

Media Release: Rail and Maritime Transport Union Thursday May 6, 2010

Jump in Otago unemployment demonstrates need to back Hillside workshops

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union says today's big spike in unemployment in the Otago region, bucking the trend nationally, demonstrates the need to support rail industry jobs like those at Hillside workshop in Dunedin.

Otago was one of the only regions, alongside Northland, Bay of Plenty and Tasman/Nelson/West Coast, to register an increase in unemployment in today's Household Labour Force Survey.

Otago unemployment has risen from 2.7 per cent in the March 2008 quarter and 4.4 per cent in the March 2009 quarter, to 6.3 per cent in the March 2010.

"Hillside workshop is a major employer in Dunedin," Wayne Butson, General Secretary of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union said.

"This is the time to be backing Hillside, not walking away from it, as we have seen from the government's response this week to the BERL report on building rolling stock for Auckland."

"We have the expertise and equipment in our rail workshops in Dunedin and Lower Hutt and we have workers who are ready and keen to do this work."

"We want KiwiRail and the government to back Kiwi workers, back the Dunedin and Lower Hutt economies, and get our trains built at home," Wayne Butson said.

This week's BERL report estimated that building trains needed for Auckland electrification in New Zealand would add between 770 to 1270 additional jobs and \$232 to \$250 million to GDP.

Ends.

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

Note:

Unemployment figures broken down by regional council boundaries are available from Table 6, of the excel sheet accompanying today's Household Labour Force Survey. See:

http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/work_income_and_spending/Employment/HouseholdLabourForceSurvey_HOTPMar10qtr/Commentary.aspx