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## **“TRANZ SCENIC SALE UNDERSCORES NEED FOR UNIONS TAKE BACK THE TRACK CAMPAIGN”**

“The sale of the Tranz Scenic business which includes the sale of 61 stations, Christchurch’s Waltham Passenger depot, Wellington’s Passenger Car depot and the Otahuhu Passenger Depot all signal the beginning of the fragmentation and breakup of New Zealand’s rail network” said the Rail & Maritime Transport Union’s General Secretary Wayne Butson.

Wayne Butson was commenting on the sale of Tranz Rail’s Tranz Scenic business to West Coast Railway announced today.

“Whilst the Union is comfortable with the sale of locomotives, passenger cars, railcars and such we view with concern the sale of strategic elements of the rail asset like station buildings and depots.”

“We are concerned that in the event we are able to motivate central and local government to seriously look to return the national rail asset back into public ownership through our campaign, key elements may have been sold which becomes a barrier to free and open competition developing on rail”

“Whilst Tranz Rail remained a virtual monopoly operation there was wide scope for the government to negotiate the return of the rail infrastructure (the buildings, track, signals, electric power overhead etc) back into public ownership.”

“Tranz Rail’s CEO Michael Beard announced the break-up of the company on 10 October 2000 and the Labour-Alliance government has had from then until now to do something. To their shame they have done virtually nothing”

“It is time for government to get real on rail and set about the task of negotiating the return of the rail asset to the public of New Zealand so that it can generate benefits to the whole country.”

“We are very disappointed at the lack of real progress being made by central government in returning the Auckland rail asset back into public ownership yet alone the whole system. Whilst government procrastinates Tranz Rail is happily selling the asset out from under their noses.”

“The Union’s *“Take Back The Track”* campaign is a way that ordinary New Zealanders can send a clear message to government telling them to get off their bums and get to the negotiating table with Tranz Rail”, said Mr Butson.

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