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Community to voice rail sell-off concerns in Longreach

Longreach railway workers and supporters will meet tomorrow to highlight concerns at the State Government sell-off of railways, ports, roads and forests.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union Branch Organiser Craig Allen said a community forum would be held at 6pm on 14 July at the Civic and Cultural Centre in Longreach.

There will also be a rally at 12 noon tomorrow in Barcaldine, at the Tree of Knowledge, and a rally in Winton at 12 noon on 15 July, near the railway station.

The RTBU has joined with other unions and community groups to oppose the Queensland government's sell-off of rail, ports, roads and forestry assets.

"Workers and their families are facing threats to their job security and small businesses are concerned about regional economies if railways fall into the hands of big business," Mr Allen said.

"Workers and businesses in Longreach are already copping a pounding – the fuel subsidy has gone, there's a 20 per cent increase in vehicle rego and a 15 per cent jump in electricity expenses.

"This fire sale of public assets is short-sighted and puts big business before the people of regional Queensland.

"This government says they are getting 'on with the job' but the only 'job' they are doing is a job on working families," Mr Allen said.

"Historically privatisation of government assets means reduced services and higher charges for regional areas, because profits for shareholders become more important than providing a vital service," he said.

"Privatisation also puts at risk more than 10,000 rail jobs throughout Queensland. Privatised rail is a basket case in other Australian states, and is being returned to government hands in the United Kingdom but only after much pain and damage to regional economies and workers," he said.

This week's western Queensland meetings are just some of many regional forums being held throughout July to highlight the risks of privatisation to regional and rural communities.

**For further information or interviews,
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