

THE ACTIVIST



Published regularly – ISSN 1178-7392 (Print & Online)

October 2026

Message from the Gen Sec

Kia Ora, it's great the days are finally getting longer and weather improving. We are busy preparing for our Biennial Delegates Conference 2026 in Wellington 20th – 22nd October at the James Cook hotel. There is a great level of interest, this looks to be our largest Delegates Conference. We look forward to getting our delegates together, meeting new and old friends, networking and working out how we can take "Action" together. Voting for the General election starts October 26th – November 7th, enrolment to vote closes midnight October 25th. This Activist edition has plenty of information on what has occurred in the last 3 years and what to look forward to if there is a change of Government. The CTU is calling for eligible voters, nationally, to organise groups to "Roll to the Polls" October 28th, there is more information in this edition. This is another "action" that we can do together. If you take up the call to "Roll to the Polls" then please fly the flag and take good action photos for our next Transport Worker magazine which will be compiled in November.

Stay safe out there.
Todd Valster



KiwiRail and RMTU agree proposed new annual leave approach

KiwiRail and the Rail & Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) have reached agreement on a new approach to annual leave deductions.

The agreement follows joint work to develop a simpler and fairer way of calculating annual leave deductions for employees with varying work patterns.

Under the proposed approach, annual leave will be measured and deducted in weeks, or parts of a week, based on an employee's Sunday-to-Saturday working week. The same methodology will also be used to recalculate relevant historical leave deductions for affected RMTU members.

A key principle of the agreement is that no affected employee will be worse off as a result of the historical recalculation process. Employees found to be owed leave will have it credited back to their leave balance, while former employees will receive a remediation payment.

KiwiRail and RMTU agree proposed new annual leave approach- continued

If an employee or former employee has been undercharged overall, no adjustment will be made.

Current employees who were formerly RMTU members will be included in the recalculation also and will be compensated if found to be owed leave.

Members are encouraged to attend the upcoming roadshows to learn more about the proposal, ask questions and understand what it could mean for them ahead of ratification voting.

If ratified, the new approach will be formally incorporated into our current Multi-Employer Collective Agreement through a variation.

Anyone with questions can speak with their RMTU delegate or email rmtuannualleave@kiwirail.co.nz.

October 28th Nationwide Activation Day

The CTU has called for a nationwide voting activation this month on Wednesday 28th October 2026.

As affiliates, Unions have been asked to organise our membership and the wider communities across the country to help build momentum for Vote Together '26. This campaign will see lots of small regional actions where members are encouraged to get their friends and whānau together and head to the voting booths as a collective to vote early.

Once you have registered to take part and support this campaign, you will receive regular updates like enrolment reminders, polling booth information and coordinated voting plans.

You can play your part as an RMTU member and gather your team, "Roll to the Polls" together, vote and make sure your voice is heard in this years election. For more information, see

https://www.together.org.nz/vote_together

Will you and your whānau have the right to vote on 7 November?

To be eligible to vote you need to be registered on the electoral roll with the correct address by **25 October** before the advance voting starts.

That is very soon!

If you're not sure, it's easy to check your details on the NZ electoral roll, you can: visit www.vote.nz or call 0800 36 76 56 .

Note: You need to update your details every time you move house.



Workplace relations

Better starts now



Workers in New Zealand need a new government. The attacks on working people, our families, and our communities over the last three years have seen workers falling behind. The Labour Party has the policies to turn this around so everyone gets a fair deal.

Labour will

- ▶ Introduce legislation to restore pay equity in our first 100 days
- ▶ Introduce legislation for Fair Pay Agreements in the first 100 days
- ▶ \$4 per hour uplift for Care and Support Workers from 1 January 2027
- ▶ Better protect contractors in law
- ▶ Labour will roll-back the current government's employment changes and restore a worker-centred framework that ensures fair pay, safe workplaces, and decent leave. Reinstate leave entitlements that were removed by Holidays Act changes
- ▶ Require employers to publish the pay gaps between different groups of their staff
- ▶ Pay at least the Living Wage across the public service and publicly owned organisations, and work towards extending it across the wider public sector, starting with schools and hospitals
- ▶ Ratify ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment at work, and work towards ratification of ILO convention 193 international protections for gig and platform workers
- ▶ Create an offence of corporate homicide
- ▶ Reverse National's changes to health and safety law and strengthen protections at work
- ▶ Review the Employment Relations Act, including minimum compensation redundancy provisions, so people are better supported when they lose their job, unions and employers can work constructively with government, and workers can bargain with whoever actually controls their work.
- ▶ Make collective agreements the default, while allowing people to choose an individual agreement
- ▶ Protect people's existing terms and conditions when a business is sold or a contract changes hands
- ▶ Ban most non-compete clauses in employment agreements



Authorised by Rob Salmond, 2 Glimer Terrace, Wellington.

Rail- Proposed new health assessment standard

The Union has told Kiwirail we cannot support the introduction of a new rail medical standard without assurance from Kiwirail that workers will not be disadvantaged by the change.

Last month KiwiRail's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) recommended KiwiRail adopts the updated 2024 Australian National Transport Commission (NTC) Standard for Health Assessment of Rail Safety Workers. Currently KiwiRail, AOR and Transdev Wellington use earlier versions of the Australian standard.

The revised standard requires the Rail doctors (RMO's) to carry out additional screening for neurodiversity such as ADHD, sleep apnoea and cardiac risk. It also includes additional functional fitness requirements.

The RMTU told KiwiRail the changes will likely result in members being stood down from work whilst waiting for specialist appointments at sleep clinics for sleep apnoea diagnosis. Workers with neurodiversity will be required to declare their condition to the RMO. We've asked KR for assurance that rail workers undergoing a rail medical assessment will not be disadvantaged by the change in the standard such as being forced to take sick leave or annual leave. This issue will be discussed with rail members at the RMTU biennial conference later this month.

Ports H&S: Risk management in the ACOP

Maritime New Zealand (Maritime NZ) has released the four risk management e-learning modules developed through the ACOP Implementation Programme. Find them [HERE](#). This is the result of a the collective contribution of Maritime NZ, the Port Health and Safety Leadership Group (PHSLG), industry representatives, unions, subject matter experts and the many workers who participated in testing and review.

The modules have been developed specifically for port workers and are designed to improve understanding of risk management and worker involvement in health and safety. They support implementation of the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for loading and unloading cargo at ports and on ships and are available through Maritime NZ's Education and Guidance resources hub on our website. On the website you will also see links to all the videos shown in the modules. The four modules are:

Understanding hazards and risks
Risk management in the workplace
Risk management in workplace health and safety legislation. Being involved in risk management.



If you've moved house or changed your email or phone number, please update your contact details with the RMTU so you receive important union information. [Click here.](#)

KiwiRail Loco Engineers consider new rostering rules for relief link rosters aimed at reducing fatigue and improving worklife balance

The RMTU's ROM 3 representatives will report back to KiwiRail LE's on proposed change to relief link rosters shortly. Report back meetings will be held in person from 25/10/26 to 07/11/26. In smaller depots meeting will be held via Teams. Following the report back, KiwiRail LE's will vote to ratify the proposed changes to the ROM 3 which is part of the MECA.

The proposed changes to the relief links aim to address LE's fatigue through better rostering rules. The changes include a new '3 nights off' rule whereby 3 A shifts (night shifts) will be followed by 3 nights off (2 full RDO's) before starting the next shift. LE's who trialed the change earlier this year said the Three nights off rule was a genuine fatigue killer. One LE said *"It's good to know you will get a roster on a relief link that is actually liveable, with adequate time off, rather than a jumbled mess of shifts."*

Under the changes relief links will consist of 72 to 83 hours per fortnight, rather than 76 to 83 hours and single rostered days off can only occur in certain circumstances. LE's told the Union they prefer RDO's to be grouped into 2 days rather than single days off to enable better recovery from shift work.

LE's have asked the joint working group why the changes are for relief links only and don't apply to the master roster construction. We encourage LE's to engage in the ratification process. If the ratification is successful, their endorsement of the new rules will inform Part 2 of the ROM 3 roster review. KiwiRail and the RMTU have agreed to work together on 'Part 2' of the ROM 3 review to focus on improving the construction of the master roster to address the remaining rostering issues.

Remember you have a right to a paid meal break- KiwiRail

The RMTU wants to remind KiwiRail members of their right under clause 23.4 of their MECA to a **paid** meal break of no longer than 30mins if meal breaks are not at **fixed** times. There are many pockets of KiwiRail where this is not happening, and it is up to members to book the 30mins on their timesheet and escalate it to delegates and organisers if they meet any unreasonable complaints from KR management.

23.4 Planned Days and Hours

The normal practice in planning days and hours will be to keep them at about 80 hours and up to 10 work periods in the fortnight. If it is more practicable there may be more than 10 planned work periods, but the extras are paid as overtime (the Saturday or Sunday work periods will in this case be the overtime). In general meal breaks will be for at least 30 minutes and up to 60 minutes, and rest breaks will be for 10 minutes. Generally meal breaks will be at the mid-point and rest breaks will be at the quarter and three quarter points of the work period. **Where meal breaks are at fixed times these are unpaid. Where meal breaks are paid these will not exceed 30 minutes in duration.** There will be at least 10 hours between planned work periods.

Suffrage Day 2026 133 Years of Women's Right to Vote in NZ



Wellington women including RMTU members turned out in force to celebrate Womens Suffrage day on 19 September. The procession event was led by 133 women—symbolising the 133 years since New Zealand women won the right to vote – the first country in the world.



RMTU supporting the suffrage day protest

September was Prostate Cancer Awareness Month



If September passed by without you thinking of prostate awareness month, make October the month to be proactive about your health. If you're a man in your 40s, 50s or 60s, an annual health check, including a PSA blood test, could mean the difference between a life led free of prostate cancer or ongoing cancer treatments and potentially a premature death. Prostate cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in New Zealand, with over 4,000 cases diagnosed every year. It is the second highest cause of cancer death in men after lung cancer, and the third highest for all sexes (behind lung and bowel cancers. One in eight men will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime. Prostate cancer can develop quietly. It might not cause any symptoms as it develops, only making itself apparent once it has already progressed to a serious stage. If detected early, curative treatment is possible. Contrary to popular belief, for the majority of men the check for signs of prostate cancer is a simple blood test. See your GP about getting checked. Because you are worth it!

The long awaited CRL

Politicians weren't the only ones excited about the Auckland's City Rail Loop. The school holidays have been great for first time young travellers.



Taking the kids for a ride on the CRL was an experience they absolutely loved! 🚆

The train ride was exciting enough, but what really had them buzzing was riding the escalator – and not just once! 😄 They wanted to go up and down it again and again, so we ended up doing multiple rides on the longest escalator in the Southern Hemisphere. Watching their faces light up and hearing them get more excited every time was pretty special. Sometimes it's the simplest things that create the best memories.

Safe to say, the kids were absolutely buzzing after their CRL adventure – and I think we'll be hearing about that escalator for a long time! 😊 🚆

Delegate's talking health and safety the RMTU's in Wellington & Auckland in September



RMTU & MUNZ H&S training in Wellington

Hamilton Delegate's supporting our union brothers and sisters at the NZ Professional Firefighters with their struggle.

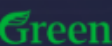


The Future Is Rail 🇳🇿

Reviving passenger rail is a goal for the NZ pro rail group called the 'the future is rail' lobby group. They make a compelling argument for investment into passenger rail saying NZ's under investment in passenger rail transport is out of step internationally. They recommended 7 relatively low-cost actions to build a stronger, popular rail network that is achievable within 3–5 years. You can find their presentation on their website by clicking [here](http://www.thefutureisrail.org/reports). Or visiting their website. www.thefutureisrail.org/reports

Fight back against the Health and Safety Amendment Act

Why this matters: New Zealand's record on workplace health and safety remains poor compared to Australia and the UK and most countries we like to compare ourselves to. The Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 will make things even worse by reducing safety requirements for small businesses and deprioritizing harmful risks. The table below shows where the political parties stand on this issue. Only a change of Government will see the repeal of this dangerous legislation- set to be introduced in April 2027.

POLICY SCORECARDS FOR WORKING PEOPLE	
Authorised New Zealand Council of Trade Unions - Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri, PO Box 9840, Wellington 6142 Will you protect safety on the job by repealing the Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 before it takes effect?	
 Labour	✓ Yes
 National	✗ No
 act/	✗ No
 Green	✓ Yes
 māori	✓ Yes
 NEW ZEALAND FIRST	— No policy
 ALLIANCE	✓ Yes
 OPPORTUNITY	✓ Yes
 NZCTU Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri	
*National and ACT declined to answer questions on their industrial policy. The stances listed above instead reflect their public statements and legislative history. For more information on how we gathered the answers for our scorecards, go to union.org.nz/election-scorecards-26	

Need a coffee?

Make yours a

Solidarity coffee where \$10 from every 500g bag of Solidarity coffee sold goes direct to UnionAID for project work. unionaid.org.nz



In case you missed it go to the RMTU website.

www.rmtunion.org.nz or click on the image below.



Stay Safe out there

