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Transport Minister Nolan off-track on QR jobs claim

Transport Minister Rachel Nolan's lightweight grip of her portfolio was exposed today after she claimed railway privatisation would create jobs when Queensland Rail is already considering overseas firms to build railway rolling stock.

The Minister has been urged to give an undertaking that jobs at QR's Redbank rail workshops will not disappear overseas to China or Korea if the Government's privatisation plans go ahead.

Rail Tram and Bus Union Branch President Bruce Mackie said potential private operators of QR were already buying rolling stock from Asian factories using cheap labour and inferior engineering.

"I am astounded how out of touch Ms Nolan is with her portfolio. Does she think that big business is going to use a better Queensland-built product just because she says so? Big business will go for the cheapest every time, at the cost of jobs in Queensland.

"Queensland Rail is already investigating moving rolling stock contracts overseas, and won't commit to future contracts at the Downer EDI factory in Maryborough," Mr Mackie said.

Downer EDI may be forced to lay off up to 1000 positions if the contract for 200 new QR trains goes offshore to tenders from Korea or China.

Any job losses would be a blow to Premier Bligh's election pledge to protect Queensland jobs by preferring local contractors in government tenders for infrastructure.

"Ms Nolan needs to promise the workers at Redbank won't be abandoned just so the government can sell Queensland Rail and get back its AAA credit rating," Mr Mackie said.

"Ms Nolan keeps telling us how great the privatisation was at Qantas – but tell that to the 1750 workers who lost their jobs there in April. Tell that to the maintenance workers who in May were told to work longer shifts or lose your jobs," Mr Mackie said.

The RTBU continues to hold community rallies and meetings against the privatisation of Queensland Rail. Communities in south western Queensland will be visited in the coming week.

**For further information or interviews, contact Brett Young
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