

Media Release: Rail and Maritime Transport Union

Friday 25 March, 2011.

KiwiRail: stop shunting rail passengers on to buses

Rail workers say KiwiRail should stop paying for coach services between Christchurch and Picton, and resume the TranzCoastal passenger train on that line.

KiwiRail suspended South Island passenger services following the February Earthquake, but so far only the TransAlpine to Greymouth has resumed.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson said it was time for the passenger line to return.

“We understand it is costing the company over \$20,000 for alternative bus transport from Christchurch to Picton.”

“This is in addition to lost revenue from people who would ordinarily opt for train service but not a replacement bus, onboard food sales, and savings in other areas such as locomotive drivers having to utilise rental or fleet cars for balancing purposes.”

“We appreciated the reality of some initial disruption to passenger services following the Earthquake in Christchurch.”

“But a month has passed, and every week that KiwiRail delays a decision on TranzCoastal is another week of uncertainty for KiwiRail workers who work on that line.”

“Now is the time to resume TranzCoastal, with a fare special such as that in place for the TransAlpine, to properly gauge changes in patronage following the Earthquake,” Wayne Butson said.

Ends.

For further comment: RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson on (04) 473-6693 or (027) 496-2461