

# RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
**VOL 1 | Issue 5 | 29 May 2014**



## Letter from Secretary

## RTBU JOIN TOGETHER IN SUPPORT OF OUR TRAMMIES



**Luba  
Grigorovitch**  
State Secretary

I was proud to speak at a protest rally which was organised by the Tram & Bus Division of the RTBU held outside of Yarra Trams

office in response to the company's increasingly intransigent approach to sackings.

Recently, Yarra Trams management has taken an extremely hard line approach in sacking workers for disciplinary matters. These unnecessary and unwarranted sackings have left our members and their families devastated. In all of the recent cases there were alternatives to sacking but Yarra Trams chose to ignore the other options. After investigating further it is clear that Yarra Trams has one rule for workers and a very different one for management. One of their managers was found guilty of physical assault of a tram driver earlier this year but this only received a minor disciplinary sanction.

Our members however who are the backbone of the network are being dismissed willy nilly for minor incidents. Although the RTBU is fighting the company at the Commission in relation to these unfair dismissals, it still puts undue stress on members and their families.

Yarra Trams, now operated by KDR is a conservative company who has demonstrated their passion for the financial bottom line over the welfare and respect of their workers. These recent sackings appear to be a deliberate strategy to reduce staff by Yarra Trams. In 2014 alone they have had 7 sackings and we have not even reached June yet.



Yarra Trams has provided talking points to their management that refer to the company being "on track" to reach its target number of dismissals this year. That is a disgrace and I condemn the company for setting 'targets' around sacking employees.

It was great to join members and comrades from other unions at the rally. Although we hope KDR got the message and will change their ways we will not be holding our breath. Never fear – the RTBU has more tricks up our sleeve and if KDR want to fight us then we are ready for it. At the end of the day our union has a proud 150 year history; KDR is yet to even see out the term of the franchise agreement. ■

**Luba Grigorovitch**  
State Secretary



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# BARRIER STAFF SAFETY



**Grant Wainwright**  
Organiser

Recently, there have been many instances of Barrier Staff verbally abused, spat on and threatened with violence whilst performing their duties on the barriers at Premium Stations.

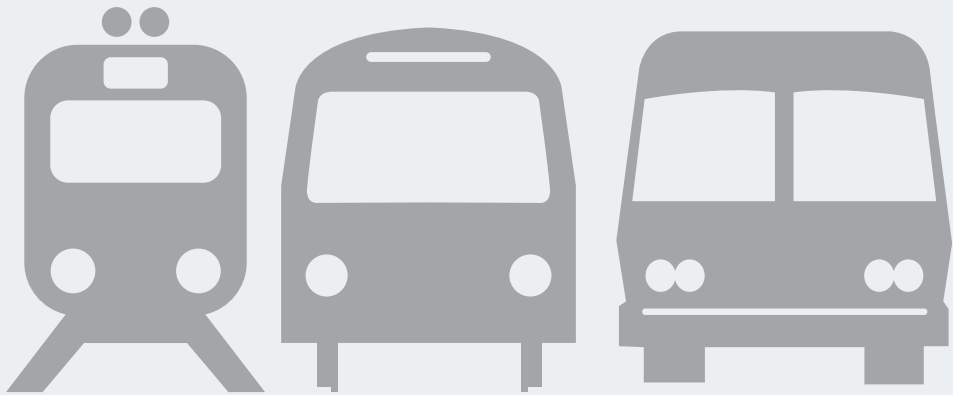
Barrier Staff perform a vital role for the travelling public, giving travel information, directions, ensuring passengers touch on and off all whilst being under pressure to ensure the public get swiftly through the barriers and on their way.

Staff shortages have meant that in some instances Barrier Staff are doing the work of two or more. These staff deserve better! All members of the RTBU deserve to be treated with respect and to be able to do the job that they do safely. Employers need to take these issues seriously.

These members work in the absolute frontline often dealing with angry passengers around delays on the network and facing the barrage of abuse that often flows from these circumstances. Being racially abused or spat on is totally unacceptable - Metro and V/Line may not be able to totally stop these types of events from occurring, but sitting on your hands and not doing anything at all is just as unacceptable.

Action plans around education, risk assessments, escape routes and other work need to be developed as a matter of urgency. The Union battle cry of "Touch One Touch All" applies here and both companies are placed on notice that simple lip service to the situation is not good enough.

Barrier Staff that require further information or that have been through any type of abuse should contact their delegate ASAP. As always for further information members should not hesitate to contact the Union Office or myself on 0421122 437. ■



## Trevor Dobbyn Wins Award

Former RTBU State Secretary Trevor Dobbyn was the recipient of a Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) Award of Meritorious Service at the recent Labour Day Dinner Dance.

The award was in recognition of Trevor's long and distinguished service to the Australian Railway Union, Public Transport Union, RTBU and the wider Labour movement.

The award was warmly received in front of members of the RTBU, VTHC Unions, Members of Parliament and the Labour faithful. Trevor's fellow award recipients were outgoing Trades Hall Secretary and former Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) Official Brian Boyd and Australian Workers Union Organiser (AWU) Brian Oates.

The VTHC Award of Meritorious Service has been awarded every year to distinguished Union officials since 1998. Trevor Dobbyn's name is added to the list of 41 servants of the Labour movement.

Congratulations Trevor!

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## Major win against cash collection



**Darren Galea**  
Secretary

Last week our Branch Secretary Luba Grigorovitch had it confirmed in writing that Authorised Officers will NOT be collecting cash as part of the new on the spot penalty fare process.

This is a major win for Authorised Officers and our Union! As members would be aware legislation was passed last year including the cash component of on the spot penalty fares. Thanks to the unity of members and the negotiating skills of the RTBU the Minister for Public Transport has agreed that cash will NOT be collected as first proposed and instead a 12 month trial will occur with EFTPOS machines only.

This is an incredible result considering the Minister and CEO of Public Transport Victoria were both adamant that cash had to be a component of this new system.

Metro have visions of implementing the on the spot penalty fare by mid-July however negotiations around the industrial implications still need to be had.

In the meantime I want to confirm with all AO's that cash is DEFINITELY off the table and will not be a component of this new system. Further, there is a rumour floating around that the Multi Modal Authorised Officers (MMAO's) will be expected to carry cash. The RTBU has had it confirmed that this is also inaccurate. The MMAO's will NOT be collecting cash either. The collection of cash would put members at an unnecessary risk of assault and attack. This unnecessary risk is simply unacceptable for any Authorised Officer.

More work is still to be done around an industrial agreement, but the major concern of cash handling has certainly been addressed.

I want commend the Authorised Officers for their unanimous support of the motion condemning the State Government for the proposed idea of cash handling and also thank the delegates and members for their hard work and unity up to this point.

If you have any queries or questions don't hesitate to call me on 0407 512 494. ■

## OHS in Administrative Workplaces



**Bryan Evans**  
Organiser

So you're sitting at your desk, reading the latest safety newsletter over a hot cup of coffee. The newsletter repeats all the same messages you have heard one hundred times before: "Never take a chance with safety", "If you're not sure ask", "Victorian workers returning home safe every day". Imagery of amputations, falling shelves, fractured disks and sweet little girls left sobbing fill your mind and for a moment you take the time to study your workplace. No wide gaping holes in the floor, no forklifts darting back and forth, no ominously

spinning razorblades for you to stick your arm in and no 40 gallon drums filled with flesh dissolving acid in sight. Your desk is ergonomically designed and your chair is reasonably comfortable.

All must be well right? This safety business doesn't really apply to you does it? Well not necessarily, the images we see on TV and those that make the news are extreme and horrific scenarios often depicting the worst physical hazards. Although administrative staff can face physical hazards, the truth of the matter is a large portion of hazards are psychological.

So what are psychological hazards? They can be a lot of things, from ridiculous timeframes to constant restructuring, lack of job security, old fashioned bullying, and the long term effects

of being under staffed. These can often lead to harassment by colleagues and management and ultimately being overworked. The results differ person to person, but stress, anxiety and depression can result from working in these environments and can affect a person's physical health and personal lives.

As an organiser I see these environments every day, and it reiterates the importance of not only union delegates in our workplaces but also Health and Safety Representatives to assist in helping our members tackle these very real issues. If you would like me to visit your workplace and discuss with your workgroup how to elect your own Health and Safety representatives please contact me on 0457 006 739. ■







# WELFARE CHECKS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!



**Kath Larkin**  
RTBU Women's Officer

One of the major issues that came up at this year's RTBU Women's conference, and seems to come up each year is the issues of members feeling they're been intimidated

during their welfare checks when returning to work following sickness or carer's leave.

In a number of negotiations between our Union and Metro we received a commitment that if these Welfare checks were to be implemented (which we were not in favour of) then they would be done in a respectful and non-threatening way.

A large number of our women members are primary carers of children or sick or elderly parents. This means on top of taking their own personal sick leave (we're not machines and we all get run down sometimes) they are more likely to require time off for carers leave.

However this does not only affect Women. The RTBU is disappointed that we are still receiving complaints of our members being treated unfairly when returning from leave. This is totally unacceptable and we will not stand for it.

Members present at the Women's Conference received a personal promise from CEO Andre Lezala that the welfare checks were not to be used to harass or intimidate staff. Below is a check list reminding you of your rights in a welfare check

- The supervisor conducting your welfare check must only ask the question depicted on the form below.
- Members do not have to disclose the nature of their illness or carer's leave. Supervisors

who continue to question this are in breach of the agreement between the RTBU and Metro.

- All members have the right to union representation during a welfare check, as with any meeting with supervisors or managers. No member can be forced into a meeting against their will. And "this is just casual" is not an excuse- these meetings are not casual, they will be on your record.
- Members always have the right to union representation in meetings, but are particularly encouraged to involve the union if ever HR or someone above your direct supervisor is involved in a meeting.
- There are reports of supervisors threatening /staff that they may be unable to gain access to promotions or full time work in the future if they take sick/ carers leave. It is unlawful under the fair work act to penalise or threaten to penalise staff for accessing EBA entitlements; such as sick leave.

**A note on bereavement leave:** Under the EBA Metro staff are entitled to three days bereavement leave for the loss of a family member. Historically there was a policy of allowing less time to staff whose family lived and died overseas. This was corrected following the 2011 Women's Conference when the issue was raised by members directly with Lezala. There have been some reports of management attempting to sneak back in the policy- this is not on!

If your rights are being breached or you feel bullied please contact your union delegate or organiser immediately, we want to stamp out this rotten culture once and for all. Members have the right to dignity, respect and safety at work. ■

## RTBU WOMENS MORNING TEA

**Tuesday JUNE 3rd**  
**10.30am**  
**Caulfield Station**

**Caulfield Railway Station**  
**Station St / Normanby Ave,**  
**Caulfield East**

**Refreshments Provided**

RTBU women is open to ALL Women in the union from all divisions, and we encourage you to be actively involved.

So please come along, for an opportunity to network, share & be actively involved in discussions with other women in the industry over cake & a cup of coffee.

**PLEASE CONTACT US TO GET  
BOOKED OFF FOR THE EVENT!**  
**Email: [women@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:women@rtbuvic.com.au)**  
**Phone: 9600 3030**

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Luba Grigorovitch

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Secretary: Kevin Killender

**Admin and Salaried  
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Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

**Rail Operations Division**  
Secretary: Darren Galea

**OH&S, Industrial and  
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Thomas Moorhead

**Admin & Salaried Division**  
Organiser: Bryan Evans

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