



RMTU

MEDIA STATEMENT EMBARGOED UNTIL 2.30 PM,
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“RAIL & MARITIME TRANSPORT UNION CONGRATULATES WEST COAST RAIL ON PURCHASING TRANZ SCENIC”

“The Rail and Maritime Transport Union have held preliminary discussions with West Coast Railway and is looking forward to working closely with the prospective new owner of Tranz Scenic”, RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said today.

Mr Butson said the RMTU wanted to assist West Coast Railway as it explored options with central and local government and the business sector to keep passenger rail services operating on the *Bay Express* and *Southerner* routes. All of the people working on these services are locally based and the service closures would see more job losses in the regions.

The union also wants to gain a greater understanding of how West Coast Railway plans to develop tourist passenger rail services in New Zealand and possibly introduce new services.

“We have spoken with our union colleagues in Australia, who have said that on balance West Coast are a decent employer. In fact, one of their directors, Gary McDonald, regularly drives trains and is himself a member of the Rail Tram & Bus union. In the event he drives trains in New Zealand we would certainly look for him to become an RMTU member.”

“Clearly we will need to spend more time getting to know each other, working through issues and developing a strong working relationship. We would see this developing as we begin the detailed work of negotiating the shift of members from Tranz Rail’s Tranz Scenic business to West Coast Rail.”

“The collective agreement which covers our Tranz Scenic members guarantee’s retention of their current terms and conditions of employment on a “*same or more favourable basis*”. We do not foresee any dispute arising out of the sale as all parties are showing a willingness to work constructively through any issues”

“Like West Coast Rail, the RMTU sees a bright future for the Tranz Scenic business and the union is keen to support West Coast rail in upgrading it’s service levels and tourist potential. We will be working hard over the next two to three months to help make that a reality,” Mr Butson said.

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