

THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

DEC 2022

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

Union support from the top



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Minister of Transport Michael Woods (l) with Todd Valster and Aubrey Wilkenson at Labours annual conference.

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Conference delegates Ratu Vakacerevalu and Malcolm Ross take a breather between sessions.

20 SLEEPING BREAKTHROUGH

The RMTU is instrumental in getting sleep disorders recognised as a physical injury.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: In his first week as an organiser based at National Office, Allan Addison-Saipe was surprised to meet Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. See page 6

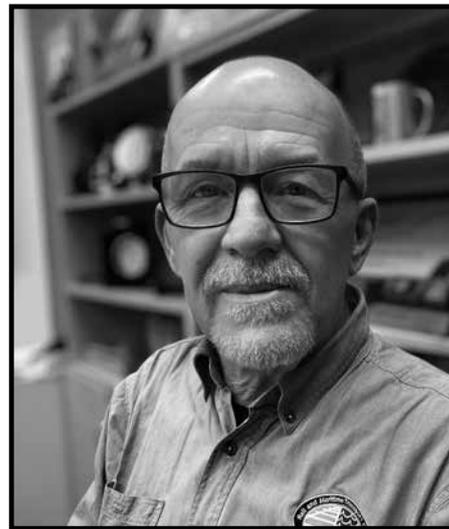
The Transport Worker is published by the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, P O Box 1103, Wellington, Aotearoa–New Zealand.

Design and production by Mike Regan.

**Printed by Pivotal Print
P O Box 11–025, Wellington.**

WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ

ISBN 1173–6488



Todd Valster
Acting general secretary
RMTU

Reflecting on 2022

– Succession planning, inter-regional passenger rail, looming elections and international solidarity.

Like many of you, I am wondering where this year has gone with the festive season just around the corner. We have had another busy year with our biennial delegates Conference in October with the women's and port and rail sessions the day before.

It was great to see so many new delegates attending.

We also had a large group of international guests from the UK, Japan and Australia present on the issues facing their unions and countries.

Conference also gave us the opportunity to have a retirement dinner for Wayne Butson. It was a great night with past, present and life members, friends of the RMTU and invited guests.

At Conference, Wayne was awarded an RMTU Life Membership for his national and international contributions over many decades.

This year our new admin assistant, Alejandra Garcia, joined the team at the Wellington Office, Dave Kearns left his role at KiwiRail to become the new South Island organiser and Allan Addison-Saipe left his role at Port Nelson to become the new Central Regional organiser.

General secretary, Wayne Butson, retired after the third quarter National Management Committee (NMC) meeting in mid-September and I was appointed acting general secretary until the election at the next NMC meeting in March 2023.

We welcome Alejandra, Dave and Allan, and farewell Wayne and wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

With appointments and retirements, it is a good time to focus on succession planning for many roles including, but not limited to, delegates, branch officials, branch committees, health and safety reps, women's reps, industrial council reps and NMC members. Too often we rely on effective delegates and reps and when they stop doing the role, we are left with a void. Succession planning can start by involving new reps and/or keen members.

One example could be including a new rep in bargaining meetings and a branch sending these keen members as observers to delegates conferences to gain a better understanding of the RMTU and to meet and network with other delegates.

The RMTU recently submitted to the 'Inquiry into the future of inter-regional passenger rail' with the Parliamentary Transport & Infrastructure Committee. Our submission was mostly prepared by one of our passionate delegates in Wellington, Mike

Nicholson. Mike worked hard on this and we are grateful for this excellent submission. On November 22, an RMTU team spoke to our submission to the Committee.

2023 is going to be a year of elections – internally and nationally. Nominations for the RMTU president, general secretary, NMC members, industrial and womens' council reps will all take place early to mid next year. If there are ballots, it is important members vote. There is considerable resource and costs to balloting, so low voting participation is a waste of that effort and Union funds.

The general election is also very important to our members. For our rail members, Labour has put significant investment and support in rail over the last two terms and need to continue. For our port members, the inquiry into port safety and outcomes from that inquiry need to be enacted.

For current and future generations, Fair Pay Agreements, will be a game changer. With a change in Government, it has been signalled FPAs would be gone in the first 100 days. Voting apathy will not go in the current Government's favour. We need high voter participation.

Lastly I wish to thank the representatives from ASLEF, RMTU, ICLS, JREU and RTBU for traveling to New Zealand for our Conference and for attending Wayne's retirement dinner. Our conference attendees gave very positive feedback after hearing the international guests' presentations. Thank you.

Hopefully you are having a break over festive season. Have a safe Christmas. 🌐

SOLIDARITY



RMTU Otago rail branch secretary, Keryn Cottier (l) and South Island organiser, Dave Kearns hold up the Union flag on the picket line supporting the Dunedin firefighters.

Retirement

Dear Editor,
Please accept my resignation from the RMTU.

What a train ride this has been. I started my time with NZR on the 15 August 1977 so had done over 44 years when I finally pulled the pin and reluctantly accepted medical retirement.

Driving trains has been a fantastic job and I have loved most of it. The bits I haven't loved so much are level crossing accidents, work mates getting hurt at work and some of the so-called great managers the company has put in place who upset the staff, then get moved on leaving unrepairable damage to the branch.

A couple of things which stick in my mind are the fantastic job the Union did getting the locomotive engineers a salary rise and the on-going work around hours of work. Most of the opponents to the salary rise and work hours are people who have never worked shift work and don't realise nor understand the costs shift work plays on a worker in terms of health and family relations.

Another great thing about working at rail was being part of a fantastic Union, one which cared about its members and is a great source of information and advice.

I have held various positions within my local branch from roster rep to branch secretary of the LEA, branch auditor and lastly roster rep again.

The thing about being part of a great union for me was knowing the RMTU had my back.

Anne and I wish the RMTU staff and members all the best for the future and sincerely thank the RMTU for their ongoing and tireless support.

Paul Henry
LE Dunedin.

Dear Editor,
Due to my retirement after 41 years in Rail, I wish to resign my membership of the RMTU. I wish to thank the Union for its work on members' behalf and its support over the years. I wish you and your members all the best for the future.
Mike Don
Train manager, Paekakariki.

Dear Editor,
I would like to thank the RMTU team for their dedication to me personally and, more importantly, to its members at Hyundai Rotem Company.

I would like to thank you all for the support, guidance and mentoring I have received as a delegate and H&S rep for the last five years.

The integrity of the RMTU and its ongoing commitment is truly appreciated.

Being empowered to lead change and advocate collaboratively with our members to resolve issues has developed my own leadership and employment relations skills and given me the courage to back my own abilities.

I am so grateful to have been a part of an amazing organisation and I look forward to continuing a relationship with you all the in the future.

Kind regards,
James McKenzie.

Bereavement

Dear Editor,

Thank you so very much for all your assistance in honouring Gordan our much loved husband, father, father-in-law, grandie and great grandie.

Gordon's life membership would not have been possible without your support and Ben's expertise.

Your caring words, thoughts and actions are very much appreciated.

Kind regards

The Wilson family: Ellen, Grant, Dawn, John and children and grandchildren.

New Aussie owners - same union bashers

THERE is a Chinese curse which says: 'May you live in interesting times'. In Auckland's case, we must be doubly cursed.

The replacement of Transdev Auckland with the Australian based AOR has led to some very 'interesting' situations.

The RMTU's relationship with TDAK before they moved on was, while not perfect, a long way from what it had been during the nadir of the dispute over Driver Only Operations in 2018.

We had regular meetings, good consultation, an ability to almost always get release for delegates and a number of agreements which were beneficial to the Union and the Company.

Unfortunately, AOR have chosen to argue over almost every one of those agreements.

The RMTU finds itself having to fight constantly to get even the simplest things done like getting delegates released.

More than this, they are arguing over clauses in the Collective Agreement which we have previously fought and won battles over.

The tying up of a union into continuous

litigation is a key union busting strategy, as is pitting members against one another.

The recent roster changes and the movement of people from one depot to another has created friction between members, and between members and the Union. This is classic union busting technique and we need to be vigilant and proactive in this arena.

What this has done has been to embolden managers who had previously been told to work alongside the RMTU, to actively attack delegates, spread anti-union sentiment and aggressively encourage people to either leave the Union, or not join up in the first place.

This bullying and harassment of Union members or potential members is another weapon in the arsenal of a company attempting to de-unionise the worksite.

We are in for a long fight but be assured, we will not be lying down and taking it.

We have a number of disputes currently active and we have a membership which won serious battles with the previous company.

This is a case of watch this space – there's going to be more to come. 🌐

PORTS RETIREMENT PLAN ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The Ports Retirement Plan is open to all port workers.

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



**Ports
Retirement
Plan**



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

www.portsretirement.org.nz

Issuer: Ports Retirement Trustee Limited

Checking Tranz Alpine's value

FOLLOWING discussions with KiwiRail regarding tourist pricing for Tranz Alpine Scenic Journeys travel the new employment relations manager, Jane Kinder, HR manager Sue Jenson, RMTU general secretary at that time, Wayne Butson and organiser, Todd Valster made the return journey to Greymouth to judge the value of the experience.

After a couple of earlier attempts to take the trip – both disrupted by the usual issues we had this year – it was finally undertaken in August. The trip was also a good opportunity for Wayne to say farewell before he retired in September.

It was a foggy start at Addington but we left on time aboard the Hillside-built AK carriages. The travel was smooth, the views outstanding and the onboard staff very professional and helpful.

However, the RMTU team concluded domestic travellers would also like this experience and, hopefully, in the future there will be options for both overseas tourists and domestic travellers. 🌐



(above) (l) A misty journey over the central divide and Otira LE Mike Morgan with Wayne Butson.

Inquiry: the future of Inter-regional passenger rail

THE RMTU put in – and spoke to – a submission in November to the Government Transport and Infrastructure select committee inquiry into the future of inter-regional passenger rail in New Zealand.

In short the RMTU argued for a passenger rail service with good coverage and frequency led by a stand alone, not-for-profit, crown passenger rail authority responsible for all things 'rail'. The submission further argued for a more modern standardised fleet of trains.

"Passenger rail is basic public infrastructure, which should not be politicised," said the submission. "There needs to be general acceptance of the greater good aspects which passenger rail brings. New Zealand can have it all – roads, air travel (when appropriate) and a modern well-functioning passenger rail."

What was most heartening were the sheer volume of submissions and how strongly people around New Zealand felt about having a decent inter-regional passenger rail.

The RMTU submission, which was mostly compiled by passionate delegate and rail enthusiast, Mike Nicholson, can be found here:

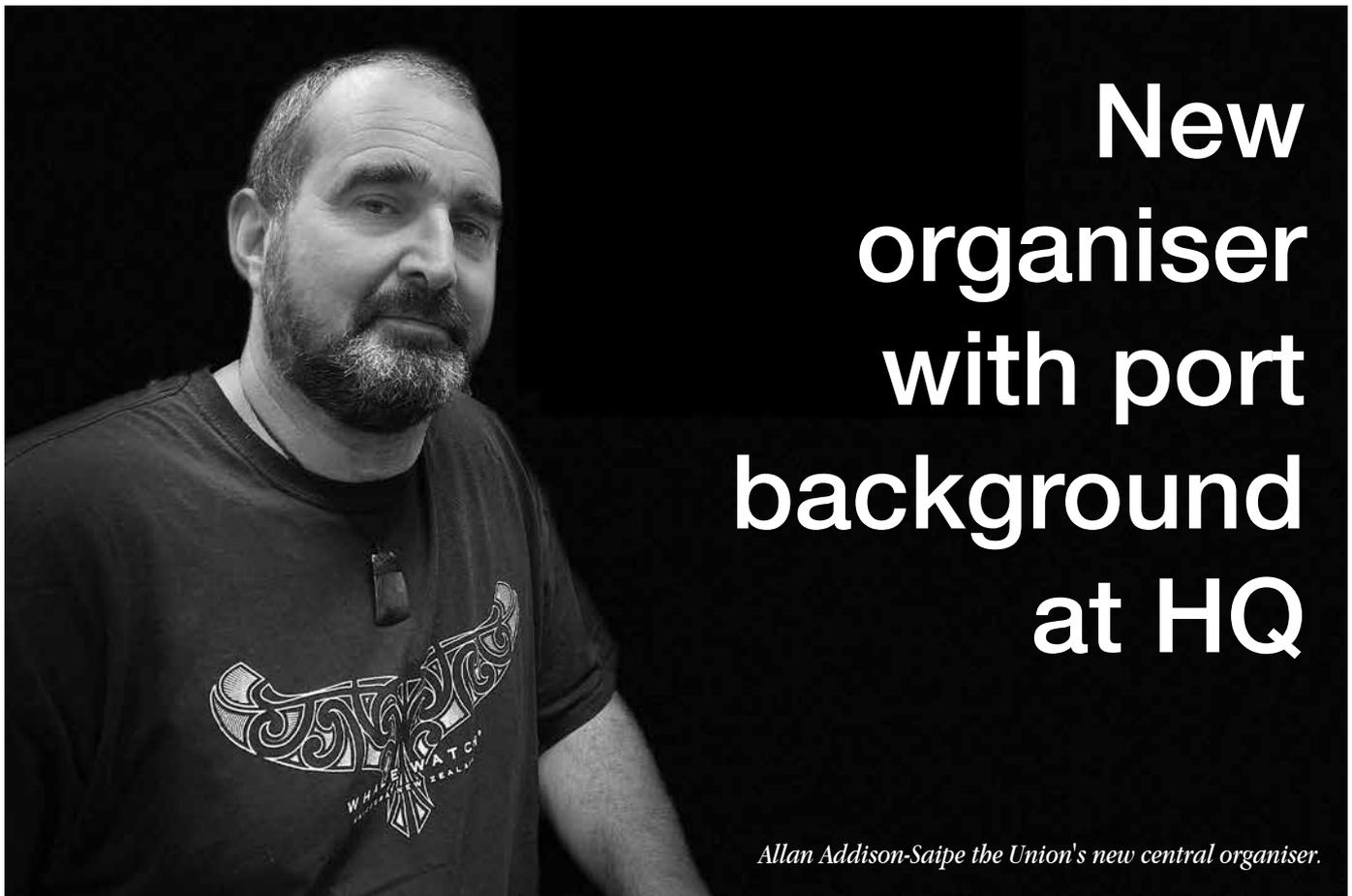
<https://tinyurl.com/5bbecyjm>

and the RMTU verbal submission (starts 40 minutes into video) can be watched here:

<https://tinyurl.com/26sk3x2t>



Standing beside Wayne Butson are (l) Scenic train manager KellyAnne Bullen and Otira rail operator Rob Thomson.



Allan Addison-Saipe the Union's new central organiser.

IN his first week at his new job at RMTU head office, Allan Addison-Saipe was thrust into a myriad of critical meetings including a meeting of Labour Party affiliates attended by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern – which goes a wee way to explaining the front page photo this issue.

Allan had just moved north from Port Nelson to take up Todd Valster's old position as organiser for the central regions.

"That last meeting was pretty hard to top for your first week on the job," he said. "It was a lively introduction."

Allan's Union journey began at Port Nelson. Only four years after starting work there – some 12 years ago – a colleague surprised him – and the rest of the meeting – by nominating Allan as branch secretary.

While the nomination caught him by surprise he quickly got into stride by completing some delegate training and seeking ways to extricate the branch from the doldrums.

With Union membership at a low ebb he set to work rectifying the situation first with a concerted membership campaign among fellow workers.

"With the membership drive we also improved communications among members

and by the end of that year we had doubled our numbers. All of a sudden the Company wanted to talk to us and take us seriously."

The situation is now completely different with the branch going from strength to strength and, most significantly, he says they are now taken seriously in pay and condition discussions.

Next step was to improve the pay and conditions for stevedores with C3, a fellow stevedoring company, and a membership drive among them was equally successful.

"Their wages are now more realistic," he said. "They were really poorly paid before they joined us."

Coming from a port background is a distinct string to his bow and especially among fellow port workers around the country who have been starved of someone with his experience. He has already received much positive comment.

But now he has to pick up the other half of the portfolio and swat up his rail knowledge.

"Thankfully I'm surrounded by people willing to help, especially Todd whose rail knowledge is comprehensive."

Other areas he has focussed on include risk management and health and safety and has helped drive policy in these areas on

What's in a name

The story behind Allan's surname – Allan Addison-Saipe – is a mystery.

His great grand parents were Russian Jewish refugees who fled to the UK around 1800 settling in Leeds. They were part of a migration of Jews fleeing large-scale, targeted, and repeated antisemitic rioting resulting in thousands of deaths and destruction. Many moved to the UK other found refuge in North America.

"The story goes they had an unpronounceable Slavic name which they apparently Anglicised to Addison-Saipe. It was supposed to make things easier"

Not knowing the original name it's hard to hazard a guess as to why they chose another complex name.

His grandfather, one of eight siblings, fell out with the rest of the family, joined the army and was wounded at Gallipoli where he sustained a life long injury. It was thought he was sent to New Zealand to recuperate.

He married here and had children including Allan's father.

"He died in Hastings, a pauper, and is buried there in an RSA plot."



Some of the RMTU team at the Labour Conference with Minister of Transport Michael Woods: Howard Phillips, Todd Valster, Aubrey Wilkenson and Rita Hill.

Optimistic focus for 2023

ON November 4, 5 and 6 the RMTU sent a delegation to the Labour Party Conference comprising acting general secretary Todd Valster, RMTU president Aubrey Wilkinson, RMTU vice president Howard Phillips, Auckland women's rep Rita Hill and northern region organiser Rudd Hughes.

As a member of the Labour Party Union Affiliates group we mingled with Labour Party members, activists and politicians as well as other unions such as the A1s, E Tu, MUNZ and the Dairy Workers Union.

It was an extremely interesting three days where the Party reflected on the great work it had done in the previous five years and achievements which often were lost in the negativity of the news media.

There was also a focus on the work to be done and, of particular interest, to the union movement and the work around Fair Pay Agreements – far-reaching legislation which will benefit thousands of workers across Aotearoa.

Alongside this there was a gimlet-eyed look at the current economic and political

milieu as Labour gave a no-holds barred assessment of where they were sitting with the electorate.

A pragmatic realism permeated throughout the three days with the acknowledgement that the election in 2023 will be a hard-fought affair and the Party and its affiliates will need to be ready for the work ahead.

While acknowledging the electoral environment, there was also real optimism and enthusiasm for the year ahead.

Kia kaha. 🌐

the Port. Lately he has been closely involved in fatigue management, especially since Port Nelson, until recently, had no published rosters despite being subject to tidal fluctuations and, obviously, varying shift times.

"It was a crazy situation but for us to manage fatigue, establishing rosters is an essential and completely reasonable way to go."

At the very beginning of the process the Company put up a little resistance but as time went on, Allan said they soon came round and saw the advantages and common

sense of a structured workplace.

"There was also pressure brought to bear by regulators and others together with published guidelines. The writing was definitely on the wall to get rid of the old methodologies. Overall the change was achieved through civilised discussion – the way it should be. Working together. Who would have thought."

Allan has been 30 years in Nelson and while the move to Wellington is dramatic it's not entirely unwelcome. He was born in the city, his wife, Lara, was ready to move and

their two children are both studying there.

"The biggest problems are our two cats and a dog," he said. "At first I didn't think we wanted to move to Wellington until I spoke to my wife and discovered that we did."

"Lara has been very supportive of my Union work even during some those difficult periods. But she insisted I stay until I'd sorted them. She saw this move as a natural progression.

"I can talk ports until I'm blue in the face but now I'm going to have to lift my rail game to match." 🌐



Rail Transport Bus Union (RTBU), Maritime Union Australia (MUA), and RMTU Womens' reps at the WIMDOI conference in Canberra.

Women in male dominated occupations and industries

SOME 192 women, 26 unions, and two continents attended WIMDOI 2022 in Canberra, Australia from September 13 to 15.

WIMDOI is a forum for women to share their experiences of working in male dominated workplaces and was established to break down the barriers and support them to develop their skills, build their experiences and excel as skilled professionals.

As an affirmative action initiative of the trade union movement, it is designed to encourage the recruitment and retention of women into these occupations and industries and promote activism.

A woman's place is in her union!

Every two years WIMDOI convenes in a different location of Australia. This conference was three jammed packed days of strong union women, inspiring keynote speakers and a natural solidarity.

The first day we visited parliament. What an amazing building inside and out. The Parliament of Australia is the legislative

branch of government. It consists of three elements: the monarch, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

We were lucky enough to sit in the House of Representatives where the decisions of the country are debated.

On Wednesday the second day of the conference we were picked up at 0700 to march in solidarity with general service officials (GSO) in the suburb of Dickson. These people look after the public areas in the city from toilets to gardening. They haven't had a pay increase since before Covid. Most of the GSOs cannot even afford to live in the city they maintain. We marched to their boss's building and made it clear that it was time the ACT (Australian Capital Territory) did something about it.

An Australian legend Aunty Pat Anderson presented the Uluru Statement from the Heart Referendum. She is an indigenous woman fighting for the rights of her people. The lack of voice and power that her people are experiencing has been going on for far

too long. The Uluru statement needs to be enshrined into the constitution. Voice, Treaty, Truth. The MUNZ and RMTU sisters of Aotearoa did a mihi to Aunty Pat followed by a waiata tautoko, a song of support along with gifts from across the ditch. It was a very special moment for us, MUNZ and RMTU sisters, to show our gratitude to Aunty Pat and our Australian sisters. It was great to meet and reconnect with my MUNZ sisters. The bond between us is growing and the relationship between MUNZ and RMTU will only get stronger.

The afternoon of the second day, although quite confronting and emotional, was probably the highlight of the conference for me.

Patrizia Cassaniti (photograph top of next page) presented a safety video about her 18 year old son who died in a workplace accident. Listening to her journey through this and her presence in the room left all the women in tears. Her willpower and motivation to advocate how important



Patrizia Cassaniti, a passionate advocate for safety after losing her son to a workplace fatality.

◀ safety is in the workplace is priceless. As I sat listening to her talk about her life in the last three years I couldn't help thinking, how can she keep going on and watching this video and sharing her experience.

Her answer to the same question that a lot of us had on our minds was, "I wouldn't be here today if I wasn't doing this. If my story can help one person not to take shortcuts in the workplace and get home to their family at the end of the day then I know I'm on the right path."

She carried a teddy bear dressed in Christopher's work shirt. In the afternoon we went to the National Workers Memorial. The design of the "Workers Glade" is a work of art and a sacred place. There was an overwhelming sense of honour in the air for those who didn't get to come home from work.

WIMDOI 2022 for me was probably the best event I've been to yet. Some phrases that embodied us all in the three days included: sweet solidarity, a safe place, togetherness, fierceness and passionate women building union.

Promoting yourself, having the strength and courage to say YES so that we as union women can pave the way for our young sisters wanting to make a career in the railways, construction, on ships, in forestry or as electricians and plumbers.

They can't be what they can't see.

WIMDOI The Herstory has been empowering women for 25 years. 🇺🇸



(above) RMTU's Rebecca Hauck takes a look at the Australian parliament.

(below) Members of the amazing WIMDOI committee with Rebecca Hauck holding up an RMTU banner.



HPHE: a win-win process



RMTU and KiwiRail members who attended the HPHE workshop.

A course was held on November 9 and 10 at the new KiwiRail offices in Ellerslie, Auckland.

Two ways to explain HPHE are, KiwiRail workers and RMTU working collaboratively for a positive outcome for all, or interest-based problem solving and decision making based on consensus rather than through a hierarchy.

It can be best summarised as the peo-

ple closest to the problem being involved in solving the problem.

The two day course, facilitated by Strachan Crang and Scott Camlin had a positive vibe and was very informative.

Participants said it was eye opening for both KiwiRail and RMTU who shared interests of working together to improve health and safety cultures and to grow productivity.

Worker participation in solving problems from the frontline to the very top of the structure is paramount for RMTU members and the employer.

The commitment from the RMTU and KiwiRail to resurrect HPHE will benefit the workers who, after all are KiwiRail's biggest asset and support the business to grow safely. 🌐

\$10,000 ADB

All members of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union 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 Rail and Maritime Transport Union. **Members also have the option to increase their coverage an additional \$10,000 which costs just \$2 for the first year.**

To have an AIL representative deliver your certificate of coverage and explain additional insurance coverage available:

Reply online: ailnz.co.nz/request

Reply by email: **Email your name, address and contact number to pr@ailnz.co.nz**

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 for \$5. A.M. Best, one of the oldest and most respected insurance ratings companies, has rated American Income Life as A (Excellent) for overall Financial Strength (as of 7/20).



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Courageous conversations



THIS year's Women's session was easier to plan as we didn't have COVID looming over our head. The Women's Council, consisting of myself (Rebecca Hauck) (NMC women's rep), Christie Yule (North Island Rail), Ann Wells (South Island Port), Rata Sidwell (North Island Port) and Annette Telfer (South Island Rail) planned this year's half day conference.

There were 10 new RMTU women delegates and observers who attended the conference. Rita Hill started our day off with a karakia, followed by an introduction from acting RMTU general secretary, Todd Valster.

It was a pretty jammed packed half day. Before our guest speaker spoke we showed a video montage of photos of our RMTU MANA WAHINE. We had two guest speakers lined up – Tauranga MP, Minister of Internal Affairs and Women's Associate Minister of Education Jan Tinetti, who spoke very passionately of young women coming through in the workforce and how it is so important for women now to be paving the way for the younger generations.

The second planned speaker was Taieri/Dunedin South Island MP Ingrid Leary who unfortunately couldn't make it.

Christie Yule gave a very informative presentation on KiwiRail's parental leave policy and how it is about to get even better in 2023. It is so important for women coming

into frontline industries to know the company has a well equipped parental policy when the time comes and they want to start having a family. Some women, even now, are afraid to tell their boss they are pregnant for fear of losing their job. The days are gone when women can't have a family and a career at the same time. Having a robust parental policy in workplaces is key for women to make having a family and a successful career a reality.

This year the Women's committee put together a goodie bag for all the RMTU women who were at the conference. One item which will be a game changer for some women was an example of period underwear. For women who work on the front line and may not have access to toilet facilities or sanitary bins, these undies are a perfect option. And not only for periods, but for menopause, incontinence, and post birth. There is talk of some companies looking to have this as PPE for women. This is fantastic and zero waste – just wash and reuse and 100% better for the environment.



RMTU womens' committee rep Ann Wells-Donoghue speaking at Conference

Rebecca's presentation focussed on toilets and how far things have come since RMTU's 'Right to flush' campaign began back in 2019. The campaign raised an enormous amount of awareness around the lack of amenities around the country in rail and in the ports. Within KiwiRail, RMTU members (mainly women) joined an amenities group formed by KiwiRail who talked to front line workers and gathering examples of their experiences of

what it was like working out in the field without any amenities. From this workers now have toilet facilities being installed around the country. And the best part is if they need to be relocated they can be. Some have solar power connected, surrounding fences and outside lighting for safety plus door lock keypad and are cleaned and serviced on a regular basis. This is a great win for the RMTU and KiwiRail working collectively for an outcome affecting all workers on the front line.

We wrapped up the day with an open forum and a closing karakia by Rita Hill. 🌐

Our international speakers



International guests to the Conference were taken to lunch in the Wairarapa. (l-r - back row) RTBU - Shane Kummerfield, Robert Hayden, Farren Campbell, ASLEF - Dave Calfe, RTBU Dan Leece, ASLEF - Mick Whelan and RMT - Alex Gordon. and (l to r front) RMT - Christine and Andrew Gordon, ICLS - Satoru Yamada and JREU - Mr Chiba.

FOR the first time since Covid restrictions limited international travel the RMTU was able to welcome guests to its Biennial Conference. The occasion was a worthy one as they came to wish retiring general secretary Wayne Butson best wishes for his retirement.

Attending were: Satoru Yamada (ICLS), Mr Chiba (JRU), Andrew Gordon and Alex Gordon (RMT), Farren Campbell, Robert Hayden and Dan Lee (RTBU New South Wales) and Shayne Kummerfield (RTBU Queensland). Also present were Mick Whelan and Dave Calfe from ASLEF.

All made presentations to Wayne on Wednesday night after enjoying a fine meal. It was wonderful to see the depth of feeling across the globe and respect Wayne had nurtured over the years.

The interesting stuff came the next day when the internationals addressed members of the Conference led off by Mick Whelan, who is an entertaining speaker at the best of times. The news he delivered was sobering, talking of tough economic times in the UK, raging inflation over two percent and the cost of energy being capped at a staggering 215 percent, making it difficult for citizens to heat their homes this winter. He spoke

of a dysfunctional government and Liz Truss's debacle, providing tax cuts to the rich costing the country £160 billion and the Bank of England having to pump £80 billion a day into the UK economy for three days to stave off a total collapse.

He spoke of transport unions striking and working together – and, for once, not being reviled but the public who were applauding their stand. He spoke of many other unions in the UK preparing to strike and the general despondency of the working classes as they struggle to make ends meet.

Alex Gordon also spoke of a gloomy picture with the Tory government holding all pay rises to three percent – despite rampant inflation. The increasing incidents of 'fire and rehire' initiatives of employers, whereby they sack an entire work force and then rehire them on lower rates and worse conditions. In some cases not rehiring at all but importing a cheaper work force from abroad, as in the case of the P&O ferries.

Next came our brothers from across the ditch, Shayne, Robert and Farren who highlighted the difficulties facing the transport sector in Australia, including the differences in the various state governments, the legislative barriers faced and, of

course, the ever-present threat of inflation and the erosion of the workers' pay. The NSW representatives rushed off the next day to attend a court sitting against NSW employers.

Mr Chiba, the retired general secretary of JRU said he made a special journey to NZ to see his old friend Wayne into retirement. Through an interpreter, he spoke of the inspiration and support he had received over the years from Wayne and what great support the RMTU had offered the JRU. He also spoke of the continued international struggle transport workers face around the world.

Satoru Yamada also praised Wayne for his friendship and support during his persecution and the time he was arrested and imprisoned as one of the JRU seven. There was an amusing moment when Satoru accidentally erased his speech from his phone but was able to recover it and continue.

The speeches from our guests and were both sobering and inspirational.

Just maybe they made us feel things are probably not that bad in little old NZ and maybe we are a little insulated from the goings on in the rest of the world – and maybe we have done a good job keeping this country going. 🌐

I kotahitanga - in unity!

Reporting from the 2022 RMTU bi-annual conference

THE theme of the 2022 Delegates Conference – I Kotahitanga – gave the opportunity to put heads together and look at what kotahitanga meant and to strategise around how to unify and progress our Union.

Why? It's on our logo. We are stronger together, but it should not be taken for granted as there are always forces at work trying to break our unity and our democracy.

We looked at the meaning of unity – a state of being united or joined as a whole.

We looked at the meaning of leadership with Marshal Ganz, senior lecturer in leadership, organising and civil society at the



Rebecca Hauck and Biggles Maindonald.

Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

He described it as the practice of accepting responsibility to enable others to achieve shared purpose under conditions

of uncertainty.

We know we have great leaders in this Union but the challenge is to create an environment where they can soar.

We asked each group to look at this table of terms and to discuss whether they promoted unity or disunity. The table shows their responses.

Whilst most groups took a pretty black and white approach, we found some things can promote unity and disunity.

The delegates then looked at what unity looked like to them and what it meant in their workplaces. We found it is easy to identify what unity is and how it looks in our branches.

The delegates found that sharing of goals, collaborating and having a collective voice was good for branch unity. The need for acceptance of peoples' differences and diversity was also key. Respect was an important point many groups came up with and the need to respect each other recognising differing views to reach an outcome we can all accept.

Democracy was another common theme talked about. Some groups would say unions are the last bastion of true democracy: we debate, we vote, and the majority take the vote. But as we have seen in recent years, sometimes a vocal minority reject the decision of the majority and create dissent. In this way we see the undermining of democracy through misinformation and hidden agendas. Unions have become the protectors of democracy.

Support and participation was also important. By supporting individuals or small groups we can bring them into the group and create unity. It has always been a union-breaking tactic to isolate small groups and turn them against everyone else. If we fight against each other the bosses' work is done.

TERM	UNITY	DISUNITY
Loyalty	X	
Self-interest		X
Tribalism	X	X
Collectivity	X	
Selflessness	X	
Group-Think	X	X
Treachery		X
Individuality		X
Kinship	X	X
Team Work	X	
Dissent	X	X
Conformism	X	X
Self-Sacrifice	X	
Sectarian		X
Common purpose	X	
Togetherness	X	
Cohesiveness	X	
Betrayal		X
Solidarity	X	



Conference delegates gather for the official photograph

◀ Lastly, an interesting word was used was 'power' which creates the most fear in those opposed to unions. Quite simply, unity is power. If we are unified and stick together we cannot be broken: that is power. The classic union busting tactic is to attack union unity to take away their power.

We asked the groups to do a SWOT analysis of 'unity' in our union to try and see what works for us and what challenges we face in our branches (see result left).

We were also able to identify barriers and threats to unity. It is easy to get unity around a common cause, but what happens when unity is disrupted? Delegates were asked to take what they had learnt back to their branches and to find one thing they could do to promote unity and grow their branch.

As is often the case with conferences they provide an opportunity for delegates from around the country to get together, communicate and find out about their respective challenges. It was clear rail branches did not have to deal with the competitive unionism which is so much a part of the port environment. Many rail branches have 100%



Unity in action

density, which is awesome.

Port branches found the inclusion of no pass on clauses and having the ability to access new employees to their ports would help them to recruit more effectively.

We all need to have sufficient courage to have the difficult conversations with those who oppose us and are required to listen to the right wing propaganda and distorted views of the work unions do. Those who



have loud voices and oppose your work will often have followers because it is always easier to follow than lead.

Don't forget there is a whole industry out there which is totally dedicated to breaking unions. They are organised and well-funded but their motives are for personal gain – not the good of all.

Keep up the great work delegates and build our unity, because we all know we are stronger together. 🌐

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

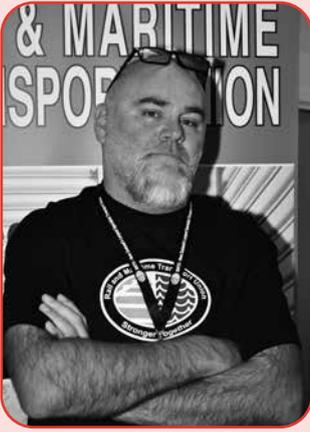


Wayne Butson, the immediate past RMTU general secretary was presented a Life Membership award for his services to the Union.



Hazel Armstrong, lawyer for Armstrong Thompson Law, speaks to port delegates at Conference about the critical risks identified by port members from 39 in-depth interviews. The insights taken from the interviews formed part of the national picture of port safety presented to the Minister Hon Michael Wood in early December 2022.

CONFERENCE



Donald Hibbs: Good to hear issues from other delegates.



Ebony Hansen: Great learning experience which taught me a lot about the Union. I enjoyed meeting and engaging with other members of the union and getting to meet two other female track workers.



Shaun Robertson: informative and eye opening.

**FIRST
CONFERENCE
ATTEN
WELC**



Samuel Baines: Inspire by international speakers and their strength of industrial action.



Jacob Sinclair: Massive eye opener, inspirational.



Rhys Harper: Reinvigorated and inspired.



Alejandra Garcia: Hard work.



Grant Ainslie: Passionate learning.



Jamie Turfrey-Rowe: Loved meeting other delegates, especially youth from other regions.



Kerryn Cottier: Great to have exposure to our National Union environment a first for many.



Lynda McGill: Great and very beneficial.



Richard Norton: Very informative and I will be implementing what I have learned back at my workplace.



Ryan Gagnepain: Inspired by the passion of the union.



Tatiana Jarvis: It was awesome meeting people outside of the area, and has been a great learning experience.



Travis Brownlee: Great meeting everyone especially the mix of youth and wise heads.

I kotahitanga
- in unity!

TIME ERENCE DEES - COME!



Chavaun Hill: Empowering and eye opening.



Elizabeth Figiel: Awesome and informative.



Julia Kelly: Great to connect with other port workers.



Rodney Brown: My first RMTU conference was a massive learning experience. A highlight was hearing from fellow unionists and former and current governments.



Dan Ward: Eye opening, passion from our delegates and guests, talking to other delegates sharing common issues.



Andrew Moselen: Inspire me to work hard for our members, encouraged by our achievements.



Deanna Groome: I feel Inspired and empowered.



Nandor Mrasz: Extremely informative of international and national issues.



Nicole Crump: Being a first-time attendee at conference I really enjoyed meeting new people, especially another female track worker! X2! Enjoyed the experience all in all.



Pat Ogden-Turner: Inspired listening to our international comrades and keen to support them.



Ratu Vakacereivalu: Good people, good network, wonderful accommodation and reception, awesome team work from the RMTU organizers and executive. Gratitude and respect. Looking forward to the next one.



Matto Croton: Informative and eye opening, our struggles are the same the world over.



Maurice Butler: An interesting few days in Wellywood. Enjoyed chatting to other depots and hearing how they deal with things. Also enjoyed the politics.



Chris Vaughan: It was great to meet the wider RMTU family and gain knowledge and skills to assist the Union Movement.



Josh Goodwin: International comrades were inspirational talking about their struggles – past and present.

I kotahitanga
- in unity!

Photo roundup

A selection of presentations



Ray Brown presents Mick Whelan and Dave Calfe with gifts from the RMTU.



(above) Liz Lester is thanked by Ann Wells-Donoghue. (r) Mick Whelan (r) presents Wayne Butson with a bag of goodies.



Todd Valster presents Alex Gordan with a gift.



Ex-general secretary Wayne Butson receives his Life Membership Certificate with congratulations from (l to r) vice president Howard Phillips, RMTU President Aubrey Wilkinson and acting general secretary Todd Valster.



Ray Brown presents gifts to our RTBU brothers.

Ports report to Conference

ORGANISER, Dasha Van Silfhout spoke about union growth. In New Zealand there are 13 ports, that's 13 opportunities for growth, but the RMTU only has members in 11 of them.

There are 5201 members in our Union, 1251 of them are port workers – the rest, 3950 belong to the rail.

The Union is working on opportunities to increase its port membership by: Amalgamating two or more port unions for a multi-employer collective agreement. The Union needs to increase the coverage of the current collective agreements or bargain and initiate for new ones. If we can get everyone involved we will become an attractive movement. Dasha also said it was important to keep members by educating them about the Union.

President Aubrey Wilkinson talked about the dynamics of competitive unionism. In 1999 six C3 employees were signed up as RMTU members – today we have 343, most of them permanent employees.

Aubrey encouraged each branch to figure out the ways of unionism by reading and educating its members.

Fighting each other with competitive unionism overlooks health and safety issues and does no-one any long term good.

Dave Marden reviewed the partial sell down of 45% of Port Napier in 2019 and Lyttelton Port Company (LPC) CEO Kirstie Gardener gave a zoom presentation and

**I kotahitanga
- in unity!**

update on the port. LPC has three locations that facilitate \$5.9 billion worth of imports and \$8.6 billion of exports. She said it was a pretty important gateway to the South Island and the third largest port in New Zealand. Last year LPC delivered \$18.9 million in net profit after tax.

The LPC has signed a charter with three of their four unions and in her opinion the RMTU has led the way around High Performance High Engagement. She said the relationship with the RMTU is really important and it can continue as long as dialogue is kept open and respects the interests of both parties.

Hazel Armstrong and Quinn Vugler talked about the port safety insights project, its key themes and findings.

The study is based on interviews of 41 port workers (35 men, 6 women) – casual and permanent plus shift workers with busier shifts and high risk. They were interviewed in their homes and the anonymised information sent back to the Maritime NZ.

Hazel and Quinn wrote the report themselves. They found the busier the port the greater the risk of harm and that workers were often under stress and were

being physically harmed: necks, backs and shoulders.

Kirsty Hewlett – chief executive and director of Maritime New Zealand, spoke about port safety. She reviewed the role of Maritime NZ looking after international and domestic shipping, tourism operators, safety on board, fishing vessels, water for the navigation as well as imports. They are in the process of creating a new maritime inspection team which will be trained to focus on big ships and quality. MNZ is looking into the courthouse and safety leadership groups, trying to understand why injuries are happening, how to prevent them and how to put rules in place. They initiate port assessments with Worksafe and talk to a lot of workers, making sure to follow-up. They want to continue building these relationships.

MNZ surveyed 1600 port workers and found variable results with some ports have some good practices, some really good but some really bad. There were some areas where there were some good things happening over time and serious injuries are going downwards. They also found that training is an important key to improving practices and making sure to stop as much harm from happening. Two critical risks are fatigue and staff shortage which companies really need to look at by reporting-notifications and sharing information to modify practices. 🇳🇿

Festive dining atmosphere at Conference in Wellington



I kotahitanga
- in unity!

A time for old friends and colleagues to meet up



Ratu Vakacereivalu and Malcolm Ross share some time out.



Dave Marden and Wayne Butson share stories while Dave (below) turns up again in a cheeky pose behind Phil Taane.



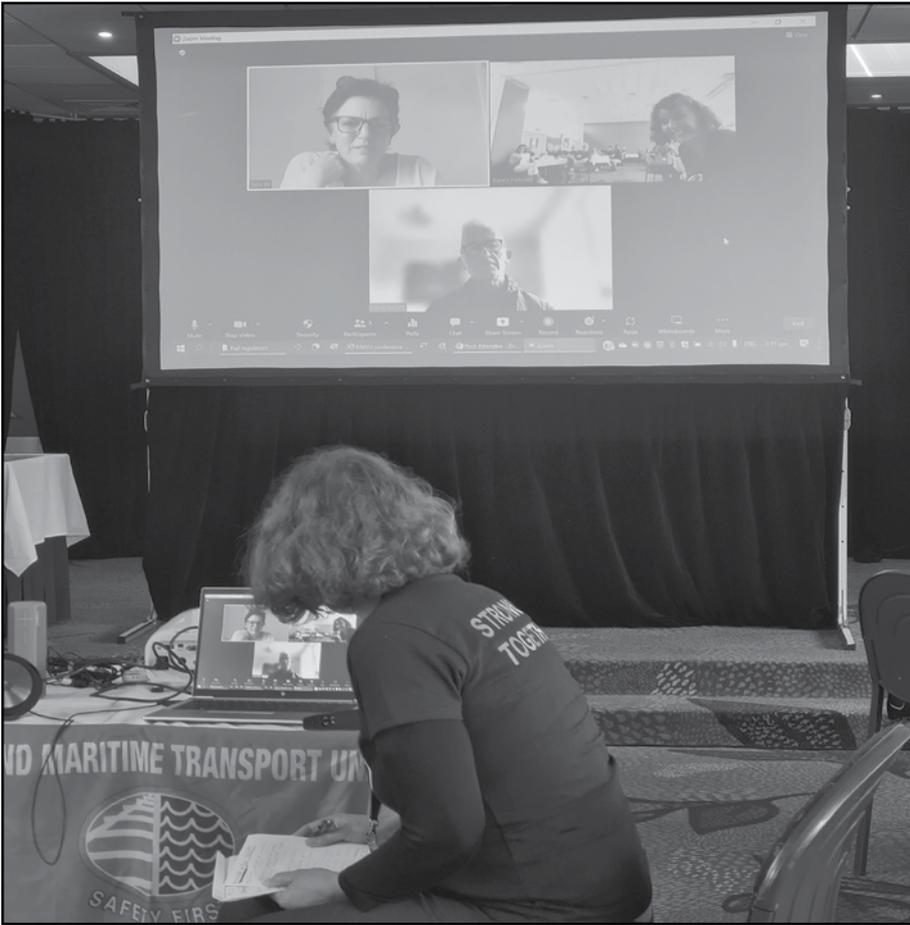
Leonie Stellier catches up with life member Bill Williams and his wife Adelaide.




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

Bloomin' Zoomin'



Best laid plans etc . . . Illness and the risk of Covid spreading meant the rail regulators needed to zoom into the Rail session at Conference to do their joint presentation on the topic: The current regulatory framework delivering a safe and healthy network.

National networks update

THE RMTU recently settled and ratified the national collective agreement with NZ National Networks (formerly Toll Group NZ). The deal was back dated to July 1, 2021 and delivered a sizeable pay jolt of 9% on base rates for the vast majority of our members.

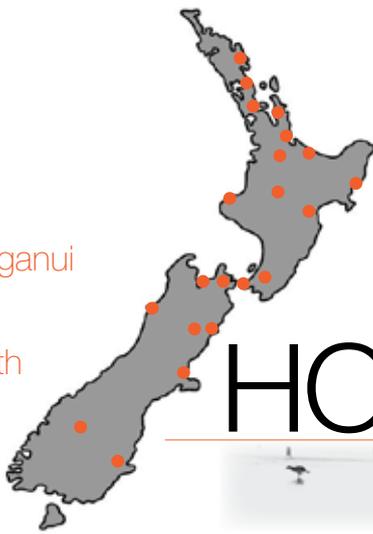
There was pressure from the Company to take a second year at 3%.

However, the members made it clear they were unwilling to accept a low-ball offer given the current rate of inflation and rising food, rent and gas costs.

We will be strongly recommending to members that a significant pay bump will be needed next year and we will be gearing up for those negotiations. 🇳🇿



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



HOLIDAYS



All current RMTU members are eligible to join after paying a Welfare Trust membership fee. Contact us to find out how.

Phone: 0800-806-444
Website: nzwelfare.co.nz

E-mail: info@nzwelfare.co.nz
Facebook: facebook.com/nzwelfare

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



Ground-breaking win for sleep disorder

KIWI RAIL'S Te Rapa loco engineer Aaron Gledhill was declined cover for a sleep disorder. In October 2022, with the help of the RMTU, the decision was overturned and he now has cover.

The lawyer representing the RMTU (and Aaron), Hazel Armstrong, says: "This is a significant victory for the RMTU, and of course for Aaron personally. Getting cover for a shift-related sleep disorder is new, as it recognises that physiological changes can be physical injuries. This decision arises from judge-made law on the back of cases about people who have been pepper sprayed and other cases where there has been physiological change. Each case has to be argued on its merits."

Aaron was working nightshifts. In May 2021 he started feeling extremely fatigued due to the shift work and disruption of his circadian rhythm. Irregular and continuous shifts without adequate rest periods over a six-month period led to a sleep disorder.

Dr Andrew Veale – a sleep physician said: "a sleep disorder represents an alteration in physiological function induced by changes to sleep pattern due to prolonged shift work."

He had no sleep related problems prior to starting in his work role. His shifts have



significant night shift-work which requires him to be awake anytime between 11pm and 7am."

Lack of sleep has a significant impact on health, including anxiety, low mood, fatigue, difficulty sustaining attention. This is caused by an impaired production of melatonin and inability to obtain adequate level of sleep.

It took 11 months for KRG to reverse their decision and accept Aaron's ACC

claim. In that 11 months Aaron had to take annual leave and pay for his own treatment. Armstrong says "this delay will have had a serious impact on his recovery".

The RMTU hopes this decision sets a precedent that sleep disorders can be covered by ACC and treatment offered without cost to the injured worker.

Aaron wrote to thank the RMTU for its support saying it was an "awesome outcome".

Survey to test effects of vibration

THE RMTU is surveying LEs in the lower South Island to find out whether they are suffering symptoms from vibration from the locomotive and/or track conditions.

In particular this survey focusses on the feet and legs.

The Union has previously worked with KiwiRail on the issue of whole-body vibration causing injury to workers' necks and backs.

A South Island loco engineer has suffered an injury called 'vibration induced neuropathy' or vibration white foot.

The symptoms include pain, swelling, bruising, numbness and tingling (pins and needles) affecting feet and is felt up to the waist after longer runs on certain lines and certain locomotives.

The symptoms can remain for up to two hours after a shift and into sleep hours

The vibration related injury comes from a combination of long shifts in the cab, rough tracks and the state of certain locomotives.

The Union's sur-

vey will be emailed to South Island loco engineers in November 2022 and stay open until the end of January 2023.

If you are a South Island loco engineer and would like to participate in the survey, please get in touch with your RMTU organiser to be sent the survey.



AUCKLAND RAIL

Auckland welcomes back stalwart deputy chair

THE Auckland branch welcomes back Mike McLaughlin to the role of deputy chair. Mike replaces Scott Robertson who won a close election earlier this year, but has moved on to another

employer.

There was an election held at the last branch meeting in November and Mike won the day.

Mike is a staunch Union member and

has shown his mettle in many disputes with TDAK and now AOR. He brings a huge amount of experience to the table and has a terrific record in handling disciplinarys and personal issues for members. 🌐

BAY OF PLENTY RAIL

Farewell to six long-serving LEs

KIA ORA from the sunny Bay of Plenty. This year has seen the end of an era for six of our long serving locomotive engineers: Allan Taylor, Claude Mason, Dennis Spencer, Neville Simpkins, Nigel Smith and Norman Lee. It was a pleasure to share a special night with these men recently to celebrate their achievements and service to both KiwiRail and the RMTU. Between the five drivers there would be 100s of years of experience. They will certainly be missed but we hope to see them around and maintain great friendships with them.

The Bay of Plenty region continues to look to increase its employee numbers across some of its terminals including Tauranga, Mount Maunganui and Kawerau. Whilst we have had some fantastic additions to these teams over recent months we still require more people to help ease workloads and take pressure off current workers. Well done to everyone who has stayed safe and

maintained very good work standards.

Recent times have seen some changes in our terminal managers at Tauranga and Kawerau. Last month we said goodbye to Adele Liliva who has left the company to pursue other opportunities.

Adele did a fantastic job managing the Tauranga terminal and I know she will be sorely missed. Geoff Laing has been recently appointed the new Kawerau terminal manager.

Congratulations Geoff we are sure you will do an amazing job in this new role.

We recently held our AGM which saw Josh Goodwin elected as our new chairperson. Shane McNae and Conrad Wright are our vice chairs and Christie Yule remains our treasurer, secretary, and women's rep. Congratulations to everyone.

The biennial RMTU conference was also held recently. Bay of Plenty had a great showing and represented us well. The

conference was productive and insightful. Those who attended loved listening to the international guest speakers who spoke passionately about their unions and what they are facing currently. It was also a fantastic night celebrating Wayne Butson's retirement.

The Bay of Plenty rail branch would like to thank and congratulate Wayne on a long, passionate and productive career. We wish you all the best with your retirement. We would also like to congratulate Todd Valster on his appointment as interim general secretary. We wish you all the best for the election next year and very much look forward to working with you into the future.

"Happiness is not something you postpone for the future; it is something you design for the present." - Jim Rohn

Until next time. Nga mihi me te aroha nui. 🌐



NAPIER PORT

Welcoming new work and expanding membership

2022 – a big year for the RMTU. I guess for many of us, putting a few words together for this edition of the TW, the main themes will be, ka kite to Wayne and nau mai to Todd in becoming the acting GS.

There is nothing that has not already been said in Wayne's departure, -- both in and outside of Conference, privately and at local branch AGMs. A huge thank you e-hoa, which in itself is simply not big enough. All the best in retirement to both you, Bonnie

and whanau.

In attending Conference 2022, one thing that was unusually noticeable were the greater number of younger members who were present. Personally, in heading toward retirement in a year or two, it was great to see this involvement, and, although somewhat clichéd, youth are our future and we must encourage, support and engage with them. This new dynamic of the RMTU membership must continue. As our Union continues to grow, youth are the essential

lifblood for our continued success. It was great to see and very encouraging.

Touching briefly on where Napier Port is at in regard to the membership, we continue to grow.

The relatively new log debarker is now working two shifts in order to get the numbers through. Hats off to the team for both getting this up and running but also we acknowledge the effort and patience in making it happen.

The new log grabs are designed for the

port company's mobile harbour cranes and are now in trial mode and have been utilised on a handful of ships in recent weeks. The understanding, though it's still early days, is there are gains to be made in terms of load times and efficiencies.

It is heartening to see all this new work expanding our membership from an operational perspective, however, all this extra work is having an impact on both the crane technicians and the team in the mechanical work shop. In essence, those servicing, repairing and generally assigned to keeping

them all going are putting in considerable good will to provide the coverage. The labour resourcing adjustments to cope with all the extra duties, which in part, does not fall within the scope of the CEA, is not being fully addressed by the company in our view. We have a memorandum of understanding within our terms of settlement of the CEA, that should address these concerns if they were being applied. There is a concern however, that management are not measuring up in terms of hiring more technical staff to assist in these new enterprises. The

Union has clearly identified these labour resourcing shortages to the company, but we have had no resolution to date. The situation has had other ramifications with the company placing expectations on a member seeking a sunset package. The restrictions unfortunately were somewhat unrealistic and impractical in what should have been a twilight exit. Sadly, he rejected the proposal and decided to continue on in a full capacity until next year.

Meri kirimete, nga mihi o te tau hou.
Noho haumarū. 

HUTT WORKSHOPS

A zero-harm future is on the cards

GREETINGS from the Hutt Workshops. We commence these notes with a couple of references to the RMTU National Conference held in Wellington in October. It was great to see some more new faces there and a marked increase in women members. This is a great indicator of progress. Our respective employers and branches are opening-up their doors to women and they are getting actively involved with all issues affecting the national workforce. It is good too that change is measured and controlled – this leads to smooth transitions and taking up of the reins by 'newbies' in a seamless manner. This year's conference theme was appropriately, 'In Unity – I Kotahitanga'.

We are all aware of what is happening on the world-stage with regards industrial relations. Those countries with large multinational companies working within them seem to be suffering a disproportionate amount of industrial unrest. The P&O 'fire and re-hire/replace' fiasco earlier this year was but one such example of how good and faithful staff can be mistreated at the whim of a greedy elitist force.

A pro-active safety message resonated loud and clear at the Conference with presentations by KiwiRail's Peter Reidy, Transdev Wellington's Sami Whitehouse, Waka Kotahi's Gini Welch and WorkSafe NZ's Dave Bellet who all gave insight, food for thought and, most of all, trust and confidence in a vitalised approach to SHE. The Waka Kotahi focus in the future will utilise the R3F Safety Management Assessment programme which will replace the current

Ordinary Safety Assessments through investigating the 'maturity' of the safety management system within an organisation.

It has been interesting and heartening to learn that KiwiRail's LSBs (life saving behaviours) are making a return. These had their genesis years ago when we began building a safety branch with a company-wide focus. It was a shame they did not roll out across the organisation earlier. Coupled with the RSAS top 10 critical risks and continuous reinforcement, we may well position ourselves to move forward with our safety performance towards a zero-harm future. There has been a desire to resurrect incident investigations to restore trust and confidence in a system which is meant to improve our safety at work. The formality has been somewhat removed until now and we are moving in the right direction to ensure all incidents are recorded, investigated, and reported. Our focus on risk as opposed to consequence needs to be reversed. The recent 'confined space' issue in Auckland (SIN-109) and the crushed fingers at National Park (EVT2225455) remind us that accidents and incidents are just around the corner and will 'get you' if you take your eye off safety.

Turnover of staff continues as people seek greener pastures in these topsy-turvy times. Whilst we continue to fill vacancies at a snail's pace, we also see people moving on to other opportunities.

Despite financial restrictions, scheduled training continues although questions are being asked about the effectiveness of some courses and seminars. It goes without

saying that time is needed to gauge the effectiveness although it must be borne in mind we are attempting a company culture change which will not happen overnight. Experience tells (teaches) us that timing is everything and if opportunities are missed the whole initiative may be undermined.

On the direct work front, we have a mountain of work to get through however, we still suffer some shortages of parts required for that work. As the world begins to return(?) to normal, the supply-chain issues should ease however, this too will take time.

Amongst other initiatives, the site has a new focus on reputation with support teams visiting other centres to assist with commissioning, technical assistance, resourcing, and follow-up support. This has commenced tackling some irks we hear from the field and we hope will harness synergies across RSAS as a whole. It should prove to be a large step towards One KiwiRail as the company fights its way out of the siloed structure we have reverted to. Our branch chair recently made a trip south to address some asset management issues with local management and delegates with great success.

Contributions to the industrial councils have been active and productive which proves concerted efforts deliver results (who knew?). We are fortunate KiwiRail openly shares our desire to address problems in a pro-active manner although some still take far more time than we'd like. However, we're all operating at 110% and time for the tasks at hand as well as our own family time needs attention if we're to avoid

the burnout permeating the lower ranks in the workforce according to ACC statistics and industry teachings.

A second attempt to fill vacant team leader positions has been carried out and we should know who the successful candidates are as you read these notes. They'll be announced the day after we submit these notes for publishing!

It was great to welcome back Peter Reidy as a returning CEO to drive the safety message and repair the damage caused by his predecessor. We also look forward to our women leaders getting a better deal in the upper echelons.

As we head into Christmas it is the time for most of us to relax and recharge whilst our comrades on the frontline keep the trains running, the ferries sailing and

customers happy – not an easy task under the prevailing conditions. However, as company we have never shied away from such challenges. In times past many of us preferred working during the standard closedown periods as the usual interruptions and organisational mayhem were absent and one could focus solely on the job at hand along with the occasional callout when things sicked up!

Site upgrades continue with seismic bracing, new cladding, and much-improved amenities for our staff. This too is a long-term project however it is good to be on the receiving end of investment in facilities and people. HPHE continues with facilities upgrades, a re-focus on training for our paint shop team and a review of how we manage courier deliveries across our burgeoning

site. These aren't 5-minute fixes. It takes time to do justice to what can be extensive topics within the context (or restriction!) of a busy site.

Asset management issues took a small step forward in October with a meeting to discuss better recording of asset management and tracking of what is installed - and where. Whilst this is still in its infancy, it shows promise and with full and frank conversations with all stakeholders, we might be onto another winner across the rail operations business unit.

So, with Christmas upon us, take care out there, have a well-deserved break when you can and enjoy that break with family and friends.

Until next time, take care and stay safe out there. 🌍

WELLINGTON RAIL

Assembling environmental questions in favour of rail

Spotlight on rail

MEMBERS of the branch have been busy assisting the RMTU with submissions as well as appearing in person to support a parliamentary subcommittee looking into the return of regional rail. Great work from those involved.

Although we may be slightly biased, it seems to be a no-brainer not to have a national passenger rail network. The need has never been greater with a global pollution crisis, high energy costs, cost of living pressure on those who can least afford it, a national airline which can't cope and an overpriced and decaying national roading network – we need passenger trains to get people out of cars and save the planet!

We hear media reports of ships being delayed getting into a number of NZ ports, and a 14 day delay in getting containers from Tauranga to Auckland, yet the Port of Wellington container berth has fewer callers these days. What a pity rail isn't able to take up the slack using our exclusive right of way along railway tracks to claw back from road transport - a group who is politically savvy and knows how to curry favour especially with National party politicians.

Like our colleagues, particularly in the Auckland area, we suffer from the daily frustration of endless speed restrictions



After 42 years, train manager Mike Don, is hanging up his clippers and retiring. We wish Don a long, happy and healthy retirement. Here with (l) Harvey Paterson and (r) Mani Raumati.

and blocks on lines while our long under-invested infrastructure is being rebuilt, renewed and brought into something approaching a modern railway - we wish!

There is much to be done in the Wellington area. Solving the single line congestion problem between north and south junction, south of Paekakariki, upgrading the Wairarapa tunnel, re-signalling the whole area as well as re-aligning the approach to Wellington Railway Station are a few of the big items still to be started.

Transdev brings train-strophie to Wellington

Transdev prides itself with its innovation. Lately it has brought to Wellington an operating style which is unwelcome to the city's travellers. For the last five years

Wellington commuters have been served a declining standard of bus service since the infamous PTOM system of operating contracts was introduced. Reduced timetables have resulted in hundreds of monthly service cancellations. Locally it is known as the 'bustastrophie'. Rail passengers are now being subjected to the same treatment. It has become a daily occurrence for multiple train trips to be cancelled or curtailed short of their destination, often leaving customers stranded and being part of an unwelcome lottery of 'will there be a bus or won't there?' Particularly unwelcome during a cold, wet winter and spring.

Transdev and RMTU are currently locked in stalled MECA negotiations. Wellington is one of the most expensive places in New Zealand to live. Many of our members pay horrendous prices for

accommodation as well as the same high living costs as other NZers.

As well as having a meaningful claim to meet inflation, there are a number of relativity issues which at press time have been rejected out of hand.

An employer initiated ballot of their offer was rejected by 100% of voting members – well over 300 of them. Watch this space.

Things will undoubtedly heat up over the summer.

In the meantime all areas of metro are suffering from staff shortages, a situation which is unlikely to change while our employer has their collective head well and truly buried in the sand when it comes to pay rates in a competitive labour market.

It is not just wages and conditions generally that have hit stormy times with Transdev. Delegates have expressed frustration with the lack of communication and collaboration over uniforms. However, we can report some progress: passenger operators and train managers have now had

raincoats issued after a seven year process. There were signs of hope when delegates met with GWRC staff and were promised a quick win with new uniform additions. But after a promising beginning and a trial of some new items – a stony silence.

Snapper off for some

The introduction of electronic ticketing has brought about the biggest change since passenger trains began.

Although there will be some ticket sales on board. Train managers and passenger operators will be busy checking electronic card validations in addition to their normal safety, data gathering and customer service roles.

For the staff in ticket sales, outer stations and the information kiosk the future is rather uncertain. GWRC and TDW have stated there will be no compulsory redundancies. At the time of writing, discerning what the alternatives are is very unclear

apart from the fact the remaining jobs will earn considerably less due to the loss of work qualifying for penal pay rates.

In the mix of proposed changes, supervisory staff roles are also impacted. A total of 65 staff are affected. Communication, consultation and staff feed-back has been very poorly handled with many feeling what has become a common thread in the Wellington metro operation: a sense of being under valued or respected by our employer. RMTU reps have been working with affected members. It has proven to be a rushed and half-baked exercise.

It is with sadness that we also acknowledge the passing of two Wellington rail branch members, Lyall Burns and Fred Hammer.

We welcome the assistance and experience new RMTU Wellington organiser, Allan Addison-Saipe will bring to the branch. Rumour has it Allan gave up living in Nelson for the invigorating climate Wellington offers. 🌐

CANTERBURY RAIL

Series of serious issues needing attention - soon!

CANTERBURY rail branch seem to have suffered lately from a lack of action from various senior managers which has finally drawn RMTU members to find their voices and complain about the lack of safety in Middleton operations producing a list of safety failures.

All of these failures have been known for most of 2022 and with the year rapidly coming to an end, members left feeling let down.

These issues include a safety critical set

of points in the yard being out of action for two years, poor underfoot conditions, a lack of facilities at Lyttelton, excessive overtime in the terminal and low morale.

These issues need to be taken seriously before things get worse.

The branch nominated a new chairperson this week after Annette Telfer's promotion to management at Scenic Journeys.

She has led the branch well over the last few years as chair. Luke James will now take

up the role. Thank you Luke.

It's with sorrow we hear of Ian Wilkie's serious illness. Ian was a past vice president of the RMTU and is a life member. His ex-colleagues at Middleton operations would like fellow Union members to know of his decline in health.

With all the heavy workload around the depots in Canterbury we would like people to take care as Christmas time approaches. 🌐

NELSON PORT

Best wishes to Allan on his new appointment

I have been a member of RMTU since I joined Port Nelson in 2018. I became a delegate earlier this year and shortly after that I stepped into the role of co-secretary with the formidable Ann Wells. Our former president Allan Addison-Saipe has left the port and become the 'New Todd'. Rhys Harper has been promoted from VP to VIP, and the new president of Port Nelson

RMTU branch!

The combination of Allan and Ann has been very effective over the years. We have been very fortunate to have had such dedicated and capable leaders. Allan has the tag of the new Todd for now, but knowing big Al, he will soon make that position his own and continue the great work left by his predecessor. Todd has taken on the top job

in the Union, a mammoth task of which he can only be successful with his knowledge, experience and commitment to RMTU. We offer him our continued support for the years ahead!

The reason I was approached to be co-secretary, was so that Ann Wells could concentrate on her role as South Island women's delegate. She is very passionate

about this responsibility and hopefully I can ease the load she carries performing both duties. We will work closely with our new president Rhys, protecting our members rights and striving for better pay and conditions for all!

My sudden meteoric rise in the Union afforded me the privilege to attend our bi-annual conference in Wellington last month. I was a little nervous, not sure of what was expected of me and what to expect from the conference! After a bad cup of coffee, a slight delay and a bumpy landing, we were shuttled to our venue, checked in and ready to get started!

The conference was a whirlwind of information sharing and experiences with

members from around the country. We had several presentations from a variety of sources. A standout for me was Kirstie Hewlett, the CEO and director of Maritime New Zealand. She shared with us MNZ's plans to tackle the issues we are dealing in our industry and all the developments happening within the agency. Her honesty about MNZ's shortcomings was refreshing, her enthusiasm to right these wrongs was very clear and promising. I believe under her leadership our industry will progressively become safer.

Another highlight were our international guests. They were there to honour our outgoing general secretary, Wayne Butson. The relationships and bonds he had

formed with unions across the world was very impressive, the respect and fondness of which they spoke about him was clear. They also shared with us the issues they are dealing with in their respective countries. This was very interesting and sobering – a bit of knowledge and 1st hand experience of what others are enduring can put one's own problems into perspective.

The opportunity to speak with fellow members from other ports and our brothers and sisters from the rail industry was invaluable. I look forward to nurturing these relationships in the years ahead.

Strength in solidarity.

UNION POWER! 

TIMARU PORT

Maybe last year's strike threat helped with this year's negotiations

OVERALL, the past few months has been steady on the shipping front. There have been a few delays involving the new costal service with regards to ship quality and crew requirements but the cargo has been moving and conditions for the crew seem to be improving.

We have bargained a wage increase with our employment contract negotiations going as smooth as possible. It would appear our intended strike action last year motivated the employers to sharpen their pencils.

The Timaru terminal is undergoing a full re-surfacing and cargo operations are working around this. Having access

to a newly upgraded section of wharf has reduced forklift travel times by half and reduced downtime, resulting in a less tedious nightshift, quicker ship discharge and, ultimately, reduced noise for the surrounding community.

Dodging potholes had become second nature to the container handlers.

Our two conference attendees returned in good spirits having enjoyed the event. It sounds like it was a well organised event and the last one for ex general secretary Wayne Butson.

Having several international representatives attend is a good sign of solidarity.

Although our vice chairman suffered a minor medical event at the conference he was well looked after by another delegate and returned in good health to finish the conference.

Both our new South Island organiser and port representative have taken on the roles well and we look forward to engaging with them more in the future.

We thank the national management office for their work in ensuring the Conference was a great success and look forward to reading about other members experiences.

Stay safe comrades. Have a merry Christmas and best wishes for the new year! 

TIMARU RAIL

Disillusioned by decision to axe essential services

OUR branch is upset and disillusioned by the axing of two important train services between Christchurch and Dunedin. As from Sunday November 13 trains 923m 937 and 920 920s will no longer run.

These trains run in daylight hours and service The Malting Company in Ashburton, Ashburton CT, Temuka, Timaru, Pukeuri and Oamaru in both directions.

Loco shortages have been blamed along with other soft excuses. We believe in building rail in NZ – not reducing services.

How can we continue while annoying many of our customers and losing tonnage to road transport.

We continue to have a lot of shunt loco failures and faults and often need three man gangs to crew shunts. We appreciate the work by loco services and fitters and understand how mentally draining it must be working on our tired and ageing loco fleet.

On a positive note, our port is picking up a lot more rail traffic inward and outward keeping our shunt yard busy.

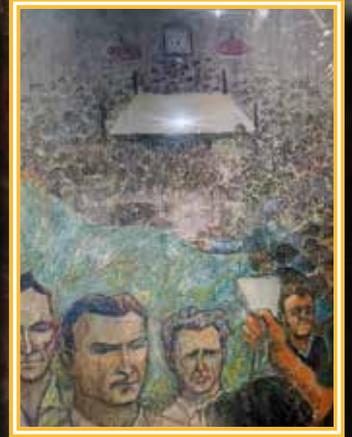
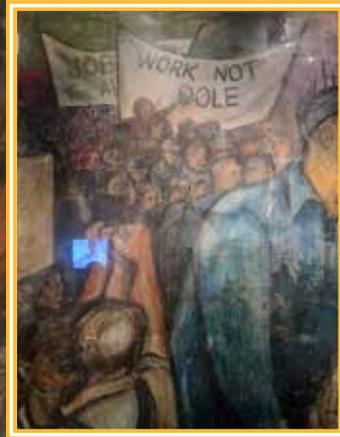
Our branch congratulates Wayne But-

son upon receiving life membership of the RMTU at our recent biannual conference in Wellington. Thank you Wayne for the years of service, leadership and comradeship given to so many members over the years. We wish you and Bonnie and family all the best in the future.

We welcome Todd Valster to the position of acting general secretary until formalities early next year.

Our branch wishes you all a very happy and safe festive season and a happy new year. 

Celebrating 150 years of the Maritime Union in Australia



THE unveiling of an historic mural at the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) coincided with celebrations for the Australian National Maritime Union's (ANMU) 150th anniversary.

This extraordinary mural was conceived in the 1950s and painted in painstaking stages directly on to the walls above the workers' canteen.

The ANMU's national secretary Paddy Crumlin said its unveiling was a proud moment for members and veterans of the Union.

"The recent social history of Australia is inextricably linked with the history of struggle and unity amongst workers on the Sydney waterfront. . . . we are rightly proud of the contribution our struggle and unity has made to the social fabric of our nation."

Dubbed 'The Wharfies' the mural is now part of the ANMM's collection but it has had a rocky path to its current safety.

The first daubs of paint were by a group of workers at the wharves of Sydney's Darling Harbour who decided to decorate their lunch-room walls and liven up the time spent indoors

when rain stopped work. It was designed to reflect the struggles, victories and aspirations of their fellow workers.

The Waterside Workers' Federation Sydney branch and the workers' canteen was established in 1902 at 60 Sussex Street – in the heart of Sydney's busiest docks, also known as the 'Hungry Mile' where casual waterside labourers and the unemployed looked for work.

During the 1950s, the branch became a hive of activity for wharfies, artists, activists and intellectuals and two of them, Clem Milward and Harry Reade, became wharfies and contributors to the mural which, by 1965, had wrapped itself almost completely around the canteen. The mural artists were influenced by 'Socialist Realism', an art movement which emerged in 1930s communist Russia seeking truthfulness in artistic subject, with a view to educating working people in the history, struggles and spirit of socialism.

In the early 1990s, when the canteen was about to be demolished the wharfies made the farsighted decision to keep their mural.

Removing it was no easy matter. The mural



Visiting the unveiling are (l-r) Todd Valster, Andy Kelly, Dasha Van Silfbout and Aubrey Wilkinson.

had been painted on thin lime plaster on brick and was painstakingly removed in 12 sections and reinstated in the Union's new building.

In 1996 it was moved to the ANMM.

Museum director Daryl Karp said, "The Wharfies' Mural is one of the iconic treasures of the National Maritime collection. It provides a window into the rich history and cultural movements that occurred among workers on the waterfront . . . and is a reminder of their significant role in Australian politics and society." 🌐

The ANMM is located at: 2 Murray Street, Darling Harbour. <https://www.sea.museum>