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Outburst shows Schwarten folding under privatisation pressure

Member for Rockhampton Robert Schwarten's abusive outburst at a public function this afternoon shows he is cracking under the pressure of maintaining support for privatisation.

Mr Schwarten abused a rail worker who was part of a group of workers greeting their local member as he arrived at Rockhampton train station at 5pm this afternoon for the Q150 celebration train.

Rail Tram and Bus Union State President Bruce Mackie said the worker was part of a group of 60 rail workers concerned at the risk of job losses if the State Government goes ahead with selling off railways in Queensland.

"I don't want to repeat what Mr Schwarten said but that worker was just asking an question about the future of his job and he doesn't deserve personal abuse for that," Mr Mackie said.

Mr Schwarten was struggling to maintain his composure under concerted community pressure against the sell-off of state railways, roads, ports and forests, Mr Mackie said.

Rallies and public meetings against privatisation continue in Mackay tomorrow, when concerned workers and supporters rally at 2pm.

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

"Thousands of rail jobs are at risk throughout Queensland. Privatised rail is a basket case in other Australian states," Mr Mackie said.

Concerned workers in the Bowen Basin today rallied against the privatisation plans, holding well-supported meetings in Blackwater, Coppabella and Moranbah.

Mr Mackie said workers and residents in the railway town of Bluff, near Blackwater, were particularly worried about their futures in a privatised rail network.

A series of regional forums are being held through July to highlight the risks of privatisation to regional and rural communities.

**For further information or interviews,
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