

Media Release: Rail and Maritime Transport Union

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## **Steve Gurney diversion sends wrong message on rail safety**

Public understanding about the serious consequences of poor driving at level crossings is not helped by police diversion being offered for collisions involving careless driving, rail workers say.

Athlete Steve Gurney's car crashed with a passenger train on a level crossing near Rangiora in September last year.

He pleaded guilty to careless driving and was yesterday offered diversion.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson said Gurney was wrong last year to label the incident a simple mistake.

"This shows a complete lack of thought for the human being sitting in the cab of the locomotive doing his or her job," Wayne Butson said.

There were 14 level crossing collisions between vehicles and trains in 2011.

"Locomotive engineers love their job but every time they begin their shift they worry whether if today will be that day that someone's life is ended in another needless level crossing or trespass incident."

Wayne Butson said that because of level crossing events some train drivers suffered such severe mental trauma that they have to give up their driving which they love and this further affects all the members of their family. Train drivers are the silent victims in all these cases.

"The public need a greater respect for the rail corridor and level crossings. The offer of police diversion to Steve Gurney yesterday doesn't seem at all appropriate to locomotive engineers in the circumstances," Wayne Butson said.

Ends.

For further information: RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson on (04) 473-6693 or (027) 496-2461