



# ONTRACK

September 2015



## TRAMMIES DEMAND A FAIR DEAL IN STRONG STOPWORK MEETING

Last week, Comrades of the Tram and Bus Division parked the trams to enact on their first industrial stoppage in nearly 20 years as Yarra Trams continues to ignore members' calls for a decent Enterprise Agreement.

On Thursday 27 August, the Tram and Bus Division embarked on a four hour stoppage of Melbourne's tramways between 10am and 2pm. Over 1000 Tram and Bus members braved the rainy weather on the day and made their angry voices heard in the rally held at Trades Hall. Speakers at the rally included the RTBU's Assistant National Secretary, Allan Barden; State Secretary, Luba Grigorovitch; and Tram and Bus Divisional Secretary, Phil Altieri.

Both Allen and Luba urged Yarra to get back to the bargaining table in good faith and to stop trying to strip away tram workers' hard-won conditions. Phil advocated for members to maintain the pressure on Yarra Trams and push for a fairer deal, condemning commentary in the media which presented inflated wage figures and sought to blindly paint tram drivers as greedy without consideration for their working conditions.

It was evident from the size, impassioned chanting, and fighting spirit of the 1000 strong crowd that members in the Tram and Bus Division are ready for a fight and cannot be ignored by Yarra for long. In this fight, our trammie brothers

and sisters can count not only on support from the Victorian union movement – evident at Thursday's rally and our march to Flinders Street Station, Friday 21 August – but also from across the divisions of our united Union. The ongoing battle with Yarra Trams is bound hand and foot to that with that of Metro workers in the common struggle for our industry conditions! We can continue to count on support from our National Office throughout these disputes, evidenced by Allan's support on the day. Our Union will fight on, and will not rest until all members have secured a fair and just deal with any employer hair-brained enough to take us on.

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The power of Union

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# THE BATTLE CONTINUES

Secretary's Report | Luba Grigorovitch

**RTBU members remain strong and united in this tough fight for a fair deal.**

I have recently heard nothing but pure, unmitigated rubbish from people who ought to know better than to blame an old and proud union for doing nothing more than standing up for the members they represent - just as we have done for over 150 years.

I remind these people that they are doing themselves no favors by attacking those who need defending. There is no bravery in attacking ordinary Victorian transport workers. It is weak, not brave, to attack members for having the courage to stand up.

Our message to Yarra and Metro has been simple throughout these negotiations. Stop wasting time drafting circulars and press releases which condemn your workforce. Stop your unprecedented legal intimidation of the RTBU. It is a strategy whose stupidity is embarrassing as it only serves to harden the resolve of workers and the RTBU. Start taking

these negotiations seriously or there will be more action around the corner.

I commend again all members of the RTBU. We are more united than ever. If you don't fight, you lose. I hope by now each and every member of the RTBU knows that we will not be pushed around. If the offer that is on the table is unacceptable then we will fight it.

The Metro Operations Enterprise Agreement (EA) is now 2 months overdue. From the current offer put by Metro it is clear that Metro has so far not been fair dinkum about reaching agreement without eroding several important conditions.

We suspended our industrial action on Friday 21 August in good faith on the basis that Metro made a commitment to present an improved offer. An offer that was ultimately the same as that already on the table.

Instead, Metro has threatened to stand members down and dock their pay if they take part in the partial work bans, refusing to return to the bargaining table to settle this EA dispute once and for all. These heavy

handed tactics show the great lengths Metro will go to in their attempts to stop our members from taking lawful industrial action.

Enough is enough.

A vote of 98% was returned to authorise industrial action and in view of Metro's actions it has become obvious that the RTBU needs to put industrial pressure on Metro.

Under instruction by the Metro Rail Operations delegates, the Union filed for a stoppage of four hours between 10am and 2pm on Friday 4 September. The protected action will be taken by Metro's operational staff including signallers, station staff, authorised officers, and Metrol staff. Drivers will then participate in further stoppages on Saturday Morning.





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## FAIR WORK COMMISSION GIVES THE GREEN LIGHT

This week Metro filed an application to terminate all protected industrial action including the four hour stoppage planned for this Friday, looking to force the RTBU into arbitration.

Metro failed. The Fair Work Commission rejected Metro Trains' application to terminate the four hour stoppage for this Friday. The commissioner, unsatisfied by Metro's arguments, did not accept that the industrial action would threaten to endanger a part of the population's personal safety and welfare.

The Fair Work Act bargaining regime allows unions and workers to take industrial action to break stalemates and encourage employers to make a better offer. We are exercising that right. We called off our previous industrial action on a promise that Metro would make meaningful concessions, but they didn't.

Over the last week we have made it clear that we are ready to negotiate at any time, day or night. Despite efforts to continue talks and settle this dispute, Metro continue to muck us around.



# METRO TRAINS

# STOP WORK

10AM  
-2PM

# RALLY FOR A FAIR DEAL

## ALL METRO OPERATIONS MEMBERS REQUIRED

## Friday, 4 Sept. 11:30AM

## Victorian Trades Hall

## Corner Lygon St & Victoria St

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