

Media release: Rail & Maritime Transport Union
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National 2 minute stopwork to mark Hillside closure

KiwiRail workers across the country will stop work for two minutes at 11am this Friday to mark the passing of 130 years of engineering work at Hillside Workshops.

Last month KiwiRail announced Hillside's foundry had been sold to Bradken Engineering with the retention of 18 jobs, and KiwiRail will keep 7 workers to run its heavy lift maintenance operation, but the rest of Hillside will close on Friday, with 90 job losses.

Wayne Butson, RMTU General Secretary said Hillside had made a huge contribution to the New Zealand rail industry and the Dunedin economy over the past 130 years.

"Hillside has a very proud history, and rail workers across the country wanted a way to mark the significance of its closure," he said.

"It really is with a deep sense of sadness that the occasion will be marked, and rail workers can't help but regret this totally avoidable situation – KiwiRail's decision to not bid for either the \$500 million contract for Auckland's new trains, or for some or all of the 4000 flat top wagons has directly contributed to the closure of Hillside."

"Most other countries would be proud of an asset like Hillside, and do their absolute best to keep it operational. Regrettably, New Zealand's government is more focused on pumping billions of dollars into roading, and expecting rail to be self-sufficient yet compete with this massive subsidy.

"A giant in the rail industry has fallen. Rail workers will take a moment on Friday to mark Hillside's passing," Wayne Butson.

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