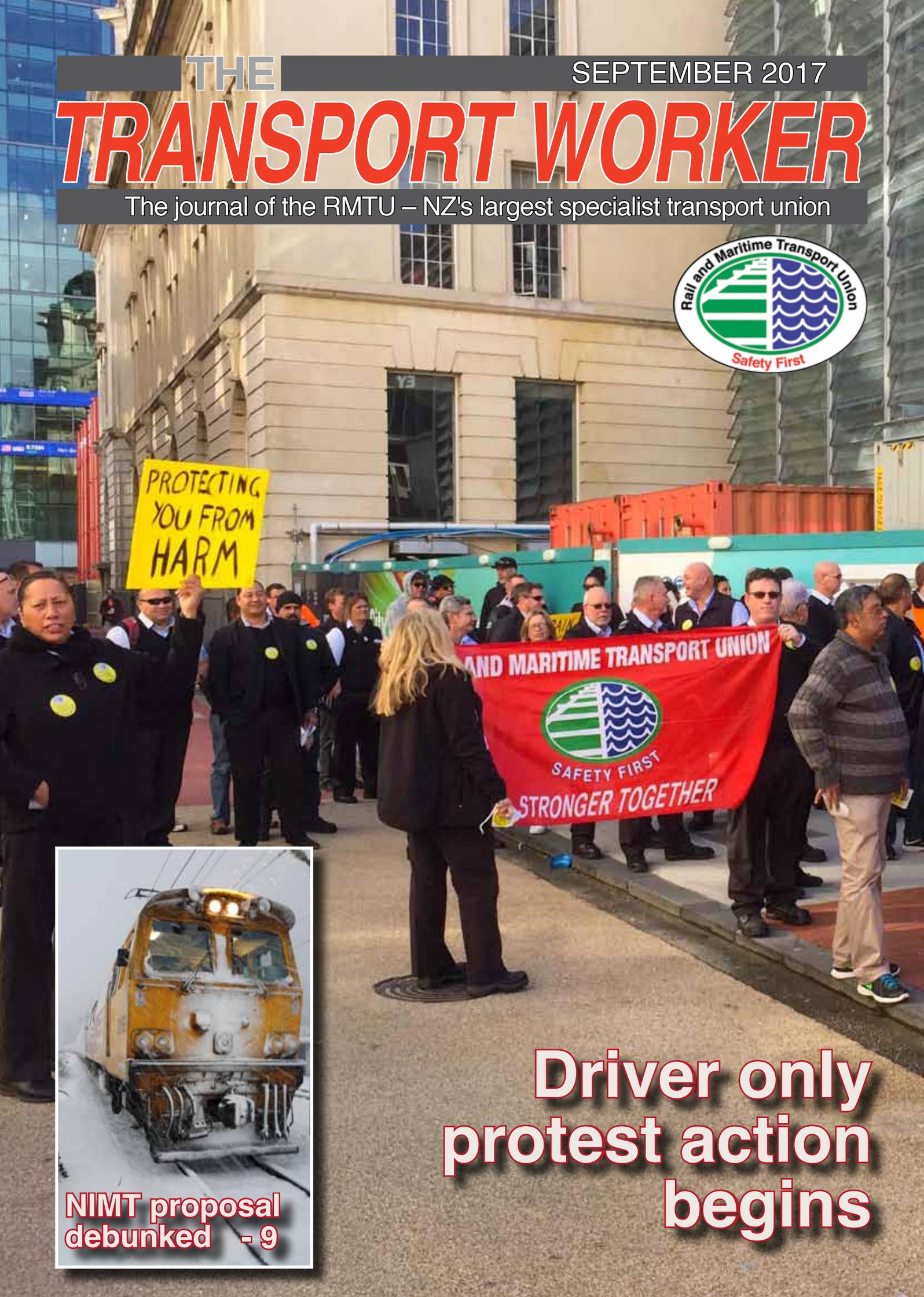


THE

SEPTEMBER 2017

TRANSPORT WORKER

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



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In the first of a series of profiles of our women members crane wrangler Pare-Ana C Bysterveld tells of her work journey.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Auckland members meet to decide on action against TransDev proposal for driver only operations on suburban units. (see page 4 to 6).

The Transport Worker is published by the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, P O Box 1103, Wellington, Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Design and production by Mike Regan.

Printed by Thames Publications Ltd, P O Box 11-025, Wellington.

WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ

ISBN 1173-6488



Wayne Butson
General secretary
RMTU

Stark election choice for workers

HERE we are at issue three of your magazine already. Where has the year gone? We have been busy but that is mostly because there has been lots happening in your workplaces and if you are in rail, we seem to have gone from one crisis to another. Mother nature has been grumpy for a while and rail and port infrastructure has borne the brunt of her anger.

September 23 looms large in all of our lives and the choice as to who to vote for has not been so stark, in my view, for many a year. We all have the choice of returning the current National Government to parliament for a record fourth term – or we can vote for a change in direction.

I find the current direction of government unacceptable.

They are only now waking up to the fact that we have a housing crisis. Their answer is to buy motels at twice their valuation and continue to sell state housing while promising to get around to building replacements.

We don't have a health crisis but DHBs are failing to meet treatment targets in ever increasing numbers whilst their deficits blow out. We have cancer patients dying on waiting lists and fellow Kiwis going blind whilst waiting for ophthalmology services.

And we must not forget the environmental issues. The removal of the electric locomotives from the NIMT and their replacement with 15 further new dog and lemon (DL) locomotives from China is utter lunacy – and all supported by Minister Bridges whilst he hypocritically announces the greater use of electric vehicles within the government vehicle fleet. The government owns KiwiRail and so the locomotives are part of the government fleet to my mind.

In addition to all of the burning wider societal and environmental issues in this election there is the question as to which party has a stronger focus on the sectors which most of you RMTU members work in.

It is undeniable that a Labour/Green government would be more supportive of rail than any National-led government.

It is also undeniable that a Labour/Green government would be more supportive of our ports, coastal shipping and regional growth.

I am old school when I vote. I look at policies and there is no doubt that the best



transport policies from political parties contesting this election belong to Labour, Greens and NZ First.

I have a passion and a love for the industries that you all work in. These industries are essential to the economic growth, sustainability and economic well being of our nation – and they provide the roof over the heads of our families.

In my view the answer to your voting choice on September 23 is clear and so I look forward to a change on the treasury benches. More of the same just doesn't cut it in my mind.

I am truly excited about what is possible under a Labour led government with the prospect of three years under New Zealand's youngest ever prime minister.

LET'S DO THIS! 

Franchise failure

NEW ZEALAND has followed the UK in adopting a franchising model for the operation of commuter rail services in Auckland and Wellington.

Why would you change from a single, vertically integrated, operating model with one rail operator for the entire network? A single operator, such as KiwiRail, gets economies of scale and operation and does not have to duplicate roles and responsibilities and so must be both operationally and economically efficient.

The cost per passenger journey in Auckland has been vastly higher for a number of years because they were first into franchising, but Wellington is catching up fast.

In Wellington we have seen a very flat management structure balloon with staffing numbers growing hugely - more managing directors, managers and supervisors up the wazoo than can be counted.

Looking back at the UK a recent study found that rail privatisation is 'financially flawed'. A new academic report from Queen Mary and Essex Universities finds that the cost of running rail has increased by a staggering £50 billion since privatisation and franchising.

The report cited factors including bureaucracy of the franchising system, train company profits and grossly inflated fares as being the causes of the cost escalation.

At the time of introducing the competitive tendering of the rail systems in Wellington and Auckland the National-led Government stated that the model would deliver better value for money and greater efficiency.

We say that this is flagrantly wrong and that the cost per passenger journey will continue to rise – and rise sharply – in Wellington because the National-led Government is ideologically blind to the benefits of public ownership of public transport systems – and especially commuter rail.

A reminder

General secretary Wayne Butson says: "If you're not prepared to put your name on it, and put it up on your workplace notice board, then you shouldn't be putting it out on social media."

Fantastic work

Dear Editor,

I would like to draw everyone's attention to the fantastic work that the NZR Staff Welfare Trust (NZRSWT) does.

My eldest daughter needed some new glasses, so off we went to see the optometrist. As we all know, prescription glasses are bloody expensive. So, after that visit my wallet was going to be considerably lighter once the glasses arrived.

That fateful day for my wallet arrived, her glasses were ready. Then I remember the NZRSWT and the fact that I could claim back \$200.

So, armed with the correct paper work, off we went, collected the glasses, paid the bill and then off to the post office to mail my claim.

So, your all probably asking why this is so fantastic?

Well I picked up the glasses on a Sunday afternoon, I posted (Fast Post) the letter off from Westcity Mail, Henderson at about 1630 and the money was in my account Monday afternoon.

Now that is a truly amazing level of service. Just try finding anywhere else that would come even close to that. Also, great job by NZ Post.

Stuart Gratton
LE and RMTU delegate
Auckland.

Resignations

Dear Editor,

I have resigned from KiwiRail Hutt Workshops. I have done 12 years and two days there.

I would like to thank you all at head office for what you done for us so far. We have a very solid Hutt branch and I hope the best for all of you. It was great to be a delegate too. I had never worked with such a great union before.

You guys rock. Till we meet again.

Ajeshwar Prasad
Hutt Shops.

Dear Editor,

I tender my resignation from the RMTU. My last day of work was July 29 2017. Thank you very much for the work that the Union has done over the ups and downs over the years.

Puka Hagatuki Veli.

Dear Editor,

After 54 and a half years I have retired from employment and now wish to resign from the Union.

Thanks for all your support over these years.

Ray Hogg.

Dear Editor,

I wish to resign from the Union from June 16, 2017.

As you know I was retired on medical grounds from the RMO at Masterton.

Thanks for all the help and advice that you have given me over the years. This was greatly appreciated and I wish the RMTU all the best for the future. George Taylor.

Dear Editor

I will be leaving KiwiRail on June 29, 2017 after 43 years. In doing so I tender my resignation from RMTU effective from that date. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the RMTU and Alby and Brad for all the guidance and assistance.

My wife Glenda and I are starting a new chapter in our lives as the new caretakers of the Orewa Welfare flats. So all the best to everyone for the future.

Dennis Taffard
Mechanical engineer
Whangarei.

Dear Editor

Friday June 30, 2017 was my last day with KiwiRail as a rail operator at Kawerau.

After 37 years I have decided to retire. I would like to thank the Union for the help over the years with special thanks to Phil Spanswick for his help over the years. Thank you and all the best for the future.

Graeme Stratton
Ex rail operator
Kawerau.

Dear Editor,

My membership to the RMTU started in December 1972 and my last day will be August 4, 2017 owing to medical retirement.

I wish to thank all Union people over the years and wish them the best for years to come. Thanks one and all. Gregory Burgess
Service coordinator
Christchurch.

Bottom line in driver only

WHERE are plans afoot to have driver only operated (DOO) trains on our railway lines by mid 2018 with the whole network involved by June 2019 - including the scrapping of onboard trained staff.

The RMTU is not a Luddite organisation, it knows new technology will change some current practices but under no circumstances will it sacrifice safety for cost-cutting.

It recognises the advent of autonomous cars - and eventually, trucks - is inevitable and rail needs to compete. DOO and even driverless trains are increasingly being investigated or made around the world. Without doubt New Zealand companies will want to follow suit - especially if it gives rail an advantage over road transport.

In New Zealand the pressure is mounting on rail workers with TransDev and Auckland Transport planning to impose DOO on the Auckland suburban passenger routes next year - a step, some suspect, on the way to driverless operation.

TransDev suggest 'transport officers' will roam DOO trains and/or platforms but they give no indication how well trained these people will be or what level of salary the job will attract.

However, the real question for Auckland's commuters - and RMTU members - is the effect this will have on their lives, work, safety and well-being.

A no-brainer

It's not all about cost savings.

While the rest of the country looks on in bemusement as the battle lines are drawn, a TransDev win in Auckland means Wellington won't be far behind.

It's a no brainer to see that a single operator on a passenger train is the cheaper option - but safety and security are also major factors.

"This is without doubt a safety issue," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "We want to ensure our passengers are safe and driver-only trains is a step in the wrong direction."

RMTU Auckland organiser Stuart Johnstone, says he has yet to see any real programme from Auckland Transport to allay passenger fears. "They say the SaFE (Security and fare evasion) project will solve the problem but the project is not about safety of passengers. Somehow passengers are 'meant' to feel safe because there will be some CCTV cameras about to catch



The elected members to the DOO mobilisation committee.

miscreants after the fact."

He added that when DOO was introduced in Melbourne vandalism rose significantly in the rear carriages.

He adds that TransDev and AT are following the Melbourne model of DOO which he believes highlights some significant features which include authorised officers (instead of transport officers) with real powers to arrest or issue fines and who have passed through rigorous training courses.

"I understand that on some routes officers are routinely assaulted and teams of officers patrol some trains," said Johnstone.

In the UK DOO has existed since the 1980s. In May 2011 a report - Realising the potential of GB rail - commissioned by the Secretary of State for Transport and chaired by Sir Roy McNulty favoured DOO.

It gave train operating companies in the UK the green light to pursue a major expansion in the technology and methodology.

And while McNulty described DOO as "a safe method of operation" its comment on the guards' position was less clear saying that "the default position for all services on the GB rail network should be DOO, with a second member of train crew only being provided where there is a commercial, technical or other imperative".

In other words, wriggle room for company

proposal is passenger safety



Transdev Auckland members pledge to fight driver only operations as they believe it to be unsafe for passengers.

operators to trim costs by cutting labour says South Island RMTU organiser John Kerr, who recently visited and spoke with the UK's National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) leadership.

"A determined and prolonged industrial, public and political campaign in the UK's Southern Rail in particular moderated the approach of employers in other regions – even in those where they are trying to bring in DOO," he said, adding that the lesson for New Zealand is that a determined push in one region will make the bosses think differently about being aggressive in others.

"So, we have to stage a maximum effort, I believe, in Auckland, not only for what is happening there but in order to lay the ground for the fight that's coming in Wellington," he said. "On the whole I believe the public in the UK sided with the guards and supported their industrial action."

The UK's RMT national policy officer, Daniel Crimes, told RMTU officials Howard Phillips and Kerr that the UK Rail Safety Standards Board (RSSB) (largely funded by private train operating companies) produced a report in 2015 which set out the potential savings from a move to DOO.

"Even in this heavily biased report," said Crimes, "the RSSB was forced to observe

that DOO increased the risk to passenger safety and that whilst DOO didn't make an accident more likely, the consequences of an accident on a DOO service were likely to be more severe."

But rail safety goes beyond the train/platform boarder and guards have frequently been instrumental in defusing volatile situations aboard moving trains - some of them suffering a beating for their good intentions.

Focus on safety

Crimes encouraged Phillips and Kerr

- and the RMTU - to focus on the safety aspects around DOO when campaigning saying that in their experience the companies - and the government - "are far less keen to talk about the negative impacts DOO has on safety and the accessibility of passenger services.

"When we've got them on to these subjects, they struggle to justify the move to DOO. Instead, they find themselves discussing the value of safety-critical trained members of staff on passenger services".

He added that supportive politicians at local and national level are crucial in

Medical emergency

LAST month an emergency on a train approaching Auckland's Britomart station showed the importance of on-board staff to the safety of the travelling public when a passenger collapsed and required emergency treatment.

"The timely action of the train guard in calming passengers through public announcements and administering first aid to the person in difficulties may have helped prevent a very difficult situation becoming much worse," said RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. "The train was delayed in its approach to Britomart and passengers were understandably becoming frustrated. The driver quite rightly focused on doing her job safely leaving the train guard to manage the emergency and passengers. Had this been a driver only train the consequences for the person in distress can only be imagined."

Emergency services arrived at Britomart shortly after arrival.

◀ holding the companies to account on these issues, in tandem with trade union actions.

He went on to describe issues with converting trains and stations to accommodate DOO and the equivocal report from the UK's Officer for Rail and Road (ORR) - the Government regulator of rail safety.

"During our dispute with ScotRail over their planned expansion of DOO services, ORR stated that '...with suitable equipment, procedures and competent staff in place, train operators are able to operate DOO safely.

"ORR does not consider DOO to be an unacceptable form of train despatch'," he said.

"This was not a straightforward endorse-



Southern Rail guards Keith Mitchell and Millie Apedo-Amam with Howard Phillips and John Kerr at the RMT conference in Exeter. Millie and Keith have been campaigning for a year for safe trains and they and their brothers and sisters are 'rock solid'.

Wheel chair ramps an impediment to DOO

WHEEL chair ramps are automated on the Auckland EMUs but are only available on what is known as the T car, the middle one of a three car set.

Automated ramps are a problem for Auckland Transport (AT) because of the adverse affect they have on dwell times at platforms. Before the door will open on a T car the ramp comes out, the door then opens. The door must be fully closed before the ramp goes back in. After the doors close a guard presses a button twice to give the driver the all clear. It takes three extra seconds. This dwell time is critical to AT who have investigated the issue several times in a bid to improve on it. The problem for them is that improving the dwell time would weaken there argument that DOO would be quicker.

Wellington's units use a manually operated ramp system which are physically deployed by train crew. The ramp folds into the floor and some staff find them too heavy to lift.

Automated or manual, ramps require staff on the train. It is impossible to conceive of a situation where a wheelchair-bound passenger would be able to deploy his or her own ramp without outside help.

ment, although the Scottish Government was quick to use it as evidence of the acceptability of DOO. Even so, the RMT and ASLEF (Associated Society of Locomotive Steam Enginemen and Firemen) were successful in defeating ScotRail's plans to expand DOO. The guarantee of a second, safety-critical, trained member of staff on ScotRail services remains in place. Crucially, this agreement also applies to new rolling stock due for introduction on the ScotRail network by 2021."

Get in early

He stressed that getting in early in the decision making process is critical. It's a "must" to be part of early discussions and to be at the table to influence train and station design. "In-cab CCTV displays for drivers on DOO trains are no guarantee of safe dispatch," he said. Sometimes there are simply "too many screens for a driver to safely assess risks at the platform-train interface".

Other significant areas under DOO for safety consideration are:

- Platform staffing and self-administered barriers.
- Handicapped passengers, especially those who may need assistance or special access methods such as ramps or hoists.
- On board safety at low peak times. With only a driver aboard passengers feel significantly less secure with no-one roaming the train.
- Late changes of mind. It's not unknown

for passengers to change their minds at the last minute. This is not a significant problem if part of their body stops the doors closing but a number of cases recently show that bag straps caught in doors don't trip the alarms with catastrophic consequences.

A particular concern overseas are curved platforms of which Auckland has several where platform cameras will be critical for safe operation.

In 2015 *Rail Magazine* commissioned an article to look at the pros and cons of DOO.

In it they conclude that the argument isn't black and white and while there can be significant cost saving there are also significant concerns from passengers and staff.

Security risks remain

It says in the 20 years since the "widespread introduction of DOO, the expectations of passengers for operators to do more to improve their travelling experience and personal safety have changed" and that even on 100% DOO operated lines in London "there remain (even in the eyes of the most ardent DOO supporters) security risks for the train's passengers without another member of staff present".

ASLEF's view, it reports, is that the driver's domain should be strictly the cab, and nowhere else on the train.

ASLEF president Tosh McDonald told them: "The view is that there's an awful lot going on in the cab these days, and it's a safety consideration that there's a second person on the train."

Experienced drivers bear out this safety concern. Without seeking either a positive or a negative view, *Rail Magazine* asked drivers to anonymously express their feelings about DOO.

One speculated on what might happen if a driver was killed or incapacitated on a busy main line service. While the train would come to a halt following the automatic intervention of the driver's safety device, it might sit stationary, packed full angry passengers receiving no information as to why the train had stopped. It won't take long before someone pulls an emergency door release and people spill out onto the track and the subsequent dangers waiting within the operating area.

McDonald recalls a recent incident involving a freight train driver: "He went into one signal section between two towns, but never came out the other end."

He was found slumped over the controls in his cab. It took 40 minutes for paramedics to arrive.

No DOO major accidents

Rail Magazine speculates that some people working in the rail industry believe DOO has become widespread simply because it is pure chance that there have been no major accidents in which DOO has been cited as a factor.

Finally they conclude with a moot question: With passenger numbers continuing to rise . . . might extending DOO further create more problems than it solves?

However, the platform edge still remains a place where around 1,500 incidents take place every year in the UK and, sadly, where six people died in the last year. None were related to people getting on or off trains.

In New Zealand similar statistics apply and thankfully, says Butson, there have been no fatalities.

"When our news media and our friends and relations start admiring the technology behind DOO," says Butson.

"It's our duty to counter their arguments by pointing to the positive aspects of an in-train guard as a second employee on the train. Someone whose bottom line is passenger safety and satisfaction rather than the bottom line of a balance sheet." 

Consider these train/platform interface incidents in NZ and how their outcomes may have changed with DOO.#

Newmarket West station 1 July 2009

A vision-impaired elderly male passenger who was had just alighted from the train was walking along the platform as the train left. He veered into the side of the moving train, spun around and fell through the gap between the train and the platform edge onto the track below. He was fatally injured. No conclusive reason for the passenger veering into the side of the train could be established. Newmarket West station was a temporary construction pending a new station. Part of the platform was constructed on a curved section of track which meant the gap between the train and the platform edge was wide enough for the passenger to fall through.

Wingate station 28 March 2013

A Tranz Metro six-car unit was disembarking passengers at Wingate station and being driven by a trainee driver. The train manager and her assistant were on the platform. When the passengers were clear the assistant was about to re-board the fourth car and the train manager was preparing to close the passenger doors. The train moved forward and both stepped back and were left standing on the platform as the train departed. The trainee thought he had heard the buzzer, so he applied power. He did not notice that the separate "all-doors-closed" light was not illuminated on his control panel. The journey to the next station was made with all 12 passenger doors along one side of the train open but with no passenger staff on board.

Waikanae Station 10 June 2013

The Capital Connection, en route from Palmerston North to Wellington, had stopped at Waikanae Station to exchange passengers. The train was fitted with a

mobility hoist in the rear-most luggage van. The train manager was monitoring the passenger exchange from near the front of the train. When he thought that the passenger exchange was complete, he re-entered the leading passenger car and closed all the passenger car doors and authorised the train driver to depart. Meanwhile, at the rear of the train the train attendant was operating the mobility hoist to alight a passenger in a wheelchair and his support person. The attendant deployed the hoist with the two passengers onto the station platform, at which time the train began to move. The attendant pressed the train emergency stop button. The train travelled about 1.7 metres. No-one was injured and no damage resulted.

Featherston 3 April 1999

The southbound Masterton to Wellington passenger service departed from Featherston while a scout party and an adult passenger were still loading their gear into the van. Three scouts were left on the platform while two of the party travelled to Upper Hutt in the unlit van. The scouts were at risk as they either alighted from, or attempted to board, the moving train during departure. The guard was unaware of the scouts' presence in the van.

Swanson 20 October 1998

At approximately 1258 hours, the sliding doors on an Auckland to Waitakere commuter train closed on a child in a pushchair as the mother was endeavouring to lift it from the train. While attempts were being made to free the pushchair the train moved slowly forward before the doors were opened sufficiently to allow the pushchair to be freed.

Boston Road Station 28 May 1996

At about 1620 hours a Papatoetoe passenger with a baby in a pushchair was also trapped in the doors. The train moved a short distance and a passenger rescued the baby from the pushchair before the train stopped.

Data courtesy of the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC).

Report – Ports Forum

THE RMTU Ports Forum was convened in Wellington for two days in mid-June with delegates from all the ports where the RMTU has representation and discussed education and planning.

The forum is a platform for action and the test of its success will be whether or not we see results in our ports in coming months.

The forum opened with a session on a national strategy. For too long now we've spoken about New Zealand's need for a national ports strategy but we haven't developed a proper industrial strategy to complement it.

The discussion focused on the need for a pattern bargaining approach to use our industrial muscle across the industry to achieve better terms and conditions for members. This message was taken up with enthusiasm by some of our delegates especially those in the South Island where four ports - Otago, Timaru, Lyttelton and Nelson – are all in bargaining this year.

The session demonstrated that the challenges we face in our port are the same for port workers everywhere in New Zealand – and indeed overseas. One of these is the impact of technology and the need to achieve a just and fair transition for working people who are facing the next wave of automation.

We learned about the history of technological change in the context of the history of capitalism and how trying to stop change industrially was doomed to fail. We also learned about the work being done by those who firmly believe that technology can be harnessed to make our world a safer and more equal place and our role in achieving that.

Our port members are political animals and we were fortunate to have two of the brightest and most articulate politicians in New Zealand visit the forum for what was a very stimulating question and answer session. Michael Wood from Labour and Gareth Hughes from the Greens were very refreshing. They didn't speak for long but they were both authentic and relaxed! What was even better was that the discussion that followed was a genuine one. Our members



(above) Heiner Benecke, Allan Addison Sape, Peter Hoff, Phil Spanswick, Murray Cadogan, Naylor Young and Stu Marsh and (below) Grant Herbert, Heiner, and Bevan Peacock.

asked incisive questions that demonstrated forethought and political awareness and both Michael and Gareth answered candidly and thoughtfully. Definitely something to think about when you go to the polling booth on September 23.

General secretary of MUNZ Joe Fleetwood together with RMTU national president Aubrey Wilkinson, briefed us on amalgamation discussions between our two unions.

Everyone appears to agree that one union on the waterfront is in the interest of working people in our ports and whilst our two leaders have different ways of saying it the message was clear: there is a will to make it happen.

Discussions are set down for mid August so expect to be kept informed via the Activist and through your branches.

Jeff Sessions, the Council of Trade Union's in-house lawyer, presented a session on the Holidays Act. Credit to Jeff for making his session amusing and stimulating. Dry and boring it was not. Jeff has the knack of being able to explain complex technical legal concepts in plain language and he knows how to engage his audience. He did not disappoint and gave us much to mull over and more importantly - to do.

This was followed by an excellent session on fatigue and its impact on so called 'flexible workers' in a 24 hour, seven day a



week industry. Our national health and safety organiser Karen Fletcher took us through a very sobering survey she had conducted amongst our members and highlighted the fact that impairment from fatigue was as dangerous as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol – and far more common. The forum agreed that fatigue and its management has to be discussed in collective bargaining and it was gratifying to learn that the Timaru, Lyttelton and Nelson branches are all addressing this issue in their talks with management as we go to press.

We ended with a session entitled 'When you stop running the boss stops chasing' which covered the use of the Red Card and beefed up health and safety legislation to make our ports safer places. The message was clear, it is through organising our members and doing things that we will get results. Creating a paper trail and using lawyers has its place but there is no substitute for strategic militancy when it comes to winning the battle for health and safety.

Thanks to all our delegates, officials and the staff for making it such a great forum. Now it's over to the branches and the wider membership to make things happen. 🌐

De-electrifying rail a retrograde step

By Ralph Sims
Professor of Sustainable Energy
Massey University

"There are a whole lot of other things you can do in New Zealand to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For instance, the idea that you should replace the one bit of electric line with diesel is just sort of barmy. There is a whole range of things you could do to show you are improving, not making worse, your situation."

— Lord Deben, Chairman of the UK's Committee on Climate Change and previous UK Secretary of State for the Environment.

(New Zealand takes lashing on climate change at home and from abroad. Rebecca Mcefee, The Listener 17 July, 2017)

SOONER or later, New Zealand will have to decarbonise to a 'low-carbon economy'. We will have to reduce our domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – and sooner will be more effective and cheaper than later.

New Zealand's gross GHG emissions in 2015 had increased by around 23.3% since 1990 – the base year used internationally. We have ratified the Paris Climate Agreement and agreed to reduce emissions by 11.2% below what they were in 1990, (a challenging target in some respects but deemed "inadequate" by several international organisations).

Given that buying carbon credits from overseas or planting more forests are only temporary solutions, strong actions are required.

New Zealand will have no choice but to deeply cut its domestic GHG emissions, as will the 156 other countries that have now ratified.

From the NZ transport sector¹ emissions rose 78% between 1990 and 2015² with per capita emissions rising from 2.6 tonnes of CO₂ to 3.1 tonnes over the same period. So there is surely potential for the transport sector to contribute to our national decarbonisation strategies.

Yet KiwiRail is intending to de-electrify the main trunk line between Palmerston North and Hamilton³.

Emissions negate savings

The replacement diesel locos running on this stretch of line will result in additional GHG emissions of around 12,000 tonnes CO₂ per year⁴ which will negate all the GHG emissions savings – and more – from the 3,700 electric road vehicles currently running around New Zealand that Transport Minister Simon Bridges has worked hard to encourage.

KiwiRail claimed that the improved efficiency and reduced journey time from Wellington to Auckland (as a result of not having to switch between diesel and electric locos twice during the journey) will attract more freight to rail from road.

However, they did not state how much extra freight would be needed to neutralise the extra 12,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions from the de-electrified rail. (See boxes Extra CO₂ and The truck differential)

Extra CO₂

Based on data from IPCC 5th Assessment Report (2014)⁵.

- Diesel rail units emit around 18-33 gms CO₂/tonne km (t km) of freight
- Electric rail units, supplied by a power grid like NZs (with a lot of renewable electricity giving it a low emissions factor of below 200g CO₂/kWh) would emit 6-12g CO₂/t km.
- Taking typical diesel rail emissions to be 25g CO₂/t km and electric rail emissions at 8g CO₂/t km, the additional GHG emissions when going from electric to diesel will be 17g CO₂ for every tonne km carried.
- The extra 12,000 tonnes of CO₂ arising from de-electrification will result from moving around 720 million tonne km over the Palmerston North to Hamilton stretch of rail in a year.

To electrify the whole trunk line from Wellington to Auckland could be a far better option in the long term since this would go along with the world trend towards reducing GHG emissions by building more electric rail. It has been estimated by KiwiRail that this would cost around \$1 billion. ▶

The truck differential

- Trucks emit 270-490 gms CO₂/ t km depending on type, size, load, engine efficiency, etc.
- Assuming the average for trucks is around 380 g CO₂/t km, then transferring freight from road to diesel rail would give an emission reduction of 355g CO₂/t km, and 372 g CO₂/t km from road to electric rail.
- To offset the extra 12,000 t CO₂ emissions arising from de-electrification would involve KiwiRail transporting around 34 million t km per year of additional freight.
- If a typical truck's payload is 20 t carried over an average journey of 250 km, then that equals 5,000 t km for the trip.
- The additional 34 million t km would equate to displacing around 6,800 truck journeys a year from road to rail.
- If a truck makes, say, 100 trips a year (thereby carrying 500,000 t km/yr), then KiwiRail will need to attract the freight business from around 64 trucks to offset the extra emissions from de-electrification. These trucks could then be taken off the road.



Compared with the recent and future investments planned for roads of national significance⁶, that seems a relatively small investment to make to:

- improve the rail transport system for both passengers and freight,
- reduce GHG emissions, and
- meet the vision for a net zero-carbon future by mid-century.

It will be interesting to see the results of a current Massey University study⁷ on the financial benefits of running a passenger train between Hamilton and Auckland.

If the rail was electrified as a result of government or "IwiRail" investment in the future of NZ transport, then the benefits would be even greater.

The world has to achieve net zero-carbon by around mid-century if we are to avoid exceeding 2 degrees Centigrade warming and hence also avoid the more extreme impacts resulting from climate change.

New Zealand has to play its part and improving our rail network and services is a no-brainer. It may involve the need for major up-front investment decisions being made, but just as making the political decision to build the main trunk line in the early 1900s proved hugely worthwhile⁸, an electric rail network would certainly benefit all New Zealanders for many decades to come. 🌐

1 Domestic aviation and shipping are included here in the statistics, but largely excluded from the discussion.

2 <http://bit.ly/2w7IIZH>

3 <http://bit.ly/2vyngw0>

4 <http://www.carbonnews.co.nz.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/story.asp?storyid=12591> (though the assumptions used to calculate these emissions are not known).

5 This chapter was led by the author: <http://bit.ly/2vxNONR>

6 For example, the "East/West road connection proposal in central Auckland is now estimated to cost \$2 billion. <http://bit.ly/2wYIZLo>

7 Funded by the RMTU.

8 This is well documented in the novel 'Leap of Faith' by Jenny Patrick. Highly recommended for all rail enthusiasts.

International solidarity

Report from Howard Phillips and John Kerr

THE RMTU is a union which understands the value of international solidarity and comradeship which can best be summed up in the phrase "when you're in a fight you need all the friends you have".

The benefits of moral and material support that we both give to, and receive from, our friends overseas cannot be overestimated. John will never forget the look of delight on one of our member's faces when he received a message of support from Norwegian locomotive engineers during a dispute in Lyttelton a couple of years ago.

It is in support of such links that we were privileged to represent the RMTU at the annual meeting of our comrade union in Britain, the RMT, at the end of June. This is the third occasion John has attended this event, and what a tumultuous occasion it turned out to be.

The momentous events of the previous few weeks which saw the destruction of the ruling Conservative party's mandate in an election that all the pundits had wrongly predicted would be a disaster for Labour, set the scene for a gathering that was unlike any union conference we had ever been to.

Not only had the Tories been smashed electorally, they had had to cobble together a deal with the Democratic Unionist Party, an extremist Ulster loyalist organisation, in order to form a government. This government faces the prospect of trying to negotiate Brit-

ain's withdrawal from the European Union (aka Brexit) with a wafer thin parliamentary majority.

The other side of the story is the remarkable success of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour



RMTU national vice president Howard Phillips with UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Party in mobilising electoral support for a manifesto that promised a decisive break with neo-liberalism and austerity.

This was as important for RMT delegates at the conference as it is for all working people.

What had particular relevance was the commitment by Corbyn's Labour Party to re-nationalise the railways, reversing the deeply unpopular privatisation that has led



Howard Phillips with UK shadow chancellor of the Exchequer, Tom Watson.



RMT youth with international guests to the RMT conference.

to all the underinvestment in rolling stock and tracks; profiteering at the expense of commuters; and deterioration in health and safety standards in Britain that we saw here in New Zealand in the 90s and early 2000s.

There was vigorous debate whether to re-affiliate with Labour which ended with a commitment to canvas the wider membership and make a decision at a special general meeting later in the year. The RMT was expelled from New Labour in 2004 after it resisted Tony Blair's anti-working people agenda.

The passion with which this debate was conducted was testimony to the way in which the election campaign had inspired the left in Britain. As the Shadow chancellor John McDonnell, a good friend of the RMT, put it: 'the burden of neo-liberalism has been lifted'.

It was in this context that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn gave an electrifying speech to the conference.

He started by pointing out Labour had gained 13 million votes during the campaign on a democratic socialist manifesto. It was so refreshing to hear a Labour leader speak boldly and unambiguously about re-nationalisation; railways run in the public interest; and the end of the shameful exploitation of seafarers. He came out against taking the guards off the trains. All this of course was an appeal to the particular interests of rail and maritime workers.

But Corbyn went further. He spoke of a fairer tax system in which multinational

corporations pay their fair share; of free tertiary education; a properly funded health system; and schools that are resourced to give children the best possible start in life.

Finally he spoke of working people's rights and made a rock-solid commitment to such rights and of a world where every worker has a secure job, with secure hours and a secure wage.

He said that paying anything less than a living wage institutionalises poverty and that a Labour government would make a living wage the legal minimum.

No weasel words such as "when economic conditions allow"; no fine print that mean "conditions apply". Just bold, visionary, clear statements of intent that break with the mean-spirited politics of neo-liberalism and austerity.

The RMT was praised for its work in educating its delegates and activists and its solidarity with workers across the globe. Corbyn emphasised that the RMT was investing in the future of trade unionism and that his Labour party was committed to that future as well.

To a standing ovation Corbyn ended by proclaiming that the deepening poverty and austerity that was a disgrace to any civilised country, had to come to an end.

He proclaimed that Labour had successfully taken the debate out on to the streets, in clubs, in

factories, hospitals, offices and schools and had by-passed the Tory dominated media.

Young and old had been mobilised and Labour membership had sky-rocketed to 600,000 making it the biggest mass party in Europe, and it was a party that was ready to govern.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash, presented Corbyn with a 100 year old sash of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, one of the RMT's founding unions, and one of the unions which founded the British Labour Party.

Your representatives at this gathering were equally inspired. How refreshing to hear a politician speaking plainly, who didn't equivocate and whose pledges were devoid of qualification.

It would be good to hear from some of our politicians in a similar vein. 🇬🇧



John Kerr and Howard Phillips with Brian Pascoe, from the RMT national executive, between them.

Better life for rail workers



OVER the past five years railway workers in the newly democratic country of Myanmar have built a national railway workers' federation with 2,200 members and 15 unions. Their success is thanks, in part, to the close support of the New Zealand union movement charity, UnionAID. The federation has members and unions in most regions of the country, despite difficult conditions and opposition from management in some areas. The new union has also delivered health and safety and skills (welding) training to hundreds of members.

As its strength has grown so too has its influence with 900 casual workers being taken on as permanent workers, and union representatives being appointed to promotion and other Myanmar railways boards. Permanent jobs mean access to pensions, healthcare and other vital supports for them and their families.

The men and women working on Myanmar's trains and their engineering yards still face a range of daily challenges. The workplace can be dangerous and most workers have no access to insurance to support them and their families if they are injured. Pay remains low and overtime rates are pitiful – if paid at all.



UnionAID
Better Work, Better World

The union members aim to tackle these issues over the next few years with UnionAID's support. If you'd like to show your solidarity with railway workers in Myanmar please sign-up as a UnionAID donor at their website :

unionaid.org.nz/donate/



John Keenan, caught in blizzard snow conditions, had to self rescue to the army military camp. Stayed there the night. Worst snow conditions seen in this area for 16 years. But he found something to keep himself busy!

Port Napier AGM



A great turnout of Port Napier members at their AGM despite being pre-warned that their general secretary would be there to address them.

The third main – A story of our broken transport system

By Harriet Gale

THE third main, a \$60m third track between Westfield and Wiri, is one of the great examples of why our transport system is so broken. It would be hard pressed to find another transformative infrastructure project that would benefit New Zealand for such a low cost. Especially when the costs of transport projects are now often measured in the billions, like the \$1.9b East-West Link.

So what is the third main? It's a proposed third track in Auckland between Westfield junction and Wiri which is one of the most congested pieces of railway track in the country. This section has the Eastern/Southern lines – 12 trains each way an hour at peak – as well as a high number of freight trains coming/leaving Westfield and the Wiri Inland Port, all on just two tracks.

With passenger services booming with Project DART and the Electrification targeted to hit 20m trips this year. This is a number that was an arbitrary target for the City Rail Loop (CRL) a few years ago which they thought would not be reached till 2020 or ever. With rail freight booming as well as passenger as a result of the RMTU members at KiwiRail having done such fantastic jobs with such little support this section of double track is now at capacity.

The solution is a third track to separate freight from passenger trains thereby increasing the capacity of not just the Auckland rail network but the National network by removing this critical bottleneck in the National freight network. The third track has been the solution for some time you can see it now partially completed as KiwiRail started the job but can't finish it without getting financial help from Government, so they turned to Auckland Transport. Auckland Transport though is short of funds as well as they need every dollar and rate-payers can't stump up with the cash either as the Council balance sheet is maxed out with their debt-equity ratios. In any event why should ratepayers pick up the slack for underinvestment in our National rail network to meet our national freight task?



The National Roads Policy needs to be replaced with a National Transport and Freight Policy. As Bridges himself put it last month, "We want to have a really good look at that and put them on a good even footing."

So what are the main advantages of a third main from the KiwiRail business case? [Note: This was the business case that was in the news recently which the MOT didn't want to be released to me with KiwiRail arguing they had no legal reason to release.]

KiwiRail were about to acquiesce when the e-mails were leaked to Winston Peters who raised the matter in Parliament. A heavily redacted version was released followed later by a less redacted version after an investigation by the Ombudsman.

"This option is economically efficient, as the forecast benefits significantly exceed the expected costs, with a predicted Benefit to Cost (BCR) ratio in a range between 1.5

and 2.3."

The salient question then is why was a project with a very high BCR at such low cost that was identified as a solution for a long time and even acknowledged as a high priority in the Auckland Transport Alignment Project not funded?

Meanwhile, East-West Link that has escalated from \$800m to \$1.9b (The equivalent of over 18 third mains) is our biased means of financing transport where modes are treated different rather than funded like for like.

To maintain this separation of planning and funding is so absurd, perhaps even the government has decided on a rethink. Is this one of the reasons Bridges announced a review of KiwiRail at the end of May, with a focus on funding models?

The National Roads Policy needs to be replaced with a National Transport and Freight Policy. As Bridges himself put it last month, "We want to have a really good look at that and put them on a good even footing."

It is important that this review of KiwiRail is done right and is public. It is also why I with others have started a "Campaign4theMains" I hope you rail workers are in for the fight? 🇳🇿

Postscript: The National party announced as part of their transport promises prior to the 2017 election, that money would be put aside for a third line between Westfield and Wiri.

THE Union recognises loyalty and service by members and delegates. Clockwise from left to right we have Peter Barlow KiwiRail RCO Middleton receives a loyalty certificate from NMC member Mike Williams; George Taylor Transdev Wellington on board team leader receives a loyalty certificate from president Aubrey Wilkinson and Ian McCallum KiwiRail loco engineer, Middleton receives a loyalty certificate from Mike Williams.

KiwiRail is also known to recognise Union delegates for their work on behalf of members and here is (L) Tim Kerwin and (R) Les Perrin receiving letters of commendation from KiwiRail freight GGM Rob McAlpine.



Proudly union!



PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

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



Ports Retirement Plan

Download a copy of the Investment Statement and Application Form at:

www.portsretirement.org.nz

RMTU on the right path!

PARTICIPANTS at the last biennial RMTU conference voted that a youth budget be incorporated into the Union's finances to help educate young delegates and activists – the next generation of RMTU leaders!

Since then the Union has identified and supported a number of young delegates to develop their skills and passion for Union work.

Emma-jane Craig, Matthew Brown and Campbell Leggett were invited to attend an organising workshop run by the NZCTU over five days.

What they got out of it was tremendous. "Every single person, apart from the RMTU team, was a paid union organiser," said Emma. "For us, as young RMTU delegates, to get such quality teaching from this workshop shows how ahead of the curve we are compared to our comrades. Our

delegates and activists operate at a level which is not seen at other unions."

"The learning that I took out of this workshop is that compared to our brother and sister unions, we are a small but strong, effective and united union!" said Campbell. "Whilst our comrades focus primarily on membership, we focus heavily on activism, organisation and influence into the workplace which empowers our members."

This is a great position for our union to be in!

However, to keep our Union strong and united, we need your help to focus on



young members who have never been in a unionised workforce.

So, please, start chatting with them, help them understand what it means to be part of a union!

If you have a young activist showing promise let us know so we can lead them down the right path!

Go RMTU – Go us! 🌐

JRU 30th anniversary conference

GS Wayne Butson and NMC Mike Williams attended the East Japan Railway Workers Union (JREU) anniversary conference to demonstrate the RMTU's lasting solidarity and comradeship. The JREU was formed following the privatisation of Japan Railways and its breaking into six trading entities on 1 April 1987. This was the same year NZ Railways was corporatised under Labour and Richard Prebble began to save it. Wayne Butson addressed the more than 1000 delegates and at its

conclusion Mike Williams presented a waka gift to JREU President Eiichi Yoshikawa. The waka was a symbolic gift as without unity from the rowers it is going nowhere – just like a union needs unity of its members. 🌐



Whangarei student's scholarship

NINETEEN-year old university student Hinemaia Harris-Otene from Whangarei has been awarded the Ernest William File Scholarship from the RMTU and will receive \$2000 towards her study. The scholarship supports the sons and daughters of members of the Union in their first year of a degree at a New Zealand university.

Last year Hinemaia was deputy head girl at Tikipunga High School where she studied chemistry, biology, statistics, history and sport science.

She is now studying towards a bachelor of science majoring in marine science at the University of Auckland.

Hinemaia says: "From a young age, I've always been around water whether it be salt



or fresh water. Over the years I've seen how our waterways have changed a lot. Some places I remember swimming at or collecting seafood and I can't anymore because of pollution. I want to help improve our water ways so that maybe one day we can return to these places."

Hinemaia has also been a member of

the Hillary Steps programme, attended the 11th Shanghai International Youth Interactive Friendship Camp, leadership development aboard Steinlager 2, completed the beginner mini-mod coaching course for league and the open water diving course. In 2015, she was awarded the year 12 honours certificate for her positive attitude towards school life and last year was awarded the Whangarei MP kotahitanga award for upholding school values.

The EWF scholarship was established in 1978 by members of the New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Association as a tribute to Ernest William File and is administered by Universities New Zealand. Applications for 2018 close on 1 April. More information is available at <http://bit.ly/2fOGesI> 🌐



delegates who attended the RMTU women's forum in Wellington

RMTU WOMEN'S COMMITTEE 2017

Inspiring change

BEING part of something special and meeting and exchanging ideas with amazing and diverse RMTU women were some of the comments made by RMTU women representatives following their committee meeting in June 2017.

Guest speaker, Green Party MP Jan Logie, spoke passionately about workplace protection and the domestic violence bill and encouraged members to support the bill become law.

She said New Zealand had appallingly high rates of domestic violence with police, on average, responding to a domestic violence call every seven minutes and that one in three women experience domestic violence sometime in their life

The bill (if made into law) would treat domestic violence as

a hazard in the workplace that needs to be managed like other hazards. The rationale for this is that victims of domestic abuse are vulnerable even when at work. The predictability of their location and working hours combined with easy public access places victims at risk of stalking and harassment.

RMTU women inspiring change through empowerment:

- Educate
- Motivate
- Participate
- Organise
- Wahine Toa
- Encourage
- Respect
- Maanakitanga
- Equality
- Nurture
- Together

The NZCTU promotes model clauses to negotiate into collective employment agreements that protect vulnerable workers by enabling them to take paid leave to make arrangements such as meeting with a lawyer, changing their span or pattern of working hours, or changing their work telephone number and work email address.

The group was very moved by Jan's presentation.

Ongoing work of the committee includes promoting employment agreement clauses with domestic violence protections as part of collective bargaining strategies. 🌐



(above) Enjoy



RMTU delegates taking a break. She wo

PROFILE – RMTU WOMEN

Pare-Ana C (Polly) Bysterveld

Cargo handler and crane operator

MY union role is assistant branch secretary, a position I fell into by putting my hand up because I wanted to be more active within the Union. I have worked at Lyttelton port for 13 years. My current job is crane operator but I have also worked in: Rail, where we discharge or re-load containers on railway wag-

ons; reefer where we plug in or unplug containers for road, rail or ships; lashing is when we unlash or lash containers on the ships in port; signal-man, who are the eyes for the crane driver directing them to where the container needs to land or which containers need to be discharged; and as a crane driver where we place the containers on the ship or discharge them.

I come from a truck driving background and when the passion for driving subsided I wanted to operate something bigger. That's when a straddle crane (aka Portainer crane) became my main focus.

Opportunities to advance come once you are full time and a long serving cargo handler retired. This was the opportunity I was looking for so I put my name forward. While the logistics manager chooses who

advances I felt they wanted to make an example of me since I was the first female to work for LPC – and I am now their only female crane operator.

Controlling a crane is like trying to stop swinging in mid-swing – it's an art. The real difficulty comes when we have big swells or heavy winds.

I found that when I started working at LPC it was the people that I enjoyed the most about my job. Once I became full time, I was placed in a group that became like my family and operating a crane is the highlight of my day.

Being a female, working in a male dominated industry, can be very challenging – especially when I only want to be accepted as an equal. What annoyed me in my early years was that the men were all waiting for me to stuff up, make a mistake or quit because I couldn't handle the work.

My motto when I was younger was: "If a man can do it then I'm the (wo)man for the job." and "Whatever they can do I can do better."

If I had to give my 21 year old self advice now, it would be, strive for your dreams, feel the fear and do it anyway. 🌐



ing the CTU women's conference.



break from dancing to Donna Sumers' song: works hard for her money.



Changing the admin guard

AFTER 31 years developing and guiding the RMTU's administration, Leonie Stieller, is calling it quits this month. Her journey through those years started in July 1986 when she was head-hunted by Ross Wilson who, at the time, was general secretary (GS) of the Harbour Board Employees Union (later Harbour Workers Union). And although that union's position became tenuous as numbers dropped she retained her position while Wilson and others oversaw a series of union amalgamations including the Combined Union of Railway Employees (CURE), the National Union of Rail Workers (NUR), the Railway Officers Institute (ROI) and brought them together under one banner – the RMTU.

"At that stage I probably should have stayed a couple of years and moved on," she said. Instead, she stayed and spent the better part of her working life with two GSs.

Curiously Wilson, a founder of UnionAID and its current chair, has again head hunted Stieller to help administer the



Leonie Stieller (r), the RMTU's stalwart administrator retires this month handing over the reins to Debby Green.

union-based charitable trust's finances.

He says: "I clearly remember interviewing Leonie 30 years ago. She seemed a demure and competent young woman. She turned out to be anything but demure! But she has been a very competent, loyal and wonderful co-worker, unionist and friend. And I feel very happy to have headhunted Leonie again as 'honorary accountant' for UnionAID!"

While current GS Wayne Butson says: "Leonie has been a constant and stalwart support for me and an excellent source of sage advice. She has always been an assiduous guardian of members monies and tireless in her pursuit of GST receipts. Many a time I have seen big tough rail and port workers pause outside her office before timidly knocking and seeking entry to face the music.

"She'll be sorely missed but she goes with our blessing and best wishes. The really great news though is that whilst Leonie is retiring her husband, Paul, has pledged to continue his maintenance and other odd jobs for the Union."

"I'm ready to go," she told the Transport Worker, "and frankly I won't miss the work. On the other hand I will certainly miss the people - not only those at head office, but all those members who pass through."

Over those 31 years she has kept abreast of a developing technology going from punch card machines to fully fledged computers, but they have taken their toll.

"My shoulders and neck feel the strain,"

she said, "and I'm finding it harder to keep up with the new program developments - and maybe I don't quite have the enthusiasm that drove me."

She is proud to have been part of a strong union which over the years has largely kept the working conditions of its members.

Meanwhile she can plan for a little more travel in retirement plus focussing on finding tasks for her partner Paul to perform!

Taking her place, and already sitting beside her, is Debby Green who comes from a strong work background in investment management and accounting which included a strong emphasis on office administration.

"I've done a lot of short term contracting work in recent years and needed to find something permanent and full time.

Curiously she does not come from a union background but finds herself very comfortable with this new position.

"I've felt exploited as a financial worker and it's not known as a unionised industry and so there was no one to talk to,"

She says she has spent most of her career "making rich people richer now I can do something for those at the other end of the scale".

She will work beside Stieller until she retires - for nearly three months - which she says will give her time to get a good deal of the institutional knowledge she holds.

She's keenly interested in rugby and loves gardening. 🌿



Don't put up with it!

Broken chairs are causing discomfort and pain for TransDev Wellington ticket sellers. The Health and Safety at Work general risk regulations entitle you to chairs that are clean, safe and in good working order. If your chair's a pain in the back, report it.

LABOUR

Standing for justice and decency – in solidarity

NEW ZEALAND'S transport network is at a critical cross-roads this election. Do we continue with the current approach, which prioritises big roading projects over every other mode, or do we build a modern, linked up transport system that integrates roading, rail, and coastal shipping?

With National you will get more of the same with government Ministers picking and choosing billion dollar roads for political advantage, while rail has to beg for the scraps.

Labour's approach is different. We know that the transport system works best when we invest in all modes. In our cities, rail has the ability to move massive numbers of passengers and really bust congestion, while in the regions rail is far and away the most efficient way of moving large volumes of freight around our country.

Blue highway

Then there is the 'blue highway'. As a small island nation we have an outstanding opportunity to have a vibrant coastal shipping industry to move massive volumes of freight and unclog the roads – if only there was a strategy and investment.

I am proud of the visionary transport policy that Labour has unveiled this election. Our key policies include:

- A plan to deliver commuter rail in the 'golden triangle' of Auckland-Hamilton-Tauranga in our first term, to be progressively upgraded to a full rapid rail service and extended to Cambridge, Rotorua, and Te Kuiti (where my Mother was born in a railway cottage – Grandpa was the Station Master)
- Immediately halt the government's absurd plan to de-electrify the rail network. I have already written to the Kiwirail CEO advising him that Labour will require all work on de-electrification to cease if elected.



Michael Wood MP

- Make investments across our transport based on evidence, putting all transport modes on the same footing. The National Land Transport fund will be made available for investment in rail, not just roading.
- Implement congestion-free networks in our biggest cities and prioritise high-quality public transport.
- Build the third main line in Auckland, electrify to Pukekohe, and double track the Trentham-Upper Hutt line. In Christchurch, develop commuter rail including a Rolleston-CBD line.
- Support regional rail lines where there is support from local communities and businesses. We will specifically investigate a link to Marsden Point and re-opening Gisborne-Napier.
- As part of our procurement policy investigate the re-opening of the Hillside workshops.
- Develop a national freight strategy, and

a national ports strategy including a special focus on the upper north island ports, to guide future investment.

- Refresh and implement the 'Seachange' strategy to revitalise coastal shipping.

In addition to our transport policy, Labour is focussed on the basics that all kiwi's need. Decent affordable housing is a priority.

We'll build thousands of affordable homes for first home buyers and ban foreign speculation in housing.

Instead of tax cuts for the wealthy, we'll invest in better schools, more affordable tertiary education, and decent healthcare for everyone.

Young people a priority

Instead of throwing young people on the scrap-heap we'll give them a chance through our 'dole for apprenticeship' scheme.

If we get them into good skill jobs and give them a bit of hope, just watch youth crime drop.

And for all workers, we'll roll back National's attacks on workplace rights and extend collective bargaining to raise wages and conditions.

As RMTU members, you know the value of solidarity – sticking together for justice and decency.

Those have always been Labour's values. With your support we can make them New Zealand's values again.

We simply must change the government and we can. The only way to be sure is to Party Vote Labour.

I value the RMTU's relationship with Labour and invite any RMTU member to contact me any time 

022 659 6360 or
michael.wood@labour.org.nz

GREEN

Proudly behind unions

INVESTING in rail and coastal shipping will be a major priority for the Greens in government. We recognise that these two important pillars of the transport network have been seriously neglected over the past nine years.

The Green Party will ensure that rail and coastal shipping can be funded from the transport budget. This will enable a significant increase in investment to improve our rail lines, increase rail passenger and freight services, and revitalise coastal shipping in New Zealand.

We are committed to passing on a safe stable climate for the next generation and that means reducing climate-damaging pollution now. Electrifying rail freight and passenger lines will allow freight and people to travel on 100 percent renewable transport.

We'll reverse the short-sighted decision by this Government to scrap the electric trains on the North Island Main Trunk Line. Long-term, we are committed to completing the electrification on this and out to Tauranga.

The Green Party will also revitalise regional rail services. We have committed to two new regional rail services, one connecting Palmerston North and Napier and Wellington, and another connecting Hamilton, Auckland and Tauranga. We know there are perfectly good locomotives and carriages sitting unused or underutilised around the country, they could be refurbished by New Zealand workers and into service.

The Rail and Maritime Union has an incredibly valuable understanding of how New Zealand's rail and coastal shipping network infrastructure can be improved. We look forward to working with the RMTU when in Government to put these ideas and insights into action.

We also recognise that workers have been squeezed by the National Government and that wages are being driven through questionable tendering decisions and



Julie-Ann Genter MP

restructures.

We will review the existing Public Transport Operating Model, which allows councils and bus operators to pay workers less for the same work when changing contracts. Reducing the wages of drivers is a lazy and utterly unfair way for councils to save money.

The current approach of prioritising low-value motorway expansion has simply encouraged more freight to go by road and more people to drive, creating congestion and pollution.

No worker should be killed, injured, or placed in harm's way at work. We are committed to working with unions and workers to ensure proper health and safety at work sites and to maintain a culture of vigilance.

We support port workers efforts to end the use of methyl bromide for fumigating logs at ports. This highly toxic fumigant is meant to be phased out by 2020, but instead its use has risen. This year we called on WorkSafe and the Environmental Protection Agency to undertake an urgent review of its ongoing use across the country.

The Green Party is committed to working with the union movement and working people to protect workers bargaining rights, ensure workplace safety,

NATIONAL

Hi-tech focus

NATIONAL believes in an integrated transport system that is resilient and balances the different demands placed on it. One that makes the most of the exciting new technological advances and provides all New Zealanders, whether they are businesses moving freight, or people moving around New Zealand with a reliable experience.

Since coming into Government in 2008 the National Party has done just this. We've invested more in transport infrastructure than at any other time in New Zealand's history.

In rail, we have invested more than \$5 billion into rail infrastructure and systems around New Zealand to support this important part of the transport system.



Simon Bridges MP

We've made this significant investment in the future of rail because there is clear economic, social and environmental benefits for New Zealand. Rail has some very real strengths, particularly with shifting bulk commodities at distance.

That's why in Budget 2017 we invested a further \$450 million in KiwiRail. This investment will ensure that KiwiRail can improve its resilience and reliability, while continuing to support tourism, freight and export industries.

NATIONAL

KiwiRail has been making some important gains in recent years to achieve significant productivity and efficiency improvements despite the challenges like the November 2016 earthquake and Midland line fire.

This is a credit to the professional workforce that are putting in the hard work to not only keep this important part of New Zealand's transport system operating, but continuing to advance the goal of putting New Zealand's rail network on a longer-term sustainable footing.

We will shortly begin a wider review of KiwiRail's operating structure and longer-term capital requirements, to ensure it has the right tools, expectations and funding structure going forward.

Major disruptions have challenged New Zealand's transport system, including the Kaikoura earthquake. Restoring the South Island Main Trunk Line continues to be a key priority. Recently the last weld was completed in the track repairs and freight is now expected to commence operating on the line in a restricted capacity in the near future.

KiwiRail, working alongside the North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery alliance, has been making excellent progress clearing slips, obstructions, and reinstating the rail track to restore this essential connection. The restoration of these essential links, both rail and road, is critical to supporting our growing economy.

New Zealand's rail network is more than just a freight and tourist network. In Wellington and Auckland there are important commuter rail networks. We've announced that we will invest \$267 million to support the strong growth these networks are experiencing.

The package includes the electrification of the Papakura to Pukekohe rail line, adding a Third Main Line from Wiri to Westfield and double-tracking the Wellington commuter network between Trentham and Upper Hutt.

Coastal shipping is also important to New Zealand, and as with any private enterprise, the Government's role is to provide data and analysis, so freight owners and operators can make well-informed decisions.

This information - such as the Future Freight Scenarios Study and the Freight Information Gathering System - helps ports to respond innovatively to their changing operating environment, which can be seen through alliances (such as Kotahi), consolidations (such as between the Port of Tauranga and Port of Timaru), new infrastructure (such as inland freight hubs) and new technology (such as the automation of the Ports of Auckland).

National maintains a clear focus on ensuring that New Zealand has the right infrastructure to keep it moving. We value a transport system that is robust, has both strong national and regional connections and continues to make the best use of emerging technology.

We are constantly looking out for new technologies and making sure that we have the right regulatory settings in place to encourage this growth. A National Government will ensure that this critical investment continues and that we continue to develop our transport system to support the country's strong economic growth. 🌐

GREEN

and guarantee an adequate income. We are proud to have worked with unions to achieve key wins – such as the abolition of

Youth Rates in 2007, the abolition of zero hour contracts this term of Parliament and fighting for pay equity. We are committed

to continuing to work with working people in government. 🌐

NEW ZEALAND FIRST

Focus on the north

THIS election is one of the most important in the past 33 years. It will mark the rejection of a proven failed neoliberal economic system, or willingness for more of the same. New Zealand First out-rightly rejects neoliberal economics which has delivered handsome rewards for the top five percent and little more than increas-



Denis O'Rourke MP

ing pain for those in the middle or lower edges of society. We are the only party prepared to amend the Reserve Bank Act so that Government can have some element of control on exchange rates to ensure our export led economy benefits the most.

New Zealand First will raise the minimum wage over three years to \$20 per hour. We did this between 2005 and 2008 when we made increasing the minimum wage from \$9 to \$12 a condition of the New Zealand First – Labour coalition Government.

We recognise crime is dramatically increasing after nine years of police funding cuts and freezes. The police need no less than 1,800 police on the beat, and we will deliver them over the next three years. We did that in 2005 when we demanded 1,000 additional front line police as a coalition condition.

Nationally important railways

Our Railways of National Importance policy is all about rebuilding our railway system to be purpose fit to move increasing amounts of freight and passengers. New Zealand First will build the Marsden Point to Whangarei railway, opening economic development to the impoverished Northland and Whangarei regions. This will also include upgrading the North Auckland Line to handle a large increase in train movements and reopening log and container loading facilities in Otiria. ▶

NEW ZEALAND FIRST

◀ We can deliver passengers from Britomart to the Auckland Airport on express passenger trains in 30 minutes with our Airport Rapid Transit plan.

Unlike others proposing a long, slow tram ride of up to 50 minutes, our Airport Rapid Transit plan will tap into the large transport hubs of Panmure and Otahuhu. We will link the new airport line from Wiri to passenger services south tapping into patronage at Papakura, Drury and Paerata (two high growth areas under the Auckland Council Unitary Plan), Pukekohe, across the Waikato to Hamilton and Tauranga. Our Airport Rapid Rail link will include a new third railway line from Glen Innes to Westfield, connecting there with the new 3rd and 4th lines all parties agree are urgently required. The cost of this project is \$600 million and comes well and truly under the \$2.6 billion tram proposal and will be of greater benefit to more New Zealanders and tourists.



Other key rail policy points include:

- Re-purposing Kiwirail away from a pure financially focused organisation to one that also ensures social and environmental needs are also taken into consideration. More will be announced about this before the election.
- Re-opening the Gisborne to Napier line for freight and passenger services.
- Ordering a purpose built rail-capable rail ferry.
- Commuter trains for Christchurch using former Auckland owned SA/SD carriages.
- Retaining NIMT electrification and upgrading the EF locomotives.
- Extending electrification from Papakura

to Pukekohe then onwards to Hamilton.

- Re-introduction of inter-regional passenger rail services on a staged basis as SA/SD stock is refurbished or new purpose build rolling stock is acquired.
 - Reopening Hillside Railway Workshops with the first project to be the refurbishment of SA/SD's carriages for Christchurch and long distance services.
 - Once Hillside is fully operational small run wagon production and new AJ carriage production will commence for tourist services.
- New Zealand First has a large planned Railway Reinvestment Programme. The above are some main targets for the first three years of the programme.
- New Zealand First is the only party to have been formed in direct resistance to the sale of our railways in 1993. This election is your chance to rebuild our railway system. Party Vote New Zealand First. 🇳🇿

\$1,500 AD&D

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

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

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



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WAIKATO RAIL

THE second local industrial council [LIC] meeting for Waikato/BOP was held on Thursday August 10 at Te Rapa with the following agenda: Waikato coupling review; SPAD workshops; Kaimai Tunnel procedure review; uniform supply and cost, winter vs summer and quantity of items provided; provision of torches; frequency of random drug testing and various questions on the process; weekend coverage of team leaders across the various sites; updates of servicing roster at Te Rapa; clarification of two man shunting at Sulphur Point; the need to clarify how H&S reps

are being used in H&S investigations; support for LEs involved in fatalities; the role of the OCM; stopping and ASL issues at Kawerau; rates of pay at Kinleith; and an update of the JFC policy. The meeting was positive and a number of issues were resolved.

The Ixom Morrinsville members have rejected Ixom's offer of a nil wage increase for three years! At the report back meeting on August 8 we applied for mediation as outlined in the bargaining process.

The freight delegates

one training seminar was held on July 18 with the emphasis on problem solving. The next training day is set down for September.

We still have a number of issues with Toll at Te Rapa which will have to be taken to head office to try and resolve.

The question of our members speeding in I&E vehicles has been raised and it is quite clear that there is a lack of consistency over dealing with the issue by KiwiRail. It has been agreed that the issue will be raised at the next KNIC. 🌐



BAY OF PLENTY PORT

THE C3 Sulphur Point workshop has been taken over by Quality Marshalling [QM] as August 1 with 11 of our members accepting severance from C3 and moving to QM on individual agreements.

The C3 delegates' training was held on July 20 and with the emphasis on problem solving, such as the crane's back pay, the move to the crane's home base, the reluctance to move our members up to the tier 4 rate in the Mount logs and the lasher's variation which was a result of the lashers moving out of the C3 collective to their own and then the agreement to move back into the C3 collective. Sounds confusing, but it was needed to help save the lashers' jobs, wages and conditions from being lost to another contractor. Sound familiar?

We are looking at a full port delegate training day in September.

The Port of Tauranga [POTL] collective agreement negotiations came to a stop when we rejected the POTL claim on security. Since then there have been a number of informal discussions to bring the negotiations back to the table on August 29. We are claiming a 3.5% increase on wages and allowances for a one year term.

We had the Mount Maunganui mainline mediation on July 28 which was adjourned for the RCOs to decide on the offer from KiwiRail which was to be paid as an outcome of the KiwiRail/RMTU review of pay scale 7. This offer has been rejected by the members as they believe they should be paid at the mainline RCO rate.

Steve MacMillan, a diesel mechanic from

the C3 Mount workshop, had his unjustified dismissal grievance resolved in mediation on August 9.

Kelvin Rush a long standing RMTU delegate, has moved on from C3. Kelvin was instrumental in developing the strong foundations of the current C3 collective agreement, along with other delegates such as Dion Young, and John Carmine. Kelvin worked his way through the sheds to the shore-side cranes in his time with C3. He was a regular attendee at the Ports' conferences and did a stint as an RMTU organiser. He was heavily involved in the RMTU transport campaign.

Kelvin will be well missed by his work-mates. All the best Kelvin.

The rail and port branches are organising their AGMs which will be held on September 21. 🌐

NAPIER RAIL

THE Napier rail AGM was held on August 4 and the main issues were the low manning levels for I&E

issues to their managers to negotiate safer manning levels.

Everyone is looking forward to the re-opening of the line to Wairoa, but with a swag of rumours swirling around it is difficult to get a straight answer from KiwiRail as to when it will happen. 🌐

HUTT WORKSHOP

AS we rocket out of a mild winter we fell head-on into the Rolling Stock and Asset Services briefing which outlined both KiwiRail's and GGM Roy Sullivan's high-level vision(s) for the next 10-15 years, and beyond. The site briefing in August gave us all an overview that was supported by other briefings detailing our heavy workload for the next three years. However, it was also an opportunity for a good number of the troops to meet the GGM directly given that he's never been before them in a group environment since taking up the job around April of last year! The briefing was well received with many questions asked, although being technical people, another Q&A session would be desirable to sound-out the strategies for achieving the goals now that the information received has been digested. It would

be fair to say all questions asked were to the point and properly answered, except for one about training which was referred to another forum which will respond in due course.

Another important meeting was a review of the Auxiliary Components Project – a multi-stage project that compresses the traction motor shop to free up space for a new wheel-set operation. Whilst the full debriefing didn't occur in time for these notes, indications are that it was progressive and will apply the 'learnings' to the subsequent stages.

RailWeld is coming! A large shipment of rail was due at the close-off date for these notes. Meetings are in-hand to discuss the proposed siting of the facility and the route the stored steel will take across a busy thoroughfare. Previously lifted track has been reinstated to assist with this process.

Since our last notes where mention

was made of staff shortages, we've taken on more temporary staff and recruited some too. We are now building our numbers and enhancing our capability to address the current and projected (likely) workload!

With Election 2017 looming, the landscape has changed markedly with the Greens imploding and a woman taking charge of the Labour party once again. The Jacinda Effect has turned things upside down and I hope it carries enough momentum to bring a much needed change to parliament. I sincerely hope everybody exercises their democratic right and moral obligation to get out and vote. The next three years will be crucial for the transport and logistics industry which impacts upon all RMTU members.

With the workload placed upon our committee, our AGM is likely to be held in late September and will coincide with a full election of all positions including HSAT. 🌐

WELLINGTON PORT

THE November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake that caused major damage to our port has seen a change in how we service our container vessels. Using geared ships was the only outcome that was available but we lacked suitably trained staff to operate the gear and were reliant on third party contractors to come in.

Four of our crane operators/trainers were sent to the OCHA port labour training centre in Antwerp, Belgium to upskill/re-hone their crane driving skills on ships cranes. This has proved to be a major success and the shipping lines with geared ships have been extremely supportive of the way the exchanges have been going.

From mid-September our STS gantry cranes will be up and running and servicing our first non-geared container vessel in 11 months.

Massive amounts of earthworks and construction to shore up the wharf is nearing completion. This is only the first stage of reconstruction and as such will see a shift from a full straddle operation to a straddle/reach stacker yard operation.

Upskilling our cargo handlers to operate reach stackers is still ongoing.

The shift away from straddles has also seen the end of an era for our Piener straddles. Demolition of these for scrap occurred over a week and then they were gone. A sad sight to see the old girls bought to their knees.



Demolition of quake damaged buildings around the port continues. Old heritage brick cargo sheds have been bought down and the footprint of the port is forever changed.

October this year will see our CEA up for negotiation. Remits will be called for shortly amongst the various departments

and the negotiating team will be up for the challenge.

In May, we bid a fond farewell to long standing member Terry Kennelly. Terry began his career with the then Wellington Harbour Board in February 1969 as a fitter and turner apprentice. After 48 years he decided it was time to stow his tool bag, pull the pin and retire gracefully. Many a story



could be shared by Terry about the good old days and this scribe enjoyed every one of them. The branch would like to extend the very best of luck to Terry and his wife Helen. 🌐

MARLBOROUGH RAIL

WE are about to go from woe to go as the Main North Line (MNL) nears readiness for the running of two up and two down trains per night.

Due to NCTIR (North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery) requirements, these trains can only travel through their zones between 1800 and 0600hrs which will mean a lot of late shifts and, at risk, (A) shifts for the loco engineers. Add to this the heightened alertness required through areas with earthquake damage means everyone will have to stay at the top of their game.

In the last couple of months Christchurch and Picton representatives in H&S, RMTU as well as managers, have been involved in detailed discussions concerning many aspects of the reintroduction of commercial train operating on the MNL. As always, the top priority has been the safety for all those who will now operate on this line. The group has had great assistance from NCTIR in this field, as engineers and project managers have taken us through, step by step, about what devices and structures have been put in place to ensure safe operations of our trains.

Our networks teams have also played

a very big part ensuring the best has been done to enable reliability. These

boys and girls have worked tirelessly over the months to have the track coupled up so quickly it is a credit to their skills.

To stand at ground level and look at what our track staff and NCTIR people have moved, replaced and repaired is amazing. No aerial photograph can do justice to their accomplishments.

Hopefully the audit of the line will have been completed by the time this goes to print and train services will be running – but only if all requirements around safety are ticked off.

Picton and Christchurch drivers as well as track gangs are about to head into working some very unsociable hours.

If your workmate is showing signs of fatigue say something to them, seek assistance from team leaders, H&S reps and managers, to feel knackered is to be human.

Our brothers and sisters at the Interislander had another tough winter with members being locked in a fierce battle of whether or not we clean the public loos at the terminal in Picton. Suffice to say that we lost the fight because of a meagre \$28,000 that KiwiRail decided to put back into the coffers instead of getting proper commercial cleaners. However we did have a wee victory in how we wanted to do them which

also resulted in the company sending the members (their choice) to visit their GP to get a hepatitis shot.

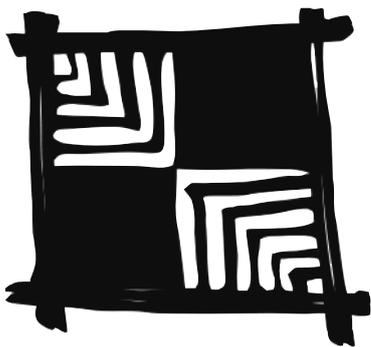
We have a new shore ops manager, David Ollivier.

The engagement survey has been done and we wait to see any significant changes. There has also been a lot more high vis with some of KiwiRail directors down our way walking the operational areas. We guess it would be to see how freight and the Interislander complement each other along with the safety of the operation. There have also been presentations about how project IREX will pan out over the coming years. We will keep you up to date with their decisions.

Interislander, rail, mechanical and CT sites have joined together to make one big health and safety team. Apart from a few hiccups and people doing stage 1 and 2 this seems to be working with a lot of robust discussions on how we can improve the operation and whether or not it is the safest way to do things. It can only get better with the members committing to being safe.

RMTU members, if you haven't already done so, remember to renew your Priv cards for 2018 if you plan on travelling with us here at the Interislander, or you may be paying again and getting reimbursed by the pay office. Some of your sisters in Picton may look like kittens but I can assure you they're trained assassins in disguise.

Take care and be safe. 🌐



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MARLBOROUGH PORT

PORT MARLBOROUGH has purchased a second tug, the 'Monowai' from Southport to complement the existing tug 'Maungatea'. Two port operations' staff have been in Bluff for several weeks completing an out-of-water survey and some maintenance and painting. The tug is expected in Picton about August 17. The company has stated that this will

allow them to extend their operating parameters and services for its customers. Branch members are hopeful it will provide some more employment opportunities.

The cruise ship season is not far away, with the first of many due in October. This provides employment for a number of casual workers for about six months and is a busy time in the port.

Likewise logs and log ships continue to roll in, with the numbers of logs be-

ing shipped increasing. This too provides employment for another group of casual workers. The port is gearing up for a busy time ahead. 



NELSON PORT

AFTER some time being absent from branch news we are happy to be back in print – and we have much to report. Port Nelson continues to surge ahead and we are sure to report in September's annual report of huge growth. This has been our biggest year ever in terms of container volumes and log exports have been through the roof.

PNL working with C3 as a strategic

partner supplying much of their labour for log ships. New joint venture project with Wineworks and CEL has seen Port Nelson become the logistics hub for the wine industry in the South Island. With 80% of New Zealand's wine bottled in Marlborough we have seen a huge increase in the flow of containers, empty bottles coming in and containers of bulk and bottled wine going out. The creation of a new division of Quay Connect and the construction of some 23,000 m² of

warehousing, this included demolishing head office and relocating to Vickerman Street.

In addition, we have seen the last of reefer vessels this year with all apples now being exported in containers. The last two reefer boats called for kiwifruit this year and from 2018 all kiwifruit will be containerised. A far cry from the days when Nelson would have seen 60 plus reefer ships a year. This has seen the arrival of a new container service with Seatrade bringing its fleet of brand new vessels starting in February. This



WHERE ARE YOU?

Problems may be looming and we may need to contact you quickly. Please check we have your correct address and contact details.

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

will culminate in a weekly service on Saturdays from October this year with Seatrade and CMA/CGM sharing this service. This will see five container ships visiting weekly.

Consequently, we have seen PNL embark on a major spend up, fitting out their new warehouses demolishing sheds for extra container storage, a new work shop, new plant and an expansion of log storage facilities.

We have also seen the fortunes of the local branch change as well, with new delegates voted in last year and a lot of work being done to regain the ground that has been lost over the last few years of complacency. We have seen a steady increase in membership over the last year along with a realisation that the members are the Union and that it is no longer ok to complain about the Union doing nothing when they are members.

A new era was ushered in with the retirement of Mike Renwick after serving the port and Union for almost 40 years. He hasn't quite said good bye as he is now a

casual, working on the tugs. You just can't keep a good man down. This now leaves Peter Hoff as our longest standing member.

With all this recent activity it has highlighted to all that while the business has changed significantly our conditions have remained the same. With a high percentage of casual employees and exploitative contracts for permanents, we have seen the workers taking all the risk and the company very little. This is especially felt in the areas of marine and cargo handling. In light of all this the membership has become increasingly disenfranchised as the company tries to cram an increasingly archaic approach to labour organisation in a new and modern world, by making it more and more complicated.

The branch has now entered negotiations with PNL, with our current collective expiring at the end of June. The issues of labour allocation and fatigue have become



pivotal issues with the membership sending a clear message that this round needs to be about conditions and while we all like to see some extra money in our pockets, it is best to be able to spend it and not see any one in an early grave. If we look at the effects of shift work and fatigue on health, not to mention peoples' safety, employers will have to be careful because the class action that our families may bring against them in 20 years' time may be crippling. The time to address these issues is now. 🇳🇿

Sickness, accident & death



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

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

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Contact:

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Telephone: (04) 499-2066
Fax: (04) 471-0896
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Attention LEs
Join this Fund now for
your own peace of mind

WEST COAST RAIL

LET'S begin with some good news. Our Westport based track inspector Kevin Gubb put his hand up and was nominated to be on the Networks Industrial Council.

He was elected unopposed. It's great to have Gubbie back in the fold. Some of us are thinking he's been getting lonely working by himself inspecting the track so being on the Council will do him good.

Elsewhere in the network services world we've had a couple of what are now apparently called "weather bombs" to deal with. Fortunately for us, these did not result in any major damage.

Our thoughts go out to our brothers and sisters elsewhere in the country. We know what you're going through.

We're doing heaps of training including tunnel operations, health and safety

stage 2 and track work re-evaluations.

Over on the shunters side of the branch things are fairly quiet,

which is something of a blessing given the times we live in. It is the off-season, but we are looking forward to getting back into high gear soon.

Over in loco land maybe it's worth a mention that the coal route is about to have a change of customer and we hope more work will be forthcoming once the dust settles.

Our loco members pulled the Red Card after concerns were expressed about the conditions in which members were expected to tie down trains at Red Jacks and Kokiri during hours of darkness. This was subsequently rescinded with conditions applied. This has resulted from some initial work being done to minimise the amount of exposure to dangers identified in the risk assessment which was carried out, namely the

poor underfoot conditions. Also we have a commitment from KiwiRail that lighting will be installed by the end of the year. Thanks to our loco delegate Bob Broadhurst for his good work on this.

Bob was also very pro-active in raising concerns around running trains in adverse weather. Due to a major snow storm affecting the South Island, the Arthurs Pass to Springfield Road (Highway 73) was totally closed for two days and closed during the night for another couple of days. However, trains still ran during the road closure, including 803 and 804 – both passenger trains.

Bob raised questions around evacuation of staff and customers in the event of an operating incident and to his credit regional manager, Murray Young, reacted positively and activated zero harm operations.

Passenger and train control will look at the adverse weather planning in order to understand the full extent of the risk and put in place mitigation. 

CANTERBURY RAIL

WE'VE had a busy winter here in Canterbury. In what seems to be the 'new normal' we have had our share of weather-related challenges with flooding in particular posing a problem. If one word were to be used to describe our members in this region it is 'resilient' – they moved heaven and earth to keep the network operational.

We should remember though that resilience is not infinite, and members do need to ensure they are getting adequate rest and taking breaks when they can.

Our South Island organiser has just come back from a trip overseas that combined work and some leave, and he commented on just how tired some of our members appeared when he returned. Don't be martyrs and sacrifice yourselves – all the evidence is that the railway will still be here when you get back if you take some time off.

The branch is doing some excellent work in preparation for the re-opening of the Christchurch to Picton MNL.

A big thank you to Mike Williams,

Steve Stringer and Neil Davies for their efforts

in liaising with KiwiRail and NCTIR to ensure our members are safe when trains start running again.

By the time you read this there is every likelihood that freight services will have resumed between Christchurch and Picton. This will be a huge boost for rail and it's a credit to the dedication of RMTU members who have made such a contribution to making that happen.

We are less impressed with the fact that a call has gone out to recently laid off locomotive engineers asking if they want to return to work on fixed term agreements. It's fine for the individuals concerned, and no-one begrudges them getting a pay-out and then being offered gainful employment. What sticks in our craw is the poor planning that caused this to happen in the first place. We work hard every day to save money and it doesn't help to see it spent like this.

On a more positive note there is a heap of training taking place. Compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA) is being rolled out to LEs working in the Otira Tunnel to enable them to both secure a train and

safely evacuate it in an emergency.

Other members in passenger and networks are being trained and issued with self-contained self-rescue (SCSR) gear. Once again well done to the H&S reps and delegates involved, especially the tireless Ian Dixon.

Over in passenger our members are gearing up for what will hopefully be a bumper tourist season now that the TranzAlpine has been re-branded as part of 'Great New Zealand journeys'.

Hopefully it won't be too long before that other great journey, the TranzCoastal, is back in service.

Well done to our members in mechanical, or 'rolling stock and asset services' as it's now called, for all the work they have done on the DCs.

We've made huge progress and whilst there is still much to do, it's not for want of trying on the part of the rank and file members up to their elbows in grease. For far too long these members have kept rolling stock rolling despite outdated and limited facilities.

It was good to hear at the time of writing that our very capable delegate Luke James

has been briefed on a programme of major investment that is long overdue. By the time you read this we should all have heard the

news directly from management.

Finally, the branch sends its heartfelt support and solidarity to our sisters and

brothers in Auckland in their fight to keep passenger trains safe and to retain guards on the trains. 🌐

LYTTELTON PORT

BARGAINING for the main Lyttelton Port collective agreement will be well under way by the time this goes to print. At the time of writing we have already initiated bargaining and are due to meet with LPC to exchange claims on August 14. We already know that the company is looking for changes to the shift arrangements in the container terminal to align with what was agreed with our brothers in MUNZ earlier this year. There is no appetite for any additional so-called sliding shifts among our members. In the meantime management has also let us know that they want to make changes to the workshop roster. The initial suggestion of changing to a 12-hour roster has caused an uproar among our members in mechanical maintenance and there is universal rejection of the idea. It remains to be seen whether LPC is wedded to this notion. If they are they will have a real fight on their hands.

A big change at Lyttelton has been the introduction of a new Liebherr container crane. With this increased capacity Port Lyttelton now has the ability to have two, two-crane operations running simultaneously. This in turn means that LPC has started recruiting another 20 plus part-time PRP cargo handlers and also means that there will be more full-time positions available.

Although there is some concern among existing PRPs about whether there will be enough work to go around with the influx of new part-timers, if company projections are to be believed then there should be plenty of work for all.

But it remains to be seen whether the vagaries of shipping are as predictable as some of the company analysts hope.

We had a bit of hiccup at the end of June when LPC attempted to switch the port radios over to a digital system from analogue. The Red Card was deployed and prolonged discussions ensued with management. Whilst these were challenging at times, it is testimony to the strength of the relationship

between the parties that we managed to navigate our way through and achieve an agreed resolution.

We have established a joint project to ensure the digital system is introduced safely and have committed to joint training of members and delegates around the origins and deployment of the Red Card.

Thanks to all involved for their hard

happy about the proposed new set up, but the technological change has been decided by management and it is now up to the LO working group to ensure that configuration and layout of their operations room suits their needs. It is perhaps instructive that had such a consultative approach been instituted from the beginning with the digital radios, then a lot of problems experienced with their implementation could have been



Julian Stewart, cargo handler, Erica Donovan, nurses' union delegate, and Heimer Benecke at the protest against threats to Canterbury Health Board.

work, patience and understanding – members, management and officials.

Meanwhile work continues on the new container terminal building due to be finished by the end of the year. Our members in logistics are currently engaged in consultation activated by the technological and operational change clause in the logistics officers CEA. A member from each LO group will be part of the working group and will work with management to ensure that the operational needs are met in the new building. The big change is that the LOs will no longer be in a tower overlooking the terminal, but will be observing everything on a bank of screens fed by multiple cameras all around the port. Some LOs are not

avoided.

Finally I note that both Gary Horan, MUNZ Lyttelton branch secretary, and I have been working hard to improve the relationship between our two unions at a local level. With amalgamation talks proceeding at national level, Gary and I are in regular contact and have been working together on a number of local issues. In the long run, we both see the necessity of one union on the waterfront and by and large most of the members of both branches seem to agree. This is not an easy process and we still have a long way to go. Nothing will be decided without a vote of the entire membership and prior meetings at which everyone will get the opportunity to talk. 🌐

TIMARU PORT

HERE at Timaru Port we've been dealing with all the bad weather that everyone else in this part of the world has had to cope with. It has made little, if any, difference to shipping but has certainly made it difficult for some of us to get to work as roads have been closed due to flooding.

Our members directly employed by Prime Port, who provide marine services and civil and mechanical maintenance, as well as Vicky in administration, are currently re-negotiating their collective agreement.

The key issue, apart from money, is fatigue management and how we reconcile terms and conditions of employment that provide management with their much

vaunted flexibility and allow us to work safely and have some balance between our lives at home and at the port. Hopefully we'll have made progress on both fronts by the time you read this.

One hiccup which may lead to a delay has been the sudden resignation of our operations manager Keith Michel. Keith has been here for too many years to count and decided it was time for a break. We all know him well and respect him as a straight shooter and someone who is both fair and compassionate. He's had a job to do and we've not always liked the direction the port or the industry has gone in over the years but Keith has always been someone we could do business with.

Murray Cadigan and Naylor Young at-

tended the RMTU Ports Forum in mid June and the importance of fatigue management was a key issue discussed.

Management's obsession with drug and alcohol screening, which to be fair is a national phenomenon and not confined to Prime Port, could usefully be extended to the impact of fatigue on workers in an industry such as ours.

Aside from the above, our little branch is ticking along. We appreciate the support we get from the wider Union, particularly around health and safety, and so we have no hesitation in adding our voice to those backing our members in Auckland Rail who are fighting to keep guards on trains and passengers and the public safe.

Stay strong – we are all thinking of you. 🌐

OTAGO RAIL

THE floods have come and gone, and with the teams on the ground doing the clean-up things are getting back to normal.

This has also affected the Taieri Gorge branch line in a big way. The upper schist rock section of the gorge came through reasonably well, but the lower part of the gorge suffered heavy mud slips which also contained the debris of cut over forestry washed into the line from bare hills. The sloppy slips will need to dry out before removal. About a dozen washouts occurred which will necessitate considerable restoration of the track formation. It appears that all the historic wrought iron viaducts and bridges have survived. It is estimated that it will be up to a month or so before the track is restored for train services.

To a certain extent the flooding happened at the best time, as there was a two week shutdown scheduled for maintenance purposes and passenger bookings are relatively low during the winter period. Dunedin Railways does have KiwiRail main line running rights so reduced Seasider passenger trips will be run to Palmerston and Oamaru as an alternative while the track maintenance gang is working a six day week

to bring the track back up to speed.

One or two little trouble spots have developed on the line just north of Sawyers Bay where the cliff has threatened to fall on to the road below and take the track with it. Our engineers are working on a fix for this problem. In the meantime trains are travelling very cautiously over the section, hoping.

It's worth noting that the team in the freight yard had a collision recently, which involved an LPG bull. While having a collision is bad enough, this branch has some serious concerns about how the aftermath was handled.

The rail incident controller is the back stop when it comes to safety and the stories relayed to this scribe do not make good reading. They include:

- Failure to identify the type of wagon involved straight away.
- Failure to move all involved to a safe area.
- Failure to inform the emergency services of a possible leak.
- Failure to stop and protect people from further harm by allowing smoking and cell phones in the area.

We need to have confidence that rail incident controllers are fit for the role.

The freight team have been looking

admiringly at the new door which has appeared between the operations' office and the operation manager's office. They are left wondering why it is so small. Anyone 186 cms and above is in danger of hitting their head. Rumour has it that it is to be changed, or is this a way to make those entering to bow before the managers?

More rumours have it that the south train plan is being reviewed with one or two trains being cut and the Balclutha shunt engine being removed. If this were to happen it would mean that the shunts at Balclutha will have to be done with the main line locomotives. A backward step is the story relayed to this scribe.

Looks like there is panic because KiwiRail has not been thinking far enough ahead about the replacement of some of our ancient locomotives. The team at Hillside have been doing a lot of work on the DC fleet and the LEs are keen to see the results. The LE's perspective is that the DXs are having lots of traction motor failures. Or is that because the south road is the only place they are allowed to run in this condition with one traction motor cut out?

Be safe out there and make good informed votes in the up and coming election. 🌐

SOUTHLAND RAIL

As you will have doubtless heard, the weather Gods have not been kind to this part of the country with a rain bomb dumping more water on the land than it could handle resulting in flooding and closure of the MSL for five days. This must surely test the patience of our customers. Thankfully we are in the low season and great volumes of freight were not involved.

It is at times like this a tribute must be paid to our track workers who have the task to get the line open as soon as possible and repair all the damage caused by the hand of mother nature, as if they don't have enough on their hands with the rebuild of the MNL. A job well done.

Speaking of track conditions a lot of work has been done in this section replacing rotten sleepers in several level crossings. At the time of writing the main one yet to be repaired is the main road crossing at Clinton. (Pictured: Our Dunedin-based inspector James White on this very crossing).

On the subject of level crossings the stupidity of some motor vehicle drivers never ceases to amaze us. In this area of late we have had two collisions with the local Bluff shunting train at Clifton and both were caused by driver inattention. The award must go to the driver of the vehicle who forgot to turn the corner on the crossing at Balclutha and took out the post alarm bells. As fate would have it these alarms had just been renewed a week earlier.

Staff levels have taken a bit of a hit with resignations from Stefan and Daniel. All the best to you in your new careers. Our new terminal manager has come from the ranks of the locomotive engineers in Invercargill. Congratulations to Nick McCleery on this appointment. We have also said goodbye to Laurie Knipe with a gathering of staff both past and present at the local Workingman's club. It was a good turn out with a contingent of our work mates making the trip down from Dunedin. As per normal at these functions with the mix of pensioners, the old days were recalled and stories told, especially as Laurie had a photo on display from days long ago of steam crews dressed up like the untouchables. It was really great to listen to speakers from all the different sectors of rail say a few words. A presentation was made to both Laurie and Denise from staff and management and our best wishes for a long, happy and healthy retirement were extended.

With the arrival of the high season roster along with the on-going leave management programme, it will be interesting to see how this works given the current staff level as no recruitment has taken place to fill the vacancies. The position of loco team leader

is not being filled for 18 months we must be ask why?

On a wider front the forthcoming election is the chance we all have to get rid of this government and you don't have to look any further than the locos we all use to answer why that needs to happen. If the newspaper headlines are to be believed then a passenger rail service will return between Invercargill and Christchurch under this Tory government! If you believe that maybe pigs will fly.

Cheerio from the south and be safe out there. 🇳🇿



James White on the job at Clinton.



(Below and right) Laurie Knipe's retirement brought in some old-timers to regale the youngsters with their stories of old. (r) Laurie gets a loyalty certificate from delegate Dave Murdoch



Taieri flooding



RAIL lines through the Taieri plains and around the river were briefly closed by flooding during the July drenching which also affected about 130 homes and completely inundated whole farms.

Many residents were unable to return home for several days with some areas reporting in excess of 140mm of rain in 24 hours - more than double their July average.

The photographs show the inundated line at various stages of visibility. 🌐

