

Rail workers push ahead with protected industrial action tomorrow, but worker actions won't impact commuters

Categories : [Media releases](#), [News](#)

Date : 20 February, 2022

MEDIA
RELEASE



Media release, 20 February 2022: Rail workers will push ahead with protected industrial action scheduled to begin tomorrow - despite the NSW Government's shocking attempt to silence workers by blocking their legal industrial action - however the actions being taken will not impact commuters at all.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW Secretary, Alex Claassens, said workers will take part in a ban on 'altered working,' meaning that they perform the shifts they are set without any changes. The action will start from 12.01am Monday 21 February and run for a fortnight.

“Workers will be taking protected industrial action, but only transport management will notice the impact, not commuters,” Mr Claassens said. “If commuters see any impact to their services, it won’t be because of workers’ actions, but because the NSW Government is spitting the dummy and trying to make a point.

“All members will be at work, ready to work. They will be ready and waiting to crew the trains. There is no impediment, only stubbornness on behalf of the NSW Government. The actions being taken are designed to make life hard for transport management, not commuters.

“There’s no strike – workers are simply performing the shifts we’re set without any changes.”

Mr Claassens said rail workers have been bitterly disappointed by the NSW’s Government’s approach to current enterprise agreement negotiations, particularly over the past days which have seen the NSW Government take a heavy-handed, expensive, legal approach to workers’ legal right to take industrial action.

“The NSW Government’s treatment of Sydney and NSW Trains workers and commuters has been appalling for a long time, but bringing in expensive lawyers in a bid to silence workers who are merely trying to get their safety concerns heard is a new low,” Mr Claassens said.

“We don’t have any choice but to continue to take action. We’re choosing not to strike at this point, but we’re hoping that our actions will finally make the NSW Government listen. We’ve been trying to negotiate for many, many months, but the NSW Government has shown time and again that it is simply not interested in listening to the genuine concerns of workers.

“Rail workers are the ones helping and protecting the travelling public every day. We chose these industrial actions so they could send a message to transport management while still running train services and helping people get by.

“It’s time the NSW Government stopped trying to bully workers into submission and starting resolving the laundry list of safety and employment issues workers have raised.”

Among the key sticking points in current enterprise agreement negotiations are:

- Privatisation – workers want a commitment that no train services or lines will be lost 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, full time jobs.