

Rail workers ready to drive the trains: NSW Government dummy spits shuts train network

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MEDIA RELEASE



Media release, 21 February 2022: Today's rail chaos is the result of the NSW Government's decision to shut the train network to make a point, and not the action of the state's rail workers, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union says.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW Secretary, Alex Claassens, said workers turned up to work this morning prepared to take part in low level protected industrial action which would not have impacted commuters, only to be told by management that trains would not be running today.

“This is a dummy spit from the NSW Government,” Mr Claassens said. “Workers were prepared to take protected industrial action, but only transport management would have noticed the impact, not commuters. The impact to services today is not because of workers’ actions, but because the NSW Government is spitting the dummy and trying to make a point.

“We’re ready to drive the trains whenever the NSW Government will let us.

“All members were at work, ready to work. They were ready and waiting to crew the trains only to be told the trains aren’t running today. There is no impediment, only stubbornness on behalf of the NSW Government.

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.

“We’re trying to negotiate an enterprise agreement that enshrines safety on our train network. For the NSW Government to suggest otherwise is unbelievable. 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.