

THE ACTIVIST



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SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF SAFE TRAINS CAMPAIGN IN AUCKLAND

More than a hundred members of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) held a demonstration at Auckland's Britomart station on 27th September to launch a campaign to keep the city's passenger trains safe. This was the first step in what will be a relentless campaign in support of keeping Train Managers on Auckland passenger services.

Removing permanent on-board staff from passenger trains is tantamount to ripping up the safety culture on those services: Train Managers play a vital role in the event of all kinds of incidents, including medical emergencies; they enable disabled passengers to travel on the network; and they are critical in deterring bad behaviour by those elements that would otherwise make the travelling public's experience unpleasant.

Auckland Transport are attempting to appease the public by saying they will recruit so-called 'Transport Officers' to patrol the network. Whilst we welcome the presence of more uniformed staff around platforms and so forth this is no replacement for safety critical permanent on-board staff. If the Transport Officers were to be deployed in addition to Train Managers, and if they were to be given the kind of powers that transport police exercise in other countries

that would represent an improvement, as it is the current plans are far from that.

Transport Officers people won't have the necessary powers to intervene in the event of incidents such as the recent graffiti bombing of a train, nor is there any guarantee they will be on the platform or train at any given time. For Auckland

Transport to try and spin the deployment of Transport Officers as an improvement to public safety, whilst at the same time the plan is to remove permanent on-board staff, is disingenuous and misleading.

We are pleased at the way the public are backing our stance on passenger safety. Auckland City Councillor Mike Lee spoke in support of our campaign, as did Public Transport Users' Association's (PTUA) Jon Reeves. A number of disabled passengers came along to support us, including two wheelchair-bound passengers, it's great to have such overwhelming public support.

Members have set up stalls at a number of suburban stations during the morning rush hour and passengers are signing our petitions in their thousands. We have met with FIRST union and the PSA who represent bus drivers and Auckland Transport

staff respectively. Both unions have assured us of their support in our struggle and we are planning co-ordinated actions in order to promote our respective campaigns.

Please ask your family and friends to sign the petition here:

<http://www.together.org.nz/all-aboard>



Cost cutting doesn't equal safe travel

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union is concerned that TransDev and Auckland Transport are sacrificing safety for cash. We make our case over the page.

The proposal:

Auckland Transport and TransDev plan to introduce driver only operations aboard all Auckland suburban units beginning mid 2018.

This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

TRAGIC LOSS

It is with great sadness that we report that our Palmerston North Rail Branch Secretary sister, Halina Adamiack, died as a result of an accident last Saturday morning near Turangi. Halina held many roles in rail spanning over decades. Her latest challenge was driving the Lube Truck on the mainline in the Central region. Halina will always be remembered for her big smile, hugs and positivity about people.

Here is the Funeral Notice from family –

FUNERAL NOTICE:

ADAMIAK, Halina (aka Jensen) Goddess of Mischief left this world doing what she loved 21.10.2017. Treasured daughter of Beryl (Elaine) and George, stepdaughter of Willie Waretini. Awesome Mum to Roman and Halam, whom she absolutely adored to the TARDIS and back. The most amazing big blister to Bronia, Rebekah, Campbell, Tiffany, Jacob and Mikhail. Please join us as we set her spirit free at 10:30am Friday 27th October 2017 at Kelvin Grove Crematorium.

The RMTU will be officially represented at the funeral by National Vice President Howard Phillips and NMC Women's rep Ruth Blakeley. Other staff and office holders will also be attending.

LYTTLETON PORT BARGAINING CONTINUES

Negotiations for the renewal of our biggest port collective agreement on the South Island have continued with in-depth discussion around hours of work in both the maintenance workshop and the container terminal. Whilst progress had been made in talks around other claims raised by both members and management we reached a point where we reported back and sought direction at a full meeting of all members covered by the LPC waterfront collective agreement on Friday 6th October.

Further talks with LPC were set down for 12 October and more discussion occurred regarding the workshop. Another bargaining session has been set down for 26-27th October.

THR MECA

The renewal of the Transdev Wellington – Hyundai Rotem (THR) MECA continues to be difficult. The parties return to mediation on 3 November 2017. In preparation for no further progress being made toward a proposed settlement the negotiation team has unanimously agreed that a further strike ballot is to be conducted with members as soon as possible.

WORK CONTINUES TO KEEP MNL OPEN AND SAFE

Well done to all our members who are continuing the good work to ensure the Main North Line from Christchurch to Picton remains open and is safe.



The resumption of freight services a few weeks ago did not mean that all the problems were solved, far from it and it has only been because of the combined efforts of management and RMTU Health and Safety Representatives like Neil Davies and Mike

Williams, working with NCTIR that the continuing challenges are being met.

One example has been a slip where a boulder rolled and jumped the warning fence that was supposed to trigger an alarm. The reality is that slips are dynamic and they move!

Members have been working to ensure trains can run safely not just so KiwiRail can move freight but so that work trains can assist the work being done to restore the road.

This is vital work but doesn't grab the headlines. Well done to all our members who are involved.

SUCCESSFUL DELEGATE TRAINING SESSION IN CHRISTCHURCH

Twelve delegates and active members attended a training seminar in Christchurch on 16th October. Members from Nelson Port, Timaru, Invercargill and Christchurch KiwiRail and Lyttelton Port gathered to learn about the role of the delegate and how to effectively fulfil it.

It was great to have such a diverse and enthusiastic group going back to the workplace with their skills and knowledge sharpened about how to organise and educate their fellow members.

The course covered the delegate role; RMTU structure; organising around issues; health and safety and The Red Card; and representing members. We used a combination of learning methods and explored both theory and practice using case studies and group work.

Congratulations to all attendees and thank you for your hard work.

CASUAL VACANCY – KIWIRAIL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL

The Joint Industrial Councils have governing terms of reference signed by the Union and KiwiRail Ltd. They are intended to be the escalation centre for industrial issues which arise during the course of the employment relationship on a day to day basis which have not or cannot be resolved at a local or branch level or issues that have national significance.

The term of office is 2 years. Following the resignation of the incumbent for personal reasons Nominations are called for the;

Lower North Island Terminals Position

If you are employed by KiwiRail Ltd at a Rail Freight Terminal Site in the Central Freight Region (Taranaki, Palmerston

North, Hawkes Bay, or Wellington) then you are eligible for nomination for this position.

Correctly completed nomination forms must be received by the National Returning Officer at the National Office of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, PO Box 1103 Wellington 6140 no later than 1700 hrs on Friday 23 November 2017.

In the event that there is more than one nomination for any position, a postal ballot shall be run. Nominees must have their photo and a short promotional statement of up to 250 words to the National Office no later than 1700 hrs on Friday 23 November 2017. Electronic receipt of this information is preferred.

Please ensure you advise National Office if you have changed addresses or your designation in the Company since the last RMTU mail-out. Call RMTU 04-4992066 or alternatively update your details online www.rmtunion.org.nz or email admin@rmtunion.org.nz.

NO TRAINS WORKING HPHE PROJECT CONTINUING IN KIWIRAIL

Readers could be forgiven from misinterpreting what this project is all about from its title. It is in fact looking at the challenge of workers getting time on track that is productive and safe.

Sounds simple, but in fact it's a very complex problem.

The project has pulled together managers and delegates from the Networks Industrial Council and has called on expertise from the wider business. This is a

worthwhile project as it has the potential to reduce track occupancy incidents thereby boosting member's safety and also leading to better productivity.

There has been considerable research done around current practice and how that stacks up against overseas experience as well as discussions of how work is planned and allocated across the workforce.



Thanks to Networks Industrial Council representatives Lou Watene, Michael Graham and Jerry Hohepa for their hard work on behalf of members.

KIWI RAIL HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING – STAGE 2.

KiwiRail Health and Safety Reps are invited to register yourselves for Stage 2 Health and Safety Rep training. During the course Reps will investigate incidents and manage risks using rail specific case studies.

The courses are facilitated by Worksafe Reps at the following dates and locations. If you're a KRG Health and Safety Rep, register now, using the following link.

Register click on this link : [Kiwirail - Stage 2 - Managing Risks - Health & Safety Rep Training](https://tinyurl.com/y7ffquyh) Or type this URL into the browser <https://tinyurl.com/y7ffquyh>

STRADDLE CRANE OPERATORS AND FATIGUE SURVEY

The RMTU is comparing how the health and safety issue of worker fatigue (arising from shift work) is managed across the ports industry, in particular straddle crane operators.

An RMTU Survey will be sent out straddle operators in the first week of November. Questions will include shift length, minimum break times between shifts and examples of where safety has been compromised due to fatigue. The RMTU aims to introduce minimum standards for fatigue management across the port sector.

MDJ LAW - LEGAL UPDATE – ELECTION 2017 – WHAT NOW FOR EMPLOYMENT LAW?

The outgoing National government made significant changes to the original Employment Relations Act 2000 (ERA), as

well as implementing amendments to the Holidays Act 2003, and passing the new Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

But, what happens now that we are about to have a Labour-led government? Labour is seeking change because "Weak employment law has created avenues for some businesses to undercut good employers by driving down wages and minimising costs". Some stated intended change is as follows:

First 100 days:

"Restore fairness rights for employees by replacing National's 90 day 'fire at will' law with a fast, fair, and simple system";

"Restore reinstatement as the primary remedy when a worker has been unjustifiably dismissed";

"Restore the right to rest and meal breaks at work";

"Restore protections for vulnerable workers in cases where the sale or transfer of business is contemplated or where outsourcing of jobs is proposed";

"Ensure that New Zealand employment law applies to everyone working in New Zealand, including foreign workers working for foreign companies";

"Increase the minimum wage to \$16.50 an hour and base future

increases on the real cost of living for people on low incomes. This includes working towards a minimum wage equal to two-thirds of the average wage as economic conditions allow";

Increasing paid parental leave: "The policy will be phased in over three years: 22 weeks from 2018 and 26 weeks in 2020";

Reversing changes made to collective bargaining and collective agreements by the National government.

Labour's "workplace relations package" includes the following:

"Introducing Fair Pay Agreements that set fair, basic employment conditions across an



industry based on the employment standards that apply in that industry”;

“Promoting the Living Wage by paying it to all workers in the core public service, and extending it to contractors over time [this is currently said to be \$20.20 per hour]”;

“Doubling the number of Labour Inspectors”;

“Implement the changes to the Equal Pay Act as set out in the report from the Joint Working Group on Pay Equity Principles to give all women in female-dominated workforces access to collective bargaining and court processes to settle their claims”.

Within its first 12 months Labour also intends to:

“Begin consultation on improving minimum redundancy protection for workers affected by restructuring, giving regard to the recommendations of the 2008 Ministerial Advisory Group report on redundancy and restructuring”;

“Introduce statutory support and legal rights for ‘dependent contractors’ who are effectively workers under the control of an employer, but who do not receive the legal protections that are currently provided to employees under the law”;

“Investigate options for ensuring that people who work over 40 hours a week receive adequate remuneration”;

“Extend the right for workers to elect a health and safety representative from amongst their own to all workplaces, regardless of size or industry”;

“Abolish youth rates”.

And on immigration and employment, Labour intends to: “Ensure that businesses are able to get genuinely skilled migrants when they need them... This will include introducing an Exceptional Skills Visa for highly skilled or talented people and introducing a KiwiBuild Visa for residential

construction firms who train a local when they hire a worker from overseas... Strengthen the Labour Market Test for work visas so they are not being used for jobs Kiwis can do, and make our skills shortage lists more regional so migrants coming in under them can only live and work in areas where there is a genuine skills shortage”.

What about New Zealand First? Labour’s plans are likely to have been affected by its as yet unseen coalition agreement with New Zealand First, whose stated “...vision is of a nation made up of well educated, determined, healthy, and innovative people, with an expanding business programme geared around exports, regional development, job growth and harnessing the natural attributes of our country.”

Under that head, New Zealand First’s stated policy is:

Raise the minimum wage

Increase the minimum wage to \$20 per hour over three years starting in 2018 (with tax assistance for employers).

Remove secondary tax for workers with more than one job.

Abolish the ‘starting out wage’ for young people.

Set Minimum Redundancy provisions based on twice the normal contractual notice

period up to a maximum of 13 weeks.

Amend the Companies Act so that wages and salary, including holiday pay, have equal priority with Secured Creditors.

Paternity and maternity leave

Introduce paid paternal leave of two weeks rising to four weeks.

Support increasing paid maternity leave to 26-weeks.

Better labour relations

Review and amend employment laws to ensure that casualisation employment



practices are fair and just with a review of short term employment contracts.

Train New Zealanders in areas of skill shortages, instead of actively recruiting offshore.

Put New Zealanders first for jobs by sensible immigration policies.

Pay the Job Seekers Benefit to approved employers when taking on an apprentice.

Paid internship programme to provide work experience.

Introduce literacy and numeracy skills package for workers.

Introduce the Ministry of Social Development funded and NZ Defence Force operated Youth Enterprise and Training Initiative to offer trade training to students not suited to conventional education.

Establish workforce planning, career advice and competitive course entry for post-secondary education.

Require transparency when public service salaries exceed accepted public service bands.

Better health & safety

Amend the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to remove its bureaucratic excesses."

There is much there, but at the same time, little detail. Like Labour, New Zealand First's 'wish list' will also have been subject to its coalition agreement - albeit there also seems to be quite a lot in common with what Labour intends to do.

And what about Green Party, from outside cabinet? Its policies are based on its "vision" that:

"People have the opportunity to participate in meaningful work that reflects their individual and cultural needs and preferences".

"Workplaces are environmentally responsible, innovative, family friendly, safe from discrimination and prejudice, and

promote lifelong learning opportunities and skills development".

"Employers, working people and their unions enjoy equitable and beneficial relationships with each other".

"Working people are paid a living wage and decent working conditions in secure, empowering jobs".

Its "Key Principles" concerning the above are:

"1. In recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Green Party supports equitable access for Māori to secure employment, decent wages and the organisation of Māori into and within trade unions.

2.The Green Party supports the realisation of a sustainable working life based on the three pillars of economic viability, environmental protection and social responsibility (the triple bottom line).

3.Working people, employers and unions should be involved in making decisions about issues in their workplaces, the economy, and the environment.

4.Workplace democracy and collective organisation are essential to address the inherent potential for inequality of power between employers and employees.

5.All working people deserve justice, and protection under the law.

6. Workplaces should be safe, environmentally healthy and free from discrimination.

7. Working people should be paid a living wage that accurately reflects the range of economic pressures they and their families face.

8. Working people have a right to pay and employment equity.

9. The state sector should provide a sound model of good employer practice".

Again, there does appear to be common ground, but the extent to which the Green Party can influence policy in this area is uncertain given its position outside cabinet.



For now, it seems fairly clear that in the short (i.e. in the "first 100 days") to medium term, there will be change. However, the specific nature of that change is unclear, including because of the as yet uncertain content of the coalition agreement that has been reached, and the exact makeup of cabinet and positions outside cabinet.

So, watch this space...

RMTU MEMBERSHIP DATABASE UPDATES

The RMTU membership database is an important tool in contacting Union Members or ensuring members are kept up to date with the latest information. We are concerned at the number of "unknown" or "return to sender" envelopes returned to National Office as part of this year's officer elections. We remind members that if you wish to exercise their rights and participate in the decision making aspects of the Union they should ensure they inform National Office of any change of address or contact details as soon as possible. This includes any change of designation or employer.

Branch Secretaries hold "update of membership forms" that you can post or fax in or alternatively for immediate action members are reminded to utilise the update of membership details link on our website www.rmtunion.org.nz.

For example – All national Union elected positions are up for election this year and so there may be votes conducted by mail. If we have the incorrect address info you will not get a vote as you will never receive a voting paper. **Update now!**

TRANSDEV AUCKLAND BARGAINING STILL UNDERWAY

Our negotiations with Transdev in Auckland are continuing on 7th & 8th November. We received an offer from the employer of a below inflation increase i.e. a wage cut in

real terms at our negotiations on 17th and 18th October. At a report back meeting on 19th October members were unanimous in their support for their RMTU negotiation team in our fight for real wage growth and safe trains i.e. a CPI plus increase in wages during the term of any collective agreement and the abandonment of the plans to sack permanent on-board train staff.

BURT MUNRO - 12TH ANNUAL CHALLENGE, 8-11 FEB 2018 INVERCARGILL.

This trip is two weeks from 4/2/2018 to 17/2/2018 - BOOK TIME OFF NOW.

We will meet at Z Dinsdale Hamilton, on 4/2/2018 leave at 08:30.

- Send an email to the address below with the number of the phone that you will be carrying on the trip, enter my number into yours, this will be used for mass communication on the road.
- I will email you a PDF file with all the details when completed.
- When you spot this and have an interest, spread the word and put a copy on your local notice board.
- Non KiwiRail workers are welcome.

For your reference;

<http://www.burtmunrochallenge.co.nz/>

Contact: Crazy Horse. crazyh@actrix.co.nz
(027) 386 1371

THANK YOU TO SOUTH ISLAND DELEGATES AND ACTIVE MEMBERS

Our South Island Organiser, John Kerr, would like to thank our South Island delegates and active members for their hard work in recent weeks as he has been assisting with RMTU's campaign and negotiations in Auckland with Transdev.



Delegates are the muscles and sinews of our union and on The Mainland they have demonstrated this time and time again, dealing with a myriad of issues facing members and allowing John to devote time and energy to supporting our Auckland Organiser and members.

It is sometimes said the delegate's task is thankless. John wants to put the record straight on that and say a genuine and heartfelt thank you to all of you who have worked hard on behalf of your members while he has been busy north of the Bombay Hills.

BITS AND BOB'S

- An Orange Roughy fishery south of Stewart Island will reopen after closure for 19 years. After being almost wiped out the biomass has now rebuilt to almost 50% of the original biomass. The commercial catch limit has been increased to 347 tonnes.
- Ports of Auckland has placed an order for three new container cranes to be delivered in late 2018. The new cranes will be able to carry up to four boxes at once. The cranes will come fitted with NZ's first "lashing Platforms". They will also be fitted with a 26Kw solar power system. The cranes will be manufactured by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Co based in Shanghai.
- NZ has moved up the Global Competitiveness Index based upon data from businesses in 137 countries. NZ has moved from 24th to 13th in ranking.

- Annual net migration to NZ was 72,100 in the to August 2017 year. Migrant arrivals reached 132,200, a new annual record. The biggest increase in migrant arrivals were from South Africa and United Kingdom. The biggest decrease was from India.
- The creation of the Labour NZ First Greens coalition Government is clearly a victory for rail workers in NZ. The coalition agreement is full of rail and regional NZ spending promises. We all look forward to the true value of rail being recognized. We also look forward to a major slash and burn job being done to the current right wing KiwiRail Board!

LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE & REMEMBER.....

SAFETY FIRST!

