



Rail Maritime Transport Union Media Release

KiwiRail can't outsource responsibility

The government must guarantee New Zealanders that Chinese engineers working on KiwiRail's locomotives are at least receiving the minimum wage says Rail and Maritime Transport Union spokesperson Todd Valster.

"Last year the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment launched an investigation into allegations that Chinese workers at the Hutt Railway Workshops were being paid as little as \$3 an hour".

"Yet the investigation hit a dead end. It has been revealed that the company undertaking warranty work on KiwiRail's new locomotives - China CNR Corporation – refused to surrender its wage records to New Zealand authorities" says Todd Valster.

"KiwiRail's Chinese-built locomotives needed warranty work because the manufacturers had used asbestos in the engine rooms and cabs".

"This situation would not have happened if KiwiRail commissioned locally assembled locomotives. Building and assembling locomotives could have happened at KiwiRail's Hutt Workshops" says Todd Valster.

"Outsourcing must stop. Will the CEO of KiwiRail and the Minister of Transport outsource their jobs next or buy asbestos riddled cars" asks Todd Valster.

"The Chinese engineers are doing warranty work, but that should not mean KiwiRail can avoid its responsibility to ensure compliance with New Zealand wage standards. It is a repeat of the foreign fishing vessels and the exploitation of migrant workers.

All companies and all employees working in New Zealand must be covered under New Zealand's labour laws. The RMTU is calling for a new investigation with greater powers" says Todd Valster.

For further comment please contact Todd Valster: 027 445 4691.