

Aucklanders show their support for rail workers

Auckland rail workers have received a huge outpouring of support from Auckland commuters after they took strike action today over safe staffing levels on the rail network.

“We’ve been sent many emails from Aucklanders expressing their concerns about Transdev’s plans to introduce driver-only operation on some trains,” says Wayne Butson, RMTU advocate for the workers.

“People know they’re safer when there’s a train manager on board, watching the doors and available to intervene if they have trouble with other passengers.

“They understand that rail workers are acting in everyone’s best interests.

“It’s no easy decision to take industrial action this close to Christmas, but our members will not compromise on the safety of passengers or the rail network.”

Transdev Auckland, the multinational company contracted to run Auckland’s rail network, has insisted on reducing staff numbers to cut costs. Last month rail workers employed by a sister company, Transdev Wellington, went on strike over demands to cut their employments conditions and penalty rates for weekend work.

“We are calling on Transdev, Auckland Transport, Auckland Council and central government, to act in the best interests of the public and work with us to ensure the ongoing safety of Auckland rail commuters and reject this unsafe proposal,” says Wayne Butson.

“We’re getting a strong message from passengers: it’s not OK to contract out important public services to multinational companies who make their profits by squeezing down on ordinary workers. Something needs to change in how public transport is operated in NZ.”

The rail workers will meet with their employer again on 15 December and are hopeful that the conversation will be more constructive and ensure the health and safety of both passengers and the people who do the work to keep the rail network running.

ENDS

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