

RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch

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Letter from Secretary

STATE ELECTION REVEALS THE POWER OF UNION



**Luba
Grigorovitch**

State Secretary

The election of a new Victorian Labor Government in last month's State Election is

a welcome result for thousands of working people across our State, and invites some real prospects for the union movement.

The unseating of the Coalition Government by the Victorian electorate was in many ways a referendum on Napthine's conservative colleagues in Canberra. But the unprecedented defeat of the Napthine Government after only 1 term in power is also testament to the hard fought campaign waged by the union movement against its shameful measures throughout its 4 years in office.

Despite coming to power in 2010 under Ted Baillieu promising a non-ideological "small target" approach to jobs, industrial relations and infrastructure, the State Liberals quickly revealed a different and more typical conservative agenda once in government. The State Government soon set about antagonising key sections of the State's workforce, including public school teachers, nurses, ambulance drivers and paramedics



RTBU activists campaigning against the Napthine Government in 2014

in a number of high-profile industrial disputes. Baillieu and his ministers callously overlooked the grievances of these workers in each of these instances, and allowed these disputes to drag on to the detriment of the workers concerned and the public. Like the Federal Abbott Government, the Baillieu/Napthine Government also embarked on an brutal witch hunt against the CFMEU which in practice represented an attack on militant unionism.

In our industry, public transport workers have had to deal with a more aggressive IR environment. The incumbency of the Coalition Government meant that management always approached the bargaining table with a heavy fist. The Victorian union movement responded to these attacks on workers' rights by organising and leading a fight back in the best of our traditions. Campaigns such as the Nurses Union "Respect our Work" campaign and the ambulance drivers' "Code Red" kept the Government on its feet and generated huge public support. During the State Election campaign, Victorian Trades Hall and the union movement played a very significant role in campaigning against the Napthine Government.

The new Premier, Daniel Andrews was frank on election night in acknowledging the role the union movement played in Labor's victory when he said, "There are some who wanted this election to be all about unions and workers. And that's exactly what it was."

The next 3 years will be absolutely critical for the union movement in ensuring that the new Andrews Labor Government lives up to its promise of delivering for working people in our State.

RTBU members must now assess our prospects under the new Andrews Government. State Labor have made the following promises in relation to public transport and the RTBU will hold this Government to account to ensure public transport gets all that has been promised during the election campaign:

- 30 new Metro trains, locally manufactured
- 20 new V/Line carriages, locally manufactured
- 50 grade separations over 8 years
- Bendigo urban rail system

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The power of Union

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- \$50 million for upgrade of Frankston Station
- \$25 million for Ballarat Station upgrade
- \$20 million for car parking projects (various, including multi-storey)
- \$300 million in first Budget for Metro Rail Tunnel
- 50 percent minimum local content clause on all bids for the contract, including all rail and rolling stock contracts.
- Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel to develop a Victorian rolling stock strategy

Labor's commitment to local content in building Metro and V/Line's fleet is welcome, as is their commitment to major projects such as the Metro Rail Tunnel and regional infrastructure as well as upgrading long-neglected stations. Premier Andrew's proposed Jobs and Investment Panel, which aims to formulate a long-term order plan to give industry certainty and secure jobs, will

be absolutely critical to the future of rolling stock and must succeed by its own criteria.

On the other hand, it is disappointing to see State Labor's plans to retain Protective Service Officers and expand their use on Friday and Saturday nights. The past 3 years have demonstrated a want of training and competence on the part of the PSO's. We know that the creation of more Station Officers would provide the traveling public with a more reliable form of protection at night.

The overall prospects for public transport and our members' livelihoods is markedly better under a Labor Government than it was at any point under Baillieu or Napthine and their friends from the big end of town. However that in itself is no guarantee that the Andrews Government will fulfill its commitments to investing in public transport and making our industry stronger. This is why the RTBU will meet with the newly elected Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan to ensure that she understands that the RTBU plan to hold this Government to account.

Above all, the new State Government needs to understand that public transport is vital to Victoria's future and cannot be treated as a niche issue - as Napthine and his colleagues found out. Only by demonstrating our strength as a union and willingness to see these policies implemented in our members' interests can we guarantee that these promises will be delivered. We have strong alliances with our fraternal unions in Victoria that we can and will draw upon in the months and years ahead. United we stand, divided we fall.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you in 2015. Have a safe and enjoyable Christmas. ■



Luba Grigorovitch
State Secretary

SOCIAL MEDIA REMINDER



Rima Tawil
Industrial Officer

As we embark on the festive season, I think it is prudent that we remind ourselves of the issues we face

with social media in the workplace.

With more and more members connecting with the different social media sites, we are finding that the line between work and private lives can be easily blurred. We continue to represent members who have been called in by the boss to answer to allegations of misconduct arising from social media activities.



Workers, more than ever before, need to be aware of and monitor their online presence, particularly during what is commonly termed the silly season - "I was under the influence at the time" is not a get out of jail free card.

Most companies in the railways have in place a social media policy or work instructions which can extend to action taken even if you are not at work. Members need to be aware of the social media policy or procedure at their workplace. Many of these policies expressly provide that a breach may lead to disciplinary action, which may include termination.

I have said it before and will say it again; the best protection is to assume that anything you post or share is public and may be seen by your employer.

Remember to...

- ✓ Double check your privacy settings are set on high
- ✓ Delete any inappropriate comments and learn how to remove or report offensive material
- ✓ Avoid altogether writing comments about your workplace
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the company's social media policy or work practices

If you have any questions or are called to attend a meeting due to allegations of breaching social media policy or procedures please contact your Organiser.

Have a safe and happy holiday season. ■

FATIGUE MANAGEMENT – NIGHT SHIFT SAFETY



Tony Matuszak
Organiser

During the warmer months ahead, it is essential that all track workers and safeworking staff are aware of fatigue whilst working on the track, whether it be during night or day shift. Remember to keep hydrated at all times and ensure wide brim hats and tinted protecting sunglasses are available.

With the Ringwood Station project, Frankston Signal works, as well as projects in metro and regional Victoria underway, the RTBU has been advised that some works are being rushed. Safety should and must always be the number one priority.

With the holidays and New Year approaching (combined with the warm weather) and the public staying out later, it is important for all members to feel safe on track and in your workplace. If for any reason you feel a project is being rushed or safe working conditions are not being observed, please inform your supervisor or Coordinator and let your

delegate know. As we know alcohol, warm weather and the festive season can spell trouble – if for any reason part of your PPE is not available, contact your Organiser. ■



From all the staff at the RTBU have a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year

V/LINE CONDUCTOR'S ROSTERS



Grant Wainwright
Organiser

Finally some common sense has come out of V/Line and the dreaded ROM's rosters will be replaced in the coming months using the old system of hand-drawn rosters. Delegates will meet once the rosters are prepared to ensure that all time allowances are included in each shift. The system of constant improvement will return to ensure that day-to-day roster improvements can be reflected as soon as possible.

V/Line have also announced the instant recruitment of 26 conductors. This will also greatly aid in the issue of shift lengths and rostered overtime. Obviously 26 new conductors will not instantly resolve all the issues, however it is a great step in the right direction and we will continue to work with V/Line to ensure that this momentum is not lost. ■

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ROSTER DISPUTE

We remain in dispute with V/Line around the interpretation of public holiday payments. V/Line today have agreed to honour the current payment system for this batch of public holidays including Melbourne Cup Day. Both sides have agreed to meet in the New Year and attempt to solve this issue before Australia Day. Payments for the public holidays for the Christmas period will be honoured as per current custom and practice.

As this is my last article for the year, I would like to wish all Rail Divisions delegates and members a great Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. Whilst the office will be closed until the 5th of January, members that have issues that need to be urgently dealt with are encouraged to give me a call at any time. ■

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?

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METRO CONTINUES TO SHUNT MEMBERS AROUND



Darren Galea
Organiser

Earlier this year, the Drivers Allocation Office (DAO) were promised as part of the current re-structure a re-classification to their grades. Unfortunately as continues to happen inside Metro, the management structure has changed at least twice in this workplace over the last 12 months. As part of this re-structure Metro planned to introduce a management team leader position with the hope that those positions would convert

to common law contracts. Our members in the DAO's office were outraged by this suggestion and their solidarity enabled us to win assurance from Metro that any successful applicants to these positions would have the opportunity to remain under the Enterprise Agreement.

The Company have also through this process, wanted to set up a rostering system which would affect our members' ability to swap shifts; however our delegates dug their heels in on this issue and kept the current swapping arrangements.

We have been fighting hard on this issue and intend to have it resolved on the terms

that were promised to our members. Metro, you're on notice.

I would like to say a special thanks to Delegates Manny Papis and Elwyn Gonsalves for their ongoing work and commitment to the cause. It's been a pleasure working with them as it has been all delegates and members throughout the year.

I would like to wish all RTBU members a safe and happy holidays and all the best for the New Year. ■

MEMBERS UPDATE VEHICLES USAGE AT E-GATE



Bryan Evans
Organiser

Metro have been successful in the hunt to find more sneaky ways to attack its workers before Christmas. The RTBU lodged a formal dispute regarding the removal of vehicles from members at E-Gate on the 28th of November and during the following two weeks status quo prevailed. Despite ongoing requests to management demanding a list of affected members and adequate

consultation, no formal response from Metro was forthcoming.

In what can be described as an outrageous tactic that fell straight out of Tony Abbott's anti-worker handbook, on the 16th of December an email was received by management stating that Metro did not recognise the dispute notice and that not all affected members will be notified that they will be losing their vehicles in 3 days' time, leaving no time for members to make alternative arrangements or argue the toss.

As members began drawing lines in the sand and sharpening sticks, cooler heads

prevailed and Metro conceded that consultation had not properly occurred.

After lengthy discussions an agreement has been reached that will see all RTBU members who have contacted the union, retain use of their allocated vehicles until mid to late January.

This will allow time for proper consultation to occur and time for each vehicle will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

If you have any concerns contact me on 0457 006 739. ■



WORKERS COMPENSATION 1800 555 777

The compensation meant
I wasn't also hurt financially.

Slater Gordon
Lawyers

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