

Media release: Rail & Maritime Transport Union
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Hillside – not forgotten

Former workers from Hillside workshops in Dunedin gathered today to mark the one year anniversary of the closure of their past workplace.

“We shouldn’t be here today marking the anniversary of Hillside’s closure. Hillside played an important role in our rail industry, and there was ample reason for it to stay open,” RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said.

“What was needed though was government ministers with a commitment to local manufacturing and being willing to take a whole of life view on procurement instead of opting for the cheapest products available, whatever the long term economic and social cost is to local communities.”

“KiwiRail’s decision to not bid for either the \$500 million contract for Auckland’s new trains, or for some or all of the 4000 flat top wagons directly contributed to the closure of Hillside.”

“Manufacturing may not have the showbiz appeal of the film industry. Manufacturing doesn’t get you invited to parties in Hollywood, but it remains New Zealand’s third largest employing industry and deserves better much support from government.”

Wayne Butson said Hillside had made a huge contribution to the New Zealand rail industry and the Dunedin economy over the past 130 years, and Hillside workers wanted to reunite a year on and share some memories of their time at the site.

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