

THE **TRANSPORT WORKER**

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



Cover Image

Lyttelton Branch Secretary
Mark Willson rallying outside CCHL
to keep the port in public hands

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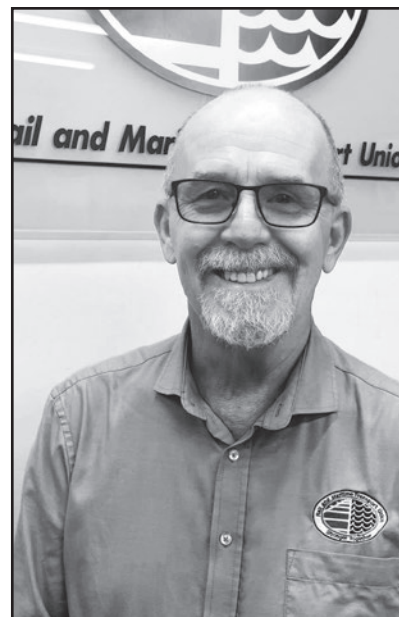
Welcome, kia ora Spring
is upon us so eventu-
ally the weather will
improve and the days get longer.
Here is a summary of my speech at
the AGM.

I thank the branch for the opportunity to attend and speak at their AGM and also thank the members for taking the time to attend this important meeting. On behalf of the RMTU, the National Management Committee (NMC), I wish to show my appreciation to delegates, active members, H&S reps and the Branch Executive.

AGM's are a time to reflect on the last 12 months and look at what is planned in the future. Membership has been static at 5800 members but we do have plans to grow. RMTU staffing has largely settled down aside from an Organiser resignation in the Upper North Island based in Auckland. We have recruited a replacement, a current RMTU member based in Hamilton, Rowan Hodgson, welcome aboard Rowan!

Our new website is getting plenty of hits, electronic voting is working well but it is essential we have your correct contact details. We have also moved to a new member database system—Swiftfox. This was and is a large piece of work but we needed to move our database to the cloud and our old database had to be on an office server which is no longer supported. We have plans to increase communication and make better use of social media—watch this space.

A major campaign against the



*RMTU General Secretary
Todd Valster*

long term lease of Lyttelton Port Company by DP World and the Tōnui Consortium's unsolicited proposal has been a success with the announcement late July that the lease will not go ahead. This was a local campaign run by RMTU, MUNZ and other supportive organisations and leaders. Well done to all involved, this is community organising at its best. The RMTU has been working with staff and the NMC on a strategic plan for the next four years. Once the Strategic Plan is finalised and agreed, it will be presented at our Biennial Conference in October this year.

Our RMTU Biennial Delegates Conference will be held in Wellington October 20–22. We are using a new venue this year, The James Cook on the Terrace. Our conference theme is "Take Action—Kōkiri Tonu" this follows from the 2024 conference theme

◀ “Anger Hope Action” The raft of anti-worker legislation continues to be rushed into law. Workers’ rights are being diminished, workplaces could become less safe, workers will get paid less when they take leave. This legislation must be amended and/or repealed with a change in government. So there is the “Action” make sure all your friends and whanau are enrolled to vote and encourage strong voter participation.

At the 2024 Conference, some new attendees wanted to understand the role of a Conference Delegate and Observers. The conference delegates are elected by the branches and attend as voting delegates on any remits submitted by branches and any notices of motion tabled conference. The Observers have speaking rights but not voting rights. The Observers are expected to report back to the branches after conference. It is likely that there

will be a slight fee increase tabled at Conference, we did increase fees in 2025.

A RMTU working group has been meeting with MUNZ representatives several times this year to discuss a potential amalgamation of our two unions. To date we have arranged to get our constitutions compared for similarities and differences, We have also discussed potential structures. A future meeting is planned for October.

The Woman in Male Dominated industries and organisations (WIMDOI) conference was held in Rotorua in May. We sent a large team of 19 to represent the RMTU. Well done to the organising committee. Thanks to all of the branches that sponsored RMTU woman to attend and thanks to all of those that fundraised for the event. We also had 6 RMTU woman attend the NZCTU Biennial Women’s Conference

and 6 members attend the CTU Pasifika Fonof in July.

2027 is election year for RMTU. The General Secretary, President, National Management Committee members and KiwiRail Industrial Council members are all up for election. We will start that process early next year. We continue to be affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), the International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) which is most of the Asian/Pacific Rail unions, NZ Labour Party and the NZ Council of Trade Unions (CTU). The CTU and affiliates have been leading the campaign “Fight Back Together” with successful nationwide rallies and days of action. Another action, please participate.

Kia Kaha—stay strong!
Todd Valster 🇳🇿

A new RMTU Organiser for the Upper North Island

Hello to all reading this edition of the **Transport Worker**. My name is Rowan Hodgson, new Hamilton-based organiser for the RMTU, looking after members in Auckland and the Waikato. I live with my wife, two daughters, and our dog Oscar. Outside of work I play darts and cricket and enjoy a cold beer.

I’ve moved over to the organiser role from the KiwiRail track gangs in Hamilton. Spent ten years doing that and loved it for the most part. I was involved in the Networks industrial council and the past three KiwiRail collective bargaining. Prior to KiwiRail I worked underground in the coal mines for Solid Energy and on the Waterview tunnel project after that. Had a stint in my 20’s living in the UK, Ireland and Australia where I worked on construction sites and I was also keen on travelling, a party and a good laugh.

I’m really excited about the new role. It’s a big change for me but I welcome the challenge. I’m passionate about fighting for workers’ wages and conditions, and supporting them through difficult times. My aim is to be approachable and available and to carry on the RMTU’s proud tradition of advancing and protecting its members’ interests. Cheers. 🇳🇿



FAREWELL FROM

Mathew Schofield

After 7 years at KiwiRail, it is time for the next adventure.

A massive thankyou to the RMTU team and especially the Westfield Operations members, for putting your trust in me as a workplace delegate.

'The Union' isn't a Monolith—it is members, working, putting in the time and effort. That is the biggest thing I have learned over last several years. It is often hard to see our wins, but they are very real, I assure you. A union can only be as strong as the membership makes it.

Whether delegate, HSAT, LIC or other engagement opportunities, I really encourage folks to step up and contribute. It needs to be a shared workload or people will burn out.

You learn a lot and get exposed to new career opportunities as well. Those who are doing the mahi right now will always appreciate the support. Stay safe everybody. I'll see you when I see you. 🇳🇿



Singing my lungs out at the World Cup, that is my love language, my best way to say thank you to Aotearoa.



In remembrance of Rocky Leofa

Picton Terminal Interislander

Rocky gave seven years of service to KiwiRail—Interislander and in that time, he became far more than just a member of the team. As a Load Marshal, he worked across the business in Picton, connecting with people from all walks of life. He took pride in what he did and it showed every single day. Whether it was coordinating operations, supporting his teammates, or simply having a chat on the job, Rocky brought commitment and quiet strength to everything he did.

Outside of work, Rocky's life was centered around the people he loved most. He shared his life with his partner Sally and together they were raising Nikko and Rocky was also a proud father to Clayton, Edward, Jaidah, and Tayla. All

of his children meant the world to him, and his love and pride in them was clear to those who knew him.

Rocky also lived for the gym. He was disciplined, focused, and always pushing himself. A reflection of the resilience and work ethic he showed in all parts of his life. By his side was Bailey, his loyal dog, a companion who brought him comfort, loyalty and happiness.

We remember Rocky not just for what he did, but for who he was—a hardworking teammate, a quiet but strong presence, a devoted partner and father, and someone who lived with integrity and care. May we carry Rocky's memory with us as we move forward—guided by the example he set and the life he lived.

Ia manuia lau malaga, Rocky.

NZCTU Pasifika Fono

On the 17th & 18th of July I had the honour and privilege to attend the NZCTU Komiti Pasifika Fono held here in Auckland with fellow members of the RMTU.

The theme of the Fono was “Lalaga, weaving our strength. Built for this”

Lalaga spoke to Pacific strength weaving together—our stories, our struggles, our faith, our unions, and our communities.

We had speakers from many walks of life and one of the stories that really stood out was the story of the Polynesian Panthers and their fight for justice during the times of the Dawn raids. The story of the Polynesian Panthers resonated with someone like me as my grandparents migrated here in the early 60s and though they were fortunate to not have been affected from brutality and deportations during that time had they been I don't think I would be the person I am today or have lived the life I live now.

Other mentionable speakers were MPs Teanau Tuiono and Carmel Sepuloni of the Green Labour Parties respectively who were questioned on topics like education, health and safety and wages as New Zealand get ready for the upcoming Election.

During the Fono there was a slide shown on the different unions and membership and of the 11 unions in attendance we had one of the smallest memberships nationwide. Though our membership numbers may be low, it actually highlighted how strong and staunch we are as a union as our members in attendance were astonished at the struggles some of the bigger unions go through to even get a few cents out of their employers.



The RMTU team



MP Carmel Sepuloni with RMTU members

Another thing that this Fono highlighted was unlike the other Unions we the RMTU don't have a National Pasifika Komiti (committee) group within our own union. In time and hopefully in the near future I hope to establish a National Pasifika Komiti within the RMTU so we can empower our Pasifika members. As Pasifika, we are natural fearless leaders within our homes, churches and villages of our respective Pacific nations yet we struggle to voice our opinions within our workplaces because we fear that we will lose our jobs and source of income. So I encourage all Pacific RMTU members to stand up, speak up, and support the union any way possible—whether it be by becoming a Delegate

within your workplace, or just simply backing the union in any movements that requires support. The biggest movement coming up this year is the 2026 Election. Be sure to enrol, update your details, make your voice be heard and vote this upcoming election.

Thanks to the RMTU—Todd, Leighton, Shirley and Anske who helped making attending the Fono possible. Also, thank you to the Pacific members of the RMTU for trusting me to represent you all in spaces like this.

Fa'afetai lava ma ia manuia. 🌐

■ Walter Sipili
RMTU Pasifika Rep

Ernest William File Scholarship

The Ernest William File Scholarship was established in 1978 by members of the Locomotive Engineers Association as a tribute to Ernest William File, the retiring General Secretary of the Association. The Scholarship was adopted and expanded by the Rail and Maritime Transport Union and extended to all members.

Purpose

The purpose of the scholarship is to assist the sons and daughters of a financial member of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union

(RMTU) to commence study in their first year at a New Zealand university.

Eligibility

An applicant must be the son or daughter of a financial member of the RMTU, and intending to hold the Scholarship in their first year of full time study for an undergraduate degree at a New Zealand university.

The financial member of the RMTU may be, or have been, the guardian of the applicant.

Applications will not be accepted from anyone who already has a

qualification from a tertiary institute in New Zealand or overseas.

- Two scholarships may be awarded year each
- Each scholarship carries an award of \$2000
- Tenure is for one year
- One award is available for the son or daughter of a locomotive running staff member. The second award is available for a son or daughter of a non-locomotive running staff member.

Visit the RMTU website for more information and how to apply for 2027.

Our 2026 winners

Kyra Sharma

As of now, my plans for tertiary education include either completing a year of Health Sciences First Year at the University of Otago or completing a year of a Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Auckland, both with the goal to transfer into clinical medicine.

I have been passionate about the biomedical sciences for years, thus receiving this scholarship by the RMTU allows me to be more confident in the path that I have chosen. This scholarship greatly helps me in reaching my aspirations of contributing to the medical field for the benefit of others, as well as allowing me to pursue my passion of understanding how the human body works and how to treat it.

I am grateful to my father who has been a part of the RMTU for a long time and made it possible for me to be eligible for this scholarship, and the people who believed in my application."

I would like to thank you for providing me with this opportunity to express my gratitude. Thank you again—Kyra



Megan Winter and her dad Duane

Megan Wintert

I am really grateful for receiving the Ernest William File Scholarship in 2026. I am currently in my first year studying a Bachelor of Food Technology with Honours. Receiving the scholarship helps me a lot financially, meaning I can focus more on my studies and less on working extra hours.

Locomotive Engineers' Sickness, Accident and Death Benefit Fund

Jed O'Donoghue.

I was medically retired officially on the 16th of November 2023 at the age of 63.

I started working at NZR in 1979, moving to "loco" in January 1980. Once I attained my 2nd class locomotive engineer qualification in 1985 I was automatically set up in the Sickness, Accident, and Death (SAD) fund. The payments came out of my fortnightly wages and I never really noticed it.

Over the years I saw LEs losing their tickets for various health issues. The SAD fund was explained to me as insurance against losing your main income, and I certainly felt that way.

In 2021 I got COVID and it turned out to be long COVID at first I could hardly think and although being a huge reader I could no longer read books, I could read the words but by the time I got to the bottom of the page I had to start over.

Once my mind cleared a bit I was able to do some reading and analysis. While I was employed to drive trains I also had other skills having been on the RMTU executive and local action teams. This was great as a medical showed up atrial fibrillation and ataxia meaning I could no longer be in safety critical environments.

Rail generously kept me on, working from home on the new SI locomotive project. I worked with rail engineers and other LEs to go through the expressions of interest from worldwide locomotive manufacturers. Our group of LEs had a preference for a US style cab configuration, but the US companies



Jed O'Donoghue and Partner Kirsty McNab

didn't put up very compelling proposals. After whittling them down by going back and forth with questions and checking the responses we settled on the bid from Stadler, having early evening discussions with Spain. As a group this was put up the chain as the group's recommendation. Once this was done I didn't "add value" any more so I was medically retired.

I wasn't ready, still expecting at least another 2 years income but thanks to the SAD fund and the medical retirement provisions of the collective agreement we were good. The SAD fund helped keep us going, MSD treated me well,

having been working significantly longer than my case worker had been alive. They found a work around that allowed my payout to be treated as an asset instead of days of work, making my stand down period much shorter. As an LE I was also paid all of my sick leave too. In my case I retired from all work. But if you lose your ticket at a younger age the SAD fund would provide a backup and potential for retraining to a different career path.

Being in the SAD fund is taking responsibility for your income seriously and I strongly recommend being in it.

Na mihi. 🌐

Anti-worker Legislation is Shifting Power away from Working People

As we approach an election it is a good time to review what this government has served up for the working people of New Zealand and look at the challenges that this union has faced and how that will influence our future. The government has pushed through many anti worker changes over their term, many under urgency and with little scrutiny. Hasty legislation is often poor legislation, and our democracy demands the greatest scrutiny of changes in legislation and that they should be for the good of the people of our nation.

For our working people, employment law is not abstract policy. It decides whether we can speak up without fear, whether we can rely on stable hours, whether we can challenge unfair treatment, and whether the law recognises the reality of the work we do. Recent changes from the current Government have been presented as flexibility, certainty, and reduced red tape. From a worker's point of view, they look more like a deliberate shift of power from employees to employers.

Trial periods make job security weaker from day one

The return of 90-day trial periods for all employers means a new worker can be dismissed during the trial period without being able to bring a personal grievance for unjustified dismissal. Supporters argue this gives businesses confidence to hire. But for

workers, especially those starting over, changing careers, or moving into insecure jobs, it creates a period where the employer holds almost all the cards. A job offer should be the beginning of security, not a three-month audition where dismissal can come without meaningful recourse.

With so many people losing employment through redundancy in the last two years the job market now resembles the hunger games and many are either unemployed, underemployed or locked into hell jobs where they are expected to cover multiple roles.

Repealing Fair Pay Agreements weakened collective bargaining

The repeal of Fair Pay Agreements removed a pathway for workers across an industry or occupation to bargain for minimum pay and conditions together. That matters because many low-paid workers do not have strong bargaining power at an individual workplace level. When workers are fragmented, employers can compete by holding wages down. Industry-wide standards were a way to lift the floor. Removing them leaves too many workers negotiating alone against far more powerful employers.

Contractor rules risk creating a lower-rights workforce

Changes to employment relations law that give greater weight to contractor arrangements are especially concerning for people in platform,

gig, and dependent contracting work. If someone works like an employee, depends on one company for income, and has little real control over price or conditions, they should not lose basic employment protections just because a contract labels them something else. A worker's rights should come from the reality of the work, not the wording chosen by the business.

Changes to leave may put simplicity ahead of fairness

Reforming leave law is not automatically a bad thing. The Holidays Act has long been difficult for workers and employers to understand, it has been especially difficult for shift workers and those with lumpy rosters.

The new Act is longer more complicated and favours casualisation, workers will be paid less when they take leave, and it will be easier for employers to chip away at leave balances. Workers are right to be cautious when reforms are sold mainly as reducing compliance costs and making administration easier. Many big employers have spent millions on remediation, compliant payroll software and lawyers. It seems that we finally have it all sorted and we now start another twenty-year cycle of interpreting poor legislation. If annual leave and sick leave systems become simpler for payroll (which is also uncertain), but worse for people with irregular, part-time, casual, or additional hours, then the reform



◀ fails the workers who most need protection.

Personal grievance changes tilt the scales

When the law narrows remedies or makes it harder to challenge unfair treatment, it does not just affect the worker who has already been wronged. It changes the behaviour of every workplace. Employers know when the risk of accountability is lower. Workers know when speaking up may cost them more than staying silent. A fair personal grievance system is not a loophole; it is one of the few practical tools workers have when the power imbalance becomes abuse.

Health and safety changes put workers at risk

The Government's health and safety reforms are described as cutting red tape and focusing on critical risks, but workers know that safety is often lost in the space between what is written on paper and what happens on the job. Limiting duties for small businesses, narrowing notification requirements, and reframing obligations around "critical risk" may sound efficient to employers. It is worth noting that many large employers especially were against the changes. To workers, it raises a harder question: who decides which risks matter before someone is injured, made ill, or killed?

Health and safety law exists because workers have paid the price for weak systems before. Every shortcut, every ignored hazard, every pressure to "just get it done" lands on the body of a worker. A worker-centred approach would strengthen participation, representation, enforcement, and prevention. It would make it easier for workers to stop unsafe work and harder for employers to treat safety as a compliance cost.

It seems this government forgets the lessons learned at Pike River and the reasons we changed the legislation, 29 lives, lest we forget.

Pay equity changes silence women workers

Pay equity is not a bonus or a favour. It is the recognition that work traditionally done by women has often been undervalued precisely because it has been seen as "women's work". The Equal Pay Amendment Act 2025 raised the threshold for claims, requiring workforces to be at least 70 percent female for 10 consecutive years, and discontinued existing claims that had not already been settled or determined. For workers in care, education, health, community services, and other female-dominated sectors, this is not a technical process change. It is a door being pushed shut after years of organising, evidence gathering, and hope.

From a worker's point of view, the attack on pay equity is one of the clearest examples of anti-worker politics. It tells women workers that proving historic undervaluation must become harder, slower, and more uncertain, even when the injustice has been obvious for generations. It also affects families and communities, because low pay in female-dominated work does not stay inside the workplace. It follows people home in the form of second jobs, unpaid bills, delayed health-care, and exhaustion.

We need to remember that this was undone to provide funds to balance the books when the government tax take was reduced by excessive tax cuts to the wealthy and a lower tax take from a slower economy.

The language of flexibility hides who carries the risk

Workers hear the word flexibility all the time. But flexibility for

whom? If flexibility means an employer can hire and fire more easily, classify workers away from employment protections, weaken collective bargaining, or reduce the consequences of unfair treatment, then the risk is being pushed down onto workers. Families cannot pay rent with flexibility. They need predictable income, safe conditions, paid leave, and the confidence that standing up for themselves will not destroy their livelihood.

Attacks on Te Tiriti are also attacks on working people

Attempts to narrow, rewrite, or remove the legal effect of Te Tiriti o Waitangi should not be treated as separate from workers' rights. Te Tiriti is about power, obligation, protection, and the relationship between the Crown and tangata whenua. When the Government weakens Te Tiriti protections, it weakens the foundations of justice that many workers rely on, especially Māori workers and communities who already face structural inequities in pay, health, housing, and access to decent work. However Te Tiriti is for every New Zealander and forms part of the basis of our constitution along with legislation like the bill of rights.

A worker movement worthy of the name cannot ignore this. Collective power means standing against laws that divide workers from one another or pretend equality can be achieved by stripping away rights designed to address historical and ongoing injustice. Defending Te Tiriti is part of defending a fair society, because workers' rights, Indigenous rights, and democratic rights are connected.

What workers should demand instead

A worker-centred approach would start from a simple principle:

people who create value deserve security, dignity, safety, fair pay, and a real voice at work. That means protecting genuine employment status, strengthening collective bargaining, ensuring trial periods do not become disposable labour, preserving meaningful remedies for unfair treatment, designing leave laws around how people actually live and work, defending strong health and safety duties, restoring a workable pathway to pay equity, and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi as part of a just society. Good law should lift standards across the

economy, not encourage a race to the bottom.

The current direction is clear: more discretion for employers, fewer guarantees for workers, weaker safety protections, attacks on pay equity, and attacks on Te Tiriti that undermine justice for tangata whenua and the wider working class. Workers and unions do not oppose thriving businesses. We know our communities need strong workplaces and successful employers. But a thriving economy built on insecurity, unsafe work, underpaid women workers, and

constitutional regression is not success for working people. If the Government wants growth that working families can believe in, it should start by strengthening rights at work, protecting people from harm, restoring fair pay pathways, and honouring Te Tiriti—not cutting those obligations back.

In November this year we have our say, this government has a poor record for working people, so listen carefully to the messages of all the parties and make your vote count. Sound democracy requires participation. 

Our Port Our Future: Solidarity Defeats Multinational Takeover at Lyttelton Port

When Dubai Government-owned global corporate giant DP World tried to grab operational control of Lyttelton Port recently, they underestimated the strength of feeling amongst port workers and the wider Lyttelton and Christchurch community.

RMTU and MUNZ members at LPC stood alongside each other, mobilised international solidarity, and forced council holding company CCHL to shut the door on the deal. But while we celebrate a win for public ownership, the battle for the future of our port is not over yet.

The Takeover Proposal

In June 2026, Lyttelton Port workers learned of a new attempt to undermine public control of Lyttelton Port. Christchurch City Holdings Limited (CCHL) is the commercial investment arm of the Christchurch City Council that owns Lyttelton Port Company

(LPC). CCHL had received an unsolicited takeover and “operational lease” proposal.

The bid came from the newly formed ‘Tōnui’ consortium, composed of three local rūnanga alongside DP World. The offer (its details were later leaked) was \$243 million in “upfront proceeds”, bundled with promises of private capital investment.

PR spin tried to frame the takeover as an innovative, progressive partnership. But the consortium was seeking a long-term lease to allow DP World to run port operations. The plan was an effective privatisation of a profitable, strategic public asset that belongs to the people of Christchurch.

DP World: A Grim Global Track Record

Across the world, DP World’s operating model has left a trail of destroyed livelihoods, aggressive anti-union campaigns, and job-killing automation.

In the United Kingdom, P&O Ferries (a DP World subsidiary) was reviled after a mass firing of 800 British seafarers with zero notice, followed by replacement with cheap agency labour.

Across the Tasman in Australia, DP World has engaged in relentless attacks on waterfront conditions and jobs while raking in record revenue and paying effectively zero corporate income tax over the eight years from 2013–14 to 2020–2, while generating approximately A\$4.5 billion in revenue.

DP World has been at the forefront of trying to force through unchecked AI automation across its international terminals, replacing experienced, unionised waterfront labour with automated systems and robotics.

Paddy Crumlin, President of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and ITF Dockers’ Section Chair, sounded a warning to New Zealand workers:

“If DP World gets into New





◀ *MUNZ and RMTUs Branch Secretaries Gerard Loader and Mark Wilson protesting outside CCHL*

Zealand, do you think it will be any different?”

Scott McDine, ITF Regional Secretary for the Asia-Pacific, reinforced that global support.

“This is a fight that we can and must win, and we stand firmly alongside MUNZ and RMTU for the sake of the port workers and community of Christchurch. DP World’s record in Australia makes it very clear to us that the only real winners from this proposed takeover of Lyttelton Port will be DP World.”

Standing Firm

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) and the Maritime

Union of New Zealand (MUNZ) joined forces with the backing of the ITF to mount a campaign against the bid.

Union leaders made it clear that they maintain absolute respect for mana whenua and local rūnanga, and have recently met with rūnanga, and share their concerns about the environmental effects of port expansion, and lack of consultation.

RMTU President Aubrey Wilkinson says a multinational takeover would inflict immense damage on the local economy and waterfront safety standards.

“If a multinational network operator like DP World captures Lyttelton Port, it will mean

skyrocketing costs for local businesses, the stripping of community wealth, the degradation of safety standards, and widespread job losses on the waterfront.”

MUNZ National Secretary Carl Findlay says the involvement of DP World raised serious concerns for workers, ratepayers, and democratic accountability.

Council rejects Tōnui deal

The collective pushback from port workers and community allies put immediate pressure on Christchurch City Holdings Limited and elected city councilors.

By late July 2026, CCHL



Port Workers and sympathetic unionists protest outside CCHL headquarters

delivered the outcome workers had been fighting for. The Tōnuī consortium's unsolicited proposal was officially rejected. CCHL Chair Bryan Pearson confirmed that the bid "failed to meet the threshold for ongoing consideration" and "was not sufficiently compelling to warrant detailed investigation or consultation."

A decisive factor in the bid's defeat was Christchurch City Council's formal Letter of Expectation (LOE), which governs CCHL's investment strategy.

The Council LOE to the boards of infrastructure companies is a crucial part of the fight against privatisation, says RMTU Lyttelton

Port Branch Secretary Mark Wilson.

"Hearing rumours of DP World sniffing around Lyttelton, the unions became involved in the upcoming local body elections, helping candidates, and driving the Keep Our Assets topic in the media."

Wilson says councillors are the representatives of the residents who through the Christchurch Council owns the port, so ultimately the councillors are the decision makers of our infrastructure, and the LOE is a directive of behaviour to the appointed (not elected) directors.

"The strength of the LOE is a direct result of returning enough

councillors to power who could ensure the mandate of holding onto public infrastructure was written into the council expectations of the governing board."

Though CCHL and LPC continue to do everything they can to diminish the significance of the Council expectations, this combined with significant public pressure resulted in the Tōnuī offer being declined by CCHL.

Lyttelton port was kept where it belongs, in public hands.

The rejection of DP World is a huge victory, but unions will need to keep up our guard. While external raiders have been turned away, serious challenges remain regarding



Protestors at a Keep Our Assets rally at the Bridge of Remembrance

◀ LPC's leadership, governance, and capital spending.

Union attention is now focused on LPC's proposed major expansion at Te Awaparahi Bay. Management has pushed heavily for this large-scale reclamation development, but port unions have raised questions about the credibility of the business case.

Wilson says LPC's commercial assumptions do not reflect economic reality.

"The business case for the expansion was flawed, as the underlying forecasts substantially overestimated future import and export demand across Canterbury."

He says the community's wealth

must remain in public hands.

"Retaining a publicly owned and operated port is vital to protecting the local standard of living and regional economic security."

Port unions remain deeply concerned about any future privatisation attempts, unmanaged port expansion, and the ongoing lack of genuine consultation with both frontline workers and mana whenua.

The defeat of DP World's proposal proves Lyttelton Port is not a speculative piggy bank for global terminal operators to strip for profit. It is essential regional infrastructure built by generations of working people.

The RMTU and MUNZ will continue to hold LPC management and CCHL accountable, demanding safe working conditions, transparent governance, and genuine consultation on every project.

The RMTU branch leadership have continued to keep members briefed on wharf development plans and automation risks.

Our message to management and those who want to sell off our local assets remains loud and clear: our port is public, our workforce is unionised, and we will defend our jobs and port every single time.



The Role of Women in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute

The 1951 Waterfront Dispute was the largest industrial conflict in New Zealand history. Lasting 151 days, from February to July 1951, it involved more than 22,000 workers and became a defining event in the nation's political and labour history. Although the dispute is often remembered as a struggle between waterside workers, employers, and the National Government, women played a crucial and often overlooked role in sustaining the resistance and supporting affected families

Background to the Dispute

The conflict began when Waterside Workers objected to working conditions and wage arrangements on New Zealand's wharves. Employers responded by refusing to employ workers who would not work overtime, leading to what Watersiders described as a lockout and what the government regarded as a strike. As was outlined in our previous article Prime Minister Sidney Holland declared a state of emergency, introduced strict censorship regulations, and made it illegal to assist striking workers in many circumstances.

These measures placed enormous pressure on waterside workers and their families. With wages cut off and public support restricted, many families faced severe financial hardship. It was under these circumstances that women became vital to the survival of the waterfront communities.

Organising Support Networks

Women, particularly the wives and relatives of waterside workers,

organised support systems that helped families endure months without income. Women's auxiliaries were established in several centres, including Auckland, where Freda Barnes, wife of union leader Jock Barnes, helped found the Auckland Women's Auxiliary of the Waterside Workers' Union. These groups coordinated relief efforts, distributed food, collected donations, and assisted families experiencing hardship.

The auxiliaries provided practical assistance while also creating a sense of solidarity among families. Historical accounts suggest that many women became more politically engaged during the dispute, taking an active interest in union affairs and participating directly in support activities.

Circumventing Government Restrictions

One of the most significant contributions made by women was their involvement in communication networks. Government emergency regulations imposed strict censorship and attempted to prevent the circulation of information supporting the Watersiders. Women frequently helped produce, transport, and distribute newsletters, leaflets, and bulletins that presented the workers' side of the dispute.

A notable example was Rona Bailey, who, together with her husband Chip Bailey, played a prominent role in producing and distributing illegal waterfront bulletins in Wellington. These publications helped maintain morale and provided workers and supporters with information that was

unavailable through mainstream channels.

By engaging in these activities, women often risked legal consequences. Their involvement demonstrated both courage and determination in the face of government efforts to isolate the Watersiders.

As their actions were considered illegal, they also faced the wrath of mainstream society who in the most part were kept in the dark as to the real story of the Unions' plight. There was also risk to their physical well being as there were often violent raids on these "illegal" activities.

Maintaining Families and Communities

The dispute was not only an industrial struggle but also a social crisis. With thousands of men out of work, women bore much of the responsibility for maintaining households. They managed scarce resources, cared for children, sought support from friends and relatives, and ensured that communities remained functional during the prolonged conflict.

Many supporters from local communities secretly supplied food and other necessities to affected families despite regulations discouraging assistance. Women were often at the centre of organising and distributing these supplies. Their efforts prevented many families from falling into extreme poverty and helped sustain the dispute for its full duration.

Post war time was challenging enough for New Zealanders as the country rallied to feed Europe and Britain, the added hardship



'ARE YOU ARE OR ARE NOT AWARE THAT IT IS AN OFFENCE TO PRINT OR PUBLISH ANYTHING INTENDED OR LIKELY TO PROCURE, AID, ABET, ENCOURAGE OR INCITE...'

of struggling to feed and care for a family was borne stoically by the women of the union. While the men were on the picket lines they toiled behind the scenes to keep the movement afloat, it needs to be noted that without their efforts the dispute would have run out of steam more quickly.

Challenging Traditional Gender Roles

The 1951 dispute occurred during a period when many New Zealand women were expected to focus primarily on domestic responsibilities. However, the crisis created opportunities for women to assume more public and political roles. Through organising relief committees, participating in demonstrations, distributing information, and engaging in political discussions, women expanded their involvement beyond the household.

Their actions challenged contemporary assumptions about women's place in society and demonstrated that industrial disputes affected entire families, not just male workers. As later historians have argued, the dispute revealed the extent to which women's labour—both paid and unpaid—was essential to the functioning of working-class communities.

These women would have belonged to the same part of society that saw women work in factories and on the land during the war, it is only natural for them to assume the organisational mantle of the movement.

Legacy

Although the waterside workers were ultimately defeated and many union activists suffered long-term consequences, the contribution of women left an enduring legacy.

Their organisational skills, resilience, and willingness to support workers under difficult circumstances helped sustain the dispute and preserve community solidarity.

Today, we increasingly recognise that the story of the 1951 Waterfront Dispute is not only about waterfront workers and political leaders. It is also a story of women who provided leadership, maintained family welfare, challenged restrictive laws, and ensured that the struggle could continue despite immense pressure. Their contribution remains an essential part of understanding one of the most significant events in New Zealand labour history.

We now see that the majority of unionised workers are now women, it is our women that see the value in solidarity and collective action, and now champion it in this 21st century world.

Wellington Rail



Tauranga Port



Waikato





AGM 2026

Women in Male-Dominated Industries

Sister Annette McCauley National Women's Rep from MUNZ and Rebecca Hauck National Women's Rep from RMTU are part of a International Women's Day Fundraising Committee that is made up of MUNZ, RMTU, DWU (Dairy Workers Union), NZPFU (New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union) and PSA (Public Service Association) union sisters. Having several unions participating in a New Zealand event is a direct result of what WIMDOI is capable of. This is just the start of something beautiful among the wāhine of Aotearoa and the union movement.



We are fundraising for our third Annual International Women's Day event on March 5th-7th

2027, heading back south to Ōtepoti, Dunedin after events in Christchurch and New Plymouth

If you're interested in attending this event please contact:
Annette McCauley annette_liz@hotmail.com or Rebecca Hauck gunkgir17@gmail.com



From Left to Right: Rebecca Hauck-RMTU, Nia Bartley—NZCTU Komiti Pacifica, Leota Alice Meredith—PSA, Eka Syafii—PSA, Amanda Aiolupotea—PSA

Union Women Supporting Union Women

Union Sisters that have been connected through WIMDOI26, as well as networking through the union sisterhood—something that we are extremely good at. We all

came together from Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin to support our sister Leota Alice Meredith and the amazing mahi she put in to launch the Pacifica

Cultures Gallery at Tūhuru Otago Museum. A great example of sisterhood, unionism, empowerment, and Kotahitanga—Unity through the union movement.

Womens' History Project

The RMTU is supporting a project being coordinated by Kaisa Beech to capture the stories of women who have shaped rail history in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"Many of the women who were among the first to step into traditionally male-dominated roles in rail are still working with us today.

This means we have a unique opportunity to record this recent history. Women's contributions and presence have often been overlooked in the way history is recorded, and this project aims to make sure those stories are captured and recognised."

The RMTU would like to publish these stories in the Transport Worker. Kaisa also hopes to collate

the stories into a separate, free downloadable history resource in the future.

Kaisa is currently gathering stories from women she knows in Wellington but needs help finding stories and milestones from branches across the country.



Do you know the important moments in your branch's history?

Who were the first women to take on particular roles? Are there stories of women who broke new ground in rail or maritime workplaces? Are there milestones, achievements or challenges that should be remembered? We want the details: names, backgrounds, experiences, and personal stories people would like to share.

If you are in the Maritime sector, Kaisa is also keen to hear these stories. If you are comfortable with Kaisa using your story as part of the wider project, these contributions may also become part of the future history resource. "This is a volunteer passion project—a bit of a "nerd side project"—but it is an important opportunity to ensure women's contributions are not lost from our shared history."

Contact Kaisa at kaisa.beech@gmail.com



Oakley at the controls

Rising Through the Ranks

Oakley Sets the Standard at the Port of Tauranga

At the Port of Tauranga, where efficiency, safety, and skill define the rhythm of daily operations, one worker is making a name for herself through determination, initiative, and a commitment to growth.

Oakley, an energetic and dedicated member of the C3 log marshalling team, began her journey at the checkpoint, scaling and ticketing logs, ensuring each load was accurately measured and assigned value before being unloaded from log trucks into the storage yard. It's a critical role in the supply chain, demanding precision and consistency, and Oakley quickly proved herself to be more than capable.

But for Oakley, doing the job

well was just the beginning. Keen to expand her knowledge and contribute further to the operation, she put her hand up to be trained as an ATV operator, a role essential to supplying logs to vessels for export loading. Recognising her drive and potential, training staff supported her progression, confident she would become a valuable member of the operator team.

Oakley's advancement is significant for more than just her own career. She is helping to lead the way for women on the port, stepping into a space traditionally dominated by men and demonstrating that skill, work ethic, and attitude, not gender define capability. In doing so, she is setting a clear and positive example for other

young women considering a future in the industry.

Her approach is straightforward: work hard, learn every day, and take every opportunity to improve. It's an attitude that reflects the values of the RMTU and the broader workforce across our ports. Oakley represents the future of our industry, skilled, motivated, and willing to step forward. She is setting a high standard for her fellow workers, both male and female, and proving what can be achieved through initiative and dedication.

The RMTU is proud to stand behind members like Oakley. Her journey is a reminder that when workers are supported to grow and take on new challenges, the entire industry benefits.



Northland

This month, the North Tugz team embarked on an important milestone—a ballot vote on a company-proposed offer to the Collective Agreement. The proposal itself was essentially a rollover of the existing CA, enhanced with a well-considered percentage increase in light of the current financial climate.

Among the highlights was a long-debated improvement to the start and stop times for our signature 3-days-on, 2-days-off

roster. The fresh change: a midnight (00:00) start and finish, replacing the old 0800 switchover. This adjustment means the team can finally enjoy a full night's rest before stepping into their well-earned time off, rather than losing half a day to recovery.

As an added bonus, a one-off payment sweetened the deal for all members who accepted the settlement terms. After careful discussion, the offer was carried by a clear vote—an outcome that

reflected the team's sense of fairness and unity.

While the much-anticipated RMTU insurance benefits from Protect were thoroughly debated, it was agreed that these would be revisited in the next negotiation round, set to begin January 2027.

All in all, this was a significant and positive result—one that left everyone feeling heard, valued, and optimistic about what's next.



Labour Candidate Dr Gary Payinda discusses employment leave act with RMTU workers in Whangarei

Bay of Plenty

Bay of Plenty Port Branch 2026 AGM: Stronger Together

The RMTU Bay of Plenty Port Branch held its AGM at Club Mount Maunganui on 4 August, bringing members together to review the year, recognise delegates and the Branch Executive, and consider the challenges ahead for

transport workers.

With more than 500 members across port companies, the Branch continues to grow in strength and influence.

Members also heard from Labour representatives Rhieve Grey, Toni Boynton and Pare Taikato.

Workers' rights and the political landscape

The guest speakers discussed the current challenges facing working people and the impact of recent changes to employment legislation.

Issues raised included workplace safety, job security, pay equity and

the removal of Fair Pay Agreements. The speakers acknowledged the important historical role unions have played in improving working conditions and protecting workers' rights.

Members also had the opportunity to ask questions about how union members can participate during an election period. Discussion included encouraging younger workers to enrol and vote, helping whānau and friends get to polling places, keeping electoral details up to date and sharing information with others.

For RMTU members, the message was clear: **workers' voices matter, and strong participation is essential if we want governments to understand the issues facing working people.**

A strong year for the Branch

The Branch has dealt with a wide range of issues, including health and safety, consultation, employment matters, restructuring, disciplinary cases, collective bargaining and protecting members' rights at work.

Much of this work happens

behind the scenes, but it is fundamental to what a union does.

The AGM recognised the commitment of the Branch Executive and delegates who give their time to attend meetings, represent members, respond to workplace issues and support their fellow workers.

The Branch also welcomed new Executive members and highlighted the importance of having representation from across the different companies operating around the port.

As the Chairperson's report emphasised, **the strength of the Branch does not come from one person—it comes from members standing together.**

Safety, fatigue and the future of work

Health and safety remained a major focus for the Branch.

Delegates received training in areas including fatigue management, with further health and safety training planned.

The Branch also discussed the need to continue developing initiatives such as PROTECT and maintaining a strong safety-first culture across the port.

These issues are becoming increasingly important as technology, automation and changing work practices reshape the transport industry.

For port workers, the introduction of new technology and automation cannot simply be about productivity. The impact on jobs, safety, skills, workload and working conditions must also be considered.

A Branch built on solidarity

Our AGM closed with a strong sense of unity and appreciation for the people who keep the port operating safely and efficiently.

The work of the Branch Executive, delegates, health and safety representatives and active members is often unseen, but it is essential.

As the Branch Chairperson's report reminded members:

"The greatest strength of the RMTU has always been its members standing together."

That remains the message from the Bay of Plenty Port Branch as we head into the next year.

Kia kaha. Stand together. Take action, kōkiri tonu.

Waikato Branch

DIFOT above all else is the message we constantly hear from KiwiRail. Members are asking how many times workers need to be raked over the coals for minor infractions while managers appear to avoid the same scrutiny. We want greater transparency around management mistakes, accountability, and disciplinary action, particularly where planning and decisions contribute to incidents.

At Te Rapa Depot, Level 3 Mechanical Engineers are being moved into Rail Operator roles, with little clarity around the future of their mechanical and servicing duties. Meetings are scheduled, and members want these staff paid the same as other depots for equivalent work. Creating hybrid roles while paying the lowest rate is not acceptable.

Hamilton track gangs are now rostered every Sunday, which the

majority strongly opposed. This roster damages work-life balance and makes family life difficult. The roster consultation was a tick-box exercise, with HPHE principles not applied.

Te Rapa LEs are also being rostered into unsafe conditions while their work-life balance continues to suffer. Local meetings are being arranged to discuss what can be done before the end of the year.





Strengthening work on the Ormondville Viaduct

Taranaki Rail

A well-attended delegate training at Whareroa went very well. With 10 local delegates attending as well as the port branch secretary. The highlight of the day being a great lunch provided by a local bakery with great pies. The real bonus was getting the delegates up to speed

with the role and duties of the delegate.

Thanks to Rob Stone for organising the training and being such a great servant of the branch for so many years. Unfortunately, the branch AGM needed to be postponed due to Rob's mother being unwell, we wish Rob and the family

all the best as she recovers.

Milk season is upon us and we look forward to a busy few months as the staple of the Taranaki line makes us earn our keep. On a positive note, the CT site in New Plymouth is having a revamp and is getting busier, increasing tonnage on this important link.

Taranaki Port Branch

Greetings from the West Coast and the RMTU team at Port Taranaki.

It has been a relatively steady quarter for the branch, with membership remaining stable and our focus continues to be on maintaining good outcomes for our members.

The branch has recently committed to extending our current collective agreement for a further year. This provides some stability for members and allows us to continue working constructively with Port Taranaki management on the

issues that matter to our workforce.

One area currently receiving attention is the position of casual workers. We are in discussions with the company around improving outcomes for our casual members and ensuring that their pay, hours and employment arrangements are appropriately aligned with employment law. We are hopeful of reaching a positive outcome through the current discussions.

There have also been some changes at management level during the quarter. So far, these changes have had no direct effect

on RMTU members, but as always, the branch will keep an eye on developments.

Health and safety continues to be a strong point at Port Taranaki. There has been no single major issue to report this quarter, but maintaining a safe workplace remains a priority for both the branch and our members.

The future of the port's business continues to be a topic of discussion amongst members. While recent financial and trade results have been positive, there is recognition that declining gas reserves

will affect some of Port Taranaki's traditional business over time. The port is looking at opportunities to diversify, including LNG, offshore wind, decommissioning, forestry, agricultural products and other project cargo.

The Government's continued procurement process for an LNG import facility at Port Taranaki is

one development members will be watching closely. There is potential for new business and employment opportunities, although the longer-term picture for the port remains something that naturally concerns our members.

For now, it is business as usual at Port Taranaki. Membership remains solid, the collective

agreement has been extended, discussions around casual employment are progressing, and safety remains front of mind. As the port looks towards its future, the branch will continue to advocate for secure, sustainable and quality employment for our members.

Keep safe out there.

Napier Rail

Greetings from the Bay. Property Group have stripped out the Dannevirke storage sheds, where asbestos sheeting was found. The area has been cordoned off and the affected materials removed. New storage facilities are being arranged, with the perimeter fencing also being upgraded.

Maintenance work is continuing at the Napier Depot, with gates being repaired and building

cladding being made good.

The Infrastructure teams have been busy dealing with large mud spots, resleepering and general joint maintenance between Ōtāne and Ōpapa, keeping Digger Services, CD60 and the Digger busy.

The Signals team have a new gantry being installed in Hastings on the 22nd/23rd August. This has been a significant project and has taken a few weekends to complete.

The Structures team have a

number of projects underway south of Napier, including steel cap installation on Bridge 166 at Hatuma. Extensive work is also underway on the Ormondville Viaduct, including timber sill and stud replacements. The north end of the viaduct is being scaffolded and resleepered, along with a new walkway, with the Palmerston Structures team carrying out the work in October

Stay safe, Speak up.

Napier Port

As the year progresses, Napier Port is accelerating its NPT program, which will introduce fully autonomous vehicles within the port. Automation represents a new threat to working people in this country, as its goal appears to be replacing people with machines. Ports of Auckland attempted to introduce automation a few years ago but was unsuccessful, so this latest effort is attracting significant interest.

The question that needs to be answered; will a hybrid model will work? Typically, in big ports overseas we see the entire port being automated. In this situation there will be a lot of interaction between autonomous vehicles, and vehicles

operated by humans, as well as people on the ground. We wait to see where this goes.

Napier Port is in the process of reorganising the way it works, and while there have been to direct effect on the number of jobs, it seems inevitable that eventually jobs will be affected. A successful introduction of automation here will see further development in this field both at this port and at other ports in New Zealand.

Other issues at large include, availability for the flexi team of heavy plant operators. Workers have little visibility about their hours of work from one day to the next and tend to get worked hard during busy periods. The company

maintains that it needs flexibility in order to maintain its business. Shift work is hard, as we know, but it is even harder when you don't know when you are working. The effects on home life and mental health make it hard going.

A well-attended AGM this year welcomed long time Branch Secretary Dave Marden who spoke about the need to fill vacant branch positions, and the need for unity hard work from the members. Todd Valster talked of the challenges facing workers with anti-worker legislation eroding our rights.

Changing times always bring uncertainty wait for the next exciting episode.



◀ Palmerston North

Retirement Acknowledgement— Ross Adams

After more than **50 years of dedicated service**, Ross Adams has officially retired from the railway. Ross has long been recognised as a valued and respected member of the railway fraternity, known for his steady professionalism, deep industry knowledge, and unwavering commitment to safe operations. Over his remarkable career, Ross served as a **Train Controller**, an **Operations Controller**, and most recently as a **Yard Team Leader**.

Across five decades, Ross supported countless colleagues, mentored new staff, and consistently upheld the values that keep our railway moving. His contribution has shaped teams, strengthened our culture, and left a legacy that will endure well beyond his final shift.

We thank Ross for his outstanding service and wish him a long, healthy, and fulfilling retirement. His presence will be missed, but his impact remains.

Two long serving Locomotive Engineers have recently reached significant career milestones.

Clint Bremner, with **30 years of service**, continues a remarkable family legacy in KiwiRail that spans **five generations**. Clint's commitment to the job, steady professionalism, and deep connection to the railway community reflect a lifetime shaped by rail.

Greg Simmons marks **20 years of service**, representing **two generations** within KiwiRail. Greg's dedication, reliability, and consistent contribution to safe operations have made him a respected member of the team.

Congratulations to both Clint and Greg on reaching these

milestones. Their service, loyalty, and on-going commitment to the railway are sincerely appreciated.

Karen Fletcher alongside other **RMTU delegates** and **KiwiRail** have been working hard on progressing improvements to the **ROM S3**. This collaborative effort reflects a strong commitment to making the system more practical, reliable, and supportive of frontline operations.

Their work ensures member feedback is heard, issues are addressed, and the ROM S3 continues to evolve in a way that strengthens safety, usability, and day to day efficiency for staff across the network.

The RMTU acknowledges and appreciates the dedication shown by Karen and the wider team involved.

EF Fleet Reliability on the Rise

One of the most encouraging developments has been the significant improvement in the reliability of the EF Fleet. After a period of instability and inconsistent performance, the fleet is now demonstrating a much stronger level of operational dependability.

This turnaround is directly attributable to the continued dedication of Mechanical staff. Their focus on preventative maintenance, targeted repairs, and consistent follow through has stabilised the fleet and restored confidence in its performance. The EF units are now completing more runs with fewer faults, reducing disruptions and improving service resilience across the central section of the network. The Mechanical teams deserve clear recognition for the role they have played in this improvement. Their professionalism, skill, and persistence have been central to the EF

Fleet's recovery. This is a textbook example of how frontline expertise—when supported, resourced, and listened to—delivers real operational progress.

Network Update—NIMT Improvements

Good progress continues across the NIMT, with multiple workgroups out addressing long standing issues and tightening up the corridor. It's clear, visible work—and it's already contributing to reduced running times and more consistent performance. These improvements support safer, smoother operations for crews and better reliability for customers.

The recent commissioning of new LED signals at Manakau marks a welcome improvement to visibility and operational safety on the NIMT. These modern units replace the ageing searchlight signals that were increasingly prone to poor clarity in adverse weather and inconsistent aspect presentation. LED signals provide sharper, more reliable indications at greater distances, directly supporting safer train handling and reducing avoidable signal related incidents. This upgrade reflects the kind of practical, frontline focused investment our members have long advocated for, and we will continue pushing for similar improvements across the network to strengthen both safety and working conditions.

Acknowledgements

A final word of appreciation goes to Dale Fagan and the entire HSAT team. Their ongoing commitment to strengthening health and safety across our workplaces continues to make a real difference for members. The improvements they drive—often quietly, consistently, and

behind the scenes—help ensure that every worker goes home safe.

We also extend a sincere thank you to all RMTU delegates. The role you play in supporting

members through the occasional tight or complex work related predicament is invaluable. Your advocacy, guidance, and willingness to step in when needed uphold

the union's core purpose: standing together, supporting one another, and ensuring fair treatment for all.

Wellington Rail

Greetings everyone. The Wellington Rail Branch has been a busy place over the past few months. We have recently concluded this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which was held on Wednesday, 19 August. The Branch was pleased to see an overwhelming turnout from members.

The main topic of discussion at this year's AGM was **"Safety in Numbers"**, particularly in light of recent events across the sector. The strong attendance and engagement from members demonstrated the importance of standing together and ensuring that safety remains at the forefront of our industry.

Since the release of the last edition, the Wellington sector has experienced an unfortunate incident involving a Wellington passenger service. The August edition of *The Activist* provided the following updates:

"There are three investigations ongoing at the moment in relation to this incident: TAIC, NZTA and the employer. None of which are close to resolution and all will take time to complete."

The publication also highlighted the pressure currently being experienced by our members:

"Our members are feeling the heat. Train managers are being held accountable for giving right of way if the signal is not green and have been receiving written warnings for these infringements. We do not believe that a punitive approach will solve the SPAD issue anywhere



The life-sized model of the Tūhono fleet cab

in the country."

Meanwhile, the crew involved continue to recover from the incident, with both members having sustained head injuries and concussion. Their recovery will be a long journey, and we extend our best wishes to both individuals as they continue that process.

The union continues to provide support to the affected members, both pastorally and legally, as the various investigations progress.

Lower North Island Rail Integrated Mobility (LNIRIM) Tūhono Cab Model

Work and collaboration on the LNIRIM project continues, with the RMTU and relevant parties remaining engaged throughout the design process.

Since the last issue, members and delegates in Wellington have had the opportunity to view a life-sized model of the new Tūhono fleet cab at Wellington Station. The model was placed in the former Service Coordination Centre, allowing staff to provide feedback and suggestions regarding the cab's design and configuration

Transdev announces proposed changes following GWRC's motion to remove cash from services by March 2027.

Following plans to remove cash from services by March of next year by Metlink / GWRC Transdev have 'investigated' possible changes to the onboard space and have proposed a 'sinking lid' approach whilst pausing recruitment of

◀ Passenger Operators.

The current proposal would see:

- Phase 1 : Operate on day of operation staffing levels, reducing POs on 4-car trains to 0 and 8-car trains to 1.
- Phase 2 : Reduce POs to 0 on 6-car trains.

These two phases would require a reduction of staff by 53 Passenger Operators over the proposed

timeframe of the 2 phases by natural attrition, redeployment & promotion.

Whilst claiming to ensure that their objectives are to maintain or improve safety of staff and passengers whilst reducing costs, it is of significant concern to the RMTU and its members that this proposal would only lead to increased fatigue and safety risks to onboard

staff as well as the risk to passengers. The branch has called for members to provide feedback / suggestions for alternatives to the proposal and of any instances where staffing numbers and passenger operators have aided to the safe running of rail services and prevention of incidents onboard services.

Wellington Port

With the introduction of the MSC Eagle Service, Centreport has seen a massive growth in throughput of TEU. With an expected tripling of container traffic to a possible 250 000 TEU, creating a massive workload for our members.

This has been positive for Wellington, making Centreport one of the few employers in the region to be hiring. Approximately an extra 50 jobs will be added by the end of the year with possibly

more to come. The negative side of this has been a huge increase in the number of hours our members have been working. While this is good for the pay packet, it has a negative effect on people's fatigue and home life.

This has been born out with many remits for this year's wage round focusing on availability and hours of work. It is always easier to deal with these issues with a busy workplace than a quiet one.

Whilst a good proportion of the container traffic are trans shipped, there has been a positive effect on more cargo through the gate as more regular services entice exporters. While Centreport maintains that trans shipping comes at a lower value, surely the port will be making money or else why do it.

Morale remains high amongst the work force the risk of burn out becomes more evident as the relentless pace keeps the pressure on.

Nelson

Another Fine Year in the Republic of Port Nelson
Strap in and stay hydrated because Well, here we are again. Another few months have vanished into the industrial swamp, and Nelson Branch is still standing—although some days it feels less like standing and more like clinging to the bonnet of a forklift on fire while somebody in management throws paperwork at us.

For a brief, shining moment, we thought we might actually be getting somewhere with Port Nelson. Perhaps, just perhaps, we had reached that mythical stage of industrial relations where not every

bloody conversation required the deployment of heavy artillery.

Foolish optimism.

Some divisions are still experiencing almost daily headaches, usually over the sort of stupid little things that should never have made it past the first cup of coffee in the morning. Yet somehow they become full-blown dramas. It seems there are still a few area managers who regard employee happiness as a personal affront and appear determined to make their working lives as miserable as humanly possible.

You have to admire the commitment, if nothing else.

Then there is the curious phenomenon known as **The Great HR Reset**.

Agreements are made in good faith with the HR people who were there at the time. Everyone shakes hands, everyone understands the arrangement, and the union executive goes back to work.

Then a new HR person arrives.

Suddenly, those agreements apparently need to be rediscovered, reassessed, examined under laboratory conditions and possibly sacrificed to the gods of corporate administration.

Nothing has changed on our side, of course. We are still doing

exactly what we agreed to do. But apparently the arrival of a new person means the historical record has become optional.

This is one of the great mysteries of modern industrial relations.

And so, naturally, we are heading into bargaining again, with negotiations due to commence in October.

Port Nelson has had a bloody good year. The log situation following the floods has brought a substantial amount of work through C3, which has ultimately meant Port Nelson has been able to supply labour across the operation. There has been plenty happening, plenty of work, and plenty of members putting in the hard yards.

But we all know what comes next.

Once bargaining starts, I am sure we will be introduced to the familiar horror story about the terrible economic future lurking just over the horizon. The sky will darken. The vultures will circle. Someone will probably produce a spreadsheet showing that prosperity is actually a dangerous illusion and that everyone should immediately lower their expectations.

We have spent the last few bargaining rounds working hard to bring the different areas up to a reasonable and fair level of pay. That work has not been easy, but it has made a difference.

So perhaps the general consensus this time will be fairly straightforward: a good GWI for everyone, with a few well-placed REMITS thrown into the mix for good measure.

After all, bargaining without a few remits is like a pub without beer—technically possible, but nobody really wants to live in that world.

Meanwhile, Port Nelson has opened a new Inland Port in Marlborough, and it is bloody good to see that some of the workers



Young Stevedor Rainor and Family

there have already signed up to the union.

We will be making the trip across at the end of the month to meet the members and introduce ourselves to the manager as well.

A roadie.

There are worse things than crossing the hills in the name of union organising. Although, knowing our luck, it will be in a V8 holden and the vice will forget his valium

And finally, on a much happier note, the family photo this time is of one of our young stevedores, Rainor, and his beautiful family.

It is worth remembering, amongst all the arguments, meetings, spreadsheets, emails, policies, remits, grievances and occasional battles with the corporate machinery, exactly why we do this work.

It isn't for the paperwork.

It isn't for the meetings.

And it certainly isn't for the joy of explaining the same bloody

agreement to HR for the seventh time.

We do it for our members and their families.

We work hard in the union because decent wages, decent conditions and a fair go matter. They matter when you're standing on the wharf at two in the morning, and they matter even more when you go home at night to the people who are counting on you.

So thank you, Rainor, for allowing us to share your beautiful family with the world. They are a pretty good reminder of what all this madness is actually about.

And with that, Nelson Branch heads into the next chapter—armed with good intentions, questionable optimism, a stack of bargaining papers and the stubborn belief that if we keep pushing hard enough, eventually somebody will realise that treating workers fairly is actually a much easier way to run a business—One can dream.

◀ Marlborough

Marlborough Picton Rail

All Picton LEs are now trained in the new DM class locos and looking forward to seeing them on more of our services. A lot of planning has been taking place regarding the yard rebuild as part of the new ferry project, and this is progressing well with team involvement. We are looking forward to hearing more about the new DSH shunt locos, these will be needed for shunting the new ferries and provide more power and reliability. We are excited about the introduction of the new Rail enabled ferries and future operations.

Interislander

As usual, change has been a constant. None more so than the operational changes we have become accustomed to during our off-peak season.

With our core operation dropping to only one ship for most of the off-peak season, due to Kaiārahi and Kaitaki being taken out of service respectively for wet-dock and

dry-dock during this time. We have had to adapt to a new style of operating with only one ship to turn per shift.

This has meant that we have steadied ourselves by making general yard improvements to take advantage of the quieter operation. A solid example of this is the new sound proofing that has been installed at our vehicle check-in with the aim of reducing the noise from the port road and Bluebridge operations next door when checking vehicles in.

With the Coastal Pacific returning from the 1st of September, there has been a mad dash to make sure preparations are completed before the return of the service. With focus taking aim at new luggage storage facilities on the platform at the railway station, to help protect passenger luggage during unfavorable weather.

We have also seen changes to our staff in recent times as well as the hiring of two new FTOs who have both recently started and are

enjoying being part of our terminal team. However, with the joy of the new staff, we also had to say goodbye to a dear friend and colleague on our team.

Rocky Leofa sadly passed away on the 15th of June. During his burial in Picton Cemetery, Kaitaki marked its afternoon departure with three long blasts on the ship's horn as a mark of respect and a solemn farewell to Rocky.

As we look ahead to a busy and transformative period for both Interislander and Picton Rail, we remain grounded in the strength of our people, the pride in our work, and the legacy of those who have shaped our teams. Rocky's memory stays with us as we move forward reminding us of the value of dedication, camaraderie, and service. With new locomotives, upgraded facilities, and the return of two-ferry operations on the horizon, we are stepping confidently into the future—honoring our past while preparing the Gateway to the South for its next chapter.

West Coast

The West Coast has been busy with both Mai Mai and Hokitika shunt starting back up. In Operations a bunch of newly minted Locomotive Engineers have been signed off and put onto the roster which is good timing as we have few Senior LEs off in sick leave. A new shunter has been signed off in Westport to put them back to a full quota. The Shunter in Reefton has been helping out but he too is above retirement age with no sign of replacement on the horizon. Same goes for Westport LEs with

two over retirement age and as yet no sign of trainees, which has been mentioned frequently.

Infrastructure have been busy with the signal replacement project on the Midland Line and Bridge replacement up in the Buller and plenty of other work on the Coast.

The DM locos were over for trials up Tawhai which is our steepest grade and performed well, all that remains now is to get every LE through the conversion course and for KR to confirm the exact make up for the Coal Programme, ie 2DMs and 30 wagons or 1DM and

20 wagons. The later would mean a rejig to the master train plan so we will be watching this with interest.

We have had a couple of incidents recently, including a dismissal at Otira.

We must not let our guard down and don't switch off until you have returned home, that is when you can relax.

The AGM was held last week with similar faces filling most of the same roles.

Stay safe out there. If in doubt—don't.

Lyttelton

Over the past 12 months our delegates, and officials especially Kelly, Pierce and John. You have all worked incredibly hard in supporting each other and myself in the role of Branch Secretary. Our Branch is stronger and healthier because of this and you. Thank you. Thank you also to Andy Woolhouse, whilst carrying a significant workload, still makes a lot of time for Lyttelton, and to Todd and Aubrey for staying across the issues here and backing us every step of the way.

If I was to sum up the relationship between LPC and RMTU over the past 12 months it is that LPC's approach has not changed. There is next to no genuine engagement or relationship. Too often, engagement is limited to minimum legislative requirements, particularly with policy changes and implementation of them. Where the CEA is clear but LPC wants change, management appears more willing to return to a worker-engaged process. The benefits of genuine workforce involvement are clear in the new Maintenance

Roster. It was a long process, but it is now ratified and included in the CEA. We acknowledge the maintenance members who worked through that process.

We recognise and commend the H&S committee representatives for their continued efforts to make our workplace safe. Some committees continue to face attempts by LPC management to limit the involvement and responsibilities of elected H&S reps. The importance of the Employee Participation Agreement remains clear, although LPC follows only parts of it and has not yet agreed to update the current agreement.

Looking at the health of our branch, our numbers continue to grow in the terminal, have retained full membership with the Customer Service Unit, and remain steady with the Inland Port membership. Over the year we have farewelled a number of members who were with us for almost their entire working lives, and today we again recognise loyalty of more than 40 years, Nigel Goodmanson.

Something we can all be proud about is the highly effective DP

World campaign we ran, fighting privatisation of our port. We didn't do it alone and thank every organisation and individual who partnered with us to see off that bid.

The campaign began during last year's election, where keeping our assets became a common theme through almost every candidate debate.

With public attention now on LPC and CCHL boards facing significant transparency and conflict-of-interest concerns, our campaign is now shifting toward securing the representation workers need: union representation on the board, alongside mana whenua and community voices.

We have continued to build strong relationships with the Lyttelton community through actions and meetings. They supported our DP World campaign, and we now want to build the same connection of mutual understanding and shared goals with mana whenua. Together, we can resist ongoing attempts to privatise the port and other Christchurch infrastructure under CCHL's direction.

Canterbury Rail

Having spent 15 years as a branch secretary it was about time to hand the reins over to a more youthful RMTU member.

At the time of writing this I have no idea who will take the position on at our AGM, but still hope that they realise that you take everything in small steps, take all the union training course—both RMTU and CTU—and develop

your own style.

When I stepped into the position I had no idea what I was getting in to, other than believing in what unions can do for us workers.

That has never changed.

We have great active members and delegates in the Christchurch branch who represent their fellow members in industrial councils, with disciplinaries, and all the small things we do every day to make sure

we keep each other safe.

We have a big 12 months coming up with an election and a wage bargain. Get involved, make sure we get the right government for us the workers, and a good pay rise.

I will still be around till the middle of next year so please reach out if you need.

RMTU will always be strong if we work together as members.



Dunedin

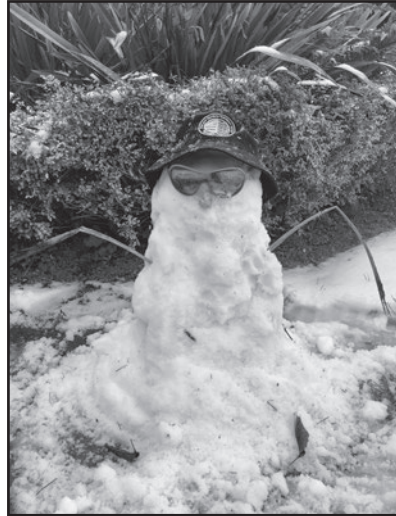
Kia Ora Sisters and Brothers from the winter wonderland of Otepoti Dunedin! Just in time for our Local Industrial Council Meetings and our Otago Rail Branch AGM. Our fearless South Island Organiser made it safely to Dunedin from Christchurch despite SH 1 closures. It's just a timely reminder that nothing is more important than your safety. So if you don't think it's safe to drive, you're probably right. Listen to your gut, they are always correct.

We have had a lot of disruptions to the Rail Network in the past few months with weather events. Rain, flooding, slips, earthquakes, snow, you name it we have had it. And with the cold and unpredictable weather came with a lot of sicknesses that affected our staffing numbers. Despite the staff shortages we managed to get the work done when we could.

Team Global Express (TGE) are going through redundancies and staff shortage is the current situation at the moment. There is still plenty of work pumping through the sheds. No shortage of work that's for sure.

The CT site always has work and sometimes not enough wagons. The CT office has gotten a well overdue makeover, the office is excellent and the guys have more room as well. The smoko room has yet to be revamped and the wash bay for the white curtain side containers that go back and forth from Dunedin to Edendale is still a work in progress. Well done to those involved in upgrading the CT offices and wash bay.

The IPD's are being pumped out of Hillside to go into service. The team at Hillside have been keeping our elderly fleet of DSG and



RMTU Snowman in Dunedin

mainline loco's serviced so we can keep the trains running. Thank you to the Mechanical Team. The high season of the milk powder from Fonterra isn't too far away, so the relaxing low season will soon be gone. Whispers of putting more tonnage out to the Taieri Fonterra siding have been floating around. Any whispers of increasing the shunters on the ground doing the mahi? Union delegates and management are still having very heated discussions on this piece of work. With the Inland Port in the pipeline to come out to Taieri, it's beggars belief that KiwiRail and management wouldn't put a 2nd person in the mix for safety reasons as well as future proofing for when the Inland Port comes on line. Watch this space.

Dunedin Railways have survived another winter under the tent, so far. The crew are working on a viewing car for the train. And are preparing for the upcoming tourist season and are recruiting more new onboard staff as part of that. Our 2026 Otago Rail Branch AGM was well attended at the Kensington

Tavern in Dunedin. Thank you to Norm Gates, Damian Hill and Jake Powers for stepping up to the union delegate role and congratulations on your appointment. Our guest speakers Aimee Taylor Senior Firefighter and Mike Taylor Firefighter and Branch Secretary of the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union of Otepoti spoke passionately and fiercely of the ongoing strike campaign against FENZ (Fire Emergency NZ). Our firefighters risk their lives everyday for their community and its people. The fire trucks are 30 and 40 years old, the gear is not fit for purpose and breaks down on the daily. Our firefighters from all around Aotearoa have been sitting on the same collective agreement for over 700 days! FENZ is reluctant to come to the party with any good faith engagement. We need to support our firefighters around the motu. They show up for us, we need to show up for them. I encourage everyone to check out their social media pages and get out into your communities and attend the protests with your local firefighters.

Rail Safety Week is August 10th-16th. This year's theme is Be A Trainspotter-The Essential Look when you cross. Kiwi rail and TrackSAFE dip into the world of fashion to inspire safer behaviour around level crossings. "Strike A Pose" wait, watch for and anticipate the arrival of a train. This is the kind of safe behaviour we want to encourage around the rail corridor. Members get out and about with the community for a fun and interactive way to promote Rail Safety Week in Otepoti. Take care and stay safe out there whanau.

I Kotahitanga
In Unity



GOOD FORTUNE COFFEE CO. PRESENTS



SOLIDARITY



ENJOY YOUR CUP



FOLLOW YOUR LUCK



ROAST ★ 500G



SUPPORTING



UnionAID
Better Work, Better World



**UNITED
WE
STAND**



**DIVIDED
WE
FALL**