

Rail Union Calls for Dunedin Council to ‘Do the Right Thing’ and Keep Dunedin Railways Rolling

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The union representing rail workers is calling upon Dunedin City Council to do the right thing at its meeting on Tuesday 13 April when it decides on the future of Dunedin Railways.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) General Secretary Wayne Butson says the RMTU led the recent Keep Dunedin Rail Rolling campaign, with the support of Unions Otago and a large number of people in the community.

“Our union backed the successful Trains not Planes initiative in running excursion trains over the summer which has gained the support of local businesses and proved a real winner with the public.”

He says Dunedin City Council have a number of options before them on Tuesday, and the RMTU are calling on them to choose the boldest option and retain the rail service both on the national network and through the iconic Taieri Gorge.

Mr Butson says this option will require investment but the economic benefit to the city will amply reward this.

“The Trains not Planes excursion services have proved an outstanding success with many sold out. Two thirds of tickets sold were to passengers from Dunedin. With our borders opening up as the threat of the global pandemic recedes, the potential demand from overseas tourists will only increase.”

Dunedin Railways has the potential to return to its status as a major attraction that will bring much needed money into the city, he says.

Mr Butson says he understands a commercial operator has expressed interest in operating a tourism rail service out of Dunedin and the RMTU was confident its members could work with any potential investor to make the venture a success.

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For more information contact Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson on 0274 962461