

Rail & Maritime Transport Union

For immediate release: 26 March 2015

Government closes door on local businesses

New Zealanders will not get a say on the government's decision to ratify an international agreement which removes the right to protect local jobs, says Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson.

"The government is preparing to assent to the Government Procurement Agreement, a World Trade Organisation Treaty which opens up New Zealand Government contracts to foreign companies and closes the door on local businesses and their workers. However the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee is refusing to take public submissions on the decision" says Mr Butson.

"The government knows New Zealanders are opposed to international treaties which remove our right to protect local jobs. That is why the select committee is refusing to take public submissions".

"Steven Joyce and Tim Groser are claiming the agreement is a win for exporters because overseas governments cannot favour their local companies over New Zealand companies. But the catch is that our government cannot favour local companies for its contracts" says Mr Butson.

"The real winners are overseas companies like Serco who will continue to muscle their way into more New Zealand government contracts. The losers are local businesses who supply government companies like KiwiRail. If our government favours local companies and local workers then overseas companies can take action in the World Trade Organisation".

"The chances of resurrecting Hillside Engineering in Dunedin are minimal. The chances of other local engineering companies getting a look in for future government contracts are just as grim. Multinationals and major conglomerates will be rubbing their hands together knowing the government will soon remove its own right to protect local jobs" says Mr Butson.

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