

THE Transport Worker

ISSUE 4 • DECEMBER 2009

SEA-SIDE STAND OFF AT TARANAKI



Greenpeace protesters caught in the act. Page 20

MATANGI SHOWS OFF



The new Matangi mock-up in Korea shows off its new emergency exit. More photos and story pages 14 & 15

NEW LOCOS



Bernie Snook looks at a Chinese mock-up of a new DL cab. Pages 16 & 17

Conference report 2009

Challenging times ahead

Stronger Together was the theme for Conference 2009 and the clarion call for 2010. The theme was also reflected in the number – and the diversity – of international guests who attended this year:

■ From the United Kingdom we had three delegates from the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT): General secretary Bob Crow; president John Leach; and Council of Executive representative Oliver New.

www.rmt.org.uk/

■ From Japan we had two delegates from the Japan Confederation of Railway Unions (JRU): President, Masaharu Takei; and deputy director international affairs Mizue Taoka.

www.jru7.net/

■ From Australia we had representatives from three unions:

- Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) deputy national secretary Michael Doleman; Victoria deputy branch secretary David Schelibs; and North NSW deputy branch secretary Len Covell and Stephan Paras.

www.mua.org.au/

- Rail Tram & Bus Union Australia (RTBU) national industrial officer Andrew Thomas.

www.rtbu-nat.asn.au/

- Transport Workers Union (TWU) NSW State secretary Wayne Forno; and Wollongong sub-branch secretary Richard Olsen.

www.twu.com.au/

Conference was formally opened by the president of the CTU, Helen Kelly, who touched on the themes for this year's CTU Biennial Conference:

■ Unions creating an alternative economic strategy; and
■ Union change – a new-look union movement.

She expanded on the need to adapt to change work environments and that of a low wage service industry with fewer larger employers. On behalf of the CTU



A rousing baka in honour of international guests to Conference.

she challenged affiliated unions to find new methods of representation, make unions more accessible to non-members and young people and reach out to the traditionally hard to organise sectors.

Grim views

Both the president Jim Kelly and the general secretary Wayne Butson spoke about the RMTU and the economic and industrial landscape and the challenges they bring plus the need for consolidation of the multi-employer collective agreements into one document and the advantages and opportunities this would bring. Amalgamation and the need for one national waterfront union was also discussed as well as the need to meet ITF obligations in regards to ports and the Flag of Convenience campaign.

Two messages were clear;

■ the need and challenge to consolidate the Rail MECAs into one document bringing all employees of KiwiRail and Veolia into the same collective agreement; and

■ the need for one national



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WWW.RMTUNION.ORG.NZ

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RMTU – NZ's Largest Specialist Transport Union

CONFERENCE

waterfront union to represent all port workers in New Zealand putting the amalgamation debate back on the table.

Japanese zeal

Brother Takei from the JRU gave a stirring speech calling for the end to the evils of international globalisation and the need for international solidarity. He went on to outline the changes happening in Japan due to the policies of the previous government and the election of a new more centrist government. He also gave an update on the plight of the JRU 7 and presented Conference with a flag signed by JRU members and the JRU 7 with messages of solidarity. The flag was received with a standing ovation and a call for a letter of support to be sent to the JRU 7. An RMTU flag was taken from the wall with a motion from the floor that our own messages of solidarity be written on it and presented to the JRU 7 at their 30th rally on our behalf. For more information on the JRU 7:

www.jru7.net/caravan2009.htm.

Brother Forno from the TWU spoke of their work in regards to density campaigns to build power in the workplace, to ensure safer workplaces, and to keep and enhance current terms and conditions. The TWU is made up of independent contractors, couriers and truck owner drivers who are working side by side with employees to make improvements for all. This was highlighted with a 5% campaign in Toll that saw the sub-contractors receive a pay increase as well.

Brother Doleman from the MUA spoke of multi-level worker solidarity from international unionism through the ITUC and ITF to local alliances such as the Oil Drilling Alliance with the AMWU, MUNZ and EPMU which seeks Maersk drilling in NZ with workers on the Australian agreement.

He spoke of the wish to see one stevedor-



RMTU president Jim Kelly receiving a gift from JRU president Masabaru Takei.



(l to r) General secretary Wayne Butson, president Jim Kelly and vice president Aubrey Wilkinson giving strong leadership to the conference.

JRU president Masabaru Takei (l) proudly holds up the RMTU solidarity greeting for the JRU7 with Les Ingram.



ing union in NZ. The MUA went through the same process of amalgamations and now reap the advantages of good organising campaigns that involve members doing one-on-one contact with potential members who realise that they all need to take ownership of making their union stronger, including undertaking such tasks as one-on-one recruiting.

British showstopper

Brother Crow from the RMT made a huge impression talking about the industrial relations landscape in Great Britain and his own union – an amalgamation of four railway unions – and reiterated that density in numbers is the basis of power and that everything they do in the workplace is to organise, organise, organise. The RMT don't stop until they have 100% membership in growth campaigns, and once they have achieved that goal they reach out to the community to ensure that the community gets a great service.

Brother Thomas from the RTBU spoke on a wide range of thought-provoking issues including the need for alternative transport systems for both passenger and freight transport and the need to get cars out of the main cities, including a seamless system of transport in moving people in the best way possible – be it road, rail, air or a mixture. He also spoke of the new Australian industrial relations system called "Fair work". One strong message from his speech was that when all transport unions walk into an employer's office the message and the result is clear. We

are "Stronger Together".

Darren Hughes, who was the NZ Labour Party's representative, spoke candidly about the election results and what is needed to revitalise the party and the role of affiliated unions to provide a lobby for better workplace legislation.

Then it was the Minister of Transport Steven Joyce's turn. He reiterated the National Party policy direction and stated that KiwiRail needed to show that it was able to put forward a good business case that included being commercially viable.

CEO perspective

The Conference then had the opportunity to listen to Jim Quinn, chief executive of KiwiRail, who presented his perspective on the issues and difficulties that lay ahead for rail. He spoke of the need for long term investment and highlighted the current capital investment projects already under way. He recognised the wealth of knowledge and long service of employees within the rail industry whilst commenting on the surprising amount of disconnect and lack of mutual respect among the different parts of the business.

A new face for Conference was Bill Rosenberg, CTU economist, who took over the role from Peter Conway. Bill provided an informative and worker perspective truth about the economy. He filled Peter's shoes comfortably and the delegates were treated to a digestible bevy of facts and figures.

Marion Edwin, ergonomist, introduced The Transport Worker December 2009

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her Port Nelson research project on Musculoskeletal Disorders in Crane and Forklift Operators; identifying the following issues:

- Limited knowledge of discomfort causation and appreciation of relevance;
- Shift work, work period length and organisation;
- Gear design, selection, use and ship's crane issues; and
- The need for sound work habits.

She spoke about the need to look at the ergonomics of crane and forklift design and operation. Delegates agreed that further investigation in this field was needed.

Centreport's chief executive Blair O'Keeffe spoke on the current port issues and told delegates that imports are down and will stay down as the NZ\$ is high and this is affecting recovery. He also spoke of opportunities such as the now scrapped "Sea Change" strategy and the need for ports to work co-operatively and to look at integrated transport.

Conference 2009 was also the stage where we re-launched the revamped and updated RMTU Health & Safety Handbook.

The "Getting Financially Sorted" session was an interactive and fun workshop run by Lynn Young. The hope of Conference was that attendees will report back to their branches and spread the message that workers need to be financially sorted prior to retirement.

www.sorted.org.nz/

CTU attacks ACC

The closing address was given by CTU secretary Peter Conway who spoke of the effects of the recession on unemployment

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Bill Rosenberg, CTU



Wayne Forno, TWU



David Schelibs



Wayne Butson and Helen Kelly, CTU



Steven Joyce, Minister of "Road" Transport



Mick Doleman, MUA



MPs (above)
Darren Fenton
(l) Darren Hughes

Bob Crow
RMT & John Marsh



Andrew Thomas, RTBU

JRU's Masabaru Takei and Mizue Taoka



The official Conference photograph.

JUST when “things” should be winding down as we approach year's end “things” are actually heating up for the RMTU.

We find ourselves engaged on a number of fronts as we react (or should that be, take action against) others affecting our members.

The fallout from the Fonterra decision to rearrange its transport logistic supply chain here in Aoteroa has highlighted that nothing is going to change under this government to the yo-yo cycle of public spending on port infrastructure that is needed one day and redundant the next. Additionally how does the supply chain servicing ports gear up to supply the transport needed to get the tonnage to the shipside if the shipside to which you're delivering is always changing?

At the moment Timaru, Port Chalmers and New Plymouth are suffering cargo loss and Tauranga, Napier and Lyttelton are benefiting from cargo increase but the essential fact is that at the moment the only thing we all know for sure is that Fonterra and Maersk will screw the scrum again at some stage.

Government supports free-for-all?

I recently attended the opening of the rebuilt Number 4 wharf at Port Napier by Road Transport Minister Steven Joyce and he made a point of saying in his opening address that his Government would not interfere in the waterfront of NZ and would allow the market to determine which ports did what and by whom. He stated very firmly that this Government would not be embarking on any form of socialist-type central planning model. Call it what you will, but this Union – and others – just cannot sit idly by whilst one port spends millions of dollars on training, job creation, forklifts, container cranes and other infrastructure (often involving the taking out of hefty loans from offshore lenders) only to have it all lay idle when Maersk and Fonterra decide that they don't want to go there anymore.

For example, this Union greatly respects the leadership displayed by Port Nelson who has stated that they are not interested in investing to become a blue water container port but are happy to be a feeder and general cargo port. A by-product of all of this yo-yoing is that we have growing casualisation and



Wayne Butson, general secretary

highly skilled workers looking for new jobs in a tight economy.

Inferior terms and conditions

In each of these scenarios we see our members being made redundant and then eventually rehired on inferior terms and conditions and “more flexible” than they were previously. This is complicated by the fact that we have strong competition between stevedores as well as ports. Rivalry between ourselves and MUNZ in one port is not assisting as more energy is expended in our mutual struggles than against the boss. On the other we have the yellow union employers – ISO and ISL – getting more aggressive and winning contracts at the expense of our and MUNZ members.

We must have unity between the CTU- and ITF-affiliated unions and we must together fight the burgeoning numbers and work of the yellow unions. This is a plain and simple fact.

MUNZ and RMTU submitted for the first time ever a joint report to the November 2009 docker's section meeting of the ITF on Tauranga and ISO and ISL. RMTU did not attend the meeting but MUNZ sent its vice president Garry Parsloe. As I write, we await a report on the outcome but I am sure that our international brothers and sisters have pledged to support us in any campaigns

"A firestorm is raging around ACC but the Government is blindly pressing on."

we may jointly mount. The joint report was thrashed out and developed during the recent ITF Oceania meeting in Sydney. This meeting saw Oceania ITF-affiliated land transport and maritime unions come together and discuss our mutual concerns. What was unanimously agreed by the affiliates is that we will all – collectively and individually – fight anyone who is intending to change honest work within the transport sector into modern slavery. The RMTU will fight on!

Negotiations begin

The work of getting one employment agreement for the rail industry has begun many months before the two MECAs and one CA expire. The reason for this is simple. There is a considerable amount of work to be done if we are to do it right and make sure that we all maintain our terms and conditions of employment. Analysis has shown that there has been quite a bit of “drift” in the wording and provisions of the various agreements and so standardising them will be a challenge. Once a process and bargaining plan is finalised by the negotiating team it will be submitted to members for support or rejection.

Our Annual Conference was a major success and all delegates reported that they enjoyed attending and the learning experience. A report and comments are published in this issue. Thank you to all of your staff for their hard work and support to ensure that the event ran like clockwork and was enjoyable. Arranging this event is a major task and certainly stresses out Julia Harrison for a couple of months leading up to the event. I know you will all join with me in thanking her and all the other members of the Union's staff for their work for Conference and throughout 2010.

The changing agenda of the current Government is in full swing with the Union submitting presently on all manner of legislation changes, the least of which is ACC. The difficulty of this debate is that ACC is complex

and near enough impossible to package into 15 second sound bites for media. Therefore it is essential that members and delegates take the time and make the effort to read all of the material circulated. The fact is that a firestorm is raging around ACC but that the Government is blindly pressing on indicates just how much their supporters are pressing for the scheme to be opened up to privatisation and competition. There are billions of dollars of potential profit to be made by off-shore insurance companies so they will fight very hard to prevail. This just means that we all must fight harder. Most of you remember the shambles of the last time National opened up ACC to competition and so surely that must galvanise you to fight back. 6,000 bikers have shown us the start now we all must get revved up to follow.

Saving SOL

'Back to the future' has begun in rail with the "line by line" review of the network and the mothballing of the Stratford/Okahukura Line (SOL). As you read this the "Save My SOL" logo should be up and running as we campaign for the retention of the current rail network for future generations, to assist the country in being able to meet its greenhouse gas emission targets and to facilitate and support the growth of the Taranaki province. It is sad that after the network is returned to public ownership that we see a line closure occur. Will this herald another mass exodus to Australia of highly skilled rail workers now that it appears the light at the end of the tunnel is dulling? Time will tell.

Christmas and the New Year will soon be upon us and that means that we should all have some time off to be with family and friends and make plans and set goals for 2010. It would be my heartfelt desire that we all do so safely so that we all enjoy the festive season without lamenting the loss of a friend or family member to yet another "preventable" accident. We must also pledge to stand up for and stand beside one another in whatever struggle presents itself in the coming year.

On behalf of myself, the national president Jim Kelly, the National Management Committee and the staff I wish each and every one of you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy, joyous and safe 2010.

Gratitude from Japan

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I'm writing this letter to express my sincere gratitude for sending a warm message to the rally to win acquittal for JRU7. Our struggle has been waged for 7 years. More than 2000 people such as union members, MPs and supporters joined the rally, and we achieved mutual agreement to fight back against oppression with solidarity. If we lose the case, that means the labour movement's actions could be considered to be a criminal offense in the coming years.

Similar to other countries, workers in Japan have also suffered from years of neo-liberal policies and are being relentlessly squeezed. Amid economic recession, expanded numbers of temp-workers have been sacked. There are a lot of jobless people who have lost their houses and are living on the streets.

Encouraged by your message full of solidarity, support and workers' spirit, we can keep fighting fairly in defiance of any suppression. We call on you to stand together beyond national borders in order to create the future for workers.

Yours in solidarity,

Masaharu Takei

President

Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions (JRU)

Dear friends,

Our experience in New Zealand was so lovely, and I am more grateful to all of you than I can say for what you have done for us. I'll never forget the days I spent with your members, and now their faces and voices come back to my mind. I am also glad to see dear old acquaintances in the RMTU.

As for the third day of your Congress, at first we decided to go to the airport directly. We felt sorry to leave during your discussion. Late on the previous night I had a phone call from Mr. Butson. He said, "Mizue, why aren't you coming to the Congress tomorrow?"

The next day we visited the Hutt train depot and then went to the Congress again,

where you had prepared a present for us, a banner with solidarity signatures. Can you guess how much we were surprised and glad to see that? Though most of those there had never seen or heard of the JRU7, they all



The banner signed at Conference is unfurled in Japan and held by two of the JRU7.

shared JRU7's story, their struggle and their hardship. I was on the brink of tears to see the banner.

On November 31 we had a rally to support the acquittal of the JRU7 in Tokyo. There we showed your banner to the 2300 participants. Brother Wayne Butson also sent a warm message to the rally. He wrote "We are proud to call the JRU7 our brothers. Your struggle is our struggle." His message was delivered to the JRU7 and all our union members.

Thank you for giving us great courage. I wish I could tell you the good result of our fighting.

As a longstanding friend, you have supported and encouraged us in our fight. Thank you for that and I wish our friendship will be further promoted.

Mizue Taoka

International office of JRU

Please visit our website:

www.jru7.net/

Retirement

Dear Editor,

Finally I have time in retirement to pen a thank you note to the team at RMTU head-

Continued on the next page



quarters and to all members nationwide who form a great bond in what has been a difficult era. I especially wish to thank our group in Palmerston North who allowed me the space on the roster to enable me to settle our grandson into the family which helped considerably. As it turned out it was necessary due to my failing health to retire earlier than I have intended after advice from specialists. My desire to reach a



Ross and Barbara Allen (centre) flanked by Wayne Butson (l) and KiwiRail's John Sargent

ripe old age spent with my wife and family and friends had to take precedence. Now four months later I appreciate the decision made was in everyone's best interests, including mine.

At this stage I don't miss driving trains contrary to what I had thought. I appreciate the comradeship I had with many people from up top to the fresh off the block new people, whether it was train controllers, fellow engineers, mechanical and servicing, track gangs, traction, passenger staff, shunters and second persons, signals, administration and welfare as well as the RMTU team.

It has been a pleasure working with you all. Each day or night was a new day and even though we had new challenges and probably a few axes to grind we got there and got the job done.

The frustrations after 46.6 years would have to be the way we got pushed here, shunted there and abandoned by would be experts who didn't have a clue what made the Railways tick, and never went low enough down the D3 to find out. We were supposed to be negative (and can't you wonder why) but deep down the answers were there, to provide a service and upgrade the equipment, so it's good to see it now slowly happening.

I recall times in the past when as chairman, branch secretary, and advocate for the

EF&CA, LEA, CURE and latterly to a lesser degree RMTU as I stepped to one side. They were good times as we were always on a learning curve and the training we got then and now were always beneficial as the latest recruits will find out as time goes by. Even though our interests were probably initially self motivated there was no greater pleasure than coming out of an office or Appeal Court knowing you had represented and helped someone who had fallen by the wayside. The whole process helped restore self esteem and also establish respect for the person concerned. They could then move forward with a better attitude and respect into the future.

I would like to thank Brian Fryer, John Sargent, Robin Simmons and Trevor Bremner for helping me when my health went downhill fast and for giving me the best advice which was appreciated. I also appreciated the invitation to the Silver Spike Award. Having just finished work a month previous this really made me realise that the best part of being a railwayman is the people you work with and deal with day by day. I thank you all from deep down for great times I have been privileged to be part of over the years, even to the guy who sent me to the store on my first day for a 'long wait'! I had many more of these over the years sitting in loops so I considered the exercise not as frustration but a definite learning curve.

Thank you one and all for the wonderful experiences you have given to me, my wife and family and the lovely gifts we received on the occasion of my farewell.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a great New Year.
Ross & Barbara Allen
Palmerston North

Gratitude from ex-MP

Dear Editor,
Thanks so much to you and your RMTU colleagues for this kind message. I have a feeling we may well be working together on common issues in future – who knows – but I have no intention of giving up on taking an active role in community, union and political life.
With best wishes,
Sue Bradford

UnionAID appeal

Dear Rail & Maritime Transport Union, I am writing to thank the union for the generous foundation grant to UnionAID. This initial support from unions will provide a sound financial base from which to build our UnionAID programmes to assist vulnerable workers in our Asia-Pacific region.

Your union's grant will enable us, in many projects with \$4 to \$1 support from NZ AID, to build partnership projects to help workers in developing countries in our region. The projects will support workers, through education and training, to build effective unions with the objective of providing decent work and better conditions for their families.

As you may know we already have successful projects with Dalit workers in South India and Burmese migrant workers on the Thai border. It is our intention to keep you informed about these and other projects so you have a good understanding of the real, and practical, benefits your donation helps to provide.

Other project options we are currently planning include:

- A joint Pacific programme with the Australian Council of Trade Unions aid organisation APHEDA,
- A training programme for women leaders of Burmese migrant workers on the Thai border,
- A work skills training programme for Agent Orange disabled youth in Vietnam,
- Occupational safety and health training in Vietnam and Lao,
- A capacity building project for workers in export processing zone in Sri Lanka,
- Trade union development and capacity building in Timour-Leste.

The union donation will help some of the most vulnerable workers and their families get a fairer deal and to build strong democratic unions for the workers who most need them.

So please convey my thanks to your union leadership and members for joining UnionAID as Foundation Union Members.
Yours sincerely
Ross Wilson
Executive chair

Labour: Only hope for workers

By Jim Kelly
RMTU president



Jim Kelly and Masabaru Takei holding the JRU solidarity banner

is a well known fan of the third-world way; making workers work harder and longer for less while he and his mates live in luxurious glory. As Don would say: "The people have spoken and we must follow their will".

Well it's up to us to tell Don where to go.

It's worth noting that between 1980 and 2008, worker productivity in this country grew by a staggering 82% according to figures recently released by the CTU. In that same period, real wages increased by 18%. So what happened to that money, where did it go? The reality is that it has gone into higher profits for business. In other words the CEOs and captains of industry have never had it so good.

It is also becoming apparent that, with Government support, there is a much more aggressive stance being taken by some employers with increased lockouts and a refusal to consider even minimal pay adjustments. We have examples in two of our ports: Port Otago and Timaru. The former suffered a loss of trade of around 15% and our branch officers there are doing their utmost to keep as many jobs as possible. They need to be congratulated on doing a sterling job. Timaru also suffered a loss of trade but the management plan was more hostile including staff redundancies followed by, you guessed, re-employment on inferior terms and conditions. This is still being worked through and once again congratulations to

our branch officers who are doing a great job trying to get the best work conditions out of a horrible and hostile situation.

We as a Union must be determined not to allow any group of workers to be isolated or have their agreements torn up. That requires every union member to become involved and willing to defend any other worker being attacked. It could be us under attack tomorrow.

Some employers have adopted a reasonable stance both in respect of maintaining jobs and negotiating on pay increases, and unions are settling collective agreements with them – including wage rises.

The severity of the financial crisis has underlined the risks faced by small open economies like ours. However, the recession cannot be used as an excuse to drive down the terms and conditions of workers. They cannot be asked to pay the heaviest price for a crisis that was not of their making. A fairer and more equal society has to be built and efforts need to be made to develop the best possible educated workforce. This requires partnerships between government, business, unions and the voluntary sector.

This is a time of great concern for trade unions.

The future for rail looks bleak under Joyce and his Government. We only need to look at the 1990s to see where we are perhaps headed. The Rail industry has only ever asked for a level playing field with other transport modes. The road transport industry is, in our view, heavily subsidised by the NZ taxpayer and so we ask that a similar subsidy for rail infrastructure also be paid.

This Government said they would not sell KiwiRail in their first electoral term but they didn't say they wouldn't destroy it!

It's time for those of you who didn't vote in the last election or who voted for National/Act to be feeling a tinge of anxiety if you work in rail – you may have voted yourself out of a job!

Our only hope is that Labour gets back in at the next election so that we again get central planning that thinks of NZ and the creation of a sustainable transport system which does not have dependence on peak oil at its core. 🌍

As you all know, we now have the 'pleasure' of being governed by a coalition government led by the National Party. The attacks on workers and their families we predicted last year are now coming home to roost. The first was on ACC with their biased figures predicting it was going bankrupt. They then sack board members including Ross Wilson and Wayne Butson. Since then they have moved on to attack physiotherapists, audiologists and elective surgery and are pushing for more and more competition in dealing with workers' injuries and compensation. As predicted, they also brought in their 'sack at will' 90-day bill, gutted the KiwiSaver and are actively looking at where they can attack the Holidays Act. Now meal and rest break legislation is at risk.

Workers who rely on ACC are already seeing the cost burden of treatment and rehabilitation shifting to the injured worker. There are also recent reports coming through of higher rejection rates for applications for elective surgery.

On top of all this is a proposal to consider handing to employers the management of injuries sustained outside the workplace. This would result in undue interference by employers in the private lives of their employees and must be rejected as completely unacceptable.

The Government has set up a Tax Working Group, which is looking at raising the level of GST. The rise is proposed in order to lower income tax rates, however, any rise in GST will hit low income people hardest. This country needs to maintain a progressive tax system – one that has higher proportional rates for those more able to pay.

They are also looking at private prisons despite there being no evidence that they perform better than state-run prisons and any savings come at the expense of working conditions and reduced services.

They have put Rodney Hide in charge of local government which includes ports of course. This is no accident as he already stated that local government was a core issue for his party and should not be involved in the running of any business. On top of that we have Don Brash in charge of productivity improvements for the country. We don't need to guess where the Don would see productivity improvements. He

Conference report continued

reminding delegates that in 1999, when Labour came into parliament, unemployment was 162,000. He spoke in-depth on the attack on ACC and the abandonment of the "Sea Change" strategy.

This report would not be complete without mentioning that the Conference honored our international guests with a rousing haka – with varying degrees of expertise – in which all participated and enjoyed the moment.

Conference regrettably came to an end all too soon with new friendships and networks being made and old friendships stronger. The international guests left delegates with plenty to think about and a better understanding of international solidarity and the global war being waged on workers' rights.

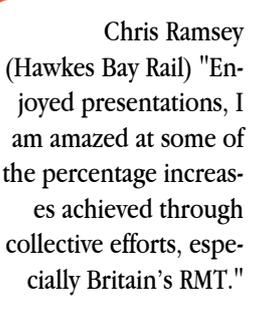
Humbling message

We were humbled by the plight of the JRU 7 and the solidarity shown by the JRU; impassioned by the strong words and personality of Bob Crow from the RMT whilst the Australians reminded us once again of the ANZAC spirit and the strength of solidarity and that we can learn from – and support – each other.

Most of all we left Conference recharged, reinvigorated and energised with the knowledge that our Union is as strong as ever, adaptive to an ever changing environment with good leadership and keen delegates armed with the knowledge that we are "Stronger Together". 🌐



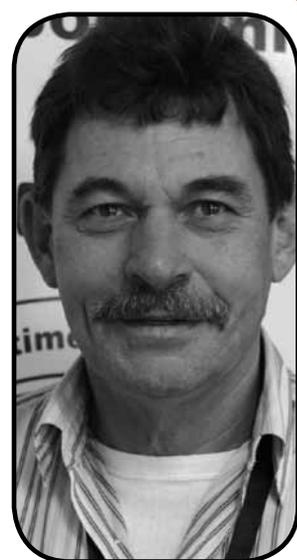
Randolph Sladen (general rep & Auckland branch secretary) "An eye opener, great learning from our international guests and their experiences. Great meeting other RMTU delegates. I will be taking what I have learnt back to the Auckland branch."



Chris Ramsey (Hawkes Bay Rail) "Enjoyed presentations, I am amazed at some of the percentage increases achieved through collective efforts, especially Britain's RMT."



Jeff Barker (Northland Rail) "A real eye opener, particularly our solidarity with unions globally. We are managing to be a force to be reckoned with to prevent what has occurred in the past."



Fred Miles (West Coast Rail) "A bit over my head, not too sure what it is all about. Looking forward to the workshop sessions."



Karl Price (Bay of Plenty Port) "Pretty interesting, all new to me as a delegate, still learning. I really enjoyed Bob Crow's presentation. A well organised conference."



George Laird (Organiser) "Re-enforcing the solidarity of RMTU through the drive of delegates, international support and the mutual esteem we hold each other in."



Bill Andrews (Bay of Plenty Port) "Very informative, revealed a global situations of similarity. Conference will assist me to resolve local and national issues."



Kenneth Midgley [aka the duck] (Auckland) "I was quite interested and taken aback by other unions coming to our conference and telling us about their struggles. I will be recommending conference to our new delegates."

RMTU National Conference 2009

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– new comers and observers



TWU – Wollongong sub-branch secretary, Richard Olsen. "I was very impressed with the organisation of your conference, sticking to the agenda and business which shows good strong leadership. Excellent quality of speakers, especially Helen Kelly from the CTU."



Brad Eason (Timaru Rail)
"Great social networking."



Pauline Evans (Port Chalmers)
"Very good conference, international speakers were the highlight to me."



RMT general secretary - Bob Crow: "The RMTU Conference was like having a syringe full of enthusiasm in my blood stream. The RMTU is tremendously similar to Britain's RMT. It is so good we can learn from each other's practical experiences and build on the great support that we can give each other and other workers throughout the world."



Tania Haraki (Marlborough Rail)
"The comradeship and togetherness at conference is just inspiring."



Telai Sefesi (Komiti Pacifica rep) – awesome, I love being around other enthusiastic union people.



Jackie Poole (Christchurch Rail)
"Really interesting, international guests a highlight, similar issues to us, great to know we have their support."



Pat Pikari (Wellington Port)
"Bloody awesome. International guest speakers were great. I have learnt a lot."



Rudi Brens (Auckland Rail)
"I have found conference fascinating, learning a lot from other unions. I am very surprised how some countries treat their workers, especially Japan."



John Sinclair (Otago Rail)
"Brilliant, the level of international guest speakers has been a real eye opener. I am looking forward to taking back what I have learnt to the branch."



Averil Van de Vlierd (Port Chalmers)
"Pretty good conference, very informative, international guest speakers were the highlight for me, they have similar issues and views to us."

Jeremy Diskin (Nelson Port)
"Very interesting. Met many delegates and was made very welcome. Good to hear what is going on around the place."



Key Legislative changes to ACC

- Reverse changes made last year to provide fairer access to income compensation for part-time and casual workers. This will discriminate against some 400,000 New Zealanders who work in areas such as retail, hospitality, tourism, agriculture and fisheries and meat plants.
- Make it harder for people with hearing loss caused by their work, to get hearing aids by the introduction of a 6% threshold. This will affect thousands of New Zealanders.
- Reduce entitlements for work-related diseases and make it harder for people to get claims accepted. This is bound to have the perverse effect of removing incentives for employers to make their workplaces safer for workers, as well as being unfair on workers who become sick as a result of chemicals and other things they are exposed to at work.
- Introduce experience rating or so-called safety incentives for employers to get lower levies if they reduce accidents in the workplace. While there are already discounts in place for employers who introduce better safety practices, incentives should not be connected to accident numbers. This happened under the last National Government and simply encouraged employers to pressure workers into not reporting accidents.
- Introduce the ability to enable ACC to offer cheaper levies for people with new, safer cars – effectively penalising those who can't afford new cars.
- Replace vocational independence and rehabilitation threshold of capacity for work for 35 hours per week with capacity to work for 30 hours per week.
- Remove the requirement for a Ministerial Advisory Panel on work-related gradual process disease and another for disease, or infection and injury surveillance.
- The families of suicide victims will no longer get ACC support.



RMTU bikers join protest

RMTU members Biggles Maindonald (left) and John West (Westie) of Port Taranaki, along with several thousand other bikers joined in the protest against the proposed ACC levies increases and its possible privatisation. Biggles flew the RMTU flag from the back of his bike.

About 500 New Zealanders commit suicide a year. Until now they got a funeral grant, a lump sum payout and weekly compensation. The cost of the scheme last year was \$14 million.

- The Bill also pushes out the deadline for fully-funding ACC claims from 2015 to 2019 to reduce levy increases and smooth out the cost of fully-funding the scheme. Labour supports this. 🇳🇿

STOP NATIONAL'S ACC RIP-OFF There is no ACC crisis

- The government claims ACC is insolvent. ACC has over \$11 billion of reserves and last year collected \$1 billion more in levies than it spent on claims. National's ACC cuts and levy hikes are a rip-off
- Don't pay more for National's scare-mongering – they misled the media into reporting ACC increases for a car registration of \$130 per annum and then put it up by \$30.
- At a time when family budgets are stretched, National is increasing levies for people like car owners and motorcyclists, and making you pay more for your care, so it can privatise parts of ACC.
- Privatisation is estimated by Merrill Lynch Australia to mean \$2 billion revenue for Australian insurers – at a profit of \$200 million per annum. That can only be paid for by increases in levies

and decreases in cover. Kiwis will pay the price if National privatises ACC.

- National's ACC changes mean you will pay more than you have to in levies and for your own care.
- New Zealand has the world's best accident compensation scheme. Labour want to keep it that way, because you need ACC if you have an accident.
- National is cutting injury prevention programmes, which just does not make sense.
- ACC costs you less than alternatives. It's cheaper than paying high lawyers' bills, and cheaper than insurance from expensive overseas-owned corporates. ACC is cheaper than the privatised alternatives in Australia. ACC works for New Zealand. 🇳🇿

Changes will affect casual workers

A good example is the case of Nelson's seasonal workers who face lower levels of compensation if they are injured.

Maryan Street, Nelson-based Labour list MP says that the National government is reintroducing an old injustice which was corrected during her time as Minister of ACC.

"Nick Smith is proposing that weekly compensation for seasonal workers who are off work through injury for more than 5 weeks, is calculated across 52 weeks of the year, even if the worker could only find work for 40 weeks that year. Then they get 80% of that. That is unfair."

Changes known to date

OVERALL ACC has made it clear it is cracking down on accepting claims, taking a much harder line on whether they meet its 'legislative' obligations. Among the changes are:

- Moving to reduce the costs of home help which could worsen rehabilitation rates.
- Reducing spending on home and vehicle modifications by at least 20%.
- Axing the Otago Exercise Programme aimed at keeping over 80s out of hospital which has shown a 35% fall of hospital admissions.
- Cutting \$60 million worth of elective surgery spending.
- Introducing a Recover Independence Service (privately run) to get long-term claimants back to work to save \$180 million this financial year.
- Reducing payments to treatment providers (osteopaths, physios, speech therapists etc) which are likely to result in increased co-payments.
- Significantly reducing the cost of high-tech imaging (medical scans).
- Cutting mileage payments for carers.
- Introducing widely opposed changes to the way sexual abuse victims can access counselling.

What Labour said when the law change were introduced last year

- Casual and seasonal workers in retail, hospitality, care, transport, tourism, agricultural and meat plants will be among some of the more than 400,000 casual and seasonal workers who will be affected by the changes.
- These workers have been disadvantaged by the way weekly compensation was calculated. From August, long-term weekly compensation for this group will be based on the workers' earning periods, rather than on the 52 weeks before the injury, which may have included non-earning periods.
- Under the current law most workers are not eligible for weekly compensation if they are "between jobs" or are otherwise on unpaid leave and are injured more than 14 days after stopping work.
- The amendment also extends eligibility for weekly compensation to 28 days after stopping work, addressing the uncertainty for most people who are in this situation and ensuring more workers are eligible for cover.

Save our SOL

FOLLOWING a recent derailment on the Stratford/Okahukura Line (SOL) KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn announced that track repairs would be deferred and the line, meanwhile, mothballed – the inference being that the line may potentially be closed, a cause for serious concern which has been condemned by the Union. The Union is also concerned at the apparent speed with which KiwiRail came to this decision with an announcement expected in early 2010 or even before year's end.

RMTU campaign

In response, the RMTU has launched a campaign to Save Our Stratford Okahukura Line (aka: Save Our Sol or SOS) to allow the NZ public a chance to voice their concerns at the potential closure of the line.

The SOS campaign will highlight the line's

for Taranaki. It provides an efficient overnight freight connection to Auckland and the Bay of Plenty which cannot be provided as sustainably if freight must first go south to Marton before heading north again on the NIMT.

Freight between the Taranaki and northern regions sent via the SOL requires less locomotive power, uses less fuel and lowers congestion on the line between Hawera and Marton

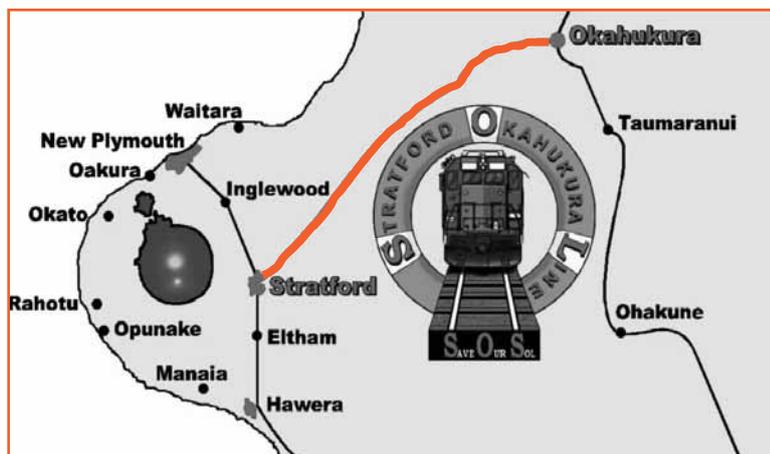
which is already high during the Fonterra milk season. It also provides a viable plan B when the NIMT between Taumararui and Marton or the line between Hawera and Marton are closed. This alternative is used every year.

A couple of years ago it was proposed to run 2000t coal trains over the SOL to Port Taranaki and although this did not eventuate, the potential of the SOL clearly shows that closing the line would be very short-sighted.

Other groups have identified the SOL's

potential for tourism.

This very important campaign may provide a platform from which to launch campaigns to save other vulnerable, and so-called, marginal lines. We all know that



historic and strategic importance and raise awareness with a nationwide petition and postcard campaign targeted at KiwiRail and the Minister of Transport, Steven Joyce. It will also be involved in public meetings among Taranaki community groups, business leaders and concerned citizens.

There is a lot of work to do in a very short time and we need to move quickly.

The SOL is a significant transport option

once a rail line is removed it will never return.

We must all get behind the "SAVE OUR SOL" campaign.

Information and resources can be downloaded from the RMTU Website: Click on the SAVE OUR SOL logo.

Do we want an efficient rail network or just the history of once having had one and a lot of well formed John Key Cycleways? 🇳🇿

ICLS unionists build unity

UNIONISTS from Australia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Philippines and New Zealand gathered in Sydney on 19 and 20 October 2009 for the fifth International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) Forum. Sadly a delegate from Burma was not able to obtain a visa to enter Australia.



The ICLS family

Hosts for the forum were the Australian affiliate the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) with other Australian unions also contributing with reps from the Transport Workers Union (TWU), Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (AMWU).

The theme of the forum was “Strategies and Directions of the Labour Movement under the Global Recession”.

The RMTU representatives at the Forum were Wayne Butson (GS), Aubrey Wilkinson (VP-NI Ports), Howard Phillips (NMC-Rail), Ruth Blakeley (NMC-SI Ports) and Les Ingram (Hillside Rail).

The forum is a valuable unity tool for unions in our region to work together and to cement strong ties. During the two days of

discussion and workshops delegates explored the effects of the global economic collapse on their unions and membership and lamented the loose economic regulations which had allowed the monetarists to behave so recklessly to bring the world’s financial system to its knees. Delegates stated with passion that we must all work tirelessly to ensure that “things” are not just allowed to go back to the way they were, but there must be greater regulatory oversight and regulation of world credit and investment markets so that capitalist greed is controlled.

Delegates also noted that recent events had seen “losses socialised” to a level never before seen in this world so that future tax paying generations will still be paying the

cost. Additionally delegates heard that many unions in member countries operate in a very repressive environment.

The Forum renewed its support for the JRU7 – seven members of the Japanese Confederation of Railway Unions (JRU) who were sacked for discussing Union business whilst at work. The seven were convicted seven years ago by a Japanese court.

“The fact that the Japanese government intervened in a union’s workplace activities and then the courts convicted the JRU7 not only denies the workers’ rights to organise but is also a significant violation of the basic human right to freedom of association and freedom of expression guaranteed to workers under international law.” ICLS delegates all agreed. The case of the JRU7 now sits before the Japanese supreme court and the Forum called upon the court to uphold international labour rights and find the JRU7 ‘NOT GUILTY’.

The forum was a valuable learning experience for RMTU reps who attended and judged a success by all. 🌐

A participant's view of an important conference

By Les Ingram

SATURDAY evening we were guests of the Japanese unions. It was a wonderful evening and Howard Phillips and I were treated to good food by very friendly hosts. It was particularly interesting as my father served in Japan as part of the reconstruction forces after WW2 and I was bought up with tales of Japan and their culture.

Sunday, we toured the Blue Mountains, an unforgettable experience meeting unionist from different cultures.

Monday the forum started. I was amazed by the depth of disappointment from all delegates at world governments bailing out the banks and surprised at the fears many expressed that “consumerist” governments would repeat the past by pushing the world toward another war. It was clear listening to the delegates, that there needs to be a change from financial de-regulation to a more regulated, fairer system and unions need to play a role in these changes, by increasing membership, countering casualisation and uniting.

Monday evening we enjoyed a meal and a cruise on Sydney Har-

bour. As this was my first visit to Sydney I was amazed at this beautiful city. It was a chance to catch up with the Japanese delegates and meet delegates from the North Sydney Bus Depot. We discussed the benefits of working in “union only” work sites and the advantages which that brings.

During lunch on Tuesday we were invited to the NSW parliament to assist the RTBU in a demonstration against the State Labour Government’s threatened closure of branch lines. It felt weird to be agreeing with and cheering Liberal MPs, and booing the Labour MPs!

There was a presentation from the Japanese Confederation of Railway Workers Unions on the Fight to Acquit the JRU7 - the seven members of the union who were sacked for discussing union business with members at their worksite seven years ago. They were convicted and jailed for 344 days. The Japanese Supreme Court will hear an appeal and a resolution was passed at the forum urging the court to uphold these workers rights.

I was amazed at the hardship many delegates face for being active in a union, but was heartened and challenged by their struggle. 🌐

Thai Rail union fights for safety

OUR Thailand railway union brothers and sisters are fighting for a safer network following a fatal train accident which saw seven people die in October. The State Railway Union of Thailand (SRUT) has been rising up in protest against ever diminishing safety within the system. The Union argues under-staffing, lack of safety measures and persistent driver fatigue are rife within Thai Rail and were the true cause of the October accident. However, Thai Rail officials, backed by government, have blamed human error as the sole cause. SRUT is calling for;



Thai travellers stranded at a station.

- Safety measures on trains and advises that 90% of existing trains don't have proper safety devices or adequate maintenance in contravention of rail safety legislation and union agreements.

- Fatigue management for drivers. Chronic understaffing due to a hiring freeze means drivers are often on duty continuously with no rest.

- No privatisation. The Thai government has announced it is speeding up restructuring plans, contravening an agreement with SRUT.

SRUT has pressed charges against Thai Rail's management over its failure to comply with agreements to properly and safely maintain the trains. On 12 October SRUT members staged a sit-in in front of the Bangkok Transport Ministry and delivered a letter demanding action on their safety concerns. The government failed to respond and so SRUT requested members to join nationwide industrial action which included go-slows and mass sick days.

The Thai government, Transport Ministry and the governor of State Rail have attacked the Union by releasing propaganda against it, emphasising

that the accident was caused by human error and that "vigilance systems are not important to safety". The spokesperson went on to say that "the train that derailed had malfunctioned in several areas including the automatic braking system".

The Thai government has responded by recruiting inexperienced graduates to drive trains – further jeopardising the safety of the Thai rail system. The ITF is considering other ways that Asia Pacific affiliates can assist. 

Sickness, accident & death

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

In the last 11 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

Checking Matang

IT was a pre-dawn start for the five intrepid RMTU 'Best Design' committee representatives as they began a short, sharp visit to the Rotem factory in South Korea. The factory is building EMUs for Wellington. The five, who with others have been working with KiwiRail engineers and Greater Wellington Regional Council engineers and designers on the new units. All involved are aware of how essential it is to 'get it right' for all the stakeholders, especially staff, who will be working them. Organiser Todd Valster, Wellington Rail branch secretary and depot fitter Howard Phillips, assistant branch secretary and locomotive engineer Hayden Smith, train manager rep Harvey Patterson and train examiner rep Hayden Harwood made up the RMTU team. Group leader and engineer is Albert Bossward and accompanying him was Dan Roebuck and Metro training facilitator Rodney Monroe.

When we started it was so early even the Koru Club was closed. After the connecting flight to Auckland it was long 12 hour flight direct to Seoul. The airport terminal at Seoul was very impressive. It was modern, large and spotlessly clean. Upon arriving at our hotel we were met by a group of Korean unionists from the ICLS (which the RMTU is affiliated to). They treated us to dinner and were very hospitable and we were united by alcohol. Language was to be a barrier during our visit with only a small number of Koreans speaking English, most of those to a limited extent. A raised glass is quite international in its meaning fortunately. One of the more memorable aspects of the trip was the courtesy shown to guests in such places as restaurants, hotel foyers etc.

Day 2: It was an early start, a hearty breakfast and a short walk to the central railway station. Time for a coffee before joining our high speed train for the two and a half hour journey to the other side of Korea where the Rotem factory is located in Changwon. Each time train crew members entered a carriage all staff bowed to the guests. The jury is out whether this custom will be introduced to Wellington commuters.

The non uniformed security guards sprang to attention at the guard house of the impressively secure compound housing the Rotem factory complex which included a tank manufacturing section. Those toys were out of bounds to these boys though. A snappy salute and we were in.

It is difficult to comprehend the scale of a factory that produces 1100 rolling stock units as this one does. It was hard to know what to look at first. Then we were outside a large workshop where the gleaming pre-production Matangi mock-up was sitting looking just like the drawings we had seen so much of over the past 18 months. It looked very spectacular and felt familiar; it was identical to the wooden mock-up at Woburn. The overall design and build quality was very impressive.

We were then taken for a tour of the rail manufacturing complex. Unfortunately for the 'foamers' amongst us we were only permitted to photograph our train. In the various workshops were double decker EMUs for Philadelphia USA, Middle Eastern and African railways as well as many for local lines. Also there were two TGV locos which, after some uncertainty, we were eventually allowed to have a look in the cabs of. Later our group



progress of LE units

was ushered into the Company theatre where we were shown a video of the Hyundai Company. That is the parent of Rotem. Just before the end of the movie appeared children playing and a bold pronouncement made "that Hyundai's contribution to world peace is the manufacture of tanks". Your scribe may be a bit slow but some time later I still can't fathom that one!

Day 3 was spent mostly at the mock-up discussing aspects of it. Unfortunately not all the features we were hoping to see were ready. Such things as passenger seating and the final design of the LE controllers handle were not in place yet. Much time was spent examining and trialling various features including the wheelchair ramp, passenger evacuation ramp and attempting to find a satisfactory means of attaching leading end brake hoses. The full-size mock up will be eventually cut up and scrapped. The team were also able to see the first two actual unit sets in build. The bogies were also inspected as they were being made elsewhere on site. The quality of workmanship and materials was evident. It was a long and detailed day. Language and the manner of our Rotem hosts made communicating rather slow.

During the day we briefly met the factory union delegates and strongly insisted that they make sure all the workers building our Matangi units do so safely. Later ICLS union delegates took us out to dinner in a traditional Korean barbeque restaurant. Sitting on the floor sure takes a bit of getting use to as does seeing people smoking whilst eating. It's amazing how quickly we have all gotten used to smoke free dining.

Our final day in Korea involved a visit to a brand new suburban EMU line in Seoul. It had been in operation for two months. We first visited the head quarters where we were introduced to each of the managers. Few spoke English so conversation was a little stilted and limited but we found out that the line is operated by Veolia just like Auckland. The light maintenance facility was of particular interest to our fitter types. Like all the Korean engineering facilities it was spotlessly clean. One of the features was a drop pit where the undersides of cars are cleaned before entering the workshop proper. A very large heavy maintenance facility was next on the agenda. It was immense, and fully equipped but devoid of staff except the cleaner and security staff, the new EMUs had not needed heavy maintenance yet. The staff training area for LEs was of great interest. There was a full-sized simulator and several desk-top models. The full-sized one in particular was very realistic as one of the team found when 'driving' round a curve to find a very realistic looking EMU on fire on the track ahead. The visit ended with a ride in service on one the EMU sets. We did not recognise the LE when he boarded. Wearing a business suit and tie he looked just like one of the passengers.

And so our brief visit drew to a close as we began the lengthy trip back to New Zealand. Three busy but interesting days. A highlight was definitely the warm hospitality shown to us especially by the ICLS unionists. A very valuable experience for us all and of immense value in ensuring that the finished product will meet the needs of members in NZ and the travelling public. 🌐



China checkout

A look at the new DL mock up

THE RMTU locomotive engineers' representative team consisting of Wally Wallbutton, Murray Dunlop, Bernie Snook and the KiwiRail management representatives Chris Cuff, Scott Murray and Soren Low last month visited China to check out progress on the new DL engines to be built there and approve the cab mock-ups.

Their report included the following points:

- Cab mock up was viewed and some changes recommended. These were mainly around the front desk to provide easy access around the control stand, but also included full swivel of both seats for easy access, a holder for the kettle situated towards the middle of the desk and with a restraint to keep it in place and that the desk top will be constructed in a moulded plastic compound with rounded edges.

- The control stand is a standalone feature with the power and dynamic controller an all in one system. The forward/reverse controller and the vigilance and horn are both on this stand. Switches, such as park brake, cab auxiliary, tail head and gauge lights and dimmer are here too together with the ATC radio shunt switch and the air conditioning and foot warmer controls.

- The desk goes from around the brake valve located by the window on the drivers side to the left hand wall in front of the second person's seat. The train brake will be in the form of a T-bar nearest the driver and the independent will have a round knob and will be nearer the window. The driver's side of the desk has plenty of leg room with the instrument module and screen right in front as is the vigilance light. The pressure instrumentation module is to the front right of the driver as is the ET and Train Control radio. The mouth piece for this will be mounted on the wall. The ET radio speakers are fitted above the right hand front window. The emergency mushroom button is mounted on the top right hand side of the driver's console. The vigilance light will be on the top part of the control desk directly in front of the driver. This will have a day and night function and will have LED lights. The lunch tray is in the



Bernie Snook (above) and Wally Wallbutton check out the DL cab layout and 'feel'.

space forward of the brake valve and will be recessed into the desk. The cup holder will be on the opposite side of the brake valve and also recessed.

- Underneath the desk top on the left hand side next to the wall will be the water bottles. One of these will contain fluid for the windows with water added, the other is for use in the cab. They will be filled from outside under the frame of the locomotive. The twin bottle system will have an overflow feature with a check valve. It is similar to the DC locomotive system used to fill the header tank. Above this is the sink on top of the desk. Mounted on the wall above that is the wet wipes. The water bottles have been set up against the front wall to give more leg room for the second person.

- The second person side will have its own reading and cab light and panel heater. There will also be a piped emergency brake feature added for the minder driver plus a dickie seat mounted on the back wall between the second person door and the electrical cabinet door. Both the driver and second person seats swivel 360 degrees.

- The electrical cabinet is located on the back wall. The fire extinguisher is recessed into the door.

- The air conditioning unit has five settings: two each for warm and cool air and one for off. The air flow will be vented with vane fins directing air into the cab from over

the desk top area above the unit itself. These can be moved manually. The option to toggle between fresh air intake and recirculated air intake will be via a switch mounted on the control pedestal. The cab's front windows are electrically heated.

- The two Isri seats to be provided (or equal alternative with air ride and lumbar support). A pull down seat to be mounted on back wall for an additional person.

- Cab lighting includes one central fluorescent as the main cab light plus extra lights on both sides (with primary light being directed towards the lap) and an adjustable spot lamp. A three positional switch would be provided to toggle between modes and off.

- The start up panel is located between the right hand side door and the electrical cabinet door.

- Cab storage bins will be lockable and recessed into the back wall on the A side.

- Internal door handles for access and to the electrical compartment will be recessed. External handles for access doors will not be recessed though they will fit into a recessed pocket in the car body when the door is fully opened.

- Other features include: Portable radio recessed somewhere in the cab; coat hooks located on cab wall on the left hand side; mirrors fitted on both sides; paper towel holder on front wall left hand side; twelve volt cigarette lighter socket on the front center wall between windows; micro wave oven mounted under the desk with access from the B side; cooler/warmer (mounted under the desk with access from B side); wet wipes holder (A side wall); Basin (with lid) and non drinking water supply (on A side desktop); and external mirrors on both A and B sides.

Some items yet to be decided on include: Track warrant board on the cab on driver side; foot rests; sand and horn features around foot rest; and where to put the loco 54d repair book. 

Redundancy protection for Kiwis

At a time of rising unemployment, hundreds of thousands of Kiwis and their families have no financial protection against redundancy – a situation that leaves NZ nearly alone in the developed world. Labour MP Darien Fenton's Redundancy Protection Bill would protect workers facing hard times by helping to tide them over until they find a new job.

But her bill needs Government support to pass. John Key is being called upon to honour his promise to help Kiwis through the recession by backing the Redundancy Protection Bill.

"I've sponsored this bill because I believe working New Zealanders deserve a fair deal in hard times," said Darien Fenton. "Other countries do it, and so do most businesses that have a union on site. It's time this right was extended to all Kiwis."

She says the campaign has broad support, not only from Labour, but also from the Greens, the Maori Party, the New Zealand union movement and community organisations who deal with people made redundant. The campaign to garner support is running under the heading "A Fair Deal in Hard Times" and will aim to lobby all MPs.

The RMTU is among a raft of unions lending its support and backing to the campaign and the bill which is based on the recommendations of the Public Advisory Group on Restructuring and Redundancy.

Under the bill all New Zealanders made redundant will have a minimum right to:

- notice of dismissal of no less than 4 weeks;
- compensation for redundancy in the amount of 4 weeks' remuneration for the first full year of the employee's continuous employment with the employer; and
- further compensation for redundancy in the amount of 2 weeks' remuneration for each subsequent full or partial year of the employees' continuous employment with the employer, up to a maximum enti-



(l to r) Aubrey Wilkinson, Tim Spence, Jim Kelly and Ruth Blakely on the steps of Parliament after attending the launch of the Redundancy Protection Bill.

tlement of 26 weeks' remuneration.

An estimated 80% of working New Zealanders don't have redundancy protections written into their employment agreement. Most of them are in non-union worksites and are on individual agreements where there is limited ability to negotiate redundancy protections for themselves.

For these workers, losing their job can mean they have no way to pay their mortgage or support themselves and their families while

they search for new work.

The Redundancy Protection Bill will do this by helping to tide them over until they find a new job.

Nearly every other country in the OECD has some form of redundancy protection written into law. In Australia the Federal Government has just increased minimum redundancy protections to provide for four weeks' pay for the first year's service plus two weeks for every additional year.

Nearly 80% of union agreements already have redundancy clauses and most OECD countries already have minimum redundancy protections in law. If unionised businesses in New Zealand can afford to pay redundancy then the rest can too. And if employers in Britain, France, Australia, Canada and Germany can pay redundancy then then so can ours.

Government support is essential to see this bill through its first reading. There has been a lot of talk from National about the need to protect working New Zealanders through the recession and this is one concrete measure they can take to make good on that promise.

In the final analysis, this bill ensures that Kiwis have some basic financial protection to tide them over between jobs.

Campaign: To build support for the Redundancy Protection Bill a 100,000-strong postcard campaign, a petition to Parliament, community stalls and workplace speaking tours is being run by the CTU. 

Unions have a long tradition of international solidarity.

Becoming a Kiwi Solidarity member is a modern way of expressing that solidarity and helping vulnerable workers in developing countries in our region get a fairer deal.

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George Taylor – train manager

By Jan Farr

GEORGE TAYLOR has worked for Rail for more than 45 years, starting as a cleaner at the Palmerston North station and working his way up to fireman on the steam engine. His ambition, then, was to drive a locomotive.

At a time when steam was giving way to diesel George sat the fireman's or locomotive assistant's ticket. His hard swot was rewarded with a 98% pass. He recalls that workers with boiler tickets were in demand in dairy factories. To stop certificated boiler boys from leaving Rail, management refused to give out their certificates.

Perhaps it was an omen that he sat the exam on April Fools Day, 1965. Shortly afterwards his sharemilker father needed an operation on his back and wanted George's help. His employers refused him leave, so George resigned.

In 1968, with encouragement from Marton's station master, George returned to become a station agent in Havelock North, where he was in charge of the station and the loading and delivery of ballast. Later he went as station agent to Rata in Rangitikei, where the freight was potatoes. This was a great time for him. His wife worked at the Hunterville maternity hospital and had friends there, and George had farmer friends in the Rangitikei.

After that, he went to Wellington to further his knowledge and became a number-taker. Then, after a busy job, shunting on the wharf and loading meat onto ships, George took a job as a guard. From Wellington he went to Upper Hutt and later became a ticket inspector on buses and trains until they did away with the position. After that he was a roster supervisor for nine years.

"It was a hard job and frustrating at times but I really enjoyed it. I had a great working relationship with the guys. If things didn't suit them we used to talk about it and change things around. I never had any trouble."



"If you're enjoying it, keep going. Work until you think you've had enough and then retire. And that's what I think I'll do."

Now, at 66, George works as a train manager in Masterton. He still enjoys his work, although it is more demanding than it was.

"I think the whole work culture has changed. You've got managers now that have never worked in Rail. It's become a leaner, meaner machine. Dealing with the public is very hard at times. Maturity and experience has helped a lot. You understand people better. You mellow a lot."

"I enjoy the life style here," he said. "I make out rosters for the Wairarapa staff. Our job is to run the train: collect the revenue and

clip the tickets. We place the engines on the passenger services, take the engines off and get them ready."

The early shift starts at 4am and finishes at 10.20. The latest shift normally finishes by 8pm. This gives George time for his hobbies. He loves to fish, garden and build things. He is also a union man, a Master Mason and a member of the Railway Craftsmen.

"I'm quite an active person. I don't think I'd get bored if I suddenly stopped work," George said. "But as long as I'm enjoying work and my health is right I'll just keep working, because I don't think superannuation is enough for people to live on. Especially with rates around here having gone up ten-fold. I joined KiwiSaver before I was 65 and I'm paying the top amount of 8% for that. I think KiwiSaver is brilliant."

"I think your health's better if you're working. A friend of mine retired at 65 and he was bored. He said, 'I can't get a job. If you're enjoying it, keep going. Work until you think you've had enough and then retire.' And that's what I think I'll do." 

RMTU supports fellow unionists

RMTU members have stood solid behind a number of protests recently including the EPMU's Telecom Line Engineer members in the Vision Stream dispute, the DWU's members in the Open Country Cheese lockout, the Auckland Bus Drivers (pictured right) and the Miners strikes in both the North and South Islands (pictured below). The Union, nationally and through individual branches, has contributed thousands of dollars in donations to assist union comrades in need.

Members have stood shoulder to shoulder with workers during these struggles and have stood solid in their refusal to cross and thereby honour official union picket



West Coast branch secretary Mike Kilsby (l) and delegate Paul Foskett (r) stand solid with Solid Energy miners on the picket line.

lines. Clearly we will need workers not just to unite in disputes and on picket lines, we will need to unite at the ballot boxes in 2011. Meanwhile let's stick together and back-to-back - "unity is strength".



(above) Otago branch chair Brian McKay (r).



RMTU members support the NZ Bus workers.

Donations to Vision Stream worker



(left) Jim Kelly (r) and EPMU national secretary Andrew Little.

(far left) Otago Port branch chair Ruth Blakeley.

Lobby pledges to boost union strength in Pacific island nations

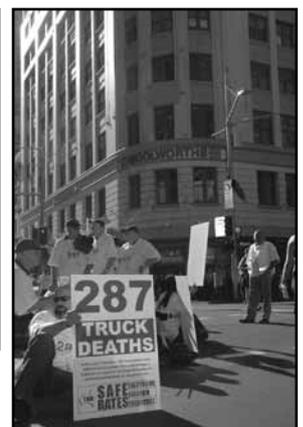
UNIONISTS have committed to be part of a process designed to strengthen the capacity of trade unions working in the Pacific island nations.

ITF affiliates in Australia and New Zealand and the national union centres in those countries made the promise at the ITF Oceania seminar on 9-11 November, in Sydney, Australia. They highlighted how they had presented a programme of measures to strengthen unions in the island states and build regional employment, particularly in offshore oil and gas, to the Australian Rudd government. These efforts, they said, would be crucial to ensure workers were involved in the development of any measures taken on climate change; island nations of Oceania are set to be among the first to be threatened by the issue. It was also important to take a stand against governments clamping down on workers' rights with participants supporting unions in countries such as Fiji, where regimes were stifling freedom of expression and workers' right to organise.

In addition, delegates promised to continue to carry out maritime mapping and encourage the Timor Leste government to provide training and job opportunities in the offshore oil and gas sectors.



(l to r) RMTU's Aubrey Wilkinson, Jim Tannock MUA retiring deputy national secretary, Wayne Butson and retiring MUA national organiser Rick Newlyn shortly after the RMTU presented a retirement gift to the two.



During the conference participants helped Aussie truck drivers blockade a busy Sydney junction.

Mark Davis, coordinator, ITF seafarer union development programme, said: "The meeting was refreshing because it signalled a revitalisation of organising initiatives throughout the sub region."

TARANAKI PORT BRANCH

Strange happenings in port



'Twas a peaceful night when the buzz from two wee boats hummed over the still waters.....



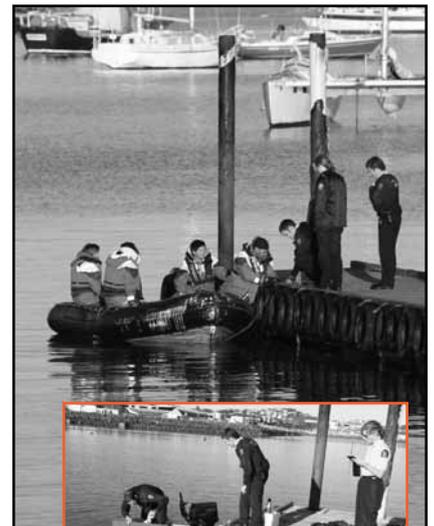
.... while harbour patrols kept a watchful eye

.... One was filled with avid types with buckets of paint and rollers on long sticks and they soon got to work on the side of the Ikan Juiai.....



.... It seems the poor Ikan Juiai was the butt of a protest against Fonterra but the obscure message, was, well obscure

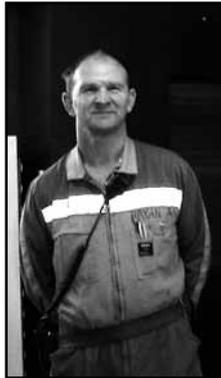
.... Job completed the painting crew sought safe harbour but there on the wharf were our trusty men and women in blue – and their 'loot' confiscated



WELLINGTON PORT BRANCH

TALKS are continuing with management with regard to the cost-cutting initiatives they wish to adopt. At the time of writing, talks have centred around the cargo section but all parts of the business are being looked at. Initial indications are is that we could be in for some rocky times ahead - we shall wait and see.

Cargo foreman Bryan Alexander will be hanging up his hook this month. Bryan injured himself on board a vessel whilst overseeing container discharges just over two years ago. He has been on ACC and returned to work on limited duties. Unfortunately Bryan will never be 100% fit to resume full duties. A 40 year plus veteran, Bryan commenced work on the port as a watersider and worked his way up to foreman. A well-respected colleague who could hold a conversation about almost anything, Bryan will be missed. An avid tramper, hunter, farmer, property investor and



Bryan Alexander

horse racing enthusiast we are sure Bryan will not bored. All the best for the future Bryan and don't forget the lads here at the port. When's the shout Bryan?

Centreport's commercial business manager Steve Tarrant will be leaving us in late December. Steve joined the Port in 2004 and has been the main frontman for the company during the wage rounds. His honesty and upfront attitude around the negotiating table and during the monthly consultative meetings have fostered a level of trust amongst the combined unions exec. Also to his credit, Steve was the main promoter of getting us the new plant to service the ever-increasing demands of the shipping industry. This branch wishes Steve all the best for his future.

So as the festive season will soon be upon us we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and stay safe through the New Year.

CTU conference

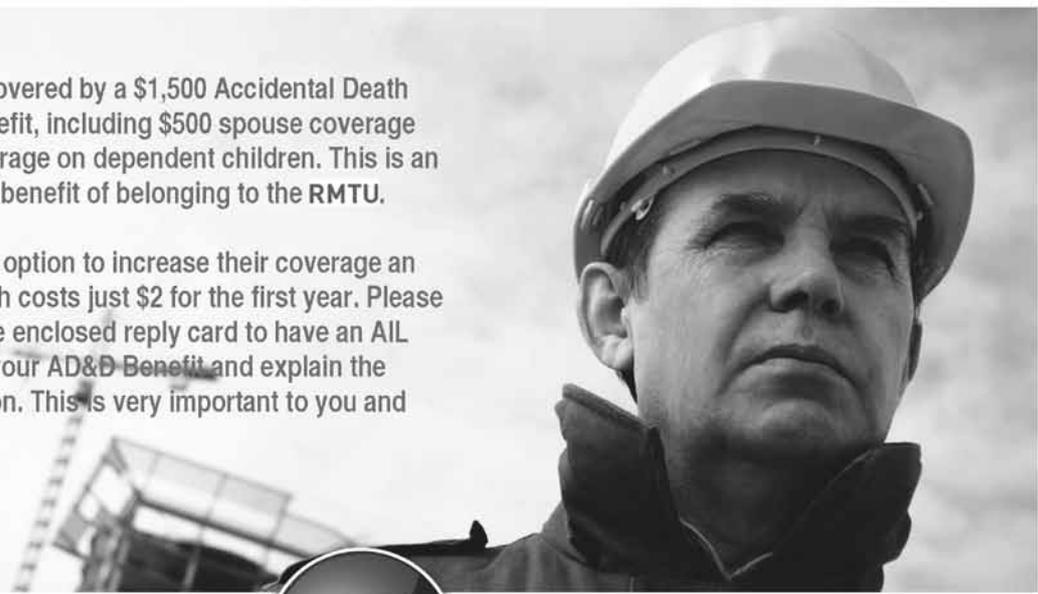


Prime Minister John Key spoke at the CTU biennial Conference and earned the respect of many. He said the easiest thing was to decline the invitation. He was given a fair hearing. He believed delegates would find more to agree on than disagree. He was wrong. There was heaps we disagreed with which illustrates the gap between this Government and the needs of workers in NZ.

\$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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TARANAKI RAIL BRANCH

WELL, we are not off to the best finish of the year in the Taranaki. The Stratford/Okahakura line has been mothballed pending closure.

A few stat's on the line: 143kms long, 24 tunnels, 71 bridges, 4 crossing loops and a fantastic get-out-of-jail card for rail. Condition of the line is varied being brilliant through to a little dodgy. Unfortunately, in the last few months the line has had its share of derailments, most of which have been track faults. Maintenance of the line since 1993, when National sold the Rail network, has been patchy. It just hasn't had the investment in funds. Head gangers Rudy and Kevin have kept the line open using a bit of Kiwi ingenuity and a lot of bloody hard work; their efforts have been appreciated by the Stratford crews travelling over the line. So taking that into account what do you expect with little investment and an aging wagon fleet? The last two derailments have been 8 kilometres long,



The 0km peg on the SOL which, since November 3, has shown the number of trains which have used the line. Hopefully not a sign of things to come.

both identical in location and identical in damage. The cost to get the line open for traffic sits between \$400,000 and one million. Investment will get it back to a good standard, maybe a few million over the next ten years. History has shown that the line has pulled the rail out of trouble when the

NIMT is blocked time and time again. Trouble is the company is run by money men who have no regard for history and will 'make do' when the NIMT snarls up again, only this time they may not have the luxury of the SOL.

The RMTU have launched a "Save My SOL" campaign. Remember, 80% of Kiwis wanted the network

and operations brought back under government ownership. The SOL is just an example of what may be coming to a line near you. The "Save My SOL" campaign is nationwide so please sign any petitions that come your way as we are expecting they will. More to come on this issue once strategies

are finalised.

The Marton/New Plymouth line has taken the brunt of the increased traffic. A typical 24 hour period on this line may involve close to a 100 track warrants being issued. Sixteen services may also use the line between Marton and Whareroa. The trains have been near full capacity, at times 1100 tons and 600 metres. The boundaries of maximum weight and length have been severely tested. A large percentage of the tonnage is bound for Whareroa which has a main loop and five sidings - one dedicated to milk unloading. The number 1 siding holds 19 Uks which is the biggest siding .

A typical day has between 70 and 100 wagons on site. Once again it's a credit to the staff working at Whareroa which contributes to the success of the place. Juggling that many wagons in such a confined yard is a credit to the expertise of the workers there.

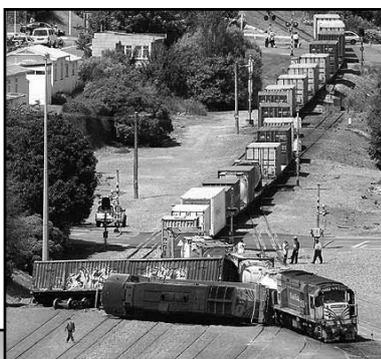
Comings and goings in the Naki include: gone is Joe Mackay (Aussie), Kieran Diack (not sure), Lance Wight (Aussie - Port Headland) and Glenn Hughes who has part transferred to Whareroa to assist with staff shortages. Raquel Doreen has transferred up from Christchurch and joins the locomotive ranks.

Have a great festive season and keep an eye on those branch lines. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Picton derailment

THIS is what happens when old trains meet old track and the points let go.

This is why KiwiRail needs considerable Government support if it is



to effectively compete against road transport and provide a sustainable transport option for this country to meet its emission targets.

NAPIER RAIL BRANCH

WE are working through a number of disputes, such as the non-provision of company cellphones, stand downs after accidents, unloading of fertiliser at Gisborne, differing views on the taking of sick leave and health and safety issues. All issues that could be resolved if there was a willingness by the manager to consult meaningfully with the branch. Simple but effective!

BAY OF PLENTY RAIL BRANCH

WE welcome back Shane McNae from his serious illness, and congratulations to Darryl and the branch executive for being re-elected for another year.

We have had a health and safety ban on the use of Chapman seats, which is slowly being resolved.

Kids jumping off the rail bridges this coming summer is being addressed with Kiwirail and the police. Hopefully we can minimise the issue this summer.

BAY OF PLENTY PORT BRANCH

CONGRATULATIONS to the branch executive for being re-elected, with the exception of Kelvin Rush, who stood down for personal reasons, and was replaced by Dion Young as vice president, who was also successful in becoming a trustee of the Harbour Super Fund.

We are currently in dispute with the Port of Tauranga, regarding their intention to use ISL workers as straddle drivers at Sulphur Point. We are calling for remits for next year's negotiations with the Port, the Mount Cossi Collective has been rolled over for 12 months with a 3% wage increase, the Quality Marshalling negotiations are heading to mediation in December.

We are having a debate with Orica about the forced introduction of a D&A policy with hardly any consultation. We expect this dispute to be a long one. There have been a number of changes at the Champion Flour Mill due to the recession, however with management we have to minimise the impact of those changes. We should be able to ratify the C3 Kawerau Collective before Xmas.



ABOVE: (l to r) Moss Carlin, John Carmine, Dion Young C3 delegate and newly appointed Harbours Super Plan trustee and branch secretary Vicki Te Amo.

LEFT: Wayne Butson hands Kelvin Rush a gift in recognition of his contribution to the RMTU on behalf of the branch.

HUTT WORKSHOPS BRANCH

GREETINGS comrades and a very Merry Christmas to you all from the membership of the Hutt Branch of our great Union.

We have a few issues happening here at Hutt. Machines are being taken out and sold or scrapped without consultation with the branch and our question is why? We could be unable to produce parts so does that mean that we will be buying a new machine or are we going to outsource even more work? That could mean that we could lose more skills from the workshop and possibly even members.

There is a lot of work to be done when you are a union official. Some do a lot more than others, so the branch has decided to split this work and also have delegates that will specialise in certain subjects such as IMP/ACC, outsourcing etc. This is being initiated and actioned now and we hope that this will facilitate more activity within the membership. Along with this we see the delegates working much closer with the H&S delegates by having a weekly meeting with them and the centre manager.

A few years ago we had

a number of our buildings sold off or demolished. We lost our big canteen (now a church in Lower Hutt) the admin building at the Elizabeth street entrance to the workshops (now a pub in Greytown) and some one took the flag pole as well. The branch protested to our GGM mechanical, Lloyd Major, and he interceded and gave the flag pole back. We use the flag pole and the surrounding area as our Workers Memorial Day memorial site. Quite a bit of work has been done in the area and it is now looking great. KiwiRail now



Dave Kearns, Terry Duffy.



Norm, Terry Duffy, Les Ingram.

want to put up a KiwiRail flag on the flag pole. We will be suggesting that the company gets its own flag pole and put it in the memorial garden.

Our branch secretary, Terry Duffy, had an authorised day trip to visit Hillside Workshops in conjunction with the Hutt manager Mike Smith and HR manager Bindu Jacob. The

purpose of the visit was to:

- Open up lines of communication with the Hillside Branch;
- Share workload; and
- Bring the management of both

workshops together so as to develop a partnership between the two.

Terry believes that the trip was a tremendous success. "This can only be good for both workshops," he said, and thanked the management for the opportunity.

Some of our members attended the ACC motorcycle rally on Parliament (see page 10) with Hutt Workshop's vice chair, Paul Morrison at the helm delivering our message of disgust to the government. How dare they meddle with our world class ACC scheme?

Our workload is steady here at Hutt with the Dxbs but we are having problems with the granting of additional paid special sick leave. This difficulty seems to revolve around the Auckland KRMS office but the branch is gathering more information.

Have a happy and safe Christmas.



Hutt Shops marks white ribbon day for the first time by hoisting a "Not Silent – No Violence" flag gifted by the MUA. White ribbon day is about men behaving badly and all of us showing a commitment to making family violence unacceptable.

PORT OF NAPIER BRANCH

AS we head into the final weeks of 09, it is a time to reflect on the fickle nature of the shipping and port industries and the political radioactive fallout caused by a Tory government spending our tax dollars on roads in Auckland and mothballing aspects of rail.

A special thought goes out to our brothers and sisters at Prime Port Timaru. No doubt we could all sit down and pontificate over the commercial issues surrounding the decision making processes that leads to ports being played off against each other in the guise of rationalisation. However, in this there was one candle blowing in the wind that flickered some sense in terms of equity between ports at Conference this year. It was a talk given by the new CEO of Wellington Port, Blair O’Keeffe. Admittedly his theme was a personal view-point on the future of NZ ports and how, in one way or another, alliances at all levels across the port industry could be built. It was a novel approach, and in my view a different perspective for a CEO. The test of course, is seeing if these ideals come into fruition. Something I am sure will not happen overnight, and sadly, a little too late for those in Timaru who go into this

festive period with a different perspective if they have become casualties of the recent redundancies. Kia kaha.

On the local front we are coming to the end of negotiations over the main collective agreement. In short it was of primary importance that we maintain conditions – the essence of any CA when times are tough.

The day-to-day issues continue as some aspects of our management team think that ‘micro-managing’ is the order of the day! The emphasis over taking leave has been apparent. To the point where there is an expectation to get this year’s entitlement sorted as soon as it was issued on October 1, including restrictions for holidays over the duration of the busy period to boot.

Somewhere along the way it’s going to come unstuck if the pound of flesh attitude continues.

The Minister of Transport Steven Joyce officially opened the new Herrick Wharf on Friday November 13.

In closing, the members of the Napier Port branch wish you and yours a safe and happy festive season, and all the best for 2010.

Pena a koutou.

WAIKATO BRANCH

FIRST we wish to take this opportunity to thank Steve Peacock for his dedication and advocacy in his time as secretary of the branch. Steve did not stand for re-election at the AGM due to personal reasons. All the best Steve.

Congratulations to Bernie Snook who was elected to the national management committee and congratulations to Alby Barr, who was elected to the Kiwirail networks industrial council.

The branch has been/are involved in a number of disputes such as the Huntly yard, rostering, terminal L/Es, ONTRACK D&A and Auckland labour at the CT site.

We have applied for mediation on behalf of Elaine West who was made redundant at Toll Network and hope to have a mediation date before Christmas.

Geoff Carr, one of our more experienced gangers, was unjustifiably dismissed, and we have applied for mediation assistance.

LYTTELTON BRANCH

A whale of a tale

Something different every day for RMTU members at Lyttelton. Gregor Chapman, SGH, was called upon to take the tail off a dead whale recently. Gregor who obligingly had his knives from the farm in the car, set to and did the job. The whale in question arrived draped over the bulbous bow of a Japanese ship. When LPC staff began unloading the ship the bow came up out of the water revealing its unexpected extra cargo. We don’t know where the whale and the ship met but the whale was apparently one that swims in very cold waters and may have been riding on the bow for most of the ships journey. A sizeable truck was needed to transport the whale, to Ngai Tahu care, but being too big to fit on the truck in one go Gregor’s carving skills were needed. A sad end for a magnificent creature and an

unusual sight for LPC staff.

Gregor is also sporting a slightly ginger moustache in honour of Movember and raising money with the purpose of highlighting men’s health issues, specifically prostate cancer and depression. He approached the branch for a donation. Such a good cause for the blokes cannot be ignored and the branch donated \$100.

A few days before the arrival of the whale a ship’s lines broke and its stern swung out with the bow heading towards the wharf. RMTU members describe hearing the lines snapping from the other side of the Port. One of the tugs, just back from a job, headed straight back out and with assistance held the ship whilst staff worked to secure the lines. Fortunately nobody was injured but it is a reminder to us all that working in the Port is dangerous and safety is first every time. Come

to work safe and go home safe. It’s your right and everyone’s responsibility.

LPC are in the process of introducing a drug and alcohol policy for the first time. RMTU and MUNZ have been reviewing the policy and discussing with LPC how it will work in practice. Currently LPC have pre employment testing and post incident/accident testing. There will be no random testing.

There is the introduction of reasonable cause testing. For example, if you come to work stinking of alcohol or acting in an unusual manner or with a severe case of the munchies and very dilated pupils/red eyes it’s likely, following a clearly set out agreed process in the policy, that you may be tested. Remember cannabis stays in your system for a long time after smoking and is an unlawful substance. The message is very simple: NOT ON THE JOB MATE.

On that note, ka kite ano and a very (safe) Merry Christmas to all.

WEST COAST RAIL BRANCH

THE start of this year's dairy season saw the first train X6 shunt use the new Arahura Bridge on the Hokitika line. This \$20 million plus structure now means that traffic flows more freely with a two-lane road bridge and rail line attached on the outside, thus doing away with the historic single lane, road-rail bridge.

The whole process was completed on time and comes with all the bells and whistles – not bad for a line that has only one return train trip per day. Makes this scribe wonder why there is so much fuss over spending money on repairs to the SOL, especially when new customers have shown interest in using Kiwirail and the SOL.

The economic hard times have cost the position of one of our Toll Tranz link members. We all wish Vic Sole a happy early retirement and thank him for his work as a Health and Safety rep.

Coal? What coal? Pike River never started



The new Arahura Bridge on the Hokitika line.

loading as planned and shipments from both Spring Creek and Ngakawau have been fickle with only four out of the seven trains rostered for running. At times even less. As I write, EPMU members are on strike so NO coal from any SE sites.

The only plus from the low coal traffic is that our track staff have been able to make great headway with improvements to track and structures. Both the SWL and Midland

lines are starting to take on the appearance of a proper rail network. All that is now required is to have CTC approval and commissioned and we will have a network to be proud of.

This year's AGM saw a changing of some of the guard, with Mike Kilsby becoming branch secretary and Fred Miles taking on the role as loco delegate. John Bannerman also came back into the ranks. His knowledge and skills within the brotherhood are a great asset. Thanks fellas for putting your hands up and taking up the challenge. New blood at branch level means more people learn the skills required.

Well the silly season is approaching fast so I will sign off by wishing you and your families all the best for the festive season and upcoming new-year and with the reminder to take care out there. Time with family and friends is far more important than taking short cuts.

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

JUST who do you work for? With the return of the former Toll Group, United and Transfield and rebranding as ON-TRACK and KiwiRail plus KiwiThis and KiwiThat it's not surprising that confusion abounds. Here in Dunedin several recent events have proved that all is not equal within the organisation.

Case 1 - We all are aware of the decision to temporarily halt operations on the SOL as return apparently is less than expenditure. Well in this region we have the Wairio Branch, which after years of neglect is actually returning money to the coffers with contracts in around \$5 million per annum. To redress the years of neglect our local track gangs are toiling away upgrading the line with second hand materials. The most important of which is TPR sleepers which have only been bored once. Our materials coordinator has, however, been thwarted as our Northern counterparts are selling perfectly usable assets to the public. How do we know this? TPR's ex Auckland are available from Mitre 10 outlets at \$41 each. When we

own reusable asset, why is being sold to the detriment of areas that can use it?

Case 2 - With the response to those who smoked the recreational weed recently in this district, it has been found that there are different policies for different sections of the company. Now that we are all under the umbrella of KiwiRail it appears there are different strokes for different folks. There is a difference in the D&A policies between ON-TRACK and KiwiRail. Not only that, but there are differences between KiwiRail operations and KiwiRail mechanical. So when are all sections of KiwiRail going to be brought under the same regulatory policies? It appears that Dunedin has become the drug capital of the company. Recently the distress gang was found to be "recreationally distressing". As a result we were visited by the large white van, and those suspected requested to undertake a drug test resulting in subsequent dismissals. The Union was ably represented by Tim Spence, the local branch secretary and Brian Cronin from the Lyttleton office. The matter has yet to run full course as there

are several issues still to be resolved. Watch this space. It is a timely reminder for all staff to be mindful of the D&A policy pertaining to their section. You don't even have to be suspected of breaching D&A policy, but have a few incidents within several weeks or a day and you may be tested under the "Post Incident" rules – as happened here recently. Again, the little white van visited but a negative result was recorded. RTMU guidance was sought and freely given. This time it was your local delegate, who now has a wealth of knowledge what happens behind the closed doors of that little white van.

Now something positive: we experienced a derailment at Katiki resulting in \$800m of damage. Luckily we had the concrete sleeper layer on hand for planned work and approx 48 hours after the incident, the line was open again thanks to the efforts of the staff from all points of the district. This shows the dedication to the job, which sometimes some sections of the company don't seem to understand.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a happy and fun filled new year from the Otago Rail branch.

HILLSIDE BRANCH

THE past few months have been a challenge, with many members being moved internally as workload reduces. This has proved stressful for those effected. The branch officials are constantly consulting with management to ensure work that members have the skills to perform remains in-house and isn't out-sourced. There remains some work that is out-sourced that RMTU members could complete competitively and we will con-

tinue to negotiate to ensure that happens.

Site manager Kevin Kearney has resigned to join another Dunedin engineering company. The branch wishes him success for his future and thanks for his input into Hillside's successes over the past nine years. We look forward to continuing the positive relationship we enjoyed with Kevin with his successor Andy Bisset.

In late October Terry Duffy, Hutt branch

Continued on the next page

PORT CHALMERS BRANCH

SEASONS greetings. Like you, we are also looking forward to the festive season. It has been a tough year at the Port with a number of 'shocks' resulting in the loss of approximately 150 ship visits per year and ultimately something in the order of 44000 TEUs from the companies projections. The result of this downturn has meant the company insisting of the introduction of a 'Vessel Operation' division which was discussed at the last negotiations and although agreed to in principal and included in the collective contract was only to be bought into being on a voluntary basis. Without going into any great detail, nobody from the combined RMTU/MUNZ workforce volunteered for this new division. This has necessitated the combined union executives and management spending the past 3 months or so exploring various ways and means of dealing with the loss of trade. The discussions have at times been heated to say the least and the combined workforce have rejected out of hand a number of proposals. Happily just today (19 Nov) the latest proposal was accepted and it looks like we can finally look forward to a settling down of some of the tension – for the immediate future anyway.

Many 'casualties'

All of the above has not been without casualties with 19 workers accepting voluntary redundancy and one forced redundancy. The RMTU members that have departed are all long serving members including Bob Hayde 35 years, Lance Corbett 32 years, Sheryl Smith 32 years, Gaye Lester 32 years, Peter Lumb 15 years and Hamish Scott 22 years. Also, Sharon Lindsay has resigned and headed to the sunshine of Brisbane.

We are looking forward to a social function before Christmas involving all past and present members of the Otago Harbour Board and Port Chalmers branch of the RMTU and of course also looking forward to a happier working environment and better times in 2010.

Rail & Maritime Transport Union Inc Statement of Financial Position As At 30 June 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
BNZ Accounts	5	351,017	300,697
Accounts Receivable	3	74,848	71,989
Interest Accrued	4	24,254	57,432
Tax Refund Due	2	18,818	-
Total Current Assets		466,937	430,118
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Fixed Assets	6	159,282	190,700
Investments	7	2,166,721	2,003,792
Total Non Current Assets		2,326,003	2,194,492
Total Assets		\$2,792,941	\$2,624,610
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	8	81,698	90,709
Current Portion of Finance Lease	11	15,488	14,776
GST Payable		22,782	16,877
Konemu Provision		12,903	12,903
Income Tax Payable	2	-	10,711
Provision for Leave		56,472	67,261
LE Reunion Trust Fund		6,350	10,124
Total Current Liabilities		195,693	223,361
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Non Current Portion of Finance Lease	11	47,044	56,643
Total Non Current Liabilities		47,044	56,643
NET ASSETS		\$2,550,203	\$2,344,606

Represented by:

MEMBERS' FUNDS	10	\$2,550,203	\$2,344,606
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Signed on behalf of the National Management Committee

General Secretary

Date

National President

Date

The accompanying notes form part of, and are to be read in conjunction with these financial statements.

HILLSIDE BRANCH [cont]

secretary, visited Hillside (and Dunedin) for the first time along with Hutt Workshops manager Mike Smith. Terry enjoyed a tour of the shops and meeting many of the members. Discussions of co-operation included Hillside's capacity to support Hutt by carrying out work currently purchased from other companies.

After lunch with the branch executive Terry explained the process his branch and management used, in conjunction with the Department of Labour to improve their relationship. Hillside has undertaken a similar process, without external help, and both branches and respective managers continue to strive for better relationships. It is hoped that the Hillside branch can visit Hutt in December to further the relationship.

At Conference it was moved to form a mechanical council and we hope to see this



Hillside welcomed Hutt reps to discuss greater cooperation between the workshops.

come to fruition very early in the new year.

Four apprentices completed their training during this year, congratulations to;

Antoni Brewer, Sean Cronin, Ben Patrick and Brian Weaver. There are four new apprentice starting their training; Kent Rickerby, Rebecca Newton, Paul (Norm) Gates and Steven Wilson. The branch wishes them good luck for their future studies. A further apprenticeship is being offered in metal melting technology and applications are being called for. The branch wishes to acknowledge the support and mentoring of training manager Donald Ross. His input has seen a significant rise in the apprentices' success rate. There is also a new paint qualification to enable progression from level 2 to level 3, the first 2 trainees have signed up. Rebecca Hauck has been appointed to the role of shunt co-ordinator. Well done.

Hillside wishes all a safe and Merry Christmas and happy and prosperous New Year.

RMTU ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP

THIS cholarship 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. It 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.

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/her first degree or qualification. Its value 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 below 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 2010.

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

APPLICATION FORM

Surname of applicant: First 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:

**Wishing all our Union
members a very
Merry Christmas and a safe
and happy New Year**

**From the president, general
secretary, NMC and staff at
head office**



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