



# RTBU EXPRESS

Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch

March 2025

Operations | Infrastructure | Workshops | Administration



**Vik Sharma**  
Branch Secretary

## SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND DRIVING RESULTS

The month of March has seen the RTBU continue consolidating our work across the industry to underpin minimum standards and provide quality representation for members.

We have welcomed to the team our latest recruit, Phoebe Kelly who will be working as an Organiser. Phoebe brings a wealth of knowledge from her work in the movement and her previous role with the Queensland Branch of the RTBU.

EAs continue to be negotiated across the network with Organiser Bryan Evans playing a key role ensuring the best possible outcomes are achieved in each workgroup and that each agreement secures a benchmark that also protects members across other sectors of the industry.

Industrial action has been organised across numerous employers in the past month including protected action ballots for members at Loram and UGL Spotswood with more on the cards and in the pipeline over the coming months to support claims for numerous other agreements underway.

Members at **ProbeCX** working in the **PTV Call Centre** have continued to drive forward with their EA. Progress here has been a significant advancement on a campaign that has been long fought for. Probe has resisted negotiating an EA with the RTBU.

Utilising new provisions in workplace legislation brought in by the Federal

Labor Government, the RTBU has been able to bring Probe to the table and begin the process of replacing their overdue agreement.

Another noteworthy development has been a funding commitment from the Federal government to fund Airport Rail, putting this key piece of infrastructure in the works pipeline. This project has suffered from long term talk and reprioritisation, but this commitment, coupled with early works already undertaken, should see shovels in the ground come early 2026 paving the way for the pipeline of rail project work that the RTBU has continued to advocate for.

Finally, the Federal Election has now been called for Saturday 3 May - the options for unions and their members could not be starker. Against the backdrop of system wide reforms to support working people with improved provisions targeted at putting power back in the hands of workers, it is critical that we retain these provisions that Peter Dutton and the Liberals have committed to repealing. As unionists, we can't risk Dutton.

Interested in finding out more, get in touch with our office on 8630 9100 or [rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au)

**Vik Sharma**  
Victorian Branch Secretary

## AIRPORT RAIL: BACK ON TRACK

Following a reprioritisation of the Victorian rail upgrades pipeline to meet budget pressures, an injection of Federal funding has put Airport Rail back on track and on the map.

A \$2 billion dollar commitment from the Federal Government has been announced that should see works ramping up at the end of this calendar year.

The funding will support a new rail "Superhub" at Sunshine that will see two new regional platforms, an extended concourse, and capacity for over 40 train services per hour, providing direct connectivity between regional services and the airport.

A \$300 million investment will also improve rail services in the Melton growth corridor, backed by electrification under the Airport Rail project.

Works between West Footscray and Albion include three new rail bridges, upgraded tracks, new signalling, a realignment of passenger and freight lines, and an upgrade to Albion Station.



**RTBU**  
The power of Union

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## Bryan Evans

Organiser

# IN BARGAINING WE ORGANISE

While union campaigning has incrementally drawn the eyes and ears of industry and government, the RTBU remains the enforcer ensuring jobs are safe, workers are treated fairly and paid properly. Attacks from the bottom undermine the many achievements we have already locked into our industry agreements, so as the maxim goes – an injury to one is an injury to all.

No level of government regulation compares to the oversight attained by your union in understanding the issues and finding lasting industry specific solutions – that’s why the RTBU continues pushing from the front to ensure members are protected by RTBU standards.

This is long term strategic work that requires boots on the ground, and an ongoing battle to ensure the entire industry is covered by enterprise agreements that work for members. Over recent years we have tackled the rise of labour hire which has posed a real threat to generations of wages and conditions in rail through a committed campaign for wall-to-wall RTBU enterprise agreement coverage across the industry.

From the shonky arrangements between Sunstone and Metro, cut-throat wage slashing efforts by others and most recently the fallout of Morson’s ghost shift scandal, our EAs have curtailed unsolicited assaults on wages and conditions and have provided avenues for members seeking work opportunities and security across the industry.

Despite having locked away conditions in major agreements with Metro and V/Line Infrastructure and Rolling Stock Maintenance, the RTBU continues to press into every corner of the network lifting standards for all rail workers and organisations regardless of their size.

The steady roll of RTBU enterprise agreements being negotiated continues to drum on – improving past agreements and finding new players to ensure 100% EA coverage across the industry. Through our committed strategy supported by delegates, shop stewards and officials Joe Denis and Mat Purcell, the RTBU is now negotiating more EAs than ever before. Our agreements now cover plant, welding, labour hire, safeworking, rolling stock maintenance, overhaul and manufacture, and rail grinding, leaving virtually no rail business left without an RTBU agreement.

Newly negotiated RTBU agreements continue to come into effect. Most recently:

- **UGL Ballarat’s** EA has come into effect achieving its first 36 hour week
- **McConnell Dowell** EA has lifted and reinforced industry standard rates
- **RMS** has got its first union agreement. Historically having avoided a union agreement, RMS have joined the fold setting a new standard for the plant sector. Their agreement boasts a 36 hour week with solid rostering provisions taking a huge step forward to secure plant and operators back under the RTBU banner.

Currently under negotiation are another raft of agreements. These include:

- **UGL Spotswood** who undertake Pacific National Locomotive Maintenance. Union members from all unions at UGL Spotswood have just voted to take industrial action to press on and back their log of claims to secure a new improved EA.
- For **SCT rolling stock maintenance** the RTBU campaigned to obtain majority support to compel SCT to negotiate for a collective agreement. This EA is the first SCT rolling stock union

agreement being negotiated where our first claim is to have members no longer working on individual contracts.

- **Loram**, who operate the rail grinder in Victoria, have tried everything under the sun to avoid negotiating their first union agreement. They were unsuccessful in their efforts when RTBU members successfully came together and forced Loram to the table. Despite Loram’s unsuccessful legal challenges, negotiations are now in full swing where members recently voted to take industrial action to press their claims.
- While **Safeworking Solutions** have not had a great history with the RTBU, recent discussions may be set to change their outlook under a new union endorsed EA. Time will tell if this comes to fruition, regardless the RTBU will continue to support and advocate for the many RTBU members at Safeworking Solutions.
- **Pacific National Wagon Maintenance** bargaining for their first Victoria specific agreement. Given the site has been under threat of closure in the past it is no surprise that members’ core claims revolve around job security and ongoing maintenance in Victoria. While Pacific National have typically been ideologically opposed to clauses that give workers a say in what coffee is supplied let alone the clauses that provide job security, it seems this EA could be very significant for the future of freight maintenance in Victoria.
- Numerous other agreements are also under negotiation at varying other stages with companies including Skilled, Probe, Saady Rail, Earth Track, ARG, and Downer.

Soon to join the list, set to commence in the coming months are agreements with Activate Rail, Asciona, DTI, PN terminal operators, Gemco and Fastrack Welding.

# WELCOME PHEOBE!



Phoebe Kelly has started this month as an Organiser for the Rail Operations and Administration Divisions.

She is joining us from the RTBU Queensland Branch, where she worked as an Organiser, bringing significant experience in tow.

In Queensland, Phoebe was involved in a number of campaigns and disputes and worked with members in network operations and administration roles.

Phoebe has been in the union movement since 2011. With her experience as an industrial officer, lawyer and organiser, she has a solid understanding of the issues faced by members. Phoebe is passionate about organising workers to use their power in the workplace and firmly believes that true change is achieved by workers standing together.

Phoebe is looking forward to getting out in the workplace and meeting as many members as she can in the coming weeks.

You can get in touch with Phoebe via email [phoebe.kelly@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:phoebe.kelly@rtbuvic.com.au) or call her on 0494 302 942.

## DONT CROSS THE LINE

RTBU campaigning against violence and aggression at work has culminated in a strong transport angle in WorkSafe's latest public campaign. Launching in the coming month, the campaign illustrates the experience and impact violence and aggression in the workplace have on staff, working to shift the public perspective and drive societal change.

While we know this is only a small element of our much bigger campaign, coupled with the Victorian Government's commitment to legislate tougher penalties for people who assault public transport workers, it shows we have their attention turned to addressing this important and ongoing issue.

Keep an eye out for the campaign and let us know if you want posters and other collateral for your workplace. Thanks again to all members who continue reporting all incidents big or small – with strong data our advocacy is only ever stronger.



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# OUT & ABOUT: REPRESENTING MEMBERS ACROSS THE NETWORK



Welcoming a huge class of Delegates who have just completed Part 2 of their training!



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**Branch President:** Victor Moore

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**Workshops Division Secretary:** Paul Jumpertz  
**Organiser:** Bryan Evans  
**Organiser:** Joe Dennis  
**Organiser:** Matt Purcell

### Operations & Administration

**Operations Division Secretary:** Darren Galea  
**Administration Division Secretary:** John Nicolopoulos  
**Organiser:** David Paton

### Industrial Officers

Amanda Swain  
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