

Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU): media statement

17 December 2015

Rail workers' union condemns rail privatisation in Wellington

The rail workers' union is condemning the Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) decision to privatise Wellington's metro rail services, says RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson.

"We're saddened to see the GWRC opt for privatisation."

GWRC has selected Transdev Australasia in association with Hyundai Rotem as the preferred future operator for Wellington's metro rail service.

"We know that privatisation comes with future costs. To councillors the upfront costs might look like a saving, but we know from past experience that private rail operators often provide poorer service at a greater cost over time. Eventually the public has to step in again to prop up services," said Butson.

"This decision will place Wellington in the same rail operating framework as Auckland. But we've seen that privatisation in Auckland has meant increasing ratepayer subsidies per passenger journey."

"Privatisation just isn't needed. Wellington metro rail services have been delivered by the national rail operator for more than 80 years," said Butson.

"KiwiRail, as a state owned enterprise, will be the poorer for the loss of work and our members are deeply saddened at the prospect of leaving the KiwiRail family."

The RMTU's collective agreement is robust and contains provisions dealing with the transfer of union members to a new employer. The RMTU will work with Transdev as an operator and maintains an existing relationship with the company in Auckland.

**For further comment contact –
RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson: 027 496 2461**