

RTBU EXPRESS

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

RTBU FIGHTS AGAINST ABBOTT'S AUSTERITY BUDGET



**Luba
Grigorovitch**
State Secretary

I was proud to join a large contingent of RTBU members and tens of thousands of workers, unionists and conscientious

Australians who took part in the Bust the Budget rally organised by Victorian Trades Hall.

The deep feelings raised by the community in response to the Coalition Government's Budget of May 13 was clear from the huge size of the march, with a turnout of more than 40,000 people – the biggest demonstration organised by Victoria's union movement since the 2005 Your Rights at Work rallies. We were all united as one by our opposition to the Budget's cruel cuts to jobs and services, slashing of funding to education and training and attacks on healthcare and pensions.

The Budget proposed by Tony Abbott and Treasurer Joe Hockey makes unprecedented cuts to basic services that ordinary Australians depend on. If passed by the Senate in July, it will cut tens of billions from health and education, increase the retirement age to 70, cut pensions and freeze super contributions at less than 10%, and cruelly impose a 6 month freeze on income support to young people looking for work. One of the most disturbing changes flagged by the Budget is a co-payment on Medicare that will charge patients an extra \$7 to visit their GP's and \$5 to purchase medicine. This surcharge represents the conservatives' long held agenda to dismantle and ultimately destroy Medicare as a universal health service accessible to all without financial hurdles imposed on the poor and low paid. All of these changes will place a huge financial burden on many RTBU members and their families and limit



their ability to seek access to decent medical care and other basic services. We know that these huge cuts will lead to job losses which will reverberate throughout the entire workforce. The RTBU will stand vigilant in protecting our members' basic right to work.

This carrying away of our hard won rights and benefits, which working people have struggled for over decades to achieve, is all being done in the name of a Budget deficit "emergency". We are told that Australia's deficit is unsustainable and we must fill Treasury's coffers back to surplus if we are to keep the economy in good shape, no matter the cost. This simply doesn't measure up to reality – Australia's debt level is the lowest in the developed world and was in fact billions of dollars more in the red under the Howard Government. The real reason the Coalition are imposing austerity under this concocted crisis is to radically reshape Australian society in the mould of their economic ideology.

In Abbott's Australia, government will retreat from its role of providing a safety net to those struggling to make ends meet, and merely become a facilitator for market forces. Big business and employers will benefit with increased profits and an even freer hand to determine wages and working hours while workers will bear the burden of greater costs of living and the brunt of reduced spending. Inequity between labour and capital will be deepened and the Australian way of life will be irreversibly changed.

While the Budget and its consequences for our members is stark, the campaign against it is also a golden opportunity for our union movement to reassert its crucial role to the community. When the Howard Government introduced the Work Choices legislation in 2005, they could not have anticipated the response it received from hundreds of thousands of working Australians –

and front and centre of the marches against it was the union movement and the ACTU's Your Rights at Work campaign. The key lesson conservatives learnt from their defeat over Work Choices is that they could not afford to attack workers' conditions directly – instead they would first have to go after trade unions, the strongest bulwark of working people's needs. This is what Abbott's Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption is really all about – by using the findings of this Commission to weaken and ostracize unions, the Coalition will have erased the last line of defence between working people and their resurgent IR agenda. By taking a leading role in the fight-back against the Budget, the RTBU and union movement can demonstrate how indispensable organised labour is to defending the way of life of ordinary Australians – and by standing shoulder to shoulder with other unions whose members are under attack from this Budget, our union will be able to call upon their solidarity when we need it.

The false narrative of the Abbott Government and their backers in big business and the pages of The Australian can only be refuted by the voices of those who oppose the conservatives' agenda and everything it stands for. I urge all RTBU members to continue to take part in the campaign against this Budget and the Abbott Government's everyday attacks on the rights and conditions that have been won by working people. If we are strong and united we can force this Government onto the back foot. As always, the RTBU will be prepared to defend our members on any front whether that be on the job or by evil political forces. ■

Luba Grigorovitch
State Secretary

RTBU
The power of Union

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UNFAIR SACKINGS?

WE WON'T. COP. THAT.



**Darren Galea and
Grant Wainwright**

V/line was once an employer who cared about their employees. An employer who valued their employees. The RTBU has found that this has changed. The recent behavior by management from V/line is disgusting.



Dervin D'Costa has been with V/line for just on 40 years. He has never stepped out of line. He has had no warnings or priors

throughout his duration of employment with the company. He is a hard worker who turns up to work day in, day out because he wants to provide the best opportunity he can for his family.

In early April, Dervin was involved in an incident at Ballan Station which ended in Dervin and another conductor having to defend themselves from punches being thrown from unruly youth who had previously verbally abused other passengers and Dervin whilst travelling on the V/line train without a valid ticket.

V/lines response was to stand Dervin down instantly.

Last week he had an interview so that V/line could hear his 'side' of the story. V/line refused to show Dervin the CCTV footage. They treated him with contempt. Dervin admitted that he could have handled the situation differently. He wrote a letter stating that he loves his job, he holds his position of conductor with pride and he is willing to undergo training or whatever V/line deem important in order for him to retain his position. He went back for his second meeting later that week and he was sacked. He was told to return his V/line belongings with a matter of urgency and was no longer employed by V/line.

This man had dedicated his entire life to V/line. He has now lost his job because of one incident. A number of V/line members have contacted the union in support of Dervin. The RTBU has lodged an unfair dismissal claim with the commission on Dervin's behalf, further RTBU Organisers Grant Wainwright, Bryan Evans and Darren Galea will be visiting every depot in the coming week to discuss with members how they can support Dervin.

We strongly believe that V/line could have offered this long serving employee additional training, given him a final warning or even some sort of promotion or demotion, but to simply sack him for one incident is unacceptable.

As always, if you have any queries or questions please feel free to call Darren (0407 512 494) or Grant (0421 122 437) or the RTBU Head Office on 9600-3030. ■

RTBU

Women's Morning Tea

Tuesday 1st of July

10.30am

Richmond Station

If you are rostered on to work, please call the Union Office to be released from work.



Contact us

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State Secretary
Luba Grigorovitch

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**Admin and Salaried
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Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

Rail Operations Division
Secretary: Darren Galea

**OH&S, Industrial and
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Admin & Salaried Division
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