

Rail and Maritime Transport Union
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The union representing rail workers is demanding action on Wellington commuter trains where defective power units are making train travel a "cold miserable experience" for both passengers and staff.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson says there is a lot of anger amongst workers and the travelling public at the number of electric commuter trains without heating and with defective motors.

He says cold trains are a health and safety issue for staff who are only issued light duty uniforms, yet are disciplined if they wear non- company clothing. "In addition, some members of the public are taking out their frustrations on rail staff at this unacceptable situation, which is not of their making."

Mr Butson says RMTU members at a stop work meeting today between 11am and 1pm considered refusing to work trains which have no heating. However he says union members decided against stopping work on the defective trains.

"The feeling of our members is that the public should not suffer further and this is what would happen if we refused to work on defective units."

The RMTU is seeking public support for a petition to be presented to the Chair of the Wellington Regional Council to demand the services are brought up to scratch.

"We are asking the travelling public to let their feelings be known to the Wellington Regional Council, KiwiRail, and to Government, and to sign our petition."

Mr Butson says union members hope the public will acknowledge the workers "goodwill gesture" and see RMTU members as "mutual sufferers on these cold miserable trains."

He says the RMTU also condemns how many replacement buses provided during line repairs do not have working heaters.

"We need to ensure public transport is a quality, top class experience for travellers to get the public onto cost-effective, environmentally safe transport modes, not supplying third rate services."

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