

RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
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Letter from Secretary

2015 Enterprise Agreements Bargaining Round



**Luba
Grigorovitch**
State Secretary

Next year, our Union faces negotiations for replacement enterprise agreements (EA's) with the 3 major

public transport operators, being Metro, V/Line and Yarra Trams. With these current EA's reaching their nominal expiry dates on 30 June 2015, and a number of smaller EA's also up for negotiation at the same time, we have a big task ahead of us.

To ensure our Union is best placed to get the most favourable outcome for members, we want to be prepared to commence bargaining for replacement EA's in 2015. This means, taking the opportunity from now to engage with members and get your feedback before these formal negotiations commence.

Earlier this year members received an RTBU Members Survey asking for your feedback on what you think our Union's next priorities should be. Not only was this survey an important way for us to know what workplace issues matter most to you, but it also provided a starting point to kick off preparations for the next round of EA negotiations.

As part of these preparations, delegates who attended the **Rail Divisions Delegates' Conference** on 16 October considered the broader framework and principles for bargaining; as well as breaking out into workshops based on their relevant Division and having an honest discussion about some of the bigger issues affecting members that need to be considered when developing our log of claims for each EA.



Rail operations division delegates in early EBA planning during the 2014 Delegates Conference

Where to from here...

- **Have the conversation** – we encourage all members to start talking to your delegates and organisers about the issues you would like to see addressed in your EA.
- **EA Review** – the RTBU will formally write to the appropriate company in December to request that we commence a process of reviewing the current EA's.
- **Planning Meetings** – delegates will be invited to attend an EA planning meeting for their relevant Division and EA in January 2015.
- **Log of Claims** – you will be invited to respond to a survey in early February indicating the items that matter most to you when it comes to determining our log of claims for each EA.

In the meantime if you have any queries or questions please speak to your Organiser by telephoning the office on **9600 3030**. ■

Luba Grigorovitch
State Secretary



Members will be kept updated about the bargaining process to ensure that you have the opportunity to get involved in your EA campaign and bring a representative and united front to the bargaining table

ANNA STEWART MEMORIAL PROGRAM

Kate McIntosh

Driver Allocation Officer

Having been recommended to attend the Anna Stewart Memorial Program (ASMP) by RTBU Women's Officer Kath Larkin and not knowing what to expect, it is with great honour I write this article.

Three of the days were spent with the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) where Deputy Branch Secretary Dave Schleibs welcomed me like family. I got to experience some amazing sights; for example I was shown around the Spirit of Tasmania. I was also lucky enough to meet Matt Purcell of the ITF (International Transport Workers Federation) who do amazing work ensuring international seafarers are paid, fed and generally looked after – these are basic rights – we take so much for granted.

Sharon and Nicole who are wharfies and work for DP World were an inspiration; these women drive the straddles moving containers on and off vessels in a real male dominated workforce. It was wonderful to hear their stories and to have an insight into what their union does for them.

I also had four days at the Victorian Trades Hall, which is an iconic building, although old and very

cold inside it was good to spend time there – if the walls could talk I'm sure there would be some incredible stories!

Then I came to the RTBU head office for three days and what an eye opener! All of the Organisers and staff are not stop, whether it be taking phone calls, running from one office to the next, site visits or attending meetings. I can guarantee that our union really work for us.

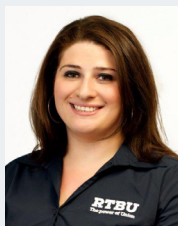
Although our organisers have many 'fights' on their hands. I was invited to attend a meeting with the Authorised Officers (AO's) at Malvern station with Luba and Darren who were updating members about the positive outcomes of recent disputes. The key message of the ASMP is regarding women in the workplace and encouraging women to be more involved in their Union.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the project and would encourage anyone interested to put themselves forward for the next ASMP. ■



Kate McIntosh making a pledge as part of the Anna Stewart Memorial Program

ABBOTT'S IR AGENDA: ANOTHER FREE KICK TO THE BOSSES



Rima Tawil

In-House Lawyer

The Abbott Government is at it again. If the attacks on your right to penalty rates, your right to superannuation increases and your right to be

represented by your Union was not enough; this time they want to further restrict your right to strike and dictate what is said in negotiations for enterprise agreements (EA).

Under these proposed laws, unions will need to show their bargaining claims are "realistic and sensible" before members can take protected

industrial action in support of their claims. So what exactly is meant by "realistic and sensible"? We don't really know, but you can bet your money that it will deliver a free kick to the bosses.

Further, the Fair Work Commission will be required to consider whether an enterprise agreement contains productivity improvements before it approves it. If the past is anything to go by, we know that when this Government talks about productivity, they are generally talking about cuts to current wages and conditions for members in the workplace.

This is a further attack on the right of workers to bargain for fair wage increases and better conditions and will make it harder for members to

exercise their right to take unprotected industrial action in support of their claims during EA negotiations.

Let's hope that common sense and fairness prevail and the Senate blocks this absurd attempt to further strip away the rights of workers.

We will keep members updated about changes in this area.



SALMAT'S FAILED ATTEMPT TO SHUT DOWN BREAST CANCER FUNDRAISER

Salmat are a call centre operator whose clients include NAB, Foxtel, Coles and Fairfax (to name a few). Earlier this year Salmat won the contract to take on (Public Transport Victoria) PTV's call centre commitments. Our newest members at Salmat act as PTV agents; booking tickets, journey planning, topping up Myki's and taking complaints.

One would expect that when entering a new industry an organisation such as Salmat may be inclined to make a good impression and assist the unions with some local fundraising for the Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA). Unfortunately this wasn't the case.

Working together the RTBU, ASU and NUW approached Salmat and asked them to sponsor our BBQ raising money for the BCNA. Salmat declined, citing their own overwhelming charity commitments as a reason to refrain from endorsing the sale of sausages. Despite Salmat's response, the unions collectively went about the business of planning the day.

You would think that Salmat's opposition to the event would start and end there, but wouldn't you have it, Salmat contacted Melbourne City Council and then BCNA directly to try and shut us down.

After jumping through half a dozen hoops, their attempt failed and we successfully gained all our required permits. This didn't stop another call to the health inspectors, who just happened to be wondering through the area – which we passed!

I am proud to say that Salmat workers raised \$524 during a lunch break for the BCNA and I thank the volunteers from RTBU Women, the ASU and NUW for all their hard work in organising the event. ■



Have you moved house or changed jobs recently?

Please let us know if your details have changed by calling us on **9600 3030** or send us an email on the address below.

Do you have an email address?

Do you have a mobile phone number?

send us an email:

rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au

45 Years' Service to the movement.



Grant Wainwright
Organiser

Last week I had the honour of awarding long-serving RTBU member Jim Richardson a recognition plaque for his 45 years of membership to our Union. A Services Officer

at Maryborough, Jim was 17 when he started work on the railways and joined the Australian Railways Union in 1970. He has seen many roles in his time in the Railways in both customer service and as a signaller and shunter. Jim exemplifies the dedication to our industry and his fellow workers that has kept our Union strong over many generations.

Maryborough has a long and proud railway history. The grand station was once a bustling railway interchange for both passengers and goods (and will hopefully be once again). Unfortunately in recent years like much of regional Victoria Maryborough has fallen under hard times with a

loss of jobs and stalling of economic growth. One of the big priorities of a State Labor Government after November 29 will need to be investing more in V/Line to provide jobs and growth in the bush.

Our Union truly values loyalty and it is why we take the time to make sure members receive acknowledgment of their commitment to our Union and the service. If you know of any members who are reaching 30, 40 or even 45 years' service in our Union and the railways please get in touch with your organiser. Unfortunately due to amalgamation of unions and switching over from paper to computer based membership systems details of members joining dates can go missing.

Congratulations once again to Jim Richardson on his 45 years' of commitment to our Union. ■



Jim Richardson and station staff at Maryborough Station on presentation of his 45 year membership plaque

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DELEGATE PROFILE



1) Name: John Cheevers

2) How long have you been working in the rail industry?

I have worked in the rail industry since 2006, when I joined the Department of Infrastructure.

3) Who do you work for and what position do you currently hold?

I work for Public Transport Victoria as the Document & Records Manager.

4) Have you held any other positions in the rail industry previously to this?

I was training to be an Authorised Officer but decided not to pursue that role when another position was offered to me.

5) What do you enjoy most about your job?

My role covers all of PTV & I get to speak to people within every Division. Whilst I don't necessarily have direct involvement in what each Department is doing, it is important for me to understand what is happening around the place, in order for me to best support the broader PTV staff. So, having a supporting role for the organisation as a whole means that I am not pigeon holed when it comes to who my colleagues are, and I can walk across floors & say hello to many people and also know what is going on in their workplace.

6) How long have you been a union member?

I've only recently returned to full Union membership but, if I take into account my previous employment, then I have been a Union member for 30 years & 3 months!

7) In your opinion, what is the best thing about the RTBU?

Diversity. When I worked at Ansett, there was a Union for the clerical staff, one for the Pilots, one for the Flight Attendants, one for the Engineers, and one for the Ramp staff. Very rarely did any of these Unions see eye to eye and as such, everyone fought for their little piece of the pie. With the RTBU I can clearly see the advantages of a Union that represents the 'industry', in a sense. I'm more than happy that I can support AO's, counter staff, Drivers, clerical staff etc, etc, because I know they've got my back!

8) Why did you become a delegate?

In my opinion, there is always a place for representation in the work place. Unions have always worked better when they are united and have solid support. In the past, I have been a part of established Unions so I have never had to be a part of that first foray into a non Unionised workplace. I currently find myself in exactly that situation & when I was asked about the role I figured, 'if not me, who?' I have reaped the benefit of the initial steps made by others, so now it's my turn to get representation, solid representation, into my workplace.

9) Is there anything else you would like to add?

We're only as strong as the sum total of us so, if the opportunity arises, support & promote your Union. ■

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