

Rail workers avert last-minute Govt attack, will keep essential workers moving tomorrow

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Media release: Rail workers are trying to avert a last-minute attack from the NSW Government that could prevent them getting essential workers to work during tomorrow's industrial action, seeking a promise from Sydney and NSW Trains to allow workers to stay in a safe place on the worksite so they can resume services as soon as possible.

This morning rumours were circulating that management would lock workers out and force them to breach health orders, which would then question their ability to keep the network moving during the critical periods of the day.

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW wrote urgently to the CEOs of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains asking that workers be allowed onsite during tomorrow's work stoppage, so they can get trains back into operation.

"Rail workers deliberately planned our action tomorrow to ensure the impact on essential workers would be kept to a minimum. I'm grateful that management have seen sense and will not be making it harder for rail workers to get people moving again tomorrow," says RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens.

Transport workers are taking protected industrial action on Tuesday between 9am and 1pm – a timeline deliberately chosen to ensure minimal disruption to essential workers.

The stop work action is the culmination of a month of protected industrial action in protest of the NSW Government's refusal to provide workers with the respect, pay and conditions – particularly

safety conditions – they deserve.

“We don’t want to have to take action at all, but we’ve been left with no choice,” says Mr Claassens.

“The public were told today by NSW Trains and Sydney Trains that they are trying to bargain with their employees in good faith. The reality could not be further from the truth.

“The CEOs and senior management at NSW Trains and Sydney Trains have refused to meet with members to negotiate. No one at any level of either organisation has met with the combined workforce to discuss a new enterprise agreement, despite repeated invitations.

“Transport Minister Andrew Constance has also refused to come to the table. Rail workers would love to meet with any of them.

“The claim that NSW Trains and Sydney Trains are bargaining ‘in good faith’ is wildly misleading. We invite them to negotiation meetings and they just don’t show up. It’s beyond ridiculous.

“We can’t sit back and let the safety of workers and the community be put at risk, nor can we allow the disrespect of members to continue.

“Our industrial action has been a last resort, but it has prompted NSW Trains, Sydney Trains and the Transport Minister to make public promises to bargain in good faith. We look forward to them accepting our next invitation to meet.”