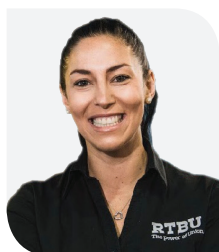


RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
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Luba Grigorovitch
State Secretary

OUT AND ABOUT

2020 certainly was one hell of a year.

From the many site visits I conducted over the past few weeks, the union wide sentiment has been that everyone is grateful to see the end of 2020.

Waving goodbye to 2020, we have officially signed off on all 2019 major enterprise agreements, protected job security and have fought for COVID safe workplaces while being able to continue the ongoing job of fighting for the broader rights of members at work. We won't let a pandemic get in the way of ensuring justice and safety for RTBU members!

While 2020 may be behind us, 2021 has already proved its turbulence as the ongoing outbreak risk continues to rear its head. Despite this, we remain focused on upholding the standards set last year.

Throughout the "circuit breaker" 5-day lock down, it is RTBU Members once again kept the network moving. We must work to expect that such occurrences may continue to plague our lives for some time still but knowing we have established benchmarks and expectations from operators, DoT and the Government should be cause for comfort.

The year started with a number of disputes including Public Holiday provisions that hadn't been paid, Provisional Improvement Notices (PINs) being issued relating to the return of cash handling for Myki on stations, being identified as COVID-19 exposure sites.

In January, members at Bombardier unanimously accepted and endorsed their new enterprise agreement delivering key advances in conditions aimed at furthering job security across rolling stock maintenance.

Sadly, a number of public transport assaults on staff have continued to highlight the need for more action from the government and from the companies in relation to keeping Members safe.

While the RTBU's campaign for improved safety is making progress with the Government finally supporting public messaging targeted at passengers and most recently the Department of Transport has moved to adopt a new transport personal safety policy and have engaged in consultation with the RTBU and Members.

Everyone deserves to feel safe at work and the RTBU will continue to push for these plans to be followed through as it is simply unacceptable that assaults on public transport workers are an

ongoing occurrence.

If you experience or witness an assault, the RTBU needs you to report it. Please complete an incident report, share a copy with the RTBU (send to SAFETY@rtbuvic.com.au) and contact your Delegate or Organiser.

Due to challenges faced through COVID, the RTBU Women's committee have chosen to hold off the International Women's Day conference until they are confident they can safely run the event in-person. Members will be kept informed once a new date is confirmed. Women's meetings will continue to take place online via teleconference each month. For more info, contact women@rtbuvic.com.au

As I continue to do the rounds, I look forward to seeing you all around the traps this year.

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary

Rail Division Committee Of Management supports protesting Indian farmworkers

This meeting of the RTBU Rail Divisions Committee of Management resolves to support the actions of protesting Indian farmworkers. To date a strike of over 250 million has taken place across India in protest against the Modi government's attempts to introduce neo-liberal reforms which threaten the livelihoods of farmers across India. These laws are designed to benefit large corporations at the expense of farmers and farmworkers. Currently tens of

thousands of farmers are camped around New Delhi and we note their determination to stay as long as it takes to remove the Government's attempts to their livelihoods, many of whom are small scale farmers trying to sustain incomes near poverty levels. This meeting resolves to support the protests and we demand that the Modi Government remove the threatened reforms which will if enacted reduce many farmers to abject poverty and unemployment.





Darren Galea

Organiser

WELCOME TO 2021!



As always, I have hit the ground running this February. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, many of our Delegates meetings were held online last year, and in some offices these restrictions have continued into 2021. I hope to see all members in person this year. It's been great to see Geelong, MMAOs, Pacific National, Hawthorn AOs, Thomastown Station, V/Line AOs, NSS, Metrol, V/Line Geelong shunters and Benalla members last week, and I look forward to getting out to our regional members in the coming months.

It has been great to catch up with Delegates in our monthly meetings and catching up with members in between. As always, we will make it around to as many departments as possible throughout the year.



Victor Moore

Senior Branch Vice-President

ASSAULT ON RTBU MEMBERS

Over the New Year period has been a busy one covering a broad range of issues impacting our members.

Unfortunately, we have seen a number of cowardly assaults on station staff members at barriers just doing their jobs. Station staff are bearing the brunt of a range of social problems now exacerbated by the angst created by COVID-19.

The RTBU has continued to campaign and pressure management on several fronts on this critical safety issue including staffing levels, staff training & support, police response and supportive government legislation.

The initial critical response though is the first impact on the job at the Delegate and local management level.

The RTBU at all levels has had to fight management to get that first level of incident and risk review to occur while the EBA provides for both Trauma leave and Employee safety reviews local management often struggle or seek to evade that initial critical response and joint review.

We have over the course of the New Year attended stations where these incidents have occurred much to the annoyance of management and have ensured that management actually apply the EBA process.

With passenger numbers increasing slowly and with up to 75% of city office workers and school kids due to return once the current COVID-19 Hotel quarantines outbreaks are under control then issues surrounding abuse of station staff and even assaults are likely to increase.

Unfortunately, there still remains a lot of unreported matters that are occurring, where members are verbally abused, threatened to be killed or pushed and shoved or spat on that often goes unreported largely due to the cumbersome reporting INX system.

If members are having difficulties in accessing the system or it is overly complicated, then send through a email or a SMS as every unreported incident lets management get away with the old get out of jail card of "No one told us it was an issue."

Remember to tell your Delegate and HSR, and email the union office on safety@rtbuvic.com.au.

Contact us

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Organiser: Bryan Evans

Industrial Officer
Alice Dunn



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/RTBUVic/

**Industrial Officer /
Organiser**
Vik Sharma





Vik Sharma
Industrial Officer/Organiser

METRO LSA TRANSFER PROCEDURE

Metro

LSA Transfer Procedure

Over many years, transferring from one location to another has been a massive problem and never a real option. We all understand that circumstances change, and people have to move from one place to another and sometimes even from end of the town to another. Until now if you wanted to move to another station, you had to apply for your own job at another station. This was unfair and unnecessary. We raised concerns about this with Metro and after many discussions, Metro has introduced a new procedure which will enable LSAs to move to other locations on the network. This procedure is currently limited to only LSAs, but we will keep working on it with the help of Delegates to improve it and expand its scope.

New Barrier Opening App

As we are all aware, there have been countless assaults experienced on the network. The RTBU

continues to hold the company accountable and explore safer working options. Assaults on barrier staff coupled with the pandemic hit last year triggered discussions to develop a tool that will enable the frontline barrier staff to open the barriers whilst keeping a safe distance. Consequently, the Ticketing Services team developed an App which will allow the workers to have safer control over the barriers. This is one step forward in a safer direction for frontline workers but there is a long road ahead and we will keep working towards making and keeping our industry safe.

V/Line

\$100 allowance for incorrect pay – As you are aware, V/Line's payroll has been notorious for inaccurately processing pays. Members have been frustrated for years and as a result, we negotiated a clause in the last agreement which will entitle the members to a \$100 allowance if V/Line makes a mistake in the pay run and that error is not fixed within 72 hours. There have been instances where this has happened, and



V/Line refused to pay the \$100. We are in the process of pursuing these issues and if need be, refer the matter(s) to the FWC to get justice. If you have been affected in this manner, please contact your local delegate or your organiser.

Probe Overtime Dispute

It was brought to our attention that Probe was applying the overtime provisions of the EA in a way which we thought was completely unfair. Your agreement provides for you to be entitled to OT penalties if you work in excess of 38 hours in a week. Probe refuses to recognise the overtime worked on the day in certain circumstances, and if your last shift is on Sunday for that week, you end up working the extra hours without overtime penalties for those hours. After several discussions with Probe, the matter remained unresolved. As a result, we have referred the matter to the Fair Work Commission. We will keep you posted as the matter develops. If you have any queries or want to have a chat, I am only a phone call away on 0413 363 923 or email: vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au.



Bryan Evans
Organiser

AROUND THE TRAPS

2021 started off on the right foot this year, with the Bombardier EA being unanimously endorsed by the RTBU membership across Bombardiers sites.

This was quickly followed up by the ratification of the V/Line Infrastructure EA which has now come into effect, leading to significant work regarding implementation particularly around rostering.

The Coleman Rail EA and Downer Infrastructure EA are in the final stages of completion, with only the last checks and balances of drafting to finalise for each. All going well, both should be put to a vote of RTBU members over the coming month. This will put them on par with other Tier 1 contractors, such as John Hollands, McConnell Dowel and LORA.

The TPA and Activate agreements are also in the final stages of drafting, and as far as the RTBU are concerned, signal a significant changing of the guard for Safeworking across Victoria.

This will place TPA and Activate along with Skilled and TSA, acknowledging a fair wage increase of 14%, respecting that RTBU members are Safeworkers not Slaveworkers in our industry, and committing to pay for both training and time to attend training when maintaining Safeworkers' qualifications.

The good news story stops with Downer HCMT however, which has stalled since the company withdrew its offer linked to 7-day shift rosters and supplanted it with an offer that can only be described as, offensive, and certainly not fitting of an EA that underpins the manufacture



of the biggest single order of shiny new rolling stock in years. Negotiations recommenced this year where although progress was made in relation to wages and conditions, the company has blatantly refused to convert 34 Fixed term employees to full time.

This despite being a 2 billion dollar project, running 2 years late, where the company has already sent significant portions of work back to be done in China.

Members of the RTBU, ETU and AMWU held a union meeting, unanimously rejecting their offer, and endorsed the use of industrial action including indefinite stoppages to protect local jobs.





Joe Dennis
Organiser

ON THE MOVE

This year is already off and running with the V/Line Infrastructure Enterprise Agreement approved by the Fair Work Commission on Wednesday the 13 January. This agreement came in effect 7 days later and is the first agreement in rail to have a 36-hour week implemented.

V/Line have been busy putting the S7C rosters in place, as these were agreed and voted on late in 2020. T7C members have also been notified of roster changes and all gangs have begun consultation with the company to produce rosters.

Members have expressed frustration at some of the proposed rosters having them work every weekend, and leaving little time for family. As we progress into the consultation, work life balance is becoming the most important factor in negotiating a suitable roster for all members and V/Line.

Members on the Ballarat Line Upgrade (BLU) project received backpay this month as V/Line were not paying members the relevant site allowances to work the project. This goes back months and was finally recognised and paid to all who worked the project.

The MPM gang at V/Line highlighted that the plant has not been serviced and maintained to an appropriate level for over 2 years. Members are forced to work 10-hour shifts breathing in large amounts of dust while seated in a "sealed" cabin. Members have brought this up with

V/Line, but V/Line have simply issued the members face masks and respirators rather than fixing the issue.

Members have even purchased various items including weather strips to seal the dust out. This in my opinion is unacceptable. I have reached out to V/Line's OH&S officer to discuss the issue but until now I have been ignored. I will be heading out on site in the next few days and will keep you updated.

The Christmas break was unfortunately not a good one regarding safety for infrastructure members. Three people were severely injured. One in Bombardier West Melbourne who fell and sustained serious injuries and is in hospital recovering, one contractor working with the Major Program Maintenance (MPM) gang was airlifted to hospital after being hit by a piece of plant and a DSL worker who had his hand crushed by a piece of plant. Please be safe when working on or near rail, we are all lucky that it was not more serious. Speak out if you don't feel safe at work, and don't hesitate to raise issues with your Delegate, HSR or the union via safety@rtbuvic.com.au.

2021 delegate meetings for Infrastructure and workshops have all been locked in, as well as regular prestart meetings on all rail projects. I look forward to working with everyone in the coming year.



Attention HSRs

The RTBU will be running the next HSR forum to discuss topical health & safety issues across the industry.

11am Wednesday 24 March

Via Zoom

RSVP & Details:

www.rtbuvic.com.au/HSRs

If rostered to work, please speak to your manager to arrange release for the 1 hour session. Should you run into any issues, please contact an RTBU Organiser.

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