



Rail and Maritime Transport Union

Media Statement For Immediate Release

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Rail Union Concerned About Mothballing Of Central North Island Rail Line

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) is concerned KiwiRail is mothballing a damaged North Island rail line.

A major derailment closed the Stratford-Okahukura Line in the King Country on Monday night, and KiwiRail management have told staff the line will not be repaired.

The line was not being closed, but would remain inactive, as management claimed it was not commercially viable to fix it.

RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson says the decision was heavily influenced by Government attitudes towards publicly-owned KiwiRail.

A number of unrelated planned upgrades to the Stratford-Okahukura Line have also been put on hold.

Mr Butson says the Union is concerned it's a sign of things to come with rail under the current Government.

"The National Party said they would not sell rail in the first term of their Government, but neglecting basic repair work on our rail network is running down this valuable asset."

Mr Butson says that if New Zealand was to have a modern, world class transport infrastructure, maintaining a quality rail network was essential.

"This decision by KiwiRail is likely to have been influenced by Government pressure for rail to suddenly become a big earner, despite years of private sector mismanagement and lack of investment."

He says that under the current National Government, expenditure on transport infrastructure had been heavily weighted towards road transport, while investment in rail and coastal shipping was seriously lacking.

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For more information, contact Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson on 0274962461