

Media release: Rail & Maritime Transport Union
Monday December 10, 2012

International rail workers condemn Hillside decision

A meeting of Asia Pacific rail unions has condemned the government's failure to keep rail manufacturing jobs in New Zealand.

At a meeting of the [International Centre for Labour Solidarity](#) in Wellington over the weekend, delegates were updated on the situation at Hillside rail workshops in Dunedin, and expressed deep concern at the failure of the New Zealand government to support the local rail industry.

RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said that the unions, representing rail workers from Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand, called for stronger procurement rules that took into account whole-of-life costs, and recognised the wider economic benefits of buying local.

Wayne Butson said internationalism was at the heart of the union movement and welcomed the support from Asia Pacific rail workers.

"The closure of Hillside workshops was completely avoidable. Instead of utilising the significant purchasing power of government to support good, high skilled manufacturing jobs, like governments overseas do, John Key has been happy to stand aside and preside over the decimation of our domestic rail construction industry," he said.

The full resolution reads

That this meeting of the New Zealand Forum of the International Centre for Labour Solidarity:

In light of the New Zealand Government's failure to give clear direction to the state owned railway company KiwiRail to build railway rolling stock in new Zealand, and the subsequent decision to close down Hillside Railway Workshops, resulting in the loss of 115 jobs and the cessation of rail rolling stock manufacturing:

- 1. Abhors and condemns the failure of this New Zealand Government to consider the wider economic and social implications of its procurement decisions AND*
- 2. Expresses our loathing of the impact of this failure; specifically the decline in our manufacturing base; the loss of highly skilled jobs and the reduction in investment in our workforce AND*
- 3. Endorses the principle of fostering the economic, political and social well being of our members by building railway rolling stock as close to the point of use as possible; AND*
- 4. Calls upon all affiliates to demand that national and regional governments adopt procurement policies that actively promote this; AND*
- 5. Affirms our commitment to employment and production for the public good and not for private profit in order to foster social and economic justice.*

Ends.

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