

# THE ACTIVIST



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## **RMTU EXPRESSED**

After Express #100 was released the union office received many complaints over the content of the "Quinn Expressed" article. Such was the anger of our members, at the spin of Mr Quinn, that we have issued this special Activist newsletter to address what has been said.

The CEO of KiwiRail, Jim Quinn, made a statement regarding the so called proposal to slash jobs at Hillside and Woburn Workshops in the Express #100. We, like the many who contacted us, are extremely concerned at the nature of his comments and want to set the record straight with you all.

Mr Quinn said  
*'I've also watched with considerable interest the progress over consultation on the proposed staff reductions in the Mechanical business - in particular the events that have unfolded in Dunedin. I know just how much Hillside means to the city and to the people who work there.*

*For that reason, I can understand their determination to resist any change that they regard as a threat to the workshops.*

*What I do have difficulty with is their belief that in the city's interest, KiwiRail should be expected to maintain a workforce that is greater than its commercial needs.'*

**We've never said this. In fact, we've said we're prepared to work with KiwiRail to make Hillside even more competitive. In particular, we're prepared to support lean manufacturing initiatives. We're saying this because we think by making Hillside more**

**productive and investing in equipment and training its future will be secured and more, not fewer, highly skilled workers will be needed. Mr Quinn makes no mention of this in his article, and we believe the reason for this is that Mr Quinn and KiwiRail have already made up their minds. We find it remarkable, that during a so called consultation process, and before it is completed, Mr Quinn has stated:**

Mr Quinn has also said that:  
*I can understand the city's disappointment at not getting contracts to build rolling stock. But from a KiwiRail perspective, the commercial logic is inescapable.*

**Unfortunately, this language represents the approach that is also being taken to the job losses. The company says it is engaging in consultation, but its refusal to engage on the proposals we have put forward to build jobs and enhance Hillside's competitiveness are falling on deaf ears. This is in our view because the company has already decided that cutting jobs is also inescapable.**

Mr Quinn has also said that:  
*..as a State Owned Enterprise, KiwiRail is expected to act commercially...*

**This is misleading. Whilst SOEs are expected to act commercially, they are also required under s4 1 c of the State Owned Enterprises Act to exhibit 'a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which it operates and by endeavouring to accommodate or encourage these when able to do so'. KiwiRail is obliged to do this, and it is not. We've asked to see a comprehensive analysis of the**

*This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!*

downstream economic and social effects of the jobs cull and have yet to receive anything of substance. That has not been provided. We will keep asking for this and other information, because consultation cannot be genuine and in good faith if relevant information is withheld.

Mr Quinn has also stated that:

*Hillside could not build wagons to the time scale needed or at a price that is competitive. With a limited amount of money to spend, we must get the most we can for every dollar and we must rejuvenate our wagon and locomotive fleet as quickly as possible....*

What Mr Quinn is not telling you is that the calculations around Hillside's ability includes front loading capital expenditure into the cost of building the first run of wagons, thereby inflating the cost compared to the Chinese bid. It also involves counting in contingencies and not real costs and the price of so called 'shared services' (including, one assumes, a portion of Mr Quinn's salary and his overseas trips) into Hillside's costs.

Mr Quinn has also stated that:

*I note the RMTU has also complained that we have not given them information about the wagon tender their delegates had asked for. For the record, last week we provided the RMTU with a confidential cost analysis of the tender. The RMTU has asked for further information and we have indicated we will respond promptly. But we are not going to meet the RMTU request for six weeks to enable the union to do its own analysis.*

The original consultation document said consultation would continue until 1 July. That timeframe is nonsense. We are yet to be provided with relevant information even now, let alone be given time to assess it.

Mr. Quinn appears to be taking the view that we have to ask for each item of the required information. He is choosing to ignore the obligation to proactively provide information under section 4 of the Employment Relations Act. The lack of genuine engagement by the Employer also reflects the approach taken in the consultation document towards the RMTU, referring to the RMTU very much as an afterthought.

Mr Quinn has also stated that:

*The consultation process has begun and the longer it goes on, the harder it becomes for those affected.*



Our view is that it's much harder for people to unnecessarily lose their jobs than it is to engage in through and genuine consultation and to genuinely explore alternatives. Hillside worker unanimously

called upon us to fight for every single job at Hillside. We're not going to let them down. We will fight for what is right.

The last few decades have been a very hard time for Rail workers with all the different ownership models, ideologies and rip offs. The RMTU is here to stay and will do all it can to look after the interests and employment of RMTU members.

Attached is a few copies of the Hillside/Hutt petition being organised by Clare Curran, Dunedin South MP, it closes on July 15.

Let's work hard and get as many of these petition sheets filled as possible.

**"We're Stronger Together!"**