

DECEMBER 2010

# THE *Transport Worker*

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

## Mainland misery



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RMTU stalwart Brian Cronin died suddenly as the RMTU annual conference began.

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A dreadful First World War battle and its rail connections are recalled as a new memorial is unveiled.

**COVER PHOTO**

Midland rail after the big shake and (inset) Timaru Port RMTU and MUNZ members remember their fellow workers at Pike River Coal Mine. More photos on page 17.



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Wayne Butson  
General secretary  
RMTU

**A**t this time the whole country is in shock at the loss of 29 miners at Pike River on the West Coast. All of our sympathy and thoughts are with the families, friends and wider West Coast community during this distressing time. The first task is to grieve and mourn the loss with the families whilst providing full and total support. To this end I must sincerely thank KiwiRail's Jim Quinn, Deborah Hume and other members of management for agreeing to provide and run the 'Miners Special' train and additionally the members who operated the train by volunteering their time. Thank you to loco engineers Anthony McCarthy and Darryl Dodd and on board members Brian Armstrong, Kathy Templeman and Willy Grant. A fundamental tenant of modern health and safety theory is that all accidents are preventable and so we will all watch with great interest as the various agency investigations unfold with the main spotlight going onto the Royal Commission of Enquiry. It has long been accepted that underground mining is a dangerous industry but 29 souls lost is an unacceptable loss in this day and age and so the families – and us, as fellow workers – deserve answers. As we know from our own experience within rail, Commissions of Inquiries can and do change the landscape by identifying systemic failures that, when fixed, are able to provide improvements in safety. In my view, every worker should be able to leave their home to go to work in the total expectation of coming back home at the completion of their shift safe and sound. We have to look after our workmates and to fulfil this requirement we must be assiduous in our scrutiny of what happened at Pike River on 19 November 2010.

The mine disaster added to the Mainland's woes coming so soon after Canterbury's devastating earthquake. Although no one died, our hearts go out to all those people affected by the shake – especially those with long term housing problems.

**Brian Cronin RIP**

I would be failing in my role if I didn't record in this issue my personal shock and horror at the sudden and surprising loss of our loyal comrade Brian Cronin. I have worked beside Brian since 1991 when CURE was formed. I am yet to find a more committed unionist to this day. My heart goes out to Mandy, Amelia and Bridget for their loss and I thank them for sharing him with us for the years that we had him. We have published an obituary in this issue (page 12) to Brian which was very kindly authored by another RMTU Life Member Paul Corliss which chronicles Brian's life far better than I could and so I will say no more.

**Elections coming**

2011 is the year of elections. During the year every position in our Union will be up for election including all of the five KiwiRail industrial councils, National Management Committee, national president and general secretary. All will have nominations called for and, if necessary, ballots conducted during the year. At the branch AGMs, as usual, we will also see all branch positions up for election. More

importantly, 2011 will herald another of our three-yearly cycles of electing the political leadership to occupy the Treasury benches and govern New Zealand. A poll was released over the weekend and it was interesting to note that New Zealand First and Winston Peters are back, the Greens are back into the 8% area and United Future, Maori and the Act parties are all within the margin of error. A centre-left coalition is a very real possibility and so 'smiling' John and the rest of the current coalition must be a wee bit worried. We know that a Labour/Green coalition Government would be great news for rail and the ports so we all should be getting in to making it happen if we are passionate about our work. There will be more to come in this area during the year, I am sure.

## Long list of achievements

Thankfully the clock is counting down for 2010 and I for one am looking forward to a rest. This year has been a very productive and full-on year for the RMTU. We have succeeded in continuing to increase our membership, we have merged the KiwiRail Collective Agreements, bedded in our Alliance Charter with MUNZ, reached a positive negotiated settlement to an attack on organised labour by Port Tauranga at Sulphur Point, dealt with the continuing fall out from port rationalisation in the absence of any coherent Government ports strategy to name just a few. We have passionately run our campaigns for NZ Work for NZ Workers and the Save Our SOL (Stratford – Okahukura rail line) with mixed results to date. The fact is that the RMTU is a strong and united union which repeatedly punches above its weight and is a strong and passionate advocate for its members. All of which is entirely due to its staff, delegates and officers. I especially thank you – the members – for your on-going membership and support of your Union. Without either it could not function. Equally it could not function without the hours of volunteer time that our branch officers, delegates and activists devote to working to protect and to improve the conditions of – and for – their peers. I remain proud and honoured to be your general secretary.

Have a very Merry Christmas and here's to a prosperous, safe and a job secure New Year.

See ya next year! 🍷

*Wishing all our Union members a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. From the president, general secretary, NMC and staff.*

## Unionism and law changes

Dear editor

As we repeatedly hear, our strength lies in our unity and collective action. Without that we can be dismissed without a second thought. Think about who the 'establishment' (ie big business, media, capitalist interests) answer to. Producing profit for shareholders is their goal. Keeping power in the hands of the few is vital to this goal. They control, dominate and monopolise resources – including people – on a grand scale. Working people produce this profit and, relatively speaking, get the crumbs in return. Human rights' abuses carried out throughout the world feeding this imbalance are too many to count. You don't have to be an economist to know that the distribution of wealth in our population is unfair.

Make no mistake, law changes publicised as fair and reasonable have been calculated to shift power more in favour of big business.

Take the proposed employment law changes currently before parliament. There are already provisions to have probationary periods and deal with people who abuse sick leave etc. And rightly so. Unions don't have a problem with performance management. They have a problem with unfair treatment. That is why it's so important to keep the rights and conditions that past generations have fought for.

Will you be surprised if, after these amendments are passed, another raft of even more unfair changes are proposed? I won't.

Within this flawed system, our members enjoy reasonably good pay and working conditions. However, we must bear in mind that even if an issue does not affect us directly, that is probably because our union has had the strength and will to maintain a good working environment.

Therefore it is only right, and a core value of unionism, that we stand alongside other, more vulnerable, people and sustain them in their struggle for a fair deal.

Or considering this from a selfish viewpoint, one day it will be our turn to ask for help.

We sometimes fail to realise how much power we hold to change things for the better of all. What it will take is a little effort from every person, rather than a large effort by a few.

On that note, I appeal to all our members to continue to support the campaign for Fairness at Work and increase the groundswell of protest until it can't be ignored.

It seems that democracy exists in NZ in name only as the powers that be constantly find ways around it. But our cause cannot be ignored if we are united and our voice is strong.

David Kearns.

## Strategically (un)important

Dear editor

Many countries – and states within countries – consider maintaining certain key industrial capabilities as strategically important to them. The ability to quickly repair a power station, keep transport infrastructure, water and wastewater treatment and reticulation operating can be crucial to maintaining energy security and meeting the needs of business and the community. Most people would consider such measures prudent and would expect their government would too.

A prime example of a government taking a strategic view of industrial capability and the flow on effect on jobs is our near neighbour, the Australian State of Victoria. The Victorian minister for Public Transport, Martin Pakula and Industry and Trade minister, Jacinta Allan, recently announced a Govern-

ment procurement contracts for Melbourne's \$A4.3 billion Regional Rail Link project will require an overall 80 percent minimum local content provision, boosting local jobs.

The project has been declared a 'strategic project' under the Victorian Industry Participation Policy. "This decision underlines our Government's commitment to protecting jobs by maximising opportunities for local companies to participate in major infrastructure projects," Ms Allan said.

The project, jointly funded by the Australian Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, joins 3,313 other project worth \$A39.4 billion which have been declared strategic projects since 2001. Over that period more than 32,000 jobs were created. Clearly, this attention by government to securing what is strategically important to them, has contributed to the strong growth in GDP.

While other countries seem to have little difficulty identifying which industries and infrastructure are strategically important, New Zealand seems to lack such a focus. The recent rail upgrades in Auckland and Wellington made extensive use of imported content. They were not declared 'strategically important'. In fact New Zealand has no mechanism to make such a declaration. When we consider that we not only bring in content from foreign sources for our projects, but we even send equipment offshore for refurbishment rather than utilising and building our own capability, we should all begin to worry.

An example of sending equipment offshore is the research vessel Tangaroa, belonging to SOE NIWA was recently sent to Singapore for a refit, despite the fact that it is usually competently maintained here by the same company that maintains our naval capability. It is hard to imagine that many New Zealander's would think that maintaining a ship repair capability was not strategically important.

It is not difficult to conclude that something is seriously lacking if we consider so much of our industrial capability to be so strategically unimportant. Perhaps that's why our GDP performance has been so poor.

The leadership and foresight shown by governments like that in Victoria provide a ready template for what New Zealand needs to do. We just need to find the nerve to stand up and say that some capabilities are strategically important enough to maintain; it's only prudent.

Nick Inskip

Industry development manager, HERA

## Retirement

Dear editor

As I have retired from my position with Tranz Metro, I wish to tender my resignation from the RMTU.

I have met and made many friends and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all good luck, good health and all the best for the future.

It has been pleasure working with all of you over the years.

Bill Ringrose  
Wellington

## Overseas support

Dear editor,

I heard the news that the RMTU reached an historic agreement on 2 November, 2010, which covers all the railway workers in New Zealand.

As you said, you have combined four existing collective agreements with the highest rates for workers.

I wish to express my heartiest congratulations on your long fight which resulted in a great success. Your members must be proud of this outstanding achievement.

We know that the RMTU have long been fighting against privatisation. In 2008, you won the re-nationalisation of NZ railway, and now you are waging the 'NZ WORK FOR NZ WORKERS' campaign.

Under neo-liberal pressures, especially in the current recession, workers and labour unions stand on the defensive in every country. Your fight to move back from privatisation encouraged us so much.

We have also been inspired by your slogan 'Stronger Together' in our fight. As trying as our struggle is, we are supported and empowered by the way you are tackling your problems. Yes, we must be stronger together in Japan as you have been in New Zealand.

Once again, please accept our sincere congratulations, and please keep us informed.

In global solidarity,

Masaharu Takei  
President

Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions (JRU)



Dave Marden,  
Port Napier



Daniel Manu, Port Taranaki



Bert Katene,  
GoBus Wellington



Les Ingram,  
Hillside



Kasia Kurene,  
Hutt Shops

Stand Up Fight Back

# Stand-up, Fight Back

## Conference 2010

**T**HE theme for Conference 2010 was Stand Up, Fight Back from the union chant: 'When workers' rights are under attack – Stand up fight back!'

If you have been listening to what National are saying regarding their intentions if they win the 2011 election you will have realised that it really is time to Stand Up and Fight Back! Not only to protect your terms and conditions but for family members not so lucky as to belong to a strong union and be covered by collectives like ours.

However we also need to let Labour know that we are not going to sit back and let them tinker with workers' rights legislation. This is about driving a political agenda that is built on respect and fairness for all workers. An agenda that demands more work for Hutt and Hillside workshops for insourcing of track and port work and to put a halt to – even reverse – privatisation and casualisation in our industries.

We need to Stand Up and Fight Back for socially responsible government; for well-funded education; a public sector that has the resources to do its job properly; a health system that we can be proud of; and a public funded state owned accident compensation and rehabilitation system.

**Helen Kelly** (r) opened Conference 2010 by providing updates of the Fairness at Work campaign; Together – a new way of making union membership more accessible –



and the real effects of the 90-day fire-at-will-law. Helen spoke of two brave young women, Florence Cohen and Heather Smith, who have stood up and spoken out about the unjust and unfair treatment they received from their employer under this law. For more information visit the CTU website [www.union.org.nz] and view video footage.

Finally Helen spoke of the importance of next year's general election and how party politics directly affects workers' rights and conditions.



National president **Jim Kelly** (l) welcomed all to Conference 2010 and reminded delegates of the responsibilities they hold as representatives for their respective branches. He spoke about the RMTU

campaigns and the significant work the Union has undertaken over the last year, acknowledging the work of both paid and non-paid officers of the Union, the delegates and activist members whose efforts continue make the RMTU a proud organisation.

He went on to congratulate all the people of Canterbury in the way they have endured the largest earthquake in a major population centre in New Zealand since the 1931 Napier earthquake and how Unions Canterbury worked closely with the Department of Labour, Ministry of Social Development, Community Law Centre and local politicians.

A significant part of the opening speech was to remind us of the broken promises,

lies and half-truths John Key's Government have made since getting into parliament. He questioned how the Maori Party's support for National and Act policies was good for working class Maori.

Jim went on to make a quote from Albert Einstein: "I consider it important, indeed necessary, for workers to get together both to protect their own economic status and to secure their influence in the political field."

He also announced that he would not be seeking re-election.

Once again we had a diverse range of speakers. Here are some highlights of those presentations:

**Jim Anderton** (r), Progressive Party, gave a seat by seat analysis of how Labour and the left can win the next election through campaigning and the volatility of the political environment. He said a very low percentage swing – less than 2% –



in five key electorates was just one example. However, it depends on members becoming involved in the election campaign.



The Honourable **Phil Goff** (l), NZ Labour Party and Leader of the Opposition, was, as expected, very optimistic of Labour's chances of winning the next election with help and support from

RMTU members. He spoke of the unfairness

and the detrimental effects of National Party policies on working class New Zealand and the need to support an integrated transport system.

**Gareth Hughes** (r), Green Party, spoke of their vision for smart transport investment with a balance of road, rail and sea for freight transport with public transport being a mix of bus, rail, light rail, walking, sea – and cycling.



Minister of Transport Steven Joyce declined an invitation to address conference.



An economic snapshot was provided by CTU economist **Bill Rosenberg** (l) whose informative address gave a picture of the current state of the

NZ's economy.

Past RMTU organiser and RMTU life member, **Eddie Dickson** (r), shared his experiences and lessons as the ITF assistant secretary for land transport based in London.



What could not be missed was the importance of international solidarity and organising globally.

**Bronwyn Maxwell** (r) from the CTU organising centre highlighted the Fairness @ Work Campaign, how the brand and message has evolved over time and how the campaigning has evolved to reach out, not only to union members, but the general public.



Todd and Libi shared ideas, concepts and campaigning techniques they picked up from their recent attendance at the ACTU

organising conference. A very informative session and I am sure you will experience, be a part of and/or participate in some of those lessons at some stage. One thing was clear from their presentation is that every member needs to Stand Up and Fight Back and it is the ground work and the raising awareness that will enable that to happen.

Todd Valster critiqued our two high publicity campaigns – NZ Work 4 NZ Workers and the Save Our SOL. This session was not about celebrating our wins and achievements, which are many, but challenging conference to explain why these campaigns did not resonate with, or engage, the general membership. Were you involved? If not why not? What can we do to gain your support?

**Jim Quinn** (r) CEO talked of the future of Kiwirail, the Turnaround plan, the need for a customer-driven approach and an integrated organisation.



C3 CEO **Dean Camplin** and general manager of employee relations **Baz Pritchard** spoke of the need for quality, responsibility and taking

care and ownership.

Veolia Transport Auckland Ltd managing director **Graham Sibery** and HR manager Gavin Cook gave an informative introduction to Veolia as an international organisation, its environmental vision, and its New Zealand operation. A very welcoming fact is that demand for rail services and usage is increasing rapidly in Auckland and this rapid growth will see more jobs and more development.



Other presentations were made by:

- ★ NZ Harbour Super & LE SAD fund
- ★ NZ Railways staff welfare trust
- ★ AIL Insurance
- ★ UnionAID where **Ross Wilson** (r top)



presented an update of the great work that this new charity is performing, supporting vulnerable workers to organise and fight for better working conditions. Conference delegates were clearly

impressed by what has been achieved and what could be achieved, don't be surprised if you or your branch are asked to support this worthy cause.

## General Business

The RMTU finances were audited by WHK Ltd (formerly Sherwin, Chan and Walshe) and the financial statements were presented to Conference and were found to be in good order.

The National Management Committee continues to adopt a cautious and prudent approach to financial management. Our objective has been to achieve a surplus result on the basis of our member subscription, income supplemented by investment income on reserves. In the year ended 2009 the Union achieved an acceptable income over expenditure surplus of \$114,094.00 and this year (2010) the National accounts are again in surplus by \$167,939.00 income over expenditure. Branch annual accounts are also in surplus this year of \$1,343.00 mainly due to a lower unrealised loss on the shares held in Port Tauranga and slightly decreased branch expenditure. The strike fund increased to \$37,658.00.

Conference closing address was made by NZCTU national secretary **Peter Conway** (r) speaking on the union movement he said:



"I don't propose to go through a major evaluation here today. But we have to continue to strengthen the union movement, build greater unity, get more activity going, create even stronger links with the Australian union movement and beyond, reach out to the non-unionised, and so on."

The message for us is that we need to ensure all workers working in our industries



**Ruth Blakely,  
NMC &  
Port Otago**



**John Marsh,  
Waikato**



**Aubrey Wilkinson,  
NMC &  
Port Tauranga**



**James Williams,  
Auckland**



**Ray Brown,  
Waikato**



**Gary Parsloe,  
MUNZ**

belong to a bona fide trade union.

Returning to his days as CTU economist Peter made the following observation:

“And we have seen the so-called tax ‘switch’ when they have given tax cuts worth \$3.6 billion a year to go mainly to those on high incomes. It is not a tax switch. It is a tax swindle.

If you are on the minimum wage the very best you might get from the tax cuts is another \$4.13 a week. But if you are on ten times the minimum wage, you get another \$154.00 a week even allowing for

higher GST.

The gap in take-home pay between someone on \$30,000 a year and someone on \$150,000 a year will grow by \$102 a week as a result of the income tax cuts.

It is all very well to say that the top 50 percent of income earners pay 89 percent of the income tax take, but they get 84 percent of taxable income.”

Peter then went on to talk about the work the CTU is undertaking including the campaigns already mentioned, pointed out the fact that Government cuts to ACC

funding and targeted industry training has meant a restriction in the number of H&S reps that the CTU can train from our membership base.

With that, Conference 2010 came to an end and 46 delegates and observers headed for the four corners of Aotearoa and everywhere in between, with the understanding and the message that when workers rights are under attack

– Stand Up Fight Back.





# President's report

## Jim Kelly

**"Get involved and get others involved. That is the challenge."**

**W**E say it every year, but it needs to be said: We are a strong and active Union only when our members are strong and active. Which leads me to make some observations and comments of two campaigns the Union were involved with: the the SOL petition that was run to save the line from being closed or moth-balled and the New Zealand Work for New Zealand Workers petition – both of which were very poorly supported by our members. Members of other unions returned over a thousand signatures, while our own members, with the exception of Hillside, returned about the same number. Overall, 5000 or so signatures was a disappointing outcome. The SOL petition gathered even less, about 600.

How do we address the apathy which affects our members? That is our challenge.

Congratulations to all the people of Canterbury for the way they have endured the largest earthquake in a major population centre in New Zealand since the 1931 Napier earthquake. Canterbury union officials made themselves available for community meetings, often in their own time. They have been in attendance in order to supply advice on employment matters and problems for workers affected by the quake such as pay entitlements. Unions in Canterbury worked closely with the Department of Labour, the Ministry of Social Development, the Community Law Centre as well as local politicians and continue to be involved in the aftermath of the disaster. It needs to be said that the union staff suffered during the quake also but put themselves out there in the community while dealing with issues in their own home lives. This is what we mean when we talk about the need for unions to get involved in community issues.

### Election whoppers

A few days before the general election of 2008 John Key was asked if National was planning to increase GST to 15%. He said National is not going to be increasing GST. Is that a whopper of a broken promise? I believe it is.

John Key now says "our tax package is the largest reform of the tax system in nearly 25 years. It helps families get ahead, encourages savings and productive investment, creates a fairer tax system and keeps skilled Kiwis in New Zealand."

Is this another whopper? Under the tax package allowing for the GST rise and with the tax cuts,

- ★ Someone on \$30,000 per year gets \$4 a week.
- ★ Someone on \$50,000 per year gets \$14 a week.
- ★ Someone on \$150,000 gets \$90 a week.

Is this a fairer tax system? In the meantime electricity and fuel prices have skyrocketed, education costs have risen, ACC costs have risen while ACC benefits have decreased. It may sound fair – if you happen to be in the top range of earners, but for the rest of us I don't think so.

National and ACT obtain most of their support at the high end of the income and wealth spectrums so when they make a decision they tend to favour the rich at the expense of working people and the poor. They go for greater inequality, as we saw in the budget and as we saw in this tax package.

So while National and Act look after their own at the expense of the rest of us, what about the Maori Party. According to their policy "the tax system needs to reflect the principle that taxation should be dis-

tributed to achieve equality". What equality has been achieved here? The vast majority of Maori will be worse off as a result of this tax package. So who exactly do the Maori Party represent? Certainly not the average Maori worker.

### Industrial front

On the industrial front, you will all be aware of the CTU's opposition to the proposed changes to Employment Laws. The 90-day fire-at-will-law and the rolling back of union access rights are just the tip of the iceberg. There is now an accumulation of attacks on workers either implemented or in the pipeline including cuts to ACC, meal breaks, changes in holiday entitlements, removal of rights of appeal against unfair dismissal, restriction access for workers to union officials, cuts to union education funding, axing the Pay and Employment Equity unit – the list goes on. Show me one thing this government has done positively to improve workers' right or conditions.

The 90-day law is not just about young workers in their first job but all workers starting a new job. At any given time there are around 300,000 people in the first 3 months of a new job. Around 700,000 New Zealanders start a new job every year. Each one of those workers will be exposed to the risk of being sacked for no reason at all and without any right to appeal nor a chance to clear their names.

To make matters worse we believe the Government will also make it more difficult for the Employment Court to question the reason why a worker has been dismissed. There are about 2,500 cases submitted to the Employment Relations authority every year of which only about 1,000 make it to the first stage investigative meeting. With

two million workers in NZ this shows the tiny scale of any problem with personal grievances. Employers' fears are out of proportion to reality. Compensation to workers averages only \$2,800 despite the many cases found by the court of unjustified dismissal.

The same is true of union access rights. In the decade since the current rules were introduced there have been fewer than 10 instances of complaints, and all of those were against employers acting unreasonably. John Key said his government was a solution-focused one. We ask him to show us the problem to which restricting union access is the solution.

The spurious claim that personal grievances impede employment is demolished by the facts. Without the 90 day law, unemployment fell from 162,000 in 1999 to 17,465 in May 2008 before the onset of the recession. In June 2010, after 15 months of the 90-day 'incentive' to small employers, there were 62,085 unemployed and growing. As a job creation scheme it must be marked a spectacular failure.

We are not talking about the fair appraisal of an employee's ability to do a job, and an honest and open assessment that perhaps someone isn't up to the demands. That is the purpose of a probationary period. What we are talking about is the wholesale removal of any right to contest dismissal.

That opens the door to all kinds of abuse, and we have seen plenty of examples of it.

The CTU is running a campaign to raise the awareness of the public of the significance of these anti-worker laws. It will be coordinating protests against this government's policies until the general election next year. It is imperative we mobilise our resources. It's all about fairness at work.

## Return of Winston

Perhaps all this gives fertile ground for the return of New Zealand First leader Winston Peters who has confirmed he will run in the 2011 general election. Winston will of course appeal to what have always been his most loyal supporters – the elderly.

He has said his party would stop rest homes being sold to overseas owners if it makes it back into government.

About 75 percent of our 870 rest homes are run by foreign companies and last year the Overseas Investment Office approved sales of aged rest care facilities worth \$1.5 billion.

This sector receives government subsidies and labour costs were low.

His party also has a policy to extend super gold card benefits to include a free medical check once a year with GP fees capped at \$10.

Winston has criticised the Government

over land sales, for allowing the Maori sovereignty flag to be flown, for signing up to a United Nations declaration of indigenous rights and reopening the foreshore and seabed debate. No doubt Winston will be a player leading up to the election.

Let us not forget the general election next year. At the same time there will be a referendum on MMP. You will hear lots of scare stories coming from business people, the National Party and others who desperately want to get back to the business of selling off our remaining assets, including infrastructure such as ports and water. Each of us have a responsibility to stop them returning to a first-past-the-post (FPP) system where they can form Governments with a minority of votes and continue where they left off in the bad old days of the 1980s and 1990s. We must act as unionists and that means being involved in all matters which affect our conditions of employment – including politics.

Albert Einstein said: "I consider it important, indeed necessary, for workers to get together both to protect their own economic status and to secure their influence in the political field."

Get involved and get others involved. That is the challenge. 🇳🇿

✳ This report has been edited from the original speech

# International guests provided much to think about

## Phillip Kessey RTBU

"It's not about unions, it's about values; reaching out to not necessarily union people."

This is how Phillip (r) introduced the highly successful Australian Union campaign against the Howard Government's work choices legislation – a campaign that reached out past the union movement to the wider community to people of all political persua-



sions, blue and white collar workers, professionals and the self-employed.

He went on to say that when putting together a campaign we must look at the message and what will resonate with the public, such as fairness, respect, truth – the values that union members hold dear. They will resonate with the public.

He spoke of challenges facing his union such as:

The threat to safety of the new National

Rail Safety Regulator, a proposal that will lower safety standards across the country putting lives at risk. See <http://putrailsafetyfirst.com.au/>

Highlighting the RBTU concerns regarding the demeaning and invasive nature of urine testing which has led the union to campaign for approved saliva-based testing as a first indicator.

Phillip finished his presentation speaking on the need for trans-Tasman cooperation, coordination and campaigning.

## Ian Bray, MUA

Once again we had the pleasure of being challenged by the words of Maritime Un-

ion of Australia's assistant national secretary Ian Bray (r) challenging our views on member apathy to the union.

"When we talk about workplace apathy is it apathy or job security? That is to say are the members secure in their jobs? Are they under threat of contracting out, or having

their jobs taken away, or is it the fear of casualisation or that they will not be given work if they already are casuals?"

"We must look past the word apathy to the true cause. Often it can be a lack of education or information or not understanding where we are going (with the campaign or union) not understanding the processes, and not understanding that they make the profits so they are entitled to their fair share of those profits."

He also spoke of the importance of the ITF, the high esteem in which the RMTU is held, and the need for the union movement to look past national boundaries to support each other as there are no boundaries for capital. Ian finished by challenging us to take the community with us.



## Peter Lane, TWU

Peter (r) spoke of the need to ensure that workers still had a parliamentary voice fighting the industrial struggle through political aspiration. He reminded us of how we have been let down by the political wing of the Labour parties in both countries and how they are not prepared to upset employers. This is clearly



seen in New Zealand by the minor changes to the ECA giving us the ERA. He pointed out that sadly NZ unions can say to their Australian counterparts "We told you so".

From there Peter perked up when telling how the TWU is looking to give support to the cross benches in Australia – the independents and Greens – as they seem more supportive of advancing workers' issues.

He then spoke of how union members are politicised and get out and talk to MPs, taking their families along and explaining the impact of policies on workers' children.

"Remember, both politicians and business like to protect their public image. They do not like bad press so we need to identify new ways to get our message across, such as a well-placed rat in front of a bad employer's

office or store," he said.

He spoke about TWU's battles such as the threat from labour hire companies, modern day sweat shops, truck drivers forced to take anti-fatigue drugs, and more. The accumulative effects stripped away worker rights.

Finally Peter reminded conference that workers' rights are under attack and only organised workplaces with high union membership can hold off that attack.

From the experiences of our Australian colleagues it is a fact that if every member participates and takes ownership of some aspect of a campaign then we can win. However, this can only happen if we stop expecting someone else to fight our battles and we ALL STAND UP AND FIGHT BACK. 🇺🇸



**Phil Goff signs the RMTU flag of remembrance for Brian Cronin**



**Randolph Sladen**



**Marty Duncan**



**Bernie Snook**



**Phil Spanswick**



**Chris Steel,**

# Conference newbies

**Chris Lydiate, Port Chalmers**

Good meeting all the delegates and a problem shared is a problem halved.



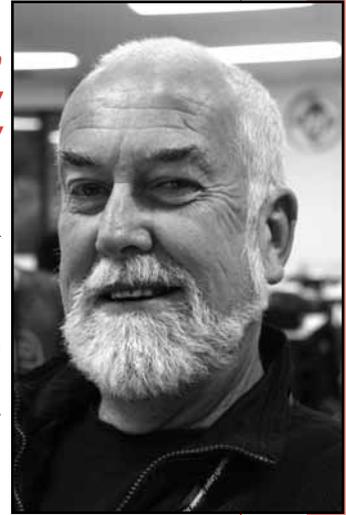
**Utuki Thompson, Marlborough**

Very educational, and as a new delegate it is, to an extent, empowering.



**Dave Telford, Bay of Plenty**

Very good speeches especially Helen Kelly's, and it was good to network with other delegates.



**William Lanigan, Bay of Plenty**

Really interesting and enjoyed all the speeches.



**Colin Braddock, Wellington**

Well organised, however how does Conference information get back to the grass-roots?



**Christine Sharma, Wellington**

Absolutely enjoyed the conference. Well organised and informative. However we need a permanent coffee urn.



**Doug Blakie**



**Roy Cowley, Harbour Super & LE SAD Fund**



**Libi Carr**



**Chris Ball, Welfare Trust**



**Ken Midgley**



**Buzz Terrey**

# *Ni Ceart go cur le chiele* [There is no strength without unity]

## Brian Thomas Cronin

**T**HE smiling face smiles no more, except in the memories and hearts of his family, comrades and members. Brian Cronin, long-time RMTU industrial officer, unexpectedly passed away on October 13, leaving in his wake his bereft wife Mandy, and their delightful daughters Amelia and Bridget.

Born to an Irish working class family of seven children, raised in a council house in Stillorgan on the outskirts of Dublin, Brian joined his two older brothers as an electrical apprentice with Irish Rail. It was here, and later with London Transport and then (after his marriage to Mandy Gill) New Zealand Railways, that the lessons of workplace solidarity and organisation were hard learnt.

Rather than tracking the detailed chronology of his path in the union movement, just noting the organisations to which he gave his commitment and energy to (over some three decades) exposes his true value to his adopted country: the Railway Trademen's Association, The Federation of Labour, the Combined Union of Railway Employees, NZ Railways Staff Welfare Trust, the Council of Trade Unions, and the Rail & Maritime Transport Union since it was formed in 1995. And at all stages of these and their organisational development and amalgamations Brian applied his 'Unity is Strength' principles.

That scarcest of peer recognitions, RMTU Life Membership, was unanimously and posthumously bestowed on Brian during the Union's 16th Annual Delegates Conference, which was when Brian's death occurred. The presentation of this to Mandy at Brian's funeral felt particularly appropriate and heart-warming.

October 13, 2010 will be remembered as the day our RMTU family lost an irreplaceable workmate, friend and leader.

Brian's trademark smile and laughter belied his passion when aroused. If you thought it reflected other than his warm nature you were to be mistaken. He was probably at his best when angered, when representations on behalf of workers were

not taken seriously or treated too lightly, then there was no holding back and his words flowed hard-hitting, emotionally and with intelligence.

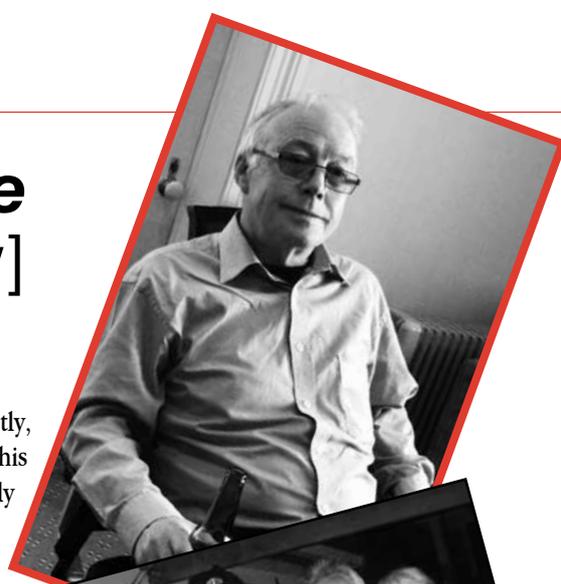
When Brian talked of the political tragedies of Thatcherism and the subsequent right-wing takeover of New Zealand by Roger Douglas, Richard Prebble, Max Bradford and Bill Birch in the late 1980s and 1990s, he fairly burned with fury at the damage wrought to workers and their families, to society, by the excesses of monetarism. There was a depth of knowledge and intelligence which Brian concealed behind his innate modesty, a working-class honesty that had no fear in challenging bosses and politicians, at any level.

It was these beliefs that saw Brian establish strong fraternal and personal friendships not just with workers in New Zealand, but with unionists throughout the world.

Supporting Brian's family at his service were Members of Parliament, past and present senior Council of Trade Union comrades, and, of course, all the RMTU and other union officials from around the country. Even more pleasing was to see the rank-and-file delegates from the railways and the ports gathered from the South and North islands, reflective of the contribution Brian had made to their lives and representing the membership he had devoted his life fighting for, and alongside.

From a cheeky wee freckle-faced Irish lad with a sparky's inheritance to a highly respected Kiwi activist for social justice and an ardent advocate for workers - Brian Thomas Cronin not only left his mark, he gouged it proud and deep. There is no doubt that he has left the world a better place for his having walked among us.

Thank you Mandy, Amelia and Bridget, both for your loyal support of Brian, and for loaning him to the working class for as long as you did. He was "Proud to be Union" and Brian, we are proud to have been workmates and comrades. 🌐



Brian's wife Mandy, and daughters Amelia and Bridget, express their sincere thanks for the many messages, cards and beautiful flowers which they received since Brian was first admitted to hospital. They are also very grateful for the generous donations made to the Bruce Jesson Foundation and Oxfam in commemoration of Brian's life. The love and support which has been shown to Brian's family and the heartfelt sorrow that has come from KiwiRail and New Zealand port workers and trade unionists from around the country and overseas has been very touching.



## MECA signed off

SIGNING off the Kiwirail industry MECA with great relief following its ratification by RMTU members is Kiwirail CEO Jim Quinn (l) and RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson. The MECA saw four collective agreements merged with no terms and conditions being lost by any members following the use of a “best of best” analysis framework by KiwiRail and the Union. KiwiRail and the RMTU have both given their consent to Veolia Transport, Auckland being added as a subsequent party when their negotiations are concluded and ratified by the VTAK members. 🇺🇸



## Passenger Industrial Council

Wayne Butson and KiwiRail Passenger Group general manager Dr Deborah Hume appear happy to be signing off the last of the five KiwiRail industrial councils to be formed. The parties intend for the Passenger Industrial Council to herald a much improved working relationship between members and managers within Passenger where in the past adversarialism ruled supreme. 🇺🇸

## CT working party

THE CT working party met in Auckland on November 15, and debated the new gradings that had been put forward by Kiwirail. The major sticking point was which grades would include reefer work, as different branches have different set ups. It was finally agreed that Grade 3 would be the starting grade for reefers. The Union team left the meeting on that basis, and Kiwirail would send a draft transition agreement for the Union to consider.

At the Kiwirail Industrial Council, Kiwirail voiced their displeasure on the deal that was put forward by the Working Party, which brings us all back to square one. 🇺🇸



PHOTOGRAPH: Phil Spanswick

*(l to r) Chris Gledhill, Toris Enterprises; Damian Light, Linehaul process manager; Bruce Courtney, National Fleet & Equipment manager, Takapuna; Warren Makaua, CT operator Southdown; Reuben Chapman, container terminal team leader, Southdown; Joe Harding, container terminal operator, Southdown; Bob Alexander, container terminal manager, Southdown; Harvey Stoneham, customer service, Southdown; Garesh (Gary) Sukba, customer service, Wellington and KiwiRail industrial council rep for CT site.*

*Absent: Jim Mitchell, Middleton; Rob McMillan, Palmerston North.*

# UnionAID training course

RECENTLY, organiser George Laird attended a UnionAID training course run by Ross Wilson.

Not only was this a chance for George to brush up on his training skills but it was also an opportunity to hear more about the great work this project is undertaking to empower workers in poor countries.

“One lasting comment from Ross that keeps repeating in my mind regards the training in seamstress skills to Burmese girls and

young women in Thailand. They may end up working in sweat shops, but this is far more preferable to ending up being shipped around Asia as sex slaves,” George said.

If your branch would like to hear more about this work contact George at [georgel@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:georgel@rmtunion.org.nz)

For more information please visit the UnionAid website: [www.unionaid.org.nz](http://www.unionaid.org.nz)



Kaitia



Kaikohe



Auckland



Hamilton



New Plymouth



Hawera



Whanganui



Levin



Wellington



West Coast



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22,000 workers came together to stand for fairness.  
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[www.fairness.org.nz](http://www.fairness.org.nz)



Whangarei



Paeroa



Tauranga



Rotorua



Taupo



Napier/Hastings



Gisborne



Nelson



Masterton



Palmerston North



Invercargill



Timaru



Dunedin



and up for  
ampaign.

**FAIRNESS**  
 **at WORK**  
 unions we're about fairness



The RMTU had a vocal and visible presence at many of the rallies on October 4 and is firmly behind the CTU's 'Fairness At Work' campaign.



## A dummy's guide to modern economics

**H**EIDI, the proprietor of a bar in Detroit, realises that virtually all of her customers are unemployed alcoholics and can no longer afford to patronise her bar. To solve this problem she devises a new marketing plan allowing her customers to drink now but pay later. She keeps track of their drinks in a ledger – thereby granting her customers loans.

Word gets around about her 'Drink now pay later' bar and increasing numbers of customers flood in. Soon she has the largest sales volume for any bar in Detroit.

Her customers are so satisfied that Heidi gets no resistance when, at regular intervals, she substantially increases her prices for wine and beer, the most consumed beverages. Consequently, Heidi's gross sales volume increases massively.

A young and dynamic vice-president at the local bank recognises that these customer debts constitute valuable future assets and increases Heidi's borrowing limit. He sees no reason for any undue concern, since he has the debts of the unemployed alcoholics as collateral.

At the bank's corporate headquarters, expert traders figure a way to make

huge commissions, and transform these customer loans into DRINKBONDS, ALKIBONDS and PUKEBONDS which are then bundled and traded on international security markets. Naive investors don't really understand that the securities being sold to them as AAA secured bonds are really the debts of unemployed alcoholics and the bond prices continuously climb. Soon the securities become the hottest-selling items for some of the nation's leading brokerage houses.

One day, even though the bond prices are still climbing, a risk manager at Heidi's local bank decides that the time has come to demand payment on the debts incurred by the drinkers at her bar.

He so informs Heidi and Heidi demands payment from her alcoholic patrons. But being unemployed alcoholics they cannot pay their drinking debts and Heidi cannot fulfill her loan obligations. She is forced into bankruptcy, the bar closes and the 11 employees lose their jobs.

Overnight, DRINKBONDS, ALKIBONDS and PUKEBONDS drop in price by 90%. The collapsed bond asset value

destroys the bank's liquidity and prevents it from issuing new loans, thus freezing credit and economic activity in the community.

The suppliers of Heidi's bar had granted her generous payment extensions and had invested their firms' pension funds in the various BOND securities. They find they are now faced with having to write off her bad debt and with losing over 90% of the presumed value of the bonds. Her wine supplier also claims bankruptcy, closing the doors on a family business that had endured for three generations. Her beer supplier is taken over by a competitor, who immediately closes the local plant and lays off 150 workers.

Fortunately, the bank, the brokerage houses and their respective executives are saved and bailed out by a multi-billion dollar no-strings attached cash infusion from their cronies in Government. The funds required for this bailout are obtained by new taxes levied on employed, middle-class, non-drinkers who have never been in Heidi's bar.

Now, do you understand economics in 2010?

## 'Miners' Special' reflects close ties

**T**HE close ties between the rail and mining industries were instantly recognisable on Thursday December 2 as the 'Miners' Special' rolled into Greymouth carrying passengers wishing to attend the memorial service for the 29 miners who died at the Pike River mine.

The idea to run the train came from the RMTU and KiwiRail immediately picked up the baton. Volunteer staff from both organisations made it happen while KiwiRail picked up all the other costs so all proceeds from ticket sales could be donated to a relief fund for the miners' families.

More than \$4,500 was raised from the journey.

The train was driven by LEs Darryl Dodd and Anthony McCarthy and on board staff were train manager Brian Armstrong, attendants Kathy Tempelman and Willy Grant, while on the West Coast Chris Stoop liaised with the local authorities organising the memorial service to manage the passenger stop at Omoto Race Course – the venue for the service.

KiwiRail passenger GM Deb Hume, ST&E asset performance manager Sean Moran and RMTU representatives Howard Phillips (Metro Wellington), Phil Kearns (Christchurch), Libi Carr (Lyttelton branch secretary) and Helen Kelly (CTU) were also on board.

Chief executive of KiwiRail Jim Quinn said: "There are close historical ties between the mining and rail industries and we are doing this as an expression of our deep sympathy and support for family, friends and colleagues of the lost miners.

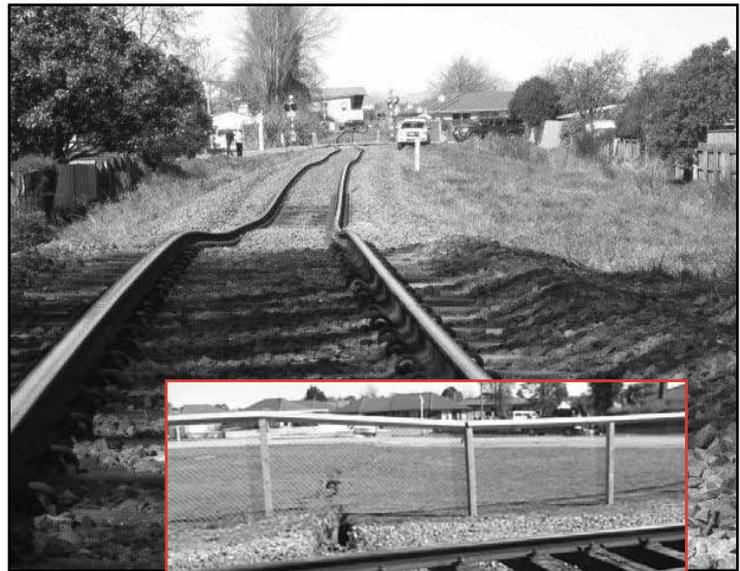
General secretary of the RMTU, Wayne Butson, said many union members worked closely with the Pike River miners at the coal loadout sites, and like all others were devastated by the tragedy.

First preference for seats was given to those with close ties to the Pike River mine and who might not have otherwise been able to get to the memorial service, and to KiwiRail staff and union members. Seats were then made available to the general public and a minimum donation of \$90 was requested per passenger.

The service left Christchurch at 8.15am and took passengers directly to the Omoto Racecourse.

Following the journey KiwiRail and the RMTU received many positive comments from travellers similar to this from Anne Sheard: "Please pass on my personal thanks to all those who volunteered their time to organise and run the Pike River Miners special train. As a West Coaster now living in Christchurch I am so pleased that you offered this service - it was a very precious way to get home. The service and the respect shown by the crew were fantastic - dignified, supportive and friendly. I appreciate the effort it took the volunteers to give up their precious time off and, of course, to the many people behind the scenes who put in many hours to help with the preparations." 🌐

The after-effects of Canterbury's earthquake continue to provide problems for the region. . .



. . . And KiwiRail and the RMTU take over 100 people across the island to remember the 29 miners killed at the Pike River Coal Mine



# Seeking fair play for workers under climate change conditions

**T**HE ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) is taking a clear and blunt message to the United Nation's meeting on climate change in Cancun, Mexico: That nations must ensure that workers are treated fairly in the inevitable transition as work conditions change to accommodate remedies to counter climate change.

The negotiation, which takes place as this magazine goes to press, are aimed at reviving the shaky flame left by the disappointing meeting in Copenhagen last year.

"Climate change remains an overriding priority for all our futures; we cannot afford to let pessimism prevail", said Sharan Burrow, the general secretary of the ITUC. "While the conditions for a binding climate agreement still seem far from being met, governments in Cancun have the opportunity to establish the basis for a new con-

sensus on vital issues such as agreeing on common rules for measuring emissions and identifying innovative sources of long term finance such as a financial transactions tax".

On the labour front says the ITUC, this 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) is a unique opportunity to move social justice proposals forward. More than 200 trade unionists from developed and developing countries will be taking part and promoting an ambitious and binding agreement which guarantees a Just Transition for workers. They went to the meeting with a 13-point paper outlining their suggestions and to back their concerns for urgent government action.

"The outcome of Cancun needs to guarantee the protection of the most vulnerable communities and workers of the world. All countries have to act, but this

must start with ambitious emission reduction and financing commitments from the developed world," said Burrow. "However, that is not enough. A decision confirming that workers and their unions will be a full part of the transformation of our societies should already be made in Cancun, giving trade unions a clear mandate to work for the implementation of Just Transition at the national level."

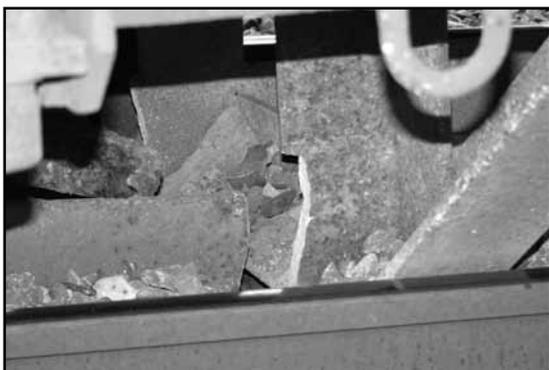
Just Transition is mentioned in the Cancun negotiating text but, says Burrow, it needs to be mainstreamed and governments must start putting it into practice and "send a message of hope to the world's workers".

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates. 

<http://www.ituc-csi.org>

## Manawatu Gorge slip

**S**EPTEMBER 25 must have been the day to buy Lotto tickets for two of our Palmerston North rail branch members after they hit a massive slip in the Manawatu Gorge. The slip derailed the locomotive, sent it towards the sky and then heading towards a long drop to the Gorge. Luckily, the train stopped and the members were not seriously injured.



**Broke back wagon:** AUK class wagon at Fielding northbound, failed with a large break in the under frame due to metal fatigue. Initially it was believed to be overloaded but when checked it was within limits.

## Mechanical failures

These two photos show two separate significant mechanical failures on wagon rolling stock in late September.....

**You picked a fine time to leave me loose wheel:**

*The wheel is from a ZH wagon which shattered north of Waikanae narrowly missing a contractor track-side. One piece ended up on the highway alongside the NIMT. The cause is still under investigation.*





(l to r) Wayne Butson, Peter Clemens and John Ormond.

## New life member

**P**ETER CLEMENS joined the Harbour Board Employees Union in 1984 and was actively involved in that Union, its successor the Harbour Workers Union (HWU) and latterly the RMTU. He has held all branch positions at Timaru Port and was national vice president of the HWU and vice president of the RMTU from 2000 until 2005. From 2002 until 2010 Peter was a Trustee of the NZ Harbours' Superannuation Plan where his expertise and financial acumen has been invaluable. He has given some three decades to protecting and advancing the interests of rail and port union members generally, and Timaru Port members specifically. He epitomises the staunch character that deserves recognition with the RMTU's highest accolade – Life Membership. 🌐

## Rail and Maritime Transport Union Veterans' Association

**P**RESENT and retired members have, over the years, discussed the benefits of forming an association for veterans and their wives.

The reasons for forming such an association are many and varied including maintaining work and fraternal relationships formed over many years, improvement of government legislation in regard to the effect on pensioners and supporting the Union in its work. These are just some areas in which such an association could be very active. The final agenda however, would be decided by the members.

A small committee, with the full support and assistance of the RMTU has been formed to establish the Association.

Are you interested? Or do you know someone who might be?

If interested please supply the following details (all details held in strictest confidence on Union database).

NAME; ADDRESS; TELEPHONE; EMAIL

By submitting your details it will be assumed that you are interested in joining the RMTU Veterans Association and that understand that when a sufficient number show interest within an area, a branch meeting will be called to elect officers and adopt a branch constitution.

Please send your details to: Veterans' Association

PO Box 1103, Wellington

or e-mail to: [veterans@rmtunion.org.nz](mailto:veterans@rmtunion.org.nz)

## EPMU Pike River Miners Families Support Trust

The Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union (EPMU) is deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of 29 men following the Pike River Mine explosion of 19 November 2010, New Zealand's worst mining disaster for 96 years.

Eleven of the 16 miners killed were members of the EPMU, including union delegate Blair Sims. The other men killed were local contractors.

The cause of the disaster is not known and is unlikely to be known for many months, and the families will face hardship.

Now is the time to give practical support to the families.

The EPMU is assisting by setting up the "EPMU Pike River Miners Families Support Trust" to collect donations to support the 29 families.

Half of the funds donated will be contributed to the community and being administered by the Grey District Council and half will be used to establish a dedicated fund for the education of the children of those killed. The trustees will be local union representatives.

Donations can be made at any Kiwibank branch or direct to bank account: Kiwibank 38-9011-0165987-00

Cheques made out to "EPMU Pike River Miners Families Support Trust" can also be sent by post, care of EPMU, PO Box 14-277, Kilbirnie, Wellington 6241.



# White ribbon day



The BOP Port executive wearing their 'No to violence against women' ribbons are (l to r) Kelvin Marten (president), Shaun Wilson (secretary), Rex O'Connell, Aubrey Wilkinson (National VP), Ian Oakley and Jeremy Thompson.

(above and below) Hutt Shops workers show their solidarity to the 'White Ribbon' campaign.



## Rail & Maritime Transport Union Inc Statement of Financial Position As At 30 June 2010

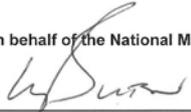


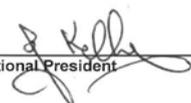
	Note	2010	2009
		\$	\$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
BNZ Accounts	5	511,788	351,017
Accounts Receivable	3	20,190	74,848
Interest Accrued	4	12,021	24,254
Tax Refund Due	2	9,189	16,818
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>553,188</b>	<b>466,937</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Fixed Assets	6	118,714	159,282
Investments	7	2,282,141	2,166,721
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>		<b>2,400,855</b>	<b>2,326,003</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>\$ 2,954,043</b>	<b>\$ 2,792,940</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts Payable	8	96,307	81,668
Current Portion of Finance Lease	11	2,133	15,488
GST Payable		23,716	22,782
Konemu Provision		12,903	12,903
Income Tax Payable	2	-	-
Provision for Leave		74,290	56,472
LE Reunion Trust Fund		6,350	6,350
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>215,699</b>	<b>195,663</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Non Current Portion of Finance Lease	11	1,622	47,044
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,622</b>	<b>47,044</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>\$ 2,736,722</b>	<b>\$ 2,550,233</b>

Represented by:

<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	10	<b>\$2,736,722</b>	<b>\$2,550,203</b>
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Signed on behalf of the National Management Committee

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Secretary 14 October 2010  
 Date

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 National President 14 October 2010  
 Date

**U**NITED NATIONS RESEARCH shows that one in three women suffer some form of violence in their lives and both men and women who work in the transport industry are vulnerable to physical and non-physical violence and abuse because of the job they do.

RMTU members, especially its 91% male membership, were encouraged to support White Ribbon Day on 25 November, which celebrates the many men willing to show leadership and commitment to promoting safe, healthy relationships within families and encourages men to challenge each other on attitudes and behaviour that are abusive.

## Memorial plaque on Wellington waterfront



**L**AST month a memorial plaque commemorating workers who died on the job was unveiled in Wellington between Te Papa and the harbour. On Workers' Memorial Day it will be the focus for a central Wellington gathering.



## On the streets with labour law protests

**O**N September 7 Helen Kelly visited the Port of Napier and spoke with both RMTU and MUNZ members on the issues facing us under the National Government, in particular the effects of the 90-day bullshit that is hurting workers throughout the country. Helen also gave reference to some instances whereby some individuals are being sacked unfairly under this tyrannical regime and that some employers see it as the best thing since sliced cheese.

The meeting was also attended by Stewart Nash Labour MP for Napier (RMTU member) who had arranged for us to meet at his office for a BBQ. After food consumption and bellies full, placards were hoisted, union banners raised and chanting commenced as around 20 to 30 of us from various unions marched to Chris



Tremain's office (National MP for Napier).

Outside his office Helen re-iterated and expanded on the issues facing unions and workers with attacks by Act and National on industrial laws. During her talk there was public support by way of car horns blowing, which no doubt raised attention across the road at the police station!

It was then a return to Nash's office with the usual calls and back to work.



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■ [www.unionplus.co.nz](http://www.unionplus.co.nz)



## PORT TAURANGA BRANCH

**O**N the afternoon of November 17, RMTU members at the Champion [Goodman Fielder] Flour Mill, held their ratification meeting, and ratified the employer's offer with the exception of the Union's claim on long service leave. We are currently talking to the company to also resolve this issue. 🇺🇸



## PORT NAPIER BRANCH

**W**ITHOUT doubt Conference this year will be remembered for the untimely passing of our Union legend Brian Cronin. I'm sure there are countless stories, anecdotes and sentimental thoughts. We will all cherish and remember the Irish man that punched well above his weight and with a laugh that will never be forgotten.

At Napier Port we are experiencing some radical changes, primarily the loss of the Pan Pac pulp and timber marshaling to the vessels.

However, with both MUNZ (HBS stevedoring) and the RMTU invoking the Charter

Alliance has enabled us to be cross-hired by C3 who won the contract. A thank you to Phil Spanswick for his efforts for a positive outcome in terms of concerns raised locally.

There are also a couple of redundancies pending (not members) but as usual where people are facing redundancies, others are expected to pick up their work, which ultimately filters down – except for those responsible for creating the crap in the first place! It's difficult to understand, as the port company made a profit.

A couple of months back we took the port company to task over what was termed a 'management judgement error'.

In essence they let ISO start receiving sawn timber directly on to the wharf – historically our work. There was also an intent to let the yellow union load/marshall to the vessel. This caused quite a bit of angst as one would expect. The threat of a 'stop work' meeting resolved the situation in which ISO were told to withdraw their labour by the port company. To this day, after what happened two years ago – literally 'what were they thinking'?

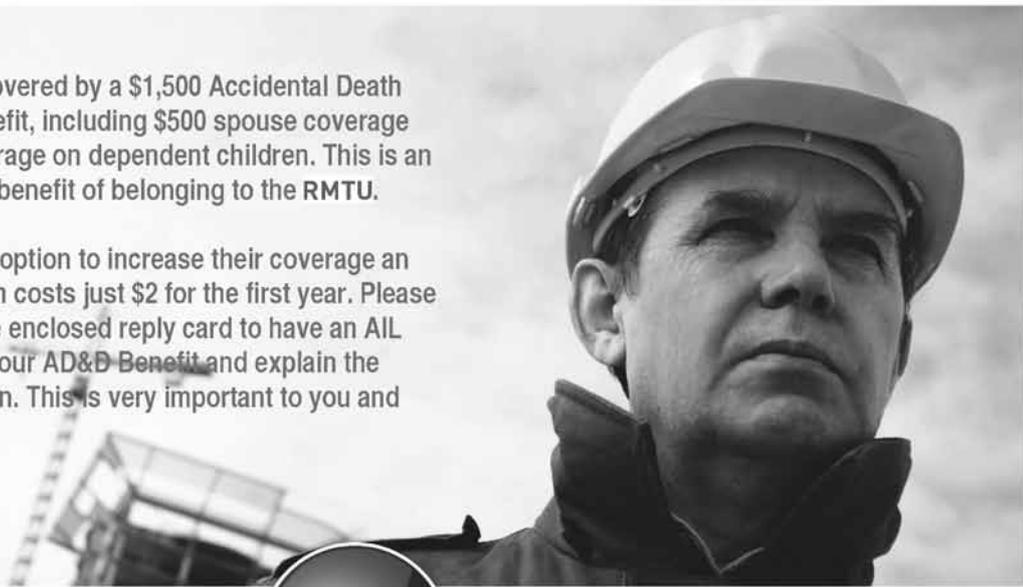
Once again Conference sends us away with plenty to do. Activism needs to snowball. We had a good proactive day in Hastings (20/10/2010) with an educated guess of 400 to 500 people turning out for the

*Continued on the next page*

### \$1,500 AD&D

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

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



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cause and marching on the Foss's office – our National MP. The train was well timed to go through the center of Hastings over the duration of the meeting, with our RMTU flag across the front (even though it was the wrong way around!).

In summary, it has been a busy year for us all, especially while the blue brigade are at the helm. No doubt there will plenty more floggings in terms of industrial law

## PORT NAPIER BRANCH [cont]

and workers' rights. Unfortunately this sort of capitalism breeds deceit and greed amongst those at the top end of the wealth scale. I hope we can all see the bullshit and the twisting of the real issues that were served out by the government over the Hobbit. Warners must be laughing all the way to the bank. Goodness knows how the

teachers are now supposed to get ahead. Tolley indicating there was no money in the coffers prior to Warners even coming to NZ.

Anyways, as the year winds down and we head into the festive season I hope you and yours have a happy and safe holiday period. Resolution 2011, get rid of this government! 🇳🇿

**O**NCE again I report from the sunny Marlborough Sounds. You might think this is an idyllic quiet haven. Well for our port brothers and sisters it might just as well be. However, here in rail the branch has been quite busy.

It appears industrial issues are springing up all over the branch and our members are rising to the challenge and we are seeing greater communication, solidarity and most importantly member activity. Stand Up and Fight Back is taking hold in the Marlborough branch!

The new position of convenor of delegates is working out well and has resulted in the first rail delegate's meeting for a very

## MARLBOROUGH RAIL BRANCH

long time. A lot of issues were sorted out with rumours put to bed and information shared. We will be looking forward to those weekly branch and delegate updates.

It has also been a sad time for two of our branch executive with chair Grant Herbert and convenor of delegates Tania Haraki's fathers both passing away. Our heartfelt condolences go out to them both. Tania's father, Alan, was a much-respected LE and an upstanding member of the RMTU. Tania would like to thank the Wellington branch and the RMTU for the tributes paid to him. She was touched by the announcement

across the Metro PA system notifying all staff. She thanks the Wellington members, her work colleagues who travelled from Picton – both Kiwirail and Interislander management – and the RMTU national office who attended and spoke at the service. A fitting tribute to a lifelong rail man and friend to many. Alan was also an active member of the Freemasons and was acknowledged for his dedication to the Railways Craft Association of NZ.

From the Marlborough branch have a safe and festive holiday season. 🇳🇿

## UnionAID model supported by Helen Clark

**I**N a speech recently former Prime Minister, Helen Clark, upheld and supported the principles of the sort of work UnionAID is doing saying: "Workers in vulnerable employment struggle with inadequate earnings and difficult conditions – and are not connected to the protections and social dialogue which define decent work."



*Helen Clark at the UK/UNDP Millennium Development Conference in New York last year.*

She pointed out to delegates at the Second International Trade Union Confederation World Congress in Vancouver during June, that the over-riding factor in achieving the six Millenium Development Goals (MDG), which was determined by world leaders in 2000 with an aim to have ac-

complished them by 2015, was an explicit target on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

"More broadly, decent work is a factor in meeting all the other MDGs," she said. "Stable and decent

jobs enable families to have enough income and food, to be well nourished, to send their children to school, and to access health care."

The work of UnionAid in India, Thailand and Sri Lanka is focussed clearly on

the needs of vulnerable and/or oppressed workers who, through the support of unionism, can become organised and plot their own paths.

"As key stakeholders," she said, "unions can help refocus attention on decent work and the need to make it an explicit priority." She also stressed how we must empower women and girls and include measures which "close the stubborn gender gap in employment and wages" M



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**UnionAID**  
**P O Box 6689, Wellington**  
**email: unionaid@nzctu.org.nz**

**Your union charity spending your dollars wisely**

## WELLINGTON RAIL BRANCH

**I**T has been a very busy year for Wellington branch members with extensive work in and around the area providing challenges and opportunities in sometimes trying circumstances.

Some of the major projects our members have been involved are:

- \* The new third main line into Wellington.
- \* Double tracking and the Waikanae extension.
- \* New Matangi units.
- \* Overhead and signalling upgrades for Matangi units.
- \* Unit depot upgrade.
- \* New carriage servicing depot.
- \* A-box computerisation.
- \* Platform upgrades.
- \* Yard upgrades.

These projects have meant a lot of additional work with long hours for track, overhead and signal workers, huge numbers of bus replacements for on-train workers and huge challenges for delegates

making sure that members are properly consulted on changes. A number of changes have also taken place in workplaces with all mechanical services within KiwiRail now falling under KRMS (KiwiRail Mechanical Services), the Wellington wagon depot closing, restructuring in the Wellington Ferry Terminal and roster changes for the worse.

Passenger group has a new general manager and a North Island passenger manager. We welcome Deborah Hume and David Knight respectively into their new roles and look forward to working with them. In fact there has already been a positive start with the establishment of the Passenger Industry Council.

On the industrial front there have been a number of disputes where the solidarity of members and hard work by delegates has yielded results. Some of these include:

- \* Masterton train managers 'second man' training;
- \* Petone platform operation arrangements

during upgrade;

- \* Eurocell siding ban; and
- \* Wellington depot and yard safety management during upgrade work.

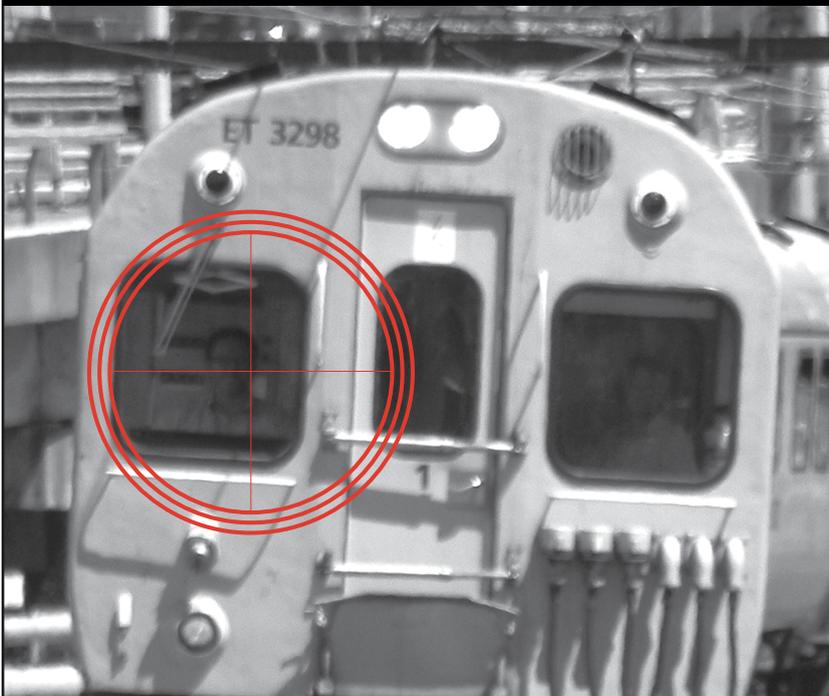
It is heartening to see that central government has made some commitment to rail although it appears that attacks on workers are starting to come to the fore with attacks on ACC entitlements, the 90-day bill and proposed changes to sick leave legislation.

It is important that we stay strong and work together to send a clear message to government that such attacks on workers will not be tolerated.

We thank Howard Phillips for his hard work and commitment over the past two years who recently stood down from the position of branch secretary. Howard will be continuing to support the branch and representing the members on the National Management Committee.

Lastly we wish to thank the members, delegates, executive and national office for their ongoing support and wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas. 🌐

## 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.

### You could be next to miss out!

For as little as \$403 a year your future – or those of your next of kin – could be better assured.

### Contact:

Julia Harrison, PO Box 813, Wellington  
 Telephone: (04) 499-2066  
 Fax: (04) 471-0896  
 Email: julia@rmtunion.org.nz

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

TIMARU PORT BRANCH



Brad Easton (l), track worker and Timaru rail branch secretary/treasurer Joe Holland.



Tony Mann (l) and Laurie Barnes.

Above - (l to r) Mike Dash, Andy Grindley, Tony Lister, Mike Balchim, Mike Nijssen, Geoff Pickering, Josh Meyer and Glen Davidson

**T**HIS branch and its executive deeply miss our departed brother Brian Cronin. His support, guidance and friendship will be irreplaceable. Our thoughts, prayers and condolences go to Brian's family and our thanks for their sharing of a great comrade and friend.

The willingness of the incumbent National Government to pander to Warner Brothers to encourage industry in New Zealand raises the issue of rolling stock construction. In April the RMTU and Dunedin City Council commissioned a BERL Report

HILLSIDE BRANCH

to look at the business case of building EMUs in New Zealand. The resulting report was overwhelmingly favourable: between 770 and 1270 jobs would be created, \$230 to \$250 million added to the GDP; and \$60 to \$70 million in tax revenue for the Government's coffers. John Key's indecent haste to seduce Warner Brothers with cash and law changes seems totally at odds with his party's and KiwiRail's dismissal of the BERL report. The only parallel we could find

was Steven Joyce's referral to a "Cinderella Industry".

It appears that international pressure has been brought to bear in the EMU tender process with another six tenders being added after the short-list was announced. This scribe understands that the original four tenders expressed their dissatisfaction at the unusual business practices on display, and may not continue with the process. Is this another example of a foreign

*Continued on the next page*

 Please cut on the dotted line

RMTU ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP

**T**HE Ernest William File Scholarship was established in 1978 by members of the Locomotive Engineers Association as a tribute to Ernest William File, the retiring general secretary of the Association. The Scholarship was continued and expanded by the Combined Union of Railway Employees and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union has continued to support it on the same basis.

The scholarship is open to male or female applicants in two groups:

- ◆ those who are the children of a locomotive engineer; and

- ◆ those who have a parent who is a member of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union at the time of application.

Three years

The scholarship is tenable for a maximum period of three years at any university or tertiary institution in New Zealand, by a scholar undertaking full time study for his or her first degree or qualification. The value of the scholarship is \$1500 a third of which shall be applied in each of the three years during which the scholarship is tenable.

Written applications may be made on the application form on the following page and should include details of your most recent scholastic achievements, career intentions, the names and addresses of two referees and sent to the address below before 31 January 2005.

The General Secretary  
Rail & Maritime Transport Union  
PO Box 1103  
WELLINGTON

Application also available on website at:  
[rmtunion.org.nz/services](http://rmtunion.org.nz/services)

## HILLSIDE BRANCH [cont]

government pressuring the New Zealand Government to change its thinking? Does this change in focus signal a move to price over quality? If this is the case, what does this bode for the future? A fleet of cheap, unreliable EMUs, locomotives and wagons. How does that effect the much publicised 'Turnaround' Plan? It's starting to look like a 'turnaround' for the worse. Can Auckland move ahead with its rail network with an unreliable, third-world rail fleet, or is this the real agenda, to discredit rail once and for all?

### New building

Kiwirail has called tenders for 300 container wagons to be built next year. The workshops have been allowed to tender for these wagons. This contract will test our ability to work smarter, leaner, and be innovative to meet a tight deadline. We can do this by Hutt and the Dunedin Engineering Cluster working together. If it requires new ways of thinking, then we must consult and find the best way forward. The alternative of imported rolling stock spells doom for many in our industry.

Len Brown's election in Greater Auckland and his desire for an efficient, reliable and user friendly rail network is a positive



*Kenneth Lobb (l) receives his Certificate of Appreciation from RMTU national president Jim Kelly.*

outcome. The challenge that the Hillside Branch will put to Mayor Brown is to give Kiwi workers a fair chance to tender for his city's rail work. Not handouts, but an opportunity for a fair go at bidding for our work, and recognition of the added value this means in dollars earned in New Zealand and real jobs created. If not the EMUs, why not the pylons and other infrastructure?

Last night on TV we saw Dr Brash outline his requirements for raising New Zealand wages and living standards to parity with the Australians. They included slashing government spending by \$9 billion, cutting taxes, reducing beneficiary numbers by "ambitious" welfare reform, raising the pension

age, cutting subsidies for health and education, reducing the minimum wage, selling state-owned assets and vigorously encouraging foreign investment. John Key's reaction was a shrug of his shoulders and an "I don't know". This government continues to favour supporting foreign workers by effectively exporting our jobs thus allowing the economy to shrink and stagnate.

### Retirement

December 22 will be the last working day for our valued and popular workmate Ken Lobb. Ken is retiring after almost 51 years at Hillside. Ken has contributed widely to life at Hillside, playing basketball as an EAP representative, and since July 1985 administrator of the Apprentice Tool Fund. This fund has \$16,000 and last year members bought \$11,000 worth of tools and car parts at huge discounts. Ken has expended uncounted hours of his own time to this cause. The branch organised an RMTU Certificate of Appreciation for Ken which national president Jim Kelly presented at the AGM. The Hillside Branch thanks Ken for his dedication and wishes him well for his well earned retirement.

All that remains is to wish all RMTU members and their families a Merry Christmas and the best for a happy and successful 2011. 🇳🇿

## ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Surname Of Applicant:  Christian Names:

Contact postal address for academic year:

Age (yy:mm):  Date of birth:

University/institute at which enrolled:

Degree/qualification(s) for which enrolled:

Student ID if known

Which year is this of your undergraduate study? (eg first, second etc.):

References (use separate sheets if necessary):

Latest academic results (Sixth or Seventh Form and certified copy of Bursary results) – attach copies:

Parents name & signature:

Loco Running  Non Loco Running:  Parents please indicate

Applicant's Signature:

Date of Application:

**A**LTHOUGH the past three months (August – October) have been quiet months there has still been plenty happening at Port Otago.

## The tug 'Otago'

The Otago was slipped on 12 August to enable the fitting of a new grid cooling system. The \$350,000 project entailed fitting external cooling radiators to replace the existing internal cooling system which did not have sufficient capacity to enable Otago to operate in all harbour conditions, particularly during periods when there are increased levels of harbour weed. The upgrade solved these issues and has enhanced its operating capacity.

## Log exports

Like other ports, log exports continue at record levels and in the year ended 30 June were 100,000m higher than the previous record set for this port in 2001. Logs are now also being loaded at the Dunedin wharves as well as at Port Chalmers and with the market outlook being positive it is expected that log exports will continue at this higher level for some time yet.

## Crane demolition

During July and early August the Port Otago original PACECO No 1 container crane was demolished, cut up and removed – an extremely slick operation that went

## PORT CHALMERS BRANCH

without a hitch and in double quick time.

## Channel deepening

Submissions closed on August 13 with the Otago Regional Council for the channel deepening consents. In all, 188 submissions were received – 142 in opposition, 13 neutral and 33 in support. The company has asked for a delay in the council hearing date to allow more work to be done in some areas and to also spend time with some submitters to work through their areas of concern. A likely hearing date is March 2011.

## Collective agreement

Negotiations began in early June to renew our collective agreement which expired on 9 July. It was very optimistic to expect agreement would be reached prior to the expiry date. In fact, final acceptance and ratification by members of RMTU and MUNZ finally occurred in late September.

## Lyttelton/Otago merger

The merger negotiations with Lyttelton took much longer than expected. In November 2008, the Board signed an agreement with the LPC Board to study the benefits of a merger. It was expected the process would take about 12 months to complete. At the beginning of October the process was

further complicated by the damage caused to LPC by the Christchurch earthquake and was called off by the LPC Board. The prospect of a merger has now ended.

## Dredging

The dredge 'New Era' departed Port Chalmers during October to complete Lyttelton's annual maintenance dredging programme. Prior to this the 'New Era' has been busy at the Dunedin berths. With an increased level of shipping in Dunedin with logs from Leith wharf and fertilizer from the T&U berth there has been a concentrated programme of dredging at these berths and adjacent areas.

## Rail operations

Fonterra Mosgiel is moving the transportation of their containers to Rail. KiwiRail have been in discussion with Port Otago regarding these changes and the impact on both parties. Trialling began on 18 October and hopefully by the time this is published any problems will have been sorted and the operations is going smoothly for all concerned.

A Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to all RMTU members. Have a safe and relaxing festive season and come back refreshed as there is a lot of work to be done in the new year. 🇳🇿

*Continued from the back page*

mere eight kilometres at a cost of 140,000 combat deaths, or roughly one dead soldier for every five centimetres. The Germans recaptured the lost ground five months later. Figures vary for how many died but they range from 250,000 to 300,000 Allied forces and between 230,000 and 400,000 Germans. Curiously, Adolf Hitler fought



in the Battle as a member of the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division. If only . . . .

In the years following 1917, New Zealanders remembered the sacrifices at Passchendaele and other battles – most visibly with hundreds of war memorials.

In 1925 the minister of railways, Gordon Coates, agreed to name a steam locomotive 'in memory of those members of the New Zealand Railways who fell in the Great War'. More than 5,000 railwaymen served overseas between 1914 and 1918 (out of a total workforce of 14,000),

*Troops at the Battle of Menin Road near the Western Front.*



*The Ab608 with the original memorial plaques.*

and 447 were killed. The name Passchendaele was chosen and two memorial plates were attached to the sides of an Ab 608.

In 1927 the gleaming 'Passchendaele' hauled the Duke and Duchess of York's

royal train.

The nameplates were removed during WWII and put on display at Christchurch and Dunedin railway stations. By the time it was withdrawn from service in 1967, Ab 608 had steamed more than 2.4 million kilometres. It is currently being restored at Paekakariki. 🇳🇿

# Passchendaele remembered

**A**RMISTICE DAY recalling the end of World War One on November 11, 1918 was marked with dignity and honour at Hutt Workshops this year with the unveiling of a special memorial.

With flags flying at half mast, KiwiRail staff laid poppies on the new memorial at the mechanical workshops in a special service at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month – the time and date the war ended.

More than 7500 railway workers served in World War I, more than half the entire workforce. Of those, 444 were killed.

KiwiRail director Bryan Jackson said the memorial was a way to honour the Kiwi soldiers who served their country, and the railwaymen among them.

“When you consider the loss of life and impact of the battle, this single contribution doesn’t seem anywhere enough recognition for the loss of life,” he told the assembled at a short ceremony.

Belgian exchange student Manoelle Godin, 18, was at the service, and read the Ode of Remembrance in Flemish and English.

In Belgium, Armistice Day is a public holiday. Godin said she was proud to take part in the service where she was accompanied by former railway worker Eileen Smeaton, 95, in laying a wreath.

Smeaton, who worked as a shorthand typist at the time, said: “It’s wonderful that people remember – it feels like they didn’t die in vain.”

In December last year the plaque, which was hanging in an office, was found and management promoted a competition to make something of – and for – it.



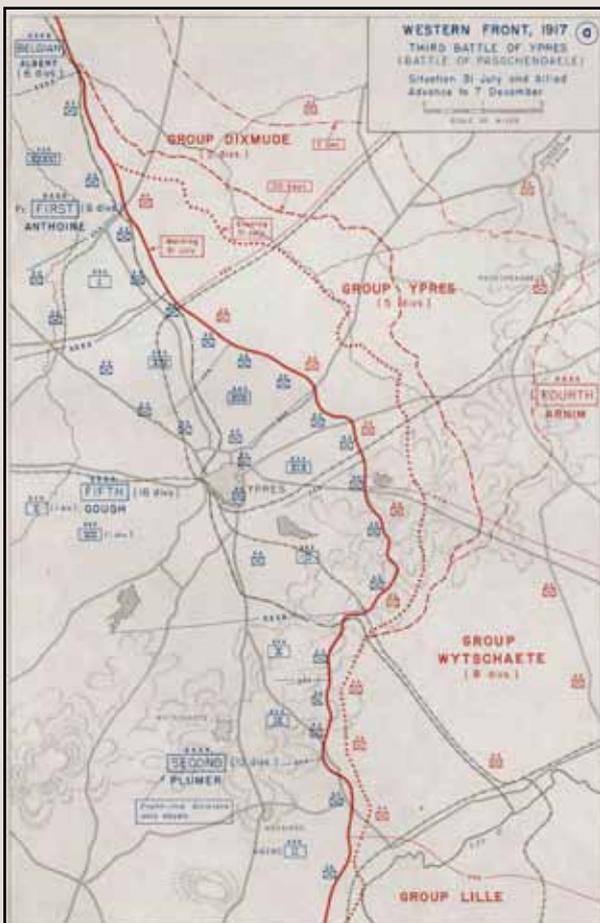
(l to r) Kneeling: Murray Hewitt and Yogesh Reddy; Standing: Isimelli Volavola, Paul Sheerin, Geoff Osborne, Phil Bosworth, Peter Peteru, Manu Barclay, Mike Foster back of Dave Smith, Jerome Alefosio, Joe Soane and Naresh Kumar.

Two men in Phil Bosworth’s team – Murray Hewitt and Richard Eades – drew up an idea and won. Richard is now at Westfield Wagon Depot.

Phil was then asked (‘told’ he says) as team leader to drive its completion. Jim Kelly and Tim Spence were contacted to find a wheel which Tim found in Oamaru and sent to the Hutt Shops where an old DFT was machined and pressed.

Phil then got another group to mount the wheel on the tracks and sleepers donated by ONTRACK and sent the assembled parts to Triple R, Palmerston North, who kindly donated the sandblasting and zinc coating. It was then painted by the paint shop at Hutt.

Phils says there is also an RSA poem – two verses of it – being cast by Hillside that will be fitted onto the sleeper each side of the wheel and a metal poppy, still to be manufactured, which will be placed under the wheel. 🇳🇿



Map showing the battle lines around Ypres.

## From the battle to the locomotive

**S**INCE 1917 Passchendaele has become synonymous with the misery of grinding warfare in thick mud. For many the name conjures images of a landscape of mud, shell craters and barbed wire, and of helpless soldiers mown down by machine-guns and artillery. The capture of the Belgian village of Passchendaele (Passendale), near Ypres (Ieper) in Flanders, became an objective that cost thousands of lives.

For New Zealand soldiers it began in

June 1917. The battle for Passchendaele reached its climax nearly four months later in early October. Even then, the misery was not over. In December, at Polderhoek, the New Zealanders suffered another costly setback. By the time they were finally withdrawn in February 1918, they had suffered more than 18,000 casualties – including around 5,000 deaths.

Although inflicting terrible casualties on the Germans, the Allies captured a

*Continued on the previous page - page 27*