

Rail and Maritime Transport Union media release: 11 January 2017

Rail workers call out Transport Minister's hypocrisy over electric vehicles

The union representing working people in New Zealand's railways says Transport Minister Simon Bridges is acting like a hypocrite for [touting the benefits of electric cars](#) while allowing KiwiRail to [ditch electric locomotives](#).

There's some incredible irony in this. While Bridges is ditching his diesel vehicle for an electric one, he's overseeing KiwiRail's move from electric locomotives to diesel ones, said Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) General Secretary Wayne Butson.

In December KiwiRail confirmed that it would not upgrade its electric fleet on the North Island Main Trunk Line, instead opting to downgrade to Chinese-made diesel locomotives.

Why is Bridges so sold on the benefit of electric vehicles why isn't he sold on the benefits of electric locomotives?

All the arguments that apply to electric cars apply to electric locomotives. They're cheaper and better for the planet in the long run. Investing in electric locomotives would even create local jobs, said Butson.

RMTU modelling shows that KiwiRail's electric fleet saves 8 million litres in fuel each year and the price of upkeep is only \$1.13 per km, but the Chinese-made diesel locomotives will guzzle the gas the electric fleet saves and the likely cost of upkeep will be \$2.27 per km.

This looks, sounds and smells like hypocrisy.

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Contact: RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson 027 496 2461