



Media release

17 December 2020 4pm

Port Otago responds to unsubstantiated claims

Port Otago met with the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ) and Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) this afternoon. The unions failed to substantiate their earlier allegations of management bullying at Port Otago.

Port Otago Chief Executive Kevin Winders says the business responded quickly to the challenges of Covid-19. “Our team did a brilliant job keeping the region’s exporters’ products flowing from our catchment to the world. The team coped well with the Covid 19 testing regime and the many changes we implemented to protect our borders. I am confident they will continue to do so into the future.”

Port Otago has been significantly impacted by the \$8m revenue loss from its cruise business. “Like most businesses, we have worked through right-sizing our workforce, which is challenging. We have worked constructively with our unions to identify staff who are towards the end of their careers and 12 individuals embraced an early retirement option that was well received.”

Nine staff have been made redundant – either electing to take redundancy rather than redeployment, or where no redeployment option was available.

“Moving the business towards a more modern, diverse, inclusive and safe workplace is a significant change for some union members. We look forward to working through these issues in a constructive manner into the future.”

End

Contact

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Port Otago is mid way through a three-year Collective Employment Agreement (CEA) for the container-related portion of the business, including a 9% wage increase for union staff. Salaries have been frozen for all other staff (property/cruise/bulk/support) and this will be reviewed in June 2021.

Currently, Port Otago is recruiting for cadets, business analysts and project managers – to support continued investment in new systems related to the business becoming sustainable.