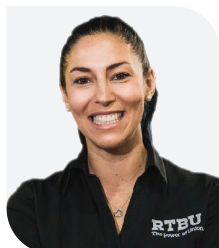


RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
VOL 8 | Issue 3 | Monday 10 May 2021



Luba Grigorovitch

State Secretary

NO WAY METRO!

RTBU Members across the network are angry and frustrated – they have every right to be! Last month Metro announced a 'restructure' in the station land that would result in a blatant attack on frontline jobs.

Members received no consultation on the change and were informed of Metro's grand plan over an online meeting in which they were told that the 'essential workers' during the pandemic were no longer required. Metro's proposal would make 29 frontline customer service positions redundant. This adds insult to injury when considered in the context of the dozens of frontline positions have not been filled since pre COVID times. Greed is the only word that comes to mind.

The ever prosperous and growing rail industry has been reduced to a balance sheet with absolutely no regard for its loyal workers and their families. Taking a job in the rail industry was once a job for life. Job security has been the one of hallmarks of our industry that we have fought to build and defend. Rail family is supposed to grow with additional services and patronage, not shrink. Especially with many new projects envisaged such as Metro Tunnel, Suburban Rail Loop, and the Airport Link, here we are, fighting to protect the essential frontline jobs.

The RTBU will fight this all the way. Under the EA, Metro has an obligation to conduct a joint review of the roles and responsibilities and classification structure for station grades. In what universe does unilaterally changing classifications at certain stations, cutting and slashing jobs pass

the definition of 'joint review'? We believe that Metro is in breach of the EA.

To prevent this attack on jobs, we lodged a dispute and argued that 'status quo' should apply until the dispute was resolved. Metro flouted this and continued with their plans. This led to the RTBU issuing proceedings in the Federal Court seeking an injunction. The court has since ordered Metro to immediately stop any redeployment or redundancy for any station grade employees while the matter is before the FWC. The first conciliation meeting is due to take place on Tuesday May 18.

Members continue to receive regular updates via text messages and newsletters. Organiser's Vik Sharma and Victor Moore have been visiting stations to continue building the campaign and answer Members' questions. A stations campaign committee consisting of delegates and members has been also been setup and meets regularly.

Rallies

RTBU Members have continued to send a clear message to Metro with two well attended rallies. The first held at North Melbourne Station at 8am on Wednesday 28 April, and the second at Flinders Street Station, at Midday on Wednesday 5 May. Station Staff from right across the network attended both rallies in their own time.

Thank you to Shane Stevens on behalf of the Maritime Union Australia for speaking and showing his solidarity at the Flinders Street Station Rally.

Meeting the Minister

A meeting with the Minister for Public Transport has been held with an RTBU delegation consisting of Station Masters, Passenger Services Leaders and RTBU Officials Vik Sharma and Victor Moore, and myself, where we highlighted the scale of mistruths perpetuated by Metro to the Government about the nature of the work performed by those being made redundant.

Expressions of Interest

While the halt to redeployment and redundancies is a major win for RTBU Members, the court refused to stop Metro's Expression of Interest (EOI) process. As further legal action is afoot, the RTBU is advising Members to hold off on participating in the expression of interest scheme being run by Metro until the current legal questions and issues have been resolved in the FWC.

The RTBU will continue to build the campaign for job security for all front-line and operational grades.

For updates and detail on the campaign you can visit the Campaign's web page: www.rtbuvic.com.au/no-way-metro/

Stay united and stay strong!

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary



RTBU
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Darren Galea

Organiser

VALE AMARJIT SINGH

It is with great sadness that we inform members of the passing of Amarjit Singh.

Amar has been a much loved and respected Member of the RTBU and the railway family. His absence will be deeply felt by all.

Amar began his railway career as a train patroller back in 2001 with M Train, alongside some of the Organisers and Delegates who work in the union today.

Throughout his 20 years in the industry, Amar was always a big supporter of the union and it wasn't long after joining the RTBU that he was elected as a union delegate.

He served on the Rail Divisions Committee of Management, and on Branch Council.

As a Delegate he was heavily involved in issues that affected Authorised Officers, always fighting for Members, and ensuring Members were put first.

He was a staunch unionist, and his legacy will live on forever through the Members he recruited and fought for.

Amar was a good friend of mine, I always enjoyed working with him and later campaigning for Members alongside him.

He will be missed.



ANNUAL FRANK HYETT AWARD

This year will be the third year running of our annual award in honour of Frank Hyett, to celebrate his contribution to not only the Australian Railways Union, but the entire Union movement.

Frank Hyett was the father of our Industry wide union. It was his work that saw a move away from smaller craft or trade based unions to the formation of a state-wide railways union, The Victorian Railways Union. He went on to lay the foundation for a federated Rail Union bringing unity across the industry throughout the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Frank Hyett award will be awarded annually to one recipient who has made an outstanding and meritorious contribution to our collective. An RTBU member who has time and time again shown their dedication to the Union through hard work, persistence, comradery and leadership.

We have a set of criteria for the award whereby a member can nominate a member, or another person who has made a contribution to our Union which fits the criteria. Self-nominations will not be accepted.

Life Membership remains the highest honour for our Branch of course, but this medallion recognises outstanding leadership, comradery and Union values. Nominations will be accepted via email to rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au or posted to the RTBU, Level 2 365 Queen Street, Melbourne 3000 and addressed to the Branch Secretary Luba Grigorovitch.

Nominations must be received via email or post no later than Tuesday 25 May 2021.

Contact us

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**Industrial Officer /
Organiser**
Vik Sharma



Bryan Evans

Organiser

HCMT

2.3 BILLION DOLLARS, 2 YEARS LATE, 3 TRAINS IN SERVICE AND INSECURE WORK



When HCMT was announced, it was lauded as one of the biggest rail investments since privatisation. As gold rained from the heavens, the industry celebrated the alleged 1100 jobs the project was meant to create as we all prepared for a new fleet of 65 trains which were meant to arrive mid-2023.

In mid-2021, what do we have to show for all that money and excitement?

3 trains (kind of) in service, a shiny new depot in Pakenham that is reminiscent of a cold war relic, complete with razor wire, full of trains that don't run, covered by an enterprise agreement containing cold war era wages and conditions.

Over at Newport workshops, things only appear to be slightly less grim. Take a lick of the new paint off and just under the surface you will find a history of offshoring work, broken promises, and insecure jobs.

The RTBU, ETU and AMWU have been negotiating a new EA for the site for the last 12 months and at one stage were on the cusp of a deal centred around the "acceleration program" which was designed to hire more staff and catch up on the manufacturing timeline.

The potential deal fell apart when Downer decided that catching up might not be a good idea and withdrew their offer. Despite some progress being made in bargaining earlier this year, the company refused to convert 34 insecure workers to full time employment despite the 2-year delay on the project, blatantly refusing any discussion regarding the clauses which ensured the proper use of fixed term and casual labour.

In response the unions lodged for industrial action which was unanimously voted up by all union Members, and industrial action is in full swing.

At the time of writing Members were out the gate for two, nine-hour stoppages and unless the company does significant amounts of soul searching over the next few days, the action will only intensify.

Rail has always been a job for life, and where there has been full time work, there have always been full time jobs. A 2.3 billion-dollar, 7-year project leaves no reason for insecure work and this Dispute has now become a fight for full time Jobs.

Congratulations to Members at Newport HCMT taking the fight to the company and going out the gate. All rail workers should support this fight, come, and support the HCMT workers on the Picket, check Facebook or call your organiser to find out when the next stoppage is on and come join workers on the picket line!





Joe Dennis

Organiser

AROUND THE TRAPS

V/Line Signal and Track

The enterprise agreement has been in since January 2021, yet V/Line still engage supplementary labour to fill jobs that our Members can and should be doing. This has been happening in the Signal and Track grades.

The enterprise agreement states that Members should be offered the shift before engaging contractors to complete works. On 22 April, the RTBU raised a dispute in relation to this issue. RTBU officials and V/Line have begun discussions in relation to the dispute. V/Line are currently looking into this issue and will inform the RTBU of any contractors being used in the infrastructure space.

If you see contractors on-site, let us know so we can scrutinise the engagement.

Control

Control Delegates and HSRs have been involved in risk assessments on the train controllers' room as the new timetable has created more workloads in some of the rooms. Discussions have taken place around rosters and room assessments to get a better picture of easing the workload on our Members.

Projects

Project contractors continue to try to get away with minimal or no safety in place when it relates to rail jobs. This week I attended Glenroy station works and found a slew crane and piling rig both working in the corridor with no Track Force Protection Coordinator (TFPC). The crane was completing lifts within 8 meters of live running trains without the appropriate protection.

Again, the RTBU had to bring this to the attention of John Holland and fight to get the protection needed, something that we continue to do on this specific site. I will continue to visit all sites in Victoria and fight to get the protection needed in all rail jobs, cutting corners/cost will not be acceptable to the RTBU or any other union. **Safety comes first.**

Shepparton Line Upgrade

The Shepparton line upgrade is now up and going. Being a 100% rail job, the RTBU now have a full-time shop steward, George White, on the project. George has been in rail for many years and has always been a staunch supporter of the RTBU. We look forward to working with George in ensuring the project is completed safely and to standard.



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