

## **Transport unions renew calls for Marsden Point refinery to be restarted**

Maritime Union of New Zealand / Rail and Maritime Transport Union joint media release

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Two of New Zealand's main transport unions are urging the Marsden Point refinery be returned to functioning status, if necessary through Government ownership.

The Maritime Union of New Zealand and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union together represent thousands of workers in the ports, shipping and rail sectors.

The privately owned Marsden Point facility ceased refining crude oil earlier this year but is still intact and is being modified into a storage facility.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson says the closure of Marsden Point refining operations has left New Zealand exposed.

He says the closure was driven by the short term interests of fuel companies who owned the refinery, and has undermined fuel security for New Zealand.

Ironically, profits for fuel companies from fuel refining have soared this year.

Mr Butson says Marsden Point could be upgraded to refine New Zealand produced crude oil, and this could keep essential services functioning in the case of emergency.

He says both Unions have actively promoted rail and shipping transport modes, which are comparatively low emission.

"We need low emission transport and decarbonization, but we also need fuel security in the short to medium term transition period."

Maritime Union of New Zealand National Secretary Craig Harrison says the volatility of global fuel prices and supply chains are making the closure of the refinery look even more of a bad idea.

"Supply chain disruption is the new normal and ongoing COVID, global conflict and security threats means New Zealand is dangerously exposed."

He says New Zealand is now completely dependent on imported refined fuel being shipped into New Zealand ports by overseas tankers.

Two New Zealand flagged and crewed tankers were taken out of service recently due to the shutdown of Marsden Point refinery, further reducing New Zealand's fuel security.

"Our fuel reserves are small compared to many other countries and from what we have seen in the last couple of years, the supply chain is very vulnerable to shocks."

The serious situation being faced in Europe due to disruption of gas supplies from Russia was a warning of how quickly events could unfold, he says.

Mr Harrison says there are a number of potential options, including part or full Government ownership of the refinery.

He says the Australian Government had kept two Australian refineries open by underwriting them, which was a specific response intended to ensure fuel security.

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