

MEDIA RELEASE

Rail & Maritime Transport Union

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### **No more race to the bottom: Transport workers support Fair Pay Agreements**

Transport workers say they are optimistic about the potential for Fair Pay Agreements to improve New Zealanders' working lives.

With the publication today of a Business & Economic Research Ltd paper analysing the economic impact of sector-wide bargaining arrangements, evidence is mounting that sector-wide bargaining will benefit a country like New Zealand.

"Fair Pay Agreements prevent greedy and unscrupulous employers from driving down wages in a race to the bottom," says Wayne Butson, General Secretary of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union.

"Perhaps more importantly, they establish a level playing field that can protect decent employers who do the right thing and pay a living wage."

Members and officials of the RMTU have extensively discussed the proposed industrial reforms with employers, government and industry bodies over the past two years.

Alongside significant investment<<https://embed.radionz.co.nz/news/budget-2019/390948/budget-kiwirail-funding-a-cause-for-celebration>> in the country's rail network and increased attention to workplace health and safety<<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/strategy-launched-keeping-kiwis-healthier-and-safer-work>>, the introduction of Fair Pay Agreements is widely seen in the transport sector as evidence of the Labour-led government's commitment to an economy that works for all.

"A smart 21st century economy grows through innovation, technology and investment in a skilled workforce," says Mr Butson.

"Only a profiteering minority, stuck in the past, remain addicted to paying poverty wages."

Fair Pay Agreements will also help ensure workers make it home to their families by setting consistent safety standards across industries, and can include negotiated arrangements for entry-level training and professional development for existing staff.

With an ageing workforce<<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/100998151/new-zealands-ageing-workforce--the-elephant-in-the-room-for-many-companies>> and an epidemic of migrant worker exploitation<<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/113639803/shameful-exploitation-of-vulnerable-migrant-workers>> in the headlines, the RMTU welcomes all opportunities to get New Zealanders working in secure and well paid jobs.

"Fair Pay Agreements are a common sense proposal based on what is already standard practice across the developed world. From Brisbane to Belgium, sector-wide collective bargaining has supported good wages in strong economies," says Mr Butson.

"Meanwhile in too much of New Zealand, we have a low wage economy. None of us like being second best to Aussies on the sports field or anywhere else, so why would we accept it in our pay cheques?"

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