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Community to voice rail sell-off concerns in Roma

Roma and Chinchilla rail workers and supporters will meet next week to highlight concerns at the State Government sell-off of railways, ports, roads and forests.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union Branch Organiser Ross Schimke said rail workers would meet at 3pm at the QR Infrastructure Depot in Roma on Tuesday 21 July.

In Chinchilla, workers will rally at 7am on Tuesday at the QR Infrastructure Depot.

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 Schimke said.

"Workers and businesses in Roma 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.

"Premier Bligh says in the 2009 Maranoa and Districts Draft Regional Plan that communities throughout this area face challenges like reducing populations and access to vital services.

"Those will be two definite outcomes if she sells off Queensland Rail. Wasn't she elected to solve the challenges rather than create them?" Mr Schimke asked.

"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 Schimke 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.

These 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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