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INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Axe falls on Rail Infrastructure Corporation workers ahead of rail line handover

27 August 2004

The Rail Infrastructure Corporation (RIC) workforce in Tamworth has been cut by a third and morale among workers has hit an all time low ahead of the Australian Rail Track Corporation's takeover of NSW country rail lines Member for Tamworth Peter Draper said today.

Mr Draper met with a representative of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union in Tamworth this morning who revealed 25 RIC employees of 75 in Tamworth and Werris Creek have taken voluntary redundancies and quit the industry.

The redundancies were offered by the ARTC which will take over a 60-year lease of NSW rail lines on September 5.

The positions have been lost in surveying, land management, administration and logistics. Current RIC workers will remain employed by the State Government as a country rail arm but some will be seconded to the ARTC to perform what has been referred to as 'routine maintenance'.

The union has negotiated a redeployment scheme, however, workers are being kept in the dark as to what their duties will be.

Mr Draper said the redundancy process has taken an enormous toll on the morale of RIC workers some of whom have taken stress leave or suffered anxiety due to the uncertainty.

"Workers are feeling greatly disheartened as it appears many of the positions will be surplus to what the ARTC requires and those who have taken jobs with the ARTC still don't have any security as they will be subject to a six month probation period," Mr Draper said.

"The way this process has been handled is appalling and I intend to impress upon the Government the need to maintain and increase investment in country rail infrastructure," Mr Draper said.

End Release

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