budget for the three years of \$16,949m announced.

What is especially disappointing is the complete silence of the Greens on the NIMT electric axing given that the 'Save our electrics' campaign was initiated by the Green party and to which the RMTU joined.

The theme of our upcoming conference is 'Fighting Fatigue for Safety' and delegates will be asked to endorse that the RMTU have as its campaigning focus for 2018 and 2019 a sustained fight to improve rosters and rostering for members in all of our workplaces.

Kia kaha brothers and sisters. 🌐

Leading the pack!

CONGRATULATIONS to the Rail and Maritime Transport Union and KiwiRail on their agreement for a flat rate increase for all their workers. It has long been my opinion that this is far more equitable than percentage pay rises.

Just once, way back in the 1980s, I managed to convince a PSA branch to agree to vote for a flat amount general wage increase, arguing that the cost of living does not rise in proportion to one's income but by much the same amount for everyone. It helped that the members were statisticians and so the mathematical argument carried some weight.

It cut no ice with the authorities and management then or since, and percentage increases have been the rule. Therefore, incomes have risen exponentially: the higher the income the greater the rise. This is mainly what caused inequality to increase!

Let us hope that this agreement heralds a change in thinking and more unions and workplaces opt for flat amount increases to the advantage of the lower paid groups. 🌐

- Mary Mowbray.

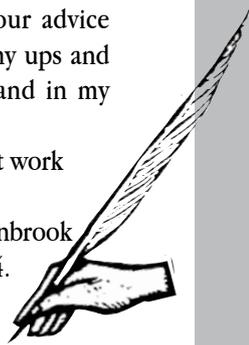
Retirements

Dear Editor,
I wish to resign from the Union as I am taking early retirement on 31st August.

I have been in the rail industry for around 37 years and have made life time friends.

I would just like to thank everyone of you and also the Union for your advice and support in my ups and downs at work and in my life.

Keep up the great work
Dale Loveridge
Team leader, Glenbrook
Member # 20024.



Dear Editor,
I wish to advise you that I have made my decision to retire on August 24, 2018.

I first started work as an apprentice fitter on 26 January 1960 at Hutt Workshops and joined the RTA (Railway Tradesman's Association) upon completion of that apprenticeship. Whilst a member I was a shop steward and a branch treasurer.

I spent time as an apprentice instructor in 'Boys Town', worked in the loco overhaul group, engine overhaul group, the car and wagon depot, the electric loco depot (EWs), the diesel depot, the east car yard and the multiple unit depot before becoming a supervisor. After many positions, I ended up being redeployed into inventory.

I have completed 58 wonderful years with rail and wish to acknowledge the many friends I have made over those years.
Warmest regards,
Ian Heppleston
Senior storeman.

Unsafe toilets - an international affair

AN extraordinary number of our fellow workers overseas suffer from health and safety issues relating directly to poor sanitation at work. A huge number cannot even rely on a functioning toilet system.

This has become such a significant issue that the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) has decided to make it a discussion point for their upcoming Nov congress in Singapore.

They have chosen November 19 as 'World Toilet Day' to highlight the impact of the denial of this basic human right, and to share successful strategies and tactics to win decent facilities.

Meanwhile the ITF is seeking worldwide testimony about how poor sanitation can affect workers' health and safety.

RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson says: "We would be very surprised to find the sort of conditions being tackled by this enquiry in New Zealand but our good fortune does not bar us from giving our wholehearted support to our fellow workers. Nevertheless, there may still be that rogue or ruined toilet out there and, if so, we would like to know about it. Call or contact us if there's a facility at your place of work that is unsanitary or unsafe – and send us a photo." 🌐

Debt of gratitude

UNDER the RMTU Rules and Standing Orders branches are required to hold annual general meetings (AGM) in August or September of each year to pass the accounts and elect officers and delegates. It is also a time to look back over the activities of the branch and the Union and plan the strategic focus for the next year. It's a time for members and Union staff to thank branch officers and delegates for their tireless work on behalf of members and their peers. These rank and file delegates and branch officers are the life blood of our Union and it is important to recognise and remember that they do most of their Union activity in their own time. With much of their work done during family time we also sincerely thank their families for their forbearance. Your work to safeguard and improve the working conditions of RMTU members is hugely appreciated!

On these pages are shots of AGMs and members attending – it is democracy in action. 🇳🇿

Bay of Plenty rail



Otago rail



Port Nelson



Port Lyttelton



Port Napier



Supporting a fair deal

FAIR PAY AGREEMENTS (FPA) set a minimum bar for a whole industry and as such are supported by your Union regardless that we already reach those minimum standards.

"It's shameful that the pay of many workers in New Zealand falls far short of these standards," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "We are a strong enough union to stand in solid support behind this campaign."

Information from the CTU explains that FPAs are a way of deciding what is a fair way to do business and its calculation incorporates pay, hours, leave and other conditions of work.

A working group has been set up to recommend what FPAs in New Zealand will look like.

"A really good example of this minimum bar mechanism is the equal pay settlement for care and support workers begun by the actions of Kristine Bartlett in her brave campaign showing gender bias was at play in her low wages," said Butson. "Her action through to the Supreme Court improved minimum pay for an undervalued workforce of some 55,000 people."

The Bartlett settlement, in negotiation with employers, government, and unions, covered everyone in those jobs - including non-union members.

Other countries, including Australia, have 'sector bargaining' like this where working people, represented by their unions, negotiate and set minimum industry standards with employers.

Nothing will change for collective bargaining between smaller groups of working people and employers, says the CTU, there will just be a new minimum bar that employers can't undercut. Just like the universal minimum wage we already have, but there will be specific rules for different industries.

Sometimes, if no agreement can be reached, there will be an arbitrator appoint-

ed to decide what's fair. But representatives will try to talk through the issues first.

"New Zealanders are working longer hours. However, the profits they help make are not reflected in their pay packets," said Butson. "That's not fair. Part of the problem is that some businesses compete by pushing wages down to the lowest possible level, making it harder for good operators to stay in business. We have to change that!"

FPAs will create a level playing field, reign in the cowboys, stop the race to the bottom and set the rules for what's acceptable practice. At the same time they will encourage competition through quality and innovation on the basis of being a good employer.

The CTU explains how FPAs particularly protect small and medium New Zealand businesses by raising the bar for employment conditions. They say it can be difficult to start up an innovative and ethical



business in New Zealand when large firms, including multinationals, are able to compete simply on their size. Some use their high product volume, low-wage business models to drive out local competition and take money out of our communities. Good small firms don't have to trade off attracting the best people to work for them with decent wages, and being profitable. These businesses will have protection from cowboys who try to undercut the market.

It's also easier for everyone to do business when you know what's fair, without starting from scratch.

The CTU says the working group will report back by the end of 2018. The Gov-

FPA or collective?

A collective agreement is negotiated between union members and employers. You have to be a union member to be employed under one. An FPA will cover everyone in a particular industry or occupation, whether they are in a union or not.

"However, if you are employed under a collective agreement you are legally protected if you take industrial action," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "Employers also have the right to use a lockout."

The Government has said they will not extend these rights to support negotiating an FPA - but the current rights of working people and employers to industrial action shouldn't be affected either.

ernment will then write the draft bill before proceeding through Parliament.

The CTU says: When we have a Fair Pay Agreement law, there will be a process to follow to negotiate an agreement. There will be minimum thresholds that groups of working people or employers will have to meet to start negotiations. If they can't agree, there will be an independent

third party that would arbitrate (decide) on the terms of the Fair Pay Agreement.

Butson adds: "This campaign's aim is just common good sense. Workers have been filling the pockets of their bosses for years and now it's time they shared that profit through a reasonable and sensible process. I urge all our members to give serious consideration to supporting this process and the new bill in our time-honoured fashion of supporting the working poor in this country." 🇳🇿

■ Sign up to the Working People's Charter for Fair Pay

www.together.org.nz/fair-pay-charter



The French Confédération Générale du Travail representatives David Gobe and David Donnez with RMTU organiser John Kerr at the Waverley Station RMT protest in Edinburgh.

NZ industrial action features in UK media and meetings

By John Kerr

THIS June I had the privilege of once again attending the annual general meeting of our comrade union in Britain, the RMT. Last year I was lucky enough to be at the RMT's AGM in Exeter, together with our national vice-president Howard Phillips, where we heard an electrifying speech by Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party and the Opposition. As RMT delegates gathered in Edinburgh this year it was clear to everyone that a year is a very long time indeed in politics.

In 2017 the RMT resolved to debate and vote on re-affiliation with the British Labour Party at a special general meeting. The RMT had been expelled from Blair's 'New Labour' for expressing forthright opposition to the right wing policies of that government – with Labour seeming to be getting back to its social democratic roots under Corbyn it was time to have the conversation about re-affiliation.

In the event the RMT decided not to re-affiliate to Labour. This does not mean that the RMT lacks a political strategy, far from it. What is very interesting was the way in

which the RMT works on strong links with a group of MPs who share and promote its values. Representatives of this 'Parliamentary Group' spoke at the AGM.

The RMT constitution is very clear: one of the objectives of the union is the replacement of capitalism with a socialist society. In practical terms this means the union puts a great deal of time and effort into fostering strong links with like-minded unions, politicians and progressive organisations, not just in Britain but globally. The battle to re-nationalise rail in Britain is the most obvious example of how this struggle plays out.

Brexit – a defining issue

With a Conservative government in power re-nationalisation is highly unlikely. Moreover, the RMT's support for leaving the European Union – Brexit – is an expression of the membership's disenchantment with Brussels' continued commitment to the neo-liberal policies of privatisation and austerity. For example, the EU promotes

rail privatisation.

Brexit is the defining political issue in Britain today and is a fault line that divides Britons no matter where they sit on the political spectrum.

Some on the left argue strongly that the European project is worth sticking with – we have to work to change the EU from within.

Other progressive thinkers say the EU is irrevocably broken and the left has to see Brexit as an opportunity to organise and promote a progressive agenda. The RMT is firmly in the latter camp.

The extent to which Britain's privatised rail system is broken came home to me very strongly as I joined an RMT protest at Waverley Station in Edinburgh to mark the first day of operation of the East Coast Main Line. This was a state owned company set up by the Tory Transport Minister Chris Grayling. The private franchise that previously ran the line had gone bust at the cost of millions of pounds to the British taxpayer. The RMT demands the complete re-nationalisation of rail, not just a bail out of a broken privatisa-

tion project.

Alongside me on the picket line in Edinburgh were two of our comrades from the French railway union, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT). The French are locked in a struggle with their neo-liberal President Emmanuel Macron, a former merchant banker, who is bent on privatising rail.

French rail workers have been staging rolling strikes for months now and encouragingly their resolve and public support remains strong. In fact their membership is growing.

Macron's approval ratings are in steep decline and one can only hope the French people do not make the same mistake that we made in New Zealand and allow an unpopular government to sell off the railway.

As members who have travelled overseas will be aware, when one leaves New Zealand our country usually disappears from the airways and newspapers.

This time New Zealand received a good deal of coverage in British media. The wave of recent strikes were making the news, together with our Prime Minister taking six weeks leave to have a baby. The nurses' dispute in particular was very well reported. As your representative I had the opportunity to update our British comrades on the RMTU's disputes with Transdev in Wellington and Auckland, together with the fight at Lyttelton port. The Auckland dispute resonated with the RMT, as they are in disputes with a number of rail franchises in Britain over the same issue of driver only operation and

fighting for a safe railway.

It was heartening to hear our British brothers and sisters' support for not only the RMTU but for New Zealand workers in general. A photograph demonstrating solidarity with the NZNO was especially well received on social media by Kiwi nurses.

And that sums up the value of international solidarity. When you and your fellow members are in a dispute it can feel very lonely and isolating. Support from workers many miles away, given freely and unconditionally, is profoundly reaffirming. Similarly, when a French railway worker in Metz, or a British train guard in Penzance, knows there are fellow workers in Aotearoa backing them, it makes a world of difference. 🌐



The RMT supports New Zealand nurses in their fight for a fair deal.

Accident provides lessons

ON August 22 one of our members, Paul Thompson, on the West Coast was seriously injured in an incident with a hi-rail digger. He was airlifted to Christchurch where he underwent emergency surgery. The latest news is that he has feeling in his toes and the prognosis is positive at this time.

KiwiRail, to their credit, stopped all work on the track for 24 hours and called meetings to discuss what members do when working around hi-rail diggers. The RMTU attended these meetings.

In Christchurch one key point raised by members was that administrative and behavioural 'solutions' will not work if these rely on people not making mistakes. Systemic and engineering solutions, for example automatic cut-outs when people are close to a digger, are far more promising.

A second key point was that safety is paramount – if it doesn't look or feel right then stop! Members must support one another if a worker asks to stop and think about safety – a short delay can, and may,

make all the difference.

Think about yourself; think about your family; think about your workmates. Think safety! 🌐



Safety stop meeting at Midas Place to discuss the incident.



(above) During the AGM of the Port Napier branch our National President Aubrey Wilkinson presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Trevor Miles recognising his 21 years as branch president. Trevor has been a staunch leader and stalwart of the branch and even though he is stepping aside as president he will remain an active member of the committee.
Thank you Trevor.

(left and below) It is important for the RMTU to provide solidarity support to other unions at times of struggle so that we have support during our disputes and struggles. Here RMTU members stand in solidarity with our nurse and IRD comrades.



Shawn Alexander Bates

25/3/1974 – 18/7/2018

ON Wednesday, July 18, 2018 at the age of 44 years, Shawn Bates died. Dearly loved by son (and daughter-in-law) Sidney and Gay Bates and his brother and brothers-in-law Cynthia, Robert, Slade and Sam Bates and numerous nieces and nephews. Messages to the Bates family can be placed online at Shawn's tribute page or posted to PO Box 44-176 Lower Hutt, 5040. In lieu of flowers, donations to the SPCA Wellington would be appreciated. Special thanks to Andrew Gain and the hospital staff who cared for Shawn who's support has been greatly appreciated. 🇳🇿

PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

The plan has an external administrator and contributions are invested with four fund managers.



Ports Retirement Plan



Download a copy of the Product Disclosure Statement from our website:

www.portsretirement.org.nz

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

Injury management update

GETTING back to work after a workplace injury can be a lengthy and painful process of rehabilitation. However, the injured worker should not bear the financial cost of treatment as well.

Warren Burrell who works as a Dunedin rail operator was left fuming after being given the run around by Work Aon in relation to accessing physiotherapy treatment for his injured shoulder.

Warren suffered a 22 mm tear in his shoulder ligament from lifting a bull hook whilst coupling a train. To make matters worse he experienced a 'frozen shoulder' which he describes as 10 out of 10 on the pain scale and enough to put him on the ground in agony if his shoulder was knocked.

The rehabilitation and return to work process had been painful and slow and Warren credits the support of his workmates who helped him by lifting bull hooks and his manager (at the time) for supporting him to access medical support such as additional physiotherapy.

However, his experience with KiwiRail's third party provider, Work Aon, was less than satisfactory due to his ACC case manager's refusal to pay for additional physiotherapy costs, which had been recommended by the Rail medical officer.

Out of frustration Warren paid for physio out of his own pocket.

Following a complaint, Warren was allocated a new case manager and is now receiving better support.

KiwiRail is an accredited employer under the ACC Partnership Programme. The programme allows KiwiRail to 'step into the shoes' of ACC and manage workers' ACC claims in return for a discount in their ACC levies.

Work Aon is contracted by KiwiRail to deliver their injury management duties prescribed by the ACC legislation.

"No one should have to pay for their own treatment for a work related injury," says RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson.

"If members are being treated unfairly by Work Aon they should reach out to the Union for help," said Hazel Armstrong, a lawyer specialising in ACC law who adds

that Work Aon add no value to the injury management process in her opinion.

Returning to work safely

The RMTU has an agreed process with both KiwiRail and Transdev Wellington known as the Health, Injury, Wellness and Rehabilitation Programme (HIWMP).

Following an injury or illness the agreement requires a return to work plan be developed in consultation with the injured worker, her/his Union rep, the medical providers, ACC and the employer.

"It's important that injured workers reach out for union support," says RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher. "People are vulnerable when they're injured and they may not be aware of their full ACC entitlements including access to medical treatment."

When there are medical restrictions that prevent a person from returning to their previous work straight away, it can be a challenge to find alternative work that is both medically appropriate and meaningful. It can take some collective willingness and creative thinking to come up with alternative work. It's important people don't feel forgotten."

Lyn Heafield a Wellington train manager, suffered a neck and shoulder injury from a work accident in July 2017. She says



Lyn Heafield says the hardest thing about being off work with an injury is the isolation.

the hardest thing about being off work with an injury is the isolation and lack of communication from work. 🇳🇿

A mode of transport that runs on
80% hydro, geothermal+wind?

Lets do this!
SAVE OUR ELECTRIC MAIN TRUNK RAIL

RMTU WOMEN

Ann Wells

Union role and why did you become involved? What has been a memorable experience in your role as a delegate and branch sec?

I first got involved with the Union as a women's delegate, attended a conference and then a ports forum and was hooked really. The more involved I got the more I realised that there is a huge need for people to stand up and speak out for all those people who don't have the confidence to do so for themselves – and that there is power in the many sticking together to achieve common goals. There is great camaraderie in being part of such a powerful group of people and the women especially for me are such an amazing diverse group of wahine toa and I love that. Along the way I became involved in the collective bargaining process and have continued to be involved with a great team of delegates from the branch who continue to meet with management on a monthly basis to continue talking and resolving issues as they come up. I recently took up the role of branch secretary and have found that once you get involved with the Union it is a continual evolving process of learning and taking on more commitment to the cause!

Job title and what the job entails?

I am a stevedore and have been at Port Nelson for coming up to seven years. As everyone else does, I started out on the wharf and progressed through the stevedore jobs to now driving the Full 50 T forklifts in the yard discharging and loading the vessels. Next challenge to get signed off on the

empty high stackers!! Health and safety is a big challenge for us in stevedoring and I have been elected H&S rep for the last couple of years and have just been voted in for another term. I am looking forward to the challenges that will bring, especially with the fatigue risk management policy that the port is now undertaking to implement.

Why did you decide to become a stevedore?

It was a pure case of needing an extra job that I could fit in around the business I was working and running at the time and stevedoring gave me the flexibility I needed.

What's the best part of the job?

The people, they're great. There's nothing like being part of a team that is committed to getting the job done as efficiently and safely as possible. Everyone treats everyone the same. I like being 'just one of the guys' while having a laugh and kidding each other around. I have a lot of respect for how hard the guys and gals work despite all the adverse conditions we have to endure and, for the most part, with a smile on their faces because we are all there till the bitter end – lol!

Whats something that bugs you about your job?

Night shifts!

What piece of advice would you give your 21 year old self?

Ain't that a loaded question! Well first, do NOT believe people who tell you that 'you're not' – not good enough,



Photograph: Tim Cuff

not nice enough, not smart enough, not pretty enough, not thin enough, not capable enough, not strong enough. You are what you BELIEVE. So to change your life change your BELIEF – you will be amazed at what you actually are!

Some days you just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other to get through life and that is ok. Life isn't perfect all of the time and it isn't always about the big things, its also appreciating and finding value in the little things. When you feel like you are at the bottom that's positive because there's only one way through and that's UP. So keep your chin up so you can see where you are going!

About happiness, I used to think, if I just have this or that I will be happy or if just achieve this or that I will be happy. Then one day I finally realised that happiness is the journey, not the destination.

And lastly everyday - LIVE - LOVE - LAUGH 🌍

RAIL - TAKING STRESS OFF NORTHLAND ROADS

It's time to reconnect Northland's extensive railway network enabling industry to use the safest way to move freight and increase high value rail tourism.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union Fully Supports re-opening lines to Dargaville and Otiria. Reconnecting rail to Kawakawa - Opuia for rail tourism.



Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.

- Logs • Woodchips
- Dairy • Bulkloads • Tourism
- Large Consignment freight

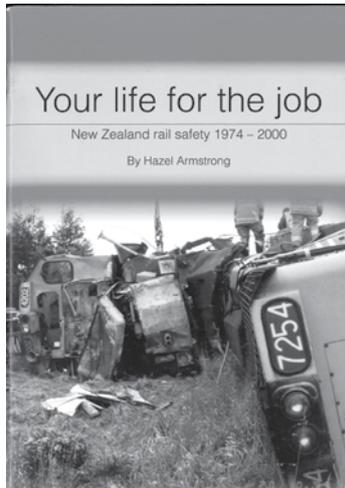


Fatality remembered

ON October 20 1999 the northbound express (Freight 938) collided with a stationary southbound express (Freight 919) at Waipahi on the Main South Line. The locomotive engineer of 919, Graham Richard White, was fatally injured while the LE of 938 was seriously injured. Both were Dunedin based. The Transport Accident Investigation Report 99-122 stated the "Causal factors included one locomotive engineer misunderstanding his track warrant and the limited effectiveness of the action taken by the operator [TranzRail] and the regulator to minimise the possibility of such misunderstandings".

General secretary Wayne Butson said at the time: "That morning dawned as the proudest day of my life to date as at the RMTU Conference that day I was to assume the role as general secretary of our great Union. The last thing I expected was to get a telephone call advising me that the train crash had occurred and that an LE I knew well had been killed. The accident confirmed my worst fears of the change to the track warrant system as it required administrative controls to manage risk and those controls are completely exposed to human error and other human factors."

Next year will mark the 20 year anniversary of the accident. The Otago and Southland branches have been requested to focus their Workers Memorial Day activities on an event at the memorial site at Waipahi. Mark your diaries and plans to attend. 🌐



Port members too!

DON'T let the name put you off, say MTU general secretary Wayne Butson: "The New Zealand Railways Staff Welfare Trust is for our port workers too!"

He says this includes their full range of holiday homes.

He says some port workers have woken to the opportunity but many more need to "get on board".

"I recently spoke with a couple of port members who had taken family holidays in Ohope and Wellington," he said. "They both told me they had fabulous holidays. The Wellington group said the location was perfect - close to the city centre and easy walking to all they could wish for."

Meanwhile the other family told Butson how they lazed and played around on the beach a "million miles from home".

He advises that RMTU port member should make enquiries about joining.

"The advantages are many and the cost is minimal."

Look at the advert below to see where the holiday homes are located and for contact details. 🌐

Your Welfare Trust has a fantastic range of reasonably-priced holiday homes throughout New Zealand exclusively for members. Take a look at our locations.

Auckland
Christchurch
Dunedin
Gisborne
Greytown
Hanmer
Kaikoura
Mount Maunganui
Napier
Nelson
New Plymouth
Ohope
Orewa
Paihia
Picton
Queenstown
Rotorua
Taupo
Wellington
Westport
Whitianga



HOLIDAYS & HEALTH



The Trust takes the worry out of your family's basic medical costs. For a modest weekly fee, 80% of the costs of basic medical expenses are covered including: GPs, some medical specialists, prescriptions, bereavement benefit, welfare sick pay, birth, ambulance, hearing aids, and much more. Members may also apply to join an extended health insurance programme at advantageous prices.

All RMTU members are eligible to join. Contact us to find out how.

Phone: 0800-806-444

E-mail: info@nzwelfare.co.nz

Website: nzwelfare.co.nz

Facebook: [facebook.com/nzwelfare](https://www.facebook.com/nzwelfare)

Fatigue takes centre stage

From the courts

■ Worksafe NZ recently prosecuted Michael Vining Contracting Limited for failing to manage the risk of fatigue of a tractor driver who had worked 200 hours in the fortnight before his death.

■ Wild Fish (NZ) Limited, a commercial fishing company, who were fined \$27,200 following a prosecution by Maritime NZ for failing to manage the risk of fatigue for on-board staff causing a ship to run aground. The helmsman fell asleep whilst working alone at night. He had had between one and three hours sleep prior to the accident.

A snapshot of Lyttelton Port

Unsafe rostering continues to be a safety risk at Lyttelton Port. A recent review of the rosters revealed container terminal staff working 18 shifts in a row without a day off. In addition, the roster included the practice known as 'rolling 8s'. A rolling eight roster includes two eight hour shifts in a 24 hour period with an eight hour break in between. The rotating shift pattern requires workers to sleep at different times of the day and night – at odds with their circadian cycle. This pattern prevents sleep from being as restorative as it needs to be. Fatigue-related impairment is cumulative and dose dependent, so the longer a person keeps going without proper sleep the worse their impairment becomes and the more likely they are to make a fatigue related error.

"Unsafe rosters are the main contributor to workplace fatigue," say RMTU H&S organiser Karen Fletcher.

Port Nelson fatigue workshop

RMTU Nelson branch exec members Allan Addison-Saipe and Anne Wells organised the union event to discuss how workplace fatigue affects people's health and safety. The open invitation included operational staff, roster coordinators and management.

Members identified lack of sleep, rotating shift work, and shift uncertainty as causes of fatigue. One member said: "Preparing for shift work and making sure you get enough sleep in before starting the shift is difficult

if you only get 12 hours notice that you'll be working the shift."

When considering the impacts of fatigue, they said that fatigue caused slower reaction time, inability to judge risk and lower productivity. They agreed that being fatigued from shift work is "hard on relationships with family, especially if the kids have to remember to tip toe around during the day because mum or dad is trying to sleep".

Members discussed strategies for managing fatigue risk including:



Is a DX upgrade on the cards?

THE RMTU is reliably informed that KiwiRail is about to give approval for 15 DX locos to be modernised and upgraded.

"This will be great news for the industry and thoroughly welcomed by the Rail community," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "We have been urging for a long time that this class of loco merits an upgrade."

The RMTU believes the overhaul will include:

- New EFI 7FDL12 electronic fuel injected diesel engines;
- The latest version of the Brightstar control system;
- New engine control units and wiring harnesses;
- A new high capacity fuel tank/battery box assembly;
- Strengthened under frame and new 2MN maintenance-free dragboxes/drawgear;
- New BHE engine oil cooler and piping kit to eliminate "E" and "chec" DX versions;
- Electronic air brakes;
- Cab air conditioning;
- New or rebuilt cab with latest appliance features (aka DXR); and
- Full locomotive overhaul/rewire.

The RMTU has given its unqualified support for the project which it hopes will be seen on the tracks soon.

"The upgraded cabs will be especially welcomed," said Butson. "Improving working conditions is one of the principles we stand by and we believe KiwiRail have got the mixture right in this case



if what we hear becomes a reality."

Butson believes that the old hotplates and immersion heaters will be replaced by an integrated sink and storage unit containing an electric jug, a microwave and fridge drawer together with a 230V outlet to charge phones and laptops.

"Let's not forget the fiasco with the Chinese-built locos," said Butson. "Frankly, anything made or even refurbished in New Zealand, using New Zealand labour has to be better than those will ever be." 🌐

\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



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HUTT WORKSHOPS

THE year is rocketing along and after some years of waiting, a specific DL locomotive was programmed-in and came to Hutt for a 'health check' against the documented standard. This has been a long time coming even though the pursuit by the union has been constant and relentless. It is hoped that this will herald an integrated One KiwiRail approach to the maintenance and overhaul of this fleet. We also attended to the one that recently suffered a mishap.

Strict adherence to the spirit of HPHE continues to deliver on the promise. So much so that at a monthly briefing the CEO indicated he wanted another forty (yes 40!) projects kicked-off across the company. Reading between the lines, he would no doubt be trying to further breakdown the walls/divisions (read 'silos') that still plague the company. The CEO's restructuring announcement earlier this year should go some way in achieving this although it's a long-term 'project' and we hope that sufficient time and energy will be expended in allowing the gains to be realised. Another accolade under the auspices of HPHE is what has become the norm with various visits by other government department managers who want to see how big and successful improvements can be made by fully cooperating with staff, by sharing ideas and constructively solving problems within a consensus framework. It's not rocket science but changing the culture does take time.

There have been quite a few depar-

tures from the team this period including people who have moved to other parts of the company and to new jobs outside of the 'railway family'. Of interest were some managers 'moving on' including the CEO himself. That was

teams. The recently announced changes to the CEO and board positions may add yet another delay however that's the way things go so we shall remain ever patient. It was mooted that announcements would be made in August however as these notes were being written, nothing had been forthcoming.



The rebuilt and relocated rail weld at Hutt Workshops.

somewhat of a shock as he's yet to complete his (assumed) five year tenure. However, it would appear that the Fletcher group of companies needs someone like Peter to sort out their woes so no doubt a hopper full of money was offered to induce him back.

The site was recently audited both internally and by Telarc. By all accounts we came out the other end quite well with minimal areas for improvement although it appeared that the delayed re-issue of the Mechanical Code (M2000) raised a few eyebrows.

The rail weld installation project continues with the ongoing erection of cranes (see attached photos). We are also still awaiting some much needed investment in equipment for our wheel sets and bogies

We have lost a few staff since the last issue as people seek pastures greener, although one made a quick return to the fold after a short period of only several weeks! We strive to backfill all departures and to keep driving for apprentice intakes as the engineering industry as a whole is short of people who can handle a hammer, spin a spanner and complete the ever-present paperwork.

The MECA roadshows in August were well received and we expect that the proposed changes will be ratified by the time you read these notes.

Until next time, be safe and look out for your mates. 🇳🇿



Goodbye Ganz Mavag!

WELLINGTON RAIL

THINGS have been moving quickly around the Wellington rail scene, notably with significant changes

in commuter services with new timetables and rostering in effect from July 15. This means 20 minute services in off peak with new zones and fares. Many thanks to our hard working roster delegates.

◀ At the Transdev Wellington operation there have been new intakes of part time passenger operators. (For those who are not in the know, passenger operators - aka PassOps - assist the train managers with ticket and fair collection and with the safe operation of the train.) Welcome to our new passenger operator members. If you need anything just ask your friendly RMTU delegates and you shall be well received.

One consequence of the new timetables are that smaller but more regular services have resulted in the greater concentration of PassOps at the morning and evening peak and fewer required during the day (inter-

peak). This has resulted in the redundancy of the full-time passenger operator role. Some have taken up other jobs or simply moved to part time hours while some have made the choice to retire, notably Steve Kappatos with over 40 years service, and Jim (Jimbo) Jennings another long time face around the depot.

Outside of passenger operators we have another notable retirement; from the Paekakariki depot: we farewell Dave Wadilove (aka Father Ted).

Also of note, the ladies' amenities have finally been completed and the bargaining team are back in negotiations for the next

wage round.

We have had two fatalities on our network in the past three few months.

Our condolences to the families of the deceased and to the crews involved with emergency services.

Additionally we have had three well-respected colleagues pass away in the last six weeks who are also missed:

Teeiva Metuariki with over 40 years service in his railway career as a shunter and train manager at depots in our region;

Shawn Bates, train manager; and Ivan Kovacev a locomotive engineer.

Ka aroha to their loved ones. 🌐

MARLBOROUGH PORT

At the recent RMTU/Port Marlborough ratification meeting late July, Murray Burgess (R) workshop foreman and past branch president took the opportunity to present Brian Carver (L) an RMTU Loyalty Certificate. Brian is a marina supervisor at Port Marlborough, with 42 years' service and union membership and is still smiling. Well done Brian.



NELSON PORT

WORKER participation has been our theme for a non-negotiating year. This is a concept that has been enacted by Parliament in the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015. It was a direct result of the Pike River tragedy where it was found that the workers had no voice, even though for years they had been questioning the mine's safety highlighting the fact they thought it would blow – but no one listened to them.

Now in 2018 we are still struggling to have workers' voices heard. So far this year we have pointed out that our H&S committee was not meeting and had not been functioning in accordance with the Act. It has taken months but finally we have man-

aged to elect a committee. We are now trying to get everyone trained and up to speed so that hopefully this committee is functioning correctly.

Whilst this has been going on we have also been struggling to have a realistic fatigue risk management system (FRMS) instituted. Once again worker participation has been minimal with the process being driven by managers who have no experience of the shift work that port workers perform. Notable that we have managed



Nelson branch chair Allan Addison-Saippe demonstrates his cooking talents.

◀ to get through another busy season without any real progress.

PNL have invested a lot of time and money in a new software-based labour allocation system for stevedores. It is hoped that this will eliminate a lot of human error and basic problems with the current manual system. However, with PNL's insistence on only putting in guidelines for an FRMS and no hard and fast rules, it seems that once again we will be presented with a soft option devoid of any real commitment to managing the risk. It has been good to see that PNL is slowly starting to accept some of the vast resource of science available on

the issue.

They are picking and choosing what applies to them without taking a broad view. It is important to contextualise the science and with close scrutiny it is obvious that there has not been much research around an on-call, no-roster set up. In this scenario workers never know when they are working or when their next day off is, sometimes having less than 24 hours' notice of a shift and often being flipped between days and nights in a 24-hour period. Occasionally also doing a long stretch of days or nights with a one-off alternate time shift thrown in the middle.

The only way forward can be a non-punitive system that partners equal responsibility for workers and employers. Until we can achieve acceptance of such an approach it is feared that this initiative will fail and workers will continue to be at risk.

We thank Karen Fletcher for her visit to the port at the end of July and her hosting of a really great fatigue workshop. It was well worth while and we can only urge other branches to make use of Karen and her excellent knowledge of H&S – and especially fatigue. 🌐

WEST COAST RAIL

HERE on the West Coast we are about to start the peak season and new rosters are being bought in to meet our customers' transport requirements. This has meant all the general freight services now run in the dead of night and this has gone down like a lead balloon to the people forced to work these ugly rosters. But management tells us there is no other way they can manage it.

This may be the case but the roll out of these rosters has been a shocker with, at the time of writing, the new train plan two days away from starting and the Greymouth rail operators have not even got an agreed roster in place. So there is going to be fun and games with very little matching up.

There have been a number of rosters presented but these have, for varied and valid reasons, been rejected. It is obvious we need more staff and yet management is trying to get more out of existing staff and in doing so they have hit the bottom of the barrel. No more can be squeezed out of us and we are letting them know loud and clear.

Talking to other staff members up and down the country most areas seem to have the same problem of very tight rosters and low staff numbers.

This writer is aware of numerous occasions that trains have been cancelled or parked up en route due to lack of manning. This is what you get when bean counters have too much influence in rostering

– the staffing levels drop away we arrive at the situation that the company finds itself in now with big revenue losses caused by cancellations, and our customers and staff left wondering what is going on with this company?

Why do we have to be in a crisis before senior management start asking questions?

In addition, in this part of the world we have what appears to be a chronic shortage

Let's not forget this is in the off peak season so with peak about to start and the Coastal Pacific and other services coming on stream one wonders how we are going to supply horse power to move these services. It does not bode well looking into the short term future.

Over on the networks side, things have been pretty quiet of late with the main challenge being lots of inclement weather causing the gangs to spend plenty of time doing weather runs. Being a largely rural



Keith Teasdale and Graham Nichol hard at work in the new comms office in Greymouth.

of locomotives to haul services. On occasions managers have been forced to make a decision to cancel a general goods train so a coal train can run as they are worth more to the company.

This is not a good situation to be in and again our customers who use the general freight services are wondering what is going on? If we cannot offer a reliable service to move their freight they will find someone who will.

branch we also find ourselves dealing with roaming cattle in the rail corridor and on one occasion recently the guys had to deal with a cow stuck on a bridge! The lads did a fantastic job of removing it without delaying any services but unfortunately the beast had to be put down. To make matters worse, after assurances from the farmer that he would get on top of his fencing issues, the following week a loaded freight train hit and killed a cow in exactly the same area! ▶

◀ The same gang had another harrowing and frustrating job removing the carcass from under the loco.

Rail on the Coast was recently with the opening of the new Taramakau Road bridge. This means the last road-rail bridge in New Zealand is now exclusively a rail bridge. It was a big occasion with over 5,000 people turning up for the opening which was preceded with a convoy of nearly 300 mainly commercial vehicles taking a last crossing of the historic bridge. Protestors also took the opportunity to peacefully

protest what many see as another kick in the guts for Coasters with the implementation of mining bans on conservation land. The fact is that if we are to transition away from mining and other extractive industries in this part of the world we need a plan that will ensure that well paid, highly skilled jobs are available to replace those that are lost and that training and education is provided to help people make the change. Minimum wage work in the tourism and hospitality industries isn't going to cut it.

Finally, we had a well-attended RMTU-

KiwiRail MECA report back meeting, together with a comprehensive report back on the ROM 3 project. The branch took advantage of the occasion to hold an equally well-attended AGM – the first in the South Island we believe. It was really good to have so many members taking an interest in our Union. Our South Island organiser gave us an update on the Auckland and Wellington Transdev disputes and the Lyttelton Port dispute. To our fellow members around the country, the Coast membership is with you – stay safe and stay united! 🌐



Todd Valster giving a report back on the RMTU/KiwiRail MECA negotiations to a well attended and attentive West Coast membership meeting

CANTERBURY RAIL

THE Canterbury rail branch has had an eventful few months. To begin on a positive note we've had a number of new members join us as they have been employed by KiwiRail – this is great news as they are bringing down the average age of the workforce. We've had people join us across the company – in signals, mechanical and a couple of new loco engineers. Welcome to the rail and RMTU family folks.

In other news, the networks production manager for the upper South Island has left us after a very short tenure by rail standards. Management seems to be in a state of permanent restructuring, which provides us with plenty of material for speculation over a cup of tea in the smoko room.

We've had a few individual issues one of which sadly ended in a dismissal. Others have been resolved by agreement. This sort of work takes an enormous amount of a delegate's time and is largely done quietly and confidentially. It's often thankless work as well. So let's put that at least partially right and say a heartfelt thanks to all our delegates who put in time and effort on

behalf of our members.

Waltham Yard has been in the spotlight with work being done on shunt locos in a sealed environment because of the presence of asbestos containing material. As members will know, the spectre of asbestos has ap-

peared in the mainline loco fleet as well. Interesting times ahead.

We had a difficult episode at Waltham after a squabble over a project that was unilaterally touted by management as 'High Performance High Engagement' when in fact RMTRU involvement had been minimal. ▶



Waltham depot: Branch chair Grabam Ealam and industrial council representative Luke James listen as depot manager Duncan Ness explains asbestos safety measures to members.

◀ This sort of thing is serious as many people are already sceptical about HPHE and it does nothing to build trust and credibility with rank and file members.

Over in operations there has been a great deal of frustration over LE rostering which has generated a bit of activity. Hopefully ROM 3, which will alleviate some of the pressure on members, should it be ratified. It is refreshing to see the fruit of the good work being done by our Union on highlighting the very real risk that fatigue represents. Increased awareness will mean better rostering if we are relentless in pressing our case. Elsewhere in operations we see our manager Rose Pettigrew is the poster girl for KiwiRail's careers advertising. Good work Rose. If we're going to get more women into the industry we need to promote it using positive role models. Great to see that one of our two trainee LEs is a woman as well. Hopefully a sign of things to come.

Over at Toll our new delegate, Malcolm Ross, has been doing great work ▶



(above) RMTU members peruse the MECA offer at Christchurch Railway Station and (below) Q & A session for Todd Valster and KiwiRail employment relations manager Maryan Street at Christchurch MECA report back meeting.



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◀ at the bargaining table and around the shed. He was part of the team that negotiated a settlement in the recent national collective bargaining that, at the time of writing, is being voted on by the members. In addition to that he's had a couple of very challenging disciplinary issues to deal with. Thanks for your work Malcolm – the branch appreciates it.

Like all KiwiRail members we've been attending MECA report back meetings. The settlement is novel with a flat rate dollar increase for all members regardless of job and grade. We had three membership meetings in Christchurch and there was a positive response from the majority of

members attending. By the time you read this we'll know if it's been ratified by the national membership.

We've been watching what's been going on in other sectors with interest. Several of our members have attended rallies and pickets supporting nurses, public servants and fast food workers in recent weeks and it looks like the teachers are the next group we'll be supporting.

These workers have endured years of stagnating wages and it's good to see them fighting. In rail we've been successful at hanging onto terms and conditions that have become increasingly rare – penal rates being the obvious example. Our members

understand these conditions haven't just fallen out of the sky – they are there because we've stuck together and fought to keep them so let's support other workers in their struggles for a fair deal.

As we head into spring and our busiest time of year stay safe and try and take some time for yourself and your family. We deal with a disproportionate number of investigations and disciplinary issues going into Christmas, many of which could be avoided if people recognised when they are tired and under pressure and just took a little time out. Your Union will back you if you're strung out and don't feel safe. 🌐

PORT LYTTELTON

HERE in Lyttelton we're now in what is turning out to be a difficult period following an acrimonious and bitter industrial dispute which only ended a few months ago. (See TTW June issue) On both sides there are people who find it difficult to let go of the grievances that led to the dispute. Some managers felt the need to pursue disciplinary actions against some of our members who had been active in the dispute. These actions have been vigorously fended off but not without legal expense. Frankly, it is difficult to rebuild trust and get back to business as usual under such circumstances.

Unfortunately, this is just a part of

a pattern of coercive management practices in which LPC has clearly departed from its previous past practice of a 'no blame policy'. This is particularly the case in the container terminal where, since late 2017, members have been subjected to a seemingly endless series of disciplinary measures largely, and unjustly, focusing on what are really performance issues. The change in attitude is clear in that management appears to be bent on a punitive approach. In a couple of cases this has even led to the dismissal of the members concerned. These cases are currently the subject of personal grievances.

The hardening of LPC's attitude coincides with the move to the new terminal

building and the introduction of a new port-wide surveillance system that was part of the operational upgrade in the container control. Almost immediately we saw footage being used in disciplinary meetings and all sorts of conclusions being drawn on the strength of those images without the context being properly investigated. Members must be aware that all aspects of their work is being watched and that the company will throw the procedure book at them if there is an apparent breach. Under these circumstances it is better to do all your work by the book even if that takes more time and impacts on productivity. If you are the subject of disciplinary action, admit nothing as it will be held against you. As soon as you get a letter, contact



Branch AGM shows support for striking teachers.

◀ your delegate.

Despite the above, at the time of writing we have a semblance of peacetime reality and in recent weeks we have been dealing with other issues:

Bargaining for the logistics officers' collective agreement has restarted after being stalled in February due to the industrial dispute around the main port collective agreement. We attempted to make a quick deal, but the company is adamant that a roster change is necessary. Although LOs on the existing roster will not be affected, all new full-time LOs will be. We are currently working through the roster proposal to try and come up with something that is acceptable to both parties and also adheres to modern fatigue management practice.

We've also initiated bargaining for the inland port at Woolston and have a growing membership at the second inland port out at Rolleston. It'll be interesting to see how the negotiations go given management's

continued belligerency towards our Union.

After the excellent workshops on fatigue management given by Phillipa Gander of Massey University earlier this year, a lot of work has been going on behind the scenes to develop a fatigue management standard. LPC should have a draft for us by the end of August and we intend to hold a cross-union meeting to discuss it in early September. Fatigue is always a risk in 24/7 operations and has for far too long been ignored in New Zealand.

We are fortunate to have the dedicated support of Karen Fletcher, the RMTU's national health and safety organiser, who has been actively working with Alisa Davies, LPC health and wellbeing specialist, to develop this standard.

In the LPC workshop we are about to convene a working group to look at remuneration in the mechanical maintenance department. This was a key result of the recent bargaining and an agreement here would

facilitate a roster change for workshop staff. This will be particularly challenging as this roster change was a key claim by LPC during bargaining. Even though we arrived at a roster that was mutually acceptable, it was over the issue of remuneration, or rather the assumption by LPC that they would get a change for next to nothing, that was a key trigger to talks breaking down. Let's hope LPC takes a less positional approach this time and that workshop staff are made a sensible offer in exchange for a roster change.

To end on a positive note, it was great to see so many RMTU members at the nurse's strike rally on July 12 at Christchurch Public Hospital. What a fantastic sight it was to see literally thousands of nurses at that event! We all remember the huge support we got from the nurses during our dispute, so it was great that our branch president Andy Kelly spoke so passionately in support of the nurses at the rally. Of all the speakers, he got the biggest cheer. Proud to be RMTU. 🇳🇿

TIMARU RAIL

ALTHOUGH it's allegedly the quiet season we've had a bit going on here in Timaru Rail. Top story is the impending shift by our KiwiRail operations members from their current abode across the road to the networks depot. This is apparently because Toll is demanding rent for premises that KiwiRail own but lease to Toll. Yes, you read that correctly. The new premises are in the final stages of being refurbished and members expect the very best. They are adamant they are only moving if the accommodation is fit for purpose and preferably an improvement on what they are leaving behind. Collective bargaining has been very much in people's minds. Both Toll and KiwiRail members have deals that are being ratified.

The RMTU KiwiRail report back meeting was exceptionally well attended and most remarks were positive. By the time you read this you'll know if that was the mood across the country as the ballot will have closed. In operations we are facing what seems like an increasingly difficult task running DSG locos which are older than many of our members. This is a challenge for the mechanical guys

as well. Now we have a government that is supposedly pro-rail it would be good to see the rhetoric matched by an open cheque book and some real investment in the locomotive and rolling stock. Members took a keen interest in our acting Prime Minister's tenure while Ms Ardern was on parental leave.

We're very keen on provincial growth down here and once again we're impatient to see some results that match the rhetoric. On more mundane, but no less important, matter – we seem to spend an inordinate amount of time and effort carting fresh air,

in the form of empty wagons, about. At least pay scale 7 has been sorted – thanks and well done to all involved. And more good news is the arrival of new staff.

We have a couple of trainee RCOs, Daniel and Darryl, who are being looked after by our veterans Bernard and Gavin. Welcome lads – you're part of the rail and RMTU family.

Finally, recognition to our hard working networks members who are out in all weathers over the winter making sure the track is safe and well maintained in readiness for the coming peak. Once again, stay healthy and safe. 🇳🇿



Timaru Rail members at the RMTU/KiwiRail MECA report back meeting.

TIMARU PORT

IT'S all change here in Timaru with shipping being shifted around. Maersk will now be arriving on Fridays and Wednesdays which will stuff things up for those of us who enjoy weekend pursuits. We hear that most shipping up the road in Lyttelton is concentrated at weekends as well. Oh, the joys of being a port worker!

We've been working hard in our quality marshalling negotiations and while we haven't quite sealed the deal we have

addressed and made good progress on our key claims around pay and fatigue. Fatigue is certainly the hot topic and it is gratifying that the employer seems to share our members' view that we need to address it.

We had our branch AGM on August 14 and had the pleasure of welcoming RMTU national president Aubrey Wilkinson and general secretary Wayne Butson.

It's always good to see our most senior elected officials and get their perspective on our Union, particularly given we are

nine months into a more worker friendly government.

It was particularly interesting to hear about the work being done by them to promote a national port strategy a study of which is underway.

Work on the reinvigoration of coastal shipping is also in the wind.

Thanks to all the officials and delegates who stood for office and thanks to all our members who supported them and continue to support them throughout the year. 🇳🇿



Branch AGM 14th August.

OTAGO RAIL

THE proposed KiwiRail/RMTU collective agreement with its flat rate wage increase of \$1.63/hour in place of a percentage wage claim has caused good discussion among our membership. If ratified there will be more money in total for members due to the whole increase taking effect at the start of the agreement, and far fewer members earning under the living wage of \$20.55 per hour. By the time you read this we will know if this ground-breaking deal has been ratified.

Focus lately has been on planning the branch AGM held on August 13. There was an excellent turnout and the branch was happy national president Aubrey Wilkinson, general secretary Wayne Butson and South Island organiser John Kerr were all along

to share in the branch business - and the food and drink. Alas...if only the barman had been on time!

Guest speaker Brian Roper, who is a politics lecturer at Otago University and a member of the Tertiary Education Union, gave a passionate and very enjoyable account of the history of strike action in New Zealand putting the current action by nurses, teachers, public servants, bus drivers, not forgetting of course the RMTU in Wellington, Auckland and Lyttelton in their proper context.

Wayne later pointed out that this strike action was spearheaded by our Union resisting clawbacks and ensuring safe train staffing, so we can be proud that we led the way. Members watched a film clip of an interview with the director of the forthcoming

Helen Kelly documentary, with a view to a group going along to the premiere when it comes out shortly.

A good reminder of Helen's commitment to the workers' cause and her inspiration to all around her!

Branch representation and experience is getting even better with two new delegates elected, Mike Batt from KiwiRail freight operations and Mel Ryall from Dunedin Railway's office and ticketing area. Mel was also elected as a rep to the Women's National Conference, so there will be great representation from Otago this year, three in total.

Long standing Dunedin Railways delegate Lyall Kelpie has stepped down from the role and Julian Evans is the new delegate in that area. Much thanks to Lyall from the branch for the tremendous work he has

put in organising our membership over the years. Lyall led by example, remaining cool and polite whatever the pressure but always demonstrating steely resolve in fighting for fairness and justice at work.

Something coming up of note is the

Labour Party conference to be held in Dunedin in November. This is an opportunity for branch representatives to raise some issues from recent contact with local MPS and ministers David Clark and Clare Curran, namely: the re-opening of Hillside Work-

shops which is Labour Party policy; NIMT electrification; rail ferry retention; worker representation on the KiwiRail board; – and that's just for starters.

Until next time, ka kite, stay safe and stay strong together! 🌐

SOUTHLAND RAIL

OVER the last wee while we have seen a number of positive changes taking place that have been long awaited and, credit where it's due, the "new broom" operations manager, who, being an ex LE and RCO, actually knows a thing or two about the job, which is refreshing, has been sweeping clean.

The fuel bay lighting is now at a level where it should have been when the facility was first installed about five years ago, along with level ground conditions and sand bags neatly stored separately in an old 10 foot container keeping the place clean and tidy. Heat pumps now keep everybody in the amenities building cozy during those frosty mornings that have been hanging around of late. No more arguing with the boss over PPE and uniform is a welcome change, and by the time this goes to print the new book on room, housing all the bulletins, gas monitors, the new info kiosk and other bits and bobs, should be completed.

Congratulations to Matt Moynihan being appointed LE team leader and Dave Murdoch LE being appointed OCM which he covers Timaru south, based in

Invercargill. We eagerly await Dave's replacement, who it appears is so popular that they

don't want to let him go from his present location!

We also have seen some movement in training of yard based staff to RCO and confirmation of an LE to be trained which is long overdue.

Again, positive stuff.

Some of the staff have been taking advantage of the free gym membership which is another positive offering that's been made available. It should also be noted that there are some staff who haven't taken advantage of it and should, particularly those who have just spent four weeks swanning around the Mediterranean on a cruise boat and have come back with a bit of "extra baggage".

The cows are about ready to start milking again which heralds a new round of high season roster negotiations with the usual jostling, a new master train plan (MTP) which, if finalised, will see the disestablishment of the dreaded 934/927/924/925 shift, which caused no end of fatigue-related issues for the LEs. It would appear that Dr Phillipa Gander's report has had a positive influence on the design of the MTP.

The "F" word has left its mark down here, but it appears there are some managers who refuse to acknowledge it. Hiding behind the ROM doesn't protect staff from fatigue. We have a number of staff who have been disciplined for making mistakes that are fatigue-related and were told that they shouldn't have come to work in the first place while they were "fatigued".

If the rumours are correct, the Dunedin LEs are being called upon to run 939 to Invercargill on a Monday morning and are expected to drive a car back to Dunedin, all of this on the back of an A level, at risk shift. It would appear that the message from the CEO and board, and Zero Harm, that KiwiRail is striving to be the leading H&S company in the country, is not getting through to junior management!

In light of all that the new management structure is starting to take shape and we watch with interest who will and won't be around, including who will be the new CEO.

Asbestos is once more in all our minds. Easily solved. Replace the ageing and worn out South Island loco fleet!

Keep safe, and if you are fatigued, report it, stay home, or otherwise you could find yourself well and truly "F"ed. 🌐



Southland RMTU members and industrial council reps listen attentively at the RMTU-KiwiRail MECA report back meeting.



Wairoa line nearly ready for action



THE All Trains Stop Board (ATSB) is currently firmly planted at the mark 291.2 at the last bridge before Wairoa then it's just a short way to mark 294.38 – the end of the line at Wairoa – and the line will be ready for its first train in nearly six years to run in early September.

The Napier Structures Gang, comprising Joe Gibson, Paul Cavanagh, Jason Harmer and Peter Usherwood, has completed all safety critical work on previous bridges which have all been signed off by the structures inspector. Once work is complete on the current bridge they can carry the Stop Board to the end of the line.

Their current project is to replace a well-rotted, hard wood beam at the northern end of the bridge before heading back to the south end to where digger opera-

tor Graeme Simpkin has prepared road access for the gang to replace two piles.

The Wairoa Line closed in 2012 after a storm and severe flooding and was mothballed by KiwiRail. Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones and his billions have changed their minds. Hopefully KiwiRail can now convince the log truckers clogging the narrow highway to transfer their loads to rail. It will be a welcome relief for the regular road users and a nod of encouragement to rail.

“Maybe the Jones’ fund will even out the funding imbalance between road and rail,” said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. 🇳🇿

Photographs illustrate the work required repairing the Wairoa line and readying it for operation.

