

Commuters warned of more industrial action tonight as NSW Govt refuses to deliver on rail worker safety asks

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MEDIA RELEASE



Monday 20 December: Commuters are being warned of further protected industrial action overnight, as the NSW Government again refused to deliver on basic safety asks as part of the current Sydney and NSW Trains enterprise agreement negotiations.

Rail workers will now undertake an 8 hour stoppage between 8pm on Monday 20th December and 4am on Tuesday 21 December. The action may impact services either side of the stoppage.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW Secretary, Alex Claassens said the NSW Government's continued refusal to deliver on basic safety, hygiene and privatisation asks is disappointing.

“This NSW Government’s shocking handling of transport is all being laid to bare at the moment, but rather than moving forward and addressing the obvious failings, the Perrottet Government is insisting on pushing back against workers’ basic safety needs,” Mr Claassens said.

“Workers are taking a stand for safety. We want basic hygiene, safety and privatisation commitments and we simply can’t let the NSW Government get away with no delivering them.

“These aren’t just issues that impact workers – these are issues that impact every single person who gets on a train.

“These members are the people who have been putting themselves in harm’s way to keep our communities moving throughout the pandemic. All they want now is a commitment to the ongoing safety of commuters and workers.

Mr Claassens said the action overnight on Monday will impact services throughout the state, however the RTBU is ensuring that the movement of freight trains will not be impacted at all.

“While it’s hard to say exactly how many services will be impacted, there’s no doubt that there will be a serious impact for commuter services. We’re very aware of the impact this will have on commuters, but we also know that not taking action will leave workers and commuters at risk.

“We are pulling out all the stops to ensure that vital freight movement is not impacted at all though, so people’s Christmas presents and other vital goods will still get through.

“This isn’t what we want to be doing. No one likes industrial action, but we can’t allow our basic safety, hygiene and privatisation asks to go ignored.”

The previous agreement expired in May. Among the key sticking points in current enterprise agreement negotiations are:

- **privatisation** - workers want a commitment to services and jobs in the event of privatisation;
- **safety claims** – workers want a guarantee that any changes to our services will leave them as safe or safer;
- **hygiene** – workers want a commitment to maintaining the existing level of hygiene using good, publicly owned jobs.