



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Rail & Maritime Transport Union**

**18 May 2020**

# **“A terrible Toll”: Railway company initiates nationwide job cuts**

At least 33 people are set to lose their jobs in corporate restructuring initiated by Toll NZ, and the union for workers affected says that number is likely to grow.

The Rail & Maritime Transport Union is calling on Toll NZ to extend its consultation period and explore other options that don't cut jobs or compromise health and safety.

“Cutbacks don't pull you out of a downturn, they just leave you badly prepared for when things go back up. There will be enormous demand for transport and freight as New Zealand gets moving again,” says RMTU organiser Rudd Hughes.

“It is absurdly short sighted to tell experienced staff to take a hike, including team leaders with decades of combined experience. Now is not the time for austerity, particularly when the government has just announced such significant support for rail.”

A minimum of 18 jobs will go in Auckland, ten in Christchurch and the rest scattered around other New Zealand cities and towns.

“If you disestablish the jobs of your most skilled employees, you lose people who know how to do the job well and do it safely. There just isn't enough fat to trim safely, Toll have already cut staffing down to the bone,” says Mr Hughes.

“We don’t want New Zealand to go back to the bad old days when working on the railways all too often could mean injury or death and not enough was done to prevent it.”

Toll Networks (NZ) Ltd has so far accepted over \$5.5 million in taxpayer money from the government’s wage subsidy scheme.

Toll Group in its last published financial statement reported revenue of \$8.7 billion, a 6% increase on the previous year, with earnings up by 7% to \$127 million.

The union is concerned that with fewer workers employed its members at Toll NZ will face unrealistic work targets and increasing pressure, with advanced responsibilities shifted down the line to less trained workers.

“Everyone knows being expected to do more with less can take a terrible toll on your wellbeing,” says Mr Hughes.

“We don’t think it’s right for a huge multinational corporation to treat essential workers like they’re just expendable numbers on a sheet. If we work together and explore all the options we can find a better way.”

**ENDS**

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