



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Rail & Maritime Transport Union**

**30 October 2018**

## **Rail workers celebrate decision to keep electric trains running**

The Rail & Maritime Transport Union welcomes the decision to keep KiwiRail's electric locomotives running on the North Island Main Trunk.

The government has honoured its [campaign pledge](#), committing an extra \$35 million to refurbish the 15 electric engines currently in operation between Hamilton and Palmerston North.

"We're thrilled to see the Labour-led government protecting Kiwi jobs," says RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson.

"Union members, environmental campaigners and industry experts have all spoken out about the importance of investing in electric rail, and we clearly have a government that listens to the people."

If KiwiRail had been permitted to go ahead with its plans to replace the EF Class electric locomotives with DL class diesel engines imported from China, it would have added an extra 12,000 tons to New Zealand's carbon footprint while jeopardising local jobs.

The plans were announced in 2016, despite [internal studies](#) suggesting the DL locomotives are unreliable, overly expensive and at risk of asbestos contamination.

“Our position has always been that New Zealand must electrify more of our rail network, not less,” says Mr Butson.

“The highly skilled workforce in KiwiRail’s workshops can now build a modern, sustainable fleet of locomotives that will be the envy of the world.”

The RMTU and its allies in the [International Transport Workers Federation](#) are part of the [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#) initiative, a global campaign to prevent damage to the environment, create green jobs for transport workers and campaign for climate justice.

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