



Media release: Rail and Maritime Transport Union  
Wednesday April 16, 2014

## **Tougher approach needed for safety of rail staff**

Assaults on rail operating staff and Maori Wardens over the weekend have prompted calls for much better safety measures on Auckland's rail network.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union says the assaults on Maori Wardens and ticket inspectors are the latest in a string of violence directed at personnel operating Auckland's trains, and follow serious assaults in January.

"Further assaults on the Auckland rail network are hugely frustrating for rail workers. It leaves them questioning what is being done to protect them," RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said.

"The majority of the incidents which lead to assaults are committed by fare evaders. This is a situation that has been created by Auckland Transport no longer selling tickets on board trains and only having ticket inspectors on random trains. It is anyone's guess how many people are riding the network free each day, and when people are questioned incidents do occur."

Wayne Butson said incidents often involved young people and staff anxiety would increase with school holidays approaching. Staff held genuine concerns that one of their colleagues would get seriously injured any day, he said.

"We are calling for more open and proactive measures. It does not help our members when both Transdev and Auckland Transport keep discussions and control measures behind closed doors. For example during a meeting in March Auckland Transport agreed to run a poster campaign highlighting that violence against railway workers would not be tolerated and that offenders will be prosecuted. We would like to see these posters around the network right away."

"Rail staff should be able to come to work, do their job and go home safe at the end of their shift. If public transport is to thrive in Auckland it must be safe for passengers and staff alike," Wayne Butson said.

Ends.

For further comment:

Wayne Butson, General Secretary, Rail & Maritime Transport Union, on 027 496 2461