

Rail and maritime workers back improved sick leave

Rail and Maritime Transport Union media release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday 1 September 2020

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) is backing improved sick leave for workers.

RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson says rail and maritime workers are essential workers who would benefit from changes being promoted by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU).

Mr Butson says an extension of the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme, and improvements to minimum sick leave entitlements, were a "no brainer."

"These changes would provide workers with security, safety and support."

He says if the Government and business want to show their appreciation for essential workers, this was the best way to do it.

"Actions speak louder than words."

He says the changes would improve New Zealand's resilience and ability to manage any future outbreaks of COVID-19.

"Front line transport workers have kept New Zealand functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic and must be provided with the support they need, along with all other workers," he says.

The NZCTU is presenting a 10,000 signature petition to Workplace Relations Minister Andrew Little at 12 noon today (Tuesday 1 September) at Parliament.

The 5 issues raised by the petition are:

1. Extend the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme for the next year, make it easy to access, and cover anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, including those who are waiting to be referred to testing or getting results.
2. Increase legal minimum paid sick leave from 5 to 10 days over the next year - with support from the government to help small businesses make the change.
3. Make sick leave available if people need to care for their dependents like their children and their parents.
4. Remove the 6-month stand down to access sick leave when you start a new job.
5. Get rid of the previous National Government's law change that can require a doctor's certificate after just one day of sick leave.

ENDS

For more information contact RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson on 0274962461