

THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

SEP 2019

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

Zero tolerance for racism



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(l to r) Kaisa Beech, Christine Fisihoi, Jaquelyne McCorkindale and Campbell Legget met this year's Myanmar leaders brought to New Zealand by UnionAID.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Wellington MetLink train manager JJ Phillips, confronted racist abuse in her train by inviting the offender to leave! Page 20.

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Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Bursting to capacity with pride and joy

WELCOME to your huge 36 page September issue of *The Transport Worker* journal. The magazine is not intended, nor budgeted, to be 36 pages, rather it should be 18 pages. However, I cannot remember when we last kept it to that limit. There is just such a lot to report and we are proud of what we achieve on your behalf, and want to share it with you.

I am honoured that you have all endorsed me as your general secretary for the next four years, thank you. This will be my fifth term in the office and my 20th year on 20 October 2019. I have now been in full time union work for 29 years and I enjoy the challenge as much today as I did when I became an assistant general secretary (loco) of the Combined Union of Railway Employees in 1990 after having been in loco since 1974.

Bitterseet memories

The 20 October is always a bittersweet day for me as whilst it was the day that a long sought after goal of mine was achieved it was also a day of great sadness. Early that morning I received the phone call advising me of the head on train collision at Waipahi and that Graham White had been killed and David McKie seriously injured. This year we are holding a 20 year commemoration of the collision and Graham's passing at Waipahi organised by the Otago and Southland rail branches.

Those first two years were traumatic to say the least, as the rail industry entered a period of unheralded death and injury of members at work.

I am mindful that those who forget history are destined to repeat it and I am determined that we shall not forget and we shall remember them all - plus the many other things which have happened to the RMTU and its members over the last 25 years.

On Mayday 2020 the RMTU will be 25 years young and so we have commissioned the writing of a Union history by celebrated union historian Peter Franks who will be ably assisted by our own Paul Corliss. This book will be released at our Union conference in October 2020 at a special function to mark the occasion.

I was in the South Island last week speaking to members at their annual general

meetings. This is the best part of the job in my view. I enjoy reuniting with old mates and meeting new members and getting the feel of the rank and file members. I especially enjoy having the opportunity to thank our passionate, skilled and hard working branch officers and sector delegates. These people are the back bone of our Union without whom we would not be as effective at projecting power and influence in the workplace for the benefit of members. We are an active Union which gets shit done and the AGMs are when we all get to remind each other what we have achieved and those who have made it happen. I look forward to attending more AGMs as we continue to hold them and the enormous struggle to get branch chair Kelven Martin to give me more than his arbitrary "five minutes" at the BOP AGM.

Rank and file opinions

In this issue you will see reporting on the CTU-Government forums. This is where our rank and file members get the opportunity to meet and speak with our Prime Minister and members of her cabinet. The two way knowledge transfer which occurs at these meetings is priceless because the politicians aren't hearing opinions from the union officials instead, it is coming from the rank and file members and so they are quickly aware that what is talked about is widely and deeply felt. The icing on the cake, as it were, is that they also get to have their picture taken with Jacinda which seems to be high on everyone's agenda.

Read, enjoy and care for each other. By Standing Together we are Union – POWER! 🇳🇿

Peter Conway lecture



UnionAID chair, Ross Wilson, thanks prime minister Jacinda Ardern who delivered the 2019 Peter Conway lecture.

Correction

Our apologies for the error which crept into the last issue (TTW June 2019) in the caption under the title Hillside on page 18.

Ron Palenski's address was actually at the Dunedin Town Hall at the site of the Paschendale plaque and not, as stated, outside the Hillside Works.

Retirements

Dear Editor,

I wish you to know that I am leaving the RMTU to take up an opportunity with a port company. I leave the Union with only good thoughts now and in the future.

My thanks to the RMTU for its support over the last 14 years and especially to Dave Marden.

Ian Raku Raku

Operations services manager, Port Napier.

Dear Editor,

It is with a tinge of sadness that I leave KiwiRail and tender my resignation from the RMTU due to a medical retirement on the 10/5/19 for a hearing issue.

I will not miss the early starts or late finishes but will certainly miss all the individuals in all departments that I have rubbed shoulders with that make KiwiRail operate in both the North and South Islands.

Adios and thanks for all the memories and to the RMTU for making my medical retirement from KR as easy as it was, very much appreciated.

Paul Atkinson

Westport

Big thanks

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for your un wavering support and fighting the good fight. What an emotional rollercoaster it has been. I am indebted to you as a union member, a father and a worker. It feels great to have that cloud lifted. Wayne, thanks for your support and backing me up, John, thanks for your guidance and Geoff, you're a diamond mate.

Thank also to union colleagues, Heiner, Andy, Joe and Bobbie for your support – it meant a lot.

Kind regards,

David Craig.

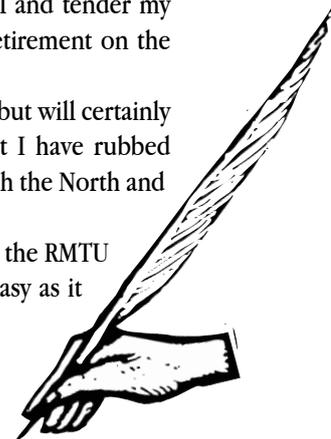
Joining SAD

Dear Editor,

Having been an LE in the UK and New Zealand. In 2009 I joined the RMTU when I began service at Westfield.

I didn't immediately join the SAD fund. I don't know why, maybe it wasn't mentioned or most likely I wasn't paying attention during the induction. Nevertheless, it was only during a discussion with a colleague (Bernie Henare) perhaps around 2012 that I did so.

You never think anything is going to happen to you. At least they were my thoughts but in 2015 (aged 50) I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease by the railway doctor. Mild though it was I was able to continue in my role until I decided that it would be better if I took control of the situation now, rather than potentially something occurring that would cause harm to myself or others. I was beginning to struggle with shift work and to consistently take medication at regular times.



Automation: not just about technology

By John Kerr
South Island organiser

WHAT we do with computers and information networks is an extension of what we once did with windmills, power looms and the internal combustion engine. For the past 200 years workers have been moved to the side of the industrial process, making them observers rather than controllers, and giving machines temporary and limited autonomy. The risk is once machines can give themselves instructions, humanity may be swept aside altogether and surrender control.

If you were told a machine could:

- run the country better than the government,
- think more logically than any single human,
- run autonomously,
- could control all the important decisions

LETTERS (CONT)

Approaching my manager and the RMO late in November 2018 it was agreed I could/would leave KiwiRail through ill health, which I did finally mid-January 2019.

One hundred and eighty days later I received a full cash payout from the RMTU SAD fund. This has been an absolute Godsend, taking away financial pressure.

I am writing to you to offer my thanks to the RMTU, to Bill Sweeney (Westfield rep) and to Debby Green personally for all they have done for me leading up to my resignation.

I wish to advise any young – or even seasoned – LE not in the SAD fund to seriously consider joining it. It is not expensive for what it is but (God forbid) should you be suddenly removed from the role of LE through sickness, accident or death then at least you are safe in the knowledge there is some cover from the burden of financial worry for yourself or the ones you leave behind.

Michael Scott
Ex Westfield LE.

in your life; and

- that you would be happier if you changed your behaviour to anticipate what the machine decides, you would probably think it was nonsense.

If you substitute the word 'market' for 'machine' you may alter your position. For a generation, millions of us have allowed market forces to run our lives, shape our behaviour and override our democratic rights.

I suspect that if James Watt had invented the steam engine in Ancient Egypt the local pharaoh would have ordered it to be displayed in his palaces to show the ingenuity of his empire.

And that's it.

The pyramids would continue to be built by thousands of slaves and Egypt would remain an agricultural slave-owning society.

Because technology alone isn't enough.

Starting in the 17th century the British, over a few decades, experienced one of the most violent transformations in human history when over 70 per cent of the rural population were thrown from the land as land ownership changed from feudal lords to entrepreneurs: from subsistence farming to supplying global demand.

Vast numbers of landless peasants, with nothing to sell but their labour, were cast aside, bewildered and resistant.

Landowners began pursuing profit alone – with the help of modern banking – thus heralding the modern industrial society.

Central government also helped by suppressing those recalcitrant peasants resisting eviction from the land and by supported technological inventions such as the steam engine. Suddenly the first wave of automation and the speedy growth of an industrial society was at hand.

During the wars against Napoleon, in the early 19th century, the British government deployed more troops in northern England suppressing its own people than it did fighting the French.

Why? Because the new technology,

in the shape of machines, had provoked some of the most misunderstood rebels in history, the machine breakers or Luddites.

The steam engines could power hundreds of looms and provide jobs for thousands of landless labourers but the immense wealth they produced landed in the pockets of the owners and little found its way into the hands of the workers. It wasn't the machines the Luddites objected to, but the system of ownership that condemned them to poverty alongside hitherto unheard of wealth.

Not long after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, on August 16, 1819, 60,000 people gathered in St Peter's Fields in Manchester to demand the reform of England's corrupt electoral system. By day's end at least 15 were dead and 650 injured after being attacked by local militia and regular army soldiers in what became known as the Peterloo massacre.

It was no coincidence that this atrocity occurred in Manchester, the world's first industrial city, where fabulous wealth existed alongside abject poverty – and where demand for political change was the loudest.

Technology was the heat that generated the economic, social and political change that followed. It needed the other ingredients though.

What the Luddites could not achieve – stopping the march of technology – was achieved, if only sporadically, by the flaws inherent in the system of capitalist society generated by the industrialisation of the economy.

Mechanisation reduced costs but competition between producers squeezed profits. Furthermore, the machines which replaced human workers do not spend wages, thus reducing demand. Entrepreneurs, who have borrowed heavily to invest in machines, faced economic disaster.

Meanwhile unemployment increases and wages are depressed, resulting in some recovery of the ground lost to machines. The same thing happened after the crash of 2008 – workers made this kind of comeback



Algorithms

An algorithm is the step-by-step instructions used for solving a problem.

A computer programme is an algorithm running without human intervention.

If you are on Facebook you will be subject to algorithms as the software behind the program analyses your 'likes' and makes calculations based on the numbers. The software is able to predict your personality more accurately than a work colleague by analysing just 10 'Likes'. With 70 'Likes' it obtains a truer picture of your character than a friend or room-mate, while with 150 'Likes' it may outperform your parents, or sibling. With 300 'Likes' a programme may be able to judge your character better than your spouse.

in large areas of the global economy.

As former *BBC Newsnight Economics* editor Paul Mason tells us: 'Far from rapidly automating jobs, advanced market economies created thousands of jobs that did not need to exist. In the UK there are 20,000 hand car washes, staffed mainly by migrant workers: 20 years ago they barely existed, and at the same time the market for automated car wash machines collapsed.'

In New Zealand we have something similar: people staffing stop/go signs at roadworks, something which has European visitors scratching their heads. The anthropologist David Graebner calls these 'bullshit jobs'.

In less developed economies it is worse. For example, in Bangladesh, garments from a T-shirt factory are not produced by autonomous machines but by thousands of, largely, women workers – often in unsafe and insanitary conditions. All the T-shirts are for export – the workers' wages have fallen to the point where they are too low to buy the goods they help produce.

Take away access to the global market – the very thing that is breaking down post 2008 with the rise of populists like Trump – and the solution of exporting in pursuit

of profit also disappears

Looked at in this light it is in the interests of employers to support the resistance to automation, because automation can destroy profits.

The antidote to this are well organised trade unions which can increase wages, reduce hours and secure better conditions. More enlightened capitalists and politicians know this. Didn't Winston Peters talk about capitalism with a human face when he sealed the deal with Jacinda?

In the absence of strong unions, governments have had to step in – even in countries as prosperous as Germany – and introduce measures such as a minimum or living wage.

In 2016 the Labour Party launched the report of its Future of Work Commission, and soon-to-become finance minister Grant Robertson said:

"The pace of change in the world of work is undoubted. The uptake of technology in the digital age is at a pace estimated to be ten times that of the industrial revolution at 300 times the scale.

The impact of artificial intelligence, 3D printing, sensors, algorithms, and robots has only scratched the surface of what is

possible.

Higher levels of unemployment from rapid automation, and less full time stable work seem likely."

The next wave is driven by a different kind of machine: the computer. The man who developed a specific theory of digital machines was the same man who cracked the German Enigma code, and developed modern computer along the way. He was based in the same city where the Peterloo massacre took place.

Alan Turing made three propositions, two of which have already transformed human life:

■ It is possible to design a physical machine to emulate specific human thought processes – a computer. (A silicon chip is a machine with billions of switches that do not move. The 4G network is a machine whose main components are switches and radio waves. The cloud is also a machine.)

■ In its ideal form this machine will be able to mimic all other machines and all single purpose computers. (With a smartphone in your pocket you don't have to carry a phone, a camera, a calculator and a GPS device.)

◀ Digital technology of this nature allows us to stack airliners in holding patterns; to model and test new materials before they are made; and to create goods unlike all previous goods, that can be copied and reproduced infinitely at minuscule cost: information goods.

The classic example is the digital music track. Whilst there is a production cost – the wages of the band and recordist, the price of the microphones, the marketing budget – the reproduction costs are close to zero.

Large amounts of what we see as physical goods are becoming information goods. For example, a modern aircraft wing is designed and tested to destruction on a computer millions of times. In commercial law analytical tasks, once done by junior lawyers, can be done by software in seconds.

The third proposition made by Turing in 1950 in his paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" was:

■ Within 50 years computers will begin to out think us, be able to simulate emotions, have a sense of 'self' and emulate

a deep subconscious mind. Then they will begin learning independently of human teachers.

That has already started.

What's our response?

It has to be the same as the way I hope you respond to the notion that the market runs our lives, shapes our behaviour and overrides our democratic rights

As you will hopefully see by now, we, as trade unionists, are already responding by simply doing our job of advocating for workers, by community organising, by being involved in politics.

We have to keep doing that and we owe it to ourselves to learn the history and the theory because that's how we'll work out what is possible and what's not.

We have survived three previous industrial revolutions and we will survive the next. Some old jobs may disappear but new ones will appear. We must be ready by upskilling, retraining and supporting each other

We can't stop the march of technology but we can humanise it. There is actually

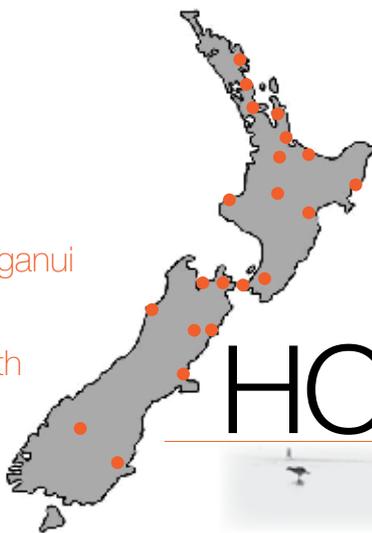
Three key things you can do to stay or be competitive:

- Encourage maths and science learning in your family, among your colleagues and for yourself. The new jobs will be in science, technology, engineering and maths.
- Be a lifelong learner. Reskill, retrain and learn – with enthusiasm. It is a part of your lifelong journey.
- Stay passionately curious. Technology is changing so fast. Skills relevant today could be worthless tomorrow, but for a curious person, evolving skills with the market isn't a challenge.

an argument for accelerating automation by decoupling work from wages. A world with universal basic incomes, free lifelong education and cheap or free housing and healthcare is there for the taking. It's called a 'just transition'. Trying to stop change and break the machines like the Luddites is a doomed strategy. Fighting for a just transition isn't. 🌐



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



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**RMTU members took part in three forums during the last three months.
We publish their comprehensive reports**

PORTS

Challenging and captivating speakers inspirational

THE RMTU held its 2019 biennial Ports Forum in Wellington for two days in July this year where branch delegates and officials from around New Zealand gathered to discuss and prepare for action in dealing with the challenges facing maritime sector members.

The Forum was ably chaired by NMC members Dave Marden and Andy Kelly, North and South Island ports representatives respectively, and saw a range of RMTU people and guests lead sessions on a wide variety of topics.

Outgoing CTU secretary Sam Huggard updated us on winning the next round of employment law reform, in particular around Fair Pay agreements. Not something that will impact on the industries we organise in directly, where we tend to have high membership density and good bargaining power, but very definitely something that will have a benefit for workers in industries like contract cleaning where unions were smashed by National's anti-union legislation in the nineties. Given that all wage setting mechanisms are built from the bottom up, it can only help us if all working people have the ability to achieve good pay and conditions. The idea behind Fair Pay agreements is that they will achieve just that, setting minimum terms and conditions in industries where workers are vulnerable in a race to the bottom as employers compete to slash costs by attacking pay packets.

After that it was timely to hear from a great friend of the RMTU, barrister Geoff Davenport, on updates to employment law, many of which came into effect this May. These have largely had the effect of resetting employment law where it was prior to the election of the John Key National/ACT Government in 2008. A series of changes have made modest progress towards equalising



Allan Addison-Saipe and Ann Wells - part of a team at Nelson which grew the branch from 60 to 200+ members – a more than 300% increase. Now there's a challenge!

power between unions and employers, particularly around collective bargaining. The glaring issue remains however, that fewer than one in five working people are in a union and therefore lack the power, protection and benefits which RMTU members enjoy.

There followed an excellent session run by another friend of the RMTU, lawyer Hazel Armstrong, and our health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher. This was an interactive exercise that looked at the potential use of the Red Card in a real life situation – that of the APL – Kota, a ship which was at the centre of a snapped lines incident at Lyttelton Port. The interactive session was attended by staff from Maritime New Zealand and Worksafe and certainly focused delegates minds on the right to refuse unsafe work and when to exercise that right.

Later in the afternoon, South Island organiser John Kerr led a workshop on or-

ganising inside and outside the port gates, focusing on reaching out to fellow workers in other unions and to the wider community to maximise our strength and, as Nelson branch secretary Ann Wells put it: 'to bank that good will' that comes from supporting and being supported.

Lyttelton Port branch officials spoke of the close involvement with other unions they have enjoyed in both their own dispute with management and the support of working people fighting for a fair deal in the health, education, and core public sectors and in private industry.

Simple things like attending rallies and pickets and inviting guest speakers to membership meetings are all ways to get members more involved.

We started day two bright and early after an evening of discussion and camaraderie. Karen Fletcher led us in a stocktake exercise

◀ of how different employers in the port sector are handling fatigue. Port Otago and Lyttelton Port were outstanding for all the wrong reasons – they scored very badly. The Timaru delegation were happy to share their success story with Quality Marshalling. The session was illuminating and showed that while we've scored some real wins we still have much to do to tackle this issue.

The next presentation focused on the International Transport Federation's (ITF) global campaign, 'The Right to Flush'. The ITF, to which the RMTU is affiliated, represents 18 million transport workers worldwide, and their representative Michelle Myers, gave us a very clear synopsis of the issues and the challenges facing workers

demanding this very basic human right.

After a short break John Kerr talked about automation, and demonstrated that the march of technology – which may be impossible to stop – is not sufficient to generate economic, political and social change, good or bad. In other words, we as unions and working people have been dealing with technological change for 200 years and it offers us as many opportunities as it does challenges.

The key point is to understand it, know the history and organise to make it work for us and not wealthy elites.

We ended the forum with what, for this writer, was the most outstanding and inspiring presentation of the whole two

days – Allan Addison-Saipe and Ann Wells from the Nelson branch told the story of how their members have successfully grown their branch from 60 to 200 plus members in two years and the wins they achieved along the way. This was great to hear, all the more so as it was from rank and file active members who have gone out and applied good solid organising techniques and shown how this can make a real difference. The session ended with each branch committing to tackle an issue of substance on their return to work.

All in all, an excellent two days that left people better informed and very much inspired to carry on with the great work we do in our union. 🌐

New to the forum - quotes from first timers



Bill Hunter: Great to mix with the other members and to help build Union strength and solidarity in other branches.



Chris Shaw: Enlightening. One of my key takeaways is that I'm going to get involved in the local body elections. I had no idea how important these are in affecting our work.



Jason Kuka: It's been great listening to the various speakers and I've learnt a great deal.



Jared Parnell: I came to learn. It's been great and I can go back to the work site and talk to other members about it.



Kama Harris: There was great education around legal changes and I gained a lot of new knowledge. The interactive sessions were great.



Rata Sidwell: It's been really engaging and a slither of fun mixed in with the serious stuff. I loved the interactive sessions.



Mike Taane: Very informative. It's been good to see what is happening around the ports, especially with the various negotiations.



Karen East (MUA): It's been empowering being amongst our New Zealand comrades.



Peter Watson: I came here to see if I can make a difference and I've come away believing I can.



Mich-Elle Myers (MUA): This has been a great opportunity for the port workers to plan strategies and campaigns to improve their rights and conditions.



Rudd Hughes (Northern region organiser): Great to see so many great delegates taking up the many challenges head on.



Gina Ruddell: It's been great. I came here to get more informed and on those grounds it's been very successful.

PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN

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D ID you know the Ports Retirement Plan has a website? Members of the Plan can access the private section of the website and view their latest statements.

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RMTU WOMEN

By Rebecca Hauck
NMC women's rep

Inspiring speakers

THE RMTU 2019 women's forum brought some new faces from across the country including Holly Egger from Christchurch rail, Annelies Griemink, Louise Francis and Hiria Walters from Wellington rail, Gina Ruddell from Timaru port, Rata Sidwell from Bay of Plenty port and Kama Harris from Port Otago. It was great to see some new faces and some young strong women at the forum. Good luck and safe travels to Annelies as she makes her way to Sri Lanka for the International Transport Federation (ITF) maritime round table. Have a great time!

It was good to have our national president Aubrey Wilkinson at our forum to listen to speakers and group discussions. Thank you. Ka pai.

A big thank you to everyone who brought an item for the hamper we raffled and thanks to those raffled it off a 2nd time! Special thanks to Phil Spanswick who donat-

ed the hamper back after winning it! Merv Read eventually won it and gifted it to Dan Manu and his daughter. Well done guys.

Our first guest speaker was Danelle Whakatihi, from the New Zealand Defence Force. She spoke about women in the military and how mentally and physically challenging it is for them and how the Defence Force supports them by grouping them together so they have a network and connection with each other. As well as mentors and counsellors to ensure a safe and happy workplace, the Defence Force runs a sexual ethics and respectful relationship training course which has won them an award from Diversity New Zealand. Some great stuff happening there.

Diane Edwards, deputy CEO of Ports of Auckland, started her speech with a catchy phrase: "hire women, and men work harder". That's a pretty strong slogan and here is why. At Ports of Auckland they have

a bonus system on productivity as well as a safety record for the straddle drivers and stevedores. At the end of each month if staff have a perfect record they were eligible for a bonus. When more women came onto the scene and were driving the straddles etc their productivity and safety record was right up there with the men, to the point that all the women were receiving bonuses. The men weren't impressed so the only thing they could do was to pick up their game. The result was productivity and safety improved. Women just want to work alongside men, not replace them.

A panel consisting of Jeanine Benson (General manager, KiwiRail infrastructure and rail operations team in the South Island), Maryan Street (KiwiRail employee relations manager), Danelle Whakatihi (NZ Defence Force) and Diane Edwards (Deputy CEO Ports of Auckland) talked about their roles in male dominated industries and

\$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.

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how to encourage more women into them. The discussions, comments and questions were fantastic. The common themes of the discussion were about attending schools, universities, expos, career days and exposing the fact that women can work in male dominated industries. Finding those men to champion women's issues and supporting them is also key to making a safe and happy workplace for all.

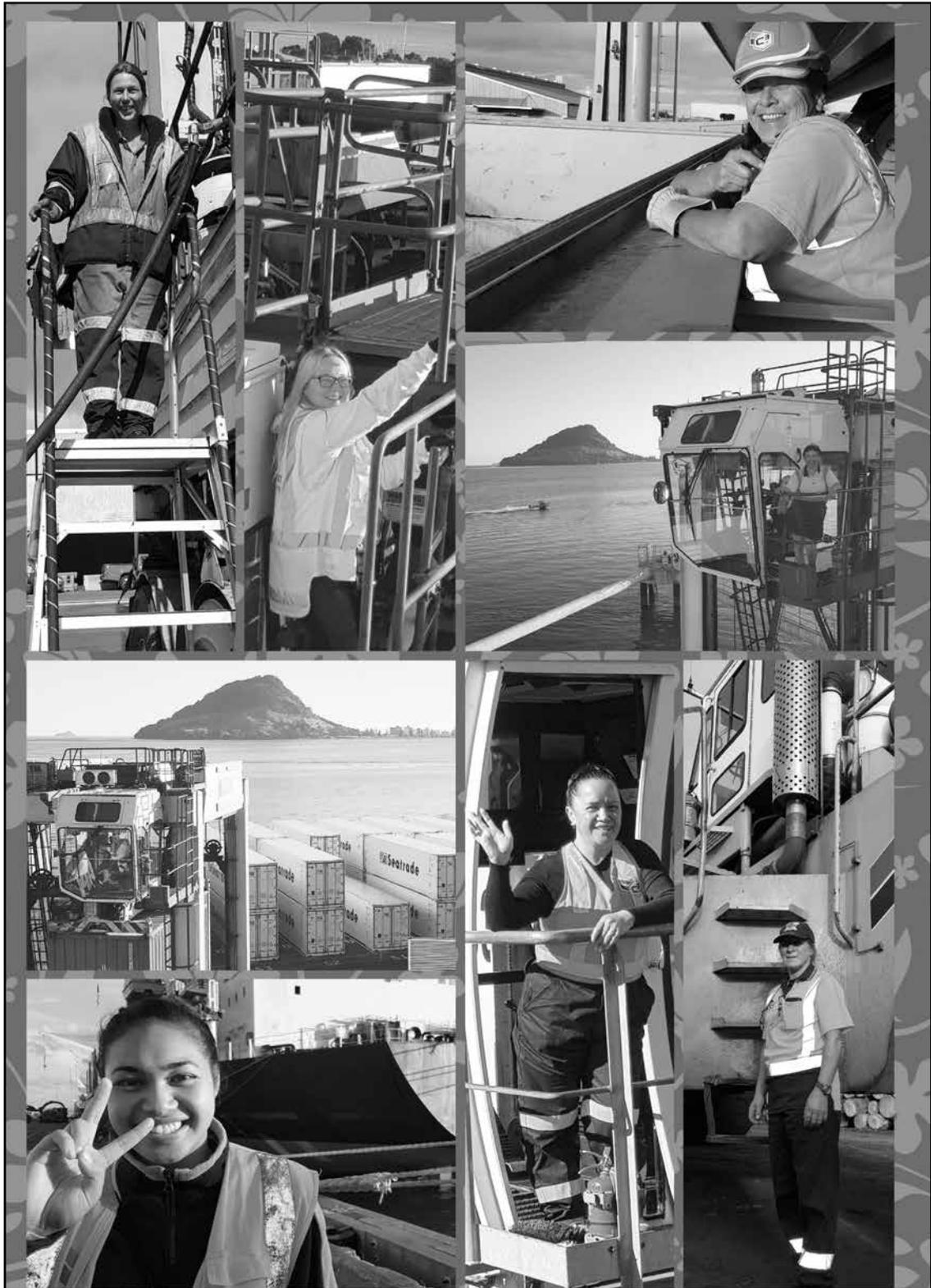
Mich-Elle Myers (Maritime Union of Australia) spoke passionately about using your voice. This was illustrated with video footage of her at rallies in Australia as well as the chanting that went on after the US Women's Soccer team won the World Cup. Chants of "Equal play, equal pay" were heard around the world. The message was, if you have an audience use your voice.

A few of us RMTU women spoke about our Right to Flush Campaign and the issues that we face in our workplaces where we have lack of toilets or no toilets at all and the state that some of these facilities are in. Louise Francis, Debbie Brown, and myself spoke of our experiences. Remember November 19 is World Toilet Day. The Right to Flush is a global ITF campaign and it's one we can all unite behind. This is a basic human need we're talking about.

Our RMTU national health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher discussed fatigue and how to manage it. Fatigue affects your mood, communication, accuracy, judge-

ment, decision making, and critically means slower reaction times. It not only affects us at work, but in our personal lives as well. You could be fatigued and not even realise it. Our work on this has to be two pronged: while we have to manage and take responsibility for fatigue we also have to ensure employers play their part and manage the systemic risk. Safe rostering is a big part of managing fatigue.

Our last speaker was, Green MP, Minister for Women and associate minister for Health and Transport, Julie Anne Genter. She spoke about how she supports women in male dominated work forces and the importance of getting young women interested in our industries. She also touched on trying to get more electric cars in New Zealand and the need to improve the public transport systems. 🇳🇿



Port sister 2019: a poster produced for the 2019 forum by Rata Sidwell.

CTU/GOVERNMENT

The second and third in a series of NZCTU-Government forums were held in Palmerston North (July 3) and Wellington (August 9). These regional forums provide an opportunity for union members and delegates to meet the prime minister, her cabinet and associate ministers to discuss issues relating to current concern, interests and industries.

Report

THIS forum which was attended by Wayne Butson, Dave Marden, Paul Simmonds, Dwayne Ewyat, Chris Vaughan and Jared Parnell of the Napier Port Branch and William Te Amo from Hawkes Bay rail.

The purpose was for the Labour Party to get feedback and see how they were tracking with workplace policies, conditions and where funding was being placed. There was strong participation from unions that represented the care and disabled industries.

One of the topics discussed was the benefits of a higher wage versus current tax brackets that may in some cases counter-act each other.

Another topic, from the floor, was regarding automation and the effect on jobs. The current

government assured us they were trying not to take 'a wait and see' approach. Only time will tell.

Dave was entrusted to be the voice of the group and rose to the occasion to address the Prime Minister asking "Why was it that ACC are still run under the same Board and CEO, selected by the previous government, when the Labour Party promised to undo some of the wrong-doings made by the National Government? It was stressed that in a coalition government it is not always an easy environment to make changes without compromise.

To finalise the session, we were split into groups to discuss topics such as: law, immigration, economics, automation and ACC.

Lastly, Stuart Nash remained very elusive and may have a better career as a magician. 🌐



Jared Parnell with prime minister Jacinda Ardern.



RMTU attendees at the Wellington forum held at the Beehive (l to r) Sam Kabui, John Millward, Annelies Griemink, PM Jacinda Ardern, Marty Duncan, Carey Sullivan and Brett Sullivan.



(l to r) Paul Simmonds, Jared Parnell, William Te Amo, Dave Marden, Chris Vaughan, Wayne Butson and Dwayne Ewart.

When 'liking' back-fires



By Hope Farquhar
Hazel Armstrong Law

WITH the ever growing importance of social media in our everyday lives, workers need to be aware that their actions on social media – even outside of work – may have repercussions on their employment.

Industrial relations in New Zealand are underpinned by the duty of good faith. Employers, workers and unions must deal with each other in good faith. This includes not doing anything that is likely to mislead or deceive each other. If a worker's actions outside of work may reasonably be viewed as bringing the employer into disrepute or having a negative impact on his/her reputation, the employer can consider disciplinary steps. Activities which can jeopardise an employment relationship include the use of social media. Workers must be careful to consider what they post, share, comment on and even 'like' on social media.

A recent illustration of this is the case *Blylevens V. Kidicorp Limited*, whereby the Employment Relations Authority held that



the worker's actions of 'liking' and commenting on her advocate's Facebook post and making derogatory comments about Kidicorp amounted to serious misconduct. Even though the worker did not write the post herself, the fact that she 'liked' it was enough to show that she agreed with, endorsed or supported the actions of her advocate. This resulted in the post being made visible to a new and wider audience via her Facebook page and thus it was reasonable to view that it would have had a negative impact on the employer.

The Employment Court went even further in *Hook v Stream Group*, holding that Facebook posts, even those ostensibly protected by a privacy setting, may not be regarded as protected communications

given that Facebook posts have a permanence and potential audience "that casual conversations around the water cooler at work or an after-hours social gathering do not."

Inevitably this requires a balancing act between a worker's right to privacy and their duties to their employer. It raises the question of how far can the employer reach into workers' lives outside of work. We know that the law does allow employers to curtail non work activities that can foreseeably impact the company – ie: drug use outside of work that might undermine performance and/or workplace safety.

The above cases show that workers must be careful when making statements about their employer on social media platforms. Even activity in private groups can have ramifications for not only the worker but potentially anyone else associated with that post. Social media posts which can be associated with a union could result in the union being subject to penalties – even if the union itself had no direct control over the post. Members must be careful to not post anything that could potentially be seen as bringing the employer into disrepute. 🌐

Changes to ACC review process

ACC have recently implemented new changes in relation to review hearing arrangements to make it easier for claimants to access the right support and information. However, these changes could negatively impact on claimants' ability to reach a just outcome in disputes with ACC.

If a claimant is unhappy with a decision made by ACC they are able to apply for a formal review. A common example of decisions that are reviewed include ACC declining to cover an injury or ACC suspending entitlements (ie weekly compensation) on a covered injury.

After receiving a review application, ACC refer the matter to an independent reviewer. A hearing is then held whereby the reviewer considers:

- all of the existing information/evidence;

and

- any new evidence presented by either party, in order to reach a decision.

The ACC scheme is complex and far reaching. An adverse decision from ACC can have profound consequences for an injured person. It is important therefore, that the review process is fair, robust and truly independent.

Key changes

New resolution provider

For many years, Fairway Resolutions Limited has been the sole provider used by ACC for review hearings. Although they haven't been without problems, the reviewers contracted by Fairway Resolutions Limited have accumulated a large institutional knowledge of ACC and the complexities of

the scheme (including the huge body of decisions coming from the Courts, which are binding on reviewers).

ACC have confirmed another provider, The Independent Complaint and Review Authority' (ICRA). Although a second provider may alleviate the delays some claimants experience, the greatest concern is that a new group of reviewers won't have the level of knowledge accumulated by Fairway over several years.

Inexperienced reviewers will likely rely on arguments put to them by ACC and the claimant. This is fine if the claimant has the benefit of an experienced representative; but in the majority of cases, they do not. Thus the reviewer is left to rely on ACC review specialists who will present the legal position in a way that favours ACC as much as possible, resulting in the possibility of ▶

◀ skewed outcomes.

In-person review hearings

In-person review hearings will now be limited to the main centres of Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Napier/Hastings, New Plymouth, Wellington, Blenheim/Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. For claimants outside of these areas the review hearing will be conducted via videoconference technology.

This may present difficulties for claimants who do not have access to these facilities forcing them to either travel in order to access the technology or appear over the phone. Appearances over the phone may be challenging for claimants who are neither familiar nor comfortable with the review process.

Alternative dispute resolution provided

Mediation and conciliation will now be provided by Talk Meet Resolve alongside Fairway Resolution. Mediation can be a useful tool for claimants, providing them with an opportunity to discuss their concerns with ACC, and in some instances agree on a resolution.

Examples of where mediation can be helpful include:

- Relationship issues with ACC; and
- The nature and extent of certain entitlements to be provided, such as treatment, vocational and social rehabilitation.

In such instances, the ACC Act leaves room for negotiation and agreement.

However, many ACC disputes do not lend themselves to mediation because the nature of the dispute leaves no room for negotiation. The prime example is medical causation, which forms the basis of the majority of ACC disputes. Causation cannot be bargained on – either the injury was caused by an accident/work related gradual process or it was not. ACC's decision is therefore either right or wrong. Such disputes are better suited to adjudication in the form of a review hearing.

If a claimant agrees to attend mediation prior to review, it is very important to bear in mind that this does not alter the time-frame for lodging a review application. A claimant must always lodge an application within three months of the decision being made, regardless of whether mediation is agreed to in the first instance.

Once a review application is lodged, the claimant can then agree to attend mediation, but will retain the right to go to a review hearing if mediation doesn't achieve the desired outcome.

Relevant documents provided

ACC will also be making changes to the documents provided to the claimant and/or their advocate for a review hearing. ACC will now only be providing specific documents that they believe are relevant, rather than a full file copy.

ACC have no grounds to refuse to provide a claimant their full file. Under the Privacy Act 1993 a claimant has a right to their full file. Furthermore a claimant should always request that they receive their full file and not let ACC make the determination of what is classified as relevant.

Ultimately, these changes aim at streamlining the review hearing process with the intent to provide a fast and more efficient outcome for the claimant. However, these may compromise the claimant's fundamental right to a fair and independent review hearing.

If you are currently involved in a dispute with ACC (or an ACC accredited employer) or have any concerns regarding your claim speak to your delegate to find out how the RMTU can help. 

New rights for victims of domestic violence

THE Domestic Violence – Victims' Protection Act passed in 2018 and came into effect on 1 April 2019 and makes changes to New Zealand law. These law changes provide employees affected by domestic violence, either in the past or currently, with some support at work, including paid leave and an ability to request short term changes to working arrangements. This applies to employees who experience, or have experienced, domestic violence directly or who live, or have lived, with a child/children who has experienced or have experienced domestic violence.

Leave entitlements

The new law entitles victims of domestic violence to be able to request up to 10 days additional leave from work a year for reasons related to domestic violence. This leave is intended to assist employees manage the effects of domestic violence and to make themselves and their children safe by enabling time for arrangements, such as moving house, attending scheduled court dates, and arranging care for their children, without risking their ongoing employment. To be eligible for this leave, an employee must have worked for six months with their employer continuously; or worked at least an average of 10 hours a week with no less than one hour in every week or no less than 40 hours in every month over a six month period. An employee needs to request the leave and the employer may require proof. Proof could be in the form of a letter from a medical practitioner or a statutory declaration.

The changes

An employee, or a person acting on their behalf, has the right to request a change of working conditions on a short term temporary basis for up to two months including the ability to work from a different location and carry out different duties as well as variation of other terms.

The things that could be changed are:

- The place of work
- Hours of work
- Days of work
- Duties at work
- Specific contact details that the employee must provide to the employer and may be negotiated
- Other things that in the employee's view need changing so as to enable the employee to deal with the effects of



domestic violence.

◀ The requirement for change (request) needs to be in writing and:

- The employer needs to respond as soon as possible but no later than 10 working days after having received the request
- If an employer does not deal with a request then it can be referred to a labour inspector, mediation or to the Employment Relations Authority.

When an employee is asking for changes to employment for reasons related to domestic violence the formal request must be in writing and include the following:

- The employee's name
- The date on which the request is made
- That the request is made under s69ABC of the Employment Relations Act 2000
- The specific changes that the employee is seeking and for how long (up to a maximum period of 2 months)
- The start and finish dates of the requested changes
- How, in the employee's view these changes will assist the person to deal with the effects of domestic violence

- In the employee's view, what changes the employer may need to make to accommodate the employee's request.

An employer may require proof that an employee is affected by domestic violence.

An employer can refuse to meet a request if proof is requested and not supplied.

While there are some specific grounds in law on which an employer can refuse a request an employer has to be reasonable in responding to, and accommodating, the request.

The new law now makes it unlawful under the Human Rights Act 1993 for an employer to discriminate against someone affected by domestic violence.

For more information or support and assistance in making a request for domestic violence leave or other support related to reasons to domestic violence contact your union or union organiser.

Other supports

If you or someone close to you needs support and assistance for urgent or immediate assistance because of domestic violence

these organisations can be contacted:

■ Are You OK?

- areyouok.org.nz/utility-pages/contact-us/

■ Family Violence Information Line(0800 456 450)

■ Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children

- orangatamariki.govt.nz/contact-us/contacts/

- Phone 0508 326 459 if you are concerned about a child or young person.

■ Women's Refuge

- womensrefuge.org.nz/home-page/

- Phone 0800 733 843

■ Shine

- 2shine.org.nz/ Making homes violence free in NZ.

- Free helpline 0508 744 633 - provides information to victims of family violence and also a training provider for the prevention of family violence.

■ National Network of Stopping Violence

- nnsvs.org.nz/about/ - a network of community organisations working to end men's violence to women and children across New Zealand. 

Fair Pay agreement research

A report produced by BERL for the NZCTU has found a return to sector bargaining in the form of Fair Pay Agreements is the single biggest thing the Government could do to improve well-being.

The agreements would deliver a better deal to vulnerable, low paid workers in industries where collective bargaining is difficult. The research also highlights economic benefits to good employers who compete on quality and innovation. The RMTU is now calling on the Government to introduce the agreements.

To read further go to: <https://bit.ly/2Z3bvNF>

Wahine toa: organising for change

By Rebecca Hauck
NMC women's rep



(above and below) Team RMTU with some other union colleagues.

THE NZCTU biennial women's conference was held in Wellington on July 11 and 12. Whaea Gazala opened the conference with a karakia and mihi whakatau as well leading us in waiata throughout.

Over the course of two days we heard from some amazing speakers. Julie Anne Genter (Minister for Women, Associate Minister for Transport and Associate Minister for Health) spoke passionately about the importance of our future and the young men and women who will create that and the struggles they may face. She emphasised how we can make that future better for our children and grandchildren.

Tania Te Whenua (principal of Te Whenua Law and Consulting) spoke passionately about the inequity for wahine Maori and employment and how serious the pay gap is. She spoke of her homeland and how lucky she is to be where she is today.

Saunoamaali'i Karaniua Sumeo (Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner)



has been working for 20 years as a public advisor and social worker. She works in a broad range of advocacy roles for children, women, families, the rainbow community, the social protection of youth in employment, gender equality and for an end to gender violence. She spoke about the gender pay gap and how much it affects families throughout New Zealand and the Pacific.

Mich-Elle Myers was the international guest. She is a proud unionist and an Australian Labor Party vice president. Mich-Elle is a passionate activist in the Maritime Union of Australia and the wider global union movement. She spoke of finding our voice and saying yes more often to things in life. She quoted the actor Jasmine Kaur who said: "Scream! So that one day, a hundred years from now, another sister will not have to dry her tears wondering where in history she lost her voice."

The most interesting part for me was the Pacifica perspective on well-being. Jean Mitaera (Chief Advisor on Pacific Strategy for

◀ WelTec and Whitireia) led this. She defined well-being as a state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. The workshop focused on - and challenged - the group to get in touch with our turanga. It's about yourself and others you support in your personal and professional life and your community. Breaking down the roles you play in your personal life - daughter, sister, auntie etc - as well as your professional and community life, was very interesting. What was really eye opening was our lists kept growing as we thought about who we are and what we mean to others in our lives, and how we support and connect with those people. I feel fortunate that I had the opportunity to be a part of the workshop and listen to the many women and the personal stories they

	MEN	WOMEN
EXHIBITION GAMES PER YEAR	20	20
PLAYER PAY FOR GAME WIN	\$17,625	\$1,350
PLAYER PAY FOR GAME LOSS	\$5,000	\$0,000
PLAYER PAY FOR MAKING WORLD CUP TEAM	\$68,750	\$15,000
TEAM PAY FOR WORLD CUP PERFORMANCE	\$9 MILLION <small>(FOR LOSING IN THE ROUND OF 16)</small>	\$2 MILLION <small>(FOR WINNING WHOLE THING)</small>
QUALITY OF TEAM	PRETTY O.K.	OFF THE CHARTS

CC.COM/EQUALPAY

A demonstration of what we're fighting for!

shared about who they are in their personal and professional life and in their community as well as how they support other people in their lives. 🌐

Rehua rununga

Te Whatu Manawa
Māoritanga o Rehua
1960

THE CTU runanga biennial conference took place in Otautahi (Christchurch) at Rehua marae in May.

The RMTU was well represented by Pareanna Bysteveld and Aubrey Wilkinson. Other unions in attendance were MUNZ,

FIRST, NZEI, PSA, NZNO, PPTA, TUIA, ETU, DWU, UNITE, TEU, and CTU with Richard Wagstaff and Sam Huggard.

There were a lot of new faces, young people, and women in attendance. We also noticed a very strong feeling of unity among all participants. The programme was

full, so our deliveries had to be accurate and to the point. With 50 plus attendees our strong chair Laures, managed to get us through our entire programme. It will be a very exciting two years ahead dealing with our work programme within te ao Maori, along side our CTU partners. 🌐

RMTU members are active, positive, supportive and cheerful. V

In solidarity with MUA



THROUGHOUT the year RMTU members see the need to support fellow unionists struggling to get a fair deal. Their support comes in various forms: stopping work to show solidarity; mass meetings with placards, joining pickets and, in extreme situations, donating money and more. In the end it's union solidarity which makes us strong.

In this case the MUA wharfies at DP World dominated ports in Australia are fighting back against DP World's automation and outsourcing. They're fighting for real income protection, for domestic violence and to protect local jobs. The RMTU supports their actions and shows its solidarity with their fight. 🌐



Video enthusiasts

Wairarapa train manager Tangiwai Haney, has a video showing her early start for the Wellington train.

It's a dark, grim morning with cheerful customers and gratitude that someone got up early and put on the h

<https://youtu.be/-cJc>

Appreciation



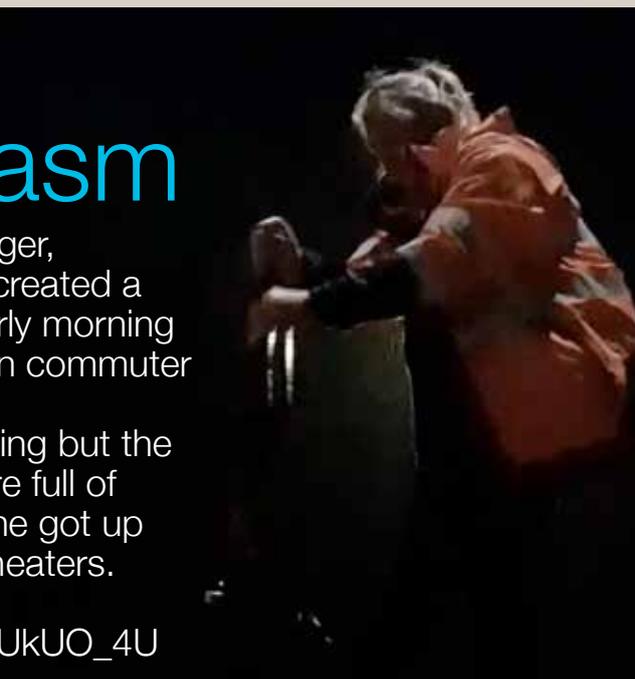
Alfie Wilson retires and other

THR bargainers



The Transdev Wellington/Hyundai employees with the employers to fight for a real

We present your Union in a variety of situations.



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words of recognition.....

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Rotem/RMTU bargaining team pose before entering the fray
al and meaningful gain for members in the MECA renewal

RMTU WOMEN

The RMTU wholeheartedly supports equal opportunities for women and men and have often been instrumental in improving conditions - especially for women. The latest issue is to improve access to toilet and wash room facilities - see page 23.

Sharon Jefferis or Shazz/Shazza

What is your Union role and why did you become active in Union?

I joined the RMTU two years ago when I started at KiwiRail. I'm an H&S rep and the chairperson of the health and safety action team (HSAT) at Kaiwharawhara.

What has been memorable experience in your role as a delegate/HSAT chairperson?

The ideas from the HSAT team, especially the newer employees putting forward their thoughts and suggestions for how to deal with and manage hazards and improve safety.

What is your job title?

Rail protection officer – Level 2

What does your job entail?

Scoping sites and setting up compulsory stop protection. Protecting workers and gangers on work sites doing any maintenance, stopping them from been hit by a train and also ensure they work safely and identify any new hazards.

Why did you decide to work as a safety protector?

I was working for a contractor just spotting for trains for track inspector and wanted to excel in my career and take it further. A job opportunity came up at KiwiRail and I was able to complete sign off and gain my 1.1 Protector and 902 Site protector qualifications.

What's the best part of your job?

I love being outdoors on the rail corridor. At the end of the day everyone goes home to their family.

What's something that bugs you about your job?

The wet days and working nights. I'm not a night owl!

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

Twenty years ago I witnessed a fatality on the rail tracks. One thing I say to people who aren't familiar with the rail corridor is always expect trains. People don't realise how dangerous the track is. Expect trains at all times. 🌐



Racist teen booted from train

When passengers on a Wellington suburban train last month heard a teenage woman racially abusing three Indians talking in Hindi among themselves, they were appalled and called it to the attention of train manager, JJ Phillips (pictured right) who quickly tried to quell the situation.

Unfortunately, the recalcitrant, abusive and volatile young woman would have none of it but continued demanding that the three Indians cease talking in their own language, speak English and/or leave New Zealand – but peppered with some pretty coarse language and plenty of vitriol.

Phillips said:

"There was no way I was going to let that carry on in my train so I told her to zip it. She wouldn't so I told her to get off."

The train was sitting at Ngauranga Station and there it stayed for 20 minutes or more while Phillips called and waited for the Police to arrive.

"They spoke to the young woman who then gave a pretty half-hearted apology before we continued on."

Phillips said she couldn't tolerate such behaviour: "I had a packed train that night."

And there the story would have remained. It's not often someone is evicted from a train, but, this time a nearby passenger, who worked in mayor Justin Lester's office, told him the story.

He responded by putting it up on his Facebook page saying:

"I was greeted by a shocking story when I got to work today." And followed up with an account of what happened.

He added that though it was an aw-

ful example of racism in our midst he was "he was incredibly proud to be Mayor of this city" to hear of the support offered by other passengers and the Metlink staff member who stopped the train and when it was resolved stood in front of the passengers and told them "how this behaviour is never acceptable in NZ".

The story then quickly took off with media in New Zealand picking it up and, shortly afterwards, media around the world - and especially in India where this reporter found evidence that the story ran in almost every newspaper there.

"I don't have any tolerance for racism," said Phillips, "and I encourage my fellow workers to call them out as well. Too often my Indian co-workers are abused by passengers and do nothing about it. I tell them they must stand up to it. I hope they will have seen this incident and it will help them to take a stand. I know it doesn't come easy for some people."

She was heartened and encouraged by the response of other passengers who not only intervened but also supported and approved her actions.

No doubt it gave them something to discuss on the rest of the journey and



hopefully Phillips' actions will encourage them to speak out in future.

Phillips suggests that some specific training for train workers in how to deal with racist behaviour might be useful and especially in the light of the support she received from the other passengers.

"We get some customer service training about smiling and being friendly and what to do in aggressive situations but nothing focussed on racial abuse and I think that could be quite helpful." 🌐

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 - Opua for rail tourism.



Rail is the Strategic missing link to Northport.

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



Europe's lurch to the right

ONCE again I was fortunate enough to be sent to the AGM of our comrade union in Britain, the RMT, in June. This is the fifth time I have attended this event representing the RMTU and it was a wonderful opportunity to renew old friendships and to share experiences of the struggles that face working people in the industries we organise in.

The RMT is almost 90,000 strong and has a reputation as one of the most effective and militant unions in Britain, consistently winning good pay increases and fighting for jobs, safety and pensions in the rail and maritime sectors.

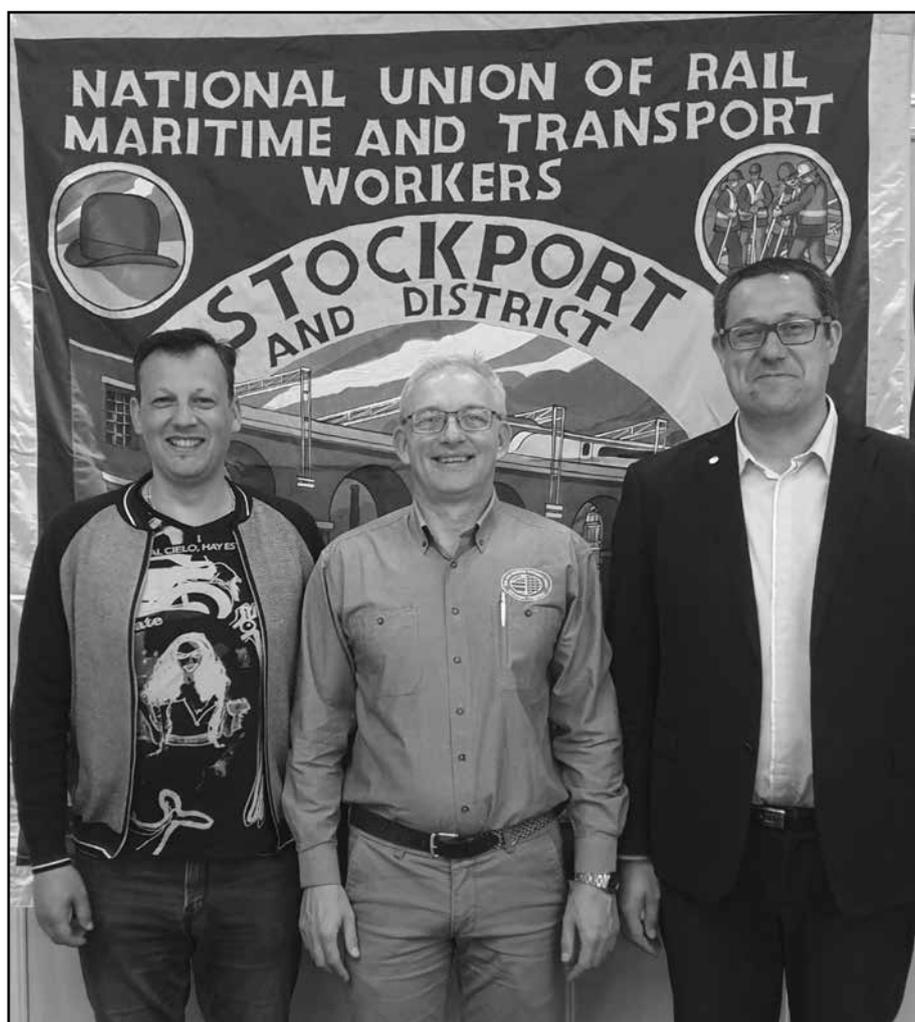
Also attending were delegations from our brothers and sisters in Irish, French, Norwegian and Australian unions so this was, for me, an unrivalled opportunity to get a true international perspective on our work.

On a personal note the AGM was held in the city where I grew up and was hosted by the Manchester and Stockport branches of the RMT, so it was a very proud moment when I addressed the gathered delegates in a venue a stone's throw from the world's first passenger railway station in the cradle of the industrial revolution and the birthplace of British parliamentary democracy, international socialism, the suffragette movement and the Football League.



In memory of the Peterloo massacre - the subject of a recent movie.

The fortunes of our two unions are intertwined with that of our politics and the visit was an opportunity to compare and contrast Britain and New Zealand in a rapidly changing world. Here in Aotearoa we have a left of centre government that whilst it is not transformative, is pro-rail and is making all the right noises about well-being. We have a prime minister who is very popular overseas, not least for her leadership and demonstration of tolerance and kindness in the aftermath of the terror



South Island organiser, John Kerr, at home in his comfort spot of Stockdale with fellow locals David Gobe and David Donnez.

attack on the Christchurch mosques.

In Britain the country is divided over Brexit, fascist politicians are mobilising and stirring up hatred against minorities, at the time we met Boris Johnson was on the brink of becoming prime minister and the industries the RMT organises in are being devastated by privatisation. This pattern, minus the issue of Brexit, is being repeated across Europe and North America. The lurch to right wing extremism presents a very clear danger to working people everywhere.

What is always inspiring is the way the RMT tackles such challenges head on. The union's formidable education department has started teaching an anti-fascist course and activists are being mobilised to provide stewards to protect gatherings of workers subject to racist attacks.

All this while fighting the bread and

butter issues that are important to rank and file members – keeping the guards on passenger trains; opposing contracting out of track and signals work; and negotiating pay and conditions.

I had an opportunity to speak to a young members' course that was running in parallel to the AGM. This crystallised the value of such gatherings, for in describing the wave of industrial action and militancy that has swept New Zealand in the last 18 months, I was subject to questions that led to a fresh perspective on the struggles we all face in protecting and enhancing working people's rights at work and our political, social and economic interests.

We have much to learn from our fellow unionists overseas but we can be proud of the work we do here – and they are watching our achievements with a very close eye. 🌐



First woman president of RMT

Fighting for what's right

By John Kerr

Michelle Rodgers was elected by the membership to serve as RMT president for the period 2019-2021. She will preside over the union's national executive committee and the AGM. I had an opportunity to talk to Michelle and ask about her career in rail.

MICHELLE has worked in rail for 30 years, starting as a cleaner in Edinburgh for 18 months. She says it was the best time of her life on the railway because of the strong bond and sense of camaraderie amongst her fellow workers. She then became a guard working on the trains in Manchester – her home town - but, after being assaulted by a passenger, joined the station staff.

The key event that radicalised Rodgers and led her to commit to a life of union activism was the dismissal of the 'Piccadilly Four' – a group of Manchester delegates who were sacked by their employer after refusing to agree to a new roster. Workers across the network downed tools in wildcat strike action, leaving their trains across the network.

"I left mine at Oxford Road Station," she says.

The actions continued for three and half weeks and the union balloted its members to make it official.

"If you're in a depot there's massive solidarity there," Rodgers says.

Only after this did Rodgers' activity in

her union branch take off, and before long she was branch chair for "umpteens years". She was then elected onto the union's NEC for four years.

The RMT has a unique system of governance among Britain's unions, in which executive members are elected to a full-time union post for a three-year term. Afterwards, they cannot seek re-election, and must return to their old job.

"When I left the NEC and went back into my own workplace, a number of people said: "You should stand, you should stand, you should stand." Rodgers says the RMT's structure, and her previous experience on the NEC, was good training for the presidency.

"Watching NEC members, some of the debates we have in the boardrooms as NEC members, they sometimes challenge your view and that's helpful too. And when you finish the term of office you go back into the workplace and you're responsible for every decision you've made."

She also credits the union's organising success, including recent breakthroughs over driver-only operation and growing membership and to the fact that officials are drawn from the rank and file.

The late Bob Crow, who Rodgers says "enthused everybody" started out making tea on London Transport before becoming a track worker and then going on to become the RMT's legendary general secretary.

The current general secretary, Mick Cash, looked after the signals on the West Coast Main Line. Unlike in many unions, regional organisers and assistant general secretaries are elected positions, filled by rank and file members rather than career officials, which Rodgers says has a "massive impact".

The union's unique culture, developed by generations of activists and leaders, has helped the RMT maintain job security and a collective strength that is the envy of most workforces.

Her victory has made history.

"We've shifted to something that hasn't existed in almost 150 years in having our first female president," she says.

She believes it's time for the trade union movement to step up, in their own structures, as well in workplaces.

Her message to all women in unions is clear: "Never be afraid to speak up, never assume the role of the token woman, speak out, be bold and you can and will change the future."

That's a message she extends to all minority groups who should, she says, demand that their voice be heard.

In her view a more representative movement will go hand in hand with a spirit of industrial militancy

"Trade unions have got plenty of compassion, but most of all we've got passion to fight for what's right." 

The right to flush campaign

Our Union gives a crap!

WHEN nature calls a shamefully large number of transport workers find themselves with nowhere to go. The International Transport Federation (ITF) of which the RMTU is a proud affiliate, is campaigning to win safe, clean and accessible toilets for all transport workers. The RMTU is backing and encouraging members to take action to address the issue on November 19 – World Toilet Day.

At the RMTU women's forum in July, delegates shared stories of how they manage 'comfort breaks' when they are working remotely on tracks or operating locos. Even in the mechanical depots where toilets are available, the buildings weren't designed with women in mind. It is common to have a male urinal in the women's bathroom. Or in one depot, due to the lack of purpose built facilities, the women's wash facility is separate from the changing room so women have to 'run the gauntlet' in a towel from the workplace shower to the changing room. Other women reported not having a

World Toilet Day

19 November

bathroom at all and were required to walk to a separate building on the other side of the yard in the rain and dark. Delegates were horrified to hear women confess to taking medication to deliberately dehydrate themselves and carefully choosing what they ate prior to a shift to help avoid trips to the toilet.

Access to toilets and wash facilities are

required by health and safety regulations (General Risk and Workplace Management Regulations 2016).

"It is incredible that women and men have been putting up with this issue for so long," said Karen Fletcher, RMTU health and safety organiser.

"It's time KiwiRail stepped up and sorted this issue out. If KiwiRail is serious about encouraging more women into the industry, they need to make women welcome by providing adequate toilet and wash facilities. Expecting people to just pop a squat in the bushes whilst they're working on track is just not ok. It's time to do something about it."

On November 19 the RMTU will support the ITF's international campaign to provide safe and equal access to all transport workers globally.

To support the campaign go to this website for campaign material 

www.itfglobal.org/en/campaigns/world-toilet-day-2018



Port Napier AGM

Members pack into the mess room at Port Napier to hear the latest updates on the Port share sale and speeches from national president Aubrey Wilkinson and GS Wayne Butson. The outcome of the sale process is a tribute to the work put in by the branch delegates in opposing three of the four initial options. The 45% partial sell down was the best of a bad lot. 

Delegate training - Palmerston North



A team of delegates from Palmerston North, Taranaki, Napier and Wellington attended a one day delegate training course in Palmerston North last month. The regional focus of this delegate

training has great benefits for delegates, it increases their understanding of RMTU membership in their regions. Well done to the delegates posing in the rain for their group photo!

Two way learning experience



By RMTU delegate
Jaquelyne
McCorkindale

EVERY year, thanks to UnionAID and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Myanmar Young Leaders Programme (MYLP) brings 12 young leaders from Myanmar to Aotearoa New Zealand for six months. They study human rights, democratic processes and economics so they can help to contribute with their country's transition to democracy. Currently, Myanmar, which has a population of around 54 million and over 100 ethnic groups, has the longest ongoing civil war in the world.

I was so lucky and honoured to be invited to talk with the group this August along with Campbell Leggett, Christine Borell-Fisihoi and Kaisa Beech.

It wasn't until 2011 that workers there were finally able to legally form and participate in unions.

We talked with them about how the RMTU was formed and our history, how we are New Zealand's largest specialised transport union and how many members



The 2019 group of young Myanmar leaders in New Zealand for six months.

we have around the country. We discussed our personal stories on how we became involved and why we love it, the fights we've had and are currently going through and how the RMTU always has its members' backs and best interests at heart – everyone is represented and cared for under the union democracy.

This was such an amazing group of future leaders who showed so much interest and passion about the workplace and human rights. The stories they shared about life in their country also taught me a lot and showed me how lucky we are to have such

an amazing union to take care of us.

On their way home to Myanmar they'll take back invaluable knowledge to help them express and raise more awareness to their peers about the issues they face with their rights as workers and as humans in their country, as well as be prepared to create and participate in union democracy.

Thank you to UnionAID and RMTU for this opportunity. Thank you for letting me be apart of such incredible solidarity and allowing me to meet an incredible group of young people who I know have such bright futures ahead of them. 🌍

Rostering for KiwiRail locomotive engineers

A team of RMTU and KiwiRail management reviewed and updated the Rail Operating Manual Section 3 (ROM S3). This review was completed in 2018. It then ratified by the KiwiRail LEs.

As part of this review it was agreed that better education and briefings had to be undertaken in the depots to improve understanding of the changes.

Six regional briefing took place in June. At these briefings were LE roster reps, LE team leaders, managers and members of the roster centre team.

There were three parts to the briefings: to outline the changes to ROM S3; to



Lower North Island regional briefing at Palmerston North

build relationships between the LE roster reps, the planners and roster centre; and to

present on the much improved roster for the Middleton LEs. 🌍

Minister visits Hutt Workshops



(above) Transport Minister Phil Twyford (centre left) talking with visitors and workshop delegates about the programme of works.

(l) The group getting an explanation of plans for the shop floor.



Half cross campaign

TRANSPORT minister Phil Twyford launches the 'Half cross' safety campaign highlighting the dangers at rail crossing and the numerous near misses.

KiwiRail is installing half crosses at pedestrian and vehicles crossings which have been identified as having near misses with trains. Hundreds of near misses are occurring every year and, as we know, the more near misses which occur the increased likelihood of crossing fatalities.

This campaign is also focussing on the harm caused to LERs and other rail employees who experience these fatalities and near misses. While crossing infrastructure is improving, the message must be clear – 'stay alert around trains, expect trains travelling in both directions or on each line and remove distractions when using level crossings'. 

Why choose Worksafe Reps for training?

WORKSAFE REPS was created by the RMTU, DWU, PPTA, NZNO, PSA and NZCTU working together to form a trust to provide courses in workplace health and safety. It is a union based organisation with union values with worker empowerment at its core.

It deliberately delivers training from a worker perspective.

Duties & responsibilities

Worksafe Reps' two day stage 1 course explains the duties and responsibilities of an elected workplace rep and the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASWA).

"HASWA was written and enacted in the wake of the Pike River Tragedy to give more power to workers' voices to raise concerns without fear that it could adversely affect their employment" says Worksafe Reps board chair Wayne Butson.

Once members complete the course and achieve the unit standard (29315) they are able to have serious H&S con-

cerns registered with Worksafe NZ, who can then investigate and potentially issue an improvement notice if warranted.

Diverse range

RMTU members work in a diverse range of workplaces, from offices and remote areas of the track to marshalling yards, and they all have areas of health and safety risk and concern.

It is important to remember that these reps can raise concerns about matters relating to health and wellbeing, including

bullying, harassment and psychological harm.

Worksafe Reps has developed and trialled an excellent education course on fatigue for shift workers and is currently developing a course on the prevention of workplace bullying, and other hot topics. Their courses are delivered by highly qualified and experienced trainers, in partnership with the Open Polytechnic.

Register or call for more information about the courses, which can be run around the country as well as online. 



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WORKERS'
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Getting workers home safe and healthy

WorksafeReps is owned and operated by the Workers Education Trust, established by the PPTA, PSA, RMTU, NZNO, DWU and the NZCTU to provide education courses in health and safety at work.

To book a course, or for more information:

www.worksafereps.co.nz | 0800 336 966

AROUND THE BRANCHES

AUCKLAND RAIL

THE HPHE process around the pay scale for mechanical workers has been overwhelmingly ratified. This will give the ability for workers at level 4 on the mechanical pay scale access to level 5, a process that wasn't previously clearly defined. It will also provide those members

with more skills and more pay. Also provided in the pay scale is a far better and fairer remuneration for apprentices. This has been an HPHE process that has had real benefits for our members.

KiwiRail are looking to increase the utilisation of the depots at Westfield. One of the ways is by changing the rosters

which will provide them with a minimum 80% utilisation but which will also serve our members' needs regarding fatigue and work-life balance. We have entered into an HPHE process with the company and have had one meeting so far.

We signed a new collective agreement at CAF. A very good result with members getting a 10% pay increase across 28 months. 

◀ This was especially pleasing given the recalcitrant nature of the employer who had told us there was no way they were going to give us more than a 2% increase. It was the first time many of the CAF members had been involved in an industrial action and, given the company's aggressive stance, it showed what a group of workers can do when they stand together and stay solid. We were also incredibly proud of the support from branches and workers from right across the country. There is no doubt this support was crucial in winning the day.

The ratification ballot to proceed with trials for driver door operations (DDO) re-

sulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of continuing the HP2 process. This part of the process includes a risk analysis, followed by an intensive testing regime during which RMTU members will be front and centre to ensure this is done properly. The purpose of these trials is to see if DDO is both safer and more efficient than the current process. If it doesn't meet either of these criterion we will be kicking it to the kerb.

We are currently involved in discussions with TDAK regarding a phased retirement scheme. This emerged from bargaining and we have had some interest from members. This will be carried out under the auspices

of HP2 and we have had one meeting already that displayed areas of disagreement. The RMTU will be sending out a survey to all TDAK members to get their views on this.

The Union is due to go into mediation with TDAK on August 30 to determine whether or not the stand-by period for LEs is considered work time or not. This mediation has come about due to members wanting clarification on working hours. There are ramifications for our members either way.

The Auckland branch AGM is set down for Wednesday September 4, 2019, 11:30am to 2:30pm. 🌐

BAY OF PLENTY PORT

THE Port of Tauranga and the RMTU bargaining teams attended mediation on August 19 and 30 in an attempt to finalise the collective agreement. While we have resolved a large chunk of the claims we are still a distance apart on the wage offer which is 2% for year one and 1% for six months. The RMTU claim is 6% over two years, plus the electricians on-call payment and the crane drivers' relieving allowance. It is proposed that the draft Terms of Settlement be drawn up with a suggestion that one more bargaining meeting take place before we hold our report back meeting.

The parties to the Owens Cargo Company Limited [C3] and the RMTU have finally agreed to the bargaining process agreement, however, C3 have had to change their advocates. Nick Cockroft has resigned from C3 and he will be replaced by Walter

Naera. We anticipate this set of negotiations will be tough as our members have had a gutsful over their delaying tactics. We believe an impasse in bargaining will be reached pretty quickly once C3 decide to commence bargaining.

We have had a large number of pay issues with C3 notably around annual leave and public holiday pay, which they seem to deliberately refuse to resolve. This is surprising as we understand that they are currently being audited by MBIE!

The delegates who attended the 2019 Ports Forum thoroughly enjoyed the experience and learnt a lot from talking to delegates from the other ports. However, one of the delegates missed his flight and had to remain in Wellington overnight. We are not sure why he missed his flight but we understand that he will give a



Sam Napa and Taula Faamasani.

full report to the branch executive meeting.

A number of Quality Marshalling workers have expressed an interest in joining the RMTU. As a consequence of this spike in interest there will be a meeting called for them. 🌐

WAIKATO RAIL

THE Waikato/BOP local industrial committee met in Te Rapa on May 20 and the following issues were discussed:

■ Both the Health, Injury and Well-being management programme and the Return to Work policy were discussed and it was clear that the majority of the council were unaware of these policies

and how they should be used. It was agreed that copies would be made and distributed with a commitment to follow them up.

■ The topic of light/alternative duties was discussed at length and once again there was confusion as to what they were. A working party was convened to come up with revised list of alternative/light duties for the depots.

■ The additional sick leave clause (26.13.2) was debated as a number of union members had been refused additional sick leave, even though they complied with the additional sick leave criteria. Mike Todd from HR will present at the next LIC meeting how this clause will be applied in the future.

■ The ongoing issue of team leaders, specifically at Mission Bush and Kinleith, was discussed and a working party was

formed to investigate how they function in both depots and will report back to the next council meeting.

■ The perennial problem of ASL links and stropping for yard staff at Kawerau was discussed and a meeting was set to sort out the local rules.. That meeting was held and we are still working through the issues.

■ The train optimisation programme will move into the next phase which will be around engagement as employees don't understand the benefits. A video is being worked on to explain them.

■ We need better and more consistent communication in logs between sales, operations, customers and network services

so a working party was established to review communication in that area.

Thanks to the LIC delegates Steve Peacock, Hamish Paton, Willy Dashwood, Jackie Ransfield, Allana Ranui, Darrell Edwards, Robert Hamiora, Debbie Brown and Nigel Smith for their valuable input. 🌐

HAWKES BAY RAIL

CONGRATULATIONS, Napier freight operations has been awarded best performing terminal for 2019 and Tainui Greeks was one of this year's graduates in the Toi Toi Maori Leaders' programme.

Also, congratulations to William Te Amo on completing his delegate training in Palmerston North.

Great achievements for a small branch line depot.

Napier branch also welcomes Gennie Humm as operations manager, taking over from Wayne Kempton who has stepped back to team leader locomotive engineer after four years in the operations role.

Freight to Napier has recently slowed down due to the fall in export log prices. However, a log hub is being developed in Wairoa to transport logs on the recently reopened Napier-Wairoa rail line and the Government has announced potential

funding for another log hub in Dannevirke.

Plus there appears to be interest in using the Wairoa to Gisborne railway line.

There are opportunities in the Bay for a structures inspector and a trainee locomotive engineer by the end of year.

Structures team has been preparing for hardwood running beams to be replaced on the Matohora Viaduct on the Wairoa line.

Napier and Wairoa track teams are busy destressing tracks and getting ready for summer peak tonnage.

Abernethy Projects Ltd has been doing a fantastic job on the formation, drainage and clearing of culverts north of Napier.

Recently two long serving members have passed away: Colin Cunningham



Wayne Kempton proudly holding the trophies for best terminal.

a track inspector from Dannevirke and Carl Hirt from mechanical in Napier. Our condolences go out to their families. 🌐

NAPIER PORT

WELL, this will be part six of the saga around the 45% sell down of Napier Port and pretty much the final chapter as we are now at the point where shares are entering the share market. I understand there has been a large uptake of shares within NZ. Whether the speculators are chomping at the bit is yet to be seen. It's important these shares stay within NZ and not find their way onto the global market. Keeping it Kiwi is essential from this scribe's perspective. As rate payers to the Hawkes Bay Regional Council, who used to own 100% of the Port, it is with anticipation the regions peoples, iwi and port staff will indulge themselves if they can afford to buy?

The shares are listing at around \$2.60, which will certainly boost the HBRC coffers as they intend to take at least \$90 million from the sale - which will not go toward the port. It is expected the balance or the other half of the share uptake monies generated will go toward paying off the port's current debt which is roughly \$85m give or take. Anything left over will probably go toward the proposed six berth wharf, currently estimated to cost \$187m.

So, there are some major financial challenges ahead and as a consequence some senior managers and the CEO have been offered these things called LTI's, not what you and I know as 'lost time injuries', but rather 'long term incentives'. In essence,

providing these managers and the CEO reach and maintain the required financial targets from the business end and the share value meets the goals set down over the next three years, they will be the beneficiaries of thousands of free shares.

The CEO will get 68,582 shares, effectively giving a 10% increase, or there – abouts, compounding over the next three years.

No worries from our end, these are the wishes of the board. Apparently it is common practice for those at the top end only, to receive these type of hand-outs as part of their pay make-up. However, there are two concerns to this type of offer that does raise some interesting perspectives.

Does this allow us to consider a 10%

◀ compounding deal for our negotiation process for the next three years? And we are all moving parts in this port, understandably some cogs are bigger than others, but is this type of hand out only fit for certain senior managers? We all contribute in one way or another toward the growth this company.

All staff have been offered up to \$5,000 worth of shares. A trust has been set up to either pay the shares off via the expected

dividends, or to pay for them outright, or from the onset, over a period of 10 years, the tenure of the trust. Either way we are paying for them, there are no handouts. This includes those who will be entitled to the freebies in three years' time, subject to their terms and conditions, targets etc.

Watch this space.

Our concerns? Which port is next?

In closing, well done and a big thank

you to the branch membership who lobbied hard and took up the challenge to the HBRC to stop the complete 50 year sell out option. To those who turned up to public meetings and made presentations, your good work is noted.

Words are never enough and simply don't meet my appreciation for the efforts and time given at a difficult period of uncertainty. 🌐

HUTT WORKSHOPS

WE begin with congratulations to Aubrey and Wayne on being returned to their respective positions of national president and general secretary. Their continuing high calibre of stewardship keeps our union on a straight and steady course and their return to office is testament to their cohesive performance.

We also acknowledge the contributions of the branch scribes in the last issue – especially the port branches. There are many issues confronting our people and it's great to hear what those issues are and how the branches are addressing them. We read with mirth the BoP rails notes about incident investigation. 'One KiwiRail' is an aspirational target and it's a fair way off given the apparent dysfunctional nature of the Zero Harm Group. Until rail gets serious about consistent application of the incident investigation process (plus others), we'll continue to experience (suffer) differing standards.

The new CEO for KiwiRail has wasted little time keeping staff informed of government and internal announcements. These are important piece of communications and are appreciated by the staff. Various ministerial news releases have confirmed the efforts being expended to ensure that rail experiences the same renaissance as our sister railways in the rest of the developed world.

The former National government was pretty bloody slow

on the uptake to realise that rail is a core element that needs to be cemented into the fabric of our transport infrastructure to deliver the gains it brings.

In June we received the staff survey results. Our eNPS (electronic Net Promoter Score) was a fantastic 29 (more than double that of last year) indicating that when management and staff understand how the system works – together with embedding HPHE within our culture – the outputs are real and tangible and not just the load of psychobabble we've been getting in times past.

With the ongoing reinvention of the wheel (re-restructuring within KiwiRail) we are waiting for the advertising for the vacancy of site managers as a result of Karl Bouterrey stepping down. Right now we've got more people in acting positions than a branch office of the IRD! One significant drawback of this is where you have consecutive links in the command chain in an 'acting' capacity, you have the makings of a perfect storm as parties are often not yet up to speed and the subsequent project planning and production outputs suffer significantly. Whilst we can tolerate the 'hit', we have to stop lurching from crisis to crisis.

Another bit of good news was the political reference at the recent ARA Conference

in June where our branch chairman Mat Cordell-Bain, got a mention, along with HPHE, from the Transport Minister. It was good to see rail getting some much needed advertising in what is a volatile transport industry.

Back in May we were honoured to be a part of a pay equity project in conjunction with the PSA and the DHBs. A big thank you to our staff ranging from apprentices to team leaders who allowed (subjected) themselves to interviewed in-depth about their jobs.

On the job front, we have taken-on a number of fixed term staff under the Future You programme, as well as agency staff for the various projects we have on the go. Whilst we continue to experience real growth in our staff numbers, taking on staff from a wide range of backgrounds brings its own set of problems and challenges.

At the close-off for these notes a site meeting has been arranged where we are expecting a culture-oriented discussion from the GM with a greater emphasis on KiwiRail's Code of Conduct! The branch executive hasn't been advised nor consulted on this so it's anybody's guess how well, or not, the 'show' will be received.

Our AGM is scheduled for late September so any changes in positions will be notified in the December issue of TTW.

Until next time, take care out there. 🌐

WELLINGTON RAIL

ON Thursday August 1 we held our AGM. It was notably that for the first time in years agreement was

reached with the employers to hold a stopwork meeting for the AGM and we can happily report our largest turn out in years with over 130 members making their way up to the Loaves and

Fishes Hall to be involved in the election of the branch's leadership team for the next 12 months, to elect workplace delegates and to receive a special state-of-the-union address from RMTU organiser Todd Valster on behalf of the NMC, always a highlight. ▶

It was a great day, and a very successful day for the branch with all committee positions being filled after having two positions vacant the year prior. It was great to see everyone there who made the time to come and participate, and stay informed about their local branch. If we can all remain engaged and create strong grassroots local organisation then this union of ours will surely remain strong for many years to come!

New committee

We welcome our newly elected member:

Chairperson: Hamish Searle

Vice chair: Sam Kahui

Secretary: Marilyn Williams

Treasurer: Michael Nicholson

Assistant secretary: Mareena Warren

Convener of delegates: Mark Pickering

Women's rep: Christine Fisiihoi

Youth rep: Te Manu Daly

Komiti Pasifika rep: Fred Taupe

Returning officer: Mark Wolstenholme

I am writing this from North America in plus 34C, listening to the sound of Sd40s run by the CN railroad company. I really hope that KiwiRail look at the long term and purchase some American iron for its

next loco purchase and contract the Scandinavians to build our new ferries.

Welcome!

Welcome to our new rail operators, Tino, Iti, Jeremy, Matt and John. I am sure I have forgotten someone, so please forgive me.

And welcome to the dark side (Loco) to Howard and Jason. HR must have decided to recruit new drivers starting with the letter N as we have Nigel, Neil and Nick. Also, we said goodbye to Patrick who headed home to the South Island.

Wellington really hit the headlines with the derailment across the junction. Could not have happened at a worse place or time. Great work was done by all to get the train system up and running again quickly. I feel that this was amplified due to the effect on commuters by GWRC. Nothing is really said when the same company - or those operating on their behalf - cancel 50 buses a week!

Compliance seems to have really ramped up this year. One example is the use of chocks which are trying to stop unauthorised rail movements. The depot all knows about this and I think we are adapting to the new rules.

Loco reliability seems to be fluctuating at the moment. Our DFB captured fleet has been absolutely marvellous over the years, but lately there have been some unfortunate breakdowns. Some would like to see a couple of DFBs disappear and I personally would like to see more DXBs come home.

With the regional development programme, we are seeing some changes in the Wairarapa. We are running bigger log trains as logs seem to be a big customer and hopefully this continues.

Passengers increase

Passenger numbers are also increasing with often 600 pax on 1606 and in the mornings carting in to work well over a 1000 pax on the three morning trains. I think people are realising that the Wairarapa lifestyle is a good one and the commute on the Transdev trains, with contracted KR drivers and locomotives, called the hook and tow arrangement, is working well.

The depot is really buzzing with growth and we all work well together. It is good to see fresh faces.

We hope that by the time of printing that you have all had successful AGMs in your local branches too. Solidarity! 

WEST COAST RAIL

FIRSTLY let's start with a big thank you from our South Island organiser who called your scribe in June to say how impressed he was with the quality of Bruce Stringer's bacon butties. As many readers will know, Bruce is a veteran LE from an old railway family and our organiser was lucky enough to be visiting when Bruce was cooking breakfast for the Westport track gang early one morning. A great way to start the day and a great example of how RMTU members look after one another.

In other news our Minister for Regional Development Shane Jones visited the Coast and had a ride on one of our locos. Given the money that is being directed KiwiRail's way from the Provincial Growth Fund members were very happy to see Jones and give him an opportunity to see how we do our work over here. It's a source of

great satisfaction that we have a coalition running the country that is pro-rail. And

because we have a strong union, jobs in rail are relatively well paid with good terms and conditions, which is more than can be said for many in tourism. So, let's applaud the Government for investing in the regions and in rail and let's not forget it's our job as union members to support all workers to get decent wages and conditions.

On a less positive note by the time this goes to print the Westland Milk Products deal with a Chinese owned multinational will be done and dusted, much to the consternation of most Coasters. To many of us this is another example of gross negligence by board members and managers who have allowed an efficient, locally owned cooperative to become a basket case ripe for foreign ownership. It's not as if something like this hasn't happened before - shades of Solid Energy.

Our network services members have just finished a six week shutdown on the Hokitika line enabling the teams to do a range of work including bridge maintenance, crossing upgrades and sorting out mud spots and so forth. We've also had a big involvement in the development of new procedures around working around hi-rail diggers. This comes nearly 12 months since one of our members lost his lower leg in an incident involving a digger.

By the time you read this the new procedures should be fully implemented and not before time.

We hear the regulator is finally showing some teeth and this is to be welcomed. Whilst management have looked after our member he should never have been hurt in the first place and we all have a role to play in stopping anything like this happening again.

So, on that sober note - please stay safe as we get into the busy time of year! 

CANTERBURY RAIL

HERE in Canterbury, we've had a few long serving members move on and retire since the last issue of the TTW, evidence of the ageing workforce in KiwiRail. We wish all our retired members all the very best for a long, happy and healthy retirement. Alfie Wilson, who is something a legend in the RMTU family in Christchurch, finally cut the cord after 50 years on the job. Alfie and his wife are off to enjoy a cruise round Britain and the Arctic before coming back to summer in New Zealand where he will doubtless devote himself to his many hobbies. Another retiree, after decades working the wheel lathe, is Graham Swan. Enjoy your time Graham, you deserve it after putting in all those years down the hole helping to keep the rolling stock safe. Over in the container repair workshop, team leader Bill Templeman retired in July.

Bill had planned this for some time and it is very much in character that he left with a minimum of fuss. Bill and his team were, and are, staunch Union members who turn up to every meeting and quietly support their fellow members and elected officials. Finally, Ivan Martin is about to retire. Another long serving member of the mechanical team, Ivan has spent his career keeping vintage rolling stock on track.

Which leads us into the big changes that are starting to show signs of happening as the money flows into rail via the Provincial Growth Fund and the allocation to KiwiRail in the budget.

Work has started on procurement of new locomotives for the South Island and loco and mechanical delegates are working with management to see if they can make this once-in-a-generation decision the correct one. We all want the same thing: reliable, fit for purpose, gear that will help

propel rail in the South Island into the 21st century. It's just a question of getting it done. Of course the other positive impact of secure funding is that KiwiRail are investing in people and identifying a career path for newcomers and veteran employees.

Congratulations to Jed O'Donoghue on winning a closely fought election for the South Island rail representative position on the RMTU national management committee. Our union is in good health when we have such excellent candidates who can fight an election in a spirit of unity. As well as his NMC role, Jed has been doing a great deal of work in his role on the operations industrial council around Middleton and the rest of the South Island.

There are exciting times ahead for our members in Scenic Journeys as well. The Coastal Pacific will be back in service shortly after you read this and that means new staff and a new roster. The latter has caused a little angst. The simple fact is that

Sickness, accident and death



The New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Sickness, Accident and Death Benefit Fund

In the last 10 years 230 locomotive engineers had to retire due to medical reasons. They received a total payout of \$4,737,097 from the above Fund. LEs who didn't belong to the Fund and who were forced to retire did not receive anything.

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

◀ it's impossible to come up with a roster that everyone likes and management do have the prerogative to change hours of work providing they consult and give the required notice under the terms of our collective agreement. We shouldn't lose sight of two things:

- this is management's job and our delegates are doing all they can to represent all members views fairly; and

- Scenic Journeys in the South Island has been insecure for years given the impact of the two earthquakes so the fact we have some certainty about the future is a positive thing we should not forget. Our station-based members are currently working out of Ensors Road taking bookings as the station is being fully refurbished in time for the peak tourist season. Again more evidence that we are growing and that job security is stronger.

Another area where delegates are wrestling with rosters is in mechanical services at Middleton as management are looking to increase coverage towards a 24 hour, seven day a week operation. Again, these are problems of growth and, whilst they are far better than those of contraction, they do throw up challenges. Luke James has worked tirelessly on behalf of members (and with a great sense of humour) in this part of KiwiRail, so it was great to see others step up, notably Rod O'Connor, to

help work through what can be a very time consuming process.

Our network services members seem busier than ever up and down the main North and South lines and across the Midland Line. Branch secretary Ian Walker has been ably supported by delegate Ivan Riordan in dealing with a myriad of individual issues, not just in network services, about which the vast majority of members hear or see nothing. That's as it should be, as much of what is being dealt with is, and should remain, private and confidential. What must not be overlooked however, is the tremendous work our officials do on behalf of members. One of the key benefits of your RMTU membership is that advice and representation is there if, and when, you need it.

New shoes in old job

Another delegate who deserves singling out for mention is Malcolm Ross at Toll Christchurch. Malcolm has grown into the role since he was elected when Tony Dreaver stepped down after giving years of sterling service. Tony left a big pair of shoes to fill and Malcolm has had to learn fast. He did just that and is putting in a great deal of effort navigating his way through some very tricky issues. A stone's throw away from Toll is the container transfer terminal and your

scribe wants to thank Pat Ritchie for some very delicate work performed on behalf of our members there.

We have new delegates coming through. Holly Eggers in signals is our new branch women's representative and attended the RMTU women's forum in July. Holly replaces the redoubtable Bernie Jones and we're sure she'll do a great job advocating for the increasing number of women in our branch. One key issue that is the focus of an International Transport Federation global campaign in the Right to Flush (see story page 23) We're happy to report that there is good progress providing adequate toilet facilities for all members at Middleton for our operations, mechanical and servicing members. It's been good to see that management are very supportive of this as well.

Finally, when you read this, our work will hopefully be getting busier as we get into the high season, so your delegates and officials would like all our members to keep in mind the need to stay safe and look after one another. As we approach the holiday season it's normal to get tired and stressed. Your delegates deal with more investigations and disciplinarys in the final three months of the year than at any other time and yet being busy is no surprise – it happens every year. So, this year please make an extra effort to stay safe and watch out for your mates. 🌐

LYTTELTON PORT

THE past few months at LPC have been characterised by mixed messages from LPC management. On the one hand, we have been pleased that Kirstie Gardener, the HR manager, accompanied by two logistics office managers, accepted our invitation to attend the CTU's Fair and Just Culture course, alongside Andy Kelly (Lyttelton branch president) and Glen Arthurs (RMTU delegate). There were many positives that resulted from the course and there was a general feeling that the toxic industrial relationship existing between LPC and the RMTU may have turned a corner. On the other hand, since the Just Fair Culture Course, RMTU members have been subjected to a raft of attempted claw-

backs across the board, new policies hurriedly instigated with no consultation, total inaction

with respect to implementation of a fatigue management plan and a sudden spike in the number of members being the subject of investigation and/or disciplinary meetings.

Attempts by LPC to claw back working conditions have been numerous and wide ranging. We have seen attempts to reduce the number of ship lashers assigned to a two-crane operation from 12 down to eight (that's a 50% increase in workload for each person), in-cab surveillance cameras monitoring straddle drivers, a deskilling of the workforce by withdrawing the initial and refresher training for MPI inspections and first aid training. Even milk deliveries to workshop and coal work areas have been

cut back. LPC claims that the clawbacks are cost-pressure driven but that can be viewed only with scepticism given what we believe to be extreme financial wastage over the past few years. Once again, it is a case of workers paying the price of attempts to balance the books, while those directly responsible for the financial waste somehow manage to avoid being held accountable. That is hardly fair or just!

LPC has announced the outcome of their two-crew tug risk analysis. Unsurprisingly, their assessment is that this operation is safe and they are proceeding with operations and associated redundancies on that basis. The RMTU is ardently opposed to any two-crew tug operations and is considering an appropriate response. So watch this space!

It is interesting to note that the spike

in investigation and disciplinary meeting occurred while Kirstie Gardiner was away. This leads us to reflect on the legacy that Peter Davie, who resigned from his position as CEO earlier this year, leaves behind when his resignation takes effect in the coming months. In a previous edition of *The Transport Worker*, the question of whether Davie's legacy would be one

of divisiveness or one focused more on repairing the industrial relationship, was posed. As the clock runs down on his tenure as CEO, we can only conclude, based on rampant clawbacks, spiking numbers of investigations and disciplinary hearings, woeful levels of consultation on policy and procedures, and little more than lip service paid around a number of important matters

such as the implementation of a fatigue management plan, that he intends to leave industrial relations between the RMTU and LPC in the same dire state that characterised his tenure. We can only hope that Davie's successor will be enlightened enough to recognise the significant value to be realised, by all parties, of engaging positively and collaboratively with the RMTU. 🌐

TIMARU RAIL

Common with many branches this is our quiet time of year and the members have been enjoying settling into our new shared operations and network services depot. This represents a huge improvement on the facilities we previously had so people are very positive about the change. It also means we see more of our fellow members across KiwiRail – always a good thing.

Congratulations to all delegates who won a seat on the NMC and commiserations to those who weren't successful. It's good to see elections being contested by such high calibre candidates. This just goes to show the depth of talent in our union. We look

forward to having visits from our South Island rail representatives –

Timaru isn't very far from Christchurch or Dunedin by train!

We welcome Mark Kumar to the RMTU and to the team at operations. Mark has previously worked at the Temuka container transfer site and was well known to many of our members before he came on board.

There has been a lot of discussion and some resentment expressed at what looks like the knee jerk response to continuing runaways in a couple of our rail yards around the country. In our view KiwiRail should be dealing with the specific circumstances and individuals concerned instead of adopting a blanket approach that merely

annoys the rest of us. Every yard has its own topography which can be dealt with by local instructions for the usage of chocks and handbrakes. One word keeps being said in our team: overkill. We know the roads that need chocks in our area, as do members in other yards, so local instructions should suffice.

The Timaru rail branch also supports the Canterbury branch in its pursuit of automatic handbrakes on flat decks. In our view the next order of new wagons should be fitted out with new automatic handbrakes. Furthermore KiwiRail should consider retro-fitting the current fleet of IAB and IH wagons.

In closing, stay safe and remember summer is just around the corner. 🌐

TIMARU PORT

Our branch is ticking along pretty well as we work through winter and approach spring. After the success of the inaugural Workers' Memorial Day ceremony at the new memorial stone, we've been approached by other local unions expressing a desire to be part of the event next year. This is tremendous and we are committed to making the ceremony a bigger and better event next year and in years to come. The support we've

received from the local council and Prime Port, Quality Marshalling and KiwiRail has been really

positive – so thank you to those employers.

Our branch sent a strong delegation to the RMTU women's and ports' forums in Wellington in July with our new women's representative Gina Ruddell staying for both events. Gina was joined by branch president Naylor Young and Bill Hunter. Naylor and Bill experienced some travel difficulties. This has happened to Naylor twice now and he was so frustrated that he said he would

drive to Picton and swim the rest if he had to. All ended well however, and all three delegates said they enjoyed the events. The branch was particularly interested in Karen Fletcher's 'Fatigue Stocktake' and the comparison with how the issue is managed in our port compared with elsewhere.

At the time of writing we're preparing for our AGM and looking forward to hearing from our national president and general secretary. Our plan for the next 12 months is to build a closer relationship with the local RMTU rail branch and reach out to other local unions. Watch this space! 🌐

OTAGO RAIL

We've had a busy three months here in Otago. At the time of writing our members in Dunedin Railways – formerly known as Taieri

Gorge Railway – are about to commence negotiations for the renewal of their collective agreement. Delegates Julian Evans and Andy Howie have done some excellent work recruiting and preparing

members for bargaining. We are aware the company has had a difficult time of late, particularly with the flooding during the last financial year, but we are also mindful that there are people employed by what is a majority owned Dunedin Council enter-

prise, who are paid below the living wage. Somehow we have to sort this out.

Over in KiwiRail operations there are now several high quality recruits well into their training. Four yard-based staff and two locomotive engineers are at various stages of training, with more LE trainees to come. This will relieve stress on the rosters once signed off. Unfortunately the LEs won't be qualified in time for the next high season, nevertheless, it's good to see the staffing issues being addressed as the age of penny-pinching rostering seems to have passed. In the yard itself congestion issues have long been raised and members are still waiting for any actual progress. The current state of affairs means more shunt movements and/or double handling especially in the busy season. It's important members keep safe regardless of the pressure induced by timetabling.

New locos

RMTU South Island delegates attended the first loco procurement meeting in Dunedin recently to have input into requirements for the planned new South Island locos. The branch is making sure that the appropriate delegates get to attend these and other important meetings such as fatigue workshops, which is proving a bit of a challenge.

Congratulations go to Jed O'Donoghue who won the South Island RMTU NMC ballot and also to our own Rebecca Hauck in winning the election for NMC women's rep!

On July 11 the branch was represented

at a ministerial visit to Hillside Workshops, attended by Clare Curran, Phil Twyford, Dunedin mayor Dave Cull and KiwiRail management. Good to hear support for growing Hillside coming from KiwiRail's CEO and being well received by the politicians. It is well short of a plan to manufacture rolling stock again though, bearing in mind the place was purposefully stripped bare in 2012 to make that proposal very difficult.

Even keel

Over in network services things are on a pretty even keel. Our kapa haka group are going from strength to strength which in turn is creating comradeship and pride within the group. We all, management included, are proud of the group. Anyone within our branch is welcome to join, not just network services members.

On another positive note, long standing member Graeme Irvine will have returned to work by the time you read this after having endured a kidney transplant. It's good to see a positive outcome and to see him well on the road to recovery.

This time of the year is a very busy time for our track gangs with some major works in the area as it is off peak for freight movements, and a good time to do some of the larger projects. This has a flow on effect for signals and communication members and the fitters. The structures people are busy in their own right with repair and maintenance of the many bridges in our area. It is good to see the government putting

investment into rail so this important work can be done.

Congratulations to Gareth Bachop, Emma Little and Mikaere Lewis for the completion of their KiwiRail leadership courses. Mikaere also completed the Toi Toi Maori cadetship programme. Gareth, Emma and Mikaere pushed themselves out of their comfort zones to complete these programmes and should be rightfully proud of their efforts.

Solidarity

Goings on in Dunedin have included a one day strike at KFC stores on May 18 which shut down all stores in Dunedin. The strike was attended by UNITE Union members and supporters including RMTU. It was called to address issues such as Restaurant Brands cutting margins for extra skills and training from 80c to 25c per hour. This in response to being forced to increase the paltry hourly rate due to the minimum wage increase. Also an attempt to limit overtime rates to hours in excess of 50 per week rather than 40 and chronic under staffing. Recent report from the organiser at UNITE is that the strike action has led to better talks, which is at least hopeful. We must support our fellow workers.

Another struggle looming is coming to a head on Friday September 27 with the global school Strike for our Climate. Notices will be out for our members to be out in support. Don't say young people today know nothing about taking action! 

PORT CHALMERS

HERE in Port Chalmers at the time of writing, we are embroiled in collective bargaining for the renewal of our collective agreement with Port Otago. Our document, which we negotiate with our comrades in MUNZ, expired in early July. The employer tabled a very large number of claims. Depending on how you do the numbers, something like 170! Buried amongst them are some very significant proposed changes around hours of work that are proving challenging to resolve. As your scribe pens this in early August we

have had 16 meetings with management and it's fair to say progress has been glacial.

The crux of the matter is that management have willfully ignored every approach we have made to try and address fatigue in last six months leading to negotiations and now we're in the very position we were seeking to avoid – trying to resolve fatigue-related hours of work issues that have significant contractual implications from scratch in collective bargaining.

We sincerely hope to be able to report that better progress has been made in the December edition of The Transport Worker.

Aside from this bit of excitement the port is relatively quiet, although by the time you read this, the cruise ship season will be almost upon us and the IMEX trade will be ramping up towards peak.

Looking beyond our port gates at the wider RMTU our branch is proud to say that we had one of the biggest delegations at the July Ports Forum. Our branch president, Ruth Blakely, says she particularly enjoyed the presentation on automation (see story page 4) while one of our veteran delegates, Merv Read says the highlight for him was lawyer Hazel Armstrong and national H&S organiser Karen Fletcher's workshop on the APL Kota incident at Lyttelton. An upbeat

event at which every branch committed to tackle serious issues in the year ahead. Our's being (you guessed it) fatigue and hours of work.

July also marked a significant event in that Ruth Blakely stepped down as women's representative on the NMC. A hard fought three cornered election saw Dunedin based KiwiRail member Rebecca Hauck prevail to take on the mantle. We often see Rebecca as she works the port shunt and we're pleased that this important elected position has stayed in Dunedin. Albeit we know that she and her sisters have a national, and indeed global, perspective in the struggle. Thanks Ruth and congratulations Rebecca.

Also, heartfelt congratulations to other successful NMC candidates and commiserations to all who missed out. We are very fortunate that the depth of talent in our union is such that positions can be contested and that this is done in a spirit of unity.

We know our comrades in Dunedin



Port Chalmers workers show their support for fellow MUA unionists in their struggle with DP World..

Railways are about to commence negotiations so solidarity brothers and sisters, you work for an iconic Dunedin enterprise and you deserve the best possible wages and conditions. We also heard loud and clear, the appeal for support from our Australian comrades in the Maritime Union of Australia in their struggle with DP World who are

bent on union busting and slashing jobs. The photos show our joint RMTU-MUNZ bargaining team taking time out to express our solidarity and members reinforcing that message at a negotiation report back meeting.

Until next time, stay safe and support one another! 🌐

SOUTHLAND RAIL

WE are presently in our low season which seems to be getting shorter every year, but that hasn't stopped the flurry of activity around the operations depot which has seen a well overdue spruce up to the facilities. Flooring has been relayed, a new kitchen installed with new utensils, brand new lockers, bright new notice boards and a fresh lick of paint to complement the recently installed heat pumps. A new roof is coming. The office and training room is being reconfigured to accommodate the new PA position. All we are waiting on now is for slippers to be included in the PPE allocation!

At the coal face we have an unprecedented level of training being undertaken. Two remote control operators are training to become locomotive engineers, four rail operators to become RCOs and two new ROs. That's eight positions in a 24 man depot not including the four member team at Edendale who are about to get busy again looking after Fonterra and other customers. Proof there is indeed a career pathway in KiwiRail. A big welcome to Rhys Smolenski and Daniel Ward the two new ROs. You've joined the RMTU family at

a good time for rail and friendly reminder to all members to be diligent and patient as all these

guys come to terms with their new levels of responsibility.

All this is in anticipation of the Southland branch taking a front foot approach to regain traffic lost to road transport - an attitude not seen by this scribe in 34 years. By the way, if you haven't got the memo, roster optimization and its architects and proponents have well and truly been consigned to history, or as Steve Hansen would say, flush the dunny and move on.

On that note, the locomotive engineer delegate was recently joined by the South Island operations general manager in the field, another initiative not seen before but sincerely welcomed. It's a great opportunity when you've got the boss as a captive audience in the cab.

He also was invited to attend the first consultation meeting to procure new locos for the South Island. Given the difficulties experienced with the Chinese built DL locos the general consensus was that the supplier should be ABC locomotives. (Anything But Chinese). Seriously, we just want something that will do the job and do it well from day one. On previous form, North America and

Europe looks like better places to look.

Our network services members continue to do a great job keeping the track and signals infrastructure in good shape. They have a hell of a lot of ground to cover and just quietly get on with doing their job whatever mother nature throws at them. This is demonstrated by the high levels of track repairs on the network between Dunedin and Invercargill during this present low season, some long standing issues being dealt a major blow, particularly the Green Island track subsidence south of Clinton which is now more like a bowling green than a roller coaster, and multiple mud spots between Gore and Edendale, most of which will be lifted by the start of the new high season. Rumour also has it that the flooding issue on the Taieri Plain will finally be addressed with money budgeted to start lifting the track, another historical problem that closes the Main South Line whenever there is a heavy rainfall event which sees all the Fonterra traffic out of Edendale put on road. It will be good to get that sorted.

By time you read this we should be into the high season once again, only this time with a full complement of staff, a phenomenon not seen in these parts in living memory. We are all looking forward to this with some enthusiasm. 🌐

Wairoa/Napier line welcomed back



Some of the team who worked on the reopening of the line with (r) Dave Marden.

JUNE 14 was a great day for Rail. Seven years after the Napier – Gisborne line was mothballed due to damage, a special train travelled the route to celebrate its reopening to Wairoa. For those fortunate enough to be on the train, the response from the public, track-side, was amazing. For much of the journey it was like the royals were on the train with the public waving at every opportunity. What cannot be forgotten is all the men and their families that made the sacrifices to work on building this line, some never coming home and, in more recent times, the men and women who worked hard to rebuild it. Well done. All the hard graft is appreciated. 🌐



Greg Millar KiwiRail CEO and Wairoa's deputy mayor, Denise Eaglesome-Karekare speaking at the Wairoa greeting from the locals.



One of the locals welcoming back the train. The same man met the last train to travel over the line in 2011 with a sign "You'll be back". He was right!



(l to r) Stephen Thomas, Francis Raibania, Ray Brown and Logan Kabui from Te Kupenga Mahi.



Ikaroa-Rawbiti and Labour MP, Meka Whaitiri at the Wairoa welcoming.