

RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
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2016 IN REVIEW



**Luba
Grigorovitch**
State Secretary

2016 has certainly had its ups and downs. There has not been one dull month along the way and I want to thank each and every member

of the RTBU for your ongoing support of the union and your unity that you've showed along the way.

We started off the year with the introduction of 'Night Network', an initiative of the State Government which required roster changes from all members across our industry. 12 months on, Night Network has proved a success with the State Government announcing that they will extend the trial for an additional 6 months.

The RTBU welcomed this announcement, however in doing so we raised a number of concerns primarily around fatigue. The Government, Metro, V/Line and Yarra Trams are all keen to see the extended hours continue, but footing the bill for additional staff was not something that any party was volunteering to do. The RTBU is currently lobbying the companies and the State Government to ensure that as part of the review for Night Network a provision for additional staff is made.

February 2016 saw what is now known as the 'V/Line wheel wear issue'. This string of events and the lack of transparency shown by those in charge led to the resignation of the then V/Line CEO. Although this move was welcomed by many members, it meant a heap of uncertainty and a lack of direction for our V/Line members for 2016.

At one stage V/Line had no CEO, then an 'Acting-Acting' CEO. Getting a decision made by

V/Line at times often proved to be quite difficult. I am pleased to now report that both the V/Line Operations and V/Line Infrastructure EAs have been voted on and endorsed by members. I thank all V/Line members for their patience with these EAs.

The Level Crossing Removal project has seen a huge injection of jobs in the Labour Hire and Infrastructure grades of our industry. I am told that all works are on track. 2017 will see a continuation of works on these level crossings as well as the construction of the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. These changes will see significant growth for public transport in Victoria.

This year also brings the opportunity for the State Government to either extend the franchise for both Metro Trains and Yarra Trams, or alternatively to make a change. At the start of 2016 I arranged meetings with various Ministers to ensure the feelings of the membership towards these companies was heard. Irrespective of how many meetings we had about the re-franchising (known as MR4), it seemed that our rhetoric fell on deaf ears.

Given a Labor Government is currently in power, we are urging them to use this rare opportunity to bring the public asset of public transport back into the hands of the public. I have written to the Minister formally requesting this, I have met directly with the Premier and we also successfully passed a motion at the annual ALP conference calling on this to happen.

The current contracts rip off Victorians and allow too much money to be stripped from our assets and shipped offshore to shareholders, rather than being reinvested into Melbourne's public transport system. Members deserve to be treated better, the travelling public deserves the best system possible, and tax payers deserve to get value for their money.

Ultimately it is the decision of the State Government. A decision which will be made in the New Year.

We can't waste a moment in 2017, we must ensure that we are loud and proud in our battle.

Now more than ever the Union must remain united in the fight against these companies. The easy answer for the Government is to roll over the franchises, just as they did earlier this year with the Myki franchise.

Our job as unionists is to not allow this to simply happen without any noise. We must hold the Government – who are the ultimate decision makers to account.

We are calling on the State Government to make the bold move of bringing these assets back into the hands of the Government.

Please support the campaign by visiting www.publictransportpublichands.com and fill in the survey and the petition. You will also find links from our Facebook Page RTBU Victoria. Remember to tweet #publictransportpublichands

The louder we are, the more likely we have a chance of being heard. This is your future as an employee of these companies, but it is also the future of Public Transport for all Victorians.

We have also been leafleting outside stations and in public spaces to raise awareness of the rare opportunity this government has to make a real difference to the future of our public transport.

We will be knee deep in the MR4 re-franchising campaign in 2017 and I am sure 2017 will present us with even more challenges. Through these challenges, unity is key.

Again thank you to each and every member and Delegate for your contribution this year. I wish you and your family a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year's. ■

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary

CHRISTMAS DAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY



Jamie Porter
Organiser



Darren Galea
Organiser

This year there has been a number of concerns for members about whether Christmas Day will be classified as a public holiday.

Originally, due to Christmas Day falling on a Sunday, the Government insisted that the Public Holiday would be observed on Tuesday, and therefore workers would not get paid Public Holiday rates on the Sunday of Christmas Day.

Through pressure from the RTBU and the wider Union Movement, the Government has now announced that Christmas Day 25 December 2016 will be classified as a Public Holiday.

For RTBU members who each year sacrifice time with their families, this is a great win as it means they will now be compensated with paid public holiday rates for working on this day.

Due to a change in public holiday entitlements for all of the V/Line Rail Operations members. There were concerns raised by the membership that shift workers would not receive this entitlement. We can confirm that all shift workers will be paid all public holiday entitlements for Sunday 25 and Tuesday 27 of December.

Metro Rail Operations members will too be entitled to all public holiday entitlements for 25, 26 and 27 of December, including no loss of pay for shift workers who are booked off and not required to work.

Members with any issues resulting in incorrect payments over this time are advised to contact your relevant union organiser. ■

The Christmas period public holidays are as follows:

Christmas Day - Sunday 25 December 2016

Boxing Day - Monday 26 December 2016

Christmas Day (gazetted) Public Holiday - Tuesday 27 December 2016

New Year's Day - Sunday 1 January 2017

To all members, have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.



DID YOU KNOW?

The term penalty rate comes from the early days of such provisions where the penalty was placed on the employer for forcing workers to work anti-social hours.

V/LINE INFRA EA VOTED UP IN LANDSLIDE YES VOTE



Bryan Evans
Organiser

Over the course of the last week I have completed another tour of the regions to attend the V/Line Infra EA vote. The result was

an astounding yes!

93% of members voted in favour of the well overdue Enterprise Agreement (EA) which secured an industry standard pay rise, gave significant influence over rostering back to the members, addressed issues with travel time and significantly strengthened our disputes procedure.

It also delivered a blow to casualization by delivering a minimum of 12 full time jobs to F-Gate. This EA takes huge steps to future proof conditions for V/Line infrastructure workers. Concurrent to the EA being signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been put in place for all members. This MOU ensures that day shift workers are treated as such and only do night shift on a voluntary basis. When they do volunteer shifts they also receive industry standard short shift and loading provisions.

In addition to the new EA which has already been signed off, we have 4 new Delegates to assist in maintaining conditions in the regions. These are;

- Henry Singh - F-Gate Night shift
- Brett Tisdale - Donald Gang
- Steve Szewczyk - Seymour Gang
- Mick Spooner - Signals

When you see them out and around, make sure you thank them for putting their hand up to represent their respective gangs.

Furthermore, a special thanks to Delegate Ian Unthank who attended every bargaining meeting representing the RTBU and went over and above to ensure a fair deal for the members. His assistance was priceless. ■



SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE SILLY SEASON



Jess Mekhael

Industrial Officer

It's that time of the year where the social calendar is full of Christmas parties and gatherings, including work functions. As

such, it is necessary that all members are reminded of the implications of behaviour at work Christmas parties and online.

Lately, employers have been able to use employee's social media activity as grounds for disciplinary action and in some circumstances termination. Earlier this year,

I wrote an article about the potential perils of social media with regard to employment, and the warnings in that article apply equally to this time of year. Although it is important that you enjoy your time, it is also incredibly important that any posts (statuses, photographs, tweets etc) whilst at work parties, or about work parties are kept appropriate. Many employers have policies that state that if you disrepute the employer or undermine the employer through social media, it is grounds for disciplinary action. If you are posting anything online be weary of this and ensure that everything is above board. Review the relevant policy if necessary.

Further, it is important that your conduct and interactions with other staff are appropriate. It is not uncommon that with the combination of alcohol that there is a potential for issues, such as complaints, to arise from these parties.

I wish all our members a safe and happy festive season. I look forward to working with you all in the New Year. ■

SICK LEAVE AND CARERS LEAVE



Joe Maisano

Organiser

With winter behind us, Metro Management has decided to call up members for disciplinary meetings,

whom they believe have taken an excessive amount of sick days. The biggest problem is that no matter what the circumstances are, members are being called up for meetings and/or investigations as to why a large amount of sick days have been taken.

If you are sick or have a medical condition, you are entitled to your sick leave. Members should not be at risk of a disciplinary meeting for having accessed the sick leave they are entitled to.

Also, members taking Carer's Leave to care for an immediate family member and/or a member of their house hold are being handed letters in person calling them to attend a meeting. This has caused a lot of unease in the workplace for members needing to take carers leave.

Under the Metro Rail Operations Enterprise Agreement (EA) 2015-2019 carer's leave is accrued in the same way as personal leave, and the EA provides that employees who require carer's leave may also utilise annual leave, time off in lieu for overtime, make-up time and up to two days unpaid carer's leave on each occasion. Metro may approve additional unpaid leave for carer's leave.

Carer's leave is an entitlement, if members are being called up for a meeting please make sure that the sick days/personal leave are calculated from your anniversary of employment. This is the date when you commenced employment.

If any members feel that they have been in a similar situation or have been asked to attend a meeting, please don't hesitate to call me on 0421122 437 or your relevant organiser. ■





WORKERS COMPENSATION 1800 555 777

The compensation meant I wasn't also hurt financially.

Slater Gordon
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RTBU
The power of Union

FRANCHISE Public Transport, MR4 2016 AGREEMENT Public Hands

Early in 2017, the State Government has the rare opportunity to make a move against the damages of Kennett's privatisation and protect the interests of Public Transport workers and Victorian Taxpayers.

The **RTBU** firmly believes that Metro and Yarra Trams are not the best companies to run Victoria's Public Transport – our network would be better off back in the hands of the public, or as a bare minimum with the contracts out to market to ensure Victorians get the best possible deal. **We won't stand by as the bosses do a cozy deal with the Politicians at Spring St.**

We are calling on the State Government to make a bold move and put the **public** back into **public transport**, and return democracy to our transport and our workplaces!

To get involved in the campaign for our chance for change, visit:

www.publictransportpublichands.com

or look us up on Facebook (**RTBU Victoria**).



Health insurance premiums risen? They haven't for RTBU members with rt's Premium Hospital cover

RTBU (Vic) members with rt's Premium Hospital cover won't pay a cent more for their cover this year. And, new Victorian members who join with the same level of cover can take advantage of the price lock benefit, too!

Remember, RTBU Health Plan members also get:**

- ✓ A 5% discount
- ✓ An immediate waiver of all 2 and 3-month waiting periods
- ✓ A \$150 petrol or grocery voucher.

It's your union health plan – developed for you, backed by your union.

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