

Media Release: Rail & Maritime Transport Union
Wednesday 16 November, 2011

Hillside Workers Down Tools, Express 'No Confidence' in Their Bosses and Call on CEO Jim Quinn to 'Step In'

Angry Rail & Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) members downed tools this morning for a stop work meeting that has passed a motion of no confidence in Hillside site manager Andy Bisset and KiwiRail Workshops Manager Clive Cooper-Smith.

The meeting comes four months after 44 jobs were slashed at the South Dunedin Railway Workshops.

'The 110 workers that survived the job cull are being offered at least 10 hours overtime per week, we estimate that about 30% of the labour on the projects that are being worked on is being outsourced and there are around a dozen outside contractors actually working alongside our members in the factory,' said RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson.

'It beggars belief that KiwiRail sack long serving, highly skilled workers and then work those that are left flat out on overtime and bring in outside contractors, some of whom are asking our guys for advice about how to do the job.

'Management are saying this is because of a so called unforeseen increase in short term work – try explaining that to a someone who has just seen 44 of his workmates sacked ' he said.

'Since the redundancies we've been trying to work with management to make Hillside as efficient as possible, we've asked for their long term plan and vision for the place and we've sought to re-build the relationship between the staff and their boss. Given what's happening, we've concluded there is no plan and that management really don't know what they're doing,' he said.

'The workers are frustrated and angry. Today they expressed no confidence in their managers and have called on KiwiRail CEO Jim Quinn and Chair of the Board John Spencer to meet with their delegates to work on a plan for the future of Hillside and railway manufacturing in this country' he said.

'The employer has told us there is no fabrication work planned for Hillside beyond 2012. The reality is that this is a direct consequence of buying rolling stock made overseas.

'There is plenty of work for both Hillside and Hutt Workshops if KiwiRail does the right thing and has the rolling stock made here,' he said.

Ends.

For further information contact: Wayne Butson 027 496 2461

Full text of motion

This meeting of RMTU members at Hillside Workshops

Expresses our commitment to the success of Hillside Workshops and the future of Railway Engineering in Dunedin and New Zealand, and that we

Condemn Site Manager Andy Bisset and Workshops Manager Clive Cooper Smith's :

- *Failure to present any evidence of a plan to sustain the future of Hillside*
- *Apparent desire to use contract labour to do the work of Hillside staff*
- *Cutting of the workforce at Hillside in July this year and relying on overtime and contractors to make up the shortfall in labour thereafter*

And, that despite our best efforts to build a productive employment relationship, we are driven to the conclusion that our Site manager and KiwiRail's Workshops Manager is incapable of successfully managing Hillside.

Accordingly we express no confidence in their ability to lead Hillside Workshops into the future and call upon CEO Jim Quinn and Board Chair John Spencer to step in and work with us to make Hillside a success.