



**Media Release
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Rail & Maritime Transport Union

Christchurch Rail Workers Revolt Against Cost Cutting Plan

An emergency stop work meeting of Christchurch KiwiRail Track workers today condemned the Company's plan to axe 181 jobs nationally, and 18 in Christchurch.

'Yesterday we were told by a local manager that KiwiRail may in the future "get outside help" to do work that is required to keep the network up to standard, at the same time as they're proposing to make our members redundant, " said RMTU South Island Organiser John Kerr.

"This reinforces our view that KiwiRail's so called 'cost reduction' programme is really about contracting out member's jobs. Experience of this in the United kingdom demonstrated contracting out leads to casualization and compromises the health and safety of workers and the public," he said.

"The irony is that even during the failed privatisation of the network in New Zealand the previous owner did not outsource core rail work, and here we have a state owned enterprise that appears bent on doing this very thing," he said.

"Our members are incensed at what is going on and called an immediate stop work meeting this morning to discuss how they can respond", he said.

"Members voted unanimously to condemn KiwiRail's plan to axe jobs and put the company on notice that any attempt to contract out or privatise by stealth their work will be met with the strongest possible industrial response," said John Kerr.

"We have a range of options open to us and we're not ruling anything out. We're holding meetings around the country and the overwhelming response mirrors that in Christchurch. Our members have had enough, and are giving us a clear message that it's time to take a stand."

ENDS

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